



Number of Jews in the world with emphasis on the United States and Israel

On the 20th of December, 2010, the Steinhardt Institute in Brandeis University published new data regarding the size of the Jewish population in the United States:

[U.S. Jewry 2010: Estimates of the size and characteristics of the population](#) .

These data are based on the joint study conducted by researchers Elizabeth Tighe, David Livert, Melissa Barnett, and Leonard Saxe from August 2010.¹ The study crosschecked data taken from a cross-section of 50 different surveys (including ANES, ARDA, ICPSR) conducted between 1998 – 2005 and carefully chosen by the researchers according to prior criteria. For the new study, the researchers created a database from all the data they had gathered. The sample size encompassed 240, 247 respondents from the entire United States. This unique method was meant to overcome the difficulties inherent in common research practices, improve forecasting, and reduce various biases. Most of the surveys upon which the study was based were telephone surveys (RDD) and only three were conducted face-to-face. The average rate of response was about 18%. In all the surveys additional data were gathered making it possible to comprehend the unique characteristics of the group of respondents. The classification of a respondent as "Jewish" was based on self-determination, and an (important) distinction was made between those who define themselves as "Jewish by religion" and those who define themselves as "ethnically-culturally Jewish" (belonging to the latter group are Jews who would not necessarily be considered as such by the Jewish community, since at times they also identify themselves with another religion).

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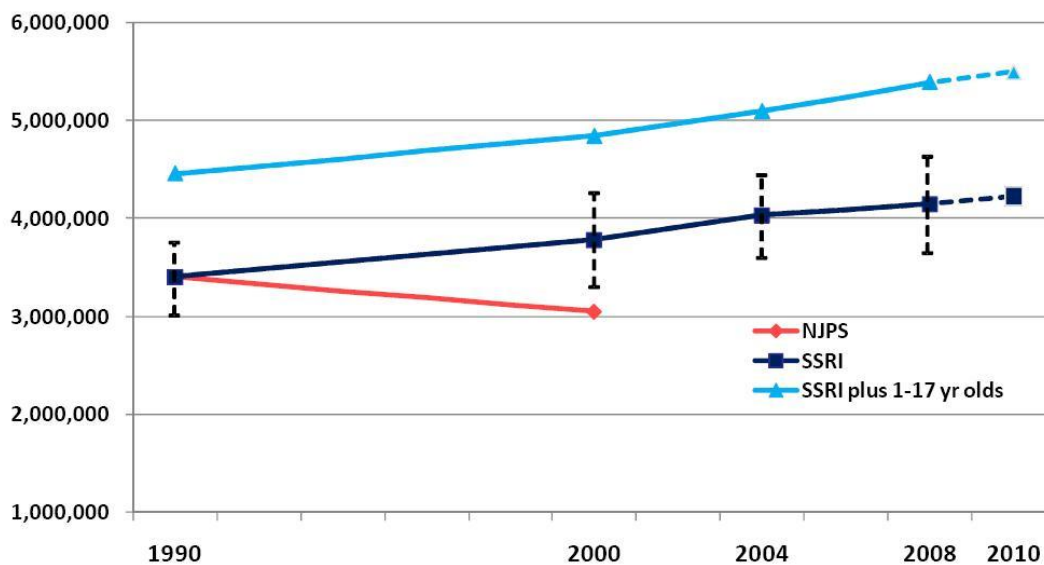
¹ Tighe Elizabeth, David Livert, Melissa Barnett and Leonard Saxe, (August 2010), "Cross- Survey Analysis to Estimate Low-Incidence Religious Groups," *Sociological Methods & Research*, 39(1), pp. 56-82

Below are some of the data presented in the new study, compared to previous ones:

Total US Jewish population estimates

	NJPS 1990	NJPS2000	SSRI 2000	SSRI 2008	SSRI 2010
Adult Jews (18+) who identify by religion	3,399,527	3,047,568	3,780,000	4,143,000	4,225,860
Children (under 18) who identify by religion			1,055,896	1,241,828	1,266,665
Jews who identify by non-religious criteria			857,888	955,269	974,374
Total	5,500,000	5,200,082	5,693,784	6,340,097	6,466,899

Estimate of the number of adults and children self-identified as Jews by religion 1990-2010





