

Appendix H Jewish Groups

The information we supplied on Jewish congregations consists of the following estimates, calculated by denomination and by county:

- Number of synagogues
- Number of members
- Number of adherents
- Number of worshippers

Synagogue Counts Derived from Three Congregational Roof Organizations

The congregational arms of the Conservative (United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism), Reconstructionist (Jewish Reconstructionist Federation) and Reform (Union for Reform Judaism) movements provided us with lists of their synagogues and exact membership totals (or estimates) for each congregation.

Not included in the synagogue counts or membership totals are the small number of synagogues that call themselves Conservative, Reconstructionist or Reform but are not affiliates of their respective national congregational arms.

A few congregations have affiliations with more than one movement. In those cases, each movement was given .5 of that congregation in the “Synagogue” column, and 50% of the membership units.

Diverse Ways of Counting the Orthodox Congregations

For Orthodox synagogues, the main national congregational body, the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations (Orthodox Union, or “OU”), provided us with a list of their synagogues and membership totals. In addition, the website for the National Council of Young Israel lists the names and locations of all Young Israel congregations, an additional source of Orthodox congregations.

Chabad is a Hasidic sect which fields about 1,500 outreach emissaries worldwide with the vast majority in the US. Its national website, provides a detailed listing of every Chabad-run outreach endeavor. We examined the website for each individual Chabad to determine if religious worship services take place on a regularly scheduled basis in that location.

In addition, we consulted the website of every Jewish Federation in the United States to check for other Orthodox congregations not otherwise found. Finally, we consulted a variety of other local and national websites catering to the Orthodox community to locate Hasidic, Syrian, Persian, Yemenite, Sephardic, Mizrachi and other Orthodox congregations that are either independent of the OU or are affiliated with the more traditionally oriented Agudath Israel (which does not have a website)

Not included in these Orthodox synagogue totals are afternoon-only worship services that meet in offices; yeshivas; Kollels (institutions of full-time study of sacred text); or worship services that meet in a home solely on a Friday night or a Saturday night.

Finally, the overall synagogue totals do not include worship services that occur on college campus Hillels or Chabad.

“Membership Units” or Households: Preliminary to Counting Adherents

Jewish congregations and their denominational roof bodies enumerate their adherents in terms of “membership units,” or households who are dues-paying members of congregations. Almost all congregations rely upon annual membership dues for financial sustainability. We first determined number of membership units and then proceeded to estimate adherents.

Members of Three Denominations from National Roof Organizations

Member unit figures or estimates for Reform, Reconstructionist and Conservative congregations were provided by the national movements as noted above. While counting membership in these three denominations was relatively straightforward, enumerating the Orthodox proved far more complex and challenging.

Orthodox Complexities

In some counties, those with very few Orthodox congregations, we were able to gather and rely upon published membership figures for Orthodox congregations.

In counties with larger numbers of Orthodox congregations, membership information was generally insufficient. In these counties, we used published Jewish population estimates from recently conducted local Jewish community studies sponsored by local Jewish federations to arrive at estimated Orthodox membership totals. Some population studies provide estimates of the number of members of Orthodox congregations by county. Where such estimates were not available, we drew upon the estimated number of Orthodox households in any given county to estimate the number of congregationally affiliated membership units. In so doing, we estimated that 90% of the Orthodox households were members of Orthodox congregations, consistent with figures observed in several local population studies.

In a few self-contained Orthodox communities such as Kiryas Joel in Orange County, NY, we used 2010 US Census data were used to arrive at membership, adherent and worshipper figures.

In computing Orthodox membership figures, member information for most Chabad congregations was unavailable, so we used a figure of 50 members per Chabad, an estimate that is complicated by the overlap of worshippers at Chabad services with other nearby congregations, and by the non-uniformity and irregularity in attendance.

From Members to Adherents

As noted, Jewish congregations record their size in terms of “member units,” or entire households who pay membership dues. To calculate the number of adherents, for each Jewish denomination we multiplied the number of its households by the mean number of its household members (Jewish or not) derived from the 2001 National Jewish Population Survey. We focused upon respondents who identified with a given denomination

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and reported membership in a congregation, aware that a small number of congregants belong to congregations whose denominational identity differs from their own.

Average household size by Jewish denomination by geographic location

<i>Jewish Denomination</i>	<i>New York 8-county area (5 boroughs of New York City, Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester)</i>	<i>Rest of US</i>
Orthodox	4.0	3.7
Conservative	2.6	2.7
Reform	2.6	2.7
Reconstructionist	2.6	2.7

We noted significant-enough differences between means for the New York eight-county area and the rest of the country to warrant treating New York separately. Hence, we applied mean scores specific to the eight-county New York area, as provided by the 2011 Jewish Community Study of New York. These differed from those applied to other parts of the US. Illustrative and relevant means are provided below:

Outside the New York 8-county area, in selected other counties with high concentrations of Orthodox Jews, we also assigned a mean household size of 4.0. In a few other instances of heavy Orthodox concentration, such as in Kiryas Joel (Orange County, NY), where 2010 US Census data provided even higher household sizes, those were used.

From Adherents to Worshipers

We used the 2001 National Jewish Population Survey as well to derive the denominationally specific number of worshippers, drawing upon responses to questions on frequency of religious service attendance. We calculated the average number of weekly services attended per year and applied the mean to its number of total adherents of all ages. The result yielded an estimate of the average numbers of worshippers attending services on any week, by denomination as recorded below.

Average number of worshippers per week by denomination

<i>Jewish Denomination</i>	<i>Proportion of Adherents Attending Synagogue in a Given Week</i>
Orthodox	.71
Conservative	.33
Reform	.21
Reconstructionist	.29

Acknowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge the following individuals for their assistance: Rabbi Steven Wernick, Faye Gingold and Marty Kunoff (United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism); Rabbi Joel Baker (Pacific Southwest Region of United Synagogue); Rabbi Daniel Frelander and

Carole Goldberg (Union for Reform Judaism); Dan Hazony and Rabbi Judah Isaacs (Orthodox Union); Rabbis Amy Small and Shawn Zevit (Jewish Reconstructionist Federation); Adina Frydman (UJA-Federation of New York) and Ron Miller (North American Jewish Data Bank).

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