

# Stratification and the Transformation of American Jews, 1910–90 Have the Changes Resulted in Assimilation?

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Large, cohesive, and powerful Jewish communities have emerged in several modern, western, pluralist societies where Jews define themselves and are comfortable both as Jews and as full citizens of the states they live in. They have long term roots in their countries and have developed life styles and cultural forms, along with complex local, national, and international institutions, that enrich their ethnic and religious expressions. These multi-generational communities do not appear to be ephemeral. Their Judaism and their Jewishness are expressed in diverse and changing ways that challenge simple assumptions about the total assimilation of ethnic white minorities and the demise of religion in modern society. For while Jews have assimilated and become secular in some ways, their communities have become more cohesive and viable in other ways, developing new expressions of Judaism in a secular context and of Jewishness in an open society. They are well integrated into and share much of the broader national culture and society in which they live; yet they remain distinctive communities.

Instead of asking whether Jews in America are assimilating or whether they are surviving as a community (they are doing both), social scientists have reformulated the central analytic question about Jews and other ethnic and religious minorities in the United States: What factors sustain ethnic and religious continuity for American Jews in the absence of overt discrimination and disadvantage? What structural and cultural forces sustain continuity in the face of pressures toward the disintegration of the uniqueness and distinctiveness of their communities?

The theory that guides my research is based on the comparative-historical analysis of Jews in the modern world (Goldscheider and Zuckerman, 1984) and cross-national studies of ethnicity (Goldscheider, 1992; Goldscheider, 1996). It is also part of the larger set of studies I have carried out on Jews in the United States (Goldscheider, 1986). It is neither an “optimistic” nor a “pessimistic” view; it is not a question, as some have argued, of whether the glass is half full or half empty. It is distorting to see only half a glass, examine only part of the evidence, and emphasize only the negative (or positive) sections. We should examine what is in the glass — that is, the quality of Jewish life.

There are a wide variety of structural and institutional features that link Jews to one another in complex networks and mark Jews off as a community from those who are not Jewish. These features include family and social connections, organizational, political, and residential patterns, and religious and ethnic activities which can reinforce the values and shape the attitudes of American Jews. This paper examines stratification as one of the structural conditions that affects the cohesion within Jewish communities in the United States. It focuses on occupation and education using evidence from 1910, 1970, and 1990 data sources (U.S. censuses and sample surveys) on Jewish men and women and other white, non-Hispanics. First, the long term changes in Jewish American stratification and its continuing distinctive communal pattern are described. These changes are then linked to selected measures of the intensity (or quality) of American Jewish life, examining the impact of educational attainment, occupational type, and occupational concentration on religious and ethnic Jewish expressions. The data provide a basis for assessing the consequences of the changing stratification profile for the continuing developments of the American Jewish community.

### **Education**

We start with the changing educational profile of the American Jewish community from the turn of the 20th century to its end. The story for the most part is clear and well known: Jews in the United States have become the most educated group of all American ethnic and religious groups, of all Jewish communities around the world, and of all Jewish communities ever in recorded Jewish history. Quite a feat, given the low level of education of the American Jewish community three to four generations ago. This accomplishment reflects both the value that Jews place on education and the educational opportunities available in the United States. Over 90 percent of American Jewish young men and young women go on to college, and they are the children of mothers and fathers who also have studied in college — two generations of men and women who are college educated. Increases in the educational level of the American Jewish population have been documented in every study carried out over the last several decades; the level attained is a distinguishing feature of American Jewish communities and may be a core value of contemporary American Jewish culture.

New national data sources have become available that allow us to analyze this dramatic change in detail. (Data on local communities have also been used to assess contemporary patterns and historical changes. For a recent, excellent account of schooling differences between Jews and others in the late 19th and early 20th centuries see Perlmann, 1988.) Using both the 1970 and 1990 National Jewish Population Surveys along with comparable data on the non-Hispanic white population from U.S. census and Current Population Survey data, we constructed the educational attainment levels of American Jews born in the pre-1905 period to 1950–60 (Table 1). Formally, these are the survivors of the members of the respective birth-cohorts who were interviewed in 1970 and in 1990. There is

**TABLE 1. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT BY GENDER AND AGE-COHORTS  
— JEWISH AND TOTAL POPULATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES**

