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The Jewish Community
Foundation of Montreal

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The American Jewish Year Book 2019
The Annual Record of the North American Jewish Communities Since 1899

This Report derives from Chapter 6 of the *American Jewish Year Book, 2019*.

The *American Jewish Year Book* is "The Annual Record of the North American Jewish Communities Since 1899." This volume is a very important and prestigious annual publication because it has acted as a major resource for academic researchers, researchers at Jewish institutions and organizations, practitioners at Jewish institutions and organizations, the media, both Jewish and secular, educated leaders and lay persons, and libraries, particularly University and Jewish libraries, for up-to-date information about the American and Canadian Jewish communities. For decades, the *American Jewish Year Book* has been the premiere place for leading academics to publish long review chapters on topics of interest to the American Jewish community.

Obtaining *The American Jewish Year Book, 2019*

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Canadian Jewish Population, 2019

For many decades, the census of the Canadian population has provided an important opportunity to obtain a demographic "snapshot" of the Canadian Jewish community. A major census is distributed at the start of every decade and contains a wealth of information related to the social, cultural, and economic characteristics of Canadian Jews. The two questions used to identify Jews, namely religion and ethnicity, are located on the census "long-form."

A census is also distributed in the middle of every decade, but it does not contain a religion question and, therefore, is much less useful for identifying Jews. However, the most recent mid-decade census (2016) has alarmed those who rely on census data for gaining important information about Jewish populations in Canada.

"Jewish" was not included as a sample response choice among the 28 ethnic categories listed as examples in the 2016 Census. Examples were based mostly on the most frequent single ethnic origins reported in the 2011 National Household Survey. Unfortunately, the number of ethnic Jews fell below the threshold in 2011.

The omission of the "Jewish" ethnicity sample choice, and the fact that the actual choices represented only national or aboriginal groups, rather than cultural groups, resulted in a severe response bias among Jews. The numbers of Canadians who indicated a Jewish ethnicity diminished by 54% between 2011 and 2016, from 309,650 to only 143,660 individuals.

This has implications for the next major census in 2021. Although those who will say they are Jewish by religion will be identified as being Jewish in 2021, there is concern that those who say they have "no religion," but who may identify as Jews on a cultural (ethnic) level, may not do so if they do not have a prompt upon which to base their response.

The number of Jews who say they have no religion has been rising steadily. If the ethnicity variable is thus compromised, it may be difficult to maintain a definition of Jewishness that is as inclusive as possible for the 2021 Census, thus limiting the ability of community leaders and planners to make informed decisions that will ultimately impact their constituents in profound ways. As of July 2018, discussions are underway with Statistics Canada to see what options might be available to address this issue.

The current report is based on the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS). Citing privacy issues, the Federal government decided to make the census long form voluntary in 2011, and a survey methodology was employed.¹ The 2011 NHS was distributed to one-third of Canadian households, compared to the 20% who receive the long-form in the case of the 2001 or 2016 censuses. Whereas the response rate for the census was nearly universal, it was 73.9% for the NHS. Moreover, because the sample was voluntary, it was difficult to know whether certain populations were less inclined to respond, such as economically disadvantaged individuals, the less educated, and recent immigrants.²

¹ Statistics Canada reverted to using a census methodology with a change in national governments in 2015.

² In the case of Jewish communities, it is possible that the ultra-Orthodox were also under-represented in the final count.

Statistics Canada applied rigorous statistical treatments to deal with possible gaps in the data and assured users that it would only release information if it had confidence in its reliability. An examination of the final data sets related to Jewish communities, along with such key variables as poverty and intermarriage, seemed to indicate that the data did "make sense" in light of statistical trends extrapolated from previous censuses.

