

**Comparisons Between Local Jewish Community Studies and the
2000-01 National Jewish Population Survey**

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Abstract

About 50 Jewish federations completed local community studies from 1985 to 2003. This paper provides guidance to researchers wishing to compare local community study results with one another and with results of the National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01. If these comparisons are to be properly interpreted, an understanding of the varying purposes and methodologies of local community studies and NJPS 2000-01 is necessary. This paper concludes that more can be learned by comparing local community study results with one another than with NJPS 2000-01 results.

Introduction

Many researchers will be tempted to compare the results from local Jewish community studies (*local studies*) with one another and with results from the 2000-01 National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS 2000-01). About 50 Jewish federations completed local studies from 1985 to 2003, with some Jewish federations completing two or more studies during these 20 years. Table 1 presents a full list of these studies, the year in which the fieldwork was completed for each study, and the Jewish population size of each local Jewish community. Utilizing data from local studies completed since the data were last updated for the 2003 *American Jewish Year Book*¹ provides a revised 2003 estimate of 6,240,750 American Jews. Thus, the 49 studies in Table 1 account for about 80% of American Jews identified in the *Year Book*. See the Appendix for a listings of the bibliographic references to the 49 studies.

As a researcher who is working on his 35th local study for Jewish federations throughout the United States, I can testify to the fact that Jewish community professionals, lay leaders in the Jewish community, and researchers are all interested in how their community compares with the national study and with other local studies.² While it may appear to be simple to make these comparisons, if the comparisons are to be properly “nuanced,” analyzed, and interpreted, an understanding of the varying purposes and methodologies of local studies and NJPS 2000-01 is necessary. The first purpose of this paper is to provide guidance on the differences between local studies and NJPS 2000-01. A second purpose is to gain an understanding of some of the problems of comparing local studies with one another and with NJPS 2000-01. An important conclusion of this paper is that Jewish communities can often learn more from

Table 1
Jewish Population of Jewish Communities
Completing Local Jewish Community Studies

Community	Year of Study	Number of Jewish Households	Number of Persons in Jewish Households	Number of Jews¹
Atlanta	1996	38,100	95,400	77,300
Atlantic County, NJ	1985	6,700	15,700	14,700
Baltimore	1999	36,600	99,900	91,400
Bergen County, NJ	2001	28,400	78,000	71,700
Boston*	1995	97,000	233,100	233,100
Broward	1997	133,000	269,100	241,000
Buffalo	1995	11,520	31,600	26,400
Charlotte	1997	4,000	10,600	7,800
Chicago	2000	137,700	327,000	270,500
Cleveland	1996	33,710	88,300	81,500
Columbus	2001	11,878	32,000	22,000
Dallas	1988	15,260	36,900	34,300
Denver	1997	32,100	78,500	63,300
Detroit	1989	42,500	106,250	96,000
Essex-Morris*	1998	47,000	117,100	117,100
Harrisburg	1994	3,200	8,600	7,100
Hartford	2000	14,800	36,900	32,800
Houston	1986	16,060	42,500	33,600
Jacksonville	2002	6,700	16,200	13,000
Las Vegas	1995	29,100	66,900	55,600
Los Angeles	1997	247,668	619,000	519,200
Martin-St. Lucie, FL	1999	2,700	5,800	5,000
Miami	1994	74,519	163,000	153,600
Milwaukee	1996	10,400	25,400	21,100
Monmouth County, NJ	1997	26,000	72,500	65,700
New York	1991	638,000	1,633,000	1,419,000
Orlando	1993	9,044	23,400	19,200
Palm Springs	1998	7,850	15,850	13,850
Philadelphia	1997	99,300	241,600	206,100
Phoenix	2002	44,000	106,900	82,900
Pittsburgh	2002	20,900	54,200	42,200
Rhode Island	2002	9,550	23,000	18,750
Richmond	1994	6,000	15,300	12,150

Table 1
Jewish Population of Jewish Communities
Completing Local Jewish Community Studies (*cont.*)

Community	Year of Study	Number of Jewish Households	Number of Persons in Jewish Households	Number of Jews ¹
Rochester	1999	10,230	25,600	21,000
Sarasota	2001	8,800	17,500	15,500
Seattle	2000	22,490	53,500	38,400
SF Bay Area	1986	90,660	222,800	192,800
South Broward	1990	38,963	78,800	74,700
South Palm Beach	1995	61,300	115,500	110,800
St. Louis	1995	24,600	59,400	54,000
St. Petersburg	1994	13,006	30,200	25,700
Tidewater	2001	5,400	13,800	10,950
Tucson	2002	13,400	28,600	22,400
Washington	2003	110,000	267,800	215,600
West Palm Beach	1999	52,900	101,650	94,800
Westport	2000	5,000	13,600	11,450
Wilmington ²	1995	5,700	15,100	11,900
Worcester	1986	6,003	14,800	13,400
York, PA	1999	925	2,400	1,800
Total		2,410,636	5,850,550	5,084,150

* Available results do not distinguish between persons in Jewish households and Jews. Thus, the number of Jews for these communities are overestimated.

¹ Includes number of Jews in institutions where available.

² Population estimates are for New Castle County (Wilmington and Newark). In addition, the Jewish Federation of Delaware serves the remainder of the state with 1,100 Jewish households, 2,500 persons in Jewish households, and 1,600 Jews.

Note: These data are estimates for the year of the study (the year in which the field work was completed). Current estimates may differ.

Note: Only studies that employed random digit dialing methodologies are listed.

comparison of the results of their local studies with other local studies than with NJPS 2000-01.

Purposes of Local Jewish Community Studies and NJPS 2000-01

Local studies and NJPS 2000-01 share an overall common purpose: providing data that will facilitate planning for the benefit of the American Jewish community. Thus, many of the questions asked and the issues addressed in local studies and NJPS 2000-01 are similar. Yet, to some extent, the purposes of local and national studies diverge because the type of planning that is possible and effective differs by geographic scale. That is, some issues need to be addressed at the national level by national Jewish organizations, while others are addressed better at the local level by local Jewish organizations.

Each local study is designed to be of utility to the local Jewish federation sponsoring the study, as well as to local synagogues and Jewish agencies, such as Jewish Community Centers (JCCs) and Jewish family services. The questionnaire design process for local studies reflects this overall purpose. Generally, a researcher is hired to guide the project with the aid of a demographic study committee, which usually consists of representatives of the federation's various departments, Jewish agencies, Jewish educators, and synagogues. Meetings often are held with Jewish agency executives and rabbis to obtain input into the questionnaire design.

Almost all local studies have collected information for three purposes. The first purpose is to enable the organized Jewish community to provide services and programs that contribute to the development or preservation of a Jewish community that will offer compelling reasons for Jews to be active members and maintain their Jewish identity. Partly as a result of NJPS 1990 (Kosmin, *et.al.*, 1991), this "Jewish continuity" issue came to the fore both nationally and locally in the 1990s.³ The second purpose is to assist the organized Jewish community in dealing with the complex programmatic and capital decisions involved in the delivery of social and educational services to the Jewish community. The third purpose is to assist Jewish federations and other Jewish organizations in financial resource development.

