

THE STATE OF ANTISEMITISM IN AMERICA 2020 SURVEY METHODOLOGY REPORT

Prepared for the American Jewish Committee

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OVERVIEW

In the fall of 2020, the American Jewish Committee (AJC) contracted with SSRS to conduct two surveys of American Attitudes about Antisemitism. One survey would replicate a 2019 AJC Survey of American Jewish Attitudes towards Antisemitism and a second companion survey would ask American adults similar questions regarding antisemitism. Both surveys asked for opinions on the current state of antisemitism in the United States. Respondents were also asked about their own personal experiences or observations of antisemitic incidents. Additionally, topics included the interplay of negative statements about Israel and antisemitism, as well as issues related to the Holocaust. Some questions were asked on only one of the two surveys, and some question wording was altered between the two, these differences are noted in the report.

The **Jewish American** study collected data from a nationally representative sample of 1,334 adults (ages 18 or older) of Jewish religion or background. The survey was conducted from September 9th through October 4th, 2020. The **U.S. adult** study collected data from a nationally representative sample of 1,010 adults ages 18 or older. Data for this companion survey were collected from September 15th through 20th, 2020. All data are weighted to correct for known biases due to sampling and non-response.

This report provides information about the methods used to collect the data and report the survey results.

JEWISH AMERICAN STUDY

Sample Design

The Jewish population is a very low incidence population. In order to obtain the number of interviews needed in a timely manner, SSRS used pre-screened sample from our Omnibus survey, which is a national, weekly dual-frame bilingual telephone survey designed to meet standards of quality associated with custom research studies. For this study, SSRS utilized sample where someone in the household had been identified as Jewish in a previous Omnibus survey. If there was no longer anyone Jewish in the household, the interview was terminated.

Additionally, pre-screened sample for SSRS's probability web panel was utilized. Jewish respondents were identified and asked if they would participate in a phone survey.

Field Preparations, Fielding and Data Processing

The questionnaire was developed by the staff of the American Jewish Committee in consultation with the SSRS project team.

Prior to the field period, SSRS programmed the study into Conformat Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) software. Extensive checking of the program was conducted to assure that skip patterns followed the design of the questionnaire.

The field period for the study was September 9 through October 4, 2020. All interviews were done through the CATI system. The CATI system ensured that questions followed logical skip patterns and that complete dispositions of all call attempts were recorded.

CATI interviewers received both written materials on the survey and formal training. The written materials were provided prior to the beginning of the field period and included an annotated questionnaire that contained information about the goals of the study as well as detailed explanations of why questions were being asked, the meaning and pronunciation of key terms, potential obstacles to be overcome in getting good answers to questions, and respondent problems that could be anticipated ahead of time as well as strategies for addressing the potential problems.

Interviewer training was conducted immediately before the survey was officially launched. Call center supervisors and interviewers were walked through each question from the questionnaire. Interviewers were given instructions to help them maximize response rates and ensure accurate data collection.

Weighting Procedures

The data from this project was weighted to reflect nationally representative estimates of the adult Jewish population. The weighting process takes into account the disproportionate probabilities of household and respondent selection due to the number of separate telephone landlines and cellphones answered by respondents and their households, as well as the probability associated with the random selection of an individual household member.

The base weight was computed differently depending on whether the panelist was recruited from the Omnibus or from ABS.

Omnibus Recruits:

The base weight for the Omnibus recruits (OMNI_BW) was their original base weight. This base weight account for selection probability of telephone numbers along with the overlapping landline and cell frames. And for panelists recruited via landline sample, it also adjusts for different selection probabilities based on the number of adults in the household.

