



# 2018 Survey of Jews in Canada

**Final Report**

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# Introduction

## Background

The first Jew to settle in what is now Canada was an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company. He arrived in 1732. Today, Canadian Jews number about 392,000 and form the world's third or fourth largest Jewish community.

As late as the first half of the 20th century, Canadian Jews experienced a high level of discrimination in accommodation, employment, property ownership, and everyday interaction. Despite these impediments, they proved to be highly resilient. They achieved rapid upward mobility and made many important contributions to Canadian medicine, jurisprudence, science, education, government, the economy, and the arts.

Upward mobility and increasing acceptance on the part of the Canadian mainstream have had what many community members regard as a downside: these social processes heightened the prospect of cultural assimilation, loss of traditional languages, and intermarriage. Many in the community are also deeply concerned about the recurrence of a stubborn malady; since the early 2000s, anti-Israel sentiment has sometimes engendered anti-Semitism, and over the past few years, the rise of "white nationalism" has resulted in increased anti-Jewish harassment and violence. Although the latter circumstance did not motivate this survey, it is part of the context in which the 2018 Survey of Canadian Jews was conducted.

What is known about the identities, values, opinions, and experiences of Jews in Canada today? The basic demographics of the Jewish population are captured every five years through national censuses conducted by Statistics Canada, which document the number who identify as Jewish ethnically and/or religiously, where they live, and their basic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, and education). However, this research does not provide a full understanding about the Jewish experience in this country, and such knowledge is becoming increasingly important given the dynamic changes taking place in society generally, and in the Jewish

world in particular (e.g., assimilation, intermarriage, and anti-Semitism). It is remarkable that the Canadian Jewish community is one of the least studied in the world—in sharp contrast to that of the USA and the UK.

## 2018 Survey of Jews in Canada

In 2013, the respected Pew Research Center published the results of a comprehensive survey of American Jews that examined the identities, values, opinions, and experiences of Jews in the United States. To address the gap in knowledge about these issues among Canadian Jews, the Environics Institute for Survey Research, in partnership with Professor Robert Brym (SD Clark Professor of Sociology at the University of Toronto) and Professor Rhonda Lenton (President and Vice-Chancellor, York University) conducted a landmark national survey of Jews in Canada in 2018.

The survey focuses on what it means to be Jewish in Canada today—specifically, patterns of Jewish practice, upbringing, and intermarriage; perceptions of anti-Semitism; attitudes toward Israel; and personal and organizational connections that, taken together, constitute the community. This research is modelled closely on the 2013 Pew Survey of American Jews, to provide the basis for cross-national comparison and set a high research standard.

The principal investigators assembled the necessary institutional resources, funding, and research expertise required to launch a study of this scope. This included securing financial support from the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, Federation CJA (Montreal), the Jewish Community Foundation of Montreal, the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba, and the Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies, University of Toronto. The support provided by these organizations made it possible to expand the scope of the research to more effectively cover the Jewish population in particular cities and groups.

The principal investigators also assembled an informal advisory group of community members to provide input for the development of survey themes and questions. This group included Professor Anna Shternshis, Esther Enkin (journalist, and former CBC Ombudsman), and Michael Miloff (a consultant in strategic planning to both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations). Through the participation of Federation CJA (Montreal) and the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba, city-specific questions were included in the survey that addressed issues of particular interest to these organizations.

## Survey methodology

Because Canadian Jews constitute only about one percent of the Canadian population, the use of standard survey research methods was not a feasible option given the high costs of using probability sampling to identify and recruit participants.<sup>1</sup> The principal investigators developed a research strategy to make the research sample as comprehensive and representative as possible within the available budget. This strategy entailed two main parts. First, the survey focused on the census metropolitan areas encompassing Canada’s four largest Jewish communities (Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, and Winnipeg) that include approximately 82 percent of the Canadian Jewish population.

Second, a multi-stage sampling plan was developed to complete interviews with Jews in each of the four cities using a combination of sample sources and survey modalities. The primary sampling frame was drawn from a dictionary of several thousand common Jewish surnames that was used to select households with listed landline telephone numbers in census tracts with a minimum of five percent Jewish households. This source was supplemented by requesting referrals from respondents who completed

the survey, social media promotion, and on-site recruitment at the Jewish Community Centre in Winnipeg. People were eligible to participate in the survey if they were 18 years of age or older and self-identified as Jewish or partially Jewish.

The survey was conducted with 2,335 individuals by telephone or online between February 10 and September 30, 2018. Quotas were established in each city for age cohort and gender based on the 2011 National Household Survey to ensure adequate representation by these characteristics.<sup>2</sup> In addition to completing the survey with a representative sample in each city, additional surveys were conducted with Jews between the ages of 18 and 44 in Montreal and those who immigrated from the former Soviet Union, in both cases at the request of study sponsors.

The distribution of completed surveys by city is presented in Figure I-1 below. The final data were weighted by each city’s population, age and gender distribution, and the national percentage of Jews in each age cohort who were married or living common-law with someone who is not Jewish. Because the survey is not fully based on probability sampling, sampling error cannot be calculated.<sup>3</sup> A more complete description of the survey methodology is presented in the appendix to this report.

Figure I-1  
Survey sample by city

Census Metropolitan Area	Final sample	% of Canadian Jewish population
Toronto	1,135	48%
Montreal	638	23%
Winnipeg	361	4%
Vancouver	201	7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,335</b>	<b>82%</b>

<sup>1</sup> The 2013 Pew Survey of American Jews used a comprehensive probability sampling strategy, which was made possible by a research budget estimated to be in the millions of dollars.

<sup>2</sup> This extended time period was required because some quotas were considerably more difficult to fill than others (e.g., younger respondents are more difficult to identify and recruit than older ones).

<sup>3</sup> However, as a rough benchmark, we note that 19 of 20 random samples of 2,335 respondents would result in a maximum margin of error of plus or minus 2.0 percentage points.



## About this report

This report presents the results of the research and covers the following themes: what it means to be Jewish; types of Jewish practice; strength and type of connections to other Jews and to Jewish organizations; patterns of Jewish upbringing; intermarriage; views on Israel; perceptions of, and experiences with, discrimination and anti-Semitism; and connection to the local community. Throughout the report, the results highlight relevant similarities and differences across the Jewish population, by city, age cohort, denominational affiliation, and other characteristics. The Canadian results are compared with those of American Jews based on the 2013 Pew Survey of American Jews where available, and in several cases also compared to results from surveys of the Canadian population at large. Each chapter ends with a commentary with further analysis and interpretation of the results.

Detailed tables presenting results for all survey questions by Jewish population segments are available separately on the Environics Institute website at [www.environicsinstitute.org](http://www.environicsinstitute.org). All results are presented as percentages unless otherwise noted.

## Acknowledgments

This research was made possible with the support from a number of organizations and individuals. The principal investigators would like to acknowledge the important contributions of the study sponsors (UJA Federation of Toronto, Federation CJA (Montreal), the Jewish Community Foundation of Montreal, the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba, and the Anne Tannenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto; study advisors (Esther Enkin, Michael Miloff, and Anna Shternshis); the research team at Environics Research; and, finally, the 2,335 survey participants who took the time to share their background, experiences, and opinions which collectively informed our understanding of what it means to be Jewish in Canada today.

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# Executive summary

This research provides the first empirically-based portrait of the identity, practices, and experiences of Jews in Canada, based on a survey conducted in four cities containing over 80 percent of the country's Jewish population (Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, and Winnipeg). Four overarching themes emerge from the survey.

**CHANGING BASIS OF IDENTIFICATION.** Identifying oneself as a Jew is not what it used to be. Three centuries ago, being Jewish meant practicing a distinct religion. Today, only one in three Canadians who identifies as Jewish considers religion very important in his or her life, and just six in ten say they believe in God or a universal spirit (compared to seven in ten of all Canadians). For most Canadian Jews today, the basis of Jewish identity is less about religion than about culture, ethnicity, or a combination of culture, ethnicity, and religion.

Consider that one of the most important expressions of Jewish identity involves families getting together over a meal to mark a Jewish holiday. What does this practice mean? For a growing number of Canadian Jews, the practice seems to be chiefly a means of achieving conviviality in the family and, beyond that, solidarity with the larger community. The purely religious significance of the practice is less important than it was in the past.

**COMMUNITY RESILIENCE.** It would be wrong to conclude that change in the basis of Jewish identification signifies that widespread assimilation is taking place among community members. To be sure, the rate of intermarriage is growing. A small minority of Jews display a Christmas tree (or, among relatively recent immigrants from the former Soviet Union, a New Year's tree) in their homes. The quickly growing Vancouver Jewish community stands out in its degree of religious, ethnic, and cultural assimilation. However, the Canadian Jewish community as a whole remains surprisingly cohesive across generations. A range of indicators tells us that. Whether we examine the weekly ritual of lighting candles at the onset of the Sabbath, belonging to Jewish organizations, donating to Jewish

causes, or regularly attending synagogue services, we find little difference between young adults and elderly Jews.

Universally, discrimination increases group cohesiveness, and Canadian Jews are no exception in this regard; perceptions of the level of anti-Semitism in Canada contribute to community cohesion. The survey examined Canadian Jews' views on discrimination against various racial, religious, ethnic, and sexual minorities. The results suggest that, by and large, Canadian Jews assess the extent and threat of anti-Semitism realistically.

**CANADIAN JEWISH EXCEPTIONALISM.** The cohesiveness of the Canadian Jewish community contrasts with that of the Jewish community in the United States. We know this from previous research—but the magnitude of the difference revealed by this survey is so large that it nonetheless strikes one as remarkable. Intermarriage is far more common in the United States than in Canada, the ability to read or speak Hebrew is much less widespread, visiting Israel is a lot less common, and so on.

Since World War II, the story of the Jewish diaspora has been dominated by historical events and social processes taking place in the United States and the former Soviet Union. In both cases, community cohesiveness is on the decline. Lost in the dominant narrative is the story of Canadian exceptionalism. The Jewish communities in Montreal and Winnipeg are shrinking in size, but those in Ottawa, Toronto, Calgary, and Vancouver are growing, as is the Canadian Jewish population as a whole (albeit slowly). The overall result is that Canada's Jews are on the verge of becoming the second largest Jewish community in the diaspora, next in size only to the much larger American Jewish community. (Some research finds that the Jewish population of Canada already exceeds that of France.) In short, evidence of Canadian Jewish population growth and resilience suggests the need for a modification of the dominant diaspora narrative.

**HETEROGENEITY.** Cohesiveness does not imply homogeneity. Far from it. This report documents that Canadian Jews vary widely in denominational affiliation,

subethnic identification, strength of ties to the community, Jewish upbringing, and much else. Geographical differences exist too: a strong east/west pattern emerges, with the large Montreal and Toronto communities being the most cohesive, the Vancouver community in many respects looking more like a part of the United States than of Canada, and Winnipeg sitting between these extremes, although closer to the eastern model.

Heterogeneity extends to support for different Canadian political parties and, perhaps surprisingly to some, differences of opinion concerning key issues in the Jewish world, notably attitudes toward Israel's West Bank settlement policy. Among those with an opinion on the subject, nearly three times more Canadian Jews believe that West Bank settlements hurt Israel's security than believe the settlements help Israel's security. Some people think of the Canadian Jewish community as a monolith. This research should disabuse them of that impression.

Following are the main highlights from the study.

## Canadian Jewish population

Canada's approximately 392,000 Jews comprise about one percent of the country's population. They are highly urbanized, with more than 87 percent living in just six census metropolitan areas: nearly one-half in Toronto, nearly one-quarter in Montreal, and nearly one-sixth in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Ottawa, and Calgary combined. The country's Jewish population is growing slowly, but trends vary by city. Vancouver is the country's fastest growing Jewish community, followed by Ottawa, Toronto, and Calgary. In contrast, the Jewish populations of Montreal and Winnipeg have been declining.

The age and sex distribution of Canadian Jews is much like that of the entire Canadian population, but is somewhat more likely to include immigrants. More than eight in ten Canadian Jews define themselves as of Ashkenazi ancestry (from Western Europe and Eastern Europe), and one in ten as of Sephardi or Mizrahi ancestry (from Southern Europe and the Middle East). The educational attainment of the Canadian Jewish population is extraordinarily high; eight in ten Jewish adults between the ages of 25 and 64 have completed at least a bachelor's degree, compared to fewer than three in ten in the population at large.

## Jewish identity

Jews in Canada identify as Jewish in a variety of ways. About one-half consider themselves to be Jewish mainly as a matter of religion, by culture, or by ancestry/descent, while the other half emphasize two or more of these aspects. Identification by all three of these aspects is most common among Jews who are Orthodox or Conservative, and those who are actively involved in their local Jewish community. By comparison, identification as Jewish mainly through culture or ancestry/descent is most prevalent among those who affiliate as Reform, or are not attached to any denomination or movement.

Two-thirds of Canadian Jews say that being Jewish is very important in their lives, with most of the rest indicating that it is at least somewhat important. By comparison, only three in ten place this level of importance on religion, although a majority say they believe in God or a universal spirit.

What do Canadian Jews consider to be essential aspects of being Jewish? At the top of the list are leading a moral and ethical life, remembering the Holocaust, and celebrating Jewish holidays; a majority identify each of these as "essential" to what being Jewish means to them. In a second tier, at least four in ten identify as essential such attributes as working for justice and equality in society, caring about Israel, being intellectually curious, being part of a community, and having a good sense of humour. By comparison, no more than one in five places such importance on observing Jewish law, attending synagogue, and participating in Jewish cultural activities.

What Canadian Jews consider as being essential to being Jewish varies by age cohort. In particular, members of the youngest cohort are much less likely than those in the oldest cohort to consider a sense of humour to be an essential element of Jewishness. This difference may be due partly to the depletion among young adults of Jewish humour's richest reservoir—the Yiddish language, which was the mother tongue of nearly all Canadian Jews in 1931, but is spoken by just a few percent of Canadian Jews today. A second noteworthy difference is that younger Jews are considerably less like than older Jews to consider caring for Israel an essential aspect of Jewishness, a trend that has been noted in the United States for some time.

**Comparisons with American Jews.** How Canadian and American Jews identify as Jewish is broadly similar. American Jews are somewhat more likely to pin their identity to religion, culture or ancestry/descent rather than a combination of these aspects. They are less apt to say that being Jewish and being religious is very important to them personally, although they are more likely than Canadian Jews to express belief in God or a universal spirit. And what they consider essential aspects of being Jewish is comparable to what is articulated by Canadian Jews, but with less emphasis on being part of a community.

## Jewish life and practice

Most Jews in Canada consider themselves to be part of an established Jewish denomination or movement. About six in ten affiliate with one of the three mainstream denominations, the largest being Conservative, followed by Orthodox or Modern Orthodox, and Reform. One in ten report being part of one of the smaller Jewish movements, including Reconstructionism, Humanistic or Renewal Judaism, Hasidism, or something else. Three in ten are not affiliated with any particular type of Judaism, including some who say they are “just Jewish.”

Six in ten report they (or someone in their household) belong to a synagogue, temple or prayer group, and this represents the majority across all denominations/movements and even applies to three in ten Jews who are unaffiliated. Membership does not, however, translate into regular attendance: only one in six attend services at least once or twice a month outside of special occasions such as weddings, funerals and bar/bat mitzvahs. Apart from synagogues and temples, close to half of Canadian Jews say they belong to one or more other types of Jewish organizations, such as a Jewish community centre. Three in ten do not belong to any type of Jewish organization.

Even more prevalent than organization membership is providing financial support to Jewish organizations and causes. Eight in ten Jews in Canada report having made such a donation in the previous year (2017). This proportion is highest among those who belong to a denomination or movement, but such contributions have also been made by a majority of Canadian Jews who are unaffiliated and those with a household income under \$75,000 a year.

Apart from formal memberships and affiliation, being Jewish in Canada is about social connections. More than half report that either all or most of their current friends are Jewish, with very few indicating that hardly any or none of them are Jewish. Having a high proportion of Jewish friends is most closely linked to denominational affiliation, being most prevalent among Orthodox/Modern Orthodox Jews, and least so among Reform Jews and those who affiliate with smaller denominations and movements.

There is remarkably little difference between age cohorts in their degree of religious involvement (e.g., attending religious services, lighting Sabbath candles) and in their degree of community participation (e.g., belonging to Jewish organizations, donating to Jewish causes, having close Jewish friends). This finding suggests that, all else the same, the Canadian Jewish community is unlikely to become much less cohesive as younger generations age. On the other hand, inter-city differences in religious involvement and community participation are large, with community cohesiveness at a very high level in Montreal and Toronto, but declining as one moves west (notably in Vancouver, which approaches American levels of community cohesiveness).

**Comparisons with American Jews.** American Jews are as likely as Canadian Jews to have a Jewish affiliation, but are much less involved in their local community. Six in ten identify with one of the three mainstream denominations (predominantly Reform, and least apt to be Orthodox or Modern Orthodox), and like Canadian Jews about one-third have no affiliation. But American Jews are half as likely as Canadian Jews to belong to a synagogue, and even less likely to belong to other types of Jewish organizations. Only one-half have made a financial donation to Jewish organizations and causes (compared with 80 percent of Canadian Jews), and comparatively few have a preponderance of Jewish friends.

## Jewish upbringing

A significant feature of the Jewish population in Canada is the continuity of identification and practice across generations. Nine in ten Canadian Jews report that both of their parents are Jewish, and a comparable proportion say they were raised in the Jewish religion. Being raised in the Jewish religion is most widespread among Orthodox/Modern Orthodox Jews, but it is also the experience of most Jews who are currently unaffiliated. Among the small percentage who were not raised in the Jewish religion, about half say they were raised in a secular Jewish tradition.

A key component of continuity is the prevalence of Jewish education, with most Jews in Canada having participated in one or more types of Jewish education when growing up. Jewish education is most likely to include attendance at an overnight summer camp, Hebrew school or Sunday school, but close to one-half have attended a Jewish day school or yeshiva and have done so for an average of nine years.

Also important to Jewish upbringing is the coming-of-age tradition of becoming bar or bat mitzvah, typically at age 12 for girls and age 13 for boys. Nine in ten Canadian Jewish men and four in ten Canadian Jewish women have done so, in most cases as a youth but for a small proportion as an adult. The gender difference is due largely to the fact that bat mitzvahs did not become common practice until the 1970s. Consequently, the prevalence of this experience is largely a function of generation, as it is reported by eight in ten Canadian Jews ages 18 to 29, compared with little more than one-third among those ages 75 and older. Notably, becoming bar or bat mitzvah is common even among Jews who are not currently synagogue members or affiliated with any denomination or movement.

Most Canadian Jews claim some knowledge of the Hebrew language, with three-quarters saying they know the alphabet, six in ten indicating they can read at least some Hebrew words in a newspaper or prayerbook, and four in ten claiming to be able of carrying on a conversation in the language. Such knowledge is most widely indicated by Jews who are Orthodox/Modern Orthodox, those under 30 years of age, and first-generation Canadians.

The positive effect of Jewish schooling on community cohesion is evident. Comparing those who did not attend a Jewish day school or yeshiva with those who attended such schools for nine or more years shows that the latter are much more likely to believe that being part of a Jewish community, celebrating holidays with family, and caring about Israel are essential parts of being Jewish. Those who attended a Jewish day school or yeshiva for nine or more years are also significantly less likely to have intermarried.

**Comparisons with American Jews.** One of the major distinctions between the two Jewish communities is the extent of Jewish education in the formative years. American Jews are as likely as Canadian Jews to say they were brought up in the Jewish religion. But they are half as likely to have attended a Jewish day school or yeshiva, and less apt to have attended a Jewish

overnight summer camp, Sunday school or Hebrew school. Consequently, many fewer American Jews know the Hebrew alphabet or can carry on a conversation in Hebrew. At the same time, one-half of American Jews have become bar or bat mitzvah, not far behind the Canadian proportion of six in ten.

## Intermarriage and child upbringing

Assimilation is a widespread concern in the Canadian Jewish community, and a key indicator is intermarriage. Just over three-quarters of Jews who are married or in a common-law relationship have a spouse who is Jewish by religion. Having a Jewish spouse is almost universal among those who are Orthodox/Modern Orthodox or Conservative, and somewhat less so among those who affiliate with Reform or another denomination or movement. Just over half of those who are unaffiliated have a Jewish spouse. Intermarriage is highest among Jews in the youngest age cohort (nearly one-third among those 18 to 29), declining to one in five among those 75 and over. In general, intermarriage is less common in cities with large Jewish marriage pools, but Vancouver is exceptional. With a Jewish population nearly twice as large as Winnipeg's, it has a higher intermarriage rate.

Most Canadian Jewish parents report raising their children in the Jewish religion. This practice is almost universal among Orthodox/Modern Orthodox and Conservative Jews, but is also reported by about half of those who are unaffiliated, those who do not belong to Jewish organizations, and those who themselves were not raised in a Jewishly religious home. Moreover, most Jewish parents with children under 18 years of age believe their children will grow up to have a connection to Jewish life that is as strong, if not stronger, than their own.

**Comparisons with American Jews.** In Canada, intermarriage rates are increasing for all ethnic and religious groups, but they are increasing faster for Jews than for Christians. Still, intermarriage is far more common among American Jews than among Canadian Jews, at a rate of 50 percent (compared with 23 percent among Canadian Jews). Largely because of intermarriage, American Jewish parents are less likely to report raising their children in the Jewish religion. This difference is most striking among Jews who are not affiliated with any denomination or movement, with American Jews less than one-third as likely as their Canadian counterparts to be raising their children in the Jewish religion.

## Discrimination and anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism has a long history in Canada and continues to be experienced among Jews today. Close to four in ten Canadian Jews report having experienced discrimination in the past five years due to their religion, ethnicity/culture, sex and/or language. This is comparable to the experience of Muslims in Canada, and well above that of the population at large.

Specifically, about one in ten Canadian Jews say he or she has been called offensive names or snubbed in a social setting in the past year because of being Jewish. Even more common is attracting criticism from others for taking a position for or against the policies and actions of Israel; many have refrained from expressing opinions about this topic to avoid such a reaction. Close to four in ten say they have downplayed being Jewish in one or more types of situations, such as at work or while travelling outside the country. Across the board, experiences of discrimination are closely linked to age, with Jews ages 18 to 29 most likely to report such incidents.

While Jews in Canada are mindful of the burden of anti-Semitism, they do not see themselves as the most significant target of persecution in this country. They are more likely to believe that Indigenous Peoples, Muslims and Black people in Canada are frequent targets of discrimination, and are more likely to hold this view than Canadians as a whole.

Respondents' perceptions of discrimination against Jews are quite realistic if one considers official statistics on hate crime as one indicator of the actual level of anti-Jewish sentiment in Canada. In seven of the 12 years between 2006 and 2017, Jews ranked second in the number of hate crimes committed against Canadian minority groups. Jews ranked third in four of the 12 years and first in one of the 12 years. On average, about six (mainly non-violent) hate crimes per 100,000 Canadians are committed against Jews each year.

The same percentage of Montreal and Toronto Jews think they are often the object of discrimination, which is somewhat surprising given the historically higher level of anti-Semitism in Quebec than in Ontario as measured by surveys. Younger Jews are less likely than older Jews to report believing that Jews experience frequent discrimination, but are more likely to report experiencing discrimination themselves, possibly because younger Jews are more exposed to non-Jews in their

daily lives, while older Jews grew up when discrimination was more common, and their perceptions may be influenced by memory of an earlier era.

**Comparisons with American Jews.** Most of the questions in this section were not included in the Pew Survey of American Jews, so direct comparisons cannot be made. American Jews are as likely as Canadian Jews to report having been called offensive names or been snubbed in social settings over the previous year. American Jews also share with their Canadian counterparts the view that other groups in society (e.g., Muslims, Blacks) are more likely than Jews to be the target of discrimination; and they are more likely to express this opinion than is the general public in the United States.

## Connection to Israel

Canadian Jews have a strong connection to Israel. A large majority express an emotional attachment to Israel and have spent time in the country. Eight in ten have visited Israel at least once and have done so an average of five times to date. One in six report having lived in Israel for six months or more. Travel to Israel is most prevalent among Jews who are Orthodox/Modern Orthodox, but it is common across the population, especially among Jews under 45 years of age and those with a post-graduate degree.

