



**Israeli
Society
in the
Twenty-First
Century**
Immigration,
Inequality,
and Religious
Conflict

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10 | Family Formation and Generational Continuities

Families are the building blocks of social organization. In obvious ways, families reproduce and socialize the next generation in the values and lifestyles of the community. They are sources of both comfort and conflict, of generational continuity and change, of financial support and the transmission of values; and they are the basis of the social and economic networks that adults share. Family life places the next generation in adult roles, educates children about assuming responsibilities in the community, and fosters family and socially related obligations. Families provide support and networks that are economic and political, as well as social and personal.

The formation of new families is among the most significant transitions young adults make in becoming fuller members of their community. These transitions are marked by ceremonies and rituals, providing public and social recognition of new families in the community. Newly separated from their families of origin and independent of the full constraints of their parents and their parents' household, new families are nevertheless linked to the past and form family-based connections. These transitions may be viewed as linkages among families in which new relationships develop for the couple, for their parents and relatives, for broader family networks, and, in turn, for the community. Because these linkages are often economic and social, cultural and political, they redefine the integration of the individuals within the community. In these ways, family patterns reflect the broader societies of which they are a part and shape those societies as new generations develop and new families are formed.

Marriage and Family

Like families elsewhere, Israeli families are characterized by transitions that are consistent with the changing contexts of society. The mixture of persons in Israel from very different societies, with consistently different family backgrounds, sets up the basis for family formations consistent with these new social, economic, political, and

cultural contexts. The radical societal changes that Israel has experienced since the 1950s, along with the integration of immigrants from diverse countries of origin and the continuing differentiation in Israel of ethnic communities, raise two questions about family change and continuity. First, how have social, demographic, economic, and cultural changes influenced Israeli family patterns? Second, how are family changes linked to the integration of ethnic groups and the narrowing of family difference among those coming from diverse families of origin?

The family life course from birth to death is experienced very differently by persons of different social and cultural backgrounds who are exposed to a rapidly changing society. The overall dramatic shifts in mortality and the fertility experienced by Israeli society imply that more adults in Israel grow up with surviving parents and grandparents, with the possibility of more-extensive generational relationships, vertically and horizontally. The reduction in fertility results in fewer siblings in smaller families, placing greater individual responsibilities on children to care for the older generation and creating a very different milieu in the parental household. Given the same general investments, smaller families mean more attention to individual children, and, at the same time, there are fewer years in which the household contains parents and children.

These changes also place strains on marriages. The reduction in mortality implies that marriages have the potential of lasting more years and involving more-intensive relationships, which in turn may lead to strains and possible dissolution. *The shorter span of the life course when there are young children living in the household is likely to have an impact on the economic roles of men and women. As the state replaces the family in providing some of the care for older and less-healthy persons while also*

relieving some of their social obligations, the welfare system also replaces certain family responsibility for the education and socialization of children.

With the extension of life, the reduction of family size, and the myriad social changes that ensue, critical questions emerge: What happens to family values? Do these radical social and demographic changes carry within them the cost of greater emphasis on the individual to the detriment of the family? Do the benefits accompanying structural changes in the extension of life and the reduction of family size outweigh the costs to the family?

Changes in family structure have an impact on the decisions about

whether, when, and whom to marry. In some ways, marriage is often the step toward independence from the family of origin but also is likely to be the basis of forming new family linkages, with both the family of origin and the spouse's family. Moreover, the timing of marriage is linked to education and work roles and to other sources of independence. Who one marries is important as it relates to connections to family extensions and to networks for the couple as well as for their children. A focus on independence from family and on family extensions connects to broader issues of communities and their cohesiveness.

There are two revolutions confronting the family at the end of the twentieth century (F. Goldscheider and Waite 1991). The first is internal to the family and involves a change in gender roles, increasing the participation of women in the paid labor force outside the home and challenging the traditional separation of male and female activities. The second revolution involves reductions in family living and increases in living alone and in settings where individual worth and dignity are not associated with family roles. This chapter assesses changes in the marriage and childbearing regimes and alternatives as expressed in living arrangements among young adults. Marriage across ethnic boundaries informs us further about the social integration of families and the family networks that are established and reinforced, hence about the relative assimilation of ethnic groups. As part of our analysis, we explore a firmer answer to the question of how traditionalistic Israelis are and infer how important family connections are in changes that have enveloped the society over time.

Family Formation Extent and Timing

At what age do Israeli men and women start new families? Are there major ethnic differences in these family formation patterns among Jews and between Jews and Arabs? The available data portray almost universal exposure to marriage. Over 85% of the women and over 80% of the men in Israel have been married by ages 35–39, and most by age 30. Men marry at later ages than women, but almost everyone (95% of the population) has been or will be married at least once during his or her lifetime. Marriage is thus the normative life-course experience in Israel, with but minor exceptions.

When the data in 2011 are reviewed in a life-course perspective, they display the movement from almost universal singlehood in the 15–19 age

group to almost universal marriage by later adulthood. Marriage rates increase slowly among those ages 20–24, more for women than for men, toward a gradual equalization of levels among men and women. There is little teenage marriage among all groups in Israel; fully 90% of Moslem women ages 15–19 have not yet married. By ages 20–24, 49% of the Moslem women had never married compared to 78% of Jewish women. While 64% of the Jewish Israeli men were single at ages 25–29, only 45% of the Moslem men were still single.

The evidence supports the conclusion that family-formation patterns have changed substantially toward the later timing of marriage, but they have changed little in terms of eventual family formation. During five decades of major demographic change (1961–2011), the proportion of young Jewish adults ages 20–24 who are single has increased. In 1961, 34% of the women and 74% of the men in their early twenties were single; by 2011, the proportions had increased to almost 80% of the women and 90% of the men. The postponement of marriage has been more dramatic for women than for men and, hence, the gender gap in singlehood has narrowed considerably. These changes over time for the Jewish population are consistent with the increase in schooling and military obligations, both extending young-adult dependency on parents further into adulthood. *Over 90% of the Jewish women and over 70% of the Jewish men in Israel have been married.*

These patterns of singlehood are reflected in the changing median age at marriage, which has increased among Jewish women and Jewish men and 19% as Israeli men participated in the baby and marriage booms characteristic of Western societies.¹ In 2005–2011 the median age at marriage was 19 for Jewish grooms and 26 for Jewish brides. Three decades earlier (1970) the median age of marriage for Jewish grooms was 25 and 22 for Jewish brides. Over time, groups from all ethnic origins have moved toward a new "Israeli" pattern of marriage timing and a considerable narrowing of Jewish ethnic differences in this regard.

The ages of marriage of Moslem Israeli men and women have also become later, although more slowly and at earlier ages than among Jews. Moslem Arab women marry on average much later than do Moslems; Moslem men marry significantly later than either Moslem or Jewish men. The pattern of Druze women and men is very similar to that of Israeli

Moslems: There is a five-year age gap between brides and grooms of the three non-Jewish Israeli groups, twice as high as the age gap between Jewish brides and grooms.

