SHIFTING BOUNDARIES:
TRENDS IN RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL HOMOGAMY[*]

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I assess whether intermarriage between Protestants and Catholics has increased over the course of the twentieth century and, if it has, whether the declining salience of religious boundaries has been accompanied by a rising importance of educational boundaries in spouse selection. By analyzing a set of national surveys that were conducted between 1955 and 1989 and using a research design that separates the effects of period and duration of marriage, I examine changes over a longer period of time than any previous study has done. Multivariate loglinear analyses show that intermarriage between Protestants and Catholics has increased dramatically since the 1920s, while intermarriage between different educational groups has decreased. Currently, the social boundaries that separate educational groups seem to be stronger than the boundaries that separate Protestants and Catholics. In addition, there is some evidence that interfaith marriages have become increasingly homogamous with respect to education, suggesting that education has replaced religion as a factor in spouse selection.

O f the various sociological and psychological factors that determine who marries whom, religion has long been considered to have special sociological significance. In the past five decades, more than 11 major studies have examined religious homogamy in the United States (Burgess and Wallin 1943; Hollingshead 1950; Locke, Sabagh, and Thomes 1957; Glick 1960; Burchinal and Chancellor 1962; Reiss 1965; Bumpass 1970; Monahan 1973; Kobrin and Goldscheider 1978; Johnson 1980; Glenn 1982). Because these studies span a number of years, one would think they are useful for analyzing trends in the extent of religious intermarriage. Such trends are important in their own right, but they also help us understand major social processes directly relevant for sociological theory, such as secularization, the loss of community, the rise of individualism, and the declining importance of primary socialization.

Unfortunately, these studies tell us little about change. While endogamy rates seem to be lower in more recent studies, it is difficult for methodological reasons to attribute these differences to an historical trend. First, most studies use local

data. Since there are large regional differences in the religious composition of the population, opportunities to marry endogamously vary widely and absolute endogamy rates consequently differ as well (Locke, Sabagh, and Thomes 1957). Second, studies have measured religion at different points in the life-cycle. Because people tend to switch faiths when they marry someone from another religion (Newport 1979), endogamy rates will be lower when religious upbringing rather than current religious affiliation is used. Despite these differences, the studies also make clear that religious endogamy in American society is strong. In national data, the percentage of Protestant marriages that are endogamous varies from 80 to 90. For Catholics, the percentages are somewhat lower, varying from 64 to 85, and for Jews, they are generally higher, about 90.

The endogamous closure of the three main religious communities has often been related to the history of European immigrants in the United States. In his classic treatise on the role of religion in American society, Herberg ([1955] 1960) argued that when third-generation European Americans were faced with declining opportunities to identify with their national origin group, they began seeking new "ways of belonging." Based on intermarriage statistics in New Haven in the first half of this century (Kennedy 1944), Herberg concluded that religion had replaced national origin as "the primary context of self-identification and social location" for the Ameri-

can people (p. 31). Like others at that time (e.g., Lenski 1961), Herberg regarded the high degrees of religious endogamy as evidence that religion defines social groups whose members share a sense of group identity while maintaining a distance from others in primary relationships. He even used the now classic term "triple melting pot" to characterize the social differentiation of American society into Protestants, Catholics, and Jews.

While Herberg's influential essay implies that the three religious communities have maintained their social boundaries, there are several reasons to believe that the "triple melting pot" has disappeared. Secularization, the rise of individualism, the diminishing influence of parents on children, the suburbanization of Catholics, and a declining status gap between major religious groups, all suggest that traditional religious boundaries have lost their impact on patterns of social interaction.

Although much work has been done on religious change in American society, little is known about the historical trend in interfaith marriage. My first aim is to examine how intermarriage between Protestants and Catholics has changed. By pooling a series of cross-sectional nationwide surveys I investigate a longer time period than has been considered before — from the 1920s to the 1980s. The second aim is to examine whether new social boundaries have emerged. While Herberg contended that there had been a shift from national to religious boundaries, I examine whether a declining importance of religion has been accompanied by an increase in the importance of education in assortative mating. Recent studies have shown that educational homogamy has increased over time (Mare 1991; Kalmijn 1991a), but how this change interacts with trends in religious homogamy is not yet known. Using multivariate loglinear models that consider the roles of education and religion in marriage selection simultaneously, I examine trends in the relative and independent importance of these two selection criteria and assess how the relationship between the two forms of marriage selection has changed over time.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON TRENDS

Most research on religious homogamy is limited to describing the prevalence or incidence of religious intermarriage at a single point in time. The lack of knowledge on trends can be attributed in part to the constitutional separation of church and state, which precludes the American government from including questions on religion in the decennial censuses.[1] Trends in other modern industrialized countries are documented more extensively, e.g., Heer (1962) and Travis (1973) for Canada, and Hendrickx, Lammers, and Ultee (1989) for the Netherlands. Although in these countries, intermarriage between Protestants and Catholics has increased, it cannot be assumed that the same trend has occurred in an immigrant society like the United States where religion has played a different historical role.

The few American trend studies provide limited evidence. A comparison of marriage cohorts in a single cross-section showed that intermarriage among Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, increased from 1935 to 1965 (Bumpass 1970). A possible drawback of this approach, as Bumpass pointed out, is that the trend may be affected by selective attrition. In a synthetic cohort design, marriage cohorts vary in the time they have been exposed to the risk of marital dissolution. This is a problem because exogamous marriages are more likely to dissolve than endogamous marriages (Glenn 1982). Older marriage cohorts may be more homogamous, either because these marriages were formed at a time when society was more "closed" (i.e., a *period* effect), or because most interfaith marriages were already dissolved at the time the cohort was interviewed (i.e., a *duration* effect). Because time and length of marriage are perfectly (inversely) correlated in a synthetic cohort design, it is not possible to separate period and duration effects empirically.

