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**BEYOND THE 1990 NATIONAL JEWISH POPULATION
SURVEY: A RESEARCH AGENDA***

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In the post NJPS-1990 period, research on American Jewry faces key challenges: 1) reexamination of basic conceptual issues, including "who is a Jew," selection of the most appropriate indicators of Jewish identity, and understanding the interrelations among contextual factors, national linkages, social networks, and Jewish identity; 2) methodological issues such as fuller achievement of representative and standardized national coverage, development of in-depth and follow-up studies, more effective comparative research among communities and between Jews and non-Jews, and greater reliance on multi-disciplinary perspectives and qualitative approaches; 3) fuller integration of research with planning; and 4) expansion of personnel resources.

I am most appreciative to the Association for the Social Scientific Study of Jewry for recognizing my contribution to the study of American Jewry by giving me its Award for Distinguished Scholarship. In fact, however, the efforts for which I have been recognized have generally been group endeavors in which I was only one actor. Therefore, a number of individuals and groups deserve to be acknowledged. The list is a long one, and I can cite only a few; among them are the members and staffs of both the Council of Jewish Federations' (CJF) National Technical Advisory Committee for Population Studies (NTAC) and the Mandell L. Berman Institute - North American Jewish Data Bank (NAJDB); my Israeli colleagues associated with the International Scientific Advisory Committee for Jewish Population Surveys (ISAC) who have been a constant source of inspiration and stimulation; and on the individual level, to cite just three with whom I have worked continuously over the last several years -- Barry Kosmin and Jeffrey Scheckner of CJF and my lifetime collaborator, my wife, Alice.

In accepting this recognition, I would not be honest if I did not indicate that the greatest reward I have received and hope to continue receiving in the years ahead is to see the data and the insights that have emerged from the 1990 National Jewish Population Study (NJPS-1990)

and from other studies in which I have been involved being used so often and widely to help assess the state of American Jewry and to develop more effective programs to ensure a continuing and vital Jewish life in the United States in the twenty-first century.

It is well over a half century since the first serious efforts to assess the status and dynamics of the Jewish population of the United States were launched (Levin 1984). Since then well over 100 community studies (most of them conducted in the last two decades) and two CJF organized National Jewish Population Surveys (NJPS-1970/71 and NJPS 1990) have been conducted. Moreover, several communities have undertaken two studies; Boston has already conducted three. At the time of NJPS-1990, about three-quarters of the American Jewish population had recently been surveyed in the aggregate through local community surveys, attesting to the widespread recognition across the United States of the need to base planning on knowledge (see, e.g., Goldstein 1970; 1981; 1992a).

In planning NJPS-1990, our NTAC did so with three goals in mind: 1) high scientific quality for the study itself; 2) early and wide dissemination of its findings; and 3) extensive discussion and use of its findings for evaluation of the community and development of enlightened strategies for planning its future. I believe we can honestly report that all three goals have either already been achieved or are well on their way to being realized, thanks to the efforts of NTAC, NAJDB, and CJF generally, and to community leaders and individual scholars across the nation.

For me personally, it has been very satisfying to note the significant extent to which a strong tradition of research on the Jewish American population has developed over the last several decades. The growing number of studies, their high quality, the high proportion of the population covered by them, the increasing number of communities (including some of our largest) that are undertaking repeat surveys, the greater sophistication characterizing both local and national surveys, and especially the wide and rapid communication and use of the survey findings mean that we know more than ever about ourselves. Coupled with continuing efforts to extend and enrich such knowledge, this augurs well for the future of American Jewry.

