# A Century of Jewish Fertility in an American Community: Cohort Trends and Differentials

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Two general analytic themes pervade recent research on Jewish fertility in the United States:

- (1) Are recent trends in the level and timing of Jewish fertility distinctive? What are the parallels between the recent low level of period fertility and fertility during the economic depression of the 1930s and the baby boom after World War II?
- (2) What are the major sources of fertility differences among contemporary Jewish women, as issues of education and social class no longer differentiate Jewish community life? Has there been a general convergence of differences, such that few internal fertility differentials remain by the late 1980s? In particular, are there new forms of differentiation related to the changing roles of women and of family in recent decades?

These themes are particularly significant to address using data from local American Jewish community studies. They are unlikely to be addressed using more general sources of data because of the absence of religion questions in decennial censuses and the small number of cases of Jews that are included in general surveys. While there are areas of analytic concern that can only be addressed with systematic attention to the non-Jewish population, these themes of trends and differentials are most efficiently addressed with detailed cohort data reconstructed from local Jewish community surveys.

The data from the Rhode Island Jewish population surveys of 1963 and 1987 are particularly well suited to examine these issues because we now have an extensive sequence of data that allows us to reconstruct retrospectively cohort fertility histories over about a century. Since the original study of fertility was comprehensive and detailed (see Goldscheider, 1964, 1986b), systematic comparisons can be made that shed light not only on overall cohort changes in fertility but also on patterns of fertility differentials that span about one hundred years. Thus, we have the opportunity to reexamine a series of relationships for the same community using similar methodological strategies over a 25 year period and thereby to reconstruct the cohort fertility patterns and differential fertility of women for over a century.<sup>1</sup>

We address three major issues with the Rhode Island data: First, we examine long term cohort trends in Jewish fertility, linking them to cohort social demographic changes in the community. We then explore variation in Jewish fertility within the community for these two survey periods, examining changes in the relationship between religious denominational affiliation and Jewish fertility and investigating the linkages between the changing patterns of labor force participation of women outside of the home and Jewish fertility and the potential for conflict between work and family roles.

## **Cohort Fertility Trends**

From the 1963 and 1987 surveys of Rhode Island, we constructed the cohort fertility patterns of ever-married women, for those born in the last decades of the 19th century to the cohort of women born in the period 1963-69. We calculated the average number of children born for each cohort. We used the number of children expected as the basis for estimating the family size of the last three cohorts (1953-69) of women (Table 1).

TABLE 1. TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN EVER BORN FOR COHORTS OF EVER-MARRIED WOHEN BORN FROM BEFORE 1894 TO 1963-69 -Rhode Island Jeuish Community, 1963 and 1967; National Jeuish Population Study, 1970-71

Rhode Island 1987		Rhode Island 1963		NJPS	1970-1	
Birth Cohort	Average Number of Children	Birth Cohort	Average Number of Children	Birth Cohort	Average Number of Children	
1963-69	2.2-	X		X	x	
1958-62	2.0-	X		X	X	
1953-57	1.9-	X		X	х	
1948-52	2.0	X		X	Х	
1943-47	1.6	X		X	х	
1938-42	2.3	X		1936-40	2.3	
1933-37	2.3	X		1931-35	2.4	
1928-32	2.4	1929-33	2.5	1926-30	2.3	
1923-27	2.5	1924-28	2.3	1921-25	2.4	
1913-22	2.1	1914-23	2.1	1916-20	2.1	
х		1914-18	2.0	1911-15	2.0	
X		1909-13	1.8	1906-15	1.8	
X		1904-08	1.6	1901-05	1.5	
X		1894-1903	2.3	1896-1900	2.4	
Before	1913 2.9	Before 1894	3.0			

a. Average number of children expected for all women. Source: For the R.I. birth cohorts from before 1913 to 1969, 1987 Survey of Rhode Island; for the R.I. birth cohorts before 1984 to 1933, 1963 survey of the Greater Providence Metropolitan area; NJPS data were derived from DellaPergola (1980, Table 2).

The two surveys overlap in the cohorts covered, allowing us to compare the fertility of several cohorts from each of these surveys. In every case, the approximate cohort overlap reinforces the consistency of the survey results, despite somewhat different methodologies and some variation in the study population covered (compare columns 1 and 2 with 3 and 4). In no cohort fertility comparison were there any significant discrepancies between the two surveys. For example, the 1929-33 birth cohort of women reconstructed from the 1963 survey had an average of 2.5 children, while the 1928-32 cohort reconstructed from the 1987 survey had an average family size of 2.4. Both the 1914-23 cohort reconstructed from the 1963 survey and the 1913-22 birth cohort of the 1987 survey had the same average family

size of 2.1 children. The largest discrepancy between the two surveys was 0.2 children for the cohorts born during the 1920s.

