# Jewish Women in Transition: A Comparative Sociodemographic Perspective

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Over recent decades, extraordinary changes have occurred worldwide with respect to women's role in society. This is true concerning actual transformations in demographic, socioeconomic, and cultural trends; and probably even truer regarding the nature of public discourse. The key issue at stake in the assessment of gender in society concerns the amount of equity, if not equality, achieved by women in comparison with men. In this regard, innovative and sometimes provocative feminist ideas, claims, and strategies that assertively stressed the issue of equality—which were once barely at the margins of acceptance—have become part of mainstream discourse.[1] There is, for example, the establishment of academic programs of women's studies, an intriguing symptom of this legitimacy, as it indicates that the position of women in society can be conceptually equated with that of regional cultures or minorities.

Though inconsistent with the fact that women in all modern societies constitute the majority of the total population,[2] acknowledging the specific character of women as a "minority" with regard to history, social structure, and subculture may be analytically helpful in the process of monitoring their path toward socioeconomic parity with the pacesetting "majority"—men. Since demographic, socioeconomic, and cultural patterns may evolve differently among specific groups relative to the majority, and among single individuals relative to the average of their reference group, the concept of *transition* may best apply to the social study of women. A transition is the often prolonged process of passage from an initial and rather stable situation to a different one (which may also become stabilized in the long run). From this perspective, assessing the position of women in society requires, among other things, a judgment on whether observed sociodemographic differences are better characterized as *lags of variable magnitude* over time in the framework of a general process of convergence, or as *insurmountable diversity* that is bound to persist or even increase.

To the extent that epochal changes are revolutionizing the status of women in the more developed societies, their impact on world Jewry can hardly be more dramatic. Moreover, the analysis of such transitions may have an added urgency in the Jewish context. This is because the debate about the status of Jewish women also involves consideration of their normative role in the transmission of group identity. Since traditional Judaism demarcates different developmental paths for women and men, any

evaluation of the way that Jewish women participate in the household, in the marketplace, and in the formation of collective culture and awareness must take into account both the more traditional and the broader contemporary Jewish contexts.

A growing body of scholarly literature in recent years has examined the status and role of Jewish women. There have been broad sociohistorical evaluations of the challenges facing those who attempt to achieve a synthesis between the preservation of a distinctively Jewish lifestyle and full participation in contemporary society;[3] detailed analyses of life-cycle, socioeconomic, and cultural experiences in different contexts, with special attention to the situation in the United States and in Israel;[4] reviews of women's organizations and the part that they play within and outside the Jewish community;[5] and attempts to evaluate how the organized Jewish community might cope with various emerging challenges.[6]

This article more modestly endeavors to review what has actually happened in recent years—"recent" being defined as the span of the last generation or, more broadly, the 40 years between the late 1950s to the late 1990s—regarding the presence and role of women in several critical processes that have affected world Jewish populations and communities. The following is an obviously selective review of trends in the areas of educational attainment and employment, marriage and fertility, and Jewish identification. It provides a series of empirically measured indicators as background to the more focused essays appearing earlier in this symposium. The emphasis here is on data comparisons by gender and on gender-specific indicators of achievement. Reported observations relate to major Jewish communities in the diaspora; to the Jewish component of Israeli society; and to developments within the Jewish population as compared with more general trends in their different countries. Although most of this article deals with indicators at the individual level, one section attempts to provide a more global perspective of the context within which contemporary Jewish women live.[7]

## Training, Jobs, and "Invisible Work"

### *Educational Attainment*

Probably the most impressive change in the status of women has occurred in the area of education, where women have almost entirely closed the once wide gender gap, in some instances even surpassing men's educational attainments. Changes among the Jewish populations in the United States and Israel over the last 30 to 40 years are most illustrative in this respect. In the U.S. in 1957, among the Jewish population aged 25 and over, 23 percent of women had studied for at least some time in college, and 10 percent had studied in college for four years or more, versus 13 and 6 percent, respectively, for all U.S. women. The figures for Jewish men were 38 percent with some college studies, and 26 percent with four years or more of college.[8] In 1990, focusing on the group aged 30–39, 85 percent of Jewish women had some college studies and 63 percent had a college degree, while 29 percent had gone on to study on the graduate level.[9] Among white women generally, 46 percent had studied at all in college, and 24 percent had a college degree. Among Jewish men in the same age group,

87 percent had been to college and 69 percent had a college degree (37 percent had studied at the graduate level); the comparable figures for white men as a whole were 52 percent (some college) and 31 percent with a college degree. Hence, over the last 30 years, Jewish women not only maintained their edge in comparison with white American women generally, but very significantly surpassed the average educational attainment of white American men. Relative to Jewish men, the conspicuous educational gap of 1957 had virtually disappeared by 1990 in terms of a college education, although the accomplishment of Jewish women at the level of graduate studies still lagged behind that of Jewish men by about one fifth. The high proportion of Jewish graduates in the U.S. is most exceptional and, inter alia, indicates a high degree of professional specialization, which in turn underlies significant developments in the occupational domain (see below).[10]

In examining the evolution of educational attainment in Israel, it is worth recalling that heterogeneous waves of immigration, especially since 1948, brought to the country a large number of individuals with little or no formal education.[11] Consequently, in 1961, Israel's Jewish population had an education lag not only relative to the Jewish population in the U.S., but also relative to the total U.S. population. Among Israeli Jewish women aged 30 and over in 1961, 7 percent had completed at least 13 years of study (the equivalent of some college), and 2 percent had studied 16 years or more (implying the attainment of a university degree). Among Jewish men, the respective figures were 14 and 6 percent.[12] In 1997, once again narrowing the analysis to the younger and better educated segment of the Jewish adult population—in this case, those aged 25 to 34—54 percent of Jewish women had attained at least 13 years of study, and 24 percent had 16 years of study or more; among men, the respective figures were 50 and 24 percent.[13]

**Table 1.** Jews with Higher Education in the U.S. and Israel, ca. 1960 and 1990 (percent)

| Educational attainment | ca. 1960 | | | ca. 1990 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Women | Men | Women % difference[a] | Women | Men | Women % difference[a] |
| U.S.[b] | | | | | | |
| Studied in college | 23 | 38 | −41 | 85 | 87 | −2 |
| College completed | 10 | 26 | −62 | 63 | 69 | −9 |
| Graduate studies | | | | 29 | 37 | −21 |
| Israel[c] | | | | | | |
| Studied 13 + years | 7 | 14 | −49 | 54 | 50 | +9 |
| Studied 16 + years | 2 | 6 | −67 | 24 | 24 | +2 |

[a]Relative difference (in percent) between figures for women and men in the two previous columns is computed from percentages not rounded to the unit as in previous columns.

[b]For the years 1957 and 1990, respectively. For 1957, figures are for those aged 25 and over; "college completed" refers to persons who have completed four or more years of college. For 1990, figures are for individuals aged 30–39.

[c]For the years 1961 and 1997, respectively. For 1961, figures are for individuals aged 30 and over; for 1997, those aged 25–34.

*Sources*: Goldstein, "Socioeconomic Differentials among Religious Groups in the United States"; idem, "Profile of American Jewry"; Central Bureau of Statistics, *Language, Literacy and Educational Attainment*, part 1, *Population and Housing Census 1961*, vol. 15; idem, *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, vol. 49.

Jews in Israel had therefore achieved educational levels quite similar to the white population in the United States, though still distant from the unique educational achievements of U.S. Jews. Moreover, the large gender gap in education that had existed in 1961 not only had disappeared by 1997, but younger adult women had achieved greater exposure to higher education than males in the comparable age cohort. The significant improvement in Jewish women's educational achievements during the 30 years since around 1960 are summarized in Table 1 (although one must keep in mind the different age definition of the data at the two points in time). The total of individuals with at least some college education increased by 370 percent in the U.S., and by 730 percent (from a much lower starting point) in Israel; the number with advanced college studies increased by 630 percent in the U.S., and by an overwhelming 1,150 percent in Israel. To what extent this achievement was translated into other aspects of status equalization is examined below.

### *Participation in the Labor Force and Occupational Composition*

Between the late 1950s/early 1960s and the 1990s, the weight of Jewish women in the labor force—as of women generally in most of the Western world—increased substantially, as did their specific contribution to various branches of the economy. The following analysis does not address individual occupational mobility but rather compares the same populations at two points in time (of course, very substantial, if not nearly complete, substitution of individuals in the labor force had occurred over time). These changes are best illustrated with regard to the two largest Jewish concentrations in the world, those of the United States and Israel.

In the U.S., the participation of Jewish women in the labor force increased from 31 percent in 1957 (versus 35 percent for the total female population) to 58 percent in 1990 (versus 57 percent for white women generally).[14] In Israel, the number of working women increased from 27 percent in 1960 to 51 percent in 1997. In contrast, the respective figures for Jewish males decreased slightly from 82 to 76 percent in the U.S., and from 78 to 61 percent in Israel. Focusing on peak ages of working activity (which were different in the two countries), 82 percent of Jewish women aged 45–49 in the U.S. were in the labor force in 1990; while for Israel, the figure was 76 percent of those aged 35–44 in 1997.[15]

Table 2 reports occupational distributions for men and women in the United States and in Israel over a 40-year period.[16] A significant restructuring of the Jewish labor force occurred as part of more general trends in the labor market of the respective countries—namely, a relative reduction in the share of agriculture and industry, and a large expansion in business, community, and professional services. To better understand the trends in the female labor force, changes among men will be assessed first, since women often tended to replace men in certain spheres while joining them (comparatively later) in other occupational branches, particularly in professional and managerial occupations.

In the U.S. by the end of the 1950s, more than half of all employed Jewish men had attained a comparatively high occupational status as either professionals or as managers and proprietors—more than twice the average share among whites as a whole (55 versus 23 percent, respectively). By 1990, the concentration of Jewish men in the

**Table 2.** Labor-force Characteristics of Jewish and Total Population, U.S. and Israel, 1957–1997 (percent)

| | U.S., aged 18+ | | | | Israel, aged 15+ | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1957 | | 1990 | | 1961 | 1997 |
| Occupational category | Jewish | Total | Jewish | Total | Jewish | Jewish |
| Women | | | | | | |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Total upper | 24.4 | 17.7 | 49.1 | 31.2 | 24.9 | 35.5 |
| Professional | 15.5 | 12.2 | 36.1 | 15.2 | 23.1 | 32.6 |
| Managers and proprietors | 8.9 | 5.5 | 13.0 | 16.0 | 1.8 | 2.9 |
| Total intermediate | 62.9 | 50.3 | 47.3 | 57.8 | 51.1 | 50.7 |
| Clerical | 43.9 | 30.3 | 41.1 | 41.3 | 18.9 | 30.0 |
| Sales | 14.4 | 6.9 | [a] | [a] | 8.6 | 20.7 |
| Service workers | 4.6 | 13.1 | 6.2 | 16.5 | 23.6 | [b] |
| Total lower | 12.6 | 32.0 | 3.6 | 10.9 | 24.0 | 14.0 |
| Crafts, operatives, and unskilled | 12.4 | 28.3 | 3.6 | 10.0 | 15.5 | 13.4 |
| Agriculture | 0.2 | 3.7 | 0.0 | 0.9 | 8.5 | 0.6 |
| Men | | | | | | |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Total upper | 55.4 | 23.2 | 55.7 | 30.1 | 16.9 | 33.3 |
| Professional | 20.3 | 9.9 | 39.0 | 15.8 | 9.7 | 24.0 |
| Managers and proprietors | 35.1 | 13.3 | 16.7 | 14.3 | 7.2 | 9.3 |
| Total intermediate | 24.4 | 18.4 | 29.4 | 26.4 | 27.6 | 24.4 |
| Clerical | 8.0 | 6.9 | 24.4 | 17.5 | 11.6 | 9.2 |
| Sales | 14.1 | 5.4 | [a] | [a] | 8.6 | 15.2 |
| Service workers | 2.3 | 6.1 | 5.0 | 8.9 | 7.4 | [b] |
| Total lower | 20.0 | 58.4 | 14.9 | 43.6 | 55.5 | 42.4 |
| Crafts, operatives and unskilled | 19.8 | 48.6 | 14.9 | 39.4 | 42.1 | 39.6 |
| Agriculture | 0.2 | 9.8 | 0.0 | 4.2 | 13.4 | 2.8 |
| Women % difference[c] | | | | | | |
| Total upper | −56 | −24 | −12 | +4 | +47 | +7 |
| Professional | −24 | +23 | −7 | −4 | +138 | +36 |
| Managers and proprietors | −75 | −59 | −22 | +12 | −75 | −69 |
| Total intermediate | +158 | +173 | +61 | +119 | +85 | +108 |
| Total lower | −37 | −45 | −76 | −75 | −57 | −67 |

[a]Included in "clerical."

