

ACCOUNTING FOR JEWISH INTERMARRIAGE: AN ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY STUDIES

BERNARD FARBER and LEONARD GORDON

Arizona State University

This paper attempts to codify and interpret social science research dealing with marriages between Jews and non-Jews.

The term *intermarriage* carries with it varying connotations for different people. Generally intermarriage is applied as a synonym for exogamy, that is, marriage in which the husband and wife are members of two different groups. This definition, however, presents two problems in specification. The first problem pertains to criteria of membership, and the second to the time dimension. In Judaism, membership is defined according to three different criteria—being the child of a Jewish mother, profession of Judaism as a religion, and self-identity as a Jew. Most studies of Jewish intermarriage (such as the National Jewish Population Study) accept the weakest criterion—self-identity—as evidence of membership (Massarik and Chenkin, 1973). As for the time dimension, there are three periods by which intermarriage may be defined—childhood upbringing, identity at the time of the marriage ceremony, or self-identity during marital life. Many writers would regard all of these as constituting intermarriages but would then consider the intermarried couples who retained their initial religious identities as having a *mixed marriage* (Vorspan, 1973). For practical purposes, this review will apply a broad definition to intermarriage—that is, the marriage between a person whose self-identity is Jewish in upbringing or at the time of marriage, or both, with one who is not. However, for the sake of clarity, it will depart from some usages and apply the term *mixed marriage* to those couples who continue after marriage to be of different religious identities—one Jewish and the other not (see Rosenthal, 1978: 261; Massarik and Chenkin, 1973: 296-297).

A review of past research on Jewish intermarriage is for practical purposes an accounting procedure. In fact, codifications of social science research findings lend themselves readily to a metaphor of bookkeeping or accounting. Several similarities exist between the two tasks. These include (1) entering specific transactions into a journal, (2) organizing and

abstracting the journal entries under specific ledger rubrics pertaining to income (i.e., factors in producing the social phenomenon) or outlay (i.e., consequences of the phenomenon), (3) preparing a balance sheet of income and expenditures based on ledger rubrics (i.e., describing relationships of items to income and expenditures in relatively abstract ways, such as a propositional inventory or path diagram), and (4) discussion of an overall profit-and-loss statement (i.e., evaluating the corpus of research findings in terms of theoretical and policy implications).

The bookkeeping metaphor permits a clarification of the relationship between codification and theoretical and policy development. That is, codification, like keeping accounts, does not per se yield theory or policy; rather, it enables the social scientist to confront her or his theoretical or policy stance with empirically based propositions. This act of confrontation implies that theory and policy development integrates ideas and values drawn from diverse sources into a conception of how the phenomenon "works" and that, at most, the corpus of findings functions as but one of these sources. Thus, having prepared a profit-and-loss statement, the social scientist asks, "In which way does this corpus of research findings indicate a profit (i.e., support) for a particular theoretical or policy stance or a loss (i.e., lack of support)?"

The organization of this paper follows the procedure dictated by the bookkeeping metaphor. It first presents an accounting of the trends in Jewish intermarriage and a general diagrammatic balance-sheet of the factors in intermarriage. It then turns to the elements in this balance-sheet to produce a particular accounting for what has occurred, and it concludes with a "profit and loss" statement.

TREND ACCOUNTS OF INTERMARRIAGE

Trends in intermarriage with non-Jews have been regarded by some observers as leading to an early demise of the Jewish family. Other observers are more cautious in their assessment. To shed light on these varying assessments, this section is devoted to a discussion of long-term projections of intermarriage as well as a depiction of contemporary trends.

Long-Term Trends in Intermarriage

Over the long run counted in generations, among Jews, each successive generational cohort of descendants from an original cohort of immigrants to the United States tends to intermarry with non-Jews to a greater extent than those of previous generations did. This tendency has been apparent throughout American history. Erich Rosenthal (1978) suggests that historically as each new wave of Jewish immigration is integrated into American society, intermarriage rates rise. The earliest American Jews were the

Sephardim, whose ancestors had been dispersed in the period of the Spanish Inquisition. By 1840, this group was greatly reduced in size because of both intermarriage with Jews from Western Europe and intermarriage with non-Jews. (Celibacy also played an important role in the diminution) (Stern, 1961). The second major wave consisted mainly of German-Jewish families, who began arriving in the decades before the Civil War. Their numbers, too, have declined; apparently "about half of them are no longer identifiable as Jews today" (Rosenthal, 1978). The third and by far the largest wave was made up of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe in the decades between the pogroms around 1880 and World War II. This group's grandchildren and great-grandchildren have now reached marriageable age. Having been exposed more to American popular culture than to traditional Jewish injunctions, they, too, are intermarrying at high rates. A fourth (but minor) flow of immigration occurred among Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany in the 1930s and among the remnant of European survivors of the Holocaust in the late 1940s. Some of the refugees settled in Latin America, from which a small secondary immigration flow occurred. The children of the refugee-survivor generation have now reached adulthood, and indications are that they are intermarrying at rates more similar to those of the first-generation children of earlier immigrants than to those of contemporaries who are grandchildren or great-grandchildren of immigrants. Finally, the fifth and most recent trickle of immigration comes from Israel and the Soviet Union. As the children of this group mature, they may yield still different pictures of paths of social integration in American society. Insofar as the major streams of immigration from oppressed lands have been in large measure diverted from the United States to Israel, it is unlikely that in the foreseeable future American Jewry can count on large groups of migrants to replenish losses sustained through out-marriages, conversions, or simply lapses in identity.

