

In the Footsteps of Ruth: A Sociological Analysis of Converts to Judaism in America

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Although the subject of conversion has been a major theme in the social scientific study of religion for years, research on the subject is characterized by a number of important lacunae, which the present paper seeks to identify and begin to fill.

First, and perhaps most importantly, Judaism has not been a proselytizing religion since the ascendancy of Christianity in the fifth century, C.E. Therefore, the social science literature dealing with conversion has focused exclusively on conversion within a Christian context, and more recently, within the context of the study of new religious movements, which became popular in the West in the early 1970s. The study of conversion to Judaism is notable by its absence from the corpus of general social science literature dealing with conversion.

In the rare cases where modern scholarship has focused on conversion to Judaism, the approach has been almost exclusively historical or rabbinic in orientation (Seltzer, 1988; Eichorn, 1965). This paper contends that the lack of social science attention to conversions to Judaism, has resulted in a somewhat skewed understanding of the conversion phenomenon in general.

In a seminal analysis of the existing body of conversion research literature, James T. Richardson (1985) describes the two prevailing paradigms in accounting for conversion: the "active" and the "passive". The paradigm that has prevailed in much of the traditional literature on conversion, suggests Richardson, is the "Pauline experience" associated with the New Testament story of the conversion of Paul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. In this paradigm, conversion is the result of a cognitive/emotional breakthrough brought on by an experience over which the "convert" has no control (hence its designation as the "passive" paradigm). The Pauline experience is also seen as a single life-changing event, which has the once-and-for-all result of replacing an old self with a new.

"In sum", writes Richardson, "this prototypical experience is psychological, deterministic and assumes a passive subject." It might be added that the "passive" paradigm is also highly individualistic. It ignores the social psychological insights of George Herbert Mead (1934) and more recently of Peter L. Berger (1967) who have argued that the maintenance of human identity in general and of religious identity in particular is dependent upon both the cognitive support of a meaningful "plausibility structure" that the individual internalizes, and the social support of a reference group that reinforces the beliefs, choices and lifestyle of the individual.

A significant shift in the traditional paradigm occurred sometime in the mid-1960s, marked most notably by the studies of Lofland and Stark (1965) of the

Unification Church. Subsequently, other research began to focus attention on what Balch and Taylor (1976) call "the role of the seeker" in searching out the cognitive components of a new belief system as well as in establishing links with the reference group that would support the seeker in his or her emerging new choice. Indeed, Lofland and Skonovd (1981) delineate eight different role dispositions or "seeking strategies" reflected in the motifs of personal conversion accounts. These motifs reveal the variety of ways in which individuals play an "active" role in becoming converts to a new religion.

Despite the striking differences between the two paradigms, Richardson's analysis fails to take note of one very important similarity between them: both see conversion as a process and/or a condition that is fundamentally related to, or characteristic of, an individual's relationship to a new faith and its community or church. Whether in the context of Christianity or in the context of new religious movements, both the "passive" and the "active" paradigm sees conversion as a process that brings the individual into a new relationship with a large, *secondary group*. The conversion is seen as an event that brings the *individual* into a new relationship with his or her chosen *community of faith*. The desire to establish that relationship is assumed to be the principal object of the conversion.

Curiously, none of the studies, and neither of the two paradigms have focused on the role of the *primary groups* in either facilitating conversion or supporting the lifestyle choice of converts. To be more precise, no consideration has been given to a model of conversion in which the convert's relationship to the larger faith community is both stimulated and reinforced by more intimate, primary group ties, namely family ties.

The Research Problem

The point of departure for analyzing conversion to Judaism is more appropriately the model of the Biblical figure of Ruth, the Moabitess, than that of Paul. The Biblical legend, placed by historians in the Age of Judges (circa 969 BCE), recounts the story of a couple from Bethlehem, Naomi and Elimelech, who travel into the land of the Moabites because there is a famine in their own land. There they raise two sons who marry Moabite women, one named Ruth, the other named Orpah. In time Naomi's husband and two sons die, leaving her with only her daughters-in-law as relatives. Naomi decides to return to the land of her people and suggests to her daughters-in-law that they, too, return to their fathers' houses. It is then that Ruth utters to her mother-in-law, Naomi, the famous words: "Where you go I shall go, your people will be my people, your God will be my God and where you die there I shall lie down also".

