

New Roles, New Commitments? Jewish Women's Involvement in the Community's Organizational Structure

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The changing sociodemographic profile of American women in the 1970s and 1980s is widely documented and acknowledged (Bianchi and Spain, 1986). They are better educated than ever before, marry at somewhat later ages, have fewer children, and, most dramatically, have entered the labor force in increasing number. Young women are delaying marriage and childbearing to achieve career goals. Small children at home do not serve as major deterrents to mothers working outside the home. These general developments characterize Jewish women as well, as has been documented by a number of community studies (Goldscheider, 1986; Goldscheider and Goldstein, 1988; Rapoport and Tobin, 1987; Tobin, 1986).

Recognizing these changes, much of the leadership of the American organizational sector that relies on voluntarism has expressed concern about the impact of women's changing roles on membership and volunteer activities among women. Studies in the early 1960s (American Volunteers, 1965) indicated, for example, that volunteers were predominantly married women aged 25-34 who were not in the labor force. In the next two decades, this pattern changed considerably: More men became volunteers, and women entering the voluntary sector did so concurrent with greater participation in the labor force. In fact, a Gallup Poll taken in 1988 showed that the 47 percent of female respondents who indicated they were volunteers was only slightly above the percentage of male volunteers (Hodgkinson and Weitzman, 1988). Those identified as housewives had a lower percentage of volunteers than employed persons, while among workers, self-employment and part-time employment were both associated with higher levels of voluntarism. The survey also found a positive correlation between both education and occupational level and percent volunteering. Moreover, the presence of children under age 18 in the household appeared to enhance the levels of voluntarism.

Jews (with 46 percent volunteers) differed little from most other religious groups in levels of voluntary activity, although the levels were higher than those of Catholics and Baptists and lower than for Presbyterians. For all religious groups combined, however, degree of participation was directly affected by intensity of religious involvement as measured by regular attendance at religious services. Since no distinction was made in the survey between religious and non-sectarian volunteer activity, it is not possible to ascertain whether some groups had higher levels of

participation because they also directly sponsored more types of activities for which individuals could volunteer.

These findings for the general population suggest that levels of involvement have not suffered because of the new responsibilities that women have accepted in the labor force or because of changing marital status and educational levels. If anything, these changes may have enhanced voluntary activity. How the activities themselves have changed has not been ascertained, nor has the intensity of involvement. Data generated from a sample survey of the general American population also cannot provide detailed information on differences by ethnic or religious sub-groups, even though they do suggest some overall differentials by religion.

Since its establishment in the United States, the Jewish community at the local and then the national level has been characterized by a high degree of organization dependent on broad support through dues-paying organizational membership and volunteer activities. Yet, despite the high degree to which the Jewish community is organized and the long history of Jewish voluntarism in the United States, little research has focussed specifically on this topic. Especially lacking is assessment of how various sociodemographic factors affect involvement in the organized Jewish community and whether the effects differ by gender.

Using data from Boston surveys of 1965 and 1975, Cohen (1983) suggested that membership in Jewish and non-Jewish organizations was closely associated with the high socioeconomic status of Jews. His findings also suggest, however, that levels of affiliation were lower among third and fourth generation Jews, and he speculated that the change reflected lower religious commitment (Cohen, 1983, p. 75). Since his analysis did not control for gender in considering this relation, it is not possible to ascertain whether men and women respond in similar ways.

This paper seeks to examine the community involvement of Jewish women by assessing sociodemographic differentials in organizational membership and volunteer activity of Jewish women living in Rhode Island in 1987. Special attention will be given to those factors that have changed most dramatically for women in recent decades—labor force status and number of young children at home. Does the absence of young children at home enhance volunteer activity and increase Jewish organizational membership? Do careers substitute for organizational activity and do they lead to more involvement in non-Jewish activities at the expense of Jewish ones?

This study will use data from the 1987 Social and Demographic Survey of Rhode Island. The survey was based on a sample of 1,455 households throughout the State, chosen both from the records of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island and through random digit dialing screening of 18,000 households in the State. In each household, one adult (age 21 or older) was randomly chosen as the respondent. Some questions asked of the respondents covered the characteristics of all members of the household; others pertained specifically to the attitudes and practices of the respondent only. Interviews were completed for 1,129 households. The resulting data for households and individuals were weighted to approximate the total Jewish population of Rhode Island. It is these weighted data that will be used in the current study, and all numbers in the following discussion will be the weighted numbers. (For a detailed review of the study design and the overall findings, see Goldscheider and Goldstein, 1988.)

The Rhode Island Jewish community is among the oldest established Jewish communities in the United States and is characterized by considerable variation among areas within the State. Nonetheless, comparison of data on the socio-demographic characteristics of Rhode Island Jewry and of several indicators of Jewishness and identification with the organized Jewish community with those obtained from Jewish communities across the United States indicates general similarities (Goldscheider and Goldstein, 1988, p. 399-412). Differences are due in part to the timing of the various studies and in part to the fact that the Rhode Island population is somewhat older than most, reflecting the considerable net out-migration from the state. On the whole, therefore, patterns identified for Rhode Island Jewry are likely to be quite typical for other communities as well. This may in fact become increasingly true as the populations of other communities come to contain increasingly higher proportions of older persons.

This paper uses the information obtained from the women respondents of whom the survey asked a wide array of characteristics and attitudes. Also ascertained was how many memberships each woman held in Jewish and non-Jewish organizations, whether she had engaged in volunteer activity during the year preceding the survey, and how many hours per month such activity involved. The information obtained from these questions will be the focus of this analysis. Background variables used to help explain variations in degree of involvement will include age, marital status, secular education, number of young children at home, and labor force status. In addition, several indicators of specifically Jewish background will also be used: years of Jewish education, an index of ritual practices, and frequency of attendance at religious services.

