

Brandeis University
Steinhardt Social Research Institute

The 2008 Berkshire Community Survey For the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires

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Introduction

Background and Study Design

The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires (JFB) has undertaken its first demographic survey. This marks an important first step to a better understanding of the Jewish community of Greater Berkshire County and its environs. This report seeks to understand who the Jews of this community are, how those individuals engage in Jewish communal life, and what the community's needs and services are. By looking at the community's own priorities, this study is intended to be used as a tool in determining how services should be directed.

The 2008 preliminary report begins by exploring the size and scope of the Berkshire Jewish community. It highlights many of the socio-demographic characteristics that underpin the community's current position and provides some context for the challenges facing the community. The report then takes a look at the myriad connections to Judaism and the Jewish community that exist in the community including organizational affiliation, ritual practice, philanthropy, and volunteering. Next, the report focuses on the community's children and youth. Jewish education—the hallmark of continuity and communal strength—is explored in this section as the report looks at participation in supplemental schools, Jewish day school, and other youth activities. Finally, the report devotes a special chapter to part-time Jewish residents of Berkshire County. This section discusses length of residence, communal participation, and the challenges and potential that this subset of the Berkshire community presents.

This study finds that the Berkshire Jewish community:

- Is composed of a majority older, retiree population with a large part-time cohort.
- Is deeply engaged and well connected to the organized Jewish community with multiple points of access.
- Provides children and youth with a variety of educational and social opportunities.
- Faces an increasing presence of part-time residents, which offers both a promise and a challenge for community leaders and residents.

How Was the Study Conducted?

The main survey was conducted using a list-based sample. We obtained lists of names and contact information from the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires and from a commercial provider that sorted names through a filter of ethnic Jewish names. We then combined the two lists, formatted and removed any duplicates so that each household was represented only once. All respondents were sent a pre-notification letter detailing the purpose of our study and requesting participation. For respondents whose contact information included an email address (from the JFB list), we sent an email with a link and a request to complete the survey online. For all other names, calls were made to the respondent in order to either obtain an email address for sending the survey or to complete the survey by phone. All follow-up communication with

respondents occurred through email. Finally, a paper survey comprised of a short version of the full survey was sent to all households who had not completed the online or phone version.

Who Was Surveyed?

Virtually all of the households included in the JFB list were assumed to be Jewish. Because most households included in this list belong to at least one Jewish organization (e.g., a synagogue, school, the Federation, or a Jewish organization) it is expected that they will exhibit stronger levels of Jewish identification and engagement in the Berkshire Jewish community than households obtained through the ethnic Jewish names list.

The lists obtained from the commercial provider used an ethnic Jewish names filter and one of the following criteria: telephone directory listings in Berkshire County, property ownership determined by court property deeds, and rental records of persons who rented for at least one year in Berkshire County. It was determined that in the absence of a method that would include everyone in Berkshire County (such as a Random Digit Dial [RDD] of all phone numbers in the Berkshires until a Jewish household was reached), an ethnic (or distinctive) Jewish names list would increase the coverage of less-affiliated households. Because the households on the ethnic Jewish names list are “unknown” to the organized Jewish community (that is, their names did not appear on any of the membership lists of synagogues, schools, or the Federation), we believe that their addition will create a more inclusive and representative sample of the Berkshire Jewish community. A more detailed description of the methodology can be found in the appendix.

A Note on Reading the Report

We have presented the data throughout this report by resident status—full-time and part-time residents. Each of these contain respondents from both the Federation and ethnic Jewish names lists. Although certain groups are believed to be undercounted (i.e., young adults and adults in institutions such as hospitals or nursing homes) we do not believe this introduces any significant bias in our estimates. Finally, under each chart, the number of respondents who answered the questions ($n=\#$) and the statistical significance of the analysis is noted. “Statistically significant” means that the distribution between the variables being tested is not likely to be a chance event. The value is representative of the amount of error that is present in the analysis. Following standard social science practice, this report uses a 5% or less amount of error (e.g. $p<.05$). This means that we are at least 95% confident that the findings are not the product of chance, but rather the result of particular variables.

Chapter 1: *Klal Yisrael*—Who We Are

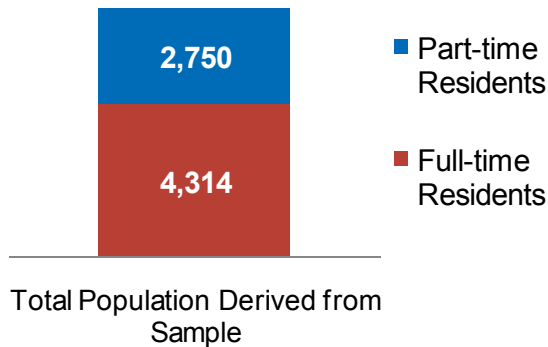
Our Size

Estimates of the Berkshire Jewish community have been reported to the American Jewish Year Book since 1918 (1,500 Jews were reported). More recent estimates have suggested that the Berkshire Jewish community has experienced modest growth, from 3,900 Jews in 1998 to 4,400 in 2006. These reports, however, did not include scientific inquiry and no figures were reported on the part-time population. The estimates provided here have been calculated using the methods described in this report and cannot be used in direct comparison with prior estimates. Our analysis estimates that there are approximately 4,300 full-time Jewish residents in Berkshire County and its environs. In addition, there are *at least* 2,750 Jewish residents who reside in Berkshire County and its environs for part of the year¹ (Figure 1).

What is Considered a Jewish household?

A Jewish household was defined as any household where either the respondent or the spouse/ domestic partner of the respondent is Jewish. A broad definition of who is “Jewish” was applied whereby the respondent was asked if he or she considered themselves Jewish in any way (religiously, ethnically, culturally). Answering “no” to this question screened those who did not identify themselves or their spouse as Jewish out of the survey.

Figure 1: Population Estimates from Survey Sample



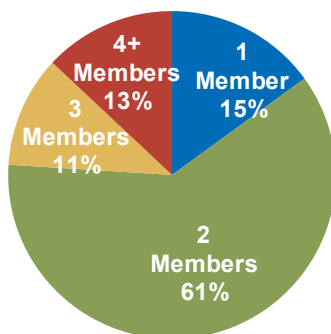
Household Size

The high proportion of single and two-person households is similar to other Jewish communities that have large cohorts of older, retiree populations such as those found in Florida (Figure 2). The implications of this household distribution will undoubtedly be felt as the baby boom generation moves into retirement. A greater proportion of households comprised of one or two person retirees could shift already limited resources to meet the needs of this generation by providing special programming for active adults and elderly services for seniors who require assistance.

Resident Status of Survey Sample

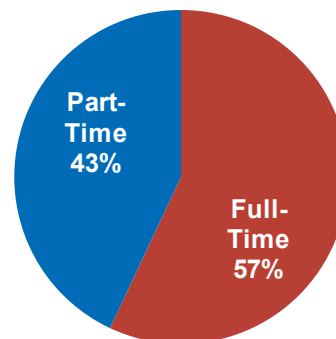
The proportion of full-time residents to part-time residents was reflected in our survey sample. Figure 3 illustrates that 57% of respondents reside in the Berkshires full-time and just over 40% part-time.

Figure 2: Percentage of Jewish Households by Number of Household Members

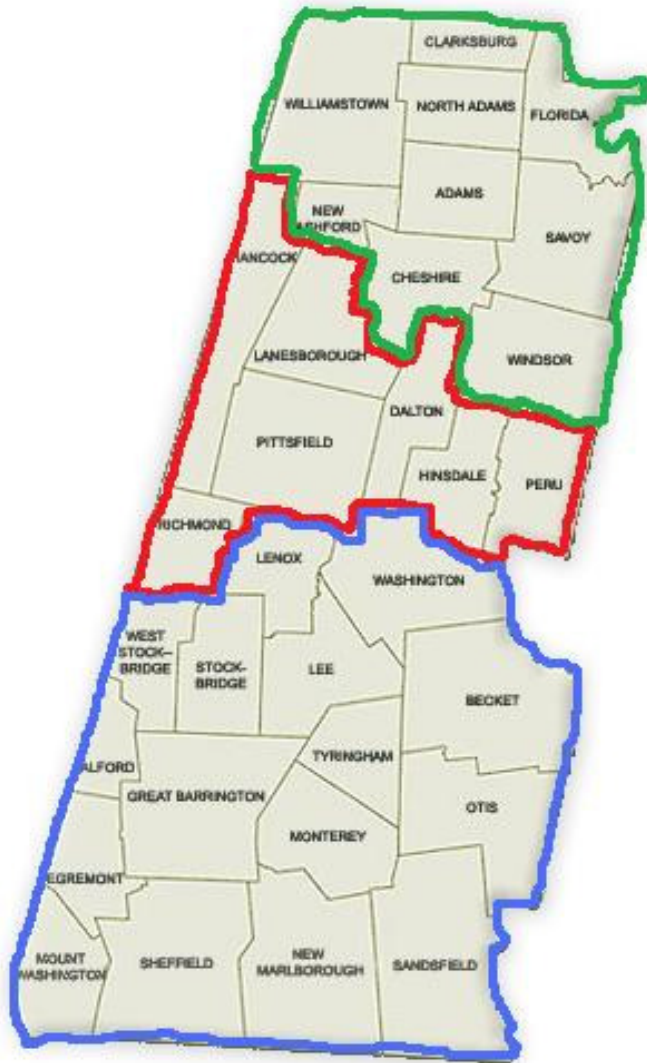


Note : $n= 1068$

Figure 3: Percentage of Survey Sample by Resident Status



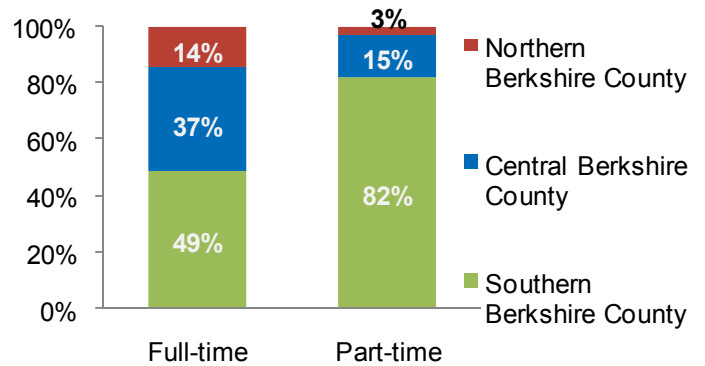
Note : $n= 1085$



location of the organized Jewish community, it appears that a large number of Jews currently reside in Southern Berkshire County (Figure 4). Whether this represents a population shift south (or to what degree) is unknown. The distribution of part-time residents is clearly centered in Southern Berkshire County, with 82% indicating that their second residence is located here.

