

Survey: Canadians Reject Branding Criticism of Israel as Antisemitic

**Part 3 of a national opinion survey of Canadians
conducted June 5-10, 2020**

Issued by:

**Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME)
Independent Jewish Voices Canada (IJV)
United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine-Israel (UNJPPI)**



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Executive Summary

A recent survey conducted by EKOS Research Associates sought to probe the opinions of Canadians on issues related to antisemitism. It found that a strong majority of Canadians believe that most forms of criticism and protest of Israel are not in principle antisemitic.

EKOS Research Associates (<https://www.ekos.com/>) conducted a **national online survey** of 1,009 Canadians, between June 5-10, 2020, on behalf of Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (<http://cjpme.org>), Independent Jewish Voices Canada (<http://www.ijvcanada.org/>) and the United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine-Israel (<http://www.unjppi.org/>). The margin of error associated with the sample is plus or minus 3.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

This is the third publication in a three-part series. Part One of this survey was published on June 17, 2020, on issues related to Israeli annexation and Canada's bid for a seat on the United Nations Security Council. Part Two was published on September 16, 2020, on issues related to the International Criminal Court and the status of Jerusalem.

As debates rage over the controversial International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism, these survey results show that **Canadians do not support the IHRA's conflation of certain forms of political speech and activism in relation to Israel and Zionism with antisemitism**. Rather, most Canadians are able to distinguish between the two, and believe that **criticism of Israel, even when harsh, is not in principle antisemitic**.

The findings show that **a strong majority of Canadians believe that most forms of criticism of Israel are not antisemitic**. These include:

- Accusing Israel of committing human rights abuses against the Palestinians (80% not antisemitic)
- Claiming that Israel is unlawfully pushing Palestinians off their land. (79%)
- Calling for a boycott of Israel because of alleged human rights abuses (76%)
- Establishing campus groups which criticize Israeli government policy (74%)
- Suggesting that Israel's restrictive movement and residency laws on Palestinians are similar to South African Apartheid laws (69%)

This suggests that most Canadians would disagree when Canadian politicians describe Palestine solidarity activism, such as BDS or Israeli Apartheid Week, as being antisemitic. As such, **any initiatives to legislate limits on criticizing or protesting Israel, or to enforce the IHRA working definition of antisemitism in this regard, would strongly conflict with the views of average Canadians**.

At the same time, **a majority of Canadians identified four other statements as being antisemitic**:

- Painting swastikas on an Israeli consulate (91% said antisemitic)
- Claiming that Jews control the world's media (73% said antisemitic)
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis (61%)
- Accusing Jewish-Canadians of being more loyal to Israel than to Canada (58%)

Rather than seeing a correlation between criticism of Israel and otherwise antisemitic views, we saw the opposite. Those respondents who were most likely to see criticism of Israel as legitimate were also the most sensitive to negative statements about Jewish Canadians, including “Claiming that Jews control the world's media” and “Accusing Jewish-Canadians of being more loyal to Israel than to Canada.” Conversely, those respondents more likely to say that criticism of Israel is antisemitic were also the most likely to say that statements critical of Jewish-Canadians were not antisemitic.

The survey also found that **a majority (59%) of Canadians see prejudice against minority groups to be a serious problem, and a smaller number (35%) see prejudice against Jewish people in Canada to be a serious problem.** Notably, these numbers are similar to the results of a 2018 survey of Canadian Jewish opinion. Despite the particular focus by governments on legislation that specifically addresses antisemitism, average Canadians see prejudice against minorities in general as a more serious issue. These findings point to the need to combat antisemitism as part of a holistic, intersectional approach against racism and prejudice in general, rather than addressing antisemitism in a vacuum.

Survey Sponsors

Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME, <http://cjpme.org>) is an organization whose mission is to promote justice, development and peace in the Middle East, and here at home in Canada. Through campaigns promoting and enabling political engagement, interaction with the media, and educational initiatives, CJPME seeks to stimulate understanding and action around human rights, especially vis-à-vis Canada and the Middle East. CJPME is a pan-Canadian organization with over 100,000 adherents and local groups in a dozen Canadian cities.

Independent Jewish Voices Canada (IJV, <http://www.ijvcanada.org/>) is a grassroots organization grounded in Jewish tradition that opposes all forms of racism and advocates for justice and peace for all in Israel-Palestine. Our strength comes from our members. IJV has active chapters in cities and on university campuses across the country.

United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine-Israel (UNJPPI, <http://www.unjppi.org/>) is a grassroots network of United Church members and adherents working toward the goal of a just peace in Palestine and Israel by calling for an end to the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands and equal rights for all who live in Palestine/Israel through education and advocacy. UNJPPI seeks to raise awareness of the conditions of Palestinians under the illegal Israeli occupation and encourages action to pressure the state of Israel to end the occupation of and building of Israeli only settlements in Palestinian land.

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1. Survey Introduction

1.1. Scope of Part 3 of Survey Findings

This report constitutes the third and final release of results from a June 2020 survey probing the attitudes of Canadians on foreign and domestic policy related to Israel-Palestine. Part 1 was released on June 17, 2020, as “Out of Touch: Canadian Foreign Policy Disconnected from Canadians’ Views.” Part Two was published on September 16, 2020, as “No Double Standards: Canadians Expect Greater Impartiality vis-à-vis Israel.”

1.2. Survey Methodology

EKOS Research Associates (EKOS), an experienced public opinion research firm, was hired to conduct an on-line poll to seek answers to these questions. EKOS is a full-service consulting practice, founded in 1980, which has evolved to become one of the leading suppliers of evaluation and public opinion research for the Canadian government. EKOS specializes in market research, public opinion research, strategic communications advice, program evaluation and performance measurement, and human resources and organizational research.

Between June 5-10, 2020, a random sample of 1,009 Canadian adults from EKOS’ online panel, *Probit*, aged 18 and over, completed the survey. The survey was made available to all respondents in either English or French. The margin of error associated with the sample is plus or minus 3.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided.

EKOS statistically weighted all the data by age, gender, education and region to ensure the sample’s composition reflects that of the actual population of Canada, based on 2016 census data.

The survey results presented in this report are with residuals excluded. The full data for the survey findings released in this report, both with residuals (“don’t know” and “no response” percentages included) and without residuals can be found at <http://cjpme.org/survey2020> or <http://ijvcanada.org/survey2020>.

2. Survey Results

2.1. Canadians' Views on Antisemitism and Criticism of Israel

Background

Antisemitism appears to be on the rise worldwide, as does racism and xenophobia more generally. The killing of worshippers at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh in 2018, the shootings at Chabad Poway Synagogue in 2019 and the three murders that were a result of an attack on a Jewish grocery store in New Jersey in December 2019 were shocking displays of this trend.

In the context of these disturbing trends, several Jewish and Israel advocacy groups have been lobbying to have the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Antisemitism (IHRA WDA)¹ adopted by all levels of government, as well as by institutions such as universities and social media enterprises. While the IHRA WDA guidelines note that “criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic,” and that it is important to take into account the “overall context,” the document has come under fire for nevertheless equating certain political criticisms of Israel with antisemitism.

The Trudeau government adopted the IHRA working definition in 2019 as part of its anti-racism strategy,² and its adoption has been debated by various provinces and municipalities.³ However, due to IHRA’s potential suppression of legitimate speech relating to Israel and Palestine, its adoption has been opposed by the Canadian Labour Congress,⁴ the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association,⁵ and over 400 Canadian academics.⁶ Kenneth Stern, the lead drafter of the IHRA working definition, has criticized right-wing organizations for “weaponizing” it to stifle free speech.⁷ Indeed, it has been utilized on numerous occasions as a means of shutting down political speech and activism critical of Israel and in support of Palestinian rights.⁸

Out of the eleven examples of antisemitism attached to the IHRA WDA, which are usually understood to be part of the definition,⁹ seven of those examples relate in some way to Israel or Zionism. Example 7, for instance, reads as follows: “denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.” Although other examples are clear and straightforward, the vast majority are heavily reliant on context, including but not limited to those dealing with questions of Jewish stereotyping (Example 2), dual loyalty charges (Example 6), and comparisons between Israeli policy with that of the Nazis (Example 10).¹⁰ These examples are nevertheless frequently applied uncritically by some proponents of the IHRA WDA to attack those who engage in specific forms of criticism and protest of Israel, including the boycott, divestment, sanctions (BDS) movement, Israeli Apartheid Week, and anti-Zionism.¹¹

Existing research shows that Canadians disapprove of labelling criticism of Israel as antisemitic. In 2017, an EKOS survey found that 91% of Canadians believe that “criticizing Israeli government policies is not necessarily antisemitic.”¹² In 2018, an EKOS survey of Jewish Canadians found that almost half (48%) agreed that “accusations of antisemitism are often used to silence legitimate criticism of Israeli government policies.”¹³ However, to date there has been no data clarifying specifically where Canadians draw the line, and what kind of criticism they deem to be legitimate versus what criticism they deem to be antisemitic.