[b]Included in "sales."

[c]Relative difference in percent between figures for women and men in the two upper panels.

*Sources*: Sidney Goldstein, "Socioeconomic Differentials among Religious Groups in the United States"; idem, "Profile of American Jewry"; Central Bureau of Statistics, *Labour Force*, part 1, *Population and Housing Census 1961*, vol. 9; idem, *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, vol. 49.

upper range of the labor force had not changed, their share continuing to be substantially higher than that of the male population generally (56 versus 30 percent), but a significant transfer had occurred among Jews from managerial to professional occupations (20 percent in the latter category in 1957, versus 39 percent in 1990). At the intermediate occupational level (clerical, sales, and service workers), the share of Jews increased moderately (from 24 to 29 percent), alongside a more significant increase among total whites (from 18 to 26 percent). In contrast, the comparatively low share of Jewish males at the lower echelons of the labor force (crafts, technical jobs, unskilled labor, and agriculture) further declined (from 20 percent in 1957 to 15 percent in 1990), while declines also occurred among the total white population (from 58 to 44 percent).

Changes in the female labor force were even more significant. The share of American Jewish women employed as professionals or as managers and proprietors increased from 24 percent in 1957 to 49 percent in 1990. Jewish concentration in these more prestigious occupational categories significantly strengthened in comparison to the total share of white women, which stood in 1957 at 18 percent and in 1990 at 31 percent. More specifically, the share of Jewish woman professionals (by definition, having academic training ) increased from 16 percent in 1957 to 36 percent in 1990, as against a modest rise from 12 to 15 percent, respectively, among total white women. The Jewish presence among total U.S. professionals, much above their share in the total labor force, is therefore even more remarkable among women than among men. Notably, the share of professional Jewish women is much higher than the Jewish share among white professionals in the U.S. In contrast to the trend among Jewish men, the professionalization of women did not occur at the expense of their presence in managerial jobs, which also grew (though much less than among total white women). The proportion of Jewish women employed at the intermediate occupational levels declined from 63 percent in 1957 to 47 percent in 1990, while among all white working women it increased from 50 to 58 percent. At the same time, women tended to be generally less represented as craftspeople, operatives, unskilled workers, or as agricultural workers, their share declining from 13 to 4 percent among Jewish women and from 32 to 11 percent among the total population of white working women.

Trends in Israel were similar, after making due allowance for the significant structural differences that existed between the Jewish labor forces in the two countries at the beginning of the period under consideration. In Israel, the proportion of Jewish managers and proprietors was much lower than in the United States, and the proportion of craftspeople, operatives, and unskilled workers was much higher. Of course, different economic structural characteristics must be expected of a Jewish population constituting a majority in Israel and a minority everywhere else.

In Israel, more women than men continued to be represented in professional occupations, although their edge diminished (23 percent of women versus 10 percent of men in 1961, and 33 versus 24 percent in 1997). Underrepresentation of Jewish women managers and proprietors, however, was striking in Israel: 3 percent in 1997, versus 9 percent of men—as against 13 and 14 percent, respectively, in the U.S. in 1990. The proportion of Israeli Jewish women employed at intermediate occupational levels remained constant between 1961 and 1997 (51 percent), versus a moderate decline among men (from 28 to 24 percent). At the lower occupational levels, the share

**Table 3.** Women as Percent of Total Employed Jewish Population in Each Occupational Category, U.S. and Israel, ca. 1960 and 1990s

| | U.S. | | Israel | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Occupational category | 1957 | 1990 | 1961 | 1997 |
| Total employed | 29 | 45 | 26 | 47 |
| Total upper | 15 | 42 | 35 | 48 |
| Professional | 24 | 43 | 46 | 54 |
| Managers and proprietors | 9 | 39 | 8 | 21 |
| Total intermediate | 51 | 57 | 40 | 65 |
| Total lower | 20 | 17 | 13 | 22 |

*Source*: Computed from Table 2.

of employed women declined from 24 percent in 1961 to 14 percent in 1997, while among men it declined from 56 to 42 percent. These figures attest to the modernization of the Jewish labor force and, more generally, to the declining share in the Israeli economy of agriculture, manufacturing, construction, and transport—against a growing orientation toward high-tech industry and professional services.

In Table 3, the share of women employed is shown as a percent of the total Jewish labor force in the United States and in Israel over a period of more than 30 years. The increased incidence of women in the marketplace followed parallel paths in the two countries as the women's share of the total Jewish labor force increased from 26/29 percent around 1960 to 45/47 percent around 1990. The greatest change occurred at the professional and managerial level. In the U.S., the share of women increased from 24 to 43 percent of all Jewish professionals, and from 9 to 39 percent of all Jewish managers and proprietors. Women strengthened their already dominant share at the intermediate occupational levels (clerical, trade, and services) from 51 to 57 percent of the total, and experienced a moderate decline in their relative share of the lower occupational levels (crafts, technical jobs, unskilled labor, and agriculture) from 20 to 17 percent.

Over a similar 30-year span, the women's share among the professionals in Israel increased from an already high 46 percent to a 54 percent majority; among the managers and proprietors, from 8 to 21 percent; among the intermediate occupational strata, from 40 to 65 percent; and among the lower occupational strata, from 13 to 22 percent. The disproportionate increases at the upper level call for special attention, signifying as they do the massive entry and definitive presence of women at the more educated and decision-empowered end of the labor force. At the same time, women maintain their preponderant role at the functionally important level of clerical and other white-collar auxiliary occupations. Still, due in part to women's later entry and hence lesser seniority in those positions, and in part to the greater frequency of women's part-time employment, their actual income continued to lag behind that of men of comparable background and skills.

It clearly emerges from these analyses that gender gaps in occupational distributions closed considerably during the 30–40 year period under consideration. The actual patterns of change, however, were quite different in the U.S. (which may be con-

**Table 4.** Indexes of Dissimilarity between Occupational Distributions, U.S. and Israel (men and women, 1957–1997)

| Populations compared | | Year | Dissimilarity index[a] | % change |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| U.S., Jewish women | U.S., Jewish men | 1957 | 0.385 | |
| U.S., Jewish women | U.S., Jewish men | 1990 | 0.179 | −54 |
| U.S., Total women | U.S., Total men | 1957 | 0.342 | |
| U.S., Total women | U.S., Total men | 1990 | 0.332 | −3 |
| Israel, Jewish women | Israel, Jewish men | 1961 | 0.369 | |
| Israel, Jewish women | Israel, Jewish men | 1997 | 0.349 | −5 |
| U.S., Jewish women | U.S., Total women | 1957 | 0.194 | |
| U.S., Jewish women | U.S., Total women | 1990 | 0.209 | +8 |
| Israel, Jewish women | U.S., Jewish women | ca. 1960 | 0.190 | |
| Israel, Jewish women | U.S., Jewish women | ca. 1997 | 0.137 | −28 |
| Israel, Jewish women | U.S., Total women | ca. 1960 | 0.117 | |
| Israel, Jewish women | U.S., Total women | ca. 1990 | 0.204 | +74 |

[a]Computed from four main occupational categories in Table 2: professional; managers and proprietors; total intermediate; total lower.

sidered a trendsetter for smaller Jewish communities in the diaspora) and in Israel (see the lower section of Table 2). In the U.S., Jewish women achieved labor-force characteristics very similar to those of Jewish men by massively moving toward the upper categories of distribution from intermediate and lower categories. In Israel, the advancement of women at the upper professional levels was comparatively slower than among men. Movement away from lower occupational categories was significant, but there was a much greater tendency to stay at the intermediate levels.

The same trends can be expressed by means of dissimilarity indexes that synthetically quantify the difference existing between two populations (see Table 4).[17] Between 1957 and 1990, U.S. Jewish women reduced the occupational gap that separated them from their male peers by 54 percent. In comparison, the reduction of the gender gap in the white labor force as a whole in the U.S. was only 3 percent. Initially, in 1957, gender occupational dissimilarity was greater among Jews than among whites, but in 1990 it was much smaller. U.S. Jewish women also moderately increased their occupational gap as against all working (white) women. The trend toward closing the gender gap evolved quite differently in Israel, where the overall amount of gender occupational dissimilarity in 1961 was quite similar to that found in the United States. By 1997, however, it had decreased by a mere 5 percent. Israeli women thus moved significantly closer to the occupational distribution of total white women in the U.S. At the same time, their occupational dissimilarity vis-à-vis U.S. Jewish women had increased significantly.

## *Visible and Invisible Work*

Although informative, data on labor-force characteristics do not provide a picture of all the different kinds of work that people do. Activities that are not economically rewarded are not usually documented by standard socioeconomic sources. Interesting

**Table 5.** Time Spent on Major Types of Activity, Jewish Population Aged 14 and Over, Israel 1991–1992

| Major types of activity | Women | Men | Women % difference[a] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total minutes (daily average) | 1,440 | 1,440 | |
| Total % | 100.0 | 100.0 | = |
| Sleeping and personal care | 44.7 | 42.4 | +5 |
| Work, total | 26.6 | 26.5 | +0 |
| Paid work | 8.4 | 19.4 | −57 |
| Unpaid work[b] | 18.2 | 7.1 | +155 |
| Leisure[c] | 23.2 | 22.8 | +2 |
| Education | 4.3 | 5.2 | −17 |
| Religious activity | 0.5 | 2.0 | −76 |
| Residual | 0.7 | 1.1 | −33 |

[a]Relative difference (in percent) between figures for women and men in the two previous columns.

[b]Domestic work, shopping, services, errands, child-care, "helping and volunteering."

[c]Entertainment, socializing, hobbies and sports, television, video and other forms of media and communication, other leisure.

*Source*: Adapted from Central Bureau of Statistics, *Time Use in Israel, Time Budget Survey, 1991/92*, Table 16.

insights on the whole complex of economically visible and invisible work can, however, be obtained through a series of national surveys of time budgets undertaken around 1990 in Israel and in several other countries.[18] Detailed documentation of the use of time, 24 hours a day, provides important information on the economic and sociocultural habits of the population. Thus, for example, Table 5 presents the distribution of time allocated daily to major types of activities by Jewish women and men in Israel in 1991/1992. The data refer to an average seven-day week measured in daily minutes.

Overall, the greatest amount of time was devoted to sleep and personal care, followed by work, leisure, education, and religious activity. The main gender-related difference concerns the time spent on paid work activity (19.4 percent of average total time for men, versus 8.4 percent for women). This appears to be fully compensated by the time allocated to unpaid work—defined as domestic work, shopping, services, errands, child-care, helping, and volunteering—which accounts for 18.2 percent of total daily time on the average for women, as against 7.1 percent for men. When the two figures for paid and unpaid work are added, the difference between the genders practically disappears: an average of 384 daily minutes of work obtain for women, versus 382 for men. These findings help to clarify the internal articulation of one of the main factors of gender inequality in society—the convention by which certain types of work (mostly performed outside the household) receive monetary compensation, while others (mostly performed inside the household) do not. Other interesting, though not particularly large, differences between the genders in the allocation of time concern the slightly higher share of time devoted by Jewish women in Israel to sleep, personal care, and leisure, in contrast to the greater amount of time devoted by the men to education and religious activity.

