Methodology Report

2024
Jewish Population Estimates and Demographics
For Congressional Districts and Other Geographies

Submitted to

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To produce the best possible estimates of the Jewish population of the U.S. Congressional Districts a novel **Multimethod "DJN-Guided" Approach** was developed by the authors.

Available Jewish Population Estimates

The last time an accurate count of the "United States" Jewish population existed was in 1654 when court records indicate that 23 Jewish refugees arrived in New Amsterdam from Recife, Brazil.

The decennial census and the American Community Survey (ACS), due to separation of church and state, have never asked a religion question.[1] Although numerous surveys completed by private companies, universities, and other entities have asked questions about religion, only a handful have asked questions enabling the identification of both Jews by Religion and Jews of No Religion.[2]

No Jewish population estimates have been available for the 435 U.S. Congressional Districts (CDs). National studies of Jews, such as those completed by the Jewish Federations of North America (and its predecessor organizations) and the Pew Research Center yield only national and Census Region (Northeast, Midwest, South, and West) estimates.

For geographic areas smaller than Census Regions, two types of estimates are available in the *American Jewish Year Book*:

1) **Scientific Estimates** are available from dozens of <u>Jewish community studies</u>, commissioned by local Jewish federations, which produce data for metropolitan areas and (sometimes for) counties as well as for

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[1] The March 1957 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey did so.
[2] Being Jewish is viewed by some Jews as a religion and by others as an ethnic identity. For most Jews, it is viewed as both. The Pew Research Center report <u>Jewish Americans in 2020</u> categorized 73% of American Jews as Jews by Religion and 27% as Jews of No Religion. Thus, any survey that only asks about religion will fail to identify more than one-fourth of American Jewry. Moreover, the 27% who identify as Jews of No Religion differ demographically and politically from those who identify as Jews by Religion.
　　All Jewish population estimates in this report are of Jews living in households (and in institutions such as schools, prisons, and nursing homes, where such data are available) and do not include non-Jews living in households with Jews. The estimates include Jews who are affiliated with Jewish organizations as well as Jews who are not. Different scientific studies and informants use varying definitions of "who is a Jew."

amorphously defined subareas (such as "Northwest Valley" and "Tri-City Area"). Local Jewish community study estimates are made primarily on the basis of random digit dialing telephone surveys or address-based sampling internet/mail/telephone surveys. In a few cases, U.S. Census Bureau data are available.[3]

2) **Informant Estimates** are available in which a community leader or rabbi with local knowledge has provided an estimate to a researcher or to the press. These Informant Estimates historically have been based on contacting about 140 Jewish Federations and about 300 Jewish Federation of North America (JFNA) "network communities" annually. These informants generally had access to information about the number of households on the local Jewish Federation's mailing list and/or the number of households who are members of local synagogues and Jewish organizations. An estimate for Jews who are not currently associated with the Jewish community would then be added..

These scientific and informant estimates have been collated annually for more than 100 years in the *American Jewish Year Book* (*AJYB*). However, in many areas of the country where Jews lived, but there was no organized Jewish community, no estimates were available. Also, the available local Jewish community studies were often quite dated with no reliable methodology for updating the information. Many of the informant estimates were of suspect reliability.

Due to these concerns, the current effort to estimate the Jewish population of the 435 Congressional Districts (CDs) did not simply rely on the existing information in the *AJYB*. Rather, we brought to bear a number of different indicators (discussed below) and, thus, made new estimates (which will be published in the 2024 *AJYB*) which were then aggregated to the CDs.

The *American Jewish Year* Book has always presented estimates for hundreds of Jewish communities (and parts thereof). There was no way to accurately allocate these estimates to CDs. Rather, using methodologies explained below, we made estimates for the 3,143

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[3] U.S. Census data, both the Decennial Census and the American Community Survey can be used to estimate the Jewish population in several highly Jewish communities inhabited by Hasidic and other ultra-Orthodox groups: Bloomingburg, NY; Kaser Village in Rockland County, NY; Kiryas Joel (Town of Palm Tree) in Orange County, NY; Lakewood, NJ; Monsey in Rockland County, NY; and New Square in Rockland County, NY.

U.S. counties, county equivalents, and independent cities.[4] (In some cases, as explained below, we were able to make estimates by zip code.)

The DJN Methodology

Historically, the fact that about 8%-12% of U.S. Jews, despite rising intermarriage rates, continue to have one of *36* Distinctive Jewish Names (DJNs)[5] facilitates making reasonable estimates of the Jewish population. Note that we omitted the six names in italics in the footnote because in some areas of the country, we judged that too high a percentage of people with those names would *not* be Jewish. A Schwartz in Brooklyn is almost certainly Jewish, but a Schwartz in a rural area of western Nebraska is much less likely to be Jewish.

