MIXED MARRIAGE AND POST-SOVIET *ALIYAH*

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In this paper we shall study the incidence of mixed marriage in the Former Soviet Union (FSU) and the role of demographic peculiarities of the Jewish marriage market in the spread of mixed marriage. Special attention will be devoted to the offspring of mixed couples and their ethnic affiliation. The relatively high proportion of non-Jews in the *aliyah* movement from the FSU as a consequence of mixed marriage will also be examined.

Between 1989 and 2002, more than 1,500,000 ex-Soviet Jews and their relatives emigrated to countries outside the FSU. Most of this movement (about 940,000 people, or 62%) was directed toward Israel, and the rest was divided mostly between the United States and Germany.

It is important to take note of the Soviet official system of ethnic classification. The ethnicity of every Soviet citizen was written in his or her internal passport once he or she reached age sixteen. Anyone with two Jewish parents had no choice but to be registered as being Jewish, in many cases without wanting to. Soviet authorities, contrary to their proclaimed goal of assimilation, actually preserved Soviet Jewry by labeling Jews on the individual level (Gitelman, 1992). Only the offspring of mixed marriages could choose the ethnicity of one or the other parent, and most of these preferred the ethnicity of the non-Jewish parent.

The group of persons eligible for immigration to Israel (*aliyah*) according to the Israeli Law of Return is rather large; it includes Jews, their children and grandchildren, and all respective spouses. The Israeli definition of who is a Jew is based on the *halachic* (Jewish religious) approach. A Jew is a person born to a Jewish

mother (female lineage is decisive and the number of generations backwards is not determined), or a person who converted to Judaism (DellaPergola, 1998; Tolts, 1999). In the Israeli Law of Return, only conversion to another religion can disrupt Jewish lineage. During the period of post-Soviet *aliyah*, for the first time in the history of migration to Israel, non-Jewish relatives of Jews, including the offspring of mixed marriages and their spouses, became a very sizeable segment of the immigrant population.

Mixed Marriage in the Former Soviet Union

After the second world war, one of the most characteristic features of Soviet Jewry was the steep rise in mixed marriages, but Soviet statistics provided no relevant data for the postwar period (for some partial data, see Altshuler, 1987). Actually, rates of intermarriage had already begun to increase before this period (Table 1). Ethnically mixed marriages were widespread in the FSU, whose total population hosted many relatively small and widely dispersed ethnic groups, and the Jewish population was no exception (Susokolov, 1990).

Table 1: Percentage of Mixed Marriages among All Registered Marriages Involving Jews in Russia, Ukraine and Belorussia, 1924-1996

Year	Russia		Ukraine		Belorussia	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
1924	17	9	4	5	2	3
1926	25	17	5	6	2	4
1936	44[(a)]	35[(a)]	15	15	13	11
1939	--	--	18	16	--	--
1970	--	--	38	32	--	--
1978	59	43	45	34	38	26
1988	73	63	54	45	48	40
1996	--	--	82	74	--	--

(a) Ashkenazi Jews only.

Sources: Vital statistics data (Altshuler, 1998, p. 74; Denisenko, 2002, p. 55; Oren (Nadel) and Prat, 1996, col. 303; Tolts, 2001, p. 119).

The increase in mixed marriages is not merely an outcome of assimilation but also of certain demographic realities. The primary demographic factor in the rise of intermarriage rates in the FSU before the start of the recent mass emigration is the shortage of Jewish marriage partners for Jewish males. According to the 1989 census, in the Soviet Union in all age groups under 55, there were more males than females (Table 2).

Table 2: Sex Ratio of Jews in the Soviet Union, by Age Group, 1970-1989

Age Group	Number of females per 100 males in the same age group			Number of females 5 years younger per 100 males in the given age group		
	1970	1979	1989	1970	1979	1989
15-19	98	96	96	--	--	--
20-24	97	97	96	77	80	99
25-29	99	93	94	179	87	67
30-34	98	93	92	48	85	78
35-39	97	98	93	122	127	87
40-44	111	97	94	83	60	87
45-49	134	99	99.7	125	114	125
50-54	137	118	98	175	87	61
55-59	145	141	103	97	148	118

Sources: 1970, 1979 and 1989 Soviet censuses.

