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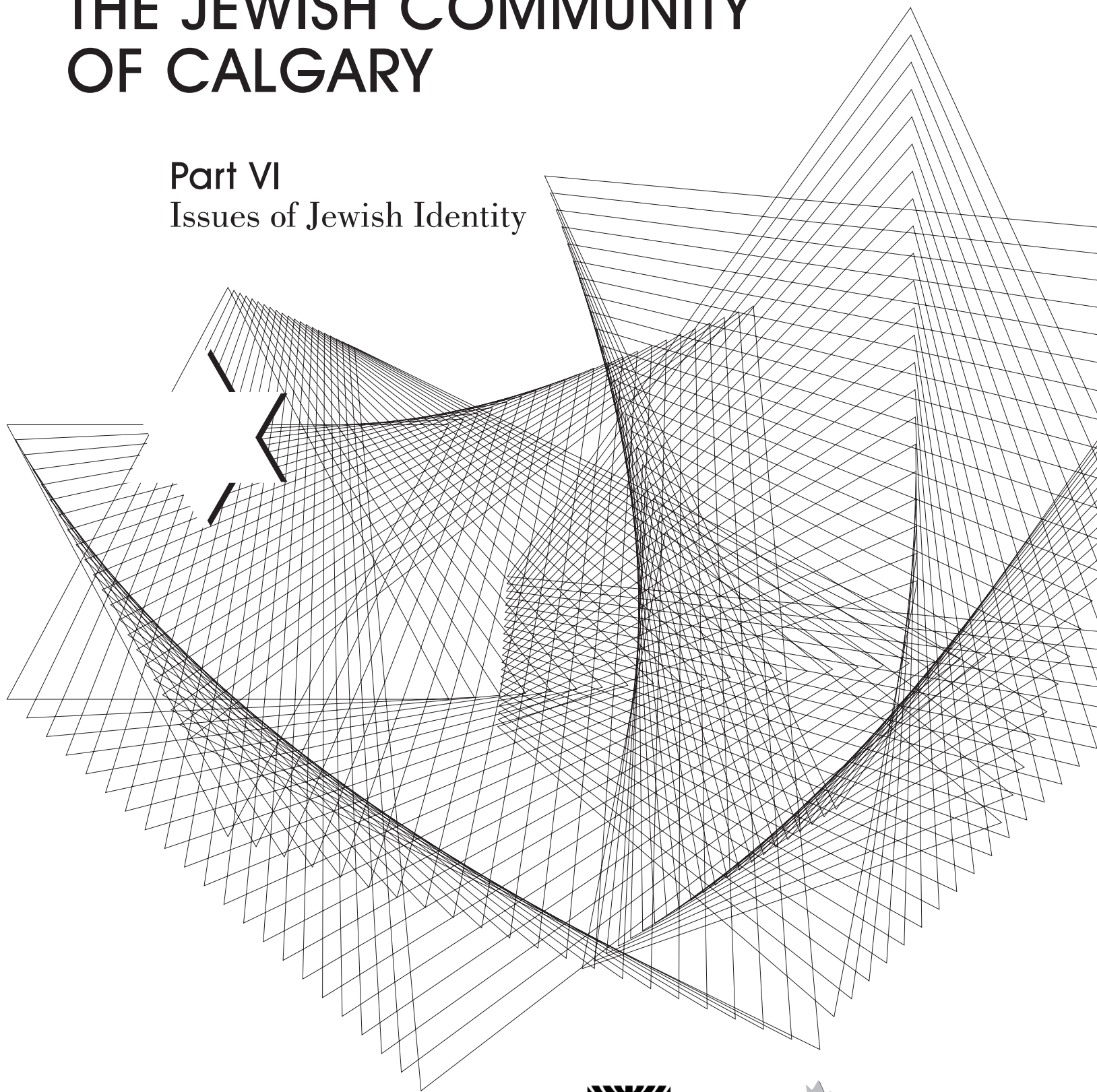
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# 2001 Census Analysis Series **THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF CALGARY**

Part VI  
Issues of Jewish Identity



By Charles Shahr  
February 2006



**2001 Census Analysis  
The Jewish Community of Calgary**

**Part 6  
Issues of Jewish Identity**

**By  
Charles Shahr**

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## Highlights of Results

- A majority of Jews in the Calgary metropolitan area, 4,970, consider themselves as Jewish by both religion and ethnicity. A further 1,560 respondents say they are Jewish by religion, but have another ethnic affiliation; whereas 1,415 people say they are Jews by ethnicity but have no religion. Finally, 1,790 are ethnic Jews who indicate another religion. The latter group was not included in this report's definition of Jewishness.
- Using a combination of Census responses related to religion and ethnicity to define levels of Jewish identification, it was found that there is a lower proportion of Jews who are highly identified in the Calgary metropolitan area (82.2%) than in Canada as a whole (89.1%).
- The area with the highest percentage of less affiliated Jews is the NE Quadrant (44%). The SW Sector has the largest proportion of highly affiliated individuals (86%).
- 34.3% of Jewish spouses / partners are married to non-Jews. *This figure is considered to be the intermarriage rate for Jews residing in the Calgary Census Metropolitan Area, and includes common law and same-sex arrangements.* In absolute terms, 1,330 of 3,880 Jewish spouses / partners are intermarried.
- There are 1,965 Jews (including children) who live in intermarried arrangements, or 32.2% of all Jewish individuals living in couple arrangements in the Calgary metropolitan area.
- There has been an increase of 51.2% of Jews living in intermarried households in the last decade. The number has climbed from 1,300 to 1,965 individuals between 1991-2001. There has been a 120% increase in the number of Jews living in intermarried families in the last two decades, climbing from 895 to 1,965 individuals.
- The geographic area with the highest proportion of Jews living in intermarried households is the NE Sector (72.9%). The lowest proportion of intermarried live in the SW (22.9%).