Most Israeli Jews (56%) report that the ideal age to start a family is between 25–29 for men, and almost as many say the same for Jewish women (49%); most Israeli Arabs (63%) agree that the ideal age for men to start a family is 25–29 but 20–24 for women (62%). Religiosity is a key differentiator of the ideal age to start a family among Israeli Jews: 88% of the *haredim* (the ultraorthodox) consider the ideal age for men to start a family is before 25 compared to 42% of the *datim* (religious), 10% of the *mesortim* (traditional), and 5% of the *hilonim* (secular).² Fully one-third of the secular see the ideal age for starting a family as 30 or older, compared to less than a quarter of those defined as traditional and almost none of the religious. The ideal age for a Jewish woman to marry follows the same pattern by religiosity but at somewhat younger ages.³

Familyism, Divorce, and Living Arrangements

Taken together, data on the extent and timing of marriage suggest the normative condition of marriage and, indirectly, the family centeredness of Israeli society. Clearly, new families are being formed in Israel almost universally, even as the timing of marriage is changing. As marriage timing extends later into the adult life course, there is an increased potential for dependence on parents for a longer period of time and an increase in time available for living in a nonfamily context. Getting married may be viewed as one indicator of the value placed on families; the changing level of divorce and the extent of nonfamily living arrangements are two additional indicators that support this assessment:

Divorce. Although the divorce rate in Israel is relatively low by U.S. standards, an increase in divorce is well documented. Since the mid-1950s, the number of divorces has increased in Israel from about 2,100 per year to 3,100 in the mid-1970s and to over 13,000 in 2011 (over 10,000 of which are among Jewish Israelis). The increasing numbers reveal the spread of the divorce experience among larger numbers of persons but do not indicate the relative rate per population. A calculation of crude divorce rates per 1,000 population also shows an increase, from an average of 1.0 to 1.7 per 1,000 over the five-decade period to 2011. There has been a doubling of the divorce rate from 1961 to 2011 among Jewish men and women ages

17 to 49. Since the early 1970s, the rate of divorce among Moslem men and women has also more than doubled, and the number of divorces among non-Moslem Arabs in Israel is very low. Thus, although divorce is increasing in Israel, the low level further supports the argument of the continued family centeredness of Israeli society.⁴

Living Arrangements. Two indicators of strong family ties—the high levels of marriage and low rates of divorce—are consistent with an assessment of changing living-arrangement patterns in Israel. Most unmarried persons live in family settings, with marriage marking the transition from one family setting to the next, and with the incorporation of a widowed parent into a family-based household. The extension of life and the increase in age at marriage have not resulted in large proportions of people living independently. Compared to the United States and to other Western countries, there has not been a conspicuous growth of nonfamily living in Israel.⁵ In the last decades these patterns have begun to slowly change. The percentage of cohabiting Jewish couples that were unmarried doubled from 2.5% in 2000 to 5% in 2011, and a large majority (69%) of the unmarried couples living together are childless.

Recent research on cohabitation in the twenty-first century documents the increasing level of unmarried cohabitation among Jewish Israelis who define themselves as secular or traditional. This is particularly the case as a prelude to marriage. Over three-fourths of the secular-identified Jews support cohabitation among the unmarried and 83% support premarital cohabitation. Only about one-fourth of the *datim* (religiously identified) are supportive of cohabitation among the unmarried and few among the ultraorthodox are supportive. Religious women are less likely to postpone marriage or experience alternative nonfamily living arrangements. Moslem women in Israel closely resemble the ultraorthodox in this regard (Bystron 2012, table 2).

There has been a slow increase in the proportion of households containing only one person: only 10% of the Jewish households in 1960 were one-person households, and this percentage doubled in 50 years. There has been little or no increase among Arabs. Clearly, the Israeli level of nonfamily living is below that of Western European countries (where it is about 25% of all households) but above that of many other parts of the world (see F. Goldscheider and C. Goldscheider 1989, 1994). In the early 1970s, most unmarried adults in Israel lived with their families until they

were married, and marriage was the major passage to independence. But this has been changing over time. At the other end of the life course, there were 753,000 Israeli Jews over age 65 living in households in 2011. Of these, 24.4% were living alone; 14% of the older Arab population were living alone (Okun 2013).

Research has shown that there is some ethnic variation in living arrangements in Israel. Moslems are least likely to live in nonfamily households, Jews of Asian and African origins are next, and those of European/American origins are most likely to live in nonfamily households. This ethnic pattern does not appear to be the result of education, life cycle, or the marital status factors that differentiate these communities. There were no generational differences within the ethnic categories, suggesting that the length of stay or experience in Israeli society had little effect on this dimension of ethnic differences in family and kinship ties. Differences among ethnic categories are therefore not due to differences in economic resources or life-cycle factors that differentiate these communities (R. Goldscheider and Fisher 1989); they are consistent with ethnic differences in familism and the association of living alone with greater independence and individualism. This too seems to be changing, and ethnic differences seems to be narrowing among the second and third generations.

Families and Assimilation

Ethnic Families and Inter marriages

The familistic context of Israeli society implies the importance of family-based networks for social and economic activities. One source of these family networks is the ties that are formed within communities through marriage. An examination of changes over time in who marries whom in Israel helps us to understand the family connections associated with marriage choices and, in particular, changes in the extent of marriages within ethnic communities.

Intermarriage across ethnic lines may be understood in terms of two interrelated themes. First, and most obviously, marrying across ethnic communities reflects the assimilation and integration of populations of different ethnic origins. Isolated ethnic communities that do not have social contacts with each other are unlikely to experience high rates of intermarriage. A second theme emphasizes the linkages through marriage of two different extended families. Interethnic marriage may be viewed as

the breakdown of the ethnic family based on networks and an increase in broader community and national allegiances. Increasing levels of interethnic marriages imply greater independence and autonomy of couples from their family origins. Intermarriage rates have often been interpreted as a prime indicator of the breakdown of the family, or increases in individual decision making toward the maximization of personal choice.

Intermarriage among ethnic groups counterbalances tendencies toward ethnic particularism and the reinforcement of ethnic communities. Marriage patterns are structural dimensions of social life that most clearly and directly appear to be linked to ethnic continuity. The incidence of interethnic and intraethnic marriages reflects and affects ethnic continuity. In a system of choices, persons who interact are likely to develop a relationship that may result in marriage. Hence, the greater the isolation of ethnic groups, the greater the barriers to social interaction across ethnic groups and the lower likelihood that interethnic marriages will occur. The higher the rate of interethnic marriages, the more likely that the family networks of ethnic groups will be reduced, leading generationally to further interethnic marriages. Indeed, intermarriage has often been viewed as the quintessential indicator of ethnic assimilation; at the group level, it is associated with the path to the ethnic melting pot.

By implication, ethnic communities are not able to sustain social and cultural continuity in the face of high levels of interethnic marriage. The argument has been made that by the third or fourth generation of ethnic intermarriages the identity and the culture, the in-group interaction and the networks, have become so mixed that ethnic origin no longer is salient.

Although the power of intermarriage to dilute and diminish ethnicity is clear, we should be cautious about overinterpreting intermarriage rates and their changes over time. First, individuals can move into and out of ethnic communities, reducing the salience of ethnicity for them as individuals, even as the community as a whole retains a core with greater commitment to ethnic continuity. The selective out-marriage of those who are more marginal to the ethnic group may result in a core remnant of ethnic-group members who are even more ethnically committed. Although it may seem counterintuitive, intermarriage may actually strengthen ethnic communities over time if those who leave are the most marginal ethnically and if those who remain are core sources of social and cultural continuity.

A second caution relates to the assumption that the intermarriage

rate itself is an indicator of the total assimilation of groups (as viewed by Gordon 1963; Alba 1990; Alba and Nee 2005; and many others who have studied ethnic assimilation). The key question left unspecified is how the children of interethnically married persons view themselves and how they are viewed by the various communities with which they identify. If children of the intermarried identify themselves in terms of the ethnic group of one of their parents, then the ethnic identity of that group is not diminished. There is, of course, the possibility that interethnic marriage would result in strengthening neither origin group but rather the formation of a new ethnic group—broader than the original groups but containing some of the elements of both. Some interethnic marriages in Israel have resulted in the formation (and perhaps the reinforcement) of new ethnic divisions among Jews, the result of some types of marriages and not others. Marriages between Jews of Russian and Argentine origins in Israel or between those of Yemenite and Moroccan origins would fit the newly formed categories of “European-American” and of “Asian-African” that have emerged (see chapter 2).

