NJPS 2000-01 Methodology Series

UJC Research Department

Report #1

Religion in America: Comparing Data from NSRE/NJPS, GSS and ARIS

The National Survey on Religion and Ethnicity (NSRE) was conducted in conjunction with NJPS 2000-01. This survey was administered to people who qualified as non-Jews based on their answers to initial screening questions. NSRE participants were asked a variety of questions on basic demographic characteristics, religious affiliation, economic activity and other topics.

To assess the validity of data on religious identification in NSRE/NJPS, this document compares NSRE and NJPS data to data from the General Social Survey (GSS) 2000 and the American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) 2001. The GSS, administered by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC), is generally considered one of the most reliable and accurate national surveys of American opinions. The ARIS was sponsored by the Graduate Center of the City University of New York and is a follow-up study to the 1990 National Survey of Religious Identification.

Table 1 below compares data from the three surveys on religious group identification. It is important to note that discrepancies between the surveys may be due to sampling variability or small non-sampling errors. In general, the NSRE data on religion align very closely with GSS and ARIS data. The total Christian, Catholic, Jewish and No Religion categories are very similar across the three surveys, and major Protestant denominations such as Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian and Lutheran are nearly identical. Overall, the convergence of religious affiliations across the three surveys, especially in light of sampling variability and differences in coding, provides confidence that the NSRE and NJPS accurately measured the religious identification of Americans.

Table 1. Religious Identification in NSRE/NJPS, GSS and ARIS

Category	NSRE/NJPS 2000-01	GSS 2000	ARIS 2001
Christian	**78%**	**81%**	**81%**
Catholic	26	24	26
Selected Protestant	33	37	32
Baptist	18	20	17
Methodist	7	9	7
Presbyterian	3	3	3
Lutheran	5	5	5
Other Protestant or Christian	19	17	23
Jewish	**2**	**2**	**1**
Other Religions	**7**	**3**	**3**
No Religion	**13**	**14**	**15**

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Report #2

Jews from the Former Soviet Union (FSU): Reconciling Estimates from NJPS and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS)

I. Introduction

Findings from the National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01 (NJPS) reveal a total of 252,000 adult American Jews who were born in the Former Soviet Union (FSU) and immigrated to the United States since 1970.

In contrast, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) reports that it helped resettle 402,000 refugees from the Former Soviet Union from 1970 to 2001.

In order to reconcile the numbers, several factors must be taken into account on both the NJPS and HIAS sides of the ledger, including definitional and classification issues, children of immigrants born in the FSU, non-Jewish family members of immigrants and mortality.

II. Adjustments to the NJPS estimate of FSU Jews

A. Definition of "Jews" from the FSU

The NJPS figure of 252,000 immigrants from the FSU counts those classified as Jews according to UJC's definition of who is a Jew. According to UJC's definition, a Jew is defined as a person:

1. whose religion is Jewish, OR
2. whose religion is Jewish and something else, OR
3. who has no religion and has at least one Jewish parent or a Jewish upbringing, OR
4. who has a non-monotheistic religion, and has at least one Jewish parent or a Jewish upbringing

In addition to interviewing and estimating the population of Jews according to the definition above, NJPS interviewed and estimated the population of "People of Jewish Background" (PJBs).

PJBs include those who have a monotheistic religion (i.e., Christianity, or in rare cases, Islam) and have a Jewish parent or were raised Jewish. It is appropriate to include PJBs in the FSU Jewish population because Jewish background, and the fear of persecution it brought, would have been one of the criteria used for seeking to leave the FSU and enter the U.S. According to NJPS, the total number of adult PJBs who immigrated from the FSU since 1970 is 9,000, bringing the total number of adult Jews and PJBs from the FSU to 261,000.

B. Children

NJPS asked about the place of birth and, where appropriate, immigration to the United States only of adult respondents and their spouses/partners. The NJPS figure of 261,000 FSU immigrants therefore only includes adults, as represented by the respondents.

The HIAS figures, however, include children. Therefore, children 17 or younger who were born in the FSU need to be added to the NJPS number in order to make the NJPS and HIAS figures comparable.

