

# Home and away: Jewish journeys towards independence

Key findings from the 2011 National Jewish Student Survey

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David Graham and Jonathan Boyd

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The **Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR)** is a London-based independent research organization, consultancy and think-tank. It aims to advance the prospects of Jewish communities in Britain and across Europe by conducting research and developing policy in partnership with those best placed to influence Jewish life.

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## Foreword

This is the first national study of Jewish student identity in Britain. It offers a perspective that has never previously existed – it includes the views of 925 Jewish students from multiple different Jewish backgrounds, based at 95 different academic institutions, and studying a plethora of different courses. It investigates them at a time when national, communal and educational finances are more stretched than they have been for several decades, and when concerns about Jewish identity, Israel's security and an increase in antisemitic incidents dominate communal discourse. Furthermore, its focus is on the upbringing and lives of a cohort of Jewish students that has seen more communal investment in its Jewish development than any group that preceded it.

Our report, *Home and away: Jewish journeys towards independence*, looks at this group whilst they are undertaking a pivotal, transitional journey in their lives. On the one hand, they are moving, in the literal sense, back and forth, between the security of the parental *home* in which they grew up, and the simultaneously daunting and exciting new world *away* at university. But they are also journeying in a metaphorical sense. They are taking the Jewish ideas and practices they have accumulated during their upbringings and reassembling them away, at university, whilst also bringing back *home* the new experiences they have had through their encounters and studies at university. It is a time in which they are answering, for the first time, questions about how they wish to live, both as adults and Jews.

For Britain's Jewish community, a key question arises: how should it support and nurture these students, the future of communal life in Britain, at this critical juncture in their lives? JPR, together with the sponsors of this report, believe that the data in this report should be used to help inform the answers to this question.

In examining the data, it is important to remember who today's undergraduate Jewish students are. Born in the late 1980s and early 1990s, most started primary school in the mid-1990s and secondary school in the early 2000s. They were born around the time of the collapse of communism, into a world that had only one

superpower, the United States. They have no personal recollections of apartheid South Africa, the war in Yugoslavia or the Rwandan genocide. Relatively recent major events in the Middle East – the Gulf War, the Oslo Accords, the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin – happened before they were born or when they were very young.

Thus the social and political consciousness of the current generation of students is likely to have been shaped by far more recent events: 9/11, the 7/7 bombings in London, the Boxing Day tsunami, the global financial crisis and the election of Barack Obama. The issues that have dominated their political landscape have been 'the war on terror,' climate change, economic instability and political corruption in Britain. In terms of Israel, their formative memories are likely to have been the unilateral disengagement from Gaza, Operation Cast Lead and the flotilla affair; the dominant wider discourse from their teenage years onwards has been about boycotts, divestment and sanctions, Israel's legitimacy and moral conduct, and a continual lack of progress towards peace.

Furthermore, for these Jewish students, there is nothing new about the 'new antisemitism.' The notion that antagonism towards Jews may be expressed in some way through antagonism towards the State of Israel has been a constant theme of recent Jewish discourse. Whether or not they have witnessed or experienced it, Jewish students will almost certainly recognize the concept, and be alive to the possibility that antisemitism may surface in the guise of criticism of Israel.

Today's students are also living in a very different society from the one in which their parents grew up. Britain is more multicultural, both religiously and ethnically, and its student body is more international and diverse. Furthermore, the actual number of students in higher education increased every year throughout the first decade of this century; indeed, by the end of the decade there were over half a million more students than there were at the beginning.<sup>1</sup> The economy of tertiary education has also changed – the student

1 See: <http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php/content/view/1897/239/>

grants that were a norm until the early 1990s were replaced by student loans, and university tuition fees for undergraduates have increased from very low levels to substantial sums equal to (and sometimes exceeding) the economic cost of the tuition itself.

In addition, students have become an important target population for a wide range of economic interests – in an increasingly commercialized world many businesses now recognize that attracting customers during their student years may be critical to their long-term interests. Student provision on campus itself has had to compete on a more commercial basis too; the pressure on academics and university departments to demonstrate their financial sustainability, and the need for basic student services, such as housing and food, to be profitable, have all altered the nature of the student experience.

For students themselves, the notion that a university degree will serve as a ticket to profitable employment is no longer assumed. At the same time, changes to tertiary education that took place during the 1990s – the introduction of semesters, continuous assessment and winter examinations – have all affected the amount of time students have to dedicate to extra-curricular activities. This has added a layer of pressure to the decisions taken about how students should best utilize their leisure time. In the Jewish community, which has long relied on the voluntary contribution of this age group to provide a wide range of youth activities during the university holidays, these changes may yet necessitate a major rethink about the resourcing of our informal educational infrastructure. In fact, if, as some predict, increased university fees lead to a reduction in participation levels in gap year schemes in Israel, such a rethink may already be a pressing item on the agenda.

Life for Jews in Britain generally has changed in recent decades too. Indeed, in terms of developments in the British Jewish community, the current crop of students is a particularly interesting cohort to analyze and understand. The ‘Continuity’ agenda – prompted globally by the alarmingly high intermarriage rate recorded in the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey

in America, and in Britain by the publication of Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks’s book *Will We Have Jewish Grandchildren?* – shaped the Jewish educational world in which they grew up. Between the mid-1990s and mid-2000s, enrolment in Jewish day schools increased by almost 30% in the mainstream community. Participation in short-term Israel Experience programmes has been a communal norm throughout their lives. The renaissance that we have witnessed on the Jewish cultural scene – Jewish Book Week, the Jewish Film Festival, Limmud, the JCC for London – has been part of the community’s infrastructure for as long as many of them can remember. In short, the Jewish community they have experienced is quite different from the one that influenced their parents and grandparents, and these data offer us a first insight into the types of Jews that environment has helped to shape.

Finally, these students were ‘born digital’ – they are part of the ‘iGeneration’ that experienced digital technology and the Internet as a norm rather than a novelty. They have grown up with personal computers, Internet access, mobile phones and iPods; Google searches, social networking, twitter feeds and online music, film and television are all central to how they encounter and experience the world. The sociological literature is divided over whether these influences should be regarded as largely positive or negative, but it is agreed on one point: new technologies will have – indeed are already having – a profound effect on the behaviours and identities of this generation.

In short, whilst many readers of this report will have personal memories of their university years, it is important to look at these data with an appreciation of the context in which today’s Jewish students have grown up. The world has changed in multiple ways, and the students portrayed in this report are the products of those changes. Whether the attitudes and behaviours they exhibit give us cause for optimism or concern should form part of the discussion that is generated by the findings.

### **About this survey**

The background to this survey begins in America. In 2007, Hillel in the United States published a groundbreaking report *Hillel’s Journey*:

*Distinctively Jewish, Universally Human.*<sup>2</sup>

It was based, in part, on the largest ever survey of randomly selected Jewish undergraduate and graduate students in the US, and the data that were procured were subsequently used to inform an extensive strategic planning process for the organization, which was written up in the *Hillel's Journey* document. Inspired by this, the Union of Jewish Students (UJS), the UK's main umbrella body serving the interests of Jewish students in Britain, was eager to replicate the process in the UK, and approached JPR to discuss research possibilities.<sup>3</sup> Its goal was to understand the identity of Jewish students in order to inform its future strategy and programme.

At the same time, Pears Foundation – a family foundation concerned with positive identity and citizenship – was eager to understand more about the nature of Jewish student identity, and approached JPR to undertake some research work in this area. As a result of their shared interests, the two organizations came together to commission this study. Funding came primarily from Pears Foundation, with additional support from UJIA, Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv) Europe, and the Maurice Wohl Charitable Foundation.

In preparation for the work, a project Steering Group was established comprised of representatives of UJS, Pears Foundation, UJIA and the JPR research team. A full-day preliminary consultation was held, involving members of the Steering Group, representatives of UJS and several Jewish students themselves, in order to outline the contours of the project and help develop the research methodology. In the course of the consultation, it became clear that the primary purpose of the research was to examine the nature of contemporary Jewish student identity: who Jewish students are, their concerns and aspirations, the factors that may

have contributed to their Jewish development, and how they understand the meaning of being Jewish. An examination of students' relationship with Israel and experiences of antisemitism was included in the brief, but there was a strong sense that these areas should not overwhelm the research; they should simply be included within it and situated in a way that reflected the results. Importantly, it was acknowledged from the very outset that this would not be an evaluation of the work of UJS nor any other Jewish provider on campus; it would rather be focused on the students themselves and how they understand, experience and explore their Jewishness.

The preliminary consultation was also informative in terms of how to market the survey. Dr Sarah Abramson, Research Fellow at JPR, managed much of this process, recruiting individual students based throughout the country in order to access social networks as a means of developing the sample. Their contribution was vital to the success of the project. In addition, Elliot Cowan, a freelance marketing consultant and founder of Br&Nu, designed the emails to invite people to participate in the survey, the posters to advertise it, and set up the Facebook group to help publicize it.

During the course of the research itself, JPR was assisted by the staff at Ipsos MORI, one of the UK's leading research agencies, who worked closely with us to construct the questionnaire. They also managed the online data collection exercise, run between 15 February and 15 March 2011, with considerable professionalism and attention to detail, and conducted a parallel benchmark survey of the general student population in Britain in order to provide additional baseline data (referred to as the National Student Benchmark Survey, or NSBS). We are especially grateful to Pamela Bremner and Tom Frere-Smith for all of their hard work; it is, however, important to note that Ipsos MORI played no role in analyzing the NJSS dataset nor in writing this report; JPR was solely responsible for those elements of the project.

Following the completion of the online survey, a qualitative phase was initiated in the form of a series of five focus groups, which took place in June and July 2011. Dr Sarah Abramson managed this process: recruiting the participants, running the focus groups themselves and ensuring that

2 Beth Cousens (2007). *Hillel's Journey: Distinctively Jewish, Universally Human*. Washington DC: Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life. Hillel is the largest Jewish campus organization in the world, and serves students at more than 550 colleges and communities throughout North America and globally, including thirty communities in the former Soviet Union, nine in Israel, and five in South America (see: [www.hillel.org](http://www.hillel.org)).

3 See: [www.ujs.org.uk](http://www.ujs.org.uk).

the proceedings were transcribed in preparation for analysis.

In the months leading up to the fieldwork, students featured quite prominently in the national media. There were protests in central London against government proposals to significantly raise student tuition fees, and the demonstrations turned violent and resulted in numerous arrests and considerable damage to property. The economic downturn continued to be a major news item, and as the new British government began to take tough measures to reduce spending in a number of areas, graduate unemployment reached a ten-year high. In contrast, during the fieldwork phase, the situation in Israel was relatively quiet, although there were continuing repercussions from the Gaza flotilla affair in May 2010. However, the “Arab Spring,” which began in Tunisia in December 2010, was at its peak – the revolution in Egypt began just a few days before fieldwork began.

We are particularly grateful to the members of the Steering Group – Daniel Marcus, Amy Philip and Dr Helena Miller – all of whom gave a great deal of time to this project and were pivotal in shaping it. Any credit JPR receives for this work should, in part, be theirs; any criticism is JPR’s alone. We are also extremely grateful to our partners in this research, and, in particular, Pears Foundation. Trevor Pears, together with Amy Philip, worked with us to develop the research brief, and their support throughout the project has been of huge importance. Thanks too are due to UJIA, Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv) Europe and the

Maurice Wohl Charitable Foundation, not only for their financial contributions, but also for all the support and advice we received from the UJIA marketing department and the staff at the UJIA’s Informal Education Department, as well as from Sally Berkovic and Kate Goldberg.

Our final thanks are extended to JPR’s lay leadership and professional staff. In particular, Harold Paisner, JPR’s Chairman, who has been a constant source of encouragement and support throughout the project, and Judith Russell, together with Catriona Sinclair and Lena Stanley-Clamp, who assisted with the project at various stages of its development, and helped us to complete the report.

In undertaking this study, JPR’s primary interest throughout has been to fulfil the role it holds within the Jewish community: to provide reliable and objective data to inform constructive policy debate. Certainly, the questions about how the Jewish community gives students and young people the tools with which they will be able to generate Jewish life, and how it empowers them to become entrepreneurs of Jewish culture, are ones that should lie at the very heart of our contemporary deliberations. The data in this report alone cannot answer these questions, but they should help to inform the discussion and provide some valuable reference points and indicators as we plan for the future.

Jonathan Boyd  
*Executive Director*



## Executive summary

**“Yes, at the end of the day, I’m Jewish because I like being Jewish, and I’m going to get on with being happy Jewish, not talk about being a suppressed, struggling, beaten Jew, because I’m not. I’m just doing my Jewish thing.” (Joel)**

The National Jewish Students Survey (NJSS) was carried out in February and March 2011. The sample contained 925 valid responses covering 95 different institutions and 43 students also took part in focus groups. A parallel study among the general student population elicited 761 valid responses.

## Jewish upbringing and Jewish journeys

### ***Jewish identity and practice***

- Just over half the sample (52%) consider themselves to be ‘Religious’ or ‘Somewhat religious’; two out of five (41%) describe themselves as ‘Secular’ or ‘Somewhat secular’; 7% are unsure.
- Outside university, 74% attend Friday night meals most or every week, 50% eat only kosher meat at home, and 27% are *shomrei Shabbat*, i.e. they ‘do not switch on lights on the Sabbath’.

### ***Schooling***

- 57% have attended a Jewish day school for at least one stage of their education. One third (32%) have only attended Jewish day schools, a quarter (25%) experienced a mixture of both Jewish and non-Jewish schooling, and 43% have never attended a Jewish day school.
- Respondents from ‘Orthodox’ homes are more than twice as likely to have attended a Jewish day school at all stages as those from ‘Traditional’ homes (64% compared with 30% respectively).

### ***Youth movements and Israel Experience programmes***

- Most respondents (88%) have been involved with a Jewish youth movement at least ‘Occasionally’. Whilst 59% of those from ‘Orthodox’ homes have been youth movement leaders, only 38% of those from ‘Just Jewish’ homes have been leaders.
- Most respondents (82%) have participated in an Israel Experience summer programme (‘tour’). Two out of five (40%) went on a gap programme year in Israel, of these, one in five (22%) studied at a yeshiva/seminary.

## University challenge

### ***Topics studied***

- The most popular courses are medicine (9%), politics (6%), and ‘business and finance’ (5%). Jewish students are three times less likely to be studying ‘education’ (3% v 10%) than students in general.
- 19% of Jewish respondents report that Jewish Studies and/or Israel form a ‘small part’ of their course. Just 4% report that either of these topics constitutes ‘at least half’ of their course.

### ***Institutions attended***

- Half the sample attends just eight (out of 113) institutions: Leeds (10%), Birmingham (9%), Nottingham (7%), Manchester (7%), Cambridge (6%), UCL (5%), Oxford (5%), and King's College (3%). By contrast, less than ten percent of the national student population attend these institutions.
- When choosing a university, 45% of respondents chose it primarily for the 'course', 23% chose it for 'reputation'. Just 10% considered its 'Jewish population size', though 19% put this as a secondary consideration.
- 29% of respondents attend universities that have been consistently ranked in the top 10 (out of 113) since 2008.
- Students at universities with larger Jewish populations have larger Jewish social circles than those at universities with smaller Jewish populations.

### **Accommodation and finance**

- Most respondents (82%) live away from home during term-time. 18% live at home with their families, the majority (58%) of whom are 'Orthodox'.
- Excluding those who live at home, the proportion that lives only with other Jews almost doubles between the 1st year (22%) and the 3rd year (42%).
- A majority (56%) of respondents have taken out a 'Government loan' to help pay for their studies. Just over half (51%) receive financial help from their parents, in contrast to less than a third (30%) of students in the general population.

### **Jewish beliefs and behaviours**

#### ***Ethnic and religious attitudes***

- Virtually all (94%) respondents agree/strongly agree that being Jewish is about 'Feeling part of the Jewish People' and 'Sharing Jewish festivals with my family' (91%).
- Whereas 72% 'regularly' attend a Friday night meal at home, 60% do so on campus; similarly, 47% observe *kashrut* at home while 41% do so on campus.
- Whilst four out of five (79%) agree/strongly agree that being Jewish is about 'Having a religious identity', far fewer agree it is about 'Observing the Sabbath' (65%), 'Believing in God' (56%), or 'Prayer' (54%).

#### ***Ethical Jewish behaviour***

- Although 85% of respondents agree/strongly agree that being Jewish is about 'Strong moral and ethical behaviour', only 65% agree it is about 'Volunteering to support a charity' or 'Supporting social justice causes' (64%).
- 62% of respondents currently do some voluntary work but only 16% do so more frequently than once a month. 'Religious' respondents are more likely to do voluntary work for both Jewish and non-Jewish causes than 'Secular' respondents.
- 84% of 'Religious' respondents agree/strongly agree that being Jewish is about donating funds to charity (Jewish causes or otherwise), compared with 50% of 'Secular' respondents.

## **Jewish social life**

### ***Friends and socializing***

- 34% of respondents agree/strongly agree that being Jewish is about ‘Socializing in predominantly Jewish circles’, yet 59% report that more than half their closest friends are Jewish. Religious respondents have more close Jewish friends than secular respondents.
- A far higher proportion attend ‘Jewish social events most weeks’ (such as ‘Booze for Jews’) during term-time (59%) than during vacation time (31%).
- Respondents’ primary methods of communicating with their closest friends are by mobile phone (voice calls) (27%) and text messaging (26%). Their secondary preferred method is via social networking sites (32%) such as Facebook.

