

Patterns of Spatial Behavior among Jews in West European and North American Cities

Shimon Stern

This paper examines the spatial residential behavior of Jews within the cities in which they live. During the last twenty years, researches about many Jewish communities and their residential behavior have been conducted by sociologists, demographers and geographers. (Detailed bibliography see *inter alia* in DellaPergola, 1989; Klaff, 1983; Stern, 1984 & 1986; Waterman and Kosmin, 1986). Most of these are about one specific community, usually the one in which the researcher lives. Others take the results of these papers, as well as generally published statistics, and use them to determine the patterns of Jewish spatial behavior. But they usually lack the possibility to compare results, as data are inconsistent in methods, in the definitions of "Who is a Jew?", and in the time span researched.

Some of the papers about the behavior of ethnic or religious minorities call the neighborhoods in which these minorities used to settle "Ghettoes", especially if the settlers were newcomers to the city or to the country (Knox, 1982). When speaking about Jews in modern times, we prefer the word "concentration", as the ghetto has two characteristics which do not apply to Jews in our time: Inside a ghetto, the majority of the inhabitants belong to the said ethnic or religious group living there. Also, in the past, the Jewish "ghetto" (in contrast to black ghettoes in the U.S.A.) was usually made up of people who were forced to live there.

Two methods were used here to analyze Jewish residential behavior in some cities of Western Europe and Canada:

The geographical method examines the extent of Jewish residential concentration or dispersion within one or several neighborhoods and interdependence with the location of Jewish institutions. The historical method analyzes the changes that occurred in the residential behavior of Jews during the last generation (or where available and applicable, the last two or three generations).

The Jewish communities analyzed are Basel (Switzerland), Strasbourg (France), Amsterdam (Netherlands), Leeds (England) and Vancouver (Canada). The data for Basel, Strasbourg and Leeds were gathered by the author at the site. Most of the communities analyzed are second to fourth in size within their countries; none is so

small that the residential behavior of the Jews would not be meaningful, nor so large that the research would need a whole team.

The results were compared with existing researches and statistics about other near-by Jewish communities, like Zurich and Geneva in Switzerland, Manchester in England and Toronto in Canada.

Basel (Switzerland)

Basel had about 2,000 Jews during most of the period analyzed (this dropped to 1,650 in 1980). The main sources are population censuses taken every ten years, from 1910 to 1980, as well as lists of community members and their addresses for 1909–12, 1956, 1982 (Stern, 1984, 1986). Actually, more than 90% of the Jews of Basel are affiliated with the Jewish community. The reason for this high percentage is that Judaism is recognized as an official religion, so part of the income taxes paid by Jewish citizens are received by the Jewish community. In 1910 two thirds of the Jews of Basel lived near the synagogue, within a standard distance of about 600 meters from it. In 1980 the synagogue (and the other Jewish institutions, like a kosher restaurant, community center, kindergarten) were still at the same place. As this place is at the outer margin of the Central Business District, Jewish residents have moved slightly outwards, so that the synagogue is at the inner edge of the Jewish residential area, this having now a standard distance of about 900 meters from the Jewish residential center of gravity. The concentration in one area is still prominent, as outwards migration during these 70 years was minimal. Two thirds of the Jewish population of Basel are still residing within easy walking distance from the center of the Jewish community.

TABLE 1. JEWISH POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY RESIDENTIAL AREAS AND DISTANCE FROM SYNAGOGUE, BASEL, 1910 AND 1980 (PERCENTAGES)

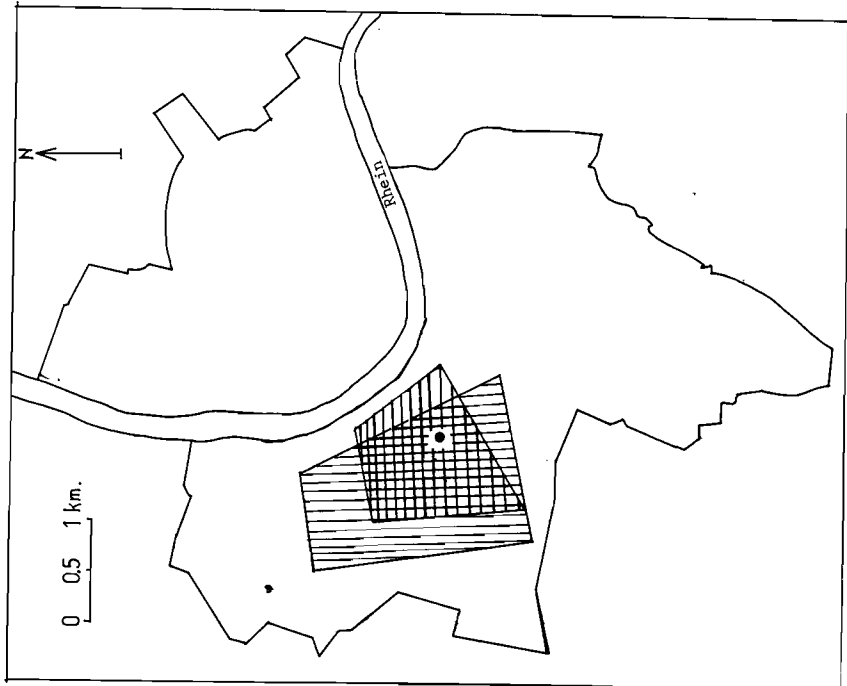
	1910	1980
Center and inner ring, near synagogue ^a	55	28
Outer ring, near synagogue ^b	21	40
Other neighborhoods ^c	24	32
Basel, Total	100	100

