

MSc Advanced Social Research Methods and Statistics

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is the United Synagogue a microcosm of the
UK's Jewish community?

demographic research using available data

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2 Abstract

The United Synagogue is the UK's largest and oldest Jewish religious institution. This report sets out to analyse raw membership data of that organisation. The methodology invoked is Research Using Available Data and a number of key findings are reported.

Using data about the number, gender and age of members, descriptive statistics are produced. These suggest that the United Synagogue membership base is in a state of decline. Male membership has fallen absolutely by over 22% in less than one generation and twice as many synagogues experienced a contraction rather than an expansion in membership from 1981 to 1999.

These results, it is suggested, can be used to shed light on the demographic state of the wider UK Jewish community – a task that in the past has proven to be notoriously difficult to achieve. Clearly the picture presented here is therefore a negative one from the perspective of the UK Jewish community. However it can be argued that the United Synagogue's membership record is not a representative sample of the UK Jewish community as a whole and that further research is therefore required before crystallised conclusions can be drawn.

3 Introducing the Research Problem

3.1 Introduction

The primary aim of this research is to analyse the United Synagogue's membership data thereby establishing trends and patterns that describe what is happening to the organisation. This information will enable light to be shed on the status of the wider UKJC since the United Synagogue it is argued, can be seen as a microcosm of British Jewry.

Demographically, UK Jewry represents less than half a percent of the total UK population (Schmool & Cohen; 1998), between 260,000 and 300,000 people. But even though it is so small, recording and mapping its demographic profile has proven to be fiendishly difficult. Unfortunately, the UK Jewish Community (UKJC) has no equivalent to the American National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS), which is an annual survey of the American Jewish Community. It is therefore often necessary to estimate demographic trends within the UKJC from a variety of sources.

Any population study of (unaffiliated) Jews in the Diaspora can be an all but 'impossible task' according to the AICE (1998). The reasons for this will be discussed below however the main thrust of this report is to try and solve the problem by using a *proxy* community as a microcosm of the whole. That proxy is the United Synagogue.

3.2 Affiliation statistics

One data set that does provide a demographic record of UK Jewry is the synagogue. "What happens to synagogue affiliation is of fundamental importance to the character of Jewish life in Britain." (Miller et al 1996:14). In 1996 a JPR survey found that almost two-thirds of its sample of UK Jewry belonged to some form of synagogal body. Of this group 40% belonged to the 'Orthodox', i.e. more religious, wing (Miller et al 1996).

3.3 The United Synagogue

The United Synagogue is the UK's largest single Jewish organisation by membership (Schmool et al 1998). It represents 'Mainstream Orthodox' Jews¹. 61% of all synagogue-affiliated households in the UK fall under this umbrella term (Schmool & Cohen, 1998). At the end of 1998 the United Synagogue consisted 64 member synagogal organisations of which 43 were *member* synagogues², and 20 were *affiliated* synagogues. Until 1999 the organisation had never carried out a comprehensive internal analysis of its membership even though it has a history of more than 130 years³ i.e. the United Synagogue understands that there are some serious issues to be addressed and that this one way in which this may occur.

3.4 Communal planning

The need for, and benefits of, this study can be simply stated; there is very little available data that describes the UKJC. This has serious implications for communal organisations that wish to gain a better understanding of what makes their community *tick* - i.e. the main factors affecting its dynamism, successes and failures. Communal planners who are looking to provide effective and efficient welfare services require knowledge of who their clients so that infrastructural investments can be made.

1 This definition is synonymous with the term 'Central Orthodox' used by Kalms, 1995.

2 *Member synagogues* (colloquially known as constituent synagogues) differs from *affiliate synagogues* in the way that their financial affairs are dealt with by the central United Synagogue body. There are also differences in representation afforded to members on the United Synagogue Council, the body that dictates policy. *Affiliated synagogues* therefore have a greater amount of independence from the United Synagogue. There is also one *associate synagogue* (called Western Marble Arch) which has even greater independence. (Steven Garcia pers. comm. 14/03/01)

3 See Graham (1999) for the first demographic study of the United Synagogue.

4 Literature Review

4.1 The data shortage

As mentioned, one of the main reasons for studying raw synagogal membership data is the fact that there is a dearth of useful research into the UKJC. Gathering data on the Jewish community has traditionally been carried out in any one of three ways:

- a) By the analysis of census data,
- b) Making comparisons with other communities or
- c) Through local/national sample surveys.

Apart from synagogue membership records, the Jewish Yearbook and community mailing lists, data sources for Jewish populations are very limited (Gay, 1971). Hence, much is still not understood about this community and its continuing distinctiveness (Schmool, Board of Deputies, pers. comm. 1999).

Of the studies that have been carried out, most relate to Jewish mobility and residential behaviour. These have been quantitative in nature and carried out as large-scale surveys⁴. But even here there are lacunas, for example Shortridge (1976, in Park, 1994) and Park (1994) establish that 'the geography of religion' is in its infancy and that in the past two decades, very little study has been carried out in this sphere. Research into the UKJC is consequently very limited (Schmool, Board of Deputies, pers. comm. 1999; Miller, pers. comm. 31/03/00).

4.2 The analysis of census data

Research into the UK Jewish community (UKJC) has traditionally been impaired by the UK census not including an ethnic or religious question (Gay, 1971). Clearly, this represents a major data anomaly and stumbling block for researchers who, in the past, have had little alternative but to practise complicated methods of guess work (see for example; Waterman & Kosmin, 1986a; 1987 on Distinctive Jewish Names and Electoral Registers).

The current census can however reveal some information that may be of use for Jewish research. For example, using the nationality data from the census we know that there has recently been an increasing inflow of Israelis into the UK, especially to London⁵. However it should be noted that these immigrants are most likely to be irreligious since there is little religious advantage of moving from Israel to the UK. They are even less likely to be interested in joining an Anglo-Orthodox Jewish organisation such as the United Synagogue and consequently are unlikely to hold the key to the future of the UKJC.

4.2.1 Census 2001

At the time of writing, the first UK census containing a religious question is being carried out. However even the census will have its imperfections, for example there may be undercounting of Jews who, for historical reasons, are concerned about declaring their religious background on government documentation. (See also Straits, 1993: 372). There is no doubt however that the results of this particular census survey will provide the richest quantitative data set ever gathered about the UKJC.

⁴See for example, Reisman, (1995) on the location factors of the Jews in Alaska; also see Goldstein, (1990) on the migration patterns of the Jews in Rhode Island, New York.

⁵In 1999 the Israel Embassy in London had c. 20,000 registered individuals on record but noted that the actual figure may be twice this size since there is no requirement to register (Embassy staff, pers. comm. 1999). This group has a very young age profile and lives predominantly in London (Schmool & Cohen, 1998).

4.3 Comparisons with other communities

Straits, (1993: 371) suggests that making comparisons using more than one source of data could increase the reliability of the results. One possible option for comparative purposes in this study would be to extrapolate to the USA and Israel where more detailed demographic studies are regularly carried out. However it would be misleading to directly compare UK Jewry with these communities for the following reasons:

Firstly, there is the sheer size difference – millions of Jews in the USA and Israel, only hundreds of thousands in the UK. Secondly, age structures – Israel has a much younger population than the UK (see appendix A). Thirdly, communal structures – in the USA there is no national broad 'church' to which any majority of Jews belongs, i.e. there is no equivalent to the United Synagogue. The religious communities tend to operate independently of one another, national collaboration only occurs for charitable and Zionistic concerns. And fourthly, it is thought that there are fundamental demographic differences between the UK and American communities⁶, even the categorisation of religiosity has fuzzy boundaries and definitions are not directly transmutable across the Atlantic (Schmool 1998). An American reform Jew has very different practises to UK Reform Jew and no UK Jew would describe a synagogue as a temple, a common term in the States.

4.4 Local and national sample surveys

The most important work that has been carried out about the UKJC to date has been in the form of sample surveys. There have been only a few of these and they were often based upon mail-back questionnaires. The largest Jewish surveys have involved communities in Edgware, Redbridge and Barnet as well as national sample surveys such as the Kalms Review carried out by the United Synagogue in 1992. The Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) carried out the most recent national survey in 1996. This was a major qualitative study aimed at assessing attitudes of Jewish people in the UK whatever their denomination or religiosity. (See for example Miller et al, 1996).

4.4.1 Edgware

In 1968 Krausz carried out one of the earliest surveys of the UKJC. This was a study of the Edgware Jewish community and was the first of its kind to formulate a socio-economic set of data on a specific community. At the time, Edgware was a small and growing community in northwest London, today it is the fourth largest in the United Synagogue. Krausz used census data to compare statistics already known about Edgware Jewry (based on membership records) with similar statistics on the UK and other Jewish surveys. A picture was formed of a young, upwardly and spatially mobile community.

4.4.2 Redbridge

A similar, though more in-depth, survey of the London Borough of Redbridge by Levy *et al* (1979) made use of local resources such as synagogue membership records and a local building society survey. A socio-demographic profile of the community was created representing 8.2 per cent of British Jewry. Distinctive in its northeast London location (as opposed to northwest London), Redbridge's population was 'extremely concentrated' in the central wards of the borough.

4.4.3 Barnet

The data used in Waterman's 1989 study of the London Borough of Barnet was based on Small Area Statistics at an Enumeration District (ED) level (a unit of less than 150 households). He identified 58 'Jewish EDs'⁷ out of 227 using the Distinctive Jewish Names method on the Electoral Register. By means of quantitative, socio-economic data,

⁶ The UK Jewish community has an older population structure than the USA's, reflected in its lower birth rate (Schmool & Cohen 1998).

⁷ A 'Jewish ED' represents a district whose estimated Jewish population is 50 per cent or more of the total population.

comparisons were then made between 'Jewish EDs' and 'Gentile EDs'. This proved to be an effective way of quantifying and describing a concept as abstract as the *Jewishness* of an area and avoided the difficulties usually associated with a widespread questionnaire survey (such as targeting questions, the choice of questions, cost, sample nature and so on).

