

**Assimilation, Transformation,
and the Long Range Impact of Intermarriage**

Bruce Phillips

Abstract

Using the NJPS 2000 and other Jewish population studies, the Jewish identity of mixed-parentage and Jewish parentage respondents is compared. In the abstract respondents of mixed-parentage are oriented to the Jewish people, but at a concrete level their communal ties are tenuous and their children's Jewish identity is doubtful.

Introduction

Intermarriage has been the most discussed aspect of each of the three National Jewish Population Surveys. When the original NJPS of 1970-71 reported a rise in the rate of intermarriage in the late 1960s (Massarik, 1973), opinions were divided about where this would lead. Elihu Bergman (1977) speculated that intermarriage eventually would lead to a drastic diminution of the Jewish population. Fred Massarik (1978) disagreed, reasoning that as long as half of the children of Jewish intermarriages were raised as Jews there would be no net loss in Jewish population. Leonard Fein (1979) agreed with Massarik, chiding the American Jewish community for being so ready to embrace the most pessimistic projections. Controversy also followed the release of findings from the 1990 NJPS. Not long after Kosmin and Goldstein (1991) reported an individual intermarriage rate of 52% for the period 1985-1990, this number was challenged by Steven M. Cohen (1994), who put the figure at 40% and possibly even lower. Not discussed at the time were the long-range implications for the composition of the American Jewish population inherent even in the lower figure posited by Cohen. If only one-third of all Jews married non-Jews, half the couples with Jews in them would be intermarriages, and a non-Jewish parent thus would raise half of all Jewish children. Cohen's rate of 38% implied that it would not be long before more than half of Jewish children would have a non-Jewish parent. A decade later this indeed is the case. More than half the NJPS 2000-01 respondents born after 1982 were of mixed Jewish/non-Jewish parentage (data not shown).¹

The NJPS 2000-01 provides an excellent opportunity to examine the long-range impact of intermarriage on the American Jewish population. Its national scope went far beyond the metropolitan areas where local Jewish population surveys typically are conducted. Therefore, it included Jews whose geographical marginality to Jewish communal life reflects their social distance from it. The NJPS 2000-01 used liberal cri-

teria for inclusion and thus captured 640 interviews with respondents who identified as Christian by religion.² These respondents typically would be considered too marginal for inclusion in local Jewish population surveys. About half of the children in the 1990 NJPS are now adults, and the NJPS 2000-01 consequently includes more than 1,300 respondents who are the products of intermarriages. Thus, four theoretical models that explicitly or implicitly predict the long-range impact of intermarriage on adult Jewish identification can be tested using the NJPS 2000-01 precisely because it cast a wide net.

The classic model for studying intermarriage is Milton Gordon's *Assimilation in American Life* (Gordon, 1964). In this work, Gordon describes assimilation as a multifaceted process beginning with the adoption of the majority culture by the minority group. The final stage of assimilation is marital assimilation, whereby the minority group is absorbed into the majority group through intermarriage. Implicit in the assimilation paradigm is the prediction that Jews raised in intermarriages will be assimilated as adults, particularly if they were raised in marriages in which the lone Jewish parent was only half-Jewish.

A second model is presented by Bernard Lazerwitz and his co-authors in *Jewish Choices* (1998), which I call the tradition-socialization model. This model is a modification of the Milton Gordon assimilation paradigm in that it acknowledges the strong pressures toward assimilation in American society. Where Gordon hinges assimilation on the openness of the majority group, the tradition-socialization model identifies a mechanism whereby the minority group can resist assimilation. Working with the 1990 NJPS, Lazerwitz and his co-authors observed that socialization into a traditionalist Jewish value system was negatively associated with intermarriage. They noted that intermarriage was lowest among men raised Orthodox and highest among men raised Reform or unaffiliated. They linked the propensity to intermarry with exposure to traditional Jewish values (p. 104). Extending this model to the offspring of Jewish intermarriages suggests they would be less likely to have internalized Jewish traditional values within an intermarried family because of lower exposure to two kinds of socialization (and transmission of those values). The first is socialization through institutions such as Jewish schools and Jewish summer camps. The second socialization is through the family. The children of endogamous and Jewish-gentile marriages in theory have equal access to institutional socialization, depending on the willingness of their parents to provide it. Familial socialization is another matter, however. To what extent does the non-Jewish parent dilute familial Jewish socialization in the intermarriage? The tradition-socialization model suggests, indirectly at least, that growing up with a non-Jewish parent should produce an indepen-

dent effect even if the respondent was exposed to the formal and informal socializations specified above.

Writing in the mid 1980s, Calvin Goldscheider (1986) and Steven M. Cohen (1988) offered an alternative to the Milton Gordon model of inevitable assimilation, which they called the transformation paradigm. The underlying premise of the transformation paradigm is that what looks like assimilation might only be adaptation. They specifically rejected the assimilation paradigm's assumption that ethnic groups either cannot resist assimilation or actively seek it out as a path to upward mobility. Social change, they reasoned, was not necessarily assimilation. Instead of assimilating, Goldscheider and Cohen argued that American Jewry was undergoing a process of transformation.

Because intermarriage is the culmination of assimilation as described by Gordon, it is the starting point for the transformation paradigm. Goldscheider's case for the transformation paradigm, *Jewish Continuity and Change* (1986), thus starts with an analysis of intermarriage. Through the middle of the 20th century, intermarriage was commonly understood to be an escape from the Jewish community. For example, an economically successful Jewish man might seek to concretize his social standing through marriage to a higher-status non-Jew. It might also be that the individual Jew was rejecting Jewish identification outright and thus seeking a non-Jewish partner as a result of his/her alienation. Using data from the 1985 Boston Jewish Population Survey, Goldscheider argued that younger Jews no longer viewed intermarriage in ideological terms. He found that the understanding of intermarriage had been transformed so that intermarriage was accepted but not valued. Younger Jews were not concerned about the consequences of intermarriage, Goldscheider explained, because they did not believe there were any. Like Goldscheider, Cohen began his transformationist book, *American Assimilation or Jewish Revival?* (1988) with an analysis of intermarriage (using data from the 1981 New York Jewish Population Survey). Explaining that Transformationists are more sanguine [than assimilationists] about Jewish continuity after intermarriage (p. 17), Cohen noted, most mixed marriages reported some features of Jewish commitment and involvement (p. 36). Cohen concluded that the children of intermarriages were being raised sufficiently Jewish so as to produce only a small population loss—and possibly a population gain (p. 40). These two works were written in the 1980s. The children in those intermarried households now are adults, and the transformation paradigm can be extended to the adult children of intermarriage by focusing on ideology. If a new understanding of intermarriage is part of the transformation of American Jewry, then adults of mixed parentage should continue to identify as Jews and value that identity.

