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INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
(ISAC)  
FOR THE 1990 WORLD JEWISH POPULATION SURVEYS

First Meeting

Occasional Paper 1989-05

The Institute of Contemporary Jewry  
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
December 18-21, 1988

## World Jewish Population Survey

Meeting of the International Scientific Advisory Committee (ISAC)  
Jerusalem, Maierdorf Bldg., Mount Scopus Campus  
December 18-21, 1988

### Agenda

#### Sunday, December 18

19<sup>00</sup>-21<sup>30</sup> (incl. supper). Welcome; general reports.

#### Monday, December 19

9<sup>00</sup>-11<sup>00</sup> Core questionnaire.

11<sup>30</sup>-13<sup>30</sup> Sample selection.

16<sup>00</sup>-18<sup>00</sup> Sponsorship; Processing and release of data.

#### Tuesday, December 20

9<sup>00</sup>-11<sup>00</sup> Data collection.

11<sup>30</sup>-13<sup>30</sup> International comparability of data.

16<sup>30</sup>-18<sup>30</sup> Cost of surveys.

#### Wednesday, December 21

9<sup>00</sup>-11<sup>00</sup> Supplementary consultations.

11<sup>30</sup>-13<sup>30</sup> " " "

15<sup>00</sup>-18<sup>00</sup> Non-survey data; summaries.

19<sup>30</sup> Closing session and reception

Opening Session  
Sunday, December 18, 1988

Welcoming addresses and opening remarks:

Ezra Mendelsohn welcomed the participants on behalf of the Institute of Contemporary Jewry of the Hebrew University.

Roberto Bachi reviewed the general developments that took place since the October 1987 Symposium on World Jewish Population: Research and Policies, and introduced the agenda of the International Scientific Advisory Committee (ISAC) meeting.

Rami Kornblum welcomed the participants on behalf of the Organization Department of the World Zionist Organization and reviewed the Department's contribution toward a World Jewish population survey.

Sidney Goldstein summarized the recent work undertaken in the United States by the National Technical Advisory Committee of the Council of Jewish Federations, and the progress being made toward a national survey of US Jews in 1990.

Moshe Sicron reviewed the contributions that data available from Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics can provide to the World Jewish population survey.

Eric Peritz commented on the research project on family formation and fertility in Israel currently undertaken at the Hebrew University, in cooperation with the Central Bureau of Statistics and with the support of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities.

Session on Core Questionnaire

Monday, December 19, 1988  
Chairman: Sidney Goldstein

S. Goldstein introduced the discussion of the core questionnaire by stressing the importance of having a standardized set of questions, based on an agreed-upon set of definitions of variables. Standardization is essential to insure comparability among surveys conducted in different communities within a given country and among surveys in different countries. Concurrently, maximum comparability is desirable with census data on the general population of the reference country. At times the latter kind of comparability may have to be incomplete, if comparability among Jewish surveys is to be achieved.

In reviewing the core questionnaire developed for use on the American scene, several criteria were employed:

1) to insure inclusion of the variables regarded as essential for analysis of the socio-economic and demographic structure and the dynamics of change in the Jewish population;

2) to provide the basic data needed to assess Jewish identification and behavior;

3) to exclude questions relating to behavior and attitudes which would vary considerably from one community to another (e.g. service needs);

4) to restrict the length of the core questionnaire to 20-25 minutes interviewing time so that individual communities could add questions directed at their particular local needs.

Within the core questionnaire specific items have been rated in terms of priority so that if more time (space) must be economized, items with lower priority can be dropped.

It was also stressed that the U.S. core questionnaire was designed for telephone interviewing and on the assumption that a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interview) would be used in data collection. The format may have to be reorganized when other data collection methods are employed - particularly with respect to grouping of questions directed at particular sections of individuals (e.g. children, adults 16 and over, etc.) within the household.

A set of explanatory notes should be provided to clarify definitions employed and to account for differences among countries in the meaning of particular categories.

As part of the sampling procedure, guidelines have to be provided for determining who is to be the respondent for each household. This is essential since the attitudinal data obtained need to be

representative of the adult population. The respondent chosen should be from among the "Jewish" members of the households.