Any reasonable estimate of long-run trends must presuppose that the greater the generational distance between the immigrant generation and its descendants, the greater the probability of intermarriage of those descendants. Yet accurate data for making such an estimate are lacking. As a result, it is necessary to make projections from findings dealing with recent periods of migration. Although it is unlikely that current trends will continue unaltered, an estimate based on present rates of intermarriage will at least permit us to foresee the kinds of problems the Jewish family may face in the next few generations. Research on intermarriage in the past few decades has shown the following:

1. The intermarriage incidence for foreign-born Jews has averaged only about 2%

- (Rosenthal, 1956; Goldstein and Goldschneider, 1966). Where generational cohort is not reported, this figure generally holds for older persons, most of whom are foreign-born (e.g., Axelrod et al., 1967; Fowler et al., 1977).
2. A plausible endogamy estimate for first-generation American-born Jews is about 92%. Actually, the evidence on intermarriage of native-born Jews with foreign-born parents hovers in the range of 7-10% (Rosenthal, 1956; Goldstein and Goldschneider, 1966). In recent studies, members of this generation cohort tend to dominate the 40-60 year category, and the mean intermarriage rate in that group is also around 8% (Farber et al., in press; Axelrod et al., 1967; Fowler et al., 1977; Massarik and Chenkin, 1973: 295).
 3. If the incidence of intermarriage increases at roughly 8% per generation, we expect an endogamy rate of about 84% for persons whose grandparents were immigrants. That figure is fairly close to research findings of community studies; e.g., for grandchildren of immigrants, the results were 87.5% for Providence, Rhode Island (in the 40-59 age range) and 82.1% for Washington, D.C. (Goldstein and Goldschneider, 1966; Rosenthal, 1956). When age is taken as an indicator of generation, the results are consistent with those above. In 1971, most Jewish adults under 35 were at least grandchildren of the foreign-born. The National Jewish Population Study data reveal that "in 1971, 14% of currently married Jewish born adults who were under 35 years of age had non-Jewish born spouses" (Farber et al., in press).
 4. For great-grandchildren of immigrants, the percentage of Jews marrying endogamously is expected to be only about 76% (if we assume an 8% rise in intermarriage per generation). Actually, the research data suggest that this estimate is too low. For example, in Kansas City, the percentages of Jewish persons aged 20-24 (in large part the great-grandchildren generation) who have married non-Jews far exceed the estimate. In 1976, in this age bracket, 70% of the men and 45% of the women have intermarried (Farber, Gordon, and Mayer, 1979) (see also Massarik, 1973: 11). But even if the rate of increase were to remain steady, without replenishment through conversion, within three more generations at most only half of the Jewish youth would marry endogamously.

The percentage of persons marrying endogamously differs, however, from the proportion of endogamous marriages. For every 100 persons, when 50% marry outside the Jewish deme (i.e., a group within which people traditionally marry), there are 50 marriages; but for the remaining 50% who marry within the deme (assuming a sex ratio of 1), there are but 25 marriages, and consequently, only 25% of marriages of Jews are endogamous. From the perspective of the destiny of the Jewish family as an institution, it then makes a crucial difference whether the non-Jewish spouses in intermarriages retain their previous religious identity or convert to Judaism.

Although the projection of a continual decline in endogamous marriages does not imply the disappearance of Judaism from America, it suggests that over the next several generations the role of the family as a carrier of Jewish tradition will change. Insofar as the continuity of the Jewish family will depend increasingly upon converts, the part played by communal organizations and educational institutions can be expected to expand. These

will then overshadow the family as a bearer of Jewish norms and values. The findings on studies of intermarriage, which will be collated in the sections below, can be interpreted as reflecting this crescive shift in the locus of culture bearing from the family to the Jewish communal structure (Lazerwitz, 1981).

Contemporary Trends in Intermarriage

The overall trend of Jewish intermarriage in the United States follows that of other ethnic, religious, and racial groupings. The *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* summarizes national and historical documentation demonstrating that religious and racial intermarriage has been rising more rapidly in recent decades than at any other time in the American experience (Thernstrom et al., 1980). The general growth in intermarriage is reflected among Jewish persons in terms of both interreligious marriages and the much smaller incidence of interracial marriages. National and community-based studies demonstrate that while interreligious marriages are expanding among all Jewish groups, there are marked differences associated with degree of orthodoxy and with demographic, institutional, and social-psychological factors.

The findings of these studies suggest that most Jewish and other persons remain predominantly endogamous with respect to religion, ethnicity (or religio-ethnicity), and race. While this remains the case, there is a clear trend generally (and particularly among younger cohorts) to intermarry. This trend signifies a shift in the religious structure of the United States away from what Greeley (1970) has characterized as "the denominational society." As for interracial marriages, the evidence suggests a continuing low incidence for all religious groups, including Jews (Heer, 1966; Kephart, 1972: 298-301). However, the high involvement of young Jewish persons in civil rights activities (Bell, 1968), Jewish tendency toward liberal attitudes (Heitzman and Reinwach, 1980), and relatively close black-Jewish neighborhood spatial proximity in many communities (Peach, 1980) combine to result in a likely greater degree of black-Jewish intermarriage than for other black-white marriages.

In the changing patterns of Jewish-non-Jewish intermarriages, certain factors weigh heavily. On the one hand are those centrifugal social forces inclining Jewish persons toward higher rates of intermarriage. These include a spatial locational shift westward to newer communities and a dispersion beyond tightknit neighborhoods in older metropolitan areas, a continued shift away from orthodoxy among most young Jewish persons, and increasing educational achievement and occupational careers among Jewish women. On the other hand, centripetal social forces emanating from the mass, impersonal, *gesellschaft* American society may be produc-

ing some return to a "new ethnicity" (Novak, 1979). This latter emergence of stronger informal and formal associational ties suggests a consequence of more intragroup Jewish marriages.

A DIAGRAMMATIC ACCOUNTING

The trends in Jewish intermarriage result from a multitude of pushes and pulls to and from religious endogamy. These pushes and pulls are to be found in both the Jewish and the non-Jewish demes. However, since little systematic research has been undertaken on the factors that lead non-Jews to marry Jews, the accounting for intermarriage in this paper is presented from the perspective of the Jew who intermarries.

The trends toward intermarriage suggest that numerous factors in the larger society as well as in the Jewish community itself operate to break down barriers to religious exogamy, and, in some instances, to create barriers to endogamy. These factors are summarized in the diagrams in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1 depicts the centrifugal influences—the pushes in the society generally and in Jewish institutions in particular that decrease the attractiveness of religious endogamy among many Jews. The diagram starts with generational succession, through which the opportunities for participation in the ongoing stream of economic, social, and political life are actualized. It then proceeds with demographic and ecological factors, trends in religious institutions, and effects of social participation that have lessened the stigma of Jewish intermarriage. The major demographic movement in the United States has been the dispersion of Jews from a few urban centers, mainly in the Northeast, and from residential concentrations within these centers. The most important change in religious institutions has been a decline in Orthodoxy and a concomitant rise in the Conservative and Reform movements, as well as an increasing unaffiliation with any branch of Judaism. Increased social participation by Jews in the American middle class has exposed them to the general trends in marriage and the family current in that socioeconomic stratum. Thus, increases in secular education, in employment of women in white-collar and professional occupations, and in marital instability reflect a movement in family lifestyle toward a standard American conception. This movement is most pronounced among those Jews who are drawn away from participation in institutions identified as having a "Jewish" content.

