THE NATIONAL JEWISH POPULATION SURVEY 2000-01

STRENGTH, CHALLENGE AND DIVERSITY IN THE AMERICAN JEWISH POPULATION

A UNITED JEWISH COMMUNITIES REPORT

IN COOPERATION WITH

THE MANDELL L. BERMAN INSTITUTE – NORTH AMERICAN JEWISH DATA BANK

SEPTEMBER 2003

Updated January 2004
see downloadable Errata for corrections from original edition

Copyright © 2003
United Jewish Communities
111 Eighth Avenue
New York, NY 10011-5201

ERRATA

THE NATIONAL JEWISH POPULATION SURVEY 2000-01

STRENGTH, CHALLENGE AND DIVERSITY IN THE AMERICAN JEWISH POPULATION

In January 2004, United Jewish Communities issued an updated edition of its report and PowerPoint slides entitled, "The National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01: Strength, Challenge and Diversity in the American Jewish Population." The January 2004 edition contains the following corrections and clarifications from the original edition issued in September 2003:

Report:

1. Page 6, text in right-hand column: 34% of Jewish households have incomes over $75,000 per year (changed from 36%), and 17% of all U.S. households have incomes over $75,000 per year (changed from 18%).

2. Page 7, Table 7: 67% of adult Jews hold or attend a Passover Seder (changed from 77%).

3. Page 7, text in right-hand column: The distribution of Jewish denominations is as follows: 38% Reform (changed from 39%), 22% Orthodox (changed from 21%), 2% Reconstructionist (changed from 3%), and 5% other types (changed from 4%). The percentage for Conservative (33%) was correct in the original edition.

4. Page 9, Table 9, last row: 55% of Jews age 55-64 regard being Jewish as very important to them (changed from 45%).

5. Page 12, Table 11: Asterisks (*) have been added to the column headings for "Family and friends in Israel" and "U.S. and Israeli Jews share destiny." The asterisks indicate the base population is 4.3 million Jews with stronger Jewish connections, rather than the full population of 5.2 million Jews (see pages 1-2 of the report for a fuller explanation of the distinction between the 4.3 and 5.2 million population bases).

6. Page 23, text in right-hand column: 22% of adult immigrants who have arrived in the U.S. since 1980 live in households below the poverty line (changed from "22% of immigrants" to clarify that the percentage refers to adult immigrants).

7. Page 24, Table 20: Title is "Poverty among American Jewish Adults" (changed from "Poverty among American Jews" to clarify that the percentages refer to adults only).

PowerPoint slides:

1. Slide 10: 9% are divorced (changed from 8%) and 8% are widowed (changed from 9%).

2. Slide 14: A U.S. map showing the four regions of the country has been added.
3. Slide 19: Percentages have been added on top of columns for each income category.
4. Slide 22: 67% of adult Jews hold or attend a Passover Seder (changed from 77%).
5. Slide 23: An asterisk (*) has been added to "Use the Internet for Jewish purposes." The asterisk indicates the base population is 4.3 million Jews with stronger Jewish connections, rather than the full population of 5.2 million Jews (see slide 3 for explanation of the distinction between the 4.3 and 5.2 million population bases).
6. Slide 24: 27% of American Jews attend synagogue once/month or more (changed from "attend synagogue monthly").
7. Slide 25: A footnote has been added to explain that 46% of adult American Jews reside in the 40% of Jewish households belonging to a synagogue.
8. Slide 36: A footnote has been added to explain that some Jewish adults reported multiple forms of Jewish education.
9. Slide 50: The text reads "Jews 65 and over…" (changed from "Jews over 65…").
10. Slides 50-53: Keys refer to "age 65 and over" (changed from "above age 65").

PREAMBLE

Dr. Bernard J. Shapiro
Principal and Vice-Chancellor Emeritus, McGill University

United Jewish Communities (UJC) and the Jewish federation system sponsored the National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) 2000-01 in order both to determine the size and key characteristics of the American Jewish population and to provide a policy-relevant portrait of that population so as to assist those planning communal services. Planning for the NJPS, undertaken by UJC, the NJPS Trustees and the National Technical Advisory Committee (NTAC), a volunteer committee of academic and survey researchers, was completed by mid-2000, and the telephone survey itself was conducted in the twelve months between August 2000 and August 2001.

On October 8, 2002, UJC released key demographic findings from NJPS, and the release of additional findings was planned for the UJC General Assembly scheduled for the following month. In that intervening month, however, a number of issues arose with respect to the NJPS data.

The issues and challenges that had been raised focused primarily on (i) missing data, (ii) weighting and design effects, (iii) response rates, (iv) accurate counting of the overall Jewish population as well as specific groups within it, (v) the "screener" questions that had been used to qualify individuals to participate in the NJPS, and (vi) comparability between the 1990 and the 2000-01 National Jewish Population Surveys.

As a result, UJC announced that further releases would be postponed. At the same time, UJC asked me to act, on a volunteer basis, so as to assist the organization in considering these issues and where appropriate responding to them. After a review of the NJPS and its implementation, I came to a number of conclusions. First, that the basic conception and survey design of the NJPS was not a matter of consensus within either the service or the research community. As with any complex undertaking, there were a variety of alternative routes that might have been taken although none of these would have been without the challenges of all survey research, especially with respect to particularly small populations. Second, that despite the issues of basic design and the further difficulties that emerged in the implementation process, there remained much of value in the NJPS data and that, therefore, steps should be taken to validate the NJPS and make its findings available to national and local Jewish communities.

Therefore, in the months since November 2002, the UJC staff – in conjunction with NTAC, RoperASW (the firm that conducted the survey's fieldwork) and special consultants – worked on all of these matters. A full listing of the issues is presented in the methodological appendix to this report along with instructions on how to obtain more information about them.

Finally, in view of the complexity of the project, the concerns raised, and the broad interest in the findings, UJC accepted my advice and commissioned a final external review of the technical aspects of NJPS. Mark Schulman, President of the American Association for Public Opinion Research, the leading professional organization for survey researchers, and a team of three other experts reviewed issues of sampling, screening, response rate and weighting. Their report, available on the UJC website, was very useful and, in general, validated both our assessment of the integrity of the NJPS data and its limitations.

This second release of NJPS data by UJC reviews and expands some of the demographic issues covered in the first release of October 2002. In addition, it presents a range of findings on Jewish identity, involvement and community connections. These findings represent, however, only a small subset of the information now available from the NJPS data file, information that

should be of considerable interest to researchers and other analysts in the coming months and years.

Although the review process delayed release of the NJPS data, it enabled UJC to be satisfied with the value of the work, to possess confidence in the data themselves, and to have a clear sense of the data's limitations. I am convinced that the months taken to review the study have confirmed it contains a tremendous amount of important and reliable information for Jewish communal organizations, the wider American Jewish population, and of course for academic researchers who specialize in contemporary American Jewry.

National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01
Supporters and Participants

Mandell L. Berman, NJPS Co-Chair
Edward H. Kaplan, NJPS Co-Chair

NJPS Trustee Funders
Andrea & Charles Bronfman Philanthropies
AVI CHAI Foundation
Mandell L. Berman
Charles & Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation
Council of Jewish Federations Endowment Fund
Crown & Goodman Family
David & Inez Myers Foundation
William Davidson
Eugene Applebaum Family Foundation
J.E. and Z.B. Butler Foundation
Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland
Jewish Federation of Greater Washington Endowment Fund
Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit
Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago
Edward Kaplan
Leonard and Tobee Kaplan Philanthropic Fund
Mandel Supporting Foundations
Robert Russell Memorial Foundation
UJA Federation of New York
United Jewish Appeal
United Jewish Communities

NJPS Funders
Alan Ades
Guy Barron
Belz Foundation
Byron & Dorothy Gerson Fund
Stanley Chesley, Esq.
CMS Companies
Judge Avern Cohn
Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston
Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany
Coville-Triest Family Foundation
Marvin Danto
DeRoy Testamentary Foundation
Michael David Epstein
Sam Frankel
Robert Goldberg
Greater Miami Jewish Federation
Irwin Green
David Handleman
Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation
Hoffberger Foundation
Isadore & Bertha Gudelsky Family Foundation
Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco,
the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties

Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles
Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta
Jewish Federation of Greater Dallas
Jewish Federation of Greater Houston
Jewish Federation of St. Louis
Donald P. Kent
Robert Kogod
Jonathan Kolker
Edward C. Levy, Jr.
Leon Levy
Lippman Kanfer Family Foundation
Robert Loup
Lubin-Green Foundation of the Jewish Federation of St. Louis
Lionel Margolick
Michael B. Rukin Charitable Foundation
Minneapolis Jewish Federation
Joseph H. Orley
Albert Ratner
Reisman Foundation of Rhode Island
Eugene Ribakoff
Dr. Irving Smokler
Charles Steiner
The Associated: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore
John Uhlmann
United Jewish Federation of MetroWest
United Jewish Federation of Pittsburgh
Steven I. Victor
Larry Weinberg

NATIONAL TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Vivian Klaff, Co-Chair, University of Delaware
Frank Mott, Co-Chair, The Ohio State University
Carmel Chiswick, University of Illinois at Chicago
Sergio DellaPergola, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Peter Friedman, Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago
Norbert Fruehauf, Council of Jewish Federations
Alice Goldstein, Brown University
Sidney Goldstein, Brown University
Bethamie Horowitz, Mandel Foundation Israel
Sherry Israel, Brandeis University
Ariela Keysar, City University of New York
Daniel Levine, Statistical Consultant
David Marker, Westat, Rockville, MD
Egon Mayer, Brooklyn College
Bruce Phillips, Hebrew Union College, Los Angeles
Seymour Sudman (z”l), University of Illinois
Ira Sheskin, University of Miami
Mervin Verbit, Brooklyn College
Joseph Waksberg, Westat, Rockville, MD
Lawrence Ziffer, Center for Jewish Education, Baltimore

SPECIAL CONSULTANT ON NJPS
Bernard J. Shapiro, McGill University

SENIOR CONSULTANT ON NJPS
Steven M. Cohen, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

PUBLICATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Howard Rieger, Chair, United Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh
Steven M. Cohen, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Peter Friedman, Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago
Sidney Goldstein, Brown University
Bethamie Horowitz, Mandel Foundation Israel
Sherry Israel, Brandeis University
Vivian Klaff, University of Delaware
Frank Mott, The Ohio State University
Bruce Phillips, Hebrew Union College, Los Angeles
Lawrence Ziffer, Center for Jewish Education, Baltimore

DATA UTILIZATION COMMITTEE
Hayim Herring, Chair, STAR (Synagogues: Transformation and Renewal)
Robert Hyfler, United Jewish Communities
Sherry Israel, Brandeis University
Alisa Rubin Kurshan, UJA Federation of New York
Leslie Robin, United Jewish Communities
Rabbi Louis Feldstein, United Jewish Communities

UNITED JEWISH COMMUNITIES NJPS PROJECT STAFF
Lorraine Blass, NJPS Project Manager
Laurence Kotler-Berkowitz, NJPS Research Director
Jonathon Ament, Senior Project Director
Danyelle Peckerman-Neuman, Research Associate
Debbie Bursztyn, Project Manager, Database Systems
Jim Schwartz, Research Director, 1997-2002
Sarit Amir, Senior Project Director, 1999-2001
Jeffrey Scheckner, Research Associate, 1997-2002

UNITED JEWISH COMMUNITIES LEADERSHIP
Max M. Fisher, Honorary Chairman
James S. Tisch, Chairman of the Board
Robert Goldberg, Chairman of the Executive Committee
S. Stephen Selig III, National Chairman, Campaign/FRD
Morton B. Plant, Treasurer
Joseph Kanfer, Assistant Treasurer
Stephen H. Hoffman, CEO/President
Beryl Geber, Vice Chair
Julia Koschitzky, Vice Chair
Michael Lebovitz, Vice Chair
Kathy Manning, Vice Chair
Robert M. Schrayer, Vice Chair
Karen Shapira, Vice Chair
Carole A. Solomon, Vice Chair
Roselyne C. Swig, Vice Chair
Stephen D. Solender, President Emeritus