Respondents were identified as Jews according to the "Jewish Standard Definition," formulated by Jim Torczyner of McGill University in 1971, which used a combination of religious and ethnic identification. However, because the ethnicity variable has been slowly eroding in terms of its usefulness in identifying Jews, the Jewish Standard Definition was revised in 2011 and expanded to include a further set of variables, such as having an Israeli ethnicity and having knowledge of Hebrew or Yiddish.³ All in all, this "Revised Jewish Standard Definition" did not result in a substantial increase to the final count of Canadian Jews as it only added about 6,300 persons.

Despite the limitations of the 2011 NHS, this instrument nonetheless represents an important opportunity for academic researchers as well as community leaders and planners to understand the demographic situation of the Canadian Jewish population better. We are fortunate to have a national survey that includes questions related to ethnicity and religion (as the American census does not).⁴ Also, the NHS has a much larger scope than the Canadian Jewish community can undertake on its own.⁵

Section 1 Basic Demographics

According to the NHS, the Jewish population of Canada numbered 391,665 persons in 2011.⁶ This represented an increase from 2001, when there were 374,060 Jews. Between 2001 and 2011, the Canadian Jewish population thus increased by 17,605 persons, or 4.7% (Table 1 and Figure 1).

The gain between 2001 and 2011 was slightly larger than that between 1991 and 2001. In the latter decade, the community increased by 14,950 persons, or 4.2%. In short, at least for the past twenty years, the growth rate of the Canadian Jewish population has not been remarkable but compares well with growth rates in European countries and also with the United States.

³ For a more comprehensive description of the erosion of the utility of and the problems associated with using both the ethnicity and religion variables in identifying Canadian Jews, see Weinfeld and Schnoor (2015).

⁴ Specifically, the US Census asks only one ethnicity-related question identifying respondents of Hispanic or Latino descent. The American Community Survey, an annual demographic study of the US population, does ask questions on "ancestry" and language spoken at home.

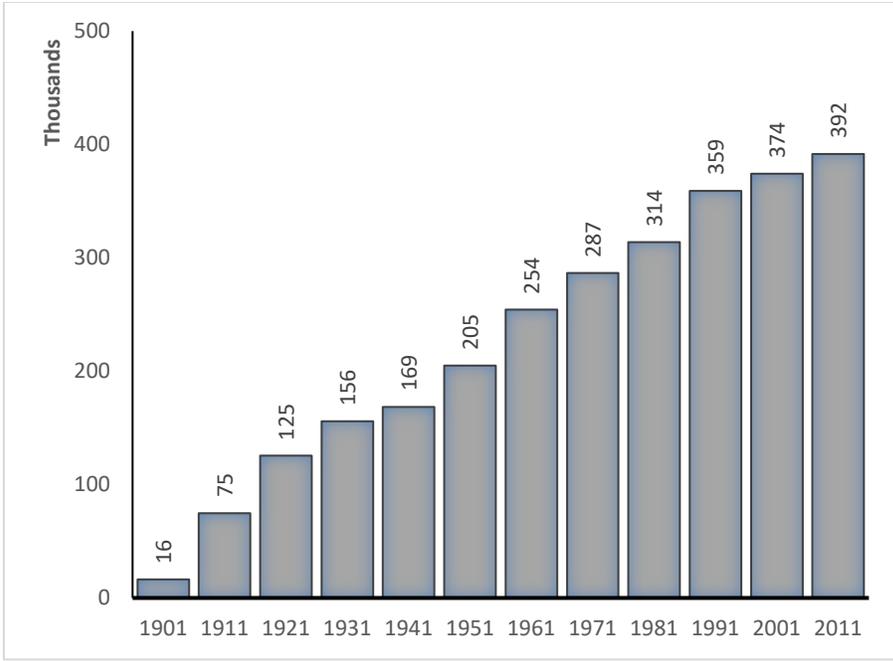
⁵ The NHS did not ask specific questions such as denominational affiliation, levels of religious observance, attitudes toward Israel, etc. For these data, the Jewish community needs to develop its own survey tools.