For each of the 3,143 counties, the number of households with one of the 30 DJNs was counted. Because SelectPhone (SP)[6] lists households and not persons, the traditional 8%-12% Jewish was changed to 17%-25% Jewish, given that the Pew Research Center's *Jewish Americans in 2020* survey finds 2.1 Jews per household,[7] We then set a guideline of 20%-30% (for reasons related to some inaccuracies in SP and the fact that we only counted 30 of the 36 names to which the original 8%-12% applies), but even this, we should emphasize, is a guideline. Thus, if a particular county had 20 DJN households in SP, that would suggest that between 400 and 600 Jews reside in that county. Although the 20% to 30% is our "DJN Multiplier," we did not hesitate to go outside this guideline if other factors indicated that the estimate yielded by the multiplier did not make sense.

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[4] Hereinafter, we will refer to 3,143 U.S. counties.

[5] Berman, Caplan, Cohen, Epstein, Feldman, Freedman, Friedman, Goldberg, Goldman, Goldstein, *Goodman*, Greenberg, *Gross*, Grossman, *Jacobs*, Jaffe, Kahn, Kaplan, Katz, Kohn, Levin, Levine, Levinson, Levy, Lieberman, Rosen, Rosenberg, Rosenthal, Rubin, *Schwartz*, Shapiro, Siegel, Silverman, *Stern,* Weinstein, and *Weiss),* See Kaganoff (1996), Kosmin and Waterman (1989), Lazerwitz (1986), Sarna (2009), and Sheskin (1998, 2024) for examples of the use of these names in the scientific literature. See also Mateos (2014) on the uses of ethnic names in general.

[6] The national household directory that we use is SelectPhone (SP) from Data Axle (https://www.dataaxleusa.com). They claim to spend $20 million annually to ensure accuracy.

[7] For known ultra-Orthodox areas for which we used census data for estimates of the Jewish population, we found that the DJN Multiplier is much higher, since the number of Jews per household among the ultra-Orthodox is probably around 6 to 8, not 2.1.

We then employed a number of approaches to adjust some of the DJN counts. We had counted 30 names for 3,143 counties and found, after adding the results for all 50 states (and DC), for example, that 2.0% of the households with one of the 30 names was an "Epstein" household. Also, the Greater Miami Jewish Federation provided us with a count of households with each of the 30 names on their mailing list. On that list, 1.6% of households with one of the 30 DJNs were Epstein households.

Now, while there is no good reason to believe that every state should contain about 2% Epstein households, when the percentage was far greater than expected, subjective judgement was used to "trim" the number of Epsteins using the following procedure. Suppose a county in a state with 10% of its DJNs being Epstein had only 8 households with one of the 30 DJNs, but 6 of them were Epsteins. It is possible that a Jewish Epstein household had moved to that county years ago and had several adult children who stayed, but it seems much more likely, particularly if the U.S. Census ancestry data suggest that county has a high percentage of German origin population, that those Epsteins were probably not Jewish, particularly if this was a small rural county far from any metropolitan area. This situation was particularly evident in the upper Midwest, and impacted names like Epstein, Grossman, Rubin, and Siegel.

In general, the percentage of DJN households who are actually Jewish is going to be much higher in, say, a county near New York City than in a county in the rural area of a Midwest state.

After making such "corrections" at the state level, we then examined the DJN counts for all 3,143 counties and it became evident that further adjustments needed to be made, particularly in counties in a few southern states. For example, our research indicated that the name Levy should be about 7-8% of the 30 names. Yet, we had several counties (in the South) in which the count of Levy was simply too high. One county, for example, contained about 30 DJN households, but 24 of them were Levy. By Googling Levy with the county name and asking for Google Images, it was quickly determined that all of the pictures of Levys were Black in this county. All of them being Jewish was improbable because 1) fewer than 2% of American Jews are Black; 2) a minuscule percentage of the 47 million Black Americans are Jews; and 3) majority-Black synagogues are located in urban rather than rural areas. Also, this county (according to U.S. census data) was only about 20% non-Hispanic white (NHW). The 24 Levy DJNs were reduced to 2.

For counties with about 20 or fewer DJN households, additional judgment was applied. To assume that a rural county with 4 DJN households (say 2 Siegels and 2 Silvermans) contained 80 Jews seemed a bit too much of an assumption. In all these cases, which of the 30 DJNs were included in the count in the small county of 20 or fewer DJNs as well

as other factors discussed below were given more consideration than the simple number of DJN households.

As an example of the efficacy of our estimation method, consider the case of Walton County, FL, a county in the Florida panhandle on the Gulf Coast. The 2023 *AJYB* (whose estimates we were revising) provided no estimate for this county as no informant ever came forward to provide one. We found 71 households with one of the 30 DJNs in this county. Quite conservatively, we estimated 1,200 Jews.