In discussing the findings of community studies and of NJPS, a number of reviewers and users have tried to classify the social science analysts as "pessimists" or "optimists," based on the scholars' assessments of the survey findings for the future of American Jewry (Silberman 1985; Goldberg 1992). Most often, I have been labeled as

a pessimist, based on the concerns I have expressed about the implications of high intermarriage rates, low fertility, increased dispersion, and lower levels of traditional ritual and home practices. I take exception to such a classification. Like Shoshana Cardin (1992), I have a very different conception of optimist and pessimist. A pessimist is one who looks at the evidence and concludes that nothing can be done about the situation; the future is doomed. The dreamers look at the data, decide the changes observed are part of a normal evolution, and conclude there is no need to worry since the future will take care of itself. An optimist is one who looks at the evidence and concludes that, now that we know what some of the problems are, we can confront them and try to work out acceptable solutions to cope with them. Within this framework, I regard myself an optimist; I have strong confidence that we are able to assess ourselves and then to take the facts into account in planning for a better future. Research and planning need to go hand in hand. That the Jewish American community has come to recognize this is in itself a major reason for optimism about the future.

I do not propose here to review the findings of NJPS-1990 or even their implications for the future. These concerns either have already been covered in a number of published papers (Kosmin et al 1991; Goldstein 1992a; 1992b) or will be treated in great depth in the series of monographs being prepared by members of NTAC and others. Rather, I want to direct my comments to what I see as the challenges we now face in undertaking further research on American Jewry. Such a focus is especially important for members of ASSJ because, as I define an optimist, it is scholars such as you who will gather the facts and interpret them to provide the insights necessary for community leaders to cope more effectively with existing and potential problems confronting the Jewish American community.

As I envisage the state of our research on American Jews, we still face key challenges in four major aspects of research: 1) basic conceptual issues; 2) methodological concerns; 3) the relation of research to planning/policy; and 4) personnel/training. Although these are interrelated, it is best to discuss each in turn.

CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

"Who Is a Jew?" Among the major findings to emerge from NJPS 1990, as a result of the wide sweep of its sampling procedures, is the complexity of the national Jewish population and the extent to which this varies across the nation (Goldstein 1992a; Goldstein and Kosmin

1992). Persons identified themselves as Jews by religion, secular or ethnic Jews, Jews by choice; some indicated they were currently non-Jews, but had a Jewish upbringing or were of Jewish parentage; some even concurrently regarded themselves as both Jewish and members of Christian or other groups. Still other members of the sampled households were non-Jews married to or living with persons who were Jewish or of Jewish descent. These results confront us with the basic research question "Who is to be identified as a Jew?" and who should therefore be represented and counted in a community or national survey. How narrow or broad a net should be thrown by the sampling design?

Findings based on NJPS-1990 are obviously very much affected by the decisions about who was to be covered and the methods used to classify individuals who regard themselves as Jews by religion, as secular Jews, as Jews by choice, or who were born Jews or of Jewish parentage even though not currently Jewish. The three-stage process employed by NJPS-1990 in developing its sample, beginning with the national, year-long screening survey of 125,813 households to identify eligible Jewish households, and ending with a final count of 2,241 households, encompassing 6,514 individuals, yielded a broad range of identities. (For fuller details on screening and sampling methods, see Goldstein 1992a: 82-86; and Kosmin et al 1991: 1-2, 38-39.)

The many types of Jews revealed by NJPS-1990 confirm, I believe, the serious biases introduced in earlier sampling designs restricted to federation lists, distinctive Jewish names (DJNs), or areal clusters reflecting Jewish population concentrations. Costly though it is, use of Random Digit Dialing (RDD), as was used for NJPS-1990, helps ensure the representativeness we are seeking if we are to encompass all segments of the community. However, even RDD leaves room for deciding what range of "Jews" we are to count and to compare. We need also to ask the right questions related to who is or was a Jew.

The richness of the insights we gain from our results will be very much affected both by the nature of the sampling procedure and the coverage provided by our screening questions. For example, whether our levels of intermarriage are 30, 40 or 50 percent and over will obviously be considerably influenced by the extent to which we are able to identify all current and former Jews, however defined.

I believe that, for assessing the current situation and planning the future, we must ascertain our situation in the past and know our current position. We must therefore select our sample, ask our

questions, and code our data so that all Jews (former and current) may be included and so that the study population can be narrowed or broadened to suit the purpose of a particular analysis. Only then will the data be of maximum use for both theoretical and policy purposes. We should not let our anxieties about the real world or about whether the facts will support particular perspectives determine what definitions we use. To do so is a disservice both to science and to the community.

