

Communal

The American Jewish Family Today

IN THE LAST DECADE the American family has undergone such dramatic changes as to generate a popular and scholarly debate about whether it is in fact disintegrating.¹ Even if the evidence does not support such a far-reaching conclusion, demographers have documented highly dynamic family patterns. Americans are marrying at a later age than in the past.² Those who do marry, especially those in their 20's, are divorcing much more frequently than was the case just ten years ago.³ Married couples are having fewer children, and many more women are bearing a first child at age 30 and over.⁴ As a result of these trends, the number of single person households has more than doubled in the last decade, while the number of young adult households without children has also sharply risen.⁵

Since the demographic behavior of Jews often reflects that of the societies in which they dwell, one would expect to find these changes characterizing American Jewish families as well. Although comprehensive and accurate national data on American Jews are rare, there is evidence to support this proposition. Federations and family service agencies, for example, report growing numbers of young Jewish singles,

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¹See Mary Jo Bane, *Here to Stay: American Families in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1976).

²Robert T. Michael, Victor R. Fuchs, and Sharon Scott, "Changes in the Propensity to Live Alone: 1950-1976," *Demography*, February 1980, pp. 39-56.

³Robert T. Michael, "The Rise in Divorce Rates, 1960-1974: Age Specific Components," *Demography*, May 1978, pp. 177-182.

⁴Elise F. Jones and Charles Westoff, "The End of 'Catholic' Fertility," *Demography*, May 1979, pp. 209-218.

⁵Frances E. Kobrin, "The Fall of Household Size and the Rise of the Primary Individual in the United States," *Demography*, February 1976, pp. 127-138.

divorced people, and single parents among their clients.⁶ Moreover, widely scattered Jewish communal surveys indicate a precipitous drop in the Jewish birthrate.⁷

There are sound theoretical reasons to anticipate parallels between general American and American Jewish family changes. In the past, even when Jews followed the demographic patterns of the larger societies in which they lived, they usually maintained distinctive variations. Today, with mounting assimilation, Jews are probably less likely to vary demographically from American non-Jews. In this regard it is noteworthy that until the late 1960's Catholics had much higher birthrates than Protestants. But the Catholic birthrate bonus has disappeared, probably because of their widespread social assimilation.⁸ If Catholic fertility differentials evaporate because of assimilation, so too should the ways in which Jewish family patterns differ from those of other Americans with similar social background.

Taking a somewhat longer historical view, there is good reason to expect Jewish singlehood and divorce rates to increase, and Jewish birthrates to decrease. Jews in traditional society—such as Eastern Europe in the 19th century—married at a young age, had large families, and enjoyed a reputation for stable marriages. As a result of the modernization process, however, all this began to change. Lower birthrates were a way in which urbanizing people—both Jews and non-Jews—adjusted to the modern economy. Large families were more economically useful in traditional peasant societies than in modern cities; moreover, the traditional pronatalist religious subcultures became less influential among secularized individuals in secularized social milieus. Postponement of marriage, a very recent phenomenon, has been another adjustment to the modern economy, in that it permits more time for specialized training and intense professional dedication in the early stages of a career. Rising divorce rates have come about, in part, because of the breakdown of Jewish subcultural norms and values which inhibited marital dissolution in the past. In sum, all three demographic trends under study—later marriage, lower birthrates, and increased divorce—may be part of a large-scale historical process of modernization, entailing both economically motivated accommodation and socially motivated assimilation.

Since the Jewish family and Jewishness are inextricably intertwined, changes in American Jewish family life also imply changes in Jewish identification. A wide variety of research findings testify to the centrality of the family for Jewish identification.⁹ Intensive Jewish schooling is effective only in the presence of parental

⁶Chaim I. Waxman, *Single Parent Families: A Challenge to the Jewish Community*. American Jewish Committee, 1980.

⁷Sidney Goldstein, "Jews in the United States: Perspectives from Demography," *AJYB*, Vol. 81, 1981, pp. 3–59; and Sergio DellaPergola, "Patterns of American Jewish Fertility," *Demography*, August 1980, pp. 261–273.

⁸Jones and Westoff, *op. cit.*

⁹Harold Himmelfarb, "The Study of American Jewish Identification: How It Is Defined, Measured, Obtained, Sustained, and Lost," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, March 1980, pp. 48–60.

commitment to Jewish identification.¹⁰ Moreover, children's ritual practices tend to replicate those of their parents.¹¹ Finally, the spouse is the single most powerful interpersonal influence on adult Jewish identification.¹² Insofar as the Jewish family is changing in the directions suggested above, then, this may well account for declining Jewish identification.

This paper, then, has several aims. First, using more comprehensive data than have heretofore been available, it examines the extent to which American Jews have participated in some of the larger society's recent family changes. Second, it asks how family life cycle status—in particular, being single, childless, or divorced—affects Jewish identification, and how different forms of Jewishness relate to the family life cycle. Third, it assesses the extent to which recent changes in the family, especially among young people, have been linked to diminished Jewish identification. Finally, it considers alternative communal policies in light of the research findings.

Data and Measures

The findings derive from a secondary analysis of two sorts of data sets. One set consists of pooled national surveys of the American population conducted over the last 25 years by the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center (NORC) and the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center (SRC).

These data, while adequate on such matters as marital status, socio-economic variables, and residence, are lacking in measures of Jewishness, with the one exception of religious service attendance. Other data are therefore needed to understand precisely how family status affects various forms of Jewish identification. The many Jewish community surveys conducted over the years by federations in various locales are very well suited for this purpose. In particular, the 1965 and 1975 Boston community surveys are valuable because they contain an unusually wide array of Jewishness items, provide information midway through two of the last three decades (providing some comparability with the national data), and allow for a comparison of Jews in the same city ten years apart.

Findings

MARRIAGE

Table 1 reports the per cent of individual respondents who have ever been married, by religion, age, and decade of survey.¹³

¹⁰Steven M. Cohen, "The Impact of Jewish Education on Religious Identification and Practice," *Jewish Social Studies*, October 1974, pp. 316–326.

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²Harold Himmelfarb, "The Interaction Effects of Parents, Spouse, and Schooling: Comparing the Impact of Jewish and Catholic Schools," *The Sociological Quarterly*, 18, Autumn 1977, pp. 464–477.

¹³The reader is cautioned that these data refer to *households*, not *individuals*. If all single

TABLE 1. PER CENT EVER-MARRIED BY RELIGION, AGE, AND TIME OF SURVEY

Age: ^a	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
<u>1960's</u>						
Protestants ^b	79 (409)	94 (1253)	95 (1436)	96 (1326)	94 (985)	94 (1080)
Catholics	73 (143)	90 (455)	95 (472)	95 (346)	95 (219)	91 (202)
Jews	46 (13)	87 (46)	97 (69)	96 (69)	95 (40)	97 (30)
Jews (1965) ^c	37 (86) ^d	87 (271)	94 (289)	90 (348)	85 (241)	91 (283)
<u>1970's</u>						
Protestants	51 (1481)	87 (2475)	96 (1939)	97 (1980)	95 (1923)	95 (2349)
Catholics	48 (777)	88 (1364)	96 (968)	95 (897)	95 (712)	93 (645)
Jews	29 (45)	74 (113)	91 (81)	94 (83)	99 (72)	91 (82)
Jews (1975) ^c	12 (160)	60 (247)	97 (132)	95 (125)	87 (117)	86 (139)

Source: pooling of NORC General Social Surveys, other NORC National Surveys, and Michigan SRC Electoral Surveys, whites only (except as otherwise noted).