The story of Ruth portrays a model of religious conversion that has little to do with either the ecstasy of divine revelation or with a gradual, purposive quest for a new religious identity. Rather, Ruth's conversion seems to emerge out of a profound human bond born of a family relationship. Ruth's desire to make Naomi's people her own people and Naomi's God her own God is connected to a deep attachment of Ruth to Naomi herself, and, perhaps, an attachment to the memory of her dead

husband. Ruth is neither a "passive" agent of some mysterious spiritual force nor an "active" spiritual seeker who wants to break away from the norms of the Moabites. Rather, she is a loving widow/daughter-in-law who wants to retain the intimacy of her family bonds. She appears to choose "conversion" as a way of securing those bonds.

In point of fact, then, the classical model of conversion into Judaism suggests an alternate paradigm altogether. Where the two paradigms described by Richardson would seem to be both *ego-centered*, the paradigm suggested by the story of Ruth appears to be *family-centered*. It appears to be motivated by a desire to keep the family system intact.

In the contemporary American Jewish context, series of studies of intermarriage by Mayer et al. (1979, 1983, 1987, 1989) have shown that marriage between Jews and Gentiles results in the conversion of the non-Jewish spouse to Judaism in about 25-30% of cases. Moreover, these studies have shown that about 95% of all conversions to Judaism occur within the context of intermarriage. Furthermore, these studies have shown that the Jewish partners in intermarriage convert out much less frequently, in fewer than 5% of the cases.

These findings suggest that, at least in the case of conversion to Judaism, the existing paradigms that account for conversion have failed to take into account the role of the family, particularly husband-wife relationships, as either the precondition for conversion or as the social matrix within which a newly acquired Jewish identity is supported.

It might be noted parenthetically that Hoge et al. (1981) have also found that conversions into and out of Catholicism occur overwhelmingly within the context of intermarriage. Yet, conversion research has not taken into account the dynamics of intermarriage in either of the paradigms.

The purpose of the present research is to begin to fill this gap in conversion research in general and in the study of conversions to Judaism in particular.

The study seeks to demonstrate that:

- (a) Conversion is, indeed, a significant feature of modern American Jewish life, particularly in the context of marriage between Jews and Gentiles;
- (b) Conversion results from certain family relationships that appear to be quite independent of the personal psychological dispositions of the persons involved; and
- (c) The "Jewishness" of the convert appears to be more a point along a continuum of becoming Jewish, rather than a sharp point that demarcates Jew from non-Jew fully; converts are just like born-Jews on the specifically religious dimensions of Jewishness, but fall somewhere between born-Jews and Gentiles on the social-cultural dimensions of Jewishness.

It should be noted that the authors are well aware of the highly politicized climate of opinion surrounding this issue, particularly in the State of Israel. It is not the purpose of this study to enter the religio-political debate concerning the well-known question of "Who is a Jew?". Rather, the study intends to by-pass that debate and focus instead on the subjective perceptions of respondents in objective surveys, regarding their demographic characteristics, lifestyle choices and social attitudes.

The Data

The data for this study are derived from the archives of the North American Jewish Data Bank, a facility at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, which has become the depository of local Jewish community demographic surveys that are conducted periodically by local Jewish Federations throughout the United States. In the present study, which represents an instance of secondary analysis, the data were compiled from general purpose demographic surveys conducted between 1981-87 in ten Jewish communities as listed in Table 1.

TABLE 1. SIZE AND SOURCE OF SAMPLE - HOUSEHOLDS

City	Date	Household includes a:				
		Convert	Born-Jewish couple	Gentile	Total	Percent
Total		398	9,356	996	10,750	100.0
Boston	1985	16	1,074	154	1,244	11.6
Chicago	1981	35	897	28	960	8.9
Cleveland	1987	31	537	92	660	6.1
Denver	1981	48	422	125	595	5.5
Houston	1985	56	336	117	509	4.7
Miami	1982	28	909	40	977	9.1
New York	1981	67	2,945	240	3,252	30.3
Palm Beach	1987	25	675	50	750	7.0
Philadelphia	1984	28	1,070	11	1,109	10.3
Phoenix	1983	64	491	139	694	6.5

In short, the sample includes 398 households with at least one person converted to Judaism, that is people who reported that they were not born or raised as Jews but became Jewish by conversion; 9,356 households who reported that they included only people born and/or raised as Jews; and 996 households who reported that they included at least one person neither born nor raised as Jews and not now Jewish. With but few isolated exceptions all of this last group were currently married to a born and/or raised Jewish spouse.

The criteria for inclusion in the present composite sample were: available information about whether conversion had taken place, or, if born Jewish, whether both parents were Jewish or the respondent was raised Jewish. Cases were excluded where there was not sufficient information about conversion, or how respondent was raised.

