

# The Redistribution of the Jewish American Population

Sidney Goldstein

Considerable recent research has analyzed the redistribution of the American population among the regions, states, and metropolitan areas of the country and the ways in which such redistribution varies by racial and ethnic groups and among persons with different socioeconomic characteristics. However, the absence of a question on religion in the United States census has precluded the use of census data to assess the migration behavior of persons identified with specific religious groups. Yet, such redistributions can have significant relevance for the groups themselves, for their individual members, and for the larger American scene. This paper uses a unique data set on Jewish Americans to explore how their patterns of lifetime and recent migration have affected this population's redistribution across the United States.

To the extent that the redistribution of Jewish Americans leads to a greater or lesser population concentration in particular locations, it may enhance or weaken the extent of their socioeconomic and demographic integration into the wider American population, the ability of individual members to maintain their Jewish identity, and, in turn, the ability of Jews to maintain their distinctiveness.

National omnibus surveys that include a question on religious identity provide possible alternatives to the census data sources for such assessments, but often they do not include the relevant questions on migration to allow evaluation of redistribution patterns. Even if the survey did include the needed migration information, all too often the total number of a particular minority group, such as Jews, who are less than 3 percent of the total population, included in the survey may be inadequate for meaningful analyses. Moreover, not all Jews necessarily identify themselves as Jewish if asked their religion. The coverage of Jews might therefore be biased if based only on a question on religion; those persons who consider themselves Jewish only in ethnic/secular terms would be omitted.

## Data Source

Recognizing both the desirability of better understanding of the demographic situation of the Jewish American community, of the role that migration and

redistribution play in its vitality, and of the shortcomings of existing data sets as a basis for such assessments, the national Jewish-American community, represented by the Council of Jewish Federations, in 1990 organized a National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) which included questions on migration in addition to the usual census-type variables, as well as a wide range of questions related to Jewish identity. The resulting data provide a unique opportunity to assess the migration patterns of the Jewish population and the impact of such movement on the redistribution of Jews among the regions of the United States.

In NJPS, the identification of Jews in the American population was achieved through a three stage national telephone survey. (For a full discussion of the design of NJPS, see Waksberg, 1996.) Since the universe of Jews was not known, Stage I involved contacting a random sample of 125,813 American households using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). The sampled households represented all religious groups in continental United States, as well as secular households. The initial screening was carried out as part of a twice weekly national representative omnibus market-research survey conducted by ICR Survey Research Group of Media, Pennsylvania. One thousand households were contacted in each of 125 successive rounds over the course of the period April 1989 to May 1990. Representation of Jews in Alaska and Hawaii was incorporated into the national sample in the third stage of the survey.

To ensure the comprehensive coverage desired in NJPS for current and former Jews, the standard question on "What is your religion?" which all but 2.2 percent of the 125,813 respondents answered, was supplemented by three follow-up sets of screening questions directed at all those respondents who did not answer Jewish to the question on religion: 1) "Do you or anyone else in the household consider himself/herself Jewish?" 2) "Were you or anyone in the household raised Jewish?" 3) "Do or did you or anyone else in the household have a Jewish parent?" A positive answer to any of these questions qualified the household for initial classification as "Jewish." The four screening questions identified 5,146 households as containing one or more "qualified" Jews. They include a small number representing Alaska and Hawaii, based on random proportional selection from lists of Jewish households available for these two non-continental states.

Over the course of the year, a panel was thus created to be used in the summer of 1990 for an intensive assessment of the socioeconomic, demographic, and Jewish identity (both behavioral and attitudinal) characteristics of the Jewish-American population, both those who professed to be currently Jewish and those of Jewish origins. To requalify potential respondents and to minimize loss to follow-up between the initial screening and the in-depth survey, 2,240 members of the 5,146 Jewish sample who had been identified in the early months of the screening survey were recontacted in Stage II, the inventory phase, during the months immediately preceding the final survey. During this procedure, a number of potential respondents dropped out of the survey sample due to changes in household composition or disqualification upon reinterview.

Stage III, the in-depth survey was conducted from May to July 1990. During this stage, the entire sample of 5,146 "Jewish" households was requalified. Based on the original goal of 2,500 completed interviews, a total of 2,441 households of those qualified were interviewed, using the extensive questionnaire prepared by the CJF National Technical Advisory Committee on Population Studies (NTAC) for in-depth assessment of the Jewish American population. Completed interviews were obtained from 2,439 households, encompassing 6,507 individuals; these constitute the final sample for NJPS. Appropriate weights were applied to the data to insure that key demographic characteristics of the adult population of the total weighted sample of the 125,813 responding households in Stage I matched the most recent estimates of these characteristics produced by the Bureau of the Census for the American population. The weighting procedure automatically adjusted for non-cooperating households as well as those who were not at home when the interviewer telephoned and for households that did not have telephones or had multiple lines. The weighted sample encompassed 8.1 million individuals. Of this total, 5,515,000 were either Jews by religion or secular Jews at the time of the survey (referred to together as core Jews, and in this paper simply as Jews), 1,325,000 were of Jewish descent but not professing to be exclusively Jewish at the time of the survey, and 1,350,000 were non-Jews either married to Jews or living in households with current Jews or Jews by descent.

The omnibus character of the NJPS and the limited size of the sample did not allow inclusion of as many questions on residence and geographic mobility as would have been ideal for a full assessment of the extent and direction of population movement and the characteristics of the movers. However, the inclusion of an important set of core questions on residence and migration, together with the wide array of information collected on other socioeconomic, demographic, and identity variables means that NJPS offers the best opportunity yet available to evaluate the national levels of Jewish population movement, the effects they have on redistribution of the population across regions of the country and between metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas, the degree to which migration is selective of certain segments of the Jewish population, and how such selectivity affects the concentration of different types of Jews in the regions of the United States.

Some of the questions on migration used in the survey referred to all household members; others were restricted to the respondents chosen randomly from among the households' current or former Jewish members. Those asked of all members include: country of birth and state of birth for those born in the United States; year of migration to the United States for the foreign-born; for those age 18 and over, country of birth of mother and father; and number of grandparents born in the United States. The respondents were asked a broader array of questions: year of movement to current town or city and to current address; origin of the move in terms of intra-city/town, intra-state, interstate, or international (name of state or country of origin was obtained). Paralleling a question in the United States census, respondents were also asked where they were living five years before the survey,

May, 1985, and detailed information was obtained similar to that noted for last place of residence.