- In cases where both spouses are less than 30 years of age, the level of intermarriage is strikingly high, at 80%. It is 25.4% when both spouses are at least 40 years old.
- More than a third (38.3%) of Jewish children under 5 years of age (living in couple families) reside in intermarried arrangements.
- The percentage of common law arrangements among intermarried households is markedly higher than among those where both spouses are Jewish (27.5% and 1.6%, respectively).
- Families earning between \$100K - \$149K have the highest intermarriage levels (63.4%). The intermarriage levels are lowest among those earning \$25K-\$49K (33.3%).
- Regarding the youngest children of intermarried couples, about a fifth (20.9%) are identified by their parents as Jews; almost half (48.5%) are assigned no religious affiliation; and the rest (30.6%) are identified as having other religions.

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# Census Analysis Series

## Issues of Jewish Identity

This report examines issues related to Jewish identity based on figures from the 2001 Census. Specifically, two subjects are addressed: self-perceptions of Jewishness as specified in the Census; and the levels and characteristics of intermarriage in the Calgary Census Metropolitan Area (CMA).

What defines someone as a Jew? According to Halachic law, a Jew is anyone whose mother was born as such, or who has converted to Judaism. This definition is straightforward, and does not rely on issues of beliefs, values or levels of ritual observances. Being Jewish is a birth-right, which is not withdrawn even if the person converts to another religion. Whatever the nature of one's identification, whatever the self-perception, the fact of one's Jewishness is inviolable.

However, it is in the expression of one's Jewishness, in the strength of their Jewish identity, that self-perception does play a role. The Jewish experience can relate to religious, cultural and nationalistic aspects that

represent a wide spectrum of attitudes and beliefs.

According to some analysts, Judaism has remained vibrant and strong because of its ability to tolerate and embrace a wide variety of expressions. Others have contended that opening the Jewish identity to such a multitude of expressions has further frayed or fragmented the cohesion of the Jewish people. These perspectives have been at the heart of the debate on how to counteract the forces of assimilation that have threatened the cohesiveness of the Jewish people throughout the centuries.

In North America there has been increasing concern about the ability of the Jewish community to withstand the pressures of such assimilation, and these worries have implications for the future of Jewry in the Diaspora as a whole. A recent population survey in the United States, for instance, suggested that since 1996, only slightly more than half (53%) of Jewish marriages involved

two partners who were born Jewish.<sup>1</sup> In 2001, more than 185,000 Americans who said they were raised exclusively Jewish, indicated they practiced another religion.<sup>2</sup>

The Canadian situation is not as dramatic as the American findings, although assimilation has had some impact on the character of the community. Such effects have been tempered by a government policy, which emphasizes "multi-culturalism", a tolerance for various cultural expressions, which are woven into the fabric of Canadian life.

The effects of assimilation have also been influenced by the fact that Canadian Jews are more of an immigrant community than Americans. The Jewish communities in the United States are generally historically older than Canadian ones. Approximately 85% of American Jewish adults were born in that country.<sup>3</sup> About 40% of adult Jews were not

born in Canada, and this may account for a stronger cultural and religious identity.

Unfortunately, the last opportunity for comparing national surveys in the United States and Canada was in 1991. Although these findings were presented 15 years ago, their implications were very suggestive.

For instance, Cohen (1991) found that Canadian Jews observed more ritual practices than American Jews.<sup>4</sup> Comparisons also suggested that Canadian Jews were more close-knit, and substantially more Jewishly philanthropic than American Jews. Finally, when compared with American Jews, Canadian Jews were more in touch with Israel and Israelis, more knowledgeable about Israel, and more actively pro-Israel.<sup>4</sup>

The 1991 Canadian Population Survey also suggested considerable variations in the Jewish identification of people living in various localities across Canada. For instance, British Columbian Jewry fell below the national average in several measures of ritual observance and institutional affiliation.

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<sup>1</sup> The National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) 2000-01: Strength, Challenge and Diversity in the American Jewish Population. United Jewish Communities, September 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Special analysis done of NJPS 2000-2001 data and personally communicated to the author by J. Ament, Senior Project Director, Research Department, United Jewish Communities.

<sup>3</sup> Ament, J. Jewish Immigrants in the United States. United Jewish Communities: Report Series on the National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01, October 2004.

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<sup>4</sup> Cohen, S. Jewish Identity in Canada: National Character, Regional Diversity, and Emerging Trends (1991).

Toronto Jews generally scored neither very high nor very low on measures of Jewish identity or involvement. On the whole, the Toronto community was somewhat less involved in many aspects of Jewish life than those in Montreal, but more involved than most Jews elsewhere in Canada.

Unfortunately, there were too few individuals sampled from the Jewish community of Calgary to yield reliable results from this 1991 national survey. There has not been a major attitudinal and behavioral survey of the community, at least in the last two decades. It is therefore difficult to say where Calgary Jews stand on a number of measures of affiliation and observance, although anecdotal evidence suggests that Calgary Jews are similar to those on the West Coast (i.e., Vancouver) when it comes to their level of affiliation.

Unfortunately, unlike the survey mentioned above, the Canadian Census does not allow for analyses related to Jewish attitudes and beliefs, or adherence to Jewish customs. This is an important limitation, since most factors related to Jewish identity cannot be examined using the Census. On the other hand, there are certain variables that allow for the

measurement of some aspects of Jewish identity. These include the type of identification (religious or ethnic) among Jews, and the level of intermarriage and its correlates.

The following monograph will take an in-depth look at these issues, as they pertain to the Calgary Jewish community specifically.

### **Self-Perceptions of Jewishness**

The 2001 Census asked two questions related to one's Jewishness. The first looked at the respondent's religion. The other asked about the person's ethnic origin. Whereas the religious criterion is straightforward, the question of ethnicity is more ambiguous. Ethnicity could include implications of culture, nationality and race. It is therefore more prone to idiosyncrasies of interpretation. For instance, some respondents who identified themselves as Jewish by religion, claimed that their ethnicity was "Canadian" or "Israeli".

