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**The Changing Demography of Jewish London,
Ontario: A Community Profile (2001–2021)¹**

Abstract

Canada's Jewish population is growing slowly and aging rapidly. However, the national portrait may hide great variation across different contexts. This article examines Canada's tenth largest Jewish community, that of London, Ontario. First, I highlight the size of the Jewish community according to different measures and how it's changed between 2001 and 2021. Next, I examine the households in which London's Jews live and what we can learn about changes in the characteristics of Jewish households and their members. This detailed analysis of the Canadian long-form census data highlights challenges and opportunities for local Jewish community leaders and institutions.

Résumé

La population juive du Canada croît lentement et vieillit rapidement. Cependant, le portrait national peut cacher de grandes variations selon les contextes. Cet article examine la dixième plus grande communauté juive du Canada, celle de London, en Ontario. Tout d'abord, je présente la taille de la communauté juive selon différentes mesures et son évolution entre 2001 et 2021. Ensuite, j'examine les ménages dans lesquels vivent les personnes juives de London et ce que nous pouvons apprendre sur les changements dans les caractéristiques des ménages juifs et de leurs membres. Cette analyse détaillée des données du recensement canadien met en évidence les défis et les opportunités pour les dirigeants et les institutions de la communauté juive locale.

Recent research highlights that the Jewish population of Canada is growing slowly and aging rapidly. Alongside the national picture, it is important to understand sub-national variation in how local Jewish communities are changing. Although the Canadian Jewish community is largely based in Toronto (46 percent in 2021), Montreal (22 percent in 2021), and Vancouver (7 percent in 2021), one-quarter of Canadian Jews reside outside these big cities.² Local communities may have very different demographic changes and challenges than we see at the national level or in the largest cities. This community profile focuses on London, Ontario, the tenth largest Jewish community in Canada. How the characteristics of individuals and households in this community are shifting has important implications for Jewish organizations like the Jewish London Federation, the London Community Hebrew Day School, synagogues, social service organizations, and potential migrants to the community.

This profile builds on prior work in two main ways.³ First, I utilize multiple definitions and subgroups of the Jewish population to examine important and growing subpopulations such as secular Jews, who are likely to be unaffiliated. Second, I examine how Jewish households, not just the characteristics of individual Jews,

are changing. How people group together in households is key for understanding important shifts in families. Demographic shifts occurring in Canada such as the increase in living alone, the postponement of marriage, shifts in divorce and re-partnership, and the rise of cohabitation as a precursor to marriage among younger people and as an alternative to marriage among older adults are likely also affecting the Jewish community.⁴ In addition, life expectancy is increasing and this decreases widowhood and the likelihood of older adults living alone.⁵ Last, intermarriage is not uncommon, with 27 percent of Jews in Canada married to someone of a different religion in 2021.⁶ All these dynamics can be studied by examining household data. The findings from this community profile show the shifts in Jewish individuals and households in London (2001–2021) and have important implications for future challenges and opportunities for the Jewish community leaders and institutions.

Data and Analysis

To examine demographic change in London's Jewish community, I analyze the long-form census data for Canada for 2001 and 2021. The census of Canada is conducted every five years in years ending in 1 and 6 (e.g., 2001, 2006). A census form goes to every household in Canada, with most households receiving the short-form census and only some receiving the long-form census. The percentage of households that received the long-form census was 25 percent in 2021, up from 20 percent in 2001.

Long-form census data are the best source for tracking demographic change in Canada and its subpopulations, given the mandatory nature, high response rate (96–98 percent), and large sample, which are important for studying small populations such as Canada's Jewish population, about 1 percent of the total. This work draws on confidential Statistics Canada data files in the Research Data Centre at the University of Western Ontario.

To measure the Jewish population, I use two questions in the long-form census. The first concerns religion and the second concerns ethnic origins. The religion question addresses each person in the household, asking, "What is this person's religion?" with instructions to "Indicate a specific denomination or religion even if this person is not currently a practicing member of that group. For example, Roman Catholic, United Church, Anglican, Muslim, Baptist, Hindu, Pentecostal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Sikh, Buddhist, Jewish, Greek Orthodox, etc. Specify one denomination or religion only or No religion." The question on ethnic origins asks, for each person in the household, "What were the ethnic or cultural origins of this person's ancestors? Ancestors may have Indigenous origins, or origins that refer to different countries, or other origins that may not refer to different countries. For examples of ethnic or cultural origins, visit <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2026/ref/questionnaire/ancestry.cfm>."