To study how intermarriage has changed, one needs to compare the actual marriage choices that were made in different historical periods. One way of doing this is to examine time-series of incidence data such as marriage certificates. Although this has been done for other countries, marriage records that include religion are not available for the United States as a whole. Some authors have examined marriage records of the annual Catholic Directory to get an idea of the national trend (Reiss 1965), but such data are suspect because they do not include marriages that were not sanctioned by the Catholic church. Other authors have compared recently married couples in surveys conducted at different points in time. Johnson (1980), for instance, compared couples married for less than 15 years in the 1960 *Growth of American Families* survey with cou-

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[1] The only exception was the *Current Population Survey* of 1957 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1958; Goldstein 1969).

ples married for less than 15 years in the *General Social Surveys* around 1975, and found that religious endogamy declined. Because Johnson compares marriages of similar, short duration, his study is not confounded by duration bias.[2] Another advantage of his study is that he uses the religion in which the spouses were raised (i.e., religion before marriage), so that the trend is not affected by changes in the extent to which people switch faiths when entering a mixed marriage. Despite the progress that Johnson made, from an historical point of view his work is limited by the short time-span studied.

Research on educational homogamy has demonstrated that in all modern industrial societies, education plays a critical role in the choice of a spouse (Ultee and Luijkx 1990). In American society, about half of the marriages are educationally endogamous (Rockwell 1976), and the Pearsonian correlation between spouses' educational levels is about .60 (Jacobs and Furstenberg 1986). Trends in educational homogamy have been analyzed by Rockwell (1976) and by Mare (1991). Mare used loglinear models to compare young marriage cohorts in the censuses from 1940 to 1980 and found evidence for increasing distances between major educational groups, especially for those at the higher end of the educational hierarchy. Because of the design and the methods used, Mare's finding that educational homogamy has increased is clearly more believable than the finding of stability since the 1940s in Rockwell's comparison of marriage cohorts in a single cross-section (i.e., the 1970 census).

No studies have analyzed education and religious background simultaneously. Given the statistical relationship between education and religion, religious homogamy may be in part the result of people's tendency to match on education. Similarly, educational homogamy may be partly caused by the fact that people marry within their faith. Because people choose a spouse on the basis of a range of correlated attributes, multivariate analysis is needed to assess the independent importance of alternative selection criteria. Although this has long been recognized in the

study of marriage patterns, multivariate analyses of homogamy are rare. In a previous study, I used multivariate loglinear models to compare the roles of education and social class background in marriage selection (Kalmijn 1991a). The analysis showed that education is a more important selection criterion than social class origin, and that, over time, educational homogamy has increased while homogamy based on social class background has decreased.

The current study follows the line of my earlier study by comparing education with religious upbringing, another characteristic of the family of origin. Although there are clear differences between the two factors — for instance, homogamy of religious background is directly related to the religious climate in society, whereas homogamy of social class origin obviously is not — there are also commonalities. Marrying within one's religion of origin, like making a match on social class background, connects the family networks of the spouses and not just the marriage partners themselves. In general, these types of homogamy help preserve the intergenerational stability and homogeneity of ascriptive groups in modern American society. My aim here is to explore whether religious groups have become more "open" over time and, if so, whether the traditional religious boundaries in patterns of marriage selection have been replaced by educational boundaries.[3]

THEORIES ABOUT CHANGE IN INTERMARRIAGE

Secularization

Theories of secularization posit that in the process of industrialization and urbanization, religious practices and beliefs become less important in governing people's lives (Wilson 1966). When the members of different religious groups become less devoted to their religion, it can be expected that the social boundaries between them gradually decline in strength. Although the number of people who claim that religion is "very important" in their lives has decreased since the 1950s (Gallup and Castelli 1989, p. 36), overall, there is little evidence for a long-term decay of religiosity in American society. In part, this stems

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[2] This design does not rule out other forms of bias, but there is little reason to believe they would affect Johnson's conclusion. For instance, because the divorce rate increased in this period, more recent cohorts have higher rates of attrition and may appear more homogamous. Because Johnson observes less homogamy among recent cohorts, this source of bias does not alter the conclusion that intermarriage has increased.

[3] It would be interesting to examine trends in social class background, religious origin, and education simultaneously, but there are no recent data that provide all three variables for both spouses.

from the fact that there are few reliable time-series that go back far enough to facilitate a truthful test of the secularization thesis. Nonetheless, the data that are available have led most contemporary sociologists to conclude that the dominant feature of American religion is stability rather than decline (Greeley 1989; Gallup and Castelli 1989). For example, Americans continue to score high on doctrinal religious belief, and apart from a short-lived — though substantial — decline in church attendance among Catholics during the 1960s, weekly church attendance has remained high and stable (Hout and Greeley 1987).

While the debate on secularization continues (Wallis and Bruce 1991), it is widely recognized that religious change is a multidimensional process and that different dimensions of this process can change in different directions. In the present context, I focus on what Glock (1959) has called the "consequential" dimension of religion, which is defined as the cultural values and beliefs that people hold as a result of their membership in a religious community. The issue here is not so much the intensity of religious experience, but rather the strength of cultural differences between religious groups. Empirical evidence on this aspect of religion seems to favor the secularization thesis. For example, differences between Protestants and Catholics with respect to family-size preferences (Blake 1966), marital fertility (Westoff and Jones 1979), and birth control practices (Westoff and Jones 1977) have largely disappeared over time. In addition, the attitudes that Protestants and Catholics have about child rearing, as well as the qualities they value in children, have become more similar over time (Alwin 1986). When religious differences in family values disappear, the chances of marital conflict in an interfaith marriage are lower and the men and women who enter a mixed marriage will have to make fewer compromises. Because people tend to look for spouses with whom they can share tastes and values in the intimate family environment, this cultural convergence of religious groups has probably encouraged interfaith marriage.