- **Probability of Selection (P_{phone}):** A phone number's probability of selection depends on the number of phone-numbers selected out of the total sample frame. So for each respondent whose household had a landline phone number this was calculated as total landline numbers dialed divided by total numbers in the landline frame and conversely for respondents answering at least one cell phone number, this was calculated as total cell phone numbers divided by total numbers in the cell phone frame.
- **Probability of Respondent selection (P_{select}):** In households reached by landline, a single respondent was selected. Thus, the probability of selection within a household was inversely related to the number of adults in the household.
- **Total Probability of Selection:** This was calculated as the phone number's probability of selection (by frame), and for landlines, divided by the number of adults in the household. Thus,

for each respondent a probability could be calculated for being reached via landline (LL_{prob}) and for being reached via cell phone ($Cell_{prob}$). These calculations are:

$$LL_{prob} = P_{phone} * /P_{select}$$

$$Cell_{prob} = P_{phone}$$

The sample weights derived at this stage are calculated as the inverse of the combined probability of selection, or:

$$1/(LL_{prob} + Cell_{prob} - LL_{prob} * Cell_{prob})$$

ABS Recruits:

The base weight for ABS recruits (ABS_BW) was the product of a sampling weight (ABS_SAMPWT) and a household size adjustment ($ADULTS$). The sampling weight corrected for the disproportionate sample design by adjusting the distribution of ABS panel across the 16 strata to match the distribution of the ABS frame across strata. Then any non-completed interviews were removed.

The sampling weight for the ABS recruits was expressed as

$$ABS_SAMPWT_i = P_i/p_i$$

where P_i is the proportion of the sample frame from in stratum i and p_i is the proportion of completed interviews from in stratum i .

The household size adjustment ($ADULTS$) was simply the number of adults in the household, capped at 3.

The base weight for the ABS recruits was the product of the sampling weight and the household size adjustment.

$$ABS_BW = ABS_SAMPWT \times ADULTS$$

The unadjusted base weight (UBW) was

$$UBW = \begin{cases} OMNI_BW, & \text{cases recruited from SSRS Omnibus} \\ ABS_BW, & \text{cases recruited from ABS sample} \end{cases}$$

The base weights were standardized by recruitment source to produce the standardized base weight (SBW).

$$SBW = \begin{cases} UBW \times n_{OMNI} / \sum_{i \in OMNI} UBW_i, & \text{cases recruited from SSRS Omnibus} \\ UBW \times n_{ABS} / \sum_{i \in ABS} UBW_i, & \text{cases recruited from ABS sample} \end{cases}$$

Post-stratification weighting

The second stage of the weighting balanced the demographic profile of the sample to target population parameters.

To handle missing data among some of the demographic variables we employ a technique called hot decking. Hot deck imputation replaces the missing values of a respondent randomly with another similar respondent without missing data. These are further determined by variables predictive of non-response that are present in the entire file. We use an SPSS macro detailed in 'Goodbye, Listwise Deletion: Presenting Hot Deck Imputation as an Easy and Effective Tool for Handling Missing Data' (Myers, 2011).

Weighting was accomplished using SPSSINC RAKE, an SPSS extension module that simultaneously balances the distributions of all variables using the GENLOG procedure. The sample was balanced to match estimates of the Jewish population determined from 2 years of data collected through our SSRS Omnibus. The population parameters used for post-stratification are: age (18-29, 30-49, 50-64, 65+); gender (male, female); Census region (Northeast, North-Central, South, West); Education (less than high school, high school graduate, some college, four-year college or more); race/ethnicity (White non-Hispanic or Other non-Hispanic, Black non-Hispanic, Hispanic); marital status (single, married, other); denomination (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, or other), phone-usage (cell phone only, landline only, both); and internet use (yes, no).

Weights were trimmed at the 1st and 99th percentiles to prevent individual interviews from having too much influence on the final results. The use of these weights in statistical analysis ensures that the demographic characteristics of the sample closely approximate the demographic characteristics of the target population. The following table provides the population parameters, and we added the unweighted and weighted sample distributions after weighting.