Table 1 illustrates the individual population estimates by geographic distribution derived from our survey sample.

Figure 4: Resident Status by Geographic



Note : Full-time: *n*= 490; Part-time: *n*=230

Geographic Distribution:

This report has divided the Berkshire Jewish community into three geographic regions: Northern Berkshire County, Central Berkshire County, and Southern Berkshire County (including Lenox).² Although Pittsfield is considered the seat of the county and has historically been the primary

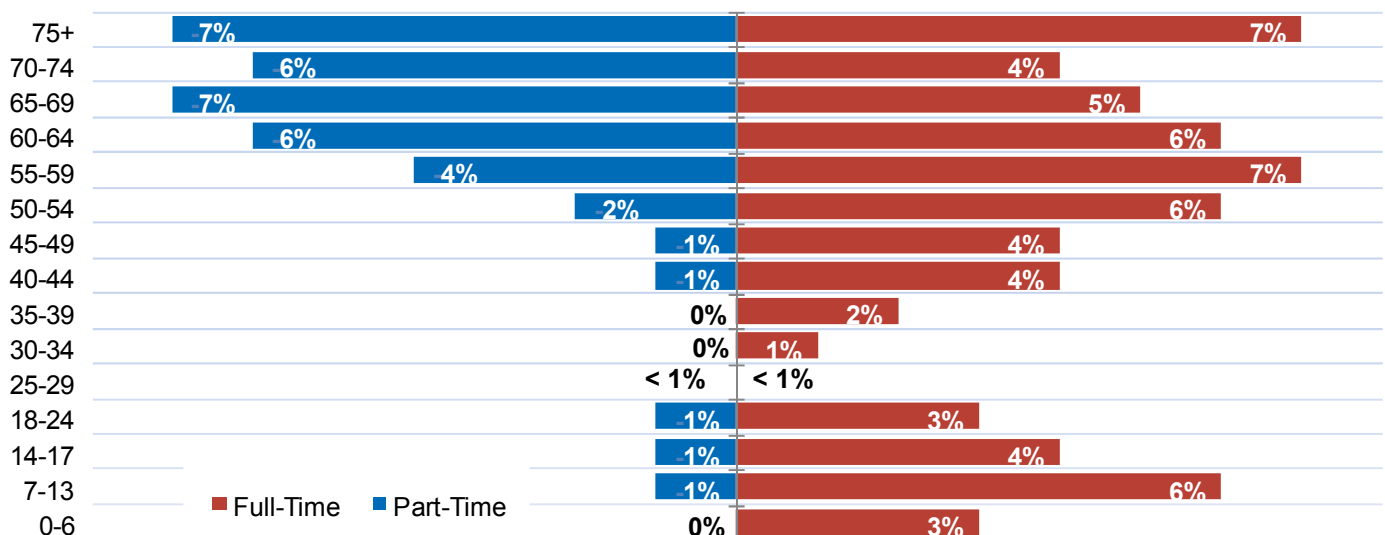
	Full-time	Part-time
Northern Berkshires	604	83
Central Berkshires	1596	413
Southern Berkshires	2114	2255

Age

While the general hour-glass-shaped age distribution of the Berkshire Jewish community is similar to other Jewish communities around the country, the actual percentages are more reflective of retiree populations in many Florida communities. The age distribution of the Berkshire Jewish community, shown in Figure 5, provides a clear picture of a sizeable retiree and elderly population.³ As the baby boomers continue to enter their retirement years, the proportion of elderly residents will continue to increase. Given the addition of a large part-time retiree population, the Berkshire Jewish community (and the broader Berkshire community as well) may face increasing challenges. Need for elderly care services such as meals, assistance with daily activities and tasks, institutional care or home care,

health-related services, visitation, and special programming for both the elderly and active adults will likely rise.

Figure 5: Age Distribution of Berkshire Residents

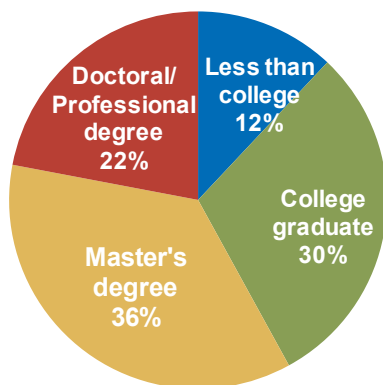


Note : Full and Part-time residents. $n= 1043$. Figure does not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Education

The education of full-time residents is reflective of several trends in the Jewish and U.S. community. Similar to other Jewish communities, Berkshire residents are a highly educated group, with 88% of Jews ages 25 and above having completed at least a college education. Additionally, 36% hold a master's degree and another 22% possess a doctoral or professional degree (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Highest Level of Educational Attainment



Note : All Jewish adults, ages 25+. $n= 979$. $p<.01$

Marital Status

The majority of respondents from our sample are married or living with a domestic partner (Figure 7). The higher percentage of full-time respondents who are divorced (10%) is likely due to the age distribution (more adults under 50 years old).

Intermarriage

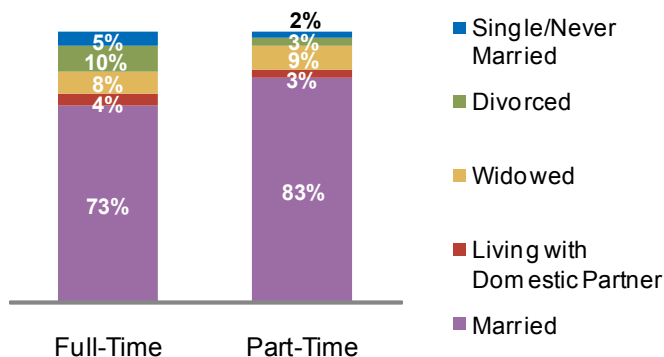
The issue of intermarriage has been a dominant issue for the American Jewish community for nearly forty years. Over the past two decades, there has been significant research into the causes and effects of intermarriage on the relationship between intermarriage and Jewish communal involvement and Jewish philanthropy. Recent research has shown that intermarriage does not necessarily mean the end of an engaging and meaningful Jewish life.⁴

The intermarriage rate for the United States is 52%,⁵ however, individual communities within the United States differ greatly. Boston and New York

reported intermarriage rates at 36% and 37% respectively, Tucson 46%, and South Palm Beach 9%.^{6, 7, 8, 9} The Berkshire Jewish community survey finds that 30% of full-time residents are intermarried (Figure 8).

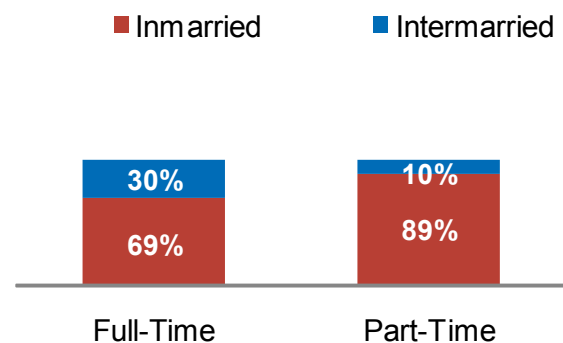
While the Berkshire intermarriage rate is well below the national average, it is important to keep in mind the two survey samples. We find that 39% of respondents from the ethnic Jewish names list are intermarried compared with 21% from the Federation (JFB) list.

Figure 7: Marital Status of Jewish Households by Type of Resident



Note : $n=1076$. $p<.001$

Figure 8: Intermarriage and Inmarriage by Type of Resident

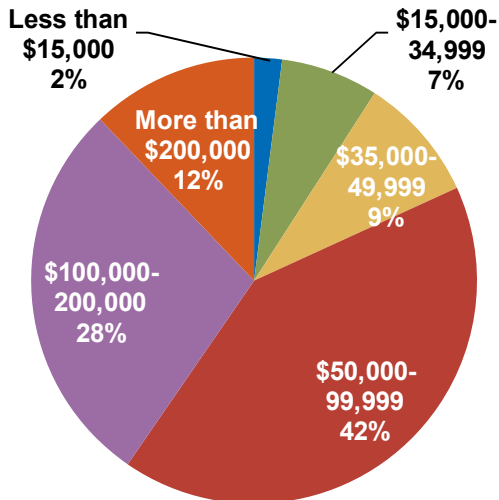


Note : $n=683$. $p<.001$

Income

The financial situation of Berkshire Jews is an important indicator of wealth and financial distress. While very few Jews found in the survey meet the criteria of federal poverty guidelines (Figure 9), this report looks at income levels, self-reported standard of living, and confidence in ability to retire comfortably to assemble a picture of residents' financial situations. This analysis focuses on full-time residents only. A special note is necessary regarding the 2008 financial crisis affecting U.S. and world markets. The survey was in the field between March-April of 2008, arguably at the beginning of the financial crisis. As a result, it is possible that the measures of standard of living and confidence in ability to retire are more optimistic than the reality of current conditions would present themselves.

Figure 9: Household Income Level of Full-Time Residents

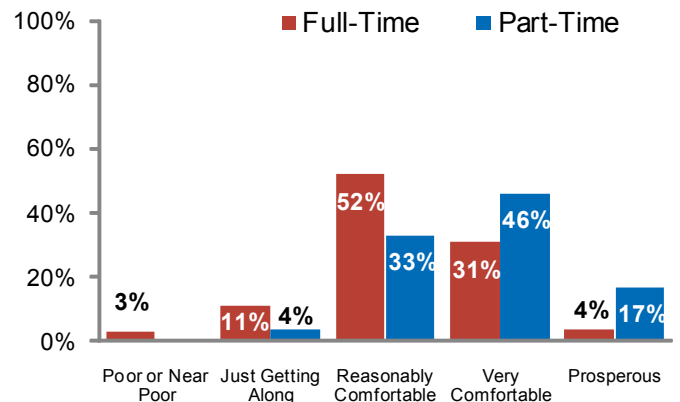


Note : Full-time residents. *n*=486. *p*<.001

Standard of Living

Figure 10 illustrates that the majority of full-time residents report that their standard of living is “reasonably comfortable” or greater. Although this is a subjective, self report of standard of living, it is a reasonable measure of one’s financial situation. Measuring level of income alone fails to account for the household’s feeling of security, spending, and debt. Still, although nearly 90% of households report being comfortable, a significant percentage are “just getting along” and 3% report being “poor or near poor.”

