

# Jewish Perceptions of Antisemitism and Antisemitic Perceptions About Jews

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Analysts have consistently argued, on the basis of survey research conducted during the past two decades, that antisemitic beliefs among non-Jews in the United States are in a decline. Comparisons with data compiled from the 1930s to 1962 are seen as reinforcing this conclusion. Similarly, national polls are said to demonstrate strong American support for Israel, another possible indicator of waning anti-Jewish sentiment.

Yet, according to data from local Jewish population studies conducted by individual Jewish communities, Jews in significant numbers report that they personally have been experiencing antisemitism in some form. Furthermore, national studies based on samples representative of both non-Jews and Jews report dissonance between the beliefs of the two groups. Antisemitism is believed by most Jews to continue to exist in moderate form in the United States. What accounts for this disparity between the data on the beliefs of non-Jews and the perceptions and experiences of Jews? A brief look at the quantitative literature on antisemitism reveals numerous methodological problems that may help to explain the gap.<sup>1</sup>

Although there is a fairly large amount of qualitative literature on this subject,<sup>2</sup> its quantitative study remains narrow and has been basically confined to three sources. First, since the 1930s, major polling firms have investigated the feelings of non-Jews about Jews and Israel. Questions have been asked about a series of issues relating to Jewish stereotypes, to Jews as potential family members or neighbors, to Jews as potential presidential candidates and Israel and Israeli policies.<sup>3</sup>

Polling data have been compiled into coherent essays on two occasions. Twenty years ago, an essay by Charles Herbert Stember in *Jews in the Mind of America* constituted a comprehensive examination of the existing data on non-Jews' beliefs about Jews.<sup>4</sup> A second, more narrowly based essay was completed by Geraldine Rosenfield and published in 1982.<sup>5</sup>

Another important source of quantitative data is to be found in the two major national studies of antisemitism. Using wide-ranging survey techniques, national samples of non-Jewish households were drawn and in-depth interviews conducted. The first of these works was commissioned by the Anti-Defamation League in

1964. A University of California research team of Gertrude J. Selznick, Stephen Steinberg, Charles Y. Glock and others constructed a scale in order to measure the antisemitic beliefs of non-Jews. It consists of twelve variables that were used to measure attitudes and beliefs and is reprinted in Table 1. A number of publications resulted, most notably *The Tenacity of Prejudice*<sup>6</sup> by Selznick and Steinberg and *Anti-Semitism in America* by Harold E. Quinley and Charles Y. Glock.<sup>7</sup>

The major findings of the Berkeley studies were:

1. Some traditional antisemitic beliefs had diminished significantly since the 1930s and 1940s, particularly those related to negative Jewish stereotypes.
2. Antisemitic beliefs were strongly linked to age but also linked to education, that is, the higher the education level, the less likely one was to hold antisemitic beliefs.
3. Despite both the effects of education and a younger generation, some antisemitic beliefs continued to persist in a significant minority of the population. A wide range of other attitudes and perceptions were linked to political, religious and other beliefs and behaviors.

The importance of the Berkeley research cannot be overemphasized. It provides both the theoretical and quantitative base on which later studies have been constructed and by which comparisons can be made. Any empirical understanding social scientists have of the phenomenon of antisemitism rests largely on the scale it formulated.

These were the only available data until the American Jewish Committee commissioned Yankelovich, Skelly and White, Inc., to conduct a follow-up study in 1981. Using the same baseline as the Berkeley study, the 1981 survey reemployed many of the initial questions, adding some new ones about Israel and other issues. A sample of Jewish households was also used to compare the responses of Jews and non-Jews. The research was published in 1982 as a monograph, *Anti-Semitism in the United States: A Study of Prejudice in the 1980s*, by Gregory Martire and Ruth Clark.<sup>8</sup> The Yankelovich study concluded that since 1964 the levels of antisemitic beliefs among non-Jews had decreased. Although the authors noted that antisemitism remained a problem in the United States, the emphasis in the volume was clearly on its decline and on the dissonance between non-Jewish and Jewish beliefs about antisemitism.

Local demographic studies undertaken by individual Jewish communities provide a third source of information regarding the question of how Jews perceive antisemitism.

Important surveys from two metropolitan areas, St. Louis<sup>9</sup> and Washington, D.C.,<sup>10</sup> for example, addressed a number of questions to the Jewish respondents regarding antisemitism. They demonstrate that the vast majority of Jews, no matter what their age, report that they have experienced some antisemitism in their lifetimes, and nearly all Jews believe that antisemitism still persists today in their own community or in the United States as a whole. Although Yankelovich reports that antisemitism is declining in the United States, nearly two of every five Jews under the age of thirty reported having personally experienced antisemitism during the preceding twelve months (1980).

To seek the possible explanation for this apparent discrepancy, this essay both presents the data gathered in local Jewish demographic studies about antisemitism (see Tables 5–10) and reexamines the Yankelovich data (see Tables 1–4). The importance of the data from the local Jewish demographic studies rests in the questions they raise. They serve as a reference point from which to examine the data about non-Jewish beliefs and the small sample of Jews from the Yankelovich sample. Ultimately, however, the key question of whether or not antisemitism is increasing or decreasing in the United States cannot be answered from the data on Jewish perceptions alone. And after examining both data sets in juxtaposition, it can be argued that the 1981 national study of non-Jewish beliefs does not answer this question adequately either and is certainly open to severe questioning. The reassessment of the Yankelovich data is of critical importance if we are to attain a clearer picture of how further research tasks connected with antisemitism should be conducted.

In their interpretation of the 1981 Yankelovich data, Martire and Clark advance the thesis that “while there are worrisome signs, there are also solid reasons to believe that antisemitism may be on the wane in the United States,” and they state that “antisemitism has declined significantly in the United States since the mid-1960s.”<sup>11</sup> They are even more hopeful for the future, saying that “the baby boom generation can be expected to raise a generation of children and young adults who are, like themselves, more tolerant of Jews and other minorities than were previous generations.”<sup>12</sup> Martire and Clark acknowledge throughout their analysis, however, that antisemitism remains a problem in the United States. Nonetheless, the conclusions show a decline in those classified as “highly antisemitic” from 37 percent in 1964 to 23 percent in 1981.