While Jews may share a connection to Israel, they do not agree when it comes to the politics of the region. Canadian Jews are divided in their views about the Israeli government's commitment to a peace settlement with the Palestinians and the building of settlements on the West Bank in terms of their legality and impact on the security of Israel. Critical opinions of Israel are most evident among younger Jews, and those who are Reform or unaffiliated.

Opinions are also divided when it comes to how Jews view their own country's relations with Israel. A plurality endorse Canada's current level of support for Israel, but a significant minority believe it is not supportive enough. Opinions are closely linked to federal political party affiliation, with a majority of Liberal Party supporters judging the country's support of Israel to be about right, and a majority of Conservative Party supporters maintaining Canada provides too little support. Substantial minorities of Jews who support the New Democratic Party and Green Party believe Canada is too supportive of Israel.

**Comparisons with American Jews.** American Jews have a much weaker connection to Israel than do Canadian Jews. They are only half as likely to feel a strong attachment to Israel and half as likely to have ever visited the country. At the same time, Canadian and American Jews are similarly divided in their opinions about the political situation in Israel, in terms of the government's commitment to peace, Israeli settlements in the West Bank, and their own country's support for Israel. The one notable difference is that American Jews are more apt to hold an opinion (whether positive or negative), while Canadian Jews have a greater tendency to say they are unsure or decline to offer an opinion.

## Connection to local Jewish community

A large majority Canadian Jews feel somewhat, if not strongly, connected to Jewish life in their city. Such connection is largely a function of denominational affiliation and active involvement; strong connection is most prevalent among Orthodox/Modern Orthodox Jews, those with mostly Jewish friends, those who belong to multiple Jewish organizations, Israeli Jews, and those who live in Montreal. A strong connection is least evident among Jews from the former Soviet Union, those who identify mainly by ancestry/descent, and residents of Vancouver.

Reasons for not wanting to become more connected to Jewish life tend to fall into one of three broad themes. Some Jews do not want to become more connected because they are simply not interested in doing so. Others indicate obstacles that make it difficult, such as a lack of time, other priorities, access to the necessary connections or resources,

and personal limitations (e.g., health issues). A third theme concerns not feeling Jewish enough, which in some cases is about not identifying or feeling comfortable with the local community.

Many Jews express interest in becoming more connected to the local Jewish community, but they also tend to be the same people who are already feeling strongly connected. The types of activities and programs most likely to be of interest are, in order, those that are educational (lectures, courses, book clubs), cultural (the performing arts, movies, concerts), and social (activities that connect people). Some would like to see programs and activities tailored for specific groups, notably families and young children.

Based on the survey results, the Canadian Jewish community includes roughly 37,000 Sephardim, 25,000 Jews born in the former Soviet Union (FSU), and 17,000 Jews born in Israel. Comparing members of these subgroups to the Canadian Jewish population as a whole, it is only among Jews born in the FSU that one finds a substantially larger proportion that feel less than very connected to their local Jewish community. However, Jews born in the FSU, as well as Sephardim and Jews born in Israel, seem to be significantly more eager to increase their connection to Jewish life in their city than are members of the Canadian Jewish population at large. Members of the three subgroups rank-order the kinds of programs and activities they would like to engage in much like the entire Jewish community does: educational programs and activities lead the list, followed by cultural and social programs and activities. Religious programs and activities, and those intended for specific groups such as children and families, rank lowest.





# Chapter 1: The Canadian Jewish population

## Population size

In 1936, Canada's 167,000 Jews formed the world's thirteenth largest Jewish community (Rosenberg 1939: 4-5). By 2011, Canada's Jewish population had grown to 385,000, making it the third or fourth largest Jewish community in the world, exceeded in size only by the Jewish populations of Israel, the United States and, probably, France (Shahar 2014: 100). If in 2018 France's Jewish population is not already smaller than Canada's, it may well be in little more than a decade.<sup>4</sup>

What is the present Jewish population of Canada?

Unfortunately, the size of Canada's Jewish population cannot be estimated precisely from the most recent census (2016). Only censuses taken in the second year of each decade ask a question on religion. Moreover, unlike previous iterations, the 2016 census did not list "Jewish" as an example of ethnic origin. Because of that change, the number of Canadians declaring Jewish ethnicity on the census dropped 54 percent between 2011 and 2016 (Brym 2017).<sup>5</sup>

The 2018 Survey of Canadian Jews, on which this report is based, does not allow us to estimate the size of the Canadian Jewish population directly. Thankfully, Sergio DellaPergola (2017, 2018), the leading international authority on Jewish demography, has estimated the "core" Canadian Jewish population for 2017. DellaPergola defines the core Jewish population of a country as "all persons who, when asked in a socio-demographic survey, identify themselves as Jews, or who are identified as Jews by a respondent in the

same household, and do not profess another monotheistic religion." By this definition, DellaPergola estimates that there were 390,000 Jews in Canada in 2017. He also estimates that the core Canadian Jewish population increased by 2,000 between 2016 and 2017. If that rate of growth persisted, we arrive at a population estimate of 392,000 core Canadian Jews in 2018.

The 2013 Pew Survey of American Jews broadened standard definitions of "Jewish" to include people who regard themselves as partly Jewish (Pew Research Center 2013). In the 2018 Survey of Canadian Jews, five percent of respondents said they were partly Jewish. If the core Jewish population was 392,000, it follows that core plus partly Jewish Canadians numbered about 413,000 in 2018.

## Urban population

Canada's Jewish population is highly concentrated in a few cities. Figure 1-1 lists cities with Jewish communities of more than 2,000 members in 2011, the last year for which we have reliable data (Shahar 2014). In that year, nearly one-half of Canada's Jews lived in Toronto and nearly one-quarter in Montreal. Vancouver and Winnipeg ranked third and fourth in size, but accounted for a much smaller percentage of the population—6.7 percent and 3.5 percent, respectively. The Jewish population of Ottawa was nearly as large as that of Winnipeg.

<sup>4</sup> Figures are rounded throughout to avoid giving a false sense of precision. The 2011 figure for Canada is based on the number of National Household Survey respondents who indicated they were Jewish by (1) religion and ethnicity, (2) religion and non-Jewish ethnicity or (3) ethnicity but with no religious affiliation. The Jewish population of France is declining because of rapid aging and mounting anti-Semitism leading to out-migration to Israel and other countries, including Canada (Cohen 2009; Murray 2018). The Pew Research Center (2015) estimated that the Jewish population of Canada was 13 percent larger than that of France as early as 2010. DellaPergola (2017, 2018) estimated the decrease in France's Jewish population and the increase in Canada's between 2016 and 2017. Using his 2017 population estimates as a base, and projecting forward, Canada's core Jewish population will be larger than that of France by 2029.

<sup>5</sup> The 2011 National Household Survey was voluntary and therefore not really a census. Although it was deficient in some respects, particularly in its undercount of rural and low-income Canadians, it probably had little effect on the Jewish population count (Brym, 2014). Statistics Canada researchers linked respondents from the 2011 and 2016 censuses. They found that many Canadians who declared themselves Jews by ethnicity in 2011, no longer seeing "Jewish" as an option in 2016, said they were of Polish, Russian, Canadian, or some other ethnic origin (Statistics Canada 2018d).

Vancouver was by far the fastest growing Jewish community in the country, increasing in size by one-third between 1991 and 2011. The Jewish populations of three other cities also increased substantially over those two decades: Ottawa (16.4%), Toronto (15.4%), and Calgary (13.0%). On the other hand, the Jewish population of some cities shrank between 1991 and 2011. Montreal and Winnipeg stand out, with the Jewish communities of both cities having decreased in size by more than 10 percent. We discuss reasons for population decline in Montreal and Winnipeg in Chapter 8.

## Sex and age distribution

According to the 2011 National Household Survey, the sex distribution of the Canadian Jewish population is within a few tenths of a percentage point of the sex distribution of the total Canadian population, while the age distribution is somewhat different (see Figure 1-2; Shahar 2014). Notably, Canadians Jews are proportionately 1.2 percentage points more numerous in the 0-14-year-old age cohort, 3.0 percentage points more numerous in the 65+ age cohort, and 3.2 percent points less numerous in the 25-44-year-old age cohort.

## Immigrants

According to the 2016 census, 22 percent of all Canadians were immigrants. Among Jews in our survey (which consists of adults only), the figure was 30 percent. Of the immigrants in our sample, 21 percent came from the former Soviet Union, 20 percent from the United States, 15 percent from Israel, and seven percent from South Africa, with the remainder arriving from numerous other countries.

## Ashkenazim and Sephardim/Mizrakhim

In our survey, 83 percent of respondents defined themselves as of Ashkenazi ancestry (from Western Europe and Eastern Europe), and around 10 percent of Sephardic or Mizrahi ancestry (from Southern Europe and the Middle East). The remainder defined themselves as “something else” (often a mixture of the two groups), replied “don’t know,” or did not answer the question.

Figure 1-1

### Canadian Jewish population: Distribution and change

CENSUS METROPOLITAN AREA	PERCENT OF JEWISH POPULATION 2011 (%)	PERCENT CHANGE 1991 - 2011 (% ±)
Toronto	48.2	15.4
Montreal	23.2	-10.8
Vancouver	6.7	33.4
Winnipeg	3.5	-10.1
Ottawa	3.5	16.4
Calgary	2.2	13.0
Edmonton	1.4	1.1
Hamilton	1.3	-1.1
Victoria	0.7	3.4
London	0.7	-0.8
Halifax	0.5	1.9
Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge	0.5	na
Rest of Canada	7.6	na
TOTAL	100.0	9.1

na=not available

Figure 1-2

### Sex and age distribution of Canadian Jewish population and all Canadians

	CANADIAN JEWS (%)	CANADIAN POPULATION (%)
Sex		
Male	49.6	49.2
Female	50.4	50.8
TOTAL*	100.0	100.0
Age cohort		
0-14	18.2	17.0
15-24	13.4	13.2
25-44	23.5	26.7
45-64	28.0	29.3
65+	16.9	13.9
TOTAL*	100.0	100.0

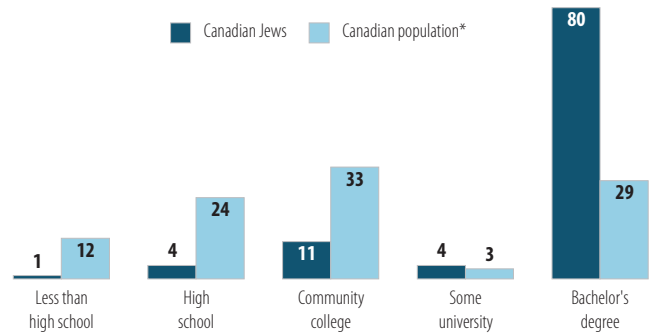
\*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

## Educational attainment

The educational attainment of our survey respondents is extremely high by any standard. Canada boasts the world's highest percentage of residents with a post-secondary degree (OECD 2016). With 32 percent of respondents whose highest level of education attainment is the completion of a bachelor's degree, and 37 percent whose highest level of education attainment is the completion of a post-graduate or professional degree, it may well be that Canadian Jews form the most highly educated ethnic group in the country.

Figure 1-3 highlights the difference between all Canadians (based on Statistics Canada data) and Canadian Jews (based on our survey data) with respect to educational attainment. It focuses just on people between the ages of 25 and 64, that is, on people who have likely completed their education and are not retired. The proportion of Canadian Jews in the 25-64-year age cohort who have completed a bachelor's degree is 2.8 times higher than the corresponding figure for the entire Canadian population (80% versus 29%).

Figure 1-3  
Educational attainment of Canadian Jews/  
all Canadians, ages 25 to 64 (%)\*



\* Data for the Canadian population is from the 2016 census (Statistics Canada 2017a).

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# Chapter 2: Jewish identity

Identity is a critical and complex topic for the Jewish people. For many Jews, being Jewish is much more than a matter of religious faith and practice. This chapter explores the ways in which Jews in Canada identify as Jewish. Many of the survey questions are drawn from the Pew Survey of American Jews, providing the basis for cross-country comparison.

## Personal Jewish identity

Canadian Jews identify as Jewish by religion, ancestry/descent and/or culture, with many relating to more than one of these dimensions. Most Canadian Jews believe in God or a universal spirit, but for most, being Jewish is more than about being religious.

**BASIS OF JEWISH IDENTITY.** When Canadian Jews are asked how they personally identify as Jewish, they respond in a variety of ways. About one-half emphasize one of three primary characteristics: Being Jewish is mainly a matter of culture (22%), ancestry or descent (15%), or religion (12%). The other half say that their identity is based on a

combination of two or more of these three aspects (16%), with a plurality (33%) indicating that their identity is based equally on all three dimensions (culture, ancestry/culture, and religion).

American Jews express a similar pattern of personal identification, but are more likely than Canadians to emphasize one of the three aspects rather than a combination of them (only 19% say all three are equally important in how they identify as Jewish).

Among Canadian Jews, the overall pattern of identification is broadly similar across the population, but there are some notable differences. Identity based on all three aspects of Judaism is most widely reported by individuals who affiliate as Orthodox/Modern Orthodox (44%) or Conservative (43%), those who are members of a synagogue and one or more other Jewish organizations (42%), and those for whom being religious and/or being Jewish is very important (46% and 41%, respectively).

Figure 2-1  
How do you think of yourself as Jewish? (%)

	CANADIAN TOTAL	DENOMINATION					AMERICAN JEWS
		ORTHODOX	CONSERVATIVE	REFORM	OTHER	NONE	
Mainly a matter of culture	22	8	22	28	19	28	26
Mainly a matter of ancestry/descent	15	7	9	13	15	26	27
Mainly a matter of religion	12	27	10	6	14	6	15
Combination of two of above	16	12	15	21	15	18	11
All three equally important	33	44	43	33	35	20	19
Other	1	1	1	<1	2	1	1
TOTAL %*	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

\* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Q.3

To you personally, is being Jewish mainly a matter of religion, mainly a matter of ancestry or descent, or mainly a matter of culture?

By comparison, identification as Jewish mainly through culture is most prevalent among Reform Jews, and those who do not identify with any denomination or movement, as well as among those who say religion is of little or no importance to them. Ancestry or descent is the most common response among individuals who have the weakest connections to Judaism: those who identify as “partially Jewish,” are not attached to any denomination/movement, place low importance on being Jewish, and who have few if any Jewish friends. The basis of identification as Jewish does not vary significantly by city or age cohort, or between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews.

**JEWISH BY RELIGION.** While religion may not be the primary basis for identifying as Jewish, almost everyone surveyed (95%) identified their current religion as Jewish. This is somewhat less likely to be the case among residents in Vancouver (84%), those not affiliated with any branch of Judaism (87%), and immigrants from the former Soviet Union (87%). Of the five percent who do not identify their religion as Jewish, nearly all (94%) describe themselves as “partially Jewish” (this translates into 5% of the total adult Jewish population across the four cities).

**IMPORTANCE OF BEING JEWISH.** Apart from the basis for identification as Jews, how much importance do individuals (including those who identify themselves as partially Jewish) place on being Jewish? Almost everyone surveyed says being Jewish in their life is very (64%) or somewhat (27%) important, with few (8%) indicating it is of little or no importance.

The strength of importance placed on being Jewish varies somewhat across the population. Strong importance is most widespread among Jews who are Orthodox/Modern Orthodox (89% say very important), those whose mother tongue is Yiddish (86%), and those who belong to both a synagogue and another type of Jewish organization (for example, a Jewish community centre) (82%).

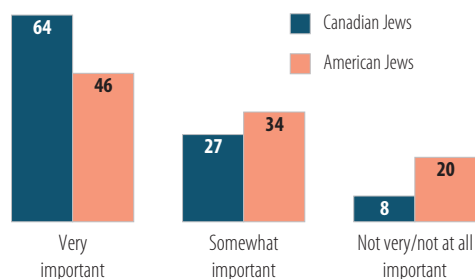
Strong importance is evident but much less widespread among Jews with the weakest connections to Judaism; that is, among those who identify primarily through ancestry/descent (41% say very important) or culture (52%), who have no denominational affiliation (43%), belong to no Jewish

organizations (39%), have hardly any or no Jewish friends (28%), or have not been raised religiously as a Jew (35%). Even among these groups, a majority indicate that being Jewish is at least somewhat important. The only identified group in which a significant proportion says being Jewish is not very or not at all important consists of those who identify as partially Jewish (48%).

The importance placed on being Jewish is higher among women (68% say very important) than among men (59%), but is notably consistent across age cohorts. Across the four cities, Jews in Vancouver (51%) are less likely than those in the other three cities to place strong importance on being Jewish. This pattern is further reflected in other survey findings showing that the Vancouver community is, on average, more secular in its orientation and practice.

By comparison, American Jews are much less likely than Canadian Jews to place strong importance on being Jewish: only 46 percent of American Jews say being Jewish is very important to them, compared with 20 percent who say it is not very or not at all important. Moreover, for American Jews there is a much stronger link between the importance of Jewish identity and that identity being tied to religion (American Jews who identify primarily through religion are five times more likely than others to say that being Jewish is very important to them; in Canada, the ratio is less than two-to-one).

**Figure 2-2**  
Importance of being Jewish in your life (%)



Q.9  
How important is being Jewish in your life – very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important?

**IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION.** While relatively few Canadian Jews ground their Jewish identity mainly in religion alone, most say religion is important to them. Two in three report that religion is very (30%) or somewhat (37%) important in their lives, compared with three in ten who say it is not very (20%) or not at all (11%) important. As with Jewish identity, the importance placed on religion is more widespread among Canadian Jews than among American Jews; among the latter, 55 percent say it is very or somewhat important, versus 44 percent who say it is less so.<sup>6</sup>

In Canada, Jews placing strong importance on religion tend to be the same people who identify strongly as being Jewish, especially those who are Orthodox/Modern Orthodox (72% of whom say religion is very important to them). Most of the individuals who place little or no importance on religion are the same ones who put little or no importance on being Jewish.

**BELIEF IN GOD OR A UNIVERSAL SPIRIT.** Six in ten (62%) Canadian Jews say they believe in God or a universal spirit, compared with 24 percent who do not, and another one in six who offer a more equivocal response (2%) or none at all (12%). Predictably, belief in God or a universal spirit is most widespread among Jews who identify mainly by religion (88%) and among those who are Orthodox/Modern Orthodox (89%). However, a significant proportion of Jews who identify mainly by culture (47%) and/or by ancestry/descent (50%) also express belief in God or a universal spirit.

American Jews may be less likely than their Canadian counterparts to place a strong importance on religion in their life, but they are more likely to express belief in God or a universal spirit. About seven in ten American Jews say they believe in God or a universal spirit with absolute certainty (34%) or with somewhat less certainty (38%). This view is somewhat less evident among American Jews who do not identify Jewishly by religion, but it is nevertheless shared by majorities in each denomination, as well as among those with no denominational affiliation.

Figure 2-3  
Belief in God or a universal spirit (%)

	Yes	No	OTHER/ DON'T KNOW	TOTAL
TOTAL*	62	24	14	100
BY JEWISH IDENTITY				
Mainly by religion	88	5	8	100
Mainly by ancestry/descent	50	37	12	100
Mainly by culture	47	38	16	100
Other combination	53	30	17	100
All three equally	74	11	14	100

\* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Q.10  
Do you believe in God or a universal spirit, or not?

<sup>6</sup> Data from other Pew Research Center studies document that American Jews are among the least religious groups in the United States.

## Important aspects of being Jewish

Attributes most widely seen as essential to Jewish identity include leading a moral and ethical life, remembering the Holocaust, and celebrating Jewish holidays with family. Much less emphasis is given to observing Jewish law, attending synagogue, and participating in Jewish cultural activities.

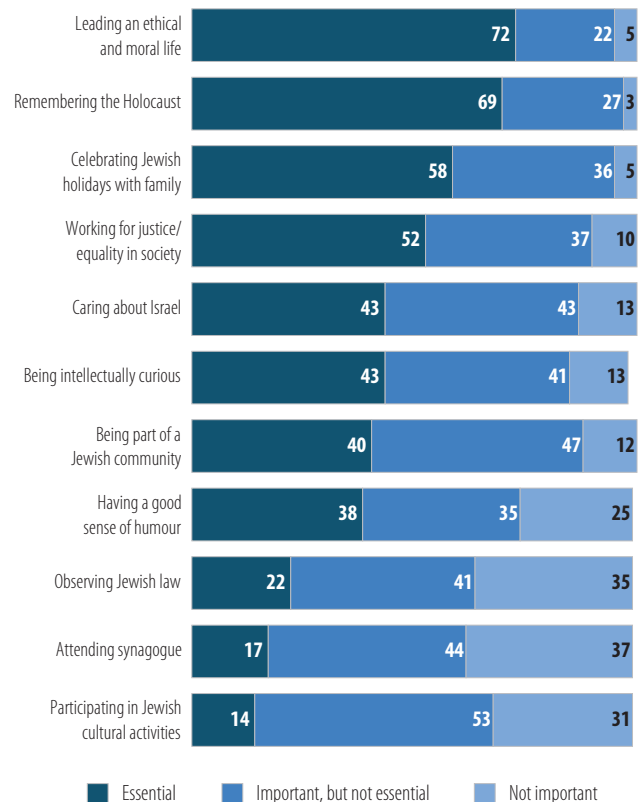
**WHAT IS ESSENTIAL TO BEING JEWISH?** Another useful way of understanding what it means to be Jewish is to explore what people consider essential aspects of being Jewish. The survey asked respondents whether each of 11 attributes or activities is essential to what being Jewish means to them (versus important but not essential, or not important). Most of these items were drawn from the Pew Survey of American Jews.

Each of the 11 attributes are considered by Canadian Jews to be important, but what is most telling is what is seen to be “essential” to being Jewish. At the top of the list is **leading an ethical and moral life** (which 72% see as essential), followed closely by **remembering the Holocaust** (69%), and then **celebrating Jewish holidays with family** (58%) and **working for justice/equality in society** (52%). At the bottom of the list are **observing Jewish law** (22%), **attending synagogue** (17%), and **participating in Jewish cultural activities such as concerts and events** (14%).

Across the population, the rank order of essential attributes and activities is similar, but some significant differences emerge. Attributes most widely considered essential among Jews who identify strongly by religion include observing Jewish law, attending synagogue, and celebrating Jewish holidays with family (although, even among those who identify strongly by religion, these attributes are still well down the list). Religious identity and observance is also a factor in the extent to which individuals place essential importance on living a moral and ethical life, caring for Israel, and being part of a Jewish community.

Figure 2-4

### What is essential to being Jewish? (%)



Q.4a-k

Please tell me how important each of the following is to what being Jewish means to you. Is [item] essential, important but not essential, or not an important part of what being Jewish means to you?



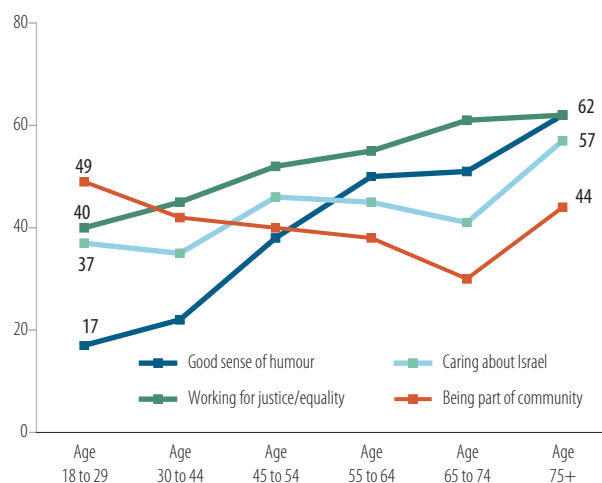
Women are more likely than men to emphasize most of the attributes and activities as essential, especially in relation to celebrating Jewish holidays with family and being part of a Jewish community. Age is also important in many cases: The importance of living a moral and ethical life increases with age, as does working for justice and equality in society, being intellectually curious, caring for Israel, and—in particular—having a good sense of humour (seen as essential by 62% of Jews 75 and older, compared with only 17% among those 18 to 29). However, it is younger Jews who are most apt to say that being part of a Jewish community is an essential component of their Jewishness.