a. Grossbasel/Altstadt, Vorstaedte, Am Ring

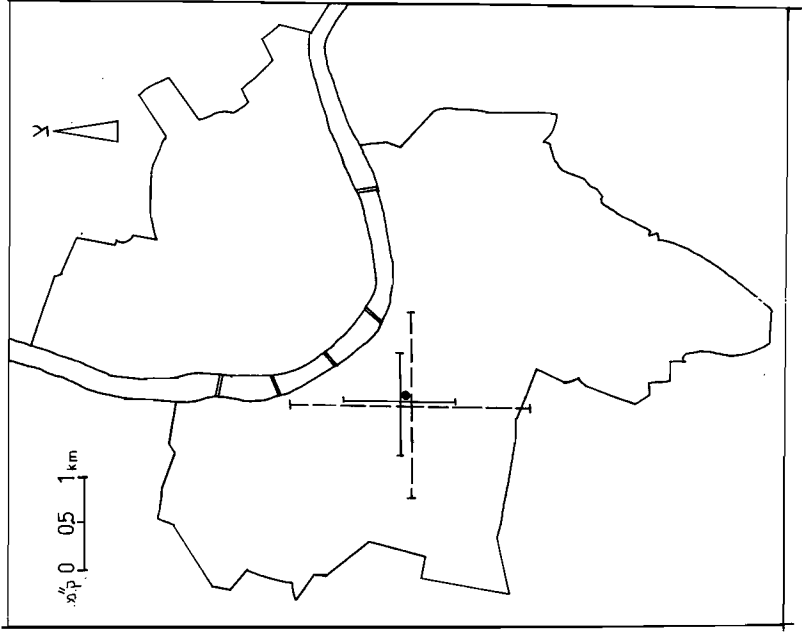
b. Bachletten, Gotthelf, Iselin

c. St. Alban, Gundeldingen, Bruderholz, St. Johann, Kleinbasel/Altstadt, Clara, Wettstein, Hirzbrunnen, Rosental, Matthaecus, Klybeck, Kleinhüningen.

FIGURE 1. RESIDENTIAL AREAS OF JEWS IN BASLE, 1910 AND 1980



Residential area of 2/3 of the Jews 1910
Residential area of 2/3 of the Jews 1980



• Location of the synagogue

Diffusion cross 1910
Diffusion cross 1980

While in 1980 51% (the majority!) of the general population of the conurbation (Swiss area only, French and German suburbs not included) was living in suburbs, only 22% of the Jewish population were residing there, most of them (about 3/5) in two suburbs which are within walking distance of up to half an hour from the synagogue and community center. The same pattern was found in smaller communities of Switzerland, like Lucerne and Berne.