⁶ All 2011 NHS data cited in this chapter were derived from Statistics Canada, special order tabulations for Jewish Federations of Canada - UIA, CO-1421. Most of the descriptions related to the data were adapted from Shahar (2014a, b, 2015).

Table 1 Jewish Population of Canada: A Historical Summary

	Jewish Population	Change From Previous Census	% Change From Previous Census
2011	391,665	17,605	4.7%
2001	374,060	14,950	4.2%
1991	359,110	45,245	14.4%
1981	313,865	27,315	9.5%
1971	286,550	32,182	12.7%
1961	254,368	49,532	24.2%
1951	204,836	36,251	21.5%
1941	168,585	12,819	8.2%
1931	155,766	30,321	24.2%
1921	125,445	50,685	67.8%
1911	74,760	58,267	353.3%
1901	16,493	--	--

Note: 1991 to 2011 are based on the Revised Standard Jewish Definition described in the methodological discussion above. The rest of the figures are based on the Jewish Standard Definition (1971 and 1981) or were derived from either the religion or ethnicity variables individually (1901 to 1961). For information on the Jewish population of Canada from 1851 to 1941, see Rosenberg (1946).



Sources: Statistics Canada

Fig. 1 Growth of the Canadian Jewish population

A more pronounced increase for the Canadian Jewish community was evident between 1981 and 1991 when it increased by 45,245 persons, or 14.4%. This is likely related to the beginning of significant immigration to Canada by Jews from the former Soviet Union (FSU), and to a lesser extent from South Africa. In fact, this gain of 45,245 persons was the largest increase experienced by the national Jewish population since the large influx of immigrants in the 1950s.

All in all, the number of Canadian Jews has been rising steadily since the turn of the past century. In the 1930s, restricted Jewish immigration to Canada slowed some of the growth experienced in previous decades. Significant levels of immigration then resumed immediately after World War II.

Jews constituted 1.2% of the total Canadian population of 32.9 million in 2011, compared to 2.1% for the US (see Chapter 5). The total Canadian population has been increasing at a faster pace than the Jewish population. For instance, between 1991 and 2011, the Jewish population grew by 9.1%, compared to 21.7% for Canada's total population.

According to the 2011 NHS, the Jewish community, including single and multiple origin responses, ranked seventeenth among ethnic groups in Canada. The ten largest ethnic affiliations were British (6.5 million), Canadian (6.0 million), French (3.7 million), German (2.4 million), Aboriginal (1.8 million), Chinese (1.5 million), Italian (1.4 million), East Indian (1.1 million), Ukrainian (1 million), and Polish (644,700). It is noteworthy that the Jewish population ranked twelfth among ethnic groups in 2001, five rankings above its current status.

In 2011, the Jewish community ranked seventh with respect to religious identity. The five largest religious groups in Canada were Catholics (12.8 million), Protestants (8.7 million), Muslims (1.0 million), Christian Orthodox (550,690), and Hindus (497,965).

Almost one-quarter (23.9%) of the total Canadian population, or about 7.9 million persons, indicated that they had no religious identity. This category included persons who defined themselves as agnostics, atheists, or humanists or who did not identify with any religion at all. It is not clear to what extent highly secular Jews said they had no religious identity. It is thus possible that these individuals were under-represented in the final count of Jews (unless they indicated a Jewish ethnicity).

Finally, the Canadian Jewish community was the fourth largest Jewish community in the world in 2012 (using the year closest to the Canadian census, but see Chapter 8 for current figures). Israel had the largest Jewish population followed by the US, France (480,000), and Canada (391,665). The Jewish populations of the United Kingdom and the Russian Federation numbered 291,000 and 194,000, respectively.

The Canadian Jewish community constituted 2.8% of the total 13,746,100 Jews in the world in 2012 and 5.0% of the 7,845,000 Jews living in the Diaspora in 2012. The Jewish population of Canada comprised 6.8% of the Jews residing in North America.

