

Jews in the United States: Perspectives from Demography

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AT A TIME WHEN THE demographic, social, and perhaps even economic structure of the American Jewish community is undergoing rapid change, there is a crucial need for a continuous monitoring of the situation and an assessment of its implications for the future. Changes in size, composition, and distribution, as well as in the patterns and levels of births and deaths, have tremendous significance on both the local and national levels. Knowledge of demographic factors is clearly essential for purposes of planning whether a community should provide certain services, where facilities should be located, how they should be staffed, and who should bear the funding burden. Moreover, the demographic structure of the Jewish community greatly affects its social, cultural, and religious viability, whether this is judged by the ability to support an educational system, to organize religious life, or to provide sufficient density of population to insure a sense of community. Because the socio-demographic structure of the Jewish community, like that of the larger American community, is both a product and a cause of change, we clearly need to have current data available. Unfortunately, however, such data are often lacking.¹

The absence of a question on religion in the United States decennial census precludes tapping the wealth of information that would otherwise be available from that source on the religious characteristics of local populations. The need for comprehensive data on religious identification is indicated by the fact that perhaps the best single source of information available on the size and composition of Jews and other religious groups remains that collected by the Bureau of the Census in the 1957 Current

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¹An excellent review of the varied efforts undertaken between 1818 and 1977 to gather and assess statistics on the American Jewish community appears in Jack Diamond, "A Reader in the Demography of American Jews," *AJYB*, Vol. 77, 1977, pp. 251–317.

Population Survey.^{1a} Because answers were voluntary, the survey was able to include a question on religion. But 1957 is long past, and much has happened to the American population and to American Jewry since then. The 1957 data, therefore, relatively rich though they are, can serve only as a bench mark against which changes can be measured, rather than as an indication of the current situation. Unfortunately, we have few new sets of comprehensive data.

The National Jewish Population Study (NJPS) was an important and promising attempt to conduct a nationwide survey representative of the United States Jewish population. As a report in the 1973 AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK (AJYB) indicates: "The study, sponsored by the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, now has completed data collection and other tasks prerequisite to analysis, and constitutes a repository of information that will require 'mining' and interpretation for many years to come."² The NJPS remains largely just that—to date only a few published reports on the number and basic characteristics of the Jewish population have appeared. This overview will make use of the limited information that is available, but in the absence of a comprehensive evaluation of the NJPS data, such information must be used with caution.

Other nationwide demographic statistics containing information on religious identification are available from various surveys undertaken by public opinion polls and other organizations.³ Some of these surveys have been used to gain insights on American Jewish fertility,⁴ but because they include a very small number of Jews, detailed analysis for general purposes is greatly restricted.

Aside from the 1957 Current Population Survey and the data from the NJPS, locally sponsored community surveys still provide the best sets of data on the characteristics of American Jews. These studies differ considerably in quality, depending in particular on the manner in which the sample populations were selected, but also on the quality of the interviewers, the response rates, and the sophistication of the analyses. Since some of the

^{1a}U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Religion Reported by the Civilian Population of the United States, March 1957," *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 79, 1958.

²Fred Massarik and Alvin Chenkin, "United States National Jewish Population Study: A First Report," AJYB, Vol. 74, 1973, p. 264.

³As, for example, the annual General Social Survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Corporation (NORC).

⁴Ronald Freedman, Pascal K. Whelpton, and Arthur A. Campbell, *Family Planning, Sterility, and Population Growth* (New York, 1959); Norman B. Ryder and Charles F. Westoff, *Reproduction in the United States, 1965* (Princeton, 1971); Charles F. Westoff, Robert Potter, Jr., and Philip Sagi, *The Third Child* (Princeton, 1963); Charles F. Westoff, Robert Potter, Jr., Philip Sagi, and Eliot Mishler, *Family Growth in Metropolitan America* (Princeton, 1961); Pascal K. Whelpton, Arthur A. Campbell, and John E. Patterson, *Fertility and Family Planning in the United States* (Princeton, 1966).

surveys rely exclusively on lists of families available to the local federations, serious doubts are raised about the representativeness of the samples covered; they are usually strongly biased in favor of individuals and families who contribute to fund-raising efforts. In some communities, the federations have made concerted efforts before undertaking surveys to insure coverage of donors and non-donors, as well as of both affiliated and non-affiliated families. The success of such attempts varies both with community size and with the ease of identifying non-affiliated households. In the limited instances where these efforts have been successful, the resulting samples provide a good basis for studying the entire population; in other cases, the findings about the extent and nature of Jewish identification, intermarriage, and demographic characteristics and behavior are probably seriously biased.

Beyond these concerns the findings from community surveys must be used with great caution for generalizing to the national community, since other considerations affect how representative the local sample will be for such broader purposes. Most of the surveys conducted in local communities have been for moderate-sized Jewish populations of 25,000 or less; Boston, Los Angeles, Washington, Detroit, Baltimore, and San Francisco are exceptions. Legitimate questions must be raised about the extent to which findings based on moderate-sized communities are typical of the total American Jewish population. Yet, these studies appear to display impressively similar patterns for the varied locations that have been surveyed.⁵ Variations can generally be explained by the nature of the communities themselves, that is, whether they are older communities or newer suburban areas, and in which region of the country they are located. The relatively high degree of homogeneity that characterizes the patterns of these communities suggests that the underlying demographic profile of American Jewry as a whole probably does not deviate significantly from that depicted by already existing sources, incomplete as they are. The fact that the findings which are available to date from the NJPS also conform to the general patterns, provides some additional basis for confidence in both the community studies and in the NJPS itself.

In undertaking this review, the focus, within the limits of available information, will be on the major areas of concern to demographers—size, composition, distribution, and the components of change (fertility, mortality, and migration). The presentation would not be complete, however, without some attention to intermarriage. Throughout the discussion, the implications of the current situation for future patterns of growth and identification will be explored.

⁵Sidney Goldstein, "American Jewry, 1970: A Demographic Profile," *AJYB*, Vol. 72, 1971, pp. 17-19.

POPULATION GROWTH

At no time in American history has there been a complete enumeration of the nation's Jewish population. Whether referring to the population in 1790 or in the 1970's, the statistic is an estimate, and therefore subject to question. For example, in 1972 the AJYB⁶ reported a total Jewish population of 6,115,320, while in 1974 it cited a considerably lower figure of 5,732,000. The drop reflected the findings of the NJPS, and particularly the reassessment of Greater New York's population, which had been reported by the AJYB at 2,381,000 between 1962 and 1973, but which was estimated by the NJPS to be only 1,998,000 as of 1971.^{6a} As the latest AJYB stressed, at least two factors continue to make even the most recent estimates problematic—the difficulty in documenting the extent of the shift to the “sun-belt” states, and continuing doubts as to the accuracy of the New York City estimate, which may still be too high.⁷

Even the NJPS estimate of a 5,800,000 total American Jewish population in 1971 needs qualification. The statistic refers to individuals residing in Jewish households, exclusive of the institutional population, and as such includes both Jews and non-Jews. If non-Jews are excluded, again based on information gathered in the NJPS, the total number of Jewish residents in households is 5,370,000. If added to that estimate is an estimated 50,000 Jews in institutions, the total population in 1971 would be 5,420,000, still some half million less (a 10 per cent differential) than the previous estimates cited by the AJYB. This is far too great a range of difference to allow strong confidence in the estimates which have been provided.⁸

A set of annual estimates by Ira Rosenwaik of the American Jewish population for the period 1940 to 1975, based on use of the 1957 Bureau

⁶The U.S. Jewish population estimates which appear in the AJYB are prepared by staff members of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds.

^{6a}Cf., Alvin Chenkin, “Jewish Population in the United States, 1972,” AJYB, Vol. 74, 1973, pp. 307–309, and Alvin Chenkin, “Jewish Population in the United States, 1974,” AJYB, Vol. 76, 1976, pp. 229–236.

⁷Alvin Chenkin and Maynard Miran, “Jewish Population in the United States, 1979,” AJYB, Vol. 80, 1980, p. 159.

⁸Given the nature of the sampling procedures employed in the NJPS and resulting potential biases, the “official” NJPS estimate of the U.S. Jewish population of 5,780,000 is actually the middle of three estimates that range from a low of 5,560,000 to a high of 6,000,000. Each of these statistics has its own standard error, so that the 95 per cent confidence limit for the respective estimates would be

High	6,000,000	±	1,175,000
Medium	5,780,000	±	884,000
Low	5,560,000	±	763,000

The wide range encompassed by these estimates, especially when their sampling errors are taken into account, provides further evidence of the absence of exact statistics describing the Jewish population. See Bernard Lazerwitz, “An Estimate of a Rare Population Group: The U.S. Jewish Population,” *Demography*, August 1978, pp. 389–394.

of the Census estimates, indicates that the U.S. Jewish population in 1970 was 5,550,000—very close to the estimate emanating from the NJPS. Rosenwaike estimated a 1975 population of 5,619,000, only 69,000 greater than in 1970.⁹ This estimate takes account of levels of fertility, mortality, and immigration, but does not incorporate estimates of losses resulting from intermarriage and assimilation. While all estimates are subject to question, the close correspondence between Rosenwaike's 1970 estimate and the NJPS figure, and the small growth since then, point to the strong likelihood that the total population in 1970 was well below the 6 million mark, and that it has remained so. The AJYB estimate that the 1979 Jewish population totaled 5,860,900 conforms to this expectation.¹⁰

The Jewish population of the United States has clearly experienced tremendous growth between the time of the formation of the United States and the 1970's. From a community estimated to number only slightly above 1,000 in 1790, the Jewish population had passed the 1 million mark by the end of the next century. Over three-quarters of that growth occurred, however, in the last two decades of the century, reflecting the onset of massive immigration from Eastern Europe in the 1880's. Between 1881 and 1902 almost 800,000 Jews entered the United States. By the beginning of the 20th century, Jews constituted 1.4 per cent of the total American population (Table 1). Immigration continued to augment the Jewish population even more substantially in the first decades of the 20th century; between 1902 and 1924 over 1.5 million Jews immigrated, and all but a small percentage remained in the United States, in contrast to high return rates among other ethnic groups. By 1927 Jews were estimated to number 4.2 million persons. The fourfold increase in an interval of less than three decades was far greater than the increase of the total population of the United States; during the same interval the American population grew by about only 60 per cent. Reflecting this differential rate of growth, Jews more than doubled their proportion of the total population—from 1.4 per cent in 1900 to 3.6 per cent in 1927.

Thereafter, the imposition of immigration quotas slowed the rate of growth. What is often overlooked, however, is that between 1925 and World War II about 250,000 Jews immigrated to the United States, and that another 320,000 did so between the end of the war and 1975. Despite its reduced volume compared to the 1881–1924 peak period, immigration has therefore continued to be an important component of growth. Without it, the American Jewish population today would be substantially smaller in size, particularly given the low rates of natural increase, losses through

⁹Ira Rosenwaike, "A Synthetic Estimate of American Jewish Population Movement Over the Last Three Decades," paper presented at the Seventh World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, August 1977.

¹⁰Chenkin and Miran, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

intermarriage and assimilation, and a small loss through emigration, especially to Israel and Canada.¹¹ What is interesting is that despite this immigration, only one-half million persons are estimated to have been added overall to the Jewish population between 1927 and 1937, and only one-quarter million more by 1950. Such slow growth, with comparatively minor exception, has persisted to the present, and the Jewish population has increased at a much slower rate than the population as a whole. Whereas the total U.S. population increased by just over three-fourths in the 50 years between 1930 and 1980, the Jewish population grew by about only one-third in the same interval.

Estimates¹² of the net effects of international migration on the growth of the Jewish population in the 1970's suggest that net immigration has contributed about 8,000 persons per year. If estimates of the near-equal number of births and deaths during this period are correct, net immigration may thus have accounted for as much as 60 per cent of the small growth of the American Jewish population between 1970 and 1975. By contrast, in the early 1950's net immigration is estimated to have accounted for only one-fifth of total growth. With the increase in the influx of Russian Jews in the 1970's, amounting to approximately 58,700 persons between 1975 and 1979,¹³ supplemented by what may be a substantial immigration of Israelis, immigration undoubtedly has persisted as the most important component of growth.

Reflecting the long-term reversal in rates of growth between the Jewish and the total population, the proportion of Jews in the total population, after peaking at 3.7 per cent in 1937, has undergone a steady decline to 2.7 per cent in 1979—about the same percentage as around 1910. Given the low Jewish birthrate, the losses sustained through intermarriage and assimilation, and what may well be higher levels of mortality due to the aging of the population, there seems little prospect of a reversal in the slower rates of growth that have come to characterize recent years. If anything, the growth rate is likely to continue to decline, and may even become negative in the not too distant future.

Consideration of the joint impact of the above factors has led to dire predictions about the virtual extinction of the American Jewish population

¹¹Simon Kuznets, "Immigration of Russian Jews to the United States: Background and Structure," *Perspectives in American History*, 1975, pp. 35-124; Jacob Lestchinsky, "Jewish Migrations, 1840-1956," in Louis Finkelstein, (ed.), *The Jews* (New York, 1960), pp. 1536-1596; Calvin Goldscheider, "The Demography of Jewish Americans: Research Findings, Issues, and Challenges," paper presented at Brandeis University Planning Conference for Modern Jewish Studies, Waltham, October 21-24, 1979.

¹²Rosenwaike, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.

¹³Personal communication from HIAS, March 11, 1980. The number includes only those Russian immigrants who were assisted by HIAS.

TABLE 1. JEWISH POPULATION GROWTH, UNITED STATES, 1790-1979

Year	Number	Percent of Total U.S. Population
1790 ^b	1,200	0.03
1818 ^a	3,000	0.03
1826	6,000	0.06
1840	15,000	0.1
1848	50,000	0.2
1880	230,000	0.5
1888	400,000	0.6
1897	938,000	1.3
1900	1,058,000	1.4
1907 ^b	1,777,000	2.0
1917	3,389,000	3.3
1927	4,228,000	3.6
1937	4,771,000	3.7
1950 ^c	5,000,000	3.5
1960	5,531,000	3.1
1970	5,870,000	2.9
1975	5,732,000	2.7
1979	5,860,900	2.7

^aEstimates for 1818-1899 are based on "Jewish Statistics," AJYB, Vol. 1, 1900, p. 623.

^bEstimates for 1790 and 1907-1937 are from Nathan Goldberg, "The Jewish Population in the United States," *The Jewish People, Past and Present*, Vol. 2 (New York, 1955), p. 25.

^cThe 1950-1979 estimates are taken from AJYB, Vols. 70-80, 1969-1980.

within the next 100 years. One forecast suggests that "when the United States celebrates its tricentennial in 2076, the American Jewish community is likely to number no more than 944,000 persons and conceivably as few as 10,420."¹⁴ While this prediction is overly pessimistic, in the absence of a drastic reversal in ongoing patterns, a decline does seem probable; the projections by Lieberman and Weinfeld of a Jewish population of 3-4 million by the end of the 21st century seem much more likely.¹⁵

¹⁴Elihu Bergman, "The American Jewish Population Erosion," *Midstream*, October 1977, p. 9.

¹⁵Samuel S. Lieberman and Morton Weinfeld, "Demographic Trends and Jewish Survival," *Midstream*, November 1978, pp. 9-19.