	Birth Cohort						
	Before 1905	1905– 1919	Before 1925	1920– 1929	1930– 1939	1940– 1949	
<i>Jewish Population</i>							
<i>Male</i>							
Less than HS	44	16	11	8	2	2	2
High School	23	29	23	20	13	6	9
Some College	10	21	24	20	19	21	18
College Graduate	9	13	19	17	23	25	33
Post Graduate	14	21	23	35	43	47	38
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	1,217	2,047	175	1,423	904	269	312
<i>Female</i>							
Less than HS	50	15	10	7	2	1	3
High School	32	47	40	36	23	19	10
Some College	10	20	27	28	32	21	26
College Graduate	4	8	14	14	22	20	28
Post Graduate	4	10	9	15	21	39	33
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	1,440	2,100	213	1,585	1,110	253	342
<i>Non-Hispanic White Population</i>							
<i>Male</i>							
Less than HS	69	46	35	34	23	8	7
High School	15	28	31	32	35	31	33
Some College	8	12	14	15	17	22	24
College Graduate	4	7	10	10	12	18	20
Post Graduate	4	6	9	10	14	21	16
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	4,538	8,842	4,538	7,157	6,525	5,570	7,201
<i>Female</i>							
Less than HS	64	46	35	31	24	8	6
High School	21	35	41	46	48	41	36
Some College	9	11	13	14	15	24	27
College Graduate	4	5	7	6	8	14	19
Post Graduate	2	3	4	4	5	13	12
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	7,632	10,081	6,609	7,777	6,765	5,708	7,415

Source: National Jewish Population Survey data of 1970 and 1990 were used for the Jewish population. Data on the total population were tabulated from the 1970 Census Public Use Sample and from the Current Population Survey of 1990. Both were restricted to the non-Hispanic white population living in metropolitan areas of the United States.

some selectivity in using these data as a basis for estimating the educational levels of each cohort as a whole. Periods of school enrollment ranged from the first decade of the 20th century to the 1970s and 1980s. These reconstructed data highlight several important features of the educational transformation of American Jews.

First, cohorts of Jews born before 1905 had relatively low levels of education. About half had less than a high school education and less than one-fourth of the men and only eight percent of the women graduated from college. By the 1920–30 birth cohort, almost three-fourths of the men had exposure to some college education; ten years later that was the level attained by Jewish women as well. Over half of the men of the 1920–30 cohort at least graduated from college and 35 percent had some post-graduate education. Starting with the 1940–50 cohort, about six out of ten of the women had at least graduated from college.

The data also show the distinctive educational attainments of Jewish men and women relative to non-Hispanic whites living in U.S. metropolitan areas. For the earliest cohort, Jewish men had somewhat higher levels of educational attainment than white (non-Hispanic) men in general, with a larger proportion completing at least high school. The educational level of Jewish women was also distinctive in the earlier cohorts, but most (about 85 percent) women had no more than a high school education. Both Jewish men and women increased their educational level earlier than the total population: attending some college became the norm for the majority of Jewish men beginning as early as the 1905–20 cohort, a level that white men did not reach until the 1940–50 cohort. The majority of Jewish women had some college education beginning in the 1920–30 cohort; that level was only barely reached among white women of the 1940–50 cohort. Advancing beyond college to post-graduate education characterized one-third of the Jewish men born between 1920–30 and over one-third of the Jewish women born between 1940–50; that level has yet to be attained by the total population.

The cohort educational experiences of Jews and others can also be compared. Treating the length of a generation as about 30 years, we can assume that the 1920–30 cohort was for the most part the parental generation of the 1950–60 cohort. Seen in this way, almost three-fourths of the Jews who were born between 1950–60 had fathers with some college education and half of these fathers had graduated from college and/or went on to post-graduate school. Over half of their mothers went on to college and almost 30 percent of them graduated from college. In sharp contrast, two-thirds of the fathers and three-fourths of the mothers of non-Jews born between 1950–60 had no education beyond high school. Earlier cohorts of Jews grew up in families where the educational level was higher than their non-Jewish friends but the contrasts were not as sharp.