To assess the likely future redistribution of the population and the relation between past and future mobility, respondents were also asked whether they thought it very, somewhat, or not at all likely that they would move within the next three years and, if so, what the likely destination of that move would be. Information was also obtained on multiple residences for those who lived away from their residence at the time of the survey for more than two months. Together these data provide the basis for a comprehensive evaluation of Jewish migration patterns.

Within the limits of this paper, only a small segment of the available data can be assessed. (For a fuller analysis of Jewish migration, based on the NJPS data, see Goldstein and Goldstein, 1996.) Since a major change characterizing the Jewish American community in the decades since the end of massive immigration from Eastern Europe in the 1920s has been its development as a continental society, i.e., its much greater dispersal across the country, the analysis focuses on lifetime and recent interregional migration, the way in which they relate to each other, and the way in which they have contributed to the changing regional distribution of the Jewish population. The analysis will again be restricted to the core Jewish population, i.e., those persons identifying as Jewish at the time of the survey; they numbered 2,190 households among the 2,441 encompassed in the survey and contained 4,590 members. Restricting the analysis to the core Jewish population makes the data relatively similar to the coverage that would obtain if a question on religion were asked in the census or in a national omnibus survey in which religious identity was one of many background characteristics. However, NJPS identifies a considerably broader core Jewish population than a census might encompass, since the core population includes persons who consider themselves Jewish even though they do not regard themselves as Jewish by religion. By including these secular/ethnic Jews, the coverage provided by NJPS is more representative of the total Jewish American population than data based only on a question on religion.

### **Changing Regional Distribution**

Based on estimates received from local Jewish communities, the *American Jewish Yearbook* (AJYB) has regularly published data on the number of Jews living in various communities, the number in each state, and the national total. While the accuracy of these estimates remain open to question, over the decades the data generally reflect quite closely the changing geographic distribution of the Jewish population.

For 1900, during the midst of the mass immigration from Eastern Europe, the AJYB estimated that 57 percent of American Jewry lived in the Northeast in contrast to the 28 percent of the total American population (Table 1). Moreover, virtually all the Jews in the Northeast were in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, reflecting the key role of ports of entry from Europe in this region and the magnetic effect of the socioeconomic networks provided to the incoming

migrants by the dense Jewish settlements that already existed. The Midwest accounted for the next largest number of Jews -- about one quarter, in contrast to the one-third of the total American population living in this region. Compared to the general population, Jews were also underrepresented in the South, where 14 percent were located, compared to almost one-third of the national population. Like the general population, only about 5 percent of all Jews lived in the West in 1900. The heavily westward movement had obviously not yet begun.

**TABLE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL UNITED STATES AND JEWISH POPULATIONS, BY REGIONS, 1900, 1930, 1971, AND 1990**

| Region             | 1900                |                            | 1930 <sup>c</sup> |               | 1971 <sup>d</sup> |               | 1990 <sup>e</sup> |               |
|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|
|                    | Jewish <sup>a</sup> | United States <sup>b</sup> | Jewish            | United States | Jewish            | United States | Jewish            | United States |
| Northeast          | 56.6                | 27.7                       | 68.3              | 27.9          | 63.2              | 24.1          | 43.6              | 20.4          |
| Midwest            | 23.7                | 34.6                       | 19.6              | 31.4          | 12.1              | 27.8          | 11.3              | 24.0          |
| South              | 14.2                | 32.2                       | 7.6               | 30.7          | 11.5              | 30.9          | 21.6              | 34.4          |
| West               | 5.5                 | 5.4                        | 4.6               | 10.0          | 13.2              | 17.1          | 23.5              | 21.2          |
| Total U.S. Percent | 100.0               | 100.0                      | 100.0             | 100.0         | 100.0             | 100.0         | 100.0             | 100.0         |
| Number (in 1,000s) | 1,058               | 75,994                     | 4,228             | 123,203       | 6,059             | 203,212       | 5,515             | 248,710       |

- a. American Jewish Year Book. (1900). "Jewish Statistics." Vol. 1, pp. 623-624.
- b. U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1961. 1960 Census of Population, Vol. 1, Characteristics of the Population. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. pp. 1-16.
- c. Linfield, H.S. (1931). "Statistics of Jews." American Jewish Year Book, Vol. 33, p. 276.
- d. Chenkin, A. (1972). "Jewish Population in the United States, 1971," American Jewish Year Book, Vol. 7, pp. 384-392. Data were not published for 1970. United States distribution refers to 1970.
- e. Based on NJPS-1990 estimates. Compared to these figures, American Jewish Year Book estimated that 51 percent of the Jewish population lived in the Northeast, 11 percent in the Midwest, and 19 percent each in the South and West (Kosmin, B. and Scheckner, J. (1991). "Jewish Population in the United States, 1990." American Jewish Year Book, Vol. 91, pp. 204-224).

Between, 1900 and 1930, the Jewish population of the United States increased fourfold, from 1,058,000 to an estimated 4,228,000, largely because of the heavy immigration of the early decades of the century preceding the imposition of the quota laws in the 1920s. By 1930, reflecting its immigrant source of the growth, the Northeast contained 68 percent of the American Jewish population; each of the

other regions encompassed a smaller proportion of the nation's Jews than they did at the turn of the century. The sharpest drop characterized the South, from 14 to 8 percent of the total. The West continued to have the smallest proportion of Jews, just under 5 percent, even though the percent of all Americans living in this region had doubled to 10 percent since 1900.

The national picture changed very sharply in the next sixty years, more so for the Jews than for the national population. Based on NJPS, and generally consistent with the trends indicated by the continuing AJYB annual estimates, by 1990 the percentage of Jews living in the Northeast had declined precipitously to only 44 percent of the total, so that it was much closer to the general population's 20 percent. The South and the West together contained 45 percent, almost equally divided between them (Table 1), and the Midwest had the lowest proportion of the nation's Jews, only 11 percent.

Compared to the national population, relatively fewer of the nation's Jews lived in the Midwest and the South, and comparatively more resided in the Northeast and the West. However, the overall distribution pattern shows a major realignment of the Jewish population, one that generally followed the redistribution of the general population, but, for some regions, such as the West and the South, in somewhat accentuated form (Long, 1988, pp. 137-188). At the peak of Jewish concentration in the Northeast in 1930, the index of dissimilarity for regional concentration between the Jews and the general population was 40, i.e., 40 percent of the Jews would have had to be redistributed regionally to resemble the regional distribution of the total American population. By 1990, this index was reduced to only 25. While Jews remain heavily concentrated in the Northeast, the changing regional distribution suggests that Jews feel increasingly accepted in America and are paralleling mainstream America in shifting to the Sunbelt. In doing so, they are becoming much more of a continental population than was previously true.

