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# Historic Marriage Patterns in the Sephardim of Gibraltar, 1704 to 1939\*

by Lawrence A. Sawchuck and Doris Ann Herring

## *Introduction*

There has been growing concern about whether the Sephardim will persist as one of the major branches of World Jewry. As Patai commented:

The once and great and unique Sephardic division of the Jewish people is in the process of merging, both ethnically and biologically into the Ashkenazi majority all over the world, while in Israel it fuses partly with the Ashkenzi and partly with the Oriental Jews. In another generation or two Sephardic Jewry will be a thing of the past.<sup>1</sup>

Historical demographic research on one Sephardic population, the Jews of Gibraltar, has shown that a complex of ethnohistoric factors contributed to its gradual depletion. Although there was an undeniably significant rise in interfaith marriages from 1930 onward,<sup>2</sup> other demographic features of the community were substantially more important to its ultimate decline: 1). a progressive reduction in completed family size, which began as early as 1870; 2). a relatively high rate of childless families; 3). a high rate of celibacy; and 4). increased emigration from Gibraltar during the latter part of the nineteenth century as economic conditions deteriorated.<sup>3</sup>

The decline of Gibraltar's Sephardic community, moreover, cannot be clearly understood without reference to its almost exclusive economic specialization in mercantile and related activities. From the time of its establishment in 1704, this community was an important link in a Sephardic trade diaspora that controlled much of western Mediterranean trade.<sup>4</sup> A trade diaspora is an "interrelated network of commercial communities forming a trade network"<sup>5</sup> composed of culturally and structurally distinctive social groups.<sup>6</sup> At one time trade diasporas were the major agents of cross-cultural trade, but their role diminished with the gradual westernization of world trade in the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, once-flourishing mercantile communities such as that of the Sephardim of Gibraltar began to decline.

Given the importance of marriage to the maintenance of Sephardic ethnic distinctiveness and to the persistence of trading minorities in general, we undertook a detailed examination of historic marriage patterns among the Jews of Gibraltar. The central purpose of the research was to determine the relationship between marriage patterns and the evolution of the community from the time it was founded in 1704 to the civilian evacuation of Gibraltar in 1940.

Interpretation of the findings was hampered by a virtual absence of statistical

information on marriage in historic Jewish and mercantile communities. Although our knowledge of contemporary Jewish marriage patterns has grown over the past two decades,<sup>8</sup> the observation made twenty years ago that there was little quantitative data on historic communities<sup>9</sup> still holds. As for mercantile communities in general, the shifting and ephemeral nature of trade goods, trade links, and the communities themselves, makes it difficult to observe and record marriages and, indeed, any vital events in such groups. Thus, some of the deficiencies in demographic theory stem from an unavoidable lack of data;<sup>10</sup> on the other hand, a lack of attention to historical detail has also been noted.<sup>11</sup>

Research into the Jewish community of Gibraltar since 1974, however, has unearthed an unusually rich body of primary and secondary demographic information on marriage in this trading community: eighteenth-century nominative censuses, synagogue marriage records (1820 onward), marriage licenses granted by the governor of Gibraltar (1820–1830), and civil marriage registers (1869 onward). These documents provide data on patterns of spatial endogamy and exogamy, and on the geographic scope of the marriage network.

Information is also available on the husband's occupation at marriage from 1869 to 1939; however, examination of the relationship between marriage patterns and socioeconomic status proved unrewarding. Marriages where the husband's occupation was known were classified into three broad socioeconomic groups (high, moderate, low) based on the system developed by The Registrar General for England and Wales.<sup>12</sup> While there may have been differences between the three groups, these could not be distinguished statistically owing to the small sample in the high and, particularly, the low categories.

It is important to note, as well, that this study is restricted to Jewish marriages registered in Gibraltar; we have no information on Gibraltarian Jews who left the garrison and married elsewhere. This is a major limitation in that vital events in one community of a trade diaspora are best understood within the demographic context of the whole network.<sup>13</sup>

### *Methods*

The following discussion of historic marriage patterns in the Jews of Gibraltar has been divided into two periods: 1). the period prior to marriage registration (1794–1819); and 2). the period of marriage registration (1820–1939). The marriage registration period has been further partitioned into four temporal intervals that reflect major demographic phases in the development of the community.

Marriage unions were classified as either spatially endogamous (both spouses born in Gibraltar) or spatially exogamous (one or both spouses born outside of Gibraltar). The percentage of each form of marriage to all unions was then calculated for each time interval in the study period.

The geographic scope of the marriage network was defined by analyzing the birth-

place of the spouse(s) in spatially exogamous unions. Our measure of marriage mobility or marital movement is defined exclusively in terms of “marriage distance by birthplace”<sup>14</sup> or, in other words, in terms of “birthplace distance.”<sup>15</sup> Although this is a common demographic method for analyzing marriage patterns, our approach to interpreting the data does not rely on the conventional technique of fitting mathematical models to the findings.<sup>16</sup> Rather, we emphasize the ethnohistoric context of mate selection.

Data processing and analysis were carried out primarily via SPSS programs<sup>17</sup> on the IBM 370/3033 computer at the University of Toronto. The G statistic, a log linear test for homogeneity, was used to evaluate the significance of the findings.<sup>18</sup>

### *The Jewish Community of Gibraltar: Early History*

The history of Gibraltar, and hence the history of its Jewish community, is closely tied to fluctuating international relations between England, Spain, and Morocco. English occupation of the Rock dates from 24 July 1704 when the garrison fell from Spanish to English hands during the Wars of the Spanish Succession. Spain retaliated by cutting off supplies to the fortress, a stratagem that was particularly effective as the rocky promontory has no natural resources or potential for agriculture. The English promptly designated Gibraltar a free port to ensure a continued supply of fresh food, water, and building materials.

To repopulate the town, settlers were brought in from all parts of the Mediterranean. Jewish merchants and traders from the coastal cities of Morocco were encouraged by the English to establish themselves in Gibraltar. At that time, trade was primarily local and centered around the needs of the English military and the small civilian population. It involved importing provisions from Morocco and exporting British manufactured goods.<sup>19</sup> The majority of Jewish merchants came from trading communities along the coast of Morocco; others came from Leghorn (Italy), Portugal, and Spain.<sup>20</sup>

Local migration was an important element in the beginnings of the Jewish community. In response to the new opportunities offered by the Jewish merchants, a cadre of porters, hawkers, peddlers, and workmen from Morocco quickly established themselves in the fortress.<sup>21</sup> This influx of Moroccan Jews occurred despite Spanish efforts to force the exclusion of Jews and Moors from Gibraltar via Article X of the Treaty of Utrecht.<sup>22</sup> The English, concerned about Spanish designs on Gibraltar and the necessity of relying on Moroccan supplies in the event of siege, did not wish to offend the emperor of Morocco.<sup>23</sup> As a result, the exclusionary article was studiously ignored.<sup>24</sup> By 1712, 28 Jewish shops were paying rent and a Christmas levy to the governor<sup>25</sup> and Gibraltar had become incorporated into a widespread Sephardic trade diaspora in the western Mediterranean.<sup>26</sup>

The life of the fledgling community was short, however. Through the efforts of the newly appointed lieutenant governor of Gibraltar, Colonel Stanhope Cotton, Anglo-

Spanish relations moved toward normalization. Following the persistent demands of the Spanish, Cotton enforced Article X of the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) and in January of 1718, Jews and Moors were expelled from the Rock. In protest, Morocco severed relations with England and Gibraltar.