Table 1. Weighted and Unweighted Sample Distributions

		Parameter (%)	Unweighted (%)	Weighted (%)
Gender	Male	55.5%	58.2%	56.7%
	Female	44.5%	41.8%	43.3%
Age	18-29	25.4%	12.2%	23.2%
	30-49	30.9%	23.2%	32.5%
	50-64	21.8%	23.8%	21.0%
	65+	21.9%	40.7%	23.3%
Education	Less than High School	5.9%	0.5%	3.0%
	High School Graduate	19.5%	6.6%	18.9%
	Some college/Assoc Degree	19.5%	13.5%	19.2%
	College Graduate	55.1%	79.4%	58.9%
Denomination	Orthodox	10.3%	8.8%	9.4%
	Conservative	11.7%	19.3%	12.6%
	Reform	25.8%	37.1%	28.1%
	Other	52.1%	34.7%	49.9%
Region	Northeast	35.2%	39.1%	33.3%
	North Central	13.8%	12.9%	15.3%
	South	27.7%	23.8%	26.5%
	West	23.3%	24.3%	25.0%
Marital Status	Single/Other	47.5%	44.7%	47.3%
	Married	52.5%	55.3%	52.7%
Race	Whites and Other	86.4%	96.7%	91.4%
	Blacks	4.9%	0.2%	1.6%
	Hispanic	8.7%	3.1%	7.0%
Phone Status	Cell Phone Only	46.1%	38.8%	45.3%
	Dual Frame	50.5%	58.7%	51.5%
	Landline Only	3.4%	2.5%	3.1%

Effects of Sample Design on Statistical Inference

Specialized sampling designs and post-data collection statistical adjustments require analysis procedures that reflect departures from simple random sampling. SSRS calculates the effects of these design features so that an appropriate adjustment can be incorporated into tests of statistical significance when using these data. The so-called "design effect" or *deff* represents the loss in statistical efficiency that results from a disproportionate sample design and systematic non-response.

The total sample design effect for this survey was 2.43.

SSRS calculates the composite design effect for a sample of size n , with each case having a weight, w as:

$$deff = \frac{n \sum w^2}{(\sum w)^2}$$

In a wide range of situations, the adjusted standard error of a statistic should be calculated by multiplying the usual formula by the square root of the design effect (\sqrt{deff}). Thus, the formula for computing the 95% confidence interval around a percentage is:

$$\hat{p} \pm 1.96 \sqrt{\frac{deff \times \hat{p}(1 - \hat{p})}{n}}$$

where \hat{p} is the sample estimate and n is the unweighted number cases in the group being considered.

The formula for computing the 95 percent confidence interval around the difference between two percentages, p_1 and p_2 , of sizes n_1 and n_2 , is:

$$(\hat{p}_1 - \hat{p}_2) \pm 1.96 \sqrt{\frac{deff_1 \times \hat{p}_1(1 - \hat{p}_1)}{n_1} + \frac{deff_2 \times \hat{p}_2(1 - \hat{p}_2)}{n_2}}$$

where \hat{p}_1 is the estimate of p_1 , \hat{p}_2 is the estimate of p_2 , and $deff_1$ and $deff_2$ are the design effects for each group.

The survey's margin of error is the largest 95% confidence interval for any estimated proportion based on the total sample—one around 50%. For example, the margin of error for the total sample is ± 4.2 percentage points. This means that in 95 out of every 100 samples using the same methodology, estimated proportions based on the entire sample will be no more than 4.2 percentage points away from their true values in the population. It is important to remember that sampling fluctuations are only one possible source of error in a survey estimate. Other sources, such as measurement error, may contribute additional error of greater or lesser magnitude.

Response Rate

The response rates for this study were calculated using AAPOR's RR3. The overall response rate was 28.5%. The landline and cell components had response rates of 24.3% and 31.8%, respectively.¹ Table 2 gives a detailed account of final sample dispositions for the principal study.

