The Jewish Population of Canada, 1991

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With the release of data from the June 1991 Canadian Census of population, it is now possible to monitor the ongoing evolution of Canadian Jewry. The information available today enables us to look at geographic realities, i.e. the residential locations of Canadian Jews, to see where they are currently living, as compared with previous censuses. It is also important to monitor the evolving age structure of the Jewish population in Canada, i.e. to look at increases or decreases with regard to the percentage of all Canadian Jews who are children under the age of 15 years, comparing that with the seniors' population (65 years and over). Additionally, we shall examine marital status data for the most important CMA's (Census Metropolitan Areas) of Canadian Jewry. One always has to consider the trends, by comparing the percentages as of 1991 with those in earlier years.

Examining these data enables us to look, broadly speaking, at the demographic health of the Canadian Jewish population. As the tables before us will indicate, one can gain some sense of the security versus danger of continuing Jewish existence in Canada by looking at the overall development of the Jewish population from census to census, in comparison with the overall population trends in Canada; one certainly has to look at the percentage of children in each city (or province) to gauge the prospects for Jewish continuity, in various parts of Canada, in coming generations (See the chapter on "The Fertility of Ethnic Groups" and that on "Aging & Ethnicity" in Halli et al, 1990).

Next in the causal chain comes marital status. Very briefly, currently-married couples have more children than divorced, separated or cohabiting ones! The tables below examine these geographic, age and marital status realities, always presenting previous censuses as well as that of 1991.

Obviously, additional data and further analysis are required to determine the reasons for trends that are apparent in this paper, and therefore to provide a better picture of the forces actually at work shaping Canadian Jewry at the end of the current century. Here there will only be a few explanatory comments provided later (concerning why certain trends have appeared at this time), and a few forecasts for the rest of the 1990s. The world context of Jewish demography is amply presented in such works as DellaPergola and Cohen (1992).

Note that these tables all identify Jews by their (current) religious denomination, not by ethnic origin. Whereas the latter criterion picks up those whose ancestors

were Jews, it does not tell us what affiliation or religious identity they claim now. Thus, a Jew who chose to become a Catholic would still be counted as an ethnic Jew by his ancestry; however, "Jews by choice" — who had converted to Judaism — would not be in the ethnic origin Jewish category, but are included in the (Religious) Jewish count. Brym (1989) has a valuable discussion of these definitional differences and what they could mean (pp. 37-40); also see the remarks by Torczyner et al. (1993, pp. 3–4, 10–12).

Basics: Geography and Age Groups of Canadian Jewry

On examining Tables 1 and 2, one can see that the Canadian Jewish population has become more concentrated during the decade 1981-1991. In particular, the greater Toronto area has grown from 41.7% of all Canadian Jews in 1981 to 47.5% of the national total in 1991; if this trend were to continue just a few more years, then the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area might soon constitute, by itself, a majority of all Canadian Jews. On the other hand, Montreal's share of Canadian Jewry has declined in the same ten years from 34.2% to 30.3%; the reasons for Montreal's demographic problems have been discussed elsewhere (e.g. Weinfeld, 1993, pp. 171–192).

One can also see in these two tables that over 55% of all Canadian Jews now live in the Province of Ontario, which includes approximately 25,000 who live in Ontario but outside of the Toronto CMA. On the other hand, there is no substantial Jewish diaspora in the Province of Québec; the numbers for the Montreal CMA and those for the Province of Québec are almost identical, indicating that there are less than 1,000 Jews in the Province of Québec who are not living in the greater Montreal area.

We also find (Tables 2 and 4), that Vancouver has overtaken Winnipeg as the third largest Jewish city in Canada. Whereas Winnipeg had a substantially larger Jewish population than Vancouver in 1981 (when Winnipeg Jewry was somewhat over 5% of the national total), by 1991 the Jewish population of Vancouver was larger than that of Winnipeg, which has continued to lose population over the past several decades. More on the Winnipeg situation will become visible in Table 4.

