

**UNITED NATIONS EXPERT GROUP MEETING  
ON RECENT AND FUTURE TRENDS IN FERTILITY**

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# **Fertility Prospects in Israel: Ever Below Replacement Level?**

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Israel's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) was **2.98 in 2008**.

In the 2009 HDI assessment Israel's ranked 27<sup>th</sup> out of 182 countries. **Israel's projected TFR was the highest among 38 countries with very high human development.** A higher TFR obtained in only six additional countries ranked up to 100<sup>th</sup>.

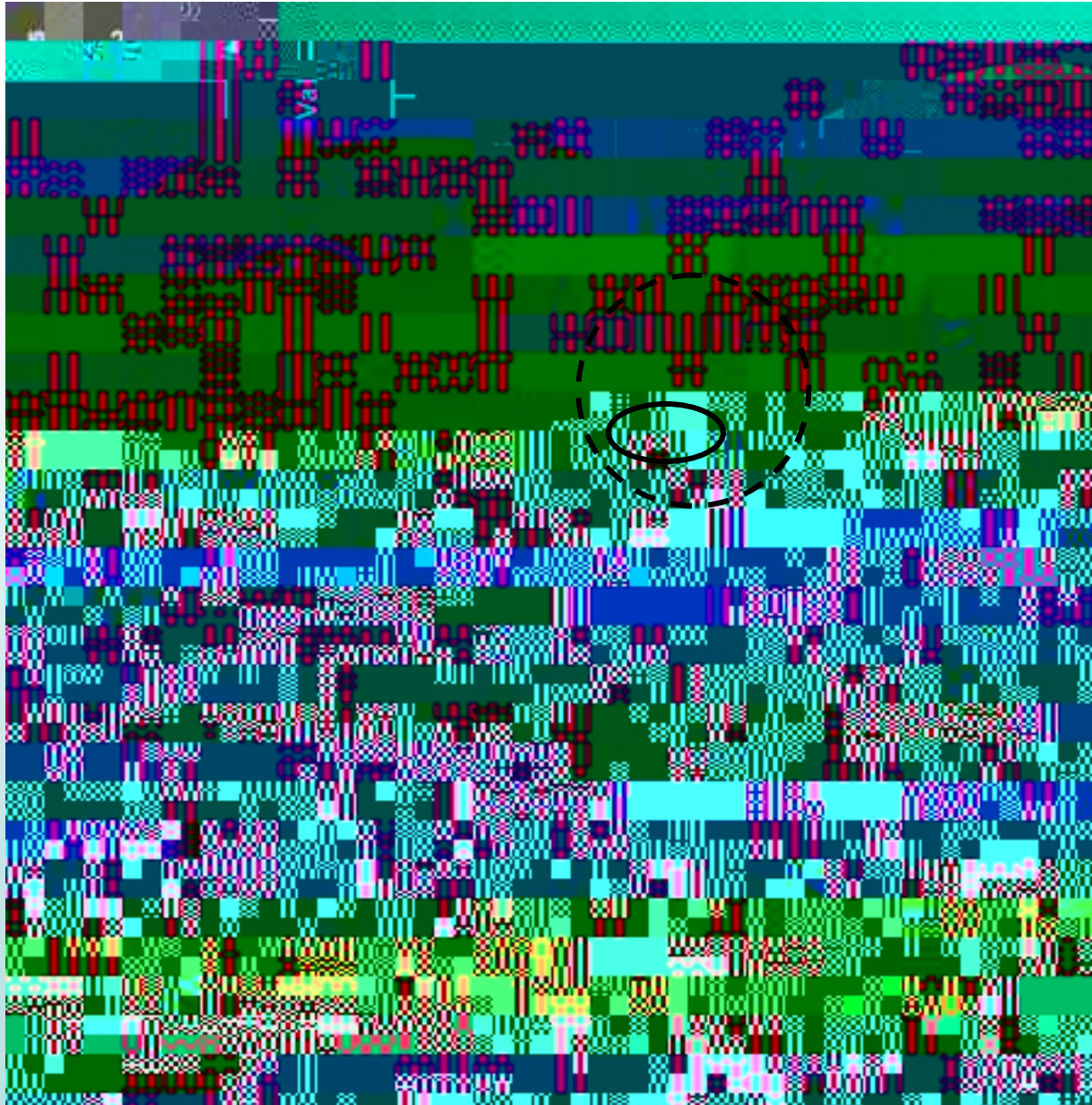
Hence the lead question: **ever below replacement level?**

One of the crucial analytic issues is whether relatively high levels of fertility essentially reflect the **failure to curb**

We analyze fertility goals through different measures of **attainment, intention and appropriateness**, and outline public attitudes towards **possible policy interventions** aimed at affecting fertility in the future.