Indicators of Jewish Identity For all too long, surveys of Jewish populations have relied on a small number of indicators of Jewish identity, such as lighting candles on Shabbat, buying Kosher meat and using separate dishes for meat and dairy, attending Seder, observing Chanukah, being a synagogue member, fasting on Yom Kippur. We need to ask ourselves whether such indicators are still adequate when the lines are no longer clear between Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and secular Jews; between current and former Jews; and between Jewish and non-Jewish household members. NJPS identified some non-Jewish household members who fasted on Yom Kippur or belonged to Jewish organizations, and many Jews, even some professing to be Jewish by religion, who did not. We find, in some surveys, Jews who eat pork, many who do not, and a few who do except on Yom Kippur or Passover.

Goldscheider (1986; 1990) and others (Massarik 1977; Cohen 1991) have argued that it may be that we are looking at the wrong indicators of Jewishness in late 20th century America; friendship patterns, residential clustering, and occupational ties have been suggested as additional or substitute indicators of what it means to be Jewish. We need evaluations to test the variables both used in earlier studies and suggested as alternatives in future studies in order to develop and employ the most appropriate indicators of what it means to be Jewish. These should include behavioral traits, attitudes, and measures of personal interaction; their interrelations must be tested, as well as their impact, in turn, on the Jewish identity and practice of both respondents and their children. We urgently need to experiment with different ways to define Jewish identity and to assess the implications of different indicators of what it means to be a Jew for the future vitality of the community.

The Continental Community A substantial geographic redistribution has characterized the American Jewish community since the massive waves of immigration between the 1880s and the 1920s (Goldstein

1987; Sidney Hollander Memorial Colloquium 1987). Migration between city and suburb, between metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas, between cities and towns, and across regions has become a major dynamic for American Jewry. In 1990, only 45 percent of all adults (age 18 and over) reporting themselves as currently Jewish (the core Jewish population) were living in the same city/house in which they were born (Goldstein 1991). An important outcome of this process has been the development of a continental Jewish community (including Hawaii and Alaska). It has given a new face to American Jewry — one that requires much greater attention to the linkages among communities, to the ways contextual factors affect Jewish identity and continuity, to the ways in which the Jewish identity of individuals and households are affected as a result of movement — often with some frequency — from one community to another, and the challenges that such movement entails vis-à-vis structural integration and access to facilities that play a catalytic role in maintaining Jewish identity. Unless surveys recognize the importance of contextual factors, of linkages and networks, our ability to understand the dynamics of change and the problems Jews confront in maintaining their Jewish identity may suffer.

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES:

Problems of National Coverage Over the past several decades, community surveys of the Jewish population have varied considerably in scope and quality. In large part, this is because the various local surveys relied upon different questionnaires, varying sampling designs that led to differential and often biased coverage of the Jewish population, and diverse tabulation plans. The absence of standardized methods and definitions (including definitions of who was to be counted as a Jew) made it difficult and sometimes impossible to compare findings across communities, either to obtain a better understanding of a particular community or to obtain insights into the national Jewish community.

Recognizing the problems of coverage and variation in quality among local studies, the Council of Jewish Federations (CJF) undertook the first National Jewish Population Study in 1970/71 (NJPS-1970/71). The national sampling design relied on a combination of local Jewish federation lists of Jewish households and standard area probability methods to ensure representation of Jewish households not included on lists (Massarik and Chenkin 1973). Housing units of the combined list and area samples were screened for Jewish occupants. Three criteria

were employed to identify Jews: whether any of the occupants had been born Jewish, had a parent who had been born Jewish, or regarded himself or herself as being Jewish (Lazerwitz 1978).

NJPS-1970/71 was a milestone in the development of American Jewish demography. Unfortunately, the exploitation of its rich data was limited, so that the full value of the survey for understanding the Jewish population was not realized. Nonetheless, the experience of both implementing that survey and trying to use the results has served us well.