Information obtained from the questions on organizations and voluntarism may be used to measure women's involvement in the formal structure of Rhode Island's Jewish and general communities. It must be recognized, however, that organizational membership and volunteer activity cover different facets of community integration and that they may be at very different levels of intensity. Organization membership may involve very little investment of time or interaction with others in the local community. Volunteer activity, on the other hand, requires direct expenditure of time on the part of the volunteer and most often also interaction with others. Volunteer activity is thus a better indicator of an individual's integration in the community than is organization membership.

The distinction is central to the issues raised here, but it is unfortunately not made in most of the studies cited above. The patterns identified by other studies may therefore not hold when organization membership and volunteer activities are treated separately. Organization membership should be less sensitive to those characteristics that place constraints on women's time—such as having young children at home or being employed full-time—than is volunteer work. On the other hand, education and age may be as directly related to one aspect of community involvement as the other. Similarly, strong Jewish identification is expected to be directly related to both affiliation and voluntarism in Jewish activities, but not in non-Jewish ones.

Attention will turn first to the level of organizational membership, both Jewish and non-Jewish, and then to the number of such memberships. This will be followed

by an analysis of volunteer activities. Since the women on whom this assessment is based were all respondents in the survey, they are not entirely representative of all Jewish women age 18 and over living in Rhode Island. They represent 58 percent of all adult Jewish women in the State and are somewhat more heavily concentrated in the older ages. They are also more likely, for example, to be married if they are in the age groups under 35 and more likely to be widowed if they are age 55 or over than are all Jewish women in Rhode Island in these age groups. Nonetheless, since age will be controlled throughout the analysis and the whole range of demographic characteristics will be controlled in the multivariate analyses, the patterns identified for the respondents can have more general applicability. The characteristics of the women analyzed in this paper are presented in the Appendix Table.

Organizational Membership

Levels of Membership

Of all the women respondents, 58 percent belong to at least one Jewish organization and 40 percent belong to at least one non-Jewish organization. These levels of Jewish membership vary considerably by age (Table 1), increasing sharply from only 18 percent of women age 18-24 to 69 percent of the 65 and over age group. This does not hold for membership in non-Jewish organizations, for which membership levels take on an inverted U-shaped pattern, with women aged 35-44 having the highest levels.

TABLE 1. PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN INVOLVED IN JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS AND VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES, BY AGE

Age	Organizational membership		Volunteer activities	
	Jewish	Non-Jewish	Jewish	Non-Jewish
All ages	58.3	40.4	33.8	25.3
18-24	18.3	22.3	18.3	26.4
25-34	33.7	41.4	29.4	28.6
35-44	60.9	60.0	35.1	32.1
45-54	52.7	45.7	35.6	25.6
55-64	60.2	33.9	45.2	22.4
65 and over	68.7	36.6	28.1	21.9

The pattern for non-Jewish memberships therefore conforms to that noted by the 1965 study of the general American population. The pattern by age for Jewish organizational membership does not fit, but it does resemble that identified for women in a 1963 study of the Jewish population of Greater Providence (Goldstein, 1964). The major change over time seems to be a lower level of membership in Jewish organizations in 1987 compared to 1963 and a considerably higher level of membership in non-Jewish organizations in the more recent period. In 1963, 76 percent of the women age 20 and over belonged to Jewish organizations and only 25

percent belonged to non-Jewish ones. By 1987, the rates of membership among women age 18 and over were 58 percent and 40 percent, respectively. These changes suggest that, while age patterns of membership have changed very little over the last quarter century, levels of membership have changed, with considerable attenuation for Jewish organizations, but an increase in membership for non-Jewish organizations.

To gain some insights into the factors that underlie the patterns identified in 1987, this paper will first briefly explore the relation between a variety of characteristics and rates of organizational membership, controlling for age. A more comprehensive analysis is then presented through multivariate regression.

Consistent with the findings of other studies, being married is strongly related to belonging to at least one organization, especially to a Jewish one (Table 2). This

TABLE 2. PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN INVOLVED IN JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS AND VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES, BY AGE AND MARITAL STATUS

Age	Jewish				Non-Jewish			
	Never Married	Married	Divorced	Widowed	Never Married	Married	Divorced	Widowed
	Organizations							
All ages	38.7	63.1	46.2	63.0	46.7	43.3	40.1	28.8
25-34	22.3	37.9	*	-	72.4	35.9	*	-
35-44	48.1	63.9	59.7	*	58.0	57.3	65.0	*
45-54	37.1	55.1	47.1	*	37.4	38.5	37.3	*
55-64	11.5	65.7	36.2	56.5	21.5	38.0	28.3	19.1
65 and over	75.7	78.0	34.5	62.9	47.6	42.5	35.5	28.8
	Volunteer activities							
All ages	23.2	39.0	22.7	25.5	32.5	23.9	24.6	23.8
25-34	5.9	36.1	*	-	51.2	24.3	*	-
35-44	28.7	37.6	16.5	*	39.1	28.3	40.7	*
45-54	56.6	37.3	28.6	*	0.0	32.8	8.7	*
55-64	65.5	47.8	17.4	43.9	49.8	19.9	27.7	27.8
65 and over	27.7	35.0	44.4	22.0	22.4	18.4	35.5	23.3

a. Fewer than 20 cases.

