

# A Divided Jewish Community, Even at a Time of War

Robert Brym, [robert.brym@utoronto.ca](mailto:robert.brym@utoronto.ca)

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## Executive Summary

Canada's Jewish community is divided over Israeli and domestic Canadian politics even though rising antisemitism and war seem to have increased the emotional attachment of Canada's Jews to Israel. This is the main finding of a recent poll of 588 Canadian Jews managed by Leger, one of Canada's leading public opinion firms. In the field from 28 August to 16 September 2024, the survey was sponsored by the New Israel Fund of Canada, JSpaceCanada, and Canadian Friends of Peace Now.

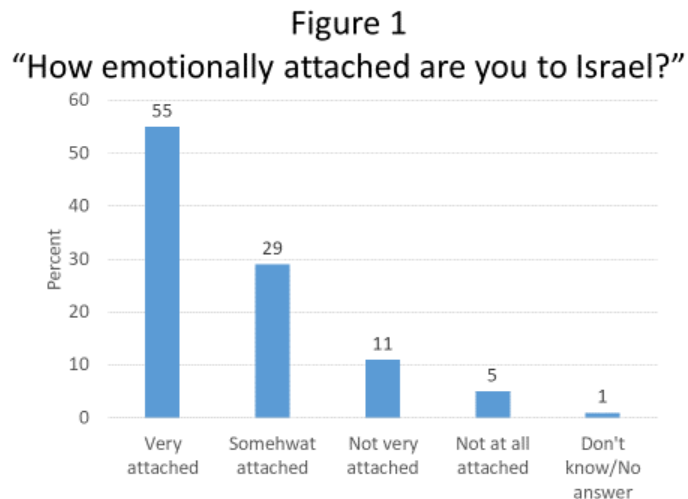
The study's highlights are as follows:

- Canadian Jews express stronger emotional attachment to Israel than in four previous surveys dating back to 2018. Specifically, 84% of Canada's Jews say they are "very" or "somewhat" emotionally attached to Israel. Ninety-four percent support the existence of Israel as a Jewish state. However, just 51% of Canadian Jews consider themselves Zionists.
- While 61% of Canada's Jews with an opinion on the subject believe that the best resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the establishment of a Jewish state of Israel alongside an Arab state of Palestine, 30% of those with an opinion on the subject favour Israeli annexation of the West Bank and Gaza.
- In recent years, support for the Conservative Party of Canada has increased among all Canadians. A more pronounced trend in this direction is evident among Canadian Jews. Fifty-five percent of decided Jewish voters saying they would vote for the Conservatives if an election were held tomorrow and 42% saying they would vote for parties to the left of the Conservatives (Liberal, NDP, Green, and Bloc Québécois).
- When presented with a list of 11 issues that might be driving their voting preference, Canadian Jews, like all Canadians, say the number one issue is the rising cost of living. However, not far behind in second place for Canada's Jews is "antisemitism," which Jews consider a more important issue than healthcare and a far more important issue than climate change and the environment, crime, and even the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
- Jewish settlements in the West Bank represent a contentious issue for Canadian Jews. Thirty-four percent of Canadian Jews say the continued building of Jewish settlements in the West Bank hurts Israel's security, 27% say it helps Israel's security, and 39% percent say it makes no difference or claim they don't know or don't answer the question.
- When asked whether Canadian politicians should increase pressure on Israel and the Palestinians to engage in a meaningful peace process, 55% of Canadian Jews agree and 23% disagree. When asked whether politicians should sanction Jewish West Bank settlers who engage in acts of vigilante violence against Palestinian civilians, 35% of Canadian Jews agree and 41% disagree. When asked whether politicians should recognize a Palestinian state in the near future, 21% of Canadian Jews agree and 53% disagree. When asked whether Canadian politicians should impose an embargo on the arms trade with Israel, 69% of Canadian Jews say "no" and 10% say "yes."

## Survey Results

### Attachment to Israel and Zionism

Four previous surveys dating back to 2018 show that Canadian Jews tend to be strongly emotionally attached to Israel. However, the current poll records the highest percentage of Jews saying they are very or somewhat emotionally attached to Israel—84%, compared to [79% in 2018](#) (Figure 1).