An analysis was also completed to indicate whether the total number of households in SP for each state was much lower or higher than the number of households counted in the U.S. census. When the SP number of households was lower than the census number of households, we used a somewhat higher DJN Multiplier. In other cases, SP had more households than the census, suggesting that they had duplicate households in their data base, and we used this to justify, in some cases, a somewhat lower DJN Multiplier.

At the national level, we compared the total SP DJN counts to the total count of each name reported in the 2010 census (Comenetz 2016). This confirmed the basic accuracy of SP as a source for DJN data: the ratio between census name counts and SP DJNs was consistent for all 30 DJNs used in this project[8].

See the References Cited section below for a list of scientific publications that have used DJNs. Dr. Sheskin has used them in almost all of his scientific Jewish demographic studies for both sampling for the telephone survey and population estimation in peripheral areas of a Jewish community.

Multimethod "DJN-Guided" Jewish Population Estimates

Utilizing the new Multimethod "DJN-Guided" Population Estimates represents a major change in the manner in which Jewish population estimates have been made in the past for the *American Jewish Year Book*. In addition to the DJN estimations discussed above, 13 other methods were considered in developing Jewish population estimates:

1) When a Jewish community had conducted a scientific study, such as had New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, we generally ignored the DJN counts and used the numbers from that study.[9] Such studies cover most of the American Jewish population, as the vast majority of Jews live in large urban areas.

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[8] The ratio was between 2.32 and 2.56 for all except Rosenberg at 2.67.

[9] Note that an exception was made for the Philadelphia federation service area where a recent demographic study (2019) indicated 351,000 Jews. This was suspect because it

2) We also found implausible numbers in the scientific studies of a few multi-county federation service areas. For example, the Rochester scientific study contained an estimate for Monroe County (the main area served by the Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester) and for neighboring Ontario County. But that study assumed that all the Jews in Ontario County lived in the area of the city of Victor (a city close to Monroe County), and only the Victor area was included in the study. The DJN counts indicated a much greater Jewish population in Ontario county in areas east and south of Victor.

3) More weight was given to scientific studies completed in the past ten years than to studies completed earlier. We did sometimes change the estimates for counties in which studies were completed more than 15 years ago.

4) We still considered existing informant/internet estimates from the 2023 *American Jewish Year Book* as a guide to current numbers, with more weight being given more recent estimates.

5) The American Jewish Population Project (AJPP) made estimates in 2020 for all states, some individual counties, and for groups of counties. The AJPP analyzes scores of surveys completed by private and commercial research firms for other purposes, but which ask a question about religion. This provides an estimate of the number of adults who are Jews by Religion. The AJPP then makes estimates based on the Pew Research Center *Jewish Americans in 2020* and some local studies of the number of Jews of No Religion and of the number of Jewish persons per household to derive estimates mostly for groups of counties. When AJPP made estimates for groups of six counties or less, we added our estimates for those county groups and compared them to the AJPP estimates. Most of the time our estimates and AJPP estimates were within a reasonable range of one another.

6) We gathered data on the presence of synagogues and other Jewish institutions from all the sources we could find, including lists on the websites of large Jewish religious organizations such as the Union for Reform Judaism, the Orthodox Union, the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, and Chabad-Lubavitch; smaller

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suggested an increase over the past ten years of 136,000 Jews, including an increase of 95,000 in the City of Philadelphia itself from 67,000 to 162,000. In addition, the DJN Multiplier for the city would have been 76, highly unlikely given our guide of 20-30. Also, the American Jewish Population Project had an estimate for the City of Philadelphia of 81,600, and a recent study for the Jewish Federations of North America also suggested the 162,000 and the 351,000 were too large.

organizations such as the American Sephardi Federation and BlackJews.org; the National Center for Education Statistics for Jewish private schools; Hillel and Chabad for campus organizations; the *American Jewish Year Book* for non-synagogue community organizations; and Google searches. If Jewish institutions are present in a zip code or county, it is likely that more than a few Jews live in the surrounding area. In counties of fewer than 100 DJN households, we recorded the number of synagogues. The presence of one or more synagogues in these small counties led to increased Jewish population estimates.

7) A county contiguous or very close to a county with a large Jewish population, particularly if connected to that large county by an interstate highway, was given a higher DJN Multiplier. Jews in such an "ancillary county" could well be employed in the large county and could be taking advantage of the Jewish infrastructure in the large county. A county with the same number of DJNs as the ancillary county but located nowhere near a city with a significant Jewish community would have a smaller Jewish population estimate. Google Maps was used to assess the location of counties, major cities, and major highways.