The decline in relative numbers may not be very significant in view of the fact that Jews have never constituted a numerically large segment of the American population. Despite their small numbers, Jews are generally considered the third *major* religious group in the country. There seems little reason to expect that this situation will change, even should the Jewish percentage of the total population decline further. As long as Jews, both as a group and individually, continue to play significant roles in the cultural, educational, political, and economic life of the country, more important factors than sheer numbers may influence the position of the Jewish community within the total American community. These factors include changes in Jewish geographical concentration, as well as in Jewish representation in selected socioeconomic strata of the population. Only when the change in total numbers is accompanied by significant changes in distribution and composition which are deleterious to the prominent role Jews have played on the American scene will the change in numbers itself take on a new significance.

MORTALITY

Better health and longer life have characterized the Jewish population in the Western world since at least the mid-17th century.¹⁶ Factors contributing to this favorable differential have included the positive effect of religious observance on health conditions; the relatively longer exposure which Jews have had to "civilized" environments and urban settings, resulting in higher levels of immunity against certain contagious diseases; and the higher-than-average socioeconomic status which Jews have enjoyed, permitting them thereby to obtain more and better medical attention, and to live in a better environment. Because of the low mortality levels and the generally good health conditions which have characterized American society in recent years, minimum attention has been paid by Jewish scholars to the mortality experience of the American Jewish population. In part this also reflects the difficulty of obtaining the necessary data in the absence of direct information on religion on death certificates. No study on Jewish mortality levels appears to have been conducted since 1970. The few studies undertaken before 1970 were limited both because of their restriction to a small number of communities, and because they were cross-sectional and did not, therefore, provide trend data that might be useful for projections.

Although the specific findings differ somewhat among communities, the general conclusion seems warranted that as recently as the 1960's some differences existed between Jews and the total white population in age

¹⁶Salo Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*. Vol. II (New York, 1937), p. 169.

specific death rates, life expectancy, and survival patterns—generally more so for males than for females.¹⁷ Jewish age specific death rates were below those of the white population at younger ages, possibly because of a combination of the conditions already outlined which have lowered the susceptibility of Jews to contagious diseases. The particularly lower mortality among Jewish babies under one lends support to this interpretation. Older Jews have a higher mortality than the total white population, which may reflect the possibility that, given the better medical attention they receive at earlier ages and their better ability to survive contagious diseases, more Jews with physically impaired lives survive until later years, when the effects of chronic diseases produce higher death tolls. Data for Providence, R.I., by cause of death, support such an interpretation.¹⁸

Again, it is necessary to use caution in interpreting these data, because of their limited coverage of the American Jewish population, as well as their outdated character. It is especially important to recognize that the cross-sectional character of the data provides no basis for projecting future patterns, particularly about the mortality experience of older persons. In the United States in general, minimal changes in mortality are expected. The fact that relatively small differences already existed between Jews and non-Jews in the 1960's, and that these have most likely diminished still further as the socioeconomic environment of Jews and non-Jews and their utilization of health services have become more similar, probably means that future mortality will be even more similar than that observed here. Certainly, the differences observed for the 1960's are not large enough to account for the overall differences in the rate of natural increase of the Jewish population compared to the total population. At the same time, the aging of the Jewish population means that the number of Jewish deaths is likely to rise. To the extent that this happens, the rate of natural increase is likely to decline in the absence of a corresponding rise in births, all the more so if the birthrate should decline. Given these patterns, whatever differential in natural growth characterizes Jews and non-Jews in the future will be largely attributable to variations in levels of fertility.

FERTILITY

The available evidence clearly indicates that throughout American history Jews have had a lower birthrate than non-Jews. Yet, only in very recent years has lower fertility become an openly discussed concern of the Jewish

¹⁷Goldstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-15.

¹⁸Sidney Goldstein, "Jewish Mortality and Survival Patterns: Providence, Rhode Island, 1962-1964," *Eugenics Quarterly*, March 1966, pp. 48-61.

community. In part, this reflects the fact that Jewish fertility, like that of the larger society, has recently declined to a point where continuation at its current levels would lead to zero population growth (ZPG) or possibly even negative population growth (NPG)—reflecting situations wherein births are either equal to or below the number of deaths, thereby leading to stability or decline in population size in the absence of reenforcement from international migration. For Jews this threat of population decline is particularly serious, since it can be exacerbated by losses resulting from intermarriage and assimilation.

Despite the Biblical injunction to be fruitful and multiply, Jews have had the smallest families of virtually all ethnic and religious groups. As early as the late 19th century, available evidence pointed to a Jewish birthrate which was lower than that of the non-Jewish population; this differential, although narrowing, has persisted to the present.

In the Rhode Island census of 1905, the only state census that obtained information on religion and related it to family size, the average family size of native-born Jewish women was 2.3, compared to an average of 3.2 for native-born Catholics, and 2.5 for native-born Protestants.¹⁹ Studies in the 1930's found Jews to have not only lower fertility, but also higher proportions using contraceptives, planning pregnancies, and relying on more efficient methods to achieve that goal.²⁰ The 1941 Indianapolis fertility study, a milestone in demographic research in the United States, found the fertility of Jews, controlling for age differences, to be 25 per cent lower than that of Protestants, whereas that of Catholics was about 15 per cent higher.²¹

The results of the 1957 population survey conducted by the United States Bureau of the Census also confirmed the lower fertility of Jews.²² The cumulative fertility rate (children ever born) of Jewish women 45 years of age and over was 2.2, compared to 3.1 for Catholic women and 2.8 for Protestant women. Lower fertility also characterized Jewish women at younger ages. Moreover, controlling for area of residence, the fertility rate for Jewish women in urban areas was 14 per cent below that of all urban women.

Beginning in the 1950's, a series of surveys was undertaken to investigate the fertility behavior of the American population. Although Jews

¹⁹Calculated from *Rhode Island Census of 1905*. "Conjugal Conditions, Maternity Tables," Bulletin IV, part one of the annual report for 1907, Table VII, p. 551.

²⁰R.K. Stix and Frank Notestein, *Controlled Fertility* (Baltimore, 1940), p. 29; Raymond Pearl, *The Natural History of Population* (New York, 1939), pp. 241-242.

²¹Pascal K. Whelpton and Clyde V. Kiser, "Differential Fertility Among Native White Couples in Indianapolis," *Social and Psychological Factors Affecting Fertility, I, Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*, July 1943, pp. 226-271.

²²U.S. Bureau of the Census, *op. cit.*

constituted only a small portion of each of the samples in these surveys, the data clearly pointed to lower Jewish fertility. The 1965 Growth of American Families study showed that the average number of children born by that year to women under age 44 was 2.3 for Protestants and 2.8 for Catholics, compared to only 2.1 for Jews.²³ By the end of childbearing, Jews also expected to have a smaller total number of children (2.9) than either Protestants (3.0) or Catholics (3.9). The similarity between the Protestant and Jewish expected averages is particularly noteworthy in view of earlier observed differences, but expectations may not be fully realized. In a 1970 study, Westoff and Ryder found that among women 35–44 years of age, those at the end of the reproduction period, sharp religious differentials existed.²⁴ Restricting the comparison to white women, Catholics averaged 3.6 children compared to only 2.9 for Protestants and 2.1 for Jews—a level equivalent to ZPG. The authors also made a distinction between wanted and unwanted children. Only 3 per cent of the Jewish children were reported as unwanted, by far the lowest percentage for all religious groups—a fact that reflects successful fertility control.

Although focusing on a somewhat different population, and using a follow-up approach to their original sample rather than an independent cross-section of the population in successive rounds of interviews, the Princeton Fertility Studies of 1957 and 1960 reached the same conclusions as those reported by GAF.²⁵ Jews, when compared to Protestants and Catholics, desired fewer children and more successfully planned their pregnancies.

Since the late 1960's, a new set of statistics allows national comparison of the current fertility of Jews and non-Jews.²⁶ The data collected in the National Natality Surveys of 1967, 1968, and 1969 by the National Center for Health Statistics are based on follow-up interviews with samples of mothers of legitimate births reported on birth certificates in those three years. By combining the data from the three years, it was possible to assemble a sample of 167 Jewish women who gave birth during that period; they constituted 2 per cent of the total sample. Omitted are all childless married women, all mothers of illegitimate children, and all women who did not have a child during 1967–1969. The latter restriction means that the respondents are younger than all married women and that they probably average somewhat more children than the total married.

²³Ryder and Westoff, *op. cit.*

²⁴Charles F. Westoff and Norman B. Ryder, *The Contraceptive Revolution* (Princeton, 1977).

²⁵Westoff, Potter, and Sagi, *op. cit.*, p. 89; Westoff, Potter, Sagi, and Mishler, *op. cit.*, pp. 72–92.

²⁶Sidney Goldstein, "Jewish Fertility in Contemporary America," in Paul Ritterband, (ed.), *Modern Jewish Fertility* (Leiden, in press).

Use of these data does have the advantage of allowing assessment of current fertility, whereas most of the surveys focus on cumulative fertility. In conjunction with the estimates of Jewish women by age from the NJPS, a variety of basic fertility measures could be computed; these were, in turn, compared with those of the U.S. white population. It must be stressed that the fertility rates calculated represent only very crude estimates, since they are subject to wide sampling errors. However, even when these sampling errors are taken into account, the evidence clearly documents the low fertility of Jews.

During 1967–1969, the crude birthrate for total U.S. whites was 16.8, but only 9.6 for the Jewish population (middle estimates will be used throughout the discussion). Because the age composition of the Jewish and total population is quite different, a better comparison of Jewish and total fertility can be made if age is controlled. As the data in Table 2 show, with the exception of the 25–29 age group, Jewish fertility is consistently below that of the total white population, and usually substantially so. Probably reflecting the later age of marriage of Jewish women, related in part to their tendency to stay in school longer, the birthrate of Jewish women aged 15–19 is only 7.2 per thousand, compared to 59.9 per thousand for the total white population. This differential narrows in the next age group, but the birthrate remains very low for Jewish women. Because of the delay in marriage and consequent delay in fertility, the age specific fertility rate for Jewish women in the 25–29 year age group is actually slightly above that of the total white population. About half of all Jewish births occur to women aged 25–29, and almost three-quarters of total fertility is completed by age 29. Corresponding percentages for the total white population are only 25 and 63 per cent, respectively. The Jewish fertility rate drops precipitously for women aged 30–34, and continues the decline for higher aged groups.

The cumulative effect of these age differences leads to an estimate of an average of 1,468 children per thousand Jewish women at the end of their reproductive cycle, assuming that the 1967–1969 age specific patterns persisted. This contrasts to 2,388 for the total white group. To the extent that 2.1 is the average number of births per woman required for replacement level, these data make it very clear that, unless there are drastic errors in either the birth data or the base population data, Jewish fertility levels were already below replacement during the early 1960's, whereas those for the total whites in those years were still above replacement level. The tremendous differential between the two, approaching the ratio of 2 to 1, is substantial enough to confirm that the difference in the crude rate is not strictly a matter of age composition, but also reflects a very real difference in fertility behavior between Jews and the total population.

Replacements can be measured more clearly through use of the net reproduction rate, which shows the number of daughters who would be

TABLE 2. COMPARATIVE MEASURES OF FERTILITY, JEWISH AND TOTAL WHITE UNITED STATES POPULATIONS, 1967-1969

	Jewish Population*			U.S. White Population
	Low Population Base	Medium Population Base	High Population Base	
Crude Birthrate	9.9	9.6	9.2	16.8
General Fertility Rate	48.1	46.2	44.5	82.3
Total Fertility Rate	1,527.5	1,467.5	1,412.5	2,388.0
Net Reproduction Rate	722.5	694.2	668.2	1,143.6
Age Specific Birthrates				
15-19	7.5	7.2	6.9	55.9
20-24	63.2	60.8	58.4	164.1
25-29	153.0	147.0	141.5	141.0
30-34	60.3	57.9	55.8	73.7
35-39	17.5	16.8	16.2	34.0
40-44	4.0	3.8	3.7	8.9

*Based on population estimates from National Jewish Population Study, 1970-1971, and on fertility estimates from the 1967-1969 National Natality Surveys.

Low Population Estimate = 5,550,000

Medium Population Estimate = 5,775,000

High Population Estimate = 6,000,000

born to a thousand women passing through their reproductive years, subject to both current age specific fertility rates and current mortality patterns. In general, a net reproduction rate of a thousand indicates that the women will produce enough daughters to exactly replace themselves; a rate below a thousand is indicative of inadequate replacement. Based on the assumption that Jewish mortality and that of the U.S. white population are quite similar, the net reproduction rate for Jews is shown to be between 668 and 722 per thousand, compared to 1,144 per thousand for the total white population. The net reproduction rate thus confirms what has already been indicated by the other measures, i.e., that the replacement level of Jews is far below that of the total white population, and also considerably below the level needed to insure growth if 1967-1969 rates persist.

The restriction of the National Natality Survey data to women actually having children during the specified years argues for the exploitation of complementary data which allow assessment of cumulative fertility. Some limited insights into this can be obtained from data available from the

National Opinion Research Census (NORC) annual surveys. By combining the data from the 1972 through 1975 surveys, it was possible to obtain 89 ever married Jewish women in all age groups over 18.²⁷ These women had averaged 2.0 children up to the time of the survey, compared to 2.7 for both Protestants and Catholics. Among women aged 40–49, the age group at the end of childbearing, corresponding averages were 2.4, 3.4, and 3.6 for Jews, Protestants, and Catholics, respectively. The pattern of lower Jewish fertility is reflected dramatically in the parity data. About equal percentages of all religious groups were childless, but 70 per cent of the Jewish women had 2 or fewer children, compared to only 53 per cent of the Protestants and 52 per cent of the Catholics. By contrast, 16 and 17 per cent, respectively, of Protestant and Catholic women had 5 or more children, compared to only 1 per cent of the Jews. Regardless of the index used, therefore, the NORC data, which reflect cumulative fertility behavior rather than current performance or expected future levels, point to consistently lower Jewish fertility compared to that of non-Jews.

The evidence available from 15 Jewish community studies encompassing the period 1953–1976 also points to lower Jewish fertility (Table 3). These data measure fertility by comparing the number of children under 5 years of age per 1,000 women aged 20–44. Particularly noteworthy is the observation that five of the seven communities which took surveys before 1960 reported child-woman ratios above 500, whereas none of the surveys taken since 1960 have done so; and the ratios for three of the four communities surveyed in the 1970's display the lowest of all, below 400, and in the case of Greater Kansas City only 231. That this low fertility is typical of the national scene is indicated by the NJPS data for 1970–1971 which reveal a child-woman ratio for Jews of only 352, some 27 per cent below the 1970 national average of 485 for the white 1970 urban population.

Also using data from the NJPS, Della Pergola has undertaken what constitutes one of the most comprehensive assessments yet completed of fertility patterns among the Jewish population of the United States as a whole.²⁸ The large sample size, consisting of 5,303 ever married females age 15 and over, allows much more in-depth study, despite some concern about the coverage of the NJPS, than any other national sample. The exploitation of the retrospective fertility history information collected in the survey enhances the richness of the analysis undertaken. The findings of the analysis basically confirm the insights gained in other studies.

Throughout the period covered by the analysis, Jewish fertility was consistently lower than among total whites, varying from a ratio of 69 Jewish

²⁷General Social Surveys, 1972 through 1975, conducted by National Opinion Research Center, Roper Research Center, Inc., Williamstown, Mass.