Reform Jews are somewhat more likely than others to place essential importance on such secular attributes/activities as being intellectually curious, working for justice and equality in society, and having a good sense of humour. However, differences on these attributes across denominations are not large. Finally, Vancouver residents are less likely to emphasize many of the attributes/activities, reflecting that community's more secular orientation to identity and practice.

What Canadian Jews consider essential aspects of being Jewish is roughly in line with their counterparts in the USA. The overall ranking of comparable attributes and activities is mostly the same, with a few exceptions. Canadians are noticeably more likely to emphasize being part of a Jewish community (a 12-point difference in the proportion who say this is essential), while American Jews are a bit more apt to place a priority on remembering the Holocaust (4-point gap), working for justice and equality in society (4 points), being intellectually curious (6 points), and having a good sense of humour (4 points).

The survey also gave respondents an opportunity to identify anything else they consider to be essential to what being Jewish means to them that was not already presented (this question was asked without prompting specific responses). Close to one-half volunteered at least one additional aspect of being Jewish, with a broad range of themes identified. At the top of the list are maintaining traditions to pass on to future generations (8%), being part of a Jewish community (7%), maintaining good values (7%), the importance of family, even if some members are not Jewish (6%), defending the Jewish people against anti-Semitism (6%), and connecting to Jewish history (5%).

**Figure 2-5**  
What is essential to being Jewish?  
(%) By age cohort



Q.4d,g,e,h  
Is [item] essential, important but not essential, or not an important part of what being Jewish means to you?

**Figure 2-6**  
Essential to being Jewish (%)

	CANADIAN JEWS	AMERICAN JEWS
Leading an ethical and moral life	72	69
Remembering the Holocaust	69	73
Celebrating Jewish holidays with family	58	NA*
Working for justice/equality in society	52	56
Being intellectually curious	43	49
Caring about Israel	43	43
Being part of a Jewish community	40	28
Having a good sense of humour	38	42
Observing Jewish law	22	19
Attending synagogue	17	NA*
Participating in Jewish cultural activities	14	NA*

\* Not asked in Pew survey  
Q.4a-k  
Is [item] essential, important but not essential, or not an important part of what being Jewish means to you?

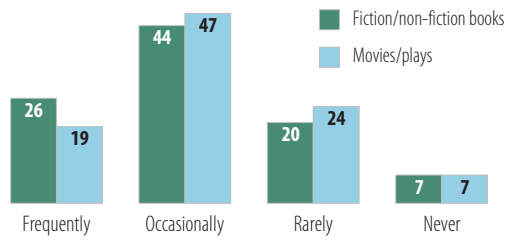
### IMPORTANCE OF JEWISH BOOKS AND FILMS.

Another indicator of Jewish identity is the extent to which individuals are drawn to Jewish themes in books and the arts. Seven in ten Canadian Jews say that when choosing a **fiction or non-fiction** book to read, they are frequently (26%) or occasionally (44%) attracted to works that contain a Jewish theme. A similar proportion is frequently (19%) or occasionally (47%) attracted to **movies and plays** with a Jewish theme.

When it comes to books, attraction to Jewish themes is most widely voiced by those who identify Jewishly by religion, those who are Orthodox/Modern Orthodox (42%), 75 and older (37%), and whose mother tongue is Yiddish (50%). A similar pattern is found in terms of frequent attraction to Jewish movies and plays, but such interest is also evident among those who identify with a non-mainstream denomination or movement (27%).<sup>7</sup>

Figure 2-7

### Attraction to Jewish themes in the arts (%)



Q.5

*In choosing a fiction or non-fiction book to read, how often are you attracted to works that contain a Jewish theme?*

Q.6

*And in choosing to see a movie or a play, how often are you attracted to ones that contain a Jewish theme?*

<sup>7</sup> Non-mainstream denominations and movements identified by survey respondents include Reconstructionist, Renewal, Humanist or Humanitarian, Chabad, Hasidic, Yeshivish, and Modern Jewish.

## Commentary

**A SENSE OF HUMOUR.** When asked what the essential elements of Jewishness are, the biggest difference that emerged across age cohorts concerned the importance of having a good sense of humour. Respondents over the age of 74 are 3.6 times more likely than those under the age of 26 to regard having a good sense of humour as an essential part of being Jewish.

It is difficult to say what accounts for this unexpected finding. However, we may borrow a page from linguist Benjamin Lee Whorf and anthropological linguist Edward Sapir (Whorf 1956). Sapir and Whorf investigated the way language helps to shape perceptions of reality. They might have argued that the positive relationship between age and regarding a good sense of humour as an essential part of Jewishness is due in part to the depletion among young Jews of Jewish humour's richest reservoir—the Yiddish language, which is today spoken almost exclusively by some Chasidim, a few academics, and aging survivors of pre- and immediate post-World War II Jewish immigration from Europe. In the 1931 census, 96 percent of Canada's Jews declared Yiddish their mother tongue; in the 2011 census, fewer than four percent of Canada's core Jewish population did so (Shahar 2014: iii; Statistics Canada 2014a 2018b; Yam n.d.: 3).

**CARING FOR ISRAEL.** In addition, Canadian Jews over the age of 74 are 20 percentage points more likely than Canadian Jewish adults under the age of 30 to think that caring for Israel is an essential part of being Jewish. It would be a mistake to base a historical forecast on these data, anticipating that as young Jewish Canadians age, the Canadian Jewish community's support for Israel will weaken; unforeseen events that change people's minds happen all the time. On the other hand, based on these results, it is possible to say that, barring unanticipated events that elicit an increase in young Jewish Canadians' concern for Israel, the Canadian Jewish community may be somewhat less inclined to offer unqualified support for the Jewish state with the passage of time. This is the first Canadian evidence of a trend that has been documented in the United States over decades. This issue is explored in greater depth in Chapter 7.

It is unclear whether the inclination of younger Canadian Jewish adults to care less about Israel is associated with the younger generation being more left-wing politically. On the one hand, the youngest age cohort is 22 percentage points less likely than the oldest cohort to regard working for justice and equality in society an essential part of being Jewish. On the other hand, the proportion of respondents supporting the federal New Democratic Party (the most left-wing of Canada's major political parties) declines with age; 18 percent of respondents between the ages of 18 and 29 say they support the NDP compared to eight percent of respondents over the age of 74. One interpretation of these findings is that young Canadian Jewish adults lean more to the left than do older Canadian Jews but are more likely to regard working for justice and equality in society as a universal human value rather than a distinguishing feature of Jewishness.

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# Chapter 3: Jewish life and practice

## Affiliation with Jewish organizations

Six in ten Canadian Jews affiliate with one of the three main Jewish denominations, and a similar proportion belong to a synagogue, temple or prayer group. Jews in Canada are much more likely than their American counterparts to belong to a synagogue or other types of Jewish organizations.

**JEWISH DENOMINATION/MOVEMENT.** A central part of life for many Jews is affiliation with organized Judaism, in the form of religious and non-religious organizations. Affiliation is typically organized around well-established denominations or more recent movements.<sup>8</sup> In Canada, six in ten Jews report belonging to or being actively involved in one of the mainstream denominations, including Conservative (26%), Orthodox/Modern Orthodox (17%), and

Reform (16%). About one in ten (11%) affiliate with one of the smaller Jewish movements, including Reconstructionism, Humanistic or Renewal Judaism, Hasidism, or something else. The remaining three in ten (31%) say they are not affiliated with any specific denomination or movement, including some who indicate they are “just Jewish.”

American Jews, in comparison, are much more likely to be members of the Reform movement, and less apt to be Conservative or Orthodox/Modern Orthodox. The proportion of unaffiliated Jews in the USA is roughly the same as in Canada, despite American Jews being more assimilated and secular in other ways (see below).

Figure 3-1  
Jewish denomination/movement  
(%) By city

	CANADIAN TOTAL	TORONTO	MONTREAL	CITY WINNIPEG	VANCOUVER	AMERICAN JEWS
Conservative	26	27	19	33	18	18
Orthodox/Modern Orthodox	17	16	25	6	9	10
Reform	16	21	10	12	16	35
Reconstructionist	3	3	2	1	6	1
Renewal/Humanist	2	2	1	1	7	1
Hasidic/Chabad	2	1	6	<1	1	<1
Other	4	3	4	4	2	4
None/just Jewish	28	27	30	39	40	30
Don't know/no answer	3	3	4	4	1	—
TOTAL %*	100	100	100	99	101	100

\* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding

Q.11

What religious denomination or movement, if any, do you consider yourself belonging to or currently active in?

<sup>8</sup> For those unfamiliar with the subject, a brief history of Jewish denominationalism may be useful. The Reform movement emerged in mid-nineteenth century Germany, emphasizing ethics over ceremony and traditional practice, and accommodation to the cultural standards of the post-Enlightenment West. Orthodox Judaism, also of German origin, was a reaction against Reform and involved a return to tradition. The Conservative movement crystallized in Great Britain and the United States as a synthesis of Reform and Orthodoxy, seeking to integrate what its leaders regarded as the most viable elements of both. These three branches of Judaism incorporate the great majority of affiliated Jews. Smaller branches include Reconstructionism, which broke away from Conservatism in the United States in the mid-1950s, and may be regarded as a gender-egalitarian and politically progressive movement that in some respects stands between Conservative and Reform; Chasidism, an ecstatic movement that originated in Ukraine in the eighteenth century; and various late 20th century humanist movements that originated in the United States and do away with the notion of a personal God.

In Canada, Conservative affiliation is most common in Winnipeg (33%), and among those who identify Jewishly by religion, descent and culture, those with higher incomes, are ages 45 and older (and especially 75 plus), and are second and third-plus generation Canadians. Orthodox/Modern Orthodox Jews are most prevalent in Montreal (25%), among Jews who identify mainly by religion, and among those with lower levels of education. Reform Jews are most apt to reside in Toronto (21%), have higher levels of education and income, are between the ages of 45 and 74, and are third-plus generation Canadians.

Finally, unaffiliated Jews are most apt to live in Vancouver (40%), identify Jewishly mainly by ancestry/descent or by culture, and to be men and first-generation Canadian. Not surprisingly, unaffiliated Jews are also least likely to have strong connections to Judaism in other ways: they are least likely to place strong importance on religion, being Jewish, on belonging to Jewish organizations, and having Jewish friends.

**SYNAGOGUE MEMBERSHIP.** Synagogues play a central role in the religious, spiritual and community life of many Jews. In Canada, close to six in ten (58%) report they and/or someone else in their household is currently a member of a synagogue, temple or prayer group (5% of this total indicate that it is someone else in their household who is a member). This proportion is almost double the percentage of American Jews who report such membership (31%).

Synagogue membership is most widespread among Orthodox/Modern Orthodox Jews in Canada (89%), followed by those who identify as Conservative (70%) or are part of one of the smaller movements (69%).

Synagogue membership is somewhat less common among those who identify with the Reform movement (56%). Membership in a synagogue or other Jewish religious organization is also indicated by three in ten (31%) of those not affiliated with any Jewish denomination or movement; this indicates that a significant number of Jews find it worthwhile to belong to such organizations even if they do not consider themselves affiliated with their synagogue's denomination.

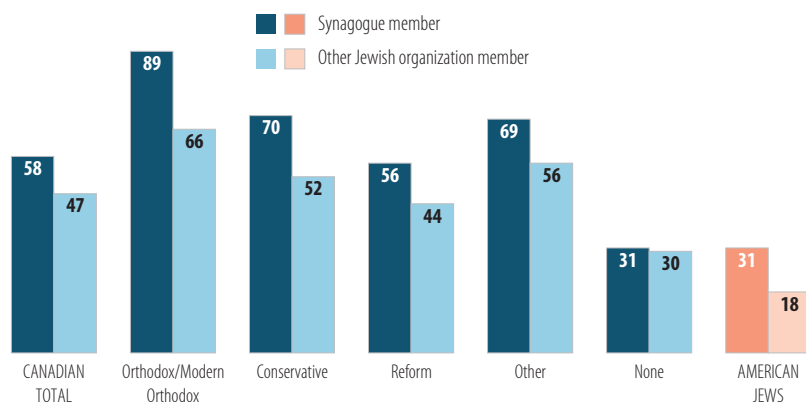
Across Canada, synagogue/temple/prayer group membership is most prevalent in Montreal (62%) and Toronto (61%), as well as among households earning \$150K or more (66%), and those with children at home (66%). Such membership is least common in Vancouver (37%), and among those who identify as Jewish mainly by ancestry/descent (36%).

**OTHER JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS.** Almost half (47%) of Canadian Jews report belonging to one or more types of Jewish organizations other than a synagogue or temple, such as a Jewish community centre; this is about 2.5 times the proportion for American Jews (18%). In Canada, such membership is most common in Winnipeg (57%), among those who are Orthodox/Modern Orthodox (66%) or affiliated with one of the smaller movements (56%), among Jews with children at home (54%), women (49%), and those 18 to 29 years of age (57%).<sup>9</sup>

Figure 3-2

### Synagogue/Jewish organization membership\*

(%) By denomination/movement



\* Includes self plus others in household

Q.13

Are you, or someone else in your household, currently a member of a synagogue, temple, or other prayer group?

Q.14

Are you, or anyone in your household, currently a member of any Jewish organization other than a synagogue or temple?

<sup>9</sup> The high membership level in Winnipeg may be attributable in part to the large and well-established Asper Jewish Community Campus in that city.

## Participation in Jewish organizations

Regular attendance at synagogue services is closely linked to denomination and religious identity, with most Canadian Jews attending services no more than a few times a year (apart from special occasions). Eight in ten, however, support Jewish organizations and causes financially.

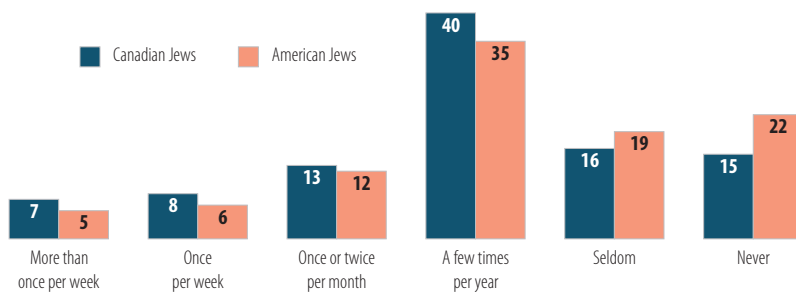
In addition to membership and affiliation, the survey also examined synagogue attendance and financial donations to Jewish causes.

**SYNAGOGUE ATTENDANCE.** People belong to synagogues, temples, and prayer groups for various reasons, which may not include regular participation in Shabbat services and other synagogue-based activities. Apart from weddings, funerals, and bar/bat mitzvahs, only one in six Canadian Jews says he or she attends synagogue services at least once a week (8%) or more often (7%). A similar proportion (13%) does so once or twice per month, while a plurality (40%) attend a few times per year, and three in ten say they attend seldom (16%) or never (15%). Attendance among American Jews is only a little less frequent. Among

those who report being a member of a synagogue, temple or prayer group, attendance is more frequent: one in four (25%) in this group attend at least once per week, with another 20 percent doing so once or twice per month.

Not surprisingly, synagogue attendance is closely tied to denomination and religious identity. Frequent attendance (at least once a week) is most widely reported by Jews who are Orthodox/Modern Orthodox (49%), and those who identify Jewishly primarily through religion (39%). Frequent attendance is also above average among those who affiliate with a non-mainstream movement (20%) and among men (20% versus 11% among women). Infrequent or no attendance is most widely reported in Vancouver (53%) and Winnipeg (42%), among those who identify as Jewish through ancestry/descent (55%), and among those who were not raised as religiously Jewish (54%). Notably, frequency of synagogue attendance does not vary significantly by age cohort, and is marginally higher among Jews under the age of 45.

Figure 3-3  
Frequency of synagogue attendance\* (%)



\* Excludes attending weddings, funerals and bar/bat mitzvahs

Q.17

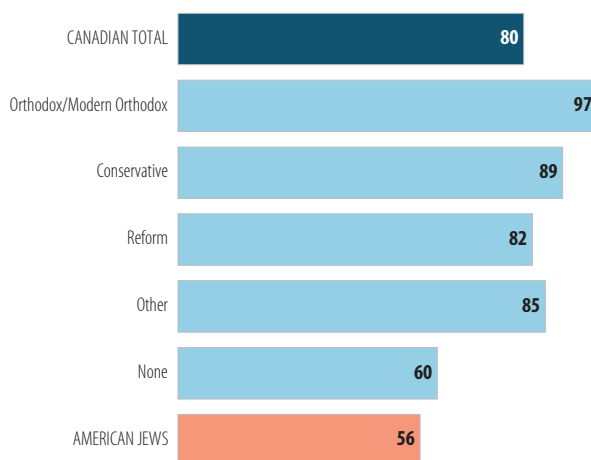
Aside from special occasions like weddings, funerals and bar/bat mitzvahs, how often do you attend Jewish religious services at a synagogue, temple, or minyan?

**FINANCIAL DONATIONS TO JEWISH CAUSES.** The Jewish community in Canada is very active in providing programs, services and other activities—religious, educational, cultural, and advocacy—all of which depend heavily on financial support from individuals; and Canadian Jews respond. Eight in ten (80%) report that they or someone in their household made a financial donation in 2017 to one or more Jewish charities or causes such as a synagogue, Jewish school, or group supporting Israel. The comparable figure among American Jews for 2012 is 56 percent.

Such donations are the norm across the community but are most widespread among Orthodox/Modern Orthodox Jews (97%), as well as those who belong to both a synagogue and another Jewish organization (96%), or just a synagogue (90%). Household income makes a difference, but such support is reported even among households earning less than \$75,000 a year (69%). The proportion providing financial support in 2017 is lowest among Jews in Vancouver (54%), those who identify primarily through ancestry/descent (63%), those with no affiliation (60%), those not raised religiously Jewish (58%), and those for whom being Jewish is not important (46%).

Figure 3-4

Financial donation to Jewish causes in 2017  
(%) By denomination



Q.15

*In 2017, did you or someone else in your household make a financial donation to any Jewish charity or cause, such as a synagogue, Jewish school, or group supporting Israel?*



## Family/home practice

Almost one-half of Canadian Jews light Sabbath candles on a weekly or regular basis, almost twice the proportion of American Jews who do so. One in seven Canadian Jews had a Christmas or New Year's tree last December, with this practice most prevalent among those with a non-Jewish partner or spouse.

**LIGHTING SABBATH CANDLES.** One of the most widely observed Jewish practices in the home is the lighting of candles at sundown on Friday to mark the beginning of the Sabbath. One-third (34%) of Canadian Jews reports lighting Sabbath candles every week, with another 12 percent saying they usually do so. This is in sharp contrast with American Jews, only 16 percent of whom observe this practice every week, compared with just over half (53%) who never do so.

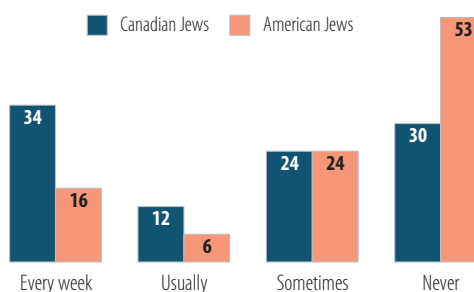
The practice of lighting Sabbath candles weekly is most common among Orthodox/Modern Orthodox Jews (76%), those who identify mainly through religion (62%), and those who belong to both a synagogue and another Jewish organization (54%). This practice is least evident in Winnipeg (17%) and Vancouver (17%), and among Reform Jews (19%), those with no affiliation (17%), and those who were not raised religiously Jewish (22%). Across age cohorts, Jews ages 18 to 29 (41%) are most likely to report making this a weekly practice, in comparison with those 45 to 74 years old (31%).

**CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR'S TREE.** Christmas is widely celebrated in North America by having a Christmas tree in one's home, and New Year's trees are common in the countries of the former Soviet Union around the time of the winter solstice. To what extent do Jews in Canada mark these events by having a Christmas or New Year's tree?

One in seven (14%) Canadian Jews says his or her household had a Christmas or New Year's tree the previous December (2017), fewer than half the percentage of American Jews (32%) who observed this holiday tradition. In Canada, this practice is most widely reported by Jews with a non-Jewish partner or spouse (51%), and to a lesser extent among Jews in Vancouver (33%) and Winnipeg (29%), those with no affiliation (26%), first-generation residents from the countries of the former Soviet Union (36%), and those not raised religiously Jewish (36%).

Figure 3-5

### Frequency of lighting Sabbath candles (%)



Q.18

How often, if at all, does anyone in your household light Sabbath candles on Friday night?

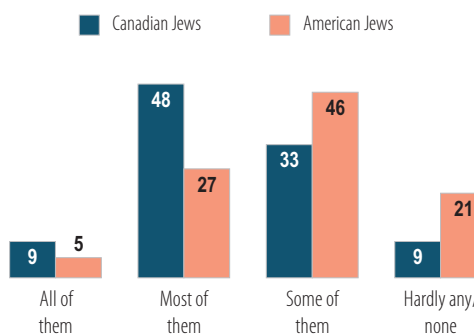
## Jewish friends

Canadian Jews tend to have friendships with other Jews. This pattern is especially common among those in the Orthodox/Modern Orthodox community, but is also evident among unaffiliated Jews. More than half say that all or most of their friends are Jews, well above the proportion reported by American Jews.

Apart from formal membership and affiliations, being Jewish is also about social connections with family and friends. Results from this survey reveal that Canadian Jews tend to have friendships mostly with other Jews. More than half report that either all (9%) or most (48%) of their current friends are Jewish, compared with those who say only some (33%), hardly any (8%) or none (1%) of them are Jewish. As with many other aspects of Jewish life covered in this survey, American Jews are much less apt to form friendships with other Jews; only one-third (32%) of American Jews say that all or most of their friends are Jewish.

The strongest predictor of having all or mostly Jewish friends is denominational affiliation. More than eight in ten (84%) Orthodox/Modern Orthodox Jews say that all or most of their friends are Jewish, well above the proportion reported by those who are Conservative (67%), Reform (51%), members of other denominations or movements (47%), or those who have no affiliation (40%). Strong Jewish friendship networks are more evident in Montreal (59%) and Toronto (59%) than in Winnipeg (49%) and Vancouver (27%). The proportion of Jewish friends is similar across both age cohorts and generations in Canada.

Figure 3-6  
Proportion of friends who are Jewish (%)



Q.16

*How many of your close friends are Jewish? Would you say all of them, most of them, some of them, or hardly any of them?*

## Commentary

### JEWISH RELIGIOUS INVOLVEMENT ACROSS AGE

**COHORTS.** One might expect to find considerable religious assimilation as one moves from older to younger age cohorts. Surprisingly, attending synagogue weekly or more often hardly varies by age cohort (see Figure 3-7). True, the percentage of 18-29-year-olds who install a Christmas or New Year's tree in their home is six percentage points higher than is the case for those over the age of 74. But at the same time, 18-29-year-olds are eight percentage points more likely than those in the oldest age cohort to light Sabbath candles all or most weeks. What is remarkable about Figure 3-7 is the flatness of the curves, indicating little difference in religious involvement over the generations.<sup>10</sup>

### JEWISH COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION ACROSS AGE

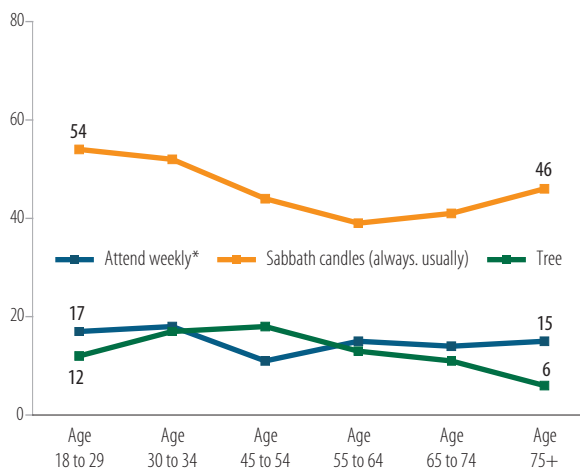
**COHORTS.** Figure 3-8 summarizes four measures of the intensity of participation in Jewish community life for each age cohort in our sample. The main story (told by the weakly inclined curves in Figure 3-8) is that young Canadian Jewish adults are about as involved in the Jewish community as their grandparents are.