#### **Trends in Actual Family Size**

What do these cohort data show about the variation in fertility over this period of time? Several important features of these data are noteworthy:

- (1) The family sizes of the older cohorts of women, those born in the last decades of the 19th century, are the highest recorded for the entire range of cohorts-around three children. This characterizes the oldest cohorts in each survey. This is not a large family size by Eastern European Jewish standards or even compared with the women who were having most of their children in the latter part of the 19th century in the United States. It is a high fertility level for Jewish women having their children in the early 20th century in the United States. Note however that this does not reflect the whole pattern of the fertility of women who were having children in the late 19th century, since these women in the late 19th century birth cohorts not only survived to the 1960s and 1980s but were having their children for the most part in the first two decades of the 20th century.
- (2) A clear downward shift in completed family size characterizes the cohorts of women born after 1894, reaching a low of between 1.6 children and 1.8 children for the 1904-13 cohorts. These were second generation American women who were having their families in the 1920s and 1930s, reflecting the full impact of the economic depression on fertility levels and the timing of childbearing.
- (3) A recovery from these very low, below replacement levels of fertility may be clearly discerned in these data. The recovery is evident for the four cohorts born 1914-33 from the 1963 survey, increasing from 2.0 to 2.5. These were women who were having their families during the late 1930s and through the post World War II baby boom. A similar increase is evident from the 1987 survey: cohorts of women born 1913-22 had 2.1 children increasing to around 2.5 children for the 1923-32 birth cohorts. These birth cohorts of women were marrying after World War II (almost all between 1946 and 1958) and having their first child in the period between 1949 and the early 1960s.
- (4) The 1987 data allow for an examination of the follow-up of these "baby boom" patterns for the cohorts born after 1933. The two cohorts born 1933 to 1942 had an average completed family size of 2.3 children; family size declined to a low of 1.6 children for the women born in the early post World War II period (1943-47), who were having their children during the 1960s and early 1970s. They were the offspring of the post World War II baby boom; their parents had 2.4 children on average, but they are not likely to have more than 1.6 children.
- (5) There are already indications from the 1987 Rhode Island survey of a new average family size emerging among the cohorts born in the late 1940s that indicate that the 1.6 average family size of the 1943-47 cohort was exceptionally low. Women born 1948-52 already had an average family size of two children by 1987, higher than the low levels of the 1943-47 cohort. Their younger sisters of the two cohorts 1953-62, those already married and those not married, are expecting to have around the same family size of two children.

#### **Expected Number of Children**

The families of women below age 45, and therefore still in their reproductive period, are incomplete since they have not yet necessarily completed their childbearing. The 1987 survey data show that women age 35-44 (born 1943-52) already had 1.8 children on average and those age 30-34 (1953-57) had 1.6 children. Reflecting decisions to delay childbearing as well as marriage, 63 percent of the women age 25-29 (born 1958-1962) do not yet have children.

In order to obtain an estimate of the eventual family size of those women who had not yet completed their childbearing, we examine the total number of children women expected for the three youngest cohorts in the 1987 survey-women born 1953-69. These data show that the average expected family size reported was two children for the two cohorts of women born 1953-62, with a slightly larger family size (2.2 children) expected by the cohort who have not yet had any children (born 1963-69). About 14 percent of the women in the youngest birth cohort expect not to have any children; 27 percent of those in the 1963-69 cohort and 30 percent of those born in the 1958-62 cohort expect to have more than two children. Except for women in the birth cohort 1943-47, the birth cohorts currently in the reproductive ages in the Rhode Island data as well as those who completed their family size have, or expect to have, about two children on average.<sup>2</sup>

Comparing these family size patterns and family size expectations from the 1987 survey data with results from the 1963 survey data on the Greater Providence Metropolitan Area shows a general stability in the overall low levels of completed and expected family size that has characterized the Jewish community over the last century: this low level has fluctuated around two children per family for the last several generations. The average family size of all ever-married women in 1963 was 2.1, as it was for the 1987 survey.