The greatest shortage of potential Jewish brides was encountered by Jewish males in Russia, where according to the 1979 census, Jewish males outnumbered Jewish females in all age groups under 50. According to the 1989 census, this is true even up to age 60 (Table 3). This is naturally coincident with the character of Jewish migration to Russia from other republics. In the Ukraine and Belorussia, the sex imbalance was much more moderate. According to the 1979 census, in both republics, the only age groups with more males than females were under age 35, but by the 1989 census, the shortage of females had advanced to age 40 in the Ukraine and to 45 in Belorussia. Corresponding to the sex imbalance, the percentage of mixed marriages was highest in Russia, and lower in the other two republics.

Table 3: Sex Ratio of Jews in Russia, Ukraine and Belorussia, by Age Group, 1989

Age group	Number of females per 100 males in the same age group			Number of females 5 years younger per 100 males in the given age group		
	Russia	Ukraine	Belorussia	Russia	Ukraine	Belorussia
15–19	91	97	98	--	--	--
20–24	87	98	95	85	103	98
25–29	87	97	93	61	67	60
30–34	88	93	96	72	78	80
35–39	88	98	95	81	89	90
40–44	89	100	96	76	88	100
45–49	92	105	104	107	137	142
50–54	89	104	109	58	58	61
55–59	94	109	110	109	129	118

Source: 1989 Soviet census

A distinctive feature of the age structure of the Jewish population of the FSU in the post-war period is its regressive nature; that is, younger generations tend to be consistently less numerous. This is the result of extremely low fertility over a long period. An examination of the ratio of females to males in the relevant age groups shows the limited possibilities for Soviet Jewish males to select a suitable marriage partner from their own ethnic group. The shortage of potential partners has been very pronounced. In 1989, for example, in the Soviet Union the number of Jewish males aged 25–29 exceeded by almost one-third the corresponding number of females aged 20–24 (see Table 2).

In 1989 in the Russian Federation, the number of Jewish females aged 25–29 was 13 less than needed to balance each 100 Jewish males of the same age group, while in the Ukraine and Belorussia the imbalance was only three and seven per 100 Jewish males, respectively. For this same age group of males, the imbalance was much higher when they were compared with the adjacent group of females (aged 20–24). In all the Slavic republics, the male population aged 25–29 exceeded the younger female population by one-third or more (see Table 3).

The opposite situation existed within the general urban population, where, in most instances, there was a shortage of potential male marriage partners (Tolts, 1992). Partly as a result of this situation of imbalance, many more Jewish males than females found a spouse outside the Jewish group. In 1988-1989 in the Soviet Union as a whole, among Jews who married, 58% of males and 47% of females entered into mixed marriages (Table 4). The share of mixed marriage was highest among divorced Jewish males (62%) and lowest among widowed Jewish females (34%).

Table 4: Percentage of Mixed Marriages among Registered Marriages Involving Jews in the Soviet Union, by Premarital Status, 1988-1989

Premarital status	% Males	% Females
Never Married	56	47
Divorced	62	49
Widowed	53	34
Total	58	47

Sources: Vital statistics data.

Among Jews of the FSU, the Jewish population of the Russian Federation held the leading place in mixed marriage. In 1988, the frequency of mixed marriages among all marriages involving Jews in Russia was 73% for males and 63% for females; a relative increase of 23 and 46% respectively, as compared to 1978 (see Table 1). In the Ukraine, the frequency was 54% for males and 45% for females, at an increase of 21% and 31%; and in Belorussia, 48% for males and 40% for females, rising 26% and 53% respectively.

By the start of recent mass emigration, within Russian and Ukrainian Jewry, mixed marriages had become more prevalent. This trend was found especially among those males marrying under the age of 20, although marriage at such an early age is not common among Soviet Jewish males (Table 5).

Table 5: Percentage of Mixed Marriages among All Registered Marriages Involving Jews in Russia, Ukraine, and Belorussia, by Age Group, 1988

Age group	Russia		Ukraine		Belorussia	
	% Males	% Females	%Males	% Females	% Males	% Females
Under 20	84	71	70	51	64	49
20-24	74	61	53	50	51	39
25-29	69	67	55	47	49	40
30-34	73	70	57	51	43	47
35-39	75	65	56	52	61	49
40-44	78	68	59	45	46	43
45-49	79	60	61	38	69	56
50-54	78	58	57	35	55	16
55 and above	70	21	44	20	33	18
Total	73	63	54	45	48	40

Sources: Vital statistics data.

The mass migration of the 1990s only hastened the erosion of the Jewish marriage market. By 1996, according to the data of annual official vital statistics, the frequency of mixed marriages among all marriages in the Ukraine involving Jews was 82% for males and 74% for females—a substantially higher percentage than that of the Russian Jews in 1988 (see Table 1).