The NJPS questionnaire did not ask directly about the birthplace of immigrant children, but it is still possible to deduce this information. An analysis of the households of adult FSU immigrants (both Jews and PJBs) shows there are 20,000 children whose ages indicate they were born prior to the adult immigrant's arrival in the United States. Adding these children to the adult population brings the NJPS estimate of the total population of Jews and PJBs who immigrated from the FSU to the U.S. since 1970 to 281,000.

III. Adjustments to the reported HIAS number of FSU immigrants

A. Mortality

NJPS 2000-01 identifies FSU-born Jews and PJBs who were alive during the survey's fieldwork period from August 2000 until August 2001. In contrast, the HIAS figure of 402,000 covers a 31-year period of immigrant arrival. The HIAS number includes those who are still alive as well as those who died after their arrival in the United States and therefore could not have been counted in NJPS. Mortality among the immigrant population must be accounted for in order to make the NJPS and HIAS numbers comparable.

A rough annual mortality estimate of any given group is 1% of its total population. Using a spreadsheet, a 1% mortality rate was applied to the yearly changing base of FSU refugees according to the HIAS figures. In other words, 1% of the first year's immigrants were subtracted, the next year's total immigrant pool was added, 1% of the resulting total was subtracted again, the next year's total immigrant pool was added again, and so on across all 31 years. Total mortality resulting from these calculations is 47,000 people, which when subtracted from the 402,000 initial arrivals leaves 355,000 people currently alive.

B. Non-Jews

HIAS does not officially distinguish between Jewish and non-Jewish refugees from the FSU, so that its official count of 402,000 contains some non-Jews. U.S. government regulations allowed Jewish refugees (who may show up in NJPS as either Jews or PJBs) to bring non-Jewish spouses and children with them. These regulations allowed Jewish refugees to bring extended non-Jewish family members with them as well. It is crucial to understand that while HIAS includes non-Jewish family members in their figures, the NJPS estimate of Jews and PJBs does not include them. As a result, the total number of non-Jews in the HIAS figures must be removed to make the HIAS and NJPS figures comparable.

UJC researchers obtained estimates from two former HIAS professionals about the percentage of non-Jews in the total FSU population that HIAS helped to resettle. The estimates were obtained independently; neither source knew that UJC researchers had spoken to the other. In addition, neither source knew why UJC researchers were interested in knowing this information. Both sources said that approximately 25% of the FSU arrivals resettled by HIAS were non-Jews; one of the sources said that up to 33% of the arrivals in the 1990s were non-Jews.

The 25% estimate of non-Jews in the FSU immigrant population must be applied to the revised HIAS population figure of 355,000. Doing so yields 89,000 people, leaving 266,000 Jewish/PJB immigrants arriving from the FSU since 1970 and still alive in the United States.

IV. Summary

In sum, 29,000 people must be added to the NJPS estimate of adult FSU Jews: 9,000 adult PJBs and 20,000 children of Jewish/PJB immigrants also born in the FSU.

Additionally, 136,000 people must be subtracted from the HIAS figures: 47,000 people who have died since their arrival and 89,000 non-Jews.

Source	**Original Estimate**	**Change**	**New Total**
NJPS	252,000	+ 29,000	281,000
HIAS	402,000	- 136,000	266,000

When this is done, the NJPS estimate now exceeds the HIAS figure by a total of 15,000 immigrants. This new discrepancy can be accounted for by the fact that though a vast majority of FSU-born Jews and PJBs arrived in the United States by coming through HIAS resettlement offices, not all did. An unknown number came as immigrants sponsored by relatives who were already U.S. citizens, on work and student visas, as illegals and as parolees. Non-HIAS immigrants from the FSU were interviewed in NJPS if they qualified as Jews or PJBs, and the NJPS estimate includes them together with the HIAS arrivals.

In conclusion, the two sources of recent FSU Jewish immigrant data -- NJPS and HIAS -- provide very similar total numbers once standardized criteria are applied to both sources of data.

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Report #3

Israelis in the United States: Reconciling Estimates with NJPS

In the 1980s, a common perception was that as many as 300,000-500,000 Israeli-born Jews resided in the United States. These perceptions were fueled in part by two reports, one from the Jewish Agency for Israel and one from the Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles.