By international comparisons, the total paid and unpaid workload of Jewish women

in Israel does not appear to be particularly heavy or skewed to their disadvantage.[19] In the United States (1985), an average of 453 minutes of work time per day were computed for women, versus 428 for men; in Canada (1992), the respective figures were 429 and 430; in the United Kingdom (1985), 413 and 411; in France (1985/1986), 429 and 388; and in Australia (1992), 443 for both sexes. (For more international comparisons of indicators of gender status see below.)

Whereas gender differences with regard to Jewish identification will be discussed below, a question of interest here is whether traditional religious lifestyles are related to significant gender differences in the allocation of time, specifically, in the amount of work. The time budgets of Israeli Jews with regard to paid, unpaid, and total work were compared for four groups of households that were classified according to their self-assessed degree of religiosity as religious (including haredi), traditional-religious, traditional–not so religious, not religious (see Table 6). The same typical relationship between work and gender appeared in each of the groups, namely, women's predominance in unpaid work and men's predominance in paid work. It emerged, however, that women's participation in paid work was more strongly—and negatively—related to their religiosity than that of men. The more religious women, in other words, devoted more time to unpaid work, mainly to child-care (a fact that accords with their larger than average families). When paid and unpaid work time is combined, it appears that the more religious women spent more time working than did the more religious men—377 minutes a day for women, versus 337 for men; and 418 versus 369 minutes, respectively, among those defined as "traditional-religious." A gender

**Table 6.** Time Spent Working, by Measure of Religiosity and Gender, Israeli Jewish Population Aged 14 and Over, 1991–1992 (daily average minutes)[a]

| Measure of religiosity and work status | Women | Men | Women % difference[b] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Religious | | | |
| Work, total | 377 | 337 | +12 |
| Paid work | 82 | 231 | −65 |
| Unpaid work[c] | 295 | 106 | +178 |
| Traditional, religious | | | |
| Work, total | 418 | 369 | +13 |
| Paid work | 92 | 250 | −63 |
| Unpaid work[c] | 326 | 119 | +174 |
| Traditional, not so religious | | | |
| Work, total | 392 | 401 | −2 |
| Paid work | 109 | 299 | −63 |
| Unpaid work[c] | 283 | 102 | +177 |
| Not religious | | | |
| Work, total | 372 | 397 | −6 |
| Paid work | 157 | 294 | −47 |
| Unpaid work[c] | 215 | 103 | +109 |

[a]Out of a total of 1,440 minutes per day.

[b]Relative difference (in percent) between figures for women and men in the two previous columns.

[c]Domestic work, shopping, services, errands, child-care, "helping and volunteering."

*Source*: Adapted from Central Bureau of Statistics, *Time Use in Israel. Time Budget Survey 1991/92*, Table 16.

comparison of the less traditional sectors of Israeli society showed an opposite picture—392 minutes of work daily for women, versus 401 for men among those defined as "traditional-not so religious," and 372 versus 397 minutes, respectively, among the nonreligious. Overall, the substitution of unpaid for paid work shows up much more clearly among women than among men. A comparison of time budgets therefore indicates that, whether or not the result of conscious choice, a more traditional environment appears to lead to less economic equality between the sexes and to a greater relative workload for Jewish women—in Israel, and conceivably elsewhere as well.

## Marriage and Child-bearing

Although caution is warranted in drawing inferences about the direction of causation, it is undeniable that changes in women's labor-force participation, (and, more generally, in their position in the socioeconomic system) have been accompanied by changes in the timing and frequency of certain life-cycle events, particularly marriage and child-bearing. An unprecedented erosion in the conventional roles of marriage and child-bearing has developed alongside the growing involvement of women in the labor force in the economically more developed societies. The following section summarizes recently observed changes among Jewish women in different countries regarding marriage propensities, the choice of partners, and fertility levels.

### *Changing Patterns of Marriage*

While the family has long functioned as the cornerstone of Jewish society, Jews historically anticipated many other social, religious, and ethnic groups in completing the transition from lower to higher ages of marriage, and from higher to lower (controlled) fertility.[20] Changing family patterns among the general population today include delayed marriages (alongside increasingly high rates of ethnoreligious intermarriage), higher rates of permanent nonmarriage, more frequent cohabitation, growing rates of divorce, low birthrates, growing proportions of births out of marriage (the latter still uncommon among Jews), and increasing numbers of one-parent households, mostly headed by women. Moreover, young adults increasingly leave home in the course of their educational training. In the U.S., ethnic background plays a strong role in the propensity to leave home. Young American Jews, more than members of other groups, are likely to leave home and form "nonfamily" living arrangements. Jewish women, interestingly, are almost as likely as Jewish men to leave home, in contrast to women of other ethnoreligious backgrounds.[21]

The declining Jewish propensity to marry—at least during the earlier part of adulthood—is clearly documented in Table 7, which compares the proportions of "ever-married" individuals among Jewish women and men of various ages in the U.S. and in Israel around 1970 and 1990.[22] In both the U.S. and in Israel after the Second World War, marriage was virtually universal among Jews by the age of 35. Yet a trend to postpone first marriages is evident in the more recent data regarding those aged 25–29 and 30–34. This tendency is more apparent among U.S. Jews (a drop from 85 per-

**Table 7.** Jews Ever-married at Selected Ages, U.S. and Israel, ca. 1970 and 1990 (percent)

| | 1970 | | | 1990 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | Women | Men | Women % difference[a] | Women | Men | Women % difference[a] |
| U.S. | | | | | | |
| 25–29 | 85 | 75 | +13 | 61 | 35 | +74 |
| 30–34 | 95 | 93 | +2 | 76 | 66 | +15 |
| 35–39 | 98 | 96 | +2 | 89 | 83 | +7 |
| 40–44 | 99 | 96 | +3 | 88 | 85 | +4 |
| 45–49 | 98 | 98 | = | 92 | 93 | −1 |
| Israel[b] | | | | | | |
| 25–29 | 88 | 73 | +21 | 73 | 50 | +46 |
| 30–34 | 96 | 93 | +3 | 89 | 78 | +14 |
| 35–39 | 98 | 97 | +1 | 93 | 90 | +3 |
| 40–44 | 98 | 97 | +1 | 94 | 95 | −1 |
| 45–49 | 98 | 97 | +1 | 95 | 97 | −2 |

[a]Relative difference (in percent) between figures for women and men in the two previous columns.

[b]Data refer to the years 1969 and 1995, respectively.

*Sources*: Schmelz and DellaPergola, "The Demographic Consequences of U.S. Jewish Population Trends"; Chiswick, "The Economics of Contemporary Jewish Family Life"; Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, vol. 22; ibid., vol. 49.

cent of women and 75 percent of men ever-married at age 25–29 in 1970, to 61 and 35 percent, respectively, in 1990) but it can also be seen in Israel (a decline from 88 percent of women and 73 percent of men ever-married at age 25–29 in 1969, to 73 and 50 percent, respectively, in 1995). Interestingly, the comparison of Jews with U.S. whites in general shows a reversal of patterns in the framework of a common trend. In 1970, among those aged 35–44, only 2 percent of Jewish women and 4 percent of Jewish men had never married, versus 5 and 7 percent, respectively, of all whites. By 1990, however, the corresponding proportions of "never-married" had increased to 11 percent of Jewish women and 17 percent of Jewish men, versus 7 and 12 percent, respectively, of the entire white population. Marriage postponement appears to be more significant among men than among women; if continued indefinitely, this trend will result in significant numbers of Jewish adults who have never married. Indeed, if current patterns hold, the eventual proportion of such Jews who have reached the age of 50 might well be 20–25 percent; if the trend accelerates, figures could run as high as 40–50 percent.

Such figures do not necessarily indicate a change in the widespread positive orientation toward family values among younger Jewish adults. Rather, a significant factor hampering marriage is the imbalance in age-sex composition that has emerged in many Jewish populations since the Second World War, not only as a consequence of the dramatic decline of the Jewish birthrate in Europe as a result of the Holocaust, but also (and more significantly for the U.S. Jewish population) as an outcome of the sequence of *baby boom* and *baby bust* years during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. As grooms are usually somewhat older than brides, the sequence of larger and scantier birth cohorts has caused alternating and significant shortages in the number of mar-

riage candidates of one sex as against the number of candidates of the opposite sex.[23] The problem has been made more acute by the growing tendency of young Jewish adults to find marital partners outside the Jewish community (see below). Possible additional factors are the high cost of housing and, more significantly, the growing perceived conflict between the demands of a career and those of a household. To some extent, improved educational attainment and increased participation in the labor force have come to interfere with more traditional family roles, especially for women.

Fitting into this general pattern is the increased incidence of divorce. Among the total population of leading Western countries, about 35–45 percent of those who married in recent years are expected eventually to divorce (in the U.S., the projected figure is more than 50 percent). In the past, there was a lower (albeit increasing) tendency among Jews to divorce. However, retrospective survey data shows that the gap has practically closed. Of all ever-married Jews aged 35–54 in the U.S. in 1970, 11 percent of women and 13 percent of men had been divorced at least once, although the large majority of them had since remarried.[24] The frequency of divorce among the general white population in the U.S. at that time was roughly twice as high. By 1990, 15 percent of ever-married Jewish women and 12 percent of ever-married Jewish men aged 35–64 were *currently* divorced or separated (a figure that does not account for those who had remarried).[25] Among whites in general, there were nearly identical levels of currently divorced.[26] Adding those who remarried, the level of "ever-divorced" among the general U.S. population reached 43 percent for women and 38 percent for men.[27]

In contrast, the more traditional Jewish community of Mexico showed a lower frequency of divorce in 1991, with only 8 percent of ever-married Jewish women and 6 percent of Jewish men aged 35–64 being currently divorced.[28] Divorce among Israeli Jews, meanwhile, has remained at relatively moderate levels, although it, too, is rising significantly. Of all marriages performed around 1970, 15–18 percent had ended in divorce by 1995, while the percentage of currently divorced stood at 13 percent for women and 8 percent for men. In view of the increasing trend toward divorce, it can be estimated that 19–23 percent of the marriages performed among Israeli Jews around 1990 will eventually end in divorce.[29] Remarriage, it should be noted, has become less common; when occurring at all, it is more often the divorced man who remarries.

## *Mixed Marriage*

The growing frequency of mixed marriage also plays a central role in determining the new configuration of Jewish gender, family, and population trends. A large body of literature has discussed the general significance of this phenomenon.[30] What follows is a focus on gender comparisons.

Debate about mixed marriage and its demographic consequences was greatly stimulated in the wake of the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS), which estimated that 52 percent of all marriages involving Jews between 1985 and 1990 were mixed marriages (this figure counted as "Jewish" those marriages in which a non-Jewish partner had converted).[31] The NJPS pointed to a rapid increase in Jewish outmarriage during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. When the data are separately analyzed

for the more recent marriage cohorts, as determined by generation of residence in the U.S., the current level of mixed marriage comes closer to 70 percent among members of the fourth generation (that is, people whose grandparents were born in the U.S.).[32] Based on documented evidence, the continuing trend toward assimilation in the U.S., as in most other large diaspora communities, has reached unprecedented heights.

Similar current frequencies of mixed marriage around or above 50 percent have been estimated for Jewish communities in several other West European and Latin American communities, as well as in Ukraine; mixed-marriage frequencies are even higher in the Russian Republic and in the smaller communities of Eastern Europe.[33] In England, the trend has been more gradual, but recent data indicate that the increased frequency of mixed marriage follows a path already charted in the U.S. Mixed marriage frequencies are somewhat lower in Canada and Australia, and notably lower in Mexico, where the rate barely reached 10 percent around 1990.[34] Perhaps the major demographic divide between Jews in Israel and those in the diaspora concerns the choice of spouse and the frequency of marriage with non-Jewish partners. Mixed marriage virtually does not exist in Israel because of the predominantly Jewish context of Israeli society. However, increasing numbers of outmarried families have been migrating to Israel in recent years, especially from the former Soviet Union.

