

The Gentleman's Agreement in Canadian University Campuses:
How Jewish Faculty Members Navigate an Asymmetric Contract and Stigma

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Abstract

This thesis examines the materialization and operation of what I term *The Gentleman's Agreement* – the asymmetric, often implicit, moral contract between Jews and non-Jews that governs the formers' inclusion – and how Jewish faculty members navigate it on Canadian campuses. It draws primarily on Erving Goffman's (1963) stigma theory to understand how the stigmatization of certain expressions of Jewish identity, namely Zionism, upheld and reproduced The Agreement at the individual and institutional levels. This thesis undertakes a secondary data analysis of interviews with 40 Jewish faculty members, diverse in academic discipline, location, professional rank, and political leaning. The interview data originates from the "Faculty Experiences of Antisemitism Research" study, co-led by Drs. Cary Kogan at the University of Ottawa and Deidre Butler at Carleton University. The findings and analysis developed in this thesis provide insight into how Jewish faculty members came to understand and experienced Zionism as a spoiled identity through indirect and direct instances of stigmatization prior to and following their entry into Canadian academia. They also illustrate how Jewish faculty members negotiated their stigmatized identities through concealing, minimizing, and reclaiming their Jewish identities. The accounts by Jewish faculty members underscore the asymmetry of The Agreement: non-Jewish actors are positioned as the arbiters of what, if any, expression of Jewish identity is "acceptable", and that Jews must continually prove their worth and justify their existence through fulfilling their prescribed role as subservient, powerless, and agreeable – in essence, as a human giver.

Keywords: Stigma; Jewish Faculty Members; Jewish Identity; Antisemitism; Zionism; Antizionism; Canadian Universities; Postsecondary Education

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1. Introduction

At the start of the interview, the interviewer asked, “What’s it like to be a Jew on campus? You meet someone in an elevator; what would you answer?” Samson, a full professor in humanities at a university on the West Coast and whose research in Israel has made him the target of an antisemitic campaign, responded, “I feel like I’m in a straitjacket, and every time I try to wiggle free, it gets tighter.” He let out a dejected sigh before continuing, “I feel like I can’t be myself...There are a large number of other faculty members who have publicly stated they want me to stop doing my job, and it is nearly impossible to operate. That’s what I would say.”¹

Since the Hamas-led attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, and the ensuing war, there has been an unprecedented rise in antisemitic incidents and documented hate crimes against Jews. In Canada, despite Jews accounting for less than two percent of the total population, they constituted the most targeted religious group from 2023 to 2025 (Stats Canada, 2026). Occurrences of antisemitic graffiti, vandalism of Jewish institutions, schools, and synagogues, antisemitic rallies and protests that targeted Jewish communities, and verbal and physical assault of Jews have proliferated following October 7 (Brym, 2024b, 2025a). On Canadian university campuses across the country, Jewish students and faculty similarly reported antisemitic graffiti and vandalism of Jewish campus buildings, verbal and physical assaults, antisemitic rallies and protests that incited violence against Jews, and which, at times, became violent (House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, 2024). They additionally reported exclusion from campus Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) policies and initiatives (see also Marom & Switzer, 2025) and the passing of Boycott, Divestment, and Sanction (BDS) motions

¹ Except from an interview with one of the study’s participants.

at student unions and faculty associations that silenced and marginalized many Jewish and allied members of the campus community. Resultingly, increasing numbers of Jewish Canadians (Brym & Lenton, 2026), including medical professionals (Blaff, 2024; Derfel, 2026) and academics (Elizur & Marom, 2026; Marom, 2026b), are considering or have already emigrated. These events have led to renewed attention on the need to study the experiences of Jewish students and faculty on campuses.

Existing scholarship primarily focuses on Jewish undergraduate students on US campuses (e.g., Harris & Maranto, 2024; Samuel et al., 2024; Wright, Hecht, et al., 2024; Wright, Volodarsky, et al., 2024). However, emerging studies on the experiences of Jewish students (Morstead & DeLongis, 2025; Santos & Yogev, 2026) and Jewish faculty (Elizur & Marom, 2026; Marom, 2026a, 2026b) on Canadian campuses reveal similar patterns of the marginalization of Jewish campus members and in their coping strategies. Although these studies frequently reference concepts associated with Erving Goffman's (1963) stigma theory (e.g., passing and covering), they often report the findings descriptively and seemingly begin with the analytical assumption that Jewish identity inherently constitutes a stigma.

The present research thus aims to complement and expand this growing body of scholarship through a sociological analysis that draws primarily on Goffman's (1963) theory to understand how, why, and when Jewish faculty members' Jewish identities become stigmatized within the Canadian academic context. To do so, I undertake a secondary analysis of interviews with 40 Jewish faculty members across Canadian campuses. Through this analysis, the study situates participants' responses within a broader social structure that illuminates the social scripts and expectations governing relations between Jews and non-Jews and that establish the terms for the conditional inclusion and paternalistic tolerance, to which the former are subjected.

1.1. Present Research

In August 2024, I was hired as a Research Assistant to assist with conducting interviews from October 2024 to February 2026 with Jewish and non-Jewish faculty members on Canadian university campuses for the research project, “Faculty Experiences of Antisemitism Research” (FEAR). Drs. Cary Kogan at the University of Ottawa and Deidre Butler at Carleton University co-led this project.² With permission from Kogan and Butler, and the University of Ottawa’s Research Ethics Board, I conducted a secondary data analysis of interviews with 40 Jewish faculty members, a sub-sample from the FEAR data. Participants in my sub-sample varied in gender, professional rank, academic discipline, and region.

I adopted Thompson’s (2022) abductive approach to explore the explanatory power of my theoretical framework, *The Gentleman’s Agreement*, in the Canadian academic context. A detailed explanation of the framework is provided in Chapter Three. Briefly, the title of my framework is a nod to the 1947 book and film adaptation, *Gentleman’s Agreement*, wherein the term, “gentleman’s agreement”, denotes the unspoken agreement to exclude Jews from certain spaces, namely, housing. The *Gentleman’s Agreement*, conversely, refers to an often implicit and asymmetric arrangement that articulates “acceptable” Jewish expression and conditions Jews’ inclusion on their adherence to this prescribed role. Erving Goffman’s (1963) stigma theory provides the basis for my framework to understand the interactional order through which Jewish identity becomes “unacceptable”, meaning, a discredited or spoiled identity. Given the longstanding pejoration and stigmatization of Zionism (Cotler, 2002;

² For transparency of this thesis, Cary Kogan and Deidre Butler are also co-presidents of the Network of Engaged Canadian Academics.

Hirsh, 2023) and the subsequent intensification in Canadian society (Brym, 2024b, 2025b) and on Canadian campuses (Brym, 2024b; Elizur & Marom, 2026; Kenedy, 2022a; Marom, 2026a, 2026b) since, I sought to understand the positioning of Zionism as a spoiled identity in the context of The Agreement and the implications for Jewish faculty members on Canadian campuses. Therefore, my research questions are as follows:

1. How do Jewish faculty members come to know and experience Zionism as a spoiled identity?
2. How do Jewish faculty members negotiate their stigmatized identities?

The four results chapters are organized in order to respond to these two research questions. The first and second results chapters address the first research question. Chapter 5 reports how Jewish faculty members understand Zionism in relation to their own Jewish identity and their encounter with and understanding of non-Jews' perception of Jewish identity. Chapter 6 describes the crystallization and enforcement of The Agreement that positions Zionism as a spoiled identity within Canadian academia. The third and fourth results chapters address the second research question. The third results chapter details the strategies Jewish faculty members use to avoid being discredited or to minimize their discredited identity, thereby revealing the coercive nature of The Agreement. The fourth results chapter reports on how Jewish faculty members oscillated between alienation from their Jewish identities and communities and strengthened self- and group-identification. It demonstrates how these responses reflect different ways of navigating the conditional inclusion and pressures of belonging, which define The Gentleman's Agreement.

1.2. Terminology

Much contestation surrounds the appropriate word(s), definition(s), and even the spelling(s) (i.e., the use of the hyphen in antisemitism or antizionism) of what can broadly be

understood as a worldview and its corresponding actions that harm, or seek to harm, Jews. Waxman, Schraub, and Hossein (2022) succinctly summarize this dilemma in their observation that “while concern about antisemitism is growing, agreement on what actually constitutes antisemitism is shrinking” (1803).

This thesis primarily focuses on how, why, and when Jewish faculty members’ Jewish identities become stigmatized within the Canadian academic context. It also seeks to understand the implications for Jewish faculty members’ navigation of this environment and social interactions, and their negotiation of their discreditable identity. To that end, it utilizes Goffman’s (1963) microsociological stigma theory to explore how micro-level interactions reproduce and sustain macro-level structures, and vice versa (Collins, 1988). Put differently, I take a granular approach to examining how variables, e.g., intersecting identities, professional rank, academic discipline, etc., shape the interactional and relational process of stigmatization and how this stigmatization upholds and allows The Agreement to function.

Ancient and contemporary antisemitic tropes undoubtedly inform the stigmatization process and the broader structure of The Agreement examined in this study. However, neither adjudicating competing definitions of antisemitism nor determining the boundaries between antisemitism and antizionism constitute its central aim. Instead, I adopt an operational and capacious definition similar to that advanced by Morton Weinfeld (2005) that conceptualizes antisemitism as “views or actions that are, or that most Jews perceive as, harmful. This definition is agnostic regarding motivations, focusing more on consequences than intentions” (35-36). In doing so, this definition allows for the discussion of the relevant history and scholarship on Jews’ experiences with marginalization and for the exploration of the interactional processes through which Jewish faculty members experience stigmatization. In the conclusion, I briefly return to

the theoretical and definitional debates over antisemitism and its relation to antizionism to consider how the findings of this study may inform, but not resolve, them.

1.3. Overview of the Thesis

The structure of the thesis is as follows. Chapter 2 situates the present research against the backdrop of the social and historical context of antisemitism in Canada from the interwar years to the present. It then reviews and synthesizes existing scholarship on the experiences of Jewish students and faculty on North American campuses, highlighting Canadian differences in campus culture, Jewish identity and Zionism, and university governance. The chapter concludes by outlining the significance of the present study and its empirical and theoretical contributions to the literature on the experiences of Jewish faculty on Canadian campuses.

Chapter 3 presents my theoretical framework, The Gentleman's Agreement, and explains its relation to the 1947 book and film adaptation, *Gentleman's Agreement*. It outlines the concepts and frameworks adapted from other scholars that form the basis of The Agreement. Specifically, it defines the key concepts from Erving Goffman's (1963) book, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, which provide the foundation for the analysis of the findings and the development of my framework. The chapter also discusses critiques of Goffman's theory and introduces supplementary concepts from antisemitism and feminist scholars, including historian Lisa Silverman and philosopher Kate Manne. Throughout the chapter, I draw on recent studies of Jewish faculty experiences on Canadian campuses by Lilach Marom and colleagues, as well as Robert Brym's work on Canadian Jewish identity and Zionism, to provisionally inform the hypotheses of the study and the operation of The Agreement.

Chapter 4 describes the study's research design and methodology. It explains the data collection process and my role in it, as well as the ethics approval process. The chapter then details the secondary analysis of a sub-sample of interviews with 40 Jewish faculty members. After outlining the study's research questions, it discusses the strengths and limitations of the methodological approach and explains how the findings are presented, including the measures taken to preserve participant anonymity. The chapter concludes with a positionality statement reflecting on the challenges of conducting this research and how I navigated them.

Chapters 5 through 8 present the findings organized according to Goffman's (1963) stigma framework. Chapter 5 begins by examining how participants understand the relationship between their Jewish identity and Zionism. It then explores how participants became aware of how others perceived their Jewish identity and connection to Zionism at different points in their lives, and how these experiences shaped their self-understanding and perceptions of the Canadian academic environment.

Building on this foundation, Chapter 6 reports how participants experienced their Jewish identity and Zionism as stigmatized within Canadian academia. It reports on how micro, meso-, and macro-level variables, such as intersecting identities, the (in)visibility of Jewish identity, professional rank, academic discipline, and geographic region, shaped participants' experiences in physical, social, research, and online settings. The chapter documents both indirect and direct encounters that reveal the terms of The Gentleman's Agreement and the consequences of transgressing them.

Chapter 7 details how these same variables shaped participants' strategies for managing their stigmatized identities. It describes how participants concealed,

minimized, or selectively disclosed their Jewish identity in interactions with administrators, colleagues, students, and on social media.

Chapter 8 reports on how Jewish faculty members, to varying degrees, internalized or rejected the logic of The Agreement that stigmatizes certain forms of Jewish expression and identity. It outlines participants' experiences of alienation from their identities and the Jewish community, as well as the forms of self- and group-identity management they engaged in to attempt to rehabilitate their own and their group's reputations. The latter half of the chapter documents, again, to varying degrees, strengthened self- and group-identification and its manifestations on and off campus.

Chapter 9 analyzes the findings presented in the four preceding chapters in relation to the study's two research questions employing the conceptual tools of The Gentleman's Agreement. It introduces additional concepts that extend the provisional framework outlined in Chapter 3 to account for findings that emerged during the analysis, such as the reluctance of some participants to describe their experiences as antisemitic.

The final chapter, Chapter 10, begins by returning to Samson's interview to summarize how the findings illustrate the operation of The Gentleman's Agreement within Canadian academia and how Jewish faculty members navigated its terms. It then discusses the study's theoretical and empirical contributions to scholarship on stigma, Jewish identity, and antisemitism in higher education, as well as its limitations. The chapter subsequently suggests directions for future research and considers the potential explanatory power of The Gentleman's Agreement across different temporal, spatial, and cultural contexts. It concludes by reflecting on the relationship between the study's findings, the framework's title, and the 1947 film, *Gentleman's Agreement*.

2. Context and Literature Review

This chapter provides an overview of the historical and social context and the relevant scholarship that situate the current study. Drawing primarily on the work of historian Ira Robinson, it begins by broadly summarizing the history of antisemitism in Canada from the interwar period to present. The second section focuses on the history of antisemitism on Canadian campuses from the interwar period to present. The third section reviews existing scholarship on the experiences of Jewish students and faculty on North American campuses, taking stock of the Canadian differences. The chapter concludes by outlining how the present study complements existing scholarship.

2.1. History of Antisemitism in Canada from 1919 to present

Social and institutional antisemitism in Canada animated by religious, cultural, and political stereotypes that position Jews as threatening the social order have fluctuated over the decades. In the interwar period, Canadians thought of Canada as a “Christian country”, leading to the treatment of Jews, as well as other non-Christian minorities, as suspect (Robinson, 2015: 60). Consequently, Jews’ upward social mobility and demands for equality in educational, social, economic, and political spheres were framed as undermining the rights of Christian Canadians and their way of life. The circulation of the English translation of the czarist forgery alleging a Jewish plot to subvert Christianity and to achieve world domination, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, also contributed to Canadians’ weariness of and discrimination against Jews (Robinson, 2015: 64). The history and the ethnic and linguistic makeup of the provinces where Jews primarily resided, namely Ontario and Quebec, additionally played a role in the reception and treatment of its Jewish residents. Quebec’s economy in the early 20th century was primarily agriculturally oriented, and many French-speaking Quebecers distrusted the forms of

industrialization introduced by Anglophone Protestants (Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre in Montreal, 2015: 14). Accordingly, during the interwar period, some Quebecers negatively associated Jews, most of whom worked in the urban garment industry, with this Anglophone Protestant modernity. Their animosity towards Jews intensified as Jews became increasingly integrated into English-speaking society, which was perceived as posing a linguistic threat to French Canadian identity and language. Later, Adolf Hitler's rise to power in Germany and the subsequent dissemination of antisemitic propaganda exacerbated and shaped the physical and ideological manifestations of hostility towards Jews in Canada (Robinson, 2015: 85). Canadians consequently restricted the immigration of Jews to the country and the full participation of Jews already in Canada in various sectors in the interwar years.

Against the backdrop of the economic recession that began in 1920 in Canada, the 1923 designation of Jews as a "special permit" group limited their immigration (Robinson, 2015: 63). This designation reflected the prevailing non-Jewish view that unrestricted Jewish immigration endangered material and professional resources (Robinson, 2015: 63). Opposition by the general public and the Canadian government to Jewish immigration strengthened in the 1930s when Jews were desperately trying to flee persecution in Europe. Hundreds of thousands of Canadians signed petitions opposing admission of Jewish refugees (Robinson, 2015: 63). The Canadian government, cognizant of the unpopularity of Jewish immigration, and which comprised of many antisemitic politicians, proceeded to tighten immigration laws (Abella & Troper, 2023).

Jews already living in Canada between 1919 to 1939 faced tacit and open educational, economic, and social discrimination. In public education, Christian Canadians sought to limit Jewish students' enrollment, and impose Christian values and traditions upon Jewish students, many of whom they segregated (Robinson, 2015: 62-63; Speisman, 1992: 117). Public and

private schools additionally avoided employing Jewish teachers (Davies, 1992: 120). Elsewhere, employers in other professions, including medicine, law, academia, government, and finance, similarly avoided hiring Jews due to their own antisemitism and so as not to cause upset among their staff (Robinson, 2015: 65-67, 69-70). For example, one of the most infamous cases involved the appointment of a Jewish doctor, Dr. Samuel Rabinovitch, in May 1934 to Montreal's Hôpital Notre Dame and the ensuing reaction: the hospital's French-Canadian interns went on strike, citing concerns about working with a Jewish doctor and that Catholic patients too would share their contempt. Several French-Canadians additionally sent letters to the hospital expressing their support for the strikers and their recommendation to exclude Jews from such positions (Robinson, 2015: 75).

Other forms of economic discrimination during these years pertained to housing and the boycotting of Jewish shops and businesses. Housing discrimination often involved the property deed including a condition that allowed for the owners to prevent the sale or lease of the house to those they found objectionable, which the courts invariably upheld until after the Second World War. It also manifested in unspoken agreements among neighbours to exclude Jews from living in their neighbourhoods (Speisman, 1992: 121). The boycott campaign against Jewish shops and business was particularly pronounced in Quebec (Robinson, 2015: 79-81). This campaign was carried out under the name "Achat chez nous" with the slogan, "If we do not buy from them, then they will leave." Although the title did not explicitly target Jews, the campaign's spokespeople publicly assured French and English Canadians that it solely targeted Jews. This campaign received sponsorship from some French-Canadian organizations, e.g., L'Action Catholique, and support from some French-Canadian newspapers, e.g., Le Devoir. This

campaign ultimately failed to coerce Jewish shopkeepers and retailers to leave en masse from Canada.

Jews, moreover, encountered social discrimination in interwar Canada. This discrimination ranged from signs at country clubs, hotels, and beaches barring Jews to physical assault in the streets or at sporting events throughout the 1930s and into the early 1940s (Robinson, 2015: 67-69). Examples of the former included signs reading, “Gentiles Only” and “No Jews Wanted” on the Toronto Islands and elsewhere in resorts across Ontario (Speisman, 1992: 121). Robinson (2015: 67-68) notes that there were occasions where non-Jews protested Jewish presence at areas of public recreation. One instance in 1933 involved members of the Balmy Beach Swastika Club of Toronto roaming the Balmy Beach and the neighbouring Kew Beach warning that Jews should refrain from using these facilities (Robinson, 2015: 68). Harassment and physical assault of Jews occurred throughout Canada. In the streets of Montreal, for example, Catholic French Canadians would attack Jews with bottles and bricks around Easter or, in Toronto, assault Jewish peddlers (Robinson, 2015: 60). In 1935 in Val Walter, Quebec, a synagogue filled with worshippers was set on fire (Robinson, 2015: 77).

Sports events with Jewish participation in Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and British Columbia at times devolved into antisemitic riots and brawls (Robinson, 2015: 68). The infamous six-hour riot at Christie Pits in Toronto, Ontario on August 16, 1933, sparked by Nazi-inspired youth unfurling a swastika flag at a public baseball game, holds particular historical and cultural significance in Canada and for Jews (Levitt & Shaffir, 2018). Levitt and Shaffir (2018) write that this violent riot in which hundreds of Jews and non-Jews battered each other with bats, lead pipes, and other makeshift weapons highlighted the influence and acceptance of Nazism by certain Canadians and Jews’ resolve to fight back.

Educational, economic, and social discrimination against Jews in the interwar years led to their mobilizing to build competing establishments, including hospitals, schools, law firms, and country clubs, and to secure housing for their own community (Robinson, 2015: 68-69, 74). Many Jews also tried to blend in and keep a low profile, for some, changing their identifiably Jewish names to gentile ones (Speisman, 1992: 122).

In the postwar years in Canada, antisemitic sentiment, and to varying degrees, overt manifestations, remained prevalent. Strong opposition persisted from the general Canadian public and some Canadian government officials to absorbing Jewish survivors of the Holocaust (Tulchinsky, 2008: 403). Nevertheless, in need of increased labour, the government eased the Jewish immigration policy in 1948. Tens of thousands of Holocaust survivors moved to Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver and elsewhere. Many integrated with the Jewish community and the broader Canadian society; however, a significant portion felt estranged from these communities due to the gravity of their trauma and the lack of understanding from those around them. Nonetheless, both Canadian Jews and Holocaust survivors shared a deep attachment and support for the newly founded State of Israel that manifested in fundraising, public relations, and lobbying for the Jewish state (Tulchinsky, 2008: 425, 432-434).

Economic, social, and educational acceptance of Jews in Canada oscillated throughout the 1950s to the 1960s. For example, in the early 1950s, the passing of a bill that prohibited new restrictive covenants based on race or creed by the Ontario legislature made it possible for Jews to live in previously restricted neighbourhoods (Tulchinsky, 2008: 414). Some more affluent Toronto Jews moved to posher areas, such as Forest Hill, though the Anglo-Saxon Protestants and pre-war Jewish dwellers regarded these newcomers with distaste (Tulchinsky, 2008: 417). The 1960s saw greater evidence of upward social mobility in educational and economic spaces.

In the former, Jews were finally allowed to sit on the Protestant school board in Quebec and a few provincial governments, i.e., in Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, B.C., and Manitoba, who also provided tuition grants to parents for Jewish day-schools (Tulchinsky, 2008: 429). In the latter, Jewish business tycoons in real estate and retail enjoyed significant success and Jews began to ascend the political and legal ranks. Canadian Jewry further benefited from the enactment of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* in 1971 (Brym, 2025a).

Nonetheless, discrimination against Jews persisted during these years in various spheres and regions. Jew still experienced harassment and physical assault in the streets of Canada after the Second World War, though to a lesser extent than in the 1930s (Robinson, 2015: 107). As late as the 1980s, some country clubs in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Ontario still excluded Jews (Robinson, 2015: 114). In Quebec, French Canadians generally maintained the social distance that existed in the early 20th century, evinced by their continued suspicion of Jews' ability, willingness, and motivation to assimilate to French-Canadian culture (Robinson, 2015: 116). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the burgeoning Quebec separatist movement and the antisemitic undercurrents among, and frequent overt comments made by, Quebec nationalists led to a decades-long Jewish exodus from Quebec numbering approximately 30,000 to 40,000 (Robinson, 2015: 121-122). The 1970s and 1980s additionally saw the rise in expressed antisemitic sentiment that demonized Israel and Zionism, and Holocaust denial (Robinson, 2015: 118). The 1990s, however, were regarded as a period of relative calm for Jews in Canada (Robinson, 2015: 124), although it would not last long.

Several scholars (e.g., Chesler, 2003; Cotler, 2002; Hirsh, 2023; Nelson, 2019) identify 2001 as a turning point for the re-emergence and expression of antisemitism. Hirsh (2023) argues that a confluence of three events precipitated the rebirth of antisemitism in the 21st century: first,

the collapse of the peace process in Israel in 2001 that preceded the start of the Second Intifada; second, the anti-racism conference that took place in Durban, South Africa early September that year that devolved into an antisemitic event centred around redefining Zionism as racism;³ and third, the Al Qaeda attack on the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. on September 11. Cotler (2002) likewise identifies the 2001 World Conference Against Racism in Durban as influential for the mainstreaming of the so-called “new antisemitism”. He proposes thirteen indices to illustrate this evolved form of antisemitism. Among these indices are Holocaust denial and inversion that positions the Palestinians as the Jews and the Israeli Jews as the Nazis; existential or genocidal antisemitism that seeks the destruction of Israel and the Jewish people; the demonization of Israel and Zionism as inherently and irredeemably racist; and theological antisemitism that requires the elimination or replacement of Israel.⁴ Crystallized at the 2001 Durban conference, this new antisemitism and its various manifestations through activism became especially prevalent on university campuses, as the next section demonstrates.

Antisemitic incidents against Jews in Canada coincided with the rise of this new antisemitism and military operations in Israel (LaFreniere Tamez et al., 2024). Occurrences spiked in 2002, 2004, 2009, 2014, 2021, and 2023 (B’nai Brith, 2024). After the Hamas-led attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, antisemitic incidents in Canada reached a record high (Stats Canada, 2025) with the proliferation of antisemitic graffiti, vandalism of Jewish institutions and synagogues, and verbal and physical assaults (Brym, 2024b). Despite Jews accounting for less than two percent of the total population in the country, roughly 71 percent of the 1,345 religion-

³ The UN General Assembly Resolution 3379 that declared Zionism to be a form of racism was adopted in 1975, but as Hirsh and Miller (2023) note, the pejoration of Zionism well precedes this Resolution. For further information on this topic, see: Hazan, 2017; Tabarovsky, 2023.

⁴ For the full article and list of indices, see: Cotler 2002.

motivated hate crimes reported in 2023 targeted Jews in Canada (Stats Canada, 2025). In 2024, Jews remained the most targeted religious group, representing roughly 68 percent of the 1,342 religion-motivated hate crimes (Stats Canada, 2025). Furthermore, while non-Jewish Canadians held relatively positive views of Jews in 2024 (Anti-Defamation League, 2025; Brym, 2024b), their attitudes towards Jews and Israel have since significantly deteriorated, or at the very least, become more uncertain (Brym & Lenton, 2026). Jewish Canadians consequently increasingly feel distressed about their safety in Canada, with approximately one quarter considering emigrating due to antisemitism (Brym & Lenton, 2026).

As the next section illustrates, discrimination against Jews at Canadian university campuses cannot be divorced from the surrounding societal context. Rather, Canadian universities both reflect and reproduce the political and social currents, as well as act as sites of creation of antisemitism in their own right.

2.2. History of Antisemitism on Canadian University Campuses from 1919 to present

Like other social, professional, and economic domains in interwar Canada, Jews faced exclusion and discrimination within Canadian academia. Robinson (2015: 70-74) outlines the restrictions Jewish students encountered beginning in the 1920s that varied by province, university, and academic discipline. For example, in the 1924 to 1925 academic year at McGill University in Quebec, nearly 25 percent of the first-year students were Jewish. However, by 1935, the proportion of Jewish students dropped from 25 to 12 percent due to the “informal” policies McGill implemented to restrict Jewish enrolment. These measures included unspoken policies to not admit “Hebrews” from outside Quebec in 1926, and in 1929, the requirement that Jews score 700, compared to a score of 630 for non-Jews, to pass the university matriculation examination. These restrictions at McGill further tightened in the 1930s. McGill’s Faculty of

Law, however, did not need to implement Jewish quotas because most Jewish students instead elected to attend the law school at the Université de Montreal.

Robinson (2015: 73-74) additionally notes the notorious restrictions on the admission of Jews into medical schools in interwar Canada. In 1938, McGill's Medical School reserved just eight places for Jews for their incoming class – a quota set without bringing it before the university's Faculty and Senate. They defended this quota, claiming that Jewish students and citizens of Montreal endorsed it due to the “difficulty” Jewish medical students had in securing hospital internships. The University of Manitoba's percentage of Jews admitted to their medical school declined from 28 percent in the 1920s to 9 percent in 1944. At the University of Toronto, restrictions on clinical placement for Jewish medical and physiotherapy students in part impelled the Jewish community to build their own hospital. The medical schools at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia (Robinson, 2015: 73) and Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario constituted the exceptions in their admission of Jewish students; however, after the Second World War, Queen's would change its tune (Duffin, 2014). As Duffin (2014) notes, several non-Jewish trustees expressed their disdain for the lack of Jewish quotas and their concern for the university's reputation and purity as a Christian university. Consequently, after 1947, which saw the highest proportion of Jewish students admitted to that year's medical school cohort, the number of Jews admitted plummeted, and those admitted were treated harshly. Although the quotas at McGill University and the University of Toronto were eventually lifted in the late 1960s, Jewish medical school graduates from Queen's University questioned whether they informally remained in place until the early 1990s (Duffin, 2014).

In Canada's interwar period, universities likewise limited hiring Jewish faculty members. For example, no Jewish doctor could obtain a clinical position at the University of Toronto until

after the Second World War (Robinson, 2015: 73-74). Jewish faculty desperate to flee persecution across Europe pleaded with the senior administrators at Canadian universities to little avail (Stortz, 2003). Widespread concern about limited faculty appointments, the ability of European Jewish faculty to adapt to a predominantly Christian Canadian culture, and just general indifference to the plight of Jewish refugees curbed the enthusiasm and willingness to sponsor them (Stortz, 2003).

The hiring of Jewish faculty in the postwar years, however, underwent considerable growth, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s. In 1961, 132 Jewish men and 19 Jewish women held faculty positions (Tulchinsky, 2008: 428). Just a decade later, these numbers rose to 1,280 Jewish men and 225 Jewish women. Jewish faculty increasingly populated the faculties of law and medicine and the departments of psychology and sociology, though few held appointments in humanities disciplines and even fewer in engineering. Tulchinsky (2008: 428) further notes that Jews increasingly held senior administrative positions at universities that previously restricted Jewish enrolment and the hiring of Jewish faculty, such as the University of Toronto and McGill University. Queen's University likewise hired more Jewish faculty in their medical school (Duffin, 2014). Jewish faculty members at Queen's University reportedly did not experience overt antisemitic discrimination, although they mentioned colleagues making "off-the-cuff" antisemitic remarks (Duffin, 2014).

The early 2000s saw the rise of antisemitic incidents in broader Canadian society and the manifestations of the so-called "new antisemitism" on Canadian campuses. Traditional conspiratorial antisemitic stereotypes of Jewish power and greed did not disappear; however, hostility towards Jews increasingly became articulated and viewed as righteous through the

language of anti-colonialism and social justice that position Israel, Zionism, and its supporters as the embodiment and source of the world's ills (Marcus, 2016; Nelson, 2019).

A prelude to the years of campus activism that targets Jews and supporters of Israel can be seen in the riot at Concordia University in Quebec. In 2002, hundreds of student and non-student protesters forced the cancellation of the scheduled talk on campus with then Israel's former prime minister and private citizen, Benjamin Netanyahu (Braun, 2006; Robinson, 2015). Protesters blocked and assaulted the event's attendees trying to enter the building, and outside the university, burned Israeli flags while chanting antisemitic and anti-Israel slogans in English, French, and Arabic (Marcus, 2016). They additionally smashed windows and broke furniture, causing significant property damage. To dispel the mob and prevent further escalation, the riot police used tear gas on the protesters. Concordia University's administration responded to the riot by issuing a blanket moratorium on all campus events related to the Middle East (Marcus, 2016). Attempted or forced cancellations of Zionist speakers by incensed protesters occurred at other Canadian campuses in the years that followed. In 2003, the scheduled appearance of a Middle East scholar, Daniel Pipes, at York University in Ontario sparked protest from students and the university's faculty association (Goldschläger, 2007). In 2004, protesters prevented the visiting Israeli consul-general from speaking at Levi Fraser University in British Columbia.

Student- and faculty-led pro-Palestinian campus organizations additionally spearheaded similar forms of antisemitic activism during the early 2000s. In 2003, the McMaster University chapter of Students for Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR) sponsored a lecture entitled "Zionist collaboration from the Nazis to the USA: Imperialists today" (Braun, 2006). The following year, members of York University's SPHR chapter dressed in Israeli military uniforms and established mock military checkpoints inside a campus building, obstructing the free passage of students to

and from classes (Braun, 2006). In 2005, activists at the University of Toronto launched the first “Israel Apartheid Week” (IAW), a week-long series of events that subsequently spread to campuses across Canada and internationally (Robinson, 2015). Despite organizers’ claims that this event targeted the policies of the State of Israel, traditional antisemitic images of hook-nosed Hasidic Jews and violent incidents have regularly accompanied it (Marcus, 2016).

IAW also became a central vehicle for promoting the Boycott, Divestment and Sanction (BDS) movement that calls for the return of all Palestinian refugee descendants to Israel, the dismantling of the security barrier, and full rights for Israel’s Arab citizens (BDS Movement, n.d.).⁵ BDS advocates for the economic, academic, and cultural boycotts of Israeli products and institutions to achieve these goals. However, leaders of this movement explicitly call for the elimination of Israel (Nelson, 2019). Nelson (2019) further argues that the BDS movement amounts to an anti-normalization campaign that ostracizes and deters Jewish and non-Jewish support for Israel or collaboration with Israeli scholars and institutions.

Faculty-led organizations, such as Faculty 4 Palestine and the Jewish Faculty Network, in addition to faculty members of Independent Jewish Voices, support and actively work to advance BDS motions in faculty associations and support similar student activism.⁶ While their efforts were largely unsuccessful at the faculty level prior to October 7, 2023, numerous Canadian faculty associations have since adopted BDS motions (DeCoste & Rockman, in press; Freiman & Nelson, 2026).

⁵ For a detailed explanation on the practical, legal, and ethical implications of these goals, see: Nelson (2019), “Chapter 1: The Goals and Tactics of the Boycott Movement” in *Israel Denial: Anti-Zionism, Anti-Semitism, & the Faculty Campaign Against the Jewish State*. Indiana Press.

⁶ For more information on these organizations and their missions, see Faculty 4 Palestine: <https://faculty4palestine.ca/>; Jewish Faculty Network: <https://www.jewishfaculty.ca/about-jfn/>; and Independent Jewish Voices: <https://www.ijvcanada.org/about-ijv/>

Mounting concern about antisemitism off and on Canadian campuses culminated in the creation in 2009 of the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism (CPCCA) to conduct hearings and produce a report (Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism, 2011).⁷ The CPCCA launched an Inquiry with an open call for written submissions from the Canadian public and held a series of hearings, which included testimonies from students, faculty members, and staff and leaders of Jewish campus organizations. Notably, most university presidents declined to participate.

The Inquiry mentions a number of antisemitic incidents that occurred across Canadian campuses, including but not limited to: student federations refusing Jewish campus groups funding for events because of their association with Israel; holding Jews collectively responsible for the State of Israel's actions and subjecting Jewish students and faculty to litmus tests for participation in campus life; harassment from students, faculty, and student groups and unions for expressing support for Israel; student and faculty unions proposing BDS motions; vandalism and graffiti, some of which included swastikas; physical assault; antisemitic and anti-Israel rallies; traditional antisemitic tropes of Jewish power parroted by students and faculty members; violent protests against, and consequent cancellations, of invited Israeli speakers' talks; students and faculty espousing Holocaust denial; and the barricading of Jewish students on campus. Collectively, the Inquiry Panel deduced that these activities created a hostile atmosphere that left Jews and allies feeling distressed, unwelcomed, and silenced. These activities and impacts on Jews and their allies on campus intensified after October 7, 2023.

Following the Hamas-led attack on October 7, 2023, and the subsequent increase in antisemitic incidents both on and off campus, the House of Commons Standing Committee on

⁷ Members of Bloc Quebecois withdrew from the CPCCA in 2010, asserting that they believed their approach to equate criticism of Israel with antisemitism.

Justice and Human Rights (the Committee) undertook an independent study of antisemitism in March 2024 (House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, 2024). The Committee heard from 23 witnesses, including Jewish university students and faculty members, Jewish national organizations, police, and university presidents. They additionally received a large volume of written submissions, including 78 briefs. Many of these testimonies echoed those raised 15 years earlier, including Holocaust denial, verbal and physical assault, vandalism and graffiti, litmus tests on Zionism, violent protests and rallies, the forced cancellation of speakers, and the passing of BDS motions in student and faculty unions. Witnesses also testified to individual students and faculty and student-led and faculty-led organizations simultaneously denying, justifying, or celebrating the October 7 attack and charging Israel with genocide and apartheid⁸ through petitions, statements, and signage at encampments that sprung up in the spring and summer of 2024.

At the institutional level, they spoke and wrote of their university administrators' passivity, tolerance, and reluctance to enforce their codes of conduct and discipline those violating them, thereby fostering what they characterized as a permissive environment. Moreover, several witnesses commented on the exclusion of Jews and antisemitism from EDI policies, initiatives, and discussions, and, at times, the potential perpetuation of antisemitism by the EDI framework.

Although the 2011 and 2024 reports document many of the same manifestations of antisemitism, the 2024 report also features testimony from newly formed Zionist faculty organizations dedicated to combating antisemitism. Their inclusion reflects the emergence of

⁸ These charges against Israel long predate October 7, 2023, but intensified following the Hamas-led attack. For an analysis on why the genocide charge is antisemitic, see Spencer, 2024 and Strawson, 2026; for the apartheid charge, see Bolton, 2024.

both national and university-specific organized faculty responses to concerns about antisemitism on Canadian campuses. Some examples include: the Network of Engaged Canadian Academics, a national organization formed in 2022 that boasts more than 400 Jewish and non-Jewish faculty members on 54 university campuses (Network of Engaged Canadian Academics, n.d.); the provincial level organization, the Jewish Academic Alliance of BC, whose membership includes Jewish and non-Jewish faculty, staff, administrators, and university students in BC (Jewish Academic Alliance of BC, n.d.); and at the university level, the Queen's (University) Coalition Against Antisemitism (House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, 2024: 53).

Having provided an overview of the historical and social context of antisemitism on Canadian campuses, the next section details existing scholarship on Jews' experiences on campus and the theoretical and empirical contributions of the present research.

2.3. Existing Scholarship on Jewish Experiences on University Campuses

In tandem with the documented rise in campus antisemitism, scholarship examining the experiences of Jewish students and faculty on university campuses has undergone considerable growth in the last two decades – though it is still relatively small. This body of scholarship is mostly concentrated on Jewish students in the US; however, emerging literature reveals similar patterns in the marginalization of Jewish identity and Jews' responses on Canadian campuses. The following section provides a brief overview of the key differences related to the Canadian academic context and proceeds to synthesize the scholarship on the experiences of Jewish students and faculty on North American campuses.

Pertinent to situating the studies that follow, this section provides an overview of the confluence and influence of EDI policies and initiatives and BDS activism within student

organizations and faculty associations on Canadian campuses, all of which intensified in the wake of October 7, 2023. Marom and Switzer (2025), acknowledging Canadian universities' active promotion of EDI efforts focusing on antiracism and decolonization, conducted a timely textual analysis of EDI policies from 28 universities in Canada to explore the inclusion (and exclusion) of Jews and antisemitism in these initiatives. They found that these policies overwhelmingly marginalized antisemitism by including it in a long list of other prejudices and coupling its mention with Islamophobia, thereby creating a false symmetry. They also report that these policies primarily classify Jewish identity merely as a religious one, which legitimizes its exclusion from EDI policies that predominantly focus on racial and ethnic justice. They argue that this religious classification may stem from a reluctance to address the centrality of Zionism and Israel to most Jews' identities in Canada. They further contend that the racial classification of Jews as "White" additionally serves to justify their exclusion, and that this classification obscures the diversity of Jewish experiences and identity. The repeated mentions of these issues in the studies discussed below highlight how Jews' exclusion and marginalization from EDI policies and initiatives contributes to a hostile campus climate.

Freiman and Nelson (2026), in their taxonomy of 72 arguments opposing the BDS movement, situate the prevalence and enactment of BDS activism within Canadian universities, particularly following October 7, 2023. They argue that BDS campaigns are frequently advanced by small but highly motivated groups of students and faculty who mobilize to pass BDS motions at poorly attended meetings within student organizations and faculty associations. Furthermore, characteristics of the Canadian postsecondary sector, including the high rates of faculty unionization (Katchanovski et al., 2011), the central role of faculty associations in collective bargaining, and the prominence of student organizations in campus life (Freiman & Nelson,

2026), provide important context for understanding the similarities and differences in the experiences of Jewish students and faculty at US and Canadian campuses discussed in the studies below.

