

NATIONAL DATA ON AMERICAN JEWRY, 1970-71: A COMPARATIVE EVALUATION
OF THE CENSUS YIDDISH MOTHER TONGUE SUBPOPULATION AND THE NATIONAL
JEWISH POPULATION SURVEY

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Introduction

Social scientists interested in the study of American Jewry as a national subpopulation in the United States have been frustrated by the scarcity of suitable data on Jews at the national level. The decennial census includes no question on religion, and Jews are a sufficiently small group relative to the total population that even quite large national surveys turn up too few Jews to support more than the most general level of analysis. The data obtained from such surveys are nevertheless very valuable, since they are representative of the total population of self-identifying Jews, and extensive comparisons with non-Jewish groups are possible. Therefore, these data have been analyzed extensively, yielding often provocative and tantalizing clues, but with the characteristic instability of small samples, the results are often difficult to reconcile. (For a thorough discussion of these efforts, see Goldscheider, 1981; Goldstein, 1981).

Another approach is to assemble the series of local community studies which have been conducted at various times, primarily in the last 25 years, to get some sort of collective overview. This is a much more difficult and frustrating task since, although the number of cases is potentially large, other difficulties are extreme. Few of the raw data sets are available, and published reports are rarely very detailed, making comparisons difficult even if the questions asked were fully comparable, which often they were not. Further, the issue of representativeness is cloudy. Community-based surveys are conducted where there is a large enough community of Jews to organize and justify the study. As a result, small Jewish communities and persons living near few other Jews cannot be observed. Further, although Jewish community organizations are ordinarily very eager to maintain complete and current lists of Jews in the community which can be used as a sampling frame, these lists will inevitably be more nearly complete and current for those who are more identified with the community. Proportionately fewer of the less affiliated will be included, since they get listed longer after they arrive, are carried longer after they move away, and, for shorter residence durations, perhaps are missed altogether. This may be particularly true for unmarried persons. Finally, the problem of comparison with non-Jews is great as well. With few exceptions (e.g., Boston, Chicago), these surveys are not carried out in such a way that comparable information on other local subcommunities, or the total population of the area, is available.

The important data needs, then, for the study of American Jewry are, in addition to depth of questioning, 1) sample size, 2) national representation, and 3) comparability. The National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) was undertaken in 1971 by the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds in response to these needs. A large sample of about 7,000 households and 13,000 individuals was attained, which allows for extremely detailed analysis. Questions were asked on a broad range of issues of interest to scholars and service organizations, and a genuine effort was made to use frequently asked and well understood questions to increase comparability. A great deal of effort was also expended on trying to represent Jews of small communities, and unaffiliated Jews within the largest communities. The result is a valuable body of data on Jews in late 20th century America, and as the problems which have plagued its widespread use during the 1970s have faded, greatly increased analysis should be encouraged. (For further details on the NJPS, see Lazerwitz, 1973, 1974; Massarik, 1973, 1977).

Nevertheless, these data are far from ideal, and it will be argued in this paper that for many purposes, research questions of importance to the study of American Jewry would be better answered with a much less widely appreciated body of data. The 1970 U.S. Census of population included on the 15 percent sample schedule a language question which, for the only time since 1940, was not restricted to the foreign born. And to the question, "Was a language other than English spoken in the home when you were growing up?" large numbers of American Jews, most of them native born, replied "Yiddish."

Relative to the NJPS, these data are surely less representative of American Jewry. Yiddish is a more prominent feature in the background of some Jews than others, and with the expansion of the third and later generations, fewer and fewer Jews will have had this experience. Yiddish speakers are disproportionately first and second generation, and of Russian and Polish origin. On the other hand, the Census sampling plan is complete and thoroughly random. Unquestionably, individuals in 15 percent of American households, Jewish and non-Jewish, of every region, state, city, and town, were given the opportunity to say whether Yiddish was spoken in their home when they were growing up. Analyzing these two sources of data together allows for the resolution of much of the bias in each: the NJPS includes data on Yiddish language use which can be used to show how, where, and for whom Yiddish is a better or poorer indicator; the mother tongue data can be used to assess representativeness in the sampling plan of the NJPS. These census data, however, may prove even more valuable in terms of representativeness than a focus on the Yiddish speakers would suggest. In the households of the Yiddish speakers there are many persons who did not hear Yiddish used when *they* were growing up. The 1.6 million individuals with Yiddish background live in households containing between 3 and 4 million people, most of whom are Jews and could be

