Demographic and Attitudinal Survey of the Jewish Population of New Mexico

January 15, 2015
Introduction

• Research goals
  • How Jews in New Mexico identify as being Jewish, including denomination and upbringing
  • Attitudes regarding the importance of being Jewish and participating in the Jewish community
  • Level of Jewish practice, including religious and community involvement
  • Demographic characteristics

→ Ultimately, the purpose of the project is to support strategic planning for strengthening the Jewish community in New Mexico.
Methodology

• Telephone calls to a “random” sample of surname/geography targeted individuals
  • 4,012 individuals on the list, 90 completes

• JFNМ/partner provided lists of 5,052 emails/phones yielded 152 completes by phone, 484 via email

• Publicized a link to the survey website, resulting in 665 completes

• Paper surveys were distributed, resulting in 300 additional completes
Methodology

- The total sample of 1,691 has a margin of error of +2.4% at the 95% confidence level
  - Subgroups carry higher margins of error

- Data collected September 2-November 3, 2014

- Results have been weighted to reflect the distribution by gender of the population and by the distribution by age of Jews in New Mexico as estimated by Brandeis

- According to the Brandeis estimates of Jewish NM population, this corresponds to a 7% response
Screening: Phone Survey

- Warm-up question (age)

- Present religion $\rightarrow$ Jewish by Religion (87% of our survey, vs. 78% of the Pew survey)

- Consider self Jewish (apart from Messianic) $\rightarrow$ Jews of No Religion (1% for our survey, 12% of Pew)

- Jewish parent or raised Jewish $\rightarrow$ Jews by Background (12% of our survey, 10% of Pew)

- Crypto-Jews (4% of all Jews in our survey)
Overview

- Much older population than the national Jewish population

- 87% of Jews in NM are from out of State; 40% have been here more than 20 years

- Relatively solid levels of “importance of being Jewish,” “attachment to Israel;” high levels of Seder attendance, donation to Jewish charities
  - Softer “importance of Jewish community” results
Denomination and Upbringing
Q6. Thinking about Jewish religious denominations, do you consider yourself to be…?
Denomination – Current vs. Raised

• One-third (33%) were raised Reform, 29% were raised Conservative, 13% were not raised Jewish, and 7% were raised Orthodox (less than 1% was raised Chabad), while 8% were raised with “no denomination” and 6% said “another denomination.”
  • Nationally, 29% say Reform, 26% Conservative, 14% Orthodox and 17% “none.”
  • Those age 65+ were much more likely to have been raised in an Orthodox household than those 55-64 or younger, while those age 35-54 were more likely to be raised Reform. Those 18-44 are more likely not to have been raised Jewish.
Other Issues

- Denomination Switching
  - 20% of those raised Orthodox/Chabad are Orthodox/Chabad today, 35% of those raised Conservative are still Conservative and 71% of those raised Reform are still Reform

- Conversion
  - Among the 13% who report that they “were not raised Jewish,” two-thirds (65%) have had a formal conversion to Judaism, and 34% say they have not
  - Among those who report that they did have a formal conversion to Judaism, 62% say they had a conversion through the Reform movement, 24% say Conservative, 6% say Orthodox (and another 2% say Chabad), and 6% say Reconstructionist (5%) or Renewal (1%)
  - Those who were not raised Jewish are typically Reform (45%), followed by Conservative (20%) and Renewal/Reconstructionist (6%) and Orthodox/Chabad (5%) (and another 20% say “none” or “other”)

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Two-thirds of Jews in New Mexico report that they were in a formal Jewish education program when they were growing up, ‘such as Jewish Day School, Hebrew school or Sunday school.’

Those most likely to say they grew up with some formal Jewish education include those over the age of 45 (and particularly those over 65) and those who were not born in New Mexico.
Attitudes
The majority of New Mexico Jews say that ‘being Jewish’ is “very important” in their life, with another 31% saying it is “somewhat” important to them.

Nationally, 46% say being Jewish is “very important,” 34% say “somewhat” and 20% say “not too/not at all” important.

Orthodox/Chabad and Conservative Jews are more likely to say “very important,” as are members of a synagogue (though we would point out that 41% of those who are not members say “very important”).

Q10. How important is being Jewish in your life?
Two-in-five New Mexico Jews (40%) say that being ‘involved in the Jewish community’ is “very important” to them, with another 38% saying it is “somewhat” important to them.