The growing similarity in patterns of redistribution seems likely to continue for several reasons. Reflecting their high educational achievements, Jews are entering occupations requiring mobility because of the limited employment opportunities in particular areas of the country; physical proximity to family seems to be becoming less important for third and higher generation Jews than has been the case for the first and second generation; and living in areas of high Jewish density with their easier access to Jewish religious, social, and cultural institutions is ceasing to be a priority for many Jews (Goldstein, 1992).

### **Interregional Migration**

Patterns of lifetime and recent migration allow us to assess the dynamics underlying the changes in regional distribution. For such purposes, the information collected in NJPS from respondents on state of birth and on state of residence five years preceding the survey, i.e., in 1985, are used. The analysis ends with joint use of these two data sets to evaluate the extent of repeat migration among Jews and the ways such repeat migration affects the regional distribution of the Jewish

population. The data on state of birth are restricted to native-born Jews, so that the analysis of repeat migration patterns refer only to the American-born Jewish population. Since all but 9 percent of the population is American born, and a majority of the foreign-born are above age 45, beyond the ages of peak interstate migration, this restriction does not significantly affect the overall patterns.

**TABLE 2. FIVE-YEAR AND LIFETIME MIGRATION OF CORE JEWISH ADULTS BY AGE**

| Migration Status              | Age Group |       |       |       |       |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                               | 18-24     | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-64 | 65 +  |
| <i>Five-Year Migration</i>    |           |       |       |       |       |
| Same House                    | 54.3      | 21.0  | 48.6  | 73.1  | 82.7  |
| Diff. House/<br>Same Town     | 17.3      | 33.0  | 26.9  | 14.3  | 9.1   |
| Intrastate                    | 16.5      | 21.3  | 12.8  | 5.7   | 3.9   |
| Interstate                    | 11.5      | 22.1  | 10.4  | 6.2   | 4.1   |
| International                 | 0.3       | 2.6   | 1.4   | 0.7   | 0.1   |
| Total Percent                 | 100.0     | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| <i>Lifetime Migration</i>     |           |       |       |       |       |
| Same                          | 13.4      | 2.3   | 0.1   | 0.2   | 0.8   |
| Diff. House/<br>Same Town     | 16.2      | 17.5  | 12.3  | 19.8  | 19.5  |
| Intrastate                    | 29.0      | 27.5  | 29.7  | 23.5  | 14.0  |
| Interstate                    | 36.0      | 45.8  | 48.5  | 46.2  | 48.4  |
| International                 | 5.4       | 6.8   | 9.4   | 10.2  | 17.3  |
| Total Percent                 | 100.0     | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Total Number<br>(in millions) | 0.43      | 0.85  | 0.92  | 1.02  | 0.90  |

Overall, recent mobility rates of American Jews very closely parallel those of the total American population (Table 2). Among Americans generally, 53 percent had not changed their house of residence and 26 percent had made only local moves (within county) between 1985 and 1990. Ten percent had moved between states, and 10 percent had made intrastate moves beyond the local area. The virtually identical levels of Jewish and general mobility suggest that the underlying economic and social forces that account for a very mobile American population operate among

Jews as well. This is not surprising, given the educational and occupational composition of the Jewish group and their generally high degree of acculturation. Perhaps what is surprising is that Jews are not more mobile than the general population. Possibly, the stimulus for movement provided by these factors is counterbalanced by ties to family and community.

The cumulative effect of such extensive mobility is evidenced in the proportion of Jewish adults who had moved during their lifetime (Table 2; lower panel). Just under one in five were living in the same city/town in which they were born. One-quarter of all adults had moved elsewhere in their state, and almost half were living in a different state in 1990 than their state of birth. Those who were foreign-born constituted the remaining 10 percent of the adult population. According to this lifetime index of mobility, Jews are considerably more mobile than the general population, among whom only 29 percent had changed state of residence and 9 percent had moved from another country. That 57 percent of all Jews were living outside their country or state of birth, compared to only 38 percent of the total population, attests to migration's key role as a dynamic for change among America's Jews.

Age affects the propensity to move since migration is closely linked to events in the life cycle. Thus, whereas 72 percent of Jews aged 18–24 resided in the same city/town in 1990 as in 1985, this was true of only 54 percent of the 25–34 age group (Table 2; upper panel); graduate studies, marriage, and beginning a career all help explain the heightened mobility. That as many as 22 percent of the Jews aged 25–34 were interstate migrants attests to the dramatic role of migration at this stage of the life cycle.

Thereafter, increasing age is associated with greater stability: Rising proportions lived in the same house in 1985 and 1990, reaching a high of 83 percent of those 65 years and over, compared to a low of only 21 percent of those aged 25–34. A corresponding change was noted in the percent who reported interstate migration. Nonetheless, a majority of those aged 35–44 and over one-quarter of those aged 45–64 changed residences during the five-year interval, many between states or outside their local area within state. Mobility is certainly not restricted to the younger segments of the population. Moreover, as we will document below, a part of the mobility of middle-aged and older persons represents repeat movement.

Not only were the younger age groups the most mobile in the period immediately preceding the survey, the lifetime migration data (Table 2; lower panel) suggest that such mobility has a cumulative effect. Even among those aged 18–24, over one-third had experienced interstate mobility before 1990, perhaps as children. In fact, 21 percent of all Jews under age 18 (not shown in Table 2) had migrated interstate by 1990. An unusually high proportion, as many as 80 percent in all cohorts but those under 25 years, were not living in their areas of birth. For example, almost half of those aged 25–34 had made at least one interstate move and over one-quarter more had migrated intrastate; only 20 percent were still living in the same community in which they were born. The levels and types of lifetime movement are

quite similar for older groups, except that the proportion who reported international migration rose consistently with age to a high of 17 percent of the elderly.