8) Procedures were used to deduct seasonal residents from the estimated Jewish population. In some local Jewish community studies, particularly in Florida, the community studies included questions about the number of months per year usually spent in their Florida home. In other cases, such as Vail, CO, people have residences inhabited in the winter to ski. Residences in northern Michigan are used as hunting and fishing lodges. We identified counties with a high percentage of seasonal housing units from the U.S. Census and assumed that if x% of the housing units in an area are seasonal than that x% applies to the Jewish population as well.

9) Procedures were used to deduct college students living in on-campus dorms from the county totals. This involved using data from Hillel International on the number of college students at various American universities for colleges estimated to have 400 or more Jewish college students. Since the impact was small, we did not do this for colleges in major Jewish communities. This procedure was most useful for rural counties containing a university with a large Jewish student population. Also, most larger universities have a reasonable number of Jewish faculty. Note that in total, about 150,000 Jews are either seasonal residents or are college students living in dormitories in college towns.

10) Census data were occasionally used when a scientific study was old and the DJN Multiplier indicated some growth in the Jewish population. Such was the case in Rhode Island, but to be on the conservative side, since the overall population of RI

increased by only 1% in the past 20 years, even recognizing that the Jewish population can increase when the general population does not, no change was made in the Jewish population of Rhode Island.

11) The 2020 U.S. census and the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) provide data on ancestry, language spoken, and birthplace at the census tract (average about 4,000 people) and Zip Code Tabulation Area (ZCTA) scale. (ZCTAs are very similar to postal zip code. While these data do not include estimates of population by religion, variables that indicate the presence of Jews include:

   a. Yiddish or Hebrew home language – few non-Jews speak these at home.
   b. Israeli ancestry and Israel as a birthplace – on the assumption that most non-Jews who could identify themselves this way do not, because they identify as Arab or Palestinian.
   c. Russian home language, Russian ancestry or Russia as a birthplace – a large share but by no means all immigrants to the U.S. from Russia or the former Soviet Union -- have been Jewish. A sizable Russian-speaking or Russian-ancestry community very likely contains some Jews.
   d. Non-Hispanic white (NHW) category – most American Jews select this when asked to choose among the standard American race/ethnic categories. In the absence of better indicators, the distribution of the NHW population can be used to approximate the distribution of Jews, especially if modified by knowledge of the location of Jewish institutions. Areas where more Jews choose other categories, such as Hispanic in south Florida and Hispanic and Black in the New York City area, tend also to be larger urban areas with better coverage from other sources.

12) Special procedures were used for the Atlanta, Dallas, Las Vegas, and Phoenix metropolitan areas. In these cases, while relatively recent estimates of the overall Jewish population were available, the most recent estimates for the geographic distribution of that population were judged too dated to provide an accurate portrayal of the geographic distribution of Jews in these areas (2006, 1988, 2005, and 2002, respectively). The four federations were contacted and cooperated in providing us with counts by zip code of Jewish households in their communities. In the case of Atlanta, because of issues with their mailing list, we also counted the

number of DJN households in each zip code area on SelectPhone to allocate the total for the Atlanta area to each county.

13) Finally, a special procedure was used for the 8-county New York metropolitan area served by UJA Federation of New York (Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Nassau, Queens, Suffolk, Staten Island, and Westchester). In this case, UJA Federation was asked by local politicians to make estimates from their 2023 local Jewish community study for the CDs within the eight counties. This was completed by SSRS, the company that conducted the survey for the Federation. Because this study used an address-based sample, SSRS had the exact street address for many of the 5,901 survey respondents. Surveys could then be allocated exactly to a CD and then the Jewish population could be proportionately distributed among the CDs. We have used a version of the SSRS estimates in this report, adapted for consistency with our other sources.

Data Sources for Jewish Population Estimation by CD

Although the number of congressional districts (436, including the District of Columbia) is smaller than the number of counties or equivalent areas (3,143), calculating CD Jewish populations is more difficult because of the irregularity of CD geography. CDs are constructed of census blocks (small units defined by the Census Bureau with about 100 people) and are required to be of roughly equal population. No Jewish population data are available for census blocks or any comparable geography. Therefore, to move from the national county estimates of Jewish population described above to CD estimates, we utilized a number of other indicators gathered for counties, zip codes, or census tracts. We also created a national map of current CD boundaries. All sources described below, and others that were also consulted, are listed in the Data Sources section at the end of this report.

Geographic areas. The Census Bureau provides national Geographic Information System (GIS) layers (digital boundary maps) for a range of geographies, including counties, CDs, and Zip Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTAs).[10] County boundaries were linked to the national Jewish county data described above to create maps of Jewish population patterns by county. CD boundaries from the Census Bureau were compared to the most current congressional boundaries found on state government websites and via broader sources such as Wikipedia and Dave's Redistricting. Based on this, boundaries for five states (AL, GA, LA, NC, NY) were updated to reflect new CD geography in effect for the 119th U.S. Congress (2025-27).