²⁸Sergio Della Pergola, "Patterns of American Jewish Fertility," mimeographed paper, Jerusalem, 1979.

TABLE 3. JEWISH CHILD-WOMAN RATIO: NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER AGE 5 TO NUMBER OF WOMEN AGED 20-44, SELECTED COMMUNITIES

Community	Year	Fertility Ratio
New Orleans, La.	1953	496
Lynn, Mass.	1955	528
Canton, Ohio	1955	469
Des Moines, Iowa	1956	596
Worcester, Mass.	1957	525
New Orleans, La.	1958	510
Los Angeles, Calif.	1959	560
South Bend, Ind.	1961	494
Rochester, N. Y.	1961	489
Providence, R. I.	1963	450
Camden, N. J.	1964	480
Springfield, Mass.	1966	418
Columbus, Ohio	1969	444
Dallas, Texas	1972	304
Minneapolis, Minn.	1972	436
Houston, Texas	1975	342
Greater Kansas City	1976	231
National Jewish Population Study	1971	352
U.S. white urban population	1960	635
U.S. white urban population	1970	485
U.S. white metropolitan population	1975	360

Sources: Sidney Goldstein, "American Jewry, 1970: A Demographic Profile," *AJYB*, Vol. 72, 1971.

Betty J. Maynard, *The Dallas Jewish Community Study* (Dallas, 1974).

Judith B. Erickson and Mitchel J. Lazarus, *The Jewish Community of Greater Minneapolis* (Minneapolis, 1973).

Sam Shulman, David Gottlieb, and Sheila Sheinberg, *A Sociological and Demographic Survey of the Jewish Community of Houston, Texas* (Houston, 1976).

The Jewish Population Study of the Greater Kansas City Area (Kansas City, 1977).

births per 100 white births in about 1930, to a high of 87 in 1945, and declining thereafter to only 68 in 1965, when the total Jewish fertility rate was again below replacement level. As Della Pergola notes, "Jewish fertility levels basically followed over time the general fluctuations of the total whites, but patterns of response to period societal change were relatively earlier, sharper, and faster as appropriate to a nearly perfectly contracepting population."²⁹ The most recent cohorts were unmistakably directed towards increasingly lower fertility, even though young ever married women indicate an expectation to slightly surpass replacement levels; these expectations seem unrealistically high, given other patterns observed.

Della Pergola also notes considerable variation in fertility levels of different marriage and birth cohorts, but these generally occur within the boundaries of lower fertility. He also suggests, however, that there may be a "minimum" level below which families are unwilling to lower their fertility, providing societal circumstances are not too exacting. What seems to vary more among cohorts than the absolute differences in average number of children born (which generally varies within a range of one child) is the tempo of childbearing which is affected by age of woman at marriage, duration of marriage, and societal circumstances.

The detailed analysis leads Della Pergola to conclude that "long-term American cycles of socio-demographic change stimulated a multi-faceted Jewish demographic response. This included, during the more adverse years, non-marriage, later marriage, more frequent childlessness, fewer children per mother, longer birth intervals, and later termination of childbearing. After World War II, trends were quite similarly reversed for the different components of Jewish family formation, although relatively late marriage and low fertility generally characterize the entire period."³⁰

A final set of data, whose major attractiveness is its currency and national coverage, but which includes only a small number of Jews, is the National Survey of Family Growth sponsored by the federal government.³¹ The results of the first survey, conducted in 1973-1974, showed that for the white population of the United States the number of children ever born was 2,180, but the average for Jews was only 1,914 (Table 4). If the comparison is in terms of total children expected, the Jewish average of 2,356 per thousand was 15 per cent below the total white average of 2,783. Perhaps more significantly, Jewish women aged 20-24 expected to have 1,569 children per thousand women, a number 32 per cent below the 2,313 expected by all white women, and well below replacement level. Only among women

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 18.

³⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

³¹Gordon Scott Bonham, "Expected Size of Completed Family Among Currently Married Women 15-44 Years of Age: United States, 1973," *Advancedata*, August 1977.

aged 35 and older was the average number of children expected above replacement level; yet even these averages were only 0.4 to 0.6 children above replacement level, and well below the averages of the total population.

Lower Jewish fertility is also reflected by the fact that only 15 per cent of all Jewish women aged 15–29 were pregnant, seeking to become pregnant, or in a post-partum status at the time of the survey, compared to 23 and 26 per cent, respectively, of the white Protestant and Catholic married women in the same age range.³² These data indicate, too, the high levels of fertility control characterizing Jews: 91 per cent of all currently married Jewish women 15–44 years of age were practicing contraception or were

TABLE 4. TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN EVER BORN AND TOTAL BIRTHS EXPECTED PER 1,000 CURRENTLY MARRIED WOMEN AGED 15–44, BY AGE AND RELIGION: UNITED STATES, 1973

Religion	15–19	20–24	25–29	30–34	35–39	40–44	All Ages
<i>Children Ever Born</i>							
Protestant	482	928	1,670	2,548	2,993	3,169	2,158
Catholic	471	888	1,773	2,727	3,273	3,546	2,359
Jewish	*	*	994	2,058	2,510	2,733	1,914
Other, none	*	1,035	1,025	2,103	2,471	2,510	1,467
All women	479	921	1,651	2,575	3,054	3,251	2,180
<i>Births Expected</i>							
Protestant	2,246	2,260	2,402	2,798	3,088	3,198	2,710
Catholic	2,790	2,514	2,650	3,138	3,476	3,632	3,057
Jewish	*	1,569	2,094	2,058	2,583	2,771	2,356
Other, none	2,020	2,117	2,002	2,553	2,680	2,586	2,257
All women	2,376	2,313	2,445	2,879	3,183	3,297	2,783

*Figure does not meet standards of reliability.

Source: Gordon Scott Bonham, "Expected Size of Completed Family Among Currently Married Women 15–44 Years of Age: United States, 1973," *Advancedata*, August, 1977.

³²Kathleen Ford, "Contraceptive Use in the United States, 1973," *Vital and Health Statistics*, Series 23 (forthcoming).

sterilized at the time of the 1973 survey. This level contrasted to 79 per cent of the white Protestant women and 73 per cent of the white Catholic women.

The low levels of Jewish fertility observed in these various studies strongly suggest that Jews continue to have highly favorable attitudes toward family planning, and to be highly successful in the use of contraceptives. In a period of generally declining fertility, the fertility of Jews may be lower still. Goldscheider and Uhlenberg have argued that the "characteristics" approach, which attempts to explain the lower Jewish fertility by the social and economic characteristics that distinguish Jews from non-Jews, falls short of supplying a full explanation for the differential.³³ They maintain that attention must also be given to the minority position of Jews and to the cross-culturally shared Jewish values that have helped to account for lower Jewish fertility in the past and in widely different societies. Perceptions of discrimination, feelings of insecurity, and values particularly conducive to fewer children may continue to contribute to lower Jewish fertility.

Thus, although Jewish fertility may foreshadow the patterns of other groups as we move into the era of the perfect contraceptive population, Jews may still continue to be characterized by lower levels of fertility because of other social-psychological factors associated with the still unique position of Jews in the larger society. That the already low Jewish fertility levels have evidently declined even further as part of the national pattern suggests that the motives for small families reflect a complex combination of factors involving both conditions unique to the Jews and those shared with the larger population. Even though Jewish community leaders have spoken out against ZPG and in favor of higher Jewish fertility in order to compensate for losses through intermarriage and avoid declines in aggregate numbers, American Jews have shown little evidence of reversing their exceptionally low fertility levels.

At the same time, it seems apparent that, as among the general population, the number of Jewish singles has increased in recent years. In part this reflects higher levels of enrollment in college and graduate school, later age at marriage, changes in life style that involve more frequent sharing of households while unmarried, and higher divorce rates. This comparatively new development has implications both for fertility levels and for the vitality of the Jewish family, which has been a mainstay of the community's strength and survival. To date, the community and its institutions continue to experiment with various methods by which to insure maintenance of

³³Calvin Goldscheider and Peter R. Uhlenberg, "Minority Group Status and Fertility," *American Journal of Sociology*, January 1969, pp. 361-372.

Jewish identification on the part of this segment of the population.³⁴

It will be interesting to observe, if general fertility levels should rise in the next decade as some experts predict,³⁵ whether Jews participate in the upward swing. Past patterns suggest that, if they do, it will not be to the same extent as the general population. As Cohen has recently suggested, the factors helping to explain the low Jewish birthrate—including higher divorce and separation rates, later age at marriage and possible rises in levels of celibacy, increased extra-familial activity, higher education levels, greater secularism, and higher rates of intermarriage—should serve to reinforce low fertility levels.³⁶

For the immediate future, and most likely for the longer run as well, therefore, available evidence points to birth levels among Jews which are inadequate to insure growth, especially when viewed in conjunction with possible losses through intermarriage and assimilation. There seems little prospect that the total Jewish population of the United States will rise above 6 million in the foreseeable future. The chances are much more likely that it will stabilize or move toward 5 million, and possibly go even lower. Moreover, the losses in population resulting from ZPG or NPG take on added significance because they will also produce changes in the age composition of the Jewish population, reducing the percentage of youths and increasing that of the aged. Before turning to questions of composition, however, attention needs to be given to the other components of change: intermarriage, assimilation, and migration.

INTERMARRIAGE

In contrast to the recentness of concern about the levels of Jewish fertility, interest in the levels and impact of intermarriage has a much longer history. Particular importance was attached to intermarriage, not so much because it was seen as a threat to the demographic maintenance of American Jewry, but because it was viewed as an index of the loss of Jewish identification, and as a threat to the social and religious cohesiveness of the community. Yet, if marital assimilation takes place at a high rate, the Jewish group faces demographic losses both through the assimilation of the Jewish partner in the marriage and through the loss of children born to such a marriage. Thus, it is not surprising (particularly in the face of earlier

³⁴Cf., *New York Times*, April 2, 1976.

³⁵Ronald Lee, "Demographic Forecasting and the Easterlin Hypothesis," *Population and Development Review*, 1976, p. 459.

³⁶Steven Cohen, "Renesance or Oblivion," paper presented at meeting of Task Force on Jewish Population, New York, September 19, 1977.

evidence that Jews had been remarkably successful, compared to other groups, in maintaining religious endogamy) that a variety of evidence suggesting an increasing rate of intermarriage has set off alarm bells in the Jewish community.

Regrettably, the quality of the information that we have on the rates of intermarriage and its impact on identity is still poor; we lack a clear picture of the overall situation. The evidence suggests that the level of intermarriage and its impact vary considerably depending on community size, location, and social cohesiveness. Complications are also introduced by the manner in which intermarriage is measured. Studies relying exclusively on current religious identification of marriage partners run the risk of undercounting intermarriages, since those partners to a mixed marriage who have changed their religion in conjunction with the marriage would not be identified as having intermarried. This problem can be compounded by fairly loose definitions of who is regarded as a Jew. At the other extreme, the rate of intermarriage may be inflated if the criterion for religious identification is the ancestry of individuals rather than their personal life histories.

Despite these measurement problems, the evidence clearly points to an increased rate of Jewish intermarriage. A number of communities surveyed in the late 1950's and 1960's showed levels of intermarriage between 5 and 10 per cent—levels which differed only minimally from those observed in communities surveyed in the 1930's. The March 1957 sample survey conducted by the Bureau of the Census found that only 3.8 per cent of married persons reporting themselves as Jews were married to non-Jews, and that 7.2 per cent of all marriages in which at least one partner was Jewish were intermarriages.³⁷ Both of these statistics are probably somewhat low, since no information was collected on the earlier religion of the marriage partners. Yet the 1950's and 1960's also produced studies that revealed intermarriage rates as high as 17 per cent in New York City, 37 per cent in Marin County, California, and 54 per cent in Iowa.³⁸

Eric Rosenthal's analysis of intermarriage among the Jewish population of Washington, D.C. in 1956 aroused serious anxiety concerning the threat which intermarriage posed to the demographic survival of the Jewish population.³⁹ This anxiety grew out of his observation that the rate of intermarriage increased from 1.4 per cent among foreign-born husbands, to 10.2 per cent among second-generation men, and up to 17.9 per cent among husbands of third- and higher-order generation status. The possibility that these generation differentials reflected a trend toward rising levels of

³⁷U.S. Bureau of the Census, *op. cit.*

³⁸Goldstein, "American Jewry, 1970," *op. cit.*, p. 28.

³⁹Eric Rosenthal, "Studies of Jewish Intermarriages in the United States," *AJYB*, Vol. 64, 1963, pp. 34-51.

intermarriage was reinforced by data emanating from other community studies, such as Providence and Springfield,⁴⁰ even though the levels of intermarriage were lower than those for Washington. The 1965 Boston survey also suggested a sharp rise in the level of intermarriage among the very youngest segment of the population; in contrast to a 3 per cent level of intermarriage among couples in which the age of the husband was 51 and over, 20 per cent of the couples in which the husband was 30 years old or younger were intermarried.⁴¹ Interestingly, the 1975 Boston survey also found 3 per cent of couples in which the age of the husband was 50 and over to have been intermarried; but the rate had risen to 26 per cent of those under 30 years of age.⁴² The sharpest increase occurred in the intermediary age groups. In contrast to 7 per cent of those with the husband between ages 31 and 50 who were intermarried in 1965, 22 per cent of those in the 30–49 age range in 1975 were intermarried. The lesser rise for the youngest age group may reflect the high percentage in that age group who are still unmarried, and that intermarriage occurs somewhat later.

The NJPS provided the first nationwide set of comprehensive data on Jewish intermarriage patterns.⁴³ Since it ascertained the religious identity of the marriage partners at the time they met, it allowed fuller assessment of intermarriage than did the census data. The NJPS found that 9.2 per cent of all Jewish persons married at the time of the survey were intermarried. This level was not unusually high; what was “shocking” about the NJPS findings was the analysis of intermarriage in terms of marriage cohorts. This analysis determined that the level of intermarriage rose from 2 per cent of those individuals who had married between 1900 and 1920, to 6 per cent of those marrying between 1940 and 1960, and increased precipitously thereafter to 17 per cent of the 1960–1965 marriage cohort and 32 per cent of those marrying in the five years preceding the survey.

In the absence of a full evaluation of the NJPS data and of supporting evidence from independent sources attesting to the validity of this very high level of intermarriage, its exactness must be questioned. There seems little doubt, however, that the finding does justify the conclusion, based on reports by rabbis, newspapers, and other sources, that the level of intermarriage has risen very substantially in recent years. This is undoubtedly related to the increasing proportion of the population that is now third-generation,

⁴⁰Sidney Goldstein, *The Greater Providence Jewish Community: A Population Survey* (Providence, 1964); Sidney Goldstein, *A Population Survey of the Greater Springfield Jewish Community* (Springfield, 1968).

⁴¹Morris Axelrod, Floyd J. Fowler, and Arnold Gurin, *A Community Survey for Long Range Planning: A Study of the Jewish Population of Greater Boston* (Boston, 1967).

⁴²Floyd J. Fowler, *1975 Community Survey: A Study of the Jewish Population of Greater Boston* (Boston, 1977), pp. 66–67.