Some local studies have been driven by more specific purposes. For example, the 1997 Charlotte local study⁴ examined in great detail the possibility of expanding the existing Jewish day school. The 2002 Jacksonville study⁵ was driven by the possible need to address the growth in the Jewish population outside Jacksonville's core area of Jewish settlement.

Almost all local studies cover such topics as population size, geography and mobility, demography, religious practice, intermarriage, membership, Jewish education, familiarity with and perception of Jewish agencies, social-service needs, Israel, anti-Semitism, readership of the Jewish newspaper, and philanthropy.

NJPS 2000-01 was designed to collect data on a very broad range of topics that would be of use to many national Jewish organizations. The questionnaire design process for NJPS 2000-01 reflected the national nature of the effort. First, a preliminary questionnaire was designed under the direction of the United Jewish Communities' research department by a National Technical Advisory Committee (NTAC), which consisted of about 20 academics and practitioners. Much of the actual question writing was accomplished by a subcommittee of about six persons, myself included. More than 900 copies of this preliminary questionnaire were mailed to academic experts in the field, Jewish community leaders, and other experts throughout the country. Numerous meetings were held with various national constituencies, ranging from representatives of the various movements (Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Reform) to a myriad of Jewish organizations. The questionnaire then was reviewed by the four UJC "Pillars" that existed at the time—Campaign/Financial Resource Development; Jewish Renaissance/Renewal; Human Services and Social Policy; Israel/Overseas—to ensure that NJPS 2000-01 would provide them with necessary data. The highest priorities in question selection were to develop a broad socio-demographic profile of American Jews and meet the planning needs of the UJC Pillars and Jewish federations. An attempt was made to maintain comparability with NJPS 1990, the 2000 U.S. Census, and the local studies. Unfortunately, as will be seen below, these goals were not always met.

NJPS 2000-01 covered such topics as population size, geography and mobility, demography, fertility, adoption, religious practice, intermarriage, membership, attitudes toward Jewishness, Jewishness of social networks, Jewish education (both formal and informal of adults and of children), social service needs, Israel, anti-Semitism, Jewish ethnicity, Nazi victim status, Hebrew language ability, readership of the Jewish newspaper, political orientation, volunteerism, philanthropy, and numerous other topics.

Methodology of Local Jewish Community Studies & NJPS 2000-01

There are significant methodological differences between local studies and NJPS 2000-01. These differences are, to some extent, reflective of budget limitations in local studies, particularly those completed in smaller communities. The differences also reflect the somewhat different purposes of local studies. These methodological differences also help to explain why, in some cases, NJPS 2000-01 results do not appear to be within the range of local study results. For example, 40 local studies have queried whether subject households donated to a Jewish charity in the past year. The results range from 49% in Denver to 83% in Atlantic County (NJ), with 31 communities having values between 60% and

76%. The NJPS 2000-01 results just for the top 40 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) show a value of 51%, which is well below most local studies. This is one of the more extreme examples; many NJPS 2000-01 results do compare logically with results from local studies (Table 4). This section provides some reasons why results from NJPS 2000-01 and local studies may not be comparable, as well as why it is sometimes difficult to compare local studies with one another.

Different Geographies

An important principle within the discipline of geography is the recognition of the importance of scale in examining data and analyzing issues and problems. Scale refers to the size of the geographic areas for which data are collected. Commonly used geographic scales include the country as a whole, census divisions, states, metropolitan areas, counties, cities, zip code areas, census tracts, and census block groups. For Jewish demographic research, data have generally been presented at four different Geographic Scales:

- 1) The United States as a whole. NJPS 2000-01 provides data at the national level.
- 2) United States Census Divisions (Northeast, Midwest, West, and South). NJPS 2000-01 provides data by U.S. Census Division.
- 3) Jewish Federation Service Areas. These areas are often loosely defined by local Jewish federations and are sometimes coterminous with metropolitan area boundaries as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. The study area of local studies is usually coterminous with Jewish federation service areas.
- 4) Geographic Areas within Jewish Federation Service Areas. These may be political units, such as counties, or geographic units consisting of groups of zip code areas defined by the local Jewish community for planning purposes. For example, the New York local study analyzed data separately for each of the eight counties in the Jewish federation service area. The Miami local study analyzed data for the three geographic areas of North Dade, South Dade, and Miami Beach, each of which has a Jewish federation branch office.

Geographic Scales 1 and 2 are generally useful for national planning. Geographic scales 3 and 4 are generally useful for local planning. Most Jewish community planning, of course, occurs at the local level.

Reflecting the goal of being a representative national sample, NJPS 2000-01 interviewed Jews throughout the United States, including many in non-metropolitan areas. With few exceptions, local studies have been completed only in larger metropolitan areas, primarily those with established Jewish communities. Yet, as will be shown below, if areas not surveyed in NJPS 2000-01 are eliminated from the NJPS 2000-01 results, the results are still quite disparate from the results of the local studies.

Different Sampling Methods

Significant differences exist in the sampling methods used by many of the local studies and NJPS 2000-01 (Table 2). The NJPS 2000-01 sample was produced entirely through random digit dialing (RDD). Everything else being equal, this should produce the most random sample of Jewish households. Only six of the local studies relied exclusively on a RDD sample. In the other local studies, some of the interviews were obtained from a RDD sample and some were obtained from either a Distinctive Jewish Name (DJN) sample (drawn from a telephone directory) or a List sample (drawn from the local Jewish federation mailing list). DJN and List samples almost always produce Jewish identity profiles that are more Jewishly oriented than RDD samples. While weighting factors are applied to "correct" the DJN and List samples, they do not always adjust all of the biases introduced by DJN and List sampling. Thus, NJPS 2000-01 sampling methodology is superior to that of most local studies.

Different sampling methods may lead to differences in survey results. Lists of affiliated Jews usually include fewer intermarried households than do RDD samples. Thus, an intermarriage rate reported in Place A, using a combination of RDD and List samples, may be lower than one reported for Place B, using a combination of RDD and DJN samples, and for NJPS 2000-01 which used a RDD-only sample. While weighting factors should nullify these differences, not all researchers have provided enough information to discern if the weighting factors actually do so.

While a full explanation of the types of biases produced by DJN sampling compared to List sampling is beyond the scope of this paper, the main biases introduced by DJN sampling is that intermarried households in which the woman is Jewish are underrepresented, as are households who are not listed in the telephone directory (including recent immigrants). The former bias almost always means that the DJN sample is older in age than the RDD sample. List samples are always biased toward households who have made themselves known to the Jewish community in one way or another, and particularly toward households who donate to the Jewish federation. Intermarried households also are