Note: In this and succeeding tables by age, the 18-24 age group has been omitted because of the small number of women of these ages who were respondents.

relation may, in fact, be more related to having children than to marital status per se. Belonging to organizations has sometimes been associated for women with involvement for the sake of their children's welfare, either directly (e.g., parents' groups) or indirectly through supportive activities. Yet when rates of membership are examined by the presence of children under age 6 and age 6-17, no clear support is given to this assumption (Table 3). Nor do the data clearly suggest that presence of young children inhibits affiliation. It appears, therefore, that marital status per se is the more important factor in determining membership. This may be so because many organizations, particularly Jewish ones, have been traditionally aimed at attracting married women, and the non-married may as a result feel out of place at their meetings. That this is less true of some non-Jewish groups is indicated by the

TABLE 3. PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN INVOLVED IN JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS AND VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES, BY AGE AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER AGE 6, AND 6-17

Woman's age and age of children	Jewish				Non-Jewish			
	Number of children				Number of children			
	0	1	2	3 or more	0	1	2	3 or more
Organizations								
Under 6 years								
25-34	30.4	24.0	47.1	-	35.6	33.8	31.6	-
35-44	55.3	74.9	19.5	-	56.3	78.8	52.6	-
6-17 years								
25-34	31.8	29.3	21.7	-	32.9	34.3	47.2	-
35-44	45.9	60.0	65.3	68.6	55.8	76.3	51.2	51.4
45-54	47.5	44.9	53.7	*	28.7	31.3	37.3	*
Volunteer activities								
Under 6 years								
25-34	16.0	31.4	59.1	-	27.6	21.1	36.9	-
35-44	35.6	42.0	11.4	-	31.6	42.4	11.4	-
6-17 years								
25-34	29.8	37.7	0.0	-	29.2	29.7	15.4	-
35-44	26.1	38.5	36.5	57.8	25.0	43.8	28.9	35.0
45-54	35.2	37.6	16.8	*	23.9	26.1	35.0	*

a. Fewer than 20 cases.

relatively high rates of membership in such organizations among younger unmarried women.

As indicated earlier, higher socioeconomic status has been associated with joining organizations (Busching, 1987; Hodgkinson and Weitzman, 1988; Cohen, 1983). Since it is closely related to status, education should therefore be directly related to

TABLE 4. PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN INVOLVED IN JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS AND VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES, BY AGE AND EDUCATION

Age group	Jewish				Non-Jewish			
	High school	Some college	College	Post-graduate	High school	Some college	College	Post-graduate
	Organizations							
All ages	54.6	56.8	64.3	57.4	24.3	37.2	47.1	57.0
25-34	0.0	31.1	40.1	40.4	0.0	23.2	32.0	64.3
35-44	45.5	44.3	73.0	65.6	31.0	39.9	60.0	71.1
45-54	15.1	66.3	57.6	57.5	13.6	29.8	46.9	38.9
55-64	43.4	46.9	73.7	62.2	25.0	30.2	34.8	59.1
65 and over	65.6	71.1	78.7	62.3	26.8	47.3	56.0	36.1
Volunteer activities								
All ages	19.3	32.6	43.1	36.4	12.5	26.1	29.4	31.7
25-34	0.0	20.0	32.9	34.5	0.0	11.1	25.3	45.6
35-44	31.4	29.4	41.1	33.4	23.1	26.6	26.6	36.3
45-54	9.1	36.1	50.8	33.7	4.4	24.9	36.1	25.6
55-64	30.8	31.1	61.9	47.7	10.5	21.5	36.9	20.5
65 and over	17.8	37.2	36.4	34.4	15.2	30.2	26.4	24.4

membership rates. This is generally the case for non-Jewish organizations, but not as clearly so for any age groups when Jewish organizations are considered (Table 4). This pattern suggests that memberships in Jewish and non-Jewish organizations may serve different purposes for women. Although respondents were instructed specifically to exclude professional organizations when they were asked about memberships, membership even in non-Jewish social or cultural organizations may be seen as enhancing careers because they provide opportunities for establishing contacts (cf. Cohen, 1983).

If affiliation is seen as enhancing careers, then participation in the labor force should not necessarily act as a deterrent to membership. With the increasing participation of women in the labor force, this relation is of particular importance. Like American women in general, half of Rhode Island's Jewish women are in the labor force; 33 percent work full-time and 17 percent part-time. Their work status clearly affects their membership in both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations, although in different ways (Table 5). On the whole, part-time work is associated with higher levels of membership in Jewish organizations than is full-time work; and with lower levels than is true of women who are not in the labor force. By contrast, working either full- or part-time enhances membership rates in non-Jewish organizations among most age groups. This finding supports the assumption made about the impact of education on membership: non-Jewish organizations are seen as

TABLE 5. PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN INVOLVED IN JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS AND VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES, BY AGE AND LABOR FORCE STATUS

Age and labor force status	Organizational membership		Volunteer activities	
	Jewish	Non-Jewish	Jewish	Non-Jewish
All ages				
Working full-time	47.5	41.9	31.3	26.6
Working part-time	58.5	44.1	44.5	26.6
Not in labor force	61.7	30.6	30.8	22.2
Age 25-34				
Working full-time	29.6	52.7	24.7	38.2
Working part-time	47.1	20.6	48.6	10.7
Not in labor force	18.7	16.4	23.5	27.3
Age 35-44				
Working full-time	57.1	56.1	40.7	42.0
Working part-time	56.3	66.2	32.8	23.4
Not in labor force	60.7	53.2	23.7	22.0
Age 45-54				
Working full-time	40.1	21.9	25.4	16.7
Working part-time	61.5	49.8	51.2	37.3
Not in labor force	49.1	30.8	38.0	31.8
Age 55-64				
Working full-time	55.9	37.9	32.4	12.2
Working part-time	54.7	29.2	74.3	34.6
Not in labor force	65.6	25.1	45.6	23.0
Age 65 and over				
Working full-time	55.8	38.9	30.7	16.8
Working part-time	73.8	40.6	29.9	32.2
Not in labor force	67.1	32.3	27.6	21.5