Two main deviations from the overall pattern exist. First, synagogue membership is 10 percentage points higher for Canadian Jews between the ages of 18 and 29 than for those over the age of 74. The second exception concerns the proportion of Jews who say that all or most of their close friends are Jewish—57 percent of the youngest age cohort and 67 percent of the oldest. Both these deviations are likely the result of the fact that elderly people are more sedentary than young people are, and a considerable number of them live in Jewish homes for the elderly. (The oldest respondents in our sample are in their late 90s.)

Taken together, the flatness of the curves in Figure 3-7 and Figure 3-8 suggest that, all else the same, the Canadian Jewish community is unlikely to become much less cohesive as younger generations age. To be sure, all diasporic Jewish communities have become less cohesive since the end of World War II. But it would be wrong to assume that Canadian Jewry is in this respect like the Jewish communities in the United States and the former Soviet Union (Brym with Ryvkina 1994; Gitelman 1998; 2012). To the contrary, relevant measures from the 2018 Survey of Canadian Jews speak loudly of Canadian exceptionalism.

Figure 3-7

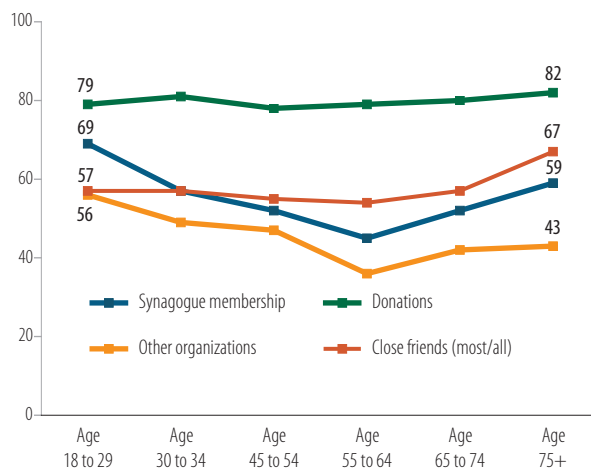
### Jewish religious involvement across generations (%) By age cohort



\*Excludes weddings, funerals and bar/bat mitzvahs

Figure 3-8

### Jewish community participation across generations (%) By age cohort



<sup>10</sup> The high level of religious involvement and Jewish community participation recorded on the survey may be due in part to the difficulty in recruiting younger Jews (especially those 18 to 29 years of age), resulting in a disproportionately large number of committed young Jews in the sample.

**INTER-CITY DIFFERENCES.** From the data in Figure 3-9, it seems that Canada's Jewish communities exhibit less cohesiveness as one moves westward: 80 percent of Montrealers and 83 percent of Torontonians donated to a Jewish organization other than a synagogue in 2017, compared with 73 percent in Winnipeg and 54 percent in Vancouver. Six in ten Jews in Montreal and Toronto report that most or all of their close friends are Jewish. The comparable figures are 49 percent in Winnipeg and 27 percent in Vancouver. Sixty-two percent of Montrealers and 61 percent of Torontonians are synagogue members, compared to 46 percent of Winnipeggers and 37 percent in Vancouver. Sixty-two percent of Montrealers and 61 percent of Torontonians are synagogue members, compared to 46 percent of Winnipeggers and 37 percent of Vancouverites.

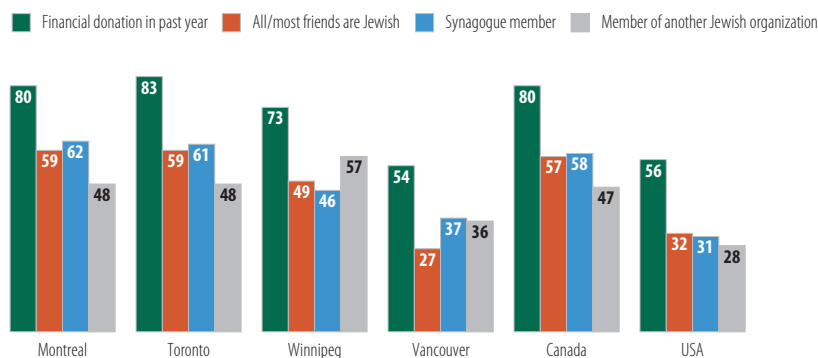
The main exception to the general pattern is that 57 percent of Winnipeggers belong to a Jewish organization other than a synagogue, compared to 48 percent in Montreal, 48 percent in Toronto, and 36 percent in Vancouver. Winnipeg's first-place ranking on this indicator is probably due to the remarkable success of the Asper Jewish Community Campus, which involves a large proportion of Winnipeg Jews in its many and diverse cultural, educational, and recreational activities. Apart from this exception, the east/west divide holds—and the same pattern is evident for patterns of religious involvement (not shown here).

On all four indicators of community cohesiveness, the Canadian figures are substantially higher than the figures for the United States, although the figures for Vancouver are nearly as low as those for Americans, according to the 2013 Pew Survey of American Jews.

Two main factors are responsible for Canada's east/west divide. One concerns differences in the patterns of upbringing of Jews who reside in eastern and western cities. We deal with this factor in Chapter 4. The second factor is bound up with variation in the characteristics of the cities themselves.

As Canada's commercial and industrial centres and largest cities, Montreal and Toronto have long been magnets for migrants, Jews among them. Once settled, migrants have tended to attract their relatives. In turn, large Jewish communities tend to attract additional Jews, especially those who are more heavily involved in Jewish life. That is because large Jewish communities offer abundant opportunities for Jewish involvement—everything from a wide array of cultural and political activities, to a deep pool of potential marriage partners (Brym, Gillespie, and Gillis 1985).

Figure 3-9  
Indicators of community participation  
(%) By location



While the Toronto Jewish community continues to grow, the Montreal Jewish community has been shrinking since the Parti Québécois won the 1976 provincial election and sought to make Quebec a sovereign state. Many anglophone Jews felt marginalized because of new laws restricting the use of English, and many were worried that sovereignty might curb business and professional opportunities. Nevertheless, Montreal remains the home of Canada's second largest Jewish community by a wide margin, partly because Chasidic, Sephardi, and French-speaking Jews—the latter including immigrants from France in recent years—continue to find a hospitable climate in the city (Burgard 2017).

Winnipeg's period of rapid growth began in the late nineteenth century, when the extension of the Canadian National Railway turned the city into the "gateway to the west." Winnipeg was Canada's third largest city until 1931,

when Vancouver overtook it. In recent decades, Winnipeg has grown slowly while Vancouver has grown quickly due to its abundant economic opportunities, temperate climate, and natural beauty. The annual Mercer Quality of Living Survey uses 39 indicators to rank 231 cities worldwide for their attractiveness as places to reside (Mercer 2018). In 2018, Vancouver ranked 5th in the world, while Winnipeg did not make the list. This difference suggests one reason why the Jewish community of Winnipeg has been declining in size for several decades, while the Jewish community of Vancouver has been growing quickly and has become Canada's third largest. In addition to Vancouver, Toronto seems to be an especially popular destination for departing Winnipeggers, especially its younger members, who may be drawn to the city by its large Jewish community, its economic opportunities, and its high quality of living (Toronto ranks 16th globally on the Mercer index).

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# Chapter 4: Jewish upbringing

## Jewish upbringing

The vast majority of Canadian Jews have two Jewish parents and were brought up in the Jewish religion. This is in sharp contrast to the experience of American Jews, who are much less likely to have a similar upbringing.

**PARENTS' JEWISH BACKGROUND.** Membership in the Jewish *religious* community is based primarily on parentage—unlike other world religions, in which membership is grounded in faith and/or observance. Within the Orthodox/Modern Orthodox and Conservative denominations, membership depends solely on having a Jewish mother. In recent decades, other denominations and movements have accepted patrilineal descent as the basis for membership.<sup>11</sup>

In Canada, almost all self-identified Jews have a Jewish mother. Nine in ten (90%) report that both parents are Jewish, with the remainder identifying only their mother

(3%) or father (4%) as Jewish, or neither (3%).<sup>12</sup> By comparison, only seven in ten (71%) American Jews report two Jewish parents, with most of the rest indicating they have a Jewish mother (13%) or a Jewish father (12%).

Having two Jewish parents is most widely reported by individuals who are Orthodox/Modern Orthodox (97%) or Conservative (95%), and those who are over the age of 74 (96%). This pattern is somewhat less evident in Vancouver (75%) and among Jews under 45 years of age (84%).

The group least likely to have Jewish parents includes those who identify as “partially Jewish”: Only one-third (34%) of this group reports two Jewish parents, with a larger proportion indicating only one Jewish parent (31% father, 16% mother), and another 16 percent who say neither parent was Jewish.

Figure 4-1  
Jewish parents and upbringing  
(%) By age

	CANADIAN TOTAL	AGE						AMERICAN JEWS
		18 - 29	30 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 64	65 - 74	75 +	
JEWISH PARENTS								
Both	90	84	84	91	93	91	96	71
Mother only	3	6	6	3	1	2	1	13
Father only	4	8	6	2	4	1	1	12
Neither	3	1	3	3	2	5	1	4
TOTAL %*	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Raised in Jewish religion	88	91	86	90	88	88	88	90

\* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Q.21  
Thinking about when you were a child, in what religion were you raised, if any?

Q.23  
Thinking about your parents, which if either of them were Jewish?

<sup>11</sup> Conversions are possible but less common in the Orthodox, Modern Orthodox, and Conservative denominations, in comparison with other Jewish denominations and movements.

<sup>12</sup> Those who say neither parent is Jewish likely converted to Judaism. The survey did not include questions about conversion.

**RELIGIOUS UPBRINGING.** Being Jewish typically means being raised in some form of the Jewish religious tradition, and this is the norm in Canada. Close to nine in ten (88%) Canadian Jews say they were raised in the Jewish religion, with the remainder identifying another religion (3%, mostly Christian) or no religion at all (8%). In the USA, the proportion is lower, with 80 percent of American Jews raised in the Jewish religion, compared with 10 percent in another religion (10%) or no religion (11%).<sup>13</sup>

There are almost no parts of the Canadian Jewish population where fewer than 80 percent report being raised in the Jewish religion; the notable exception is the small group of individuals who identify as partially Jewish (36%). This proportion is highest among Orthodox/Modern Orthodox (95%) and Conservative (95%) Jews, while it is substantially lower among those who are unaffiliated with any

denomination or movement (77%), and those who are first-generation Canadians (78%; and in particular immigrants from countries of the former Soviet Union (37%)). The impact of being raised in a religiously Jewish household is reflected in one's Jewish identity as an adult: Those who identify as Jewish mainly through ancestry/descent or through culture, and those who place low importance on being Jewish, are less likely to have been raised in the Jewish religion.

Among those who say they were not raised in the Jewish religion (12% of the total sample), just over half indicate they were raised Jewish (24%) or partially Jewish (29%), but in a more secular fashion (for example, with an emphasis on culture, language, or connection to Israel). Among American Jews, only 11 percent indicated they were not raised in the Jewish religion but were raised Jewish or partially Jewish in a secular tradition.

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<sup>13</sup> Among American Jews, two percent say they were raised in a combination of Jewish and Christian traditions, while another one percent identify their childhood faith as Messianic Judaism. The total does not equal 100 percent due to rounding.



## Participation in Jewish education

Most Jews in Canada have participated in one or more types of Jewish education when growing up. This is most likely to be an overnight summer camp, Hebrew school or Sunday school, but close to one-half have attended a Jewish day school or yeshiva.

Outside the family, formal education is a pillar of Jewish upbringing. In Canada, Jewish day schools, summer camps and other types of education such as Sunday and Hebrew schools have played an important role in Jewish communities across the country.

**JEWISH DAY SCHOOLS.** Many communities operate private day schools or yeshivas, mostly at the primary level, but also at the secondary (high school) level. Just over four in ten (43%) adult Canadian Jews report having attended one of these types of schools. This is almost twice the proportion of American Jews with a similar experience (23%).

Attendance levels at day schools or yeshivas are most notably a function of denomination. It is most widespread among Orthodox/Modern Orthodox Jews (67%), followed by those who affiliate with one of the smaller denominations or movements (52%), Conservative Jews (43%), those who are unaffiliated (38%), and Reform Jews (24%). Day school experience is also a function of age cohort, with attendance levels more than twice as high among Jews 18 to 29 (68%) than among those 55 and older (31%).<sup>14</sup> Across cities, day school attendance is highest in Montreal (54%) and lowest in Vancouver (33%), reflecting in part the denominational makeup of the Jewish community in each city.

On average, Jews who have attended a Jewish day school or yeshiva have done so for nine (9.1) years, with most doing so between six and 15 years. Average years of attendance are highest among those who affiliate with the Orthodox/Modern Orthodox denomination (10.9 years) and non-mainstream denominations and movements (10.3 years), as well as among Jews under 45 years of age (10.2 years).

**OVERNIGHT SUMMER CAMPS.** Summer camps provide one of the most popular forms of Jewish education in Canada. Almost six in ten (58%) Canadian Jews say they attended an overnight summer camp with Jewish content. This type of experience is common across the population. It is most prevalent among those living in Toronto (61%) and Montreal (59%), and among those who are Orthodox/Modern Orthodox (69%). It is less common among Jews who are not affiliated with any denomination or movement (44%), and those who do not belong to any type of Jewish organization (45%).

**OTHER KINDS OF JEWISH EDUCATION.** Two-thirds (67%) of Canadian Jews say that when growing up they participated in other kinds of Jewish educational programs, such as Hebrew school, Sunday school or a Jewish teen program (the comparable number for American Jews is 58%). As with summer camps, this type of educational experience is prevalent across the Canadian Jewish population, although most common in Toronto (73%), as well as among those who affiliate as Conservative or Reform (both 75%). Participation in this type of Jewish education is notably lower among first-generation Canadians from the former Soviet Union (34%) and those who were not raised in the Jewish religion (22%).

Figure 4-2  
Participation in Jewish education  
(%) By city

	CANADIAN TOTAL	CITY				AMERICAN JEWS
		TORONTO	MONTREAL	WINNIPEG	VANCOUVER	
Attended full-time Jewish school	43	43	54	44	33	23
Attended Jewish summer camp	58	61	59	52	44	38
Attended other type of Jewish education	67	73	58	67	61	59

Q.24

When you were growing up, did you ever attend a full-time Jewish school, such as a yeshiva or Jewish day school?

Q.25

When you were growing up, did you ever attend an overnight summer camp with Jewish content?

Q.26

When you were growing up, did you ever participate in some other kind of Jewish educational program, such as Hebrew school, Sunday school, or a Jewish teen program?

<sup>14</sup> It was up to respondents to interpret what was meant by "Jewish content," and the figures likely include some cases in which Jewish content was minimal.

## Bar/bat mitzvah

Nine in ten Jewish men and four in ten Jewish women became bar or bat mitzvah, in most cases in their youth, but a small percentage as an adult. This experience is common across the population, even among those who do not belong to a synagogue, denomination, or other Jewish movement.

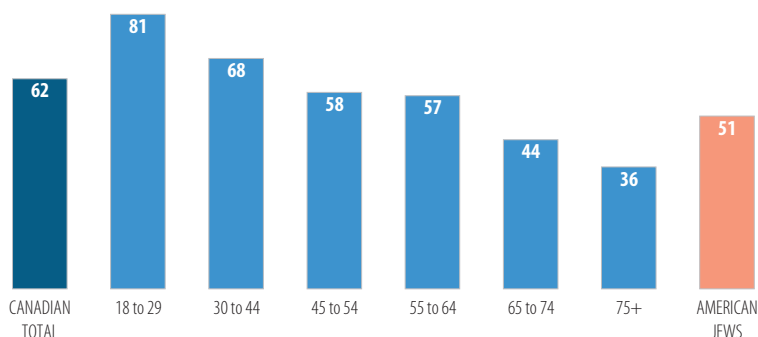
Bar mitzvah is the traditional rite of passage to adulthood for Jewish boys, which typically takes place at age 13. Since the 1920s, some denominations and movements have gradually expanded the tradition to allow Jewish girls to become a bat mitzvah at age 12 or 13. In Canada, six in ten Jews report becoming bar mitzvah or bat mitzvah, in most cases in their youth (58%), but for some as an adult (4%). Among American Jews, the overall proportion is slightly lower at 51 percent (none of whom indicated this happened as an adult).

Despite recent changes, this tradition remains a predominantly male experience. Nine in ten (89%) Canadian Jewish men report becoming bar mitzvah (of which 2% did so as an adult). This compares with only four in ten (40%)

Canadian Jewish women (of whom 5% did so as an adult). Across genders, becoming bar/bat mitzvah is more prevalent among younger Jews, reflecting the fact that this ceremony became common among females only in the 1970s. Among Jews 18 to 29 years of age, 81 percent have had a bar/bat mitzvah (with a gender gap between men and women of 16 percentage points), compared to only 36 percent among those 75 and older (among whom the gender gap is 77 percentage points).

Notably, the likelihood of becoming bar/bat mitzvah is only weakly linked to synagogue membership and denominational/movement affiliation. This tradition is reported by roughly half of Canadian Jews who do not belong to any Jewish organization (51%) and those who are unaffiliated (55%). Individuals least likely to become bar/bat mitzvah include those who identify as partially Jewish (28%), first-generation Canadians from the former Soviet Union (27%), and those not raised in the Jewish religion (16%).

Figure 4-3  
Became bar/bat mitzvah  
(%) By age



Q.27  
Did you have a bar or bat mitzvah, either when you were young or as an adult?

## Knowledge of Hebrew

Most Canadian Jews report knowing the Hebrew alphabet, and many say they can read and understand at least some Hebrew words, as well as carry on a conversation in the language. The ability to carry on a conversation is most common among younger Jews and first-generation Canadian Jews.

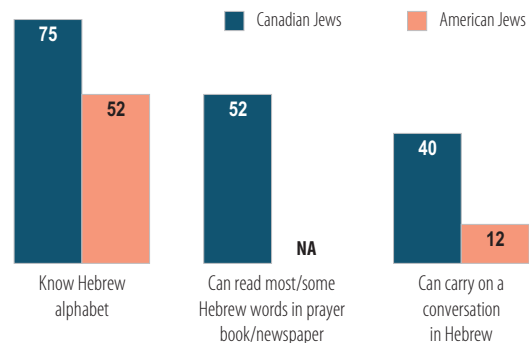
Ancient Hebrew is the language of the Torah and most of the prayers in traditional Jewish religious services, although non-Orthodox denominations and movements have introduced English translations, making knowledge of Hebrew less essential in prayer services. Although modern Hebrew is grounded in the language of the Torah and uses the same alphabet, it is quite different from Biblical Hebrew in many respects. How well do Canadian Jews know Hebrew, either ancient or modern?

**KNOWLEDGE OF HEBREW ALPHABET.** Three-quarters (75%) of Canadian Jews say they know the Hebrew alphabet, which is considerably higher than the proportion of American Jews (52%), as might be expected given the comparatively higher prevalence of Jewish education in Canada.<sup>15</sup>

Self-rated knowledge of the Hebrew alphabet is reported by most people in almost every group, but most widely among those who are Orthodox/Modern Orthodox (91%), those with a post-graduate degree (81%), those with children under 18 years of age in the home (85%), and those under 45 years of age (85%). Notably, such knowledge is claimed by almost half (48%) of those who were not raised in the Jewish religion.

**PROFICIENCY IN READING HEBREW.** Survey respondents were also asked how much Hebrew they can understand if reading a newspaper or prayer book. Six in ten say they can understand at least some of the text, including all (9%), most (28%) or only some (24%) of the words. The remainder acknowledge they can read just a few words (28%) or none at all (9%).<sup>16</sup>

Figure 4-4  
Knowledge of Hebrew  
(%) By age cohort



Q.28  
Do you know the Hebrew alphabet, or not?

Q.29  
(IF YES TO Q.28) If you read a Hebrew newspaper or prayer book in Hebrew, can you understand most of the words, some of the words, or just a few of the words?

Q.30  
Would you say you can carry on a conversation in Hebrew, or not?

Proficiency in reading Hebrew (understanding all or most of the words) is most prevalent among Orthodox/Modern Orthodox Jews (56%), those under 45 years of age (45%), and first-generation Canadians (54%; some of this group was born in Israel or lived there for an extended period). This level of proficiency is least apt to be reported by those who affiliate as Conservative (26%) or Reform (22%), those 65 and older (26%), and third-plus generation Canadians (27%).

**CONVERSING IN HEBREW.** Four in ten (40%) Canadian Jews say they can carry on a conversation in Hebrew. By comparison, only 12 percent of American Jews say they can do so. This proportion is somewhat higher among Jews who are Sephardi (57%), Orthodox/Modern Orthodox (56%), 18 to 29 years of age (49%), and immigrants from the countries of the former Soviet Union (70%), many of whom lived in Israel before immigrating to Canada. Least able to converse in Hebrew are Reform Jews (21%) and those over the age of 64 (27%).

<sup>15</sup> The survey measured a self-rated knowledge of the Hebrew alphabet, with no independent validation of actual knowledge. It is likely that respondents chose to interpret the question in different ways, and that knowledge levels are somewhat inflated (although there is no basis to conclude that they are more inflated for Canadian Jews than American Jews).

<sup>16</sup> This question was not included on the Pew Survey of American Jews.

## Commentary

### TO WHAT DEGREE DO JEWISH DAY SCHOOLS GUARD AGAINST ASSIMILATION IN TORONTO?

Based on the Toronto subsample, it is evident that an association exists between attending a Jewish day school and not fully assimilating into the mainstream culture. For some indicators, the likelihood of assimilation falls steadily the more years one attends Jewish day school. For other indicators, the likelihood of assimilation falls only when one attends nine or more years of Jewish day school. Six examples follow (see Figure 4-5):

1. **Believing that being part of a Jewish community is an essential part of being Jewish.** Thirty-four percent of Toronto Jews who did not attend Jewish day school believe that being part of a Jewish community is an essential part of being Jewish. The percentage increases to 41 percent among Toronto Jews who attended one to eight years of Jewish day school, and 58 percent among those who attended nine or more years of Jewish day school. The difference between those who did not attend Jewish day school and those who attended nine or more years is 24 percentage points.
2. **Believing that celebrating Jewish holidays with family is an essential part of being Jewish.** Fifty-eight percent of Toronto Jews who did not attend Jewish day school believe that celebrating Jewish holidays with family is an essential part of being Jewish. The percentage increases to 63 percent among Toronto Jews who attended one to eight years of Jewish day school, and 67 percent among those who attended nine or more years of Jewish day school. The difference between those who did not attend Jewish day school and those who attended nine or more years is nine percentage points.
3. **Believing that caring for Israel is an essential part of being Jewish.** Forty percent of Toronto Jews who did not attend Jewish day school believe that caring about Israel is an essential part of being Jewish. The percentage increases to 42 percent among Toronto Jews who attended one to eight years of Jewish day school, and 49 percent among those who attended nine or more years of Jewish day school. The difference between those who did not attend Jewish day school and those who attended nine or more years is nine percentage points.

4. **Likelihood of being a synagogue member.** Sixty-six percent of Toronto Jews who attended nine or more years of day school are synagogue members. The comparable figure for those who attended fewer than nine years of day school is 55 percent, a difference of 11 percentage points.
5. **Likelihood of having a Christmas tree or a New Year's tree in one's household.** The chance of having a Christmas tree or a New Year's tree in one's household is significantly lower for those who attended nine or more years of Jewish day school—five percent, compared to 13 percent for those who attended fewer than nine years of day school, a difference of eight percentage points. (Displaying a New Year's tree is customary in the former Soviet Union.)
6. **Likelihood of marrying a non-Jew.** Attending Jewish day school for nine or more years reduces the likelihood of marrying a non-Jew by seven percentage points, from 23 percent to 16 percent.

These observations suggest that Jewish day schools help to ensure the cohesiveness and longevity of the Jewish community.

Figure 4-5

Indicators of assimilation by years in Jewish day school (%) Toronto

	YEARS IN JEWISH DAY SCHOOL		
	0	1-8	9+
HOW IMPORTANT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING IS TO WHAT BEING JEWISH MEANS TO YOU:			
Being part of a Jewish community (% "essential")	34	41	58
Celebrating Jewish holidays w/ family (% "essential")	58	63	67
Caring about Israel (% "essential")	40	42	49
Are you, or anyone in your household, currently a member of a synagogue, temple, or other prayer group? (% "yes")	55	54	66
Last December, did your household have a Christmas tree or a New Year's tree? (% "yes")	13	13	5
What is your spouse's/partner's religion, if any? (% non-Jewish)	23	28	16



# Chapter 5: Intermarriage and the upbringing of children

The Jewish population in most diaspora countries has been stable or declining over the past several decades due to low birth rates and high intermarriage rates in most parts of the Jewish community. This has become a central concern in terms of the long-term future of the population, and so a relevant topic to address in this survey.