Table 2
Local Jewish Community Studies Completed
Since 1985

Community	Year of		Sample Size			
	Previous Study	Most Recent Study	RDD	DJN	List	Total
Atlanta	None	1996	404	283	0	687
Atlantic County	None	1985	403	0	0	403
Baltimore	1985	1999	182	0	825	1,007
Bergen	None	2001	1,003	0	0	1,003
Boston	1985	1995	600	0	600	1,200
Broward	None	1997	1,023	0	0	1,023
Buffalo ¹	None	1995	582	0	483	1,065
Charlotte	None	1997	186	298	0	484
Chicago	1990	2000	704	0	1,344	2,048
Cleveland	1987	1996	531	9	646	1,186
Columbus	1990	2001	369	0	370	739
Dallas	None	1988	430	75	420	925
Denver	1981	1997	241	122	359	722
Detroit	None	1989	462	538	100	1,100
Essex-Morris	1986	1998	1,446	0	0	1,446
Harrisburg	None	1994	186	289	0	475
Hartford	1982	2000	216	547	0	763
Houston	None	1986	600	0	0	600
Jacksonville	None	2002	209	226	166	601
Las Vegas	None	1995	152	0	299	451
Los Angeles	1979	1997	1,080	0	1,560	2,640
Martin-St. Lucie	None	1999	23	180	0	203
Miami	None	1994	604	609	0	1,213
Milwaukee	1983	1996	308	531	0	839
Monmouth ²	None	1997	395	401	0	796
New York	1991	2001	3,270	0	1,263	4,533
Orlando	None	1993	204	467	0	671
Palm Springs	None	1998	77	0	325	402
Philadelphia	1984	1997	1,437	0	0	1,437
Phoenix	1983	2002	229	0	564	793
Pittsburgh	None	2002	341	0	972	1,313
Rhode Island	1987	2002	306	523	0	829
Richmond	None	1994	191	432	0	623
Rochester	1986	1999	213	495	0	708
Sarasota	1992	2001	189	427	0	616
Seattle	1979	2000	200	0	600	800

Table 2
Local Jewish Community Studies Completed
Since 1985 (cont.)

Community	Year of		Sample Size			
	Previous Study	Most Recent Study	RDD	DJN	List	Total
SF Bay Area	None	1986	800	200	1,400	2,400
South Broward	None	1990	528	0	415	943
South Palm Beach	None	1995	1,070	0	0	1,070
St. Louis	None	1995	198	424	833	1,455
St. Petersburg	None	1994	204	412	0	616
Tidewater	1988	2001	182	446	0	628
Tucson	None	2002	300	505	0	805
Washington	1983	2003	400	801	0	1,201
West Palm Beach	1987	1999	1,008	0	0	1,008
Westport	None	2000	202	422	0	624
Wilmington	None	1995	157	318	0	475
Worcester	None	1986	100	0	400	500
York	None	1999	23	90	283	396
Total			24,168	10,070	14,227	48,465

List sample was drawn from synagogue member lists.

²Distinctive Jewish Names were supplemented by sampling via Distinctive Sephardic Names (DSNs).

Note: As this article went to press, studies had been commissioned by Miami, South Palm Beach, West Palm Beach, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Atlantic and Cape May Counties (all Ira Sheskin), San Francisco (Bruce Phillips), Boston (Leonard Saxe), and San Diego (Jacob Ukeles).

Note: Only studies that employed random digit dialing methodologies are listed.

somewhat less likely to be on the Jewish federation mailing list and those intermarried households who are on the mailing list are most likely a biased sample of intermarried households in the sense that they would tend to be more involved in the Jewish community.

In all the studies I have undertaken, the bias introduced by the use of the DJN samples is removed via a weighting procedure that compares the RDD and DJN samples. The RDD sample is compared to the DJN sample on a number of key variables: geographic area, age of the head of the household, household size, household structure, marital status,

length of residence, household income, home ownership, Jewish identification (Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist, Reform, Just Jewish), type of marriage (in-married, conversionary in-married, intermarried), synagogue membership, JCC membership, familiarity with the Jewish federation, visits to Israel, and whether the subject donated to the federation in the past year. Chi-square tests are used to discern instances in which the RDD and DJN samples differ significantly, and appropriate weighting factors are applied to correct the biases introduced by DJN sampling.

The procedure used in these studies is not perfect, but it guards against the DJN sampling introducing any significant bias. The studies by Gary Tobin use a similar procedure, but most of the local studies completed by other researchers are not clear about the manner in which they dealt with this issue. Thus, some of the results of the local Jewish community studies may be affected by biases introduced by non-RDD sampling methods.

In addition, NJPS 2000-01 data are unique in that Jews were divided into two groups as a result of the screening questions. The NJPS 2000-01 questionnaire was administered to 4,523 respondents representing all 5.2 million American Jews estimated by NJPS 2000-01. Of the 4,523 respondents, 4,220 (representing 4.3 million more Jewishly connected Americans) received a longer, 43-minute questionnaire. An additional 303 respondents (representing 900,000 less Jewishly connected Americans) received a shorter, 21-minute questionnaire. The shorter questionnaire consisted of a subset of questions from the longer questionnaire, omitting many questions about Jewish identity. As a result, the NJPS 2000-01 results for most demographic measures are available for all 5.2 million American Jews, while NJPS 2000-01 results for most Jewish identity measures are available only for the 4.3 million more Jewishly connected American Jews. Results on Jewish identity measures for the more Jewishly connected sample are, in most cases, more Jewishly oriented than they would have been had the Jewish identity measures been collected from all respondents representing all 5.2 million American Jews. None of the local studies have used this sampling methodology. Thus, the researcher wishing to compare local studies with NJPS 2000-01 is sometimes presented with a quandary: to compare the local study to the entire NJPS 2000-01 sample representing all 5.2 million Jews, or to the more Jewishly connected sample representing 4.3 million American Jews. In many cases, whether a local Jewish community has higher or lower values than NJPS 2000-01 depends upon which NJPS 2000-01 sample is used.

Different Sample Sizes

The sample size for many of the variables in NJPS 2000-01 is 4,523; for other variables, the sample size is 4,220. The maximum confidence interval is $\pm 1.5\%$ at the 95% confidence level. Because of this very large sample size, NJPS 2000-01 is amenable to analysis of many small population subgroups. Even population subgroups that are a mere 3% of American Jews garner a sample size that facilitates analysis with a maximum confidence interval of $\pm 8.4\%$ at the 95% confidence level.

Local studies, on the other hand, sometimes have relatively small overall sample sizes. Table 2 shows that sample sizes for local studies vary from 403 in Atlantic County (NJ) to 4,553 in New York. In 30 local studies, the overall sample size is less than 900, implying that the maximum confidence interval varies from $\pm 3.3\%$ to $\pm 6.9\%$ at the 95% confidence level. For a typical sample size of 600, only population subgroups that are about 23% of the total sample achieve a maximum confidence interval of 8.4% at the 95% confidence level.

By virtue of its enormous sample size, NJPS 2000-01 has an advantage in the analysis of just about every population subgroup except that group that is most important to a local Jewish federation: Jews residing in its service area. While the NJPS data set contains zip code data for each household, an insufficient sample size is available for most Jewish federation service areas to facilitate analysis of NJPS data.

Different Screeners

Local studies typically ask only one screening question. A common screener asked of the respondent in local studies is: "Was anyone in your household born or raised Jewish or is anyone currently Jewish?" In contrast, four questions were asked in NJPS 2000-01 for each adult in the household (each adult's religion, whether each adult considers himself/herself Jewish, whether each adult was raised Jewish, and whether each adult had a Jewish parent). It is generally agreed that screeners used in local studies are not as effective at qualifying Jews on the margin of the community as is the screener used in NJPS 2000-01.