The 1981 Jewish Agency report, based on the investigations of then Director Shmuel Lahis, reported up to 500,000 Israelis residing in the United States. The report was commissioned as part of the Israeli government's efforts to highlight a perceived problem of emigration from Israel and to provide incentives to bring emigrants back to Israel. The 1983 Los Angeles report put the number of Israelis in the Los Angeles region alone at up to 100,000, suggesting the national estimate was several hundred thousand.

Although estimates of several hundred thousand Israelis in the U.S. remain popular, scholarly analyses of the Israeli Jewish population in the United States do not support such high figures. Almost all scholarly estimates place the total number of Israelis residing in the U.S. at 100,000 or fewer. Caution should be utilized in making direct comparisons between these studies, as precise definitions of "who is an Israeli" vary. One fairly common criterion, however, is to define Israelis as those who were born in Israel.

The NJPS estimate of Israelis in the U.S. is based on the definition above. NJPS defines "Israelis" as Jews who were born in Israel and estimates a total of 63,000 Israeli-born adult Jews living in the United States. In addition, a total of 30,000 children live in the households of Israel-born adult Jews. Maximally, then, the Israeli-born Jewish population in the U.S. is 93,000. However, only 7,000 of the children were reported born before the Israeli-born adult immigrated to the United States, suggesting the Israeli-born Jewish population residing in the United States is 70,000, with 23,000 children born to Israeli immigrants already living in the U.S. and thus technically first generation Americans.

A variety of studies support the NJPS estimate of an Israeli-born Jewish population of less than 100,000 in the United States. In their wide-ranging examination of Israelis living in the United States, Steven Gold and Bruce Phillips report estimates from two survey sources -- the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey and the 1991 New York Jewish Population Study, both with various adjustments -- that put the Israeli-born Jewish population in the U.S. at 90,000.

Gold and Phillips also report two estimates produced by demographer Pini Herman. Working with data from the Immigration and Naturalization Service from 1948 through 1990, Herman estimates between 97,000 and 117,000 Israelis living in the U.S. in 1990. However, Herman's estimate does not adjust for mortality among Israelis with INS records dating across the 1948-90 period. Adjusting for mortality would reduce the total below 117,000. Using U.S. Census data

from 1990, Herman puts the number of Israeli-born persons in the U.S. at 90,000, but that figure does not differentiate between Jewish and non-Jewish natives of Israel, suggesting the Jewish component of the Israeli-born in the U.S. is somewhat lower.

Yinon Cohen and Yitzchak Haberfeld, sociologists at Tel Aviv University, also use 1990 U.S. Census data to estimate the Israeli-born population residing in the U.S. at that time. Their estimate, published in Demography -- the leading peer-reviewed academic journal for demographic studies -- puts the number of Israeli-born Jews living in the U.S at 80,000.

Moreover, Cohen and Haberfeld point out that data from the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics place the total number of Israelis residing abroad -- using broader definitional criteria -- at 340,000. Of that total, up to one half may be in the United States. Consequently, estimates of 450-500,000 Israelis in the U.S. are inaccurate.

In another study, Kenneth Hill examines Israeli immigrants in the United States for the National Academy of Sciences. Hill uses a more expansive standard that defines Israelis as Israeli citizens upon entry to the United States. He uses three sources of data to produce estimates that overlap considerably with one another. Based on U.S. Census data, Hill estimates that between 67,000 to 137,000 Israelis reside in the U.S.

Using U.S. INS data, he estimates that between 55,000 and 99,000 Israelis live in the U.S. Furthermore, he employs data from the Israeli Bureau of Central Statistics to estimate that approximately 120,000 Israelis reside in the U.S., falling within the range provided by U.S. Census data. Hill's estimate of 120,000 requires the assumption that one-half of all Israelis residing outside Israel live in the U.S.

Finally, the 1997 Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles study of the Jewish population in Los Angeles estimates 14,000 Israeli-born Jews in the area. This is considerably less than 100,000 originally suggested by the Los Angeles Federation fifteen years earlier. This updated study suggests the unreliability of national estimates of Israelis in the hundreds of thousands, which would be strongly influenced by an estimate from Los Angeles.