^a Age of respondent; unit of analysis is the household, so that currently married respondents represent two adults. Entries therefore somewhat understate per cent of individuals who are ever-married.

^b All respondents are white.

^c Boston Jewish Community surveys.

^d Aged 21-24.

By ages 35-44 the marriage rates of all three religions are nearly identical: virtually all respondents have married. The major difference between Jews and others is found among the youngest households, aged 18-24. In this age group, in the 1970's, only 29 per cent of the national sample of Jewish households were married, while 48 per cent of the Catholics and 51 per cent of the Protestants were so classified. The gap narrows considerably with the next age group: Jews aged 25-34 are married almost as frequently (74 per cent) as Catholics and Protestants (88 and 87 per cent, respectively).

The 1975 Boston data offer a useful comparison with the national data, and because of the former's larger Jewish sample, they may also offer an important

individuals lived alone and all "married" households had two married adults present, one could convert these figures to individual-level data. The purpose here is to provide gross over-time comparisons, and not to supply precise statistics on marital behavior.

corrective to the less stable national statistics. Indeed, among Boston Jews in 1975 we find greater accentuation of the Jewish pattern: extraordinarily low frequencies of marriage among the 18–24 and 25–34-year-old households (12 per cent and 60 per cent). These contrast with much higher rates in Boston ten years earlier (37 and 87 per cent, respectively; although the former figure refers to those aged 21–24, a group older than the 18–24 year olds in 1975). In sum, fewer young Jews than young non-Jews were married in the 1970's, and they were less likely to be married than were young Jews in the 1960's.

The national surveys conducted by NORC from 1972 to 1978 and the Boston studies directly address the question of age at marriage by asking the respondent when he or she first married. Table 2 reports the median age of marriage for previously married respondents of different birth cohorts and religions.

TABLE 2. MEDIAN AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE BY CURRENT AGE AND RELIGION

Age:	18–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+
Protestants ^a	19.2 (367)	20.7 (1148)	21.1 (1031)	21.4 (10.22)	22.2 (982)	22.6 (1175)
Catholics ^a	19.3 (245)	21.1 (792)	22.2 (621)	22.7 (538)	25.0 (432)	23.6 (382)
Jews ^a	–	22.1 (55)	23.0 (44)	22.6 (43)	24.4 (43)	23.3 (47)
Jews (1965) ^b	21.1 (31) ^c	24.1 (224)	25.4 (163)	–	–	–
Jews (1975) ^b	21.7 (10)	24.4 (118)	24.8 (120)	25.4 (104)	–	–

^a Source: NORC General Social Surveys, conducted annually, 1972–1978, whites only.

^b Source: Boston Jewish Community Surveys (1965 and 1975). Age at marriage was not ascertained for married respondents where the wife was more than 40 years in 1965 or 45 in 1975.

^c Aged 21–24.

Reading across the rows, it might seem that age at first marriage has decreased slightly in recent years among younger people. However, the lower median age at first marriage for the younger age groups (those 18–24 and 25–34) should not be seen as a refutation of reports of increasing age at first marriage. Since, as Table 1 suggests, at least another ten per cent of those aged 25–34 may well marry by the time they become 35–44, their eventual marriages will of course raise the median age at marriage for their age group. Additionally, many of the already married 25–34 year olds married in the 1960's, before the hypothesized rise in marital age took place. Thus, the eventual median age of first marriage for young adults in the 1970's may well be higher than any of the figures for young people in Table 2.

Although Table 2 cannot settle the question of whether the marital age has risen most recently, it does show that for middle-aged respondents and younger (i.e., those under 55 years old), Jews married about a year later than others. For example, in the 25–34 age group the median marital age of Protestants was 20.7, that of Catholics was 21.1, and that of national sample Jews was 22.1.

Once again, the Boston data offer a possible corrective. Boston Jews aged 35–44 in 1965 report a 24.1-year-old age at first marriage, almost two years higher than the national sample. In 1975 the Boston Jews aged 25–34 also report a median marital age (24.4) higher than their national counterparts. As noted, 40 per cent of these households are still unmarried and their eventual marriages will raise their median even further.

In short, Jews apparently have been marrying about two years later than non-Jews. This difference is directly attributable to the small proportion of Jews marrying during their late teens or early twenties. Moreover, the tendency for Jews to postpone marriage seems to be growing.

FERTILITY

The decline in nationwide birthrates, reports of declining Jewish fertility, and evidence (above) of somewhat later marriage by Jews all lead us to anticipate lower Jewish birthrates. Table 3 reports the average number of children ever-born by religion, age, and decade of survey.

As might be expected, the average number of children rises steeply through ages 35–44. Moreover, the post-World War II baby boom is evident, with the highest number of children born found among the birth cohort aged 45–54 in the 1970's. Additionally, Catholics aged 35–44 have more children than do comparable Protestants; the gap, though, disappears among younger adults, under age 35, in the 1970's, a finding consistent with previous research.¹⁴

With few exceptions Jews exhibit the lowest birthrates of all comparably aged religious groups. Interestingly, Jews aged 35–54 in the 1970's have produced just enough children to replace themselves, while their elders' birthrates were apparently below the 2.1 replacement level. Since these data refer only to ever-married respondents, the mean number of children would be even lower were the never-married included in the calculations.

Once again, the Boston data provide additional confirmatory information. Examining the 1975 study, we find the number of children ever-born to individuals aged 35–44 and 45–54 approximates rates for the national sample of Jews in the 1970's. In other words, Boston and national Jewish birthrates are about two-thirds of a child lower than national, white, non-Jewish rates. In the earlier years, ages 25–34, the mean number of children among Boston Jewry (1975) is 0.7, substantially lower

¹⁴Jones and Westoff, *op. cit.*

TABLE 3. NUMBER OF CHILDREN EVER-BORN BY AGE, RELIGION, AND TIME OF SURVEY (EVER-MARRIED RESPONDENTS ONLY)

Age:	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
<u>1960's</u>						
Protestants	1.3 (253)	2.3 (900)	2.2 (1001)	-	-	-
Catholics	1.3 (78)	2.5 (310)	2.8 (323)	-	-	-
Jews	-	2.1 (29)	1.9 (44)	-	-	-
Jews (1965) ^a	0.6 (31) ^b	1.5 (224)	2.5 (164)	-	-	-
<u>1970's</u>						
Protestants	0.9 (625)	1.9 (1822)	2.9 (1576)	3.0 (1618)	2.6 (1560)	2.5 (1913)
Catholics	0.9 (315)	1.9 (1060)	3.2 (815)	3.2 (739)	2.4 (602)	2.5 (543)
Jews	-	1.2 (75)	2.3 (66)	2.4 (67)	1.9 (61)	1.9 (66)
Jews (1975) ^a	0.3 (20)	0.7 (149)	2.3 (128)	2.5 (119)	-	-

Source: NORC General Social Surveys, conducted annually, 1972-1978, whites only (except as otherwise noted).

^a Boston Jewish Community Surveys (1965 and 1975). Number of children ever-born was not ascertained for married respondents where the wife was more than 40 years old in 1965 or 45 in 1975.

^b Aged 21-24.

Note: Fertility behavior was not determined for women over 45 on many surveys.

than that of the national sample (1.2), which in turn is lower than the non-Jewish mean of about 1.9. The number of children born to Boston Jews aged 18-24 in 1975 is also well below non-Jewish means. Not only are the Boston and national Jewish birthrates lower than Protestant and Catholic rates in the 1970's, but comparing the 1965 with the 1975 Boston fertility rates shows declines of from one-fifth to four-fifths of a child, depending upon the age groups compared.