Table 8 shows the frequency of mixed marriages in three different countries: the U.S., France, and the Russian Republic. Since the 1920s, all three countries have experienced a constant increase in mixed marriage over time, although the actual levels have differed. In Russia, for example, a sharp increase appeared during the late 1920s and 1930s;[35] in France, in the 1950s;[36] and in the United States since the late 1960s. In the United Kingdom (not shown on the table), a major shift has occurred since the 1980s—approximately 44 percent of young Jewish male adults who married at the beginning of the 1990s and about 30 percent of females chose a non-Jewish partner.[37]

In the past, the frequency of intermarriage generally tended to be lower among women, a fact that can be explained by Jewish women's lower levels of schooling and participation in the labor force. More recently, however, the level of mixed marriage among Jewish women has grown faster than among men. The reduction in gender-related educational and occupational gaps has evidently resulted in women's increased access to an expanded pool of marriage candidates. Another significant factor is the Jews' changing socioeconomic profile. In the very early stages of acculturation in America, there were rare cases in which Jewish women would be "coopted" by marriage into a higher-rated group. Today, the Jewish population constitutes one of the highest ranking socioeconomic groups in the U.S. and thus provides more attractive candidates for marriage.[38]

The propensity of the non-Jewish spouses (still mostly women) to convert to Judaism has been declining relative to the total number of outmarriages. But more important when it comes to the consequences of mixed marriage for the Jewish family is the question of the religious identification assigned by the parents to their children.[39] Past research consistently indicated that the majority of children born to interfaith couples were identified with the non-Jewish parent, or else were assigned dual or no religious identification by the parents. A detailed reanalysis of the original 1990 NJPS data shows that the distribution of children of mixed marriages was 18 percent

**Table 8.** Jewish-born Married with Currently Non-Jewish Spouse, by Year of Marriage, U.S., France and Russian Republic, 1920s–1990s (percent)

| Country and year of marriage | Women | Men | Women % difference[a] |
|---|---|---|---|
| U.S. | | | |
| Total, 1990[b] | 28 | 28 | = |
| Total, 1970–1971[c] | 5 | 9 | −42 |
| By year of marriage: | | | |
| 1981–1990[b] | 47 | 45 | +7 |
| 1971–1980[b] | 34 | 36 | −6 |
| 1961–1970[b] | 17 | 24 | −29 |
| 1960–1971[c] | 10 | 20 | −51 |
| 1950–1959[c] | 3 | 7 | −63 |
| 1940–1949[c] | 7 | 5 | +48 |
| 1930–1939[c] | 2 | 4 | −61 |
| Before 1930[c] | 2 | 2 | +47 |
| France[d] | | | |
| Total, 1975 | 7 | 15 | −56 |
| By year of marriage: | | | |
| 1966–1975 | 28 | 31 | −10 |
| 1956–1965 | 8 | 25 | −68 |
| 1946–1955 | 2 | 9 | −80 |
| 1936–1945 | 1 | 7 | −85 |
| Before 1936 | 2 | 6 | −70 |
| French-born | 15 | 23 | −34 |
| By year of marriage: | | | |
| 1966–1975 | 44 | 41 | +8 |
| 1956–1965 | 10 | 20 | −49 |
| 1946–1955 | 3 | 21 | −84 |
| 1936–1945 | 5 | 17 | −72 |
| Before 1936 | — | 7 | −100 |
| Russian Republic | | | |
| Total, 1994 | 44 | 63 | −30 |
| Total, 1989 | 40 | 58 | −31 |
| Total, 1979 | 33 | 51 | −35 |
| By year of marriage: | | | |
| 1988 | 63 | 73 | −14 |
| 1978 | 43 | 59 | −27 |
| 1936 | 37 | 42 | −13 |
| 1926 | 17 | 25 | −34 |
| 1924 | 9 | 18 | −50 |

[a]Relative difference (in percent) between figures for women and men in the two previous columns is computed from percentages not rounded to the unit as in previous columns.

[b]*Source*: National Jewish Population Survey (1990), adapted from DellaPergola, "New Data on Demography and Identification among U.S. Jews."

[c]*Source*: NJPS 1970–1971, adapted from Schmelz and DellaPergola, "The Demographic Consequences of U.S. Jewish Population Trends."

[d]*Source*: French Jewish Population Study, adapted from Bensimon and DellaPergola, *La population juive de France.*

[e]*Source*: vital statistics, adapted from Altshuler, *Soviet Jewry on the Eve of the Holocaust;* Tolts, "Demographic Trends among the Jews in the Three Slavic Republics of the Former USSR."

"Jewish only," 25 percent "dual Jewish and Christian," 33 percent "Christian only," and 24 percent "no religion."[40] Typically, those children whose identificational options are postponed tend to socialize in the environment of the majority rather than of the minority. The religious identification of the children of mixed marriage tends to be affected by the mother, at least in English-speaking countries. Some past evidence of a prevailing paternal influence on children's identification in Latin societies should be corroborated by more recent data.

In the U.S. and in England, the most important factor associated with the frequency of mixed marriage is the cultural environment provided in the parental home during childhood. The level of Jewishness of the parental home exerts stronger and more lasting effects on adult identification than does the type and amount of formal Jewish education received,[41] although the latter has also definitely been shown to strengthen Jewish identification.[42] Some circular correlation was found between divorce, remarriage, and mixed marriage.[43] Outmarriages tend to terminate in divorce more often than inmarriages, but remarriages after divorce often tend to be outmarriages. Interestingly, the relationship between socioeconomic status and mixed marriage now appears to be moving from direct to inverse. Recent data indeed point to higher levels of outmarriage among Jews with less formal education and lower occupational status.[44] This finding hints at the greater difficulty households with a lower social status and income may have in keeping in touch with the organized Jewish community and its often costly social and educational activities.

## *Fertility*

Another fundamental demographic divide between Jewish women in Israel and in the diaspora concerns fertility levels and family size. Figure 1 provides a synoptic portrayal of Jewish fertility over the last 60 years, its upward and downward fluctuations over time, and its patterns of convergence and divergence across geographical, social, and cultural settings. The data refer to the number of children ever born to women who have reached the end of their child-bearing years.

Jewish fertility levels in Israel have been relatively stable—and unusually high—when compared with other developed countries.[45] In 1996, current fertility as measured through the Total Fertility Rate (TFR)[46] was 2.6 children, more than enough to support continuing population growth. Women immigrants from countries in Asia and Africa had an average of about six children during the 1950s but, once in Israel, underwent a widespread process of modernization. Completed fertility declined to a level of between three and four children among the generation of mothers born during the 1940s. In contrast, Jewish women of European origin in Israel had already undergone the demographic transition to lower fertility levels before migrating to Israel. In Israel, as if to conform to the predominant notion of the "fusion of the diasporas," their family size tended to converge toward the higher (but falling) fertility level of Jewish women from Asia and Africa. The family size of Jewish women born in Israel—themselves the product, to a growing extent, of the intermarriages of immigrants from different continents—consistently fell somewhere between the polarities characteristic of the various immigrant groups.

Jewish fertility levels outside Israel provide insights on the Jewish experience,

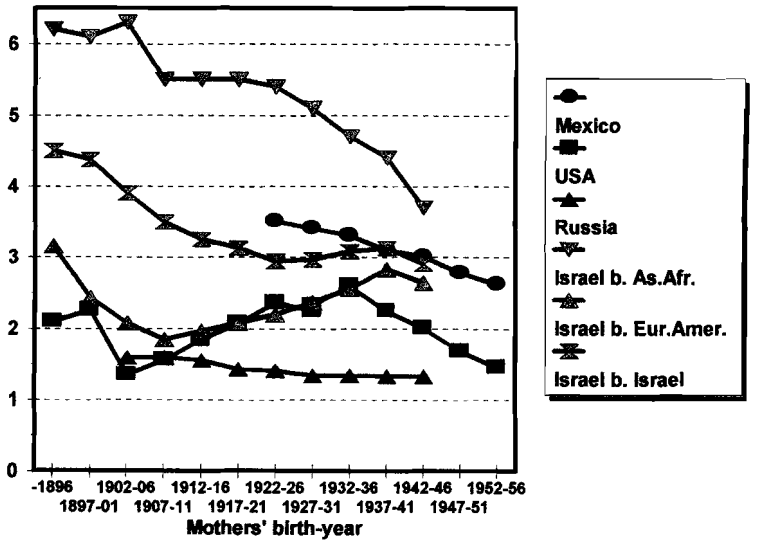


**Fig. 1** Total children born to Jewish women in selected countries, by year of birth of mothers

whose interest extends beyond the specific theme of reproduction. In the United States, the number of children born fluctuated significantly over the years in accordance with the time when women reached prime child-bearing ages. The economic depression of the 1930s determined sharp declines in U.S. fertility in general and among Jews in particular. Economic recovery during the Second World War and the postwar period of prosperity, optimism, and upward mobility brought about a baby boom that peaked during the late 1950s. The transformations in American society since the late 1960s, epitomized by the increased emphasis on rising economic expectations, individual achievement, and more complex roles for women, have been associated with a renewed decline of fertility. The Jewish pattern did not so much follow as anticipate that trend: it was systematically lower than the national average of U.S. whites and tended to respond more quickly to periodic changes, as appropriate to a better-educated population more in control of reproductive processes.[47] Jewish attitudes toward reproduction continued to be fairly traditional and child-oriented, but a follow-up of young adult generations over the 1970s and 1980s shows that actual reproductive behaviors fell short of declared intentions.[48] (Larger-than-average families among the Orthodox community were the exception, but these had only a minor impact on the overall fertility of American Jewry.) The fact that U.S. national and Jewish fertility trends have tended to run in parallel demonstrates the dependency of Jewish demography on the fluctuations in the economic, social, and cultural development of society at large.

In Soviet Russia prior to the Second World War, Jewish mothers born at the beginning of the century were already having an average of 1.5 children or less.[49] What is completely missing in the Soviet case is any sense of a postwar demographic re-

covery. Jewish fertility levels there appear to have been the product of what was felt to be a situation of permanent, unrelieved economic depression prevailing over the 73 years of Communist rule. Yet no matter how distant the U.S. and Soviet social systems once were, in the end, Jewish fertility levels in these respective countries have tended in the end to converge. In most other Jewish communities during the past 20 to 30 years, Jewish fertility levels stood far below the minimum for generational replacement. This was true, for example, for the communities of Canada, Argentina, Australia, and even France, where there was a significant intake of immigrants from North Africa. In all these countries, after accounting for children of Jewish parentage who were not raised as Jews, the low levels of *effectively Jewish* fertility pointed to a net reduction in the size of generations, a narrowing at the younger end of the age structure, and a progressive aging of the population. One interesting exception, again, was the Jewish community of Mexico, which by the early 1990s continued to display a moderate margin of demographic growth. It is likely that a combination of factors, including the still comparatively segregated position of the Jewish community and its low rates of intermarriage; the mix of Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jewish subethnic communities in Mexico; and the favorable economic situation enjoyed by a majority of the community (which allows more time for family-related activities on the part of Jewish women and easy availability of household help) are responsible for this situation.[50] If the uniqueness of the Mexican Jewish experience is merely the expression of socioeconomic advantage, however, the situation may change—given the experience of the similarly prosperous Jewish community of South Africa.[51]

Even at the height of the baby boom, the maximum level of completed Jewish fertility in the U.S. reached approximately 2.5 children—a level just below the minimal level ever experienced in Israel. Indeed, allowing for the rapid modernization of the traditional immigrant groups, and keeping in mind the high proportion of married Jewish women in the labor force, the Israeli fertility experience can be defined as a 50-year-long baby boom. Although there is no definitive proof that the same women would have borne a different number of children had they lived elsewhere, more than anecdotal evidence indicates that this is indeed the case. Jewish communities, or even families split by international migration, display different demographic patterns from those of Israel,[52] and compositional differences such as the higher proportion of religious families in Israel[53] or the comparatively higher educational level in the diaspora do not provide a sufficiently persuasive explanation of Israel-diaspora fertility differentials.

