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Marshall Sklare Award Lecture, 2017: Beyond Policy: New Directions for Jewish Demography

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Abstract The era of national Jewish demographic studies appears to have ended. The 2013 Pew Portrait of Jewish Americans study is an excellent substitute, but it is an opinion survey and lacks demographic questions important for studying intermarriage. The American Jewish Population Project of the Steinhardt Social Research Institute at the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University is an innovative alternative utilizing meta-analyses of national surveys that include Jews, but these surveys usually include only Jews by religion and do not include questions about Jewish identification and practice. Local Jewish population surveys, once the main source for quantitative research on American Jews, remain a viable alternative, but have become more descriptive and policy-driven than theoretical because the 1990 and 2000-01 National Jewish Population Surveys rendered them redundant for this purpose. Even so, local Jewish population surveys can once again be a fruitful resource for Jewish social research when used to study theoretical questions such as spatiality, suburbanization, and the individual community as a predictive variable in comparative analyses. Some studies have included theoretical topics such as spirituality that have not been utilized for secondary analysis. More theoretical questions (which are nonetheless policy relevant) could be added to future studies, but this will require a culture change on the part of the Jewish communities that sponsor them. In the meantime, we should look to qualitative research to break new ground and develop new perspectives that will become so compelling that they will be examined quantitatively in future local studies.

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A recent issue of *Contemporary Jewry* was devoted to an assessment of local Jewish population surveys (Hartman 2016).[1] While there were many disagreements about the biases and advantages of different sampling strategies, there was general agreement that local Jewish population surveys are, first and foremost, for planning and policy. Why else would Jewish organizations sponsor them? I made this same point 30 years ago (Phillips 1985), as did demographer Ira M. Sheskin a decade later (Sheskin 1994). The association between Jewish demography and communal planning and policy goes back a century. The pioneers in Jewish statistical research in Germany wanted to prove that so-called "Jewish traits" (such as Jewish criminality) were not racially intrinsic to Jews as a race or a "*volk*," but were explained rather by the social and economic conditions imposed on Jews (Hart 2000, 2016). When a group of lay leaders of the New York Jewish community wanted to persuade their peers to support a study of New York Jewry in 1925, they asked these rhetorical questions: "Do you believe it to be desirable that the Jewish community of Greater New York should at this time think in terms of 1930 and 1935 in planning its communal activities? … Jewish Greater New York today differs radically from that of 1905 or 1915 … What is the present trend? What will be the situation in ten years? Where shall we build hospitals, Jewish educational centres [sic], orphan asylums and other institutions?" (Goldsmith 1928, iii). Contemporary Jewish demographers in the United States have long made the case for the importance of local community demographic studies as a basis for communal planning, myself included (Phillips 1985; Sheskin 1994). Sheskin and sociologist Steven M. Cohen recently responded to a critic of local Jewish population studies (Levine 2015) by emphasizing that such population studies "…are specifically designed to address policy issues. In designing the studies, community lay and professional leaders articulate the most pressing policy needs of their communities and are intimately involved in shaping and designing the tailor-made questionnaires for their communities." They proceed to describe a dozen detailed examples of how demographic studies have been used by Jewish federations. Such studies have led to the discovery of more than five hundred thousand Jews living in poverty or near poverty in New York. They have prompted a drive to gain permission from the state of Florida to add more nursing home beds. They have analyzed the cost barriers to participation in Jewish life. And they have guided decisions about where and whether to relocate Jewish institutions. Researchers Leonard Saxe and Fern Chertok of the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University similarly argue for "developing knowledge to drive policy"(Saxe and Chertok 2013). Two projects have combined multiple local studies to produce policy recommendations. Camp Works: The Long-Term Impact of Jewish Overnight Camp, a 2011 project sponsored by the Foundation for Jewish Camp, used 25 local studies conducted between 2000 and 2008 to examine "the impact of Jewish summer camp." (Cohen, Miller, Sheskin, and Torr 2011). Laurence Kolter-Berkowitz, director of the Berman Jewish DataBank, and Chaim Adler, a pioneering researcher in the sociology of education (2016), used 11 local studies to examine the relationships among income,

[1] These articles can be accessed at http://jewishdatabank.org/Studies/community%20studies%20articles.cfm.