Section 2 Provincial and Metropolitan Population Distributions

Table 2 and Map 2 show the distribution of Jewish populations across provinces and territories. More than half (57.9%, or 226,610 persons) of Jews in Canada reside in Ontario.

Quebec has 93,625 Jewish residents and about a quarter (23.9%) of the total Jewish population of Canada. British Columbia has 35,005 Jews, or 8.9% of the total Jewish population of Canada.

All other provinces have less than 5% of the national Jewish population. Alberta has 15,795 Jewish residents, or 4% of the country's Jewish population. Manitoba has 14,345 Jews, or 3.7% of the total. The Atlantic Provinces have 4,175 Jews, or 1.1% of the country's total Jewish population. Saskatchewan has 1,905 Jews, or 0.5% of the country's total.

There are 145 Jews in the Yukon, 40 in the Northwest Territories, and 20 in Nunavut. Although these last numbers are small, it is nonetheless instructive that Jews populate every region of the country, including the northern territories.

Table 3 and Map 1 present the 20 largest Jewish communities in Canada, which account for 95% of Canada's Jewish population. The Toronto metropolitan area is home to 188,710 Jews and includes about half (48.2%) of Canada's Jewish population. The Montreal community numbers 90,780 Jews and constitutes about a quarter (23.2%) of the Jewish population of Canada. Vancouver has a Jewish population of 26,255, representing 6.7% of the national Jewish population.

The rest of the Jewish communities in Canada each number less than 15,000 persons. For instance, Ottawa has 14,010 Jews, Winnipeg has 13,690, Calgary has 8,335, Edmonton has 5,550, and Hamilton has 5,110.

Section 3 Focus on the Age of the Jewish Population

The Canadian Jewish population has a somewhat larger proportion of children (age 0-14) than the total population (18.2% and 17.0% respectively). The Jewish population has a similar percentage in the age 15-24 cohort compared with the total Canadian population (13.4% and 13.2% respectively).

In the economically productive age 25-44 cohort, the discrepancy between the two distributions is more marked. Less than a quarter (23.5%) of Jews fall into this age cohort, compared to 26.7% of Canada's total population. The Jewish community also has a somewhat smaller proportion in the age 45-64 cohort than the overall Canadian population (28.0% and 29.3% respectively).