PRINCIPAL REPORT AUTHORS
Laurence Kotler-Berkowitz, United Jewish Communities
Steven M. Cohen, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Jonathon Ament, United Jewish Communities
Vivian Klaff, University of Delaware
Frank Mott, The Ohio State University
Danyelle Peckerman-Neuman, United Jewish Communities

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS
Lorraine Blass, United Jewish Communities
Debbie Bursztyn, United Jewish Communities
David Marker, Westat, Rockville, MD

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREAMBLE	**i**
NJPS SUPPORTERS AND PARTICIPANTS	**iii**
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	**viii**
INTRODUCTION	**1**
Analytic limitations	
DEMOGRAPHY	**2**
The Jewish population	
Jewish households	
Age structure	
Marriage and fertility	
Geography: regional residence and mobility	
Education, employment and income	
JEWISH CONNECTIONS	**7**
Regional variations	
Over-time continuity and change	
Communal affiliation	
Israel	
Philanthropy	
Jewish education	
INTERMARRIAGE	**16**
Defining and calculating intermarriage	
Rates of intermarriage	
Differences with the 1990 NJPS Highlights Report	
Variations in intermarriage	
Intermarriage and current Jewish connections	
Intermarriage and Jewish children	
SPECIAL TOPICS	**20**
The elderly	
Immigrants	
Poverty	
CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS	**26**
METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX	**28**
POWERPOINT PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS	**33**

Executive Summary

Key findings in the National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01 include:

Demography

- The Jewish population in the U.S. totals 5.2 million people, consisting of an estimated 4.1 million adults and 1 million children in households and 100,000 Jews in institutional settings. Jews reside in 2.9 million households with a total of 6.7 million people, both Jews and non-Jews.
- The median age of the Jewish population is older than it was ten years ago and older than the median age of the total U.S. population now. Twenty percent of the Jewish population is under the age of 18, and 19% is over the age of 65.
- Relative to the total U.S. population, Jews tend to marry at later ages.
- Jewish women have somewhat lower fertility rates than all U.S. women, and Jewish fertility rates are below population replacement levels.
- More Jews live in the Northeast than any other region, but many native-born Jews have migrated to the South and West over the course of their lifetimes.
- Relative to the total U.S. population, Jews are more highly educated, have more prestigious jobs and earn higher household incomes.

Jewish Connections

- Jews connect to their community, traditions and other Jews in a variety of ways.
- Most Jews participate in selected holidays and forms of cultural involvement, maintain strong social connections to other Jews, and regard being Jewish as very important.
- Smaller proportions of Jews – ranging from a quarter to a half – are variously engaged in other aspects of Jewish life as well, such as synagogue affiliation, charitable giving, volunteering, and many ritual observances.
- Jews in the Northeast lead in most indicators of Jewish involvement, while Jews in the West trail.
- Adults age 35-64 display strength and stability in selected indicators of Jewish involvement and declines in others, suggesting diversity in over-time trends.
- Jews who belong to Jewish institutions are substantially more engaged in other forms of Jewish life than Jews who do not.
- American Jews maintain multiple social and attitudinal connections to Israel. Ties to Israel are powerfully associated with communal affiliation, strongest in the Northeast and least strong in the West.
- More Jews give to non-Jewish philanthropic causes than to Jewish causes.
- Fewer younger adults than older adults give to all causes. The gap in giving between younger and older Jews is larger for Jewish than non-Jewish causes, and larger still for federation than other Jewish causes.
- A greater proportion of Jewish children attend day schools than ever before, and a greater proportion of Jewish college and graduate students take Jewish studies courses than ever before.

Intermarriage

- The intermarriage rate for Jews who have married since 1996 is 47%.
- Differences between intermarriage rates reported in the 1990 Highlights Report and this report are due to differences between the "born Jewish" definition used for the 1990 analysis and the "currently Jewish" definition used in this report.

- Both definitions show intermarriage slightly increasing since 1985, but at a much slower rate than during the 1970s and early 1980s.
- Intermarriage is more common among young adults, Jews in the West, Jews with no or less intensive forms of Jewish education, those with lower levels of secular education, and the adult children of intermarried parents. Among adult Jews with intermarried parents, those raised Jewish are less likely to be intermarried than those not raised Jewish.
- In-married Jews maintain more Jewish connections and greater engagement with Jewish life than intermarried Jews.
- Almost all children of in-married spouses are being raised Jewish, compared to one-third of the children of intermarried spouses.

SPECIAL TOPICS

- Relative to other Jewish adults, more elderly (age 65 and over) live alone, have low incomes, and report both poor health and health conditions that limit daily activities.
- Many elderly Jews remain actively engaged in the Jewish community. Relative to Jews under age 65, greater or nearly equal proportions of elderly Jews affiliate with Jewish institutions, give to Jewish causes, and participate in communal programs and activities.
- Over 335,000 Jewish adults are immigrants who have come to this country since 1980. About two-thirds of these immigrants are from the former Soviet Union (FSU).
- Jewish immigrants from the FSU are older, more concentrated in the Northeast, have fewer children and report lower incomes than non-FSU Jewish immigrants.
- Ethnic ties and attachments are important components of the Jewish connections among FSU immigrants.
- Five percent of Jewish households report incomes below the U.S. government's poverty line. An estimated 353,000 people, including 272,000 adults and 81,000 children, live in poor Jewish households.
- Poverty is more common among the Jewish elderly, immigrants, single mothers, those with a high school education or below, and those who are not currently employed.
- Adults living in households under the poverty line report poorer health and more health conditions that limit daily activities.
- Many Jews in poor households join Jewish organizations and contribute to the Jewish community, but they do so less frequently than Jews in other households.
- Poor Jews are equally likely or more likely than other Jews to observe individual rituals such as lighting Shabbat and Chanukah candles and keeping kosher, and they have equally strong or stronger ethnic attachments than other Jews.

INTRODUCTION

American Jews possess many strengths, face important challenges, and exhibit notable diversity. They maintain frequent points of involvement in Jewish religious and ethnic group life, but many are disengaged from the Jewish community. As a group, American Jews have relatively high educational levels and socio-economic status, but significant pockets of poverty and social service needs also exist within the population. Intermarriage, delayed marriage and low fertility rates constitute challenges to Jewish continuity. The diversity across these areas – religious, cultural, social, communal and demographic – is truly striking, making simple, global characterizations difficult to reach. The American Jewish landscape, while full of common themes, is also marked by systematic variation.

This portrait of American Jews emerges from the National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) 2000-01, a representative survey of the Jewish population in the United States sponsored by United Jewish Communities and the Jewish federation system. This report presents findings on several demographic topics; Jewish connections and engagement; intermarriage; and three special topics, the elderly, immigrants and those living below the poverty line. In coming months, UJC will issue a series of specialized reports on these and other topics, such as synagogue affiliation and denominations, Jewish practice, philanthropy and volunteerism, Jewish college students, marriage and families, and regional differences among Jews.

This report and other documents associated with NJPS 2000-01 are available on the UJC website, www.ujc.org/njps. The NJPS electronic data files and full study documentation are available through the North American Jewish Data Bank, a joint project of United Jewish Communities and Brandeis University. For further information on obtaining the data files and documentation, visit the Data Bank website, www.jewishdatabank.org, or email the Data Bank at info@jewishdatabank.org.

Analytic limitations

All surveys are subject to certain analytic limitations due to research design and methodology, and NJPS is no exception.

The NJPS questionnaire was administered to 4,523 respondents who represent the total Jewish population. Of these, 4,220 respondents with stronger Jewish connections received a "long-form" questionnaire. An additional 303 respondents with Jewish connections that are not as strong answered a "short-form" questionnaire. The short-form version consisted of a subset of questions on the long form, omitting many questions on specifically Jewish topics. As a result, some data – for example, many demographic items – are available for the entire population. Other data, especially on many Jewish subjects, are restricted to a more engaged population of Jews represented by respondents to the long form.

The most important implication of this design decision is related to findings on Jewish connections. Descriptions of Jewish involvement and identity that are restricted to the more engaged Jewish population would, in many cases, be somewhat less strong if they had been collected from all respondents representing the entire Jewish population.

Furthermore, in many instances, data in NJPS 2000-01 are not fully comparable with data on similar topics found in NJPS 1990 due to changes in question wording. Many methodological studies have shown that how a question is asked affects how respondents answer it. Researchers who designed NJPS 2000-01 frequently changed question wording, especially on Jewish topics. This was designed to produce more precise questions than had been asked in 1990, but it also reduced comparability between the surveys. As a result, comparisons between the studies are limited in this report.

DEMOGRAPHY

NJPS collected a variety of important demographic information on the American Jewish population. Total population and household estimates as well as the population's age structure, regional residence, mobility, marriage and fertility, and socio-economic characteristics are critical to understanding the demographic dynamics of American Jewry.

The Jewish population

The total Jewish population in the United States is estimated at 5.2 million people (see Table 1), including survey estimates of 4.1 million adults and 1 million children in households, as well as additional estimates of 100,000 Jews in institutional settings who were not sampled as part of NJPS.

For purposes of this report, a Jew is defined as a person:

- Whose religion is Jewish, OR
- Whose religion is Jewish and something else, OR
- Who has no religion and has at least one Jewish parent or a Jewish upbringing, OR
- Who has a non-monotheistic religion, and has at least one Jewish parent or a Jewish upbringing.

This definition is very similar to the definition used in the 1990 NJPS, which estimated a total Jewish population of 5.5 million people, including survey estimates of 5.4 million people in households and an additional 100,000 Jews in institutional settings who were not sampled.

In NJPS 2000-01, the population with stronger Jewish connections – represented by respondents who answered the long-form questionnaire – consists of 4.3 million people, including over 3.3 million adults and more than 900,000 children. In the remainder of this report, findings about the Jewish population of 4.3 million are noted by an asterisk (*) following a specific topic or by a footnote. Otherwise, findings in this report apply to the total Jewish population of 5.2 million people.

(For information on why NJPS 2000-01 may have undercounted the Jewish population, see the Methodological Appendix).

Jewish households

There are 2.9 million Jewish households, defined as a household with at least one Jewish adult, with a total of 6.7 million people residing in them. Of all people in Jewish households, 76% are Jews and 24% are not Jews. The average number of Jews per Jewish household is 1.8, and the average number of people in Jewish households is 2.3. In 1990, there were 2.7 million Jewish households, containing on average 2.0 Jews and 2.4 people overall.

Table 1. Jewish population and household estimates.

	2000-01	1990
Total Jewish population	5.2 million	5.5 million
Total Jewish households	2.9 million	2.7 million
Jews per Jewish household	1.8	2.0
People per Jewish household	2.3	2.4
Total people in Jewish households	6.7 million	6.6 million

Among all Jewish households, 30% are comprised of a single adult living alone, 37% consist of two adults living with no children, and 7% are comprised of more than two adults with no children. Children (defined as age 17 or younger) reside in 26% of all Jewish households, in most cases with two adults. Approximately 3% of all Jewish households are composed of a single adult with one or more children.

Age structure of the Jewish population

The American Jewish population is older than the Jewish population ten years ago and the total U.S. population now (see Table 2). The median age of the Jewish

population is currently 42, five years older than the median Jewish age in 1990 and seven years older than the overall median age for the U.S. population.[1] The proportion of children in the Jewish population stands at 20%, compared to 21% 10 years ago and 26% for the total U.S. population now. At the other end of the age spectrum, 19% of Jews are elderly, defined as 65 years of age or older, compared to 17% in 1990 and 12% for today's total U.S. population.

The aging of the Jewish population is likely due to several reasons, including low fertility, longer life expectancy, and the movement of large numbers of baby boomers born during the 1940s and 1950s into older age groups.