World Jewish Population, 2010

On November 20, the North American Jewish Data Bank published a new series of studies that provide updated data regarding the number of Jews in the world. The articles published in the series follow up on the articles dealing with the number of Jews in the world published in the American Jewish Year Book. The series is jointly edited by Professor Ira Sheskin, from the University of Miami, Professor Arnold Dashefsky from the University of Connecticut, and Professor Sergio DellaPergola from the Hebrew University. The three presented different and contrasting approaches in the 2008 AJC Year Book and did so once again in the current publication. The two articles in the series that have been published to date are:

1) [Jewish Population in the United States, 2010](#)

Sheskin and Dashefsky's study relied on a research method similar to the one they used in the 2008 study (scientific estimates based on the RDD and DNJ [Distinctive Jewish Name] method, Federation reports, and data from internet sites), with an important addition – data from the American census regarding language spoken at home. Another important innovation is the special reference to the group of people living in the community on a part-time basis (and therefore liable to be double counted, in both the communities they belong to). The study's data point to an increase of about 55,000 in the number of Jews, compared to the previous study.

The researchers emphasize that these numbers do not necessarily point to an increase in the population. Two possible reasons for this increase may be: 1) an addition of five local communities, the studies of which have only recently been concluded: Cincinnati (Ohio), Middlesex County (New Jersey), Portland (Oregon), Berkshire (Massachusetts), and Philadelphia (Pennsylvania); 2) Additional, new information gathered concerning the communities.



The following presents data taken from the tables for states with the largest number of Jews (we added one column for comparison with the data gathered in 2008):

State	Jewish Population in US 2010			2008 AJYB	Trends
	Number of Jews	Total Population	Percentage Jewish		
New York	1,624,720	19,541,453	8.3	1,618,000	
California	1,219,740	36,961,664	3.3	1,200,000	+
Florida	613,235	18,537,969	3.3	655,000	+
New Jersey	504,500	8,707,739	5.8	479,000	+
Pennsylvania	295,050	12,604,767	2.3	287,000	+
Illinois	278,420	12,910,409	2.2	279,000	+
Massachusetts	282,455	6,593,587	4.3	278,000	-
Maryland	241,050	5,699,478	4.3	241,000	+
Ohio	148,355	11,542,645	1.3	149,155	+
Total	6,543,820	307,006,550	2.1	6,489,110	-

2) World Jewish Population, 2010

Professor DellaPergola continues to adhere to his position, sharply criticizing the approaches of the other researchers concerning the estimation of the number of American Jews. DellaPergola explains the reasons for the differences as resulting, among other things, from a lack of uniformity in definitions and criteria for comparison. He presents three important problems affecting the numerical estimate: a) definition of the target population; b) identification of the group so defined in the population; 3) degree of success in reaching the target group.

The study relies on four types of data: a basic estimate based on the national census or reliable surveys regarding the Jewish population; a basic estimate relying on less accurate sources but presenting, for the most part, more up-to-date data – Jewish population surveys conducted by the various communities; less recent and sometimes partial or inadequate sources; estimates and speculations – various sources complimenting one another and raising each other's level of reliability, thereby creating a broader and more accurate picture. Another interesting point rising from this study concerns trends within the State of Israel, especially regarding the ratio between Jews and the rest of the country's citizens:



The core Jewish population, the wider Jewish population, Arabs and foreign workers in Israel and the Palestinian territories, by territorial division, January 1, 2010:

Area	Core Jews	Others	Jews and others	Arabs	Foreign workers	Total	% Jews and others
Total	5,704,000	313,000	6,017,000	5,206,000	222,000	11,445,000	52.6
State of Israel	5,414,000	307,000	5,721,000	1,536,000	222,000	7,479,000	76.5
Thereof:							
Pre- 1967 borders	5,207,000	300,000	5,507,000	1,238,000	222,000	6,967,000	79.0
East Jerusalem	189,000	6,000	195,000	276,000	N.A	471,000	41.4
Golan Heights	18,000	1,000	19,000	22,000	N.A	41,000	46.3
West Bank	290,000	6,000	296,000	2,200,000	N.A	2,496,000	11.9
Gaza	-	-	-	1,470,000	N.A	1,470,000	0

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Other interesting data:

Estimates of the Jewish population in the world: original and updated, 1945-2010:

