

Toward a Concept of Jewish Population Policy: Mechanisms of Population Change and Significant Interventions

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the light of current Jewish population trends in Israel and in the Diaspora, policy analyses and operational suggestions are urgently needed by decision-makers concerned with the facts, outlook and emerging challenges. In this paper we review some of the main relationships between major determinants and major consequences of demographic processes affecting contemporary Jewry. In addition we outline some mechanisms of action aimed at strengthening Jewish identification, and try to designate the main goals for Jewish population policies.

Two prominent areas need to be considered. On the one hand, the growing influences of globalization on Jewish life lay beyond the reach of Jewish corporate interventions. On the other hand, the internal process of socialization and intergenerational transmission of Jewish values and identity lend themselves to resolute interventions by the Jewish community.

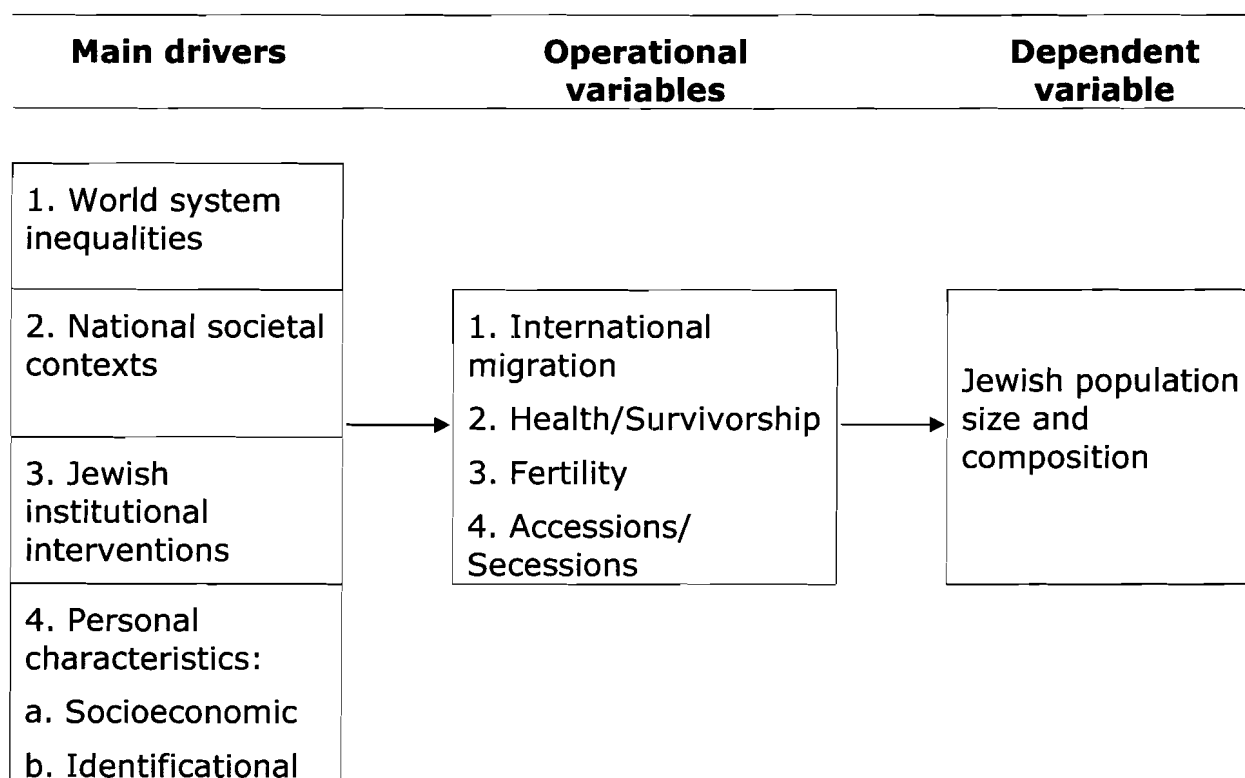
Main issues for policy evaluation and intervention touch upon Jewish identification, family patterns, socioeconomic change and the implications of demography for Israel's territorial definition in a prolonged situation of military and political conflict.

MECHANISMS OF POPULATION CHANGE

Drawing on the experience of the last several tens of years, the fundamental forces and stages that have influenced Jewish demographic change and population characteristics should be reconsidered in a more general perspective. This paper aims at outlining some initial ideas toward the possible development of a more coherent concept of Jewish population policy for Israel and for world Jewry.

The principal factors at work are illustrated in Figure 1 which outlines the main drivers of change, the intervening operational variables of population change, and the final product in terms of Jewish population size and composition. It may be noted that Jews may serve as a paradigm for the more general case of the demography of subpopulations whose existence and development over time is determined not only by demographic-biological factors, but also by cultural-ideational factors.

FIGURE 1. DETERMINANTS OF JEWISH POPULATION CHANGE



Four main operational variables that affect the eventual population size and composition are:

1. International migration (the balance of immigration and emigration);
2. Health and survivorship, affecting the death rate;
3. Fertility levels, affecting the birth rate; and
4. The balance of accessions to and secessions from the group (often, but not exclusively, dealt with under the heading of "conversions").