Survey Question

Given the ongoing confusion and heated disagreement as to what does or does not constitute antisemitism, particularly in regard to debates over Israel, we wanted to ascertain which forms of criticism Canadians believe to constitute antisemitism and which forms they believe to be legitimate criticism.

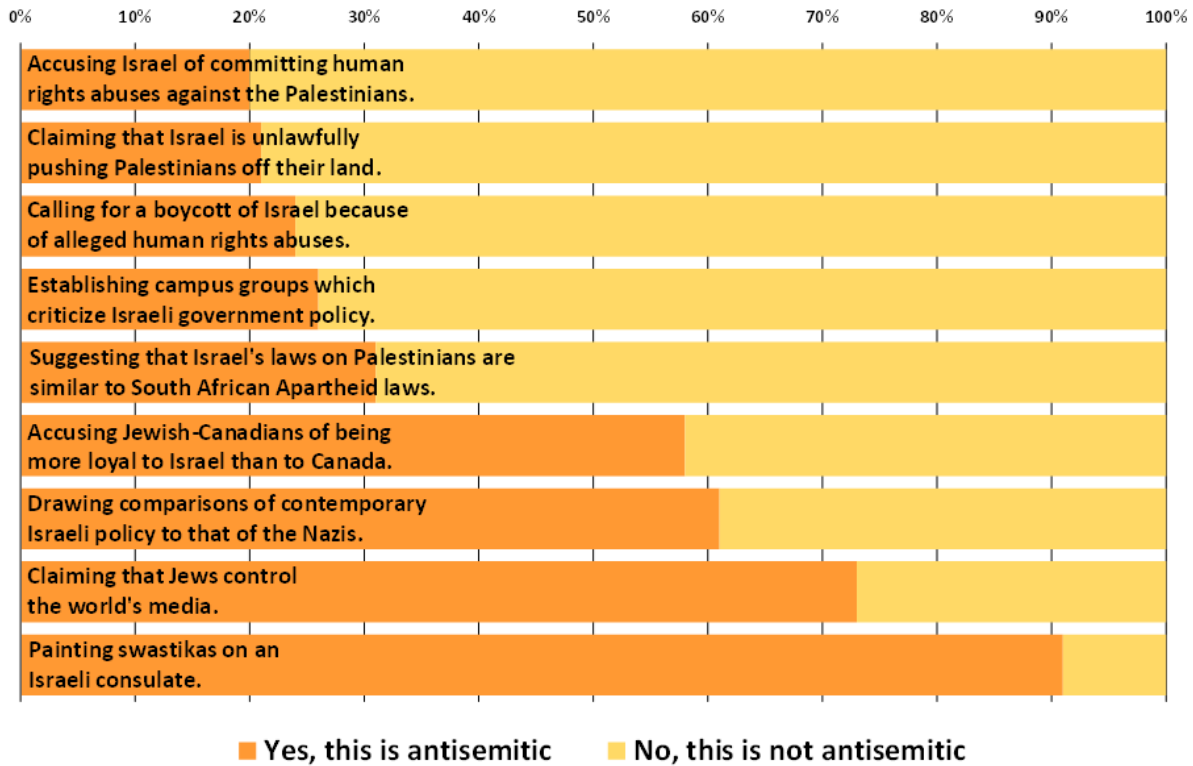
Some people argue that the following are (antisemitic / legitimate criticisms). Other people argue that they are (legitimate criticisms / antisemitic). Do you believe that the following statements are, in principle, antisemitic?

- *Yes*
- *No*
- *Don't Know*

The order of the phrases “antisemitic” and “legitimate criticism” in the question were randomized by respondent, to avoid favouring one response or the other.

Canadians were asked to evaluate nine different statements. Many of the nine statements draw in some way from the examples suggested by the IHRA definition of antisemitism. The overall results for the nine different statements are provided in the following chart, in ascending order as rated by the Canadians surveyed:

Canadians on whether the following statements are antisemitic



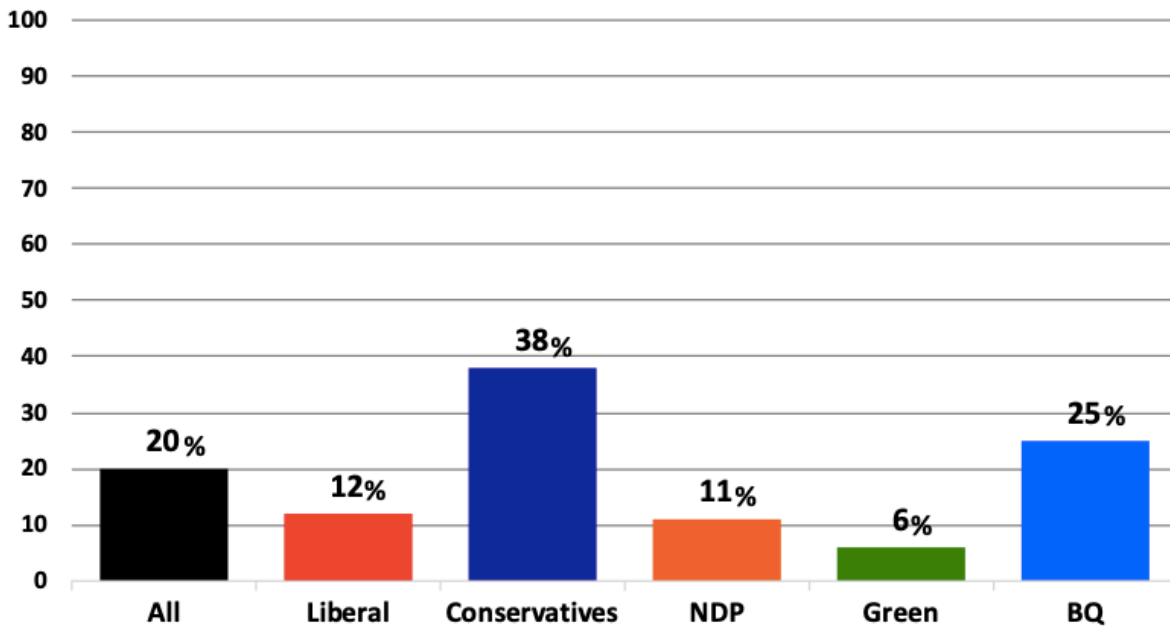
2.1.1. Only a Small Minority of Canadians Believe that Accusing Israel of Committing Human Rights Abuses Against Palestinians is Antisemitic

In this question, Canadians were asked whether they considered it antisemitic to accuse Israel of committing human rights abuses against the Palestinians, as follows (with the question preamble repeated):

Some people argue that the following are antisemitic. Other people argue that they are legitimate criticisms. Do you believe that the following statements are, in principle, antisemitic?

- *Accusing Israel of committing human rights abuses against the Palestinians.*
 - *Yes*
 - *No*
 - *Don't Know*

Only a Small Minority of Canadians Believe that Accusing Israel of Committing Human Rights Abuses Against the Palestinians is Antisemitic



80% of Canadians said that accusing Israel of committing human rights abuses against the Palestinians is not antisemitic, while 20% said it was antisemitic.

There was a major divide according to age: among Canadians 18-34 years old, 95% said it was not antisemitic, and only 5% said that it was. Among Canadians 65+, 66% said it was not antisemitic, and 34% said that it was.

