RECENT TRENDS IN JEWISH MARRIAGE

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In the context of population studies, marriage can be generally viewed as the resultant of three major groups of determinants: sociocultural, or the 'desirability' of marriage; socioeconomic, or the 'feasibility' Of marriage; and demographic, or the availability of marriage partners (Dixon, 1971). Abundant evidence available on marriage patterns of Jews in the past points to a number of singular traits in comparison to other population groups (Bachi, 1976; DellaPergola, 1983a). Sociocultural factors - the normative centrality of the family in traditional Jewish culture - generally produced a greater marriage propensity among the Jews than among other religioethnic groups. Socioeconomic factors - the peculiar occupational stratification of Jewish communities - produced differences in the response of marriage frequencies of Jews and non-Jews as affected by general socioeconomic change. Demographic factors - the relatively small size and segmented structure of the pool of potential marriage candidates - tended to lessen marriage frequencies among the Jews. Legal limitations imposed upon the Jews in certain countries before emancipation constituted a further factor of attrition to past Jewish nuptiality.

Other things being equal, Jewish communities in the past were mostly characterized by rare definitive celibacy, low or moderate divorce frequencies, frequent remarriage in case of marriage disruption due to death or divorce, and infrequent religious heterogamy. Patterns of age at marriage among Jews tended to shift in the course of modernization, from comparatively early in traditional environments, to comparatively

late in more modern environments. Structurally, Jewish populations were mostly composed of nuclear Jewish households. Allowing for general regional variability of family types, family structures were relatively simple and family size somewhat smaller than among the surrounding populations. Overall, Jewish familism was one of the cardinal pillars of Jewish community life in the past. The family was not only the product of a certain type of traditional culture; it also was the main agency of cultural continuity.

Trends observed in a variety of contemporary Jewish communities depart from each of these traditional models and call for careful assessment and evaluation of the direction and implications of recent Jewish family patterns. Needless to say, the interest in family formation is also tied to the prospects for natality and family growth, at least in a population - like the Jews - among which out-of-wedlock births have been, and continue to be quite rare (Schmelz, 1971; Goldstein, 1988a).

Number of Marriages

A first indication of the recent family trends comes from those few countries where Jewish marriage statistics are available - whether from national registrar authorities, or from Jewish communities. A substantial decline in the yearly number of Jews marrying has occurred in many countries (outside Israel) since the early 1970s. In Great Britain, for example, the yearly number of Synagogue marriages did not change much throughout the 1960s, but declined by about 40% between 1972 and 1986 (Schmool, 1987). Similar results obtain for some other Western European countries (Bensimon, 1987; DellaPergola, 1988a; German Federal Republic, Statistisches Bundesamt; Switzerland, Bureau Federal de Statistique).

The recent declines sharpen the trend of the last several decades, when marriage rates of Jews per 1,000 Jewish population were already significantly lower than marriage rates among the total population of the respective countries. This is true when taking into account all Jewish grooms and brides, whether marrying with a religious or a civil ceremony, and obviously more so when the comparison is limited to Synagogue marriages only. (The proportion of Jews not marrying with a Jewish ceremony has increased over time in connection with the spread of out-marriage, see below.)

Variations in the yearly number of marriages or in marriage rates per 1,000 in the population, though highly indicative, are not enough conclusive since they may reflect periodical changes in age-composition of the population. Different types of data and measurement approaches are necessary for a better assessment of recent trends in Jewish nuptiality.

Marriage Propensities

Measurement Approaches

Table 1 presents a selection of data on marriage propensities among the Jewish and total populations in five different countries: Canada, the United States (represented here by the community of Boston - not necessarily an acceptable proxy for the whole country), South Africa, Switzerland and Israel. In Table 1 we chose to juxtapose two different measurement approaches, cohort and period, first, because of the intrinsic interest in comparing the respective results, and second, in order to illustrate the usefulness and limitations of each type of measure in the context of a broader discussion of demographic trends among the Jewish population.

The percentage of a given cohort ever-married around age 50 provides a definitive criterion for judging how universal marriage was among that cohort. Comparing different cohorts that reached the same age in different years one gains some sense of changes in marriage propensities among the surveyed population over time. The problem with cohort-measures in the study of marriage propensities is that marriage is an event that can be scheduled at different points of a person's lifecycle. The answer as to which proportion of a cohort eventually marries is readily available for adults that have reached relatively mature ages; with regard to younger adults, whose marriage patterns are of particular interest for the attempt to assess ongoing demographic changes, the answer will only be known many years later.

Period measures may provide a partial remedy to this problem, by offering an indication of what would be the final percentage of ever-married under the assumption of indefinite continuation of the age-specific marriage patterns that prevail at a given point in time. Period measures generally show much sharper variation over time than cohort measures; the direction of change, however, tends to be consistent among the two types of measures. Furthermore, if a period measure displays relatively stable levels over a sufficiently extended span of years, the cohort measure will eventually converge towards the same levels. Therefore, the relevance of period measures stands not as much in the actual levels of nuptiality projected, as in the indication of the direction and intensity of changes that may be expected in the eventual levels of nuptiality measured cohort-wise.

In Table 1, an extremely simple and admittedly rough measure of period marriage propensities was obtained by comparing successive observations of the same population at intervals of ten years. Assuming a closed population, the same persons that were observed at a certain date are supposed to reappear ten years later being ten years older. It is thus possible to estimate the percentage of each cohort

that, having reached a given age at a certain date, married during the following ten-year period. Under the further assumption that these age-specific percentages will remain constant over time, we can easily compute the percentage ever-marrying of a hypothetical cohort behaving at each age under the conditions of that particular ten-year period. This is referred to as the `Period Percent Ever Married (PEM)' in Table 1.

Findings

In most of the countries observed in Table 1, the actual percentages of Jewish adults who were ever-married around age 50 used to be rather high - often higher than among comparable non-Jewish populations. These cohort percentages did not change much over the last decades, thus lending the impression that Jewish universal marriage - typical of the past - continued to prevail in the present. Slight declines followed by increases in the proportion eventually ever-marrying suggested that some compensatory mechanism related to age at marriage operated within flexible but generally high Jewish marriage propensities.