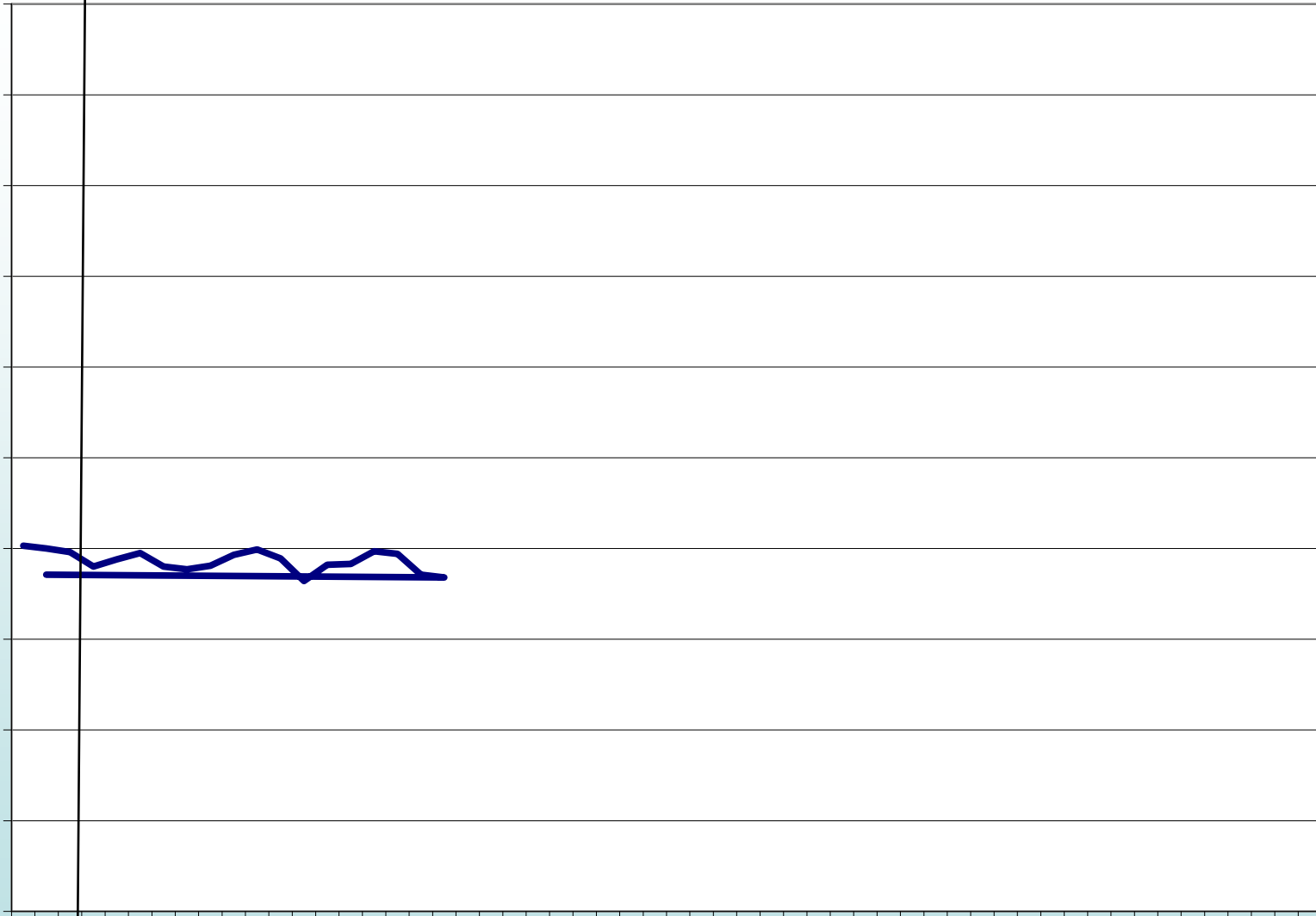
We also question whether **country population projections relying on a single set of demographic assumptions** are appropriate for societies that, like Israel's, encompass several sub-populations with significantly different demographic patterns.