Like previous research, and unless otherwise specified, my analysis uses the “standard Jewish definition” to measure Jewish individuals.⁷ This definition relies on questions about both religion and ethnicity. It includes people in all of the following categories: (1) those who report Jewish ethnic origins *and* Jewish religion; (2) those who report Jewish religion *but* ethnic origins other than Jewish; and (3) those who report no religion and Jewish ethnic origins. Excluded from this definition are people who report Jewish ethnic origins but a religion other than Judaism. In my analysis, I break down the Jewish population into these three subgroups and also examine religion and ethnic origins separately.⁸

In addition to religion and ethnicity, I examine for the Jewish community (measured by the standard Jewish definition) the age and sex of all household inhabitants, country of birth, languages spoken in the home, marital status, and relationships among those in the household. I also examine questions on labour force participation, income, household ownership, disability, and educational attainment.

I use the London Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) as the geographic unit of analysis, rather than the City of London. This is done to include Jews who live outside the city proper in places such as Strathroy, St. Thomas, and Port Stanley.

My analysis is descriptive, focusing on the characteristics of Jewish individuals and households where Jews live. For the household analysis, first I examine households in which at least one Jewish person resides. I compare these households to those with no Jewish people in London. Then I break down households with at least one Jewish person into two groups: those with all Jewish people and those with at least one Jew and at least one non-Jew. This is done to examine how Jewish families are changing in the face of intermarriage and varied living arrangements. All data are weighted to be representative of the London CMA. To have results approved by the Research Data Centre, I rounded counts to the nearest five.

Results

First, I examine the size of London’s Jewish population and how it has changed between 2001 and 2021. Table 1 presents an overview of the Jewish demography of London. Three subgroups are reported: (1) those who report Jewish religion and Jewish ethnic origins; (2) those who report Jewish religion but other ethnic origins; and (3) those who report no religion and Jewish ethnic origins. Combined, these three subgroups equal 2,265 Jews in 2001 and 2,765 in 2021, a 22 percent increase over the twenty-year time span, a rate of growth 2.75 times larger than that of the Canadian Jewish community as a whole (8.0 percent).

It is telling to examine change in the composition of this group over time. In 2001, most Jews reported being Jewish by religion and ethnicity (58 percent). However, this group of Jews is much less prevalent in 2021, with 36 percent reporting Jewish on both criteria. The two other subgroups increased in prevalence. Those who identify as Jews by religion and having other ethnic origins made up one-quarter of London's Jewish population in 2001 but 40 percent in 2021. Secular Jews were 17 percent of the 2001 population but in 2021 made up one in four Jews according to the standard Jewish definition. London has proportionately more secular Jews (25 percent) than Canada overall (17 percent), a pattern seen across smaller Jewish communities.⁹

The second part of Table 1 includes alternative definitions and additional data. It shows the most stringent categorization of Jews—those who report Jewish religion and ethnic origins—numbering 1,320 in 2001 and 985 in 2021. Those who report Jewish religion comprise 1,880 in 2001 and 2,080 in 2021, an increase of 10.6 percent. Those reporting Jewish ethnic origins (2,460 in 2001 and 2,140 in 2021) declined by 13.0 percent. Last, we have the most inclusive definition which includes those reporting either Jewish religion or Jewish ethnic origins. This categorization includes those with Jewish ethnic origins who report another religion. The most common other religion that is reported is Christian. This subgroup grew from 3,015 in 2001 to 3,240 in 2021, an increase of 7.5 percent. Note that this last category, those who report Jewish ethnic origins, but a non-Jewish religion, are not generally included as part of the Jewish population by researchers and mainstream Jewish organizations.

The data at the bottom of Table 1 are useful for providing demographic context. The Jewish population of 2,765 in 2021 can be viewed in light of the broader London CMA, which is home to over half a million people (535,780). The population of London grew by 25.4 percent from 2001 to 2021, somewhat more rapidly than the increase in the Jewish population (22.1 percent). Also useful for context is the fact that Jews comprise 0.5 percent of the London CMA's population, compared to just over 1 percent of the country's population.

Table 1
Overview of Jewish demographics in London, Ontario according to different definitions, 2001 and 2021

	2001	2021	2001–2021 Change
	Counts (%)	Counts (%)	Counts (%)
Jewish Individuals in London, Ontario CMA according to the Standard Jewish Definition	2,265	2,765	500 (22)
Jewish religion and Jewish ethnic origins	1,320 (58)	985 (36)	-335 (-25)
Jewish in religion, other ethnic origins	560 (25)	1,095 (40)	535 (96)
Secular religion, Jewish ethnic origins	385 (17)	685 (25)	300 (78)
Alternative Definitions of Jewish Individuals in London, Ontario CMA			
Population reporting both Jewish ethnic origins and religion	1,320	985	-335 (-25)
Population reporting Jewish religion	1,880	2,080	200 (11)
Population reporting Jewish ethnic origins	2,460	2,140	-320 (-13)
Population reporting either Jewish ethnic origins or religion	3,015	3,240	225 (8)
Demographic Data on the Total Population for Context			
All Individuals in London, Ontario CMA	427,215	535,780	108,565 (25)
All Individuals in Canada	29,639,030	36,328,475	6,689,445 (23)

Note: Counts are rounded to the nearest 5 and weighted. The population used is the Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) of London, Ontario at the Canadian censuses of 2001 and 2021.