Year	World Jewish Population			World Population		Jews per 1,000 Total Population
	Original Estimate ^a	Revised Estimate ^b	Annual Percentage Change ^c	Total (Thousands) ^d	Annual Percentage Change	
1945, May 1	11,000,000	11,000,000		2,315		4.75
1950, Jan 1	11,303,400	11,297,000	0.57	2,524	1.74	4.48
1960, Jan 1	12,792,800	12,079,000	0.67	3,027	1.83	3.99
1970, Jan 1	13,950,900	12,585,000	0.41	3,702	2.03	3.40
1980, Jan 1	14,527,100	12,819,000	0.18	4,447	1.85	2.88
1990, Jan 1	12,810,300	12,868,000	0.04	5,282	1.74	2.44
2000, Jan 1	13,191,500	12,900,000	0.02	6,075	1.41	2.12
2005, Jan 1	13,034,100	13,032,600	0.2	6,487	1.32	2.01

2006, Jan 1	13,089,800	13,102,100	0.53	6,568	1.25	1.99
2007, Jan 1	13,155,200	13,180,700	0.60	6,649	1.23	1.98
2008, Jan 1	13,231,700	13,261,700	0.61	6,732	1.25	1.97
2009, Jan 1	13,308,800	13,348,000	0.65	6,815	1.23	1.96
2010, Jan 1	13,428,300		0.6	6,900	1.25	1.95

a - Core definitions. As published in the Jewish Year Book in previous years. Part of the estimates of Jewish population for January 1 were originally published as being for December 31 the previous year.

b- Based on updated or revised information.. The original estimate was for 1990 and beyond; all the estimates are revised. From: the Department of Demography and Jewish Statistics, the Harman Institute of Contemporary Judaism, the Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

c- Based on revised estimates, except for recent years.

d – Overall population in the middle of the year. Based on revised estimates.

Estimate and data regarding the natural movement of Jews in selected countries, rate per 1000 in the Jewish population, 2005-2010

Country	Birth Rate		Death Rate		Difference	
	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated
Germany	1.6	3.6	11.3	14.3	9.8-	10.7-
United Kingdom	10.2	10.2	11.4	15.0	1.2-	4.8-
Russian Federation	2.2	2.6	29.9	30.2	27.7-	27.6-
Ukraine		4.1		37.8		-33.7
Canada		10.5		12.4		-1.9
United States		10.1		11.7		-1.6
Argentina		10.4		15.2		-4.8
Australia		11.7		12.3		-0.6
Israel	19.9		6.4		+13.5	

i. Based on estimates regarding effective fertility rates and current life expectancy.



In 2010, the North American Jewish Data Bank published an article titled: **Frequently Asked Questions on American Jews. Comparative Tables: American Jewish Demography** ([link](#))

In the essay there are two tables (the only difference between them is the order in which the states are presented. In one table they are presented alphabetically and in the other they are ordered according to the size of the Jewish population). The numerical data presented in the tables are based on scientific surveys conducted by the local communities (mainly using the RDD method of random dialing). Some of the studies have been last updated in 1994.

The numerical data presented by the researchers are closer to those presented in the Annual Survey of American Jewish Public Opinion 2000- 2001 (NJPS) and to

DellaPergola's numbers than to the estimates made by Sheskin and Dashefski in the American Jewish Yearbook (beginning from 2006).

An interesting distinction presented in the table is the one made between the number of Jewish households, the number of people living in those households, and the number of Jews living in them.

The following presents data from the tables for the communities with the largest number of Jews:

Community	Year of Study	Number of Jewish Households	Number of People in Jewish Households	Number of Jewish Persons
New York	2002	643,000	1,666,000	1,412,000
Los Angeles	1997	247,700	619,000	519,200
Chicago	2000	137,700	327,200	270,500
Washington (DC)	2003	110,000	267,800	215,600
Philadelphia	2009	116,700	251,400	214,700
Boston	2005	105,500	265,500	210,500
San Francisco	2004	125,400	291,500	213,800



South Palm Beach	2005	73,000	136,800	131,300
West Palm Beach	2005	69,000	137,300	124,250
Atlanta	2006	61,300	156,900	119,800
Miami	2004	54,000	121,300	113,300
Total of Communities Above		2,571,200	6,248,850	5,223,050
NJPS	2000-1	2,900,000	6,700,000	5,200,000
AJYB	2008	NA	NA	6,489,110

Previous prominent studies:

The Changing Population Profile of American Jews 1990-2008

[\(link\)](#)

In August 2009, at the 15th convention of the World Jewish Congress, Barry A. Kosmin presented the American Jewish Identity Survey data, updated for 2008. The estimates were based on AJIS data from 2008 and on expected demographic trends (Prof. DellaPergola's studies). While previous studies estimated that the number of Jews was larger than that estimated in 2001 and 1990, this study estimated the core Jewish population in the United States as being between 5.2-5.4 million Jews, a decline compared to the 1990 survey, and a slight change, if at all, from the survey conducted in 2000. The core population is defined as those that identify themselves as Jews (JBR) and children of Jews who do not have any other monotheistic religion (JNR).



Estimates of the core Jewish population 1990, 2001, 2008

Code	Jewish Identity Category	1990		2001		2008	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
	Adults						
JBR	Jewish Parent: Religious Judaism	3,365,000	61	2,760,000	52	2,510,000	48
JBC	No Jewish Parent: Religion Judaism	174,000	3	170,000	3	170,000	3
JNR	Jewish Parent: No Religious	813,000	15	1,120,000	21	1,288,000	25
	Children (under 18)						
JBR	Jew by Religion (Include JBC)	856,000	16	700,000	13	650,000	12
JNR	Jew No Religion	307,000	5	590,000	11	600,000	12
Total	All Ages	5,515,000	100	5,340,000	100	5,200,000-5,400,000	

The American Jewish Committee Yearbook, 2008 ([link](#))

The chapter dealing with the Jewish population in the United States in 2008 was written, as in 2006, by the researchers Ira Sheskin from the University of Miami and Arnold Dashefsky from the University of Connecticut. The two present new research methodologies based on 3 sources of information:

1. Scientific estimates based on studies using mainly the RDD method (Random dialing). Sheskin and Dashefsky note that this source is the most credible one currently in use in population research.
2. Self reports made by local communities – wherever the local community does not cooperate, the estimates are based on previous years.
3. Use of internet sources. Tracking reports and updates of organizations and local communities.

According to the study data, the number of Jews in the United States in the year 2008 was estimated at 6,489,110. The increase in the number of Jews compared to previous years (6,443,805 in 2007 and 6,452,030 in 2006) is not attributed by the researchers to real growth in the population, but rather to updates in the estimates of different populations, which may have been underestimated in the past.

In addition, Sheskin and Dashefsky emphasize that they believe that the figure of 6.5 million is higher than the actual number, which ranges between 6.0 – 6.4 million. The



reason for this is, apparently, migration within the United States (of students and families) and double counting of the same populations.

8 States in which the number of Jews is estimated to be more than 200,000

State	AJYB 1/1/2006	AJYB 2008
New York	1,618,000	1,618,000
California	1,194,000	1,200,000
Florida	653,000	655,000
New Jersey	480,000	479,000
Pennsylvania	285,000	287,000
Illinois	279,000	279,000
Massachusetts	275,000	278,000
Maryland	235,000	241,000

Reconsidering the Size and Characteristics of the American Jewish Population: New Estimates of a Larger and More Diverse Community ([link](#))

In January 2007, Leonard Saxe and others published a study within the framework of the Steinhardt Social Research Institute of Brandeis University. This study disputes the AJIS and NJPS data while pointing out the differences between the NJPS survey from the year 2000 and the data from the same survey conducted in 1990 (the comparison provides proof that the data were taken from different populations, the unresponsiveness and the "disappearance" of responders- especially among a certain section of the population). The study offers new data based on national surveys funded by the government and local organizations. According to Saxe and his associates, the Jewish population in the United States in 2002 was between 6.0-6.4 million Jews (similar to the figures presented by Sheskin and Dashefsky in the 2006 AJC yearbook). In their study they note that the adult Jewish population numbered at least 3.5 million, an estimate higher by 17% than that suggested by the 2000-2001 NJPS survey. The child population (0-17) was estimated at 1.1-1.7 million by Saxe and his associates (compared to a NJPS estimate of 1.1 million). Another population that was undercounted, according to the estimates presented in the study, was the unorthodox population. Saxe and his associates propose a figure higher by 800,000 - 1,300,000 than the figure suggested by the NJPS, arguing that it is likely that the share of orthodox in the population is lower than that suggested by the NJPS survey.