While local study screeners may fail to qualify Jews at the margin, they do result in much higher cooperation rates than was the case with NJPS 2000-01. The NJPS 2000-01 screener sometimes required four, eight, or twelve questions (or more) for each household before a household was disqualified. If, for example, a household contained three persons age 18 and over, each of the four questions noted in the previous paragraph had to be asked of each of the three adults. While asking each of these questions separately may have had the effect of finding more marginal Jews, it also meant a much lower cooperation rate. Imagine that a non-Jewish husband of a Jewish wife answered the phone. If he hung up after the first 1-3 questions (which were questions about his

background), the procedure would never identify the wife as Jewish. In a local study, the one question asked (a *household* question instead of a series of *person* questions) would have identified the household as Jewish. To the extent that local and national studies qualify different respondents, differences between local studies and NJPS 2000-01 may be attributed to the use of different screeners.

Respondent-Oriented Versus Household-Oriented Studies

As implied by some of the differences enumerated above, NJPS 2000-01 was a respondent-oriented survey, while most local studies are household-oriented surveys. NJPS 2000-01 tended to ask many more attitude questions (using agree/disagree scales and the like) than is the case in local studies. This orientation also led NJPS 2000-01 to ask more questions of the nature, “Did you...” rather than, “Did anyone in your household...,” which is more commonly asked in local studies. Finally, this orientation led the NJPS 2000-01 survey designers to make decisions about respondent selection and the interviewing of non-Jews that were at odds with the methodology of most local studies.

Respondent Selection

NJPS 2000-01 used a respondent selection procedure to randomly select an adult respondent (age 18 and over) from the *Jewish* adults enumerated in the screener.⁶ Other than age, sex, and relationship of each non-Jewish adult in the household to the respondent, no demographics are available for adult non-Jews in Jewish households in NJPS 2000-01.

Respondent selection has the advantage of assuring a random sample of adult Jews. For questions about the characteristics of a *household* (for example, synagogue membership), no advantage accrues to respondent selection. For questions about the characteristics of *adults* (for example, marital status), respondent selection is superior. In local studies, which have tended not to use a respondent selection procedure, one must ask marital status for all adults in the household or accept the bias introduced by the likelihood that the persons who happen to answer the phone are probably not a random sample of all adults.

Note as well that asking about all adults (both Jewish and non-Jewish) provides information on non-Jews in Jewish households that NJPS 2000-01 did not solicit. Many local studies have collected demographic information on all adults (both Jewish and non-Jewish) in Jewish households. Thus, the published data on adult demographics (age, sex, place of birth, marital status, employment status, educational level, and other variables) in many local studies are for all adults in Jewish households, while the published data from NJPS 2000-01 are often only for Jewish adults in Jewish households. The researcher must be careful, then, to

only compare the demographics of adult Jews from local studies with NJPS 2000-01.

The significant disadvantage of respondent selection is that the cooperation rate is affected negatively by this procedure. Imagine that a Jewish adult answers the screener and is willing to participate in the survey. Suppose the respondent selection procedure randomly selects another Jewish adult who is not home or is unwilling to be interviewed. In exchange for a marginal gain in accuracy on attitude questions, the researcher is significantly lowering the cooperation rate and sacrificing accuracy on all the variables about the household that can be answered by any adult household member. To the extent that local and national studies qualify different samples, differences between local studies and NJPS 2000-01 may be attributed to methodological differences.

Interviewing of Non-Jews

NJPS 2000-01 did not interview non-Jews living in Jewish households. Many local studies have interviewed non-Jews when a Jewish member is either unavailable or unwilling to be interviewed. Thus, in NJPS 2000-01, in an intermarried household, if a non-Jew answered the telephone he or she would have been disqualified by the respondent selection procedure and a “hand off” of the call would have to occur. Many interviews are lost during this process. By being willing to interview non-Jews, local studies avoid this problem. As with respondent selection, the researcher is significantly lowering the cooperation rate and sacrificing accuracy on all the variables about the household that can be answered by any adult household member. Local studies, on the other hand, must either omit certain questions when interviewing a non-Jew, or ask them in a proxy fashion on behalf of the Jewish household member or accept more item nonresponse when, for example, a non-Jewish wife does not know if her husband attended a Jewish summer camp as a child. NJPS 2000-01, because it did not interview non-Jews, did not need to make any of these compromises. But the methodological decision not to interview non-Jews no doubt *lowered* the intermarriage rate found in NJPS 2000-01 and somewhat increased the “more Jewishly connected” portion of the sample.

Different Questionnaires

Local studies have used a variety of questionnaires and these questionnaires differ from the NJPS 2000-01 questionnaire. The survey research literature indicates that even small changes in question wording, or in the sequence in which questions are asked in a telephone survey, can have a significant impact upon survey results.⁷

Note that some standardization in local study questionnaires has been achieved by the circulation of a “model questionnaire” by the UJC

research department, by the fact that a relatively small group of researchers has completed a high proportion of the local studies, and by the fact that a number of the researchers have collaborated with one another on one or more studies.

On the other hand, over the 20-year period represented by the studies in Table 1, questions gradually have been refined to improve the wording. In doing so, some comparability is lost. For example, some local studies had asked: "Did you *consider* sending your children to a Jewish day school?" As demographic study committees in later years examined and refined this "standard" question, the wording was changed to: "Did you *seriously investigate* sending your children to a Jewish day school?" The feeling was that it was simply too easy to say that you had "considered" something. "Seriously investigated" implies some level of activity, which most researchers agree is a better question. Unfortunately, it makes local studies that used the *consider* question difficult to compare with local studies that used the *seriously investigate* question (this question was not included on NJPS 2000-01.)

Different Definitions and Categorization of Data

Local studies and NJPS 2000-01 vary considerably in the manner in which missing and "don't know" responses are treated, in the definitions used, and in the manner in which data are categorized. The published results of local studies often do not specify the manner in which missing and "don't know" data have been treated. Differences in results between NJPS 2000-01 and local studies, and among local studies, may reflect some differences in definitions and categorizations. For example, at least for the published results, length of residence in the local community is sometimes reported for 0-4 years and sometimes for 0-5 years.

Another example is the manner in which the "separated" status is categorized when reporting marital status. Some studies report separated as a separate category, while others combine separated with married, and still others combine separated with divorced. Because divorce rates should be reported as the number of divorced adults per 1,000 currently married adults (as in the U.S. Census), combining separated with either the married or divorced group makes it impossible to compare divorce rates among some local studies.

Use of Publicity in Local Studies

Most local studies involve some level of publicity in the Jewish community in an attempt to increase the cooperation rate. These often include articles in the local Jewish and secular press, post cards mailed to all known Jewish households, flyers distributed to preschool, religious school, and Jewish day school children, and posters displayed at Jewish institutions. In recent years, publicity has been made available via com-

puter listservs and websites. In all likelihood, such publicity raises the cooperation rate among potential respondents with stronger Jewish identities and especially among potential respondents who are on Jewish mailing lists and who receive Jewish newspapers. NJPS 2000-01, by design, had no such publicity, in part because the budget needed for national publicity exceeded the likely “payoff” from an increased cooperation rate. Nevertheless, differences between local studies and NJPS 2000-01 may be attributed to the use in local studies of publicity, which tends to bias these studies toward obtaining cooperation from Jews with stronger Jewish connections.