Table 1 shows that out of the total population of American "Jewish" households in the mid-1980s (defined as households in which there is at least one adult Jew over the age of 18), 3.7% of the adults were converts to Judaism, 9.3% were not Jewish in mixed marriage households, and 87% of all adults were Jewish. Put another way, out of all the households in which there was an adult present who was not born and/or raised as a Jew (13%), a little over 28% included a convert. Since with but rare exceptions all those households involved a marriage between a person who was born and/or raised as a Jew and a spouse who was not, we estimate that 28% of all

intermarriages involve the conversion of the non-Jewish spouse to Judaism. These will be referred to below as "conversionary" households or families. The remaining 72% intermarriages which do not involve the conversion of the Gentile spouse will be referred to as "mixed" households or families.

As can be seen below, 95% of converts were married, at least at some point in their lives. Therefore the study does not address the question of factors that might stimulate the conversion of singles to Judaism (largely because there are just too few cases to warrant analysis).

Who Converts

A first step in addressing the question of why people convert to Judaism is to examine the question of who converts. The salient characteristics of converts, and their comparison with born Jews and non-Jews is provided in Table 2.

TABLE 2. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF CONVERTS, BORN-JEWS AND GENTILES IN JEWISH HOUSEHOLDS

Characteristic	Converts	Born-Jews	Gentiles
Total	398	9,356	996
Sex			
Male	22.5	42.1	41.9
Female	77.5	57.9	58.1
Age			
Mean	41	48	39
Median	37	47	36
Marital status (percent)			
Ever married	95.5	79.8	98.4
Single	4.5	20.2	1.6
Education (percent)			
< 4 years of college	47.6	46.6	48.6
4 years of college	33.2	30.7	30.3
MA degree	10.3	13.2	10.2
PhD or equivalent	8.9	9.5	10.8
Occupation (percent)			
Full time	44.9	46.4	61.2
Part time	14.7	12.0	8.3
Housewife	23.3	14.1	15.5
Retired/other	17.1	27.5	15.0
Dual career (percent)			
Yes	47.7	41.6	54.4
No	52.3	58.4	45.6
Generation in US (percent)			
Foreign-born	3.5	10.0	7.2
US-born	10.8	35.7	12.3
Parent(s) US-born	85.8	54.3	80.5
Number of children (percent)			
None	29.2	18.1	43.0
One	20.1	20.4	19.4
Two	30.7	37.1	23.2
Three or more	20.1	24.4	14.3
Income, US\$ (ever-married only)			
Mean	51,683	50,965	47,495

Table 2 shows that converts, in contrast to Gentiles married to Jews, are much more likely to be women, not in full-time employment. In subsequent tables it will be seen that converts are more likely to come from a non-Catholic religious background and are also more likely to have been previously married to a Jew.

Since the subsamples of single converts and Gentiles do not lend themselves to analysis due to a lack of enough cases, the remaining analysis focuses upon households and married individuals. Each table will carry a legend indicating whether the analysis is of individuals or households.

As a next step in accounting for conversion, Tables 3 and 4 examine the relationship between intermarriage and age on the one hand and conversion and age on the other.

TABLE 3. COMPOSITION OF HOUSEHOLD, BY AGE OF CONVERT, GENTILE OR BORN-JEWISH RESPONDENT (PERCENT)

	Up to 34	35-45	46-60	61 or more	N	%
Total n.	1,643	2,149	2,425	2,406	8,623	100.0
%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Household includes a:						
Convert	7.5	6.8	2.3	1.9	371	4.3
Gentile	23.8	15.3	5.7	3.3	938	10.9
Born-Jewish couple	68.7	77.9	92.0	94.8	7,314	84.8

Table 3 shows the rising rate of intermarriage among American Jews, particularly in the age cohorts under 45, as well as the rising rate of conversion over-all. Only about 5% of the respondents over the age of 60 were in a marriage with a spouse who was not born or raised Jewish. On the other hand, 31% of the respondents under the age of 35 were in such marriages. The table also suggests that the rate of conversion in intermarriages has climbed slightly, but not nearly as rapidly or steeply as the rate of intermarriage itself.