Table 2. Age distribution of Jewish and U.S. populations, 2000-01.

Age	**Jewish**	**U.S.**
0-9	10%	14%
10-19	13	14
20-29	14	14
30-39	12	15
40-49	15	15
50-59	14	11
60-69	9	7
70-79	10	6
80 and over	4	3
Median age	42	35

Increasing social assimilation among those in younger age groups may join these demographic explanations. The Jewish population will probably continue to age in the years to come, creating challenges and opportunities for the Jewish communal system.

Marriage and fertility

More than half of Jewish adults (57%) are currently married, while 9% are divorced, 8% are widowed, and 1% are separated. The remaining 25% are single and have never been married.

Table 3. Percent ever married by age and sex, for Jewish and U.S. populations.

	Men		**Women**	
Age	**Jewish**	**U.S.**	**Jewish**	**U.S.**
18-24	10%	12%	18%	21%
25-34	48	59	64	70
35-44	74	82	85	87
45-64	90	92	90	93
65 and over	96	96	98	96
Total	72	73	79	79

American Jews, both men and women, tend to marry later than Americans generally (see Table 3). In every age group under 65, proportionally fewer Jews than all Americans have ever married, with the largest gap being among those age 25-34. Only among those 65 and over do more or equal proportions of Jews report having been married than the general U.S. population. High educational levels and concentration in high status jobs among Jews provide a partial explanation for their delayed marriage and family formation.

At all ages, fertility among Jewish women is lower than fertility for all U.S. women, whether gauged by the percent who are childless or the average number of children ever born (see Table 4). While both women and men make decisions regarding childbearing, this report follows the standard scientific practice of only referring to women when analyzing fertility. The fertility gap between Jewish and all U.S. women narrows but is not eliminated in later childbearing age groups, indicating that Jewish women delay having children until later years, and then come close to, but do not match, fertility levels of all U.S. women.

Substantial majorities of both Jewish and all U.S. women under the age of 25 remain childless. Majorities of Jewish women age 25-29 and 30-34 have still not had a child, while less than half of all U.S. women in

[1] Unless otherwise noted, data on the total U.S. population come from the 2000 U.S. Census or other U.S. Census Bureau studies. Jews are *included* in Census data on the total U.S. population, but Jews cannot be *identified* in Census data because the Census Bureau does not ask about religion or include Jews as an ethnic group.

Table 4. Percent childless and average number of children born, by age, for Jewish and U.S. women.				
	Percent childless		**Average number of children born**	
Age	**Jewish**	**U.S.**	**Jewish**	**U.S.**
18-24	90%	70%	.13	.46
25-29	70	44	.59	1.06
30-34	54	28	1.04	1.56
35-39	36	20	1.38	1.85
40-44	26	19	1.86	1.93

these age groups are childless. It is not until age 35-39 that less than half of Jewish women remain childless, compared to a fifth of all U.S. women. By age 40-44, usually considered the last childbearing age group, the gap narrows but is not completely closed, with just over a quarter of Jewish women remaining childless compared to less than a fifth of all U.S. women.

A similar pattern is evident for the average number of children ever born. In all childbearing age groups, Jewish women have given birth to fewer children than U.S. women. The absolute gap between Jewish and U.S. women widens through age 30-34, at which point Jewish women on average have given birth to 1.04 children and U.S. women generally have had 1.56. The gap declines slightly in the 35-39 year age group, and then closes significantly in the 40-44 year age group, with Jewish women having on average 1.86 children and U.S. women generally having just slightly more, 1.93 children.

Differences in fertility between Jewish and all U.S. women are negligible when examining women who have had at least some college education (see Table 5). Accounting for education is instructive because educational attainment has a significant influence on fertility, and Jewish women have relatively high educational levels. By age 40-44, Jewish women who have been to college have nearly identical numbers of children as all U.S. women at the same educational levels. In other words, these results suggest that with respect to fertility, Jewish women are acting very much like their educational counterparts in the larger society. Because proportionally more Jewish than U.S. women have attained higher education, the connection between education and fertility disproportionately affects the Jewish population.

Table 5. Average number of children born to Jewish and U.S. women age 40-44, by education level		
	Jewish	**U.S.**
Some college	1.89	1.90
College degree	1.61	1.65
Graduate work	1.62	1.48

While Jewish fertility approaches general fertility levels in later childbearing ages, overall Jewish fertility is too low to replace the Jewish population. NJPS data point to an average number of children born to Jewish women of less than 1.9. Demographers generally regard 2.1 as the average necessary for population stability. Moreover, a sizeable fraction of children raised by Jewish women and men in interfaith homes are not raised as Jews. Consequently, the "effective Jewish birthrate" is below 1.9 children per Jewish woman. Current Jewish fertility will contribute over time to a declining Jewish population, if other sources of population growth such as immigration do not compensate for it.

Adoption* is another path to raising children. Among Jewish households with children, just over 5% report an adopted child resides in the home, accounting for

---

* Topics with asterisks refer to respondents who answered the survey's long form, representing a population of 4.3 million Jewish adults and children.

approximately 35,000 children in total.[2] In a strong majority of cases, just one child is reported as adopted, and in two-thirds of single-adoption households, the adopted child is the only child in the household. While adoption clearly addresses the desire of thousands of Jewish parents to raise children, NJPS data indicate that it has not significantly augmented the Jewish population or counterbalanced low fertility rates.

Geography: regional residence and mobility

The U.S. Census divides the country into four major regions: the Northeast, Midwest, South and West. Traditionally, the Northeast has been home to the largest proportion of American Jews, and more Jews continue to live in the Northeast than in any other region (see Table 6). However, migration over the years to the South and West has resulted in the regional distribution of the Jewish population – especially the native-born population – shifting slowly to the Sunbelt, a pattern which mirrors the U.S. population generally.

Just over four in ten Jewish adults currently reside in the Northeast, more than a tenth live in the Midwest , and slightly less than a quarter reside in both the South and West. The distribution of Jewish children is skewed more toward the Northeast and away from the South and West, while very similar to adults in the Midwest. Higher rates of in-marriage and raising children as Jews in the Northeast contribute to the relative concentration of Jewish children in that region. The regional distribution of Jewish households is similar to that of Jewish adults.

Relative to the total U.S. population, the Jewish population – adults and children combined – remains over-represented in the Northeast (43% for Jews and 19% for the total U.S. population), proportionally represented in the West (22% vs. 23%) and under-represented in both the Midwest (13% vs. 23%) and South (23% vs. 35%).

Among native-born adult Jews, two patterns indicate substantial migration over the course of their lifetimes from the Northeast and Midwest to the South and the West. First, relative to their current regional distribution, the distribution of where they were born is even more skewed toward the Northeast (57%) and Midwest (18%) and substantially less skewed toward the West (14%) and South (11%).

Second, adult Jews have left their regions of birth at different rates. Among Jews born in the Northeast, 62% continue to live there today, and only 50% of Midwestern-born Jews are still in their native region. The vast majority of adults who have left these regions are now in the West and South. Jews born in the South show about the same level of regional stability (61%) as Northeastern-born Jews. In contrast, more than three-quarters of Western-born Jews (77%) are still in their region of birth. The net effect of these movements has been a population shift of native-born Jews away from the Northeast and Midwest and toward the South and West.

Mobility in the past five years* has been fairly common among Jews. Thirty-five percent of adult Jews indicate they lived in a different residence five years ago than they do now, including 12% who lived within the same town or city but in a different house or apartment; 10% who lived in a different town or city within the same state; 10% who lived in a different state; and 2% who lived in a different country.

[2] Adoption was asked only of female respondents. Total estimates and proportions reported here assume answers of male respondents about adoption in their households would have been statistically the same.

Table 6. Regional distribution of Jewish population and households.					
	Northeast	**Midwest**	**South**	**West**	**Total***
Total Jews	43%	13%	23%	22%	100%
Adults	41	12	24	23	100
Children	50	13	19	17	100
Jewish households	39	13	24	25	100
* may not add to 100% due to rounding					

Education, employment and income[3]

Relative to the total U.S. population, Jews are more highly educated, have more prestigious jobs and earn higher household incomes. The educational success and socio-economic status of Jews constitute a significant source of strength for the community and its organizations, with positive implications for charitable resources, cultural sophistication and influence in the public sphere.

More than half of all Jewish adults (55%) have received a college degree, and a quarter (25%) have earned a graduate degree. The comparable figures for the total U.S. population are 29% and 6%. Jewish men are more likely than Jewish women to have college degrees (61% vs. 50%) and graduate degrees (29% vs. 21%).

Proportionally, slightly fewer adult Jews are currently employed (61%) than in the total U.S. population (65%), reflecting the older Jewish population. More than 60% of all employed Jews are in one of the three highest status job categories: professional/technical (41%), management and executive (13%), and business and finance (7%). In contrast, 46% of all Americans work in these three high status areas, including 29% in professional/technical jobs, 12% in management and executive positions, and 5% in business and finance.

The distribution of household income among Jews, especially at the high end of the income scale, reflects their relatively high education levels and high status jobs. More than one-third of Jewish households (34%) report income over $75,000, compared to 17% of all U.S. households. Proportionally fewer Jewish households (22%) than total U.S. households (28%) report household income under $25,000. The current median income of Jewish households is $54,000, 29% higher than the median U.S. household income of $42,000. In 1990, the median income of Jewish households was $39,000, 34% higher than the median income of $29,000 for all U.S. households.

[3] Data on education, employment, occupation and income for the total U.S. population come from the combined, weighted sample of respondents to NJPS and the National Survey of Religion and Ethnicity (NSRE). For more information on the NSRE, see the Methodological Appendix.

JEWISH CONNECTIONS

At the heart of NJPS are findings related to Jewish connections, including Jewish identity, participation in Jewish religious, cultural and ethnic life, affiliation with communal organizations, Jewish education and ties to Israel. A selection of approximately two dozen indicators of Jewish connections demonstrates the patterns of strengths, challenges and diversity that characterize the American Jewish population (see Table 7).

Most American Jewish adults observe in some way the High Holidays,* Passover and Chanukah. Majorities also read a Jewish newspaper or magazine* or books with Jewish content,* regard being Jewish as very important,* and report that half or more of their close friends are Jewish. Taken together, these findings point to widespread engagement in Jewish family life around certain holidays, cultural involvement, an inner commitment to being Jewish, and significant Jewish friendship ties.

In contrast, smaller proportions – generally between a quarter and a third – report involvement in other religious and communal activities. Among these are always or usually lighting Shabbat candles,* keeping kosher at home,* attending religious services monthly or more,* belonging to a JCC* or other Jewish organization,* making a personal or household contribution to Jewish federation campaigns,* volunteering under Jewish auspices,* participating in adult Jewish education programs,* and having visited Israel two or more times.*

Between these two extremes are a moderate proportion of American Jews, from about a third to nearly a half, who engage in a variety of Jewish behaviors. Most prominent among these are belonging to a synagogue either personally or as a household* (46%). Among those who belong to a synagogue, they divide as follows: 38% Reform, 33% Conservative, 22% Orthodox, 2% Reconstructionist, and 5% other types.

Table 7. Jewish connections.

	Percent
Half or more of close friends are Jewish	52
Hold/attend Passover seder	67
Light Chanukah candles	72
Fast on Yom Kippur*	59
Light Shabbat candles*	28
Keep kosher at home*	21
Attend Jewish religious service monthly or more*	27
Belong to synagogue*	46
Belong to JCC*	21
Belong to other Jewish organization*	28
Volunteer under Jewish auspices*	25
Participate in adult Jewish education*	24
Visited Israel	35
Visited Israel two or more times*	20
Contribute to federation campaign*	30
Contribute to Jewish cause (not federation)	41
Read Jewish newspaper/magazine*	65
Read books with Jewish content*	55
Listen to tape, CD, record with Jewish content*	45
Watch movie with Jewish content	44
Use Internet for Jewish purposes*	39
Regard being Jewish as very important*	52

In addition, moderate proportions of Jews have visited Israel at least once, make a personal or household donation to a Jewish cause outside the federation system, use the Internet for Jewish purposes,* and participate in a variety of cultural activities such as watching a movie or listening to a tape, CD or record* with Jewish content.