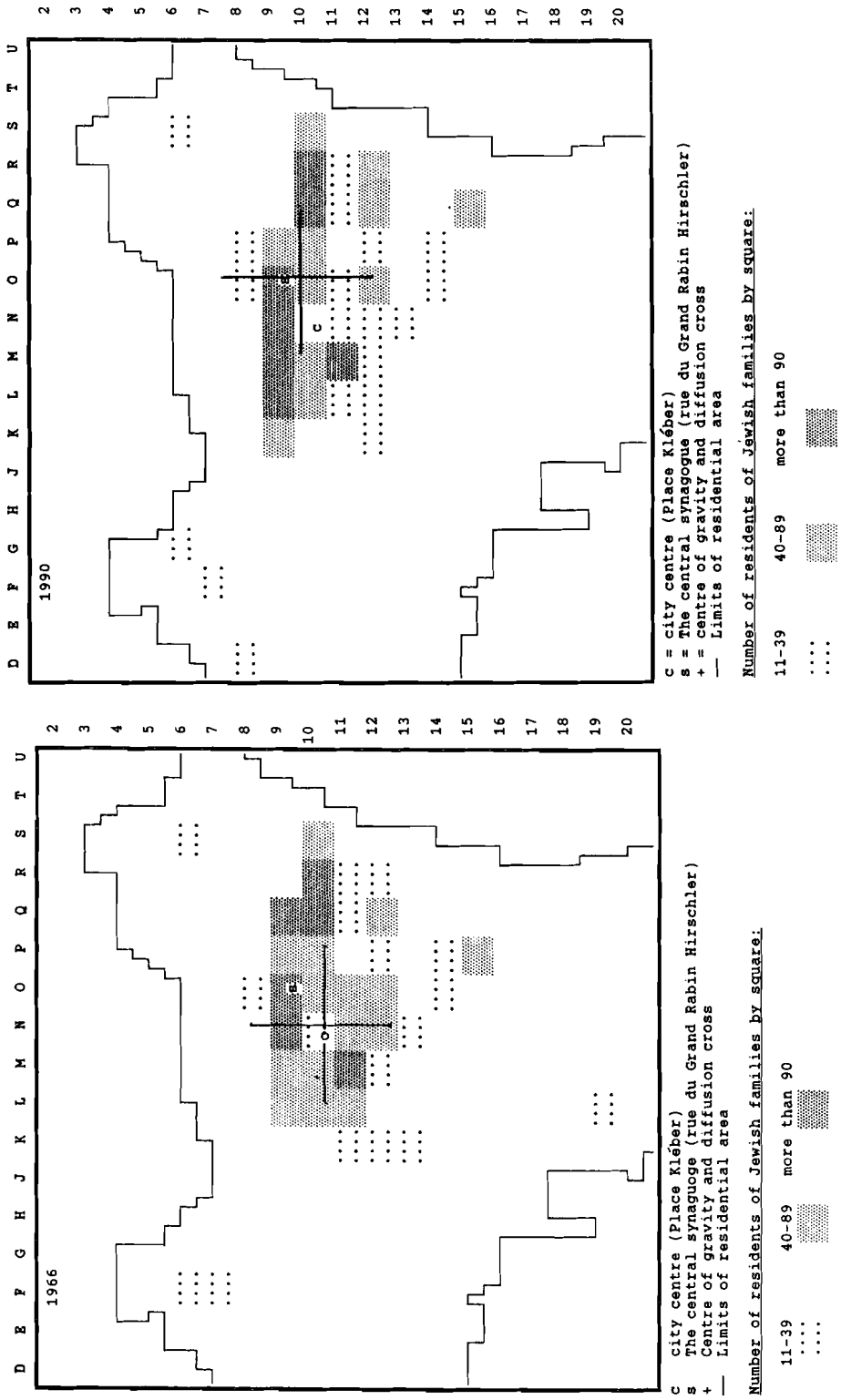
Strasbourg (France)

There are about 7,000–9,000 Jews in Strasbourg (France) (Stern, in print). 80% of the Jews of Strasbourg are of the same origin as are those in Basel, namely, most are Alsatian Jews; the remaining 20% came from North Africa in 1962. Although the latter are but a minority, they are very active in public Jewish life.

The Jews of Strasbourg suffered less from the holocaust than other French Jews because the city was evacuated; but the comparison of pre-war data with later statistics must nevertheless take into account changes caused by the holocaust and by immigration of Jews from North Africa in the early 1960s. The period which we researched was from 1966 to 1990 (about one generation). Thus, the Jews of North African origin are included already at the beginning of the period analyzed. The main data were compiled from membership lists of the different communities, and from a list of the elections to the Jewish district council (“Consistoire Israelite du Bas-Rhin”). In most French cities, only about 40% of the Jews were affiliated with a community, but in Strasbourg the percentage was supposedly higher. Until 1954 official data were published about the Jews in Alsace (due to the special status of Alsace in the “concordat” and the Versailles treaty). According to the data for 1954, we may assume that the number of affiliated Jews (about 2,000 in 1990, representing about 5,500 people, according to a full census of one third of the families) is 60% or more of the total. But as this paper is researching the residential behavior of people who feel Jewish in any sense of the word, excluding people who are Jewish only in origin, the lists of community members are usable as a source. Not included were members of two minor orthodox communities, the “Lubavitcher” (number of members unknown, but less than one hundred), and the “Yechiva des tudiants” (with about 100 students, some of whom may be members of the general Jewish community), as these two bodies ostensibly had no organized lists of members. The residential addresses of the members of the main Jewish Community and of an orthodox community (“Etz Haim”) were mapped by streets and then analyzed.