A number of suggestions were made for additional questions that were desirable:

E.g. Ashkenazi vs. Sephardic identity; languages spoken;  
Whether a Get was obtained in case of divorce;  
Possession of specific religious objects in the house;  
Israelis in the U.S.

It was agreed that the ISAC members would review the U.S. core questionnaire and suggest changes, additions and deletions in topics at a later session (that was held on Dec. 21). In addition, attention should be given to topics that warrant development of modules to provide broader coverage than a few questions in the questionnaire allow. Present plans for the U.S. questionnaire call for modules in Jewish education, identification and service needs. A full fertility schedule was suggested as a possible additional module.

Considerable attention was given to the screener questions used to identify eligible households, i.e., those containing a Jewish member. It was stressed that the broad net thrown by use of 4-5 criteria results in a larger number of households being identified, since many are of mixed composition and contain "marginal" Jews. Concern was also expressed as to whether Jews report themselves as Jews and how best to maximize such self-identification.

Session on Sample Selection  
Monday, December 19, 1988

Chairman: Gad Nathan

Overviews of current plans for sample designs were presented by members of the committee. B. Kosmin reported on U.S. plans to combine special local surveys with a screened national sample from an omnibus market research organization. The local surveys are usually on a dual frame base - community lists combined with RDD/CATI (Random Digit Dialing/Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews). The national survey will be based on RDD/CATI screening of a representative national sample by a commercial market research organization. An accumulated total of some 80,000 interviews will be screened and tracked over some ten years and is expected to yield some 2,500 households with at least one Jewish person. Supplementation to cover the institutional population is also proposed.

Initial results of pre-tests were presented. A. Dubb reported on plans to combine community list sampling with limited area sampling in South Africa. M. Schmool reported on attempts to use telephone interviewing in Manchester and the difficulties encountered in the use of telephones for survey work in the U.K., especially for Jewish surveys and the problems of costs. D. Friedmann and M. Levy reported on the use in France of the automated phone directory, Minitel, and the DJN method for stratification to select a sample of addresses, to be screened and interviewed by home visits. For the Argentine, Y. Rubel reported on plans to limit the sample primarily to areas of Buenos Aires with high Jewish concentration. The primary framework will be Jewish communal lists (schools and institutions) to be supplemented by electoral lists (with DJN) and snowballing techniques. Manual matching will be used to eliminate duplication.

While sampling will obviously differ considerably between countries due to differences in survey practice, availability of frameworks, cost structure, social mores, etc., there are some common underlying factors. Overall there was general agreement that, as far as possible, complete coverage of the whole Jewish population (including those only marginally attached to the community) by a probability sample should be aimed at. In general a combination of frameworks (community lists, area sampling, RDD, etc.), of sampling methods (DJN stratification, areal clustering etc.) and of methods of investigation (telephone, home visit or mail) may be used.

In order to share experience and expertise it was agreed to set up a Technical Advisory sub-committee on Sampling (TASS) as a clearing-house of information on methodology. The sub-committee would attempt to set up a bibliography and, possibly, a methodological handbook.

Finally, the question of representing countries and regions with small Jewish communities was raised. While every effort must be made to encourage separate surveys in each country, it seems likely that many countries with small communities will be unable to do so. In this case, the responsibility of a regional survey covering several countries with similar characteristics should be considered. While samples for each country will not be sufficient for separate design-based analysis, the possibilities of using model-based small-area estimates should be investigated.

Session on Sponsorship and Data Processing  
Monday, December 19, 1988

Chairman: Sergio DellaPergola

The issue of sponsorship of the 1990 survey was first briefly discussed at the global level. A positive attitude was noted on the part of the government of Israel, the World Zionist Organization, the Jewish Agency and the World Jewish Congress. Response of leaders, professionals and laymen to the first issue of Jewish Population Prospects was very favorable. This indicates there is a growing awareness of the need for a major Jewish population survey. The effort must be continued to increase this awareness among the Jewish public and leadership.