Elsewhere we have argued that using expected family size is one reasonable basis for projecting actual family size in the future (Goldscheider and Goldscheider, 1989a; for an alternative assessment of expected family size data see Schmelz and DellaPergola, 1988). Assuming that the actual family size of the youngest cohort of Jewish women is very highly correlated with their expected family size, then average family size will remain at population replacement level for the Jewish community of Rhode Island. The realization of these expectations for those 18-29 years of age will result in a slightly higher level of childlessness than previous cohorts and some increase in the proportion who will have more than two children. There seems to be evidence from these data that the 1943-47 cohort is likely to complete their childbearing with less than two children on average and that this low level appears to be an exception to the general pattern. Indeed, women born in the 1948-52 cohort already have had 2.0 children on average. Women who were born 1953-57 already have had 1.6 children and expect to have a completed family size of 1.9 children. The youngest birth cohort of all women that we can examine with confidence in the new Rhode Island survey expect to have 2.2 children. This level of expected family size is consistent with data from other Jewish community surveys and national data that indicate similar levels of expected family size (see

Goldscheider, 1986a; Goldscheider and Mosher, 1988; Goldscheider and Gold-scheider, 1989a).

#### The Generality of Cohort Fertility Data from Local Surveys

These data on birth cohorts in Rhode Island cover a long span of time. The consistency between the overlapping cohorts of the 1963 and 1987 surveys noted earlier increases our confidence that data based on the two surveys represent the Jewish population of Rhode Island. It is appropriate, however, to raise the larger question: Do these data and the patterns they suggest represent the American Jewish population as a whole?

Some have argued that local American Jewish community patterns are not generalizable and hence by inference not very useful for identifying national trends. DellaPergola and Schmelz (1989, p. 171) argue, for example, that the limitations of local Jewish surveys in the United States "do not seem to deter scholars from arriving at far-reaching generalizations about national processes based on the study of a certain specific situation. Such an approach is of dubious validity given the documented differences in demographic, socioeconomic and Jewish characteristics of various regional and local Jewish communities..."

There is considerable evidence that there are regional and community level variations in a wide range of indicators of Jewish life. Nevertheless, in most cases the *processes* associated with Jewish life are similar among Jewish communities. And careful analyses should be able to identify these general processes. In the case of fertility patterns, there is ample evidence to challenge the argument that dismisses or minimizes the value of carefully designed local studies.

First, the expected family size data that we examined for Rhode Island in 1987 are consistent with several major national studies that have not been sponsored by Jewish communities or under "Jewish auspices" and have not been limited to the Jewish population. National estimates indicate an expected family size of 2.1 and 2.2 for ever-married and non-married Jewish women of recent cohorts (see the discussion and review in C. Goldscheider and F. Goldscheider, 1989a; 1989b; Goldscheider and Mosher, 1988; cf. Schmelz and DellaPergola, 1988). So the consistency of these Rhode Island data with national estimates is impressive and cannot be dismissed as "insights of a merely local character" (DellaPergola and Schmelz, 1989, p. 210).

There is another way to check in detail for consistency of patterns between the Rhode Island data and national estimates. In the final column of Table 1 we display the data from the National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) of 1970-71, the only detailed national American Jewish population study with cohort fertility data available on Jews. These cohort data approximately match the cohort fertility data from the 1963 and 1987 Rhode Island surveys.

There are nine birth cohorts from the NJPS data covering women born in the period from 1896 to 1940, and covering their fertility from about the second decade of the twentieth century until about the end of the 1960s. These cohort fertility data from the NJPS are remarkably consistent with the Rhode Island data and always within a range of 0.1 or 0.2 children. Most importantly, the various patterns of

decreases and increases that are reflected in the NJPS data accord with the patterns from the two Rhode Island surveys.

#### **Fertility and Generations**

As an additional way of compressing these cohorts into reasonable but larger multi-cohorts so as to link these cohort fertility trends to other indicators of societal change, we combined several of the cohorts into categories that capture the fundamental social, economic, family, and demographic changes that the American Jewish population has experienced in the last century. For the first time, these data provide estimates of cohort fertility patterns from the late 19th to the late twentieth centuries along with social profiles that are related to fertility at the contextual level. In Table 2 we present the fertility patterns of each of these broader cohorts and briefly describe selected aspects of the detailed social and demographic data that characterize these cohorts. The socioeconomic data were constructed from the more general data of the two Rhode Island surveys and are estimates for these combined

