Editor's Introduction

Harriet Hartman¹

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On the listserv of the ASSJ (Association for the Social Scientific Study of Jewry, which sponsors this journal), a recent discussion included concerns about the extent to which (hired) researchers' own agendas can and should legitimately be expressed in their analysis and interpretation of data, and the extent to which judgments about their research and scholarly activity should be impacted by the researchers' personal and political beliefs. Further, the role of the funder in desiring particular research outcomes is always a contentious topic, suggesting great role strain or conflict. It is a recurring theme for researchers, especially as so much of Jewish studies analysis is based on surveys designed for policy-oriented purposes, or applied research.

Our opening piece makes an important contribution to this conversation and concern; it is the Marshall Sklare Memorial Award address delivered at the American Jewish Society's annual meeting in Washington D.C. last December by Bruce A. Phillips, professor of sociology and Jewish communal service at the Jack H. Skirball Campus of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Los Angeles. Selected for his significant contributions to quantitative, qualitative, and innovative approaches to the study of such critical topics as intermarriage, Jewish education, and spatial perspectives, Phillips joins 24 other colleagues previously selected to honor the memory of Marshall Sklare (1912–1992), who is considered the founding father of American Jewish sociology. In his lecture, Phillips addressed the critical issue of “bringing theory back to demography,” a subject particularly relevant to the significant (and growing) body of Jewish population studies, both communal and national, that are available at the Berman Jewish DataBank (<http://jewishdatabank.org/>), along with other research studies on American and global Jewish life.

✉ Harriet Hartman
Hartman@rowan.edu

¹ Rowan University, Glassboro, NJ, USA

While many of these studies have been conducted and analyzed primarily for policy-oriented purposes, Phillips suggests several important ways to mine this data through the lens of theory, in order to gain a broader perspective on how Jewish life fits into broader American and international social developments. For example, he highlights the contributions of looking through the lens of mixed-race identities to study the children of Jewish intermarriage. Joel Perlmann, a scholar of mixed-race/ethnicity identity and one of three scholars who commented on Phillips' lecture at the AJS presentation, elaborates on this perspective in his comment. Phillips also advocates the integration of qualitative and quantitative research in order to deepen the understandings that survey research and its analysis enables. Jennifer Thompson, a second commenting scholar, brings a humanistic perspective from her anthropological background to stress the importance of the emic perspective, which contributes an emphasis on understanding how subjects perceive their experiences and make meaning of them; as she notes, demographic research often settles for an etic perspective, which primarily documents actions and outcomes, rather than motivations and interpretations from the subjects' points of view. Debra Kaufman, a third commenter, adds to this discussion her focus on the importance of the emic perspective of the researchers themselves, a theme she explored in an earlier special issue of this journal that she guest-edited, vol. 34 (2), 2014. Kaufman also turns on its head Phillips' advocacy for bringing theory back to demography, by asking Phillips (and all of us) to consider how Jewish social science can revise and/or expand broader sociological and multicultural theories. The Sklare address and all three comments on it provide much for us to consider in future research.

Phillips also suggests that we expand our research to include more secondary analysis of the questions asked in existing surveys that are not comprised of exclusively Jewish samples. In the journal's special issue on Jewish community surveys (vol. 36 [3], 2016), Alan Cooperman made a related suggestion: that Jews partner with other religious or ethnic groups to develop comparative surveys, pooling resources in order to fund broader studies of more than one specific population group. All of these suggestions should stimulate Jewish studies scholars to expand current research paradigms and to dig down deeper to understand contemporary Jewish life.

The original articles presented in this issue also expand research paradigms, addressing the important topics of the relationship of American Jews to Israel, the development of Jewish identity, and Jewish education. Janet Aronson's article goes beyond analyzing the effect of the Taglit-Birthright Israel trips on their participants, to analyzing their effect on the interest of participants' parents in visiting Israel. This is a first of its kind, and it shows that there is a ripple effect beyond the program's actual participants. Moshe Krakowski's article begins with the (etic) statement, that "American modern Orthodoxy is declining demographically"; he goes on to analyze the why and how of this phenomenon (using an emic perspective) by addressing curriculum and pedagogy in modern Orthodox schools through observation and telephone interviews. Krakowski's comparison of modern Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox curricula and pedagogy led to the shaping of problem-based learning (PBL) adapted to modern Orthodoxy teaching; he presents this PBL, which is intended to foster Jewish identity tenable in a society that bridges both

secular and religious worldviews. The final article, by Menachem Keren-Krantz, presents an in-depth analysis about how the Satmar Rebbe, Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum, influenced at least part of the American Jewish ultra-Orthodox community to be anti-Zionistic, and why. Keren-Krantz relies on newspaper articles and published materials to cogently present this change that occurred after the establishment of the State of Israel.

Reading of the Satmar Rebbe and his efforts in Keren-Krantz's article should remind us that ours is not the only time in which controversial attitudes between American Jews and Israelis have developed and separated American Jews from each other and from Israel. One of our research updates also concerns this topic: a study of Jewish students on California campuses and how they experienced being Jewish on campus, and specifically how they felt impacted by the way the Israel–Palestine conflict is presented on campus. Other topics of current research include antisemitism in Great Britain and Jewish students at U.S. military service academies.

Our book reviews concern both Israel and American Jews, as well as Jewish participation in a major U.S. institution, the Supreme Court. Sara Hirschhorn's *City on a Hilltop*, reviewed by Eric Fleisch, focuses on American Jews' involvement in the settler movement in the West Bank. As Fleisch writes, Hirschhorn notes that the biggest flaw in the work of settler movement research is the fact that researchers/writers have put their own ideologies and agendas front and center. (Is this reminding you of Kaufman's comment on the Sklare address? It should!) She bases her study on archival documents and interviews, providing a unique contribution. Frederick Lawrence reviews David Dalin's *Jewish Justices of the Supreme Court*, which shows how the different types of Jewish identity held by the justices, intertwined with changing historical contexts, shaped the justices and the role being Jewish played in their careers.

We also tantalize you with more suggestions for reading in our list of books received.

Enjoy!