There have also been changes in the link between religion and socioeconomic achievement. One of the traditional arguments in the sociology of religion is that Protestants have a distinct economic ethic that fosters upward economic mobility. In line with this position, Lenski's (1961) landmark study of religious differentiation in the 1950s showed that Catholics experienced less upward intergenerational mobility than Protes-

tants. Later studies, however, suggest that the gap between Catholics and Protestants has narrowed. The original educational disadvantage of Catholics has largely disappeared over the course of this century (Greeley 1976) and the occupational composition of Protestants and Catholics has become more alike over time (Mueller 1971). As Catholics and Protestants become more similar in their cultural values and their socioeconomic status, the social barriers that traditionally separated them will begin to fade (Bumpass 1970; Wuthnow 1988).

In contrast to the cultural and socioeconomic convergence of religious groups, educational groups remain remarkably distinct. First, educational attainment has become increasingly important in determining people's future earnings and occupational status (Featherman and Hauser 1978; Grusky and DiPrete 1990). Second, educational attainment strongly affects the values people hold about marriage and the family. Independent of the effects of class background, better-educated Americans are more likely to have liberal sex-role attitudes, they want — and have — fewer children, they consider it less important for their children to be obedient, and they are more permissive about sexual matters (Davis 1982; Kohn 1977). Education also affects people's moral and political views (Hyman and Wright 1979), and the way they spend their leisure time (Robinson 1977). The crucial role of education in the cultural domain suggests that making a match on education enables spouses to develop a common life style in marriage that enhances mutual understanding and social confirmation (Kalmijn 1991a). The importance of education for the distribution of economic rewards in society suggests that education plays an increasingly salient role in the competition for economically attractive spouses in the marriage market (Mare 1991).

The Retreat of "Third Parties"

Patterns of marriage selection depend not only on the preferences of the marriage candidates themselves, but are also affected by "third parties." Third parties are individuals who are not directly involved in the marriage but who interfere in the search process because they are connected to one of the two candidates. One of the traditional explanations of religious endogamy is that there are social norms against interfaith marriages. These norms exist, it is believed, because intermarriage threatens the stability and homo-

geneity of the religious community. The parents of the marriage candidates are important in maintaining these norms. They voice the opinions they have about their children's marriage candidates, they sometimes act as matchmakers, and when children marry against their will, they may threaten to withhold support in the early years of the child's marriage. As societies modernize, children gain economic independence, which reduces parental control over children's marriage decisions. In addition, the emerging norm of individualism in modern society conflicts with the notion that third parties should interfere in individual marriage decisions. Hence, even when parents could influence their children's choice of a spouse, they may now simply be less willing to interfere in the search process. While parents also evaluate the candidate's achieved characteristics, such as educational success and financial prospects, they are believed to pay special attention to the social and cultural origins of these candidates. As a result, the retreat of third parties has probably fostered intermarriage across ascriptive group boundaries like religion, and may have increased people's tendency to match on achieved characteristics like educational attainment (Goode [1963] 1970, p. 30).

Religious institutions are another example of third parties that affect intermarriage. The Roman Catholic church and various Protestant denominations have denounced interfaith marriages for centuries, although the strength and nature of their disapproval have changed over time. Under most conditions, religious institutions have good reasons to sanction the norm of endogamy — it is one way of maintaining a loyal membership. Their role becomes more complex, however, when other changes in society make intermarriage more acceptable. Because denominational switching often occurs in connection with marriage (Newport 1979), strong institutional opposition to exogamy entails the risk of losing members, and possibly a new generation, to competing religious institutions. Under these conditions, religious institutions have an incentive to be more lenient than others in their denunciation of exogamy. The Roman Catholic church, for example, has typically accepted interfaith marriages on the condition that the children be raised as Catholics. Although there have been no recent sociological studies on this topic, denominational competition, in combination with a social climate that favors intermarriage, has probably made religious institutions somewhat milder in their sanctions.

There are also signs that lay acceptance of institutional control has changed. Most authors have argued that despite the stable and high levels of religious belief, Americans have become increasingly independent of the religious institutions to which they belong. Among Catholics, for example, conformity to church doctrines on birth control has declined rapidly (Westoff and Jones 1977). In addition, survey research in the 1980s showed that an overwhelming majority of Americans, especially the young, want the laity to have greater influence than the clergy in deciding the future of religion (Gallup and Castelli 1989, p. 254). Hence, even when religious institutions still desire to influence the choice of a spouse, Americans have become less willing to accept their interference.

Shifting Opportunities

Marriage patterns also depend on the opportunities to meet individuals within or outside the group. While marrying within one's faith of origin is fostered by the religious and ethnic homogeneity of the parental neighborhood, educational homogamy is directly related to the fact that people are embedded in settings like the school and the workplace. In comparison to the parental community, these settings are homogeneous with respect to people's current and expected socioeconomic status. The processes of urbanization and suburbanization have moved people out of small homogeneous communities and, in doing so, have enhanced social interaction between different religious groups. Related to the process of suburbanization is the decline of Catholic school enrollment (Greeley 1979), which has increased opportunities for the young to socialize with people from different religious backgrounds.

Opportunities for making a match on education, in contrast, have increased. Not only do people spend more time in school, the time interval between leaving school and marriage has narrowed between the 1940s and 1970s (Mare 1991). As a result, it is now more likely that unmarried people, especially the college educated, meet their spouses in school (Mare 1991). The increase in college enrollment has not only moved an increasing number of youngsters into educationally homogeneous settings, it has also removed many of them from residential marriage markets that are often religiously more homogeneous than the school environment.