Most of the discussion consisted of a review of sponsorship and organization of future surveys in each of the major relevant countries. Different strategies must be devised in the fundraising effort, on the one hand, and in the presentation to the public of the questionnaire and survey methodology, on the other, whose prime requirement will be scientific credibility. Combinations of different Jewish and academic, local, national, international and Israeli institutions as sponsors should be created, as most appropriate to each case.

Support of the main Jewish leadership, including religious leaders, must be secured. Adequate means of public relations and publicity should accompany the research effort, particularly during data collection.

Confidentiality of the information collected is a key issue deserving careful consideration, especially in view of experiences in the past.

A further topic discussed, though in a very preliminary form, was the future rules for control and dissemination of data of the 1990 survey. Such rules should parallel those of data collection by government or other large public agencies.

Finally, the input of data for community planning was briefly reviewed. Research design and contents should take into account from the beginning the needs of Jewish community planning. This will provide greater legitimacy to the survey in the quest for leadership support. The need was also noted to educate the planners to use more intensively the available data resources.



Session on Data Collection  
Tuesday, December 20, 1988

Chairman: Paul Ritterband

P. Ritterband said that the subject of data collection should be regarded in a broader perspective including two other topics on the agenda, namely "International Comparability of Data" and "The Cost of Surveys". He asked the participants from the U.S. to raise some points concerning recent data collection by means of telephone surveys.

S. Goldstein mentioned some of the advantages in using telephone queries as a means of data collection (in the U.S.):

- a) It is possible for big institutions like universities to make a special deal with telephone companies in order to receive a significant discount on long-distance calls (provided there is a sufficiently large number of calls);
- b) The time difference between the East and West coasts in the U.S. enables interviewers to make calls during their normal working hours and still get people in the evening.

The CATI System (Computer Assisted Telephone Interview), which has recently become very popular in commercial firms and marketing research companies, provides several outstanding advantages which cannot be obtained in face-to-face interviews or other more "traditional" methods of data collection.

- a) Coding and punching of data is done by the interviewer himself simultaneously at the time of the interview.
- b) It enables control and monitoring of interviewers.
- c) It enables automatic control of the "skipping structure" in the questionnaire.
- d) Quick processing and tabulation of data within a few days after the interview.

S. Goldstein expressed his satisfaction with the survey company he worked with in Rhode Island and pointed out that the publication of the research report appeared within one year after starting data collection. He also mentioned the high level of cooperation on the part of the interviewees in Rhode Island.

There are three stages in such interviews - the screening, tracking and interviewing itself. There is a lengthy gap between the first and final stages (up to one year). Approximately 5% of the interviewees are "lost" between the first and final stages.

The national Jewish survey in the U.S. will be conducted according to the CATI method. B. Kosmin explained that potentially eligible households will be tracked over a period of one year through the routine weekly telephone survey conducted by one of the

specialized commercial companies. An estimated 3-3.5% of the US households will be eligible, based on the broadest possible definition of the "enlarged Jewish population". The cost of posing one question to 1,000 interviewees in a routine telephone survey is \$750. From this one question it is possible to make a basic tabulation of eligible households, by age, sex and geographical distribution. The CJF and the NAJDB are in the process of negotiations with 3 companies, two of which conduct 1,000 interviews per week (52 rounds per year), while the third conducts 2 rounds of 1,000 interviews each. They mostly interview over the week-end. We have to take into account the need to conduct interviews with religious Jews during the week, a fact which adds to the overall price.

Only after completion of this tracking stage, will the actual interviewing of the 2,000-2,500 eligible households begin.

E. Cohen described the survey he conducted earlier this year in France, based on face-to-face interviews (after first fixing an appointed time). He sees advantages in this system in that it enables the interviewer to gather a more concrete impression of the interviewees and their attitudes to matters of day-to-day Jewish life, e.g. placement of mezzuzah, Hanukkah menorah, etc. The country was divided into several regions, each with a supervisor who also checked the questionnaires upon receipt.

There are other countries in which the CATI system may be available for use. S. DellaPergola mentioned a company (in Basel) which specializes in telephone interviews. He also pointed out that the two methods of data collection (conventional and computer assisted) may be used in tandem in certain circumstances. The method of data collection should be adapted to the basic sociocultural characteristics of the interviewees (provided the latter are known in advance).