We see a similar trend, with Orthodox/Chabad and Conservative Jews (and Reconstructionist/Renewal Jews as well) saying “very important.” There is an even more pronounced gap on this question between those who are members of a synagogue and those who are not.
"Three thousand years of beautiful tradition from Moses to Sandy Koufax"
"I live in a small ranching community in Northern NM... I don't know any Jews here and I don't advertise... things being what they are..."
"I live in rural NM. The closest Jewish community is 60 miles away. That is too far for us to travel for community"
"Want my kids to connect with my culture"
"Want kids raised Jewish"
"There don't seem to be many opportunities to connect."
"I am culturally Jewish, not religiously Jewish; I don't always participate in the Jewish community because I am not religiously Jewish."
"It depends on the character of the local Jewish community. There's diversity in American Jewish culture--sometimes I identify, sometimes I feel alienated."
"Although I feel very Jewish, I was raised in a home that wasn't observant and we never belonged to a synagogue or temple."

“I feel like a Jew culturally but not at all religiously. I don't believe in God and have no interest in belonging to a temple.”

"I am an observant Jew who believes that unless you are involved there is no community & unless you are one of the bricks, there is no building."

"As a convert, it's very important to be connected to a shul to help cultivate and strengthen my growth in Judaism."

“Just found out one of my parents has an auto-immune decease. Was contacted by a Jewish historian and found out thru DNA testing and ancestral tracing that there was definitely a connection to crypto-Jews”

“Getting closer to my roots and raising my children with the knowledge that our ancestors were crypto Jews”
Q25. How many of your close friends are Jewish?

- About one-quarter (28%) say “all” (3%) or “most” (25%) of their close friends are Jewish, while 51% say that “some” are Jewish and 20% say “hardly any” (17%) or “none” (3%).
- Nationally, 32% say “all/most,” 46% say “some” and 21% say “hardly any/none.”
- Those 18-34 are considerably more likely to say “none,” while those over 65 are more likely to say “all/most.” Those who are not members of a synagogue are less likely to say “all/most.”
- A higher proportion of those living in “Other Counties” say “hardly any/none,” while few Jews in Santa Fe tend to say “hardly any/none.”
Three-quarters feel attachment to Israel, including 40% who are “very attached” and 38% who are “somewhat attached.”

- Nationally, 30% say “very attached,” 39% say “somewhat attached” and 33% say “not very/not at all.”
- Members of a synagogue are more likely to say “very attached,” as are Orthodox/Chabad Jews and Conservative Jews.
- Younger Jews, as well as Renewal/Reconstructionist Jews and those who say “no” or “another” denomination, are more likely to say “not very/not at all attached.”

Q27. How emotionally attached are you to Israel?
Engagement
Synagogue Membership

- A majority of Jews in New Mexico say someone in their household is ‘a member of a synagogue or temple,’ and another 3% say they are a ‘member of an independent Havurah or minyan,’ while 4% say ‘there is no synagogue available nearby.’
  - Nationally, 39% overall report being members of a synagogue (with 47% saying as such among “Jews by Religion” in the Pew survey).
  - Those with children and Orthodox/Chabad Jews are most likely to belong to a synagogue, while those who say “none” or “another” denomination are considerably less likely to do so.
  - Jews outside Bernalillo/Sandoval and Santa Fe are more likely to report “no synagogue nearby.”
  - Jews under the age of 35 are much less likely than those over age 35 to be member.

Q13. Is anyone in your household currently a member of a synagogue or temple, or not?
• New Mexico’s Jews attend religious services “a few times a year” (34%) and 24% attend “once or twice a month.” One-in-ten (12%) attend “weekly” (8%) or “more than once a week” (4%), while 16% attend “seldom” and 12% “never” attend.
• Orthodox/Chabad are much more likely to say they attend services at least weekly, while Conservative and Renewal/Reconstructionist Jews are more likely to say they attend at least a few times a month.

Q15. Aside from special occasions like weddings, funerals and bar mitzvahs, how often do you attend Jewish religious services at a synagogue, temple minyan or havurah?
Jews in New Mexico are about equally divided on the importance of ‘spirituality and prayer’ in a formal or informal setting, with one-third (33%) saying these are “very important” to them, 37% saying “somewhat important,” and 30% saying these are “not too important” (18%) or “not at all important” to them (12%).

Orthodox/Chabad Jews are most likely to say “very important,” followed by Renewal/Reconstructionist Jews; those with “no” or “another” denomination are most likely to say “not too/not at all important.”