Moving on to another main focus of this paper, which is Canadian Jewry's age distribution, we see in Table 3 that the general tendency in Canadian Jewry — as in the entire Diaspora — has been a continuous aging process. So, the percentage of children in the Jewish population of Canada (age 0 to 14 years) has declined from almost 28% of the entire Jewish population in 1961 to under 20% in 1991, although the 1991 child proportion looks somewhat better than in 1981. Between 1981 and 1991, there was a significant "recovery" of the Jewish child population, which rose from a little over 53,000 to 62,500; this increase is almost an 18% rise from the 1981 count, while the entire Jewish population grew a little over 7% in the same decade. Below we consider how to explain this.

The aging of Canadian Jewry (aging is also occurring throughout the western world, both among Jews and in the larger population) is directly indicated by the continuing rise in the fraction of Canadian Jewry which is 65 years of age and more. In 1961, seniors (age 65 plus) were just over 8% of all Canadian Jews, but that had risen by 1991 to 18.6%. (See Statistics Canada 1992 on aging trends in the country: pp. 12–13, 19.)

	19	71	198	81	199	91
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total Jewish population thereof:	276,000	100.0	296,400	100.0	318,050	100.0
Ontario Province	125,300	45.4	148,250	50.0	175,650	55.2
Quebec Province	110,900	40.2	102,350	34.5	97,750	30.7
Rest of Canada	39,800	14.4	45,800	15.5	44,650	14.0

TABLE 1.CANADIAN JEWISH^a POPULATION IN 1971, 1981 AND 1991
(ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST 50)

a. By religious denomination, not ethnic ancestry criterion.

Sources: 1971 Census, Cat. No. 92–732 (T. 19); 1981 Census, Cat. No. 92–912 (T. 1&3); 1991 Census, Cat. No. 93–319 (T. 2).

	1	981	1	991
	Number	% of National Population	Number	% of National Population
Toronto	123,725	41.7	151,125	47.5
		} 75.9		} 77.8
Montreal	101,375	34.2	96,700	30.3
Vancouver	12,875	4.3	14,350	4.5
Winnipeg	15,350	5.2	13,325	4.2

TABLE 2. SELECTED METROPOLITAN POPULATIONS — CANADIAN JEWS*, 1991 VS. 1981 (ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST 25)

a. By religious denomination, not ethnic ancestry criterion.

Sources: Leo Davids, 1985 (T. 1); 1991 Census, Cat. No. 93-319 (T.2)

Nevertheless, the overall size of Canadian Jewry has continued to increase throughout the period surveyed in our Table 3, and the rate of increase during the 1981 to 1991 period stayed at the 1971–1981 level; that is, the Jewish population of Canada rose 7.4% between 1971 and 1981, then continued along at just the same pace by increasing another 7.3% between 1981 and 1991. Canada as a whole

increased 12.1% from 1981 to 1991; Jews are therefore becoming a smaller part of the total Canadian population, now constituting under 1.18% of all Canadians.

		14	15-0	54	65 and	Over	Tota	als
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1961	70,275	27.6	163,250	64.2	20,850	8.2	254,375	100.0
1971	56,800	20.6	186,700	67.6	32,500	11.8	276,000	100.0
1981	53,100	17.9	194,600	65.7	48,700	16.4	296,425	100.0
1991	62,500	19.7	196,400	61.7	59,150	18.6	18,075	100.0
Thereof:								
Ontario	36,225	20.6	111,100	63.2	28,350	16.1	175,650	100.0
Quebec	18,050	18.5	57,350	58.6	22,350	22.9	97,750	100.0

TABLE 3.MAJOR AGE CATEGORIES IN THE CANADIAN JEWISHPOPULATION, 1961–1991 (ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST 25)

Sources: 1961 Census of Canada, Vol 1, Part 3 Cat. No. 92–554, (T. 85, 88); 1971 Census, Vol. 1, Part 4 (T. 8); 1981 Census, Cat. No. 92–912 (T. 3); 1991 Census, Cat. No. 93–319 (T. 2)

The increases shown in Table 3 have not been divided between net Jewish immigration and Jewish natural increase, although it is clear that a substantial part of this growth is due to Jewish immigration from the former Soviet Union, from Israel, and from other countries (Schmelz and DellaPergola, 1995). Torczyner and associates (1993, pp. 8–9 and Appendix "D") report that Ottawa and the major western Canada communities have benefitted demographically from the 26,000 Jews who settled in Canada between 1981 and 1991. Emigration data (for Jews leaving Canada) are not in hand yet, so one cannot see the full net migration picture at present.