Table 6: Percentage of Mixed Married among All Currently Married Jews in Russia, the Ukraine and Belorussia, 1978-1994

Year	Russia		Ukraine		Belorussia	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
1979	51	33	31	23	27	19
1989	58	40	36	25	34	24
1994	63	44	--	--	--	--

Source: Author's estimates, based on census/microcensus data (for the method used see Tolts, 1996, p. 19).

The mixed marriage data for all currently married Jews in the FSU confirms the earlier assumption that mixed marriage rose as a result of the mass emigration of the 1990s. Indeed, according to the estimate made on the basis of the 1994 microcensus data, 63% of currently married Russian males and 44% of females had

spouses from another ethnic group, a figure that increased five and four percentage points respectively since 1989 (Table 6). This estimated rise coincides with the growth of the Jewish sex imbalance in Russia. Previously this shortage had applied to all the age demographics up to age sixty. According to the 1994 microcensus, it had advanced to the 60-64 age group. Among all those who were under fifty at the time of the 1989 census, the ratio had become even worse during these five years (Tolts, 1997).

Thus, the incidence of mixed marriage among Soviet Jews, which, in general, reflects the growing cultural and social assimilation of the Jewish population, has become more acute due to the development of a severe age-sex imbalance among Jews of marriageable age. The recent mass emigration only intensified the erosion of the Jewish marriage market in the FSU and this necessarily led to a further increase in mixed marriage.

Offspring of Mixed Couples and Their Ethnic Affiliation

After the second world war in the Soviet Union, rising intermarriage was accompanied by a great increase in the proportion of children born to mixed couples: from 19% in 1958 to about 41% in 1988. Corresponding to Russia's high percentage of mixed marriages compared to the Jews of the Slavic republics, the proportion of these children among all children born to Jewish mothers was greater there than in the other republics: 58% in 1988, 2.1 times more than in 1958. At the same time, it was 42% in the Ukraine and 37% in Belorussia, an increase of 2.4 and 2.7 times, respectively (see Table 7).

The size of a Jewish community is an important factor related the spread of intermarriage. At the start of the mass emigration in 1989, in some small Jewish groups, this indicator was even higher than in Russia: 60% in Turkmenistan, 63% in

Estonia, and 75% in Armenia. Thus, we see the relevance of the size of a Jewish community to the spread of mixed marriage, which may be gauged by the indirect indicator of the proportion of children born to mixed couples among all children born to Jewish mothers.

Following the start of the recent mass emigration, the proportion of children born to mixed couples among all children born to Jewish mothers reached 68% in 1993, in Russia, and it was slightly higher in Ukraine and Belorussia. From 1988 to 1993 in Moldavia, this proportion rose dramatically from 17% to 58%. These dynamics coincide with the very high level of recent Jewish emigration from the latter three countries. In 1998 in the Russian Federation, the proportion of children born to mixed couples among all children born to Jewish mothers reached 74%. In 2000 in Latvia among all children born to married Jewish females, 77% had fathers from other ethnic groups.

Table 7: Percentage of Children of Mixed Origin among All Children Born to Jewish Mothers in the FSU, by Republic, 1958-1993

Republic	1958	1968	1978	1988	1993
FSU	19	--	--	41	--
Russia	27	40	42	58	68
West					
Ukraine	17	30	31	42	69[d]
Belorussia	14	32	30	37	71
Moldavia	7	12	15	17	58
Baltic					
Latvia	14	27	28	40[b]	48[d]
Lithuania	12	19	28	32	...
Estonia	34	--	--	63[c]	67
Transcaucasia					
Georgia	9	13[a]	17	25[b]	...
Azerbaidzhan	20	21	32	28[b]	40
Armenia	27	--	--	75[c]	100[e]
Central Asia					
Uzbekistan	10	13	12	13	20
Tadzhikistan	13	9[a]	12	15	18
Kirgiziia	16	--	--	25[c]	47
Turkmenistan	37	--	--	60[c]	44[f]
Kazakhstan	35	43	42	41	65

(a) 1967.
(b) 1987.
(c) 1989.
(d) 1992.
(e) One birth.
(f) Four births to Jewish mothers and non-Jewish fathers
Sources: Vital statistics data as cited in: Tolts, 2001, p. 120 [revised].