The fourth model derives from research on mixed marriage between different racial groups, which I call the “multi-racial paradigm.” Although the emerging body of research on multi-racial identity does not address interreligious marriage, this paradigm provides useful insights into the long-range impacts of Jewish mixed marriage because Jewish identity has both ethnic and religious dimensions. The multi-racial paradigm studies persons of mixed race, an area of research that led to the inclusion of a multi-racial category in the 2000 U.S. Census. Black-white marriages have been the focus of multi-racial research because historically these are the two groups least likely to marry. Most Southern states outlawed such marriages at one or another point in history, and it was not until 1967 that the anti-miscegenation laws outlawing black-white marriage were declared unconstitutional.

The focus of the multi-racial paradigm is the element of choice in racial self-definition. Kerry Ann Rockquemore and David L. Brunzma (2001) conducted qualitative research among young adults of mixed black-white parentage. They found that mixed-race individuals typically defined themselves in one of three ways: “singular identity” (as black or white only), biracial (a border identity between the established racial categories), or “protean” (situational shifting between racial categories). With regard to the protean identification, Rockquemore and Brunzma found that “the individual does not possess a single, unified racial identity.” Instead, “the biracial person possesses multiple racial identities and personas that may be called up in appropriate contexts.” They found that individuals with a protean identity “will sometimes identify as black, at other times as white, and still other times as biracial” (p. 69).

The role of choice and self-definition is very much in evidence in the early analyses of the mixed-race question introduced in the 2000 Census, which allowed for multiple responses to the category of race. Even before the introduction of the multi-racial category in the 2000 Census, there was indirect evidence of racial self-definition. The number of American Indians increased dramatically from the 1960 to the 1970 Censuses because of the switch to self-reporting. Individuals of mixed Indian and white ancestry had been categorized erroneously as white by census takers operating under the Gordon model of assimilation (Harris, 1994). They assumed that a mixed-race person who looked white would identify as such. Preliminary research into the mixed-race category in the 2000 Census has revealed that mixed-race persons did not report themselves consistently between the census and other government reporting agencies (Harrison, 2002). These mixed-race persons were behaving in a “protean” fashion, identifying as white in some situations and as black or biracial in others.

The bi-racial identity model is theoretically applicable to Jewish intermarriage because Jewish and gentile historically have been mutu-

ally exclusive categories. In the past, Jews assumed that the products of Jewish intermarriages would drop their Jewish identification because Jews were outsiders of low or at best uncertain social status. They would “sit shiva” for such a person, sociologically lost to the Jewish people (Sklare, 1964). In America, assimilation was easier for mixed-parentage Jews than for biracial African Americans. Light-skinned blacks were legally defined as black for the purposes of segregation. They could try to pass as white with the hope that they would not be discovered. Individuals of mixed Jewish parentage, by contrast, could openly and authentically claim to be non-Jewish, especially if they converted to Christianity. For both mixed-parentage Jews and multi-racial persons, there were only two options: remain in the minority group or disappear into the majority. It was easier for Jews to disappear because they were not racially visible and because resistance to black-white marriage was much stronger than resistance to Jewish assimilation through marriage. In the 21st century, African Americans of mixed parentage have an intermediate option that combines both racial identifications. So too, the multi-racial paradigm suggests that contemporary Jews of mixed parentage in a multicultural society also have multiple options. Mixed-parentage Jews can identify in a singular fashion (either as a Jew or as a non-Jew), as both Jew and non-Jew (e.g. as “half-Jewish”), or as one or the other depending on the situation. Because Jewish identity has both ethnic and religious dimensions, the middle ground for a hybrid Jewish identification is wider than for multi-racial persons. Mixed-parentage Jews can and often do identify as Christian by religion and Jewish by ethnicity, or even as a mixed-race Jew. The expression “half-Jewish” probably reflects the influence of multi-racial identification, and it has become a subject of popular interest. Journalist Susan Jacoby titled her discovery of her father’s hidden Jewish identity *Half-Jew* (2000), and *The Half-Jewish Book* (Vuijst, 2000) celebrates this seemingly intermediate status as a legitimate culture in itself. As a website called HalfJew.com explains, those with a mixed heritage sometimes feel as if they exist in a kind of limbo, not really belonging to a religious and cultural minority and not really belonging to the religious and cultural majority either. The site includes a monthly selection of celebrities that are half-Jewish. Multi-racial even can overlap with half-Jewish when one parent is African American and the other is Jewish (Walker, 2002).

The tradition-socialization paradigm is a variant of the assimilation paradigm with an allowance for minority efforts to counteract the forces of assimilation. The tradition-socialization paradigm is similar to the assimilation model in that it acknowledges the tremendous pressures to assimilate, but it expands it by introducing socialization experiences that encourage resisting assimilation. The multi-racial model is similar

to the transformation model in that both allow for individual reinterpretation of traditional categories. All four models are tested in this paper using the NJPS 2000-01.

Methods

Three methodological issues affect this analysis. The first is generic to the NJPS and the other two pertain specifically to the procedures used in this article to categorize respondents as having mixed or Jewish parentage. The generic issue, discussed in depth elsewhere in this issue, is how well the NJPS 2000-01 can be said to represent American Jewry as a whole. The response rate in the screening phase of the NJPS 2000-01, in which Jewish households were identified, was considerably lower than the industry standards delineated by the American Association of Public Opinion Research. This problem was further exacerbated by the loss of many of the screening records. The NJPS is most problematic for describing the American Jewish population as a whole. Researchers stand on firmer ground when using the NJPS 2000-01 for examining relationships among variables. Even weak samples should reveal strong relationships. Studies of college students provide a useful analogy. While college students are not representative of the American population, many such studies have been published in journals and remain widely cited. With regard to this article, that means that though the estimate of the number of Jews with a non-Jewish parent may have a large error range, the association of Jewish parentage with other variables nonetheless can be explored. Since this paper deals with bivariate and multivariate associations within NJPS 2000-01, it is less adversely affected by the methodological shortcomings than would be an analysis based on comparisons between the National Jewish Population Surveys of 1990 and 2000-01.

Two methodological issues uniquely pertain to this analysis: the determination of Jewish parentage and the handling of biases caused by missing data from questions not asked of Jewish ancestry respondents who did not consider themselves Jewish. These issues are briefly summarized here because they influence the analysis. In keeping with the methodological thrust of this issue of *Contemporary Jewry*, these topics are discussed in detail in the methodological appendix.

Respondent's Jewish parentage was ascertained in two different ways. The screening section of the questionnaire asked respondents who were not Jewish: "Do you have a Jewish mother or a Jewish father?" In the body of the questionnaire, all respondents were asked if their mothers and fathers were *born* Jewish. The wording of the latter question turned out to be problematic. By asking if the respondent's parents were born Jewish the NJPS questionnaire misclassified parents who had converted to Judaism as non-Jews (i.e. they were not born Jewish). This is

not a serious problem because conversion to Judaism is low and the resulting bias is known. The net effect of this misclassification would be to make respondents of mixed parentage seem to be more Jewish than they otherwise would appear because those raised by a parent who converted to Judaism were included in this category. Screened respondents who were also the interviewed respondents³ were asked both versions of the Jewish parentage question but their responses were not always consistent. In order to resolve these contradictions, other questions in the survey were consulted so that the respondent could be categorized as having either Jewish or mixed parentage. The results of this case by case analysis (presented in the appendix) suggest a process of identity construction consistent with the multi-racial paradigm.