Understanding Fertility Dynamics of the 1980s

The increase in the Jewish child population between 1981 and 1991 is a somewhat ambiguous signal of a more pro-natalist reality among Canadian Jews. On the one hand, the increase in Jewish child population might be due to the immigration of younger families to Canada in the appropriate time period, which could have had a strong impact both on total Jewish numbers and on the proportion of children in the major cities. Alternatively, we may be seeing a genuine rise in Canadian Jewish fertility. Further, it is useful to remember that, across the board, Canada shows a slightly lower proportion of children within its overall population, during the 1981 to 1991 period. In fact, the children's age group (0-9 years) in Canada grew by just over 7% during this decade — vs. the 12% rise in over-all population — on examining the number of children under the age of 10 in 1981 as compared with 1991 (See Table 3 in Statistics Canada 1993, p. 102).

Interestingly, Canadian fertility rates slowly declined during most of the 1980s, then rose during the 1988–1990 period. Total fertility had "bottomed out" at 1.576 in 1987, but climbed to 1.710 in 1990, then began to fade again (Statistics Canada 1994, pp. 38, 40–41).

Thus, a part of the substantial growth in the Jewish child population can be explained by the same factors that were at work in Canada generally, which also exhibited a stronger birthrate in the late 1980s than had been the case in the previous decade. Why did this occur?

It seems that the reason for the general rise in the children's population sector, between 1987 and 1991, was the "baby boom" of the 1950s! The echo of a baby boom is a similar boom some years later, when people born, let's say, in the 1950s have their children in turn. Thus, those born during the late 1950s (at the peak of that "boom") would be likely to have a child about 30 years later, given that the age of marriage in Canada has been increasing while total fertility hovers in the vicinity of 1.6 children. Although the lifetime total of births per woman is not rising, the number of births in a given time period will reflect life-cycle realities; indeed, women in their early 30s are now more likely to become mothers than women in their early 20s, as fewer and fewer people in Canada marry before age 25 (Statistics Canada, 1992, pp. 22–25; Statistics Canada 1994, p. 38).

So, the late 1980s "boomlet" is a reflection of the baby boom a generation earlier, which would mean that births will decline in the current decade, as a reflecting the end of the baby boom during the mid-1960s. Thus, we would expect lower birth rates throughout the 1990s, and a smaller proportion of children in the Canadian population when one compares future 2001 census data with the child population of 1991.

Overall, it is likely that there has been some real gain in Jewish fertility, i.e. of Canadian Jewish families having more children than they used to. To what extent this is a reflection of some higher-fertility immigrants is not entirely clear, but we know that approximately 1/3 of Canada's 1991 Jews were not born in Canada. (On the other hand, Manitoba had less than 20% immigrants in its Jewish population in 1991.) Thus, immigrant Jews were an important part of the total Jewish population in 1991, as was the case during earlier censuses (Davids 1985, pp. 192–193; Statistics Canada 1993, Table 8).

For Canada as a whole, about 17% of the 1991 population were not native-born, but either had immigrated or were temporary residents (Statistics Canada 1993, p. 272). This is just half the level (by percentage) among the Jewish population, which includes twice as many immigrants — 34% to the national 17%.

Assessing the Big and Medium Communities

We shall now more closely examine the information presented in Table 4, dealing with the major cities separately, comparing 1981 with 1991.

Looking at the eight most important cities — from the standpoint of where the Jewish population of Canada is located — we find the concentration in Ontario (shown in Table 1) quite evident, with major increases for the Toronto and Ottawa CMA's between 1981 and 1991, a smaller increase in Vancouver and a slight increase in Hamilton — while there are declines in the number of Jews in the other cities.