## Jewish background of spouse/partner

For Canadian Jews who are married or in a common-law relationship, three-quarters have a spouse who is Jewish by religion, which compares with 50 percent among American Jews. This proportion is highest among Orthodox and Conservative Jews, but significant even among those who are not affiliated.

**PARTNER/SPOUSE RELIGION.** Two-thirds (68%) of survey respondents are currently married or in a common-law relationship. Of this group, about three-quarters (77%) report that their spouse or partner is Jewish by religion. The remainder identify their spouse/partner as Christian by religion (11%: Catholic (6%), Christian Orthodox (3%) or Protestant (2%)), another religion (1%), or having no religion (9%, including atheist and agnostic).

These results translate into roughly one-quarter of Canadian Jews having married out of the Jewish religion.

The comparable American figure is double this proportion (50%). One-third of American Jews have partners of another religion (Christian in almost all cases), with about one in six (17%) having no religion.

In Canada, having a spouse who is Jewish by religion is the norm among Jews who are Orthodox/Modern Orthodox (97%) or Conservative (90%), and somewhat less so among those who are Reform (75%) or belong to another denomination or movement (77%). Across age cohorts, having a Jewish partner/spouse is similar among those 65 and older (81%) and those under 45 (79%).

As would be expected, having a religiously Jewish partner/spouse is much less in evidence among Jews who have no denomination/movement affiliation (56%), do not belong to any Jewish organizations (49%), and do not have any children (55%). Yet such proportions are notable given these individuals' lack of connection to the Jewish community, suggesting that many unaffiliated Jews in Canada are attracted to Jewish partners for a variety of reasons. Moreover, this appears to be more often the case in Canada than in the USA, where only three in ten (31%) American Jews with no denomination or movement affiliation have partnered with someone who is Jewish by religion.

Figure 5-1  
Spouse's religion  
(%) By age

RELIGION OF SPOUSE	CANADIAN TOTAL	AGE						AMERICAN JEWS
		18 - 29	30 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 64	65 - 74	75 +	
Jewish	77	84	74	75	79	80	82	50
Christian	11	10	11	11	12	7	11	31
Other religion	1	2	1	1	2	1	–	2
None	9	6	15	11	7	11	5	17
TOTAL %*	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

\* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Q.32  
What is your [spouse's/partner's] religion, if any?

**PARTNER/SPOUSE JEWISH NOT BY RELIGION.**

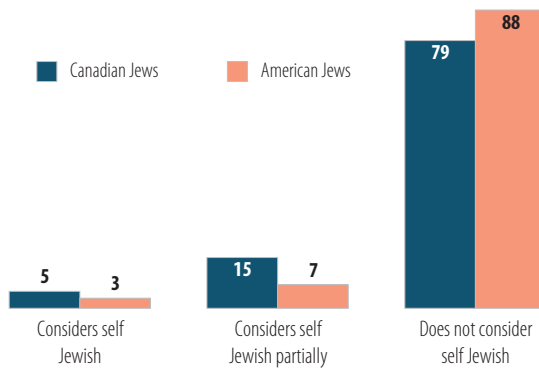
Among those whose spouse/partner is *not* Jewish by religion, about one in six indicates his or her spouse/partner identifies as Jewish in a non-religious way, either fully (5%) or partially (15%) (among American Jews the proportion is one in ten). In most cases, the spouse/partner had a Jewish parent or was raised in a Jewish home, but no longer chooses to be Jewish by religion.

**PREVIOUS MARRIAGES.** The survey asked respondents about previous marriages or common-law relationships, which are reported by one in six (17%) Canadian Jews. Similar to the results for those currently married, about seven in ten (69%) of those previously married indicate their first spouse/partner was Jewish by religion, with the remainder being Christian (18%), or affiliating with another religion (2%) or none at all (10%).

The survey also asked respondents about their own religion when they were first married/in a common-law relationship, and whether it was different from what their religion is today. Very few Canadian Jews report having changed their religion following their initial marriage/relationship. Only three percent of this group report their religion was different from today and other than Jewish (1% Catholic, 1% "other" and 1% agnostic).

Figure 5-2

**Jewish connection of spouse who is not religiously Jewish**  
(%) Among those married/common-law whose spouse is not religiously Jewish



Q.33  
(IF SPOUSE/PARTNER IS NOT JEWISH BY RELIGION) Aside from religion, does your [spouse/partner] consider themselves Jewish or partially Jewish?

## Children and Jewish upbringing

Most Canadian Jewish parents report raising their children in the Jewish religion, higher than the proportion among American Jews. This practice is almost universal among Orthodox and Conservative Jews, but also significant among those who are unaffiliated and less connected to Jewish organizations.

Seven in ten (71%) of the individuals surveyed report they have children. This proportion includes those who have children under 18 years of age (31%), children 18 years or over living in the home (15%), and children 18 years or over no longer living at home (40%).<sup>17</sup>

**RAISING CHILDREN IN THE JEWISH RELIGION.** For Canadian Jews, the vast majority have raised, or are raising their children in the Jewish religion. More than eight in ten (86%) say they have raised/are raising all of their children fully or partially in the Jewish religion, while another seven percent say this applies to some of their children.<sup>18</sup> Seven percent of individuals with children say they have not raised any of their children in the Jewish religion. By comparison, only 59 percent of American Jewish parents report raising their children in the Jewish religion, with another 14 percent indicating their upbringing has been partly Jewish and partly something else (e.g., another religion or no religion).

Not surprisingly, raising all children in the Jewish religion is almost universal among Canadian Jews who identify primarily through religion (93%; or in combination with culture and descent (95%)), as well as among those who are Orthodox/Modern Orthodox (97%) or Conservative (97%). But this practice is also mentioned by more than 80 percent in most other identified groups within the population, including those who identify as Jewish mainly through culture (83%). Across age cohorts, it is parents under 45 years of age who are most likely to have raised, or to be raising all or some of their children as religiously Jewish (96%), with this proportion somewhat lower among those 75 and older (86%).

Jewish parents less likely to be raising all of their children in the Jewish religion (but still at a rate of 50% or more) include those with no affiliation (64%; the comparable U.S. figure is 19%), Vancouver residents (59%), first-generation immigrants from the countries of the former Soviet Union (62%), and those not raised themselves in a religiously Jewish home (50%). The one group that stands out in terms of this practice is the small proportion of Canadian Jews who identify as partially Jewish: Only 17 percent of this group say they have raised all of their children Jewish or partially Jewish, while another 26 percent have raised some of them in this tradition.

Figure 5-3  
Raising children Jewish  
(%) Those with children By Jewish identity

	CANADIAN TOTAL	JEWISH IDENTITY				
		By RELIGION	By ANCESTRY/ DESCENT	By CULTURE	ALL THREE	OTHER COMBINATION
All children raised in Jewish religion	<b>86</b>	93	65	83	95	85
Some children raised in Jewish religion	<b>7</b>	4	14	9	3	6
All/some children raised Jewish, but not by religion	<b>2</b>	4	3	2	1	4
No children raised as Jewish	<b>5</b>	—	18	5	1	5
TOTAL %*	<b>100</b>	100	100	100	100	100

\* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Q.36

In terms of religion, have all or some of your children been raised Jewish, or partially Jewish?

Q.37

(IF CHILDREN NOT RAISED JEWISH/PARTIALLY JEWISH IN Q.36) Aside from religion, have all or some of your children been raised Jewish or partially Jewish?

<sup>17</sup> The total of these percentages exceeds 100% because some households have children in more than one of these categories.

<sup>18</sup> The fact that, in some cases, parents raise only some children as Jewish may indicate children from different marriages or a change in practice over time.

**RAISING CHILDREN AS JEWS, BUT NOT BY RELIGION.**

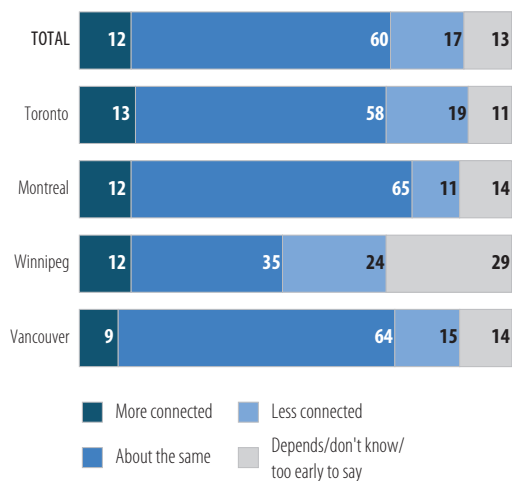
Of the small group (8%) who have not raised or are not raising at least some of their children in the Jewish religion, about one in four say they have raised them as Jewish (17%) or partially (6%) Jewish in a non-religious way (i.e., through secular customs and traditions). The comparable figure among American Jews is eight percent.

**PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS FOR THEIR CHILDREN WHEN THEY BECOME ADULTS.**

Parents of children under 18 years of age were asked what they expect in terms of their children’s connection to Jewish life once they become adults. A majority (60%) say they expect their children to be as connected to Jewish life as they themselves are today. Just over one in ten (12%) believe his or her children will be more connected than they are themselves, while 17 percent expect them to be less connected. The remainder (13%) cannot make a prediction, saying it is too early to tell, it depends, or they are simply unsure.

Parental expectations are notably consistent across the Canadian Jewish population in that a majority in almost every group anticipate their children’s connection to Jewish life as adults will resemble their own. Those most likely to believe their children will become less connected include Winnipeggers (24%), and those with no denominational or movement affiliation (28%). This view is less apt to be shared by Jews under 45 years of age (13%) than among those who are older (22%).

**Figure 5-4**  
**Jewish connection in the next generation**  
 (% Those with children under 18 years of age, By city)



Q.62  
 (IF HAVE CHILDREN UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE) What about your children once they become adults. Do you think they will likely end up being more connected to Jewish life than you are, less connected, or do you think they will be about as connected as you are?



## Priorities of younger generation parents in Montreal

Montreal Jews between the ages of 18 and 44 identify a range of experiences and activities that are important for their children’s Jewish upbringing, which for many includes Jewish day school. Two-thirds say it is important that their children marry someone who is Jewish.

Several questions were included on the survey in Montreal, focusing on younger Jews’ priorities for their children’s Jewish experience.<sup>19</sup>

**IMPORTANT JEWISH EXPERIENCES.** Jewish Montrealers ages 18 to 44 were asked what types of experiences and activities are most important for their children (for those without children, the question was asked in terms of “if and when you have children”). This question was asked “unprompted,” which means that no response options were presented to survey respondents.

Young Jewish Montrealers identify a range of Jewish experiences and activities they consider important for their children, and most fall into one of three themes. The most common theme relates to **customs and traditions** (identified by about six in ten), and includes celebrating holidays (25%), attending synagogue (19%), keeping the Sabbath (14%), living according to the Torah (10%), participating in family gatherings and outings (8%), living as a Jew (7%), and keeping Jewish values (6%).

A second theme is **education**, mentioned by four in ten young Jewish Montrealers. This theme references education in a Jewish day school (34%) or Sunday school (6%), and studying Jewish history (6%).

The third theme is **participation in activities and groups**, which includes attending Jewish summer camp (15%), participating in Jewish community activities (10%), visiting Israel (8%), having Jewish friends (5%), and belonging to Jewish youth organizations (4%). Five percent of this subsample identified other types of experiences and activities, while one in five (19%) did not identify any.

The size of this subsample is too small to support a detailed analysis of results across the Montreal Jewish community, but the results reveal that responses to this question are roughly the same between men and women, and between Montreal Jews ages 18 to 29 and those 30 to 44.

Figure 5-5  
Important experiences/activities for families/children  
(%) Montreal parents ages 18 to 44

<b>Customs and traditions</b>	<b>58</b>
Celebrating Jewish holidays	25
Attending synagogue	19
Upholding traditions/customs	16
Keeping the Sabbath	14
Living according to the Torah	10
Living as a Jew	7
Keeping Jewish values	6
<b>Education</b>	<b>41</b>
Education in Jewish day school	34
Education in Jewish Sunday school	6
Studying Jewish history	6
<b>Activities and groups</b>	<b>36</b>
Attending Jewish summer camp	15
Jewish community activities	10
Family gatherings/outings	8
Visiting Israel	8
Having Jewish friends	5
Belonging to Jewish youth organizations	4
Other	5
None	19

Q.M38  
(IN MONTREAL AGES 18 to 44) Families have different priorities for how, if at all, they want their children to participate in Jewish life. What types of experiences and activities are most important to your family, or would be likely if and when you have children?

<sup>19</sup> These questions were directed to Jewish Montrealers ages 18 to 44, and were included at the request of Federation CJA in Montreal, one of the study’s sponsors.

**PREFERRED SCHOOLING.** When asked what kind of schooling they would prefer for their children (or future children), young Montreal Jews are most likely to say Jewish day schools (39%), with somewhat smaller proportions mentioning either public schools (27%) or private schools (21%); the remaining 13 percent do not express a clear preference or are unsure. Not surprisingly, Jewish day schools are most widely preferred by Orthodox/Modern Orthodox Jews (74%), and those who identify as Jewish mainly by religion (67%), and to a lesser extent among women, and those who currently have children under 18 in the home.

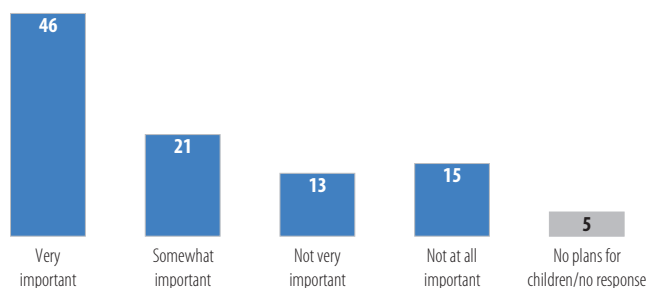
**IMPORTANCE OF CHILDREN MARRYING JEWISH.**

How much importance do young Jewish Montrealers place on their children marrying someone who is Jewish when they grow up? Two-thirds say this is very (46%) or somewhat (21%) important, compared with about three in ten who believe it is not very (13%) or not at all (15%) important.

As with schooling preference, the premium placed on children’s marriage choices is most evident among those who identify as Jewish primarily through religion (89% say it is very important) and those who are Orthodox/Modern Orthodox (75%).

Figure 5-6

**Importance of children marrying someone Jewish**  
(%) Montreal parents ages 18 to 44



Q.M40

*How important is it for your children to marry someone who is Jewish?*

## Commentary

### **Rising intermarriage rates are evident among all Canadians, with the rate rising faster among Jews than among Protestants and Catholics.**

A special census tabulation covering a 30-year span allows us to track religious outmarriage for 18-to-34-year-old Canadians in marital and common-law relationships.<sup>20</sup> Between 1981 and 2011, religious outmarriage increased by 3.2 percentage points among Catholic husbands and 4.8 percent percentage points among Catholic wives. It increased by 3.3 percentage points among Protestant husbands and 6.5 percentage points among Protestant wives. Among Jews, outmarriage increased by 11.2 percentage points among husbands and 12.3 percent points among wives. Thus, the intermarriage rate grew least among Catholics and most among Jews. In 1981, about 16 percent of couples between the ages of 18 and 34 in which at least one spouse was Jewish by religion included one spouse who was not Jewish by religion. By 2011, that figure had risen to 28 percent, for an increase of around four percentage points per decade.

**For people who favour Jewish continuity, intermarriage is a growing problem.** Some Jews view increased intermarriage positively, and not just because it indicates improving social relations between Jews and non-Jews. Arguably, it also represents a net population gain for the Jewish community. Assume that couples produce an average of two children. If one Jew marries another, they will yield two children who, as noted earlier, are highly likely to be raised Jewish. But if these two people each marry non-Jews, they will produce four children. Among our respondents, 58 percent of children from mixed marriages or common-law relationships are raised at least partly as Jews, either religiously or otherwise. Thus, the net gain from one intermarriage is as much as  $4 \times 0.58 = 2.32$  Jewish children, compared to just two Jewish children from one in-marriage (for this logic applied to the American context, see Sasson 2013). The logic is compelling—until one realizes two things. First, if the two Jews married two other Jews, they would likely produce four Jewish children. Second, children raised Jewish by intermarried couples tend to exhibit weaker Jewish identification than do children raised in families in which both spouses are Jewish (Cohen 2015). Consequently, most people who favour Jewish continuity regard intermarriage as a growing problem for the community.

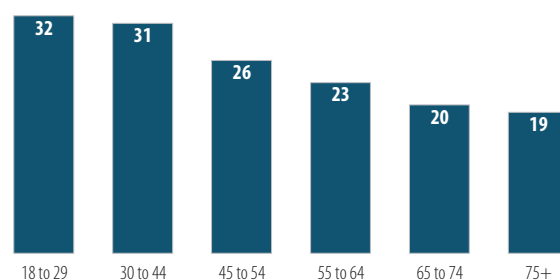
### **Religious outmarriage is comparatively moderate in Canada.**

Despite the rise in religious outmarriage in Canada, prevalence remains moderate in comparative terms. At about 25 percent, it is about one-half as prevalent as religious outmarriage among Jews in the United States and about as prevalent as, or a little less prevalent than, religious outmarriage in the United Kingdom and Australia (Pew Research Center 2013: 191; Graham 2016: 13).

**Religious outmarriage by city size.** In general, religious outmarriage is more common in communities with small marriage pools than in communities with large marriage pools. However, Vancouver's rate of religious outmarriage is higher than one would expect based on the size of that city's Jewish community—higher than Winnipeg's, despite Vancouver's Jewish population being about twice as large as Winnipeg's (Brym, Gillespie, and Gillis 1985; Goldmann 2009). The high rate of outmarriage in Vancouver is the product of its relatively unique patterns of upbringing, denominational and organizational membership, and friendship ties, as outlined in previous chapters.

**Religious outmarriage by age cohort.** Figure 5-7 illustrates the association between religious outmarriage and age cohort in our sample. The intermarriage rate rises steadily from 19 percent for those over the age of 74 to 32 percent for those between the ages of 18 and 29.

**Figure 5-7**  
**Jews with religiously non-Jewish current partner**  
(%) By age cohort



<sup>20</sup> We are grateful to Professor Feng Hou (Department of Sociology, University of Victoria, and Statistics Canada) for the special census tabulation.

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# Chapter 6: Discrimination and Anti-Semitism

Over the course of their history, Jews have experienced enormous ups and downs in terms of privilege and persecution. Jews in North America have avoided the pogroms and atrocities in Europe, but they too have experienced systemic and individual-level anti-Semitism in various forms.

## Perceptions of discrimination

Most Canadian Jews believe members of their community experience discrimination in Canada “sometimes” if not “often.” But they are more likely to perceive that Indigenous Peoples, Muslims and Black people are targets of frequent discrimination, and more apt to hold this view than the population at large.

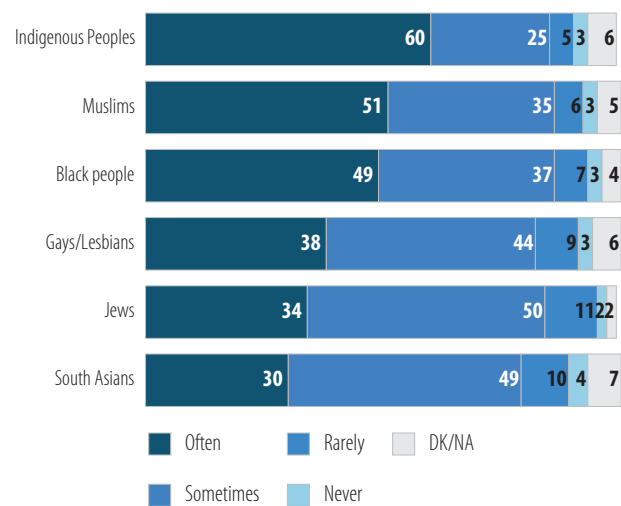
The survey examined perceptions of the frequency of discrimination experienced by Jews, as well as that of five other marginalized groups in Canada as a basis of comparison. These results can be compared with the views of the population at large through other Environics Institute research.<sup>21</sup>

One-third (34%) of Canadian Jews say they believe Jews in Canada “often” experience discrimination in this country, with another 50 percent who say this happens “sometimes,” and only a few indicating it takes place rarely (11%) or never (2%). By comparison, Canadian Jews are much more likely to believe that discrimination is often experienced by Indigenous Peoples (60%), Muslims (51%) and Black people (49%), and to a lesser extent gays and lesbians (38%). Only South Asians (30%) are seen as less likely than Jews to experience frequent discrimination in this country.

The view that Jews often experience discrimination in Canada is most widely expressed among Jews who affiliate as Conservative (42%) and are women (38% versus 29% among men), and is somewhat more prevalent in Toronto (33%) and Montreal (33%) than in Winnipeg (23%) and Vancouver (22%). This view also increases noticeably with age; only 22 percent among those 18 to 29 believe Jews in Canada experience frequent discrimination, rising to 42 percent among those 75 and older.

Perceptions of discrimination against Indigenous Peoples, Muslims and Black people are influenced by other characteristics. Canadian Jews most likely to say these groups often experience discrimination include those who identify as Jewish mainly by culture or in combination with religion and descent, among those who affiliate as Reform, women, third-generation Canadians, and those with fewer Jewish friends. This perspective is least apt to be shared by Orthodox/Modern Orthodox Jews and first-generation Canadians.

Figure 6-1  
Perceived discrimination against groups in Canada (%)



Q.2a-f  
For each of the following groups, please tell me whether you think they are often, sometimes, rarely or never the subject of discrimination in Canadian society today.

<sup>21</sup> Environics Institute – Focus Canada (2015, 2018).

## How the perspective of Jews compares with that of other Canadians

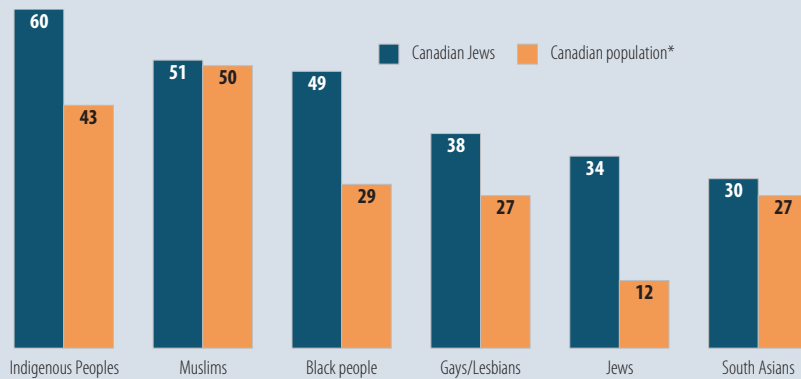
General population surveys conducted by the Environics Institute in 2015 and 2017 included the same questions on perceptions of discrimination, and this provides the basis for comparing the perspectives of Canadian Jews with those of the population at large.

Not surprisingly, Canadian Jews (34%) are much more likely than Canadians overall (12%) to believe that Jews in Canada often experience discrimination. But Canadian Jews are also more likely than other Canadians to say that frequent discrimination is experienced by Indigenous Peoples, Black people and gays/lesbians, while they are as likely to believe that discrimination is experienced frequently by Muslims and South Asians. Jews may be more cognizant of discrimination against other groups because of their own experience with anti-Semitism.

Figure 6-2

### Often experiences discrimination in Canada

(%) Jews and Canadian population



\* Environics Institute Focus Canada (2015, 2018)

## Personal experience with discrimination

A significant proportion of Canadian Jews report having experienced some form of discrimination in the past five years due to their religion, ethnicity/culture, language and/or sex. Incidence levels are highest among younger Jews.