4.4.4 JPR national sample survey

The 1996 JPR survey (Miller et al 1996) was used to gather data about religious and political attitudes of British Jewry. In terms of synagogue membership it found that older people were more likely to become members of synagogues than younger ones, and that one quarter of the respondents had not attended a synagogue in the entire year prior to the survey (op cit :14). Miller notes "the most marked development in synagogue affiliation is the shift from membership to non-membership rather than from membership from one denomination of synagogue to another." The data showed that "all [main synagogue groups] are losing members" (Miller et al 1996).

5 Background and Contextualisation of the UKJC

5.1 The UK Jewish community

In 1995 the UK national population stood at 58.6 million (GSS, 1999) of which about 0.285 million (0.48%) were Jewish (Schmool & Cohen, 1998). From 1971 to 1991 the UK national population increased by 3.3% (Jackson, 1998) whilst the UK Jewish Community (UKJC) decreased by about 20%⁸. Unlike the UK's national population, the size of the UKJC is significantly affected by migration and marriage. For example, an influx of over 20,000 Israeli Jews to London during the 1990's (Israel Embassy staff, pers. comm. 07/09/00) represents a significant proportion of the existing community however this increase will have been balanced by increasingly high levels of *intermarriage* as discussed below.

5.2 Intermarriage

Intermarriage effectively reduces the size of the UK's Jewish population. This is because Jews are invariably defined matrilineally; consequently, if a male Jew desires that his children be recognised as Jewish, the mother of his children must be Jewish (assuming no conversion)⁹. This leads to the unusual state of affairs whereby marriage significantly affects the size of the community so; if intermarriage is high the size of the UKJC will fall. Kennedy (1944, in Peach, 1984) comments that Jewish marrying habits are particularly endogamous and marriage rates are very high.

There is an implicit assumption that children of intermarried couples are less likely to have strong Jewish identities. Although figures are not available for the UKJC, American data suggests that since 1985 there were twice as many mixed-couple marriages as monogamous (Jewish) marriages (NJPS, 1991). The NJPS report also noted that conversions to Judaism did not significantly affect this result. Such data led the Chief Rabbi, Professor Jonathan Sacks, to write a book called 'Will we have Jewish Grandchildren'. This book was in effect an 'emotional wake up call' to British Jewry to consider the implications of 'marrying out' (intermarriage) and the negative affect this will inevitably have on the size and religiosity of the community.

5.3 Geographic location

The majority of Britain's Jewish population lives in urban regions of which 67 per cent (c. 100,000 people) live in or near to London (Schmool & Cohen, 1990). This population is residentially dynamic and mobile; for over 100 years it has been moving from the east to the west of the capital. The most recent growth has been in the Home Counties and between 1977 and 1990 these grew by 21.8 per cent (Schmool & Cohen, 1990).

5.4 The United Synagogue in context

Over 60% of the UKJC is affiliated to one synagogue or another and of these 40% belong to an orthodox synagogue of which the United Synagogue is by far the largest. It is estimated that all synagogue membership data accounts for 75-80 per cent of the total Jewish population whilst some estimate it to be as high as 90 per cent (Haberman *et al*, 1983, in Miller, 1994).

Although the size of orthodox Jewry declined between 1970 and 1990 it still accounted for 73.6¹⁰ per cent of all affiliated British Jewry in 1990, of which, 52 per cent belonged to the United Synagogue.

⁸ 1977 estimate of UK Jewish population 353,720 (Lipman, 1990: 232). 20% is also supported by Schmool & Cohen's (1998) data.

⁹ This issue has been an important part of the development of the Reform Synagogue organisation in the UK. This organisation recognises people with a Jewish father and a non-Jewish mother as being Jewish.

¹⁰ It is important not to rely on individual statistics when analysing the UKJC but rather a collection from several sources. For example Miller *et al* (1996) found that only 40% of UK synagogue members

This organisation dates from 1870 and has been described as 'the most versatile and remarkable Jewish organisation in the Jewish world' (Jewish Chronicle, 15/09/95); it represents over 50 per cent of the UKJC although its membership is concentrated in London. This study will therefore concentrate on these members rather than the Reform Synagogue of Great Britain, which represents a smaller number of UK Jews.

5.5 The United Synagogue

In their study of the United Synagogue Kalms, *et al* (1992) categorised 10 per cent of the United Synagogue's members as 'strictly orthodox', 67 per cent as 'traditional', and 16 per cent as 'just Jewish'. Of the 90 or so per cent of United Synagogue members who are not strictly orthodox, *belief* and *observance* were found to be virtually independent of each other thus, Miller (1994) concludes that:

".... a feeling of *belonging*, rather than divine belief, is the driving force behind synagogal attendance and other forms of involvement in synagogue life." (Miller, 1994:200) (Author's italics)

This highlights the suggestion that Judaism is shifting its identity locus from religious observance towards more institutional forms of identification (Cohen, 1983; in Miller, 1994).

could be broadly defined as *orthodox*. The disparity is partly due to definitional problems and partly due to lack of data.

6 Definitions

Often Jewish research finds itself being 'bogged-down' by problems associated with defining two crucial concepts – *Jewish* and *community*. As with all concepts in social scientific analysis these two terms are incredibly fluid and awkward to define. In order to operationalise them, this study will use the United Synagogue's membership base as the starting point.

6.1 Who is a Jew?

Religious Jewish law (*Halacha*) is unambiguous: a person is Jewish if their mother is Jewish. However, even the ultra-orthodox communities accept conversions given the correct procedures are followed. Consequently this definition often becomes distorted with mixed marriages, unrecognised conversions and modern emancipation (Gay, 1971). Conversely, not all maternally Jewish people choose to identify themselves as being Jewish and can, therefore, be completely missed in records and surveys. The JPR survey carried out by Miller et al (1996) allowed for a self-definition of *Jewish*, as indeed has the 2001 UK census.

6.1.1 Conversions

This issue of conversion to Judaism procures a dilemma; orthodox Jews only recognise orthodox conversions. Therefore a Reform conversion (i.e. less orthodox) is not recognised as being Jewish enough by more orthodox bodies since reform Judaism takes a more lenient view than the orthodox as to what is or is not an acceptable conversion. The United Synagogue does not recognise converts via Reform Judaism as being Jewish. The American NJPS uses a definition based on *eight* separate categories in order to accommodate such technicalities as well as secular and religious differences.

6.1.2 Scales and spectrums

Schmool & Cohen (1990) identified *ten* levels of denomination to various affiliations ranging from right-wing orthodox to left-wing liberals. Within its membership, the United Synagogue has a wide spectrum of orthodoxy, from the irreligious 'burial Jew' (i.e. a person whose membership is for the sole reason of gaining a Jewish burial) to the strictly religious '*da'iti*' Jew who only eats strictly kosher food and rigidly observes the religious laws of the Sabbath. Goldberg & Kosmin (1997) discovered that only 6% of their UKJC sample fell into the *strictly orthodox* category and 24%, *traditional*.

6.2 Defining community

Other definitions are also problematic if not quite as significant as those relating to who is Jewish. For example defining *community* is, according to Caplan (1993), notoriously difficult. Goode (1969, in Caplan, 1993) describes community as 'a set of functionally oriented shared interests' rather than a geographical entity per se. Hillery (1955, in Caplan, 1993), laid out no less than 94 separate definitions of the term. In the Catholic Church, territoriality is used as well as faith, to define community, i.e. here the definition of community was geographically focused (Sack, 1986). This acceptance of non-religious issues (such as organisation, hierarchy and bureaucracy) was because, like all groups, 'Catholics need internal discipline to continue to exist' (Sack, 1986: 40).

This is highly problematic since even standard government measures of 'community' are not based on religion or even ethnicity but rather are based on geography and economics. (See for example in 'Communities Count! A step-by-step guide' in, New Economics Foundation 1999: 152). Here it is possible to again see the benefits of using the United Synagogue's data as a default definition.

6.2.1 Community v 'community'

Note the difference between '*a group of people who are members of the same synagogue*' and a *community*. The latter has richer and more qualitative facets that would not ordinarily be equated with the former. Consequently, no recognition is given here to non-members, however much they may or may not be involved in their synagogue. Also, no account is made

of synagogue attendance on the Sabbath or any other religious / communal activity. Further, this research is quantitative in the sense that it is an analysis of membership figures only¹¹.

6.2.2 Qualitative community facets

Kalms *et al*, (1992) found that 84 per cent of United Synagogue respondents said 'All', or 'More than half', of their 'close friends' were Jewish. The same result was produced in Radlett with 85 per cent preferring 'Many' or 'All' of their local friends to be Jewish (Graham, 1996). Waterman analysed this in a different way in his survey of Dublin (1983) due to the difficulties of defining 'local' and 'close friends'. He found just under one third of those interviewed had had 'social interactions with their Jewish neighbours' in the week prior to the survey and 65 per cent had done so three months prior to the survey. Although valid, this sort of data will **not** be analysed in this report.

¹¹ The United Synagogue is well aware of this duality and increasingly focuses its resources around the richer definition of *community*, coining the term 'Synagogue community' as opposed to a community that has a place to pray, a synagogue. (Lewis, pers. comm. 14/06/01)

7 Research Questions

7.1 Research aim

The primary aim of this research is to analyse the United Synagogue's membership data thereby establishing trends and patterns that describe what is happening to the organisation. This information will enable light to be shed on the situation of the wider UKJC since the United Synagogue it has been argued, can be seen as a microcosm of British Jewry. Consequently there is no formal hypothesis. This is a demographic / statistical piece of research using data analysis and descriptive statistical methods to investigate various aspects of a single data set. It will ask 'what has happened to the membership of the United Synagogue?'

7.2 Jewish Continuity

This is timely research. Jewish Continuity, a term popularised by the Chief Rabbi in 1993, highlighted his concern about the future of the Jewish community. Given the issues relating to assimilation of Jews into western society, the key issue concerned whether or not Diaspora Jewry (Jews not living in Israel) would be able to 'survive' into the future. This report looks at data from the United Synagogue and asks whether or not that organisation's membership records can shed any light onto this issue almost eight years after the Chief Rabbi first brought it to the community's attention.

7.3 The wider picture of religious decline

A third angle on this issue of the importance of the membership analysis is placing the mainstream Anglo Jewish experience in the context of the nature of religious decline in society as a whole¹². It will ask 'has membership of the United Synagogue changed in line with the change of organised UK religion as a whole?'