### ***Relationships and attitudes to intermarriage***

- The majority (65%) of the sample is ‘currently single’, although most (85%) have experienced at least one relationship in the past.
- Two out of five (40%) have only ever had Jewish partners, 29% have had Jewish and non-Jewish partners, and one in ten (10%) has only ever had non-Jewish partners.
- 72% agree that it is important for ‘a Jew to marry another Jew’, although 50% of those who have been in a relationship have had a non-Jewish partner.

### ***UJS and other student organizations***

- Three-quarters of respondents (75%) are members of UJS.
- Half the sample (49%) ‘regularly’ attends JSoc ‘meetings and events’ and a further third (32%) attends ‘occasionally’.
- 70% of ‘Orthodox’ and 67% of ‘Traditional’ respondents are regularly involved with a JSoc, compared with 33% of ‘Reform/Progressive’ respondents.
- Over half (53%) the sample reports being connected to their ‘home synagogue’. A third (34%) is connected to University Jewish Chaplaincy.

### ***Jewish openness on campus***

- A majority (59%) of respondents says that they are ‘Always open’ about their Jewish identity on campus; 35% say that they are ‘Sometimes open’ about it.

### ***Student worries compared***

- Jewish students are *more* worried (very/fairly) than students in general about passing exams (76% compared with 68%) and living up to their parents’ expectations (41% compared with 32%).
- Jewish students are *less* worried (very/fairly) than students in general about finding a job (76% compared with 68%) and paying off financial debts (39% compared with 60%).
- Jewish students are *more* likely to have relationship issues than students in general (47% compared with 23%), feel lonely (34% compared with 23%), and have personal health concerns (28% compared with 18%).

## Israel

### **Attitudes towards Israel**

- The majority (92%) of respondents have visited Israel; of the 8% that have never visited (a proportion in line with other surveys), most hope to do so one day.
- Half (51%) have 'very positive' feelings towards Israel and a further 38% have 'Fairly positive' feelings; only 11% have either negative or ambivalent feelings. Most students in the general population have 'no feelings either way' (63%) about Israel. Of the remainder, half have positive and half have negative feelings. 4% of the general student population has 'very negative' feelings about Israel.

### **Israel on campus**

- 44% of respondents say that the topic of Israel arises 'regularly' or 'occasionally' in their Students Union. By contrast, just 11% of the general student population said this is the case. On the other hand, a quarter (24%) of Jewish students do not know how often the topic arises.
- 38% feel that Israel is treated unfairly in their Students Union but 37% do not know. Most (58%) think Israel is dealt with fairly in lectures and classes.
- Relatively few respondents say they are 'very worried' (8%) or 'fairly worried' (30%) about 'Anti-Israel sentiment' at their university. By contrast, 32% are 'very worried' and 44% are 'fairly worried' about passing exams.
- Focus group respondents maintained that an over-emphasis on anti-Israel sentiment at university in the Jewish media distorts the reality of their experience. At the same time, they noted that it is difficult to hold even apolitical events, such as 'Israel Awareness Weeks', without drawing "grief".

## Experiences of antisemitism

- Just over two out of five (42%) respondents have experienced an antisemitic incident since the beginning of the academic year, which is similar to results obtained by JPR in 2010 for Jews in general aged under 30.
- Despite this high incidence, just 4% say they are 'very worried' about antisemitism at university.
- Respondents who are 'very positive' about Israel are more likely to have experienced antisemitism than those who are 'fairly positive' (48% compared with 37% respectively).
- Respondents in Scotland are most likely to have experienced antisemitism; those in London are least likely (52% compared with 33% respectively). Students in the North-west are the most concerned about it.

## Views on Britain's Jewish community

- Focus groups respondents expressed negative views about Britain's Jewish community. They do not feel that their voices are being heard, they are frustrated about inter-denominational tensions, they feel that alternative views are marginalized and they express pessimism about the community's future.

# 1 Jewish Journeys

**“My family, we keep kosher at home, keep kosher when we go out, but we’re not particularly frum [religious] or ... I did go to a Jewish school, went to synagogue on occasion, there was nothing too rigorous, and I’ve come to university and I’ve met people who are quite a lot more religious, and who know a lot more [about Judaism] than me, and I can’t help but thinking that I quite like that, and I have considered actually becoming more religious, and maybe going to Israel and just finding out a bit more, but it’s the effort I have to change from what I’ve been brought up, and ... I don’t know.” (Sarah)**

## Jewish upbringing and current identity

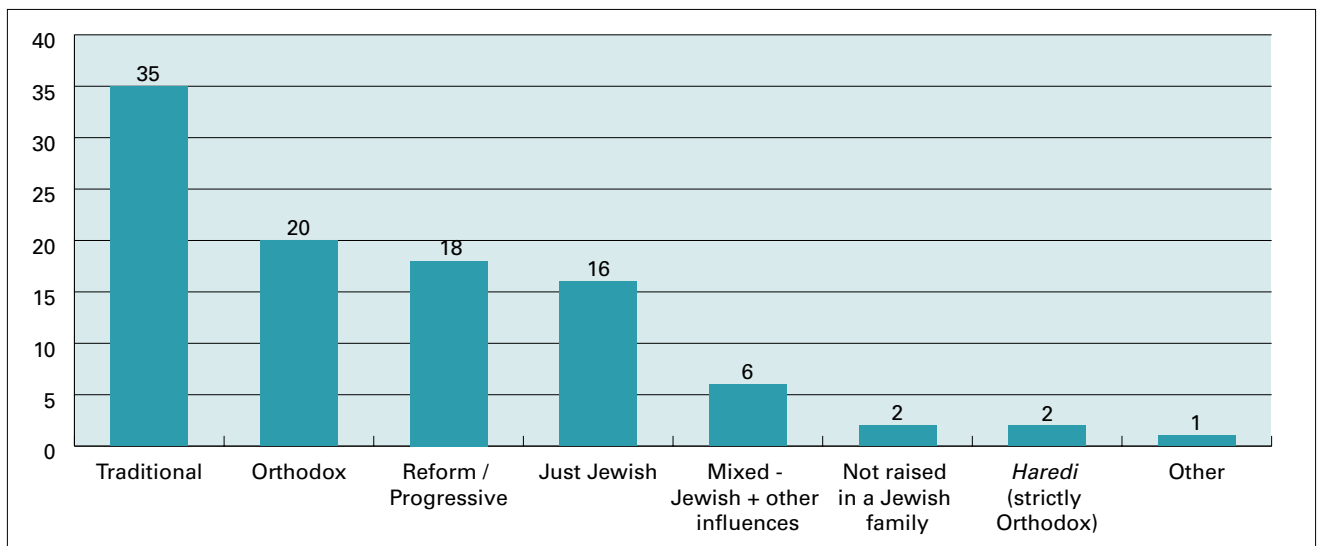
Whilst Jewish identity is an inherently fluid concept, there are many ways in which it can be quantitatively assessed, and NJSS included a range of questions aimed at exploring its many dimensions. In Britain, a popular approach has been to divide the community into its main groupings—‘broad-churches’ of attachment that encompass denominational alignment (or lack of) regardless of actual membership. Respondents were asked which type of alignment best reflected the type of Jewish upbringing they experienced and, as Figure 1 shows, most (89%) experienced one of four different types of upbringing ‘Traditional’ (35%), ‘Orthodox’ (20%), ‘Reform/Progressive’ (18%) and ‘Just Jewish’ (16%).

As is demonstrated in a number of the graphs below, the type of Jewish upbringing students experience significantly influences their current

Jewish identity. In Figure 2, Jewish upbringing is compared with the student’s current Jewish position. Overall, the ‘current’ pattern of alignment is fairly similar to the upbringing pattern, yet it is also evident that some shifting has already occurred, mainly away from the ‘Traditional’ position towards both the secular ‘Just Jewish’ position and the religious ‘Orthodox/*haredi*’<sup>4</sup> position. In other words, the seeds of polarization are evident, with the middle-ground giving way to both the secular and religious ends of the spectrum.

An alternative approach to assessing the sample’s Jewish identity profile is to examine its secular-religious ‘outlook’. Although Jewish identity exhibits both religious and ethnic traits (both of which are examined in this report), most Jews are able to identify where they fit on a continuum spanning from secular to religious. Just over half the sample (52%) consider themselves to be ‘Religious’ or ‘Somewhat religious’, whilst two

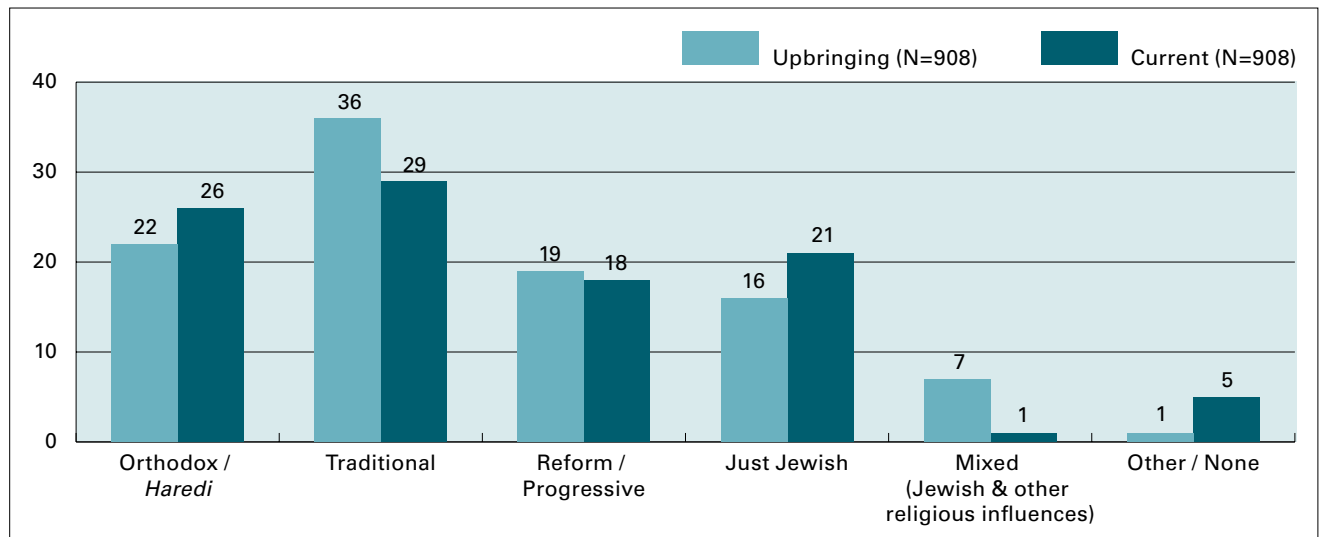
Figure 1: Type of Jewish upbringing (%) (N=925)



4 Due to the very small number of *haredim* (strictly Orthodox) in the sample, in most cases they have

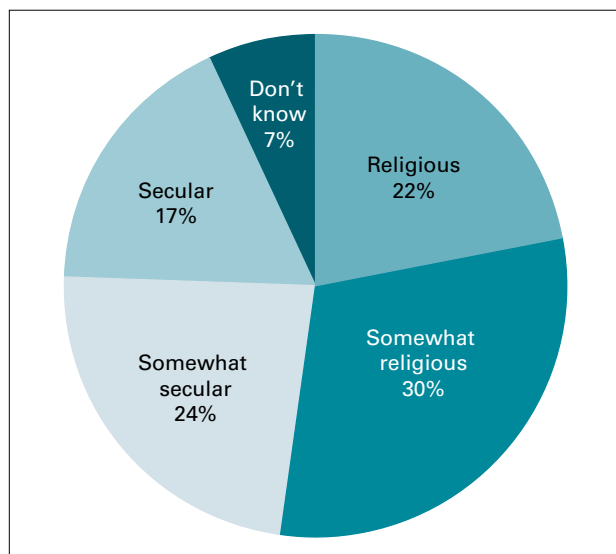
been amalgamated with the much larger ‘Orthodox’ sub-group.

Figure 2: Jewish practice; upbringing compared with current position (%)<sup>§</sup>



<sup>§</sup> Columns may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

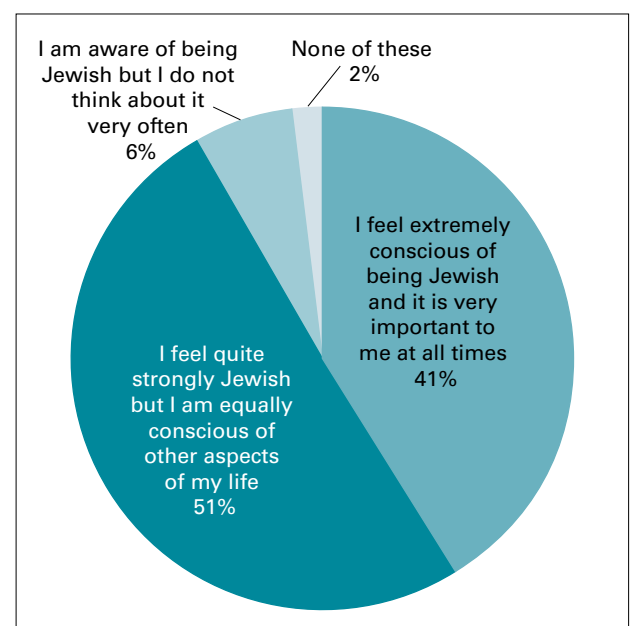
Figure 3: 'When it comes to your current outlook, how would you personally describe yourself?' (N=925)



out of five (41%) describe themselves as 'Secular' or 'Somewhat secular', and 7% are unsure where they stand in terms of their outlook (Figure 3). Thus, the overall makeup of the sample is more religious than secular, which compares favourably with findings from other surveys.<sup>5</sup> However, the term 'religious' is used loosely

5 For example, JPR's 2010 Israel Survey found that among respondents under 30 years old 52% were religious, 44% secular and 4% were not sure (see: Graham D. and Boyd J. (2010) *Committed, concerned and conciliatory: The attitudes of Jews in Britain towards Israel*. London: JPR/Institute for Jewish Policy Research.)

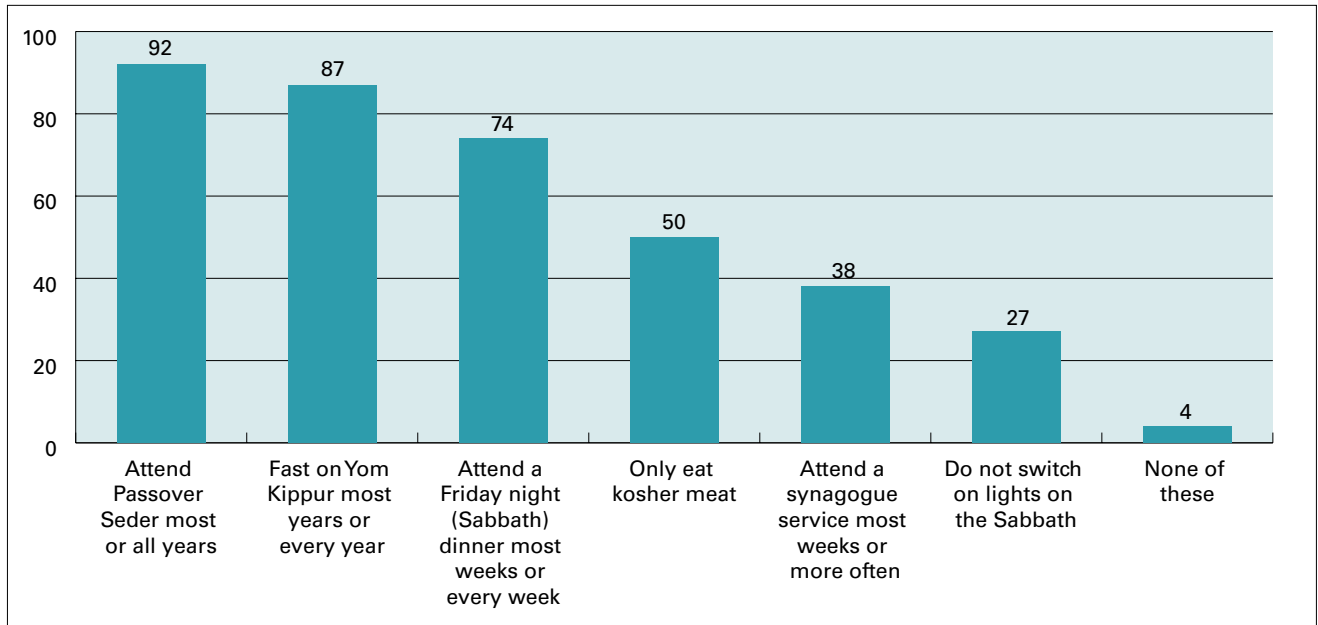
Figure 4: 'How conscious you are of being Jewish?' (N=925)



here; for most respondents it does *not* mean strictly observant, since only a quarter of respondents (27%) place themselves in that category if it is defined as *shomrei Shabbat* (i.e. they 'do not switch on lights on the Sabbath' (see Figure 5)).

