

Demography and Jewish Education in the Diaspora: Trends in Jewish School-Age Population and School Enrollment

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Jews constitute only a small minority of the total population in all countries besides Israel. The future size of these Jewish populations depends on the overall balance of natural increase and migrations on the one hand, and on the ability to retain group identity on the other. Identity affects the demographic dynamics of a minority in that it is the cohesive power of the group, and thus a causative factor in passages between it and the majority or other minority groups.

At present, Diaspora Jewry faces demographic erosion (Bachi, 1982). The total Jewish Diaspora population is decreasing, though trends are modified by the specific conditions in each country. Low fertility rates and increased aging have combined to reduce natural growth of the Diaspora population, and have actually created a natural deficit with deaths outnumbering births. Since aliyah has reached low levels in the early 1980s, and *yeridah* is numerically insignificant relative to the total Diaspora population, the net balance between those who come to Israel and those who leave is of little consequence to Jewish population size in the Diaspora. Losses due to assimilation have a more significant effect.

Assimilation among Diaspora Jews reflects socio-cultural change - especially secularization - among the majority population of a country, as well as identificational changes within the Jewish minority. Demographic losses due to assimilation are the terminal stage in the process of weakening Jewish identity at the periphery of the Jewish community. Recent socio-demographic studies support the common impression that an identity crisis is affecting signifi-

cant segments of Diaspora Jewry. Cases of secession are generally more widespread than conversions to Judaism, whether formal or informal.

Jewish education is perceived by many as an important means of strengthening Jewish identity in the longer run. Jewish educational institutions, together with other agents, especially the Jewish family, are expected to impart Jewish knowledge and values to children. Awareness of the importance of these values may later affect the behavior of Jewish adults in such matters as religious observance, the ties to the Jewish community, the choice of a marital partner from within or without the Jewish group, the religion of the offspring, and whether or not the latter will be given a Jewish education.

Jewish education is an investment whose dividends become payable only when the child that was thus educated reaches adulthood and his/her decision-making processes become part of the input to the equation of Jewish population changes.

The Demographic Background of Jewish School Enrollment

Educational systems generally – and Jewish education in the Diaspora in particular – do not operate in a societal vacuum. Rather, they are intended to fulfill certain basic socialization needs of society on the whole or, as in the case of Jewish schools, of a specific ethno-religious group. The study of educational systems, then, besides merely describing the various facets of the educational function, should be able to relate these systems to other relevant characteristics of the populations and societies concerned.

In the field of educational research, important information is provided by data on enrollment. Growth, stability, or decline in the numbers of school-going children may reflect significant changes within the educational system, or within the broader society. This is particularly true of Jewish school enrollment in the Diaspora, which can be viewed not only as an indicator of trends in schooling but also more generally, of group vitality.

Over the last few decades, Jewish school enrollment in many Diaspora communities has undergone significant changes, both upward and downward. Perhaps the most impressive example is that provided by the United States, where Jewish enrollment in day and supplementary schools was estimated at 231,000 in 1945/46, 488,000 in 1955/56, 589,000 in 1961/62, 554,000 in 1966/67, 457,000 in 1970/71, 392,000 in 1974/75, 357,000 in 1978/79, and 372,000 in 1981/82–1982/83 (Pollak and Lang, 1979; Dubb and DellaPergola, 1986). Quantitative shifts like these have often been interpreted at their face value, as symptoms of the changing power of attraction of the Jewish educational system in the country concerned.

To be properly interpreted, however, enrollment data should be examined together with information on the size and age structure of the school-age popu-

lation. Variations in school-enrollment in a certain country or locality over the years, or between different countries and localities, at the same time, actually depend on corresponding variations in the school-age population – and thus on a number of different demographic factors, such as changes in the birth rate, and international or internal migrations. Generally, only limited and unsystematic attention has been given to the underlying demographic factors which shape the Jewish school-age population, modifying its size and structure.

The instability of the number of Jewish children hampers serious management and planning of Jewish education. Certainly, those deciding on the building of schools or the recruitment and training of teachers should be informed of the long- and short-range demographic trends among their respective Jewish population.

Effects of Migration

In certain Western countries – most notably France during the 1950s and early 1960s – immigration, substantially expanded the demographic base of Jewish education. Other countries which absorbed some inflow of Jewish migrants include the United States, Canada, Australia, Brazil and a few other smaller communities in Western Europe (such as Italy, Germany, and Spain) and Latin America (such as Venezuela). On the other hand, the international migration balance was strongly negative for the Jewish communities of the Muslim countries, Eastern Europe (when Jewish emigration was permitted), and several countries in Latin America, such as Argentina, Uruguay and Chile. Anglo-Jewry, too, lost through emigration more than it gained through immigration. In these countries, migrations tended to cause a shrinking of the Jewish school-age population.

On the local level, where most management and planning of Jewish education takes place, instability in the size of the school-age population is also caused by the substantial extent of Jewish residential mobility, both within and between cities and metropolitan areas – in the latter case, particularly the movement to suburbia and between its various segments. Nor is the effect of this mobility uniform at the places of departure and destination. If a family leaves a particular city or neighborhood, this generally causes immediate withdrawal of the children from the schools there. On the other hand, social integration of the family in its new neighborhood may be slow, thus delaying the enrollment of children in Jewish educational frameworks. This is true especially in the United States where most Jewish education is supplementary and, therefore, optional.

The consequences of residential mobility should also be examined at the institutional level. A growing Jewish population tends to stimulate the need for new schools in neighborhoods that previously may have had none; declin-

ing neighborhoods may experience consolidation of old denominational schools into interdenominational ones. Enrollment in existing schools may be affected by differences in accessibility from recently developed outlying areas. Mobility may therefore generate a variety of consequences for both enrollment levels and institutional set-up in a Jewish educational system.

Effects of Changing Fertility Levels

More complex and perhaps even less clearly understood in the Jewish community has been the effect of changing fertility levels and birth rates on the actual number of Jewish children. Rapid changes are occurring in the number of Jewish children of kindergarten or school age in the Diaspora. While the basic trend is one of decline in numbers, temporary increases do occur. At any given period, fluctuations in both directions unevenly influence the different age groups among school children. The situation is therefore both complex and unstable.

Under the present conditions of low mortality, the number of children currently of a given age depends mainly on the initial size of the appropriate birth cohort, that is, on the number of children born in a certain year who have now reached the age under consideration. The number of Jewish children of given age depends more particularly on the number of 'effectively Jewish' born, that is, excluding those children born to a Jewish parent who are themselves not Jewish – mainly the offspring of mixed marriages.

