

## Jewish Identity in Conversionary and Mixed Marriages

Intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews in the United States is now commonplace. The propensity of Jews to marry non-Jews was extremely low until the mid-1960s but rose sharply thereafter and continued to climb in the 1980s. As a result, in many Jewish communities, among those marrying in recent years, there are more out-marriages than in-marriages.

This change in the underlying social and religious structure of the American Jewish community has important implications for the present and future state of that community. On the one hand, marriage to non-Jews may indicate the successful integration of Jews into American society and their achievement of a high level of social acceptance. On the other hand, intermarriage may betoken and contribute to the decline of Judaism in America.

The subject of intermarriage evokes considerable passion among Jews because it arouses fears about elemental issues of group survival. One aspect of the matter is quantitative: the offspring of intermarriage may not remain Jewish; within one or two generations there may be fewer Jews and a greatly weakened Jewish community. Another aspect is qualitative: even if intermarriage does not lead to a decrease in the physical number of persons living in households with a Jewish parent, questions remain as to their Jewishness—that is, the intensity of their communal affiliation, ethnic identification, and religious practice.

This article<sup>1</sup> focuses on the qualitative aspects of Jewish intermarriage in the United States. It presents a theory of Jewish identity that provides a framework for the systematic empirical analysis of Jewish identification and behavior in households representing three basic marriage types: in-marriage (between two born Jews), conversionary marriage (between a born Jew and a born non-Jew who converts to Judaism), and mixed marriage (between a born Jew and a born non-

Jew who does not convert to Judaism). Although, as we will show, they differ greatly, the latter two categories are often referred to collectively as intermarriage or out-marriage.

It has been notably difficult for researchers to assess the quality of Jewish life in intermarried families or to make the kinds of meaningful comparisons between conversionary and mixed-married families that could help to gauge the potential for future Jewish commitment. Among the specific issues calling for clarification are the following: What are the characteristics and extent of Jewish behavior and identification in conversionary and mixed-married households? To what degree do the offspring of conversionary and mixed marriages receive formal Jewish education? To what extent are non-Jewish identities maintained in conversionary and mixed-married households?

In an effort to better understand the relationship between marriage type and level of Jewish identification, this study employs a typology for categorizing patterns of Jewish identification and behavior. The typology makes it possible to clarify whether and under what conditions Jewish identity is maintained in such marriages and to evaluate the character and content of that Jewish identity.

The article begins with a review of the recent literature on intermarriage, indicating how the present analysis goes beyond previous work in the field. It then provides a detailed description of the data set and methodology used in the analysis. Following a discussion of background variables, the article presents a new theory of Jewish identity and a typology of conversionary and mixed marriages. Empirical analysis of the Jewish identification and behavior of the various marriage types follows. This establishes the basis for the construction of an overall index of Jewish identification that makes it possible to quantify the various categories in the typology. The typology is then expanded to include a category we call dual-identity households. These households incorporate Jewish and Christian identities simultaneously. The concluding section takes note of the major findings and their implications.

## **Review of the Literature**

Numerous books and articles in the past decade have discussed the effects of the escalating rate of Jewish intermarriage on the character and vitality of individual Jewish identity and the continuity and survival of the American Jewish community as a whole. Observers differ widely in their perceptions of the consequences of the intermarriage phenomenon.<sup>2</sup> At one end of the spectrum are scholars who are comparatively pessimistic, some of whom predict the eventual disappearance of a distinctive Jewish community, seeing only the survival of the Orthodox. At the other end of the spectrum are scholars who are relatively optimistic, who discern the transformation and even revitalization of the American Jewish community.

Rising rates of intermarriage, the latter argue, provide an opportunity to strengthen the ranks of American Jewry through an infusion of new blood or “imports”—the born non-Jewish spouses and their children.

During the past ten years the optimists have dominated the discussion of Jewish intermarriage in the United States. Thus, Egon Mayer, who has written extensively on the subject, derives encouragement from the fact that contemporary intermarried couples tend to feel closer to Judaism than to Christianity. What is more, he argues, the generally higher educational and occupational status of the Jewish spouse enhances this leaning toward Judaism.<sup>3</sup>

Another scholar who leans toward the optimistic view is Steven M. Cohen. He argues that the “concentration of intermarriage among the Jewishly peripheral means it is less threatening to Jewish continuity.” He also takes a positive view of conversionary marriages, which “in all likelihood . . . are both quantitative and qualitative assets to the Jewish population.” However, Cohen is somewhat less sanguine about the impact of mixed marriages. On the plus side, he observes that “most mixed-married Jews report not one, but several sorts of attachment to Jewish people and Jewish ritual and, less frequently, to organized Jewry.” On the negative side, he asserts that “the marriages of Jews to born non-Jews vastly increase the chances that the partners will be less involved in various aspects of Jewish life,” even if the Jewish spouse was peripherally involved to begin with. On the whole, Cohen maintains, intermarriage does not present a “grave threat to the Jewish continuity of large numbers of American Jewry.”<sup>4</sup>

A significant scholarly exchange on the subject of intermarriage appeared in *Studies in Contemporary Jews*, volume 5. Israeli demographers Sergio DellaPerola and U. O. Schmelz interpret not only rising rates of intermarriage but also trends toward postponement of marriage and nonmarriage, low fertility rates, increasing divorce, and the like as pointing to the “decline of the conventional Jewish family.” Reviewing the available survey data, they argue that “as a result of more frequent out-marriage, particularly mixed marriage, Jewish identity is generally weakened, often amalgamated with the ethnocultural heritage of an originally non-Jewish spouse or parent and frequently lost in the longer run.”<sup>5</sup>

Aiming to refute this position, Calvin Goldscheider asserts that “there is currently about a 20 percent gain of Jewish adults through conversion relative to total in-marriages.”<sup>6</sup> Goldscheider argues that the “growing acceptance of intermarriage and the intermarried into Jewish life” and the “increasing similarity between the intermarried and the nonintermarried in measures of Jewishness” make for a situation in which a relationship between intermarriage and Jewish discontinuity is “weak and growing weaker.” Goldscheider concludes: “Concerns over the demographic implications of Jewish intermarriage for survival of the group seem exaggerated.”<sup>7</sup>

In this debate about its quantitative implications, the impact of intermarriage on the nature and intensity of Jewish identification and behavior has been relatively neglected. Thus, while Mayer, Goldscheider, and Cohen<sup>8</sup> all have data

showing that persons living in intermarried households are generally less Jewishly involved than those in in-married households (except for conversionary marrieds in matters of religious performance), these qualitative aspects of intermarriage have not been subjected to systematic and detailed analysis.

This study focuses directly on the nature and intensity of Jewish identification and behavior in conversionary and mixed marriages. The analysis highlights two significant factors that elsewhere have gone unnoticed: the Jewish denominational identification of the various types of households and the simultaneous presence within them of Christian symbols and practices. Moreover, the large size of the sample used in this study<sup>9</sup> permits a more in-depth statistical analysis of qualitative data than ever previously undertaken.

## Methodology

This article is based on data collected in eight different Jewish communities in the United States: Baltimore; Boston; Essex and Morris counties in New Jersey; Providence, Rhode Island; and Worcester, Massachusetts, all in the eastern United States; Cleveland in the Midwest; Dallas in the Southwest; and the San Francisco Bay area in the West.<sup>10</sup>

These eight communities were selected from the many Jewish population surveys on file at the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University on the basis of four criteria. They reflect the current regional spread of American Jewry, the samples were fully representative, the data were collected between 1985 and 1988, and the questions relating to key variables were mostly identical, which permitted the files to be merged.

The analysis focuses on married couples, who are also referred to as households. In constructing a merged data set, therefore, the first step was to remove all unmarried respondents—the widowed, the divorced, the separated, the singles—from the data files of each of the eight communities. Following this, a consecutive merged file was constructed via the SPSSX Data Analysis System. Consecutive merging of the variables was facilitated by the identical or almost identical wording of the questions, relating to the items (variables) that were included in the merged file.

In each of the individual community surveys a weighting factor had been applied to enable projections to be made corresponding to the estimated numbers of individuals and households in a particular community. The merged file is based on these projected totals. Consequently, the weight applied to each community in the merged file is determined by its projected Jewish population, not by the actual numbers in the original sample used in each community survey. As such, the merged file is fully representative of the eight communities.

No attempt has been made to weight or correct the merged file further in order to make it representative of the actual proportions of these communities within

American Jewry as a whole. However, the same basic trends, relationships, and patterns relating to marriage types are found in each of the individual communities. As a result, merging the file does not erase nor average out contradictory trends and patterns in the different communities.

The total projected number of households in the merged file is 197,078, representing a total Jewish population in the eight communities of over 433,104 individuals in in-married households, 35,266 in conversionary households, and 106,163 individuals in mixed-married households—in all, 574,533 individuals, or about 9.75 percent of American Jewry. All percentage calculations have been made on the basis of these projected numbers.

The present analysis focuses on differences between marriage types, as reflected in the pattern of identification or behavior of the household as a unit. Occasionally, however, the analysis focuses on the attributes or achievements of the individual Jewish spouse or spouses, as, for example, is the case with most of the background variables (except for income, which is a household attribute). Thus, the incidence of the various types of marriage within the different age groups, for example, is arrived at by counting each individual Jewish spouse as a single unit.

The sum of the individual Jewish spouses in all marriage types will always be greater than the sum of couples or households. Put simply, one marriage of each type (in-marriage, conversionary, mixed) adds up to three marriages. However, the sum of born-Jewish partners in these three marriages is four (two in the in-marriage and one in each of the other types).

Household intermarriage rates—the percentage of intermarried couples as a proportion of all couples, households, or marriages—are always higher than individual rates: the percentage of born Jews in intermarriages as a proportion of the total of married Jewish individuals. Thus, in the example above, the individual intermarriage rate is 50 percent (two of four Jews are in intermarriages), whereas the household intermarriage rate is 66 percent (two of three marriages are intermarriages). Or to take actual figures: for the decade 1980–89 the individual rates shown—62 percent in-marriage, 5 percent conversionary marriage, and 33 percent mixed marriage—have computed equivalent household rates of 45 percent in-marriage, 7 percent conversionary marriage, and 48 percent mixed marriage.

