

Survey of Jews in Canada 2018

Project Overview

Background. Canada's Jewish population has historic roots stretching back to the times of earliest European settlement of this continent. Most of Canada's urban centres have well-established Jewish communities, and Jews are well represented in the country's professions, business community, government and cultural circles. Today, Canada's Jewish population is diverse and consists of numerous distinct religious and cultural communities, and is evolving along with the rest of society. Within the next few years, Canada's Jewish population may exceed 400,000, which would make it the largest Jewish community outside of Israel and the United States.

The basic demographics of the Jewish population are captured every ten years through national censuses conducted by Statistics Canada, which document the number who identify as Jewish religiously and/or ethnically, where they live, and their basic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, education). This research does not provide a substantive understanding about Jewish identity, priorities, attitudes and values. This type of information has never been collected among Canadian Jews on a national scale and is becoming increasingly important given the dynamic changes taking place in society generally, and in the Jewish world in particular. It is remarkable that the Canadian Jewish community is one of the least studied in the world, in sharp contrast to that of the USA and the UK.

In 2013, the respected Pew Research Center published the results of a comprehensive survey of American Jews that addressed many of these questions for the American community. This research provides a valuable portrait of the Jewish population in the USA, and raises important questions about the extent to which it may or may not characterize the Canadian Jewish community.

Survey of Jews in Canada. The Environics Institute for Survey Research, in partnership with Professor Robert Brym (SD Clark Chair of Sociology at the University of Toronto) and Professor Rhonda Lenton (President and Vice-Chancellor, York University) is conducting a landmark national survey of Jews in Canada in 2018. Consistent with the Pew American survey, the Canadian survey will be conducted as live telephone interviews (landline and mobile) with a representative sample of individuals 18 years and older who self-identify as Jewish (by religion, ethnicity or parents' background). This is the only feasible survey method for effectively sampling a representative sample of the Jewish population within the broader Canadian population-at-large.

The study will include interviews with a representative sample of 2,400 eligible respondents in four cities (Toronto, Montreal, Winnipeg and Vancouver) that comprise 81 percent of the country's identified Jewish population. The sample includes enhancements made possible by the generous support from the following sponsoring organizations:

- Jewish Foundation of Manitoba
- Federation CJA (Montreal)
- UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

The sample includes 150 interviews to be completed with Jews from the Former Soviet Union in Toronto, through additional support provided by the Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto (Ann Shternshsis, Director).

Additional cities will be added where there is interest and funding support from local organizations and funders. Additional sponsor contributions are welcome, and will be considered tax-deductible charitable donations if made as designated gifts through the University of Toronto Advancement Office (For details, please contact Heather Maclean, Senior Development Officer, Advancement Office, University of Toronto, at 416-978-1844 or heather.mclean@utoronto.ca).

Themes covered in the research. The survey questionnaire has been developed by the project partners, with the assistance of a small group of advisors, and input from Jewish organizations. The survey includes approximately 80 questions, and will cover the following themes:

- Jewish identity
- Jewish practice (self and family)
- Childhood upbringing
- Experiences with anti-Semitism and discrimination
- Attitudes about Israel
- Connections to the local Jewish community
- Demographic characteristics (including ethnic and national background)
- City-specific topics (developed in collaboration with local sponsors)

Core survey sample

City	Sample size	% of Jewish population in Canada*
Toronto	1,150	48%
Montreal	600	23%
Winnipeg	400	3%
Vancouver	250	7%
TOTAL	2,400	81%

*Based on the 2011 National Household Survey

The survey sampling will employ a multi-prong strategy for the identification and recruitment of eligible respondents in the population, based on census subdivision data and last name. The sample in each city will be structured to approximate the Jewish population by standard demographics such as age, gender and ethnic background, and then weighted appropriately so that the results for each city will conform to the most recent population profile.

Study timetable. The study timetable is as follows (subject to revision):

- Planning: design/questionnaire and sample development May – December 2017
- Implementation: Survey fieldwork/data tabulation February – May 2018
- Analysis/report preparation June - August 2018
- Public release September 2018

The completed research will be publicly released in partnership with one or more media organizations (e.g., CBC, *The Globe and Mail*, *Canadian Jewish News*), and the partners will be available for briefings to community organizations, governments and other interested groups. The research will also serve as the basis for academic articles and a book by Professor Brym and Dr. Lenton.

For more information:

Keith Neuman, Ph.D., (Executive Director, Environics Institute) at 416-969-2457 or keith.neuman@environics.ca.

The Environics Institute for Survey Research conducts original public opinion and social research related to issues of public policy and social change. The Institute's primary mission is to survey those not usually heard from, using questions not usually asked. Survey research—properly conducted and published—helps all of us better understand our world as it is today, how it's changing, and where it may be heading. For more information, see www.environicsinstitute.org.

Robert Brym holds the SD Clark Chair of Sociology at the University of Toronto and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. He specializes in political sociology and race and ethnic relations, and is the author/co-author or editor/co-editor of more than 125 books, peer-reviewed articles and book chapters. Among these are works on Jews in Canada and the former Soviet Union. Dr. Brym has received numerous awards for his scholarly work and teaching. His work has been translated into nine languages. For more information, see www.utoronto.academia.edu/RobertBrym.

Rhonda Lenton is President and Vice-Chancellor of York University. A sociologist by training, her areas of teaching and research expertise include gender, research methods, data analysis, domestic violence, sexual harassment, and anti-Semitism. She has published peer-reviewed book chapters and articles in an array of academic journals. She has also led numerous initiatives in the areas of academic planning, institutional change management, the alignment of academic priorities and resources, and strategic enrolment and complement planning. For further information, see <http://president.yorku.ca/>.