A majority of supporters of all parties agreed that it was not antisemitic: Liberal (88% “no” to 12% “yes”), NDP (89 to 11), Green (94 to 6), BQ (75 to 25), and Conservative (62 to 38). Supporters of the Conservative Party, and to a lesser extent the BQ, were much more likely to consider the statement antisemitic than supporters of other parties.

Residuals (don’t know and no response) were 14%.

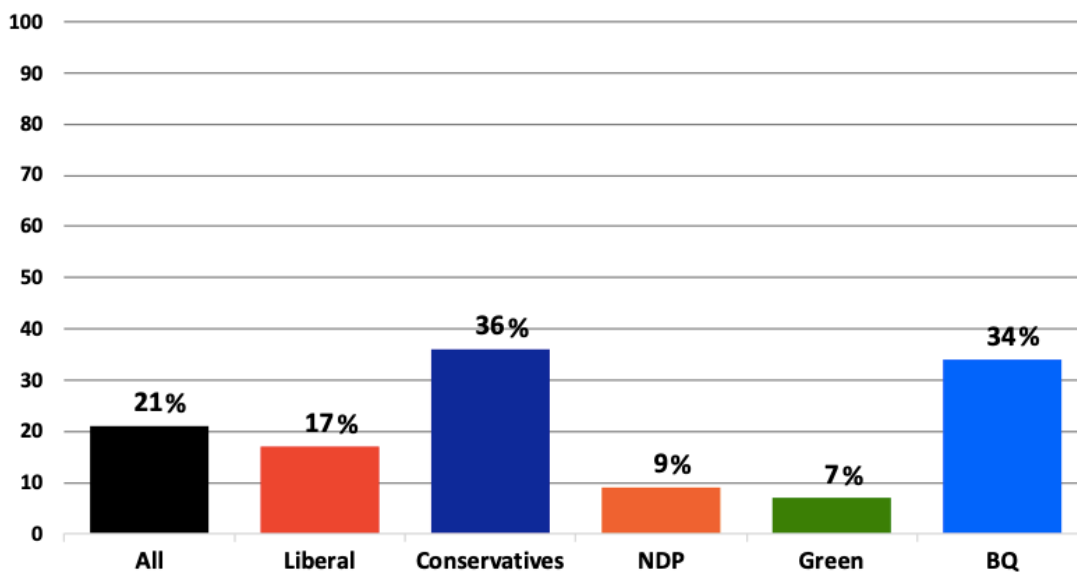
2.1.2. Only a Small Minority of Canadians Believe that Claiming that Israel is Unlawfully Pushing Palestinians Off Their Land is Antisemitic

In this question, Canadians were asked whether they considered it antisemitic to claim that Israel is unlawfully pushing Palestinians off their land, as follows (with the question preamble repeated):

Some people argue that the following are antisemitic. Other people argue that they are legitimate criticisms. Do you believe that the following statements are, in principle, antisemitic?

- Claiming that Israel is unlawfully pushing Palestinians off their land.
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't Know

Only a Small Minority of Canadians Believe that Claiming that Israel is Unlawfully Pushing Palestinians off their Land is Antisemitic



79% of Canadians said that claiming that Israel is unlawfully pushing Palestinians off their land is not antisemitic, while only 21% said that it was antisemitic.

Among Canadians 18-34 years old, 92% said it was not antisemitic, and only 8% said that it was. Among Canadians 65+, 62% said it was not antisemitic, and 38% said that it was. Canadians with higher levels of education were less likely to consider this statement to be antisemitic than Canadians with lower levels of education.

A majority of supporters of all parties agreed that it was not antisemitic: Liberal (83% “no” to 17% “yes”), NDP (91 to 9), Green (93 to 7), BQ (66 to 34), and Conservative (64 to 36). Supporters of the Conservative Party and the BQ were much more likely to consider the statement antisemitic than supporters of other parties.

Residuals (don't know and no response) were 16%.

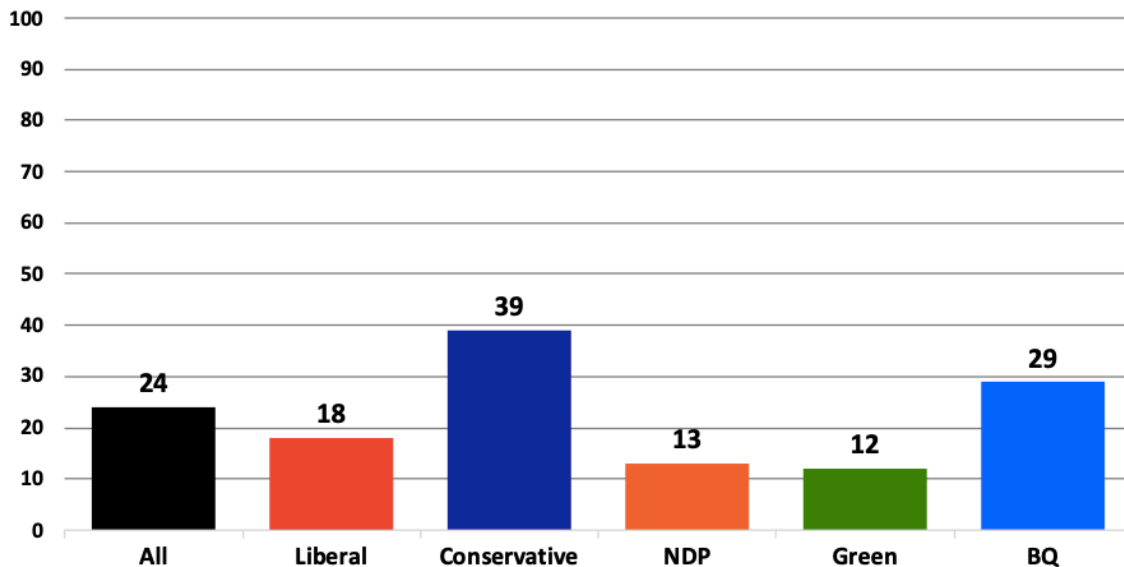
2.1.3. Only a Small Minority of Canadians Believe that Calling for a Boycott of Israel Because of Alleged Human Rights Abuses is Antisemitic

In this question, Canadians were asked whether they considered it antisemitic to call for a boycott of Israel because of alleged human rights abuses, as follows (with the question preamble repeated):

Some people argue that the following are antisemitic. Other people argue that they are legitimate criticisms. Do you believe that the following statements are, in principle, antisemitic?

- *Calling for a boycott of Israel because of alleged human rights abuses.*
 - *Yes*
 - *No*
 - *Don't Know*

Only a Small Minority of Canadians Believe that Calling for a Boycott of Israel Because of Alleged Human Rights Abuses is Antisemitic



76% of Canadians said that calling for a boycott of Israel because of alleged human rights abuses was not antisemitic, while 24% said that it was.

Among Canadians 18-34 years old, 88% said it was not antisemitic, and only 12% said that it was. Among Canadians 55-64 as well as 65+, 67% said it was not antisemitic, and 33% said that it was. Canadians with higher levels of education were less likely to consider a boycott of Israel antisemitic than Canadians with lower levels of education.

A majority of supporters of all parties agreed that it was not antisemitic: Liberal (82% “no” to 18% “yes”), NDP (87 to 13), Green (88 to 12), BQ (71 to 29), and Conservative (61 to 39).

Residuals (don’t know and no response) were 16%.

