



American Jewish Committee

The Arthur and Rochelle Belfer Institute
for Latino and Latin American Affairs

**Findings and Challenges in Contemporary Research on
the Latino Jewish Population in the United States**

Implemented by

Latino  **Decisions**

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Quantitative Research and Latino Jews in the U.S.	
Challenges in Jewish Population Research	2
Findings: Latino Jewish Population Estimates	5
3. Qualitative Research on Latino Jews in the U.S.	
Challenges in Qualitative Approaches and Research	15
Findings: Emerging Research on Latino Jews	17
4. Future Research on Latino Jews in the U.S.	21
References	23

1. Introduction

On behalf of the American Jewish Committee (AJC) Arthur and Rochelle Belfer Institute for Latino and Latin American Affairs (BILLA), Latino Decisions evaluated existing research and academic literature on Latino Jews in the United States to establish a baseline on the state-of-knowledge on Latino Jews in the United States. AJC's Arthur and Rochelle Belfer Institute for Latino and Latin American Affairs maintains relationships that help protect and strengthen local Jewish communities, secure support for Israel throughout the Americas, and foster favorable political alliances between Jewish and Latin American communities in the United States.

The study of Latino Jews in the U.S. presents researchers with unique methodological and empirical challenges. Quantitative and qualitative researchers alike must contend with small population size, in-group diversity (such as national origin and language preference), and different approaches to conceptualizing Jewish identity in the United States (DellaPergola 2014a). Scholars engaged with this topic and all its complexities are opening new avenues for research. This report identifies key findings, population estimates, and challenges in the nascent research on Latino Jews in the U.S.

The study of Latino Jews in the United States presents researchers with unique methodological and empirical challenges. Scholars engaged with this topic and all its complexities are opening new avenues for research.

The purpose of this project is two-fold: first, to summarize what the existing research tells us about who Latino Jews are; and second, to consider options that can support ongoing research on Latino Jews in the United States. This report proceeds in the following fashion. First, a detailed discussion on population estimates and associated challenges is presented. Next, key findings from qualitative research are highlighted. Finally, we conclude with suggestions for BILLA to consider with the goal of supporting ongoing research and data collection on the views of Latino Jews in the United States.

2. Quantitative Research and Latino Jews in the U.S. States

Challenges in Jewish Population Research

Before delving into Latino Jewish population estimates, it is important to consider two fundamental challenges inherent in Jewish demographic research. First, there is no consensus definition of who is Jewish. Sheskin (2008) points out that “defining who is and is not Jewish is the subject of thousands of books and articles.” Second, in order to generate scientifically sound estimates of this relatively small population, researchers must develop and follow specialized research designs, sampling methods, contact protocols, and weighting procedures that are expensive to implement (Saxe, Tighe, and Livert 2006; Tighe et al. 2012).

The most basic elements of survey and population research —determining who to count, and deciding how to count— pose complicated theoretical and methodological challenges for scholars of Jewish demography and public opinion. Thus, quantitative research on Latino Jews, who constitute a small share of the U.S. Jewish population, is all the more difficult.

The theoretical and methodological difficulties associated with Jewish demographic research are well documented (Tobin and Groeneman 2003, Saxe, Tighe, and Livert 2006; Sheskin 2008; Koven-Gelman 2014). While a full assessment of these challenges is beyond the scope of this report, it is important to highlight key issues in order to consider the research on Latino Jews in context of these broader challenges.

Who Counts: Core and Expanded Population Definitions

Most researchers agree that the total Jewish population can be classified into two broad categories: core and enlarged. The core population includes those who “declare they were

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born Jewish, or declare to be of no religion but have Jewish ancestry, or converted to Judaism, and do not belong to any other monotheistic religion” (DellaPergola 2011). The enlarged population is expanded to also include “all people of Jewish ancestry who now hold another monotheistic religion, and non-Jews who belong to nuclear families of Jews” (DellaPergola 2011). In some instances, American survey researchers have used a broader scope to identify the expanded population to include “Jews by affinity,” which includes people who self-identify as Jewish despite having no Jewish parent, upbringing, nor Jewish religious affiliation (Pew 2013).

How to Count: Survey Questions

Jewish population estimates are often derived from responses to a basic religious affiliation question (i.e. what is your religion). This approach, however, undercounts secular Jews. Analyzing the few American studies with large enough sample sizes to analyze Jewish origin data, researchers conclude 80 percent of people who identify as Jewish indicate they are Jewish by religion, and about 20 percent of Jews in the U.S. do not identify as Jews by religion (Tighe et al. 2013). National and local studies focused on the Jewish population¹ take a more comprehensive approach, and include a thorough battery of questions to identify Jewish respondents, the sources of their Jewish identity, and its qualitative meaning in their lives (DellaPergola 2014b, Sheskin). While there is no uniform set of questions employed to assess Jewish identity across studies, some of the most common measures researchers include are:

- Religious identification and denomination;
- Secular identification engagement with Jewish community and organizations;
- Jewish upbringing and parents;
- Jewish spouse and children;
- Cultural traditions and practices;
- Interest in Israel and involvement with advocacy activities.