In many ways the Martire and Clark analysis repeats the same errors that Stember made in 1962, as demonstrated by Selznick and Steinberg in 1964. Stember erred in his assessment of the decline or disappearance of antisemitism because he analyzed measuring devices that were appropriate in one period of U.S. history but woefully inadequate for another. Better constructed and more sensitive questions in 1964 showed the changing character of antisemitism in the United States. More sophisticated questions in 1981 probably would likewise have produced different results. With relatively minor exceptions, the 1981 study does not improve that of 1964. Identical questions had, of course, to be asked for purposes of comparison; but when it came to formulating new items, Yankelovich did not go far enough.

Table 1 shows that many antisemitic beliefs as measured by the surveys of 1964 and 1981 declined in the intervening years. Indeed, eight of the twelve items on the original scale decreased. Some stereotypes such as “the movie and television industries are pretty much controlled by Jews” declined by 24 percent and “Jews have a lot of irritating faults” by 19 percent. However, the four items with the most antisemitic intensity *increased*: “Jews are always stirring up trouble with their ideas” by 1 percent, “Jews have too much power in the business world” by 4 percent, “Jews are more loyal to Israel than to America” by 9 percent, and “Jews have too much power in the United States” by 10 percent.

Martire and Clark as well as Selznick and Steinberg used the same scale to assess levels of antisemitism.

*Prejudiced*—accept five or more antisemitic beliefs.

*Neutral*—accept four or fewer antisemitic beliefs and give “not sure/no answer” response to four or more items.

*Unprejudiced*—accept four or fewer antisemitic beliefs and give “not sure/no answer” response to fewer than four items.<sup>13</sup>

Gallup asks the question about Jewish loyalty to the United States or Israel and finds consistently between 1979 and 1982 that about one-third of the non-Jews believe that Jews are more loyal to Israel. Yankelovich found the figure to be 48 percent.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, on the questions of power in the United States, Jews

**Table 1.** Trends in Negative Beliefs About Jews Among Non-Jews

Statements Proposed as Probably True	1964 (%)	1981 (%)	Net Difference 1981–64 (%)
The movie and television industries are pretty much controlled by Jews. <sup>a</sup>	70	46	-24
Jews have a lot of irritating faults. <sup>a</sup>	48	29	-19
Jews are more willing than others to use shady practices to get what they want. <sup>a</sup>	48	33	-15
The trouble with Jewish businessmen is that they are so shrewd and tricky that other people don't have a fair chance in competition. <sup>a</sup>	40	27	-13
Jews are just as honest as other businessmen. <sup>a</sup>	34	22	-12
International banking is pretty much controlled by Jews. <sup>a</sup>	55	43	-12
Jews always like to be at the head of things. <sup>a</sup>	63	52	-11
Jews should stop complaining about what happened to them in Nazi Germany.	51	40	-11
Jews don't care what happens to anyone but their own kind. <sup>a</sup>	30	22	-8
Jews stick together too much. <sup>a</sup>	58	53	-5
Jewish employers go out of their way to hire other Jews.	60	57	-3
Jews today are trying to push in where they are not wanted.	21	19	-2
Jews are always stirring up trouble with their ideas.	13	14	+1
Jews have too much power in the business world. <sup>ab</sup>	33	37	+4
Jews are more loyal to Israel than to America. <sup>a</sup>	39	48	+9
Jews have too much power in the United States. <sup>ab</sup>	13	23	+10

Notes: Based on those with an opinion.

<sup>a</sup>12-item antisemitism index.

<sup>b</sup>These statements were posed as questions designed to elicit responses of yes, no, or don't know.

Source: Martire and Clark, p. 19.

consistently are perceived by non-Jews as more powerful than other ethnic and racial groups.

Thus, the scale of antisemitic beliefs shows that certain negative antisemitic beliefs are not decreasing. The internal consistency of the scale itself may be questioned insofar as it shows that the highest indexed items increase, whereas the lower items decrease. Have antisemitic beliefs shifted in such a way that the scale requires a different internal weighting mechanism? Unfortunately, the methodological explanations given by Martire and Clark are not sufficient to evaluate these questions. But the data are troublesome and lead to serious questions about the validity of the scale. Further experimentation is necessary to explain the increase of some powerful antisemitic beliefs. Certainly, the assertion—based primarily on this scale—that antisemitism in the United States has decreased must be rigorously challenged.

The inconsistency in the scale points to a more profound, more troubling aspect of the data. Selznick and Steinberg point out:

It is not at all certain that data from other countries or from another period in history would yield the same result. During the Hitler era many Germans accepted the belief in excessive Jewish power without also accepting beliefs in Jewish dishonesty and clan-nishness. Indeed, this probably occurred in the United States during the same period. As mentioned earlier, polls during the 1940s found that almost 60 percent of Americans believed that Jews had too much power in the United States. While no evidence is available, it is possible that many held this belief without holding other, less extreme beliefs. This is not an unimportant observation. If people who would ordinarily score low on antisemitism can suddenly take on extreme beliefs when they become current, it is not surprising that antisemitism has often flared up after periods of decline.<sup>15</sup>

The acceptance of extreme beliefs at different times must cause us to assess what “neutral” or “mild” antisemitic beliefs mean, definitionally and behaviorally. Are people “mildly” antisemitic if they do not accept extreme negative beliefs most of the time—or, rather, if they only hold one extreme belief most of the time? The sharp increase in beliefs that can be seen as antisemitic during conflicts involving Israel may be interpreted either as an aberration during times of stress or as a true barometer when the normative barriers are less severe. Little is known about this phenomenon, and it requires much more study.

The data from the studies of 1964 and 1981 (as well as from Stember’s summary) show persistent levels of high antisemitism over two generations or more, whether measured by the portion of the population holding at least one antisemitic belief or by the proportion of the population holding some highly antisemitic beliefs. For example, the belief that Jews have too much power in the business world was held by 19 percent of the non-Jews in 1940, 33 percent in 1964 and 37 percent in 1981. Although some stereotypes about Jews have diminished, some remain consistently strong.