Jewish connections, and affordability in the decision to send a child to Jewish day school.

It is self-evident that Jewish population studies must be primarily for planning and policy, but I am troubled that they are now seen as useful primarily, and even exclusively, for policy research at the expense of larger theoretical investigations. I use "theoretical" here in the simplest sense of asking larger analytical questions by which to frame our understanding of American Jewry. Sheskin, who has conducted more than 40 local Jewish population surveys, seemingly rejects the inclusion of theoretical questions in local Jewish population surveys: He writes, "… local study questionnaires are not (and should not be) designed to ask questions about national issues that have little local application" (2013, 84). Sheskin points to fertility as an example of a national issue, by which he means a theoretical question, since there is a large literature in demography that seeks to explain patterns of fertility.

The heavy emphasis on the planning and policy uses of Jewish demography is a departure from a century of quantitative Jewish social research. The impetus for these early statistical studies of Jews in Germany at the beginning of the 19th century was applied or policy-driven in the sense that the researchers sought to prove to non-Jews (and to themselves) that Jews were normal, but they were rigorous in their analyses and willing to test their propositions objectively (Hart 2016). Indeed, the credibility of their argument rested on the methodological scrupulousness of their research. In addition to providing an answer to the "Jewish question," they were interested in bringing the new statistical tools of social science to bear on the quest for a broader understanding of Jews. Jewish demography in the United States similarly built academic research on the scaffolding of applied research. In addition to providing data about where Jews lived, the 1925 *Jewish Communal Survey of Greater New York* included a detailed analysis of the leading causes of death among New York Jews compared to those among non-Jewish whites. This was some early and serious demography. In 1943, *Jewish Social Studies* published a special volume on Jewish demographic studies, emphasizing their usefulness both for communal planning and for a larger understanding of American Jewry (Robison 1943). In that issue, for example, Henry J. Meyer, a professor of sociology at the University of Michigan, used the census schedules from the 1935 Census of Population and Unemployment to provide the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit with information about the impact of the Depression on Detroit's Jewry (Meyer 1943). In an article about his research, Meyer extensively analyzed the occupational and geographical distribution of the Jewish population in Detroit as compared with the general population. Three years earlier, he had written an academic monograph on the economic structure of Detroit's Jewry that was published by what was then called the Jewish Welfare Federation of Detroit (Meyer 1940). In 1968, demographers Sidney Goldstein and Calvin Goldscheider (both winners of the Marshall Sklare Award) used the 1964 population survey, *The Greater Providence Jewish Community*, to write their classic book, *Jewish Americans: Three Generations in a Jewish Community* (Goldstein and Goldscheider 1968), in which they analyzed such issues as migration, fertility, and generational change. The 1980s saw the publication of three important books using data from local studies. Steven M. Cohen's *American Modernity and Jewish Identity* (1983)

analyzed the 1965 and 1975 population studies of Boston to look at changes in Jewish identification over time. In the mid-1980s Calvin Goldscheider and Steven M. Cohen introduced what they called the "transformationist" perspective on American Jewry. The essence of this perspective is that the long-established "assimilationist" interpretations of American Jewry as assimilating were too simple. Instead, they proposed that American Jewry was changing without necessarily disappearing. As Cohen, for example, explained with regard to intermarriage, "Assimilationists see intermarriage as frequently implying the cessation of ties with Jewish life; transformationists are more sanguine about Jewish continuity after intermarriage." (Cohen, 1988, p. 26) Both Goldscheider and Cohen used local Jewish population surveys to advance their "transformationist" position, Goldscheider (1986) using the 1975 Boston Jewish population survey and Cohen (1988) using the 1981 New York Jewish population survey.The *American Jewish Year Book* has also published substantial scholarly articles using Jewish demographic studies, both national (e.g., Goldstein 1992) and local (e.g., Ritterband and Cohen 1984; Phillips 1986):