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[10] ZCTAs are very similar to postal zip codes.

Zip code indicators. Geographically detailed direct evidence of Jewish population below the county level is mostly tabulated by zip code. We used three types of zip code data:

1) DJN counts from lists of registered voters, using the same set of 30 names mentioned above;
2) Estimates of the Jewish population from local Jewish community studies; and
3) Updated household counts direct from the Jewish Federations in the Atlanta, Dallas, Las Vegas, and Phoenix areas. As described above, these provided more current information on population distribution in these four rapidly-growing urban areas, all of which have relatively old local Jewish community studies and significant Jewish populations.

State voter registration offices typically provide lists updated within the past month, showing each voter's name, zip code, CD, and also party affiliation if the state registers voters by party. Not all states offer these data for public access, and many charge fees—ranging from a few dollars to tens of thousands—for access. The lists also indicate if voters are "active" or not; we deleted inactive voters because "activity" is good evidence that a voter still lives in the state. Stephen Morse's site also provides statewide lists of registered voters, of less recent vintage than state-direct data but providing zip code coverage of a number of states where we could not easily obtain the data directly. We counted the number of DJNs in each CD and zip code listed in voter registration data. As with the SelectPhone DJNs that supported county population estimation, voter DJNs helped us approximate the geographical distribution of Jews by zip code.

We obtained estimates of the Jewish population by zip code (and also data on age and political affiliation where available—see next section) from more than 60 Jewish community studies covering many metropolitan areas and some smaller places.[11] These estimates improve on voter DJNs because they provide total Jewish estimates rather than counts of the subset of Jews who have DJNs. On the other hand, the data are older; the median study year was 2016. Although community study zip code data cover only about one-third of CDs, they contain two-thirds of American Jews.

All zip code data was linked to ZCTA geography. The post office does not provide Geographic Information System (GIS) polygons (boundaries of areas) for zip codes. ZCTAs are a close approximation of zip codes but not a perfect match – for example, PO Box addresses do not link to ZCTAs. Fortunately, only a tiny fraction, under 1%, of the

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[11] See list in Data Sources section below. Most study results are publicly accessible via the Berman Jewish DataBank, www.JewishDataBank.org. Note that the public files do not contain a zip code variable for each respondent, so we needed to obtain data files from the researchers. (Dr. Sheskin has completed 50 such studies and consequently had the files.)

Jewish population represented in zip code sources such as community studies cannot be linked to ZCTAs.

Methods for Estimating Jewish Population of CDs

The Jewish population of each CD was calculated using GIS software and several different methods, depending on the CD geographical configuration and available data.

In the explanations below, a *split county* is one whose area is divided among multiple CDs. A *split zip* is a ZCTA whose area is divided among multiple (usually just two) CDs.

State-based estimates. Six states (AK, DE, ND, SD, VT, WY) and DC have only one CD. The DJN-based state Jewish population was used for the CD estimate.

Community study estimates. Among our sources, the only community study that provides estimates for CDs directly from survey results is the 2023 study of the 8-county New York City area. We adapted estimates from this study for 16 CDs in the New York area and part of one more.

County-based estimates. All counties entirely within one CD were assigned to that CD. Also, to save time, split counties with zero Jewish population, or fewer than 100 Jews (or a higher threshold in states with more Jews) were assigned to the CD containing the polygon centroid,[12] or to whichever county contained a Jewish institution or an urban center.

In IA and WV, all CDs are comprised of whole counties. Some CDs in other states, typically in rural areas, also consist of groups of whole counties. In some CDs, all split counties had small Jewish populations that could be assigned to CDs based on Jewish institution or polygon centroid location. In all these cases, county DJN-based estimates were summed to obtain CD estimates.

Zip code-based estimates. At the time of the 2020 census, the average CD's total population was 760,000. During political redistricting, all large urban counties were split among multiple CDs, as were many counties with smaller populations. Fortunately, zip code data were available from community studies, voter registration lists, or Jewish federations for most counties with large Jewish populations. Community study or Federation zip code estimates of total Jewish population can be summed, wherever ZCTAs fit within CDs. DJN counts from voter registration lists show the proportional distribution of Jewish population across counties, and therefore can be used to split a county's population among more than one CD.

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[12] A centroid is the point at the geographic center of an area.

However, like counties, many ZCTAs are split by CD boundaries. As with counties, the first step was to assign ZCTAs with small Jewish populations to CDs based on the polygon centroid, Jewish institution location, or evidence of population density. Frequently, Google Maps imagery demonstrates that towns or housing exist in only one part of a ZCTA. The Randy Majors website overlays county, ZCTA, and municipality boundaries on Google Maps, and Google Maps itself will show most individual CDs, counties, and ZCTAs.