Montreal shows a significant population loss between 1981 and 1991, which is concentrated in ages 15 to 64, since the number of seniors in Montreal increased substantially between 1981 and 1991 while the number of children held its own. Calgary and Edmonton showed slight declines in the same decade, while Winnipeg continued to lose Jewish population, although the number of children (ages 0 through 14) in Winnipeg held its own during 1981–1991. This suggests some real growth in fertility, just as one would infer from the Calgary and Montreal data — where total Jewish population declined, but the 0–14 year old sector has grown. Ottawa gained Jews during the decade, increasing 17.1%.

What has apparently been happening, then, is migration: a) within Canada, of Jews leaving Montreal and several western cities to Vancouver or Ontario; b) immigration from abroad also choosing southern Ontario, in response to good economic prospects in the 1980s there.

On the other hand, the exceptionally large rise in both the number and percentage of children in Hamilton, Ontario, is probably the result of some substantial immigration to Hamilton of younger Jewish families, whether from within Canada or outside of it. Further data would have to be provided to determine just where that increase actually came from.

It is noteworthy, again, that both Montreal and Winnipeg showed a substantial decline in their total Jewish populations, but not in their child populations. This indicates that immigration is not the entire answer to the considerable rise in the proportion of children in Canadian Jewry during the 1980s. These Montreal, Calgary and Winnipeg Jewish child data suggest an actual rise in fertility, not just due to the "boomlet" we referred to earlier, but because the traditional sector in these cities is growing in strength, and where there is even a small Orthodox Jewish population, the number of children is likely to increase substantially (Davids, 1989; Mott and Abma, 1992; Ritterband, 1992. pp. 100–103).

JEWISH² CHILD AND SENIORS POPULATIONS IN 8 CANADIAN CITIES, 1981 VS. 1991 (ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST 25) TABLE 4.

CMA		$0 - 1_{2}$	0 - 14 Years			65 Years	65 Years and Over		Total	Total Jews ^a (100%)
	1981	81	16 61	91	51	1981	1661	16	1981	1661
	z	%	z	%	z	%	z	%		
Calgary	1,075	19.3	1,150	21.1	625	11.2	600	11.0	5,575	5,450
Edmonton	875	20.6	850	21.0	425	10.0	525	13.0	4,250	4,050
Hamilton	800	18.6	1,050	23.5	650	15.1	006	20.1	4,300	4,475
Montreal	17,100	16.8	17,950	18.6	19,400	19.1	22,150	22.9	101,375	96,700
Ottawa	1,800	21.2	2,075	20.9	1,200	14.2	1,600	16.1	8,475	9,925
Toronto	23,000	18.6	31,250	20.7	18,200	14.7	24,050	15.9	123,725	151,125
Vancouver	2,250	17.5	2,600	18.2	1,600	12.6	2,400	16.7	12,875	14,350
Winnipeg	2,200	14.2	2,175	16.4	3,800	24.6	3,475	26.1	15,350	13,325

a. By religious denomination, not ethnic ancestry criterion.

Marriage, Divorce and Cohabitation

Next, we shall consider the Jewish marital status picture, as shown in Table 5. Nationally, the 1981–91 trend (for both Jews and all Canadians) was toward more divorced or separated people as well as a little increase (due to population aging) in the widowed sector. However, the two populations differed with regard to never-married singles: whereas the proportion of this category declined in Canada as a whole between 1981 and 1991 (Statistics Canada, 1991 Census. Cat. No. 93–310, Table 2), it rose among Jews. Further, the increase of separated and divorced Jewish people was proportionately greater than for all Canadians. Thus, the grand trend was toward fewer currently-married Jews in 1991, as more were single or post-married (=separated and divorced) than ten years earlier. The major cities, however, display important differences in this area, which are worthy of examination and comment.

As shown in Table 5, never-married singles were plentiful in both Toronto and Vancouver, with 26% of all Jewish adults in this category. However, the two CMA'S differ considerably in regard to currently married and those separated or divorced. Toronto showed under 7% of its adult Jews as separated or divorced, but over 60% of them in the currently married group. Vancouver, though, had 56% married vs. close to 11% separated and divorced. The widowed percentage was the same in both cities. Despite the similar age structures of Toronto's and Vancouver's Jewish populations, the two cities are strongly different with regard to marriage breakdown. This calls for explanation, as one cannot tell immediately why this occurs.