The push toward intermarriage exerted by movement to the periphery of the Jewish community is complemented by the pull of several ideological factors toward styles of life found in other social worlds. Figure 1 also shows the attractions of alternative cultural values and norms that pull Jews into marriages with non-Jews, including changes in the meaning of family

ties. One significant attraction refers to the growing valuation of individual autonomy and concomitant participation in social movements that promote civil rights. Although participation in these movements does not generally grow out of a disaffection with one's Jewish past, an unintended consequence is its justification (and opportunity) for individual choice in unrestricted mate selection. A second attraction does depend upon disaffection with Judaism, and it refers to the attraction of cults among youths who face difficulties in their transition to adulthood.

In contrast to Figure 1, the diagram in Figure 2 refers to the centripetal influences—the pulls toward religious endogamy among Jews. The figure presents specific centripetal factors that continue to knit the Jewish community together and, in doing so, sustain the norm of religious endogamy. The pull factors consist of those influences concerning continued (1) anti-Semitism and the role of Israel as a "homeland," (2) institutional supports for maintaining a "Jewish" cultural core, and (3) the part played by converts in sustaining group continuity.

The overall trends toward increased intermarriage with generational succession indicate an imbalance in centrifugal over centripetal forces. Such an imbalance, however, is not inevitable. As Nazi Germany has dramatically demonstrated, trends in intermarriage depend for their sustenance upon the political and economic life of the society. Rather, more can be understood about their character at any given time by observing the multitude of pushes and pulls that give them their direction.

FIGURE 1
Centrifugal Influences Toward Increased Intermarriage

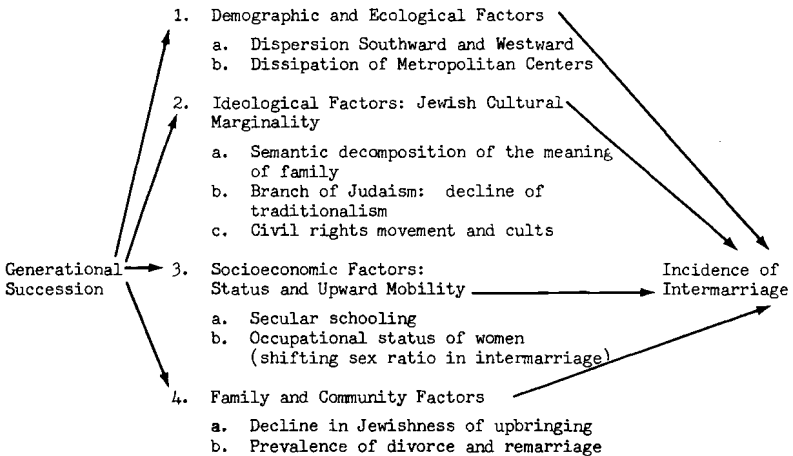
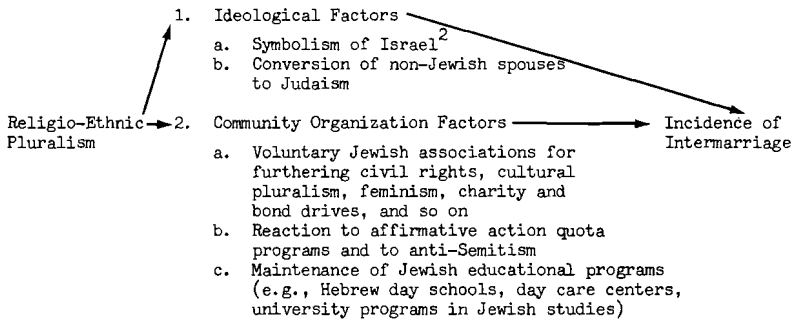


FIGURE 2
Centripetal Influences Toward Maintaining Endogamy¹



¹In addition to the opposites of centrifugal factors.

²Also activities pertaining to reinforcement of Israeli symbols: visits to Israel, contact with relatives who migrated to Israel, Yiddish and Israeli cultural events—theatre, music, dance—and references to Holocaust.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECOLOGICAL ACCOUNTS

The National Jewish Population Study (NJPS) describes the American Jewish population as having a very low birth rate, a high median age, a high median level of education, and a high concentration in urban centers (Massarik and Chenkin, 1973). Unlike the aged household heads (70 or over), of whom only 33% are U.S.-born, 96% under the age of 30 are native Americans. The data draw a numerical portrait of an urbanized deme, well integrated into the American middle-class world. In addition, the NJPS shows that the Jewish population is undergoing a deconcentration in residence, with important consequences for intermarriage.

Residential propinquity is an important variable in marital selection in those societies that permit assortive mating (Hill and Katz, 1958). From this tendency, it is reasonable to suppose that high concentrations of Jewish populations in residential areas would enhance the probability of endogamy and that the degree of dispersion is associated with rates of intermarriage with non-Jews. Indeed, the findings of past studies support this contention:

1. Before 1900, the existing Jewish population in the United States had begun spreading from the Northeast to the East North Central and to the South Atlantic states.
2. In the early decades of the twentieth century, however, immigration from Eastern Europe replenished the Jewish population in the Northeast.
3. Since World War I, there has been a steady redistribution of the Jewish popula-

tion, steadily draining the earlier concentrations. In 1918, about 90% of the Jewish population lived in the Northeast and North Central States, but by 1979 this percentage had dwindled to 70%. According to 1979 estimates, the Jewish population in the South and West had risen from 10% (in 1918) to 30% (*American Jewish Yearbook* 1 [1900]: 623-624; 21 [1919]: 606; 33 [1931]: 276; 65 [1964]: 14; 80 [1980]: 163).