Antisemitism retains its hold among a significant percentage of the non-Jewish population as a whole and is clearly rising among certain groups, most notably blacks. Table 2 shows that most antisemitic beliefs recorded for the black sample increased from 1964 to 1981. Blacks are more likely than whites, for example, to

**Table 2.** Trends in Attitudes Toward Jews: Whites Versus Blacks Among Non-Jews

	Total Non-Jews				Whites			Blacks				
	1964	1981	Net Difference:		1964	1981	Net Difference:		1964	1981	Net Difference:	
	(%)	(%)	1981-64	(%)	(%)	(%)	1981-64	(%)	(%)	(%)	1981-64	(%)
Statements Proposed as Probably True <sup>a</sup>												
Too much power in United States.	13	23	+10	13	20	+7	11	42	+31			
Care only about own kind.	30	21	-9	27	18	-9	49	43	-6			
Not as honest as other businessmen.	29	22	-7	29	17	-12	28	47	+19			
Too much power in business world.	33	37	+4	35	35	0	22	51	+29			
More loyal to Israel than to United States.	39	48	+9	38	45	+7	51	63	+12			
Control international banking.	56	43	-13	52	40	-12	74	67	-7			
Shrewd and tricky in business.	40	27	-13	38	24	-14	54	45	-9			
Have a lot of irritating faults.	48	28	-20	46	28	-18	56	36	-20			
Use shady practices to get ahead.	47	33	-14	45	30	-15	67	58	-9			
Stick together too much.	58	53	-5	59	52	-7	52	63	+11			
Always like to head things.	63	52	-11	62	51	-11	70	64	-6			
Mean level of antisemitism	42.4	35.2	- 7.2	40.4	32.7	-7.7	48.5	52.6	+4.1			

Notes: Based on those with an opinion.

<sup>a</sup>Items used in antisemitism index.

Source: Martine and Clark, p. 42.

believe that Jews are more loyal to Israel than to the United States. Just as important, Martire and Clark report:

While generational change and increased education have led to lower levels of anti-semitism among whites, among blacks, age and antisemitism are not highly related ( $r = .07$ ), and the effects of education are significantly less powerful among blacks than among whites ( $r = .14$  among blacks versus  $.25$  among whites). As a result of the weak correlations among blacks between age and antisemitism and education and antisemitism, increased education and generational change have not led to lower levels of antisemitism.<sup>16</sup>

The authors offer no explanation for this phenomenon other than to argue that black antisemitism may also be anti-white prejudice.

The persistence of antisemitism among younger people can be seen in Table 3. Although younger people are less likely than older people to hold antisemitic beliefs, a significant proportion of those under 30 years of age nonetheless do share such beliefs. Indeed, those under 30 years old were more likely in 1981 to believe that Jews have too much power in the United States (16 percent in 1981 as opposed to 7 percent in 1964) and that Jews are more loyal to Israel than to the United States (51 percent in 1981 compared to 30 percent in 1964). Martire and Clark note this trend but dismiss it and assert that as today's young people grow older and displace today's older adults, the process of generational change can be expected to continue. Similarly, those with higher education are also more likely in 1981 than in 1964 to hold antisemitic beliefs, including the view that Jews have too much power in the United States.<sup>17</sup> Clearly, the effects of age and education are not as strong as they would appear at first glance.

Furthermore, if the more highly antisemitic statements are a better indicator of growth or decline of antisemitism, it may be that antisemitism has actually increased since 1964. In the absence of (1) better and more detailed questions, (2) a deeper understanding of the changing normative milieu and the way it has affected these questions as well as (3) some coherent decision on the weighting of the index, one interpretation can be considered as good as another.

Other analytical problems arise when it comes to analyzing Jewish as compared to non-Jewish perceptions. For example, Martire and Clark state:

[O]nly 5 percent of non-Jews and 14 percent of Jews have, in the last year or two, come across clubs or organizations that exclude or restrict Jews. While trend data on the subject are not available, it is safe to say that current levels of social club restriction represent a sharp departure from the past in the direction of lower levels of discrimination.<sup>18</sup>

But these figures are misleading. They include the huge proportion of respondents who have had no interest in such clubs at all. Clearly, the percentages should be calculated on the basis of those who have had contact with a social club and on the number of clubs found to restrict Jews. The resulting figures might well prove to be significantly greater.

High levels of support for Israel among non-Jews may be used to argue that antisemitic beliefs are declining or that anti-Israel beliefs do not represent a new form of antisemitism. Yet, of the total population, almost as many non-Jews (27

**Table 3. Trends in Attitudes Toward Jews Within Age Levels**

Statements	Age							
	1964				1981			
	18-29 (%)	30-39 (%)	40-54 (%)	55 and over (%)	18-29 (%)	30-39 (%)	40-54 (%)	55 and over (%)
Jews have too much power in the United States.	7	9	11	20	16	24	23	31
Jews don't care what happens to anyone but their own kind.	23	23	28	42	18	23	16	31
Jews are just as honest as other businessmen.	25	29	30	35	22	24	17	24
Jews have too much power in the business world.	23	25	30	46	29	35	40	46
Jews are more loyal to Israel than to United States.	30	30	33	53	51	44	39	58
International banking is pretty much controlled by Jews.	34	40	56	77	33	40	36	65
The trouble with Jewish businessmen is that they are so shrewd and tricky that other people don't have a fair chance in competition.	32	33	37	53	23	26	20	39
Jews stick together too much.	51	55	56	66	42	52	54	64
Jews always like to be at the head of things.	62	57	58	73	47	53	47	63
Jews have a lot of irritating faults.	41	41	45	58	22	32	26	37
Jews are more willing than others to use shady practices to get what they want.	41	42	46	59	26	32	26	48

*Note:* Based on those with an opinion.