¹ Recent examples include, annual AJC Surveys of American Jews, The 2013 Pew Research Center Survey of U.S. Jews, the 2012 Jewish Values Survey, and the many Jewish Federation demographic studies in various metro areas across the country.

Research Design and Implementation Challenges

Research costs pose significant barriers to in-depth demographic research on the Jewish population (Sheskin 2008, Tobin and Groeneman 2003). The price of conducting scientifically sound survey research is substantially higher when studying small and somewhat difficult to identify populations. For example, because Jews comprise only two percent of the adult population in the United States, it takes far more time to identify, reach, and complete a survey interview with a Jewish respondent. Making a survey available in multiple languages, such as Russian or Spanish, adds to an already expensive endeavor.

Challenges to Quantitative Research on Latino Jews in the U.S.

Lack of data is the biggest challenge to conducting rigorous statistical analysis on Latino Jews in the United States. No national dataset has enough Latino Jewish respondents to determine what the demographic profile of this population is in terms of Latino origin, nativity, language ability, citizenship status, education, income, generations in the United States, age, or income. There is no empirical basis to determine what a representative sample of Latino Jews looks like; the data do not exist.

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Small population size, of course, begets these challenges. Large, national surveys of Latinos in the U.S. capture few Jewish respondents, and large polls of Jews in the U.S. capture few Latino respondents. This is a common phenomenon, a point clearly illustrated by the examples below:

- 2012 Pew National Survey of Latinos: 1,765 total respondents, 14 were Jewish.
- 2013 Pew Survey of Jews in the United States: 3,475 total respondents, 79 were Latino.
- 2014 Latino Decisions Election Eve Poll: 5,013 total respondents, 21 were Jewish.
- 2015 AJC Survey of American Jews: 1,031 total respondents, 31 were Latino.

Findings: Latino Jewish Population Estimates

Latinos, Jews, and Latino Jews

The United States Census estimates there are 54 million Latinos in the United States, comprising 17 percent of the national population. Scholars of Jewish demography estimate there are approximately 5.7 million Jewish adults (core population) in the U.S., and two percent of the American population is Jewish (DellaPergola 2016, Tighe et al. 2013, Pew 2013). The Steinhardt Social Research Institute's American Jewish Population Project (AJPP) at the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies estimates the Latino Jewish population in the U.S. numbers 227,700, or 5 percent of the U.S. Jewish population.

In recent years the AJPP, at the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University, has made tremendous strides in Jewish demographic research. Their innovative analytical approach combines the best survey research available with Census data to estimate the Jewish population at the national, state, and county level. Most important for the purposes of this report, the AJPP research scientists have modeled estimates for sociodemographic groups (race/ethnicity, education, and age) within the Jewish population at the national, state, and county level.² These estimates provide unprecedented insight on the basic demography of the Latino Jewish population in the United States. Until now, it was unclear how the Latino Jewish population is distributed across states or counties, and there was no baseline estimate to observe trends across states or counties.

AJPP estimates provide unprecedented insight on the basic demography of the Latino Jewish population in the United States. Until now, there were no comparable state or local baseline estimates of Latino Jews in the U.S.

² Data from The American Jewish Population Project used in this report can be located using the interactive tools on their website at: <http://ajpp.brandeis.edu/index.php>. A summary description on population estimates is located at: <http://ajpp.brandeis.edu/aboutestimates.php> and methodology details are posted at: <http://ajpp.brandeis.edu/methodology.php>.

Latino Jews in the U.S.: National, State, and Local Populations

Using the AJPP population estimates posted on their interactive website, Tables 1-5 report the Latino Jewish population at the state and county level. The data in the estimates reflect the adult Jewish population that was “directly estimated through the AJPP’s data synthesis³, that is, the majority of the population who self-identify as Jewish when asked about religion. The limitation of the data synthesis is that it misses the portion of the population that might identify culturally, ethnically, or secularly as Jewish but do not identify as Jewish when asked about religion.” With that caveat in mind, the data provide the most detailed population estimates publicly available on the Latino Jewish population in the U.S.