2.3.1. Existing Scholarship on Jewish Student Experiences on University Campuses

To comprehend the contemporary campus climate, an environment in which Jewish faculty conduct research, and lecture, mentor, and support Jewish and non-Jewish students, this section turns to the comparatively larger body of scholarship on the experiences of Jewish students and to non-Jewish student attitudes towards Jews and Israel. Research conducted prior to October 7 suggests that the marginalization of Jewish students on campus has long been a pervasive issue (Perry, 2011; Pollack, 2011). A substantial proportion of Jewish students on US campuses reported encountering anti-Jewish and anti-Israel sentiments and activism, with experiences varying according to institutional context, including the presence of an active Students for Justice in Palestine chapter (Saxe et al., 2016). While some Jewish student respondents reported encountering little hostility toward Jews or Israel, many nevertheless described feeling silenced or reluctant to participate in discussions surrounding Israel-Palestine (Saxe et al., 2016). Similar findings were reported by Kelman et al. (2017) in their study that interviewed 66 Jewish undergraduate students on campuses in California. Participants did not describe their campus as antisemitic but reported that the occurrence of Israel-Palestine and BDS activism and discussions caused significant discomfort. A qualitative study by Kenedy (2022) on the experiences of 60 Jewish undergraduate university students in Ontario, Manitoba, and Quebec likewise found that participants expressed that BDS and Israel-Palestine activism created a silencing effect. In contrast to Kelman et al. (2017), however, participants at these Canadian campuses, many of whom were actively involved in Jewish campus groups and Israel advocacy,

reported feeling unsafe. Moreover, relative to the several participants in Kelman et al.'s (2017) study who expressed that they view their Jewish identity as separable from Israel and Zionism, Kenedy (2022) describes the strong affinity that most participants held for Israel. This difference between Canadian and American Jews in their identification with Israel and Jewish peoplehood (Della Pergola, 2023) thus provides an important consideration for situating the experiences of Jewish faculty on Canadian campuses.

The exclusion and omission of Jews and antisemitism from campus EDI policies and discussions predating October 7, 2023, additionally contributes to and constitutes a form of the marginalization of Jewish students on campus. In a qualitative study involving 40 Jewish students and leaders of Jewish campus organizations in the US, Farber and Poleg (2019) found that participants reported routine exclusion from EDI initiatives and discussions. The participants reported that this exclusion was justified by the often-communicated perception by students and faculty that Jews are “White” and therefore privileged. In a qualitative study with nine Jewish students in a Social Work program in Canada, Poizner et al. (2022) likewise found that Jewish students reported the dismissal of their request to be included in EDI-focused curricula on the basis of their supposed “White privilege.” Similar patterns in Canada are documented beyond the Jewish student population. Yaffa and Poizner (2025), drawing on their experiences as a Social Work faculty member and social worker, respectively, and Marom's (2026a) empirical study on the exclusion of Jews from EDI policies on Canadian campuses all suggest that this marginalization extends to Jewish faculty.

October 7, 2023, and its aftermath marked an intensification of the marginalization of Jewish students and their responses at North American university campuses. In a survey that included nearly 750 undergraduate Jewish students on US campuses, nearly half reported

experiencing antisemitism (Wright et al., 2026). Of the remaining approximately 3,000 non-Jewish respondents to their survey, the authors found that 9 percent held anti-Jewish views and 15 percent expressed views about Israel that most Jews deem antisemitic. Comparatively, in Canada, a survey of 1,010 non-Jewish university students found that they harboured significantly more anti-Jewish and anti-Israel attitudes than the average non-Jewish Canadian adult, save for the general Quebecois population (Brym, 2024b). A quantitative survey by Santos and Yogev (2026) on the experiences of 201 Jewish members on campuses in the US, Canada, and Europe found that more than a third reported experiencing hate speech against Jewish persons in the weeks preceding October 7, 2023. This proportion increased to just over half in the weeks immediately following October 7 and rose again to 63.9 percent in the weeks that preceded the survey, which was conducted between mid-December 2023 and early January 2024. The impacts on respondents were especially pronounced in Canada. Compared to respondents in the US and Europe, those in Canada felt most comfortable leaving their home, using social media, and attending public events on campus prior to October 7. However, after October 7, respondents in Canada reported the lowest levels of comfort compared to those in the US and Europe to undertaking these activities. Santos and Yogev (2026) additionally found that Jewish members on campus reported low levels of trust in their university leadership and EDI offices to address antisemitism. Applying the traumatic invalidation model to public data, i.e., university antisemitism taskforce reports and scholarship, which document the experiences of Jewish university students and faculty in the US post-October 7, Bar-Halpern and Wolfman (2025) provide a complementary theoretical framework to understand this crisis of trust. Specifically, they argue that the indifference, discrimination, exclusion, misrecognition, blaming, and

gaslighting, to which university administrations subjected its Jewish members, result in profound and long-lasting psychological impacts, such as pervasive insecurity and hypervigilance.

Other post-October 7 studies on the psychological and social effects of marginalization and antisemitism on Jewish students further corroborate these patterns. A longitudinal mixed-methods survey by Morstead and DeLongis (2025) on how antisemitism impacts the well-being of Jewish students in Canada, the US, and Europe found that it was associated with heightened stress and depressive symptoms. In a study that involved 32 interviews with Jewish undergraduate students at US campuses, Samuel et al. (2024) detail the social and psychological impacts of antisemitism. Participants reported that their support for and identification with Israel resulted in the fracturing of their friendships with other non-Jewish students and their exclusion from student-led campus organizations. With regards to the psychological impacts, participants expressed feeling on edge in classroom settings in anticipation of or already occurring discussions on Israel-Palestine. These social and psychological consequences led to specific coping strategies by Jewish students. Literature on these coping strategies, moreover, provides an important point of comparison for understanding how Jewish faculty navigate similar processes of marginalization within the university.

Throughout the scholarship on the experiences of Jewish students on North American campuses, there is a persistent pattern of Jewish students feeling pressured to self-censor by withdrawing from spaces and situations and concealing or minimizing their Jewish identity (Abrams & Armeni, 2023; Farber & Poleg, 2019; Harris & Maranto, 2024; Kelman et al., 2017; Kenedy, 2022; Poizner et al., 2022; Samuel et al., 2024; Santos & Yogev, 2026; Schachter & Ajayi, 2026). While some Jewish students reported taking greater pride in their identity and defending their community and Israel, they reported that such actions had a high social and

academic cost and a toll on their well-being (Farber & Poleg, 2019; Kenedy, 2022; Samuel et al., 2024; Schachter & Ajayi, 2026). These findings illustrate that Jewish students are not merely on the receiving end of campus hostility but actively negotiate and manage the social consequences elicited by certain expressions of their Jewish identity in their everyday academic lives.

Together, these studies identify the challenges Jewish students experience with marginalization and the ways in which they mitigate this hostility. Considerably less attention, however, has been paid to Jewish faculty, who teach, support, and mentor these students, as well as influence university scholarship and governance. The existing scholarship of Jewish faculty experiences is discussed in the following section.

2.3.2. Existing Scholarship on Jewish Faculty Experiences on University Campuses

Much of the literature on the experiences of Jewish faculty pre-October 7 consists of personal accounts. Edited by Craig Pessin and Doron S. Ben-Atar, *Anti-Zionism on Campus: The University, Free Speech, and BDS* (2018), includes 24 essays written by Jewish faculty members on their experiences with antisemitism and antizionism. Most of these scholars hail from humanities and social sciences disciplines, and despite the diversity in their location, these essays reveal a similar pattern of marginalization of their Jewish identities. Jewish faculty from the US (e.g., Ben-Atar, 2018; Blackmer, 2018; Brahm, 2018; Freedman, 2018; Nelson, 2018), South Africa (Klazinga, 2018), Australia (e.g., Avnon, 2018; Mendes, 2018), and Canada (Bauer, 2018; Kopstein, 2018) described incidents between the years of 2008 to 2016, wherein any expressed support for Israel and Zionism or condemnation or challenging of BDS motions at their universities or professional associations or of anti-Israel activities in their city, i.e., rallies (Bauer, 2018) elicited smear campaigns and harassment. An understanding of how professional rank and

intersecting identities further shaped the content and manifestation of the consequences for voicing support for Israel and Zionism can be gleaned from these firsthand accounts.

In the US, Gabriel Noah Brahm (2018), then a tenure-track professor with less job security than a tenured professor, details that in 2011, he attended a faculty trip to Israel with colleagues organized by his university that devolved into an “anti-Israel hate fest” (83). When he voiced his opposition to the lack of balance or nuance, he reported that he became the target of a disciplinary investigation, and the following year, was threatened with denial of tenure.

In South Africa, Larissa Klazinga (2018) recounts that in 2012, she placed a pro-Israel poster on her office door and wore pro-Israel clothing to work after Jewish students approached her, concerned about the upcoming Israel Apartheid Week. Klazinga (2018) describes how her poster and clothing triggered a disciplinary investigation with eighteen separate counts related to her defense of Israel and some that referenced her sexual orientation as a lesbian.

In the US, Denise Nussbaum (2018) details that, in 2015, after challenging her university Diversity Committee’s decision to sponsor a lecture by a BDS activist, she became the target of a sustained smear campaign and workplace harassment. She described repeated complaints of a hostile work environment that went unaddressed by the administration. It culminated in a faculty association meeting where, after she raised allegations of misogyny, which a student had reported to her, a male colleague grabbed her arm hard enough to leave a bruise while berating her opposition to the BDS speaker. According to Nussbaum (2018), bystanders did not intervene nor check on her following the assault, and neither did the administration. She writes that the hostility and ostracism ultimately led to her decision to file a lawsuit against the institution and to teach exclusively online.

The two personal accounts from the Jewish faculty in Canada, moreover, provide useful insights into the marginalization of Jewish faculty prior to October 7. In Quebec, at the Université du Québec à Montréal, Julien Bauer (2018) explains how, in 2012, he condemned on public radio the rally against Israel's military operation in Gaza, in which protesters flew Hamas flags. The following day, Bauer (2018) recounts that his office door was covered with antisemitic graffiti. His rector condemned the incident in a voicemail, and campus security treated it seriously. However, when his office door was vandalized with anti-Israel stickers in 2015, Bauer (2018) describes a markedly different response: his rector remained silent, and campus security was evasive and lacked transparency about efforts to find the individual responsible. He additionally observes how TV Radio Canada, the French-speaking counterpart of the Canadian Broadcasting Company, and highly critical of Israel, did not air this story. Bauer (2018) believes these reactions are reflective of the emphasis on consensus in Quebec society, particularly within public media and within the historically ambivalent to more recently antagonistic approach of trade unions to Israel and Zionism. Specifically, he argues that this approach influences faculty associations and their willingness, or lack thereof, to protect its Jewish Zionist members.

The second Canadian Jewish faculty member, Jeffrey Kopstein (2018), details his five years as the director of the Anne Tanenbaum Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto. He describes a "generalized weirdness associated with Israel on campus" (143-144) that manifested in social sciences and humanities colleagues' discomfort when he proposed deepening engagement with Israeli scholars and academic institutions. He also mentions that the access afforded to him to the university administration because of the philanthropy of the Jewish donors for the center led to department chairs asking him to intervene with the university administration on irrelevant matters. Kopstein (2018) elaborates that he had to combat the

impression among faculty and some graduate students that the Jewish donors overreached in their control of the scholarship around Israel – a longstanding antisemitic trope of Jewish power and control.

The level of detail in the personal accounts shared in *Anti-Zionism on Campus* allows for a deeper exploration of the myriad forms the marginalization of Jewish identity took. The student leadership of certain organizations on campus and faculty hostile to Jewish faculty and who victimized the latter often reversed the roles, alleging that they were abused (e.g., Blackmer, 2018; Dubnov, 2018). Other common themes in these personal accounts included the tokenization of antizionist Jews (e.g., Freedman, 2018; Yakira, 2018) and the expulsion, and pointed indifference of this expulsion, of those who did not conform (e.g., Bauer, 2018; Mendes, 2018; Nussbaum, 2018; Yakira, 2018). Overwhelmingly, these Jewish faculty concluded that the only acceptable expression of their Jewish identity necessitated the denunciation of Israel and Zionism or, as Brahm (2018: 84) puts it, “Jews who loudly reject or quietly neglect (ignore) Israel are OK. But as soon as a Jewish person self-identifies as Zionist, he or she becomes vulnerable...[and] radioactive.”

Other personal accounts from Jewish faculty that predate October 7 illustrate the marginalization of Jewish faculty in other disciplines and spheres. Rubin (2018) details the seven rejections from academic journals of his manuscript on antisemitism and the reviewers’ feedback that he did not sufficiently denounce Zionism and Israel. In that same chapter, Rubin (2018) discusses the findings from six interviews with Jewish scholars on their perception of the feedback to his manuscript, whereby they likewise lamented the exclusion and omission of Jews and antisemitism from multiculturalism studies. In her account of her personal experiences as a Jewish faculty member at the University of Toronto’s Temerty Faculty of Medicine, Kuper

(2023) similarly expresses her frustration with the omission of Jews and antisemitism from EDI discussions, which she argues stems from the classification of Jews as “White” and the connotations of oppression and privilege. Kuper (2023) further explains that this classification obscures and legitimizes the antisemitic nature of the pervasive tropes of Jews as conniving, deceitful, all-powerful, wealthy, selfish, and the nefarious depiction of Zionism.

Firsthand accounts post-October 7 mark the intensification of the exclusion and dismissal of Jews and antisemitism from EDI discussions and the increased normalization of invoking antisemitic tropes. In her reflection of her experiences as a professor in Social Work at Columbia University in the US, Werman (2025) points to the contradiction of her academic discipline’s emphasis on equity and social justice, and the indifference, silence, or celebration by colleagues and students in response to October 7. In Canada, Yaffa and Poizner (2025), also in Social Work, similarly write about the contradictory behaviours from colleagues and students, as well as the omission and exclusion of Jews from discussions about EDI and discrimination due to their supposed “White privilege”. In an article on the experiences of Jewish faculty in medicine with antisemitism by Gordon et al. (2025), Ted Rosenberg recounts the events that precipitated his public resignation from the University of British Columbia. Namely, physicians and medical students’ circulation of a petition in November 2023 that accused Jews of deicide,⁹ organ trafficking,¹⁰ and that called for Jewish faculty to be prevented from adjudicating resident matching due to supposed racism. In response, nearly 300 Jewish physicians signed a counter-petition expressing their concern; however, the Dean of the medical faculty refused to recognize antisemitism as an issue or to meet with the representatives of the counter-petition.

⁹ The antisemitic and false accusation that Jews conspired to kill Jesus Christ and that present day Jews bear responsibility.

¹⁰ The antisemitic and false accusation of organ trafficking likewise predates October 7, 2023, and dates back to medieval European blood libels. See Bronner, 2026 for further information.

Larger-scale empirical studies examining Jewish faculty experiences across North American campuses corroborate the patterns identified in these firsthand accounts. Although these studies vary in methodology and scope, they similarly point to recurring themes of identity-based hostility and marginalization, and the strategies Jewish faculty adopt, namely, self-censorship or reclaiming of their identity. In his mixed-methods survey of 93 Jewish faculty members on US college campuses, Rubin (2021) found that nearly half of the respondents reported experiencing both indirect and direct forms of marginalization as a result of their Jewish identity. Indirect marginalization commonly took the form of encountering antisemitic graffiti, i.e., of swastikas, and overhearing jokes and comments from students and colleagues invoking Jewish stereotypes of power and wealth. Respondents also detailed non-Jewish colleagues scheduling meetings that coincided with Jewish holidays or with Shabbat.¹¹ Direct marginalization often manifested in non-Jewish colleagues advising respondents to conceal or minimize their Jewish identity, and, less often, non-Jewish students making antisemitic remarks, including accusations of deicide, in the classroom. Some respondents additionally reported that they suspected that their Jewish identity negatively affected their career opportunities, such as obtaining tenure. Rubin (2021) notes that respondents reported consequently hiding or muting their Jewish identity, and, in some cases, minimizing antisemitic experiences by framing them as routine or insignificant.

Rubin's (2021) study illustrates the indirect and direct forms of marginalization that Jewish faculty encountered and experienced due to their Jewish identity. Subsequent research on this topic post-October 7 provides greater detail into how the "new antisemitism" shapes the marginalization of Jewish faculty on North American campuses and their responses. In a mixed-

¹¹ Observant and many non-observant Jews do not work on certain Jewish holidays nor Shabbat/the Sabbath as the Torah commands rest.

methods survey of 209 Jewish faculty on US campuses, respondents reported observing anti-Jewish activities or statements from students (79.9 percent), faculty, administrators or staff (73.2 percent), student groups/organizations (69.4 percent), faculty groups/organizations (49.8 percent), and from individuals or groups unaffiliated with their campus (45.5 percent) (Anti-Defamation League & Academic Engaged Network, 2025). Respondents noted soft or shadow boycotts, meaning not permitting or quietly cancelling Israeli, Jewish and/or Zionist speaking events, and removing or discouraging Israel-related exchange programs and collaborations. They additionally mentioned their non-Jewish colleagues' refusal to collaborate, students' boycott of their courses, and exclusion or expulsion from their professional faculty associations. Like the respondents from Rubin's (2021) study, respondents reported concealing their Jewish and Zionist identities. Some respondents additionally reported considering or already retiring from their fields of study due to the hostility and marginalization. Some respondents, conversely, expressed their strengthened identification with their Jewish and Zionist identity in the face of hostility, which frequently led to their mobilization to combat antisemitism.

Whereas Rubin (2021) and the ADL and AEN (2025) provide primarily descriptive accounts of the forms and frequency of the marginalization experienced by Jewish faculty and their responses, ensuing studies have drawn on and adapted theoretical frameworks to interpret similar research. Based on existing microaggression taxonomies for other marginalized groups and prior research on contemporary and historical antisemitism, Silverstein and Block (2025) developed a similar measure specific to antisemitism with categories that include overt assaults, microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations, each of which include subcategories. They then conducted a quantitative survey using this new taxonomy and a revised scale to measure the frequency and psychological impact of antisemitism with 252 Jewish respondents, of which 23.4

percent consisted of Jewish faculty members from 85 US universities. Jewish staff members, graduate students, and undergraduate students made up the remaining 76.6 percent. Although they do not differentiate between faculty members and staff and students, they found that nearly all (98.8 percent) experienced at least one form of antisemitism within the last 12 months. The most common pertained to their collective identity as Jews and to Israel, followed by perceived double standards in their treatment on campus, witnessing incitement to violence, and anti-Jewish graffiti. The least common pertained to dual loyalty, conspiracies about Jewish power, and classic antisemitic tropes. Silverstein and Block (2025) additionally note that positive identification with Zionism correlated with respondents reporting more frequent experiences with antisemitism and higher reports of depression, anger, hypervigilance, and physical symptoms.

In Canada, data on the experiences of Jewish faculty are exceptionally scarce. The three qualitative articles discussed below derive from the same dataset collected after October 7, 2023. Marom (2026b) draws on Silverstein and Block's (2025) taxonomy of antisemitism and critical theory scholarship to understand the manifestations of antisemitism and the experiences of 51 Jewish faculty in varied disciplines, campuses, and provinces in Canada. Marom (2026b) reports on interviews with 22 participants selected to represent a diverse sample and provides important context to situate the presentation of antisemitism, such as participants' (in)visibility as Jews, the emphasis on Indigenous issues in Canadian universities, and the absence of a strong national identity within Canadian culture and discourse. Marom (2026b) found examples of microinsults that invoked antisemitic tropes of Jewish wealth, greed, and deceit and conspiracies about Jewish power used by colleagues and university administrators, in addition to instances of environmental microassaults (i.e., antisemitic vandalism and graffiti) and microassaults that fell

short of violence. Marom (2026b) emphasizes the prevalence of microinvalidations that took the form of department chairs scheduling meetings on Jewish holidays and faculty associations and colleagues dismissing Jewish indigeneity to Israel and concerns about antisemitism. Moreover, she details that participants reported how these microaggressions led to them to concealing or minimizing their Jewish identity and withdrawing from relationships and campus life. Others, conversely, reported that they opted to make their Jewish identity more visible and engage in campus activism and research to combat antisemitism.

In another article, Marom (2026a) analyzes the responses from 136 respondents from the larger survey of Canadian and US faculty, staff, and postdoctoral students' experiences with antisemitism and EDI policies at their universities, and cited 25 interviews from the larger sample. Both sources of data include diverse samples in terms of professional rank, academic discipline, and province. Marom (2026a) found that Jewish faculty and staff perceived significant gaps in how universities addressed antisemitism compared with other forms of identity-based discrimination. Respondents consistently reported that institutional policies, EDI initiatives, and resources addressing antisemitism were less visible and less comprehensive than those addressing other marginalized groups. Although most participants formally reported antisemitic incidents after October 7, 2023, satisfaction with institutional responses was low, with EDI offices, unions, and human rights offices receiving the lowest evaluations. In contrast, respondents reported greater support and satisfaction from colleagues and external Jewish organizations. Themes from the interview data were generated inductively from participants' interviews and deductively informed by the EDI frameworks. These themes also reflected the findings from the survey. Interview participants detailed the exclusion from EDI policies and initiatives and uneven extension of religious accommodations. They also described the

misrecognition of Jewish identity as “White” or merely as a religious identity. Lastly, they reported the dismissal and stonewalling of requests to be included within EDI policies, or the selective inclusion of right-wing antisemitism or anti-Zionist Jewish voices. Of particular interest to this literature review and present research, Marom (2026a) argues that the exclusion of Zionist Jewish voices from EDI frameworks, discussions, and policies “must grapple seriously with the implications of stigmatizing an entire group” (37).

A third article that utilizes this dataset by Elizur and Marom (2026) reports on interviews with 35 Jewish faculty and staff at Canadian universities and analyzes their experiences through the framework of minority-stress theory and the racism-related stress model. Like the other two articles, the sample is diverse in terms of academic discipline, professional rank, and province. The authors write that participants reported antisemitism leading to deteriorating mental, physical, social, and professional well-being, prompting some to consider leaving academia. They additionally found that participants testified to greater levels of vigilance and self-doubt due to anticipated discrimination. Elizur and Marom (2026) reference patterns, similar to those detailed by Marom (2026b), of withdrawal from spaces and situations, concealment of identity, and, conversely, increased visibility, seeking Jewish community, and collective mobilization, but situate them within the psychological frameworks on stress. They additionally describe participants’ engagement with and support for Jewish students on campus. On a related note, Tuckel (2025), in her interviews with Jewish faculty on US campuses, similarly details how Jewish faculty described the sense of empowerment from providing emotional and administrative support, though also highlighted the simultaneous feeling of enormous responsibility.

Collectively, this growing body of scholarship demonstrates that Jewish faculty across North American universities experience recurring patterns of exclusion, hostility, and institutional indifference, particularly concerning expressions of Zionism and attachment to Israel. Personal accounts and empirical studies suggest that organizational contexts, academic disciplinary cultures, and broader national norms shape the frequency and manifestation of these patterns. These accounts and studies further point to the influence of intersecting identities and professional rank on these experiences and the ways in which Jewish faculty respond to and navigate these interactions and environments. The next section turns to the how the present research complements and enhances this literature.

2.4. Contributions and Chapter Summary

The present study takes a sociological approach to examine how Jewish faculty on Canadian campuses experience Zionism as a spoiled identity and the strategies they employ to avoid or manage stigmatization. It primarily makes theoretical and empirical contributions, rather than methodological or study population, to the literature. The relevance of the present research's theoretical approach can be justified through the frequent references to concepts associated with Erving Goffman's (1963) stigma theory (e.g., passing and covering) in existing scholarship. Whereas these personal accounts and studies generally employ these concepts descriptively, the present research aims to theorize a broader sociological explanation of stigmatization. In particular, this study seeks to explore in greater depth the interactional dynamics and power relations that underlie the social process of stigmatization. It further aims to examine how intersecting identities, professional rank, academic disciplinary culture, and geographic context shape the social scripts governing Jewish faculty's interactions, the strategies

they employ to negotiate or resist these expectations, and the consequences of perceived and actual transgressions.

The empirical contributions of the present research stem from its analysis of Jewish faculty members' initial socialization to, and ongoing negotiation of, their discreditable identity. First, the study extends existing scholarship by examining participants' understandings of Zionism in relation to their Jewish identity prior to entering Canadian academia, and how they came to recognize others' perceptions of both. In doing so, it explores how these early experiences shaped their self-conceptions and informed their self-presentations within Canadian universities. Second, the study broadens existing research by exploring the stigmatization of Jewish and Zionist identities in settings that have received comparatively little scholarly attention, namely, in research settings and on social media. Together, these empirical and theoretical foci trace the trajectory through which Jewish faculty come to understand, negotiate, and respond to a potentially discreditable identity across multiple contexts and that becomes instantiated and redefined through interactions with others.

Lastly, like the existing qualitative research on Jewish faculty experiences on Canadian campuses conducted by Marom and colleagues, the present study draws on interview data. However, by including participants from the Atlantic provinces, it extends the existing literature by providing greater insight into how regional contexts and their associated social conditions shape the stigmatization of Jewish faculty, the strategies they employ to navigate it, and the consequences of those strategies.

The following chapter introduces the guiding theoretical framework that primarily draws from Goffman's (1963) stigma theory and the adapted concepts of other feminist and antisemitism scholars that supplement Goffman's (1963) theory. The chapter brings together

these theoretical perspectives to develop what I term “The Gentleman’s Agreement”, a framework for understanding the social expectations, power relations, and interactional processes through which Jewish and Zionist identities become stigmatized within Canadian universities.

3. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, I outline my working theoretical framework, “The Gentleman’s Agreement”, that frames the secondary analysis of the interview data. I begin with a definition of my framework and its relation to Laura Z. Hobson’s 1947 book, *Gentleman’s Agreement*, and the movie adaptation. I subsequently explain the underlying theoretical foundations adapted from other scholars, particularly that of Erving Goffman and his seminal work on stigma. I conclude with a summary of the framework.

3.1. *Gentleman’s Agreement* vs. *The Gentleman’s Agreement*

Against the backdrop of the anti-antisemitism movement in post-war America, Darryl Zanuck and Elia Kazan produced the highly acclaimed film, *Gentleman’s Agreement*, based on the best-selling book by Jewish writer, Laura Z. Hobson (Gordan, 2021; Horn, 2021b, 2026). The film depicts a gentile widowed newspaper journalist who reluctantly accepts an assignment to write about antisemitism in America. This protagonist decides that he will pretend to be a Jew for six months in New York City, announcing his Jewish identity at every opportunity – in stark contrast to the many Jews hiding or minimizing their identity – to uncover antisemitism. He is subsequently subjected to several casual antisemitic remarks by seemingly decent people, including his fiancé, who also defends the “gentleman’s agreement”: the unspoken agreement that non-Jews would not rent or sell homes to Jews. Eventually, the protagonist and his fiancé reconcile when she agrees to rent her sister’s cottage to his Jewish friend. The film ends with the protagonist’s mother rejoicing that the American values of democracy and acceptance have prevailed.

Some scholars have critiqued the plot and production of the film as placating non-Jewish Americans’ anxieties about pervasive antisemitism that limited Jews’ social mobility, rather than

meaningfully examining antisemitism or Jewish identity (Gordan, 2021; Horn, 2021b, 2026; Silverman, 2025). These scholars point to the film's superficial depiction of Jews as merely religious individuals who can occasionally pass as White, rather than members of a distinct and historically persecuted people. They also contrast the film's acclaim and the success it brought to its non-Jewish actors and director with the career repercussions experienced by John Garfield, the Jewish actor who portrayed the protagonist's Jewish friend.

I build on these critiques by drawing on the work of other scholars to construct my theoretical framework, *The Gentleman's Agreement*. Whereas the gentleman's agreement referenced in the film denotes the unspoken agreement to exclude Jews, I use the title, "*The Gentleman's Agreement*", to theorize the implicit contract governing Jews' conditional inclusion. The deliberate similarity between the title of my framework and that of the book and film seeks to draw attention to the underlying social scripts that form an asymmetric dynamic in both cases. Specifically, like the plot and production of *Gentleman's Agreement*, *The Gentleman's Agreement* aims to conceptualize the structured social relationships and interactions whereby benevolent non-Jews exercise the capacity to define and welcome the "acceptable" Jew and to stigmatize and potentially exclude the "non-acceptable" Jew.

3.2. Stigma, Jewish Difference, and Disciplinary Measures

Erving Goffman's (1963) conceptualization of stigma provides an important explanatory key to understanding the conditional inclusion of Jews and the broader operation and sustainment of *The Gentleman's Agreement* in the Canadian academic context. Academic institutions are normatively geared towards the inclusion of individuals and their full participation. As such, it is only by impugning the moral worth of certain categories of individuals via some discreditable blemish that the latter might be

excluded de facto or de jure from the “community of the good”, a term I borrow from Hirsh (2017: 37), and their full participation circumscribed. As I show below, The Gentleman’s Agreement can be usefully understood as a specific instantiation of Goffman’s analysis of stigma.

In his seminal book, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled identity*, Goffman (1963) differentiates between a person’s actual social identity and their virtual social identity: the actual social identity refers to the attributes the person possesses that make up their identity, and the virtual social identity refers to the expectations or stereotypes imputed onto individuals with these attributes (2). The possession and expression of an attribute that causes a discrepancy between the actual and the virtual social identity in a way that deeply discredits or spoils¹² one’s identity constitutes a stigma (Goffman, 1963: 2). Goffman (1963: 3) further emphasizes that an attribute that causes a discrepancy between these two identities does not always lead to a spoiled identity but renders the person discredited under certain circumstances. Stigmatization therefore occurs when there is a shared expectation that individuals who possess a particular attribute both accept and enact a prescribed normative role, and their behaviour is interpreted as violating those expectations (Goffman, 1963: 3). The Gentleman’s Agreement and its focus on the situational and interactional dynamics of conditional inclusion and paternalistic tolerance of Jews adopts a Goffmanian framing: Jewish identity constitutes a discreditable attribute that becomes discrediting when Jews do not, will not, or cannot adhere to the prescribed role or their virtual social identity that is articulated by The Agreement. I further posit that the prescribed role, upon which both tolerance and acceptance hinge, varies depending on temporal, spatial, and cultural factors that idealize a certain construction of the Jew (Schraub, 2020a; Silverman, 2025).

¹² Like Goffman (1963), I use the terms “discredit” and “spoil” synonymously throughout this thesis.

Competing social scripts related to Jews' intersecting identities (Crenshaw, 1989) shape the prescribed role and Jews' navigation of the structural relationships enacted by The Agreement.

In the Canadian academic context, I hypothesize that this virtual social identity positions Jewish faculty members as a religious and racially White identity that can be divorced from Zionism and Israel¹³ (Marom, 2026b; Marom & Switzer, 2025a) and, like elsewhere, values them as powerless, agreeable, and subservient (Horn, 2021a; Wilf, 2018). As most Jews in Canada do not adhere to this virtual social identity (Brym, 2024b, 2025b; Statistics Canada, 2022), I anticipate that most faculty members' Jewish identity renders them vulnerable to being discredited. I additionally expect that Jewish faculty members' intersecting identities, such as their gender or nationality, and the related social scripts, complicate the prescribed role and how they negotiate these expectations within the context of The Agreement.

Goffman (1963) distinguishes between the normals and the wise, and the discreditable and the discredited. People who do not possess the stigma in question constitute the normals (Goffman, 1963: 5). Normals who reject the hegemonic standpoint of the normals that explains and justifies the inferiority of the stigmatized, and who consequently feel sympathetic to the stigmatized,¹⁴ are defined as the "wise" by the stigmatized group (Goffman, 1963: 28). Because of their defiance of the prevailing standpoint of the normals and their affiliation with the discredited, the wise may also be subject to courtesy stigmatization, or stigmatization by association (Goffman, 1963: 30-

¹³ Dara Horn's (2026) conceptualization of Jewish identity as a "joinable tribal group with a shared history, homeland, and culture...in Hebrew... 'am', a word best translated as 'a people'" (334) proves useful in identifying the issue with classifying Jewish identity as merely a religion.

¹⁴ Like Goffman (1963), I use the term "stigmatized person(s)" to denote both the discreditable and the discredited.

31). The discreditable refers to those whose stigma can be concealed through information management strategies that allow them to “pass” as a normal (Goffman, 1963: 91-92). Conversely, the discredited refers to those whose stigma cannot be concealed and instead must employ tension management strategies that minimize the obtrusiveness of their stigma (Goffman, 1963:102). Goffman (1963: 32) contends that the stigmatized person’s information or tension management strategies occur in response to having learned the standpoint of the normals and through experiencing the consequences of their stigma, known as the moral career.

As Goffman’s (1963) theory does not convey the specificity of stigma as it relates to Jews, Lisa Silverman’s (2025) concept of “Jewish Difference” can supplement his framework. Specifically, Jewish Difference refers to the deeply embedded hierarchical social framework that constructs the Jew as the Other through a range of cultural stereotypes and assumptions, including philosemitic and antisemitic tropes (Silverman, 2025: 5). The non-Jewish standpoint of the normals can thus be understood as rooted in Jewish Difference. This standpoint becomes apparent through moral experiences¹⁵ in which normals disclose, or the stigmatized expose, the limits of the former’s tolerance towards the stigmatized and their in-group¹⁶ (Goffman, 1963: 33-34).

These moral experiences, moreover, illuminate the illusory nature of phantom acceptance and phantom normalcy: the stigmatized must adhere to their prescribed role and keep themselves at a distance from the normals, thereby allowing the latter to maintain a self-conception of

¹⁵ Goffman’s (1963) use of the term “moral” to refer to the stigmatized person’s “moral career” or “moral experiences” underscores the interactional nature of stigmatization and its effects on the person’s socially ascribed moral standing.

¹⁶ I use the term “in-group” throughout this thesis to refer to Jews, not just Jewish faculty members or Jews in Canada.

themselves as benevolent and tolerant without ever having that self-conception tested or substantiated (Goffman, 1963: 122-123). The stigmatized can lessen the likelihood of being discredited or minimizing this stigmatization by engaging in information or tension management strategies.

The degree to which Jews accept or reject the terms of The Agreement, and their oscillation between these responses, can be understood through Goffman's (1963) concepts of identity ambivalence and concern with in-group purification, and what I term "strengthened self-identification". Goffman (1963: 106-108) argues that the stigmatized persons' internalization of the normals' standpoint results in a feeling of ambivalence or alienation towards their stigmatized identity and their in-group. The stigmatized persons' perception that the behaviour of others in their in-group in front of the normals is distasteful also tends to elicit shame and stratification (Goffman, 1963: 108). Resultingly, concerned with the "purification" of their in-group, they attempt to "normify" their own conduct and that of others (Goffman, 1963: 108). Goffman (1963: 102) describes the inverse of identity ambivalence as the stigmatized persons' replacement of shame and alienation with self-acceptance and greater identification with their in-group. This strengthened self-identification also entails no longer employing information or tension management strategies (Goffman, 1963: 102). I anticipate that findings from the interviews will illustrate how Jewish faculty members with varied political leanings experienced identity ambivalence and how this ambivalence is reflected in the content of their concerns with the (im)purification of their in-group. I additionally expect that Jewish faculty members' political leanings, their social, professional, and physical precarity, and the extent to which they identified with their stigmatized identity and in-

group (Brym, 2024a) will shape their acceptance or rejection of the disciplinary logic of The Agreement.

Although Goffman (1963) emphasizes the interactional dynamics that give rise to stigmatization, much of the subsequent stigma literature pays little attention to this social process and instead conceptualizes stigma as a fixed attribute (Link & Phelan, 2001). Both Goffman (1963) and Link and Phelan (2001) point to the use of indirect and direct discriminatory strategies to communicate and enforce the stigmatized person's inferior status. Goffman's (1963) work on stigma primarily took a microsociological approach in its focus on the everyday interactions rather than on the role of power relations central to a macro-sociological lens (Jacobsen & Smith, 2019). Link and Phelan (2001), however, most notably,¹⁷ implore stigma studies to consider the social and structural power relations that allow for the occurrence of stigmatization, namely the labeling and stereotyping, discrimination and exclusion, and status loss of the stigmatized. Yang et al. (2007) advance this paradigm in their argument that stigmatization occurs when those in power believe that the moral and social goods they most value in their communities are at stake. I consequently take a similar approach to theorizing the micro-macro connection in the everyday operation of The Agreement and the social and structural power relations that underscore it. I moreover adapt concepts from the philosopher Kate Manne and her homologous analysis of patriarchal relations of power to supplement the underdeveloped discriminatory tactics alluded to by Goffman (1963), Link and Phelan (2001), and Yang et al. (2007) for my framework.

In her 2017 book, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*, Manne distinguishes between sexism and misogyny: the former refers to the ideological branch of the patriarchy that justifies

¹⁷ Their article has accrued more than 17,000 citations at the time of this writing.

women's subordination through pseudo-scientific explanations of their inferiority, and the latter as the enforcement arm that rewards women's obedience and disciplines perceived or actual deviation from their prescribed role. At the individual level, misogyny operates through "down girl moves"¹⁸ that serve a punitive, deterrent, or warning function to signal to or put women in their place when men, or other women, perceive their behaviour to be violating the norm (Manne, 2017: 68). These moves include infantilizing, belittling, ridiculing, humiliating, mocking, slurring, vilifying, demonizing, shunning, silencing, blaming, applying double standards, and physical violence (Manne, 2017: 68). Manne (2017) observes that men most often employ these moves when they feel "threatened, cornered, thwarted, put down, let down, dressed down, wounded, defeated, bested, corrected, surpassed, usurped, displaced, disappointed, humiliated, chastened, undermined, or ousted" (76). Shaped by intersecting identities, these "disciplinary measures", as I term them in relation to The Agreement, serve as its enforcement arm when non-Jews or other Jews employ them in moral experiences.

3.3. Chapter Summary

My theoretical framework, The Gentleman's Agreement, can be summarized as the asymmetric moral contract that governs the relations between Jews and non-Jews. Whereas the term "gentleman's agreement" refers to non-Jews' "polite" exclusion of Jews, The Gentleman's Agreement examines their "polite" inclusion within the community of the good (Hirsh, 2017: 37), contingent upon their adherence to their prescribed role. Goffman's (1963) stigma theory underpins The Agreement in that Jewish

¹⁸ Manne (2017: 30) uses the term "down girl moves" to convey how these mechanisms down-rank girls and women who are perceived as deviating from their prescribed role, in addition to how they can gently or authoritatively command girls and women to obey them.

identity renders one discreditable and that it can become discrediting dependent on the non-Jewish standpoint. Rooted in Jewish Difference, the non-Jewish standpoint idealizes and stigmatizes certain forms of Jewish expression. When non-Jews perceive Jews' behaviour as deviating from their prescribed role – a role shaped by the competing social scripts associated with their intersecting identities – non-Jews, and to a lesser extent, other Jews, employ disciplinary measures that deter, warn, or punish such departure, thereby distinguishing between the tolerated and the spoiled. Over the course of their moral career, Jews learn that their identity renders them discreditable, and in certain cases, discredited, and the illusory nature of phantom acceptance and phantom normalcy. Consequently, Jews employ information or tension management strategies to avoid or mitigate this stigmatization. Jews further oscillate between acceptance and rejection of The Agreement dependent on their identity ambivalence and concerns with the purification of their in-group, and their strengthened self- and group-identification and agency.

The Gentleman's Agreement provides a general framework to understand Jewish faculty members' experiences in Canadian academia. Findings from the data will make apparent the specific expectations, disciplinary measures, and negotiation of The Agreement in physical, social, academic, and online settings.

4. Research Design and Methodology

My research consists of a secondary data analysis of the interviews I assisted in collecting for the larger research project, “Faculty Experiences of Antisemitism Research” (FEAR), led by Drs. Cary Kogan at the University of Ottawa and Deidre Butler at Carleton University. As a Research Assistant (RA) on the FEAR project, I participated in the recruitment and interviewing of Jewish and non-Jewish faculty members and aided in cleaning of the transcripts. However, I am not responsible for the inception of this project, nor did the research team conduct the interviews for the purpose of my MA thesis.

The following sections detail the processes for the data collection for the FEAR project and the Research Ethics Board (REB) approval. I subsequently outline my study’s central research questions that guided the secondary data analysis and its strengths and limitations. I conclude this chapter with an overview of the presentation of the data and my positionality as a researcher.