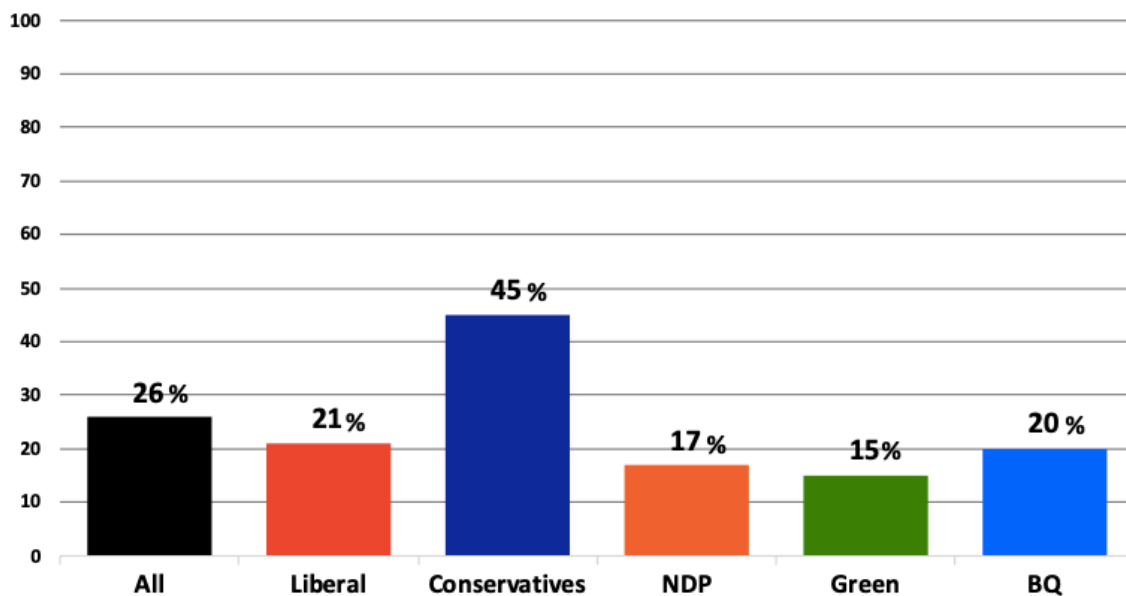
2.1.4. Only One-Quarter of Canadians Believe that Establishing Campus Groups Which Criticize Israeli Government Policy is Antisemitic

In this question, Canadians were asked whether they considered it antisemitic to establish campus groups which criticize Israeli government policy, as follows (with the question preamble repeated):

Some people argue that the following are antisemitic. Other people argue that they are legitimate criticisms. Do you believe that the following statements are, in principle, antisemitic?

- *Establishing campus groups which criticize Israeli government policy.*
 - *Yes*
 - *No*
 - *Don’t Know*

Only One-quarter of Canadians Believe that Establishing Campus Groups which Criticize Israeli Government Policy is Antisemitic



74% of Canadians said that establishing campus groups which criticize Israeli government policy was not antisemitic, while 26% said it was antisemitic.

Among Canadians 18-34 years old, 86% said it was not antisemitic, and only 14% said that it was. Among Canadians 65+, 66% said it was not antisemitic, and 34% said that it was. Canadians with higher levels of education were less likely to consider such campus groups antisemitic than Canadians with lower levels of education.

A majority of supporters of all parties agreed that it was not antisemitic: Liberal (79% “no” to 21% “yes”), NDP (83 to 17), Green (85 to 15), BQ (80 to 20), and Conservative (55 to 45). While there was some agreement among supporters of most parties, Conservative party supporters are more divided on this question.

Residuals (don’t know and no response) were 17%.

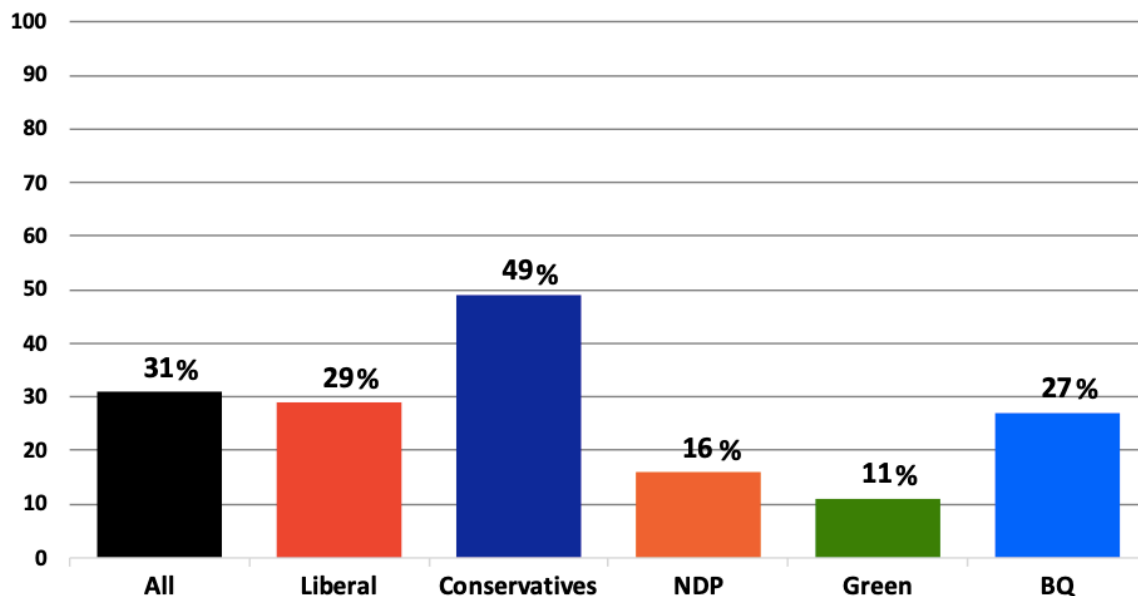
2.1.5. Less than a Third of Canadians Believe that Suggesting that Israel's Restrictive Movement and Residency Laws on Palestinians are Similar to South African Apartheid Laws is Antisemitic

In this question, Canadians were asked whether they considered it antisemitic to suggest that Israel's restrictive movement and residency laws on Palestinians are similar to South African Apartheid laws, as follows (with the question preamble repeated):

Some people argue that the following are antisemitic. Other people argue that they are legitimate criticisms. Do you believe that the following statements are, in principle, antisemitic?

- *Suggesting that Israel's restrictive movement and residency laws on Palestinians are similar to South African Apartheid laws.*
 - *Yes*
 - *No*
 - *Don't Know*

Less Than a Third of Canadians Believe that Suggesting that Israel's Restrictive Movement and Residency Laws on Palestinians are Similar to South African Apartheid Laws is Antisemitic



69% of Canadians said that suggesting that Israel's restrictive movement and residency laws on Palestinians are similar to South African Apartheid laws is not antisemitic, and 31% said that it was antisemitic.

Among Canadians 18-34 years old, 82% said it was not antisemitic, and only 18% said that it was. Among Canadians 65+, 63% said it was not antisemitic, and 37% said that it was. Canadians with higher levels of education were less likely to consider this antisemitic than Canadians with lower levels of education.

A majority of supporters of all parties agreed that it was not antisemitic: Liberal (71% “no” to 29% “yes”), NDP (84 to 16), Green (89 to 11), BQ (73 to 27), and Conservative (51 to 49). Supporters of the Conservative Party were divided almost equally.

Residuals (don't know and no response) were 24%.

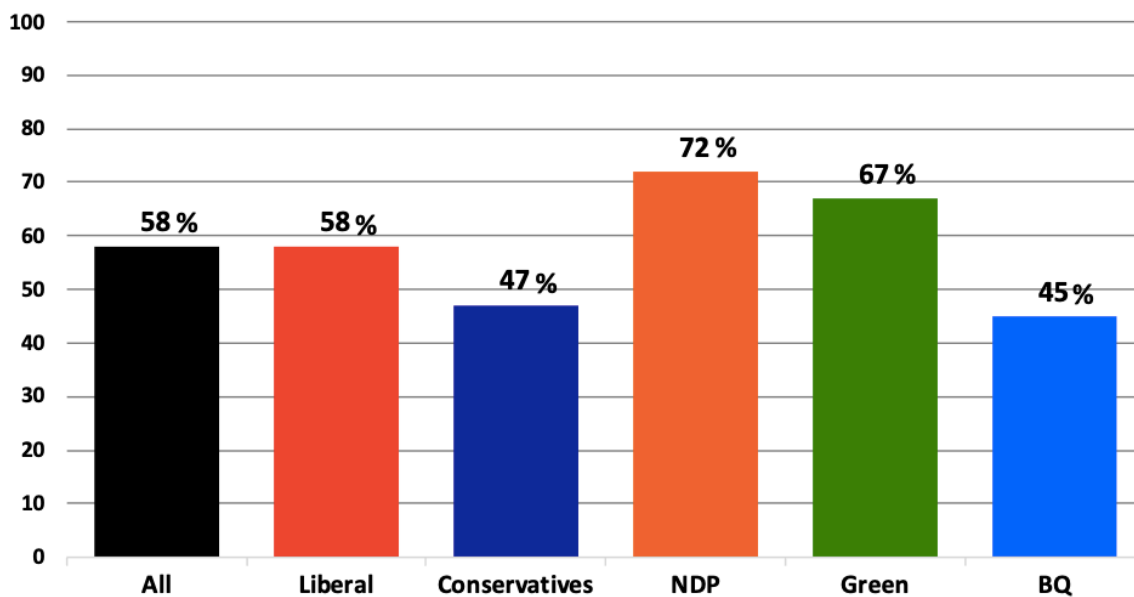
2.1.6. A Majority of Canadians Believe that Accusing Jewish-Canadians of Being More Loyal to Israel than to Canada is Antisemitic

In this question, Canadians were asked whether they considered it antisemitic to accuse Jewish-Canadians of being more loyal to Israel than to Canada, as follows (with the question preamble repeated):

Some people argue that the following are antisemitic. Other people argue that they are legitimate criticisms. Do you believe that the following statements are, in principle, antisemitic?