7.4 It's not size that counts

It can be argued that sheer volumes of members may not necessarily be the best measure of synagogal success. A relatively small community may have regularly good synagogal attendances for the Sabbath services and a vibrant programme of well-attended daily communal activities¹¹.

There are several interrelated socio-economic factors influencing the tendency of individuals to either join the United Synagogue or to terminate their membership. These include recessions, house prices, the cost of synagogue fees (which are not uniform across all synagogues), a Rabbi's personality, one's work location, changes to one's religiosity, marriage and family makeup. This study will ask 'is the methodology of counting member's heads the best way to analyse the future of a faith community?'

¹² It is estimated that across all denominations, UK adult church attendance has dwindled from 10.2% of the adult population in 1980 to 7.7% today. However the odd community did manage to buck the trend. For example the Anglican Church runs an evangelical course called Alpha, which it is estimated, brings 7,000 new people into the church in London every year. (Economist, 2000)

8 Research Design / Methodology

8.1 Secondary analysis

The research method applied in this study is known as 'Research Using Available Data'; it is in fact secondary analysis using an existing database. As noted it will place emphasis on the membership data set of the United Synagogue. This is secondary analysis since the data was not collected for the sole purposes of this research. The advantage of using available data as opposed to surveys and perhaps experiments include:

- Non-reactive measurement – since people are unaware of their being studied and possibility of distorting the results,
- Understanding social change – since the analysis is able to span substantial periods of time,
- Large sample size – by definition it includes all members, and
- Lower costs – the data already exists and is stored in one location (Singleton et al, 1993: 354).

8.2 Evaluating the quality of the data

Since the membership figures were not gleaned first hand it is important for the sake of *validity* of the data that the process by which they were originally assembled is reconstructed (Riley 1963 in Straits: 369): how, when where and by whom? Is the data accurate, complete and reliable?

8.3 Membership data source

The historical membership records held by the United Synagogue provided a unique, and largely untapped data source. Being a registered charity, each year the United Synagogue membership department creates a list, which is published in a document entitled "Trustees' Report and Annual Accounts", in its annual financial reports. The data within this section are taken from the membership records at the end of each financial year.

In the Trustee's Report the data are presented as a table consisting of three columns, 'Men', 'Women' and 'Total' for each synagogue. These also show a gendered membership breakdown for all synagogues. They are compiled by removing membership totals at the end of each year from the computerised membership system¹³. This source also has some information about the age of members. Beyond the most recent year, data was only available in a printed format; there were no historical records in electronic format.

All members of the United Synagogue (membership generally being held by the male head of household on behalf of the rest of the household) are logged (but not stored) on computerised records that date from 1985 onwards. These figures can be used to obtain information regarding addresses, family size, patterns of location and the rate of change in membership levels. Only Constituent Synagogues have been analysed and at the end of 1998 they were 43 such institutions representing 87% of the total United Synagogue membership².

8.3.1 Gaining access

Access was obtained through the Community Development Department. Having carried out previous research work within the organisation little difficulty was encountered in gaining access. The Department's Director, Leonie Lewis, was a conduit to the key gatekeepers of the data within the organisation – they were the Membership Administrator and the Finance

¹³ This system was called *Softran* but in 2000 was replaced by a new system called *Kehilla*. This limited to some extent the quality of data available for age analysis of the individual synagogues especially changes in age structure over time.

Administrator. Both departments provided virtually unlimited access to their key data archives since they understood the value that research could afford to the future of the organisation.

8.3.2 Data quality

The data set will be treated as a 'true' reflection of the 'exact' number of members that the organisation had at each point they were recorded. However this is obviously an unrealistic interpretation of the figures since there are many reasons why the numbers may be inaccurate. These include mistakes made by members when completing applications by hand and mistakes by employees entering the data into the United Synagogue's database system. Also the definition of 'member' has yet to be clarified and as will be shown below, this is open to various interpretations. Nevertheless it is not felt that any of these issues will significantly detract from the data quality or the results.

8.4 Data analysis

Once the paper-based data sets were gathered, they were analysed using SPSS 10.0 for Windows and MS Excel 2000. The data input was carried out manually from the printed sheets supplied by the United Synagogue and all analytical techniques are described in the text where necessary. The majority of the analysis was not of a sophisticated statistical nature since a wealth of interesting information was gleaned from the straightforward descriptive results produced by SPSS.

8.5 Quantitative not qualitative analysis

No attempt has been made to carry out a qualitative investigation of membership or any other facets of 'community' such as rabbinical leadership, religious commitment, unaffiliated commitment and so on. These are all worthy indicators for membership analysis in its looser definition and they could justifiably form the basis of valuable future research however they are **not** the subject of this report.

8.6 Caveats

The reader is advised to interpret all of the results with the following limitations in mind: This research focuses on United Synagogue membership data only. Therefore no account of other communal 'membership' can legitimately be drawn from this research. A majority of people 'belong' to the United Synagogue rather than being 'members' – a difference which is subtle but important in this analysis (see 9.1 below). For example, a nuclear family of two adults and two children under 21 will be counted as:

- one member if only the father is a member or,
- two members if both father and the mother are 'members in their own right' or,
- three members if one of the children is also 'a member in their own right' and so on.

This is despite the fact that under 21s 'are counted on their parent's membership' because strictly speaking, they are not. Nor are the majority of 20-somethings who were 'counted on their parent's membership' but did not join their synagogue after turning 21. The implications of these caveats are that the data should not be interpreted as absolute reflections of the 'size' of the United Synagogue.

9 Implementation

Since no single definition of *Jewish* will suffice this research seizes upon the concept of *United Synagogue membership*. In order to be eligible for membership of the United Synagogue a person has to 'prove' that they are Jewish by either a matrilineal decedency or by a recognised conversion. Unfortunately the definition of *member* is far less simple than this.

9.1 Operationalisation - Membership

As with most membership-based organisations the definition of who is and who is not a member is defined by who has signed up. The definition of those who are *eligible* to sign up is generally laid out in the rules of the organisation. Being eligible and having signed up afford the membership holder certain rights and privileges within the organisation. Membership of the United Synagogue is however not quite as straight forward as this.

There is for example a significant percentage of 'members' who have full voting rights but are not signed up - they merely 'belong'. This issue of membership is complex and important. The traditional view is that membership is held by the head of the household (invariably male) 'on behalf of' his family. This however is not a very helpful definition since it ignores for example, the recent growth in wives of members joining and the large number elderly widows in many communities who join.

9.2 Risks of using membership data

Kosmin and Levy (in Schmool & Cohen, 1990) cite many problems associated with reliance on synagogue membership figures for research purposes. Due to the different definitions of 'who is a member' (i.e. membership is often based on the male head of household), figures do not equal population counts and dual membership often inflates figures. For example, when a member, as a unit or an individual, belongs to more than one synagogue or when more than one person at a single address has individual membership and so on.

Because of its age and its constituent communal structure membership of the United Synagogue is not simply a matter of paying a fee and holding a membership card. Thus in order to operationalise 'membership' and for this research to be accurate and repeatable it is necessary to have a clear definition of membership of the United Synagogue.

9.3 Defining United Synagogue membership

The official definition has evolved over many decades with limited attention being paid to consistency. First, one does not join the United Synagogue itself but rather one joins a *Member synagogue* that is itself a member of the United Synagogue. The Bylaws of the United Synagogue state the following:

The members of this Synagogue shall consist of male and female persons who shall have affected membership at this Member synagogue in such manner as the Council of the United Synagogue may from time to time determine hereinafter call "members". (Bylaw, A1)

The bylaws continue by referring to the issue of membership fees:

...a person shall be a member of this synagogue on payment of the appropriate membership contribution and after the application for membership has been approved by the Membership Department of the United Synagogue. (Bylaw, A7)

However it is not possible to define membership by fee payment alone since the bylaws continue:

Provision shall be made in the case of a first marriage for a couple... to be granted free membership for a period of one year. (Bylaw, A8)

This fact is important because often membership has been thought of as synonymous with fee payment. Further, since all the individual synagogues set their own fees¹⁴ and not the central office, it is possible that free membership can also be granted at that synagogue's discretion. Thus membership is not defined by fee payment.

During discussions with the Membership Department the following definition of *United Synagogue membership* seems to be the most prescient:

A *member* is any person who has fulfilled each of the following three criteria:

- i. They have completed and signed a Membership Form
- ii. The form is signed-off by personnel in the Membership Department (this includes proof of matrilineal Jewish heritage)
- iii. The data is entered on the computerised system

Membership affords the holder certain rights within the United Synagogue. This may seem to be an unnecessarily complex definition however, the system itself is very complex and does not allow for simplification.

Point i. provides a contractual basis of the membership as well as providing *some* information about that particular member. Point ii. is necessary because the form can only be signed-off (endorsed) once the person has proven to the satisfaction of the Office of the Chief Rabbi that they either have matrilineal Jewish heritage or have converted to Orthodox Judaism. Point iii. is necessary because if the data have not been entered on the system that person will not appear on the membership figures presented in the financial accounts at the end of each year. They would therefore not be included in any membership analysis conducted by the United Synagogue itself.

Another point relating to this definition also needs to be noted: it is possible for up to two members to appear on the same form if the extra member has also signed the form and been entered on the system. For persons under 21 years old that person must sign an additional form if they wish to become a member.

9.3.1 Wives of members

There is a separate form that female spouses of members should complete if they also wish to become members and if they did not countersign their husband's original membership form. This form is effectively identical to the original form for the purposes of this definition of membership.

The traditional concept that the head of household somehow 'covers' the rest of his household is misleading. Unless other members of the household have completed the procedures outlined above only the head of a household can be a member. This is despite the fact that they will often be treated as members by the individual Member synagogues themselves. In fact the 'rest of the family' are not members of the United Synagogue at all and by extension have no membership rights whatsoever. There is no such thing as 'membership covered by a husband or father' – this statement usually refers to *burial rights* that are not equated with membership in this analysis. Membership is not familial or fee-based.

Another problem that exists is the 'membership by default' policy that is operated by the United Synagogue. Specifically, if the child of a member dies then they automatically 'become members' in order to be buried in a United Synagogue cemetery¹⁵. However, based on the above definition this is impossible since the dead child **cannot** become a member; how can they sign a membership form? If this were not the case it would be theoretically possible to

¹⁴ Fees typically range from £350 to over £1000 per year depending on the synagogue and personal circumstances of the member.

