

Jewish Life in Greater Toronto

A Survey of the Attitudes & Behaviours
of Greater Toronto's Jewish Community
(Abridged Edition)



By Charles Shahar & Tina Rosenbaum
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Acknowledgements

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Highlights of Results

- A total of 654 individuals successfully completed the survey. 11.2% of the sample resided in the Downtown area, 48.2% in the Central Jewish Community, 35.3% in York Region, and 5.4% in “Other Areas” of Greater Toronto.
- 14.2% of respondents described themselves as Orthodox, 36.9% said they were Conservative, 18.7% Reform, and 1.7% Reconstructionist. Less than one in ten (9%) were secular Jews, and 17.2% preferred the more ambiguous designation of “Just Jewish”. A very small proportion said they were Humanist (1.9%) or Jewish New Age (0.5%).
- The Jewish community of Toronto has a high level of Orthodox Jews relative to other North American communities, is in the middle of the distribution as far as Conservative and unaffiliated Jews are concerned, and has a lower percentage of Reform Jews as compared to other North American communities.
- The majority of respondents attend synagogue only on High Holidays, or on High Holidays and a few other times (50.8%). 17.2% attend only on special occasions, and 8.3% attend rarely or never. In short, about three-quarters (76.3%) of Toronto Jews do not attend synagogue on a regular basis. A small percentage (4.5%) attend at least once a month, 5.8% several times a month, 8.3% about once per week, and 5.1% more than once per week.
- Intermarried individuals, immigrants from the FSU, those who don’t live in traditionally Jewish neighbourhoods, and those with no spouse or family, are particularly likely to feel disconnected from synagogue life.
- In terms of keeping kosher, 22.4% of respondents said they keep “strictly kosher” at home, and 10.2% keep “strictly kosher” outside the home. Only one in ten (10.1%) keep strictly kosher both in and out of the home. This finding suggests that there is generally a low level of strict kashrut observance among respondents.
- Certain religious customs (such as attending a Passover Seder or lighting Chanukah candles) are prominent in the lives of the great majority of unaffiliated Jews, although they may not interpret these practices in strictly religious ways. Reading about Israel / Jewish subjects is another way that the majority of unaffiliated individuals connect to Judaism.

- Of respondents living in intermarried households (where the spouse did not convert), 29.7% of respondents said their children were being brought up within the Jewish faith, 2.7% said according to the spouse's faith, 37.8% within both faiths, and 29.7% with no religion.
- 80% of respondents who live well outside the sphere of Jewish neighbourhoods have children who married non-Jews, suggesting that such geographic detachment from the community may relate to lower levels of affiliation and connection that stretch across even generational lines.
- Almost half (45.2%) of respondents said their children have had a Jewish elementary school education, 19% said their children have had a Jewish high school education, 46.6% said a Jewish supplementary education, 53% private tutoring, and 10.5% post-secondary Jewish studies.
- The most prominent factors that relate to whether or not respondents have had their children attend Jewish day schools include geographic proximity to Jewish neighbourhoods, whether the parents are intermarried or not, the level of household ritual observance, and the economic status of the household.
- Almost half of the sample (48.2%) said they donated to United Jewish Appeal in the past year; 30% said they did not donate, but had in the past; and 21.8% said they had never donated. More than three-quarters (77.8%) of respondents said they donated to non-Jewish charities.
- Of a total of 654 respondents, (45.6%) did not report use of any Jewish service or organization; 20.5% used one service; 12.4% used two services; 10.1% used three services; and 11.5% used four or more services. In short, almost half of the sample did not use any services, whereas about a fifth used at least three community services.
- About three-quarters (73.9%) of respondents said they have been to Israel at least once. Almost half the sample (47.1%) said they felt "very close" to Israel, 32% said "somewhat close", 13.4% said "somewhat distant", 4.3% said "very distant", and 3.1% said they weren't sure.
- More than one in ten respondents (11%) said they had a personal experience with antisemitism in the last 2 years, 29.6% said they experienced antisemitism but not recently, more than half (55.6%) never had a personal experience with antisemitism, and 3.8% were not sure. Of respondents who recently had such an experience, the most likely venue was in the workplace or was job-related, followed by in the neighbourhood where they live.

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Introduction & Methodology

The following is a summary of the results of a comprehensive survey of the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of Jews living in the Greater Toronto Area. The Strategic Planning & Community Engagement Department of UJA Federation undertook this study. It was felt that it was important to have a “snapshot” of the community to understand the challenges it faces as it looks to the future.

The Greater Toronto Area has a cosmopolitan and rapidly growing Jewish population. The community here is close-knit and enjoys a vibrant cultural and religious life. It has a large network of services designed to meet the needs of its members, and strong economic and political representation in the wider milieu. All in all, the Greater Toronto community represents one of the major centres of Jewish life in North America.

It is important that the leadership of the organized community has a “finger on the pulse” of its constituency, and that it takes steps to directly hear from its members. It is not sufficient to rely on anecdotal sources of

information that may be subjective in nature. Rather, this survey is an attempt to engage in scientific fact-finding regarding the state of the Greater Toronto Jewish community today, and to ultimately respond to the concerns and needs expressed by its members.

How was the sample drawn from the Greater Toronto Jewish population?

A sample pool of 6,000 Jewish-sounding names (including Russian, Sephardic and Israeli-sounding names) was drawn from a computerized telephone directory. The list was stratified by geographic area. Potential respondents were chosen randomly from this list, and contacted by telephone. A screener was used to ensure that the potential respondent was in fact Jewish, and that they were the primary household maintainer, or their spouse. Dependent adults were not interviewed in this study.

A total of 654 individuals successfully completed the survey. Of these individuals, 290 (44.4%) filled out an e-mail attachment, 352 (53.8%) had the

survey delivered to their home, and 12 (1.8%) were interviewed by telephone. Telephone interviews were conducted by research assistants who were trained to remain neutral and to ask questions in a standardized way.

The Basic Demographics of the Sample

In terms of geographic districts, 11.2% of the sample resided in the Downtown area, 48.2% in the Central Jewish Community, 35.3% in York Region, and 5.4% in “Other Areas” of Greater Toronto.

More than half (53.8%) of survey respondents were females, and 46.2% were males.

Regarding the age of respondents, 10.9% of the survey sample were 17-34 years, 17.2% were 35-44 years, 29.1% were 45-54 years, 19.8% were 55-64 years, and 23% were 65+ years.

In terms of marital status, 71.6% of the sample were married, 7.3% were divorced or separated, 8.4% were widowed, 9.5% were single, and 3.2% were living in common law arrangements.

Almost two-thirds of the sample were non-immigrants (63.4%), 29.5% immigrated before 1990, and 7.1% after 1990.

Regarding the education level of respondents, 14.3% of the sample had completed elementary or high school, 26.5% had a technical or college education, 22.7% had a university undergraduate degree, and 36.6% had a university graduate degree.

Finally, 10.8% of the households sampled earned under \$30,000 per year, 40.5% earned between \$30,000 - \$99,999, and 48.7% earned at least \$100,000.

A comparison with the 2001 Census data (see Figures 1A to 1C) suggests that the geographic stratification for this survey was largely successful. The gender and marital breakdowns were likewise comparable. On the other hand, the current sample appears to have a somewhat stronger representation among middle-aged, Canadian-born, more affluent and more educated Jews.

This type of “skewing” is not unusual since it is precisely these groups that are more inclined to fill out such surveys in the first place. The issue of self-selection is one that is prevalent among almost all population /

attitudinal surveys, even those employing random-digit dialling as a sampling technique. While the results of the survey can be generalized to the great majority of members within the Jewish community, the reader should keep in mind that there are some under-representations of certain demographic segments and therefore the results should be viewed as indicative rather than as an absolute reflection of the Toronto Jewish community.

How will this report be presented?

Given the large amount of information contained herein, it may be useful to outline the general presentation of this report. Four basic analyses will be presented throughout:

1. General breakdowns will look at percentages of responses for most variables. For instance: What percentage of respondents are synagogue members? What percentage have visited Israel?
2. “High-Low Analyses” will look at the segments of respondents (young adults, living in York Region, Orthodox, high income, divorced, recent immigrants, etc.), who are most or least inclined to demonstrate a particular behaviour or attitude.

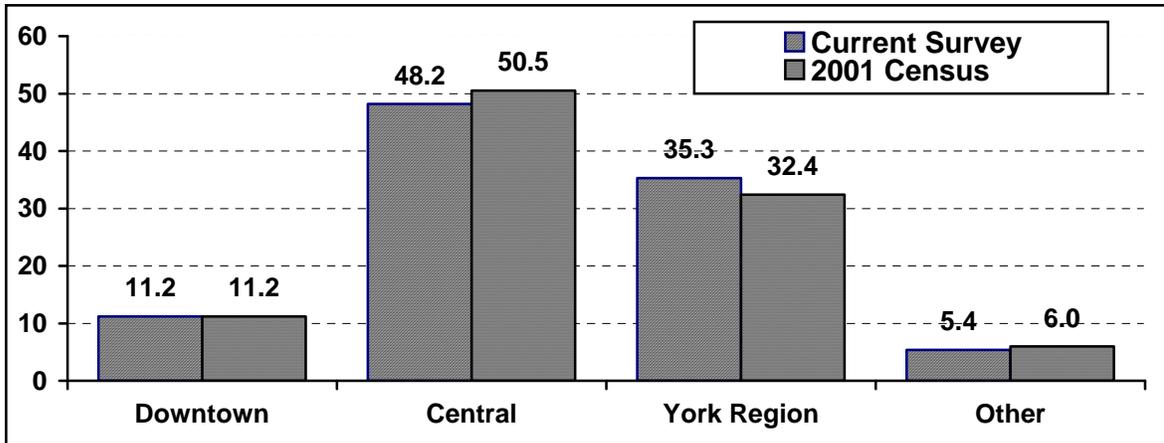
3. To provide an even broader context, comparisons will also be made with results obtained from surveys conducted by other Jewish communities across North America. Most of these data were gleaned from Sheskin’s (2001) review of American Jewish population studies.¹
4. Finally, comparisons will be made with the 2000-2001 National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS), a comprehensive study of Jewish life in the United States implemented by United Jewish Communities (UJC).

In terms of the boundaries of geographic areas referred to in this report: The Downtown Area stretches from Lake Ontario to St. Clair. Central Toronto spans the area from St. Clair to Steeles. Finally, York Region includes the municipalities of Vaughan, Richmond Hill, and Markham. Few respondents in this survey were drawn from other areas of York Region such as Aurora or King, where there are much smaller populations of Jews.

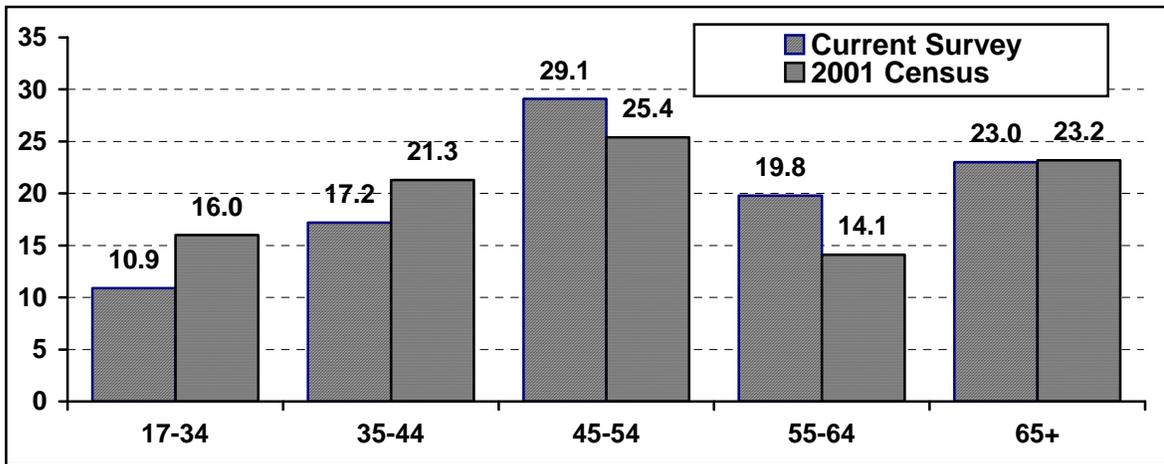
All other individuals (not living in Downtown Toronto, Central Toronto, or York Region) were considered living in “Other Areas” of Greater Toronto. These areas comprised mostly of Scarborough, Mississauga, and Oakville. These areas typically have small concentrations of Jews.

Figures 1A-1C
Comparisons of Current Survey & 2001 Census

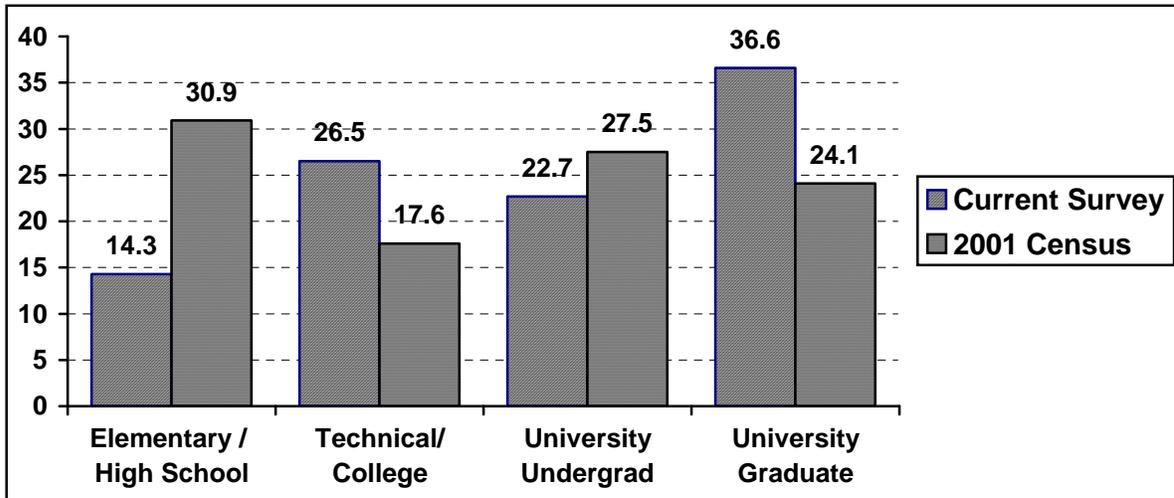
Area of Residence (%)



Age Breakdowns (%)



Education Level (%)



Religious Affiliation

The survey asked respondents to describe their current denomination and how they were raised in terms of their affiliation. They were also asked comparable questions about their spouse.

It should be noted that the question of denominational affiliation is based on self-identification. Many individuals often ascribe their affiliation according to the denomination of their synagogue, and this does not necessarily imply a perfect correlation between affiliation and level of ritual adherence.

Some individuals have chosen to self-identify using a more ambiguous designation, such as “Just Jewish”. In the present study, an effort was made to be as inclusive as possible by including non-mainstream affiliations, such as “Humanist” and “Jewish New Age”. It was felt that such choices were appropriate given the varied expressions of “Jewishness” in modern life.

How do respondents describe themselves Jewishly?

About one in seven respondents (14.2%) described themselves as Orthodox, 36.9% said they were Conservative, 18.7% Reform, and 1.7% Reconstructionist (Figure 2). One in eleven respondents (9%) were secular Jews, and 17.2% preferred the more ambiguous designation of “Just Jewish”. A very small proportion said they were Humanist (1.9%) or Jewish New Age (0.5%). All in all, there was a remarkable variability in terms of the affiliations of Greater Toronto Jews.

In other communities across North America, the proportions of **Orthodox** range from 1% to 22.2%. The 14.2% Orthodox obtained in this study is at the high end of the distribution. In fact, only Montreal (22.2%) and Baltimore (20%) have higher percentages of Orthodox Jews than the Toronto community. On the other hand, New York (13%), Miami (9%), Los Angeles (4%), Philadelphia (4%), and San Francisco (3%) have lower percentages of Orthodox. The proportion of Orthodox Jews in the United States is 10%.

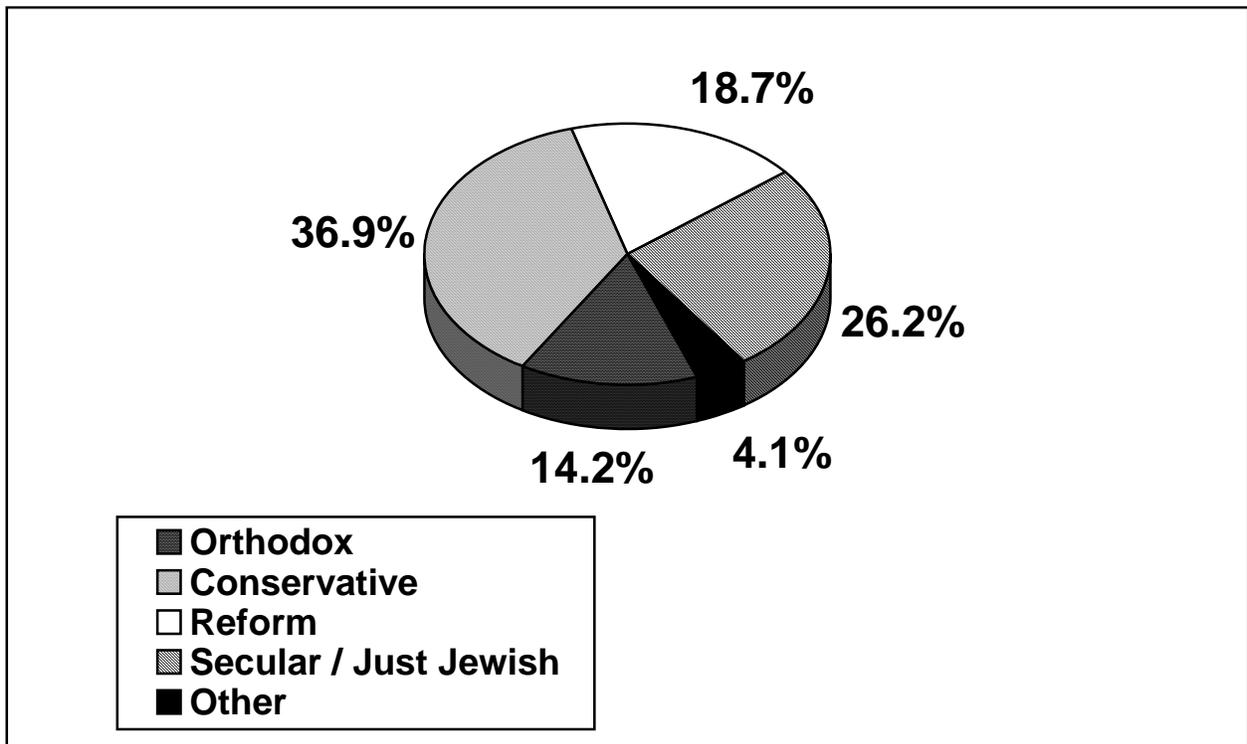
The level of **Conservative** affiliation varies from 15% to 48% for communities across the continent. The Toronto community is in the middle of the distribution with 36.9%. The level of Conservative affiliation in the United States is 27%, somewhat below the Toronto figure. It is 29.7% for the Montreal community.