To sum up, there are three reasons to believe there has been a shift from religious background

Table 1. Protestant and Catholic Marriages by Period and Duration of Marriage: U.S., 1920-1989

Period of Marriage	Duration of Marriage				
	0-9 years	10-19 years	20-29 years	≥ 30 years	Total
1920-1929	—	—	3[a]	451	454
1930-1939	—	294	278	1,073	1,645
1940-1949	741	1,200	849	1,382	4,172
1950-1959	1,150	1,064	876	418	3,508
1960-1969	1,193	1,072	474	—	2,739
1970-1979	1,253	679	—	—	1,932
1980-1989	625	—	—	—	625
Total	4,962	4,309	2,480	3,262	15,075

[a] Because of its small sample size, this combination of period and duration is omitted in the models in Table 2.

to education in patterns of marriage choice: (a) a secularization of religious differences with respect to cultural values and socioeconomic status, in combination with persisting educational effects on achievement and life styles; (b) a general retreat of "third parties" from the process of marriage choice, which has given people more freedom to move away from their ascribed characteristics while giving them new chances to match on achieved characteristics; (c) a shift in the location of marriage markets from the small residential community to the school environment, which has decreased the chances of finding a spouse within one's faith of origin and has increased opportunities for making a match on education.

DATA AND RESEARCH DESIGN

In the absence of government survey data on religious affiliation, scholars have either resorted to national surveys that typically contain small numbers of cases, or have focused on large data sets that are limited to a certain state, city, or county. By using a series of national surveys, I examine religious homogamy in a large set of data that is representative of the United States as a whole. My sample consists of white Protestants and Catholics who were in their first marriage at the time of the survey.[4] In total, 15,075 couples are in-

[4] Whether the spouse is in his/her first marriage cannot be determined from the GSS data. Because there is a correlation between the marital histories of brides and grooms (Sweet and Bumpass 1987, p. 39), most spouses of first-married respondents will be in their first marriage as well. To ensure comparability

cluded. Although the sample is large, it is not large enough for a reliable analysis of changes in the marriage patterns of Jews and blacks.

The surveys I examine are the 1955 *Growth of American Families* survey (Freedman, Whelpton, and Campbell 1959), the 1965 *National Fertility Study* (Ryder and Westoff 1971) and the *NORC General Social Surveys* from 1972 to 1989 (Davis and Smith 1988). All surveys are random, nationwide samples. The *GAF* covers white married women 18-39 years old, the *NFS* covers married women born after 1910, and the *GSS* covers individuals 18 years old and older. These surveys are unique in that they include information on the religious origins of spouses. In the *GAF*, each woman was asked about her own and her husband's religion before marriage; in the *NFS*, each woman was asked about the religious preferences of her parents and her parents-in-law; and in the *GSS*, each respondent was asked in which religion they and their spouse were raised. Since all questions refer to religion before marriage, my measures of intermarriage are not confounded by switching faiths in connection with the entrance into a mixed marriage.[5]

By pooling survey data that were collected over a period of almost four decades, I can compare marriages that were contracted in different periods while controlling for attrition from cohorts that have been exposed to the risk of marital dissolution for varying lengths of time. In Table 1, marriages are cross-classified by period and duration of marriage, both distinguished into ten-year categories. Because length and year of marriage are imperfectly correlated ($r = -.63$), it is possible to estimate period and duration effects simultaneously. This approach yields expected row averages (i.e., homogamy estimates for each period) while controlling for column averages (i.e., homogamy estimates for marriages of varying durations). It is assumed that there is no interaction between the two effects, i.e., that duration

across surveys, I did not exclude spouses who were in their second marriage in the *GAF* and *NFS* data. Furthermore, in none of the surveys was the race of the spouse known. Given the rarity of black/white intermarriage, I can safely regard the vast majority of spouses as white.

[5] If the parents' religious preferences differed in the *NFS*, I used the mother's religion. Since religious intermarriage was uncommon in the past, the number of cases with mixed parental religions is small. Choosing the mother's religion is to some extent arbitrary, but the trends are the same when the father's religion is used.

Table 2.   Loglinear Models for Changes in Religious Ho-
mogamy Controlling for Duration of Marriage

Model	L^2	Degrees of Freedom	L^2/df
(1) Stability (no change in homogamy)	192.9	17	11.34
(2) Linear (linear change in homogamy)	19.4	13	1.49
(3) Cyclical (nonlinear change in homogamy)	12.2	8	1.53
(4) One-shot (contrast before 1960 vs. after 1960)	79.2	13	6.09
(5) Jump (contrast before and after 1960 plus linear change)	17.3	12	1.44
(6) Acceleration (linear change before 1960 and after 1960 separately)	17.1	11	1.55

effects do not change over time. Whether this assumption is valid cannot be tested conclusively because data are not available for all duration categories in all periods, but the data suggest that it is plausible. Because the surveys are conducted at different points in time, estimated period effects could be affected by differences between surveys with respect to phrasing of questions, reporting bias, and the like. Such survey effects would affect the results if they are correlated with religious and educational homogamy. Although this is not very likely with the random national samples under consideration, I explore some of these issues later.

FINDINGS

Trends in Religious Homogamy

The model for the religious homogamy table is defined as follows:

$$\log F_{ij} = \alpha + \beta_i^{Hr} + \beta_j^{Wr} - \tfrac{1}{2}\delta_{ij}^{HrWr}, \qquad (1)$$

where $\sum \beta_i = \sum \beta_j = 0$, $\delta_{ij} = \delta_{ji}$ when $i \neq j$, and $\delta_{ij} = 0$ when $i = j$. The superscripts Hr and Wr refer to husband's and wife's religion respectively. The first three parameters adjust for sample size and the marginal distributions. The last term models the interaction between rows and columns. For a 2×2 table, this is a saturated model where δ_{ij} measures homogamy independent of the effects of the relative sizes of the two groups. In the present parameterization,

$$\delta_{ij} = \log \frac{F_{ii}/F_{ij}}{F_{ji}/F_{jj}} ; \qquad (2)$$

this is the log odds ratio in the 2×2 table. More precisely, $\exp(\delta_{ij})$ is the ratio of the odds that a Protestant marries a Protestant to the odds that a Catholic marries a Protestant. This measure is symmetric, so it is equivalent to the ratio of the odds that a Catholic marries a Catholic to the odds that a Protestant marries a Catholic. Hence, the more positive the log odds ratio, the stronger the degree of homogamy.