TABLE 6. PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN INVOLVED IN JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS AND VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES, BY AGE AND YEARS OF JEWISH EDUCATION

Age group	Jewish					Non-Jewish				
	Years of Jewish education					Years of Jewish education				
	None	1-3	4-6	7-9	10 or more	None	1-3	4-6	7-9	10 or more
Organizations										
All ages	53.0	62.9	60.1	61.5	64.4	34.6	47.4	42.5	41.5	50.5
25-34	5.4	41.7	47.9	21.1	56.4	30.6	38.8	44.0	50.7	60.7
35-44	62.1	57.1	63.3	56.4	74.3	58.3	68.1	64.3	50.7	67.6
45-54	42.6	56.9	51.7	58.9	66.6	36.8	42.9	42.5	27.7	46.7
55-64	39.4	58.9	55.6	82.6	70.3	31.5	34.9	35.1	38.2	37.8
65 and over	72.6	79.6	71.6	71.8	57.3	28.6	50.7	31.0	40.0	53.3
Volunteer activities										
All ages	25.3	29.1	38.8	35.6	42.2	18.3	26.8	19.6	24.5	32.1
25-34	0.0	28.9	44.9	18.8	41.8	21.3	35.3	39.0	0.0	32.9
35-44	27.7	50.6	46.8	28.6	10.3	34.7	45.0	27.0	25.3	25.5
45-54	30.7	35.2	40.2	21.2	47.5	8.9	30.7	14.0	30.0	37.1
55-64	34.9	28.0	37.2	55.1	65.0	13.9	5.0	14.2	22.7	32.9
65 and over	28.4	18.6	34.1	41.9	39.3	18.1	21.5	17.7	32.3	29.0

TABLE 7. PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN INVOLVED IN JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS AND VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES, BY AGE AND RITUAL OBSERVANCE INDEX

Age and labor force status	Organizational membership		Volunteer activities	
	Jewish	Non-Jewish	Jewish	Non-Jewish
All ages				
High	68.1	35.3	47.3	20.4
Medium	63.8	46.6	37.9	24.1
Low	49.3	39.9	19.9	25.3
Age 25-34				
High	63.6	19.1	48.7	13.4
Medium	40.5	62.7	44.1	38.5
Low	15.0	33.7	6.6	22.8
Age 35-44				
High	70.6	62.9	44.8	32.3
Medium	65.4	63.3	40.1	30.4
Low	45.4	52.3	17.6	34.2
Age 45-54				
High	63.5	30.8	63.4	23.4
Medium	55.4	30.6	33.3	22.5
Low	46.0	42.2	27.3	29.3
Age 55-64				
High	72.5	32.0	69.7	29.0
Medium	64.9	39.0	38.6	15.3
Low	48.5	32.7	28.6	17.1
Age 65 and over				
High	71.9	32.0	34.7	12.2
Medium	76.1	40.1	35.2	22.9
Low	64.2	38.5	18.2	23.3

TABLE 8. PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN INVOLVED IN JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS AND VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES, BY AGE AND ATTENDANCE AT RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Age and attendance	Organizational membership		Volunteer activities	
	Jewish	Non-Jewish	Jewish	Non-Jewish
All ages				
Often	77.0	41.4	62.6	27.6
Sometimes	71.0	45.2	39.0	25.8
Seldom	43.4	37.6	19.7	22.2
Age 25-34				
Often	57.0	34.7	75.1	16.3
Sometimes	62.5	49.7	28.5	33.2
Seldom	20.1	40.6	18.6	30.2
Age 35-44				
Often	70.1	68.3	50.1	26.8
Sometimes	71.7	65.4	42.3	31.2
Seldom	39.6	47.6	15.3	35.7
Age 45-54				
Often	100.0	43.9	100.0	100.0
Sometimes	64.7	30.5	45.0	23.6
Seldom	37.6	38.4	20.3	17.5
Age 55-64				
Often	81.0	22.1	79.7	21.1
Sometimes	68.1	35.1	42.2	22.9
Seldom	46.4	39.4	32.8	19.0
Age 65 and over				
Often	87.9	36.9	53.6	27.0
Sometimes	81.6	42.8	32.7	23.2
Seldom	55.5	33.2	17.5	19.0

playing an important role in furthering career aspirations. Relatively high rates of non-Jewish memberships among working women may also be the result of the wider and more intense contacts with non-Jews that participation in the labor force fosters.

A number of studies have found a strong, direct relation between involvement in organizational activities and religious commitment as measured by attendance at religious services (Cohen, 1983; Hodgkinson and Weitzman, 1988). Whether other aspects of religious identification have similar effects seems not to have been investigated. The present study explores this relation by considering three aspects of Jewish identification: years of Jewish education, a simple index of ritual observance,¹ and attendance at religious services.²

All three measures of Jewish identification had a strong, direct relation to rates of affiliation with Jewish organizations. This was true of almost every age group. Women with 10 or more years of Jewish education had almost consistently higher levels of membership than did women with less Jewish education (Table 6). Women with a high level of religious observance, as measured by the index, had substantially higher levels of membership than those who scored low on the index (Table 7). Women who attended religious services with some regularity were far more likely to be members of Jewish organizations than those who attended seldom or never (Table 8). As indicated by these bivariate relations, therefore, religious identification is an important element in ensuring Jewish organization membership.