The number of 'effectively Jewish' births is determined by three factors:

- the size of the Jewish population in recent decades. Jewish population size has been influenced not only by the small natural increase in most Diaspora communities,¹ but also by the Holocaust and by major migrations, particularly immigration to Israel;
- the relative frequency of women of childbearing age within the Jewish population, which is subject to modifications due to changes in the age composition of the Jewish population;
- the 'effectively Jewish' fertility, which is in turn affected by the marriage rates within the Jewish population and by the frequency of mixed marriages.

The major trends in Jewish fertility in the Diaspora over the last decades can be summarized as follows (DellaPergola, 1980; DellaPergola, 1983; Schmelz, 1981a). The economic and political crises of the 1930s were followed by the outbreak of World War II. The prevailing conditions caused a great decrease in the fertility of the general population and an even greater decline among Jews. Soon after the conclusion of the war, a temporary increase of both fertility and birth rates (the 'baby boom') occurred in developed countries; in the United States it continued until the end of the 1950s. The Jews participated

in the increased fertility and birth rate; however, they did so at lower levels and for a shorter time than the general populations in their countries of residence. During the first stage of the 'baby boom', relatively large numbers of women were in the main ages of reproduction, having themselves been born prior to the decline of the birth rate in the 1930s.

Subsequent to the 'baby boom', fertility declined sharply among the populations in developed countries. In the United States, this decline began in the early 1960s and lasted into the 1970s. As a result, fertility dropped below replacement level – i.e., the level necessary to ensure long-term maintenance of population size, based on natural increase alone and regardless of international migrations. Taking into account very low death rates, the average number of children per woman required to achieve inter-generational replacement is approximately 2.1.² Among Diaspora Jews, fertility dropped to especially low levels. By the second half of the 1960s, the number of Jewish births was declining year by year throughout the whole Diaspora. Fertility levels continued to decline until the later 1970s, probably stabilizing in recent years at very low levels.

Until nearly the end of the 1960s, the reduction of fertility was reinforced by a low number of women in the reproductive ages, since these women belonged to the small birth cohorts of the 1930s and early 1940s. At the end of the 1960s, the large birth cohorts of the 'baby boom' (around 1950) started entering their reproductive ages. An upward 'echo' effect could thus be expected in the Jewish birth rate, gradually gaining momentum and reaching its peak toward the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s. But the actual impact of these shifts in the Jewish age structure seems to have been quite limited, due to the more recent developments in Jewish marriage patterns. These involve less frequent and later marriages, increased rates of divorce, and higher proportions of mixed marriages. Mixed marriage in turn has been proven a factor of erosion in the Jewish birth rate for two complementary reasons: the overall lower fertility of mixed couples as compared to that of homogamous Jewish couples; and the predominant pattern of raising less than one half of the children of mixed couples as Jews³ (Schmelz and DellaPergola, 1983; Bensimon and DellaPergola, 1984).

The trends now briefly sketched do not only apply to Jews in the Diaspora, but derive from the broader demographic transformation of Western societies. Peculiar to Jews, though, have been fertility rates lower than those observed in the total populations of the respective countries and an often more rapid, sharper response to the determinants of upward or downward twists in the general course of fertility levels. Hence, variations in the size of consecutive age groups, and changes in the overall school-age population in successive years, may have been relatively greater for the Jewish than for the general population of the same countries or localities.

Changing Size of Jewish School-Age Population

This process is reflected in Table 1, which presents estimates and projections regarding the widespread changes that occurred or can be expected to occur in the numbers of Jewish school-age children over the period 1965–2000.

TABLE 1. NUMBER OF DIASPORA JEWISH CHILDREN AGED 3 TO 17 – ESTIMATES AND PROJECTIONS, 1965–2000*

Year	Total 3–17	3–5	6–11	12–17
<i>Absolute Numbers</i>				
1965	2,048,000	360,000	872,000	816,000
1975	1,524,000	231,000	533,000	760,000
1985	1,228,000	251,000	502,000	475,000
2000 Projections				
Medium	1,079,000	173,000	405,000	501,000
Low	950,000	145,000	353,000	452,000
High	1,317,000	235,000	509,000	573,000
<i>Indices (1965 = 100)</i>				
1965	100	100	100	100
1975	74	64	61	93
1985	59	69	57	58
2000 Projections				
Medium	52	48	46	61
Low	46	40	40	55
High	64	65	58	70
<i>Indices (prior date = 100)</i>				
1975 (1965 = 100)	74	64	61	93
1985 (1975 = 100)	81	109	94	62
2000 Projections (1985 = 100)				
Medium	88	69	81	105
Low	77	58	70	95
High	107	94	101	121

(a) Except Eastern Europe. For method and assumptions, see: Schmelz (1981b, 1983a, 1984).

The table applies to all Diaspora communities with the exception of Eastern Europe where, for all intents and purposes, formal Jewish education does not exist. 1965 was chosen as base year because by then the mass migrations of Jews, characteristic of the post-Holocaust period and the founding of the State of Israel, had been completed. The exception is the emigration of a quarter of a million Jews from the USSR during the 1970s. However, neither the USSR nor Israel, to which most of the mass emigrants came, are included in the table. Furthermore, in 1965 the number of Jewish children between the ages of 3 and 17 was at a high level, since that year was still close to the end of the extended 'baby boom' among the large Jewish population of the United States.

Clearly, the data for all Diaspora communities are only rough estimates due to quantitative and qualitative flaws in the available demographic documentation. Furthermore, it is evident that demographic projections are not prophecies, but quantitative predictions of the future development which a specific population may undergo given certain assumptions. As a precautionary measure and also in order to give the reader an idea of the reasonable scope of variation, projections are presented in Table 1 in three versions: high, medium, and low. The projections presented here for the school-age population in the whole of the Diaspora (with the exception of Eastern Europe) constitute a partial summary of regional projections prepared for all age groups of the Jewish populations in nine separate geographical regions.⁴

The number of Jewish school-age children (3–17) has fallen from the high levels around 1965, and there are no indications that the figures will return to this level or to anything near it in the future, even according to the high projection. This trend is very clearly seen in the middle section of Table 1, where all indices from 1975 onwards are lower than the base of 100 for 1965, and in the majority of cases much lower.