**TABLE 3. REGION OF 1990 RESIDENCE BY REGION OF BIRTH AND INTER-REGIONAL LIFETIME MIGRATION, U.S.-BORN CORE JEWISH POPULATION**

| Region of Birth                                 | Region of Residence, 1990 |          |          |          |       | Distribution by Region of Birth |
|---|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|-------|---------------------------------|
|   | Northeast                 | Midwest  | South    | West     | Total |                                 |
| <i>Percent Distribution of Total Population</i> |                           |          |          |          |       |                                 |
| Northeast                                       | 69.7                      | 2.9      | 17.2     | 10.2     | 100.0 | 57.3                            |
| Midwest   | 6.9                       | 57.6     | 13.3     | 22.2     | 100.0 | 16.4                            |
| South   | 11.5                      | 4.0      | 76.8     | 7.7      | 100.0 | 11.9                            |
| West  | 5.9                       | 1.8      | 5.4      | 86.9     | 100.0 | 14.4                            |
| Total   | 43.3                      | 11.8     | 22.0     | 22.9     |       | 100.0                           |
| <i>Percent Distribution of Out-Migrants</i>     |                           |          |          |          |       |                                 |
| Northeast                                       | -                         | 9.7      | 56.7     | 33.6     | 100.0 | 59.9                            |
| Midwest   | 16.2                      | -        | 31.4     | 52.4     | 100.0 | 24.0                            |
| South   | 49.5                      | 17.2     | -        | 33.3     | 100.0 | 9.6                             |
| West  | 45.3                      | 13.6     | 41.1     | -        | 100.0 | 6.5                             |
| Total   | 11.6                      | 8.4      | 44.2     | 35.8     |       | 100.0                           |
| <i>Interregional Lifetime Migration</i>         |                           |          |          |          |       |                                 |
| Total In-Migration                              | +161,930                  | +116,970 | +618,330 | +501,860 |       |                                 |
| Total Out-Migration                             | -838,500                  | -335,860 | -133,570 | - 91,160 |       |                                 |
| Net Migration                                   | -676,570                  | -218,890 | +484,760 | +410,700 |       |                                 |
| <i>Net Interregional Flows</i>                  |                           |          |          |          |       |                                 |
| Northeast                                       | -                         | +270,040 | +409,310 | +240,220 |       |                                 |
| Midwest   | - 27,040                  | -        | + 82,440 | +163,490 |       |                                 |
| South   | -409,310                  | - 82,440 | -        | + 6,990  |       |                                 |
| West  | -240,220                  | -163,490 | - 6,990  | -        |       |                                 |

Overall, these patterns suggest that the high levels of migration characterizing the Jewish population as a whole are set early in life. Later moves, as documented by the five-year migration data, occur in conjunction with career changes, family

reorganization, and retirement, but they seem often to take, as later integrated analyses of the lifetime and five-year data will show, the form of repeat moves rather than adding significantly to the overall levels of lifetime migration.

### **Lifetime Regional Redistribution Patterns**

The highest migration rates characterized those Jews born in the Northeast and Midwest; 30 percent of the former and 42 percent of the latter were living in a different region in 1990 than that in which they were born (Table 3). By contrast, only 23 percent of those born in the South and even fewer, 13 percent, of those born in the West had changed region of residence (cf., Rebhun, 1993a, 1993b).

The direction of the shift among those who moved is clearly to the Sunbelt. About half of the 838,500 persons leaving the Northeast moved to the South, and another third migrated to the West. Of the 335,860 Jews leaving the Midwest, almost one-third went to the South and just over half headed to the West. Of the much smaller numbers leaving the South and the West, almost half shifted to the Northeast; the second largest stream was the interchange between the South and the West.

The direction of the overall shift is most evident in the streams from the Northeast and Midwest: Whereas 60 percent of all interregional migrants originated in the Northeast and another 24 percent in the Midwest, by 1990 only 12 percent of the interregional migrants had moved to the Northeast and 8 percent to the Midwest. By contrast, only 10 percent of all inter-regional migrants were born in the South and 7 percent in the West, but 44 percent and 36 percent, respectively, resided there by 1990. On balance, this redistribution resulted in a net loss of almost 677,000 Jews to the Northeast and 219,000 to the Midwest. By contrast, the South gained 485,000, and the West netted 411,000. Clearly, migration has produced a massive redistribution of Jews among the major regions of the United States.

### **Five-Year Regional Flows**

Lifetime migration measures provide insights on the cumulative effect of population redistribution, but they do not allow insights into recent patterns of movement. The former may be particularly interesting for historical perspectives on the redistribution process, but concern with current issues requires attention to more recent migration patterns. This is made possible by use of the information from NJPS on place of residence five years before the survey (in May 1985). These data (Table 4) show that of the 430,000 adults in the Jewish population who changed state of residence between 1985 and 1990, 250,000 migrated between the four major regions of the United States.

**TABLE 4. INTERREGIONAL FIVE-YEAR MIGRATION FLOWS, CORE JEWISH POPULATION, U.S. BORN ONLY**

| Region of Residence, 1985                            | Region of Residence, 1990 |         |          |         |       | Distribution by Region of Residence in 1985 |
|--|---------------------------|---------|----------|---------|-------|---|
|  | Northeast                 | Midwest | South    | West    | Total |   |
| <i>Percent Distribution of Interstate Migrants</i>   |                           |         |          |         |       |   |
| Northeast  | 41.1                      | 8.1     | 39.7     | 11.2    | 100.0 | 39.9  |
| Midwest  | 27.6                      | 26.3    | 26.7     | 19.4    | 100.0 | 17.9  |
| South  | 31.0                      | 10.3    | 45.4     | 13.3    | 100.0 | 27.8  |
| West   | 10.7                      | 10.4    | 30.6     | 48.3    | 100.0 | 14.4  |
| Total  | 31.5                      | 12.3    | 37.6     | 18.6    |       | 100.0                                       |
| <i>Percent Distribution of Regional Out-Migrants</i> |                           |         |          |         |       |   |
| Northeast  | -                         | 13.7    | 67.3     | 19.0    | 100.0 | 39.5  |
| Midwest  | 37.4                      | -       | 36.3     | 26.3    | 100.0 | 22.3  |
| South  | 56.8                      | 18.9    | -        | 24.3    | 100.0 | 25.6  |
| West   | 20.6                      | 20.1    | 59.3     | -       | 100.0 | 12.6  |
| Total  | 25.4                      | 12.8    | 42.2     | 19.6    |       | 100.0                                       |
| <i>Interregional Five-Year Migration</i>             |                           |         |          |         |       |   |
| Total In-Migration                                   | +63,640                   | +32,000 | +105,400 | +49,010 |       |   |
| Total Out-Migration                                  | -98,900                   | -55,750 | -64,020  | -31,380 |       |   |
| Net Migration  | -35,260                   | -23,750 | +41,380  | +17,630 |       |   |
| <i>Net Interregional Flows</i>                       |                           |         |          |         |       |   |
| Northeast  | -                         | -7,270  | +30,270  | +12,260 |       |   |
| Midwest  | +7,270                    | -       | +8,100   | +8,380  |       |   |
| South  | -30,270                   | -8,100  | -        | -3,010  |       |   |
| West   | -12,260                   | -8,380  | +3,010   | -       |       |   |

As in the case of lifetime migration, both the Northeast and the Midwest lost population in the 5-year interregional redistribution process. A net of some 35,000 Jews left the Northeast and 24,000 moved away from the Midwest, but these net losses represent the balance between much larger out-migrations partially

compensated by fairly substantial in-migrations. Both the South and the West gained through the regional redistribution process, continuing the pattern suggested by the lifetime data. In the 5-year period, however, the South gained over twice as many Jews as did the West. This change suggests that the southern states have become by far the preferred region of destination. Both the South and the West also were characterized by compensating movements; the net gains from in-migration were reduced by at least 60 percent through out-movement.