We can also view these cohorts in terms of educational range or inequality. Jewish men and women born in the first decade of the 20th century aggregated at low levels of education; even those who completed high school were exceptional within the Jewish community as well as among their non-Jewish age-peers. Those growing up at the end of the 20th century are college graduates; those not completing college have become clear exceptions among Jews. In contrast, those born in the 1920s and

1930s attained a much greater range of educational levels than the cohorts born before or after them. These middle cohorts lived through a period of transition in the schooling of American Jews, where the rate of educational change and the choices about whether to continue schooling at various stages were at a maximum. The transformation from a generation characterized by low levels of education to where two generations of Jews are characterized by college levels of education is clearly reflected in these contrasts.

**TABLE 2. LITERACY, ESTIMATED OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION, AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS BY GENDER — JEWISH AND TOTAL POPULATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1910**

	Male		Female	
	Jewish	Total	Jewish	Total
Percent Literate	91	95	77	96
N	1,847	10,237	1,694	9,850
<i>Occupational distribution</i>				
Total	100	100	100	100
Professional	4	7	3	13
Managers	6	3	0	0
Clerical	10	11	19	20
Sales	25	11	5	2
Skilled Workers	27	24	30	15
Semi-Skilled	23	20	33	16
Service	5	18	10	34
<i>Employment status</i>				
Total	100	100	100	100
Employer	13	7	2	2
Own Account	23	9	8	13
Work for Wages	64	84	90	85
N	1,782	9,590	459	2,697

Note: These estimates are based on tabulations from the 1910 Public Use file of the United States Census. The Jewish population includes those whose mother tongue was Yiddish, either parent's mother tongue was Yiddish, and/or where the language spoken at home was Yiddish. The total population includes whites living in urban areas (population of 2,500 and over). The data are restricted to persons 18 years of age and older.

These educational data, retrospectively constructed, refer to individuals, with generation and compositional changes inferred. Cross-sectional views that are contemporary with the periods examined are powerful additional reminders of what the community looked like educationally at various points. The 1910 United States

census provides us with a brief glimpse of educational patterns for Jews and others. While no information on educational attainment of the adult population was collected, data on literacy point to lower levels among Jewish men than others in 1910 and significantly lower levels among Jewish women than either men or other women (Table 2, line 1). So the educational starting point for Jews, most of whom were recent immigrants in 1910, was lower than others. Estimates of school enrollment by age in 1910 suggest that Jewish children aged 14–18 were less likely than native whites to be in school (47 percent compared to 59 percent) and even less than some other immigrant groups (Jacobs and Greene, 1990, Table 3). But Jewish men who were born in the United States had much higher enrollment levels and the highest estimated years of schooling completed (*ibid.*) that there was a systematic increase in literacy for each younger cohort of Jewish males and females — 84 percent of the men and only 57 percent of the women age 50 and over in the 1910 census were literate; among those ages 18–19, the respective proportions were 97 percent and 89 percent. As an interesting methodological aside, we can estimate the proportion who did not complete high school by using enrollment data among Jews aged 14–18 in 1910. The census data show that 50 percent of the boys and 55 percent of the girls in this age group were not enrolled in school (*ibid.*, Table 6). These levels are very close to the estimates we presented in Table 1 for the cohort born before 1905 that were derived from the 1970 National Jewish Population Survey: 44 percent of the Jewish men of that cohort and 50 percent of the women did not finish high school. These comparisons suggest that the survivor selectivity of the 1970 NJPS does not distort the cohort educational experiences of Jews at the turn of the 20th century.

Table 3 compares national data on two cross sections of Jews and others in 1970 and 1990, encompassing the variety of cohorts that characterized the American Jewish community at those two points. These data confirm three central points about the educational transformation of Jews: (1) Jews as a community have distinctively high levels of education, higher than others in the United States; (2) there has been a systematic increase in the levels of education over the last two decades, reducing only marginally the gap between Jews and others; and (3) the Jewish community as a whole has become more concentrated at the upper end of the educational distribution, reducing the educational heterogeneity among Jews.

### **Occupation**

How have these educational patterns been translated into occupational changes? What have been the changing patterns of occupational concentration among both men and women? Unlike for education, there are rich occupational data on the national level that can be analyzed for the 1910 census. We present some descriptive data in the second panel of Table 2.