The main drivers of each of these components of demographic change tend to operate at both the broad aggregate (or macrosocial) level, and the individual (or microsocial) level. The ensuing changes prominently reflect:

1. Transformations in the global societal system, namely inequalities between different countries and regions in the world;
2. The context of each national society in which Jewish communities are located, including the mode of operating of the relationship between the majority of society and the Jewish part of it;
3. The various types of interventions enacted by the Jewish institutional system internationally and locally; and
4. The personal characteristics of individual Jews, namely their socioeconomic status and their cultural and identificational patterns.

In the following we briefly review each of these main components of population change, stressing the main changes that have emerged over the recent period and the main options for change that may be expected in the foreseeable future.

International Migration

To what extent are large Jewish migration waves, particularly *aliyah* to Israel, predictable? To be able to answer this question, one needs to assess the different factors that operate in such circumstances, the possible independent impact of each factor, and the final outcome due to the interplay of all factors. In historical perspective, the main factors at work have been:

1. *The intensity of pro-migration forces in response to the socioeconomic and political situation within the country of origin.* Periodical crises have disrupted the extant equilibrium between Jewish communities and the social environment in different countries at different times. This created the typical wavelike profile of Jewish international migration over the last century. In the FSU these forces gained momentum after the Six Day War and again since the end of the 1980s but eventually dissipated over time. Given the

current Jewish population distribution globally, the extent of these pushing forces is significantly more limited than in the past.

2. *The actual possibility to leave the country of origin.* Shifting policies in different countries, ranging from the FSU to Morocco, from Romania to Ethiopia, powerfully impacted on the possibilities of Jews to live.

3. *The availability of alternative destinations for Jewish migration.* Since 1948, Israel stands out with its open-door immigration policy, as against other countries that have been much more selective if not reluctant to receive large numbers of immigrants, including Jews. The U.S. policy of immigration quotas was especially significant in this regard since the early 1920s, during the immediate pre- and post-World War II period, and until the more recent changes in immigration regulations. Many other countries followed the U.S. example and strongly regulated immigration with powerfully limiting effects for Jewish migration. After several years of sustained "drop-out" of Jewish migrants who supposedly had left the Soviet Union directed to Israel, in 1989 the U.S. stopped granting automatic refugee status to Soviet nationals and a yearly quota of 40-50,000 was established for Jewish immigrants; in 1996 that quota was reduced to 20,000, reflecting a general reduction in the refugees quota. In recent years Germany and to some extent Canada have maintained comparatively more encouraging immigration policies. The economic incentives offered by Germany have been particularly significant, but in prospective German policies will tend to become more restrictive.

4. *The extent of involvement and the nature of the assistance provided by Israeli and international agencies.* Different bodies promoted, directed and supported Jewish migration, such as the Jewish Agency for Israel, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), and *Nativ*, the "Liaison Bureau" of Israel's government in the former Soviet Union (popularly known as *Lishkat Keshet*). Migration opportunities were comparatively more accessible to Jews in some countries than in others.

5. *The demographic, socioeconomic and sociocultural characteristics of the Jewish population.* These have tended to differently affect the propensity to emigrate, and the choice of country of destination. More frequent migration has usually involved both ends of the social ladder, including highly educated professionals and low status labor. The middle classes engaged in trade and tied to local capital investments have been less mobile when the opportunity existed and the most vulnerable when emigration became anyhow imperative. Israel has absorbed historically a disproportionate share of the needier and has consequently carried a higher burden in immigrant absorption.

6. *The quality of absorption and feedback by recent migrants.* Information about the success of their strive to integrate and start a new life sent back by immigrants to Israel, the U.S. and other main receiving countries to families and other social networks in the former countries of origin significantly affected the latter's decision-making about possible future migration.

7. *Finally, from the point of view of recipient countries, what counts is the number of immigrants who stay for good.* Net immigration is the total number of immigrants minus re-emigrants or return migrants. Net migration has tended to encompass a quite high share of total Jewish migration in historical experience. In the case of the former Soviet Union, the latter constitute a comparatively small share of total migrants. Those who return, or re-emigrate to a third country tend to display different socio-demographic characteristics from those who settle permanently.

Health and Survivorship

The general trend toward lower mortality and longer life expectancy constitutes a determinant of higher population growth and resilience. It can be roughly assessed that since World War II, every five calendar years Jewish life expectancy improved by one full year of life. It may be recalled that mortality and its reverse of survivorship reflect the variable incidence of several main types of negative agents:

1. Physical and chemical;
2. Bacteriological and epidemiological;
3. Psycho-social;
4. Genetic;
5. General degenerative processes related to ageing.

The absolute and respective incidence of these factors has greatly changed in the course of time. In particular the past dominance of bacteriological and epidemiological factors has been substituted by a growing relative incidence of heart and circulatory diseases and malignant neoplasms – at much higher levels of longevity. It can be expected that further therapy developments will help further reducing mortality levels. In the longer term, advances in genome research may produce beneficial effects on Jews among which incidence of genetic disease is quite high (though not frequent in absolute terms).