In terms of **Reform** Jews, the proportion varies from 22% to 60% for communities across the United States. According to the National Jewish Population Survey (2000-2001), 35% of American Jews affiliate with Reform. The levels of Reform Jews are

much lower in Canadian cities, such as Toronto (18.7%) and Montreal (4.5%).

Finally, regarding Jews who don't affiliate with any mainstream denomination, the proportions range from 9% to 43% across North American communities. The percentage of **unaffiliated** is very high in the West Coast of the continent, in cities such as Seattle (43%) and San Francisco (36%). It is 26% for the United States as a whole. The Toronto figure for unaffiliated Jews (28.6%) is in the middle of the distribution, similar to the percentage for Montreal (28.1%).

Figure 2
Denomination of Respondents (%)



In summary, the Jewish community of Toronto has a high level of Orthodox Jews relative to other North American communities, is in the middle of the distribution as far as Conservative and unaffiliated Jews are concerned, and has a lower percentage of Reform Jews as compared to American communities.

Have the denominations of respondents changed since their childhood?

In terms of how respondents were raised, 23% said they were raised as Orthodox, 39.9% as Conservative, 10.8% as Reform, 0.3% as Reconstructionist, 1.1% as Humanist, 16.4% as Just Jewish and 6.8% as secular. It is evident that when one compares current to childhood affiliation, there is a smaller proportion of Orthodox, a similar proportion of Conservatives, and greater percentages of Reform, secular and “Just Jews”.

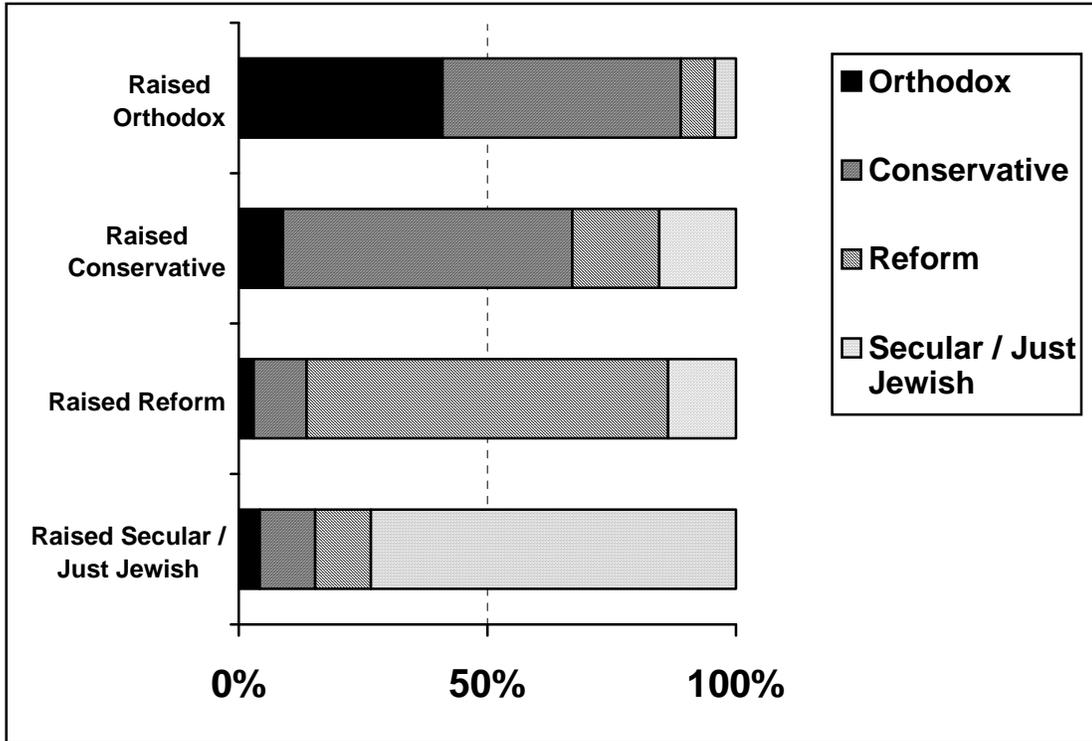
A closer examination of the interaction between current and childhood affiliations reveals some interesting trends (Figure 3). Of 144 respondents who said they were raised as **Orthodox** Jews: 41% retained their

affiliation, 47.9% became Conservative, 6.9% became Reform, and 4.2% became Secular / Just Jews. Of those who were raised as **Conservative** Jews: 8.9% became Orthodox, 58.1% retained their affiliation, 17.5% became Reform, and 15.4% became Secular / Just Jews.

Of those who were raised as **Reform** Jews: 3% became Orthodox, 10.6% became Conservative, 72.7% retained their affiliation, and 13.6% became Secular / Just Jews. Finally, of those who were raised as **Secular** or **Just Jews**, 4.2% became Orthodox, 11.2% became Conservative, 11.2% became Reform, and 73.4% retained their lack of affiliation.

In summary, the most significant “migration” of affiliation appears to be from Orthodox to Conservative. The greatest level of adherence to their upbringing seems to be among Secular / Just Jews (73.4%), but there is also a high level of adherence among Reform Jews (72.7%). Very few among those who were raised as Reform or Secular / Just Jews migrated to the other end of the religious spectrum and became Orthodox.

Figure 3
Current Denomination Given How Raised



Synagogue Attendance & Membership

The role of the synagogue in Jewish communal life is critical. The synagogue remains a central meeting place for Jews of all denominations. It has traditionally been a place of spiritual communion, although now it can be said to be as much a focal point for social and educational, as well as spiritual, activities.

Membership in a synagogue does not necessarily imply a high rate of attendance. For some Jews, simply being a member and attending on the High Holidays, is the extent of their participation in Jewish life.

How often do respondents attend synagogue?

The majority of respondents attend only on High Holidays, or on High Holidays and a few other times (50.8%) (Figure 4). 17.2% attend only on special occasions, and 8.3% attend very rarely or never. In short, about three-quarters (76.3%) of Toronto Jews do not attend synagogue on a regular basis.

A small percentage (4.5%) attend at least once a month, 5.8% several times a month,

8.3% about once per week, and 5.1% more than once per week. Thus, about one in four respondents (23.7%) attend synagogue regularly.

The level of regular synagogue attendance (at least once per month) varies from 9% to 31% across Jewish communities in North America. Toronto Jews are in the middle of the distribution as far as regular synagogue attendance is concerned (23.7%). The Montreal figure is 23.4%, almost identical to the Toronto figure of 23.7%.

What segments of the community attend synagogue most often?

A “High-Low Analysis” of the percentage distribution of attendance across various variables reveals that certain segments of the Jewish community are much more likely to attend synagogue regularly (at least once per month) than others (Figure 5). Not surprisingly, individuals with high levels of ritual adherence (77.3%) and the Orthodox (70.7%) are particularly likely to attend synagogue regularly.

Figure 4
Level of Synagogue Attendance (%)

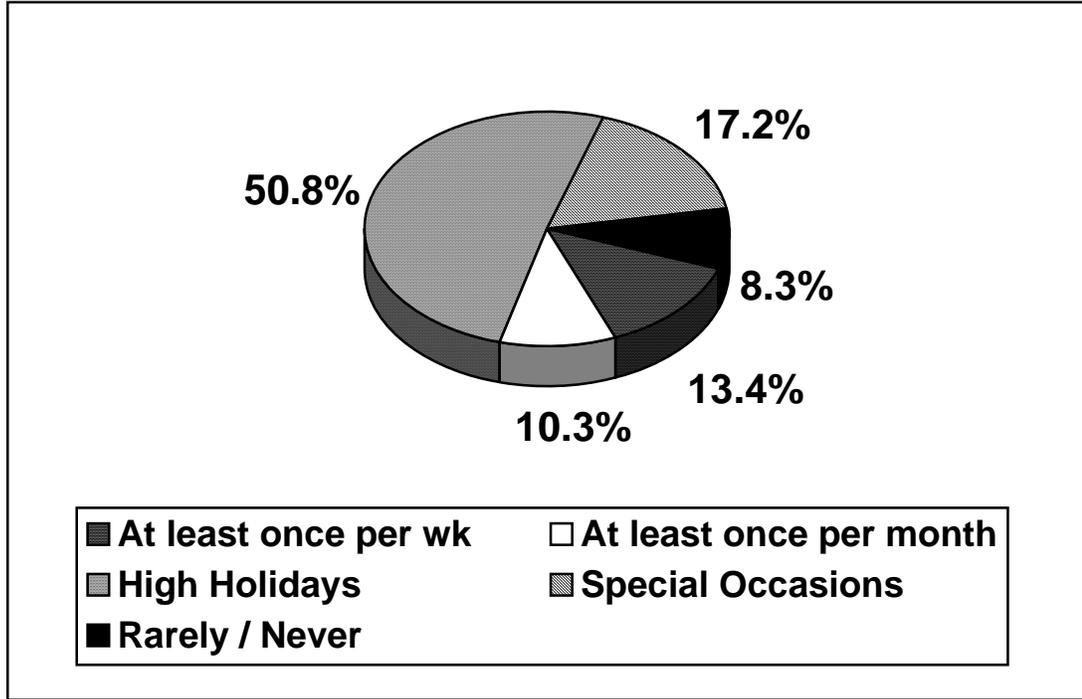
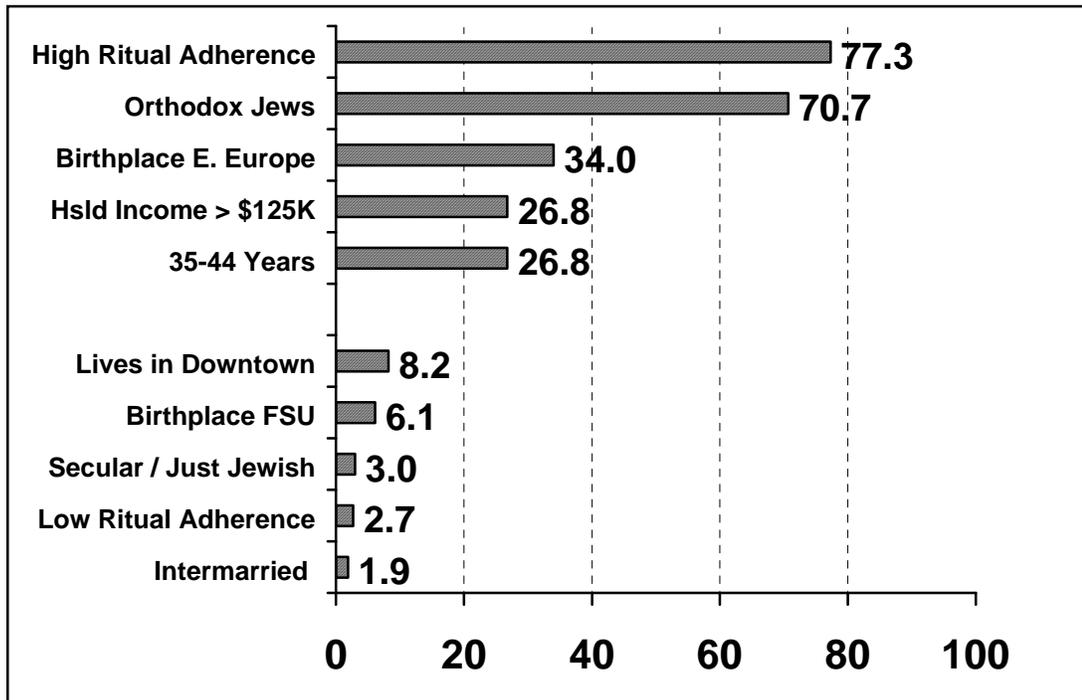


Figure 5
Attends Synagogue at Least Once a Month (%)
“High-Low Analysis” of Selected Segments



Note: Only the five segments with the highest and lowest percentages are included in this chart.

Other segments with higher levels of synagogue attendance include those born in Eastern Europe (34%), those living in households earning at least \$125K (26.8%), those between 35-44 years of age (26.8%), and those living in Central Toronto (26.7%).

At the other end of the continuum, respondents least likely to regularly attend synagogue include those living in intermarried households (1.9%), those with low levels of ritual adherence (2.7%), those who are Secular / Just Jews (3%), those born in the Former Soviet Union (6.1%), and those who live in Downtown Toronto (8.2%).

Also less likely to attend synagogues regularly are divorced or separated persons (8.3%), those who live in “Other Areas” of Greater Toronto (8.6%), those who are single (11.3%), and Reform Jews (15.7%).

These breakdowns are instructive because they suggest that there are several distinct groups who may feel distant from synagogue life. *Aside from those who are not observant, there is an association between being less likely to regularly attend synagogue, and being intermarried, an immigrant from the FSU, not living in*

traditionally Jewish neighbourhoods, and having no spouse or family.

What is the level of synagogue membership in greater Toronto?

Individuals sometimes indicate their synagogue membership on the basis of attendance, rather than on whether or not they pay dues. To avoid such a misunderstanding, the choices in the current questionnaire took these perceptions into account.

Half of respondents (49.6%) report they are paying members of a synagogue. A smaller percentage (11.2%) consider themselves members, but do not pay. Finally, 39.2% are not members at all.

Which segments of the community are more likely to be synagogue members?

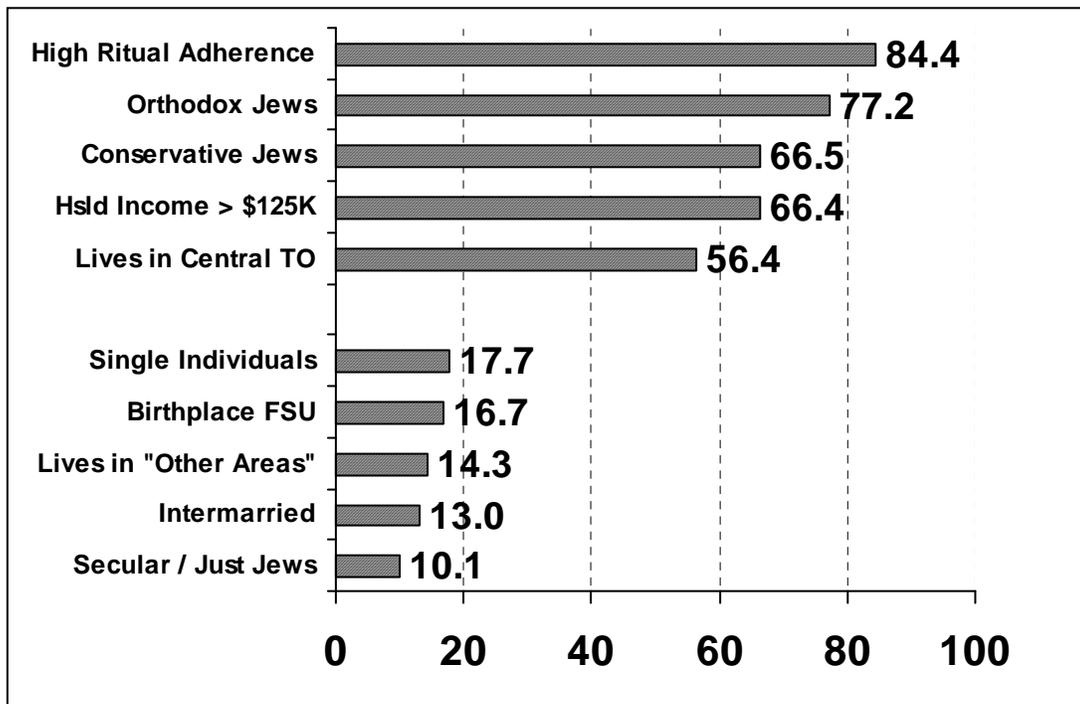
A “High-Low Analysis” of those who are paying synagogue members reveals the following: The highest levels of membership are found among those with high ritual adherence (84.4%), the Orthodox (77.2%), Conservative Jews (66.5%), those living in households earning at least \$125K (66.4%), Jews living in Central Toronto (56.4%), widowed individuals (56.4%), persons with

university graduate degrees (55.7%) and non-immigrants (54.7%) (Figure 6).

The lowest levels of membership are found among Secular / Just Jews (10.1%), those living in intermarried families (13%), those living in “Other Areas” of Greater Toronto (14.3%), those whose place of birth is the FSU (16.7%), single individuals (17.7%), divorced or separated persons (20.8%), recent immigrants (23.9%), those with low ritual adherence (31%), and those living in households earning under \$40K (33.3%).

The above profile is similar to that found for synagogue attendance. There are certain segments of the community who have very low levels of synagogue membership. *Aside from those who are not observant to begin with, it seems that synagogue membership is less accessible to those who are intermarried, those who do not live in traditionally Jewish neighbourhoods, those who are not married and/or do not have a family, recent immigrants, and those who live in low-income households.*

Figure 6
Paid Synagogue Membership (%)
“High-Low Analysis” of Selected Segments



Note: Only the five segments with the highest and lowest percentages are included in this chart.

Ritual Observance

The tendency of Jews in North America has been to assimilate toward the dominant culture around them. Particularly in the United States, research has shown that with every generation the commitment to uphold traditions has diminished. Jews have increasingly identified themselves along ethnic and cultural lines, rather than according to the strict observance of Jewish law.

For example, even Jews with a tenuous commitment to their heritage, will usually take part in important symbolic ritual practices. Some of the best examples are the Jewish rites of passage (such as circumcision, Bar / Bat Mitzvah, Jewish wedding, funeral). The emphasis of this type of expression is communal and ethnic solidarity. Keeping the Sabbath or the laws of kashrut are no longer seen to be as fundamental as marrying a fellow Jew and maintaining some form of ethnic identity.²

In Canada, as in other countries, certain ritual practices are more popularly observed than others. The rituals that more people practice include Passover Seder, Chanukah,

and the High Holidays.³ These rituals occur only once a year and are not as demanding to observe as many other Jewish requirements. Both Chanukah and the Passover Seder reinforce solidarity through large family gatherings. In addition, both holidays contain aspects of ritual behaviour which directly involve and attract children. This helps parents pass on their Jewish identity to their offspring.

What are the levels of ritual observance in the Toronto Jewish community?