*Source:* Martire and Clark, p. 41.

percent) are highly unfavorable toward Israel as the proportion (32 percent) who are highly favorable. Furthermore, young people are more likely to be highly unfavorable toward Israel than older people.<sup>19</sup> Less than half of the non-Jews (46 percent) said that they would sympathize with Israel if there were a war between the Arab countries and Israel. Most (51 percent) favored neither side or were not sure. Only about one out of three non-Jews (35 percent) believe that most Jews would side with the United States if Israel and the United States broke off relations. However, a majority of non-Jews (51 percent) believe that the survival of the State of Israel is important. Thus, the data can be said to show that the non-Jewish public is split in terms of attitudes toward Israel. Very strong support and hostility to Israel are about equal—although preference for the Arab side is virtually nonexistent. A large proportion of Americans is indifferent or not sure. It is impossible to say from the current data whether or not anti-Israelism is a new form of antisemitism. These two sets of attitudes can only be correlated within the existing scales. Of those who are critical of Israel, 33 percent are “equivocal.”<sup>20</sup> But if the scale is weighted improperly, as it may be, these assertions are not meaningful. A much more detailed study of the intricate sets of beliefs about Israel and antisemitism must be developed to accurately gauge this phenomenon.

One of the most serious analytical problems in the work of Martire and Clark is the discussion of the differing perceptions of antisemitism itself held by Jews and non-Jews. Working from the premise that antisemitism is declining, questions are constructed that tend to demonstrate that Jews discern far more negative attitudes among non-Jews than are “real.” The authors seem to endorse the thesis that “Jews could be expected to err in over-attributing antisemitic sentiments to non-Jews, whose ‘negative’ actions were in fact a response to their perceived situation rather than to stable dispositions (antisemitic).”<sup>21</sup>

It may, of course, well be true that Jews, given their heightened sensitivities when it comes to this phenomenon, are likely to exaggerate the prevalence of negative beliefs held against them. The questions, though, are too crude for accurate measurements of dissonance. Jews, for example, could be asked what proportion of non-Jews hold a certain belief. Exact proportions could then be compared (Table 4).

Jews are more likely than non-Jews to have heard or remembered an anti-Jewish remark where they live or work (40 percent to 13 percent) or to have heard of or experienced job discrimination against Jews (10 percent for Jews, 2 percent for non-Jews). Furthermore, an antisemitic remark may be made or overheard by a non-Jew who is unaware that a Jew would find the remark antisemitic. Such an incident would not be reported by the non-Jew.

Given that most non-Jews hold at least one antisemitic belief and the majority two or more, it is not surprising that many Jews say that they are aware of, or have personally experienced, antisemitism. It is quite likely that they have, in fact, encountered these hostile beliefs.

Furthermore, most Jews do not say that they have experienced a great deal of antisemitism nor do they say there is a great deal of antisemitism in the United States or in their community. Virtually all Jews believe there is some antisemitism. This is also consistent with the Yankelovich data.

**Table 4.** Beliefs About Jews Versus Jewish Perception of Those Beliefs

Statements	Non-Jews (%)	Jews' Perceptions of the Views Held by the Majority of Non-Jews (%)
Jews have more money than most people.	56	83
Jews are more ambitious than other people.	45	79
Jews have too much power in the business world.	32	76
Jews have too much power in the United States.	20	53
Jews try to push in where they are not wanted.	16	55
I am bothered by the feeling that Jews have more money than most people.	13	77

Source: Adapted from Martire and Clark, p. 108.

A number of questions might be considered to strengthen the analysis of non-Jewish beliefs about Jews. For example, stereotypes about Jewish businessmen should be followed by questions about Jewish lawyers, doctors, newspaper reporters and other occupations. If stereotypes are changing, new Jewish stereotypes should be explored. The question on Jewish loyalty to America or Israel should be coupled with the same questions for Italians, Poles, Japanese and other such groups in relation to their countries of origin. The meaning of this perception should be probed. Does the respondent consider this an act of treason? Instead of the statement, "Jews have a lot of irritating faults," a series of statements such as, "Jews are too loud" or "Jews have poor manners" or other irritating faults in more detail should be proposed.

The cultural pluralism of the 1980s may have transformed not only beliefs but the milieu for normative responses as well. The current set of questions about negative beliefs regarding minorities may simply be too crudely formulated in the face of social acceptability. This is not to say that respondents are hiding their true feelings. But it is possible that some antisemitism or other prejudice is suppressed and the current questions unable to break through these normative barriers. Additional questions must be formulated to reflect this changing background.

Furthermore, some experimentation must be made with language. Asking whether statements are "probably true" or "probably false" is too vague. A scale of "definitely true," "probably true," "probably false," "definitely false," "don't know" might help distinguish among the very prejudiced, the somewhat prejudiced and the unprejudiced portions of the population. A more sensitive scale of antisemitic beliefs might be possible with these additions. A great deal of attention must be given to expanding the kinds of questions that are asked.

The data from the St. Louis and Washington, D.C., studies deal exclusively with perceptions of Jews about antisemitism in their communities and with their own

**Table 5.** How Much Antisemitism Do You Think There Is in This Community? (Percentage Answering Yes)

Response	St. Louis	Washington, D.C.
Great deal	17.5	8.2
Moderate	39.3	44.8
Little	29.4	37.7
None	7.3	3.7
Don't know	6.5	5.6
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

Sources: Tobin (1982), p. 183; Tobin et al. (1984), p. 184.

personal experiences. These data are presented in Tables 5–10.<sup>22</sup> The St. Louis sample consists of 920 cases and the Greater Washington sample consists of approximately 1,400 cases.

Respondents in St. Louis were asked to assess how much antisemitism they believed there was in their local community (see Table 5).<sup>23</sup> A total of 37 percent of the respondents believed that there was little or no antisemitism (7 percent said that there was none). As against this a total of 57 percent believed that there was a moderate or a great amount of antisemitism in the St. Louis area (18 percent said that there was a great deal). Perceptions of antisemitism in the Washington, D.C., area proved to be broadly similar, although there only 4 percent of the adult Jewish population believed that there was no antisemitism, whereas 8 percent believed that there was a great deal.