The 1990 *National Jewish Population Survey* (NJPS) was promoted for its usefulness as a resource for planning:

> Changes in size, composition and distribution, as well as in the patterns and levels of births and deaths, have tremendous significance at on both the local and national levels. The demographic structure of the Jewish community also greatly affects its social, cultural and religious viability, whether judged by the composition or by the population density necessary to support an educational system, to organize religious life or to ensure a sense of community. Knowledge of demographic factors is also clearly essential in order to plan whether a community should provide certain services, where facilities should be located, how they should be staffed and who should bear the funding burden. (Goldstein and Huberman 1988, 1)

In addition to planning questions, the 1990 NJPS contained enough theory-driven and demographic questions to produce more than a dozen academic articles and six monographs (see Appendix I). The 2000-2001 *National Jewish Population Survey* also produced academic publications (See Appendix II), although not as many as the 1990 NJPS. This was likely prompted by methodological questions raised about the 2000 *National Jewish Population Study* (Kadushin, Phillips, and Saxe 2006). Most of the recent research using national and local Jewish population studies and other surveys is heavily tilted toward policy. Much of it is published as research reports outside of peer-reviewed publications in order to get the information to decision makers more quickly and in a more accessible form. This is certainly true for studies of intermarriage (e.g., Cohen 2006; Chertok et al. 2008; Sasson et al. 2015). The impact of migration on Jewish communal engagement combined the 2000-2001 NJPS with nine local Jewish population surveys (Groeneman and Smith 2009). The survey was also published online because its audience was made up of federation leaders, not demographers, and because the Jewish Federations of North America commissioned the study.

Up until 2011, I generally agreed that national/theoretical questions were not needed in local studies because the *National Jewish Population Survey* in 1900 and 2000-01 addressed national issues (both applied and theoretical). In 2011, the Jewish Federations of North America announced it would no longer fund national Jewish population surveys, apparently because they would not be sufficiently useful for federations. As Joe Berkofsky, a spokesman for the Jewish Federations of North America, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, "NJPS was very useful for the Jewish community at large, but given limited resources, we decided to focus on research that would directly benefit federations" (Heilman 2011). Two other organizations stepped in to do some of the work that the Jewish Federations of North America had abandoned. The American Jewish Population Project of the Steinhardt Social Research Institute at the Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University has done extensive meta-analyses of national surveys that identified Jews by religion to produce Jewish population estimates (Tighe et al. 2010; Saxe and Tighe 2013) and to produce demographic profiles based on questions asked in those studies (Saxe et al. 2007). The studies used by Saxe and Tighe for their meta-analysis are limited for the understanding of American Jewry. These studies identify Jews using a question on religion and thus exclude Jews who identify as "no religion." They are also studies of national issues and not of Jews. As such they do not have questions about Jewish attitudes, Jewish identity, Jewish engagement, or Jewish background experiences. The 2013 study *A Portrait of Jewish Americans* conducted by the Pew Research Center (Pew Research Center 2013) in many ways stood in for the *National Jewish Population Survey* that didn't happen. The Pew study is excellent—a valuable resource for Jewish social science research. Its application to Jewish demographical research is limited because it is a religion survey, part of a larger research program. For example, it did not ask respondents about their marital history, which limits its usefulness as a demographic study of intermarriage (Qian and Lichter 2007). It also did not ask about the education of a respondent's spouse, which eliminates the possibility of using it to study educational homogamy within Jewish intermarriages (Mare 1991; Kalmijn 1998).[2]

There will be no more national Jewish population surveys in the foreseeable future, and the Jewish community cannot rely on the Pew Research Center to take on this responsibility on its behalf, so is it time to think about bringing back national and/or theoretical questions into local studies? I think it is, because national questions such as those of fertility, migration, and the Jewish identification of adults who grew up in intermarriages will impact local communities. I don't think it will happen anytime soon, because this tradition has been dormant for too long, and local communities, which are hard-pressed for funds as it is, will rightfully ask why this should be their responsibility. In the meantime, I offer three research programs for bringing theory back into local studies: (1) looking at existing studies through a theoretical lens, (2) identifying local studies that have included theoretical questions, and (3) looking to qualitative research to explore issues that may

[2] The strengths and limitations of the Pew study for the study of intermarriage are discussed in depth in Phillips (2018).