Different Dates of the Studies

The local studies listed in Tables 1 and 2 were conducted over a 20-year period, leading to the possibility of a greater variation in results due to temporal differences. NJPS 2000-01 was completed subsequent to the majority of the local studies.

Thus, differences in results between Place A in 1985 and Place B in 2003 may be due to the temporal differences in the local studies. For example, the intermarriage rate in Place A may be lower than in Place B or in NJPS 2000-01 simply because the local study in Place A was completed many years earlier, when intermarriage rates generally were lower. Obviously, this is an extreme example, since most comparisons are between local studies completed closer in time than in this example.

The importance of the date of the study *can* be overestimated. For example, in a number of communities where two studies have been completed, many measures have not changed significantly over time. In Washington over a 20-year period (1983-2003), for example, while the couples intermarriage rate⁸ increased significantly (from 17% in 1983 to 26% in 2003), there was little significant change in the percentage of those who always/usually light Sabbath candles (from 21% to 19%), who keep a kosher home (from 10% to 12%), who never attend synagogue services (from 32% to 31%), and who attend synagogue services once per month or more (from 20% to 22%).⁹

Problems in Comparing Studies

This section aims to provide some concrete examples of problems that exist when trying to compare local studies with one another and with NJPS 2000-01.

Different Bases

The *base* refers to the set of persons to whom (or about whom) each question in a telephone survey was addressed. The base is the denominator used in calculating the percentages reported by each study. Examples of bases include Jewish Households, Persons in Jewish

Households, Respondents, Adults in Jewish Households, and Jewish Children Age 0-17.

As an example of the difficulties given rise by using different bases, all studies have asked questions about marital status (married, divorced, widowed, and single/never married). The local studies I have undertaken have asked marital status for all adults (both Jewish and non-Jewish) in the household. NJPS 2000-01 asked marital status only of respondents, all of whom were Jewish. Since a respondent selection procedure was used in NJPS 2000-01, one can generalize to all Jewish adults from the results for the respondent. But, the results for Adults in Jewish Households cannot be compared directly to the results for Jewish Adults in Jewish Households in NJPS 2000-01.

Further complications are introduced because several studies (Baltimore and Philadelphia, for example) report marital status results for Respondent and Spouse only. These studies did not use a respondent selection procedure and only interviewed the head of household or the spouse of the head of household. By refraining from collecting and reporting data on the marital status of adult children or elderly parents (or any other adults) living in a household with a married couple, the reported results cannot be compared directly to the results in other studies. In addition, several studies report results for Respondent Only without using a respondent selection procedure.

The four different potential bases for marital status are shown for Tucson in Table 3: Adults in Jewish Households (*All Adults*), Jewish Adults in Jewish Households (*Jewish Adults*), Respondents and Spouses in Jewish Households, and Respondents Only. Tucson was selected for this analysis because it is a relatively new study in a community with a high intermarriage rate. Little difference is seen between All Adults and Jewish Adults, with the Jewish Adults slightly less likely to be currently married. The clear bias introduced by local studies reporting the results for Respondent and Spouse is evident in these results, as is the bias of reporting results for the Respondent Only when no respondent selection procedure is used.

A second example of the difficulties caused by using different bases results from the fact that NJPS 2000-01 is a respondent-oriented study while the local studies are generally household-oriented. In this vein, NJPS 2000-01 asked the respondent if he or she had visited Israel. Most local studies have asked if anyone in the household has visited Israel. Thus, NJPS 2000-01 can compare the opinions of those respondents who have visited Israel with those who have not visited Israel. Local studies, on the other hand, can examine the impact on synagogue membership of having at least one adult in the *household* who has visited Israel. Each analysis is useful in its own way. However, because different bases (respondents versus households) were used in NJPS 2000-01

Table 3
Marital Status in Tucson

Marital Status	All Adults	Jewish Adults	Respondent and Spouse	Respondent Only
Currently Married	63%	60%	71%	55%
Widowed	9	11	9	14
Divorced	9	10	8	13
Single, Never Married	20	20	12	18
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: For simplicity, separated adults are reported as currently married. The Tucson local study did not use a respondent selection procedure.

Source: Calculated by author

and local studies, one cannot directly compare the results on visits to Israel of local studies with NJPS 2000-01.

Question Wording

Unfortunately, question wording often is inconsistent across studies. In some cases, this occurs for scientific reasons, as discussed above. Sometimes variations in wording can be considered benign. For example, age is sometimes queried as “How old are you?” and other times as “What is your age?” or “In what year were you born?” Clearly, these three questions almost certainly will elicit the same response. Another example is that some studies have employed the answer set “always, usually, sometimes, never” while others have used “all the time, usually, sometimes, never.” Again, the difference between these two answer sets is unlikely to evoke different responses.

On the other hand, some wording differences compromise the ability to make comparisons. As a first example, NJPS 1990 and all local studies have asked respondents if someone in their household always, usually, sometimes, or never participates in a Passover Seder. NJPS 2000-01 asked respondents “Last Passover, did you hold or attend a Seder?” Clearly, this change in question wording makes direct comparisons of NJPS 2000-01 with NJPS 1990 and all local studies impossible.

As a second example, NJPS 2000-01 asked respondents, “How emotionally attached are you to Israel? Very, somewhat, not very, or not at all?” NJPS 1990 and 25 local studies have utilized a different scale: “extremely, very, somewhat, or not attached.” While both are four-point scales, the scales are different enough so as to render comparisons impossible.

In some cases, these wording or scale variations are made without regard to the value of comparisons. In other cases, researchers simply did not investigate the wording used in previous local studies.

Inexplicit or Contradictory Language in Reports

In many cases, researchers have not been careful in clarifying the base of the percentages in the reports. Some reports make statements to the effect that “62% of Jews” are married, when they should state rather that “62% of adults in Jewish households” are married. Some reports make both statements in different sections of the report.

Some reports make statements such as “34% of respondents” have visited Israel in one paragraph and then state that “34% of Jews” have visited Israel in a later paragraph. Since the latter would include both adults and children, while the former would represent adults only, only one of the two statements is usually correct.

Examples of Problems Comparing Studies

Table 4 provides examples of some of the problems involved in making comparisons among studies. For 16 sample variables, the table shows the NJPS 2000-01 results (when available) for both the entire country and the Top 40 MSAs, followed by a range of results from local studies. For most of the variables, results are available from between 40 and 50 local studies. For the local studies, the table reports the range of results (by providing the lowest and highest values) and a weighted average. Space does not permit publishing a table for each variable, a dated set of which appears in “How Jewish Communities Differ: Variations in the Findings of Local Jewish Demographic Studies” (Sheskin)¹⁰ with updated versions of many of the tables appearing in the 2003 Greater Washington Jewish Community Study (Sheskin).¹¹ Table 5 provides an example table (for intermarriage).