Despite the basic trend of decline in the school-age population, limited temporary increases in the number of Jewish children may occur. These are reflected by some indices over 100 in the bottom part of Table 1. The reasons for such temporary increases are as follows:

- the 1980s 'echo effect' of the 1950s 'baby boom' as explained above;
- a significant future increase in the fertility levels of the Jewish population, as assumed in the high projection.

At any rate, the total number of Jewish children in the Diaspora between the ages of 3 and 17 is much lower in the 1980s than it was in the 1960s or even in the 1970s.

However, it must be noted that the total number of 3 to 17 year olds is comprised of 15 separate birth cohorts and that considerable changes can take place in the Jewish birth rate over a 15 year period. In Table 1, the totals for the age aggregate 3 to 17 have been divided into ages 3 to 5, 6 to 11, and 12 to 17. Different patterns of change appear for each of these age groups relative to its size in 1965 or in the other years presented in the table. Such differences

result from the fact that each age group is occupied by different birth cohorts at any given time.⁵ For example:

- from 1965 to 1975 there was no considerable drop in the number of 12–17 year olds, because even at the later date this age group still included the birth cohorts of the postwar ‘baby boom’. In contrast, the 3–11 year olds reflected the sharp drop in the birth rate subsequent to the ‘baby boom’;
- from 1975 to 1985, the sharp drop in the birth rate reaches its broadest representation among the older school-going children (those 12–17 years old), whereas some rise may have occurred among the young age group of 3–5 year olds, due to the ‘echo effect’ of the ‘baby boom’;
- from 1985 to the year 2000 a further decrease in the birth rate can be expected to reduce the number of the 3–11 year olds, except for the 6–11 year olds according to the high projection. However, the number of 12–17 year olds will increase – slightly according to the medium projection and markedly according to the high projection – since some of the relatively large birth cohorts of the ‘echo effect’ will still be included in this age group at the end of this century.

Therefore, even within the 3 to 17 age aggregate certain sub-groups may increase, while others may decrease concurrently.

Future Perspectives

It is worth noting again that the projections for year 2000 point to alternative levels of the school age population according to the assumptions that underlie each version of the projection – high, medium, or low. Currently, at least two main schools of thought exist among demographers with regard to the expected fertility levels of the general populations of developed countries in the near future. The one contends that low fertility will continue to be a permanent factor in these countries, in consequence of socio-economic and socio-cultural factors that have weakened the position of the family in Western societies (Westoff, 1978). The other school of thought maintains that the favorable labor-market position of smaller cohorts of young adults – a consequence of the low birth rates of the late 1960s and 1970s – could entail a rise in wages, thus stimulating family formation and triggering a greater demand for children (Easterlin, 1978).

In any case, the number of women in the major reproductive ages will be reduced toward the end of the century, since by then most of these will belong to the small birth cohorts born between the ‘baby boom’ and its ‘echo effect’ as mentioned above. A reduction in the number of potential mothers must necessarily cause a relative decline in the birth rate for any given level of fertility.

In light of empirical observations made over the past several generations, we may expect that fertility among Diaspora Jewry will continue to be lower

than that of the general populations of their countries of residence. This is the result of the fact that Jews have tended to display both a socio-demographic stratification – in terms of educational attainment, and female labor force participation – and a set of attitudes and behaviors, especially with regard to family planning, which are generally consonant with low fertility. Moreover, continuation of high rates of mixed marriage in Diaspora communities may be expected to cause some losses in intergenerational replacement of the Jews, since the ‘effectively Jewish’ birth rate is lower than that for all Jewish women.⁶

The Jewish School-Age Population in 1982

The total size of the Diaspora Jewish school-age population (3–17) is detailed in Table 2 with regard to each of the major regions and countries.⁷ In 1982, the total Diaspora school-age population was estimated to range between 1,349,000 and 1,465,000. Without Eastern Europe and other countries not covered by our enrollment data the total Jewish school-age population ranged between 1,216,000 and 1,318,000. About 65% of all Diaspora Jewish children lived in the United States.

The presentation of estimates of Jewish school-age population in the form of ranges reflects a margin of uncertainty which, however, does not affect the basic orders of magnitude of the age-group considered. In Table 2 we allowed for a margin of error of plus/minus 5% around the most reliable estimate of Jewish school-age population in each country or region. With regard to the United States, estimates for the total country (Schmelz and DellaPergola, 1983) and for the Greater New York area (Ritterband and Cohen, 1984) were used to compute the figures for the rest of the country.

It should be noted that the school-age group constitutes a variable proportion of the total Jewish population in different countries. This variation contradicts the conventional assumption put forward in the past by some analysts of Jewish education in the Diaspora that the school-age population constitutes 20% of the total Jewish population (World Zionist Organization, 1971). Even if this assumption may have been true at a certain time in the past for specific Jewish populations in the Diaspora, it is no longer supported by the contemporary experience, apart from sporadic exceptions.

The percentages of school-age children among the total Jewish populations are presented in Table 2 as ranges of approximately one percentage point plus/minus our best estimate. Taking together the countries covered by the census of Jewish schools, the 3 to 17 age group constituted between 15% and 17% of the total Jewish population in the early 1980s. These percentages are quite low – compared to the corresponding non-Jewish populations – and reflect the continuation of low Jewish birth rates and a marked process of aging throughout the Diaspora. Yet, the picture is not identical everywhere, as a consequence

TABLE 2. TOTAL JEWISH POPULATION AND JEWISH CHILDREN AGED 3 TO 17, BY COUNTRY - ESTIMATED RANGES, 1982

Country	Total Jewish Population ^a	Jewish Children Aged 3 to 17	
		Number ^b	% of Total Jewish Population
Total Diaspora	9,614,000	1,349,000-1,465,000	14.0-16.0
Total Diaspora, without Eastern Europe and other countries not incl. in the census	7,817,000	1,216,000-1,318,000	15.0-17.0
United States thereof:	5,705,000	880,000- 950,000	5.0-17.0
New York	1,671,000	270,000- 290,000	16.0-18.0
Other	4,034,000	610,000- 660,000	15.0-17.0
Canada	308,000	53,000- 57,000	16.5-18.5
France	530,000	78,000- 86,000	14.5-16.5
United Kingdom ^c	352,000	52,000- 57,000	14.5-16.5
Other Western Europe ^d	194,000	28,000- 31,000	14.0-16.0
Argentina	233,000	32,000- 35,000	14.0-16.0
Brazil	100,000	20,000- 22,000	20.0-22.0
Other Latin America ^e	132,000	21,000- 23,000	15.5-17.5
South Africa ^f	120,000	22,000- 24,000	18.0-20.0
Australia ^g	79,000	14,000- 16,000	18.0-20.0
Muslim Countries ^h	64,000	16,000- 17,000	25.0-27.0

(a) Adjusted from: Schmelz and DellaPergola (1984).