A missing data problem resulted from a decision to give an abbreviated version of the questionnaire to a sub-population of those who were secular or identified with another religion. These persons were asked: Do you consider yourself Jewish for any reason? Those who answered affirmatively were interviewed, and those who answered in the negative were classified as Persons of Jewish Background (PJB). They received an abbreviated version of the questionnaire that left out many of the attitudinal questions. The vast majority of the PJB were persons of mixed parentage who identified as Christians by religion. In local community surveys, these respondents would not have been interviewed. A national Jewish population survey, however, has a broader intellectual agenda than does a local planning survey, and full inclusion of the PJB would have made it possible to assess the extent and character of assimilation or transformation associated with intermarriage. The NJPS 2000-01 took a compromise position and saved money by setting a limit on the number of PJB interviews conducted and reducing the number of Jewish content questions asked of them on the assumption that these questions would not apply. The methodological appendix shows the PJB to be less Jewish than other respondents of mixed parentage based on the few questions asked of the PJB respondents. On the other hand, it is matter of degree rather than kind. They are relatively less Jewish, but not entirely devoid of Jewish feelings or practices. Moreover, some of the PJB may have understood the Do you consider yourself to be Jewish in any way question to refer to Judaism. Because almost all of the PJB respondents were of mixed parentage and because they came out less Jewish on the few Jewish content questions they were asked, the missing data makes the mixed-parentage respondents appear to be more Jewish than they otherwise would have been had the PJB respondents received the full questionnaire.

Evaluating the paradigms

Each of the theoretical paradigms can be evaluated with regard to the adult children of intermarriage using NJPS 2000-01. The assimilation model is evaluated by looking at persons of Jewish birth or ancestry who identify as Christian by religion. Historically, conversion to Christianity was the means by which to assimilate.⁴ The United Jewish Communities, which sponsored the NJPS, took the position that Christian Jews were assimilated and excluded them from reports it has released. The UJC decided that Christian identification disqualified these individuals from being counted as Jews, even if they identified as Jewish in some other way. Thus, Christian identification is used in this analysis as an indicator of assimilation.

Table 1 shows that mixed parentage is associated with Christian identification. Almost half (49%) of the mixed-parentage respondents identified as Christian by religion, and another 10% identified with an Eastern or New Age religion. Less than half (42%) identified either as Jewish by religion or as a secular Jew (16% and 26% respectively). It is not surprising that identification with Judaism is relatively rare among respondents of mixed parentage since fewer than one in five was raised as Jewish by religion (Table 2).

Table 1

Religious Identification by Parentage of Respondent

Current Religion	Parentage of Respondent	
	Mixed parentage (N=1,341)	Jewish parentage (N=3,663)
Judaism	16%	84%
No religion, secular	26%	10%
Eastern/New Age Religion	10%	1%
Christian Jew	49%	5%
Total	100%	100%

The long-range intergenerational effect of intermarriage can be gauged by adding children currently in the household to the analysis. Table 3 shows the joint impact of the respondent's parentage and spouse's ethno-religious status on how the children are raised. Children raised in endogamous marriages were more likely to be raised in Judaism than those raised in intermarriages, with Jewish parentage operating as a secondary factor. The children of in-married Jewish-parentage respondents were almost universally (98%) being raised in Judaism. I specify raised

Table 2
Religious Upbringing by Parentage of Respondent

Religious Upbringing	Parentage of Respondent	
	Mixed parentage (N=1,341)	Jewish parentage (N=3,663)
Raised Exclusively in Judaism	18.9%	88.6%
Not Raised Exclusively in Judaism	81.1%	11.4%
Total	100%	100%

in Judaism as opposed to the more familiar phrase raised as Jews to differentiate between children raised in Judaism and children raised as ethnic Jews only. Only 2% of the children of in-married respondents of Jewish parentage were being raised as secular. Secular here means in no religion at all or in an Eastern or New Age religion. The specific responses given by parents that were coded as secular were, in order of popularity: None/No Religion/Secular, Other Religion (Unspecified), Refused or Don't know, Atheist, Agnostic, New Age/Spiritualist, Buddhist, Pagan, Druid, Baha'i, and Humanist. These two categories were combined because there were so few children being raised in an Eastern or New Age religion. By contrast, the children of intermarried Jewish-parentage respondents were almost equally divided among three categories: raised in Judaism (37%), raised in no religion (28%), or raised in some other religion (34%). The children of endogamous mixed-parentage respondents were less likely than children of endogamous Jewish parentage respondents to have been raised in Judaism, but most of them still were raised in Judaism (67%). The children of intermarried respondents of mixed parentage are the best test of the assimilation paradigm; it would predict that children who are only one-quarter Jewish⁵ should be raised as Christians. This was only partially the case. Most were being raised as Christians (61%), and almost none were being raised in Judaism (4%), but more than one-third (35%) were being raised in no religion.

Christian identification erases an important long-standing distinction between Jews and other Americans. If Christian identification is used as an indicator of assimilation, then only about half of mixed-parentage adults and only 61% of the children of intermarried, mixed-parentage respondents can be said to have assimilated. According to the assimilation paradigm, all these children should be raised as Christian. The assimilation paradigm is validated in the sense that subsequent generations of diluted Jewish parentage is associated with increased Christian identification. However, the assimilation is not total. The tradition-

Table 3
Religion of Children by Jewish Parentage of Respondent
and Jewish Status of Spouse

Religion in Which Child is Being Raised	Respondent is of Mixed Parentage			Respondent is of Jewish Parentage		
	Spouse of Respondent is			Spouse of Respondent is		
	Jewish (N=82)*	Non-Jew (N=390)	No spouse present (N=317)	Jewish (N=1,007)	Non-Jew (N=402)	No spouse present (N=394)
Judaism	67%	4%	11%	98%	37%	64%
No religion, secular	5%	35%	33%	2%	28%	26%
Jew + Other Religion	1%	1%	3%	0%	9%	2%
Christian	27%	61%	53%	0%	25%	8%
Total	100.0%	100%	100.0%	100.	100%	100%

*The *N* is the number of children in the analysis, not the number of households.

socialization paradigm suggests that they are the exception that proves the rule, because Jewish socialization partially explains the lack of total assimilation among adults of mixed parentage as defined by Christian identification.

Although Lazerwitz and his co-authors did not investigate this issue, the tradition-socialization paradigm as they have explained it predicts a negative association between socialization experiences and Christian identification. The regression equation presented in Table 4 demonstrates that socialization experiences were negatively associated with Christian identification while simultaneously controlling for such contextual variables as age, education, and generation.