(should) eventually become part of local studies (or possibly of another Pew survey).

Looking at Jewish Population Surveys Through the Lens of Theory

Much is to be gained when Jewish population surveys are examined from the perspective of larger theoretical questions rather than from the perspective of policy only. By theory, I mean putting Jewish social research in the context of larger social processes taking place in American society. My own experience has taught me that thinking about Jewish population studies through a comparative theoretical perspective has enhanced my understanding of American Jewry. Here, I highlight three examples in which Jewish demography is enhanced by incorporating theoretical perspectives: intermarriage, mixed-race studies, and spatiality.

Intermarriage

I start with the work of Joel Perlmann, a leading scholar on race, immigration, and the census, who has fortunately contributed his expertise to our small field. Following the release of the 1990 *National Jewish Population Survey*, Steven M. Cohen argued that the reported intermarriage rate of 52% was too high in light of the fact that "…people who were raised as gentiles, provided they had one Jewish parent, are counted as Jews and their marriage to (another) gentile is counted as a Jewish-gentile intermarriage." (Cohen 1994, 89). In my 1997 study, *Re-examining Intermarriage: Trends, Textures, and Strategies*, I argued that studies of the intermarriage rate should differentiate between Jews with two Jewish parents and Jews with one Jewish parent. I showed that the intermarriage rate for the latter group was consistently high and then went on to explain the controversial figure of 52%. This distinction never caught on. Thus, the 2000-2001 NJPS repeated Cohen's critique of the 1990 NJPS, explaining that the rate of 52% was made on the basis of "…including non-Jews who had been born to at least one Jewish parent and were raised in a non-Jewish religion. (Kotler-Berkowitz et al. 2003, 16). The debate about intermarriage remained fixed on the question of "who is a Jew?" I think the reason my approach never gained any traction is because I was not sure how to articulate that distinction in an established conceptual framework. Perlmann, an expert on race, ethnicity, and the U.S. Census solved that problem. In a carefully considered methodological comparison of the 2000–2001 NJPS and the *American Jewish Identification Survey* (Mayer, Kosmin, and Keysar 2001), Perlmann noted that both surveys allowed for individuals to identify as Jewish outside of religion by including questions on Jewish parents and on whether respondents considered themselves to be Jewish. He observed that this conceptual approach was similar to that of the census:

> In this sense, it operates rather like the United States Census ancestry question: "With which ancestry group or groups do you identify?" Or, rather, the

> question is actually closer to the Hispanic origin question in the census, since it focuses the respondent's attention on one particular ancestry (Hispanic origin in one case, Jewish origin in the other) and asks whether the respondent identifies with those origins (Perlmann 2007a, 10).

Unlike the more general census question on ancestry, the census question on Hispanic ancestry directly parallels the NJPS question by focusing on a particular ancestry. In an era of a rising rate of intermarriage, Jews, like Hispanics, have the option of not claiming their ancestry:

> Most Hispanic immigration is of recent years, and it stands to reason that few who have [a] Hispanic immigrant parent fail to declare themselves [as being] of Hispanic origin. On the other hand, there are also many people who have a Mexican-born ancestor much farther back in the family tree and some fraction of these people surely respond that they are not of Hispanic origin. (Perlmann 2007b, 16).