The spatial concentration of Jews is very pronounced in Strasbourg. In 1990, 95% of the community members were living in the city, as against 62% of the general population. Even if we suppose that the non-affiliated Jews are as dispersed as the general population (which is not sure at all), this would give a percentage of about 75–80% of all the Jews living within the city. The concentration within the city is remarkable, with a standard distance of only 1,100 meters from the center of gravity of the Jewish population, which is about 250 meters to the south of the central synagogue. The standard distance stayed almost constant throughout the period 1966–1990, although that of the Sephardic Jews diminished, while the

FIGURE 2. RESIDENTIAL AREAS OF JEWS IN STRASBOURG, 1966 AND 1990



Ashkenazic distance grew slightly. The center of gravity moved about 200 meters to the north-east, due to outmigrations of the Jews — like the non-Jewish population — from the old city, which had developed into a Central Business District. In the last generation a new cluster of Jews developed in Esplanade. This is a new neighborhood of high-rise apartment houses with more than 100 apartments each, near the university campus and at a walking distance of 20 to 30 minutes from the main synagogue — so this cluster is still within the standard distance mentioned above. Therefore most of the activities of the community center in Esplanade are on weekends, while during week-days Esplanade Jews rely on the facilities near the main synagogue (kosher groceries, butchers, restaurants, Jewish schools, etc.). To the north of Esplanade, in the old established neighborhood of Orangerie, the Jewish population is growing — but within easy walking distance of about 10 to 15 minutes to the community center. Therefore no new Jewish facilities are developing there, with the exception of 2–3 small synagogues and the aforementioned Talmudic high-school “Yechiva des étudiants”.

TABLE 2. JEWISH POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY RESIDENTIAL AREAS AND DISTANCE FROM SYNAGOGUE, STRASBOURG, 1961 AND 1990 (PERCENTAGES)

	1961	1990
City center and its surroundings	30	12
Near synagogue (Contades/Halles and Orangerie neighborhoods)	53	65
Esplanade neighborhood	4	9
All other neighborhoods (more than 50% of residential area) ^a	13	14
Strasbourg, Total	100	100

a. Cronenbourg, Koenigshoeffen, Montagne Verte, Elsau, Neudorf, Meinau, Neuhof, Robertsau.

Amsterdam (Netherlands)

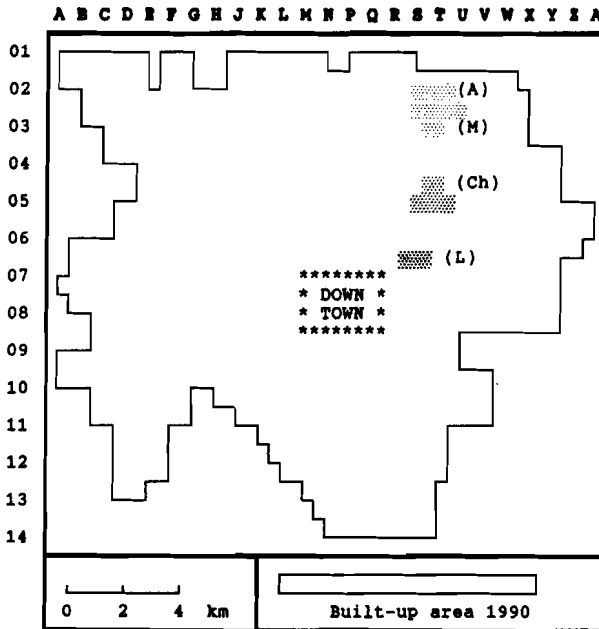
There are about 10,000–14,000 Jews living in Amsterdam. Only very vague data were given, due to the “Law of Privacy” (data-protecting law), so the results for this city must be accepted with even more reservations than for the other cities (Letter of Mr. Polak, secretary of the “Joodse gemeente Amsterdam” from June 12th, 1990). According to these data, about 80% of the Jews live in the southern part of the city

(Vondelpark, Station Rai, Buitenveldert), and in the southern suburb of Amstelveen. The Jewish population of this suburb has been growing in the last decades, and contrary to the new Jewish neighborhoods in Strasbourg it is not within walking distance of the community center of Amsterdam. New synagogues were founded in Amstelveen in 1961, and in Buitenveldert in 1967. As this is a different model from the former ones, Amsterdam was still included in this analysis, but any further conclusion is impossible due to the scarcity of available data.