Table 4
Regression Model Predicting
Adult Christian Identification

Predictor Variables	Standardized Coefficients
	Beta
Two Jewish parents (0, 1)	-.153
Mother of respondent is Jewish (0, 1)	-.052
Raised exclusively in Judaism (0, 1)	-.229
Raised in a Jewish movement (0, 1)	-.026
Visited Israel as a teenager (0, 1)	-.007
Jewish camping experiences (0, 1)	-.020
Had formal education in another religion (0, 1)	.213
Mostly Jewish friends or dates in HS (0, 1)	-.078
Age in years	.035
Generation of respondent (1 st & 2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th)	.078
Education (HS, some college, college grad, graduate or professional school)	-.016
(Constant)	

Adjusted R Square=.370

Four family socialization variables were negatively associated with Christian identification as an adult. They were, in order of impact: being raised exclusively in Judaism,⁶ having two Jewish parents, having a Jewish mother (respondents of mixed parentage), and being raised in a Jewish denomination. The relatively high correlation regression coefficient for two Jewish parents is the independent effect of Jewish parent-

age above and beyond the association of Jewish parentage with Jewish socialization experiences. Socialization experiences outside the home were also negatively associated with adult Christian identification: visiting Israel as a teenager, Jewish camping, and having mostly Jewish friends or Jewish dates in high school. Conversely, non-Jewish socialization via formal instruction in a religion other than Judaism had a strong positive association with adult Christian identification.

As previously discussed, mixed-parentage respondents were less likely than Jewish parentage respondents to have been raised as Jews, and those raised as Jews were less likely to have Jewish socialization experiences. Controlling for these socialization experiences, the regression equation shows that mixed parentage still is strongly associated with adult Christian identification because it has an independent effect. If the only Jewish parent is the father, the likelihood of Christian identification is further increased. In sum, Jewish socialization experiences counteract the influence of a non-Jewish parent on adult identification as a Christian, but they do not completely negate it.

To accept or embrace one's difference from others in the surrounding society is different from disappearing into it. The transformation paradigm would predict that adults who were raised in intermarriages (i.e. the mixed-parentage respondents) would maintain and even value their identification as Jews. In *Jewish Continuity and Change* (1986), Goldscheider stressed the importance of attitudes because assimilation means the rejection of minority identification. While Jewish observance might be low and affiliation almost nil among adults raised in intermarriages, they might still value their identification as Jews. Applying this argument to the NJPS means that if mixed-parentage respondents were positive or even neutral about being Jewish, then they have not assimilated. The transformation paradigm can be evaluated using the many Jewish identity items in NJPS 2000-01. Table 5a examines Jewish identity and Table 5b compares how mixed- and Jewish-parentage respondents said they were Jewish. Charts 1 and 2 present the data in Tables 5a and 5b graphically in order to visually represent the overall similarities in response patterns between respondents of Jewish and mixed parentage.

The statements in Table 5a ask about the importance of Judaism and Jewishness. The responses of the mixed- and Jewish-parentage respondents generally were similar. With one exception, mixed-parentage respondents were between 8% and 16% less positive than Jewish-parentage respondents in their responses to the various items. Further, the attitudinal items to which the Jewish-parentage respondents responded most affirmatively also received the most positive responses from mixed-parentage respondents. The item that produced the strongest affirmation from both groups was the statement, "I have a strong

Table 5a
Jewish Identity Items

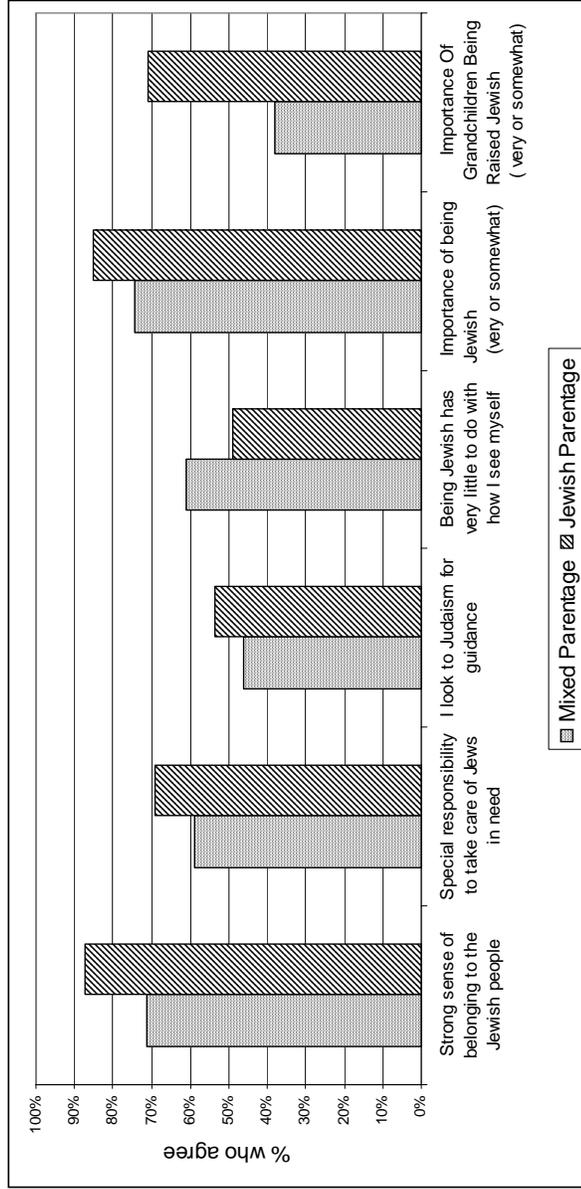
(% of respondents who agreed with or answered important to each statement)

Jewish Identity Items	Mixed parentage respondents	Jewish parentage respondents	Difference
“I have a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people”**	71%	87%	16%
“Overall, the fact that I am a Jew has very little to do with how I see myself”**	61%	49%	12%
“I have a special responsibility to take care of Jews in need around the world”**	59%	69%	10%
“When faced with an important life decision, I look to Judaism for guidance.”**	46%	53%	7%
“How important is being Jewish in your life?”**	74%	85%	11%
“How important to you, if it all, that any grandchildren you have be raised as Jews?”**	38%	71%	33%

* % who somewhat or strongly agreed.

** % who answered very or somewhat important

Chart 1
Table 5a in Chart Form



sense of belonging to the Jewish people”—87% of Jewish-parentage respondents and 71% of mixed-parentage respondents agreed with this statement. Jewish-parentage respondents were 16% more likely than mixed-parentage respondents to agree with this statement, but many more mixed-parentage respondents agreed with this statement than disagreed with it. This is consistent with the transformation paradigm, which argues that Jews (even when not raised in Judaism) do not reject Jewish identification. In this case, they seem to embrace it.