In sum, scholarly estimates have put the estimate of Israeli-born Jews residing in the United States between 55,000 and 137,000. The NJPS estimate of 70,000-93,000 is consistent with these other estimates. The NJPS estimate is also consistent with the fact that there is no evidence in either the popular press or the scholarly literature of a significant increase in immigration from Israel to the United States during the 1990s.

There are several possible explanations for the discrepancy between higher, more popular estimates on one hand and lower, more scholarly estimates by NJPS and other studies on the other hand. Public perceptions do not take into account, for example, the return of many Israelis to Israel who have spent time in the U.S. On the other hand, popular estimates may include spouses or children of Israeli-born Jews, even if they themselves have never been to Israel or are not Israeli-born. These and other factors may contribute to "gross" overestimations of the Israeli-born Jewish population, as Cohen and Haberfeld conclude.

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Report #4

Comparing Estimates of Holocaust Survivors: NJPS and the Claims Conference

NJPS estimates that there are 122,000-142,000 Holocaust survivors residing in the United States. The following criteria were used to arrive at this estimate:

1) All respondents who were initially classified as Jewish and born in Europe, in 1945 or earlier, were asked at least one of the following two questions:

a) Between 1933 and 1945, did you live in a country that was under Nazi rule, or under the direct influence of the Nazis?

b) Between 1933 and 1945, did you leave a country or region under Nazi rule or direct influence because of Nazi occupation of the area you were living in at the time?

2) Any respondent who answered "yes" to either of these two questions was considered by NJPS to be a Holocaust survivor. The weighted number of these respondents is 122,000.

3) The questions above were not administered to respondents initially classified as People of Jewish Background (PJB). A rough ceiling estimate of PJB Holocaust survivors was calculated, as follows:

a) 57% of all Jewish respondents age 55+ and born in Europe indicated that they were Holocaust survivors.

b) The weighted number of PJB respondents age 55+ and born in Europe is 35,000. Assuming that PJB respondents would have answered the Holocaust survivor questions like Jewish respondents, an additional 20,000 survivors can be added to the new total (.57 x 35,000 = 19,950), which now becomes 142,000.

To assess the reliability of the NJPS estimate of 122,000-142,000 Holocaust survivors, an estimated figure from the Conference On Jewish Material Claims Against Germany ("Claims Conference") was obtained. In its Planning Committee report written in 2000 ("A Plan for Allocating Successor Organization Resources," Report of the Planning Committee, Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (2000), 12-15), the Claims Conference estimates that between 127,000 and 146,000 Jews living in the United States are Nazi victims. Both studies use identical criteria to define Holocaust survivors/Nazi victims. In addition, definitions of Jewish identity are comparable.

In conclusion, then, the Claims Conference and NJPS estimates are very similar, resulting in a high confidence level for the NJPS survey estimate.

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Report #5

Enrollment Estimates in Selected Types of Jewish Education: NJPS and the Avi Chai Foundation

NJPS provides an estimate of the total number of students age 6-17 attending Jewish day schools or yeshivas. In addition, NJPS provides estimates of the enrollments of children ages 0-5 in kindergartens, nursery schools, pre-schools and childcare programs under Jewish auspices.

To help validate the NJPS estimates, Table 1 below compares NJPS estimates to estimates of day school enrollments provided by the Avi Chai Foundation in its census of Jewish day schools conducted in 1998-99 (Schick, Marvin. 2000. A Census of Jewish Day Schools in the United States. New York: Avi Chai Foundation.)

In evaluating different data sources, it is important to examine categories that are as comparable as possible. The category best suited for comparison between NJPS 2000-01 and the Avi Chai census of day schools is the total enrollment in day schools or yeshivas for 6-17 year olds (i.e., 1st through 12th grade in the Avi Chai census).

As Table 1 indicates, NJPS 2000-01 and Avi Chai estimates are very similar, with NJPS estimating 161,000 students in day schools or yeshivas and Avi Chai estimating 153,000. The convergence of estimates supports the validity of both the Avi Chai census and the NJPS.