The lower Jewish birthrates in recent years do not derive from childlessness; fewer married Jews remain childless than their non-Jewish counterparts. Rather, lower Jewish birthrates result from the paucity of Jewish couples having more than two children (data not shown).

We can obtain yet another picture of historic trends in interreligious fertility differentials by examining the family size of respondents' families of origin rather

TABLE 4. AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER CHILDBEARING COUPLE BY RELIGION AND APPROXIMATE YEARS OF CHILDREN'S BIRTH

Years:	Before 1915	1915-24	1925-34	1935-44	1945-57
Protestants	4.1 (1640)	3.6 (1090)	3.4 (983)	3.2 (1212)	3.4 (1654)
Catholics	4.5 (563)	3.8 (540)	3.3 (560)	3.1 (739)	3.3 (1122)
Jews	3.5 (76)	3.1 (46)	1.9 (37)	2.0 (53)	2.3 (75)

Source: NORC General Social Surveys conducted annually 1972-1978; responses to question on number of siblings; whites only. Respondents are weighted by size of family of origin (i.e., number of siblings) such that couples with large families, who had a better chance of having one of their offspring interviewed, are no more likely than couples with fewer children to appear in the table. Childless couples (and individuals) are, of course, excluded by virtue of their not having had children-respondents to report on their fertility behavior.

than their childbearing behavior. By using information on the number of siblings—available only in the NORC surveys (1972-1978)—Table 4 reconstructs the average number of children born to respondents of different religions and periods of family formation (see note, Table 4, for details on the procedure).

The table shows that birthrates among all groups have significantly declined since the first quarter of the century, and that there was a dip in the birthrate during the Depression years, followed by the post-World War II baby boom. Consistent with historic investigations of European fertility patterns, the oldest mostly European-born Jews (born before 1915) report families of origin smaller than Protestants (3.5 versus 4.1 children), and much smaller than Catholics (4.5). Then, in the next decade, all birthrates dropped, but Jewish birthrates remained about one child below those of Protestants and Catholics.

These diverse data on Jewish fertility patterns show that since the early 20th century American Jews have had fewer children than non-Jews, that Jewish couples have usually not produced children much in excess of the 2.1 replacement level, and that the most recently formed Jewish families will probably give birth to even fewer children.

DIVORCE

Jews have enjoyed a reputation for stable families. However, recent popular Jewish communal literature has abounded with reports of increased marital dissolution among American Jews. Orthodox Jews, as the most traditional denomination, are reputed to have the most stable marriages, but even the Orthodox press and rabbinate report an increasing incidence of divorce and separation. With

the well-documented rise in divorce among all Americans, one wonders whether Jews are retaining their historic "advantage" relative to non-Jewish divorce rates.

Most surveys ascertain only current marital status and not marital history. We usually know if the respondents are currently divorced or separated. The considerable number of the once-divorced who remarry, however, would be classified as currently married. Fortunately, the 1972-1978 NORC surveys asked respondents if they were ever divorced. Table 5 reports the incidence of divorce among ever-married individuals by age and religion.

TABLE 5. PER CENT EVER-DIVORCED BY AGE AND RELIGION

Age:	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Protestants	5 (328)	15 (988)	20 (875)	20 (895)	16 (876)	17 (1106)
Catholics	4 (230)	10 (712)	15 (574)	13 (501)	18 (398)	11 (365)
Jews	-	8 (53)	10 (40)	7 (43)	5 (39)	8 (45)

Source: NORC General Social Surveys, conducted annually, 1972-1978, white, ever-married respondents only.

Older people have been at risk of divorcing longer than younger people. If the divorce rate had not increased in recent years, older individuals would be expected to have higher ever-divorced rates than younger respondents. With this in mind, it is significant that in the national data the ever-divorced rate of 35-44 year olds exceeds those of all their elders. As more divorces occur among currently young respondents, their ever-divorced rates when they are old will exceed those for elderly respondents in the 1970's.

Comparing across religious groups rather than age cohorts, Catholic and Protestant divorce rates retain the same general relationship to one another: Catholic divorce rates are roughly 70 per cent of Protestant rates. Over time, despite their rise, Jewish divorce rates have remained equal to about half the Protestant rates and have stayed somewhat below those of the Catholics.

In short, while Jews (like Christians) are divorcing more frequently than they have in the past, they are still divorcing less often than their non-Jewish counterparts. Moreover, the proportional gap between Jewish and non-Jewish divorce rates has been remaining steady, since non-Jewish rates have climbed faster than Jewish ones.

Jewishness and the Family Life Cycle

The historic connection between traditional family patterns and Jewish identification, the special meaningfulness of ritual observance in a family setting, and research on social participation all suggest that Jewish commitment should rise and fall with changes in family status.

To see how the family influences Jewish expression in the national sample, we focus on religious service attendance, a particularly useful indicator of religious activity. This is so because service attendance is ascertained in many social surveys, permits interreligious comparisons, and is easily quantifiable. For purposes of this analysis, mean annual attendance figures were calculated by replacing verbal categoric responses with an appropriate quantity. (For example, "two or three times a month" implies about $12 \times 2.5 = 30$ times a year.)

Although service attendance is intrinsic to Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish subcultures, it does have different implications for the three major American religious groups. Religious attendance is much more central for Christian religious identity than it is for Jewish identity, since the latter entails both religious and ethnic bases for group affiliation.¹⁵ On the other hand, service attendance does correlate moderately with other forms of Jewish expression, such as home ritual observance, synagogue membership, organizational membership, etc. In short, religious service attendance is a reasonable though admittedly imperfect proxy for overall Jewishness (however defined).

Table 6 presents the mean service attendance figures for people in different family life cycle stages, cross-tabulated by religion and decade of survey.

As might be expected, Catholics generally attend services more often than Protestants (especially in the 1960's), and both are much more frequent attenders than are Jews. In the early stages of the life cycle (i.e., singles, childless couples, divorcé(e)s), Protestants report low attendance rates. Their attendance figures then rise somewhat with the bearing of children, grow even more as the youngest child reaches school age, and are slightly higher among retirees and widows. Catholics exhibit much the same patterns, only to a sharper degree. One notable difference between Catholics and Protestants is that young single Catholics attend church more frequently than do childless couples or divorcé(e)s. But, consistent with Protestants, the big jumps in attendance occur with young children and with the attainment of school age by these youngsters. Thereafter, Catholic church attendance remains at a high plateau, with the average Catholic parent, older couple, retiree, and widower attending church about every two weeks out of three in the 1960's, or every other week in the 1970's.

In general terms, the social participation literature predicts these patterns. Each stage in the family life brings distinctive factors which influence integration in the wider community, be it specifically religious or otherwise. Thus, young singles are

¹⁵See Nathan Glazer, *American Judaism* (Chicago, 1972).

TABLE 6. MEAN FREQUENCY OF ANNUAL RELIGIOUS SERVICE ATTENDANCE BY FAMILY LIFE CYCLE, RELIGION, AND TIME OF SURVEY

Family Life Cycle:	Family Life Cycle							Widowed, Older Singles	
	Young Singles ^b	Young Couples	Div/Sep	Pre-Schoolers	Parents	Older Couples	Retired Couples	Older Singles	
<u>1960's</u>									
Protestants	20 (208)	19 (313)	20 (322)	21 (1056)	24 (1037)	22 (1017)	25 (92)	24 (681)	
Catholics	32 (95)	32 (71)	25 (74)	34 (435)	37 (283)	34 (220)	25 (18)	32 (129)	
Jews	-	-	-	14 (48)	12 (50)	12 (44)	-	9 (17)	
Jews (1965) ^a	6 (108)	6 (91)	5 (28)	6 (155)	9 (540)	9 (273)	6 (73)	9 (274)	
<u>1970's</u>									
Protestants	14 (1019)	16 (501)	15 (1032)	19 (1459)	20 (2177)	21 (1602)	22 (1061)	22 (1447)	
Catholics	18 (584)	15 (299)	14 (341)	19 (984)	25 (1088)	25 (646)	24 (328)	28 (445)	
Jews	6 (62)	3 (29)	3 (16)	4 (53)	5 (82)	10 (96)	9 (24)	9 (56)	
Jews (1975) ^a	3 (242)	4 (101)	8 (37)	7 (95)	10 (184)	9 (112)	9 (48)	10 (112)	

^a Boston Jewish Community Surveys (1965 and 1975).