A third caution is the assumption that increases in the rate of intermarriage mean the growth of individual choice over family preferences. The emphasis on choices that individuals make often excludes consideration of the constraints on the options available. Often there are limits on the availability of potential spouses within the market of eligible spouses. The selection of spouses from an ethnic group is based first and foremost on availability. If there are few potential spouses to choose from, then spouses can be selected from a different ethnic origin, if they are defined within the field of eligible partners. To the extent that markets of eligible spouses contract and expand with waves of immigration and with the age, gender, and marital-status composition of specific ethnic communities, marriage markets are likely to change rapidly. For example, if there are very few immigrants from Argentina in Israel of the appropriate age, gender, and marital status, the choice of an Argentine marriage partner will be severely constrained, unless the field of eligible spouses is expanded to include a wider range of potential partners from other Latin American countries or from other ethnic origins. The interethnic-marriage issue, then, involves not only whether young adults “choose” persons from other ethnic origins but also whether there are persons available from similar origins to select from.

Another option for those who cannot find a spouse within their own ethnic group and who do not widen the range of eligible spouses is to remain unmarried. If judged by the marriage patterns in Israel, this more-radical alternative (nonmarriage) has been selected by few. Indeed, Israelis faced with a narrowing market of potential spouses of their own ethnic origins have almost always chosen to expand the pool of eligible spouses to include those of other ethnic origins.⁶ This ethnic-marital choice has been reinforced by the Zionist Israeli ideology, which challenges the legitimacy of ethnic origins among the Israeli-born (see chapter 2). Marriages between those of different ethnic origins have been actively encouraged by the national ideology in Israel (Rosen 1982). Interethnic marriage in Israel may be viewed under some circumstances as a trade-off between familism and ethnic continuity. In the clash between the values placed on ethnic community (with marriage-market constraints) and family formation, the overwhelming majority of Israelis appear to select family values.⁷

The Increase in Interethnic Marriages

Overall rates of ethnic out-marriages show clear increases over time. By the end of the 1980s, about 20% of the Jewish marriages in Israel were between those of different ethnic origins. The level has remained relatively steady over the past several decades (Okun 2013). Census data on first- and second-generation couples married in Israel who were in their first marriage (Eisenbach 1989) show an increase in intermarriage by marriage cohort; interethnic marriages increased from 8% in the 1949–1953 period to 22% in the 1979–1983 period. In part, this increase reflects changes in the composition of the population—the increase in the proportion of Asian/Africans in the marriageable age group from about 36% in the early 1950s to about 62% in the 1980s. This compositional shift accounts for increases (from the 1960s to the 1980s) in the proportion marrying out among European/Americans (from 16% to 32%). The proportions marrying out remained at a rather steady level among Asian/Africans (about 16%). In the 1949–1953 marriage cohort, 80% of women of African origin married men from Africa; 81% of Asian women married men from Asia; and 95% of European women married European men. In the 1979–1983 cohort, these figures were 59%, 57%, and 73%, respectively (Eisenbach 1992, table A.2). Viewed another way, the proportion out-married of those married in Israel (defined dichotomously as Asian/African and European/American)

was 5% until 1945, increasing to 9% from 1946 to 1955, to 13% from 1956 to 1961, to 18% from 1964 to 1973, and to 21% from 1974 to 1983 (Schmelz et al. 1990). In each cohort, and for both husbands and wives, the Israeli born have a higher ethnic out-marriage rate than the foreign born. However, there is a great deal of specific country-of-origin variation in the extent of ethnic homogamy. Thus, for those marrying in the period from 1974 to 1983, higher rates of in-marriage characterize Jews from Yemen, India, Morocco, and the USSR, compared to Turkey, Egypt, Germany, and Austria. These differences reflect the size of the marriage market and the recency of immigration, as well as the strength of the communal-ethnic ties and cultural-family relationships that have characterized some groups (C. Goldscheider 1983; Schmelz, Dellapergola, and Avner 1990).

An interesting exploration of these patterns of ethnic homogamy can be organized by examining data on the ethnic origins of Israeli couples in 2012. Using broad continent-of-origin definitions of ethnicity, about half of the men whose continent of origin was Africa were living with women whose continent of origin was Africa (and another 20% were living with women from Asian countries). Over 70% of men of European origin were living with women of European origin. In this context, the majority of Israel's population lived in ethnically homogeneous households in 2012. This is a minimum measure since part of the difficulty with these data is the category "Israel" as a continent of origin where ancestry or ethnic origin has not been specified. Thus, while 40% of the American-origin households are homogeneous, adding European-origin households increases the homogamy to 74%. Of the women not in European/American homogeneously defined households, most are in households with third-generation "Israeli" men. It is likely that the overwhelming majority of these are from European origins.

The major conclusion from these data is a clear pattern of ethnic homogamy, redefined by broad continents of origin rather than specific countries and recategorized into Israeli-defined groups. Research in general shows a modest increase in interethnic marriages but the retention of broadly defined ethnic homogamy. When each ethnic group's total number of homogeneous married couples is compared with those who were married since 1996 (and living in Israel in 2012), the evidence shows that African homogeneous households declined from 55 to 43%; the Asian from 52 to 27%, and the European from 71 to 60%. Again the decline in homog-

amous households is evident, with the retention of homogamy for broad ethnic groups in Israel.

The increasing level of intermarriage across ethnic groups directs our attention to the question of the characteristics of those who marry within their own ethnic group compared to those who out-marry. One of the most fascinating results of recent analyses of interethnic marriages in Israel is the educational selectivity of the intermarried among different ethnic-origin groups. These ethnic-education trade-offs are quite complex. The notion that intermarriage between those from different ethnic origins results in an ethnic melting pot is grossly oversimplified without taking into account these trade-offs. And, unfortunately, the available evidence is weakest when intergenerational questions are raised. Even with weak evidence, there is a reasonable case to be made that some ethnic intermarriages in Israel result in the strengthening of ethnic communities. Children of mixed ethnic origin can primarily select the ethnic group of one of the parents, adopt neutrality with regard to ethnic origin, remain committed to both ethnic sides of the family, or vary ethnic identity with context and with changes over the life cycle. These choices mean that only if ethnicity loses its salience in the family and community senses can we expect ethnic intermarriages to result in the reduced significance of ethnic origins generationally. There are indications at the community and socioeconomic levels that such a diminution of ethnic salience is unlikely, at least for the next generation in Israel (cf. Okun 2004; Okun and Khaït-Marely 2008).

What does the limited evidence reveal about these trade-offs? The most significant finding is that interethnic marriages are more likely among the Middle Eastern-origin ethnic populations with higher educational levels, but are more likely among Western-origin groups with lower educational levels. The proportion out-marrying in the Middle Eastern-origin group increases with education, and it declines with education in the Western-origin group (Eisenbach 1992; Schmelz, Dellapergola, and Avner 1990; C. Goldscheider 2002).

No less important, the decline of place-of-origin endogamy also reflects the erosion of ethnicity as a central axis of social organization in the Jewish population (Matras 1986, 32, 38). Others have made a similar argument that "the high rate of ethnic intermarriage reflects ethnic convergences and at the same time contributes to further integration in the

future" (Peres and Katz 1991, 30). Using a special file that linked records from the 1995 and the 1983 censuses of Israel, Okun has explored for the first time the marriage behavior of persons of mixed ethnic ancestries. She finds that persons of mixed ethnic ancestry are less ethnically endogenous than other groups, which contributes to ethnic blending and to the blurring of ethnic boundaries. Using a complex statistical model examining ethnic-educational trade-offs, she suggests that ethnic distinctiveness is reinforced in these marriages. In particular, marriage patterns of those of mixed ancestry increase the association between low socioeconomic status and Asian/African identity (Okun 2004).

Some supportive evidence among high school students in Israel reinforces the notion of specific ethnic-origin preferences among those who will marry in the next generation. Israeli-born Jewish young adults of Israeli-born parents raised with egalitarian and liberal attitudes toward ethnicity express very ethnic-based attitudes about their own ethnic preferences in spouse selection and have fairly strong negative views about specific ethnic origins. Those of Middle Eastern origin are more likely to view others of Middle Eastern origin (not necessarily of their specific country of origin but the Israeli-constructed category of "Oriental") as preferable potential spouses and partners over "Europeans" or Westerners (Shahar 1991).

