

# **The Jewish Community in Canada**

Toronto and Montreal

# Thesis

- The Jewish community **has thrived** over time.
- Their ability **to adapt** was influenced by their religious value orientation (rational, inner worldly) but more particularistic than Protestants.

# From Max Weber

- Judaism -grew as a religion of a civic  
`pariah= people.
- In the **middle ages** it gave rise to a  
quasi- proletarian and rationalistic petty  
**bourgeoisie** known for their training in  
literature and ritual.

## Weber argues..

- That the Jewish religious value orientation is conducive to capitalistic social development.
- However, the Jewish identity as pariahs have them to be particularistic, although inner worldly.

# **The Census data: Canada**

- The **census data** show that Jewish Canadians are concentrated in **Montreal**, **Toronto** and **Winnipeg**.
- “They have the **lowest fertility** and the **highest incomes** of any group in Canada.”  
(Kallen, 1999)

## **Porter's data**

- They are highly educated and are primarily in professional, managerial and technical occupations.(Stats Can. 1981)
- However, this is not to suggest that “all Jewish people are rich..”

# **Jewish community studies**

- Accounts of the **Jewish community** have largely been restricted to excellent literary works like Duddy Kravitz and St. Urbaines Horsemen.
- Best sociological study **Crestwood Heights**-a euphemism for Forest Hill area Toronto

# **The Jewish Family**

- The dominant **familial characteristics** include:
  1. an egalitarian marital ideology
  2. sexual division of labour in the domestic and occupational spheres,



# **The Jewish Family**

3. Permissive **love based child rearing** patterns
4. Aimed at inculcating a **high need for achievement**
5. A concentration **upon nuclear family**
6. At the expense of extended kinship

# **Toronto Jewry -**

- **Three Phase Development**
- -Formative, maintenance and actualization.
- Similar to French Canadian
- Formative, Maintenance, Actualization=
- **Stages** for Jewish community indicates progress towards acceptance by the Host society.

# **IC=institutional completeness**

- One key factor in their survival according to Raymond Breton (1963) is Institutional Completeness

# Breton's Hypothesis

- The degree to which an ethnic community possess high or low **levels of organization** is referred to by Breton as their **degree of institutional completeness**.
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# Institutional affiliations

- Institutional affiliations such as :
- -social services
- -legal aid
- -religious and spiritual services
- -voluntary associations

# **degree of institutional completeness.**

- **Ethnic communities may contain:**
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- -welfare systems
- -mutual aid societies
- -radio stations
- -newspapers and periodicals
- -commercial services
- -churches
- -schools
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# **Institutional completeness**

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- **Institutional completeness** is at its extreme when the ethnic community provides all of the services for its members.
- Members do not require the services provided by the receiving society.
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# Few are totally complete

- There are few ethnic communities that have this high degree of institutional completeness.
- Most **vary between low and high** and fall somewhere in the middle of the continuum.



# **Jewish: Formative Stage I.**

- **Mass migration.**
- **Two waves:**
- The **first wave** came from Germany, more liberal group, quite successful immediately.

# **Formative Stage I**

- **Second wave** of immigration from Eastern Europe began in 1880 and continued until 1920.
- Many Jews had fled Eastern Europe to escape anti-Jewish violence.

# **Institutional Completeness (phase one)**

- **Holy Blossom synagogue** on Bathurst, a Conservative Temple
- Within the workings of **The Temple**-the **Hebrew Benevolent Society** was established

# Hebrew Benevolent Society

- This **organization** helped to orient new immigrants to the new society....it taught immigrants language, customs, and economic fundamentals.

# The Dorcas Society

- Another service was the Dorcas Society...it worked closely with Holy Blossom to provide food, clothing and shelter for the poor immigrants.

# Jewish Boys in Training

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- Still another program was **JBT** established in 1914, to work to resolve an ever growing problem of **juvenile delinquency** among immigrants.
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# **Egros Noshem Society -**

- Still another was **Egros Noshem Society** -this Jewish agency looked after sick immigrants when the Toronto Hospitals failed to provide **adequate care** because of language barriers
- This was the foundation of **Mount Sinaï Hospital**.

# **Institutional Completeness**

- Very High Among this group.
- **Three Factors** according R. Breton:
  - 1. Group difference from Host
  - 2. Level of resources
  - 3. Ability to construct parallel institutions



# Religious Orientations

1. The first wave was by German Jews they tend to be of either the **conservative** or **reform** tradition.
2. The second wave were from **Eastern Europe** and were much more Orthodox in their faith

# Kallen (1974)

- Reports a shift from religiousity to a more **ethnic collective consciousness** combined with a strong identification with the **state of Israel** among the younger generation.
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# Rose (1970)

- Finds that it was **religion**, that initially created **a sense of location and belonging** for these Jews....it provided not only a place to gather and express faith, it also **distributed social welfare**.

# Smooth Transition IC

- Another important aspect of Jewish **Immigration history** was the **smooth manner** in which the Jewish Community in Toronto **absorbed socio-cultural difference** between Eastern and Western Jew.

## Early 20thc

- The second wave were from **Eastern Europe** and were much more Orthodox in their faith.
- As a result, Holy Blossom went out of its way to ensure that **new Rabbi** could appeal to both groups.