Fertility

Fertility levels are governed by a combination of economic and cultural factors, mediated by several demographic-biological factors. Fertility variables can be organized in a five-tier sequence. Toward the end of the causal chain, *proximate determinants* – the immediately preceding bio-demographic causal factors of fertility – instrumentally affect the chance of initiating a new pregnancy and of completing one with a live birth:

1. The frequency of couple formation, mostly through marriage but increasingly also through other informal arrangements;
2. The level of natural fertility, expressing the biological capacity to procreate and mostly tied to health and bio-physical factors;
3. The amount and success of fertility control before a pregnancy initiates or before it is terminated.

Interventions to enhance or depress the effects of each of the proximate determinants reflect *household-level* or *micro-socioeconomic* strategies. These synthesize:

1. The value-oriented *desirability* of children in general and of a child of specific parity in particular;
2. The cost-related *feasibility* of childbearing and child rearing; and
3. The household *availability* of relevant means, resources and tools.

The dilemmas and negotiations of individual households inherent in the potential conflicts between identity and sentiment, on the one hand, and economic rationality, on the other hand, are better evaluated in their *community context* – the third explanatory level. Perceptions broadly shared with one's close environment tend to influence individual family growth behaviors. The role of community influences is especially important in a sociocultural environment diverse such as typically observed across Jewish communities. In this respect five groups of factors call for special attention:

1. *Traditional culture and organization*, or a group's religious and social norms concerning fertility as well as community frameworks and institutions established for implementing those norms, is a natural source of inter-group differences. Traditional Judaism, Islam and Christianity, each in their own distinctive ways, carry an explicit pro-natal stance. In traditional Judaism, more explicitly than in other religious frameworks, the principle goes together with definite prescriptions affecting each of fertility's proximate variables. Traditional Judaism also gives high priority in children's prolonged religious education, but community investments to the same effect may reduce its cost to individual families. Community mechanisms of communication, social control and sanction explain why the more religious individuals generally conform more strictly to each religious group's declared

fertility precepts.

2. *Minority/majority status* reflects past situations of actual legal discrimination or, more relevant to the contemporary experience, community-based subjective perceptions of dependence/dominance relative to the majority of society or other minorities within it. Such perceptions may psychologically affect group propensities to expand or restrain. Minorities may feel pressured to concentrate on the higher quality of fewer children to overcome the odds of possible discrimination. Minorities may also consciously try to maximize their natural increase as a mechanism to expand their share of the total population. In Israel, the latter may be the case for communities that feel their lifestyle endangered, such as the *Haredim*, or whose advocacy for political goals requires the support of numbers, such as the Palestinians.

3. *Social class stratification*, namely occupational status and specialization, implies significant differences in perceived interests and access to resources. Shared perceptions of the role of children as potential providers or dependents tend to generate widely different strategies of family growth. Other things being equal, social mobility of individuals within a subpopulation or of a whole subpopulation relative to the rest of society may translate into significant fertility change.

4. *Knowledge* obtained through formal education or other channels affects fertility especially via community level awareness of fertility control opportunities and understanding of their mode of operation. In this respect, it would be mistaken to equate religious traditionalism with lack of information. Traditionalism in contemporary societies tends to shift from repudiation of modernity to selectively choosing from modernity those elements compatible with or even supportive of traditional goals – including ways and means to increase fertility.

5. *Biological constraints*, such as inherited diseases and other health-related factors, often tied to strict community homogamy, affected fertility differentials in the past and may still exert minor effects in contemporary more open and heterogamic societies.

National or collective policy interventions provide a fourth explanatory level. Israel's social policies do reflect some general concern with family formation and growth (regardless of the citizens' religion or ethnicity). Means for birth control, while not encouraged are easily available. Abortion is strictly regulated but feasible through public health facilities. The actual impact of Israel's pro-birth stance tends to be moderate and mostly felt by specific subpopulations. Among these public interventions:

1. *Direct governmental provisions* such as transfer payments (allowances to children below 18) pertain to all relevant households. The Israeli Social

Security system offers moderately benign provisions to working women in the case of maternity. Comparatively easy availability of child-care and educational facilities is a facilitating (or rather not a preventing) factor in family growth in Israel. The high cost of housing is the main constraint perceived by families wishing to increase their number of children.

2. *Indirect governmental provisions* are especially significant at the community level. Collective exemption from otherwise universal, three-year compulsory military service applies in Israel to Muslim and Christian Arabs (though not to the Druze community), as well as to the majority of the *Haredi* Jewish population. Military exemption facilitates lower ages at marriage and a longer exposure to the chance of childbearing. Moreover, transfer payments at the community level, in particular public financing of community-specific educational networks or housing projects may significantly reduce the given community's cost of children.

3. *Non-governmental provisions* of a similar nature may derive from the intervention of groups and agencies from Diasporas abroad, whether Jewish or Palestinian, or from other private sources of cultural and political support locally. The main effect on fertility of relevant services and subsidies provided operates, again, through reducing the cost of children.

A fifth and broader explanatory level reflects the continual flow of civilization, namely political, socioeconomic, cultural and technological change subsumed under the general definition of *modernization*. Modernization's enhanced *global effects* on local populations operate through diffused media and communication networks. Broad transformations of macro-economic patterns, standards of living, contents and boundaries of community identities and individual *mentalités* may significantly affect demographic patterns. The comparative evidence points to predominantly lowering effects on fertility levels. However, technological advances are of special interest inasmuch a previous generation of scientific research greatly enhanced fertility control, while more recent advances have focused on overcoming fecundity impairments.