There is every basis for arguing the continuing salience of ethnicity in the next generations because of the overlap of ethnic residential patterns and education and occupational patterns with ethnic origin, along with implications for socialization and politics. Ethnicity in Israel is not simply the reflection of closeness to cultural roots; it is the lack of socioeconomic equalization among groups that has characterized Jewish ethnic subpopulations. Family, economic, and religious networks have served to reinforce family ties and ethnic communities based on family ties. The shape ethnicity will take in the long term will depend in large part on the continuing overlap of ethnicity and social class, residence, and culture in the next generation. Religiosity, which has served as a major dividing line among Israeli Jews, may reinforce ethnic variation as well (chapter 6).

A general review of the evidence in Israel suggests two conclusions. First, interethnic marriages have increased over time; and second, higher interethnic-marriage rates among Jews do not, in and of themselves, imply the demise of ethnic communities. These conclusions parallel

those pertaining to the narrowing of ethnic differences in other areas of Israeli social life. While increases in interethnic marriages in Israel do not indicate total ethnic-group assimilation, they are consistent with the changing definition of Jewish ethnicity. Ethnic differences that primarily reflected past origins diminished as Israeli institutions and Israeli contexts shaped immigrant groups and their children. Institutions, such as the army and the system of ethnically integrated schooling, operated to reinforce national allegiances and collectively shared culture. However, family centrality helped sustain ethnic continuity and reinforced ethnic communities based on residential patterns. Stable rates of intermarriage and the educational and ethnic trade-offs, along with uncertainty of how children of mixed ethnic origins will select their own ethnic communities over their life course, point to the continuing salience of ethnicity for several generations.

The ethnic options available to the next generation of the interethnically married may help to solve the ethnic-origin dilemma of these children. Their generational choices are to select an ethnic origin of one of the parents or retain the combined mixture of Western and Middle Eastern origins. The latter combination is possible, but the evidence suggests that it is not a viable alternative (Okun 2004).

The second generation of mixed ethnic origins could become "just" Israeli and treat ethnicity as irrelevant. Those of mixed origins might select this option while retaining some relationship to grandparents or other extended relatives who are ethnically identified. Members of the mixed third generation are most likely to respond to a question about their ethnic identity by identifying themselves as "Israeli," but that may not be sufficiently clear as a basis for networking or for identity in all circumstances, even though it solves the confusion of the moment. Networks based on ethnicity are not simply the result of the social psychology of personal identity. The option of individuals identifying themselves only as "Israeli" is most likely to occur when ethnicity at the group level loses its family and social-class importance.

The revolutions in family patterns in Israel are surprising—not because of the changes that have occurred but because of the continuities in family centrality despite major changes. Family has remained normative for almost everyone in Israel. Radical demographic and social changes have not moved persons toward nonfamily alternatives, either nonmarriage

or extensive nonfamily living arrangements. Delayed marriage, which is responsive to the social, economic, educational, and political contexts among all ethnic origin groups in Israeli society, becomes marriage postponed but not forgone. Changes both in the proportion married and in the age at which persons marry reveal important ethnic convergences and join the converging ethnic differences in other areas as powerful indications of some forms of the national integration of ethnic groups.

Family connections must serve economic needs, provide comfort and support of children and grandchildren, and provide social and political connections in order to be sustained in the face of the major demographic and social upheavals Israel has experienced. It is the structural connections to families, not the “value” placed on the family, that have shaped these types of family continuities. Family continuities in Israel are one basis of continuities in ethnic communities. Ethnicity and family issues revolve around generations and around the transmission of community and culture, of rights and obligations, and of continuity and social networks. Together families and ethnicity provide the building blocks for the next generation of Israeli families.

The Transition to Small Family Size

The Fertility Revolution and Ethnic Convergences

One of the revolutions associated with the modernization of Western societies has been the transition from large to small family size. This transition has been linked to the changing roles of women, to the increasing investment parents make in their children, and to the higher costs of raising them. It has also been related to the greater ability of couples to implement their reproductive decisions. Indeed, the revolutionary changes in fertility levels are one manifestation of the increasing range of choices that accompanies modernization and the higher value placed on individual rather than family goals (C. Goldscheider 1992, 2006). An examination of changing fertility levels in Israel provides insight into the linkages among our themes of inequality, familism, and ethnicity.

Fertility levels, in conjunction with mortality, are primary sources of population growth; with the decline in mortality in Israel, fertility levels have shaped rates of overall population growth and have become sources of differential ethnic-population growth rates. Given the importance of population growth for economic planning and development, govern-

ments have often fostered policies to enhance fertility control and to provide maternal and child-welfare services to emphasize the quality of life over the number of children. Fertility-control policies in Israel have often clashed with pro-natalist Zionist ideologies and Israeli norms, which valued the increase of Jewish population through diverse means—primarily by way of immigration but also through sustained large family size (see the historical review in Friedlander and Goldscheider 1979).

Powerful linkages between immigration and the differential fertility of ethnic-origin populations raise questions about the demographic assimilation of groups among Jews and between Jews and Arabs as well. Through the combined effects of immigration and differential fertility, the ethnic composition of Israel has been transformed. Generational continuity of ethnic communities is dependent on childbearing and intraethnic marriages. The study of the transition to smaller family size is therefore important for its demographic relevance, for what it implies about individual gender and family roles, and for its relevance to the structure and composition of communities over time. Because of the links between family size, generational replacement, and social mobility, the decline in fertility level has been used as a prime indicator of the advantage (or continuing disadvantage) of subpopulations and of the relative integration of immigrant groups from different fertility backgrounds.

Similar to other countries, Israel has experienced fertility reductions over time and the transition to small family size; fertility changes have occurred in more-compressed time periods in Israel than elsewhere and without direct government intervention. Moreover, significant fertility variation has characterized major ethnic subgroups in Israel in the past and is likely to continue to have implications for social, economic, political, and demographic processes into the next decades.

Changing Fertility Patterns over Time

What have been the major changes in fertility and family size in Israel? A careful and detailed look at fertility patterns in Israel since the 1950s reveals several major revolutions, not one simple pattern. The fertility level of Israelis of European/American origins has fluctuated, though it has remained near lower levels, with slight increases over time. In contrast, there has been a steady decline in Christian Arab fertility levels over more than a half century and a significant reduction in the Moslem Israeli fertility

level since the 1970s. Major fertility reductions have characterized Jewish immigrants from Asian and African countries and their Israeli-born children, dropping by 50% from the 1950s to the 1980s.

Thus, the first fertility pattern that emerges clearly is a reduction in family size over time, fluctuating around low levels of controlled fertility in the new millennium. There has been a decline in the crude birthrate among Jews from 34 per 1,000 population in the 1920s to below 30 per 1,000 in the mid-1950s, to around 20 per 1,000 starting in the late 1980s and continuing through the first decade of the twenty-first century. This rather steady overall decline was, in fact, much sharper than what may appear at first glance, since the decline incorporates immigrant Jewish families arriving in the 1950s from Middle Eastern countries, who were characterized by higher fertility than that of the European-origin Jewish population in Israel.

A second pattern evident in these data is the consistently higher levels of fertility among Moslems than among Jews throughout these seven decades. The Moslem fertility level, overall, has also been high relative to world fertility levels, although the current level is among the lowest of Arab populations in the Middle East. The crude birthrate of Moslems in Palestine was over 50 per 1,000 population in the 1920s, and it continued to fluctuate at high levels until the mid-1970s, when a noticeable decline in Moslem fertility began. The Moslem crude birthrate in Israel in the 1990s averaged 37 per 1,000 population, a level characteristic of the Jewish population in Palestine in the 1920s and comparable to that of many countries in Asia and Africa. In 2012 the crude birthrate of Moslem Israelis was around 28 per 1,000.