* Topics with asterisks refer to respondents who answered the survey's long form, representing a population of 4.3 million Jewish adults and children.

In short, the diversity of possibilities for Jewish engagement is as great as the diversity of levels of engagement. Selective types of connections consistently appeal to large proportions of Jews, while other forms of engagement remain the province of those who are more religious, communally involved and culturally active.

Regional variations in Jewish connections

Jews vary significantly across the four regions of the country, reflecting the distinctive regional contexts in which they live.

Jews in the Northeast tend to have stronger and more consistent Jewish connections than Jews in other regions (see Table 8).

Table 8. Jewish connections by region.

	Regions			
	Northeast	**Midwest**	**South**	**West**
Half or more of close friends are Jewish	61	45	50	41
Hold/attend Passover seder	75	67	65	55
Light Chanukah candles	79	69	68	65
Fast on Yom Kippur*	65	56	58	50
Light Shabbat candles*	33	25	26	22
Keep kosher at home*	28	17	15	15
Attend Jewish religious service monthly or more*	30	29	26	22
Belong to synagogue*	50	53	44	36
Belong to JCC*	23	21	22	15
Belong to other Jewish organization*	28	34	32	21
Volunteer under Jewish auspices*	25	28	25	23
Participate in adult Jewish education*	25	30	22	22
Visited Israel	39	29	35	29
Contribute to federation campaign*	30	37	34	22
Contribute to Jewish cause (not federation)	45	41	40	35

Northeastern Jews participate in many Jewish rituals more frequently than other Jews, including fasting on Yom Kippur,* lighting Shabbat* and Chanukah candles, keeping kosher in their homes,* and holding or attending a Passover seder. They also attend Jewish religious services* more often, have more close friends who are Jewish, contribute more often to Jewish causes aside from federation, and are more likely to have visited Israel and to belong to a JCC.*

Midwestern Jews are distinctive for their high rates of communal involvement, including federation giving,* synagogue membership,* other Jewish organizational memberships,* volunteering under Jewish auspices* and participation in adult Jewish education programs.*

Jews in the South are the least distinctive, frequently falling near the national average in terms of Jewish connections.

Finally, Jews in the West stand in sharp contrast to other Jews, especially those in the Northeast. Western Jews report the lowest levels of in-group friendships, many ritual practices, synagogue membership* and attendance,* charitable giving to federation* and other Jewish causes, and JCC* and other Jewish organizational memberships.*

Over-time continuity and change in Jewish connections

Are American Jews changing over time, either becoming more “assimilated” or

Table 9. Jewish connections by age.			
	Age		
	35-44	**45-54**	**55-64**
Half or more of close friends are Jewish	45%	53%	59%
Hold/attend Passover seder	69	69	70
Light Chanukah candles	73	78	73
Fast on Yom Kippur*	63	63	60
Light Shabbat candles*	32	28	25
Keep kosher at home*	22	20	19
Attend Jewish religious service monthly or more*	32	33	25
Belong to synagogue*	47	52	44
Belong to JCC*	21	21	18
Belong to other Jewish organization*	25	28	29
Volunteer under Jewish auspices*	28	30	26
Participate in adult Jewish education*	28	29	25
Feel emotionally attached to Israel	56	64	68
Contribute to federation campaign*	22	29	39
Contribute to Jewish cause (not federation)	41	45	49
Read Jewish newspaper/magazine*	68	64	67
Read books with Jewish content*	57	58	52
Listened to tape, CD, record with Jewish content*	47	48	47
Watched movie with Jewish content	43	44	48
Use internet for Jewish purposes*	50	46	32
Regard being Jewish as very important*	45	51	55

participating in a period of "Jewish renaissance and renewal?" Alternatively, are they holding steady in their Jewish involvement?

Examining how Jewish connections differ across the age spectrum provides initial clues to the overall directions of American Jewry. Age-related variations in Jewish involvement reflect two factors. First, they may indicate differences in birth groups – the ways in which younger people differ from their elders – and therefore reflect changes over time. Second, they may point to changes in the life cycle, for example, marital and family status, employment, income and migration. To the extent that life cycle factors can be logically dismissed, then age differences in Jewish connections can be more safely attributed to over-time trends and changes in American Jewry.

Adults age 35-64 are a particularly important group in which to discern possible over-time (or birth group) changes in Jewish connections. With respect to life-cycle factors, this 30-year age group tends to be more stable than those who are younger and older than they are. Before age 35, many young adults have yet to finish their education, marry or have children. After age 65, many people leave the work force, experience lower incomes, and endure the loss of their spouse.

How, then, do Jews in the 35-44 year age group differ from the next two age groups, 45-54 and 55-64? In some ways, younger adult Jews hardly differ from their elders. In other forms of Jewish involvement, younger Jews are alternately more and less engaged (see Table 9).

Many indicators of Jewish engagement remain steady across the age groups, including synagogue affiliation* and attendance,* JCC membership,* volunteerism under Jewish auspices,* and ritual observances such as fasting on Yom Kippur,* holding or attending a Passover seder and lighting Chanukah candles. In addition, younger adults are as likely as older adults to be involved in Jewish cultural activities such as enrolling in adult education programs* and utilizing print and audio media with Jewish content.*

Beyond this broad pattern of stability, Jewish engagement seems to strengthen in other areas. Younger Jews appear to be increasing their practice of some rituals, including keeping kosher in their homes* and lighting Shabbat candles.* The use of the Internet for Jewish purposes* is another example, reflecting both a greater technical proficiency among younger adults and their readiness to access new forms of Jewish engagement that technological advances bring.

However, not all signs point to stability or intensification over time. Less frequent among younger than older Jews are charitable giving to Jewish causes (both federation and otherwise), close friendships with other Jews and, marginally, Jewish organizational memberships* beyond synagogues and JCCs. Younger adults also report less frequent endorsement of two critical attitudes related to Jewish ethnicity, the importance of being Jewish* and feeling emotionally attached to Israel.

In sum, NJPS results are consistent with recent research on changing patterns of Jewish engagement in the United States over the last few decades. They indicate strength and stability in many areas including religious life, adult education, congregational and JCC affiliations, and Jewish cultural participation. Simultaneously, they point to weakening ties among Jews on several levels, including close friendships, contributions to Jewish philanthropy, some organizational connections, and attachment to the Jewish collective as represented by Israel and other symbols.

Communal affiliation and Jewish connections

Traditionally, formal institutions have been vital to the Jewish community. The centrality of synagogues, JCCs and other Jewish organizations is so profound that Jewish leadership frequently distinguishes between "affiliated" and "unaffiliated" members of the Jewish population. Institutional affiliation is not a constant over the life course. Marriage and parenthood, economic status, friends, residential location, Jewish commitment and other factors combine to influence who joins Jewish institutions. Though causal directions are difficult to determine, institutionally affiliated Jews more often engage in other domains of Jewish life than Jews who are not organizational members.

To examine affiliation-related differences in Jewish involvement, a measure of affiliation* was constructed based on synagogues, JCCs and other Jewish organizations. Those with no such memberships total 44% of adult Jews and are called "unaffiliated." The affiliated divide evenly into two groups: those with one membership (28%) are called "moderately affiliated," and those with two or more memberships (28%) are regarded as "highly affiliated." [4]

Substantial differences in Jewish connections and engagement exist between the unaffiliated and the moderately and highly affiliated (see Table 10). The unaffiliated differ most dramatically from the two affiliated groups with respect to religious service attendance, adult Jewish education, charitable giving to Jewish causes, volunteering under Jewish auspices, and selected observances like lighting Shabbat candles and keeping kosher at home. Differences between the unaffiliated and the affiliated are smaller but still

[4] All findings related to affiliation are restricted to the Jewish population of 4.3 million.

Table 10. Jewish connections by institutional affiliations.			
	Institutional affiliation		
	Unaffiliated	Moderately affiliated	Highly affiliated
Half or more of close friends are Jewish	41%	68%	81%
Hold/attend Passover seder	58	88	96
Light Chanukah candles	69	90	94
Fast on Yom Kippur*	39	69	80
Light Shabbat candles*	8	36	50
Keep kosher at home*	8	25	36
Attend Jewish religious service monthly or more*	5	34	56
Volunteer under Jewish auspices*	6	27	52
Participate in adult Jewish education*	6	29	47
Visited Israel	25	44	58
Visited Israel two or more times*	9	21	35
Feel emotionally attached to Israel	48	74	85
Contribute to federation campaign*	12	31	57
Contribute to Jewish cause (not federation)	18	58	80
Regard being Jewish as very important*	33	59	74

significant regarding friendships with other Jews, connections to Israel, the use of media with Jewish content, subjective importance of being Jewish, and observances such as fasting on Yom Kippur, lighting Chanukah candles and holding or attending a Passover seder.

In every case, the highly affiliated are even more engaged in other aspects of Jewish life than the moderately affiliated, but the differences between these groups are not substantial in most cases. The major divide in the population is between those with at least one institutional affiliation and those with none.

Connections with Israel

Many close observers of American Jewry sense that Jewish engagement with Israel declined in the past twenty to thirty years after a period of high mobilization in the late 1960s and 1970s.

Possibly reversing these trends, the tragic events of 2001-03 in Israel may have galvanized at least a portion of the American Jewish population behind Israel. However, because those events occurred largely after interviewing for NJPS was completed, the study cannot assess the most recent levels of attachment to Israel.

Nonetheless, NJPS contains valuable information about American Jews' connections with Israel. Key indicators of Israel engagement – such as the cumulative number of American Jews who have traveled to the Jewish state, as well as family and friendship ties in Israel – are not particularly sensitive to the events of the last few years and are therefore reasonably current. Moreover, while levels of emotional attachment and feelings of common destiny with Israel may have increased after 2001, their correlates should be more constant over time. Thus, examining who was more attached to Israel in 2000-01 provides important insights into the American Jewish population.

With this said, just over one-third of all American Jewish adults have been to Israel (35%), and 20% have been there at least two times.* Nearly half (45%) report having family or close friends in Israel.* In terms of attitudinal connections, almost two-thirds (63%) of American Jews say they are emotionally attached to Israel and nearly

Table 11. Connections with Israel by region, age and affiliation.*					
		Visited Israel	Family or friends in Israel*	Emotionally attached to Israel	U.S. and Israeli Jews share destiny*
Total		35%	45%	63%	72%
Region	Northeast	39	51	66	73
	Midwest	29	42	61	73
	South	35	38	62	73
	West	29	41	59	67
Age	35-44	31	42	56	72
	45-54	34	45	64	71
	55-64	32	43	68	75
Affiliation	Unaffiliated	25	34	48	62
	Moderately affiliated	44	49	74	76
	Highly affiliated	58	56	85	81

three-quarters (72%) say U.S. and Israeli Jews share a common destiny,* consistent with years of surveys demonstrating broad engagement with Israel among American Jews.

Ties to Israel vary by region, Jewish affiliation, and age (see Table 11). Jews in the Northeast lead other Jews in most but not all connections to the Jewish state, while Jews in the West trail other Jews in emotional attachments and feelings of common destiny with Israel. The institutionally affiliated are uniformly more connected to Israel than the unaffiliated.

Among Jews between the crucial ages of 35-64, older Jews express stronger emotional ties to Israel. Importantly, though, age is not related to travel to Israel, having family or friends there, or feelings of common destiny with Israeli Jews. In other words, proportionally as many Jews age 35-44 as those age 55-64 have gone to Israel, maintain social networks there, and believe in the common fate of American and Israeli Jews, suggesting stability and strength over time in many types of connections to the Jewish state. With many years ahead of them, younger age groups may well surpass older adults in the proportion who have ever been to Israel.