¹⁵ There is a morbid significance in the relationship of burial rights and membership of the United Synagogue. It is traditionally very important for Jews (even the non-practising ones) to be buried in a Jewish cemetery. To guarantee a Jewish burial, many will join the United Synagogue for this sole reason.

sign-up any number of deceased people as long as their *Jewishness* was established and consequently, further distort the membership figures.

9.4 A membership loophole

Apart from the above definitional problems there is a loophole that must be noted. Since the central office has no authority to demand from the individual synagogues details of their members, it is entirely possible for a Member synagogue to not inform the Membership Department of a default (non-payment) of an existing member. (For Member synagogues, bigger is better). The central office has no way of proving such a circumstance has arisen and can only guess as to the extent of this problem.

9.5 Using membership data - benefits

Kalms *et al*, (1992) note further that most men in orthodox synagogues, under 25 years old, do not become members of the synagogue that was previously under their father's name¹⁶. However, although unsatisfactory, synagogue membership figures do indicate trends (Newman, 1987) and given the limitations of this study the use of such data does lend itself to being a convenient and consistent source of information.

¹⁶Cohen (1988) attempts to overcome this membership problem in his *typology of Jewish involvement*. He has shown that dividing Jews into 'affiliated and unaffiliated' or 'committed and uncommitted' groups was a gross simplification and so focused upon the complexities of Jewish communal participation. Thus, the weakness of using membership figures to define the size of a community were accounted for.

10 Data Analysis and Findings

10.1 Total United Synagogue membership

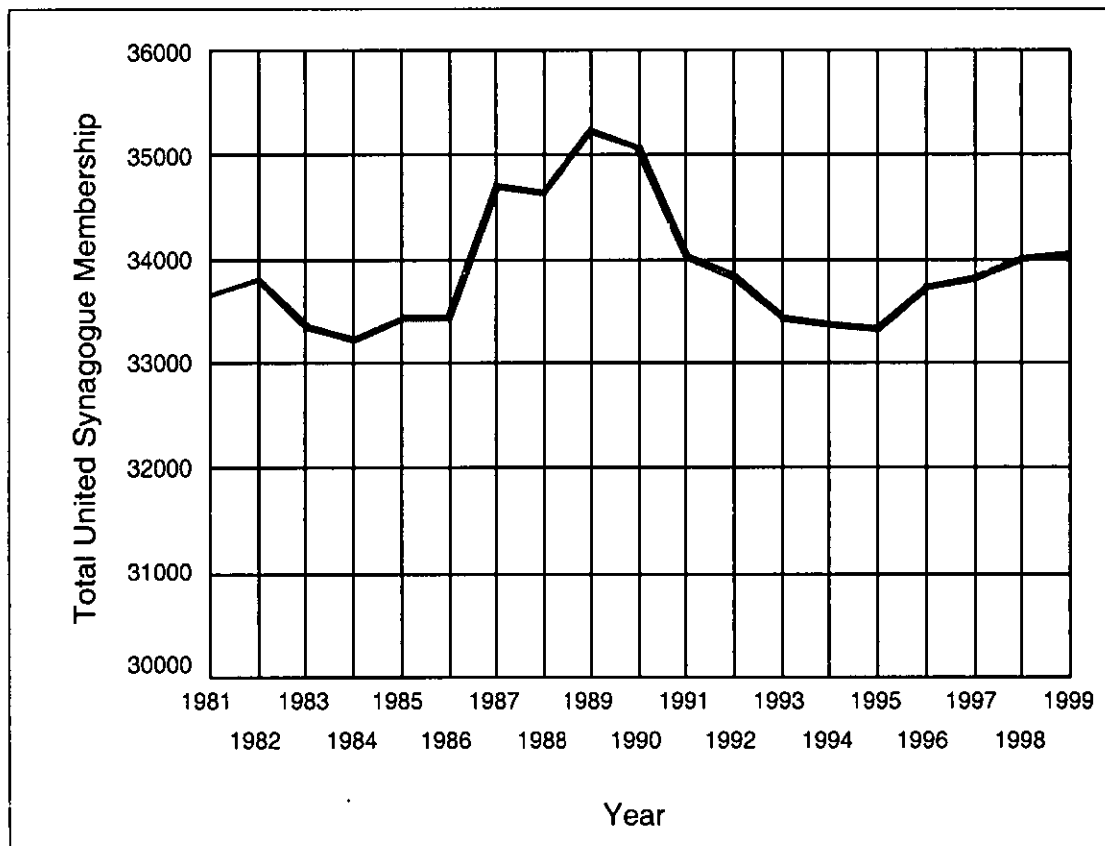
At the end of 1999 the United Synagogue had a total membership of 34,043 individuals of which 17,736 were male and 16,270 were female. The average number of members per member synagogue was 791.

Table 1 - Total United Synagogue membership

Date as at:	Total number of United Synagogue members
5 th October 2000	34,059
31 st December 1999	34,043
31 st December 1989	34,006

Since 1981 total membership has remained fairly stable with an average annual membership of 33,892. Graph 1 shows how total United Synagogue membership has changed over the 18-year period from 1981 to 1999. Membership peaked in 1989 at 35,233 members, having climbed by 2,007 members since 1984. However it can be seen that this gain was almost wiped out in the following six years to 1995 since which time it has begun to climb again. (Note that this graph starts from 30,000 members thus exaggerating the changes).

Graph 1 - Total United Synagogue membership 1981-1999



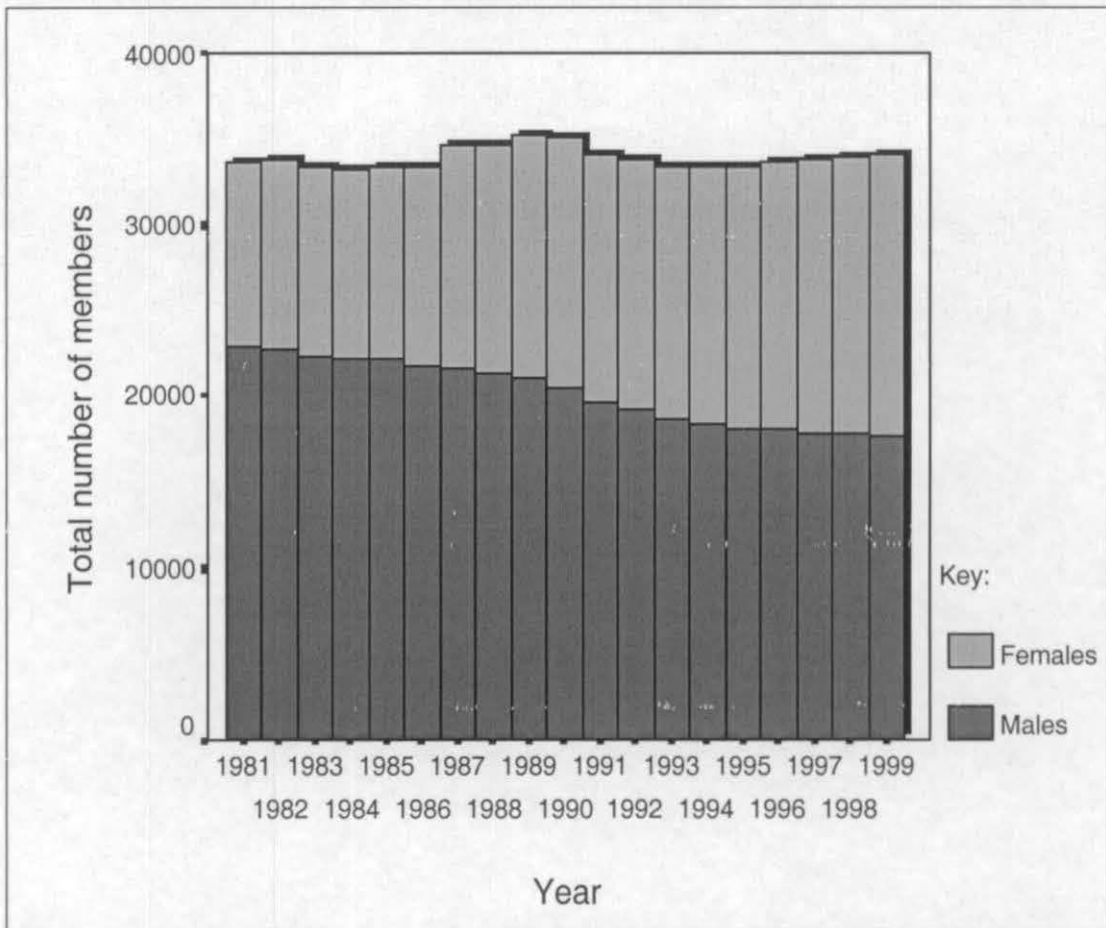
10.2 Change in membership

Graph 1 shows a reasonably healthy picture, i.e. that the greatest range of change in the total membership of the United Synagogue over the 1981 – 1999 period was only 5.7%. The largest annual net increase occurred between 1986 and 1987 where total membership rose by 1,272 members. The largest net decrease was between 1990 and 1991 when total United Synagogue membership fell by 1,051 members. During the 1990s the net change year on year has been relatively stable with no major changes in total membership size. This represents a fairly constant level suggesting that the concept of terminal decline (highlighted by Sacks opt cit) has not yet been realised.