The declining fertility over time and the higher Moslem than Jewish fertility level raise the question of the changing gap between these populations in Israel. The crude birthrate gap between Jews and Moslems in Palestine and in Israel increased significantly until the end of the 1960s, and from an 18-point gap (per 1,000) to a 26-point gap in the early 1970s. The increasing differences between Moslem and Jewish birthrates reflect the relative stability of the Moslem level and sharp declines in the crude birthrate among Jews. Since the mid-1970s, the gap between these populations has narrowed considerably as the crude birthrate among Moslems declined and the Jewish rate declined only slightly during the same period.

These three patterns—general fertility-rate declines, higher Moslem than Jewish fertility levels, and the changing fertility gap between those two populations—are derived from simple measures, relating births to total Jewish and Moslem populations rather than to women in their childbearing period. A more-refined measure of fertility (and one that has more-intuitive meaning) is the total fertility rate: the cumulative age-specific pattern of births to women in the childbearing ages.⁸ Changes in these rates over time and in other direct fertility measures reveal clearly the overall decline of one child per woman among Israeli families from the mid-1950s until the 1980s, from a total fertility rate of 4 children per woman until 1970 to 3 children per woman during the decades of the 1980s, 1990s, and up to 2010. This decline was quite pronounced among women with larger numbers of births. The proportion of women with 5 or more births declined in Israel from about 25% before 1970 to about 15% in the 1990s. Examining the total fertility rate shows a Moslem fertility decline from over 5 children in the 1980s to around 4.5 children in the 1990s, to 3.6 in the period 2005–2009 (Okun 2013, table A1).

These measures of changing fertility levels over time reinforce the conclusions derived from the crude birthrate data and add details and refinements. For the Jewish population as a whole, there was a decline of 1 child per woman on average (from 3.6 to 2.7 children) during the period from 1955 to the 1990s; the proportion of Jewish women having 5 or more births fell by half, from 24% in 1960 to 13% in the 1990s (the proportion actually dipped below 10% in the 1980s). Impressive fertility shifts occurred among ethnic groups in the Jewish population. Among Israeli Jews born in Asian and African countries, the total fertility rate dropped steadily and dramatically in 40 years—from a total fertility rate of 5.7 children per woman in 1955 to 3.2 in the 1990s. The fertility level of European/American-origin women has been lower and declined only modestly, from 2.6 children per woman in 1955 to 2.3 in the 1990s, having increased to 2.8 children during the 1970s and 1980s.

Fertility convergences among Jewish women of different ethnic origins (and with different fertility histories) have occurred in Israel, even as women of Asian and African origin have retained a somewhat higher level than those of Western or European origin. Convergences mean narrower gaps over time, not necessarily the full closure of differential fertility among all groups.

Fertility Transitions, Immigration, and Jewish Cohorts

The fertility changes that I have described direct attention to the reasons underlying these changes and to the factors that need to be taken into account for their explanation. Research addressing these issues provides the basis for understanding the connections between fertility and social-demographic, economic, and political changes and the changing roles of women and families in the Jewish population.⁹ The country of origin of immigrants is associated with their particular socioeconomic backgrounds. European-origin groups have had, and continue to have, low levels of fertility. Jewish immigrants from European countries arriving before the establishment of the state had, on average, 2.3 children over several cohorts, with no fertility differences among people from different places of origin within Europe. Jewish immigrants from Europe who arrived after the establishment of the state had even lower fertility levels, reflecting the effects of the extremely harsh circumstances of World War II on women's reproductive patterns. Recent cohorts of European-origin groups in Israel have experienced about a 10% upswing in fertility (a mini-baby boom), averaging around 2.5 children per married woman. The small increase in fertility characterized all European-origin groups and has resulted in higher levels than that in Western industrialized countries.

Immigration from Asian countries was concentrated in the earlier periods of nation-building. Immigrants from North African countries arrived later and were spread over a large number of years (see chapter 3). Initial levels of fertility among both groups were high—about 6.5 births among those who married in the 1930s (most of whom were married and had children before immigrating to Israel), declining to an average of 3 children among marriage cohorts of the 1950s (most of whom were married and having children in Israel). Fertility levels were almost halved between cohorts 25 years apart, and large family size has been replaced by medium-to-small families. Jewish immigrants from North African countries had higher levels of initial fertility than did Asian immigrants, about 7.5 children per woman. Sharp and early fertility reductions took place for these immigrants upon exposure to Israeli society. These reductions occurred quite soon after arrival in Israel and converged with the patterns for Asian immigrants.

The fertility differences between Asian and African immigrants and among specific country-of-origin groups within these populations re-

fect differences in the timing of immigration and length of exposure to Israeli society, not cultural differences among groups. As length of exposure to Israeli society increased, these country-of-origin differences in fertility disappeared. Fertility convergences in Israel have occurred within and between Jewish ethnic groups. Israeli-born Jews of Western origin have somewhat higher fertility than their parents' generation; the second generation of Middle Eastern origin has lower fertility than their parents' generation. Cohort fertility patterns are thus converging between Israelis of Western and of Middle Eastern origins.

One puzzling feature of these changes is that the fertility convergences of the second and later generations of Israelis have stabilized at higher levels when compared to those of Western countries generally. Explanations for these higher fertility levels relate to specific economic and military conditions in Israel. The economic conditions in Israel have improved considerably for the Jewish population in the post-1967 period, following the Six Day War. Because of the improvements, births, which had been delayed or postponed because of the socioeconomic hardships of earlier periods (among the children of European immigrants) increased, as did the desire for a third child. But why should the Israeli-born want and have three and not two children on average? It may reflect what demographers have referred to as an "insurance" effect, motivated by Israel's flow of military casualties (Friedlander and Goldscheider 1978). This means that people decide on an additional child as insurance against the risk that war or military action will result in the premature death of one child. Higher fertility levels may thus be a result of the willingness of Israeli Jewish families to allocate more resources, compared to people in Western countries, toward raising a somewhat larger family. The economic circumstances of the late 1960s and 1970s transformed that potential into childbearing. This would account for the fertility increase among all Jewish ethnic groups (and none of the Arab populations) and their fertility convergences.

Other explanations emphasize the familistic orientation of Israeli society and the continuing segregated roles of Israeli women. Unlike in some Western industrialized nations, the employment of women in Israel does not seem to conflict with their family-size goals, nor does it lead to their increased autonomy and status within the family (chapter 7; Kupinsky 1992). The greater familism in Israeli society is thus associated with higher fertility levels in Israel than in Western countries.

Clearly, the contemporary Israeli pattern involves fluctuations around low fertility levels, and there is no indication of a return to larger family size. Most interesting, but less fully documented, are the unfolding fertility patterns among the recent immigrant groups from the former Soviet Union, who have had very low fertility, and immigrants from Ethiopia, who have had higher fertility and mortality. How these groups will develop in Israel will be the social-demographic stories of the twenty-first century (cf. Nahmias 2004).

With increased levels of education among all Jewish ethnic groups, fertility differentials are converging and are likely to converge even further. Indeed, ethnic-origin differences in fertility levels tend to be minimal in the most recent marriage cohorts. As length of exposure to the norms and values of Israeli society and to the institutions that shape the lives of those married and educated in Israel increases, fertility patterns lose their ethnic distinctiveness (Eisenbach 1992). In the past, the convergence in ethnic fertility has often been attributed to the changes and improvements in the level of schooling, the negative association between number of children and investment in children, the increase in interethnic marriages, and a likely convergence of human-capital endowments (Ben-Porath 1986a).