Leeds (England)

There are 9,000–10,000 Jews in Leeds according to a study made by Freedman, mainly based upon lists of contributors to Jewish institutions and personal knowledge of the communities (Freedman, 1990). Other sources have estimated 13–15,000 Jews, which seems exaggerated. The reasons for accepting these data are the same as for Strasbourg. According to Freedman, only 5% of the Jews are not affiliated (based on the percentage of non-member Jewish burials and cremation of Jews). Whereas 5% is probably an underestimate, it would not be appropriate in this paper to include as Jews people who are no longer dependent in any way on Jewish community life, and do not contribute to any Jewish organization.

FIGURE 3. RESIDENTIAL AREAS OF JEWS IN LEEDS, 1910-1990



Residential areas of Jews in Leeds:

- 1910 (L) Leylands
- 1945 (Ch) Chapeltown
- 1990 (M) Moortown; (A) Alwoodley

A hundred years ago all the Jews of Leeds were living in the Leylands, at the immediate northern proximity of the city center. (Middleton, n.d.). Then they moved to Chapeltown, two to three miles northward, but were still very concentrated. The Jewish residents in Leeds of the late 19th century were textile factory workers of East European origin. The rise in their standard of living could be part of the explanation for their leap-frogging to distant neighborhoods. Chapeltown was the actively Jewish neighborhood around 1920–1950 (Krausz, 1964). But in 1990 no Jewish institutions or residences were found there, and almost all the Jews of Leeds now live two miles farther north, in the Moortown corner and Alwoodley neighborhoods. The last synagogue in Chapeltown was closed down in 1986, and the last Jewish shop in 1988 (Freedman, 1990). The standard distance of Jewish residences from their center of gravity in 1990 was about 900 meters; this is much more concentrated than in Basel or Strasbourg, as almost all the Jewish families of Leeds live in detached houses, while in continental Europe apartment houses with 6 to 12 apartments are the rule even for upper-class or middle-class residences, and most of the Jews belong to these classes. Therefore the distances in Leeds should be larger, as is the urban area. The high degree of concentration is also well illustrated by looking at the postal districts. In 1990, 84% of households with synagogue members, as well as all the Orthodox Jewish communities in Leeds were located in Leeds 17. (In 1967 this area claimed only 50% of the households). Leeds 8, to the east of Leeds 17, held 11.5% of the Jewish households and the Liberal (Reform) congregation with its “Sinai” synagogue. Even within Leeds 17, the southernmost synagogues were closed down in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as the Jews continued moving northwards.

The center of gravity of Jewish residents is today on the Northern Ring Road, to the North-East of the city and far away from the general center of gravity. But the Jews are concentrated in only one of the neighborhoods of their socioeconomic class; there are almost no Jews living in the North-West of Leeds, which also belongs to the same socioeconomic group.

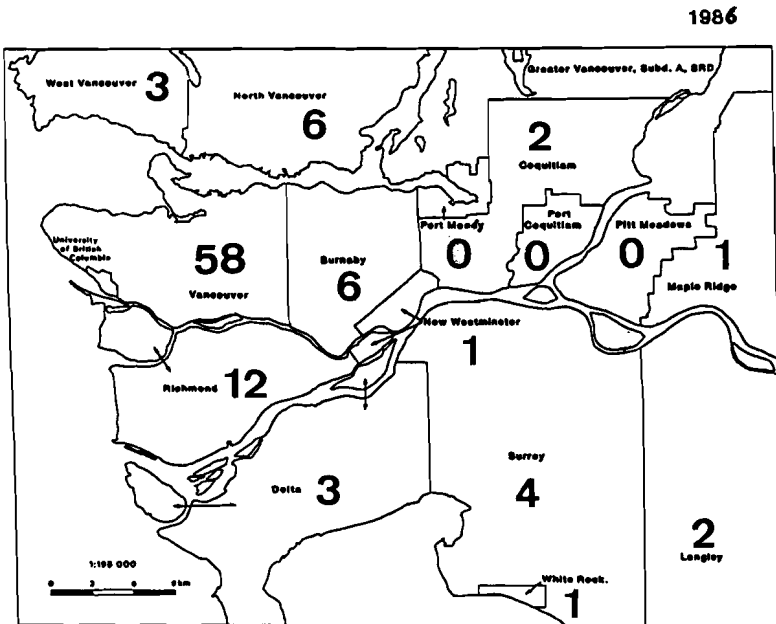
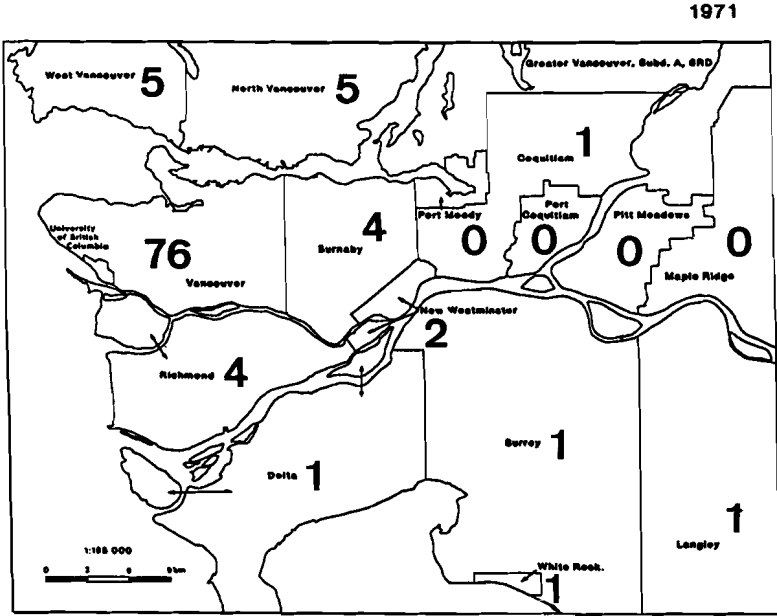
Vancouver (Canada)