identified as such based on household relationship and perhaps such background characteristics as their parents' country of birth. Assuming that the calculations based on the NJPS are correct in estimating between 5.5 and 6 million Jews in the United States in 1971, a national data set representing half to three-quarters of American Jews with known rather than unknown biases is a valuable resource to be exploited.

The NJPS is rich in material specific to Jews, and includes information on attitudes and practices which is extremely valuable for comparisons within the Jewish community. The census can provide no information on these subjects. Further, the NJPS is the stronger data set in terms of representativeness. On the two other critical dimensions, however, the Census file is much the more valuable. To begin with, although the NJPS is of quite adequate size for national analysis, the number of cases available from the Census files is potentially enormous. Three percent of these 3-4 million Yiddish speakers and their household members can be assembled -- about 100,000 individuals -- which makes possible detailed analysis for quite small areas. Appendix 1 shows the types of areas possible. However, a much more important strength of the Census mother-tongue based data file is its comparative power. On every dimension possible to be analyzed with the 15 percent sample, comparisons can be made with the total U.S. population, and with any other group which can be identified with those data. Other ethnic groups defined by race, origin, and/or mother tongue are available for comparative ethnic analysis, and it is also possible to make sensible comparisons between Jews and the U.S. total population sharing similar socioeconomic, urban/rural, and other background characteristics.

Analysts of the American Jewish population have tried before to use the indirect measures such as this which can be found in census data, and the results, while valuable, were sufficiently problematic to discourage further use. Rosenthal (1975) argued that census data on Russian origin are sufficient to identify and characterize Jewish communities. His reasoning is based on Russian and U.S. data showing the overwhelmingly selective nature of Russian immigration to the United States, since Jews were allowed to leave and few others were. Later arrivals, however, have until quite recently been less exclusively Jews, so by 1970, it is difficult to estimate what proportion of persons of Russian origin were probably Jewish (see further details on the argument below). Yiddish speakers, on the other hand, are entirely Jewish. Rosenthal's approach would be helpful in identifying primarily Jewish census tracts, however, since mother-tongue information is not available at that level, if more direct means are not possible.

The mother-tongue data have also served prominently in the effort to assemble national data on American Jews. Goldberg (1945; 1962) provides

a thorough summary of efforts to identify the American Jewish population by various means, and presents some insightful analyses of early mother-tongue data. More recently, Rosenwaike (1971) has analyzed published tabulations on the foreign born Yiddish mother-tongue population from 1920 to 1960 which reveal many changes in the composition of the population.

Any demographic analysis using indirect census indicators, however, is drastically handicapped if it is restricted to published tabulations. Given the age and generational biases, the results of analyses such as Goldberg's and Rosenwaike's are impossible to compare with information for other groups or other periods since the effects of age and generation cannot be controlled. And from published data, of course, no access is possible to information on the characteristics of others in the households of Yiddish speakers or those of Russian origin. The data now available through the public use of census tapes, however, change all this.

The Population

In order to use the NJPS and census mother-tongue data constructively, it is necessary to identify the comparable Yiddish speaking populations. This task is made somewhat complicated by the fact that the designers of the NJPS chose not to include the mother-tongue question among those for which to maximize comparability. A series of questions on Yiddish language knowledge was asked, none of which reflects a mother-tongue context. The NJPS questions include "some knowledge" (more than a few words or phrases), and "understanding", "speaking", "reading", and "writing" Yiddish.