Figure 10: Self-Reported Standard of Living by Resident Status

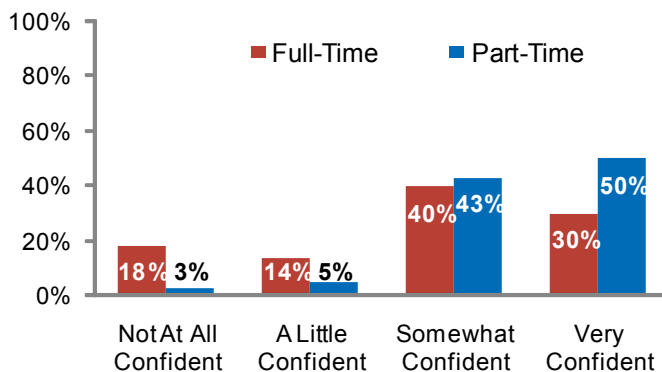


Note : Residents ages 55+. *n*=518. *p*<.001

Retirement

Measures of a household's financial situation (wealth and standard of living) paint only part of the picture reflecting their present situation, which can change from year to year. Although nearly 90% of respondents (ages 55 or older) reported that their current standard of living was at least "reasonably comfortable," far fewer felt that they would be able to live comfortably through retirement (Figure 11). The implications of this finding suggest that individuals may postpone their retirement, receive financial assistance from their adult children, move in with their adult children, or move into living situations that are financed with public funds.

Figure 11: Self-Reported Confidence in Ability to Retire by Resident Status

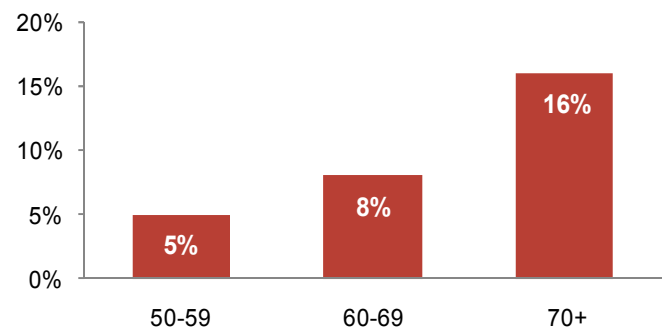


Note : Residents age 55+. $n=516$. $p<.001$

Health: Adults Ages 50+

The overall health of the Berkshire Jewish community is good or better with few indicating that they suffer from any serious or critical health issues. However, by looking at the age breakdown of those reporting "fair or poor" health, we see that the level of health steadily declines in older cohorts, with 16% of residents ages 70+ reporting "fair or poor" health (Figure 12). When we consider a growing proportion of Jewish Berkshire residents are ages 70 and older, we note that an increasing share of communal resources will be needed in the future for additional support and elderly care services.

Figure 12: Self-Reported Level of Health as "Fair or Poor" by Age of Full-Time Residents



Note : Full-time adults ages 50+, first and second household members. $n=505$. Scale not to 100%

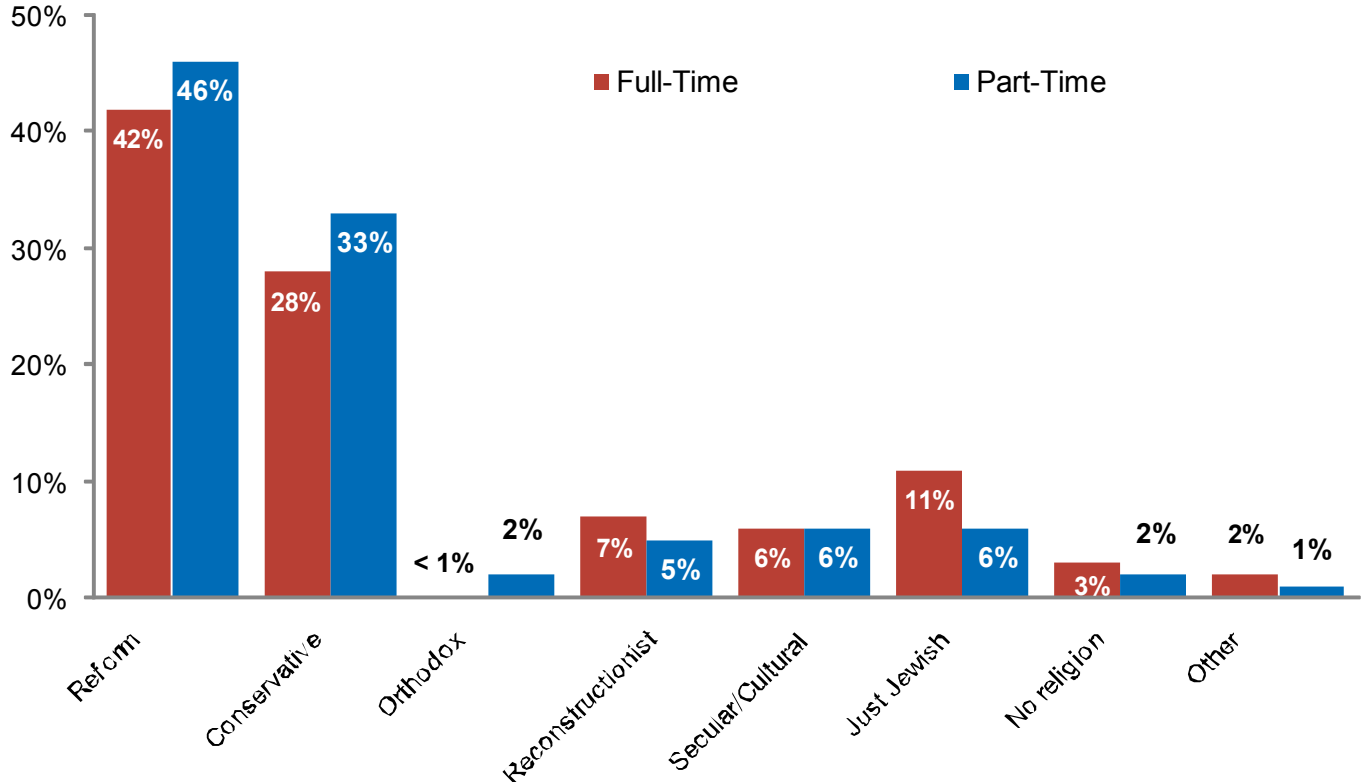
Chapter 2: *Kesher*—Our Connections

Denomination

Denominational affiliation is an important aspect of U.S. Jewish identity. While not all Jews affiliate with one of the major streams of Judaism, the majority continue to do so. However, national trends, especially among younger Jews, have shown a move toward “no affiliation” or affiliation with periphery groups. Although Jews who affiliate are often engaged in various aspects of Jewish life such as congregational membership, Jewish giving, and participation in Jewish education and ritual practice, it is important to keep in mind that those who choose to identify as “just Jewish,” “secular/

cultural,” or something else may still be involved with the Jewish community. Figure 13 illustrates that part-time residents, the majority of whom represent an older cohort, are slightly more likely to affiliate with one of the major denominations.

Figure 13: Denominational Identification by Resident Status



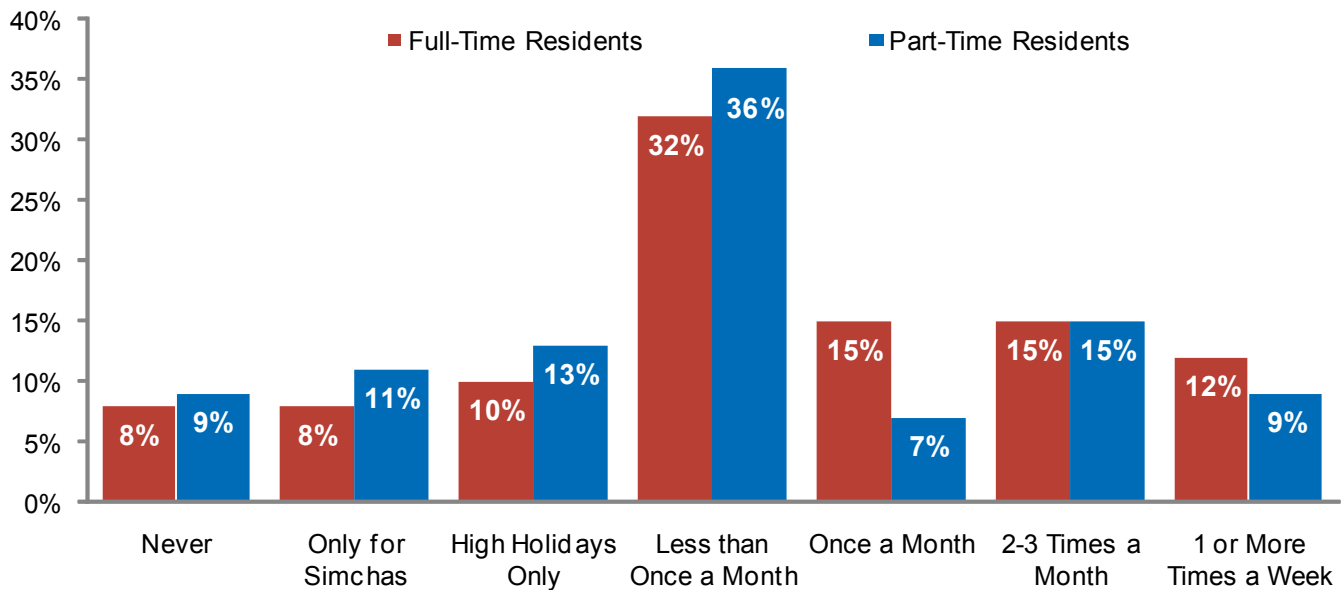
Note : $n=1014$, $p<.05$. Scale not to 100%

Frequency of Synagogue Attendance

Figure 14 compares the frequency of synagogue attendance by resident status. This analysis describes behaviors of part-time residents at the location of their *primary residence*. A comparison of part-time residents' attendance in their primary versus Berkshire residence is found in chapter 4. Forty-two percent of full-time residents attend synagogue once a month or more. The number of respondents who reported "high holiday attendance only" is lower than expected. This may be due in part to the list sample (underrepresentation of less-affiliated Jews) as well as the possibility that some

who answered "less than once a month" in fact over reported their attendance.