## **Background Characteristics and Marriage Types**

### *Rates of In-marriage and Intermarriage*

The distribution of marriage types varies by community. For example, approximately 80 percent or more of marriages in Baltimore, Boston, Cleveland, Essex/Morris counties, and Providence are in-marriages, whereas in San Francisco and Dallas the proportions are 60 percent and 66 percent, respectively. In the merged sample, 73 percent of all marriages are in-marriages, 5 percent are conversionary, and 21 percent are mixed marriages.

### *Decade of Marriage*

The overall distribution of marriages in the merged sample shows a consistent increase in the incidence of intermarriage since 1960. Almost 94 percent of Jewish individuals who married prior to 1960 are in-married; only 2 percent are in conversionary marriages and 5 percent in mixed marriages. The proportion in-marriage declines by about 10 percent in the 1960s and by another 10 percent in the 1970s. This process becomes accelerated in the 1980s, when the rate of in-marriage declines by a further 13 percent. Conversely, the proportion entering into mixed marriages rises dramatically over time. By the 1980s, 33 percent of Jewish individuals are entering into mixed marriages.

Significantly, since the 1960s the proportion of individuals entering into conversionary marriages has remained fairly steady at about 5 percent. Despite what some have claimed, converts do not constitute an increasing proportion of the intermarried. To the contrary, the figures show that they constitute a rapidly declining proportion of the intermarried, from 28–29 percent before 1970 to 13 percent in the 1980s.

### *Age and Generation*

The basic pattern with regard to intermarriage is confirmed by examining marriages within age and generation. The incidence of in-marriage declines steadily with age, from well over 90 percent among Jews aged 55 and older to 70 percent among those aged 18–34. There has been a fivefold increase in the incidence of mixed marriage among younger age groups; 5 percent of those in the two oldest age groups are mixed-married, as compared with 25 percent of those aged 18–34. At the same time, the incidence of conversionary marriage more than doubles, rising from about 2 percent for those aged 55 and older to 5 percent for those under age 44.

Tabulation of marriages by generation produces a similar but even more pronounced pattern. While 93 percent of first-generation Jews are in-married, only 56 percent of the fourth generation are. At the same time, the proportion of Jews entering into conversionary marriages increases threefold, from 2 percent in the first generation to 6 percent in the fourth. However, the proportion of those in mixed marriages increases more than sevenfold—from 5 percent in the first generation to 38 percent in the fourth.

### *Gender*

In the past, Jewish men were much more likely than Jewish women to intermarry. Although rates of intermarriage and mixed marriage for both men and women have risen steadily over time, Jewish men are still more likely than Jewish women

to intermarry. Overall, 82 percent of Jewish men are inmarried, compared with 90 percent of Jewish women. The proportion of in-marriages among Jewish men declined by 35 percent in three decades, from 90 percent for the period before 1960 to 55 percent in the decade of the 1980s. For Jewish women, the proportion of in-marriages declined by 28 percent during the same period, from 98 percent to 70 percent. Significantly, since the 1960s, the decline in the proportion of in-marriages for the two sexes has proceeded apace, with a 23 percent decline among Jewish men and a 21 percent decline among Jewish women. Apart from the fact that both groups are subject to the same societal influences, the two rates are also integrally connected to each other: as increasing proportions of Jewish men intermarry, there will be fewer available Jewish males for Jewish women.

In all decades of marriage, Jewish men are consistently more likely than Jewish women to be involved in conversionary marriages, indicating the greater propensity of non-Jewish women to convert to Judaism, compared with non-Jewish men married to Jewish women. Over three decades, the proportion of mixed marriages among Jewish women increased from 2 percent to 28 percent; among Jewish men it increased from 8 percent to 38 percent.

### *Multiple Marriages*

Intermarriages are more common in subsequent marriages than in first marriages. While 86 percent of first marriages are in-marriages, the proportion drops to 70 percent in second marriages and 54 percent in third or subsequent marriages. Conversely, rates of mixed marriage rise with the number of marriages, but conversionary marriages remain fairly static. Other data indicate that individuals under the age of 45 are more likely to have multiple marriages than those over age 45. Nevertheless, when controls for age are introduced, mixed marriages are still more common in the case of multiple marriages. Multiple marriage, it appears, lowers the likelihood of choice of Jewish marriage partners, possibly because religiously suitable partners are less readily available. In addition, factors related to starting and raising a family may no longer be relevant, which may also influence these trends.

### *Age at First Marriage*

For the entire sample, the mean age is 25 years. In-married men have a mean age of 25.9 years; for women it is 23.2 years. The mean age jumps to 27.8 years for males and to 25.7 years for females in conversionary marriages, and to 27.9 years for males and 26 years for females in mixed marriages. The tendency of conversionary and mixed marriages to occur at a later age than in-marriages suggests that a substantial proportion of never-married individuals currently in their thirties and forties are likely to marry non-Jews.

### *Children at Home*

The distribution of marriage types among households with children at home more or less mirrors that of the whole sample. If anything, there are slightly more mixed-married households with children at home than the proportion of mixed-marrieds in the total sample, reflecting the increased incidence of mixed marriage among the younger age groups. Overall, 24 percent of households with children at home are mixed marriages, and 4 percent are conversionary marriages. Thus, nearly three in ten families with children at home have one spouse who was not born Jewish, and the vast majority of these constitute mixed marriages.

### *Education, Occupation, Income*

Marriage type is related to socioeconomic status but in ways that defy conventional wisdom, which associates intermarriage with high socioeconomic achievement and integration. The data reported here indicate the opposite: higher socioeconomic status is associated with lower levels of mixed marriage, higher rates of conversion, and higher rates of in-marriage. Education, occupation, and income alone are weakly associated with marriage-type variation, but these associations are stronger when age group is introduced as a variable. Generally, lower socioeconomic status is associated with higher rates of intermarriage and much higher rates of mixed marriage. This is particularly noticeable in the 18–34 age group. For example, 74 percent of those with a graduate degree in that age group are in-married, compared with 69 percent of those with a college degree, 63 percent of those with some college, and 59 percent of those with a high school diploma or less. Conversely, 41 percent of those with a high school education are in mixed marriages but only 19 percent of those with graduate degrees. There are also differences in the incidence of conversionary marriages. In the 18–34 age group, 7 percent of those with graduate degrees are in conversionary marriages, compared with under 1 percent of those with a high school diploma or less. Overall, similar but less pronounced marriage patterns appear for the 35–44 age group but are not present among those aged over 45 years.

Again, in the 18–34 age group, between 72 percent and 75 percent of those in professional, executive, and sales positions are in-married, compared to 61 percent of those in clerical positions, and 54 percent of those in blue-collar and service occupations. Conversely, while the proportion of mixed-marrieds is about 20 percent in the three highest occupational categories in the 18–34 age group, it climbs to 45 percent in the lowest occupational category. As with education, these patterns are apparent but less so in the 35–44 age group; for the most part they are not present in the older age groups.

This general picture is further corroborated by the household income data. While the data indicate that the proportion of mixed marriages is at its lowest where income is highest (i.e., among those earning over \$150,000), the opposite



does not appear to be true, and there does not appear to be any association between lower income and higher rates of mixed marriage. However, when broader income categories are used, lower income does turn out to be associated with mixed marriage. Overall, 26 percent of those with incomes below \$75,000 are mixed-married as compared with 18 percent of those earning over \$75,000. The picture is sharpened further when we control for age.

The data demonstrate clearly that there is a strong association between lower income and higher rates of mixed marriage among those under 45 but that it does not exist at all among those over 45. Thus, in the under 45 age group, 37 percent of those earning under \$30,000 and 33 percent of those earning between \$30,000 and \$75,000 are mixed-married, while 21 percent among those earning over \$75,000 are. Conversely, 56 and 59 percent, respectively, of the two lower income groups are in-married, compared with 72 percent of those earning over \$75,000. Turning to those over 45 years, the differences between the rates of mixed marriage of the three income groups are extremely small. The rate of mixed marriage is slightly higher in the middle income group (17%) than among the lower and higher income earners (12% and 15%, respectively).

In all, greater proportions of younger Jews than of older Jews are better educated, in more prestigious occupations, and earn higher incomes. Why they are more likely to in-marry than those young people who do not achieve these educational, occupational, and income levels and why the latter are more likely to marry out is not clear from our data. One possible explanation is that within a community in which high levels of achievement are the norm, low achievers will be less attractive marriage partners and more limited in their choices than high achievers. Conversely, low achievers in terms of Jewish norms may still be relatively high achievers by the norms of American society as a whole and may seek to maximize these assets outside the Jewish community rather than compete within it against higher achievers.

### *Jewish Education*

The data relating to Jewish education seem to indicate that individuals who have had some Jewish education and those who have had none at all are almost equally likely to be involved in conversionary and mixed marriages. However, closer examination of the data does reveal differences based on duration of Jewish education, particularly so in younger age groups. In general, going from older to younger age groups, there is a linear increase in the proportion of individuals receiving more than six years of Jewish education, strikingly so among women. Thus, 45 percent of women aged 18–34, as against 21 percent of women over 65 years of age, received six or more years of Jewish education; the comparable figures for men are 46 percent and 35 percent. Similarly, the proportion of women receiving no Jewish education at all declines markedly, from 45 percent of those aged 65 and over to 25 percent of those in the 18–34 age group. By way of

contrast, the proportion of men of all age groups with no Jewish education at all is consistently much lower—in the range of 11 percent to 20 percent—and there is no linear relationship with age.

While Jewish women are both less likely than Jewish men to have received any Jewish education at all and to have received it for more than six years, older Jewish women are also less likely to intermarry. This suggests a complex relationship between Jewish education and the propensity to intermarry. To control for these factors, the figures for years of Jewish education were broken down by both age and gender. A comparison of those with more than six years of Jewish education and those with less or none at all confirms that Jewish education is clearly associated with higher rates of in-marriage and lower rates of mixed marriage. While this holds true for both men and women in all age groups, the association between more than six years of Jewish education and in-marriage is strongest in younger age groups—especially among men aged 35–54, and it is also weakly present in the 18–34 age group. For women it is strongest among those under age 45 (particularly in the 18–34 age group).