In reality, current marriage propensities were undergoing rather significant periodical fluctuations. Changes among the Jewish population generally reflected changes among the total population, though the rhythm of variation was rather sharper among Jews. In North America (see the Canadian data in Table 1), after the low levels of the 1920s and 1930s, a spectacular `marriage boom' took place throughout the 1940s and 1950s. This is reflected by Period PEMs of well over 100 percent. The apparently incongruous, but computationally possible result of more than 100% of persons marrying correctly reflected the postponement of numerous marriages from the years of economic depression and war, and the anticipation of many more marriages that would otherwise have occurred in later years.

TABLE 1. COHORT AND PERIOD MEASURES OF MARRIAGE PROPENSITIES AMONG JEWISH AND TOTAL POPULATIONS - SELECTED PLACES, 1911-1985

Place and indicator of marriage propensity	Year	Jewish population		Total population	
		Males	Females	Males	Females
Canada, Total					
% Ever-married, 45-54	1911	..	..	86.0	88.1
	1921	..	..	86.5	88.8
	1931	97.0	98.6	86.3	89.6
	1941	94.6	97.5	86.3	89.2
	1951	92.8	93.7	87.1	88.7
	1961	93.0	93.5	89.5	90.1
	1971	91.8	95.9	91.1	92.7
	1981	93.7	97.0	92.7	93.6
Period PEM[a]	1911-21	..	..	93.2	95.6
	1921-31	..	..	82.3	83.2
	1931-41	86.7	87.5	87.5	87.2
	1941-51	110.0	123.5	108.8	107.9
	1951-61	92.4	104.4	95.9	103.5
	1961-71	96.7	82.0	98.4	94.0
	1971-81	83.3	80.7	89.5	89.4
United States, Boston					
% Ever-married, 40-49	1965		97		
	1975		94		
	1985		96		
Period PEM[a]	1965-75		83		
	1975-85		74		
South Africa, Total[b]					
% Ever-married, 45-54	1970	92.8	94.5	95.1	94.0
	1980	94.5	95.9	95.4	96.1
Period PEM[a]	1970-80	88.0	81.6	95.7	92.4
Switzerland, Total					
% Ever-married, 45-54	1941	81.8	86.1	86.6	80.3
	1950	81.5	83.5	87.0	80.8
	1960	86.2	87.2	88.2	84.1
	1970	90.9	92.0	90.2	87.4
	1980	92.0	92.5	91.4	90.3
Period PEM[a]	1941-50	105.1	102.9	96.4	93.8
	1950-60	101.3	99.8	99.5	99.0
	1960-70	113.4	97.5	103.4	104.8
	1970-80	89.1	82.5	76.8	74.2
Israel, Total[c]					
% Ever-married, 45-54	1948	95.3	96.0	..	..
	1961	96.8	97.5	95.8	97.7
	1972	96.4	98.0	97.4	97.3
	1983	96.7	97.5	98.4	96.0
Period PEM[a]	1948-61	107.0	105.0	..	..
	1961-72	99.4	85.0	91.3	91.7
	1972-83	90.0	89.0	91.2	79.7

(a) Percent of a hypothetical cohort that would ever marry, assuming the age-specific increases in proportion ever-married during observed period remain constant. Effects of migration and mortality on population composition by marital status were ignored.
(b) Comparison with total white population.
(c) Comparison with Muslim population.

During the 1960s and 1970s, propensities to marry - as reflected by Period PEMs - sharply declined in North America. Among some Jewish populations they became even lower than they had been during the economic depression of the 1930s. As a result, in the United States - for example - the percent of Jews never-married at age 35-44 increased from 3% in the 1960s to 9% in the 1970s - 5 percentage points above the total population level (Goldstein, 1988a). Were the more recent American marriage propensities to continue indefinitely, the proportion of a cohort of Jewish adults ending in final celibacy could become as high as 20-25%. Contrary to their near univarsality of marriage in the past, Jews now tend to marry less than the total population in the respective countries. This is shown by the decline of both cohort data of percent ever-married, and Period PEM estimates.

While a certain time-related parallelism emerges between several Diaspora Jewish populations examined in Table 1, there are also substantial differences in the levels of marriage propensities. For example, over the 1970s Jewish marriage frequencies were noticeably higher in South Africa than in North America. In a number of Western-Central European countries, such as Switzerland, where the proportion of Jews marrying had strongly declined during the interwar and World War II period, the postwar return to greater marriage propensities lasted longer than in North America - well into the 1960s. Sharp declines intervened during the 1970s.

The different pace of change that can be noted in the Period PEMs of men and women in Table 1 - especially among Jewish populations - probably reflect periodical changes in composition of the marriageable population, by sex and age. The principal cause is that fluctuations in birth rates two or three decades before determined a succession of cohorts of variable size. The clear preference in contemporary societies for couples where the groom is somewhat older than the

respective bride determines, on any given year, an unequal supply of potential spouses of each sex. 'Marriage squeezes' have consequently recurred over time. Persons of one sex faced by a larger supply of persons of opposite sex had greater chances for spouse selection, and tended to marry more, and at somewhat younger ages.

Detailed analyses of marriage propensities, by age, indicate that the major single determinant of change in Period PEM was the frequency of marriage among the young adults - females under 25 and males under 30. A few examples of such variation are instructive.

In Canada the percentage of Jews ever-married at age 20-24 varied as follows (Canada, Statistics Canada; Torczyner, 1984):

	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981
Males	10.6	12.2	21.9	19.6	20.3	12.2
Females	25.8	32.0	57.7	62.0	44.9	28.4

In France, among Jews in the Greater Paris area around 1975, significant declines in the percent ever-married were found for the cohorts born, respectively, in 1935-1944 and 1945-1954 and compared at similar stages in the respective lifecycles, at age 20-29 (DellaPergola, 1986):

	Born in Europe		Born in North Africa	
	1935-1944	1945-1954	1935-1944	1945-1954
Males	37	22	46	22
Females	51	27	72	35

One could speculate - and this has indeed been suggested by some analysts (Goldscheider, 1985; Cohen, 1986) - that evidence of the kind produced above only points to postponement of marriage, without any bearing on final marriage propensities among the Jewish population.