**TABLE 3. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND OCCUPATIONAL TYPE BY GENDER — JEWISH AND TOTAL POPULATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES 18 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER, 1970 AND 1990**

	1970		1990	
	Jewish	Total	Jewish	Total
<i>Male</i>				
Less than HS	14.1	34.1	3.9	14.1
High School	19.5	30.2	11.2	33.8
Some College	25.0	18.4	20.9	22.6
College Graduate	15.2	9.0	29.2	16.4
Post Graduate	26.1	8.3	34.8	13.2
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	7,302	39,219	1,181	30,454
Professional	31.3	17.7	38.5	18.0
Managers	37.2	13.5	16.0	16.7
Clerical	5.3	8.7	7.0	6.0
Sales	14.6	9.6	16.1	12.8
Skilled Workers	4.8	23.6	8.1	19.3
Unskilled and Service	6.8	26.9	14.4	27.2
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	5,786	32,513	1,170	24,138
<i>Female</i>				
Less than HS	15.3	34.6	4.5	14.7
High School	32.1	38.8	21.2	39.7
Some College	27.3	16.2	25.8	23.5
College Graduate	12.8	7.0	22.0	13.5
Post Graduate	12.4	3.4	26.5	8.6
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	7,916	43,876	1,245	33,566
Professional	31.4	18.9	36.6	20.5
Managers	14.2	4.1	14.1	12.8
Clerical	36.7	11.4	27.0	30.0
Sales	10.3	47.2	10.3	13.6
Skilled Workers	0.9	2.0	1.6	2.0
Unskilled and Service	6.5	16.4	10.4	21.1
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	3,033	43,033	1,209.0	20,734

Source: National Jewish Population Survey data of 1970 and 1990 were used for the Jewish population. Data on the total population were tabulated from the 1970 Census Public Use Sample and from the Current Population Survey of 1990. Both were restricted to the non-Hispanic white population living in metropolitan areas of the United States.

Consistent with the literature (see, for example, Chiswick, 1991; Kessner, 1977; Lieberman, 1980; Goldscheider, 1986) and with the educational patterns presented earlier, 1910 census data show that a majority of American Jews (i.e., those who were living in households where Yiddish was the mother tongue; see note to Table 2) were either skilled or semi-skilled workers. Few were professionals or managers. When Jews worked in white collar jobs, they tended toward "sales" and not "clerical" work. Jewish women in 1910 were heavily concentrated in these same categories of blue collar work and few were in professional and managerial jobs or in sales. At the turn of the century, Jewish men were distinctive in their greater concentration in sales and, along with Jewish women, in their lower concentration in jobs classified as "service." Jewish women were exceptional in their very high concentration in skilled and semi-skilled work. Thus, Jewish occupational distinctiveness at the turn of the century in the United States was not the result of their position in jobs at higher levels but in their involvement in sales or in factory work.

It is difficult to use cohort patterns of occupation and infer change over time from the age patterns as we did for the education data, since we cannot effectively separate life-course-related job changes from inferred inter-generational occupational mobility. We also do not have occupational data according to time spent in the labor force (older men and married women). Our general focus here allows us to examine the 1970 and 1990 data and compare them with 1910 occupational patterns. We review changes in occupational type and in the distribution of these patterns from 1910 to 1990. We also briefly examine self employment and then turn to issues of occupational concentration.

### **Occupational Change**

In the two generations preceding 1970, the Jewish occupational pyramid was up-ended: it shifted from having 55 percent of the males in worker or service positions in 1910 to having 69 percent in professional and manager positions in 1970; from 73 percent of the Jewish women with jobs classified as worker or service categories in 1910 to 46 percent in professional and managerial jobs in 1970 and 37 percent in clerical jobs. Between 1970 and 1990, there was an increase in professional occupations among Jewish men and women along with a rather sharp decline (over 50 percent) in managerial positions among Jewish men. The increase in service workers is partly a function of classification changes but some is a reflection of the changing occupational structure of Jews in the United States.

Despite these radical shifts over time in the occupational structure and in jobs, the Jewish occupational structure remains distinctive in the United States when compared to white non-Hispanics in metropolitan areas. Particularly conspicuous is the greater concentration of Jews in professional jobs, paralleling their educational attainments.

These crude occupational classifications only begin to reveal the occupational mobility of Jews and their distinctiveness. We compare the occupational

concentration of Jews and non-Jews from three additional perspectives: (1) the extent of self employment; (2) the specific jobs Jews have within broad occupational categories and their concentration within them; and (3) the proportion of the total occupational distribution that is captured by a small number of jobs.