4.1. Data Collection

I took part in the interview data collection from October 2024 to February 2026, yielding a total of 66 interviews with Jewish and non-Jewish faculty members across Canadian campuses. We primarily recruited participants through snowball sampling, a technique well-suited for reaching a guarded demographic (Parker et al., 2019; Patton, 2002). First, we invited professional contacts to participate in the study. After the interview, we requested that they forward the study’s flyer and consent form with our contact information to other faculty members in Canada they believed would be open to participation. Interested faculty members contacted us to set up their interviews, and we

repeated the process of requesting they forward information about the study to other potential participants. We closely monitored the sociodemographic information of participants and adjusted our recruitment methods accordingly to maximize diverse representation. Specifically, we contacted synagogues, Jewish campus groups (i.e., Hillel and Chabad), and Jewish faculty organizations (i.e., Jewish Faculty Network, the Jewish Medical Association of Ontario, etc.) to request that they circulate information about the study to their members.

Pilot interviews took place with professional contacts to assess the flow of the questionnaire and to train the RAs that included an undergraduate student, a doctoral student, and myself. To ensure best qualitative practices for a multidisciplinary research team, such as rigour, reliability of the data, and fostering and maintaining participant trust (Goodell et al., 2016), Butler conducted three interviews in their entirety while we took notes and familiarized ourselves with the process. Butler then supervised us conducting interviews in pairs. Depending on availability, various combinations of the RAs and Butler conducted the subsequent interviews, which always had a minimum of two interviewers.

The in-depth semi-structured interviews lasted between 1.5 to 3.5 hours and took place over the video-conferencing technology platform, Zoom. In the few instances that we did not complete the entire questionnaire in one interview due to time constraints, we scheduled a second interview. The questionnaire prompted participants on a wide range of topics, including how their upbringing shaped their understanding of their own ethnoreligious identity and their social environment. The questionnaire subsequently asked participants about their experiences on Canadian campuses primarily since October 7, 2023, in physical, academic, social, and online settings, and the consequent impacts on their academic freedom and well-being.

The use of Zoom proved advantageous in its cost effectiveness (i.e., unnecessary of renting a research space or audio recording devices, or travel to the research location), maintaining of physical distance (i.e., participants and researcher may feel safer from their chosen location and can connect with people geographically distant), and ease of transcription (i.e., automated transcription services) (Camilleri & Camilleri, 2022). In-depth interviews allow researchers to gain access to information that may otherwise be unavailable due to an absence of formal documentation or suppression (Tracy, 2012). Accordingly, the confidential nature of these in-depth interviews with participants afforded them the space and comfort to speak freely on their experiences with antisemitism on campus. The semi-structured nature of the interviews, moreover, provided the flexibility for deviation from the script when appropriate (Tracy, 2012). It additionally allowed the researchers to take the position of a listener and observer, much like responsive interviewing in which the researcher ensures accurate representation of participants' narratives that can lead to beneficial outcomes from the research (e.g., policy changes or increased public awareness) (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, as cited in Tracy 2012).

4.2. Ethics Approval

Prior to commencing research interviews in October 2024, I was added and approved as an RA under the FEAR project's original REB applications at the University of Ottawa and at Carleton University. I conducted and cleaned the interviews as a paid RA for the FEAR project until late December 2025. I continued to conduct interviews for the FEAR project from January to early February 2026. In July 2025, with the permission of Butler and Kogan, I decided to use these interview data towards my MA thesis, which I subsequently began at the University of Ottawa in September 2025. After I successful

defended my thesis proposal in late January 2026, I submitted my application to the University of Ottawa's REB in early February for secondary analysis of the FEAR data. I obtained REB approval (S-02-26-12569) in late February, obtained copies of the cleaned transcripts, and began data analysis shortly thereafter.

4.3. Data Analysis and Research Questions

Data analysis for my MA thesis took place from the first week of March to the first week of May. I met with Dr. López weekly to discuss the progression of the coding and to troubleshoot any issues I incurred in coding the data. I adopted Thompson's (2022) abductive approach to explore the explanatory power of my theoretical framework to answer my two research questions:

1. How do Jewish faculty members come to know and experience Zionism as a spoiled identity?
2. How do Jewish faculty members negotiate their stigmatized identities?

As Thompson (2022) details, the abductive approach to data analysis bridges the inductive and deductive approaches in its emphasis on a "parallel and equal engagement with empirical data and extant theoretical understanding" (1411). He explains that his approach utilizes theoretical understanding to guide the initial exploration but allows and encourages theoretical development to improve understanding of the phenomenon in question. The first step involves familiarization with the data (Thompson, 2022: 1412). I conducted most of the interviews as first or second chair and cleaned more than half of the automatically transcribed interviews. To re-familiarize myself with the data at the time of analysis, before coding, I actively read through each transcript and made a note in the participant master list document I created of possible codes. For the second step, coding (Thompson, 2022: 1413), rather than starting in chronological order of

interviews, I elected to first code the transcripts of five participants who represented variation in their academic discipline, gender, province, and experiences on campus. After uploading the cleaned transcript to NVivo, a software commonly used for large quantities of qualitative research (Thompson, 2022: 1413), I went through the transcript line-by-line and created descriptive codes that I later aggregated into broader themes to create a codebook (Thompson, 2022: 1413). Figure 1 provides an example.

Figure 1

Codebook Extract: Theme: Information Management Strategies

Parent Code: Selective disclosure of stigma in classroom or clinical settings among students Child Code: Carefully disclosing Jewish identity in the classroom or clinical setting in a way that minimizes tension
Definition: Selective disclosure of stigma is a form of information management employed by the discreditable, i.e., those whose stigma can be concealed. Like covering, a form of tension management employed by the discredited, i.e., those who cannot conceal their stigma, the goal is to minimize the obtrusiveness of their stigma (Goffman, 1963: 103).
When to use: Apply this code to participants whose Jewish identity can be concealed (i.e., the discreditable) and when they mention how they disclose their Jewish identity in the classroom to reduce anticipated backlash or tension.
When not to use: Do not apply this code to participants whose Jewish identity cannot be concealed (i.e., the discredited). When the discredited participants mention their careful disclosure of their identity in the classroom, apply the code related to tension management strategies: covering.
Example: Jacqueline: “I tend to bake cookies for my team, and I’m working on the ward with the same team for two weeks. When I bring the cookies on the first day, I say, ‘Are there any allergies or any kind of food restrictions?’, and then I’ll say, ‘If anyone cares, these cookies are kosher. There’s no dairy, but there is almond milk. So, that’s a nut allergy risk. I can make vegan ones if you want.’ I kind of frame it as part of all of those things, and then it’s kind of just one piece, as opposed to <i>the</i> piece.”

My working theoretical framework that draws on Goffman’s (1963) stigma theory guided the initial round of coding the interviews. The refined codes and themes through repeated rounds of coding provided specificity to how The Agreement operates in Canadian academia and how discreditable and discredited Jewish faculty members

navigated it. Where the data did not fit neatly into The Agreement, a framework instantiated from Goffman's broader stigma theory, I modified it and consulted extant theories to supplement it (Thompson, 2022: 1415-1416), as outlined in the discussion chapter. The codebook additionally provided information into the frequency of the code and to which participants it applied. I mention and situate these findings in the results chapters and analyze them further in the discussion chapter.

I initially set out to code all 66 interviews with Jewish and non-Jewish faculty members. After I coded the first five interviews, I began coding the data in chronological order. However, due to time constraints, I realized I could not code all 66 interviews for my MA thesis. I aimed to construct a representative sub-sample of 40 participants and consequently sought to include participants from a variety of academic disciplines, genders, professional ranks, provinces, and who had different experiences on campus. The details of the 40 participants chosen for my sub-sample can be found in Table 1.

Table 1
Sub-sample of 40 Jewish Faculty Members from FEAR

	Pseudonym	Gender*	Region**	Discipline***	Professional Rank
1	Rebecca	Woman	Central Canada	Social Sciences	Associate
2	Deborah	Woman	Central Canada	Social Sciences	Emerita
3	Romi	Woman	West Coast	Social Sciences	Assistant
4	Gideon	Man	Central Canada	Social Sciences	Full
5	Daniella	Woman	Central Canada	Humanities	Associate
6	Asher	Man	West Coast	Social Sciences	Assistant
7	Anna	Woman	Central Canada	Humanities	Full
8	Aviva	Woman	Central Canada	Social Sciences	Full
9	Eden	Woman	Central Canada	Social Sciences	Adjunct
10	Amira	Woman	Central Canada	Humanities	Associate
11	Danya	Woman	Central Canada	Humanities	Associate
12	Caleb	Man	Central Canada	STEM	Full
13	Einat	Woman	Central Canada	Humanities	Full
14	Jared	Man	Central Canada	STEM	Full
15	Delilah	Woman	Central Canada	STEM	Associate

16	Ivan	Man	Central Canada	STEM	Associate
17	Eva	Woman	Central Canada	Social Sciences	Full
18	Jacqueline	Woman	Central Canada	Medicine	Associate
19	Kayla	Woman	Central Canada	Humanities	Associate
20	Shaina	Woman	Prairie Province	Medicine	Full
21	Simone	Woman	West Coast	Medicine	Associate
22	Saul	Man	West Coast	Medicine	Clinical Instructor
23	Leonard	Man	Prairie Province	Humanities	Full
24	Susan	Woman	West Coast	Humanities	Associate
25	Samson	Man	West Coast	Humanities	Full
26	Ellie	Woman	Prairie Province	Humanities	Adjunct
27	Arik	Man	Central Canada	Social Sciences	Full
28	Luke	Other	Prairie Province	Humanities	Associate
29	Heather	Woman	Central Canada	Social Sciences	Full
30	Hillary	Woman	Central Canada	Law	Associate
31	Oscar	Other	Prairie Province	Social Sciences	Assistant
32	Walter	Man	Central Canada	Humanities	Associate
33	Seth	Man	Prairie Province	Social Sciences	Full
34	Craig	Man	Prairie Province	Humanities	Assistant
35	Justin	Man	Central Canada	Law	Full
36	Philip	Man	Atlantic Province	Social Sciences	Associate
37	Scott	Man	Atlantic Province	STEM	Full
38	Dalia	Woman	Atlantic Province	Social Sciences	Associate
39	Levi	Man	Atlantic Province	Medicine	Assistant
40	Jack	Man	Atlantic Province	Humanities	Full

Note.

*Luke and Oscar declined to identify with a specific gender but acknowledged that they presented as men. Accordingly, I use male pronouns when citing them in the results and discussion chapters.

**Central Canada = Ontario and Quebec; West Coast = British Columbia; Prairie Province = Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba; Atlantic Province = Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia. We did not interview participants in Newfoundland and Labrador nor New Brunswick.

***Social Sciences = Sociology, Psychology, Social Work, Political Science, Criminology, Public Health, and Philosophy; Humanities = History, Languages, Communication, and Religion, including Jewish Studies; STEM = Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.

4.4. Strengths and Limitations

The study's research design, sampling methods, and practical constraints constituted the three limitations of my study. As I mentioned, I conducted a secondary analysis of the interview data that I assisted in collecting for the larger project, FEAR.

Access to a large amount and high quality of data afforded me the opportunity to examine

more variables than would be feasible in a smaller dataset (Wickham, 2019). The varied academic backgrounds of the team members, including myself as the only sociologist, allowed for multidisciplinary analyses of the data. Conversely, the limitations of the secondary data analysis centred around the fact that I was not responsible for the inception of the project and had limited influence over the content of the questionnaire (Wickham, 2019). However, my significant involvement in the recruitment and data collection mitigated these limitations (Wickham, 2019).

Sixty-six interviews total, and a sub-sample of 40 for my thesis, is a significant amount of data for qualitative research (Morse, 2000). To reduce the risk of homogeneity in the sample and participants' experiences (Morgan, 2008), the research team made a concerted effort to recruit a diverse sample of faculty members with respect to their gender, ethnoreligious identity, academic discipline, region, professional rank, and experiences with antisemitism. We contacted self-described "anti-Zionist" academic organizations, including the Jewish Faculty Network and the Independent Jewish Voices chapter in New Brunswick, to include these members' perspectives in our study. However, they did not respond to our emails. In less densely populated regions with small Jewish communities (i.e., New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Northwest Territories), we reached out to synagogues and Jewish communal organizations to request that they circulate our flyer. Most did not respond, or they agreed to circulate our flyer, but no faculty members contacted us. Therefore, the snowball sampling method had limited success in reaching certain demographics, namely, self-described anti-Zionist Jewish faculty members, Jewish faculty members unaffiliated with Jewish communal institutions, and Jewish faculty members in certain regions.

Time constraints further shaped the selection and analysis of the sub-sample of 40 Jewish faculty members. As discussed in the previous section, although I initially intended to code all 66 interviews with Jewish and non-Jewish faculty members, my project's timeline precluded this. Accordingly, I sought to construct a sub-sample that was as representative as possible of the larger sample.

4.5. Presentation of the Data

I organize the interview data from the sub-sample of 40 Jewish faculty members into four chapters. Goffman's (1963) stigma theory, which forms the basis for *The Gentleman's Agreement*, provides a germane but non-essentializing structure to understand the progression of Jewish faculty members' moral career. Accordingly, I make mention of his work throughout these four chapters that present the findings in a descriptive and linear, rather than analytical, manner. In the discussion chapter, I return to the works of other scholars cited in my working theoretical framework, as outlined in Chapter 3, to make sense of the findings. I additionally draw on additional scholars' work to supplement my theoretical framework in the discussion chapter.

To preserve participants' anonymity, especially given multiple researchers' usage of the FEAR interview data across different disciplines, I use the pre-approved descriptors of the FEAR project, i.e., the same generalized academic disciplines and regions. At times, I take additional precautions in this thesis to anonymize participants' identity due to the specificity of their story. For example, rather than using their pseudonym, I preface the story only with "a participant in central Canada". In a small number of cases, I omit certain stories because the combination of contextual details and information in the public domain increased the risk of deductive identification to an unacceptable level.

4.6. Positionality

In line with the protocols of qualitative research practices and disclosure of positionality, I turn to a discussion of how my identity and lived experiences have shaped my worldview and how they informed my role as a researcher in this study (Goundar, 2025). Specifically, I situate my positionality within the insider/outsider lens and the relations of power as a researcher, and I detail how I strove for reliable and rigorous data collection (Goundar, 2025).

I belong to the same ethnoreligious community as most participants in that I identify as a Jew. Like the participants, I also experienced some form of antisemitism within Canadian academia from students, faculty members, and administrators that compelled me to partake (as a researcher) in the study. To that end, my insider position and lived experiences afforded me a degree of trust and rapport with participants that an outsider may have struggled to achieve (Goundar, 2025). Namely, when introducing myself to the participants at the beginning of the interview, I began with a brief explanation of my academic credentials and why I joined this study as an RA. I detailed that I was a Jewish MA student in Sociology and interested in understanding the lived experiences and unique perspectives of Jewish or non-Jewish faculty members who held various roles as lecturers, mentors, researchers, and, at times, administrators. In turn, this introduction fostered a sense of emotional safety and trust that allowed for participants to share their stories with the assurance that they would be taken seriously (Miller, 2017).

Professionally, however, my status as an MA student made me an outsider in conversation with faculty members who confirmed this status with passing comments. Some participants who conducted qualitative research remarked on my interviewing style as a graduate student. One participant who experienced relentless harassment and discrimination at his

university requested to reschedule the interview to ensure Butler, a Jewish faculty member and a seasoned interviewer intimately familiar with the topic, conducted it. Notably, several participants expressed concern that their stories would dissuade me from pursuing a career in academia. Admittedly, these concerns were not unfounded; hearing about the severity of antisemitism, as detailed by several participants, and the repeated exposure to their stories through transcribing, analyzing, and writing up the findings resulted in profound distress. Other scholars who conducted qualitative research on difficult material reported similar challenges in managing their own well-being and maintaining boundaries between themselves and participants (e.g., Carroll, 2013; Dickson-Swift et al., 2007; Engelsrud, 2005; McClelland, 2017).

To mediate the methodological challenges that arose from my emotional proximity to the topic as a Jewish student on a Canadian campus and the relations of power between myself and participants, I employed several strategies during the data collection and analysis. During the interviews, I actively and attentively listened to participants, including confirming with participants that I accurately understood what they expressed (McGrath et al., 2019). I additionally emphasized that the purpose of the interview was to understand participants' unique perspectives and I encouraged open dialogue should they take issue with the framing of the questions or anything else, thus granting them control and autonomy as participants (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Furthermore, to the best of my abilities, I tried to keep the role between researcher, i.e., documenting participant experiences, and helper, i.e., offering advice or suggestions, distinct (Garrels et al., 2022). Several participants shared that they had not, and could not, discuss their experiences with anyone beyond their immediate family or some friends,

and that the interview provided therapeutic benefits (Alexander et al., 2018). In turn, I listened to their stories with compassion and sympathy.

My disclosure of my positionality situates my interpretation of the research and illuminates how my identity as a Jew, a graduate student, and as a researcher created and shaped the methodological challenges in collecting and analyzing the data. Although my proximity to the data and the participants undoubtedly coloured my interactions with it and the participants, I have sought to be transparent about the process. The following four sections detail the findings from the data.

5. Results Chapter I. Zionism as a Spoiled Identity

The following four chapters draw on 40 in-depth interviews with Jewish faculty members conducted between October 2024 to February 2026, and across a variety of academic disciplines, campuses, geographic regions, and professional ranks. Findings from these interviews suggest that in the context of ostensibly antiracist and progressive Canadian campuses, being Jewish constituted a discreditable identity that did not always translate to a fully discredited or spoiled identity. Identification with or support for Israel and Zionism, however, rendered Jewish identity vulnerable to stigmatization. The Gentleman's Agreement, as it materialized in the Canadian academic context, therefore prescribed the abandonment of Zionism and attachment to Israel. Crucially, as the first and second results chapters show, most Jewish faculty members could not, would not, and did not adhere to this prescribed role. Accordingly, to avoid being discredited and to receive conditional inclusion, or to mitigate stigmatization, Jewish faculty members had to continually employ information or tension management strategies.

The organization of the four results chapters presents the findings in a linear manner that illustrate the materialization and navigation of The Gentleman's Agreement in Canadian academia. The first two results chapters address the first research question of how Jewish faculty members come to understand and later experience Zionism as a spoiled identity. The third and fourth results chapters address the second research question of how Jewish faculty members negotiate their stigmatized identities.

The first results chapter begins with Jewish faculty members' understanding of Zionism in relation to their actual social (Jewish) identity. It then outlines how they come to learn non-Jews' perception of their Jewish identity and how this socialization shapes their understanding of the contemporary campus climate. The second results chapter

describes how this process unfolded on campus and in related academic, social, and online contexts, and how micro-, meso-, and macro-level variables shaped it. The chapter subsequently details Jewish faculty members' consequent understanding of the (un)acceptability of their Jewish identity in Canadian academia. The third results chapter discusses how these variables and understandings informed Jewish faculty members' strategies for avoiding being discredited or minimizing the stigmatization in these contexts. The fourth and final results chapter addresses Jewish faculty members' oscillation between experiencing self- and group-alienation and concern with in-group purification and experiencing strengthened self- and group-identification.

5.1. Zionism and Israel in Relation to Faculty Members' Jewish Identity

When asked about how they defined and if they identified with Zionism, thirty-seven out of the 40 Jewish faculty members interviewed self-identified as Zionists; and, per their own definition, felt a positive attachment to Israel and supported the existence of Israel as a Jewish State. Of the three Jewish faculty members who did not identify as Zionist, two still felt a positive attachment to Israel and supported the existence of Israel as a Jewish state. Eden, an adjunct professor in social sciences, shared:

I don't consider myself a Zionist, but I believe that the Jewish people have the right to have a Jewish country or state, and they have the right to defend that state just like any other country. And I guess that's a kind of a definition of Zionism. But it's just, if somebody says, "[Eden], are you a Zionist?", I would say, "No, I don't think I am."

Eden elaborated that she "[doesn't] like labels" and that to identify as a Zionist, akin to classifying discrimination against Jews as antisemitism rather than as racism – a comment she makes elsewhere in her interview – separates and seemingly elevates Jewish self-determination from that of other nations.

Luke, an associate professor in humanities who teaches Jewish Studies courses, and a Jewish convert, explained that while he did not consider Zionism to be part of his Jewish identity, he still felt “an attachment to Eretz Yisrael”, and that when he spent time there, “it [was] very moving on the spiritual level.” Luke also mentioned that, while he did not personally identify as a Zionist, he still defended Israel’s right to exist because of its practicality to Jews’ safety:

I’m very aware that Jewish existence is probably, on balance, safer and more secure with there being a state of Israel than not. Were it not for the state of Israel, then the Jews today would be like the Romanis, like the Gypsies – a stateless people. And that’s not a good place to be. That has not historically been a good place for Jews to be.

Oscar, an assistant professor in social sciences, constituted the exception in the sub-sample of 40 Jewish faculty members in his total ambivalence towards Zionism and Israel. He expressed that “if Israel was the socialist utopia that it was supposed to be in 1948”, he would likely be more supportive of it. However, he noted, that, as of now, he has “zero relationship” to Israel or Zionism as the former does not “represent [his] values” and that he does not consider Israel to be “any homeland of [his].” Oscar further articulated his objection to framing Israel as the Jews’ homeland:

We have the ancient texts, which tell us Israel is the place of the Jews. But Jews were exiled from Israel, and the understanding of a Jewish state of Israel, as it existed in the Torah...has not existed for thousands of years. And the current state of Israel is anachronistic. It’s an attempt to create something in a text that we could not possibly recreate. Even if we accept that there’s a literal truth, it would be impossible in the 20th and 21st century to recreate this thing from thousands of years ago. In the meantime,

Jews spent thousands of years living in incredible hardship, as tolerated guests, and often untolerated [*sic*] guests, of other nations. And I think that's the really defining element of the Jewish experience. And it's like a rejection of that being the defining experience if you say Israel is the homeland, in my opinion. I see Jews as more similar to Bedouins or Romanis than I do towards people with a definitive single homeland.

Oscar also did not consider Israel to be a refuge for Jews:

Basically, 45 percent of Jews in the world live in the States, and another 45 percent of them live in Israel. I don't think Israel is the safeguard people think it is. Ironically, for as little value as I give the United States, I think that's the place that essentially became the new center of global Jewish life after the Holocaust. And I have no reason to think that Israel would be a better place for Jews than the States.

Oscar thus opted to self-identify as "Zionism agnostic", in that he was "ready to be convinced that we need a state [or] ready to be convinced we don't."

The remaining 37 participants, despite many who felt discomfort, concern, or dismay with the actions of the current or past Israeli governments in their treatment of Palestinians or Mizrahi Jews,¹⁹ or war strategies, still self-identified as Zionist.²⁰ They identified Zionism as central to their Jewish identity for several reasons, including religious:

I mean, everything, every prayer that we've said for thousands of years contains something about something we're supposed to do in the land of Israel, something we can

¹⁹ Jews who lived in Babylon (modern day Iraq), Persia (modern day Iran), and the Arabian Peninsula (modern day Saudi Arabia and Yemen), among other regions in North Africa and Asia. After the founding of Israel, nearly a million Mizrahi Jews primarily fled to Israel due to intensified persecution in their Muslim majority countries.

²⁰ I return to this finding in the discussion chapter and its implications for the existence and operation of The Agreement.

no longer do, something we miss...I mean, not every prayer, but a good chunk of them.

(Hillary, associate professor in law)

Theological:

And when we think of the amazing contributions that that little state, little Israel, has contributed to the world, and that the Jewish people, that we constitute such a microscopic blip of the global population, it's staggering, and it's not by chance. It is for my faith part of Judaism...that I can't think of anything else other than there is a divine component to this, where we have this amazing people, and this amazing land, and the connection between the two, and the diaspora with the land also. So, Zionism, I think, is a very important part of my belief system. (Seth, full professor in social sciences and a Jewish convert)

Spiritual:

I would say the aspect of Jews longing for autonomy and to live in a particular geographic space has been in Jewish history, in Jewish sources, for the longest time, really since the destruction of the Temple,²¹ and especially after the Bar Kokhba Revolt in the second century²²...Zionism is sort of the modern political manifestation of that, that sort of integrates these longstanding aspirations...It's part of a continuity. There's always

²¹ The first Temple in Jerusalem, built by King Solomon, was destroyed in 586 BCE by the neo-Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar II. The second Temple, rebuilt by the Jews allowed to return to Jerusalem by King Cyrus of Persia, was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE. More information can be found here:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Temple-of-Jerusalem>

²² The Bar Kokhba Revolt, led by Shimon Bar-Kokhba, took place from 132 to 135 CE and involved Jews seizing and fortifying towns in Judea. The Revolt was precipitated by the Roman Emperor, Hadrian, and his decision to build a temple to Jupiter in place of the Jewish Holy Temple. In 135 CE, Hadrian's army defeated the Jewish rebels in the battle of Bethar. Hadrian consequently expelled Jews from Jerusalem and changed the country's name from Judea to Syria Palestina. More information can be found here:

<https://jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/revolt1.html>

been this sort of Jewish yearning to return to a certain portion of land. It's hard to find an epoch or a location in which that didn't exist. (Samson, full professor in humanities)

Historical:

I don't think you can separate the way most of us understand Judaism without talking about Israel because it's so part of our history. So, any effort that I've heard to sort of separate the two, "I like the Jews, I just don't like Israel.", it's still creating violence because it is denying our history. It's denying Jewish history. Our history is tied up to the land and we know that; we've got the archaeological evidence, we've got the textual evidence, we've even got genetic evidence that we've been in that land for a really long time...Most Jews are tied to Israel. (Aviva, full professor in humanities)

Peoplehood:

It really is the peoplehood notion...The same words are uttered across the globe by our people with the same meaning and with the same intent that makes us one. And that means that what happens to everyone is connected because we have the same purpose. I don't mean it in a higher calling purpose necessarily, although sometimes I kind of feel that...But I was thinking recently that we have in our religion a prayer for captives. What religion has a prayer for captives? None, as far as I know, other than the Jewish religion. And why? Because that's our peoplehood experience, and we've connected it to religious identity because we don't know what else to do when faced with tragedy and the difficulty...The Jewish connection to Israel is not optional in that view that I was raised in, and that I still continue to believe. I don't think it's an accident that everywhere in the world people pray in the direction of Jerusalem. Yes, it's a religion, but it's more than that. It's about a connection to a place, and we are tied to that place, even though we live

in other places and do things in other places. So, I see Zionism as core to my Jewish peoplehood identity and the religious identity. I see them as different, but both connected.

(Jacqueline, associate professor in medicine)

Generational:

I grew up in a house [where] my parents supported Israel. My grandparents supported Israel. So, it was definitely from a young age [that] I grew up knowing that Israel is a place of safety for Jewish people...I don't want to sound crass, but the ultimate sort of insurance plan, a safe haven, a place that you'll always be accepted, no matter how bad things get. (Asher, assistant professor in social sciences)

Pragmatic:

I am a strong supporter of the State of Israel, simply because I know why it's there. The reality is, historically, that it's there, not just because of Adolf Hitler, because this dates to the late 19th century, because of antisemitism being prevalent in Europe, prevalent worldwide. And it is the only safety valve that we have. If things turn in Canada, and we have to run, we can go to Israel. So, I'm a huge supporter of it. To me, Zionism is very important. (Levi, assistant professor in medicine)

Or some combination:

I've always been a Zionist...It's our ancestral homeland. It's the greatest indigenous return story in the history of humans. And yeah, connection to the land is unquestionable. I've been saying, "Next year in Jerusalem."²³ To me, it's just an undeniable connection about people to Israel. And I hear the stories of my grandparents that lived in a pre-Israel

²³ Said at the end of Passover, the eight-day (in the Diaspora and seven days in Israel) Jewish holiday commemorating the Israelites' Exodus from slavery in Egypt, this phrase expresses a longstanding Jewish yearning to return to Jerusalem and the ancestral homeland.

world, and it was terrifying. There was nowhere to go. I never wanted to be a scared Jew. I didn't want to, as much as I worship my grandparents' Holocaust stories, because they really did some amazing things, I never wanted to be the scared Jew hiding, hoping that the local farmers weren't just going to decide to string us up one day...If you live in a world where there's no Israel, then you better hide because you don't have an army to protect you. You don't have a place to go. You're in someone else's land, and eventually, they're going to come get you. And that's always been in my mind. (Saul, clinical instructor in medicine)

Save for Oscar, most Jewish faculty members therefore subscribed to the commonly used definition of Zionism, even if they did not self-identify as Zionist, as in the cases of Luke and Eden. Jewish faculty members, including Jewish converts (e.g., Seth) moreover, articulated the importance of Zionism and Israel to their Jewish identity for religious, theological, spiritual, historical, tribal, generational, and pragmatic reasons. Accordingly, these findings suggest that, within the context of the Canadian academy in which Zionism constituted a spoiled identity, most participants' Jewish identities rendered them vulnerable to stigmatization. The following section outlines how participants first came to understand the boundaries of acceptable Jewish identity, which largely necessitated, for most, the impossible task of severing Zionism.

5.2. Moral Careers of Those with Inborn Stigma and Converts

Jewish faculty members recounted similar learning experiences regarding the (un)acceptability of their Jewish identity and related changes to their self-conceptions. This “moral career” or socialization process, as Goffman (1963: 32) defines it, has two phases: 1) the stigmatized learn and incorporate the standpoint of the normals and form a general understanding of what it would be like to possess a particular stigma; and 2) moral experiences, meaning how

they learn that they possess a particular stigma and the consequences of possessing it. The timing and interplay of these two phases form four distinct patterns with respect to how they understand their environment and their stigma. Three of the four patterns that Goffman (1963) identifies pertain to those with an inborn stigma (i.e., faculty members born Jewish), with the fourth pertinent to those who acquire the stigma later in life (i.e., faculty members who converted to Judaism).

5.2.1. Inborn Stigma Socialization Through Intergenerational Trauma and Academic Expertise

One pattern involves the two phases of the moral career occurring in tandem (Goffman, 1963: 32). Faculty members born Jewish become aware of the consequences of possessing the stigma through moral experiences while still learning the standpoint of the normals. For many participants, this socialization process occurred at a young age. Nearly half noted the impact of intergenerational trauma on their self-conception. Anna, a full professor in humanities, shared:

In a sense, [antisemitism] was always there. I mean, I've always known, as far as I can remember, that my grandmother was Jewish and that she had to hide when the Germans occupied [Western Europe], and only just escaped with her life, and that most of her relatives were killed in concentration camps. And that's the thing that being Jewish has always meant to me: I've always been aware of Jews as people whom everybody loves to hate.

Susan, an associate professor in humanities, reflected on her parents' experiences with antisemitism in Canada,

I always understood myself to be Jewish. My parents grew up in an age with more overt antisemitism...I grew up in this sort of posher, traditionally very Anglo, neighbourhood

that did not accept Jews in it until the early '60s, I think...I knew that when my father had applied for a job at the [hospital in the Canadian city we lived in], he had been told to his face, "Why don't you go be with your people? We're not going to hire you here." And that was in the late '60s...I was always aware of antisemitism.

Saul, who grew up in Oceania and later moved to Canada where he became a specialist physician, explained:

I grew up hearing stories of my mother, who lived in [Oceania] in a very rural sort of environment, being tied to a clothesline and beaten for killing Jesus...I have these stories of knowing very well that [Oceania] is not a safe place to be Jewish unless you're in synagogue with your buddies, in which case it's fine...I mean when my grandparents were Holocaust survivors, they basically said to me, all through my childhood, as a very young child, "The only people that survived were doctors. You have to be worth something to the greatest society, otherwise you won't survive when this happens. And it's going to happen again, probably. You're either a doctor or a garbage man, it'll be treated the same. If you're not valuable to people, you're always going to be under threat." And that stuck with me. That was what came with the breast milk, so they say.

Participants also described formative moments in their childhood where they personally experienced antisemitism. For example, Saul mentioned how

Growing up in [Oceania], it was fine to be Jewish in Jewish places, and not fine to be Jewish in not Jewish places. That was very clear to me. So, I had been beaten up by skinheads in the past. I used to take the train to school, and the Jewish kids would be attacked by the Catholic kids.

Caleb, a full professor in STEM, recounted that one of his high school teachers in the small Canadian town he grew up in would always administer mandatory tests on Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah²⁴ with no opportunities for makeup tests. He explained how these moral experiences shaped his understanding of antisemitism since October 7 relative to colleagues who grew up in predominantly Jewish areas in Canada:

For [my colleagues], the first thing they had to wrap their heads around was antisemitism, whereas for me, there's always been antisemitism, because I grew up in a small town. There's never been a time when I haven't been exposed and I'm very conscious of the antisemitism around me.

Other participants who researched Jewish issues or related topics articulated how their academic background shaped their understanding of their identity in Canadian academia. For example, Craig, an assistant professor in humanities who teaches Jewish Studies courses, described how his teaching and research expertise lent insight into the precarity of Jewish existence:

I think a big part of it is that I teach in all these different areas, [including the Holocaust], and I've been teaching Judaism since I was bar mitzvah'ed. The main focus of my study is late antiquity, so I think that gives me a very long historical perspective to be able to see the ways that this stuff sort of ebbs and flows, right? It's that new narratives emerge, and that if we lived in, or are in, or are not still in, a sort of golden age for Jews in North America. I think I had a better sense that those sorts of things were always contingent.

²⁴ Rosh Hashanah is a two-day (in the Diaspora and one day in Israel) Jewish holiday that marks the New Year in the Hebrew calendar. Yom Kippur, which follows Rosh Hashanah, is considered the holiest day of the year for Jews and involves a 25 hour fast and praying in synagogue for forgiveness. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur take place in the Hebrew calendar month, Tishrei, or September and October in the Gregorian calendar. The Torah commands Jews not to work during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Hillary, an associate professor in law, recalled how a moral experience during her doctoral studies illuminated the consequences to certain expressions of her Jewish identity. She detailed that when the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) decision on the security wall in Israel came out, her supervisor assumed she opposed this decision because of her Jewish identity, rather than on a legal basis. She elected not to publicly express her opposition to the ICJ decision because she felt "it was clear that [she] was going to be identified as being pro-Israel simply because [she] was Jewish." Hillary explained the long-term impact this moral experience had on her decisions as an academic:

From an international law perspective, or within the international law community, [Israel] is just a third rail. I felt, as I was building my career, that this would absolutely be a third rail. And if I touched it, whatever I said, I was either going to be the Jew writing something pro-Israel, or I was going to be the good Jew who was writing something anti-Israel and would probably get lauded for it. There was no squaring those pieces of my identity, which were going to come out into that conversation with taking public positions.

Participants whose moral careers followed this pattern tended to report feeling less surprised about the severity of antisemitism post-October 7, 2023, than others with inborn stigma described in the next two sections.

5.2.2. Inborn Stigma Socialization Through a Safety Bubble

A second pattern Goffman (1963: 32-34) outlines for the stigmatized person's moral career involves the stigmatized person growing up in a relatively insulated environment where they face minimal discrimination. Most Jewish faculty members' moral careers followed this pattern, where they grew up in Canada or the US during the 1980s and '90s in Jewish

communities and experienced little antisemitism. Samson, a full professor in humanities, stated that although he grew up around Holocaust survivors, “There was also a sense, growing up in the ‘90s, that things are a thousand percent better now – and they were – and that the Holocaust was in the past.” Danya, an associate professor in humanities, shared that antisemitism used to exist primarily on the margins on Canadian campuses:

I’ve been in universities for more than half my life, and [antisemitism has] always been there, but it’s always been on the margins. Now, it’s central to everything, every day.

There isn’t a day that I don’t have to think about antisemitism.

Participants whose moral career followed this second pattern commonly alluded to this shift that represented a major inflection point in their understanding of their self-conception and their social environment. Jewish faculty members overwhelmingly identified the October 7 massacre and subsequent moral experiences as this inflection point that left them disoriented to their new reality. In the online sphere, Aviva, a full professor in humanities, recounted the reaction from professional acquaintances on social media to October 7:

That’s where I saw explicit like, “Israel had it coming.” At least a few people I had to block because they were putting up really offensive images of like, “This is good news.”

And I was just like, oh, suddenly the lines are being drawn in ways that I didn’t expect, and I didn’t realize that that was happening. Now that I’m reading more and thinking more, I see other people already saw this coming...My eyes were opened on October 2023 that the progressives that I saw as allies are actually not allies to the Jews...I guess I was a little bit sheltered from that just living in [Central Canada with] lots of Jews around; I didn’t see it as a day-to-day problem. And now, I can see how this could go badly.

In the physical and academic contexts, Scott, a full professor in STEM, articulated two formative moments:

I think one was after a few weeks, when the encampments were left on campus, in spite of the fact of how the campus began to look like an inner city with graffiti, and all sorts of stuff, and how it was tolerated by my own university. And I'm sure it would not have been tolerated had Jews encamped there and done the same things...I think the union meeting, where the votes were taking place, just to realize how colleagues who I thought were intellectuals who were not only not interested in talking about [opposition to the proposed BDS motions], they were interested in a witch hunt. How can that be my colleagues? How could the people that I've associated with for 30 years have that as their underbelly?

Samson, who faced relentless harassment and discrimination from students, colleagues, and administrators because of his research in Israel, summarized how his moral experiences impacted him:

I think what's changed and become eye-opening is my worst fears about how embedded this is in academia have sort of come to fruition...The idea that Israel shouldn't exist at all. It's not about the conflict. It's not about the current war. It is about people who believe that they can rewind the clock to before 1948 and say that Israel has no right to exist at all. And that's become much more clear to me, that there are people, especially in academia, that just see the entire state as totally illegitimate, and if they just push hard enough on their colleagues, I guess, on me, they will somehow erase the state of Israel, or they will rewind the clock, which is so utterly absurd...I think how alone Zionist Jews are...There is much more deep-seated antisemitism than we had realized.

Participants whose moral career followed this pattern of a more insular upbringing in North America tended to feel a greater sense of shock and disorientation than others who grew up in North America, or, in Saul's case, Oceania, whose moral experiences occurred earlier in life.

5.2.3. Inborn Stigma Socialization Through Alien Communities

The third pattern Goffman (1963: 35-37) describes that pertains to those with an inborn stigma involves initial socialization in an "alien community" inside or outside the geographical boundaries of the non-stigmatized society. The stigmatized person must then adapt to their new surroundings and the social scripts native to this environment. Jewish faculty members who grew up in radically different environments outside of North America constitute compelling cases for the cross-cultural differences in the socialization process of their Jewish identity. For example, Heather, a full professor in social sciences, explained how she learned of the different connotations for the racial identification of Jews as White in Canada compared to her home country:

I grew up during apartheid South Africa, and there was absolutely no doubt whatsoever that Jews were considered White in terms of the legal, political, social structures of that society...And so, when I left there and came to North America, and kind of encountered the sort of Canadian Jews speaking about not being White, I kind of poo-pooed that, because I thought, "Well, that's ludicrous." I think Ashkenazi Jews are received as White in our culture, and I know receive all of those benefits, so I'm not in any shape or form disputing that. But I'm also aware, particularly now, of how constructed that piece is, and there were periods where we were not White, and now, with the inversion of what that means, it's something that...I see how it's also played out in this specific context...[of] what counts as hate and what doesn't count as hate.

An associate professor in social sciences, shared a similar sentiment in her articulation of the reception of her intersecting identities as Jewish and Latina on Canadian campuses:

When I first moved here, it was so hard for me to understand how people categorize each other. I came from [South America], where we're so truly multiracial, multi-ethnic, multicultural, everyone is everything...It's even a silly question to try to categorize, "Well, what race are you?" because people are Black, Indigenous, and White all together, right? And so, coming here and having people being like, "Well, how do you identify?", it was really hard to be like, "Well, I mean, in [South America], I've always been kind of White. That's what I would [identify as] because that's the colour of my skin." But here, the concept of race is very different...But when I first moved here, it was like, "Well, you're White, and there's White supremacy, and so you're a White supremacist." And I was like, well, I'm really uncomfortable with that word, being Jewish, I think that that's complicated...It was really difficult to show a bit more who I was here...But it was just, to me, it was an identity crisis of, oh my gosh, I'm going to have to figure out again who I am after all of these moves. But I didn't necessarily like how I was being categorized as a White supremacist.

Other participants who personally experienced antisemitic persecution in their home countries and who came to Canada expressed their shock and disappointment in experiencing antisemitism here. Einat, a full professor in humanities, who grew up in North Africa and later came to Canada shared:

As an immigrant from [North Africa] and from [Western Europe], I had lots of trauma, dispossession, dislocation, family disruption. All those things were pretty traumatic. And this came again to put me into this same place where I was when I immigrated, which is a

place where it remade the trauma again. It revived the trauma of migration and finding a place, and finally finding a place where I want to be, which is [in Central Canada].