More detailed inspection of the so far available evidence does not support this assumption. Indeed, wherever the necessary data are available:

(a) upturns and downturns in nuptiality generally affected all age groups simultaneously during a given period;

(b) the major bulk of marriages continued to occur in the lifespan of a cohort between ages 20 and 30;

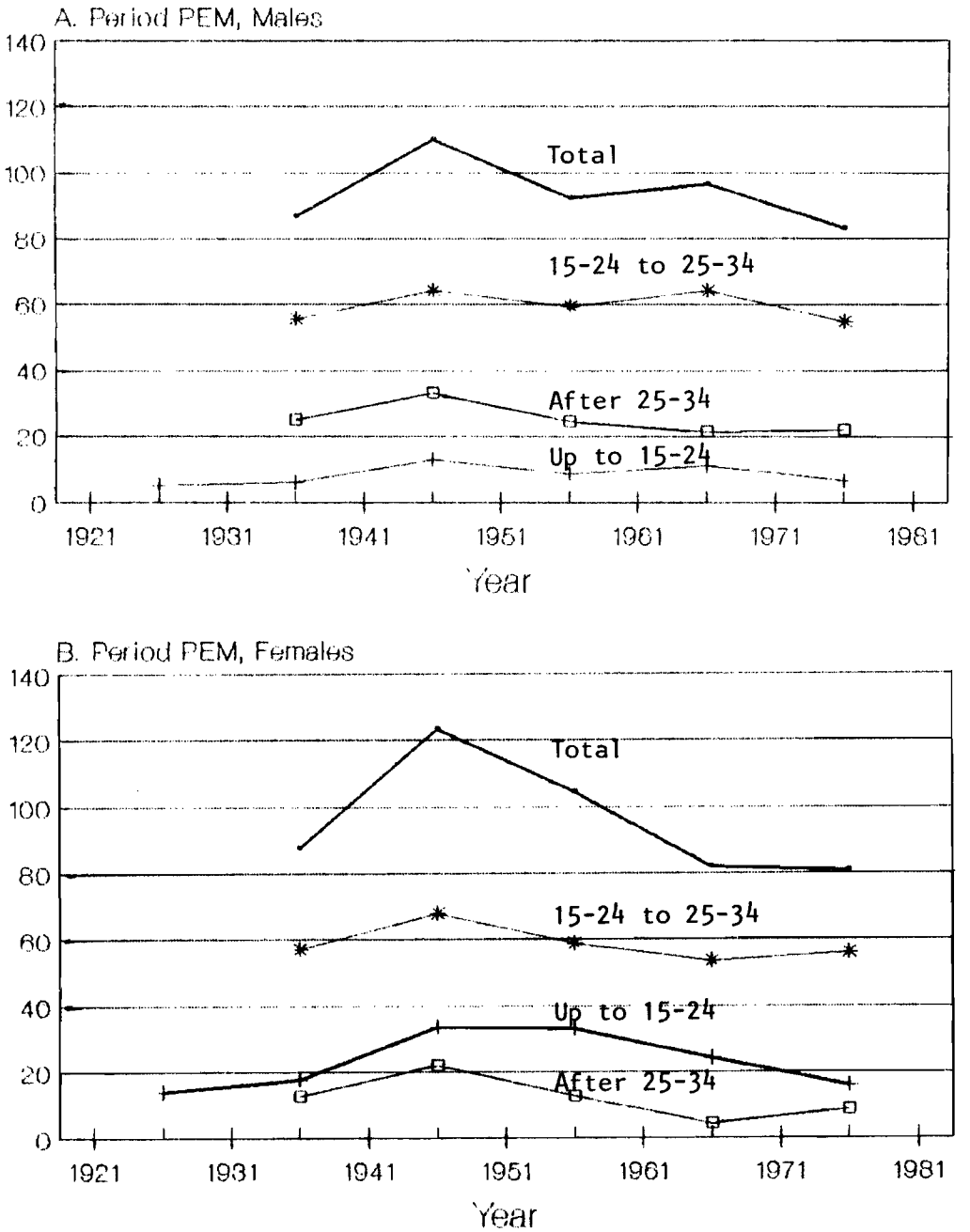
(c) the percent of a cohort of Jewish adults marrying for the first time at relatively older ages during a given ten-year period tended to be comparatively small.

Figure 1 demonstrates this by showing the percent of Canadian Jews entering first marriages in the ten-year interval following each census, by sex and age at marriage. The proportion marrying for the first time after having been censused as single in the 25-34 age-group varied as follows:

	1931-41	1941-51	1951-61	1961-71	1971-81
Males	25.0	33.1	24.4	21.4	21.9
Females	12.7	21.9	12.7	4.2	8.7

Therefore, frequencies of marriage at relatively older ages basically reflect the major periodical changes in marriage propensities for all ages together - much as in the case of younger marriages. The maximum tendency for older marriages indeed corresponds with the historical peak of the 1940s. The data for the 1970s do point to moderate increases in older marriages, but these are far less intense than the previous declines, and in any case insufficient to compensate for the diminished marriages of young adults.

FIGURE 1. PERCENT ENTERING FIRST MARRIAGES DURING TEN-YEAR PERIOD, BY AGE AT MARRIAGE AND SEX - JEWS IN CANADA, 1921-1981



Source: Canada, Statistics Canada, various censuses.

Similar findings obtain for South Africa and Switzerland. The isolated observation we have in the United States for Boston, extending into the mid 1980s, not only does not show any turnabout but points to a sharpening in the previous declining trend in Period PEM. Among the total US population, marriage rates continued to decline reaching the historical minimum during the 1980s. Marriage rates of older age-groups, though increasing minimally, continued to remain far below the levels of earlier decades (United States, National Center for Health Statistics, 1984).

It then appears that increases in mean age at marriage that have been recently recorded in some Jewish and total populations are far less significant than the brusque decline in earlier marriages. In other words, as far as we can document for Jewish communities, the overall avoidance of marriage constitutes in recent years more important a factor than the redistribution of spouses by age, and delay in marriage.

The country where contemporary Jewish marriage propensities appear to be comparatively higher is Israel. A slow-down in marriage frequencies has developed in Israel as well (Sicron, 1987), and this is confirmed by declining Period PEM values. But marriage declines have been milder in Israel than in other developed countries. During the 1970s, Israel's Jewish Period PEMs were higher than those of other Jewish populations, especially among females. Israel may possibly lag several years behind other countries in more general demographic processes. However, conspicuous evidence on trends and variation in marriage frequency and age at marriage, and on the diffusion of family norms makes it more plausible that the Jewish sector of Israeli society still features a measure of demographic distinctiveness (Bachi, 1977). Such distinctiveness, related among other things to the process of absorption and mutual acculturation of large and heterogenous groups of immigrants is not bound to vanish too soon.