A similar pattern was evident in response to the question, “How important is being Jewish in your life?” The two groups were overwhelmingly positive: 85% of the Jewish-parentage respondents and 74% of the mixed-parentage respondents answered very or somewhat important, just 11 points apart. Thus, being Jewish was important for both Jewish- and mixed-parentage respondents, but a little more so for the former.⁷ More than half of both the Jewish- and mixed-parentage respondents agreed that they had a special responsibility to take care of Jews in need, with the Jewish-parentage respondents feeling this responsibility more keenly.⁸

While being Jewish was important for both groups, they were similarly uncertain as to whether it was particularly relevant. Both groups were split between agreement and disagreement in response to the statement that, Overall, the fact that I am a Jew has very little to do with how I see myself. Half (49%) of the Jewish-parentage respondents agreed, as did somewhat more than half (61%) of the mixed-parentage respondents, a difference of only 12 percentage points. They were even more closely divided about the relevance of Judaism as a religion. Just over half (53%) of the Jewish-parentage respondents and just under half (46%) of the mixed-parentage respondents agreed that, “When faced with an important life decision, I turn to Judaism for guidance.”

The largest and most significant difference between the two groups had to do with Jewish continuity. The great majority (71%) of Jewish-parentage respondents said it was at least somewhat important that their grandchildren be Jewish. By contrast, only 38% of the mixed-parentage respondents gave this any importance. That the mixed-parentage respondents gave this any importance at all is noteworthy, considering that most of them were not raised as Jews.

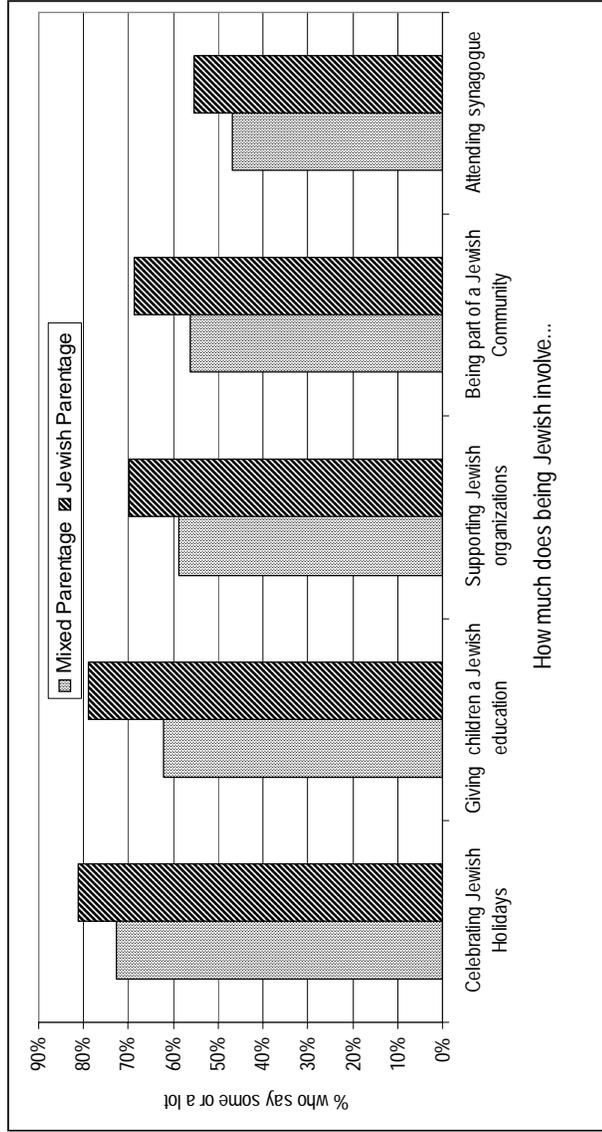
Table 5b compares the answers of mixed- and Jewish-parentage respondents to a series of questions about how important various aspects of being Jewish were to them personally. Most important to both groups was celebrating Jewish holidays: 81% of Jewish-parentage respondents and 73% of mixed-parentage respondents said this was a way they expressed being Jewish. The similarity between Jewish- and mixed-parentage respondents is all the more impressive when it is recalled that most of the mixed-parentage respondents were not raised in Judaism

Table 5b
Ways of Being Jewish

(Percentage of respondents that said “some” or “a lot”)

“Personally, how much does being Jewish involve....	Mixed percentage respondents	Jewish percentage respondents	Ratio
...celebrating Jewish Holidays”	73%	81%	8%
...attending synagogue?”	47%	55%	8%
...giving your child(ren)/children you might have a Jewish education?”	62%	79%	16%
... supporting Jewish organizations?”	59%	70%	11%
... being part of a Jewish Community?”	56%	69%	12%

Chart 2
Table 5b in Chart Form



How much does being Jewish involve...

and did not identify themselves as Jewish by religion. Mixed- and Jewish-parentage respondents were also in close agreement that attending synagogue was the least salient aspect of how they were Jewish (47% of the former and 55% of the latter).

Mixed-parentage and Jewish-parentage respondents both responded positively to two questions about communal attachment: 70% of Jewish-parentage respondents and 59% of mixed-parentage respondents said that for them being Jewish involved supporting Jewish organizations. Their responses were almost identical to the question, "Personally, how much does being Jewish involve being part of a Jewish community?"

Because being Jewish encompasses both ethnic and religious dimensions, mixed-parentage Jews have more materials to work with than multi-racial persons when it comes to expressing a dual identity. Sylvia Barack Fishman has shown (2004) that ostensibly religious symbols have become secularized within intermarriages. Although Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ and the Christmas tree is the central symbol of Christmas, the Christmas tree typically is reinterpreted by intermarried Jews as an expression of a family or ethnic connection on the part of the non-Jewish spouse. Similarly, Cohen and Eisen (2000) have described the many ways that Jews construct individualized Jewish identifications that are legitimized by a larger American acceptance of the sovereign self. Adding the multi-racial perspective to the findings of Cohen, Eisen, and Fishman introduces the possibility of a dual identity in which Jewish rituals can be reinterpreted as expressions of Jewish ethnic identification. This would be the Jewish counterpart to secularizing the Christmas tree.