Inspired by Perlmann's work, I adapted the census terminology and began referring to persons with two Jewish parents as "Jews of single ancestry," and Jews with one Jewish parent (or even just a Jewish grandparent) as "Jews of mixed ancestry." I then looked at how demographers study interracial marriage and found that they face the same decisions without getting bogged down in parallel discussions about whether or not biracial persons are black or white or Asian or white. Using Perlmann's distinction between mixed-ancestry and single-ancestry Jews, I found that in both the 2000–2001 NJPS and the 1990 NJPS the rate of intermarriage among single-ancestry Jews had leveled off. The overall rate of intermarriage had risen because of what demographers call a compositional effect: The proportion of mixed-ancestry Jews (who overwhelmingly marry non-Jews) had increased, leading to an increase in the overall rate of intermarriage (Phillips 2013; Phillips 2018). The concern about intermarriage in the Jewish community is not misplaced, as this is arguably the most significant change taking place in the American Jewish population, and looking at Jewish intermarriage in a larger context can only deepen our understanding. Let's start with the rate of intermarriage. The consensus in Jewish communal discourse is that the rate of Jewish intermarriage is high, but on what basis? In comparison with the mid-20th century, this is true. It's also true if we think about the impact of intermarriage on the Jewish community. The increasing number of Jewish children with a non-Jewish parent comprises more than half of all children in Jewish households (Phillips 2018). But, if we look at Jewish intermarriage using Michael J. Rosenfeld's comparative intermarriage rate (2008), it turns out that, when controlling for group size, Jews out-marry less than Asians and Hispanics, and intermarriage among American Jews is actually lower than it ought to be, given the small size of the Jewish population and the privileged position Jews hold in American society (Phillips 2013). Jewish social scientists (myself included) have framed their discussion of intermarriage in the context of assimilation theory, which is also called "Jewish continuity" in policy circles (Tennenbaum 2000). By contrast, Rosenfeld and Kim (2005) and Rosenfeld 2009) links the rise of interracial unions with the increase in same-sex unions and non-

marital unions. All three are explained by the independent life stage that began in the post-1960 era:

> The independent life stage is typified by delayed union formation, post-secondary education, urban residence, geographic mobility of young adults, and non-coresidence with parents. We note that the rise of the independent life stage in the post-1960 era corresponds temporally to the rise in alternative unions in the United States (Rosenfeld and Kim 2005).

If we take Rosenfeld's research seriously, this means that intermarriage for Jews cannot be understood as a straight-line act of assimilation, but rather as part of larger processes taking place in American society. The conceptual work of sociologist Matthijs Kalmijn (1998) has further influenced how I look at intermarriage. In what is arguably the most influential recent work on intermarriage (Rosenfeld and Kim 2005), Kalmijn argues that intergroup marriage is influenced by three different sets of factors: the extent of preference for the group; demographic constraints (such as the size and geographic distribution of the group); and third-party influences, such as anti-miscegenation laws, parental disapproval, and the refusal of clergy to perform the wedding ceremony. Applying Kalmijn's conceptual framework to intermarriage among American Jews in a forthcoming article for the *American Jewish Year Book,* I found that Jews are a preferred group (because of both their Jewish identity and their high educational attainment) with few constraints on their marital prospects. In contrast to influences on other groups (Rosenfeld and Kim 2005), it is third-party influences, such as those of the partially subsidized trips to Israel for young adults sponsored by Taglit-Birthright Israel, that have had the greatest impact on Jewish marital choices (Saxe et al. 2011). Learning from these perspectives, I have concluded that Jewish social scientists should no longer find it surprising that Jews marry non-Jews. Rather than seeing intermarriage as a deviation from the norms of the first half of the 20th century, social scientists (and policy analysts) concerned with the contemporary Jewish community should understand that Jewish in-marriage is exceptional in the larger American context.

Mixed Race

A major theme in American Jewish discourse about intermarriage is its long-range impact; in the popular Jewish press, this comes down to the question, "Will your grandchildren be Jewish?" This theme apparently emerged from the discussion of the 52% rate of intermarriage in the 1990 NJPS. Antony Gordon and Richard M. Horowitz (1996) produced a widely reproduced chart based on the 1990 NJPS that predicted an American Jewry consisting almost entirely of ultra-Orthodox Jews two generations hence. Most recently, Steven M. Cohen (2016) took a similarly dim, if less dramatic view: "Are the grandchildren of inter-group marriages likely to be raised as Jewish, let alone as committed Jews? Unfortunately, the news is still quite disheartening." I have contributed to this discourse as well (Phillips 2005a, 2005b), because the long-range impact of intermarriage is crucial for Jewish planning and policy and especially for rabbinical seminaries and congregational movements.