A distinct generational difference in attachment to Israel is evident (Figure 2). Sixty-four percent of the 18-24-year-old cohort say they are very or somewhat attached to Israel, significantly fewer than the 78% of the 25-to-34-year-old cohort. In turn, 86% of Jews over the age of 34 say they are very or somewhat attached to Israel, significantly more than the figure for the 25-to-34-year-old cohort. Among those over the age of 34, there is little variation in emotional attachment to Israel.

Significant denominational differences also exist (Figure 3). Ninety-two percent of Jews who say they are Orthodox (including Modern Orthodox) or Conservative claim to be very or somewhat attached to Israel. The corresponding figure for those who identify with the Reform denomination or say they have no denominational affiliation or are “just Jewish” is 78%. Differences between Orthodox and Conservative Jews, and between Reform and non-denominational Jews, are not statistically significant.

Eighty-seven percent of individuals in households with an annual income of \$110,000 or more in 2023 say they are very or somewhat attached to Israel, while the corresponding figure for individuals in households with an annual income under \$110,000 is 79%. Gender and educational attainment have no discernible bearing on emotional attachment to Israel.

Ninety-four percent of Canadian Jews believe that Israel has the right to exist as a Jewish state (Figure 4). Just 3% say Israel lacks that right, while another 3% say they don't know or don't answer the question. Belief in Israel's right to exist does not vary significantly by gender, educational attainment, income, or denomination. It does vary significantly by age and political party support. Ninety-eight percent of those over the age of 34 say Israel has the right to exist

as a Jewish state, compared to 81% of those under the age of 35. Ninety-seven percent of Conservative and Liberal party supporters say that Israel has the right to exist as a Jewish state. Some 79% of NDP supporters concur, although the number of NDP supporters in the sample is too small to provide a highly reliable estimate.

Figure 2  
“Very” or “somewhat” attached to Israel, by age

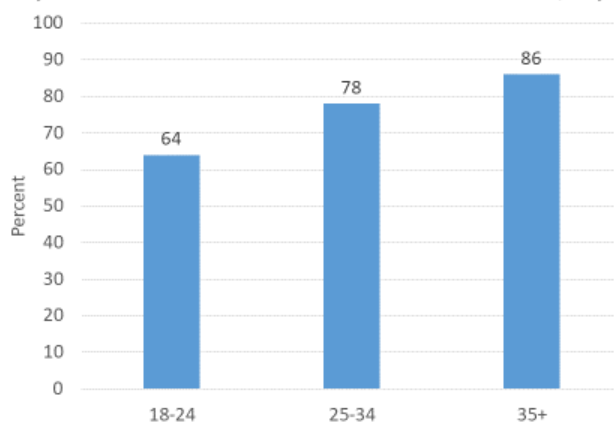
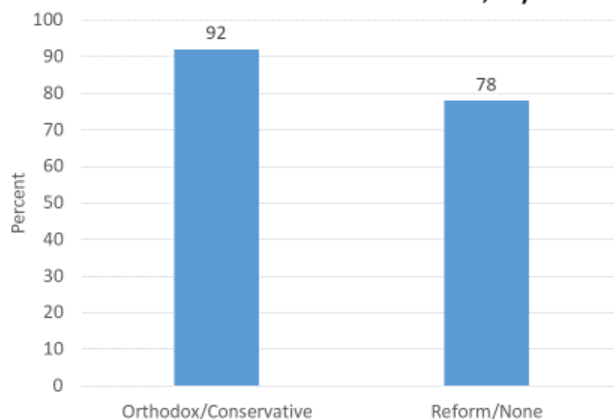