The continual dispersion nationally has been matched by a decline in the concentration of Jews in a few metropolitan communities. For example, in 1967 roughly 60% of the Jewish population in the United States lived in just four metropolitan areas (New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Chicago), but in 1979 these cities held only about half of the Jewish population in America (*American Jewish Yearbook* 69 [1968]: 285-289; 80 [1980]: 164). There has been a steady migration to communities with smaller densities of Jews. But the effect of this dispersion is not uniform: The extent of intermarriage depends in some measure upon the nearness of these smaller communities to metropolitan centers of Jewish concentration. In Iowa, which is situated far from any major center, the intermarriage rates are large. But even there, "while in cities of 10,000 or more, the intermarriage rate was 34.2 percent, it was almost twice as high in towns and rural areas" (Rosenthal, 1963: 51). Similarly, in southern Illinois, among small-town Jews, almost 40% intermarried (Schoenfeld, 1969). By way of contrast, in Indiana "the state's geographic location (contiguous to Chicago and Detroit) influenced the degree of endogamy in that couples with one partner usually residing in Indiana and the other outside the state had the lowest intermarriage rate" (Rosenthal, 1967: 263). Moreover, unlike their southern Illinois counterparts, small-town Jews growing up in up-state New York have a relatively low intermarriage rate (25%) (Rose, 1977: 183). But as the trend toward movement out of cities with large Jewish concentrations continues, Jewish communal institutions lose their cohesive character and Jewish neighborhoods dissipate, so that eventually even the large metropolitan areas will no longer be able to act as a brake upon intermarriage rates unless new forms of intragroup association reverse the pattern evident at the end of the 1970s (see also Peach, 1980).

ACCOUNTING FOR CENTRIFUGAL MOVEMENT: PUSHES FROM "JEWISHNESS"

The acculturation of Jews into American society over successive generations reorients ideas about marriage and family away from traditional Jewish modes and facilitates receptiveness to those current in the dominant groups. This tendency has important implications for trends in intermarriage.

At the present time, in the United States the concept of the family as a

social entity is undergoing a semantic decomposition into its component parts. Traditionally, the definition of the family as a bundle of functions was useful, in part, to social scientists because it reflected the conception held by the general population. It also fit a widely accepted concept of "family" in anthropology (Murdock, 1949; Malinowski, 1956). The family was indeed considered to be the social unit in which sex, reproduction, socialization of children, and household maintenance hung together to create an integrated entity of social relations. For social relationships outside the family to handle these activities was somehow considered illegitimate. Until mid-century, the terms *household formation* and *marriage* were regarded as almost synonymous. Even where there was no marriage ceremony, many states considered household formation as de facto (or "common law") (Foote et al., 1966: 270). The term *marriage* also implied the foundation of a family, which semantically included children and responsibility for their rearing. The bundle of terms forming a semantic unity in the family concept signified also a tight fit in definitions of the components as reciprocal to one another; each component implied the others. The current trend, however, is to separate these phenomena semantically. Sexual relations do not imply marriage, reproduction, or even household formation. Household formation does not imply any of the other functions (or marriage for that matter). These phenomena have gained a semantic autonomy, and each of them is accorded an independence in actualization (cf. Adams, 1960; see also Farber, 1973, on the transition from the "natural family" to the "legal family" model).

The semantic decomposition of the family concept in American society—particularly in the middle-class, emerging generation—produces a changing significance of endogamy among Jews. Increasingly, the choices in mate selection are becoming separated from decisions about how the children will be raised. As time goes on, the injunction of Jewish endogamy is growing more irrelevant to options regarding socialization of children, style of life in the household, or even the stability of the marriage. As a result, the intensive traditional involvement of family in the marriages of offspring is dissolving. With the growing incorporation of Jews into the standard American culture, the family ceases to be the primary vehicle for the transmission of Judaic norms and values.

There are several indicators of heightened participation in the American mainstream. One would expect that each of these indicators would be associated with intermarriage with non-Jews. These include (1) a shift to less traditional branches of Judaism, (2) attainment of high levels of secular schooling, (3) marginality to the Jewish community, and (4) style of life more in accordance with typical non-Jewish families at similar socioeconomic levels.

Branch of Judaism

Without exception, studies of intermarriage report that the degree of orthodoxy of a branch of Judaism is related to the prevalence of endogamous marriages. Those persons raised in Orthodox and Conservative homes are least likely to marry non-Jews, followed by the Reform Jews; and the marginal, unaffiliated Jews show the greatest propensity to marry non-Jews (Lazerwitz and Harrison, 1979: 662). This progression reflects the extent to which each group differentiates itself from the general social milieu—number of non-Jewish friends, degree of opposition to intermarriage, and so on. Most of all it is related to the extent to which intermarriage is stigmatized. Unlike Jews who identify themselves as members of Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform branches, most nonaffiliated Jews remove any stigma from intermarriage (Axelrod et al., 1967; Lazerwitz and Harrison, 1979).

Secular Schooling

In American society, Jews have had an unusually high proportion of both men and women who have gone to college. Massarik and Chenkin (1973: 277) suggest that when the immigrant generation dies out, "the total Jewish (adult) population in the United States should approach the point where . . . more than 60 percent will have graduated college, with a substantial proportion of graduates going on to do postgraduate work." Generally, secular education weakens ethnic group loyalties and involvement (Borhek, 1970; Rosenthal, 1978). Studies of widely diverse Jewish communities indicate that those Jews who have gone to college tend to have a higher prevalence of intermarriage than those with less education do (Rosenthal, 1963; 1978; Farber et al., in press; Cohen, 1977). Yet, not all postgraduate education stimulates intermarriage. Referring to Washington, D.C. data, Rosenthal (1978: 271) suggests that persons with "postgraduate training in . . . 'Jewish' professions (for example, medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, and law) may come from families that are strongly identified with Jewish life." The "Jewish" professions thus seem analogous to the middleman occupations (such as small shopkeepers), which promote, rather than interfere with, ethnic identity (Bonacich and Modell, in press). Still, as a general principle, education past high school is associated with a high prevalence of religious exogamy among Jews.

Marginality to the Jewish Community

Intermarriage with non-Jews can, for practical reasons, be attributed either (1) to personal attraction that overcomes one's general orientation against exogamy or (2) to communal marginality, in which Judaism is

merely a formal label. Most findings indicate that the communal marginality plays a stronger role than personal motives in the prevalence of intermarriage with non-Jews. These findings pertain to (1) the "Jewishness" of the childhood home, and (2) the propensity to date Jews. The National Jewish Population Study (NJPS), undertaken in 1970, provides support for ascribing most intermarriage to family background and dating patterns.

In the NJPS, people were asked the degree to which their upbringing was "Jewish." Of persons who reported that their upbringing had been "strongly Jewish," only 8% married non-Jews; about 18% of those with a "somewhat Jewish" upbringing were exogamous; but fully 33% with "doubtful," "slightly Jewish," or non-Jewish home backgrounds married non-Jews. (Percentages were estimated from Tables 13 and 14 in Massarik and Chenkin, 1973.)