Friendly relations between Spain and England lasted but a few months, however, and by the summer of 1718 the two countries were once again at war. Gibraltar found itself isolated from Spanish supplies, dependent on Moroccan goods, and needing the services of Jewish merchants. The perilous position of the garrison led to renewed negotiations between England and Morocco in 1720 and, with the establishment of peace in 1721, Jews and Moors were readmitted to the Rock. More significantly, Jews and Moors residing in Gibraltar gained legal standing before English Law.<sup>27</sup>

Details of the resettlement remain unclear. Lieutenant-Governor Kane's 1725 report to Lord Townsend indicates, however, that the Jewish community consisted of 111 males and 26 females. Almost two-thirds of the migrants were male: Moroccans ( $n = 86$ ) predominated, followed by Jews from Leghorn ( $n = 17$ ), England ( $n = 4$ ), Holland ( $n = 3$ ), and Turkey ( $n = 1$ ). By this time, the Jewish community was firmly established in Gibraltar. A synagogue had been built, property grants had been obtained,<sup>28</sup> and the Jews comprised nearly one-eighth of the total civilian population.

Anglo-Spanish hostilities erupted again in the thirteenth siege of Gibraltar in 1727. Although the siege itself lasted but four months, peace negotiations continued for almost a year. One result of the treaty was instruction from the English secretary of state that Governor Clayton of Gibraltar comply with the Treaty of Utrecht and expel Jews and Moors from the fortress.<sup>29</sup> Since Spain had constructed a land blockade along the isthmus connecting Gibraltar to the mainland in 1728 (which stayed in place for the next 25 years), goods and services provided by the Jews were crucial for the garrison's survival. Thus, in an attempt to balance Spanish demands with the needs of the fortress, Gibraltar enacted a treaty with Morocco in 1729 permitting Moroccan Moors and Jews to temporarily reside in Gibraltar for 30 days for the purposes of trade. The 30-day residency period was more theoretical than real and the prohibition against the right to settle was not enforced.<sup>30</sup> Serfaty notes, for example, that the Jews had already begun to build houses on the rock by 1728.<sup>31</sup> By 1749, moreover, the largest property owner in Gibraltar was a Jew, Isaac Aboab.<sup>32</sup>

Reorganization and reassessment of existing land titles and the terms under which property was owned by Governor George Bland in 1752 established the right of Jews and Roman Catholics to keep the land they owned in Gibraltar. Bland's new regulations also required, nevertheless, that property be sold henceforth only to native-born Protestants. This discriminatory provision was routinely circumvented by registering property in the name of a Protestant and then mortgaging it in perpetuity. By this ruse, the non-Protestant mortgagor acquired the property rights of the original, fictional Protestant owner.<sup>33</sup> In this way, members of the Jewish and Roman Catholic communities were able not only to increase their land holdings on the Rock but also to establish their communities more firmly within the Garrison.

According to Benady, it was about this time that the Jewish community's practice of regulating its own affairs became established in law.<sup>34</sup> Governor Bland had received "complaints of quarrels, disturbances and disorderly behavior of Jews inhabiting the garrison" which upset public order and embarrassed the more prosperous members of the Jewish community. To keep peace among the Jews, the Governor set forth a number of rules and regulations for the community in 1750:

THAT all offenses against those regulations be examined and inquired into by three of the Principal Jews, to be chosen and appointed, for that purpose, every six months, out of the Body of the Jews; and who ever by them after an impartial Enquiry, found Guilty of a Breach of any of these foregoing Regulations, shall be banished from the Garrison and never permitted to return hither again.<sup>35</sup>

This marks the early origin of the Jewish Managing Board, one of the most important community institutions that to this day oversees much of Jewish life in Gibraltar. Other special concessions given to the Jewish community were the responsibility of collecting certain taxes for the governor and license to make and sell fig *me-hayim*, a North African wine, to Jews only.

By 1753, the Sephardic community had grown to 575 individuals and to approximately one-third of the total civilian population at Gibraltar. During this time, Gibraltar entered into a period of prosperity through its considerable trade with Morocco, the West Indies, and Spain. Some of the benefits of expanding trade are reflected in the fact that by 1756, 20 per cent of the property in Gibraltar was owned by Jews.<sup>36</sup> Along with an increase in wealth came the development of a number of Jewish institutions. The small yeshivah, *Es Hayim*, for instance, was turned into a second synagogue for the community in 1759; the original synagogue, *Shahar Hashamayim*, was rebuilt and enlarged in 1768.<sup>37</sup>