(b) Estimates and projections of Jewish school-age population prepared by Division of Jewish Demography and Statistics, Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

(c) Includes Ireland.

(d) Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, West Germany, Gibraltar, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland.

(e) Bolivia, Chile, Columbia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela.

(f) Includes Zimbabwe.

(g) Includes New Zealand.

(h) Iran, Morocco, Tunisia.

of the regional variations in migration patterns and of some differentials in the timing and rhythm of recent fertility reductions. Available data and estimates point to higher proportions of Jewish children in the small communities extant in the Muslim countries; percentages somewhat above the total Diaspora average appear in Brazil, South Africa and Australia. The lowest proportions of Jewish children in the regions studied here have been estimated for the Western European countries and Argentina; they are even lower in Eastern Europe.

Major Patterns of Jewish School Enrollment

The balance of this paper discusses trends and characteristics of Jewish school enrollment in the Diaspora, based on the First Census of Jewish Schools carried out in 1981/82–1982/83. The Census is the most important – and complex – research task accomplished since the establishment of the Project for Jewish Educational Statistics in the Diaspora at the Institute of Contemporary Jewry of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The project functions on behalf of the Joint Program for Jewish Education of the Israel Ministry of Education and Culture, the Jewish Agency, and the World Zionist Organization.

The census of Jewish schools in the Diaspora covered about 3,550 educational institutions – day schools and supplementary schools – in 40 countries, with about 550,000 pupils and 40,000–45,000 teachers (Genuth, DellaPergola and Dubb, 1985). Table 3 shows the distribution of pupils between the two main types of formal Jewish education: day schools (including yeshivoth as well as independent kindergartens), where both general and Jewish subjects are taught; and supplementary schools – hadarim, Talmudei Torah, Sunday and afternoon schools – for Jewish studies, as a complement to the general studies taught in other educational institutions. We divided the Diaspora into 11 geographical regions, each consisting of one or more countries. The United States was divided into two regions: Greater New York and the rest of the country.

The number of pupils in the various regions differs widely, and so does the distribution of these pupils between the two types of schools. Mention should be made of the dominance of the United States in the Diaspora as a whole: it accounts for almost half of all day school pupils, and for 85% of all supplementary school pupils. The United States is the only country where the vast majority of the pupils receiving a Jewish education attend supplementary schools. In all the other countries surveyed, most of the pupils in Jewish schools are in day schools; this majority fluctuates between 51% in Britain and 98% in the Latin American countries other than Argentina. Actually, in the Greater New York area most of the pupils in the Jewish education system do attend day schools, so that the exceptional region is the rest of the United States (i.e. without New York). But since this region accounts for about 50% of all pupils in Jewish schools in the Diaspora, it has tremendous influence in

TABLE 3. PUPILS IN JEWISH SCHOOLS IN THE DIASPORA, BY TYPE OF SCHOOL AND COUNTRY - 1981/82-1982/83

Country ^a	Total	Day Schools ^b	Supplementary Schools
<i>Absolute Numbers</i>			
Total Diaspora ^c	544,595	231,828	312,767
United States	372,417	104,752	267,665
thereof: New York	99,515	53,737	45,778
Other	272,902	51,015	221,887
Canada	26,627	16,679	9,948
France	20,664	12,638	8,026
United Kingdom	30,248	15,346	14,902
Other Western Europe	11,276	8,040	3,236
Argentina	21,371	17,997 ^d	3,374
Brazil	10,705	10,449	256
Other Latin America	16,881	16,551	330
South Africa ^e	15,658	13,398	2,260
Australia	9,789	7,268	2,521
Muslim Countries ^f	8,959	8,710	249
<i>Percentages</i>			
Total Diaspora ^c	100	43	57
United States	100	28	72
thereof: New York	100	54	46
Other	100	19	81
Canada	100	63	37
France	100	61	39
United Kingdom	100	51	49
Other Western Europe	100	71	29
Argentina	100	84 ^d	16
Brazil	100	98	2
Other Latin America	100	98	2
South Africa ^e	100	86	14
Australia	100	74	26
Muslim Countries ^f	100	97	3

(a) See notes (c)-(h) to Table 2.

(b) Including kindergartens not attached to a day or supplementary school.

(c) Without Eastern Europe and other countries not included in the census. Including about 7,200 non-Jewish pupils, thereof approximately 900 in the United States.

(d) Including schools offering both day and supplementary programs.

(e) Including non-Jewish pupils in Jewish nursery schools.

(f) Underestimated, especially for supplementary schools.

Source: First Census of Jewish Schools, 1981/82-1982/83.

determining the overall statistics of Jewish schools and of their pupils in the Diaspora.

Types of Enrollment Rates

Before we turn to the recent evidence on Jewish school enrollment rates, as revealed by the 1981/82–1982/83 Census of Jewish schools, a basic conceptual distinction should be mentioned. There exist two different and complementary approaches to measuring the relative frequency of Jewish education. The first consists of the current enrollment rates observed during a given school year, i.e. the number of pupils enrolled in a given year divided by the total number of school-age children at that time. The other approach relates to the cumulative exposure to Jewish education experienced during the lifetime of a certain individual or group of individuals. It indicates the proportion of a given child population that ever receives any education in a Jewish school. Obviously, the latter measure refers to a larger number of individuals and a higher percentage of the relevant population, since it includes:

- those who are currently receiving some Jewish education;
- those who received a Jewish education in the past but are no longer enrolled at the time of observation; and
- those who, at the time of observation, have not yet received any Jewish education but will receive some at a later age.

Since the data to be reported here are based on a survey of Jewish education in the Diaspora during a particular school year, the enrollment rates discussed below belong to the more limited, current type. Nevertheless, as we shall see, some inferences can be made, based on the same data, concerning the proportion of contemporary Jewish children who have received or will ever receive some Jewish education.

Current Jewish School Enrollment Rates

Current Jewish school enrollment rates can be computed by dividing the data on the number of Jewish pupils presented in Table 3 by the estimates of Jewish school-age population presented in Table 2. The percent ranges in Table 4 reflect the ranges of the estimated Jewish school-age populations in the various countries. Around 1982, about 36–40% of all Jewish children in the Diaspora aged 3 to 17 studied in a Jewish school. If we exclude Eastern Europe and other countries in which the census was not carried out, the enrollment rate rises to 40–44%.