The content of Jewishness in upbringing is suggested by Himmelfarb (1979: 491), who found that "parents are influential because they channel their children into environments which support the socialization received at home." His model "argues that religious parents socialize their children to be religious adults by what they practice in the home ('parents' religious observance') and by encouraging them to obtain extensive religious schooling, to participate actively in Jewish organizations (particularly during college years), and to marry a religious spouse" (Himmelfarb, 1979: 485). Himmelfarb's (1979: 491) "data show that much of the parental effect upon adult religious involvement is indirect through other agents of religious socialization," particularly schooling. Findings on Jewish education, in turn, indicate that the greater the intensity of Jewish education, the less likely the occurrence of intermarriage (Weinberger, 1971: 239 and 243).

The NJPS data on Jewishness of upbringing are augmented by information on dating across religious lines. Virtually all persons who had restricted their dating to Jews (even allowing for a non-Jewish date "once in a while") married Jews (99%); of those who had dated non-Jews "sometimes," about 20% married exogamously; however, of those who reported that they had interdated "a lot," almost half (47%) married non-Jews. These tendencies are related to Jewish upbringing (Cromer, 1974), and they reflect to some extent the persons' perceptions of the opinions held by their parents. Of persons who reported that their parents had not opposed their interdating at all, 34% married non-Jews, whereas those who saw their parents as "strongly opposed" almost invariably married endogamously (97%). (Percentage estimates are derived from Tables 10 and 11 in Massarik and Chenkin, 1973; cf. Mayer, 1980.) However, given the current view of parents that "the grown child is an autonomous individual who must be allowed to make his own decisions and, if necessary, learn

from his own mistakes," even in marital choice, much parental opposition to dating non-Jews may be subliminally subtle or actually suppressed (Cromer, 1974: 164).

The data thus indicate that marginality to Jewish community—in cultural context as well as social isolation—increases a sense of alienation from "Jewishness" and ultimately increases the probability of intermarriage. As expressed by an adolescent being nagged by parents for dating non-Jews exclusively, this alienation is evidenced by a semantic split between one's personal essence and sense of Jewishness (i.e., *Yiddishkeit*) in the statement "I'd like them to understand that they're dealing with people and not just with their religion" (Cromer, 1974: 160).

Marriage: American Style

Marshall Sklare (1971) proposes that many major trends in Jewish family life in the United States have little to do with changes in Jewish values but instead are a reflection of more general currents in American society. The old Yiddish proverb that "as the Christians do, so do the Jews," appears to hold true in modern society as it did in the European *shtetl*. That tendency seems most pronounced among Jews who are drawn into modes of thought and patterns of consumption prevalent in the mass media, colleges and universities, and contacts in work and play. Accordingly, we would anticipate that those Jews who "dance after" the non-Jews in lifestyle are also more prone than the others to intermarry with them.

Since the early 1960s, major trends in lifestyle affecting the American family have included (1) an increase in the prevalence of divorce and remarriage, (2) a dramatic change in the employment and social status of women, and (3) an increase in the proportion of families with few or no children. Each of these has implications for the incidence of intermarriage between Jew and non-Jews.

Remarriage. Traditionally, divorce among Jews has been rare, and even though it has become more prevalent among Jews, its incidence is still lower than that found among non-Jews at similar ages and socioeconomic levels (Farber, 1981). Among divorced Jews, those who remarry are more likely to choose non-Jews than Jews marrying for the first time are. This finding appears in such diverse places as Iowa, Indiana, Washington, D.C., and Chicago (Rosenthal, 1970; 1978; Lazerwitz, 1972). These studies suggest that remarriages are more often formed with little family involvement, simple ceremony and celebration, and a heavily muted optimism. As a result, the chances of exogamy are greater for remarriages than for first marriages (see Cohen, 1971, for comparative data).

Status of Women. The twentieth century has seen a marked increase in the participation of women both in the work force and in the political and social arena. As the proportion of tertiary occupations grew with continued industrialization and urbanization after the close of the nineteenth century, women replaced foreign-born men as a source for recruitment in the expanding economy (Johnson, 1977). By the 1970s, national policies and legal decisions established the principle of sexual equity in labor force participation. These changes have evolved during a period in which educational levels, particularly for Jewish women, have risen dramatically, and a period for which the NJPS data show a high percentage of Jewish women, both married and single, in professional and white-collar occupations. This attainment has fostered a heavy ideological and personal involvement of Jews in the women's movement and has served to alter traditional conceptions of women's roles in family, economy, and politics. This shift in conceptions of role in society has meant, for many Jewish women, a break with past expectations, which valued marrying "a nice Jewish boy" and becoming "a Jewish mother." The transfer from reference groups identified by "Jewishness" to those defined by feminist content implies a transformation in norms governing marital choice, with a consequent rise in the prevalence of intermarriage among Jewish women. This rise portends a change in the ratio of men and women who intermarry, with the incidence of exogamous women approaching that of men. (Supporting data are presented in Farber, Gordon, and Mayer, 1979.)

Summary: Pushes from Jewishness

The continual trend over generations toward intermarriage is accentuated by pushes from the premium placed on "being Jewish." The waning of commitments to Jewish norms and values seems to derive in part from a decline in the meaningfulness of traditional lifestyles in a society characterized by (1) secularism and religious unaffiliation, (2) broad educational opportunities, (3) an open field in courtship and dating, (4) individuated marital choice (particularly upon remarriage), and perhaps most important (5) the changing status of women in contemporary society. In the face of all of these contemporary phenomena, the attraction of a traditional Jewish family lifestyle seems to fade, and the probability of intermarriage rises.

**ACCOUNTING FOR CENTRIFUGAL MOVEMENT:
PULLS TOWARD ALTERNATIVES**

The push from endogamy is complemented by pulls from the non-Jewish community. Some pulls involve a tie to Jewish identity, including Jewish efforts to advance the cause of civil rights of Jews and other minorities.

However, while older Jews tend to work through Jewish organizations to advance civil rights, many younger Jews work in close collaboration with non-Jews.

A second consideration in this section deals with the temptation of cults among Jews who have become disenchanting with their "Jewishness." In the decline of religious observance and synagogue participation, some young Jews have turned to cults to ease their transition from adolescence to adulthood, with a resultant break from their Jewish past and marriage outside the Jewish community.