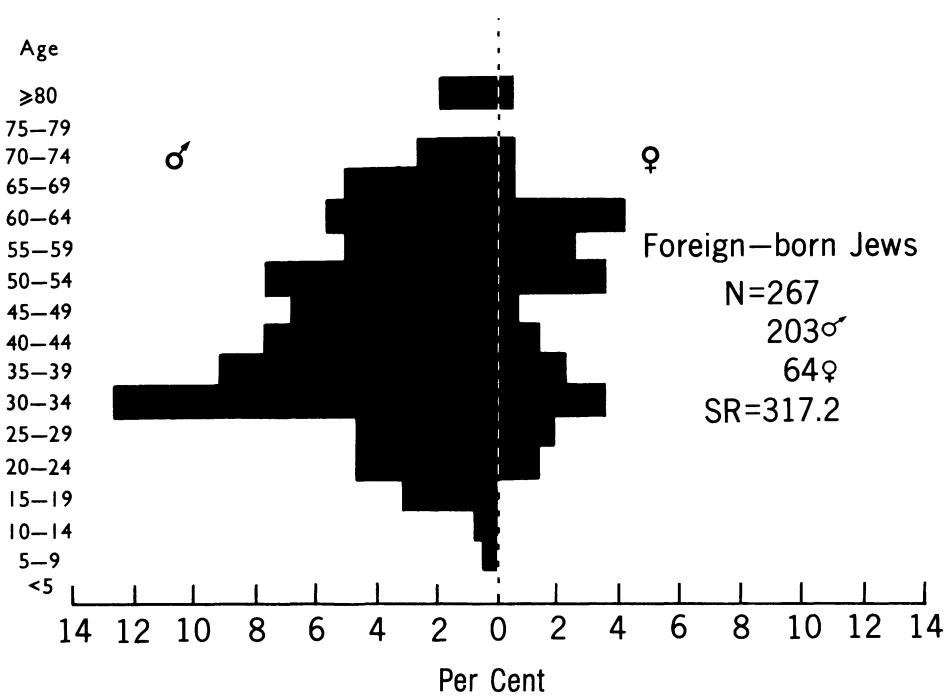
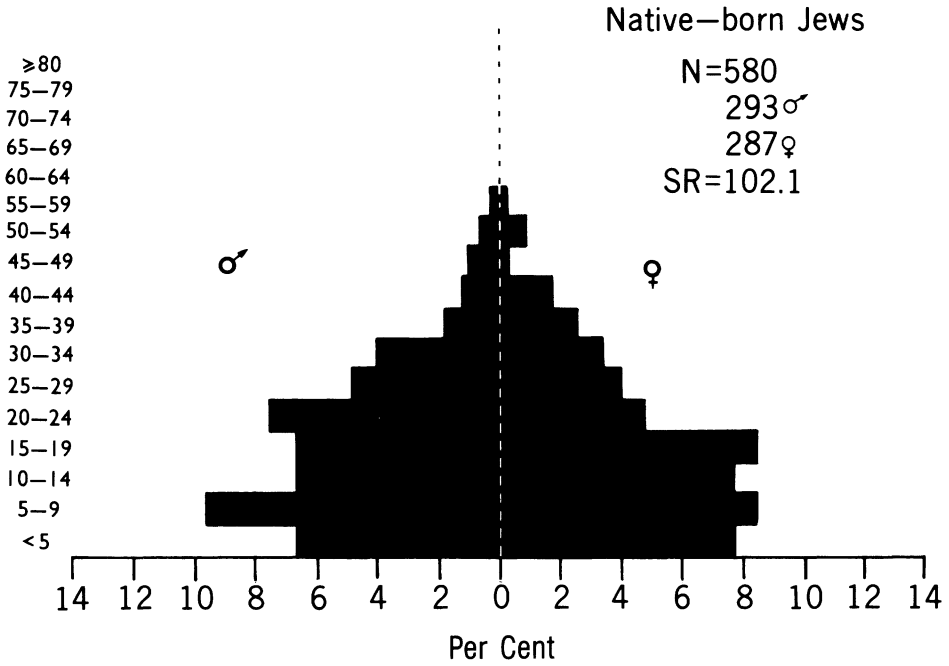
All of these political, economic, and social developments within the Jewish community served to solidify its position within the wider social context of Gibraltar. These developments, in turn, symbolized the community's view of itself as a permanent part of life in the garrison.

### *Marriage Patterns in the Jews of Gibraltar: 1777–1819*

The earliest reliable evidence of the demographic makeup of the Jewish community is found in a census of the inhabitants of Gibraltar taken in 1777. The census shows that the Jewish community had grown to 863 individuals and comprised 32.2 per cent of the total civilian population. It also provides the first clear indication that the Jewish community was composed of two demographically distinct components: a numerically dominant core of native-born individuals ( $n = 596$ ), and a smaller segment of foreign-born inhabitants ( $n = 267$ ). The population profile of the native-born segment is broadly based, suggestive of a young or expanding population (see Figure 1). The foreign-born segment differs in two significant features: 1). it is overwhelmingly male; and 2). the population profile has a truncated base and the pre-reproductive

FIG. 1

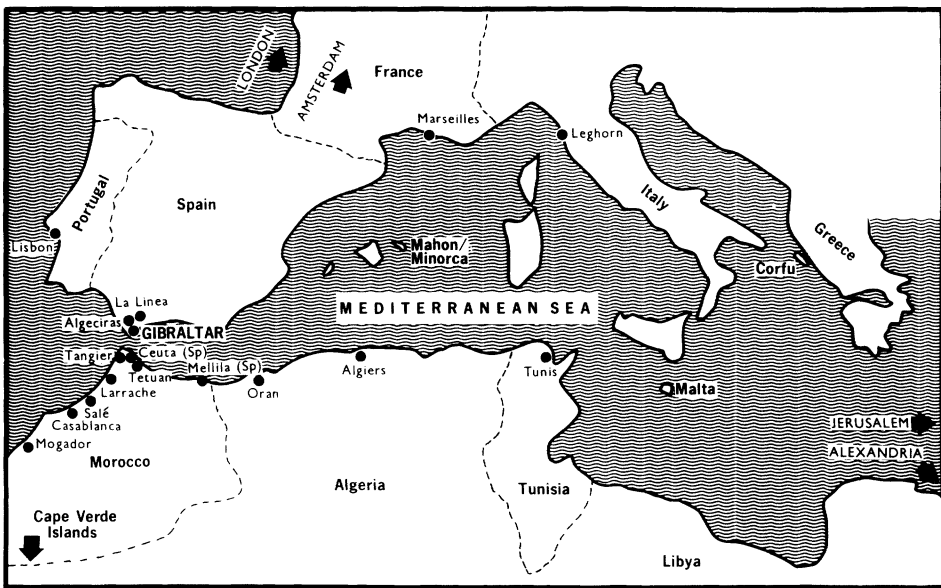
Age and Sex Composition of the Sephardic Community of Gibraltar as of 1777.



age group is virtually absent.

Most of the foreign-born males came from nearby Tetuan (63.4 per cent), one of the three Moroccan ports open to external commerce at the time (see Figure 2). Tetuan was not only an important religious, commercial and administrative center in Morocco,<sup>38</sup> but also an important continuing source of kin, spiritual and commercial ties for the Jewish community of Gibraltar. Although only 7.5 per cent of the foreign-born males originated in Salé, three-quarters of them arrived in Gibraltar prior to 1737 and therefore constituted an important element in the founder population.<sup>39</sup> The more distant but economically important port of Leghorn contributed a further 6 per cent of the Jewish migrants. The latter were probably members of trading families sent to Gibraltar to establish commercial connections and bilateral trade relationships.<sup>40</sup>

FIG. 2



MAJOR SOURCES OF EXOGAMOUS MATES FOR THE JEWS OF GIBRALTAR

Benady suggests that since 72 per cent of the Jewish community at this time was native-born compared with 49 per cent of the Roman Catholics, this is evidence that the Jewish community was established earlier than other groups in Gibraltar.<sup>41</sup> He argues, moreover, that this gave the community important economic advantages over more recent immigrants. For instance, in 1756 Jews owned 20 per cent of the property in Gibraltar: this rose to 25 per cent in 1777.

The census of 1777 also provides the first detailed information on marriage patterns of the Gibraltarian Jews (see Table 1). Of the 93 couples whose birthplaces were listed, only 17.2 per cent were spatially endogamous. Most marriages were composed of at least one foreign-born individual (82.8 per cent). Furthermore, 45.2 per cent of the marriages involved a Gibraltar-born female and a foreign-born male. Unions be-



TABLE 1  
 SPATIAL ENDOGAMY AND EXOGAMY RATES IN THE SEPHARDIC  
 COMMUNITY OF GIBRALTAR: 1777, 1791, 1820 TO 1939

Marriage Cohort	Endogamy		Exogamy					Source	
	In M	In F	In M	Out F	Out M	In F	Out M		Out F
1777	17.2		3.2		45.2		34.4		Census
1791	39.8		3.2		41.9		15.1		Census
1820-1839	52.3		3.6		43.2		0.9		} Civil and synagogue records
1840-1859	75.5		3.1		17.1		4.3		
1860-1899	64.9		15.3		12.2		7.6		
1900-1939	53.0		26.5		14.5		6.0		

tween foreign-born females and native-born males, on the other hand, were rare (3.2 per cent). About one-third of all married couples consisted of two foreign-born individuals.