The same relation does not characterize affiliation with non-Jewish organizations. In general, the pattern for each of the religious identification variables is quite mixed; in fact, some tendency appears for lower levels of identification to be associated with higher rates of non-Jewish affiliation. Apparently, and not surprisingly, different motivations affect whether or not women join Jewish or non-Jewish groups.

Number of Memberships

While analysis of membership rates can provide some insights into factors affecting involvement with the organized Jewish and non-Jewish communities, the number of organizations to which women belong can provide a better measure of the level of involvement. The women who belong to Jewish organizations on average hold 3.1 memberships;³ almost one-third belong to only one organization, and one-third belong to four or more. The number of affiliations is somewhat lower for non-Jewish organizations, averaging 2.8, with 38 percent holding only one membership, while only 21 percent hold four or more. In order to assess the relative importance of the full array of characteristics on number of memberships, multivariate regression analysis is used.

The regression model includes age, marital status, education, presence of children, labor force status, and three measures of religious identification—years of Jewish education, level of ritual observance, and attendance at religious services.⁴ Since high levels of identification are affected by a number of characteristics, a regression analysis is particularly useful for controlling all the variables simultaneously to estimate the net effects of each on membership. Also included as an independent variable is the number of non-Jewish organization memberships in order to test whether women are joining non-Jewish organizations at the expense of Jewish ones. The regressions are carried out separately for Jewish and non-Jewish memberships. The standardized *beta* coefficients are shown in Table 9 to indicate the relative effects of all the variables.

With all characteristics controlled, some of the relations identified for levels of organizational membership through bivariate analysis become insignificant; others are reinforced. Both multivariate controls and the difference in the measure used here (number of memberships) are factors in explaining the differences in the patterns.

Age and education both have a significant, positive effect on the number of Jewish organizational memberships; in fact, age is the strongest predictor of number of affiliations. Number of young children at home makes only a slight difference, although the presence of children age 6 to 17 tends to depress memberships slightly. Consistent with the findings on rates of membership, being single, divorced, or widowed depresses number of affiliations compared with being married. These findings of the relation between marital status and membership are particularly important. Increasing numbers of Jewish women can be expected to become widows as the population ages; rates of divorce among the Jewish population, while still low, continue to rise; and the percentage of unmarried Jewish women has increased considerably in the 1980s, especially at the younger ages. All of these changes lead to

TABLE 9. REGRESSION ON NUMBER OF JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIPS (STANDARDIZED BETA COEFFICIENTS)

	Jewish	Non-Jewish
Age	0.274 ^a	0.079 ^a
Education	0.082 ^a	0.147 ^a
Marital status ^b		
Never married	-0.038 ^a	-0.002
Divorced	-0.096 ^a	-0.004
Widowed	-0.031	-0.082 ^a
Children under 6	0.012	0.038 ^a
Children 6-17	-0.007	0.045 ^a
Labor force status ^c		
Working full-time	-0.073 ^a	0.130 ^a
Working part-time	-0.054 ^a	0.004
Years of Jewish education ^d		
1-3 years	0.033 ^a	0.016
4-6 years	0.010	0.077 ^a
7-9 years	0.059 ^a	0.016
10 or more years	0.132 ^a	0.090 ^a
Ritual observance index ^e		
High	0.029	-0.069 ^a
Medium	0.031 ^a	-0.003
Attendance at religious services ^f		
Often	0.210 ^a	0.063 ^a
Sometimes	0.233 ^a	0.042 ^a
Number of non-Jewish memberships	0.232 ^a	-
R ²	.241	.073

a. Significant at $P < .01$

b. Reference group is married.

c. Reference group is not in the labor force.

d. Reference group is none.

e. Reference group is low.

f. Reference group is seldom.

lower rates of membership. If Jewish organizations expect to maintain or enhance their levels of membership, these segments of the Jewish population will have to be taken into consideration.

Surprisingly, the net impact of labor force status on number of memberships is the opposite of that indicated so far. The bivariate analysis indicated that being in the labor force actually enhanced the rate of non-Jewish membership in general, and among the younger women, Jewish membership as well. The regression model indicates, however, that being in the labor force, and especially working full-time, significantly lowers the number of memberships compared to women not in the labor force. This finding suggests that although women working full time are as likely as those not in the labor force to join at least one Jewish organization, they do not join as many. With more constraints on their time, these women are more selective about the number of organizations in which they hold membership. The data therefore support generally held assumptions that women's entry into the labor force has weakened their involvement in organizational activities.

The variables associated with Jewish identification all have a positive relation to memberships. Any amount of Jewish education increases membership compared with having no such education, but having 10 or more years has a particularly strong impact. Scoring medium or high on the ritual observance index also results in positive coefficients, but the impact is not as great as for the other identificational

measures. Finally, attendance sometimes or often at religious services is strongly related to number of memberships, compared to attending seldom.

As indicated earlier, over the past quarter century, some decline has been noted in rates of membership in Jewish organizations while membership in non-Jewish ones has risen sharply. Concern has been expressed that a substitution effect was taking place and that increasing assimilation, as indicated by rates of membership in non-Jewish organizations, was responsible for the change. To test whether a substitution was indeed taking place, the number of non-Jewish organizational memberships was included in the regression model. The results indicate a positive relation: the number of non-Jewish affiliations is associated with the number of Jewish affiliations. If a substitution effect were occurring, the relation would have been negative. The positive relation suggests that women who join organizations are likely to do so regardless of whether they have a Jewish or secular sponsorship. Women do not allocate a set number of memberships, but allow other factors to determine how many organizations they will join.

