

## **Boston Study Question Did Not Bias Results**

As the principal researchers who conducted the recently released Boston Jewish community study, we appreciate the comments by opinion writers Steven M. Cohen, Jack Ukeles and Ron Miller regarding our finding that the majority of children in intermarried homes are being raised as Jews (“Read Boston Study on Intermarriage With Caution,” December 8). We concur that there are likely other communities that have had similar success as Boston, but we take issue with the view that our question may have resulted in a bias.

Our colleagues suggest that because we did not ask directly whether parents were raising their children “Jewish and something else,” our conclusions are inaccurate. In fact, our question — that asked parents to identify in which “religion” that they are raising their children and allowed for multiple responses — creates a more stringent criterion for Jewish identification. In contrast, Ukeles and Miller ask about childrearing only in terms of Jewish identification, not religion, in their studies of Jewish communities.

Evidence that our question did not bias the results is provided by our respondents’ description of the Jewish education their children are receiving. Children of in-married and intermarried families are just as likely to receive formal Jewish education. (Children of intermarried parents are, however, less likely to continue after bar mitzvah.)

Cohen and his colleagues encourage those who read the Boston findings to interpret them with caution. In general, that is a good prescription for dealing with social science. In the case of the Boston study, we hope that the quantitative findings do not divert attention from efforts to understand how to engage Jews of all backgrounds.

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