What experiences have Canadian Jews had with discrimination and anti-Semitism in recent years? A significant proportion reports having experienced discrimination or unfair treatment in the past five years because of one or more of four personal characteristics. One in five say he or she was discriminated against because of his/her religion (21%) and/or ethnicity/culture (18%). Somewhat fewer indicate discrimination was due to their sex (16%) or language (12%). When combined, close to four in ten (38%) Canadian Jews report such experience in one or more of these categories.

Among Canadian Jews, experiences of discrimination or unfair treatment because of one's **religion** is largely a function of age and religious observance. Such experience is most widely reported among Jews who are 18 to 29 years of age (36%), Orthodox/Modern Orthodox (27%) or Sephardi (29%), and is least evident among Winnipeg residents (14%),

those who identify as Jewish primarily through descent/ancestry (14%), and those 65 years and older (11%).

Experience with discrimination due to one's **ethnicity** or culture shows a similar pattern. It is most widely reported by Sephardic Jews (26%) and those ages 18 to 29 (25%), along with those who affiliate with one of the non-mainstream denominations/movements (28%), and those whose mother tongue is other than English, French, Yiddish or Russian (25%). Least apt to report such treatment because of ethnicity or culture are those who identify primarily through descent/ancestry (13%), and those 65 years and older (10%).

Discrimination because of one's **language** is reported primarily among Jews in Montreal (32%), who mostly likely experience language discrimination by the francophone majority in that city. Such experience is much less evident in Toronto (4%), Vancouver (3%), and Winnipeg (7%).<sup>22</sup> Finally, discrimination based on one's **sex** is largely a function of age and sex. Such experience is reported by 23 percent of women (versus 5% of men), and 26 percent among those under 45 years of age (compared with 5% among those 65 plus).

Figure 6-3

### Personal experience with discrimination

(%) By city and age

Experienced discrimination in past five years because of your:	CANADIAN TOTAL	CITY				AGE				
		TORONTO	MONTREAL	WINNIPEG	VANCOUVER	18 - 29	30 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 64	65 +
NET (any mention)	<b>38</b>	35	49	38	31	57	48	41	37	21
Religion	<b>21</b>	24	23	14	19	36	27	20	22	11
Ethnicity/Culture	<b>18</b>	20	19	15	18	28	22	18	17	10
Sex	<b>16</b>	17	11	13	18	28	25	15	12	5
Language	<b>12</b>	4	32	7	3	18	13	14	12	8

Q.44a-d

In the past five years, have you experienced discrimination or been treated unfairly by others in Canada because of any of the following?

<sup>21</sup> The unique situation of Montreal is further reflected in the fact that, across the sample as a whole, discrimination by language does not vary by respondents' mother tongue, including English, French, Yiddish, English, Russian, and all other languages combined.

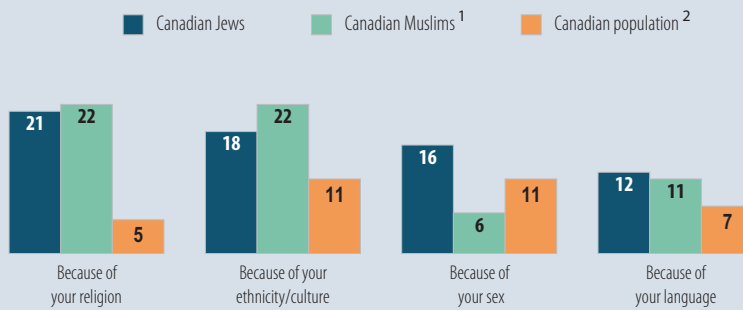
## Discrimination experienced by Jews compared with Muslims and other Canadians

Data on personal experience with discrimination are also available for both the Canadian Muslim population and the Canadian population at large, which provide a basis for a comparison of personal experience. By religion, Jews and Muslims in Canada are equally likely to report experiences of discrimination, and well above the incidence for the general population. On ethnicity/culture, Muslims are the most apt to report such experience, slightly above the level experienced by Jews, and twice the level for the general population. The population at large is less likely than Jews and Muslims to experience discrimination because of their language, while Muslims are least apt to report such treatment due to their sex.

Figure 6-4

### Personal experience with discrimination in Canada

(%) Past five years



<sup>1</sup> Environics Institute (2016)

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada (2013)



## Specific types of negative experiences

Few Canadian Jews have experienced anti-Semitic mistreatment in the form of being called offensive names or been snubbed socially because of being Jewish. But a minority has been criticized for either defending or criticizing Israel, and many also consciously avoid expressing their views on this topic.

**GENERAL ANTI-SEMITIC TREATMENT.** The survey asked about experiences that might be classified as relatively minor forms of anti-Semitism, sometimes referred to as “micro-aggressions.”

One in ten (11%) Canadian Jews report having been **called offensive names** in the past 12 months because of being Jewish or having a Jewish background. This result is most apt

to be experienced by younger Jews (especially those 18 to 29 (22%)), as well as by Sephardi Jews (17%), and those who affiliate with a non-mainstream denomination or movement (16%). This is similar to the incidence recorded for American Jews (12%).

Fewer than one in ten (7%) say he or she has been **snubbed in a social setting or left out of social activities** in the past 12 months because of being Jewish or having a Jewish background (identical to the proportion of Americans reporting this type of experience). Once again, this form of discrimination is most evident among younger Jews, although to a lesser extent than their being called offensive names.

Figure 6-5  
Personal experience with discrimination as a Jew  
(%) By age

Happened to you in past 12 months because you are Jewish	CANADIAN TOTAL	AGE					AMERICAN JEWS
		18 - 29	30 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 64	65+	
Called offensive names	11	22	16	10	8	4	12
Snubbed in social settings	7	9	12	6	6	3	7

Q.45a-b

I will now read a few things that some Jews in Canada have experienced. Please tell me whether or not if any of them have happened to you in the past 12 months.

### CRITICISM FOR TAKING A POSITION ON ISRAEL.

In recent years, controversies involving Israel have divided Canadian Jews and attracted negative attention from outside the community. This situation has put many Jews in a difficult position when these controversies become a topic of conversation or debate.

Significant proportions of Canadian Jews say they have been criticized either for defending (34%) or criticizing (28%) policies or actions of the State of Israel in the past 12 months.

Those most likely to say they have been criticized for **defending Israeli policy** include Sephardi Jews (42%), those 18 to 29 years of age (49%), those who identify as Jewish mainly by religion, ancestry/descent and culture (44%), and those who belong to a synagogue *and* another type of Jewish organization (43%). Those most apt to have elicited negative reactions for **criticizing Israeli policy** include

those affiliated with a non-mainstream denomination or movement (40%), those 18 to 29 years of age (40%), and those with a post-graduate degree (35% versus 15% among those with only a high school diploma).

**AVOIDING CONFLICT OVER ISRAELI POLICY.** The survey also asked respondents about situations in which they consciously avoided expressing their opinions about Israeli policies and actions in the past 12 months. Three in ten (31%) Canadian Jews say they have **refrained from expressing support for Israeli policies and actions** in public or social settings because they were worried about criticism. One in five (22%) have **refrained from expressing opposition to Israeli policies and actions** for the same reason. In both cases, such effort to avoid criticism is most evident among Jews 18 to 29, women, those who affiliate with Reform or a non-mainstream denomination/movement, and those with a university degree.

Figure 6-6  
Experience with commentary about Israel  
(%) By age

HAPPENED TO YOU IN PAST 12 MONTHS	CANADIAN TOTAL	18 - 29	30 - 44	AGE 45 - 54	55 - 64	65+
Criticized by others for <b>defending</b> policies/actions of Israel	<b>34</b>	49	37	31	38	24
Criticized by others for <b>criticizing</b> policies/actions of Israel	<b>28</b>	40	33	22	26	23
Refrained from <b>expressing support</b> for policies/actions of Israel	<b>31</b>	49	43	37	24	14
Refrained from <b>expressing opposition</b> to policies/actions of Israel	<b>22</b>	35	35	22	18	11

Q.45c-f

I will now read a few things that some Jews in Canada have experienced. Please tell me whether or not if any of them have happened to you in the past 12 months.

## Downplaying one's Jewishness

One-third of Canadian Jews report having consciously downplayed their Jewishness in one or more situations, most commonly in the workplace, when travelling outside Canada, and socializing with non-Jews.

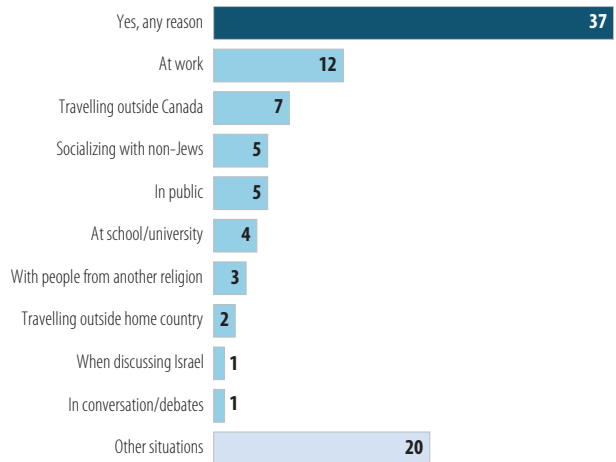
One response to anti-Semitism is to downplay one's Jewishness, a strategy more easily adopted by Jews than by members of other more visibly identifiable and often marginalized groups, such as Black people and Muslims (e.g., women wearing headscarves). The survey asked respondents in what situations, if any, they consciously downplayed their Jewishness or being a Jew (asked unprompted, without offering response options).

More than one-third (37%) of Canadian Jews identified one or more situations in which they have downplayed their Jewishness. The most common situations have occurred in the workplace (12%), travelling outside Canada (7%), socializing with non-Jews (5%), and generally in public (5%).

The likelihood of downplaying one's Jewishness in one way or another is similar across the population, but somewhat more prevalent in Toronto (41%) and Winnipeg (42%) than in Montreal (33%). It is also more apt to be reported by those who affiliate as Reform (39%) or with a non-mainstream denomination/movement (48%), and among those who are under 45 years of age (52%).

Figure 6-7

In what situations, if any, have you downplayed being a Jew?  
(%) Top mentions (unprompted responses)



Q.46

In what situations, if any, have you consciously downplayed your Jewishness or being a Jew?

## Commentary

**THE LEVEL OF ANTI-SEMITISM IN CANADA.** Hate crime statistics are one indicator of the level of anti-Semitism in Canada. A hate crime is a criminal offence committed against a person or property where there is evidence that the offence was motivated by hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, or similar factors. Statistics on hate crimes reported to the police have been collected in Canada since 2006 (Allen 2015; Allen and Boyce 2013; Dauvergene and Brennan 2011; Leber 2017; Statistics Canada 2017b; 2018c; Silver, Mihorean, and Taylor-Butts 2004; Walsh and Dauvergne 2009). In that year, police departments submitting reports covered 87 percent of the population. In recent years, reports covered jurisdictions including 99 percent of the population. Presumably, increased coverage contributes to an increase over time in the measured frequency of hate crime, as does growing awareness on the part of the police that some crimes are motivated by hate.

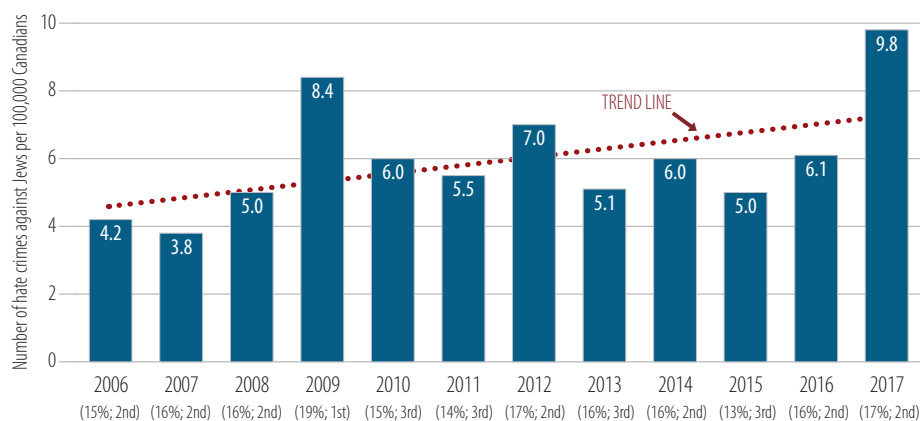
Figure 6-8 tracks the number of hate crimes against Jews per 100,000 Canadians for the period 2006-17. It shows that, annually and on average, six anti-Jewish hate crimes were committed per 100,000 Canadians—a total of 360 such crimes in 2017. Most hate crimes are non-violent.

Figure 6-8 suggests that the trend in the number of measured hate crimes committed against Jews per 100,000 population is upward. However, most of the upward trend in Figure 6-8 is due to the 2017 data point; there was little trend from 2006 to 2016. Moreover, the recent trend may be due in part to improved coverage and awareness.

Over the last three years for which data are available (2015-17), South Asians were tied for fourth, Blacks third, Jews second, and Muslims and Arabs/West Asians first in the frequency of hate crimes committed against them.<sup>22</sup> From this point of view, it seems that Jewish perceptions of anti-Jewish discrimination are more realistic than those of Canadians in general, many of whom may be inclined to think that discrimination is largely restricted to underprivileged groups (see Figure 6-2).

Jews are not alone in experiencing an increase in hate crime. A similar trend is evident for Muslims, Blacks, Arabs and West Asians (the latter mainly Iranians), Catholics, and sexual minorities. Therefore, as a percentage of all hate crimes, the percentage of hate crimes against Jews has remained approximately steady since 2006 at just under 16 percent of the total.

**Figure 6-8**  
Hate crimes against Jews per 100,000 Canadians  
2006-2017 (percent of all hate crimes; rank among groups in parenthesis)



<sup>22</sup> Combining “Muslims” with “Arabs/West Asians” aggregates a religious and an ethnic category, as does “Jewish,” since some Jews consider themselves Jewish by ethnicity, culture, and/or ancestry/descent rather than religion.

**ANTI-SEMITISM IN QUEBEC.** The percentage of respondents who think Jews are often the objects of discrimination in Canada ranges from 33 percent in Montreal and Toronto to 23 percent in Winnipeg and 22 percent in Vancouver. The fact that there is no difference between Toronto and Montreal in this regard is surprising. As recently as the 1980s, the recorded level of anti-Jewish sentiment was twice as high in Quebec as in the rest of Canada (Brym and Lenton 1991; 1992). Since then, tolerance of religious and ethnic minorities in general seems to have increased. Still, there is a long way to go. In 2009, just 36 percent of Quebecers held a favourable opinion of Judaism, increasing to 45 percent in 2017. The comparable figures for the rest of Canada are 59 percent and 55 percent, respectively (Angus Reid Institute, 2017).

**THE AGE PARADOX.** We saw earlier that younger Jews are less likely than older Jews to report believing that Jews experience frequent discrimination but are more likely to report experiencing discrimination themselves. These findings appear paradoxical if not contradictory. Why should people who experience more discrimination as Jews believe that the

Jewish community experiences less discrimination? A likely possibility is that younger Jews are more exposed to non-Jews in their daily lives than are older Jews. Most young people are in college, university, or the paid labour force. As they age, they graduate from post-secondary educational institutions and eventually leave the paid labour force. Their social interactions then become more restricted to family members and friends, the latter of whom tend overwhelmingly to be Jewish, as noted in Chapter 3. Living in a Jewish home for the elderly further removes them from interaction with non-Jews.

It therefore seems plausible that older Jews experience less discrimination than younger Jews in their daily lives because they interact relatively little with non-Jews. At the same time, older Jews grew up in a period when discrimination against Jews was more widespread. After all, there was a quota on Jewish admissions to the University of Toronto medical school until 1959, and Canadian workplaces and labour unions systematically favoured white Christians of Western European stock until the 1960s (Godwin 2017; Levi 2003). Perceptions of discrimination by older Jews may be influenced by the memory of that era.

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# Chapter 7: Connection to Israel

## Attachment to Israel

A large majority of Canadian Jews are emotionally attached to Israel and have visited the country at least once, with a significant proportion having made multiple trips. Attachment to Israel is strongest among Orthodox/Modern Orthodox Jews, but evident across all segments of the population.

**EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT TO ISRAEL.** Israel is a central focus for Jews across the diaspora, and this survey reveals this to be especially so for Jews in this country. Almost half (48%) of Jews in Canada say they are very emotionally attached to Israel, with another three in ten (31%) somewhat attached, and only one in five feeling not very (11%) or not at all (8%) attached emotionally. By comparison, only 30 percent of American Jews are very attached to Israel, with an equal proportion (31%) who feel not very or not at all attached.

Emotional attachment to Israel is prevalent across the Canadian Jewish population, but there are significant

differences in the strength of this connection, most notably based on religious identity.

Strong attachment to Israel is most widespread among Jews who are Orthodox/Modern Orthodox (76% very attached), and those who identify as a Jew mainly by religion alone (60%), or in combination with culture and ancestry/descent (61%).

This connection is much less evident among Jews who are not affiliated (32%), identify mainly by ancestry/descent (32%) or by culture (36%), and are third-plus generation Canadians (38%). Attachment to Israel also varies by city, being stronger in Toronto (49%) and Montreal (48%) than in Winnipeg (43%) and Vancouver (31%, where 32% say they are not very or not at all attached). Across age cohorts, Jews under 45 years of age (43%) are somewhat less apt to be very attached to Israel, compared with those who are older (51%).

Figure 7-1  
Connection to Israel  
(%) By Jewish identity

	CANADIAN TOTAL	JEWISH IDENTITY					AMERICAN JEWS
		BY RELIGION	By ANCESTRY/ DESCENT	By CULTURE	ALL THREE	OTHER COMBINATION	
Very attached	48	60	32	36	61	47	30
Somewhat attached	31	25	31	39	28	32	39
Not very attached	11	7	18	14	8	13	22
Not at all attached	8	7	17	11	3	7	9
TOTAL %*	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Been to Israel at least once	79	81	65	76	86	80	43

\* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Q.47  
How emotionally attached are you to Israel?

Q.48.  
Can you tell me how many times have you been to Israel?

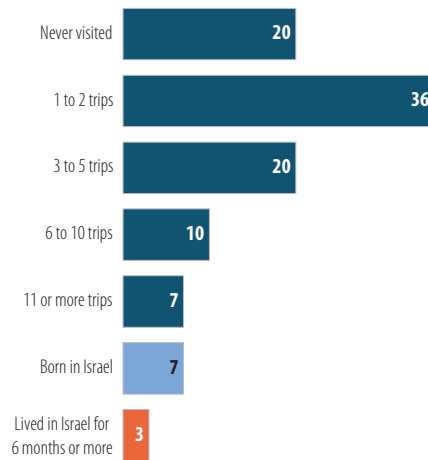
**TIME SPENT IN ISRAEL.** For many Jews, attachment to Israel extends beyond feelings to time spent in the country, whether to visit friends and family, for study, or simply as tourists. Eight in ten (79%) Canadian Jews say they have visited Israel at least once, including seven percent who were born there. And for most, this is more than a one-time experience; almost four in ten (37%) have been to Israel three or more times, and Canadian Jews as a whole have visited an average 5.1 times to date. By comparison, just over four in ten (43%) American Jews have ever been to Israel.

Canadian Jews most likely to have visited Israel at least once include those who are Orthodox/Modern Orthodox (92%), under 45 years of age (84%), women (82% versus 74% of men), and those with a post-graduate degree (83% versus 70% among those without a university degree).

Travel to Israel is less prevalent but still the majority experience among Jews in Vancouver (64%), those with no affiliation (70%), and those who do not belong to any Jewish organization (63%). The average number of trips to Israel is highest among Sephardi Jews (7.0) and/or those who are Orthodox/Modern Orthodox (6.7).

Another indicator of connection to Israel is spending an extended period in the country. Among those who have visited the country at least once, one in five (20%) says he or she has lived in Israel for a period of six months or more (this translates into 16% of all adult Canadian Jews). Such extended stays are reported by an appreciable proportion across the country's Jewish population, but are most evident among those who are Orthodox/Modern Orthodox (28%) or belong to a non-mainstream denomination/movement (28%), those 55 to 64 years of age (26%), those whose mother tongue is Russian (33%) or other than English, Yiddish or French (40%), and also those who were not raised in a religious household (27%).

Figure 7-2  
Travel to Israel (%)



Average # of trips (lifetime) 5.1

Q.48

Can you tell me how many times have you been to Israel?

Q.49

Have you lived in Israel, for a period of six months or more?



## Israeli-Palestinian relations

Canadian Jews, along with their American counterparts, are divided about the efforts of the Israeli leadership in seeking peace with the Palestinians. Only a minority believe West Bank settlements are illegal under international law, but most people with an opinion on the subject believe settlements are hurting the security of Israel.

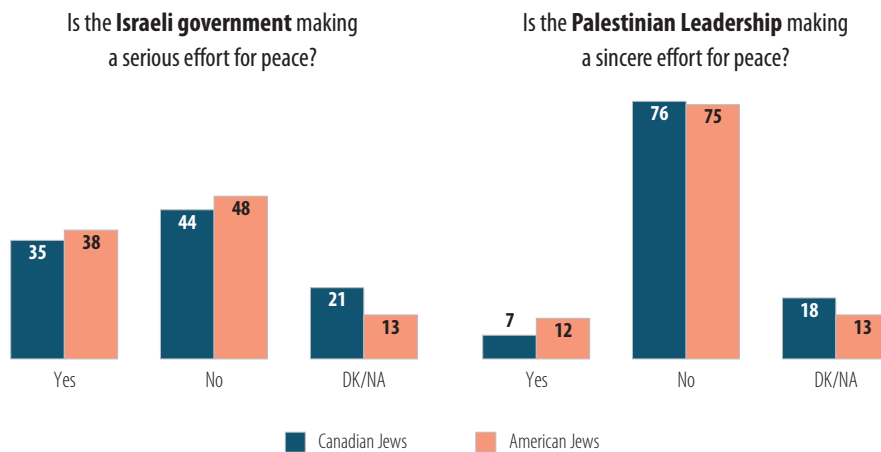
### GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP IN SEEKING PEACE.

Peace between Israelis and Palestinians has been elusive for generations despite numerous plans and stated intentions. How do Canadian Jews view the leadership on both sides of the conflict? Regarding the Israeli side, opinions are divided, with only 35 percent believing the current Israeli leadership is making a sincere effort to bring about a peace settlement, compared with 44 percent who disagree, and another 21 percent who have no clear opinion. American Jews express a similar divide in perspective, although they are more apt to have an opinion.

This division of opinion about the current Israeli leadership is evident across the Canadian Jewish population, but a positive view is more prevalent among those who are Orthodox/Modern Orthodox (50% say a sincere effort is being made), those 75 years and older (46%), and first-generation Canadians (43%). Least apt to agree with this position are Jews who are Reform (26%) or unaffiliated (28%), those with a university degree (34%), and those under 45 years of age (28%, compared with 49% who do not believe the current Israeli leadership is making a sincere effort to bring about peace).

There is considerably more agreement about the current Palestinian leadership, with only seven percent saying it is making a sincere effort for peace, compared with 76 percent who disagree and another 18 percent who do not express a clear opinion. Once again, this result closely mirrors the sentiments of American Jews. Among Canadian Jews, opinions about the Palestinian leadership are largely consistent across the population.

Figure 7-3  
Commitment to peace in the Middle East (%)



Q.50

Do you think the current ISRAELI GOVERNMENT is making a sincere effort to bring about a peace settlement with the Palestinians, or don't you think so?

Q.51

Do you think the current PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP is making a sincere effort to bring about a peace settlement with Israel, or don't you think so?

**OPINIONS ABOUT WEST BANK SETTLEMENTS.** One of the major flash points in the Israel-Palestinian conflict is the ongoing expansion of Jewish settlements in the West Bank. One in four (23%) Canadian Jews believes that these settlements are illegal under international law, compared with just over four in ten (43%) who maintain they are not illegal, and another third who say it depends (8%) or have no clear opinion to offer (26%).

The belief that West Bank settlements are illegal is a minority view across the Canadian Jewish population, but is most likely to be expressed by residents of Vancouver (38%), those who belong to a non-mainstream denomination or movement (34%), have a post-graduate degree (29%), and are under 30 years of age (32%).

Apart from legal considerations, how do Canadian Jews believe West Bank settlements are affecting Israeli's security? About one-half of the population believe the settlements are having a clear impact on Israeli's security, and by a margin

of almost three-to-one, they say the settlements are hurting (39%) rather than helping (14%) security.