Respondents were allowed more than one choice for ethnicity, and a maximum of four choices. Thus, a person could say that they were ethnically Jewish and Polish. There was no way of knowing the strength of one's

**Table 1**  
**Religious & Ethnicity Affiliations**  
**Calgary Jewish Population**

	#	%
Religion Jewish / Ethnicity Jewish	4,970	51.1
Religion Jewish / Ethnicity Not Jewish	1,560	16.0
Religion None / Ethnicity Single: Jewish	365	3.7
Religion None / Ethnicity Jewish & Other	1,050	10.8
Religion Other / Ethnicity Jewish	1,790	18.4
<b>Total Having Any Jewish Affiliation</b>	<b>9,735</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 2**  
**Levels of Jewish Identification**  
**Based on Religion & Ethnicity Responses**  
**Calgary Jewish Population**

	#	%
Higher Jewish Identification	6,530	82.2
Lower Jewish Identification	1,415	17.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,945</b>	<b>100.0</b>

identification regarding a particular ethnic category; but if only one choice was made, then it could be assumed it represented the dominant affiliation.

Despite these ambiguities, Jewish identity, as defined by the Census, is unique, because it can be classified as both a religious and ethnic affiliation. One can also say something about the strength of Jewish identification by looking at different combinations using these two criteria. Thus, a person who said they were ethnically Jewish but had no religion, likely had a different self-perception as a Jew than one who claimed both religious and ethnic affiliations.

Given the Census parameters, a Jew in this report was defined as someone who indicated they were (a) Jewish by religion and ethnicity, (b) Jewish by religion with another ethnicity, or (c) Jewish by ethnicity with no religion. This is the Jewish Standard Definition, which was formulated in 1981 by Jim Torczyner of McGill University. It was devised because this definition was more inclusive than if religion or ethnicity were considered separately.

A category that was not included in this definition related to respondents who said they were ethnically Jewish, but claimed another religious affiliation, such as Roman Catholic or Buddhist. These people may have converted to another religion, or they may simply have had an ancestor (e.g. a grandparent) who was Jewish. In either case, it was assumed that they have a very minimal affiliation with Judaism, and were therefore not included as Jews.

Table 1 shows a breakdown of the Calgary Jewish population by category of affiliation. The majority of Jews in the Calgary CMA, 4,970, consider themselves as Jewish by both religion and ethnicity. They are the group most clearly identified as Jews. A further 1,560 respondents say they are Jewish by religion, but have another ethnic affiliation.

It is interesting that 1,415 people say they are Jews by ethnicity but have no religion. These may be secular Jews, who don't follow religious customs, some of whom may consider themselves as atheists or agnostics. They likely identify more with Judaism on a cultural level. Together, these three categories comprise 7,945 individuals, which is the Jewish population of the Calgary CMA

**Table 3**  
**Census Metropolitan Areas by Levels of Jewish Identification**  
**(Row %)**

Census Metropolitan Area	Total	Higher Jewish Identification		Lower Jewish Identification	
	#	#	%	#	%
<b>Calgary</b>	<b>7,945</b>	<b>6,530</b>	<b>82.2</b>	<b>1,415</b>	<b>17.8</b>
Montreal	92,970	88,765	95.5	4,205	4.5
Toronto	179,095	164,510	91.9	14,585	8.1
Ottawa / Gatineau	13,445	11,325	84.2	2,120	15.8
Winnipeg	14,775	12,765	86.4	2,010	13.6
Vancouver	22,595	17,275	76.5	5,320	23.5
Canada	370,520	329,995	89.1	40,525	10.9

according to the Jewish Standard Definition (JSD) as applied to the 2001 Census.

There are 1,790 persons in the category that was not included in the JSD (ethnic Jews indicating another religion). A further analysis reveals that 48.3% of these individuals say they are Protestant, 27.4% say Catholic, 10.3% Christian (unspecified), 6.7% Christian Orthodox, 2% Buddhist, and 5.3% report various other religions.

### **A Closer Look at Levels of Affiliation**

In the following analyses, those that indicated they were Jewish by religion are considered as having a "Higher Jewish Identification"; people who indicated that they were Jewish by ethnicity but who claimed no religion, are considered as having a "Lower Jewish Identification".

It is obviously difficult to judge the quality of identification of any person, let alone rely on the limitations of the Census criteria. But these labels are meant for comparison purposes only. Someone who said they were ethnically Jewish, but had no religion, may have a strong commitment in different ways (e.g. participation in community organizations, supporting Israel). The

findings should therefore be interpreted with these caveats in mind.

As Table 2 suggests, the majority of Calgary Jews have a higher Jewish identification (82.2%), whereas 17.8% are considered as having a lower identification.

There is a lower proportion of Jews who are highly identified in Calgary (82.2%) than in Canada as a whole (89.1%) (Table 3). In terms of other major Canadian Jewish communities, Montreal has 95.5% who are highly identified, Toronto has 91.9%, Winnipeg has 86.4%, Ottawa has 84.2%, and Vancouver has 76.5%. In short, the Calgary CMA has among the lowest proportion of highly identified individuals of any major Jewish community in Canada.

According to Table 4, Jewish affiliation is clearly related to age. The older segments seem to have higher levels of identification. In fact, 92.9% of seniors are highly affiliated. It is the 25-44 age group that has the largest proportion of Jews with low identification (22.6%). There are similarly high percentages of less affiliated among those 15-24 years (20.8%) and 0-14 years (19.9%).

**Table 4**  
**Age by Levels of Jewish Identification**  
**(Row %)**

Age Cohort	Total	Higher Jewish Identification		Lower Jewish Identification	
	#	#	%	#	%
0-14	1,530	1,225	80.1	305	19.9
15-24	1,155	915	79.2	240	20.8
25-44	2,300	1,780	77.4	520	22.6
45-64	2,120	1,830	86.3	290	13.7
65+	850	790	92.9	60	7.1
<b>Total Calgary CMA</b>	<b>7,955</b>	<b>6,540</b>	<b>82.2</b>	<b>1,415</b>	<b>17.8</b>

It is difficult to explain the lower levels of identification among those under 15 years. There are 305 such individuals listed as having no religious affiliation by their parents, and who are still counted as Jews using the Jewish Standard Definition (JSD) as a criterion. They are children who likely have had little exposure to Jewish customs or traditions, and they represent an interesting challenge: how to encourage a life-long connection to the community.