Figure 14: Frequency of Synagogue Attendance in Primary Residence by Resident Status



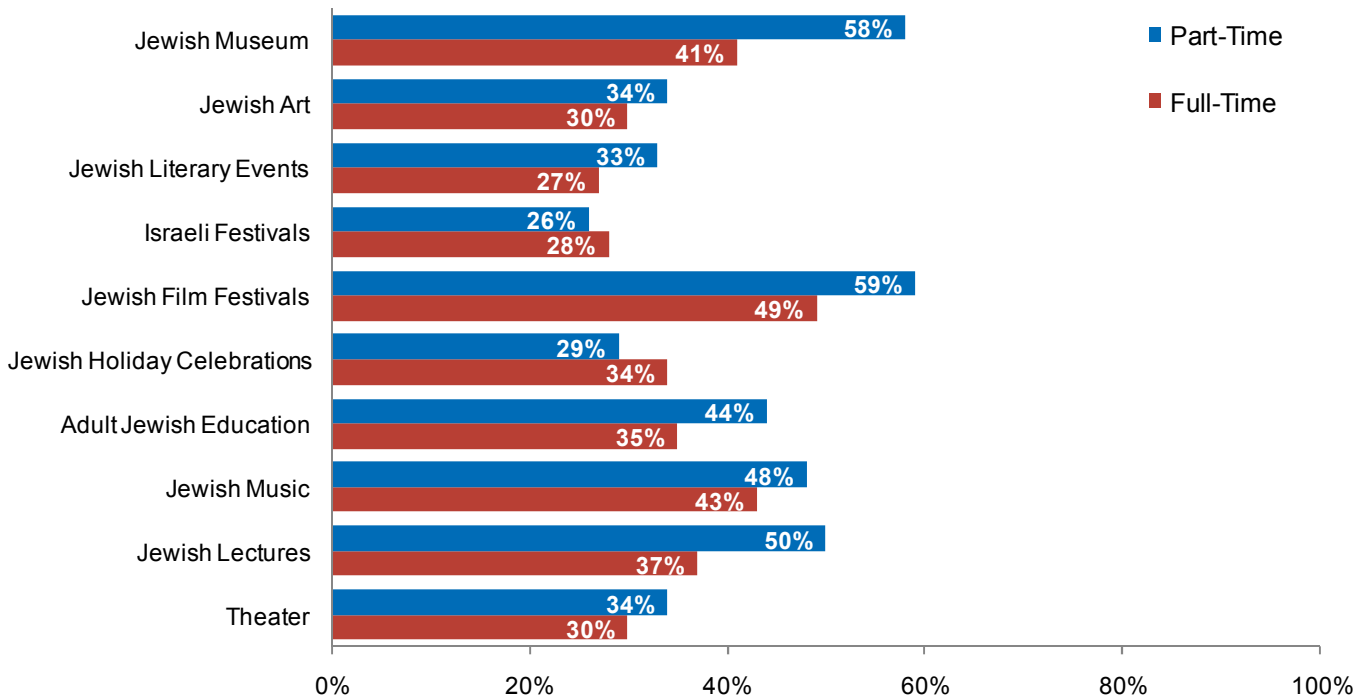
Note : $n=671$, $p=.065$. Scale not to 100%

Program Interests

The survey asked respondents about their interest in particular types of programs. Figure 15 illustrates the percentage of respondents who selected a given program option. The greater number of part-time residents selecting interest in most of the programs listed is likely due to the vacation nature of their residence in the Berkshires, as well as greater leisure time availability and higher overall income. There are also trends among different age groups. In general, older adults ages 50-64 and 65+ show increasing interest in most of the programs compared with younger adults ages 18-34 and 35-49. One exception are Jewish holiday celebrations where adults ages 35-49 report far greater interest

than all other age groups (45% compared with 23-30%). This is almost certainly an effect of having young children in the household. This same age group also report higher interest for other family-oriented activities such as Jewish museums and lower interest in more time-intensive or solitary activities such as literary events and lectures.

Figure 15: Resident Status by Interest in Jewish Programs



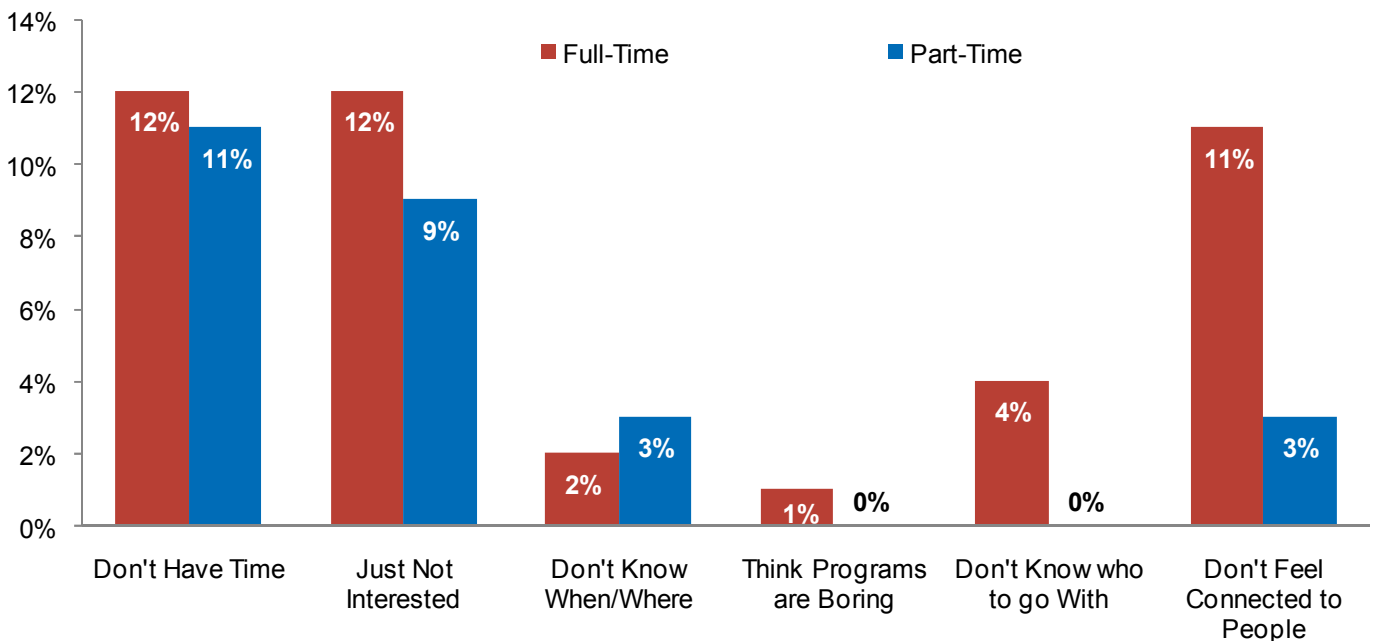
Note : Full-time residents $n=464$; Part-time residents $n=286$. Each percentage reported is out of 100% of all respondents. Jewish lectures and Jewish museum are significant at $p<.001$; Jewish film festivals is significant at $p<.01$; Adult Jewish education is significant at $p<.05$; and Jewish literary events is marginally significant at $p=.053$

Non-Participation

Although most Jews, whether part-time (60%) or full-time residents (65%), participate in one or more Jewish programs or organizations throughout the year, respondents were also asked to describe the primary reasons they choose not to participate at various times. The reasons for non-participation vary. The majority who responded indicated that they either “don’t have time” or that they are “just not interested” (Figure 16). Small percentages reported that they either did not know when or where the programs took place (the ethnic Jewish names list sample were twice as likely as the

Federation list sample to make this report). Very few (1%) thought that “Jewish programs are boring,” however, significantly more were just not interested in Jewish programs. Lastly, full-time residents were nearly four times more likely to report that they “don’t feel connected to people” at the program than part-time residents. There was no difference between either sample (JFB or ethnic Jewish names) responding that they “don’t feel connected to people,” however, younger adults are more likely to feel unconnected than older adults.

Figure 16: Resident Status by Reasons for Non-Participation in Jewish Programs



Note : Full-time residents $n=464$; Part-time residents $n=286$. Scale not to 100%

Ritual Practice

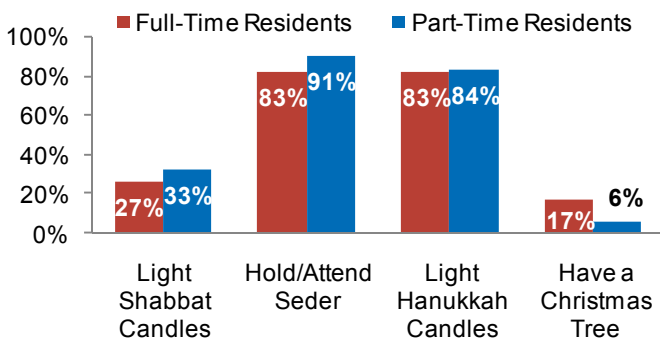
Respondents were asked about their current levels of observance of selected Jewish rituals. As shown in Figure 17, the Berkshire Jewish community shows high levels of observance in lighting Shabbat candles, attending a seder, and lighting Hanukkah candles either “all or most of the time.”¹⁰ Resident status appears to be of little significance when viewing levels of engagement in each of the rituals. The slightly lower levels of ritual observance by full-time residents is likely due to the higher number of unaffiliated and intermarried households in that population.