Among those with less than six years of Jewish education, there does not appear to be a consistent relationship between number of years of Jewish education and the propensity to in-marry. In only two of ten cases, Jewish males aged 35–44 and Jewish males aged 45–54) is there a clear linear relationship between the two, with those having up to five years of Jewish education more likely to be in-married than those without any Jewish education. In four other cases the opposite is true—those who have not received any Jewish education are more likely to be in-married than those with up to five years of Jewish education. In yet another four cases there is little or no difference at all.

In general, the association between in-marriage and a lengthy period of Jewish education appears strongest at a time when the incidence of intermarriage is relatively high, as can be seen among younger men and women, and appears weakest when the incidence of intermarriage is relatively low, as in the case of older men and women. Clearly, the relationship between these two elements is not linear but is mediated by other powerful social and psychological factors, most especially the character and salience of personal Jewish identity at the time of marriage.

These background data have been concerned with the question of which Jews have a greater or lesser propensity to intermarry. Overall, they indicate that age, generation, and gender are more highly associated with intermarriage than are the other background factors. Intermarriage rates are highest among younger and fourth-generation American Jews, particularly males. The data also show an increased incidence of mixed marriage over time, with the rates of conversionary marriage remaining fairly stable.

By the 1980s just under half of the marriages involving Jews were mixed, forming families in which one spouse was Jewish and the other was a non-Jew. Consistently, the incidence of mixed marriage was found to be highest in the

younger age groups, among whom it was only slightly lowered by long exposure to Jewish education. Thus, in the youngest age cohorts, even those who received more than six years of Jewish education manifest a relatively high rate of mixed marriage, peaking at 25 percent among males aged 18–34 years.

This finding of increasing mixed marriage even among strongly identified Jews suggests a hitherto unappreciated and intriguing possibility: the increasing incidence of mixed marriage may be associated with underlying changes in the nature of Jewish personal and group identity. These changes, in turn, have led to expectations or hopes that Jewish identity can still be maintained and transmitted in mixed marriages.

Given the increasing incidence of intermarriage, how these hopes and expectations play themselves out—in short, what happens to Jewish identity in conversionary and mixed marriages—is a particularly crucial question for investigation. We begin with a theoretical analysis of the nature of contemporary Jewish identity, the underlying changes within it, and the implications for different marriage types.

### **Contemporary Jewish Identity and Intermarriage**

Jewish identity is located at the core of personal identity, which Herbert Kelman defines as “the enduring aspects of the person’s definition of himself . . . the individual’s conception of who he is and what he is over time and across situations.” Included in this is “the child’s cultural and ethnic heritage—the groups into which he is born.” These form “an inherent part of his identity . . . by virtue of the fact that the group[s] to which he belongs are usually an inevitable part of his life experience.” Thus, Kelman notes, an individual’s ethnic and cultural heritage “enters into who and what he is, just as his biological heritage does.” The individual, therefore, “must somehow take his cultural as well as his biological heritage into account if he is to develop a firm personal identity.” The group’s definition of itself—its own conception of its basic values—enters into the individual’s personal identity as an ongoing cultural heritage that exists independently of the individuals that bear it. It is expressed in written documents, oral traditions, institutions, and symbols.<sup>11</sup>

#### *A Partial Community of Shared Feelings*

In the past, the common denominator of Jewish identity was a community of belief based on a system of shared prescriptive values.<sup>12</sup> Over the past century, however, this has shifted in the direction of a community of shared individual feelings. The community of belief constituted a total system that controlled the individual’s environment with a detailed pattern of prescribed actions and fixed roles. Group membership was thus clearly defined. In contrast, the contemporary community of

shared individual feelings is a voluntary and partial community of personal choice, with unclear boundaries and undefined membership. It is characterized by emotions and attachments that, while often deep, are not always clearly articulated.

This shift in Jewish identity is paralleled and reinforced by the trend in American society in the direction of what Richard Merelman has called “the decline of group belongingness and the rise of individualization.” Merelman notes that in contemporary America, “many people continue to be members and identify with groups, [but] they believe their group identities to be matters of individual choice, which can be changed without stigma. Group membership thus becomes voluntary, contingent, fluid, not ‘given,’ fixed and rigid.”<sup>13</sup> The process that Merelman is describing shows itself in the fact that many American Jews give strong expression to feelings of Jewishness as a central component of their personal identity even when they fail to uphold major Jewish religious beliefs and rituals. As documented in many studies, being Jewish is very important to such individuals: they express considerable Jewish pride, are comfortable with their Jewishness, are happy that they were born Jewish, relate to other Jews as family, and want their children to remain Jewish.

Despite the shift away from the community of shared belief, the religious value system remains a distinctive defining characteristic of the Jewish group at the normative and cultural levels. Popular religious observances—those relating to *rites de passage* and the holidays—continue to provide personal identity with its group aspects, even though the practices may have been selectively detached from a coherent and consistent whole. They serve as a vehicle for expressing shared feelings in familial and communal contexts, which reinforce and heighten the positive emotional affect of group belonging at the core of personal identity.

At the same time, religion differentiates and separates Jews from other groups. This implies, first and foremost, a rejection of the dominant Christian culture.<sup>14</sup> In Robert Bellah’s words, “It is part of Jewish identity and the maintenance of the boundaries of the Jewish community to deny that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah. This is to claim, however tacitly, that Christianity is a false religion.”<sup>15</sup> Paradoxically, as the religious aspects of Judaism have become relatively less central to the core of Jewish identity and shared feelings have become more important, being *not* Christian has taken on greater salience as a defining element of Jewishness.<sup>16</sup>

In the partial community of shared individual feelings, Jewishness forms part of the core of self-identity. As such, it can be significant without requiring the individual to raise it constantly to the level of conscious awareness. But there are also occasions in the life of the individual that do characteristically raise the issue of Jewish identity to the level of conscious awareness, for example, when choosing a marriage partner, at the birth of a child, and when making decisions about whether and how to transmit an ethnic heritage to the children. Similarly, events that affect the larger Jewish group, such as episodes of prejudice and discrimination—rejection of the group by others—may be experienced as personal rejection. Such rejection threatens all members of the community of shared individual

feelings, constituting an attack on the core of personality, whether or not the attack is directed at them personally and however tenuous their own ties with the group.

### *Segmented and Unambiguous Jewish Identity*

The Jewishness of the community of shared feelings in contemporary American society has become segmented in a number of different ways.

First, Jewishness constitutes only one segment of personal identity; it exists alongside others, such as those deriving from being an American, college-educated, a high-income earner, or a social and political liberal, for example. Needless to say, the various aspects of personal identity inform and shape each other. Thus, the trait of Jewishness plays a part in how Jews act out their various roles in American society, and their various roles in American society influence their Jewish identity.

Second, the multiple aspects of identity coexist independently rather than coalescing to form a larger, integrated whole. The result is what might be termed a pluralistic personality. The significance and salience for the individual of any particular segment of his or her personal identity will vary with particular circumstances—personal, societal, historical, and so forth.

Third, neither the extent nor the intensity of the Jewish segment of personal identity is fixed. The Jewish segment may be very broad, taking in many aspects of contemporary Jewish group identity (such as religion, Israel, philanthropy, culture, group defense, friendship) or only one or a few aspects. At the same time, involvement in even a single, narrow segment of Jewishness may be very intense, whereas simultaneous involvement in a number of aspects may be attenuated.

Although contemporary Jewish identity is segmented in these various ways, the core of Jewishness remains unambiguous, in the sense that it is perceived by both Jews and others to be exclusively connected with the Jewish group's cultural and ethnic heritage. Thus, in families in which both parents are Jewish and continue to identify as such, the Jewish ethnic and cultural self-identity imparted to their children is unambiguous, even when it is weak or generates ambivalence. They are Jewish and nothing else. The Jewish self-identity of these individuals defines both who they are and who they are not, irrespective of the extent and intensity of its particular form. The process of unambiguous Jewish identity formation is reinforced by values in American society encouraging individuals to build on their own cultural roots for purposes of self-esteem, individual happiness, and positive intergroup relations. Under these conditions, an unambiguous ethnic identity provides the foundation for a secure personal identity.<sup>17</sup>

### *Segmented Jewish Identity and Mixed Marriage*

The existence of a segmented and unambiguous Jewish identity encourages Jews who enter into mixed marriages to assume that this will not prevent them from

continuing to affirm and maintain the Jewish element at the core of their personal identity. (By the same token, their non-Jewish spouses, if they so choose, will be able to maintain a culturally different personal identity.) They see Jewish identity as a personal issue and are convinced that participation in a mixed family is compatible with strong personal expressions of Jewishness: to feel part of the Jewish people, to be proud of one's Jewishness, to attend synagogue, to perform Jewish rituals, to support Israel. The experience of diversity and pluralism within the family may be deemed personally enriching. The rationale of mixed marriage, therefore, is that neither partner's personal identity need impinge on the other.

The structural realities of American Jewish life predispose young American Jews to meet, date, and marry non-Jews. The segmented and unambiguous character of their Jewish identity often leads them to assume or hope that intermarriage will have little effect on their Jewish feelings and commitments. Many also believe that their children will likewise be Jewish and that mixed families are not a bar to the transmission of a Jewish personal identity. These expectations are not always realized, however, and indeed run counter to the fundamental dynamics of mixed families in America. Thus, an unambiguous Jewish identity in the parental generation may turn out to be a terminal Jewish identity in the next. To understand why this is so, it is necessary to examine the identity dynamics in mixed and conversionary marriages.

### *Identity Dynamics in Conversionary and Mixed Marriages*

Conversionary and mixed marriages reflect very different hopes and goals and set in motion opposing processes. Conversion to Judaism generally indicates a desire to create an environment for identity formation that avoids competing and conflicting identities within the family and thereby increases the chances of developing an unambiguous Jewish identity in the children. Conversion to Judaism, however, is a process, not an act, and as such it is by no means easy, quick, or inexorable. Some who convert may not proceed very far along the road, may stop, or go backward, while others do indeed reach the final destination. Conversion involves a change of personal and group identity by the non-Jew, necessitating, on the one hand, distancing, disaffiliation, and cutting off ties with the usually Christian spiritual heritage and identity of the family into which the individual was born and the adoption of Jewish symbols, behavior, and identity, on the other.