Table 6 shows the percentage of respondents who observed four Jewish rituals: lighting Shabbat candles, lighting Chanukah candles, attending a Seder, and observing any Jewish mourning ritual. The presence of Christian Jews of Jewish parentage in Table 6 raises a red flag. This is an ostensibly incongruous category. A close inspection of the 88 such cases uncovered three explanations underlying this apparent anomaly. The first is the wording of the parentage question. Respondents were asked if their mothers and fathers were born Jewish, not if they were Jewish by religion. It might be that one or both of the parents were of mixed parentage themselves and thus were reported as being born Jewish. For example, a respondent with a mixed-parentage mother and a Jewish parentage father might have reported both as being born Jewish. Many of these respondents described themselves as both Jewish and Christian (and were categorized as Christian Jews). The second explanation is religion of the spouse. About half of the Christian Jews of Jewish parentage were married, and most (86%) of those who were married had a non-Jewish spouse. In these cases, the religion of the respondent

Table 6
Jewish Observance by Religion and Parentage
 (% of Respondents reporting each observance)

	Mixed parentage, religion is:			Jewish parentage, religion is:		
	Jewish (N=377)	Secular or Eastern (N=412)	Christian Jew (N=552)	Jewish (N=3,273)	Secular or Eastern (N=302)	Christian Jew (N=88)
During the past year did you ...						
Light Chanukah at least some candles nights	80%	27%	21%	83%	38%	28%
Hold or attend a Seder	64%	19%	13%	80%	36%	28%
Observe any Jewish mourning ritual	45%	28%	28%	52%	14%	23%
Light Shabbat candles at least sometimes	48%	5%	5%	61%	14%	14%

matched the religion of the spouse, indicating that these respondents had at least nominally adopted the religion of the spouse and were reporting the religion of the household as their own. The third explanation is the Unitarian response. Unitarians were classified as Christian even though they only barely qualify as such. Historically, German Jews who converted to Christianity chose this denomination for that reason (Sklare, 1968). The analysis could have been simplified by re-classifying these 88 anomalous respondents as Christian Jews of mixed parentage, but I chose to accept their responses at face value.

Respondents who were Jewish by religion were more observant than respondents who were not. Jewish-parentage respondents who were Jewish by religion were the most observant, followed by mixed-parentage respondents who were Jewish by religion. Among respondents who were not Jewish by religion, Christian Jews were only slightly less likely than secular Jews⁹ to have lit Chanukah or Shabbat candles, attended a Seder, and observed a Jewish mourning ritual. Between 21% and 38% of respondents who identified as secular or as Christian reported lighting Chanukah candles. Why would a respondent who does identify with Judaism observe this Jewish ritual? They were not asked this directly, of course, but the work of Fishman, Cohen, and Eisen suggests an explanation: Lighting Chanukah candles was for them an expression of Jewish identification during a season when Chanukah is almost as ubiquitous as Christmas. Multicultural sensitivities have combined with Jewish pressure to give Chanukah equal weight in the public square. Chanukah has become Christmas' Jewish counterpart. Thus, secular and Christian Jewish respondents were probably lighting Chanukah candles as a personal affirmation of Jewish belonging. Shabbat candle lighting was rarely reported because it is more religiously significant than Chanukah. The few secular and Christian respondents who said they lit Shabbat candles were perhaps expressing a strong personal connection with a Jewish parent.

Between 13% and 36% of secular and Christian Jews reported attending a Seder, with mixed-parentage respondents less likely to do so than Jewish-parentage respondents. Between 14% and 28% of secular and Christian Jews reported observing a Jewish mourning ritual. Attendance at a Seder and participation in a Jewish mourning ritual reflect the influence of Jewish relatives. These Jewish relatives probably chose to include secular and Christian Jews in these family centered rituals because they were part of a Jewish family. For secular and Christian mixed-parentage respondents, these were affirmations of their connections with Jewish relatives, though not with the presumed Jewish religion of those relatives.

NJPS 2000-01 included a set of questions about informal Jewish connections, based on the work of Bethamie Horowitz (2003). These

items inquired about individual consumption of Jewish culture, such as reading a book or watching a movie because it was perceived by the respondent to have Jewish content. This is reported in Table 7. Consistent with the findings on observance and identification, Jews by religion were the most likely to be consumers of Jewish culture, regardless of parentage, but a substantial minority of respondents who were not Jewish by religion also reported some kind of informal Jewish cultural connection. Of special note are the 44% of mixed-parentage Christian Jews who reported reading a book because it had Jewish content and the 28% who consulted the Internet for Jewish information.

Tables 6 and 7 do not reveal depth versus breadth among respondents who were not Jewish by religion. Were only a small number of these respondents observing multiple rituals or were many respondents observing a variety of single rituals? Were only a few respondents reporting multiple informal connections or were many respondents reporting a variety of single connections? Table 8 addresses this question by reporting the percentage of respondents who reported at least one ritual, at least one connection, or at least one ritual or informal connection. For all the categories of respondents, Jewish observances were more prevalent than cultural connections, even among respondents who did not identify as Jewish by religion. Among these respondents, secular respondents were more observant and more informally connected than Christian respondents, but more than half (54%) of the mixed-parentage Christian Jews reported at least one observance or informal connection. These patterns of informal connection are consistent with the transformation paradigm. Half of the respondents most likely to be assimilated reported at least one Jewish behavior.

For all respondents informal connections were more prevalent than formal affiliations, but Jews by religion were far more likely to pay dues to a synagogue, Jewish organization, or Jewish community center than were secular or Christian Jews. Formal affiliation among respondents not Jewish by religion was extremely rare: The highest rate was 10% of secular respondents of Jewish parentage who paid dues to a Jewish organization. Among Jews by religion, Jewish-parentage respondents were more likely than mixed-parentage respondents to belong to a synagogue (45% vs. 36%), pay dues to a Jewish organization (29% vs. 14%), pay dues to a Jewish community Center (21% vs. 12%) or even attend a program at a JCC (31% vs. 26%). The prevalence of informal connections along with the paucity of formal Jewish affiliations among mixed-parentage respondents is consistent with Cohen's argument that transformation involves the development of new forms of Jewish identification.

Friendship networks stand between informal connections and formal affiliations. Unlike informal connections that are purely individual,

Table 7
Informal Jewish Connections by Religion and Parentage
 (% of Respondents reporting each)

	Mixed parentage, religion is:			Jewish parentage, religion is:		
	Jewish (N=377)	Secular or Eastern (N=412)	Christian Jew (N=552)	Jewish (N=3,273)	Secular or Eastern (N=302)	Christian Jew (N=88)
During the past year did you ...						
Read Jewish print media	54%	26%	38%	65%	40%	40%
Listen to Jewish audio media	35%	27%	29%	45%	26%	39%
See Jewish movie/video	47%	30%	27%	48%	31%	22%
Read Jewish book for Jewish content	53%	40%	44%	54%	36%	41%
View Internet for Jewish information	42%	24%	28%	39%	25%	23%
Mean # of informal connections	2.3	0.6	0.6	2.5	1.1	0.8

friendship networks involve other Jews. Unlike formal affiliations, friendship networks do not require a financial commitment. Friendship networks thus add another dimension to the multi-racial paradigm because they indicate a behavioral group alignment toward other Jews. Jewish friendship ties also are essential to the evaluation of the transformation paradigm. Describing Jewishly dense friendship networks as “an alternative source of Jewish cohesion” (p. 165) that is “tied to new forms of Jewish continuity” (p. 168), Goldscheider has argued that they are evidence of Jewish differentiation from the larger society.