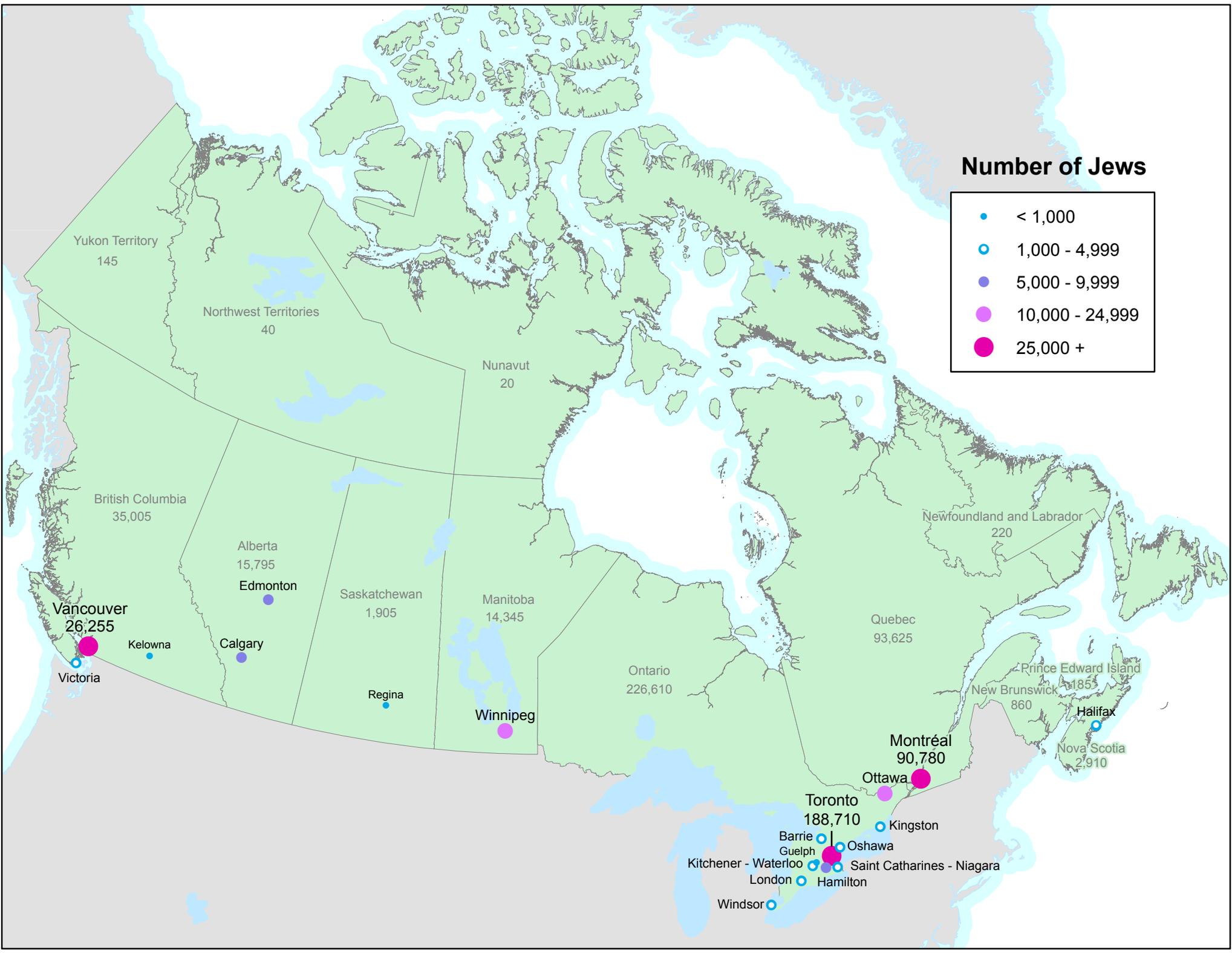
Finally, a comparison of the two age distributions shows that the Jewish community has a significantly larger proportion of persons age 65 and over (16.9%) than the total Canadian population (13.9%).

Table 2 Jewish Population Distribution: Provinces & Territories

Province / Territory	Jewish Population	% of Canadian Jewish Population
Nova Scotia	2,910	0.8%
New Brunswick	860	0.2%
Newfoundland/Labrador	220	0.1%
Prince Edward Island	185	0.0%
(Total Atlantic Canada)	(4,175)	(1.1%)
Quebec	93,625	23.9%
Ontario	226,610	57.9%
Manitoba	14,345	3.7%
Saskatchewan	1,905	0.5%
Alberta	15,795	4.0%
British Columbia	35,005	8.9%
Yukon	145	0.0%
Northwest Territories	40	0.0%
Nunavut	20	0.0%
Total Canada	391,665	100.0%

Table 3 Twenty Largest Canadian Jewish Communities

Metropolitan Area / Province	Jewish Population	% of Canadian Jewish Population
Toronto, ON	188,710	48.2%
Montreal, QC	90,780	23.2%
Vancouver, BC	26,255	6.7%
Ottawa, ON	14,010	3.6%
Winnipeg, MB	13,690	3.5%
Calgary, AB	8,335	2.1%
Edmonton, AB	5,550	1.4%
Hamilton, ON	5,110	1.3%
Victoria, BC	2,740	0.7%
London, ON	2,675	0.7%
Halifax, NS	2,120	0.5%
Kitchener / Waterloo, ON	2,015	0.5%
Oshawa, ON	1,670	0.4%
Windsor, ON	1,515	0.4%
Barrie, ON	1,445	0.4%
St. Catharines-Niagara, ON	1,375	0.4%
Kingston, ON	1,185	0.3%
Guelph, ON	925	0.2%
Regina, SK	900	0.2%
Kelowna, BC	900	0.2%
Total		94.9%