Respondents were also asked to indicate how much antisemitism they had experienced during their lifetimes. A total of 56 percent of the St. Louis respondents and 62 percent of the Washington, D.C., respondents declared that they had personally experienced little or no antisemitism. Approximately 29 percent in each study said that they had experienced a moderate amount of antisemitism in their lifetimes, whereas 15 percent in St. Louis and 9 percent in Greater Washington experienced a great deal—a total of 44 percent in the former and 38 percent in the latter (see Table 6).

As might be expected, the amount of antisemitism perceived in the course of a lifetime varies by age group. In St. Louis 12 percent of those over 65, but only 9 percent of those under 35 stated that they had experienced no antisemitism in their lifetimes. Over 60 percent of those under 35 said that they had experienced little antisemitism in their lifetimes. Clearly, most Jews, no matter what age group, report having experienced some antisemitism in their personal lives. The results in Washington, D.C., were somewhat similar, both in total and by age group.

Respondents also reported how much antisemitism they believed they had personally experienced within the twelve-month period prior to the survey. In St. Louis almost 26 percent of the respondents said that they had experienced antisemitism in this twelve-month period. The younger the person, the more likely he or she was to report a recent experience of antisemitism. Almost 40 percent of those under 35 as

**Table 6. Antisemitism Experienced in Own Lifetime, by Age (Percentage Answering Yes)**

Age	Great Deal			Moderate			Little			None	
	St. Louis	Washington, D.C.		St. Louis	Washington, D.C.		St. Louis	Washington, D.C.		St. Louis	Washington, D.C.
Under 35	6.7	11.6		24.3	39.7		60.5	43.0		8.6	5.7
36-65	16.4	7.8		32.1	26.4		41.2	56.0		10.2	9.8
65+	19.7	10.2		26.2	30.7		42.1	38.6		12.0	20.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15.0</b>	<b>9.1</b>		<b>28.6</b>	<b>28.9</b>		<b>45.2</b>	<b>52.3</b>		<b>10.3</b>	<b>9.7</b>

Sources: Adapted from Tobin (1982), p. 183; Tobin et al. (1984), p. 184.

**Table 7. Have You Personally Experienced Antisemitism in the Past Twelve Months, by Age (Percentage Answering Yes)**

Age	St. Louis	Washington, D.C.
Under 35	39.7	46.0
36-65	29.4	18.4
65+	6.9	6.7
TOTAL	25.8	28.0

*Sources:* Adapted from Tobin (1982), p. 183; Tobin et al. (1984), p. 185.

opposed to 29 percent of those between the ages of 35 and 65 and 7 percent of those over the age of 65 had experienced antisemitism in the past year (see Table 7). Again, the Washington results proved to be broadly similar.

The respondents in St. Louis were asked, "In what ways does the antisemitism which you have perceived manifest itself?" The Greater Washington respondents were asked, "In what ways have you experienced antisemitism in the past twelve months?" These results can be seen in Tables 8 and 9. Antisemitism is seen in many aspects of everyday life and also is reported as having been experienced in many ways. The perception of antisemitism in St. Louis is least pervasive in housing; 32 percent see manifestations of antisemitism in this area. Antisemitism is seen as most prevalent in social clubs; some 60 percent of the respondents noted this area. Other areas where antisemitism has been noted are: politics, 42 percent; schools, 44 percent; employment, 49 percent; informal relations, 52 percent; and business, 54 percent (see Table 8).

In Washington, D.C., antisemitism was believed to have been experienced the least frequently in housing, 4 percent, and the most frequently in informal relations,

**Table 8. In What Ways Does the Antisemitism Which You Have Perceived Manifest Itself? (Percentage Answering Yes)**

Category	St. Louis
Business	53.8
Employment	48.9
Housing	31.8
Politics	41.6
Schools	43.6
Social clubs	60.3
Informal relations	51.5
Other	5.8

*Source:* Adapted from Tobin (1982), p. 183.

**Table 9.** In What Ways Have You Experienced Antisemitism in the Past Twelve Months? (Percentage Answering Yes)

Category	Washington, D.C.
Business	59.0
Employment	24.9
Housing	4.3
Politics	26.2
Schools	24.2
Social Clubs	15.4
Informal relations	83.7
Other	22.0

Source: Adapted from Tobin et al. (1984), p. 185.

84 percent. About 59 percent of those who experienced antisemitism in Washington, D.C., said that it was in business that they had experienced it, 25 percent in employment, 26 percent in politics, 24 percent in schools, 15 percent in social clubs, and 22 percent in other areas (see Table 9).

Respondents in Greater Washington were asked to whom they reported their antisemitic incidents. More than 91 percent of all personal experiences with antisemitism went unreported to the police; the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, D.C.; the Anti-Defamation League; the Jewish Community Relations Council; or any other agency or institution (see Table 10). No respondent reported the incident to the Federation or Jewish Community Council. On the rare occasion that a Jewish agency was notified, it was the Anti-Defamation League. The police were notified in about 1 percent of the cases. Most reports were made to a variety of people: superiors, employers, teachers and others in more immediate ranges of authority.

**Table 10.** Reported Incidents of Antisemitism (Washington, D.C.)

Total Number of Adults with Personal Experience with Antisemitism in Last 12 Months		Total Reported Incidents	Total Unreported Incidents	Total Reported to Jewish Organizations
Number of Adults		% Yes	% Yes	% Yes
<35	19,194	9.2	90.8	0.2
35-65	9,798	7.3	92.7	1.3
>65	552	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29,544</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>91.4</b>	<b>0.8</b>

Source: Tobin et al. (1984), p. 185.

Although specific questions about the nature of the antisemitic incidents were not asked, the interviewers recorded many of the respondents' comments regarding antisemitic experiences. The reported experiences ranged from employment discrimination to having to endure a non-Jewish husband's "jokes about Jews." Experiences with antisemitism in Girl Scout troops, work, housing, business and a wide variety of other places were recounted by the respondents. Some advocated personal action such as speaking up if someone made antisemitic remarks; some wanted public education about antisemitism. One man suggested that he would "like to see more exposing of major corporations who [*sic*] are practicing antisemitism. I would like to see the Jewish people educated about these companies and their products." Others reported having their first experiences with antisemitism at college, saying that they had come from relatively protected Jewish upbringings and neighborhoods.