Figure 3  
“Very” or “somewhat” attached to Israel, by denomination



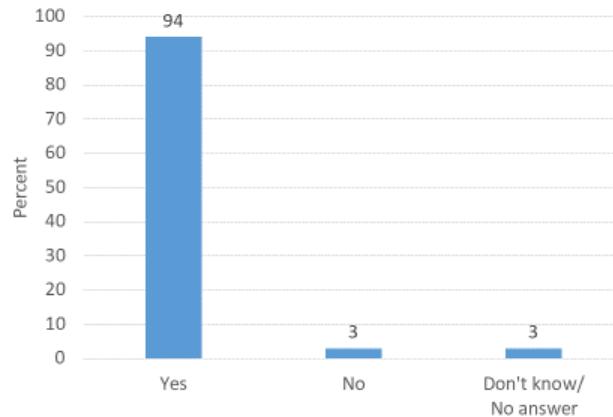
The [Encyclopaedia Britannica](#) defines Zionism as a “Jewish nationalist movement with the goal of the creation and support of a Jewish national state in Palestine, the ancient homeland of the Jews.” Given this definition and the virtual unanimity among Canadian Jews that Israel has the right to exist as a Jewish state, it will surprise some readers that just 51% of Jews in Canada are prepared to call themselves Zionists (Figure 5). Twenty-seven percent of Canadian Jews say they are not Zionists, 15% say they are ambivalent, and 7% say they don’t know or don’t answer the question.

Because this is the first time such a survey question has been asked of Canadian Jews, one cannot know whether the results indicate weakening, strengthening, or stability over time in the percentage of Jews who consider themselves Zionists. Given their strong emotional attachment

to Israel and their nearly universal belief that Israel has the right to exist as a Jewish state, one might be tempted to speculate that more Canadian Jews do not consider themselves Zionists because they confuse Zionism with certain policies of the Netanyahu government that they find objectionable. Future research needs to probe this issue.

While emotional attachment to Israel varies by age, propensity not to consider oneself a Zionist varies little. That is, no age cohort departs much from the average 27% of Canadian Jews who do not consider themselves Zionists. Nor does the likelihood of refusing to consider oneself a Zionist vary significantly by gender, level of educational attainment, or annual household income. Propensity to not consider oneself a Zionist varies significantly only by denominational identification. Fourteen percent of Orthodox respondents do not consider themselves Zionists, with the figure rising to 23% for Conservative respondents and 33% for respondents who identify with Reform, other denominations, say they identify with no denomination, or consider themselves “just Jewish.”

**Figure 4**  
“Do you believe Israel has the right to exist as a Jewish state?”



**Figure 5**  
“Do you consider yourself a Zionist?”

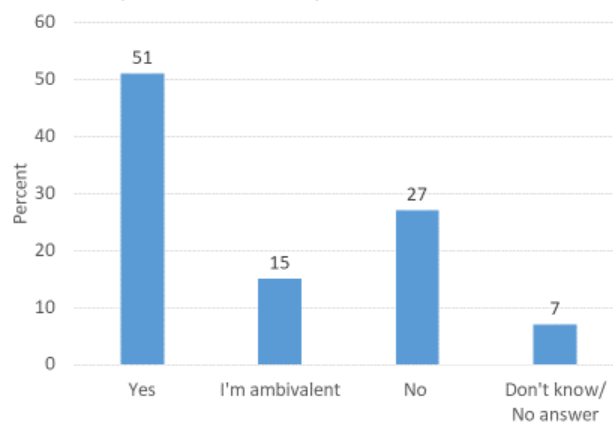
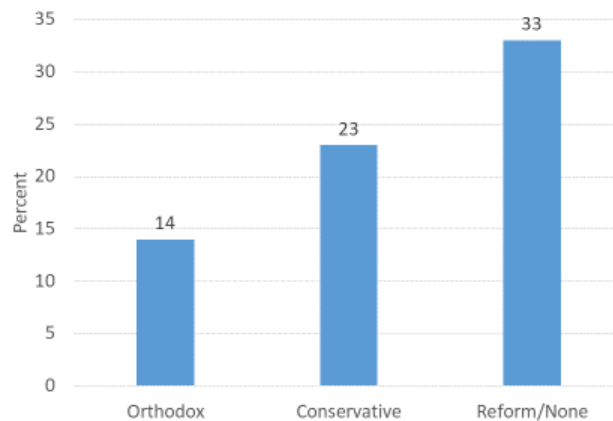