Vancouver, with about 19,000 Jews in the Greater Vancouver area, of which about 11,000 are in Vancouver City, is larger than the above-mentioned Jewish communities, but similar to them, this city has the third largest Jewish community in the country.

The Canadian census gives religious affiliation as well as ethnic origin. In addition, there exists a phone directory of the Jews of Vancouver, with about 4,400 names. However, this list may be less accurate than the census, as not all the numbers quoted are of Jews, and there are households with more than one phone number.

There is also an account and analysis of the census results for 1986, comparing them with data for 1971 and 1981 (Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver, 1990). According to these data about 90% of the Jewish population of Greater Vancouver were living in the city in 1950, but only 58% in 1986. Between 1971 and 1981 the most outstanding change occurred in Richmond, to the south of Vancouver City.

FIGURE 4. RESIDENTIAL AREAS OF JEWS IN GREATER VANCOUVER, 1971 AND 1986 - PERCENTAGES



Source: Our People Count, 1990.

This area contained 3.5% of the community in 1971, but by 1981 its portion had grown to 12% thus turning it into a second minor Jewish concentration. This percentage was still the same in 1986. 10% of the Jews of the conurbation resided on the north side of the Bay (West Vancouver and North Vancouver) in 1971, and 9% in 1986. All the other ten suburbs each had less than 2% of the Jews in 1971 or 7% altogether. By 1986, this percentage had grown to 15%.

TABLE 3. JEWISH POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY RESIDENTIAL AREAS, GREATER VANCOUVER, 1971 AND 1986 (PERCENTAGES)

	1971	1986
Vancouver	76	58
Richmond	4	12
All other suburbs ^a (about 80% of area)	20	30
Greater Vancouver	100	100

a. Port Moody, Coquitiam, Port Coquitiam, Pitt Meadows, Maple Ridge, New Westminster, Surrey, White Rock, Longley, Delta.

The Jewish day-schools, community center, retirement facilities and eight of the eleven synagogues are located in the Oak Street area, but this is no longer the focus of young families or of new arrivals (Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver, 1990, p. 3).

TABLE 4. JEWISH POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY RESIDENTIAL AREAS, CITY OF VANCOUVER, 1971 AND 1986 (PERCENTAGES)