Conversion to Judaism may trigger a number of difficulties. In the first place, a Christian core identity may prove resistant to change and may therefore manifest or reassert itself on symbolic occasions during the cycle of the year or at critical junctures of the life cycle unless it is consciously rejected. Second, it is often not clear what becoming Jewish entails in terms of the Jewish partner's desires and expectations. If it entails conversion to Judaism as a religion, then it is clear what that means and how it can be achieved. But if Jewishness involves an ethnic dimension—a relationship in blood, membership in a people characterized by shared

feelings and history—it is not so clear how this may be attained, even after formal religious conversion. It may take time and experience before the convert to Judaism “feels” Jewish.

Mixed marriage involves a very different situation. A mixed family creates an environment for identity formation that is founded on the competing heritages of the Jewish and the non-Jewish spouses, both of which enter into the child’s core identity. Mixed marriage thus not only decreases the likelihood that an unambiguous Jewish identity will be formed but also raises the possibility that no Jewish identity at all will emerge. As Nathan Glazer has explained, “Their children have alternatives before them that the children of families in which both parents were born Jewish do not—they have legitimate alternative identities.”<sup>18</sup>

In mixed-married families, the absence of agreement about fundamental matters of identity confronts the children with a choice between four alternatives: they can incorporate the identity of the Jewish parent, that of the non-Jewish parent, that of both, or that of neither. Identifying wholly with one parent may prove traumatic to the extent that it involves the rejection of the other parent, as well as part of the self. Maintaining both identities simultaneously may create tensions and conflicts that prevent the development of an integrated personal identity. Thus, the most commonly chosen solution may turn out to be identifying with neither parent and focusing on shared, general, secular values.

The range of possible Jewish identity outcomes from both conversionary and mixed marriages can be presented in the form of a typology with six cells or subtypes, as shown in table 12.1. The cells are based on the intersection of Jewish identification and marriage type. As there are three levels of Jewish identification (low, medium, and high) and two marriage types (conversionary and mixed) this results in six subtypes, three for each marriage type.

At this point, this typology does not take account of the possible simultaneous presence within the various marriage types and subtypes of a Christian identity, assuming an inverse relationship between Jewish identity and Christian elements. The existence of marriages in which Jewish and Christian identities are both maintained will be examined at a later stage and will result in an expanded typology.

Having established a theoretical framework for the examination of Jewish identity in mixed and conversionary marriages, let us now turn to the empirical data.

TABLE 12.1  
Conversionary and Mixed-Marriage Typology

<i>Marriage Type</i>	<i>Jewish Identification Level</i>		
	<i>Low</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>High</i>
Conversionary	LC	MC	HC
Mixed	LM	MM	HM

## Marriage Type and Jewish Identification

### *Denomination*

Jewish identity is formed not only within the family but also within formal religious structures, such as synagogues and schools, that are generally affiliated with organized Jewish religious movements. These denominations, as they are known, represent alternative normative patterns of Jewish belief and behavior, each having different standards and expectations on a whole range of matters, including conversion to Judaism and mixed marriage.

It was argued above that, in the community of shared feelings, the religious aspect of Jewish identity continues to be central to the core of individual and group identity. One expression of this is the overwhelming extent to which American Jews think of themselves as being Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform Jews even when they are not formally affiliated with a synagogue or temple.<sup>19</sup> (In the survey files, there is an additional category of "Just Jewish." Sometimes it is a specific denominational alternative; when not, it is a residual category for all who give some other broad general term of Jewish identification.) In all, denomination is likely to be strongly associated with differences in the pattern of individual Jewish identification and behavior.

The need to control for denomination is underscored by the differential distribution of the four denominations within each marriage type. Thus, Conservative Jews constitute over one-third of the total sample but only 12 percent of the mixed-marrieds. Conversely, those who identify as Just Jewish represent less than 14 percent of the total sample but make up over one-third of the mixed-marrieds. Finally, Reform Jews represent 45 percent of the total sample but constitute 57 percent of the conversionary marrieds.

These patterns of discrepant representation are a result of the clear relationship between denominational identification and marriage type. In the case of the in-marrieds, the rank order is Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Just Jewish, while in the case of the mixed-marrieds it is the reverse. About nine in ten Orthodox and Conservative Jews are in-married, as against seven in ten Reform Jews, and five in ten of the Just Jewish. Conversely, nearly half of the persons calling themselves Just Jewish are mixed-marrieds, as are over one-fifth of those identifying as Reform Jews, but only one in 15 of those calling themselves Orthodox and Conservative Jews. The overall level of conversionary marriages is low among all denominational groups—ranging between 2 percent and 7 percent—with the rank order being Reform, Conservative, Just Jewish, and Orthodox. (The very small number of Orthodox conversionary and mixed-marrieds in our sample necessitates their exclusion from all further statistical analyses involving denominations, leaving only Orthodox in-marrieds).



It is clear, then, that persons identifying themselves with different wings of American Judaism exhibit very different marriage profiles. While Orthodox and Conservative Jews are predominantly in-married, among those who identify as Reform three in ten are either conversionary marrieds or mixed-marrieds, as are half of the Just Jewish. It must be emphasized, however, that these denominational figures are based on current self-identification, and their relationship to family of origin is unknown. Thus, a person who grew up in an Orthodox home and married a convert might decide that he or she would be more comfortable affiliating with a Conservative or Reform congregation. One cannot draw any conclusions from these data about possible linkages between the denomination of the family of origin and the propensity to engage in conversionary or mixed marriages.

### *Religious Affiliation and Identification*

Synagogue membership and attendance give public expression to religious affiliation and identification. On a more private, familial level, ritual practice plays the same role.

The overall data for marriage types show that the differences between in-marrieds and conversionary marrieds are very narrow and not unidirectional. In-marrieds are slightly more likely than conversionary marrieds to belong to synagogues, but conversionary marrieds are more likely than in-marrieds to attend synagogue regularly. Thus, 60 percent of in-marrieds belong to synagogues and 28 percent attend regularly; among the conversionary marrieds the figures are 56 percent and 34 percent, respectively. In-marrieds and conversionary marrieds perform Jewish rituals with almost identical degrees of frequency: 87 percent of both groups attend a Passover seder, 85 percent and 84 percent light Hanukkah candles, 68 percent fast on Yom Kippur, and 38 percent and 32 percent, respectively, light Sabbath candles.

The most striking feature of the data is the marked difference between in-marrieds and conversionary marrieds, on the one hand, and mixed-marrieds on the other. For all three measures, mixed-marrieds score 30 percent to 40 percent lower than the in-marrieds and the conversionary marrieds: 15 percent of mixed-marrieds belong to a synagogue; 6 percent attend synagogue regularly (53% never attend); 52 percent participate in a seder; 52 percent light Hanukkah candles; 34 percent fast on Yom Kippur; and 3 percent light Sabbath candles.

For all three marriage types, the same denominational rank order from highest to lowest—Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Just Jewish—is evident. Thus, 36 percent of Conservative mixed-marrieds are synagogue members, as against 21 percent of Reform mixed-marrieds and 5 percent of Just Jewish mixed-marrieds. The comparable figures for regular synagogue attendance are 75 percent, 63 percent, and 25 percent, respectively. The practice of all the Jewish rituals follows a similar pattern. For example, 76 percent of Conservative mixed-marrieds fast on

Yom Kippur, as against 40 percent of Reform mixed-marrieds, and 17 percent of Just Jewish mixed-marrieds. The three apparent exceptions to this pattern do not alter this basic finding.<sup>20</sup>

Comparison of the different marriage types within denominations shows that Conservative and Reform conversionary marrieds are less likely than their in-married counterparts to belong to synagogues but are more likely to attend synagogue. The differences in synagogue membership are greatest among Conservative Jews: 68 percent of Conservative in-marrieds belong to synagogues but only 54 percent of Conservative conversionary marrieds do; 59 percent of Reform in-marrieds and 57 percent of Reform conversionary marrieds belong. With regard to synagogue attendance, in both denominations the margin in favor of conversionary marrieds is about 10 percent: 42 percent of Conservative conversionary marrieds attend synagogue regularly, as do 32 percent of Conservative in-marrieds; among Reform Jews the equivalent figures are 33 percent and 22 percent. However, no clear pattern emerges for ritual performance: in both denominations, in-marrieds and conversionary marrieds are variously higher on different rituals. Moreover, the margins between them are very narrow, usually a few percentage points.

In contrast, Just Jewish conversionary marrieds consistently score higher, sometimes much higher, than Just Jewish in-marrieds on all three measures of religious affiliation and identification. Thus, 49 percent of Just Jewish conversionary marrieds belong to synagogues, compared with 23 percent of Just Jewish in-marrieds; 66 percent of the conversionaries attend synagogue at least a few times a year, but only 43 percent of the in-marrieds do so. Again, 86 percent of Just Jewish conversionary marrieds light Hanukkah candles and 60 percent fast on Yom Kippur, compared with 52 percent and 33 percent, respectively, of Just Jewish in-marrieds. The differences between the two groups indicate an underlying secular orientation among Just Jewish in-marrieds and a more religious orientation on the part of Just Jewish conversionary marrieds, even when this is not accompanied by current denominational identification. (There may, of course, have been some denominational affiliation in the past, during the conversion process.) Given the relatively small actual numbers of Just Jewish conversionary marrieds, however, all findings relating to them must remain somewhat tentative and will therefore be excluded from further analysis.

The considerably lower levels of religious involvement of mixed-marrieds are maintained within the various denominations. On average, mixed-marrieds are 25 percent lower than the other two marriage types on all measures of religious identification and affiliation. Thus, 36 percent of Conservative mixed-marrieds, 21 percent of Reform mixed-marrieds, and 5 percent of Just Jewish mixed-marrieds belong to a synagogue, compared to 68 percent, 59 percent, and 23 percent, respectively, of comparable in-marrieds. Similarly, 76 percent of Conservative mixed-marrieds, 68 percent of Reform mixed-marrieds, and 35 percent of Just Jewish mixed-marrieds light Hanukkah candles, while 95 percent, 86 percent, and 52 percent of equivalent in-marrieds do so.