^b "Young singles" are 45 and under and never married. "Young couples" are married couples where the respondent is 45 or under and no children have been born to the couple. "Div/Sep" are respondents who have divorced (and not remarried) or who are currently separated. "Pre-schoolers" refers to couples with at least one child under 6 at home. "Parents" have children at home, all of whom are 6 or over. "Older couples" refers to couples where the respondent is 45 or older, and no children are living at home. "Retired couples" refers to those where the man has retired and there are no children living at home. "Widowed" and "Older singles" are currently unmarried and over 45 (although most are over 65).

still emotionally if not physically close to their parental home and conform somewhat to parental norms regarding church attendance. Young marrieds without children, often preoccupied with career advancement and typically in a new residence or community, have not yet entered the network of affiliations which promote service attendance. Divorcé(e)s attend less often, possibly because of preoccupation with marital stress and, in some cases, the burden of single-parent child rearing. Parents with young (under age 6) children tend to draw closer to neighbors and other parents, yet their preoccupation with child rearing in its early years limits opportunities for wider involvement. Parenting burdens diminish when all children reach school age, leaving more time for service attendance and concomitant activities.

These considerations help explain the Jewish family life cycle/religious service attendance contour, one which bears some similarities to the Catholic pattern. Religious service attendance on the part of Jews is lowest among young singles, childless couples, and divorcé(e)s. Much as Sklare and Greenblum find,¹⁶ more active involvement in the Jewish community takes place not with the birth of the first child, but when offspring attain school age. Attendance is relatively high among older couples whose children have left home and among retired couples. It falls, however, among the widowed and other older singles. The reliability of these findings is of course limited both by small case size among the national samples of Jews and by the admittedly narrow measure of Jewishness available (i.e., service attendance). For a more complete and reliable picture of the relationship between family life cycle and Jewishness we turn to the Boston community data sets.

Two rows in Table 6 report the mean frequency of religious service attendance by family life cycle among Boston Jews in 1965 and 1975. The two surveys' findings are generally consistent: attendance rises when children attain school age and tends to remain at that higher level thereafter. In other words, mature parenthood elevates service attendance by about 50 per cent, or from roughly six or seven to nine or ten appearances at services annually.

Table 7 reports on seven other measures of Jewish involvement: participating in a Passover Seder, lighting Sabbath candles, attending synagogue more often than on the high holy days, belonging to a synagogue, belonging to at least one Jewish organization, giving to the central Jewish philanthropic campaign, and having two sets of dishes for meat and dairy products.

The findings for 1965 and 1975 and for the different measures are generally consistent. All forms of Jewish activity, in both surveys, rise when children reach

¹⁶Marshall Sklare and Joseph Greenblum, *Jewish Identity on the Suburban Frontier* (New York, 1967), pp. 181-182. For Christian service attendance, see Dennison Nash and Peter Berger, "The Child, the Family, and the Religious Revival in the Suburbs," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, October 1962, pp. 85-93; and Dennison Nash, "A Little Child Shall Lead Them: A Statistical Test of an Hypothesis that Children were the Source of the American Religious Revival," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Fall 1968, pp. 238-240.

TABLE 7. JEWISH ACTIVITIES BY FAMILY LIFE CYCLE AND TIME OF SURVEY

Family Life Cycle:	Young		Div/ Sep	Pre-Schoolers	Parents	Older Couples	Retired Couples	Widowed, Older Singles	
	Singles ^f	Couples						Older Couples	Singles
1965									
Seder ^a	94	74	-	85	91	85	91	82	
Sabbath Candles	23	37	-	45	72	68	75	60	
Attend Syn. ^b	43	32	-	22	46	38	22	28	
Syn. Member	29	23	-	14	70	62	60	46	
Org'n Member ^c	23	30	-	41	59	58	51	45	
Giving ^d	26	28	-	53	70	75	74	51	
Kosher ^e	13	23	-	19	17	37	53	40	
	(108)	(91)		(155)	(540)	(273)	(73)	(274)	
1975									
Seder	84	65	63	79	92	92	92	78	
Sabbath Candles	18	42	30	42	62	58	61	49	
Attend Syn.	12	26	34	28	46	46	30	36	
Syn. Member	17	9	29	28	63	62	48	42	
Org'n Member	33	29	42	40	64	65	72	66	
Giving	11	17	28	34	54	73	49	48	
Kosher	8	13	7	5	16	31	35	30	
	(242)	(101)	(37)	(95)	(184)	(112)	(48)	(112)	

Source: Boston Jewish Community Surveys, 1965 and 1975. The three highest entries in each horizontal row are italicized for emphasis.

a Participated in a Passover Seder last year.

b Attends synagogue services more often than high holy days.

c Belongs to at least one Jewish organization.

d Contributed to the local central Jewish philanthropic drive.

e Maintains two sets of dishes for meat and dairy products (1975); keeps kosher at home (1965).

f See Table 6 for descriptions of family life cycle categories.

age six. In addition, the birth of the first child implies small to moderate increases in the performance of Jewish activities.

The pattern of italics in Table 7 highlights these findings. The italics denote the three (out of eight) stages of family life cycle with the highest frequency of Jewish activity performance in each row (i.e., for each activity). Out of the 14 times that a family life stage could be italicized (i.e., seven measures, two surveys), the entries for "parents" (those with school age children) are italicized 11 times, "older couples" entries are italicized 13 times, and "retired couples" entries are italicized 12 times. Clearly, the most active members of the Jewish community—in terms of private and public behaviors—are couples who have children six years or older. At this stage children seem to integrate parents into the Jewish community through the Jewish school and synagogue; school age children also demand less attention from parents than do tots and infants.

As might be expected, joining a synagogue is the Jewish activity which is most sensitive to changes in family life cycle, reflecting the family-centeredness of the American synagogue. The synagogue is an institution whose facilities and overall ambience are especially designed for couples with school age children.

The impact of family life cycle upon Jewishness, combined with the changing family patterns reported in Tables 1–5, suggests significant impending declines in Jewish identification in years to come. These changes may well help diminish Jewish identification in at least three ways.

First, family change may induce what can be termed a "compositional" effect. Thus, if alternative households—singles, childless couples, and divorcé(e)s—are less Jewishly active, and if there are more such households, then overall Jewishness should decline simply because of growth in the very types of families which typically exhibit low levels of Jewish identification.

The second possible impact—a "rate" effect—entails declines in Jewish activity among singles, childless couples, and divorcé(e)s—the types of households growing most rapidly. When adults were single for just a few years, when they bore children fairly quickly, and when few divorced, the alternative family stages were viewed as transitional and deviant (in the non-judgmental sense). Jews in alternative families could anticipate rejoining the Jewish community reasonably soon. Now, however, that alternative families have grown in number, they have become less transitional and more permanent, less deviant and more normative. Singles, childless couples, and divorcé(e)s have created their own communities, subcultures, and counter-norms to support and justify their once-deviant status. As a result, they may have less use for the conventional Jewish community and may well be less likely to undertake Jewish activities, public or private. In short, not only are there more alternative households, but they also may be moving further away from Jewish life.

