CHAPTER 1 | INTRODUCTION

This report describes the Jewish population in 2002 of the eight–county New York area served by UJA–Federation of New York — the five boroughs of New York City (Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island), and the three suburban New York State counties contiguous to the city: Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester.[1]

Jewish Population Estimates: A Historical Perspective

The New York Jewish community has been part of the fabric of the New York community since 1654, when the community numbered 23 individuals. One hundred years later, around 1750, the population increased to about 300 Jewish people in New York City. By 1850, there were an estimated 16,000 Jewish persons, 3.1% of the 515,000 people living in the city. The 1850s was the first period of rapid growth in the Jewish community; the community grew from 16,000 to 40,000 over a nine–year period. [2]

Between 1860 and 1880, the Jewish population grew slowly to an estimated Jewish population of 80,000 in 1880, a relatively modest (by contemporary New York standards) 4% of the total population. The most explosive growth in the size of the Jewish community occurred over the next 40 years. From 1880 to 1920, massive immigration caused the Jewish population to expand 20 times — to over 1.6 million — 29% of the city's 5.6 million residents.[3]

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1 These eight counties will be referred to throughout this report as the eight-county New York area, or the New York area, as a way to identify the eight-county area served by UJA-Federation of New York. The same eight counties were the focus of the *1991 New York Jewish Population Study* and the 1981 study: *The Jewish Population of Greater New York: A Profile*. The eight-county area is, of course, part of the much larger New York metropolitan area defined by the U.S. Census as the New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-CT-PA Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA). This CMSA contains 31 counties with 21 million persons, of whom approximately 2 million are Jewish. This 31 county estimate of Jewish population is based on the *2003 American Jewish Yearbook* and must be viewed as a rough approximation, since the Jewish population estimates for many of the counties included in the CMSA are not based on actual surveys, and there is not an exact correspondence between the boundaries as defined in the Yearbook and the CMSA.

2 Hyman Grinstein, *The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1945), Appendix I, p. 469.

3 *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Volume 12, p. 1078.

The Jewish population reached its peak in the 1950s when more than 2 million Jews lived in New York City — 2.5 million in the eight-county area, including Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester. By 1970, during a national period of suburbanization and inner city population decline, the city's overall population decreased by 43%, while the area's Jewish population declined by 25%. [4]

Because the U.S. Census is prohibited from asking questions about religion, and does not ask questions about ethnic identity, there have never been precise national or local estimates of the numbers of Jewish people and their characteristics. In an effort to address this, many Jewish communities began to conduct their own Jewish community surveys in the 1970s and early '80s.

The first sample survey of Jewish households in the New York Jewish community was carried out in 1981 under the sponsorship of the New York Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, a predecessor organization of UJA-Federation of New York. [5] All previous studies were non-survey based estimates of the Jewish population, typically extrapolations of the total number of Jews based on the number of Jewish persons affiliated with synagogues, the Federation, other Jewish organizations, etc.

The 1981 study estimated that there were 1,742,000 people living in 700,000 Jewish households in the eight-county New York area; 1,642,000 of these people were Jewish persons. Of these estimated totals, 514,000 households (73%) lived in New York City and the remaining 186,000 households lived in the suburban counties of Westchester, Nassau, and Suffolk.

The *1991 New York Jewish Population Study* estimated that 1,420,000 Jewish persons lived in 638,000 "core" Jewish households, in the eight-county area.

Why This Study Was Conducted

The 2002 study was designed to answer a myriad of questions about Jewish life in the New York area which had emerged during the decade following the release of the 1991 study, including:

- What is the Jewish population? Has the Jewish population declined, increased, or stayed essentially stable since 1991?

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4 Bethamie Horowitz, *1991 New York Jewish Population Study*, United Jewish Appeal-Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, Inc., New York: 1993, p. xiv.

5 *The Jewish Population of Greater New York: A Profile*, Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York (1984).

- Has the geographic location of Jewish households changed within the eight-county area?

- What is the demographic structure of the community — age, marital status, household size, presence of children — and has it changed significantly since the 1991 study?

- What has been the demographic impact of increased immigration of Russian-speaking Jewish households?

- What is the level of vulnerability in the New York Jewish community?

- How do Jewish households connect to Jewish-life experiences and the organized Jewish community?

- What types of Jewish education are Jewish children receiving in 2002?

- Has the intermarriage rate increased or stabilized since 1991?

- Have Jewish households maintained the high levels of philanthropic giving to both Jewish and non-Jewish charities that were reported in 1991?

About The Study[6]

The Jewish population estimates in this report are based on randomly generated telephone interviews with 4,533 Jewish households which were conducted between March 11, 2002 and September 13, 2002. While interviewing was originally scheduled to begin in the late fall of 2001, the start of survey interviewing was delayed until March 2002 after the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City.

The interview questions, as well as the screening questions used to determine if a household was Jewish, are available on the UJA-Federation of New York website (www.ujafedny.org/jewishcommunitystudy). The complete data file, the screener and the questionnaire are available through the North American Jewish Data Bank (www.jewishdatabank.org).

6 Please see the appended Note on Research Methodology for more research methodology details.

Ninety-two percent (92%) of the survey respondents considered themselves to be Jewish, while another 2% viewed themselves as "Jewish and something else." In 6% of the interviews, a non-Jewish spouse (who felt comfortable answering questions about the household's Jewish life) completed the survey.

Definitions and Scope

A household is defined as a Jewish household if it includes one or more Jewish persons at least 18 years old. For the purposes of this report, a Jewish person is someone who:

- self-identifies as a Jew, or

- is a child being raised as a Jew.[7]

Potential respondents who indicated that they were born or raised as Jews, but no longer considered themselves Jewish, are defined as households of Jewish origin and were not asked to complete an extensive interview, unless some other adult in the household currently considered themselves to be Jewish.[8]

Phone Calls: Random Sampling Design

Altogether, 578,527 phone calls were made to 174,128 different phone numbers in the eight-county New York area in order to identify Jewish households, and then complete the Jewish household interviews.