Note that the weighted average can be viewed as a calculated national figure to be compared to NJPS 2000-01 with the caveat that the local studies only cover about 80% of the U.S. Jewish population and that most of the 20% of the Jewish population not covered by the local studies is, for the most part, found in smaller Jewish communities and rural areas. I and others often have attributed differences between the local studies and NJPS 1990 to the fact that very few of the local studies were completed outside of the larger Jewish communities.¹² I suggested above that this might contribute to differences between local studies and NJPS 2000-01 as well. The preferred method of testing this hypothesis (that the difference between local study results and NJPS 2000-01 results is due to the fact that few of the local studies were conducted in small Jewish communities) would be to assign each of the 4,523 NJPS interviews (based upon zip code) to one of two strata: “area covered also

Table 4
Comparisons Between NJPS 2000-01 and Local Studies

Variables	NJPS 2000-01*			Local Studies		
	Total U.S.	Top 40 MSAs Only	Weighted Average ¹	Low	High	Weighted Average ¹
Demographic Variables						
Age 0-17	20%	19%		6%	31%	21%
Age 65 and over	16%	21%		7%	69%	22%
Single person households	30%	31%		16%	35%	25%
Median household income (2002 dollars)	\$54,000	\$56,600		\$46,000	\$142,500	\$67,600
Jewish Identification²						
*Orthodox	8% (6%)	9% (7%)		1%	17%	9%
*Conservative	25% (20%)	26% (21%)		15%	47%	30%
*Reform	35% (28%)	35% (29%)		22%	60%	33%
*Just Jewish	30% (45%)	30% (42%)		11%	44%	27%

Table 4
Comparisons Between NJPS 2000-01 and Local Studies

Variables	NJPS 2000-01*			Local Studies		
	Total U.S.	Top 40 MSAs Only	Weighted Average ¹	Low	High	Weighted Average ¹
Home Practices						
*Mezuzah on front door	61% (48%)	62% (51%)	68%	41%	84%	68%
*Seder (always/usually)	NA	NA	76%	61%	86%	76%
*Shabbat candles (always/usually)	23% (18%)	24% (19%)	26%	13%	36%	26%
*Kosher home	17% (13%)	18% (14%)	19%	4%	29%	19%
Intermarriage^{3,4}						
Couples intermarriage rate	48%	39%	25%	5%	55%	25%
Couples intermarriage rate Under age 35	59%	56%	45%	15%	93%	45%
Membership						
*Synagogue membership	40% (31%)	40% (33%)	39%	21%	60%	39%
*JCC membership	18% (14%)	19% (15%)	13%	1%	36%	13%

Table 4
Comparisons Between NJPS 2000-01 and Local Studies

Variables	NJPS 2000-01*			Local Studies		
	Total U.S.	Top 40 MSAs Only	Weighted Average ¹	Low	High	Weighted Average ¹

* Results for NJPS 2000-01 are for the “more Jewishly connected sample” representing 4.3 million American Jews. Numbers in parentheses adjust the results to the entire NJPS 2000-01 sample representing all 5.2 American million Jews estimated by NJPS 2000-01, *assuming* that had the “less Jewishly connected” sample been queried on these matters, they would have responded Just Jewish, no mezuzah on the door, sometimes or never light Shabbat candles, no kosher home, and not a synagogue or JCC member. No doubt these results understate the results that would have been obtained had all questions been asked of the entire NJPS 2000-01 sample, as it is likely that small percentages of the “less Jewishly connected” sample would have responded affirmatively to some of the questions on home practices and membership.

¹The two age variables were weighted on the basis of the number of persons in Jewish households shown in column 4 of Table 1. All other variables were weighted on the basis of the number of Jewish households in each community shown in column 3 of Table 1.

²Excludes Reconstructionist.

³The couples intermarriage rate variable should have been weighted on the basis of the number of married couples in each community. Unfortunately, for the most part, other than the local studies completed by Sheskin (see Bibliography), researchers have not reported the number of married couples in the community reports. Thus, this variable was weighted by the number of Jewish households in each community. The error introduced by the substitution of number of households for the number of married couples is not believed to be significant.

⁴The well-known argument concerning whether born Jews who have converted out should be included in the calculation of the couples intermarriage rate is NOT one of the reasons for the difference between local studies and NJPS 2000-01. The reported NJPS 2000-01 couples intermarriage rate does not include persons who have converted out, nor do any of the local studies by Sheskin. While most other local studies have probably followed the same convention, many of the reports do not make this explicit.

by a local study” or a “non-local study area.” Unfortunately, the manner in which NJPS sampling was accomplished technically precludes this approach.

In any case, a much simpler but equally revealing analysis is possible. NJPS 2000-01 sampling was accomplished by stratifying the sample into seven strata on the basis of an expected incidence of Jewish households.¹³ The first six strata include all counties in the Top 40 MSAs or Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Areas (CMSAs) in the United States. Of the 26 counties comprising the first three strata, half are covered by local studies and half are not. Thus, it is not true that the local study data cover all the larger Jewish communities. In fact, about 250,000 Jews (according to the 2003 *American Jewish Year Book*) reside in 13 New York City-area counties *not* covered by local studies.

Of the 39 MSAs/CMSAs in strata 4-6, only seven are not covered by local studies, and only two local studies (Martin-St. Lucie (FL) and York (PA)) were completed in areas outside the Top 40 MSAs. Thus, Table 4 presents results separately for the first six NJPS strata (Top 40 MSAs Only), which contain 81% of American Jews. In only two cases is there a significant difference between the NJPS 2000-01 results for the Total U.S. and for the Top 40 MSAs Only: the percentage of persons in Jewish households age 65 and over and the couples intermarriage rate. The Top 40 MSAs contain a more elderly population with a somewhat lower intermarriage rate. The higher percentage of elderly is much closer to the weighted average for the local studies. The lower couples intermarriage rate is also closer to the weighted average for the local studies but is still quite disparate. Thus, the conclusion is that differences between local studies and NJPS 2000-01 cannot be explained in any significant measure by the different geographic areas covered.

Demographic Variables

Local studies generally provide data for persons in Jewish households. Thus, the age data from NJPS 2000-01 shown in Table 4 are for persons in Jewish households. The initial NJPS 2000-01 report¹⁴ showed age data for Jews, not persons in Jewish households. Thus, to compare data on age groups to the local studies, additional analysis of NJPS 2000-01 data was needed.

While the percentage of persons in Jewish households age 0-17 from NJPS 2000-01 (20%) is not significantly different from the weighted average from the local studies (21%), the percentage age 65 and over from the local studies (22%) is significantly higher than the result from NJPS 2000-01 (16%) (although it is about equal to the NJPS 2000-01 results for the Top 40 MSAs). Several explanations are possible. First, perhaps persons in Jewish households in unsurveyed local Jewish communities are less likely to be age 65 and over. That 21% of

persons in Jewish households in the Top 40 MSAs are age 65 and over supports this contention. Second, most local studies have used interviews that last 15-25 minutes, compared to the 43-minute and 21-minute surveys conducted for NJPS 2000-01. The elderly may be less likely to remain on the telephone for a longer interview. Third, almost all local studies I have completed have used all (or mostly) Jewish interviewers, and Jewish interviewers may be more effective at eliciting cooperation from Jewish elderly than the mostly non-Jewish interviewers used in NJPS 2000-01. Fourth, perhaps other methodological differences are responsible for this difference.