Unfortunately, the current state of the data does not allow us to quantify these perceptions. Moreover, from such data we cannot tell why the incidents were not reported. Was it because they were perceived to be too trivial? Did they know whom to call? Were they afraid of making trouble? Did they simply not care enough? Did they believe that no action would be taken or did they have an unsuccessful or unpleasant experience before with an organization or agency? These are some of the possible reasons. Clearly, however, we know very little about Jewish responses to antisemitism.<sup>24</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

Local Jewish demographic studies must be viewed as a legitimate source of data about antisemitism. They are consistent with national data and can help monitor Jewish perceptions of antisemitism. Follow-up studies of those who have experienced antisemitism could contribute much toward a better understanding of such perceptions.

The apparent dissonance between the perspectives of Jews and non-Jews disappears when a more critical analysis of the Yankelovich data is made. The disparity could probably be reduced even more with different kinds of questions and with more in-depth research.

Many additional questions result from the examination of these data and suggest a research agenda about antisemitism. A number of areas of inquiry can be outlined.

First, has antisemitism increased or decreased in the United States since 1964 or some other base point? Current ways of measurement should continue, but new avenues of enquiry should be developed as well. More in-depth questions about the meaning of such beliefs as loyalty to the United States or the assessments of Jewish power should be formulated.

Second, is the nature of antisemitism changing? This is a different question than asking if it is decreasing or increasing. Anti-Israel feelings, for example, are not well understood, and the current data do not help unravel the meaning of anti-Israel sentiment. Other growing beliefs about Jews may be antisemitic and new stereotypes may be developing.

Third, more research is necessary on the behavior of non-Jews vis-à-vis anti-semitic remarks or social exclusion. It is necessary to gauge how non-Jews behave in relationships with Jews in a wide variety of settings. In-depth explorations of specific behaviors are necessary to assess what antisemitic beliefs mean.

Fourth, what is the nexus between behavior and beliefs? These questions should be concerned with what non-Jews say they would do, what they actually do and what they say they believe. For example: Do they belong to exclusionary clubs? Do they make "religious" jokes? Do they associate with Jews in certain kinds of social situations? More in-depth personal interviews are probably necessary for this kind of analysis. Some of these data are available from Yankelovich and have been underutilized.

Fifth, the relationship between events and a rise or fall in certain antisemitic beliefs needs to be examined in more detail. If antisemitic beliefs rise at times of unpopular Israeli actions, for example, are these "true" feelings being expressed or has antisemitism increased because of external events? Do certain forms of Jewish behavior lead to an increase in antisemitic beliefs? Or, do these forms of behavior at least serve to reveal antisemitic beliefs? These areas remain virtually unstudied.

Sixth, the Jewish perceptions of antisemitism need more inquiry. Are these perceptions influenced by demographic factors such as age, country (area of birth) or by religious factors related to levels of identification or observance? Or, are these perceptions a function of social contact and milieu, where one is more or less likely to encounter antisemitic behavior? These data are currently available for selected cities.

Seventh, what roles do institutions such as the media, schools and churches play in influencing perceptions (Jewish and non-Jewish alike) of antisemitism? Are there connections between stated beliefs and organizational affiliations or contacts? How volatile are these beliefs in the light of institutional influences?

Eighth, the relationship of Jews to the organizations and agencies designated to combat antisemitism needs to be explored. Are Jews aware of the role and purposes of these agencies? To what extent? Do Jews report antisemitic incidents and to whom; if not, why not? These are critical questions for analyzing the effectiveness of these agencies.

Finally, although many Jews say that they have experienced antisemitism, in what ways does it affect their lives? Are these serious incidents that alter behavior patterns of Jews? Or, are they minor events that individuals handle adequately without major influence on their lives? The impact of antisemitism on Jewish behavior and institutional roles or perceptions is largely unstudied.

These and other areas might form the core of a research agenda on antisemitism. Examining the current data sets raises many questions, most of which cannot be answered from the available data. Both the Yankelovich data and the local demographic study data make it possible to address at least some of these questions if they are properly analyzed and reported. But some require different kinds of inquiries. In the introduction to the Stember volume, Theodore Solotaroff and Marshall Sklare wrote almost two decades ago that "hard data are necessary if we are to go beyond isolated clues and impressions concerning the ambiguous Jewish situation in the society, and learned opinion is indispensable if we are to make our way through

the maze of historical, social and psychological issues that immediately surround the subject."<sup>25</sup> It is still vital today. The major research tasks still remain.

## APPENDIX

The sample of the Jewish populations discussed in this essay covered all Jewish persons living in housing units in the St. Louis and Washington, D.C., areas. Members of Jewish households were defined to be all persons who usually live in a Jewish household on a permanent basis even though they may be away temporarily. The respondents were asked to include school or college students who may have been living elsewhere while attending school. They were asked not to include as a member of the household anyone who was temporarily living at their house but who had a permanent residence elsewhere. Persons living in group quarters such as college dormitories, hospitals, homes for the aged or military installations were not included in the surveys with one exception. Those in homes for the aged in St. Louis were interviewed.

For St. Louis the sample area included St. Louis City, St. Louis County, Jefferson County, St. Charles County and Franklin County. This constitutes the Missouri portion of the St. Louis metropolitan area and does not include the Illinois portion. The Washington sample area included Washington, D.C.; Montgomery County, Maryland; Prince George's County, Maryland; Alexandria City, Virginia; Arlington County, Virginia; Fairfax County, Virginia; Fairfax City, Virginia; and Falls Church City, Virginia.

### *Definition of "Jewish" Household and "Jewish" Person*

When screening a household, the question was asked, "Are there any persons in this household who are Jewish or who consider themselves to be Jewish?" If the respondent answered "Yes," the household was considered Jewish. Later in the screening, the interviewer asked to speak to "a Jewish person 18 years of age or older who lives in this household." This person became the respondent to the questionnaire. During the main questionnaire, the respondent was asked to report the *current* religion of everyone in the household. Those household members the respondent designated as "Jewish" were considered as Jewish for the purposes of this study.