In the New York and Rhode Island surveys, the interviewers were not uniformly Jewish; in New York, however, they in all cases presented themselves as such. In Rhode Island the interviewers were taught some relevant Hebrew/Jewish terms in order to equip them for the task. In New York the response from Haredim was very positive, after co-ordination in advance with the relevant haredi institutions. It is possible that the Jewish organizations and institutions would prefer that the interviewers indeed be Jewish.

Session on Comparability of Data  
Tuesday, December 20, 1988

Chairman: Uziel O. Schmelz

Comparability

The data of each of the various national (or else local or regional) studies that together will constitute the Survey of World Jewry should, in principle, be doubly comparable:

- a. with the other Jewish studies in the Survey;
- b. with the official population census of each country in question.

These two targets may not always be easily reconcilable, because of differences in national census practices (despite existing international recommendations by UNO and other bodies) or because of differences in the situation and institutional terminology of the widely scattered Jewish communities. Yet, serious efforts should be made in this direction, since the global synthesizability of the various studies will depend on the comparability of their respective data.

Standardization

To this end, standardization should be practiced, insofar as possible, with regard to the core questionnaire and any international modules that will be drawn up. Standardization will relate to contents, definitions of concepts, classifications, eventual computer format, etc. Specific interests in countries or localities shall be served by additional questions and particular modules.

Persons to be studied

A matter of particular importance that received a good deal of attention in the discussion at this session is which persons are to be included in the studies. The respective recommendations are as follows:

a. The data collection - i.e., screening for "Jews" amongst the general population and actual interviewing - should be widely devised. It should encompass, as far as possible, the following categories:

1) Persons who declare themselves to currently be Jews - allowing for subdivisions as to whether the parents were Jewish; in the negative case, whether a formal conversion took place; and how the person conceives his/her Jewishness (in religious or other terms). Care should be taken not to exclude those who claim to be Jews for other than religious reasons.

2) Persons who currently are not Jews but were raised/born as such or at least one of whose parents was a Jew.

3) All the non-Jewish household members of any person according to 1 and 2. This is necessary inter alia for the study of out-marriage and the off-spring of such unions.

b. In the analysis, different scopes of the Jewish population - "actual" (a.1), "extended" (a.1-2), "enlarged" (a.1-3) - should be clearly distinguished.

c. The count of actual Jews should relate only to a.1.

Any departure from these recommendations (e.g., if data collection were to be exclusively based on communal lists) should be reported so that it can be taken into account in international comparisons.

### International data files

Comparability is necessary for building up meaningful international data files:

a. The individual data file, eventually encompassing the data of all the interview studies that will be accomplished.

b. The aggregate data file, which will contain:

1) the core information of all the interview studies;

2) data on Jews from official population censuses taken around 1990, especially for countries where no Jewish-organized study will be possible;

3) supplementations for such countries where neither 1 nor 2 are available.

The figures according to b.1-3 will be manipulated, where necessary, in such a way as to relate to a common date.

The aggregative data file should serve not only for global cross-sections but also for demographic projections. It could be updated - in part conjecturally - at suitable intervals until a second World Survey will be taken (hopefully around year 2000).

Session on Cost of Survey  
Tuesday, December 20, 1988

Chairman: Barry Kosmin

In order to calculate the cost of a survey, one must discuss both the technology and manpower expenses. It is important to take into account publication costs as well. The problem of defining costs was faced at the outset. Do we fix them in U.S. dollars or should we index them in some way to the realities of national pay rates etc?

Obviously, the cost of a survey can differ considerably between various countries and communities, since it is a function of many different factors which must be taken into consideration. What is paid for in cash and what is donated or volunteered is another problem faced in budgeting. Costs of data collection vary regionally in the U.S.A. Screening to locate a Jewish household can cost from \$0.80 to \$3.00 a call, while interviewing costs can range from \$12-\$50. Sample size may be influenced by the cost of each interview.

A great effort must be made to reduce the cost of the surveys. Several methods were suggested, such as: contributions from commercial companies in terms of free computer time, use of local Jewish community facilities, making contact with universities and other research institutions to take part in collecting the data (by granting students scholarships) and/or by using graduate and research students for analyzing data on an academic level. Only basic results will be provided by the commercial companies.

