

Cover Page



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Beyond the Doors of the Synagogue

Self-Perceptions of Jewish Identity in a Modern Canadian Society

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1. Religious participation can be expressed through active ritual-based observation, passive cultural tradition, or both.
2. One's religious identity needn't necessarily include active ritual practice in order to claim religious membership.
3. Emigration from a region where one has religious minority status to a region where one is in a religious majority may alter situational identity.
4. Awareness of individual religious minority status, or awareness that one's religious group exists as a majority elsewhere, does not necessarily influence feelings of national identity.
5. Higher self-esteem is often the byproduct of membership in any religious group, irrespective of the degree to which one practices that religion.
6. Social identity theory is applicable to religious groups, as they function much as any social group that claims members.
7. Optimal distinction offers significant explanation of group-specific secular religious identity, as it facilitates integration with the general population while maintaining a distinct religious identity.
8. Secular participation (or participation distinct from active practice) does not exclusively imply extrinsic orientation. Intrinsic religious orientations are found within non-active participation styles.
9. Optimal distinction may help explain how a secular Jewish identity remains situationally salient.
10. Religious identity can be synonymous with social identity, independent of active ritual participation.
11. The use of the word 'Jewish' as an identity marker for secular members is not contingent upon either minority or majority contextualization, but rather upon incidental prominence.
12. Jewish holidays and other traditional observances are not necessarily considered ritual, and are often secular or cultural expressions distinct from any active context.
13. Activation of Jewish identity salience greatly increases one's affinity for telling stories about one's mother.