The majority of all respondents reported having at least some close Jewish friends (Table 8), but Jews by religion had the most intensive networks (half or more friends were Jewish). For example, 64% or more of secular and Christian respondents reported at least some close Jewish friends, but only between 14% and 27% reported that half or more of their close friends were Jewish. Jews by religion were much more likely than secular and Christian Jews to report intensive Jewish friendship networks. Among Jews by religion, Jewish-parentage respondents were twice as likely to have intensive Jewish friendship networks as mixed-parentage respondents (63% vs. 30%). Even though the Jewish friendship ties of mixed-parentage respondents were more attenuated than those of Jewish-parentage respondents, they nonetheless had Jewish friends. Considering that Jews constitute only 2% of the U.S. population, finding Jewish friends is not an automatic given.

Table 8
Jewish Observance and Informal Jewish Connections by Religion and Parentage

(% of Respondents reporting each)

	Mixed parentage, religion is:			Jewish parentage, religion is:		
	Jewish (N=377)	Secular or Eastern (N=412)	Christian Jew (N=552)	Jewish (N=3,273)	Secular or Eastern (N=302)	Christian Jew (N=88)
During the past year did you ...						
Reported at least one Jewish observance	93%	48%	39%	97%	69%	53%
Reported at least one informal connection	84%	35%	33%	85%	48%	35%
Reported at least one connection or observance	98%	62%	54%	98%	78%	61%

Table 9
Formal Jewish Affiliations and Friendship Networks by Religion and Parentage

(% of Respondents reporting each)

	Mixed parentage, religion is:			Jewish parentage, religion is:		
	Jewish	Secular or Eastern	Christian Jew	Jewish	Secular or Eastern	Christian Jew
During the past year did you ...						
Dues Paid to JCC/YM/YWHA	12%	5%	3%	21%	6%	8%
Attended JCC/YM/YWHA program	26%	9%	8%	31%	9%	9%
Dues paid to synagogue	36%	1%	1%	45%	8%	9%
Dues paid to Jewish organization	14%	5%	6%	29%	10%	12%
At least some Jewish friends	81%	73%	70%	94%	81%	64%
Half or more Jewish friends	30%	15%	14%	63%	27%	17%

Conclusion

Revisiting the assimilation-transformation debate over intermarriage almost two decades later provides supports for both paradigms. If assimilation is a process by which a minority becomes increasingly less distinct from the majority, then identification as a Christian among the mixed-parentage respondents supports the assimilation paradigm. The negative association between socialization and Christian identification supports its corollary, the tradition-socialization paradigm. Socialization experiences reduced the odds that a mixed-parentage respondent would identify as a Christian.

Evidence was also found to support the transformation paradigm. Although mixed-parentage respondents responded to the Jewish-identity items less affirmatively than did the Jewish-parentage respondents, they were nonetheless affirmative. Since the transformation paradigm specifies that Jews have not rejected Jewish identification, it is supported by the analysis presented here. The similarity in response patterns between Christian and secular Jews suggests that even the ostensibly assimilated respondents have not rejected Jewish identification. Goldscheider has argued that a continuous Jewish niche in the social structure is a second aspect of the transformation paradigm. The friendship associations with other Jews among mixed-parentage Jews is consistent with the transformation paradigm.

Even if intermarriage has not resulted in the wholesale disappearance of mixed-parentage Jews, the transformation of American Jewry will nonetheless bring about a transformation of the American Jewish landscape. Only a minority of mixed-parentage respondents identified with Judaism. Identification with Judaism was even further reduced among the current children of mixed-parentage respondents who had married non-Jews. Thus, there will be fewer practitioners of Judaism in the future, and this development will at some point become evident in the number and/or size of synagogues and other Jewish institutions. Although secular Jews and Christian Jews resembled Jews by religion both attitudinally and in terms of Jewish observance, it was overwhelmingly the latter group that belonged to synagogues and supported Jewish organizations. Given the movement away from Judaism associated with children of mixed marriages, the potential membership pool for synagogues and Jewish organizations will diminish and the institutions that have come to define the American Jewish community will become less numerous and less visible. Whether other associational forms will emerge from this transformation remains to be seen.

For the moment, the persistence of Jewish identification and behavior among adults of mixed parentage, who in earlier generations probably would have assimilated, suggests that it would be premature to proclaim the immanent demise of American Jewry.

NOTES

¹ This percentage includes Christians of Jewish birth or ancestry who were not counted in the population totals in any of the United Jewish Communities reports.

² These respondents were excluded from all published reports by the United Jewish Communities.

³ Respondents were chosen at random among qualified household members. In some cases, a different person was interviewed than was screened.

⁴ See, for example, Endelman (1987).

⁵ By virtue of having a “half-Jewish” parent, these children would be a quarter-Jewish.

⁶ As opposed to being raised in no religion, in two religions, or as a Christian.

⁷ The Jewish parentage respondents were also more likely than the mixed parentage respondents to specify “very important” as opposed to “somewhat important”

⁸ The Jewish-parentage respondents were also more likely than the mixed-parentage respondents to specify “strongly agree.”

⁹ Included with secular Jews are the small number of respondents who identified with an Eastern or New Age religion. Because there were so few cases and because the patterns were so similar, these were grouped together.

¹⁰ The question was also asked about other household members. Because respondents were chosen at random among qualified household members, the respondent interviewed was not always the initial respondent.

¹¹ Actual wording: “So that we properly understand, we would appreciate if you would explain the ways in which you consider yourself Jewish.”

¹² If no Jewish parents, the respondent could still qualify as being of Jewish ancestry if there was evidence of a Jewish grandparent.

¹³ They were defined as Persons of Jewish Background (PJB).

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Appendix A: Methodological Issues with Regard to Jewish Parentage

Although determining whether a respondent had one or two Jewish parents would seem to be a fairly straightforward task, this was not always the case. This discussion begins with methodological issues that had to be resolved in order to conduct the analysis. These methodological problems are important to anyone working with the data set, but they are of substantive interest as well. The ambiguities of Jewish parentage illustrate the extent to which postmodern Jewish identity is subjectively constructed among respondents of mixed-Jewish parentage.

In the 2000-01 National Jewish Population Survey, the ambiguities appear as inconsistencies among comparable questions. The first inconsistency is between two sets of questions about Jewish parentage. The initial question on Jewish parentage appeared in the screener. Respondents who were not Jewish by religion¹⁰ were asked: Do you have a Jewish mother or a Jewish father? The question was only intended to identify qualified respondents and was not asked of those who had already qualified on the preceding religion question. In the body of the questionnaire, the respondent's Jewish parentage was ascertained with two questions: "Was your mother born Jewish?" and "Was your father born Jewish?" All three questions allowed for a half or partially Jewish response in describing the respondent's parents. Consistency between the screener question and the mother & father questions can be tested only for the 1,367 respondents who were not Jewish by religion because only they got the screener question on parentage.