### **Self Employment**

The data from the 1910 census subdivide employment status into three categories: employer, own account, and work for wages. Not surprisingly, almost everyone worked for wages in 1910 — Jews and others, men and women. Nevertheless, Jewish men were much more likely to be self employed or to be employers than were others. One-third of the Jewish males who were working were self employed compared to 16 percent of the total population. Detailed data not presented in tabular form show the extent of self employment by occupation. For example, we can subdivide the census category “manufacturing officials” (which characterized 4.7 percent of the Jewish males and 1.9 percent of the total whites males) by self employment. Among Jews, 10 percent of those in this category were own accounts, 74 percent were employers, and 16 percent were working for wages. In contrast, for total males, the respective proportions were 9 percent own account, 48 percent employers, and 44 percent working for wages. Hence, the social class implications and perhaps the educational antecedents of this job category differ significantly between Jews and others.

While the tracking of self employment over time is not directly comparable between censuses, there is some indication of a modest decline in the extent of Jewish self employment. Estimates from the 1970 and 1990 National Jewish Population Surveys suggest that the proportion self employed declined between 1970 and 1990 among Jewish men from 38 percent to 32 percent. The level of self employment remains high for Jewish men and its pattern contrasts with the total population which experienced an increase from 10 percent to 15 percent. Thus, despite some convergence in the level of self employment between Jewish and other males, the Jewish level continues to be distinctive. Even as the level of self employment remained higher among Jews, the meaning of self employment has also radically changed. Self employed professionals and self employed tailors not only require different levels of education but these are likely to have different implications for generational occupational transfers and for ethnic networks.

The data also show that Jewish women were not very different from other women in their employment status, suggesting that gender differences in employment (not only in jobs) were more distinctive between men and women than between Jews and others. That observation requires much more elaboration than is germane to the issues covered in this paper. For a discussion of the gender issue in stratification see Goldscheider, 1986; Davidman and Tenenbaum, 1993. As with occupational patterns, the most dramatic changes have characterized self employment among women. The share of Jewish women who were self employed increased from 12 percent to 19 percent between 1970 and 1990 compared with an

increase from three percent to eight percent among total white women. As with men the level of self employment among Jewish women remains distinctively higher than others.

### **Occupational Concentration**

A key theme in the analysis of educational and occupational changes over time has been how the inter-generational social mobility of American Jews has allowed them to become integrated into the mainstream of American life. However, social mobility can be a group phenomenon occurring in significant segments of entire cohorts and hence can result in educational and occupational re-concentration rather than assimilation. We have already noted the changes in the educational concentration of Jews — Jews moved from high concentrations at low levels of educational attainment to a greater diversity of educational levels during the transition, and then to a new intensity of concentration at high educational levels. The same pattern of occupational change has led to a re-concentration as seen in the shifts from 1910 to 1990 (Tables 2 and 3).

This re-concentration can be observed when specific jobs are examined, not only for the standard occupational categories that the census has categorized. These details illustrate both the concentration of Jews in a select number of jobs and the distinctiveness of Jewish patterns relative to non-Hispanic whites. For the three dates, we organized the specific jobs that accounted for 50 percent of the total occupational distribution of Jews and calculated as well the percent of the total population in these specific jobs (Table 4). The data show that 50 percent of all Jewish men working were located in only six specific occupations in 1910, which encompassed only 11.2 percent of the total population. The concentration in skilled and semi-skilled work and also in specific jobs was even greater for Jewish women than for both Jewish men and the total population. Over half of the Jewish working women in 1910 were located in only five occupations; only 12 percent of the total female population were in these occupations.

These patterns continued through 1990. Again, examining particular jobs and the number that account for about half of the job distribution of Jews reveals both a significantly longer list than in 1970 and a continuing occupational distinctiveness of Jews when compared to the total population. In 1990, as before, occupational distinctiveness continues along with the dispersal of Jews within the American occupational structure. Detailed data not presented here in tabular form show that this conclusion remains even when multi-variate models control for obvious covariates like age, education, marital status, and region. Comparing 1970 and 1990 shows a shift away from managerial positions toward both more specialized and new professional jobs. Coding made this comparison easier for the Jewish population based on the NJPS in 1970 and 1990 but very difficult when comparing 1990 NJPS and the total population. Where possible, we recoded the 1990 In 1970, almost three out of ten Jewish men were in managerial and administrative positions compared to seven percent of the total white population. Lawyers,