	Late 19th Century	Depression Cohorts	Baby Boom	1970s Cohorts	1990 <b>s</b> Cohorts
		Number of C	hildren	•	
None	3	14	5	7	14
One	9	26	7	18	10
Two	24	39	43	56	47
Three	25	18	35	13	20
Four+	39	3	10	6	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Average	3.1	1.7	2.5	2.0	2.1
	Social	and Demogra	phic In	dicators*	
Age at					
Marriage	20	24	21	24	26
Foreign Bor	n 80	25	10	3	2
2nd Gener.	20	65	45	20	10
3rd+ Gener.	x	10	45	77	88
Years of					
Education	8	12	14	16	18
t Never					
Married	3	7	5	11	15?
t Divorced	0.5	2.5	12	15	20?
Intermarrie	d 1.2	5.6	6.6	20	25?
Orthodox	52	20	ó	4	7
Reform	10	20	33	35	35
% No Jewiah	I				
Education	25	25	18	15	13

TABLE 2. PAMILY SIZE DISTRIBUTIONS AND SELECTED SOCIAL AND Demographic characteristics of five birth cohorts

cohorts. They should be viewed as general approximations rather than precise indicators.

The first cohort combines all women who were born in the last decades of the 19th century, who were ages 65 and older in the 1963 survey. These women had three children on average. Fully four out of ten had four or more children and only three percent were childless. Most of these women were foreign born, married at around age 20, and had their first child 12-18 months after marriage at age 21 or 22. Few of these women worked after they married but well over 95 percent married and very few were divorced. Women of this cohort averaged about eight years of secular education and even fewer years of formal Jewish education. About one fourth had no Jewish education. Many of these women started out their married life with few resources; they were generally better off economically than their parents but struggled to raise their standard of living. Those who went to high school, and those who had higher levels of education, married later (usually at age 24), and had fewer children (about 2.3) compared to their sisters who had less education, married much earlier, and had 3.6 children. The women of this cohort clearly wanted better for their children from the new opportunities emerging in American society. Most of these women were Orthodox in affiliation and in practice and almost none married non-Jews.

This pattern sharply contrasts with the social, demographic, and fertility profile of the cohorts directly exposed to the economic depression in the late 1920s and 1930s in the United States, women who were born in the first decade and a half of the 20th century. Those women had 1.7 children on average, fully 14 percent were childless, an additional 26 percent had only one child, and only three percent had four or more children. Thus, while four out of ten women of the late 19th century cohorts had four or more children, four out of ten women of the depression cohorts had no children or only one child.

This second cohort of women consisted were largely of second generation Americans, who married at ages 23 or 24 and had their first child two to three years after that, when they were around age 26. Some of these women worked during the span of time between high school and when marriage, but only about 20 percent worked after they began to have children. Most were exposed to the hardships of the economic depression that had wiped out many of the early gains of their parents' generation. Almost all grew up in foreign-born families and associated their Jewishness with the "old world" of their immigrant parents' generation. Taking advantage of the access to public education and having parents who had sufficient resources to encourage even their daughters to spend a longer time in school, most of these women completed high school. And the more extensive their education, the later their marriage age and the fewer their children, although the very clear inverse relationship between socioeconomic status and fertility was weakening as almost all these women were under economic pressure to have very small families. Only a small proportion intermarried with non-Jews in this generation, but clearly more than in their parents' generation, and those that did were rarely integrated in the Jewish community. While most grew up in Orthodox homes, only about 20 percent remained Orthodox as adults, 20 percent were affiliated with Reform Judaism and over half identified with Conservative Judaism. Still the level of Jewish education for these women was low and one-fourth had no formal Jewish education.

The baby boom cohorts born in the mid 1920s through the mid 1930s increased their family size to 2.5 children, but did not return to the large proportions of women who had four or more children which had been characteristic of the pre-depression cohorts. A comparison of the family size distributions of the baby boom and depression cohorts shows clearly that the increase in family size among the former was the result of an increase in the proportion of women having two children and the near doubling of the percent of women who had three (from 18 to 35 percent), along with the sharp decline in childlessness and the one child family. While the proportion with four or more children increased from 3 percent to 10 percent, there was no return to the significantly higher levels characteristic of the late 19th century cohorts. The women who were having children during the baby boom were marrying at ages 21 or 22, earlier than those who had their children during the 1930s; they also were having their first child at an earlier age.