Civil Rights and Individual Autonomy

The engagement of Jewish persons with non-Jewish persons in intense, goal-oriented interaction is part of the social-psychological preconversion process that leads to increased intermarriage. Such a process was evident in the relatively high Jewish involvement in the civil rights movements of the 1960s (e.g., Lipset, 1968; Lipset and Ladd, 1974; Liebman, 1978). Participation in these movements, however, cut across generations. The activity of older Jewish persons generally occurred within the context of long-established positions and programs of such voluntary Jewish associations as the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith, and the major Jewish coordinating body of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council (Robison, 1951; Joint Program Plan, 1979). As such, the civil rights involvement of most older Jews to increase the intensity of their interaction with other Jews, and insofar as there was an effect on intermarriage it would have been to decrease the rate as postulated in respect to Jewish associational factors in Figure 2.

In contrast to older Jewish participants, many young civil rights activists tended to be isolated from Jewish organizations. Lipset (1968) notes that many protestors in the 1960s civil rights and antiwar demonstrations came from Jewish homes. Similarly, Bell's (1968: 67-68) national study of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) during its high point in the early 1960s suggests that a third to a half of all young white CORE members came from families with a Jewish background.

The civil rights effort stress on attaining individual rights combined with both close black and close white non-Jewish working relationships led to close friendships (Bell, 1968: 147-157). The effect on many young Jews was a preconversion process either away from Jewish identification toward a secular orientation or toward some form of Christian, generally Protestant, religious identification (Goldstein, 1974: 114-123).

Why was such a high proportion of young white civil rights activists Jewish? Studies of this phenomenon do not suggest a general rejection of

their Jewishness based on the kind of self-hate syndrome Lewin (1948), Stonequist (1942), and others found among an earlier generation of Jews in a less hospitable American society. Instead, by the 1960s young Jewish persons generally perceived a positive reception of Jews qua Jews in America and accepted their own identity as Jews (Rothman, 1965). Indeed, it appears that the very nature of their American Jewish socialization inclined many young Jews toward activation in the civil rights movements. Lipset (1968) observed that white activists generally came from upper-middle-class homes with permissive child-rearing practices and that these practices are particularly characteristic of Jews who are disproportionately concentrated in the upper middle class.

The strong socialization to the particular Jewish value tradition based upon a theological justice emphasis, historical diaspora minority status, and a continuing sense of periodic prejudicial exclusion impelled many young Jews into active civil rights roles (Turner and Killian, 1972: 364). In this respect Bell cites the young Jewish motivation in CORE as related to "the influence of the Jewish concern of Judaism with social justice" (149) and the close connection with, not rejection of, parental values. This close connection with parental values is evident in the liberal national voting pattern of Jews during the active civil rights period of the 1960s, a pattern that formed the basis of Jewish organizational support for civil rights (Bookbinder, 1976: 2).

It appears, then, that the involvement of many young Jews in the civil rights movement needs differentiating in terms of aims of consequences. The general motivated aim was not based upon a rejection of Jewish identity. Rather, the young Jewish motivation appeared more to emanate from the values inherent in positive group identification. The latent consequence of such activation led many away from the Jewish community into a set of new, largely non-Jewish, peer relationships. The preconversion effect combined with such young adult socialization processes as extended higher educational training in universities with mostly non-Jewish students and increasing occupational careers in predominantly non-Jewish professional, corporate, or governmental settings.

The Temptations of Cults

In the decades of the 1960s and 1970s American society experienced a number of social strains as a consequence of such developments as assassinations of national leaders, urban race riots, the divisive war in Vietnam, the forced resignation in disgrace of a presidential administration, and the economically depressing effects of the international oil cartel. As in other periods of history, such socially strainful developments resulted in religious cult movements (e.g., Hoffer, 1951; Wallace, 1956; Smelser, 1963).

Although cults differ markedly, they tend to have the common characteristic of offering a new vision of the future with a new religious-faith sanction that is attractive to many young people (Catton, 1957; Feuer, 1969; Lofland, 1979).

Although religious cults are often viewed in prepolitical terms (e.g., Cohn, 1957; Lanternari, 1963), one consequence of cult involvement is a turning from one religious orientation to another. For those persons engaging in such a process, the result is often a premarital conversion process, which becomes part of the Jewish-non-Jewish intermarriage rate. A small minority of young people generally have been attracted to such religious cults of the Unification Church of Sun Myung Moon and the Hare Krishnas. Of this minority, Jewish young persons appear to be relatively more attracted to such groups, just as in the case of young Jewish attraction to civil rights and other social protest movements (Lipset, 1968; Herman, 1980). Indicative of the relatively high attraction of young Jewish persons to the religious cult phenomenon is the estimate that about four times the expected population base rate, or 12%, of the Unification Church's approximately 6,000 members are of Jewish descent (Rice, 1976).

What attracts young Jewish persons to cults? To some extent the attraction appears to be based upon the position of young people generally in modern society, particularly during periods of social strain. Fuere (1968) observes in his *Conflict of Generations* that in the period of life between childhood and maturity ideals and peer relations combine to encourage idealistically critical views of adult institutions and practices. It has long been observed that American society engages in more rapid changes than many adolescents can assimilate readily (Zorbaugh, 1929: 154, 182, 214; Lynd and Lynd, 1937: 482-483). American and other modern societies produce a discontinuity between generations. As Lipset and Bendix (1959: 89) document, most sons at every social class level do not enter the same occupation as their fathers in the United States, Great Britain, and Denmark. Further, as Jewish women extend their educational training and become more career oriented, the mother-daughter generational discontinuity may be in process of becoming even more intense.

The religious characteristics of young people attracted to cults closely parallels the trend among young Jewish persons. Cults tend to attract young people who are less active in church or synagogue membership activity and observance but who are seeking a support system as they move from a state of parental dependency (Spero, 1977: 332-333). In Catton's terms, some young Jewish persons become "seekers," with strong latent religious interests not being satisfied through available, in this case Jewish, channels (1957: 563). In this respect, the inordinant Jewish conversion to non-Jewish religious cults can in good measure be attributed to what Wallace

describes as an effort to join a "revitalization religious movement" in order to construct a more satisfying culture (1956: 265).