The last possible effect of alternative family growth upon overall Jewish identification entails a long-range impact, one which may emerge no sooner than the mid-1980's. In the past, the few Jews in alternative family stages decreased their Jewish activities upon leaving their parental home and then, as married parents, resumed

higher levels of activity. But the growth in alternative Jewish households means that many Jews are spending a greater portion of their lives outside of a conventional family, possibly diminishing eventual resumption of higher levels of Jewishness. Only in the years to come will we learn whether the longer duration outside conventional familyhood will have a lasting impact upon Jewish identification.

To assess the extent to which family changes—both growth in alternative families and their increasing remoteness from Jewish life—contributed to assimilation between 1965 and 1975, we turn to Table 8.

As panel A reports, the proportion of alternative families among all households grew from 15 to 38 per cent during the ten-year period, primarily because of huge increases in singles and childless couples among those under 35 years old. But, as panel B reports, the proportion of young people in the population also grew as a result of the maturation of the post-World War II baby boom children, many of whom attended Boston's universities and settled in the area thereafter. Thus, alternative families increased not only because they made up a greater proportion of young people, but also because the proportion of young people increased from 1965 to 1975.

Panel C reports mean scores on a composite Jewish activities index which gives respondents a point for each of six activities listed in Table 7 which they performed (i.e., all activities except Seder attendance, which was dropped so as to balance private and public Jewish activity in the composite score). In both years conventional families performed more Jewish activities than alternative households. However, because over the ten-year period alternative families' Jewishness scores declined fully .63 unit while conventional families' scores declined only .23 unit, alternative families were much less Jewishly active relative to conventional families in 1975 than in 1965.

We can assess the impact of the growth in alternative families and their increasing Jewish disaffiliation by composing hypothetical Jewish activity means with different assumptions built in sequentially: (a) that the alternative households grew because of a younger 1975 population; (b) that the alternative households had grown as they did (the "compositional" effect); (c) that Jewish activity declined uniformly for all households; and (d) that it declined an extra amount among alternative households. We can then compare each of the four hypothetical scores with the actual 1975 Jewish activity mean to determine the impact of the various components of change from 1965 to 1975. In other words, we can project a hypothetical 1975 Jewish activity score, assuming that the 1975 Boston Jews had changed in no respect except for being a little younger than their 1965 predecessors. This procedure yields an estimate of the decline in Jewish activity owing solely to the greater youthfulness of 1975 Jews. We may then determine the hypothetical impact of the growth in alternative families above and beyond the change in age structure. That is, we grant that the 1975 population is younger than the 1965 population, and we assume that Jews in alternative and conventional households are just as Jewishly active in 1975 as were their respective counterparts in 1965. We seek to assess the impact on the

TABLE 8. DECOMPOSITION OF EFFECTS OF FAMILY CHANGE UPON DECLINING JEWISH FERTILITY, 1965-1975

A. Distribution of Alternative Families ^a By Age								
	21-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	NA	Total
1965	80%	34%	10%	4%	4%	5%	0%	15%
1975	100%	74%	9%	15%	5%	2%	0%	38%

B. Age Distribution								
	21-24	25-34	35-44	44-54	55-64	65+	NA	Total
1965	6%	18%	19%	23%	16%	18%	2%	100%
1975	14%	28%	15%	14%	13%	16%	1%	100%

C. Jewishness Mean Scores ^b By Family Type, 1965 and 1975			
	1965	1975	Difference (1965-1975)
Alternative	1.79	1.16	.63
Conventional	3.05	2.82	.23
All	2.87	2.18	.69

D. Components of Change in Jewishness, 1965 to 1975		
Due To Growth in Alternative Families:		
a. Because of Younger 1975 Population	.09	13%
b. Because of Growth in Proportion of Alternative Families	.21	30%
Due to Decline in Jewishness Scores:		
c. Basic Decline (.23) Among All Family Types	.23	33%
d. Extra Decline (.40) Among Alternative Families	.16	23%
Total	.69	100%

^a Per cent of households where respondent is single, married without children (and under 45), or currently separated or divorced.

^b Summary score of six activities: lighting Sabbath candles; attending synagogue more often than on the high holy days; belonging to a synagogue; belonging to one or more Jewish organizations; giving to the UJA (CJP in Boston); and having two sets of dishes for meat and dairy products.

population's Jewish means owing solely to the growth in the proportion of alternative families. Since alternative households are less Jewishly active, their greater number in 1975 itself contributed to a decline in Jewish activity scores, net of other factors (such as the greater youth of the population, which we have already taken

into account). A third effect is the overall assimilation of American Jewry. That is, even if Jews were not younger, and even if there were no growth in alternative families, there would still be an across-the-board decline in Jewish activities for all kinds of reasons, apart from changing age distribution and family structure. Finally, the fourth effect refers to a special decline in Jewish activities experienced by the alternative households between 1965 and 1975. In those ten years alternative households' Jewish activity levels declined further than did those of conventional families. In other words, alternative households were becoming increasingly remote from the Jewish community, and the fourth effect tries to capture this notion of distinctive remoteness or assimilation among alternative households. In sum, we are concerned with four sources of change in Jewish activity scores: (a) declines due to greater proportions of young people; (b) declines due to greater proportions of alternative families after having taken into account the greater youthfulness of the 1975 Boston population; (c) declines due to general assimilation affecting all families; and (d) declines affecting alternative families to a greater extent than conventional families.

Applying these methods, we find that the entire .69 unit decline in overall Jewish activity from 1965 to 1975 can be divided up as follows: (a) a .09 unit decline because 1975 Jews were younger than 1965 Jews; (b) a .21 unit decline because, their youth aside, 1975 Jews were more likely to live in alternative households, and less likely to live in conventional families; (c) a .23 unit decline due to a general decline in Jewish activity, a measure of across-the-board assimilation characterizing all family types between 1965 and 1975; and (d) a .16 unit decline due to the extraordinary decline in Jewish activity among alternative families between 1965 and 1975.¹⁸

¹⁸For those interested in a more detailed description of how the various components of change were calculated, the following is offered. The first component (a), owing to the greater youthfulness of the 1975 population, is calculated by first comparing the 1975 and 1965 age distributions in ten-year intervals, except for the first, which is a four-year interval (aged 21-24). We multiply the 1975 age proportions (e.g., the 14 per cent who are 21-24, the 28 per cent who are 25-34, and so forth) by the 1965 proportions of alternative families in each age category (e.g., the 80 per cent alternative households in the 21-24 age group, the 34 per cent alternative households in the 25-34 age group, and so forth) to obtain a hypothetical distribution of alternative households. With this done, we learn that if the 1965 Jews were as young as the 1975 Jews, then 22 per cent of the 1965 Jews would have been living in alternative households, instead of the 15 per cent we actually observed. We then multiply the percentage of alternative households (22 per cent) by the 1965 Jewish activity mean (1.79) and perform a similar operation for the conventional households (78 per cent of 3.05). These two products are added to yield a hypothetical Jewish activity mean of 2.78, which is .09 unit less than the original 1965 mean of 2.87.