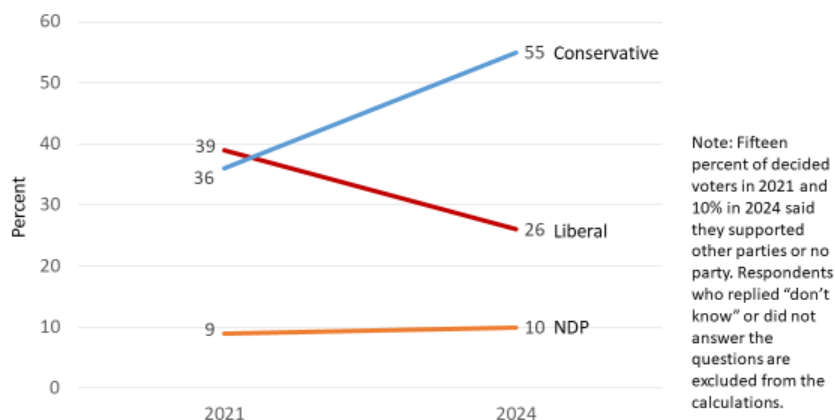
Figure 6  
Percent claiming not to be a Zionist, by denomination



## Voting

Respondents were asked which political party they voted for in the last (2021) federal election and which party they would vote for if a federal election were to be held tomorrow. The results are arrayed in Figure 7. Among decided voters, support for the New Democratic Party remained steady at about 9 percent between 2021 and 2024. Support for the Liberal party fell from 39% to 26%. And support for the Conservative party increased from 36% to 55%. These trends are similar to those in the general population, but the decline in Liberal support and increase in Conservative support is more pronounced among Jews.

Figure 7  
Federal party support of decided voters, 2021 and 2024



Jewish respondents were asked to rank eleven issues in order of importance for the next federal election. As suggested by the shading in Figure 8, the issues cluster in three groups: (1) Between 27% and 19% of Jewish voters rank the cost of living, antisemitism, and healthcare as the most important issue facing them. (2) Between 8% and 6% of Jewish voters select housing affordability and accessibility, the Israel-Palestine conflict, climate change and the environment, and crime and public safety as their top worry. (3) Between 3% and 0% of Jewish voters select

**Figure 8**  
**Most important issue driving the Jewish vote, by party support**

	Issue rank, total sample	First choice, % total sample	First choice, % Conservative supporters	First choice, % Liberal supporters	First choice, % NDP supporters
Cost of living	1	27	28	34	24
Antisemitism	2	22	30	13	5
Healthcare	3	19	18	20	19
Housing	4	8	4	10	25
Israel-Palestine conflict	5	6	7	4	6
Climate change & environment	5	6	3	11	12
Crime & public safety	5	6	7	5	6
Immigration	8	2	3	0	1
Threat posed by China & Russia	9	1	1	1	1
Discrimination against Indigenous	10	0	0	0	3
Islamophobia	11	0	0	0	0

immigration, the threat posed to Canada by Russia and China, Islamophobia, and discrimination against Indigenous people as their chief concerns when it comes to voting. Because antisemitism ranks as the second most important issue influencing the Jewish vote and the Israel-Palestine conflict ranks tied for fifth, it seems likely that differences in party policies affecting Jews and Israel have been partly responsible for the shift away from the Liberal party and toward the Conservatives: the Liberals have been much more critical of the Netanyahu government during the war in Gaza than have the Conservatives, and [many Canadian Jews consider strong criticism of Israel antisemitic](#). Accordingly, some 30% of Jewish supporters of the Conservative party rank antisemitism as the top issue influencing their vote. The comparable figure for Jewish Liberal party supporters is 13% and for Jewish NDP supporters 5%. For Jewish voters, these figures represent the largest and most significant across-party spread in issue support.

## West Bank settlements

An unreleased poll of 500 Canadian Jews conducted by the sponsors of the current survey in September 2023, just before the 7 October Hamas attack on Israel, asked whether the construction of Jewish settlements in the West Bank helps or hurts Israel's security. The question was repeated in the current survey. Figure 9 compares the results of the two polls on this question. In the 2024 poll, 34% of Canadian Jews say the continued construction of Jewish settlements in the West Bank hurts Israel's security while 27% say it helps Israel's security. A year earlier, the respective figures were 38% and 20%. By the narrowest of margins the percentage saying the settlements help Israel's security increased significantly between the two surveys (Figure 9).