Herman (1980) summarizes the combined historical and contemporary social forces that have resulted in a relatively high attraction of young Jewish persons to Christian, Eastern, or other religious cults as a consequence of the following four primary factors: (1) historical Jewish messianic sectarianism stemming from internal and external pressures on Jews, (2) the value consonance of cults with traditional Jewish rationality-mysticism duality, (3) revitalization needs in periods of social strain, and (4) an escape from unpalatable established Jewish or traditional non-Jewish alternatives toward a new exclusive redemptive belief system and rewarding social setting. These factors relate both to the reemergence of religio-ethnic pluralism among Jews in the context of American society and to the even larger attraction of many young Jewish persons to the civil rights movement than to various cults.

ACCOUNTING FOR CENTRIPETAL MOVEMENT

There are points of generic Jewish identification that combine to produce increased intragroup association with consequent restraints on influences tending toward increased intermarriage. Of these the clearest rallying point is the symbolism of Israel, established after the holocaust experience and long years of diaspora persecution and alienation in former homelands (Duker, 1969: 388-389). The data from the National Jewish Population Study of 1971 make clear that whether Jews are in new or old communities, are first-, second-, or third-generation, or hold any other characteristic, a substantial majority identify positively with the viable and secure continuity of Israel (Lazerwitz and Harrison, 1979; Gordon and Mayer, 1980).

Another religio-ethnic rallying point within the Jewish community is a reaction to the proclivity of racial groups to lump Jews with Christian whites in attempts to gain redress of grievances in American society. Perhaps the most cutting national issue in this respect has been that of affirmative action quota programs designed to bring more racial minorities into higher educational programs and desirable occupational positions. Affirmative action as a national policy stems from Title VII, the equal employment opportunity title of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and subsequent presidential orders. This act grew out of the civil rights movement in which an inordinant proportion of white movement participants were Jewish (Bell, 1968; Lipset, 1968).

The affirmative action issue has crystallized much self-identity feeling within the Jewish community. Jewish exclusion from equal treatment and opportunity in American society subsided substantially only after World

War II (e.g., Wirth, 1945; Selznick and Steinberg, 1969). Unlike opportunities for long- or longer-established Episcopalian, Methodist, Irish Catholic, or other mostly Protestant Christian groups, both opportunities and significant higher educational and professional-managerial advances of Jewish persons are a relatively recent phenomenon (Mayer and Sharp, 1962; Lenski, 1963).

The increasing national acceptance of the long-held Jewish communal policy of establishing objective test and performance criteria (Robison, 1951; Gold, 1978) was a primary factor in enabling many young Jewish persons to advance educationally and occupationally. The affirmative action programs, championed by racial minorities, often appeared to be "affirmative discrimination" to Jews, who had so recently advanced into secure socioeconomic positions (Glazer, 1975). In this context, major Jewish community relations organizations such as the American Jewish Committee (AJC) and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) broke with the National Association of Colored People (NAACP), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and other black civil rights organizations on this civil rights strategy.

The Jewish communal reaction to many affirmative action programs as a form of reverse discrimination combines with some substantial continuing sense of anti-Semitism in American society. In the 1971 National Jewish Population Study, 17% of first-generation, 20% of second-generation, and 21% of third-generation American Jews reported having had anti-Semitic experiences (Gordon and Mayer, 1981). The continuing Jewish communal effect is summarized by Rosenberg (1965: 268) who observes that despite a high level of Jewish assimilation:

certain fundamental vestiges remain embedded in the depths of the Jewish psyche. In America, as elsewhere in the long history of their diaspora, psychologically, Jews are still in exile. And as one wit has said, it is often more difficult to get the Exile out of the Jews than to get the Jews out of Exile.

The Jewish communal identification based upon Israeli symbolism and continuing signs of anti-Semitism has been further reinforced by a general rise in manifest ethnic pluralism in American society. What Colburn and Pozzetta (1979), Novak (1979), and other analysts call "the new ethnicity" was first highlighted in Glazer and Moynihan's *Beyond the Melting Pot*, which appeared in 1963. Partly in response to the challenges to their status and relative opportunities as a consequence of the black-led civil rights movement, there has been a resurgence of ethnic identification among members of the white middle class, where most Jews are situated. Levine and Herman (1972: 4) attribute this phenomenon to two interrelated processes: (1) advancement of the economic and political interests of

ethnic, including Jewish religio-ethnic, groups and (2) a consequent reinforcement of cultural, ethnic (including Jewish) identity.

The combination of Israeli symbolism, a continuing sense of some anti-Semitism, a resurgence of general American religio-ethnic pluralism, and related developments has resulted in a Jewish cultural countermovement, which has seen new or renewed growth in Jewish studies programs at universities, expansion of Hebrew day schools, and enlarged membership in Jewish communal organizations (Fein, 1980). Though none of these developments encompasses a direct involvement of most Jewish persons, in combination they serve to constrain the continuing increase in Jewish-non-Jewish marriage rates.

The question of gains or losses to the Jewish community when young Jewish persons marry non-Jewish persons must take into account the rates of conversion to or away from Judaism after marriage. The major Jewish social groupings involved in higher than average intermarriage rates include primarily the limited number attracted to cults, the larger number in social reform movements, and the entire membership of the third and fourth generation. Yet, despite the variety of influences pushing young Jewish persons away from Judaism, the immediate loss to the Jewish community appears limited. Relatively few Jews actually convert to other faiths upon marriage. At the same time, the proportion of conversions to Judaism has been rising. Among older persons, aged 40 or over, the incidence of conversion of the non-Jewish spouse to Judaism is small. But among younger persons, a third to a half of Catholics and Protestants who intermarry do convert to Judaism (Lazerwitz, 1971; Mayer, 1980). This tendency reflects the tenuous ties of these individuals to Christianity prior to their marriage (Mayer, 1980). Hence, though the stigma of intermarriage with Jews seems to be lessening, the value of the endurance of Judaism remains. Given these views, one can expect conversion of non-Jewish spouses to continue at high levels. (See also Lenski, 1963; Goldstein, 1974; NJPS reports; and 1957 U.S. Census report.)

INTERPRETATIONS OF PUSHES AND PULLS IN INTERMARRIAGE

The review of research accounts of Jewish intermarriage is now examined in the light of various interpretations that have been offered by observers. Some interpretations emphasize the importance of the pushes away from Judaism and others the pulls of a world in which Jewishness is at best regarded as irrelevant.

The self-hatred theory set forth by Kurt Lewin, Abram Kardiner (1951), Louis Berman (1968), and others proposes that intermarriage is a reaction against being Jewish. According to this theory, intermarriage arises be-

cause of the self-hatred generated by holding dominant-group views of Jews as a despised people. One avenue of escape is through intermarriage. Although this theory may have been appropriate in explaining intermarriage at other times and places, it is not supported by contemporary research. Most findings in this review point to a lessening of the relevance of Jewishness as a factor in mate selection rather than to a rebellion against a fundamental self-identity.