Analysis of the birthplaces of the exogamous mates (see Table 2) reveals that the majority of the husbands came from Morocco (71 per cent) while most of the wives came from Gibraltar (62 per cent). Interestingly, proportionately more of the female migrants (31 per cent) came from distant locations in the Mediterranean and Europe compared with the male migrants (9 per cent).

The nearly constant state of war between Spain and England culminated in the Great Siege (1779-1883) during which the town was destroyed, land was devalued and trade disrupted.<sup>42</sup> In addition to the general devastation and demoralization experienced by all of the civilians, the Jewish community endured a smallpox epidemic in 1779 and witnessed the shelling and demolition of the *Shahar Hashamayim* synagogue in 1781. A number of Jews were ruined financially; others were rendered destitute, and some 160 emigrated to London.<sup>43</sup> Many of the migrants returned to Gibraltar via Genoa, Tangier, and England after the Spanish terminated their unsuccessful offensive on 5 February 1783.

The census of 1791, taken 8 years after the Great Siege, shows that the Jewish community was still in a relatively reduced state, standing at only 680 individuals and comprising 23.6 per cent of the total civilian population. Despite this reduction in membership, its population profile was relatively unchanged since the 1777 census, as were the marriage patterns. Table 1 shows that exogamous unions between Gibraltar-born females and foreign-born males, mainly from Morocco, continued to predominate at 41.9 per cent of all marriages ( $n = 92$ ), while the number of foreign-born females entering the marriage pool remained constant at 3.2 per cent. Spatial endogamy rose, however, to 39.8 per cent, an increase of 22.6 per cent from the 1777 census.

A vigorous effort to rebuild the town and a fortunate conjunction of historical events ushered in a period of unmatched prosperity at the end of the nineteenth cen-

ture. In the process, the Rock was transformed from a small military garrison into a “grand emporium,” one of the most important centers of European trade.<sup>44</sup> Wealth flowed in quickly, property values soared, and new fortunes were made overnight.<sup>45</sup> The merchants not only benefited from Gibraltar’s enhanced position as an international port, entrepôt center and financial marketplace, but also from the considerable outlays of the British Admiralty which was headquartered there.<sup>46</sup>

TABLE 2  
BIRTHPLACE OF 93 JEWISH MARRIED COUPLES WHERE BOTH SPOUSES  
WERE ALIVE IN 1777. BASED ON RAW RETURNS OF  
THE 1777 CIVIL CENSUS OF GIBRALTAR

Birthplace	Per cent	
	Husband	Wife
Gibraltar	20.4	62.3
Morocco	10.8	3.2
Tetuan	49.5	19.4
Tangier	2.2	2.2
Salé	8.6	1.1
Algiers, Algeria	1.1	0.0
Algeçiras, Spain	2.2	0.0
Lisbon, Portugal	1.1	2.2
Port Mahon, Minorca	0.0	1.1
Leghorn, Italy	1.1	5.4
London, England	1.1	2.2
Amsterdam, Holland	2.2	1.1

Migrants poured in from all parts of the Mediterranean, swelling the number of civilian inhabitants to over 5,000 by 1801, nearly double the figure for the previous decade, and to 11,173 civilians in 1811. By the census of 1816, the Jewish community alone had grown to 1,068 individuals, with British and native-born Jews dominating at 73 per cent. Rapid population expansion brought with it the accompanying problems of overcrowding, poor sanitation, a series of devastating yellow fever epidemics,<sup>47</sup> and the dubious reputation of being the filthiest garrison under the British flag.<sup>48</sup>

As Gibraltar’s importance to European trade grew, so did the significance accorded its civilian population. The garrison gradually took on the political organization of a colony and military rule was replaced with a civilian administration following the amalgamation in 1801 of the British Departments of Wars and Colonies.<sup>49</sup> With the arrival of Governor George Don in 1814, a number of civil reforms were introduced, such as the construction of the Civil Hospital and the establishment of a Commission for Scavenging and Paving, which improved conditions in the town substantially.

The Jewish community made significant contributions to the sociopolitical transformation of the Rock during this period of transition. Two examples serve as illustrations. Members of the Jewish community, for one, were among the founders of the

Exchange Committee in 1817,<sup>50</sup> the representative body of civilian interests until the creation of the City Council in 1921.<sup>51</sup> Originally set up to expedite financial and other business transactions, the Exchange Committee subsequently dealt with trade, social, welfare, and political issues in conjunction with garrison authorities. During this period as well, numerous disputes regarding the legality of buying and selling land by and to non-Protestants were brought to the attention of the governor by the Committee. The Jewish community, moreover, was represented on a committee and a deputation to address the English Privy Council on the question of land tenure in Gibraltar. As a result of this committee's efforts, a new Amending Order in Council was passed in 1819 that repealed all elements of religious discrimination involving land titles.<sup>52</sup>

### *The Registration Period: 1820–1939*

During this period immigration to the Rock remained unabated and had become such a cause for concern that the governor of Gibraltar refused to grant marriage licenses in 1822 to alien males unless they left the garrison. Despite this action, the civilian population continued to increase, numbering over 15,000 by 1826.<sup>53</sup> In September 1828, yellow fever struck again, killing 1,667 inhabitants. A census taken in March of the following year revealed that the civilian population continued, nonetheless, to increase to 16,394 with approximately 44 per cent designated as "resident strangers." Fearful of the introduction of further epidemics to the already overcrowded garrison and concerned over the growing alien population, a radical reform of the Permit System was carried out by the secretary of state to regulate and limit the number of "aliens."<sup>54</sup>

By the 1830s, the halcyon days of trade in Gibraltar were on the wane; shipping was on the decline and Gibraltar was being used more and more simply as a port of call.<sup>55</sup> The drop in trade, coupled with the newly introduced legislation limiting the number of foreigners in the garrison, brought immigration to Gibraltar to a virtual halt. Despite the reduction in the alien component, the civilian population continued to increase to slightly over 17,000 inhabitants and the Jewish community reached its maximum of 1,895.<sup>56</sup>

In June 1834, cholera broke out in Gibraltar killing some 380 inhabitants. A census taken that December revealed that the civilian population had declined to 15,008 individuals, largely at the expense of resident aliens, who now numbered 4,886. Similarly, the Jewish population had declined in membership to 1,625 with a modest reduction in the number of natives ( $n = 68$ ) and a more pronounced reduction in the number of aliens ( $n = 202$ ).