- Accusing Jewish-Canadians of being more loyal to Israel than to Canada.
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't Know

A Majority of Canadians Believe that Accusing Jewish-Canadians of Being More Loyal to Israel than to Canada is Antisemitic



58% of Canadians agreed that accusing Jewish-Canadians of being more loyal to Israel than to Canada is antisemitic, while 42% said that it was not.

Those who were most likely to say that it was NOT antisemitic include people who are 65+ (57%), in Quebec (49%), and had lower levels of education (47% high school and 47% college). Those who were most likely to say it WAS antisemitic include those 18-34 (75%), and those with higher levels of education (69% Bachelor and 70% Post Grad).

Supporters of political parties were divided. Those were who most likely to say that it WAS antisemitic include Liberal (58% “Yes”), NDP (72%) and Green (67%) supporters. Those most likely to say that it was NOT antisemitic include BQ (55% “No”) and Conservative (53%), constituting a small majority of their supporters.

Residuals (don't know and no response) were 16%.

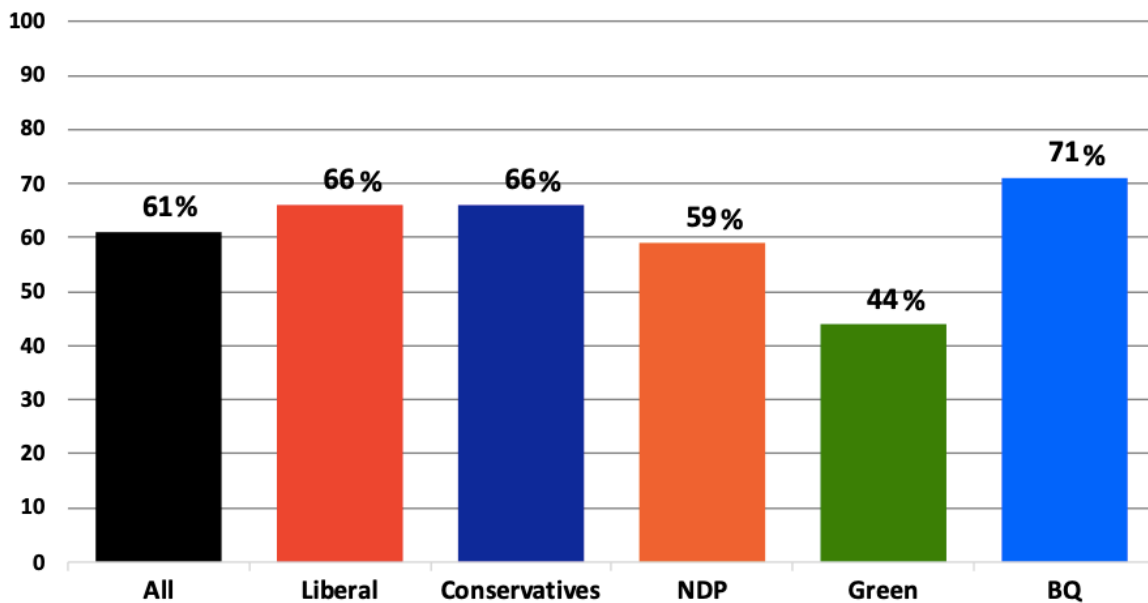
2.1.7. A Majority of Canadians Believe that Drawing Comparisons of Contemporary Israeli Policy to that of the Nazis is Antisemitic

In this question, Canadians were asked whether they considered it antisemitic to draw comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis, as follows (with the question preamble repeated):

Some people argue that the following are antisemitic. Other people argue that they are legitimate criticisms. Do you believe that the following statements are, in principle, antisemitic?

- *Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.*
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't Know

A Majority of Canadians Believe that Drawing Comparisons of Contemporary Israeli Policy to that of the Nazis is Antisemitic



61% of Canadians agreed that drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis is antisemitic, while 39% said that it was not.

Those most likely to say it was not antisemitic include Canadians 18-34 years old (46%) and those with College level education (46%).

A majority of supporters of most parties agreed that it was antisemitic: Liberal (66% “yes” to 34% “no”), NDP (59 to 41), BQ (71 to 29), and Conservative (66 to 34). Green party supporters, however, were more likely to say it was not antisemitic (56% “no” to 44% “yes”).

Residuals (don’t know and no response) were 20%.

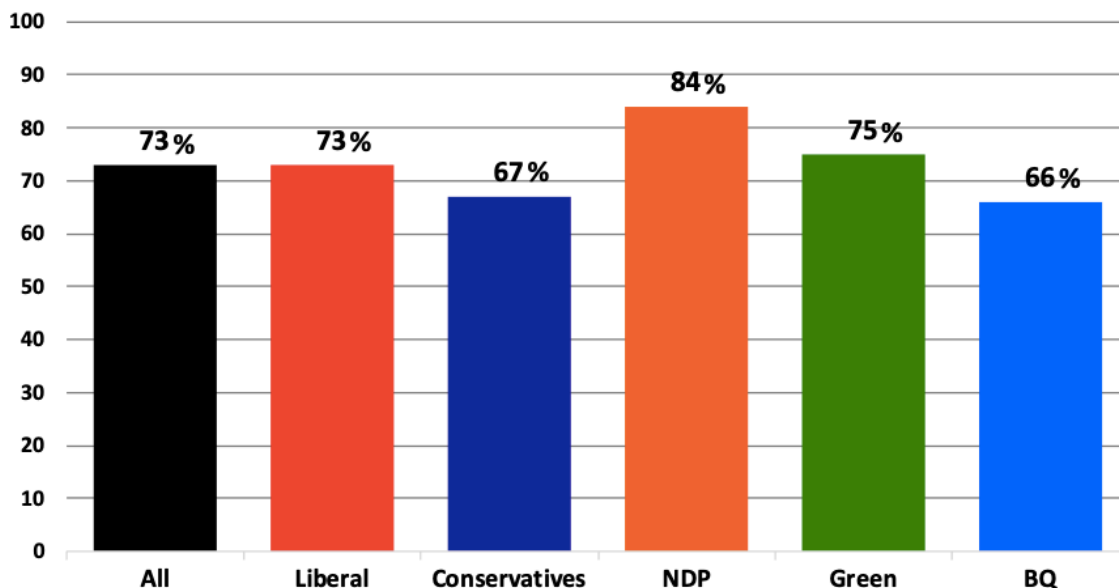
2.1.8. More than Two-Thirds of Canadians Believe that Claiming that Jews Control the World’s Media is Antisemitic

In this question, Canadians were asked whether they considered it antisemitic to claim that Jews control the world’s media, as follows (with the question preamble repeated):

Some people argue that the following are antisemitic. Other people argue that they are legitimate criticisms. Do you believe that the following statements are, in principle, antisemitic?

- *Claiming that Jews control the world's media.*
 - *Yes*
 - *No*
 - *Don’t Know*

More than Two-thirds of Canadians Believe that Claiming that Jews Control the World's Media is Antisemitic



73% of Canadians agreed that claiming that Jews control the world's media was antisemitic, and 27% said it was not.

While it was a minority view in every group, those who were most likely to say that it was NOT antisemitic include people 65+ (39%) and with lower levels of education (35% high school and 31% college). Those who were most likely to say it WAS antisemitic include those 18-34 (82% “Yes”), those with higher levels of education (88% Bachelor degree and 90% Post graduate).