Table 2 provides context for better understanding respondents who report Jewish religion but not Jewish ethnic origin. What ethnic origins do they report? In 2001, in order of frequency, their most frequently reported ethnicities were Canadian, Polish and English. In 2021, again in order of frequency, Polish, Canadian, and Russian were most common.

Table 3 shows information about how Jews are distributed across households in London. In 2021, there were 1,755 households with at least one Jew by the standard Jewish definition. Of these, 49 percent were comprised of all Jewish household members (including one-person households). The remaining 51 percent were households in which only some members are Jewish. Examining the shift since 2001, we see that in 2001 there were 1,230 households with at least one Jew, 54 percent of which were all-Jewish households and 46 percent of which consisted of at least one Jew and one non-Jew. Overall, the number of Jewish households with at least one Jew increased 43 percent between 2001 and 2021. The rate of increase for households where some members are Jewish (57 percent) is greater than that for all Jewish households (29 percent).

Table 2
Ethnic origins reported among individuals reporting Jewish religion, but not Jewish ethnic origins, 2001 and 2021

2001		2021	
	Counts (%)		Counts (%)
Canadian	130 (24)	Polish	265 (24)
Polish	50 (9)	Canadian	100 (9)
English	50 (9)	Russian	90 (8)
Czechoslovakian	40 (7)	English	70 (6)
Hungarian	40 (7)	Irish	50 (5)
French	35 (7)	Eastern European	50 (5)
Russian	35 (6)	European	45 (4)
South African	30 (5)	Scottish	45 (4)
Israeli	25 (5)	German	30 (3)
Scottish	25 (4)	British Isles	30 (3)
Other	95 (17)	Other	315 (28)

Note: Counts are rounded to the nearest 5 and weighted. The population used here is the Census Metropolitan Area of London, Ontario at the Canadian censuses of 2001 and 2021.

Table 3
Jewish households, according to different definitions, 2001 and 2021

	2001	2021	2021–2021 Change
	Counts (%)	Counts (%)	Counts (%)
Households including at least one Jewish person (Standard Jewish Definition)	1,230	1,755	525 (43)
Households where all members are Jewish (Standard Jewish Definition)	665 (54)	860 (49)	195 (29)
Households where some members are Jewish (Standard Jewish Definition)	565 (46)	890 (51)	325 (58)
For Context: Total Households in London, Ontario CMA	173,250	222,240	48,990 (28)

Note: The population used here is the Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) of London, Ontario at the Canadian censuses of 2001 and 2021.

Table 4
Characteristics of individuals, Jewish (left) and non-Jewish (right), 2001 and 2021