Accessions and Secessions

At first sight, the pace of accessions to Judaism is governed by the religious authorities who are directly involved in decision-making about acceptance of candidates to conversion. Conversion itself can normatively occur only after a certain formal *rite de passage* has occurred. However it should be noted that in today's Jewish world, especially in the U.S., joining a Jewish community is often the product of a free act of choice not sanctioned by any formal ceremony. Such cases obviously cannot be recognized by the

religious authorities but nevertheless constitute a large share of the total joiners.

The quest for conversion reflects complex motives among the potential candidates among which the main include:

1. Intellectual curiosity and spiritual needs in a general context of search for meaning;
2. Interpersonal relations and the willingness to unify the cultural-religious composition and style of the household following or in the prospect of a marriage among two people born in different religions;
3. Socioeconomic needs and a perception that conversion is likely to induce possible advantages.

In turn, these motivations are in all likelihood related to the candidates' personal characteristics, including their demographic profile, socioeconomic status, and cultural background.

Formal conversion procedures are conditional upon a period of formal instruction, which necessarily must follow a propensity to join. Such decision reflects evaluation by potential candidates of various factors including:

1. The social acceptability of contemplated change;
2. The availability of conversion frameworks;
3. The expected degree of difficulty to be overcome;
4. The cost of the whole procedure, including missed benefits during the period of instruction.

In turn the religious authority's decisions reflect a number of main factors:

1. The conceptual (Halakhic) framework out of which the specific authority operates;
2. The variable leniency standards for admission by different authorities;
3. The authorities' stereotypes about the candidates (such as having different standards for Ethiopian vs. Russian candidates);
4. The candidates' learning achievements during their instruction period – which in turn reflect the candidates' characteristics and their motives.

One interesting and evolving question concerns the extent to which Jewish religious authorities are directly or indirectly influenced by the policy assumptions and decisions of lay Jewish institutions. In the case of Israel legislative, executive, and judiciary agencies have periodically intervened on controversial issues in relation to the Law of Return and the Law of Conversion. In the case of Jews in the Diaspora decisions there is no central

Jewish lay authority and a wide range of decisions are taken by volunteer organizations.

Mutual Influences

Each of the different main drivers interacts to a greater or lesser extent with each of the operational variables of population change. The respective degrees of influence can be assessed in the light of the experience of recent years (see Figure 2), and can provide a guideline concerning reasonable expectations for the future.

FIGURE 2. INTERCONNECTIONS BETWEEN MAIN CAUSAL DETERMINANTS AND MAIN SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROCESSES

Main drivers	Influences on:			
	International migration	Health/ Survivorship	Fertility	Accessions/ Secessions
World system inequalities	Most significant	Significant	Moderate	Moderate
National society contexts	Significant	Significant	Significant	Moderate
Jewish institutional interventions	Significant	Moderate	Significant	Most significant
Personal characteristics:				
Socioeconomic	Significant	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Identificational	Moderate	Moderate	Most significant	Significant

Among the strongest connections detectable, some reflect forces out of the reach of the Jewish institutional system, while others appear to be within the reach of community interventions. Among the main interactions:

1. The stimulating effects of global system inequalities on the pace and direction of international migration: these have been at the origin of the

most striking variations on the configuration of world Jewry during the second half of the 20th century.

2. The nature of Jewish institutional interventions on the pace of accessions to Judaism: the Jewish status of entire communities has been decided by the variable rulings of religious authorities in Israel and in other countries.

3. The effect of religiosity on fertility levels: the intensity of personal Jewish identity appears to be by far the best predictor of Jewish fertility variation (also incorporating the effects of gains and losses due to out-marriage).

Several other significant effects causally relate main drivers to population variables. In particular one should note the following important effects:

1. World system inequalities affect health and survivorship chances in different parts of the world. It should be mentioned, though that nearly all most Jews today live out of the reach of crisis-stricken areas.

2. National contexts significantly intervene on international migration propensities, health care opportunities, and fertility incentives.

3. Jewish institutional interventions are highly visible in the assistance provided to international migrants and may significantly affect the cost of children and fertility levels.

4. Personal characteristics tend to significantly affect – on the socioeconomic side – the propensities to international migration, and – on the identificational side – the propensities to accession and secession.

The development and transmission of Jewish identification, which operates as a significant factor in Jewish population trends, needs in turn to be considered as the dependent variable of a long chain of intervening influences. Some of the relevant relationships are summarily dealt with in the following section.

SIGNIFICANT INTERVENTIONS

General Challenges

The current Jewish population trends and prospects need to be taken into account in any attempts to consider the future course of Jewish affairs. Policy planning needs to reasonably evaluate how current and expected population trends will affect the future of the Jews as a collective and as individuals wherever they are. Two quite different sets of issues stand at the center of an agenda aimed at monitoring and, where possible, strengthening the global Jewish population balance sheet.