What is the percentage of individuals who **light Shabbat candles**? About a third (33.4%) of respondents said they light candles “all the time”, 13.6% said “usually”, 25.7% said “sometimes”, and 27.3% said “never” (Figure 7). In short, almost half (47%) of the sample said they light Shabbat candles “usually” or “all the time”.

The percentage of respondents who said they light Shabbat candles “usually” or “all the time” ranges from 13% to 50.8%, among Jewish communities in North America. The overall level in the United States is 28%.

Toronto (47%) has the second highest level of adherence to this ritual in North America, following Montreal (50.8%).

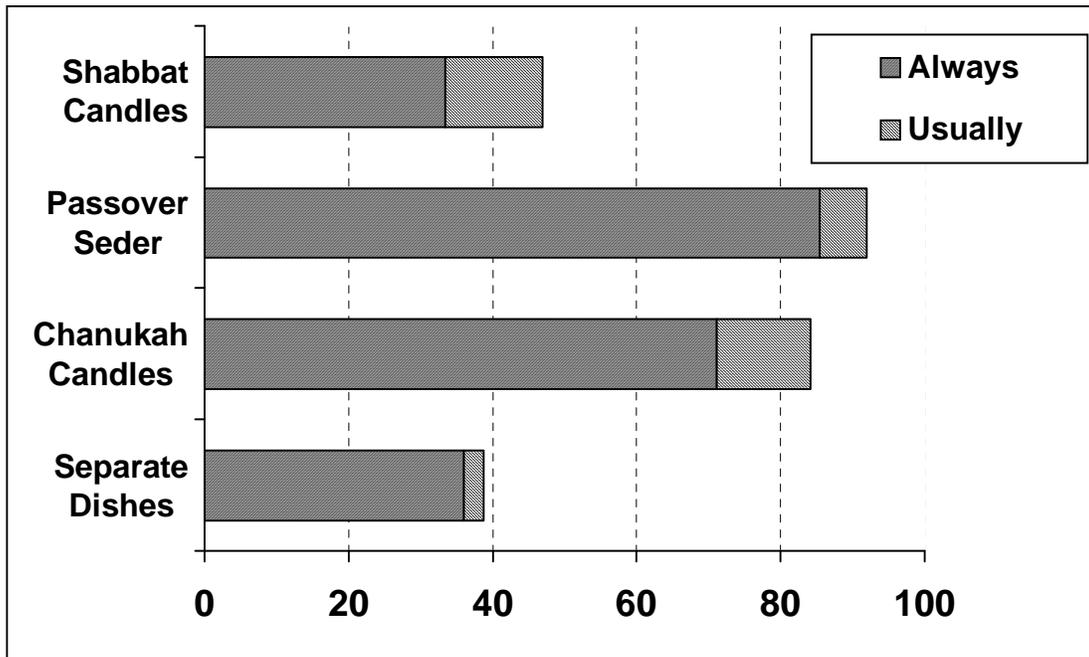
In terms of attending a **Passover Seder**, 85.4% of respondents said they attend “all the time”, 6.6% said “usually”, 6% said “sometimes”, and 2% said “never” (Figure 7). In short, the great majority of the sample (92%) said they attend a Passover Seder “usually” or “all the time”.

The level of attendance (“usually” or “all the time”) for Passover Seders ranges from 62%

to 95% across Jewish communities in North America. The overall level in the United States is 77%. The Toronto level (92%) is at the high end of the distribution, with only Montreal (95%) having a higher percentage.

Almost three-quarters (71.1%) of respondents said they **light Chanukah candles** “all the time”, 13.1% said “usually”, 8.2% said “sometimes”, and 7.7% said “never” (Figure 7). In other words, the great majority of respondents (84.2%) observe lighting Chanukah candles “usually” or “all the time”.

Figure 7
Observance Levels of Specific Rituals (%)
Percent Responding Always or Usually



The level of respondents lighting Chanukah candles “usually” or “all the time” varies from 59% to 95% for communities across North America. The overall level for the United States is 66%. Toronto is at the high end of the distribution (84.2%), with only Boston (95%) and Montreal (88.5%) having higher levels.

Finally, almost three-quarters of the sample (71.7%) said they **fast on Yom Kippur**, whereas 28.3% said they do not. The United States level for fasting on Yom Kippur is 46%.

Do respondents observe kashrut, and how does that compare to their parents?

In terms of keeping **kosher at home**, 22.4% of respondents said they keep “strictly kosher”, 28% said “somewhat kosher”, and 49.5% said “not at all”. The levels for keeping **kosher outside the home** are lower. Only 10.2% keep “strictly kosher” outside the home, whereas 23.5% keep “somewhat kosher” and 66.3% do not keep kosher at all.

What percentage of respondents keep kosher in and out of the home? Only one in ten (10.1%) keep strictly kosher both in and out

of the home. This would suggest that *there is generally a low level of strict kashrut observance among respondents.*

The survey also asked respondents whether their parents kept a kosher home. A third (33.2%) said their parents kept a “strictly kosher” home, 29% said “somewhat kosher”, and 37.7% said “not at all”. *When the level of kosher observance of respondents is compared to that of their parents, it seems that the level of this practice has declined somewhat across generational lines.*

For instance, less than a quarter of respondents currently keep a “strictly kosher” home, compared to a third of their parents. Half of respondents do not keep kosher at all, compared to just over a third of their parents.

A further analysis reveals that of respondents whose parents kept a “strictly kosher” home: 44.8% currently keep a “strictly kosher” home, 30.7% “somewhat kosher”, and 24.5% “not kosher at all” (Figure 8). Of those whose parents observed a “somewhat kosher” home: 14.8% currently keep a “strictly kosher” home, 47.3% “somewhat kosher” and 37.9% “not kosher

at all”. Finally, of those whose parents did not keep kosher at all: 8.2% currently keep a “strictly kosher” home, 10.7% “somewhat kosher”, and 81.1% “not kosher at all”.

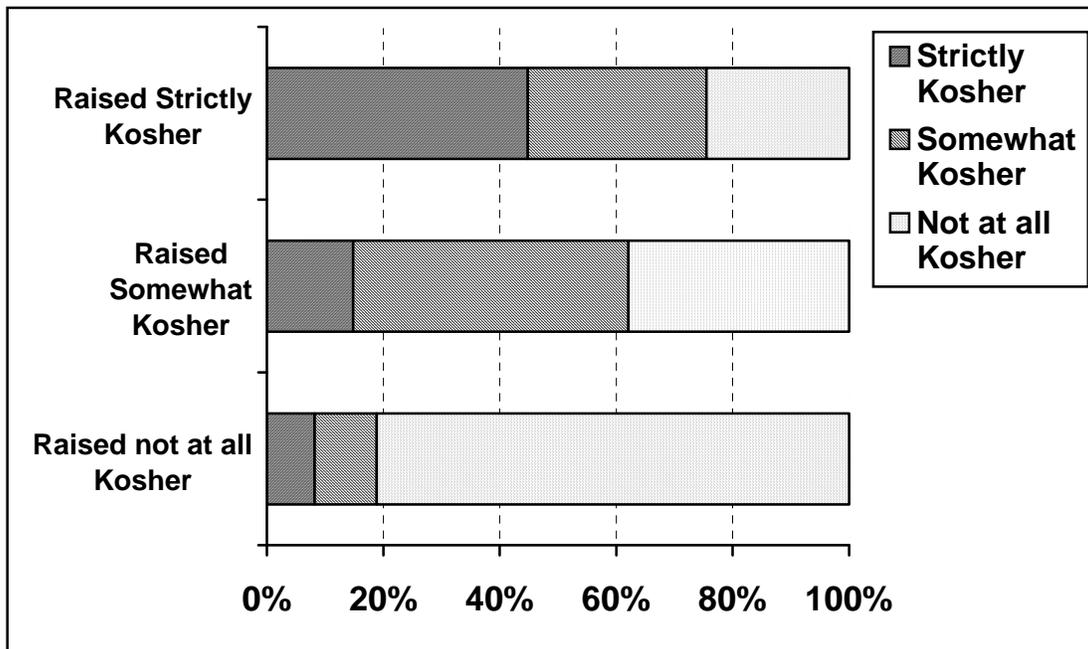
What do these findings suggest? As far as kashrut observance in the home is concerned, if the parents kept strictly kosher at home, the chances were far greater that their children would as well. Nonetheless, *a remarkable proportion (55.2%) have diverged from the strictly kosher practices of their parents.*

What other rituals do Toronto Jews practice?

The above examined the level of observance of the most widely practiced rituals. Certain practices are less common among Jewish households. Some, such as fasting on the Feast of Esther, are practiced by only a small minority of individuals.

Regarding having **separate dishes** at home, 36% of respondents in the present study said “all the time”, 2.8% said “usually”, 4.3% said “sometimes” and 57% said “never”. In short, just over a third of respondents keep separate dishes at home “usually” or “all the time”.

Figure 8
Current Level of Kashrut Observance Given How Raised



Regarding **avoiding work on Shabbat**, 24.9% of respondents said they do and 75.1% said they do not. It is not clear whether respondents generally interpreted this question in a religious sense, because some may not work or exert themselves on Shabbat for other reasons.

Fasting on the **Feast of Esther** is observed by 7.5% of respondents, whereas 92.5% do not fast on this holiday. Finally, a small proportion (8%) of male respondents said they put on **tfillin** daily, whereas 92% do not.

These latter two rituals are often considered part of an Orthodox way of life. However, only 45.3% of Orthodox respondents said they fast on the Feast of Esther, and only 40% of Orthodox males said they put on tfillin daily. This finding suggests that a person's perceptions of their level of religiosity may not necessarily reflect their actual behaviours. This issue will be examined more extensively in the next page, looking at the Ritual Adherence Index.

Do respondents keep a Christmas tree at home?

Whether or not a Jewish household has a Christmas tree at home has been taken as an indication of their level of assimilation to Christian culture and traditions. A very low proportion (4.3%) of respondents said they have a Christmas tree "all the time", whereas 1.9% said "usually", 4.1% said "sometimes", and 89.7% said "never". In short, the great majority of respondents never have a Christmas tree, but about one in ten (10.3%) have a tree at least sometimes.

The levels of having a Christmas tree "all the time", "usually" or "sometimes" range from 5% to 33% across North American Jewish communities. Toronto is at the low end of the North American distribution (10.3%), with only Montreal (5.8%) and South Palm Beach (5%) having lower proportions.

Which segments of the local community tend to have a Christmas tree at home "all the time" or "usually"? The highest percentage is found among respondents living in intermarried families (50%), followed by those born in the Former Soviet Union (25.6%), those who immigrated

between 1990-2004 (23.8%), and those living in “Other Areas” of Greater Toronto (22.9%).

Also tending to have higher levels of having Christmas trees at home include respondents considering themselves as Secular / Just Jews (15.1%), those living in Downtown Toronto (12.7%), those 35-44 years (11.9%), and those with low levels of ritual adherence (11.8%).

How do various denominations score on a measure of ritual adherence?

Adapting a technique from Fishman & Goldstein (1993)⁴, a “Ritual Adherence Index” was developed to measure a respondent’s level of ritual observance, or adherence to various Jewish customs and traditions. The Index was constructed as a composite of fourteen practices, including synagogue attendance. Because these practices varied in intensity and frequency, they were given different weights.

For example, fasting on Yom Kippur was given a score of 5, yet keeping kosher at home was assigned a score of 10. This was done not to minimize the importance of fasting on Yom Kippur, but rather, to

emphasize a wider commitment to upholding various traditions. The maximum score possible for this Adherence Index was 100. Only one respondent of 654 actually attained this maximum score, whereas 17 had a score of zero.

As expected, Orthodox Jews had the highest mean score on this index (68.22), whereas Conservative and Reform Jews had mean scores of 35.18 and 21.12, respectively. Reconstructionist Jews had a mean score of 24.18, slightly higher than Reform, but below that of Conservatives. Secular respondents had a score of 13.14, and those who were “Just Jews” had a score of 12.54. Finally, Humanists had a slightly higher score (15.75) than Secular Jews.

A question remains as to why those who claimed to be “Orthodox” did not score higher on this index, receiving a mean of 68.22. An explanation relates to the high standard deviation registered by Orthodox respondents (23.78). The standard deviation (SD) is a measure of variability of scores. A high SD suggests that while some individuals may identify themselves as Orthodox, they do not necessarily lead an Orthodox lifestyle, and do not necessarily translate their self-identification into actual practice.

Why do individuals identify themselves as “Orthodox”, yet do not necessarily follow rituals that reflect a high level of adherence? The answer is complex. Some persons are members of an Orthodox Shul and identify themselves according to this affiliation; whereas others were brought up as Orthodox and may continue to see themselves as such, despite the fact that their level of practice is not consistent with that of their parents. The bottom line is, when it comes to religious identification, how people see themselves may not necessarily correspond to how they actually behave.

Do unaffiliated Jews engage in “alternative” expressions of Jewishness?

Studies of Jewish populations have traditionally used certain measures – such as level of lighting Shabbat candles, fasting on Yom Kippur, keeping kosher – to measure one’s level of Jewish identity and observance. According to Weil (2004), these measures have failed to assess other, “softer” forms of Jewish expression and affiliation.⁵

Weil suggests that the so-called unaffiliated (i.e. those who do not affiliate by denomination, the self-identified Secular /

Just Jews) are doing and feeling things Jewish, but in a different fashion. He proposes that many of these Jews are proud of their Jewishness and attachment to Israel, but do not want to express their Jewishness in traditional or formalized ways.

Weil points to a number of interesting trends among the unaffiliated. For instance, the interest in Kabala addresses some of the spiritual needs of young and not-so-young Jews; the search for alternative synagogues is gathering momentum; the myriad of Jewish dating services on the Internet are very successful; and interest in the Holocaust has increased considerably.

An analysis was done to examine Weil’s conclusions that unaffiliated individuals (Secular / Just Jews) may not participate in traditional observances, but engage in other ways of expressing their Jewishness. Since not all of Weil’s “alternative” Jewish expressions were included here (interest in Kabala, use of Jewish dating services, etc.), this analysis cannot be considered a comprehensive one, but it affords an interesting perspective nonetheless.

Below is a list of various forms of Jewish practices and behaviours that Secular / Just

Jews claim they maintain “sometimes”, “often” or “all the time”. Questions that only require yes / no responses (such as whether they fast on Yom Kippur) were also included for comparison purposes. Finally, also included to round out the profile were questions related to membership in Jewish organizations and Jewish volunteerism.

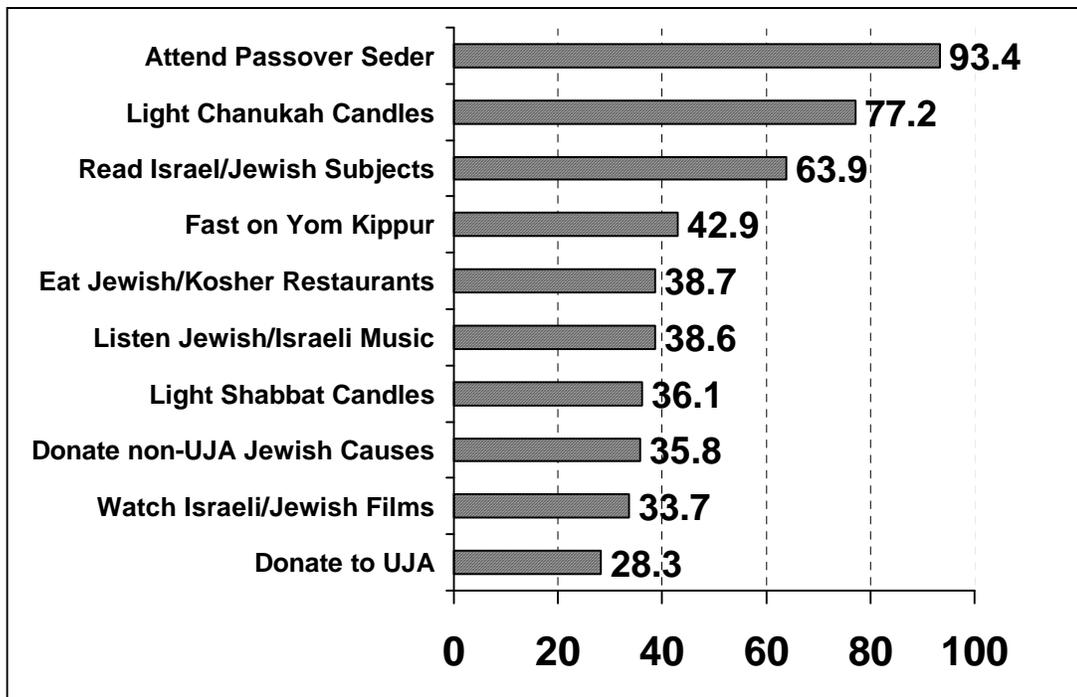
- Belong to a Jewish organization 20.1
- Keep kosher at home 17.9
- Volunteer for a Jewish organization 15.1
- Keep kosher outside home 11.4

It can be seen that certain religious customs (such as attending a Passover Seder or lighting Chanukah candles) are prominent in the lives of the great majority of unaffiliated Jews, although they may not interpret these practices in strictly religious ways (see also Figure 9). Reading about Israel / Jewish subjects is another way that the majority of unaffiliated individuals connect to Judaism, suggesting an underlying interest in “keeping in touch” with their faith or what is happening in the Jewish world generally.

Jewish Practices and Behaviours of the Unaffiliated:

	%
▪ Attend Passover Seder	93.4
▪ Light Chanukah candles	77.2
▪ Read about Israel/Jewish subjects	63.9
▪ Fast on Yom Kippur	42.9
▪ Eat in Jewish / kosher restaurants	38.7
▪ Listen to Jewish / Israeli music	38.6
▪ Light candles on Friday night	36.1
▪ Donation to non-UJA Jewish charities	35.8
▪ Watch Israeli / Jewish films	33.7
▪ Donation to UJA	28.3
▪ Rallies / political activities for Israel	23.5

Figure 9
Jewish Practices & Behaviours of the Unaffiliated (%)



The Jewish Education of Respondents

Throughout history, Jews have placed a high value on education. There is no doubt this is one of the contributing factors to the unprecedented occupational and financial success enjoyed by North American Jews. It can be argued that in modern times the traditional dedication to religious education among Jews has been applied to secular studies. Indeed, Jews are disproportionately represented in the professional fields.

This is not to say that Jews have abandoned their commitment to religious education. Jewish day school is still seen as a priority among North American communities. In fact, a childhood Jewish education has been identified as playing a significant role in terms of instilling the values and beliefs that form essential ingredients of one's "Jewishness".