Table 5 examines level of affiliation across geographic areas. According to this table, many individuals with lower identification live in the SW Sector. In fact, the SW has 775 less-affiliated individuals, or 54.4% of the total in this category within the Calgary metropolitan area.

It should be noted, however, that there are also 4,755 Jews who consider themselves as highly identified in the SW Quadrant. This figure is significantly larger than the numbers of highly identified in any other area within the Calgary CMA.

In relative terms, the area with the lowest percentage of highly affiliated Jews is the NE Sector (56%), followed by the “Rest of

Calgary CMA” (61.8%), and the NW (71.3%).

## **Levels of Inter-marriage in the Calgary Jewish Community**

The Census can be used to analyze the incidence of intermarriage in the Jewish community. Specifically, in this report intermarriage is defined as a situation where a person who falls under the Jewish Standard Definition (JSD) marries someone who is not included under this criterion. It is then possible to cross-tabulate intermarriage with a number of other variables to profile those who are most likely to marry outside their faith.

Note that individuals who converted to Judaism are considered as Jewish according to the Jewish Standard Definition. Thus, intermarriage as described in this report only examines couples where the non-Jewish spouse did not convert to Judaism. It is not possible to identify conversionary marriages using the Census information alone.

It is also important to mention that common law unions are included in the following statistics on intermarriage, as are same-sex

**Table 5**  
**Levels of Jewish Identification by Geographic Areas**  
**(Row %)**

District	Total	Higher Jewish Identification		Lower Jewish Identification	
	#	#	%	#	%
SW Sector	5,530	4,755	86.0	775	14.0
SE Sector	1,060	875	82.5	185	17.5
NW Sector	820	585	71.3	235	28.7
NE Sector	375	210	56.0	165	44.0
Rest of Calgary CMA	170	105	61.8	65	38.2
<b>Total Calgary CMA</b>	<b>7,955</b>	<b>6,530</b>	<b>82.1</b>	<b>1,425</b>	<b>17.9</b>

arrangements where one of the partners is Jewish and the other is not. In this report, common law and same-sex arrangements refer to a union between “partners”, whereas individuals who are married are referred to as “spouses”.

What is the level of intermarriage among Calgary’s Jews? Table 6 examines the intermarriage rate from the perspective of spouses or partners. Since there are two Jewish spouses / partners when Jews marry within the faith, such arrangements are given a count of two; whereas in intermarried families, only the Jewish spouse / partner is considered in the calculation.

*According to this breakdown, 34.3% of Jewish spouses / partners are intermarried. This figure is considered the intermarriage rate for the Calgary Census Metropolitan Area. In absolute terms, 1,330 of 3,880 Jewish spouses / partners are intermarried.*

Of 1,330 spouses / partners who live in intermarried arrangements, 740 (55.6%) live in situations where the husband is Jewish and the wife is non-Jewish; and 590 (44.4%) are living in arrangements where the husband is non-Jewish and the wife is Jewish. In other

words, Jewish men are more inclined to intermarry than Jewish women.

The intermarriage rate for Calgary’s Jews (34.3%) is among the highest of any major Jewish community in the country. The rates of intermarriage include 13.1% for Montreal, 15.6% for Toronto, 23.3% for Winnipeg, 31.8% for Ottawa, and 41.3% for Vancouver. The Canadian intermarriage rate is 21.7%.

What is the total number of Jews living in intermarried families, including children? According to Table 7, there are 1,965 individuals who live in intermarried arrangements. This represents 32.2% of all individuals living in couple arrangements.

The small discrepancy between the intermarriage figures in Tables 6 and 7 (34.3% versus 32.2%) results from the fact that intermarried families typically have fewer children (see Table 11), and hence are underestimated when the rate is calculated based on all individuals, rather than only spouses / partners.

Also according to Table 7, 70 Jewish children are living in situations where neither parent is Jewish. They may be products of

**Table 6**  
**Intermarriage Breakdowns**  
**Base Population: Jewish Spouses / Partners**

	#	%
Husband Jewish / Wife Jewish	2,550	65.7
Intermarried: Husband Jewish / Wife Non-Jewish	740	19.1
Intermarried: Husband Non-Jewish / Wife Jewish	590	15.2
<b>(Subtotal: Intermarried)</b>	<b>(1,330)</b>	<b>(34.3)</b>
<b>Total Jewish Spouses / Partners</b>	<b>3,880</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 7**  
**Intermarriage Breakdowns**  
**Base Population: Individuals Living in Couple Households**

	#	%
Husband Jewish / Wife Jewish	4,075	66.7
Husband Jewish / Wife Non-Jewish	1,050	17.2
Husband Non-Jewish / Wife Jewish	915	15.0
<b>(Subtotal: Living in Intermarried Households)</b>	<b>(1,965)</b>	<b>(32.2)</b>
Husband Non-Jewish / Wife Non-Jewish	70	1.1
<b>Total Individuals Living in Couple Households</b>	<b>6,110</b>	<b>100.0</b>

mixed marriages, where the non-Jewish partner has divorced and then married someone outside the faith while retaining custody of the children, who are nonetheless considered Jewish.

How does the 2001 level of intermarriage compare to statistics available from previous decades? Unfortunately, previous Census analyses did not examine the intermarriage rate on the basis of spouses / partners, only in terms of total individuals living in intermarried families. Also, there are small discrepancies between the Jewish Standard Definition used in the present Census, compared to previous definitions of Jewishness (see Appendix 2).

Notwithstanding these caveats, in 1991 there were 1,300 Calgary Jews living in intermarried arrangements, compared to 1,965 in 2001.<sup>5</sup> This represents an increase of 51.2% between 1991 and 2001.

In 1981, the number of Jews living in intermarried arrangements was 895.<sup>5</sup> This represents a 120% in the last two decades. In

other words, the number of people living in intermarried arrangements has more than doubled since 1981.