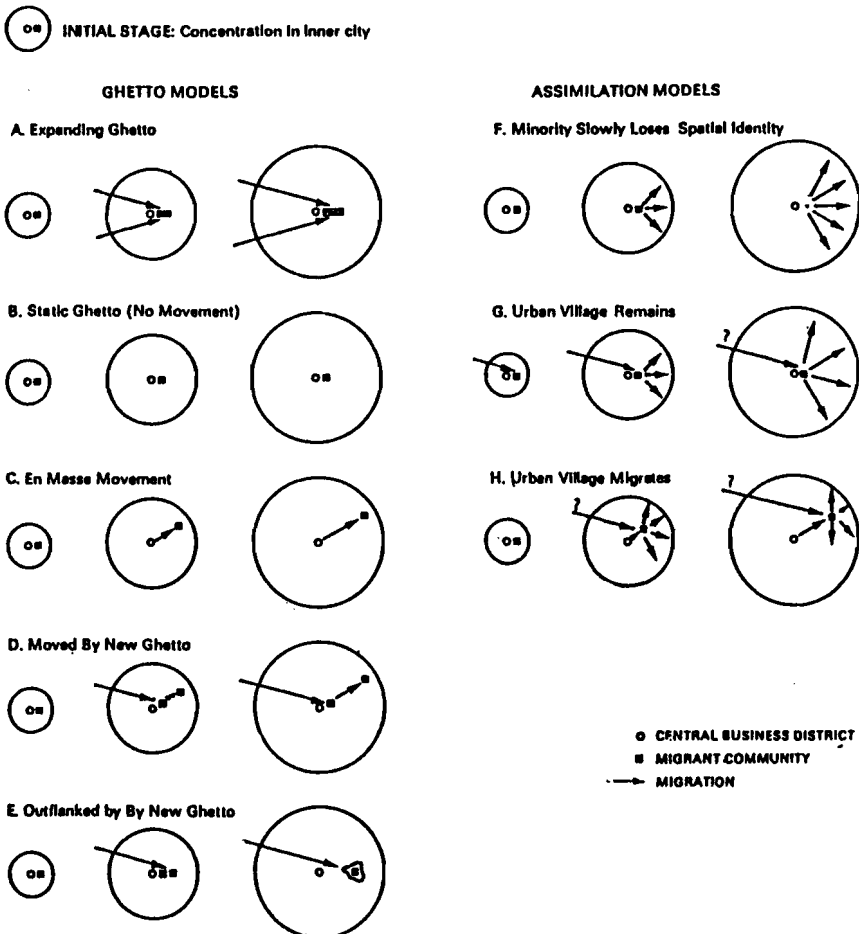
	1971	1986
Oakridge area	22	22
Other central neighborhoods	48	33
Other neighborhoods	30	45
Vancouver city, total	100	100

Models of Jewish Residential Behavior

This research found different models of residential behavior:

1. A conservative, or more or less static pattern in Basel, with one center, which did not change during more than three generations (similar to Johnston's model A of an expanding Ghetto; see Johnston, 1971 and the illustration of his models here). The residences moved slightly outwards, but remained loyal to the existing center and the total outmigration was essentially less than the outmigration of the general population.

FIGURE 5. JOHNSTON'S MINORITY GROUPS LOCATION MODELS



Source: Johnston, 1971, p. 110-114

2. A conservative, or static, pattern with the creation of a new center (Strasbourg, Zurich). The old center is at the same location as before, and is the dominant one. A new, smaller cluster of Jewish residents develops in one of the neighborhoods at the city's edge or in a suburb. People from newly created neighborhoods still depend on the old community center, while creating a smaller one near their new residence.
3. A dynamic pattern with a strong concentration of Jews in one neighborhood is typical to Leeds, but was also found by other researchers in other English Jewish communities, like Manchester and London. Jews move together with their institutions once in 30 to 40 years along an axis leading outwards (to the north in many cases, in London both to the north and the east), on a leapfrog model, i.e. the distance between the old and new centers is considerable, and the old neighborhoods are not adjacent to the new ones. Old synagogues, community centers and Jewish facilities close down and new ones are opened along the residential migration axis. Residential concentration remains very high. Actually, other minority groups such as the Indians and Japanese in England were found to have the same spatial behavior. In Leeds the Irish minority, which was living near the Jews in Chapeltown, moved eastwards, while the Jews moved northwards. Neither in Europe nor in Vancouver was a similar pattern found.
4. Another dynamic pattern found by researchers in the United States (see Johnston's models *F-H* — which he calls "Assimilation Models") was not found in any of the cities analyzed here. According to this pattern, minorities, (including the Jewish minority) move outwards, but disperse in the first generation to 2–5 new clusters, from which a further dispersion is observed in the next generation, again breaking up the concentration. This is the main difference between them and the English Jewish pattern, with its high degree of spatial concentration.
5. The case of Vancouver is less conservative than the continental European communities discussed here, but more than most United States communities researched in the last twenty years (Johnston's model *G*). It is marked by a quick suburbanization, more than in Europe, with the percentage of suburban Jews growing from 24% to 42% within 15 years (1971–1986). In 1971, there was one central residential area, but during the seventies another smaller one developed in Richmond, eight kilometers to the south. Similar developments were found in Amsterdam/Amstelveen and to a lesser extent in Zurich/Wollishofen and Zurich/Brunau. The development of Vancouver is more similar to the European pattern than to the one found in the United States, but only further studies will show whether this is a general Canadian model or a special case.

