



**REPORT ON JEWISH ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES
AMONG MEMBERS OF THE GREATER VANCOUVER
JEWISH COMMUNITY**

2008

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2007, the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver was awarded a Jewish Community Foundation grant to undertake a survey of the Greater Vancouver Jewish community. The purpose of the survey was to better understand how people see themselves as Jews, how they participate in Jewish communal life, and what aspects of Judaism are important to them. The information gathered is intended to strengthen our community's ability to meet the needs of a growing and increasingly diverse Jewish population.

The survey sample was arrived at by determining the percentage of Jewish households per region based on the 2001 census and then selecting a comparable number of households from the Federation mailing list. The 1199 potential respondents received the survey by email or by mail and could respond either way. There was a 17% (205 individuals) response rate primarily from those living in Vancouver (65%), Richmond (15%) and the North Shore (11%).

The demographic profile of the respondents revealed that 58% were female and 69% were married. The age group of the majority (43%) of the respondents was 60 – 79 years, followed by 26% of the respondents who were between 30 – 39 years. Of the respondents, 41% had a graduate degree or higher, followed by 33% with a bachelor's degree. The household income of the respondents reflected the high level of education, with 49% earning \$100,000 and over. Approximately 65% were born in Canada, while the majority of immigrant respondents arrived in BC in the 1960s and 1970s. Another 32% arrived in the 1990s. There was a very low response rate from recent immigrants arriving from the former Soviet Union or Israel.

Given the inherent bias in this study arising from using only the Jewish Federation database to generate names of potential respondents, it is not surprising that the respondents represent a relatively high level community affiliation and involvement.

In order to examine responses to questions regarding Jewish attitudes and practices, respondents were divided into two categories: Denominational: (Conservative, Orthodox, Reform, Reconstructionist, Jewish Renewal, and Traditional); and Non-Denominational: (Just Jewish, Culturally Jewish, Secular, Humanist, and Ethnically Jewish).

The responses indicate a trend toward a decrease in denominational identity over three generations. Approximately 65% stated that they were raised denominationally and about 52% of respondents identified themselves that way. However, of this group of parents, only 32% identified their children as denominational. The top-ten religious practices deemed important and observed also suggest this trend, with the selected items overwhelmingly being those associated with home and family, rather than those requiring institutional involvement.

In comparing responses to various Jewish attitudes and practices between those who identified denominationally and those who did not, some activities revealed significant differences while other activities showed more commonality. The following findings illustrate some of the differences and similarities:

- Among those who reported a denominational identity, about 60% also reported membership in a synagogue.
- Of all respondents, 72% stated that some form of Jewish education was important. Of those who identified denominationally 25% enrolled their children in Jewish day schools compared to 8% who said they were non-denominational.

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- Of those households with school-aged children, 75% were enrolled in some form of Jewish education.
- Of those who were denominationally identified, 84% thought it important for their children to marry someone Jewish, while 61% of those who identified non-denominationally thought it important.
- Of those who responded to the questions regarding dating and marrying a Jewish partner, 66% thought it important to date Jewish people, 76% thought it important to marry, a Jewish partner.
- Approximately 61% of respondents said they had a bar or bat mitzvah, while of those respondents with children, 90% said their children had a bar or bat mitzvah. Totals were almost identical for both denominational and non-denominational respondents.
- The top community priority for respondents, regardless of identity, was “decreasing the rate of poverty in the community”, closely followed by services for Jewish teens and youth.
- Of denominational respondents, 83% had visited Israel at least once compared to 89% of non-denominational participants. Approximately 72% of all respondents had visited Israel twice or more.

Other findings:

- Income levels made a difference to participation in communal life. Low-income households had a 64% participation rate, compared to an 82% participation rate among high-income households.
- Approximately 25% of respondents whose children did not attend any form of Jewish education indicated that the reason was that their children were not interested. This was followed by 15% who indicated that cost was a barrier.
- Over 53% of respondents said they considered the rate of anti-Semitism in Canada to be low, while 8% rated it as high.

This survey represents a snapshot of the attitudes and practices of a segment of the Greater Vancouver Jewish community. It is an initial step in understanding the attitudes and practices in our community as well as the barriers and obstacles to participation and involvement in Jewish life. The Jewish community of Greater Vancouver is a relatively “young” community with many reasons to feel optimistic about the future. There are some significant challenges that relate to meeting the needs of an increasingly diversified community and retaining the interest and involvement of the next generation.

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2007, the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver (JFGV) was awarded a Jewish Community Foundation grant to undertake a survey of the Greater Vancouver Jewish community. The purpose of the survey was to better understand how people see themselves as Jews, how they participate in Jewish communal life, and what aspects of Judaism are important to them. The information gathered is intended to provide insight and direction to the Federation Planning Council in our identification of community needs. The findings will also be useful to the community at large by providing a perspective on the attitudes and values of a growing and increasingly diverse population.

An advisory committee chaired by Jonathan Berkowitz oversaw the survey process. Jean Gerber was contracted as Project Coordinator and Sabina Dobrer as Data Manager. Shelley Rivkin and Abba Brodt managed the project. Members of the advisory committee were Jonathan Berkowitz, chair, Jack Altman, Jeffery Brooks, Penny Gurstein, Alberta Levitan and Andy Wachtel.

This survey is the first step in understanding the attitudes, practices and level of community participation for the Lower Mainland Jewish community. The recommendations contained in the report provide specific suggestions for further investigation of particular demographic groups in the community.

A. Methodology

According to the 2001 census, 22,585 Jews lived in the Greater Vancouver Census Metropolitan area, representing approximately 12,000 households. The number of households on the Federation mailing list from which the samples were drawn was 7,103. The number of households chosen in each geographic region was a proportion of the average of the census figures for each region's Jewish population and the Federation list. Potential respondents were contacted by email where an email address was on file or by mail if no email address could be found. Respondents could respond either by mail or on-line. (See Appendix 1 for copy of survey instrument.)

The regions were: Vancouver City, Richmond City, Surrey/White Rock/Delta/Ladner, Burnaby/New Westminster, North and West Vancouver, Coquitlam/Port Coquitlam/Port Moody, and Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows/Langley. A total of 1,199 surveys were sent out. Total return for all samples was 205, or approximately 17% of all samples drawn.

There was a sample bias built into the process: only households on the Federation database were contacted. Therefore, only households with some interest in Jewish activities or connection to community agencies or organizations were included in the survey, and returns were self-selected. That is, there was no control over who returned the surveys and who did not. Some communities were under-represented, with Vancouver, Richmond and North Shore providing a higher proportion of replies than the other Lower Mainland communities.

In order to examine responses to many questions regarding attitudes and practices in the survey, the responses were divided into two categories: Denominational and Non-Denominational. In the former, we combined Conservative, Orthodox, Reform,

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Reconstructionist, Jewish Renewal and Traditional. In the latter, respondents were divided into Just Jewish, Culturally Jewish, Secular, Humanist, and Ethnically Jewish.

In the report, the number of responses to each question are indicated by (N=). In some categories, the response rate was too small to be meaningful. When giving percentages, the number of responses is also provided. This is done so that readers can appreciate that some of the sample sizes are quite small. However, responses do identify trends that will be useful guides for further study. (Note: Every 5% in a reported percentage represents about 10 people.)

Not all of the percentages add up to 100%. This is because non-responses and missing data have been extracted from the totals.

II. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Results from this report are sometimes compared with the results of the 2001 census for the Vancouver Metropolitan area to clarify certain points. Census figures have been taken from the 2001 Census of the Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area (Vancouver CMA), which was the most recent census to ask questions about religion.

A. Gender

The majority of survey respondents were women: 58% female, 42% male. According to the 2001 census, the Jewish population consists of 51% males, 49% females. Thus, respondents to the survey were disproportionately female.

B. Marital Status

Of the 205 respondents, 69% were married. A further 14% were divorced or separated, about 10% were single, and 8% were widowed. However, consistent with the general population, there were notable gender differences in marital status: 64 of the women (60%) were married or in common-law relationships and 42 (40%) were divorced or separated, widowed or never married, while only 15 men (20%) were living alone, being either divorced, single or widowed.

C. Age

The median age of Jews living in the CMA according to the census was 39.8 years. For the respondents of this survey, that median was 54.4 years. As a result, the survey results represent the views of an older demographic rather than being representative of the total population.

The majority of responses came from the age group 60-79 (43%). The 30-39 age group accounted for 26% (46), 15% (26) from the 40-59 age bracket, (11% for 40-49 and 4% for 50-59), and 11% each from the 20-29 and 40-49 age groups. Only one response came from someone under the age of 20 years.

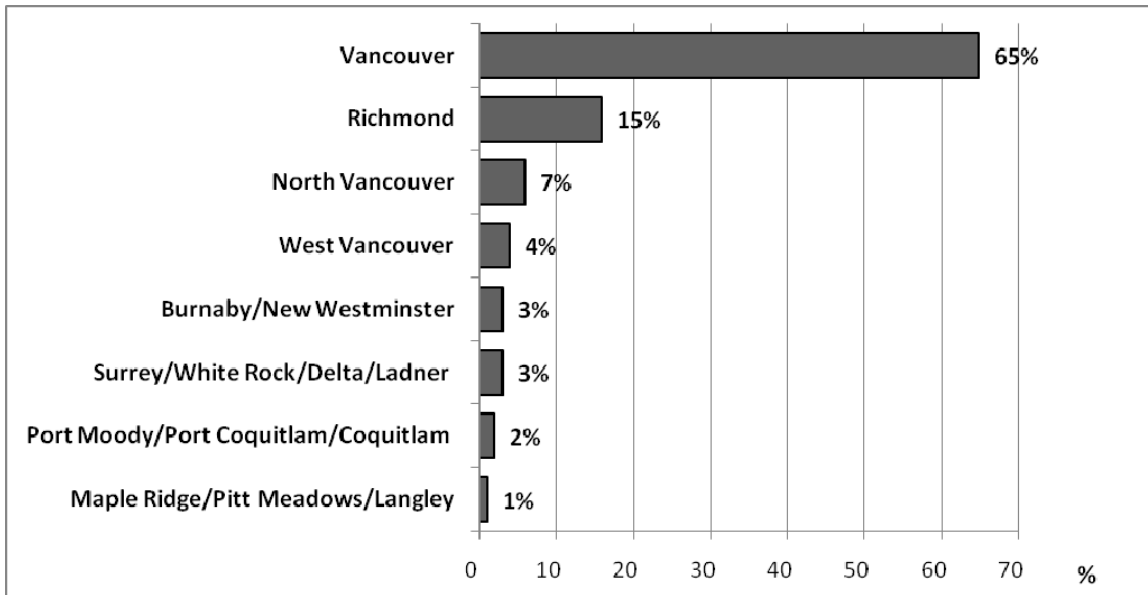
D. Geography

Geographic distribution of respondents was highly skewed towards Jews living in Vancouver: 65% were from Vancouver City, 15% from Richmond City, 11% from the North Shore

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communities, 3% from Burnaby/New Westminster, and the rest (7%) were from all other suburban communities: (Port Moody/Port Coquitlam/Coquitlam 2%, Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows/Langley 1%, Surrey/White Rock/Delta/Ladner 3%). When there are too few responses from any one area to be meaningful, we compare Vancouver, Richmond, and all other areas in a combined category called “Other”. The chart below illustrates the distribution of the respondents across the region.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS



E. Occupation of Respondents and Spouses

Of all respondents, 20% gave no answer to this question and 15% were retired. Of the rest, the overwhelming majority were professionals or businesspersons, either self-employed or in management positions (N= 164).

The top five:

- Business/self-employed/consulting (14%)
- Education/social sciences (12%)
- Health occupations (10%)
- Law professions (7%)
- Management (6%)

Occupation of spouses: 20 % were retired (N= 114)

The top five:

- Business/self employed/consulting (17%)
- Health occupations (10%)
- Education/social sciences (9%)
- Art/culture/sport (6%)
- Sales and Service (5%)

See Appendix 3 for complete breakdown by occupation.

F. Level of Education

The level of education (N=180) mirrors the large percentage of professionals, self-employed and business or management positions. (Note: 12% of respondents did not answer this question.) Asked for the highest level of education attained, 34% had a graduate degree and 8% had doctorates. Another 33% held bachelors' degrees, 16% earned a diploma or certificate and 9% reported high school graduation as their highest level of education. This is compared with the general population of British Columbia, where only 48% of adults between ages 25-54 years have some form of post-secondary education.

For our analysis of education levels, three categories were used: low, medium and high: low for high school completion, diploma or certificate (25%); medium for undergraduate degree (33%); high for graduate degree or PhD (42%).

G. Household Income

Not surprisingly the yearly household income level (before taxes) of those who answered the question (N=148) reflected the professional and educational levels of respondents. Of the households that reported, 49% earned \$100,000 or more per year. Of that group, 15% earned over \$250,000, 21% earned between \$125,000 and \$249,000, and 13% earned between \$100,000 and \$125,000. Another 15% earned between \$75,000 and \$100,000, 25% earned between \$25,000 and \$75,000, and 10% earned \$25,000 or less. Although the Low Income Cut-off (LICO) for Greater Vancouver is about \$25,000 for a household, for the purposes of this report we divided income levels into three categories: low income households that earn less than \$54,999 (23%); medium income households earn \$55,000-99,000 (28%); and high income households, over \$100,000 (49%).