The increase in the number of individuals living in intermarried households should be considered in the context of the overall Jewish population increase in the last twenty years. Between 1981 and 2001, the Calgary Jewish population increased by 30.6% compared to 120% in the number of persons living in intermarried arrangements. In short, the intermarriage levels have significantly outpaced the increase in the number of local Jews in the last two decades.

### **Where Do Individuals Living in Intermarried Households Reside?**

Table 8 looks at the geographic distribution of individuals (including children) living in different couple arrangements. The SW Sector has the largest number of Jews living in intermarried households (965). Significant numbers also reside in the NW (380), and the SE (375). There are 175 in the NE Quadrant, and 65 in the “Rest of Calgary CMA”.

In relative terms, the area with the largest proportion of those living in intermarried

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<sup>5</sup> Torczyner, J. L. and Brotman, S. L. Weaving Diverse Strands: Demographic Challenges Transforming the Fabric of Jewish Communal Life in Calgary. McGill Consortium for Ethnicity & Strategic Social Planning. November 1996.

**Table 8**  
**Individuals Living in Intermarried Households**  
**by Geographic Areas**  
**(Row %)**

District	Total	Both Spouses Jewish		Intermarried	
	#	#	%	#	%
SW Sector	4,215	3,250	77.1	965	22.9
SE Sector	860	485	56.4	375	43.6
NW Sector	575	195	33.9	380	66.1
NE Sector	240	65	27.1	175	72.9
Rest of Calgary CMA	145	80	55.2	65	44.8
<b>Total Calgary CMA</b>	<b>6,035</b>	<b>4,075</b>	<b>67.5</b>	<b>1,960</b>	<b>32.5</b>

**Table 9**  
**Intermarriage Breakdowns**  
**Age of Spouses / Partners**  
**(Row %)**

	Total	Both Spouses Jewish		Intermarried	
	#	#	%	#	%
Both Spouses < 30 Years	200	40	20.0	160	80.0
At Least One Spouse 30-39 Years	1,115	620	55.6	495	44.4
At Least One Spouse > 39 Years	2,880	2,060	71.5	820	28.5
Both Spouses > 39 Years	2,535	1,890	74.6	645	25.4

Note: The age categories described above may overlap with one another. Hence, the totals of the columns represent more than 100% of the households in question.

**Table 10**  
**Individuals Living in Intermarried Households**  
**by Age Breakdowns**  
**(Row %)**

Age Cohort	Total	Both Spouses Jewish		Intermarried	
	#	#	%	#	%
0-14	1,350	935	69.3	415	30.7
15-24	820	545	66.5	275	33.5
25-44	1,660	965	58.1	695	41.9
45-64	1,635	1,125	68.8	510	31.2
65+	565	495	87.6	70	12.4
<b>Total Individuals Living in Couple Households</b>	<b>6,030</b>	<b>4,065</b>	<b>67.4</b>	<b>1,965</b>	<b>32.6</b>
0-4	405	250	61.7	155	38.3

households is the NE Sector. Almost three-quarters (72.9%) of Jews residing in the NE live in such arrangements. There are also large proportions of individuals living in intermarried arrangements in the NW (66.1%).

The area with the lowest proportion of Jews living in intermarried households is the SW Quadrant, with 22.9%. The next lowest percentage of individuals living in intermarried households is found in the SE (43.6%).

### **The Characteristics of Intermarried Households**

Table 9 looks at the ages of Jewish spouses / partners living in intermarried arrangements. Note that the age categories represented in this table may overlap with one another. American studies have shown that younger adults are more inclined to intermarry than their older counterparts. This trend seems to be verified by the current Census data. In fact, the relationship between age and intermarriage is almost linear.

For instance, the intermarriage rate when both spouses are less than 30 years of age is strikingly high, at 80%. It is 44.4% if at least

one spouse is between 30-39 years, 28.5% if there is at least one spouse greater than 39 years, and 25.4% if both spouses are older than 39 years. It seems that the intermarriage rate for the youngest couples is significantly higher than for older ones.

Table 10 provides an interesting statistic. Almost half (41.9%) of Jews between 25-44 years live in an intermarried arrangement. This represents 695 individuals.

A further examination shows that 38.3% of children less than 5 years, who reside with both parents, live in an intermarried arrangement. This involves 155 children.

It should be noted that the above statistics likely underestimate the number of children under 5 years residing in intermarried families, since only those identified as being Jewish by their parents are included in this count. Later data presented in this report will show that a significant percentage of younger children in intermarried families are not considered to be Jewish by their parents.

Table 11 shows the number of children living at home by various couple arrangements. When both spouses are Jewish, the mean

**Table 11**  
**Number of Children in Intermarried Households**

Number of Children	Total		Both Spouses Jewish		Intermarried	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
None	1,140	43.7	495	38.5	645	48.7
One	500	19.2	270	21.0	230	17.4
Two	665	25.5	340	26.5	325	24.5
Three	250	9.6	125	9.7	125	9.4
Four	45	1.7	45	3.5	0	0.0
Five or more	10	0.4	10	0.8	0	0.0
<b>Total Couple Households</b>	<b>2,610</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,285</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,325</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Mean Number	--		1.2		1.0	

**Table 12**  
**Family Structure in Intermarried Households**

Family Structure	Total		Both Spouses Jewish		Intermarried	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Married couples	2,220	85.2	1,260	98.4	960	72.5
Common-law couples	385	14.8	20	1.6	365	27.5
<b>Total Couple Households</b>	<b>2,605</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,280</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,325</b>	<b>100.0</b>

number of children living at home is higher than in intermarried situations (1.2 and 1.0 children, respectively). Although both figures appear low, the reader should note that these are not measures of fertility, because they do not take into account children living outside the home.

Further analysis reveals that whether the wife or husband intermarries makes relatively little difference in terms of the number of children living at home. The mean number of children when the husband is Jewish is 0.9, compared to 1.0 when the wife is Jewish.