The earlier analysis of percentage of women who affiliate with organizations suggested that the factors influencing membership in non-Jewish organizations differ from those affecting Jewish organizational affiliation. A similar finding emerges from the regression analysis on number of affiliations. Children serve to increase the number of memberships. Age, with other characteristics controlled, becomes positive, but less so than for Jewish memberships. Marital status makes little difference, except for being widowed, which depresses number of affiliations compared to being married. More important, full-time work is associated with a strong positive effect on memberships, reinforcing the assumption that belonging to organizations is viewed by many women as complementing career goals and personal development.

Strong Jewish identification was not expected to enhance the number of memberships in non-Jewish organizations as it did for Jewish affiliations, and ritual observance has a negative relation to the number of non-Jewish affiliations. Both Jewish education and attendance at religious services have a positive impact, net of other variables, often significantly so. Perhaps these variables also serve as indicators of propensity for community involvement beyond that sponsored by the religious community.

Volunteer Activity

Although organization membership can provide considerable insights into the factors that effect women's affiliation with the formal community structure, it can not indicate the intensity of involvement. Since belonging to organizations may simply be a matter of paying dues, with little demand on members' time, family and work commitments do not necessarily impinge on whether a women joins an organization or with how many she becomes affiliated. Furthermore, organizational membership may not necessarily indicate local community involvement, since many organizations are national in scope and membership and do not require extensive local activity. A more sensitive measure of the impact of these variables on

involvement with the community structure may be volunteer activities since these demand active participation on the part of the volunteer.

The Rhode Island survey asked respondents whether they participated in Jewish and non-Jewish volunteer activities, and how many hours each month they devoted to them. The analysis that follows will use the information obtained from this set of questions and the same characteristics as were used for organizational membership to assess the factors determining whether or not women are involved with the organized Jewish and non-Jewish voluntary sectors. Number of hours volunteered will then be assessed through regression analysis.

Rates of Voluntarism

Among all women respondents, only 34 percent indicated that they participated in Jewish voluntary activities and even fewer—25 percent—in non-Jewish ones (Table 1). Rates of voluntarism were therefore appreciably lower than rates of membership, reflecting the different nature of the two types of activities. The percentage of women who volunteered varied directly by age for Jewish activities, rising from a low of 18 percent of the 18-24 year old women to 45 percent of those aged 55-64; it dropped to 28 percent for the oldest group. The variation was much less pronounced for non-Jewish activities, and it peaked much earlier. It rose from 26 percent of the youngest group to 32 percent of those aged 35-44, and then declined continuously to 22 percent for the aged. The age patterns for voluntarism in Jewish activities thus differ from those for organizational membership for which levels increased regularly with age. For non-Jewish memberships and volunteer activities, the inverted U-shaped relation to age was similar.

Being married is not always associated with the highest rates of volunteering; in several age groups, those who are not currently married have higher rates of volunteering than do the married (Table 2). This mixed pattern is even more true for non-Jewish volunteer activity than for Jewish, suggesting that, like organizational membership, Jewish activities are somewhat more geared to married women. Also, like organization membership, rates of volunteer activity show only a weak relation to number of pre-school and school age children (Table 3). Nonetheless, rates of voluntarism are generally somewhat higher for women who have children at home than for those who do not.

The pattern for rates of voluntarism by level of education is very similar to that for organizational membership (Table 4). Rates are consistently higher among the more educated than for those with only high school education, both for Jewish and non-Jewish activities. The exception is among women with post-graduate education compared to those with a college degree only. These highly educated women may be more concentrated in professional careers that place constraints on the amount of time available for volunteer activity. In fact, although labor force participation in general may be thought to restrict volunteer activity, this is not entirely the case. Part-time workers overall have the highest rates of voluntarism, and among younger women, full-time workers also volunteer more than those not in the labor force (Table 5). The higher education that women have received in recent decades and their

greater participation in employment outside the home therefore does not, in general, seem to have any strong effect on rates of voluntarism.

Previous analysis indicated that strength of religious identification was directly related to levels of membership in Jewish organizations. A similar pattern appears for volunteering in Jewish activities. For each of the three indicators used, high levels of religious identification are strongly associated with higher levels of voluntarism in Jewish activities (Table 7). And as was also true of organization memberships, these patterns do not characterize non-Jewish activities, for which the reverse association is generally the case.

On the whole, rates of volunteer membership are therefore sensitive to a number of sociodemographic and religious characteristics of women, but not always in the hypothesized direction. Number of children at home seems to have little direct effect on volunteering, while labor force participation enhances voluntarism, especially for those who work part time. The data also clearly show that the factors affecting patterns of volunteering are different for Jewish and non-Jewish activities.

Number of Hours Volunteered

A final indicator of intensity of involvement with the Jewish and non-Jewish community is number of hours volunteered. Respondents who were asked how many hours each month they devoted to volunteering, indicated an average of 13 hours a month in Jewish activities and 10 hours in non-Jewish ones. Half of the women who volunteered in Jewish activities did so for at least 10 hours each month; 40 percent spent such amounts of time in non-Jewish activities. As with the number of organizational memberships, to obtain a fuller assessment of the factors affecting the amount of time spent in volunteer work, a regression model is used (Table 10). The same independent variables are used here as in the earlier regression analysis.