Montreal's pattern was close to that of Toronto, except for the significantly greater widewed category, constituting 9% of all Montreal Jewish adults. Ottawa shows a younger population, many being Jewish Canadians from other cities who moved to Ottawa for professional work with government agencies or ministries. Slightly fewer Ottawa Jews (than those in Toronto and Montreal) are never-married, and even fewer are widowed, but a higher percent are in a current marriage or are post-marriage (almost 8% separated or divorced).

Winnipeg, already known for its dwindling and highly-aged Jewish population, has the highest percentage of widowed Jews among these "big 5" centers, the lowest percentage of never-married adults, and a moderate (less than Ottawa and Vancouver, but more than Toronto and Montreal) representation of separated and divorced Jews. Table 4 shows that Winnipeg Jewry has fully 26% in the 65 and over category — vs. 16% children and early adolescents — and Table 5 indicates that only Vancouver has a smaller proportion than Winnipeg among these "big 5" in the currently-married group.

Summing up this section, it seems clear that Toronto's strength is not just a matter of total size, but also favorable marriage demographics — with low levels of post-marrieds, a high percentage of currently married, and many singles, most of whom, presumably, will marry eventually. The other cities — leaving Vancouver aside for the moment — are not far apart, although the Winnipeg data are not

encouraging in the long term. Vancouver, however, has an outstandingly high representation of divorced and separated Jews, and — as Table 4 shows — an unimpressive Jewish child percentage, although it is growing through migration. Other data would be needed to see whether migration within Canada is linked to marital status, e.g. whether divorced Toronto Jews have a measurable propensity to move to Ottawa or Vancouver, thus making Toronto artificially look like a low-divorce community, but Vancouver a high-divorce place, when it is actually the post-marriage Jews of other cities who may be giving rise to those percentages.

Table 6, finally, presents data on unmarried cohabitation by Jewish (vs. all Canadian) couples. In Canada, the same phenomenon is often referred to as "Common Law marriage". The main lesson to be learned from Table 6 is quite clear. Except for the Vancouver situation (to which we return below), Canadian Jews are strongly under-represented among the country's unmarried cohabiters. That difference is greatest for Montreal, where the general population is so strongly involved with this lifestyle (8.5% of the entire CMA population); Jews constitute fully 3% of all inhabitants but 0.7% of Montreal's cohabiters. Looking at Toronto and Winnipeg (with far lower cohabitation rates in the total population than in Montreal), Jews in 1991 were about half as likely to cohabit as others. While Jews made up 3.9% of all Torontonians, they were 2% of its cohabiters, which is about a 50% under-representation.

Only in Vancouver are Jews very close to a "normal" rate of participation in unmarried cohabitation; Jews there are about 0.9% of the population, and 0.8% of the cohabiters. Further, 4% of all Vancouver Jews were cohabiting as of Census Day 1991, higher than any other Canadian city. Explanations cannot easily be provided here, but this exceptionality fits in well with other data (as in Table 5) indicating major demographic weaknesses in Vancouver Jewry. We also don't know whether local Jewish Vancouverites are so much more likely to choose cohabitation, or if committed cohabiters from elsewhere migrate to the comfortable freedom of Vancouver, raising its rate of Jewish cohabitation. These interlocking trends threatening the city's Jewish future have been duly noted by Vancouver's Jewish Federation (eg. Berkowitz, 1994. pp. 9–12).