A majority of supporters of all parties agreed that it was antisemitic: Liberal (27% “no” to 73% “yes”), NDP (16 to 84), Green (25 to 75), BQ (34 to 66), and Conservative (33 to 67). Conservative and BQ supporters were most likely to say it was not antisemitic.

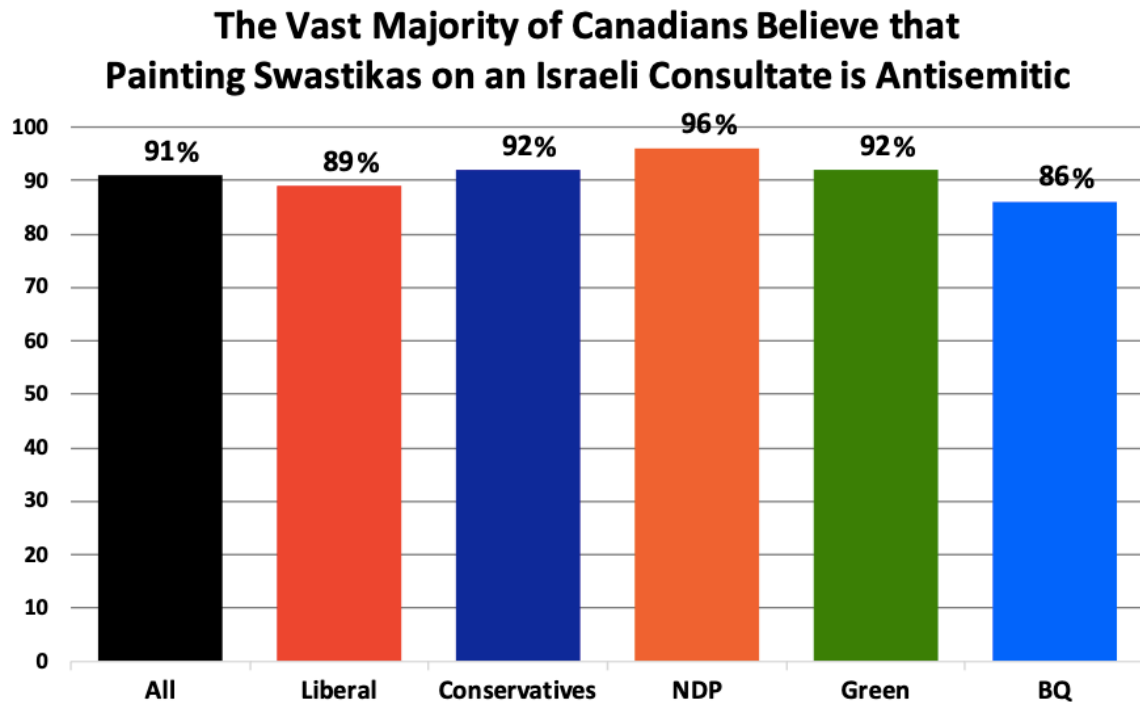
Residuals (don’t know and no response) were 11%.

2.1.9. The Vast Majority of Canadians Believe that Painting Swastikas on an Israeli Consulate is Antisemitic

In this question, Canadians were asked whether they considered it antisemitic to paint swastikas on an Israeli consulate, as follows (with the question preamble repeated):

Some people argue that the following are antisemitic. Other people argue that they are legitimate criticisms. Do you believe that the following statements are, in principle, antisemitic?

- *Painting swastikas on an Israeli consulate.*
 - *Yes*
 - *No*
 - *Don’t Know*



91% of Canadians agreed that painting swastikas on an Israeli consulate was antisemitic, and only 9% said that it was not.

Canadians 65+ were most likely to say it was not antisemitic (15%). Canadians with lower levels of education were twice as likely to say that it was not antisemitic (10% and 11%), compared to those with higher education (4% and 5%), but the numbers were still low.

An overwhelming majority of supporters of all parties agreed that it was antisemitic: Liberal (11% “no” to 89% “yes”), NDP (4 to 96), Green (8 to 92), BQ (14 to 86), and Conservative (8 to 92).

Residuals (don’t know and no response) were 8%.

Discussion

A strong majority of Canadians stated that most forms of criticism and protest of Israel are not in principle antisemitic. These include:

- Accusing Israel of committing human rights abuses against the Palestinians (80% not antisemitic)
- Claiming that Israel is unlawfully pushing Palestinians off their land. (79%)
- Calling for a boycott of Israel because of alleged human rights abuses (76%)
- Establishing campus groups which criticize Israeli government policy (74%)

- Suggesting that Israel's restrictive movement and residency laws on Palestinians are similar to South African Apartheid laws (69%)

Canadians aged 18-34 overwhelmingly responded that such criticism of Israel was not antisemitic. Comparatively, older generations were more likely than youth to say that these criticisms of Israel were antisemitic, but a majority of them still said it was not. Generally speaking, two thirds of those 65+ tended to say that the listed examples of criticism of Israel were not antisemitic, compared to 8 or 9 out of 10 among those 18-34. There is a similar yet less dramatic pattern according to levels of education, as those with higher levels of education are most likely to say that criticism of Israel is not antisemitic, and those with lower levels of education are most likely to say that it is.

This suggests that a strong majority of Canadians would disagree when Canadian politicians denounce Palestine solidarity activism, such as BDS or Israeli Apartheid Week, as being antisemitic. Any initiatives to legislate limits on criticizing or protesting Israel, or to enforce the IHRA working definition of antisemitism (including its examples), conflict with the views of Canadians.

At the same time, a majority of Canadians identified four other statements as being antisemitic:

- Painting swastikas on an Israeli consulate (91% said antisemitic)
- Claiming that Jews control the world's media (73% said antisemitic)
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis (61%)
- Accusing Jewish-Canadians of being more loyal to Israel than to Canada (58%)

Of the statements deemed to be antisemitic, one involves targeting the Israeli state as such: namely, drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis. Two other statements target Jewish-Canadians themselves, either according to conspiratorial theories ("Jews control the world's media") or related to a 'dual loyalty' trope ("more loyal to Israel"). In the case of painting swastikas on an Israeli consulate, it could be either: the use of a swastika in this context may be a way of comparing the Israeli state to Nazis, or (hypothetically) it could be deployed by Nazis themselves, targeting the consulate as a proxy for Jewish-Canadians.

Interestingly, the limited evidence here suggests those who are most likely to support criticism of Israel are also the most likely to say that criticisms of Jewish Canadians are antisemitic. Those respondents who were most likely to say that various forms of criticism of Israel are legitimate (i.e. 18-34, higher levels of education, NDP and Green supporters), were also the same respondents most likely to say that "Claiming that Jews control the world's media" and "Accusing Jewish-Canadians of being more loyal to Israel than to Canada" are antisemitic. Conversely, those respondents most likely to designate various forms of criticism of Israel as antisemitic (i.e. 65+, lower levels of education, Conservative supporters), were also the same respondents most likely to say that "Claiming that Jews control the world's media" and "Accusing Jewish-Canadians of being more loyal to Israel than to Canada" are NOT antisemitic.

In other words, rather than seeing a correlation between criticism of Israel and otherwise antisemitic views, we saw the opposite: those who were most likely to see criticism of Israel as legitimate were also the most likely to say that statements about Jewish-Canadians were antisemitic, and those who viewed criticism of Israel as antisemitic were the most likely to say that statements critical of Jewish-Canadians were legitimate.

Of course, all of these statements must be judged within the specific context in which they are expressed (i.e. dual loyalty charges or Israel-Nazi comparisons),¹⁴ but these results give us an indication of Canadian opinion.