[Antisemitism made it] not as hospitable a place as I would have liked to have.

Ivan, a full professor in STEM, who grew up in the former Soviet Union and later immigrated to Canada, lamented: “I realized that that [antisemitism is] far more pervasive than I thought among my fellow Canadians.” He further reflected:

It’s actually interesting. It’s almost kind of a medieval feeling that came to me, and I recognize it because I remember it from my childhood, the fear of being recognized publicly as a Jew. It was not part of my life for I don’t know 30, 40 years in Canada. But I remember that feeling of absolute necessity of hiding that you’re Jewish within the society at large, because you could be beaten up or discriminated in some way if somebody knew you were Jewish.

Cross-cultural and temporal differences in the conceptualization of Jewish identity and the treatment of Jews resulted in a significant shift in self-conception and understanding of Canada for Heather, the Jewish-Latina professor, Einat, and Ivan. Much like this third pattern, the acquisition of stigma later in life caused a significant shift in self-conception and worldview.

5.2.4. Late Stigma Acquisition and Jewish Converts

The fourth moral career pattern Goffman (1963: 34-35) details involves those without an inborn stigma and who later acquire a stigma. He provides examples of individuals who involuntarily take on a stigmatized identity due to illness or injury that occur later in their lives, and which significantly alter how they and others see themselves. The voluntary stigma acquisition by faculty members who converted to Judaism, by contrast, complexify this moral career pattern. Namely, the five participants

in the sub-sample who converted to Judaism as adults did not primarily conceptualize this conversion as a stigma acquisition. Instead, they spoke with a deep appreciation and affection for Judaism, saying that the conversion felt “natural.”

Moreover, growing up as non-stigmatized, they did not experience antisemitism personally, however, they expressed a general awareness of it. Their conversion catalyzed the second phase of their moral career, in which moral experiences, for four out of five Jewish converts, led to a radical reorganization of their self-conception and their understanding of their environment, as Daniella, a full professor in humanities, recounted:

I think I didn’t appreciate, and I’m speaking as somebody also who, until the last three or four years, hadn’t spent a lot of time thinking about antisemitism, frankly. I mean, I spent some time thinking about it because I know that it exists, and I never would have said it doesn’t exist anymore. But it’s for sure opened my eyes to the way it really sort of hides itself and the ways in which it’s really sneaky and comes from quarters that you might not think that it would come from or expected to come from...And I’m sure a lot of people would say you’re only surprised because you’re new to [being Jewish], relatively speaking.

One participant, Luke, an associate professor in humanities who teaches Jewish Studies courses who converted decades ago and whose kippah²⁵ renders his Jewish identity visible on campus, but who did little public advocacy against antisemitism on campus, constituted the exception. He emphasized throughout the interview that he had “not a hard time being Jewish on campus since October 7”, thereby meaning that he did not experience a radical reorganization of his self-conception or environment.

²⁵ A kippah or yarmulke is a Jewish head covering for men.

Apart from Luke, who did not perceive antisemitism to be widespread at his campus, the other four Jewish converts, like participants who had an insular upbringing or who grew up in an alien community, reported profound shock to October 7 and the global reactions.

The trajectory of Jewish faculty members' initial socialization process shaped the degree to which they felt disoriented after October 7. Participants socialized from a young age expressed a less radical reorganization of their self-conception and understanding of their environment than those whose moral career followed the other three patterns, save for Luke.

5.3. Chapter Summary

This chapter began by reporting on how Jewish faculty members understood their actual (Jewish) social identity and how they conceptualized Zionism and their relationship to it. Save for Oscar, 39 out of the 40 participants considered Zionism integral to their Jewish identity. The second section subsequently provided an overview of the four moral career patterns in which Jewish faculty members learned that their Jewish identity and certain expressions of it rendered them vulnerable to being discredited. It briefly noted how these patterns shaped their self-conception and understanding of their environments within the Canadian academic context. The next results chapter explores in greater detail how Jewish faculty members' moral career unfolded within this context and how it shaped and reinforced their understanding of the boundaries of acceptable Jewish identity.

6. Results Chapter II. Moral Career in Canadian Academia

This chapter examines Jewish faculty members' moral careers in greater detail as it pertained to campus and related settings. The chapter begins with an overview of the types of moral experiences that Jewish faculty members encountered. It then briefly introduces the micro-, meso-, and macro-level variables that determined the frequency and manifestation of these moral experiences, i.e., involving protesters, administrators, colleagues and students in physical, academic, and online settings, around which the sections in this chapter are organized. This chapter concludes with Jewish faculty members' reflections on how these moral experiences impacted their self-conceptions and their understandings of their environments.

6.1. Moral Experiences

Goffman (1963: 33-34) describes two predominant forms of moral experiences: incidental disclosure and systematic exposure. The former refers to instances in which the normals *disclose* their true feelings of intolerance towards the stigmatized person and their in-group. The latter, by comparison, refers to instances in which the stigmatized person *exposes* the normals' true feelings of intolerance. As Goffman (1963: 34) notes, instances of systematic exposure most often occur when the normals perceive the stigmatized persons' behaviour to be in violation of their prescribed role of subordination.

Jewish faculty members described instances of both incidental disclosure and systematic exposure on campus from campus protesters, administrators, colleagues, and students, and in various settings. The time, geographical region, academic discipline, and professional rank, as well as a participant's (in)visibility as a Jew and their intersecting identities, shaped the frequency and manifestation of these moral experiences.

6.1.1. Moral Experiences on Campus

Geographical location, campus population demographics and corresponding level of Israel-Palestine activism, and the response from university leadership shaped the frequency and manifestation of participants' moral experiences. Analysis of the transcripts revealed that commuter campuses and campuses in more rural settings had less antisemitic activity and Israel-Palestine activism. These campuses mostly did not have encampments, and had fewer instances of antisemitic graffiti, vandalism, and signage. Some participants ascribed this to fewer international students from the Middle East attending these campuses. Others speculated that the lower-income students attending these campuses were less inclined to engage in activism not related to their immediate identity. Participants at these universities reported fewer instances of moral experiences on campus than bigger universities with larger Jewish populations and higher rates of antisemitic activism. Of note, however, these participants were either more ambivalent towards Zionism and Israel, or they intentionally minimized or concealed their Jewish identity on campus.

Participants on urban campuses with larger populations with more affluent undergraduate student tended to report higher rates of antisemitic activities. Cases of incidental disclosure commonly took the form of student unions or campus groups releasing statements that either omitted mention of October 7 in their condemnation of the war, which many framed as a "genocide", or they justified the massacre as "resistance". Others reported examples of incidental disclosure on campus that included defaced hostage protesters, swastikas, and signage that promoted BDS, denigrated Zionism (i.e., by equating it to racism, imperialism, and the like), or called for violence

against Jews and Israel (i.e., “intifada revolution”, “globalize the intifada”, or “free Palestine from the river to the sea”). Participants also recalled rallies wherein protesters voiced similar slogans and sentiments through chants, and signs. More than 25 percent of the sub-sample’s 40 participants stated that protesters on their campus graffitied university buildings with similar messages. For example, one participant said “annihilate Israel” was spray-painted on a university building on his campus in the Atlantic provinces. Another in central Canada said that protesters plastered over the names of Jewish donors on certain campus buildings with the names of Gazan cities. A minority of participants mentioned that, in addition to graffiti, protesters smashed windows of their university buildings. Participants across the country reported that protesters stormed and occupied buildings on their campus to demand their universities implement BDS.

The widespread erection of encampments on Canadian campuses in the summer of 2024 represents further examples of incidental disclosure. Participants largely avoided the encampments, which commonly had signage that included the red triangle Hamas used to mark their targets in videos, a keffiyeh-clad silhouette hurling a Molotov cocktail, slogans calling for “intifada” or “Free Palestine from the river to the sea”, and “No Zionists allowed”.

A few participants explained that their university’s encampment constituted an example of systematic exposure that targeted them directly because of their known discredited identity or their disclosure of it. Samson, a full professor in humanities in the West Coast whose research in Israel rendered his identity discredited, described how the encampment at his university had a sign that explicitly called for the cancellation of his research. A STEM professor in central Canada, not visibly Jewish by name, appearance, nor academic discipline, detailed how his “attempts to enter the encampment were actually prevented” because he identified “not just as Jewish” but “as a Zionist.”

Participants listed other instances of systematic exposure on campus, including protesters vandalizing their campus offices and heckling and interrupting vigils for the October 7 victims on campus or speaker events related to Israel. One Arab-Jewish participant shared that about a month after October 7, 2023, a mob of protesters swarmed Jewish students tabling on campus. One of her students texted her asking for help, and when she went to help her student escape the situation, she recalled:

One guy with a keffiyeh was just literally frothing at the mouth, screaming about babies, and killing babies, and my student was crying. I came in the other entrance, and I tried to sort of console her, and the guy with the keffiyeh yelled at us, “Go back to Poland!”, which is really awful, because I don’t look Polish, and [my student is] [North African].

Ten participants, or a quarter of the sub-sample, furthermore, expressed their reluctance to label these moral experiences antisemitic. Participants often classified student protesters as generally well-meaning, but ignorant of the history of the conflict and the meaning of the words used, like “intifada”, or unaware of the consequences for Jews on campus because of their actions. In the case of a student who compared Jews to Nazis on their private social media, one participant wrote to the university administration that this Middle Eastern student “is angry at Israel, [and that this] is not a reason to call her antisemitic. The fact that she’s posted stuff on her Instagram or whatever is none of the business of the university.” This phenomenon of participants’ reluctance to label these moral experiences antisemitic or to downgrade the charge from antisemitism to ignorance or emotionality is not confined to only student protesters. Instead, as the following sections demonstrate, this sympathy and denialism extended to university administrators, colleagues, and students. In the discussion chapter, I analyze how this phenomenon both reflects and reproduces The Agreement.

6.1.2. Moral Experiences and University Administrators

University administrations' tolerance of antisemitic activities on their campuses largely determined the frequency and manifestation of Jewish faculty members' moral experiences on campus and with administrators. Some participants, including Philip, an associate professor in social sciences in the Atlantic provinces, hypothesized the influence of Jewish donors on the university administrations' tolerance: "The fact that there are so many deep-pocketed Jewish donors [means] that the university cannot afford to be blatantly pro-Palestinian because it's going to cost them too much."

Another participant, however, noted the limits of Jewish donors' influence on the university administration, describing a conversation between the Dean of their university and Jewish donors who wanted to endow a new position for Jewish Studies. The donors requested that the university not hire a professor who espoused antisemitic or antizionist sentiments, and the Dean replied, "Look, we can't really ask [potential hires] about their ideology... That's not something we can really determine." The donor responded, "Can you at least guarantee that this won't be a professor who's calling for the destruction of the State of Israel? Because that is the destruction of seven million people." The Dean said, "I will never, ever not hire somebody because they're calling for the destruction of the State of Israel."

The vast majority of the sub-sample's participants similarly concluded that their university administration's overall treatment of Jews on campus and their inaction to address antisemitism culminated in a double standard. Participants noted, for example, their administrations' tolerance of the encampments, despite protesters violating trespassing policies and subjecting those who sought to pass through to litmus tests, and their negotiation with these protesters on BDS. Participants also mentioned the seemingly maximalist policy by their

university administration in allowing antisemitic activities, such as rallies that called for “intifada revolution”, and how they did little to quell these protests. Instead, participants stated that their administrations directed the campus security to merely manage the protests and prevent escalation to physical violence.

Other instances participants chalked up to a double standard included their university administrations’ silence on October 7, whereas they had previously put out statements on other global events, such as for the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In other cases, participants observed their administrations’ mealy-mouthed condemnation of the October 7 massacre, or the frequent pairing of any discussion or condemnation of antisemitism with Islamophobia. Participants reported that their university administrations did not have, or resisted, adopting specific policies to combat antisemitism. If and when university administrations did make this effort, such as forming a university taskforce to address antisemitism or creating anti-antisemitism education modules, they typically consulted “anti-Zionist” Jewish faculty members to represent the Jewish community.

Untenured faculty members with administrative positions or tenured Jewish faculty members exposed the limits of their university administration’s tolerance when they tried to sway university administrators through emails and meetings. They highlighted that their university administrations typically did not respond to their emails or requests for meetings. When they did respond, participants perceived their response to be one of pacification, lip service, or of shirking responsibility by claiming limited agency and authority (e.g., disciplining violent protesters). Furthermore, discredited participants who met with administrators due to concerns for their physical safety shared that administrators offered them a security guard to escort them around campus and in their classrooms, or to teach virtually. One participant detailed

how their university administration recommended that they move their campus office from the second floor to the first floor, should they need to escape protesters through their office window.

Although some participants knew of certain administrators who were sympathetic to antisemitic activities on campus, most did not believe that their university administrators held overtly antisemitic attitudes. More than 25 percent of the sub-sample's participants acknowledged the difficult position university administrations occupied because any action they took to address antisemitism would be perceived as "pro-Israel". Several participants ascribed ignorance or incompetence to their university administrations' actions, or lack thereof. Danya, an associate professor in humanities in central Canada, expressed what she believed to be a constellation of ignorance, resentment, and latent antisemitism from her administration:

It's not malicious, it's just ignorant. At the same time, I think that somewhere in their hearts or souls, the back of their minds, they think, "These Jews are so privileged, and yet, they're complaining so much. What is wrong with them?" I do think that there's a latent antisemitism...And there's a resentment, I think, when Jewish donors have pulled out, or they think, "[Jewish donors are] going to throw their money at us...It's aggressive lobbying on behalf of the Jewish community." I think they resent those kinds of things, so I do think there is a latent anti-Jewish kind of sentiment that they would never acknowledge to themselves. But mostly, I think it's just ignorance and an attempt to appear neutral, and hear all voices, which means ours get drowned out.

6.1.3. Moral Experiences in EDI Settings

More than 50 percent of participants, irrespective of their campus location, discipline, and professional rank, reported instances of incidental disclosure and systematic exposure in EDI settings. Incidental disclosure took the form of excluding Jews and antisemitism from campus

EDI policies and initiatives and misconceptualizing Jewish identity as solely a religion. When participants directly pushed for the inclusion of antisemitism and Jews in these EDI policies and initiatives, EDI officers often dismissed or stonewalled participants, or even reacted with overt hostility.

Asher, an assistant professor in social sciences in the West Coast, shared that when his campus' EDI officer asked if faculty members had any questions after her presentation, he inquired if the "EDI strategy or policy [is] going to take into consideration antisemitism." The EDI officer responded with "an anecdote about a Jewish person that she knew once who was racist or who had made a racist comment." Asher felt too stunned to react, and, given his colleagues' silence in that moment, he felt reluctant to openly challenge her. Upon reflection, Asher said:

I don't feel any bitterness towards my colleagues for not speaking up in that situation just because it was such a weird situation. It's like the situation where a grandparent says something inadvertently racist, and nobody wants to correct the grandparent like this.

This is a very senior colleague. And she's, like I said, an incredibly sweet lady, who in all situations is very, very kind, so I think it sort of took everybody by surprise.

Comparatively, Anna, a full professor in humanities in central Canada, took a more confrontational approach to her university's exclusion of Jews in their graduate student mentorship initiative that paired minoritized students with faculty members. Noting the absence of Jewish mentors, she wrote to the Dean, "Firstly, this list is kind of offensive and secondly, are Jewish students being included?". She continued:

And he forwarded that [email with my permission] to the Inclusion Advisor [who responded], "No. This program is meant solely for equity-deserving groups, specifically

Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. If Jewish students feel they're being discriminated against, they can go and see the multifaith team." In other words, go cry on the rabbi's shoulder or something.

Anna subsequently responded to the Inclusion Advisor that historic and current levels of antisemitic discrimination were not "a matter [of a] crisis of faith." The Inclusion Advisor did not initially respond, but after Anna wrote to her again a week later, she responded, "Thank you for your interesting and thoughtful comments. I'm passing this to the Vice President of [EDI] and to the Dean." At the time of the interview, more than a month after this event transpired, Anna said that she had not gotten redress.

Eden, an adjunct professor in social sciences in central Canada shared a similar example of systematic exposure. In a mandated education course on EDI in the classroom for adjunct professors, she asked why they did not mention antisemitism. The instructors "brushed [her question] off." When she asked her university's EDI office to include curricula on antisemitism, she said that they "stonewalled" her, that "It's like a silence. 'Thank you for telling us that.' And that's all."

Other participants had more hostile instances of systematic exposure with EDI officers at their universities. For example, Samson, a full professor in humanities in the West Coast, articulated that his university's EDI office's module on antisemitism was an "absolute disaster", as they "basically let the [anti-Zionist Jewish faculty members] write most of it." He said that that when he tried to add "some basic history points" to the module, including the Babylonian Exile, the EDI officer claimed that the Babylonian Exile is a "disputed fact." When prompted why he thought the EDI officer made that claim, he hypothesized, "Because if there was an

Exile, that means there was a non-Exilic period. That means Jews or Israelites, their predecessors lived in what's modern-day Israel and the West Bank."

Saul, a clinical instructor in medicine in the West Coast, recounted a formative instance of systematic exposure pre-October 7 when he volunteered on his hospital's EDI committee that almost resulted in him resigning from his faculty position. In one of these EDI committee meetings, they discussed the difficulties minorities and immigrants experience in Canadian society. Saul shared his experience of coming to Canada as an immigrant with "700 bucks" in his pocket, and how he spent the first few years in Canada "bartending and making minimum wage, [working] on construction sites, cleaning garbage, and was well below the poverty line." He continued that "because Canada is such a great country", he could retake grades 11 and 12, earn a scholarship to university, and graduate from medical school, albeit \$300,000 in debt that he only recently paid off. Saul recalled the response from the EDI committee:

"You're so blind to your privilege because you're a White Jewish person... You don't understand the barriers in society to people because you're the colonial class. And so, you think that that was all your effort, but actually, none of the things that you describe are your effort. That's just because of the colour of your skin and your gender [as a cis male]."

Saul, in turn, described how this response "basically robbed [him] of [his] own story" and how his "experience is completely different from what they think it is, but they're making racist assumptions based on [his] culture." He bitterly remarked that the antisemitic tropes of Jewish power, wealth, and privilege preclude the possibility of taking pride in personal and collective resilience: "We don't get to be refugees, right? Because we rule the world... So, it doesn't matter how hard your story was. You're not included."

6.1.4. Moral Experiences and Colleagues

Jewish faculty members' professional rank, (in)visibility as a Jew, and intersecting identities shaped, in part, the frequency and manifestation of their moral experiences involving colleagues within and outside of their department. Discipline and departmental differences, including tolerance for ideological diversity, emphasis on social justice issues (i.e., Israel-Palestine), and number of Jewish and wise²⁶ faculty members, played a comparatively more central role.

Jewish faculty members who worked in clinical settings associated with the university varied in the frequency and manifestation of moral experiences involving their colleagues, as Jacqueline, an associate professor in medicine in central Canada, explained: "Amongst colleagues here, it's very easy because everyone knows that there's a lot of Jewish faculty here, and Jewish doctors here, and some Jewish nurses, and many Jewish physiotherapists." Saul, a clinical instructor in the West Coast who worked in a hospital with almost no other Jewish staff, and who disclosed his Jewish identity, conversely reported more frequent moral experiences.

Participants in STEM generally did not report many moral experiences that involved their colleagues in their department. Caleb, a full professor in STEM in central Canada who wore a stigma symbol (i.e., Magen David necklace), shared:

I think in my corner of the world, [antisemitism or Israel] really has no bearing at all, if anything. And I think this is true of a lot of STEM fields. My [STEM discipline] is a very international discipline...It's almost like we embody the notion of academic neutrality within our academic discipline.

²⁶ As explained in Chapter 3, I use the term "wise" in the Goffmanian sense to refer to non-Jewish actors sympathetic to Jews.

One participant in central Canada, however, detailed an instance of systematic exposure that involved a STEM department's EDI committee organizing a virtual event with a Palestinian scholar from off campus and subjecting attendees to a litmus test. The organizer of the event "required people to accept the manifesto that the committee had prepared, to be supportive of the Palestinian and condemn the way that Israel had been treating Palestinians as a requirement to get permission to join the zoom call."

Another participant, Scott, a full professor in STEM in the Atlantic provinces, recounted a moral experience that predated October 7. As part of his department's hiring committee, he attended lunch with a candidate from the Middle East who, "out of nowhere, declares that Israel is evil." He subsequently refused to go to her talk. A colleague he did not know was Jewish disclosed their identity later when they tried to convince Scott that "[this candidate] didn't really mean [what she said]."

Participants who taught Jewish Studies courses stated that they had no moral experiences within their departments involving their Jewish colleagues. However, they shared that within their department, they experienced some instances of systematic exposure with non-Jewish colleagues. Luke, an associate professor in humanities who taught Jewish Studies courses in the prairie provinces, and who did not feel that Israel represented a central component to his Jewish identity, nonetheless detailed a moral experience before October 7 that "brought home to [him] that non-Jews, including [his] colleagues, really don't understand what Israel means to Jews in general." He explained that his department short-listed three candidates for a position in their department, including a Palestinian scholar. Luke recounted that this candidate only referred to Israel as "Occupied Palestine", and that despite his claim that he generally had a "broad welcoming attitude" to people he considered part of his "ummah, [his] community]", he said,

“You might not be part of my ummah, you might be a Zionist.” After the interview, Luke shared his concerns with his colleagues, noting how it would affect Jewish students, and that a candidate that held a comparable anti-Muslim position would not be seriously considered. Luke recounted how his colleagues misunderstood him:

They basically got the impression that I didn’t like this guy’s politics, which was not, in fact, the issue, right? It’s not that I disagree with his politics. I personally have no problem with him being anti-Zionist. I have a problem with him expressing that in ways that would be really honestly hurtful for our Jewish students.

Luke further clarified that he “would not personally accuse [this Palestinian scholar] of antisemitism”, and instead ascribed ignorance as the motive for his behaviour, as well as that of his colleagues.

Another professor who taught Jewish Studies courses explained how his endowed position afforded him institutional resources but generated resentment from his colleagues:

I still have funding from private sources, and a lot of other ethnic studies don’t. There’s absolutely animosity about the fact that we pay our speakers and stuff like that, and they can’t afford to. And that has led to some extremely icy conversations with colleagues, where basically I’ve had to not quite say, “I’m sorry that I’m a Jew with money, but I don’t really know what to tell you right now.” Funding discussions can be really fraught, because nobody takes you seriously and nobody really wants you there, but you’re also the only one with any money at the table because the Jewish community gave me money, and their communities didn’t give them money, which also creates hostility.

He illuminated other subtle instances of systematic exposure he countered at his “WASP-y” university:

When you go to the large faculty meeting and you're at a table with people who are all very well-behaved, there's an assumption that A), you're going to behave a certain way; and B), you actually may even behave that way, and then that gets into this sort of cyclical sort of...[trails off]. Look, when I was a punk and I had purple hair, older people would be like, "Your hair's very interesting.", and that was an insult, and there's a lot of that. "Oh, that's interesting. Oh, I could never do that." That kind of shit. And then, silently blocking you, or taking you less seriously, or trying to sideline you at various committees and whatnot.

Jewish faculty members of all disciplines and campus locations articulated instances of incidental disclosure, such as colleagues scheduling meetings on Shabbat or high holidays. Participants in social sciences, humanities, and law, however, mentioned more instances of incidental disclosure. For example, participants mentioned the prevalence of faculty members wearing keffiyehs to faculty board meetings, thereby communicating with whom their sympathy in this conflict lies. Danya, an associate professor in humanities in central Canada, described it as "faculty board meetings with, I don't know how to put it any other way, middle-aged White women waving keffiyehs at each other across the room."

Other instances of incidental disclosure commonly took the form of antisemitic petitions supporting the encampment, department or caucus statements that supported BDS, or that omitted or trivialized the events and sexual violence on October 7. These moral experiences, however, did not remain instances of incidental disclosure for several participants. One participant reported leaving her faculty disability caucus after its leader, unable to secure unanimous support for endorsing a student petition that justified October 7 due to the participant's objection, encouraged caucus members to sign the petition individually instead.

Another participant in social sciences recounted that students and faculty members in her department advocated for them to release a statement on the Israel-Hamas war. Determined to support her Jewish colleague who voiced their hesitation about releasing a statement, she explained, “I’m Jewish. My family’s there. This is incredibly painful. I oppose what’s happening in Gaza, but this is a complicated situation.” She continued, “I may as well have just tattooed ‘Zionist’ on my forehead and put the white pointy hat on, because that’s how I was treated there from there on out.”

Two tenured male participants shared that their self-identifying feminist female colleagues who omitted or trivialized the overwhelming evidence of sexual violence on and after October 7 against Jewish women (see Civil Commission on October 7th Crimes by Hamas Against Women and Children, 2026) met their confrontation with silence or anger. One participant shared that, together, with several university administrators, these female colleagues who omitted the sexual violence on October 7, and after against the Israeli hostages, “spent an hour and a half debating if there is a way to get [him] fired.” The other participant emailed his female colleagues to express his opposition to their op-ed piece about an event on campus that described the sexual violence committed by Hamas as “blown out of proportion”, and that the focus should be on the “violence being committed in Gaza now by the IDF...Not to silence the voices of the women who may have experienced sexual violence at the hands of Hamas, but we need to put this in perspective and not let it be used for pro-Israel propaganda.” He reported that one colleague did not respond to his email, and the other replied, “I am watching the destruction

of Rafah, right now, live, on my phone, and it's appalling to me that you are more upset about our article than you are upset about that."²⁷

Participants of all disciplines, moreover, expressed the isolation they felt due to their colleagues' silence or seeming indifference after October 7. Jewish faculty members in social sciences, humanities, law, and, to varying degrees, medicine, expressed a particular sense of betrayal due to the discipline emphasis on social justice. Aviva, a full professor in humanities in central Canada, recounted the silence from her colleagues after October 7:

Nobody said anything to me. All my colleagues who know I'm Jewish, most of my colleagues are not Jewish, I should say. I remember, I checked in with my one Jewish colleague...So, we had our moment, but the other colleagues didn't say anything to me. And I thought that even if they don't quite get that Jews feel affected by this, that Jews are connected to Israel, they knew, most of them knew, that I have Israeli roots...Nobody said anything, and I was so surprised...Like, even before it got messy with retaliation from Israel, there was an attack on Israel. All these Jews got killed. Worst attack since the Holocaust. Say something. Say anything.

Hillary, an associate professor in law in central Canada, described the seeming indifference from her colleagues after October 7:

I've run into colleagues, people I've known now for 19 years, post-October 7, and they asked how things were going, and I would say, "Well, my [child], who goes to [Jewish] day school, is going to school with police protection." And they would look at me blankly. Blankly. As if that was OK in Canada that a [child] should need police protection

²⁷ This phenomenon of self-identifying feminist scholars omitting or trivializing the sexual violence perpetrated by Hamas and other Palestinian factions on and after October 7, 2023, against Jewish women and men is analyzed in detail by Kara Jesella, 2026 and Karin Stögner, 2026.

to go to school. Forget the politics of it, take everything else away. Do we, as Canadians, think that that's OK? And they clearly did. They clearly didn't know how to process that, because they were so bound up in this rhetoric around Israel as an aggressor and a terrible state that they couldn't even pull apart that piece of how are we actually treating this community in Canada?...So, what do you do with that? Like, as a human being, how can I think that my [child]'s life means so little to you because of this ideological vision you have?... I have nothing to say to you. I have nothing at all.

Moreover, only 25 percent of the sub-sample's participants said that immediately after October 7, they received support or sympathy from the few wise colleagues in their department. Several Jewish faculty members, however, described colleagues moralizing' behaviour in response to their pleas for compassion or, when accused of antisemitism, colleagues responding in a way akin to an intervention.

Anna, a full professor in humanities in central Canada, articulated an instance of systematic exposure that involved her phoning a colleague she believed to be a "good friend" and a "shoulder to cry on" after witnessing the celebrations after October 7. Anna detailed how instead, she "got a speech about how the Palestinians are poor, innocent victims and everything that had just happened and has ever happened was Israel's fault." Anna later shared another instance in which a colleague "informed [her] proudly that [the encampment] was not antisemitic because there were some Jews who were included there and had signed, 'Jews for Palestine'. So, [therefore], she probably wasn't antisemitic." Anna continued that after she pointed to various antisemitic posters at the encampment, her colleague conceded that the posters were antisemitic, but "the people are not because they're doing this out of ignorance. And therefore, [she] thinks [that] the encampment is a good thing and should be allowed to continue, no matter how

antisemitic it is.” Anna further disclosed that this colleague told her she was “completely irrational” and needed to “seek therapy.”

More than 25 percent of the sub-sample’s female participants mentioned instances of systematic exposure involving male or female colleagues who, through one-on-one interactions, painstakingly tried to convince them that their behaviour or their sentiments did not constitute antisemitism. Instead, these colleagues argued, the female Jewish faculty members were mistaken or misguided in their beliefs about Israel, October 7, or antisemitism.

Delilah, an associate professor in STEM, detailed how, seven months after an initial conversation that went awry with a male humanities professor she was friends with, he sent her “unsolicited messages saying that the rapes were debunked, and that there was no sexual assault, and that he’s done his own research.” She said he did so because “he [said that he] just needs [her] to know that that was used as justification for the genocide in Gaza.” She described this harassment as “evangelical” in that he seemed to want to “save” her.

Susan, an associate professor in humanities in the West Coast similarly described that one of her colleagues claimed that “there was no conclusive evidence that mass rapes had taken place.” She detailed how a mutual colleague asked her to meet one-on-one and tried to get her “to understand the point of view” of this other colleague and “bring her onside”.

Simone, an associate professor in medicine in the West Coast, detailed that after the encampment protesters interrupted a conference at her campus and security removed them, a colleague who held a senior position at the university took to the podium. This colleague “essentially said how horrific and inappropriate it was for [them] to sit here and witness genocide and do nothing, and that, of course, it can create very adverse and very negative feelings and emotions among attendees.” Simone mentioned how this colleague then “invited everyone now

to go outside with her and pray under the tree for the liberation of Gaza.” In response, Simone and some Jewish colleagues at this conference wrote a statement to express that they found this behaviour “inappropriate” and “not conducive to a collegial environment.” Simone recalled that after the conference ended, this senior colleague approached her to invite her for coffee to “have more conversations” and to “make [her] see the light.”

One professor in the social sciences who identified as Jewish-Latina recounted an incident that occurred in 2019 of systematic exposure also resembling an intervention. She detailed that she and a Muslim female colleague she considered a “good friend” had a disagreement when this colleague “wanted [her] to respond to emails that she was putting out to our department about White supremacy and White guilt.” She said that she expressed to her colleague that she “didn’t think it was her place.”, to which her colleague responded, “Well, you’re not responding, you’re kind of complicit.” Her colleague also pointed to the importance of Jewish voices and activism in the US. The participant then replied, “Yeah, American Jewish people might feel that they have more of a voice, but I come from a culture where we try to hide as much as possible, and kind of just blend in, because there is a tradition that if you stand out, really bad things can happen.” The participant added to her email:

We had the Inquisition, and it’s not even 200 years, I think, that it’s been the last out of the auto-da-fe, so you have a bit of a [sense that] the walls have ears. You’re a bit more careful about how you portray yourself outwardly versus the things that you do in your home.

The Muslim colleague replied, “Well, it’s your Jewish identity that keeps you from doing what is right and just.”

This participant further mentioned how later that year, a string of violent antisemitic events in the US²⁸ left her “really paranoid” about being targeted. A mutual colleague reached out to invite her for coffee. There, the mutual colleague did not express any awareness of the events in the US, but instead, tried to persuade the participant to “see the light about this whole email issue” with her Muslim colleague. In this conversation about “identities of privilege” the mutual colleague initiated, the participant started to say, “Being Jewish is not necessarily an identity of privilege. It can be a bit mixed in some aspects, but not really, depending on just the context.” However, she stated that before she could finish her sentence, the mutual colleague interrupted, “Oh, yes, yes, you have Jewish privilege.”

The participant said that her Muslim colleague eventually left the university but was later re-hired to an EDI position. With her faculty association and an Indigenous-Middle Eastern colleague who had also been labelled a “White man” by this Muslim colleague, she wrote to the administrator to express their concerns. He responded, “These things that you’re saying, and that you’re bringing up, this is a highly respected person in our community. If you keep talking about it, I’m going to consider it harassment.”

These participants identified these cases of systematic exposure in which colleagues took a moralizing tone as a form of silencing, as Hillary, articulated:

By telling everybody else exactly how they should be thinking to achieve the perfect outcome for the perfect world that I believe should happen, regardless of whatever steps happen in between, [it creates] a huge silencing...They’re so convinced that they know what right looks like at the end of the day...And they’re binding up their vision of being a good and just person into the fact that they’re going to get to [this utopia]...so it’s

²⁸ See The Associated Press (2019) for more information.

perfectly OK for them to make those assumptions...They're happy to assume [that] everybody agrees that this is a genocide, and if I were to assert otherwise, the only thing that I would be asserting is, because I'm a Jew, that I clearly can't see what's right and good, and they could perfectly well explain to me my own history in order to get to that outcome.

6.1.5. Moral Experiences in Research Settings

Relative to participants in STEM, participants in humanities, social sciences, and medicine disclosed more frequent examples of incidental disclosure that took place at academic conferences that did not directly relate to Israel. Deborah, a professor emerita in social sciences, tearfully relayed that when she attended a social science conference in March 2024, in a “huge auditorium [with] hundreds of people”, the presenter projected on the screen “a picture of all of these people going, ‘Heil Hitler’, and one person not doing ‘Heil Hitler.’” The presenter proceeded to say, “We’re tired of the oppressed becoming the oppressor, and we can’t stand up for this anymore.” Deborah recounted that although the presenter did not explicitly mention Israel, she made apparent the likening of Jews to Nazis, and how “it felt so dangerous” because everyone else “were all agreeing.” She subsequently left the auditorium and threw up in the bathroom. Jacqueline, an associate professor in medicine, similarly articulated that:

There have been incidents at conferences where speakers talking about things that should not have had anything to do with geopolitics intentionally veered into geopolitics, and made Jews in the room feel very uncomfortable. And anyone who tried to speak up was shut down and shut out and excluded from spaces.

Other participants reported instances of systematic exposure by research panel organizers excluding them because of their discredited identity, as one professor in humanities, illustrated:

My department was doing [a research panel] on the extreme right, which I am a specialist on. I've written [several] books and edited another one on the extreme right in [specific countries]. I definitely would think I would be one of the people that they would choose to be on that panel, but I was excluded principally because I was bumped for somebody from [another humanities discipline] who has no experience in any of that but is completely anti-Israel.

Another participant in the humanities described a particularly striking instance of attempted exclusion that occurred at a conference they co-sponsored at their university, where they had also been invited by the organizer to speak. This participant said that a professor from a humanities department at their university “offered the conference organizer money to remove [them] from the conference” because, as the humanities professor wrote in the email, “[the participant] is a Zionist, and has programs in Israel, and should not be allowed to participate in this program.”

Jewish faculty members additionally highlighted instances of systematic exposure in the context of obtaining funding or having their research published when it related to Jews that pointed to their discredited identity. Samson, a full professor in humanities in the West Coast who conducted research in Israel, explained that when he eventually succeeded in obtaining a grant from his university to conduct research purely focused on Judaism, not Israel, his approved grant application included “in all caps, ‘YOU MAY NOT USE THESE FUNDS FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE.’” A professor in humanities with an identifiably Jewish name mentioned that when she submitted an article on the connection between a literary genre and Jewish converts to Christianity to a humanities journal for publication, they responded, “Oh, no. This is too Jewish. You should publish it in a Jewish journal.” She said that she later found out that “the people who had written back to [her] are among the greatest promoters of the BDS movement.”

6.1.6. Moral Experiences in Faculty Association Settings

Save for physicians and participants with administrative positions who were not part of their faculty associations, more than 50 percent of the sub-sample's participants reported that their faculty association engaged in some form of antisemitic activism. These instances of incidental disclosure included proposing or passing BDS motions, releasing statements supporting the encampment, or providing financial support for antisemitic activities (i.e., encampments or research panels that demonized Israel). In turn, most of these participants voiced their concerns about a lack of, or biased, representation from their associations, particularly if they conducted research in Israel.

Several participants, regardless of their discipline or research, expressed how certain motions culminated in a silencing effect. They emphasized that the vocal minority of Jewish faculty members who advocated for or supported these motions shielded non-Jewish proponents from accusations of antisemitism. Gideon, a full professor in social sciences in central Canada, mentioned that, years ago, his faculty association passed a motion against the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism. The motion argued that "We are against all forms of antisemitism, but this definition," which Gideon noted, "is defined by the community through this long process and careful process", "is unacceptable in an academic environment because it does not allow for us to explore decolonization and anti-racism." Gideon inferred that this motion insinuated that "Israel is a racist colonial state" and that, by extension, "that tells [him] here are the limits on what Judaism can be."

Gideon further mentioned that, following backlash to this motion against IHRA, his faculty association formed an ad hoc committee on antisemitism that consulted "with basically nine people" over the summer. He continued that they did not consult with Hillel, which "is the

major representative of Jewish students on campus. And then they misrepresented the data that they collected in the report, and said, ‘Look at the great things we’re doing for Jewish people on campus.’”

Another participant in central Canada provided an example of this “splitting of good Jews and bad Jews” when her faculty association proposed a BDS motion in an online meeting in November 2024 “under the guise of being a scholasticide motion, which said that Israel is committing scholasticide in Gaza by destroying all the universities.” She said that while a Jewish faculty member expressed their opposition to the motion, arguing that it is one-sided and violates academic freedom, “a whole bunch of incendiary comments [flooded] the chat”, including from a member of the Executive Committee. The participant read examples of these comments that she had screen-shotted: “[Jewish colleague] is an IDF spokesperson.”; “Did Netanyahu write this?”; “I can’t believe you guys support genocide.”

She also gave examples of comments Jewish faculty members wrote in the chat: “As a Jew, I’ve never felt any antisemitism, and I support this motion.”; “As a Jew, my grandparents were killed in the Holocaust, and I support this motion. I’m against genocide, no matter who it happens against.”; “The narcissism of the Zionist supremacy.”; “My rights as a Jew are not being trampled. They have never been trampled by the pro-Palestinian community.”; “I’m offended by the suggestion that criticism of Israel and its conduct of the war in Gaza is antisemitic.”; “To talk about the historical context, and start at October 6th, while not mentioning Gaza being starved even prior to the 7th, is disingenuous. To talk about war when the motion is on scholasticide occurring during a genocide is equally disingenuous.”; “Please do the right thing and know your place on stolen land.”; “Absolute disgrace as a Jewish faculty member. I wholeheartedly object to this speech and its narrow, ideological, and genocidal claims. This does not represent Jews, let

alone members of those standing up for justice anywhere in the world.” She further noted that “those comments were especially liked, those got the most hearts...It was 20 people ‘liking’ each post.”

She explained that “they didn’t allow anyone else on the Jewish faculty side to speak” and that “not everyone was even able to vote because the poll didn’t work, and then people shut it down.” Along with other faculty members, she filed a complaint with the Executive Committee, as the voting procedure violated several of their bylaws and because one of the Executive Committee members participated in some of the comments. The Committee agreed and officially sanctioned some of the professors “who made comments that reached the level of harassment.”

Scott, a full professor in STEM in the Atlantic provinces, and whose faculty association also passed a BDS motion, shared how this environment intimidated non-Jewish faculty members from dissenting in these meetings:

I spoke to the President of my faculty association...And he told me at the meeting where they had the three anti-Israel motions, he said he would not have been comfortable talking against them as the union President because of the kind of aggressivity of that side.

Three politically left-leaning participants did not classify BDS motions as antisemitic, because, as one put it, they thought that the motion “came from people...who are very concerned about what’s been happening in Gaza.” Most participants, however, considered these motions antisemitic because of the double standards, demonization, and delegitimization of Israel, as one participant explained:

They're trying to undermine the existence of Israel, trying to isolate it, undermine its economic strength. They are trying to make Israel a pariah state...If you make Israel weak on purpose, that's in between the lines calling for its' destruction. And if you want to destroy the state of Israel, then you're supporting the eradication of the people there or you are supporting the evacuation of the country...So, it's a subtle antisemitism that has a veneer of respectability, but it's just another way of being antisemitic. You never see BDS resolutions against China, for example. And the treatment of the Muslim minorities in China is appalling.