The median age of the national Jewish population is 40.5 years, slightly higher than that of Canada's overall population (40.1 years) but a bit lower than the median age of 42 for US Jews, based on the 2000-01 National Jewish Population Survey. Ethnic groups with the oldest median ages include the British (48.7 years), Americans (45.9 years), French (44.8 years), Germans (40.7 years), Jews (40.5 years), Greeks (40.4 years), and Poles (40.3 years). These ethnic groups generally involve older, more established communities whose peak periods of immigration to Canada have long passed. Since there has not been a large influx of recent immigrants among these groups, their median ages remain at fairly high levels.

The youngest median ages were reported by the Pakistani (26.0 years), African (27.9 years), Aboriginal (28.4 years), Arab (29.3 years), Latin American (30.1 years), Caribbean (31.2 years), and Korean (33.7 years) communities. Most of the latter populations have a large number of more recent immigrants, many of whom settled in Canada in the past two decades. This infusion of people, often involving younger families, has revitalized these communities and has kept their median ages lower than the rest of the population.

Section 4 Focus on Sephardim⁷

The term "Sephardim" initially referred to Jews living in Spain, who were expelled during the "Inquisition" in the 1490s. The term now refers to descendants of those Jews, who ultimately settled in areas such as North Africa, Holland, England, Turkey and the Balkans, and who originally spoke Judeo-Spanish languages. It also refers to Jews who were connected to the Judeo-Spanish culture before the Inquisition, and lived in Arab countries and Iran, where they spoke a variety of Judeo-Arabic and Judeo-Persian languages.

The Sephardic community of Canada comprises 36,040 individuals. In fact, Canada has the seventh largest Sephardic community in the world, following those of Israel, France, United States, Argentina, Brazil and Spain. The rich cultural heritage of Sephardim has contributed to the intricate fabric of the Jewish community in Canada, particularly in Montreal.

The Sephardic community in Montreal has a long history. In the late eighteenth century, Sephardim were among the first Jews to settle in the province of Quebec. The oldest surviving synagogue in Montreal, the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation, is of Sephardic origin. It was founded in 1768, and was the first such congregation in Canada.

The most significant period of Sephardic immigration began following the 1967 Six Day War between Israel and its Arab neighbors. A large influx of Sephardim, mostly from Morocco, settled in Montreal between 1967 and 1987. More recent Sephardic immigrants have come mainly from Israel and Western Europe.

Since many speak French as their mother tongue, and this is the dominant language of the province of Quebec, Sephardim have generally adjusted well to life in Montreal. Jews of Sephardic origin occupy key positions of leadership and influence in the Jewish

⁷ Previous foci have appeared in the *American Jewish Year Book 2018* (Shahar 2019) on "Seniors", in the *American Jewish Year Book 2017* (Shahar 2018) on "Poverty", in the *American Jewish Year Book 2016* (Shahar 2017) on "Holocaust Survivors", and the *American Jewish Year Book 2015* (Shahar 2016) on "Intermarriage."

community, have developed thriving businesses, and enjoy political representation in the general community.

There are 22,225 Sephardim residing in the Montreal metropolitan area. Sephardim comprise 24.5% of the 90,780 members of the Montreal Jewish community. There are also 715 individuals of mixed (Sephardic and Ashkenazi) extraction living in Montreal.

The Sephardic community has been on the ascendancy since their arrival in greater numbers to Montreal in the late 1960s. However, their increases slowed somewhat between 2001 and 2011, when there was a gain of only 1,000 individuals. On the other hand, the Ashkenazi population declined by 3,380 individuals in that decade, and contributed to an overall decline of 3% in the Jewish population of Montreal. An influx of Jewish immigrants from France in recent years may change the composition of Montreal Jewry somewhat if it continues.