Yet another way of understanding Jewish identity is to focus on how conscious a person is of being Jewish. Figure 4 shows the majority of the sample is either 'Extremely conscious' (41%) or 'Quite strongly' conscious (51%) of being

Figure 5: Jewish practice at home outside of term-time (%) (N=925 for each column)



Jewish. Again, these results are consistent with those of other community surveys.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, the sample’s Jewish identity was assessed on the purely practical level of ritual observance. As Figure 5 shows, rituals that are the least demanding and most family-oriented are most commonly observed. Thus, almost all respondents (92%) attend a Passover Seder meal ‘Most years’ or ‘Every year’ but only half (50%) observe *kasbrut* (Jewish dietary laws) and just over a quarter (27%) are *shomrei Shabbat*. Again these findings are consistent with previous studies.<sup>7</sup>

Together, these various indicators of Jewish identity paint a picture of a sample that is both Jewishly conscious and Jewishly engaged. Just over one half is, at least nominally, Orthodox and half of these are Sabbath observant; a further quarter is religiously unaligned and this broad

picture is fairly typical of the one found in Britain’s wider Jewish community (see Appendix). Although young, this cohort’s Jewish identity profile is very familiar.

### Schooling history

This young Jewish sample grew up during a period in which Jewish day schooling experienced considerable growth in Britain.<sup>8</sup> Between 1995 (approximately the time when NJSS respondents were starting school) and 2005, Jewish day school attendance grew by 29% in ‘mainstream’ (non-*haredi*) Jewish schools.<sup>9</sup>

6 JPR’s 2002 survey of Jews in London and the South-east found that 31% of under 30s were ‘extremely’ and 51% ‘quite strongly’ conscious of being Jewish (N=122, based on the authors’ calculations). Note the age profiles are not strictly comparable (see: Becher H., Waterman S., Kosmin B. and Thomson K. (2002), *A Portrait of Jews in London and the South-east: A community study*. London: JPR/Institute for Jewish Policy Research.)

7 For example, JPR’s 2010 Israel survey found that 92% of under 30s attend an annual Passover seder and 24% observe the Sabbath (N=474 per item; based on the authors’ calculations). Graham and Boyd (2010).

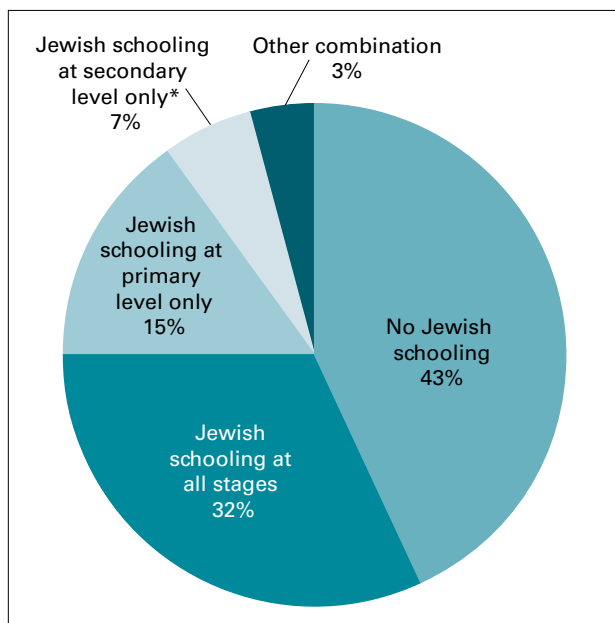
8 This has been well documented by JPR, the Board of Deputies and the Jewish Leadership Council. See: Valins O, Kosmin B and Goldberg J (2002), *The future of Jewish schooling in the United Kingdom*, London: JPR / Institute for Jewish Policy Research; Hart R, Schmol M, and Cohen F (2007) “Jewish Day Schools in Britain 1992/3 to 2003/4” in *Contemporary Jewry*, 27 (1) 137-156; and *The Future of Jewish Schools: The Commission on Jewish Schools*, Jewish Leadership Council, 2008.

9 Calculations based on data from the Board of Deputies. The NJSS sample therefore provides an early opportunity to explore how this growth might have impacted on Jewish identity. However, the relationship between current Jewish identity and Jewish day school (JDS) attendance is complex. Many statistical studies controlling for home background and other influential factors have cast doubt on the assumption that JDS attendance alone can inculcate strong Jewish identity. This relationship will be examined in detail in a forthcoming JPR publication using NJSS data.



“Basically, my sister went to Jewish school but I went to [a non-Jewish school] which is a mixed school with loads of different religions going, and my parents were always [saying] you aren’t going to have a very good Jewish circle of friends, but my sister will ..., so you need to somehow get a good Jewish circle. So I went to [a Jewish youth movement] when I was 15, which was basically where I got my friends, and now I actually think that my circle of Jewish friends is actually stronger and she went to her Jewish school. [...It] has helped to root, strengthen my Jewish circle of friends.” (Tammy)

Figure 6: Type of school attended (Jewish v non-Jewish) by school stage (primary and secondary)<sup>§</sup>, (British-educated respondents only), N=888



\* Includes ‘secondary only’ and ‘secondary and sixth form’  
<sup>§</sup> The three stages presented to respondents were: ‘Primary school (ages 4 to 11)’, ‘Secondary school (from age 11/12 to 16)’, ‘Sixth Form (from age 16)’

For those respondents educated in Britain (which is the vast majority), over half (57%) attended a Jewish day school for at least part of their formal education, whereas two out of five (43%) never attended one (Figure 6). A third (32%) of respondents attended a Jewish day school for their entire schooling career, and of the 25% that experienced a mixture of both Jewish and non-Jewish schooling, the most common path taken was Jewish schooling at primary stage followed by non-Jewish schooling at the secondary stages (15%).

Regardless of whether the schooling was Jewish or non-Jewish, 42% of British-educated respondents experienced state education at all stages, 25% experienced private education at all stages and 33% experienced a mixture of private and state education.

The type of schooling respondents received is related to the type of Jewish upbringing they experienced. A majority of those brought up ‘Orthodox’ attended Jewish schools at all stages (64%), whereas this was the case for 30% of those who experienced a ‘Traditional’ Jewish upbringing (Figure 7). Indeed, two out of five (41%) of those with a ‘Traditional’ upbringing experienced no Jewish schooling at all; this was the case for 65% of those brought up in ‘Reform/ Progressive’ households. (Note the majority of Jewish schools in Britain are formally ‘Orthodox’, so some non-Orthodox children would not have been accepted to most Jewish day schools if they had wished to attend.<sup>10</sup>)

“[...] I went to a Jewish primary school and a non-Jewish secondary school so I came to my secondary school and everyone asked, why do you do this, why do you do that, and I thought, why do I do this, and I had to start to define myself and then when you go to university you start to define yourself again. [...]” (Shana)

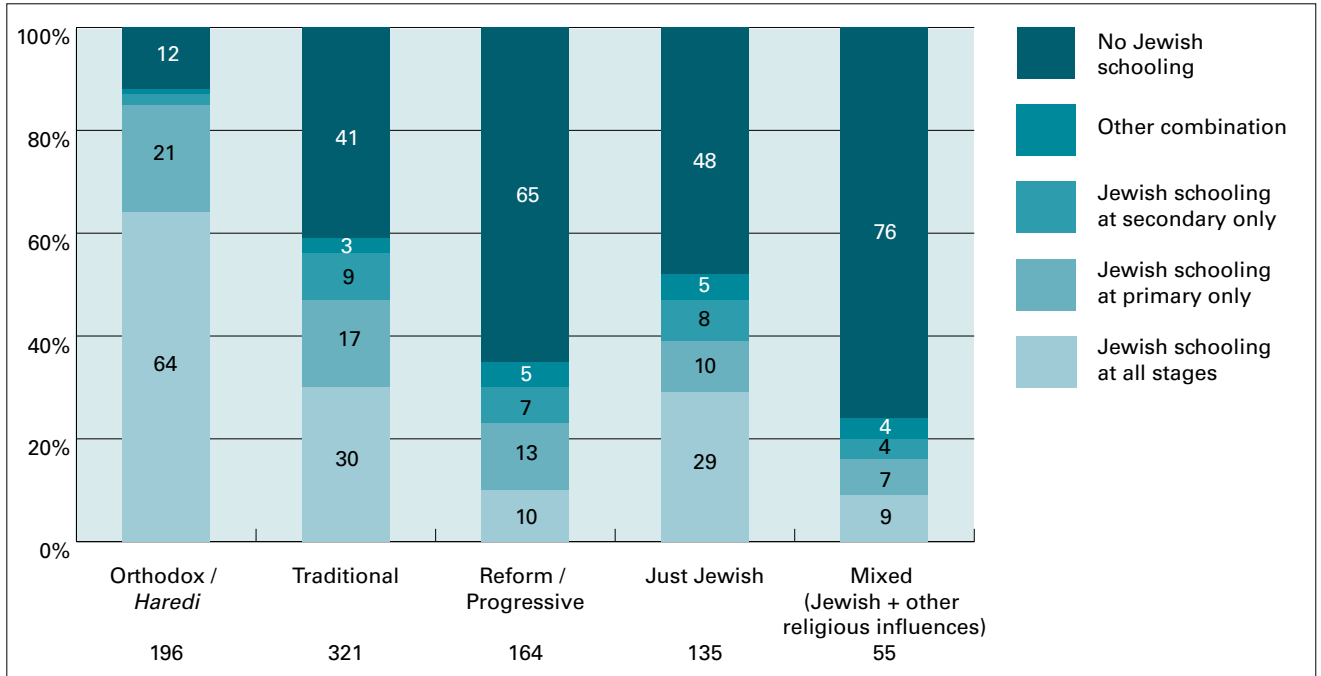
### Other forms of Jewish education

Since Jewish education extends well beyond the realms of formal schooling, the sample was asked about other forms of Jewish education they might have experienced growing up. The vast majority of (British-born) respondents (97%) had experienced at least one form of (non-day school) Jewish education. As Figure 8 shows, a *bar/bat mitzvah* (84%) was the most common type experienced, followed by ‘Part-time classes in synagogue/*cheder*

<sup>10</sup> Two recent important developments are likely to impact on this situation in the future. First, JCoSS, the UK’s only inter-denominational secondary school, opened in 2010, and second, the legal challenge against the entry criteria operated by JFS (Britain’s largest Jewish school) which resulted in the UK Supreme Court ruling that tests of ethnicity for admission purposes constitute a contravention of the Race Relations Act 1976.

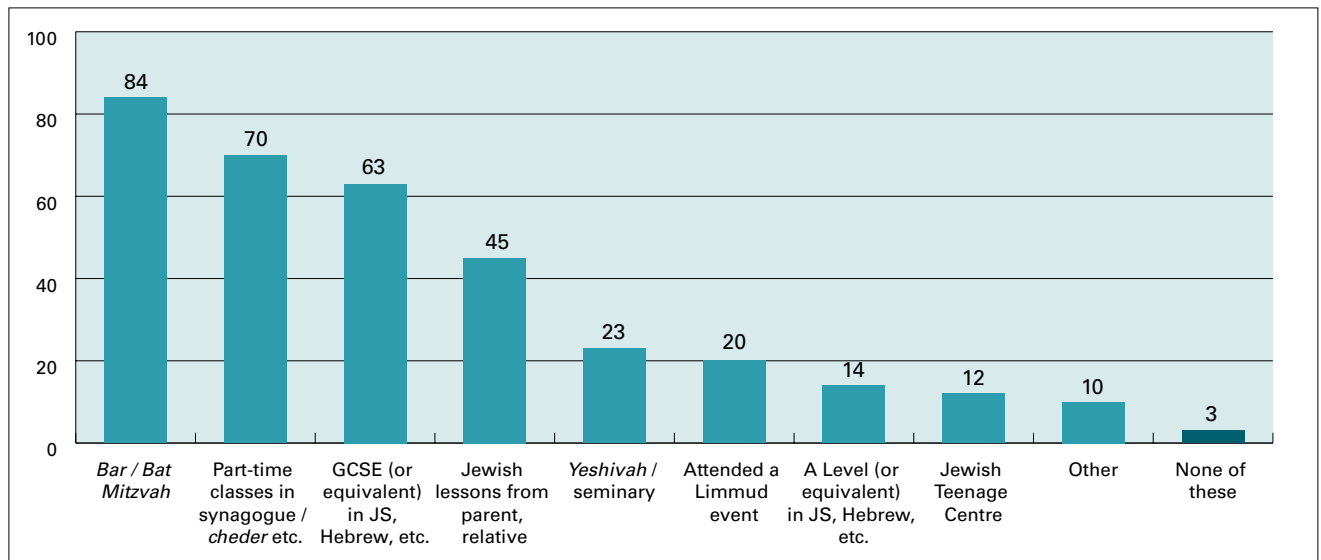


Figure 7: Type of Jewish upbringing by school history<sup>§</sup>



<sup>§</sup> Columns may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 8: Have you ever experienced any of the following forms of Jewish education? (%) (N=830\* per item)



\* This question was only asked of those who had grown up in the UK

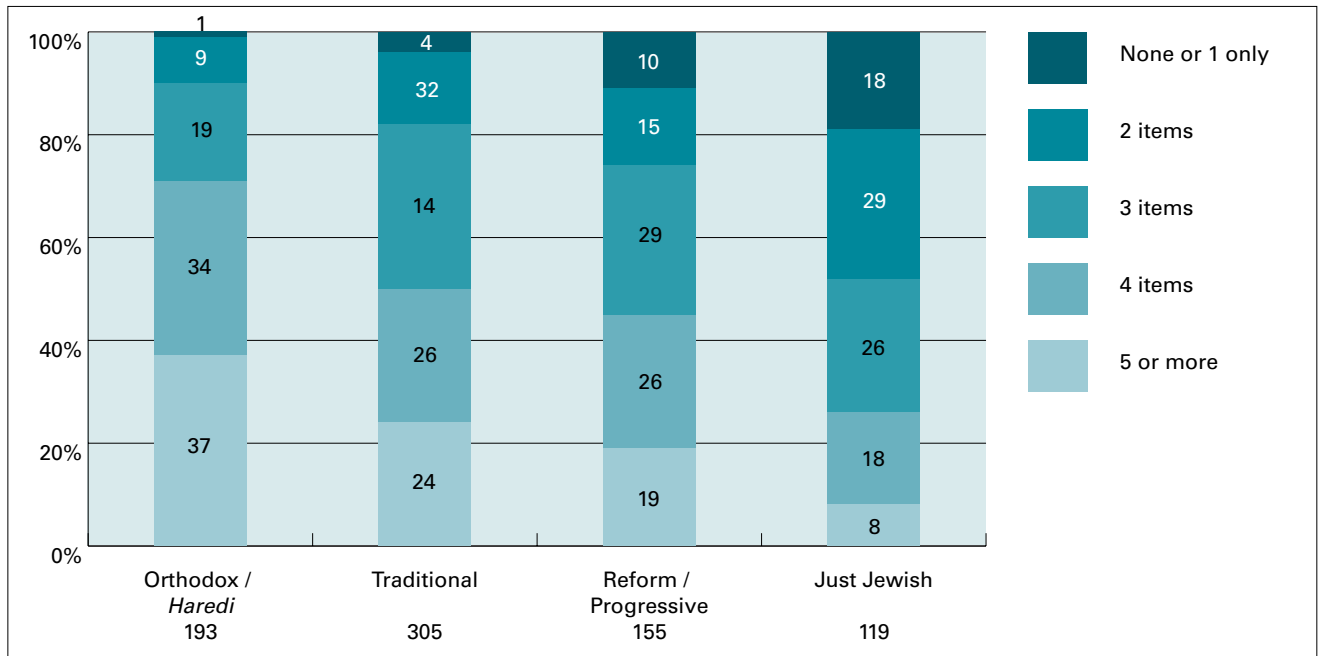
etc.<sup>11</sup> (70%). The third most common form was GCSE-level education in Jewish Studies (JS) and/or Hebrew, etc (63%).

11 Jewish boys become *bar mitzvah* (literally, ‘son of the commandment’) at age 13, and according to Jewish law, are then able to participate fully in all areas of Jewish communal life and become responsible for their actions. The moment is typically marked by being called up to read from the *Torah* in synagogue,

As with Jewish day school experience, the extent to which respondents experienced these forms of Jewish education was closely related to the type

and a family celebration often takes place. Many girls also go through a similar ceremony and celebration when they become *bat mitzvah* (‘daughter of the commandment’), usually at age 12. *Cheder* (lit. ‘room’) refers to additional Jewish and Hebrew studies classes which take place outside formal schooling.

Figure 9: Type of Jewish upbringing by number of (non-school) Jewish educational items experienced<sup>§</sup>



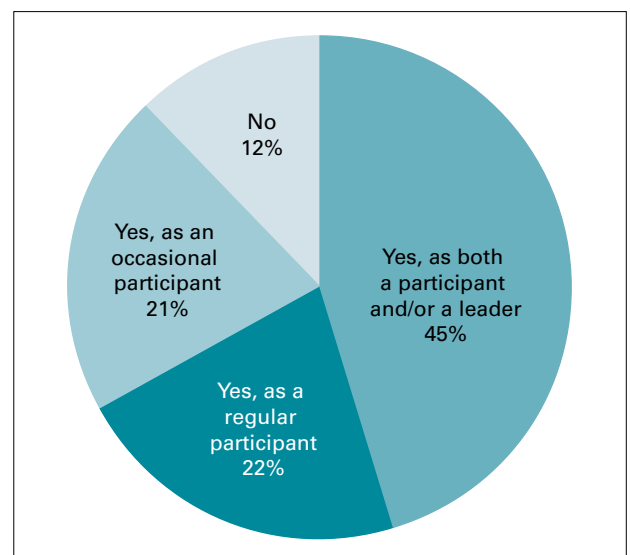
<sup>§</sup> Columns may not add to 100% due to rounding

of Jewish upbringing they had received. Figure 9 shows that 71% of respondents who had an Orthodox Jewish upbringing had experienced at least four of the items listed, whereas this was the case for 49% of those with a ‘Traditional’ upbringing and 26% for those who described their upbringing as ‘Just Jewish’.

