

Migration and Mobility Patterns of The Jewish Population of Cincinnati

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Introduction

Since the end of World War II, the spatial distribution of the Jewish population of American metropolitan areas has changed considerably. Many formerly Jewish central city neighborhoods have undergone racial turnover. During this same period, Jews have been in the forefront of the white middle class exodus to the suburbs. New Jewish concentrations have also been developed near central city campuses as an increasing number of Jews have entered the academic world. Finally, while the overall direction of movement of the Jewish population has been toward the suburbs— there has been a small but significant movement of certain types of families (e.g., young marrieds, upper middle class families without children) to center city neighborhoods.

One implication of these rapid population shifts is that it is increasingly important for Jewish communal leaders to consider the future (as well as the current) distribution of the Jewish population in making allocative decisions regarding the construction of new facilities or the remodeling of existing ones. Forecasts of the future distribution of the Jewish population require information concerning the current distribution of the Jewish population and information about recent migration trends. Recognizing the utility of this type of information, the Jewish Federations in a number of

cities have conducted studies focusing on the size, distribution and composition of the Jewish population in their cities.¹ The National Jewish Population Survey (1971), sponsored by the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, was the first comprehensive study made of the Jewish population in the United States.² Since these studies have typically been based on surveys conducted at one point in time only, the results are of relatively little value for identifying population movements. This article focuses directly on this limitation in existing research. It examines shifts in the settlement patterns of the Jewish population of Cincinnati between 1970 and 1973; as well as migration patterns of Jewish families into and within the Cincinnati area.

In contrast to most previous research on the subject (which has relied on cross-sectional social surveys), this article utilizes the Jewish Federation donation list as a data source. It has the advantages of being readily available, relatively cheap to utilize and suitable for analyses of trends. Thus, this article should be of interest not only for its substantive findings but also for its methodological approach.

Methodology

The data sources for this study were the 1970 and 1973 lists of donors of the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati. While these lists are not inclusive of the entire Jewish population of Cincinnati, they are likely to provide a relatively accurate picture of the spatial distribution of the Jewish population.³

Data on five characteristics of the families contained on the pledge lists were coded: migration status (e.g., non-mover, intra-

¹ For a listing of these community surveys see: Sidney Goldstein, "American Jewry, 1970: A Demographic Profile" in Morris Fine and Milton Himmelfarb eds., *American Jewish Yearbook 1971*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1971, pp. 87-88.

² Fred Massarik and Alvin Chenkin. "United States National Jewish Population Study: A First Report." *American Jewish Yearbook 1973*, Morris Fine and Milton Himmelfarb (eds.). Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, pp. 264-306.

³ We estimate that about 60 percent of the Jewish families in Cincinnati appear on this list. Two groups are likely to be under-represented: (1) younger couples who do not belong to any Jewish organization, and (2) older couples and individuals who cannot afford to make a donation to the Federation.

metropolitan mover, inter-metropolitan movers), previous location, current location, amount of pledge to the Jewish Federation, and synagogue affiliation. The current (and in some cases, previous) addresses were coded into predefined community areas (e.g., Roselawn). These community areas represented combinations of census tracts. The data from the donor lists were processed onto optiscan sheets and then I.B.M. cards. The relationships between different family characteristics were then computer analyzed.

Hypotheses

The following six hypotheses guided the research. We assumed that:

1. Cincinnati's Jewish population would shift toward the suburbs within a particular corridor of the metropolitan area.⁴
2. Suburbanization would be accompanied by an increase in the degree of spatial dispersion of the population (i.e., the average distance between families).⁵
3. Suburbanization would be accompanied by an increase in the spatial differentiation of the population. That is, because of the high cost of suburban housing, moderate income families would be concentrated within the city of Cincinnati while more affluent families would be concentrated in suburban areas. Furthermore, a higher proportion of suburban families would be members of a congregation.⁶ Among synagogue members, a higher proportion of suburban residents would be members of a Reform congregation, while a higher proportion of residents of the city would be affiliated with an Orthodox congregation.
4. The residential choices of intra-urban and inter-urban movers would differ significantly. We expected that families moving into the Cincinnati metropolitan area would be concentrated in particular suburban communities.⁷
5. The families moving within the Cincinnati metropolitan area would tend to

⁴ Kenneth Gelman. "Ethnic Corridors in the Metropolis: A Case Study of Boston's Jewish Community." Paper presented to the Eastern Historical Geographer's Association meeting, College Park, Maryland, October 27, 1973.