Where as in most Diaspora communities Jews confront minority status, their changing socioeconomic, political and cultural circumstances largely depend on trends and interests of the majority. The challenge is how to preserve the sense of a cohesive and meaningful Jewish community while enjoying the whole gamut of creative opportunities offered by open and non-hostile societies such as those in which Jews mostly live in major Western countries. From a demographic point of view, this implies that those who wish to be part of the Jewish way of life be persuaded that a cultural collectivity cannot survive in the long term without the primary biological foundations of family and children. A related challenge is how to pierce the surface and reach those who do not bother or do not want to belong in order to revive in them a spark of historical memory and mutual responsibility, if not a sense of pride and mission.

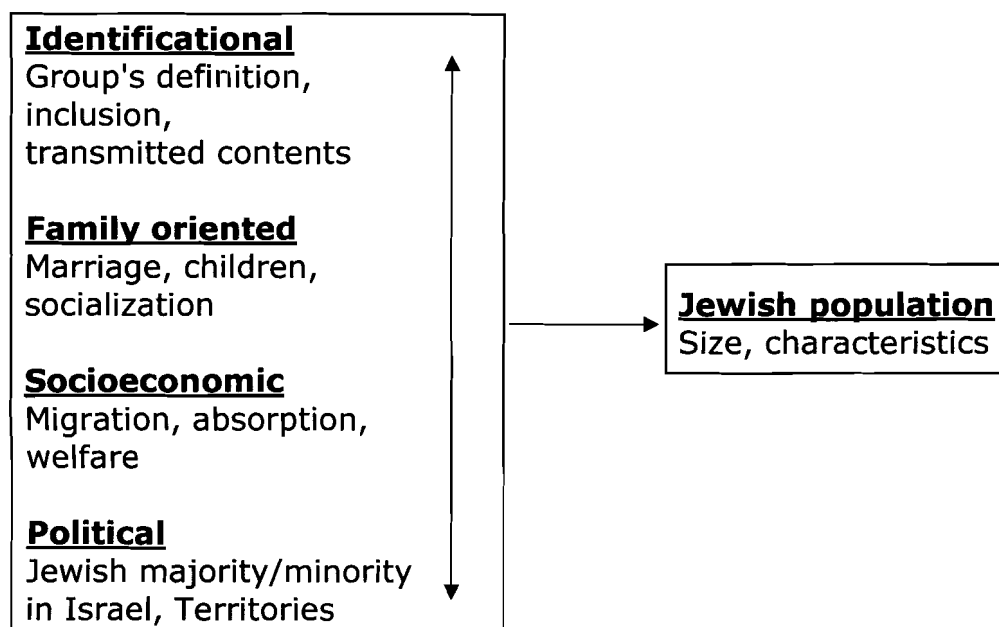
The main challenge in Israel is how a clearly defined Jewish majority can be preserved among the total population so that the character of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state can be maintained and transmitted. Differential growth rates, population composition and territorial configurations need to be taken into account when envisaging possible solutions to the conflict. Israel's vested interest from a demographic point of view is to encourage possible, legitimate social processes that might be conducive to reducing the existing gaps in the pace of growth and the emerging quantitative unbalances between rival ethnoreligious groups. Existing interconnections between the security situation, the economy, international migration and trends affecting family patterns and the Jewish and Israeli identity of Israelis should be thoroughly examined. Likewise, the costs inherent in achieving these goals must be fully appreciated in order to develop effective long-term strategies.

Intervention Goals

Figure 3 summarizes the main current Jewish population policy concerns. Future global and local Jewish population size and characteristics will depend on a variety of factors: identificational, family oriented,

socioeconomic, political and cultural, each of which may directly affect the outcome while standing in mutual interaction with the others.

FIGURE 3. ILLUSTRATIONS OF MAIN JEWISH POPULATION POLICY CONCERNS



More specific Jewish population policy goals should consider the following aspects:

- *The global system* should be monitored to shed more insights into possible future Jewish migrations and the prospective growth or diminution of Jewish populations in individual countries. A better set of indicators constantly monitoring the quality of Jewish material and cultural environment in different countries might help to better forecast the future volume and direction of Jewish international migration.
- Rescue, assistance to, and resettling of *Jewish international migration* remains a central concern at the beginning of the 21st century as it has been over the whole of the 19th and 20th centuries. Understanding why *aliyah* and other Jewish migrations are higher or lower than expected in certain countries is an essential prerequisite to policy planning.
- Extensive *geographical mobility* between and within major urban areas – a significant factor in Jewish community affiliation – calls for careful evaluation and planning of the territorial location of Jewish community services.