10.3 Total membership by gender

However this is a misleading image. Graph 2 presents total membership by gender and shows a significant trend away from a ratio dominated by males toward a more balanced male to female ratio. Ostensibly this seems also to show a healthy state of affairs with little real change in total membership over the period however, in reality it reflects the decline that Sacks (opt cit) is referring to. Total male membership in 1981 was 22,831; by 1999 this had fallen to 17,612 *an absolute decline of 22.9% in less than a generation.*

Graph 2 - Total Membership of the US by gender 1981-1999



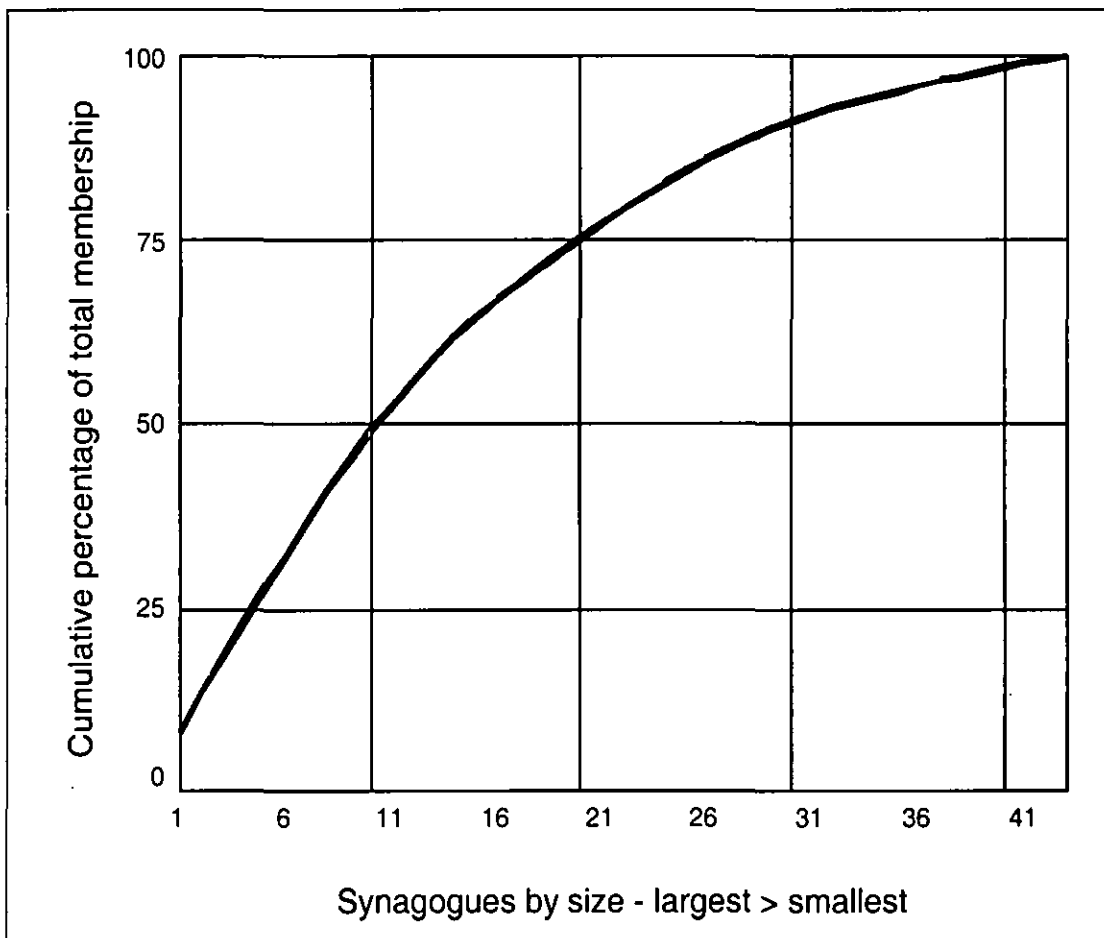
Whilst the recruitment of women is a worthy strategy the key point to note is still that male membership has been in continual decline since the beginning of the period (it is possible that this trend is the continuation of an older one but this would require painstaking analysis of the hand-written data archives compiled prior to 1981). One positive point shown in Graph 2 is the fact that the rate of decline is noticeably less in the final 5 years of the period than in the entire preceding 15 years. This coincides neatly with the setting up of the Community Development Department, itself in direct response to the Chief Rabbi's concerns.

10.4 Cumulative membership changes

Continuing the data analysis at the level of total United Synagogue membership, Graph 3 shows cumulatively the percentage of members belonging to individual synagogues. Simply stated all members are spread across all 43 constituent synagogues. If membership were spread evenly there would be about 740 members per synagogue¹⁷. However the distribution is in fact strongly negatively skewed with a small number of synagogues containing a large proportion of the members.

The 10 most populous synagogues have an average membership of 1,670 whilst the 10 smallest synagogues have an average membership level of 210 – the difference is a factor of eight. The real significance of this skewed distribution is that more than half the membership belongs to less than a quarter of the synagogues.

Graph 3 - Total cumulative membership



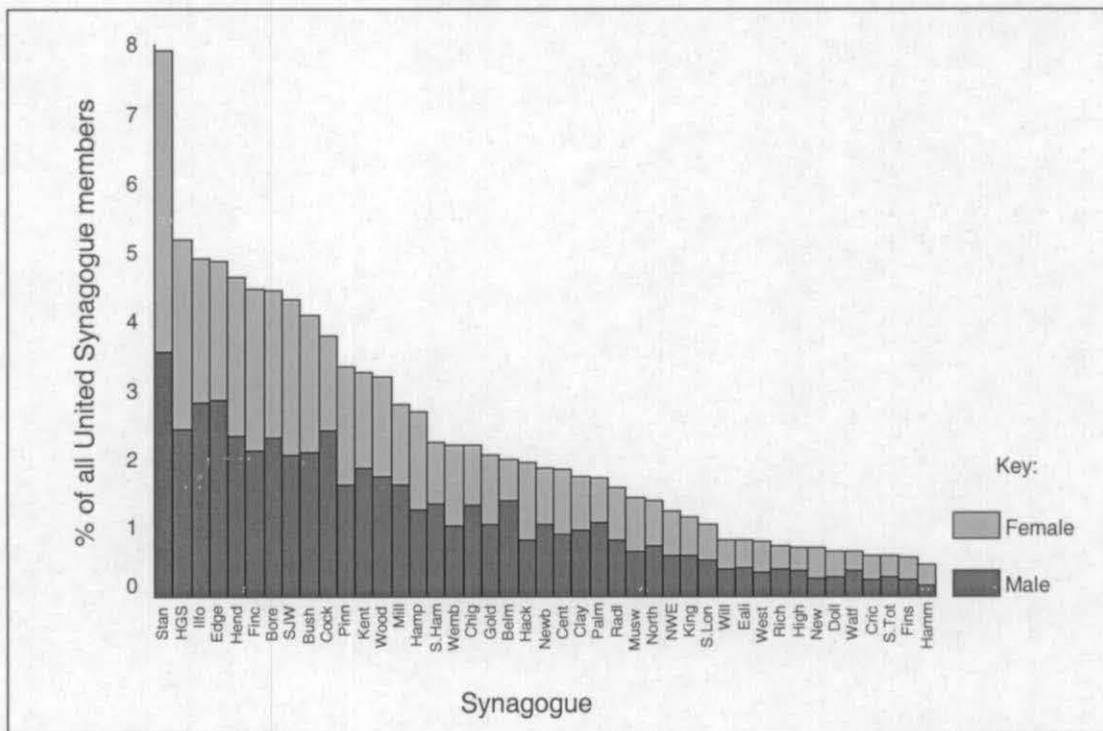
In 1999 Stanmore Synagogue was the largest by membership in the United Synagogue with 2,691 members. The next four largest were Hampstead Garden Suburb Synagogue with 1,766 members, Ilford Synagogue (1,670), Edgware Synagogue (1,658) and Hendon Synagogue (1,576). Together these five represent 27.5% of all United Synagogue membership.

Further, three quarters of all United Synagogue members belong to less than half (20 out of 43) the synagogues. Graph 4 shows this skew synagogue by synagogue and is a useful tool to group the communities by size. It shows firstly that there is a 'primate' synagogue – Stanmore – that has 33 per cent more members than its next nearest rival (Hampstead Garden Suburb). Secondly it shows that there are broadly speaking three groups, based on size and ignoring Stanmore:

¹⁷ This figure is based upon a total membership of 34,043 at the end of 1999.

- i. *Large* of which there is a group of nine (HGS to WOOD),
- ii. *Medium* of which there is a group of 16 (MILL to S.LON) and
- iii. *Small* of which there is a group of 12 (WILL to HAMM)¹⁸.

Graph 4 - Percent of members by synagogue and gender, 1999



However this information is of limited analytical use because it ignores growth rates. Since different synagogues perform differently over different periods of time a more useful way of looking at this data is shown in Graphs 5 – 7.

10.4.1 5 years to 1999 (Graph 5)

The fastest growing synagogues are unsurprisingly the five newest (RADL, S.HAM, NORTH, CLAY and WATF respectively) however, because a new synagogue is more likely to have a greater relative increase in its membership than a more established one the wider picture is possibly more revealing. Overall 12 synagogues increased their membership by at least 10% but more than half (23) decreased in the period; 16 of these contracted by at least 10%.

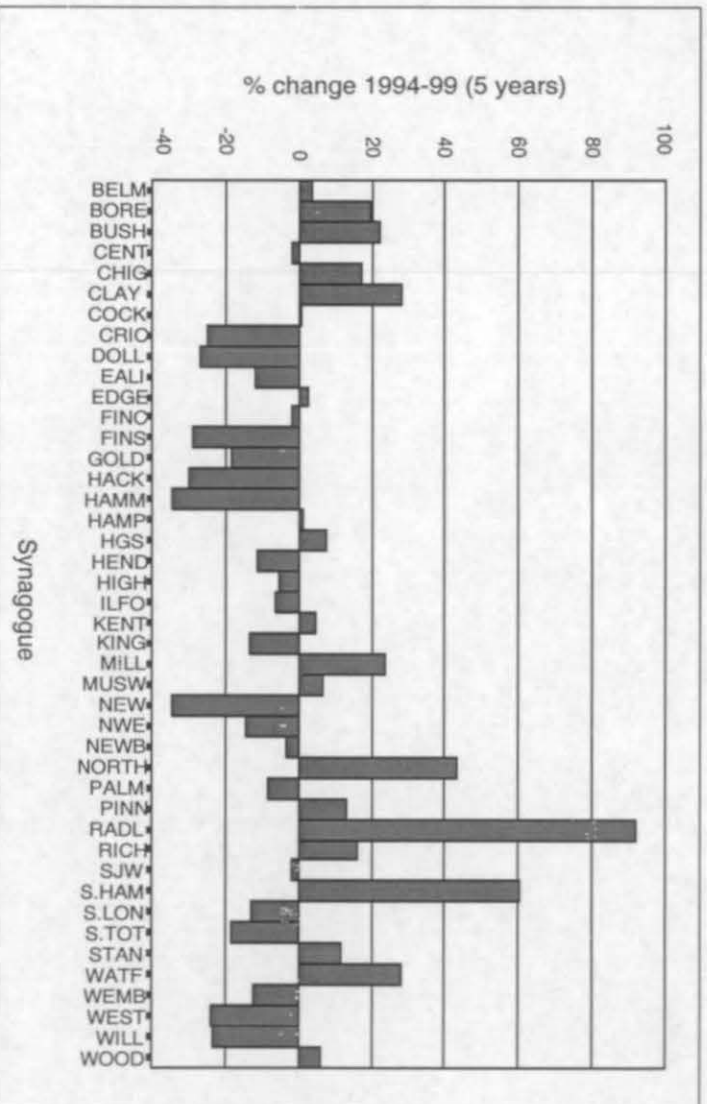
10.4.2 10 years to 1999 (Graph 6)

None of the five newest synagogues appear in this graph. Overall 7 synagogues increased their membership by at least 10% but three quarters (29) contracted in the period of which 18 decreased their membership by at least 10%.