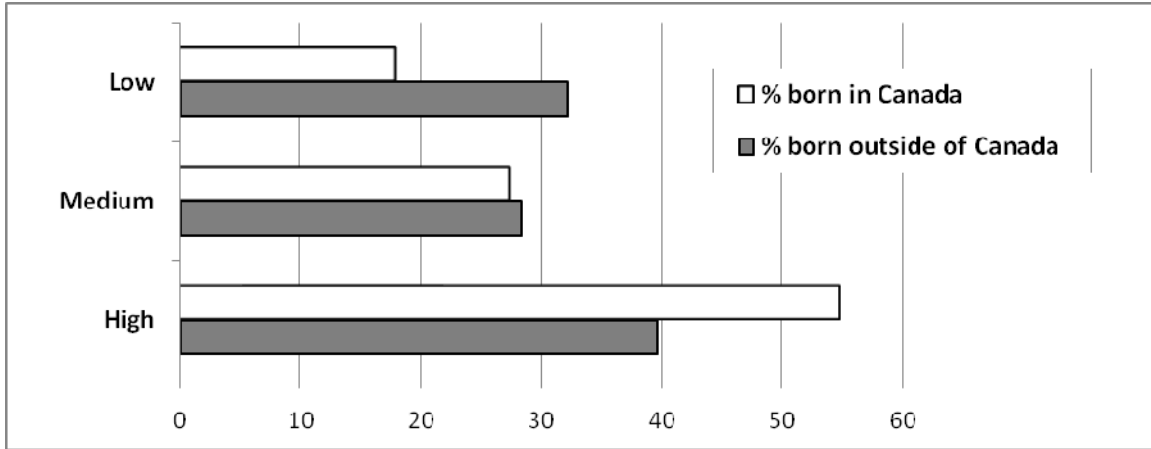
H. Place of Birth

Greater Vancouver is known as a destination for immigrants from all across Canada and countries abroad. The Jewish community is no exception. The Canadian Jewish community has a higher percentage of immigrants from abroad than the general Canadian community. In the Vancouver CMA, Canadian-born Jews account for 65% of the Jewish population; approximately 35% of the Jewish population of the Lower Mainland was born outside the country. (See Appendix 2 for breakdown by country or origin).

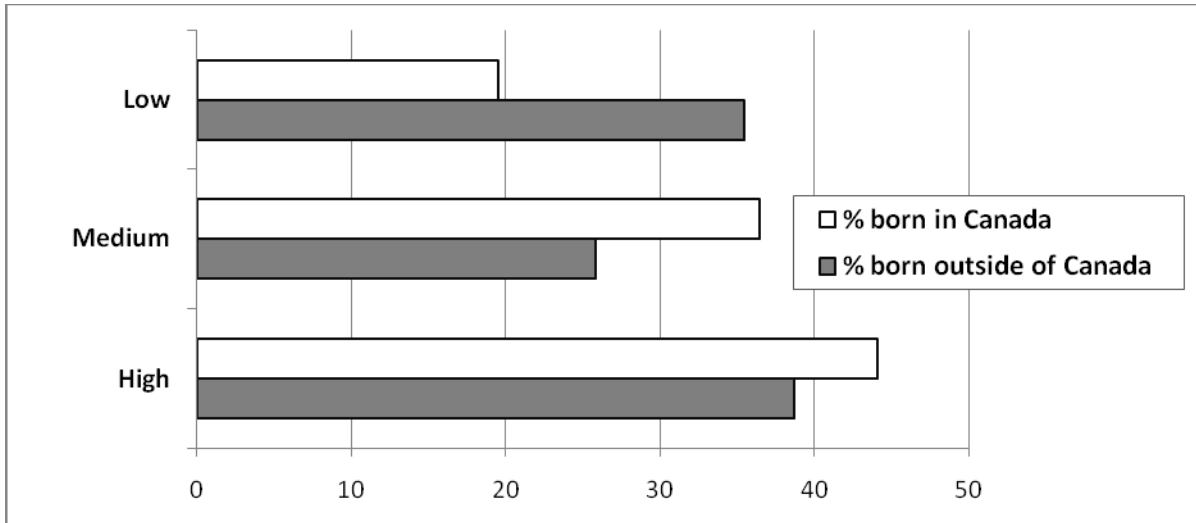
The greatest number of immigrant respondents 42% (N=24) arrived in the 1960s and 1970s, with another 32% (N=18) arriving since 1990. The three main areas of origin were Western Europe (N=17), USA (N=13) and South Africa (N=10). This contrasts with the more recent immigration from the Former Soviet Union and Israel, a trend not reflected in responses to this survey. Of Canadian-born respondents, 42% were born in Vancouver, 20% in Montreal, 18% in Toronto, 10% in Winnipeg and the remaining 10% from other parts of Canada.

There are differences between Canadian-born and immigrant populations with regards to education and income. The following charts illustrate some of the differences in education and income levels between Canadian and foreign-born respondents.

INCOME LEVELS OF RESPONDENTS BY PLACE OF BIRTH



EDUCATION LEVELS OF RESPONDENTS BY PLACE OF BIRTH



III. ANALYSIS OF DATA

A. Identity

A major goal of the survey was to discover the range and variety of Jewish attitudes and practices in our community. With this information, the community can analyze the services currently provided and plan for new programs and services – or modify the ones currently being delivered.

To this end, we began by seeking the answers to three questions in order to have respondents give us their own definition of Jewish identity. We asked: How were you raised? How do you define yourself Jewishly? How would you define your children’s Jewish identity? We can then

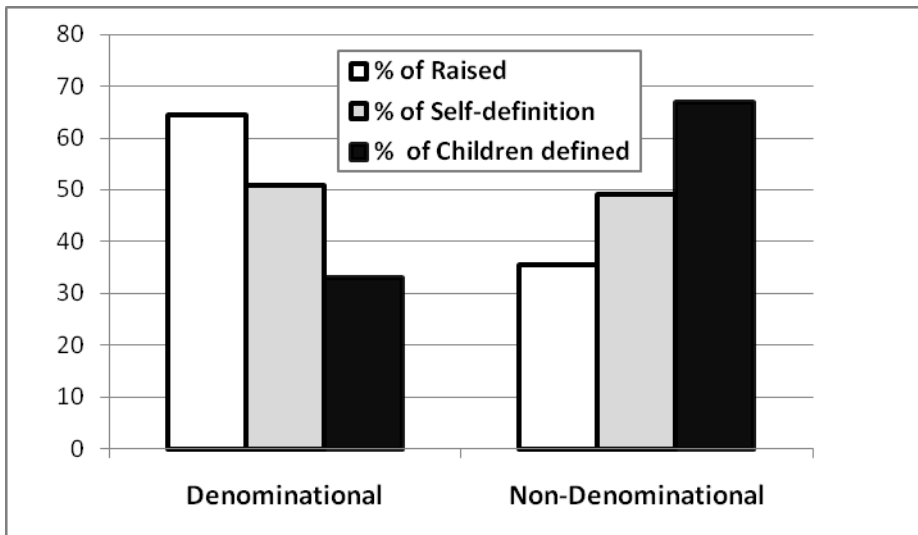
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see if there is continuity or change among the generations. Respondents were given 12 possible categories for each of the three sections. (See Appendix 3 for breakdown by identity).

The responses reflect a major shift from the way respondents were raised to the way they now identify themselves. Major changes have occurred from the way in which most respondents were raised and the way that they perceive their own Jewish identity and that of their children. For example: 16% said they were raised in an Orthodox household, but only 12% identified themselves as Orthodox, and only 7% placed their children in that category. Approximately 14% defined their upbringing as Traditional, yet only 10% identified themselves as Traditional, and 8% placed their children in that category.

In contrast, 13% defined their upbringing as Culturally Jewish, 19% identified themselves as Culturally Jewish, and 22% identified their children as such. These responses signal a movement away from traditional definitions of Denominational affiliation, without sectarian ascription. The trend away from Denominational identity is clearer when we look at the graph below:

CHANGE IN DENOMINATIONAL/ NON-DENOMINATIONAL IDENTITIES ACROSS GENERATIONS



The children of parents with a Denominational identity are identified by the respondents as increasingly Non-Denominational, indicating that the grandchildren would fall into the Non-Denominational categories. This survey indicates an apparent trend away from denominational identity among the younger generation. What this means for community planning is discussed in the section on "IMPLICATIONS".

Location matters. In Vancouver City, 50% identified themselves by a denomination. In Richmond, denominational identity rose to 63%. (Richmond also has the lowest intermarriage rate at 18%, according to the 2001 census.) In all other areas combined, the rate was only 46%. Non-denominational identities for Vancouver and Richmond were 50% and 33% respectively, and all other areas combined were 49%.

However, when asked how they were raised, respondents in all areas differed only slightly. In Vancouver, denominational upbringing was 60%; in Richmond, it was 63%. All other areas

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combined reported that 56% of respondents had a denominational upbringing. Non-denominational upbringing in Vancouver was 34%, Richmond was 33% and all other areas were 31%.

B. How Did Respondents View and Practice Judaism?

Our next series of questions asked what practices were important to respondents and what they actually practiced. We used this data to see if different self-definitions reflected major differences in what respondents considered important and what they practiced in daily life.

We asked respondents what Judaic practices they considered of high, medium and low importance, and which they actually practice. We chose the top ten considered important, the top ten respondents indicated that they actually practice, and then compared the two. We divided the respondents again between those identifying denominationally and those identifying non-denominationally. We also compared the responses between those who indicated that they had intermarried, and those who were married and indicated that they were both Jewish.

We chose to isolate responses to more general questions – addressing environmental concerns, advocating for social justice, and working to eliminate poverty – separately.

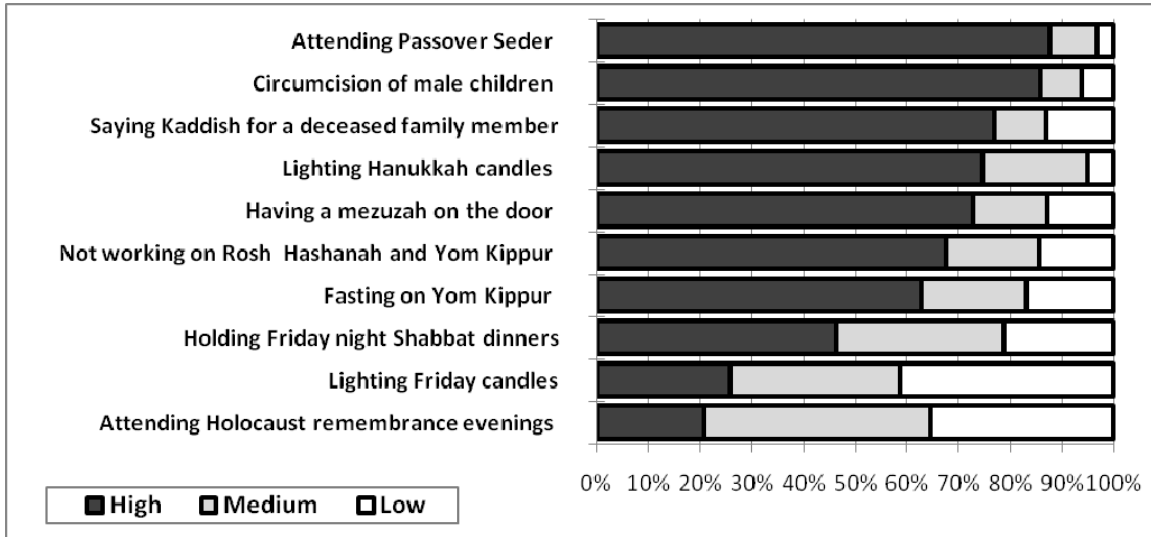
C. The Importance and Practices for Respondents and Their Children

We asked respondents to tell us what Jewish practices they considered the most and least important. We also asked them to answer questions about what their actual practices are and what practices they hope their children will observe.