Mixed-marrieds calling themselves Conservative are more likely to belong to synagogues (36%) than Reform mixed-marrieds (21%). This is true despite the Reform movement's recognition of patrilineal descent and greater Conservative ideological opposition to mixed marriage.

Denominational identification is closely associated with level of religious involvement. Conservative and Reform mixed-marrieds are on average about 30 percent more likely than Just Jewish mixed-marrieds to have current synagogue membership, to attend synagogue, and to participate in ritual practice. Clearly, among mixed-marrieds a denominational self-definition is associated with a higher level of religious involvement, while Just Jewish as a self-definition indicates conscious distancing from Jewish religious identification.

The strength and stability of the relationship between marriage type and religious affiliation and identification were tested by controlling for the effects of age and family type. For age, the sample was divided into two groups: under 45 years of age and over 45 years of age. For family type, the sample was divided into two groups: couples with no children at all and couples with unmarried children, whether living at home or not. These controls were applied to the questions relating to synagogue membership, synagogue attendance, and ritual practice, for the three marriage types, both by themselves and within denomination. The results indicate that although both age and family type are themselves influential, the impact of marriage type and denomination are still clearly evident within age groups and family types. In general, the expected age-related and life-cycle-related influences do not diminish the strength of the association between denomination and marriage type on the one hand and Jewish religious affiliation and identification on the other.

Two aspects of the relationship between marriage type and Jewish religious identification and affiliation are particularly noteworthy. The first is the extent to which conversionary marriages are like in-marriages, both as a whole and within denomination. Clearly, conversion often leads to the maintenance of Jewish religious practices. At the same time, a significant proportion of conversionary marriages are low in their levels of Jewish religious practice, which raises questions about the quality and meaning of such conversions. The second aspect is the low overall level of Jewish religious affiliation and practice of mixed-marrieds, although these levels are slightly higher among those who are denominationally identified. Mixed marriage clearly militates against Jewish religious affiliation and practice.

#### *Organizational Membership and Ties to Israel*

The broad pattern of organizational membership for the three marriage types generally parallels that for synagogue membership. Indeed, the same rank order is evident—in-marrieds, conversionary marrieds, and mixed-marrieds. At the same time, there are some significant variations.

The data for marriage types as a whole show that in-marrieds and mixed-marrieds respond uniformly to both organizational and synagogue membership but with one fundamental difference: in-marrieds are uniformly quite high in their membership levels, while mixed-marrieds are uniformly low. Thus, 57 percent of in-marrieds belong to Jewish organizations and 60 percent to synagogues, whereas 16 percent of mixed-marrieds belong to Jewish organizations and 15 percent to synagogues. In contrast, however, among conversionary marrieds the level of Jewish organizational membership is significantly lower than that for synagogue membership—45 percent belong to Jewish organizations and 56 percent to synagogues.

When the data for membership in synagogues and other Jewish organizations are combined, it is found that 40 percent of in-marrieds belong to both and 24 percent to neither, 31 percent of conversionary marrieds belong to both and 30 percent to neither, and 5 percent of mixed-marrieds belong to both and 75 percent to neither.

From the data it would appear that conversion to Judaism in the sense of religious integration proceeds faster than communal integration. Apparently it takes longer to acquire and develop Jewish communal ties than it does to adopt new religious beliefs and practices. At the same time, the obstacles placed by mixed marriage in the path of Jewish self-identity seem to apply equally to both the religious and communal dimensions.

Ties to Israel were probed by means of a question asking whether any member of the household had ever made a trip to Israel. The data replicate the rank order seen previously: in-marrieds, conversionary marrieds, and mixed-marrieds. Overall, 47 percent of in-marrieds have visited Israel, compared to 39 percent of conversionary marrieds and 21 percent of mixed-marrieds.

When the denominational factor is taken into account, some noteworthy exceptions emerge. On the one hand, the expected rank order for both organizational membership and visits to Israel—Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Just Jewish—maintained. However, with regard to visiting Israel, differences between the Just Jewish and the other denominations are rather small; indeed, only 2 percent separates Reform Jews and the Just Jewish in this regard. For Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Jews, the level of synagogue membership is higher than the level of organizational membership, which in turn is higher than the level of Israel visits. For the Just Jewish, however, the reverse is true: the level of Israel visits is highest (34%), followed by organizational membership (26%), with the level of synagogue membership (16%) lowest. These data further demonstrate the underlying secular orientation of the Just Jewish in all marriage types.

When marriage types within denominations are examined, there is a striking exception to the expected pattern: Conservative conversionary marrieds are almost as likely as Conservative in-marrieds to belong to Jewish organizations (56% vs. 59%) and more likely to visit Israel (55% vs. 47%). On the basis of this finding, the earlier suggestion that conversionary marrieds generally have a

lower level of ethnic and communal identification compared to their religious identification must be revised, since it holds only for Reform, not for Conservatives. The explanation may lie in the interaction between denomination and conversion, perhaps in the differing standards and expectations of Conservative and Reform conversions, combined with a process of self-selection among those undertaking conversion.

Within each denomination, mixed-marrieds are consistently less likely than other marriage types to belong to Jewish organizations and to visit Israel. Moreover, their levels of participation are lower than their already low levels of religious affiliation and identification. Thus, 33 percent of Conservative, 17 percent of Reform, and 7 percent of Just Jewish mixed-marrieds belong to Jewish organizations; the comparable figures for visiting Israel are 16 percent, 20 percent, and 24 percent.

When controls are introduced for age, the results clarify further the differential processes at work among Conservative and Reform conversionary marrieds. While both Conservative and Reform inmarrieds and mixed-marrieds over the age of 45 are much more likely to have visited Israel than those under the age of 45, with Conservative and Reform conversionary marrieds the situation is reversed. Among Conservative conversionary marrieds under the age of 45, 61 percent have visited Israel, compared to 34 percent of those over the age of 45; among Reform conversionary marrieds, 27 percent of those under the age of 45 have visited Israel, compared to 18 percent of those over the age of 45.

It would appear that the increasing centrality given to Israel in contemporary Jewish life has in recent years found direct expression in visits to Israel as part of the conversion process, whether formally or informally. This seems particularly evident in the case of young Conservative conversionary marrieds. This process is augmented within the Conservative movement by membership in Jewish organizations: 63 percent of Conservative conversionary marrieds under the age of 45 belong to Jewish organizations, compared to 39 percent over the age of 45. In contrast, among Reform conversionary marrieds, membership in Jewish organizations is slightly lower for those under the age of 45 than for those over the age of 45.

### *Jewish Philanthropy*

Researchers have consistently found that contributing to Jewish causes is highly correlated with other measures of Jewish identification.<sup>21</sup> According to Jonathan Woocher, philanthropy constitutes one of the central tenets of American Jewry's civil religion of "sacred survival." And indeed, in the study described here, some 80 percent of respondents report that their households contribute to Jewish causes.

The pattern of giving to Jewish causes follows the rank order of the marriage types previously encountered for other measures of Jewish identification: in-married (86%), conversionary married (81%), and mixed-married (57%). Similarly, the denominational rank order replicates the standard pattern: Orthodox

(87%), Conservative (86%), Reform (83%), and Just Jewish (65%). However, the differences between Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Jews with regard to philanthropy are narrower than for any of the other measures. Moreover, the level of participation of the Just Jewish in Jewish philanthropy is higher than for all other items of religious and communal identification. When marriage type is combined with denomination, the same pattern of relationship between marriage type and Jewish philanthropy is maintained.

By way of comparison, 72 percent of households report that they give to non-Jewish or nonsectarian causes, which is slightly lower than the overall rate of Jewish giving. Differences between marriage type and denomination and between combinations of the two are much narrower for general philanthropic giving than for donations to Jewish causes. When giving to both types of causes is compared, within all denominations in-marrieds are more likely to give to Jewish than to non-Jewish causes, whereas the opposite is the case with mixed-marrieds.

### *Friendship Patterns*

Jewish religious identification and communal affiliation are reinforced by primary groups such as family and close friends. Thus, it is important to examine the relationship between marriage type and the ethnic character of friendship groups.

The patterns of friendship of the three marriage types were analyzed in two categories: a predominantly Jewish friendship pattern, in which two or all of one's three closest friends are Jewish, and a predominantly non-Jewish friendship pattern, in which only one or none of one's three closest friends are Jewish.

The figures indicate an extremely strong relationship between marriage type and friends, with each marriage type maintaining its own distinctive pattern of friendship. Exactly three-quarters of the in-marrieds have predominantly Jewish friends, whereas one-quarter have mainly non-Jewish friends. Among the conversionary marrieds, exactly half mix with predominantly Jewish friends, and the other half have mainly non-Jewish friends. The friendship pattern of the mixed-marrieds is more or less the reverse of that of the in-marrieds: about seven in ten have predominantly non-Jewish friends, and three in ten have predominantly Jewish friends.

A somewhat more complex picture of friendship patterns emerges when denomination is taken into account. Overall, the familiar denominational rank order is evident: the Orthodox have the highest proportion of predominantly Jewish friends, followed by Conservative Jews, Reform Jews, and the Just Jewish. It is worth noting that when marriage types are compared within and across denominations, the expected distance between Conservative and Reform in-marrieds is virtually erased. However, the major deviation from the expected rank order occurs among the conversionary marrieds: Conservative conversionary marrieds are less likely to have predominantly Jewish friends (41%) than are both Reform conversionary marrieds (54%) and Conservative mixed-marrieds (49%).

When controls for age are introduced, the expected denominational and marriage-type rank orders are reinstated for those aged 45 and older. In this age group, 84 percent of Conservative conversionary marrieds have predominantly Jewish friends, compared with 63 percent of Reform conversionary marrieds and 65 percent of Conservative mixed-marrieds. But among those under 45 years of age, the previously noted deviations from the expected denominational and marriage-type rank orders are even more marked. Only 34 percent of the younger Conservative conversionary marrieds have predominantly Jewish friends, compared with 54 percent of Reform conversionary marrieds and 43 percent of Conservative mixed-marrieds.