### *Interview Methods*

The St. Louis survey was administered in personal interviews, with the exception of about eighty-five interviews conducted by telephone. The interview took about fifty minutes. The survey in Washington, D.C., was carried out by telephone. Both surveys were undertaken by professional survey research firms. The questionnaires themselves included questions that provided detailed social, economic, demographic and religious profiles as well as attitudinal data on a wide variety of issues related to service usage. Questions on antisemitism were part of these larger questionnaires. The interviewing in St. Louis was done in 1981; in Washington in 1983.

### *Sample Design*

The sample frame in St. Louis was constructed by a list-merging process, utilizing over 150 lists. These included the Jewish Federation of St. Louis list; the subscribers of a Jewish

newspaper; all Jewish organizations, agencies, temples and synagogues in St. Louis; and other currently affiliated populations. In addition, old lists; marriage records; birth records; a variety of other listings, including distinctive Jewish names; and a "snowball" list were utilized to reach nonaffiliated households (which comprised 25 percent of the interviewed population). The methodology was successful in reaching unaffiliated households, but it undercounted both recent migrants to the metropolitan area who had not yet affiliated and the most marginal Jewish populations.

Yet, tracing old lists and a wide range of lists does produce a sample that includes nonaffiliated Jews. For example, on tracing the old lists, over 21,000 households were manually traced. Of these, 15,400 were believed to be Jewish households, of which 7,200 were located in the metropolitan area, or 34 percent of the 21,000 names that were assembled. Confirmands were the most difficult to find, given their age, mobility and women changing surnames when they married. But the miscellaneous lists and old lists generated 1,400 names that were single entry, coming from these lists and no other. This represents almost 8 percent of the households, a sizable group of nonaffiliates.

A dual-frame sample design was used in Washington, D.C., to select the sample. In effect, all Jewish households in the Washington area were considered as stratified into two groups. One group consisted of households on a list supplied by the federation, the single largest list of Jews in the area. The second group comprised all other Jewish households in the area. The sample for the first group came predominantly, but not exclusively, from a sample of the federation list. This list was cleaned before sample selection to eliminate duplicates, missing phone numbers and out-of-area telephone numbers. The sample for the second group was drawn by using the random-digit-dialing technique. Random-digit dialing also contributed somewhat to the sample for the first group. The random-digit-dialing sample was chosen by selecting telephone numbers at random within the exchanges in the Greater Washington area. Many of the telephone numbers were unassigned or businesses, government agency and institution numbers. Those that were households represented a random sample of telephone numbers.

To avoid matching problems such as last-name differences, business addresses and misspellings, the Federation list was treated as a set of telephone numbers, and all matching was done by telephone number. This implied that the sample case was deleted if the telephone number was that of a business or institution, for example, or if the current household with that number was non-Jewish. No follow-up was conducted in either of these cases. The Federation sample, therefore, should be considered as a sample of Jewish households with telephone numbers as shown on the Federation list rather than as a sample of all persons whose names were on the list. People who moved or persons reporting business addresses to the Federation as well as those not on the Federation list were covered by the random-digit-dialing part of the sample. The procedure is unbiased and permits a virtually error-free matching.

With these two strata—Federation and the random-digit dialing—most, though not all, households had equal chance of selection. Two kinds of households in the random-digit-dialing sample had somewhat different probabilities. First, because random-digit dialing is a random sample of telephone numbers, not residences, households with two or more separate telephone numbers had multiple chances of selection. To avoid their overrepresentation in the survey results, the questionnaire included an inquiry on the number of telephone numbers in the household, and the weights for households reporting multiple numbers were adjusted to reflect this probability. Second, telephone numbers within exchanges in the predominantly black areas of the District of Columbia were sampled at half the rate of all other telephone exchanges. The weights for these sample cases were also adjusted appropriately.

Because the random-digit-dialing sample comprised a sample of all households, the Jewish households that were identified included both households on the federation list and those not on the list. All of the random-digit-dialing Jewish households were compared with the

complete Federation list, and those that matched were combined with the Federation sample to represent households on the Federation list. The balance was a sample of non-Federation Jewish households. The two samples were weighted to produce the final total sample.

### *Response Rates*

The response rates for St. Louis were derived from a random sample of 1,550 households selected from the created master list. Of these, the breakdown of the results is:

—Completed	922 (84 telephone)
—Refusals	238
—Non-Jews	149
—Can't Locates	150
—Moved out-of-towns	52
—Other	39 (vacation, ill health, etc.)

The *known* Jewish households in St. Louis consist of those households in the completed, refusal and other categories (a total of 1,199 households):

—77 percent completion
—20 percent refusal
— 3 percent other

In Washington, D.C., the results were:

	UJA Federation	Random Digit Dialing	Total
Total Jewish households	945	542	1,487
Completed	773	436	1,209
Language problems	2	2	4
Refusal	131	69	200
Unable to contact	39	35	74

The total response rate is the product of the screener and the interview response rates. The final response rate and the components are:

	UJA Federation	Random Digit Dialing	Total
Screener response rate	0.92	0.94	0.94
Interview response rate	0.82	0.80	0.81
Overall response rate	0.75	0.76	0.76

Analysis of the Washington data required weighting the Federation and random-digit-dialing samples. A multistage weighting procedure was used. Initial weights for the random-digit-dialing sample were prepared by calculating the ratio of the best estimate of the total households in the area to the number of households screened. This assumed that the 824

telephone numbers with insufficient information had the same distribution as the approximately 13,000 for which screening was successfully accomplished. In calculating these ratios, the two kinds of households with different chances of selection—those with two or more telephone numbers and those in mainly black areas of the District of Columbia—were assigned proper probabilities.

The initial weights were the final weights for the part of the sample not in the Federation list. The part on the Federation list was combined with the Federation sample, and these were given a different set of weights, calculated as follows. First, an estimate was prepared of the total number of telephone numbers on the Federation list that reflected Jewish households. This total was based on the screening of data from the random-digit-dialing part of the sample. Then, weights were prepared by calculating the ratio of the estimate of total households by the total Federation sample size, including both households selected from the Federation list and from the random-digit-dialing sample that were matched to the Federation file. The random-digit-dialing weights were calculated separately for each of six geographic subareas. Also, the groups with different chances of selection—multiple-phone households and those in mostly black areas of the District of Columbia—had weights that reflected these differences.