Increasing proportions of this cohort were third generation Americans but an equal number grew up in households where their parents were foreign born. Higher proportions attended college and many did not work while raising their families but returned to work, often part time, after their children went off to college or got married. The women who worked were largely in clerical and sales jobs, with teaching and social work their major professional occupations. Significant increases were taking place in the level of their socioeconomic gains, reinforced by the stability of their life styles. Few of these women divorced, but many more did so than the cohort facing the economic depression; almost all married, and there were no indications of significant increases in the extent of marriage with persons who were not born Jewish. There were increases in both the level of Jewish education and in the proportion who identified with Reform and Conservative Judaism, with less than 10 percent identifying themselves as Orthodox. This period of upward social mobility placed almost all Jews of this cohort in the middle classes, with those left behind in the lower classes having fewer children than their sisters who were better off. The traditional inverse relationship between socioeconomic status and fertility had not only weakened, but tended to be positive.

The fourth cohort covers women who were having children in the 1970s (women who were born in the late 1940s and early 1950s). They reduced their family size by 20 percent from 2.5 children of the baby boom cohorts to on average of 2.0. These birth cohorts were distinctive in the very high proportion with two children (56 percent), their higher level of one child families and lower levels of three-or-more child families. But they had not returned to the pattern of the childless family in the economic depression cohorts. These women were caught up in the major changes of the women's movement in the United States, questioning the traditional role of women in the household and traditional marriages in general. Fully three fourths of these third generation Jewish American women had at least some exposure to college and about half completed college. Many more viewed having children and family continuity as a role conflict with their individual independence and autonomy as women. They placed greater emphasis on their careers and new patterns were emerging of later marriage, increased divorce, and increased independence. Intermarriage with non-Jews increased significantly with this cohort along with a continuing decline of affiliation with the more traditional, Orthodox and Conservative Judaism. More remained Jewish ethnically, in ways that were less "religious" and ritual oriented and less linked to the formal institutional and organizational structure of the Jewish community.

We obviously do not really know what the fertility levels will be of the generation born in the middle to late 1960s who will be having their families until the end of the 20th century. We also do not know the nature of their social and demographic patterns as these too will unfold in the course of the next two decades. We can, however, estimate some of these future patterns on the basis of current characteristics, values, and attitudes. The data in the last column of Table 2 should therefore be viewed as general estimates rather than as rigorous conclusions.

One important implication of the current family size expectations of 2.1 children of the cohort of the 1990s is that they too will have distinctive patterns of fertility. It is likely that the level of their fertility will not be exceptional compared with the long term pattern of two children on average that has characterized this community and the American Jewish population as a whole for several generations. The parity distribution of their fertility will likely be different, as will be the timing of their childbearing. If the expected family size of women born between 1958-69 cohorts materializes in the 1990s, then the 2.1 children these women will have will be exactly at replacement levels. More of this cohort will be childless (a return to that feature of the depression cohorts), but significantly fewer will have only one child and there should be a somewhat larger proportion who will have three or more children compared with the cohort of the 1970s. These women and men will marry significantly later than previously recorded cohorts, are likely to begin their childbearing in their early thirties, and divorce, remarriage, and intermarriage are likely to increase substantially. Almost 90 percent of these women will have gone to college, 75-80 percent will be working outside the home full or part time, most during the period of time that their children are in school and growing up in their household. Most will have some exposure to Jewishness through formal Jewish education and are likely to continue their connections with the Jewish community. They are not likely to identify Judaism (i.e. the religious element) as a major component of their Jewishness; if their current attitudes and values are indicative, they are likely to view the core of their Jewishness in terms of family connections and the State of Israel. They will have been exposed to an increasing number of years of formal Jewish education, and significant numbers will have visited Israel or at least will consider the State of Israel a major part of their Jewish identity. Less than 10 percent are likely to think of themselves as Orthodox, 40 percent will affiliate with Conservative Judaism and about one third will be Reform.

## Fertility Variation Among Jews

Cohort changes in fertility are linked to broad changes in the nature of the Jewish community. Four major sociodemographic changes have occurred in American Jewish communities that are linked to these cohort changes:

- (1) The transformation of the socioeconomic status of Jews, particularly their high levels of educational attainment and occupational achievement;
- (2) Ecological changes and the residential dispersal of the Jewish community;
- (3) Changes in the expression of Judaism and Jewishness; and
- (4) The revolution in women's roles.

The broad societal level linkages to cohort fertility trends that we have examined can be translated into specific questions about fertility differentials at the group level. We review below four differentials that have been important in the study of Jewish fertility in the United States.