The other half of Canadian Jews believe the settlements are having no effect on the security of the country (24%), say it depends (4%), or offer no opinion (19%). American Jews express a similar spectrum of views, although once again are more likely than their Canadian counterparts to express an opinion.

Opinions on the effect of West Bank settlements on Israeli's security are generally similar across different parts of the population. Only among those who are Orthodox/ Modern Orthodox does a positive view about the impact of settlements on security outweigh a negative one (27% versus 20%). The belief that settlements *hurt* the security of Israel is most widespread in Vancouver (61%), and among Jews who affiliate as Reform (51%) or with a non-mainstream denomination or movement (53%).

**Figure 7-4**  
**Legality of Israeli settlements in the West Bank**  
 (%) By age

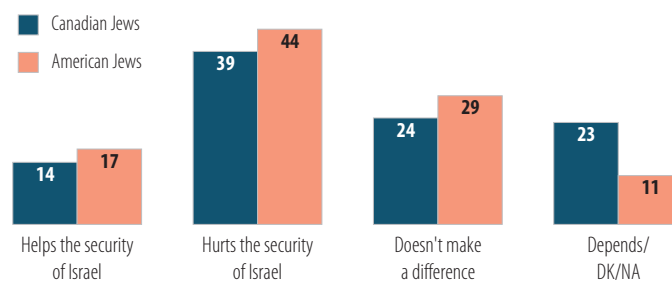
	CANADIAN TOTAL	AGE					
		18 - 29	30 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 64	65 - 74	75+
Illegal under international law	23	32	25	19	20	24	17
NOT illegal under international law	43	30	37	52	47	47	45
Depends/unclear	8	12	13	5	7	4	5
DK/NA	26	25	25	24	27	25	33
TOTAL %*	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

\* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Q.53

Some people consider Israeli settlements in the West Bank to be **ILLEGAL** under international law, while others disagree. Which position is closer to your own?

**Figure 7-5**  
**Continued building of Jewish settlements in the West Bank (%)**



Q.52

In your opinion, does the continued building of Jewish settlements in the West Bank help the security of Israel, hurt the security of Israel, or does it not make a difference?

**JEWISH CLAIM TO THE LAND.** One of the central obstacles to a negotiated peace with Palestinians is the belief that God gave the land of Israel to the Jewish people. Among Canadian Jews, there is no consensus on this point. They are evenly divided between those who say that the land was given to the Jewish people by God (42%) and those who do not believe this is literally true (41%); the remainder (17%) do not express a clear opinion either way. American Jews are as likely to accept this Biblical view (40%), but also more likely than Canadian Jews to have no clear opinion (33%).

Not surprisingly, belief in the land being granted by God is most widely held among Jews who are Orthodox/Modern Orthodox (75%) and those who identify as Jewish mainly by religion (64%). It is least apt to be accepted by those who identify as Jewish mainly by culture (27%) and those who are unaffiliated (29%).

## Canada's support for Israel

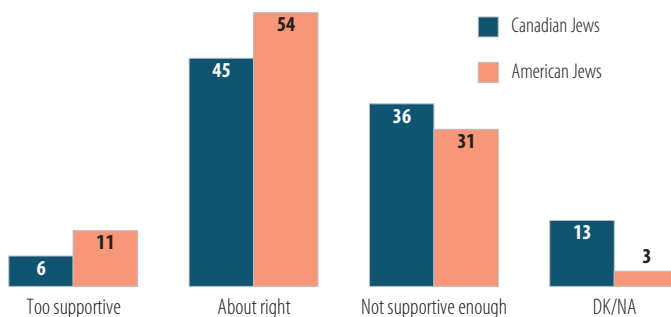
A plurality believe Canada's level of support for Israel is about right, but a significant minority say it is not supportive enough. This latter view is most widely expressed among Jews who support the federal Conservative party, and to a lesser extent among those who are Sephardi and/or Orthodox.

How do Canadian Jews feel about their country's current level of support for Israel? A plurality (45%) consider the relationship between Canada and Israel to be about right, but a significant minority (36%) say Canada is not supportive enough, while only six percent maintain it is too supportive. This perspective is comparable to that of American Jews' view about their own country's support for Israel in 2013

(under the Obama Administration), although the balance in that year was tipped toward "about right" versus "not supportive enough."

A positive view of Canada's current relationship with Israel is most prevalent among Vancouver residents (51%), those who identify as Jewish mainly by culture (52%), Reform Jews (52%), those with a post-graduate degree (49%), and men (51% versus 40% among women). By comparison, those most likely to say that Canada is not supportive enough include Jews who are Orthodox/Modern Orthodox (49%), Winnipeggers (43%), and Sephardi Jews (45%).

Figure 7-6  
Own country's support for Israel (%)



Q.55

Now thinking about the relationship between Canada and Israel, do you believe that Canada is too supportive of Israel, not supportive enough of Israel, or is the level of support for Israel about right?

## Commentary

### ATTITUDES TOWARD WEST BANK SETTLEMENTS ACROSS AGE COHORTS IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES.

In the United States, younger Jews are much more likely than older Jews to express opposition to Jewish settlements in the West Bank and related aspects of Israeli policy (Ungar-Sargon, 2018). For example, skepticism about the security benefits of settlements grows steadily as one moves from older to younger age cohorts. In Canada, the situation seems roughly similar, as Figure 7-7 shows. Skepticism about the security benefits of West Bank settlements does not increase steadily as one moves from older to younger age cohorts, but a tendency to increase is nonetheless evident.

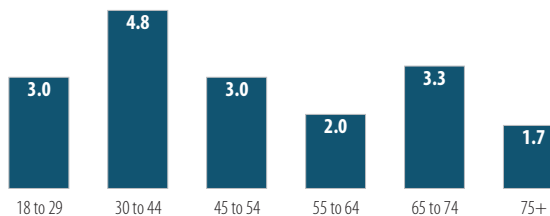
**FEDERAL PARTY SUPPORT.** Like most non-Jews in Canada, most Canadian Jews tend to support the Liberal and Conservative parties (see Figure 7-8). In the case of Canadian Jews, support is driven partly by the degree to which federal parties are seen to support Israel, as Figure 7-9 shows.

A review of party platforms, internal debates, and recent statements by party leaders suggests that, in terms of support for nationalistic Israeli state policies, Canada's federal political parties lie on a continuum, with the Conservatives solidly in the camp of pro-Israel nationalism and the NDP at the other extreme. In the survey, respondents were asked, "Now thinking about the relationship between Canada and Israel, do you believe that Canada is too supportive, not supportive enough, or just about right in its level of support for Israel?" Figure 7-9 cross-tabulates responses to that question with respondents' political party identification for the four most popular political parties among Canadian Jews.

The results are telling. At this writing, the Liberals are in power. Fifty-nine percent of Canadian Jews who support the Liberals think that Canada is about right in its level of support for Israel. In contrast, 60 percent of Canadian Jews who identify with the Conservatives think that Canada is *insufficiently* supportive of Israel. The parties most opposed to nationalistic Israeli policies are the only ones that attract a substantial number of Canadian Jews who believe that Canada is too supportive of Israel; some 27 percent of Canadian Jews who identify with the New Democratic Party and 21 percent who identify with the Green Party are in that camp.

Figure 7-7

Ratio of respondents who think West Bank settlements hurt versus those who think they help security (%) By age cohort



Q.52

In your opinion, does the continued building of Jewish settlements in the West Bank help the security of Israel, hurt the security of Israel, or does it not make a difference?

Figure 7-8

Federal political party support (%)

Liberal	36
Conservative	32
New Democrat	10
Green Party supporter	2
Bloc Québécois supporter	<1
Another party	2
None	6
Don't know/no answer	12
TOTAL	100

Q.67

In federal politics, do you usually think of yourself as a Liberal, a Conservative, a New Democrat, a Green or a Bloc Québécois supporter [QUEBEC ONLY]?

Figure 7-9

Attitude toward Canada's support for Israel (%) by federal party support

	← Anti-Israel nationalism		Pro-Israel nationalism →	
	NDP	Green	Liberal	Conservative
Too supportive	27	21	4	1
About right	47	48	59	32
Not supportive enough	9	13	26	60
Don't know	17	19	11	6
TOTAL*	100	100	100	100

\*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Q.55

Now thinking about the relationship between Canada and Israel, do you believe that Canada is too supportive of Israel, not supportive enough of Israel, or is the level of support for Israel about right?

### **CANADIAN-AMERICAN DIFFERENCES IN SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL?**

Historically, Canadian Jews have expressed stronger support for Israel than have American Jews. By 1914, Zionism had become “the normative form of Canadian Jewish identification” (Tulchinsky, 1992: 201). In contrast, as late as 1942, leaders of the American Reform movement created the American Council of Judaism, insisting that Jews form a religious group, not a national group, and opposing the newly adopted principle of the World Zionist Organization that Palestine be established as a “Jewish Commonwealth” (Kolsky, 1990). No such division over the need for a Jewish state was evident in Canada.

Much of the historical Canadian-American difference is a result of American Jews having earlier developed a strong national identity. The United States was settled by Europeans more than a century before Canada was. Accordingly, American national identity had more time to crystallize. Moreover, American national identity was forged in an anti-colonial war—always a great unifier—while Canadian national identity emerged gradually, in tandem with the peaceful evolution of independence from Great Britain. For these reasons, when Zionism appeared on the scene at the turn of the 20th century, it conflicted with the American patriotism of many Jews in the United States, particularly Reform Jews, who formed the plurality religious denomination in their country.

It is, however, an open question whether historical Canadian-American differences in support for Israel persist. We saw in Chapter 2 that 43 percent of Canadian Jews feel that caring about Israel is an essential part of being Jewish, the same percentage that the Pew Survey of American Jews found south of the border in 2013. Both surveys also note that some people believe God gave the land of Israel to the Jewish people, while others do not believe the Biblical claim is literally true. A negligible Canadian-American difference of opinion exists on this issue; 40 percent of American Jews and 42 percent of Canadian Jews believe that Israel was given to the Jews by God.

In contrast, when asked how emotionally attached they are to Israel, a gap of 18 percentage points opens up between Canadian and American Jews who answer “very attached” (48% versus 30%). Moreover, the greater emotional attachment of Canadian Jews to Israel is backed up by the extraordinarily large difference in the proportion of respondents who say they have visited Israel—about 80 percent among Canadians versus 43 percent among Americans.

Based on these findings, it seems that Canadian Jews are like their American counterparts with respect to some attitudes and behaviours concerning Israel, but unlike them in other respects. The historical argument needs to be modified but not rejected.



# Chapter 8: Connection to local Jewish community

Throughout much of their history, local Jewish communities have been tightly knit and organized around synagogues, other Jewish organizations, and extended family connections. In 21st century North America, social mobility, assimilation, migration patterns, and other trends mean that many Jews are no longer as closely connected to the local community as they once were. This makes community connections an important topic for this survey.<sup>23</sup>

## Current connection to local Jewish community

Eight in ten Canadian Jews feel somewhat if not strongly connected to Jewish life in their city, and connectedness is most strongly linked to denomination and involvement with organizations and friends. Reasons for not feeling more connected have to do with lack of interest, obstacles, and not feeling Jewish enough.

Most Canadian Jews feel connected to their local community. Close to four in ten (37%) say they feel very connected to Jewish life in the city where they live, with a similar proportion (40%) indicating they feel somewhat connected. Just over one in five feels not very (15%) or not at all (7%) connected.

As might be expected, strength of connection is largely a function of denominational affiliation and involvement with Jewish organizations and friends. Jews most likely to report feeling very connected to Jewish life in their city include those who affiliate as Orthodox/Modern Orthodox (71%), those who say all of their friends are Jewish (70%), and those who belong to a synagogue and one or more other Jewish organizations (62%); fewer than 10 percent in each of these groups report feeling not connected. In contrast, a strong connection is least evident among Jews with no affiliation (16%) or organizational membership (8%), those with few or no Jewish friends (8%), and those who were not raised in the Jewish religion (17%).

A sense of connection to local Jewish life also varies by city. Jews in Montreal are most likely to say they feel very connected (48%), while those in Vancouver are least apt to share this perspective (21%). Across the four cities, women (42%) are somewhat more likely than men (32%) to say they feel very connected, while there are few differences across age cohorts or across levels of education and income.

**Figure 8-1**  
How connected to local Jewish community  
(%) By city and organization membership

	CANADIAN TOTAL	CITY				ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIP			
		TORONTO	MONTREAL	WINNIPEG	VANCOUVER	SYNAGOGUE + OTHER	SYNAGOGUE ONLY	OTHER ONLY	NONE
Very connected	37	34	46	37	21	62	40	31	8
Somewhat connected	40	44	36	43	26	34	44	49	40
Not very connected	15	17	11	14	28	3	14	14	31
Not at all connected	7	5	6	5	25	1	2	5	19
TOTAL %*	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

\*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Q.56  
How connected do you currently feel to Jewish life in the city where you live?

<sup>23</sup> This topic was not covered in the 2013 Pew Survey of American Jews.

**WHY NOT MORE CONNECTED?** Respondents who do not feel “very connected” to Jewish life in their city were asked why they do not feel more connected (this question was asked without offering response options, and multiple responses were allowed). Canadian Jews offered a range of responses to this question, with most falling into one of three broad themes. The first theme includes reasons pertaining to **not being interested in being more connected** than they currently are (this theme was mentioned by 35% of those asked the question). Specific reasons include a general lack of interest, not having found Jewish programs or activities of interest, not being a sociable type of person, and contentment with their current level of connection.

The second theme (mentioned by 34%) encompasses **obstacles to greater connection**. These obstacles include not having time for greater involvement, other competing or higher priorities, lack of access to Jewish friends and/or resources, not knowing people in the community, health or age issues, and the expense involved in participation (e.g., synagogue fees).

The third theme (mentioned by 30%) involves reasons having to do with **not feeling Jewish enough** to feel more strongly connected to the local community. This theme encompasses such reasons as not identifying or feeling comfortable with the local Jewish community, not finding the community accepting, not being a religious person, not agreeing with the political views of others, and having a different type of background.

Each of these three themes is present across most identifiable groups in the Canadian Jewish population. However, low interest in being connected to the local Jewish community is most evident among those who are less likely to be involved in Jewish activities, including Vancouverites (38%), those with no denominational or movement affiliation (40%), those who belong to no Jewish organizations (35%), and men (38% versus 33% of women), as well as Jews ages 75 and over (44%).

In contrast, those reporting obstacles to greater connection are people who already feel well connected, including those who affiliate as Orthodox/Modern Orthodox (48%) and those who belong to a synagogue and one or more other Jewish organizations (43%). This theme is also prominent among Jews with children under 18 at home (42%) and

Figure 8-2

### Why not feeling more connected to the community?

(%) Unprompted mentions

<b>Not interested</b>	<b>35</b>
Not interested in being more connected	23
Haven't found Jewish programs/activities I like	6
Not the social type	4
Happy with current level of connection	4
<b>Obstacles</b>	<b>34</b>
Don't have time/other demands/priorities	19
Don't have access to Jewish friends/relatives	8
Don't know people in local community	7
Health issues/age	3
Too expensive to participate in organizations/events	3
<b>Not Jewish enough</b>	<b>30</b>
Don't identify/feel comfortable with local community	9
Community not very accepting	7
Not a religious person	7
Don't agree with political views	4
Have different background/culture	3
Single/no family/married out of faith	3
Do not feel Jewish	2
Not a synagogue member	2
Other reasons	2
Don't know/no answer	9

Q.57

What is the main reason or reasons you do not feel more connected to Jewish life than you currently do?

those between the ages of 30 and 54 (41%). Those who say they do not feel Jewish enough are most apt to be affiliated with non-mainstream denominations and movements (40%), have few or no Jewish friends (39%), and were not raised in the Jewish religion (36%).



## Interest in stronger connections

A majority of Canadian Jews express interest in becoming more connected to Jewish life in their city, but they are likely to be the same people who already feel strongly connected. The highest level of interest is in activities and programs that are educational, cultural, or that help people connect socially.

### INTEREST IN BECOMING MORE CONNECTED TO JEWISH LIFE.

How interested are Canadian Jews in becoming more connected to Jewish life in their city? About six in ten say they are very (20%) or somewhat (38%) interested, with the remainder indicating they are not very (26%) or not at all (12%) interested in strengthening this connection.

The survey results reveal that such interest is strongest among Jews who already feel very connected to Jewish life

in their city. Strong interest in becoming more connected is expressed by more than one-third (35%) of those currently feeling very connected, compared with only eight percent among those who say they feel not at all connected. This means that strong interest in becoming more connected is most evident among Jews who affiliate as Orthodox/ Modern Orthodox, those who belong to a synagogue and one or more other Jewish organizations, and those with all or mostly Jewish friends.

Interest in developing a stronger connection to Jewish life is similar across the four cities, although lack of interest is most evident in Vancouver (where 21% say they are not at all interested). Across age cohorts, Jews under 45 years of age (27%) are more likely to express strong interest, in comparison with those 45 and older (16%).

Figure 8-3

### Interest in becoming more connected to local Jewish community

(%) By level of current connection

How interested in becoming more connected to Jewish life in your city?	CANADIAN TOTAL	CURRENT LEVEL OF CONNECTION TO JEWISH COMMUNITY			
		VERY CONNECTED	SOMEWHAT CONNECTED	NOT VERY CONNECTED	NOT AT ALL CONNECTED
Very interested	20	35	11	10	8
Somewhat interested	38	34	46	36	17
Not very interested	23	14	30	42	29
Not at all interested	12	9	8	11	45
Depends/don't know	5	8	4	1	2
TOTAL %*	100	100	100	100	100

\* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Q.58

How interested are you in becoming more connected to Jewish life in your city?

Figure 8-4

### Interested in becoming more connected to local Jewish community

(%) By city and age

How interested in becoming more connected to Jewish life in your city?	CANADIAN TOTAL	CITY				AGE				
		TORONTO	MONTREAL	WINNIPEG	VANCOUVER	18 - 29	30 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 64	65 +
Very interested	20	18	24	24	20	28	26	18	15	15
Somewhat interested	38	40	36	44	31	41	42	39	41	30
Not very interested	26	28	24	18	25	25	18	31	28	28
Not at all interested	12	10	11	9	21	4	10	10	13	17
Depends/don't know	5	4	5	4	3	3	4	3	3	10
TOTAL %*	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

\* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Q.58

How interested are you in becoming more connected to Jewish life in your city?

## ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS OF MOST INTEREST.

Those expressing at least some interest in becoming more connected were asked (without prompting) what types of Jewish activities and programs would be of most interest if available in their city.<sup>24</sup> More than half identified one or more types of activities or programs, with just over four in ten saying they could think of none (24%) or not offering a response to the question (20%). Most of the responses fall into one of five broad themes:

1. **Educational activities and programs.** One in four (24%) Canadian Jews responding to this question mentioned something pertaining to Jewish education, which included programs on history, lectures, documentaries, book clubs, courses in Hebrew and Yiddish, and cooking. This theme was most likely to be mentioned by individuals who affiliate with a non-mainstream denomination or movement (35%), those with a post-graduate degree (29%), and those who say that religion is very important to them personally (32%).
2. **Cultural activities and programs.** One in five (19%) identified something that fits this general theme, which includes arts, movies, concerts and music, or cultural events that promote Jewish life and values. This theme was most often identified by those who affiliate with non-mainstream denominations or movements (25%) and those 65 to 74 years of age (29%).
3. **Social activities and programs.** One in six (17%) mentioned something related to social activities, such as charitable activities or volunteering, activities that bring Jews together (including Jews with different origins), and activities that accept non-Jewish partners and friends.
4. **Activities and programs for specific groups.** One in ten (9%) identified something fitting this theme, mostly activities for families and young children, but also including singles, retirees, the LGBTQ community, and young

Figure 8-5

## Jewish programs/activities of greatest interest

(%) Major themes Unprompted mentions

MAJOR THEMES*	
<b>Educational</b> (Lectures/conferences/talks/book clubs)	24
<b>Cultural</b> (Arts/movies/plays/concerts)	19
<b>Social activities</b> (Charitable/sports/sports/connect people)	17
<b>For specific groups</b> (Families/young children/retirees/singles)	9
<b>Religious</b> (Ceremonies/synagogue functions)	6
<b>Other</b> (JCC programs, other)	6
None	24
Don't know/no answer	20

\* Total exceeds 100% because of multiple mentions

Q.59

*What kinds of Jewish programs or activities would you like to take advantage of in your city, if available?*

professionals. Not surprisingly, interest in programming for families and young children is most evident among parents with children under the age of 18 at home (15%), and those under 45 years of age (18%).

5. **Religious activities and programs.** Six percent mentioned activities or programs with a religious focus, either ceremonies, holidays and celebrations, or other types of synagogue functions. This theme is most likely to be mentioned by Jews who affiliate with a non-mainstream denomination or movement (11%) and those under 45 years of age (11%).

Finally, Canadian Jews who did not identify any type of activity or program of interest tend to be those who identify as Jewish mainly by ancestry/descent (56%), who consider being Jewish as not at all important personally (68%), and those with lower levels of education and income.

<sup>24</sup> This question was not asked to respondents who said they were "not at all interested" in becoming more connected to Jewish life in their city.

**COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND PRIORITIES IN WINNIPEG.**

Survey respondents in Winnipeg were asked about the financial resources of their local Jewish community and whether they believe they are adequate in terms of providing the programs and services needed by the community and its members. Seven in ten say they believe the resources are adequate (59%), if not more than adequate (13%), to meet the community’s needs. The remainder believe the resources are less than adequate (13%) or are unable to offer an opinion (15%). The view that local resources are not adequate is somewhat more prevalent among women and residents who belong to both a synagogue and one or more other Jewish organizations.

Jews in Winnipeg were also asked to identify what areas they believe should be the most important spending priorities of the Winnipeg Jewish community (asked unprompted). Almost six in ten identified one or more areas of priority, most of which fit into one of two themes: education or schools (33%), including programs to promote an active Jewish life, Jewish day schools, and summer camps; and social services or assistance to groups and individuals in need (24%), including children and families, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and Jewish immigrants. Small percentages highlighted spending priorities for cultural programs or other activities. More than four in ten (45%) did not offer any responses to this question.

Figure 8-6  
**Most important spending priorities for the Winnipeg Jewish community**  
 (% Unprompted mentions)

<b>Education/schools</b>	<b>33</b>
Jewish education	14
Kids/teens programs to promote active Jewish life	10
Jewish day schools	6
Summer camp for youth	4
Affordable programs/schools	2
Jewish Sunday schools	1
Jewish after-school classes	1
<b>Social services/assistance</b>	<b>24</b>
Social services (child and family, seniors, disabilities)	16
Support for Jewish people in need	11
Support for new Jewish immigrants	4
<b>Cultural/cross-cultural programs</b>	<b>5</b>
Other priorities	14
None/don't know	45

Q.W61  
*The Winnipeg Jewish community supports many different types of educational, religious and charitable programs and institutions. What specific areas should the most important spending priorities of the Winnipeg Jewish community be?*

## Out-migration

The Jewish communities of Toronto, Vancouver, Ottawa and Calgary have grown in recent decades, whereas the population of most other cities, including Montreal and Winnipeg, have remained stable or declined. The survey explored this issue in Winnipeg and Montreal, with questions developed in partnership with study sponsors in those cities.

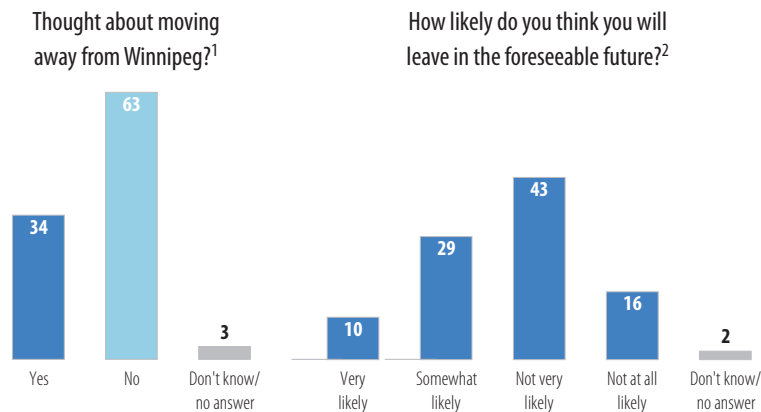
**WINNIPEG OUT-MIGRATION.** In Winnipeg, the survey questions focused on considerations given to leaving the city. One-third (34%) of Jews in Winnipeg say they have thought about moving away from the city at some point in the past few years (this includes 1% who say they have already decided to move). The size of the Winnipeg subsample limits the depth of subgroup analysis, but thinking about moving is most likely to be reported by those 18 to 29 years of age, those with no children, and those with higher levels of education and income.