The top ten practices which respondents rated as high in importance, beginning with the most important, were:

- Attending a Passover Seder (88%)
- Circumcising a male child (Brit Milah) (86%)
- Saying Kaddish for a deceased family member (77%)
- Lighting Hanukkah candles (75%)
- Having a mezuzah on the door (73%)
- Not working on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (68%)
- Fasting on Yom Kippur (63%)
- Holding Friday night dinner for family and friends (46%)
- Lighting Shabbat candles (26%)
- Attending Holocaust remembrance evenings (21%)

TOP TEN MOST IMPORTANT PRACTICES



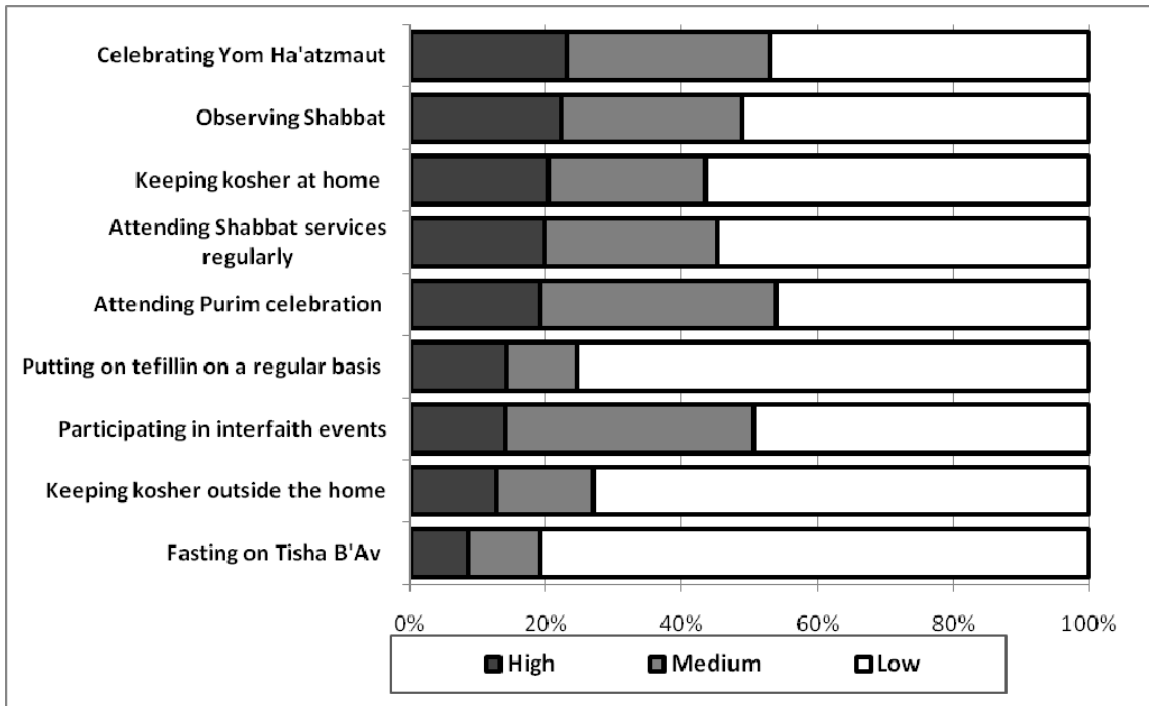
The top ten practices observed were:

- Attending a Passover Seder (97%)
- Lighting Hanukkah candles (95%)
- Circumcision of a male child (Brit Milah) (92%)
- Having a mezuzah on the door (86%)
- Fasting on Yom Kippur (76%)
- Saying Kaddish for a deceased family member (76%)
- Not working on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (68%)
- Lighting candles on Friday night (61%)
- Holding Shabbat family dinners for family and friends (60%)
- Attending Holocaust remembrance evenings (51%)

Rated of much lesser importance in descending order:

- Celebrating Yom Ha'atzmaut (23%)
- Observing Shabbat (22%)
- Attending Shabbat services regularly (20%)
- Keeping Kosher at home (20%)
- Attending a Purim celebration (19%)
- Keeping Kosher outside the home (14%)
- Putting on tefillin on a regular basis (13%)
- Fasting on Tisha B'Av (8%)

PRACTICES RATED LOWER IN IMPORTANCE



The practices less observed (in order of decreasing observance) were:

- Attending a Purim celebration (40%)
- Celebrating Yom Ha'atzmaut (39%)
- Attending Shabbat services regularly (27%)
- Observing Shabbat (27%)
- Keeping kosher at home (25%)
- Keeping kosher outside the home (12%)
- Fasting on Tisha B'Av (10%)
- Putting on tefillin on a regular basis (10%)

Although in a slightly different order, the ratings are similar. However, when we analyze the practices themselves, we see that in each instance there is a significant cluster.

All but one of the categories highest rated for importance and observance are practices which are home-based and personal: Seder, circumcision, Hanukkah candles, mezuzah, Friday night dinner and candle lighting, fasting on Yom Kippur and not working on the High Holidays. The only synagogue-based practice deemed important was saying Kaddish for a family member, and the only community-based activity was attending Holocaust remembrance events. Therefore, we can conclude that for the total number of respondents to these questions, personal and home or family-based practices make up the strongest expressions of their Judaism.

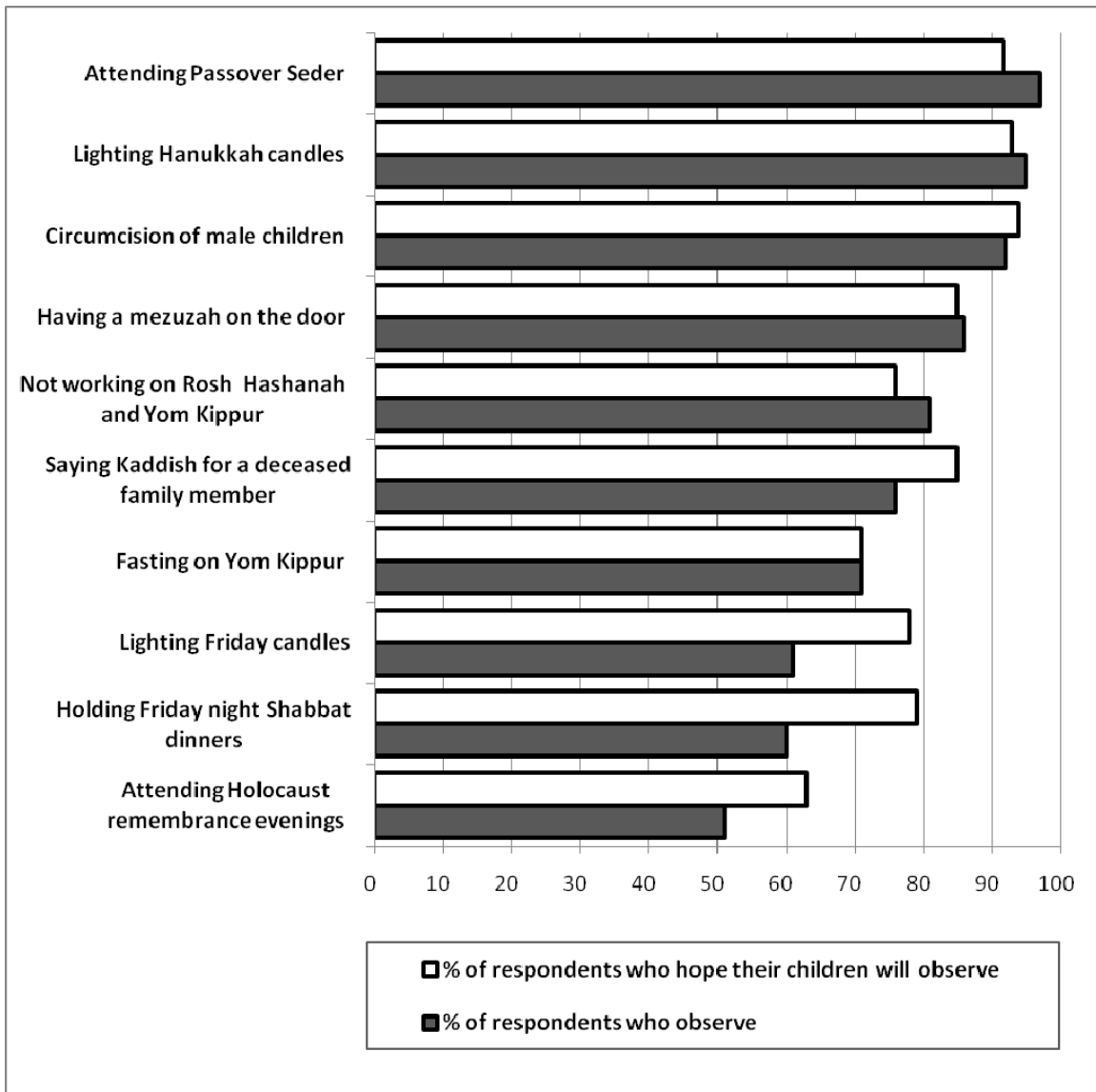
We also asked respondents to tell us what they hoped their children would observe. The top ten responses were:

- Lighting Hanukkah candles (93%)

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- Attending a Passover Seder (92%)
- Circumcision of a male child (94%)
- Having a mezuzah on the door (85%)
- Saying Kaddish for a deceased family member (85%)
- Holding Friday night dinners with family and friends (79%)
- Lighting candles on Friday night (78%)
- Not working on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur/ (76%)
- Fasting on Yom Kippur (71%)
- Attending Holocaust remembrance events (63%)

TOP TEN PRACTICES FOR RESPONDENTS AND HOPES FOR CHILDREN

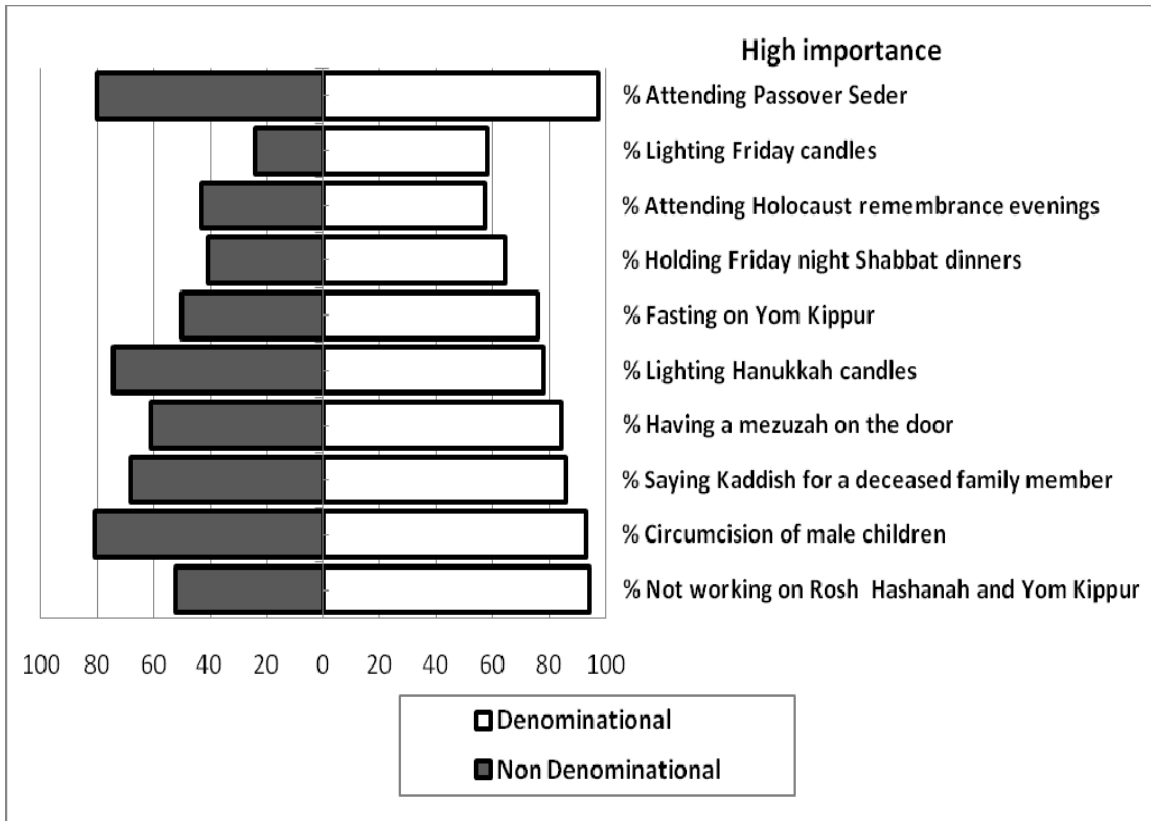


Again, the home and family-based observances are the majority, with only one synagogue-based practice – saying Kaddish – and one community event – attending Holocaust remembrance

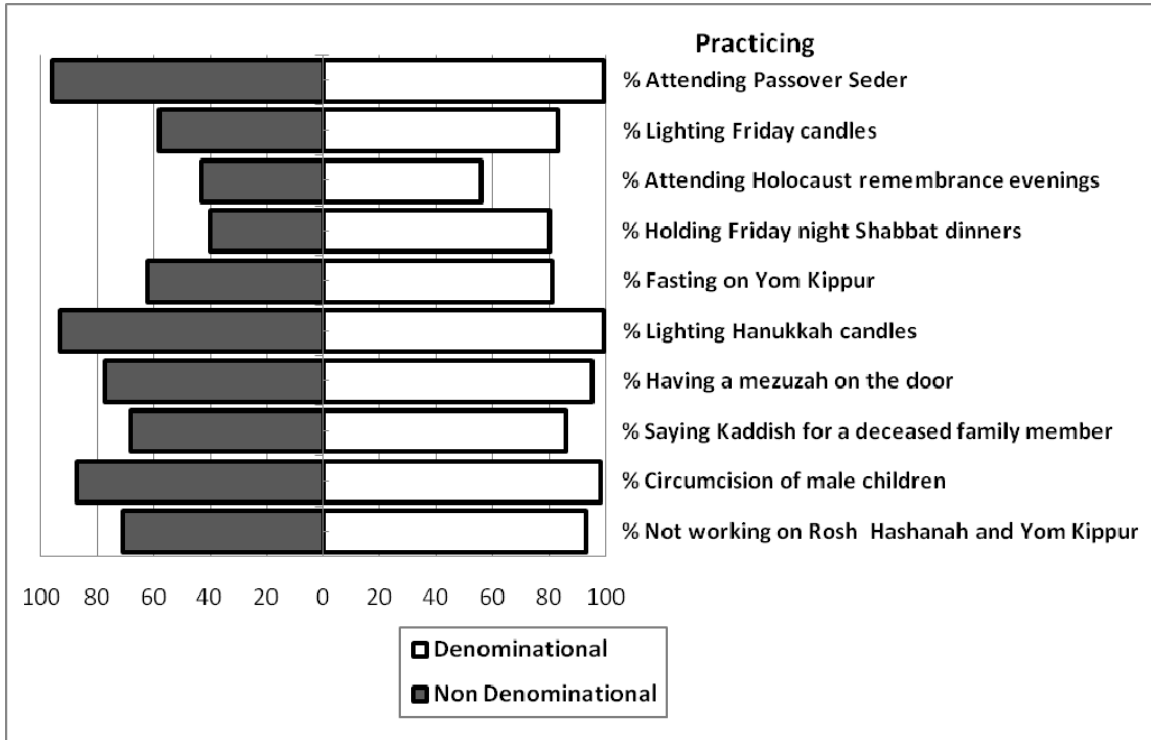
evenings – selected. These findings may be significant for synagogues, in that they indicate a decrease in synagogue-based worship, and in central observances like kashrut (whether at home or outside the home) and prayer. Also, parents tended to expect more from their children than from themselves.