The net effect of the exchanges can best be summarized by comparing the regional distribution of the Jewish interregional migrants in 1985 with their regional distribution in 1990 (Table 4; second panel). Whereas in 1985 four of every ten lived in the Northeast and 22 percent in the Midwest, by 1990 one-fourth of the interregional migrants lived in the Northeast and only 13 percent in the Midwest. By contrast, the number in the South increased from 26 percent of all interregional out-migrants to 42 percent of the movers at the time of the survey. Similarly, the West's share rose from only 13 percent of the out-migrants to one-in-five of the in-migrants. An impressive redistribution has resulted for those changing region of residence.

This is further evidenced in the comparison of the region of residence of all interstate migrants, both between and within regions (Table 4, top panel). Five-year regional movement was much stronger to the South than to the West, in contrast to the more equal gains resulting from lifetime migration (which also favored the South). The more recent movement was also characterized by a considerable narrowing in the differences between the regions of residence in the size of the in- and out-migration streams. Again, the index of dissimilarity (not in table) can be used as a summary measure. The index indicates that only 24 percent of the recent migrants would have had to shift their regions of destination to have their regional distribution match that at origin. By contrast, the index of dissimilarity for Jewish lifetime migrants is 64.

This change is largely due to the much larger proportions of recent migrants than of lifetime migrants who moved out of both the South and the West. (Compare Tables 3 and 4.) Such a pattern became possible because by 1985 both regions had developed fairly large Jewish populations. When many of the lifetime migrants first settled in these regions they were still outposts of Jewish life. The subsequent increase of Jewish populations in these regions means that many will in turn migrate elsewhere when better opportunities arise or when personal/family needs change. The lower index for the recent migrants is also affected by the lower proportion of all recent migrants settling in the West (20 percent), compared to the proportion of lifetime migrants who did so (36 percent). By contrast, the proportion settling in the South among both lifetime and recent migrants was virtually identical (44 and 42 percent).

The other sharp change between lifetime and recent migrants was the reduction in the proportion leaving the Northeast (from 60 percent to 40 percent) and the increase in the proportion moving to this region (from 12 percent to 25 percent). The massive exodus from this older region of Jewish settlement appears to have

slowed, and the region may, in fact, have become somewhat more attractive in recent years to migrants from other parts of the country. Thus, even while the Jewish populations in the South and the West continue to grow through redistribution, the complementarity of the in- and out-migration streams that characterize all regions reinforces the argument that Jewish Americans have indeed become a national (continental) population.

### **Five-year Regional Interchanges**

The redistribution process can also be viewed from the perspective of the interchange between specific regions (Table 4, bottom panel). Between 1985 and 1990, the Northeast, on balance, lost to both the West and the South, but especially to the latter. It gained from the Midwest, in contrast to the net loss shown by lifetime migration. The Midwest lost Jews almost equally to each of the other three regions between 1985 and 1990. Only the South gained from all three regions, but the largest net movement by far was from the Northeast. That the South gained even a small number from the West between 1985 and 1990 contrasts with the loss to the West from lifetime movement and points to the changing attractiveness of these two Sunbelt areas to interregional migrants. The West's largest net gains were also from the Northeast, followed by the Midwest. Again, with the exception of the net movement from the Midwest to the Northeast and from the West to the South, these data suggest the continuation in recent years of the same patterns of national redistribution identified by the lifetime migration statistics (see Table 3, bottom panel). What has changed most is the comparative magnitude of the different streams and the diminution of the losses to the Northeast and the gains by the West.

Still another perspective for gaining insights on whether regional patterns of migration of Jews may be changing is to compare the regional origins and destinations of the younger and older segments of the population (Table 5). While not fully consistent, such comparisons suggest that there is much less diversity between the opposing streams among younger persons than among older ones. For example, the index of dissimilarity between the regional distributions of the 25–34 year old out- and in-migrants is only 4.4, indicating the close similarity in the regional origins and destinations of migrants in this age range. The index increases to 13.7 for those aged 35–44, and to 17.0 for those aged 45–64. It then jumps to 59.0 for the aged. The oldest segment of the population thus is making very distinct choices of destination, whereas the younger segments of the population have a near balance in moves out of and in to particular regions. Evidently, migration associated with retirement and the needs of the elderly is more regionally selective than is migration associated with economic and family-related factors.

This pattern is clarified by the distribution of the various streams. One-quarter of the aged migrants moved to the West, but only 10 percent originated in this region. The contrast is even sharper for the South, to which 58 percent moved but from which only 14 percent came. The Sunbelt has obvious strong attraction for older Jews who migrate interregionally. Both the Northeast and the Midwest contributed very disproportionately to the out-migrants and attracted only a small percentage of all elderly interregional migrants.

**TABLE 5. DISTRIBUTION OF FIVE-YEAR INTERREGIONAL MIGRANTS, BY REGIONS OF ORIGIN AND DESTINATION, BY AGE, CORE JEWISH POPULATION**

| Region                 | Age 25–34    |             | Age 35–44    |             | Age 45–64    |             | Age 65 and over |             |
|------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
|                        | Out-Migrants | In-Migrants | Out-Migrants | In-Migrants | Out-Migrants | In-Migrants | Out-Migrants    | In-Migrants |
| Northeast              | 37.4         | 36.8        | 41.6         | 32.1        | 32.2         | 19.1        | 59.7            | 14.4        |
| Midwest                | 20.8         | 19.3        | 15.9         | 11.7        | 9.2          | 5.8         | 16.2            | 2.2         |
| South                  | 27.8         | 32.2        | 27.5         | 33.0        | 37.2         | 54.3        | 13.9            | 57.9        |
| West                   | 14.0         | 11.7        | 15.0         | 23.2        | 21.4         | 20.9        | 10.2            | 25.5        |
| Total                  |              |             |              |             |              |             |                 |             |
| Percent                | 100.0        | 100.0       | 100.0        | 100.0       | 100.0        | 100.0       | 100.0           | 100.0       |
| Index of Dissimilarity | 4.4          |             | 13.7         |             | 17.0         |             | 59.0            |             |

In contrast to elderly mobility is the experience of those 25–34 years of age. Only 12 percent moved to the West and 32 percent to the South. More migrated out of the West than entered it, and almost as many left the South as moved to it. The most popular single region of destination for the interregional migrants in this age group was the Northeast; they virtually canceled out the number leaving there. While the Midwest was less popular as both origin and destination, the one-in-five leaving there were also matched by the proportion moving there. The intermediate age groups showed more diverse patterns, but the streams of regional in- and out-migration were still more balanced than among the aged. Whether these age comparisons have any predictive value or whether they merely reflect differences in life cycle effect cannot be ascertained here. What they do indicate is the need to take stage of the life cycle into account in assessing the impact of migration on both who moves and where they move.