A corollary question to that of the long-range impact of intermarriage is the Jewish identity of the children of intermarriage. I first looked at this question almost two decades ago from the perspective of the strength of these children's Jewish identity based on the 1990 NJPS (Phillips 1998). Three recent studies on the children of intermarriage have been even more policy-focused than my earlier research. Researcher Pearl Beck (2005) conducted interviews with 90 adult children of intermarriage with the goal of answering this question: "What can be done to strengthen and promote attachment to Jewish life among the children of the intermarried?" (6). Working with the 2000 NJPS, two other social researchers. Benjamin T. Phillips and Fran Chertok (2004), explored Jewish identity among the adult children of intermarriage with the goal of answering these questions: "What do they look like when they grow up? How connected and involved are they in Jewish individual and communal life? To what extent do Jewish education, home life and social networks impact on their Jewish identities as adults?" (1-2). Most recently, research scientist Ted Sasson and his colleagues at the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (Sasson et al. 2015) used the Taglit-Birthright Israel data to address a similar set of policy questions:

1. How were the childhood and college experiences of children of intermarriage similar to and different from [those of] their counterparts who were raised by two Jewish parents?
2. What are the factors in the backgrounds of children of intermarriage that make them more or less involved in Jewish life as young adults?
3. What are the policy levers available to Jewish organizations to increase the likelihood that children of intermarriage will grow into committed Jewish adults? (5)

I have taken a different approach by researching Jews of mixed ancestry in the context of the newly developing field of mixed-race studies. One of the pioneers in this field is, once again, Joel Perlmann (2002). Prior to Census 2000, Americans could choose only one race, although, prior to 1930, the census included a "mulatto" classification to be determined by the census taker. In part because of political pressure from multiracial persons (DaCosta 2007), the U.S. Census Bureau began exploring the question of asking respondents about belonging to "more than one race." They pretested a new question about race in 1996. In response to increasing rates of interracial marriage, qualitative research on multiraciality had appeared by the early 1990s (Root 1992, 1996). The introduction of the "more than one race" question in Census 2000 accelerated the new field of "mixed race" studies (e.g., Rockquemore and Brunsma 2002, 2004, 2008; Brunsma 2006). Guided by the emerging literature on multiraciality, I have been interviewing adult children of Jewish intermarriages for the past five years along with Dawn Kepler, founding director of Building Jewish Bridges in Northern California. Our approach is to understand how Jews of mixed parentage, like biracial and multiracial persons, construct and understand their own identities. We began this project by studying and borrowing from the research on multiraciality, which is not policy-driven. We expect that our research will have important policy implications, and we have

already identified some. Because our focus is on how Jews of mixed-ancestry construct their identities in their own terms, we are coming up with unexpected findings that ultimately will lead to new ideas about policy.