# WHERE IS ISRAEL?



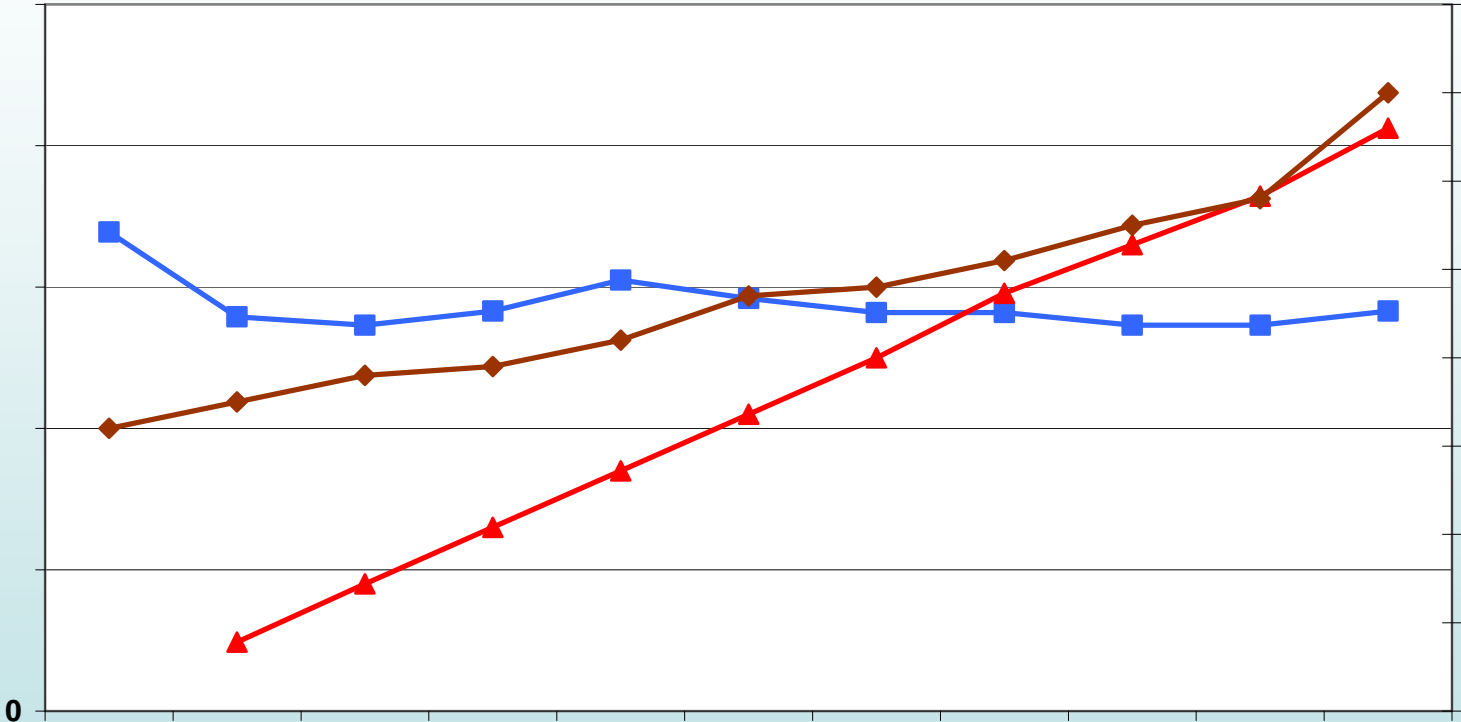
Source: Inglehart and Welzel, 2005.