MARITAL STATUS AMONG JEWS⁴ IN THE 5 MAJOR CANADIAN CITIES^b, 1991 ADULTS --**15 YEARS AND OVER ONLY (ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST 25) TABLE 5.**

	Montreal	real	Ottawa	wa	Toronto	onto	Winnipeg	ipeg	Vancouver	uver
	z	%	z	%	z	%	z	%	Z	%
Single, never married	19,700	25.0	1,950	24.8	31,275	26.1	2,600	23.3	3,075	26.1
Currently married	46,625	59.2	4,800	61.4	72,325	60.3	6,550	58.8	6,600	56.2
Widowed	7,200	9.1	475	6.2	8,350	7.0	1,175	10.6	800	6.9
Separated and divorced	5,225	6.6	600	T.T	7,925	6.6	800	7.2	1,275	10.8
Total adult Jewish population	78,750	100	7,825	100	119,875	100	11,125	100	11,750	100

a. That is, identified by religious denomination, not ethnic ancestry.

b. These 5 together contained about 90% of all Canadian Jews in 1991.

Source: Statistics Canada, Special tabulations for L. Davids; 1991 Census Report 93-319, Religions in Canada, Table 2.

	Montreal	Toronto	Winnipeg	Vancouver
Total CMA population	3,127,250	3,893,050	645,600	1,602,500
Total Jewish population (all ages)	96,700	151,125	13,325	14,350
Cohabitants ^a (all religions) as %	266,150	121,350	27,250	75,375
of CMA population	8.5	3.1	4.2	4.7
Cohabitant Jews (by denominational criterion)	1,825	2,450	275	575
Jews as % of the population	3.1	3.9	2.1	0.9
Jews as % of all cohabitants	0.7	2.0	1.0	0.8
Cohabitants as % of local Jews	1.9	1.6	2.0	4.0

TABLE 6. JEWISH UNMARRIED COHABITATION IN FOUR CANADIAN CITIES, 1991 (ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST 25)

Also referred to as "Common Law" couples; cohabitating people not married to each other — who may have been married to someone else, or may still be undivorced from a legal spouse but residing with another partner currently (on census Day, 1991)

Source: Statistics Canada, Special tabulations for L. Davids; 1991 Census Report 93-310, Table 2.

Overview and Prospects

We shall conclude our discussion by indicating that the prospects for Jewish life in southern Ontario are good throughout the coming years, but that there is a substantial threat to the numerical strength of the Jewish communities in Manitoba and Quebec. Neither province has a substantial Jewish presence outside of the big city, and we have seen both Montreal and Winnipeg (in Table 4) losing Jewish population during the 1981–1991 period. There is no reason to suggest that this population decline will not continue during the next few years, unless there is some really dramatic turnaround in the economic situation of these cities; there is no immediate prospect of such prosperity appearing. Political and linguistic uncertainty continue to overshadow the Montreal Jewish scene.

Alberta gained population in the early 1980s as a result of the oil boom at the time, but if there are no job attractions in Calgary and Edmonton during the 1990s, one would not expect them to have a substantial increase of their Jewish population. Vancouver, however, is likely to continue to attract Jewish migrants; Berkowitz

extrapolates from the 1980s Jewish population growth in Vancouver to suggest that his community grows about 3% per year, through strong net migration (1994, p.4).

Demographically speaking, Vancouver might be characterized as the endangered city of Canadian Jewry, in light of our data showing its much higher proportions of divorced, separated and cohabiting Jews than elsewhere in the country. Mixed marriages are very common there, as well, and there is a higher proportion of Jewish one-parent families than for the entire CMA population, as reported by Torczyner and associates (1993, pp. 10–12, 19–21; also see Berkowitz, 1994). Yet, Vancouver's size now makes it the number 3 city for Canadian Jewry, so its survival certainly does matter, from an all-Canada Jewish future perspective.

Overall, Canadian Jewry has a reasonable proportion of children to sustain itself in the near future, but has an increasingly aged population, where the senior segment (aged 65 and over) is almost sure to be at least 1/5 of all Canadian Jews by the time of the next full census, in 2001. (Only large-scale emigration by Jewish seniors could change that.) As is well known, this is a dominant trend in all of Canada and elsewhere (See "Average Age" data in Statistics Canada, 1993, pp. 103,105).

Further information, and work by other researchers, will make it possible to better analyze and explain the demographic scene for the Jews of Canada, but the value of following Jewish demographic developments from census to census is again demonstrated by the data we have presented and discussed here.

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