Next, we determine (b) what the 1965 Jewish activity mean would have been had the 1965 proportion of alternative households been equal to its higher level in 1975. By substituting 1975 proportions of alternative and conventional households and retaining 1965 Jewish activity levels for these two types of families, we find a hypothetical mean of 2.57, a figure .30 below the original 2.87. But .09 unit of change was already accounted for by the increased youthfulness of the 1975 population; so .21 (.30 - .09) is left to be attributed solely to the ten-year growth in the proportion of alternative households within age groups.

In short, 1975 Boston Jews were less Jewishly active in large measure because many more of them were living in alternative households, and in large measure because those households in particular were much less Jewishly active than were their counterparts ten years earlier. These two effects—owing to growth in alternative households and their increasing remoteness from Jewish life—account for .37 out of .69 unit of decline in Jewish activity in Boston from 1965 to 1975.

Policy Implications

The organized Jewish community clearly has an interest in stemming the erosion of Jewish identification attributable to Jewish family change. Policies designed to achieve this end may focus on either of the two links in the causal chain tying family change to declining Jewish identification.

Jewish singlehood, divorces, and low birthrates have all stimulated synagogues, federations, and other institutions to undertake, or at least to consider, various containment policies. Many institutions now sponsor social programs to promote marriages among Jewish singles and divorcé(e)s. Family service agencies have, of course, long counseled troubled families in an attempt to resolve discord and keep marriages together. In response to low birthrates, though, much fewer programs are under way. Some young parents who have limited their families to one or two children claim that economic incentives go a long way toward resolving their qualms about expanding their families. Some have suggested communally sponsored day care, exemption from or reduction in day school tuition and summer camp charges for the third child, as well as reduced synagogue fees for large families.

Putting aside the high moral value one may attach to communal efforts to relieve the burdens of having many children, to reduce marital discord, and to stimulate early marriage or remarriage, these efforts are unlikely to dramatically alter the family changes that have been affecting American Jewry. Generally, formal institutions in modern societies—be they governmental or otherwise—have had little success in altering people's highly personal family decisions. The organized Jewish community, with few resources at its command, probably can do little to increase early marriage and fertility, or to reduce marital dissolution. Policies of containment simply won't work.

The third component (c), which refers to across-the-board assimilation, is simply equivalent to the difference between the Jewish activity means for 1965 and 1975 conventional households. Thus, $3.05 - 2.82 = .23$.

The fourth component (d), referring to the extraordinary decline in Jewish activity among alternative households, is the product of two figures. First, we determine the extent of extraordinary decline, an amount equal to the difference in Jewish activity between 1965 and 1975 alternative households ($1.79 - 1.16 = .63$), less the across-the-board decline ($.63 - .23 = .40$). We multiply the last figure (.40) by the proportion of alternative households in 1975 to determine the impact upon the entire population's Jewish activity mean ($.40 \times .38 = .16$).

The overall difference in Jewish activity between the 1965 and 1975 populations is .69 ($2.87 - 2.18$). Adding together the four components yields this difference ($.09 + .21 + .23 + .16 = .69$).

Policies of accommodation aimed at reducing the growing remoteness of singles, divorcé(e)s, and childless couples from the Jewish community probably stand a greater chance of success. Institutions tend to lag behind society in adjusting to changing social circumstances. Thus, one should not be surprised to learn that synagogues and other Jewish institutions have only recently begun to accommodate the larger number of alternative households in their potential pool of members and clients. These institutions are still largely geared toward the modal Jewish family: parents who have or have had children beyond school age. However, just as the growth of singles in the larger society has stimulated the formation of social structures attuned to their needs, we may expect their sheer numbers within the Jewish population to stimulate the construction of subcommunities within the Jewish world that are particularly accommodating to alternative households.

The formation of such subcommunities inevitably raises questions of the extent to which they are to be integrated into pre-existing communal structures. At one extreme, singles, divorcé(e)s, or childless couples may establish institutions or social networks largely outside extant institutions. Such subcommunities may come to be seen as valid alternatives to institutions which remain predominantly composed of conventional families. At the other extreme, the pre-existing institutions may adjust themselves in ways which make them more attractive to alternative family members. The latter represents an "integrative" rather than a "segregative" strategy of community-building among non-conventional Jewish families.

Should many subcommunities for alternative Jewish family members—be they inside or outside current institutional life—fail to emerge, then the rise in singlehood, divorce, and small families will no doubt shrink the number of Jewishly active individuals. Such an eventuality would have enduring consequences for distinctive Jewish continuity in the United States and, indeed, in any modern and open society.

STEVEN MARTIN COHEN

Soviet Jews in the United States: An Update

BETWEEN JANUARY 1, 1976 and December 31, 1979 Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union increased significantly; 105,540 Jews left the USSR during that period as compared with 124,912 during the years 1966 to 1975. At the same time, the percentage of Jews choosing to settle in some country other than Israel rose substantially—from 11 per cent in the 1966–1975 period to 57 per cent in the years 1976–1979.

Table 1 indicates the number of Soviet Jewish arrivals in designated areas by year. Between 1976 and 1979, 53,413 persons arrived in the United States. Of these, a relatively small number, ranging in any given year from fewer than 400 to approximately 700, were permitted to leave with their Soviet passports and with U.S. visas based on letters of invitation* from relatives in America. The thousands of others who desired to leave the USSR for destinations other than Israel, primarily the United States, were forced to use the so-called “Israeli pipeline”; they had to obtain letters of invitation from Israel, and exit permits for Israel from the Dutch embassy in Moscow. It was the use of Israeli visas that brought about the problem of the so-called “dropouts,” i.e., Soviet Jews who left with visas for Israel, but who ended up going to other destinations.

The reason for the overwhelming number of approvals of exit for Israel is largely based on the Soviet perception that desire to emigrate implies a rejection of the Soviet system. Thus, Jews seeking to leave are branded as aliens, traitors, and Zionists—people disloyal to the USSR. The fact that Jews have to apply formally to go to Israel in order to obtain necessary exit documents provides further proof

Note: An earlier discussion of the subject, covering the period 1966–1975, can be found in Joseph Edelman, “Soviet Jews in the United States: A Profile,” *AJYB*, Vol. 77, 1977, pp. 157–181.

*Since there is no free emigration from the USSR, the only way for a Soviet Jew to leave is to receive a “letter of invitation” from his family abroad for reunion. The recipient of such a letter must then submit it to the Soviet authorities. If and when it is submitted (and often it is not, out of fear), a period of uncertainty develops as to the reaction of the authorities. They decide how many exit permits are to be issued, and to whom. If the response is favorable, the applicant must then obtain a number of other documents, including one from his landlord that he is leaving his apartment in good condition, another from his employer, and others that there are no outstanding debts, etc.

TABLE 1. HIAS-ASSISTED USSR ARRIVALS IN DESIGNATED AREAS, 1976-1979

Country	1976	1977	1978	1979	Total
United States	5,512	6,842	12,265	28,794	53,413
Canada	603	443	478	1,170	2,694
Australia & New Zealand	331	482	593	1,552	2,958
Latin America	2	19	5	8	34
Europe	122	199	204	407	932
Total:	6,570	7,985	13,545	31,931	60,031
USSR ARRIVALS IN ISRAEL					
	7,279	8,518	12,112	17,600	45,509

of their unreliability. This whole procedure is capped when the departing Soviet Jews are forced to relinquish their Soviet national passports and citizenship.

All the Jews who leave the USSR with Israeli documents travel to Vienna, where, for the first time, they set foot in the free world. Here they are met by representatives of the Jewish Agency who try to convince them to settle in Israel. If the emigrés choose otherwise, the Jewish Agency transfers them to the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society (HIAS) and the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). JDC representatives then screen the emigrés to determine if they are eligible for HIAS/JDC assistance. Those who are not are retransferred by HIAS to non-Jewish and other migration agencies in Vienna. Table 2 delineates transfers and retransfers to and from HIAS.