Table 2. Sample Dispositions

	Landline	Cell	Total
Eligible, Interview (Category 1)			
Complete	519	815	1334
Eligible, non-interview			
Refusal and breakoff	563	39	602
Break-off	50	18	
Answering machine	119	0	119
Physically or mentally unable/incompetent	0	0	0
Language problem	6	0	6
Unknown eligibility, non-interview (Category 3)			
Always busy	21	38	59
No answer	886	848	1734
Answering machine don't know if household	345	461	806
Call blocking	82	38	120
Technical phone problems	0	0	0
Housing unit, unknown if eligible respondent	77	768	845
No screener completed	5	81	86
Not eligible (Category 4)			
Fax/data line	27	0	27
Non-working number	271	95	
Business, government office, other organizations	27	44	71
No eligible respondent	40	231	271
Total phone numbers used	3038	3476	6514
Response Rate 3	24.3%	31.8%	28.5%

¹ Note that the response rate for the SSRS omnibus averages about ~9% overall and thus the total response rate would be the product of the original response rate and the study response rate.

U.S. ADULT SURVEY

This **U.S. adult** study was conducted for the American Jewish Committee via telephone by SSRS on its Omnibus survey platform. The SSRS Omnibus is a national, weekly, dual-frame bilingual telephone survey. Interviews were conducted from September 15-20, 2020 among a sample of 1,010 respondents in English (974) and Spanish (36). Telephone interviews were conducted by landline (304) and cell phone (706, including 423 without a landline phone). The margin of error for total respondents is +/-3.68% at the 95% confidence level. All SSRS Omnibus data are weighted to represent the target population.

Table 3: Omnibus Margin of Error

	N	Margin of Error	Design Effect
Total	1,010	+/- 3.68%	1.42

Sample Design

The SSRS Omnibus sample is designed to represent the adult U.S. population. The SSRS Omnibus uses a fully replicated, stratified, single-stage, random-digit-dialing (RDD) sample of landline telephone households, and randomly generated cell phone numbers. Sample telephone numbers are computer-generated and loaded into on-line sample files accessed directly by the computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system.

Respondent Selection

Within each landline household, a single respondent is selected through the following selection process: First, interviewers ask to speak with the youngest adult male/female at home. The term "male" appears first for a randomly selected 30% of the cases and "female" for the other randomly selected 70%. If there are no men/women at home during that time, interviewers ask to speak with the youngest female/male at home.

Cell phones are treated as individual devices and the interview may take place outside the respondent's home; therefore, cell phone interviews are conducted with the person answering the phone.

Field Procedures

Interviewing for each SSRS Omnibus survey is conducted over a six-day period. Each wave of the SSRS Omnibus is composed of two distinct parts. The first is a series of inserts contracted for by various clients; these inserts may range from a single, closed-ended question to a twenty-minute battery of open- and closed-ended questions. The second part of the SSRS Omnibus questionnaire includes standard demographic/classification questions.

The CATI system allows for computer control of questionnaire administration, automatic handling of skip pattern response editing, and range checks. Closed-ended responses are ready for tabulation following completion of the last interview. Each unit in the sample receives as many calls as necessary in order to survey qualified respondents and to fulfill the required number of interviews within each sub-strata of the samples. Additional callback attempts follow a differential callback schedule (AM/PM, alternate days, weekdays-weekends) to ensure the highest completion rate possible.

Weighting

Each SSRS Omnibus insert is weighted to provide nationally representative and projectable estimates of the adult population 18 years of age and older. The weighting process takes into account the disproportionate probabilities of household and respondent selection due to the number of separate telephone landlines and cellphones answered by respondents and their households, as well as the probability associated with the random selection of an individual household member. Following application of the above weights, the sample is post-stratified and balanced by key demographics such as age, race, sex, region, and education. The sample is also weighted to reflect the distribution of phone usage in the general population, meaning the proportion of those who are cell phone only, landline only, and mixed users.