# Total fertility rates, by religion groups – Israel, 1955-2008



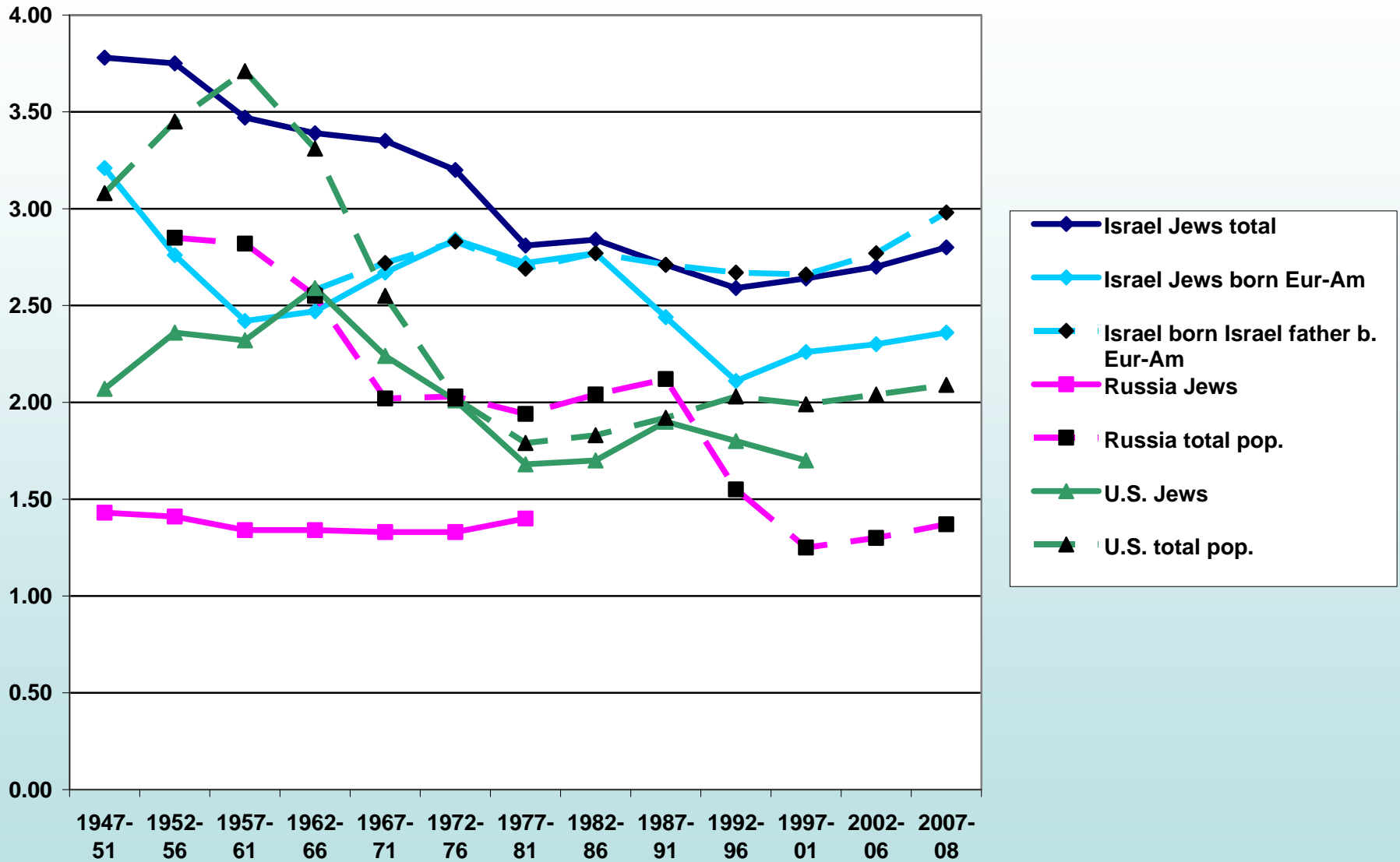


# TFR of Israel born, post-secondary education attained, and labor force participation – Jewish women, Israel, 1955-2005





# Total fertility rates among Jews – Israel, Russia and the United States, 1947-2008



Source: Central Bureau of Statistics; United Nations, Population Division (2008); DellaPergola, 2009; Tolts, 2008

# Total fertility rates among Muslims and Christians in Israel, Palestinian Territory and neighboring countries – 1955-2010