Other categories in the table are not as well suited to comparison. NJPS asked about enrollments in kindergartens, nursery schools, pre-schools and childcare programs under Jewish auspices for children age 4-5 and 0-3 separately, but did not specify whether the program is part of a Jewish day school. In contrast, the Avi Chai Foundation's data for children age 3-5 includes day school enrollments only. Moreover, the Avi Chai Foundation report states that enrollment figures for 3-year-olds are incomplete and does not provide data for those less than 3 years of age.

The absence of strict comparability between the two data sources makes direct comparisons of estimates for 4-5 and 0-3 year-olds difficult. However, one test is possible: given the more expansive definition of Jewish programs in the NJPS data and the inclusion of complete data for children 0-3 in NJPS, the NJPS estimates in these two categories should be higher than the Avi Chai estimates. The table indicates this is the case, thereby again supporting the validity of the NJPS estimates.

Table 1: Educational enrollments under Jewish auspices by age group

	NJPS 2000-01	Avi Chai Foundation
6-17 year olds: day school or yeshiva	**160,954**	**152,856**
4-5 year olds (sum)	**40,722**	**30,328**
Kindergarten (sub-sum)	7,958	
Synagogue	396	
JCC	3,958	
Another Jewish organization	3,604	
Pre-school/nursery school (sub-sum)	31,531	
Synagogue	15,973	
JCC	9,857	
Another Jewish organization	5,701	
Childcare (sub-sum)	1,233	
Synagogue	0	
JCC	0	
Another Jewish organization	1,233	
Day school only		30,328
0-3 year olds (sum)	**20,431**	**6,847**
Pre-school/nursery school (sub-sum)	13,026	
Synagogue	4,605	
JCC	1,549	
Another Jewish organization	6,872	
Childcare (sub-sum)	7,405	
Synagogue	495	
JCC	4,692	
Another Jewish organization	2,218	
Day school only		6,847
Total day school/yeshiva for 6-17 year olds plus any Jewish program for 0-5 year olds	**221,107**	
Total day school/yeshiva		**190,031**

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Report #6

Non-Response Bias Test -- Jewish Religious Denominations

The UJC Research Department conducted a number of tests to ensure that various subpopulations of American Jews were accurately surveyed during NJPS 2000-01. The goal of this particular test was to assess the response rates of American Orthodox Jews to a telephone interview. If the response rates of Orthodox Jews were found to be substantially lower than those of non-Orthodox Jews, this would suggest that the population estimate of Orthodox Jews in NJPS 2000-01 might be low.

Sixteen geographically dispersed federations of various sizes, with reputations for maintaining reliable databases, participated in this test. These federations provided UJC with two types of names and phone numbers.

The first type, Conservative/Reform, numbering 12,065 usable phone numbers, consisted of individuals categorized as either Conservative or Reform by synagogue affiliation. The second type, Unaffiliated, numbering 8,730 usable phone numbers, consisted of individuals with no synagogue affiliation and no federation campaign contribution in the previous two years.

Three major Orthodox synagogue organizations (Agudath Israel, Orthodox Union and Young Israel) provided UJC with recommendations of 28 geographically dispersed congregations. Of these congregations, 15 cooperated, providing a total of 4,298 usable telephone numbers for the Orthodox sample.

Approximately 500 usable telephone numbers from each of the 3 samples (Orthodox, Conservative/Reform and Unaffiliated) were dialed between July 5, 2001 and September 5, 2001. No calls were made during the Jewish Sabbath. RoperASW, a survey research firm with headquarters in New York City, conducted the telephone dialing. A screener nearly identical to the NJPS 2000-01 screener was administered, as were 11 additional NJPS questions.

Of the 502 households classified as Orthodox for whom there was a final disposition, 149 or 30% of the total completed a full interview. This was a higher percentage than either the households classified as Conservative/Reform (119/496, or 24%) or the households classified as Unaffiliated (90/496, or 18%).

The Orthodox refusal rate was 50% (249/502). The refusal rate was slightly higher for the Conservative/Reform sample at 53% (264/496) and somewhat lower (44%) for the Unaffiliated sample (218/496). In the context of this test, refusers are considered to be respondents who answered the telephone but did not complete the interview. This category excludes respondents who had a language barrier or were hearing impaired.