The largest Sephardic age cohort is middle-aged adults between 45-64 years of age (5,570 individuals). Many of those between 45-64 years represent the children of Sephardim who immigrated to Montreal in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s. There is also a significant representation of Sephardim in the 25-44-year age group (5,315 individuals).

About one in five Sephardim (20.4%) are seniors, or 4,540 individuals. As large numbers of middle-aged Sephardim enter their senior years, the proportion of elderly will likely increase significantly.

There are 9,735 Canadian-born Sephardim living in Montreal, comprising 43.8% of the Sephardic community. The rest of the Sephardic population (56.2%) are immigrants. More than a quarter (28.3%) of Sephardim were born in Morocco, followed by France (7.6%) and Israel (6.4%).

The percentage of adult Sephardim that have a university degree has increased significantly from 35.7% in 2001 to 45.7% in 2011.

There are 4,080 Sephardim living below the poverty line in the Montreal metropolitan area, or 18.4% of the total Sephardic population.⁸ The poverty level among Sephardim is lower than that of the rest of the Jewish community (20.5%).

Those who are particularly vulnerable to poverty include Sephardic seniors living alone (47.7%); Sephardic adults between 15-64 years living alone (47.3%); and Sephardim living in female single parent families (32.7%).

Section 5 Focus on a Community: Winnipeg⁹

Winnipeg has the fifth largest Jewish community in Canada, comprising 3.5% of the country's Jewish population. It was recently surpassed by Ottawa in terms of the size of its Jewish population.

⁸ The "poverty line" in this report refers to the low-income cutoff (LICO), which is defined by Statistics Canada as "an income threshold at which families are expected to spend 20 percentage points more than the average family on food, shelter and clothing."

⁹ The corresponding chapter in the previous *American Jewish Year Book 2018* (Shahar 2019) focused on Ottawa, on Greater Vancouver in the *American Jewish Year Book 2017* (Shahar 2018), on Toronto in the *American Jewish Year Book 2016* (Shahar 2017) and on Montreal in the *American Jewish Year Book 2015* (Shahar 2016).

The community has faced a number of challenges in the last few decades, including a steadily declining Jewish population since its peak in 1961 of 19,376 Jews. Other challenges include a burgeoning elderly cohort; and the fact that the community is more spread out than ever before, straining the reach of its service delivery.

Despite these challenges, the Winnipeg community has a long history of Jewish commitment and affiliation. The variety and availability of Jewish services in Winnipeg are those usually found in considerably larger communities. Several community initiatives, particularly related to immigration, have been launched in the last two decades. The result is an increasingly diverse population as evident in the cultural makeup and orientations of community institutions.

In 2011, the Jewish population of Winnipeg was 13,690. Jews comprised 1.9% of Winnipeg's total population of 714,640.

The Jewish population figure for 2011 represented a loss from 2001, when there were 14,820 Jews in this metropolitan area. Between 2001 and 2011 the Jewish population declined by 1,130 people, or 7.6%

The population loss between 2001 and 2011 was somewhat greater than between 1991 and 2001. In the latter decade, the community declined by 415 people or 2.7%. The current decline is also a little more significant than the one experienced between 1981 and 1991, when the community decreased by 935 people or 5.8%.

All in all, the demographic trends suggest that the Jewish population is continuing to decrease. This is perhaps surprising given the level of Jewish immigration to Winnipeg in the last decade, particularly from individuals originating in the former Soviet Union, Israel and Argentina. Sources from the organized community suggest that the great majority of these newcomers have remained in Winnipeg and have planted their roots there.

Regarding the age distribution of the Winnipeg Jewish community, after showing a very dramatic loss between 1991 and 2001, the 25-44-year age group continued to decrease in the last decade, from 3,210 to 2,915 individuals.