	Jewish Individuals		Non-Jewish Individuals	
	2001	2021	2001	2021
	Counts (%)	Counts (%)	Counts (%)	Counts (%)
Age group				
0 to 4	130 (6)	120 (4)	24,645 (6)	26,770 (5)
5 to 12	175 (8)	235 (9)	47,650 (11)	49,460 (9)
13 to 18	250 (11)	190 (7)	34,735 (8)	37,160 (7)
19 to 29	345 (15)	455 (16)	59,230 (14)	82,540 (16)
30 to 39	275 (12)	345 (12)	70,675 (17)	72,955 (14)
40 to 49	360 (16)	295 (11)	67,280 (16)	65,020 (12)
50 to 59	375 (17)	340 (12)	50,330 (12)	69,745 (13)
60 to 69	200 (9)	335 (12)	32,415 (8)	64,865 (12)
70 and above	160 (7)	455 (17)	37,995 (9)	64,495 (12)
Gender				
Female	1,130 (50)	1,395 (50)	218,930 (52)	271,745 (51)
Male	1,135 (50)	1,375 (50)	206,020 (49)	261,265 (49)
Country of birth				
Canada	1,630 (72)	1,965 (71)	340,905 (80)	393,560 (74)
USA, Latin America, and Caribbean	215 (10)	285 (10)	11,805 (3)	24,305 (5)
Europe	255 (11)	295 (11)	51,045 (12)	40,450 (8)
Africa/Asia	75 (3)	40 (1)	14,285 (3)	52,460 (10)
Israel & Middle East	95 (4)	185 (7)	6,390 (2)	21,600 (4)
Australia and Other	- (0)	- (0)	520 (0)	640 (0)
Marital Status (Ages 18+)				
Never married (and not living common law)	420 (24)	660 (29)	74,110 (23)	114,095 (27)
Married or living common law	1,065 (61)	1,280 (57)	200,565 (62)	247,635 (58)
Separated or divorced	175 (10)	205 (9)	29,815 (9)	41,880 (10)
Widowed	75 (4)	105 (5)	19,075 (6)	22,055 (5)
Labor force participation in previous year (among ages 25+)				
Not working	385 (26)	725 (37)	86,525 (31)	141,690 (38)
Part time	280 (19)	250 (13)	33,695 (12)	41,630 (11)
Full time	835 (56)	995 (51)	161,065 (57)	193,185 (51)
Educational attainment (among 25+)				
High school or less	355 (24)	360 (18)	137,500 (49)	140,695 (37)
Apprenticeship or trades certificate, college diploma, CEGEP or other certificate or diploma	340 (23)	365 (19)	93,460 (33)	118,820 (32)
University certificate, diploma or degree at bachelor level or above	810 (54)	1,250 (63)	50,325 (18)	116,985 (31)
Disability				
None	1,935 (86)	1,525 (55)	359,345 (85)	317,970 (60)
At least one limitation	275 (12)	1,230 (44)	61,070 (14)	212,865 (40)

Note: Definition of Jewish is the standard Jewish definition. Counts are rounded to the nearest 5 and weighted. The population used here is the Census Metropolitan Area of London, Ontario at the Canadian censuses of 2001 and 2021.

Next, I turn to change in the characteristics of the Jewish population of London. Table 4 presents data on Jews according to the standard Jewish definition. Tables 5–6 examine Jewish households and the characteristics of where Jews are living and with whom. Table 5 examines households in which there is at least one Jewish resident, compared with households without any Jewish residents. Table 6 examines two types of Jewish households: those in which all members are Jewish and households in which some are Jewish. I highlight six findings that draw on these tables.

The first finding is that London had stable numbers of children, young adults, and middle-aged adults between 2001 and 2021 and experienced rapid growth in the number of older adults. Therefore, London's Jewish community is much older than in 2001, which has important implications for community planning. Table 4 presents these data at the top left. Consider first the stability in the population of young people. In 2021, there were 545 children aged 0–18 in the community, nearly the same as the 2001 figure of 555. In 2021, this category includes 120 children between the ages of zero and four (compared to 130 in 2001), 235 children between the ages of five and twelve (up from 175 in 2001), and 190 children between the ages of thirteen and eighteen (down from 250 in 2001). These numbers will be useful for London's Community Hebrew Day School and other children's programming at the Jewish Community Centre and synagogues.

There were 455 young adults between the ages of nineteen and twenty-nine in London's Jewish community in 2021, up from 345 in 2001. Note that this does not include most of the approximately three thousand Jewish students at Western University for much of the year because these students are typically counted in the census with their parents, not at their school address. Young Jews between the ages of zero and twenty-nine make up 36 percent of the Jewish community.

Now consider the Jewish population over the age of twenty-nine. Adults in their prime working years (thirty to fifty-nine) comprise 35 percent of the 2021 Jewish population in London—980 adults in 2021, down from 1,010 in 2001. The population of older adults, above the age of fifty-nine, has experienced much more rapid growth. The Jewish community in London has a relatively old population in terms of age structure, much older than in 2001, and older than the non-Jewish London population. In 2021, there were 790 adults older than fifty-nine, more than double the number in 2001 (360). Older adults make up 29 percent of Jewish people in London in 2021 compared to 16 percent in 2001. Within the sixty-plus population, 17 percent were seventy and above in 2021 compared to 7 percent in 2001. There were 455 individuals over the age of sixty-nine in London in 2021. Another measure of the aging of the community is the percentage reporting at least one functional limitation or disability. This measure includes difficulties or long-term conditions that have lasted or are expected to last six months or more (for example, difficulty seeing,

hearing, walking upstairs or doing physical activities, and learning/remembering/concentrating/ and emotional/psychological/mental health conditions). In 2001, only 12 percent of Jewish people in London reported having at least one limitation or disability. This increased to 44 percent in 2021. The increase has important implications for how, and how much, Jewish institutions provide help.