Interesting and important insights into fertility have been derived from Israel's Social Surveys 1979–2009 with links to questions on religiosity (Okun 2013; see chapter 6). Among Jews, religiosity is a significant differentiator of family size. In 2007–2009, the total fertility rate among ultraorthodox women was 6.5 (having declined from over 7 children in the late 1980s through 2005); among the “religious” the total fertility rate was 4.2; the rate among Jews who defined themselves as traditional was less than 2.5, and among secular Jews the rate was just under 2.1 (actually an increase in the rate among the secular from the 1990s). In short there is a direct relationship between religiosity and fertility among Jewish Israelis in each of the time periods considered over a period of three decades. Some have argued that the somewhat higher fertility in Israel compared to other Western countries is primarily the effect of the larger family size of the religious Jewish population (Friedlander and Feldman 1993).

The similar experiences of Israeli young adults and their shared communications in a variety of settings are likely to result in the growing similarity of their family-building and family-size patterns. Commonalities in terms of women's roles, the army, and educational experiences; the small-

ness of the country; and the national welfare-entitlement system yield some uniform family-formation patterns and shared generational family-size goals. Access to information about controlling family size among the diverse segments of the population influences ethnic fertility convergences over time and helps to explain the family-size decline converging toward a new Israeli norm. Familism, gender-role segregation, and traditional pressures from both Judaism and secular Zionism result in levels of fertility higher than in Western countries in general.

Moslem and Christian Fertility Changes in Israel

In general the fertility of Moslem women declined from around 6 children in the late 1970s to 3.6 in the 2005–2009 period. But the relationship between religiosity and Moslem fertility within each of the five-year periods considered is somewhat erratic and no singular pattern emerges, although there is an unmistakable family-size decline among Moslem women in all religiosity categories. The crude birthrate data documents the slowness of the Moslem fertility reduction and the changes that began to occur in the 1970s. More-detailed data show important variations between the fertility of Moslems and Christians in Israel. Fertility levels among Moslems fell from a high of over 9 children per woman on average in the 1960s to 4.7 children per woman in the 1990s; 50% of the Moslem women had 5 or more births through the 1970s, declining by 50% in the late 1990s. Moslem fertility levels continue to be higher than those among Jews but have clearly moved toward lower levels in recent generations. Processes of Moslem-Jewish fertility convergences are therefore clearly evident.

The Arab population in Israel is clearly not homogeneous in terms of fertility processes. Both the level of fertility and the pace of its reduction differentiate Christian from Moslem Israelis; in turn, the fertility patterns of both populations are different in pace and level from the Jewish ethnic patterns that we described. Nevertheless, convergence toward small family size has become ubiquitous among all groups. The Arab Christian fertility levels are more comparable to the Jewish levels (indeed, their fertility levels have often been below the overall Jewish levels in the 1980s and 1990s). The fertility decline has been more regular among the Christian population, and there are indications that it began among the urban and more-educated women as early as the marriage cohort of the 1920s

(see Friedlander, Eisenbach, and Goldscheider 1979). In 1998, the total fertility rate among Arab Christians was 2.6 children per woman (lower than among Asian and African Jewish immigrants, higher than among European/Americans, and slightly below the overall Jewish level of 2.7) compared to 4.8 per woman among Moslems and 3.1 per woman among Druze. Very sharp declines in childbearing among younger Christian Arab women may be noted, as well as the stopping of childbearing at higher parities.

A study of ideal family size by marriage cohort (as viewed in the 1970s) has documented the changing attitudinal and normative expectations of Arab women (C. Goldscheider and Friedlander 1986). Christian women who were married before 1955 had an ideal family size of about 6 children, but the cohort married in the post-1967 period had an average ideal family size of 4 children. Moslem women of the older cohort had an ideal family size of about 8 children, declining among those married in the 1970s to 5 children. In contrast to the Jewish pattern, most of the Moslem women controlled family size after long marriage durations, using contraception for stopping childbearing but not for the spacing of births. In the period since 1975, fertility reductions occurred even among Moslem women at shorter marriage durations and have included all socioeconomic segments of the Arab population, even the less educated (Eisenbach 1989). The total fertility rate for the 1990s (4.7) is similar to the number of children considered ideal by the cohorts of Moslem women married in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The general factors associated with lower Arab fertility patterns include the continuing declines and low levels of mortality (life expectancy increased to about 73 for both sexes; infant mortality declined from 60 deaths per 1,000 births at the end of the 1950s, to 41 deaths per 1,000 births in 1975, to 15 in 1989, and to 9 in 1999—see chapter 9). In addition, there has been a continuing increase in the educational attainment of Moslem women: those who benefited from the mandatory education act in Israel reached their childbearing period only in the 1970s. Thus, among those women who were married between 1974 and 1978, only 8% had 9 or more years of education, compared to 31% among those who married from 1979 to 1983. The labor-force pattern of Israeli Moslems has also changed. The formal participation of Moslem women in the paid labor force remains lower than that of Christian and Jewish women—but the

more-educated Moslem women (13 years or more of schooling) participate in the labor force as much as the Christian Arab women (Eisenbach 1989; Grossbard-Shechtman and Neuman 1998).

Other factors influencing Moslem fertility connect Moslem families to the communities in which they live. There has been a shift in the kind of male employment, tied to the economic "integration" of Arabs in the Jewish economy (chapter 4). Moslem Israelis have left agriculture and commute to jobs in the Jewish sector (in 1983 only 7% of Moslem men worked in agriculture, compared to 18% in 1972 and 35% in 1961; fully half of the Moslem men worked outside their residential areas in the 1980s). The portion of men working in white-collar jobs was 14% in 1983, double that of a decade earlier. Part, but not all, of the move toward white-collar jobs was facilitated by the entrance into Israel of Arab day laborers from the administered territories, pushing the Israeli Moslems upward socioeconomically. Standards of living have increased in real terms: between 1972 and 1983, the income of Moslem laborers in cities increased by 50%, a 5% per capita increase per year. Consumption has increased as well (Eisenbach 1989; see also chapter 8).

Increases in the standard of living and in education, along with the benefits from the welfare state and the increase in the opportunity structure, suggest that the power of the extended family and the *hamula* has declined,¹⁶ particularly among younger couples whose economic futures are less under the control of their extended families. Thus, from the point of view of the Arab community, fertility is a feature of intergenerational family and economic connections and is an important reflection of the ways Arab Israeli communities are organized. Changes in the decade beginning in the 1970s put pressures on this connection and, combined with socioeconomic increases, led to the beginning of the transition to small family size.

Have state policies been involved in the changing pattern of Arab fertility? The state has provided the opportunity to increase the educational level of the population; the provision of social security organized at the national level has increased the expectations for higher levels of living. Moreover, the state supports families through subsidies and tax benefits; welfare payments through the national insurance system may, in the early years, have prevented an earlier and even sharper fertility decline (see Friedlander, Eisenbach, and Goldscheider 1979). The shift toward smaller

families in conjunction with economic trends has steadily eroded the control that the *hamula* exercised over women and the value of children and large family size. These changes have broken the powerful linkage between place of residence, *hamula*, and fertility (Al Haj 1987).

There has been a slight increase in the average age that Moslem women marry, from 19.7 years in 1960 to 20.6 in the 1980s and 1990s. In the period from 1964 to 1968, 34% of those who married were under age 18, compared to 18% among those married from 1979 to 1983. It is estimated that about one-third of the decline in the fertility of Moslem women between 1972 and 1983 can be accounted for by the decline in early marriage (Eisenbach 1989). The relationship between education of women and their age at marriage is U-shaped among Moslems. Both the least educated and the most educated marry later, in part because of the arranged-marriage system wherein women with education are less desirable spouses and women with more education are more likely to delay marriage until after school and some work experience. Thus, when the average age of marriage of Moslem women was 20.6 years, it was 21.7 for those with 0 to 4 years of education and 22.8 years for those with 13 or more years of schooling. Later age at marriage characterizes the Moslem population in the recent period and for each of the levels of education (Eisenbach 1989). The declining Moslem fertility among the younger generation has occurred primarily through the use of contraception to control births within marriage.

Changes in marriage and in the control of fertility within marriage are clearly linked to the major demographic and socioeconomic transitions that have characterized the Moslem Israeli population in the last three decades, and these changes gained momentum in the 1970s and 1980s. Large family size contradicts the emerging tastes associated with higher standards of living and increased education.