To examine trends, the religious marriage table is cross-classified by period and duration of marriage.[6] Table 2 presents multivariate loglinear models that test several hypotheses about the nature of period effects. In all models except the stability model, I control for the effects of marriage duration by allowing the log odds ratio to be different for each duration category. The model further adjusts for the sample size and the marginal distributions of religion for each combination of period and duration separately.

The *stability* model in Table 2 assumes that homogamy is constant across periods and duration categories. This model clearly fits the data poorly. The *linear* model adds a single term for a linear decennial change in the log odds ratio while controlling for duration effects. This model greatly improves the fit, showing that religious homogamy has changed significantly. The *cyclical* model, which allows homogamy to be different in each period without imposing linearity does not improve on the linear model (it increases the fit by 7.2 at the cost of 5 degrees of freedom). These findings suggest that the change in religious homogamy is linear.

The parameter estimates of the *linear* model are presented in Table 3. Since the first duration category is the omitted category and the periods are coded from 0 (for the 1920s) to 6 (for the 1980s), the intercept pertains to recently married couples in the 1920s (married for less than 10 years). Over the entire period, homogamy of recent marriages has decreased by 65 percent: from a strong log odds ratio of 3.86 in the 1920s to a still substantial but much smaller log odds ratio of 1.34 in the 1980s, i.e., 3.86 + 6(-.420). This signifies a dramatic rise in intermarriage between Protestants and Catholics over the course of this century.

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[6] The period-by-duration table contains $7 \times 4 = 28$ cells (of which 10 are empty) so that the full table has $2 \times 2 \times [(7 \times 4) - 10] = 72$ cells.

Table 3. Period and Duration Effects on the Log Odds Ratio of Religious Homogamy

Parameter	Estimate
Log odds ratio in 1920s	3.858*
	(.173)
Period effect (change per decade)	-.420*
	(.038)
Duration effects[a]	
10-19 years	.075
	(.111)
20-29 years	.021
	(.142)
30 years or more	-.266
	(.156)

* $p < .05$

[a] Less than 10 years is the reference category.

Note: Numbers in parentheses are estimated standard errors. Parameter estimates are for Model 2 of Table 2.

The literature suggests that the social acceptance of Catholics in American society improved rapidly in response to the election of a Catholic president (e.g., Demerath 1968). At the same time, changes in the Roman Catholic church in the 1960s, especially the Second Vatican Council, led several commentators to predict that relationships between Protestants and Catholics would improve. The question thus arises whether the models estimated thus far obscure some kind of response to these forces of assimilation.

I consider three possible responses. First, the entire trend could be due to a single rise in intermarriage after the early 1960s. In the *one-shot* model in Table 2, the linear trend parameter is replaced by a dichotomous effect that only estimates the difference in the log odds ratio between the pre-1960 and the post-1960 periods. Although this model is statistically not comparable to the *linear* model, the fit is so much worse that it has to be rejected on its own grounds. A second possibility is that the trend was already under way in the first half of this century, but that religious intermarriage jumped to a higher level in the 1960s while the trend continued thereafter. In the *jump* model, I include a parameter that allows intermarriage to be different after 1960 as well as a single parameter for the linear trend. Although the *jump* model fits the data better than the *linear* model, the improvement in fit is modest (i.e., 2.1), and the estimate reveals a small increase rather than a decrease in homogamy after the 1960s. The last possibility is that instead of a jump, there was an acceleration of the trend.

In the *acceleration* model, I replace the single trend parameter by two linear trend parameters, one for the change before 1960 and one for the change after 1960. Table 2 shows that this model does not improve on the *linear* model.

In short, there is little evidence in these data that religious homogamy changed in response to the social and political changes of the 1960s. The social boundary between people from Catholic and people from Protestant backgrounds has declined in strength over the course of this century, and this decline seems to be linear. Log odds ratios expected under the *linear* and the *cyclical* model are depicted in Figure 1, which shows the strong decrease in religious homogamy and confirms that the estimates of nonlinear change follow the linear trend quite closely.

Duration Effects and Reporting Bias

The duration effects presented in Table 3 are small, and they do not confirm the hypothesis that a given marriage cohort grows more homogamous as it ages. Although marriages 10 to 19 years old are more homogamous than the youngest marriages, the oldest marriages seem to be the least homogamous. A possible interpretation of this effect lies in reporting bias. Following a given marriage cohort over time means not only that the cohort ages, but also that it is interviewed in subsequent historical periods. If intermarriage has become more acceptable in society, as the increase in intermarriage suggests, it is possible that the members of a given cohort are now more willing to report their marriages as mixed than they were in an earlier period. If there has been an historical decrease in underreporting of mixed marriages, marriages of longer duration will be less homogamous than young marriages of that cohort.

If this reasoning is valid, the question arises whether reporting bias has affected the period effects. In other words, does the increase in intermarriage reflect an increasing willingness to report such marriages? To answer this question, I examine the effect of period of marriage while controlling for the period in which the interview was conducted. This does not change the fit of the original model because the time of interview is simply the sum of year and duration of marriage. Because of this linear dependency, it is not possible to estimate all three effects simultaneously. It is nonetheless useful to examine how the trend would look if only time-of-interview effects were operating. When H stands for the degree of homogamy in each combination of peri-
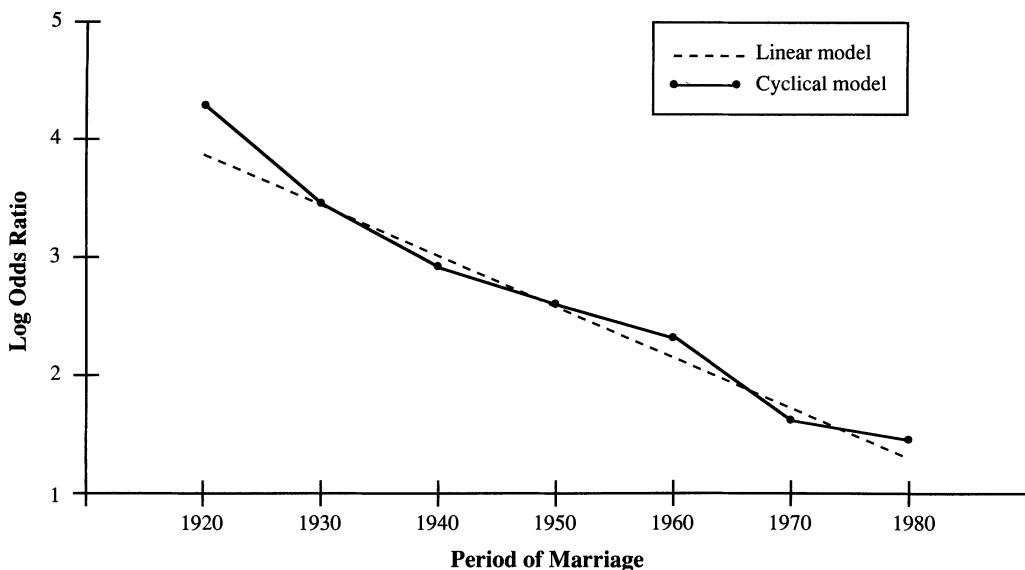
Figure 1. Trend in Religious Homogamy for Couples Married Less Than Ten Years