**Youth movement involvement**

In addition to the more formal varieties of Jewish education, many would argue that involvement in a Jewish youth movement is also a fundamental part of Jewish education. Two-thirds (67%) of respondents (who grew up in Britain) have ‘regularly’ been involved with a Jewish youth movement (Figure 10). Indeed, 45% of respondents have had some form of leadership experience through Jewish youth movements.<sup>12</sup> Several focus group participants also noted how impactful Jewish youth movements had been in helping them develop Jewish social circles and their Jewish identities.

Figure 10: ‘Are you currently or have you ever been involved with a Jewish youth movement?’ N=830\*

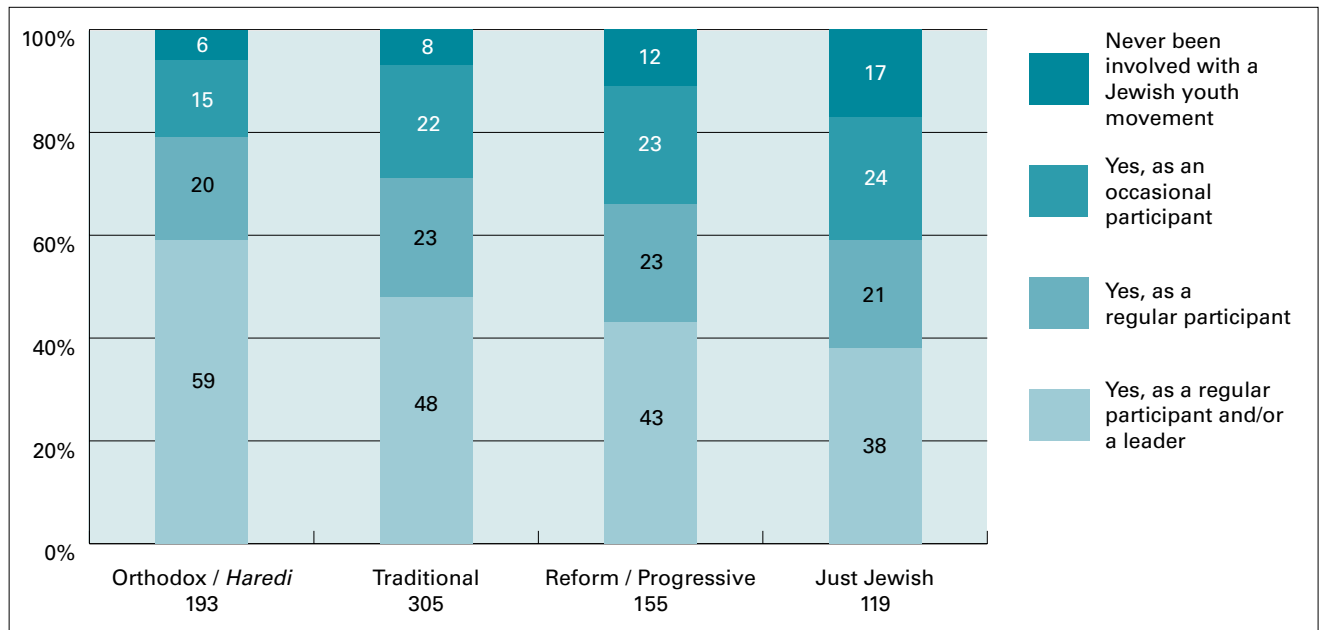


\* This question was only asked of those who had grown up in the UK

12 It is possible that the oversampling of the Jewishly engaged student population (see Appendix) may mean that these figures overstate the actual proportion in the Jewish student population.

“I would say despite having gone to a Jewish day school, I wasn’t really brought up to be active Jewish, it was more Jewish by default. So, for me, my connection came when I got involved with a Jewish youth movement. And that was when I really became a lot more actively Jewish, I think.” (Elliot)

Figure 11: Type of Jewish upbringing by extent of participation in a Jewish youth movement\*<sup>§</sup>



\* Data refer only to respondents who grew up in the UK  
 § Columns may not add to 100% due to rounding

The patterns noted above linking a respondent’s type of Jewish upbringing to their Jewish educational experiences are also seen in terms of Jewish youth movement involvement. As Figure 11 shows, 79% of those who had experienced an ‘Orthodox’ upbringing have previously been involved with a Jewish youth movement either ‘regularly’ and/or ‘as a leader’, which compares with 65% of ‘Reform/Progressive’ respondents and 59% of those brought up ‘Just Jewish’. A similar pattern is evident in terms of (current) secular-religious outlook and Jewish consciousness.

**Youth programme involvement**

*“I had a very good positive Jewish experience both at home and 14 years of school and also when I went to Israel, but I actually found that for me, my most pivotal Jewish experience in making me who I am was through my youth movement as in... it’s interesting to note that I could spend 300... I don’t know, whatever, 150 days a year, 200 days a year in school in a very good Jewish school and it wouldn’t affect me as much as the two weeks I then spent on summer camp or on Shabbat [Sabbath] afternoon in my youth movement. I found that somehow the informal education did something which was different to what formal education or home environment did.” (Richard)*

Jewish youth movements offer Jewish teenagers the opportunity to take part in various immersion programmes and activities outside the regular confines of weekly meetings. Respondents were asked to what extent they had taken part in a Jewish youth camp, an organized visit to Israel or a gap year programme in Israel.

“[...] my peers at [Jewish day school] were not at the same religious level as me, but then it really got to me when I took my gap year with Bnei Akiva, when I started to make friends who had the same religious standards as me, and that’s when I started becoming more observant and also being more proud of my religion.” (Rob)

Most respondents (82%) had been on an Israel Experience programme, colloquially referred to as ‘tour’; for many, such an experience is as much a social rite of passage as a Zionist educational experience.<sup>13</sup> Two out of five respondents (40%

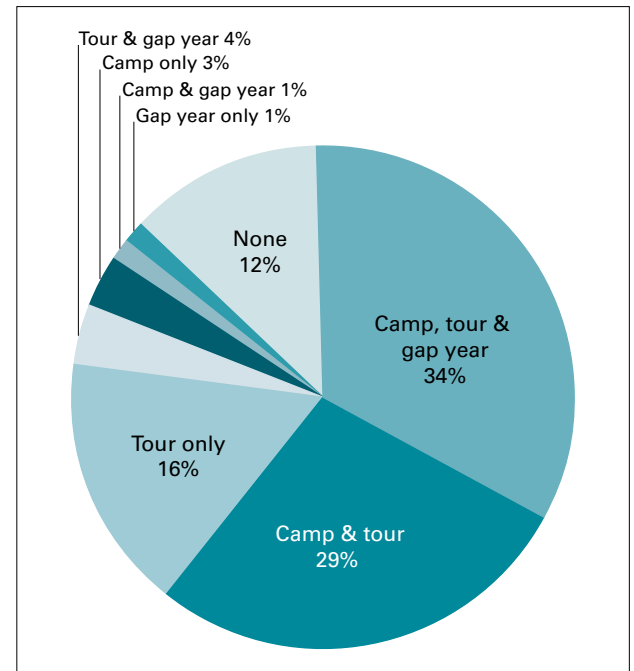
13 Our calculations using alternative data suggest that about 67% of Jewish teenagers who go on to university went on an organized Israel tour, which suggests NJSS oversampled Jewishly engaged students (see Appendix on page 63 for details).

of the British-born subsample) had spent a gap year in Israel on an organized programme (N=334). Of these, 23% went under the auspices of the Federation of Zionist Youth (FZY), 20% under Bnei Akiva and 22% attended a yeshiva/seminary.<sup>14</sup>

Figure 12 summarizes the various combinations of programming respondents have experienced. Just 12% of the sample had not been on any of these programmes (although this is probably lower than the actual proportion among all Jewish students (see Appendix)).

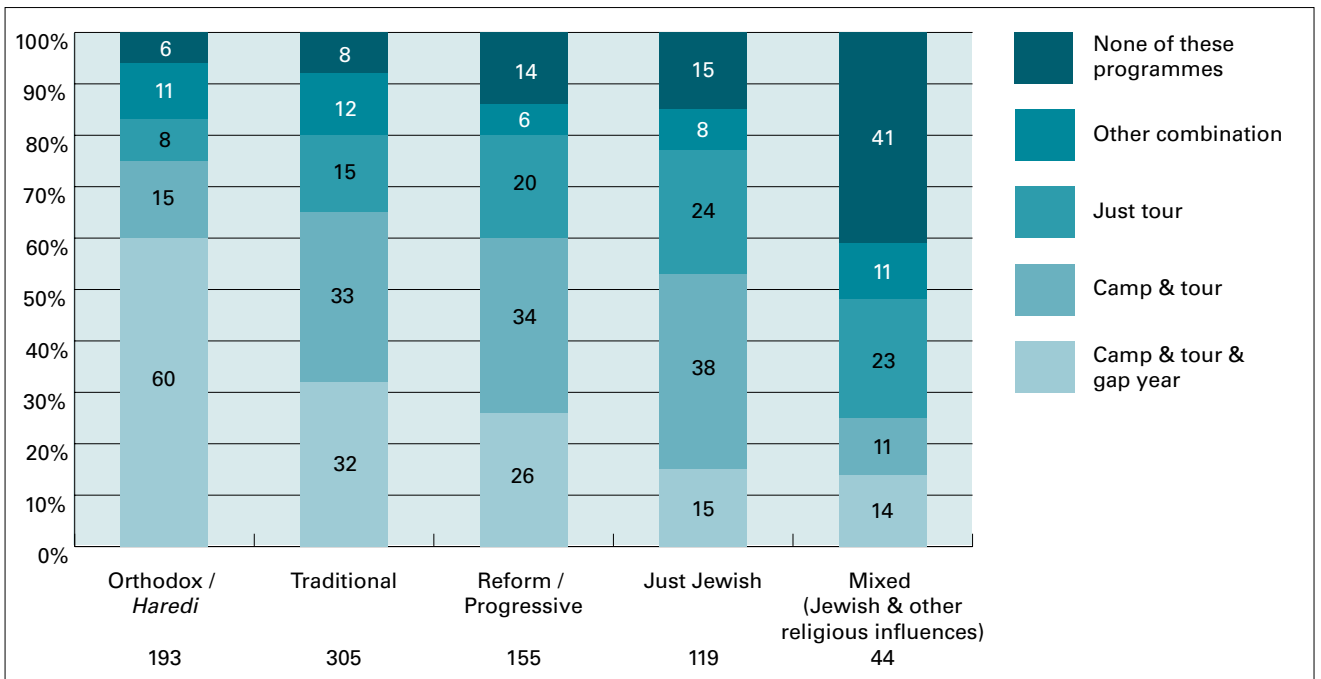
Once again, the importance of Jewish upbringing is evident: Figure 13 shows that those who experienced a more religious upbringing are more likely to have experienced more of these programmes. For example, 60% of those brought up in Orthodox households took part in all three types of programme (summer camp, Israel tour, and Israel gap year programme), by contrast, less than a third (32%) of those who experienced a ‘Traditional’ upbringing had participated to this extent.

Figure 12: “Have you been on ... ‘A Jewish youth summer camp in the UK’, or ‘An Israel tour’ or ‘A gap year programme in Israel’?”\* N=830



\* Data refer only to those who were born in the UK

Figure 13: Type of Jewish upbringing by whether respondents participated in summer camp, Israel tour, and/or Israel gap year<sup>5</sup>

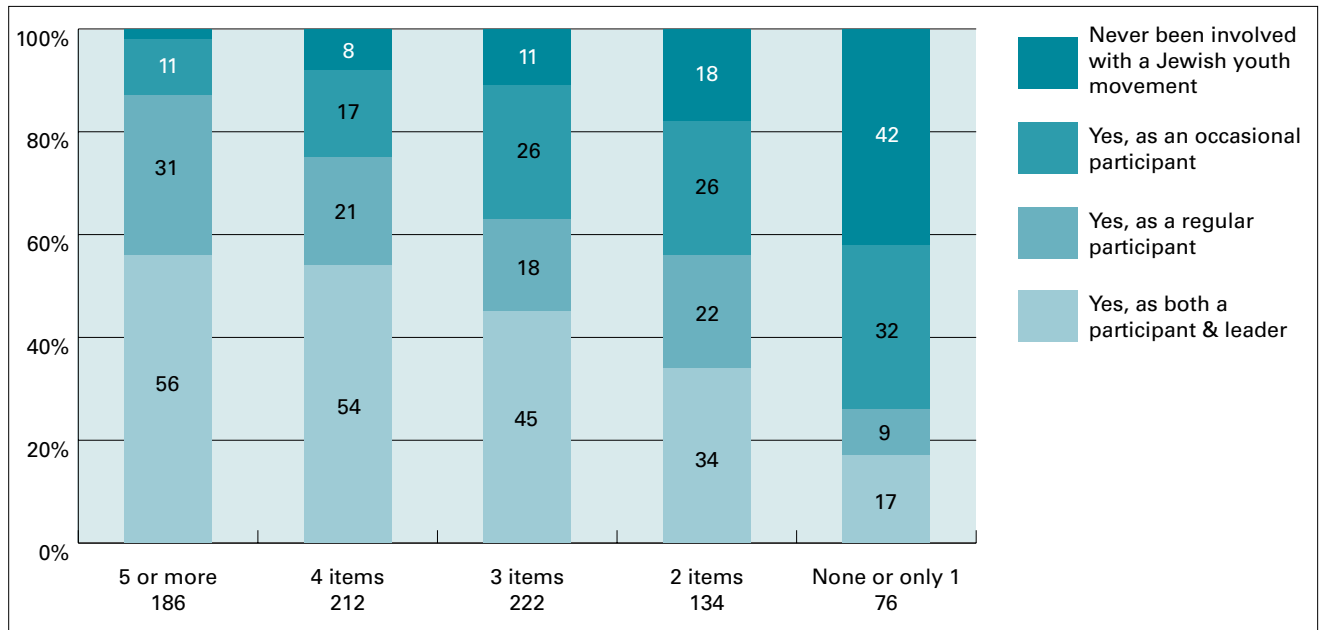


<sup>5</sup> Columns may not add to 100% due to rounding

14 As noted, the sample over-represents the more Jewishly engaged students and so these are probably

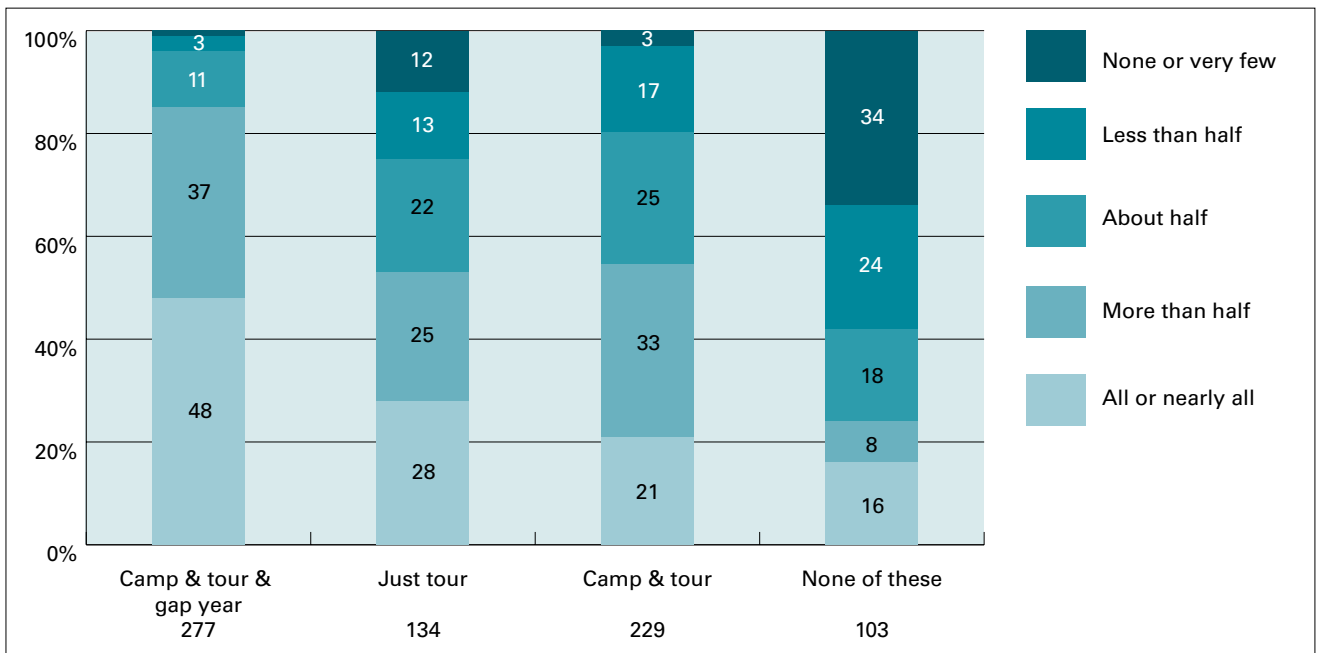
higher proportions than actually occur, especially with respect to the Israel gap year data (see Appendix).