Latino Jews in the States: On the following page, Table 1 reports population estimates of the overall and Latino Jewish population at the national and state level. The Latino share of the statewide Jewish population is reported to place these numbers in context. In addition, the distribution of the Latino Jewish population across the states is reported in the last column. Key observations from the Table 1 estimates on Latino Jews across the states are:

- There are 227,700 Latino Jews in the United States; 5% of the Jewish population.
- Three states have Latino Jewish populations above 50,000: New York (58,070), California (56,630), and Florida (51,360). These three states are home to 73 percent of the entire Latino Jewish population in the U.S.
- Three states have between 8,000 and 13,000 Latino Jews: New Jersey (12,090), Texas, (11,530), and Illinois (8,070).
- Ten states have Latino Jewish populations between 1,000 and 3,500: Maryland, Arizona, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Nevada, New Mexico, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, and Virginia.
- New Mexico has the largest share of Latinos in the statewide Jewish population, 11 percent. Latinos are 10 percent of the statewide Jewish population in Texas, California and Florida.

³ Tighe et al.’s meta-analysis method in summary: The estimates are “based on a sample of over 200 independent samples of the U.S. adult population collected across the years 2007 to 2013. The surveys represent all available sources of data that are nationally representative of the adult population in the United States and include a standard question about religious identification as part of the survey instrument. Model results are post-stratified to the 5 year American Community Survey 2008 to 2012, which is first adjusted to 2013 population totals using the 2013 Census Population Estimates for counties by age, sex, race and Hispanic origin.”

Table 1. Latino Jewish Population in the United States by State (2013)*(Data Source: The Steinhardt Social Research Institute's American Jewish Population Project (AJPP))*

	U.S. Jewish Population	U.S. Latino Jewish Population	Latino Share of Jewish Population	Share of U.S. Latino Jewish Population
U.S. Total	4,298,000	227,700	5.3%	
New York	973,600	58,070	6%	26%
California	577,700	56,630	10%	25%
Florida	535,200	51,360	10%	23%
New Jersey	314,400	12,090	4%	5%
Texas	113,700	11,530	10%	5%
Illinois	199,100	8,070	4%	4%
Maryland	146,400	3,500	2%	2%
Arizona	67,000	3,280	5%	1%
Massachusetts	199,400	3,140	2%	1%
Pennsylvania	214,300	2,990	1%	1%
Nevada	41,500	2,500	6%	1%
New Mexico	22,200	2,390	11%	1%
Colorado	58,100	1,680	3%	1%
Connecticut	60,500	1,390	2%	1%
Georgia	68,000	1,220	2%	1%
Virginia	64,300	1,220	2%	1%
District of Columbia	32,200	870	3%	0%
North Carolina	57,400	860	1%	0%
Ohio	95,000	600	1%	0%
Washington	41,100	570	1%	0%
Michigan	73,000	480	1%	0%
Oregon	22,300	340	2%	0%
Minnesota	35,800	280	1%	0%
Rhode Island	13,500	280	2%	0%
Louisiana	16,900	220	1%	0%
Wisconsin	20,900	220	1%	0%
South Carolina	23,200	210	1%	0%
Utah	10,200	200	2%	0%
Indiana	18,100	160	1%	0%
Missouri	26,800	140	1%	0%
Kansas	8,400	130	2%	0%
Tennessee	15,200	130	1%	0%
Oklahoma	8,100	120	1%	0%
Delaware	7,900	110	1%	0%
Alabama	15,600	100	1%	0%
Arkansas	9,000	90	1%	0%
Nebraska	7,700	90	1%	0%
Iowa	10,400	70	1%	0%
New Hampshire	17,500	70	0%	0%
Kentucky	11,600	60	1%	0%
Idaho	3,300	50	2%	0%
Maine	14,800	30	0%	0%
Mississippi	4,400	30	1%	0%
Wyoming	2,100	30	1%	0%
Vermont	7,900	20	0%	0%
Montana	3,000	10	0%	0%
North Dakota	2,100	10	0%	0%
South Dakota	1,300	10	1%	0%
West Virginia	6,300	10	0%	0%

County Level Estimates on Latino Jewish Population Size: On the following page, Table 2 reports the population estimates for counties with the largest Latino Jewish populations in the United States. In two cases, county estimates are reported in combination (Westchester and Putnam counties, and Imperial and Riverside counties). Because county names may be less familiar, cities associated with each county are parenthetically listed next to each county as a point of reference. Each county estimate reported is mutually exclusive⁴. The last column reports the distribution of the national Latino Jewish population across these counties. Key observations from the Table 2 estimates on Latino Jews at the county level are:

- Two counties have Latino Jewish populations above 25,000.
 - Los Angeles County has the largest Latino Jewish population at 38,290.
 - Miami Dade is second with 27,750.
 - Nearly 30 percent of all Latino Jews reside in either Los Angeles or Miami Dade counties.
- The Latino Jewish population is geographically concentrated. Half of all Latino Jews in the U.S. reside in one of six counties: Los Angeles, Miami Dade, Kings, Broward, New York, and Bronx.
- The 25 counties reported in the table account for 77 percent of Latino Jews in the United States.