⁴³Massarik and Chenkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 292–306.

and has moved away from older areas of dense Jewish population to newly developed, more integrated areas within both the cities and suburbs; to the very high proportion of Jewish youth enrolled in colleges and universities; to the entrance of Jews into occupations and social groups which earlier had been closed to them; to the generally greater freedom and integration which Jews have enjoyed in American society in recent years; and to the increasing secularization and weakening of tradition among younger Jews. Whether these conditions will lead to still further increases in intermarriage, or whether a plateau may have been reached, has not been ascertained. To answer this question, comparative data of the type emanating from the Boston study are needed.

Whether the effects of intermarriage on demographic growth are serious may largely be determined by the extent of conversion to Judaism on the part of the non-Jewish partner to such marriages, as well as by the extent to which children born to such marriages are raised as Jews. Obviously, counts such as this for purposes of measuring the demographic outcome may not do justice to the effect of intermarriage on Jewish identification and religiosity *per se*, which constitute other significant dimensions of the intermarriage question. Considerable evidence does exist, however, suggesting that a substantial part of the threat of high levels of intermarriage to demographic survival is reduced by comparatively high rates of conversion to Judaism and of children being raised as Jews.

When attention was given to these questions as part of the 1963 Providence survey, for example, it was found that of all the intermarried couples, 42 per cent had experienced the conversion of one partner to Judaism, thereby creating religious homogeneity within the family unit.⁴⁴ Even more significantly, perhaps, the proportion of persons converting increased with decreasing age, a finding consistent with that of many other studies. The 1975 Boston survey did not find as high a level of conversion; those data indicate that only about 10 per cent of all the intermarriages of males 30–49 years of age at the time of the survey resulted in a conversion of the non-Jewish partner.⁴⁵ The NJPS found that in 27 per cent of the intermarriages in which the husband was originally Jewish, the wife converted; however, among those couples in which it was the wife who was originally Jewish, only 2.5 per cent of the husbands converted.⁴⁶ An interesting finding of the NJPS is that a very substantial percentage of non-Jewish partners in intermarriages identify themselves as Jews even though they have not officially converted. This was true of 46 per cent of the non-Jewish wives and 44 per cent of the non-Jewish husbands.

⁴⁴Goldstein, *The Greater Providence Jewish Community*, *op. cit.*, pp. 186–187.

⁴⁵Fowler, *op. cit.*

⁴⁶Massarik and Chenkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 296–297.

The same questions can be raised from the point of view of the religion in which the children of intermarriages are reared. According to the 1963 Providence survey, 78 per cent of the 280 children born to intermarried couples were being raised as Jews. This contrasted very sharply to the 70 per cent of the children of mixed marriages being raised as non-Jews according to Rosenthal's Washington survey. The NJPS found a high proportion of children of intermarriage being raised as Jews: 63 per cent of the children of Jewish fathers and 98 per cent of those of Jewish mothers.

Overall, therefore, the evidence suggests that although the rate of intermarriage has increased sharply, a substantial proportion of these intermarriages result in the conversion of the non-Jewish spouse to Judaism, while an even larger number result in the non-Jewish spouse identifying as Jewish. Moreover, the rate of conversion seems to be higher among the very groups having a higher intermarriage rate. Furthermore, a significant proportion of children from such marriages are evidently being raised as Jews. Finally, evidence from several studies indicates that the fertility patterns of intermarried couples are coming to reflect those of the non-intermarried, whereas older groups had a much stronger tendency to have significantly lower fertility.⁴⁷ Taken together, these changes suggest that the net effects of intermarriage on the overall size of the Jewish population may not be as serious as the rates of intermarriage themselves suggest. The effect of intermarriage on Jewish identification and religiosity may be a different matter, and these concerns can certainly have long run implications for the demographic variables.

Reflecting the continuing concern with the impact of intermarriage on Jewish demography and identity, the American Jewish Committee in 1976–1977 sponsored an eight-city study focusing on Intermarriage and the Jewish Future, directed by Egon Mayer.⁴⁸ Defining intermarriage broadly as a marriage between any individual born Jewish and one who was not, the study population encompassed 446 intermarried couples in Cleveland, Dallas, Long Island, Los Angeles, New York City, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Westchester. Given the *ad hoc* character of the selection of the respondent couples (largely through reliance on local informants) and high rates of non-response, the results cannot be regarded as representative of all intermarried couples. Furthermore, the absence of any control groups of Jewish homogamous marriages precludes direct comparisons with the characteristics of the non-intermarried as well as calculation of rates of intermarriage.

⁴⁷Sidney Goldstein and Calvin Goldscheider, *Jewish Americans: Three Generations in a Jewish Community* (Englewood Cliffs, 1968), pp. 168–169.

⁴⁸Egon Mayer, "Patterns of Intermarriage Among American Jews: Varieties, Uniformities, Dilemmas, and Prospects," mimeographed report, New York, 1978.

Typical of previous findings, two-thirds of the intermarried consisted of a Jewish man and a non-Jewish woman. Interestingly, the ratio was lower in the younger age group, suggesting that higher rates of intermarriage may come to characterize women as their educational and occupational patterns more closely resemble those of men. The effect of the women's liberation movement, and the deficits in potential Jewish husbands under conditions of high intermarriage rates, may also lead to a closer balance in the ratio of male and female intermarriage rates. If this does not happen, it could well lead to a growing proportion of Jewish women who remain unmarried due to the lack of available Jewish spouses.

In this population study, just over one-quarter of the not-born-Jewish respondents had converted to Judaism, whereas only 3 per cent of the Jews had converted out. The finding that rates of conversion were highest in the youngest age group (one-third of those aged 20–29 compared to one-fourth of those aged 30–49, and only one-fifth of those aged 50–59) again lends support to earlier evidence that higher rates of conversion prevail among groups with the highest intermarriage rates. About 80 per cent of the Jewish spouses in marriages in which the other spouse had converted considered their children Jewish, compared to about one-third of the Jewish spouses in mixed marriages.

Overall, the study concludes that intermarriage represents a threat to Jewish continuity, as evidenced by the low conversion rate, the low level of Jewish conduct and practice in mixed marriages, the low proportion of children regarded as Jewish, and the fact that most of the children are not socialized as Jews. Strong stress is therefore placed on the need for outreach programs designed to provide more formal and informal opportunities to enhance the Jewish content of the family life of the intermarried, and especially to strengthen the likelihood that children will identify as Jews. Most provocative is Mayer's suggestion that a new category of "naturalized" Jew be established to allow those who have not converted to identify more formally with the Jewish people and thereby confer a sense of legitimacy to the non-converted spouse as a way of strengthening the Jewish identity of the family.

Together, the results of the varied studies reviewed here confirm that the problem of intermarriage warrants considerable concern on both the policy and research levels. That it is receiving such attention is evidenced by recent calls by such community leaders as Rabbi Alexander Schindler of the Reform movement to reverse the practice of centuries and begin a drive to convert the unchurched to Judaism.⁴⁹ He especially argues for conversion of the non-Jewish partner in an impending marriage and for removal of the

⁴⁹Providence *Sunday Journal*, December 3, 1978.

“not-wanted signs” that make non-Jewish spouses feel alienated. It needs to be stressed, however, that from a demographic perspective, attention to intermarriage certainly should not exclude concern about the impact of fertility and population redistribution on the size of Jewish population and on the quality of Jewish identification. Concurrently, the Jewish community needs to take heed of the words of Marshall Sklare:

A more realistic confrontation is necessary, and that requires a much larger body of research than we now possess on the current rate of intermarriage in the country as a whole. It also requires much more information about the Jews who intermarry and about the causes and consequences of their doing so. So, too, there is a need for studies to evaluate the various methods in use to combat intermarriage, particularly those involving Jewish education. And demographic research will have to be done at regular intervals so that a reliable trend-line can be established.⁵⁰

ASSIMILATION

If attempts to assess the demographic consequences of intermarriage on Jews are difficult, attempts to evaluate the impact of assimilation are almost impossible. To some extent, the problem is illustrated by the experience of the NJPS. To qualify a household for inclusion in the NJPS at least one person within it was required to be “Jewish.” By intent, a broad definition of Jewish was used;⁵¹ the respondent had to provide an affirmative reply, for himself or for one or more household members, to at least one of the following questions: 1) was person born Jewish? 2) is person Jewish now? 3) was person’s father born Jewish? 4) was person’s mother born Jewish? Clearly, a more narrow or halakhic definition would exclude certain households, some of whose members may, however, satisfy sociological (ideological and/or behavioral) definitions of Jewishness. It was on the basis of a broad definition of a Jewish household as one including one or more Jewish persons that the NJPS reached the estimate of 5,800,000 Jews in 1971. But as was noted earlier, if non-Jewish persons in such households (including non-Jewish spouses and children not being raised as Jews) are excluded, the total number of Jewish residents in households is reduced to 5,370,000, almost a 10 per cent reduction.

The use of a loose definition of Jewishness has particular implications for the study of intermarriage. In his assessment of intermarriage, using NJPS data, Massarik distinguishes between “typical intermarriage” (in which

⁵⁰Marshall Sklare, “Intermarriage and the Jewish Future,” *Commentary*, April 1964, p. 52.

⁵¹National Jewish Population Study, *National and Regional Population Counts*, New York, 1974, p. 6.

either the husband or the wife was Jewish at the time the couple met) and "marginal intermarriage" (in which one or both partners expressed no preference concerning religious viewpoint at the time of initial meeting, noted the existence of some Jewish familial or ancestral roots, but affirmed either only vague relatedness to Jewishness or none at all).⁵² Massarik's analysis does not indicate the numerical division between these groups, but it could well be that the high rates of intermarriage he noted are partially a function of the inclusion of "marginal intermarriages" in the total.

The problems encountered by the NJPS and comparable surveys clearly document the difficulties in determining for survey purposes who constitutes a Jew. The halakhic definition is too simple for the sociologist and demographer, particularly for analysis of assimilation. Yet, the possibility is very limited of identifying clearly those individuals who were born Jews but who do not identify themselves as such; even the NJPS may not have succeeded in identifying a representative sample of such persons in its survey, despite the wide net that was thrown out.

Some limited insights about assimilation have come from studies of college students who have "dropped out" from Judaism. A study of Jewish seniors in 1961 found that about 13 per cent had apostatized, while in 1969, 21 per cent of the graduates reported no religious preference. Comparison of freshmen in 1965 and 1972 surveys shows a rise in the number who expressed no religious preference from 13 to 18 per cent. However, it is not at all clear whether such individuals, if approached in a general population survey, would or would not report themselves as Jewish; therefore these data have only very limited value. All that one can conclude is that the same general conditions in society which have led to a rise in intermarriage also probably lead to substantial rates of dropouts; there is little basis for believing that the rate will decline in the foreseeable future.⁵³

A study designed to assess assimilation was recently undertaken in Los Angeles.⁵⁴ Based on 413 respondents selected from a canvas of 5,000 households, the analysis concludes that intermarriage, a reduced birthrate, and the decline of Jewish neighborhoods are contributing to the assimilation of the nearly half-million Jews of Los Angeles. This was compounded by declining rates of affiliation and involvement in Jewish religious and secular organizations. The authors also find that "at the same time, the picture that emerges from the survey is of a vibrant people whose closest personal associations are with other Jews in their family, friendship, and occupational groupings." They further note that "one of the most significant

⁵²Massarik and Chenkin, *op. cit.*

⁵³Cohen, *op. cit.*

⁵⁴Neil C. Sandberg and Gene N. Levine, as summarized in *News from the Committee*, American Jewish Committee, November 21, 1979.

changes in Jewish life in the last generation is the way in which Jews act out their Jewishness. Whereas only 18 per cent see being Jewish as primarily religious, 61 per cent perceive of Jews as an ethnic-cultural group." This was seen as "a dramatic shift from formal religious involvement to ethnic and cultural commitment." As a result, the challenge for Jewish leaders is seen as the need to adapt their institutions to the increasingly informal expressions that are becoming more common.

Overall, one can raise the questions whether assimilation is, in fact, an especially new phenomenon in Jewish history. We know that crusades, inquisitions, and pogroms all took a heavy toll of the Jewish population, but these occurrences in themselves were probably inadequate to account for the tremendous loss in numbers that must have occurred if only 16.7 million Jews were alive just before the Holocaust. Many, quite clearly, were also lost through assimilation and intermarriage. Yet then, as now, any attempt to approximate the losses sustained through "dropouts" would be sheer guesswork. It is likely to remain so for many years to come.

MIGRATION AND POPULATION REDISTRIBUTION

Jewish history might easily be written in terms of migration and resettlement, from the days of Abraham's move to Canaan to the recent exodus of Jews from the Soviet Union. Yet, in the United States the large majority of immigrants arriving between 1880 and 1924 tended to be quite stable geographically. They settled in communities, often ports of entry, where there was a need for their labor in various industries. Subsequently many immigrants went into business for themselves, but while socially and economically mobile, they and often their children remained in the same city all their lives. This pattern now seems to be undergoing significant change. Because Jews are increasingly third- and fourth-generation residents of the United States, and are more highly educated than ever before, they enjoy the widest possible range of occupational choices. But the kinds of education which Jews are seeking, and the kinds of jobs for which their high education qualifies them, very often require geographic dispersion—movement away from family and out of centers of Jewish population concentration. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that many high-level jobs require repeated movement, so that individuals and families have no opportunity to plant deep roots in any single Jewish community.

Regional Distribution

Estimates indicate that in 1900, 57 per cent of American Jewry lived in the Northeast, in contrast to 28 per cent of the total American population; and virtually all of the Jews in the Northeast were in New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey (Table 5). New York alone accounted for about 40 per cent of the national total. The North Central region accounted for the next largest number of Jews—about one-fourth—with most concentrated in Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Michigan. By contrast, one-third of the total U.S. population lived in this region in 1900. Compared to the general population, Jews were also underrepresented in the South, where 14 per cent were located, largely in Maryland. Florida at that time had only 3,000 Jews. The proportion of Jews in the West in 1900 was identical to that of the general population, just over 5 per cent.

The continued mass immigration from Eastern Europe during the first decades of the 20th century resulted in a fourfold increase in the Jewish population of the country between 1900 and 1930; and it became even more concentrated in the large cities of the Northeast, especially New York. By 1930 the Northeast region contained 68 per cent of the American Jewish population and most of it lived in New York. The other regions of the country all contained smaller proportions of the Jewish population than they had in 1900, with the sharpest change occurring in the South. The Far West continued to be the region with the smallest percentage of Jews, although the proportion of the total American population living in the Western states doubled between 1900 and 1930. Jews had clearly not yet joined the Western movement on the same scale as had the rest of the population.