⁵ Sidney Goldstein. "American Jewry, 1970: A Demographic Profile," Morris Fine and Milton Himmelfarb (eds.). *American Jewish Yearbook 1971*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1971, p. 45.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.

make relatively short moves (i.e., a large proportion would move within the same community).⁸

6. That families moving from a particular community would tend to recluster in the same new community.⁹

Findings

The suburbanization of Cincinnati's Jewish population has in fact been in a sectoral manner. The shift has largely been within the northern sector of Hamilton County (which includes the city of Cincinnati and other suburban areas).

The original East European "ghetto" in Cincinnati was in the West End, adjacent to the downtown area.¹⁰ Rising incomes during the 1920's permitted the Jewish population to leave the West End; a majority relocated in Avondale (a community located directly north of the central business district). Avondale remained the center of Jewish life in Cincinnati until the 1950's, when the area experienced relatively rapid racial change. During the 1950's and 1960's Jewish population growth was focused on a number of communities along the northern edge of the city (particularly Roselawn) and on a number of adjacent suburban communities (Golf Manor, Amberley Village).

The 1970 and 1973 distributions of the Jewish population (Table 1) provide evidence of the continued movement of the Jewish population away from inner city Cincinnati and toward suburban and suburban type communities along the northern edge of the city. In 1973, only about one out of every twenty Jewish families in Cincinnati lived in the inner city, while about seven out of every ten lived in seven city and suburban communities along the northern edge of the city. One of the seven communities, Roselawn, contained about one-fourth of the Jewish families on the Federation list. The results also provide evidence of a limited yet signifi-

⁸ Eric G. Moore, *Residential Mobility in the City*. American Association of Geographers Resource Paper Number 13. Washington, D.C.: Commission on College Geography, 1972, p. 16.

⁹ This hypothesis is not based on previous research. It is a widely accepted belief among communal leaders.

¹⁰ This brief review of historical settlement patterns of the Jewish population in Cincinnati is based on a conversation with Dr. Stanley F. Chyet, formerly with the American Jewish Archives.

TABLE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF THE JEWISH POPULATION OF CINCINNATI
IN 1970 AND 1973 BY COMMUNITY

<i>Community/Area</i>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1973</u>
	<i>% of Total-1970</i>	<i>% of Total-1973</i>
Inner City	4.1	4.8
Downtown Mt. Adams	0.5	2.0
Hyde Park-Mt. Lookout	3.1	6.5
Other Eastern City	4.5	2.4
North Avondale	9.8	9.7
Bond Hill	7.9	6.0
Roselawn	21.1	23.1
Other Western City	4.3	2.5
Clifton	2.5	2.1
Westwood-W. Price Hill	0.6	1.3
Other Western Suburbs	2.9	2.6
Finneytown	3.9	2.9
Other Eastern Suburbs	4.7	3.0
Wyoming	4.7	9.0
Amberley Village	16.2	13.8
Golf Manor	7.1	4.8
Kenwood-Montgomery	2.1	3.5
	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>

cant return movement of Jewish families toward the center of the city. During this three-year period, there was a dramatic increase in the proportion of the total Jewish population living in Hyde Park, a community in the eastern sector of the city and which is relatively close to the downtown area. Most of the Jewish families in this area have no children at home and live in a small number of luxury high rise apartments. The movement of families from the suburbs and fringe areas of the city to Hyde Park resembles the movement of similar families to the Upper East Side of Manhattan and the Rittenhouse Square section of Philadelphia.¹¹

Although the overall direction of movement of the Jewish population in Cincinnati has been toward the suburbs, a majority

¹¹ For a discussion of this return movement see: Chester Rapkin and William Grigsby, *Residential Renewal in the Urban Core*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969, pp. 40-52.