Those age 18-44, as well as those 55-64, are most likely to say “very important,” while those age 65 or greater are most likely to say “not too/not at all important.” Those outside of Bernalillo/Sandoval and Santa Fe are most likely to say “very important.”
Pray in Hebrew

• A majority of New Mexico’s Jews can ‘read or sing along’ during a Hebrew prayer service (56%), while 28% can follow along partially and 17% say they cannot.
  • Those who are Orthodox/Chabad and Conservative are most likely to say “yes,” as are those who are a member of a synagogue.

Q17. Can you read or sing along in Hebrew during a prayer service?
A strong majority (79%) attended a Seder last year, while one-in-five (17%) report that they had a Christmas tree.

- Nationally, 70% attended Seder, and 32% had a Christmas tree.
- Orthodox/Chabad and Conservative Jews are most likely to have attended a Seder, as are those under the age of 44, those with children and natives of New Mexico.
- Those most likely to have had a Christmas tree include those who say they have “no” or “another” denomination, those who are not members of a synagogue, those under the age of 54, those with children and natives of New Mexico.

Q23. Last Passover, did you hold or attend a Seder?
Q24. Last Christmas, did your household have a Christmas tree?
Up to one-third of Jews in New Mexico say they are a member or otherwise participate in the activities, programs or meetings of a Jewish organization. Keep in mind that percentages add to more than 100 because individuals could choose multiple responses.

Q18. Is anyone in your household currently a member of any of the following Jewish organizations or does anyone participate in their activities, programs or meetings?
Two-thirds (69%) donate to a Jewish charity or organization, 61% attend or participate in ‘other formal or informal Jewish groups, activities or gatherings’ and 60% donate or are a member of ‘a secular organization.’

Nationally, 56% donate to Jewish charities (67% among Jews by Religion).

Q19. Does anyone in your household donate to any Jewish charities or organizations?
Q20. Does anyone in your household attend or participate in other formal or informal Jewish groups, activities or gatherings?
“Engagement” Summary

- Those most likely to donate to Jewish charities include Orthodox/Chabad and Conservative Jews, those who are members of a synagogue, those over the age of 55, those who are natives of New Mexico and those who have been in New Mexico for over 20 years.

- Those more likely to participate in Jewish activities/groups include Orthodox/Chabad and Reconstructionist/Renewal Jews, synagogue members, those <44 and those with children.

- Those most likely to participate in secular organizations include Renewal/Reconstructionist Jews, synagogue members and those who have been in NM for over 20 years.

Q19. Does anyone in your household donate to any Jewish charities or organizations?
Q20. Does anyone in your household attend or participate in other formal or informal Jewish groups, activities or gatherings?
Among the 60% who say they donate to or participate in a non-Jewish or secular organization, three-quarters (79%) say they support a charitable/social services organization, while 53% say they attend events/festivals/concerts. One-quarter support animal shelters/rescues and a similar percentage participate in walks/runs for a cause.

Q21. Does anyone in your household donate or is anyone a member of a non-Jewish or secular organization or does anyone participate in the activities, programs, or meetings of a non-Jewish or secular organization? Q22. IF YES, ONLINE ONLY: Which organizations, groups or activities? Please choose all that apply:
The New Mexico Jewish Link is read by 39% of Jews in New Mexico, with other periodicals being read by 10%-20%. One-third (33%) say “none.”

Q28. Do you regularly read news in any of the following Jewish newspaper or a periodicals, or do you get this information from another source?
About one-third (36%) have no preference whether they read the news (generally speaking) online or in print, while 35% prefer reading online and 27% prefer reading it in print.

- Those most likely to say they prefer to read news online include those under age 44 and those with children.
- Those most likely to say they prefer print include those over age 55 and those who have been in New Mexico for over 20 years.

Q29. Do you prefer to read the news (in general) in print, online or about the same?
Fully 87% of Jews in New Mexico report that they moved to New Mexico, while 12% report that they were born in New Mexico.

- Those more likely to live in New Mexico for less than five years include Conservative Jews, non-members of a synagogue, those age 18-34, those without children and those who are unmarried.
- Those who have been in New Mexico for 6-20 years are more likely to include Orthodox/Chabad Jews, those age 35-54 and those with children.
- Those in New Mexico 20 years+ include Renewal/Reconstructionist Jews, members of a synagogue, those age 55+ and those with no children.