Did it make a difference if the respondents identified themselves as Denominational or Non-Denominational in the choices of practices and their importance to them and their children? The following two graphs show comparisons by identity in the areas of importance and practice.

COMPARISON OF IMPORTANCE BY DENOMINATIONAL / NON-DENOMINATIONAL IDENTITY



COMPARISON OF PRACTICES BY DENOMINATIONAL / NON-DENOMINATIONAL IDENTITY



D. The Importance of Community Activities

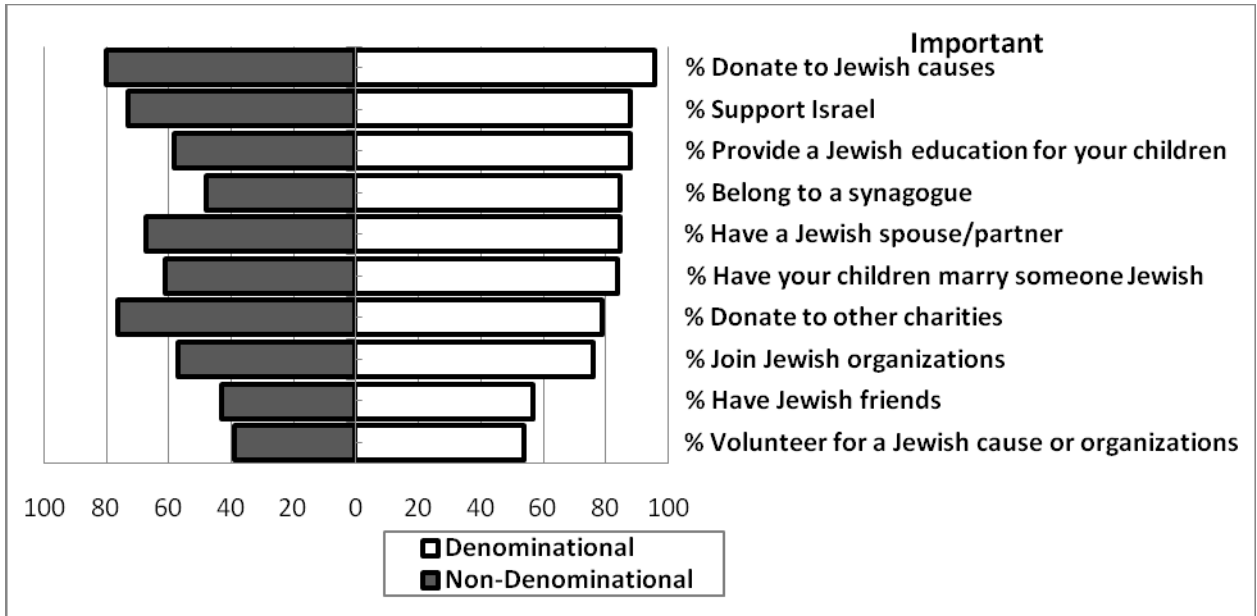
Respondents were asked to rank in order of importance a series on non-ritual activities. The top ten practices in decreasing levels of importance were:

- Donate to Jewish causes (88%)
- Provide Jewish education for children (82%)
- Support Israel (80%)
- Donate to other charities (77%)
- Have Jewish friends (76%)
- Have Jewish spouse/partner (76%)
- Have children marry someone Jewish (73%)
- Volunteer for Jewish causes and organizations (69%)
- Belong to a synagogue (68%)
- Join Jewish organizations (67%)
- Date someone Jewish (66%)
- Take part in Jewish education for self (59%)

The remaining items: Read/Speak Hebrew, subscribe to Jewish periodicals, volunteer for non-Jewish causes, and live in a Jewish neighbourhood, were rated 50% or below on a scale of importance.

When we compared these items by Denominational/ Non-Denominational identity, the order changed as indicated in the following chart.

IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES BY DENOMINATIONAL / NON-DENOMINATIONAL IDENTITY



For Denominational respondents, the top three activities remained the same: donating to Jewish causes, giving children a Jewish education and supporting Israel. However, their next two choices (belonging to a synagogue and having a Jewish spouse) differed from the non-denominational choices, as did the order of their remaining choices.

For Non-Denominational respondents, the order changed. Donating to Jewish causes and Jewish education for children remained first and second, but third was donating to non-Jewish charities. Support for Israel was fourth, followed by Jewish friends, a Jewish spouse, children marrying someone Jewish, volunteering for Jewish organizations, joining Jewish organizations and lastly, dating someone Jewish.

Again, most notable about these choices is how many of them are personal choices or activities that people can do without joining a synagogue or other Jewish organization. For Denominational respondents, participation or membership in a synagogue and having a Jewish spouse came before other choices. Having children marry someone Jewish ranks sixth for Denominational and seventh for Non-Denominational respondents. (See Appendix 5 for other answers to community priorities).

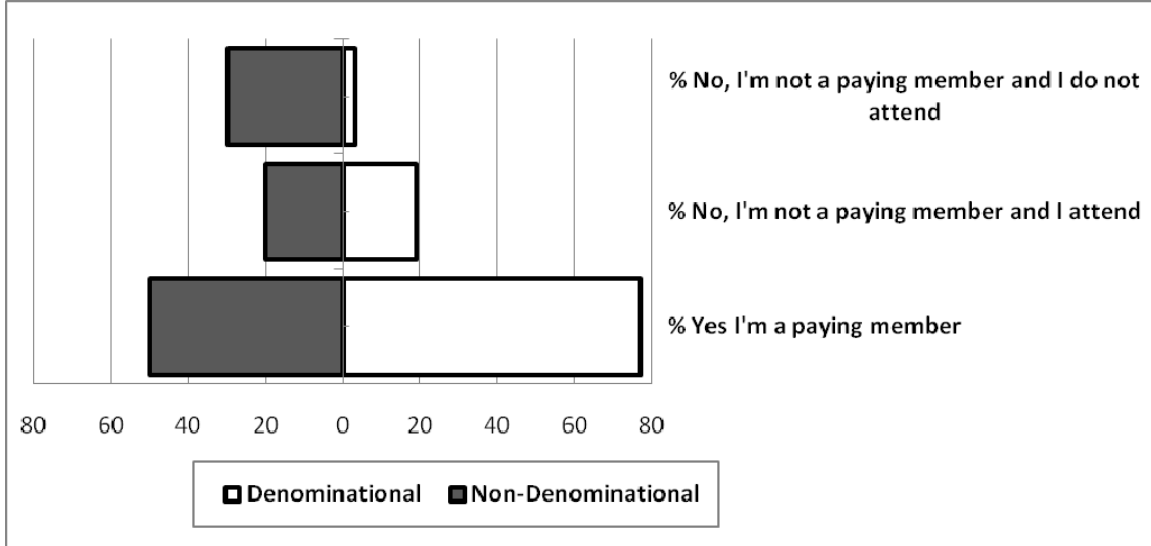
E. Synagogue Affiliation

Of those who responded to the question on synagogue affiliation (N=187), about 50% were paying members. Another 19% attended but were not paying members; only 18% neither belonged nor attended. The rate for synagogue membership for denominational respondents

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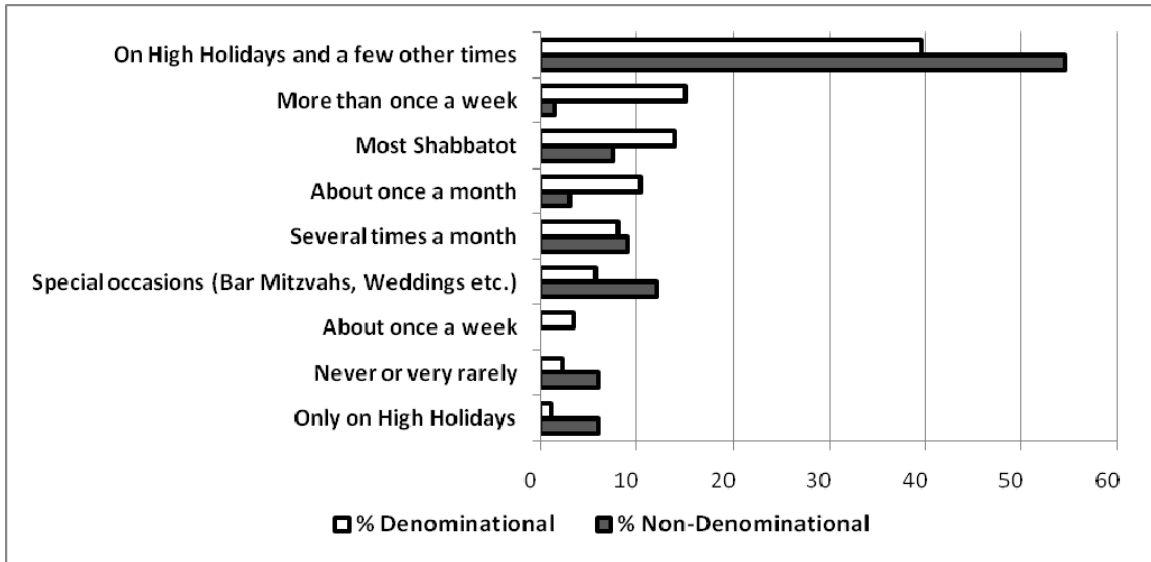
was 65%, compared with Non-Denominational at 35%. For those in the Non-Denominational category, half neither belonged nor attended.

SYNAGOGUE MEMBERSHIP BY DENOMINATIONAL / NON-DENOMINATIONAL IDENTITY



How often did respondents attend? Out of 155 responses, 46% said they attended “On High Holidays and a few other times.” Only 11% indicated they attended “Most Shabbatot.” Furthermore, 9% reported attending more than once a week and 2% attended once a week. The rest attended rarely or on special occasions. So even though 63% were members, this did not translate into regular attendance at the same level.

SYNAGOGUE PARTICIPATION BY DENONIMATIONAL / NON-DENOMINATIONAL IDENTITY



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Membership for Canadian-born and non-Canadian born respondents was similar at 64% and 63%. Not surprisingly, income level made a difference. Membership of those in the high-income category was 82% (N=72). For those in the medium range it was 53% (N=40), and for those in the lowest income category, it was 44% (N=34).

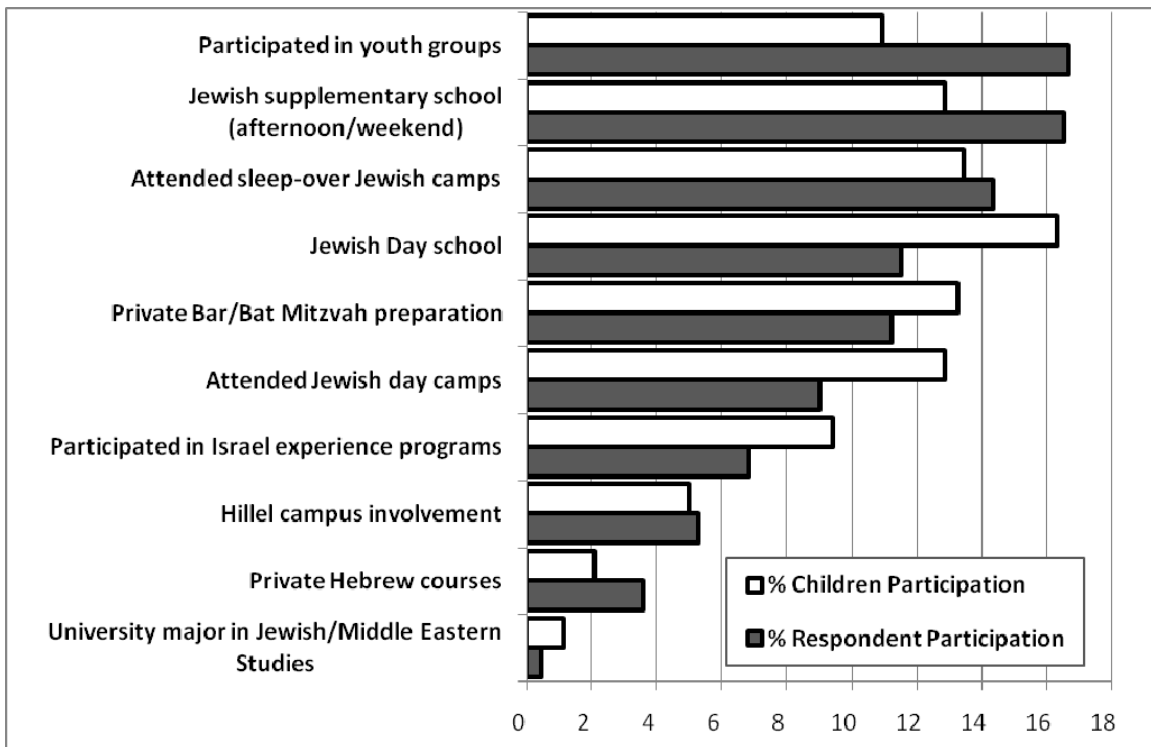
What were some of the barriers to participation and membership? “Not a priority” was first at 37% (N=89), with financial need second at 26%. Distance was third at 8%. In general, financial need and priority were the two main reasons, regardless of the other factors (Canadian-born or not, in Vancouver, Richmond or elsewhere in the Lower Mainland, Denominational or Non-Denominational).