The low proportion of predominantly Jewish friends among younger Conservative conversionary marrieds is consistent with the general relationship between age and friendship patterns: for every combination of denomination and marriage type (except the Orthodox in-marrieds) those under the age of 45 are less likely to have predominantly Jewish friends than those over age 45. However, the difference between the two Conservative conversionary married age groups—50 percent—is twice that of the age groups for other denominational marriage types. Why this is so, since younger Conservative conversionary marrieds score relatively high on all other dimensions of Jewish identification, is not clear.

### *Jewish Education for the Children*

There is a relationship between marriage type and the provision of formal Jewish education to children during the key period, ages 10–13. Among the in-married, formal Jewish education for children in the pre–bar/bat mitzvah years is almost universal (95%), and its incidence is only slightly lower among the conversionary marrieds (84%). However, the proportion receiving Jewish education drops to 41 percent among the children of mixed marriages.

This rank order among marriage types remains intact when denomination is taken into account, but some striking variations are apparent. First, among all marriage types the differences between Conservative and Reform Jews in the provision of Jewish education are minimal. Second, within both denominations the differences between the in-married and the conversionary marrieds, on the one hand, and the mixed-marrieds, on the other, are greatly reduced; among the Just Jewish the gap between them is increased to the maximum. Among Conservative Jews the difference between the mixed-marrieds and the other two marriage types in providing children with formal Jewish education is 19 percent; among Reform Jews it ranges from 12 to 14 percent, but among the Just Jewish it is 100 percent. While all the Just Jewish in-marrieds provide their children with formal Jewish education, no Just Jewish mixed-marrieds do so.

Denominational identification is closely related to the provision of Jewish education to the children of mixed marriages. Over 80 percent of mixed-marrieds who identify with a denomination give their children Jewish educations, but

mixed-marrieds without a denominational identification do not. In all likelihood, this relationship is two-directional: attendance at Jewish schools that are denominationally affiliated usually entails formal synagogue or temple affiliation, thus providing children with a clear denominational identification. Conversely, denominational self-identification facilitates formal synagogue or temple membership, which in turn encourages the provision of Jewish education for the children.

Three main conclusions may be drawn from the foregoing analysis of the relationship between marriage type and various aspects of Jewish identification. First, there is a strong, direct relationship between marriage type and all measures of Jewish identification. Second, within the marriage types themselves, there are recurring variations that point to the existence of separate subtypes. Third, these patterns continue to show themselves even when account is taken of the strong and consistent influence of denomination, which variously mutes or reinforces the impact of marriage type but never overrides it completely. This is even more the case when the weaker and less consistent influences of family type and age are considered.

### *Index of Jewish Identification*

Taking the analysis a step further, an index of Jewish identification was constructed, making it possible to identify the different marriage subtypes as well as to determine the relative weight of each within the broader marriage type, within the denomination, and within the total sample.

The index of Jewish identification was constructed by combining all the various elements of Jewish identity into a single numerical score on an additive (Likert) scale. Ten items were included: synagogue membership, synagogue attendance, Sabbath candle lighting, participation in a Passover seder, fasting on Yom Kippur; lighting Hanukkah candles, membership in a Jewish organization, donating to a Jewish charity, visiting Israel, and having predominantly Jewish close friends. In each case one point was assigned for a positive response, except for synagogue attendance, where one point was given for attendance on the High Holy Days and a few times a year and two points for attending monthly or weekly. To avoid problems of standardization, only respondents who answered all of the questions were scored, thus excluding those in communities in which not all of the questions were asked and those who, for whatever reason, did not answer particular questions. As a result, the total number of respondents was reduced by about one-third. The range of possible scores is 0–11, and following the shape of the frequency distribution, it is divided into three categories: low Jewish identification, 0–4 points; medium Jewish identification: 5–8 points; and high Jewish identification, 9–11 points.

It should be noted that the index does not include items indicating higher levels of Jewish identification, such as strict Sabbath and festival observance, keeping kosher, and daily synagogue attendance. Although the original Jewish population



surveys contain such data, these and similar items that reflect traditional standards of Jewish religious identification were excluded to reduce the range of the index, thereby lowering the thresholds for the medium and high levels. The net effect, therefore, is to include within these two categories many individuals who would not otherwise have been included.

Measured by the index of Jewish identification, 25 percent of all respondents score high; 45 percent, medium; and 30 percent, low. When divided according to marriage type, the data show the same relationship between marriage type and Jewish identification for the overall index as for the individual items—there is little difference between in-marrieds and conversionary marrieds on the index, but the gap between them and mixed-marrieds is quite wide.

These data also serve as the basis for identifying and locating the various marriage subtypes in the typology of conversionary and mixed marriages and assessing their relative weights. Thus, the vast majority of conversionary marrieds (83%) are to be found at the middle and upper levels of Jewish identification. One-third of them (33%) are “high-Jewish-identification conversionary marrieds,” indicating the considerable value and identity change, if not total transformation, that has resulted from conversion. Half of the total (50%) are “medium-Jewish-identification conversionary marrieds.” The smallest group, about one-sixth (17%), are “low-Jewish-identification conversionary marrieds,” for whom conversion may be described as nominal or *pro forma* because it has resulted in little or no change in identification or behavior.

The pattern for mixed-marrieds is strikingly different. Indeed, judging by these figures, mixed marriage represents an almost insuperable bar to the achievement of a high level of Jewish identification. Thus, only 1 percent are high-Jewish-identification mixed-marrieds, who have created a family environment in which a strong Jewish identity is being maintained and transmitted. The largest single group by far, just under seven in ten (69%), are at the opposite end of the scale, low-Jewish-identification mixed-marrieds. In these households, Jewish identification and behavior are peripheral. Finally, three in ten mixed marriages (30%) are medium-Jewish-identification mixed-marrieds, mainly households that emphasize ritual home practices rather than communal or ethnic ties.

Taking denomination into account sharpens the picture even further. Looking first at differences within denomination, Conservative conversionary marrieds score somewhat higher than Conservative in-marrieds, while the pattern within Reform is dichotomous: Reform conversionary marrieds are represented more at the high and low levels of Jewish identification and less at the medium level than are Reform in-marrieds. Mixed-marrieds among all the denominations score much lower than do the other marriage types.

Turning to differences across denominations, just under half (48%) of Conservative conversionary marrieds, but only a little more than a quarter of Reform conversionary marrieds (27 percent), exhibit high levels of Jewish identification. Conversely, very few Conservative conversionary marrieds (3%) show low levels of

Jewish identification, compared with nearly a quarter (23%) among Reform conversionary marrieds. The largest groups in both denominations are those with medium Jewish identification; they represent about half of all conversionary marrieds.

The differences between Conservative mixed-marrieds and Reform mixed-marrieds, in contrast, are narrower and are concentrated at the lower and middle levels of the Jewish identification index. Very few Conservative mixed-marrieds or Reform mixed-marrieds exhibit high Jewish identification, but 53 percent of Conservative mixed-marrieds are at the medium level, compared with 41 percent of Reform mixed-marrieds. At the bottom of the scale the situation is reversed: 57 percent of Reform mixed-marrieds show low Jewish identification, compared with 42 percent of Conservative mixed-marrieds. However, the largest differences are between Conservative and Reform mixed-marrieds, on the one hand, and the Just Jewish mixed-marrieds on the other. There are no Just Jewish mixed-marrieds with high Jewish identification, and only 13 percent are at the medium level; the vast majority (87%) are at the low level.

#### *Identification with Non-Jewish Cultural and Religious Symbols*

The foregoing discussion analyzed the extent and strength of key aspects of Jewish identification in different marriage types. Our theory of Jewish identity posited that being *not* Christian was a major defining element of Jewish identity. The creation of an unambiguous Jewish identity entails, at the very least, the absence from the home of Christian symbols and practices, even if the level of Jewish identification is low. Empirically, we can then hypothesize that Jewish identification and the incorporation of Christian practices and symbols in the home will vary inversely. Thus, in homes with medium and high levels of Jewish identification we would not expect to find Christian symbols and practices; such symbols would be present only when Jewish identification had disappeared completely or was at a low level.

This hypothesis is explored by means of a question about having a Christmas tree at home. While this single question serves clearly to identify those who have introduced a central Christian symbol into the home, it does not indicate whether it is an isolated practice or the tip of the iceberg—part of a more extensive incorporation of Christian symbols and values into the home. However, the surveys contain no further questions that might resolve this issue.

It is clear that in-marrieds shun the practice: 98 percent do not have a Christmas tree. Such an unequivocal response strongly supports our theory that, among in-marrieds at least, there exists an unambiguous Jewish identity, in which being *not* Christian is a defining element. Among conversionary marrieds, 78 percent do not have a Christmas tree, and 22 percent do. In contrast, among mixed-marrieds, 62 percent have a Christmas tree, and 38 percent do not. Quite remarkably, more mixed-marrieds have Christmas trees than perform any single Jewish ritual. (The most widely practiced rituals are attending a Passover seder and the lighting of Hanukkah candles, which are engaged in by 52% of the mixed-marrieds.)

The expected denominational rank order remains firm in this area. Overall, 3 percent of Orthodox Jews have Christmas trees, as do 4 percent of Conservative Jews, 18 percent of Reform Jews, and 33 percent of the Just Jewish. The same rank order is maintained when marriage types are compared across denomination. Thus, 8 percent of Conservative conversionary marrieds, as against 33 percent of Reform conversionary marrieds, have Christmas trees; among mixed-marrieds the comparable figures are 41 percent and 63 percent, and 66 percent for the Just Jewish.