Connections with Israel are mutually reinforcing. Visiting Israel and having family and close friends there are each positively associated with feeling emotionally attached to and believing in a shared destiny with Israel. These findings underscore the important relationship between social connections to Israel – travel and knowing people there – and feelings of attachment and commonality with the Jewish state and its citizens.

Lastly, the communal system has increasingly promoted travel to Israel among adolescents and young adults to initiate and strengthen the connection between young American Jews and the Jewish state. NJPS data reveal that more than a fifth (21%) of Jewish children age 6-17 have been to Israel,* including 13% who have been there multiple times.* Among these travelers who are age 13-17, a third visited Israel with an organized Jewish group such as a synagogue, youth group or federation.*

Philanthropy

Charitable giving is crucial for Jewish institutional life. NJPS asked about charitable giving to non-Jewish causes and Jewish causes aside from federations for the entire Jewish population, but restricted

Table 12. Philanthropic giving by region, age, affiliation* and income.				
		Charitable donation to:		
		Federation*	Other Jewish cause	Non-Jewish cause
Total		30%	41%	62%
Region	Northeast	30	45	60
	Midwest	37	41	71
	South	34	40	63
	West	22	35	60
Age	35-44	22	41	67
	45-54	29	45	69
	55-64	39	48	73
Affiliation	Unaffiliated	12	16	54
	Moderately affiliated	31	58	65
	Highly affiliated	57	80	77
Income	Under $25,000	14	24	36
	$25-50,000	24	35	58
	$50-75,000	28	34	64
	$75-100,000	32	46	71
	$100-150,000	35	50	75
	$150,000 and above	46	57	85

questions about contributing to federation campaigns* to the more engaged Jewish population.

Most American Jews (62%) give to non-Jewish causes and 41% donate to Jewish causes other than federations. Among the more Jewishly connected population, just under a third (30%) give to the federation system.* Within each of these domains, the proportions that report they donate $100 or more are far smaller, ranging from 39% for non-Jewish causes, to 26% for Jewish causes aside from federations and 15% for federations.*

Though data on federation giving are limited, a reasonable estimate of the percentage of all Jews who give to federation is 21%. This estimate assumes that respondents who were not asked about donating to federation campaigns give to federations at the same rate as respondents who are similar to them on other Jewish characteristics and were asked directly about federation gifts.[5]

As with other aspects of Jewish involvement, philanthropy is related to region, age and institutional affiliations, as well as income (see Table 12). Midwestern Jews are distinguished for their high rates of giving to both non-Jewish causes and federation campaigns, while Northeastern Jews are notable for the broadest participation in Jewish charitable giving outside the federation system. Jews in the West, in contrast, report the lowest levels of giving to Jewish causes, both federation and otherwise.

Age-related patterns in the crucial age groups between 35 and 64 are important because they may indicate changes over time in charitable giving. Significantly, adults age 55-64 are almost twice as likely to give to federation campaigns as those age 35-44. Differences between these

[5] More information on this estimation procedure is available from the UJC research staff. Other than this estimation, all other findings in this report on federation giving are restricted to the Jewish population of 4.3 million.

groups are less distinctive for giving to other Jewish causes and even narrower for non-Jewish causes. In sum, of all types of philanthropy, federation giving is most sensitive to age, with steady declines registered from older to younger age groups.[6]

Not surprisingly, those under 35 years of age give less frequently to all three types of causes. Life cycle factors are prominent in this pattern, as those who are at the beginning of careers and family formation have traditionally been less engaged in charitable giving than other adults. Elderly Jews, in contrast, give to federation campaigns at even higher rates (48%) than those age 55-64, but the elderly are not distinctive with regard to giving to other Jewish causes and show a small decline in donating to non-Jewish causes relative to others.

Charitable donations to each type of cause – non-Jewish, Jewish and federation – rise with Jewish institutional affiliations.* However, the connection between affiliation and giving is stronger for Jewish than non-Jewish causes. The moderately affiliated are about three to four times as likely and the highly affiliated about five times as likely to donate to federation and other Jewish causes than are the unaffiliated. Causal order cannot be disentangled, but Jewish affiliation and charitable giving are clearly bound together, suggesting that Jewish causes in general and federations in particular have a strong interest in Jews joining and supporting synagogues, JCCs and other Jewish organizations.

Lastly, philanthropic behavior is closely linked to income. The frequency of giving to all three types of causes increases as income rises. In general, those at the top of the income scale – earning more than $150,000 annually – give two to three times more often than those who earn less than $25,000 a year.

Jewish education

Many communal activists view Jewish education as critical to Jewish continuity in America. The vast majority of American Jews in the more Jewishly engaged population of 4.3 million – to which this section is restricted[7] – experienced some kind of Jewish education in their childhood years. Moreover, enrollment in Jewish day schools and yeshivas and Jewish studies courses during college years has increased substantially over time.

Almost three-quarters (73%) of Jewish adults report receiving some kind of formal Jewish education while they were growing up (see Table 13). More than one-tenth attended Jewish day schools or yeshivas, nearly four in ten went to a part-time Jewish school that met more than once a week, and about a third attended a one-day per week educational program.[8] Beyond the adolescent years, 23% of Jewish adults who attended at least some college enrolled in at least one Jewish studies course. Finally, among today's Jewish adults, nearly a quarter report that they participated in an adult Jewish education class or other Jewish learning experience in the year prior to the survey, usually under the sponsorship of a synagogue.

Comparing the Jewish educational experiences of Jewish children with Jewish adults provides initial information about trends in formal Jewish education over time. Nearly four-fifths (79%) of Jewish children

---

[6] Life cycle effects may play a role in charitable giving even among adults age 35-64, because occupational prestige and in turn income tends to increase throughout the adult years. Nonetheless, age-related differences in giving across federation, other Jewish and non-Jewish causes are notable.

[7] Jewish education data are available for all adults in the larger 5.2 million population, but most Jewish education data for children are limited to children in the Jewish population of 4.3 million people. To compare Jewish education of adults to children, this section is restricted to the 4.3 million population for adults as well.

[8] More than 13% of adult Jews received multiple forms of formal Jewish education as children. As a result, the sum of percentages for types of schooling (83%) exceeds the total percentage (73%).

age 6-17 have received some kind of Jewish schooling, including 71% who are currently enrolled in a formal Jewish education program and another 8% who were enrolled in the past but are not now. Among those who are 14-17 years old, even more (83%) have received some kind of Jewish schooling. This pattern reflects an increase in Jewish schooling over approximately the past 15 years. Eighty percent of adults under 35 years of age also received some kind of formal Jewish education, roughly 5-10 percentage points higher than adults in all older age groups.

Table 13. Jewish education by age.

		Any Jewish education	Jewish day school or yeshiva	Part-time Jewish school	One day per week Jewish program
Children	**6-17**	79%	29%	24%	25%
Adults	**Total**	73	12	39	32
	18-34	80	23	39	33
	35-44	74	12	41	32
	45-54	70	8	39	33
	55-64	71	7	39	36
	65+	71	7	37	29

The most common type of Jewish educational program among today's children is Jewish day school or yeshiva (29%). Nearly equal proportions have attended part-time Jewish programs that meet more than once a week (24%) and one-day per week educational programs (25%). The rise in day school and yeshiva enrollments is particularly noteworthy. Among 18-34 year olds, 23% attended day school or yeshiva, compared to 12% of 35-44 year olds and fewer than 10% of all older adults. The increase in day school attendance has been somewhat offset by losses in less intensive forms of Jewish educational programs, with current enrollments in both part-time and one-day per week programs declining relative to adults. In short, over the last two decades, day school and yeshiva enrollments have grown dramatically, largely at the expense of supplementary Jewish schooling.

In addition to formal Jewish schooling, many Jewish children have informal Jewish educational experiences, for example in Jewish youth groups and Jewish summer camps. NJPS collected data on these topics for various age groups of children. Among children age 3-17, 23% went to a Jewish day camp in the year before the survey, and 19% of children age 8-17 went to a Jewish sleep-away camp in the year prior to the survey. Among children age 12-17, nearly half (46%) participated in Jewish activities or an organized Jewish youth group in the year before the survey.

Significantly, Jewish education is continuing into the college years, with more Jews taking college-level Jewish studies courses than ever before. Among current Jewish college and graduate students, 41% report that they have taken a Jewish studies class as part of their coursework to date. This continues a sharp and steady increase relative to older Jews who went to college or graduate school and have finished their higher education. Just 11% of Jews 55 and older who attended college or graduate school enrolled in a Jewish studies course, rising to 28% of those age 35-54 and 37% among those under 35.

INTERMARRIAGE

For the Jewish community, the matter of marriages between Jews and non-Jews is suffused with complexity and controversy. Ideological sensitivities combine with a range of definitional and methodological choices to complicate the analytic tasks: defining intermarriage, calculating its prevalence, examining change over time, analyzing other factors associated with it, and identifying potential consequences.

Defining and calculating intermarriage

Marital statistics are available for all respondents who represent adults in the Jewish population of 5.2 million people. For purposes of this report, intermarriage is defined as the marriage of someone who is Jewish to someone who is non-Jewish at the time of the survey. Jews married to other Jews are referred to as in-married. Importantly, the same definition of Jewish is applied to the respondent and spouse.

The intermarriage statistics presented here include respondents and spouses who were born and remain Jewish, as well as those who have converted or switched to Judaism. However, the intermarriage statistics exclude the marriages of current non-Jews to other non-Jews even when one of the spouses was Jewish at an earlier point in time. Furthermore, the intermarriage rate is calculated for current, intact marriages only; previous marriages that were dissolved for reasons of divorce or death are excluded. Finally, the rate of intermarriage applies to married individuals rather than to married couples. In other words, we ask: what percentage of currently married Jews are married to Jews (in-married), and what percentage are married to non-Jews (intermarried)?

Rates of intermarriage

As previous analyses have shown and the NJPS data confirm, the intermarriage rate among American Jews climbed dramatically over the course of the second half of the twentieth century (see Table 14). The intermarriage rate for Jews who married before 1970 stands at 13%, rises to 28% for those whose marriages started in the 1970s, and then increases again to 38% for Jews married in the first half of the 1980s.

Table 14. Intermarriage by year marriage began.

Year marriage began	Percent intermarried
Before 1970	13
1970-1979	28
1980-1984	38
1985-1990	43
1991-1995	43
1996-2001	47

Since 1985, the rate of increase in intermarriages has slowed as intermarriage levels have stabilized in the mid-40% range. Among Jews whose marriages started in 1985-90, the intermarriage rate is 43%. The intermarriage rate is also 43% for Jews whose marriages began in 1991-95. Jews who have married since 1996 have an intermarriage rate of 47%.

Differences with the 1990 NJPS report

Readers familiar with the 1990 NJPS Highlights Report will recall that researchers at the time reported a 52% intermarriage rate for Jews who married during the 1985-90 time period, which is obviously higher than the 43% rate reported with NJPS 2000-01 data.

The discrepancy can be explained by the definition 1990 NJPS researchers employed to calculate intermarriage rates. They calculated and presented an intermarriage rate for "born Jews," a category that included those they considered Jewish at the time of the survey and some they considered non-Jewish, including non-Jews who had been born to at least one Jewish parent and were raised in a non-Jewish religion. Their rationale was to throw as wide a net as possible in calculating the intermarriage rate, in contrast to the narrower definition of Jews they employed for other analyses in their report.

Applying a parallel definition of "born Jews" to the NJPS 2000-01 data, the intermarriage rate among those who married in 1985-90 is also 52%. In other words, by employing essentially the same expansive definition of "born Jews" used by the 1990 researchers, the intermarriage rates are the same for the 1985-90 time period in both the 1990 and 2000-01 surveys, lending confidence to both studies.