F. Jewish Education

We asked respondents to describe various Jewish educational experiences they had, and what they had provided for their children. We also asked them how important these experiences were. They could choose one of three categories: important, neutral, or not important. We looked at the responses in general, and then cross-tabulated them by country of origin, place of residence, and marital status, as well as by whether their spouse was Jewish or not. The majority of respondents were speaking of past experiences, since many no longer had school-aged children at home.

Categories included: Jewish day school (elementary and high school); supplementary school; Private Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparations or private Hebrew courses; day or sleepover camps; youth groups and Israel experiences; Hillel campus involvement, and university courses or majors.

COMPARISON OF PARENTS’ AND CHILDREN’S PARTICIPATION IN JEWISH EDUCATION



Report on Jewish Attitudes and Practices among Members of the Greater Vancouver Jewish Community

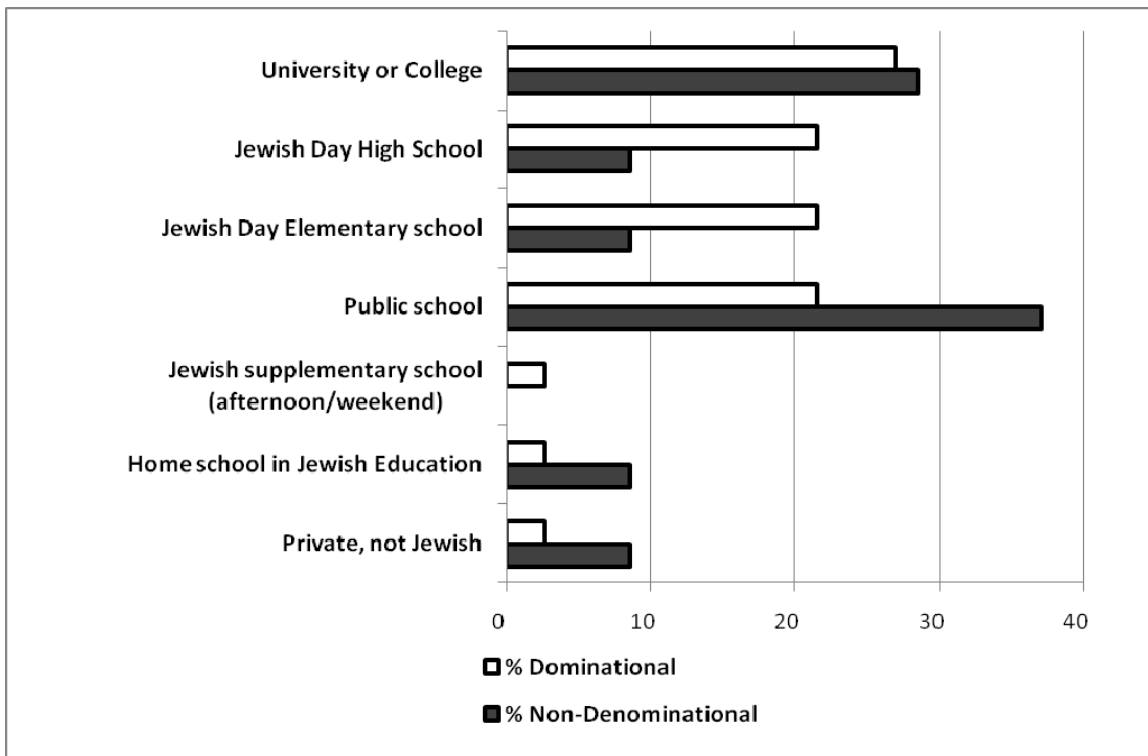
Because there were multiple answers for each respondent, we looked at the percentages for each choice to determine which choices were most frequent and which choices corresponded to the actual practices of parents when compared to what they considered important. Here trends are important, since the numbers vary greatly and respondents could choose more than one activity.

Of the total responses, 72% said attending some form of Jewish school was important, versus 16% who were neutral and 12% who thought it was not important. Regarding a Jewish camp experience, 72% thought it was important, 15% were neutral and 13% thought it unimportant.

We then looked at the actual practices of parents regarding Hebrew schooling for their children. Of those who deemed it important, 49% had their children attend a day elementary school, 31% a supplementary school, 13% a day high school and 7% a supplementary high school experience.

Interestingly, when we asked about children currently living in the household (N=82), while 64% (excluding college or university) were in a Jewish school, 25% were not attending a Jewish school even though their parents thought it important to do so. When asked if they provided the same educational experience for all their children, 82% said yes, 18% responded no.

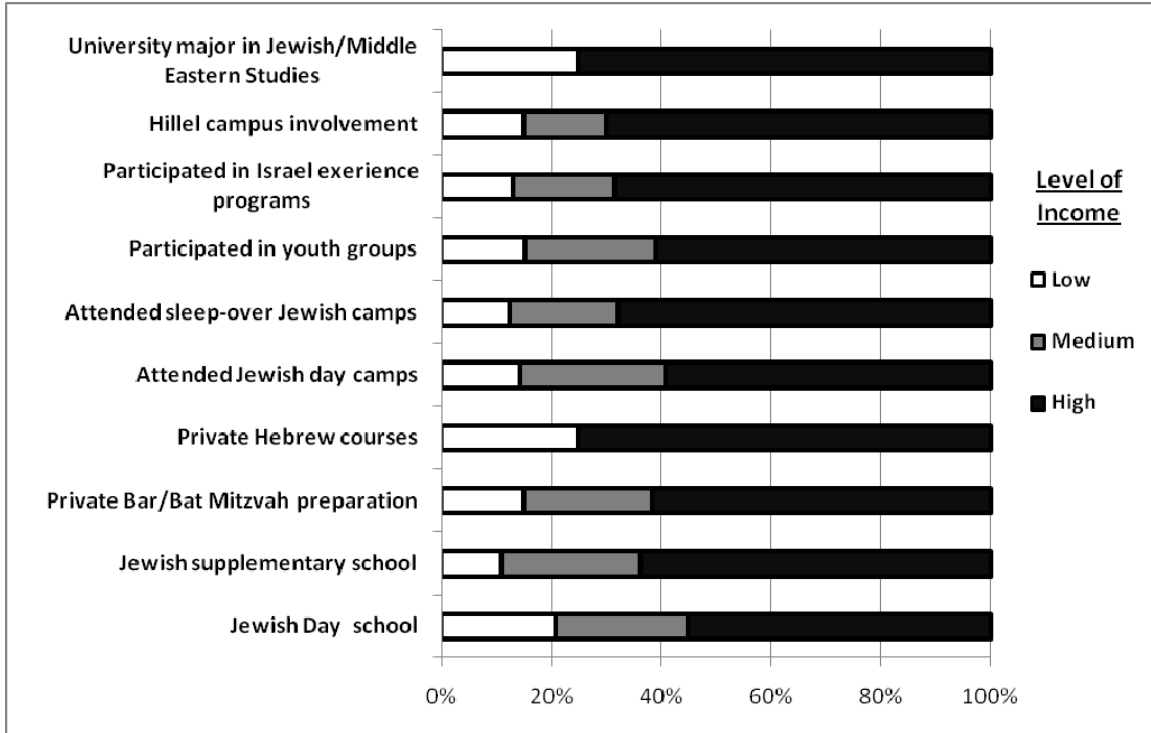
COMPARISON OF EDUCATION CHOICES BY DENOMINATIONAL / NON-DENOMINATIONAL IDENTITY



We then asked for reasons why the children did not attend. Approximately 26% replied that their child was not interested, while another 15% said it was too expensive. Other reasons given for not providing their children with a Jewish education were geographic distance, quality of

education, “too religious”, ideological opposition, or not a priority. For parents with a denominational identity, “too expensive” was the top reason given, regardless of their location. For Non-Denominational parents, cost, quality of education and the “too religious” categories were tied for first choice. For parents with a low or medium income, “child not interested” was the top reason, followed by “too expensive”. For parents with the highest education, other reasons were given. For Canadian-born parents, the most important reason was cost; for non-Canadian born, cost and priority were tied.

PARTICIPATION IN JEWISH EDUCATION BY INCOME LEVELS



The results warrant further examination of the reasons why and why not children are provided a Jewish education along with what are some incentives that could be used to promote participation in Jewish education at both the elementary and secondary school levels. One point that this study does illustrate is that today’s children are more involved in the decision to participate in Jewish education than in past generations. The value of a Jewish education should be directed toward both children and their parents as children’s preferences are definitely a growing factor in decision to attend.

G. Jewish Camp

For parents who considered Jewish camping experiences important, 57% sent their children to a day camp and 14% to sleepover camps, while 10% did not send their children to camp at all. It was not clear whether this was because of the children’s ages or because of their children’s lack of interest. For those who were neutral, 31% and 13% respectively sent their children to camp. Even for parents who did not consider it important, 7% sent them to day camp and 13% to sleepover camps.

H. Participation in Jewish Youth and Young Adult Groups

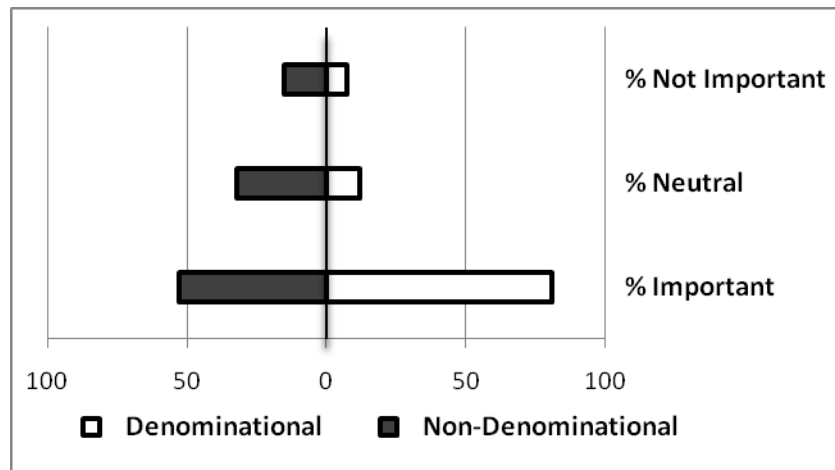
For parents who thought it was important to have their children participate in Jewish youth groups and Hillel activities, 88% (N=46) said their children were participating in some form of youth activities, and 83% (N=20) said they participated in campus activities. These results do not correspond with a 2004 JESNA study of youth affiliation that indicated that less than 20% of Jewish youth in the Lower Mainland participated in organized youth activities. The seemingly very high rate of participation identified in this study is directly attributable to both the small sample size and the overall rate of affiliation among this group of respondents. To get a more accurate picture of the participation rate among this age group would require a more targeted study.

I. Dating and Marrying a Jewish Partner

Of the 176 answers to ranking the importance of dating someone Jewish, 66% thought it important, 22% were neutral, 11% thought it unimportant. Asked whether having a Jewish spouse was important (N=186), 76% said yes, 15% were neutral and 9% found it unimportant. Having your children marry someone Jewish (N=174) was important to 73% of respondents, while 19% were neutral and 8% thought it unimportant.

When we compared Denominational with Non-Denominational responses, for those who identified denominationally (N=84), 81% thought it important to date someone Jewish, 12% were neutral and 7% thought it unimportant. For those with a Non-Denominational identity (N=87), 53% thought it important, 32% were neutral and 15% deemed it unimportant.

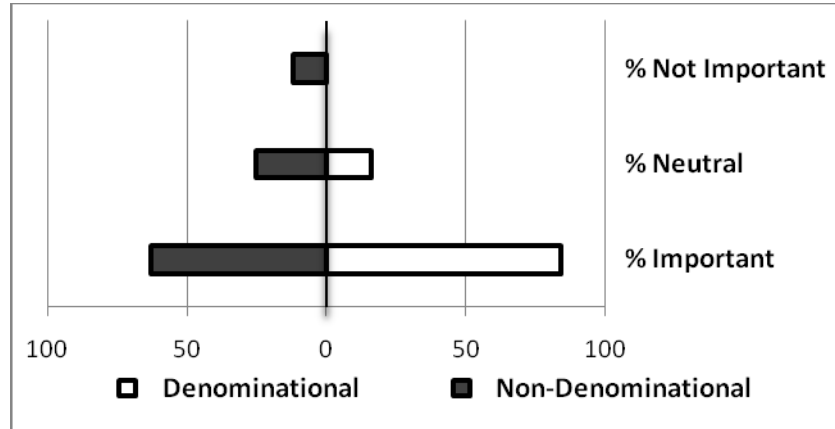
IMPORTANCE OF CHILDREN DATING SOMEONE JEWISH BY DENOMINATIONAL / NON-DENOMINATIONAL IDENTITY



The importance of having a Jewish spouse also showed significant differences between the two groups. For Denominationally identified respondents (N=92), 86% thought it important, while only 67% of the Non-Denominational respondents (N=89), thought it important. When it came to a question of the importance of having their children marry someone Jewish, again there is a difference between the two groups. For Denominational respondents (N=64) 84% thought it

important, while 16% were neutral. For Non-Denominational respondents, (N=55), 63% thought it important, 25% were neutral and 12% thought it unimportant.