Prima facie, it was not clear what level of current facility would be characteristic of the mother-tongue Yiddish subpopulation at the time of the survey, since we know neither how much Yiddish would have counted for a typical respondent, nor how rapidly those skills would have decayed (or felt to have decayed) with little subsequent use. Another consideration, although probably of less gravity, is the extent to which individuals without Yiddish spoken in the parental home would have acquired facility beyond "a few words and phrases" either in the homes of relatives and friends, or from formal study. A final problem is a technical one common to surveys. It has routinely been found that where an extensive series of questions revolves around a single issue, more respondents will make a positive response than where the same question is asked in isolation. Whether because respondents' memories and attention are better focussed, and/or because they want to feel more interesting to the survey, respondents are more likely to decide marginal cases positively, so that one can expect levels of Yiddish knowledge to be higher where more questions are asked, other things equal.

Approximately 1.6 million persons responded "Yiddish" to the Census mother-tongue question. The number of American Jews estimated by Lazer-

witz (1978) based on the results of the NJPS ranges from 5.6 to 6.0 million. Putting these figures together leads to an estimate that 27 to 29 percent of American Jews grew up in a home where Yiddish was spoken. Table 1 presents this information, as well as data from the NJPS on Yid-

Table 1. Yiddish Language Knowledge in the U.S., 1970-71

Type of knowledge	Percent	Probable number (000) (a)
<u>National Jewish Population Survey, 1971:</u>		
Know some Yiddish	42.1	2433
Understand Yiddish	40.5	2340
Speak Yiddish	31.9	1844
Read Yiddish	13.1	757
Write Yiddish	9.8	566
<u>U.S. Census, 1970:</u>		
Yiddish spoken in parental home	26.6-28.7 ^(b)	1594
<u>N.J.P.S. Jewish population estimate</u>		
High		6002
Medium		5779
Low		5555

(a) Based on medium estimate from N.J.P.S.

(b) High to low estimate of total Jewish population.

dish language knowledge based on their series of questions. For the vast majority of native born Jews, exposure to Yiddish at home would not be expected to extend to reading and writing skill, and this is obvious from the data. Only 10 percent can write and 13 percent can read Yiddish. However, far more feel they have maintained some lesser facility. Forty-two percent claim some Yiddish knowledge, 40 percent say they "understand" the language, and 32 percent profess to be able to speak Yiddish. These levels are all higher than the 27 to 29 percent mother-tongue exposure. Further analyses of these data, and perhaps more detailed data on language retention, would probably shed more light on which group is closest to the Census mother-tongue group. (See Fishman, 1981 for insight on this problem.) However, on the basis of the numbers, and the superficial interpretive similarity, the 32 percent population, those who felt in 1971 that they could speak Yiddish, were taken as com-

parable to mother-tongue Yiddishists.⁽¹⁾ Both groups will be called, for the sake of simplicity, "Yiddish speakers."

Biases in the Two Populations

Before turning to an assessment of the similarities and differences between the two groups of Yiddish speakers, it seems useful to establish who, among American Jews, speak Yiddish, and thus to see what biases arise for analyses limited to this group. Tables 2 and 3 address this issue in a general fashion, presenting data from the NJPS on the percentages speaking Yiddish along a variety of demographic and social dimensions. Later data will be presented suggesting some bias in the NJPS.⁽²⁾

The first and most obvious phenomenon to be seen in Table 2 is the great variation in Yiddish knowledge. Only sex differences are absent. A major pattern is the rapid decay in speaking knowledge among younger cohorts. Whereas nearly three quarters of those aged 65 and older can speak Yiddish, less than half those 40 to 49, and barely a quarter of those 30 to 39 claim this facility. Among children, Yiddish is essentially lost, since only 6 percent of those 10 to 19, and 2 percent of younger children are reported by their parents as Yiddish speakers. (This is no doubt an under-estimate for the youngest group since some,

- (1) This decision, is, of course, open to question. One approach is to expect greater decay of language skill, perhaps for most to the level of "understanding" and so to question the validity of current estimates of American Jewish population size. This approach would lead to the much lower estimate of 3.9 million. In an effort to address this issue further, Census data on the total population of Russian origin were examined. The 1970 Census reports only 1.9 million individuals who were born or whose parents were born in Russia, whereas as is shown below, the 40% of the NJPS total who indicated Russian origin should comprise 2.3 million persons. One possible explanation is that the two differed in their coding of the Ukraine so that the Census gave more of them to Poland. However, among Yiddish speakers, the Census found more of Russian origin than did the NJPS, not less. The other explanation is that there are fewer Jews.
- (2) In making these comparisons, however, an important point to consider is the way in which weights were used in the sampling strategy of the NJPS. The sampling proportions varied a great deal, reflecting the high cost of interviewing in areas of less dense Jewish settlement. As a result, these cases carry very high weights. In comparing two populations, such as this paper attempts to do, these weights must be respected. However, most of the cases with high weights were non-Yiddish speaking. Sampling variability, thus, is high in these data, and instability relatively high as a result. (This will not be so much a problem with Census data.)