Regional variations in the percentage of Jewish children currently enrolled in Jewish schools are significant. The highest enrollment rates were computed

for the aggregate of smaller Jewish communities in Latin America (69–73%). These were followed by South Africa, Australia and Argentina (62–66%), the United Kingdom (53–57%), Canada and Brazil (47–51%), the United States (39–43%), the Muslim Countries (38–42%),⁸ and the smaller Jewish communities in Western Europe (36–40%). Of the major communities, France, with an enrollment of 22–26%, had the lowest proportion of Jewish children currently receiving a Jewish education.

TABLE 4. CURRENT ENROLLMENT RATES IN JEWISH SCHOOLS^a PER 100 JEWISH CHILDREN AGED 3 TO 17, BY TYPE OF SCHOOL AND COUNTRY – ESTIMATED RANGES, 1981/82–1982/83

Country ^b	Total	Day Schools ^c	Supplementary Schools
Total Diaspora	36–40	15–17	21–23
Total Diaspora, without Eastern Europe and other countries not incl. in the census	40–44	17–19	23–25
United States thereof:	39–43	11–13	28–30
New York	34–38	18–20	16–18
Other	41–45	7–9	34–36
Canada	47–51	30–32	17–19
France	22–26	14–16	8–10
United Kingdom	53–57	27–29	26–28
Other Western Europe	36–40	26–28	10–12
Argentina	62–66	53–55 ^d	9–11
Brazil	47–51	46–50	1
Other Latin America	69–73	68–72	1
South Africa ^e	62–66	52–54	10–12
Australia	62–66	47–49	15–17
Muslim Countries ^f	38–42	37–39	1–3

(a) Estimates of Jewish school-age population prepared by Division of Jewish Demography and Statistics, Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

(b) See notes (c)–(h) to Table 2.

(c) Including kindergartens not attached to a day or supplementary school.

(d) Including schools offering both day and supplementary programs.

(e) Including non-Jewish pupils in Jewish nursery schools.

(f) Underestimated, especially for supplementary schools.

Source: First Census of Jewish Schools, 1981/82–1982/83.

The significant difference in Jewish school enrollment between the New York area (34–38%) and the rest of the United States (41–45%) is worth noting. The lower New York rate is consistent with the expectation that high Jewish population densities in some neighborhoods make the composition of many public schools distinctly Jewish. This may render the need for separate Jewish schooling less felt in the New York area than elsewhere in the United States.

If enrollment rates are considered separately for the two major types of Jewish education – day schools and supplementary schools – very different regional patterns emerge. In the Southern Hemisphere (most of Latin America, South Africa, Australia) between two-thirds and one-half of the Jewish school-age population currently attend Jewish day schools. This proportion declines to between one-third and one-fourth in Canada, the United Kingdom and the smaller communities of Western Europe; and further down to between one-sixth to one-eighth in France and in the United States. The United States day school enrollment rate is an average of quite different figures for the New York area (18–20%) and the rest of the country (7–9%). On the whole, 17–19% of all Jewish children in the Diaspora aged 3 to 17 were enrolled in Jewish day schools (excluding Eastern Europe) around 1982.

The total enrollment rate for supplementary Jewish education in the Diaspora (excluding Eastern Europe) was estimated at 23–25% of the relevant age group. The highest regional enrollment rate appears in the United States outside the New York area (34–36%). This corresponds to twice the rate in New York (16–18%). The total supplementary school enrollment rate for the United

TABLE 5. ENROLLMENT OF JEWISH CHILDREN AGED 3 TO 17 IN JEWISH SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES – 1961/62 TO 1981/82–1982/83

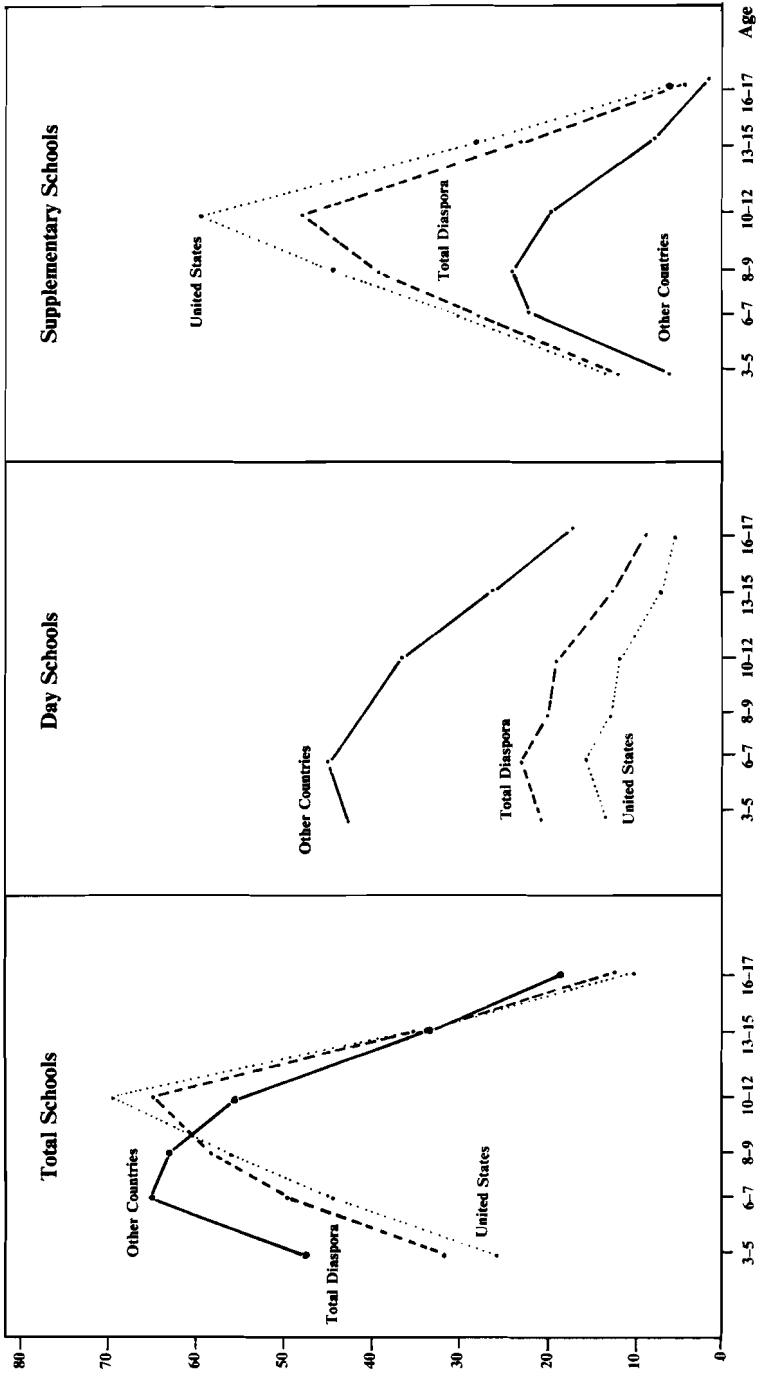
Year	Absolute Numbers		Indices (1966=100)		Enrollment Rates per 100 Jewish Children
	Jewish Children	Pupils	Jewish Children	Pupils	
1961/62		559,000			
1966/67	1,539,000	554,000	100	100	36
1970/71	1,383,000	457,000	90	82	33
1974/75	1,165,000	392,000	76	71	34
1978/79	962,000	357,000	62	64	37
1981/82– 1982/83	880,000	372,000	57	67	42