In NJPS 2000-01, 30% of households interviewed contained a single person living alone, compared to a weighted average of 25% from the local studies. One possible reason for this difference is that persons living alone were more likely to complete a 43-minute interview because they were less likely to be interrupted by other household members. A mother with small children may be difficult to keep on the phone for that length of time.

In NJPS 2000-01, the median household income is \$54,000, compared to a weighted average median household income of \$67,600 from the local studies. One possible reason for this difference is that persons of lower income were more likely to complete a 43-minute interview, since they are less likely to hold jobs that require travel or work outside of normal business hours.

Jewish Identity Variables

The most significant problem with comparing the Jewish identity variables examined below is that, with the exception of intermarriage, these variables are only available for the more Jewishly connected sample representing 4.3 million American Jews. Is this a fair comparison to local studies? Perhaps a fairer comparison is to the numbers in parentheses in Table 4, which I estimated assuming certain (logical) responses (shown in the note to Table 4) from the less Jewishly connected sample. As will be seen below, this issue has no definitive answer.

Jewish Identification

Certainly, the suspicion that the screener in NJPS 2000-01 was likely to identify Jews on the margin of the community is borne out by the fact that the percentage identifying as Just Jewish in NJPS 2000-01 (be it the 30% from the more Jewishly connected sample or the 45% estimate for the entire NJPS 2000-01 sample) is higher than the weighted average from the local studies (27%). To develop percentages for the entire NJPS 2000-01 sample, the assumption was made that all respondents in the less Jewishly connected sample would have identified as Just Jewish if queried.

Complicating this comparison is that NJPS 2000-01 asked the respondent: “Do you consider yourself to be Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist, Reform, Just Jewish, or Something Else?” The She-skin local studies omitted the Something Else choice (although respondents were allowed to volunteer an answer other than those responses that were read to them), while some of the other local studies omitted the Just Jewish choice but provided the Something Else choice. My analysis of two surveys in Milwaukee suggests that when not presented with the Just Jewish choice, respondents are more likely to identify as Reform rather than as Something Else.¹⁵

The percentage of Orthodox is not significantly different between the local studies (9%) and the two NJPS 2000-01 samples (8%, 6%). The percentage of Conservative from the local studies (30%) is much higher than from the two NJPS 2000-01 samples (25%, 20%). The percentage Reform from the local studies (33%) is lower than the more Jewishly connected sample from NJPS 2000-01 (35%) and higher than the entire NJPS 2000-01 sample (28%).

Home Practices

The percentage of households with a mezuzah on the (front) door of their house from the local studies (68%) is higher than the more Jewishly connected sample from NJPS 2000-01 (61%) and much higher than the entire NJPS 2000-01 sample (48%). To develop percentages for the entire NJPS 2000-01 sample, the assumption was made that all respondents in the less Jewishly connected sample would have responded negatively to this question. Further complicating this comparison is that NJPS 2000-01 asked about having a mezuzah on any door of the house, while the local studies asked only about having a mezuzah on the front door.

No comparisons can be made concerning participation in a Passover Seder, since NJPS 2000-01 asked: “Last Passover, did you (the respondent) hold or attend a Seder?” whereas local studies generally asked: “Does someone in your household always, usually, sometimes, or never attend a Seder?”

The percentage of households who always or usually light Sabbath candles is higher in the local studies (26%) than the more Jewishly connected sample in NJPS 2000-01 (23%) and much higher than the entire NJPS 2000-01 sample (19%). For the latter comparison, the assumption was made that none of the households in the less Jewishly connected sample always/usually light Shabbat candles.

The percentage of households who keep a kosher home from the local studies (19%) is higher than the more Jewishly connected sample in NJPS 2000-01 (17%) and much higher than the entire NJPS 2000-01 sample (13%). For the latter comparison, the assumption was made that

none of the households in the less Jewishly connected sample keep kosher.

Intermarriage

The percentage of married couples in Jewish households who are intermarried is shown, community by community, in Table 5. For all existing married couples, the weighted average for the local studies is 25%, compared to 48% for the entire NJPS 2000-01 sample. Clearly, this represents the largest difference between local studies and NJPS 2000-01. These differences are not definitional since the NJPS 2000-01 and local studies generally have used the same definition. That is, persons who have intermarried and converted out are not included as intermarried because they no longer qualify as Jewish in both NJPS 2000-01 and most, if not all, local studies.

Perhaps the most important reason for the difference between the 25% and the 48% figures is that intermarriage rates outside the communities covered by the local studies are doubtless much higher than the intermarriage rates in studied communities—particularly given that the South Florida communities, with very low rates, are among the surveyed communities. The intermarriage rate in the Top 40 MSAs is only 39%, much closer to the weighted average for the local studies, but still quite disparate from the 25% weighted average for the local studies.

Another significant reason may be that, unlike some Jewish identity variables, intermarriage rates in local studies have increased significantly over time. For example, the intermarriage rate in Chicago increased from 20% to 30% from 1990 to 2000 and in New York, from 19% to 22% during the 1991-2001 period. Thus, the fact that some of the local studies are considerably older than NJPS 2000-01 may contribute to the difference.

Table 5 also shows intermarriage rates for married couples under age 35. The comparison between NJPS 2000-01 (59%) and the weighted average for the local studies (45%) also shows intermarriage rates that are quite disparate. Also, intermarriage rates for this age cohort are not available for the local studies in many of the largest communities, and the sample sizes for the intermarriage rate for married couples under age 35 are as low as 25 in some communities (Most local studies have not asked the year of marriage so one cannot compare local studies with one another and with NJPS 2000-01 for a common time period).

Membership

The percentage of households who are members of a synagogue is about equal in the local studies (39%) to the more Jewishly connected sample in NJPS 2000-01 (40%) but is much higher than the entire NJPS 2000-

Table 5
Intermarriage Comparisons

Base: Married Couples in Jewish Households			
Community	Year	Under Age 35	All
Seattle	2000	NA	55%
Essex-Morris	1998	NA	50%
Charlotte	1997	43%	47%
Tucson	2002	44%	46%
York	1999	74%	46%
Columbus	2001	NA	45%
Jacksonville	2002	44%	44%
Tidewater	2001	93%	43%
Washington	2003	53%	41%
Phoenix	2002	NA	40%
Denver	1997	60%	39%
Atlanta	1996	51%	37%
Pittsburgh	2002	NA	36%
Rhode Island	2002	40%	34%
Richmond	1994	63%	34%
Westport	2000	50%	33%
Wilmington	1995	54%	33%
Harrisburg	1994	51%	33%
Orlando	1993	58%	32%
Chicago	2000	NA	30%
Rochester	1999	36%	30%
Boston	1995	NA	30%
Houston	1986	NA	30%
St. Petersburg	1994	47%	29%
Milwaukee	1996	36%	28%
SF Bay Area	1986	37%	28%
Martin-St. Lucie	1999	NA	27%
Buffalo	1995	NA	26%
Las Vegas	1995	72%	26%
St. Louis	1995	38%*	25%

Table 5
Intermarriage Comparisons (*cont.*)

Base: Married Couples in Jewish Households			
Community	Year	Under Age 35	All
Dallas	1988	34%*	24%
Worcester	1986	NA	24%
Hartford	2000	43%	23%
Los Angeles	1997	NA	23%
Cleveland	1996	NA	23%
Philadelphia	1997	30%	22%
Sarasota	2001	NA	20%
Palm Springs	1998	NA	19%
New York	1991	NA	19%
Broward	1997	57%	18%
Bergen	2001	25%	17%
Baltimore	1999	33% ¹	17%
Monmouth	1997	32%	17%
Detroit	1989	NA	15%
Miami	1994	18%	12%
West Palm Beach	1999	61%	11%
South Broward	1990	29%	9%
South Palm Beach	1995	29%	6%
Atlantic County	1985	15%	5%
NJPS	2000-01	59%	48%

* Age category is age 25-34.