⁴ For example, people counted in Bronx County estimates are not included in Queens County estimates. Both counties are associated with the New York-Newark-Jersey City metro area.

Table 2. Top 25 Counties with the Largest Latino Jewish Populations in the U.S., 2013
Data Source: The Steinhardt Social Research Institute's American Jewish Population Project (AJPP)

State	County (Metro Area)	Latino Jewish Population (18+ years)	Share of U.S. Latino Jewish Population
U.S.	U.S. Total	227,700	
CA	Los Angeles County (Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim)	38,290	17%
FL	Miami Dade - Monroe (Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, Key West)	27,750	12%
NY	Kings (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	14,330	6%
FL	Broward (Miami-Ft. Lauderdale, West Palm Beach)	11,270	5%
NY	New York County (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	11,170	5%
NY	Bronx County (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	10,590	5%
NY	Queens County (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	9,770	4%
FL	Palm Beach (West Palm Beach, Miami, Ft. Lauderdale)	7,720	3%
IL	Cook (Chicago-Naperville-Elgin)	6,580	3%
NY	Nassau (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	4,060	2%
NY	Westchester-Putnam (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	2,910	1%
CA	San Diego County (San Diego)	2,670	1%
CA	Imperial -Riverside (El Centro-Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario)	2,560	1%
MD	Montgomery (DC-Arlington-Alexandria)	2,530	1%
AZ	Maricopa (Phoenix)	2,480	1%
TX	Harris (Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land)	2,460	1%
NV	Clark (Las Vegas)	2,420	1%
MA	Middlesex, Worcester, Essex	2,170	1%
NJ	Middlesex (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	2,030	1%
NJ	Essex (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	2,010	1%
TX	Bexar (San Antonio)	1,990	1%
NJ	Bergen (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	1,980	1%
NY	Suffolk (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	1,910	1%
CA	Orange (Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim)	1,890	1%
PA	Philadelphia County (Philadelphia)	1,720	1%

Many are familiar with the valuable in-depth studies on local Jewish population have been produced by Jewish Federation community studies. They provide sharp insights on local demography, public opinion, community needs, and policy priorities (Koven-Gelman 2014). To illustrate the point, The 2014 Greater Miami Jewish Federation Population Study made their survey available in Spanish, and 265 Latinos were included in their sample of 2,020 Jewish respondents. Miami is the exception though, as few Latinos surface in Federation community studies, reflecting local population trends. It is also important to note that data generated from local Federation studies are not comparable – the content and sample frames differ, and they are not implemented on a regular or coordinated schedule. The AJPP county and metro-level data provide comparable local Jewish population estimates that were heretofore unknown.

Latino Jews Within the States: On the following pages, Tables 3, 4 and 5 report the total and Latino Jewish population distributions in states with the largest Latino Jewish populations. County estimates in each state are reported in rank order of the Latino Jewish population size.⁵ Table 3 reports estimates in states where the Latino Jewish population is above 50,000. Table 4 includes states where the Latino Jewish population ranges between 8,000 and 12,500. Table 5 reports metro and state estimates for areas where Latino Jews number between 1,200 to 6,000. Key observations and trends in Table 3:

- Latino Jewish population is distributed differently than the overall and non-Latino Jewish populations within the states. For instance, Palm Beach has the largest total Jewish population in Florida, but Miami Dade ranks first among Latino Jews.
- New York has three counties where the Latino Jewish population exceeds 10,000: Kings (14,330), New York (11,170), and Bronx (10,590).
- One-third of the Jewish population in Bronx County is Latino, and 10 percent of Queens County Jews are also Latino.
- More than one in ten (14%) Jews in Los Angeles County is Latino. L.A. County's Latino Jewish population, at 38,290, dwarfs all other California counties. San Diego County ranks second, with 2,670 Latino Jews, 6% of all Jews in the county.
- Miami Dade County's Jewish population is 35 percent Latino.

⁵ Counties with the fewest Latino Jewish populations are not included in the tables. For this reason, the counties may not add up to the reported statewide totals.