(about 60 percent) still resided within the city in 1973.¹² Further, there was no meaningful change in the proportion living in the suburbs between 1970 and 1973. The pace of suburbanization in Cincinnati has certainly been relatively modest in comparison to that of other cities. As of the late 1950's, only about 15 percent of Cleveland's Jewish population remained in the city of Cleveland¹³ and the comparable figure for Boston in 1967 was 20 percent.¹⁴ The low rate of suburbanization may be due to the fact that the city of Cincinnati has a number of suburban type areas that are likely to be particularly attractive to families with young children. There are also a number of other areas of the city where apartment houses predominate which are particularly attractive to families without children. As a result of the attractiveness of these different types of neighborhoods, the "pull" of the suburbs is likely to be somewhat less powerful than in other metropolitan areas.

There is little evidence, however, that the suburbanization of Cincinnati's Jewish population has been accompanied by a great increase in the extent of spatial dispersion of the population. In both the city and the suburbs, approximately three-fourths of the Jewish population live inside less than 10 percent of the census tracts.¹⁵

Nor has suburbanization led to a spatial separation of affluent Jewish families (in the suburbs) from the needy and economically marginal ones in the city. While the level of wealth (as indicated by

¹² It is possible that there was a somewhat greater degree of suburbanization than was indicated in this study's results. Younger families are likely to be under-represented on the Federation donation list either because they lack the interest or because they have not had the opportunity to join a synagogue or the Jewish Center. Furthermore, previous research suggests that a disproportionately large number of Cincinnati's young Jewish families live in suburban areas. This caveat does not alter the main conclusion—that suburbanization has proceeded at a relatively slow rate in Cincinnati.

¹³ Albert I. Gordon, *Jews in Suburbia*. Boston: Beacon Hill Press, 1959, p. 10.

¹⁴ Morris Axelrod, Floyd J. Fowler and Arnold Gurin, *Community Survey for Long Range Planning: A Study of the Jewish Population of Greater Boston*. Boston: Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston, 1967, p. 21.

¹⁵ Since census tracts tend to be somewhat larger in the suburbs than in the city—it is likely that Jews are somewhat more spread out in the suburbs than in the city. Nevertheless, the results suggest that in relation to other cities, Cincinnati's suburban Jewish population is relatively highly concentrated and that suburbanization has not led to a substantial increase in the extent of spatial dispersion of the population.

the level of donations) was generally higher in the suburbs, there were considerable variations among suburban and central city communities. That is, there were both well-to-do and economically marginal suburban and central city communities. Interestingly, two central city communities had the highest levels of giving (Hyde Park and Clifton).

As expected, the proportion affiliating with a congregation was higher in the suburbs than in the city. About two-thirds of the suburban families are members of a congregation as compared to a little over half of the families inside of the city.¹⁶ As might have been expected, the synagogue affiliation rates were highest in those city and suburban communities where the congregations were located and where there were substantial numbers of Jewish families. This finding suggests that some families deliberately chose to live in communities with congregations so that they could most easily meet their religious and educational needs (and also be near other Jewish families).¹⁷

The results dealing with denominational affiliation also were generally as anticipated. The proportion belonging to Reform congregations was somewhat higher in the suburbs (44 percent versus 33 percent), while the proportion affiliating with a Conservative congregation was somewhat higher in the city (15 percent versus 10 percent). Surprisingly, there were no significant differences in the proportions of city and suburban residents belonging to an Orthodox congregation (11 percent in the city versus 12 percent in the suburbs). This apparent contradiction is clarified when one realizes that a high proportion of the suburban residents belonging to an Orthodox congregation live in a suburban area (Golf Manor) adjoining the city, which more closely resembles a fringe area of the city rather than a typical suburban area (e.g., one with a low population density). Homes are modestly priced and the density of the Jewish population is relatively high. Thus, for purposes of comparison it would seem valid to consider this community as an