¹Age category is under age 40.

01 sample (31%). For the latter comparison, the assumption was made that none of the households in the less Jewishly connected sample are synagogue members.

The percentage of households who are members of a JCC is much lower in the local studies (13%) than the more Jewishly connected sample from NJPS 2000-01 (18%) and is lower than the entire NJPS 2000-01 sample (14%). For the latter comparison, the assumption was made that none of the households in the less Jewishly connected sample are JCC members.

How Useful Are the Comparisons?

Fortunately, survey research is considered by most to be a rather robust process. That is, despite methodological differences between surveys, it is likely that major differences in the results of surveys are *real differences* and are likely not seriously affected by methodological differences.

While I would not be willing to say that comparisons between local studies and NJPS 2000-01 are not at least somewhat instructive, I strongly believe that comparisons among local studies are more instructive than comparisons between local studies and NJPS 2000-01. Too many of the apparent differences between NJPS 2000-01 and local studies could be due to the very significant differences in methodologies between the studies, which may be so overwhelming as to negate the “robustness” argument.

On the other hand, local studies have employed methodologies that are much more consistent with one another and make for far better comparisons. For example, a statement like: “The 47% intermarriage rate in Charlotte is the third highest of about 50 comparison Jewish communities and compares to 44% in Jacksonville, 43% in Tidewater, 37% in Atlanta, 34% in Richmond, and 32% in Orlando” is much more instructive for informing the Charlotte Jewish community of the potentially greater need to address the intermarriage rate in their community compared with other Jewish communities than compared with a national rate. Likewise, a statement like: “The 15% who are very familiar with the Jewish Federation of Southern Arizona (in Tucson) is the sixth lowest of about 30 comparison Jewish communities and compares to 42% in Dallas, 28% in Milwaukee, and 23% in St. Louis” is a convincing statement to justify the Jewish Federation of Southern Arizona initiating a marketing campaign.¹⁶

Comparisons between NJPS 2000-01 and local studies are even less useful in small communities like Charlotte and Tucson than in larger communities like New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. When a Charlotte compares itself to NJPS 2000-01, it is comparing itself, for the most part, with the state of American Jews in the larger Jewish communities (New York, South Florida, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, etc.), since that is where the bulk of NJPS 2000-01 interviews were completed.

Thus, the central conclusion of this paper is that comparisons between local studies and NJPS 2000-01 are problematic due to methodological differences; comparisons among local studies are considerably more valuable. This is not to say that local studies are any better or worse than the national study, just that the comparisons among local studies are more instructive than comparisons between local studies and the national study.

In addition, researchers should note that the combined sample size of the local studies (in excess of 48,000, about half of which is derived from random digit dialing) is more than 10 times the size of NJPS 2000-01 sample size. Certainly, even with the caveat that local studies only cover about 80% of American Jews, much of the research that is likely to be undertaken with NJPS 2000-01 can be supplemented by using local study data.

NOTES

¹ David Singer and Lawrence Grossman, *American Jewish Year Book 2003* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 2003). Note that NJPS 2000-2001 provides an estimate of 5.3 million American Jews. While NJPS researchers warn that evidence exists to suggest that the 5.3 million estimate is too low, the disparity between the findings of the *American Jewish Year Book* and NJPS 2000-01 is of significant note.

² Ira M. Sheskin, *How Jewish Communities Differ: Variations in the Findings of Local Jewish Demographic Studies* (New York: City University of New York, North American Jewish Data Bank, 2001).

³ Barry Kosmin, *Highlights of the CJF 1990 National Jewish Population Survey* (New York: Council of Jewish Federations, 1991).

⁴ Ira M. Sheskin, *The Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte Jewish Community Study* (Charlotte: Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte, 1997).

⁵ Ira M. Sheskin, *The 2002 Jacksonville Jewish Community Study* (Jacksonville: Jewish Federation of Jacksonville, 2003).

⁶ Ira M. Sheskin, *Survey Research for Geographers*. Resource Publications in Geography (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Geographers, 1985).

⁷ Seymour Sudman and Norman M. Bradbury, *Asking Questions* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1982).

⁸ Inter-marriage rates may be reported based on *married couples* or *individuals*. As an illustration, imagine that two weddings occur. In wedding one, Moshe (a Jew) marries Rachel (also a Jew). In wedding two, Abraham (a Jew) marries Christine (a non-Jew). Thus, there are two married couples, one of whom is intermarried. In this illustration, the *couples intermarriage rate* is 50%. Another method of calculating an intermarriage rate, however, is to note that there are three Jews (Moshe, Rachel, and Abraham) and one of the three (Abraham) is married to a non-Jew. In this illustration, the *individual intermarriage rate* is 33%. All intermarriage rates reported in this paper are reported as a couples intermarriage rate.

⁹ Ira M. Sheskin, *The 2003 Greater Washington Jewish Community Study* (Potomac, MD: Charles I. and Mary Kaplan Foundation, 2004).

¹⁰ Ira M. Sheskin, *How Jewish Communities Differ: Variations in the Findings of Local Jewish Demographic Studies* (New York: City University of New York, North American Jewish Data Bank, 2001).

¹¹ Ira M. Sheskin, *The 2003 Greater Washington Jewish Community Study* (Potomac, MD: Charles I. and Mary Kaplan Foundation, 2004).

¹² Ira M. Sheskin, *How Jewish Communities Differ: Variations in the Findings of Local Jewish Demographic Studies*. (New York: City University of New York, North American Jewish Data Bank, 2001).

¹³ United Jewish Communities, *The National Jewish Population Survey/ National Survey of Religion and Ethnicity 2000-01, Study Documentation* (New York: United Jewish Communities, 2003) p.44. This report is available at www.jewishdatabank.org.

¹⁴ United Jewish Communities, *The National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01, Strength, Challenge, and Diversity in the American Jewish Population* (New York: United Jewish Communities, 2003).

¹⁵ Ira M. Sheskin, *Jewish Community Study of Greater Milwaukee* (Milwaukee: The Milwaukee Jewish Federation, 1996).

¹⁶ For additional examples justifying the use of comparing local studies, see Ira M. Sheskin, "Jewish Demographic Studies: Still Necessary After All These Years," in *Contemporary Jewry*. Special Issue on Jewish Community Surveys (1994) Vol. 15, pp. 1-3 and Ira M. Sheskin, "Local Jewish Community Studies in the United States: A Mostly Untapped Resource," in *World Jewish Demography: Trends and Challenges* (ed. by Sergio DellaPergola, Jerusalem: Hebrew University. Forthcoming, 2005.).

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