Table 3. Population Distribution for States with Latino Jewish Populations Over 50,000*Data Source: The Steinhardt Social Research Institute's American Jewish Population Project (AJPP)*

State, County (Metro Area)	Total Jewish Population	Latino Jewish Population	Latino Share of Jewish Population
NEW YORK	973,600	58,070	6%
Kings (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	215,500	14,330	7%
New York County (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	196,800	11,170	6%
Bronx County (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	31,100	10,590	34%
Queens County (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	99,100	9,770	10%
Nassau (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	136,200	4,060	3%
Westchester-Putnam (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	70,800	2,910	4%
Suffolk (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	66,500	1,910	3%
Rockland (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	34,600	1,300	4%
Richmond (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	24,300	870	4%
CALIFORNIA	577,700	56,630	10%
Los Angeles County (Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim)	282,300	38,290	14%
San Diego County (San Diego)	42,400	2,670	6%
Imperial -Riverside (El Centro-Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario)	21,300	2,560	12%
Orange (Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim)	29,200	1,890	6%
Alameda (San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward)	25,000	1,290	5%
Ventura (Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura)	15,500	1,190	8%
San Bernardino (Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario)	7,800	1,120	14%
Santa Clara (San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara)	18,500	1,020	6%
San Mateo (San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward)	19,200	970	5%
San Francisco County (San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward)	24,300	810	3%
Contra Costa (San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward)	16,500	740	4%
Santa Barbara (Santa Maria-Santa Barbara)	9,500	720	8%
Sacramento County (Sacramento)	9,100	400	4%
FLORIDA	535,200	51,360	10%
Miami Dade - Monroe (Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, Key West)	78,300	27,750	35%
Broward (Miami-Ft. Lauderdale, West Palm Beach)	124,000	11,270	9%
Palm Beach (West Palm Beach, Miami, Ft. Lauderdale)	172,000	7,720	4%
Hillsborough County (Tampa)	16,500	920	6%
Orange (Orlando)	10,500	760	7%
Seminole (Orlando)	11,200	430	4%
Osceola (Orlando)	1,800	260	14%

Key observations from Tables 4 and 5:

- Similar to statewide Latino population trends, there are more Latino Jews in San Antonio (1,990) and El Paso (1,470) than there are in Dallas (1,350) or Austin (440).
- Latino Jews comprise a large share of the total Jewish population in several Latino-majority counties located along the Texas-Mexico border.
 - El Paso County - Latino Jews are 40% of the Jewish population.
 - Cameron County - Latino Jews are 48% of the Jewish population.
 - Hidalgo County – Latino Jews are 53% of the Jewish population.
- In several states the Latino Jewish population is clustered in one county. This is especially true in the West, and states with one large population center.
 - Illinois - 82% of Latino Jews reside in Chicago and its suburbs.
 - Arizona – 76% of Latino Jews reside in Maricopa County (Phoenix area).
 - New Mexico – 57% of Latino Jews reside in the Albuquerque metro area.
- The Washington DC metro area (adding the Virginia and Maryland suburbs) has a combined Latino Jewish population of 5,590; only six states have a larger number of Latino Jews.

Table 4. Population Distribution for States with Latino Jewish Populations Between 8,000-12,500*Data Source: The Steinhardt Social Research Institute's American Jewish Population Project (AJPP)*

State, County (Metro Area)	Total Jewish Population	Latino Jewish Population	Latino Share of Jewish Population
NEW JERSEY	314,400	12,090	4%
Middlesex (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	47,100	2,030	4%
Essex (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	32,100	2,010	6%
Bergen (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	54,700	1,980	4%
Passaic (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	14,200	1,290	9%
Hudson (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	9,500	1,240	13%
Union (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	12,600	850	7%
Monmouth (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	33,700	510	2%
Morris (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	22,600	430	2%
Camden (Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington)	13,700	360	3%
Mercer (Trenton)	12,800	360	3%
Somerset (New York-Newark-Jersey City)	14,800	350	2%
TEXAS	113,700	11,530	10%
Harris (Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land)	24,200	2,460	10%
Bexar (San Antonio)	11,700	1,990	17%
El Paso County (El Paso)	3,700	1,470	40%
Dallas (Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington)	15,400	1,350	9%
Cameron (Brownsville-Harlingen)	2,000	950	48%
Hidalgo (McAllen-Edinburg-Mission)	1,200	630	53%
Travis, Hays (Austin-Round Rock)	7,600	440	6%
Tarrant (Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington)	6,900	320	5%
Nueces, San Patricio, Starr (Corpus Christi)	1,400	290	21%
Fort Bend (Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land)	4,600	270	6%
Collin (Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington)	10,000	240	2%
Williamson (Austin-Round Rock)	4,100	160	4%
Denton (Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington)	2,200	70	3%
Galveston (Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land)	1,800	70	4%
ILLINOIS	199,100	8,070	4%
Cook (Chicago-Naperville-Elgin)	131,200	6,580	5%
Lake (Chicago-Naperville-Elgin)	33,600	970	3%
Grundy, Kane, Kendall, McHenry, Will (Chicago-Naperville-Elgin)	7,600	220	3%
DuPage (Chicago-Naperville-Elgin)	8,500	160	2%