In the current survey, applying the broad "born Jews" definition to people whose marriages began in 1991-95 and since 1996 yields intermarriage rates of 53% and 54%, respectively. Thus, both definitions of Jews lead to a similar substantive conclusion: a significant stabilization of the intermarriage rate since 1985-90.

Variations in intermarriage

Among all married Jews today – including those recently married and those married long ago whose marriages are still intact – 31% are intermarried. Age, gender, region, secular and Jewish education, the Jewishness of parents and Jewish upbringing are all related to intermarriage (see Table 15).

Intermarriage is more frequent among younger than older adults, consistent with the increasing rate of intermarriage over time. Among those 55 and over, 20% of married adults are currently intermarried. In contrast, intermarriage stands at 37% among those 35-54 and 41% among those younger than 35.

Overall the intermarriage rate among men (33%) is slightly higher than among women (29%), but the gender composition of intermarriage fluctuates with age. Men above the age of 55 are more likely to be intermarried than women. In the 35-54 year age group, equal proportions of men and women are intermarried. The gender gap in intermarriage has widened among those under the age of 35, with men again more likely than women to be intermarried.

Table 15. Variations in intermarriage.

		Percent intermarried
Total		31
Age	Under 35	41
	35-54	37
	55 and older	20
Men	Total	33
	Under 35	47
	35-54	37
	55 and older	24
Women	Total	29
	Under 35	37
	35-54	37
	55 and older	16
Region	Northeast	25
	Midwest	34
	South	29
	West	42
Education	High school or below	34
	College	31
	Graduate	27
Jewish education	No Jewish education	43
	One day/week	29
	Part time	23
	Day school/yeshiva	7
Parents	Two Jewish parents	22
	One Jewish parent	74

On a regional basis, intermarriage is most frequent in the West, where 42% of currently married Jews have a spouse who is not Jewish. The Northeast offers the sharpest contrast, with intermarriage rates of 25% for all currently married Jews. The intermarriage rates in the South and in the Midwest fall between these extremes.

Higher levels of secular education are associated with slightly lower levels of intermarriage. The intermarriage gap between those with a graduate degree and those with a high school education or less is

7%. This relationship may appear counter-intuitive given long-held impressions that higher education is associated with weakening religious commitments and ethnic ties. The contrary findings among Jews may be due to two factors: marriages often occur among people with similar levels of education, and higher education is empirically normative for most Jews. As a result, Jews lacking a higher education encounter a marriage market with fewer Jews, making them more prone to marry non-Jews.

Jewish education while growing up is strongly related to in-marriage later in life. Intermarriage is more common among those who did not receive Jewish education (43%) than among those who received some kind of Jewish schooling (25%). Marriage to a non-Jew is rare among those who attended a Jewish day school or yeshiva, more common among those who attended a part-time program that met more than once a week, and higher still among those who attended one-day-a-week programs. In short, the more intensive the Jewish schooling, the lower the rate of intermarriage, reflecting both the types of people who obtain more intensive Jewish schooling and, quite possibly, the direct impact of Jewish education on later marital decisions.

Finally, intermarriage among current Jewish adults is associated both with intermarriage among their parents and with their Jewish upbringing. Slightly more than a fifth of Jewish adults who were raised by two Jewish parents are intermarried. In contrast, nearly three-quarters of Jewish adults with just one Jewish parent are intermarried. In other words, Jewish adults who are the children of intermarriages are more than three times as likely to be married to non-Jews themselves. At the same time, among those who had intermarried parents, a Jewish upbringing reduces the rate of intermarriage. Almost 60% of Jewish adults who were raised Jewish by intermarried parents are themselves intermarried, compared to 86% of their counterparts who had intermarried parents but were not raised Jewish by them.

Intermarriage and current Jewish connections

In-married Jews maintain more Jewish connections and greater engagement with Jewish life than intermarried Jews (see Table 16). The most significant differences between in-married and intermarried Jews are associated with synagogue membership* and attendance,* memberships in JCCs* and other Jewish organizations,* donations to federation campaigns,* volunteerism under Jewish auspices,* adult Jewish education,* lighting Shabbat candles* and keeping kosher.* Less dramatic but still substantial differences between the in-married and intermarried are associated with having close friends who are Jewish, giving to Jewish causes other than the federation system, holding or attending a Passover seder, lighting Chanukah candles, fasting on Yom Kippur,* and connections to Israel.

Common forms of Jewish engagement among the intermarried revolve around three major Jewish holidays, with more than half of intermarried Jews lighting Chanukah candles, a significant minority attending or holding a Passover seder, and slightly more than a quarter fasting on Yom Kippur. A substantial minority of intermarried Jews are also emotionally attached to Israel, and just under a quarter report that half or more of their close friends are Jewish.

Intermarriage and Jewish children

In-married and intermarried Jews differ dramatically in the extent to which they raise their children as Jews. Nearly all children (96%) in households with two Jewish spouses are being raised Jewish, compared to a third (33%) of the children in households with one non-Jewish spouse.

---

* Topics with asterisks refer to respondents who answered the survey's long form, representing a population of 4.3 million Jewish adults and children.

How the children of intermarriages will identify themselves when they grow up is unknown now. However, it is noteworthy that children of intermarriages are being exposed to less intense forms of engagement with Jewish life through their parents than children of in-married Jews.

Table 16. Jewish connections of in-married and intermarried Jews.

	In-married	Intermarried
Half or more of close friends are Jewish	76%	24%
Hold/attend Passover seder	85	41
Light Chanukah candles	88	53
Fast on Yom Kippur*	66	26
Light Shabbat candles*	39	5
Keep kosher at home*	27	5
Attend Jewish religious service monthly or more*	37	8
Belong to synagogue*	59	15
Belong to JCC*	29	6
Belong to other Jewish organization*	39	9
Volunteer under Jewish auspices*	33	8
Participate in adult Jewish education*	31	7
Visited Israel	49	16
Feel emotionally attached to Israel	76	45
Contribute to federation campaign*	41	9
Contribute to Jewish cause (not federation)	60	19

SPECIAL TOPICS

Three groups within the Jewish population – the elderly, immigrants, and those living below the poverty line – are of particular interest to the Jewish communal system. Many people in these groups maintain strong Jewish connections, though in ways that sometimes differ from other Jews. In addition, from a social policy perspective, many members of these groups are susceptible to social isolation, health problems and economic difficulties.

The elderly

As noted earlier, 19% of the total Jewish population is elderly, defined as 65 years of age or older, and 9% of the Jewish population is 75 or older. Fifty-four percent of the elderly are women. Relative to the total Jewish adult population, the elderly are slightly under-represented in the Northeast (with 38% of all Jews over 65) and West (19%), equally represented in the Midwest (11%), and over-represented in the South (33%), where many have moved since retirement.

More elderly Jews than other Jews live alone (see Table 17). One-third of Jews age 65 and over reside by themselves, and among those 75 and over, the proportion increases to 39%. These rates are substantially higher than adults age 25-34 (22%), 35-44 (17%) and 45-54 (18%), the prime years of marriage and child rearing. That so many elderly live by themselves is consistent with the movement of children out of their homes and the dissolution of marriages through the death of spouses. Of all elderly who live alone, 67% are widows or widowers.

Elderly Jews report more health problems than their younger counterparts. More than one-third of all elderly say their health is poor or fair, nearly three times the rate of those under 65. At the other end of the scale, elderly Jews are less than half as likely as other Jews to report they have

Table 17. Characteristics of Jewish elderly and other adults.

	Elderly (age 65 and over)	Adults under age 65
Live alone	33%	18%
Report health is poor or fair	35	12
Report health is excellent	20	49
Health condition limits activities of someone in household*	26	12
Household income below poverty*	9	4
Household income less than $15,000	18	8
Household income $15-25,000	15	7
Household income $25-35,000	16	8
Belong to synagogue*	43	47
Belong to JCC*	29	18
Belong to other Jewish organization*	43	23
Volunteer under Jewish auspices*	22	26
Participate in adult Jewish education*	22	25
Contribute to federation campaign*	48	24
Contribute to Jewish cause (not federation)	43	47

excellent health. Moreover, more than a quarter of the elderly report that either they or someone else in their household have a health condition that limits employment, education or daily activities.* In stark contrast, just over 10% of adults under 65 report that they or someone else in their household have such a health condition.

Elderly Jews may be more vulnerable to economic difficulties than other Jews. Nine percent of elderly Jews live in households with incomes below the federally-defined poverty line, more than double the rate of other adult Jews.* Almost a fifth (18%) of elderly live in households with incomes of less than $15,000, 15% live in households with incomes of $15,000-25,000, and another 16% live in households with incomes of $25,000-$35,000. Corresponding rates for other Jewish adults are just half the levels of the elderly. Elderly Jews living in institutional settings and thus not sampled as part of NJPS may also have low incomes, potentially adding to the number of elderly facing economic difficulties.

Low current income suggests the potential for economic vulnerability. However, many elderly Jews possess assets accumulated over their lifetimes that may ease their economic situation during later years. Close to half of all elderly Jews (43%) have total assets over $250,000, and approximately 20% have assets of more than $500,000.

Lastly, from a specifically Jewish perspective, many older Jews remain actively engaged in the Jewish community (see Table 17). For example, proportionally more of the elderly than other Jews affiliate with JCCs* and other Jewish organizations aside from synagogues,* and more give to federation campaigns* and other Jewish causes. In addition, nearly equal proportions of the elderly and other adults volunteer for Jewish organizations,* enroll in adult Jewish education programs,* and live in households that belong to a synagogue.* Clearly, many Jewish elderly continue to bring their talents and resources to Jewish organizations and communal life.

Immigrants

Successive waves of Jewish immigrants have been fundamental to the formation and growth of the American Jewish population. Today's immigrants, like their predecessors, bring new ideas, experiences and needs that continue to transform the nature of the Jewish community.

Just over 8% of today's Jewish adults have immigrated to the U.S. since 1980, accounting for 335,000 Jewish adults. Of these new arrivals, 227,000 – a little over two-thirds – emigrated from one of the republics of the former Soviet Union (FSU). The remaining 109,000 Jewish adult immigrants hail from 30 other countries, with Israel, Canada and Iran accounting for more than half (56%) of them. These figures do not account for thousands of adult immigrants who arrived in the U.S. after 1980 and subsequently died.

Other people in immigrant households are directly connected to the immigrant community. An additional 22,000 adults and 40,000 children live in households with adult immigrants from the FSU, bringing the population in these households to 289,000 people. Similarly, an additional 30,000 adults and 61,000 children reside with non-FSU immigrants, making the population in their households 200,000 people.

Though arriving in this country over the same 20-year period, FSU and non-FSU immigrants differ starkly in their demographic profiles, economic status, regional residence and communal affiliations (see Table 18).

* Topics with asterisks refer to respondents who answered the survey's long form, representing a population of 4.3 million Jewish adults and children.

Table 18. Jewish immigrants since 1980.		
	FSU immigrants	Non-FSU immigrants
Age 65 and over	33%	7%
Age 18-34	28	55
Single/never married	17	35
Widowed	10	1
Households with children	12	28
Northeast	58	39
Midwest	8	8
South	9	23
West	24	30
Household income below poverty *	27	11
Household income less than $15,000	46	13

In general, FSU immigrants are older than their non-FSU counterparts, with a significantly greater proportion of elderly and lower proportion of young adults characterizing those from the FSU. Differences in the age distribution are reflected in marital status and household composition. Non-FSU immigrants are twice as likely to be single and never married than FSU immigrants, while more FSU immigrants than non-FSU immigrants are widowed. More than a quarter of non-FSU Jews live in households with children, over twice the rate of FSU immigrants.

The two immigrant groups are also distinguished by their regional distribution. Following traditional immigrant patterns, most FSU Jews are in the Northeast, with a substantial minority in the West, and smaller percentages in the Midwest and South. In contrast, the regional distribution of non-FSU immigrants more closely resembles that of the larger American Jewish population. Many non-FSU immigrants live in the Northeast, but nearly one-third live in the West and slightly more than one-fifth reside in the South, with under 10% residing in the Midwest.