When hours devoted to Jewish volunteer activities are considered, both age and education have a positive, significant impact. This finding is consistent with the earlier findings on rates of voluntarism. By contrast, being in a "not married" category lowers the number of hours volunteered compared to those who are married, a relation parallel to that found for Jewish organizational memberships. Having young children at home has no significant impact on hours volunteered, suggesting that the time constraints involved in caring for children do not affect voluntarism. Nor does working full-time have any significant impact. On the other hand, part-time workers volunteer more hours than those not in the labor force.

Almost every dimension of the Jewish identificational variables has a significant, positive impact on hours volunteered. The major exception is 1 to 3 years of Jewish education compared to none, where the effect is negative. Cohen's (1983) observation that religious commitment is associated with levels of affiliation therefore also holds for amount of time devoted to Jewish volunteer activities.

As for voluntarism, the number of hours volunteered in non-Jewish activities was also entered into the equation. Again, number of hours in Jewish and non-Jewish activities are strongly and positively related. The active involvement of women in non-Jewish volunteer activities does not detract from the hours they devote to Jewish voluntarism.

TABLE 10. REGRESSION ON NUMBER OF HOURS TO JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES (STANDARDIZED BETA COEFFICIENTS)

	Jewish	Non-Jewish
Age	0.076 ^a	-0.072 ^a
Education	0.057 ^a	0.051 ^a
Marital status ^b		
Never married	-0.028	0.059 ^a
Divorced	-0.052 ^a	0.004
Widowed	-0.041 ^a	0.119 ^a
Children under 6	0.007	0.005
Children 6-17	0.005	0.035 ^a
Labor force status ^c		
Working full-time	-0.028 ^a	-0.061 ^a
Working part-time	0.061 ^a	-0.080 ^a
Years of Jewish education ^d		
1-3 years	-0.058 ^a	0.044 ^a
4-6 years	0.094 ^a	-0.010
7-9 years	0.039 ^a	0.069 ^a
10 or more years	0.056 ^a	0.038 ^a
Ritual observance index ^e		
High	0.077 ^a	-0.073 ^a
Medium	0.051 ^a	-0.066 ^a
Attendance at religious services ^f		
Often	0.030	-0.032
Sometimes	0.152 ^a	0.030
Number of non-Jewish volunteer hours	0.218 ^a	-
R ²	.130	.033

- a. Significant at P<.01
- b. Reference group is married.
- c. Reference group is not in the labor force.
- d. Reference group is none
- e. Reference group is low.
- f. Reference group is seldom.

When non-Jewish volunteer hours are examined a somewhat different pattern emerges than characterized Jewish volunteer activities. Among the sociodemographic characteristics being considered, only having children over age 6, being never-married, and being widowed have a significant positive effect on hours volunteered. Most other characteristics have a weak, generally negative impact, although both full-time and part-time work have a significant negative effect on voluntarism compared to not being in the labor force.

The Jewish identificational variables show a much less consistent pattern than for Jewish volunteer hours. Jewish education most often has a positive relation to non-Jewish voluntarism, while medium or high scores on the ritual observance index show a negative effect, as does often attending religious services.

Conclusions

Since the early 1970s, American Jewish women have participated in the dramatic changes characterizing American women in general, and have often been in the forefront of those changes. Jewish women have, for example, been among the leaders of the feminist movement in the United States. They have also been among the first to lower their fertility, and they have participated equally with their non-Jewish

sisters in entering the labor force. They also have attained exceptionally high levels of education. Finally, many are spending more of their lifetimes in an unmarried state—single for longer periods while young, divorced at middle ages, and widowed when elderly.

These developments have important significance for the organized Jewish community. On the one hand, many of the traditional organizational activities no longer hold strong appeal for highly educated, career-oriented Jewish women. Concurrently, their shifting personal goals may make active participation in the organized Jewish community less attractive than it had been in the past. They also have quite different constraints on their time than was previously true. All of these factors can be seen as being inimical to holding organization memberships and to engaging extensively in volunteer activities.

Concurrently, many of these same factors may argue for exactly the opposite behavior. Increasing feminism may make it desirable for women to participate in organizations that allow them to share in the community power structure (Kosmin, 1989). Career goals may encourage memberships as providing entrees to networks that might otherwise be unavailable. And fewer children at home may remove some of the demands on women's time and allow more volunteer activity. The question then becomes one of whether these changing women's goals are best realized in Jewish or non-Jewish activities.

In beginning to answer this question it is important to distinguish between a variety of possible types of involvement in order to understand the dynamics at work. Rates of organization membership and number of such memberships tap a somewhat different dimension of involvement than do rates of voluntarism and number of hours volunteered. Distinctions must also be made between involvement in Jewish and non-Jewish activities. The data analyzed here suggest that, in fact, all of these factors are operating to some degree, either to enhance or diminish involvement.

When Jewish activities are considered, age and education are strongly and positively correlated with each of the dimensions of involvement discussed here. Contrary to expectations, however, the number of young children at home has little impact. More surprisingly, participation in the labor force, while having the expected negative effect on number of memberships in organizations, especially among full-time workers, has either a positive effect or none at all on rates of membership and on voluntarism.

The data also suggest that involvement in non-Jewish activities, either on the level of memberships or in terms of voluntary activities does not substitute for such involvement in Jewish activities. The two seem to reinforce each other, with women who are active in the Jewish sphere also being active in the non-Jewish one. Despite this strong relation, it is also true that Jewish women are more involved in the Jewish community at every level than they are in the non-Jewish one. In response to questions about the relative importance of Jewish versus non-Jewish activities, about half of the women indicated that they considered their Jewish activities more important than their non-Jewish ones (Goldscheider and Goldstein, 1988, p. 289 and 301). Within this overall pattern, however, it is important to recognize that younger women are more likely to consider Jewish and non-Jewish activities of equal importance and that 10 percent think their non-Jewish ones more important.