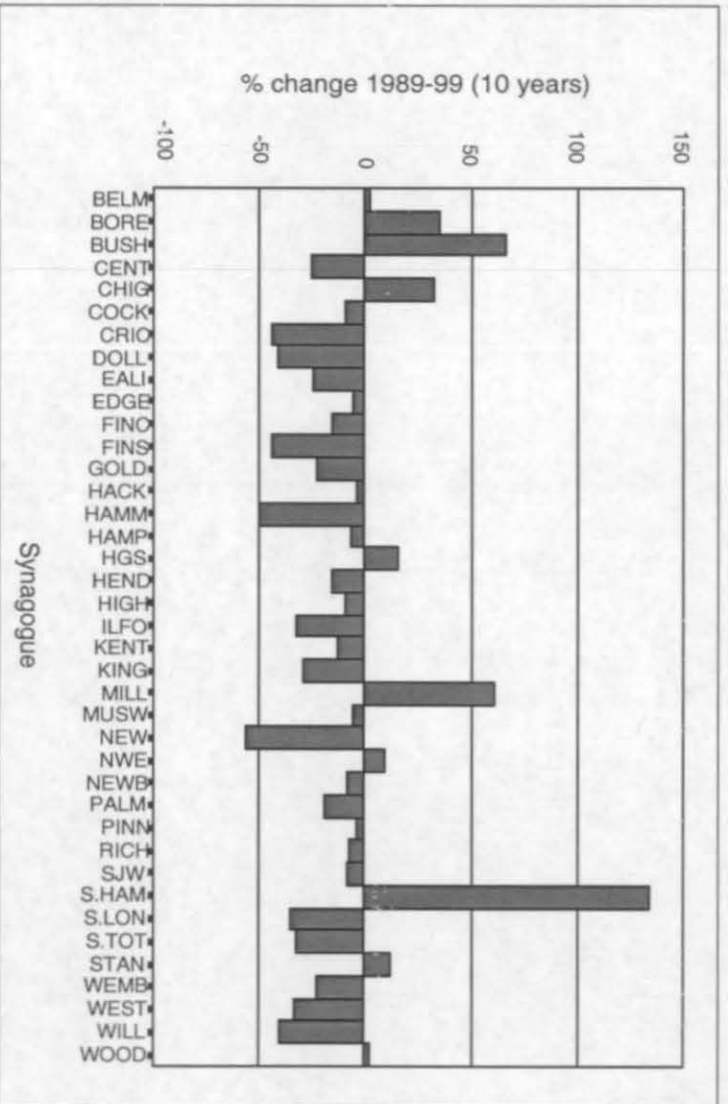
10.4.3 15 years to 1999 (Graph 7)

None of the five newest synagogues appear in this graph either. Overall 14 synagogues increased their membership by at least 10% but over half (23) contracted in the period of which 21 decreased their membership by at least 10%.

Graph 5 – 5-year rate of membership growth, 1994-1999¹⁸

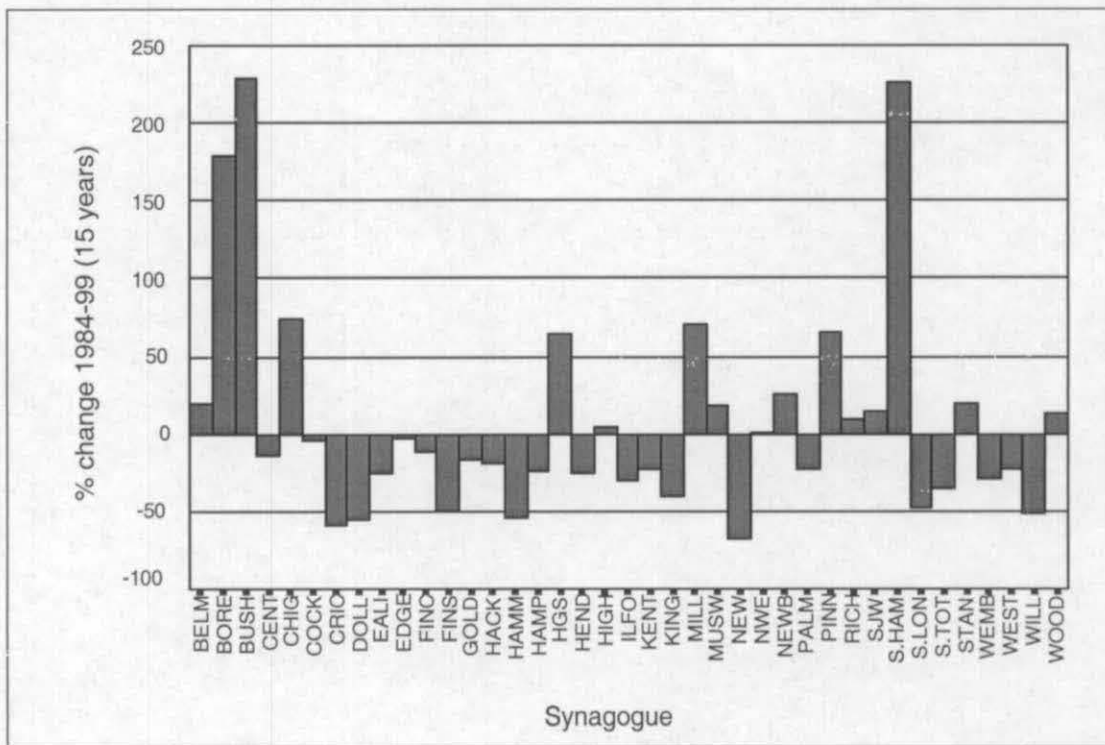


Graph 6 – 10-year rate of membership growth, 1989-1999¹⁸



¹⁸ See Appendix D for a list of full synagogue names

Graph 7 – 15-year rate of membership growth, 1984-1999¹⁸



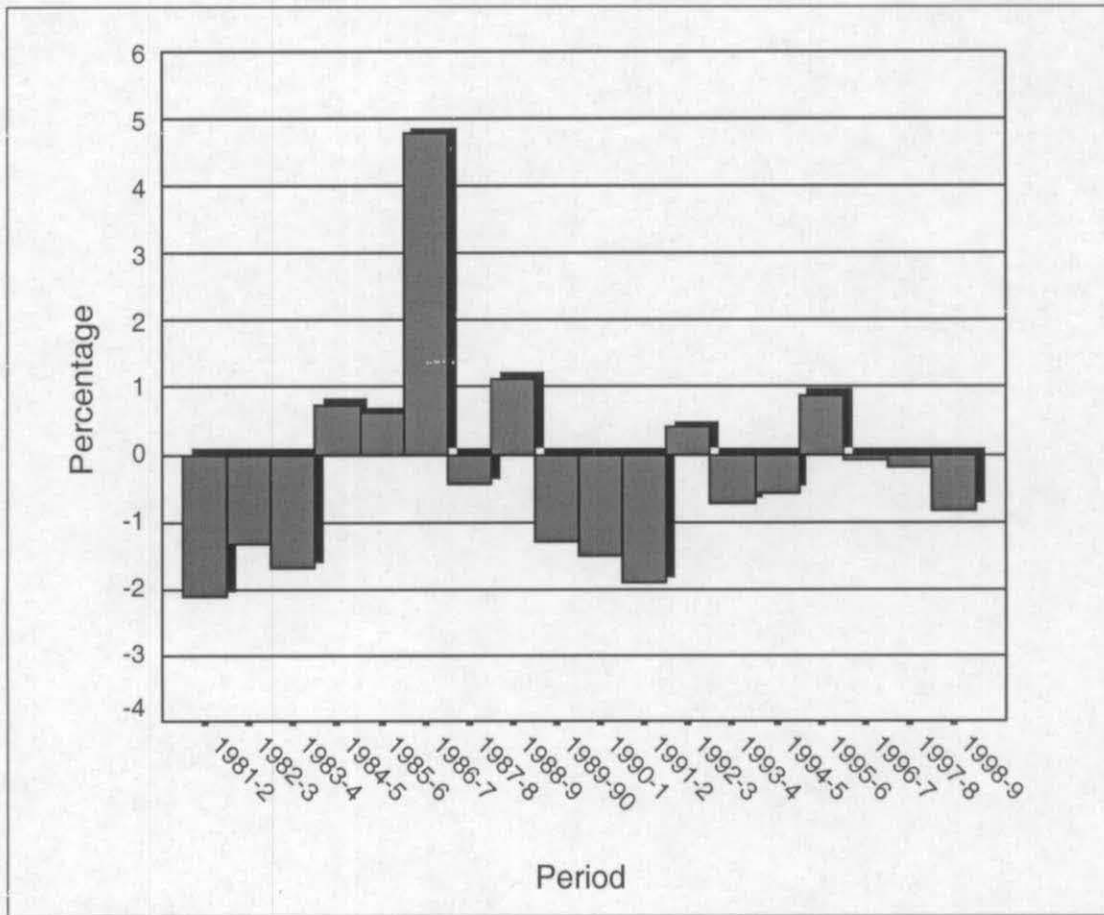
In every period more than half the synagogues lost at least ten percent of their members whether by attrition (members dying or defaulting) or by migration (members moving to other synagogues). In an attempt to analyse the underlying trends, all three periods (5, 10 and 15 years) can be examined together. It turns out that 9 synagogues had positive rates of growth whilst 18 synagogues had negative rates of growth in all three periods. *i.e. twice as many synagogues contracted as grew in the period from 1981 to 1999.*

10.5 Total membership change per year

Graph 8 shows the average percentage change of total United Synagogue membership over the period¹⁹. So for example, it can be seen that in the 1998-99 period on average every synagogue declined by almost one percent in size. In the 1986-87 period there was a large average increase of almost five percent for each synagogue (1,272 members joined in that period).