The first inconsistency was not an inconsistency at all. There were 154 respondents who said their religion was Judaism but neither parent was born Jewish. Most of them were either converts to Judaism or married to Jews. Because Judaism was the religion practiced in the home, Jews by choice who had not formally converted apparently chose to state that Judaism was their religion. Some of the Jewish by religion respondents who said neither parent was born Jewish had some other indication of Jewish background, which begs the question of why they said neither parent was born Jewish. Perhaps both parents were converts to Judaism, or perhaps they had interpreted the matter in some kind of idiosyncratic way. More puzzling are the 173 respondents who said they had at least a half-Jewish parent in the screener but later, in the body of the questionnaire, said that neither parent was born Jewish. These respondents were scrutinized on a case-by-case basis using additional questions. Respondents in the no Jewish parents category who were not Jewish by religion were asked if they considered themselves to be Jewish. Those who said yes were asked how it is they considered themselves to be Jewish.¹¹ They typically had at least one Jewish

grandparent or indicated that they were of Jewish ancestry. Respondents were also asked Were you raised Jewish? and this question was used along with questions about Jewish observance in the parental home to indicate whether or not the respondent was Jewish in some credible way and to determine whether the respondent had two, one, or no Jewish parents.¹² Something Jewish turned up for all 174 cases, which explains why they were interviewed. In some cases, the only Jewish parent was described as half or partially Jewish. This may explain why the respondent answered yes to the screener question, Did you have a Jewish parent? but later stated that neither parent was born Jewish, because the half-Jewish parent was not raised as a Jew. In other cases, the respondents said they were raised Jewish in some way or there was some sort of Jewish observance in the parental home.

The question about being raised Jewish was used to clarify parentage where the responses patterns were unclear or inconsistent. The question Were you raised Jewish? itself turned up additional anomalies: 103 respondents said they were not raised Jewish but nevertheless had some formal Jewish education or a bar/bat mitzvah, or both. In the screening questions, respondents were asked Were you raised Jewish? with the answer categories allowing for being raised half or partially Jewish. The responses to this question were compared with responses given to questions about Jewish education and bar/bat mitzvah. There were 103 respondents who said they were not raised Jewish but nonetheless reported having some formal Jewish education and/or having had a bar/bat mitzvah. More than half of these persons grew up in intermarried homes, so it could be that they were reflecting on the Jewish climate of their home when they answered that they were not raised Jewish. This might also explain the respondents with two born Jewish parents who said they were not raised Jewish even though they had received some sort of Jewish education.

The inconsistencies were resolvable to the level of being able ascertain that the respondent was either of Jewish or mixed parentage. It was not always possible to tell whether the respondent had a Jewish parent, a half-Jewish parent, or only a Jewish grandparent. Again, the lack of clarity applies only to respondents who were not Jewish by religion. These inconsistencies can be seen as data about the construction of Jewish identity among adults of mixed parentage. Attributes that are clear to Jews by religion of Jewish parentage are more a matter of interpretation to Jews who identify with no or some other religion who did not have two Jewish parents. There may have been only a single aspect of their ancestry or upbringing that linked them to the Jewish people, but it was sufficiently important for them to be interviewed. In other words, they were trying to respond to the standard Jewish categories in which they do not easily fit.

Another problem derives from the wording of the question. Respondents with a parent who converted to Judaism would erroneously be classified as having only one Jewish parent, since the converted parent in fact was not born Jewish. This misclassification has a minimal impact on the analysis because numerous Jewish population surveys at the local level and the 1990 NJPS have shown the rate of conversion to be low. In this analysis, the misclassification of parents who converted would make the category of respondents with one Jewish parent appear to be more Jewish than they otherwise would have been. As will be seen in the following analysis, the differences between respondents with one and two Jewish parents are so dramatic that the substantive conclusions would not be affected.

A different methodological problem relevant to this analysis results from not asking all questions of all respondents. Respondents who were not Jewish by religion were asked if they considered themselves to be Jewish. Those who replied in the affirmative were asked how it was they were Jewish. Those who replied in the negative were classified as Persons of Jewish Background (PJBs) and were given a shorter version of the questionnaire. In most local Jewish population surveys, these respondents would not be interviewed in the first place or excluded from both the analysis and Jewish population estimate. The NJPS 2000-01 partially included them by giving them a short form of the questionnaire that included only a few of the Jewish observance and identity questions.¹³ While it is preferable that they received a shorter interview than not being interviewed at all, the missing questions complicates the analysis of half-Jewish respondents because most of these respondents were of mixed parentage. The impact of these missing questions on the analysis can be estimated from a comparison of PJBs with other respondents on the questions that were asked of everyone.

Table A-1 shows that respondents of mixed parentage who considered themselves to be Jewish were more than three times as likely as PJB mixed-parentage respondents to have been raised Jewish. As a result, they were less likely to have received a Jewish education (data not shown).

Tables A-2 and A-3 compare the Jewish affiliations and attitudes of Jewish and PJB respondents of mixed parentage. Table 2 suggests that in general terms Jewish and PJB respondents of mixed parentage are almost identical. They are equally likely to report believing in God, report that religion is very important in their life, and contribute to a non-Jewish charity or cause. Table A-3, however, shows that PJB respondents of mixed parentage are much less likely than Jewish respondents to have gone to synagogue, lit Chanukah candles, attended a Passover Seder, attend a JCC program, or contribute to a non-Jewish cause. They were also less likely to have experienced anti-Semitism

during the past year or to describe themselves as very emotionally attached to Israel.

Table A-1

How persons of mixed parentage were raised controlling for self-definition as Jewish

	Do You Consider Yourself Jewish?	
	“Yes” Jewish file (N=791)	“No” PJB file (N=551)
“Were you raised Jewish? “		
Yes	39.4%	7.9%
Yes, raised half/partially Jewish and something else	18.4%	8.6%
Yes, other	1.9%	1.5%
No	40.1%	81.6%
Don't know	.1%	.5%
Refused	.1%	
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Table A-2

Observance and affiliation among respondents of mixed parentage controlling for self-definition as Jewish (PJB status). Percent of respondents who affiliated or practiced each observance.

	Mixed Parentage	
	Jewish file (N=791)	PJB file (N=551)
Religion very important in life today	40.4%	39.9%
Yes, believe in God	85.6%	85.9%
Monetary contribution to non-Jewish charity/cause	58.5%	58.6%

Table A-3

Observance and affiliation among respondents of mixed parentage controlling for self-definition as Jewish (PJB status). Percent of respondents who affiliated or practiced each observance.

	Do You Consider Yourself Jewish?	
	“Yes” Jewish file (N=791)	“No” PJB file (N=551)
Observance		
Attended synagogue during past year	39.0%	8.4%
Held or attended Seder last Passover	43.1%	12.6%
Lit candles last Chanukah	56.9%	18.8%
Contributed to non-federation Jewish charity/cause	22.3%	8.0%
Personally experienced Anti-Semitism in past year	26.2%	9.4%
Attended JCC/YM/YWHA Program in Past Year	17.2%	7.5%
Observed any Jewish mourning/memorial ritual	44.6%	22.1%
“Very” attached to Israel emotionally	17.4%	9.5%