The uniqueness of Israeli Jewish fertility is further illustrated in Figure 2, which compares total fertility rates (TFRs) for European-born Israeli Jewish women with the corresponding data for all women in four European countries (Ireland, Italy, France, and the Russian Republic), and with all white women in the U.S. between 1960 and 1997. In 1960, the number of children born to European-born Jewish women in Israel was at the lower end as compared with their non-Jewish peers in Europe and North America. But whereas earlier (as among U.S. whites) or later (as in Catholic Ireland) fertility subsequently declined below the level of 2.1 children required for generational replacement, the fertility of European-born women in Israel was uniquely stable and generally remained above the 2.1 threshold. Especially since the mid-1970s, fertility in Europe has dropped as a result of economic erosion, new and more effi-

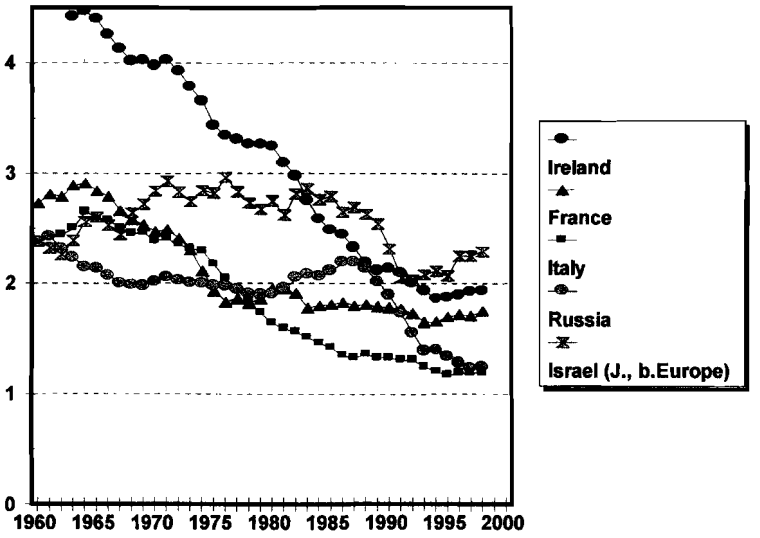


**Fig. 2** Total fertility rates for selected countries, 1960–1998

cient contraception, and more widespread secular and/or hedonistic norms.[54] Large-scale immigration from the former Soviet Union did lower Israeli fertility during the early 1990s but, as noted, new immigrant women rapidly caught up with the higher fertility level of their more veteran peers. The resilience of Israeli Jewish fertility—Israel is the sole developed country currently above demographic replacement[55]—is the more remarkable considering the already noted general improvement in educational levels; large-scale entrance into the labor force of Jewish women since the early 1960s; and the much improved standards of contraception.

It is also worth noting that about one-fourth to one-third of all births in the leading Western countries now occur out of marriage. In England and Wales as well as in France, the proportion of births in this category approaches one third; in Sweden and Denmark, it is closer to 50 percent. Among Jewish women, births out of wedlock have not become fashionable. Children born to single mothers constitute about 1 percent of the Jewish birthrate in Israel;[56] paradoxically, the near absence of such births contributes to the lowering of Jewish fertility in the diaspora.

In the now predominant context of widespread and efficient family-size control, the fundamental determinant shaping family size is the interplay between the normative value of children; the cost of child rearing; and the economic resources available to the household.[57] On the whole, Jewish families in the diaspora have at their disposal more personal economic resources than do Jews in Israel, which would seem to be conducive to larger families. A feeling of insecurity, possibly associated with minority status, has been suggested as a significant determinant of lower fertility among minorities in general and diaspora Jews in particular.[58] In this case, however, the growing feeling of adaptation to the general environment experienced by contemporary Jewish communities would be expected to lead to a decline in such insecurity

and, consequently, to higher fertility—an expectation that is not supported by recent data.[59]

At the same time, evidence is accumulating that the different meaning of, and commitment to, Jewish continuity (and to community bonds in a broader sense) stands at the core of the larger Jewish family size in Israel as compared both with the rest of world Jewry and with non-Jewish populations in the developed world.[60] An additional factor, inherently related to the former and carrying significant effects of its own, is that Israel, as a Jewish-oriented state, has encouraged the establishment of child-care facilities and woman-oriented social security benefits that render child-rearing more feasible than in many other countries of similar economic level. One relevant argument in the policy debate about fertility relates to the need, beyond the creation of the necessary logistical infrastructure, for societies to develop a more gender-balanced orientation toward child-rearing.[61] Population policies in Scandinavian countries that encourage socioeconomic benefits for mothers and the greater involvement of fathers in the child-rearing process have been associated with significantly higher birthrates than in countries lacking the same provisions.[62]

On a purely demographic plane, the Jewish fertility level in Israel of 2.6 Jewish children on the average per woman (regardless of marital status), as opposed to 1.5 or less in other Jewish communities worldwide (with a few exceptions) corresponds to a ratio of nearly 2:1 children "ever born" in Israel versus the diaspora. This dramatic contrast has obvious implications for Israel–diaspora relations in the coming decades.

## Jewish Identification and Levels of Observance

It is reasonable to expect that, under the impact of socioeconomic and demographic change, gender attitudes toward Jewish identification should also undergo transformation. The following section reviews gender differences in Jewish education and knowledge, religious observance, and various forms of involvement with the Jewish community in major Western communities and in Israel. Given some differences in the format of available data, the findings are first examined by country, followed by an overall evaluation.

### *The United States*

The level of involvement of men and women in a variety of Jewish observances and other forms of Jewish communal activity are compared in Table 9 for the years 1970/1971 and 1990.[63] Over the 20 years under consideration, different indicators of Jewishness evolved along quite different paths. Measures of religious observance and synagogue attendance remained rather stable; the level of membership in Jewish religious and lay organizations, of philanthropic activity, and of the "Jewishness" of informal social networks generally declined; and connections with non-Jewish organizations as well as visits to Israel became more widespread.[64] A composite index of observance of Jewish traditional precepts (fasting on the Day of Atonement, not eat-

**Table 9.** Selected Indicators of Jewishness, Jewish Population Aged 18 and Over, U.S., 1970–1971 and 1990 (percent)

| | 1970/71 | | | 1990 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Measure of Jewishness | Women | Men | Women % difference[b] | Women | Men | Women % difference[b] |
| Religious observance index | | | | | | |
| High | 23 | 25 | −8 | 31 | 24 | +28 |
| Medium | 59 | 61 | −4 | 55 | 57 | −4 |
| Synagogue visit | | | | | | |
| >1 per month | 22 | 24 | −8 | 21 | 22 | −7 |
| Ever | 71 | 73 | −3 | 75 | 74 | +2 |
| Fasts on Day of Atonement | 48 | 50 | −2 | 52 | 48 | +7 |
| Attends Passover seder | 78 | 79 | −2 | 65 | 58 | +11 |
| Celebrates Hanukah | 73 | 73 | = | 75 | 70 | +7 |
| Keeps separate dairy/meat dishes | 21 | 21 | +1 | 14 | 13 | +12 |
| Prefers a denomination[c] | 83 | 83 | = | 78 | 72 | +8 |
| Member of synagogue | 47 | 50 | −6 | 34 | 31 | +11 |
| Member of Jewish organization | 45 | 40 | +14 | 32 | 24 | +31 |
| Member of non-Jewish organization | 36 | 49 | −27 | 50 | 52 | −5 |
| Contributes to Jewish philanthropy | 42 | 40 | +4 | 36 | 31 | +18 |
| Ever visited Israel | 14 | 15 | −1 | 28 | 27 | +4 |
| Lives in Jewish neighborhood | 69 | 68 | +1 | 41 | 36 | +16 |
| Most friends are Jewish | 76 | 75 | +1 | 41 | 36 | +12 |

[a]For each indicator, adding a negative or lower option brings the total to 100 percent.

[b]Relative difference (in percent) between figures for women and men in the two previous columns is computed from percentages not rounded to the unit as in previous columns.

[c]Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform.

*Source*: Adapted from Rebhun, "Geographic Mobility and Religoethnic Identification among American Jews 1970–1990."

ing leavened products on Passover, observing laws of kashruth, and Sabbath observance) was reported to be slightly lower among women than among men in 1970, but had become higher for women by 1990. A similar reversal of gender patterns appears for the frequency of synagogue attendance and membership. On all other measures of Jewishness, women reported frequencies similar or slightly higher than those of men in 1970 and, by 1990, they had substantially strengthened their edge (the frequency of Jewish women's membership in *non*-Jewish organizations, which had lagged significantly behind men in 1970, had also grown by 1990). On all accounts, then, Jewish women in the U.S. in 1990 were more involved in Jewish activities than were men, a situation that in most spheres was the reverse of what had been noted 20 years earlier.

## *France*

Data on the Jewish profile of French Jewry are available for the 1970s, a decade after the mass influx of Jewish immigrants from North Africa (see Table 10).[65] Jewish

**Table 10.** Selected Indicators of Jewishness, Jewish Population Aged 18 and Over, France, 1970s (percent)

| Measure of Jewishness | Women | Men | Women % difference[b] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mode of attachment to Judaism | | | |
| Religion | 39 | 31 | +26 |
| Family tradition | 15 | 13 | +11 |
| Community | 5 | 13 | −66 |
| Historical tradition | 5 | 9 | −48 |
| A reality, no religious content | 34 | 29 | −18 |
| Synagogue visit | | | |
| Regular | 6 | 11 | −39 |
| Ever | 64 | 58 | +10 |
| Fasts on Day of Atonement | 67 | 63 | +8 |
| Does not eat leavened products on Passover | 60 | 55 | +9 |
| Observes kashruth | 37 | 35 | +6 |
| Observes Sabbath | 39 | 35 | +12 |
| Member of Jewish organization | 39 | 46 | −16 |
| Participated in youth movement | 23 | 32 | −26 |
| Ever visited Israel | 50 | 46 | +10 |
| Regularly reads on Jewish matters | 22 | 28 | −22 |
| Knowledge of Jewish languages | | | |
| Hebrew, can read | 19 | 48 | −60 |
| Hebrew, can translate | 14 | 29 | −51 |
| Hebrew, can speak | 14 | 23 | −40 |
| Yiddish | 14 | 16 | −15 |
| Judeo-Arabic | 12 | 13 | −8 |
| Judeo-Spanish | 3 | 3 | +17 |

[a]For each indicator, adding a negative or lower option brings the total to 100 percent.

[b]Relative difference (in percent) between figures for women and men in the two previous columns is computed from percentages not rounded to the unit as in previous columns.

*Source*: Adapted from Bensimon and DellaPergola, *La population juive de France.*

women then reported more often than did men that their mode of attachment to Judaism was through religion and family traditions. Their adherence to traditional practices such as fasting on the Day of Atonement, not eating leavened products on Passover, and observing the laws of kashruth and of the Sabbath were also higher than that of the men. In addition, women were more likely to have visited Israel. At the same time, they reported less frequent synagogue attendance, a lower level of membership in Jewish organizations, less regular reading of Jewish books and newspapers, and less knowledge of Hebrew and Yiddish. Such weaker activity at this, the more public level, may be related to women's lesser educational attainment at the time of the survey. Overall, Jewish women displayed a more traditional orientation (this may also explain the persistence among women of a knowledge of Judeo-Arabic and Judeo-Spanish languages). Interestingly, the highly secular mode of attachment to Judaism as "a reality without religious content" was also more frequently reported by women.

## *Israel*

The behavior of Jewish women in Israel during the early 1990s displayed an apparent contradiction with regard to certain aspects of religiosity and Jewish tradition (see Table 11).[66] On the one hand, the frequency of their synagogue attendance, the amount of time devoted to religious activity, and their self-identification at the more religious end of the Jewish continuum were all low on average when compared with the practice of men. On the other hand, Jewish women were more concentrated at moderately high levels of self-assessed religiosity, and they reported a higher level of observance in areas such as fasting on the Day of Atonement, not eating leavened products on Passover, and abiding by the Sabbath regulations.