Sources: Pupils until 1978/79 – Pollak and Lang (1979); Himmelfarb and DellaPergola (1982).

Pupils 1981/82–1982/83 – First Census of Jewish Schools.

Jewish children – authors' estimates.

FIGURE 1. RATES OF ENROLLMENT IN JEWISH SCHOOLS PER 100 JEWISH CHILDREN AT EACH AGE, BY TYPE OF SCHOOL AND COUNTRY - 1981/82-1982/83



States (28–30%) is the highest in the Diaspora, closely followed by that in the United Kingdom (26–28%). Elsewhere, supplementary enrollment rates reach 15–20% in Canada and Australia; around 10% in South Africa, Argentina, France and the smaller communities in Western Europe; and extremely low percentages in Brazil, the smaller Latin American communities, and the Muslim countries (in the latter region the data are obviously incomplete).

As shown in Table 4, the United States has the lowest enrollment rate in Jewish day schools of all the areas studied, along with the highest rate in supplementary schools. Several censuses of Jewish education have been carried out in the United States since the early 1960s through 1982/83. They indicate an overall decline of 200,000 pupils. However, there is insufficient information regarding the comprehensiveness of the various educational censuses; the latest, which showed a small increase in the number of pupils, was carried out using different, improved methods (Dubb and DellaPergola, 1986).

The sharp decline in the number of Jewish pupils receiving Jewish education is not open to debate. But, according to our estimates, as derived from the various censuses, the enrollment rates in the United States for Jewish school-age children between the ages of 3 and 17 have not fallen. Not only have the rates not declined, but they have in fact recently shown an apparent increase.⁹ The solution to this paradox of decrease in the number of pupils as opposed to stability or even a small increase of the enrollment rates is found in Table 5. Indeed, according to our estimates, the total number of Jewish children has dropped even somewhat more than the number of pupils in Jewish schools (compare especially the middle columns in Table 5, presenting the indices). The drastic drop in the number of Jewish children conforms to the demographic trends discussed above (see Table 1). Any smaller decrease in the number of Jewish pupils may have depended on each or both of two different types of factors:

- an improved coverage of Jewish schools in the most recent school census;
- a greater propensity of parents to give their children a Jewish education, especially in Jewish day schools.

Age Profiles of Current Enrollment Rates

Further variation in Jewish school enrollment rates is shown in Table 6 and Figure 1, according to detailed age-groups within the school-age population, by type of school and by major areas. For the sake of simplicity, the Diaspora has been divided into only two areas – the United States and all other countries (except Eastern Europe) – despite the geographical dispersion and lack of uniformity in the latter. The enrollment rates for the entire Diaspora are in the nature of weighted averages of the rates for the United States separately, and the remaining countries together. The overall rate is closer to those of the

United States because two-thirds of all Jewish children in the Diaspora are concentrated there.

The census of Jewish education did not specify pupils' ages but rather their grades; however, the information on distribution by grades can be closely translated into the distribution of pupils by ages.¹⁰ Data on grades was not available from some institutions and, as is usual in such cases, it was assumed that these pupils were distributed like the others in the census. The denomina-

TABLE 6. JEWISH PUPILS IN JEWISH SCHOOLS, BY GRADE/AGE, TYPE OF SCHOOL AND COUNTRY - 1981/82-1982/83

Grade/Age	Total Diaspora			United States			Other Countries		
	Total	Schools		Total	Schools		Total	Schools	
		Day	Suppl.		Day	Suppl.		Day	Suppl.
<i>Absolute Numbers (thousands)^a</i>									
Total	536.1	223.8	312.3	371.5	104.1	267.4	164.6	119.7	44.9
Kindergarten	85.1	54.7	30.4	52.0	26.1	25.9	33.1	28.6	4.5
Grades 1-12	451.0	169.1	281.9	319.5	78.0	241.5	131.5	91.1	40.4
Grades 1-2	84.6	38.7	45.9	55.1	18.9	36.2	29.5	19.8	9.7
Grades 3-4	98.3	34.3	64.0	69.5	16.2	53.3	28.8	18.1	10.7
Grades 5-7	154.9	46.3	108.6	116.9	21.2	95.7	38.0	25.1	12.9
Grades 8-10	87.1	33.1	54.0	62.3	14.3	48.0	24.8	18.8	6.0
Grades 11-12	26.1	16.7	9.4	15.7	7.4	8.3	10.4	9.3	1.1
<i>Enrollment Rates per 100 Jewish Children at Each Age (estimated ranges)</i>									
Total	40-44	17-19	23-25	39-43	11-13	28-30	45-49	33-35	12-14
Ages 3-5	31-35	20-22	11-13	25-29	13-15	12-14	46-50	41-43	5-7
Ages 6-17	43-47	16-18	27-29	42-46	10-12	32-34	44-48	31-33	13-15
Ages 6-7	48-52	22-24	26-28	43-47	15-17	28-30	63-67	43-45	20-22
Ages 8-9	56-60	19-21	37-39	54-58	12-14	42-44	61-65	39-41	22-24
Ages 10-12	63-67	18-20	45-47	67-71	11-13	56-58	53-57	35-37	18-20
Ages 13-15	33-37	12-14	21-23	33-37	7-9	26-28	32-36	25-27	7-9
Ages 16-17	12-16	8-10	4-6	10-14	5-7	5-7	18-22	17-19	1-3

(a) Pupils with unknown grade were distributed proportionately.