In the absence of another NJPS in the early 1980s, but with keen recognition of the need for national assessments of the Jewish population, individual groups and scholars have attempted to develop national samples. Our colleague, Steven Cohen, has been in the forefront of such efforts with the studies he has undertaken for the American Jewish Committee. Since the mid-1980s, a special effort has been made in these surveys (Cohen 1987; see also Cohen 1991) to achieve less biased coverage for developing the sample by relying on a base other than distinctive Jewish names derived from lists of persons affiliated with Jewish organizations and activities (Cohen 1983a; 1983b). The resulting data suggest that the newer sampling procedure "succeeded in reaching a slightly larger number of marginally Jewish respondents" than did the earlier samples based on distinctive Jewish names (Cohen 1987; see also Cohen 1991). However, both the self-selective character of participants in the panel and the fact that the sample presumably reflects current religious identification and therefore misses individuals who do not report themselves as currently Jewish by religion necessarily raise doubts about the representativeness of such samples of the full array of persons currently and formerly Jewish. As Cohen (1987: 91) himself stresses, "There is no completely satisfactory way to sample American Jews nationwide, and no single method yields a representative group at a reasonable cost."

The leadership of CJF recognized in the early 1980s the need to correct problems of comparability among local surveys and to design better sampling methods and a core questionnaire that could be used both locally and eventually in a national survey. They therefore created the Technical Advisory Committee on Population Studies (NTAC) in 1984. Two years later, the Mandell L. Berman North American Jewish Data Bank (NAJDB) was founded through the cooperative efforts of CJF and the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York.

A major part of NTAC's initial efforts were devoted to achieving greater standardization of concepts and methods in community surveys to allow fuller and easier comparative analyses and to facilitate the aggregation of data from individual community surveys to gain regional or even national profiles of the population. Greater reliance on qualified scholars to organize and analyze surveys has also been noteworthy. The results have greatly enhanced the quality and value of survey data.

While most communities and even the national community no longer need to be convinced of the importance of surveying themselves as a basis for planning, all too often a number of communities fail to recognize the limitations of biased sampling methods, such as exclusive use of federation lists and DJNs (see Kosmin and Waterman 1989), or of questionnaires designed independent of nationally developed standards. An all too frequent willingness to deviate from accepted recommended practices in order to save funds or to serve purely local interests detracts from the general advances that have characterized the field. Equally serious is the tendency to accept results at face value regardless of methods used. This failure to evaluate the quality of the results can lead to serious errors in both interpretation and utilization of survey findings since not all studies are equally good.

Beyond the Omnibus Survey With respect to both community and national surveys, we must acknowledge that a single survey conducted in 30-35 minutes, by telephone, and attempting to meet the data demands of a wide range of local or national interests cannot provide all the information needed for testing/answering all relevant questions or to do so in enough depth to allow realistic planning. The type of surveys we have been conducting do not offer the final word on the factors and relations in which we are interested; rather, they provide a useful overview and a baseline, like the decennial United States census. They can be used to develop a profile of the population and as a standard against which change can be measured and, most important, as a basis for developing in-depth analyses.

We need more in-depth information, however, than an omnibus survey such as NJPS-1990 can provide on such groups as the aged, women, the intermarried, the mobile segments of the population, single parents, the Orthodox, the disabled. An omnibus survey can indicate the prevalence of such groups and provide only limited insights into how their characteristics are related to other factors. Full assessment requires additional studies directed at specific problem areas and

having enough cases involving the particular variable being researched to allow meaningful evaluation. The same is true of issues which were of peripheral interest in 1990 when the survey was designed (for example, languages spoken at home, interracial contacts), but which may merit future research attention. A major by-product of a study such as NJPS-1990 is that the analysis itself points to important new questions, which have gone unanswered because they were not anticipated when the questionnaire was designed, such as the role of family networks in providing support, both material and emotional.