Spatiality and Local Jewish Population Surveys

The Berman Jewish DataBank (www.Jewishdatabank.org) archives hundreds of datasets for local Jewish population surveys going back to 1978; this archive must represent the combined investment of many millions of dollars. The datasets are carefully curated by Dr. Ron Miller, a senior research consultant at the data bank, and they are easily accessible. They have not been used much post-1990 because national studies better represent American Jewry than does any individual local population survey. Thinking about these many studies in larger theoretical contexts, however, brings exciting possibilities to life. Ira Sheskin created a "Decade 2000" data set consisting of 22 communities[3] which he and Harriet Hartman used to examine the impact of individual community characteristics on Jewish identity (Hartman and Ira Sheskin 2011). I have applied the concepts of the "ethnoburb" (Li 2009) and "spatial assimilation" (Alba et al. 1999) as new ways to understand Jewish suburbs in Los Angeles and Chicago (Phillips 2008, 2016). In another project, I analyzed 13 local datasets to compare the spatial patterns of in-married and intermarried Jews in five metropolitan areas over time (Phillips 2014). In his classic 1972 essay, "Jews, Ethnics, and the American City," in *Commentary,* Marshall Sklare theorized about the relationship between American Jews and American cities. With a reference to a different work by Sklare, Stuart Schoenberg has organized a diverse group of researchers to produce a volume tentatively titled *Jewish Identity on the Urban Frontier*. My contribution will be to look at the persistence of Jewish "inner-ring" suburbs" (the older, more populous communities of metropolitan areas) in a variety of communities in the Berman Jewish DataBank. The recent literature on suburbia has given special attention to inner-ring suburbs (Hanlon 2010), which are also known as "first-ring suburbs" (Puentes and Warren 2006). A consistent theme in this literature has been the decline of inner-ring suburbs (Hanlon 2009). In this context, affluent Jewish inner-ring suburbs, such as Encino and Highland Park in Los Angeles, can be understood as a kind of Jewish residential exceptionalism. Unlike non-Hispanic whites with the means to do so, Jews have not moved to the new outer suburbs (Katz and Lang 2003), to exurbs (Lang 2003), or to "boomburbs" (Lang and LeFurgy 2009). Social ethnographer Samuel C. Heilman (1995), among others, is highly critical of suburbs for their dissolution of Judaism and their role in assimilation. The persistence of Jewish inner-ring suburbs suggests that the link between suburbanization and Jewish assimilation is more nuanced than generally perceived.

[3] Sheskin has since been expanded this to 28 Jewish communities in a "Century 21" data set.

Alan Cooperman, the director of religion research at Pew who conceived and directed the research center's *A Portrait of Jewish Americans*, has also emphasized the importance of placing the study of Jews in a larger context (2016):

> Even if your primary interest is Jewish continuity, focusing your research solely on Jews is a mistake, both for conceptual and practical reasons. Conceptually, looking at Jews in isolation makes it harder to spot the ways in which Jews are a lot like other members of your community and the ways in which Jews may truly be different.

My own predilection for studying Jews in a theoretical perspective comes from Marshall Sklare, who was my teacher, my mentor, my dissertation adviser, and my friend. Sklare's first book, *Conservative Judaism: An American Religious Movement* (1955), drew on the sociological concept of the "ethnic church." His second book, *The Jews: Social Patterns of an American Group* (1958), which arguably created the field of Jewish sociology, was organized around sociological rubrics, such as demography, family and kinship, political behavior, religion, social mobility, occupations, and intergroup relations. As if seeing into the 21st century, Sklare included an article on the persistence and boundaries of Jewish identity as seen in Hebrew Christians. The classic and still influential Lakeville study of suburban Chicago Jews, which Sklare co-authored with Joseph Greenbaum and Benjamin B. Ringer (1967), came directly out of the American tradition represented by *Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture*, Robert Staughton Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd's 1929 sociological case studies of Muncie, Indiana.

Identifying Existing Questions for Secondary Analysis

Some local studies, even if they are policy-driven, contain questions of theoretical interest. The Berman Jewish DataBank has a search engine for question topics. I found 155 questions on spirituality listed in various surveys. To my knowledge, no one has published anything on this topic based on these studies. Perhaps the Berman Jewish DataBank might put out a guide to interesting questions in existing studies. As an avid user of the Berman Jewish DataBank, I would volunteer for such a project. I am currently identifying studies in the Data bank that have questions on Jewish background and intermarriage for a book I am working on with Arnie Dashefsky (for the ASSJ Book Series, Studies of Jews in Society). I would also encourage researchers who are conducting local studies to indicate which questions they think have theoretical importance and which can be used in an academic article. My 2004 *San Francisco Jewish Community Study*, for example, included questions on social networks, echoing Claude S. Fischer's work in *To Dwell Among Friends: Personal Networks in Town and City* (1982). If investigators added such information to the overviews found at the Berman Jewish DataBank website, other researchers could possibly get some ideas for future research more quickly than poring over the material in the data bank's Jewish Survey Question Bank.

Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Research

I would also encourage qualitative and quantitative researchers to be in closer dialogue. Jewish social science is a small field, and many of us already know each other. Noted feminist ethnographer, Debra R. Kaufman, moved some of us in this direction when she challenged us to write our demographic narratives (Kaufman 2014). Those of us who do survey research should be looking to the work of our qualitative–research colleagues for ideas. Conversely, qualitative researchers may seek to explore ambiguous findings in surveys. Sociologist Mary Waters (1990) was curious as to why the same respondents interviewed in different years for the *Current Population Survey* reported different ancestries, so she proceeded to do in-depth, qualitative interviews about how and why people construct their ethnic identities after first asking them how they would answer the ancestry question on the census. One of the options chosen by respondents in the 2000-2001 NJPS and in Pew's *A Portrait of Jewish Americans* study was to identify as being "partly Jewish." In my current qualitative-research study interviewing Jews of mixed ancestry, I ask my interviewees if they ever use this term to describe themselves and how they feel about it. Survey research in the popular press has more status than does qualitative research (at least, that's what gets covered), because it is perceived as more authoritative. Conversely, as Herbert J. Gans has pointed out (1977), it is often qualitative research that breaks new ground in the social sciences. Even though Steven M. Cohen has conducted dozens of surveys, one of his most influential works, *The Jew Within: Self, Family, and Community in America*, which he co-authored with Arnold M. Eisen, was based largely on qualitative-research interviews (Cohen and Eisen 2000). Many of the best questions in my 1977 national survey *Re-examining Intermarriage* (Phillips 1997) came from a year of in-depth qualitative-research interviews with intermarried couples. Research expert Bethamie Horowitz's influential 2000 survey, *Connections and Journeys* (Horowitz 2003), which contributed questions to both the 2000-01 NJPS and the much discussed study by the Pew Research Center, *A Portrait of Jewish Americans* (Pew Research Center 2013), was preceded by intensive qualitative research. Psychologist Kurt Lewin made this point many years ago, "There's nothing so practical as a good theory" (Lewin 1951). I expect that some of the innovative qualitative research presently under way will raise new questions and suggest new ways of thinking about current issues. As a result, some local Jewish communities may want to explore the findings of qualitative research in their local surveys.

In the meantime, local Jewish population surveys should include additional interviews with non-Jewish spouses, who constitute half of the decision makers in intermarried families. If it were not obvious already, author Jennifer Thompson's recent study of intermarried couples demonstrates that non-Jewish spouses play an equal, and sometimes more important, role than Jewish spouses in the religious life of the family (Thompson 2014). I interviewed non-Jewish spouses of intermarried Jews from the 1990 NJPS in 1995. I found that the non-Jewish spouses were less likely than their Jewish husbands or wives to report that they were raising their children as Jews. I also found that the respondents' answers for religion of spouse

were sometimes different from how their spouses answered this question for themselves when they were interviewed two years later. Jewish population surveys depend upon respondents providing information about their non-Jewish husbands and wives. Given the importance of intermarriage on the Jewish communal agenda, would it not be better to hear from the non-Jewish spouses directly? I'm sure there are other national or theoretical issues that would prove equally useful both for policy studies and for basic research.

My own sense is that this is an auspicious time for bringing theory back to demography. Jewish communities (Los Angeles is the lone exception here) continue to do population studies that are almost all methodologically sound and consistent with each other for comparison purposes and for aggregating studies, as Hartman and Sheskin have done (2011). We also have a new generation of young social researchers who are studying Jewish demography and asking novel and compelling questions about the nature of our field (Berman 2009; Kravel-Tovi and Moore 2016). I look forward to future conversations between generations of researchers and among the fields of social science. I am confident that both the Association for the Social Scientific Study of Jewry, and our journal, *Contemporary Jewry*, will be at the center of these conversations.

Appendix I: Publications Using NJPS 1990

Articles

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