Source: First Census of Jewish Schools, 1981/81-1982/83.

tors for computation of the enrollment rates were our demographic estimates of the number of children in the Jewish population, according to their ages. Age-specific current enrollment rates were computed for six age-groups: 3–5, 6–7, 8–9, 10–12, 13–15, and 16–17. Apart from total rates, separate profiles were constructed for day and supplementary schools. We turn to these strikingly different profiles first.

Day school enrollment rates start at a comparatively high plateau at pre-school age, reach an early relative maximum at age 6–7 (corresponding to first-second grade of elementary school), and subsequently decline quite steadily until the upper grades in high school. This general trend is similar in the United States and the rest of the Diaspora, but United States day school enrollment rates are much lower. The highest enrollment rates recorded correspond to 43–45% of Jewish children aged 6–7 outside the United States, and to 15–17% in the United States. On the other hand, in the passage to higher grade levels, the pace of decline in enrollment rates is sharper outside the United States.

The declining profile of Jewish day-school enrollment per 100 children at each age-group can be interpreted essentially as the consequence of a continuous pupil drop-out from lower to higher grades. This is more accurately described as a continuously negative balance between the numbers of pupils leaving and the number joining Jewish day-schools after a certain grade level. The turning point in enrollment rates seems to correspond well with the passage from elementary to secondary school. It must also be assumed that the lower enrollment in high school classes is due not only to differences in demand for the various levels of Jewish education, but also to differences in supply – the establishment and maintenance of a high school is more difficult and costly than organization of an elementary school.

A further determinant of the age profile of Jewish day-school enrollment rates may be the progressive strengthening of the day-school movement in the Diaspora. That is, the higher enrollment rates for preschool and early elementary school ages could reflect an expanding base for Jewish day schools, relative to the total Jewish school-age population. Such expansion would logically start from the lower grades, only gradually reaching the higher educational levels. Such an explanation – though speculative – is supported by partial data reported in previous research (Himmelfarb and DellaPergola, 1982; DellaPergola, Genuth, 1983), and by some impressionistic observations in a variety of Jewish communities.

If we now examine the age profile of enrollment rates in Jewish supplementary education, we find a major peak at age 10–12, obviously related to pre-bar/bat mitzvah training. This peak is peculiar to the United States, where about 56–58% of the 10–12 age group were receiving supplementary Jewish education in 1981/82–1982/83. The pattern is somewhat different for the aggregate of other Diaspora communities, where the peak is reached at age 8–9 (22–24% of the age group). Thereafter, enrollment rates rapidly decline and even fall

below those for day schools in both the major geographical regions considered here.

The overall enrollment rates for both day and supplementary Jewish schools in the Diaspora outside the United States begin falling with the younger age groups in elementary school. This drop reflects the common course of rates of enrollment in both day and supplementary education, since enrollment tends to decline with the increase in age. By contrast, the overall enrollment rates in the United States and their effect on the entire Diaspora mainly reflect the typical pattern of enrollment in US Jewish supplementary schools: that is, a rise in rates until bar/bat mitzvah age, and a sharp decline beyond this age.

Outside the United States, the number of Jewish children of the 3–5 age group attending Jewish kindergartens is high in relation to the total number of children. Half of the pupils in Jewish kindergartens in the United States receive supplementary education, while in the rest of the Diaspora, most of the attendance is in Jewish full-time kindergartens.

Rates of Lifetime Attainment (Ever-enrolled) in Jewish Schools

Census data like those reported in this study do not constitute, in principle, an adequate basis for attempting to assess what proportion of the Jewish school-age population ever receives some Jewish education (i.e., the cumulative enrollment rate). Nevertheless, the age-specific current enrollment rates reported in the preceding section render possible some educated speculation on this topic. Given the considerable public interest in obtaining cumulative rates of Jewish schooling and in comparing them with current rates, it seems worthwhile to present here at least a very rough and tentative estimate.

It is sufficient for this purpose to consider that the highest age-specific enrollment rates shown in Table 6 and Figure 1 constitute – for the age groups respectively concerned – a measure of lifetime exposure to Jewish education. Indeed, about 16% of the 6–7 age group in the United States, and about 44% elsewhere in the Diaspora as of 1981/82–1982/83 started their schooling in a Jewish day school. Even if the subsequent enrollment rates of these Jewish children decline, the percentage values just mentioned constitute a minimum estimate of the proportion of that age cohort that will ever receive some Jewish day school education; the actual proportion will possibly be higher. If one further assumes that the behavior of the immediately preceding and following age cohorts was or will be roughly similar, this finding can be extended to the entire Jewish school-age population of the early 1980s as an approximate measure of its cumulative enrollment rate. The result is, of course, no more than a tentative hypothesis awaiting validation or rejection through further data collection

a few years from now. A similar approach may be applied for estimating the enrollment rates in Jewish supplementary education.

For the sake of simplicity, we shall further assume that no passage of pupils occurs between day and supplementary schools and vice-versa. This is obviously not true, since there is some known overlap of lifetime attendance in the two types of Jewish education. The over-estimate tolerated here may compensate for the fact that the enrollment peaks observed in the educational censuses miss a certain proportion of the pupils ever exposed to Jewish schooling: the 'early drop-outs' – i.e. pupils leaving Jewish education for good before the age-specific enrollment peaks discussed above – and the 'late-bloomers' – who attend for the first time after those peak ages. We shall assume that errors due to these over-estimates and under-estimates counter-balance each other.

If one accepts these assumptions, a measure of lifetime Jewish school attendance is provided by the sum of the highest age-specific current enrollment rates separately obtained for Jewish day and supplementary schools (see Table 6). In the United States, by adding the maximum for day schools (15–17%) to that for supplementary schools (56–58%) one obtains a total of 71–75% of children aged 3 to 17 who ever received any Jewish education in the early 1980s. The corresponding estimate for the rest of the Diaspora is 65–69%, obtained by adding the maximum age-specific enrollment rates of 43–45% for day schools to 22–24% for supplementary schools. For the entire Diaspora (excluding Eastern Europe and other countries not covered by our census) an estimated 67–71% of the Jewish school-age population may ever receive some Jewish education (22–24% in day schools and 45–47% through supplementary education).