Eva, a full professor in social sciences in central Canada, moreover, summarized the domestic impact of BDS motions on Jewish faculty association members:

I think it makes Jewish members who don't want BDS afraid to go to their union if there's a perception that the union won't have their back. I think that's really the big issue – the symbolism of it. I wouldn't go to my union if I knew that the Executive was pro-BDS and had this problem. Actually, I'm not even sure I would go to my union about anything if I knew the Executive had this problem, and if they knew I was Jewish. They might not protect me.

6.1.7. Moral Experiences in the Classroom

In the classroom, disciplinary differences, namely, emphasis on social justice and the prevalence of Israel or antisemitism in class discussions, professional rank, and (in)visibility as a Jew largely shaped the frequency and manifestation of participants' moral experiences. Overwhelmingly, participants in STEM did not report many moral experiences involving students due to the more apolitical nature of their discipline and the irrelevance of topics related to Israel or Jews to class discussions. They did not

encounter much pro-Palestinian paraphernalia, such as keffiyehs or laptop stickers, or class strikes, protests, or disruptions related to Israel. Participants whose discredited identity was known, such as Scott, however, recounted an example of incidental disclosure in his classroom:

A student came to class all of a sudden one day with a keffiyeh wrapped around their head...I chose to ignore it as much as I can. I don't know if he came that way because he knew I was Jewish, and he was trying to make me uncomfortable. There's no way of knowing. I didn't want to make an issue of it. I certainly didn't want him to be able to say, "Look at how you graded me, it's because of that." So, I chose to ignore it.

Other participants in different disciplines and of different professional ranks also noted that their position as the professor often constrained them in cases of moral experiences involving students. For tenure-track and untenured participants in humanities and social sciences, this double bind exacerbated their worries of students weaponizing complaints processes or smearing them online. Ellie, an adjunct professor in humanities in the prairie provinces, illustrated this predicament when she gently tried to challenge a student in class who wrote an essay that alleged that Israel committed genocide and that denigrated Zionism:

[I said to my student], "Well, I am a Zionist.", and she said that "Israelis and Zionists have brain rot."...I said she didn't know the first thing about Israel, how it was formed, what it was, she just [yelled], "You want to [kill babies]!"...I tried to just stay calm and say, "I really encourage you to do some additional research and to maybe learn a bit more about Israel." Then she did come back and apologize the next class, and said, "I shouldn't have [yelled at you]. I learned a bit more, and I shouldn't have said those things to you."

In the sub-sample of 40 Jewish faculty members, only four participants, all women whose Jewish identity was known and who taught in humanities or social sciences, reported instances of their

undergraduate students yelling at them. Instead, moral experiences in humanities, social sciences, medicine, and law more commonly resembled Scott's experience of the student wearing the keffiyeh to class. These participants also hypothesized that the power imbalance in the classroom that favoured them as faculty members likely protected them from overt hostility from students, in addition to discipline differences.

Justin, a full professor in law in central Canada and whose anti-antisemitism advocacy rendered his identity discredited, explained, "[Overt antisemitism from students is] unlikely to happen in the law school. Law students generally are often concerned about job prospects and stuff like that, and there's just, hopefully, there's a bit of respect in a way that you're unlikely to see much of it."

Participants who taught Jewish Studies courses generally felt that students who took their courses were more open-minded than other faculty members. However, these participants still noted instances of incidental disclosure and systematic exposure involving students in their classroom. Walter, a full professor in central Canada, provided an example of incidental disclosure involving a student who said that she intended to ask the guest lecturer, an expert on Israeli art, "if she's a Zionist." Luke, an associate professor in the prairie provinces, mentioned that, occasionally, students made an "off-the-cuff remark" that the "Old Testament God is all about wrath and judgment and punishment", but valorized the "the loving God of the New Testament." Kayla, an associate professor in central Canada, further outlined the challenges in supervising students who seem to "have a vendetta against the Jewish community that they came from" and "just want to talk about how bad and exclusive the Jewish community is." She continued:

It's not critical. It's not ethnographic. And so, as a prof, it becomes just very, very difficult because you want to advise them, but you feel like their criticisms, or their lack of critical thinking rather, is actually anti-Jewish and directed at you in a certain sense.

6.1.8. Moral Experiences in Online Settings

Jewish faculty members active on social media all reported instances of incidental disclosure that manifested in colleagues and others in their academic circle posting texts or images glorifying, justifying, trivializing, or denying the events of October 7, or other antisemitic imagery and sentiments. Only a few participants tried to engage with these colleagues they consider friends:

One participant in humanities recounted that a colleague he considers a friend “put a blood libel piece on Facebook: ‘Miss Vicki’s makes potato chips with the blood of Palestinian children.’” He and another Jewish colleague went to their university President, who “ignored” them, then to the university donors. He articulated that this colleague consequently “got in quite a lot of trouble from HR about that” and gave him “an unreserved apology.” The participant further stated that he considers this colleague to be “the only guy...who’s anti-Zionist, who’s not antisemitic, because he’s an old Bolshevik, and he believes that all peoples have the right to rise up...And he would include Jews in that as well.”

Delilah, an associate professor in STEM, cited instances of systematic exposure when colleagues sent her unsolicited messages. She recalled one in particular who “has blamed antisemitism on Israel”, saying, “What do you expect? Of course it’s going to rise. I’m not saying it’s right, but that’s what happens.” Delilah said that this colleague also posted on social media that the November 2024 attack on Jews in Amsterdam²⁹ were “driven by the Israeli fans

²⁹ For further information on this attack, see de Bruijin (2024).

[and that] there is no antisemitism. It's being hijacked by the Zionists." Delilah stated that after she pointed out the inaccuracy of her post, "she did do an apology on her own social media", but, to Delilah, said, "Well, the Israeli fans were chanting pro-genocidal chants, so I just have 0 sympathy. If they get beat up, they deserve it...I just am mad that any criticism of Israel is labeled as antisemitic, and you can't be anti-Zionist without being called antisemitic." Delilah explained that she asked to meet with her colleague over Zoom, but the colleague declined the request and instead messaged her, "It's hard to not have a deep-seated hatred of Israel when there's things like this."

Participants whose discredited identity was widely known through their research or public advocacy to combat antisemitism reported being targeted by student and faculty groups, as Samson elucidated, "Instagram posts with my picture posted by [student groups] and Faculty for Palestine... 'Zionist Exposed.'"

One participant shared that when she posted a video she took at the concentration camps in Poland for Holocaust Remembrance Day on her Instagram, "the troll farm descended on [her] account." She said that she "started having hundreds of people, like, 270 people either commenting or liking antisemitic posts...[and] commenting on [her] other [posts]", including on her workout video that her arms "look like they would make good soap."

Another participant highlighted the gendered antisemitism he and his wife faced on social media due to their public advocacy against antisemitism. He shared that anonymous accounts harassing and impersonating him on social media used "they/them" pronouns and claimed he identified as homosexual, despite his identification as cisgender and heterosexual. These accounts also disseminated fabricated and defamatory allegations concerning his sexual inadequacy and purported inappropriate sexual conduct toward students. The participant

speculated that a student or faculty member at his university likely controlled the account, but that his university administration claimed it was “out of their jurisdiction.”

The frequency and manifestation of Jewish faculty members’ moral experiences varied considerably depending on variables including campus type and location, university leadership and demonstrably minimal influence of donors, academic discipline, professional rank, (in)visibility as a Jew, and intersecting identities. Participants recounted numerous instances of incidental disclosure and systematic exposure on and off campus that involved administrators, colleagues, students, and protesters. These moral experiences, in turn, solidified their self-conception and their understanding of their environment.

6.2. Phantom Acceptance and Phantom Normalcy

Over the course of their moral career, the stigmatized person develops a new self-conception and understanding of their social environment. This process culminates in an awareness of the normals’ expectations of them and the boundaries of self-expression they must adhere to in exchange for paternalistic tolerance (Goffman, 1963: 122). Phantom acceptance, a term that refers to this paternalistic and conditional tolerance extended to the obedient stigmatized person provides the basis for phantom normalcy, which legitimizes and entrenches this moral contract (Goffman, 1963: 122).

Jewish faculty members across disciplines and geographical regions acknowledged their awareness of this implicit agreement in the context of Canadian academia that necessitated, for most of them, to renounce a central component to their Jewish identity:

Gideon, a full professor in social sciences in central Canada, stated that overall, on campus, “I don’t actually think that there is any form of Jewish identity that is fully acceptable, but particularly anything that would express the connection with Israel and Zionism.”

Simone, an associate professor in medicine in the West Coast, similarly shared, “I feel that most of the campuses I’ve heard about definitely have been very pro-Gaza leaning. If you want to not be a black sheep among sort of general circles, you definitely need to espouse anti-Israeli sentiment.”

Delilah, an associate professor in STEM in central Canada, articulated the differential treatment of Jews who adhere to their prescribed roles on campus:

I think the university environment is, in general, pretty hostile to Jews, especially who are Zionist. I think there’s a splitting of who’s a good Jew, and who’s a bad Jew based on your views on Israel. And so, how I’ve seen it happen is, Jews who distance themselves from Israel are then treated fine, and if you identify as a Zionist, or even bring the slightest nuance into a conversation about the conflict, that’s not fine. So, I think, for the vast majority of Jews who identify with the definition of Zionism...the right to self-determination in the Jewish ancestral homeland, I think Jews who identify Zionism that way are not given any benefit of the doubt and are harassed.

Dalia, an associate professor in social sciences in the Atlantic provinces, recounted that to be accepted within her research networks, she “would have to become an anti-Zionist” and would have to “give up things that are important”, to say, “‘Yes, Jews are White supremacists,’ and all these things.”

Oscar, an assistant professor in social sciences in the prairie provinces, acknowledged that this pressure extends to research funding applications, even though it did not personally impact him:

I’m guessing that if I were applying for a SSHRC in English and I wanted to study Israeli writing, I would almost certainly have to make mention of how Israel is a settler colonial

state that I hate and whatever, whatever, whatever, because English is a very ideological field.

Samson, a full professor in humanities, shared that he believes that “people who support Israel, both Jews and non-Jews...They will never be fully accepted into the social sciences and humanities communities.”

Hillary, an associate professor in law in central Canada, summarized how adherence to this Agreement conveniences non-Jews, whose sense of self can remain untested:

I’ve known throughout my career that being Jewish was OK, [that] being pro-Israel [is] not widely acceptable within the social milieu. This comes back to Dara Horn’s *People Love Dead Jews*. It’s fine as long as you talk about things that require people to acknowledge and accommodate you as it makes them feel good about themselves. “You take that day. Go celebrate with your community. Have a meaningful holiday.” But the minute it becomes something that talks about some of these deeper, more complicated, historical [ties to Israel and Zionism], it would be very hard on campus.

And Kayla, an associate professor in humanities in central Canada, highlighted the disciplinary measures that continually enforce and maintain this Agreement:

There are dog whistles. There are things that other people know, and we, as Jews know, are antisemitic, and then other people don’t. And they’re deliberately deployed all the time, I think, to torment Jewish people who don’t perform the right standard of morality, support the right narratives. They’re continuously deployed, and they kind of occur in this undercover kind of way...There are these specific keywords that are designed to target Jews in in the discourse, and people don’t know. They don’t see the flickering.³⁰

³⁰ Kayla’s use of the term “flickering” referred to the flickering of the gas light in the 1938 stage play and 1944 movie adaptation, *Gaslight*, in which the now commonly used term “gaslighting” originated. In the play and movie,

6.3. Chapter Summary

This chapter reported on how Jewish faculty members' moral careers unfolded on campus, including cases of incidental disclosure and systematic exposure, and the micro-, meso-, and macro-level variables that shaped the frequency and manifestation of these moral experiences. The chapter sections reported on how these variables influenced Jewish faculty members' moral experiences on campus, among protesters, administrators, colleagues, students, and in online and research settings. The chapter concluded with participants' accounts in how these moral experiences shaped their self-conceptions, understandings of their environments, and the boundaries that underpin phantom acceptance and phantom normalcy. The following results chapter examines how Jewish faculty members, cognizant of the consequences for possessing their stigmatized identities, concealed or minimized it to avoid (further) stigmatization.

the woman's husband burns the gas to illuminate the attic while he searches for hidden jewels but denies doing so. In turn, she thinks she is going insane, which he capitalizes on by intensifying her paranoia.

7. Results Chapter III. Avoiding and Managing Spoiled Identity

The findings presented in this chapter represent the middle phase of Jewish faculty members' moral career. Whereas the previous chapter detailed how and where participants learned the boundaries of The Gentleman's Agreement and consequences for perceived or actual transgressions, this chapter describes how they avoided being discredited or managed their discredited identity through information and tension management strategies. Like the previous chapter, it notes how the micro-, meso-, and macro-level variables shaped the available strategies Jewish faculty members could use to conceal or to minimize their stigmatized identity in physical, social, academic, and online settings.

7.1. Information Management

The discreditable, or those who possess a stigma that can be concealed or carefully managed, engage in information management techniques in the face of anticipated stigmatization (Goffman, 1963: 41-91). Information management strategies commonly take the form of passing as "normal", such as active concealment or omission of stigma (Goffman, 1963: 73), or a controlled, selective disclosure of their stigma (Goffman, 1963: 100). The ease to which participants could engage in information management strategies to avoid or mitigate stigma largely depended on their (in)visibility as a Jew in various settings.

7.1.1. (In)Visibility as a Jew

Disciplinary differences and physical markers largely shaped participants' (in)visibility as Jews. For example, faculty members who taught Jewish Studies courses had little to no ability to conceal their stigma in academic and campus settings by virtue of their professional identity and academic discipline. In other academic fields, physical markers, such as identifiably Jewish names, Judaica, or religious clothing, made participants' stigma visible so long as those around

them recognized these markers as indications of their Jewish identity. Some participants, however, made their stigma known through controlled and selective disclosure.

7.1.2. Information Management on Campus

On university campuses, generally, participants who were not widely known or physically recognizable as Jews through religious garb or Judaica did not need to actively engage in information management. However, in the case of interpersonal interactions where they anticipated being discredited, they often concealed their identity. Caleb, a full professor in STEM who regularly wore a Magen David necklace on campus, and whose university had an encampment, described how he went undercover as a non-Jew not only to protect himself but to also expose the “foolishness” of the normals (Goffman, 1963: 135), i.e., the encampment protesters:

I put on my Michael Moore disguise. I had a hat and a jean jacket and a neck beard, and I put my little camera in my pocket and just walked through the encampment just to see what it was about. And it's uncomfortable.

Asher, who has an identifiably Jewish last name, illustrated his fear of being identified on his campus and the consequent risk for being discredited:

I worry about being identified. I'm scared of becoming sort of a lightning rod or a symbol for antisemites to sort of latch onto on campus, whether that be this student population or faculty members who are very anti-Israel, who I know are on campus and are not shy about expressing those opinions.

However, he noted that the absence of Jews on his university campus allowed for him to “hide in plain sight” along with his other identifiably Jewish colleague:

The beautiful thing is that people here have no idea like there's no trace of a Jewish community here. So, my other Jewish colleague, his last name is [also identifiably Jewish], in my first semester, there was an event, and we locked eyes across the room. I looked at him, and he looked at me, and I knew, and he knew, and we just sort of came up and started talking about it, and it was just like it was such serendipity. He was saying, "Nobody knows here. Nobody is going to pick up on it."

The mutual recognition between Asher and his colleague of their membership to the same stigmatized in-group and the ability for them to assist each other in remaining undetected represents what Goffman (1963: 97-98) refers to as "mutual aid in passing".

7.1.3. Information Management Among Colleagues

Disciplinary and collegial differences that shaped participants' anticipated stigmatization from their colleagues influenced Jewish faculty members' concealment of their stigma or their selective disclosure of it. Susan, an associate professor in humanities in the West Coast, whose colleagues, she reported, have been vociferously antisemitic, described the decision to omit her work combating antisemitism:

I've been involved with the [provincial Jewish academic organization against antisemitism]...I've been writing press releases with a group of people for them, which is not something I've put on my CV or told my department head about because I don't feel like it's safe to do...because it's about directly contradicting my colleagues.

Heather, a full professor in social sciences in central Canada, who also reported having colleagues expressing antisemitic sentiments, and who, like Susan, was not identifiably Jewish, shared how she concealed her Jewish identity in anticipation of being discredited:

Since the war, I censor it out of my speech. I used to say “Mazal Tov” to people. I used to speak about my Jewishness in the way that you would speak about a part of your identity.

I censor it out now and I feel myself doing that...I avoid it because, in some sense, I don't even want to invite a response. I don't want to know sometimes how this person's going to respond. I don't want to break my heart. It's just easier.

Other participants opted for selective disclosure of their stigma to colleagues, namely, through purposeful slips about observing Jewish holidays and reported a positive reception from their colleagues. Simone, an associate professor in medicine in the West Coast, explained how:

For some Jewish holidays, I try to bring apples with honey,³¹ or donuts for Hanukkah,³² or something along those lines. I definitely don't hide [my Jewish identity]. I try to make it more known than not known, because I want people to be aware of my identity.

Hillary, an associate professor in law, illuminated why participants could disclose their stigma when it aligned with the (mis)conception of Jewish identity as a religion, and how she tested this phantom acceptance:

I had a colleague, who was very, very anti-Zionist...He was one of the major activists on campus around our campus around anti-Zionism. And he would make a point every Jewish holiday of wishing me a good holiday, whatever holiday that was. “Happy Chanukkah.” “Have a good Rosh Hashanah.”...At the university, it certainly became aware to me that my Jewishness was acceptable, but that Israel was going to be a contentious topic, which reinforced what I had understood throughout my career...And

³¹ Apples dipped in honey are traditionally eaten for Rosh Hashanah and symbolize the hope for a sweet and fruitful new year.

³² Donuts and other oil-fried foods are traditionally eaten for Hannukah, the Jewish holiday that marks the defeat of the Seleucid Empire by the Jewish army led by Judah Macabee and the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem in the second century BCE. The oil-fried foods symbolize the miracle of the Temple oil, in which a one-day supply of oil lasted for eight days, keeping the Temple's Menorah burning.

so it kind of became a game, almost. I used to challenge him. I'd come up to him and be like, "It's a Jewish holiday! I'm taking off! I'm not going to be here for the next 3 days", and just wait to see what he would do, and how much he would be like, "Oh, enjoy the matzah,³³ have a great Passover!" Because he was trying so hard to make sure that he was the good, progressive person who loved everybody, and just had a real problem with human rights violations, and this was just his issue and his *raison d'être*.

Hillary, however, admitted the limitations of her willingness to test this phantom acceptance:

I sometimes poke at it by making people notice my Jewishness, but I'll only poke so far because of the emotional toll. And maybe I'm doing the same things to a certain extent that my colleagues are doing to me, is essentializing their positions without actually speaking to them, but I just don't need that headache in my life. I see what they write to each other. I see how they want to stand up for different things...I just don't think I need to go any further.

7.1.4. Information Management Among Students in the Classroom and Clinical Setting

With students in the classroom setting, disciplinary differences and the power relations that typically favoured faculty members shaped participants' decisions to employ information management strategies. Generally, participants in academic disciplines that did not emphasize positionality or elicit conversations about Jews nor Israel to the same degree as most humanities and social science disciplines did not feel the need to actively engage in information management among students. Participants in STEM, medicine, and some in law or social sciences expressed that disclosing their Jewish identity to students felt superfluous as it did not

³³ Matzah (unleavened bread) is traditionally eaten on Passover. It symbolizes how the Israelites fled Egypt in such haste that their bread did not have time to rise.

directly relate to the course content. Most participants relayed that they felt relief in not needing to engage in information management in the classroom. For example, Rebecca, an associate professor in a more apolitical social science discipline in central Canada, and who did not have an identifiably Jewish name, expressed how her classes “don’t have these conversations that [she] knows are happening in all other sorts of disciplines around campus”, and that she “never wanted to bring [her Jewish identity] up in class” lest she be “outed as a Jew.”

Jacqueline, an associate professor in medicine – a discipline that varied in emphasizing positionality and that has shown to be rife with antisemitism (e.g., Gordon et al., 2025) – took a different approach to Rebecca:

I have found that if people get to know me first, and they find that I’m Jewish second, it doesn’t matter. But I have to make sure it happens in that order. There are a lot of people of various backgrounds in our healthcare network as learners. There’s a large number of learners from the Gulf States who come to do their Residency at [my university]...If people get to know me first, they know that what you see is what you get...So, if I’m nice to you, I’m nice to you, because that’s how it is. And then if they find out afterward that I’m Jewish, it kind of doesn’t matter. But the reverse is riskier. So, I feel like it can’t be the leading edge of my identity in the teaching space, even though it can be part of my identity.

Jacqueline further explained how she used purposeful slips to disclose her Jewish identity to students:

I tend to bake cookies for my team, and I’m working on the ward with the same team for two weeks. When I bring the cookies on the first day, I say, “Are there any allergies or

any kind of food restrictions?”, and then I’ll say, “If anyone cares, these cookies are kosher. There’s no dairy, but there is almond milk. So, that’s a nut allergy risk. I can make vegan ones if you want.” I kind of frame it as part of all of those things, and then it’s kind of just one piece, as opposed to *the* piece. And I found that that has kind of not turned problematic. I tend to get along really well with all of the learners.

A minority of participants in social science and humanities disciplines whose courses included material related to Jews, Israel, and the like, or who anticipated discussions on these topics, opted to disclose their stigma to their students. Oscar, an assistant professor in social sciences in the prairie provinces, articulated that:

Students are funny. I regularly make mention of being Jewish as a way of contextualizing some things in [social science]. So, like, I’ll critique capitalism by showing them how on YouTube music, or on Apple iTunes, or something, I’ll be marketed Kanye West music, and I’ll say, “See, if you’re rich, there’s no such thing as cancel culture.”, blah blah blah. So, they know I’m Jewish, and no one has ever said anything or done anything that has indicated to me that they have any kind of real animus towards Jews.

Jack, a full professor in humanities in the Atlantic provinces, also reported a neutral reception to his disclosure of his stigma in the classroom:

I will very openly say [that I am Jewish] when it comes up. Like the other day, for example, the experience of Jews in Spain came up in a class, and I said, “I am Jewish, and I can speak to that a little bit to you.” ...I don’t hide it...As I said, [the students at my university] tend to be a bit more conservative, from what I can see, and I don’t think they really care...I’ve heard of colleagues in other schools, like [the other university in the province] that have had students coming in with Palestinian flags and screaming at them

and stuff. I've never had any of that, not even close. I've never had any student make a remark of any kind that was antisemitic, openly anyway, in the class.

Most participants in social science and humanities disciplines whose courses included material related to Jews, Israel, and the like, or who anticipated discussions on these topics, and whose students were unaware of their stigma, opted for other approaches. Several participants elected, or considered, to stop teaching these courses, as Asher, an assistant professor in social sciences, said, "I used to teach the [social science class on human rights]. I've told my department head that I don't want to offer that class anymore." Others, such as Anna, a full professor in humanities in central Canada, modified the course content to reduce the risk of the occurrence of these discussions:

Post-October 7, I removed any content relating to Zionism and Israel. There is a grad course on European identities, and they have a segment on European Jews. [This Holocaust historian] is a Holocaust historian that we normally include, and we were debating whether to include him. We decided no since he goes to Israel and talks about getting disenchanted with how Israel is shaping up. We did not want to get into a discussion of how Israel has handled the Palestinian question.

Many adopted a position of neutrality in the classroom, as Gideon, a full professor in social sciences explained: "I'm very much neutral. I have had students who show up with keffiyehs and pins that show the State of Israel as Palestine, and I remain totally neutral on it. I'm really careful not to enter into that discussion."

7.1.5. Information Management in Research Settings

No participants reported engaging in information management strategies for presenting or publishing research, however, some either concealed, omitted, or

strategically disclosed their stigma in funding applications. Craig, an assistant professor in humanities who taught Jewish Studies courses, explained that when he conducted research and applied for grants in a Middle Eastern country hostile to Jews, he “[tried] to scrape any mention of the fact that [he was] Jewish, or, definitely, that [he has] any connection to Israel.” Jacqueline, an associate professor in medicine, recounted that she had written a positionality statement for a grant proposal that disclosed her Jewish identity, but “then thought better of it, and [ended up] taking it out because it was for a grant proposal, and [she] wasn’t sure how it would land.” Eva, a full professor in social sciences, strategically disclosed her Jewish identity in a letter to a senior administrator at her university asking for funding for a Jewish studies project:

I made the argument in my letter that my being Jewish was going to be part of the calculus; not just my being Jewish, but that [my university] is on fire with antisemitism. “I have written you letters of complaint about it, so now you have to take me seriously and give me this money.” I didn’t write it like that, but that was the gist of it. I said it much more nicely than that. “This would go a long way to sending a message to our community if you would support me in [funding this research project on a Jewish topic].” And [the senior administrator] did give me money...I feel pretty confident that, at any other time, I probably wouldn’t have got the money. It felt like she couldn’t say no because of the context that we’re in...I felt glad that she got that message.

7.1.6. Information Management in Online Settings

Most participants did not actively engage in information management strategies in online settings, namely, social media. They either did not use it frequently or for political purposes, or they opted not to disclose any information about their Jewish identity due to anticipated

stigmatization. For example, Heather stated, “I absolutely cannot think of a bigger nightmare than to engage in social media in any conversation on this topic, and I don’t.”

Jacqueline detailed how she mitigated the anticipated stigmatization through concealment of her identity on social media:

I closed down my account on X that was tied to my name, and I created an account with a different name and a Gmail that goes nowhere so that I can follow what I want to follow on social media and see what’s happening without any risk of being accused of being this way or that way because of who I follow on social media and who I don’t follow on social media. So, with my fake account, I can follow the IDF and see their updates on what’s happening in the war. With my real account, I couldn’t have done that.

Saul, a clinical instructor in medicine in the West Coast, recounted how he disclosed his Jewish identity on his social media:

In the first 6 months after October 7, I wrote one of the only Facebook posts that’s political that I’ve ever written, which was basically to repost something that someone else had posted, saying, “If you’re wondering why you haven’t heard from your Jewish friends, it’s because you haven’t reached out.”

The interplay between the variables (e.g., geography, academic discipline, professional rank, etc.) and the contexts (e.g., among colleagues, students, etc.) determined the method of information management the discreditable Jewish faculty members could employ. Most participants in STEM could engage in information management with minimal effort. Participants in humanities, social sciences, and to some degree, law and medicine, in comparison, reported a more active effort to pass or selectively disclose their stigma.

7.2. Tension Management

Those who cannot conceal their stigma or who elect to disclose it employ adaptive strategies to limit the obtrusiveness of their stigma and membership to their in-group (Goffman, 1963: 102). Referred to as “covering”, these strategies of the discredited resemble that of the discreditable (Goffman, 1963: 102). For example, they may engage in assimilative techniques that mimic the attempts to pass by the discreditable (Goffman, 1963: 103). At other points, they may withdraw from, or avoid, certain situations or relationships that elicit anticipated stigmatization and retreat to their in-group, where they do not need to engage in information or tension management (Goffman, 1963: 99). Jewish faculty members who disclosed their stigma out of necessity (i.e., working with administrators to address antisemitism) or who could not conceal it due to their identifiably Jewish name, appearance, or academic research or discipline, covered in various settings.

7.2.1. Tension Management on Campus

Most participants limited their time and visibility on university campuses due to anticipated stigmatization. Many Jewish faculty members, such as Eva in central Canada, relayed their refusal to come to campus during antisemitic activities:

I won't go to campus when there's a protest because they're violent and I'm afraid of getting trapped. People have been trapped in their offices. They've had to hide under their desks. They've locked the doors to their offices with protesters on the other side trying to break in. That's an invasion. That's not a protest; that's an invasion. I feel unsafe, and I won't go if there's any whiff of a protest [on campus].

Another participant at the same university as Eva shared a similar sentiment:

There are certain places in the university where I just won't go – I boycott them...I don't go there, and I don't buy things from them, and I avoid them at all costs. And there are certain buildings, like the one where I actually experienced a violent antisemitic incident.

I won't even go to those buildings. I'll avoid them if I can.

Several Jewish faculty members also reduced office hours or even had their information removed from the campus website. Aviva, a full professor in social sciences in central Canada with an identifiably Jewish last name, explained how the stabbing incident at Waterloo University in June 2023³⁴ and the October 7 massacre shaped her anticipated stigmatization and consequent decision:

I remember at some point, I had this moment where we were about to post all the classes and who's teaching what on our campus website. And our chair just said, "If anyone doesn't want their name posted as the professor of this class, you need to let me know."

And I thought about it, and I'm like, OK, which thing am I not posting it for? I did take my name off. Is it because I'm a feminist or is it because I'm Jewish? I guess it's both.

Justin, a full professor in law in central Canada, and who ran a joint course with an Israeli university, shared that after the encampment at his university started, "For the first time, I took identifying information about where the class was being held off the internet." He further stated that he continued this practice the following year.

Samson, a full professor in the West Coast who conducted research in Israel, represented a case of a discredited Jewish faculty member who could not as easily cover due to his high visibility from his academic discipline and the campaigns targeting him

³⁴ For a summary of this incident, see CBC News, 2023.

on campus. He articulated his dilemma: “I just feel like there’s no quarter right now, there’s no safe place to hide [on campus].”

7.2.2. Tension Management Among University and Hospital Administrators

Participants who dealt directly with university and hospital administrators described the tension management strategies they employed during these interactions. Jared, a full professor in STEM in central Canada, described how his time in senior administration on his campus afforded him the diplomacy strategies to address antisemitism on campus: “I’m also quite careful about how to talk with people to avoid conflict, to find ways of actually helping people move forward without making them feel attacked.” He further expressed his strategic disclosure of his stigma: “I don’t try to club people over the head with [my Jewish identity and Zionist values]. Where it’s appropriate to bring it up, then I am happy to bring it up.” Jacqueline, an associate professor in medicine who also held a university administrative position, similarly expressed how her prior administrative roles shaped her tension management strategies:

The analogy I use when talking about this issue with many people is that I’m way more Mossad than Tzahal³⁵...I blend in without giving up who I am, but I say it as much as I can in a way that that can be heard.”

She elaborated on the translation of this strategy to her actions:

I don’t write [to the senior administrators] about everything. I get upset internally about a lot of things that I don’t get upset about externally, because I kind of consider those not the hill to die on. And what I personally have been working towards all through this process is an insistence that antisemitism is present, it is real, it has to be named, and it has to be fought, and that the university has a role in all of that. And I’ve seen that as

³⁵ Hebrew acronym for the Israeli Defence Forces.

being a long game and not a short game. So, there is no email that I've ever written expecting it to result in them fixing it or doing a specific thing, but more, everything I've expressed was really to try to help them understand how deep the problem is, and how different the lived experience of Jews is on campus than what they would imagine.

Because I really think you can't solve a problem you can't name and you can't understand. That's one of my strengths, is framing things in a way people can understand.

Craig, an assistant professor who taught Jewish Studies courses in the prairie provinces, and who regularly served as a liaison between the Jewish community on campus and the university administration, too took pride in his ability to minimize tension. However, he also expressed his frustration with the university administration's evasiveness in granting Jewish students on campus access to a room they could use to safely "mourn" after October 7:

This is a prime example of me trying to feel like, how do I prove to [the university administration] that this matters, and not in a way where I become bad? I can't accuse them of the antisemitism that I think that they're playing into. That wouldn't work. Then they'd not respond well, and they'd think of me as a bad Jew...and I'll lose credibility. Because what I'm saying is that antisemitism is ubiquitous, and people can't hear that...Trying to point out to other people on campus that this [refusal to grant Jewish students access to a safe room] arises from an antisemitic way of thinking about Jews in relation to Zionism and this conflict, I don't think that that's a message that I can give to them, and that they will hear...so I won't do it.

Saul, who had experienced antisemitic discrimination from the hospital administration, and who also feared the reaction an accusation of antisemitism would provoke, explained his strategy:

I took the attitude that I was going to work with this [hospital administrator] and not draw any more attention to myself. I was going to be cowed, because I thought that's what they want. And so, I worked with this person, he set several meetings, we talked, I tried to do my best to be politically neutral, and never mention anything that might be problematic, and just try to end the thing as quick as possible...And so, the best thing for me to do [was to] try to lean into the circle that I can trust, and try to keep away from senior leadership if I can, because they're malignant and dangerous. They're dangerous for patients, and they're dangerous for Jews.

7.2.3. Tension Management Among Colleagues

Relative to those in STEM, Jewish faculty members across humanities, social sciences, law, and, to varying degrees, medicine, reported higher rates of employing tension management strategies. Several participants in these disciplines expressed that after witnessing their colleagues' antisemitism, they emotionally divested from the relationship. Levi, an assistant professor in medicine in the Atlantic provinces, shared:

I always knew [my colleague in the hospital] was kind of wacky. He's had a Palestinian flag – he's Caucasian and is of [Western European] heritage – but he's had a Palestinian flag on his car for 20 years, so I've always known that he supports Palestine. I don't have a problem with that. Nothing wrong with supporting Palestine. But then, when I saw him post a few things on social media that I perceived as really ignorant and antisemitic, I have dealt with it the following way: when I go to work, my job is singular. I'm there to care for people. Nothing more. That's it...So, before I saw some of his awful posts, I'd be a bit chit-chatty with him. But now, I'm less chit-chatty with him, and I just go to work, and care for people.

Ellie, an adjunct professor in humanities in the prairie provinces, articulated a similar sentiment:

For me, I have no interest in being friendly with people at the university. Although, in different places, I do have colleagues that I'm absolutely fine with. It's just, I wouldn't be a friend outside of the university. I would say my interactions are collegial...It's just collegial unless they have identified as anti-Zionist and they hate me.

Anna, a full professor in humanities in central Canada, not only emotionally distanced herself from colleagues who behaved antisemitically, but also physically distanced herself from them. She recounted that after one of her colleagues, whose office was opposite hers, signed a letter supporting the encampment at her campus, she asked the department chair to "move [her] to a different office." She added, "Now, I'm in a smaller and darker office just so I don't have to look at this guy's face." Simone, an associate professor in medicine in the West Coast, went even further than Anna by changing academic disciplines and workspaces on campus:

I kind of decided that I actually wanted to leave [my medical field] because I didn't feel that I wanted to continue interacting with the same group of people, and I had an opportunity to go and move to a different working environment...The workplace that I'm transitioning to right now, and again, I didn't really know just how many Jews it has until after October 7, but I kind of realized that it had a large Jewish presence there after October 7. It was almost therapeutic to actually be able to have conversations with people there about their experiences, about my experience, to kind of support each other. That has been nice. And that's part of the reason why I've decided to leave my current workplace and go there specifically, because I know that it's a supportive environment.

Other participants who felt that their colleagues would not change their minds requested that they avoid discussing Israel or antisemitism. Some participants tried to manage the tension by gently

challenging colleagues who they were friendly with or who they thought may be amenable to an earnest discussion. Eden, an adjunct professor in social sciences in central Canada, explained:

If you start with the Zionism radical stuff, they're not going to even have a conversation with you...I told [these Jewish colleagues], "You're not getting anywhere. You're shouting into the wind. They're just going to exclude you further, particularly in a university setting." ...What I do is stir the pot or poke a little bit, because that's the only way you're going to navigate, at least in [my social science discipline] I work in, that's the only way that you're going to get heard.

Hillary, an associate professor in law in central Canada, described her depersonalization strategy to manage tension between herself and her colleagues:

I've been very careful to couch everything in sort of general terms...and to not make it my position, but more like, I am presenting to you, you've come to me because you are asking about X. X is the position...I had a colleague when I was teaching who was on their way to go to Lebanon, and the conference they were going to was going to be co-sponsored by Hezbollah. And she came back, and she was like, "So, everyone at this conference was talking about the one-state solution.", as if I'd never heard of this before, right? And she's like, "Can you tell me a little bit about this one-state solution and why it's not acceptable? Because it seems like such a reasonable post-nationalist answer to a problem." Forget the naivete of her not knowing who her conference sponsors were, and the confusion over Hezbollah as a government, who was actually running the con anyway. She didn't do any due diligence, so that's on her. But I couched my responses to her as, like, "Well, you have to understand the Israeli government position is X because of Y. They believe their position is based on the fact that demographics, and this is what

would happen, and so they will never go down the road of a one-state solution, and that's still the case 15 years later. They have reasons why this is not a starter of a conversation.” Craig, an assistant professor who taught Jewish Studies courses in the prairie provinces, adopted a similar strategy to Hillary when appealing to his department for flexibility during Jewish holidays:

I made a strategic decision to advocate that our department, for instance, just sends out a message: “Reminder: today is Simchat Torah.”, or whatever, which is also the real anniversary of October 7, which I wouldn't say. But I actually used all the examples to make this argument: Muslim holidays, because it was easier to convince people to respect Muslim holidays...and Hindu as well, [to ensure] that we were going to have announcements when major holidays were coming up, and ask faculty to be flexible if people miss class, late assignments, whatever. And I kind of tagged the Jewish part to the end of that, because I knew, strategically, that that was the way to get people on board. Because if I just said, “It was really frustrating that it was Rosh Hashanah, and then Yom Kippur, and then Sukkot, and then Simchat Torah”³⁶ – this is the culture of it's OK to be ignorant - people would be like, “What? What stupid holidays that I've never heard of that I don't care about.” I think that's what a lot of people's reaction would have been.

Numerous participants avoided faculty department meetings because they worried about incurring consequences for their discredited identity. Others limited participation in these meetings. For example, Arik, a full professor in social sciences in central Canada with an

³⁶ These Jewish holidays occur in quick succession during September and October. Rosh Hashanah marks the start of the Jewish New Year in the Hebrew calendar. Yom Kippur is considered the holiest day of the year for Jews and involves a 25 hour fast and spending the day in synagogue asking for forgiveness. Sukkot is a weeklong Jewish holiday that celebrates the gathering of the harvest and commemorates the shelter God provided to the Israelites when they left Egypt. Simchat Torah is a joyous Jewish holiday that celebrates the conclusion and restarting of the Torah-reading cycle. The Torah commands Jews to rest during Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, the first two days of Sukkot, and on Simchat Torah.

identifiably Jewish name, explained how in 2021, “there was this move to decolonize the curricula and to make sure that there are anti-racism or anti-oppression themes running throughout coursework.” He elaborated that, in 2023:

There was subsequently a discussion in the division about the decolonizing, and I didn’t raise it, but I’d always wondered, “OK, what about the Jews when it comes to anti-oppression and teaching that? Mostly it’s BIPOC people, Black, Indigenous, and other People of Colour.” I wasn’t that concerned about it, and I didn’t think that it would be well-received by my colleagues if I’d had brought it up.

Jewish faculty members, irrespective of academic discipline, whose faculty associations engaged in antisemitic activities (e.g., proposing or adopting BDS motions), reported avoided attending meetings or otherwise participating in their association. Scott, a full professor in STEM in the Atlantic Provinces, whose faculty association passed a BDS motion, stated: “I am outed as a Jew within my department. Other people know I’m Jewish. I don’t broadcast it broadly, especially in these times. Would I feel safe on campus if I was speaking out at the union about Israel? Probably not.”

7.2.4. Tension Management Among Students in the Classroom and Clinical Setting

Visibly Jewish participants by name, appearance, or discipline, or those whose Jewish and Zionist identity was widely known through disclosure, adopted tension management strategies in classroom and clinical settings. Romi, an assistant professor in social sciences in the West Coast with an identifiably Jewish name, and whose discipline emphasized disclosing positionality, recounted how for one class:

I did a case study around protest in [a Canadian city], and I did a case study around a teacher in [my province], that had a test. One of the questions was, “Should Israel exist?”

So, I bring it to the class. I usually feel that the students are overall open. I don't feel any backlash against me. I'm also doing it very carefully, not because I have to, but because I think, as an educator, because this is a very contentious time, and I can totally get that, people might have strong reactions and emotions. So, I want to help navigate complexity in a respectful way. So, let's say, if I do a case study, I would say, "Although I'm Israeli or Jewish, this is an open discussion. I'm doing the best that I can to put my voice at the back, and I'm very happy to hear what you think."