Information on marriage during this phase of rapid population expansion comes primarily from synagogue records. The evidence suggests that marriage patterns observed in the late eighteenth century persisted into the early nineteenth century (Table 1). Significantly, the high rate of foreign-born males marrying Gibraltar-born females remained stable at 43.2 per cent as did the small proportion of unions involving native-born men and foreign-born women (3.6 per cent). There appears superficially to have

been a rise in endogamous marriages to more than one-half (52.3 per cent) of all marriages. However, given that the synagogue records rarely included records of marriages contracted outside of Gibraltar (0.9 per cent), the apparent increase in endogamy is largely artificial.

TABLE 3  
PER CENT OF FOREIGN-BORN GROOMS IN THE SEPHARDIC MARRIAGE  
POOL OF GIBRALTAR BY MARRIAGE COHORT. BASED ON  
SYNAGOGUE AND CIVIL RECORDS

Birthplace of Spouse	Marriage Cohort			
	1820–1839	1840–1859	1860–1899	1900–1939
Morocco	15.23	4.27	3.82	1.47
Tetuan	2.38	2.44	1.34	1.76
Tangier	1.43	2.74	2.86	3.82
Mogador			0.19	
Casablanca				0.29
Larrache	0.48			0.29
Algeria	0.48		0.19	0.29
Tunisia				
Total	20.00	9.45	8.40	7.94
Corfu			0.57	
England		0.91	0.95	0.29
Italy	2.38			
Spain			0.19	0.29
Portugal		0.30		
France	0.48			0.29
Germany				0.29
Middle East			0.38	
Total	<u>2.86</u>	<u>1.21</u>	<u>2.51</u>	<u>1.16</u>
Grand Total	<u>22.86</u>	<u>10.66</u>	<u>10.91</u>	<u>9.08</u>
N of Migrants	48	35	55	31
N of Grooms	210	328	524	340

As the “grand total” line in Table 3 indicates, one-fifth of the Jewish males married in Gibraltar between 1820 and 1839 were foreign-born. The majority of these (85.39 per cent) came from Morocco. In stark contrast, less than 3 per cent of all brides originated outside of Gibraltar (see Table 4). Most of these came from Morocco.

The 1840s were an “Indian Summer” of prosperity for Gibraltar<sup>57</sup> and trade reached its peak between 1835 and 1845,<sup>58</sup> but the economy took a turn for the worse from 1853 to 1856. In 1854, for example, trade was down by 50 per cent and there were reports of beggars in the streets.<sup>59</sup> Trade with Morocco, however, remained strong. In fact, owing to the Anglo-Moroccan treaty of 1856, which removed all restrictions on foreign trade, more than half of Morocco’s foreign imports passed through Gibraltar from 1856 to 1865.<sup>60</sup>

TABLE 4  
PER CENT OF FOREIGN-BORN BRIDES IN THE SEPHARDIC MARRIAGE  
POOL OF GIBRALTAR BY MARRIAGE COHORT. BASED ON  
SYNAGOGUE AND CIVIL RECORDS

Birthplace of Spouse	Marriage Cohort			
	1820-1839	1840-1859	1860-1899	1900-1939
Morocco	0.96	0.91	2.29	0.29
Tetuan		0.61	2.10	1.76
Tangier		0.61	2.86	4.12
Mogador				
Casablanca				0.59
Larrache	0.48		0.19	0.29
Algeria			0.38	0.88
Tunisia			0.38	0.59
Total	1.44	2.13	8.20	8.52
Corfu			0.38	
Malta	0.48	0.30		
England	0.48		0.19	0.88
Italy		0.61	0.19	
Spain				3.24
Portugal		0.30	0.57	1.18
France			0.19	
Germany				0.29
Hungary				0.29
Egypt			0.19	
Middle East			0.19	0.29
Brazil				0.59
Total	0.96	1.21	1.90	6.76
Grand Total	2.39	3.34	10.10	15.28
N of Migrants	5	12	53	52
N of Brides	210	328	524	340

The census of March of 1844 shows that the civilian population had increased modestly to 15,823 individuals during this period, whereas the resident aliens continued to decline to only 3,641 people. The Jewish community remained numerically stationary at 1,625 members with an increase of 111 individuals in the native component counterbalanced by an equivalent loss of alien Jews.

From 1840 to 1859 the pattern of marriage underwent a significant change as three of out four marriages contracted during this interval were spatially endogamous ( $G = 16.0, p < .001, 1 \text{ df}$ ). The rise in endogamy during this period occurred primarily at the expense of marriages between foreign-born males and native-born females which plummeted to only 17 per cent of all marriages. The proportion of unions in which both spouses originated outside of Gibraltar underwent a modest increase to 4.3 per

cent of all marriages. Examination of the birthplace of Jewish spouses revealed that although the number of foreign-born males declined by nearly 50 per cent, the vast majority of them continued to come from Morocco (see Table 3). The pattern of foreign-born brides remained relatively stable in numerical terms and the majority of foreign-born brides continued to originate from Morocco (see Table 4).

By the 1860s, economic conditions in Gibraltar had deteriorated to such an extent that slightly more than one-third of the fixed residents were out of work.<sup>61</sup> The situation was further aggravated by an escalation in the cost of living and house rents. Despite these conditions, Gibraltar's Jewish community found the wherewithal to shelter some 3,800 Jewish refugees in 1860 who were fleeing the impending war between Spain and Morocco.<sup>62</sup> In 1865 cholera struck again carrying off more than 400 inhabitants and causing great social distress; soup kitchens were established to aid the poor and sick.<sup>63</sup>

The civilian population continued to expand, nonetheless, and by 1871 there were over 18,000 people residing within the limited confines of the Rock. In contrast, the total Jewish population underwent a decrease to 1,533 individuals, a net decline of 92 since the census of 1844. The native Jews increased slightly by 58; the number of alien Jews continued to decline (by 140), relative to the 1844 census. Poor sanitary conditions, a decline in available housing, and a further decline in mercantile trade<sup>64</sup> seriously detracted from the attractiveness of Gibraltar as a migration destination.

The high unemployment and serious overcrowding in the town prompted the governor to introduce legislation to limit the number of foreigners in the garrison. Enacted in 1873, the Aliens Order in Council stipulated that foreign-born women would not be permitted to give birth in Gibraltar in order to prevent the right of citizenship by *jure soli*. The insufficiency of this legislation to check population growth is evident from the subsequent legislation of December 1885 which further restricted the right to reside in Gibraltar to native-born inhabitants.

The decennial census of 1891 indicates that the civilian population increased to 19,000, despite the reduction in immigration; the Jewish community also grew by 34 individuals to 1,499. The growth of the civilian population would have been greater, nevertheless, were it not for a stagnation in trade which prompted emigration to South America and to the neighboring Spanish town of La Linea.<sup>65</sup>

During this period of chronic economic decline, endogamy dropped significantly (see Table 1) to 64.9 per cent of all unions ( $G = 6.7$ ,  $p = .009$ , 1 df). The fall in the rate of endogamy occurred primarily from a fivefold increase in marriages between Gibraltar-born males and foreign-born females from 3.1 per cent in the 1840–1869 period to approximately 15.3 per cent for the 1860–1899 marriage cohort. Further examination of Table 1 indicates that the number of foreign-born males marrying native females continued to fall to 12.2 per cent of all unions.