### **Differing Forms of Mobility**

Integrated use of the information on place of birth and information on place of residence five years preceding the survey (1985) in conjunction with residence at the time of the survey (1990) allows some attention to repeat movement during the lifetime of respondents. For such an evaluation, a modification of the framework first suggested by Hope Eldridge (1965) is used. Initially the framework will be used to provide an overview of the different forms of mobility in the lifetime of the respondents and how these vary by age. This overview will use the state as the unit

of analysis for measuring migration; given the limits set by the NJPS data, it is the smallest spatial unit to which this approach can be applied. The analysis is restricted to those born in the United States.

Five migration-status categories are identified:

- 1) Primary migrants: those persons who were living in the same state in 1985 as that in which they were born but who changed state of residence between 1985 and 1990
- 2) Early migrants: those movers who were living in a different state in 1985 than that in which they were born and who were in that same state in 1985 and at the time of the survey in 1990
- 3) Repeat migrants: persons who resided in different states at all three reference points – birth, 1985, and 1990
- 4) Return migrants: movers who reported living in the same state in 1990 as that in which they were born but who had a different state of residence in 1985
- 5) The residue category of non-migrants: respondents who reported themselves as residing in the same state at all three reference points.

This typology is not sensitive to additional moves made during the intervals between birth and 1985 and between 1985 and 1990. In the absence of a complete migration history, a typology based on three reference points therefore allows for only partial evaluation of lifetime movement. To the extent, however, that most persons do not reside in more than three states during their lifetime, the coverage is relatively complete. For purposes of simplifying the discussion that follows, the observed changes in state of residence are treated as if they were the only moves made. Following the review of interstate movement, attention will turn to the relation between different types of migration and the regional redistribution of the population.

### **Types of Mobility**

Among the Jewish population, over half of all adults had migrated interstate between birth and 1990 (Table 6). The greatest number (40 percent) did so between birth and 1985, and then remained settled until 1990. Another 10 percent of the population also moved during the period between birth and 1985, but with an additional interstate move in the next five years; 7 percent of all respondents went on to live in a third state, and almost 3 percent returned to the state of birth during the post-1985 period. The remaining 4 percent of the population who qualified as migrants made their first and only recorded interstate move between 1985 and 1990. Together with the 10 percent who either moved on to a third state or returned to their state of birth during this interval, about 15 percent of the population moved interstate during 1985-1990.

**TABLE 6. DISTRIBUTION OF INTERSTATE MIGRATION TYPE, BY AGE, CORE JEWISH POPULATION, U.S. BORN ONLY**

| Age Group   | Migration Type |                 |               |                |                | Total Percent |
|-------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
|             | Non-Migrant    | Primary Migrant | Early Migrant | Repeat Migrant | Return Migrant |               |
| 18 – 24     | 55.9           | 6.9             | 28.0          | 4.3            | 4.9            | 100.0         |
| 25 – 34     | 47.2           | 8.8             | 28.0          | 11.7           | 4.2            | 100.0         |
| 35 – 44     | 44.9           | 2.8             | 41.8          | 8.4            | 2.1            | 100.0         |
| 45 – 64     | 47.8           | 1.5             | 43.6          | 5.4            | 1.7            | 100.0         |
| 65 and over | 41.7           | 1.2             | 52.2          | 3.5            | 1.3            | 100.0         |
| Total       | 46.5           | 3.9             | 40.1          | 7.0            | 2.6            | 100.0         |

Both the extent and the type of migration varies considerably by age (Table 6). With only one small exception among the five age groups compared, increasing age is associated with more lifetime migration. Whereas 56 percent of those under age 25 in the Jewish population had not yet made any interstate move, this was true of only 42 percent of the aged. The increase in migration with rising age is most evident among those who were early migrants. Compared to the 28 percent of those under age 35 who had migrated interstate between birth and 1985, just over 40 percent of those between ages 35 and 64 and over half of the aged had done so. This pattern in large part reflects the greater length of time that older persons have had to make a move, but it also attests to the extent to which interstate migration becomes a part of the lifetime experience of many Jews, even though for most it involves only one such move.

That initial migration occurs most often at an early stage of the life cycle is evidenced in the proportion in the different age groups who made their first interstate move during 1985–1990. The proportion of primary migrants is highest in the two youngest age groups. Almost 7 percent of those under age 25 and 9 percent of those age 25–34 migrated interstate between 1985 and 1990, undoubtedly because of their pursuit of higher education and employment. Thereafter, the proportion declines regularly with rising age to less than 2 percent of those age 45 and over.

In fact, for every age group but the very youngest, more persons made repeat moves across state lines than made a first move during 1985–1990, and the differential was especially strong for those over age 35. For those in age groups 45 and over, return migration to state of birth in this five-year period also occurred more frequently than a primary move, although the differential was smaller than that characterizing repeat migration. Evidently, an interstate move early in the life cycle

is more conducive to another interstate move in mid-life or older age than is residential stability in the earlier years. This finding is consistent with evidence from other studies that a disproportionate amount of total movement is attributable to the repeat moves of the same persons rather than to more widespread movement by different persons.

Repeat migration is highest for those in the 25–34 year age group; almost 12 percent changed state of residence for at least the second time. For many, it may have involved a shift from the state where higher education was obtained to a state where employment was found; for some it may have involved sequential moves related to education and marriage or marriage and changes in employment. The level of repeat migration was also comparatively high for the 35–44 year age group (8 percent), but it continued to decline with rising age to a low of 3.5 percent for the aged.

For all age groups except those aged 18–24, return movement occurred less frequently than repeat interstate migration and the differentials were substantial. The higher level for the youngest group most likely is related to the return to home states by those who moved away to obtain higher education. Among persons age 45 and over the level of return is low compared to other age groups. Yet, slightly more of these older persons returned to their state of birth than moved away from it as primary migrants, suggesting that for a number of older persons migration may be motivated by the desire to return closer to family.