The Jewish populations of larger split zips were divided between CDs using a combination of census or American Community Survey (ACS) data by census tract (tracts are usually smaller than ZCTAs), Jewish institution location, and evidence of population density. For example, if a ZCTA was split between two CDs but all tracts with census or ACS counts of people speaking Hebrew, Russian, or Yiddish languages or having the ancestries or birthplaces listed above were in one CD, most or all Jewish population could be assigned to that CD. If the part of a ZCTA within one CD contained a town with a synagogue, while the other part contained sparsely-populated rural areas according to Google Maps, we assumed that most or all Jews lived in the first CD. ZCTA Jewish estimates could also be proportionally split among CDs using census data or institutional location. Where no Jewish indicators were available, the Jewish population of a ZCTA was split by looking at the distribution of non-Hispanic white (NHW) population within a ZCTA.

This method is not perfect because census tracts, too, are split by ZCTAs; census and ACS variables do not fully correlate with Jewish population distribution and only represent a minority of the total Jewish population; community study and DJN data vary in accuracy and currency (date of gathering); and, as with counties, there is a subjective element in splitting zip and county populations that cross CD boundaries. However, in the absence of a census religion question or a national Jewish household mailing list, it maximized accuracy given available data sources and time. Also, in most cases, addition of split-zip information did not dramatically change the results obtained by using only ZCTAs entirely contained within a CD.

Other situations. Many CDs were constructed from split counties where no zip code data were available. In these cases, entire county Jewish populations were split among CDs using the same methods that were applied to split zips by looking at Census Bureau data and the location of Jewish institutions. Fortunately, these split counties tended to be those with smaller Jewish populations, so the overall accuracy of CD population estimation did not suffer.

Sources for Jewish Demographics

In addition to estimates of the total Jewish population and percentage Jewish by congressional district, data are provided on age and political affiliation where available. While the Jewish Federation movement and the Pew Research Center have spent tens of millions of dollars over the past few decades on national and local Jewish community studies, no data are available for CDs from these sources except in the New York City area.

The Jewish Electorate Institute (JEI) asked for data on the voting age population—all adults aged 18 and over—and the "young voter" category of people aged 18 to 34. Wherever possible, therefore, we are providing data on Jews aged 18 and over as a percent of the total Jewish population, and Jews aged 18 to 34 as a percent of the total voting-age Jewish population. For political affiliation, the goal was to show the percent of Jews of voting age who identify as Democrats, Republicans, or another category. Because sources are not consistent in reporting categories other than Democrat or Republican, all other types of response were grouped into an "Other/None" category that includes identification with other parties, no political affiliation, and undecided.

Age and party affiliation data were estimated or derived as follows:

Jews aged 18 and over: the only source was Jewish community studies that gather information by age. Therefore we have coverage of only one-third of CDs, although these include about two-thirds of American Jews. A typical study provides estimates of the percent of Jews in several age ranges, and the same for non-Jewish household members.

Sixteen states were of special interest to JEI and additional maps and charts are presented for each state. For most of the 16, community studies provided data on Jews age 18 and over for CDs that included most, but not all, of the state's Jewish population. Wherever community studies had data on Jews aged 18 and over covering at least 60% of the state's total Jewish population, we assigned the total percentage from known CDs to all CDs lacking data. For example, in Arizona we had voting age data for five CDs containing about 81% of the state's Jews. In these five together, 84% of Jews are of voting age. Therefore, we used 84% as the percent of Jews aged 18 and over in Arizona's other four CDs. This methodology was also used in CA, FL, MD, MI, NV, NY, OH, PA, and VA.

Jews aged 18 to 34: we obtained young voter data for nearly all CDs in the country using five sources. These included state voter registration DJNs by CD, state voter DJNs by zip code, Morse voter DJNs by zip code, Jewish community study data by zip code, and 2020 census data for the non-Hispanic white (NHW) population by CD. Voter registration data includes birthdate or birth year, community studies query age, and census tables include counts for single-year age groups.

Census data could be used as a proxy for young-voter estimates because we found a good correlation between the percent of Jewish adults aged 18 to 34, and 2020 census NHW population aged 18 to 34, in those CDs where both types of data were available. (In contrast, there is very little correlation between the percent of Jews aged 18 and over and the corresponding NHW percent.)

State voter data covered the entire areas of nine states by CD and one by zip code (CA). Morse voter data were available for an additional six states. Community studies had data for DC, RI, and parts of 12 states not covered by voter registration. For the remaining CDs in the latter 12 states, and all of another 18—typically containing CDs with relatively small Jewish populations—we used census data as a proxy. Only three states (AL, GA, LA) had no data from any source; census data could not be used because CD geography changed since the most recent census tabulation.