Philanthropy

Philanthropy and volunteering offer other ways for Jews to connect to the community. Sometimes this participation occurs by way of an explicitly Jewish cause or organization and at other times these activities are described in terms of acting in accordance with Jewish values such as *tikkun olam*. Giving to Jewish organizations is often overstated in survey research, evident when one compares organizations’ fundraising records. In terms of

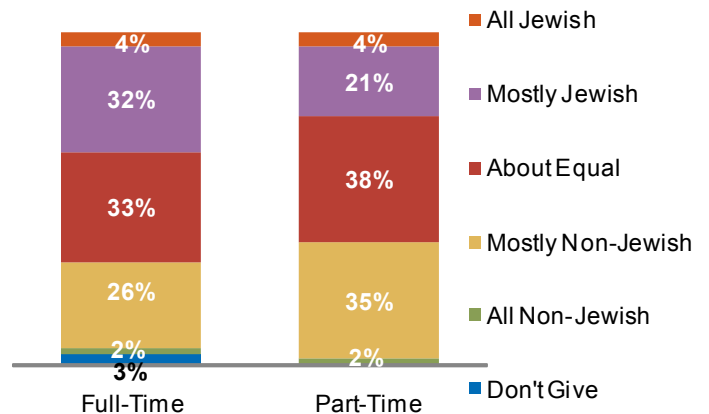
national philanthropic trends, as larger amounts of money are given by fewer donors, many organizations struggle to maintain an active and healthy donor base that can be relied upon for everything from programming and administrative costs to special events or crises. The majority of full and part-time Berkshire County residents give to Jewish causes at least half of the time. Figure 18 demonstrates that part-time residents are more likely to give to non-Jewish causes than full-time residents. Rather than being indicative of weaker ties to the Jewish community, this fact represents the relatively greater proportion of income available to this population for charitable giving as well as broader affiliations with non-Jewish organizations. Very few from either list report that they do not give at all.

Figure 17: Observance of Jewish Rituals “Always” or “Most of the Time”



Note : n=659, p<.05 for “seder” and “Christmas tree”

Figure 18: Patterns of Charitable Giving

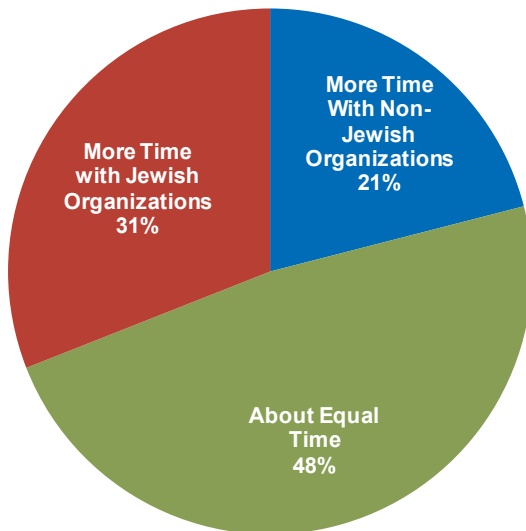


Note : n=642, p<.05

Volunteering

Similar to philanthropic giving, full and part-time residents exhibit similar patterns toward volunteering. Nearly 50% of all adults spend an equal amount of time volunteering between Jewish and non-Jewish organizations (Figure 19). Thirty-one percent report that they spend more time volunteering with Jewish organizations. About 40% of all respondents report that they have not volunteered for any organization, whether Jewish or non-Jewish, in the past year. This is consistent with other similar Jewish communities around the country, and slightly less than the national average.

Figure 19: Full-Time Residents by Patterns of Volunteering



Note : $n=456$

Chapter 3: *L’Dor V’Dor*—Our Children

A Note on Reading the Data

The report’s analysis of children’s education focuses on *full-time resident households with children ages 0-17*.

The survey asked respondents to indicate whether they had any children between the ages of 0-6, 7-13, and 14-17. For each age category that they responded a child was present, they were asked a series of questions related to that age group’s education (for example, if a child age 0-6 years old was present in the household they were asked about pre-school, kindergarten, day care, and home care). Respondents were asked to answer for the oldest child only in each age category. Thus, if a household had three children, one age 5 and two ages 7 and 12, they were asked to answer questions for the 5-year-old and the 12-year-old. This way, multiple children of different ages were equally represented.

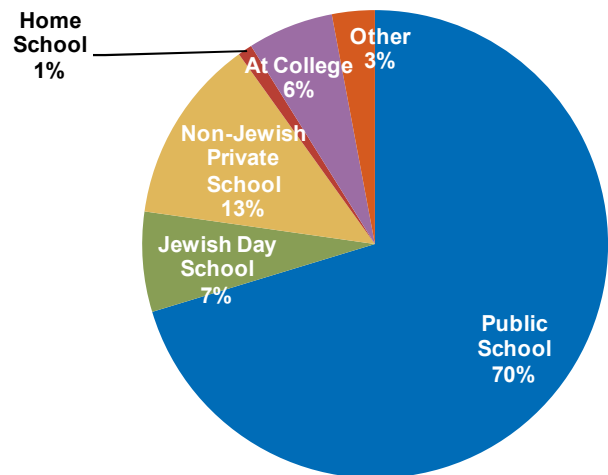
The data presented on Jewish education should be read as follows: The percentage of children enrolled in each type of Jewish education is independent of the other categories, therefore the total across all types will not add up to 100%. Instead, each category represents the percentage of children enrolled in that type of Jewish education out of all the children in the age group represented. For example, out of all the children between ages 0-6 from the sample, 35% of them are enrolled in a Jewish preschool. The figures represent only those respondents from our sample, not the entire Berkshire Jewish community.

Child’s Education

The Berkshire Jewish community offers a surprisingly broad array of Jewish educational opportunities given its relatively small size—an accomplishment worth noting given the extraordinarily high costs necessary to support and

maintain those institutions. The majority of households with children ages 7-17 enroll their children in public school (Figure 20). One-quarter of all children are enrolled in a private school, however, only about one-third of those (7%) are enrolled in Jewish day school.

Figure 20: Child’s Current Enrollment by Type of Education



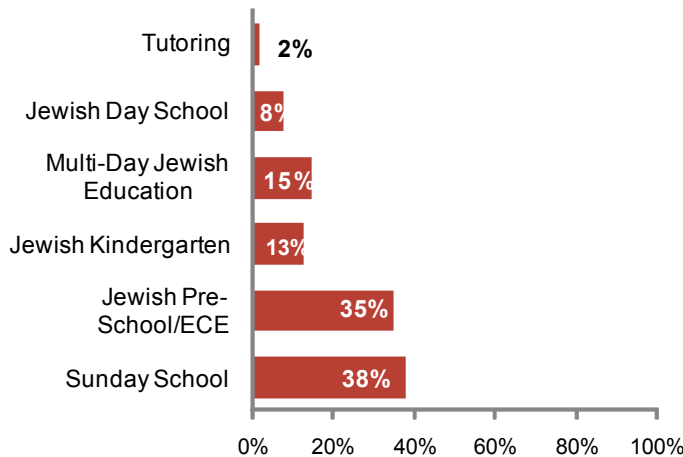
Note : $n=112$. Child age 0-17 in full-time household

Jewish Education

Figure 21 shows that one-third of families with children ages 0-6 who have children enrolled in pre-kindergarten education have enrolled them in a Jewish-sponsored school. Only 13% of children ages 0-6 from this survey who are enrolled in kindergarten are attending one that is Jewish sponsored. Among children ages 7-17, most are enrolled in Sunday school (38%), followed by a multi-day Jewish educational program (15%), and full-time Jewish day school (8%).

Perhaps not surprisingly, the rate of participation in Jewish education falls sharply after bar and bat mitzvah age (Figure 22). Nearly 80% of Berkshire children up to the age of 13 have had a bar or bat mitzvah, however, the number who continue to enroll in formal Jewish education seems to drop.

Figure 21: Child’s Current Enrollment in Type of Jewish Education



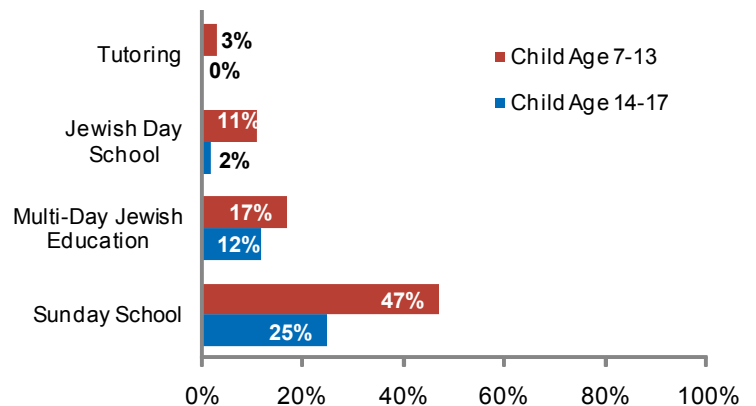
Note : Full-time residents. Child age 0-6. *n*=37; child age 7-17. *n*=113. ECE is any type of Early Childhood Education (sometimes referred to as pre-kindergarten).

Only about half as many children ages 14-17 are enrolled in a Sunday school compared with those ages 7-13.

Informal Jewish Education

Formal Jewish education is just one aspect of creating a strong Jewish identity. Informal Jewish education such as summer camps and youth groups can have a strong positive affect on Jewish identity later in life. The survey finds that 35% of children ages 7-17 years old participate in a Jewish youth group in Berkshire County and its environs. Nearly half (45%) of Berkshire children ages 7-17 years old attended a day or sleep-away camp of any kind during the summer of 2007, and over half of those (27%) attended a day or sleep-away camp that provided Jewish programming of some kind.