2.2. Canadians' Views on Prejudice Against Minorities

Background

The rise in antisemitism is in parallel with a general rise in racism and xenophobia in general. A 2018 EKOS poll found that 57% of Canadians feel that Islamophobia is an increasingly disturbing problem in Canada.¹⁵ In 2019, an Environics poll found that over 50% of Black and Indigenous Canadians have personally experienced discrimination due to race or ethnicity. Similar discrimination has also been experienced by those who are South Asian (38%), Chinese (36%) and from other racialized groups (32%), but this is less widely reported.¹⁶

One of the most visceral indicators of racial discrimination is the prevalence of hate crimes. Data from Statistics Canada indicate that the number of police-reported hate crimes has been trending upward since 2013, but this is presented with the qualification that “although changes over time could reflect real increases in the number of hate crimes, differences in the recognition, reporting by victims and investigation by police and community members could also have had an impact on these trends.”¹⁷

According to Statistics Canada's police-reported hate crimes statistics,¹⁸ Jews continue to be the most frequently targeted group in Canada. 19% (347) of all police-reported hate crimes in 2018 targeted Jews, whereas 16% targeted Blacks, 16% targeted Muslims, Arabs or West Asians, and 2% targeted First Nations, Inuit or Métis. As the Department of Justice points out, however, there are considerable limitations to official hate crime statistics on account of a reluctance by members of racial and sexual minorities in particular to report hate crimes.¹⁹ This is due to several factors including fear of victimization by the police and lack of trust in the criminal justice system.

Statistics on antisemitism in Canada are also collected independently by B'nai Brith Canada and their *Annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents* is regularly referenced by many politicians including Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.²⁰ Its most recent audit, which relies on the IHRA working definition to determine what constitutes antisemitism, reported 2,207 antisemitic events in Canada in 2019.²¹ By contrast, a similar audit of antisemitism is conducted yearly by B'nai Brith

Canada's sister organization in the United States, the Anti-Defamation League. The ADL's 2019 audit, which does not explicitly use the IHRA definition and its examples,²² listed 100 fewer incidents of antisemitism (2,107) than B'nai Brith Canada's report.²³ The discrepancy between the two reports is significant in that the Jewish population of the U.S. is 15 times larger than that of Canada.

2.2.1. Canadians Consider Prejudice Against Minorities Overall to be a More Serious Problem than Prejudice Against Jewish-Canadians

In this question, the survey sought to understand the degree to which Canadians believe that prejudice against Jews is a problem in Canada and to compare these beliefs to respondents' overall opinions on the scope of prejudice against minority groups in Canada writ large.

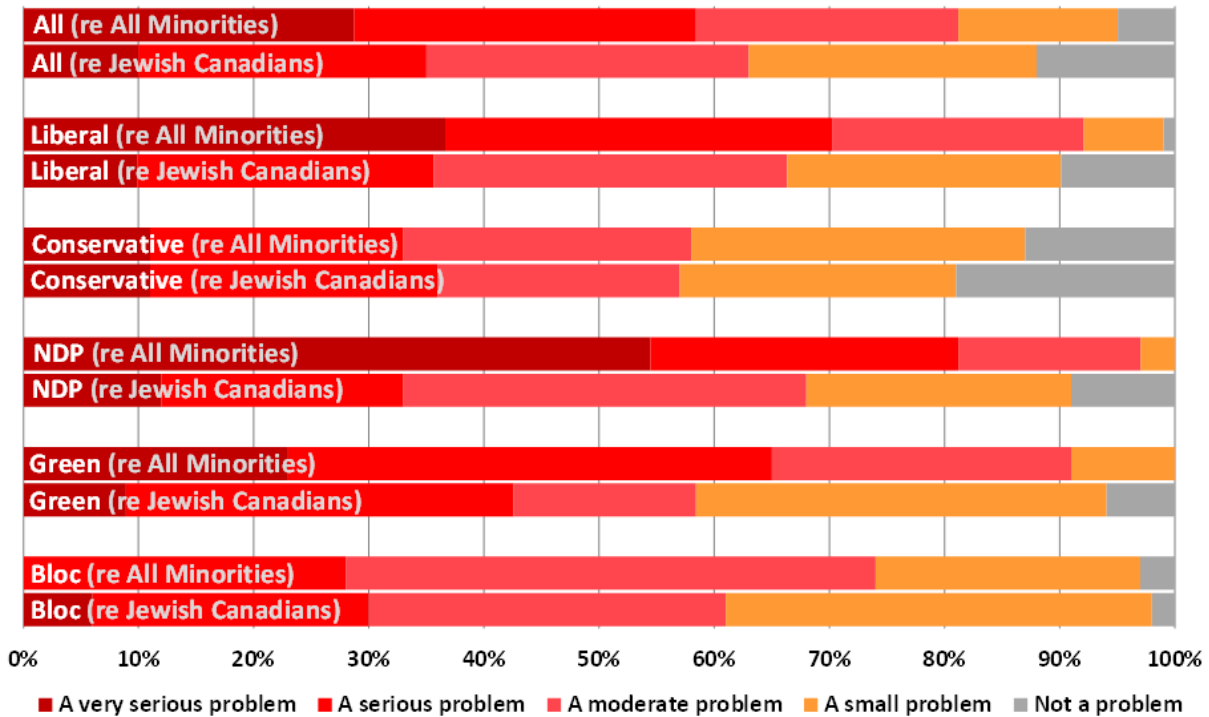
Canadians were asked the following question in a split sample:

- **Split 1:** *In your opinion, how serious a problem is prejudice against minority groups in Canada? (eg. Black, Arab, Jewish, Indigenous, Asian, etc.)?*
- **Split 2:** *In your opinion, how serious a problem is prejudice against Jewish people in Canada?*

Canadians were asked to rank their answer from 1 ("Not a problem at all") to 5 ("A very serious problem"). Below, we group together responses into "Not a problem" (1-2), "Moderate problem" (3), and "Serious problem" (4-5).

It is important to note that this question was asked in the weeks following George Floyd's murder by police in the U.S. and a renewed focus on anti-black racism and police brutality in the media.

Canadians Consider Prejudice Against Minorities Overall to be a More Serious Problem than Prejudice Against Jewish-Canadians



Survey Question Results

When asked how serious a problem is prejudice against *minority groups* in Canada, 59% said it was a serious problem, 23% said it was a moderate problem, and 18% said it was not a problem. Canadians 18-34 years old were more likely to say that prejudice was a very serious problem (40%).

Liberal (70%) and NDP (65%) supporters were very likely to say that prejudice against minorities was a serious problem, but almost half (41%) of Conservative supporters thought that prejudice was not a problem. Supporters of the Bloc were more likely to say that prejudice was a moderate problem (46%).

When asked how serious a problem is prejudice against *Jewish people* in Canada, 35% said it was a serious problem, 28% said it was a moderate problem, and 37% said it was not a problem.

Among age cohorts, Canadians ages 65+ were most likely to say it was a serious problem (44%) and least likely to say it was not a problem (23%).

Supporters of Conservative and Green parties had polarized views on this question. They were most likely to say that prejudice against Jewish people was not a problem, but they were also likely to say it was a serious problem.

Note: Residuals (“do not know” or no reply) were 2% when asked about prejudice against minorities, and 9% when asked about prejudice against Jewish people.

Discussion

A majority (59%) of Canadians see prejudice against *minority groups* as a serious problem, and a smaller number (35%) see prejudice against *Jewish people* in Canada as a serious problem. Canadians are much less likely to see prejudice against Jewish people as a serious problem compared to prejudice against minorities in general (35% compared to 59%), 5% more likely to see it as only a moderate problem, and 19% more likely to say that it is *not* a problem.