od and duration, P stands for period of marriage, and D for duration of marriage (both measured in decades), the model for linear period and duration effects can be written as follows:

$$H = \beta_1 P + \beta_2 D. \tag{3}$$

In this model, $\beta_1 = -.416$ and $\beta_2 = -.067$.[7] To estimate changes in homogamy while controlling for time of interview T, I define the following model:

$$H = \beta_1^* P + \beta_3 T. \tag{4}$$

Because $T = P + D$, equation 3 can be rewritten as:

$$H = \beta_1 P + \beta_2 (T - P) = (\beta_1 - \beta_2)P + \beta_2 T. \tag{5}$$

Comparing equations 3 and 4 shows that when the time of interview is allowed to affect the level of homogamy, the trend is the difference between period and duration effects in equation 3, i.e., $\beta_1^* = (\beta_1 - \beta_2)$. Hence, when we take into account time-of-interview effects to adjust for changes in reporting bias, the trend in homogamy equals $-.416 - (-.067) = -.349$. Under this scenario, the log odds ratio decreases from 3.86 in

the 1920s to 1.76 in the 1980s, a decrease of 55 percent. Clearly, the effect of reporting bias is far too small to affect the dramatic increase in intermarriage observed in Figure 1.

Changes in Educational and Religious Homogamy Modelled Simultaneously

If religious background has become less important in marriage selection, has this been accompanied by an increase in the tendency to match on an achieved characteristic like education? To answer this question, I present multivariate log-linear models of religious and educational homogamy. This analysis also allows me to address another issue. A possible reason why Protestant/Catholic intermarriage has increased is that these groups have become more similar in educational attainment (Bumpass 1970). If religion and education are strongly related, the chances are high that people who match on education are also similar in religious background. Since this association has weakened over time (Greeley 1976), the chance that a match on education is also a match on religion has become smaller. Given a strong tendency to match on education, the educational convergence of Protestants and Catholics may be partly responsible for the increase in religious intermarriage.

I use the model of *quasi-symmetry* to describe educational homogamy (Haberman 1979). Four categories of educational attainment are distin-

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[7] These estimates are based on the model discussed before, with the only difference being that duration effects are modelled in a linear fashion.

Table 4.   Multivariate Loglinear Models of Religious and Educational Homogamy

Model	L^2	Degrees of Freedom	L^2/df
(1) Baseline model (linear change in religion)	6967.0	547	12.74
(2) Educational homogamy (adds educational homogamy)	899.4	541	1.66
(3) Religious differences (adds interaction between education and religion)	826.8	535	1.55
(4) Convergence of differences (adds interaction between education and religion by period and duration)	699.3	481	1.45
(5) Linear trend in educational homogamy			
(a) Adds linear period effect	658.1	475	1.39
(b) Adds duration effects	687.1	475	1.45
(c) Adds both effects	648.3	469	1.38
(6) Cyclical trend in educational homogamy (adds nonlinear change in homogamy)	613.2	445	1.38

guished: less than a high school degree, high school graduation, some college, and college graduation. The model is defined as follows:

$$\log F_{k\ell} = \alpha + \text{\ss}_k{}^{He} + \text{\ss}_\ell{}^{We} - \tfrac{1}{2}\delta_{k\ell}{}^{HeWe}, \qquad (6)$$

where $\Sigma\text{\ss}_k = \Sigma\text{\ss}_\ell = 0$, $\delta_{k\ell} = \delta_{\ell k}$ when $k \neq \ell$, and $\delta_{k\ell} = 0$ when $k = \ell$. The superscripts *He* and *We* refer to husband's and wife's education respectively. For a 4×4 table, this model is not parsimonious — it has $(k-1)(k-2)/2 = 3$ degrees of freedom — but it fits the data well and it allows me to evaluate whether marriage patterns have changed in different ways for different pairs of educational groups.[8] In the present parameterization,

$$\delta_{k\ell} = \log \frac{F_{kk} / F_{k\ell}}{F_{\ell k} / F_{\ell\ell}}. \qquad (7)$$

The $\delta_{k\ell}$ parameters are log odds ratios describing intermarriage between pairs of educational groups. For instance, when considering high school graduates and college graduates, $\exp(\delta_{k\ell})$

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[8] For all but one combination of period and duration, the model fits well according to standard statistical criteria (*p*-values range from .04 to .64). This also means that no parameters are needed for asymmetric flows from rows to columns that are independent of asymmetric marginal effects (Haberman 1979).

is equivalent to the ratio of the odds that a high school graduate marries a high school graduate to the odds that a college graduate marries a high school graduate. The higher the homogamy parameter, the less these groups intermarry. The parameters for educational and religious homogamy can be compared directly because both are defined in terms of odds ratios.