Arik articulated a similar sentiment: "I do talk about being Jewish and about being Israeli, and about being both oppressed and oppressor, both in my being in Israel and in Canada. I always make that very clear. I don't hide who I am." Arik also shared that:

Immediately post-October 7, 2023, I was teaching a large course in [social sciences], which is a required course for almost all [graduate] students...In that class, I have Jewish students, Israeli students, Palestinian students, Muslim students, all accounts of students, very diverse. And I didn't know what to do. It's not a topic of the course and I didn't feel that I could not acknowledge it in some way. I also didn't feel like I could say anything. So, I decided at the beginning of the course just to hold a moment of silence for all students to think of whoever they wanted to think about and their suffering. At that time, I didn't know what the reaction was going to be, but the only feedback I got was appreciation. I was afraid at that point. In my heart, I wanted to say something about the massacres of Israelis and others on October 7, and I didn't feel that I could...I was afraid of pushback from the students who were not Israeli and not Jewish, and who may be feeling differently, particularly Palestinians and other Muslim students, and other liberal

enlightened students who may have, been feeling like, “Yeah, Jews got massacred, but look at what the Jews have been doing to Palestinians all these years.”

Some participants recounted how they adopted assimilative techniques in the classroom setting.

Deborah, a professor emerita in social sciences in central Canada with an identifiably Jewish name, stated:

I don’t think I was very open about my Jewish identity to the students, whereas I could be more open about my biracial identity and how that would affect my [social science] perspective. But talking about how my Jewish identity affects my [social science] perspective didn’t feel very safe.

Delilah, an associate professor in STEM in central Canada, hid her stigma symbol (i.e., Magen David necklace) “when dealing with students in [her] class who had keffiyehs.” She outlined these instances:

It’s like with this one student I did it because I was more nervous, or I had another student who has family in Gaza, who I needed to give accommodations for them to finish their courses. I was happy to do so obviously – their family is struggling there, and I did not want them to feel uncomfortable with me as a professor either.

Ellie, an adjunct professor in humanities in the prairie provinces, whose public advocacy against antisemitism on campus made her discredited identity known, shared how she covered to try to decrease the tension with a student in her classroom:

This student was really aggressive about every single thing that was about Israel. She’s from [the Middle East]...I felt like I was going to be penalized, that she was going to get me in trouble if I say anything. So, I kind of just, to some degree, felt like I had to inflate her marks, and just let it go on some level, which later on, I’ve moved away from. I found

I just didn't know how to do it tactfully to encourage them to think more. But every day, she was bringing it up, wearing the items. I felt that I was being trapped. I just tried to, every day, greet her with a smile and say, "Hi, how are you?", or see her in the halls, and be as nice and not fall into what she wanted me to be. I felt like she wanted to trap me and kind of incriminate me on some level for being Zionist and for not allowing her to have her views, and I never did that.

Participants who taught Jewish Studies courses, thus making their stigma apparent, employed various tension management strategies in the face of anticipated stigmatization from students. Walter, an associate professor in central Canada, whose course content typically did not include discussion of the modern State of Israel, disclosed:

I just avoid Israel because I just don't need the hassle. The same as everybody else – when it can be avoided, I avoid it. I find if you mention the word "Israel", everyone in the room gets dumber immediately, no matter who they are, left, right, whatever. Everyone just starts reciting something they've memorized rather than thinking for themselves.

Kayla, an associate professor in central Canada who taught courses that discussed Zionism, adopted a different technique:

I stopped teaching directly about Zionism...I show Zionism, and then I'll show all these different definitions of it...But that was directly in response to these things going on. I felt like I can't teach about that directly anymore because people start throwing temper tantrums. Again, it's not the whole class. Most of them are fine, and most of them are not impacted by the problematic things that I talk about...It's just a really select loud few, but that, in turn, normalizes certain behaviors that are really problematic, in my opinion.

Another professor in central Canada who taught Jewish Studies courses explained how she taught one of her courses on the history of Israel in 2025 online asynchronously “so that [she] didn’t have to be in a classroom and dealing with potential hate.” She additionally mentioned that she felt less comfortable teaching on Islam in her courses because “we’ve had a lot more self-identifying Muslim students in the class...and I feel like I just am opening myself up to all kinds of pushback and accusations of bias just from the fact that I’m a Jew.” Samson, a full professor in humanities in the West Coast, expressed that he did not feel safe teaching on campus because of the relentless campaigns against him on campus due to his research in Israel. His department head agreed with his assessment and offered him the option to teach virtually rather than in person. Samson did not feel that was fair to the students and instead opted to use his research funds to buy himself out of teaching.

Participants in other disciplines and settings whose public advocacy against antisemitism or their name made their stigma known also modified their teaching practices. Einat, a full professor in humanities in central Canada with an identifiably Jewish name, withdrew from teaching after her students at her campus pushed the research institute to adopt a BDS motion. She articulated that:

[The vote] was a very, very disheartening moment, because I couldn’t face them. I didn’t face them, which is not like me at all, because usually, I speak up. And I canceled the class. I was going to teach last semester, and I’m not going to teach anymore those classes.

Levi, an assistant professor in medicine in the Atlantic provinces, explained why he stopped taking students for supervision in his private practice:

I am disgusted at what's happening in the medical school with DEI initiatives, with lowering the bar for admissions based on race. The number of White men going to medical school is at an all-time low. The ideology of the students coming through are so activist-based. I'm very openly Jewish, and I just don't want these students coming through my office. I tolerate them in the [hospital department]. Why? Because in my [private] practice office, I'm the boss. I'm not a team member...It's my office, I'm the boss, I control everything. It's a silo. It's a metaphor that we use – I work in a silo in my office, and the [hospital] department is a fishbowl. The only way I would stop taking students in the [hospital department] is for me to go to my boss and say, "I'm not prepared to take students anymore", and ask for an accommodation to not teach. And I'm not prepared to do that.

Shaina, a full professor in medicine in the prairie provinces whose discredited identity was known due to her anti-antisemitism activism, took an approach more similar to that of the professor in central Canada:

I have some students who are Muslim, but I don't treat them any differently than any other student. I have to admit though, I have requested not to do [oral medical school] exams of students that I know are Muslim because I don't want there to be any thought that there could be any, if someone doesn't do well, that perhaps it was more of an ethnic thing.

A minority of participants anticipated students becoming out of control in the classroom to the point where participants needed security to manage the tension. One professor in social sciences in central Canada shared that she "was aware that [her students] were involved in shouting down Jewish talks on campus." She consequently requested a security guard in her classroom when she

delivered her remarks about BDS and academic freedom – after which students reacted by verbally abusing her and walking out in protest. Seth, a full professor in social sciences in the prairie provinces, and whose public advocacy against antisemitism on campus made him a target of online campaigns by students to disrupt his class, began his classes with undergraduate students by saying:

“Should the Students for Palestine actually carry through on their posted thread on Instagram, and they do come to this classroom, here’s what’s going to happen: class will be over. I ask you to all quickly put your bags together or put your computers and your bags and all your stuff away, and we will leave the classroom. I want you all to dial 911 when you do this... You have every right to leave the door. No one can stand between you and that door. It’s unlawful confinement. So, you leave the door whichever way you want, and I will be leaving that door. If someone’s between me and that door, I’m going to remove the person from me and that door.”

7.2.5. Tension Management in Research Settings

Visibly Jewish faculty members employed a myriad of tension management strategies in the context of research. Several participants in social sciences and humanities reported not attending certain academic conferences due to the occurrence of antisemitic events there. Others shared that their spoiled identity limited opportunities for research collaboration on their campuses, including necessitating the withdrawal from certain research institutes, as Leonard, a full professor in humanities in the prairie provinces who researched antisemitism, explained:

I had to withdraw from the [humanities research institute] at [my university], because I felt that the environment, including other researchers, was becoming hostile to Jewish

community identity and Zionist identity, and that my research would not only not be welcome, but would be excluded.

Other participants who conducted research on antisemitism or Jewish topics that referenced or took place in Israel, or that required collaboration with Israeli scholars articulated their challenges in tension management. One participant, a full professor in humanities in central Canada who conducted a research project with an undergraduate student on antisemitism at her university, shared:

When I'm trying to get some information for the student, for instance, I went to the campus safety office to try to get some information about how people who make complaints, like what the process is if somebody makes a complaint about anything in general. And so, I did mention to him that I was working with a student, and I wanted to know if I could send the student to talk to him...about campus processes for these kinds of things. And I found that I was careful not to say that she was going to be looking at antisemitism because I wasn't sure what kind of reaction he might have...That was me self-censoring. It had nothing to do with anything he said. I'm aware that it's a bit of a trigger point for a lot of people.

Other participants that required funding from their universities or governmental agencies, such as the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), described the process for reducing the anticipated tension related to their proposed project. Kayla, an associate professor in humanities in central Canada, said that she was "very careful to talk about bridge building and not mention any forbidden words" that may jeopardize the chances for obtaining funding for her Jewish performing arts project from her university. Samson detailed a similar strategy for getting his university to sign off on his SSHRC grants:

I foreground [my grant application] by talking about how we operate within Israel proper, we're within the Green Line. It's not even something that people would even think to ask about before, but I feel like I need to foreground it. That's A. B, I foreground how diverse the [Israeli university] side of the team is; I make a point of telling them that we have the [Israeli university] staff, the graduate students, and the students are Palestinian citizens of Israel, Palestinians from East Jerusalem...So, I start by saying, "This is a project where Jews, Christians, Muslims, Palestinians, Israelis, people from East Jerusalem, people from Israel, people from Canada, this is where people actually talk. This is where people actually get to know each other. You live and work together in the 35-degree heat. You get to know people. You eat together every three meals a day, every day, you do your laundry together, you get to know people. This is exactly the kind of thing that brings people together and generates understanding." So, this is how I foreground the project now. Whereas before, I felt like I just would just dive into the [research topic].

Craig modified his SSHRC proposal to omit mention of traveling for conferences to Israel, in addition to North America and Europe, to increase the likelihood of obtaining the grant.

All Jewish faculty members who conducted research on antisemitism reported that they strategically crafted their proposals to, as Romi put it, "be accepted by SSHRC as worthy of [studying]." These participants tried to frame their proposals in the most neutral terms, such as not using the highly contested International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism. Romi further mentioned, "When I'm going to publish [my research on antisemitism], I'm going to write it in a way to make sure that this is accepted without sacrificing the truth...I will package it in a way that will make it readable." Some participants who considered researching antisemitism or anything related to Israel, such as Oscar, lamented:

I have certainly felt dissuaded from studying things related to Israel because I am certain that I would be required to stake my personal opinion and my affiliation regarding the State of Israel in any application. And I do think that's a real problem. Knowing what I do about SSHRC and knowing what I do about people who are on SSHRC boards, if you wanted to study North Korea, you would not be expected to say, "North Korea is a bad dictatorship that I don't like." But I am pretty much convinced that you would have to make extremely clear how much you disagree with Israel on matters of policy if you were going to study something related to Israel.

7.2.6. Tension Management in Online Settings

Approximately 25 percent of the 40 participants engaged in tension management strategies in online settings, namely, social media. These participants withdrew from online acquaintances and professional networks, as Asher, an assistant professor in social sciences in the West Coast, explained:

I have a lot of people in my network who I have unfollowed, deleted, or blocked because of things that they posted. When it comes to social media, I have a very itchy trigger finger when it comes to blocking people with regards to that. For a long time, people were posting Palestinian flags as their Instagram picture, or something like that. For me, I don't want that in my life. I don't want to see what else you have to say. I'll just unfollow you.

Other participants removed themselves from professional and academic groups on social media to manage tension, as Jacqueline, an associate professor in medicine in central Canada, detailed:

There are many online physicians' groups, like Facebook groups, where the antisemitism was appalling. Now, I'm no longer appalled, I'm just disappointed. And I've actually left

several because they were so toxic. It just wasn't good for me to be there. Which is kind of excluding myself from some professional spaces that could otherwise be of value, because there were things of value in the space. But because I'm not going to be a silent witness to this, and anyone who tried to speak up got booted from the group, anyway, so there was kind of no point.

Some participants whose public advocacy against antisemitism made them the frequent target of online harassment ended up deleting their profiles, as one described:

I used to have a public X account, and on October 7, I received, not from colleagues or anybody in my university community, but online, because I had a public account, I received threats of violence on the platform. After, I just decided, because my account was public, just to remove it from being public, and then left the platform.

Compared to the discreditable participants whose invisibility as Jews afforded them the opportunity to engage in information managements strategies, the discredited participants employed adaptive strategies to limit the obtrusiveness of their stigma. Their visibility as a Jew due to their name, appearance, academic discipline, public advocacy against antisemitism, or their disclosure of their stigma necessitated covering in various contexts to reduce tension.

Participants who worked alongside or were part of university administrations, or whose disciplines necessitated disclosure (i.e., through emphasis on positionality or in the case of Jewish Studies) had to carefully and diplomatically navigate these interactions. Others who sought to minimize their visibility as Jews, by contrast, reduced their involvement on campus and withdrew from relationships.

7.3. Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a comprehensive overview of how micro-, meso-, and macro-level variables (i.e., geography, university leadership, academic discipline, professional rank, (in)visibility as Jews, and intersecting identities), shaped Jewish faculty members' negotiation of their identity on campus among administrators and colleagues, students, and in research and online settings. The discreditable, or participants who could conceal their Jewish identity, engaged in information management strategies, like passing and selective disclosure. The discredited, or participants whose name, appearance, academic discipline, research, or advocacy made their stigma known, employed tension management techniques by covering. The next, and final, results chapter examines Jewish faculty members' oscillation between identity ambivalence and strengthened self- and group-identification.

8. Results Chapter III. Identity Ambivalence and Strengthened Self-Identification

The previous three results chapters detailed how over the course of their moral career, Jewish faculty members learned of the existence of The Agreement and the consequences of transgression. This final results chapter examines participants' oscillation between identity ambivalence and strengthened self-identification. The first section explores how participants' concern with the behaviour of their in-group in Israel and in Canada shaped their identity ambivalence and need to engage in self- and group-identity management. The second section examines the ways in which participants experienced strengthened self- and group-identification, and the manifestations of this strengthened identification off and on campus.

8.1. Identity Ambivalence

Goffman (1963: 106-107) argues that the stigmatized persons' application of the learned standpoint of the normals to themselves results in a feeling of ambivalence or alienation from their stigmatized identity and in-group. To mitigate this dissonance, the stigmatized person tends to stratify others in their in-group who possess a more obtrusive and visible stigma (Goffman, 1963: 107). Members of their in-group behaving in a way they find distasteful in the company of normals additionally tends to elicit stratification and shame (Goffman, 1963: 107-108). Consequently, these stigmatized persons, concerned with the "purification" of their in-group, attempt to "normify" their own conduct and that of others (Goffman, 1963: 107-108).

Jewish faculty members' concerns with the purification of their in-group largely divided into two themes: 1) concern with Israel's conduct in the Israel-Hamas war; and 2) concern with the behaviour of Jews in Canada and on campus.

8.1.1. Concern with Israel's Conduct

Interviews with Jewish faculty members took place more than a year after the October 7 massacre and the ensuing war that resulted in the deaths of thousands of Gazan civilians. Increased incidents of Jewish settler violence in the West Bank since October 7, in addition to the death toll in Gaza, led to several Jewish faculty members expressing some level of identity ambivalence. Left-leaning participants, for example, who supported EDI or decolonization efforts in the university,³⁷ reported greater levels of identity ambivalence compared to more centrist or center-right participants. For example, Oscar, an assistant professor in social sciences in the prairie provinces, disclosed how his discomfort with Israel's response to October 7 shaped his stance as "Zionism agnostic":

I think that, if anything, the extraordinary response of the Israeli military to what happened on October 7 sort of made me less inclined to try and look at it from their perspective. I think I had been very open to looking at it from an Israeli-centric perspective in previous years in the hopes of sort of understanding both sides, but if anything, what happened was I sort of became less tolerant of what Israel was doing. And really, the change in my identity was that I got pushed further and further away from the belief that Israel had a relationship to Judaism, beyond Israel being an ethnostate, and in actuality, that I think Jews should embrace Diaspora.

Although other participants shared Oscar's concerns with Israel's conduct and government, they still identified as Zionist. Two such participants, one female and one male, with dual Israeli-Canadian citizenship and left-leaning politically articulated how their concerns over Israel's

³⁷ While the interview did not explicitly ask participants about how they identified politically, certain sentiments they expressed can provide an approximate understanding of their political identification. For example, support for EDI, decolonization efforts, non-binary conceptions of gender, as well as opposition to more hawkish approaches to war, are commonly associated with contemporary left-leaning politics in Canada.

conduct resulted in shame and identity ambivalence: “I find the situation in Gaza and in the West Bank just heartbreaking. Heartbreaking. I’m so ashamed as an Israeli, so furious on what is going on on behalf of my name. I think it’s unacceptable.” The male participant shared:

My feelings started to change when Israel decided to restart the war and to break the ceasefire. Since then, for me personally, things have only gone downhill. I have not spoken directly with any of my colleagues about this. I do feel differently now. I feel much more critical of Israel. I feel much more understanding of the viewpoints that my colleagues held at that time, and I try to avoid any conversation about it, because it’s too difficult for me.

When asked to clarify on what he meant by “things going downhill”, he responded: “Israel causing destruction, devastation, killing, starvation, with no results to speak of.” He said that he consequently “no longer would run to write the consul letters that [he] wrote at the time.” Jared, a full professor in STEM and a Jewish convert, also articulated a greater sense of identity ambivalence, as well as alienation from his in-group:

I believe that the behaviour and the policies of the current Israeli government has gone far beyond other cases and created a stronger anti-Israel anti-Zionist discourse here in North America than ever before...I’ve been strongly critical of the Israeli Government on the past practices, the various operations...This has been, by far, the worst. I think that it has created a situation where it’s difficult to actually defend Israel without somehow being interpreted as defending the activities of the Israeli government and what’s happening in Gaza. It’s very hard to be critical about Gaza and the Israeli activities there without feeling that you’re going to be tagged as being anti-Israeli or anti-Zionist. It just becomes increasingly difficult to be a Zionist.

Saul, a clinical instructor in medicine who identified as centrist, likewise detailed his concerns regarding Israel's conduct and the challenges in expressing support for Israel, but from a different angle:

The problem is that Israel is not fighting a PR war. They basically are like, "Well, we're Sabras."³⁸ We just do whatever we want to do, because fuck them." And that's a problem for the Diaspora Jews, because we are living in a PR war. We're not living in a bullets war in New York, or in Colorado. Sometimes it's bullets; it'll end up as bullets; it always starts as words. But we're losing that war bad... We're really losing in unions, we're losing in academic spaces, we're losing in hospitals. Diaspora Jews are really suffering, and it's because Israel hasn't really [fought a PR war]... We suck at that, and it's partly because we think that we don't have to care what people think about us. And in the Second World War, we didn't have a country, and we were homeless, and we had to live in our little ghettos, and then just walk into the gas chamber. We don't have to do that anymore, but we just do have to evolve just a little bit more, so that we actually realize pragmatically that we need to be running a PR war.

These growing concerns about Israel's conduct during the war and certain government policies from a humanitarian perspective, as well as the concern for how these events shape the reputation of Jews, particularly those who support Israel, are analyzed in the following chapter.

8.1.2. Concern with Jews' Conduct in Canada

Jewish faculty members of all political leanings expressed how their concern with Jews' conduct in Canada shaped their identity ambivalence, although they differed in

³⁸ Term for native-born Israeli that derives from the Hebrew word, tzabar, for the prickly pear cactus that grows in the region. In this context, it denotes a combination of self-assuredness, bluntness, confidence, and defiance – essentially, traits that characterize an unapologetic refusal to justify one's right to exist and defend themselves.

their concerns. Leftist political leanings strongly correlated with higher rates of concern with Israel's conduct and identity ambivalence. Consistent with this finding, more left-leaning participants articulated identity ambivalence due to greater concern with Jews in Canada who, they believed, supported Israel uncritically. For example, the same Israeli female participant cited in the previous section recounted the alienation she experienced in a WhatsApp group with other Israeli and Jewish academics:

Most of them have just gone rogue...I get it. They come from a good place. They want to protect Israel, and they want to fight antisemitism. But the lack of ability to see pain and suffering on the other side for me is so troubling...Sometimes when [the academics in this group] say something, I answer back, and I say, "Do you hear what you're saying?" But it's useless. I just do it when I have to do it, because I still want to be in this group, because I think it's important for collaboration and for doing things.

Eden, an adjunct professor in social sciences who declined to explicitly identify as a Zionist, but nonetheless believed in Israel's right to exist, articulated her alienation from the Jewish community and from the label of Zionist:

I comment about Palestinians and say, "I don't like kids being blown up", then I'm going to be considered an antisemite, or I'm going to be considered a Jew hater...I feel like, if you haven't sided with Zionism fully 100 percent, then you're not reliable.

Eva, a full professor in social sciences, also detailed the hostility she faced from some members of the Jewish community that led to identity ambivalence:

Sometimes, I find the Jews on this [right-wing] end are really quite intolerant. They voted for Poilievre, they think Trump is awesome, they think Bibi is awesome, and they're just as intolerant [as the anti-Israel side] in their own way...There's a WhatsApp group of

Jews at our university, and I removed myself recently because I was tired of being attacked, and I just had had enough of reading and hearing them say things that were often racist and unhelpful.

A participant who converted to Judaism mentioned how off-campus, and some on-campus, experiences (i.e., a Jewish student who dropped his course due to apprehension about the classroom discussions on Israel), made him feel so alienated from his in-group that he questioned his decision to join it:

[I realized] how much, for many religiously affiliated Jews, their religious identity is all tied up with Israel and how, over the past couple of years, that has meant for many of my fellow Jews, a real callousness about what's been happening to the Palestinians, both before and since October 7. And that really, at times, has made me question my choice to convert to Judaism because I did not sign on to be part of a religion, a core aspect of which is callousness toward another group of human beings.

Participants of all political leanings expressed concern that others in their in-group, at times, were overly sensitive and frivolously claimed antisemitism. Two male participants, both left-leaning and who reported greater feelings of ambivalence towards their Jewish identity and members of their in-group, stated that they felt that antisemitism did not constitute a major problem at their universities. At the end of their interviews, they made these sentiments explicit when they questioned the purpose and validity of this research study. One of these participants said:

At the very beginning of our conversation...you said in introducing [the project], "The study emerged because of the large amount of antisemitism that's been happening." I felt, from the beginning, when I learned about this study from two separate people, who were

encouraging me to approach you and be interviewed, I wondered whether this study is trying to tell one side of the story. And when you said that at the beginning, I felt that feeling strengthened. I'm not accusing you of anything; I'm just telling you my feelings about that. From my experience as a researcher...you're assuming that there has been a large spike in antisemitism, and some of your questions seemed to be suggesting [trails off]. No, you know what, I'm not going to say that...I don't know if you have a diverse team of researchers who have different perspectives on the issues, both in consideration of the questions asked, how they're asked, and interpreting the results that you get to make sure that you're looking at things in an even, unbiased way.

The other participant similarly emphasized:

I want to say about this whole study that I'm a little concerned that you were saying a moment ago that some people think Jews are, like, too into digging out any evidence of antisemitism. I feel a little bit that way about this study, I have to say, because if you start asking questions, like you have been asking very nicely in this study, "Can you think of any example of this? Or can you think of any time when that?" I mean, look, part of the Jewish experience is that we're a minority, and people do not know a lot about minorities, and they have misunderstandings about them, and they make assumptions...I want to really emphasize that I'm a visible Jew on this campus, and visible in different ways, right? I mean, there's the yarmulke and the beard, and there's the fact that anybody who knows me knows that I'm Jewish. And I feel safe on this campus. And I do not feel that, from my personal experience, antisemitism is an issue. And I would like that to come across really clearly. Because in response to the questions, I've kind of dug for examples of where I've been uncomfortable or troubled, and there are such examples, but they are

not representative of my experience...I want to make sure that that gets across when you write up the data.

Conversely, most participants, particularly those who reported strengthened self- and group-identification, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to discuss their experiences of antisemitism on campus. Several explained that they did not feel comfortable doing so amongst colleagues or friends, and one participant even mentioned seeking out counseling specifically with a Jewish therapist to mitigate the isolation she experienced on campus.

Moreover, Jewish faculty members who identified as centre-left, centrist, or centre-right were more likely to express contempt for others in their in-group perceived to be minstrelizing or engaging in normification. One centre-right Israeli participant in humanities provided an example of a colleague whom she perceived to be minstrelizing, i.e., consolidating their stigmatized identity into a clownish caricature that they performed for the entertainment of the normals (Goffman, 1963: 110): “As a Jew, everybody can tell she’s a Jew, because she acts very much like a sort of New York Jew. And she’s always apologizing for that.”

Participants more often witnessed other Jewish faculty members engaging in normification. Goffman (1963: 110-111) explains this process as the stigmatized persons who try to avoid being discredited by disclosing their stigma and subsequently, carefully covering to distance themselves from their in-group by emphasizing their similarities to the normals. In petitions, department and faculty association meetings, and on social media, participants described other Jewish faculty members disclosing their Jewish identity followed quickly by a denunciation of Israel, Zionism, and their Jewish supporters. One participant in central Canada explained this normification technique:

It's a very small [Jewish Studies] department; the younger colleagues want more and more to emphasize the Diaspora, and more and more to emphasize how wonderful the relations Jews had with others in the Diaspora... They want to kind of divest from Israel in general. It's just not a cool thing. The cool thing is to say, "OK, we don't care about [Israel]"... They think it's cool to be talking about Diasporism as an antidote kind of thing to Zionism.

She further explained the pitfall of Jewish faculty members who engaged in this normification in that they enabled antisemitism:

There's about a third that are Muslim or Arab Christians, maybe, who are upset about Israel. Then there's about a third who are radical left, and some of them are just antisemites, and neither Muslim nor Jews, and they're obsessed with Israel... They go with the radical left Jews, or even just some Jews who are not radical left, but are uncomfortable with being associated with Israel, and those Jews are the ones that provide the cover, the fig leaf, for the others to say, "Oh, no, I'm not an antisemite. I'm with Moishe and Rachel. We're all together fighting against the devil, Israel."

Danya, an associate professor in humanities in central Canada, likewise detailed how Jewish faculty members who engaged in these normification techniques and claimed to be representative of the Jewish community made it harder to address antisemitism on her campus:

[My Jewish colleague who identifies as post-Zionist] is the one who had the ear of the Dean, and who is constantly lobbying to have more of a voice because she considers herself to be an expert on Israeli-Palestinian relations, and therefore considers herself to be able to speak on behalf of Jewish faculty, which are completely different things in everybody else's mind, except for hers... But I know that because of her subject area

expertise, or self-proclaimed subject area expertise, she has the ear of the Administration more than just some Jewish faculty member who feels that anti-Zionist activity on campus is making them uncomfortable. And she would be the first to say that anti-Zionism is not antisemitism, despite how any of us might feel about how we're being treated, or the hostility that we're feeling.

Scott, a full professor in STEM in the Atlantic provinces, articulated a similar dilemma in the context of his faculty association:

It's difficult to deal with Jewish people standing up and essentially being anti-Zionists...[It] confuses people who aren't Jewish because they don't know who to believe. I have people who I know are Jewish, who will get up at the meeting, at the union, at the university, and say, "As a Jew." And they may be Jewish by birth, but that really doesn't cut it for me when that's their only association with being Jewish. And yet, they will stand up and portray themselves as being representative of Jewish people. And non-Jewish people do not know what to make of that.

Seth, a full professor in social sciences in the prairie provinces, spoke of a Jewish faculty member who engaged in normification as an "active member" of Independent Jewish Voices,³⁹ whom he viewed as "actively working against Jews" at his university. He said, "She's very involved, wearing the keffiyeh, and running around, [saying, 'from the] river to the sea'...I attribute [this behaviour] to possibly mental illness." Furthermore, most participants expressed their awareness of the transient and superficial nature of the phantom acceptance that Jewish

³⁹ Independent Jewish Voices (IJV) describes itself as a "grassroots organization grounded in Jewish tradition that opposes all forms of racism and advocates for justice and peace for all in Palestine-Israel." They have active chapters in Canadian cities and on university campuses and, among other positions, support the BDS movement. More information can be found here: <https://www.ijvcanada.org/about-ijv/>.

faculty members who engaged in minstrelization or normification obtained, as Gideon, a full professor in social sciences, explained:

I suppose [these Jewish faculty members] would be quote unquote accepted, but none of those that I know of are actually expressing their Judaism in a very visible way. So, it's interesting. I don't know if it's a Faustian bargain - I'll give up Israel and I'll be accepted - or they're actually giving up more than that.

These findings suggest that participants' political orientations largely influenced the content of their concerns with their in-group and the resulting identity ambivalence. Participants who identified as more left-leaning had comparatively higher rates of concern with Israel's conduct in the war, which led them to feel more ambivalent about their identity. Participants of all political orientations, however, voiced their concerns with the behaviour of Jews in Canada, including minstrelization, normification, and those they deemed overly sensitive to antisemitism or uncritically supportive of Israel. Participants' identity ambivalence therefore determined the degree to which they could dissociate from their in-group, or embrace it. The following section investigates the latter in relation to participants' strengthened self- and group-identification in the face of stigmatization.

8.2. Strengthened Self-Identification

The refusal to employ information or tension management strategies, including minstrelization or normification, and the replacement of shame with self-acceptance, mark the final and mature phase of the stigmatized person's moral career (Goffman, 1963: 102). Identity ambivalence and concern with in-group purification shaped the degree to which Jewish faculty members experienced strengthened self-identification. Feelings of vulnerability stemming from their visibility as Jews, their professional rank and job security, and their worries for their

physical safety shaped the expressions of their newfound self- and group-identification, such as advocating against what they perceived as antisemitism. Notably, however, all 40 Jewish faculty members reported that October 7 and their subsequent moral experiences resulted in, to varying degrees, strengthened self-identification and expressions of it. Equally significant, the social and professional costs to the full expression of Jewish identity on Canadian campuses led many to retreat to their in-group and to revalorize their Jewish identity within the safety of their own community.

8.2.1. Refusal to Engage in Information Management and Tension Management

Due to an internal conflict with their self- and group-identification, several Jewish faculty members, irrespective of discipline, professional rank, or political leaning, articulated their rejection of adhering to their prescribed role. These participants understood this role to encompass concealment of their Jewish identity or normification by denouncing Zionism. Romi, an assistant professor in social sciences and politically left-leaning, stated:

I will not denounce Zionism and say I'm anti-Zionist. I won't do it...I have some friends, like Muslim scholars and secular, but they keep on wearing the hijab. It is more like a political statement of showing that you can be a Muslim feminist and wear a hijab. For me, this is the same for Zionism now. Politically, I'm not going to say that I'm anti-Zionist because I'm not willing to be used.

Ellie, an adjunct professor in humanities who identified as more centre-left, similarly described resisting the pressure to engage in normification:

You have to show where you identify in order to be accepted, especially in the university. It's very much a mob mentality there. You have to perform who you are to be virtuous. At

this point, I'm very happy not to be included in that. I think that's disgusting. I'm very happy to be very visibly Zionist and to deal with that.

Saul, a clinical instructor who identified as more centrist, further detailed how his self-identification precluded him from guiltlessly employing information and tension management strategies:

Hide, let them butcher us, or assimilate. None of those are options for me. I'm not that kind of Jew...I could escape it. I could just put my head in the sand and not be part of those groups. But I can't. I don't have the option of putting my head in the sand.

Physically, spiritually, personally, who I am, like I said, I'm not the stateless Jew. I can't do that. I don't want to be that kind of a Jew.

Amira, an Israeli associate professor in humanities who identified as more centre-right, summarized how her self- and group-identification compelled her to openly disclose and normalize her identity:

When you are sure about your identity and what's right, people accept it as something normal. The problem is that we have many, many anti-Israel people who feel the same way about their anti-Israeliness. They feel they're completely right, and they present it as gospel truth. We're in a war; a war of opinions. I step up to that war, and I view myself as enlisted for the rest of my life in that war for public opinion.

8.2.2. Deeper Engagement with Jewish Identity and Community

Jewish faculty members, particularly post-October 7, expressed a "centering" of their Jewish identity, as, for example, Caleb, a full professor in STEM, articulated:

Prior to October 7, being Jewish was just one of the ways that I identified with myself, and it wasn't a thing that I thought about every day, or even every week. But since then,

it's like my primary identity. [It's the] first thing when I wake up every single day. It's just there always.

This centering of Jewish identity, or strengthened self- and group-identification, compelled participants to learn Hebrew, consume more Israeli culture, i.e., Israeli television series, and to learn more about their Judaism, Jewish history, Israel, and antisemitism through podcasts or readings. Participants reported undertaking the latter task for themselves, and, for those with children, to educate them on their identity, as Saul detailed:

I've become knowledgeable, because when my children came home early on in the conflict, they were asking me how come the Jews are "killing children and bombing hospitals", and everybody hates Jews at school. They showed me their curriculum handouts, and I read them, and they're just propaganda coming from the school. And so, I had to defend my children against this, and so I became an expert.

In addition to the deeper intellectual engagement with their identity, several participants reported increased observance of Jewish holidays, attending shul, and an overall more deliberate practicing of their Jewish identity, as Aviva, a full professor in humanities, illustrated:

I go to synagogue more often and involve my kids in Jewish things and make them attentive to it in a way that my parents didn't...I leaned a bit on my parents' Israeli-ness...and absorbed the Jewish aura, I guess. Well, now, I'm a Diaspora Jew that needs to model to my children that we are Jews and it's not something that is irrelevant to our lives just because we're not Orthodox and practicing.

Together, the antisemitism on and off campus that influenced the reactive self-identification of participants increased their participation in communal activities and their seeking out of Jewish

communities and the wise. Anna, a full professor in humanities who identified as more secular, acknowledged:

I suppose the good thing is [antisemitism was] an incentive to go and explore connections with Chabad. And so, I've made new connections and I'm in the process of becoming part of the Jewish community and exploring what Jewish identity might mean beyond being a deer in hunting season. So, there have been some good things coming out of it, but they shouldn't have to come out of it this way.

Samson, a full professor in humanities already active in the Jewish community in the West Coast before October 7, described who he sought out or kept in his social circle post-October 7:

I would say it's not necessarily [just] Jews, because it's people who understand Israel, understand the situations. That includes non-Jews. I find the social circles have changed. The friends who I've lost are the Jewish friends who...kind of want to apologize for everything that the university is doing. I find I can't be around them anymore, and who are not necessarily anti-Zionist.

The efforts by participants to create and foster a community they felt safe to express their pride in their identity can be summarized by Kayla, an associate professor in humanities:

I just cultivate the ones that are important and meaningful and just kind of move on [from the relationships that aren't]. I tell this to my students, I say, "This is how much time you have for this negativity, because some people just think it's like a black hole, they get sucked into it. They get embroiled in it, and I think we're only human, and we only have one life."

8.2.3. Increased Visibility on Campus

Jewish faculty members of various political leanings and academic disciplines consciously and deliberately made their stigma apparent on campus. However, professional rank and concerns about being targeted tempered some participants' ability and willingness to make their stigma known. Seth, a full professor in social sciences, represented the most militant case of public disclosure of his stigma. He articulated that, year-round, he and another Jewish colleague had visible Channukah displays in their campus offices. He also explained that he began the first class of every course with this acknowledgement:

“Hi. I’m your new prof. Welcome to the university. I want you to know, just while we start off, some of you might be on Instagram, and you saw my picture, and encouraging to come to my class and protest. And that we might have a group of students who come to our class and protest. One, I’m a very proud Jew. And two, I’m a very proud and staunch Zionist. If that’s a problem, go to [the other local university], or go online at [the other university], because I’m not going to listen to your bullshit. If you have some hate untoward me, you can fuck off.” I say this to my students, and I do it verbatim this way.

This is what you can do when you’re a full professor.

Other participants took a less confrontational approach to publicly disclosing their stigmatized identity. Simone, an associate professor in medicine thought it was inappropriate to wear “pro-Israel” garments at work so as not to “politicize the workplace”. However, after she saw a man at her working group’s Christmas party wearing a keffiyeh, she thought, “Well, if you’re going to do that, I’m going to do this”, and pinned her Israeli flag pin to her shirt. Delilah, an associate professor in STEM, recounted how she eventually donned a stigma symbol (i.e., Judaica) on campus:

I didn't wear any identifying things about being Jewish, jewelry or anything, for a long time. Maybe six months after October 7, I started first wearing a Hamsa. Then I start wearing my Magen David. I've also worn a "Bring Them Home"⁴⁰ necklace a few times, but that is one that I'm a lot more cautious in wearing. So now, I wear something almost every day. It took me time to feel more comfortable doing that.

Luke, an associate professor in humanities who taught Jewish Studies, detailed his decision to don stigma symbols (i.e., a kippah):

I wear my yarmulke all the time. There have been times in the past where I took it off for teaching. Since October 7, I've made a point of having it on all the time...I made a point of keeping the yarmulke on and being visibly Jewish because at a time where, clearly, in the broader environment, there was some anti-Jewish stuff going on, I wanted to be in solidarity with [Jews].

Participants who disclosed their Jewish identity publicly through stigma symbols also reported receiving appreciation from Jewish students, as Caleb, a full professor in STEM, recalled:

I've had students come up to me and just thank me for being openly Jewish. I had one student at the last course I taught [who sent me] an email saying, "I loved your course and it's great to have Jewish professors who are openly Jewish." Honestly, my course, it was like a second-year course in [STEM]. It had nothing to do with anything, and I never once made any comment about Judaism. All I did was wear a Magen David and that was enough to kind of inspire people to feel like they were part of a group of Jews.

⁴⁰ "Bring Them Home" was the slogan used by the Hostages and Missing Families Forum in their campaign advocating for the release of the Jewish and non-Jewish hostages taken on October 7, 2023, from Israel. Dog tags and necklaces donning this message were worn to show support and raise awareness.

8.2.4. Manifestations of Strengthened Self- and Group-Identification as a Faculty Member

Jewish faculty members expressed how their positions of influence and social capital in the university afforded them opportunities to counter antisemitism individually and collectively. Numerous participants in humanities or social sciences who, prior to October 7, did not research or teach about antisemitism or Jewish issues relayed that they began doing so, or strongly considered the possibility. Gideon, a full professor in social sciences, explained that he pivoted to researching antisemitism because of the urgency in addressing it and that “it’s a way to cope with [antisemitism].” He continued, “I feel it gives me some sense of control that I’m contributing in the way that I can.” Other participants who pivoted to the study of Jewish identity or antisemitism identified similar reasons, namely, supporting their community in their time of need.

Some tenured participants in humanities and social sciences who taught courses unrelated to Israel or Zionism, but who possessed a strong understanding of these topics, felt compelled to create courses on these topics to counter the misinformation spread by other faculty members on their campus. Tenure-track participants, however, felt less comfortable doing so for fear of student retaliation that could jeopardize their career.

Tenured Jewish faculty members in STEM and in social sciences deliberately sought collaboration with other Jewish and Israeli scholars in Canada and with Israeli universities. They invited them to guest lecture or sit on committees. Jared, a full professor in STEM, described how, after his faculty association passed a BDS motion, he formed an organization of academics “committed to Zionism” and “committed to being engaged with [Israeli universities].”

Participants incensed by what they perceived as unchecked antisemitism on their campus, moreover, leveraged their social capital as faculty members to individually and collectively

address antisemitism. More than 25 percent of the sub-sample's participants wrote letters to their administrations or to professional or academic representatives whom they perceived to be behaving antisemitically or enabling antisemitism. For example, several participants wrote to their university administrations requesting them to reject any BDS motions from the encampment organizers. Some participants wrote counter-petitions rebutting the BDS motions their faculty association proposed to adopt. A minority of participants became, or tried to become, involved in their faculty association Executive committee to prevent colleagues from proposing or passing BDS motions. A few participants joined EDI committees to advocate for the inclusion of antisemitism to their policies. More than half of the sub-sample's participants formed, or were part of, local, provincial, or national organizations of academics dedicated to combating antisemitism. Anna, a full professor in humanities in central Canada who, together with some Jewish colleagues, formed a university-specific organization to address antisemitism, shared how it mitigated her fear:

Instead of just sitting there being angry, I've gotten together with these colleagues and we're trying to do something...even if it doesn't lead anywhere. We are trying. So, also as a result of getting together with the others, I'm less frightened, which is totally irrational and silly because there isn't enough of us that we could really defend ourselves as we came to it. But somehow being with others makes you feel less frightened.