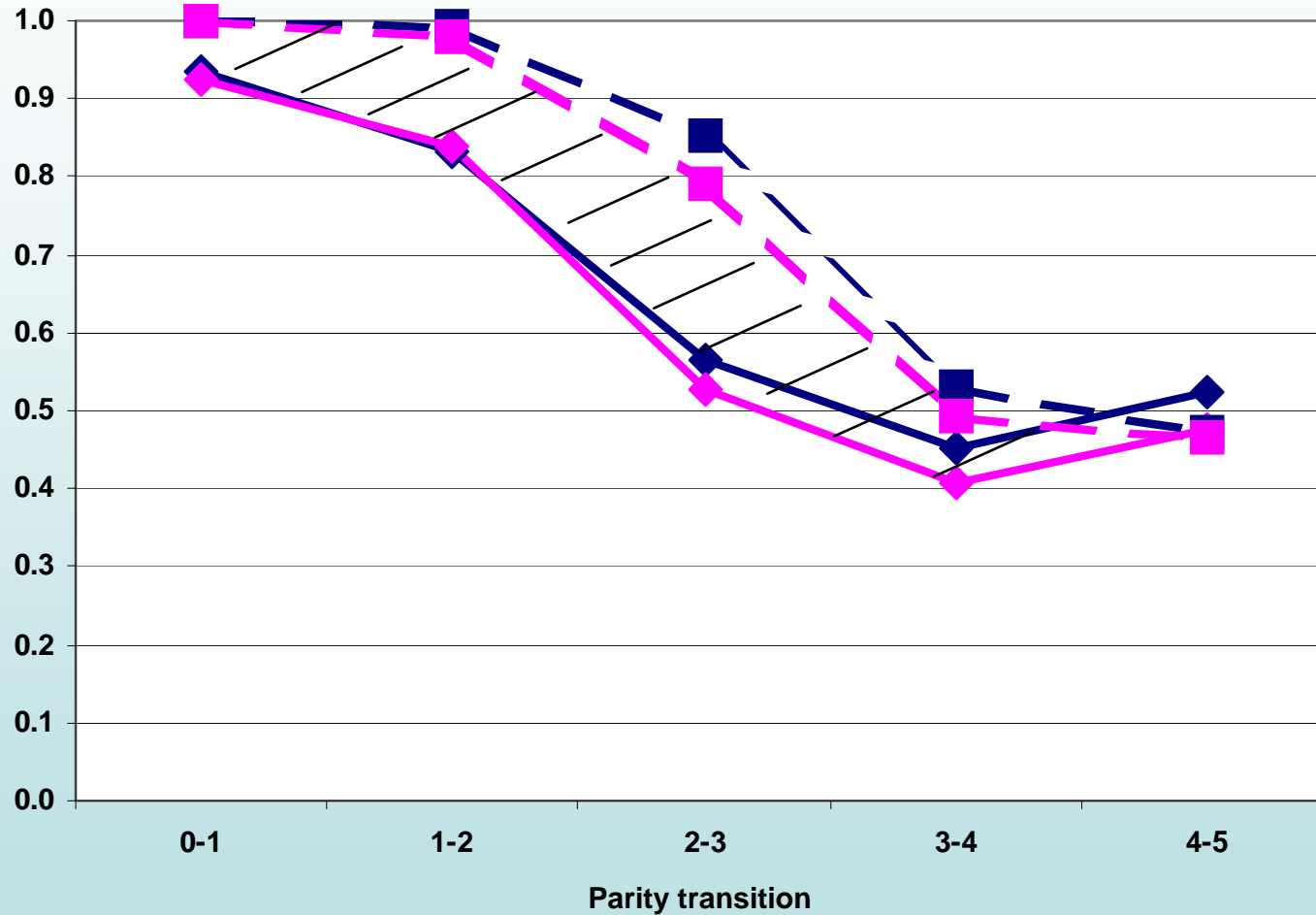

Source: Israel Central Bureau of Statistics; United Nations, Population Division (2008).

# Percent satisfied with life, by sele

# Family Size Preferences of Married Jewish Women – Israel, 1974-2005

Number of children	1974-75 <sup>a</sup>	1988 <sup>b</sup>	2005 <sup>c</sup>	
	Total	Total	Total	Without Haredim <sup>d</sup>
Currently born		2.5	2.5	2.3

# ACTUAL AND INTENDED PARITY TRANSITIONS ISRAEL, MARRIED JEWS, 2005



◆ — Women actual   
 ◆ — Men actual   
 ■ - - Women intended   
 ■ - - Men intended

# NUMBER OF INTENDED<sup>a</sup> VS. APPROPRIATE<sup>b</sup> CHILDREN AMONG CURRENTLY MARRIED<sup>c</sup> JEWS - ISRAEL, 2005