The importance of higher Arab than Jewish fertility for differential population growth is unmistakable. The emerging ethnic convergence in fertility levels indicates the end of the sharp fertility gap that has characterized these populations for a century. High fertility rates reflect the traditional family roles of Moslem women, their segregation, lower status, and less power in the society. High fertility has been costly for Arab women and families; it has affected the availability of socioeconomic opportunities for the next generation. In large part, the traditional role of Arab women has almost always been treated as one of the determinants of sustained high

fertility levels. The argument has been that unless the status of women changes to nonchildbearing roles, there is little likelihood of a significant change in fertility rates. As a result of this perspective, the theoretical challenge became to understand why the role of Arab Israeli women did not change with the first indication of economic development and why large family size was reinforced by the absence of migration and by state welfare policies (Friedlander, Eisenbach, and Goldscheider 1979; chapter 4).

But gender and family roles are not only causes but also consequences of the size of families. Large family size reinforces the traditional ties of women to households and families and enhances their segregated roles. It takes sustained economic, political, and social-demographic changes to break the cycle so that women (and men) are able to move toward the small-family-size model. Often this sustained break comes with migration (or immigration), when the family is no longer the source of economic reward and family members become less dependent on traditional economic supports. The break between family and economic resources is often facilitated by geographic and social mobility. In the case of Moslem Israelis, the state reinforced the family and economic connection as it sustained a dependency of Arab Israelis on the Jewish economic sector. The absence of Arab geographic mobility resulted in higher levels of dependency at a time when economic and social characteristics would have led to the expectation of greater mobility. Only after sustained changes could the cycle be broken. The longer-term disadvantages of high fertility levels for mobility is clearly emerging for Israeli Arabs, and the role of large family size in sustaining the family-oriented roles of women is clearly weakening.

The Nature and Impact of Fertility Policies

There is no reason to postulate (as some have in the past—see Bachi 1977 and the extensive evaluation in Friedlander and Goldscheider 1979) that Israel will face a demographic “crisis” from the differential population-growth implications of the low fertility levels of Jewish Israelis and the high fertility levels of Arab Israelis. The differential fertility of Jews and Arabs does not translate into differential population-growth rates that result in a “demographic threat” from Arab Israelis or from zero population growth among the Jewish population. The higher-than-average level of Jewish fertility (even not taking into account the powerful and continuous

demographic role of Jewish immigration to Israel) and the declining rate of Moslem fertility (even not taking into account their small proportion of the total population) make the Israeli concern over a demographic crisis unrealistic. Indeed, the continual fears expressed about the potential “decline” in the Jewish population in Israel is a demographic myth, reinforced by the lower fertility levels of Jews in communities outside Israel and by the threat that is invoked by the Holocaust and the continuous Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Without an empirical basis to identify a problem, it is difficult to consider seriously fertility-stimulating policies. Nevertheless, there is a demographic policy center attached to the prime minister’s office in Israel that has, over the years, espoused policies to increase Jewish fertility in Israel. Myths are often powerful when they are reinforced by a broader ideology, regardless of the evidence about the reality. A central tenet of Zionism is the need to “repopulate” the Jewish nation-state and rebuild it culturally as the center of world Jewry since, it is postulated, Jewish communities outside the state are not likely to survive demographically and culturally. On these grounds, the higher fertility level of the Israeli Arab population and the lower-than-average Jewish fertility level in communities outside Israel reinforce these myths of a Jewish demographic crisis in Israel.

Fertility policies in the Israeli context have in the past been pro-natalist in ideology and have been addressed to the Jewish population (Friedlander and Goldscheider 1979, 1984).¹¹ Official fertility policies have never been effectively implemented, however, and have had marginal or no impact on increasing fertility levels. Indeed, as I have reviewed, the major feature of fertility in Israel has been its remarkable decline, particularly among Middle Eastern immigrants and their children. This transition from the larger to the small family occurred without direct government intervention and primarily through the use of nonmechanical contraceptive means, withdrawal, abortion—not always legal—and delayed marriage. No fertility policy has been designed for the Arab population in Israel, although it has been influenced indirectly by health- and welfare-entitlement programs designed for the Jewish population. Modern contraception has become more readily available from the public-health clinics that serve the majority of Israel’s population, Jewish and Arab.

Given the heterogeneity of Israel’s population and the fertility levels characteristic of the various communities, religious and ethnic, a compre-

hensive fertility policy would have to be differential. By this I mean that policy measures directed at reducing fertility for some communities (e.g., rural Moslems) would not be applicable to others (e.g., Israelis of European origin) (see C. Goldscheider and Friedlander 1986). If, for ideological or political reasons, the state of Israel wants to increase the fertility level of the Jewish population as part of a grander Zionist design to increase the population of Jews, such pro-natalism would hardly be appropriate for Israeli Arabs. It is difficult to construct a national pro-natalist policy that does not apply to all the various segments of the population that is not at the same time coercive or discriminatory. The tensions between the democratic base of Israeli society and its ethnic particularism are clearly reflected in these concerns.

There are fertility policies that are direct in that they are specific to fertility issues; other policies have primarily socioeconomic or welfare goals that have important, albeit indirect, consequences for families and fertility. Policies relate to both the normative climate of reproduction and the provision of efficient means of fertility control. Data on fertility norms collected in the mid-1970s and reinforced by survey data in the 1980s point unmistakably to the normative changes that have already occurred for the high-fertility populations of Israel. The difficult task of restructuring norms toward smaller family size has already occurred, in large part as a result of the transformations in socioeconomic conditions, families, and women’s roles.

The provision of a full range of contraceptive information and family-planning strategies will reduce the reliance on abortion as a last resort for unplanned late births and the reliance on less-effective birth-control methods. Unlike in other countries, a significant proportion of abortions in Israel are obtained by married women with several children (Okun 1997; Wilder 2000). The introduction of new contraceptives would provide women with greater autonomy and control over their lives and would reduce their dependency on male-controlled contraceptives. Current contraceptive patterns often result in the use of inefficient contraception and in unplanned pregnancy (among older as well as younger women). The provision of contraceptives to all communities would enhance greater demographic equality among religious and ethnic communities. Policies that expand these family-planning services can rely on the existing public-health institutions and mother-child clinics, which have already played

an important role in bringing medical care to the population and which have reduced significantly the differential accessibility of that care to the more economically disadvantaged sectors.

The major reasons that a more-equitable policy of family-planning information and access has not been implemented are related to the co-occurrence of political-family-ideological-religious interests. The religious and socially conservative argument emphasizes the traditional sanctity and importance of the family, the retention of traditional roles for women within the family, and limiting the role of sexual activity to marriage. Normally, these forces would be on the decline in a modernizing country that is governed by a secular polity. Two features upset these processes in Israel. First, religious institutions and political parties have played an important part in recent years in coalition politics. The price of the religion-and-politics connection has been the disproportionate power of religious institutions in reinforcing limited contraceptive access. In turn, this connection has been reinforced by the Zionist ideological commitment (among some but not all secular Zionists) to increase the Jewish population of the state, either through immigration of Jews from outside Israel or through the retention of a larger family size. The external conditions of the Arab-Israel conflict and the concern expressed by some Israeli policymakers about the large Arab populations that surround the state of Israel or the growing Palestinian population living in the West Bank further strengthen this ideological concern about Jewish population size.

So Israel has not and is unlikely to adopt a policy that more democratically educates the population in the planning of family size and in the use of efficient contraception. This does not mean that fertility will increase or that contraception will not be used. Instead, it means that the pressure to limit family size, derived from economic, housing, employment, and lifestyle contexts, will more often than not result in limiting childbearing through later marriage, abortion, and less-effective means of birth control. It means, as well, that those who can afford to purchase birth-control information and obtain family-planning materials and contraceptives in the private market will do so. The absence of a more-democratic policy will reinforce the existing social-class and, in turn, the ethnic and religious gaps that exist in Israel's population. No less important, and often overlooked, is the leverage these patterns exert for the perpetuation of inequalities in women's roles and the lack of control women are likely to continue

to have over their family and social status. These are high costs indeed for a democratic society.