Political affiliation by CD: information on Jewish preference for political parties came from five sources. These provided coverage of about 60% of CDs containing more than 80% of the national Jewish population. JEI supplied recent, statewide estimates by CD for 13 states. For states without JEI data, we used voter registration DJNs from state sources by CD (AR, OK), voter DJNs by zip code (CA), and Morse voter DJNs (5 states and DC). Parts of another six states were estimated using community studies, some of which ask about political affiliation. Political affiliation data were not available for the rest of the country.

In a few places, community studies ask whether respondents are conservative, moderate, or liberal, rather than for party affiliation. The only region where that type of data were used here was the Chicago area. There, we recategorized conservative as Republican, moderate as Other/None, and liberal as Democratic.

We preferred JEI's data to voter registration, and voter registration to community study results, in the interest of currency. JEI's data were gathered most recently. State voter registration data are nearly as current but may include voters who recently left the state. Morse voter registration data are typically a few years older than registration data obtained directly from states. Community studies are also older and cover only parts of states.

In areas where more than one source provided information on political affiliation, we compared the Democratic, Republican, and Other/None percentages. The pattern was similar across sources nearly everywhere, suggesting that our estimates approximate reality.

Political affiliation by state: we provide pie charts showing Jewish political affiliation for as many states as possible, including some of those for which CD-level data were not available statewide. Where we had data for all CDs in a state, the statewide totals come

from the same source. In IL, the statewide illustration is based on data from the Chicago community study, whose coverage area included about 95% of Jews in the state. In four states (CT, MA, MD, VA) we used data derived from the Pew Research Center's *Jewish Americans in 2020* study.

Caveats on Jewish Population Estimation Procedures

As implied in the introduction to our Multimethod "DJN-Guided" Jewish Population Estimates, we will never have completely accurate estimates of the number of Jews for any geographic unit in the U.S. In fact, no demographic data from any source is guaranteed to be accurate. Even with the best survey or census methods and results, people may change their responses to the same questions over time or interpret questions differently. Adapting data tabulated for one type of geographic area to another also has a subjective element unless areas nest within each other, as counties do within states. This project employed data gathered at multiple levels of geography, by multiple institutions, and over many years. We fully admit to the somewhat subjective nature of our procedures but argue that our estimates are reasonable.

The estimates for the counties were made by Professor Sheskin who has completed more than 50 major local Jewish community studies since 1982 and has been writing the chapter on the U.S. Jewish population in the *American Jewish Year Book* since 2006.

Estimates for CDs were provided by Dr. Comenetz, who also created the national county and CD data sets and maps for the previous decade that are available on the Berman Jewish DataBank.

Keep in mind as well, that when a CD is comprised of, say, 20 counties, the amount by which we have overestimated some counties is probably somewhat balanced by the amount by which we have underestimated other counties. The same is true when working with split counties and split zips for CD population estimation.

Community Profiles from Community Studies

We also examined 37 local Jewish community studies[13] from which we collated brief demographic information on each, including the number of Jewish households, the

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[13] Baltimore, Boston, Broward County, Chicago, Cincinnati, Delaware, Denver, Detroit, Houston, Howard County, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Louisville, MetroWest NJ, Miami-Dade County, Naples, Nashville, Omaha, Orlando, Pioneer Valley (Springfield, MA), Pittsburgh, Portland, St. Louis, St. Petersburg, San Diego, San Francisco Bay Area, Sarasota-Manatee, Scranton (NE PA), Seattle, South Palm Beach, Twin Cities (Minneapolis-St. Paul), Washtenaw County (Ann Arbor, MI),

number of Jews and Jewish adults, the number of persons living in Jewish households (both Jews and non-Jews), the zip codes with the most Jews, population subgroups, age, household structure, educational attainment, retirement status, income, percentage Orthodox households, whether Jews have been to Israel, measures of attachment to Israel, and whether the Jewish population identifies as liberal/conservative and Democratic/Republican. Note that not all local Jewish community studies contained all this information. For New York, we produced data for all eight counties in the service area of UJA-Federation of New York.

In total, these 37 communities contain 4,858,000 Jews, or 63% of all American Jews.

Data Sources

1. Berman Jewish DataBank: (Most of these reports are available at www.JewishDataBank.org)

Previous national reports
- Ira M. Sheskin and Arnold Dashefsky. 2023. United States Jewish Population, 2023, in Arnold Dashefsky and Ira Sheskin. (eds.) *American Jewish Year Book*, 2023 (Cham, SUI: Springer)
- Joshua Comenetz, *Jewish Maps of the United States by Counties*, 2011
- Joshua Comenetz, *Jewish Population of Congressional Districts,* 2014
- Pew Research Center, *Jewish Americans in 2020* (https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/05/11/jewish-americans-in-2020/)
- Brandeis University, Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies and Steinhardt Social Research Institute, www.ajpp.brandeis.edu

Jewish community studies:
- Atlantic County, NJ 2004
- Baltimore 2019
- Bergen County, NJ 2001
- Boston 2015
- Broward County, FL 2016
- Buffalo 2013
- Charlotte 1997
- Chicago 2020

Greater Washington, DC, West Palm Beach, and NY (Bronx, Brooklyn, Nassau, New York County, Queens, Richmond, Suffolk, and Westchester).