TABLE 4. PERCENT OF CONVERTS AND GENTILES IN INTERMARRIAGES, BY AGE

	Up to 34	35-45	46-60	61 or more	N	%
Total n.	514	476	194	125	1,309	100.0
%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Convert	23.9	30.9	28.4	36.8	371	28.3
Gentile	76.1	69.1	71.6	63.2	938	71.1

Table 4 looks more closely at the incidence of conversion in intermarriage by age. It offers no conclusion as to the relationship between age and conversion. Conversion appears to be somewhat less common among those under 35 than those who are older. But Mayer (1987) has shown elsewhere that at least a third of conversions in intermarriages occur some years after the marriage. Therefore it would seem that the lower incidence of conversion among those under 35 is simply a

reflection of conversion delayed rather than conversion foregone. Thus, Table 4 leads one to conclude that the proportion of intermarriages resulting in the conversion of the Gentile partner to Judaism has remained fairly constant, between 25-30% in the last generation.

Further clues about the role of background characteristics in stimulating conversion are offered in Table 5, which examines the religious backgrounds of converts and Gentiles in the sample. This table suggests that conversion is slightly more likely to occur if a person was born into a family with a Jewish father; also more likely to occur among those from a Protestant rather than a Catholic background; and more likely among those who were previously also married to a Jewish partner.

TABLE 5. THE RELIGIOUS BACKGROUNDS OF CONVERTS AND GENTILES (PERCENT)

Characteristics	Converts	Gentiles
Parents' religion		
Father Jewish	7.9	5.6
Neither parent Jewish	92.1	94.4
Raised as		
Catholic	19.1	23.6
Protestant	24.3	17.1
None	9.2	6.3
Other/not Jewish ^a	47.4	53.1
Current religion		
Catholic	-	20.4
Protestant	0.3	13.1
Jewish	90.2	9.0
None	1.0	18.4
Other/not Jewish ^a	1.5	37.1
Religion of spouse		
Catholic	-	0.1
Protestant	-	-
Jewish	99.4	94.9
None	0.6	4.4
Other/not Jewish ^a	-	0.6
Religion of previous spouse		
Jewish	32.3	9.0
Gentile	67.7	91.0

a. In several of the cities respondents were not asked to specify religion but only whether they were Jewish.

Accounting for Conversion

Having examined the sociodemographic profile of converts in comparison with born-Jews and Gentiles, it is now possible to attempt to account for conversions, albeit within the limitations of the available data.

The questions suggested by these apparent associations is how important they are by themselves, when other factors are controlled and how much of the probability of conversion do they explain altogether. In short, how well do they account for the

incidence of conversion to Judaism. These questions are addressed below in a series of regression equations.

Conversion treated as an outcome (dependent) variable was entered (using pairwise missing-value treatment) into a series of regression equations that treated the following as independent variables: (1) age, (2) sex, (3) education, (4) immigrant generational status, (5) number of children, (6) employment status of household, that is, whether one or more adults were in full-time employment, (7) income/number of full-time earners, (8) religion of parents (Jewish or non-Jewish father), (9) proportion of close friends Jewish, (10) whether raised as Catholic, (11) Protestant or (12) with no religion (10, 11 and 12 are dummy variables using other religion as a baseline).

TABLE 6. REGRESSION OF CONVERSION ON ELEVEN INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Independent variables	b	Beta	Significance
Age	.003	.134	.009
Sex	.168	.183	.001
Education	.013	.041	.358
Generation in US	.092	.138	.002
Dual-income	-.003	-.003	.984
Income/earners	.000	.116	.007
Parents' religion	.047	.111	.357
Percentage of close Jewish friends	.144	.269	.001
Number of children	.040	.114	.007
Raised without a religion	.185	.043	.411
Raised Catholic	-.263	-.109	.157
Raised Protestant	.205	.079	.347
Constant	-.901		
Adjusted R ²	.15		
N	546		

Table 6 summarizes the *b* and the standardized *beta* weight values, the level of significance of each element in the regression and the adjusted total R^2 of all the independent variables taken together. Table 6 shows that only 6 out of the twelve independent variables produce a statistically significant amount of change in the probability of conversion. It also shows that, taken together the eleven independent variables explain only 15% of the variance in the probability of conversion. Therefore, the available data leave a vast gap in the understanding of the factors that determine conversion into Judaism. Nevertheless, those factors that proved significant suggest that structural factors within the family, such as gender, occupational pattern of husband and wife, the presence of children and the composition of an intermarried couple's friendship network do play a role in whether conversion occurs or not.

Previous research by Mayer (1987) has also pointed to a series of other relational factors, such as the relative religiosity of the families of origin of husband and wife, and the relative socioeconomic status of the families of origin of the spouses as having a notable impact upon the likelihood of conversion. However, the nature of the available data in the present study did not permit a confirmation or disconfirmation of those findings.