#### Social Class and Residential Differentials

The major internal social class variations characteristic of earlier cohorts which experienced rapid generational economic mobility have all but disappeared among recent cohorts. Most young adult Jews have at least completed college, and in the Rhode Island data about half of the young adult men and women age 25-44 had been to graduate school; 40 percent of the men and 50 percent of women were in professional occupations. And these are second generation college educated men and women, the children of college educated parents. Therefore the social class variant in fertility operates within a very narrow range between those with some college education, those who completed college, and those with graduate school education. Indeed, not to have completed college is increasingly a rare event in the American Jewish community. The relationship between fertility and social class is no longer a low-middle-high comparison but a comparison among those whose life styles and values range from the lower middle to the upper middle classes. It is not surprising therefore that few family size differences can be documented that are statistically significant by these educational or occupational measures.

The shifting residential pattern, from urban to suburban and back to urban areas, as well as to new areas of residence that are less densely settled Jewishly continue long term ecological processes characteristic of American Jews. There are real differences in fertility, particularly between suburban and urban areas, but these are related in complex ways to Jewish fertility, reflecting age composition and life course differences among areas and selective migration. To note that suburban areas have higher fertility than urban areas is essentially to document the selectivity effects of migration and the compositional and structural effects (age, generation, and marital status) of places. There are likely to be some regional effects on fertility net of composition, but we do not yet have a sufficient empirical basis to test that relationship.

Two important sources of variation cannot be dismissed: religiosity and the role of women. We review briefly how these patterns of differential fertility have changed over the last quarter of a century and what the new data allow us to examine.

#### **Religiosity and Jewish Fertility**

In the 1960s, the results of fertility studies of the Jewish community of Greater Providence as well as in other United States communities pointed to a changing relationship between religiosity and Jewish fertility. Those who defined themselves as Orthodox or who were more traditional by other measures of religious observance (regular synagogue attendance or the regular performance of religious rituals), had a larger family size than those who defined themselves as Conservative or Reform and were less observant of religious rituals. The critical point in the detailed systematic analysis of these patterns was that these differences by religiosity measures were narrowing over the generations, as exposure to American society changed the religious life styles of all the Jewish denominations. Moreover, most if not all of the differences among Jews by religious denomination were a direct result of the social class composition of these religious categories. Thus, for example, few fertility differences among the various levels of religious observance remained after controlling statistically for social class composition and generation of those identified with the three religious denominations and those defined as more and less religious based on religious ritual practices. And there was no indication from the data that religious ideological factors influenced the reproductive behavior of Jewish women in the United States (see Goldscheider, 1986b).

A quarter of a century later, the 1987 survey data showed (Table 3) that there were small and insignificant differences between the fertility patterns of those who defined themselves as Conservative and Reform Jews. However, those who defined themselves as Orthodox had somewhat larger families than Conservative and Reform Jews, a trend that was evident among those over age 65 as well as among those age 30-39. For example, the average family size among women over age 65 who

Age	Bìrth Cohort	Orthodox	Conse	rvative	Reform			
		1963 Survey						
65+	Before 1898	3.1	2.	7	2.5			
45-64	1899-1918	1.8	2.	0	2.0			
35-44	1919-1928	2.4	2.	2	2.4			
	1987 Survey							
65+	Before 1922	2.5	1.	8	1.8			
15-64	1923-1942	2.4	2.	4	2.2			
35-44	1943-1952	2.4	1.	8	1.6			
18-34-	1953-1969	2.5	2.	0	1.9			
		นอ	orking <sup>*</sup>	Not Worki	ng			
40-44	1943-1947		1.5	2.2				
35-39	1948-1952		1.9	1.9				
18-34	1953-1969		1.9	2.0				

TABLE 3. AVERAGE FAMILY SIZE BY RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION, COHORTS OF UOMEN BORN BEFORE 1698 TO 1953-1969; EXPECTED FAMILY SIZE BY LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION OF UOMEN

a. The average number of children expected to all vomen was used for this cohort. Note that the number of cases for those who identify themselves as Orthodox is small and should be interpreted with caution.

b. Total number of expected children.