Figure 14: Relationship between number of Jewish educational items\* experienced and Jewish youth movement participation



\* See Figure 8 for list of items. Data refer only to those who were born in the UK

Figure 15: Whether respondents participated in summer camp, Israel tour, and/or Israel gap year by the proportion of close friends who are Jewish<sup>§</sup>



<sup>§</sup> Columns may not add to 100% due to rounding

### A 'virtuous cycle' of Jewish educational experiences

Jewish upbringing has been highlighted as a key indicator of the likelihood of experiencing different forms of Jewish education throughout

childhood. However, it is not, of course, the only factor influencing the educational paths taken by members of the sample. For example, there is evidence that something of a 'virtuous socio-educational cycle' is operating, that can be summed

up as ‘the more you do, the more you do.’ In other words, experiencing certain forms of Jewish education may well increase the likelihood that other forms will also be experienced. As Figure 14 indicates, the more Jewish learning experiences respondents have had, the greater the likelihood they participated in a Jewish youth movement.

Perhaps the most important aspect of this ‘virtuous cycle’ is shown in Figure 15. This shows

that participation in Jewish youth programmes is related to a greater likelihood of having a high proportion of close Jewish friends. Whilst cause and effect have not been statistically proven in these graphs and, of course, other factors, not least of all Jewish upbringing, are playing an important role as well, there does appear to be a type of *chain reaction* occurring whereby experiences lead to further experiences which, it appears, inevitably results in more intensive Jewish socialization.

## 2 Making decisions about university

**“...I think when you do go to university as well it’s a big thing. It’s really scary and you do get drawn to people who are similar to you and it [being Jewish] is a huge thing to be similar about. I had to stop pretending it wasn’t important to feel comfortable, and that being around Jews makes me feel comfortable, and I wanted some sort of Jewish, I don’t know, bubble I guess.” (Emily)**

Although by no means all Jewish people go to university after finishing school (we estimate that about three quarters will have done so in 2011 (see Table 3 on page 67)), it is nevertheless the case that the proportion is much higher among Jews than is average for the UK population (though the difference is negligible when groups with similar socio-economic backgrounds are compared). The 2001 Census showed that 56% of Jews aged 25 to 34 had degree level qualifications, compared with 29% in the general population.<sup>15</sup> We estimate that Jewish students make up about 0.5% of the 1.6 million students in full-time higher education in the UK.<sup>16</sup>

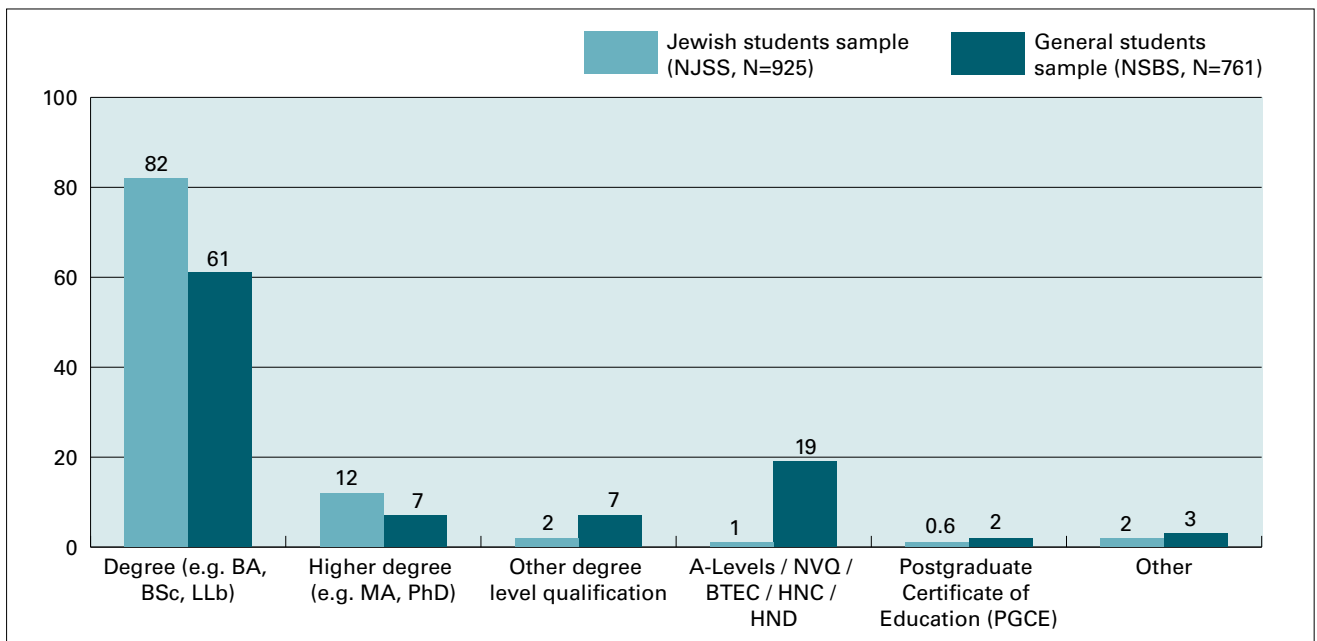
### What are Jewish students studying?

National Jewish Student Survey (NJSS) respondents are more likely to be following

traditional degree paths than students in the general population. The majority of NJSS respondents (82%) are completing undergraduate courses, compared with 61% in the control group in the National Student Benchmark Survey (NSBS)<sup>17</sup> sample (Figure 16). Jewish students are also more likely to be enrolled on postgraduate courses than the general student population. Less than 3% of the NJSS sample is studying at college, the majority of these being at law school.

In terms of disciplines, the most common is ‘Social Studies’<sup>18</sup> which one in five (20%) NJSS respondents are studying, followed by ‘Medicine & dentistry’ (13%). However, as Figure 17 shows, the disciplines that NJSS respondents are studying differ from those chosen by the general student population. Higher Education Statistics

Figure 16: Type of qualification being pursued: NJSS compared with the national benchmark survey (%)



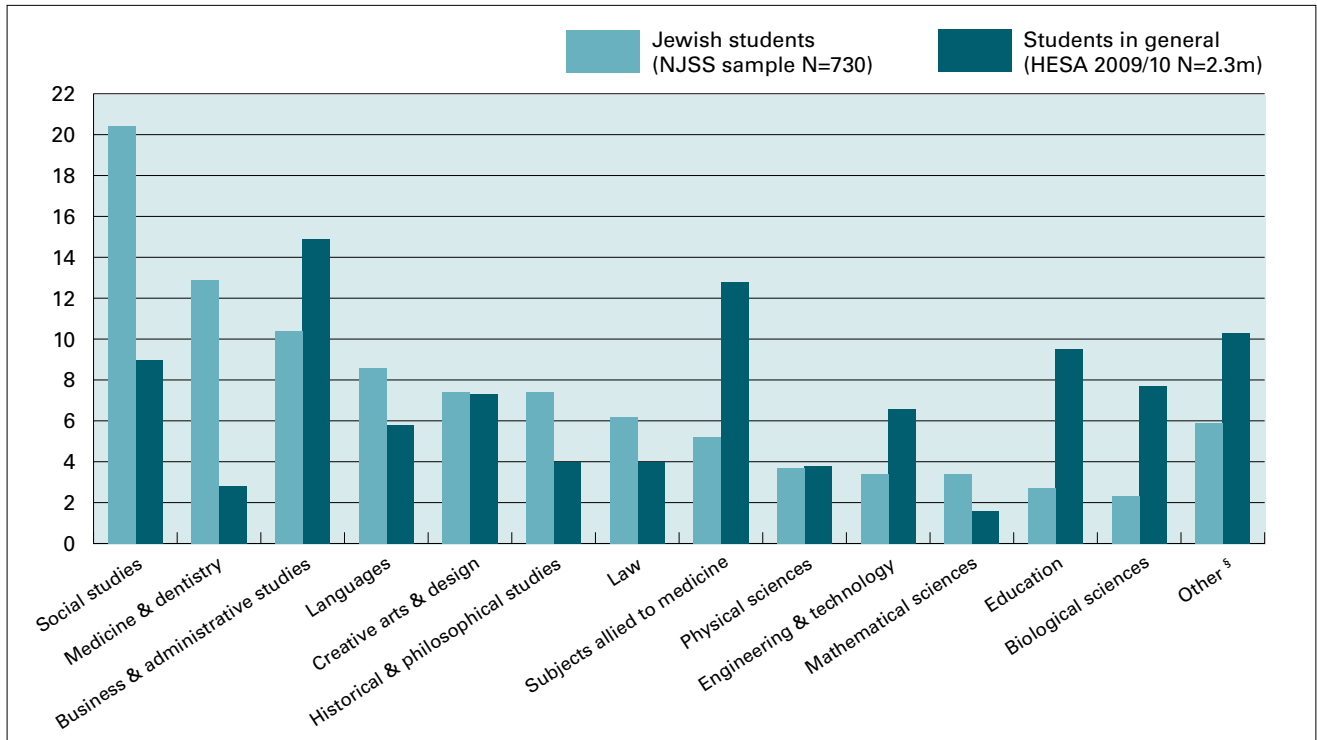
15 Source: ONS Table S158 Age and Highest Level of Qualification by Religion as well as Samples of Anonymised Records (SARs). Data from the 2011 census were not available at the time of writing.

16 HESA, 2009/10 [http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com\\_contentandtask=viewandid=1897andItemid=239](http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_contentandtask=viewandid=1897andItemid=239)

17 This parallel survey was undertaken by Ipsos MORI on behalf of JPR in order to provide some baseline data for the NJSS study (see Appendix on page 63).

18 ‘Social studies’ includes: economics, politics, sociology, social policy, social work, anthropology, human and social geography and similar fields.

Figure 17: Discipline: NJSS compared with national data\* (%)



Source: National data are from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) <http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php/content/view/1973/239/> (Students by subject of study, first year indicator, mode of study and level of study 2009/10)

\* Data are only for students studying single honours courses

§ 'Other' refers to Computer science; Mass communications & documentation; Architecture, Building & planning; Veterinary science; Agriculture & related subjects

Agency (HESA) data indicate that the most common discipline being studied in the general student population is 'business & administration' (15%). Thus, Jewish students are considerably *overrepresented* in 'social studies', 'medicine and dentistry', 'historical and philosophical studies' and 'mathematical sciences' and *underrepresented* in 'business and administrative studies', 'subjects allied to medicine',<sup>19</sup> 'engineering and technology', education, biological sciences and 'other' single honours disciplines. Note, almost 10% of the general student population study education compared with just 3% of the Jewish student sample.

The majority (79%) of NJSS respondents are studying single honours/subject courses, whereas 21% are studying joint/combined honours courses. The sample is studying a very

19 'Subjects allied to medicine' include: anatomy, physiology and pathology, pharmacology, toxicology and pharmacy, complementary medicine, nutrition, ophthalmics, aural and oral sciences, nursing, medical technology and similar fields.

wide variety of topics with the most popular course being medicine (9% of the entire sample) (Figure 18).

It is therefore evident that compared with the general student population, Jewish students tend to follow a narrower higher educational path. Compared with students in general, NJSS respondents are more likely to take the 'traditional' degree paths rather than alternative qualifications; they tend to be focused on a relatively small number of disciplines and the portfolio of topics they are studying is also relatively narrow.

### **Jewish Studies and Israel**

Although 63% of respondents have taken 'GCSE/Standard Grade (or equivalent) in Jewish Studies, Hebrew, etc.', and 40% have been to a Jewish day school at secondary level, less than a quarter (23%) report that Jewish Studies and/or Israel form even a 'small part' of their courses at university. Eighteen percent report that Israel forms at least a 'small part'



Figure 18: Courses being studied (%) N=925

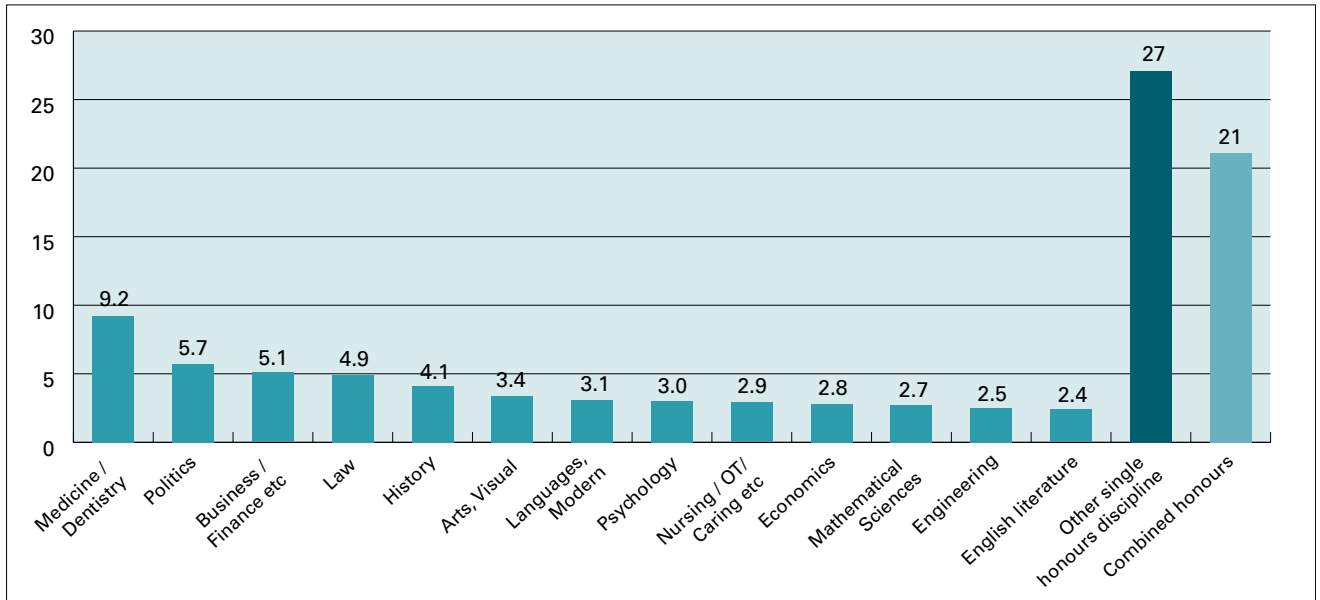
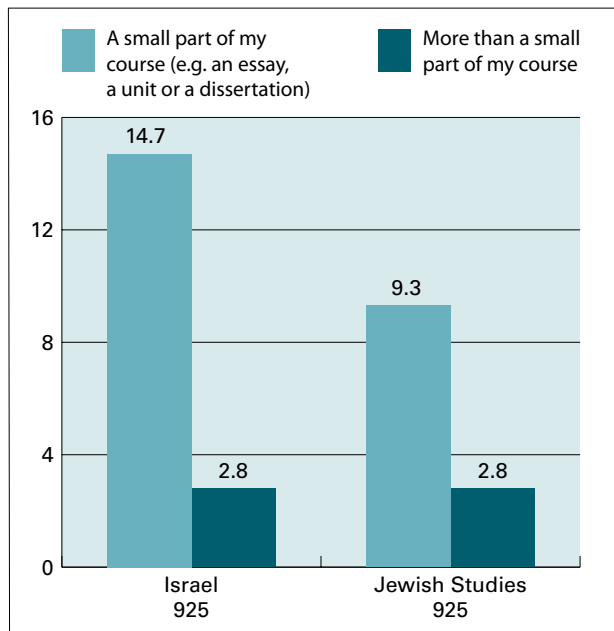


Figure 19: 'Do the topics of Israel or Jewish Studies form part your course in any way at all?' (%)

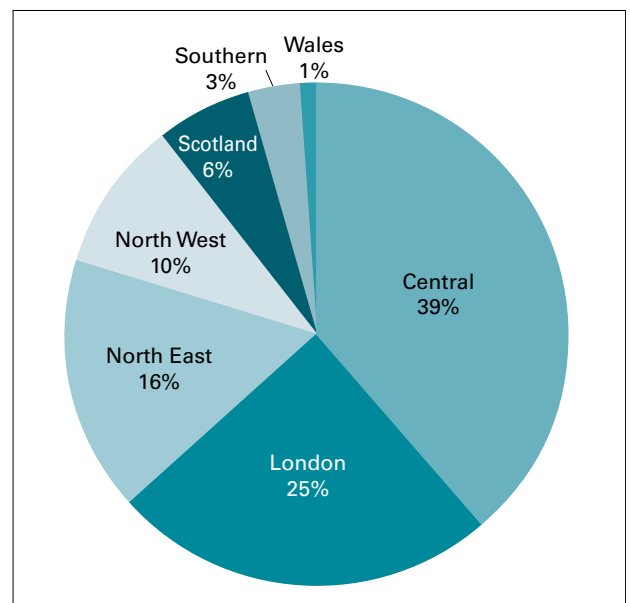


of their course and 12% said that Jewish Studies forms at least a 'small part' (Figure 19). Very few respondents (4%) report that either of these topics constitutes half of more of their course.