Arrangements in which both spouses are Jewish have a higher percentage of households with at least three children living at home (14%), compared to intermarried arrangements (9.4%).

Table 12 looks at family structure by couple arrangements. It can be seen that the percentage of common law arrangements among intermarried households is significantly higher than among those where both spouses are Jewish (27.5% and 1.6%, respectively). In short, more than a quarter of intermarried couples live in common law situations.

The level of common law arrangements among the intermarried (27.5%) is even higher than that for the overall Calgary and Alberta populations respectively (13.4% and 13.5%).

## **Who Intermarries?**

Table 13 looks at intermarriage by place of birth. Jews born in Canada have an intermarriage rate of 35.1%.

Jews from the United States (53.2%) have the highest level of intermarriage among immigrants, followed by those born in Western Europe (40.9%). The lowest incidence of intermarriage is found among those born in Eastern Europe (6.9%).

Interestingly, Jews from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) have an intermarriage level of 25%, which is below the average for the Jewish community as a whole (32.4%).

Regarding intermarriage by year of immigration (Table 14), immigrants who arrived between 1980-1989 have the lowest level of intermarriage of any landed immigrant group (20.4%). The highest intermarriage rates are found for those who came between 1960-1969 (40%). It is not

**Table 13**  
**Individuals Living in Intermarried Households**  
**by Place of Birth**  
**(Row %)**

Place of Birth	Total	Both Spouses Jewish		Intermarried	
	#	#	%	#	%
Canada	3,990	2,590	64.9	1,400	35.1
Israel	260	230	88.5	30	11.5
Eastern Europe (excl. FSU)	145	135	93.1	10	6.9
Former Soviet Union	840	630	75.0	210	25.0
Western Europe	220	130	59.1	90	40.9
North Africa / Middle East (excl. Israel)	45	35	77.8	10	22.2
United States	310	145	46.8	165	53.2
South America	80	60	75.0	20	25.0
Other	135	120	88.9	15	11.1
<b>Total Individuals Living in Couple Households</b>	<b>6,025</b>	<b>4,075</b>	<b>67.6</b>	<b>1,950</b>	<b>32.4</b>

**Table 14**  
**Individuals Living in Intermarried Households**  
**by Year of Immigration**  
**(Row %)**

Year of Immigration	Total	Both Spouses Jewish		Intermarried	
	#	#	%	#	%
Non-immigrants	4,030	2,630	65.3	1,400	34.7
Before 1960	180	130	72.2	50	27.8
1960 - 1969	150	90	60.0	60	40.0
1970 - 1979	365	255	69.9	110	30.1
1980 - 1989	465	370	79.6	95	20.4
1990 - 2001	730	530	72.6	200	27.4
Non-permanent residents	125	70	56.0	55	44.0
<b>Total Individuals Living in Couple Households</b>	<b>6,045</b>	<b>4,075</b>	<b>67.4</b>	<b>1,970</b>	<b>32.6</b>

clear why these two periods of immigration should represent extremes in the distribution of intermarried.

A more detailed analysis of intermarriage levels for immigrants arriving between 1990-2001 shows that a large percentage of recent immigrant Jews arriving from the United States (53.3%) live in intermarried arrangements. Slightly more than a quarter (26%) of recent immigrants from the FSU are intermarried.

In absolute terms, of 195 immigrants who arrived between 1990-2001, and who live in intermarried households, 130 were born in the Former Soviet Union and 40 in the United States. The remainder (25) originated in various other regions.

Unfortunately, regarding statistics related to intermarriage and year of immigration, it is not possible using the Census data alone to determine whether individuals had intermarried in this country, or arrived here with their non-Jewish spouse.

Table 15 examines the relationship between level of education and intermarriage. Note that some education categories described in

this table overlap with one another. The findings suggest that there is not a clear relationship between education and intermarriage.

For instance, when both spouses have less than a university education, the intermarriage level is 36.4%. If at least one of the spouses has a university undergraduate degree the intermarriage rate is 32.8%.

If at least one spouse has a university graduate degree the intermarriage level drops to 30.9%. Finally, the highest rate of intermarriage is found when both spouses have university graduate degrees, such as MAs or PhDs (36.7%). These results suggest that the levels of intermarriage are highest at the extremes of the education distribution.

As Table 16A shows, the relationship between intermarriage and income status is likewise complex. Intermarriage seems to be more prevalent among families earning between \$100K - \$149K (63.4%), followed closely by those earning under \$25K (61.1%). The intermarriage levels are lowest among families earning \$25K - \$49K (33.3%), and families earning \$150K+ (39.2%).

**Table 15**  
**Intermarriage Breakdowns**  
**Education of Spouses / Partners**  
**(Row %)**

	Total	Both Spouses Jewish		Intermarried	
	#	#	%	#	%
Both Spouses Less Than Univ. Education	1,320	840	63.6	480	36.4
At Least One Spouse Univ. Undergraduate	1,815	1,220	67.2	595	32.8
At Least One Spouse Univ. Graduate	1,230	850	69.1	380	30.9
Both Spouses University Graduates	395	250	63.3	145	36.7

Note: The education categories described above may overlap with one another. Hence, the totals of the columns represent more than 100% of the households in question.