The second important finding is that the educational attainment and household income of the Jewish population in London are strong and steady. The Jewish community in London is highly educated: 63 percent of those ages twenty-five and older in 2021 have a university education, compared with 31 percent of the non-Jewish population (Table 4). Moreover, the Jewish community was more highly educated in 2021 than in 2001. The percentage of adults with a university degree increased from 54 percent to 63 percent over that period (Table 4). Jews in London also have higher household income on average than do members of the non-Jewish population. Forty-eight percent of Jewish households in 2021 earned \$100,000 or more, compared with 37 percent of non-Jewish households (Table 5). In 2021, of those over the age of twenty-four, one-half worked full-time, 13 percent part-time, and 37 percent were not working (retired or unemployed). Fewer adults were working in 2021 than in 2001, which is mostly attributable to the aging of the Jewish population (Table 4). Some 64 percent of households owned their residences, and just over one in three rented. These numbers are comparable with London's non-Jewish population (Table 5).

The third major finding is that the London Jewish community is becoming more diverse in terms of country of origin and language. A large minority of the community is born outside of Canada. In 2021, 29 percent of London's Jews were born abroad, with 10 percent born in the United States and Latin America, 11 percent in Europe, and 7 percent in Israel and the Middle East (Table 4). In just under half of households with at least one Jew, all members were born in Canada. In 27 percent, some household members were born in Canada, and some were born abroad. In 17 percent, everyone in the household was born abroad (Table 5). In 17 percent of Jewish households, English and another language were spoken in the household, or solely a language other than English in 2021. In 100 households (6 percent of the total), Hebrew is spoken at home. In 130 households (7 percent of the total), Russian is spoken at home (Table 5). These figures imply that cultural diversity has grown considerably in the London Jewish community. To attract and retain involvement with the organized Jewish community, its institutions would be well advised to adjust programming to reflect this cultural diversity.

The fourth finding is that Jewish households are smaller on average in 2021 than in 2001 (Table 5). This is due to a large increase in people living alone and changes in marital status. The number of one-person Jewish households grew from 280 in 2001 to 465 in 2021. The percentage of one-person Jewish households increased from 23

Table 5
Household characteristics for Jewish and non-Jewish households, 2001 and 2021

	Jewish Households ¹		Non-Jewish Households	
	2001	2021	2001	2021
	Counts (%)	Counts (%)	Counts (%)	Counts (%)
Number of Households	1,230	1,755	172,020	220,485
Number of household members				
One	280 (23)	465 (27)	47,955 (28)	64,805 (29)
Two	435 (35)	765 (44)	57,135 (33)	75,640 (34)
Three	190 (15)	225 (13)	26,200 (15)	32,665 (15)
Four or more	325 (27)	300 (17)	40,725 (24)	47,375 (21)
Household type				
Single person household	280 (23)	465 (27)	47,955 (28)	64,805 (29)
Couple only	395 (32)	580 (33)	51,215 (30)	54,950 (25)
Couple and child(ren)	415 (34)	405 (23)	52,260 (30)	59,025 (27)
Other types	140 (11)	305 (17)	20,590 (12)	41,705 (19)
Among all households with a couple: how many are Jewish within the couple?				
None	35 (4)	35 (4)		
One	470 (58)	670 (68)		
Both	305 (38)	275 (28)		
Language spoken at home				
English only	1,090 (89)	1,450 (83)	150,005 (87)	180,410 (82)
English and another language; or a language other than English	140 (11)	305 (17)	22,010 (13)	40,070 (18)
Number of Households where these languages are spoken				
Hebrew	45 (4)	100 (6)	30 (0)	40 (0)
Russian	45 (4)	130 (7)	855 (1)	605 (0)
Country of birth				
All household members born in Canada	710 (58)	985 (56)	121,870 (71)	146,395 (66)
Some household members born in Canada	335 (27)	470 (27)	27,325 (16)	37,640 (18)
None born in Canada	185 (15)	295 (17)	22,825 (13)	36,455 (17)
Rented vs owned residence				
Owner	835 (68)	1,115 (64)	107,955 (63)	137,955 (63)
Renter	400 (32)	640 (36)	64,065 (37)	82,535 (37)
Household income categories				
Less than \$50,000	530 (43)	450 (26)	89,030 (52)	61,295 (28)
\$50,000–\$70,000	190 (15)	230 (13)	30,685 (18)	34,400 (16)
\$70,000–\$100,000	170 (14)	225 (13)	29,140 (17)	42,710 (19)
More than \$100,000	340 (28)	850 (48)	23,065 (13)	82,080 (37)

Note: Definition of Jewish is the standard Jewish definition. Counts are rounded to the nearest 5 and weighted. The population used here is the Census Metropolitan Area of London, Ontario at the Canadian censuses of 2001 and 2021.