IMPORTANCE OF CHILDREN MARRYING A JEWISH SPOUSE BY DENOMINATIONAL / NON-DENOMINATIONAL IDENTITY



J. Participation in Community Life

Participants were provided with a list of approximately 59 Jewish organizations ranging from synagogues and day schools, to service organizations, groups that promote arts and culture and social service agencies. Due to the variety of choices available and the range of possible reasons for participating or non-participating based on the nature and purpose of the particular agency selected, the findings in this section can not be generalized across all Jewish communal organizations.

Of the 184 responses to questions regarding participation in Jewish communal life, 78% answered that they participated in at least one communal institution or activity. The highest rate of participation was from Richmond at 84%; for Vancouver, the rate was 82% and for all other areas combined, it was 58% – a considerable drop-off. There was less difference in the participation rates between Canadian-born and non-Canadian born respondents, 79% versus 75% respectively. There was a significant difference between couples where both were Jewish (85%) and couples where only one partner was Jewish (60%). Among those with a Denominational identity, the participation rate was 87%. For those with a Non-Denominational identity, the rate was 69%.

Income levels also impact participation. High-income earners’ participation was 82%, compared with 69% for medium-income earners and 64% for low-income households.

When asked what barriers prevented participation, respondents were given six choices: financial need, geographic distance, ideological opposition, quality of service and programs, “too religious”, and “not a priority for me”.

Out of 46 responses, 48% said that participation in a Jewish organization was not a priority, followed by financial need (17%) and geographic distance (17%). When we evaluated the

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responses by country of origin, marital status, income and self-definition, in all cases the first answer was “not a priority for me”. Only when we cross-tabulated by geographic area, was geography a larger barrier than personal choice.

Respondents were asked if they participated in activities of the Jewish Community Centre of Greater Vancouver. Of the 182 who responded, 55% indicated they did not participate, while 45% responded that they did. Vancouver respondents (N=115) answered yes 52% of the time, while participation by Richmond residents (N=26) was 35%. The participation rate of all other areas (N=36) was 28%. By country of origin, answers were 44% yes for Canadian-born (N=117), 46% for non-Canadian-born (N=63).

Higher participation rates were also found for those married to a Jewish spouse (N=113), at 48% versus 40% for those married to a non-Jewish spouse (N=25). For Denominational respondents, the rate was 52% (N=90) and 40% for Non-Denominational participants (N=86). When income was taken into account, the rate of participation fell from 48% for those in the high-income bracket (N=71) to 44% for medium-income households (N=39) and 33% for low-income homes (N=33).

What were the barriers to participation? For Richmond residents, the most important barrier was location; for Vancouver residents, “Interest” was the number one barrier. For those in other areas, both location and priority were tied for first place.

When we looked at country of origin again, “Not a priority” was the highest category chosen. Those married to a Jewish spouse and those who defined their identity as Denominational both indicated that location was the prime barrier, while those identified as intermarried chose “Not a Priority”, as did many Non-Denominational respondents.

Cost was the main reason for non-participation by low- and medium-income families, while high-income earners cited “Not a priority” most often.

We then asked about participation in programs and services of the Jewish Family Service Agency (JFSA). Approximately 88% of the 176 respondents indicated they had not used the services of JFSA. There was a slightly higher rate of participation (15%) among non-Canadian-born than among Canadian born (10%) respondents. The rate of participation increased as income decreased from a low of 6% among the high-income earners, to 15% for medium-income earners, to 16% of those in the low-income bracket. These results are not surprising given the mandate of JFSA and the income level of a significant portion of respondents in this survey. The major reason for not participating was “no need”, followed by “not a priority” and then “knowledge of programs and services”. “No need” was the major reason in all geographic areas and for both Canadian and non-Canadian born respondents.

Readers should be aware that only the highlights from the data regarding community participation have been included. If, in the future, telephone or face-to-face interviews are conducted with some of the survey respondents, the issue of reasons for participation and barriers to participation could be explored further. These responses could then contribute to the future planning for many of our community organizations.

K. Attitudes and Practices Regarding Israel

Vancouver is known as a very Zionist community. Many former Vancouverites have made aliyah to Israel, many have family living there, and the support of the state is a primary goal of many fundraising campaigns. So it is no surprise that 84% of respondents to the question (10% had no answer) have visited Israel at least once (N= 185). Of those, 55% were Canadian-born, 29% non-Canadian-born. Of the Denominational respondents (N=92) 83% had visited Israel versus 89% of Non-Denominational respondents (N=87). In fact, 5% more Non-Denominational respondents had visited Israel than those who reported a Denominational identity. Support for Israel crosses all identity lines.

Of both categories, 72% had visited two or more times. Again, location matters. Of the Richmond respondents, 93% had been to Israel at least once (N=27). Of Vancouver residents, 84% had visited at least once, and of all others (N=36), 75%.

What of the comparison between Canadian and non-Canadian born Jews in relation to Israel? The results are virtually identical: 83% of Canadian-born Jews has visited Israel (N=121), versus 82% of non-Canadian born Jews (N=65).

Of couples where both spouses are Jewish, 82% had visited Israel (N=117). Of Jews with a non-Jewish spouse, 77% had visited (N=26).

When it comes to travel to Israel, income matters to a certain extent. Among low-income respondents, 32% (N=25) indicated that they had visited Israel at least once, with 68% having visited twice or more. Of medium-level income respondents (N=36), 78% had visited twice or more; and although more high-income respondents (57) had visited Israel, only 70% had been there twice or more. Cost does not appear to be the sole determining factor in visits. This further indicates that support for Israel is considered important at all income levels.

Of all the respondents, 136 answered the question “What words would you use to describe your connection with Israel?”

Of those, 110 described a strong attachment to the State, with many identifying it as “family”, as a place of “pride, respect, admiration”, as a “homeland” and as a source of strength for the Jewish people. Other responses included “Spiritual, Zionist” and “one of the greatest events in our history...” Several mentioned the fact that Israel is a place of refuge. The positive responses correspond well with the number of people in this survey, regardless of denominational identity, who have visited the country at least once. See Appendix 6 for a listing of positive and critical comments about Israel.

One must appreciate the honesty and in some cases the confusion of respondents to this question. While a few clearly feel some hostility towards Israel in its actions as a state, most recognize the complexity of the situation. In advocating Israel’s case, these responses remind us to be careful not to oversimplify the issues.

L. Where do Respondents Learn about Jewish Activities?

Organizations in Metro Vancouver spend significant amounts of their budgets on publicity, getting out the word about community activities, keeping members up to date on their own services and programs, and trying to attract new members. How effective are these efforts?

We asked how respondents heard about Jewish activities or events. The results show that community information came largely from three sources: Federation publications, the Jewish Independent and friends. Synagogue bulletins accounted for another 18%. It appears that paper-based publicity remains a key source of information despite the move to more on-line methods. However, the findings may reflect the older ages of respondents rather than an overall preference for paper-based media.

Where do you read or hear about Jewish activities or events?

	Frequency	%
Federation publications (eYachad/weekly newsletter/website)	114	22
Jewish Independent	111	21
Friends	101	19
Synagogue Bulletin	95	18
Facebook/Internet/email	37	7
Other organizational newsletter or bulletin	28	5
JCCGV website	25	5
Other	15	3
Total	526	100

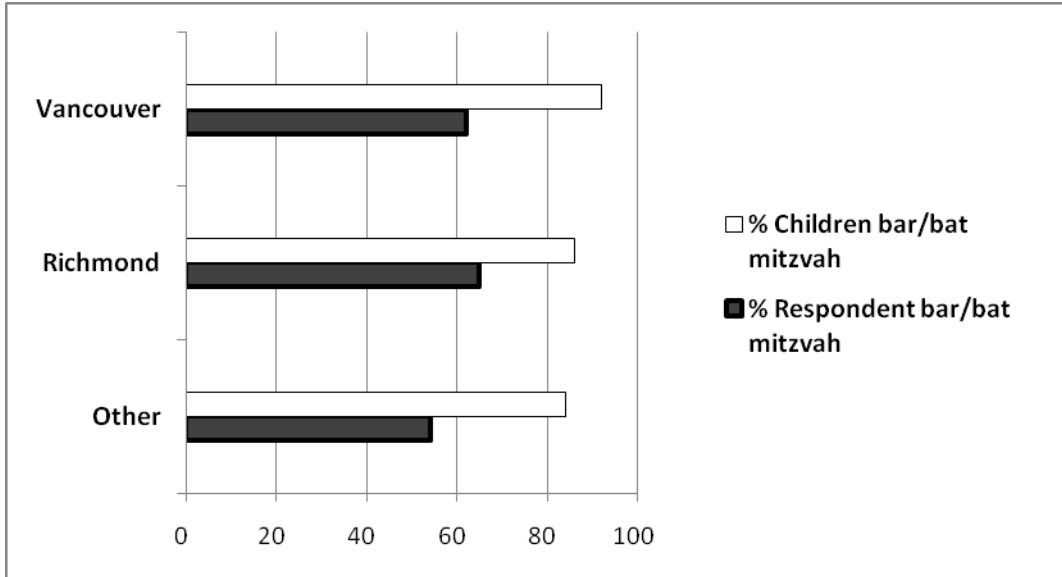
M. Bar/Bat Mitzvah: A Growing Trend – for Some

Of the 183 responses to the question on whether respondents had a bar or bat mitzvah, 61% said yes, 39% said no (N=183). However, 90% of those with children (N=137) said their children had, or would have, a bar or bat mitzvah. This statistic may reflect the increased formal and informal Jewish education of the next generation that we saw in the information on Jewish education and Jewish camp experiences, which increased significantly over their parents' generation.

Does it matter whether respondents were Canadian-born or Non-Canadian-born? Of the Canadian-born respondents, 65% said they had a bar/bat mitzvah (N=118), while only 52% of those born outside Canada (N=65) had a bar/bat mitzvah. Regarding children of Canadian-born parents, 92% had a bar/bat mitzvah, while 86% of children born to parents who immigrated to Canada had celebrated a bar/bat mitzvah.

Place of residence – Richmond, Vancouver or other areas – showed differences as well. Of the 26 who responded from Richmond, 65% had celebrated a bar/bat mitzvah. For Vancouver the rate was 62%. But for the other areas (N=35), only 54% had a bar/bat mitzvah. For their children, 92% of those living in Vancouver had a bar/bat mitzvah, while for children in Richmond and the other areas, the percentages were almost identical: 86% versus 84%, respectively.

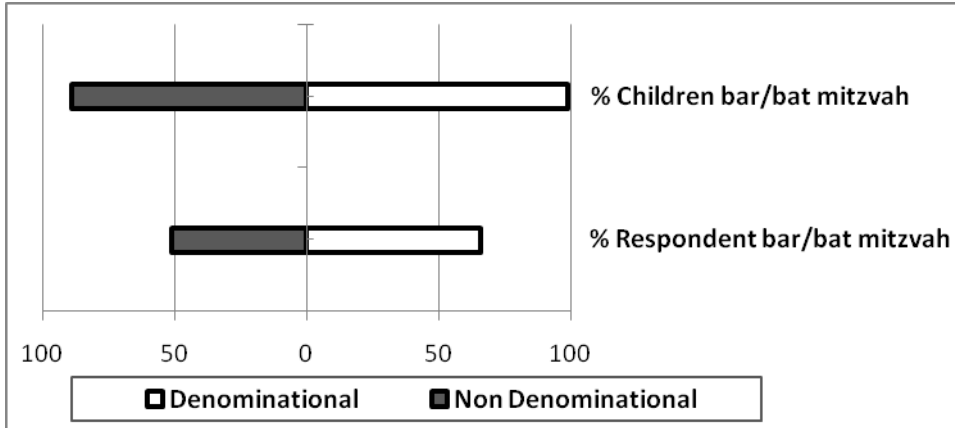
BAR/BAT MITZVAH OBSERVANCE FOR RESPONDENTS AND CHILDREN BY GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION



There are some minor differences between denominational and non-denominational respondents as to whether this rite of passage to Jewish adult status was celebrated. Of the denominational respondents, 66% (N=90) had a bar/bat mitzvah, while 59% of Non-Denominational respondents had a bar/bat mitzvah (N=87). For their children, however, the results were almost identical: for Denominational parents, 90% of their children had a bar/bat mitzvah, and 89% of children of Non-Denominational parents also had a bar/bat mitzvah.

However, the differences in bar/bat mitzvah observances are more evident between Jewish and intermarried couples. While 71% of those who married a Jewish spouse had a bar/bat mitzvah, only 40% of intermarried respondents had a bar/bat mitzvah. There was also a noticeable difference between the children of Jewish couples and the children of intermarried couples, although the number of respondents for intermarried couples was small: of 26 intermarried respondents, only 14 answered this question. For children with two Jewish parents, 92% had a bar/bat mitzvah, while only 79% of the children of intermarried couples had celebrated a bar/bat mitzvah. As the survey did not ask which parent was Jewish, it is not possible to comment on whether the lower rate for intermarried couples was due to the requirement that the bar/bat mitzvah age child must convert if the mother was not Jewish or if the rate was due to other factors such as “Not a priority”.