By 1979 the pattern had changed considerably, reflecting both the cutoff in large-scale immigration and increasing internal mobility. Jews in large measure seem to have followed the pattern of redistribution characterizing the population as a whole; in fact, they may have been doing so to an exaggerated degree. For example, between 1930 and 1979, the percentage of Jews living in the Northeast declined from 68 to 58 per cent. This was a larger percentage decrease in absolute points than those characterizing the general population (see Table 5). The drop was even more substantial for the North Central states, where Jews decreased from 20 per cent of the national total in 1930 to only 12 per cent in 1979. In contrast, both the South and the West contained growing proportions of the total U.S. Jewish population, reflecting the strong participation of Jews in the shift to the Sun Belt and to the Western states. Between 1930 and 1979, the South's share more than doubled, and that of the West tripled. The growth of the Jewish population in the South is illustrated by the experience of the Orlando metropolitan area. In 1966 it included only 600 Jews; by 1977 the Jewish

TABLE 5. DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL UNITED STATES AND JEWISH POPULATION, BY REGIONS, 1900, 1930, 1968, AND 1979

Region	1900		1930 ^c		1968 ^d		1979 ^e	
	Jewish ^a	United States ^b	Jewish	United States	Jewish	United States	Jewish	United States
Northeast	56.6	27.7	68.3	27.9	64.0	24.2	57.9	22.5
New England	7.4	7.5	8.4	6.6	6.8	5.7	6.6	5.6
Middle Atlantic	49.2	20.3	59.9	21.3	57.1	18.5	51.3	16.9
North Central	23.7	34.6	19.6	31.4	12.5	27.8	11.9	26.7
East North Central	18.3	21.0	15.7	20.5	10.2	19.8	9.6	18.9
West North Central	5.4	13.6	3.9	10.9	2.3	8.0	2.3	7.8
South	14.2	32.2	7.6	30.7	10.3	31.2	15.8	32.4
South Atlantic	8.0	13.7	4.3	12.8	8.1	15.0	13.5	15.9
East South Central	3.3	9.9	1.4	8.0	0.7	6.6	0.7	6.4
West South Central	2.9	8.6	1.9	9.9	1.5	9.6	1.7	10.1
West	5.5	5.4	4.6	10.0	13.2	16.8	14.3	18.4
Mountain	2.3	2.2	1.0	3.0	0.9	4.0	1.8	4.7
Pacific	3.2	3.2	3.6	7.0	12.2	12.8	12.5	13.7
Total United States	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Per cent								
Number (in 1,000s)	1,058	75,994	4,228	123,203	5,869	199,861	5,861	218,059

^a"Jewish Statistics," AJYB, Vol.1, 1900, pp. 623-624.

^bU.S. Bureau of the Census, *1960 Census of Population*, Vol. 1, *Characteristics of the Population* (Washington, D.C., 1961), pp. 1-16.

^cH. S. Linfield, "Statistics of Jews," AJYB, Vol. 33, 1931, p. 276.

^dAlvin Chenkin, "Jewish Population in the United States," AJYB, Vol. 70, 1969, p. 266.

^eAlvin Chenkin and Maynard Miran, "Jewish Population in the United States, 1979," AJYB, Vol. 80, 1980, p. 163.

population of Orlando had reached 11,000, and it is projected to rise to over 20,000 by 1985.⁵⁵ Although the South and the West continued to contain proportionally fewer Jews than it did members of the general population, the differences in distribution had considerably narrowed.

Thus, by 1979 the greater mobility of the Jews had resulted in patterns of distribution throughout the country that resembled somewhat more closely those of the general population. These similarities are likely to become accentuated in the future, as Jews increasingly enter occupations requiring mobility because of the limited opportunities available in particular areas, as family ties become less important for third-generation Jews than they had been for the first- and second-generation, and as more Jews no longer feel it necessary to live in areas of high Jewish density. In an ecological sense, therefore, the population will become a more truly "American population," with all this implies in terms of assimilation and numerical visibility.

At the same time, the Middle Atlantic subregion, and the New York area in particular, remains a very large and obviously dynamic center of American Jewry. Over half of the American Jewish population was still concentrated in the Middle Atlantic states in 1979, and two out of these three million persons lived in Greater New York. Yet even here changes were occurring: the estimates of Jewish population prepared for the AJYB show a decline in the Jewish population of Greater New York from 2.38 million in 1972 to just under 2.00 million in 1979.⁵⁶ In part this may reflect an artifact of the system of estimating the population; but it may also reflect the impact of changing rates of natural increase and out-migration from the New York area. The AJYB statistics show a decline in the Jewish population of New York City from 1.84 million in 1972 to 1.23 million in 1979, and even this is considered an overestimate, with 1 million probably being a more realistic statistic. This decline reflects both the change in enumeration procedures, partly related to the estimates derived from the NJPS, and the impact of changing distribution patterns. There seems little doubt, however, that the concentration of Jews in the Northeast corridor focusing on New York is likely to undergo substantial change in future years as increasing numbers of Jews leave this section of the country.

This process of dispersal is documented by an analysis of the changing geographic distribution of American Jews between 1952 and 1971, based on data from the AJYB.⁵⁷ The heavy residential concentration of the Jewish

⁵⁵Rhode Island *Herald*, September 1, 1977.

⁵⁶Alvin Chenkin, "Jewish Population in the United States, 1974," AJYB, Vol. 76, 1976, pp. 232-236.

⁵⁷William M. Newman and Peter L. Halvorson, "American Jews: Patterns of Geographic Distribution and Change, 1952-1971," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, June 1979, pp. 183-193.

population is demonstrated by the fact that only 504 of the 3,073 populated counties of the continental United States contain at least 100 Jews; most of these are metropolitan counties and most are in the Northeast. More interesting, however, is the fact that the highest growth in Jewish population between 1952 and 1971 occurred in counties other than those of traditional residence. In all, 77 counties were added to the list of those containing 100 or more Jews; 37 of these are in what the authors refer to as "new areas," and 10 more are in California and Florida. On the other hand, areas of high concentration in 1952 displayed moderate or low growth. Concurrently, therefore, the changes point to higher rates of dispersal and continued growth associated with urbanization and metropolitanization. Overall, while Jews still remain highly concentrated compared to other religious groups, the evidence on changing residence patterns leads to the conclusion that they locate in counties with high degrees of denominational pluralism, regardless of the size of the Jewish community. This suggests that Jews "feel accepted in America and are less concerned about venturing out into more traditionally conservative culturally homogeneous enclaves."⁵⁸

Suburbanization

The redistribution of population is occurring concurrently on a number of levels, including regional changes as well as shifts within and between metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. Throughout American history the Jewish population has been overwhelmingly concentrated in urban places. At the time of the 1957 census survey, about nine out of every ten Jews lived in urbanized areas of 250,000 or more persons.⁵⁹

Within the urban and metropolitan areas, Jews tended to live in a limited number of neighborhoods, but this pattern is also undergoing change. For example, between 1923 and 1970 radical shifts in distribution occurred in New York City alone.⁶⁰ Although very approximate estimates, these data illustrate the pattern of development that has probably characterized other areas of Jewish concentration. In 1923, 39 per cent of the 1.9 million Jews living in New York City resided in Brooklyn, and 37 per cent lived in Manhattan; less than 3 per cent lived in Queens. By 1970 Manhattan's share of the New York City Jewish population had declined to only 14 per cent, that of Queens had risen to 31 per cent, while Brooklyn increased its dominance to 42 per cent. Concurrently, the proportion of the total living in the Bronx declined from 20 to 12 per cent. Even more significantly, the percentage of Jews in the Greater New York area living in the city proper, in contrast to the suburban counties, declined from 82 per cent of the total

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p. 192.

⁵⁹U.S. Bureau of the Census, *op. cit.*

⁶⁰Goldstein, "American Jewry, 1970," *op. cit.*, pp. 39-41.

in 1957 to 64 per cent by 1970. By 1979 the AJYB estimated that only 61 per cent of Greater New York's Jewish population was living in the city proper, and the real figure may be 50 per cent or less.⁶¹

Similar patterns emerge from the limited data available for such metropolises as Chicago and Detroit; and the same pattern characterizes moderate sized communities. In 1970, for example, only 17 per cent of the Jews of Greater Providence, R. I., were living in the old urban areas of the central city, in contrast to 45 per cent in 1951; and the proportion living in the suburbs had grown from 11 to 36 per cent.^{61a} The comparative data from the Boston 1965 and 1975 surveys show similar patterns.⁶² Both the city and the older suburbs experienced population decline while the newer outer suburbs gained, resulting in an increased dispersal of the population. Suburbanization is also clearly evidenced in Minneapolis. In 1957, 66 per cent of the population was found to be living in the city and 34 per cent in the suburbs. By 1971 the pattern had been more than reversed, with 23 per cent in the city and 77 per cent in the suburbs.⁶³

Overall, therefore, the developing pattern seems to be one of ever greater dispersion and a more general integration. As a result, Jewish institutions may become located at quite widely separated points within a metropolitan area, and many communities find it increasingly difficult to decide on a central location for those institutions serving the community as a whole. In the past, residential clustering has been an important variable in helping to perpetuate Jewish values and the institutions important to the functioning of the community. In metropolitan areas with large Jewish populations, such clustering undoubtedly will continue, both within the central cities and in some of the suburbs. But greater dispersal and integration seem likely to become more common in the future, effecting greater changes in the extent and character of ties to Judaism, and making it increasingly difficult, from both a financial and an organizational perspective, to provide services to the total population. The impact of both suburbanization and more general dispersal of the population throughout the United States on the assimilation process needs to be fully recognized. In particular, much more research is necessary to ascertain how communal orientation varies among Jews living in cities and suburbs of differing Jewish density and size, and what significance the various activities available to Jews and the patterns of interaction and experience of Jews with non-Jews have for the larger question of Jewish identification and survival.

⁶¹Jack Diamond, "How Many Jews in New York City?" *Congress Monthly*, January 1978, pp. 8-10.

^{61a}Goldstein, "American Jewry, 1970," *op. cit.*, p. 42.

⁶²Axelrod, Fowler, and Gurin, *op. cit.*; Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-33.

⁶³Judith B. Erickson and Mitchel J. Lazarus, *The Jewish Community of Greater Minneapolis* (Minneapolis, 1973).

Small-Town Jewry

Because the vast majority of America's Jews live in large metropolitan areas, until recently little attention has been given to the situation of Jews in those small towns where the Jewish community itself typically numbers no more than a few thousand families, and often less. Since World War II many of these small communities have had great difficulty retaining their population, Jewish and non-Jewish. Like their neighbors, Jews have left to seek better educational, occupational, and social opportunities in larger cities. Many of those who remained small-town residents tended to minimize their Jewishness, and often assimilated or intermarried. On the whole, small-town life was generally viewed as isolating the Jew both from his coreligionists and from the non-Jewish community in which he was often regarded as a "stranger."⁶⁴

Yet, beginning with the 1970's (and consonant with what seems to be an emerging trend among the American population as a whole of movement from metropolitan areas to small towns and rural places, including locations which had earlier lost population) a number of small Jewish communities have been once again gaining population. Some Jews are now seeking the tranquility and slower pace of small-town life, and at the same time seem to be developing a more active identification with Judaism in their new surroundings. Jewish life in small towns is beginning to be viewed as having positive as well as negative effects on its members. Despite the limited communal services that are available in such places, the strong desire of many small-town Jews to maintain their identification may result in "more Judaism per square Jew in the small town than in the big city."⁶⁵

Although levels of identification are not easily measured, the demographic effects of both the old trend away from small Jewish communities and the more recent trend toward them are evident in communities such as Charleston, West Virginia.⁶⁶ In 1959 the city included 1,626 Jews; by 1975 the Jewish population had declined to 1,118, of which only 703 persons had been in Charleston 16 years earlier. The decline in population resulted from both an excess of deaths over births and more out-migrants than in-migrants; it was further compounded by a high rate of intermarriage. By 1977, despite continuing high intermarriage rates, the community's migration losses had been reversed and it was gaining population.

⁶⁴Eugen Schoenfeld, "Problems and Potentials," in Abraham D. Lavender, (ed.), *A Coat of Many Colors: Jewish Subcommunities in the United States* (Westport, 1977), pp. 71-72.

⁶⁵Rabbi Benjamin M. Kahn, quoted in *New York Times*, November 25, 1973.

⁶⁶See, *The Jewish Population of Charleston, W. Va.*, annual reports of 1959 through 1977, Charleston.

The 1977 *Annual Report on Charleston's Jewish Population*, the 19th in this unique series, was one of the most optimistic to appear. Its introduction states:

In our report of a year ago we stated that there were indications, however slight, 'that we are on our way upward (demographically) instead of downward. . . .' We are pleased to report that this year's study reveals that Charleston's Jewish population is definitely on its way upward. In this past year more newcomers (90) moved to our community than in any year since 1959, when we began these studies. Our losses through moving (49) were less than in any of the past 18 years. The good news, then, is that fewer are leaving and more are coming.⁶⁷

The importance of such a reversal is further evidenced in the fact that the gain through migration was more than enough to compensate for losses through a surplus of deaths over births and through intermarriages, accounting for all of the increase experienced in the community's total size from 1,121 to 1,151 during 1976-1977.

The reports on Charleston issued since 1977 have been less optimistic. The 1978 report shows a gain of only two persons, and the 1979 analysis recorded a resumption of the decline in total population size, from 1,158 to 1,086.⁶⁸ This reversal reflected in part the continuing excess of deaths over births; it also resulted from the removal from the 1979 population count of those individuals who had been counted for a number of years even though they had left the community. Nonetheless, despite this record cleaning operation, in both 1978 and 1979 Charleston gained Jews through migration. Such in-migration is probably being experienced by a number of small communities and could be crucial in either maintaining or creating the critical mass requisite to initiation and maintenance of the institutional facilities essential for continued Jewish identification. Migration may thus constitute the "blood transfusion" which greatly improves the chances of small community survival.

Internal Migration

We know little about the extent and character of Jewish migration within the United States. For such an analysis national data are essential; however, except for the recent information available from the NJPS, no such data exist. Our insights on Jewish migration patterns have, therefore, been largely restricted to what can be gleaned from local Jewish community surveys.

Judged both by the percentage of population born outside the community of residence and by the length of time that individuals have resided in the

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 19th annual report, p. 1.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 20th and 21st annual reports.

area in which they were enumerated in community surveys, high levels of population mobility have come to characterize American Jews. The 1963 Detroit study found that only one-third of the total Jewish population of Detroit was born in the city; 28 per cent were foreign-born; and 36 per cent had moved to Detroit from other places in the United States, half from other locations in Michigan.⁶⁹ A similar picture emerged for Camden, New Jersey, where one-third of the residents had been born in the Camden area, and as many as 60 per cent had moved from other places in the United States (probably reflecting the younger age of the Camden population).⁷⁰

The 1975 Boston survey found that only 30 per cent of the respondents living in Boston in 1975 had also been living in the city in 1965.⁷¹ Although the 1965 survey provided no basis for anticipating the decline of Newton and Brookline, both those older suburbs experienced heavy out-migrations and Jewish population decline. Of those Jews who lived in the city of Boston in 1965 and still resided in the Boston area in 1975, more than half remained in the city itself. However, this stable core was supplemented by a considerable influx from outside the Boston area, and there was some shifting in residence within the area by those living in it in both 1965 and 1975.

In Dallas, the 1972 survey found that only 35 per cent of the population were born in Dallas, and a high percentage of these were children.⁷² Over half the Jewish population had moved to Dallas from other parts of the United States, and an additional 14 per cent were foreign-born. Consistent with the patterns of regional redistribution noted earlier, 23 per cent of the U.S.-born migrants to Dallas had originated in the Northeast, and 27 per cent in the North Central states. Similarly, the 1976 Greater Kansas City survey found that "not only are the majority of the household heads not born in Kansas City, but there is little tendency for this proportion to increase among the younger people."⁷³

Given these illustrative data, it is not surprising that the NJPS found that only 62 per cent of the Jewish population aged 20 and over in 1970 were still living in the city in which they resided in 1965.⁷⁴ One out of every five adult Jews had changed city or town of residence while remaining in the same county or metropolitan area; an additional 3 per cent had changed areas within the same state; while 10 per cent of the total adult population had actually moved to a different state within the five-year interval. These

⁶⁹Albert J. Mayer, *The Detroit Jewish Community Geographic Mobility: 1963-1965 and Fertility—A Projection of Future Births* (Detroit, 1966).