1. Defined as households including at least one Jewish person.

percent in 2001 to 27 percent in 2021. There has also been substantial growth in the number of two-person Jewish households, from 435 in 2001 to 765 in 2021 (35 percent and 44 percent of households, respectively). The number of three-person households remained fairly steady at 225 in 2021, up from 190 in 2001. Despite population growth, there were fewer households with four or more people in 2021 than in 2001. There were 325 four-or-more person households (27 percent of all Jewish households) in 2001 and only 300 (17 percent of all Jewish households) in 2021.

There have also been significant changes in household type from 2001 to 2021, meaning the relationships between people in the household has changed (Table 5). There are more single-person households, more households made up of only a couple, and fewer couple-with-children households. The number of households comprised of a couple and children decreased from 415 to 405. In 2001, this household type represented 34 percent of all Jewish households compared to 23 percent in 2021.

These changes in household size show a shift in the marital status composition of London Jews. A larger proportion of the community is unpartnered/unmarried in 2021 than in 2001 (Table 4). Of Jewish adults ages eighteen and above in 2021, 1,280 (57 percent) were cohabiting or married, and 970 (43 percent) were not partnered (never married, separated/divorced or widowed). In 2001, 1,065 Jewish adults (61 percent) were cohabiting or married, and 670 (39 percent) were unpartnered. The number of never-married adults increased from 420 in 2001 to 660 in 2021. The number of separated or divorced adults increased from 175 to 205, and the number of widowed adults increased from 75 to 105.

Fifth, the London Jewish community had more mixed Jewish/non-Jewish families and households in 2021 than in 2001 (Table 5). Among households with a couple in 2001, 305 (38 percent of all couple households) were comprised of two Jewish adults. In 2021, this decreased to 275 (28 percent of all Jewish households). Despite the growth in the Jewish community overall and the growth in households with at least one Jewish person, the number of households where both members of a couple are Jewish has decreased. Among households with a couple in 2001, there were 470 mixed couples, where only one member of the couple was Jewish. In 2021, this number increased to 670. These changes are large and should be carefully considered in strategic planning. Again, this trend may require Jewish community institutions to adjust programming to attract members and keep them involved in community activities.

Last, we witness key shifts in the composition of all-Jewish and partially Jewish households (Table 6). In 2021, 54 percent of all Jewish households were single-person households. Nineteen percent consisted of a couple without children, 13 percent consisted of a couple with children, and 14 percent were other household types such as multigenerational families or people living with other relatives or friends. Among

Table 6
Household characteristics for Jewish households by whether all or some residents are Jewish, 2001 and 2021

	Households where all members are Jewish		Households where some members are Jewish	
	2001	2021	2001	2021
	Counts (%)	Counts (%)	Counts (%)	Counts (%)
Number of households	665	860	565	890
Number of household members				
One	280 (42)	465 (54)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Two	195 (30)	245 (29)	240 (42)	515 (58)
Three	85 (13)	65 (8)	105 (19)	160 (18)
Four or more	105 (16)	85 (10)	220 (39)	215 (24)
Household type				
Single person household	280 (42)	465 (54)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Couple only	190 (29)	160 (19)	205 (36)	420 (47)
Couple and child(ren)	160 (24)	110 (13)	260 (46)	295 (33)
Other types	35 (5)	125 (14)	105 (18)	180 (20)
Language spoken at home				
English only	590 (89)	700 (81)	500 (88)	750 (84)
English and another language; or a language other than English	75 (11)	160 (19)	65 (12)	140 (16)
Households with these languages spoken				
Hebrew	Very few	80 (9)	Very few	20 (2)
Russian	Very few	45 (5)	Very few	85 (10)
Country of birth				
All household members born in Canada	380 (57)	510 (59)	330 (58)	480 (54)
Some household members born in Canada	140 (21)	140 (16)	195 (34)	330 (37)
None born in Canada	145 (21)	210 (25)	40 (7)	85 (9)
Rented vs owned residence				
Owner	435 (65)	500 (58)	400 (71)	615 (69)
Renter	230 (35)	365 (42)	165 (29)	275 (31)
Household income categories				
Less than \$50,000	330 (50)	350 (40)	200 (35)	105 (12)
\$50,000–\$70,000	95 (14)	105 (12)	100 (17)	125 (14)
\$70,000–\$100,000	65 (10)	105 (12)	100 (18)	120 (13)
More than \$100,000	175 (26)	300 (35)	165 (29)	545 (61)

Note: Definition of Jewish is the standard Jewish definition. Counts are rounded to the nearest 5 and weighted. The population used here is the Census Metropolitan Area of London, Ontario at the Canadian censuses of 2001 and 2021.

the all-Jewish households, there was a decline between 2001 and 2021 in the number of couple households with children, from 160 to 110. The number of couple-only households in which only some members are Jewish more than doubled, rising from 205 in 2001 to 420 in 2021, while couple households with children increased from 260 in 2001 to 295 in 2021. Of all couple households with children in 2021, 110 (27 percent) were Jewish-only households, and 295 (73 percent) were mixed households. The larger increase in mixed households compared with Jewish-only households has implications for how the Jewish Community Centre and other organizations need to design and target family and children's programming. Excluding mixed families and households will yield a much smaller pool of participants.