Introducing controls for age, family type, and the ethnic character of friendship groups does not alter the above patterns. Indeed, family type itself is seen to have a marked impact: within every denomination and marriage type (particularly among mixed-marrieds), those who have children are consistently more likely to have a Christmas tree than are those who have no children. Where marriage type, denomination, and family type are mutually reinforcing, the proportion having a Christmas tree reaches a peak. Thus, 81 percent of Just Jewish mixed-marrieds with a child at home have a Christmas tree. When controls for age are introduced, the impact of marriage type, denomination, and family is clearly apparent, both among those under 45 and those over 45. In contrast, the impact of close friends is less clear-cut. While Conservative conversionary marrieds and Conservative mixed-marrieds with predominantly non-Jewish friends are more likely to have a Christmas tree than those with predominantly Jewish friends, this is not the case among Reform conversionary marrieds and Reform mixed-marrieds.

### *Dual-Identity Households*

As we have seen, virtually all in-married households manifest a single, unambiguous Jewish identity by virtue of the fact that Christian symbols are barred, irrespective of the level of Jewish identification. Thus, in-married Jews, including those with a low level of Jewish identification and those without denominational identification, overwhelmingly reject the practice of having a Christmas tree in the house.

Among intermarrieds, however, the situation is more complex. Conversionary and mixed marriages constitute arenas within which various theoretically possible identity resolutions or outcomes that come to characterize the household work themselves out. Unambiguous Jewish single-identity households are one possible identity outcome, as are Christian single-identity households, secular-identity (religiously and ethnically neutral) households, and dual-identity households. A *dual-identity* household is one in which both Jewish and Christian symbols and identification are maintained side by side, even when Jewish identification is at a medium level or higher. Indeed, under certain circumstances, Christian symbols and practices are more likely to be found in such households when Jewish practices are present than when they are absent.

The existence of single-identity and dual-identity households among conversionary and mixed marriages makes it necessary to expand the typology presented

above. Each of the previously specified subtypes can now be divided into those that have a Christmas tree and those that do not.

Among conversionary marrieds, dual low-Jewish-identification conversionary-marriage households represent a partial or incomplete conversionary process, one that has not resulted in an unambiguous Jewish identification, even at a low level, due to the simultaneous retention of a Christian identification. Dual medium-Jewish-identification conversionary-marriage households represent a conversionary process that involves a moderate, if not modal, acceptance of Jewish identification and values yet is bivalent to the extent that it also incorporates certain Christian elements in the home. In dual high-Jewish-identification conversionary-marriage households the value and identity transformation is still not fully achieved, since Christian symbols show themselves. The existence of a dual identity where Jewish identification is high will in all likelihood create considerable dissonance within the family.

Among mixed-marrieds, the combination of low Jewish identification and a Christmas tree in the house—dual low-Jewish-identification mixed marriage households—points to people on the margins of two heritages, perhaps even marginal in the classic sociological sense of not quite belonging to either. As against this, dual medium-Jewish-identification mixed-marriage households exhibit a marked degree of religious syncretism. The dual high-Jewish-identification mixed-marriage household cell is empty, as a result of the absence of a dual-identity subtype that both maintains and transmits a high level of Jewish identification and simultaneously incorporates Christian symbols.

The data indicate 62 percent of all mixed-marrieds to be in dual-identity households, compared with 20 percent of conversionary marrieds. Most of the conversionary marrieds in the dual-identity category exhibit medium and high levels of Jewish identification, while most of the mixed-marrieds are at the low level. Taken together, among all conversionary and mixed marriages, dual-identity households outnumber single-identity households 54 percent to 46 percent.

When denomination is examined, it becomes clear that the formation of dual-identity households is closely related to the standard denominational rank order. Thus, among conversionary marrieds, 7 percent of Conservative Jews and 30 percent of Reform Jews are in dual identity households; among mixed-marrieds, 33 percent of Conservative Jews, 65 percent of Reform Jews, and 69 percent of the Just Jewish are in that category. Overall, 20 percent of all Conservative conversionary and mixed-marrieds are in dual-identity households, compared with 56 percent in the Reform denomination. The small proportion of dual high-Jewish-identification conversionary-marriage households are all found among Reform Jews; there are none in the Conservative denomination.

Higher levels of Jewish identification are generally associated with single-identity households. Over two-thirds of all conversionary marrieds with medium or high Jewish identification, and 90 percent of the Conservative Jews among them, are not in dual-identity households. At the opposite end of the scale, 35

percent of the Reform and 63 percent of the Just Jewish low-Jewish-identification mixed-marrieds are in dual-identity households.

At the same time, a not insubstantial number of households at reasonably high levels of Jewish practice maintain Christian practices simultaneously. Thus, in the medium- and high-Jewish-identification categories, 14 percent of Conservative mixed-marrieds, 23 percent of Reform conversionary marrieds, and 29 percent of Reform mixed-marrieds are in dual-identity households. In the case of the latter, the dual-identity outcome is by far the most popular, outnumbering the single-identity households by a ratio of more than two to one.

Introducing controls for age provides a clear indication of the direction of these trends among the mixed-marrieds. Three features stand out when those under age 45 are compared with those over age 45. First, Reform identification is far more prevalent within younger mixed-married households than older ones. Thus, while 40 percent of mixed-marrieds over age 45 call themselves Reform, 60 percent of those under age 45 do so. This increase has come at the expense of the nondenominationally identified Just Jewish mixed-marrieds, whose proportion is 49 percent in the older age group and 31 percent in the younger one.

Second, the proportion of Reform mixed-marrieds in dual-identity households has increased dramatically. While just over half (54%) of those over 45 are in dual-identity households, nearly three-quarters (73%) of those under 45 are. (Among the Just Jewish mixed-marrieds, the equivalent proportions decline from 76% to 68%.)

Third, much higher proportions of younger than of older Reform Jews with medium and high Jewish identification are in dual-identity households. Among Reform mixed-marrieds, 34 percent of those with medium and high Jewish identification under age 45 are in dual-identity households, compared with 19 percent of those over age 45. The equivalent figures for medium- and high-Jewish-identification Reform conversionary marrieds are 29 percent and 9 percent, respectively, indicating an even greater movement in the direction of dual-identity households.

The total extent of this change is clearly shown in a comparison of the distribution of marriage types in the two age categories. Nearly one-quarter of all households (23%) in the under-45 age group are dual-identity intermarried households, and about one-sixth (16%) are single-identity intermarried households, as against 8 percent and 7 percent, respectively, in the over-45 age group. Conversely, in-marriages, which constitute the overwhelming majority of households in the older group (85%), represent only six in ten (61%) in the younger group.

## **Conclusion**

The data reported above demonstrate and quantify the dramatic changes in the marriage choices of American Jews in the past four decades. With every passing

generation and the coming of age of every younger cohort, more Jews have been marrying non-Jews, and mixed marriages represent an increasingly larger proportion of married couples. While males are more likely than females to marry non-Jews, the greatly heightened propensity of Jewish women to do so has narrowed the difference between them. Rates of intermarriage are consistently higher among those with lesser socioeconomic achievement, as measured by education, occupation, and income, than among those with greater achievement.

The finding that intensive Jewish education alone has not acted as a bar to intermarriage suggests that the increase in the propensity of Jews to marry non-Jews and to establish mixed families is associated with the nature and quality of contemporary Jewish identity. It was argued that the core of Jewish personal and group identity is distinguished less by “shared beliefs” and more by “shared feelings.” This has led to the development of a Jewish personal identity that is both secure and unambiguous and at the same time is segmented, individualistic, pluralistic, and varied in intensity and salience.

A Jewish identity of this nature can facilitate mixed marriage by permitting Jews to marry non-Jews in the hope or assumption that they will be able to maintain their personal Jewish identity. That is to say, they will not be called upon to surrender part or all of the religious core of their personality or to deny their ethnic heritage (neither will their non-Jewish spouses), and they will be able to transmit that Jewish identity to their offspring. How these hopes and assumptions actually turn out—how Jewish identification fares in conversionary and mixed marriages—constitutes the central focus of this study. In what follows, the key findings relating to it are briefly summarized and linked to our theoretical framework, and their implications for future trends are discussed.

### *Conversionary Marriages*

Overall, Jewish identification fares well in conversionary marriages, or at least as well as in in-marriages, if the identical proportions of both marriage types at each level of Jewish identification are the criterion. Indeed, the Jewish identification of conversionary marriages fares even better when they are denominationally connected: the overall level of Jewish identification among Conservative and Reform conversionary marriages turns out to be higher than that of their respective in-marriages.

However, conversionary marriages do not fare so consistently well in developing an unambiguous Jewish identity. Here denominational differences are decisive. While very few Conservative conversionary marriages result in dual-identity households, nearly a third of Reform conversionary marriages do so.

In sum, these findings indicate that conversion usually leads to the achievement of medium and high levels of Jewish identification, and more often than not brings about a qualitative identity transformation that results in the acquisition of an unambiguous Jewish identity by the convert and the establishment of a

single-identity household. At the same time, the existence of significant proportions of conversionary marrieds who remain at low levels of Jewish identification and those who maintain dual-identity households suggests that conversion “does not always work.” Clearly, there are different types and levels of conversionary marriage, and in differentiating among them, greater attention must be paid to the content and character of the conversion process and its denominational auspices. Similarly, the effect of the actual timing of conversion—whether it takes place before or after marriage, about which we had no data—is an issue meriting further analysis.

### *Mixed Marriages*

Despite the hopes and assumptions, Jewish identification does not fare well in mixed marriages. The overall level of Jewish identification among the overwhelming majority of mixed-marrieds is low and in only one case (Conservative mixed-marrieds) are less than a majority in the low-Jewish-identification category. In all, the data indicate that mixed marriage and the level of Jewish identification are strongly negatively related. So few mixed-marrieds manifest a high level of Jewish identification, and denominational connection makes so little impact in this regard, that mixed marriage must be regarded as a virtual bar to the achievement of a high level of Jewish identification.

Predominantly, Jewish identification in mixed marriages is accompanied by the presence of symbols of Christian identification, resulting in dual-identity households at all levels of Jewish identification. Contrary to what might have been expected, among Reform mixed-marrieds there was clear evidence of a positive relationship between the level of Jewish identification and the incorporation of Christian symbols. That is to say, as the level of Jewish identification rises to medium, so too does the proportion of dual-identity households. This tendency has increased over time and reaches its peak in the younger age groups.