Studies in the United States and Canada have shown that a Jewish day school education positively impacts on a person's adherence to Jewish customs, their level of involvement with Jewish organizations, raising one's own children Jewishly,

resisting intermarriage, and supporting Israel in a variety of ways.⁶

What percentage of respondents have received a formal Jewish education?

Respondents were asked whether they ever received any type of Jewish education, including attending Jewish day schools, attending Jewish supplementary schools, receiving private tutoring, or pursuing post-secondary Jewish studies. More than three-quarters (79.2%) of respondents said they received some type of Jewish education, and 20.8% said they did not.

The levels of formal Jewish education among adults range from 65% to 87% across North American communities, with an overall level of 73% for the United States. The Toronto community is in the middle of the distribution, with 79.2%.

What groups of respondents in the present study were most likely to have had a Jewish education? The highest levels of Jewish education were found among those with

high ritual adherence (91.3%), households with incomes above \$125K (90.6%), male respondents (89%), Orthodox Jews (89%), and those with a university undergraduate degree (87.4%).

Least inclined to have had a Jewish education were those born in the Former Soviet Union (36.7%), those who immigrated between 1990-2004 (48.9%), Secular / Just Jews (62.1%), those 55-64 years (67.4%), and widowed individuals (69.1%).

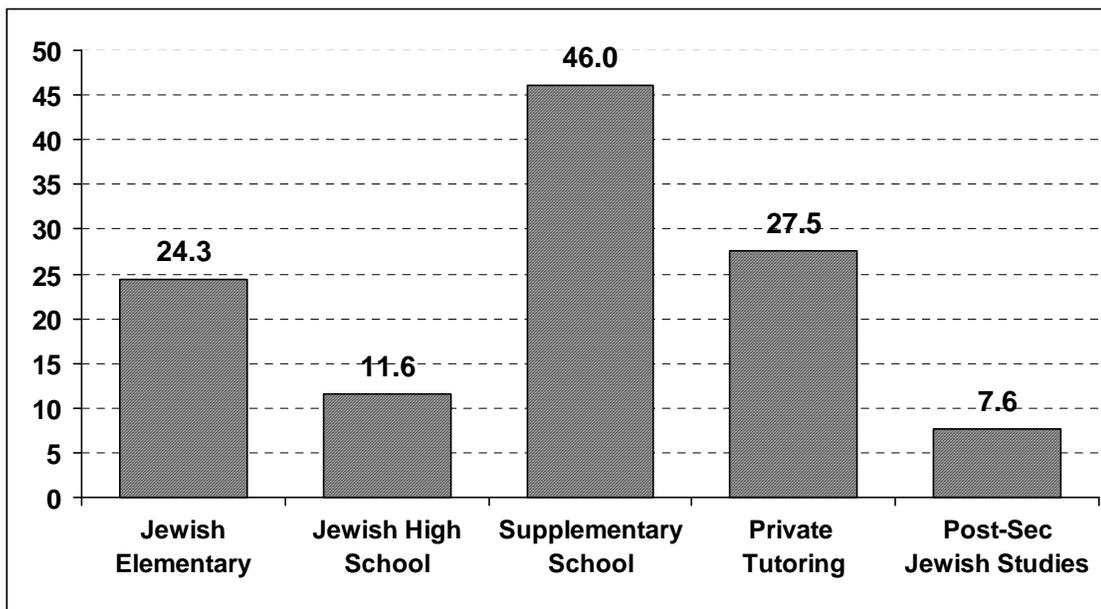
What types of Jewish education did respondents receive?

About a quarter (24.3%) of respondents said they had attended a Jewish elementary

school, 11.6% said a Jewish high school, 46% a Jewish supplementary school, 27.5% obtained private tutoring, and 7.6% pursued post-secondary Jewish studies (Figure 10). A further analysis reveals that 25.2% of the present sample had received a Jewish elementary or high school education.

The percentage of adults who obtained a Jewish day school education ranges from 3% to 17% across Jewish communities in the United States, with an overall American level of 12%. The Toronto level for Jewish day school attendance (25.2%) is the second highest reported in North America, after the figure for Montreal (34.8%).

Figure 10
Types of Jewish Education Respondents Received (%)



The Jewish Education of Children

A number of important issues have recently arisen regarding the system of Jewish schools in the Greater Toronto area. For instance, while the proportion of children attending Jewish day schools has increased in the past fifteen years, the proportion attending supplementary schools has decreased, leading to a small overall decline in the percentage of children receiving Jewish education of any kind.⁷

As well, many families cannot afford to send their children to Jewish day schools. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that currently there is no provincial funding to support private education.

Another consideration is that there is an under-representation of enrolment among the children of Jewish immigrants in the day school system. They represent a source of new vitality, and an important link for the future continuity of the community, yet many are not furthering their Jewish education.

The present study sought to lend further insights into some of these issues.

What types of Jewish education did the children of respondents ever receive?

Almost half (45.2%) of respondents said their children have had a Jewish elementary school education, 19% said their children have had a Jewish high school education, 46.6% said a Jewish supplementary education, 53% private tutoring, and 10.5% post-secondary Jewish studies (Figure 11).

A further analysis reveals that 47% of respondents reported that their children have received a Jewish day school (elementary and/or high school) education. According to the National Jewish Population Survey (2000-2001), 29% of children of respondents have had a Jewish day school education in the United States, a figure significantly below that of the local findings.

The segments of the present sample most inclined to have children who have attended Jewish day schools include the Orthodox (83.8%), those with high levels of ritual adherence (78.8%), those living in households with an income of at least \$125K (56.5%), those between 45-54 years

Figure 11
Types of Jewish Education Children of Respondents Received (%)

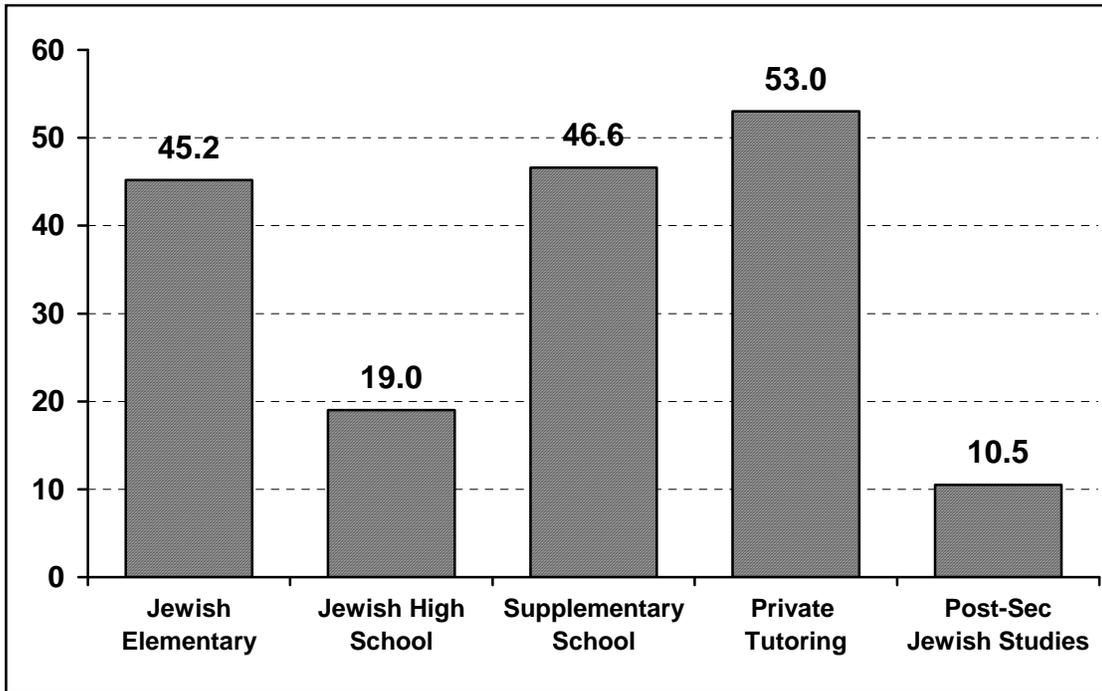
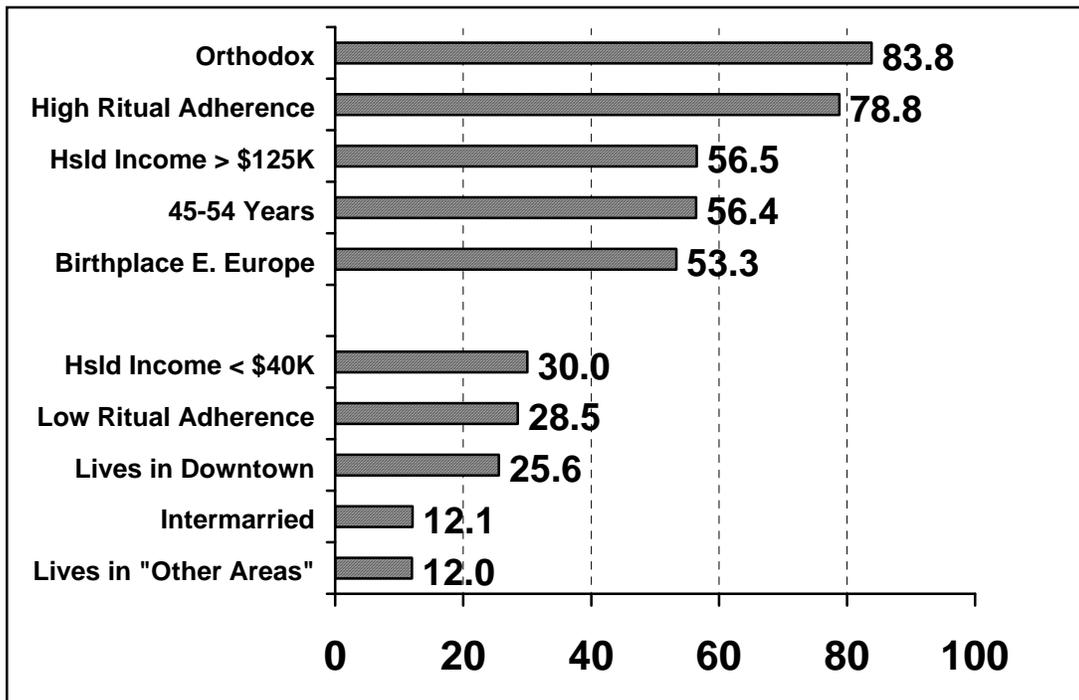


Figure 12
Whether Children Have Ever Attended Jewish Day Schools (%)
“High-Low Analysis” of Selected Segments



Note: Only the five segments with the highest and lowest percentages are included in this chart.

of age (56.4%), and those whose place of birth is Eastern Europe (53.3%) (Figure 12).

Least inclined to have had their children attend Jewish day schools are those who live in “Other Areas” of Greater Toronto (12%), intermarried individuals (12.1%), those who live in the downtown area (25.6%), those who have low ritual adherence (28.5%), those living in households earning under \$40K (30%), and those living in households earning \$75K-\$124K (30.5%).

It is clear that the most prominent associations related to whether or not respondents have had their children attend Jewish day schools include geographic proximity to Jewish neighbourhoods, whether the parents are intermarried or not, the level of household ritual observance, and the economic status of the household.

Are the children of respondents currently attending Jewish or non-Jewish schools?

Of 184 respondents with children 6-18 years, 63 (34.2%) said their children currently attend Jewish day schools, 100 (54.3%) said they attend non-Jewish public schools, 12 (6.5%) said non-Jewish private schools, 6 (3.3%) said Jewish and public

schools, and 3 (1.6%) said public and private schools.

The level of children currently attending Jewish day schools ranges from 6% to 26% for Jewish communities across the United States. Among Canadian centres, Montreal (64%) has a higher level of children currently attending Jewish day schools than Toronto (34.2%), although since the survey was done in Montreal, the community has seen a diminishment in the size of its mainstream day school population.

What types of respondents are currently sending their children to Jewish day schools? The Orthodox have the highest percentage of children attending Jewish day schools (80.5%), followed by those with a high level of ritual adherence (76%), those who live in Central Toronto (45.1%), those who immigrated before 1990 (43.5%), and respondents with a university graduate degree (43%).

Least inclined to have children currently attending Jewish day schools are those who live in “Other” areas of Greater Toronto (0.0%), those living in the downtown area (5.9%), intermarried individuals (6.3%), those living in households earning between

\$40K-\$74K (6.3%), those born in the Former Soviet Union (6.7%), and individuals who are divorced or separated (10%).

It seems that location of residence has a strong association with whether or not parents currently send their children to Jewish day schools. It is interesting that middle-income families earning between \$40K-\$74K also have a low percentage of children attending Jewish day schools. In addition, only a small percentage (6.7%) of respondents born in the FSU have their children enrolled in a Jewish day school.

Why have parents chosen not to send their children to a Jewish day school?

The major reason parents gave for not having their child attend a Jewish day school was that they wanted the child to socialize in a wider social milieu (42.1%). Financial constraints were likewise an important issue for many parents (41.3%).

Other reasons mentioned were that: Jewish education was not a priority for the respondent (20.7%); their child was not interested (14.9%); their child was not able to cope with the workload (9.9%); and

adequate transportation was not available (9.1%). More reasons for not enrolling the child in Jewish day schools included: academic supports were insufficient (5.8%); the day school in their area was too religious (5.8%); and their spouse did not agree with such a choice (5.8%).

The above were multiple-choice alternatives, but some parents had further reasons for not sending their child to a Jewish day school, which they indicated in an open-ended format. These reasons included (frequencies in parentheses): The child's needs were not being met in a Jewish school (3), and the child had special needs / learning disabilities (2). Single responses included: The child did not have a choice of campus; the spouse was not Jewish; the child was not Jewish; parent wanted French immersion for their child; parents didn't attend a Jewish day school; parent had no personal faith and wasn't sure what kind of religious orientation should be provided for the child; would like to send child to non-religious Jewish school similar to Israeli high schools; half the public school is Jewish anyway.

Interestingly, none of the reasons mentioned above were critical of the quality of

education provided in the Jewish day schools. On the other hand, an issue for some parents was that their child could not cope with the difficulty of the curriculum (perhaps suggesting there is not sufficient help for those students struggling with an extensive workload).

Financial issues were also a significant reason as to why some parents did not send their children to a Jewish day school. The issue of not being able to afford a Jewish education for their children is a difficult one for some families. In terms of reinforcing later Jewish identity, it is an open question as to whether household observance can sufficiently compensate for the lack of a formalized Jewish education, given the pressures of assimilation inherent in modern life.

Are children who are not attending a Jewish day school receiving a supplementary education?

About half (48.3%) of parents whose children were not attending Jewish day schools said their children were receiving a supplementary education, and 51.7% said they were not.

Those most likely to provide supplementary education for their children included Reform Jews (67.7%), those with moderate levels of ritual adherence (64.9%), those living in Central Toronto (60.5%), and non-immigrants (60.3%).

Least likely to provide supplementary education for their children included respondents born in the Former Soviet Union (16.7%), those who immigrated between 1990-2004 (18.7%), those who live in “Other Areas” of Greater Toronto (22.2%), and Secular / Just Jews (28.1%).

It seems that for those households where adherence levels are moderate, supplementary education is seen as an alternative to Jewish day schools. It also appears that recently immigrated Jewish families are the least inclined to consider alternative Jewish education for their children.

Interestingly, a third (33.3%) of intermarried respondents are providing a supplementary education for their children who are not attending Jewish day schools. *This is an important finding which suggests that at least some Jewish parents in intermarried*

households want to provide Jewish exposure for their children.

Why have parents chosen to send their children to a Jewish day school?

Parents were asked to specify why they have chosen to send their children to a Jewish day school. It was hoped that some insights would be gained into what made a Jewish day school education important and attractive for parents. Note that more than one response was allowed.

Of 63 respondents, 45 (71.4%) said that it was to teach Jewish values and provide Jewish grounding for the future of their children; 27 (42.9%) said it was to provide a sense of Jewish identity; 12 (19%) said these were quality schools with high standards; and 7 (11.1%) said to provide an introduction to Judaism for their child.

Have children attended a Jewish camp in the last five years?

Parents were asked whether their children (6-18 years) had attended a Jewish camp in the last five years. The majority (54.6%) of parents said their children had attended a Jewish camp. More specifically, 14.6% said a Jewish day camp, 23.8% a Jewish sleep over camp, and 16.2% said both. Less than half (45.4%) said their children had not attended a Jewish camp. It should be noted that the percentage of children attending Jewish camps (54.6%) may be inflated because some parents considered certain non-denominational camps with high Jewish enrolment as Jewish camps.

A further analysis revealed that of children not attending Jewish day schools: 47.1% attended Jewish camps in the last five years, and 52.9% did not. *In short, almost half of children who were not enrolled in Jewish days schools attended Jewish camps. It would seem that camps provide an important Jewish milieu for many children who might otherwise not have it through Jewish schools.*

Intermarriage

Until the 1960's North American Jews showed a strong tendency to marry within their own ethnic / religious group. That decade saw a significant increase in intermarriages. According to the National Jewish Population Survey (2000-2001) the intermarriage rate of American Jews married between 1996-2001 is approximately 47% (the rates are lower in Canada).⁸

While intermarriage rates are lower for Jews than for most other ethnic groups in Canada, given the particularly low fertility rates among Jews, and the increasing levels of assimilation, intermarriage represents a serious threat for Jewish continuity.

Unfortunately, intermarriage levels derived from the present study must be interpreted cautiously. The methodology of using Jewish-sounding names likely excluded women who married outside the faith and assumed their husband's name. Also, because no information was obtained regarding the year respondents were married, rates cannot be calculated as a function of time period, as they are in the

National Jewish Population Survey of 2000-2001.

What intermarriage & conversion levels were found among respondents?

Despite the limitations of methodology described above, intermarriage levels were calculated for the sample. Of 489 respondents who were married or living in common law arrangements, 55 (11.2%) said their spouse was not Jewish. In short, more than one in ten couples were intermarried.

The intermarriage level varies from 5% to 47% across communities in the United States, with an overall American rate of 31%. The Toronto level (11.2%) is at the low end of the distribution, with only Jewish communities in Rhode Island (8%) and Atlantic County (New Jersey) (5%) having lower figures.

In terms of the conversion status of the spouse, of 79 respondents and spouses in the present study who were raised as non-Jews, 24 (30.4%) converted to Judaism, and 55 (69.6%) did not. In other words, a

significant majority did not convert to Judaism.

The conversion rate of 30.4% found in the current study is at the high end of the distribution as far as Jewish communities across North America are concerned. The rates range from 10% in Buffalo to 50% in Montreal. The conversionary rates for some major American Jewish communities include: 15% in Seattle, 19% in Philadelphia, 21% in Los Angeles, and 28% in Miami.