¹⁶ Interestingly, this estimate of Cincinnati's suburban synagogue affiliation rate is almost identical to one made in 1959 for American suburban communities in general; see Gordon, *Jews in Suburbia*, p. 25.

¹⁷ For a more detailed discussion of the role of proximity to synagogues in residential choices see: Goldstein, "American Jewry, 1970," p. 49.

urban fringe area rather than a suburban one. In that case, the hypothesis that suburban growth is accompanied by a decreased propensity to join Orthodox congregations is supported.

As expected, there was a strong tendency for families to make relatively short moves when they relocated within the city. This was shown by the relatively large proportions that moved within the same community. In three communities—Roselawn, Clifton and Wyoming—more than one-half of the families moved within the same area. The great amount of intra-community mobility within these three areas probably reflects the fact that they contain a variety of housing types (e.g., garden apartments, single family homes). This diversity of housing enabled families to adapt to changes in their housing needs (e.g., changes resulting from increases in family size) while remaining in the same area.

Not surprisingly, this tendency to move within the same community was least likely to occur in the racially changing communities. Less than one-tenth of the families moving from North Avondale-Paddock Hills or Bond Hill (who remained in the Cincinnati area) moved to a home inside of their original community.

The migration patterns from these two communities differed. A relatively large proportion (one-third) of the outmigrants from Bond Hill relocated to Roselawn, a short distance to the north. Many of these families were older and Orthodox and sought the Jewish environment available in Roselawn. On the other hand, a relatively large proportion (one-fourth) of the outmigrants from North Avondale-Paddock Hills relocated to the eastern section of the city, some distance away and across sectoral boundaries. We would suspect that many of these families were older Reform couples moving to luxury apartments. Because of their Reform orientation, they did not feel as strong a need (as the relocatees from Bond Hill) to be in close proximity to synagogues and other Jewish institutions.

As expected, there were significant differences between the residential choices of families moving within the Cincinnati metropolitan area and those moving into this area. Families moving into Cincinnati from elsewhere frequently chose Finneytown—a middle income community with moderately priced single family homes. On the other hand, families moving within the Cincinnati area (and choosing a suburban area) most frequently chose

homes in Wyoming and Amberley Village, two affluent areas with expensive single family homes.

These differences in locational choices are not difficult to explain. Family breadwinners that are transferred are often at the ascending portions of their careers where they are not yet at their peak earning levels. The moderately priced homes in Finneytown would best meet these families' housing needs. In contrast, a higher proportion of families moving into Wyoming and Amberley Village are probably at their peak earning levels and are, therefore, better able to afford the high priced homes in these areas.

Conclusion

At the present time, suburbanization does not pose a threat to the Jewish community in Cincinnati. The overwhelming majority of the Jewish population lives in seven city and suburban communities near the northern edge of the city. A significant minority lives in one of these communities—Roselawn. Furthermore, the rate of suburbanization has been relatively slow in relation to other cities around the country; and suburbanization has not been accompanied by an increase in spatial dispersion. As a result, most of the Jewish population is highly accessible to the synagogues, Jewish Center and other communal facilities in the Roselawn area.

This situation could change. Roselawn currently faces the prospect of undergoing racial turnover. It lies immediately to the north of predominantly black areas (e.g., Bond Hill) and blacks have been moving into the community since the early 1970's. Up to now, the rate of black immigration has been low and there has been little white panic moving. It is possible, however, that the rate of racial transition could increase in the future.¹⁸

If this occurred, it would be costly in a number of ways for the Jewish community. During the 1960's, the Jewish community invested about \$5,600,000 in the construction of communal and religious facilities in Roselawn.¹⁹ It would be very expensive to at-

¹⁸ Panic moving, of course, is not confined simply to racial factors. Questions of culture and economics are valid points when the phenomenon of panic moving is seen in its totality.