Some of the participants detailed current survey costs. S. Goldstein reported on the Rhode Island survey in which \$25 was paid for each of the 1,200 Jewish household interviews (including the tape) and \$5 for each of the 500 non-Jewish households interviews. In South Africa a quotation of \$15-\$20 per interview was given. An overall cost of \$80,000 for 2,000, one hour face-to-face interview were quoted. S. DellaPergola told of an estimated cost for an Australian survey of \$90,000 for 2 years' scientific director's salary, \$125,000 for 2,500 interviews and an additional \$50,000 for travel and other expenses, totaling \$265,000. In France (as reported by E. Cohen) between 30-40% of the face-to-face interviews in the 1988 survey were paid through scholarships rather than as salaries. A total cost of \$75,000 was spent on all stages of the survey (n=1,113) up to processing the data. In Argentina, according to Y. Rubel, the all-inclusive cost of one completed questionnaire could be around \$15-20.

The overall problem was to determine the fixed costs of the surveys, e.g. R&D, training and pretest from variable costs which related to the research design. The research design chosen affects costings. Quality control is also a cost. Investment and opportunity

costs or development costs in coaxing a community to the stage where it is ready to pay for a survey also need to be considered. Publicity costs to ensure a good response rate can also be seen as a publicity or informational bonus for the sponsors, so allocating this charge can vary.

National costs can be looked at in two ways. One is per unit interviewed, i.e. cost of study/size of sample. The second way is cost of study/size of national Jewish community.

One way to minimize R&D costs is to produce modules in one place for wider use. Canada was suggested as a testing ground for an Identity module as well as for Francophone- and Sephardi-oriented questions.

Supplementary Consultations  
Wednesday, December 21, 1988

Chairman: Sidney Goldstein

The participants reviewed together the U.S. "core questionnaire", and several basic issues were discussed. The chairman asked the participants from the various countries to prepare a list of suggestions on this topic. The following suggestions were presented:

- 1) 2 questions should be added:
  - a) citizenship
  - b) voter registration (excluding the U.S.)
- 2) Exact specification of parents' country of birth (Q. 16, 17)
- 3) In France, and other countries outside U.S. the question on religion should be asked in terms of identification.
- 4) To distinguish between religious and civil marriage/divorce
- 5) Q.35 should be addressed to persons aged 65+ only as an optional question
- 6) Labor force participation not to be limited only to last week, but rather to the broader period of one year. Both approaches are used in many censuses concurrently. The wider one seems better suited for the purposes of a Jewish survey, which is interested in an overall picture rather than in the study of seasonal employment/unemployment.
- 7) (After Q.40) "What type of work or occupation did you have 5 years ago?"
- 8) "Where did you live 5 years ago?"
- 9) "What is your current address?" (After Q.55)
- 10) Question related to Jewish education of children who are no longer at home
- 11) Sephardi/Ashkenazi
- 12) Religious mobility
- 13) Do you go to the mikve? (addressed to married women)
- 14) how do you define your Jewishness?
- 15) Q.96 to Q.101 should be answered by "Yes" or "No"
- 16) A question on non-Jewish religious education (currently) attended should be introduced for children of mixed-married couples
- 17) Christmas tree as optional question
- 18) The chairman asked the participants to send their suggestions to add a question concerning knowledge of Hebrew and prayers
- 19) Q.95 to change to "How many times do you...."
- 20) Q.104, Do you fast on other fast days excluding Yom Kippur?
- 21) When did you last visit Israel?

On this latter topic, R. Baron of the Israeli Ministry of Tourism presented a proposal of a module of questions. Other possible modules being considered in the U.S. concern: Jewish identity

(prepared by Steven Cohen), Jewish education (prepared by Harold Himmelfarb), marriage and fertility, Jewish community services (prepared by Peter Friedman), and philanthropy (prepared by Norbert Fruehauf).