Figure 22: Child’s Current Enrollment in Type of Jewish Education by Age Group



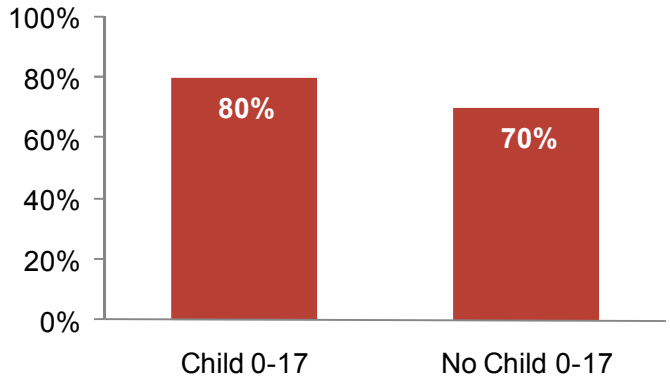
Note : Full-time residents. Child age 7-13, *n*=54; child age 14-17, *n*=59

The Presence of Children in the Household

The presence of a child from birth to 17 years of age appears to have a slight impact on the percentage of full-time resident households who are synagogue members as well as the frequency of synagogue attendance (Figure 23 and Figure 24). Households with children are more likely to attend synagogue once a month or a few times a year. In contrast, households without children are more likely to report attending 2-3 times a month or attend for High Holidays or simchas only. It is likely that households without children reflect a pattern of either minimal attendance due to the lack of children ages 0-17 or a pattern of more frequent attendance due to increased involvement during

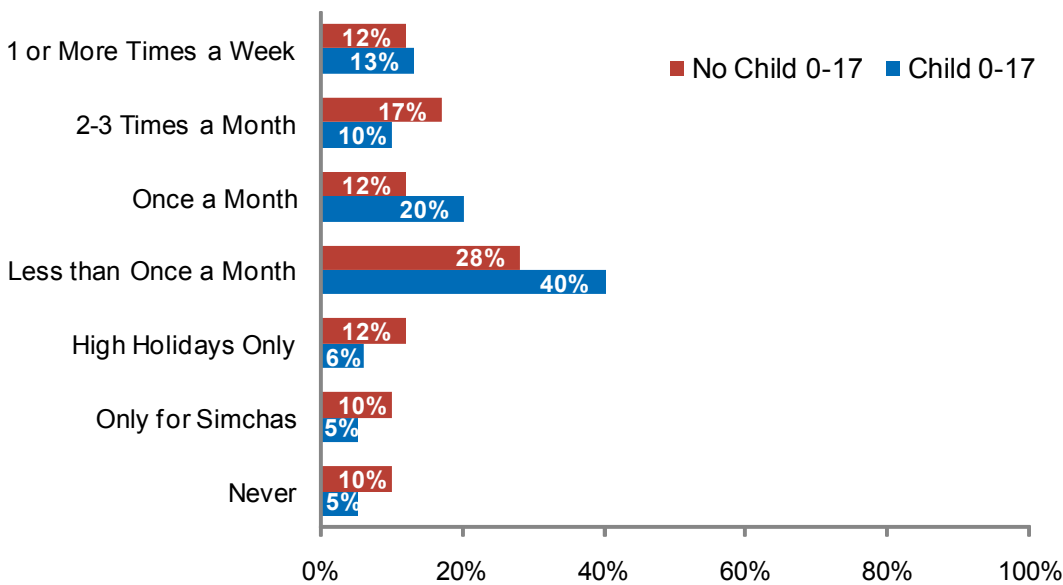
retirement years as available leisure time is increased.

Figure 24: Synagogue Membership With and Without Children (0-17 years old)



Note : Full-time households. n=571.

Figure 23: Frequency of Synagogue Attendance by Households with Children (0-17 years old)



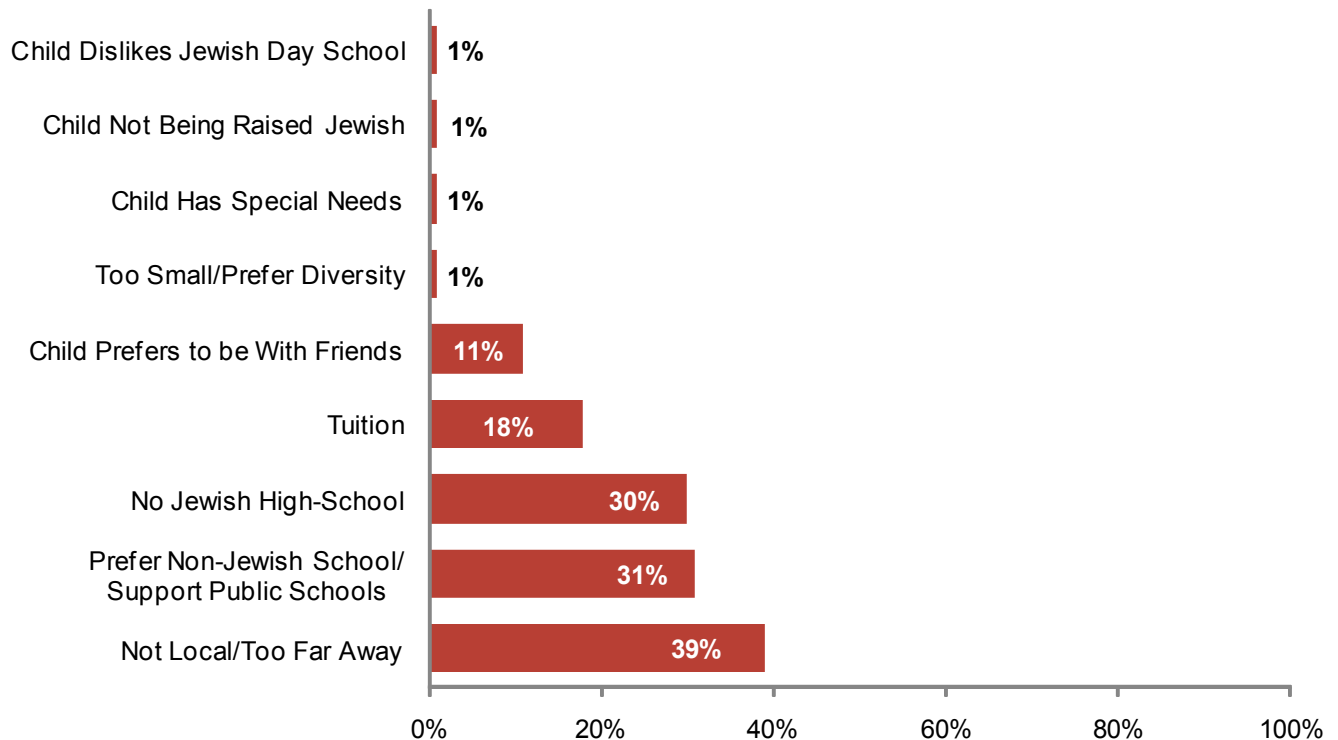
Note : Full-time households. n=406. p<.05

Jewish Day School

The survey asked parents with children not only what type of Jewish education their child receives, but also about their reasons for not sending their child/ren (ages 7-13) to Jewish day school (Figure 25). For some, the reasons had to do with preference, either their child's dislike or their own support for public education. A small percentage of those surveyed (1%) indicated that their child's special needs were better served in the public school system. However, the majority of respondents found that the school was simply too far away from

where they lived. Tuition was also a deterrent to some families.

Figure 25: Primary Reasons for Not Sending Child to Jewish Day School



Note : Full-time households with child age 7-13, $n=71$

Chapter 4: *Bruchim Habaim*—Part-Time Residents

The number of part-time Jewish residents in Berkshire County and its environs is particularly high—at least 2,750 individuals in our estimate. Nearly 75% of part-time residents are ages 60 or older. They come primarily from the so-called Main Street of the East Coast (the string of major cities that run along Interstate 95): Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, and Florida, however, they are also represented by the sunbelt region including California, Arizona, Colorado, Texas, and New Mexico. A better understanding of these residents can assist a more targeted approach for engaging them in Jewish life while they reside in the Berkshire community.

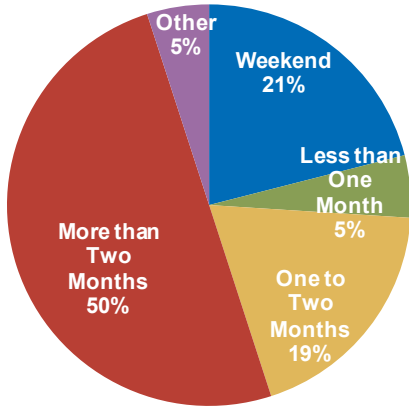
Length of Residence

The majority of residents who spend time in the Berkshires between June and August stay for two or more months (Figure 26). This prolonged length of stay for such a substantial number of Jews provides excellent opportunities for them to engage in the full spectrum of Jewish life. Twenty-one percent of part-time summer residents indicate that they reside

primarily on weekends. Frequent short periods of residence may not be conducive to deep engagement in communal life, however, the opportunity to engage these Jews in communal life may yield a richer experience for the whole community.

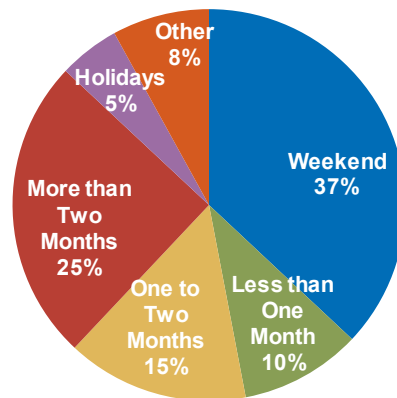
Figure 27 illustrates that during the rest of the year, the majority of part-time residents report weekend visits, with only 25% remaining for two or more months. These snow birds (likely from Florida communities) split their year between two communities.