### Where are Jewish students studying?

There are various ways in which the data can be geographically disaggregated. One common method taken by a number of Jewish student

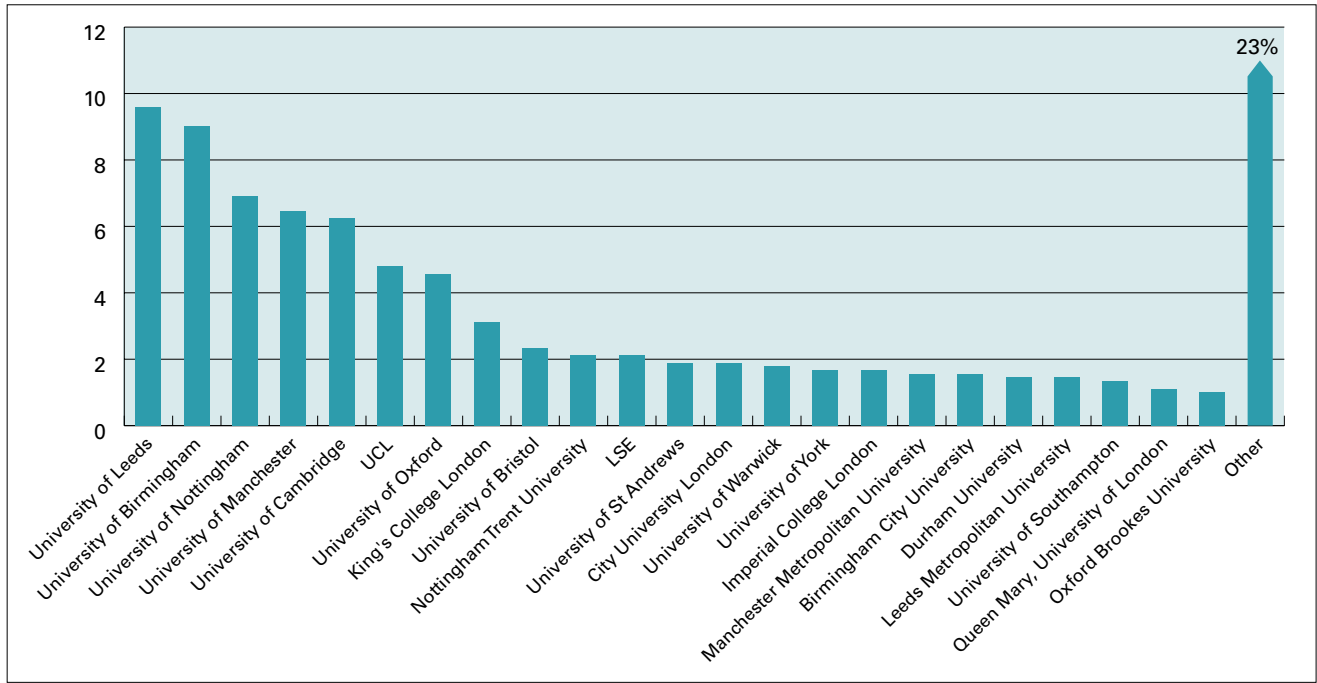
Figure 20: Sample distribution by UJS region (N=925)



bodies is the regional approach. On this basis the largest Jewish student region is 'Central' (39%) which includes two of the 'big four' universities by Jewish population size (the University of Birmingham and the University of Nottingham) (Figure 20).

The NJSS contains responses from Jewish students attending 95 different UK institutions. However, most students are based in a relatively small number of places and this is redolent of patterns of Jewish residential location more

Figure 21: Institutions attended by NJSS respondents (%)



generally, where dense clustering in a small number of areas is common.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, 50% of the sample attended just eight universities: The University of Leeds (N=86); The University of Birmingham (N=81); The University of Nottingham (N=62); The University of Manchester (N=58); The University of Cambridge (N=56); UCL (University College London) (N=43); The University of Oxford (N=41); and King's College London (N=28). By contrast, these eight institutions accounted for 9.3% of the national student population.<sup>21</sup>

It is also noticeable that students cluster not only in particular institutions, but also in particular 'Jewish university towns'. For example, Manchester hosts Jewish students attending Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Salford, as well as the University of Manchester. This phenomenon also occurs in Leeds, Nottingham, Oxford and Cambridge amongst others, including, of course, London (though this is complicated by the fact that

London contains an especially large number of institutions and is also home to a large proportion of Britain's Jewish population).

"I don't think I would have gone somewhere where I needed to live on campus where there were no Jews. [...] Because I need to be connected to my Judaism, and not just on a personal level, but in a group. The community atmosphere." (Michelle)

### **Influences on university choice**

Given the extent of this 'Jewish clustering' (in terms of both courses and institutions) it is interesting to examine the extent to which this might be the result of conscious decision-making on the part of students. An idea of student thought processes can be gained from the following quotations:

"Although, obviously, academic reputation saw a lot of it, well, I think, I know I actually chose a university that wasn't Jewish [...]. I'd been to a Jewish day school. I'd been to a secular school that was, basically, 40% Jewish. I'd had a gap year in Israel, had a very Jewish upbringing, and I wanted to go somewhere where it wasn't just North London transported further north. I could get out the bubble a little bit [...]. And I also felt I

20 See: Graham D., Schmol M. and Waterman S (2007), *Jews in Britain: A snapshot from the 2001 Census*, London: JPR / Institute for Jewish Policy Research.

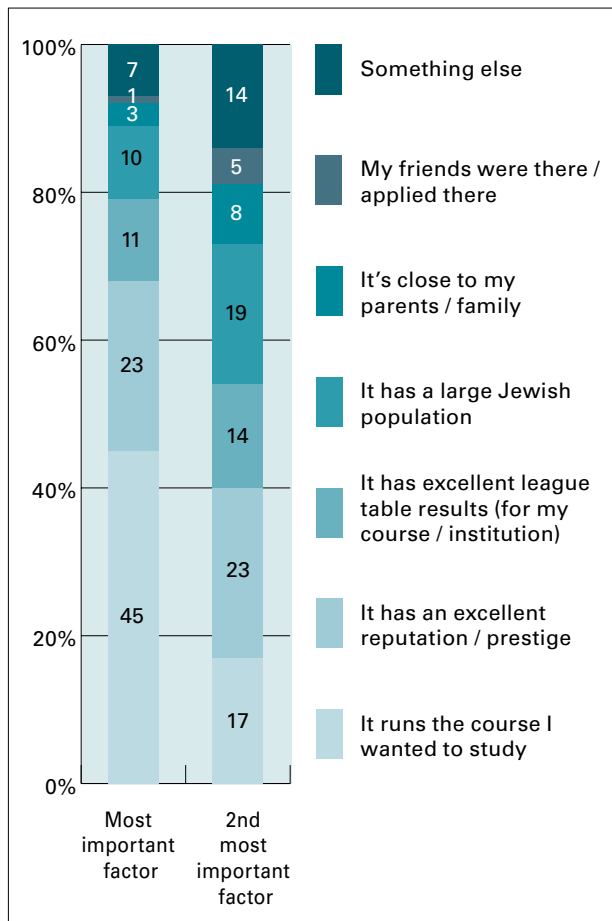
21 Source: HESA Table 1 - All students by HE institution, level of study, mode of study and domicile 2009/10 <http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php/content/view/1973/239/>

wanted to go somewhere where there was a bit of an onus or burden to make a difference and to get involved, not just to go somewhere where if you didn't get involved, someone else would do it for you.” (Elliot)

“I was more focused on how my university could get me into research after university. I didn't actually know anything about the Jewish Society at [my university], but actually only after going, I realised there wasn't one, [...] but I was more focused on my course than my Judaism.” (Tammy)

“I chose [my university], because I wanted somewhere where there was a Jewish community, but where you could escape the bubble if you wanted to. I think [my university]... because if you want to be in the bubble, you can easily be within it, or if you want to be alone, which I think I did. And also as well for the course.” (Richard)

Figure 22: ‘What were the two most important factors in helping you to decide to study at your institution?’



The survey specifically asked respondents what their primary and secondary considerations were when choosing a university. As Figure 22 shows, of the primary considerations, the practical issue, ‘It runs the course I wanted to study’ (45%), is the most popular response followed by matters relating to quality/prestige, ‘It has an excellent reputation’ (23%). Despite the Jewish clustering noted above, the size of the Jewish student population is only a primary consideration for 10% of respondents and a secondary consideration for a further 19% of respondents—i.e. the size of the institution’s Jewish population is an important consideration for 29% of NJSS respondents.

The focus on quality is reflected in the fact that NJSS respondents are almost four times as likely to attend Britain’s elite universities as students in general.<sup>22</sup> Almost 17% of NJSS respondents attend institutions that have been consistently ranked in the top five since 2008/09,<sup>23</sup> and almost 29% attend those consistently ranked in the top ten over the same period.<sup>24</sup>

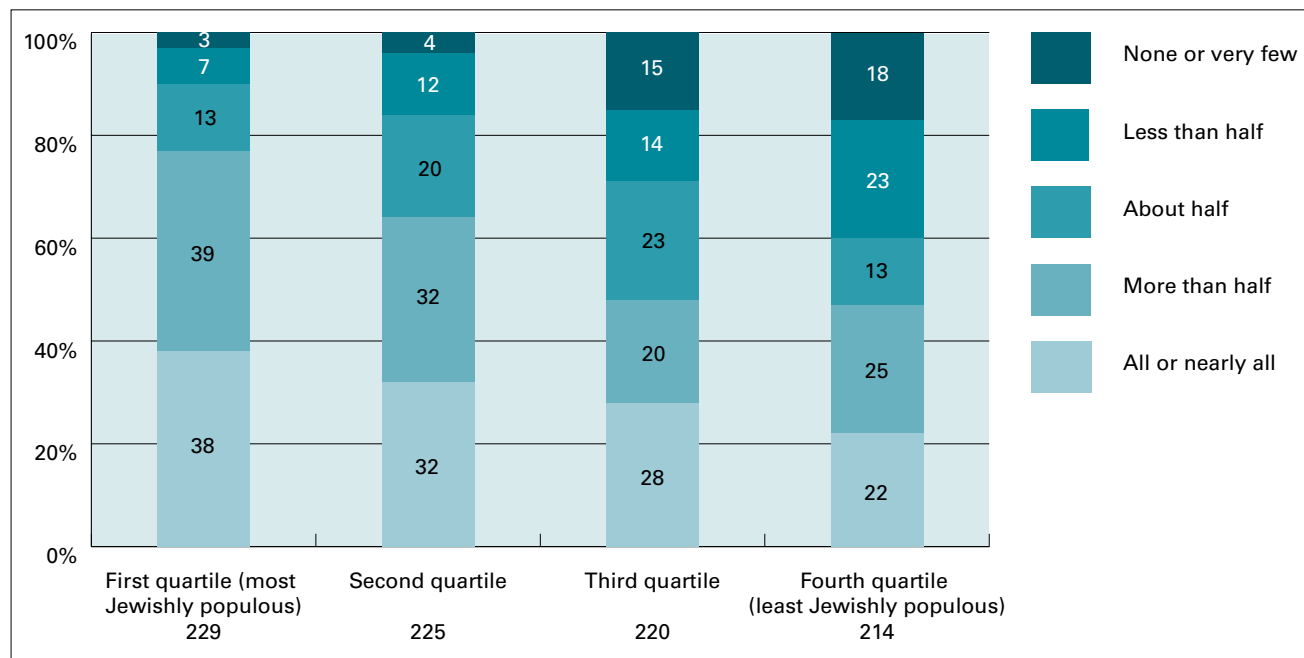
The decision-making processes that result in the sample’s university choices inevitably ‘filter’ Jewish students into particular disciplines, institutions and locations, and this results in a considerable amount of ‘Jewish clustering’. One way of exploring this further is to divide the sample into four equal groups (or ‘quartiles’). This is done by placing the 95 institutions recorded by the survey in order of Jewish population size and splitting the resultant list into four groups of equal size. Thus, each quartile consists of approximately 25% of the sample but, as Table 1 indicates, the 1st quartile contains relatively few (just three) institutions, whereas the 4th quartile contains 73 institutions. This dramatic difference is a further illustration of skewed distribution of the Jewish student population.

22 27% of NJSS respondents attend universities consistently ranked in the top ten ‘Complete university guide’ league tables compared with 7% in general.  
 23 <http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables/rankings?y=2010>  
 24 School type (i.e. private v state) continues to influence the likelihood of students entering the very top institutions in Britain. The data relating to this issue will be examined in a future JPR report based on the NJSS dataset.

Table 1: Sample split into quartiles based on the size of the Jewish population at each institution

1st quartile	2nd quartile	3rd quartile	4th quartile
Most Jewishly populous (3 institutions, N=229)	Second most Jewishly populous (5 institutions, N=226)	Third most Jewishly populous (14 institutions, N=221)	Least Jewishly populous (73 institutions, N=217)
University of Leeds, University of Birmingham, University of Nottingham	University of Manchester, University of Cambridge, UCL, University of Oxford, King's College London	U. of Bristol, Nottingham Trent U., LSE, U. of St Andrews, City U. London, U. of Warwick, U. of York, Imperial College London, Manchester Metropolitan U., Birmingham City U., Durham U., Leeds Metropolitan U., U. of Southampton, Queen Mary U. of London	Oxford Brookes U., Middlesex U., U. of Sheffield, U. of Aberdeen, Brunel U., U. of Edinburgh, U. of Hertfordshire, Newcastle U., St George's U. of London, U. of Glasgow, U. of London, U. of Reading, U. of Westminster, Lancaster U., U. of Liverpool, Aston U., U. of Bath, Birkbeck, U. of London, Canterbury Christ Church U., Cardiff U., U. of Exeter, Goldsmiths U. of London, U. of Strathclyde, U. of Sussex, Edinburgh Napier U., Kingston U., Liverpool John Moores U., Loughborough U., U. of Salford, U. of Stirling, U. of the West of England, U. of the West of Scotland, U. of Abertay Dundee, Aberystwyth U., U. College Birmingham, Bournemouth U., De Montfort U., U. of East London, Heythrop College, Keele U., U. of the Arts London, Open U., Royal Holloway U. of London, Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Sheffield Hallam U., Thames Valley U., Anglia Ruskin U., Arts U. College at Bournemouth, U. of Bradford, U. of Brighton, U. of Central Lancashire, U. of Chichester, The Courtauld Institute of Art, Coventry U., Cranfield U., U. of Essex, Glasgow Caledonian U., Guildhall School of Music & Drama, U. of Huddersfield, U. of Wales Lampeter, Liverpool Hope U., London Metropolitan U., London South Bank U., Northumbria U., U. of Plymouth, Robert Gordon U., Roehampton U., Royal Agricultural College, Royal College of Music, School of Oriental and African Studies, School of Pharmacy, U. of London, Swansea U., York St John U.

Figure 23: Size of institution's Jewish population by proportion of closest friends who are Jewish<sup>§</sup>

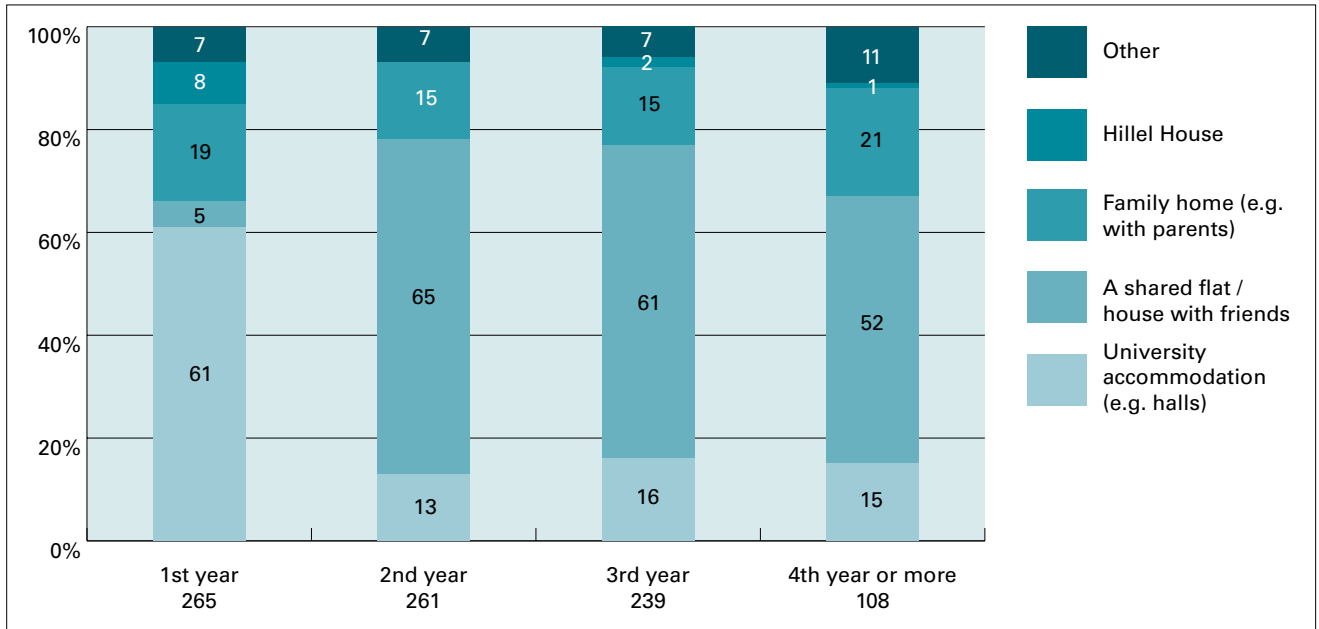


<sup>§</sup> Columns may not add to 100% due to rounding

Quartiles can be used to examine patterns in the data that relate to clustering. For example, Figure 23 shows the relationship between the size of a university's Jewish population and the likelihood of respondents having a high proportion of close friends who are Jewish. It is apparent that the bigger 'Jewish universities' contain students with larger Jewish social circles than those universities

with small Jewish populations. Whether this is a result of larger university Jewish populations leading to greater opportunities to meet other Jews, or alternatively, respondents with large Jewish social circles tending to prefer institutions with larger Jewish populations, cannot be determined. However the answer is likely to be a combination of both these factors working together.