**Table 16A**  
**Intermarriage Breakdowns**  
**Family Income**  
**(Row %)**

	Total	Both Spouses Jewish		Intermarried	
	#	#	%	#	%
Under \$25,000	180	70	38.9	110	61.1
\$25,000 - \$49,999	435	290	66.7	145	33.3
\$50,000 - \$99,999	875	385	44.0	490	56.0
\$100,000 - \$149,999	615	225	36.6	390	63.4
\$150,000 or more	510	310	60.8	200	39.2
<b>Total Couple Households</b>	<b>2,615</b>	<b>1,280</b>	<b>48.9</b>	<b>1,335</b>	<b>51.1</b>

**Table 16B**  
**Intermarriage Breakdowns**  
**Median Family Income**

	Median Income (\$)
Both Spouses Jewish	88,256
Intermarried	86,673

**Table 17**  
**Religion of Youngest Child in Intermarried Households**

Religion of Youngest Child	Both Spouses Jewish		Husband Jewish / Wife Non-Jewish		Husband Non-Jewish / Wife Jewish		Total Intermarried	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Jewish	735	93.0	45	12.3	95	31.1	140	20.9
Catholic	10	1.3	60	16.4	15	4.9	75	11.2
Protestant	0	0.0	45	12.3	45	14.8	90	13.4
Christian Orthodox	0	0.0	25	6.8	0	0.0	25	3.7
Muslim	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Para-religious groups	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
No religious affiliation	45	5.7	175	47.9	150	49.2	325	48.5
All other religions	0	0.0	15	4.1	0	0.0	15	2.2
<b>Total Couple Households</b>	<b>790</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>100.0</b>

According to Table 16B, the median income of intermarried couples (\$86,673) is somewhat lower than that of arrangements where both spouses are Jewish (\$88,256).

### **The Affiliations of Children in Intermarried Families**

How children are being brought up in intermarried families has profound implications for the issue of Jewish continuity. Since the intermarriage level among Calgary's Jews is 34.3% there is little doubt that the community cannot afford to "lose" these families to the pressures of assimilation.

Table 17 is very revealing in this regard. As expected, among Jewish families, the great majority of the youngest children (93%) are identified by their parents as Jews, 5.7% are assigned no religious affiliation, and 1.3% are identified as having other religions. Note, however, that despite the fact that the great majority are identified as Jews, it is impossible to determine their level of exposure to Jewish customs and rituals. There is also no way to know from the Census how these identifications translate into actual behaviors and attitudes.

Regarding the youngest children of intermarried couples, about a fifth (20.9%) are being brought up as Jews; almost half (48.5%) have no religious affiliation; and the rest (30.6%) are being brought up within other religions.

In other words, more than three-quarters (79.1%) of these children in intermarried families are not identified as belonging to the religious orientation of the Jewish spouse. It is difficult to say whether they are having either minimal or no exposure to Judaism, but the findings are suggestive nonetheless.

Table 17 also shows that whether a Jewish man or woman intermarries is a critical factor in the identification of the youngest child. For instance, in cases where Jewish men intermarry, 12.3% of youngest children are identified as Jewish, 47.9% as having no religious affiliation, and 39.8% as having another religion. In short, 87.7% do not have the religious orientation of the Jewish father.

In cases where Jewish women intermarry, 31.1% are identified as Jewish, 49.2% as having no religious affiliation, and 19.7% as having another religion. In short, about two-

thirds (68.9%) do not have the religious orientation of the mother.

## **The Challenges Ahead**

Jews have long relied on the commitment and participation of their fellow members to help shape the community they live in. Calgary, for the size of the community, has enjoyed a unique quality of Jewish life, and if this is to continue, some of the questions raised in this report must be addressed. Indeed, given the recent trends suggested by the Census statistics such issues would seem to require serious consideration on the part of community leaders and planners.

More ways must be found to create openings for those less likely to be active within a Jewish milieu. Those who were described as having a lower affiliation in this report, should be made to view participation as a possibility and to identify venues where they will be welcomed. The Census figures suggest that a large group see their Jewishness not in terms of the religious aspects of the faith, but have a more secular perspective. Are there ways of introducing them to Jewish experiences that are interesting, relevant and vital?

There are very few initiatives currently geared to reaching the unaffiliated. Our organizations and programs typically cater to those who live in traditional “Jewish” neighborhoods, whereas those who reside in the geographic fringes of community life are often least considered. People who self-identify as Jews and participate through their own motivation have chosen to come to community events or partake of programs. But what about those who have chosen to stay home? How can we make Judaism more attractive or relevant for them?

One approach is to provide events and programs that are particularly relevant to less identified Jews. This will take creativity and investment of resources. On the other hand, their lack of participation may have wider implication for our community’s future cohesiveness.

CJCC has a role to play in sensitizing all community agencies to the issue of outreach to the unaffiliated. It can also raise the profile of Judaism among staff and lay leaders within the Federated system: by bringing a stronger Jewish element into their work, and having them think more deeply about their Jewishness. In short, connecting

community workers and leaders with their own Jewishness may help them communicate a deeper commitment and understanding to those who feel estranged or disengaged from community life.

Calgary is a relatively young community, with the percentage of young families being higher than the Canadian average. It is also, as this report indicates, a community with lower levels of affiliation. These factors, coupled with continued out-migration of young adults for university and employment opportunities, increasing numbers of elderly and increasing demands on community dollars, necessitate efforts to reach out to every Jew. The organized Jewish community must therefore create more opportunities for participation among the unaffiliated generally.

The high percentage of intermarried households in Calgary is not unexpected, given the generally high rates experienced by Jewish communities across the continent. The number of individuals living in such arrangements has more than doubled since 1981 (120% increase), and the level continues to rise. In addition, the extremely

high intermarriage rate among those under 30 years (80%), indicates a disturbing trend.

Beyond questions of conversion and who should be considered a Jew, what types of initiatives can be taken regarding the issue of intermarriage? One approach relates to fostering accommodation: making the intermarried couple feel comfortable and accepted enough to participate in community life. This process partly relates to education: explaining Jewish customs and traditions to the non-Jewish spouse; and exposing the children of intermarried couples to Jewish values and traditions.

This approach involves giving intermarried families a “taste” of Judaism, so that they will be more inclined to choose Jewish options for their children, even if they are not necessarily inclined to raise their children Jewishly.

In Calgary, there are no barriers to entry for the children of intermarried families at one of the Jewish day schools. The other school will accept such children only on the condition of a proper conversion and Jewish lifestyle. Many young intermarried Jews

with young families choose non-Jewish schools as an alternative for their children.

The organized Jewish community has few programs currently geared to intermarried couples. For instance, there are no social programs for such couples; no initiatives run in the campuses related to inter-dating; or seminars and conferences providing general information on this subject. Moreover, very few shuls have outreach programs specifically targeting intermarried couples. In short, the organized Jewish community is not taking a proactive approach regarding this issue, despite the rising numbers of intermarried persons.