⁷⁰Charles F. Westoff, *A Population Survey* (Cherry Hill, 1964).

⁷¹Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

⁷²Betty J. Maynard, *The Dallas Jewish Community Study* (Dallas, 1974).

⁷³*The Jewish Population Study of the Greater Kansas City Area* (Kansas City, 1979), p. 12.

⁷⁴National Jewish Population Study, *Mobility*, New York, 1974.

high mobility levels are even more dramatic for Jews in the peak migration ages of 25–39 years. As the data in Table 6 show, just under half of persons aged 25–29 and 35–39 resided in the same city in 1970 as 1965; and only 4 out of every 10 persons aged 30–34 did so. Moreover, for the 25–29 age group, interstate migration accounted for the largest number of mobile persons—almost 1 out of 4. Even for those aged 30–34, almost 1 in 5 moved between states. The higher percentage in this age group moving within the same county or metropolitan area is related to their life-cycle stage of family formation and expansion.

Residential stability rises quite dramatically above age 40 and peaks for ages 55–64; three-fourths of those among the latter group reported themselves as living in the same city in 1970 as they had in 1965; a large proportion who moved did so only within the same general area. For persons aged 65 and over the stability rate remains comparatively high,

TABLE 6. MOBILITY: CURRENT RESIDENCE BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE IN 1965, BY AGE (TOTAL FOR EACH AGE GROUP = 100 PER CENT)

Age Group	Same City As 1965	Different City, Same General Area In 1965*	Different Area, Same State As 1965	Different State From 1965	In Foreign Country In 1965
20–24	60.2	28.3	1.3	8.0	1.7
25–29	48.0	21.3	2.6	22.8	4.2
30–34	41.6	30.8	2.9	18.8	4.5
35–39	48.6	28.7	11.7	7.1	3.5
40–44	62.2	22.1	1.6	12.0	1.5
45–49	66.8	16.6	1.3	11.9	1.0
50–54	67.2	17.7	3.0	6.5	5.1
55–59	75.3	13.6	2.0	3.4	5.4
60–64	76.1	12.4	1.7	4.8	1.5
65–69	70.1	14.8	0.7	10.9	2.6
70–74	70.2	17.5	0.7	8.2	2.3
75–79	69.9	17.6	3.7	4.0	2.7
80 & over	62.7	24.6	1.5	5.2	2.6
Total**	61.6	20.0	3.1	8.9	2.5

Note: Horizontal details may not add to 100 because of "no answer."

*Same county or same Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area.

**Includes 6 per cent persons under 19 for whom no detailed data are shown above.

Source: National Jewish Population Study, *Mobility*, New York, 1974.

although declining somewhat as a result of retirement, the break up of families through the death of one of the spouses, or the departure of children from home. Yet the fact that 30 per cent or more of the persons 65 and over had made some kind of residential move within a five-year period indicates that geographic mobility must be incorporated into community planning processes. The need to do so is especially crucial for the younger age groups, among whom much more movement occurs, and more of it involving longer distances requiring clear breaks with former communities and integration into new ones.

The continuation of a large degree of movement is apparent from preliminary tabulations of the NJPS data based on questions about plans to move.⁷⁵ Of the total population, 16 per cent indicated plans to move within at least five years. Again, sharp age differentials characterize this aspect of mobility: 61 per cent of those 25–29 years of age indicated they planned to move, and 11 per cent expected to do so immediately; 47 per cent among those aged 20–24 years also planned to move. These mobility intentions are related to the family formation and career stages of persons in these age groups. The greater stability of older ages is evidenced by the sharp decline in the percentage (29) planning to move among those aged 30–34, a further decline to only 19 per cent among those aged 35–39, and a percentage varying within a 15–19 per cent range through age 70, following which even greater stability seems to set in.

Further evidence of changing Jewish mobility patterns is available through surveys of family units conducted so as to permit comparison of place of residence of children with that of their parents. Lenski has noted that one of the best indicators of the decreasing importance attached to family and kin groups by modern Americans is their willingness to leave their native community and migrate elsewhere.⁷⁶ Since most migration is motivated by economic or vocational factors, he suggests migration serves as an indicator of the strength of economic motives as compared to kinship ties. In modern society the removal of economic rewards out of the hands of kinship and extended family groups lessens the dominance of Jewish families over the economic placement of its young. The change in kinship relations, coupled with more fluid labor markets, thus contributes to higher mobility rates.

If this interpretation is correct, data available for both Providence and northern New Jersey suggest that kinship ties among Jews have been weakening. In the 1963 Providence survey only one-third of sons aged 40 years and over were living outside Rhode Island, compared to just over half of

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 5–6.

⁷⁶Gerhard Lenski, *The Religious Factor* (Garden City, 1963), p. 214.

the sons aged 20–39.⁷⁷ Moreover, a higher proportion of the younger group were living further away. Accentuation of this trend is suggested by the fact that almost two-thirds of sons under age 20 living away from their parental home resided outside the state. Although fewer daughters lived away from their parental community, the basic age pattern was the same as for the males. In northern New Jersey, about one-fourth of both sons and daughters living outside of their parental home remained in the same general area, and an additional quarter were living in other parts of New Jersey.⁷⁸ But about 25 per cent were living in parts of the United States outside of New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania, pointing to a fairly substantial dispersal of family members.

Together, these data support the assumption that the American Jewish community is increasingly mobile, and that such mobility must be taken into account in any evaluation of Jewish life in the United States. Such mobility affects not only the size of a particular community but also the characteristics of its residents if the migration process is selective of age, education, occupation, and income. At the same time, migration may have an important effect on the migrants, as well as on community institutions. To the extent that community ties within the Jewish population are expressed through membership in synagogues and temples, enrollment of children in educational programs, and participation in local organizations and philanthropic activities, the high degree of population movement may disrupt patterns of participation or weaken the loyalties they generate. More seriously, they may result in the failure of families and individuals to identify with organized life in the local community. Sociological research has suggested, for example, that recent migrants to a community are much less active in its formal structure than are long-time residents.⁷⁹ Although their participation eventually increases, the adjustment has been shown to take five years, and migrants may never reach the same level of participation as persons who grew up in the community. If a significant proportion of migrants know in advance that their residence in a community is not likely to be permanent, the stimulus for active participation and affiliation may be even weaker.

Mobility is not a new facet of Jewish life, and at a number of points in Jewish history it may have served to strengthen the Jewish community and indeed to insure its very survival. Such mobility may still perform a positive

⁷⁷Goldstein, "American Jewry, 1970," *op. cit.*, pp. 51–52.

⁷⁸Mervin F. Verbit, *Characteristics of a Jewish Community: The Demographic and Judaic Profiles of the Jews in the Area Served by the Jewish Federation of North Jersey* (Paterson, 1971), p. 13.

⁷⁹Basil Zimmer, "Participation of Migrants in Urban Structures," *American Sociological Review*, 1955, pp. 218–224.

function in selected situations. Small Jewish communities may benefit considerably from the influx of other Jews who are attracted by nearby universities or new economic opportunities.

More often, migration may have a deleterious effect on the community and the migrant. Especially when repeated movement occurs, the individual's ties to Judaism and the Jewish community may be weakened. This, in turn, may affect the strength of the formal community structure as an increasing proportion of individuals fail to develop strong loyalties to local institutions. For all too long, local Jewish communities have assumed that most Jews remain residentially stable for a lifetime, and that they are therefore willing and obligated to support local organizations. This may no longer be true for many Jews. An increasing number may be reluctant to affiliate with the local community, not so much because they do not identify with Judaism, but because they anticipate that they will not remain in the local area long enough to justify the financial and other investments required. The situation is further complicated by the dispersed residential patterns which Jews adopt and by their high degree of social integration into religiously heterogeneous groups. All of this suggests the need for greater concern with the role of migration in the future of American Judaism. Indeed, the rising rates of intermarriage may largely be only a by-product, along with other undesirable consequences, of increased mobility and weaker ties to both the family and the community. Given high mobility rates, there is a pressing need to view the Jewish community from a national as well as a local perspective, so that the official affiliation of individual Jews to Jewish institutions can be easily transferred from one community to another, thereby facilitating maintenance of Jewish identity.

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION

While size and density are crucial variables in the strength and vitality of any segment of the population, a wide range of demographic, social, and economic variables also significantly affects the group's current vitality and future survival. To the extent, for example, that generation status affects the strength of ties to traditional Judaism, the changing proportion of native- and foreign-born individuals in the Jewish community takes on great relevance. Rising levels of education and changing patterns of occupational careers also have direct effects on the levels of population movement, the degree of integration into the social and residential structures of the larger community, and the likelihood of intermarriage. Age structure is a crucial variable, because the socio-demographic structure of the population as well

as the processes of birth, death, and migration are closely affected by it. In the growing attention, both in research and planning, that has been given to the Jewish population, the size of the total population and the dynamics of change have received priority. Too little attention has been given to composition and the impact of its changes. The discussion which follows attempts briefly to review the major composition variables with a view to describing the present socio-demographic characteristics of the American Jewish population, likely changes in the future, and the implications that such changes may have.

Generation Status

Of all the demographic characteristics of the Jewish population, the one with perhaps the greatest relevance for its future is the changing generation status, that is, how many are foreign-born, how many are children of foreign-born, and how many are third- or higher-generation Americans. In the past, a major factor in the continued vitality of the American Jewish community has been the massive immigration of Jews from Eastern Europe. Now, for the first time in the community's history, third-generation Jews face the American scene without massive outside reinforcement. At the same time, Jews enjoy much greater freedom than ever before, so that in several respects the Jewish community in the United States is increasingly an American Jewish community. Although this emergent pattern has been somewhat modified by the influx of Jews from both the Soviet Union and Israel, the full extent to which the upsurge in this immigration affects the demographic composition and particularly the sociological character of American Jewry, especially of the populations in those communities where they are settling, remains to be documented.

Every community study which has collected data on generation status documents the diminishing proportion of foreign-born and the rise in third-generation Jews. These studies show the percentage of American-born Jews as well above 70 per cent and becoming increasingly higher.⁸⁰ In Boston, for example, between the 1965 and 1975 surveys, the percentage of foreign-born declined from 22 to 12 per cent of the total.⁸¹ By contrast, those with American-born parents rose from 20 to 49 per cent. Evidence of change is even sharper when judged by the generation composition of different age groups. Over 80 per cent of those under age 40 in Boston were born of American-born parents, but this was true of only 2 per cent of those aged 65 and over.

The same general pattern emerges from the NJPS, which found 23 per cent of household heads in the Jewish population to be foreign-born, and

⁸⁰Goldstein, "American Jewry, 1970," *op. cit.*, pp. 53-57.

⁸¹Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

one out of every five already third-generation.⁸² The distribution would favor American-born individuals much more strongly if the NJPS data referred to the population as a whole.

Assessment of the demographic, social, economic, and religious characteristics of three generations in the Jewish community suggests that the community's future depends to a great degree on how its members, now increasingly third-generation, react to the freedom to work for integration into the American social structure. Whether they are reversing or accelerating certain trends toward assimilation, initiated by their second-generation parents or by the small number of older third-generation Jews, needs careful monitoring.

Research has suggested that the geographic dispersal and deconcentration of the Jewish population marked for many not only a physical break from the foreign-born, but also symbolized the more dramatic disassociation of American-born Jews from the ethnic ties and experiences that had served as unifying forces for the earlier generation.⁸³ The degree of identification with Judaism of the third-generation Jews who participate in this dispersal has become a key issue. The residential changes are taking place concurrently with sharp increases in the amount of secular education and with an opening up to Jews of career opportunities in the professions and at high executive levels of business. All of these factors increase the amount of interaction between Jews and non-Jews, and contribute to high intermarriage rates and to redirections of the religious system.

Yet, these trends toward assimilation have been counterbalanced by a tendency toward increased Jewish education for the young, as well as by increases in certain religious observances which are seen as better fitting into the American scene. The religious change among three generations of Jews is undoubtedly a complex process involving the abandonment of traditional forms and the development of new forms of identity and expression which are seen by many Jews as more congruent with the broader American way of life. Analysis of the Providence community in 1963 suggested that, evolving out of the process of generational adjustment, the freedom to choose the degree of assimilation has been exercised in the direction of Jewish identification.⁸⁴ Whether that pattern holds for the nation as a whole and whether it has changed since the Providence survey are major questions that argue strongly for fuller exploitation of existing data and collection of new information on the interactions among generation change, demographic variables, and Jewish identity.

⁸²Massarik and Chenkin, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

⁸³Goldstein and Goldscheider, *op. cit.*

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 171-231.

Age Composition

Of all demographic variables, age is regarded as the most basic. The significant impact of age on the generation status of the Jewish population, as well as on fertility and migration, has already been noted. Age composition also has obvious implications for communal institutions. Until the NJPS, the only source of information on the age composition of Jews nationally was the 1957 Census Survey. It clearly indicated that the Jewish population was, on the average, older than the general white population of the United States. The median age of the Jewish group was 36.7 years, compared to 30.6 for the total white population. This substantial differential results from sharp differences in the proportion under 14 years of age and in the 45–64 age category. The youngest group constituted only 23 per cent of the Jewish population, compared to 28 per cent of the total white population; this reflected lower Jewish fertility. By contrast, only 21 per cent of the total white population, but 28 per cent of the Jews, were between 45 and 64 years of age in 1957 (Table 7). Both the Jewish and the total white populations had quite similar proportions in the 65 and over category, 10 and 9 per cent, respectively. On the whole, data on age structure available from individual communities confirm the older age of the Jewish group compared to that of the total population.

The data from the 1971 NJPS indicate that Jews continue to differ from the general population in age composition. Whereas 28 per cent of the national population were under age 15 in 1970, only 23 per cent of the Jewish population were in this age category—virtually identical to the 1957 differential which refers to those under age 14. By 1970 both the Jewish and the general population had more persons aged 65 and over, 11 and 10 per cent, respectively; but this differential is understated, since the Jewish institutional population was not covered directly in the NJPS. If they are included, the proportion of Jewish aged rises to 12 per cent. The effects of the declining birthrate are clearly evidenced in the decreasing percentage of Jewish children in the youngest age groups. Whereas 20 per cent of the Jewish population in 1970 were aged 10–19, only 12 per cent were under 10 years old. If these data are accurate, they point to a very substantial reduction in the absolute number of youngsters in the population and in their proportion of the total. Such changes have serious implications for future growth, for educational program needs, and for the size of a future “reservoir” from which adult support and leadership can be drawn.