Soviet/CIS vital statistics give no data on the number of children born to couples with Jewish husbands and non-Jewish wives. However, this information is very important to any analysis of the dynamics of the "enlarged" Jewish population. As the number of these births cannot be lower than the vital statistics figure for children born to Jewish mothers in mixed couples, in order to obtain a minimal estimate, one may assume these figures to be equal.

Approximately twice as many Jewish men were currently married to non-Jewish women as were Jewish women to non-Jewish men (Tolts, 1996; Tolts, 1997). Hence, among the proportions of children born to mixed couples as a whole of all newborn children with at least one Jewish parent in the Slavic republics, the greatest proportion was in Russia: about one-half in the late 1950s, perhaps four-fifths in the late 1980s, and probably even nine-tenths in 1998. In the late 1980s, this proportion was less than 70% in the Ukraine and only about 60% in Belorussia. However, by 1992-1993, both countries may have reached the level of Russia's Jewry. Moreover, by this time, in all three Slavic countries of the FSU (as may be assumed for Jews in the contemporary FSU as a whole), more than half of all children born to at least one Jewish parent had a Jewish father and non-Jewish mother.

As mentioned previously, offspring of mixed marriages could opt to be registered on their internal passports as Jews or as non-Jews. The data on offspring of mixed couples collected before the start of the recent mass emigration showed a clear preference for non-Jewish ethnic affiliation for the children (Volkov, 1989). Also, according to the most recent data of the 1994 Russian microcensus, non-Jewish ethnic affiliation was clearly preferable among offspring of mixed couples. For children under 16, the percentage declared Jewish was about the same regardless of the composition of the mixed couples—only 11%. Among offspring aged 16 and above, the percentage was even lower: 6.2% for couples consisting of a Jewish husband and a Russian wife, and 4.1% for couples consisting of a Russian husband and a Jewish wife (Table 8).

Table 8: Percentage of Children Declared Jewish of all Children Living with Mixed Couples, Russia, 1994

Composition of mixed couples	Age of children	
	% aged under 16	% aged 16 and above
Jewish husband, Russian wife	10.9	6.2
Russian husband, Jewish wife	11.6	4.1
Total among Jewish-Russian couples	11.1	5.6

Source: 1994 Russian microcensus.

Thus, despite all recent changes in the Jewish situation in the Russian Federation and FSU as a whole, such as greater investment in Jewish education, we see a continuation of the clear preference for non-Jewish ethnic affiliation for the children of mixed couples. Dynamics of the "core" Jewish population[1], whose numerical decrease in the results of the 2001 Ukrainian census, confirm this conclusion (Tolts, 2005). Moreover, emigration is selective by level of Jewish identity, and is obviously higher among the more strongly identifying Jews (Brym and Ryvkina, 1996; Chervyakov, V. et al., 2003). These are the ones who have left—and are still leaving—the FSU.

There is probably only one large group of people of mixed origin interested in ethnic reaffiliation with the Jewish people, namely, those who made the decision to emigrate, particularly to Israel. These people have been leaving the FSU very rapidly; that is, they have joined the Jewish population abroad, especially in Israel.

Rising Role of Mixed Marriage in Post-Soviet Aliyah

[1] The "core" Jewish population is the aggregate of all those who, when asked, identify themselves as Jews or, in the case of children, are identified as such by their parents. It does not include persons of Jewish origin who reported another ethnic nationality in the census (DellaPergola, 2002). A majority of scholars agree that Soviet census figures on Jews for adults correspond very closely with "legal" ethnic nationality as recorded in internal passports. A broader definition, used later in this paper, of the "enlarged" Jewish population can also be empirically measured, and includes "core" Jews along with their non-Jewish household members (ibid.).

For a more detailed analysis of the relationship between mixed marriage and *aliyah* for a period of steady migration movement (1994-1998), we can estimate the rate of emigration to Israel for ten regions of the Russian Federation. There was great differentiation in the level of emigration to Israel by region in this period: in 1994-1998 emigration to Israel as a percent of the "enlarged" Jewish population in 1994 was as high as almost 60% from Birobidzhan and only 4.5% from St. Petersburg and 2.3% from Moscow city.