Contrary to continental European patterns, the percentage of Jews residing in their former neighborhoods dropped quickly, while the percentage of suburban Jews grew much more than in Europe. In contrast to other Jewish communities in Anglo-

Saxon countries, the center stayed at the same location, and is still an important cluster of Jewish residences.

Conclusions

In all the cities analyzed here, Jewish residents are concentrated to a high degree in certain neighborhoods, even at the end of the 20th century, although the degree of concentration diminished in some of the cities. Nowhere did the Jews concentrate in all the neighborhoods of a given socioeconomic level. This phenomenon of concentration in one of the neighborhoods of the upper middle class is typical to Europe (both the continent and England), but it exists also in North America.

No single pattern of Jewish residential behavior exists. Each of the communities researched here had its own pattern. Several of Johnston's models of minority group locations are valid for European and American Jews. In spite of the diversity, typical patterns can be found for certain countries.

The center of gravity of the Jewish population is not identical with that of the total urban population of any given city. According to one source used here (DellaPergola, 1989), Italian cities might be an exception, with Milan and Torino having in 1965 the same center of gravity for their Jewish and general populations. This might, however be due to a statistical distortion.

In Europe, the outmigration of the Jews to suburbia is essentially smaller than that of the general population.

The English pattern is very different from the continental one: the Jews have moved faster and farther and they moved their institutions as well. This might be part of the general trend of leap-frogging in Anglo-Saxon countries. It could also be a consequence of detached and semi-detached homes, which makes distances between neighborhoods grow. The pattern is reminiscent of the greater mobility of American Jews, but these do not retain the ghetto-like concentration of residences.

There is no typical geographical direction for the outmigrations of the Jews in different cities. The direction depends on the unique character of each city, and especially on the location of the higher middle and upper-class residential neighborhoods.

With most European Jews, religious observance is irrelevant to spatial residential behavior, though members of the ultra-orthodox communities are more concentrated than communities.

References

- DellaPergola, S. (1989). "Jewish Urban Ecology in European Cities: A Comparative Approach." In: Schmelz, U. O. and DellaPergola, S., eds. *Papers in Jewish Demography 1985*. The Hebrew University, Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Jerusalem. pp. 303-336. (Jewish Population Studies, No. 19).
- Freedman, M. (1988). *Leeds Jewry: A Demographic and Sociological Profile*. Leeds. 55 pp.

- _____. (1990). *Vital Statistics and Demographic Trends in the Leeds Jewish Community for 1989*. (Mimeographed)
- Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver. (1990). *Our People Count. A Demographic Profile of the Jews of Greater Vancouver*. (Social Planning Committee Report #2.)
- _____. *Greater Vancouver by Areas and by Census Tract, 1971 and 1981*. (Maps of Jewish Populations)
- Johnston, R. J. (1971). *Urban Residential Patterns*. Praeger, New York.
- Klaff, V. Z. (1983). "The Urban Ecology of Jewish Populations, A Comparative Analysis." In: Schmelz, U. O. and DellaPergola, S., eds. *Papers in Jewish Demography 1981*. The Hebrew University, Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Jerusalem. pp. 343–361. (Jewish Population Studies, No. 16.)
- Knox, P.L. (1982). *Urban Social Geography*. Longman Scientific and Technical, Harlow, Essex, England.
- Krausz, E. (1964). *Leeds Jewry, Its History and Social Structure*. Published for the Jewish Historical Society of England by W. Hefer, Cambridge.
- Middleton, E. (no date). *A Geographic and Economic Investigation into the Jewish Community in Leeds in the Late Nineteenth Century*. School of Geography, University of Leeds. (Unpublished seminar paper).
- Stern, S. (1984). "Changes in the Residential Pattern of Western Jewish Community: The Case Study of Basel (Switzerland)." *Horizons, Studies in Geography*. No. 11–12, pp. 243–267. (Hebrew, English summary)
- _____. (1986). "Das Wohnverhalten der Basler Juden seit 1910." *Judaica*, Vol. 42, no. 1. pp. 41–47.
- _____. "Le comportement spatial des Juifs de Strasbourg." Accepted for publication in *Revue géographique de L'Est*. Nancy.
- Waterman, S. and Kosmin, B. (1986). *British Jewry in the Eighties, a Statistical and Geographical Guide*. Board of Deputies, London.