Based on these results from a non-random, non-representative sample of American Jews, there is no reason to suggest that Orthodox Jews have substantially lower rates of response than Jews of other denominations. In conclusion, therefore, this particular test produces no evidence that the Orthodox Jewish population is underestimated in NJPS 2000-01.

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Report #7

Testing for Jewish "Denial"

Do Jews deny being Jewish when called on the telephone? The goal of this test was to indicate whether there is a substantial incidence of Jewish "denial" among people known to be Jews. If the rate of Jewish denial among Jews in a phone interview was found to be quite high, this would suggest that the American Jewish population estimate in NJPS 2000-01 may be too low.

A total of 39,917 phone numbers from 5 different Jewish federation lists (Cleveland, Chicago, Kansas City, Palm Beach and San Antonio) were submitted to RoperASW, a survey research firm with headquarters in New York City, which conducted the telephone dialing. Phone calls were made on Saturday, October 5, 2002 and Sunday, October 6, 2002.

Neither interviewers nor respondents were informed of the study's sponsor. A screening interview nearly identical to the NJPS 2000-01 screener was administered, and respondents were classified as either Jewish, PJB or non-Jewish. For the purposes of this test the presence of a Jew or PJB in the household was sufficient to categorize the household as Jewish.

If a household was classified as non-Jewish after being asked the four screening questions about each adult in the household, the respondent (on behalf of the household) was asked a few additional questions concerning the presence of other Jewish relatives and whether anyone in the household had ever considered him/herself Jewish (and why).

Of the 997 valid responses to the survey, 66 (6.6%) of the households contacted were identified as non-Jewish. Assuming 100% of the people on the federation lists were Jewish, the maximum possible Jewish denial rate from this study would be 6.6%. However, the Kansas City sample inadvertently included a list of JCC members that contains known non-Jews. When removing the Kansas City respondents from the larger sample, the Jewish denial rate from the remaining sample becomes 3.5% (25/723).

Of the remaining sample (Chicago, Cleveland, Palm Beach and San Antonio), 25 out of 723 households initially qualify as potential Jewish "deniers." However, one of these 25 households previously considered itself to be Jewish because it once had a Jewish grandparent. In a separate question, 6 other households indicated that they once had a Jewish grandparent or other relative. In these 7 cases, Jewishness at some level is being affirmed, not denied. Subtracting these 7 households from the original 25, the adjusted estimated ceiling rate for Jewish denial becomes 2.6% (18/723).

This 2.6% ceiling estimate, however, is based on the initial assumption that the 4 submitted federation lists were 100% Jewish. Otherwise, a seeming Jewish "denial" may instead be a non-Jew affirming the fact that he/she is not Jewish.

Before the Jewish denial test was conducted in October 2002, UJC asked participating federations for lists of donor phone numbers that were purged of non-Jews and business numbers. Although there was not sufficient time before the test to determine the criteria by which the lists were assembled, the UJC Research Department has since verified with federation professionals in each participating community the composition of the lists that were sent. As a result of this verification, there is reason to believe that some instances of Jewish "denial" may instead be instances where non-Jews were contacted:

In 2 of the 4 federation lists that were used, "prospects" were included in lists submitted to UJC. Prospects are names of non-federation donors who are constantly added to the federation database, although there exists no systematic criteria for doing so. There is also no way to verify that every prospect added is, in fact, Jewish.

Moreover, federation personnel do not believe that prospects are ever purged from the database. For the purposes of this Jewish denial test, this may result in calling a phone number that once belonged to a Jewish prospect but now belongs to a non-Jew. In addition, officials in the remaining 2 communities indicated that, as the names of their donors were not coded by religion, they could not rule out the possibility of some non-Jews appearing on their lists.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the estimated ceiling rate for Jewish denial is 2.6%. However, this ceiling assumes a 100% Jewish sample. A closer examination of federation lists suggests that this may not be the case, however. The actual ceiling from this test may therefore be lower, potentially as low as 0. In addition, these specific lists cannot be considered to be a random or representative sample of the larger American Jewish population.