The sampling methodology was designed to include random samples of Jewish households known to UJA-Federation of New York, as well as random samples of households unknown to the federation. The two samples are independent and complementary; prior to sample selection, the households on the UJA-Federation list were electronically unduplicated from the initial random sampling frame which had been generated through standard GENESYS random digit dialing techniques (RDD).

A total of 558,292 calls were made to 170,372 phone numbers within the residual RDD sampling frames (after the known Jewish households were electronically removed) to complete 3,270 interviews. In contrast, only 20,235 calls were needed to 3,756 telephone numbers within the list sampling frames to complete 1,263 interviews.

7 Respondents, spouses, and other adults who consider themselves "Jewish & something else" are included in the survey estimates as Jewish persons; only 2% of survey respondents defined themselves as "Jewish & something else." Children who are being raised "Jewish & something else" are similarly also included in the Jewish persons estimate.

8 In the 1991 study, respondents who were the equivalent of Jewish "origin" were asked to complete the full interview, but 99% of reported data analysis focused on "core" Jewish households (in which at least one adult considered themselves to be Jewish by religion or by self-definition). In the 2002 study, household respondents of Jewish origin were asked only a few questions; data from their brief interviews are only included in the two tables that specifically focus on households of Jewish origin.

Non-Jewish Household Interviews

Almost 30,000 eight-county New York area households gave the interviewers sufficient information for their religious identity to be established. Over 23,000 of these households are non-Jewish. The identification of non-Jewish households is an essential step in estimating the number of Jewish households in the study area. The screening questions were designed to allow the interviewers to first identify households as Jewish or non-Jewish, and then ask a few questions of non-Jewish households (e.g., number of telephone lines in the household) which are important for Jewish household estimation calculations.

Response Rates and Cooperation Rates

Two traditional measures of a Jewish community survey's quality are: (1) the survey's response rate during the screening phase used to locate and interview Jewish households, (2) the interview completion/cooperation rate.[9]

▶ Response Rate

The response rate (the percent of working phone numbers from which information on respondent religious identity was collected during the "screening phase" of the study) was 38%, an acceptable response rate for contemporary research as massive telemarketing since the early 1990s has resulted in numerous "slam-downs" as well as a generalized indifference to survey phone calls.

▶ Cooperation Rate

Once a Jewish household was identified through the screening process, a cooperation rate of 75% was obtained — 4,533 of the identified 6,035 Jewish households provided usable interviews.

9 The distinction between screening response rates and interview cooperation/completion rates is not always evident. Both the response rate and the cooperation rate are important. A high interview cooperation rate of Jewish identified households is critical; cooperation rates of 75% – 80%+ are typical. Response rates vary enormously, and high response rates (above 40%) are becoming increasingly difficult to achieve given the massive explosion of telemarketing, and the reluctance of individuals to stay on the phone long enough to answer even one survey question. The appended Note on Research Methodology provides a complete sampling disposition.

Survey Sampling Error

Because so many screening interviews were completed at random from contacts with Jewish and non–Jewish households, and because so many Jewish household interviews were completed, the quantitative data is statistically reliable, although subject to normal sampling error:

(1) the estimate of the number of Jewish households in the eight–county New York area is accurate within a maximum potential error of +/– 2.7% at the standard 95% confidence interval;

(2) survey data results reported for the entire interviewed sample of 4,533 Jewish households (such as the percentage of households that are congregation members) are accurate within a maximum potential error of +/– 1.8% (traditional 95% confidence level).

Comparative Information in the Report

In addition to the findings of the *Jewish Community Study of New York: 2002*, this report includes comparative information in order to help put the findings in perspective. As appropriate, data from the *Jewish Community Study* are compared to data from the 1*991 New York Jewish Population Study* (NY: 1991), the *2000-2001 National Jewish Population Survey* (NJPS: 2001),[10] and U. S. Census Data: 1990 and 2000.[11]

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10 *Strength, Challenge and Diversity in the American Jewish Population,* the *National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01*, United Jewish Communities, September 2003.

11 1990 Census data reported in the 1991 Jewish Population Study has been utilized whenever possible to maintain data consistency. 2000 Census data on the eight-county New York area is derived from U.S. Census Bureau, *Profiles of General Demographic Characteristics*, *2000 Census of Population and Housing, New York [State]*, May 2001.

How to Read the Data in This Report

Numbers in this report are rounded to the nearest hundred or the nearest thousand for presentation purposes. Percentages are also rounded to the nearest full percentage. At times, due to rounding, the reported numbers may not add to 100% or to the appropriate numerical total, however, the convention that is employed shows the totals as 100%, or the appropriate numerical total.

Where the sum of a column (row) equals 100%, the percent sign is typically included in the first entry of the column (row), and in the 100% total. This convention is employed to assist the reader in understanding the direction in which percentages add to 100. For example, a frequency table might show that 28% of a total of 100% of Jewish households report keeping kosher.

When a percent sign is shown for each entry (each cell in the table), this indicates that the printed percentages are not intended to add to 100%, but reflect a percentage of a table where the complete table is not shown to facilitate presentation. These separate cell percentages should be compared to adjacent cells. For example, the percentage of households that keep kosher might be reported by borough/county to be 35% in the Bronx, 43% in Brooklyn, 18% in Manhattan, etc.

Where the value in the cell is less than one percent, including where the survey data is zero, <1% is shown, since the data are viewed as a sample of the population, not as a census statistic.