- Cincinnati 2019
- Cleveland 2011
- Columbus, OH 2013
- Dallas 1988
- Delaware 2022
- Denver 2019
- Detroit 2018
- Harrisburg, PA 1994
- Hartford 2000
- Houston 2016
- Howard County, MD 2019
- Indianapolis 2017
- Jacksonville, FL 2002
- Kansas City 2021
- Lane County, OR 2023
- Las Vegas 2005
- Lehigh Valley, PA 2007
- Long Beach 2022
- Los Angeles 2021
- Louisville 2022
- MetroWest area, NJ 2020
- Miami 2014
- Middlesex County, NJ 2008
- Milwaukee, 2011/2015
- Monmouth County, NJ 1997
- Naples, FL 2017
- Nashville 2015
- New Haven 2010
- New York 2023
- Northeast (Scranton) PA 2024
- Omaha 2017
- Orlando 2021
- Philadelphia 2019
- Phoenix 2002
- Pinellas County, FL 2017
- Pioneer Valley area, MA 2020
- Pittsburgh 2017
- Portland, ME 2007

- Portland, OR 2023
- Rhode Island 2002
- Richmond 1993
- Rochester, NY 1999
- St. Louis 2014
- San Antonio 2007
- San Diego 2023
- San Francisco Bay area 2017
- Sarasota-Manatee 2019
- Seattle 2014
- South Palm Beach 2018
- Tidewater area, VA 2001
- Tucson 2002
- Twin Cities, MN 2019
- Washington, DC 2017
- Washtenaw County 2023
- West Palm Beach 2018
- Westport, Weston, Wilton, Norwalk, CT 2000
- York, PA 1999

2. Other Jewish data sources

SelectPhone by Data Axle

State voter registration data:
- Arkansas: Secretary of State's Office
- California: Secretary of State
- Florida: Department of State, Division of Elections
- Michigan: Department of State
- New York: Board of Elections
- North Carolina: State Board of Elections
- Ohio: Secretary of State
- Oklahoma: State Election Board
- Pennsylvania: Department of State
- Washington: Secretary of State
- Stephen Morse's state voter records pages: *stevemorse.org*

Main sources for Jewish congregations and organizations:

- *American Jewish Year Book*
- Chabad-Lubavitch
- Google Maps
- Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life
- National Center for Education Statistics
- Orthodox Union
- Reconstructing Judaism
- Union for Reform Judaism
- United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

3. U.S. Census Bureau: *Data.Census.gov*
- American Community Survey 5-year data
- 2020 Census data, including the DHC-A file

4. Map resources
- Google Maps: www.google.com/maps
- Randy Majors Research Hub: www.randymajors.org
- U.S. Census Bureau: Cartographic Boundary Files
- Dave's Redistricting/Social Good Fund (non-partisan): davesredistricting.org
- Wikipedia: provides current and older CD maps for all states

5. State election offices for recent CD boundary revisions:
- Alabama: Secretary of State
- Georgia: Legislative and Congressional Reapportionment Office
- Louisiana: State Legislature
- New York: State Legislative Task Force on Demographic Research and Reapportionment
- North Carolina: General Assembly

References Cited and Examples of the Use of Distinctive Jewish Names

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Sarna, Jonathan. 2009. "What's in a name – A response to Barry Chiswick." *Contemporary Jewry* 29: 85-90.

Sheskin, Ira. 1998. A methodology for examining the changing size and spatial distribution of a Jewish population: A Miami case study, *Shofar, Special Issue: Studies in Jewish Geography* (N. Jacobs, ed.) 17(1): 97-116.

Sheskin, Ira. 1984. Use of Ethnic Surnames to Project the Jewish Population, paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Association of Geographers.

Sheskin, Ira. 2005. Analysis of surname ethnicity to see if prosecutors systematically exclude Jews from death penalty cases, prepared for the Habeas Corpus Resource Center (San Francisco).

Sheskin, Ira. 2008. Distinctive Jewish Name analysis of California counties for a locational analysis for a new Jewish overnight camp, prepared for Bruce Phillips and Camp Ramah.

Waterman, S. & Kosmin, B. (1986). Mapping an unenumerated ethnic population: Jews in London. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 9(4), 484-501.

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Acknowledgements

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The data tables and maps of Jewish population by congressional district are hereby provided for free distribution. The data and map files may be freely used for any research or other non-profit purpose providing that the data source is acknowledged.

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