Figure 26: Part-Time Residents’ Length of Stay in Summer (June-August)



Note : Part-time residents. $n=274$, $p<.05$

Figure 27: Part-Time Residents’ Length of Stay During the Rest of Year



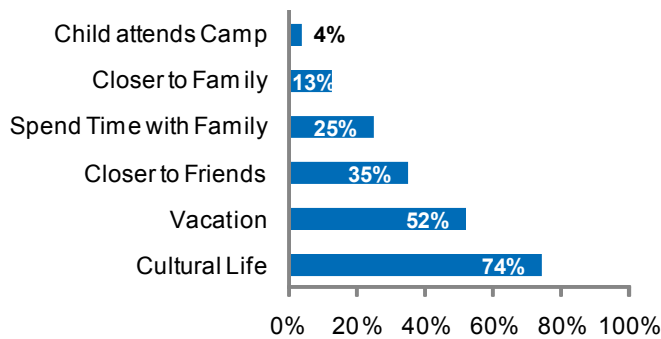
Note : Part-time residents. $n=274$, $p<.05$

Not Just a Second Home, A Second Community

The survey sought to understand more about the motivation behind part-time residents’ decision to reside in Berkshire County and its environs. While the decision likely involves cost, preference, sentiment, and numerous other variables, respondents were asked to identify the primary attraction for residing in the Berkshires. For about 75% who answered, the main attraction is the cultural life that is offered in the Berkshires, especially during the summer months (Figure 28). This was also indicated in Figure 15, with the majority of part-time residents reporting an interest in cultural activities versus holiday-type celebrations. The 35% of part-time residents who report that they reside in the Berkshires to be closer to their friends suggests that many part-time residents arrive with strong connections to other individuals in the community. The majority who responded that residing in the Berkshires is a “vacation” are from the less affiliated ethnic Jewish names list.

One measure of engagement in the Berkshire Jewish community can be seen by the frequency of

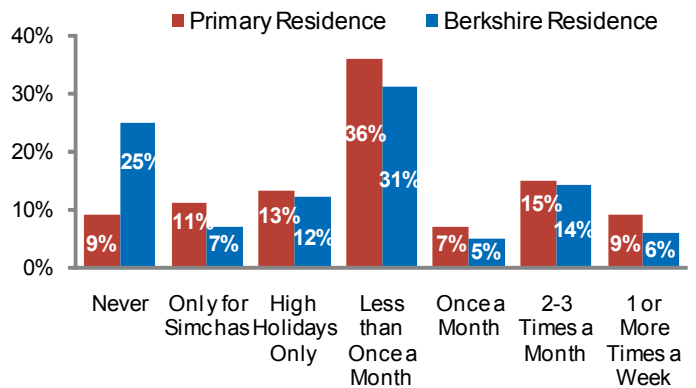
Figure 28: Part-Time Residents’ Primary Reasons for Residing in the Berkshires



Note : Part-time residents. *n*=286. *p*<.001 for “Vacation”

synagogue attendance in their primary residence compared with their frequency of attendance in their part-time, Berkshire residence (Figure 29). Although part-time residents appear to be an engaged group, nearly three times as many report that they “never” attend synagogue while residing in the Berkshires compared with their synagogue attendance at their primary residence. For some, spending time in the Berkshires may be an opportunity to “get away” from their normal activities and responsibilities.

Figure 29: Frequency of Synagogue Attendance by Part-Time Residents’ Primary vs. Berkshire Residence



Note : Part-time residents. *n*=265

Chapter 5: Looking Toward the Future/Policy Implications

The 2008 Berkshire Jewish community study indicates that the Jews of Berkshire County and its environs are diverse, highly educated, largely financially secure, and engaged with Jewish life. The study documents multiple ways of engaging in the Jewish community, Jewish formal and informal education and opportunities for youth, and a large and growing part-time population whose engagement in Jewish life promises to enrich the Berkshire Jewish community. At the same time, these findings illustrate where the community has the potential to grow and enhance or expand its services to engage families and individuals.

Many of the socio-demographic findings point to a healthy, vibrant community, however, there are special challenges facing the Berkshire Jewish community as well. The community is older, with more than 50% of residents over the age of 50. It is also relatively healthy, but as age increases, more Jews report being in “fair or poor” health. The Jewish community must look for creative ways to continue to engage this older population.

The education and income of Berkshire Jewish residents are high (more than 80% report having at least a college education and 40% earn a household income of \$100k or more). The challenges before community leaders and organizations will require new ways to broaden the level of financial support from donors. Although a significant proportion of the Jewish community has a high household income and educational level, the study finds that 14% of residents report their standard of living is either “poor or near poor,” or “just getting along.” These individuals and families must be informed that the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires is available to help.

A significant percentage of Berkshire Jews are not married or living with a domestic partner. While most programs and services are open to the entire Jewish community, singles of all ages must feel welcome as well. Thirty percent of all full-time Jewish residents are intermarried and an even higher percentage are respondents from the ethnic Jewish names list, which suggests that these individuals are not known to the organized Jewish community. Programming should be welcoming and accessible to this population. Additionally, programs and outreach should take place in a variety of settings, not only through the synagogue community. The Berkshire Jewish community has an opportunity to create a supportive environment that will encourage and engage inmarried as well as intermarried families at all levels of Jewish life.

The majority of Jewish residents participate in some form of Jewish life in the Berkshires. Both full and part-time residents express a strong interest in Jewish cultural programs, however, there are some differences that may be helpful in directing resources. Full-time residents in particular report greater interest in holiday celebrations and cultural programs of the arts, theater, and literature. Part-time residents on the other hand expressed strong interest in adult Jewish education, Jewish film festivals, and visits to a Jewish museum. Summer programming should focus on high-quality educational programs, and the remainder of the year, emphasis should be placed on holiday celebrations and cultural programs. Additionally, event organizers should provide welcoming spaces for singles and intermarried families.

One of the greatest successes—and challenges—of the Berkshire Jewish community is providing a range of educational opportunities for its youth. Encouraging Jewish day school will require addressing many of the barriers to access such as tuition and distance. Additionally, there is a large drop in participation of Jewish education among post-*b'nei mitzvah* youth. Finding ways to engage youth in education and youth group activities beyond the bar or bat mitzvah age will strengthen the community as a whole. Finally, the report finds that only half of all children attend a day or sleep-away camp that provides Jewish programming. Research has shown the strong positive and lasting effects that Jewish summer camps have on young people's Jewish identity and engagement in their Jewish communities when they return from camp. Organizing efforts to engage and educate Berkshire youth and families about Jewish summer camp opportunities will help to increase the number of children who attend.

The report has shown that there is a large, diverse population of part-time residents. As an older, retiree population, they are active in their primary

Jewish communities and reside in the Berkshires to take advantage of the many cultural opportunities. The vast majority reside in the Southern Berkshires and many are engaged in Jewish life, however, there is an opportunity to greatly increase this participation. The influx of part-time Jewish residents to the southern Berkshires during the summer months should be a factor in choosing locations for programs and events.

Whether part-time residents feel that the Berkshires is “home” to them could have implications regarding the degree that they make philanthropic contributions to the Federation, a synagogue, or another Jewish organization. Because many already give their time and money to the Jewish community in their primary residence, it is important to find creative ways to approach and appeal to them for support in the Berkshire Jewish community. By engaging these Jews in positive, meaningful ways, they will come to think of the Berkshires not only as a vacation destination, but as a second home and community.

Notes and References

¹ Although knowing the general size of the Jewish community is relevant to policy decisions, we feel it is more important to focus on the relationships between variables. The need to know what it would take to engage unaffiliated Jews is an example of this sort of information.

² **Northern Berkshires:** North Adams, Williamstown, Cheshire, Windsor; **Central Berkshires:** Pittsfield, Dalton, Hinsdale, Lanesboro, Richmond, Hancock; **Southern Berkshires:** Alford, Becket, Egremont, Great Barrington, Housatonic, Lee, Lenox, Mill River, Monterey, New Marlborough, Otis, Sandisfield, Sheffield, South Egremont, Southfield, Stockbridge, Tyringham, West Stockbridge, Washington, Westfield.

If Lenox were counted in Central, rather than Southern Berkshires, the regional distribution would be:

Full time residents: 14% Northern Berkshires; 49% Central Berkshires; 37% Southern Berkshires.

Part-time residents: 3% Northern Berkshires; 32% Central Berkshires; 66% Southern Berkshires.

³ The low percentages of adults ages 25-39 is likely to be, in part, due to undercounting of this sample, which includes young adults, married with children, and cell-phone only households. Although the precise degree to which these groups were undercounted cannot be known, it is unlikely that the percentages are significantly biased given the dual modality of the survey, the methods utilized, and the anecdotal evidence of community leaders regarding the lack of young adults in the community.

⁴ Chertok, Fern, Benjamin Phillips, Len Saxe. "It's Not Just Who Stands Under the Chuppah: Intermarriage and Engagement." Waltham: Steinhardt Social Research Institute at Brandeis University, 2008.

⁵ Brandeis University calculation of the NJPS 2000-01 intermarriage rate. See Phillips, Benjamin, Len Saxe, Charles Kadushin, Graham Wright, and Daniel Parmer. "2005 Boston Community Survey: Preliminary Findings." Waltham: Steinhardt Social Research Institute at Brandeis University, 2006.

⁶ Ukeles, Jacob, Ron Miller. "Jewish Community Study of New York: 2002." New York: UJA-Federation of New

York, 2002.

⁷ Phillips et al. "2005 Boston Community Survey: Preliminary Findings."

⁸ Sheskin, Ira. "The 2002 Tucson Jewish Community Study." Miami: Sue and Leonard Miller Center for Contemporary Judaic Studies at the University of Miami, 2003.

⁹ Sheskin, Ira. "The 2005 South Palm Beach Jewish Community Study." Miami: Sue and Leonard Miller Center for Contemporary Judaic Studies at the University of Miami, 2006.

¹⁰ The figures for ritual behavior are consistent, or higher, than those from either NJPS 2000-01 or many local community studies. The rate of lighting Shabbat candles may appear to be low when compared with other behaviors such as attending a seder, however, the figure is relatively high given both other findings as well as the implications that a highly intensive and regular ritual such as lighting Shabbat candles "always or most of the time" means that those who perform this ritual are more likely to also perform other, less intensive and less regular rituals such as the singular experience of attending a seder.

Methodological Appendix

As survey techniques have become more sophisticated, the barriers to reaching respondents have become increasingly difficult. Researchers typically experience limitations of cost and methods of reaching respondents (i.e., cell phones or caller-id/blocking). Adding to these difficulties is the small size of the Jewish community relative to the general U.S. population. While many larger Jewish communities may possess the resources to conduct a random sample, most do not. As a result, a common approach is to use list-based samples either exclusively or to augment a random sample such as random digit dial (RDD). As a small to mid-size Jewish community with a proportionally large part-time resident population, several methodological challenges were overcome to reach a representative sample of the Berkshire Jewish community.