Overall, the chances of a mixed marriage resulting in a single-identity household at any level of Jewish identification are extremely slim, and the chances of it resulting in a single-identity household at a high level of Jewish identification are infinitesimal. Under these circumstances, the likelihood of creating an unambiguous Jewish identity, should such indeed be the intention or the desire, is virtually nil.

Dual-identity households are segmented and pluralist, responding to the individual needs of both partners in an intermarriage and catering to their different if not competing religious and ethnic heritages. The longer-term viability of such marriages and the actual identity resolutions arrived at by the children in these households, the bearers of both traditions, are at present unknown. If the theory of personal identity and of the unambiguous character of Jewish identity elaborated above is correct, then the least likely resolution of all is the development of a new synthesis of Judaism and Christianity, a modern version of the ancient Judeo-

Christians, or Christian-Jews. It is more likely that, over time, choices will have to be made between being either Jewish or Christian or neither. The low level of Jewish identification in these households to begin with, the pull of the majority, and the strength and attraction of common secular and general values do not augur well for the choice of an unambiguous Jewish identity. Rather than meeting the hope of being able to transmit Jewish identity, mixed marriages may prove to be terminal for Jewish identity.

However these choices turn out in the future, one thing is certain. The American Jewish community as we know it, formerly based on a heavy predominance of in-marriage that transmitted an unambiguous Jewish identity—even if the latter was not always strong and was sometimes the source of ambivalence—is rapidly being transformed. The increased rate of mixed marriage has already produced an age cohort under 45 whose marriage profile is very different from that of the cohort over 45. As we have noted, only six in ten of all households under 45 are in-marriages, and about a quarter are dual-identity households.

If the rate of mixed marriage continues to increase and present trends continue, the already low overall level of Jewish identification is likely to fall further, and dual-identity households may eventually rival if not outnumber single-identity households. Unambiguous Jewish identity may become the mark of a minority. Whether such a Jewish community can command the will and resources to support the network of Jewish institutions, causes, and activities within the community, in American society and politics, and abroad, is an open question. But the answer to it will determine the future of American Jewry.

It can be argued that current trends and patterns are neither inexorable nor irreversible and may be influenced by changes in individual attitudes and communal policies. Both individual Jews and communal leaders may take a passive or more active response to the issues. The critical differences between conversionary and mixed-married households are clearly revealed by the data and suggest that a more activist approach to conversion, including conversion after marriage, could have a considerable impact on future developments. By the same token, the ambiguous character of mixed-married households provides opportunities for activist policies aimed at encouraging a degree of identity transformation that might lead to conversion rather than result from it.

Moreover, the quality of Jewish life of the core of the Jewish community—the in-married couples—may be enhanced or diluted as time goes on. Such changes will directly affect the intermarried Jewish population as well. Thus, the strength and viability of the American Jewish community will be affected at least as much by the strength and growth of the most deeply committed Jewish groups as by its success in drawing less committed groups closer to Judaism.

The size of the Jewish population, the vitality of Jewish life, and the future of the American Jewish community all depend on a clear understanding of these phenomena and on appropriate actions taken by individual Jews, scholars, and communal leaders.



## Notes

1. This article provides a more extensive and intensive analysis and theoretical treatment of data originally discussed in Sylvia Barack Fishman, Mordechai Rimor, Gary A. Tobin, and Peter Medding, *Intermarriage and American Jews Today: New Findings and Policy Implications—Summary Report* (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University, Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, 1990).  
In addition, Cohen Center researchers have explored aspects of intermarriage in Research Notes (Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies): Larry Sternberg, *Intermarriage: A First Look* (1988); Mordechai Rimor, *Intermarriage and Conversion: The Case from the Boston Data* (1988); Mordechai Rimor, *Intermarriage and Jewish Identity* (1989); Mordechai Rimor, *Feelings and Reactions to Intermarriage* (1989).
2. Interpersonal relationships in intermarried households are explored in Paul and Rachel Cowan, *Mixed Blessings: Marriage between Jews and Christians* (New York, 1987) and in Susan Weidman Schneider, *Intermarriage: The Challenge of Living with Differences between Christians and Jews* (New York, 1989).
3. Egon Mayer, "Processes and Outcomes in Marriages between Jews and Non-Jews," *American Behavioral Scientist* 23, no. 4 (Mar./Apr. 1980), pp. 487-518.
4. Steven M. Cohen, "Reason for Optimism," in Steven M. Cohen and Charles S. Liebman, *The Quality of Jewish Life: Two Views* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1987), pp. 13-17, 2-27.
5. Sergio DellaPergola and Uziel O. Schmelz, "Demographic Transformations of American Jewry: Marriage and Mixed Marriage in the 1980s," and "American Jewish Marriages: Transformation and Erosion: A Rejoinder to Calvin Goldscheider," in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, vol. 5, ed. Peter Y. Medding (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 169-200, 209-14; at 193.
6. Calvin Goldscheider, "American Jewish Marriages: Erosion or Transformation?" in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, 5, ed. Peter Y. Medding, pp. 201-8, at 204.
7. Calvin Goldscheider, *Jewish Continuity and Change: Emerging Patterns in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 28.
8. Egon Mayer and Carl Sheingold, *Intermarriage and the Jewish Future: A National Study in Summary* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1979); Egon Mayer, *Love and Tradition* (New York, 1985); Goldscheider, *Jewish Continuity and Change*; Steven M. Cohen, *American Assimilation or Jewish Revival?* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).
9. Thus, Goldscheider's sample of the Boston community contained 934 cases, Cohen's study of New York was based on 1,566 cases, and Mayer and Sheingold's sample totaled 446 cases. As will be explained below, the present study includes 6,673 households.
10. The eight studies are as follows: *Jewish Population Study of Greater Baltimore*, prepared for Associated Jewish Charities and Welfare Fund (data collected during 1985), principal investigator: Gary A. Tobin. *Jewish Population Study of Greater Boston*, prepared for the Combined Jewish Philanthropies (data gathered during 1985), principal investigator: Sherry Israel. *Jewish Population Study of MetroWest, New Jersey*,

- prepared for the United Jewish Federation of MetroWest (data gathered during 1985 and 1986), principal investigator: Gary A. Tobin. *Jewish Population Study of Greater Worcester*, prepared for the Worcester Jewish Federation (data gathered during 1986), principal investigator: Gary A. Tobin. *Jewish Population Study of Greater Cleveland*, prepared for the Jewish Community Federation (data gathered during 1987), principal investigator: Ann Schorr. *Jewish Population Study of Rhode Island*, prepared for the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island (data gathered during 1987), principal investigators: Calvin Goldscheider and Sidney Goldstein. *Jewish Population Study of the Bay Area*, prepared for the Jewish Federations of San Francisco, Oakland, and San Jose (data gathered during 1986), principal investigator: Gary A. Tobin. *Jewish Population Study of Greater Dallas*, prepared for the Jewish Federation of Greater Dallas (data gathered during 1988), principal investigator: Gary A. Tobin.
11. Herbert C. Kelman, "The Place of Jewish Identity in the Development of Personal Identity." Working paper prepared for the American Jewish Committee's Colloquium on Jewish Education and Jewish Identity, Nov. 1974, mimeo, pp. 1-3.
  12. The next two sections further develop the theory first propounded in Peter Y. Medding, "Segmented Ethnicity and the New Jewish Politics," in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, 3 ed. Ezra Mendelsohn (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 2-45.
  13. Richard M. Merelman, *Making Something of Ourselves: On Culture and Politics in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 30.
  14. As Ben Halpern puts it, "America is really a Christian country." See the illuminating discussion in his *Jews and Blacks: The Classic American Minorities* (New York, 1971). The citation is on p. 60.
  15. Robert N. Bellah, "Competing Visions of the Role of Religion in American Society," in *Uncivil Religion: Interreligious Hostility in America*, ed. Robert N. Bellah and Frederick E. Greenspahn (New York, 1987), p. 228.
  16. Psychologist Joel Crohn, who has worked in marital counseling and ethnotherapy groups with ethnic and religious intermarriages, reports that "Christian symbols were often perceived by the Jewish partners as unwelcome and even dangerous reminders of the dominance of the Christian world." Some "perceived irreconcilable differences between the Jewish and Christian worlds." One intermarried Jewish subject in such a group, when asked by another group member, "Do you feel like learning about Christianity is somehow betraying who you are—like it's entering the bowels of the demon?" replied, "Yeah. I feel like it's a big betrayal." See Joel Crohn, *Ethnic Identity and Marital Conflict: Jews, Italians and WASPs* (New York: Institute for American Pluralism, American Jewish Committee, 1986), pp. 33, 36.
  17. See Perry London and Barry Chazan, *Psychology and Jewish Identity Education* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1990), p. 9, who cite the theory of Henry Tajfel and John Turner that "feeling positive toward one's group is a major factor in enhancing one's self-image and self-esteem," and that "strong group identity promotes a positive sense of self."
  18. Nathan Glazer, *New Perspectives in American Jewish Sociology* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1987), p. 13.
  19. See Jack Wertheimer, "Recent Trends in American Judaism," *AJYB* 89 (1989), pp. 63-162, for a broad-ranging analysis of denominationalism in American Jewish life. Denominational self-identification in twenty-seven recent community studies ranged

between 70 and 95 percent. In the same communities, between 26 and 84 percent were currently synagogue members.

20. On two cases (higher figures for seder attendance and Hanukkah candle lighting by Conservative in-marrieds than Orthodox in-marrieds and higher synagogue membership among Reform conversionary marrieds than among Conservative conversionary marrieds), the percentage differences are marginal. In the third case (higher levels of ritual performance by Just Jewish conversionary marrieds than by Reform conversionary marrieds), the actual numbers of Just Jewish conversionary marrieds are so small that these results must be treated with caution.
21. See, for example, Mordechai Rimor and Gary A. Tobin, "Jewish Giving Patterns to Jewish and Non-Jewish Philanthropy," in *Faith and Philanthropy in America*, ed. Robert Wuthnow and Virginia A. Hodgkinson (San Francisco, 1990), pp. 13–64.