Overall, these data by age suggest that mobility patterns are very much affected by stage of the life cycle. A substantial proportion of the population did not change state of residence, and many of those who did made only one such move before “settling down” in their state of destination. However, a number of respondents, especially younger ones, were involved in recent interstate migration, much of it repeat or return movement. That such mobility occurs at these early stages of the life cycle takes on special significance for integration of the migrants into the Jewish community since most are at critical transitions in family formation and career development.

### **Regional Variations in Mobility Types**

Attention turns next to the extent to which these different forms of migration vary among the different regions of the country and the ways in which they affect the regional redistribution of the Jewish population. For such purposes, region of residence, rather than state, becomes the defining unit; the five-fold migration categories defined above continue to be applied. Under this scheme, individuals may have moved between states or intrastate within their respective regions during the specified intervals, but they would not qualify as migrants. Use of the five-fold set of categories allows insights into lifetime regional migration patterns and limited insights into when in the course of the lifetime movement across regions occurred.

Attesting to the extensive movement that has characterized the Jewish population, 37 percent had made at least one interregional move during their lifetime, including almost 3 percent who had changed region of residence at least twice (Table 7). The largest single category of mobile adults (30 percent) are those

who moved before 1985 and made only one regional change in residence. Another 4 percent made their interregional move between 1985 and 1990. Among the 3 percent who made at least two interregional moves, somewhat more returned to their region of origin than moved on to a third region of the country. Yet, despite the relatively high levels of movement, over six of every ten Jews had never changed region of residence, indicating that regional stability characterizes many Jewish Americans, even while a substantial number move about.

**TABLE 7. DISTRIBUTION OF INTERREGIONAL MIGRATION TYPE BY REGION OF BIRTH, CORE JEWISH POPULATION, U.S. BORN ONLY**

| Region of Birth | Migration Type |                 |               |                |                | Total Percent |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
|                 | Non-Migrant    | Primary Migrant | Early Migrant | Repeat Migrant | Return Migrant |               |
| Northeast       | 63.8           | 3.5             | 30.1          | 1.0            | 1.6            | 100.0         |
| Midwest         | 48.5           | 5.4             | 42.6          | 1.6            | 1.9            | 100.0         |
| South           | 65.4           | 4.6             | 26.5          | 0.7            | 2.9            | 100.0         |
| West            | 82.2           | 2.2             | 14.2          | 1.1            | 0.3            | 100.0         |
| Total           | 63.4           | 3.8             | 30.1          | 1.1            | 1.6            | 100.0         |

The extent of movement varies considerably by region of birth. The highest stability, by far, characterizes those born in the West. Over eight of every ten were living in the West at all three reference points. This contrasts with a low of 48 percent for those born in the Midwest. Those born in the Northeast and the South were almost equally stable; just under two-thirds made no change in region of residence. For all four regions, most migrants had changed region of residence only once — before 1985, suggesting that for most the type of long-distance movement represented by an interregional move occurs at fairly early stages of the life cycle. For each of the regions, 5 percent or fewer of adults had made their one interregional move in the 1985–1990 period. Repeat movement either to a third region or back to region of birth characterized the mobility history of only a small minority of the population. In contrast to the patterns for interstate migration, more of those making an interregional move during 1985–90 did so for the first time rather than as a repeat or return move.

Like our findings for interstate migration types, those for interregional movement show that levels and types of mobility are associated with stages of the life cycle. Education, career development, and, to some extent, even marriage most likely help to account for interregional movement (Table 8). Primary mobility is thus most

characteristic of younger persons; and both repeat and return mobility occur with greatest frequency among those aged 35–44, probably associated with completion of education and initiation of careers.

**TABLE 8. DISTRIBUTION OF INTERREGIONAL MIGRATION TYPE, BY AGE, CORE JEWISH POPULATION, U.S. BORN ONLY**

| Age Group   | Migration Type |                 |               |                |                | Total Percent |
|-------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
|             | Non-Migrant    | Primary Migrant | Early Migrant | Repeat Migrant | Return Migrant |               |
| 18 – 24     | 72.9           | 4.9             | 19.7          | 0.7            | 1.7            | 100.0         |
| 25 – 34     | 64.8           | 7.9             | 21.8          | 1.6            | 3.9            | 100.0         |
| 35 – 44     | 63.7           | 2.6             | 30.5          | 1.5            | 1.7            | 100.0         |
| 45 – 64     | 65.2           | 1.8             | 31.3          | 0.8            | 0.9            | 100.0         |
| 65 and over | 54.5           | 2.6             | 42.5          | 0.3            | 0.2            | 100.0         |
| Total       | 63.4           | 3.8             | 30.1          | 1.1            | 1.6            | 100.0         |

In the age range 35–64 years, the proportion of non-migrants varies minimally, at just under two-thirds, pointing to a high degree of regional stability on the part of a substantial segment of the population. Moreover, by age 35, key life cycle events associated with migration have already occurred for most, and there is less incentive to undertake a long-distance move. The higher proportion in the early migrant category, reflecting moves made before 1985, attests to this greater recent stability. The aged, who had the lowest proportion of non-migrants, had the highest proportion of early migrants, reflecting the cumulative effect of lifetime migration. For some, these could have represented moves made in conjunction with retirement. This age group had the lowest proportion of both repeat and return migrants; evidently, once having changed region of residence, there was no strong tendency to move interregionally again in old age.

A different perspective for examining the lifetime mobility experience of the Jewish population is in terms of current region of residence rather than region of birth. Not surprisingly, such data portray a very different picture (Table 9). The Northeast, reflecting its lesser popularity as a destination, consists very heavily (89 percent) of persons who were born in the region and also lived there in 1985 and 1990, i.e., non-migrants. Most of the in-migrants had come to the region before 1985. The Midwest, too, consisted largely (72 percent) of non-migrants and a vast majority of the others had lived there since before 1985. By contrast, only 29 percent of the South's adult Jewish population was born and had always lived in the South. Almost six of ten moved there from another region before 1985, and almost

10 percent more did so as recently as 1985–1990. The West, too, was composed of a majority of in-migrants from other regions, but not as heavily as the South. Moreover, relatively more of the total movement to the West occurred before 1985, suggesting that its recent attraction to migrants from other regions is not as strong as is that of the South.