Gender and age	Number of Intended vs. Appropriate Children							Total	N
	Same				Different				
	0-2 <sup>d</sup>	3 <sup>d</sup>	4 <sup>d</sup>	5+ <sup>d</sup>	I < A <sup>e</sup>	I > A <sup>f</sup>			
Women, 25-45	12	25	11	16	8	28	100	975	







# ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS OF INCONSISTENCIES: INTENDED > APPROPRIATE TOTAL CHILDREN

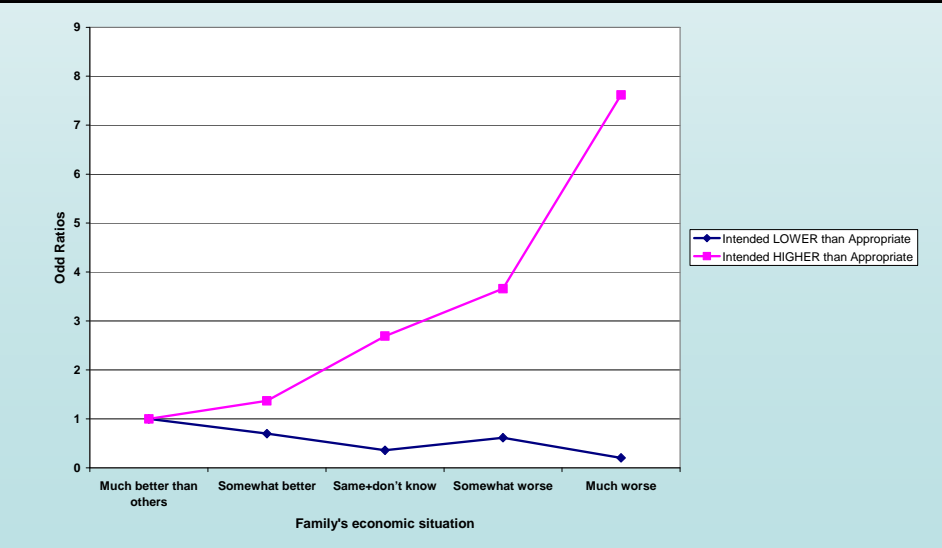
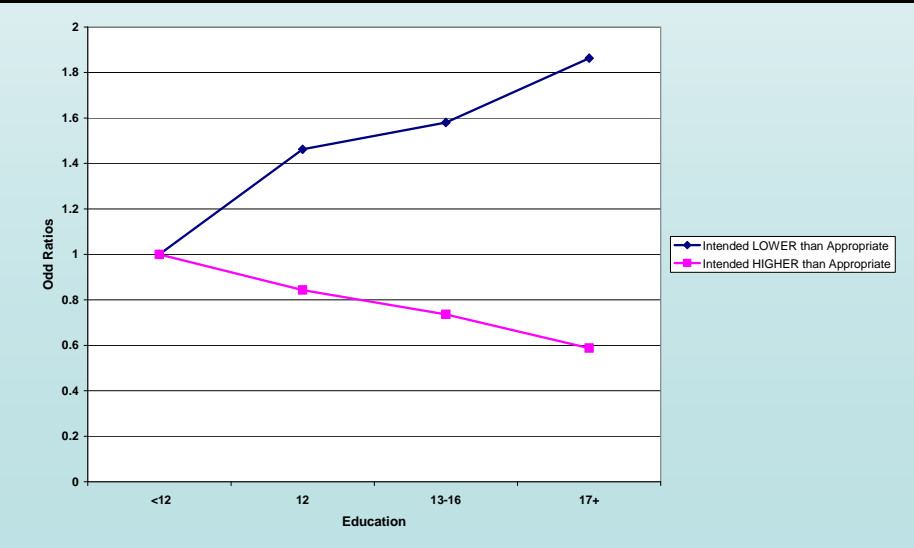
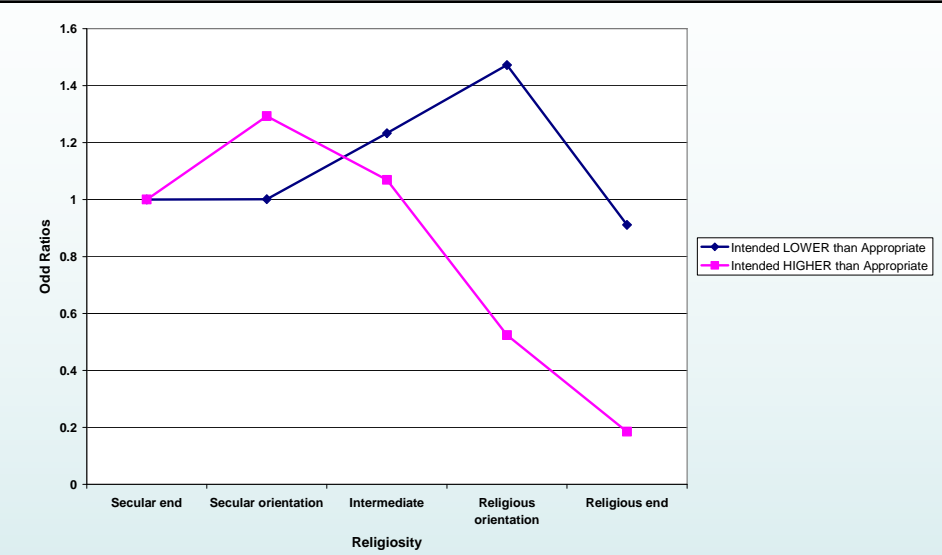
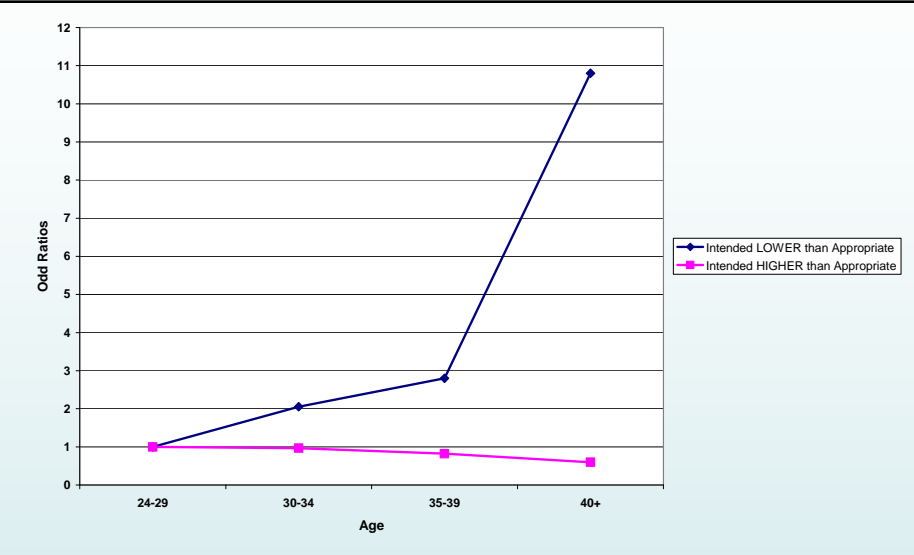
N. of children  
appropriate to  
repondent's  
social status