Session on Non-Survey Data  
Wednesday, December 21, 1988

Chairman: Peter Freedman

Since the constitutions of several countries, such as the United States and France, call for separation of church and state, and thereby prevent the federal government from inquiring into matters of creed, Jews are not distinguished as such in the decennial population census, nor in current surveys and vital statistics. Therefore, records of vital events such as births, deaths and marriages must be listed within the local communities.

The following reports and comments were pointed out: in England there are Jewish vital statistics on religious marriages and divorces; male births, deaths, and pupils participating in Jewish education. Current research emphasizes marital status cycle, age and births according to list of circumcizers. Recently an effort has been made to collect data on mixed marriages.

In Argentina, starting in 1985, vital statistics on pupils in Jewish educational institutions (in Buenos Aires) have been available. Beginning in 1989 additional data concerning births, deaths and marriages will be collected, first in Buenos Aires and later on in other Jewish communities. 3,000 Jewish households in one Buenos Aires' neighborhood were interviewed and data relating to family composition, affiliation and education given to children up to the age of 24, were collected. The future plan is to enlarge it to all the "Ashkenazi" community.

U. Schmelz mentioned that data on some socio-demographic characteristics on "Olim" can be provided by the Israel Bureau of Statistics.

Finally, R. Bachi encouraged submission of papers on vital statistics for the 10<sup>th</sup> World Jewish Congress which will be held in August 1989 in Jerusalem.

Closing Session  
Wednesday, December 21, 1988

The closing session was attended by senior members of the World Zionist direction, the faculty of the Hebrew University, and the direction of the Central Bureau of Statistics, as well as by all participants in the ISAC meeting. Concluding remarks were made by:

Roberto Bachi, The Hebrew University  
Sidney Goldstein, Brown University  
Rabbi Joe Wernik, The World Zionist Organization

They reviewed the discussions of the first ISAC meeting, the emerging prospects of research and the challenges to be tackled, the implications of research for Jewish community planning, and the educational process that should be the essential outcome of research in the years ahead.

Resolution

The International Scientific Advisory Committee (ISAC)  
for the 1990 World Jewish Population Surveys  
Convened in Jerusalem for its First Meeting  
December 18-21, 1988

Discussed fully all phases of survey design and planning related to:

- a) undertaking national surveys as part of the 1990 world round of surveys;
- b) developing standardized procedures - and instruments for data collection, sampling, tabulation and analysis to insure maximum comparability
  1. among the national studies and
  2. between the national Jewish studies and the respective national censuses.

Agreed that the social and demographic changes currently affecting the size and characteristics of the Jewish population in Israel and the Diaspora have serious implications for the future vitality of the respective communities and for world Jewry, and urgently require careful, scientific evaluation as the basis for sound policy formation and community planning.

Noted with satisfaction the strong cooperation already manifested at this meeting of ISAC and the strong interest in extending such cooperation through various activities, such as training, exchange of information, mutual assistance and sharing of data.

Noted with satisfaction the great progress made in the U.S. toward development of a core questionnaire and toward initiation of a national survey in Spring 1990 and the value which development of such survey instruments and procedures may have for other national and regional groups planning surveys for the 1990 round.

Agreed on the feasibility and strong desirability of a round of national surveys, relying on a highly standardized core questionnaire, a sampling design to insure maximum coverage to the Jewish population, and tabulations and analytic procedures to provide maximum comparability.

Agreed, also, on the strong need to coordinate such national efforts on a continuing basis through the facilities and good offices of the Organization Department of WZO and the Institute of Contemporary Jewry and other bodies, and through direct contacts among the participating national groups and representatives. ISAC was pleased to note the publication of the first issue of Jewish Population Prospects (JPP) and the widely favorable reaction to it. It urges publication of JPP on a regular basis and that every effort

be made to arrange through regional Jewish organizations for translation of each issue into Hebrew, French and Spanish versions.

Recognizing that further progress in a number of national communities requires very urgently financial support for participation in the 1990 survey round, ISAC strongly recommends that central and national Jewish institutions provide essential funding for such purpose. Without such funding, the plans already proposed and adopted for a 1990 World round of Surveys will be seriously endangered. With proper support, major progress can be made in the next few years in providing a careful assessment of the social and demographic situation characterizing World Jewry as the basis for developing policies for strengthening the various communities.

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