Table 5. Population Distribution for States with Latino Jewish Populations Between 1,200-6,000*Data Source: The Steinhardt Social Research Institute's American Jewish Population Project (AJPP)*

State, County (Metro Area)	Total Jewish Population	Latino Jewish Population	Latino Share of Jewish Population
DC METRO AREA: MARYLAND, VIRGINIA, WASHINGTON, DC	242,900	5,590	2%
Maryland, Montgomery Co	69,000	2,530	4%
Maryland, Baltimore-Baltimore City Counties	45,000	490	1%
Maryland, Prince Georges, Charles, St. Mary's	5,100	200	4%
Virginia, Fairfax County	64,300	620	1%
Washington, DC	32,300	870	3%
ARIZONA	67,000	3,280	5%
Maricopa (Phoenix)	51,600	2,480	5%
Pima (Tucson)	9,100	550	6%
MASSACHUSETTS	199,400	3,140	2%
Middlesex, Worcester, Essex	170,400	2,170	1%
Suffolk (Boston-Cambridge-Newton)	23,400	950	4%
PENNSYLVANIA	214,300	2,990	1%
Philadelphia County (Philadelphia)	48,400	1,720	4%
Montgomery (Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington)	48,800	330	1%
Carbon, Lehigh, Northampton (Allentown, Bethlehem)	10,500	230	2%
Bucks (Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington)	21,600	150	1%
Delaware (Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington)	16,600	100	1%
Chester (Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington)	7,600	60	1%
NEVADA	41,500	2,500	6%
Clark (Las Vegas)	38,700	2,420	6%
NEW MEXICO	22,200	2,390	11%
Bernalillo, Sandoval, Valencia (Albuquerque)	12,900	1,360	11%
Santa Fe County (Santa Fe)	5,400	560	10%
Dona Ana (Las Cruces)	1,100	200	18%
COLORADO	58,100	1,680	3%
El Paso, Denver, Arapahoe	58,100	1,680	3%
CONNECTICUT	60,500	1,390	2%
Fairfield (Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk)	23,300	650	3%
Hartford (West/East Hartford)	13,900	350	3%
New Haven County (New Haven)	12,000	290	2%
GEORGIA	68,000	1,220	2%
DeKalb and Fulton (Atlanta)	37,800	690	2%
Cobb (Atlanta)	8,100	160	2%
Gwinnett (Atlanta)	2,500	100	4%

3. Qualitative Research on Latino Jews in the U.S.

Challenges in Qualitative Approaches and Research

Detailed population estimates of the Latino Jewish population elucidate new information and open new avenues for research. However, population counts offer no insight on Jewish identity or public opinion. Qualitative methods, such as focus groups, in-depth interviews, and community studies are essential tools to expand the base of knowledge on Latino Jews in the United States. Their value is amplified by the absence of reliable national public opinion data, and basic in-group demographic estimates among Latino Jews.

Before evaluating the qualitative research findings on this population, it is important to consider the limits in what these approaches can tell us, and the challenges inherent in conducting qualitative studies with this very particular population.

Methodological Approach and Challenges

Researchers rely a variety of approaches to investigate, evaluate, and assess public opinion, population traits, and take inventory of a given population's interests and priorities. Qualitative research methods —such as focus groups, in-depth interviews, archival research, and participant observation— can provide useful insights, broaden the researcher's understanding of the range of perspectives, elicit unique personal narratives, and provide immediate feedback from small groups. However, results from studies employing these methods are not as generalizable to the entire population of interest. Small samples, or single cases, do not provide the statistical power necessary to make generalizations.

Surveys conducted with large, representative population samples are considered the gold standard in public opinion and demographic research because (when implemented in

The value of qualitative research approaches is amplified by the absence of reliable national public opinion data, and basic in-group demographic estimates among Latino Jews.

accordance with social science standards) the results can be generalized to the larger population of interest. When a population is hard to reach via survey research (and for many other pragmatic reasons) researchers frequently use qualitative approaches to investigate the research questions at hand.

Latino Jews in the U.S. are well-suited to the focus group, and other qualitative approaches. The population is hard to study using a survey because the population is small and difficult to identify with existing technical tools. As noted earlier, the current state-of-research is quite limited, we do not know what the

demographic profile of a representative sample of the Latino Jewish population looks like today. Hence, it would be impossible to devise a survey for a representative sample of Latino Jews until we know more about population traits such as language, nativity, Latino origin, religious affiliation, and a host of other variables. In reference to the study of Latino Jews, the common criticism of focus groups lacking representativeness is moot because we do not know with any certainty the demographic profile of this population.