Moreover, there are only scattered initiatives providing opportunities for Jewish young adults to meet one another. Whereas there has been an increase in Jewish dating services, (including online services), it would seem desirable for young Jews to have more such opportunities: perhaps in the context of the JCC, Hillel, and so on. It is evident that as young Jews enter high school and university the chances of engagement with non-Jews are pervasive. It is therefore difficult to say whether such increased opportunities for meeting fellow Jews will

have any long-term impact on their choice of partners.

Finally, aside from reflecting on how to bring people into the Jewish fold, efforts should also focus on those who already have some sense of Jewish identity, which may be further strengthened and enriched. One of the best ways for people to have some continuity in terms of their Jewish identity relates to education. Unfortunately, the exposure of most people to Jewish education ends at the primary or high school level.

Meaningful opportunities for adults to encounter Jewish ideas and values should be increased. Encouraging graduates of Jewish schools to continue with more sophisticated adult education may be a valuable means of re-enforcing Jewish continuity.

Intermarriage and a decline in affiliation pose challenges to Jewish communities across North America, which are struggling to remove barriers to participation and find new entry points for the younger generation. Because of the nature of the Calgary Jewish community, these challenges are pressing and must be addressed by the community as a whole. If we are to continue to build on the

foundation of the past and ensure a thriving Jewish future, the Calgary Jewish community must address the issue of declining levels of affiliation.



# Appendix 1

## The Jewish Standard Definition

This report uses what is known as the “Jewish Standard Definition” to distinguish who is Jewish from the rest of the population. Jim Torczyner of McGill University and the Jewish Federation of Montreal formulated this definition in 1981, using a combination of religious and ethnic identification.

According to this criterion, a Jew is defined as anyone who specified that they were:

- Jewish by religion and ethnicity.
- Jewish by religion and having another ethnicity.
- Jewish by ethnicity with no religious affiliation.

Anyone who specified another religion (Catholic, Muslim, etc.) and a Jewish ethnicity were excluded in the above definition.

Using this criterion, it is not possible to say how a person behaves “Jewishly”: for instance, whether they adhere to traditions or attend synagogue on a regular basis. However, despite this limitation, the fact

that we can identify Jewish affiliation at all is critical for using the Census as a tool to better understand our community. The Jewish Standard Definition is meant to be as inclusive as possible, reflecting the varied expressions that comprise the richness of the Jewish experience.

It is important to note that a significant change to the “Jewish Standard Definition” was implemented in the current analysis of Census data. The category of those who had “no religion and a Jewish ethnicity” was expanded to include those with “no religious affiliation and a Jewish ethnicity”.

The category of “no religious affiliation” is broader than that of “no religion” because it includes those who consider themselves agnostics, atheists and humanists, as well as those having no religion. Since it is possible to be Jewish and have such affiliations, it was felt that this change would better reflect the broad spectrum of Jewish affiliation. Data from previous Censuses have been re-analyzed to ensure compatibility with the current criterion.

## **Appendix 2**

### **The Reliability of the Census**

The Census is a massive and complex undertaking, and although high standards are applied throughout the process, a certain level of error still characterizes the endeavor. Such errors can arise at virtually any point in the Census process, from the preparation of materials to the collection of data and the processing of information.

There are a number of principal types of errors that impact on the Census. In coverage errors, dwellings or individuals are missed, incorrectly enumerated or counted more than once. Regarding non-response errors, responses to the Census cannot be obtained from a certain number of households and/or individuals because of extended absence or extenuating circumstances.

In response errors, the respondent misunderstands a Census question and answers incorrectly or uses the wrong response box. Processing errors occur during the coding and inputting of data.

Finally, sampling errors apply only to the long-form. Statistics based on this form are

projected from a 20% sample of households. The responses to long-form questions, when projected to represent the whole population inevitably differ from the responses that would have been obtained if these questions were asked of all households.

Statistics Canada has a number of quality control measures that ensure Census data are as reliable as possible. Representatives edit the questionnaires when they are returned, and follow up on missing information. There are also quality control measures in place during the coding and data entry stages.

Despite these controls, a number of errors and response-biases can nonetheless impact data obtained from the Jewish population. For instance, certain segments of the Jewish community may be reticent to answer Census questions fully or accurately.

Recent immigrant populations, who are suspicious of government-sponsored projects and are wary of being identified as Jewish, may avoid indicating such an affiliation, or may answer certain questions more cautiously.

Members of the Chassidic and Ultra-Orthodox communities may be more reluctant to participate fully in the Census effort, due to specific Biblical injunctions that prohibit Jews from “being counted.” It is unclear whether such restrictions have had an impact on their responses, but anecdotal evidence suggests that these communities respond adequately. For instance, the Tash Chasidic community of Montreal, which is fairly isolated geographically from the rest of the Jewish population, has had significant representation in previous Censuses, although it is unclear as to what extent their enumeration was complete.

Finally, since both the religion and ethnicity questions are only included in the long-form of the Census, sampling error arising from projections based on a 20% sampling of households is a factor in all Census analyses related to the Jewish community.

The level of sampling error inherent in any cell of a data table can be precisely calculated. Statistics Canada provides a table that measures these errors, and they are summarized below. Obviously, for large cell values, the potential error due to sampling will be proportionally smaller than for smaller ones.

When using the table, the reader should consider the right column as reflective of the average level of error expected for a given cell size. Of course, some cells may reflect errors smaller or larger than the average. About ninety percent of errors will fall between  $\pm$  the average error specified below. Ten percent of errors are expected to fall outside this range.

Cell Value	Average Error
50 or less	15
100	20
200	30
500	45
1,000	65
2,000	90
5,000	140
10,000	200
20,000	280
50,000	450
100,000	630

Source for Appendix 2: 2001 Census Dictionary Reference Guide (pg. 275). Published by Statistics Canada, August 2002. Catalogue No. 92-378-XPE.