Gender, household income, and denomination are significantly associated with attitudes toward Jewish settlements in the West Bank. Jewish men are more than twice as likely as Jewish women to think that West Bank settlements help Israel's security (35% vs. 16%), while women are 2.5 times more likely than men to say they don't know or not answer the question (28% vs. 11%). Respondents with household incomes below \$110,000 in 2023 are evenly split, with 29% saying the settlements help and 29% saying they hurt Israel's security. In contrast, 19% of those with household incomes of \$110,000 or more say settlements help while 38% say they hurt Israel's security. A significant denominational split occurs between the Orthodox and others. For

the Orthodox, the help/hurt ratio is 1.8 to 1. For those who identify with other denominations or no denomination, the help/hurt ratio is 0.7 to 1.

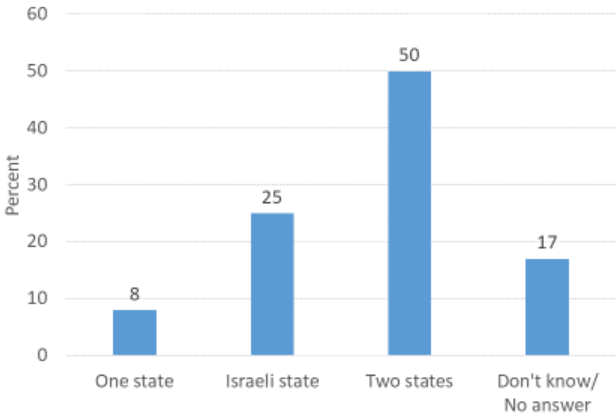
Figure 9  
“Does the continued building of Jewish settlements in the West Bank help the security of Israel, harm the security of Israel, or does it not make a difference?”

	2023	2024
Helps the security of Israel	20	27
Makes no difference	29	22
Hurts the security of Israel	38	34
Don't know/No answer	14	18
Total	100	100

The two-state solution

In Canada’s Jewish community, the strongest point of agreement regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict concerns its preferred outcome (Figure 10). Fifty percent of Canadian Jews favour a two-state solution, with a Jewish state of Israel alongside an Arab state of Palestine. Just 25% of respondents align themselves with [the platform of Likud, Israel’s ruling party](#), which calls for the annexation of the occupied West Bank and Gaza to Israel and the establishment of a single Jewish state between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. Eight percent of Canada’s Jews believe the best resolution to the conflict is a single, secular, binational state that favours equal rights for Jews and Palestinians.

Figure 10  
“In your opinion, which of the following options would be the best resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?”



By comparison, a poll of Israelis in August 2024 conducted by [Israeli think tank Mitvim](#) found that 55% of Israelis with an opinion on the subject support a two-state solution when it is described as a regional initiative that includes normalization with Saudi Arabia, the

establishment of a demilitarized Palestinian state not under Hamas control, and an American-led regional defense alliance. Similarly to Canadian Jewry, just 25% of Israelis support full annexation of the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank, and only 5% support the establishment of a single secular binational state.

According to a September 2024 poll of Palestinians by the [Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research](#), 51% of Palestinians in both Gaza and the occupied West Bank support a two-state solution when it is described as based on the 1967 borders. Twenty-two percent of Palestinians prefer the establishment of a single state with equal rights for Palestinians and Jews.

Denomination and age are significantly related to support a two-state solution. Specifically, 41% of Orthodox respondents and 56% of non-Orthodox respondents support a two-state solution. Supports stands at 50% for those under the age of 65 and 62% for those over the age of 64.

### **Canada's role in the peace process**

In a series of questions about actions Canadian politicians might take vis-à-vis the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the highest level of support—55% of respondents—agree that Canada's politicians should apply more pressure on Israelis and Palestinians to adopt a meaningful peace process, with 24% disagreeing, 16% neither agreeing nor disagreeing, and 5% saying “don't know” or not answering the question.

As Figure 11 shows, Canadian Jews are ambivalent about Canadian politicians increasing sanctions on Jewish settlers in the West Bank who engage in acts of vigilante violence against Palestinian civilians, with 36% agreeing, 41% disagreeing, and 23% neither agreeing nor disagreeing, replying “don't know,” or not answering the question. The difference between the percent agreeing and the percent disagreeing does not reach statistical significance at standard levels.

Canadian Jews are less in favour of Canadian politicians formally recognizing a Palestinian state in the near future; 21% agree with this idea, 53% disagree, and 25% reply otherwise. Finally, on the question of Canadian politicians imposing an embargo on the Canada-Israel arms trade, only 10% agree, while 69% disagree and 20% reply otherwise. Regarding these last two policy issues, the difference the between percent agreeing and the percent disagreeing is statistically significant at standard levels.