Concluding Observations

The first general lesson to be learned from studying fertility patterns in Israel is the importance of the variety of transitions. Some populations have experienced fertility decline, baby boom, and recovery, but there have been continuous declines in fertility for other populations; the pace of fertility change has varied among the various groups in Israel. An examination of national data only on fertility levels would have neutralized these variations and would have led to a chaos of explanations, since the ethnic-compositional shifts of the society as a whole have been enormous. Communities defined in real terms of ethnic origin or religious divisions are the more-appropriate unit for fertility analysis.

A second lesson derived from an analysis of fertility in Israel is the importance of family, in the context of roles of women and the connection of the family to the community. The key linkages have been those that connect family processes to the economy and that emphasize social class and political and family networks. A focus on family and household units is the most direct way of approximating the links between the individual and the community. Limiting fertility studies to women often misses family and community connections.

Studies have demonstrated the different ways in which family and economic changes have brought about pressure to reduce family size for communities faced with different circumstances. The response of Christian Arabs has been to delay marriage; withdrawal and abortion have been used efficiently among Asian- and African-origin Jews; increased use of contraceptive pills has characterized young Israelis. The important point is that there have been a variety of responses to the pressures to reduce family size. The state has played an important role in the process of fertility reduction, but not in the sense of direct birth control or anti-natal family-planning policies. Instead, Israel has developed an extensive welfare-entitlement system, along with health and educational programs, that has had important indirect effects providing incentives to reduce family size. These incentives in the past have had the reverse effect on the Arab population, slowing the pace of fertility reduction by relieving the pressures from the family. This is all the more remarkable (and

ironic) since the formal policy of the government and the official ideology were pro-natalist for the Jewish population (which witnessed the most impressive voluntary decline in fertility recorded); they were unintentionally pro-natalist for the Arab population. The state can have a powerful role in altering fertility patterns, even when policies are not fertility-specific and regardless of the policies' "intention."

One of the lessons that one can derive from studying Israeli fertility patterns is that changes in fertility are connected to other issues of demographic importance. Clearly, the relationship of fertility to immigration is well documented and, along with the decline in mortality, lies at the heart of issues of demographic and ethnic changes. But it is less well appreciated how migration and location have shaped fertility responses. The residential stability (nonmigration) of the Moslem Israeli population, the selective migration of the Middle Eastern-origin Jewish population, the links between migration and schooling, jobs, and generational continuity are powerful in the migration-family-fertility connection.

In the end, the analysis points us in the direction of community, focusing on family and gender roles, migration, social class, and the use and distribution of resources. The demographic assimilation of Jewish ethnic groups in Israel does not necessarily imply the broader pattern of total ethnic assimilation. A similar conclusion emerges from the understanding of changes in the Israeli Arab community, where the powerful effects of their continuing geographic concentration and segregation have been noted. These ethnic-related patterns appear as ethnic distinctiveness in the context of assimilation in some, but not all, dimensions of social life, and in the context of the continuing importance of family and ethnic networks in fostering generational continuity at the community level.

Ethnic continuity confronts the question of national-community developments in Israel. Indeed, the ideological and political question raised in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Europe of the role of ethnic communities in the development of the nation-state is again raised by Israeli patterns, as it is being addressed by other multicultural and pluralistic societies around the world. The "Jewish question" raised by Karl Marx in 1843 about the place of the Jewish minority in the emergent nationalism and capitalism of Europe has become Israel's ethnic question. The place of Jewish and Arab ethnic groups in Israel's changing society becomes the question in the beginning of the twenty-first century.

NOTES

1. Age-at-marriage data for women and men are from the registry of marriages and therefore do not take into account the whole population, that is, those that do not marry. Hence, these data complement but do not substitute for population-based data.
2. See chapter 6 for the definition of these categories of religious identity.
3. See chapter 6 and the special survey of the Central Bureau of Statistics in 2009, table 46.
4. Divorces are available in Israel, but the religious establishment controls the procedures of divorce and the granting of formal divorce decrees. There is no civil divorce in Israel, as there are no civil marriages.
5. For a review and an analysis of American data among young adults and older persons see F. Goldscheider and C. Goldscheider 1994 and 1999 and the references cited therein.
6. The marriage market for Jews in Israel has never included the Arab populations. Arabs in Israel are not acceptable as spouses for Jewish Israelis (and vice versa), on political and institutional grounds as well as for religious considerations from the perspective of both communities. The few-in-number Jewish-Arab couples in Israel tend to live on the margins of both communities. Inter marriages across "religious" national lines are not legally permitted in Israel without religious conversion.
7. Many of the first social studies of Israeli society treated intermarriage between ethnic groups as one of the powerful indicators of national integration, and scholars expected this form of ethnic assimilation to occur by the third generation. See for example, Bachi 1977; Bar-Yosef 1971; Ben-David 1970; Eisenstadt 1954, 1969.
8. The total fertility rate of a given year indicates the average number of births per woman if all women were to live through their childbearing years and have births at the same rate as women of those ages who actually gave birth in that year. It is an artificial construct that may be viewed as an estimate of eventual family size over the life course, derived from cross-sectional, age-specific patterns. It is particularly unreliable as an estimate of actual family size when age-specific fertility patterns are changing.
9. These questions and the detailed data needed to examine them form the basis of research that appears in Friedlander and Goldscheider 1978, and Friedlander, Eisenbach, and C. Goldscheider 1979, 1980. We draw on past research for the retrospective reconstruction of cohort ethnic changes in fertility, adding more recent data for the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s.
10. The *hamula* is a patrilineal descent group that involves kin rights and ob-

ligations and establishes kinship relationships. See Al Haj 1987; Rosenfeld 1968; chapter 4.

11. Official pronouncements and ideological exhortations to the Jewish population about “internal” immigration—having more children—have been associated most prominently with Israel’s first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion. He was quoted as saying, “Any Jewish woman who, as far as it depends on her, does not bring into the world at least four healthy children is shirking her duty to the nation, like a soldier who evades military service. . . . Every family (should) have at least four sons and daughters, the more the better” (Rein 1979, 65; see also the discussion in Friedlander and Goldscheider 1979).

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My primary focus has been on the formation of Israeli society and its development. I have identified some of the central threads of its social, economic, political, and cultural transformations and have explored the changing significance of ethnicity, religion, community, and family. In the process, I have analyzed the impact of Israeli-created conditions of social inequality and assimilation in the context of group experiences prior to arrival in Israel.

Yet, internal developments do not occur in an international or regional vacuum. As a new state, Israel has political and economic linkages to countries and people in and out of the region. As a Jewish state, it has important social and cultural relationships with Jewish communities around the world, those that represent potential sources of immigration and that are primarily sources of social, political, and economic support, as well as those that have received significant numbers of Israeli emigrants and visitors. Ethnic and religious divisions among Jews in Israel are strongly influenced by events occurring outside the state. As a state with a significant Arab population that is under its administrative control and a state that occupies a territory that has been claimed by some former residents, Israel has been centrally positioned in the aspirations of Palestinians for political autonomy.¹

My goal in this chapter is to review some of the externals to enhance the understanding of internal developments in Israel’s changing society. I focus on three questions. First, what is the relationship between Jewish communities outside the state of Israel to developments in Israeli society? I shall refer to this as the “Jewish diaspora” question. Second, what has been the relationship of the state of Israel to the territories it administers (referred to as Judea and Samaria, or the West Bank, or Palestine by persons of different political-ideological orientations)? I shall refer to this as the “Palestinian” question. Third, what are the prospects for Jewish ethnic assimilation in Israel, and what is the role of the Arab or Palestinian