Income sharply differentiates FSU and other immigrants. Significant levels of poverty* apparently characterize the FSU immigrant population, with 27% of FSU immigrants living in households with incomes below the federal poverty line. In contrast, 11% of non-FSU immigrants live in households under the poverty threshold, lower than among FSU immigrants but still higher than the 4% poverty rate that characterizes all other Jewish households.[9] A broader measure of low income – annual household intake of less than $15,000 – also disproportionately characterizes FSU immigrants compared to non-FSU immigrants.

Due to the cultural background of Jews from the FSU, it is instructive to examine their engagement with the Jewish community and Jewish life (see Table 19). Ethnic ties and attachments are important components of the Jewish connections of FSU immigrants. FSU immigrants are more likely than other Jews to be in-married, report that half or more of their close friends are Jewish, consider it very important that their child's spouse be Jewish,* and among those who are dating, to date only Jews.* They are also more likely than other Jews to define Jews in America as a nationality* and regard being Jewish as very important.*

In some respects, FSU immigrants are less religiously oriented to Jewish life than other Jews. For example, Jews from the FSU are less likely to affiliate with a synagogue,* hold or attend a Passover seder, or define Jews in America as a religious group.* However, FSU immigrants mirror the religious behavior of American Jews in other areas. Compared to all other Jews, equal or slightly greater proportions of FSU immigrants regularly light Shabbat candles,* attended Jewish religious services in the past year and have a mezuzah on a door of their home.* In addition, more Jews from

[9] Some researchers suggest that immigrants may under-report their incomes.

Table 19. Jewish connections of Jewish immigrants from the FSU.		
	Jewish immigrants from FSU	**Other Jews**
In-married	91%	68%
Half or more of close friends are Jewish	71	51
Very important that child's spouse be Jewish*	49	35
Date only Jews*	47	18
Hold/attend Passover seder	57	80
Light Shabbat candles*	31	28
Attend Jewish religious service in past year	70	60
Have mezuzah on door*	67	67
Increased Jewish activity in the past 5 years*	38	27
Belong to synagogue*	26	48
Define Jews as a nationality*	69	42
Define Jews as a religious group*	67	81
Regard being Jewish as very important*	59	52

the FSU than others report that their level of Jewish activity has increased in the past five years.*

Poverty in the American Jewish community

Data on poverty* were collected only for the households of the more Jewishly engaged population. Five percent of these households report incomes that fall below the poverty line as defined by the U.S. federal government,[10] compared to 11% for all U.S. households. Within the households of this restricted segment of the Jewish population, 273,000 people – both Jewish and non-Jewish, and including 211,000 adults and 62,000 children – live below the poverty line.

Direct poverty data are not available for households that answered the NJPS short-form questionnaire. However, a reasonable estimate of the total number of people living below the poverty line in all Jewish households (i.e., the households of the Jewish population of 5.2 million) is 353,000, including 272,000 adults and 81,000 children and again including both Jews and non-Jews. This estimation makes two assumptions about households that answered the short-form questionnaire in which direct data on poverty were not collected: 1) the rate of poverty is 5%, and 2) the ratio of the average number of adults and children in poor households to all households is the same as in households in which direct poverty data were collected.[11]

Some Jews and their households are more susceptible to poverty than others (see Table 20). As noted above, 9% of the Jewish elderly live in poor households compared to 4% of non-elderly adults. Similarly, 22% of adult immigrants who have arrived in the U.S. since 1980 live in households below the poverty line, in contrast to 4% of other adult Jews. Education and employment status are also related to poverty. Twelve percent of Jews with a high school education or below live in poor homes, while just 3% with at least a college degree do. One-tenth of adult Jews who are not currently employed – including among them the unemployed and the retired – reside in households below the poverty threshold, compared to just 2% of those who currently hold jobs.

[10] Reports on local Jewish communities have sometimes used a broader definition of poor that includes households within 150% of the federal poverty threshold. NJPS was designed to measure the poverty level as defined by the federal government.

[11] Except for this estimation, all poverty data in the text and tables are limited to the Jewish population of 4.3 million. More information on the estimation procedure can be obtained from the UJC research staff.

Table 20. Poverty among American Jewish Adults.	
	Percent living in households below poverty line
Total	5
Age 65 and over	9
Immigrants since 1980	22
High school or below	12
Not employed	10
Single mothers	8

In contrast, poverty among Jews is not at all or weakly related to several important factors. Equal proportions of men and women live in poor households, and equal proportions of households with and without children fall below the poverty line. Poverty rates are marginally higher for single person households than for either two-person or three or more person households. While single adults in general report slightly elevated poverty rates, the rate of poverty among single mothers with children reaches 8%, possibly suggesting some manifestation of the feminization of poverty in the Jewish community. In terms of regions, the Northeast has a slightly elevated proportion of poor Jewish households relative to South, with the Midwest and West between them.

Among the many consequences of poverty is the negative impact on health (see Table 21). More than half of all adults in households below the poverty line say they have poor or fair health, more than three times the rate of other adults. Likewise, nearly 30% of adults in poor households say they or someone else in their home have a health condition that limits employment, education or daily activities, double the rate of adults in other households.

Poverty also negatively influences engagement with Jewish institutions. Many people in poor households join Jewish organizations and participate in communal activities, but they do so less frequently than people in other households. For example, synagogue membership is 32% among adults in poor homes and 47% among other adults. Similar patterns are evident for JCC memberships, affiliations with other Jewish organizations, enrollment in adult Jewish education programs, and

Table 21. Consequences of poverty.*		
	Living in households below poverty level	**Living in households above poverty level**
Health is poor/fair	53%	15%
Health condition limits activities of someone in household	29	15
Hold/attend Passover seder	63	78
Light Chanukah candles	82	82
Light Shabbat candles	37	28
Keep kosher at home	34	20
Attend Jewish religious service monthly or more	23	28
Belong to synagogue	32	47
Belong to JCC	16	21
Belong to other Jewish organization	23	29
Participate in adult Jewish education	15	25
Emotionally attached to Israel	70	69
U.S. and Israeli Jewish share destiny	74	71
Contribute to federation campaign	7	31
Contribute to Jewish cause (not federation)	26	48
Regards being Jewish as very important	57	51

charitable donations to federations and other Jewish causes. Poor Jews are also less likely than other Jews to participate in Jewish activities characterized by interactions with other Jews, such as holding or attending a Passover seder and attending religious services monthly or more.

Simultaneously, Jews living below the poverty line are equally or more likely than other Jews to observe individual rituals such as lighting Shabbat and Chanukah candles and keeping kosher. Jews living in poverty also have equally strong or stronger ethnic attachments than other Jews, as indicated by emotional attachment to Israel, a sense of common destiny with Israel, and reporting that being Jewish is very important to them. These findings underscore the negative effect that poverty has specifically on joining and contributing to Jewish institutions and participating in activities with other Jews.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

As this report amply demonstrates, American Jews are indeed a strong and diverse population that is also facing challenges.

The demographic findings point to several issues that are likely to occupy the attention of the Jewish communal system as it addresses the future of American Jewry. Most centrally, the Jewish population may have declined marginally in size since 1990.

Both the median age of the Jewish population and the proportion of the population that is elderly have increased. One possible implication of the aging of the population may be an increase in demand for initiatives to promote the social integration and productivity of the older population, and to maximize the many resources and talents older Jews bring to the community. We already know that the Jewish elderly are highly active members of Jewish institutions, frequently more active than their younger counterparts.

Relative to the total U.S. population, Jews marry at later ages and have fewer children. Current fertility rates among Jewish women are too low to replace the Jewish population. To date, the incidence of adoption is not sufficiently widespread to dramatically alter the number of children being raised Jewish in Jewish homes, and Jewish immigration to the U.S. is not a likely source of significant population growth.

Highly educated Jewish women report bearing about the same number of children as highly educated non-Jews. On the one hand, this observation lends confidence to NJPS findings, as demographers have repeatedly shown a strong correlation between education and lower fertility rates. On the other hand, it points to how firmly rooted Jewish demographic behavior is in the American social environment. Well-educated Jewish women behave like their well-educated counterparts in the U.S. population.

Migration and mobility also characterize the Jewish population. Over time, many native-born Jews have migrated from the Northeast and Midwest to the South and West. In addition, more than one-third of adult Jews lived in a different residence five years ago than they do today. Migration and mobility have important implications for the communal system. Residential movement may disrupt established communal connections, and forging connections in new locations may take a sustained period of time. Family members who remain behind may also have increased need for support. In both cases, the Jewish community may face challenges of re-integrating those who have moved into communal frameworks and caring for those whose family members may no longer be locally available to them.

Other demographic news is quite encouraging. Jews continue to display extraordinary achievement in terms of educational attainment, occupational prestige and household income. These achievements underlie and promote cultural sophistication, communal involvement, and influence in the public square. They infuse Jewish communal institutions with significant resources – intellectual talent, financial assets and civic influence – for addressing local and global challenges to the Jewish people.

Three subgroups in the Jewish population – the elderly, immigrants and those living below the poverty line – draw particular attention from communal organizations. Each group serves as an important reminder of the diversity of the American Jewish population, maintaining significant ties to Jewish life, albeit in ways that sometimes vary from those of other American Jews. Communal leaders, activists and social service providers are also concerned about the potential vulnerability of these groups with respect to economic resources, social isolation and health problems.

Connections to Jewish life among the entire Jewish population are central to the concerns of communal policy makers and

activists. Most Jews participate in the High Holidays, Passover and Chanukah, have strong social connections to other Jews, regard being Jewish as very important, and receive some form of Jewish education. Smaller proportions, ranging from about a quarter to a half, are engaged in other areas of Jewish life, including many ritual observances, institutional affiliations, charitable contributions, volunteering, and travel to Israel.

Of great significance are several trends that point to more extensive use of Jewish educational and cultural opportunities. The findings show a sharp rise in enrollment in Jewish day schools during childhood years and in Jewish studies courses during college. Some signs point to steady or even increasing use of Jewish cultural options, including adult Jewish education and use of the Internet for Jewish purposes. Travel to Israel may also be included here, despite overall drops in emotional attachment among younger adult Jews.

Coursing through all the findings on Jewish connections are variations by region, age and institutional affiliation. With few exceptions, Jews in the Northeast have stronger Jewish connections than Jews in other regions of the country. Differences in age are less straightforward. Younger adult Jews demonstrate considerable stability and strength in many areas of Jewish life, including religious observances, adult education, synagogue and JCC affiliations, some forms of cultural participation, and selected connections to Israel. Simultaneously, younger Jews show declines relative to older Jews with respect to philanthropy, social connections to other Jews, some institutional memberships, and emotional attachment to the Jewish state.

The most consistent and substantial differences in Jewish connections are between the unaffiliated and those who are in any way affiliated with Jewish institutions. While Jewish commitment begets affiliation and affiliation spurs commitment and engagement, there is no denying that the affiliated population differs vastly from the unaffiliated. The affiliated exhibit far higher rates of in-marriage, in-group friendship, ritual practice, cultural involvement, educational participation, ties to Israel, giving to Jewish causes and subjective commitment to being Jewish.

The rate of intermarriage continues to increase, though at a much slower pace than the very sharp rises in the 1970s and early 1980s. Intermarriage perpetuates itself: the adult children of intermarried parents marry non-Jews at more than three times the rate of adult children of in-married parents. Moreover, almost all current children with in-married parents are being raised Jewish, compared to only one-third of the children of intermarried parents. As important, in-married Jews report far higher levels of Jewish engagement than do intermarried Jews. The differences range over the entire spectrum of Jewish involvement and identity: ritual observance, association with other Jews, affiliation with Jewish institutions, and providing Jewish education to their children.