For these concerns — intense coverage of particular topics; pursuit of issues on the fringe of federation interests; new issues suggested by the data — follow-up studies in the immediate post-study period can fill the gap. These may consist of subsamples of the surveyed population or of an expanded sample that is screened to yield sufficient cases of the subpopulation on which interest focusses.

Furthermore, we cannot rely on a single-round population survey as the basis for planning indefinitely into the future. Outdated concepts and data may be of even less value than no information, especially when change is rapid and affects key aspects of community life, such as the character of Jewish identity, marriage, the family, population distribution, or community stability. Sole reliance on NJPS-1970/71 for gaining insights into Jewish life in the United States in the 1980s and 1990s would certainly have been risky and ill-advised. At best, it provided a standard against which results from community studies could be compared to identify changes since 1970. The speed with which changes in basic concepts and in socio-demographic structure and processes can occur and their serious implications for community planning argues strongly for regular surveys at reasonable intervals, certainly no longer than 10 years apart, but preferably at shorter intervals.

Longitudinal Approaches Ideally, to allow frequent monitoring of rapid change, partly as a mirror of changes in the general population, partly as a reflection of altering social and economic conditions in the Jewish community itself, we need longitudinal study designs that follow up the same panel of households and individuals (see Phillips 1984). In this way, the pace of change in attitudes and behavior, and especially factors responsible for them, can be more readily identified. When relevant for community planning, such an approach may help provide the insights needed for altering community priorities and specific

programs well before large and counter-productive investments are made in them.

At the same time, methods must be developed that will allow us to exploit more effectively a variety of data sets that can be used to monitor changes in the inter-survey period. By employing computers more efficiently, fuller and more careful use of federation lists, birth and death records, school enrollment statistics, city directories and telephone books, and information from records of moving and utility companies can all provide rich insights on what is happening to the population in the post-survey period.

Comparative Research The pace and direction of demographic change obviously varies from one region of the country to another and often from one type of community to another within the same region, depending on their prior history, composition, size of community, and economic situation. Conclusions based on one community or on the nation as a whole cannot be expected to hold across communities or regions. The sharp regional differences observed by NJPS-1990 with respect to a wide range of demographic variables and of indicators of Jewish identity testify to the need for comparative research across regions and communities.

As a corollary, local community studies have had and will continue to have great value. They continue to provide essential information for the locality; and if the procedures are standardized, they also create opportunities to assess the extent to which national and regional patterns mask intercommunity variations, because of each community's unique features. To understand how such contextual factors as institutional structure and regional location affect demographic structure and dynamics requires local surveys. And for communities, the opportunity to compare themselves with other communities of similar and different features enhances their own understanding of themselves. National, regional, and community studies must be seen as complementing each other.

At the same time, we also need more comparative research on Jews and non-Jews (see. Goldscheider 1984). A number of the concerns related to the Jewish community, dealing with demographic characteristics and behavior, religious attitudes and practices, and attitudes toward other segments of American society, require comparative data on Jews and non-Jews and better insights into the extent to which Jews are participating in the general demographic and social changes in America or whether Jews are, in fact, exceptional.

Questions of convergence or divergence between Jews and non-Jews especially require comparative information that covers a considerable period of time.

The decision to undertake NJPS-1990 concurrent with the federal decennial census was motivated by the priority given to such concerns, even though census data encompass only a limited range of topics. Comparative data were also obtained through the screening phase of NJPS 1990, in which a small but valuable set of information on general characteristics was obtained both for the 5,146 Jewish households and for the non-Jewish segment of the total, much larger 125,813 sample of households encompassing the full range of religious, ethnic, and racial groups in the United States. Ideally, as Calvin Goldscheider (1984) has argued, and as some studies have done (Goldscheider 1986; Israel 1987), general surveys of the Jewish community should include attention to the non-Jewish community as well, preferably by inclusion in the survey of a sample of non-Jews. The resulting opportunity to compare Jews and non-Jews can substantially enrich the analysis and the value of the findings, both for testing theoretical issues and for planning purposes.