A successful qualitative study of the Latino Jewish population requires a research design specifically developed to account for unique group traits.

A larger challenge associated with qualitative study that does matter for Latino Jewish research is the results are limited by location. Interviews and focus groups conducted in New York, for example, do not offer much insight into what one might expect in Los Angeles or Miami. The highly-localized nature of focus groups and some archival research for that matter, makes it difficult to apply the learned information in broader context. For this reason, it is optimal to include interviews or discussion sessions in multiple locations to identify common themes, and distinguish them a local trend or point of interest.

Accounting for Group Traits in Research Design: Qualitative methods are a useful avenue to capture information about Latino Jews that is otherwise impossible to know. As with

quantitative work, a successful study of the Latino Jewish population requires a research design specifically developed to account for unique group traits. Cultural competence in the design and implementation are essential to collecting the most accurate information possible. Among the factors that must be taken into account and incorporated in qualitative research on Latino Jews:

- Written and verbal language preference and ability among the participants;
- Diversity, especially in terms of Latino origin and nativity;
- Nuanced understanding of cultural perspectives and expressions.

It is imperative that participant recruitment, discussion guides, and other materials are competently translated into the language of the participants' choice. For Latino Jews, this could mean English, Spanish, Russian, and/or Hebrew, depending upon the local population traits.⁶ Moderators and interviewers should be fluent in whatever languages are native to the respondents so that group (or individual) can use the language of their choice throughout the interview without losing any nuance or information.

Beyond language, it is important that research on Latino Jews incorporates content that directly addresses their unique cultural context and experience. This sort of information is sorely lacking in the applied and academic literature. Qualitative research on the Jewish or Latino populations rarely incorporate or focus on the perspectives of Latino Jews in particular.

Findings: Emerging Research on Latino Jews

Research on Latino Jews in the U.S., whether qualitative or quantitative in approach, is quite limited. At present, there are several social scientists using qualitative research methods to build the academic and applied research literature on the Latino Jewish population in the United States.

⁶ In 2015, Latino Decisions conducted a series of focus groups with Latino Jews on behalf of AJC. Several participants indicated their fluency in various combinations of these four languages.

There is a strong academic tradition of research on Latin American Jews (Bosker Liwerant, 2008, 2013), including an academic association (Latin American Jewish Studies Association) and an scholarly outlet dedicated to the subject matter: *Latin American Jewish Studies*. This body of work explores history, culture, demography, and contemporary experience of the Jewish population in Latin America (DellaPergola 2013). Bosker Liwerant's extensive theoretical and field research on Latin American Jews (in Latin America) offers especially sharp insights in understanding the distinctive Latin American Jewish identity that has emerged in Latin America. Perhaps better than any other scholar, Bosker Liwerant has articulated the how the Latin American Jews in Latin America and the United States challenge academic research conventions, and proposes a bold research agenda to theoretically and empirically develop this body of academic research (2014).

Those who study Latin American Jews have turned more attention to Latino Jews in the United States as global demographic trends indicate that thousands of Argentine, Venezuelan, and Mexican Jews have relocated to the United States (DellaPergola 2011, 2016). Leading scholars have called for researchers to map "the new relocation of Latin American Jews moving inside Latin America (such as - in the past - from Argentina to Mexico or from Uruguay to Venezuela) and outside Latin America, mainly to the United States and Israel (Bosker Liwerant 2014)."

Using a combination of in-depth interviews, archival research, and small survey methods, Margalit Bejarano's research on Cuban and other Latino Jews in Miami (2014) stands out for its focus on Latino Jews in the United States. The mixed-method approach also points to the utility of maximizing all possible avenues to shed light on difficult-to-study populations. Her

Those who study Latin American Jews have turned more attention to the United States in recent years as global demographic trends indicate that thousands of Argentine, Venezuelan, and Mexican Jews have relocated to the United States.

research examines the distinction between Cuban Jews and Latin American Jews in Miami in terms of their institutional engagements, attachment to community and Israel, and shifting identities in Miami's cultural context.

Researchers have also written about Latinos and Jews in the United States, as distinct populations, in relationship to each other. This research focuses mostly on places like Miami, Los Angeles and New York and involves case studies and elite interviewing methods (Harris 2002). This line of research has not been as developed as one might expect given the growth in research on Latinos in the United States and the implications of their demographic trajectory.