TABLE 2. CURRENTLY DIVORCED OR SEPARATED AGED 30-44 PER 100 EVER-MARRIED AMONG JEWISH AND TOTAL POPULATIONS - SELECTED PLACES, 1960-1987

Place	Year	Age group	Jewish population		Total population	
			Males	Females	Males	Females
Canada						
Total	1971	35-44	3.2	3.5	1.9	2.3
	1981	"	6.3		5.1	
United States						
Total	1971	35-44	1.5	3.5	3.9	5.8
	1975-87	30-44	10.4[a]		8.7[b]	11.5[b]
Providence	1963	30-39	2.8	2.2		
	1987	"	3.6	7.4		
Boston	1965	"	1.1			
	1975	30-44	7.0	5.2		
	1985	30-39	10.4			
Los Angeles	1967	"	4.2			
	1979	"	15.0			
Pittsburgh	1975	35-44	11.3	2.7		
Rochester	1980	30-44	6.4			
Minneapolis	1981	35-44	9.8	14.0		
St. Paul	1981	"	6.2	7.1		
Chicago	1981	30-39	11.8			
Denver	1981	"	12.5			
Nashville	1982	"	8.5			
Miami	1982	35-49	17.5			
Milwaukee	1983	30-39	11.1			
Washington	1983	35-44	15.5	9.1		
Baltimore	1985	"	10.0	8.2		
Kansas City	1985	"	13.7			
Worcerster	1986	"	5.6	5.0		
South Africa[c]						
Total	1970	35-44	3.4	5.2	2.9	3.9
	1980	"	5.1	7.9	3.9	5.6
The Netherlands						
Total	1966	35-44	2.6	6.0	1.1	1.6
Switzerland						
Total	1960	35-44	4.0	6.8	2.4	3.9
	1980	"	7.5	7.7	6.6	8.1
France						
Greater Paris						
Total	1972-8	35-44	2.0	1.7	4.4	7.0
Born Europe[d]	1972-8	30-39	4.7	2.6		
Born N. Africa[e]	1972-8	"	3.3	2.6		
Italy						
Rome	1965	30-44	0.7	0.7		
	1985	"	1.6	2.6		
Israel[f]						
Total	1961	35-44	1.4	2.7	0.7	1.4
	1972	"	1.3	2.9	0.4	1.0
	1983	"	2.4	5.3	0.6	1.5

(a) Median values of local survey results reported below.
(b) 1980.
(c) Comparison with total white population.
(d) Including born in France.
(e) Including born in Asia.
(f) Comparison with Muslim population.

Incidentally, changes in marriage propensities are also affecting Israel's Muslim population, as shown for comparison in Table 1. The comparatively low Period PEM for Muslim females between 1972 and 1983 suggests that significant modernization processes are operating in sections of Israeli society that previously featured very traditional family norms and behaviors. This too may have, in the longer run, significant effects on the demographic development of Israeli population in general, and on Jewish population trends in particular.

Divorce

In the past, systematic evidence tied Jews to stronger familism, expressed both by lower rates of divorce, and higher rates of remarriage (see, e.g., Schmelz and DellaPergola, 1983). Over the last several years, substantial increases in the proportion of marriages ending in divorce have occurred in virtually every country, among both total and Jewish populations. Divorce levels among Jews have reflected the great variation that exists between the total populations of different countries. In some Jewish communities - Great Britain is a well documented example (Waterman and Kosmin, 1986) - the recent growth of divorce rates has been slower than among the total population. Elsewhere, such as in France (Bensimon and DellaPergola, 1984) and, until the 1970s, North America (Schmelz and DellaPergola, 1983), the increase of Jewish divorce frequencies was rapid but occurred at levels still substantially lower than among the total population. Some of the more recent evidence however, points to a change of direction.

Both Canada census and US survey data indicate that at the onset of the 1980s, the percentage of persons currently divorced at age 35-44 per 100 ever-married was moderately higher among Jews than among the total population (see Table 2). The rate of growth of these percentages of currently divorced Jes - two to four times in North

America over the 1970s - is worth of attention. Similar trends, at lower levels, appear in some smaller West European communities. In North America itself the rate of eventual divorce has been estimated at over 50% for recent marriage cohorts among the US total population (Thornton and Rodgers, 1983). Among American Jews during the 1980s, the risk of divorce probably ranged between one half and two thirds of the national average.

Wide internal differences persisted in the divorce frequencies of Jews in different local communities. The more traditional sections of the Jewish population, though witnessing increasing divorce rates, still featured predominant family stability. On the other hand, sections of the Jewish population with the weakest ethnic identification - as shown by at least partial local survey evidence (e.g., in New York: Brodbar-Nemzer, 1986) - tended to rejoin the divorce rates of the majority of Americans.

Rather high percentages of currently divorced adults at the age of parenthood that have been found in several Jewish population studies, suggest that not only divorces have increased; the propensity to remarry among divorcees has been affected itself by the general slow-down in nuptiality. The data on divorce available for Jews in the Diaspora, although rather fragmentary, indicate the developing of a significant social issue with wide implications for Jewish population structure. They also seem to confirm the persistence of some tie between Jewish identity and the distinctiveness of Jewish family patterns.

In Israel, by contrast, Jewish divorce rates have been comparatively low and stable over time. Based on a 20 year follow-up of marriage cohorts, the risk of divorce is about 12% among Jewish couples in Israel (Israel, Central Bureau of Statistics, 1988).

Out-Marriage and Conversion

The choice of partner is a central aspect of Jewish marriage trends. It has come to the forefront of public attention in view of the growing number of Jews who marry with non-Jews. The issue of out-marriage rises many questions related to Jewish demographic as well as cultural continuity. Choice of partner actually represents a sensitive indicator of vastly more complex sociodemographic processes. The range of potential spouses and the modalities of decision-making in spouse selection reflect changing patterns of modernization, geographical and socioeconomic structure and mobility, and acculturation, which in turn involve not only the individuals directly concerned, but also far more extended family and community networks.

Generally speaking, the circle of potential mates for Jews seeking family formation has tended to expand, from the fold of extended family, to the Jewish community at large - first on a local basis, later on within an enlarged regional framework, finally encompassing growing sectors of relevant non-Jewish populations. Initiative on choice of spouse gradually moved from intermediary family and community agents, to the concerned individuals themselves (Katz, 1959).