Multidisciplinary Perspectives and Qualitative Approaches Since I was a graduate student in the early 1950s, I have been convinced of the great value and need for adopting a multidisciplinary approach to any research problem in which I was interested. Our separate social science disciplines have much to offer each other. We shortchange ourselves and the Jewish community when our studies, especially population surveys, are restricted to the narrow confines of a single discipline. Such studies need to be more than mere censuses of the Jewish population, especially as questions of continuity and identity become more important. The use of different disciplinary perspectives and methodologies would greatly enhance our understanding of the dynamics of change in the Jewish community and the diversity of identities we have observed. Much greater involvement of psychologists, anthropologists, and economists in our research endeavors is essential. Recent steps in this direction taken by NTAC and by CJF's newly established Research Committee are to be commended.

As part of a reorientation in our approach to understanding ourselves, much greater emphasis should be given to use of qualitative research to complement the highly quantitative methods on which we have tended to rely. The value of having focussed interviews as part of NJPS-1990 was discussed in the planning phase, but financial restric-

tions prevented incorporation of such procedures into the study plan. Explanations and anecdotes offered by respondents, especially related to Jewish identity and practices, can provide rich insights that are entirely lost in the coded responses in a computer assisted telephone interview (CATT). Understanding what sustains continued community participation; gaining insights into what influences decisions affecting intermarriage, conversion, and religious identification of children; and understanding what leads to shifts from religious to secular or from Jewish to non-Jewish identity require going well beyond a standardized questionnaire that largely forces answers into a limited number of categories which have restricted value for assessing the dynamics of ongoing processes.

PLANNING/POLICY

Policy makers and planners have increasingly recognized the key role that community and national surveys can play in the assessment of current conditions in the Jewish community and in planning for the future (Huberman 1984; 1992). The extensive discussions which NJPS findings have already generated and the wide uses to which they have been put for planning purposes should reenforce the community's recognition of the importance of both local and national surveys. What is most needed now is to extend the research to a wider range of federation and agency endeavors, not just concerns largely related to fund raising (Siper 1992).

The broad attention given by the CJF's 1992 General Assembly to questions of Jewish identity, the creation by the Council of a Commission on Jewish Identity and of task forces on intermarriage and university student services are most encouraging. The uses made of NJPS-1990 by the B'nai Brith Hillel Foundation and by NACRAC in assessing their current programs and developing their future activities provide examples for other groups. Most needed is development of a research agenda that goes well beyond narrow demographic concerns to encompass such other research topics as: single parents and childcare; poverty and financial support; the nature and impact on identity of family, occupational, and neighborhood networks; integration into the local Jewish community before and after migration; the adaptation of immigrants; women, gays, and youth; social and psychological aspects of Jewish identification; factors affecting Jewish and secular philanthropy; ties to Israel and their impact; formal and informal Jewish educational programs; causes, consequences, and

correlates of intermarriage; generational interrelations. The creation, by CJF, of a Research Committee to identify high priority concerns needing research attention and to help initiate appropriate research endeavors is especially encouraging.

As part of any concern with the linkages between planning and research, concerted efforts are needed to educate national and local federation staff and lay leaders about the technical aspects of survey design and the interpretation of survey and other relevant statistical data. While marked improvements have taken place in the involvement of planning groups in development of research designs and survey instruments, and in the communication of research findings to planning groups, wider and more intensive utilization of research findings should be made by executives, planning committees, and study groups; issuance of published reports should not and cannot be the end product of surveys, if their full value to the community is to be realized. Especially relevant here is the need to recognize that analysis, like data collection, requires adequate funding.

Sponsors of surveys have yet to learn that evaluation of data and preparation of analytic reports (as contrasted to descriptive profiles) represent integral parts of the research process and are essential to full utilization of the rich data sets collected. Although the size of their budgets and the complexity of their responsibilities qualify many federations as big businesses, unlike the business world, many have yet to learn the full importance of research as part of the organization's activities - especially in relation to assessment of ongoing programs and planning the future scope, direction, and location of programs. Only through integration of research with planning will planners, executives, and lay leaders be able to identify effective programming. In basing decisions on facts rather than myths, and by developing a willingness to set aside those programs that are not serving basic community needs, significant advances will be made toward enhancing the efficiency of community programs and ensuring Jewish continuity.