TABLE 2. TRANSFERS IN TRANSIT

Year	Arrivals in Vienna	Transferred to HIAS	Per Cent Transferred	HIAS Referrals		Net HIAS Percentage
				to other agencies	Per Cent Referred	
1976	14,269	6,976	48.89	312	4.47	46.70
1977	16,737	8,405	50.22	543	6.46	46.97
1978	28,868	16,747	58.02	944	5.64	54.74
1979	51,294	33,906	66.10	1,561	4.60	63.06
Total:	111,168	66,034	59.40	3,360	5.09	56.38

The 53,413 Soviet Jews whom HIAS assisted to come to the United States between 1976 and 1979 originated in communities in all 15 Soviet republics (Table 3). Roughly two out of every three persons—35,030 (66 per cent)—were from the

Ukrainian SSR; 9,406 (18 per cent) were from the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic. According to the 1979 Soviet census, 1,335,000 Jews (73.7 per cent of the total Jewish population in the USSR) lived in these two republics.

TABLE 3. REPUBLIC OF LAST RESIDENCE OF HIAS-ASSISTED USSR ARRIVALS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1976-1979

Republic	Jewish Population 1979 USSR					Total
	Census	1976	1977	1978	1979	
Azerbaijan SSR	35	27	46	85	323	481
Byelorussian SSR	135	114	189	387	1,798	2,488
Estonian SSR	5	10	2	10	29	51
Georgian SSR	28	87	44	81	162	374
Latvian SSR	28	135	155	314	933	1,537
Lithuanian SSR	15	49	26	82	95	252
Moldavian SSR	80	303	209	496	1,083	2,091
RSSR	701	1,247	1,430	2,150	4,579	9,406
Tadzhik SSR	15	6	-	5	39	50
Ukrainian SSR	634	3,478	4,686	8,441	18,425	35,030
Uzbek SSR	100	23	48	187	1,283	1,541
Not Listed	-	9	1	4	10	24
Armenian SSR	-	2	2	-	9	13
Kazakh SSR	35	22	3	19	25	69
Kirghiz SSR	-	-	1	4	-	5
Turkmen SSR	-	-	-	-	1	1
Total:	1,811	5,512	6,842	12,265	28,794	53,413

Table 4 indicates the sex and age distribution of the HIAS-assisted arrivals. Males accounted for 47 per cent of the total, while females accounted for 53 per cent. The arriving Soviet Jews, with an average of 2.7 persons per family, constituted one-child families. By age categories, 14,192 (26 per cent) were between one month and 20 years; 30,794 (58 per cent) were between 21 and 60; and 8,425 (16 per cent) were aged over 61. (According to the 1970 Soviet census, 26 per cent of the Jews in the USSR were 60 and over, and about 15 per cent were under age 20.) Table 4 indicates the age and sex distribution of the arrivals.

Distribution in American Communities

As the number of Soviet Jews coming to the United States increased, more and more communities in various regions of the country became involved in the

TABLE 4. AGE AND SEX DISTRIBUTION OF HIAS-ASSISTED USSR ARRIVALS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1976-1979

Age Group	1976			1977			1978			1979			Grand Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1 mo.-5 yrs.	193	182	375	253	206	459	426	405	831	923	918	1,841	1,795	1,711	3,506
6-10	198	189	387	258	184	442	493	488	981	1,226	1,160	2,386	2,175	2,021	4,196
11-20	365	317	682	501	363	864	797	666	1,463	1,874	1,607	3,481	3,537	2,953	6,490
21-30	570	534	1,104	519	593	1,112	889	1,032	1,921	1,781	2,219	4,000	3,759	4,378	8,137
31-40	472	458	930	600	647	1,247	1,158	1,174	2,332	2,590	2,619	5,209	4,820	4,898	9,718
41-50	412	378	790	508	434	942	887	803	1,690	2,232	2,032	4,264	4,039	3,647	7,686
51-60	227	296	523	274	393	667	489	691	1,180	1,201	1,682	2,883	2,191	3,062	5,253
61-70	188	307	495	260	484	744	405	771	1,176	1,027	1,897	2,924	1,880	3,459	5,339
71-80	66	117	183	118	190	308	187	397	584	562	946	1,508	933	1,650	2,583
81 & over	19	24	43	23	34	57	46	61	107	132	164	296	220	283	503
Not Listed	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	2	-	2
Total:	2,710	2,802	5,512	3,314	3,528	6,842	5,777	6,488	12,265	13,550	15,244	28,794	25,351	28,062	53,413

resettlement process. This was a result of careful community planning, the aim being to distribute the immigrants over a wide geographic area. Thus, from 21 participating communities in 13 states in 1971, the number increased to 96 communities in 34 states and the District of Columbia in 1975, and to 154 communities in 42 states and the District of Columbia in 1979—an increase of 633 per cent during the decade. Among the newer communities involved in the resettlement process were Montgomery, Alabama; Hot Springs, Arkansas; Sarasota, Florida; Vicksburg, Mississippi; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Tacoma, Washington; Racine, Wisconsin; and Austin, Texas.

Understandably, the larger communities, with their greater resources, more experienced agencies and professional staff, and already-resident Soviet Jewish populations, exerted a strong pull on the newcomers. In the 1976–1979 period, these larger communities provided initial resettlement for 42,432 Soviet Jews (79 per cent), as compared with 10,891 (21 per cent) initially resettled in the newer and smaller communities. New York City accounted for 42 per cent (22,684 persons) of the total, followed by Chicago (3,895), Los Angeles (3,431), Philadelphia (2,413), and Cleveland (1,535). (Table 5.)

TABLE 5. INITIAL SETTLEMENT OF HIAS-ASSISTED USSR ARRIVALS IN THE UNITED STATES, IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES, 1976–1979

Community	Jewish Population	1976	1977	1978	1979	Total
Baltimore	92,000	88	175	238	668	1,169
Boston	170,000	105	174	355	713	1,347
Chicago	253,000	266	499	1,031	2,099	3,895
Cleveland	75,000	174	170	377	814	1,535
Detroit	75,000	116	139	283	485	1,023
Los Angeles	455,000	397	383	819	1,832	3,431
Metropolitan N.J.	95,000	123	84	219	525	951
Miami	225,000	111	101	271	528	1,011
New York City	1,998,000	2,363	2,974	5,134	12,213	22,684
Philadelphia	295,000	240	290	514	1,369	2,413
Pittsburgh	51,000	56	82	120	357	615
St. Louis	60,000	60	94	162	396	712
San Francisco	75,000	87	145	235	765	1,232
District of Columbia	160,000	49	51	97	217	414
Others	1,781,900	1,277	1,481	2,410	5,813	10,981
Total:	5,860,900	5,512	6,842	12,265	28,794	53,413

During the period under review, increased emphasis came to be placed on the involvement of local relatives, many of whom were themselves recent arrivals, in the resettlement process. Among the beneficial effects of such family involvement were

a lessening of dependence on the community, and more rapid achievement of independence. In many communities the period of time that the refugees were supported by community funds was gradually reduced from about a year to four months.

Between 1966 and 1975, when the number of Soviet Jewish arrivals was relatively small, local Jewish family agencies, receiving subventions from community federations, took the lead in the resettlement process. In the 1976–1979 period, however, the federations themselves came to assume an increasingly active role in community planning for refugee resettlement. To facilitate this process, and to provide a vital exchange of information, the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, the umbrella organization of Jewish federations in the United States and Canada, established a Soviet Jewish resettlement program.