Figure 24: Current year of study by term-time accommodation\*<sup>§</sup>



\* This question was only asked of those whose course is fully UK-based.  
<sup>§</sup> Columns may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Thus, the size of a Jewish population at a university/university town is arguably both a *cause* and an *effect* of multiple processes. In other words, the mere presence of a relatively large Jewish student population may, in itself, be attractive but its existence is also a *by-product* of other decision-making processes (course quality, institutional reputation, etc.) that are taking place which, no doubt, are themselves influenced by Jewish educational and social experiences during upbringing.

### Student accommodation

*“I’d say that just going to uni [...] makes you more independent and I’m very glad I left home to go to uni [...] you get to make a lot more of your own decisions at uni and as well as your Judaism decisions about that for your future. Otherwise, if you’re just living at home with your parents I think you make less [decisions]... you don’t make that many choices of your own and you may just follow on from what your parents are doing.” (Mike)*

Although about one in five respondents (18%) lives at home during term-time, the majority (82%) lives away from home. This means that most are faced with yet more decisions about the type of accommodation in which they wish to live, with whom they wish to live and how they wish to run

their nascent households. Figure 24 shows that the type of accommodation students live in relates to their year of study. For example, most first years (61%) live in university halls of residence and a further 8% live in Hillel House<sup>25</sup> which provides kosher facilities and increased opportunities for Jewish socialization. After the first year, a residual 13% to 16% remain in university halls but most move into shared accommodation such as a student house or flat.

*“I didn’t live with Jews. Well, I’m not particularly bothered about *kashrut*, as I say, but I just wanted to live with Jewish people I got on with. It was more that they were people I was friendly with rather than necessarily ... They just happened to be Jews rather than being Jewish. I wasn’t bothered about finding a Jewish house particularly.” (Steve)*

Year of study is not the only influence on accommodation choice. Jewish practice is also a factor in the decision, especially for more Orthodox students. Almost two in five (38%) Orthodox

25 There are ten university towns (including London) in the UK which contain a residential Hillel House or a kosher halls of residence operated in conjunction with Hillel.

respondents live at home with their family, compared with 10% for Traditional respondents and 6% for Reform/Progressive respondents.

**Choosing who to live with**

University provides an opportunity for students to experiment, often for the first time, with whom they wish to live. Not all choose to take the opportunity (as noted, 18% of respondents live at home with their family) and for others, university is not their first taste of independent living, having previously lived away from home during a gap year abroad—52% of the UK-born group.

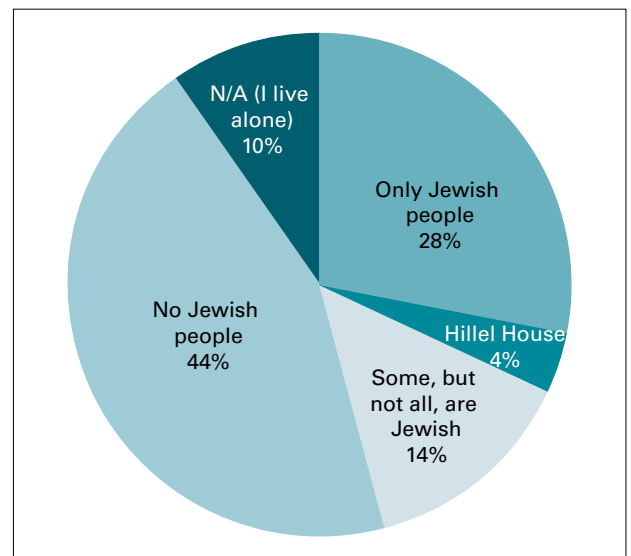
Setting aside those who live at home with their families (58% of whom are Orthodox), Figure 25 shows that just under a third (32%) of the sample lives only with other Jews. Therefore, the majority of respondents live in accommodation with both Jews and non-Jews (14%) or in accommodation in which they are the only Jewish person (44%). Of those who live with no other Jewish people, just over half (52%) live in a flat-share and 43% live in university accommodation (such as halls of residence).

After their first year, students tend to move out of university halls and therefore have a greater choice about who to live with. Excluding those who live at home, the proportion that lives only

with other Jews almost doubles between the first year (22%) and the third year (42%) (N=718). The overall picture (including those who live at home) is shown in Figure 26.

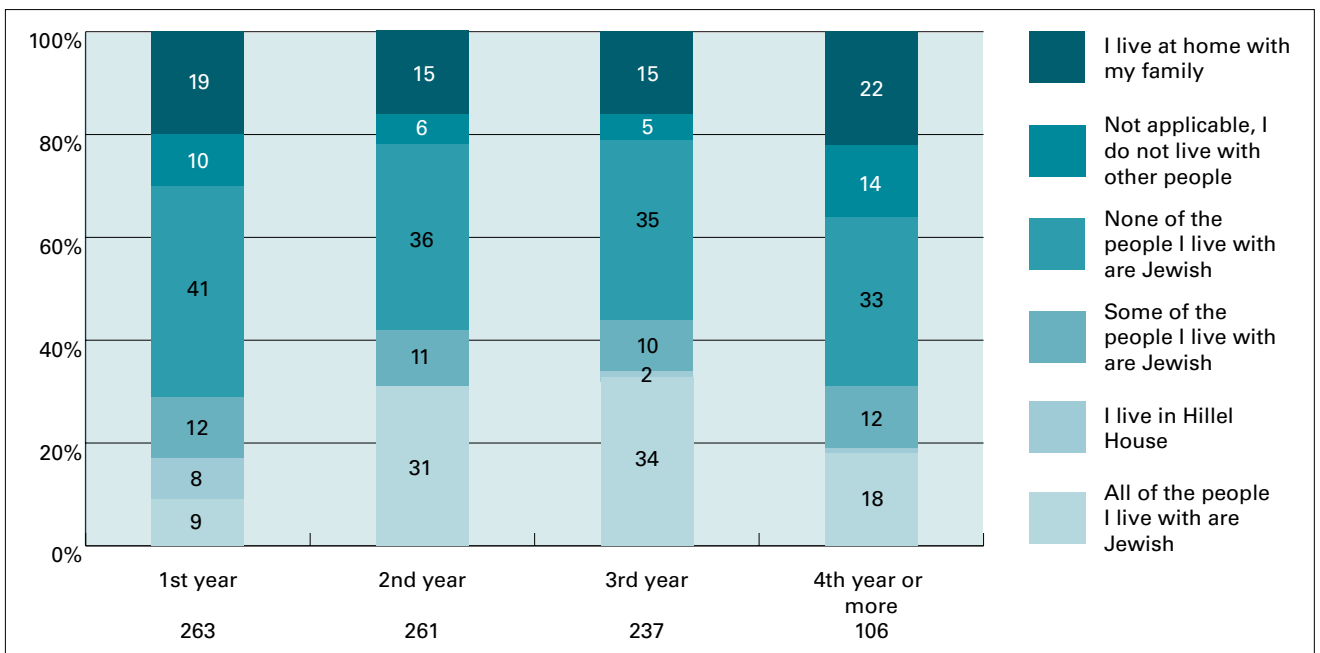
Current Jewish practice is closely related to whom students choose to live with. Figure 27

Figure 25: 'In your current term-time accommodation, do you live with other Jewish people?'\* N=718<sup>§</sup>



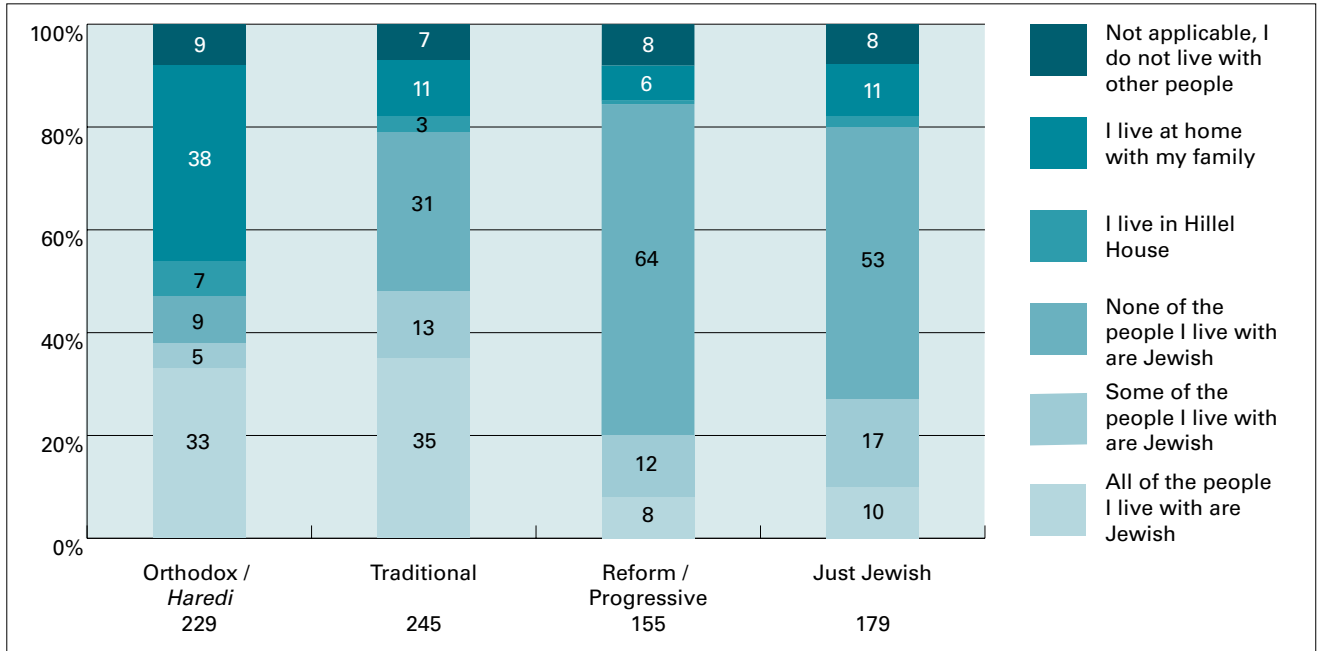
\* Respondents were given the following instruction: 'If you live in a communal building (e.g. halls) please only comment on the people you share a room/self-contained flat with.'  
<sup>§</sup> Not including those living at home with their family

Figure 26: Year of study by whether respondents live with other Jewish people<sup>§</sup>



<sup>§</sup> Columns may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 27: Current Jewish practice by whether respondent lives with other Jewish people<sup>5</sup>



<sup>5</sup> Columns may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

shows that over 70% of Orthodox respondents either live at home or only live with other Jewish people, whereas this is the case for just under half (46%) of Traditional respondents. However, for non-Orthodox respondents the situation is reversed, with almost two in three Reform/Progressive respondents choosing to live solely with non-Jews and over half (53%) of ‘Just Jewish’ respondents doing so.

### Student finance

The issue of student finance, and especially government plans for increasing tuition fees, was a major topical debate at the time NJSS was carried out (though the plans will not directly affect any of the students surveyed).

Respondents were asked about how they are funding their studies. Most (59%) are using more than one source of finance and over a third (35%) is using three or more sources. Figure 28 shows that the single most common source is a ‘Government loan’ which more than half (56%) have accessed. Just over half (51%) are benefiting from parental/family financial help. This contrasts sharply with students in the general population group of whom less than a third (30%) are benefiting from this source (National Student Benchmark Survey (NSBS) data).

It is also noticeable that NJSS respondents are *more* likely than the benchmark group to be using ‘personal savings’ as a funding source (25% compared with 17% respectively). Furthermore, NJSS respondents are also *less* likely to be in receipt of ‘Government grants’ or ‘Scholarships/bursaries’ (17% compared with 28% respectively in each case).

There is a considerable difference in debt burden between students who live at home and those who live away from home. As Figure 29 shows, respondents living at home are less likely to be using each of the funding sources examined. In particular, they are almost half as likely as those living away from home to be in receipt of a government loan (34% compared with 62% respectively), far less likely to receive their parent’s financial support (36% compared with 53% respectively—though presumably they are in receipt of indirect help such as free accommodation etc.) and more than half as likely to be spending personal savings (12% compared with 28% respectively).

Finance is a cause of stress for students, but the extent of this concern is, unsurprisingly, related to how they are funding their studies. Two factors are important—the number of sources they access and the nature of the



Figure 28: Ways in which respondents are funding their studies; NJSS compared with NSBS data (%)

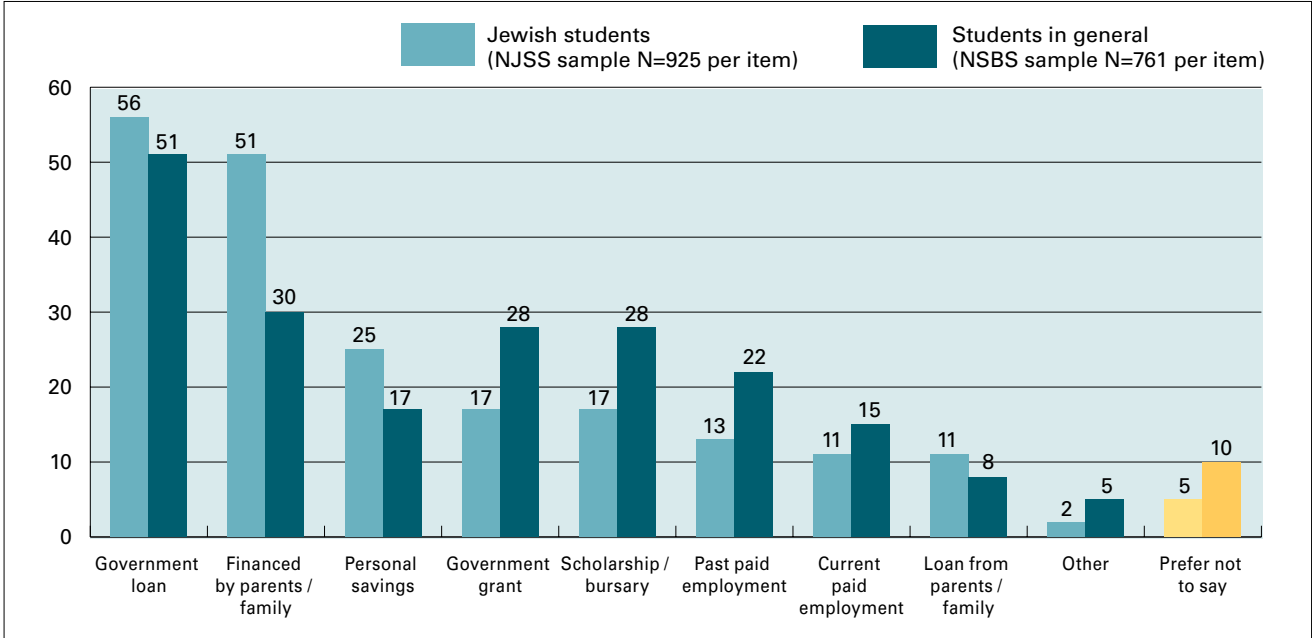
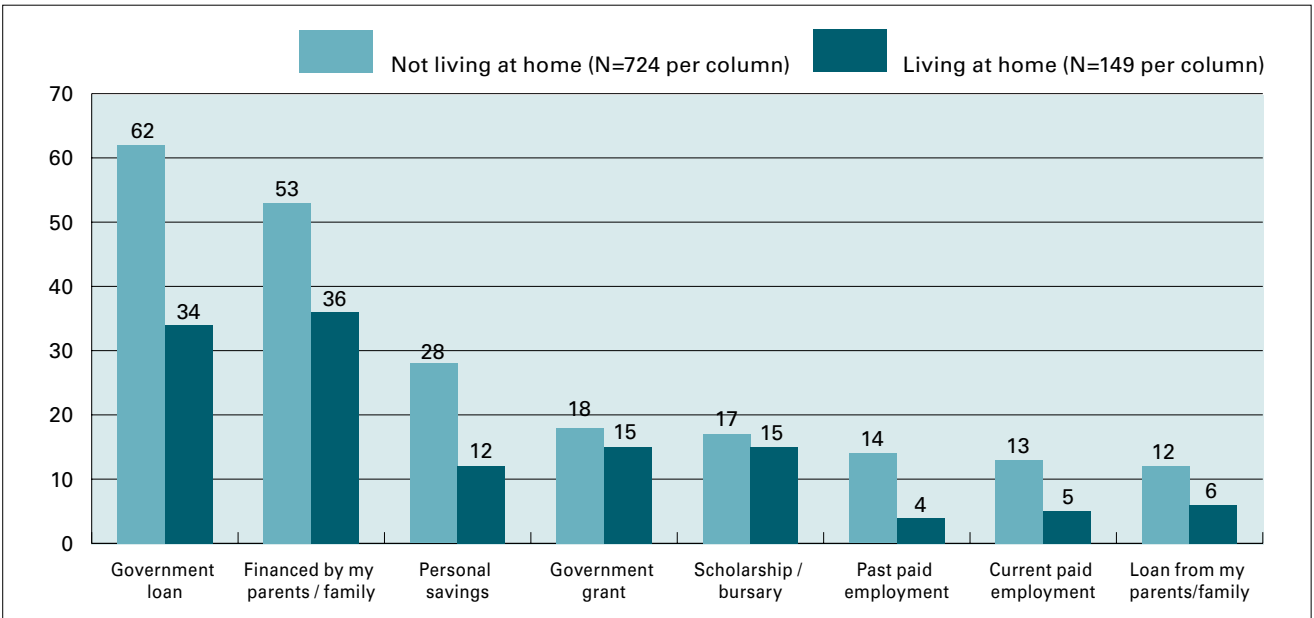


Figure 29: Ways in which NJSS respondents are funding their studies; those living at home compared with those living away from home (%)



source. The fewer financial sources used the less worried students are, and the fewer strings attached to the source, again, the less concerned they are. Thus, students depending solely on their parents for financial support are far less likely to have ‘money worries’

than those dependent on multiple sources, especially when those sources are in the form of loans or personal savings. Therefore, the data in Figure 28 suggest Jewish students are likely to have fewer financial stresses than students in general.