In the following analyses, I combine the tables for husband's and wife's religion and their educational attainment, and cross-classify the multivariate marriage table by period and duration of marriage. Since the multivariate marriage table is large ($2 \times 2 \times 4 \times 4 = 64$ cells), I combined the two earliest periods and the three longest marriage durations. The new table has $64 \times 10 = 640$ cells and 15,023 cases.[9] Loglinear models are presented in Table 4. All models adjust for the marginal distributions of religion and education of both spouses. The models start where the analysis of religious homogamy left off: they include parameters for religious homogamy and the trend therein, and they control for duration effects.

Not surprisingly, adding parameters for educational homogamy greatly improves the fit of the baseline model (Model 2 vs. Model 1). Table 4 also confirms the hypothesis that Protestants and Catholics are significantly different in educational attainment: adding parameters for the interaction between education and religion improves the fit significantly (Model 3). Comparing Model 3 with Model 4 in which this relationship is allowed to vary by cohort shows that educational differences between religious groups have changed significantly. More important, the linear trend in religious homogamy in Model 4 is the same as that estimated in Model 3 in which the relationship between education and religion is assumed to be constant (i.e., -.384 vs. -.386). In other words, the educational convergence of Protestants and Catholics cannot explain the trend in interfaith marriage. In contrast to what is generally believed, shifts in the marriage boundary between Protestants and Catholics have apparently occurred independent of changes in the socioeconomic boundaries between these groups.

Changes in educational homogamy are significant, as shown by the improvement in fit of Model 5 over Model 4. Allowing the change to be nonlinear (Model 6) does not improve the linear model. The fit is 35.1 better, but this gain

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[9] Educational attainment was missing for 57 cases. Because some cells in the multivariate table are empty, I added .01 to each cell.
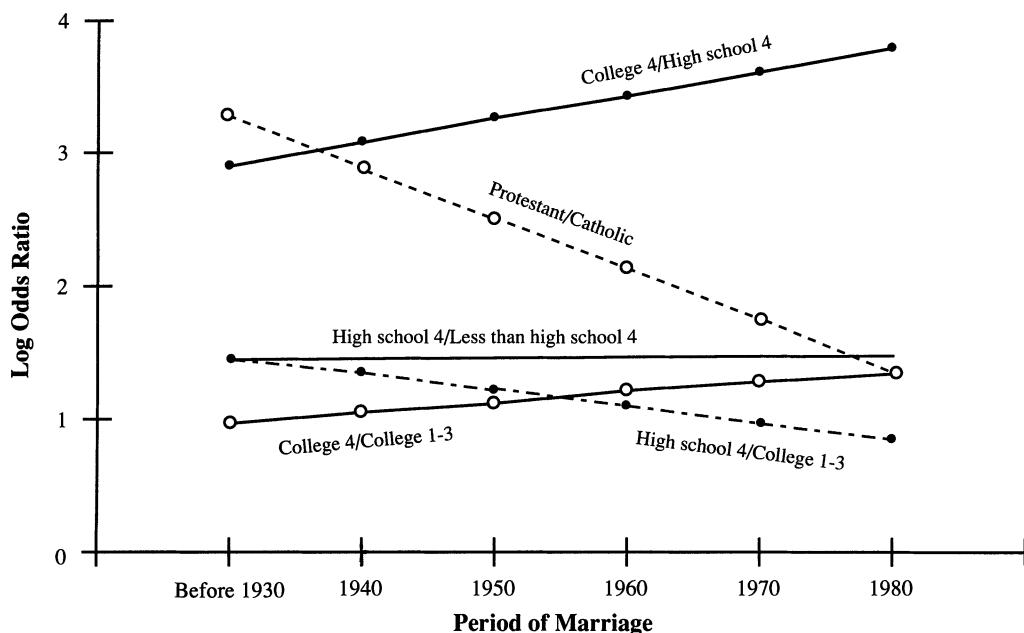
Figure 2. Trends in Religious and Educational Homogamy

is only 1.46 times as large as the loss of degrees of freedom. This indicates that educational homogamy has changed in a linear fashion. Parameter estimates from Model 5c are presented in Table 5.

Although intermarriage among educational groups has changed, the direction of change depends on the pair of groups examined. In line with expectations, declines in intermarriage occur for combinations that involve college graduates. College graduates have become much less likely to marry high school dropouts, they now marry significantly less often with high school graduates than in the past, and they marry somewhat less frequently with college dropouts. However, intermarriage between the two middle groups, i.e., high school graduates and people with some college, has increased. The fact that these groups are less likely to be selected by college graduates has apparently not made them more endogamous. Overall, this pattern of change points to a polarization of the educational hierarchy. College graduates have strongly removed themselves from all other educational groups. This finding is consistent with earlier analyses of educational homogamy using census data (Mare 1991).

To compare the strength of religious and educational boundaries directly, I present the trend for the religious groups and selected educational

pairs in Figure 2. In the 1930s, intermarriage between educational groups was more common than intermarriage between Protestants and Catholics. By 1980, this pattern had changed radically. Marriages between adjacent educational groups now seem to be as common as marriages between Protestants and Catholics. In addition, marriages over greater educational distances have become rarer than interfaith marriages. In the 1930s, the boundary between Protestants and Catholics was stronger than the boundary separating high school graduates and college graduates, whereas by the 1980s, marriages between high school graduates and college graduates were far less common than marriages between Protestants and Catholics.