Insights from AJC BILLA Initiatives

In 2011 the American Jewish Committee released a report entitled, "Living In Between: An Analysis of Hispanic Jewry in the United States". The study was based upon in-depth interviews with 38 Latino Jews across the U.S. and documented their sense on identity in terms of being both Latino and Jewish, transnational attachments, and engagement with Jewish communities in the United States. This report set an important precedent for future research. Engaging with this many Latino Jews exclusively to discuss their identity and look for common threads in their responses broke new ground.

The number of Latino Jews participating in these two qualitative research efforts exceeds the number of Latino Jews in most national omnibus surveys of the Latino or Jewish population.

In 2015 AJC BILLA implemented a series of focus groups specifically comprised of Latino Jews. In total, sixty-three Latino Jews participated in sessions held in New York, Miami, Houston, Chicago, and Los Angeles. It is worth noting that the number of Latino Jews in these two qualitative research efforts exceeds the number of Latino Jews in most national omnibus surveys of the Latino or Jewish population.

In both of these research projects, participants voiced opinions and shared experiences that were consistent with the findings in the academic literature on Latin American Jews. Across sites participants described Israel as central to their Jewish cultural attachment. They recalled being more engaged in community activities in their Latin American home countries relative to the United States. Participants noted that American Jews place more emphasis on denomination and synagogue membership.

The focus group and in-depth interviews provided information that is not yet in the academic literature. Perceptions about commonality with non-Jewish Latinos, non-Latino Jews, and how they navigate their identities in the U.S. were discussed at length and demonstrated that these are topics with special relevance and meaning to the Latino Jewish population in the U.S. In addition, these qualitative assessments provided views from the local perspective, revealing how local institutions, demographics, and outreach can dramatically shape the experiences of the local Latino Jewish population.

The qualitative research on Latino Jews is strengthened by a tradition of academic research on Latin American Jews that addresses the distinctive Jewish cultural and historical experiences among this population. However, there is less information about Latino Jews who are now in the United States, and how their views, identity or sense of community with other groups changes after years or generations in the U.S. In the next section, we provide some suggestions to advance the larger body of research on Latino Jews.

4. Future Research on Latino Jews in the United States

Reviewing the state-of-knowledge on Latino Jews in the United States leads to three important conclusions:

1. There is a tremendous need to expand the research on Latino Jews in the U.S.
2. Engaging in rigorous research on the Latino Jewish population in the U.S. is difficult for reasons both theoretical (e.g. what should a research agenda on Latino Jews in the U.S. entail) and practical (e.g. small population, budget constraints) in nature.
3. Researchers, academics, and advocates working in this domain have demonstrated it is possible to pursue high-quality research using a variety of approaches, and efficient alternatives.

Based upon the findings in this report and our research experience, we offer suggestions to advance the research on Latino Jews in the U.S. with an eye toward feasibility and efficiency. These recommendations are based upon the knowledge that scholars, advocates, and researchers have collaborated to produce an extensive body of literature on Jews in the United States, Latin American Jews, and Latinos in the United States. This emerging line of inquiry will be well served by the tradition of cross-disciplinary collaborative work.

- While a large sample survey of Latino Jews in the United States is not immediately feasible, questionnaire development should be underway.
 - Research partners should collaborate to create core question batteries to measure demographic traits, identity, community engagement.
 - A common instrument can be field tested in online or smaller-scale surveys to fine tune the questionnaire and glean some preliminary insights.
- Focus groups can provide very useful information on this unique population and should be implemented on a scheduled, regular basis in targeted metro areas.
 - The miniscule number of Latino Jews that surface in Jewish or Latino surveys means that information must be gleaned through other methods (though it does not mean the effort should be abandoned).
 - Modest on-going efforts, perhaps annually, would dramatically increase the base of knowledge about the group, and allow researchers to improve and customize the questionnaire for specific group purposes.

- Developing a core discussion guide would enhance the value of the data collected in this effort.
- Cost efficiencies in focus group procedures, including online sessions (available with and without video elements) should be incorporated in focus group programs.
- Creating an online panel of Latino Jews in the U.S. would be a huge innovation, and a valuable tool to assess public opinion, identity, engagement, and topical issues of the moment. This would allow researchers to evaluate trends over time in a systematic manner that is far less costly than large-scale surveys.
- Develop and maintain a convenience sample of Latino Jews to participate in surveys, focus group, or other research efforts via Facebook, and other social networks. This group would be a valuable resource for field test question and could provide perspectives that would otherwise be assessed in a more costly focus group.
- As a resource to researchers interested in conducting research about Latino Jews, advocates and scholars should produce a best-practices memo to provide recommendations on terminology, methodology, and “gold standard” questions that should be asked on any survey of this population.
- Share research on Latino Jews in the U.S. with broader audiences, non-Jewish Latino audiences in particular. There are several potential lines of collaboration and research support that can be developed.

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