Saul, who joined a provincial Jewish medical association in the West Coast, articulated a similar sentiment:

The reason why we have this [provincial Jewish healthcare organization] is because if I really wanted to do something, I would tell the board, and they would write a letter from

all of us, and then none of us are singled out. That's the reason why we have things like that.

Eden, an adjunct professor in social sciences in central Canada, and who, together with colleagues in the same discipline, formed a Jewish organization to advocate for Jews' inclusion in EDI research and discussions, spoke of the effect it had on her and others:

[There have been] lots more conversations with people I would have never met before, which is really interesting. And it's almost like this collective consciousness, like everybody's experiencing the same thing almost at the same time. It's weird because I may be here, and somebody may be at [another university]...and we all are experiencing almost the very same things...It's built a subcommunity.

Romi, an assistant professor in social sciences who limited her involvement in these organizations and groups, still expressed, "I met some really good collaborators that sometimes we agree, sometimes we disagree, but there is this shared connection. This is what peoplehood means. This is what belonging to a group means."

Some participants, however, noted the toll this advocacy and mobilization took on them. For example, one untenured professor at a university with few openly Jewish faculty members, and even fewer who joined their mobilization efforts, lamented:

I don't get paid or anything, but I do run the Jewish community on campus as much as I can. It's pretty loose at this point. Sometimes I feel emotionally overloaded, and I can't even bring myself to deal with it, because it's so draining and so stressful. I really have to be present as a mom for my kids, and that's my first concern, so I don't get really into it.

A tenured participant at a university with a larger Jewish faculty population more active in combating antisemitism likewise shared:

I was the chair of this [Jewish campus organization]. I stepped down at the end of the school year because it was too exhausting and debilitating, but I was the go-to person for all of the staff and faculty on campus, and for many of the students as well. I was in touch with Hillel, and whatever. So, I was the person that everybody brought it to, and I would go to the provost, who sometimes ignored me, sometimes met with me. I also was in touch a lot with that Director of Equity... We're outnumbered and frankly tired and debilitated. And this is not my job. This is not what I'm paid to do. So, I stepped down as [chair] of this Jewish group because it was exhausting. It was all consuming, and it was like standing in front of a tidal wave and holding up my hands as though it's going to hold it back... I have research to do. I have family to support and to look after. I can't do this every second of the day.

Furthermore, participants in humanities, social sciences, law, Jewish Studies, and to a lesser degree, medicine, were more likely than those in STEM to provide emotional, academic, or administrative support to Jewish students. These participants largely attributed their willingness, or even their duty, as some characterized it, to support Jewish students because of their social capital and influence as faculty members. For example, one professor in social sciences who lived in an area with few Jews mentioned how he connected with a Jewish student in his classroom:

I have one Jewish student, and I do talk to him about that. The first time we had a class together, when the class was over, after the exam, he sort of lingered, and I took him aside, and I said, "Listen. I want you to know that my door is always open. I know it can be hard to be Jewish on campus, and my door is always open if you need it."

Susan, an associate professor in humanities at a university with a larger Jewish population, also made an effort to support Jewish students in her classroom:

One concern that I had as a teacher was how do I support [Jewish] students in the classroom? I mean, I want to support all my students in the classroom, but I also felt responsible to provide a safe haven because a good number of my colleagues in courses that had nothing to do with Israel were criticizing Israel openly, like in chemistry classes...I've been so appalled by what my some of my colleagues, a good number of my colleagues have done, particularly in the Faculty of Arts. So, I don't want to do something like that. And at the same time, I want students to know that there are some professors who are not using their class time toward ideology.

Some participants, such as Craig, an assistant professor who taught Jewish Studies courses in the prairie provinces, supervised Jewish students who did not feel comfortable with other faculty members. Craig reflected that "that exact thing has happened [to him], [he thinks], every semester since October 7."

Several Jewish faculty members also served as a liaison or mediator between Jewish students and administrations or other faculty members. One participant in central Canada recalled that she, along with two other colleagues, sent posters to students electronically that said, "If you experienced or witnessed an antisemitic incident, call us." Another participant in central Canada who taught Jewish Studies courses said that he had to act on Jewish students' behalf on a few occasions when faculty members behaved antisemitically. He provided one such instance wherein a faculty member "made constant cracks" at a Jewish student, including repeatedly telling them, "We don't blame you for killing Jesus anymore."

Like some of the participants who articulated their exhaustion in their role mobilizing Jewish faculty members on campus, a couple participants expressed their frustration with, as one participant who taught Jewish Studies courses put it, the expectation for them to be “a therapist and camp counselor” in that he was “supposed to make the [Jewish students] feel good and provide snacks.” Another participant in social sciences explained why he did not want a “personal relationship with [Jewish students]” as he considered it outside the scope of his profession:

My job is not to be their friend. I cannot treat students differently based on whether they're Jewish or not. I would fight very hard for any student who's mine, but when they come up to me and want to talk about Judaism stuff, I'm happy to, to the extent it's a matter of academic interest...If it turns into kvetching, then I don't think that's great...I feel like a lot of students think that they can kind of work me by saying, “I'm Jewish, too.” And it's like, I don't want my Arab students or my African students thinking that I am somehow preferential towards people who look or sound or act more like me.

8.2.5. Defiant Presence on Campus

Although more than 25 percent of the sub-sample's participants said that they wanted to leave their campus, or academia entirely, because of the antisemitism, they decided to remain due to a sense of obligation as Jews and as faculty members with influence and power. Kayla, an associate professor in humanities in central Canada, shared that when there was the “Week of Rage” on her campus in 2024 and signage instructing faculty members to strike, she still came in to teach her class. She said that students thanked her afterwards but lamented that “it's actually not been easy. But then, life is never completely safe.” Shaina, a full professor in medicine in the prairie provinces, also insisted on coming to campus during her university's Week of Rage. She

discussed how one of her doctoral students said to her, out of concern for her safety, “Perhaps you shouldn’t be on campus next week.” She responded, “No. I work here. I belong here. I’m coming to campus.” Participants further stated that their being incensed strengthened their self- and group-identification and resolve to remain at their universities to serve as role models for Jewish students and faculty members. Rebecca, an associate professor in social sciences in central Canada, explained:

This is important, and we need to make sure that people feel pride in being Jewish and are not scared to be Jews, to say these things, and we have to fight back against what’s clear, you can edit this any way you want, but idiocy coming from fucktard colleagues.

Saul, a clinical instructor in medicine in the West Coast who reduced his involvement with his university but refused to resign from his faculty position, stated:

The only reason I’m still [at my university] is because, in our [provincial Jewish medical association], the idea has circulated that if we would completely withdraw, then they really do win. And if the Jews aren’t able to be in the faculty of medicine and can’t contribute, then these stories and this propaganda and this antisemitism will actually become more rampant, and the barriers to future generations will be even higher. And so, we have a solemn obligation to stay in these roles and continue to be visible and fight the battle that our generation’s been given. So, running to hide is not a good policy. They’ll get you eventually. So, I’m still doing it, although with revulsion.

A participant who held an administrative position and similarly worried about the prospect of no Jews remaining in academia likened the dilemma to the analogy of the frog staying in the pot of boiling water. “I have considered jumping out of the pot”, she said, “but I’m also a little stubborn

about the pot needing a frog.” Ivan, a full professor in STEM in central Canada, illuminated the responsibility many Jewish faculty members felt:

My career since October the 7th...I contemplated retiring because I’m of retirement age. I realized that being a tenured faculty offers me an opportunity to be safe and stand up. I have a certain weight in the university, and I’m not afraid. And it’s crucial that younger faculty and students see me do what I do, because if I don’t, then who will? And so, people in early stages of their career obviously can’t afford to do that. Their position is much more precarious. Students, by definition, are subject to arbitrary administrative influences, so they can be easily prosecuted for expressing an orthodox opinion, so they need to be protected. And this needs to come out very loudly and in public. So, I’ve abandoned all thoughts of early retirement or any retirement until this blows over, until this is resolved...It’s important that somebody stands up and says the right things...My job as a university educator is to, as I always say, demonstrate the correct behaviour. It’s true of, say, [my STEM discipline]. When I teach [my discipline], I have to demonstrate to the students how to solve problems. It’s not that I need to solve the problems for them. It’s not that that I need to transfer the solution from my brain to the other. It’s that I need to give them skills for dealing with problems when they come. And so, in that same spirit, I feel it is my duty to demonstrate the correct behaviour in my fight against antisemitism. All 40 Jewish faculty members therefore reported, to varying degrees, greater identification with their stigmatized identity and in-group when confronted with antisemitism and stigmatization. Many refused to employ information and tension management strategies, and instead engaged in a deeper religious, cultural, and intellectual level with their identity and community. They defiantly donned stigma symbols, such as Judaica or kippot. As scholars and teachers, they used

their skillsets to research and teach about Jewish issues, antisemitism, and Israel, and to support students emotionally, academically, and administratively. Individually and collectively, they advocated privately and publicly to address antisemitism and formed meaningful relationships with others. Moreover, they expressed their resolve to remain in their positions to ensure the continuation of Jews in academia. As some participants noted, these efforts, driven by strengthened self- and group-identification, deviated from their chosen profession and responsibilities. Importantly, many participants felt despair with the future of academia, and even their future in Canada.

8.3. Chapter Summary

This chapter constitutes the fourth and final chapter of the results section. The first half of this chapter detailed the identity ambivalence Jewish faculty members felt and its relation to concern with in-group purification. Political leanings played a major role in shaping participants' identity ambivalence and the specific concerns they held about their in-group. Specifically, more left-leaning participants expressed greater identity ambivalence because of their concerns with Israel's conduct in the war, relative to those who identified as more centrist or conservative. Participants of all political leanings felt varying degrees of identity ambivalence when reflecting on other Jews' behaviour in Canada, such as those they deemed too zealous in their support for Israel or Jewish faculty members who they perceived to engage in minstrelization or normification. The second half of this chapter examined the opposite phenomenon – strengthened self- and group-identification. These sections summarized the realization of this phenomenon through participants' embrace of their identity and community, and the individual and collective efforts to address antisemitism and support Jews on campus.

The chapter also noted the simultaneous empowerment and burden these efforts caused for Jewish faculty members.

The next chapter analyzes and discusses the findings from these four chapters as they relate to the operation and sustainment of The Gentleman's Agreement in Canadian academia and Jewish faculty members' navigation of it.

9. Discussion

This chapter uses the theoretical framework of The Gentleman's Agreement to analyze and discuss the findings from the 40 Jewish faculty members in my sub-sample. I begin by returning to my central research questions and to the theoretical framework I outlined in Chapter Three. Subsequently, I explore The Agreement's explanatory power by employing it to make sense of and explain the empirical patterns that I identified in the preceding four results chapters. The chapter concludes with a summary of the materialization and enforcement of The Agreement in the Canadian academic context.

9.1. The Gentleman's Agreement in Canadian Academia

As I explained in Chapter Three, the title of my theoretical framework, "The Gentleman's Agreement", is a nod to Laura Z. Hobson's book, *Gentleman's Agreement*, and its movie adaptation produced by Darryl Zanuck and directed by Elia Kazan in 1947. Whereas the term "gentleman's agreement" refers to a collusive exclusion by a majority group, I define The Gentleman's Agreement as a bilateral, often implicit, asymmetric moral contract that governs the relations between Jews and non-Jews. The asymmetry primarily can be observed in non-Jewish actors setting the terms for Jews' conditional inclusion within the community of the good (Hirsh, 2017: 37).

The basis of my theoretical framework is primarily derived from Goffman's (1963) seminal book, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, and its interactional focus. It has also been supplemented by the elaboration of subsequent stigma scholarship and explanatory strategies drawn from the works of feminist and antisemitism scholars. The Agreement, as I show below, materialized both through interactional and institutional processes, providing a persuasive explanation of the structures and processes through which the identities of

Jewish faculty members in Canadian universities became discredited, as well as the forms of resistance thus engendered.

9.2. Research Question #1: Zionism as a Spoiled Identity

My first research question asks how Jewish faculty members come to know and experience Zionism as a spoiled identity in Canadian academia. To respond to this question, it is necessary to establish the significance of Zionism to the actual social identity, in the Goffmanian sense, of the participants. The findings in the first results chapter provide an unequivocal response: thirty-nine of the 40 participants in my sub-sample subscribed to the commonly used definition of Zionism – support for Jewish self-determination in the ancestral land of Israel. Thirty-seven participants explicitly self-identified as Zionist for religious, theological, spiritual, historical, peoplehood, generational, and pragmatic reasons. These findings are consistent with other literature on the importance of Zionism to Canadian Jewish identity (Brym, 2024b, 2025b).

It is important to note that participants nuanced the levels and modalities of their attachment to Zionism, some being more critical than others (e.g., Luke and Eden; see also Brym, 2025b). Moreover, this phenomenon of Jewish faculty members qualifying their support for Israel and identification with Zionism with statements condemning Jewish settler violence or the Netanyahu government in the interviews may be cautiously interpreted as evidence of The Agreement continuing to function due to the proximity of the interview to the university setting. In other words, participants, who were interviewed as Jewish faculty members about their experiences on campus and who overwhelmingly expressed concern about the anonymity of the project, could plausibly be understood as attempting to hedge against the possibility of

encountering The Agreement, even amongst Jewish interviewers.⁴¹ Indeed, the findings suggest that participants' actual social identities, even if weakly attached to Zionism, revealed themselves to be discrediting. This supports my theoretical contention that The Agreement frames any attachment to Zionism as grounds for the interactional stigmatization of Jewish identity and hence legitimate exclusion from the normative respect and practices governing academic life. In consequence, the Jewish identities of all but one faculty member (i.e., Oscar) in the sub-sample are always already at risk of being discredited by virtue of their attachment to Zionism.

Additionally, it is worth stressing that Goffman's approach to stigma, which is built into The Agreement, is characterized by its interactional focus. Thus, the conditions under which an individual encounters the discrepancy between their actual and virtual social identity, the latter unilaterally defined by The Agreement, help explain their possible responses to the attempted spoiling of their identity.

Findings from the first results chapter also summarized how participants learned over the course of their moral careers that their actual Jewish identity rendered them discreditable and, at times, discredited. This initial socialization to the non-Jewish standpoint, a derivation of Jewish Difference (Silverman, 2025) that underpins The Agreement, typically followed one of four patterns identified by Goffman (1963: 32-36). Participants whose moral career followed the first pattern (e.g., Anna, Susan, Saul, Caleb, Hillary, and Craig) – socialization through intergenerational trauma, early moral experiences, and academic expertise – underwent a less pronounced transformation of their self-conception and understanding of their social environment than participants whose moral carers followed the other three patterns of safety bubble (e.g., Samson, Danya, Aviva, and Scott), alien community (e.g., Heather, the Jewish-

⁴¹ However, as the interviewers did not question participants when they engaged in this behaviour during the interviews, analysis of this phenomenon remains limited and a direction for future research.

Latina professor, Einat, and Ivan), and late stigma acquisition (e.g., Daniella and Luke).

Participants therefore entered Canadian academia with varying degrees of awareness of the existence of The Agreement through which their Jewish identity could become discredited under particular social conditions.

Whereas the first results chapter reported how Jewish faculty members came to know that Zionism, and at times, merely their Jewish identity, constituted a spoiled identity, the second results chapter revealed how this prior awareness was subsequently confirmed, refined, and intensified through participants' interactional encounters with The Gentleman's Agreement. Specifically, in the Canadian academic context, The Agreement was shown to be structured around the unacceptability of Jewish attachment to Zionism. The findings thus support the theoretical and methodological importance that Goffman (1963) attaches to the moral career as a social and biographical mechanism for shaping the negotiation and/or resistance of stigmatized identities in interactional contexts.

Above, I described in general terms how participants came to understand that their actual social identities created the risk of stigmatization through moral experiences. As detailed in the second results chapter, these moral experiences varied depending on the involvement of protesters, administrators, colleagues, and students, and the interactional setting through which they occurred. Micro-, meso-, and macro-level variables additionally shaped the frequency and manifestation of these moral experiences. Findings from the second results chapter thus address the latter half of the first research question of how Jewish faculty members experienced Zionism as a spoiled identity.

In the second results chapter, participants described how the prevailing non-Jewish standpoint became apparent through a series of moral experiences, and how it was mobilized to

justify the spoiling of their identities. This standpoint often cast Jews as oppressors, White, colonial, wealthy, privileged, or merely as a religious identity that could be divorced from Israel and Jewish peoplehood, and resultingly, discredited the majority who held some form of attachment to Zionism or Israel. These results are congruent with the findings of other scholars in the field (Elizur & Marom, 2026; Marom, 2026a, 2026b; Marom & Switzer, 2025). Through these moral experiences, Jewish faculty members learned the boundaries of acceptable, non-stigmatized Jewish expression, and the consequences of transgressing them, as encoded in The Agreement. Below, I first return to Link and Phelan's (2001) critique of Goffman's (1963) approach to understanding stigma, which I detailed in Chapter 3. I then draw on the findings from the second results chapter to analyze the interactional processes and dynamics structured by The Agreement, and how variables, including intersecting identities, shaped its operation in various settings.

In a seminal critique of Goffman's interactional framing of stigma, Link and Phelan (2001) argue that his framework confines stigmatization to the level of face-to-face interaction and individual identity management. They contend that this framework thereby renders invisible the ways in which institutional structures embed and reproduce the stigmatization of certain groups in interactional encounters. The findings of this study underscore the importance of their critique. They reveal that university administrators sometimes actively participated in the enforcement of The Agreement or, more often, permitted others to enforce it. Examples of active and passive institutional support reported by participants include mealy-mouthed condemnations of October 7, application of double standards in their allowance of encampments and rallies on campus that vandalized buildings and vilified Jews and Israel and organizational practices that

stonewalled participants when they sought redress (88-89).⁴² Several participants (e.g., Danya and Gideon) noted the granting of an excess of credibility and epistemic authority to these “anti-Zionist Jews” who shared the prevailing non-Jewish standpoint to speak on behalf of their in-group (see Fricker, 2007; Schraub, 2020b for excess of credibility).

Reports and studies on antisemitism on North American university campuses (e.g., Braun, 2006; Ginsberg, 2019; Harvard University Task Force, 2025; Kenedy, 2022; Samuel et al., 2024; Silverstein & Block, 2025) have found similar institutional practices. These can be usefully conceptualized as constituting a “policy of maximal passivity”. Coined by Greenspan (2025), the policy of maximal passivity refers to the actions, and lack of actions, taken or untaken, by university administrations to avoid addressing antisemitism on campus. These institutional disciplinary measures that deter the discreditable, penalize the discredited, and reward those willing to adhere to their prescribed role should be understood as part of the top-down institutional arrangements supporting the functioning of The Agreement. Also of note, these findings of rampant, and often, unchecked, antisemitism on Canadian campuses undermine Philip’s claim that Jewish donors meaningfully influenced the events at his university. The account of the university Dean refusing to disallow the hiring of a faculty member who advocates for the destruction of Israel to an endowed position (86) further contributes to undermining the oft-repeated antisemitic trope that Jews “control” university administrations.

Participants also identified the EDI office and policies as another significant institutional support for the functioning of The Agreement; namely, the exclusion of Jews and antisemitism in EDI initiatives and discussions, and the portrayal of Jews as merely a religious group or as members of a privileged White racial category (see also Marom & Switzer, 2025; Marom,

⁴² Please note that for this chapter, unless otherwise specified, these numbers refer to specific pages in the four results chapters of this thesis.

2026a). These institutional arrangements strip Jewish faculty members of the possibility of defining themselves as an equity-deserving, racialized, or oppressed minority whose stigmatization would be normatively untenable in the context of the Canadian university. Indeed, when participants, e.g., Asher, Anna, Eden, Samson, and Saul, sought to avail themselves of EDI policies, they suffered from a credibility deficit (Fricker, 2007). This credibility deficit functions as an important index of a spoiled identity. The spoiling of an identity, or its stigmatization, moreover, legitimizes the exclusion, silencing, and undermining of a person's credibility, collectively known as "epistemic injustice" (Fricker, 1998, 2007). In these moral experiences, EDI officers and staff employed disciplinary measures to discredit and silence participants. This effect can also be likened to the undermining of one's status as a knower of their experiences (Fricker, 1998). This dynamic is fundamental for the functioning of The Agreement in a university context where notions of inclusion and equity guide normative values. It is only if an individual's identity can be shown to be stigmatized through its non-conformity to The Agreement that they can justifiably be excluded and their epistemic authority undermined. The foregoing strongly lend support to the conclusion that EDI policies act as institutional support for The Agreement rather than as a possible remedy.

Having addressed the broader institutional dynamics supporting The Agreement, I now turn to its most significant interactional variations detailed in the second results chapter. The enforcement of The Gentleman's Agreement, as illustrated below, varied according to the number of wise and Jewish faculty members within participants' departments or clinical settings, and their academic discipline, professional rank, intersecting identities, and (in)visibility as Jews. Such variation underwrites the analytical utility of the Goffmanian interactional focus to theorize the broader macro-level structure of The Agreement.

Jewish faculty members of all disciplines recounted instances of incidental disclosure that took the form of colleagues scheduling meetings on Shabbat or high holidays (95; see also Marom, 2026b; Rubin, 2021; Silverstein & Block, 2025). Relative to participants in STEM and medicine, participants in law, humanities, and social sciences departments reported more frequent instances of incidental disclosure. For participants, these moral experiences conveyed The Agreement's dominant non-Jewish standpoint that support or sympathy for Israel, or opposition to antisemitism, risked leading to a spoiled identity. They typically took the form of faculty members circulating pro-BDS or pro-encampment petitions, or faculty members wearing keffiyehs to department meetings, as Danya described.

At the more individual level, in interactions with colleagues inside and outside their departments, Jewish faculty members described the social pressures and disciplinary measures to deter and penalize Zionist expressions of Jewish identity. These measures included: stonewalling or rebuking participants' opposition to other professors' omission or trivialization of Hamas' sexual violence on and after October 7 (96-97); bypassing a participant's refusal to support her disability caucus signing a petition that justified October 7 (95); marginalizing a participant who voiced her hesitation regarding her department's release of a statement on the Israel-Hamas war (96); excusing antisemitism from encampment protesters and dismissing concerns about it as "irrational" (99); and ostracizing participants through silence or indifference about October 7, antisemitism, and their well-being (e.g., Aviva and Hillary).

Academic disciplinary differences and intersecting identities additionally shaped how The Agreement was enforced. Participants in STEM disciplines, as Caleb noted, generally did not report many moral experiences within their department. This finding is consistent with other studies on the experiences of Jewish students (Kenedy, 2022; Samuel et al., 2024) and faculty

(Marom, 2026b). However, two participants in STEM, Jared and Scott, reported exceptions, suggesting that STEM units are not necessarily outside the purview of The Agreement.

Moreover, the experiences shared by the female participants – Delilah, Susan, Simone, Hillary, and the Jewish-Latina professor – of colleagues trying to “save” them illuminated how intersecting identities shaped the expectations of The Agreement and the gendered modalities of its enforcement. The pattern of these female participants’ colleagues framing themselves as empathetic, reasonable, and supportive interlocutors, while simultaneously attempting to correct, educate, or persuade participants draws attention to particular aspects of the interactional dynamics created by The Agreement. First, the “reasonableness” reaffirms the commonsense of the unacceptability of Jewish ties to Israel or Zionism, which constitutes the backbone of The Agreement in the Canadian academic context. Second, by attempting to “save” Jewish women through a reformative intervention, the interlocutors cast themselves as saviours – not only by “rescuing” the Jewish women, but also by using that role to shore up their own moral reputations, which the questioning of The Agreement put into question. Finally, that this interactional dynamic was only reported by female participants suggests a gendered enactment of The Agreement.

The term, “Nice Goy Syndrome”, adapted from Glover’s (2003) Nice Guy Syndrome,⁴³ can be useful for unpacking this last interactional dynamic. The “kindness” of “Nice Goys”, as I theorize here, is contingent upon Jews reciprocating with appreciation, deference, and recognition of their status as saviours when the former delineate and police the boundaries of

⁴³ Unlike Glover (2003), however, I use the term “syndrome” satirically to draw attention to the frequent, and harmful, therapization of antisemitism that removes agency from the perpetrator and attention from the victim, and misclassifies it as a disease that can be “cured” (Schilling, 2024). I additionally deliberately use the term “goy”, a Hebrew and Yiddish term meaning “non-Jew”, conscious of the provocative nature of the term in its usage today by non-Jews who claim that Jews seek to “oppress” or “enslave” goys or goyim (plural). In doing so, I also draw attention to how “Nice Goys” seek to portray themselves as the victims when they are, in fact, victimizing Jews.

acceptable Jewish expression. Failure to accept or conform to the “kind” advice and treatment triggers reactions mirroring those observed by Glover (2003) and Manne (2017): men respond with frustration, indignation, or puzzlement when they perceive women to be withholding the goodwill to which they feel entitled.

In the context of this instantiation of Nice Goy Syndrome, participants’ accounts point to how intersecting gendered expectations of women as agreeable (Manne, 2017; Wilf, 2018) and the valuation of Jews as powerless (Horn, 2021a; Wilf, 2018) can culminate in a form of misojewny (Caplan, 2020). In this sense, compounding social scripts shaped these participants’ prescribed roles and the consequent corrective and moralizing disciplinary measures designed to restore the expected social order of The Agreement.

The pressure to conform to and perform in line with the prevailing non-Jewish standpoint, as Hillary emphasized, also emerged in participants’ accounts of moral experiences in research and faculty association settings. In the instances that follow, the exclusion or silencing of Jewish voices in social spaces where inclusion and dialogue are valued can plausibly be understood as arising from the spoiling of the participants’ identities. The stigma of Zionism voided the privilege of participation and speech to which they would otherwise be entitled in these settings. Deborah and Jacqueline both reported how fellow presenters and attendees at academic conferences openly disclosed their intolerance of Jews, which resulted in the participants’ marginalization from these spaces due to their Zionist identities. Other participants in humanities disciplines described personal instances of being silenced by their colleagues’ successful, or attempted, exclusion or removal of them from research panels (102-103), or by academic journal editors who refused to publish their work because it was “too Jewish” (103).

In faculty association settings, participants noted that the ways in which faculty associations passed anti-IHRA and BDS motions, and the motions themselves, produced a material and social silencing effect, as would be predicted by the functioning of The Agreement. In the case of the former, the BDS motions violated the academic freedom of participants who conducted research in Israel or collaborated with Israeli institutions. In the latter case, Gideon emphasized that his association's anti-IHRA motion that vilified Israel as a "racist colonial state" framed Zionism as a spoiled identity and undermined Jews' agency in their capacity to engage in self-definition and self-valuation, terms I adapt from Collins (1986).

Another participant in central Canada spoke of the pedestalizing and tokenizing of Jewish faculty members who supported her association's BDS motion (105-106). She contrasted the credibility deficit suffered by those who opposed this motion to the excess of credibility – a term coined by Fricker, (2007) and elaborated upon by Schraub (2020b) as it relates to Jews – granted to its supporters. In the case of the latter, this excess of credibility reflects The Agreement's incentive structure for Jewish faculty members to validate the prevailing non-Jewish standpoint and to legitimize the virtual and *virtuous* social identity. The employment of disciplinary measures that rewarded Jews who complied and discredited those who refused, as Scott mentioned, also deterred sympathetic non-Jews from dissenting, thus highlighting how the terms of The Agreement impact wise faculty through courtesy stigmatization, or stigmatization by association.

The power dynamics between participants and students tended to favour the former. Accordingly, students' activation of The Agreement varied considerably. Participants in STEM (e.g., Caleb and Scott), medicine (e.g., Shaina), certain legal fields (i.e., Justin) and social sciences (e.g., Aviva) reported far fewer instances of moral experiences that involved students,

and which typically only manifested involving students wearing keffiyehs to class. They noted that the apolitical nature of their disciplines and the irrelevance of topics related to Israel or Jews in class discussions, in addition to the power they held over students, likely decreased the likelihood of overt attempts by students to spoil their identities.

Conversely, participants in humanities and social sciences, save for Oscar and Jack, reported higher rates of moral experiences involving students engaging in interactions geared towards spoiling participants' identities. In line with other pertinent scholarship (Mayuzumi, 2015; Samuel & Wane, 2005), some female participants, e.g., Deborah and Ellie, described students belittling, condescending, or yelling at them. These disciplinary measures undermined their epistemic and scholarly authority, thereby also suggesting a gendered component to students' enforcement of The Agreement.

Participants who taught Jewish Studies courses mentioned that their students tended to be more open-minded than faculty members. However, as Walter, Luke, and Kayla detailed, some students still sought to subject professors to litmus tests on Zionism, engaged in supersessionism, or submitted assignments with antisemitic writings.

The position of power Jewish faculty members held over students, furthermore, placed them in a double bind in The Agreement: while participants' position could deter students' aggressive attempts to stigmatize their identities, their position also constrained their responses.

The moral experiences that made the prevailing non-Jewish standpoint of The Agreement apparent did not remain strictly bound to physical academic spaces. On social media, Jewish faculty members reported witnessing an outpouring of support from colleagues for the October 7 attack, and their vilification and demonization of Jews and Israel. One participant (110) reported

his colleague's use of a blood libel, which dates back to medieval times (Perry & Schweitzer, 2002).

The disciplinary measures to penalize Jewish faculty members made possible by ascribing them a spoiled identity also extended to interactions on social media. Delilah described how a colleague dismissed her request to talk after victim-blaming Jews for the November 2024 Amsterdam attacks. Participants whose discredited identity was widely known and “established” (i.e., Samson) or who made it known through posts, i.e., commemorating the Holocaust (111), detailed the attempted enforcement of The Agreement through doxxing and harassment campaigns. One participant (111-112) highlighted the gendered nature of the attempted spoiling of their identity. Anonymous accounts called him a “raging Zionist” and disseminated fabricated and defamatory allegations concerning his gender identity, sexual orientation, sexual inadequacy, and sexual predation; which echo longstanding antisemitic tropes that have both emasculated (Gotzmann, 2012) and hypersexualized Jewish men (Braun, 2023).

The contours of The Gentleman's Agreement emerged through these moral experiences and disciplinary measures that underscored and reinforced the non-Jewish preference for non-Zionist Jews. However, as the findings in the second results chapter revealed, not all participants registered these interactions as antisemitic. A concept drawn and adapted from Manne (2017: 197), “himpathy”, can be useful here. “Himpathy” makes reference to the excessive sympathy for, or the denialism, sometimes shown towards men credibly accused of misogyny. I introduce the analogous term “goyimpathy”. Goyimpathy refers to the excessive sympathy for, or the denialism, sometimes shown by non-Jews and some Jews towards non-Jews credibly accused of antisemitism. Examples include the denial of antisemitism or the “downgrading” of the charge of antisemitism (to borrow an observation by Hirsh, 2017: 27) to ignorance, stupidity,

incompetence, and the like, because of the normative weight that the charge of antisemitism carries. Goyimpathy may also present as the pathologizing of antisemitism (to borrow an observation from Schilling, 2024) explained by mental illness or an otherwise altered state of mind through substance use, or as a prejudice motivated by hatred of or for Jews. Lastly, drawing on Silverman (2025), goyimpathy may configure “The Antisemite” in Manichean terms in opposition to oneself and/or the person/people on trial.

Goyimpathy thus exonerates perpetrators of antisemitism by denying them agency for their actions and beliefs, obfuscates the systemic presence of antisemitic tropes in discourse, policies, and structures, and shifts attention away from the impact on the victim to “curing” or “trying to understand” the perpetrator. Goyimpathy can therefore be understood as operating in parallel with Nice Goy Syndrome – both simultaneously uphold and reflect the moral order of The Agreement that demands Jews’ affirmation of gentile decency and their unconditional forgiveness for non-Jews’ transgressions. The operation of these phenomena can be observed in the five accounts by the Jewish women whose colleagues tried to “save” them.

Examples of goyimpathy can be found, following Hirsh (2017), in some participants’ downgrading the charge of antisemitism to ignorance (e.g., Danya; see also Kelman et al., 2017), ill-expressed concern for Palestinians, or due to youth, in the case of students. Anna’s non-Jewish colleague who dismissed encampment protesters as well-meaning illustrates an instance of the latter. Emotional proximity additionally seemed to shape the likelihood of participants showing goyimpathy, as in the case of Asher with his university’s EDI officer or the participant in humanities whose Bolshevik friend posted a blood libel. Moreover, similar political and ideological identification with the perpetrator of antisemitism (e.g., Luke; see also Kelman et al.,

2017; Wright et al., 2024) further seemed to increase the probability of participants showing goyimpathy.

Importantly, Manne's (2017: 198) argument that himpathy is reflective of White supremacy and disproportionately benefits White men accused of misogyny or sexual violence falls short in understanding the present study's findings. First, the extension of goyimpathy by the senior administrator towards the Muslim colleague who behaved antisemitically towards the Jewish-Latina participant, i.e., who called her a "White supremacist", suggests that Whiteness, particularly as it applies to the racialization of Jews, does not typically come with an excess of credibility in the Canadian academic context. The pattern of "White-passing" Jewish faculty members suffering from a credibility deficit present throughout the findings additionally undermine this argument. Second, the extension of goyimpathy towards Hamas exemplified in the denial, trivialization, or justification of the sexual violence committed against supposedly "White" Jewish women and men on and after October 7 further challenges Manne's (2017) claims. These findings instead suggest that the allocation of sympathy in cases of antisemitism or antisemitic violence may be shaped by the broader non-Jewish standpoint that views Jewish claims and grievances with suspicion, an argument also made by Hirsh (2017), and confirmed by most participants. Participants additionally spoke of a hierarchical framework pervasive in Canadian academia that frames the oppressed as non-White, non-Western, and indigenous, i.e., the Palestinians, thereby exonerating their actions as "resistance", and the resulting indifference to, denial, justification, or celebration of said "resistance" against the "White", colonialist, Western oppressor, i.e., the Jews. Similar findings corroborate the impact of this prevailing depiction of Jews in higher education and the consequences for their credibility as victims (e.g., Marom & Switzer, 2025; Kuper, 2023; Gordon et al., 2025).

The second results chapter concluded with participants' reflections on their prescribed role within The Gentleman's Agreement as Jews unattached to Israel or Zionism, and how departures from that role contributed to spoiling their identities. Excerpts from their transcripts (112-114) point to an understanding of the conditional and phantom nature of non-Jewish tolerance and acceptance contingent upon their adherence to their prescribed role, or, at minimum, limiting the obtrusiveness and visibility of their Jewish identity through information and tension management strategies. Manne's (2017: 112-113) distinction between human givers and human takers can be invoked to refine the analysis of Jewish faculty members' prescribed role in The Agreement: participants comprehended that they should not demand gentile-coded privileges, such as equality, self-definition or support for self-determination, or that non-Jews should uphold their end of the social bargain. They further understood that their inclusion rested on their worth to a majority non-Jewish population and the resulting precarious position they held, as Saul, the clinical instructor and physician, articulated:

I realized in retrospect that probably a lot of my heal-the-world outlook has been a desperate desire for the non-Jewish community to accept, love, and appreciate me for who I am. And I just realized after the Canadian election and this [antisemitic] incident [at the hospital], that no matter how many people I heal, and no matter how many people I save, they'll never love me, and they'll never appreciate me. I'll always be able to be discarded, no matter how much good I've done.

In this vein, The Agreement hinges inclusion, tolerance, and protection on Jewish faculty members performing and embodying the role of the human giver through deference, agreeableness, and acceptance of the limits on Jewish agency and corresponding precarity. Moreover, Jews' prescribed role as a human giver à la Kate Manne (2017) bears an analogical

resemblance to Wilf's (2022) "BDS pound of flesh" framework, that argues that Jews must continually hand over a "pound of flesh", a reference to Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, meaning that they must mutilate their identities to secure conditional acceptance. Jewish faculty members' employment of information and tension management strategies, engendered by The Agreement, which are discussed in detail below, can be more literally understood as coerced adherence to their prescribed role as a human giver, requiring participants to hand over "pounds of flesh" for non-Jews' paternalistic tolerance. However, as alluded to by Saul, and as Wilf (2022) notes, this transaction only serves to postpone the eventual expulsion of Jews from the community of the good.

Wilf's (2018) conceptualization of Zionism, furthermore, proves instructive in understanding Zionism as a spoiled identity in instances where Zionism – defined as support for Jewish self-determination in Israel – did not explicitly come up. Wilf (2018) argues that Zionism represents a broader assertion of Jewish agency, self-definition, and equal standing. Thus, Zionism, as defined by the participants, represents the ultimate instantiation of Jewish agency, which constitutes a direct challenge to The Agreement. Jewish faculty members who either identified as Zionist, or were perceived as doing so (e.g., Luke), or who asked for gentile-coded privileges (e.g., Saul, Asher, and others who asked to be included in EDI policies and discussions) violated their role as powerless, agreeable, and deferent, thus illuminating why participants' identities became spoiled in these encounters.

9.3. Research Question #2: Negotiating Zionism as a Spoiled Identity

To answer my second research question of how Jewish faculty members negotiated their stigmatized identity, I turn to analyzing the findings detailed in the third and fourth results chapters. I draw heavily on Goffman's (1963) conceptual vocabulary that not only provides a

series of tools to make sense of the empirical patterns revealed by the study, but also successfully accounts for specific variables that make some strategies available while foreclosing others.

Findings from the third results chapter illustrated how discreditable and discredited Jewish faculty members navigated the now explicit Gentleman's Agreement in physical, social, academic and online settings. Participants' (in)visibility as Jews largely determined their ability to employ information or tension management strategies – a finding similarly reported by Elizur and Marom (2026) and Marom (2026b). Participants who could conceal their Jewish identity, i.e., by passing as non-Jewish, had greater ability to control information about their identity that could lead to stigmatization. Caleb, who normally donned a stigma symbol (i.e., Magen David necklace) provides an example of disguising his identity when he put on his “Michael Moore disguise” and hid his Magen David to access the encampment. Asher, who has an identifiably Jewish last name, explained how he was able to “hide in plain sight” because of the lack of Jews on his campus and the consequent inability of those around him to recognize his Jewish identity. This disguise and concealment or omission of Jewish identity highlights how the latent nature of The Agreement fostered self-censorship and internalized surveillance among participants, which Elizur and Marom (2026) and Marom (2026b) similarly described.

Among colleagues, discreditable participants evaded the potential spoiling of their identity by omitting information about their anti-antisemitism advocacy, as Susan mentioned, or by avoiding purposeful slips, i.e., saying “Mazal tov”, as Heather explained. In classroom settings, participants in STEM, medicine, and some in law or social sciences could avoid stigmatization when they could pass as non-Jewish with minimal effort. For example, Rebecca recounted how her name and appearance were not identifiably Jewish, and that she taught in a social science discipline that did not veer into conversations related to Jews, antisemitism, Israel,

etc. Some participants in humanities or social sciences (e.g., Asher) stopped teaching courses that could elicit conversations about Jews, antisemitism, or Israel. Others, e.g., Anna, modified the course content to reduce the risk of the occurrence of these discussions, or adopted a position of neutrality (e.g., Gideon). These information management strategies, moreover, neutralized the aforementioned double bind resulting from faculty members' power over students that complicated their navigation of The Agreement in the classroom.

Information management strategies to avoid or curtail stigmatization and its concomitant loss of power and rights can likewise be found in the context of research grants and on social media. Discreditable participants, i.e., Jacqueline, omitted mention of her Jewish identity in positionality statements. Craig, a humanities professor who conducted research on Jewish topics, but who has a less-identifiably Jewish name, removed his connection to Israel in his grant proposal. Few participants actively participated on social media, many citing anticipated stigmatization, such as Heather. Jacqueline, wanting to follow certain accounts without fear of being discredited, created a false account.

A minority of discreditable participants voluntarily engaged in selective and strategic disclosure of their Jewish identity in a number of contexts: Simone recounted bringing in Jewish delicacies for Jewish holidays to her colleagues, and Jacqueline for her students; Oscar and Jack casually disclosed their Jewish identity in classes; Eva disclosed her Jewish identity for a research grant application to an administrator for a Jewish studies project; and Saul on social media to express the social isolation he felt after October 7. Crucially, these disclosures can still be understood as actively attempting to avoid the status of being discredited; they either presented their Jewish identity in a more superficial manner or merely as a religion, or they

provided non-Jews the opportunity to affirm their acceptance of and support for Jews, as Hillary emphasized.