Q30. Were you born in New Mexico, or did you move here?
Q31. How long have you lived in New Mexico? Q32. From where did you move to New Mexico?
We also see that 72% of Jews in New Mexico are planning to remain in New Mexico for the foreseeable future, while 17% are considering moving away in the next few years and 11% are unsure of their plans. Those most likely to say they are considering moving or are unsure include Orthodox/Chabad Jews, those age 18-34, those who are unmarried and those who have been in New Mexico for less than 6 years.
A majority (59%) of Jews in New Mexico are married, while 15% have never been married, 13% have been divorced, 6% are living with a partner and 5% are widowers.

Q34. Are you currently married, living with a partner, divorced, separated, widowed, or have you never been married?
Q35. IF MARRIED: And does your spouse or partner consider themselves Jewish, in terms of religion, culture or background?
Q36. IF JEWISH: Was your spouse raised Jewish or did they convert to Judaism?
Marital Status

- Nearly two-thirds of those who are married (63%) say their spouse or partner is Jewish, while 34% say their spouse is not; another 3% say they are unsure/prefer not to say.
  - Furthermore, 70% of those who are married to someone Jewish say their spouse was raised Jewish, while 22% say their spouse converted (and 7% say “other” or “not sure”).
  - Those most likely to be married to someone raised Jewish include Orthodox/Chabad and Conservative Jews, synagogue members, those 65+ and those in NM for 10 years or less.
  - Those most likely to be married to a non-Jew include Renewal/Reconstructionist and “no” or “other” denomination, those who are not members of a synagogue, those in NM for over 10 years and women (while men are more likely to be married to someone who converted).

Q34. Are you currently married, living with a partner, divorced, separated, widowed, or have you never been married?
Q35. IF MARRIED: And does your spouse or partner consider themselves Jewish, in terms of religion, culture or background?
Q36. IF JEWISH: Was your spouse raised Jewish or did they convert to Judaism?
Children Under 18

- Overall, 26% of Jews in New Mexico have children under the age of 18 in their household.
  - Nationally, 33% report having children under the age of 18.
  - A majority of Jews in New Mexico with children between the ages of 2-18 (56%) say that they have a child currently participating in a formal Jewish education program, while 44% say they do not.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Oldest child</th>
<th>2nd oldest child</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;2</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-5</td>
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<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-9</td>
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<td>10-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-18</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17</td>
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Q37. Do you currently have any children under the age of 18 living in your household?
Q38. ASK FOR EACH CHILD: How old is the oldest child? And the next oldest?
Q39. Do any of your children currently participate in a formal Jewish educational program, such as Jewish Day school, Hebrew School or Sunday school?
A majority of New Mexico’s Jewish population lives in Bernalillo County (55%), with another 6% in Sandoval County. Another 23% reside in Santa Fe County, while 6% are in Doña Ana County and 3% are in Taos County.

We found at least 1 individual (between .1%-1% of the total of the survey) in Catron, Cibola, Colfax, Curry, Eddy, Grant, Lea, Lincoln, Luna, McKinley, Mora, Otero, Rio Arriba, Roosevelt, San Juan, Socorro, Sierra, Torrance, Union, Valencia.
## Other Demographics

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<tr>
<th>Education</th>
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<tr>
<td>HS Graduate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two year degree</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<td>Four year degree</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate or professional degree</td>
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<th>Race/Ethnic Background</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>Hispanic</td>
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<td>Multi-racial</td>
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<td>$20-$49,999</td>
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<tr>
<td>$50-$74,999</td>
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<td>$150,000 or more</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Consider self “Hispanic, Latino or of Spanish Origin”</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>94%</td>
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Conclusions & Next Steps
Conclusions: Challenges

• Younger Jews feeling disengaged, wanting to leave NM
  • Orthodox/Chabad communities

• Older Jews who do not feel the need for “spirituality and prayer”
  • Many came to retire, the “Jewish community” is what they did in their previous life
  • Exception seems to be Renewal/Reconstructionist movements

• Geographic isolation

• These are in addition to the challenges faced by Jews nationally (falling levels of religiosity generally, high rates of intermarriage, declining attachment to Israel, etc.)
Conclusions: Opportunities

• Importance of spirituality to younger Jews
• Background, upbringing for middle-age/older Jews
  • Need for connection vs. a need for services?
• Involvement in Jewish life, if not in Jewish community (Seder)
• Social, personal connections seem critical
Next Steps

- Publicizing the survey
  - Respondents should get results
- Focus Groups
- Strategic Plan