## *Jewish Education*

The internationally available (but, unfortunately, far from complete) data indicate that, in the past, there were significant gaps dividing boys from girls when it came to formal Jewish education.[67] Young males were more likely than females to receive some formal Jewish education, primarily because of their greater overall exposure to

**Table 11.** Selected Indicators of Jewishness, Jewish Population Aged 14 and Over, Israel, 1991–1992 (percent)

| Measure of Jewishness | Women | Men | Women % difference[b] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Religiosity | | | |
| Religious | 14 | 16 | −10 |
| Traditional, religious | 12 | 10 | +17 |
| Traditional, not so religious | 36 | 31 | +18 |
| Synagogue visit | | | |
| Almost every day | 1 | 14 | −95 |
| On Sabbath eves and Sabbath | 11 | 32 | −66 |
| Ever | 61 | 69 | −12 |
| Fasts on Day of Atonement | 77 | 75 | +2 |
| Does not eat leavened products on Passover | 83 | 78 | +7 |
| Keeps separate dairy/meat dishes | 50 | 45 | +11 |
| Does not listen to radio on the Sabbath | 52 | 51 | +2 |
| Does not watch television on the Sabbath | 39 | 39 | +1 |
| Does not travel on the Sabbath | 30 | 27 | +10 |
| Average time spent per day on religious activity[c] | | | |
| Total population | 7 | 29 | −76 |
| Participants only[d] | 66 | 125 | −47 |

[a]For each indicator, adding a negative or lower option brings the total to 100 percent.

[b]Relative difference (in percent) between figures for women and men in the two previous columns is computed from percentages not rounded to the unit as in previous columns.

[c]Minutes per day, out of a total 1,440, based on a seven-day weekly average.

[d]Relates only to those who do spend time on religious activity.

*Sources*: Levy, Levinsohn, and Katz, *Beliefs, Observances and Social Interactions among Israeli Jews*; Central Bureau of Statistics, *Time Use in Israel*, Tables 1, 2, 50.

**Table 12.** Comparison of Exposure (Ever) of Jewish Women and Men to Formal Jewish Education in Selected Countries, by Type of Jewish School, 1960s–1990s[a]

| Country, year and type of school | Age at time of survey | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | 6–13 | 14–17 | 18–24 | 25–34 | 35–54 | 55+ |
| U.S., 1990 | | | | | | | |
| Total | −20 | +0 | −13 | −19 | −23 | −23 | −26 |
| Day school | −38 | −2 | −14 | −1 | −14 | −54 | −81 |
| Part-time | −15 | +2 | −12 | −23 | −24 | −19 | −14 |
| U.S., 1970–1971 | | | | | | | |
| Total | −22 | −8 | −13 | −17 | −30 | −25 | −27 |
| Day school | −57 | −17 | −42 | −58 | −70 | −50 | −66 |
| Part-time | −4 | −7 | −5 | −6 | −15 | −13 | +19 |
| France, 1970s | | | | | | | |
| Total | −49 | −22 | −45 | −51 | −59 | −50 | −53 |
| Day school | −43 | −10 | −32 | −53 | −44 | −42 | −50 |
| Part-time | −56 | −27 | −54 | −48 | −71 | −58 | −61 |
| South Africa, 1974 | | | | | | | |
| Total | −33 | −36 | −28 | −27 | −28 | −40 | −31 |
| Day school | −40 | −22 | −22 | −45 | −22 | −25 | −44 |
| Part-time | −31 | −45 | −32 | −14 | −29 | −41 | −28 |
| Italy, 1965 | | | | | | | |
| Total | −13 | −12 | −2 | −4 | −19 | −18 | −19 |
| Day school | −12 | +2 | +45 | −12 | −17 | −15 | −27 |
| Part-time | −13 | −33 | −18 | +72 | −27 | −24 | −6 |

[a]Relative difference (in percent) between percentages of exposure for women and for men.

*Source*: Adapted from DellaPergola and Genuth, *Jewish Education Attained in Diaspora Communities*, Table 5; NJPS (1990), as processed by the division of Jewish demography and statistics at the Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. For groups aged 6–13 and 14–17 in 1990, "day schools" denotes five years or more of Jewish school studies; "part-time" denotes less than five years.

education, but also because it was considered more of a traditional duty to provide them with religious instruction. The bar mitzvah ceremony, for example, was considered mandatory for boys, whereas bat mitzvah ceremonies were not (until recently) a common custom. Survey data on the exposure (ever) to Jewish education in selected Western countries show that, from the 1960s, this educational gap gradually narrowed, although as of 1990 it had still not disappeared altogether (see Table 12). Thus, as the table demonstrates, the relative disadvantage of Jewish women of different ages regarding exposure to formal Jewish education diminished among the younger cohorts. The trend toward gender equalization was particularly evident in the area of Jewish day-school attendance. Data from the 1970 NJPS made it clear that the educational lag experienced by Jewish women aged 55 and over, when compared with that of the younger segment of the Jewish school-age population (aged 6–13 at that time), had declined from -66 to -17 percent. By 1990, the reversal had become even more pronounced, with the gap dropping from a lag of -81 percent among women aged 55 and over to a mere -1 percent among the 18–24 age group. Similarly, the gaps in Jewish day-school exposure of women declined from −50 to −10 percent in France,

from −44 to −22 percent in South Africa, and from −27 percent to a 2 percent female edge in Italy.

Gender gaps with respect to part-time Jewish education (*talmudei torah*, *ḥadarim*, Sunday and afternoon schools) were more variable, as these were related to the different characteristics and purposes of such programs in the various countries. In the U.S., where part-time education constituted (and still constitutes) by far the predominant channel of formal Jewish education, gender gaps were significantly smaller than in the case of day schools, albeit persisting over time. In France, gender gaps were generally greater and revealed a persisting male-oriented educational approach, which in part reflected the Jewish education that was actually received in the countries of origin (mostly North Africa) of the largely immigrant Jewish community. In South Africa and Italy, where day schools were by far the primary Jewish educational channel, gender gaps in part-time education displayed a less clear trend over time.

These data do not say much about the intensity of the Jewish educational experience, as measured in years of exposure, nor about the quality or content of study programs and the training of teachers. They do, however, clearly point to the gradual diffusion of increasingly similar norms regarding the Jewish education imparted to Jewish boys and girls.

### *Overview*

Notwithstanding the significant differences in the national contexts examined here, quite consistent gender patterns emerge regarding the various indicators of Jewishness. Interpretation of the data should distinguish between patterns that are tied to the transitional status of women in the general processes of social mobility, as opposed to patterns that are more deeply ingrained in different gender roles and perceptions. Overall, Jewish women appeared more often at the stronger end of the Jewish identification continuum concerning traditional attitudes and behaviors, and they reported an attachment to Judaism that was more often tied to religious values.[68] Moreover, the level of traditional (primarily domestic) observance was consistently higher among women. In contrast, synagogue attendance (outside the United States) tended to be perceived as a predominantly male dimension of Jewishness, whether as distinctly religious behavior or as a more general public expression of Jewish identification. Consistent with the clear trend toward diminishing gender-related educational and socioeconomic lags, Jewish women have gradually become more equal or even dominant in areas such as the receipt of Jewish education, membership in Jewish organizations, the development of other types of Jewish social networks, and volunteer work for philanthropic causes.

## A Global View of Gender Development

While relevant trends related to gender have so far been considered from the perspective of individuals in various places, it is appropriate to round out the picture with a more global evaluation. In recent years, the United Nations has proposed the use of several interesting new tools aimed at providing a comparative analysis of societal

trends.[69] Based on a systematic collection of appropriate quantitative indicators, countries of the world have been ranked from highest to lowest in accordance with their respective performances in various areas of concern. An overview of indicators concerning the position of women in societies with large Jewish populations may throw additional light on the issues under discussion here.

The following analysis focuses on a comparison of 17 societies. Of these, Israel is, of course, the only one with a Jewish majority (80 percent of the total population). Fourteen other countries comprise the largest Jewish communities in the diaspora; together with Israel, they account for more than 95 percent of the Jewish population worldwide.[70] In declining order of their Jewish populations, these countries are the United States, France, Canada, the Russian Republic, the United Kingdom, Argentina, Ukraine, Brazil, Australia, South Africa, Germany, Hungary, Mexico, and Belgium. Two other countries with smaller Jewish populations, Norway and Japan, are also included by way of comparison, since they were rated in 1997, together with Canada, the U.S., and Belgium, as having the world's highest standards of living. Table 13 presents the worldwide ranking of the 17 selected countries (out of a total of 174) in 1997, with regard to several social indicators. The numbers in parentheses show their internal ranking from 1 to 17. The data for Israel basically reflect the *actual* situation of Jewish women. Data for all other countries reflect the Jewish women's *contextual* situation.

A first measure considered for general reference, the Human Development Index (HDI), aims at providing a synthetic evaluation of the quality of life—physical, material, cultural, political—available to people who live in different parts of the world. The HDI is based on a weighted average of three variables: longevity, as measured by life expectancy at birth; educational attainment, as measured by adult literacy and the combined gross primary, secondary, and tertiary school enrollment ratio; and standard of living, as measured by the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita.[71]

In terms of HDI ranking, Israel ranked 23rd out of the 174 countries for which the index was computed—that is, at the top range of the second-highest decile. More specifically, it ranked 14th in terms of life expectancy, 58th for adult literacy, 28th for school enrollment,[72] and 26th for real GDP per capita. The other countries selected for the present evaluation were ranked as follows: Canada (1); Norway (2); United States (3); Japan (4); Belgium (5); Australia (7); United Kingdom (10); France (11); Germany (14); Argentina (39); Hungary (47); Mexico (50); Russian Republic (71); Brazil (79); Ukraine (91); and South Africa (101). This ranking confirms the notion that major Jewish populations are located in an ample cross-section of countries, allowing for interesting international comparisons of the current context of Jewish life. Notwithstanding, it is also the case that the overwhelming majority of world Jewry live in countries found in the two top deciles of the most developed countries. During the last decades of the twentieth century, a growing concentration of Jews in the leading countries of the world came about as a result of a long process of international migration from less developed countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe to more developed countries in North America, Western Europe, and Australiasia, as well as to Israel. As the major recipient country of Jewish international migration, Israel was itself a society that rapidly changed its status from less to more developed.

**Table 13.** Indexes of Gender Development—Ranking for Selected Countries, 1997

| GDI[c] | GEM[d] | % women professional, technical workers | % women administrators and managers | % women in parliament | % women at ministerial level | Women real GDP (PPP$)[e] as % of men |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 143 | 102 | 102 | 103 | 156 | 173 | 58 |
| 3 (3) | 8 (4) | 27 (5) | 4 (1) | 52 (9) | 31 (6) | 7 (3) |
| 23 (10) | 37 (11) | 24 (4) | 50 (9) | 100 (15) | 36 (7) | 22 (9) |
| 10 (7) | 36 (10) | 60 (13) | 76 (13) | 80 (11) | 29 (4) | 11 (5) |
| 1 (1) | 4 (2) | 33 (6) | 6 (3) | 16 (5) | 18 (2) | 14 (6) |
| 61 (14) | [f] | [f] | [f] | 100 (15) | 123 (14) | [f] |
| 11 (8) | 16 (6) | 57 (12) | 18 (4) | 54 (10) | 62 (10) | 16 (7) |
| 37 (11) | [f] | [f] | [f] | 17 (6) | 126 (16) | 49 (15) |
| [f] | [f] | [f] | [f] | 96 (14) | 126 (16) | [f] |
| 67 (15) | 70 (14) | 8 (1) | 58 (12) | 116 (17) | 103 (13) | 39 (13) |
| 4 (4) | 9 (5) | 87 (14) | 5 (2) | 11 (4) | 29 (4) | 5 (2) |
| 84 (16) | 18 (8) | 46 (9) | 57 (11) | 8 (3) | 125 (15) | 32 (11) |
| 15 (9) | 5 (3) | 39 (8) | 31 (7) | 6 (2) | 46 (9) | 9 (4) |
| 43 (12) | 48 (13) | 13 (2) | 19 (5) | 90 (13) | 91 (12) | 20 (8) |
| 48 (13) | 33 (9) | 49 (10) | 48 (8) | 35 (7) | 23 (3) | 46 (14) |
| 6 (5) | 17 (7) | 34 (7) | 52 (10) | 37 (8) | 42 (8) | 25 (10) |
| 2 (2) | 1 (1) | 15 (3) | 22 (6) | 3 (1) | 7 (1) | 3 (1) |
| 8 (6) | 38 (12) | 56 (11) | 77 (14) | 85 (12) | 90 (11) | 35 (12) |

ions plus Norway and Japan, ranked by size of Jewish population (see DellaPergola, "World Jewish Population, 1997"). Country positions in the world is) by the internal ranking of the 17 countries displayed here.

ational attainment, and standard of living.

differences in longevity, educational attainment, and standard of living.

articipation, professional decision-making power, and political decision-making power.

chase Power Parity in U.S. dollars. Only countries with a male GDP (PPP$) of $9,000 or more were ranked.