Levels of out-marriage were already substantial among Jews in some West and Central European countries at the turn of the century (DellaPergola, 1972). However, the major worldwide increase has occurred since the 1960s, and has involved countries where Jewish heterogamy had previously been quite rare. Table 3 provides a tentative synopsis of recent levels of mixed marriage worldwide. In this table and in the subsequent discussion we follow the convention by which mixed marriages are those in which the non-Jewish spouse did not convert to Judaism; conversionary marriages are those where

TABLE 3. PERCENT OF MIXED MARRIAGES OUT OF ALL MARRIAGES WITH AT LEAST ONE JEWISH SPOUSE (ROUGH ESTIMATES)[a] - WORLD JEWRY, 1980-1986

Country	% Mixed marriages		Jewish population 1986	
	Per 100 new Jewish spouses	Per 100 new couples with at least one Jewish spouse	Number (thousands)	Percent of World Jewry
Total world			12,964	100.0
West Germany[1], East Europe (excl. USSR)[4]	65-74	79-85	135	1.0
Scandinavia[3]	55-64	71-78	24	0.2
Switzerland[1], Austria[1], Netherlands[3]	45-54	62-70	51	0.4
Italy[2], France[2], Belgium[4]	36-44	53-61	594	4.6
Argentina[3], Brazil[2], Other Latin America (excl. Mexico, Peru)[4], USSR[3]	33-35	49-52	1,921	14.8
United States[2]	28-32	44-48	5,700	44.0
Canada[1], United Kingdom[4], Other Europe[4], Mexico[4], Peru[2], Australia[3], New Zealand[4]	25-27	40-43	796	6.1
South Africa[3], Zimbabwe[4]	15-24	26-39	116	0.9
North Africa[4], Asia (excl. Israel)[4]	5-14	10-25	50	0.4
Other Africa[4]	1-5	2-10	14	0.1
Israel[1]	0-1	0-2	3,563	27.5

(a) Recent marriages between a Jewish spouse and a non-Jewish-born spouse not converted to Judaism. Data quality is rated as follows:

[1]. Recent and reliable statistical data;
[2]. Partial or less recent data of sufficient quality;
[3]. Rather out-dated or very incomplete data;
[4]. Conjectural.

conversion took place; and out-marriages are the sum of both previous categories.

The available data and estimates reveal a wide range of behaviors among Jews in different countries. Great quality variation, and the conjectural character of some of these estimates should be particularly emphasized in this event. Of the total of Diaspora Jews, 81% live in countries where the percentages of mixed marriage are estimated to range between 28% and 35%; 9% live in countries where the percentages of mixed marriage are higher, and 10% live in countries in which the percentages are lower. On the strength of these figures, it can be estimated that an average 30% to 33% of current Jewish grooms and brides in the Diaspora marry a non-Jewish spouse who does not convert to Judaism. This corresponds to about 45 to 50% of all new households involving a Jewish partner. Only in Israel are the percentages of mixed marriage quite negligible.

Interestingly, great differences in geographical region, political regime and socioeconomic structure of countries do not seem to have equally significant effects on rates of mixed marriage among the respective Jewish minority populations. A case in point are the Jews in the Soviet Union, whose rates of mixed marriage have been estimated (Altshuler, 1987) to be at levels quite similar to those known for several Western countries. It should be stressed, on the other hand, that great internal variation in rates of mixed marriage may prevail within the same country. In the United States, e.g., during the early 1980s the current rate of mixed marriage was estimated to be as low as 3% in the more intensely Jewish boroughs of New York, and as high as 60% in some recently expanding communities in the Western region (Ritterband and Cohen, 1984; Phillips, 1985; DellaPergola and Schmelz, 1989).

TABLE 4. PERCENTAGES OF JEWS OUT-MARRYING AND OF NON-JEWISH BORN SPOUSES CONVERTING TO JUDAISM - SELECTED PLACES, 1900-1987

Place	Year	% married with spouse:		% converted to Judaism out of all non-Jewish born spouses[a]
		Born non-Jewish	Currently non-Jewish	
United States				
Total by year of marriage[b]:	1970-71			
1900-1924		2	1	18
1925-1934		3	3	15
1935-1944		5	5	7
1945-1954		6	5	8
1955-1964		9	7	19
1965-1971		29	22	23
Selected cities by age at survey[c]:	1972-87			
30-39		23-27	18-22	19-23
18-29		35-39	28-32	16-20
Brazil				
Sao Paolo	1981[d]	40	29	21

(a) Including passages to Judaism without a formal conversion procedure.
(b) Retrospective National Jewish Population Study (NJPS) data.
(c) Median values in the observed range of local survey results.
(d) Year of marriage.

Table 4 reconstructs the trend in out-marriage and mixed marriage in the United States since the beginning of the century. Revised data from the 1970/71 National Jewish Population Study (NJPS) that constitute the basis for these estimates (Schmelz and DellaPergola, 1983) had been criticised by some analysts - especially the sharp discontinuity apparent for the mid 1960s. While no reliable US national estimate has become available since the NJPS, the wealth of local survey data that have accumulated over the last 15 years has fully confirmed the national estimates for marriages performed during the 1960s and 1970s, while showing continued increases in the frequency of mixed marriages throughout the 1980s (Schmelz and DellaPergola, 1988).

In the US the proportion of non-Jewish spouses who converted to Judaism - out of a pool of out-marriages that was in any event very small - declined until the 1930s. Later on, and until the 1960s, propensities to convert to Judaism increased, along with a substantial growth in out-marriages. More recent findings point again to declining percentages of converts. Similar levels of about one fifth of non-Jewish born spouses obtain for recent marriages in the US and Brazil (DellaPergola and Schmelz, 1989; Federacao Israelita do Estado de Sao Paulo, 1983). But, at least for the United States, there is some evidence that the balance of accessions to and secessions from the Jewish group, connected with marriage or for other reasons, may be significantly negative for the Jewish population (Smith, 1984).