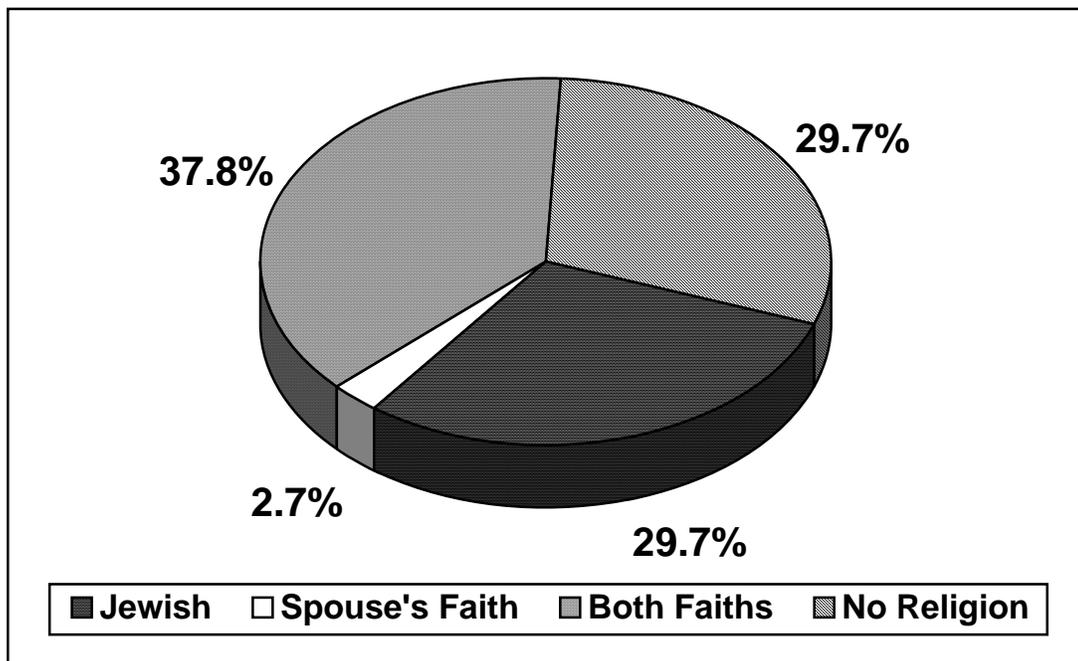
If we total the status of the 489 couple households considered in the present study:

55 (11.2%) are intermarried, 24 (4.9%) are conversionary in-marriages, and 410 (83.8%) are in-marriages between two born Jews.

How are intermarried families bringing up their children?

This question is critical in order to understand the impact intermarriage has on Jewish continuity. Of respondents living in intermarried households (where the spouse did not convert), 29.7% of respondents said their children were being brought up within the Jewish faith, 2.7% said according to the spouse's faith, 37.8% within both faiths, and 29.7% with no religion (Figure 13).

Figure 13
How Children of Intermarried Couples are Being Raised (%)



These findings suggest that in an intermarried household, the religion of the non-Jewish spouse does not necessarily take precedence. Rather, in the majority of cases (67.5%), either both religions have equal weight, or no religion is emphasized. In either case, there is no doubt that Jewish exposure is more limited for the children involved. This is also borne out by the low levels of affiliation reported by respondents living in intermarried households, across the various measures of Jewish identification and adherence described in this study.

How would respondents react if their child was considering marrying a non-Jew?

If their child was considering marrying a non-Jew, the majority of respondents (51.4%) would actively oppose such a marriage, and would express their opinion openly; 12.1% would oppose the union, but would not express their opinion; 16.7% would be neutral about the matter; 10.3% would support it openly; and 9.5% are not sure. In short, 63.5% would oppose such a marriage.

Most likely to oppose such a marriage were those with high ritual adherence (96.5%), Orthodox Jews (96.3%), those with

elementary or high school as their highest level of education (78.9%), those born in Eastern Europe (76.2%), and widowed individuals (74.4%).

Least likely to oppose such a marriage were intermarried individuals (0%), those living in “Other Areas” of Greater Toronto (24%), those living in Downtown Toronto (27.5%), Secular / Just Jews (39.8%); those with low ritual adherence (45%); and divorced / separated individuals (51.4%). It is clear that, given their personal circumstances, intermarried individuals had the least basis for opposition to such a union.

What if their child considered marrying someone who would convert? About one in ten respondents (10.9%) would actively oppose such a marriage, and would express this opinion openly; 5.2% would oppose such a union, but would not express their opinion; 14.9% would be neutral about the matter; 57.5% would support the marriage openly; and 11.5% were not sure. In short, respondents were much more conciliatory toward such a marriage when the eventuality of conversion was introduced.

What proportion of respondents have children who have intermarried?

More than a quarter (28.6%) of respondents said their children had married non-Jews, and 71.4% said their children had not. The figure of 28.6% can be taken as a very rough measure of the intermarriage rate among young adult Jews, although some of these young adults may no longer be living in the Greater Toronto area.

Those most likely to say their children had married non-Jews included individuals living in “Other Areas” of Greater Toronto (80%), intermarried individuals (64.3%), Secular / Just Jews (45.7%), Reform Jews (38.1%), and those with low levels of ritual adherence (38%).

The fact that 80% of respondents who live well outside the sphere of Jewish neighbourhoods have children who married non-Jews, suggests that *such geographic detachment from the community may be associated with lower levels of affiliation and connection that stretch across even generational lines. It is also evident that children who are raised in intermarried families, are more likely to intermarry themselves.*

Would single respondents consider dating or marrying a non-Jew?

Single and divorced respondents were asked whether they currently date Jews, non-Jews or both. In terms of single respondents, 25.9% said they only date Jews, 1.7% said only non-Jews, 51.7% both Jews and non-Jews, and 20.7% don't date. In short, the majority of single individuals are open to dating non-Jews. Regarding divorced individuals, 22% said they only date Jews, 2.4% said only non-Jews, 36.6% date both Jews and non-Jews, and 39% don't date.

Would single individuals consider marrying a non-Jew? 59.6% said yes, whether the individual converted or not; 21.1% would consider marriage only if the individual converted; and 19.3% would not consider it under any circumstances. In other words, about 60% of single respondents consider intermarriage a viable option for their future.

In terms of divorced persons, 58.1% would consider marriage to a non-Jew, whether the person converted or not; 16.3% would consider it only if the person converted; and 25.6% would not consider it under any circumstances. As with single individuals, the majority of divorced persons consider intermarriage a viable option.

Organizational & Informal Affiliations

One expression of a community's cohesiveness relates to the involvement of its members in its organizations and institutions. Whereas synagogues were once the traditional meeting places for Jews, secular organizations are now the social and cultural focus for many individuals.

What percentage of respondents belong to Jewish organizations?

A quarter of respondents (25%) said they belong to a Jewish organization, fraternity or club, and 75% said they do not. Respondents most inclined to belong to a Jewish organization included widowed individuals (49.1%), those whose place of birth was Eastern Europe (46.8%), respondents 65+ years (40%), those with elementary /high school as their highest level of education (39.8%), and those who live in Central Toronto (32.2%). In short, seniors seem to be most inclined to belong to Jewish organizations, particularly if they have lost their spouse.

Least inclined to belong to Jewish organizations were those living in "Other

Areas" of Greater Toronto (6.1%), intermarried individuals (7.7%), those whose place of birth was the Former Soviet Union (10.2%), those who immigrated between 1990-2004 (13%), those living in York Region (18.1%), and single individuals (18.3%).

It seems that location of residence, intermarried status, and recent immigration are three variables that are strongly associated with whether or not a person belongs to Jewish organizations. Interestingly, residents from York Region have a relatively low percentage of membership, possibly because they have a large representation of immigrants (FSU Jews and Israelis) in their midst.

How strong are the informal affiliations of respondents?

Almost half (44.6%) of respondents said "all or almost all" of their close friends are Jewish, 34.2% said "most" are Jewish, 15.2% said "some" are Jewish, 3.7% said "few" are Jewish, and 2.3% said "none" are Jewish. In short, there is a high degree of

Jewish association in the friendship patterns of respondents. Almost 80% said that at least most of their friends are Jewish.

The segments of respondents most inclined to say “all or almost all” of their closest friends are Jewish in the present study, include the Orthodox (78%), those with high levels of ritual adherence (76.4%), those with elementary or high school as their highest level of education (68.2%), widowed individuals (60%), and those living in York Region (60%).

Least inclined to say “all or almost all” of their friends are Jewish include intermarried individuals (0%), those living in “Other Areas” of Greater Toronto (11.4%), those living in Downtown Toronto (13.7%), single persons (19.4%), and Secular / Just Jews (25.6%).

About three-quarters (75.7%) of respondents said they feel “very close” to the Jewish people, 19.9% said “somewhat close”, 2.9% said “a little close”, 1.2% said “not close at all”, and 0.3% were unsure. In short, the great majority of respondents feel very connected to the Jewish people, and a very small percentage feels little or no connection.

What are the affiliation patterns of the children of respondents?

About a quarter (23.7%) of parents (with children living at home) said their children belong to Jewish youth groups, and 76.3% said they do not.

To which youth groups did respondents say their children belong? Frequencies are in parentheses (n=44). The most common youth group mentioned was NCSY (12), followed by B’nai Akiva (9). Three mentions were given for: Bnos, NELFTY, and Hashomer Hatzair. Two mentions were given for BBYO. Single responses were given for: Abir Yaakob Youth Program, Agudah, Habonim Dror, LOTTSY, USY, and Young Judea.

Almost half of respondents (43%) said that “all, or almost all” of their children’s friends are Jewish, 26.3% said “most” are Jewish, 21.5% said “some” are Jewish, 5.4% said “few” are Jewish, and 3.8% said “none” are Jewish. In short, almost 70% said that “all” or “most” of their children’s friends are Jewish.

Volunteerism & Philanthropic Behaviour

The spirit of “tzedakah” (charity) is an integral part of the Jewish way of life. Jews are obligated, both spiritually and morally, to assist fellow Jews who are needy, who cannot look after themselves, or who are experiencing distress in some way. Giving charity is a duty that cannot be forsaken even by those who are themselves in need. Some sages have said that tzedakah is the highest of all commandments.

The Toronto Jewish community has historically risen to the challenge of looking after its most vulnerable segments. This has been made possible by the generosity of its members, both in terms of financial donations, and their contributions of time, effort and expertise as lay leaders and volunteers. Such dedication ensures that the local community remains a vibrant and cohesive one.

What is the level of volunteerism among respondents?

Almost a third of respondents (30.6%) have volunteered for a Jewish organization in the past year, and 69.4% have not.

Respondents most likely to have volunteered for a Jewish organization include those with high ritual adherence (54.3%), the Orthodox (52.7%), those living in households earning at least \$125K (36.8%), those with a university graduate degree (36.4%), and those with a university undergraduate degree (35.5%) (Figure 14). It seems that volunteer activity is more prevalent among those who are most observant, affluent and educated.

Least likely to have volunteered for a Jewish organization were respondents living in “Other Areas” of Greater Toronto (2.9%), intermarried individuals (9.4%), those born in the Former Soviet Union (14.6%), Secular / Just Jews (15.1%), single persons (18%), and divorced / separated individuals (19.1%). These are also among the least affiliated segments of the Toronto Jewish community.

Almost one in four respondents (22.3%) have volunteered for a non-Jewish organization in the past year, whereas 77.7% have not. This level of volunteerism is lower than that for Jewish organizations (30.6%).

Figure 14
Has Volunteered for a Jewish Organization (%)
“High-Low Analysis” of Selected Segments

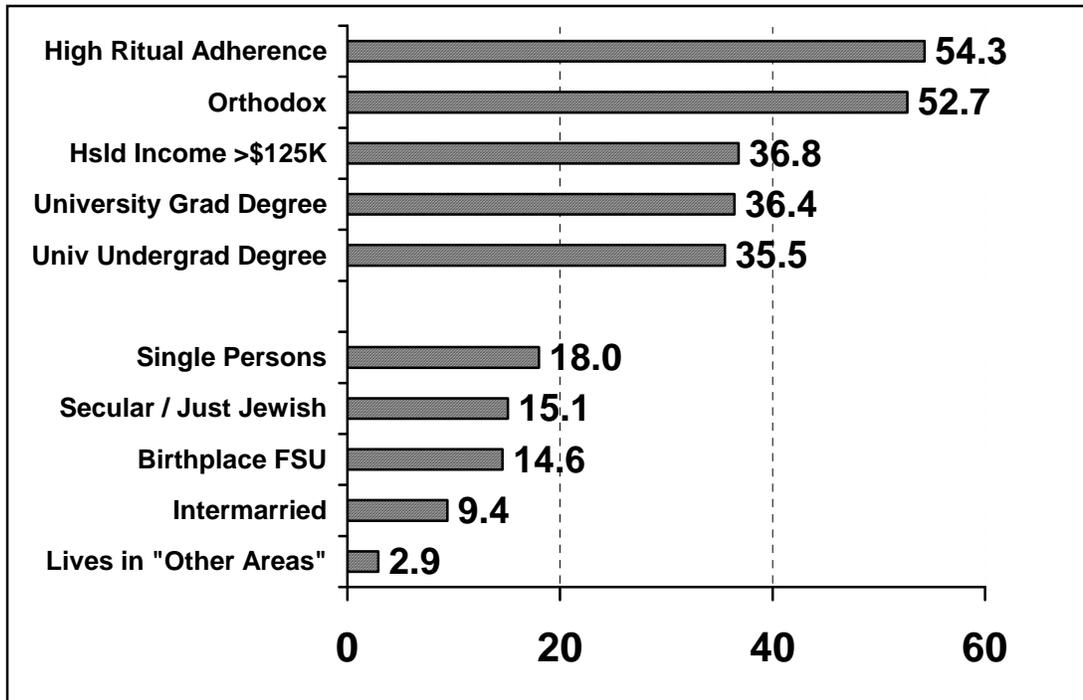
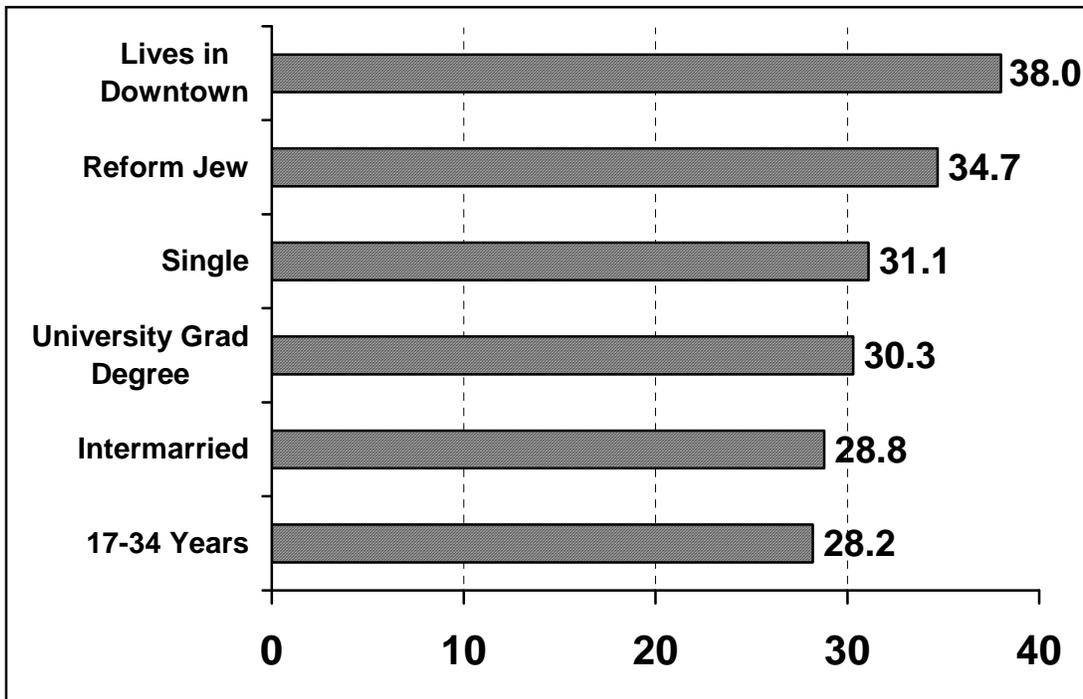


Figure 15
Segments Most Inclined to Have Volunteered
for a Non-Jewish Organization (%)



Which segments of respondents were most inclined to volunteer for non-Jewish organizations (Figure 15)? The highest percentages were reported by those living in Downtown Toronto (38%), followed by Reform Jews (34.7%), single individuals (31.1%), those with a university graduate degree (30.3%), intermarried individuals (28.8%), and those 17-34 years (28.2%).

Least inclined to volunteer for a non-Jewish organization were those born in the Former Soviet Union (4.2%), those living in households earning less than \$40K (6.3%), those who immigrated between 1990-2004 (6.5%), those with elementary / high school as their highest education (6.7%), and the Orthodox (12.2%).

It seems that those who are most educated have high levels of volunteer activity for both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations. Younger and single adults prefer donating their time to non-Jewish causes. Immigrants from the Former Soviet Union seem least inclined to volunteer for any organization.

What percentage of respondents contribute to United Jewish Appeal?

Almost half of the sample (48.2%) said they donated to United Jewish Appeal in the past

year; 30% said they did not donate, but had in the past; and 21.8% said they had never donated.

Respondents most inclined to give to UJA in the current study were those living in households earning at least \$125K (67.2%), those with high levels of ritual adherence (65.1%), seniors (62.4%), those born in Eastern Europe (60.4%), widowed individuals (60%), those with moderate levels of ritual adherence (59%), Conservative Jews (59%), and those living in Central Toronto (56.1%) (Figure 16).

Least inclined to give to UJA included those living in “Other Areas” of Greater Toronto (12.1%), single persons (16.1%), those who immigrated between 1990-2004 (20%), intermarried individuals (22.6%), those living in households that earn under \$40K (27.7%), Secular / Just Jews (28.3%), those 17-34 years (28.6%), and those born in the Former Soviet Union (30.6%). Also reporting low levels of giving to UJA were divorced / separated individuals (31.3%), and those living in Downtown Toronto (33.3%).