Table 9: Emigration to Israel and Assimilation, by Region of Residence in the Russian Federation, 1994-1998

Region[(a)]	Percentage of "core" Jews living in multi-national households, 1994	Emigration to Israel in 1994-1998 as % of "enlarged" Jewish population in 1994
Dagestan Republic	9	25[(b)]
Nizhny Novgorod Oblast	35	6.6
Birobidzhan	37	59.6
Moscow City	42	2.3
St. Petersburg City	43	4.5
Samara Oblast	45	5.9
Cheliabinsk Oblast	46	11.7
Moscow Oblast	48	4.9
Sverdlovsk Oblast	50	9.8
Rostov Oblast	52	12.9

(a) Regions are listed in ascending order of the percentage of "core" Jews living in multi-national households, 1994
(b) Emigration of Jews to Israel as percent of "core" Jewish population in 1994.
Sources: Andreev, 2001, pp. 157-159; Tolts, 1999, pp. 19, 21.

The level of assimilation also was very different by the same regions. According to the data of the 1994 Russian microcensus, the proportion of "core" Jews living in multi-ethnic households was as low as 9% in the Dagestan Republic. However, this Republic is a special case—many of the Jews of Dagestan are Mountain Jews, with a culture different from that of Ashkenazi Jews, who comprise the great majority of Russia's Jewish population. The proportion of Jews living in multi-ethnic households was higher in Moscow city (42%) and St. Petersburg (43%)

than in Birobidzhan (37%), and it exceeded one-half (52%) in the Rostov *oblast* (Table 9).[2]

Based on these data, Spearman's measure of rank order correlation[3] shows that association between levels of assimilation and emigration to Israel is weakly negative: –0.10. Thus, despite the great differentiation noted above in the levels of assimilation, there is no correlation with *aliyah*. This demonstrates that the Israeli Law of Return provides attractive possibilities for *aliyah* to different segments of people of Jewish origin entitled to immigrate to Israel.

One consequence of the Post-Soviet Jewish vital crisis and rising mixed marriage is the recently pronounced decrease in the share of Jews among the FSU immigrants in the official Israeli data: 96% in 1990, 72% in 1995, 47% in 2000 and 43% in 2002; these proportions were almost the same as among the immigrants from the Russian Federation.[4] According to official Russian data, the proportion of Jews among all those who emigrated to Israel fell from 64% in the second half of 1992 to 53% in 1995, 27% in 2000 and 23.5% in 2002 (Table 10). Thus, since the standards for Jewish affiliation differ in Israel and the FSU, there was a divergence in the registration of ethnicity of migrants.

[2] In our analysis we used only data on regions where according to the estimated sampling error, chances are 95 out of 100 that the actual number of the "core" Jewish population (which is the base for estimating the "enlarged" Jewish population) of each of these regions was not more than ±10% from the medium estimate based on the 1994 Russian microcensus.

[3] For an estimate of this indicator, see Blalock, 1987, pp. 434-436.

[4] For similar data for immigrants from Ukraine to Israel in 1996-1999, see Riss and Klopshtock, 2002.

Table 10: Percentage of Jews among Migrants to Israel from the Russian Federation and the Entire FSU, 1990-2002

Year	Russian Federation		Entire FSU
	Goskomstat of Russia data[(a)]	Israel CBS data[(b)]	Israel CBS data[(b)]
1990	--	--	96
1991	--	--	91
1992	64[(c)]	82	84
1993	60	82	83
1994	58	77	77
1995	53	73	72
1996	49	67	68
1997	36	60	60
1998	31	55	54
1999	31	51	50
2000	27	47	47
2001	25	45	44
2002	23.5	43	43

(a) Of all emigrants to Israel whose ethnicity was known.
(b) Of the immigrants who entered to Israel according to the Law of Return whose ethnicity/religion was known.
(c) Second half of the year.
Sources: Goskomstat of Russia data; Israel CBS data.

Israeli statistics are based on the Ministry of Interior's Population Register file, whose definition of "who is a Jew" as noted above is according to the *halakhic* (Jewish religious) approach. At the same time, according to the FSU official definition, "Jews" were only those emigrants (aged 16 and over) who were designated as such in their internal passports. For children without passports, ethnicity was defined on the basis of the parents' ethnicity. If the parents of the minor belonged to different ethnic groups, preference was given to the mother's ethnicity, although even in the post-Soviet era non-Jewish ethnic affiliation was clearly preferable among the offspring of such couples (see Table 8). FSU migration data overrepresented Jewish children when compared with census/microcensus data.

Obviously some of the immigrants, who were considered Jews according to their former Soviet internal passports (as well as in population censuses), that is, the

offspring of a Jewish male and non-Jewish female, are counted as non-Jews in Israeli statistics, which are based on halakha. Nonetheless, many more immigrants are counted as Jews in Israel than were registered as such in the FSU, and many of these had never identified themselves as Jews before. Based on the data above, the number of such immigrants may be estimated at more than 150,000.