The dramatic changes occurring in age composition are illustrated on the community level by comparative data from surveys taken in the same community. For example, the 1958 survey of New Orleans found 11 per cent of the population to be under age 5 and 15 per cent to be age 65 and

TABLE 7. PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF JEWISH POPULATION BY AGE, SELECTED COMMUNITIES AND UNITED STATES

Community	Date of Study	Age Distribution				
		Under 15	15-24	25-44	45-64	65 and Over
Washington, D. C.	1956	30	9	38	18	5
Worcester, Mass.	1957	27	11	26	26	10
Los Angeles, Calif.	1959	27	12	25	28	8
Rochester, N. Y.	1961	25	12	24	26	13
St. Joseph, Ind.	1961	30	14	24	24	8
Pittsburgh, Pa.	1963	27	14	25	26	8
Providence, R. I.	1963	25	14	24	27	10
Detroit, Mich.	1963	31	11	25	25	8
Milwaukee, Wis.	1964	24	15	23	28	10
Camden, N. J.	1964	30	13	23	28	6
Springfield, Mass.	1966	24	16	21	27	12
Boston, Mass.	1966	23	17	25	24	11
Flint, Mich.	1967	29	10	30	23	8
Columbus, Ohio	1969	27	13	23	28	9
Houston, Texas	1976	25	14	30	22	9
Greater Kansas City	1976	15	15	22	29	19
U.S. Jews	1957 ^a	23	12	28	28	10
U.S. whites	1957 ^a	28	14	28	21	9
U.S. Jews	1971	23	18	22	25	11
U.S. whites	1970	28	17	24	21	10

^aFor United States, lowest age categories are "under 14" and "14-24."

Sources: Sidney Goldstein, "American Jewry, 1970: A Demographic Profile," *AJYB*, Vol. 72, 1971.

Fred Massarik and Alvin Chenkin, "United States National Jewish Population Study: A First Report," *AJYB*, Vol. 74, 1973, p. 271.

1970 U.S. Census of Population.

over.⁸⁵ Reflecting, in part, the effect of lower fertility and, in part, the cumulative effects of migration and lengthening of life, the 1973 survey found only 6 per cent of the population to be under 6 years (six was used instead of five as the cutoff in 1973) but 21 per cent to be 65 and over. Clearly, there has been a substantial aging of the community in the 15-year interval.

⁸⁵*Opinions and Attitudes of the New Orleans Jewish Community* (New Orleans, 1973).

As demonstrated, the American Jewish community already has an older age structure than the total U.S. white population; over time, because of its lower fertility and its higher proportion of individuals in the middle age group, the Jewish population can be expected to become even older. The United States as a whole is already facing serious problems associated with an aging population; but during the next few decades these problems may become even more serious for the Jewish community. We can look forward to a rise in the percentage of older Jews from the 11 per cent observed in 1971 to over 15 per cent by the early 1990's.⁸⁶ This implies a 40 per cent increase in the number of aged over the 1971 count. Concurrently, the number of children under 15 will be lower, reflecting the low birthrates noted earlier. Changes will also occur in the middle range of the age hierarchy, as the reduced number of persons born during the depression years move into the upper middle-age range. This change may initially create some serious problems for the community, as the pool of persons to whom it can turn for leadership and financial contributions is somewhat reduced.

In short, Jewish communities need to reevaluate and reorganize their services to deal with the changing age composition. Equally important, continuous monitoring of the changing age composition must be maintained. The past fluctuations in fertility will manifest themselves in the magnitude of differing age cohorts as they pass through the life cycle, and may lead to temporary rises or declines in the need for services catering to particular segments of the community. While recognizing the general trend toward an aging population, and its associated problems of housing, financial restrictions, and health impairment, there must also be an awareness that changes are taking place in other key points of the age hierarchy and that the need for schools, playgrounds, camps, and teenage programs will also change as the overall age profile varies. Even if the size of the population were to remain constant, the shifting age composition would undoubtedly call for drastic changes in services, and affect residential distribution patterns and the ability of the community to provide the resources needed for strong leadership.

One of the more serious consequences of changes in the age structure and the resulting higher proportion of Jewish aged may be increasing problems of poverty. Lulled by the general affluence of America's Jews, the Jewish community paid little heed to its poor until the publication in 1971 of Ann Wolfe's "The Invisible Jewish Poor."⁸⁷ As a result of her findings and the ensuing controversy over the actual number of Jewish poor in America, communal institutions in a number of cities initiated efforts to deal with the

⁸⁶National Jewish Population Study, *The Jewish Aging*, New York, 1973, p. 1.

⁸⁷Ann G. Wolfe, "The Invisible Jewish Poor," in Lavender, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-144.

problem, and new research programs were undertaken to document the subject.

Regardless of whether the number of Jewish poor in the United States is estimated at 264,000⁸⁸ or 700,000–800,000⁸⁹ persons, those concerned with the issue generally agree that a large majority of the poverty-stricken are over age 60. Descriptions of the Jews who have retired to South Beach in Miami⁹⁰ or of those still left in the tenements of the Lower East Side in New York⁹¹ serve as poignant examples. If, as Bertram Gold states, “most of the Jewish poor are poor because of special circumstances—isolated old age, cultural separateness, maladjustment, death of the breadwinner,”⁹² the problems may well become more severe in the near future. Larger numbers of older persons, coupled with the loosening of family ties and the greater mobility among American Jews, would help to create the conditions which foster poverty. The Jewish community may thus have one more dimension to add to the services it will be called on to provide. At the very least, it is an area which should be closely monitored, with an eye to alleviating the situation before it becomes more acute.

Education

Of all the Jews who immigrated to America in the late 1800's and early 1900's, a large majority came because of the supposedly equal opportunities for social and economic mobility. But lacking secular education, adequate facility in English, and technical training, rapid advancement proved an unrealistic goal for many. For others, both education and occupational achievement were made difficult, if not impossible, by factors related to their foreign-born status and/or their identification as Jews. Frustrated in their own efforts to achieve significant mobility, many Jews transferred their aspirations to their children. First-generation American Jews recognized the special importance of education as a key to occupational mobility and made considerable effort to provide their children with a good secular education. Reflecting the great value placed on education, both as a way of life and as a means of mobility, the Jews of America have compiled an extraordinary record of educational achievement.

The limited data available for the period around 1950 show the education of Jews was higher than that of the white population, averaging about 12

⁸⁸Kaplan, “Comment: The Invisible Jewish Poor, I,” in Lavender, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

⁸⁹Wolfe, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

⁹⁰Elinor Horwitz, “Jewish Poverty Hurts in South Beach,” in Lavender, *op. cit.*, pp. 160–166.

⁹¹Mark Effron, “Left Behind, Left Alone,” in Lavender, *op. cit.*, pp. 167–179.

⁹²As quoted in Rhode Island *Herald*, February 4, 1972.

and 10 years, respectively.⁹³ This differential was confirmed on the national level by the 1957 Census Survey.⁹⁴ For the population 25 years old and over, the median number of school years completed by Jews was 12.3, compared to 10.6 for the general population. Yet, even sharper differences than those conveyed by these statistics distinguished the educational achievements of Jews from those of the general population: 17 per cent of the adult Jews were college graduates, compared to only 7 per cent of the general population. At the other extreme of the educational hierarchy, 29 per cent of all adult Jews had received only an elementary school education, compared to 40 per cent of the total population. Various community studies lent further weight to the strength of the differential, and pointed particularly to the rising levels of education among younger Jews, both male and female.⁹⁵ That an estimated 80 per cent of those in the college age group were enrolled in college emphasized the very high value placed by Jews on college education. In fact, within the Jewish population the important educational differential in younger groups is between those who had only some college education and those who went on to postgraduate work. This was further confirmed by studies of educational expectation among school-age children. In 1965, 86 per cent of the Jewish students planned to attend college, compared to only 53 per cent of the general student body.

The NJPS lends further support to the conclusions based on these earlier sets of data (Table 8). Among the male Jewish population aged 25 and over, only 15.2 per cent had not graduated high school. By contrast, 60 per cent had had some college education. Of those aged 30–39 (age specific data not shown in Table 8), who constitute the youngest age cohort likely to have completed their education, only 4 per cent had no high school education and 83 per cent had some college education. In fact, at least 70 per cent had graduated college, and 45 per cent of all the males aged 30–39 had done some graduate work. Although sex differentials are apparent among Jews, as they are for the total population, Jews value extensive education for women, particularly among the younger cohorts. Like the men, very few women (16 per cent) had less than a high school degree, but many more had restricted their education to a high school level; and just over half reported some college education. Sharp age differentials are evident, however. Among women aged 30–39, only 2.4 per cent had less than a high school degree, and as many as 75 per cent had some college education. The sharpest difference between men and women appears with respect to

⁹³Ben Seligman and Aaron Antonovsky, "Some Aspects of Jewish Demography," in Marshall Sklare, (ed.), *The Jews* (Glencoe, 1958), p. 54.

⁹⁴Sidney Goldstein, "Socioeconomic Differentials Among Religious Groups in the United States," *American Journal of Sociology*, May 1969, pp. 612–631.

⁹⁵Goldstein, "American Jewry, 1970," *op. cit.*, pp. 63–65.

graduate work. Of women 30–39 years of age, only 15 per cent reported a graduate or professional degree. The trend data suggested by age differentials point clearly, however, to rising levels of graduate work among the younger women.

Comparison in Table 8 of the levels of education completed by Jews with those reported in the 1970 U.S. census for the total white population documents the persistence of sharp educational differentials. Just over half of the Jews, but only 22 per cent of the non-Jews, had some college education; the widest difference characterized those with some graduate studies: 18 per cent of the Jews compared to 5 per cent of all whites. At the other extreme, only 16 per cent of the Jews had less than 12 years of schooling, compared to 46 per cent of all whites. Clearly, Jews continue to be characterized by distinctively higher levels of educational achievement, and, as the data in Table 8 show, this holds for both men and women.

TABLE 8. PER CENT DISTRIBUTION OF YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED BY PERSONS AGED 25 AND OVER, JEWISH AND TOTAL UNITED STATES WHITE POPULATION, BY SEX, 1970

Years of School Completed	Males		Females		Both Sexes	
	Jewish	Total White	Jewish	Total White	Jewish	Total White
Less than 12 years	15.2	46.1	16.0	44.9	15.6	45.5
12 years	22.5	28.5	35.3	35.5	29.2	32.1
College:						
1–3 years	17.3	11.1	21.0	11.1	19.2	11.1
4 years	14.9	7.2	13.6	5.7	14.2	6.4
5 or more years	26.5	7.1	10.6	2.8	18.2	4.9
Unknown	3.5	—	3.5	—	3.5	—
Total per cent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Sources: For the Jewish population: Fred Massarik and Alvin Chenkin, "United States National Jewish Population Study: A First Report," *AJYB*, Vol. 74, 1973, p.280. For the United States white population: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1970 U.S. Census of Population: General Social and Economic Characteristics*, PC(1)-C1, (Washington, 1972) p. 386.

Note: Since the differentials between the Jewish and the total white population change only minimally when age is controlled, the non-standardized data are presented here.

These data on the changing educational achievements within the Jewish population and the differentials between the Jews and the larger American population have a number of implications for the various demographic developments reviewed in this assessment. First, they clearly confirm the exceptionally high level of education that has come to characterize the Jewish population. Although the differentials between Jews and non-Jews will diminish, particularly if current emphasis on recruitment of minority group members and underprivileged students persists, it will still be some time before college attendance levels among the non-Jewish population reach those achieved by the Jews. As a result, some of the educational differences can be expected to persist for a number of decades, and indirectly to continue to affect occupation and income differentials. The growing enrollment of women in graduate work and the implications that this has for their developing independent careers have particular significance for both marriage rates and fertility, as well as for family stability.

To the extent that education is highly correlated with occupation, the continuing high percentage of college graduates in the Jewish population will affect its occupational composition, provided, of course, that the opportunities for employment exist which utilize skills developed through education. In the future even more Jews will likely be engaged in intellectual pursuits and in occupations requiring a high degree of technical skill. Concomitantly, there will probably also be a reduction in the number of self-employed, both because small, private business will not provide an adequate intellectual challenge and because patterns of discrimination which thus far have held back Jews in large corporations are likely to continue to weaken.

As before, and perhaps increasingly so, the impact of high education will go beyond occupation. In order to obtain a college education, particularly at the postgraduate level, a large proportion of young Jews must leave home. As a result, their ties to both family and community will weaken. Moreover, many of these college-educated Jews will not return permanently to the communities in which their families live and in which they were raised.

A 1973 study undertaken in Savannah, Georgia, for example, has shown that from 1954 to 1958 half of Savannah's Jewish college graduates settled in the city.⁹⁶ From 1965 to 1969 only one in five returned; the Jewish community was losing its college graduates for lack of job opportunities. Thus education serves as an important catalyst for geographic mobility which eventually leads many individuals to take up residence in communities with small Jewish populations, to live in highly integrated

⁹⁶Rhode Island *Herald*, September 1, 1977.

neighborhoods, and to work and socialize in largely non-Jewish circles. The extent of such a development needs to be assessed and future patterns need to be monitored.

Finally, Jews with higher education may have significantly higher rates of intermarriage and become more alienated from the Jewish community. This development involves not only the possible impact of physical separation from home and the weakening of parental control in dating and courtship patterns, but also the general liberalizing effect a college education may have on religious values and Jewish identity. It would be ironic if the very strong positive value which Jews have traditionally placed on education, and that now has manifested itself in a very high proportion of Jewish youths attending college, turns out to be an important factor in the general weakening of the individual's ties to the Jewish community.

Whether the high levels of enrollment in colleges and in graduate work will persist remains an open question. If the Jewish population becomes more generally dispersed and tendencies toward migration increase, a much higher proportion of Jewish youth may be raised in neighborhoods and attend schools that are less densely Jewish. Some evidence suggests that in such a situation the motivation for higher education is less strong.⁹⁷ If so, a somewhat lower proportion of Jewish youth may plan to go to college in the future. Still another factor that may affect enrollment levels is the perceived employment opportunity open to college students. If the job market is such that students are discouraged from continuing their college and graduate studies, Jews may well be affected more than other segments of the population, especially if this situation is coupled with emphasis on minority group selection in admission to universities and in the hiring practice of large firms. We need studies to document whether the college dropout rate has risen for Jews and whether the more recent Jewish high school graduates are, in fact, continuing their education. It seems less likely now than it did one or two decades ago that a college education will become virtually universal for Jewish youth. More likely, levels of educational achievement will plateau at the very high level they have already reached or slightly below it.

Occupational Composition

Reflecting in part their high levels of education, Jews are disproportionately concentrated in the upper ranks of the occupational structure. As part of his analysis of the social characteristics of American Jews prepared in 1954 for the tercentenary celebration of Jewish settlement in the United

⁹⁷A. Lewis Rhodes and Charles B. Nam, "The Religious Context of Educational Expectations," *American Sociological Review*, April 1970, pp. 253-267.

States, Nathan Glazer observed that, outside of New York City, the homogeneous character of the occupational structure of Jewish communities was beyond dispute.⁹⁸ Basing his conclusions on a number of local Jewish community surveys conducted between 1948 and 1953, he noted that the proportion of Jews in the nonmanual occupations ranged from 75 to 96 per cent, compared to 38 per cent for the American population as a whole. Even in New York City, where greater heterogeneity would have been expected, as many as two-thirds of the employed Jews were engaged in nonmanual work. Glazer further noted a general tendency for the ethnic concentration in a single occupation to suffer dilution as the native-born generation became better educated and more familiar with occupational opportunities. In the case of Jews, however, "this dilution upward becomes a concentration, for the Jews began to reach the upper limit of occupational mobility relatively early."⁹⁹ For Jews to reflect the general occupational structure of the United States would, in fact, require downward mobility for many, and Glazer concluded that, since this will not happen, "we may expect the Jewish community to become more homogeneous in the future as the number of first-generation workers and the culture they established declines."¹⁰⁰

The data from the fairly large number of community studies conducted in the 1950's and 1960's, as well as those from the 1957 Census Survey, support Glazer's thesis of an upward shift in Jewish occupational affiliations. The census survey, in particular, has special significance because of its national coverage. It found that three-fourths of all Jewish, employed males were in white collar positions, compared to only 35 per cent of the total white male population.¹⁰¹ To a very great extent, this large difference is attributable to the much greater concentration of Jewish men in professional and managerial positions. Compared with men, women in the labor force were much more concentrated in white collar positions, and therefore the differentials between Jewish women and all women were less marked than those for men. Just over four out of every five Jewish women were in white collar jobs, compared to just over half of the total female labor force.