The Changing Relationship Between Educational and Religious Endogamy

Another way of evaluating whether education has replaced religion as a factor in marriage selection is to examine how the relationship between the two forms of homogamy has changed. To simplify matters, I introduce a single parameter that measures this relationship. Let J_{xy} be an aggregation of the original cells F_{ij} so that they represent the cells in an $X \times Y$ table where X stands for religious endogamy and Y stands for educational endogamy. If the first categories of these vari-

Table 5. Changes in Religious and Educational Homogamy

Parameter	Log Odds Ratio in 1930s	Change per Decade[a]
Religious Homogamy		
Protestants and Catholics	3.316 (.129)	-.383* (.035)
Educational Homogamy		
College 4 and college 1-3	.989 (.272)	+.075 (.068)
College 4 and high school 4	2.905 (.274)	+.174* (.072)
College 4 and less than high school 4	4.409 (.544)	+.883* (.170)
College 1-3 and high school 4	1.477 (.206)	-.111* (.054)
College 1-3 and less than high school 4	3.754 (.322)	-.033 (.088)
High school 4 and less than high school 4	1.479 (.145)	+.004 (.044)

* p < .05

[a] There are six decades (1930s through the 1980s).

Note: Numbers in parentheses are estimated standard errors. Parameter estimates are for Model 5c in Table 4.

ables are defined as endogamous, and the second categories as exogamous, the following parameter can be defined:

$$\phi_{xy} = \log \frac{J_{11}/J_{12}}{J_{21}/J_{22}}. \tag{8}$$

The antilog of ϕ can be interpreted as the ratio of the odds that a religiously endogamous marriage is an educationally endogamous marriage to the odds that a religiously mixed marriage is an educationally endogamous marriage. If ϕ is positive, educational and religious endogamy are positively related, indicating that people who match on one dimension are also likely to match on the other. This parameter, when added to Model 5c, is moderately positive ($\phi = .10$) but statistically significant. When ϕ is allowed to vary by period, its estimate decreases from .26 in the 1930s to -.10 in the 1980s (the decrease is .07 per decade with an estimated standard error of .03). In the past, there seemed to be an underlying tendency to marry endogamously. Those who married within their faith were more likely than others to marry within their educational group as well. Currently, a match on religion is less likely to be a match on education, or to put it differently, those who marry outside their faith are more likely than

others to marry within their educational group. The decrease in ϕ implies that the odds that a religiously exogamous marriage is educationally endogamous (i.e., J_{21}/J_{22}) has become larger in comparison to the odds that a religiously endogamous marriage is educationally endogamous (i.e., J_{11}/J_{12}). In other words, interfaith unions have become increasingly endogamous with respect to education. Although the association is not strong and the change is small, these findings are consistent with the notion that education has replaced religion as a factor in marriage selection. The number of people who marry outside their faith has grown, and these people are now more likely to marry within their educational group than in the past.

DISCUSSION

The central finding of this study is that intermarriage between people from Protestant and Catholic backgrounds increased dramatically between the 1920s and the 1980s. In line with previous studies, I also find that educational homogamy increased over time, particularly at the higher levels of the educational hierarchy. This suggests there has been a shift from religious background to education in patterns of marriage choice. Paraphrasing Herberg, I conclude that two of the three traditional religious "melting pots" have been replaced by a new set of "melting pots" that are heterogeneous with respect to religion and homogeneous with respect to education.

Although the primary aim of this study has been descriptive, I also offer several theoretical interpretations. First, there is little evidence of nonlinearities in the trend. Neither the major changes in the Roman Catholic church in the 1960s, nor the election of a Catholic president at that time, affected the social relationships between Catholics and Protestants. Although studies have shown that intergroup images became more favorable in this period, the mutual acceptance among these groups as measured by the choice of a spouse began to grow long before the 1960s. This implies that broader societal changes must have been operating.

Second, it is often claimed that the socioeconomic convergence of Protestants and Catholics has broken down their social barriers. The present study shows that this is not an important cause. While the analysis confirms that the relationship between religion and education has changed, controlling for these changes does not affect the trend in interfaith marriage. In my opinion, the dra-

matic increase in Protestant/Catholic intermarriage reflects a secularization of *cultural* differences between religious groups — a convergence between Protestants and Catholics in attitudes about marriage, fertility, child rearing, and sexual matters. Convergence has played an important role, but it is confined to the cultural domain. Although geographic boundaries between groups have also declined, it is difficult to believe that this has played a major role in the absence of other forms of convergence. After all, marriage is a long-term, intimate relationship in which cultural similarity is of crucial importance.

At the same time, I believe that the trend partly reflects the diminishing role that parents play in shaping their children's norms and values, as well as a decline in the extent to which parents directly interfere in their children's choice of a spouse. In the past, religious socialization has traditionally been considered a crucial mechanism by which religious groups maintained their internal cohesion and group identity. The present findings suggest that this mechanism has lost some of its significance. Although it is not possible with the data at hand to determine whether this change has played a role independently of a more general secularization of cultural differences, previous studies of marriage selection also point to the weakening role of the family of origin. For example, there has been a shift from social class background to education, and among second-generation European Americans, national origin has become a less important factor in marriage choice while education has become more salient (Kalmijn 1991b). The general shift from ascriptive group boundaries to achieved characteristics like education suggests that marriage choice has become individualized.

What do the present findings imply for the role of religion in American society? I do not believe they show that the salience of religious practice and belief has changed. Although intermarriage is one indicator of secularization, it is not the only one, and different dimensions of secularization may change in different ways. For instance, those who marry outside their faith may very well switch to the religion of their spouse and remain devoted to religious practice and belief in their daily lives. The importance of the present finding lies in its rejection of the traditional view that in American society, religion plays a central role in defining "communal groups" (Lenski 1961). While religious doctrine and church attendance may have remained strong, this seems to have had little bearing on how people relate to

each other. The weakening of religious boundaries in marriage choice can be interpreted as evidence that the traditional American "communal" religion has given way to an "associational" religion.

Several questions remain. First, have Jews in American society become more "open" as well? While this question is important in the light of the "triple melting pot" thesis, in the absence of large national samples of the U.S. population that include religion, it remains difficult to answer. Second, does the increase in Protestant/Catholic intermarriage also apply to more fundamentalist Protestant denominations? Several authors have elaborated on Herberg's theme by arguing that religious differentiation has been on the rise *within* the Protestant community. The question about possible new denominational boundaries within the Protestant population deserves serious attention in future research.

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