Overall it can be seen that since 1992, year on year changes have remained relatively small and static. As has already been hinted at there were twice as many years of contraction than there were of expansion (12 and 6 respectively). However taking the entire period into consideration there is no obvious trend to be gleaned from Graph 8.

¹⁹ The vertical axis on Graph 8 was calculated by summing all individual percentage changes in membership year on year and then dividing that total by 43 (i.e. the average number of synagogues in each year of the period).

Graph 8 – United Synagogue membership changes year on year

10.6 Recruitment strategies

Graph 9 shows that a very small proportion of the membership is under the age of 21 – in fact there are only 102 members in this category. It should however be noted that only eight synagogues have any members within this age group and that 71 of those originate from the same synagogue (Stanmore). So by simply having a recruitment-drive aimed at this age group a distorting effect, albeit small, has been achieved.

10.7 Recruitment of women

By far the more significant distortion as has already been mentioned, is the recruitment of women. The male to female ratio has become more and more balanced as each year of the 1981-99 period has gone by, from two males for every female to almost one male to every female. This has occurred because of the recruitment strategies operated by certain synagogues with a greater and greater emphasis being placed upon the recruitment of women – and more specifically, the wives of existing (male) members (Lewis pers com, 2000).

The following hypothetical example highlights the problem this is causing:

In year one North Synagogue has 10 male members, as does South Synagogue. Attendances at the weekly services are the same in both synagogues with the wives and children of the members all attending. During the year South Synagogue has a recruitment drive aimed at wives of existing male members who may join for free but will have membership 'in their own right'. No new people move into the town and no one dies. Five wives decided to take up South Synagogue's offer so the membership

records at the end of year two show North Synagogue still having 10 male members, but South Synagogue now has 15 – a 50 per cent increase even though no demographic change has occurred.²⁰

Table 2 shows which synagogues have been expanding during the last five years (1994 – 1999). It shows the 10 best performers and acts as an indicator of the distortion effects of the female recruitment drives. Using a measure including all members (male and female), column two shows that South Hampstead is the biggest gainer in recent years closely followed by Radlett. However if women are taken out of the equation and only the male membership gains are noted the ordering changes to what is probably a more accurate league table. Three of the synagogues that make it into the top 10 (column 2) do not appear in the top 10 (column 3) i.e. South Hampstead, Clayhall and Mill Hill.

Table 2 – Top 10 gainers in US membership 1994 – 1999

Position	Synagogue (with women)	Synagogue (without women)
1	South Hampstead (326) ¹	Stanmore (1) ²
2	Radlett (310)	Radlett (2)
3	Northwood (306)	Hendon (3)
4	Stanmore (283)	Northwood (4)
5	Bushey (267)	Borehamwood (6)
6	Borehamwood (249)	Pinner (7)
7	Mill Hill (188)	Bushey (9)
8	Pinner (132)	South Hampstead (17)
9	Clayhall (122)	Clayhall (31)
10	Hendon (112)	Mill Hill (34)

¹ Bracketed figures in column two show the total number of members gained

² Bracketed figures in column three show the position had women NOT been included in the count

Table 3 – Absolute changes in membership 1994 – 1999²¹

Position	Top 10 gainers 1994-99	Total number gained	Average age	Top 10 losers 1994-99	Total number lost	Average age
1	Stanmore	287	52	Ilford	-377	59
2	Radlett	124	38	Cockfosters	-369	57
3	Hendon	93	44	Edgware	-295	50
4	Northwood	91	41	Belmont	-278	46
5	Hampstead	44	45	Newbury Park	-196	46
6	Borehamwood	40	37	Palmers Green	-177	65
7	Pinner	18	52	Kenton	-170	53
8	Finchley	12	51	Golders Green	-116	55
9	Bushey	12	42	Woodside Park	-108	50
10	Central	7	47	Chigwell	-99	45

²⁰ The author realises that this may be beginning to sound rather chauvinistic and wishes to stress that this analysis is meant solely to highlight the distortion effects upon the statistics and does not in any way represent a value judgement upon the strategy of female recruitment.

²¹ This data does not include women.

The reason this point is being highlighted to such an extent is to try and emphasise that even with such seemingly straightforward data significant distortions exist which severely limit the way in which extrapolations can be made.

Table 3 compares the top 10 gainers (i.e. those synagogues that increased their membership levels the most) with the top 10 losers. These figures account for the distortion effects of female recruitment drives. They show that the 10 losers combined lost 2,185 members and that the 10 gainers combined gained 728 *i.e. three times as many members were lost as were gained in the 1994-1999 period.*

10.8 Average age of United Synagogue members

Table 4 also provides some age data and it can be seen that there is a relationship emerging between the average age of synagogue members and the direction of the membership change in the 1994-99 period. A Pearson correlation was carried out using data from all 43 synagogues and the results are shown in Table 4. These show that the relationship is negative and fairly strong (-.410, significant at the 99% level). I.e. as the age of the members increases the size of the membership decreases.

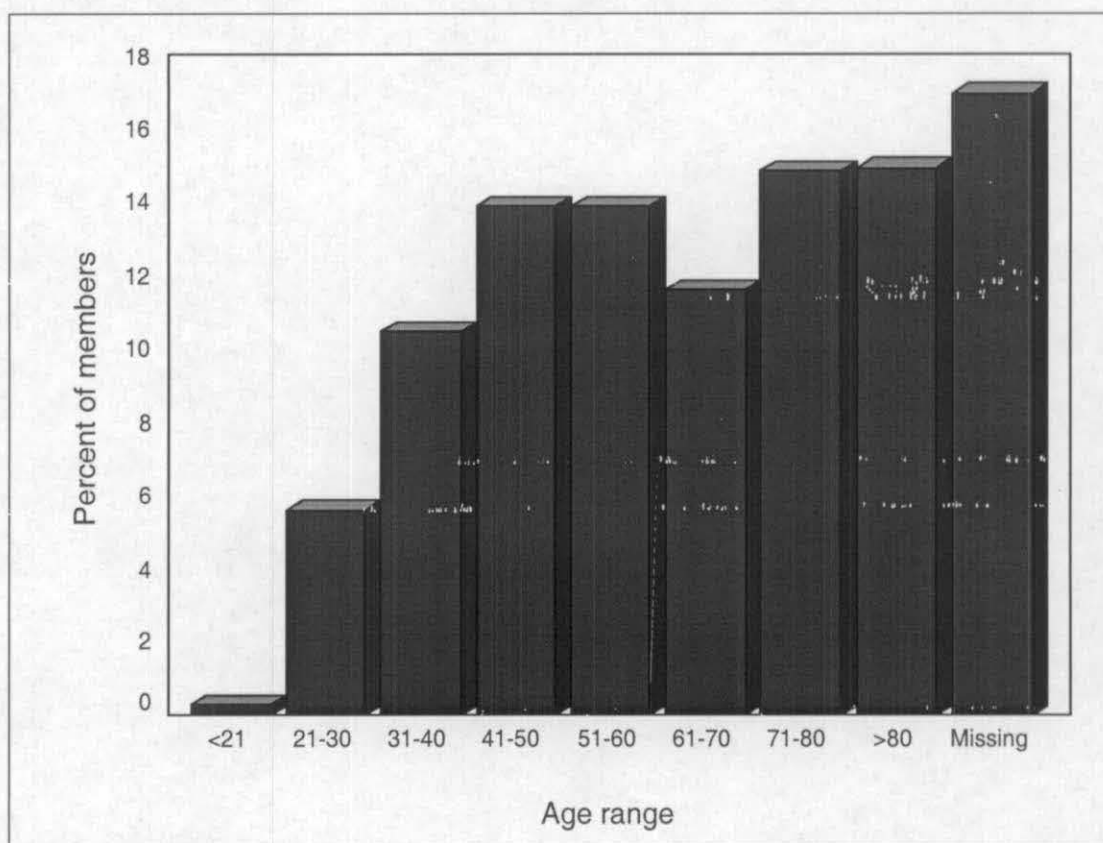
Table 4 – Pearson correlation matrix of average age on change in US membership 1994-99

Correlations

		AV_AGE	CHGE94_9
AV_AGE	Pearson Correlation	1.000	-.410**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.006
	N	43	43
CHGE94_9	Pearson Correlation	-.410**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.
	N	43	43

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Graph 9 – Age distribution of United Synagogue members, 1999



10.9 The age data

Graph 9 shows the overall average age distribution for the typical United Synagogue in 1999. The average age of United Synagogue members is 51.6 years. An odd blip in graph 9 should be noted for the 61 to 70 age bracket and this may be related to the World War II and the effects of the Holocaust on the Anglo-Jewish population.

Clearly Graph 9 is displaying an old age profile since 41% of the members are over 60 years – from a replacement perspective this is not a healthy position for any community. However, as discussed, membership is not something the under 21s participate in so this figure does not actually reflect the true average age of a community – only its members. Equally clear is the fact that 17% of data on average are in fact missing. Although it is not clear why such a hole in the records exists one reason might be that some women members are reluctant to reveal their ages because of issues related to social taboo. With such a large proportion unaccounted for the quality of this data must be in doubt.

Although people may well attend communal activities and services there is no requirement for attendees to be members. Traditionally people would join because they were getting married and wanted their marriage to be recognised as being Orthodox. As people tend get married later and later and with a lower propensity there is clearly a risk that the data will be negatively affected.

11 Discussion

It is not the aim of this study to answer the question as to **why** the results are as they are, nor does it aim to suggest or even hint at predicting future demographic trends of the UKJC. The title as outlined at the beginning is 'Is the United Synagogue as a microcosm of the UK's Jewish community?' and provocatively suggests that the experiences of that organisation can justifiably be extrapolated to the rest of UK Jewry. To answer this requires a further two questions to be clarified:

- Firstly, what has happened to the United Synagogue's membership?
- Secondly, can this justifiably be extrapolated to the rest of the UKJC?