In certain Western countries, marriages celebrated by the Reform or Liberal denominations include comparatively higher percentages of converts than marriages with an Orthodox ceremony. In Britain, the proportion of Reform and Liberal out of total Synagogue marriages in the 1980s was 21-22% (Waterman and Kosmin, 1986). In Greater Paris in the early 1980s, about 7% of Synagogue marriages were celebrated by the Union Liberale (Bensimon and DellaPergola, 1984). These figures

TABLE 5. INDEX OF CONVENTIONAL JEWISH FAMILY: PERCENT CURRENTLY MARRIED AND PERCENT WITH JEWISH SPOUSE AMONG JEWS AGED 30-44 - SELECTED PLACES, 1960-1987

Place	Year	Total Jewish population	Age group	% currently married	With now Jewish spouse per 100 married	% of age group in conventional Jewish family
Canada						
Total	1971	297,000	35-44	90	91	82
	1981	310,000	"	82	81	66
United States						
Total	1971	5,600,000	35-44	95	91	87
	1979-87[a]	5,700,000	30-44	79	80	63
Providence	1963	19,500	30-39	92	99	91
	1987	17,000	"	79	91	71
Boston	1965	208,000	"	88	96	84
	1975	195,000	"	88	90	79
	1985	228,000	"	69	74	51
Los Angeles	1967	440,000	"	90	93	84
	1979	503,000	"	71	87	62
Kansas City	1976	20,000	"	86	97	83
	1985	19,000	"	82	70	57
Rochester	1980	19,600	"	87	88	77
Chicago	1981	248,000	"	75	82	62
Minneapolis	1981	23,000	35-44	82	81	67
St. Paul	1981	7,500	"	88	91	80
Denver	1981	47,000	30-39	74	68	50
Miami	1982	253,000	"	76	83	63
Milwaukee	1983	24,000	"	77	80	62
Washington	1983	157,000	35-44	80	79	63
Philadelphia	1983-4	240,000	30-39	86	77	66
Baltimore	1985	92,000	35-44	85	77	65
Worcester	1986	12,000	"	90	71	64
South Africa						
Total	1970	118,200	35-44	89	96[b]	85
	1980	118,000	30-44	83	..	..
The Netherlands						
Total	1966	29,600	30-39	81	55	44
Switzerland						
Total	1960	20,000	35-44	79	82	65
	1980	18,300	"	82	78	64
France						
Greater Paris[c]						
Total	1960s		30-39	90	89	80
	1970s	270,000	"	83	73	60
Born Europe[d]	1960s		"	89	86	77
	1970s	153,000	"	79	62	49
Born N.Afr.[e]	1960s		"	90	83	84
	1970s	117,000	"	85	84	71
Italy						
Total	1965	30,600	35-44	84	80	67
Rome	1965	12,900	30-44	89	88	78
	1985	13,800	"	83	75	62
20 Small Comm.[f]	1965	9,200	35-44	77	57	44
Turin	1986	1,200	"	54	63	34
Israel						
Total	1961	1,932,400	30-44	91	100	91
	1972	2,686,700	30-39	91	99	90
	1983	3,350,000	30-39	88	99	87

(a) Median values of local survey results reported below.
(b) Rough estimate: average of 'heads of households' and 'children of heads of households'.
(c) Retrospective cohort data from surveys conducted in 1972-78. Figures on Jewish population include children born in France from parents of indicated birthplace.
(d) Including born in France. (e) Including born in Asia. (f) Including Turin.

might be taken as extremely rough proxies of the order of magnitude of conversion related to marriage in those communities. Based on such assumption, conversion to Judaism is less frequent in Europe than in America.

The relevance of conversion lies in its connection with the substantial differences in the degree of Jewish identity of conversionary and mixed households, respectively. The Jewishness of the former, as measured by a variety of attitudinal and behavioral indicators does not differ much from the average of in-married households; mixed marriages, on the other hand, display much weaker patterns of Jewishness (Mayer, 1987).

Attitudes to out-marriage, too, may variate sharply between different communities and may underlie differences in actual out-marriage rates. For example, around 1975, 95% of Jewish heads of households in South Africa held a very or somewhat negative attitude towards intermarriage of their children, versus 58% in one US Jewish community (Boston) (DellaPergola and Buxbaum, 1978; Goldscheider, 1985). Overall, the tendency has been to more acceptance of the out-married couples within the fold of the community than was the case in the past - when mixed marriages were less frequent. But a number of studies point to chain effects in the diffusion of mixed marriages: less than half the children of mixed marriages are raised as Jews; children of mixed couples out-marry themselves at a far greater rate than children of in-marriages; and very few out-married parents who are themselves the children of out-marriages raise their own children as Jews (DellaPergola, 1983b; 1988b).

Conventional and Other Jewish Families

The combined demographic effects on Jewish family structure of singlehood, divorce and separation, and mixed marriage can be assessed

TABLE 6. INDEX OF CONVENTIONAL JEWISH FAMILY: COMPONENTS OF CHANGE[a] - SELECTED PLACES, 1960-1987

Place	Years	Age group	Absolute % change in ICJF	Relative % change in ICJF[b]		
				Total	Due to current marriage	Due to mixed marriage
Canada						
Total	1971-1981	35-44	-16	-20	-9	-11
United States						
Total	1971-1987	30-44	-24	-28	-17	-11
Providence	1963-1987	30-39	-20	-22	-14	- 8
Boston	1965-1985	"	-33	-39	-22	-17
Los Angeles	1967-1979	"	-22	-26	-21	- 5
Kansas City	1976-1985	"	-26	-31	- 5	-26
Switzerland						
Total	1960-1980	35-44	- 1	- 1	+ 4	- 5
France[c]						
Greater Paris[c]						
Total	1960s-1970s	30-39	-20	-25	- 8	-17
Born Europe	1960s-1970s	"	-28	-36	-11	-25
Born N.Afr.	1960s-1970s	"	-13	-15	- 6	- 9
Italy						
Rome	1965-1985	30-44	-16	-21	-10	-11
Turin	1965-1986	35-44	-10	-23	-30	+ 7
Israel						
Total	1961-1983	30-44	- 4	- 4	- 3	- 1

(a) Respective effects of change in percent currently married, and in percent with now Jewish spouse per 100 married, on total change in Index of Conventional Jewish Family.
(b) Relative to value of the Index at the earlier date.
(c) See notes (c), (d), (e) to Table 5.