- Several decades of intensive social mobility have revolutionized the Jews' socioeconomic profile. Trends in Israel's *economy and labor force* and especially employment, welfare and equal access to resources should be monitored, as a fair distribution of resources – to the extent that this is feasible – and control of crucial productive sectors are fundamentally related to national stability. The latter is necessary if societal unrest and large scale emigration are to be prevented.
- Changes in *Jewish family patterns* are a major topic for assessment and new policy approaches. With the input of sociologists and social psychologists a serious survey should be undertaken of marriage and family related attitudes and behaviors among the growing pool of young unmarried adults in Israel and in the Diaspora. Facing high frequencies of out-marriage in the Diaspora, the role of child and young adult formal and informal Jewish education in shaping Jewish identification needs to be carefully evaluated.
- A critical review is needed of the prospects for affecting and sustaining *Jewish birth rates* in Israel and in the Diaspora. Policy instruments can perhaps affect the statistical equivalent of one-half of a child per family, which multiplied by millions of households over tens of years equals several millions of people. The possible role of social service, financial and value-oriented incentives in affecting fertility – particularly at medium parities such as the 3rd or 4th child – should be better understood and made available to a broad Jewish public whose social norms are still significantly family oriented.
- One important consequence of the recent family patterns is the creation of a growing pool of non-Jewish children, grandchildren and other household mates of Jews. A major policy issue relates to the question of how to bring children of *out-married couples* into the mainstream of Jewish society, particularly in Israel. The issue should also be tackled of the possible role of relevant institutions such as Israel's Chief Rabbinate regarding the hundreds of thousands of non-Jewish Israeli immigrants mostly from the former Soviet Union but also from Ethiopia and other countries, and the modes of their incorporation within the Jewish sectors of Israeli society. If it is true that the minority tends to conform to the majority of society, while in the Diaspora it is not easy to stop Jewish identificational losses, in Israel it would probably be possible to perform much larger scale *giyur* (conversion) of those who seriously wish to join Judaism.
- Jewish communities worldwide should continue monitoring the effectiveness of their different *Jewish educational programs*, full time and part time, formal and informal, in shaping and developing an attractive and durable Jewish identity among the younger generation. New solutions should be developed for those sections of the community that would like to give

their children a Jewish education but either do not find in today's system curricular options to their liking or cannot afford the cost.

- The issue of growing *identificational gaps* within the Jewish collective along religious-non religious and Israel-Diaspora directions calls for considerate efforts aimed at creating an enhanced sense of internal coherence and a dialogue respectful of differences. Lesser demographic gaps between sectors and more homogeneous Jewish population growth might follow.
- Demography is deeply intertwined with *the Palestinian-Israeli conflict*. Differential Jewish and Arab growth rates and population composition need to be taken into account when envisaging the conflict's continuing implications and possible political solutions. One of the considerations which should be given significant weight when determining the permanent boundaries is the requirement to preserve *a viable Jewish majority* in the State of Israel.
- It is imperative that in the evaluation of these problems and in the search for appropriate solutions, the global picture of world Jewry is considered because of the *mutual dependency* and *commonality of interests* that ties together Israel and Diaspora. This is the main reason why Jewish population issues should be constantly kept under observation both on the local and on the global scale.

Intervention Mechanisms

A smaller Jewish community, even if it succeeds at preserving its own high human capital quality, will face greater challenges in its competition within an expanding, diverse, and assertive total population. Two overarching policy issues emerging from these trends concern:

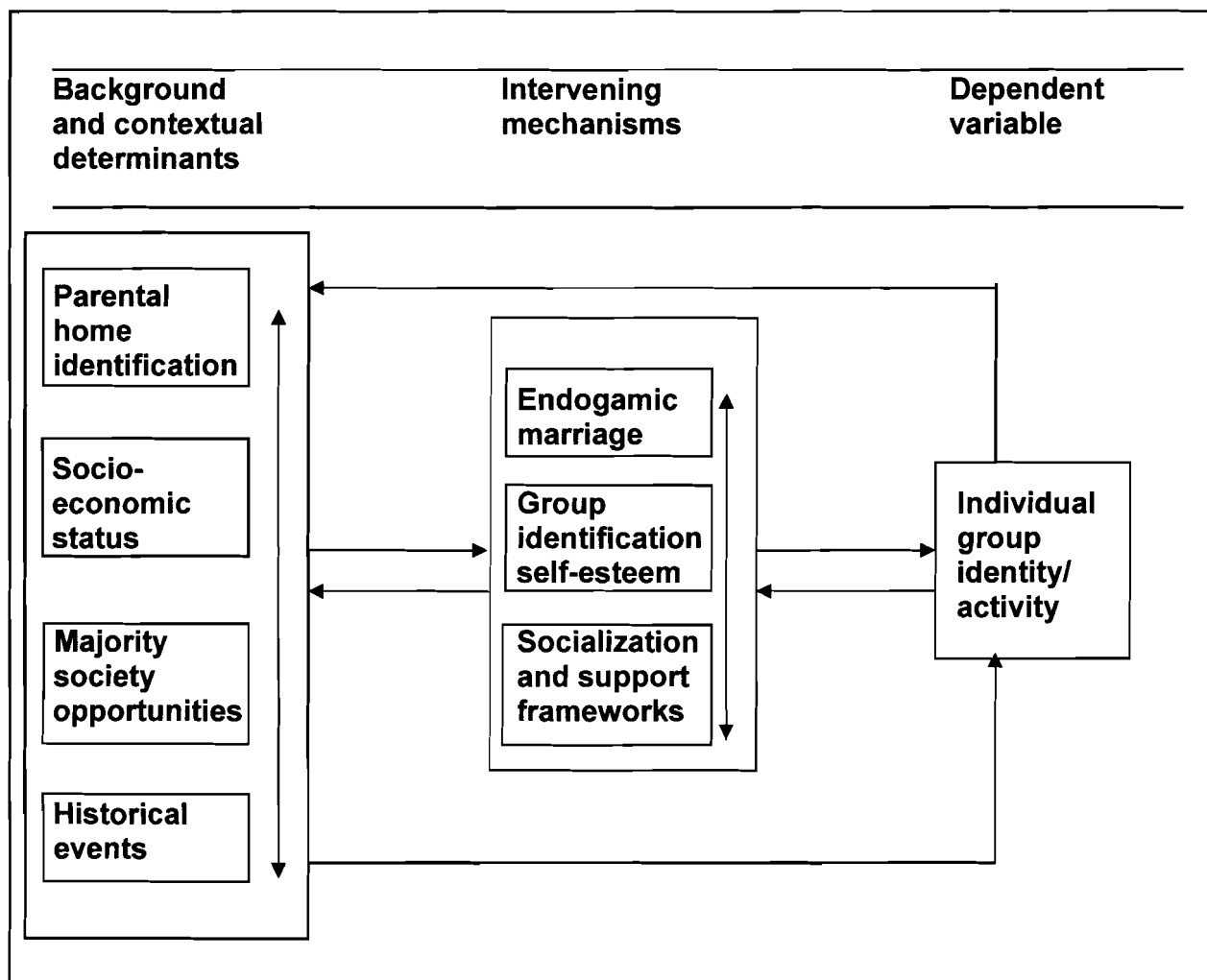
1. The impact of group identification on population size; and
2. Perceptions of and the response to ongoing trends.