In 1978 the United States government initiated the Block Grant program to ease the financial pressures generated by refugee settlement. The program reimbursed individual communities 50 cents on the dollar for costs of resettlement, with a maximum reimbursement of \$1,000 per capita. However, some of the aspects of the resettlement process, such as religious education, were not reimbursable under the law. Many communities actually expended more than \$2,000 per capita in effectuating the total resettlement of Soviet Jews.

Occupational Patterns

Many Soviet Jews arrive in the United States with high expectations of securing positions similar to the ones they held in the USSR, with concomitant status and prestige. When this proves to be impossible in the immediate term because of language difficulties, non-transferable skills, etc., bitterness and frustration often ensue.

Occupational status has particular significance for Soviet Jewish emigrés, because they come from a society which stresses “socially useful labor.” This theme is so central in the USSR that it is illegal to be unemployed there. The development pattern of Soviet industrialization requires large numbers of engineers, scientific specialists, and technicians. These occupations carry prestigious social status, status that is a codeterminant of income and in many cases a substitute for wealth.

Because of the attitudes toward work that Soviet Jews bring with them to America, many find it difficult to accept entry level jobs, even when these are the only ones available until the newcomers acquire some knowledge of the English language. They are unfamiliar with the possibility of upward mobility in the American labor market, and fear that they will be “locked in” to low-status positions.

Many Soviet Jews in the United States, especially those seeking professional positions, are put off by the requirement to prepare and submit a work resume. In the USSR information about past experience may be used against an individual, and

the newly-arrived Soviet Jews are fearful that the same thing will happen in the United States. Moreover, for many professionals, and medical personnel in particular, the requirement to pass examinations in English, testing both theory and practice, is a formidable barrier.

Perceived against this background, the occupational categories of the Soviet Jewish arrivals (Table 6) take on particular significance: 25 per cent of the new immigrants were professionals (scientists, artists, doctors, journalists, academicians, literary figures, musicians, translators and related occupations); 16 per cent were engineers; and 9 per cent were technicians. The 15,670 persons in these three categories constituted half the labor force, indicating, among other things, a high degree of training and/or advanced schooling. Significantly, only 281 persons, considerably less than one per cent of the labor force, were classified as unskilled. There were almost twice as many women (66 per cent) as men (34 per cent) who reported occupations in the professional category. The number of women in white-collar, technical, and service positions also exceeded that of men. Men predominated as engineers, blue-collar workers, and in the transportation services.

Since the number of Jews admitted to Soviet universities and specialized institutes is drastically limited and becoming even more so, it is likely that the proportion of professionals and technicians among Soviet Jewish arrivals will be significantly reduced in the future.

Jewish Identity

In the mental baggage of many Soviet Jewish arrivals is an element of tension caused by their having sought to become full participants in Russian culture and society, and having been rebuffed. Despite their high degree of acculturation, these Jews were perceived as being different and cast into the role of outsiders or marginal persons. At the same time, they had little or no knowledge of things Jewish. Ironically, many Soviet Jews were reminded of their Jewishness by the notation *yevrei* (Jewish) on their internal Soviet passports, a notation that was pejorative and that often generated discrimination in employment, education, and other facets of life. Small wonder, then, that the Jewish identities of many Soviet Jewish emigrés tend to be blurred.

In order to further the Jewish aspects of the resettlement process, many communities have provided the new arrivals with a year's free membership in a synagogue and a Jewish community center. Children have been enrolled on a scholarship basis in religious schools, while special classes on Jewish themes have been organized for adults. A number of communities, including Baltimore and San Francisco, have begun to publish Russian-language newspapers. Many communities have established hospitality programs in which Soviet Jewish families are invited to the homes of American families for the Sabbath and other festive and special occasions. Arrangements have also been made in most communities for the celebration of bar and bat mitzvahs, weddings, circumcisions for the newborn, young children, teenagers,

TABLE 6. OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF HIAS-ASSISTED USSR ARRIVALS IN THE UNITED STATES*

Occupations	1976			1977			% in Labor Force			% in Labor Force				
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Force	Male	Female	Total	Force	Male	Female	Total
Professionals	368	581	949	28	368	650	1,018	25	595	1,228	1,823	24		
Engineers	373	98	471	14	399	188	587	14	836	334	1,170	16		
Technicians	134	147	281	8	135	164	299	7	247	321	568	8		
White Collar	136	430	566	16	151	562	713	17	197	1,003	1,200	16		
Blue Collar	546	92	638	19	654	88	742	18	1,099	155	1,254	17		
Service	161	267	428	12	260	376	636	15	449	652	1,101	15		
Transportation	72	2	74	2	98	4	102	2	251	9	260	3		
Unskilled	19	7	26	1	20	31	51	1	32	26	58	1		
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	4	-		
Not Listed	7	9	16	-	7	15	22	-	13	15	28	-		
Not in Labor Force	894	1,169	2,063		1,222	1,450	2,672		2,054	2,745	4,799			
(children)	(192)	(182)	(374)		(252)	(206)	(458)		(425)	(403)	(828)			
(housewives)	(-)	(179)	(179)		(-)	(212)	(212)		(-)	(336)	(336)			
(students)	(555)	(473)	(1,028)		(718)	(507)	(1,225)		(1,190)	(1,032)	(2,222)			
(retired)	(147)	(335)	(482)		(252)	(525)	(777)		(439)	(974)	(1,413)			
Total:	2,710	2,802	5,512		3,314	3,528	6,842		5,777	6,488	12,265			
Number in Labor Force	1,816	1,633	3,449	62	2,092	2,078	4,170	61	3,723	3,743	7,466	61		

TABLE 6. (continued)

Occupations	1979		% in		Grand Total		% in	
	Male	Female	Total	Labor	Male	Female	Total	Labor
				Force				Force
Professionals	1,378	2,802	4,180	26	2,709	5,261	7,970	25
Engineers	1,896	824	2,720	17	3,504	1,444	4,948	16
Technicians	661	943	1,604	10	1,177	1,575	2,752	9
White Collar	402	1,810	2,212	14	886	3,805	4,691	15
Blue Collar	2,134	389	2,523	16	4,433	724	5,157	16
Service	1,067	1,323	2,390	15	1,937	2,618	4,555	15
Transportation	430	15	445	3	851	30	881	3
Unskilled	62	84	146	-	133	148	281	1
Others	3	-	3	-	7	-	7	-
Not listed	26	55	81	-	53	94	147	-
Not in Labor								
Force	5,491	6,999	12,490		9,661	12,363	22,024	
(children)	(933)	(914)	(1,847)		(1,802)	(1,705)	(3,507)	
(housewives)	(-)	(314)	(314)		(-)	(1,041)	(1,041)	
(students)	(3,013)	(2,686)	(5,699)		(5,476)	(4,698)	(10,174)	
(retired)	(1,545)	(3,085)	(4,630)		(2,383)	(4,919)	(7,302)	
Total:	13,550	15,244	28,794		25,351	28,062	53,413	
Number in								
Labor Force	8,059	8,245	16,304	57	15,690	15,699	31,389	59

*The occupational categories are based upon information provided by the assisted Soviet Jewish arrivals in their interviews with HIAS staff in Rome. The reported job titles may not necessarily coincide with the operational elements of similar titles in the United States.

and adults, as well as other Jewish ceremonial events. Not surprisingly, there is considerable variation among the newly-arrived Soviet Jews in their reaction to Jewish communal attempts to further their Jewish knowledge. It is clear, however, that many Soviet Jews in communities throughout the country have begun to cultivate their Jewish roots.

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