These results are similar to previous polls of Canadian Jewish opinion on this matter. The percentage of Canadians that view prejudice against Jews as a serious problem (35%) lines up closely with the 2018 Environics *Survey of Jews in Canada*, which found that 34% believe that Canadian Jews experience discrimination “often.” By contrast, Canadian Jews are much more likely to believe that Indigenous Peoples (60%), Muslims (51%) and Black people (49%) often experience discrimination.²⁴

These findings suggest that there is a significant discrepancy between Canadian perceptions of the gravity of antisemitism, on the one hand, and the oft-cited Statistics Canada and B’nai Brith Canada data which portray Jews as the most targeted group, on the other. Of course, hate crimes are only one manifestation of prejudice, but they are a visible expression and an important indicator. This difference in perception could be on account of several elements, including:

- the reluctance by marginalized groups to report hate crimes (or conversely, increased reporting by other groups as a result of outreach to communities by police or community organizations);
- a lack of education and awareness about prejudice and discrimination in general (including antisemitism); or
- the conflation of antisemitism with political speech regarding Israel, leading to an inflation of reports of antisemitism. On that note, a leading Canadian Jewish academic has criticized B’nai Brith’s methodology for conflating antisemitic incidents with instances of criticism of Israel in its audit.²⁵

These issues raise concerns about our ability to accurately assess and attribute antisemitic sentiments and actions, particularly as they relate with Israel. These concerns are especially troubling given that politicians and organizations promoting the IHRA working definition regularly cite these statistics to advance their case for adopting the definition.²⁶

One outcome of this discrepancy is that public institutions in Canada have focussed much more on initiatives that purportedly intend to address antisemitism, rather than adopting more general approaches to racism and prejudice which include initiatives against antisemitism.²⁷ These findings point to the need to combat antisemitism as part of a holistic, intersectional approach against racism in general, rather than addressing antisemitism as if it exists in a vacuum. To this point, an alternative definition of antisemitism states:

It is essential to recognize that antisemitism is not an exceptional form of bigotry. People who hate, discriminate and/or attack Jews, will also hate, discriminate and/or attack other protected groups – including racialized people, Muslims, LGBTQ2+, women, Indigenous peoples. In addition, privileging the efforts to combat discrimination against one of these groups, risks further marginalizing the other targeted groups, and undermines solidarity and cooperation among them in fighting their common enemies.²⁸

¹ International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism, accessed September 25, 2020, <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism?focus=antisemitismandholocaustdenial>

² CJNI Staff, "Canada Adopts IHRA Definition of Antisemitism," *Canadian Jewish News*, June 25, 2019, <https://www.cjnews.com/news/canada/canadian-government-adopts-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism>

³ For example, see: Janice Arnold, "Montreal Does Not Adopt IHRA Definition of Antisemitism," *Canadian Jewish News*, January 29, 2020, <https://www.cjnews.com/news/canada/montreal-does-not-adopt-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism>.

⁴ Canadian Labour Congress, Letter to Ontario Premier Doug Ford, *Twitter*, March 6, 2020, <https://twitter.com/CanadianLabour/status/1235992781635629057?s=20>

⁵ BCCLA, "The BCCLA opposes the international campaign to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Association (IHRA) definition of antisemitism," June 18, 2019 https://bccla.org/our_work/the-bccla-opposes-the-international-campaign-to-adopt-the-international-holocaust-remembrance-association-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism/

⁶ Independent Jewish Voices Canada, "Open Letter from Canadian Academics Opposing the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism," February 27, 2020, <https://www.ijvcanada.org/open-letter-from-canadian-academics-opposing-the-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism/>

⁷ Kenneth Stern, "I drafted the definition of antisemitism. Rightwing Jews are weaponizing it," *The Guardian*, December 13, 2019,

⁸ Independent Jewish Voices Canada, "IHRA Definition at Work", September 4, 2020, <https://www.ijvcanada.org/ihra-definition-at-work/>

⁹ For the purposes of this discussion we will consider the examples to be part of the IHRA working definition, although there is considerable debate on this matter. See Rebecca Ruth Gould, "The IHRA Definition of Antisemitism: Defining Antisemitism by Erasing Palestinians," *The Political Quarterly*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.12883>.

¹⁰ For a detailed analysis of each of the 11 examples, see Independent Jewish Voices Canada, "How Not to Fight Antisemitism: A Critique of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Antisemitism (IHRA-WDA)," May 2019, https://www.noihra.ca/uploads/1/2/5/8/125802458/ijv_ihrareport.pdf

¹¹ Anthony Housefather and Michael Levitt, "Why Canada's Adopting the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism," *Canadian Jewish News*, June 25, 2019, <https://www.cjnews.com/perspectives/opinions/housefather-levitt-why-canadas-adopting-the-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism>

¹² Diana Ralph, *Disconnect: Canadians' views of the Israeli government vs. Canadian government policy toward Israel and Palestine*, issued by Independent Jewish Voices Canada, Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East, Murray Dobbin, and Dimitri Lascaris, February 16, 2017, <https://www.cjpme.org/survey>, p. 16.

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- ¹³ Diana Ralph, *Two Jews, Three Opinions: Jewish Canadians' Diverse Views on Israel-Palestine*, co-sponsored by IJV and the United Jewish Peoples' Order, January 2019, <https://ijvcanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/report.Finpdf.pdf>, p. 41
- ¹⁴ See Independent Jewish Voices Canada, "How Not to Fight Antisemitism: A Critique of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Antisemitism (IHRA-WDA)," May 2019, https://www.noihra.ca/uploads/1/2/5/8/125802458/ijv_ihrareport.pdf
- ¹⁵ Thomas Woodley, Samer Majzoub, Miranda Gallo, Mohammed-Nur Alsaieq, and Grafton Ross, *A Grave Problem: EKOS Survey on Islamophobia in Canada*, sponsored by Canadian Muslim Forum and Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East, February 6, 2018, <https://www.cjpme.org/islamophobia>.
- ¹⁶ Keith Neuman, *Race Relations in Canada 2019 Survey*, Canadian Race Relations Foundation and Environics Institute for Survey Research, December 10, 2019, <https://www.environicsinstitute.org/projects/project-details/race-relations-in-canada-2019>
- ¹⁷ Greg Moreau, "Police-reported hate crime in Canada, 2018," *Statistics Canada*, February 26, 2020, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2020001/article/00003-eng.htm>.
- ¹⁸ Statistics Canada, "Police-reported hate crime, 2018," released February 26, 2020, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/200226/dq200226a-eng.htm>
- ¹⁹ https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/csj-sjc/crime/wd95_11-dt95_11/p2.html#section2_6
- ²⁰ B'nai Brith Canada, "B'nai Brith's Revelations in Antisemitism Audit Spark Widespread Reaction," April 29, 2020, https://www.bnaibrith.ca/b_nai_brith_s_revelations_in_antisemitism_audit_spark_widespread_reaction
- ²¹ B'nai Brith Canada, "More Than Six Acts of Antisemitism a Day, New Audit Reveals," April 27, 2020, https://www.bnaibrith.ca/more_than_six_acts_a_day
- ²² The Anti-Defamation League's *Audit of Antisemitic Incidents 2019* states that "The ADL is careful to not conflate general criticism of Israel or anti-Israel activism with antisemitism. However, Israel-related harassment of groups or individuals may be included when the harassment incorporates established anti-Jewish references, accusations and/or conspiracy theories, or when they demonize American Jews for their support of Israel. We have also included cases of picketing of Jewish religious or cultural institutions for their purported support for Israel." <https://www.adl.org/audit2019#methodology>
- ²³ Anti-Defamation League, *Audit of Antisemitic Incidents 2019*, accessed September 25, 2020, <https://www.adl.org/audit2019>
- ²⁴ Robert Brym, Keith Neuman, and Rhonda Lenton, *2018 Survey of Jews in Canada*, Environics Institute in partnership with the University of Toronto and York University, March 11, 2019, <https://www.environicsinstitute.org/projects/project-details/survey-of-jews-in-canada>, p. 47.
- ²⁵ Robert Brym, "Antisemitic and Anti-Israel Actions and Attitudes in Canada and Internationally: A Research Agenda," *Prejudice* 53 (4): 407-420.
- ²⁶ See for example: Paul Lungen, "Jews Still Most Targeted Group for Hate-Motivated Crimes," *Canadian Jewish News*, February 28, 2020, <https://www.cjnews.com/news/canada/jews-still-most-targeted-group-for-hate-motivated-crimes>; and Anthony Housefather and Michael Levitt, "Why Canada's Adopting the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism," *Canadian Jewish News*, June 25, 2019, <https://www.cjnews.com/perspectives/opinions/housefather-levitt-why-canadas-adopting-the-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism>
- ²⁷ For instance: recent adoptions of the IHRA WDA in Quebec (Cote St. Luc, Westmount and Hampstead) and Ontario (Vaughan, York Region, Barrie and Brampton), and the former Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism. It is notable, however, that several of these institutions have begun to speak out regarding anti-black racism in response to protests that began in the US over the summer.
- ²⁸ Independent Jewish Voices Canada, "IJV Working Definition of Antisemitism," accessed September 30, 2020 from <https://www.noihra.ca/our-definition.html>.