The relatively small amount of variance explained by the available data further suggests the need for much more refined research into the structural as well as cultural and social-psychological factors that determine conversion.

In the final section that follows, this paper seeks to address the question of the impact of conversion upon religious identity, or more specifically upon Jewish identity. This question is raised because in most studies of conversion it is assumed that once a person has converted they are totally transformed (or else their conversion is assumed suspect or they are deemed to be "backsliders"). This paper suggests that such a model of conversion is ideologically loaded in favor of a highly exclusivist notion of identity; a model that may favor one religious concept over another, but which has no universal validity and may bear little resemblance to the psychological reality of religious identity change.

How Are Converts Jewish

In the remaining section the paper focuses on the ways that converts express their sense of Jewishness and compares them with respondents who were born or raised Jewish, with Gentiles married to Jews and with people who indicate that they "feel" or "think of themselves" as Jews, but were not formally converted to Judaism.

As a first step in this process Table 7 examines selected Jewish religious practices among converts, born-Jews, Gentiles, and a small subsample of Gentiles who indicated that they think of themselves as Jews (are married to Jews) but have not converted.

TABLE 7. SELECTED JEWISH RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AMONG CONVERTS, BORN-JEWS AND GENTILES IN JEWISH HOUSEHOLDS (PERCENT)*

Selected practices	Converts	Born-Jews	Gentiles
N	388	9,169	952
Attend Passover Seder	92.1	92.2	64.0
Light Hannukah candles	87.1	85.8	57.9
Light Sabbath candles	43.5	43.7	9.2
Keep Sabbath ^b	8.3	14.6	3.5
Keep kosher	11.8	29.0	3.2
Observe Yom Kippur	69.3	73.5	41.5
Have mezzuzah on door	73.2	81.5	27.0
Overall number of rituals			
None	21.8	11.6	38.5
1-2	12.2	14.0	32.2
3-5	57.9	53.9	28.4
6-7	7.1	20.3	0.9

a. Information based on reported practices of household, not of person alone.

b. "Keeping the Sabbath" was defined as refraining from driving a car or handling money on the Sabbath.

Of the seven Jewish "religious practices" Passover and Hannukah clearly enjoy the greatest popularity. As measured by these practices converts are indistinguishable from those who are born or raised as Jews. These two practices also enjoy a high degree of popularity among Gentiles married to Jews. The observance of Yom Kippur, generally accomplished by attendance at synagogue services also shows a

TABLE 8. SYNAGOGUE AFFILIATION AND ATTENDANCE AMONG CONVERTS, BORN-JEWS AND GENTILES IN JEWISH HOUSEHOLDS (PERCENT)

	Converts	Born-Jews	Gentiles
Synagogue affiliation			
Yes	52.5	56.7	13.7
No	47.5	43.3	86.3
Frequency of attendance			
Never	23.3	15.2	57.0
High Holidays/few times a year	50.6	57.0	38.2
Once a month	7.5	9.9	2.5
More than once a month/weekly	17.8	14.4	2.2
More than once a week	0.8	3.5	-

high degree of similarity between converts and born-Jews, and is found among over 40% of Gentiles. Two observances that most clearly demarcate both converts and born-Jews from Gentiles is the lighting of candles on Friday night in marking the Sabbath, and having a mezzuzah on one's doorpost. Converts and born-Jews are also highly similar in their religious affiliations, as shown in Table 8.

It should also be pointed out that the great majority of conversions to Judaism occur under Reform or Conservative auspices, which have more liberal standards toward religious practice than Orthodox or traditional Judaism in general. Therefore any differences in the religious practices of converts and born-Jews are more likely to be the result of denominational differences within Judaism than the result of differences between converts and born-Jews. Put more simply, it may be argued on the basis of Table 8 that converts, indeed, are just like those who are born or raised as Jews. This conclusion would lend support to the notion that conversion does, in fact, transform the religious identity of the person entirely.

The point about the denominational preferences of converts is further borne out by Table 9.

TABLE 9. JEWISH DENOMINATIONAL IDENTIFICATION AMONG CONVERTS, BORN-JEWS AND GENTILES IN JEWISH HOUSEHOLDS (PERCENT)

Denominations	Converts	Born-Jews	Gentiles
Orthodox	5.9	8.6	2.3
Conservative	30.1	40.7	14.0
Reform	52.6	33.4	42.4
Secular	8.4	13.7	34.0
Other	3.1	3.5	7.0

However, quite apart from religious practices, synagogue affiliation and denominational preferences, Judaism is comprised also of ethnic-cultural memberships, feelings, memories and especially of childrearing objectives (viz. a Jew is a person who desires to raise his or her children as Jews). To what extent converts absorb these dimensions of Jewishness is the question addressed by Tables 10 and 11.