Table 2. Percentage of Yiddish Speakers by Demographic and Social Characteristics, NJPS, 1971

Characteristics	%	Characteristics	%
<u>Age</u>		<u>Relationship to Household Head</u>	
0-9	2.2	Head	52.0
10-19	5.8	Spouse	43.1
20-29	13.8	Child or in-law	5.2
30-39	26.3	Parent or in-law	78.2
40-49	48.6	Other relative	48.8
50-64	58.3	Non-relative	15.7
65+	72.6		
<u>Marital Status</u>		<u>Sex</u>	
Single	7.7	Male	32.5
Married	47.0	Female	31.6
Separated/Divorce	48.7		
Widowed	70.2		
<u>Generation</u>		<u>Education</u>	
Foreign born	63.8	Secondary	40.9
Native born of foreign parents	55.4	College	27.2
Native born of native parents	8.2	Post-graduate	39.3
		Total	32.0

Table 3. Percentage of Yiddish Speakers by Father's Birthplace and Generational Status

Father's birthplace	1st generation	2nd generation	Retention rate, % (2nd/1st)
Austria	81.5	62.7	77
Germany	21.1	13.6	64
Other western Europe and the Americas, non-U.S.	50.0	30.6	61
Poland	84.6	68.1	80
Russia	92.1	65.1	71
Other eastern and southern Europe	67.5	46.2	68
Other	31.3	22.7	73

undoubtedly, still spoke no language at all.) The rapid decay for younger cohorts is clearly in part a generational phenomenon, and reflects the large size of the 3rd generation among American Jews. Both the foreign born and their children show fairly high and fairly similar levels of knowledge, with 64 percent of the first generation and 55 percent of the second generation with speaking skill. Only 8 percent of the third generation, however, speaks Yiddish.

The age differences in Yiddish knowledge lead to differences in family characteristics as well. Only the widowed show a majority of Yiddish speakers. About half of the married and divorced persons speak Yiddish, but less than 10 percent of the single, the next generation to marry, will have this ability. Similarly, only among those persons living as parents of the head or his spouse do a majority speak Yiddish. Considerably more of this group, who are primarily widows, speak Yiddish than do the total widowed (78% vs. 70%), suggesting that the widowed who live alone or with non-relatives or other relatives are disproportionately non-Yiddish speaking. This may occur if they are also somewhat younger, and could also result both because Yiddish speakers have achieved somewhat lower social status, and thus could less afford separate living quarters, and because they come disproportionately from eastern Europe, where family extension is more widespread. This is indicated by the pattern of educational differentials, and those based on national origin, which are also shown in Tables 2 and 3. Yiddish knowledge is most common among those with a secondary school education, and much more rare in those who attended college (41% vs. 27%). Somewhat more among the relatively small group with post graduate education claim a speaking knowledge, a phenomenon that deserves more detailed analysis.

The most marked differentials in the table, however, even greater than those for age, are revealed by separating persons by country of origin. Almost all Jews born in Russia speak Yiddish (92%) and most born in Poland (85%) and Austria (82%) do so as well. Those of other eastern and southern European countries still show 68% speaking Yiddish, while the level is only 50% for those from other western European origins or from countries in the western hemisphere other than the United States. The lowest levels are found among Jews from distant origins (31%), but also particularly among those born in Germany, where only 21% are Yiddish speakers. Some indication of differences in generational change by country of origin can also be seen. Among the second generation it is those with Polish rather than Russian born parents who are more likely to speak Yiddish. Relative rankings among the other groups held in the second generation, although the high retention rate for those from Austria brought Yiddish knowledge in the second generation to almost as high a level as the Russian second generation.