COMPARISON OF BAR/BAT MITZVAH OBSERVANCE FOR RESPONDENTS AND CHILDREN BY DENOMINATIONAL / NON-DENOMINATIONAL IDENTITIES



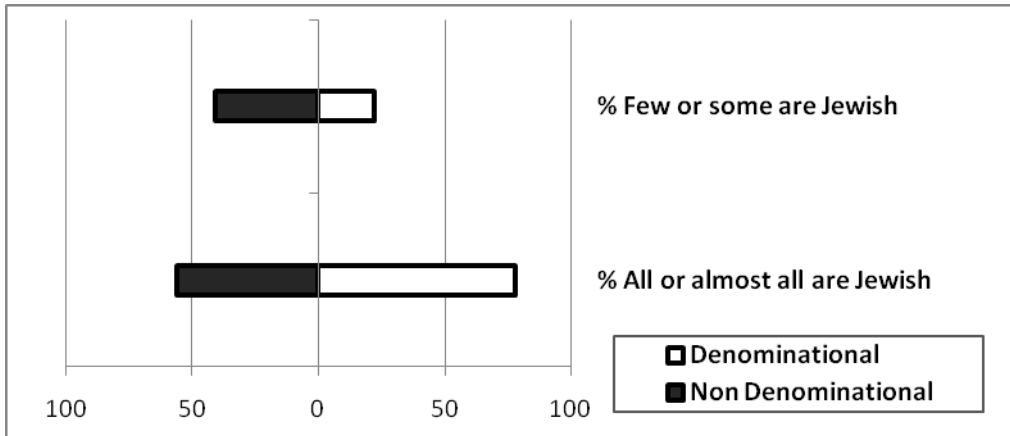
N. Jewish Friends

We asked respondents to describe their social networks. We wanted to see if there is a generational change, and if Jewish couples have significantly different social networks than intermarried couples. We also wanted to determine what other factors would make a difference in social networking.

Approximately 67% of respondents (N=187) reported that all or most of their friends were Jewish. Another 22% indicated that some of their friends were Jewish, while 11% said few or none of their friends were Jewish. However, there were differences depending on country of origin. Of Canadian-born respondents (N=121), 64% said all or most of their friends were Jewish, 2% saying that none were, and 39% indicated that they had some or a few Jewish friends. For those born outside Canada (N=65), 74% said all or most of their friends were Jewish, while 26% said they had some or few Jewish friends. Not surprisingly, those who have lived in Canada a shorter time reported a higher percentage of Jewish friends, since networks usually broaden with length of residence and acculturation.

Denominational or Non-Denominational identity also made a difference. Of the 93 responses from those who identified themselves denominationally, 78% said all or most of their friends were Jewish. Conversely, only 56% of Non-Denominational respondents (N=88) reported that all or most of their friends were Jewish.

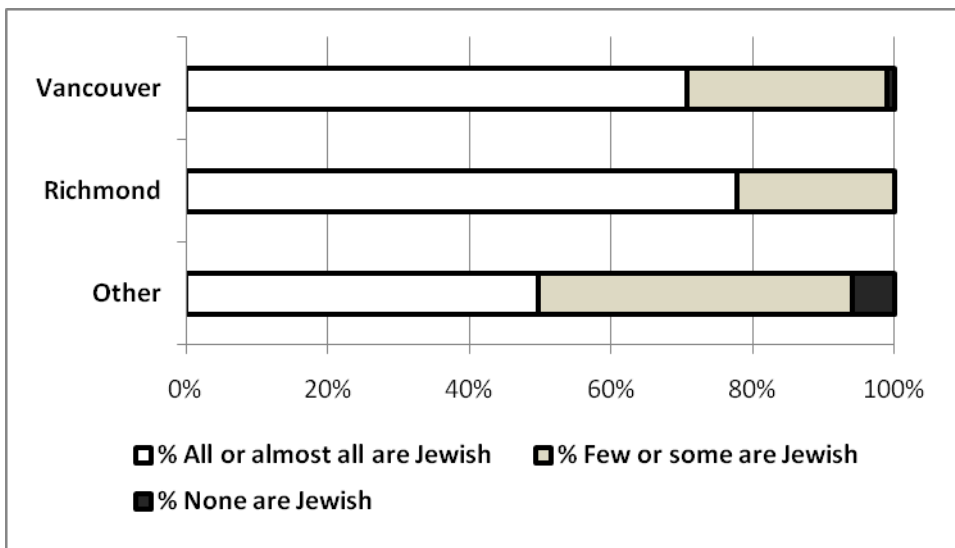
JEWISH FRIENDS BY DENOMINATIONAL / NON-DENOMINATIONAL IDENTITY



How does this compare with how respondents were raised? Of those raised in a Denominational setting, 71% said all or most of their friends were Jewish, with 28% saying some or a few were. However, for those who indicated they had a Non-Denominational upbringing, only 57% reported that all or most friends were Jewish, with 40% saying some or a few friends were.

Places of residence – Vancouver, Richmond or other areas – also showed some differences. Those living in Richmond (N=27) described their friendship circles as composed of 78% all or mostly of Jewish friends and 22% reported some or few. In Vancouver, 71% (N=120) of respondents indicated that all or most of their friends were Jewish and 28% said some or a few of their friends were Jewish. For those respondents living in other Lower Mainland areas, only 50% (N=36) indicated that all or most of their friends were Jewish, while 44% said some or a few were.

JEWISH FRIENDS BY GEOGRAPHIC AREAS



Of those respondents married to a Jewish partner, 74% (N=115) indicated that most or all of their friends were Jewish. Another 25% reported that some or a few Jewish friends. Of intermarried respondents, 35% (N=26) reported that all or most friends were Jewish, while 62% reported having some or a few Jewish friends.

O. Anti-Semitism

Much community anxiety and many resources over the years have been committed to combating anti-Semitism in our community. How did respondents feel about the current level of anti-Jewish sentiment, and what factors – place of birth, geographic location, affiliation – influenced those feelings?

In general, (N=181), 53% felt the level of anti-Semitism was low; another 38% thought it at a moderate level, and 8% rated it as “high”. Asked whether they had experienced it (N=174), 64% said yes, although this survey did not explore what those experiences were. Of Canadian-born respondents (N=117), 59% said anti-Semitism was low, 35% rated it as moderate, and 6% thought it was high. Of those born outside Canada (N=62), 43% considered it low, while 43% said it was moderate, and 13% deemed it to be high. Obviously, non-Canadian-born respondents were more cautious in proclaiming anti-Semitism moderate or low. Yet both Canadian-born and foreign-born had similar percentages when asked if they had personally experienced anti-Semitism: 63% of Canadian-born and 65% of non-Canadian-born said yes.

Of those who were married to a Jewish spouse (N=111), 42% rated it low, 39% at moderate and 12% at high. Of those married to a non-Jewish spouse (N=25), 44% rated it low, 52% at moderate and only 4% at high.

When we looked at geographic areas – Richmond, Vancouver and other areas – we saw differences. Richmond respondents (N=26) were evenly divided at 42% each for low and moderate, with 15% deeming it high. In Vancouver (N=116), 58% said they thought the level was low, 35% rated it as moderate and 7% as high. For all other areas (N=34), 47% thought it low, 47% thought it moderate and 6% thought it high. Further study of attitudes towards anti-Semitism in different Lower Mainland geographical areas could reveal reasons for the differences, especially between Vancouver and Richmond.

When we looked at the Denominational versus Non-Denominational categories, we saw similar reactions. Of those who gave a Denominational identity (N=90), 53% said they thought the level was low and 37% thought it moderate. Of those who gave a Non-Denominational identity (N=85), 52% thought the level was low and another 40% thought it moderate.

Cross-tabulating personal experience of anti-Semitism with Denominational categories showed that, for the Denominational category (N=93), 54% said they had experienced anti-Semitism, while 8% said they did not know. For Non-Denominational respondents, 64% said that they had experienced anti-Semitism, while 8% said they did not know.

Finally, when we cross-tabulated how respondents were raised with their experience of anti-Semitism, we saw that 60% of those raised in Denominational households (N=105) and 79% of those raised Non-Denominationally (N=56) said they had experienced anti-Semitism. We did

not ask whether the incidents were of a personal nature or were the result of institutional anti-Semitism.

P. Being Jewish in the Lower Mainland

We asked respondents to comment on their impressions of being Jewish in the Lower Mainland, and in general, how they felt about our Jewish community. We also asked those couples who are intermarried about their reception in the community. The answers give us some insight into how people feel about the community, its institutions and services and their places in them.

Out of the 109 respondents who commented on being Jewish in the Lower Mainland (about 50% of the total responses to the survey), 81 respondents reported positive responses. Another 14 people made observations about community and their own experiences that could be termed neutral, more in the way of advice and suggestions than either critical or laudatory, while 15 people made negative comments.

The following selection of positive and negative comments is designed to illustrate the range of experiences described by the respondents and not to offer any particular conclusions.

The positive comments mostly focused on the respondents' level of community involvement: synagogue membership, community activities, cultural events, community centers, and schools. People spoke about "being part of a local and global community"; "being an MOT (*member of the tribe*) that has lasted thousands of years; "having a sense of community"; "being part of a small but vibrant community; having "a sense of belonging"; and being "attached to a community with its obligations and benefits". Respondents also commented on their ability to celebrate holidays and community events with family and friends. For many, Jewish life in the Lower Mainland provides a wide variety of opportunities to participate, and family and friendship circles are strong links to community.

We also heard from those who had negative experiences. Their comments ranged from statements that Vancouver was a hard community to connect with, to a feeling that an elite controls most community institutions. Some criticized the concentration of community organizations in the city of Vancouver, while one respondent stated that, "It is a struggle to find Jewishness in such a diluted community". Some found the Lower Mainland deficient in religious observance ("we go to Seattle"), while others found it too tradition-bound. Some found it hard to keep kosher, others to integrate their Jewish identity into "secular life".

One felt we needed to show more solidarity with Israel. Only a few noted that their Jewish identity meant very little to them – "fighting a losing battle" as one put it. Some said they rarely thought about their Jewish identity, while others thought that being Jewish had nothing to do with geography.

Some comments addressed the broader issue of Jewish identity: "Wherever I am, Jewish identity is important, but I have to make more effort here [than back east]" was a response that several made. "I am proud to be Jewish anywhere, not just in the Lower Mainland". "In many circles, I have to explain what Jewish and kosher mean". Some emphasized their secular approach to Jewish identity, while others stated that "Judaism is a religion, how can you see it in non-religious terms?"

Q. Priorities for the Jewish Community

Respondents were given a series of choices about their top-three priorities for the Jewish community. They were also asked to suggest other items not on the list. Each choice was given a value and this graph presents the number of times a priority was chosen.

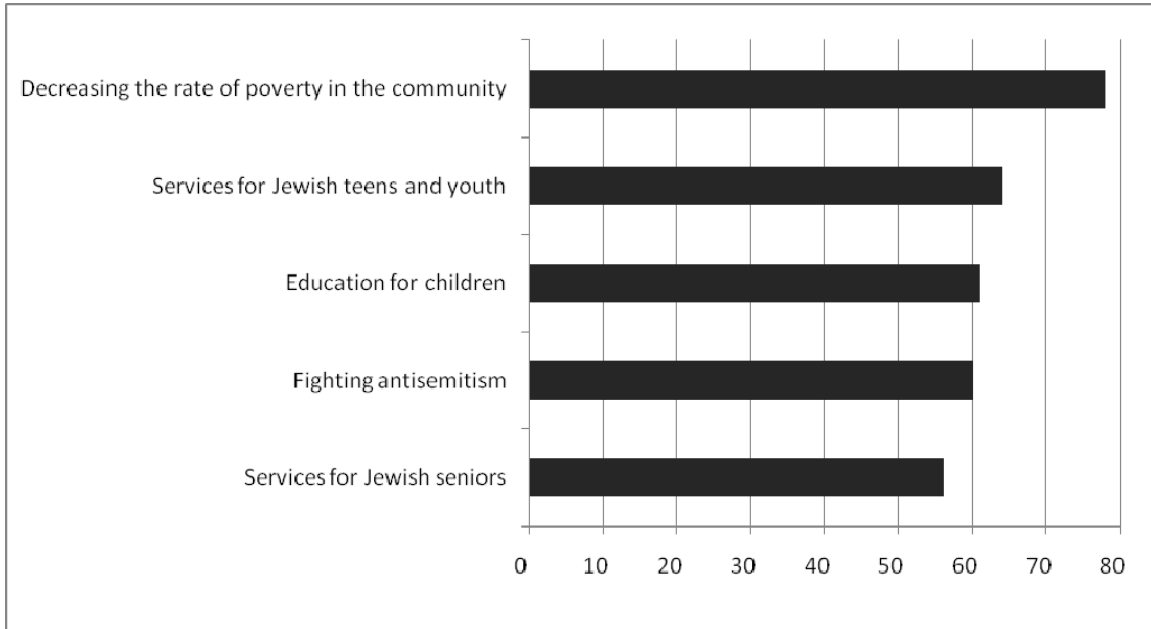
Selection of community priorities by frequency

Issue	Frequency
Decreasing the rate of poverty in the community	78
Services for Jewish teens and youth	64
Education for children	61
Fighting anti-Semitism	60
Services for Jewish seniors	56
Political advocacy on behalf of Israel	40
Outreach to interfaith families	34
Services for Jewish students on campus	25
Support for synagogue activities	19
Security for Jewish institutions	19
Immigrant resettlement	17
Services for adults with disabilities	16
Services for children with special needs	13
Political advocacy on the environment	12
Other	11
Total	525

Report on Jewish Attitudes and Practices among Members of the Greater Vancouver Jewish Community

The top-five choices were: decreasing the rate of poverty in the community; services for Jewish teens and youth; education for children; fighting anti-Semitism; and services for seniors. These all relate to the continuity and enhancement of the total Jewish community. Poverty relief is by far the top choice, separated from services for teens and youth by 14 points.