On all four policy questions, support is strongest among NDP voters and weakest among Conservative party voters, with Liberal party voters taking a middle position. For example, on the issue of increasing sanctions against Jewish West Bank settlers who engage in acts of vigilante violence against Palestinians, 65% of NDP voters agree, compared to 49% of Liberal voters and 20% of Conservative voters. Disagreement stands at 14% for NDP voters, 32% for Liberal voters, and 57% for Conservative voters (Figure 12).



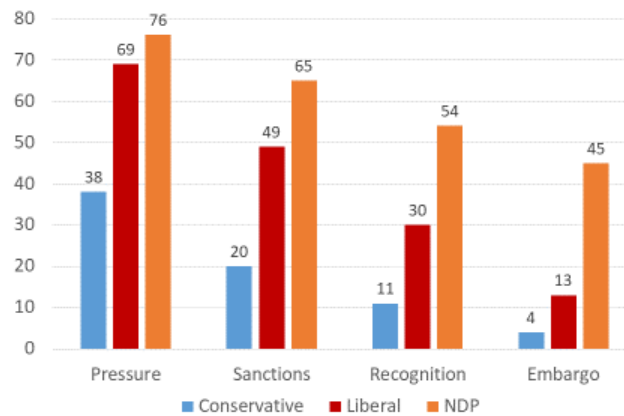
Figure 11

"Canadian politicians are considering the adoption of various policies concerning the Israel-Palestine conflict. Some of these policies are listed below. How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of them?"

	Pressure	Sanctions	Recognition	Embargo
Strongly agree	27	16	8	6
Agree	29	20	14	5
Neither agree nor disagree	16	11	17	10
Disagree	10	15	15	13
Strongly disagree	14	26	38	57
Don't know/No answer	5	12	8	10
Total	100	100	100	100

Figure 12

Attitude toward policy options by voting intention, percent agree



## Methodology

The sample for this poll was drawn from a large online panel of Canadian adults. It was weighted by characteristics of the Canadian Jewish population based on the 2021 Census of Canada and the [2018 Survey of Jews in Canada](#): the distribution of Canadian Jews by age, gender, educational attainment, region of residence, and denominational affiliation. Figure 13 provides the distribution of weighted sample characteristics. The sample is believed to be broadly representative of Canadian Jewry. A simple probability sample of 588 individuals would have a maximum margin of error of 4.0%, with the margin of error decreasing as findings exceed or subceed 50%. When statistically significant findings are reported here, they are deemed to be accurate within the margin of error in 19 of 20 similar samples. Throughout this report, percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. Some reported total percentages may not equal exactly 100 due to rounding. Figures comparing groups are designed to highlight statistically significant differences; when groups are combined, it means there is no statistically significant difference between them.

<b>Figure 13 Weighted sample characteristics</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Region</b>		
Atlantic	9	1.5
Quebec	137	23.3
Ontario	334	56.8
Prairies	49	8.3
British Columbia	59	10.1
<i>Total</i>	<i>588</i>	<i>100.0</i>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	290	49.3
Female	294	50.1
Non-cisgender	4	0.6
<i>Total</i>	<i>588</i>	<i>100.0</i>

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Age cohort</b>		
18-24	43	7.3
25-34	92	15.7
35-44	96	16.4
45-54	86	14.6
55-64	92	15.6
65-74	106	18.0
>74	73	12.4
<i>Total</i>	<i>588</i>	<i>100.0</i>
<b>Last completed level of education</b>		
<13 years	56	9.5
College (13-15 years)	64	10.8
University<Bachelor's degree	34	5.8
Bachelor's degree	212	36.2
Master's, PhD, professional degree	221	37.6
Don't know/No answer	1	0.2
<i>Total</i>	<i>588</i>	<i>100.0</i>
<b>Denominational identification</b>		
Orthodox/Modern Orthodox	95	16.2
Conservative	158	26.9
Reform	100	17.0
Other	16	2.7
No denomination; just Jewish	214	36.4
Don't know/No answer	5	0.9
<i>Total</i>	<i>588</i>	<i>100.0</i>