Source: 1963 Survey of Greater Providence and 1987 Survey of Rhode Island.

identified themselves as either Conservative or Reform was 1.8 children; among older Orthodox women average family size was 2.5 children. Among those age 35-44 the average number of children born among the Orthodox was 2.4 compared with 1.8 and 1.6 among the Conservative and Reform, respectively. The average number of children already born to women of the 1948-57 birth cohort (i.e., who were age 30-39 in 1987) was 1.6 children for both Conservative and Reform Jews, while among the small number of Orthodox women, the average was around three children. The data on family size expectations of the youngest cohort are consistent with these conclusions: Orthodox women age 18-34 in Rhode Island expect to have 2.5 children, higher than the 2.0 children expected by women who identify themselves with Conservative and Reform Judaism.

These data show, therefore, a very stable level of higher fertility among the Orthodox of the last several generations, of around 2.5 children, and some possibility that younger Orthodox women will have a slightly larger family size. This pattern combines with a tendency among the younger Orthodox toward a pattern of earlier marriage and early childbearing. These levels are high primarily when compared to Conservative and Reform Jews. Although small in number, Orthodox Jews in Rhode Island and probably elsewhere, are contributing disproportionately to the population growth of Jewish communities in the United States.

#### Labor Force Participation

A final consideration using the data on expected family size focuses on the impact of the changing labor force participation of Jewish women, their high rate of working outside the home, and the potential conflict between these new work-career roles and childbearing. In the 1960s the proportion of women working who were married and in the childbearing ages was very low. The data from the survey in 1963 show that the labor force participation rate among women in their reproductive period was very low, around 20 percent, and lower than among non-Jewish women. Indeed the small number of women who were engaged in work outside the home in the 1960s precluded a detailed analysis of the relationship between fertility and labor force participation.

It was generally the case in the 1960s that family size was inversely related to the labor force participation of women: women who worked were likely to have fewer children. It was not clear whether the smaller family size of Jewish women who worked was an outcome of "work-related reasons" or whether the causal direction was the opposite, i.e., those with fewer children were more likely to work. Since those who were working were distributed among both the higher and lower levels of education (the former were more career oriented and the latter worked to make ends meet), it was difficult to disentangle the social class connection to the lower fertility of working women. In short, in the 1960s, there was little basis from the data available to indicate that a critical factor in the lower fertility of Jewish women in general was the alternative roles to family that Jewish women in particular had uncovered through working in the labor force outside the home. Nor was there evidence of a specific relationship between labor force participation and Jewish fertility that was critical in understanding the patterns of American Jewish fertility. In contrast, the data from the 1987 survey suggest that there has been a major change in the extent and the relationship patterns between fertility and labor force participation of women. First, there has been a major and dramatic increase in the participation of women in the labor force outside the home. The survey documented that 75 percent of the Jewish women age 25-44 and 60 percent of those age 45-64 were working for pay outside the home. The 1963 survey showed that only about 25 percent of the women age 25-44 worked outside the home. The labor force participation for Jewish women was higher than for non-Jews in Rhode Island reflecting their jobs, their career orientations, and their high levels of education, not their poverty.

The data point to a clear pattern of higher expected family size among women age 40-44 who are currently not working compared to the pattern for women working full or part time. Indeed, we have shown in Table 1 that overall the women age 40-44 (the birth cohort 1943-47) had around 1.6 children, a particularly low level compared to earlier and later cohorts. However, a careful look at this cohort of women reveals that the women who are not working at all have an average of 2.2 children compared to 1.5 children for those women who are working full or part time.<sup>3</sup>

This pattern among the older age cohort does not characterize women in the two younger age cohorts, ages 35-39 and 18-34. For those age 35-39, the average expected number of children is similar for women working full time, part time, or not working (1.9 children). For the youngest cohort (age 18-34) working women expected 2.1 children and non-working women expected 2.0 children. These data are based on expectations about completed family size and not actual behavior and are limited by the small number of cases of non-working women available for analysis (since most of the women are now currently working). Nevertheless, it seems likely that the pattern of conflict between career and childbearing, between women's roles outside the home and having children, is no longer characteristic of younger Jewish women, even though it may have been characteristic of Jewish women in earlier cohorts. It appears from these data that the major increases in the work participation of Jewish women documented by the 1987 survey have not resulted in changes in expected family size, although it is likely to have affected the timing of both marriage and childbearing.