The sharp generation changes in occupational affiliation reflected in the 1957 data are attested to by a 1964 B'nai B'rith Vocational Service report.¹⁰² It found that three-fourths of all Jewish high school youths hoped to enter professional and technical jobs, whereas only one in five of their fathers

⁹⁸Nathan Glazer, "The American Jew and the Attainment of Middle-Class Rank: Some Trends and Explanations," in Sklare, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

⁹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 146.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁰¹Goldstein, "Socioeconomic Differentials," *op. cit.*

¹⁰²New York Times, June 25, 1972.

actually held such jobs. By contrast, only 3 per cent hoped to be business proprietors, compared to 27 per cent whose fathers owned businesses.

The 1965 and 1975 Boston surveys have particular value in documenting recent changes in occupational composition, although some of the changes may reflect selective in- and out-migration and changing opportunities in the Boston area.¹⁰³ In 1965 one-third of the employed Jewish males in Boston were professionals; by 1975 this proportion had risen to 40 per cent. The percentage engaged in clerical and sales work also rose from 15 to 21 per cent. As might be expected on the basis of developments noted earlier, the proportion engaged in managerial activities declined from 37 to only 27 per cent of the total in 1975. In all, therefore, the percentage of males making their living in white collar work rose, but the distribution by specific types of occupations shifted.

Jewish women followed a somewhat different pattern, with increasing percentages engaged in both professional and managerial activities. These changes relate to the rising educational levels of women and their greater participation in the labor force. In both 1965 and 1975 in the Boston area, over 90 per cent of all women were in white collar jobs, contrasted with 70 per cent for the non-Jewish employed women, with most of the differential being attributable to fewer non-Jews in professional and managerial positions.

Similar patterns of occupational distribution were found by the NJPS (Table 9). Almost 90 per cent of all males and females were employed in white collar positions, and those in the younger ages were much more heavily concentrated in professional activities. Only a very small proportion were engaged in manual work. Data from the various community surveys also point to a continuing increase in the proportion of Jews engaged in white collar work, but within the white collar group there appears to be a shift toward more professionals; either stability or decline characterizes the managerial and proprietor group. With the decrease in small businesses, an increasing proportion of Jewish men may be turning to executive positions in larger corporations, instead of operating their own firms as did many of their parents and grandparents.

Simon Kuznets, in his analysis of the trends in the economic structure of U. S. Jewry, assessed the various constraints affecting the occupational choices of American Jews. He concluded that it is evident that changes in these constraints have contributed toward greater concentration of Jews in professional and technical pursuits; an increase in employees rather than employers among officials, managers, and within the professional-technical group; a decline in the share of industrial blue collar jobs; and a lesser

¹⁰³Axelrod, Fowler, and Gurin, *op. cit.*; Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-47.

TABLE 9. OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE JEWISH AND TOTAL UNITED STATES WHITE POPULATION,^a BY SEX, 1970

Occupation	Males		Females		Both Sexes	
	Jewish	Total White	Jewish	Total White	Jewish	Total White
Professional and technical	29.3	15.0	23.8	16.3	27.4	15.5
Managers, administrators	40.7	12.0	15.5	3.9	32.2	9.0
Clerical	3.2	7.6	41.7	8.1	16.2	18.4
Sales	14.2	7.4	8.3	36.8	12.2	7.7
Crafts	5.6	21.8	1.5	1.9	4.2	14.4
Operatives	3.9	18.7	2.3	14.0	3.4	17.0
Service	1.2	7.3	3.6	17.4	2.0	11.0
Laborers	0.3	5.7	0.2	0.9	0.3	3.9
Agriculture ^b	—	4.5	—	0.7	—	3.1
Unknown	1.7	—	3.1	—	2.2	—
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

^aThe Jewish population includes persons aged 25 and over; the total white population includes persons aged 16 and over.

^bNo separate category for agriculture was included in the NJPS data.

Source: For the Jewish population: Fred Massarik and Alvin Chenkin, "United States National Jewish Population Study: A First Report," *AJYB*, Vol. 74, 1973, pp. 284-285. For the United States white population: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1970 U.S. Census of Population: General Social and Economic Characteristics*, PC(1)-C1, (Washington, 1972) p. 392.

Note: Since the differentials between the Jewish and the total white population change only minimally when age is controlled, the non-standardized data are presented here.

concentration in trade, particularly small proprietorships.¹⁰⁴ The reasons he cites are similar to those mentioned earlier in this analysis.

Change also characterizes the non-Jewish population. Between the 1957 census survey and the 1970 decennial census, the occupational differentials between Jews and non-Jews seemed to have narrowed somewhat, as a result of the noticeable increase in the percentage of non-Jews in white collar jobs. Three-fourths of all Jewish males 14 and over were already in white collar work in 1957, compared to only 35 per cent of all the white males; by 1970 this was true of 87 per cent of the Jewish males aged 25 and over covered by the NJPS and 42 per cent of all white males aged 16 and over in the 1970

¹⁰⁴Simon Kuznets, *Economic Structure of U.S. Jewry: Recent Trends* (Jerusalem, 1972), pp. 17-18.

census. For females the data also suggest some narrowing. Whereas 83 per cent of Jewish women were in white collar work in 1957, and 89 per cent in 1970, among all white women the percentage rose from 55 to 65 per cent. More importantly, perhaps, sharp differences persisted despite the narrowing. For example, among men twice as large a proportion of Jews as of all white males were in the professional and technical group. Only 11 per cent of Jewish men were engaged in manual work, compared to 58 per cent of all white men; for women the difference was almost as great—8 per cent of Jewish women, compared to 35 per cent of all white women.

As differentials between Jews and non-Jews with respect to educational level diminish, and as discriminatory restrictions on occupational choice weaken, it seems likely that occupational differentials generally, and within white collar occupations specifically, will decline. The major question, as with education, revolves about the specific direction in which the youngest generation will move as they face career decisions. How many of them, motivated by different values and attracted by new life styles, will forego college and attempt to make a living through manual work or lower white collar positions? How many of those who are trained for higher positions, but who are frustrated by their inability to obtain such work, will opt for blue collar jobs or seek employment in clerical or sales positions?

A 1972 assessment of employment prospects for Jewish youth stressed that Jewish young men and women faced "relatively greater" job-hunting difficulties in the near future, and should therefore give more consideration to nonprofessional jobs than they had in the past, due to the projected slower rise in professional and technical jobs between 1970 and 1980.¹⁰⁵ In his review, Herbert Bienstock called for more emphasis on vocational guidance and placement, and on "attitudinal reconditioning, particularly in terms of value structures relating to nonprofessional job opportunities,"¹⁰⁶ especially as the latter became more attractive in pay and security than in the past. Although predicting that a majority of Jews entering the job market would continue to seek white collar jobs, Bienstock, a labor force expert, also suggested that young Jews might turn in increasing numbers to self-employment, not in the old-style shop or small store, but in new areas where demands for services were likely to grow.

Only repeated surveys of the kind that have been undertaken in Boston, but preferably on a more frequent basis, and more intensive monitoring of changes occurring both at the attitudinal and behavioral levels, will provide the opportunities to fully assess the very significant reversals in the trends of the past that may be occurring at present or that are likely to occur in

¹⁰⁵New York *Times*, June 25, 1972.

¹⁰⁶As quoted in *Ibid.*

the near future. At the same time, research is needed to ascertain whether the changing occupational affiliations of Jews, and particularly their entrance into new types of professional and managerial responsibilities, lead to increased channeling of self-identification through professional or intellectual sub-societies rather than through the Jewish community. We also need to know more about the ways in which occupational mobility is related to geographic mobility. The two together may well provide the organized community with one of its major challenges.

THE CURRENT AND FUTURE DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION

An assessment of the demographic situation of American Jewry in 1970¹⁰⁷ pointed to a number of challenges which the American Jewish community would have to face in the closing decades of the 20th century as a result of the demographic changes that were then taking place. The low level of Jewish fertility, coupled with some losses from intermarriage, pointed at best to maintenance of the slow growth rate characterizing the Jewish population in the second and third quarters of the 20th century, and possibly to still slower growth. Concurrently, increasing Americanization seemed likely to continue, as judged by greater geographic dispersion, a higher percentage of third- and fourth-generation Americans, and narrowing of such key socioeconomic differentials as education, occupation, and income. All these changes pointed to the potential for greater behavioral convergence between Jews and non-Jews, and corresponding losses in Jewish identity. However, it was also suggested that structural separation and the continuity of Jewish identity would persist as American Jews continued their efforts to find a meaningful balance between Jewishness and Americanism.

Since the 1970 assessment was undertaken, many of the patterns that were then emerging have become further accentuated. By 1977 the Jewish population constituted only 2.7 per cent of the American population, in contrast to the peak of 3.7 per cent reached in the mid-1930's. Jewish fertility levels seem to have declined even further as part of the national pattern in the 1970's. If the fertility rates of Jews persist at the low levels reached in the 1970's, the American Jewish population is quite certain to decline in actual numbers (unless there continue to be compensating additions through immigration). Even should fertility remain at near the replacement level, the losses resulting from intermarriage and assimilation

¹⁰⁷Goldstein, "American Jewry, 1970," *op. cit.*

will compound the effects of either very low natural increase or negative growth resulting from an excess of deaths over births.

Recent estimates of the Jewish population suggest that although the American Jewish population had approached the 6 million mark in the late 1960's, it has not yet passed that milestone and, given the recent pattern of demographic growth, is not likely to do so. A realistic assessment suggests that the Jewish population of America will remain at approximately its present size, between 5.5 and 5.8 million, through the end of the century. In the absence of significant reversals in fertility behavior or in rates of intermarriage, a decline will set in during the first decades of the 21st century that could well lead to a reduction of one to two million by the time of the tricentennial. Most of the social and economic changes characterizing the United States in general, in combination with the unique characteristics of the Jewish population itself, are likely to reinforce the low growth rates or decline. These include high rates of divorce and separation, later age at marriage and possible rises in levels of non-marriage, increased extra-familial activity on the part of women, higher education levels, greater secularism, growing concern about overpopulation, and rising costs of living. Many of these very same factors are likely to lead to continued high levels of intermarriage. Although its effects on population size are compensated to a degree by conversions to Judaism and the rearing of many of the children of intermarriages as Jews, maintenance of the high levels of intermarriage reported in recent years would undoubtedly compound the impact of low fertility on the rate of population growth.

Jews have already become widely dispersed throughout the United States, and this trend is likely to continue in the future. The available evidence suggests that as a result of continuously higher education and changing occupations, lower levels of self-employment, weakening family ties, and reduced discrimination, Jews have begun to migrate in increasing numbers away from the major centers of Jewish population. Even while distinct areas of Jewish concentration remain, and while Jews continue to be highly concentrated in the metropolitan areas, the emerging patterns of redistribution point to fewer Jews in the Northeast, substantial decreases in central cities, and possibly even some reduction in the suburban population as Jews join the movement to non-metropolitan areas, smaller urban places, and even rural locations. Regardless of which particular stream becomes more popular, the net result is likely to be a much more geographically dispersed Jewish population in the decades ahead.

Such greater dispersal means that factors other than religion will provide an increasingly important basis for selecting areas and neighborhoods of residence. In turn, the lower Jewish density will provide the seeds for still greater acculturation and assimilation. Moreover, to the extent that Jews

increasingly participate in the pattern of repeated population movement which characterizes the American scene, additional dangers to the strength of community ties loom on the horizon.

The decline in relative or even total numbers may not be very significant in the next few decades, since Jews have never constituted a numerically large segment of the American population. What may be more crucial is the vitality of individual Jewish communities, and this may be much more influenced by the size of such communities and their socioeconomic composition. Only when the change in total numbers is accompanied by significant changes in distribution and composition which are deleterious to both the ability to maintain a vital Jewish community and to foster individual Jewish identification will the change in numbers itself take on a new significance. Because population movement has special significance for these concerns, any substantial change in the pattern of residential distribution of Jews and in their ability to maintain close identity with a Jewish community takes on special importance.

Operating partly as a cause and partly as an effect of these changing patterns of growth, distribution, and intermarriage are the underlying changes in population composition characterizing American Jewry. Perhaps the most striking compositional change has been the reduction in the percentage of foreign-born. Indeed, as already noted in 1970, even the proportion of second-generation American Jews has begun to diminish as third- and fourth-generation persons become an ever larger proportion of the Jewish population. The pace of change would be even faster were it not for the low levels of Jewish fertility, which, in addition to contributing to the low rate of population growth, result in a reduced number of young persons in the population and an increasing proportion of aged.

Given the ZPG levels of fertility which the Jewish population seems to have reached, the average age of the Jewish population is likely to rise still further and to remain substantially above the average of the general population. Thus, a major challenge for the Jewish community in the future will be the comparatively large numbers of older persons, a considerable portion of whom will be widows.

Jews remain unique, despite some evidence of narrowing differentials, in having a heavy concentration of members who are highly educated, who hold white collar positions, and who have large incomes. It is the large proportion of Jews who obtain specialized university training—with their tendency to move out of small family businesses into salaried employment, and their increasing willingness to seek and take positions away from their community of current residence—that helps to explain the growing residential dispersal of the Jewish population. The same factor undoubtedly also contributes to the high rates of intermarriage, the low level of fertility, and the growing tendency toward assimilation.

In combination, the current pattern of very low fertility, high levels of intermarriage, and lower residential density through population redistribution may all serve to weaken the demographic base of the Jewish population in the United States. Yet, to the extent that Jews retain a comparatively close-knit, ethnic-religious identification within the total society, the potential for continued vitality remains. Stability of numbers or even declining numbers need not constitute a fundamental threat to the maintenance of a strong Jewish community and to high levels of individual Jewish identity. The risk that this may happen is obviously present, but this was also true in the past when larger numbers obtained. Although maintenance of numbers is certainly desirable in the interest of providing a strong base for insuring Jewish identity and vitality, whether or not the community as a whole should or can do anything to control the changing fertility levels or the patterns of redistribution is debatable. To the extent that mobility and fertility behavior represent reactions to a wide and complex range of social, economic, and normative changes in the larger American society, they are probably well beyond the direct and even indirect control of the organized Jewish community. What is perhaps more important is that the community undertake and maintain fuller assessments of the implications of these developments, and that it be prepared, on the basis of such assessments, to develop new institutional forms designed, at a minimum, to mitigate the negative effects of population decline and dispersal. Ideally, these efforts should also increase opportunities for Jewish self-identification and for greater participation of individuals in organized Jewish life. By taking these steps, the community will help insure that the changes that do occur still allow for a meaningful balance between being Jewish and being American.