These percentages are higher than the current enrollment rates already seen in Tables 4, 5 and 6 for the total 3–17 age group. The differences are evident from the percentage ranges reported in Table 7. It thus appears that lifetime Jewish school attainment rates may be one and a half times or more above the current enrollment rates (DellaPergola and Genuth, 1983). Therefore, while at a given point in time, 1981/82–1982/83, less than one half of the Jewish school age population was enrolled in the Jewish educational system, a substantial majority of Jewish children do receive some Jewish education at some stage.

With regard to the United States, both current and cumulative enrollment rates obtained through our census of Jewish schools are very close to those computed from the 1970/71 National Jewish Population Study.¹¹ According to NJPS, 44% of all Jewish children aged 6 to 17 in 1970/71 were enrolled in Jewish education (excluding private lessons), thereof 8% in day schools, and 36% in supplementary schools. Relative to that same age group the total current enrollment rate had not changed by 1981/82–1982/83 (44%), but day schools had gained some percentage points at the expense of the supplementary schools, the rates being 11% and 33%, respectively. With regard to the per-

TABLE 7. PERCENT OF JEWISH CHILDREN AGED 3 TO 17 CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN JEWISH SCHOOLS AND EVER RECEIVING SOME JEWISH EDUCATION, BY TYPE OF SCHOOL AND COUNTRY - 1981/82-1982/83

Country	Percent Currently Enrolled in Jewish Education			Percent Ever Receiving Some Jewish Education		
	Total	Day Schools	Supplementary Schools	Total	Day Schools	Supplementary Schools
Total Diaspora ^a	40-44	17-19	23-25	67-71	22-24	45-47
United States	39-43	11-13	28-30	71-75	15-17	56-58
Other countries	43-47	32-34	11-13	65-69	43-45	22-24

(a) Without Eastern Europe and other countries not included in the census.

Source: First Census of Jewish Schools, 1981/82-1982/83.

centage of children ever receiving some Jewish education, in 1970/71 this was estimated to be 73%, thereof 13% in day schools and 60% in supplementary schools. According to the 1981/82-1982/83 educational census, the total attainment was still 73% as in 1970/71, but day schools had gained somewhat (up to 16%), and supplementary schools had lost the same percentage point difference (down to 57%).

The two types of enrollment rates - current and 'ever' - thus lead to different conclusions about the frequency of Jewish schooling in the Diaspora. The apparent discrepancy between the levels of current enrollment and cumulative attainment can be reconciled by the drop-out from the Jewish educational system as the bridging element. A majority of Jewish children ever do attend a Jewish school, but for many of them the contact with Jewish education is very short-lived, to the point that serious questions can be raised regarding the meaningfulness of such contact.

Conclusions

This chapter reviewed selected quantitative aspects of Diaspora Jewish education in the context of an assessment of basic changes in demographic patterns that have a bearing on the availability of children as pupils in Jewish schools. The overall decline in fertility during the last few decades accounts for the reduction in the size of the Jewish school-age population. Similar though apparently somewhat more moderate changes have occurred in the

numbers of pupils attending Jewish schools. The major trends and differentials in Jewish school enrollment in the early 1980s were presented based on the results of the first Census of Jewish Schools in the Diaspora.

The Jewish school enrollment rates that have been computed, even those that appear relatively high, do not reflect the content or quantity of the education given or its long-range 'effectiveness' as an influential factor for the Jewishness of the pupils as adults. The effectiveness of returns from investments in Jewish schooling needs to be evaluated in conjunction with data on the types of curricula adopted by different schools, intensity of the programs, duration of exposure to Jewish education, teacher training and experience, and other aspects of the contents and organization of the Jewish school system.

At any rate, the material presented in this chapter illustrates the basic importance of demographic data for understanding the state of, and the trends in, Jewish educational enrollment. The frequent and rapid changes in the number of Jewish children and their impact on enrollment population require further periodic demographic and statistical study and evaluation.

Notes

1. This does not apply to Asia and North Africa, but these areas have been virtually emptied of Jews.
2. The birth rate and natural increase are influenced by the age composition of the population. If the population is relatively young, it may continue growing although the fertility rate per se is insufficient to ensure growth. In aging populations, which are fast becoming dominant among Diaspora Jewry, the occurrence of a natural deficit will be speeded up – due to deaths outnumbering births (Schmelz, 1984).
3. Since half of the marital partners in mixed marriages are Jews, unless half of their children are raised as Jews, the size of the Jewish population will be thereby affected.
4. For explanations of the projections, basic data, underlying assumptions, and methods, see: Schmelz (1981b and 1984). Compare also to: Schmelz (1983a and 1983b). Minor changes have been made in the versions printed here as compared to those previously published.
5. The relationships between birth years and age groups are as follows:

Year	Total ages 3–17	Ages 3–5	Ages 6–11	Ages 12–17
1965	1948–1962	1960–1962	1954–1959	1948–1953
1975	1958–1972	1970–1972	1964–1969	1958–1963
1985	1968–1982	1980–1982	1974–1979	1968–1973
2000	1983–1997	1995–1997	1989–1994	1983–1988

6. For a review of Jewish demographic trends in the United States, and of the recent debate concerning them, see: Schmelz and DellaPergola (1986).
7. Data, estimates and projections; were prepared by the Division of Jewish Demography and Statistics, The Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. See: Schmelz (1981b), Schmelz and DellaPergola (1984).
8. Underestimate; the data for supplementary schools in Muslim countries are grossly incomplete.
9. It should be stressed that enrollment rates are based on very rough estimates of the numbers of Jewish children in the United States derived from the incomplete documentation available for the demography of the Jews in that country.
10. The translation of grades into ages was done as follows: pupils in grade 1 were classified as 6 year olds, grade 2 as 7 year olds, etc. The assumption was that the average age of pupils in every grade approaches the 'official' age. Special difficulties were encountered in working out classifications according to ages for supplementary school pupils because of the increased possibility of disparities between pupils' ages and grades, lack of clarity with regard to the definition of grades in supplementary schools, and the frequent occurrence of joint classes (i.e., small classes that contain pupils from several grades). Partial assistance in dealing with this problem was obtained from the fact that the census questionnaire contained questions about the age limits of the pupils in the institution and its main levels, if such existed. The computation of the rates did not include grade 13 or non-Jewish pupils, even though these are included in the absolute figures of Table 3.
11. The following estimates are derived from our own processing of the NJPS data files; see: DellaPergola and Genuth (1983). The figures of pupils in Jewish schools derived from NJPS – which was a comprehensive representative survey of the Jewish population in the United States - are greater than those obtained by the census of Jewish education for the same year (1970/71), as reported by Pollak and Lang (1979).

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