# **Ethno-religious community**

- Kallen (1974) –Jewish community not simply a religious group...ethnic identification, sense of unique history and culture, anti-semitism..
- **An ethnic bond** that unifies the group

# Education

1. Emphasis on achievement
2. Classical education ok
3. Many encouraged to seek a profession-  
Doctor, Lawyer, Accountant-mobile  
professions
4. =movable capital (Weber, 1904)

# Jewish education

- a. Holy Blossom Sabbath School-English language -deviated from tradition
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- b. Talmund Tahah School-orthodox but also taught the Enlightenment
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- C. City Charm School-taught the unchanging past of the Polish Shetl



# Jewish Redemption

- One study by Kallen of **second generation** adults finds that the **Jewish family** in Canada carries on many of the same activities it did in the shelter
- Serves as **the focal point** for extended family relations and the **preservation of a communal Jewish identity**.
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# **(Phase Two)**

## **Maintenance**

- **The Jewish Community Sticks Together**
- **Lord Day Alliance-** Protestant group
- Attempted to entrench the Lords Day as **Sunday into Law-** this passed however,

# Saturday Sabbath

- **Rabbi Jacobs** fought hard and the act included a clause which read “under certain circumstances” an exemption could be made for **Sabbath Observing Jews...**

## **PHASE TWO Anti-Semitism**

- **Christy Pits Riot**- Rabbis visited Protestant churches to preach tolerance and resist anti-semitism.
- Just prior to WW2 in 1938 “**Rooms for Rent-Jews need not Apply**”-Jewish

# Separate Clubs

- Another was **prior to WW2**, when anti-Semitic feelings ran high, Jewish kids exclude from YMCA, YWCA.
- The Jewish temples collected large sums of money from worshippers to develop **YMHA** (Young Men's Hebrew Association) and **YWHHA** (Young Women's Hebrew Association)

# Parallel Institutions High IC.

- a. The community, left out of many **Gentile clubs** and associations, started their own.
- **Examples** include private golf clubs, fraternities and sororities and children's summer camps...

# Jewish Education and ideology

- Jewish experiences helped to direct Jewish education along **ideological lines**
- Jewish community contains a combination of **traditional and modern characteristics** which have been instrumental in the survival of the group.
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# **Post World War Two (phase 3)-**

- **Group actualization**, becomes more confident, growing acceptance by the larger population of Toronto.



# Results

- Some products of this change include:
- Jews **follow rituals less closely-**  
decline in observance of the Sabbath  
and Dietary Laws
- **Decline in practices** such as tefillin,  
which holds that men must keep their  
heads covered at all times

# Increasing representation in larger society

- **Less separation** of men and women during services
- **Increasing representation of Jews** in mainstream political and cultural institutions in Toronto.

# Jewish Community and Canadian Society

- There has been **increasing** Jewish involvement in politics, recreational development, social services and business enterprises in Canada.

# Feinberg (1970)

- Notes that **Rabbis role** has changed from a preacher to a **quasi-psychiatrist**-many worshipper retreat to the Rabbis private study for to council for problems

# Kallen's assessment

- a. Kallen believes that **Jewish Synagogue** are less and less places of worship and more and more places to meet fellow Jews.
- The **Jewish community** has adapted to a new environment and a changing world

# **Liberal ideology-orthodox, conservative reform**

- A **liberal ideology** prevails in discussion on **issues** such as racism, economic exploitation, and freedom.
- Canadian Jews noted for being **open minded, educated and tolerant.**
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# Summary

- The Jewish ethnic group is highly integrated
- Jewish persecution throughout history has helped this community maintain close bond while finding success in the larger Canadian society over time.

# Drieger (1977)

- **Three Stage Adaptation**
- **Three Stage adaptation theories** tend to consider post modern realities and the three generational hypothesis.



# **Immigrant stage**

**Th I. Immigrant stage** was characterized by the initial wave of immigrant who attempt to establish an initial ethnic enclave separate from outsiders.

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# **Enclavic stage**

- **II. The enclavic stage,** the immigrant attempts to establish territorial concentration through language, homogamy, residential proximity and voluntary associations.

# **Post enclavic**

- III. Post enclavic Stage-'**regenerating pluralism** \_
- **Five Essential Aspects of Regenerating Pluralism**1.

# Regenerating Pluralism.

- 1. **Ideological mythology**-- a rallying point for the group.
- 2. **Historic Symbols**- heros, totems symbolizing group pride.
- 3. **Charismatic Leadership**- either contemporary or historical.

# **Regenerating Pluralism**

- **4. Social Status Symbols-** future generations must strive to maintain and surpass. Usually built out of an ethnic economic enclave.
- **5. Support for an ethnic language-** important for maintaining ethnic identity and values.

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# Jewish Religiousity

# Human are unique

- **Three things** seem to distinguish man from all living creatures:
- 1. The systematic use of tools
- 2. The use of abstract language
- 3. Religion

# **The West**

- **Monotheism -See Bryan Wilson**
- For example, **in the West** the idea of God predominates- the relationship between man and the **divine is Man and God----**



# **Urban Jewish Contribution to Modernization**

- The precondition for certain **rational structures of law, politics, administration** all had **their location** chiefly in the **urban social structure** mainly controlled by middle and upper social strata

# Hebrew Bible

- The subject of the Hebrew Bible or otherwise called Torah is an account of the **Israelites** relationship with God as reflected in their history from the beginning of time until the building of the Second Temple (c. **350 BCE**).

# **Jewish Laws and Customs**

- **Josephus** emphasized practices and observances rather than religious beliefs, **associating apostasy with a failure to observe Jewish law**, and suggesting the requirements for conversion to Judaism included circumcision and **adherence to traditional customs.**

# The Talmud

- Notably, in **the Talmud** some principles of faith (e.g., the **Divine origin of the Torah**) are considered important enough that **rejection of them** can put one in the category of "*apikoros*" (heretic).<sup>1</sup>