From the data seen in Table 4, it is possible to calculate the relative contributions of foreign-born brides by country. For instance, more than 70 per cent of the foreign-born brides came from Morocco (7.44/10.1). Similarly, the rest of the increase can be

attributed to long distance migration from other foci of the Jewish trade diaspora: Portugal (5.6 per cent); England (1.9 per cent); France (1.9 per cent); Egypt (1.9 per cent); Jerusalem (1.9 per cent); Italy (1.9 per cent); and Corfu (2.8 per cent). Morocco continued to be the primary source of foreign-born grooms, particularly, Tangier and Tetuan.

The start of the twentieth century was marked by further legislation designed to curb the continued growth of the civilian population. In November of 1900 restrictions on permanent residence were extended to British subjects not previously resident in Gibraltar. The census taken a year later revealed the presence of 20,355 civilian inhabitants, an increase of 1,255 since 1891. In contrast, the Jewish community had undergone a marked reduction to 1,067: more than 400 Jews had left the community and migrated elsewhere.

With the outbreak of the First World War, Gibraltar resumed its former fortress status and incurred some short-term financial gain from its strategic position in the Mediterranean.<sup>66</sup> Thereafter, the economic situation reversed again and by the 1920s there was a general depression and stagnation in trade that persisted throughout the 1930s. Economic and social conditions worsened with the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 and with the influx of some 4,500 British subjects resident in the neighboring Spanish towns.<sup>67</sup> The censuses of 1921 and 1931 show, nevertheless, that the Jewish community declined to 963 and 850 members, respectively.

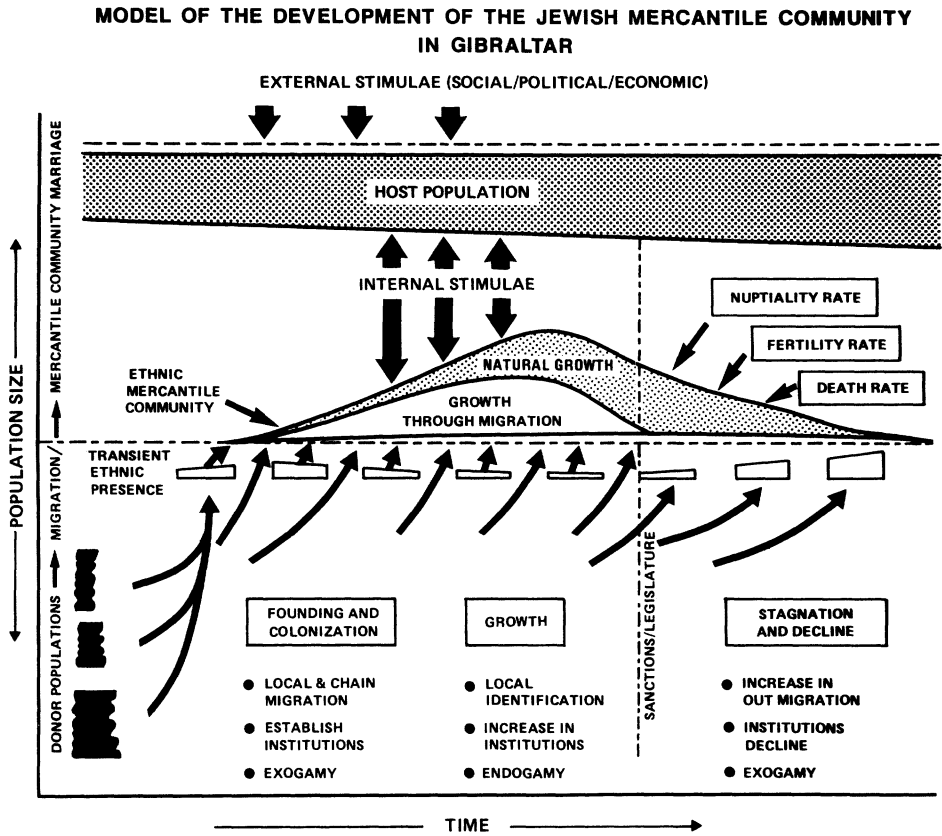
Marriage patterns during this period were essentially a continuation of those of 1860 to 1899 with a decline in the endogamy rate to 53 per cent of all marriages. Unlike the previous period, however, the reduction was not statistically significant ( $G = 1.58$ ,  $p = .21$ , 1 df).

The complementary increase in exogamous unions arose almost entirely from Gibraltarian males marrying non-native women in increasing numbers. Nearly one-quarter of all Jewish marriages were of this type (see Table 1). The proportion of marriages between foreign-born males and native-born females stood at 14.5 per cent, a modest increase of 2.3 per cent over the previous 40-year interval.

In addition to the increase in the proportion of foreign brides at this time, the origin of these brides was most often outside of Morocco (see Table 4). In particular, an increasing proportion of Jewish brides originated from the Spanish border towns of La Linea and Algeciras. Despite this substantial alteration in the spatial makeup of the female marriage pool, the male pattern remained stable with Morocco furnishing the majority of foreign-born grooms.

This study demonstrates that marriage patterns in the Jewish community of Gibraltar were fluid, changing over time in response to developments within and outside the community. Three distinctive marriage patterns emerged, coinciding with major phases in the community's development: 1). high spatial exogamy associated with the founding, establishment, and growth of the community; 2). a movement to high spatial endogamy coinciding with "la grande periode de la communauté juive";<sup>68</sup> and 3). resurgence of spatial exogamy as the community declined numerically and economically (see Figure 3).

FIG. 3



*Spatial Exogamy and the Early History of the Jewish Community*

For most of its history, the Jewish community of Gibraltar played a middleman role in the commercial and political relationships between England and Morocco.<sup>69</sup> The term “middleman” usually refers to the commercial role of a merchant or broker, and to communities specialized in trading activities.<sup>70</sup> Middleman communities tend to be found in feudal or colonial societies where they perform an intermediary role between two groups.<sup>71</sup> They tend to be ethnically homogeneous because of the efficiency a common ideology, language, kinship, and religion confers to the organization of long-distance trade.<sup>72</sup> These communities, dispersed along the trade network, depend for their commercial success on a system of communication and the retention of their ethnic distinctiveness as a means of enforcing norms over vast distances.<sup>73</sup> This middleman specialization is common to most diaspora Jewish communities, having developed in the ninth to tenth centuries and being “practically self-perpetuating” ever since.<sup>74</sup>



The Jewish community of Gibraltar was one such middleman community, having been founded initially by Sephardic trades, primarily from Morocco, who resettled there in response to the commercial needs of the newly established English military presence. Local migration of Jewish males from coastal Moroccan trading centers to perform the secondary occupations that flowed from the trading activities of a nucleus of merchants remained an important demographic feature of the community for much of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The presence of Jewish merchants from more distant commercial centers in the Mediterranean and western Europe reflected the long-distance trading activities of Gibraltar merchants with other points in the Sephardic trade diaspora.<sup>75</sup>

Most members of a middleman community are said to derive from the less privileged groups in their homeland.<sup>76</sup> This appears to have been the case in Gibraltar in the mid-eighteenth century where there were many small traders and shopkeepers, laborers, boatmen, tailors, shoemakers, hawkers and peddlers in the Jewish community.<sup>77</sup> The disproportionate number of males among early immigrants to middleman communities and the tendency of these men to marry local women<sup>78</sup> were also observed in Gibraltar.