11.1 A summary of the United Synagogue's experience

The first question has already been answered and a summary of the main results will now be outlined.

The United Synagogue is an organisation with 130 years of history. Membership data covering the period 1981 to 1999 were analysed and it was found that even though total membership levels have remained stable at around the 33,000-member mark, the total male membership has experienced an absolute decline of 22.9%; almost one quarter lost in less than a generation.

On the positive side the organisation has made significant inroads with the recruitment of women. The male to female ratio has become more and more balanced as each year of the period from 1981-99 has gone by - from two males for every female to almost one male to every female by 1999. However it was seen that this disguises a poignant reality.

A picture of decline is shown by three other graphs. In the recent past (i.e. the five years to 1999) more than half of all member synagogues (23) experienced a contraction of their membership base - three times as many members were lost as were gained in the 1994-1999 period. In the more distant past (i.e. the 15 years to 1999) again over half the synagogues (23) contracted in the period and of these, 21 saw (male) membership contract by at least ten percent. In sum, twice as many synagogues contracted as grew in the period from 1981 to 1999.

It was also seen that although the United Synagogue has 43 member synagogues there is a high skew amongst a few large communities with more than half of the membership belonging to less than a quarter of the synagogues. And finally it was seen that the older the age profile of a community gets the more likely it is to experience a contraction in its membership.

11.2 Extrapolation of the results

So to the second question, can this justifiably be extrapolated to the rest of the UKJC? As is often the case the answer is both yes and no. Certainly these results do not augur well for the UKJC - at the very least it is witnessing the demise of one of its largest and oldest religious institutions. However, is it legitimate to say that the average United Synagogue member is typical from a socio-economic, political and religious standpoint, of the average British Jew? The answer to this is probably yes for the following reasons:

It is thought that 70% (c. 196,000) of UK Jews live in Greater London (Massil, 1999) with the majority of the rest living in other urban areas. As has been noted the vast majority of the United Synagogue's members also live in London. This suggests that there is a potential similarity for socio-economic backgrounds.

The age profile of the United Synagogue is ageing with 40% of its members being over the age of 60. It is known that the UK crude death rate²² in 1996 was 11.0 per 1,000 and that for the UKJC it was higher at 14.85 per 1,000²³ (Schmool & Cohen, 1998) again suggesting that the United Synagogue member is representative of the wider community.

However, just because there are similarities between a United Synagogue member and an average member of UK Jewry does not in itself lead to the conclusion of demise. For example, it was noted that there are several definitional problems relating to the concepts of *Jewish*, *community* and *United Synagogue member*. Without mutually applicable definitions comparisons begin to have limited value. Also it is possible that those members that left the United Synagogue simply transferred their membership to a different synagogal organisation, but this is unlikely since the number of young people choosing to affiliate to any synagogue is in decline (Goldberg et al 1997).

Another problem relates to the propensity and necessity of being a *member*. To simply view the entire vista of the UKJC through the sole window of synagogue membership records is unsound since at least one third of Jews in Britain are not affiliated to any synagogue (Miller et al, 1996) and Judaism is of course not defined by synagogue membership.

Maybe synagogues are no longer integral to the future of the Jewish community – just because a person dislikes a particular rabbi or the type of people within a particular community does not necessarily mean that that person has given up on being Jewish. With this the Chief Rabbi would certainly disagree (Sacks, 1994) and there is precious little evidence to suggest examples of strong Jewish communities that exist without the base of synagogue from which to grow. Indeed the CDD of the United Synagogue has increasingly stressed the importance of measuring community based on *participation* as opposed to *sign-ups* (Lewis pers. comm. 2001).

It is possible that the majority of those who left the United Synagogue did so simply because they died (Miller pers. comm. 31/03/00). So if the underlying age profile of the United Synagogue matches that of the wider community then this is another reason to believe that the UKJC is in decline. There are many other areas that still require investigation and these are outlined in the final section below.

²² The crude death rate (CDR) is based on the total number of deaths expressed as a proportion of the mid-year estimates of population size.

²³ This figure assumes that there were c. 4,233-recorded UK Jewish burials and cremations in 1995 using a mid year total population of 285,000 (Schmool & Cohen, 1998).

12 Further Questions for Research

This has been strictly a quantitative piece of research but, as ever in the field of social research, simple numbers cannot really do justice to the complexity of underlying social issues. Therefore the next step ought to be of a qualitative nature.

The obvious area in which this research can be taken further is to ask what has caused the trends described by the above analysis? Possible explanations have been proffered however an in-depth survey comparing the attitudes of existing members with those of ex-members would begin to explain 'the why?' rather than 'the what?' which has been the key issue here.

Further investigation of United Synagogue membership changes could be extended in a search for more systematic evidence. One could ask: What happened to those that left the United Synagogue? How old were they when they left? Why did they leave? Did they die? If not where did they go? Who was it that left exactly?

Another possible study could try to establish what constitutes a declining community; whether or not there is an apparent communal sense of decline and doom. If so, is that sense of decline a catalyst for the very same decline? Or is it that members are simply not conscious of the decline? How does the present situation compare with the past?

On a more positive note, analysis could be carried out of communities that have grown, how have they achieved this? What form did it take (slow or fast)? Are there lessons to be learnt for other communities? Perhaps a project to determine the facets of community sustainability could be embarked upon by the CDD as part of their efforts to address the issues related to decline?

In conclusion, the United Synagogue has, in recent years, suffered a decline in membership. What this actually means for the organisation and for the UK Jewish community as a whole is however unclear. The figures produced here require further investigation especially from a qualitative perspective in order to assess why the trends described occurred, the significance of the trends and what they mean for the future of the UKJC.

13 Appendices

Appendix A – Jewish Population Structures

Table 5 – UK, American and Israeli population structures (%)

Age	UK ^C national pop. (1993)	USA Jewish ^E (1990)	USA national pop. ^E (1990)	Israel Jewish ^A (1990)
0-15	20.6	20.4 (18.9) ^D	21.6	28.7 (32.3) ^B
16-64	61.1	65.9 (64.2) ^D	65.8	60.8 (58.9) ^B
65+	18.25	13.7 (16.9) ^D	12.6	10.5 (8.8) ^B

A: AICE; B: Harris; C: GSS; D: 1991 Core Jewish Population NJPS; E: NJPS 1990

This table shows population structures for the UK and the USA's national populations as well as the USA's and Israel's Jewish populations.

Appendix B – Interview Notes

Leonie Lewis

Notes from a meeting with Leonie Lewis, Director of the Community Development Department on 5th October 2000:

- What can we tell about the future of British Jewry (with respect to the Chief Rabbi's book) using the United Synagogue's data archive?
- Look into the attitudinal/qualitative reasons behind the trends
- Update the membership report using the latest figures with SPSS
- What can be predicted?
- Is it a good predictor?
- What should the United Synagogue be doing?

Rumman Ahmed

Notes from a lecture by Rumman Ahmed at St John's Wood Synagogue on 20th November 2000:

- Is decline necessarily terminal? – it can rebound
- Community sustainability – measuring growth and decline in faith communities
- How has this changed over time?
- Check the London Research Centre for data?
- These are questions of sustainability – recycle resources
- However selling a building is not straight forward – some are listed or not easily converted into offices, but also there is the emotional thing. Legacies, icons, symbols of a historical past.
- Modernity/secularisation is a worry according to Rumman in the Muslim community – but their community has a very young age profile (therefore huge growth projection) so not comparable with Jewry which is much older
- How comparable is the Muslim community – its so diverse, e.g. African Muslims, European Muslims, Middle Eastern Muslims... This equates better with a comparison of the whole community such as Sephardim verses Ashkenazim, eastern versus western Jews, Reform, Masorti, Orthodox.

Appendix C – Top 10 losers

Table 6 – Top 10 losers including males and females

Position	Top 10 losers 1994-99	Total number lost
1	Newbury Park	-273
2	Hackney	-263
3	HGS	-179
4	Golders Green	-150
5	New Synagogue	-115
6	Ilford	-114
7	SW London	-114
8	Wembley	-101
9	Willesden	-80
10	West Ham	-80

Table 6 shows the number of members that were lost by the 10 worst performing synagogues over the five year period from 1994 to 1999.

Appendix D – Synagogue Abbreviations

	Alphabetical Synagogues
BELM	Belmont
BORE	Borehamwood and Elstree
BUSH	Bushey
CENT	Central Synagogue
CHIG	Chigwell
CLAY	Clayhall
COCK	Cockfosters
CRIC	Cricklewood
DOLL	Dollis Hill
EALI	Ealing
EAST	East London (merged with Hackney in 1993)
EDGE	Edgware
FINC	Finchley
FINS	Finsbury Park
GOLD	Golders Green
HACK	Hackney
HAMM	Hammersmith
HAMP	Hampstead
HGS	Hampstead Garden Suburb
HEND	Hendon
HIGH	Highgate
ILFO	Ilford
KENT	Kenton
KING	Kingsbury
MARB	Marble Arch (merged with WMA in 1991)
MILL	Mill Hill
MUSW	Muswell Hill
NEW	New Synagogue
NWE	New West End
NEWB	Newbury Park
NORTH	Northwood
PALM	Palmers Green
PINN	Pinner
RADL	Radlett
RICH	Richmond
SJW	St John's Wood
S.HAM	South Hampstead
S.LON	South London
S.TOT	South Tottenham
STAN	Stanmore
SWL	South West London (closed 1997)
WATF	Watford
WEMB	Wembley
WEST	West Ham and Upton Park
WILL	Willesden
WMA	Western Marble Arch
WOOD	Woodside Park

14 Glossary

- Associate synagogue – secondary body of synagogues making up the United Synagogue
- CDR – Crude death rate
- Da'ti – religious Jew
- Halacha – Jewish Law
- Homogamous – marriage between people from similar sociological backgrounds
- JPR – Jewish Policy Research Unit
- Member synagogue – main body of synagogues making up the United Synagogue
- NJPS - National Jewish Population Survey (USA)
- Reform Synagogue – the UK Jewish organisation that represents left of centre orthodoxy
- UKJC – UK Jewish Community
- US - United Synagogue

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