Most participants, however, could not conceal their Jewish identity. Visible markers, e.g., an identifiably Jewish name (e.g., Arik and Romi) or clothing (i.e., Luke), and academic discipline or research focus (e.g., Kayla and Walter who taught Jewish Studies courses) rendered them vulnerable to stigmatization. Particular circumstances that necessitated disclosure, i.e., seeking institutional redress for antisemitism, public anti-antisemitism advocacy, or disciplines that emphasized positionality statements additionally precluded these participants from passing as non-Jewish. Most participants, whose values and expression of their Jewish identity spoiled their identity, and who could not hide their stigma, employed tension management strategies to minimize the obtrusiveness of their stigma. These strategies, many of which resembled the information management strategies, can similarly be understood as signifying awareness of the reality of The Agreement and the consequences of its transgression.

Discredited participants utilized several tension management strategies, including withdrawing, covering, and concealing, when interacting with administrators, colleagues, and students, and across various settings. These strategies included participants avoiding campus during antisemitic protests (e.g., Eva) or the encampments (e.g., Anna) and reducing office hours or removing information from their university website about their courses (e.g., Aviva and Justin). Existing scholarship on the experiences of Jewish students on campus similarly reported withdrawal from campus life (e.g., Kelman et al., 2017; Kenedy, 2022; Morstead & DeLongis, 2025).

Encounters with university administrators to address antisemitism required a careful, diplomatic, and strategic negotiation of The Agreement as the power dynamics favoured the

administrators. Jared and Jacqueline described the tactful disclosure of their Zionist Jewish identities to university administrators in their efforts to assuage any defensiveness that could arise in conversations to address antisemitism. Participants, such as Craig, spoke of this balancing act in which Jewish faculty members could only push their administrators so far and could not accuse them of antisemitism, lest they lose their credibility. Saul's strategy of avoiding his hospital administrators after being told not to discuss the nature of an incident as antisemitic with his colleagues in the hospital illustrates the veracity of Craig's concern, and more broadly, the risks in directly challenging the terms of The Agreement.

Discredited participants additionally minimized (further) stigmatization by emotionally divesting from relationships with colleagues who they judged to have behaved antisemitically (e.g., Levi and Ellie), physically distancing themselves (e.g., Anna), or changing workspaces (e.g., Simone). Many participants also avoided attending faculty department meetings (e.g., Leonard) or faculty association meetings (e.g., Asher), or limited their participation in them (e.g., Arik and Scott). Others, including Eden, Hillary, and Craig, instead opted to diplomatically challenge the colleagues who they thought may be amenable to conversation or granting religious accommodations. Eden described how she gently "stirred the pot" by pointing to the omission of antisemitism, but not antizionism, within EDI discussions. Hillary reported adopting a "depersonalizing strategy" in conversation with her colleague, who attended a conference co-sponsored by the terrorist organization, Hezbollah, in Lebanon. Craig said that he requested religious accommodations by grouping it in conjunction with other religious minorities. These three strategies allowed participants to preserve their credibility by minimizing the obtrusiveness of their stigma within these interactional contexts. Their deference also afforded non-Jewish colleagues the opportunity to exercise benevolence, as encoded in The Agreement, in return.

In the classroom, particularly in medicine, social sciences, humanities, Jewish Studies, and, to varying degrees, law, discredited participants, cognizant of the power imbalance and consequent double bind, engaged in tension management strategies. Among students, discredited participants engaged in a strategic and careful admission that confirmed their identity as a stigma, but minimized its obtrusiveness (e.g., Romi and Arik). Some adopted assimilative techniques whereby they omitted mention of their Jewish identity (e.g., Deborah) or they concealed their stigma symbol (e.g., Delilah). Others minimized or prevented tension with Muslim students by inflating their marks (i.e., Ellie), avoiding teaching about Islam in their course on religion (138), or requesting not to administer exams (i.e., Shaina).

Faculty members who taught Jewish Studies courses avoided discussing Israel (i.e., Walter), taught about Zionism indirectly (i.e., Kayla), or taught asynchronously (138). Participants who felt limited in their ability to minimize tension with their students cancelled classes (i.e., Einat), reduced supervision of students (i.e., Levi), used research funds to buy themselves out of teaching (i.e., Samson), or requested a security guard for classes (139). Seth, who had a background in law enforcement, and who had students threatening to disrupt his class, informed undergraduate students of a plan of action should it occur. Collectively, participants' use of these tension management strategies illustrates self-policing in anticipation of or resulting from the enforcement of the stigmatization made possible by the existence of The Agreement.

Participants who researched antisemitism or who collaborated with Israeli institutions were perceived to be in violation of The Agreement. Consequently, their activities risked the total discrediting of their identity when they became known in interactions. Participants who researched antisemitism self-censored when asking for assistance from university staff for a study on antisemitism (141) and strategically crafted their research proposals to get funding or

publish their findings (e.g., Romi; see also Rubin, (2018) for challenges in publishing research on antisemitism in academic journals). Leonard, among others, whose research on antisemitism and public advocacy against antisemitism discredited his identity, withdrew from his campus research institute due to hostility from colleagues.

Moreover, participants who collaborated with Israeli institutions expressed the need to strategically craft their research proposals to get funding by emphasizing bridge-building (e.g., Kayla and Samson) or omitting mention of travel to Israel for conferences (i.e., Craig). Participants' self-policing, self-censorship, and self-segregation in these research settings further point to their awareness of the reality of The Agreement and the stigmatization they would encounter should they openly challenge their stigmatized status.

Participants likewise modified their behaviour on social media to reduce exposure to antisemitic sentiments from their colleagues and friends by limiting their online social circle (e.g., Asher), withdrawing from professional or academic groups (e.g., Jacqueline), or even deleting their profiles after enduring harassment (144). Santos and Yogeve (2026) similarly reported that Jewish campus members limited their time on social media due to the level of antisemitic activity they encountered on these platforms.

To summarize, the analysis shows participants' (in)visibility as Jews and the degree to which their stigma was known dictated the information or tension management strategies available to them to avoid or manage being discredited. It is important to note that both types of strategies afforded Jewish faculty members, to varying degrees, the opportunity to avoid or minimize stigmatization made possible by The Agreement through passing, covering, or withdrawing. The fourth results chapter elaborates on Jewish faculty members' oscillating

negotiation of their stigmatized identity and their relationship to their in-group that extended beyond these individual stigmatizing encounters with non-Jewish actors.

The first half of the fourth results chapter outlined Jewish faculty members' identity ambivalence and how it manifested through their concerns with the behaviour of Jews in Israel and in Canada. Goffman (1963: 106-108) argues that the stigmatized persons' application of the normals' standpoint to themselves results in a feeling of identity ambivalence. To mitigate this dissonance, the stigmatized person tends to stratify others in their in-group who possess a more obtrusive stigma and express it in a way they find distasteful in front of the normals. In the context of this research, these concerns can be understood as the shame or embarrassment Jewish faculty members felt when others in their in-group behaved in such a way that they felt damaged the reputation of their in-group, or, put differently, made a *shanda* for the *goyim*.⁴⁴

Participants (e.g., the two Israeli-Canadian participants and Jared) who identified as more left-leaning politically reportedly felt greater identity ambivalence and shame due to their perception that Israel acted disproportionately in the Israel-Hamas war – a finding consistent with Brym's (2024b) study on Canadian Jewry's attitudes towards Zionism and Israel. Saul, who identified as more centrist, conversely, expressed his frustration with Israel "failing the PR war", rather than the severity of Israel's military response to October 7. These Jewish faculty members' sentiments do not amount to the stigmatization of others in their in-group to the same degree carried out by non-Jewish actors in the Canadian academy carry out. However, these concerns with in-group purification and identity ambivalence point to a need participants felt to manage their own image as well as the image of others in their in-group. This need can be conceptualized as their awareness of The Agreement's rigid terms for conditional inclusion and their concern

⁴⁴ A Yiddish phrase that, loosely translated, refers to the warning by Jews to other Jews not to behave in such a way in front of non-Jews, or *goyim*, that confirms negative stereotypes.

that the behaviour of members of their in-group unnecessarily increases the likelihood of stigmatization or limits their individual ability to more successfully negotiate stigmatization. Consequently, interacting adeptly with, or positioning themselves with respect to, members of their in-group is another strategy that participants can employ to manage their interactional exchanges with non-Jewish actors who are attempting to spoil their identities. Equally, not adapting strategies for in-group purification can undermine efforts to defend their in-group against accusations that justify their stigmatization. These notions also extended to participants' alienation from their Jewish identities and their in-group in Canada.

Participants of all political leanings detailed their sense of alienation from their in-group in Canada, albeit for different reasons. Those who identified as more left-leaning, such as Eden or Eva, described the alienation they experienced from Jews they perceived to be intolerant or lacking nuance in their understanding of, or care for, Palestinians (see also Kelman et al., 2017; Wright et al., 2024). One participant recounted experiencing a profound sense of alienation from the mainstream Canadian Jewish community to the point that he questioned his conversion to Judaism. Two male participants questioned the purpose and validity of this study because they believed that it was ideologically biased in its inception and execution (151-153). Together, these findings demonstrate how participants' self- and in-group-alienation led to their distancing from those in their in-group they perceived to be tactless in their disregard for The Agreement.

Participants who did not identify as far to the left of the political spectrum, conversely articulated their contempt for "Cool Jews"⁴⁵ – Jewish faculty members they perceived to be minstrelizing or engaging in normification to avoid being discredited. Participants, e.g., Danya,

⁴⁵ A term I borrow from the participant in Jewish Studies who described how denouncing Israel is the "cool" thing to do. Horn (2021a: 57) similarly uses the term "Cool Jews" to refer to Jews who assimilate to the non-Jewish dominant culture for conditional acceptance.

Scott, Seth, and the participant in the Jewish Studies department, argued that these “Cool Jews” made it harder for most of their in-group to have their concerns about antisemitism taken seriously by non-Jews. These “Cool Jews”, participants reported, therefore came to represent the “acceptable” Jew who adhered to a prescribed role that seemingly afforded them an excess of credibility and immunity from stigmatization.⁴⁶ However, the degree to which these “Cool Jews” were “accepted” or tolerated within the context of The Agreement remained inconclusive, as Gideon suggested.⁴⁷

To summarize, Jewish faculty members’ rationale for their identity ambivalence and related concern with in-group purification shaped which members of their in-group they judged or policed. Those who felt greater alienation from their in-group and their own identity were less likely to reject the disciplinary logic of The Agreement that positioned Zionism as a spoiled identity (e.g., Oscar and Luke; see also Kelman et al., 2017). Left-leaning participants, such as Eden and Eva, distanced themselves from others in their in-group who alienated them and whose behaviour caused embarrassment and shame (see also Kelman et al., 2017). In contrast, other participants’ disapproval of the “Cool Jews” points to their contempt for those who they perceive to differentially and appreciatively adhere to their prescribed role of subservience, as encoded in The Agreement.

The second half of the fourth results chapter detailed how Jewish faculty members, who, as a function of their strengthened self-identification and dependent on their occupational, social,

⁴⁶ Other antisemitism scholars similarly contend the “exceptional” status granted to Jews who conform to the prevailing non-Jewish standpoint. For further reading on this phenomenon of tokenization, see Arendt, 1951; Hirsh, 2017; Schraub, 2020b.

⁴⁷ Despite our recruitment efforts, the FEAR sample only included one non-Zionist Jewish faculty member, i.e., Oscar, whom I have included in my thesis’ sub-sample. Given that we did not interview more self-identifying non- or anti-Zionist Jewish faculty members, I have deliberately chosen to provide a more limited analysis in this thesis based on the accounts shared by self-identifying Zionist Jewish faculty members and how they perceive these “Cool Jews”. Future research on this demographic would refine my theoretical framework.

and physical vulnerability, resisted and rejected the terms of The Agreement. Participants of various political leanings that ranged from left (i.e., Romi), centre-left (i.e., Ellie), centre (i.e., Saul), and centre-right (i.e., Amira), articulated their refusal to occupy the role of the “Cool Jew”, or to hide their identity (see also Elizur & Marom, 2026; Farber & Poleg, 2019; Schachter & Ajayi, 2026). Many (e.g., Caleb, Saul, Aviva, Anna, and Kayla) described the revalorization of their Jewish identity through a deliberate intellectual, religious, and spiritual engagement with their Jewish identity and community and their efforts to transmit these commitments to their children. Importantly, this recommitment to their Jewish identity often occurred outside of Canadian academic settings and in response to the constraints of The Agreement on their Jewish identity and expression. The shift to retreating to their in-group additionally underscores participants’ awareness of the social costs of expressing their Jewish identity that run counter to the ostensible inclusive and welcoming campus environment.

On campus, dependent on their vulnerability and discipline, participants defied The Agreement by making their stigma apparent through unapologetic and explicit acknowledgements of their Jewish and Zionist identities (e.g., Seth), donning of stigma symbols (e.g., Simone, Delilah, Luke, and Caleb), researching or teaching topics related to Jewish identity or antisemitism (e.g., Gideon and Romi), or collaboration with Jewish and Israeli scholars in Canada or with Israeli universities (e.g., Jared). Of note, these acts of defiance often came with social and professional costs, including exclusion, isolation, and, at times, overt hostility.

Numerous participants who experienced a greater sense of strengthened self- and group-identification also engaged in individual and collective action to address antisemitism on their campus, including penning letters and petitions, participating in their faculty association as members or in their Executive Committee, or in university EDI committees (164). Tenured

faculty members and clinical instructors in medicine also formed, or joined, local, provincial, or national organizations of academics or practitioners to combat antisemitism (e.g., Anna, Saul, and Eden). Participants in Jewish Studies, law, humanities, social sciences, and to a lesser degree, medicine, provided emotional, academic, and administrative support for Jewish students (e.g., Susan and Craig). These findings are consistent with that of other studies on Canadian Jewish faculty members' resistance (Elizur & Marom, 2026; Marom & Switzer, 2025; Marom, 2026b).

Not all participants engaged or wished to engage in these sorts of actions. Two male participants, one who taught Jewish Studies courses and the other in social sciences, expressed their frustration with Jewish students seeking their emotional support from them as the participants considered it outside their occupational scope and potentially unfair to other students. Some participants also expressed their consequent exhaustion from and frustration with this activism. More than half of the sub-sample articulated their disillusionment and feeling that they had been displaced from or no longer belonged at their universities and, for 25 percent of the sub-sample, even Canada as a whole (168). These feelings of displacement and a lack of belonging among Canadian Jewish members on campus have likewise been documented in other scholarship (Elizur & Marom, 2026; Kuper, 2023; Marom, 2025a, 2025b; Santos & Yogev, 2026). Furthermore, a minority of participants mentioned their plans for early retirement or emigrating to the US or Israel. However, of the more than 25 percent of tenured or clinical instructor participants who wanted to leave their faculty positions, most resolved to stay. They cited a sense of obligation to protect Jews in more vulnerable positions on campus and to foster the continuity of a Jewish presence in Canadian academia (e.g., Rebecca, Hillary, Saul, and Ivan; see also Tuckel, 2025 for US Jewish faculty experiences).

This rejection of and resistance to The Agreement can be likened to reactive ethnicity, or the identity formation process in which a dominant group's rejection, discrimination, and assignment of an inferior status to a minority group strengthens their ethnic self-identification (Portes, 1999: 465, as cited in Doering and Peker, 2022: 2959). In turn, this reactive self-identification can drive mobilization efforts to counter the discrimination and assigned inferior status. Jewish faculty members' rejection of the disciplinary moral logic of The Agreement and their reclamation of their self-definition and self-valuation can also be analogized to the identity formation process detailed by Ben M. Freeman and Sarah Hurwitz in their manifesto and memoir, respectively. Freeman (2021) describes his own journey to what he termed "Jewish pride", imploring other Jews to reclaim agency by defining for themselves their Jewish identity and to see it as a source of pride, not shame. Like Freeman (2021), Hurwitz (2025) recounts her exploration and introspection into her Jewish identity and how she came to reject the social pressure to be a Jew who fits in, or a "Cool Jew" (479) – a term she borrows from Horn (2021a: 57).

9.4. Chapter Summary

This chapter analyzed and discussed the findings from the four preceding results chapters alongside findings from other similar studies. Taken together, the findings from this study illustrate how The Agreement operates as a dynamic and interactional social process, rather than a fixed set of rules, that allows for the stigmatization of certain expressions of Jewish identity. The prevailing non-Jewish standpoint, an iteration of Jewish Difference (Silverman, 2025), established the social scripts and assumptions that Jewish faculty members were expected to obey to avoid being discredited and to be conditionally included in the community of the good (Hirsh, 2017: 37). Equally, institutional structures and policies that took the form of maximal

passivity, or active exclusion in the case of EDI programs, supported and contributed to the enactment of The Agreement.

Moral experiences, whose frequency and manifestation varied depending on micro-, meso-, and macro-level variables and power relations, refined participants' prior awareness of an Agreement and the specific terms for their conditional inclusion within Canadian academia. Disciplinary measures encountered during these moral experiences deterred discreditable participants, penalized the discredited, and rewarded those who adhered to their prescribed role as a figurative and material human giver. In the context of Canadian academia, this role precluded support for or identification with Zionism, defined as the practice of agency through the assertion for self-definition and support for self-determination in Israel (Wilf, 2018). Participants who could not, would not, or did not adhere to this role risked stigmatization. Nice Goy Syndrome and goyimpathy, moreover, can be understood as mechanisms in these moral experiences that both reflected and reproduced The Agreement through an emphasis on social harmony and extending greater concern to non-Jewish actors behaving antisemitically than to the Jewish victims themselves.

With The Gentleman's Agreement and the threat of stigmatization for perceived or actual transgressions made apparent, Jewish faculty members navigated its terms using information or tension management strategies, dependent on their (in)visibility as Jews. The employment of these strategies additionally depended on the confluence of other variables, including their professional rank and the campus atmosphere.

Jewish faculty members' political leanings and their feeling of vulnerability largely shaped their oscillation between experiencing self- and group-alienation and concern with in-group purification and experiencing strengthened self- and group-identification. Left-leaning

politics were associated with greater self-alienation and alienation from Israeli Jews due to concerns about Israel's conduct in the Israel-Hamas war and settler violence in the West Bank. Participants of all political leanings felt varying degrees of self- and group-alienation with Canadian Jewry but for different reasons. Jewish faculty members further described feeling compelled to manage their own image and that of their group to preserve the overall reputation of Jews, Zionism, and Israel, and chances for their inclusion and acceptance among Jews and non-Jews.

Depending on the levels of their strengthened self-identification and their professional, social, and physical vulnerability, Jewish faculty members engaged in campus activism and scholarly pursuits to combat antisemitism and support their in-group. Much of the revalorization of Jewish identity took place off campus, thus drawing attention to the reality of The Agreement and the known consequences of transgression. On campus, Jewish faculty members engaged in individual and collective mobilization efforts to address antisemitism and support Jews on campus. Importantly, these forms of activism and scholarly pursuits simultaneously represented a source of empowerment and burden on Jewish faculty members.

These findings underscore the importance of a granular analysis and interactional focus to theorize the micro-macro connections of the materialization, terms, and enforcement of The Gentleman's Agreement. Attention to how micro-level variables, e.g., (in)visibility as a Jew, intersecting identities, social capital, converge with meso-level variables, e.g., university leadership, student demographics, and macro-level variables, e.g., provincial and national culture, to shape the power relations and terms of a time-, place, and context-specific Agreement.

In the next chapter, I begin by returning to Samson's interview and his mention of the straitjacket, which I first cited in the introduction. I include a second excerpt and

metaphor that he invoked later in his interview to explain how these two metaphors encapsulate the operation of The Gentleman's Agreement within the Canadian academic context. I subsequently outline this study's theoretical and empirical contributions to the growing body of scholarship and briefly explain how they may inform the discussion on antisemitism and antizionism. I then discuss the study's limitations, identify directions for future research, and consider the potential explanatory power of The Gentleman's Agreement beyond Canadian academia across diverse temporal, spatial, cultural, and historical contexts. I conclude by reflecting on the parallels between the plot and production of the 1947 film *Gentleman's Agreement* and the functioning and purpose of The Gentleman's Agreement.

10. Conclusion

Towards the end of the interview, from which the excerpt that introduced this thesis originated, the interviewer inquired, “Do you think BDS is already impacting the university? What are you seeing in terms of either official or unofficial BDS?” Samson nodded and replied, “Oh, yeah...unofficially, [my university] has quietly been divesting...In terms of partnerships with...Israeli universities...it doesn't take much to end a partnership...Most partnerships...have to be actively renewed...All you have to do is just let one expire...So, BDS, Boycott,” he chuckled wryly. “That's what the ‘B’ stands for. It is sort of a silent boycott. It'll happen quietly. Death by a thousand cuts. That is what I see happening.”

The straitjacket was invented in or around 1770 in France and quickly gained widespread usage in psychiatric institutions in most Western countries to restrain patients deemed at risk of harming themselves and others (Chaney, 2022). “Death by a thousand cuts”, on the other hand, is a loose translation by Western observers of a form of the death penalty practiced in China from 900 A.D. to 1905 and reserved for the gravest of crimes (Brook et al., 2008). *Lingchi*, the Chinese term for this punishment, involved cutting the prisoner's naked body, slice by slice, before a jeering crowd until they died. In this regard, it closely parallels Einat Wilf's (2022) “BDS pound of flesh” discussed in the preceding chapter. Principally, this execution method centres on the humiliation and the systematic destruction of the condemned person's dignity and body.

Together, the metaphors of the straitjacket and the death by a thousand cuts graphically encapsulate the operation and asymmetric nature of The Gentleman's Agreement: the former symbolizes the social constraints imposed upon Jewish identity, expression, and ultimately agency, while the latter illustrates the enforcement of these

constraints through repeated, incremental, and systematic disciplinary measures that cumulatively produce a functionally terminal spoiled identity. Moreover, both metaphors draw attention to the appointment and associated power of the non-Jew as the arbiter who can determine what, if any, Jewish expression and existence is acceptable and the consequences for perceived or actual transgressions.

The findings from this study suggest that, within the Canadian academic context, the prevailing non-Jewish standpoint deemed Zionism the gravest of crimes, thereby positioning it as a functionally terminal spoiled identity within the context of The Agreement. Importantly, participants' accounts demonstrate that the straitjacket of The Gentleman's Agreement did not only materialize in the Canadian academic context, nor did it remain static. Rather, as the first results chapter details, over the course of the moral career and through moral experiences, Jewish faculty members became aware of the presence and contours of The Agreement, as well as the consequences for perceived or actual transgressions. In other words, participants came to learn of the prevailing non-Jewish standpoint that delineated the "acceptable" forms of Jewish identity and that perceived or actual deviation resulted in the straitjacket tightening.

The second results chapter describes the unfolding of the moral career on campus, whereby the positioning of Zionism as a spoiled identity became apparent through moral experiences. Importantly, micro-, meso-, and macro-level variables shaped the materialization and operation of The Agreement at the institutional and individual levels. Policies of maximal passivity and the active exclusion of Jews from EDI discussions and policies upheld, contributed to, and legitimized the enactment of The Agreement. Discredited Jewish faculty members reported funding cuts, being cut out from the community of the good and campus life, and cut off from relationships. These moral experiences crystallized for participants the illusory character of

phantom acceptance and phantom normalcy: inclusion and tolerance hinge on participants' adherence to the prescribed role of a human giver, or, at minimum limiting the obtrusiveness of their stigma. In turn, as the third results chapter describes, discreditable and discredited participants employed information and tension management strategies to avoid or mitigate (further) stigmatization, thereby cutting away aspects of their own identities in an attempt to maintain, gain, or regain acceptance.

Jewish faculty members' self- and group-alienation and concern with in-group purification, as reported in the fourth results chapter, as well as their strengthened self- and group-identification, can thus be framed within the context of these two metaphors. Participants' concerns about the behaviours of others within their in-group – whether those perceived as anti-Palestinian and uncritically pro-Israel or as “Cool Jews” – can be understood as concerns that such behaviours either tightened The Agreement, thereby accelerating the cumulative death by a thousand cuts, or reinforced its legitimacy by “Cool Jews” denying or justifying its operation.

The latter half of the fourth results chapter substantiate the central claim of this study: Jewish faculty members who, dependent on their level of self- and group-identification and vulnerability, opted to resist the terms of The Agreement consequently experienced a tightening of their straitjacket and incurred greater social and professional injuries. Resultingly, the revalorization of Jewish identity most often took place outside of campus life and among their own community where The Agreement was not present nor constraining their expression and existence.

The additional terms introduced in the discussion chapter, “Nice Goy Syndrome” and “goyimpathy”, further draw attention to the paternalistic logic underpinning the operation of The

Gentleman's Agreement. Nice Goy Syndrome denotes the transactional and conditional "kindness" non-Jewish actors showed Jews in exchange for the deference, appreciation, and goodwill to which the former feels entitled. As the accounts of the Jewish women participants demonstrated, the enactment of Nice Goy Syndrome could take on a gendered form in the prescribed role assigned to Jewish women and the specific disciplinary measures employed for perceived or actual deviation from The Agreement. Moreover, these accounts most forcefully illustrate the height of moral arbitration implicit in restricting Jewish agency lest they harm themselves or others, much like the use of a straitjacket. This dynamic further reflects and reproduces the paternalistic logic of The Agreement, whereby interlocutors' attempting to "save" Jewish women through reformatory intervention casted themselves as saviours – not only by "rescuing" the Jewish women, but also by using that role to shore up their own moral reputations, which they felt were put into question.

Operating in concert with Nice Goy Syndrome, goyimpathy refers to the excessive sympathy for, or the denialism, sometimes shown towards non-Jews credibly accused of antisemitism. When extended to non-Jewish actors by Jewish faculty members, as many participants did, it could be understood within the confines of The Agreement, which demands Jews' affirmation of gentile decency and unconditional forgiveness for non-Jews' transgressions. When extended by non-Jewish actors towards other non-Jewish actors, goyimpathy can be understood as exonerating others for the use of the straitjacket and the "death by a thousand cuts" and, by extension, exonerating themselves from supporting or participating in the same processes. Equally, as the findings suggest, The Agreement constrained the behaviour of wise faculty members through the threat of courtesy stigmatization. Therefore, wise non-Jewish actors who extend goyimpathy to other non-Jewish actors behaving antisemitically should be

understood as a response to the formers' awareness of The Agreement, and an attempt to maintain their membership to their in-group, i.e., of non-Jews. Both Nice Goy Syndrome and goyimpathy can thus be conceptualized as interactional mechanisms that reflect and reproduce the paternalistic logic and asymmetric dynamic of The Gentleman's Agreement for Jewish and wise faculty members.

The two metaphors of the straitjacket and death by a thousand cuts invoked by Samson exemplify Jewish faculty members' awareness of the presence of The Gentleman's Agreement and the consequences for perceived and actual transgressions. These metaphors further draw attention to the widespread interactional stigmatization and cumulative humiliation and degradation of Jewish faculty members, rather than merely episodic or acute moral experiences. The finding that more than 25 percent of this study's sub-sample reported wanting to leave their university substantiates the long-term effects of living under these social conditions. Lastly, these two metaphors capture how the asymmetric character of The Agreement allows for the appointment and associated power of the non-Jew to rule as the arbiter over what, if any, Jewish expression and existence is acceptable and the consequences for perceived or actual transgressions. Within this framework, Zionism therefore constitutes the gravest of crimes, a functionally terminal spoiled identity, because its' symbolic representation and material manifestation of Jewish agency and independence undermine the very moral order of The Agreement.

10.1. Contributions to Existing Scholarship

The present study examined how Jewish faculty members came to understand and experience Zionism as a spoiled identity and how they negotiated their stigmatized identity within Canadian academia. It used secondary analysis of interviews with 40 Jewish faculty

members from the FEAR project who varied by geographic region, academic discipline, professional rank, and intersecting identities. Through this analysis, I developed The Gentleman's Agreement, a heuristic framework, for explaining how micro-, meso-, and macro-level variables shaped its materialization and operation through which institutional and individual disciplinary measures constrained Jewish expression and existence. I further examined how Jewish faculty members employed information and tension management strategies to navigate The Agreement's constraints among protesters, students, colleagues, and administrators, and across physical, social, academic, and online settings. As discussed in the previous section, Samson's metaphors of the "straitjacket" and "death by a thousand cuts" succinctly capture the structure and operation of The Agreement within the Canadian academic context.

This study's significance lies primarily in its theoretical and empirical contributions. As discussed in Chapter 2, the growing body of scholarship on the experiences of Jewish campus members on North American campuses often references concepts associated with Goffman's (1963) stigma theory, e.g., passing or covering. However, these concepts have largely been employed descriptively to categorize participants' experiences rather than to explain the social processes through which Jewish identity becomes discreditable, and, at times, discredited. Consequently, comparatively less attention has been devoted to these interactional processes and how, why, and when they occur. Goffman's (1963) microsociological analysis of stigma makes possible the theorizing of the macrosociological construction and operation of The Gentleman's Agreement, which, as the Literature Review suggests, may be applicable to other national and demographic, i.e., student contexts.

Importantly, as discussed in the preceding chapter, the materialization and operation of The Agreement cannot be understood independently of the cultural, national, political, and

institutional contexts. Differences in university governance, national identity, campus culture, and broader social and cultural conditions shaped both the prescribed roles expected of Jewish faculty members and the disciplinary measures that followed perceived or actual departures from these roles. Likewise, attention must be devoted to the power relations characterizing faculty-student, faculty-faculty, and faculty-administrator interactions, as well as the intersecting identities through which The Agreement is experienced and negotiated.

The present study additionally makes several empirical contributions that complement the existing scholarship on the experiences of Jewish faculty and staff, particularly that of Marom and colleagues. First, the findings demonstrate how participants' moral careers prior to entering Canadian academia shaped their self-conceptions, understandings of their environments, and subsequent responses to anticipated or actual stigmatization. In doing so, this study situates Jewish faculty members' information and tension management strategies within the broader trajectory of their moral career rather than treating these strategies as isolated responses to individual incidents. Second, the findings reveal how micro-, meso-, and macro-level variables shaped both the social conditions through which stigmatization could or did occur and the strategies participants employed pre-emptively or in response. Accordingly, these findings emphasize the variation in how, why, and when The Agreement materialized, and how participants navigated it across institutional settings, power relations, and intersecting identities. Finally, the inclusion of participants in the Atlantic provinces, together with the examination of participants' experiences in online and research settings, extends the existing scholarship. Namely, these empirical insights illuminate the occurrences and manifestations of stigmatization

and identity management in geographic and social contexts that have received comparatively little scholarly attention.

Marom (2026b) acknowledged the challenges of recruiting self-identifying “anti-Zionist” Jewish faculty members to interview. Similarly, despite the FEAR project’s efforts to recruit this demographic, our dataset yielded only one participant, Oscar, who described himself as “agnostic” about Israel’s existence as a Jewish state. Future research examining how this demographic perceives, navigates, and responds to the social constraints and disciplinary mechanisms identified in this thesis and conceptualized as The Gentleman’s Agreement would further test and refine the framework. Additionally, although I originally intended to analyze the full FEAR dataset of 66 interviews for this study, including the seven non-Jewish faculty members, time constraints precluded me from doing so. Future research examining how wise non-Jewish faculty members may experience courtesy stigmatization within the context of The Agreement would further illuminate its relational dynamics and operation.⁴⁸ Lastly, future research should also examine the gendered modalities of the materialization and operation of The Agreement. While this study identified gendered patterns in the paternalistic regulation of Jewish women as an instantiation of Nice Goy Syndrome, a deeper analysis remains necessary.

As noted in the Introduction, the primary objectives of this thesis were to examine: 1) how, why, and when Jewish faculty members’ Jewish identities become stigmatized within the Canadian academic context; 2) the implications of this stigmatization for their navigation of the academic environment and social interactions; and 3) how they negotiate their stigmatized

⁴⁸ In a recent conference presentation (July 2026), I conducted a preliminary secondary data analysis of these seven interviews with non-Jewish faculty members. Preliminary findings from these interviews suggested that The Gentleman’s Agreement extends beyond Jewish faculty members to wise non-Jewish faculty members. I further found that these faculty members, who occupied a liminal position within The Agreement, did not experience identity-based stigmatization. Nonetheless, they became subject to analogous, though not equivalent, forms of discrediting through the interactional and social process of courtesy stigmatization. A more comprehensive analysis of these interviews remains the subject of future research.

identity. To address these objectives, I adopted a granular approach to understand how micro-, meso-, and macro-level variables shaped the interactional and relational processes of stigmatization and, in turn, how these processes upheld and sustained The Gentleman's Agreement.

The theoretical and definitional debates surrounding antisemitism and antizionism extend well beyond the scope of this thesis, and I invite others to draw upon these findings or consider how my framework may inform these discussions. Nonetheless, while I do not claim that the experiences documented here are representative of all Jewish faculty members across Canadian campuses, the analysis clearly demonstrates that the pervasive pejoration and demonization of Zionism and Israel deter the full expression of Jewish identity within these spaces. It further illustrates the cascading effects these social conditions had on participants' sense of belonging and participation in campus life. Jewish faculty members, particularly those with tenure, often possess greater institutional security and social capital than students or contract faculty to engage in campus activism and scholarly pursuits to address antisemitism. However, as this thesis reveals, resisting The Agreement frequently carried significant social, emotional, and professional costs. These findings underscore the importance of continued research on this topic, given faculty members' roles as producers and disseminators of knowledge and as mentors to future generations of academics. This need is further reinforced by Elizur and Marom's (2026) observation that, for Jewish faculty and staff, "higher education is a workplace, not a temporary passage" (2).

10.2. The Gentleman's Agreement Beyond Canadian Academia

Jewish history reveals a recurring pattern of conditional inclusion and tolerance punctuated by exclusion and expulsion. It also reveals the strategies through which Jews have

managed the tensions produced by these conditions, including decisions regarding disclosure, concealment, covering, and resistance. I therefore contend that The Gentleman's Agreement, which I conceptualize as existing along a continuum of conditional inclusion and total exclusion, dependent on Jews' adherence to prescribed social scripts and expectations, holds potential explanatory power elsewhere. Moreover, The Agreement emphasizes how micro-, meso-, and macro-level variables shape not only the interactional processes of stigmatization, but also the broader structural frameworks and social conditions through which these processes occur. In doing so, it provides a sociological lens to examine these recurring patterns of inclusion and exclusion across diverse historical, spatial, temporal, social, and cultural contexts. Below, I briefly discuss how this framework complements the work of other scholars and consider its explanatory potential beyond the Canadian academic context through a process of retroduction across a range of historical settings.

The social processes theorized through The Gentleman's Agreement are not historically novel. Indeed, the term "stigma" itself originates from ancient Greece, where it referred to bodily markings used to identify individuals as morally tainted or socially deviant (Goffman, 1963: 1). As Horn (2021a) notes, the Hellenistic empire that had conquered Judea valorized nude participation in sporting events, thus presenting a dilemma for circumcised Jewish boys and men. Many underwent the painful operation of what can be understood as a literal form of "covering" by reversing their circumcision so as to be included. Horn (2021a) refers to this "weaponized shame" as "Hannukah antisemitism", or the elimination of Jewish civilization through coercing Jews to renounce certain aspects of their Jewish identity (56-57). She further observes that Hannukah antisemitism inevitably progresses to what she describes as "Purim antisemitism", meaning the elimination of Jewish civilization through genocide (56-57).

In his seminal 2013 book, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition*, historian David Nirenberg traces a similar pattern across the ancient and Muslim world and Medieval Europe, whereby Jews both experienced forms of tolerance and protection while being positioned as the subordinate other. Nirenberg (2013) describes the simultaneous “appropriation and stigmatization” of Jewish scriptures both in the Quran and in early Islamic tradition through which competing religious claims informed the prescribed roles for Jewish expression and existence (137). This dynamic produced what Nirenberg (2013: 137) terms the “included exclusion” of Jews (and Christians) as protected yet subordinated populations, i.e., *dhimmis*, who were required to pay *jizya* tax (146). This precarious and humiliating form of conditional inclusion and paternalistic tolerance did not recognize Jews as equal members of society; rather, it valued their presence insofar as they fulfilled a prescribed subordinate role within the dominant social order. In this respect, it reflects the dynamic of the human giver that I discussed above.

This dynamic was not confined to this context nor region. Nirenberg (2013) draws attention to how, in Medieval Europe, “European sovereigns increasingly insisted that the Jews *belonged* to them in a peculiar way, different from that of their other subjects” (191). Loyalty, subservience, and service, often in the form of taxation, characterized the asymmetric relationship between Jews and European sovereigns. This arrangement secured Jewish communities’ conditional protection while preserving European sovereign’s authority to discipline them for perceived or actual transgressions, including through expulsions (Nirenberg, 2013: 191-192).

The positioning and valuation of Jews as human givers have persisted, although the terms and enforcement of this arrangement have evolved over time. In their excellent 2018 book, *Antisemitism and the Left: On the Return of the Jewish Question*, sociologists Robert Fine and

Philip Spencer argue that the universalism popularized during the French enlightenment presented a dilemma for Jewish emancipation. Namely, to achieve full rights and equality, Jews must “emancipate” themselves from the notion of peoplehood and instead redefine their identity as religious individuals (Fine & Spencer, 2018: 18-19). The authors emphasize that the opposition to Jewish statehood and peoplehood would later shape the animosity towards Zionism as a movement and the founding of Israel.

Through these four examples across diverse historical, spatial, and temporal contexts, these recurring patterns demonstrate the interactional and structural mechanisms that produce and sustain the conditional inclusion, paternalistic logic, and stigmatization that underpin The Gentleman’s Agreement. Moreover, these historical examples illustrate how such social conditions shaped the consequent tightening of the straitjacket and the accumulation of the “death by a thousand cuts” should Jews be perceived to or actually deviate from their prescribed role as human givers. In the next section, I conclude this thesis by returning to the film and briefly discussing how its plot and production mirror the operation of The Gentleman’s Agreement.

10.3. *Gentleman’s Agreement* and The Gentleman’s Agreement

The 1947 novel by Laura Z. Hobson and its subsequent film adaptation, *Gentleman’s Agreement*, received widespread acclaim; it was nominated for eight Academy Awards, and its leading non-Jewish actors and director were similarly celebrated (Gordan, 2021; Horn, 2021b). However, as Horn (2021b) argues, the film’s self-congratulatory narrative ultimately centers the moral awakening of the gentile protagonist’s fiancé, Kathy, rather than the lived experiences of Jews themselves. Namely, in one of the final scenes of the film, Kathy, who had refused to rent her sister’s home to the protagonist’s Jewish friend, Dave, meets with him and proceeds to plead

with him to reassure her that she is not antisemitic. After, receiving his assurance, she then agrees to rent her sister's home to him and his family. Horn (2021b) points out that this conclusion, in which American democratic values ostensibly triumph over antisemitism, flatters the audience while obscuring the social conditions that constrained Jewish existence at the time. Horn (2021b) additionally observes the irony of this celebration based on the events that followed the film's production: during the Red Scare, the House Un-American Activities Committee hauled the non-Jewish director, Elia Kazan, non-Jewish actress Anne Revere, and the Jewish actor John Garfield, who played Dave, to testify because of their participation in the film. While Kazan named eight friends and former colleagues, Garfield refused to give names or to out his wife as a communist. Garfield subsequently could not find work in the film industry again and died a year and a half later from a heart attack at 39-years-old.

Like the plot and production of the film, *The Gentleman's Agreement* centres on the testing and affirmation of gentile decency. Although the term "agreement" implies voluntary consent, mutual responsibility, and equal agency between the parties involved, Kathy's plea to Dave, "You know I'm not antisemitic. You're a Jew and you know it", and the findings of this study demonstrate – particularly through the concepts of Nice Goy Syndrome and goyimpathy – that the contract is asymmetric. As *The Agreement* materialized and operated within Canadian campuses, Jewish faculty members were expected to conform to prescribed roles as human givers, often requiring them to minimize, conceal, or repudiate aspects of their identities, including their identification with and support for Zionism and Israel. *The Gentleman's Agreement's* operation therefore depends upon the dynamic between the human giver and the human taker: Jews are expected to provide affirmation, accommodation, and moral reassurance, while the dominant group retains the authority to determine the terms of inclusion and tolerance.

The film remains relevant not because its plot or production meaningfully challenged antisemitism, but because its underlying moral framework endures: non-Jews continue to seek redemption through the very Jews they marginalize, and discard those they deem unworthy of “saving.”

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