Nations, *Human Development Report 1999*, Tables 2, 3, 28.

More specifically relevant to our present analysis, the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) adjusts the Human Development Index by incorporating a measurement of existing gender inequality within the same three variables considered—longevity, education, and standard of living. The greater the gender inequality—typically, the disadvantage for women relative to men—the higher the penalty that is introduced into the original HDI scores. The evaluation and ranking of quality of life in different countries can thus undergo significant change after a consideration of the relative status of women in relevant areas. Australia, for example, is a country whose high quality of human development is further enhanced by a high degree of gender equality. In contrast, Japan's ranking falls significantly once the prevailing gender gaps are considered. Most Muslim countries, too, suffer a significant drop because of the inferior status of women. In terms of the GDI, Israel was ranked 23rd out of the 143 countries surveyed, thus holding the same international position as measured through the HDI. In other words, whatever the amount of gender-related inequality prevailing in Israel, it does not influence Israel's standing in terms of overall quality of life. Israel's ranking in terms of specific variables included in the gender-related development index was as follows: life expectancy (women:22, men:6);[73] school-enrollment ratio (women:30, men:32); real GDP per capita (women and men:25). For most countries shown in Table 13, the ranking of HDI and GDI were quite similar.

The Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) is a further, more specific nation-by-nation measure of gender performance aimed at assessing the relative empowerment of women and men in *political* and *economic* spheres of activity. The GEM is a weighted average of three variables. The first two— women's share of total administrative and managerial positions, and their share of total professional and technical jobs—help to evaluate the level and quality of women's employment and professional decision-making power. The third variable, women's percentage share of parliamentary seats, reflects political participation and high-level influence. In terms of GEM, Israel ranked 37th out of 102 countries (according to available data in 1997)—that is, significantly below the level of the country's human development index. Results, however, are quite different regarding each of the three variables that comprise the gender empowerment measure. Israel's ranking is appropriate to its general HDI with regard to its share of women in professional and technical jobs (24th out of 102 countries). This is consistent with the previously noted relatively high level of women's educational attainment and school enrollment, both in absolute terms and relative to men.

However, Israel's rating worsens considerably when it comes to the share of women among administrators and managers (50th out of 103 countries). This finding points to a persistence of obstacles or lack of encouragement for women to enter the system of public administration; in the private sphere, it probably indicates lesser opportunities—or even expectations—for women to display initiative. Israel's international standing, moreover, falls considerably regarding the share of parliamentary seats held by women (it ranks 100th out of 156 countries). True, this ranking refers to data from 1996; in the Knesset elections of 1999, the proportion of parliamentarian women increased from 7.5 to 12 percent, although the likelihood is that women's parliamentary standing in other countries was similarly augmented.

One further and more specific indicator not included in the GEM but reported in

Table 13 is women's share of ministerial-level posts (including elected heads of state, governors of central banks, and similar high-ranking positions). Such data provide a measure of the place attained by women in the leading elites of a society. Israel's ranking here (36th out of 173 countries) is consistent with its rating in terms of general women's empowerment (as measured by the GEM), which, as noted, is lower than its standing in terms of more general human development (HDI and GDI). The presence (in fact ceiling) of one or two women ministers in recent Israeli governments, though not especially poor in comparison with the leading group of more developed countries, demonstrates how limited a role Jewish women still play in major-league politics. Interestingly, it appears that where high policy considerations prevail (as in government formation), the space cleared for women is somewhat larger than when party politics are left to their unrestrained rules (as in the process of selection and ranking of the candidates to the Knesset).

In sum, Israel's ranking, while generally in line with that of other developed countries, was consistently weaker than that of the Western countries with the largest Jewish populations. In particular, the status of women in the United States and in Canada was rated higher than in Israel with regard to seven of the eight measures reported in Table 13 (the exception being the percentage of women among professional and technical workers). The UK and France were rated better than Israel in six of the eight measures considered.

## Conclusion

The data presented here reveal a number of powerful trends that have affected the experience of Jewish women worldwide over the past few decades. The findings mostly point to a definite transition of women toward demographic, socioeconomic, and identificational positions more closely approximating those of men. However, while convergence has occurred in many significant respects, there still remain some conspicuous exceptions.

Nearly full convergence in educational attainment is now an established fact. Indeed, over time, Jewish women may end up with measurable advantages over men in terms of the length and quality of their academic and professional training. Women's participation in the labor force approaches one half of the total, specifically in the most sensitive sectors of the upper occupational ladder, though they still contribute less than an equal share in terms of paid working hours because many women work only part time.

The inherent conflict of interests between economic and career roles, on the one hand, and family roles, on the other, has probably influenced the postponement and weakening of Jewish marriage and family growth in the diaspora, as it has done among the general population of more developed countries. Along with the decline of marriage, the increase in divorce has contributed to making the conventional nuclear family only one of several normative alternatives currently available. And here it is the case that women, who head most single-parent families, have disproportionately carried the burden of family destabilization.

The Israeli case indicates that there need not to be an unbridgeable gap between

paid work and conventional household roles. Jewish women in Israel have attained highly impressive improvements in educational and occupational levels, approaching those of the total population of the U.S., without experiencing at the same time a visible decline in family size. Indeed, high fertility rates among Jewish women in Israel have significant implications for Jewish demography in the twenty-first century.

Jewish women also increasingly play the predominant role as the main guardian (and, presumably, conveyor) of Jewish orientations. The fact that women are the leading agent of Jewish socialization for the younger generation significantly adds to the cumulated evidence that in mixed marriages—at least in the English-speaking countries—the religioethnic socialization of the children tends to be matrilineal. Further corroboration of this trend comes from the growing visibility of women among the lay and religious leadership of Jewish communities locally and internationally—in general, but also more particularly through women's organizations. But a note of caution should be sounded: as a consequence of narrowing educational, occupational, and social gaps, Jewish women are being exposed as much as Jewish men to the effects of social interaction with members of other ethnoreligious groups and to the ensuing process of cultural assimilation. Thus, the Jewish identificational edge clearly documented here for Jewish women might at some future point decline or disappear. Nevertheless, its present existence is one central feature in the definition of contemporary Jewish population, community, and culture.

International comparisons clearly indicate that a more integrated role for women in economic and political life can be taken as one of the safest indications of a society's human and general development. In this broader context, the status of Israeli women does not deviate from the general standing expected of a country quite high in the ranking of nations with regard to the quality of life and human development. Israeli women have done much better as decision-makers and producers in the intellectual, scientific, and economic life than in the political-administrative arena. The inconsistency between these various measures of women's status can be summarized by saying that an Israeli woman is far more likely to be a physician carrying out a heart bypass than an administrator responsible for a city center traffic bypass.

In sum, Jewish women over the last decades have attained high levels of achievement in the socioeconomic sphere; and they also play a leading role in maintaining Jewish continuity. Yet such enormously augmented share of *responsibility* has not yet found full expression in the share of *power* exerted by women. This inherent conflict will either fade away through the normal completion of the transition toward equality, or else it will call for more active institutional intervention in order to reduce the societal tensions and imbalances that may otherwise ensue.

## Notes

1. See, for example, Simone de Beauvoir, *Le Deuxième Sexe* (Paris: 1949); and Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: 1963).

2. As a consistent given of human biology, about 48.5 percent of all live births are of females and 51.5 percent are of males. In developed societies, the lower mortality and greater longevity of women eventually generate a definite surplus of women among older adults, and a small majority among the total population. Among the total Jewish population in Israel in

1997, for instance, 51 percent were females and 49 percent were males. The same percentages applied to the total population of the United States in 1995. See Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, no. 49 (Jerusalem: 1998); *World Population Prospects: The 1996 Revision* (New York: 1998).

3. See Sylvia Barack Fishman, *A Breath of Life: Feminism in the American Jewish Community* (Hanover, N.H.: 1993).

4. See Yael Azmon and Dafna N. Izraeli (eds.), *Women in Israel* (New Brunswick: 1993); Moshe Hartman and Harriet Hartman, *Gender Equality and American Jews* (Albany: 1996); Calvin Goldscheider, *Israel's Changing Society: Population, Ethnicity and Development* (Boulder: 1996), ch. 8, 147–165; Sylvia Barack Fishman, *American Jewish Lives in Cultural Context* (Albany: 1999). For a general review, see Karen Oppenheim Mason, *Gender and Demographic Change: What Do We Know?* (Liege: 1995).

5. See Nelly Lass, *Jewish Women in a Changing World: A History of the International Council of Jewish Women (ICJW) 1899–1995* (Jerusalem: 1996); Marlin Levin, *It Takes a Dream. . . . : The Story of Hadassah* (Jerusalem: 1997).

6. See Marlena Schmool and Stephen Miller, *Women in the Jewish Community, Survey Report* (London: 1994); Judy Goodkin and Judith Citron, *Women in the Jewish Community: Review and Recommendations* (London: 1994); The National Commission for American Jewish Women, *Voices for Change: Future Directions for American Jewish Women* (Waltham: 1995); Bethamie Horowitz, Pearl Beck, and Charles Kadushin, *Power and Parity: The Role of Women and Men on the Boards of Major American Jewish Organizations* (New York: 1997); Rochelle Furstenberg, *The Women's Movement in Israel* (New York: 1994).

7. A more general overview of contemporary Jewish sociodemographic trends appears in Sergio DellaPergola, *World Jewry beyond 2000: The Demographic Prospects* (Oxford: 1999).

8. See Sidney Goldstein, "Socioeconomic Differentials among Religious Groups in the United States," *The American Journal of Sociology* 74, no. 6 (1969), 612–631.

9. Sidney Goldstein, "Profile of American Jewry: Insights from the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey," *American Jewish Year Book* 92 (1992), 77–173.

10. Of other Jewish communities worldwide, Jews in the Russian Republic are the ones who came closest to the high educational attainments of U.S. Jewry. In 1989, among Jews aged 30–39, 76 percent in Moscow, 72 percent in St. Petersburg, and 59 percent in the rest of Russia had received some higher education, with small gender differentials. See Mark Tolts, "The Interrelationship between Emigration and the Socio-Demographic Profile of Russian Jewry," in *Russian Jews on Three Continents: Migration and Resettlement*, ed. Noah Levin-Epstein, Yaakov Ro'i, and Paul Ritterband (London: 1997), 147–176.

11. See U. O. Schmelz, Sergio DellaPergola and Uri Avner, "Ethnic Differences among Israeli Jews: A New Look," *American Jewish Year Book* 90 (1990), 3–204.

12. Central Bureau of Statistics, *Languages, Literacy and Educational Attainment,* part 1, *Population and Housing Census 1961*, vol. 15, table 27, (Jerusalem: 1963).

13. See Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, vol. 49 table 22.1. The educational advantage of women relative to men was more significant in current higher-education enrollment. See Haim Adler and Nahum Blas, "I shivyon behinukh beyisrael," in *Hakzaat mashabim lesherutim hevratiyim 1996*, ed. Yakov Kop (Jerusalem: 1997), 121–155.

14. See Sidney Goldstein, "Socioeconomic Differentials Among Religious Groups in the United States"; Hartman and Hartman, *Gender Equality and American Jews*.

15. See Hartman and Hartman, *Gender Equality and American Jews;* Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, vol. 49, table 12.12.