Differences also exist between households consisting entirely of Jews and those with at least one Jew and one non-Jew. The latter have higher household income and are more likely to own their residences. They also differ in terms of language. In 2021, Russian was spoken in 130 households with at least one Jewish person. This includes 45 households in which all members are Jewish and 85 households with at least one Jew and at least one non-Jew. This is a new group that did not appear in the 2001 census because there were very few such households in that year. In 2021, Hebrew was spoken in about 100 households. This includes 80 households with all Jewish members and 20 households with at least one Jew and at least one non-Jew. Again, this group did not appear in the 2001 census because there were too few such households in that year.

Discussion

This community profile highlights six key demographic facts about Jewish London and how it has changed between 2001 and 2021. First, the age structure of the Jewish community is shifting. The London Community Hebrew Day School should be reassured that the number of children who are potential students is not declining. That said, more of the families with children in London today have at least some non-Jewish members. The Jewish Day School should think about whether they want to reach out to and enroll children in these families and if so, how to do it. Day schools offer high-quality education. Focusing on the academic rigour, especially relative to the relatively low standards in the public school system, may be a way to attract students from families with some Jewish and some non-Jewish household members.

Although the city has stable numbers of children, young adults, and middle-aged adults, it has a rapidly increasing population of older adults. Jewish Federation, synagogues, and other organizations that provide services to older adults will experience continued population growth among the older population over the next two decades as the large baby boom generation ages. The large cohort of older adults in their 60s and early 70s may be prime candidates for intergenerational programming.

Those in their 80s and 90s may be attracted to more programming related to health screening, exercise, physiotherapy, and support in visiting the sick. Rabbis and other community service workers should also look out for the special needs of older adults living alone, those who are unpartnered, and those who are either childless or with children living far away.

Second, educational attainment and household income in the community is strong and steady. London is a relatively highly educated city, and the Jewish population of London is even more highly educated than members of the general population. This means that the Jewish community has a large amount of human capital and resources that can be shared. One untapped opportunity is to connect community members in a variety of professions with university students who are interested in going into specific fields. The three thousand Jewish students at Western University are largely serviced by campus Hillel and Chabad. However, the community has strong human capital that could help the younger generation as they transition into higher education and the labour force.

Third, the community is becoming more diverse in terms of country of origin and language. In 2021, almost three in ten Jewish Londoners were born outside of Canada, and more families spoke Hebrew or Russian than was the case twenty years earlier. Diversification is likely to continue. How do community organizations cater towards Russian and Israeli Jews? Jewish Federation and the synagogues in London should think carefully about how best to reach out to these new subgroups of Jewish community members. Hebrew language programming at the Jewish Community Centre could also be expanded and connected more with the nearby larger community in Toronto.

Fourth, Jewish households are much smaller on average in 2021 than in 2001 due to the proliferation of single-person households and the decrease in the number of large households. This trend is likely fuelled by increases in living alone at young and older ages, declining fertility, and the large number of unmarried adults in London's Jewish Community. The population of unmarried adults is high (39 percent). Perhaps unmarried Jewish adults move to London because of the lower cost of living than in larger urban centres or perhaps the small dating pool does not provide enough partnering options. Young adult programming could include university organizations and connect with larger Jewish population centres like Toronto and Montreal. Fifth, London's Jewish community had more mixed households including both Jewish and non-Jewish members in 2021 than in 2001. It also had a higher rate of intermarried couples than the national average.⁵ Finally, households with at least one Jewish member and at least one non-Jewish member are increasing as a share of families with children. There has been a decline in the number of Jewish households with children, but an increase in mixed households with children. Jewish organiza-

tions should think carefully about how to successfully engage these households since they represent the most rapidly increasing household type. There could be specific programming for Jewish/non-Jewish couples and their children, since some may feel awkward or unwelcome at broader Jewish community events.