These two sampling methodologies produced samples representative of the total Jewish populations in each area. The relative comparisons in terms of age, education, occupation and other variables can be checked by comparing these communities to other Jewish communities and to the white populations of St. Louis and Washington, respectively. The demographic characteristics were also consistent with the profile provided by Yankelovich in his sample of 175 Jewish households in 1981. These internal and external checks indicate the soundness of the samples and the broad representation of the Jewish population that these two communities represent.

## Notes

1. It is difficult to assess why so little systematic quantitative research is done on antisemitism. Perhaps the wealth of qualitative data—historical, religious, psychological and philosophical—suffices for most discussions. Or, there may be some desire of either Jews or gentiles or both not to have “hard” numbers about antisemitism. Perhaps the numbers that are currently collected by the Anti-Defamation League on monitoring incidents of antisemitism satisfy most observers’ need for quantitative data. Perhaps there is some institutional rigidity that prohibits cooperative efforts to study or fund studies about antisemitism. Enough diversity may exist between organizations and institutions that each institution may assume that some other agency or organization will take the initiative or bear the costs of thorough quantitative research. Or, the costs may simply appear too high for consistent quantitative research. Some observers may continue to argue that the phenomenon defies good survey research because of difficulties in obtaining honest responses, representative samples or analyzing difficult psychosociological variables. All of these factors probably play some role.

2. The literature draws from a wide range of theoretical bases. The focus may be on the social causes of antisemitism, its history or the psychology of antisemitism.

3. These questions are frequently sponsored by Jewish organizations. The results of these polls are often published in magazines and newspapers and are also compiled in reports or in newsletter form by Jewish organizations.

4. Published in 1966, Stember summarized polls from Roper, Gallup, the National Opinion Research Center and others, putting them into a cohesive essay. Stember traced

changing attitudes toward Jews and the declining negative perceptions of Jews by gentiles from the peak negativism of the Second World War. Stember provided data to show that most antisemitic beliefs, as measured by these polls, dropped significantly over a generation. The essay provides the single best quantitative compendium on available data on antisemitism before 1962. Although this critical essay offered an excellent background by which to compare data collected in later studies, it did not create new methodological avenues to explore these issues nor did it provide new frameworks to analyze antisemitism. See: Charles Herbert Stember et al., "The Recent History of Public Attitudes," in Stember (ed.), *Jews in the Mind of America* (New York: 1966), 31–236.

5. Geraldine Rosenfield, "The Polls: Attitudes Toward American Jews" 46 (1982) *Public Opinion Quarterly* 431–443. This essay looked at a more limited set of variables, using some comparative data from 1964 and surveys conducted in the 1970s. Primarily concerned with attitudes toward Israel, the essay offers little interpretive comment, serving rather as a reference tool for some limited questions about gentiles' attitudes.

6. Gertrude J. Selznick and Stephen Steinberg, *The Tenacity of Prejudice* (New York: 1969).

7. Harold E. Quinley and Charles Y. Glock, *Anti-Semitism in America* (London: 1979).

8. Gregory Martire and Ruth Clark, *Anti-Semitism in the United States: A Study of Prejudice in the 1980s* (New York: 1982).

9. Gary A. Tobin, *A Demographic Study of the St. Louis Jewish Community* (United Jewish Appeal Federation of Washington, D.C., December 1984).

10. Tobin et al., *A Demographic Study of the Jewish Community of Greater Washington* (United Jewish Appeal Federation of Washington, D.C., December 1984). For a discussion of the sampling methods, see the essay's appendix.

11. Martire and Clark, *Antisemitism*, 2, 29.

12. *Ibid.*, 25.

13. *Ibid.*, 34.

14. Rosenfield, "The Polls," 434.

15. Selznick and Steinberg, *Tenacity of Prejudice*, 29–30.

16. Martire and Clark, *Antisemitism*, 43.

17. *Ibid.*, 38, 40.

18. *Ibid.*, 31.

19. *Ibid.*, 84–85.

20. *Ibid.*, 95.

21. *Ibid.*, 109.

22. This essay does not attempt to analyze the dynamics of Jewish perceptions of antisemitism within the Jewish population. The relationship between religious identity, political affiliation, friendship patterns and other dimensions of Jewish life are not analyzed as they influence perceptions of antisemitism.

23. In the text, figures from these tables have been rounded off.

24. The current research on antisemitism being conducted by the Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University in conjunction with the Associated Jewish Charities of Baltimore, the Jewish Federation of Atlantic County and the Jewish Federation of Greater Kansas City will explore other dimensions of Jewish perceptions of antisemitism: How much antisemitism do the respondents believe there is in their own community? How much do they believe that they have experienced in their lifetime? How much have they personally experienced in the past twelve months? The current research will go beyond the St. Louis and Washington, D.C., data and will explore the respondents' explanations of these incidents. Were antisemitic remarks made directly to them? Overheard? Did they personally witness anti-Jewish violence? The nature of the experience will be analyzed. Furthermore, the new research will focus on Jewish perceptions of the ways they dealt with antisemitic experiences. Did they report this experience? If so, to whom was it reported? If not reported, why not? These questions will help evaluate how important these incidents were to the Jews who

experienced them and how they relate to the organizations and institutions, both Jewish and non-Jewish, that are monitoring or combatting antisemitism.

The questions currently being asked are:

1. How much antisemitism would you say there is in this metropolitan area? Would you say there is a great deal, a moderate amount, little or none?
  2. How much antisemitism have you personally experienced in your lifetime? Would you say a great deal, a moderate amount, little or none?
  3. Have you personally experienced any antisemitism in the *last twelve months*?
  4. How many times have you experienced antisemitism in the past twelve months?
  5. Please describe these incidents.
  6. Did you report this incident to anyone?
  7. To whom did you report it: the police, the Federation, the Anti-Defamation League, or did you report it to another organization?
  8. If you did not report the incident, why not?
25. Stember et al., *Jews in the Mind of America*, 7.