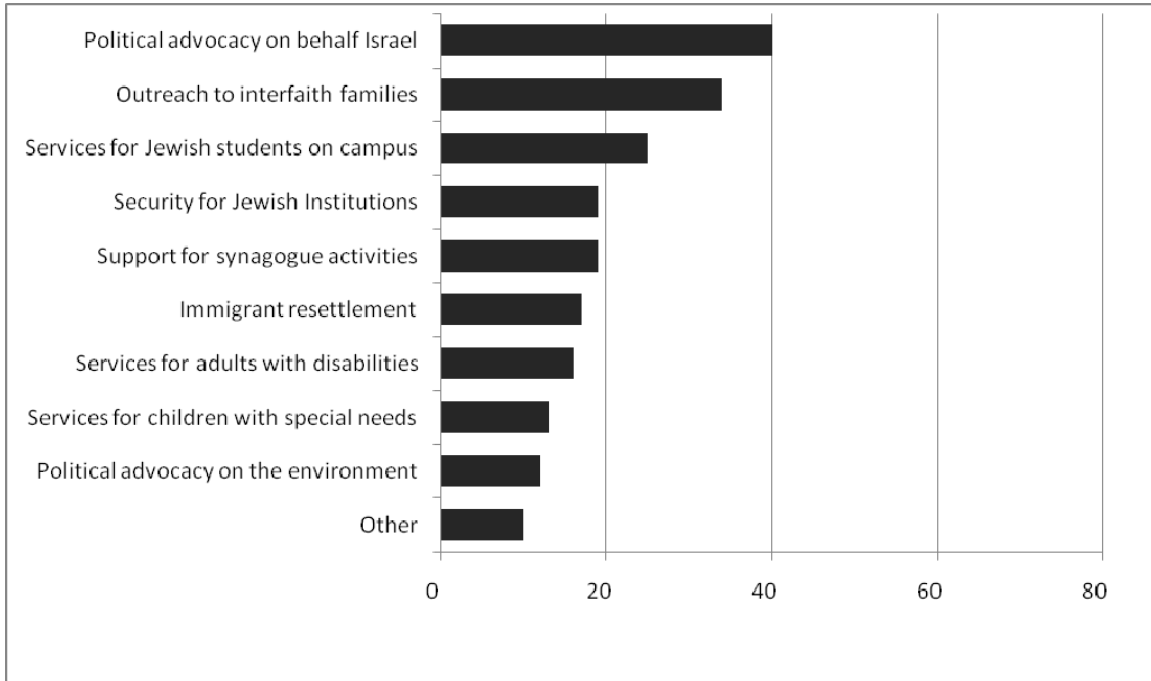
TOP FIVE COMMUNITY PRIORITIES



OTHER COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

The next cluster of choices is strong, but much lower in frequency, than the first five: political advocacy on behalf of Israel was lower by 16 points; outreach to interfaith families was another 6 points lower. These two are “second tier” choices. Far down the list – separated from the top-five by a wide margin – are “third tier” choices: campus services; support for synagogue activities; security for Jewish institutions; immigrant resettlement; services for adults and children with special needs; and environmental advocacy.

SECOND AND THIRD TIER CHOICES FOR COMMUNITY PRIORITIES



Interestingly, given the support shown for Israel in other parts of the survey, advocacy on its behalf was not in the top five. Also, given the 41% intermarriage rate shown by the 2001 census, outreach to intermarried families is a priority almost equal with advocacy – demonstrating that the issue of intermarriage is on many people’s minds and they want community attention to this issue.

Campus and synagogue activities appear far down on the list, as do services for adults with disabilities and children with special needs, and immigrant resettlement. Immigrants comprise one-third of our community. The baby boomers are now moving toward their senior years, and many of the respondents are themselves seniors, so one would have assumed that more emphasis would have been placed on expanding these services.

We also analyzed the priorities in terms of Denominational versus Non-Denominational responses, and by geographic area. The results were informative. All categories – Denominational, Non-Denominational, Richmond residents, Vancouver residents, those living in other areas – agreed that the number one priority should be decreasing the rate of poverty in the Jewish community.

These results are a rich resource for agencies and institutions planning future programs, and a guide to community planning in general. These results should be assessed along with the fact that we had a self-selecting sample with many respondents in the higher age ranges. Further discussion of these findings occurs in the section on “IMPLICATIONS”.

R. General Comments

At the end of the survey, respondents were given the opportunity to make additional comments. In this section, we include a selection of positive, negative and neutral comments. See the Appendix 7 for a summary of these comments.

IV. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

A. Attitudes and Practices

One of the main findings of this survey was that the number of people defining their Jewish identity by religious denomination is decreasing from one generation to the next. While this sample significantly represented the views of those who are affiliated in some way with the community, many felt their children would be less inclined to affiliate denominationally and more likely to identify themselves as cultural, secular Jews, or “Just Jewish”, without attaching a label to their identity.

This trend is also reflected in the responses given to questions regarding Jewish practices. What people considered important and what they practiced – and what they hoped for their children – shows that home and family-based ritual practices are the most important to their Jewish expression. Out of the top-ten practices, saying *Kaddish* for a deceased family member was the only one requiring a prayer *minyan*, and attending a Holocaust remembrance event was the only community-based activity.

This finding has particular importance for the synagogues. Their relevance to the next generation, the image they promote and the activities they program, will all have to take into account the trend away from synagogue affiliation on the part of many in the next generation.

This trend also speaks to the need for the community collectively to explore more creative ways to plan and promote family Shabbat, Passover and Chanukah programs, as these are clearly traditions that remain of great interest across denominational identity and community affiliation.

The preference for practices that can be done in one’s home rather than for activities requiring organizational involvement was also reflected in responses to questions related to community participation. “Not a priority” was the most common answer given to participation in institutional activities, across geographic areas, marital status (intra- or intermarried), country of origin or Denominational / Non-Denominational identity. The only exception was for certain activities such as membership and participation in Jewish Community Centre programs where distance and cost were also factors.

B. Community Priorities

We asked respondents to identify their top-three community priorities. The top priority was elimination of poverty, followed by services to children and youth, Jewish education, fighting anti-Semitism and services to seniors. Four of these priorities match the top local priorities for community planning. While the sample represents a segment of our community that overall has

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a strong sense of communal responsibility, it is a positive sign to note that there is an alignment between the priorities of the respondents and the priorities set by our communal organizations.

Respondents were also asked to rate a number of activities related to Jewish continuity and community connection. The top-five choices that emerged were: donate to Jewish causes; provide Jewish education for children; support Israel; donate to other charities; and have Jewish friends.

Much lower on the scale were: have children marry someone Jewish; volunteer for Jewish causes and organizations; belong to a synagogue; join Jewish organizations; date someone Jewish; and Jewish education for self. While there are differences between those with denominational and non-denominational identities, the responses indicate a greater interest in those activities individuals can determine on their own – with donating money and having Jewish friends high up on the list. Volunteering for Jewish causes, synagogue membership, and joining other Jewish organizations were much lower on the list of preferences. This finding confirms the trend that many organizations are already experiencing: it is much more difficult to attract new members or volunteers to carry out the work that was once considered a personal and communal obligation.

C. Synagogue Participation and Jewish Education

In regard to synagogue participation, we found that while 63% of respondents were synagogue members, those attending regularly were in the minority. Not surprisingly, regular attendance for services is not the main attraction for even this highly affiliated group. It is life cycle events and family-based activities that attract attendance and involvement, not ritual.

Approximately 75% of the respondents' children currently living at home were enrolled in some form of Jewish education, 25% were not. The reason most frequently given for not participating was that the child was not interested. We need to delve more deeply into the barriers that prevent parents from providing their children with a Jewish education, as well as the factors that lead to resistance on the part of the children. This will require more in-depth interviews conducted with a select group of respondents, either face-to-face or on the telephone. Additionally, we need to find more creative ways to demonstrate the link between a strong Jewish education and a strong Jewish community.

D. Regional Communities

We did not get a large enough response from communities other than Vancouver and Richmond to draw any conclusions about the impact on attitudes and practices of a growing number of Jews living on the North Shore or in the White Rock and Burquest communities.

It was once assumed that when Jews moved away from Vancouver, their commitment to Jewish community would decrease. It is unclear whether the apparently higher level of affiliation and lower rate of intermarriage among Richmond respondents is an anomaly based on the sample size or a community reality. We do know that more people, young families in particular, are moving to the regional communities. Yet overall, the Jewish institutions in the regional communities are not growing correspondingly. We know from other reports that more

attention needs to be paid to strengthening these community institutions rather than assuming the core services in Vancouver can meet all of the community's needs. However, due to the low response rate from these three regional communities, we need to work with their community leaders to explore ways to gather a deeper and more comprehensive picture of Jewish life and community needs in these areas.

E. Israel

Support for, and visits to, the State of Israel crossed Denominational and Non-Denominational lines. The percentage of respondents who had visited Israel was high in all categories, and the comments about the State were overwhelmingly positive. Cost has not been a barrier to visiting Israel, and whether Canadian-born or not, whether affiliated or secular, these respondents value the existence of Israel. As we did not ask any questions about participation in the Birthright program and ongoing community involvement following a Birthright experience, we are unable to discuss the value of the program on the attitudes toward Israel of the next generation.

The strong support for Israel reported in this survey reflects the high level of community involvement among the respondents. However, the community's views are not monolithic and there is a segment in our community – and reflected in this survey – whose views range from neutral to negative.

F. Inter marriage

Throughout the survey, we often compared responses from households that had two Jewish spouses to households where one was not Jewish. Unfortunately, the response rate for intermarried households was much lower than the 41% indicated by the 2001 census. Even so, the answers revealed differences.

We asked respondents living in intermarried households how the Jewish community had received them. Of the 23 responses, 13 were positive: some are actively involved in the community, and others reported that the community has been very supportive and welcoming. Those who did respond positively indicated that schools, camps and shuls are making an effort to welcome them.

Five responded that they had very little contact with the community. Five others had bad experiences which they did not describe in detail, but resulted in them feeling left out of Jewish communal life. Given the percentage of intermarried households in the community, it is vital to involve them as much as possible so that their children will become part of the next generation of Jews.

From the little data we have on these couples, it seems that for many of the Jewish spouses, there was very little Jewish content in their families of birth – for instance, a lower bar/bat mitzvah rate and fewer Jewish family friends. Our community needs to explore and implement the most effective ways to engage and retain the next generation. While difficult to identify, it is equally important to find ways to consult with these families about their views on how the community could improve its outreach.

The findings regarding the importance of dating someone Jewish, marrying someone Jewish, and having children marry someone Jewish, differ significantly between those who identify denominationally and those who do not. However, given the growing intermarriage rate, it is clear that while many parents would like to see their children marry someone Jewish, a significant minority are neutral. The effects of continuing intermarriage and the reception that intermarried couples described point towards the need for a community-wide outreach program to intermarried couples and families.

G. Anti-Semitism

Over half of the respondents (53%) felt anti-Semitism in Canada is low and only 8% rated it as high. Given the resources put into combating anti-Semitism, we could conclude that the effort is succeeding. However, we know from media and other reports, a high level of criticism of Israel within the general community can often morph into anti-Jewish feeling (and this does not take into account the fringe haters of the Jewish people). It would be an important study to see how specific groups within the community see this issue. A survey of university students might show a different picture.

H. General Comments

By and large, the respondents' general comments were positive and included suggestions for further initiatives. Given the emphasis on family-based activities discussed earlier, it should be noted that singles, divorced people and seniors feel that many programs are not directed towards their needs. We also heard from people living outside Vancouver City that they feel under-served, as most activities take place in Vancouver venues and few significant community events and services reach the regional communities. Lack of affordable housing was also raised as an issue.

V. CONCLUSION

The survey respondents did not represent as diverse a population as was hoped. Overall, the respondents were older, more affiliated and more connected to the community than the population in its entirety. Participation from the regional communities was lower than expected, as was the response rate from new immigrants and young couples. Despite these limitations, the results do reveal some very interesting findings. In particular, despite the level of affiliation among the respondents, there is a growing preference away from practices and activities that exists. Further study is needed to determine ways to strengthen communal involvement and institutional membership.

These findings also indicate the need for a broader range of approaches to obtain important information related to Jewish day school participation, experiences of intermarried couples, community involvement of youth and young adults and the needs of those living in regional communities. Methods such as face-to-face or telephone interviews with targeted populations, working with the regional community leadership to reach people living in those communities, or facilitating focus groups with Birthright alumni and Hillel students, to get a more comprehensive picture of the community.

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This survey represents a snapshot of the attitudes and practices of a segment of the community. It is an initial step in understanding the attitudes and practices in our community as well as the barriers and obstacles to participation and involvement in Jewish life. The Jewish community of Greater Vancouver is a relatively “young” community with many reasons to feel optimistic about the future. There are some significant challenges that relate to meeting the needs of an increasingly diversified community and retaining the interest and involvement of the next generation.