Sample

The 2008 study implemented a multi-mode internet, paper, and telephone survey to reach full and part-time residents of Berkshire County and its environs. In the absence of an RDD sample, we relied on building a list frame that was composed of several organizational lists provided by the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires (JFB) and augmented by an ethnic Jewish names list. While ethnic Jewish names (also called Distinctive Jewish Names or DJN)¹ are discouraged in the calculation of population estimates, there are advantages to using them, primarily cost efficiency. Names obtained from a commercial provider, AccuData, were selected on the following criteria. First, individuals who resided in Berkshire County or rented for at least a year were identified through court property deeds. Then, using an ethnic Jewish names filter,

individuals with common ethnic Jewish surnames were selected. Finally, a phone append was implemented using the most current telephone directory listing, including individuals on the National Do Not Call List.² The lists were cleaned and deduplicated using a software package, WinPure ListCleaner™, and then checked manually for additional errors. In all, the total number of individual households in the merged lists was 3,383; 1,797 households were obtained from the JFB list (867 telephone, 930 email), and 1,586 households were obtained through the ethnic Jewish names list. The resulting list of households with phone numbers was divided into three replicates, each replicate totaling approximately 800 households. In order to maximize the number of calls made to each household, only two replicates were included (equaling approx. 1600 households) and no attempt to contact the third replicate was made. Each number was dialed until contact was made with a member of the household. In the event that a respondent could not be reached (such as voicemail or no answer) or confirmation of a bad number was given (e.g. busy signal, number no longer in service), the respondent's case was closed. A case was closed after no fewer than five attempts were made. Once a case was closed, no further contact by phone was attempted. A total of 5,307 calls were dialed from the phone lists. The response rate for the JFB list was 58% and for the ethnic Jewish names list was 17%. The overall weighted response rate (AAPOR RR2) for the list frame was 42%.

Bias

Every effort to reach a representative sample was made to prevent bias or, where unavoidable, to identify and reduce bias. Still, certain groups are

¹ Phillips (2007) writes that “whereas the traditional distinctive Jewish names frame focuses on selecting surnames with a high incidence of Jews, the ethnic name frame must classify every name into an ethnic category. It includes a category for Israeli names, which are absent from traditional distinctive Jewish names frames.”

² Current legislation prohibits individuals or companies from accessing numbers registered on the National Do Not Call list, however, survey research is exempt.

particularly likely to be underrepresented on the sample. Prime among these are unaffiliated Jews (including new residents and intermarried families) and Jewish young adults. Newcomers who are not known to the Jewish community are likely to be undercounted, although they may have been picked up on the ethnic Jewish names list. Intermarried families may be underrepresented to the extent that they are unaffiliated and reside in households with a directory listing that does not have an ethnic Jewish name.

Finally, Jewish young adults ages 18-39 were likely undercounted. Young adults are universally difficult to reach due in part to the increasing rate of cell phone only households. Because our criteria for the ethnic Jewish names list required the existence of a landline phone number (including those who are on the National Do Not Call list), any household without a landline phone number was not included in our ethnic Jewish names list. As a result, the sample of young adults and intermarried families is likely biased with respect to marital status as well as observance and participation. The extent of these biases is mitigated by the exclusion of attitudinal scales on the survey instrument and the crafting of questions to reflect household, rather than individual, observance and participation. Additionally, the multi-mode survey was likely to increase the number of young adults who did respond due to their higher rates of email usage and proficiency with internet-based interfaces.

Survey Instrument

The survey instrument was designed in collaboration with a special advisory committee of the Federation. The questions were crafted in a way that minimized potential bias as well as any burden on the respondent. When possible, items such as

questions, language, and definitions were adopted from previous Jewish community survey questionnaires allowing for greater confidence in comparisons as well as the benefit of being previously field tested. Three versions of the survey were in the field: an online version, a telephone version, and a shorter paper version. The online and telephone survey were nearly identical. Minor adaptations in question prefaces were made in order to provide the telephone interviewer a more natural, conversational tone. The third version, an abbreviated paper survey was mailed to non-respondents. The questions focused on socio-demographic questions as well as general engagement in Jewish life. The survey was divided into two parts: a screener and the main report. The screener section was asked of all respondents to determine eligibility. An eligible household was one that contained an adult age 18 or over who identified as Jewish, was raised Jewish, or had a Jewish parent. After determining eligibility, respondents were given the main questionnaire, which included basic socio-demographic information as well as engagement in Jewish life. A series of complex “skip patterns” were created to ensure that respondents answered only those questions that pertained to their life situation or experience, such as the presence of children in the household or part-time Berkshire residence. The online survey took between 15-20 minutes to complete. Respondents who answered the telephone survey completed it in about 25 minutes, however, times varied for all respondents depending on their household composition.

Field Procedures

The survey was conducted by staff at the Steinhardt Social Research Institute (SSRI) and the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS) at

Brandeis University. An initial pre-test of the survey was conducted on a small sub-sample of respondents to identify any flaws in the design, implementation, or response. In order to maximize response rate we utilized a multi-mode approach. Beyond the considerable reductions in cost achievable with a multi-mode approach, studies have shown that multimodal designs achieve higher response, as individuals differ in their propensity to respond to various survey modes (e.g., older adults are more likely to respond to a paper or telephone survey while younger adults are more likely to participate in an online survey).³ While mode differences are unavoidable, they can be minimized by careful instrument design that minimizes variations in stimulus between web, telephone, and paper administration of the survey. All households for which a physical address was available received a pre-notification letter by regular mail explaining the purpose of the survey. The letter for respondents with a known email address included a unique URL to the online survey as well as notification that they would receive an email invitation in a number of days if they had not already completed the survey by such time. Households without an email address received a letter notifying them that a member of the research team would contact them to participate in the survey. The letter also included a unique URL to the web survey that they could complete independently. After a week, households that had not responded were contacted by telephone. The primary goal of telephone contact was to establish eligibility and obtain an email address through which a unique link to the survey would be sent requesting participation. The secondary goal of phone contact was to administer the survey over the phone if the respondent was unable, or resistant to, online participation. Households were contacted repeatedly, a minimum of five times, and at

different days and times to establish contact. Once an email was obtained, all future communication with the respondent was done through email. Finally, non-respondents (those who were unable to contact by phone or email after the online survey was officially closed) were sent a letter requesting participation in the study, a short paper version of the full survey, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope that would ensure confidentiality.

Analysis

Analyses were done of Jewish adults (who self-identified as being Jewish or were raised Jewish and currently identified as no religion) or Jewish households (who reported on household behaviors, e.g., how often does someone in the household light Shabbat candles, or how children are raised). All analyses were completed using statistical software SPSS *v.15*.

³ Don Dillman. Internet, *Mail and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method*. 3rd ed. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley & Sons, 2009.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH TEAM

The present report was developed by researchers at the Steinhardt Social Science Research Institute, located at the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies of Brandeis University. The Steinhardt Institute conducts quantitative studies concerned with the Jewish community. Brandeis University is one of the nations leading research universities and its faculty are internationally-recognized and widely acknowledged for their scholarship.

THE STEINHARDT SOCIAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The Steinhardt Social Research Institute was established to collect, analyze, and disseminate unbiased data about the Jewish community and about religion and ethnicity in the United States. The Institute collects and organizes existing socio-demographic data from private, communal, and government sources and conducts local and national studies of the character of American Jewry and Jewish organizations. The Steinhardt Social Research Institute was established in 2005 through a generous gift from Michael Steinhardt, chairman of the Jewish Life Network/Steinhardt Foundation.

MAURICE AND MARILYN COHEN CENTER FOR MODERN JEWISH STUDIES

The Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University is a multidisciplinary research center dedicated to bringing the concepts, theories, and techniques of social science to bear on the study of modern Jewish life. Research conducted at the Center explores how contemporary Jewish identity is shaped and how Jewish culture and religious practice are manifested. Faculty at the Center includes psychologists, sociologists, and Judaic Studies experts, along with methodologists and policy analysts.

AUTHORS

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Benjamin Phillips, Ph.D. is an Associate Research Scientist at the Steinhardt Social Research Institute and the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University. Dr. Phillips has a B.A. (Hons.) in Government and Judaic Studies from the University of Sydney, Australia, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Near Eastern and Judaic Studies and Sociology from Brandeis University. His dissertation, "Numbering the Jews: Evaluating and Improving Surveys of American Jews," analyzes the validity of past and present methods for surveying American Jewish populations and tests a number of innovative approaches. Benjamin managed the

2005 Boston Jewish Community Study for SSRI. He has previously been a research fellow at the Mandell L. Berman Institute—North American Jewish Data Bank and is the co-author of a *Contemporary Jewry* article on the National Jewish Population Survey of 2000-01. In addition to his interest in survey research, Dr. Phillips studies ethnic and religious status change, and is the author of two articles in *Sociology of Religion* on ethno-religious switching and apostasy and on Jewish intermarriage as a test case of the notion of ethnic capital.

Leonard Saxe, Ph.D. is Professor of Jewish Community Research and Social Policy at Brandeis University. He serves as Director of the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies and the Steinhardt Social Research Institute. Professor Saxe is a social psychologist, as well as a methodologist, and is concerned with the application of social science to social policy issues. His present focus is on religious and ethnic identity and specifically addresses issues relevant to the Jewish community. Professor Saxe's current research on the Jewish community involves socio-demographic studies of North American Jewry and a program of research on Jewish education and its relationship to the Jewish engagement. He is the principal investigator of a longitudinal study of Birthright Israel, a large-scale educational program. At the Steinhardt Institute, he is leading a program that is investigating the size and characteristics of the U.S. Jewish population. Among his recent publications, he is co-author of a 2008 book, *Ten Days of Birthright Israel: A Journey in Young Adult Identity*, the story of Birthright Israel, an intensive ten-day educational program designed to connect Jewish young adults to their heritage. Professor Saxe is an author and/or editor of nearly 250 publications. He has been a Science Fellow for the United States Congress and was a Fulbright Professor at Haifa University, Israel. In 1989, he was awarded the American Psychological Association's prize for Distinguished Contributions to Psychology in the Public Interest, Early Career. He teaches in the Hornstein Program for Jewish Professional Leadership and at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management.

The Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University is a multi-disciplinary research institute dedicated to the study of American Jewry and the development of religious and cultural identity.

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