**TABLE 4. OCCUPATIONAL CONCENTRATION BY GENDER — JEWISH AND TOTAL POPULATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES, 1910, 1970, 1990**

Occupation	Jews	Total
<i>1910 — Men</i>		
Retail Dealers	20.1	5.6
Tailors	10.3	0.8
Semi-skilled Suit/Coat Operatives	7.8	0.3
Salesmen	4.3	3.1
Manufacturers	4.1	1.3
Semi-skilled Clothing Operatives	3.8	0.1
<i>1910 — Women</i>		
Semi-skilled Factory Operatives	20.0	1.8
Skilled Sewing Machine Operators	17.2	3.0
Saleswomen	7.4	4.9
Tailors	4.6	1.1
Retail Dealers	4.1	1.5
<i>1970 — Men</i>		
Managers and Administrators	29.4	7.0
Lawyers	4.6	0.6
Accountants	3.6	1.4
Physicians	3.4	0.6
Sales Workers and Clerks	2.7	0.1
Sales Representatives, Wholesale	2.5	1.4
Sales Clerks, Retail	2.4	1.9
Real Estate Agents and Brokers	1.7	0.5
<i>1970 — Women</i>		
Secretaries, General	12.2	10.2
Managers and Administrators	9.1	1.2
Bookkeepers	8.1	4.7
Elementary School Teachers	6.5	3.9
Sales Clerks, Retail	5.2	6.5
Teachers (excl. college)	4.0	0.4
Clerical Workers	2.9	2.2
Sales Workers and Sales Clerks	2.7	0.1
<i>1990 — Men</i>		
Sales Workers or clerks	8.5	*
Managers and Administrators	7.9	9.6

**TABLE 4. OCCUPATIONAL CONCENTRATION BY GENDER — JEWISH AND TOTAL POPULATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES, 1910, 1970, 1990 (CONTINUED)**

Occupation	Jews	Total
Lawyers	3.1	1.3
Accountants	2.8	1.4
Teachers	2.6	*
Advertising Agents	2.5	0.2
Engineers	2.3	0.5
Physicians	2.3	0.7
Real Estate Agents	1.9	0.7
Consultants	1.9	*
Clericals (Misc.)	1.9	0.4
University/College Teachers	1.7	0.3
Writers, Artists, Entertainers	1.7	0.2
Research Workers	1.7	*
Insurance Agents	1.6	0.8
Computer Programmers	1.4	0.7
Craftsman (Unspec.)	1.3	*
Technicians (Misc.)	1.2	0.3
Stock Salesmen	1.2	0.5
Retail Sales Managers	1.0	*
<i>1990 — Women</i>		
Sales Workers or Clerks	7.4	*
Managers and Administrators	7.0	5.7
Teachers	6.8	*
Secretaries	6.6	8.2
Clericals (Misc.)	3.9	1.4
Bookkeepers	3.2	3.8
Registered Nurses	2.8	3.3
Social Workers	2.6	0.6
Clerical Workers (Unspec.)	2.4	1.3
Accountants	2.3	1.5
Office Managers (Unspec.)	2.2	*
Research Workers	1.9	*
Writers, Artists, Entertainers	1.5	0.2

Source: See notes to Tables 2 and 3. The occupational categories used in the NJPS are not comparable to the coding scheme used for the CPS. Estimates for the 1990 total population were based on combinations of CPS categories derived from Technical Paper 59, U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1989.

accountants, and physicians accounted for a disproportionate number of Jewish male occupations as did retail and wholesale sales jobs. In each case, these areas of job concentration were significantly greater for Jews than for the total white population. But the range of jobs diversified as the location of jobs within the occupational hierarchy increased. Jewish women were also concentrated in a limited number of jobs in 1970. Like most women, they were disproportionately secretaries, with only small differences between Jewish and other women. Compared to other women, significant numbers of Jewish women were managers and administrators, school teachers at all grade levels, sales workers, and sales clerks. The much broader number of occupations characterizing Jewish men and women in the 1970s than in 1910 reflected the educational changes and widening of the occupational opportunities as the American economy developed, as a general character of the country as a whole and among Jews in particular. Both occupational diversity and new types of occupational concentration emerged among Jews by the 1970s.