N. of children  
actually  
intended by  
respondent

N. of children  
actually  
intended by  
respondent

N. of children  
appropriate to  
repondent's

# Logistic regression odd ratios for selected characteristics of Jewish couples with inconsistent intended and appropriate n. of children – Israel, 2005



Source: Survey of Attitudes and Behaviors Concerning Family Size among Israel's Jewish Population, 2005

# DIRECT AND INDIRECT SOCIETAL ROLES OF VALUES AND NORMS AFFECTING FAMILY AND REPRODUCTION IN ISRAEL

Desirability

History  
and  
society

Social  
values  
and norms:  
*Family and  
reproduction*

Legislative,  
executive,

# Main factor affecting having one additional child above number intended – Currently married Jewish women, Israel, 2005

Factors	Number of Intended vs. Appropriate Children						
	Same				Different		Total
	0-2	3	4	5+	I < A	I > A	

**Our survey of fertility trends in Israel, beyond measurement, has focused on the cultural and socioeconomic context and causality of family formation.**

**Two main conclusions emerge – one of method and one of substance.**

Israeli society includes **population groups less prone to social change**, whose fertility is high and whose share of total population consequently tends to grow. These groups swallow the weighted average of national fertility levels and slow down fertility decline.

**The analytic imperative** is not to consider Israel society as one demographic bloc but a conglomerate of different sub-populations. **In population projections**, after disaggregating society into its components, **separate paths of change need to be considered**. Different schedules should be developed for different

The evidence reviewed points to a **conservative pattern of family formation in spite of substantial societal change at the micro- and macro-level**