**TABLE 9. DISTRIBUTION OF INTERREGIONAL MIGRATION TYPE BY CURRENT REGION OF RESIDENCE, CORE JEWISH POPULATION, U.S. BORN ONLY**

| Region of<br>Current<br>Residence | Migration Type  |                    |                  |                   |                   | Total<br>Percent |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
|                                   | Non-<br>Migrant | Primary<br>Migrant | Early<br>Migrant | Repeat<br>Migrant | Return<br>Migrant |                  |
| Northeast                         | 89.3            | 1.4                | 6.7              | 0.3               | 2.2               | 100.0            |
| Midwest                           | 72.3            | 2.5                | 20.1             | 2.2               | 2.9               | 100.0            |
| South                             | 29.2            | 9.3                | 58.9             | 1.3               | 1.3               | 100.0            |
| West                              | 41.4            | 3.6                | 53.1             | 1.8               | 0.2               | 100.0            |
| Total                             | 63.4            | 3.8                | 30.1             | 1.1               | 1.6               | 100.0            |

For none of the regions did either repeat or return interregional migration characterize a high proportion of current residents, lending weight to earlier conclusions that repeated interregional migration does not occur with great frequency among Jews. Changes in residence are more likely to involve intraregional movement. The major regional shifts that have occurred therefore appear to stem largely from a decision made fairly early in the life cycle to move cross-regionally in conjunction with completion of education, initiation of a career, and/or marriage. Only a much smaller proportion undertake later moves involving great distances, and a disproportional number of these seem to be associated with retirement.

### **Mobility Types and Interregional Distribution**

What effect does the migration experience between birth and 1985 and, in turn, between 1985 and 1990 have on the regional distribution of the Jewish population in the United States? The overall net consequences, assessed earlier, clearly pointed to substantial shifts from the Northeast and the Midwest to the South and the West. Evaluation of migration between birth, 1985, and 1990 suggests that recent net movement continues the patterns of earlier decades (Table 10).

**TABLE 10. DISTRIBUTION OF INTERREGIONAL MIGRANTS AT BIRTH, IN 1985, AND IN 1990, BY REGION, AND NET REGIONAL CHANGE, CORE, JEWISH POPULATION, U.S. BORN ONLY**

| Region of Residence | Percent Distribution |       |       | Net Change, Birth to 1990 | Net Change, 1985 – 1990 |
|---------------------|----------------------|-------|-------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
|                     | Birth                | 1985  | 1990  |                           |                         |
| Northeast           | 61.9                 | 45.0  | 44.2  | -640,240                  | -27,570                 |
| Midwest             | 17.1                 | 12.0  | 11.4  | -204,350                  | -19,930                 |
| South               | 9.9                  | 21.3  | 22.3  | +445,820                  | +32,950                 |
| West                | 11.1                 | 21.7  | 22.1  | +398,800                  | +14,550                 |
| Total Percent       | 100.0                | 100.0 | 100.0 |                           |                         |

If judged by residence at time of birth (a point which does not refer to a fixed date since it varies depending on the ages of the individuals in the sample), 62 percent of the Jewish population were born in the Northeast and another 17 percent in the Midwest. Only 10 percent reported the South as their birth region, and only slightly more, 11 percent, the West. By 1985, however, only 45 percent of these persons lived in the Northeast, pointing to a major exodus from this region of the United States. The Midwest's portion of the total also declined substantially, to only 12 percent. By contrast, both the South and the West just about doubled their share of the Jewish population, to 21 and 22 percent, respectively. Clearly, movement before 1985 led to a major redistribution of the Jewish population to the South and West, a pattern consistent with that characterizing the American population generally.

In the comparatively short interval between 1985 and 1990, the volume of movement was obviously less than during the much longer period encompassed by birth to 1985. Nonetheless, the patterns set in these earlier years continued. The Northeast lost 27,570 native-born Jews in this interval, and the Midwest lost 19,930. The South gained 32,950, and the West gained 14,550. The net result was further redistribution of the population among regions, although the changes were proportionally small. Thus, whereas the South and West together accounted for only one-third as many Jews as the Northeast, if judged by birthplace, by 1990 the proportion of Jews in these two regions combined slightly exceeded that of the Northeast. That this shift in regional lifetime distribution of adult Jews involved almost 845,000 persons, equal to about one-fifth of the total 1990 Jewish adult population, attests to the magnitude of the migration flow and its impact on the regional distribution of the Jewish population. Moreover, unless major changes in redistribution patterns occur, it is likely that a majority of America's Jews will live in the South and West by the early decades of the twenty-first century.

## **The Impact of Redistribution for Jewish Americans**

Our analysis has shown the dramatic redistribution of the Jewish American population across the United States. From being mainly concentrated in the Northeast and the Midwest at the beginning of the twentieth century, by 1990 large segments of American Jewry were living in the South and the West. In this respect, Jewish migration patterns have paralleled those of the general American population. The result has been the creation of a truly national Jewish community.

Migration levels have been high for Jews. Four out of five moved at least once since birth, and 30 percent had moved either within state of residence or between states in the five years preceding the survey. Many of these moves were closely related to the life cycle, occurring during periods of change in employment and marital status, primarily at the younger ages, but also among the elderly. Moreover, NJPS data not analyzed here suggest that the young are also the most likely to move again; they are prominent among the almost half of all respondents who said it was very likely or somewhat likely that they would move within three years. Since the times of establishing an independent household and forming a family are critical stages for identification with a given community, such high levels of mobility may hamper the establishment of roots in any one place and may promote a pattern of non-affiliation.

High population turnover and migration across states and regions have thus radically changed the distribution of American Jewry. While the Northeast continues to be a strong center of Jewish life, other regions now claim more equitable shares of the Jewish population. Greater dispersion also characterizes distribution within regions and the inter- and intra-metropolitan distributions. Such dispersion may have both positive and negative consequences. On the one hand, it can be an important factor in invigorating Jewish life in areas that were quite marginal in the past. On the other hand, it can substantially weaken some communities and areas by drawing off a critical segment of the Jewish population, making it more difficult for those remaining to maintain a viable community. This may be especially serious if the Jews who leave are those most strongly identified with the Jewish community. At the individual level, mobility may seriously disrupt ties with the Jewish community both because it takes time to integrate into a new community of residence and because movement may often be to locations with no or weak Jewish institutions. (For analysis of the NJPS data related to differentials between migrants and non-migrants with respect to indicators of Jewish identification, involvement in the Jewish community, and informal networks, see Goldstein and Goldstein, 1996.) Such barriers to integration Jewishly may be exacerbated if movement occurs primarily in response to economic or life-style factors that have little to do with being Jewish. Just as immigration to the United States led to major changes in the Jewish identity of the immigrants and their descendants and to their social integration into the larger society in the twentieth century, the widespread ongoing redistribution of Jewish Americans within the

United States may significantly affect Jewish life and community structure in the twenty-first century.

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