These judgments may be closely tied to those factors that seem to have the greatest impact on degree of involvement—measures of religious identification. Strong identification, whether measured by years of Jewish education, levels of ritual observance, or frequency of attendance at religious services, was positively and strongly related to involvement. Since high level of identification is more characteristic of older women than it is of younger ones, this helps to explain some of the observed differentials in involvement by age. Religious identification is apparently associated with values of community service and concern for the general welfare of both the Jewish and non-Jewish segments of the community. This is manifested in more organization memberships and in more hours of volunteer service, even though some aspects of religious identification may be quite time-consuming (carrying out the specific rituals and attending services) and therefore possibly limit the amount of time women have available for community activities.

These data suggest, therefore, that the changing sociodemographic characteristics of Jewish women do not of themselves generally lead to lower involvement in the community at the associational and voluntary levels. If anything, higher levels of education and greater participation in the labor force may serve to increase such activities. What women's changing characteristics do suggest, however, is that community activities will need to provide stimulation and opportunities for self-expression if women are to continue to be attracted to them. The relatively high levels of membership and voluntarism of younger women in non-Jewish activities suggest that women may increasingly turn to the non-Jewish sector as their contact with non-Jews increases (as it does in the work place) and if their needs are not met within the Jewish community. In this respect, associational membership and volunteer activities may be sensitive indicators of increasing assimilation.

The strongest factor enhancing community involvement suggested by the data assessed in this paper and one that would lower assimilation is a high level of identification with the Jewish community (measured here by three religious identification variables). Efforts to foster such identification, coupled with a sensitivity to the changing interests and goals of Jewish women, should help enhance their involvement in the Jewish community. Whether men's involvement is determined by factors similar to those identified here as important for women remains to be tested. Both men and women are, of course, essential participants in ensuring the continued viability of the Jewish community's associational structure.

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Notes

1. The index was based on responses to questions regarding lighting Sabbath candles, buying kosher meat, using separate dishes for meat and dairy, and lighting Hanukah

candles. Responses were categorized as always, usually, sometimes, and never, and ranged from 1 (for always) to 4 (for never). The responses on the four variables were summed and respondents were scored high for scores of 4 through 7, medium for 8 through 12, and low for 13 through 16.

2. Attendance has been divided into three categories: seldom (special occasions or less), sometimes (a few times a year or once a month), and often (several times a month or more).
3. Because such a large proportion of women have no organizational affiliation, inclusion of memberships when computing averages reduces the average so much as to minimize observable differences.
4. Since these three measures of religious identification are correlated at only low levels, they are all included in the same regression equation.

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APPENDIX TABLE. SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF FEMALE RESPONDENTS, BY AGE (PERCENTAGES)

	All ages	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and over
Number of cases*	4,200	87	454	790	621	835	1,413
Marital status							
Never married	8.3	94.4	16.8	7.7	4.2	3.4	5.1
Married	63.6	5.6	79.1	77.8	77.7	75.5	40.5
Separated/divorced	7.6	-	4.1	13.7	15.7	7.8	2.3
Widowed	20.4	-	-	0.8	2.4	13.3	52.0
Education							
High school or less	30.0	20.2	14.2	12.6	17.1	31.6	49.9
Some college	18.9	31.4	8.9	15.7	21.3	21.7	20.4
College	24.7	31.4	36.9	24.9	30.0	28.3	15.9
Post graduate	25.5	16.9	40.0	46.2	31.5	18.4	11.3
Number of children under age 6 in household							
0	90.0	100.0	49.6	75.8	100.0	100.0	100.0
1	6.6	-	30.5	17.8	-	-	-
2	3.0	-	18.1	5.4	-	-	-
3 or more	0.4	-	1.8	1.0	-	-	-
Number of children age 6-17 in household							
0	82.7	100.0	81.6	35.2	81.4	99.0	92.4
1	8.9	-	13.5	27.5	13.0	1.0	0.6
2	6.7	-	4.9	29.3	4.3	-	-
3 or more	1.7	-	-	7.9	1.3	-	-
Labor force status							
Working full-time	32.6	27.9	45.1	48.3	51.5	35.7	10.0
Working part-time	16.5	17.8	23.8	23.4	20.3	15.4	9.2
Not in labor force	50.9	54.3	31.1	28.3	28.2	48.9	80.8
Years of Jewish education							
None	23.4	25.5	21.4	19.0	16.4	22.7	30.1
1-3 years	17.6	13.7	19.8	16.7	19.3	13.0	19.8
4-6 years	21.2	-	23.4	16.4	24.5	22.3	21.8
7-9 years	20.7	24.5	16.1	33.4	17.7	21.5	16.7
10 or more years	17.1	36.3	19.3	14.4	22.0	20.6	11.5
Ritual observance index							
High	24.2	25.6	19.4	22.0	17.5	31.0	25.9
Medium	38.7	25.2	39.1	51.1	39.1	36.6	32.9
Low	37.1	49.2	41.5	27.0	43.4	32.3	41.2
Attendance at religious services							
Often	16.3	19.1	15.5	18.0	7.1	18.2	18.2
Sometimes	35.5	34.6	18.5	50.1	39.7	39.8	27.4
Seldom	48.2	46.3	66.0	31.8	53.2	42.0	54.4

a. Since cases with missing data are excluded from the tabulations, not all women are included for every characteristic.