occupation data in the Current Population Survey to closely approximate the categories in the 1990 NJPS. There are a few areas where the matching was not possible due in large part to the peculiarities of the Jewish occupational structure. These do not in any way change the conclusion of the analysis, even as they make these comparisons more cumbersome. Where comparisons with the non-Jewish occupational distribution is possible, the continued distinctiveness of the distribution of jobs among Jews becomes evident even as the number of jobs that make up half of the occupational structure increased. Additional data not presented here show that among the ten most prevalent occupations of non-Hispanic whites in 1990, five do not appear at all among Jews. Among these were truck drivers (2.6 percent), carpenters (2.1 percent), janitors (1.8 percent), non-construction laborers (1.4 percent), and auto mechanics (1.3 percent). There was a shift in jobs among Jewish women in the two decades to 1990, parallel to the changes for Jewish men. Jewish women in the labor force moved out of secretarial work toward greater job diversity and professional jobs, although the impression remains of continued gender segregation in the workplace among Jews as among others.

### **Implication of Stratification for Jewishness**

What do these stratification changes imply for the continuity of the American Jewish community? On the one hand, increases in educational attainment and the diversification of occupational types result in greater interaction with "others" who are not Jewish. These new contexts of interaction between Jews and non-Jews challenge the isolation and segregation of Jews and in turn the cohesion of the Jewish community. The institutional contexts of schooling and the workplace may also expose Jewish Americans to new networks and alternative values that are not ethnically or religiously Jewish. The combination of interaction and exposure may result in a diminishing of the distinctiveness of the community over time through family changes and generational discontinuity.

There is another side of the coin: the commonality of social class among Jews and the distinctiveness of Jews relative to others are important sources of cohesion of the Jewish community. Jews are both marked off from others and linked with other Jews by the resources, networks, and life styles which are the obvious implications of their occupational-educational distinctiveness and high levels of attainment. To the extent that community is based on both shared interaction among members and a common set of values and life styles, these occupational and educational transformations among American Jews are significant bases of communal cohesion.

These alternative outcomes of the educational and occupational transformations Jews have experienced in 20th century America are presented in oversimplified and extreme forms. Clearly American Jews cannot be characterized as either a totally assimilated community (in the sense of the loss of communal cohesion) or as an isolated, totally cohesive community. There is no consensus about how or even what to measure to assess the quality of Jewish life in America at the end of the 20th century. Nor is there sufficient evidence about the nature and implications of the networks that Jews have developed over the life course and generationally. So the emerging balance of Jewish communal life and its linkage to the educational and occupational changes experienced by Jews cannot be assessed fully.

There are data on selected aspects of Jewish expression from the 1990 NJPS materials (broadly defined as the quality of Jewish life) that can be linked to the educational and occupational patterns that we have outlined. A review of some analytic explorations along these lines is cogent. We first developed measures of Jewishness that tapped its multi-dimensional ethnic and religious expressions in 1990. These dimensions (derived from both a theoretical model of Jewishness and a factor analysis of the measures included in the NJPS) resulted in the identification of six combined indicators of different facets of Jewishness. These include: seasonal ritual observances (Passover and Hanukah); traditional rituals (Kashrut and Shabbat observances); organizational participation (Jewish educational and organizational activities); associational ties (Jewish friends and neighbors); philanthropy (contributions to Jewish charities); intermarriage attitudes. These were based on a factor analysis of 19 items on the survey, using an unweighted least squares solution and a varimax rotation. We included only variables that measured current identification and patterns. Other variables such as childhood religious denomination, visits to Israel, and past Jewish educational attainment were included as separate factors. In the full model, age, life cycle, generation in America, and gender were also included as controls (Wilder, 1993).

In turn, these measures were related to several aspects of the occupational and educational characteristics of households. In the model that we used, education, occupation (job classification, concentration, and self employment), and income were included. The data available are micro-level and not communal; they do not include direct measures of generational change and Jewish networks. The theory underlying these issues is a community cohesion argument not based solely on individual practices or attitudes. Hence, there is a serious misfit between our theory

and the data currently available. (See Goldscheider, 1991, where broader questions of the value of the 1990 NJPS data for measuring the quality of Jewish life are explored.) Not surprisingly, the results involving these various dependent and independent variables are complex and it is beyond the scope of this paper to include their details. Three preliminary results are revealing. First, many of the education and occupation measures are not related directly to contemporary indicators of Jewishness but operate in the context of the family life course (e.g., age, family structure, presence and ages of children). Occupation was only weakly related to most of the factors that we examined. It appears that the commonality of jobs and self employment are not directly linked with ethnic ties as was suggested in earlier studies (see Goldscheider, 1986).