It is clear that geographic area of residence, age of respondent, immigration status, level of affiliation, economic condition, and

Figure 16
Has Contributed to UJA (%)
“High-Low Analysis” of Selected Segments

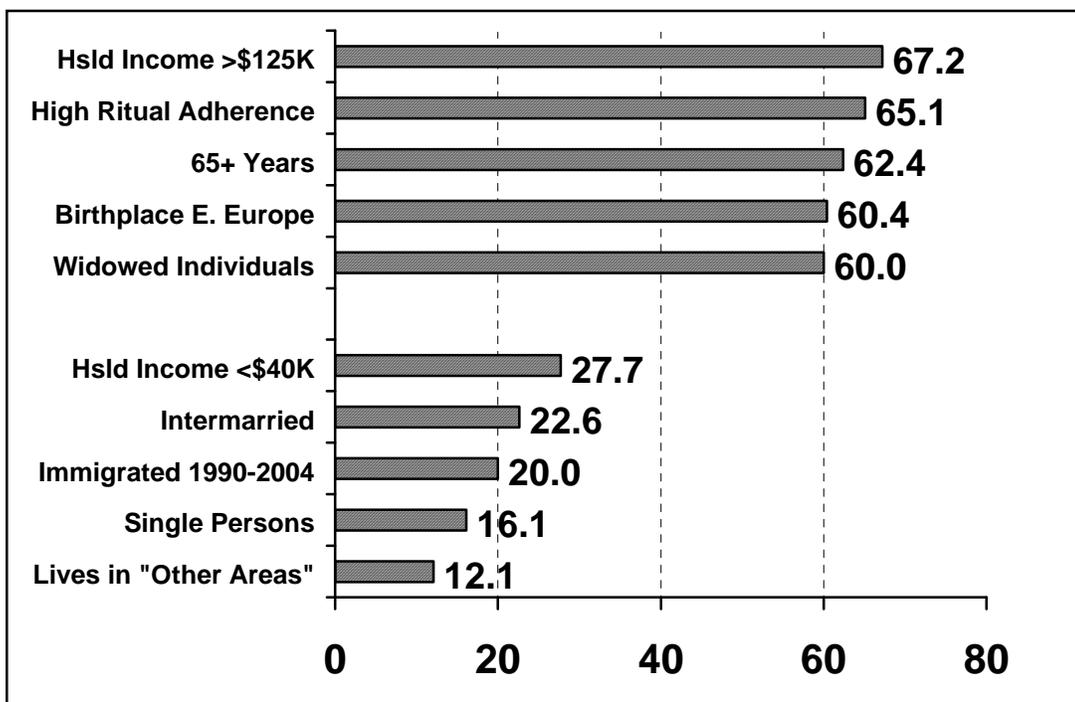
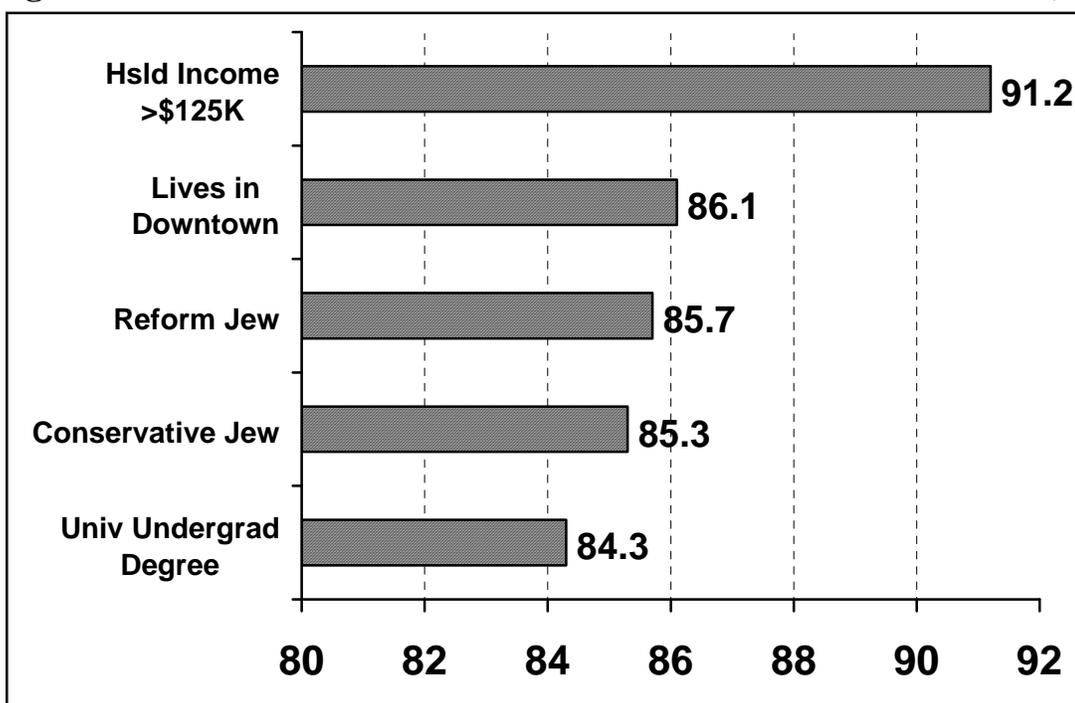


Figure 17
Segments Most Inclined to Have Donated to Non-Jewish Charities (%)



marital status interact to determine the percentage of UJA donors among respondents. There are certain segments of the community that whether due to their stage of life, or lack of affiliation, do not support the federation financially. Some of these groups represent challenges for donor outreach initiatives.

What proportion of respondents donated to other Jewish organizations?

Aside from UJA, 59.6% of respondents donated to other Jewish charities, and 40.4% did not. Respondents mentioned more than 80 organizations as targets for giving. The level of giving to other Jewish organizations (59.6%) was higher than that for UJA (48.2%).

Segments of respondents most inclined to donate to other Jewish causes included those with high levels of adherence (86.5%), the Orthodox (82.2%), widowed individuals (79.6%), seniors (74.1%), those born in Eastern Europe (73.9%), and those living in households earning at least \$125K (68.6%).

Least inclined to donate to other Jewish charities included those living in “Other Areas” of Greater Toronto (18.2%),

intermarried individuals (30.2%), single persons (30.6%), those 17-34 years (31%), those who immigrated between 1990-2004 (33.3%), and Secular / Just Jews (35.8%).

What percentage of respondents donated to non-Jewish charities?

More than three-quarters (77.8%) of respondents said they donated to non-Jewish charities, whereas 22.2% said they did not. The percentage giving to non-Jewish charities was higher than that reported for United Jewish Appeal (48.2%), and for other Jewish charities (59.6%).

Most inclined to donate to non-Jewish charities were those in households earning at least \$125K (91.2%), those living in Downtown Toronto (86.1%), Reform Jews (85.7%), Conservative Jews (85.3%), and those with a university undergraduate degree (84.3%) (Figure 17).

Least likely to contribute to non-Jewish charities were respondents born in the Former Soviet Union (38.3%), those who immigrated between 1990-2004 (43.2%), those living in households earning under \$40K (52.3%), single persons (60%), and those 17-34 years of age (60.3%).

What are the overall giving patterns of respondents?

Only a small minority of the sample (13%) did not donate to any charity. This seems to suggest that the Jewish community is generally a generous group when it comes to supporting various causes. More than a third of the sample (35%) donated to all three types of charities (UJA, other Jewish, and non-Jewish).

A very small proportion (1.6%) donated only to UJA, whereas 4.7% donated only to other Jewish charities, and 16.9% gave only to non-Jewish charities. This finding suggests that UJA donors tend to give to other charities as well. But respondents who give to non-Jewish charities are less inclined to give to Jewish ones as well.

Finally, 3.2% of the sample donated to both UJA and other Jewish causes; 8.9% to UJA and non-Jewish charities; and 16.8% gave to other Jewish and non-Jewish causes. There is a greater tendency for other Jewish causes to overlap with non-Jewish causes, than is the case for other combinations.

These findings suggest that non-donors to UJA can be divided into the following groups: those who donated only to non-Jewish charities (16.9%); those who donated to other Jewish & non-Jewish charities (16.8%); those who did not donate at all (13%); and those who donated to other Jewish charities only (4.7%). *If one totals the percentage share of donors for the three types of charities, non-Jewish causes clearly provide the most competition to UJA for donor dollars.*

Service Awareness & Use

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto provides funding for a wide range of services and programs, designed to meet the needs of a large and growing Jewish community. It is important for the Federation to determine whether members of the community are aware of available services, and whether they are using them. An additional question looked at what respondents think should be the main priorities for the local Jewish community in the next five years.

Are respondents aware of community services?

Respondents were given a list of 23 Jewish programs and organizations, and asked to indicate whether they had heard of them or not (Table 1). The level of awareness ranged from 16.7% to 90.5%. The great majority of respondents had heard of the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre (90.5%). This is not surprising since it is a central address for Jewish services in Greater Toronto. There was also a very high level of recognition for the Canadian Jewish Congress (87%), and Jewish Family & Child Service (81.7%).

Also showing high levels of recognition were: Hillel (77.4%), the Holocaust Centre of

Toronto (76.5%), Reena (72.8%), the Bernard Betel Centre for Creative Living (69%), BBYO (65.1%), Jews for Judaism (63.9%), and the Board of Jewish Education (62.4%). More than half of the sample recognized the Jewish Public Library (58.7%), followed by Jewish Immigrant Aid Services (57.3%), and the Miles Nadal JCC (56%).

Less than half of respondents have heard of the Ashkenaz Festival (47.7%), the Jewish Camp Council (46.5%), Jewish Russian Community Centre (46.2%), Jewish Information Service (45.3%), JVS Toronto (44%), and Circle of Care (36.5%). Less than a third of respondents have heard of Toronto Jewish Free Loan Cassa (30.3%), the Ontario Jewish Archives (28.1%), Israel Experience Center (22.9%), and the Kehilla Residential Programme (16.7%).

Of a total of 654 respondents, 14 (2.1%) were not familiar with any services or organizations; 74 (11.3%) were familiar with 1-5; 150 (22.9%) were familiar with 6-10; 180 (27.5%) were familiar with 11-15; and 236 (36.1%) were familiar with 16-23. In short, more than a third of the sample had a

Table 1
Awareness & Use of Jewish Agencies and Programs

	Heard of This Service?		Used This Service?	
	Frequency	Percent*	Frequency	Percent*
Ashkenaz Festival	312	47.7	99	15.1
Bathurst J Community Centre	592	90.5	146	22.3
Bernard Betel Centre for Creative Living	451	69.0	39	6.0
Board of Jewish Education	408	62.4	60	9.2
BBYO	426	65.1	17	2.6
Canadian Jewish Congress	569	87.0	45	6.9
Circle of Care	239	36.5	38	5.8
Hillel	506	77.4	12	1.8
The Holocaust Centre of Toronto	500	76.5	49	7.5
Israel Experience Center	150	22.9	24	3.7
Jewish Camp Council	304	46.5	32	4.9
Jewish Family & Child Service	534	81.7	43	6.6
Jewish Immigrant Aid Services	375	57.3	15	2.3
Jewish Information Service	296	45.3	48	7.3
Jewish Public Library	384	58.7	67	10.2
Jewish Russian Community Centre	302	46.2	23	3.5
Jews for Judaism	418	63.9	23	3.5
JVS Toronto	288	44.0	36	5.5
Kehilla Residential Programme	109	16.7	6	0.9
The Miles Nadal JCC	366	56.0	44	6.7
The Ontario Jewish Archives	184	28.1	15	2.3
Reena	476	72.8	21	3.2
Toronto Jewish Free Loan Cassa	198	30.3	12	1.8

*Percentage base (n) =654

high level of recognition of community agencies and organizations.

The recognition scores of respondents were totalled across various segments of the community, to develop a profile of the Jewish public's awareness of programs and services. For instance, respondents with the highest mean awareness scores were those with high levels of ritual adherence (15.92), followed by the Orthodox (15.08), those with moderate levels of ritual adherence (14.43), Conservative Jews (14.42), those born in Eastern Europe (14.30), widowed individuals (14.27), and those 65+ years (13.95).

Least familiar with community services and organizations were those living in "Other Areas" of Greater Toronto (6.57), those born in the Former Soviet Union (7.57), those who immigrated between 1990-2004 (8.00), intermarried individuals (8.09), single persons (8.87), Secular / Just Jews (9.21), those living in Downtown Toronto (9.82), those 17-34 years (10.15), and those with low levels of ritual adherence (10.74). It is clear that individuals who are more geographically isolated from the Jewish community, and recent immigrants, are among the least aware of community programs and services.

Which community services do respondents use?

Respondents were asked whether they had used various Jewish community services in the last two years (Table 1). The Bathurst Jewish Community Centre had the highest level of reported use, by 146 of 654 respondents, or 22.3%. The next highest level of use was reported for the Ashkenaz Festival, by 99 individuals, or 15.1% of respondents. The next highest level of use was recorded for the Jewish Public Library, by 67 persons, or 10.2% of the sample.

Fewer individuals said they used the Board of Jewish Education (60), the Holocaust Centre of Toronto (49), Jewish Information Service (48), Canadian Jewish Congress (45), The Miles Nadal JCC (44), and Jewish Family & Child Service (43). Also registering a lower level of use were: Bernard Betel Centre for Creative Living (39), Circle of Care (38), JVS Toronto (36), Jewish Camp Council (32), Israel Experience Center (24), the Jewish Russian Community Centre (23), Jews for Judaism (23), and Reena (21).

The lowest levels of use were indicated for BBYO (17), Jewish Immigrant Aid Services (15), the Ontario Jewish Archives (15), Hillel

(12), Toronto Jewish Free Loan Cassa (12), and the Kehilla Residential Program (6).

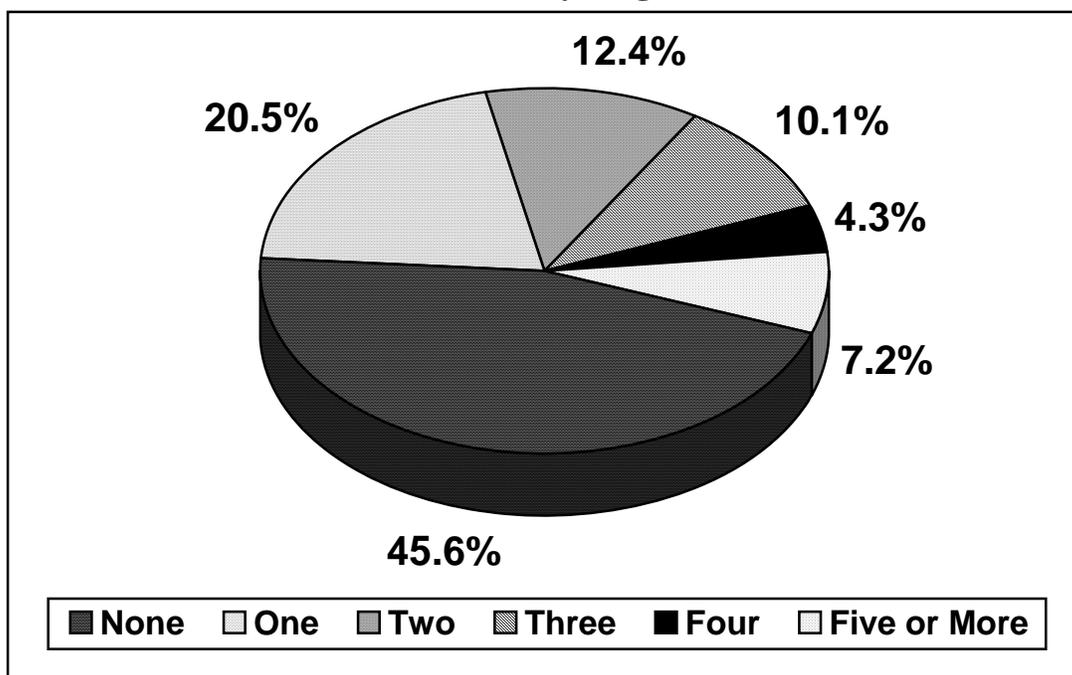
Of a total of 654 respondents, 298 (45.6%) did not report use of any service or organization; 134 (20.5%) used one service; 81 (12.4%) used two services; 66 (10.1%) used three services; 28 (4.3%) used four services; and 47 (7.2%) used five or more services (Figure 18). In short, almost half of the sample did not use any services, whereas about a fifth used at least three community services.

It is important to note that some community services are only geared to certain

subpopulations, such as the elderly, the disabled, or immigrants. On the other hand, some organizations are mandated to serve the community as a whole and not solely specific populations. Finally, the survey findings reflect self-reported usage and may thus result in an under-reporting by those individuals not wishing to disclose services they or their families may have utilized.

Hence, the fact that a significant proportion did not use Jewish services is not necessarily an indication of the level of need or quality of the services offered, but may simply reflect the specificity of the populations involved or under-reporting by respondents.

Figure 18
Level of Use of Jewish Community Organizations & Services (%)



Which segments were most inclined to use community services and organizations? Those with high ritual adherence had the highest level of use (mean=2.07 organizations used), followed by individuals 17-34 years (1.99), those living in households earning \$40K-\$74K (1.93), the Orthodox (1.87), those living in Central Toronto (1.65), and those with moderate levels of ritual adherence (1.63).

Least inclined to use services were respondents living in “Other Areas” of Greater Toronto (0.66), those living in Downtown Toronto (0.70), intermarried individuals (0.89), Secular / Just Jews (0.91), those with low levels of ritual adherence (1.01), individuals living in households earning under \$40K (1.02), those 35-44 years (1.13), those who immigrated between 1990-2004 (1.15), and single persons (1.19). In short, it is evident that location of residence has the most prominent association with lower service use.

What concerns does the community feel its leadership should focus upon?

Respondents in the present survey were asked to indicate which local concerns they think should be major priorities for the

Toronto Jewish community in the next five years. A list of 13 items was provided, and the respondent had to choose the five most important priorities.

Figure 19 is a summary of their responses. The most important priority mentioned by respondents was “services for the elderly” (68.5%), followed by “fighting local antisemitism” (67.4%), and “services for the Jewish poor” (63.3%). These three areas received significantly higher priority ratings than the rest of the items.

The next highest ratings were for “Jewish education” (43.7%) and “services for children or adults with disabilities” (41.4%). These two items placed in the middle of the distribution, and although not as highly rated as the above categories, they nonetheless received significantly higher scores than the items below.

The next highest rated items were: “promoting Jewish culture / arts” (27.4%), “supporting youth groups for teens and young adults” (26.9%), “providing security for local Jewish community institutions” (25.7%), “outreach to Jewish students on university / college campuses” (24.9%), and “Jewish political advocacy” (24.2%).