Overall, then, Yiddish speakers are disproportionately older, of the first and second generations, with somewhat lower socioeconomic back-

ground and with origins more highly concentrated among Russia and eastern Europe. Any analysis limited to Yiddish speakers will share this bias. Analyses using Census mother-tongue data for comparative analysis with other ethnic groups should control for age and generation, and any results suggesting, for example, that Yiddish speakers have higher socioeconomic status than some other group should indicate that differences would be greater if all Jews were included. These restrictions certainly limit the value of the Yiddish mother-tongue population per se. However, when the expanded population is prepared from the census tape including the appropriate other household members the differences should not be so acute. Adding the children should weaken the age bias, and probably the grown sons and sons-in-law, daughters and daughters-in-law will have achieved higher levels of education than their parents.

Beyond the bias resulting from the restriction to the Yiddish speaking population, other biases may exist in these two data sets. If Census mother-tongue Yiddish speakers differ greatly from Yiddish speakers in the NJPS, allocating the source of such differences could be very problematic. Reassuringly, however, as Table 4 indicates, the two populations are very similar. Some of the differences seem to point clearly to mild deficiencies in the NJPS sampling frame, which had a Herculean sampling task; some clearly result primarily from differences in the form of the questions and their coding between the two surveys; and others must result from sampling variability. Establishing the appropriate tests for these differences was beyond the scope of this paper.

Table 4 is organized to highlight the similarities between the two populations of Yiddish speakers, and to contrast them with the total population of Jews from the NJPS. Given the dissimilarities introduced by the question formats, coding practices, and sampling variability, it is hard not to feel that the two populations of Yiddish speakers are very similar. The Census seems to have found somewhat more under age 30, and fewer over 65, but the great majority for both groups -- 62 to 63% -- was aged 30 to 64 in 1971. The sex compositions are identical. Differences are somewhat greater on other dimensions, but the two populations are still far more similar to each other than to the total Jewish population. Perhaps as a result of the differences in age composition, the Census also found more children of the head, but they also found as many or more in every household status except for head or spouse. The difference is most marked for non-relatives. The proportion of Yiddish speakers living as non-relatives was nearly five times as high in the Census as in the NJPS. Since both surveys are based on a questionnaire filled out by a single person for the household, it is possible that respondents in the NJPS were less careful and complete in their answers for others in the household relative to themselves and their spouses than was the case in the Census. It seems more likely, however, that the NJPS screening procedure was much less likely to find Jews living in situations where the only Jewish member was a non-rela-

Table 4. Basic Characteristics of Yiddish Speakers, NJPS, 1971 and U.S. Census, 1970

Characteristics	NJPS Total	Yiddish Speakers		Characteristics	NJPS Total	Yiddish Speakers	
		NJPS	Census			NJPS	Census
<u>Age</u>	100.0	100.0	100.0	<u>Generation</u>	100.0	100.0	100.0
0-9	12.9	0.9	1.4	Foreign born	16.5	33.0	28.3
10-19	19.5	3.6	4.2	Native born of foreign parents	30.8	53.5	58.4
20-29	13.8	6.0	8.2	Native born of native parents	52.6	13.5	13.3
30-39	10.4	8.7	9.4				
40-49	13.8	21.2	18.2	<u>Marital Status</u>	100.0	100.0	100.0
50-64	18.2	33.5	34.8	Never married	40.9	9.9	10.8
65+	11.4	26.1	23.8	Married	52.9	77.8	72.6
<u>Sex</u>	100.0	100.0	100.0	Separated/divorced	1.9	2.9	3.6
Male	48.1	48.9	49.0	Widowed	4.3	9.5	10.4
Female	51.9	51.1	51.0				
<u>Relationship to Household Head</u>	100.0	100.0	100.0	<u>Education (age 20+)</u>	100.0	100.0	100.0
Head	33.5	54.5	53.5	No school/primary	17.7	16.8	21.2
Spouse	26.0	35.0	32.7	Secondary	31.4	40.4	42.2
Child	37.4	6.1	7.5	College	37.4	26.2	25.2
Other relative	3.1	3.9	3.8	Postgraduate	13.5	16.6	11.4
Non-relative	1.1	0.5	2.4				
<u>Region of Residence</u>	100.0	100.0	100.0	Father's birthplace (Foreign stock)	100.0	100.0	100.0
New England	6.4	5.2	7.7	Austria	9.1	10.2	7.7
Middle Atlantic	52.9	59.8	59.3	Germany	6.0	2.4	0.7
North Central	17.6	15.4	12.5	Other western Europe and the Americas, non-U.S.	6.1	4.1	1.7
South	12.1	10.8	10.3	Poland	16.3	20.1	22.7
West	11.0	9.7	10.2	Russia	40.4	47.3	53.1
				Other eastern and southern Europe	14.3	12.5	11.3
				Other	7.7	3.3	2.9