Jewish institutions may also find it useful to realize that there is a fair degree of in-migration to London from other cities in Canada and from abroad. For example, in 2021, almost one in four (23 percent) of Jewish residents of London did not live in London five years earlier. Most of these new residents of London moved from other cities in Canada (525 people representing 19 percent of the total Jewish community) and a smaller group (110 people representing 4 percent of Jews in London) lived outside of Canada five years earlier. Having an updated web presence for community services would make contacts known to newcomers who may be looking for places of worship, social activities, or schools.

How does London's Jewish community differ from the national average? It differs on five key characteristics. First, London has a lower percentage of Jews who report both Jewish religion and ethnicity and more secular Jews than the Canadian average in 2021. As we see in other smaller Jewish communities in Canada, this higher proportion of secular Jews implies a higher rate of intermarriage than in the larger Jewish centres of Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver.⁵ In London, of all households with at least one Jew, 49 percent are all Jewish and 51 percent were a mix of Jews and non-Jews. This is a much higher rate of mixed households than we see for Canada as a whole, where 62 percent of households with at least one Jew in them were all Jewish in 2021 and 38 percent were a mix. Second, London's Jewish community is also slightly older than the national average, with a higher reported level of disability due to the age structure. A third difference is that London has a slightly higher proportion of people born in Canada, compared to the national average, meaning the increase in diversity is occurring both in London and nationwide. Next, London's Jewish community is better educated than the national average, with more university degrees than the Canadian Jewish average. Finally, London's Jewish community has more adults who are unmarried/unpartnered compared with the national population, due to having more never-married adults.

A limitation of this analysis is that the data are a bit dated and refer to the respondents' main residence in May 2021. Since then, there has been slow growth in Canada's Jewish community, increasing from 404,015 to 408,880 with positive net migration (more immigration than emigration) and positive natural increase (more births than deaths).¹⁰ No local information for London is available on these subjects, but there has likely been some recent population growth from Israel since the October 7, 2023, pogrom in Israel and potentially some growth from Russia and Ukraine since the escalation of the conflict there in 2022. The next census will be in 2026 and from

those data we will be able to see the ongoing changes by religion in London's Jewish community. (The next census to include data on ethnicity will be conducted in 2031.) This detailed analysis of Canada's long-form census data highlights future challenges and opportunities for London's Jewish community leaders and institutions. Notably, there are many households with Jewish members that are not connected to Jewish institutions. Federation's local magazine goes to 680 households by mail and 1,015 individuals by email, but that means many households with Jewish members are not on the mailing list. An estimated 450 of the 1,755 households with at least one Jewish person are affiliated with a synagogue leaving many households unaffiliated. Much room exists for increased engagement with Jewish institutions in London.

Moving forward, this type of community profile can be presented to community leaders to help them understand how the data point to ways in which institutions can better adapt to current and future demographic realities. The ways in which the Jewish community is diversifying can suggest new types of programming to increase engagement with formal Jewish institutions. For other Jewish communities in Canada, this community profile provides an example of new ways of using census data. Analyzing the households in which Canadian Jews live and the characteristics of those families and households can yield important implications for future challenges and opportunities for local community leaders and institutions.

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2

Robert Brym, "Canada's Jewish Population, 2023: Focus," in *American Jewish Year Book 2023*, ed. Arnold Dashefsky and Ira M. Sheskin (Springer, 2024): 295.

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See Charles Shahar, *The Jewish Community of London: 2021 Census* (Basic Demographics, 2021).

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Viorela Diaconu, Nadine Ouellette, Carlo G. Camarda, and Robert Bourbeau, "Insight on 'Typical' Longevity: An Analysis of the Modal Lifespan by Leading Causes of Death in Canada," *Demographic Research* 35 (2016): 471-504.

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7

See Charles Shahar, *2021 Census: The Jewish Population of Canada* (Jewish Federations of Canada-UIA and CIJA, 2024) and Jim Torczyner and Shari L. Brotman, "The Jews of Canada: A Profile From the Census," in *American Jewish Year Book 1995*, ed. David Singer and Ruth R. Seldin (American Jewish Committee, 1995): 227-60.

8

The combination of these two variables, religion and ethnicity, can be used in a more detailed way to capture "degrees of Jewishness" as done in Robert Brym and Feng Hou, "Twelve Degrees of Jewish Identity," in *An Ever-Dying People? Canada's Jews in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Robert Brym and Randal F. Schnoor (University of Toronto Press, 2023), 73-84. However, the combination used here is designed for a simpler analysis.

9

Robert Brym, "Visible, Indigenous, and Gender Minorities among Canadian Jews, 2021," *Canadian Jewish Studies / Études juives canadiennes* 36 (2024): 14-28.

10

Brym, "Canada's Jewish Population, 2023," 295.