Among those who have considered such a move, four in ten say it is very (10%) or somewhat (29%) likely they will leave

Winnipeg in the foreseeable future. The remainder indicate this is not very (43%) or not at all (16%) likely. Those who say they are very or somewhat likely to leave were asked about the timing of the move. One-third of this group (33%) anticipate it might be within the next two years, while others indicate the next three to five years (32%), the next six to 10 years (21%), or longer (6%). Nine percent report they are still in the process of deciding on the timing of a potential move from Winnipeg.

Finally, Winnipeggers considering a move were asked why they would leave the city (asked unprompted).<sup>25</sup> Several reasons are mentioned with none predominating. Most commonly mentioned are the desire to live in a larger or different Jewish community (25% of this group, representing 4% of Winnipeg Jews), to join family or close friends living elsewhere (24%), for better job or career opportunities (17%), to live in a warmer climate (17%), and other reasons (each mentioned by fewer than 5% of this group).

Figure 8-7  
Considered moving away from Winnipeg (%)



<sup>1</sup> Includes 1% who have already decided to move

<sup>2</sup> Among those who have considered moving

Q.W63

Have you thought about moving away from Winnipeg at any point in the past few years?

Q.W64

(IF YES IN Q.W63) How likely do you think it is that you will leave Winnipeg in the foreseeable future?

<sup>25</sup> The subsample asked this question (n=49) is too small to support more thorough analysis beyond what is presented here.

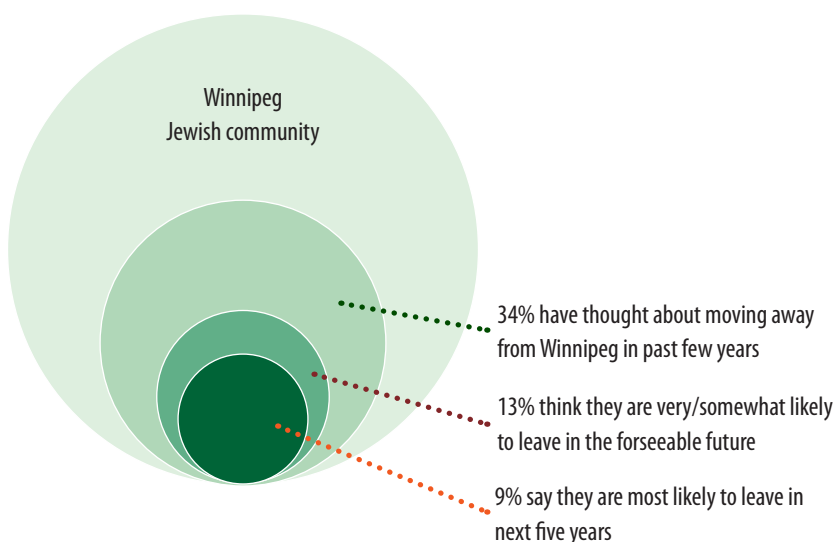
**MONTREAL OUT-MIGRATION.** In Montreal, the focus was on the out-migration of younger Jews to Toronto and Vancouver. Among Canadian Jews 18 to 44 years of age living in the latter two cities, 17 percent say they moved there from another part of Canada as an adult (14% among those living in Toronto, and 52% for those in Vancouver). Of this group, one-third (35%) moved from Montreal, followed by Ottawa (21%), and several other cities (none mentioned by more than 5% of this group).

Jews between the ages of 18 and 44 who moved to Toronto or Vancouver from Montreal (a subsample of 24), were asked (unprompted) why they chose to leave Montreal for one of these cities. A majority cite moving for a better job or career opportunities (17 of the 24 cases), while smaller numbers mention moving to join family or close friends (6), to be part of a larger Jewish community (4), because of too much French influence in Montreal (4), and/or for other reasons (5).<sup>26</sup>

## Commentary

**EXPECTED OUT-MIGRATION FROM WINNIPEG.** The possible impact of out-migration on the Winnipeg Jewish community can be seen graphically in Figure 8-8, which shows the percentage of Winnipeg respondents who have thought about moving away in the past few years, think it is very or somewhat likely they will leave in the foreseeable future, and say they are most likely to leave within five years. Thoughts, expectations and plans change. There can often be a large gap between thoughts, expectations and plans, on the one hand, and actions, on the other. It nonetheless seems likely that the size of the Winnipeg Jewish community is likely to continue to decline in the foreseeable future.

Figure 8-8  
Potential out-migration from Winnipeg



<sup>26</sup> This subsample (n=24) is too small to support more in-depth analysis.

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# Chapter 9: Sephardim and Jews from the former Soviet Union and Israel

The Canadian Jewish community contains ethnic subgroups consisting of people who think of themselves as somewhat distinct from the Jewish mainstream because of their mother tongue, customs, and/or strength of Jewish identity. These groups include Sephardim (of southern European and Middle Eastern descent), Jews born in the Soviet Union, and Jews born in Israel. The question of how well these groups are integrated in the mainstream is an issue of concern to some members of the community.

## Socio-demographic characteristics

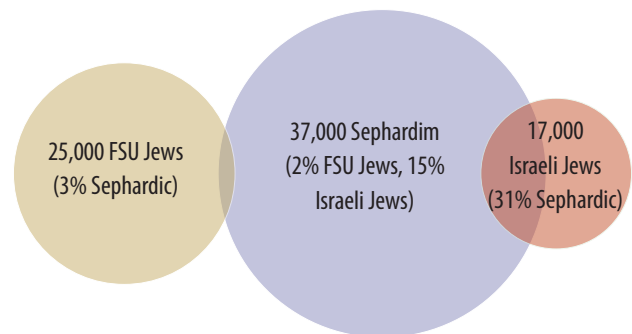
About ten percent of respondents in the survey sample say they are of Sephardi or Mizrakhi ancestry.<sup>27</sup> Nearly 80 percent of Canadian Jews claiming Sephardi ancestry were born in three countries—Canada (50%), Israel (15%), and Morocco (13%). Approximately six percent of all respondents say they were born in the former Soviet Union (FSU) and fewer than five percent say they were born in Israel. Based on our estimate of the core Canadian Jewish population in 2018 (392,000), the adult Canadian Jewish population includes about 37,000 Sephardim, 25,000 Jews born in the FSU, and 17,000 Jews born in Israel (see Figure 9-1).

With one exception, these figures are close to Charles Shahar’s estimates based on several census and National Household Survey criteria. Our figure of 17,000 Israeli Jews is a few hundred lower than Shahar’s 2011 estimate. Our figure

of 37,000 for Sephardim roughly corresponds with Shahar’s 2001 estimate of 32,000, taking into account that Canada has experienced some Jewish immigration from France in recent years (Federation CJA 2018). (French Jewry is around 70 percent Sephardi.) In fact, we would not be surprised if the actual number of Sephardi Jews in Canada is more than 40,000.<sup>28</sup> However, Shahar’s 2011 estimate for Canadian Jews born in the FSU is 35,000—considerably higher than our estimate of 25,000 (Shahar 2015b).

The number of respondents from these subgroups is small: 222 Sephardim, 148 Jews from the FSU, and 105 Israeli Jews. Small numbers imply large sampling error, so generalizations offered about these subgroups must be treated with considerable caution.

Figure 9-1  
Overlap among Jewish subgroups



<sup>27</sup> Hereafter for convenience we refer to Sephardi and Mizrakhi Jews simply as Sephardi.

<sup>28</sup> We appear to have undercounted Sephardim in Montreal, estimated at 25 percent of that city’s Jewish population in the 2011 National Household Survey and 15 percent in our survey (Shahar 2015a).

However, on the positive side, inspection of the age, sex, and geographical distribution of members of each subgroup reveals little that is unexpected by way of comparison with the corresponding characteristics of the entire Canadian Jewish population (Brym, 2001; Shaha, 2015a; see Figure 9-2 and footnote 3). This result increases confidence that, based on the survey data, one may make some useful observations about the subgroups.

## Integration in the Canadian Jewish community

Sixty-three percent of all Canadian Jews say they feel less than very connected to the Jewish community in which they reside (see Figure 9-3). By comparison, a somewhat smaller proportion of Israeli Jews feels less than very connected (58%) and a somewhat larger proportion of Sephardi Jews feels less than very connected (67%). Only among FSU Jews do we find a substantially larger proportion (79%) who feel less than very connected to the Jewish community.

Interestingly, Canadian Sephardim and Jews born in the FSU and Israel seem to be somewhat more eager to increase their connectedness to Jewish life in their city than are other Canadian Jews. Thus, one-fifth of all Canadian Jews are very interested in becoming more connected to Jewish life in the city where they live, compared to about one-quarter of people in the three ethnic subgroups (see Figure 9-4).

What can the organized Jewish community do to help members of these three subgroups become more connected to their local Jewish community? To find out, respondents were asked, "What kinds of Jewish programs or activities would you like to take advantage of in your city, if available?" Multiple responses were allowed. In Figure 9-5, programs or activities are grouped as educational (especially programs and activities on history, religion, the Holocaust, and Torah), cultural (especially movies, plays, concerts, music and dance performances, and art exhibits), social (especially charitable activities, volunteer work, fundraising, and social justice activities), programs or activities for specific groups (especially those geared toward families, young people, and children), and religious (especially religious ceremonies and holiday and Sabbath celebrations).

Figure 9-2

### Sample characteristics, all Canadian Jews and three subgroups (%)

	ALL JEWS (N=2,335)	SEPHARDI (N=222)	FSU (N=148)	ISRAELI (N=105)
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	43	46	40	46
Female	56	52	60	54
Other	0	1	0	0
TOTAL*	100	100	100	100
<b>Age</b>				
18-29	11	15	8	19
30-44	24	27	31	25
45-54	17	18	12	19
55-64	20	22	18	22
65-74	14	7	11	10
75+	14	11	20	5
TOTAL*	100	100	100	100
<b>City</b>				
Montreal	29	44	17	35
Toronto	58	47	68	56
Winnipeg	4	3	9	4
Vancouver	9	6	6	5
TOTAL*	100	100	100	100

\* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Figure 9-3

### How connected do you currently feel to Jewish life in the city where you live? (%)

	ALL JEWS	SEPHARDI JEWS	FSU JEWS	ISRAELI JEWS
Very	37	33	21	42
Somewhat	40	37	46	41
Not very	15	20	18	11
Not at all	7	8	14	6
Don't know/no answer	1	1	2	0
TOTAL*	100	100	100	100

\* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.



All Canadian Jews, and members of the three ethnic subgroups, rank the types of programs and activities they want in the same order: *educational* programs and activities are of most interest, followed by *cultural* programs and activities, and then *social* programs and activities. Decidedly less interest exists for other types of programs and activities. The proportion of respondents who desire each of these types of activities is almost the same for all Canadian Jews, Sephardim, and Jews born in Israel. Jews from the former Soviet Union stand out in one way. They are somewhat less likely than are members of other groups to know what types of programs and activities they want in order to become more connected to their local Jewish community. Again, while these observations offer useful insights, they are not conclusive because of the small sample size.

**Figure 9-4**  
How interested are you in becoming more connected to Jewish life in your city? (%)

	ALL JEWS	SEPHARDI JEWS	FSU JEWS	ISRAELI JEWS
Very	20	25	24	27
Somewhat	38	38	42	37
Not very	26	27	18	19
Not at all	12	7	14	9
Depends	2	2	0	4
Don't know/no answer	3	1	2	4
TOTAL*	100	100	100	100

\* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Figure 9-5**  
What kinds of Jewish programs or activities would you like to take advantage of in your city, if available?\*

	ALL JEWS	SEPHARDI JEWS	FSU JEWS	ISRAELI JEWS
Educational	24	25	19	23
Cultural	19	18	15	22
Social	17	17	13	17
Religious	6	5	5	7
For specific groups	6	5	5	7
Other	6	6	1	9
None/don't know/no answer	44	48	52	42

\*Because respondents could give multiple responses, totals equal more than 100% and are not shown.

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# APPENDIX: Study methodology

This section outlines the procedures used to conduct the study and a profile of the final survey sample.

## Questionnaire design

The questionnaire for this study was designed by the principal investigators, with input provided by the Advisory Group (identified in the Introduction). Many of the questions were taken directly or closely adapted from the 2013 Pew Survey of American Jews, in part because they were well-designed and relevant to the topics of interest for Canada, and in part because they provided the basis for making direct comparisons between the Jewish populations in the two countries. New questions were developed to focus on issues relating to local Jewish communities, covering topics that were not included in the American survey. Some of the new questions were city-specific and included to address issues of particular interest to study sponsors (e.g., out-migration from Winnipeg and Montreal).

Prior to being finalized, the questionnaire was pre-tested with a small number (n=17) of eligible respondents in Toronto for purposes of evaluating the survey length, comprehension, and potential sensitivities around question content and language. The final version was then adapted to be used as either a telephone interview or a self-administered online survey. A copy of the questionnaire (telephone version) is posted on the Environics Institute website at [www.environicsinstitute.org](http://www.environicsinstitute.org).

## Sample design and respondent recruitment

The objective of the study was to complete interviews with a representative sample of self-identified Jews in Canada to the extent possible within the available time frame and resources. Because Canadian Jews constitute only about

one percent of the Canadian population, the use of standard survey research methods was not a feasible option given the high costs of using probability sampling to identify and recruit participants.<sup>29</sup> The principal investigators developed a research strategy to make the research sample as comprehensive and representative as possible within the available budget. This strategy entailed two main parts.

First, the survey focused on the census metropolitan areas (CMAs) encompassing Canada's four largest Jewish communities (Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, and Winnipeg) that include about 82 percent of the Canadian Jewish population.<sup>30</sup>

Second, a multi-stage sampling plan was developed to complete interviews with Jews in each of the four cities using a combination of sampling approaches (encompassing probability and network sampling strategies) and survey modes (telephone interviews and online surveys). The sampling plan encompassed the following steps:

1. The initial sampling frame was developed by selecting census tracts in each of the four cities in which the incidence of Jewish individuals was five percent or higher, based on the 2011 National Household Survey.<sup>31</sup> Within these tracts, households were selected that included listed landline telephone numbers linked to residents with common Jewish surnames, based on a dictionary of several thousand common Jewish surnames compiled by the principal investigators from academic sources. This sampling frame was used to conduct the survey by telephone, and most of the interviews were completed in this way. Additional steps (outlined below) were taken to identify and recruit survey respondents by other means to achieve more representative coverage of the Jewish population in each of the four cities.

<sup>29</sup> See footnote 1, p.2

<sup>30</sup> The principal investigators looked to expand the survey to several other cities (Halifax, Ottawa, Calgary, and Edmonton) but were unable to secure the necessary financial support from local Jewish organizations to cover the associated costs.

<sup>31</sup> The 2011 National Household Survey was used because the 2016 Census contained a significant flaw in how it measured Jewish ethnicity. For details, see Brym (2017) and Statistics Canada (2018d).

2. Individuals under 45 years of age are the most challenging to identify and recruit for surveys, and this presents an even greater challenge when the target population is small (as is the case with Canada's Jews). To bolster representation of this age cohort, respondents who completed the survey were invited at the end of the interview to provide referrals of Jews they know (but not immediate family members) between the ages of 18 and 44 (each respondent could provide up to three names). Respondents who provided such referrals were eligible to receive \$25 if any of their referrals subsequently participated in the survey.
3. The census tract-based sampling frame provided good coverage for households with landline telephones, but was incomplete given that a significant proportion of households rely on cellphones, and this is especially the case for younger Canadians. Telephone surveys can be conducted using a cellphone sample, but because cellphones are not tied to a specific address, it is not possible to sample cellphone numbers by census tract or other location markers. This means that other sources were needed to identify eligible respondents who could not be linked to landline telephones. This was done by publicizing the survey through social media and other online channels, and qualifying interested respondents based on the established sample quotas.
4. The survey was promoted by the Environics Institute and by study sponsors in Toronto, Montreal, Winnipeg and Vancouver through their traditional and social media channels. This information included a brief description of the study, who was eligible to participate, and how to do so (a telephone number and email link were provided). Individuals who followed up to participate were screened for eligibility, and then given the option of completing the survey by telephone or online.
5. In Winnipeg, additional recruitment was conducted on-site at the Asper Jewish Community Campus over a two-week period. Individuals were screened for eligibility and then given the option of completing the survey on-site (using a web-enabled tablet) or over the following two weeks either by telephone or online. Respondents were offered an incentive in the form of a \$25 gift coupon for the local Community Campus restaurant.

People were eligible to participate in the survey if they were 18 years of age or older, and self-identified as Jewish or partially Jewish. Self-identification was used as the basis for determining eligibility because there is no Jewish or scholarly consensus on who exactly qualifies as Jewish and no clear demarcation of where the line dividing Jews and non-Jews lies. The survey was offered to anyone who described themselves as Jewish or partially Jewish by religion, identified themselves as Jewish or partially Jewish by a criterion other than religion, was raised Jewish or partially Jewish, or had a Jewish parent. This approach closely mirrors that of the Pew Research Center in its 2013 Survey of American Jews.

## Survey administration

The survey was conducted with 2,335 individuals by telephone or online between February 10 and September 30, 2018. The survey was offered in English, French, and Russian.

The survey sampling and administration was managed by Environics Research (a commercial company that was contracted to do this work by the wholly separate Environics Institute for Survey Research). Telephone interviewing was subcontracted to Tele-Poll, a commercial survey field provider that recruited and trained interviewers for this study, some of whom were Jewish, were fluent in French, and/or were native Russian speakers. Telephone numbers included in the sampling frame were contacted a minimum of seven times before determining the household was either not eligible or not available.

Quotas were established in each city for age cohort and gender based on the 2011 National Household Survey to ensure adequate representation by these characteristics.<sup>32</sup> In addition to completing the survey with a representative sample in each city, additional surveys were conducted with Jews between the ages of 18 and 44 in Montreal and those who immigrated to Canada from the former Soviet Union—in both cases, at the request of study sponsors.

To boost participation, a financial incentive was offered to respondents in the form of a contest draw. The prizes consisted of five smart phones or tablets (or the equivalent cash value of approximately \$1,165, including taxes and fees, based on an iPhone XR or iPad Pro). Two of the prizes

<sup>32</sup> See footnote 2, p.2

were allotted to Toronto respondents, and one each to respondents in Montreal, Winnipeg, and Vancouver.

Responses to unprompted questions that did not fit one of the pre-coded categories at the time of the interview were subsequently coded into conceptually meaningful codes. In some cases, these codes were then grouped into higher-order themes, such as “lack of interest” as a reason for not being more connected to the local Jewish community.

## Study sample

The distribution of the 2,335 completed surveys by city is presented in Figure A-1. The final data were weighted by each city’s Jewish population size, age distribution, gender distribution, and the national percentage of Jews in each age cohort who were married or living common-law with a non-Jew. Additional weights for age and gender were also applied to the data in each city, based on the demographic profile of the Jewish population in each city. Because the survey is not fully based on probability sampling, a margin of sampling error cannot be calculated.<sup>33</sup>

Figure A-2 provides a profile of the study sample by several demographic and Jewish characteristics.

Figure A-1

### Survey sample by city

Census Metropolitan Area	UNWEIGHTED SAMPLE	WEIGHTED SAMPLE	% OF CANADIAN JEWISH POPULATION IN FOUR CMAs
Toronto	1,135 (49%)	1,355 (58%)	59%
Montreal	638 (27%)	671 (29%)	28%
Winnipeg	361 (15%)	100 (4%)	4%
Vancouver	201 (9%)	201 (9%)	8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,335 (100%)</b>	<b>2,336*(100%)</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*Total weighted sample does not match total unweighted sample due to rounding.

<sup>33</sup> See footnote 3, p.2.

Figure A-2

## Sample profile

Profile characteristics	UNWEIGHTED SAMPLE	WEIGHTED SAMPLE	Profile characteristics	UNWEIGHTED SAMPLE	WEIGHTED SAMPLE
<b>Gender</b>			<b>Mother tongue</b>		
Male	975 (42%)	1,012 (43%)	English	1,656 (71%)	1,670 (71%)
Female	1,350 (58%)	1,314 (56%)	Yiddish	174 (7%)	173 (7%)
Other	10 (<1%)	10 (<1%)	Russian	152 (7%)	134 (6%)
TOTAL*	2,335 (100%)	2,336 (100%)	Hebrew	95 (4%)	96 (5%)
<b>Age cohort</b>			French	81 (4%)	84 (4%)
18 - 29	280 (12%)	267 (11%)	Other	166 (7%)	168 (7%)
30 - 44	545 (23%)	554 (24%)	Don't know/No answer	11 (<1%)	11 (<1%)
45 - 54	362 (16%)	394 (17%)	TOTAL*	2,335 (100%)	2,336 (100%)
55 - 64	476 (20%)	476 (20%)	<b>Generation in Canada</b>		
65 - 74	343 (15%)	330 (14%)	First generation (immigrants)	693 (30%)	696 (30%)
75 plus	329 (14%)	315 (13%)	Second generation	804 (34%)	810 (35%)
TOTAL*	2,335 (100%)	2,336 (100%)	Third plus generations	819 (35%)	808 (35%)
<b>Education level</b>			Don't know/No answer	19 (1%)	22 (1%)
High school diploma or less	235 (10%)	226 (10%)	TOTAL*	2,335 (100%)	2,336 (100%)
Community college diploma	390 (17%)	385 (16%)	<b>Jewish sub-ethnicity</b>		
Undergraduate university degree	845 (36%)	834 (36%)	Ashkenazi	1,953 (82%)	1,967 (83%)
Post-graduate degree	839 (36%)	867 (37%)	Sephardi/Mizrakhi	226 (9%)	234 (10%)
Don't know/No answer	26 (1%)	24 (1%)	Other	29 (1%)	23 (1%)
TOTAL*	2,335 (100%)	2,336 (100%)	Don't know/No answer	173 (7%)	157 (7%)
<b>Household income (annual)</b>			TOTAL†	2,381 (100%)	2,381 (100%)
Less than \$75K	519 (22%)	490 (21%)	<b>Jewish denomination/movement</b>		
\$75 - \$150K	563 (24%)	568 (24%)	Orthodox	250 (11%)	251 (11%)
\$150K and more	499 (21%)	521 (22%)	Modern Orthodox	130 (6%)	132 (6%)
Don't know/No answer	754 (32%)	757 (32%)	Conservative	644 (27%)	604 (26%)
TOTAL*	2,335 (100%)	2,336 (100%)	Reform	354 (15%)	384 (16%)
<b>Marital status</b>			Other denominations/movements	252 (11%)	259 (11%)
Married/Common-law	1,527 (65%)	1,542 (66%)	None/unaffiliated	714 (30%)	716 (31%)
Widowed/Divorced/Separated	338 (14%)	322 (14%)	TOTAL*†	2,347 (100%)	2,346 (100%)
Never married	372 (16%)	377 (16%)	<b>Survey mode</b>		
Living with partner/Engaged	73 (3%)	69 (3%)	Telephone	1,891 (81%)	1,987 (85%)
Don't know/No answer	25 (1%)	24 (1%)	Online	444 (19%)	348 (15%)
TOTAL*	2,335 (100%)	2,334 (100%)	TOTAL	2,335 (100%)	2,335 (100%)
<b>Children</b>			*Total weighted sample does not match total unweighted sample due to rounding.		
Children < 18 years of age	688 (25%)	703 (26%)	† Multiple responses were accepted so total sample exceeds 2,335		
Children 18 years plus at home	331 (13%)	335 (13%)			
Children 18 years plus not at home	952 (36%)	937 (35%)			
No children	680 (26%)	682 (26%)			
TOTAL*†	2,651 (100%)	2,657 (100%)			

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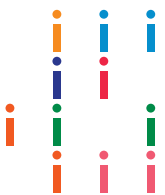
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