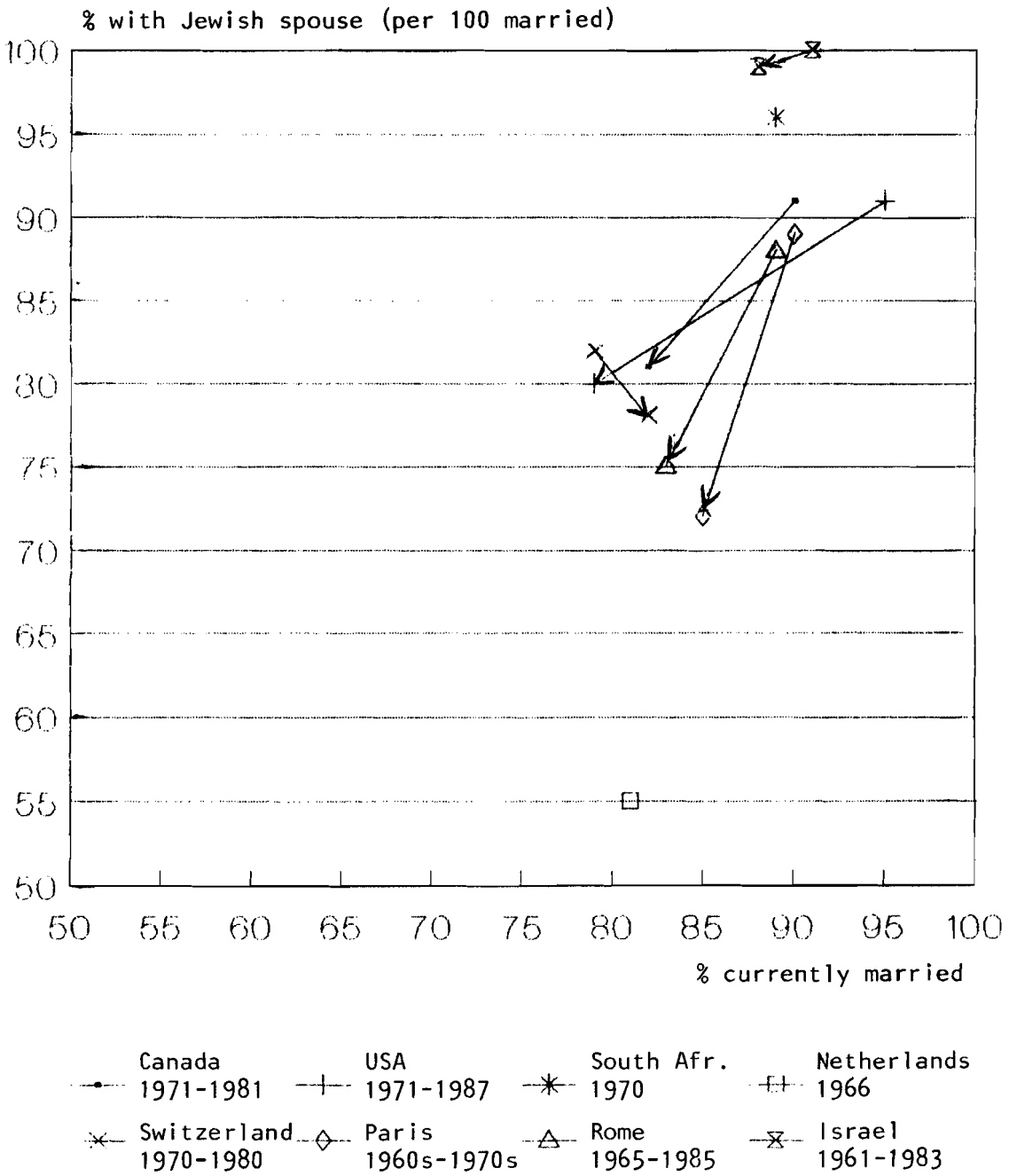
through an Index of Conventional Jewish Family (ICJF). This indicates the proportion of an adult age-cohort currently married and with a Jewish partner (see Table 5).

Historically - and still currently in Israel - the ICJF tended to be in the range of 90% or above. During the 1970s and early 1980s it rapidly declined in virtually all Diaspora communities, regardless of geographic location and size of Jewish population, or initial level of the Index itself. In several large communities, such as the United States, Canada, and France, the ICJF passed from over 80% in the late 1960s and early 1970s, to just over 60% in the early-mid-1980s. In some smaller European Jewish communities, the Index already was in the range of 60-70% during the 1960s, and subsequently declined to levels around 40% or below.

Changes and variation in ICJF are particularly worth attention in the United States, where the size of the Jewish population, and underlying cultural pluralism could be construed as conducive to greater cohesiveness of the Jewish community than in other countries. The similarity of recent family trends among Jews in the United States and elsewhere in the Diaspora seems to contradict this widespread assumption of North American uniqueness. In France, where substantial numbers of Jewish immigrants from North Africa arrived during the 1950s and early 1960s, the immigrants' family patterns rapidly adapted to the models of the Jewish population born in France or born elsewehere in Europe and long established in the country. The French experience, too, points to a basic pattern of sociodemographic convergence among Jewish populations in the Diaspora.

On the other hand, marriage trends in Israel do stand out for their uniqueness in the context of world Jewish populations. The higher contemporary ICJF of Jews in Israel results from a combination of

FIGURE 2. INDEX OF CONVENTIONAL JEWISH FAMILY: PERCENT CURRENTLY MARRIED AND PERCENT WITH JEWISH SPOUSE AMONG JEWS AGED 30-44 - SELECTED PLACES, 1960-1987



Source: Table 5.

comparatively high marriage propensities and marital stability, along with a near absence of mixed marriage.

Table 6 and Figure 2 illustrate how the respective effects of changes in current marital status and in the religious identity of marital partner have affected the ICJF during the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s. The question here is which of the two components of change - diminished diffusion of stable married couples or the increased incidence of mixed marriages - contributed more to the general recent decline in conventional Jewish familism. No clear predominance of one component over the other emerges. The conclusion seems to be that the different factors of transformation in conventional Jewish family patterns have operated in similar directions, more or less independently and at one and the same time. Such a conclusion is consistent with previous analyses of periodical changes in Jewish family formation that have also taken into account trends in marital fertility (DellaPergola, 1980; Kosmin, 1982).

Discussion

This paper has dwelt mainly upon the description of selected aspects of recent Jewish marriage trends, without entering much into the discussion of their sociodemographic and sociocultural implications.

Demographically, the data examined consistently point to declines in contemporary Jewish nuptiality. It should be stressed again that conclusions drawn from period measures can only be provisional. But, based on the available evidence, it seems most likely that future percentages of definitive singlehood connected with non-marriage or with marriage disruption will be higher among Jewish populations than those observed in the past - unless a dramatic reversal in the present trends occurs.