Table 10 shows that at least on two items that are proxies here for the ethnic-cultural dimension of Jewish identification: belonging to a Jewish organization and having visited Israel at least once—converts appear to differ more sharply from born-Jews than they do on any of the religious practices. While these two items may reflect

TABLE 10. JEWISH ASSOCIATIONAL IDENTIFICATION AMONG CONVERTS, BORN-JEWS AND GENTILES IN JEWISH HOUSEHOLDS (PERCENT)

Expressions of associational identification	Converts	Born-Jews	Gentiles
Contributed to Jewish charity	69.2	73.6	44.9
Contributed to secular charity	73.9	69.9	77.2
% to Jewish charity out of total contribution:			
None	15.5	17.1	22.2
Less than 25%	13.1	5.8	22.7
25-50%	14.9	12.6	19.2
50-75%	17.0	13.5	7.6
75-100%	39.5	50.9	29.3
Visited Israel			
Yes	27.8	45.3	16.8
No	72.2	54.7	83.2
Percentage of friends Jewish			
None	6.8	2.0	18.3
Less than half	26.1	7.9	40.3
About half	44.4	37.6	28.7
More than half	22.7	52.4	12.6
Belong to Jewish organization			
Yes	38.7	59.6	16.2
No	61.3	43.1	83.8
Read Jewish newspaper/magazine			
Yes	52.2	49.3	24.2
No	47.8	50.7	75.8

differences resulting from factors other than conversion, until better data are available to shed light on the subject, it remains suggestive of the hypothesis that converts to Judaism have a keener sense of identity as Jews along the religious dimension than along the ethnic-cultural dimension. This point is further strengthened by differences that the table reveals concerning Jewish friendship networks.

Converts fall somewhere between born-Jews and Gentiles on the measure of what percentage of their closest friends are Jewish. While more than half the born-Jews report that the majority of their closest friends are Jewish, only about 23% of the converts report such a densely Jewish friendship network. Thus, conversion does not seem to have integrated most converts into a Jewish friendship network as fully as it integrated them into the synagogue and religious practices of Judaism.

On the other hand, the table also shows that converts contribute to Jewish charities at a level very nearly (if somewhat lower) that of born-Jews and they read Jewish newspapers and magazines at a level that is even greater than born-Jews. Thus, it would seem that at least along some dimensions of identification converts do, indeed, become just like born-Jews.

At the same time, this table along with the previous ones hints at the fact that there exists a small sub-population of Gentiles-married-to-Jews who practice, affiliate and identify as Jews even though they have not converted. Whether this group represents some transitional stage before conversion or a pattern of identification *sui generis* will remain to be examined in future research.

Table 11 shows a curious discrepancy between converts and born-Jews in the proportion in which they give their children a Jewish education. It appears, at least in the very first part of the table that converts are much more likely than born-Jews to give their children a Jewish education. Part of this discrepancy is explained by the relatively older age of the born-Jewish (non-intermarried) respondents. When the sample is controlled by age, selecting only those under 60—who are most likely to be currently raising children—the discrepancy diminishes greatly. Nevertheless, it remains the case that converts appear to be more likely than born-Jews to provide their children with formal Jewish education. One probable reason for this is that a great many born-Jews see their own Jewishness as ethnic-cultural and therefore a quality that is transmitted naturally in the home and not by way of formal education.

TABLE 11. JEWISH EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN OF CONVERTS, BORN-JEWS AND GENTILES IN JEWISH HOUSEHOLDS (PERCENT)

	Converts	Born-Jews	Gentiles
Provide Jewish education			
Yes	50.0	31.6	19.3
No	50.0	69.0	80.7
Provide Jewish education (age less than 6)			
Yes	54.4	42.4	20.7
No	45.7	57.6	79.3
Children raised as*			
Jewish	88.9	93.7	47.7
Catholic	-	-	-
Protestant	1.5	0.2	5.0
None	5.9	2.8	24.6
Other/not Jewish ^b	3.7	3.0	17.6

a. This question was asked only in a few of the surveys.

b. In several of the cities respondents were not asked to specify their religion but only whether or not they were Jewish.

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