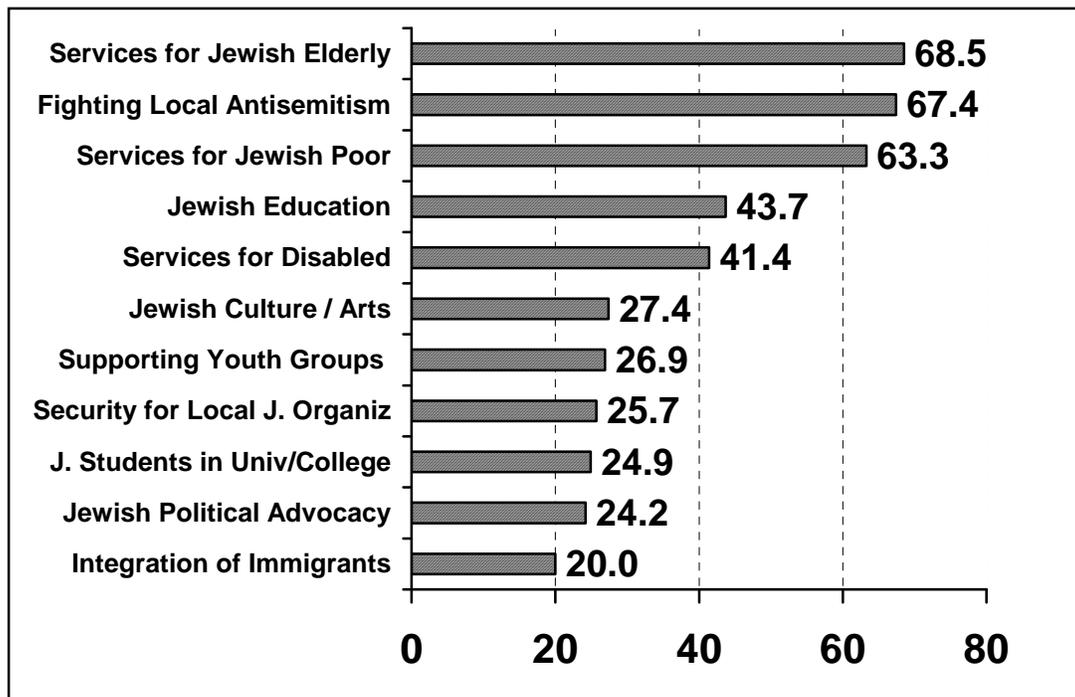
The lowest ratings were reported for: “integration of immigrants into the Jewish community” (20%), “outreach to unaffiliated Jews” (18.5%), and “supporting synagogue activities” (8%).

Respondents were asked whether there were other services, not mentioned in the above list, that they felt represented priority concerns for them. Two individuals each mentioned: “making Jewish education more affordable” and “the need for job promotion”. The following single responses were given: “free, or pay as you can, access to Temple on holidays”, “outreach to the

Jewish gay community”, “cemetery maintenance”, “support groups for needy families”, “more accurate publicity or news regarding Israel”, and “strengthen Diaspora-Israel relations, with programs such as Birthright”.

Other single responses included: “programs and services for Jewish singles”, “wheelchair provisions at most Jewish facilities”, “tutoring programs for special needs children”, “programs dealing with violence / abuse of women and children”, “advocating on behalf of Jews regarding social justice issues in the greater society”.

Figure 19
Community Priorities & Concerns Specified by Respondents (%)



Note: Figures show the percentage of individuals who considered a specific category to be among the five most important priorities under consideration. “Outreach to Unaffiliated” and “Supporting Synagogue Activities” were not included in the above chart. Their ratings were lower than 20%.

Individuals with Special Needs

Little data is available on the prevalence of special needs individuals in the community, particularly for all age groups below seniors. How to respond to the unmet needs of such individuals through effective intervention has been a communal focus, especially as the issue of special needs and inclusion has come to the forefront of public awareness.

What is the incidence and age distribution of individuals with special needs?

Respondents were asked whether there were any persons with special needs living in their household. Of 654 respondents, 95 (14.5%) said there was at least one special needs person living in their household, and 559 (85.5%) said there was not.

The incidence of special needs among Jewish communities across North America varies from 6% to 23% of households. Particularly high percentages are found among communities in Florida where there are large concentrations of Jewish seniors. The Toronto community falls in the middle of the distribution (14.5%).

Of the 95 respondents in the present study who said there was a special needs individual living in their household, 83 (87.4%) said there was one such person, and 12 (12.6%) said there were two. In short, the 654 sampled households had a total of 107 special needs individuals residing in them.

In terms of the age distribution of the special needs individuals identified in this study, 14 (13.6%) were between 0-14 years, 21 (20.4%) were 15-34 years, 17 (16.5%) were 35-54 years, 24 (23.3%) were 55-74 years, and 27 (26.2%) were 75+ years.

Regarding the types of disabilities of the special needs individuals, 59 (57.8%) had a physical disability, 18 (17.6%) had an intellectual disability, 12 (11.8%) had an emotional disability, 6 (5.9%) had an intellectual & emotional disability, 4 (3.9%) had a physical & intellectual disability, 1 (1%) had a physical & emotional disability, and 2 (2%) had disabilities on all three levels.

How severe was the disability of the special needs individual, in terms of impeding their

activities of daily life? Of 103 individuals, 21 (20.4%) had a disability which “very much” impeded their daily life, 59 (57.3%) had a disability that “somewhat” impeded their daily life, and 23 (22.3%) had a disability that did not impede their daily life at all.

What were the characteristics of children with special needs?

As noted above, 14 of the special needs individuals identified in this study were children less than 15 years. *Of the 351 children aged 0-14 years residing in the households sampled in the present study, 4% were special needs children. This figure can be regarded as a rough indicator of the incidence of disability among children less than 15 years in the Greater Toronto Jewish community.*

However, it should also be noted that surveys typically underestimate the incidence of special needs children, firstly because low-level learning disabilities are often under-reported, and also because of the perceived stigma sometimes associated with such reporting.

Of special needs children less than 15 years old: 3 had a physical disability, 4 had an

intellectual disability, 2 had an emotional disability, 3 had an intellectual & emotional disability, and 1 had disabilities on all three levels. Calculating the relative incidence of these different disabilities, of 351 total children in the present sample of households (including overlapping disabilities): 1.1% had a physical disability, 2.3% had an intellectual disability, and 1.7% had an emotional disability.

None of the special needs children identified in this study were “very much” impeded by their disability in terms of their daily activities, 10 were “somewhat” impeded, and 4 were not impeded at all.

Are children with special needs receiving any form of Jewish education?

Of 12 respondents, 9 (75%) said their special needs child was receiving some form of Jewish education, and 3 said their child was not. What types of Jewish education were these children receiving? Three respondents said “She’arim”. Two each said “private tutoring” and “Jewish day school”. Single responses were given for “special remediation”, “synagogue / youth groups”, “Hillel cooperative – Sunday School”, and “Hebrew school (extra-curricular)”.

Closeness to Israel

Throughout history, Israel has played a critical role in the collective consciousness of Jewish people throughout the world. North American Jews are no exception. Research has shown that commitment and support for Israel, whether it is financial or ideological, is a central component of the identity of Jews in North America, regardless of their individual level of religiosity.⁹

North American and Israeli Jews have much in common. They share a common ancestry and history that forms the basis of their identity. Both groups enjoy the unique position of living in two of the most secure conditions that Jews, throughout their long history have ever found themselves.

There are also important differences, however. North American Jews are a minority in a multi-ethnic society, in contrast to Israeli Jews who are a strong majority in the only Jewish state. Another important distinction is found in the different interpretations of Zionism. For Israeli Jews, Zionism signifies the actual living or a strong aspiration to live in Israel;

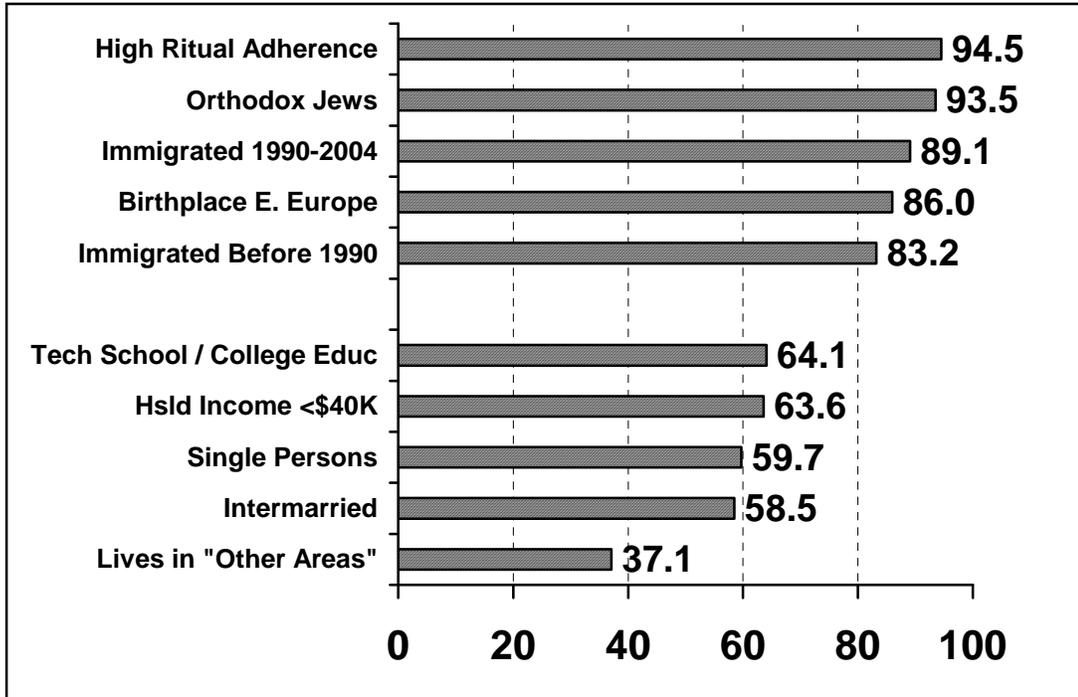
whereas for the North American Jew, it signifies a strong commitment to Israel, as a central characteristic of one's Jewish identity.¹⁰

Have respondents ever been to Israel, and if so, how often?

About three-quarters (73.9%) of respondents said they have been to Israel, and 26.1% have not. In short, a significant majority of respondents have been to Israel at least once.

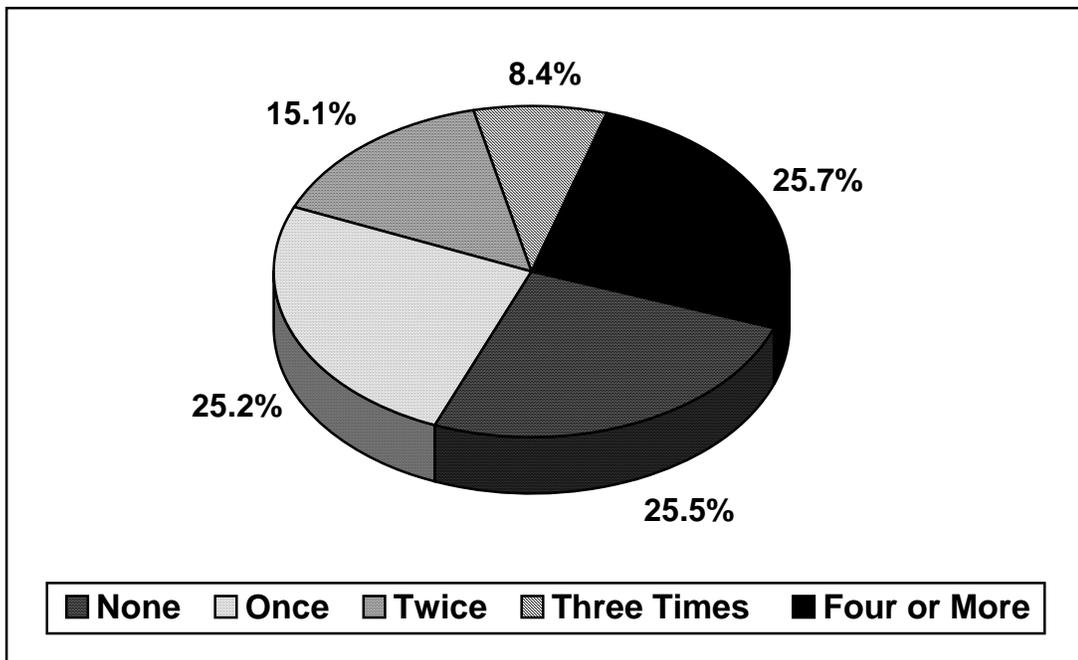
In terms of cross-community comparisons, many of the North American Jewish population surveys ask whether anyone in the household has been to Israel, a question not directly comparable to that of the present study. The level of whether the respondent has ever been to Israel is 35% for the United States, a figure significantly below that of the present finding. For Montreal Jews it is 74.5%, very similar to the Toronto level. All in all, the local community has among the highest levels of having been to Israel, of any Jewish centre in North America.

Figure 20
Has Ever Been to Israel (%)
“High-Low Analysis” of Selected Segments



Note: Only the five segments with the highest and lowest percentages are included in this chart.

Figure 21
Number of Times Respondents Have Been to Israel (%)



Which segments of respondents were most inclined to have visited Israel at least once?

The most likely were those with high ritual adherence (94.5%), followed by the Orthodox (93.5%), those who immigrated between 1990-2004 (89.1%), those whose place of birth was Eastern Europe (86%), and those who immigrated before 1990 (83.2%) (Figure 20).

Least inclined to have ever visited Israel, were those living in “Other Areas” of Greater Toronto (37.1%), intermarried individuals (58.5%), single persons (59.7%), those living in households earning under \$40,000 (63.6%), those with a technical school / college education (64.1%), and those with low levels of ritual adherence (64.4%).

In terms of the number of times respondents have been to Israel, 25.5% of the sample said never, 25.2% said once, 15.1% said twice, 8.4% said three times, and 25.7% said at least four times (Figure 21). Note that the figure obtained for those who have never been to Israel (25.5%) is slightly different than the percentage found in a previous question mentioned on page 49 (26.1%). The discrepancy relates to the fact that those who

were born in Israel were not included in the percentage base of the latter question.

Almost a third (31.9%) of respondents who had ever been to Israel, said the year of their last trip was between 2000-2004, about another third (32.3%) said it was between 1990-1999, 16.6% said between 1980-1989, 16.4% between 1970-1979, and 2.8% before 1970.

Respondents who have not been to Israel in the last five years were asked why not (Figure 22). Multiple responses were possible (n=316). One hundred and forty-one (44.6%) said it was because of “financial constraints”, 109 (34.5%) said they “have other priorities”, 102 (32.3%) said due to “security concerns”, 41 (13%) said “health won’t allow me to travel”, and 16 (5.1%) were simply “not interested”.

Other reasons for not having visited Israel in the last five years included (frequencies in parentheses): “time constraints” (12), “have very young children” (6), and “don’t like to fly” (4). Three mentions were given for: “family constraints”, “want different holiday alternatives”, and “political objections”. Two responses were given for: “in school” and “too old”.

Do respondents intend to visit Israel?

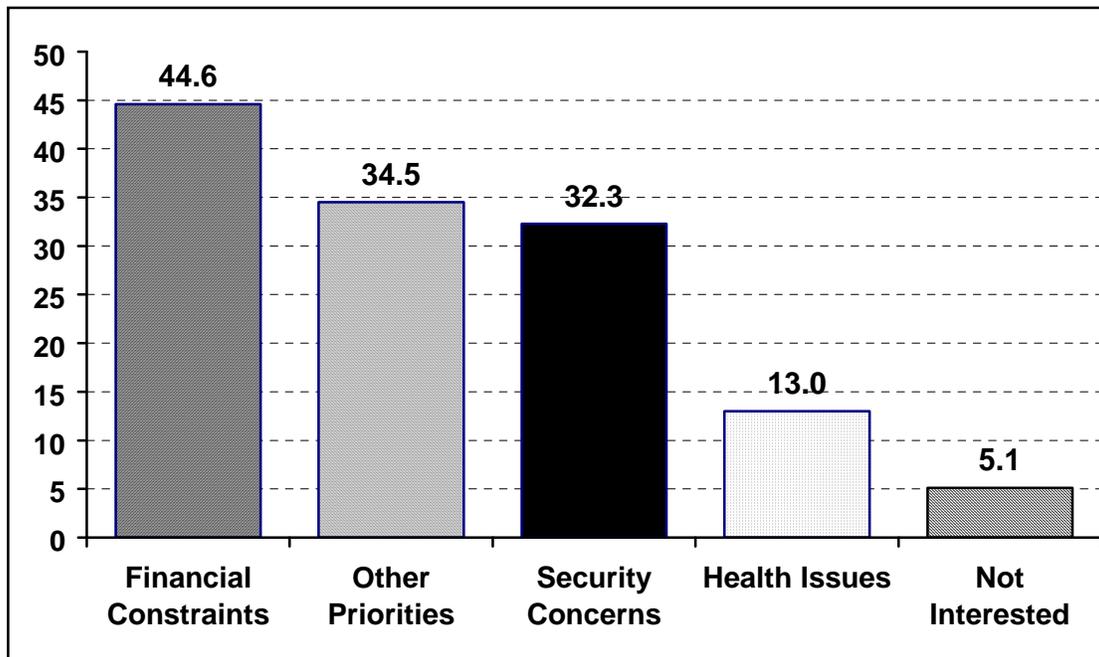
Do respondents intend to ever visit Israel? Because there were a large number of no responses, they will be included in this breakdown. Almost three-quarters of the sample (71.3%) said they intend to visit Israel in the future, 6.1% said they didn't intend to do so, 13.3% were not sure, and 9.3% did not answer this question.

The segments most inclined to visit Israel in the future were those living in households earning at least \$125K (93.2%), the Orthodox (93%), those with high levels of adherence (89.9%), those 35-44 years

(89.5%), and those 17-34 years (88.4%). It is encouraging that a large segment of young adults are intending to visit Israel some time in the future.

Least inclined to intend to ever visit Israel were those with elementary / high school as their highest form of education (54.3%), those living in households earning less than \$40K (55.6%), respondents 65+ years (56.7%), widowed individuals (58.5%), and those living in "Other Areas" of Greater Toronto (59.4%). It seems that limited finances and advanced age are the two major obstacles preventing respondents from intending to ever visit Israel. But note that

Figure 22
Reasons for Not Visiting Israel in Last Five Years (%)



more than half of the respondents across all segments said they intended to visit Israel some time in the future.

Have respondents seriously considered living in Israel?

A small percentage of the sample (13%) said they have seriously considered living in Israel, 55.8% said they have not, 4% were not sure, and 27.2% did not answer this question (it is likely they represent negative responses that respondents did not bother to register).

Segments of respondents most inclined to have considered living in Israel included the Orthodox (43.5%), those with high levels of ritual adherence (41.1%), those 17-34 years (26.7%), those in non-professional occupations (26.7%), and those 45-54 years (21.4%). It is interesting that more than a quarter of young adults sampled in this survey said they have seriously considered living in Israel.