Ongoing research – especially on American Jews – provides some indications that help clarifying more general mechanisms of group identity formation and transmission, hence the avenues through which future policy interventions might be channeled.

Group identification can be expressed by a great variety of individual Jewish identity and/or activity measures, variously stressing religion, ethnicity or culture (Figure 4). Each measure stands at the end of a causal chain where the immediately preceding stages involve three main factors:

1. The amount of self-esteem related to Jewish group identification;
2. Being part of a Jewish in-marriage or an out-marriage; and
3. The amount of exposure to Jewish socialization and support frameworks.

FIGURE 4. THE CONTEXT AND BASIC PROCESS OF JEWISH GROUP IDENTIFICATION



Source: DellaPergola (2005b).

These intervening identity variables represent indeed a major goal of Jewish policy planning. In turn, the intervening variables reflect four main determinants:

1. The quality and intensity of parental home's Jewish identification;
2. The family of origin's socioeconomic status;
3. The prevailing model of interaction of general society with the Jewish group in any given country; and

4. Relevant historical events, of which the fall of the Berlin wall, September 11, or for that matter the Holocaust or Israel's Six Day War provide vivid illustrations.

The process of Jewish identification construction, maintenance and transmission is better understood as unfolding over the lifecycle (see Figure 5). From the inner perspective of the group at stake, the main defining pillars of identification and community goals comprise:

1. A continuing inward-directed lifecycle;
2. A group-oriented personal identity;
3. A publicly manifested group identity; and
4. Support for the ethnic "core state" (in this case, Israel) and for the homologue Jewish "Diaspora" in other countries.

Achievement of these normative targets cannot occur without the previous attainment of four instrumental goals:

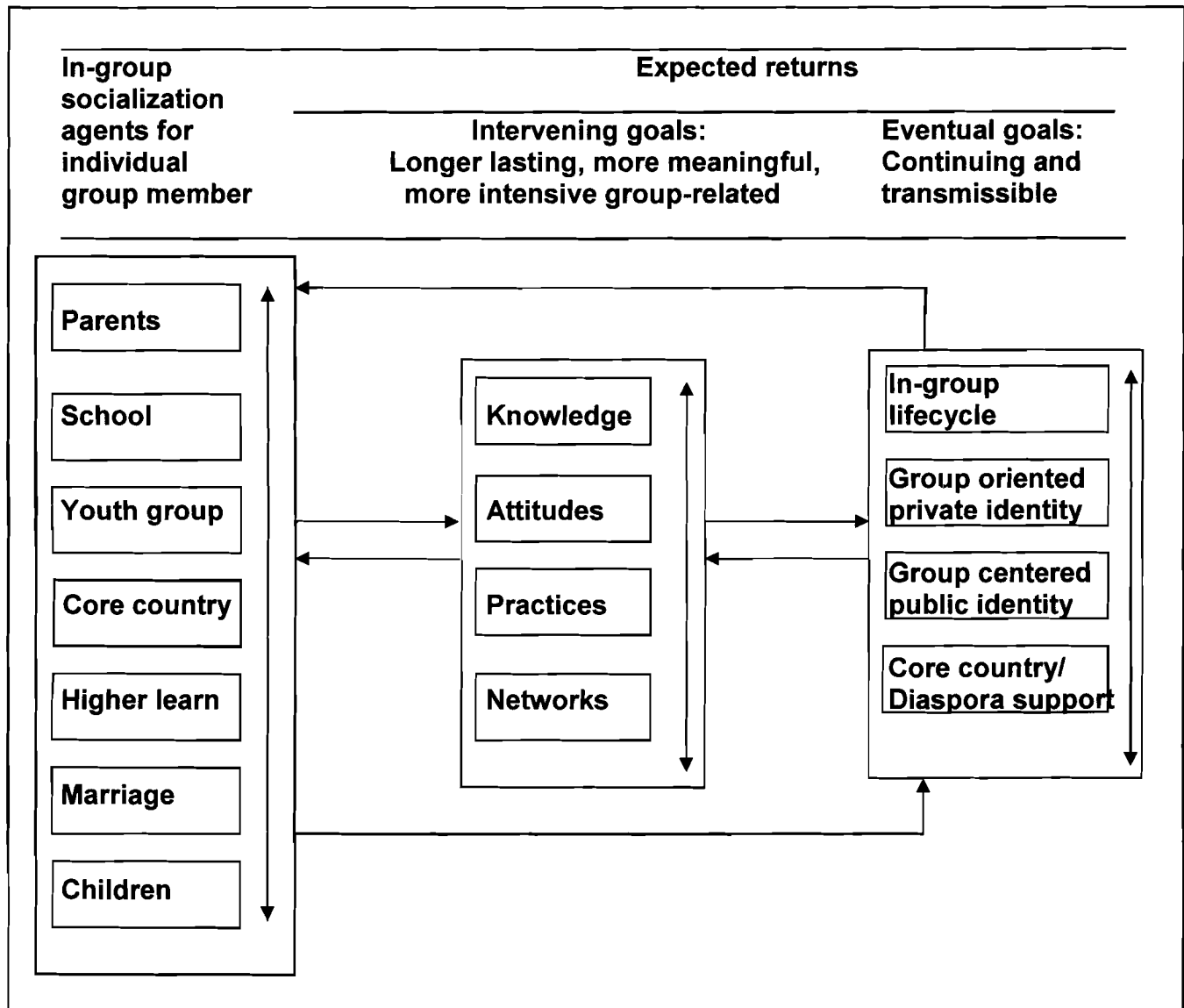
1. A good level of knowledge of the group's cultural legacy;
2. The promotion of positive group-oriented attitudes;
3. A frequent practice of uniquely Jewish normative behaviors; and
4. The development of predominantly within-group social networks.