¹⁹ Table titled "Our Investment," prepared by the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati (undated).

tempt to relocate these facilities to new locations. Furthermore, it would be difficult to find sites for these facilities that would be convenient for the more dispersed Jewish population.

The turnover of Roselawn would also involve cultural costs. The turnover of the population would not be complete; the poor and the elderly would be left behind. These families would have to live without synagogues and other Jewish facilities necessary for their life style.²⁰

Furthermore, it is unlikely that an identifiably Jewish community like Roselawn would develop in the suburbs. Contrary to popular belief, there is little tendency for families moving from a particular community to recluster at any other specific location. Consequently, outmigrants from these high density areas are unlikely to recluster at any other location. Another reason why such a community is not likely to develop in the suburbs is that the suburban environment is not conducive to traditional beliefs and practices (e.g., the long distances that would be required to walk to a synagogue). As a result, families interested in pursuing a traditional Jewish life style would find it difficult to do so.

It is widely believed that once communities begin to experience black immigration, complete racial turnover is inevitable. There are several reasons why this generalization may not be appropriate today for communities such as Roselawn.

1. *Housing Costs.* In recent years, the cost of new housing has risen dramatically. The average cost of a new house in the United States is now \$49,000.²¹ As a result, many young families wanting to purchase a home are having to reduce their aspirations from a new to an older home. This trend works in the favor of such communities as Roselawn. Furthermore, rising housing costs tend to hold families to older communities like Roselawn.

2. *Educational Policy.* The outmigration of Jewish families with children from the city of Cincinnati has undoubtedly been linked to problems in the schools (e.g., rising black enrollments, weaknesses in curriculum). Currently, Cincinnati is faced with the prospect of having the courts impose a metropolitan school district

²⁰ Yona Ginsberg. *Jews in a Changing Neighborhood: The Study of Mattapan.* New York: The Free Press, 1975.

²¹ Robert Lindsey. "First Time Owners of Homes Declining," *New York Times*, June 26, 1977.

to remove *de facto* patterns of racial segregation. If this policy were implemented, this would mean that public schools on both sides of the city boundary would have similar proportions of black students. As a result, it would no longer be worthwhile for whites to move to a suburban location to avoid racially integrated public schools. Thus, this policy would contribute to the stability of communities like Roselawn.

3. *Ethnicity*. In recent years, there has been a resurgence of ethnic awareness among members of different white ethnic groups including Jews. Among Jewish youth this has been reflected in support for Soviet Jewry, enrollment in Judaic studies courses and in interest in Hasidic sects. It is possible that when these youths marry and start their own families they will be interested in living in identifiably Jewish communities.

4. *Stabilization Programs*. In recent years, Jewish Federations have become increasingly involved in efforts to stabilize racially changing Jewish communities. For example, the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati provides the bulk of the funding for the Roselawn Community Council. The Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland through its Heights Area project has implemented "a program of mortgage assistance to encourage immigration of Jewish families."²²

Roselawn's continued viability as an identifiably Jewish community is therefore uncertain at the current time. If the suburban housing market for blacks continues to be limited and if the quality of the schools in the city continues to decline, Roselawn is likely to undergo complete transition. On the other hand, if suburban housing opportunities for blacks expanded and if a metropolitan school district were established the community could experience stable integration. Given Roselawn's uncertain status, along with the fact that such a large proportion of the Jewish population in Cincinnati lives within that community, it is impossible to predict what the spatial distribution of the Jewish population will be 10 or 15 years from now.

²² Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds. *Winners 1974: William J. Shroder Awards*: New York: Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, 1974, p. 4.