Table 11: Jewishness of Immigrants From the FSU According to the Official Israeli Definition, 1990 and 2000, Percents

Year	Total immigrants from the FSU	Jews, their non-Jewish spouses, and children	Of these:			Others
			Jews	Non-Jewish spouses of Jews	Non-Jewish children of Jews	
1990	100	--	96[(a)]	--	--	--
2000	100	78	47[(a)]	14[(b)]	17[(c)]	22[(d)]

(a) Of the immigrants whose ethnicity/religion was known (see Table 10).
(b) Including non-Jewish widowed persons who had a Jewish spouse.
(c) Offspring of Jewish fathers and non-Jewish mothers.
(d) Non-Jewish spouses of offspring of Jewish fathers and non-Jewish mothers (about 6%), non-Jewish grandchildren of Jews (14%) and their spouses (2%).
Sources: Author's estimate based on Israel CBS and other governmental data.

The composition of immigrants to Israel on the basis of the Law of Return may be better understood if we group Jews with their spouses, though of other ethnicity/religion (including widows and widowers), and offspring of Jewish fathers and non-Jewish mothers (Table 11). In 2000, according to the Israeli criteria, Jews and their specified nearest relatives constituted 78 % of all immigrants from the FSU countries; the others were spouses of offspring with Jewish fathers and non-Jewish mothers, and grandchildren of Jews and their spouses.

Immigration to Israel from the FSU was most numerous in the first years of the last decade[5], and 76% of the total number of immigrants who arrived in Israel according to the Law of Return between 1990 and 2002 whose religion was known

[5] More on mixed marriage among FSU immigrants in this period, see DellaPergola, 1991.

were classified as Jewish. It should be noted that only a small minority of immigrants classified as non-Jews chose to be registered as Christians (11,600); the great majority of them preferred to be registered with "no religion" (194,500). Today, the children of this group of the immigrant population are educated in Jewish schools and the adults are drafted into the Israeli army: in general, they may be seen as a potential boon to the Israeli Jewish population.

Table 12: Percentage of Jews among Immigrant Population from the FSU in Israel, by Age and Sex, End of 2001[(a)]

Age group	Total	Males	Females
0-14	71	72	71
15-29	69	70	68
30-44	68	69	68
45-64	81	81	80
65 and above	92	93	91

(a) Computed for FSU immigrants who arrived in Israel in 1990-2001 and were still living here by this date (including children born in Israel to mothers who immigrated from the FSU in this period).
Sources: Israel CBS data.

By the end of 2001, the percent classified as Jewish among the immigrant population from the FSU which had arrived in Israel since 1990 and were still living here by this date was highest for the ages of 65 and above: 92% (Table 12). In the same year, only 69% of the immigrant population in the age group 15–29 years old, and 68% in the next age group 30–44 years old, were classified as Jewish.

However, a higher share of the immigrants under 15 years of age (seventy-one percent, including children born in Israel to mothers who immigrated from the FSU in this period) were classified as Jewish. An explanation of this higher percentage can be found in the following phenomenon: fertility of the Jewish immigrant women from the FSU in Israel was much higher than that of non-Jewish women. From 1999-2002,

the total fertility rate[6] of Jewish women who had immigrated from the FSU since 1990 was about 1.7 (Israel CBS, 2003). At the same time, the same indicator for non-Jewish immigrant women can be estimated as having been lower than 1.3 in 2002.

The percentage of the male population which immigrated from the FSU and was classified as Jewish was only slightly higher than that of the female population of the same origin. This is the result of many factors which often act in different directions partly offsetting each other: a higher propensity to immigrate to Israel of divorced Jewish women from the FSU, the lower propensity to immigrate of mixed couples, etc.

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The demographic crisis of post-Soviet Jewry has been—and still is—dramatically intensifying since the start of the recent mass emigration. Clearly, this emigration exacerbated the already existing severe sex imbalance, thereby intensifying mixed marriage. Accordingly, in *aliyah* from the FSU, the share of the halakhically non-Jewish segment of the immigrants grew steadily, and by 2000 it exceeded one-half. Given the vital crisis of contemporary post-Soviet Jewry, only the inclusion of this segment, which is eligible to immigrate to Israel according to the Israeli Law of Return, will allow *aliyah* to continue and to include young children.

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[6] The total fertility rate is the average number of children that a woman would bear in her lifetime if current age-specific fertility rates remained stable.

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