The North American experience of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, outlined above, actually indicates how a prolonged trend toward low nuptiality can be dramatically reversed. We should, however, carefully consider under which conditions the postwar increases took place:

(a) the intense economic expansion connected with a world war and especially with the spectacular growth in the postwar period;

(b) the favorable position of relatively small cohorts in a labor market eager for manpower and ready to offer attractive wages;

(c) the then still persisting prevalence of familistic norms and traditional sex roles in society.

Of this unique combination of circumstances, only the second one is likely to materialize again in the foreseeable future, when the reduced cohorts born since the 1960s will constitute the backbone of the labor force in most western countries (Easterlin, 1980). As to the other two factors, we might observe that, fortunately, no traumatic event such as World War II and its socioeconomic implications is in sight. At the same time, tremendous changes have taken place in the position of women in society - especially their growing participation and successful role in economic life. Conflicts between the different aims of career and family gratification have grown sharper over the last years. This is especially true among a highly educated population, like the Jews, in which the economic returns of prolonged training may be expected to be greater (Chiswick, 1988).

More general changes in family norms are reflected in a greater diversity of living arrangements compared to the past, including more tolerant attitudes on cohabitation of young adults and greater freedom of sex mores. These processes, which mostly compete with traditional family formation, have probably not yet run their full course

(Westoff, 1986). Fragmentary evidence that is available would indicate that the Jews are among the forerunners of these recent social changes (Goldscheider and Goldscheider, 1987), as much as the Jews anticipated the major demographic transitions in the past (Bachi, 1976; DellaPergola, 1983a; Livi Bacci, 1986). Their resulting current marriage patterns, therefore, are not surprising.

The concept of `marriage postponement' is probably more appropriate when referred to attitudes to marriage rather than to the taking place of actual marriages. Marriage is still being considered as an appropriate personal goal by the vast majority of young adults - among Jews even more than among non-Jews (Goldscheider and Goldscheider, 1985). If the current low nuptiality and increased divortiality is conducive to a rapid growth in the pool of the currently single, constant marriage (or remarriage) propensities, reflecting constant attitudes, would foretell more marriages in the future. But with the passing of time and growing older, a person's actual probability to marry, and perhaps also some of the incentives to do so, seem to decline. While the present demographic changes probably reflect changing norms and attitudes on marriage, the latter may in turn be deeply affected by the changing demographic behaviors, thus reinforcing the main thrust of contemporary marriage trends (Bumpass, 1982; 1987).

A similar consideration applies to the trends affecting the choice of spouse. The rapid diffusion of heterogamy has been accompanied by greater acceptance of out-marriages on the part of Jewish communities in the Diaspora. At the same time, it can be quite reasonably expected that greater legitimation of current out-marriages goes hand in hand with further increases in out-marriage and with diminished pressure on the non-Jewish spouses to convert to Judaism in the future.

A number of more general conclusions that can be singled out in this cross-regional review are suggested for further discussion.

First, as has repeatedly been stressed (e.g., Schmelz, 1989; Goldstein, 1988b), and as our own paper clearly confirms, the study of Jewish population is still plagued by a substantial dearth of systematic sources of data, and by the fragmentariety and very uneven quality of those that do exist. Under the present circumstances, the analyst is more often forced to choose a certain line of investigation by the sources he has at his disposal, rather than chosing himself the line that would be optimal in the study of a certain topic. This calls for a continuing and systematic effort toward expanding and improving our factual bases of knowledge on demography of the Jews (ISAC, 1989).

Second, demographic features that have emerged among the Jewish population in recent years should be placed into an appropriate time perspective, reaching back to the postwar period and even before. Again because of the limited sources that we have at our disposal, we often risk seeing the contemporary scene in a somewhat static way. This especially applies when demographic patterns are judged on the basis of sporadic, localistic survey data. Given the nature of demographic processes to unfold over time, often in the long term, great attention should be paid to the dynamic aspects of the direction, rhythm of change and diffusion patterns in a given trend. Such emphasis should not fall short of the one often put on the description and interpretation of the current results of the trend itself. Trying to incorporate in our demographic analyses the time-related roots of present events, together with a broad geographical comparativistic perspective will improve our ability to offer relevant guidelines toward understanding the present, and projecting the reasonably near future.

Third, beyond mere description of current population features, we need a comprehensive interpretative framework. Such framework should incorporate sociocultural, socioeconomic and demographic factors, and should relate both to those variables and processes which are unique to the community under investigation (the Jewish group) and to those which are shared by such community with the population and society at large of which it is a part. It is now evident that contemporary Jewish demography cannot be fully appreciated without adequate consideration of trends among the general population of countries where major Jewish communities are located, along with due understanding of the demographic specificity of Jews in the past and of its determinants.

The experience of the last decades indicates that general, global transformations of society constitute a major determinant of changes occurring within the Jewish population. Basic demographic co-variation and convergence among different sub-populations, including the Jews, is a notable feature of contemporary societies, in spite of the different levels and patterns displayed by each specific group. In particular, the major societal forces at work have had very pervasive effects with respect to a variety of family processes (Westoff, 1978; Espenshade, 1985; Roussel, 1986). In the context of Jewish populations (with the possible exception of Israel), they have induced what can be described as the weakening and decline of conventional Jewish marriage patterns.

The correlate of decline in conventional Jewish families is an expanding proportion of alternative household types, especially never-married or formerly married singles, one-parent households, and households part of whose members are not Jewish. These recent changes in Jewish family formation and composition have far reaching implications for Jewish population structure and for prospective population trends. They also impinge on Jewish community service

delivery and planning. Attitudes, needs and relational networks of each of these different alternative household types are likely to differ from those of conventional Jewish families. The possible modes of participation in the fabric of Jewish community activities on the part of members of different types of family should be more deeply appraised in order to better understand how the interplay of purely demographic variables with sociocultural factors affects the patterns of continuity and change of Jewish population.

Consideration of the earlier demographic characteristics of Jewish groups and of the influence of Jewish cultural determinants upon them, is a necessary analytical step toward sharpening our assessment of the recent transformations. Understanding the ongoing changes is essential in any attempt to assess the possibilities that exist and the approaches that may be developed to strengthen the family and to promote continuity of the Jewish community.

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