In turn, these four intervening goals tend to reflect the amount and overlap of exposures to various possible socialization frameworks which include primarily a person's Jewish parents, formal education via the Jewish schooling system, Jewish informal educational activities such as youth groups and the similar, experiences and contacts with the Jewish group's "core country" (Israel), participation to Jewish programs in the course of higher education, in-marriage, and Jewish children. At each lifecycle stage, exposure to in-group experiences expectedly will raise the chances of occurrence of the next stage. The overall effect on Jewish identity tends to reflect the accumulation of various exposure opportunities over the lifecycle.

Two prominent areas need to be considered. On the one hand, the growing influences of globalization on Jewish life lay beyond the reach of Jewish corporate interventions. On the other hand, the internal process of socialization and intergenerational transmission of Jewish values and identity lend themselves to resolute interventions by the Jewish community.

A major challenge ahead consists in the ability to preserve not a mere *community of presence* driven by and dependent on favorable though possibly transient market forces, but a *community of creativity* able to nurture and transmit its own cultural identity and demographic momentum. The final result of the sweeping demographic changes that stand ahead will reflect the Jewish institutional system's ability to address these issues.

FIGURE 5. POLICIES AND RETURNS: CUMULATIVE OPPORTUNITIES AND GROUP IDENTIFICATION



Source: DellaPergola (2005b).

WHAT NEXT

With all the uncertainties and unknowns of the contemporary global scene, and their predictable or unpredictable consequences for Jews, it is clear that World Jewry face several serious demographic problems which may undermine its long-term viability. Jewish population changes should be prominently kept in mind and incorporated in any serious effort to develop coherent policies that will sustain the Jewish People facing the challenges of the 21st century. As demographic policies take effect only after a number of years, the momentum of current trends will generate more of the same for several more years.

Facing the continuing consequences of current Jewish population changes, it is plausible to speak of an emergency which calls for immediate action, both to reverse dangerous trends and to take compensatory measures. Policy interventions may directly aim at the specific processes and trends outlined herein, or may take alternative paths such as upgrading quality as a set-off to decreasing quantity. Available data are adequate for identifying some of the urgently needed measures, while in some cases new policy oriented research is needed.

We need to theorize, research and understand the demographic issues honestly, away from old myths and new superstitions. It should be recognized that Jews often depend on circumstances beyond their control. Nevertheless, a better outcome may with effort be secured by acknowledging the broader situation and focusing on specific ends. A realistic assessment of where and how Jewish individuals and their institutions can best shape their own demographic and cultural future should combine with a willingness to initiate decisions and processes apt to promote these goals.

The *Initiative on Jewish Demography* and the *Institute for Jewish People Policy Planning* intend to provide deeper insights on the causes and consequences of Jewish population trends. Meetings such as the *International Conference on Jewish Demography* held in Jerusalem in December 2002, further consultations between academics, professionals, policy planners and interested lay persons, and collaboration with the Israel Governments' *Public Council on Demography* and other international and national Jewish organizations, will hopefully lead to the formulation of policy suggestions urgently needed by decision makers. Jewish demography will play a central role in the definition not only of *how many* but, more significantly, of *where and what the Jews will be* in the future.