The data are consistent with the argument that the meaning of self-employment and occupational concentration has altered over the generations and, hence, the implications of these factors for Jewish continuity may also have changed. The absence of a relationship between occupation and measures of Jewishness may also imply that having these occupational ties is a sufficient basis for Jewish interaction and Jewish networks. If occupational concentration substitutes for Jewish communal and religious networks, then we should expect that the relationship between social class concentration and measures of Jewishness would be weak. There are no measures of ethnic economic resources, ethnic networks, and ethnic business connections in the NJPS survey to test these arguments directly and these must therefore be explored using other data sources.

Second, the data show that several indicators of education reinforce and strengthen modes of Jewish expression, particularly those connected to participation in Jewish communal activities and ties. College education seems to promote Jewish-related activities for those aged below 45, although this is less the case among older cohorts. In this sense, the relationship between attending college and Jewishness, that was negatively related to Jewishness in the past, has changed significantly by the 1990s. Again, this is consistent with the view that the Jewish alienation presumed to be associated with higher levels of educational attainment occurs when higher education is an exceptional group feature characteristic of the few. When exposure to college and university education is an almost universal experience for American Jews, its impact on Jewishness becomes minimal.

Third, there is no systematic evidence from these results that the changed stratification profile of the American Jewish community results in the abandonment of the Jewish community in terms of the wide range of Jewish expression. There is no systematic relationship between becoming a professional, working for others, or being in a job where there are few Jews, and most, if not all, of the modes of Judaic expression as individual measures or as part of the general index.

### **Contexts of Assimilation**

Neither high levels of educational attainment nor being in managerial and professional jobs weaken the intensity of Jewishness in all of its multi-faceted

expressions. It may be that the commonality of social class among American Jews and their very high levels of educational and occupational re-concentration are not sufficient to generate the intensive in-group interaction that characterized the segregated Jewish communities in some areas of eastern Europe and the United States a century ago. The benefits of these stratification transformations in terms of networks and resources have not recreated the cultural and social communities of the Jews of a different era. Nevertheless, the data also show that the emerging social class patterns are not a threat to Jewish continuity in the transformed pluralism of American society. The educational and occupational transformations of 20th century America mark Jews off from others and connect Jews to one another. The connections among persons who share history and experience and their separation from others is what social scientists refer to as community. The distinctiveness of the American Jewish community in these stratification patterns is clear.

However, we cannot be confident from the evidence available that these stratification patterns are sources of continuity. Evidently they do not imply a weakening of the Jewish community. The value placed by Jews on educational attainment as a mechanism for becoming American clearly is manifest in the context of the educational opportunities open to Jews in the United States. Their higher level of education and their concentration in professional and managerial jobs has not led to the "erosion" or total assimilation of the Jewish community. While these stratification changes may result in the disaffection of some individual Jews from the community, it may also result in the greater incorporation within the Jewish community of some who were not born Jewish, and the general attractiveness of the community to Jews and others.

Perhaps educational and occupational concentration at high levels implies not only cohesion and life style similarity but also exposure to options for integration and assimilation. Education implies exposure to conditions and cultures that are more universalistic and away from ethnic-based education, even when most Jews are sharing this experience together and are heavily concentrated in a select number of colleges and universities. If high levels of educational attainment and occupational achievement enhance the choices that Jews make about their Jewishness, then Jewish identification and the intensity of Jewish expression are becoming increasingly voluntary in the last decade of 20th century America. In that sense, the new forms of American Jewish stratification have beneficial implications for the quality of Jewish life. There is a balance between the forces that pull Jews toward each other, sharing what we call community — families, experiences, history, concerns, values, communal institutions, rituals, religion, and life styles — and those that pull Jews away from each other, often referred to as "assimilation." The evidence available suggests that the pulls and pushes of the changing stratification profile toward and away from the Jewish community are profound. They are positive in strengthening the Jewish community and represent a challenge to find ways to reinforce their communal and cultural benefits.

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