In sum, contrasting trends in Jewish involvement, the sharp differentiation between affiliated and unaffiliated Jews, and significant differences between the in-married and intermarried all suggest an increasing polarization in Jewish connections. Over time, some segments of the American Jewish population evince greater involvement in Jewish life, while other segments show signs of disengagement. Indeed, this apparent pattern encompasses strength, challenge, and diversity, the very themes of this report, and will likely serve as the basis of important policy discussions in the American Jewish community.

METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

Planning for the National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01 was carried out by UJC research staff in conjunction with the National Technical Advisory Committee, UJC Pillar and other professional and lay leadership, NJPS Trustees, the Jewish federation system and a broad range of Jewish communal organizations.

Interviewing for NJPS 2000-01 took place from August 21, 2000 to August 30, 2001. RoperASW, a survey research firm with headquarters in New York City, conducted the fieldwork, and in conjunction with UJC research staff and its consultants produced the survey weights, tabulations and electronic data files.

Interviewing was conducted by telephone. All telephone numbers in all 50 states of the United States plus the District of Columbia were eligible to be called. The sample of telephone numbers called was randomly selected by a computer through a Random Digit Dialing (RDD) procedure, thus permitting access to both listed and unlisted phone numbers.

The United States was divided into seven strata, based upon pre-survey estimates of Jewish population density. Telephone calls were made to all seven strata. To more efficiently locate Jews – whom survey researchers call a rare population – RoperASW moderately over-sampled strata with higher estimated levels of Jewish density and under-sampled strata with lower estimated levels of Jewish density. Over-sampling in some strata and undersampling in others meant that some people had a greater chance of being called for an interview than others. This difference in the chance of being called was adjusted in the weighting process in order to provide a representative sample of U.S. and Jewish households and populations (see below for more on weighting).

The sample was divided into 22 distinct replicates, each in itself a representative sample of the Jewish and U.S. populations. Replicates are used to increase the efficiency and quality of the sampling process. During the first five replicates, up to 16 calls were made to a telephone number to obtain a disposition, i.e. a determination that the number was a residence, business, not working, or other categories. After conducting a formal test of callback efficiency, up to 8 calls were made in later replicates.

No telephone interviewing for NJPS was conducted on Shabbat or Jewish holidays.

Over 175,000 households were screened for possible inclusion in NJPS. A series of screening questions was asked about all adults in the households contacted:

1. What is your (other adult's) religion, if any? (If not Jewish, then ask:)
2. Do you (Does other adult) have a Jewish mother or a Jewish father? (If no, then ask:)
3. Were you (Was other adult) raised Jewish?
4. (Ask all if not Jewish/Judaism in Q.1): Do you (Does other adult) consider yourself (him/herself) Jewish for any reason?

Based on answers to the screening questions, all household adults were initially classified into 19 Sample Allocation Codes, which were further consolidated into three groups: Jews, People of Jewish Background (PJBs) and non-Jews.

In households with one qualified Jewish adult, that person was selected for a full NJPS interview. In households with two or more qualified adult Jews, one was randomly selected for a full NJPS interview. The questionnaire administered to Jewish respondents consisted of over 300 questions, though no single respondent received every question. Questionnaires are

available on the UJC website, www.ujc.org/njps and the North American Jewish Data Bank website, www.jewishdatabank.org.

Among PJB households (defined as having no adult Jews, but at least one adult PJB), a random subsample was selected for an interview. Within selected PJB households, one qualified PJB adult was randomly selected from among all qualified PJB adults in the household (in households with one PJB adult, that person was selected for the interview). Based on initial, pre-survey assumptions that PJBs were not Jewish, PJB respondents were administered a short-form questionnaire consisting of a subset of approximately 40% of the questions administered to Jewish respondents. The PJB questionnaire excluded many but not all questions on Jewish topics.

A subsample of non-Jewish households, defined as households with no Jewish or PJB adults, was randomly selected for a survey entitled the "National Survey of Religion and Ethnicity." Completion of non-Jewish interviews was kept at approximately the same rate as the completion of Jewish/PJB interviews across the entire course of the field phase. Within selected non-Jewish households, one qualified adult was randomly selected from among all qualified adults in the household (in households with one adult, that person was selected for the interview). The NSRE interview consisted of 41 questions. Non-Jews were interviewed for two reasons: to collect data necessary for weighting and thus estimating the size of the Jewish population, and to provide comparative data to Jews and PJBs on socio-demographic topics.

A total of 9,175 adults (age 18 or older) completed the NJPS (Jewish and PJB) and NSRE (non-Jewish) questionnaires. Weighted data from this combined sample are representative of the total, U.S. household population. Table A-1 displays the total number of respondents in each sample, the range of interview length and the median time to complete an interview.

During data analysis, 264 respondents initially classified and interviewed as Jews were re-classified as non-Jews of Jewish background because they said they were Christians, and in one case Muslim. At the same time, 303 respondents initially classified and interviewed as PJBs were re-defined as Jews. The final unweighted number of Jewish respondents is 4,523 and the final unweighted number of respondents who are non-Jews of Jewish background is 625. This report addresses the 4,523 respondents defined as Jews according to the post-survey classification; it does not include any of the 625 respondents who are non-Jews of Jewish background under the post-survey classification, except in the case of calculating the intermarriage rate under the "born Jewish" definition first used by 1990 NJPS researchers. None of the 4,027 initial non-Jewish respondents who were administered the National Survey of Religion and Ethnicity were reclassified during analysis of the data. Table A-2 displays initial and post-survey classifications of respondents.

Table A-1. Jewish, PJB and NSRE samples.

	NJPS		**NSRE**
	Jews	People of Jewish Background	Non-Jews
Number of respondents	4,484	664	4,027
Interview length—range (minutes)	11-76	9-44	5-20
Interview length—median (minutes)	43	21	10

Table A-2. Initial and post-survey classification of respondents.				
Post-survey classification	**Initial Classification** Jews	People of Jewish Background	Non-Jews	Total post-survey classification
Jews	4,220	303	0	4,523
Non-Jews of Jewish Background	264	361	0	625
Non-Jews	0	0	4,027	4,027
Total initial classification	4,484	664	4,027	9,175

The American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR), the leading professional association of survey researchers, provides several alternative formulas for calculating response and cooperation rates. Using the formulas most commonly reported in the research industry (known as RR3 and COOP3), the response rate to the screening interview for NJPS/NSRE is 28% and the cooperation rate is 40%.

Weights were applied to the data to correct for the unequal probability of household and respondent selection into the sample. These weights adjust for the number of telephone lines in the household, sampling rates within each of the seven strata, subsampling rates for PJB and NSRE households, number of qualified adults in the household, and the number of qualified children in the household for a battery of questions asked about one randomly selected child. Post-stratification weights were also applied to bring sample household and respondent data to U.S. Census totals for strata, age, gender, and region. Final weights provide estimates of households, adults and children. Further information on weighting is available from UJC research staff.

For small numbers of households, data on the number of telephone lines in the households, which were needed for constructing the weights, were not available. Instead, they were imputed based on data from similar households. In addition, small numbers of cases that were screened and selected for a full NJPS/NSRE interview, but then never successfully completed the interview, were not retained in the survey firm's computer system. Because the total number of these missing screener cases was necessary for computing the weights, estimates of their number were made based on screened cases that were retained.

A sensitivity analysis was conducted to test whether imputing data for telephone lines and estimating the number of missing screener cases in the weighting process had an effect on findings from the data. Very extreme alternatives were tested with respect to both the imputed data on telephone lines and the estimates of missing screener cases. The results indicated that though the alternatives could affect the total number of Jews, they did not affect descriptions of the characteristics of Jews based on percentages. No estimated percentages on Jewish variables (e.g., synagogue and denominational members, charitable donations to Jewish causes, volunteering under Jewish auspices, or ritual observances) or socio-demographic variables (e.g., region, income or assessments of health) changed by more than 1-2% when applying vastly different weights. As a result, NJPS researchers are confident that the selective imputations and estimates used to calculate the weights do not affect descriptions of characteristics of the Jewish population emerging from NJPS.

All surveys are subject to sampling variability, the margin of error associated

with taking a sample from a population rather than a census of the entire population. Margins of error are a function of both the sample design and sample size. In theory, in 19 out of 20 cases, the margin of error for statistics such as percentages and proportions for all Jewish adults is +/- 2.0%, for Jewish households +/- 2.4%, and for Jewish children +/- 4.0%. Statistics from subsamples will have larger margins of error. For example, a subsample of 50% of Jewish adults has a margin of error of +/- 2.9%, and a subsample of 10% of Jewish adults has a margin of error of +/- 6.4%.

In addition to margins of error around percentages and proportions, the weighted population estimates are subject to sampling variability. The household population estimate of 5.1 million Jews may vary by as much as +/- 2.8%, and the household estimate of 4.3 million Jews in the more engaged population may vary by as much as +/- 3.0%. No statistical margins of error can be calculated for the non-sampling estimate of 100,000 Jews in institutional settings.

All surveys are subject to the possibility of other kinds of errors, called nonsampling errors. Researchers conducting Jewish population studies – including those who conducted the 1990 NJPS – have long recognized that a major nonsampling concern is the potential miscount of the Jewish household population, due for example to respondents not accurately reporting or denying their current Jewishness or Jewish background, or to differential response rates of Jews and non-Jews. Limited studies of this issue, none of which are methodologically rigorous, suggest that errors in estimating the Jewish population tend to be in the direction of undercounts, although the size of the undercounts seem to be small. Two recent studies by UJC – one on respondents inaccurately reporting their Jewishness and the second on differential rates of distinctive Jewish names between survey cooperators and non-cooperators – may point to a small undercount of the Jewish population, but both studies have methodological limitations that make their findings inconclusive.

Furthermore, Jewish population studies, be they national or local, have used different screening questions to identify Jews, and they have placed the screening questions in different orders. Both of these factors may cause estimates of the Jewish population to vary across studies. Some have suggested that the NJPS 2000-01 opening screener question on religion (what is your religion, if any?) may have dissuaded some Jews, especially secular or ethnic Jews, from affirming their Jewish identity. Others have suggested that the open-ended format of the NJPS 2000-01 screener question on religion and its placement at the very beginning of the screening interview may have lowered the Jewish population estimate as well.

In sum, many researchers believe that the methodologies of survey research may yield undercounts of the Jewish population. However, no tests to date provide firmly established data to accurately estimate the potential undercount of the Jewish population or the effects of different screening questions on population estimates. Lacking such an empirical foundation, no adjustments to the NJPS 2000-01 population estimate or weights were made for these factors.

The UJC Research staff has conducted a series of tests and analyses of important methodological issues related to NJPS 2000-01. Several of these tests and analyses were part of the project's original research plan developed in consultation with the National Technical Advisory Committee. Others arose in response to concerns following the initial release of data in October 2002. In addition, UJC commissioned an external review of NJPS methodological issues. Call the NJPS information line at 1-888-711-4490 or email njps@ujc.org for more detailed information on methodological tests and analyses, the external review, or the following topics:

- Missing data from screening interviews
- Missing data from completed interviews
- Weighting and sensitivity analysis
- Undercounts of the total Jewish population, including
  - Distinctive Jewish names among cooperators and non-cooperators
  - Denial of Jewishness among respondents
- Undercounts of groups within the Jewish population
- Non-response bias
- Response and cooperation rates
- Margins of errors (variances or confidence intervals around point estimates)
- Comparability between NJPS 1990 and 2000-01
- Screener design
- Questionnaire design
- Sample allocation codes and pre-survey classifications of Jews, PJBs and non-Jews
- Post-survey re-classification of Jews and non-Jews of Jewish background
- Comparisons between NJPS and local Jewish population/community studies
- Comparisons between NJPS and other national surveys and data
- Estimation of total people living in poverty in all Jewish households
- Estimation of percentage of total Jews giving to federation campaigns