TRAINING/PERSONNEL

Development of appropriate research as well as the ability to utilize research findings for action programs requires personnel trained in survey methods, computer utilization, and statistical analyses. NTAC and NAJDB have, I believe, been most fortunate in enlisting the assistance of a strong array of social scientists who are dedicated both to the highest standards of research and to the maintenance of a strong

Jewish community. This assistance helps to explain both the high quality of NJPS 1990 and the speed and effectiveness with which its results have been disseminated. Yet the personnel available in the United States, and indeed internationally, who are both trained in research methods and willing to use those skills for the benefit of the Jewish community are quite scarce.

As NTAC and CJF's newly established Research Committee moves beyond NJPS-1990, as America's Jewish communities enter on new rounds of local surveys, and as local and national Jewish agencies and institutions increasingly recognize the key role of research in evaluation and planning, the need for trained research personnel will undoubtedly grow sharply. To meet this need requires that early and high priority be given to training in research methods of more social scientists who can be counted on to devote all or part of their careers to work in and for the Jewish community.

Such an expansion of our personnel resources should be done both through established programs in Jewish studies and in Jewish social work and through attracting potential and enrolled graduate students in other social science programs to work on topics relevant to the Jewish community. Steps the organized community can take include subsidies to establish training programs, scholarships to individual students, facilitating access to survey and other data sets for use in master's and Ph.D. theses, and appeals to the Jewish conscience of qualified students. Such action can help to ensure an adequate, well-trained group of skilled researchers who can serve the community in the years ahead. Without such personnel, we face the serious danger of confronting the future with inadequate knowledge of who we are, what our needs are, and what the best ways are to meet those needs.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, let me emphasize that, given the major progress made in the extent and especially the quality of our research on American Jewry, we can be very proud of what we have achieved. Concurrently, we face many tasks if our research is to remain state-of-the-art and if it is to confront successfully the increasing difficulties that surveys seem likely to encounter in the years ahead. This is especially true given the likelihood that definitional concerns related to who is to be counted as Jewish will become more complex and that the Jewish population on which we focus is likely to become both more dispersed and a smaller percentage of the total population of the United States.

Meeting these and other major challenges will tax our expertise, our personnel, and our imagination.

It means that we must be prepared to substantially modify our thinking about the best approaches to the design, conduct, evaluation, and utilization of Jewish population studies. Such rethinking will become especially necessary and highly advisable for several reasons: 1) It will allow us to benefit from our new experiences with ongoing studies and from analyses of data sets already collected. 2) It is important that we develop a growing willingness to benefit from fuller exchange of ideas, knowledge, and experience as well as from constructive criticism of each other's works. 3) We must keep current with the methodological developments in social science research in order to take full advantage of more effective methods to identify our study population and to measure the dynamics of the changes which interest us. The good use to which we have put Random Digit Dialing exemplifies this point well. 4) Exploiting a broader set of sources of information, utilizing more varied perspectives for assessing the problems on which we focus, and taking advantage of advanced computer technology as well as qualitative approaches will help to give us the insights we are seeking.

In the 1980s, we learned a great deal from our experience with NJPS-1970/71 and with community surveys, as well as from advances in survey methodology generally. Now, we need to learn from our experience with NJPS-1990 and to utilize community studies being planned in the 1990s to experiment with new conceptual schemes and innovative procedures. We will thereby enhance the likelihood of resolving inconsistencies that still characterize our findings and our assessments of them. Only through ever more sophisticated methods and concurrent reliance on a broader array of methods and perspectives can we create firmer bases for understanding American Jewry and providing our community with the data on which to plan for and ensure its continued vitality in the twenty-first century.

NOTES

* This article is based on remarks made at the annual meeting of the Association for the Social Scientific Study of Jewry, held in Boston, December 13, 1992, following presentation of the Award for Distinguished Scholarship to Professor Goldstein.

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