16. See Goldstein, "Socioeconomic Differentials among Religious Groups in the United States"; idem, "Profile of American Jewry"; Central Bureau of Statistics, *Labour Force,* part 1, *Population and Housing Census 1961*, vol. 9 (Jerusalem: 1963), table 46; idem, *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, vol. 49, table 12.14. See also Barry Chiswick, "Working and Family Life: The Experiences of Jewish Women in America," in *Papers in Jewish Demography 1993 in Memory of U.O. Schmelz*, ed. Sergio DellaPergola and Judith Even (Jerusalem: 1997), 277–287.

17. The index of dissimilarity indicates, on a scale between 0 and 1, the proportion of peo-

ple belonging to one population whose characteristics would have to change in order for them to attain a distribution equal to that of another population.

18. See Central Bureau of Statistics, *Time Use in Israel: Time Budget Survey 1991/92*, Special series 996 (Jerusalem: 1995).

19. See United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 1999* (New York: 1999).

20. See Paul Ritterband (ed.), *Modern Jewish Fertility* (Leyden: 1981).

21. See Frances K. Goldscheider and Calvin Goldscheider, *Leaving Home Before Marriage: Ethnicity, Familism, and Generational Relationships* (Madison: 1993).

22. See U.O. Schmelz and Sergio DellaPergola, "The Demographic Consequences of U.S. Jewish Population Trends," *American Jewish Year Book* 83 (1983), 141–187; Carmel U. Chiswick, "The Economics of Contemporary American Jewish Family Life," in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, vol. 14, *Coping With Life and Death: Jewish Families in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Peter Y. Medding (New York: 1998), 65–80; Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, vol. 22 (Jerusalem: 1971), table B/24; ibid., vol. 49, table 2.19.

23. Schmelz and DellaPergola, "The Demographic Consequences of U.S. Jewish Population Trends"; Mark Tolts, "Jewish Marriages in the USSR: A Demographic Analysis," *East European Jewish Affairs* 22, no. 2 (1992), 3–19.

24. See Schmelz and DellaPergola, "The Demographic Consequences of U.S. Jewish Population Trends."

25. See Goldstein, "Profile of American Jewry."

26. See Sylvia Barack Fishman, *Jewish Life and American Culture* (Albany: 2000), 119 (table 5.2).

27. See Linda J. Waite, "The American Jewish Family: What We Know, What We Need to Know." Paper delivered at conference titled "Establishing a Research Agenda for the Jewish Community," New York, Oct. 1999.

28. See Sergio DellaPergola and Susana Lerner, *La población judía de México: Perfil demográfico, social y cultural* (Jerusalem: 1995).

29. Central Bureau of Statistics, *Population and Vital Statistics 1997*, (Jerusalem: 1998).

30. See, for example, the different opinions of Sergio DellaPergola and Uziel O. Schmelz, "Demographic Transformations of American Jewry: Marriage and Mixed Marriage in the 1980s," in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, vol. 5, *Israel: State and Society, 1948–1988* ed. Peter Y. Medding (New York: 1989), 169–200; Calvin Goldscheider, "American Jewish Marriages: Erosion or Transformation?" in ibid., 201–208.

31. See Barry A. Kosmin, Sidney Goldstein, Joseph Waksberg, Nava Lerer, Ariella Keysar, and Jeff Scheckner, *Highlights of the Council of Jewish Federation's 1990 National Jewish Population Survey* (New York: 1991). After independently processing the NJPS file, this author obtained a 46 percent rate of mixed marriages among Jewish-born individuals who were married over the ten-year period 1981–1990. Given the increasing frequency of mixed marriage over time, this figure is consistent with the estimate in the original NJPS report, which refers to the five-year period before 1990. A 46 percent individual rate of mixed marriage corresponds to 61 percent of newly married couples. See Sergio DellaPergola, "New Data on Demography and Identification among U.S. Jews: Trends, Inconsistencies, Disagreements," *Contemporary Jewry* 12 (1991), 67–97.

32. See Bruce A. Phillips, *Re-examining Intermarriage: Trends, Textures, Strategies* (New York: 1997).

33. See Mark Tolts, "Demographic Trends among the Jews in the Three Slavic Republics of the Former USSR: A Comparative Analysis," in DellaPergola and Even (eds.), *Papers in Jewish Demography 1993 in Memory of U.O. Schmelz*, 147–175.

34. See DellaPergola and Lerner, *La población judía de México*.

35. See Mordechai Altshuler, *Soviet Jewry on the Eve of the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: 1998).

36. See Doris Bensimon and Sergio DellaPergola, *La population juive de France: sociodémographie et identité* (Paris: 1984).

37. See Stephen Miller, Marlena Schmool, and Antony Lerman, *Social and Political Attitudes of British Jews: Some Key Findings of the JPR Survey* (London: 1996).

38. See Barry A. Kosmin and Seymour P. Lachman, *One Nation Under God: Religion in Contemporary American Society* (New York: 1993).

39. See Sergio DellaPergola, "Recent Trends in Jewish Marriage" in *World Jewish Population: Trends and Policies*, ed. Sergio DellaPergola and Leah Cohen (Jerusalem: 1992), 65–92; idem, "Marriage, Conversion, Children and Jewish Continuity: Some Demographic Aspects of 'Who is a Jew?,'" in *Survey of Jewish Affairs 1989*, ed. William Frankel (Oxford: 1989), 171–187.

40. See Phillips, *Re-examining Intermarriage.*

41. See Uzi Rebhun and Sergio DellaPergola, "Heibetim soẓiyo-demografiyim vezehutiyim shel nesuin me'uravim bekerev yehudei arẓot habrit" in *Eros, eirusin veisurim: miniyut umishpaḥah behistoriyah*, ed. Israel Bartal and Isaiah Gafni (Tel-Aviv: 1998), 369–398; Peter Y. Medding, Gary A. Tobin, Sylvia Barack Fishman, and Mordechai Rimor, "Jewish Identity in Conversionary and Mixed Marriages," *American Jewish Year Book* 92 (pp. 3–76).

42. See Sylvia Barack Fishman and Alice Goldstein, *When They Are Grown They Will Not Depart: Jewish Education and the Jewish Behavior of American Adults* (Waltham: 1993); Mordechai Rimor and Elihu Katz, *Jewish Involvement of the Baby Boom Generation; Interrogating the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey* (Jerusalem: 1993).

43. See Barry A. Kosmin, Nava Lerer, and Egon Mayer, *Intermarriage, Divorce and Remarriage among American Jews, 1982–87* (New York: 1989).

44. See Sergio DellaPergola, "New Data on Demography and Identification among U.S. Jews."

45. See Erik Peritz and Mario Baras (eds.), *Studies in the Fertility of Israel* (Jerusalem: 1992).

46. The TFR is a measure of the projected number of children expected, assuming unlimited continuation of the age-specific fertility levels observed at a given date. The TFR provides an average estimate for all women, regardless of marital status.

47. See Sergio DellaPergola, "Patterns of American Jewish Fertility," *Demography* 17, no. 3 (1980), 261–273.

48. See Frank L. Mott and Joyce C. Abma, "Contemporary Jewish Fertility: Does Religion Make A Difference?" *Contemporary Jewry* 13 (1992), 74–94.

49. See Leonid Darsky and Sergei Scherbov, "Parity Progression Fertility Tables for the Nationalities of the USSR", IIASA Working Paper, Laxenburg, 1990; Mark Tolts, "Demographic Trends among the Jews in the Three Slavic Republics of the Former USSR."

50. See DellaPergola and Lerner, *La población judía de México.*

51. See Sergio DellaPergola and Allie A. Dubb, "South African Jewry: A Sociodemographic Profile," *American Jewish Year Book* 88 (1988), 59–140.

52. See Bensimon and DellaPergola, *La population juive de France.*

53. See U. O. Schmelz, "Religiosity and Fertility among the Jews of Jerusalem," in *Papers in Jewish Demography, 1985*, ed. U.O. Schmelz and Sergio DellaPergola (Jerusalem: 1989), 157–185; Dov Friedlander and Carol Feldman, "The Modern Shift to Below-Replacement Fertility: Has Israel's Population Joined the Process?" *Population Studies* 47 (1993), 295–306; Israel Adler and Erik Peritz, "Religious Observance and Desired Fertility among Jewish Women in Israel" in DellaPergola and Even (eds.), *Papers in Jewish Demography 1993 in Memory of U.O.Schmelz,* 377–387.

54. See Ron Lesthaeghe and Guy Moors, "Is There a New Conservatism That Will Bring Back the Old Family? Ideational Trends and the Stages of Family Formation in Germany, France, Belgium and the Netherlands," in *Evolution and Revolution in European Population*, European Population Conference, vol. 1 (Milan: 1995), 225–266.

55. See United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Population Prospects: The 1998 Revision*, vol. 1, *Comprehensive Tables* (New York: 1999).

56. See Sergio DellaPergola, "Demographic Changes in Israel in the Early 1990s," in Kop (ed.), *Israel Social Services, 1992–93*, 57–115.

57. An early specification of this hypothesis appears in Joseph J. Spengler, "Values and Fertility Analysis," *Demography* 3, no. 1 (1966), 109–130.

58. See Calvin Goldscheider and Peter R. Uhlenberg, "Minority Status and Fertility," *American Journal of Sociology* 76 (1969), 361–372.

59. See Calvin Goldscheider, *The American Jewish Community: Social Science Research and Policy Implications* (Atlanta: 1986).

60. See Ilana Ziegler, "Family Growth in Israel and 'the Critical Child'" (Ph.D diss., The Hebrew University, 1995).

61. See Frances K. Goldscheider and Linda J. Waite, *New Families, No Families? The Transformation of the American Home* (Berkeley: 1991).

62. See Eva Bernhardt, "Working Parents in Sweden: An Example for Europe?" in European Community, Eurostat, *Human Resources in Europe at the Dawn of the 21st Century* (Luxembourg: 1991), 231–254.

63. Data adapted from Uzi Rebhun, "Geographic Mobility and Religioethnic Identification among American Jews 1970–1990," (Ph.D. diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1997).

64. For an earlier assessment of gender differences among U.S. Jews, see Jay Brodbar-Nemzer, "Sex Differences in Attitudes of American Jews toward Israel," *Contemporary Jewry* 8 (1987), 47–58.

65. See Bensimon and DellaPergola, *La population juive de France.*

66. See Shlomit Levy, Hanna Levinsohn, and Elihu Katz, *Beliefs, Observances and Social Interactions among Israeli Jews* (Jerusalem: 1993).

67. See Sergio DellaPergola and Nitza Genuth, *Jewish Education Attained in Diaspora Communities: Data for 1970s* (Jerusalem: 1983).

68. Consistent with the other data reported here, a more marked traditionalism among Jewish women in the United Kingdom is underlined by the fact that 35 percent of all women, as opposed to 28 percent of men, define themselves as traditional. The difference is more marked in the cohort under age 30, where "traditionals" comprised 30 percent of women, compared with 20 percent of men. See Marlena Schmool and Frances Cohen, *A Profile of British Jewry: Patterns and Trends at the Turn of a Century* (London: 1998).

69. See United Nations, *Human Development Report 1999.*

70. Sergio DellaPergola, "World Jewish Population, 1997," *American Jewish Year Book* 99 (1999), 543–580.

71. The gross domestic product is the total output of goods and services for final use produced by an economy by both residents and nonresidents, regardless of the allocation to domestic and foreign claims. The per capita measure divides a country's total GDP by the number of its inhabitants. It does not include deductions for depreciation of physical capital or depletion and degradation of natural resources. It is customary to compare the performance of different countries by converting the results from their currencies into U.S. dollars using Purchasing Power Parity exchange rates (PPP$), which allow a real comparison of price levels, since current exchange rates may over- or undervalue purchasing power.

72. The meaning and reliability of enrollment statistics may not be comparable internationally, as several less developed countries scored extremely high enrollment ratios.

73. The unusually strong ranking of men, rather than indicating a disadvantage for women, reflects uniquely low levels of Jewish male mortality that have appeared consistently in comparative demographic studies over the last century. See Sergio DellaPergola, *La trasformazione demografica della diaspora ebraica* (Turin: 1983).