Least inclined to have considered living in Israel were intermarried individuals (2.2%), widowed persons (5.1%), those 65+ years (8.3%), those whose place of birth was Eastern Europe (8.6%), those with elementary / high school as their highest

form of education (8.8%), individuals with low levels of ritual adherence (10.3%), those who live in “Other Areas” of Greater Toronto (10.3%), and Secular / Just Jews (10.6%).

How closely do respondents feel connected to Israel?

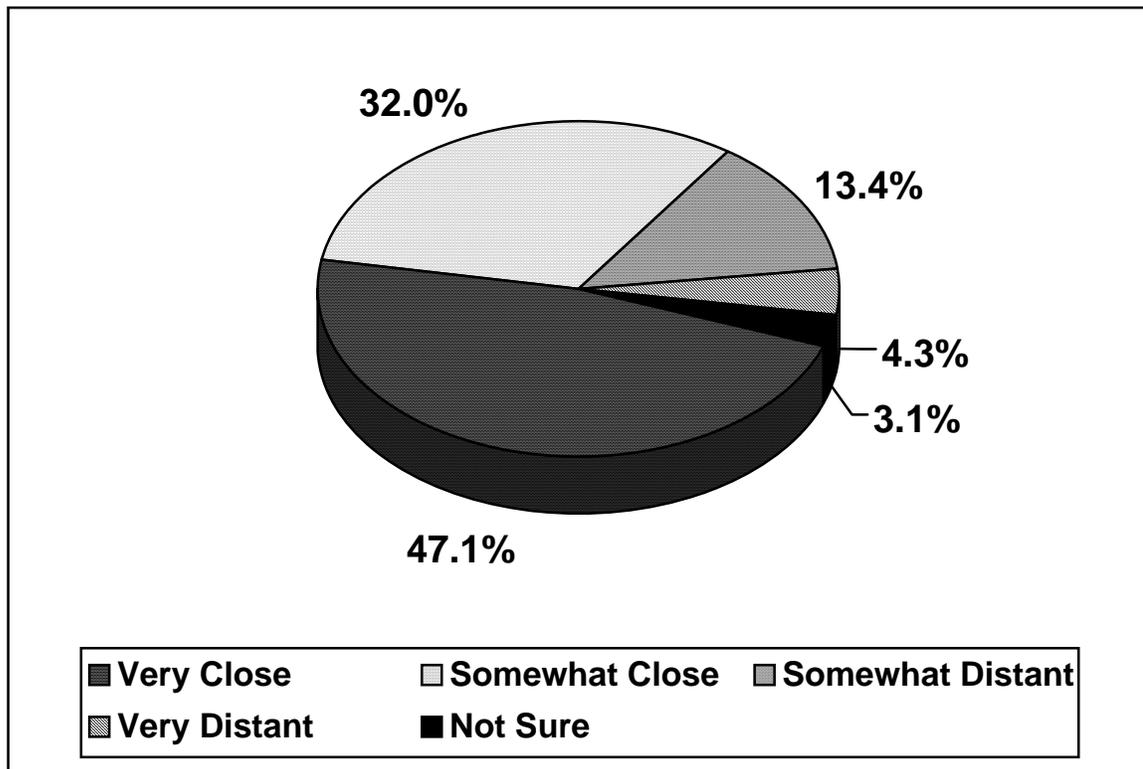
Almost half the sample (47.1%) said they felt “very close” to Israel, 32% said “somewhat close”, 13.4% said “somewhat distant”, 4.3% said “very distant”, and 3.1% said they weren’t sure (Figure 23).

Those segments most inclined to feel “very close” to Israel included those with high levels of ritual adherence (85.2%), the Orthodox (80.4%), those who were born in Eastern Europe (74%), those who immigrated before 1990 (64.9%), and those who were born in the Former Soviet Union (64.6%). It is noteworthy that despite the fact they generally have low levels of affiliation along a number of measures indicated in this study, individuals born in the FSU have among the highest levels of attachment to Israel. This is likely because many had lived in Israel before immigrating to Canada.

Least inclined to say they feel “very close” to Israel were intermarried individuals (9.3%), those living in “Other Areas” of Greater Toronto (11.4%), single persons (23%), those living in Downtown Toronto (26.4%), those with low levels of ritual adherence (29.5%), and Secular / Just Jews (30.5%).

On the other hand, the fact that almost a third of Secular / Just Jews say they feel “very close” to Israel suggests that this is an important link to Jewishness among even those that may not otherwise engage in traditional forms of practice.

Figure 23
Feelings of Closeness to Israel (%)



Experiences With Antisemitism

A measure of a civilized society is often considered to be the level of tolerance displayed to its minorities. Jews in North America have experienced an unprecedented degree of freedoms and privileges that have historically been denied to them in many other parts of the Diaspora. But this does not mean that Jews haven't experienced discrimination or violence here due to their specific religion or ethnicity.

A number of antisemitic incidences occurred during the implementation of this survey. For instance, there were several acts of vandalism at local Jewish cemeteries, and an elderly Holocaust Survivor had a swastika painted on her property. Earlier, in 2002, the fatal stabbing of an Orthodox Jew was initially reported in the media as a hate crime.

It is very likely that such occurrences influenced the reactions of Toronto Jews to antisemitism generally, and heightened the feelings of tension and concern they experienced. The following responses should therefore be considered in the context of the prevailing atmosphere at the time of the survey.

To what extent do respondents believe there is antisemitism in Toronto?

A little more than one in ten respondents (12.8%) believe there is “a great deal” of antisemitism in Toronto, 64.9% believe there is “some level” of antisemitism, 19.5% think there is “a little” antisemitism here, 0.5% believe there is no antisemitism here, and 2.3% don't know (Figure 24).

The level of those who believe there is a “great deal” of antisemitism in their respective communities varies from 5% to 30% across North America. But such surveys were done over a wide range of years, mostly from 1990 to 1999, and it is difficult to know whether perceptions have changed over time.

In the current study, most likely to say there is “a great deal” of antisemitism in Toronto were those with elementary / high school as their highest level of education (26.7%), widowed individuals (23.6%), those 65+ years (18.7%), and those living in “Other Areas” of Greater Toronto (17.1%).

Figure 24
Perceived Levels of Antisemitism in Toronto (%)

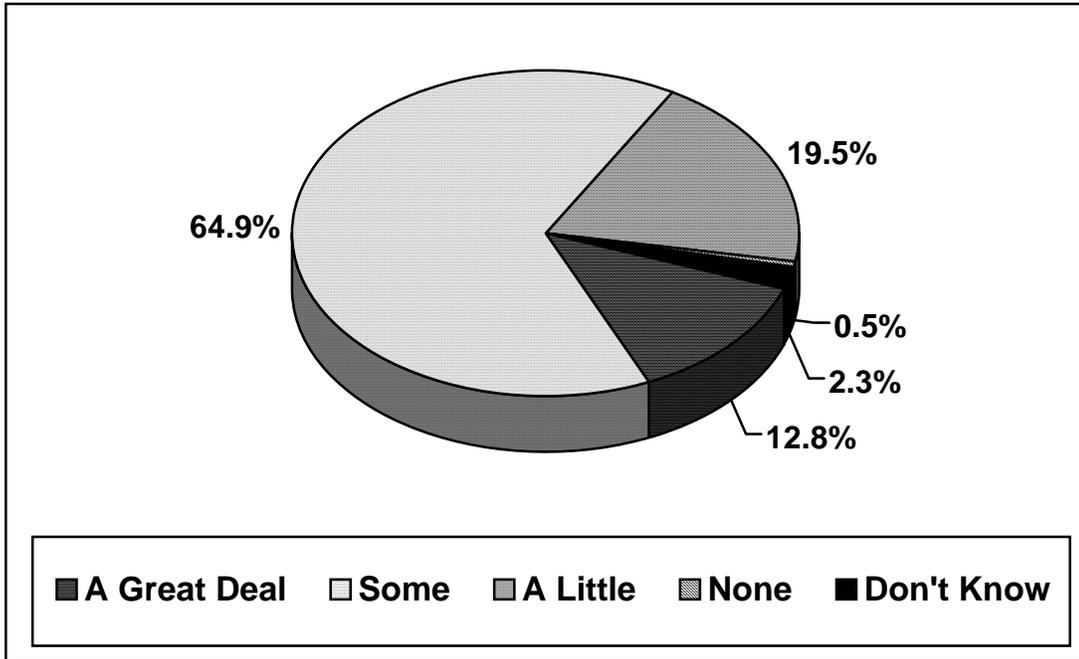
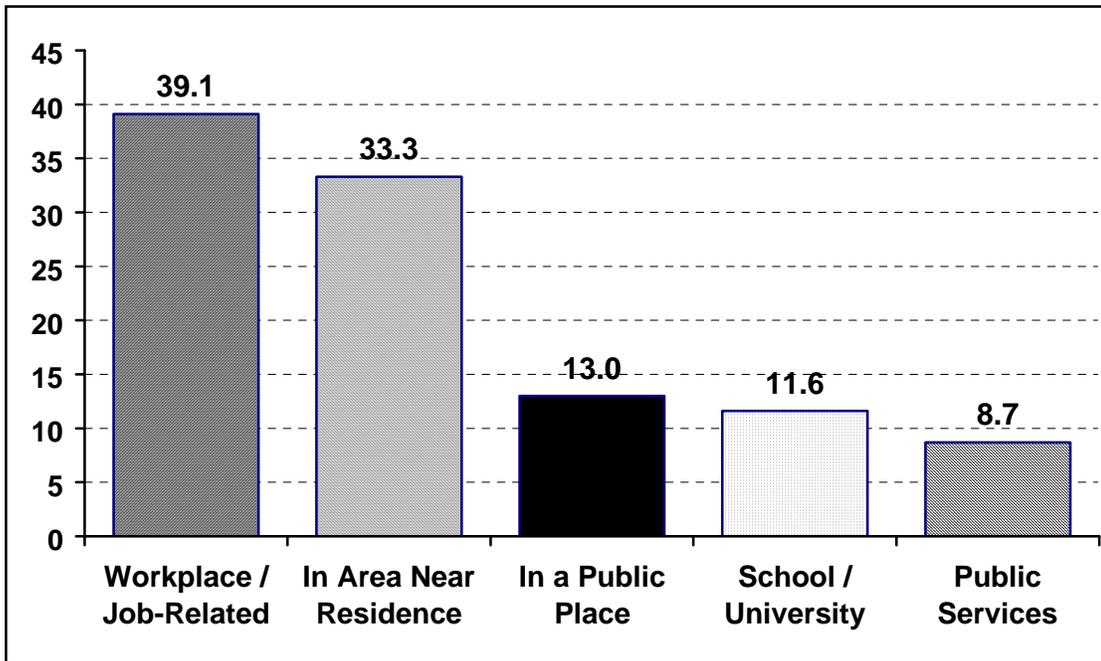


Figure 25
Where Antisemitic Experience Occurred (%)
 (Filter= Respondents Who Had an Antisemitic Experience in Last Two Years)



Least likely to say there is a “great deal” of antisemitism in Toronto were those who immigrated between 1990-2004 (6.5%), those in professional or managerial occupations (7.7%), single persons (8.2%), university graduates (8.3%), and individuals born in the Former Soviet Union (8.3%). In short, immigrants are less inclined to perceive antisemitism here, likely because there are much greater levels of antisemitism in their home countries.

Has antisemitism in Toronto increased or decreased in the last two years? About a third (32.7%) of the sample thinks antisemitism has “increased a lot” in the last two years, whereas 43.8% believe it has “increased slightly”, 14.2% believe it has “stayed the same”, 0.3% believe it has “decreased slightly”, 0.3% think it has “decreased a lot”, and 8.7% are not sure.

Have respondents had a recent experience with antisemitism in Toronto?

More than one in ten respondents (11%) said they had a personal experience with antisemitism in the last 2 years, 29.6% said they experienced antisemitism but not recently, more than half (55.6%) never had a

personal experience with antisemitism, and 3.8% were not sure.

The level of individuals who had recent personal experiences with antisemitism ranges from 11% to 31% for communities across North America. The level of antisemitism recently experienced by members of Toronto’s community falls at the bottom of this distribution, suggesting that individuals here are less likely to encounter such situations. Nonetheless, the fact remains that about one in ten Toronto Jews have recently experienced antisemitism here.

Of 69 respondents who recently had such an experience (multiple responses possible), 27 said it happened in the workplace or was job-related, 23 said it happened in the neighbourhood where they live, 9 said it happened in a public place, 8 at a school or university, 6 while getting public services, 3 were victims of antisemitic markings or vandalism, and 2 were subjected to antisemitic remarks by cab drivers (Figure 25).

Single mentions for venues included: “on the way to Hebrew school by a policeman”, “my husband was pushed, yelled at, and spit

upon”, “jokes / inappropriate comments”, and “at a hockey game”.

The segments most likely to mention recent antisemitic experiences were single persons (23%), those living in “Other Areas” of Greater Toronto (22.9%), those 17-34 years (18.8%), those living in households earning under \$40K (17.2%), and those in non-professional occupations (16.5%).

Least inclined to have recently experienced antisemitic incidences were those 65+ years (4.2%), those whose birth place was Eastern Europe (4.3%), widowed individuals (6%), Secular / Just Jews (6.3%), those living in Downtown Toronto (8.5%), and those living in York Region (8.8%). In short, the elderly were the least likely to be victims of antisemitic encounters.

Conclusions

Jews residing in metropolitan Toronto enjoy a very high quality of Jewish life. Specifically, they have among the highest levels of ritual adherence, synagogue membership, levels of Jewish education, and connection to Israel of any Jewish centre on this continent. They live in a growing community with a wide base of services and a dynamic cultural and religious life.

However, the current findings also suggest a number of important challenges facing the community that relate to questions of diversity and accessibility. These issues involve segments that seem less involved with the Jewish mainstream, and that may feel alienated or distanced from communal life.

The term “Jewish sprawl” has been used to refer to the spread of Jewish populations into areas outside of “traditional” Jewish neighbourhoods. As the population of Jews in Greater Toronto continues to increase, some will choose to live in areas distant from the major centres of Jewish life.

These individuals have limited access to synagogues, as well as Jewish services, schools, and stores. In the present report these persons are designated as living in “**Other Areas**” of Greater Toronto. Those living outside the spheres of Jewish neighbourhoods tend to rank among the least affiliated, least involved and least connected of any segments of Jews.

Individuals living at the fringes of Jewish life are also least likely to give their children a Jewish education, and most likely to have children who intermarry. As mentioned in this report, the cost of their disassociation might have generational implications.

What can be done to reach out to those who live in geographically marginal areas? Small grass-roots organizations that promote community building in these areas should be encouraged, especially if they are run by committed Jews who wish to mobilize others into greater participation. Satellite representation of Jewish services and agencies in these areas may also represent important bridges, particularly if they

address real needs experienced by these populations.

It should be noted that not only individuals living in “Other Areas” of Greater Toronto show lower levels of Jewish involvement, but those in the Downtown area as well. Interestingly, Downtown Jews report among the highest levels of attendance at the Ashkenaz Festival, suggesting they have an interest in participation, if offered programs that are attractive and innovative enough to meet their needs.

The **intermarried** are also a group that show low levels of affiliation, participation and ritual adherence. This suggests that intermarriage is a serious threat to Jewish continuity, and a strong impetus for assimilation.

Intermarriage has implications across generational lines. Only 29.7% of intermarried couples are bringing up their children strictly as Jews. Intermarried Jews are also much more likely to have children who themselves intermarry.

What types of programs can attract intermarried couples? There have been initiatives across North America that

provide intermarried families with an opportunity to participate in communal life.

Such programs include workshops that introduce the non-Jewish spouse to the richness of Judaism, support groups that help the couple deal with acceptance issues, and programs that introduce the children of such families to various aspects of Jewish tradition.

Secular / Just Jews represent the unaffiliated segments of the community. The unaffiliated are by no means divorced from Judaism. Although their Jewish expressions may be more cultural in orientation, 93.4% of the unaffiliated attend Passover Seder, and 77.2% light Chanukah candles. The question of how to get the unaffiliated more involved in Jewish life might involve programs that meet their needs in a “Jewish” setting that fosters greater connection with community.

Another segment of note includes **recent immigrants**, particularly those from the Former Soviet Union. Some of these latter individuals have come from Israel, and thus have had previous exposure to Judaism and a Western lifestyle. The findings of this study, however, suggest that recent

immigrants from the FSU tend to have low involvement in community life.

The question is how to attract such individuals by making their experience of acculturation and integration a positive one. A critical issue relates to making Jewish day schools more accessible for the children of immigrants. For instance, less than one in ten immigrants from the FSU currently have their children enrolled in Jewish day schools, and are also not likely to provide a supplementary Jewish education for their children.

On the other hand, immigrants from the FSU have among the highest levels of use of the BJCC, and among the highest levels of attachment to Israel. Hence, opportunities exist for fostering stronger community ties among this group.

The **less affluent** also often find their participation in Jewish life to be limited by their financial circumstances. As the findings suggest, they are among the least likely to be synagogue members, to have children attend a Jewish day school, to use Jewish community services, and to have ever visited Israel. They are also more likely

to report having a recent antisemitic experience.

There are other challenges facing the Jewish community of Greater Toronto. Although there is relatively high awareness of available Jewish services and programs, the level of reported use by the Jewish public suggests there is a significant proportion that are not using such services.

On the other hand, as mentioned previously, many of the services in question are geared toward specific subpopulations, whereas some organizations are mandated to serve the community as a whole and not solely specific individuals or populations. In addition, some respondents may have chosen not to report usage of services.

The level of usage may hence not necessarily reflect a lack of need, or questions related to quality or accessibility, but is rather a reflection of the specificity of the populations being serviced or a reluctance to disclose use of services.

It is particularly interesting that respondents from York Region, who comprise a significant proportion of the sample, placed

in the middle of the distribution across most measures of participation and involvement.

However, the picture for the Jewish community in York Region is a little more complicated than at first glance. For instance, 50.2% of York Region Jews are paying members of a synagogue, 36% have children currently attending a Jewish day school, 32.2% have recently volunteered for a Jewish organization, and 47.4% made a contribution to UJA in the last year. These figures suggest that there is a strong core representation of Jews in this part of Greater Toronto, but there is also potential for more affiliation and involvement.

In terms of financial planning, there is little doubt that UJA has strong competition for

market share from other types of charities. The challenge will be to penetrate those segments of the community that have traditionally not funded Federation. Many of the groups described above (geographically isolated, intermarried, unaffiliated, recent immigrants) may represent potential pools of donors.

In summary, there are many strengths related to the local Jewish community, but there are also significant challenges. The Toronto Jewish community has many reasons to be optimistic regarding its future; however, it must continue to address challenges that relate to issues of diversity and accessibility in order to remain one of the best places for Jews to live in North America.

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