Actually, from an ironic perspective (Schneider, 1975), one can interpret at least some intermarriages not so much as a reaction against Judaism but as an inadvertent outcome resulting from the pursuit of traditionally Jewish interests. Many of the Jewish advocates of the expansion of civil rights in American society carry through the ideals formulated earlier in their own families of orientation and generally in the Jewish community. The content of civil rights, however includes not only political and economic spheres; it involves personal spheres as well. Involvement in the movements has created many close ties, and marriage across religious lines is a plausible extension of one's civil rights to marital selection.

From a fundamentalist viewpoint, Robert K. Merton (1941) has proposed that intermarriage provides a means for upward social mobility. His position is based on findings pertaining to a greater tendency for minority group men than women to intermarry. In this viewpoint, minorities are seen as having a lower status in society than the dominant group. It assumes a sex difference in means of social mobility; namely, men in a minority group can achieve a relatively high status in the socioeconomic sphere, whereas women move upward socially mainly through marriage. Intermarriage permits the minority-group men to exchange access to their socioeconomic status for access to dominant-group status.

Whereas the Mertonian exchange position may have provided an accurate explanation of intermarriage in previous cohorts, it seems to be of limited usefulness in dealing with contemporary Jewish intermarriage. First, the difference in intermarriage rates between Jewish men and women is disappearing; second, marriage is no longer the primary vehicle for upward social mobility among women. Hence, the status-exchange position has little explanatory value for the recent research reviewed in this paper.

Another interpretation is that Jewish intermarriage is a form of deviant behavior. As such, it is governed by the effects of labeling on social relations; and many problems among intermarried couples derive from this deviant label. Certainly, in the first part of the twentieth century, shortly after the huge immigration wave, Jewish intermarriage was indeed a form of deviant behavior. Only a small minority participated; marital problems were attributed to mixed religious backgrounds, with high divorce rates as evidence. The stigma of intermarriage acted both as a control to prevent interreligious mate selection and as an explanation (and perhaps as a pre-

cipitating factor) for its problems. Even now, that stigma has not entirely dissipated.

Yet, some destigmatization of intermarriage has occurred in the Jewish community. Whereas the traditional norm has been that both spouses must come from Jewish homes, the emerging norms seem to be that intermarriages are acceptable provided that the non-Jewish spouse converts to Judaism. This shift appears to represent an accommodation between conflicting tendencies: the acculturation by successive generations into the economic, political, and social life of the society in opposition to the continued maintenance of Judaism as an enduring religious and ethnic entity.

Still another interpretation concerns the family structure itself. Erich Rosenthal (1978) attributes fluctuations in Jewish intermarriage more to changing functions of the family than to trends in intergroup relationships. He posits three historical family forms in the United States: (1) the preindustrial family, whose structure he identifies as comparable to the Orthodox patriarchal family in Judaism, (2) the companionship family, whose "togetherness [is] supported by homogamy" in social, religious, ethnic, class, and educational background (Rosenthal, 1978: 265), and (3) the personality growth family, where foreground is more important than background—personal fulfillment and sexual equality—and where "familism" is irrelevant as a value. For Rosenthal (1978: 278), "in societies where individualism and democracy are dominant values, intermarriage is bound to occur." As the progeny of each wave of immigrants settles in, the Jewish community tries to take steps to inhibit exogamy. His view is that the steps taken are limited by the type of family organization prevalent at the time. Controls are strongest in the preindustrial family and weakest in the personality growth family. By assuming that a tendency toward intermarriage is a concomitant of the succession of generations of the family in the United States, Rosenthal interprets shifts in the prevalence of Jewish intermarriage as dependent upon family structure.

Let us summarize these interpretations concerning Jewish intermarriage. There is little question that at any time the succession of generations fosters Jewish intermarriage. But beyond that, the interpretations that seem to fit research accounts of Jewish intermarriage vary with the historical character of American social structure. In eras during which religious and ethnic schisms have overshadowed the values of democracy and individualism in determining personal destinies, interpretations based on individual deviance—self-hatred, hypergamy, and rebellion against family and community controls—seem to accord with research findings. However, in eras in which ideals of democracy and individualism have predominated, interpretations of intermarriage as expressions of these ideals appear to be consistent with research accounts—civil rights activities, personal fulfill-

ment, participation in the American "mainstream," and the semantic decomposition of the family as a social concept. This ebb and flow in interpretations of Jewish intermarriage appears to reflect a continuing dialectic between the pulls of special interests—in this case the persistence and welfare of the Jewish community—and the pushes that serve to break down divergent interests (Farber, 1981). Like business cycles, it is this societal dialectic that (at least in part) makes accounting for intermarriage both difficult and important.

NOTES

1. Since the U.S. decennial census does not include religious affiliation, the longitudinal national data base for Jews and for other religious affiliations is limited. The two major national data sources for Jews—the special U.S. census of religion of 1957 (*Current Population Reports*, 1958) and the National Jewish Population Study of 1971 (Massarik and Chenkin, 1973)—provide some baseline and comparative data. The findings in these two national samples (e.g., see Greeley, 1970 on the 1957 sample, and Lazerwitz and Harrison, 1979 on the 1971 sample) parallel those in multiple community studies including those of Sklare and Vosk in Riverton (1957), Rosenthal in Chicago (1960), Goldstein and Goldschneider in Providence (1968), Axelrod et al. (1967) and Fowler (1975) in Boston, and Farber, Gordon, and Mayer in Kansas City (1979), among many others.

2. The Jewish liberal Democratic party vote in the social movement period of the 1960s was 82% for Kennedy in 1960, 90% for Johnson in 1964, and 84% for Humphrey in 1968 (Bookbinder, 1976: 2). Although there has been some erosion of general Jewish political liberalism (Heitzman and Weinrach, 1980: 60), as discussed above in respect to the countermovement of pluralism, the historical general liberal political orientation remained strong in the 1970s. The liberal McGovern secured two-thirds of the Jewish vote in 1972 and Carter three-quarters in 1976 (Bookbinder, 1976: 2).

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David W. Weiss

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Bernhard Frank

ARABS IN ISRAELI FICTION

MenaheM D. Rotshtein

SELF-IDENTIFICATION IN JEWISH SOCIETY

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