These findings are consistent with the results of the 1975 study of the Boston Jewish community (Goldscheider, 1986a) and contrast sharply with the patterns for non-Jews. These data challenge the inference made about patterns of relationships between socioeconomic factors and fertility for the Jewish population from relationships characteristic of the general population in the United States. While the general pattern shows lower fertility among those with higher education and among women who work outside the home, this does not characterize the Jewish population. The argument that "higher education and greater labor force participation of women lead to lower actual fertility and lower fertility expectations in the general U.S. population" and therefore must also characterize the Jewish population (DellaPergola and Schmelz, 1989, p. 213) cannot be accepted in the light of this additional evidence from the Rhode Island survey. Similar findings from the Boston study were dismissed because they contradicted the inference from the general American population and it was argued that they "must be treated with severe reservations until further evidence accrues" (DellaPergola and Schmelz, 1989, p. 213). The new data from Rhode Island and national data on other fertility relationships, (for example between educational attainment of women and fertility behavior and expectations that have been documented in Goldscheider and Goldscheider, 1989b) show that Jewish patterns are distinctive. They therefore call into question conclusions made by analogy from the general American population to patterns among Jews. It is clear that new direct evidence for Jews has accrued that shows the distinctive relationship between labor force participation of Jewish women and their fertility expectations.

The major changes over the last several decades appear to have been in the timing of childbearing, which has been delayed along with the delay in age at marriage. Changes in the timing of when women have children is more characteristic of educated women and those with careers working outside the home. These new family formation and childbearing patterns fit the high educational level of Jewish women in Rhode Island and their high level of labor force participation. However, the new roles that have become characteristic of Rhode Island Jewish women do not appear to have led to significant changes in the number of children expected.

## **Concluding Observations**

The Jewish population in the United States has experienced major changes in the last century from an immigrant to a fourth generation community (Goldscheider and Zuckerman, 1984; Goldscheider, 1986a, 1986c). Jews have become highly educated, affluent, and have developed new forms of expressing Judaism and Jewishness. In the context of these broad transformations, family patterns, including the number of children and the timing of childbearing, have been transformed as well. Fertility changes over the last century have in part reflected the broader changes characterizing the Jewish community and in part have influenced those changes. The complexity of Jewish fertility fluctuations does not neatly fit into a simple scheme of demographic transition from high to low fertility levels. But these patterns of fertility fit into a broader social science theoretical framework that links demographic change to social, economic, and family transformations that have characterized the American Jewish community in the processes of integration and modernization.

The evidence we have presented shows that a century of cohort fertility trends and differentials reflect the contexts of American society and the distinctive socioeconomic and family patterns of Jews. Of critical importance for the analysis of fertility, as well as for family and fertility policies, is the emphasis on the changing roles of Jewish women and the impact of this revolution on recent demographic patterns. The data from several studies have revealed the adjustments American Jewish women and men have made to the challenges of both family and work roles. It is clear from these studies, and the data that we have presented, that there has been a rejection of the "traditional" family but not a rejection of new forms of family relationships that are more egalitarian. There is no evidence that the changes in family roles of women and men have resulted in a pattern of fertility decline that portends the demographic erosion of the Jewish community. Whether we accept these findings from local community studies and from national data sources on the fertility expectations of young cohorts, or remain skeptical until additional data from the 1990 National Jewish Population Study become available, it is clear that a critical theme in Jewish fertility studies will be how the changing roles of women in the 1970s and 1980s have affected their family formation patterns and their family size. It is likely that Jewish fertility patterns (particularly the timing of childbearing and the relationships between specific socioeconomic factors and fertility, not necessarily the level of fertility per se) will remain distinctive, both relative to the non-Jewish American population as a whole and relative to earlier cohorts of Jewish families in the United States.

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## **Bibliographic Note**

The data presented here, unless otherwise specified, were prepared especially for this analysis. A copy of the data from the 1987 survey has been filed in the North American Jewish Data Bank. A general report on the 1987 Rhode Island survey containing extensive descriptive materials on the community and its changes over the last guarter of a century is available in Goldscheider and Goldstein (1988). This volume also includes some general substantive comparisons between the findings of the 1987 and 1963 surveys and notes some differences in the survey populations covered and the different methodologies utilized. The 1963 survey of the Greater Providence Metropolitan Area was analyzed extensively in Goldstein and Goldscheider, 1968 that was reprinted in 1985. It also was used as the basis of a detailed descriptive report to the Jewish community in Goldstein (1964). In addition, the fertility data of the 1963 survey were analyzed in detail and were reported on in a 1964 doctoral dissertation and in a series of articles in the 1960s. A reprint of the dissertation and a list of articles on Jewish fertility that used the 1963 data are reviewed and documented in Goldscheider (1986b). This volume contains materials on Jewish fertility from the 1963 survey that were not previously accessible in published form, and includes a brief new introduction as well.

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