The 45-64-year cohort remained at about the same level between 2001 and 2011, after demonstrating dramatic gains in the previous decade. This cohort represents the Baby Boomer generation.

The number of seniors 65+ years continued to decline in the last decade, from 3,180 to 2,580 individuals. On the other hand, the local Jewish community has a much larger proportion of elderly (18.8%) than Winnipeg's total population (13.1%). In fact, Winnipeg has the second highest percentage of seniors of any major Jewish community in Canada, behind only Montreal (20.4%).

The median age of the Winnipeg Jewish community actually decreased between 2001 and 2011, from 44.4 years to 43.1 years, but it is still significantly older than that of the Canadian Jewish population (40.5 years).

There are 2,000 Jews living below the poverty line in the Winnipeg metropolitan area. The poor comprise 14.6% of a total population of 13,690 Jews residing in the local community.

The level of poverty among children 0-14 years in the Winnipeg Jewish population is 20.2%, almost double the rate found in 2001. There are 470 children in the local Jewish community who live in economically disadvantaged circumstances.

Almost one of seven elderly Jews (65+ years) is poor, but senior women are significantly more likely to be disadvantaged than men (20.8% and 4.7% respectively).

In terms of the intermarriage rate, 25.4% of Jewish spouses / partners are married to, or partnered with, non-Jews in the Winnipeg metropolitan area.

The intermarriage rate among Winnipeg's Jewish population (25.4%) is slightly lower than that of the Canadian Jewish population (26.3%). Although the intermarriage rates of Jewish communities across Canada generally increase as one moves westward, the Winnipeg community is an exception, likely because it has a long history of Jewish commitment and affiliation.

In cases where both spouses are less than 30 years of age, the level of intermarriage is a striking 75.6%; although the small number of Jewish couples in this age group suggests that this figure should be interpreted with caution, as sampling error may account for this finding. It is 19.4% when both spouses are at least 40 years old.

Regarding the youngest children of intermarried couples, about a quarter (26.7%) are identified by their parents as Jews; about half (55.3%) are assigned no religious affiliation; and the rest (17.9%) are identified as having other religions. Whether it is the husband or the wife who is of the Jewish faith has a significant bearing on the religious orientation of their children, with the latter being much more inclined to be identified as Jewish if the mother is identified as such.

Section 6 Summary

The Canadian Jewish population has seen only modest growth in the past twenty years, following a more significant increase between 1981 and 1991. The latter decade coincided with the beginning of significant immigration by Jews from the FSU. Jews reside in every region of Canada, including the Northern Territories, although they are concentrated heavily in the major urban centers. The metropolitan area of Toronto is home to 188,710 Jews and includes about half (48.2%) of Canada's Jewish population. The Montreal community numbers 90,780 Jews. The median age (40.5 years) of Canadian Jews is slightly older than the national average but much older than ethnic groups with large numbers of more recent immigrants.

There are 36,040 Sephardim living in Canada with the majority residing in Montreal (22,225). The Sephardic population in Montreal has been on the ascendancy since a large influx arrived in the late 1960s. However, this growth has slowed recently, with a gain of only 1,000 individuals between 2001 and 2011. The percentage of Sephardic seniors is expected to increase significantly as the Baby Boomers turn elderly. More than half (56.2%) of Sephardim residing in Montreal are immigrants and more than a quarter (28.3%) were born in Morocco.

Winnipeg has the fifth largest Jewish community in Canada, comprising 3.5% (13,960) of the country's Jewish population. It was recently surpassed by Ottawa in terms of the size of its Jewish population. The community has faced a number of challenges in the last few decades, including a steadily declining Jewish population since its peak in 1961 of 19,376 Jews. Other challenges include a burgeoning elderly cohort; and the fact that the community is more spread out than ever before, straining the reach of its service delivery. Despite these challenges, the Winnipeg community has a long history of Jewish commitment and affiliation.

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