tive of the head.

Another difference which might reveal some problem with the NJPS sampling plan is in region of residence, since NJPS in large part tried to interview Jews in areas where they expected to find them. The results suggest that by and large they were successful in their predictions, but there is some evidence that NJPS overrepresented Jews in the north-central region (upper mid-west) and underrepresented Jews in New England. This latter problem may have arisen if the NJPS assigned the Connecticut suburbs of New York to the New York City area, but this shift would have led to a compensating increase for the middle Atlantic region, which did not occur.

Somewhat more puzzling differences appear in the rest of the table. For example, in each group a similar proportion is third generation -- 13.3 to 13.5% -- but NJPS found more persons who are first generation and the Census more in the second generation. The greater proportion foreign born in the NJPS may be associated with its higher proportion aged 65 or over, but the Census' extra children must then be second rather than third generation. The pattern of differences by marital status has similar puzzles. The higher proportion never married in the Census is consistent with its greater share of young people, but it also found more widows and widowers, and divorced or separated persons despite its lower share of older persons, while NJPS is weighted toward the married. This seems to reflect even more clearly the same processes at work to cause the household relationship differences, so that NJPS was better able to find Jewish families, while the Census was better able to find Jewish individuals.

Data on national origin are presented, but with a strong warning to look simply at gross similarities. The map of Europe has changed too much over the lifetime of these two populations, and an extensive analysis of the coding practices of the two collectors of these data was not feasible at this point, though it may prove to be an important exercise. In general, the Census found far more persons who were born or whose parents were born in Russia and Poland than did the NJPS. Among Yiddish speakers, the difference is between 67.4% and 75.8%. The shares from other areas of eastern and southern Europe were fairly similar, with the result that the NJPS Yiddish speakers include more from western Europe, particularly Germany and Austria, but also more from other western areas as well.

The overall conclusion that must be drawn from the data presented so far is that for all intents and purposes, the sets of data on Yiddish speakers in 1970-71 were drawn from the same universe of Yiddish speaking Jews of that period. The strengths of the Census data can be realized in terms of numbers and comparative power with the security of knowing the ways in which the NJPS shows us Yiddish speakers differ

from the total population of American Jews. The Census data may have an advantage as well for analysis focussing on living arrangements. One problem does emerge in Table 3, however, which requires further study before analyses concerned with socioeconomic status can be performed with equal comfort. Whereas on all other dimensions, Yiddish speakers in the two data sets resembled each other far more than they do to the total Jewish population, this is not the case for education. In general, Yiddish speakers are less well educated than is true for all Jews, and this is particularly the case for the Census file. The proportion attending college is greatest for the total population, 37%, while only 26% of the NJPS Yiddish speakers and 25% of Census Yiddish speakers attended college. Yiddish speakers, by contrast, were more likely only to have attended high school, or less. (Slight differences in the treatment of educational attainment for those still in school may account for the irregularities among those with the least education.) A major problem exists, however, when considering those with the most education. Yiddish speakers in the NJPS are more likely to have continued education beyond college than are non-Yiddish speakers, and this is not the case among the mother-tongue group. As a result, the NJPS subgroup is almost 50% more likely to have continued to this level than is the Census subgroup (16.6% vs. 11.4%). This represents a real problem for reconciling these two groups. It is the NJPS group, however, which appears anomalous, and this may result from the differences in the two Yiddish language questions. Highly educated persons, particularly those with high levels of Jewish education may be most likely to acquire a speaking knowledge of Yiddish even if Yiddish were not present in the home. Further, the Yiddish mother-tongue population is much more consistent in its pattern of lower education. Their bias is thus simpler to adjust for than is that of the NJPS Yiddishists. Further analysis is needed of the subset of highly educated Yiddish speakers in the NJPS, though it seems likely that reconciliation is possible.