During the period within which the Jewish community was founded and established, when the most common form of marriage involved a Moroccan-born male and a Gibraltar-born female, the marriage network clearly represented a vehicle for Jewish males from Morocco to enter Gibraltar's mercantile economy on a more permanent basis. This also served, reciprocally, to maintain and solidify the Sephardic community's historic kin, spiritual and economic ties with the Barbary States. The predominance of Moroccans among the founders, especially those from the nearby cities of Tetuan and Tangier, left an indelible mark on the community and remained a salient feature of the marriage network throughout its history.

The tendency at this time of Gibraltar-born males to marry women from more distant trading points was partly a reflection of Moroccan legislation that suppressed the outmigration of Jewish females.<sup>79</sup> However, it also indicates that marriage was an important means of establishing, maintaining, and reinforcing links with widely separate points in the Sephardic trade diaspora. We have no information on occupation during the pre-registration period. It was the merchants and traders, however, who were engaged in long-distance trade and who had the wealth, the opportunity, and the reasons to cement through marriage economic relationships in far-away locales. They were, in all probability, the Gibraltarians involved in these unions.

The expansion of Anglo-Moroccan trade at the beginning of the nineteenth century opened up new commercial opportunities in Gibraltar for Moroccan Jews. Handling most of the growing foreign trade between Morocco and Europe, Gibraltar became "la plaque tournante du commerce anglais avec le Maroc."<sup>80</sup> Migration to Gibraltar also offered the attractive prospect of becoming allied with a Sephardic trading family in England, of obtaining an English passport that would confer the same social status

as a European in Morocco,<sup>81</sup> and of leasing and holding land in Gibraltar. There were incentives other than purely economic, however. Gibraltar's proximity to Morocco, its historic links with the littoral cities, and the refuge it provided in the early 1800s when anti-Jewish feelings in Morocco were culminating in the forced confinement of Jews in the *mellahs* of Tetuan, Rabat, Mogador, and Salé,<sup>82</sup> prompted many Jews from these newly created ghettos to seek a safe haven across the Straits of Gibraltar. The easing of restrictions of the embarkation of Jews from Morocco at this time facilitated this emigration.

### *The Rise in Spatial Endogamy (1820–1859)*

The rise in spatially endogamous marriages in 1820–1839 and the subsequent acceleration of the trend in 1840–1859 coincided with the period identified by Miège as “la grande période de la communauté juive.”<sup>83</sup> During this period of prosperity, Jewish merchants were shareholders in the major shipping firms; they owned a disproportionate amount of land in Gibraltar, and held a large part of international maritime trade.<sup>84</sup> Other features of this phase of the community's development include: continued population growth culminating in a peak in size in 1831; civilian legislation restricting immigration to Gibraltar; the development of a local identity; and Jewish involvement in social and political reform on the Rock.

One of the major factors in the emergence of the endogamous marriage pattern at this time was the restrictive legislation of 1822 and 1829, which severely curtailed the growth of the Jewish community through immigration. This is supported by the 1844 census returns which indicate that nearly 90 per cent of the registered foreign-born Jews had resided in Gibraltar for 15 years or longer. As the number of foreign-born Jews in Gibraltar declined, the chances of entering a union with a non-native decreased accordingly.

The rise in endogamy may also be partially explained as an artifact of what Miège<sup>85</sup> argues was an increase in the number of “naturalized” Gibraltarians: individuals born elsewhere who, legally or otherwise, claimed Gibraltarian status. If foreign-born individuals were being reclassified as Gibraltarians, this could account for the rise in endogamy. Indeed, the 20 per cent increase in endogamy observed at this time was accompanied by a complementary decrease in exogamous unions between foreign-born males and Gibraltar females. However, there is no direct evidence to support this hypothesis. If the rise in endogamy merely reflected an increase in naturalizations, the number of spouses with a non-native parent would be expected to increase in 1840–1859 relative to 1820–1849. Examination of the reconstructed genealogies of endogamous couples showed no such increase. In fact, the opposite trend was found: the number of spatially endogamous unions in which the parents were born outside of Gibraltar actually *decreased* between 1840–1859.

There is little doubt that the rise in endogamy at this time was facilitated by the

relatively large pool of available mates present in the community. As Adams and Kasakoff have shown,<sup>86</sup> however, population size alone is an insufficient explanation for endogamy. The trend to endogamy during this phase of the development of the Jewish community must be viewed within the context of a rising sense of local identity, solidarity, and community control over immigration. During the renewed prosperity of the 1840s, for example, the number of marriages registered in Gibraltar rose dramatically relative to the previous two decades. While the historic records for this period are sketchy at best, it appears that the Jewish community entered a period of stabilization and internal solidification with an emphasis on local marriages to maximize kin, religious, and economic bonds.

By this time, the Jewish community was well over a century old and many of its families had lived on the Rock for several generations. The eighteenth century pattern of intermarriage of Moroccan males with Gibraltarian women and the birth of their children on the Rock increased the number of Jews who viewed Gibraltar as their homeland.<sup>87</sup> This sense of local identity could only have been enhanced by the communal experience of the rigors of the Great Siege and the yellow fever epidemics, by the growing prestige of Gibraltar as a commercial center, and by its crucial role in the expanding British Empire.

The Jewish community, moreover, had become fairly entrenched as a separate, definable group in Gibraltar. Extreme religious orthodoxy,<sup>88</sup> establishment of communal institutions early in the eighteenth century,<sup>89</sup> and adherence to Ladino as the language of speech and literature,<sup>90</sup> helped to maintain its ethnic distinctiveness. Solidarity was further enhanced by the community's autonomy in running its affairs. Although religious matters were controlled by the rabbis (who Zafrani<sup>91</sup> argues were instrumental in maintaining connections between widespread Jewish communities), administrative responsibilities were in the hands of the Hebrew Syndicks. This powerful committee, legally recognized by Governor Bland in 1750, was composed of the self-appointed presidents of the four synagogues. These men were inevitably the richest merchants and landowners in the community. The most prominent of these, the Chief Syndick, headed the committee and represented the community's interests to the governor,<sup>92</sup> thus influencing policy-making on the Rock. Furthermore, through the involvement of its prominent citizens in important Gibraltar institutions such as the Sanitary Commissioners, the Colonial Hospital, and the powerful Exchange Committee, the Jewish community had a strong voice in the social and political transformation of the Rock from a military garrison to an English colony. The Exchange Committee was not only powerful within the confines of Gibraltar but, through its connections with Chambers of Commerce in Britain, "had an indirect voice in the British parliament, which it proceeded to use."<sup>93</sup> Thus, although it has been suggested that middleman groups tend to avoid political involvement,<sup>94</sup> this was clearly not the case for the Jewish community of Gibraltar.