Discussion

Assuming that the problem with education can be reconciled, and that examination of other measures of socioeconomic status reinforces the view that Yiddish speakers stand on average somewhat lower than the full population of American Jews, the way is cleared for productive use of the 1970 Census data for the analysis of American Jewry relative to the total American population and the other subgroups. The biases of age, generation, origin and socioeconomic status are clear, and their magnitude assessed. The NJPS is available to calibrate other biases as needed.

The data from the public use file have already been used at least twice: for an analysis of Jewish fertility in California (Watts, 1980) and for a study of ethnic differences in household composition (Kobrin and Goldscheider, 1979; Kobrin, 1979, 1981). The next step, however, should be to go beyond the files currently in use from the census, and

begin a full scale effort to incorporate the other family members appropriately, and build a Yiddish-origin file. For this effort, the NJPS can be used in two ways. First, it can serve as a guide in the development of decision rules as to which other members of a Yiddish-speaking person's household could be reasonably assumed to be Jews. This will be a complex task, but is potentially enormously valuable, since it will focus directly on the issues of intermarriage and decisions of how children are to be raised which are of critical importance in any assessment of change for American Jewry in the near future. Second, the NJPS will continue to be the standard against which biases in the newly constructed Yiddish-origin population can be measured.

It is true that these materials are increasingly out of date. More than a decade has passed, and it is clear that new studies are needed to monitor change both at the community and national levels as American Jews react and change within American society. But the analyses in depth which can help us interpret the meanings of these changes for communities and regions, and for individual lives, requires the full exploitation of the comparative power and national scope these two data sets of 1970-71 can offer in combination. This work has even greater value when you consider that a data file of the 1940 Census will soon be available, in which a mother-tongue question was also asked of all generations, and not long after that, the 1910 Census will enter the public domain. This is the first Census to include a language question. To have data on Yiddish-speakers and their families in the United States for 1910, 1940, and 1970 is to be able to tell the story of American Jewry for most of the twentieth century. The research and policy questions which can then be asked are almost endless. We will be able to observe the formation of new communities and the process by which others age and decay -- not from isolated case studies but as a common process throughout the country. The process of social mobility used by Jews can be observed, and contrasted with those of other important groups. The evolution of patterns of marriage and family building, of work, self-employment and education, of migration and suburbanization will all be opened for analysis. Census survival techniques can be used along with vital rates to estimate patterns of language identification with age, and perhaps to estimate whether there is substantial loss to the Jewish population through progressive loss of identification. Finally, to have comparable trend data on a whole series in issues will make possible prediction in a way never before possible. The data are there, the technology is there. I hope that the work will be done.

Appendix

1970 U.S. Census Public Use Data Files

Public use samples of the 1970 census have been prepared which allow considerable flexibility of analysis. For both the 15% schedule and the 5% schedule, a series of three independent 1/100 samples was produced. Mother-tongue was asked on the 15% sample, and these files contain along with the 15% items, information from the 20% and 100% schedules as well. The three files differ in the level and type of geographic detail, and are called, respectively, the state, county group, and neighborhood samples.

For many purposes, all three files can be merged, yielding 3% of Yiddish origin households. The samples represent, in effect, sampling with replacement so that some households will appear twice, and a few in all three samples. Any analysis at the national level, or for a census *region* could use the total group, allowing finely detailed analysis of small subsets, such as the institutionalized elderly, college students, or the South African born. For analysis at the state level, the state and county group files can be merged, yielding a 2% sample. Smaller areas can only be analyzed using the county group sample, so that only a 1% sample is available for standard metropolitan statistical areas of 250,000 or more population, or for related groups of counties. These should include, however, all of the major Jewish communities.

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