The Hebrew Syndicks played a significant role in shaping Jewish community membership, identity, and solidarity. They influenced to a large degree who was sponsored

to enter Gibraltar on temporary permits; they levied taxes (*escamot*) on community members and determined the manner in which the funds were disbursed. Thus, through the control and regulation of relationships within the Jewish community, between the Jewish community and the civil government of Gibraltar, and between Gibraltar and other Jewish communities (in much the same way as has been described by Lipman and by Geertz<sup>95</sup>), the Committee was in a position to influence who participated in the marriage pool.

### *The Resurgence of Spatial Exogamy (1860–1939)*

From 1860 to 1899, marriage patterns in the Jewish community shifted in two important ways: 1). spatial endogamy declined significantly from 1860 to 1899, a trend that continued to the end of the study period in 1919; and 2). the rise in exogamy stemmed from an increase in foreign-born females entering the marriage pool. The resurgence in exogamy can be linked to a number of events internal and external to the Jewish community: a decline in the size of the community; legislation further restricting the entry of foreign-born males into Gibraltar; social unrest in Morocco; and the decline of the Sephardic trade diaspora as world trade became westernized.

The increasing restrictions placed on the immigration of foreign-born males into Gibraltar<sup>96</sup> is reflected in the relatively small proportion of spatially exogamous marriages involving Gibraltarian females and non-native males (12.2 per cent). The increase in exogamous marriages during this period is, therefore, almost wholly explained through a rise in unions between Gibraltarian males and foreign-born females who, in most instances, were born in Morocco. The proximity of Morocco, the upheavals experienced by its people at this time, and Gibraltar's traditional marriage links with the coastal commercial centers undoubtedly played a role in ensuring that a substantial proportion of Jewish mates continued to derive from the Barbary region.

The rise in exogamy not only reflected an increase in brides from Barbary, but also in brides from other distant commercial centers in the trade network. This expansion of the female marriage network does not necessarily reflect the infusion of "new" people but rather is more appropriately viewed as a measure of the high mobility typical of mercantile groups. In some instances, the appearance of mates born in the Barbary region reflected the use of the brokerage network that was once headquartered in Gibraltar and the return of Gibraltarian merchants and their families to the Rock. In others, it reflected the necessity of maintaining economic links between Gibraltarian Jews who acted as provisioners to the British and Royal Navy and traded under British colors during the neocolonial period. As a case in point, Gibraltarian Jews were among the original founders of the Jewish community in Lisbon, the connection between the two communities being symbolized by the naming of the first synagogue there after the Great Synagogue in Gibraltar, *Shahar Hashamayim*.<sup>97</sup>

When economic and social conditions deteriorated in Gibraltar in the last half of the nineteenth century, when fertility rates were low, celibacy rates high,<sup>98</sup> and more

severely restrictive legislation reduced the possibilities of replenishing the community through immigration, the number of potential marriage partners in the Jewish community diminished, especially from 1900 onward. Thus, the rise in spatial exogamy can be explained, in part, through the force of small numbers which made it increasingly difficult, particularly for Gibraltarian females, to find suitable Jewish mates locally.

For some Jewish males, however, marriage to a female from one of the more prosperous Jewish communities in the trade diaspora, such as the Americas or England, may have represented the prospect of future economic opportunities. As was the case when foreign-born males married Gibraltar-born females in large numbers during the first phase of the community's development, marriage to a non-Gibraltarian female offered a potential avenue for escaping the deteriorating local conditions and making a new life elsewhere if the situation became intolerable. For Gibraltarian males without the means or the connections to contract such a marriage, another alternative was to move to the Spanish border town of La Linea where the cost of living was cheaper. Indeed, the increase in marriages between native-born Jews and Jews born in Spain is a reflection of this emigration. So many Jews moved to La Linea, in fact, that a synagogue was opened there.<sup>99</sup> Some Gibraltarian males married non-Jewish females, a tendency that increased from 1900 onward;<sup>100</sup> others remained celibate.<sup>101</sup> Thus, the problem of a low replacement rate was aggravated by religious exogamy, celibacy, and the outflow of poor and wealthy Jewish families alike:

The great families who were the support of all the charities and the benevolent rulers have disappeared. The Bergels [sic], have vanished. The Levys who, for over 150 years were the leading firms, whose generosity was proverbial are no longer what they were. Gone are the Benoliels the Sequerras, the Aboabs, the Cardozos, the Seniors and the Nahons. Those who still exist have the power to do what they wish. Others, like the Benzecrys, have gone to England whilst other [sic] left for other countries.<sup>102</sup>

For Jewish females, the options were fewer. Marriage to non-Jewish males was relatively rare.<sup>103</sup> Faced with a diminishing number of potential mates in Gibraltar and barred by legislation from residency should they marry a foreign-born man, many Jewish females remained unmarried.<sup>104</sup> This further contributed to the inexorable demographic down-spiral of the community.

### *Conclusion*

In conclusion, the evidence from the Sephardim of Gibraltar shows that marriage patterns in this middleman community were fluid and responsive to internal and external events (see Figure 3). These findings, though clearly grounded in the particular historical details of the community, may nevertheless be representative of the demographic development of other Sephardic communities in the trade network.

The Gibraltar results confirm that spatial exogamy, with foreign-born males marrying native-born females, will be the norm in a trading community under colonizing

conditions. Spatially exogamous marriages offer to males from proximal communities in the trade network a means of participating in the commercial, social, and political opportunities offered in the new community. Such marriages are also a means of maintaining communication between widespread points in the trade diaspora.

The history of the Sephardic community shows that a spatially endogamous pattern will emerge under restrictive immigration conditions provided that prosperity continues, the community has established cohesive institutions, and a strong sense of local identity and solidarity has developed. The endogamous pattern emphasizes internal solidarity by maximizing kin, religious, and economic bonds.

If trade conditions deteriorate and the barriers to immigration persist, the community will begin to decline numerically in the absence of a high natural rate of increase. Emigration to more prosperous climates will deplete the population and restrictive immigration laws will preclude replenishment of the community from other points in the trade network. Consequently, as the community dwindles, it becomes increasingly difficult to find a suitable mate locally. Spatially exogamous and interethnic marriages will increase, undermining the trading community's population base and, ultimately, its ethnic homogeneity.

Similar local histories of the Sephardic communities making up the links in the trade network are needed to determine whether the Gibraltar patterns are unique, and to gain a clearer picture of the undoubtedly complex reasons for the decline of these once flourishing middleman communities.

## NOTES

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