### 3 Jewish student life

“[...] it’s not intentional that a lot of what I do has a Jewish content to it, but it’s who I seem to gravitate to. Automatically you have something in common with that [...] You are Jewish whether you’re secular or religious, there’s something there which is a mutual, common bond.” (Mark)

#### Jewish identity and Jewish practice

Jewish students who choose to live away from home, which is the majority (82%), must decide on the extent to which they will continue to strengthen, maintain or reject the Jewish customs and practices with which they were brought up. For most, this is the first time, but by no means the last, that they will be faced with making such decisions.

In terms of Jewish ritual practice, the overall trend is clear; without exception respondents observe fewer rituals when they are at university than at home (Figure 30). For example, 72% regularly attend a Friday night meal at home but during term-time this falls to 60%. Similarly, 47% observe *kasbrut* at home but only 41% during term-time. This picture of reduced levels of observance on campus may be as much a result of practicality as of principle. It is very difficult to eat kosher meat or go to synagogue in an area where Jewish facilities and services are unavailable or expensive.

To gain a deeper understanding of how the students view religious/ritualistic aspects of their identity, respondents were presented with a number of statements and asked the extent to which these corresponded with their personal feelings about being Jewish. Almost four out of five (79%) agree or strongly agree that being Jewish is about ‘Having a religious identity’. However, as Figure 31 indicates, acceptance of the abstract proposition that being Jewish is about *religion*, does not directly translate into a blanket acceptance of ritual practice. As the graph shows, far fewer respondents feel that being Jewish is about ‘Observing the Sabbath’ (65%), ‘Believing in God’ (56%), or ‘Prayer’ (54%) than it is about having a ‘religious identity’. This rather contradictory outcome gives the impression of dissonance between, on the one hand, theoretical, abstract notions of Jewishness and on the other, more practical, behavioural aspects of Jewishness for this sample.

Another fundamental aspect of being Jewish is a sense of ethnic and cultural identity. On this dimension, the sample presents a stronger, more

Figure 30: Jewish ritual practice; term-time compared with vacation time. (For all respondents *not* living at home during term-time) (%) (N=724 for each bar)

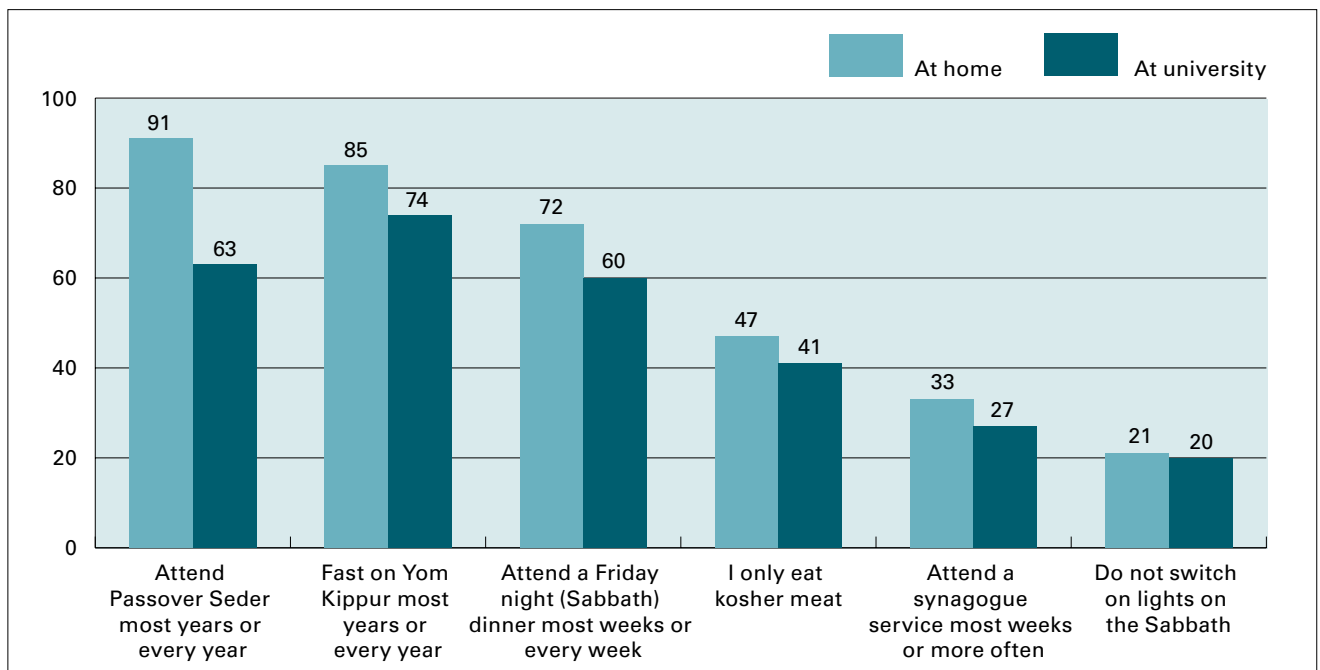
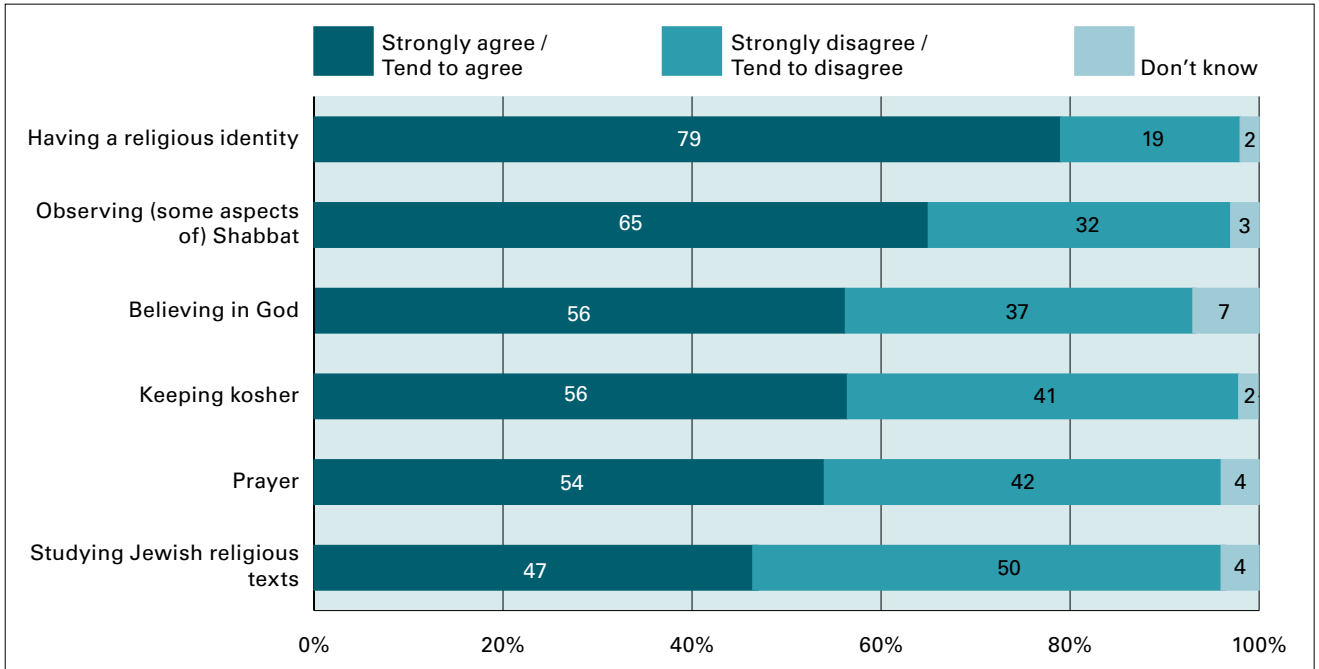
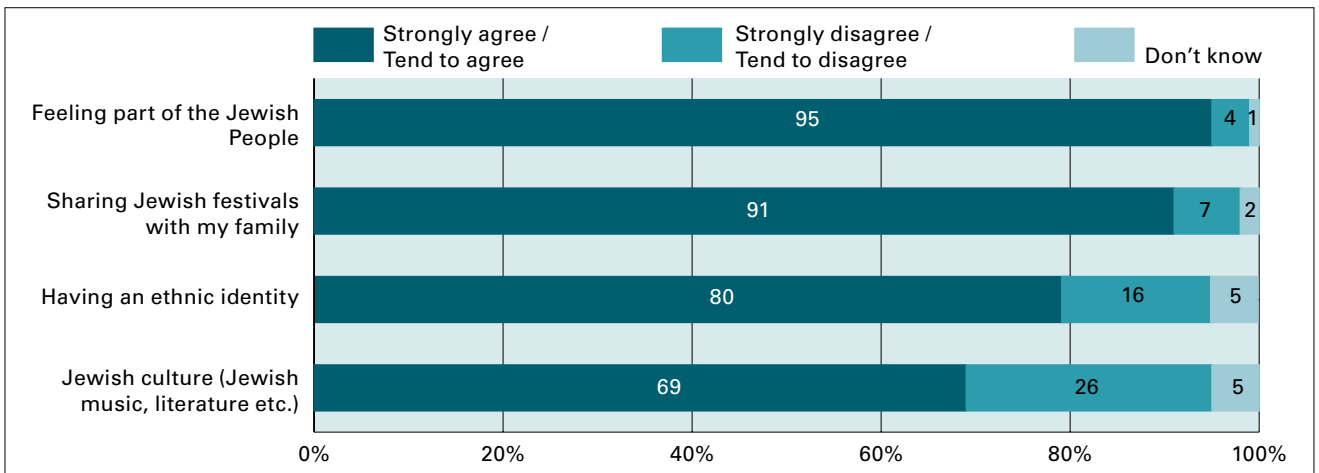


Figure 31: 'Do you personally feel that being Jewish is about...?' (Religious practice)<sup>§</sup>



<sup>§</sup> Rows may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 32: 'Do you personally feel that being Jewish is about...?' (Ethnic and cultural identity)<sup>§</sup>



<sup>§</sup> Rows may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

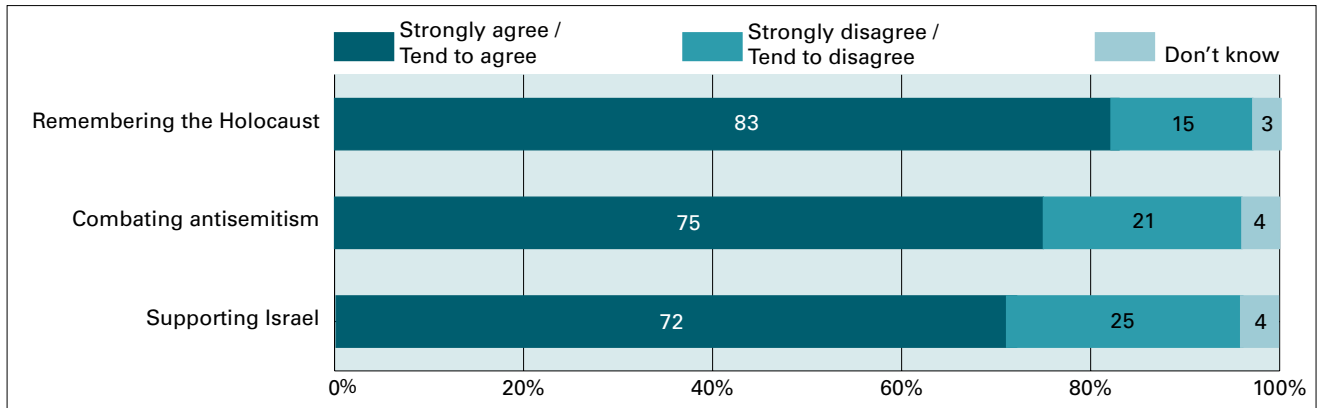
coherent and united sense of its Jewish identity. Virtually all respondents (94%) agree or strongly agree that being Jewish is about 'Feeling part of the Jewish People' (Figure 32). Similarly, 91% agree that it is also about 'Sharing Jewish festivals with my family'. Sociologists describe the notion of ethnic unity as 'peoplehood', and it is clear that this is a powerfully uniting concept among the sample. It is also noticeable how the various notions of Jewish cultural affinity garner far broader agreement than the more religious notions described in Figure 31. This is despite the finding that the same proportion

of respondents agree that being Jewish is about 'Having an ethnic identity' (79%) as they do about 'Having a religious identity' (80%).

### Activism and social justice

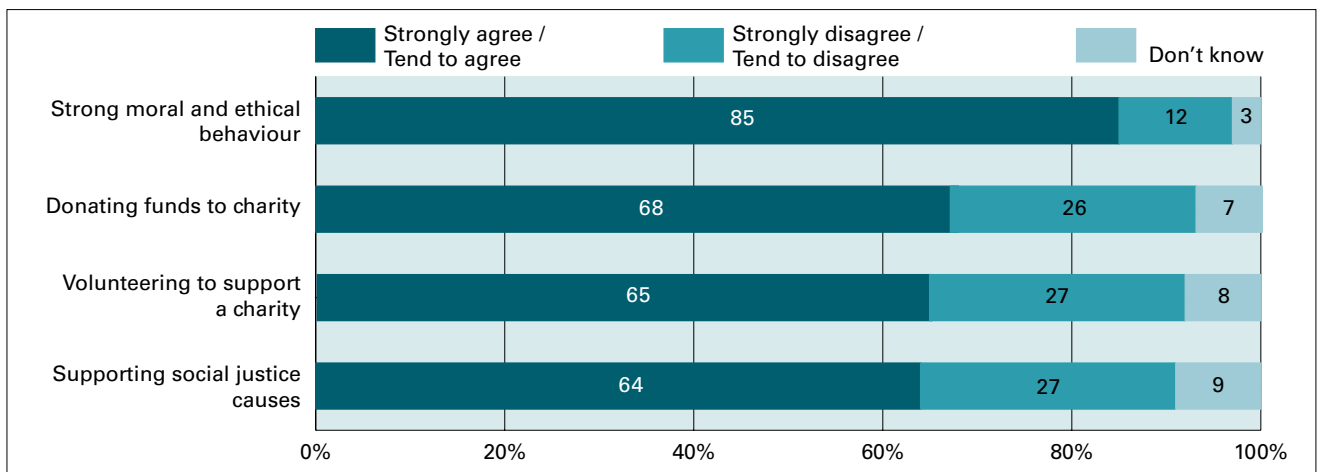
Respondents were asked the extent to which certain causes and issues form part of their Jewish identity. Most (83%) agree or strongly agree that being Jewish is about 'Remembering the Holocaust' (Figure 33), which is a higher proportion than those who feel that being Jewish is about 'Combating antisemitism' (75%)

Figure 33: ‘Do you personally feel that being Jewish is about...?’ (High profile Jewish issues)<sup>§</sup>



<sup>§</sup> Rows may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 34: ‘Do you personally feel that being Jewish is about...?’ (Ethical behaviour)<sup>§</sup>



<sup>§</sup> Rows may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

or ‘Supporting Israel’ (72%), though clearly most respondents do consider these items to be important aspects of their Jewish identity.

Fully 85% of the sample also agrees that being Jewish is about ‘Strong moral and ethical behaviour’. However, despite the unambiguous endorsement of this statement, only relatively small proportions of respondents actually agree with statements which put ‘moral and ethical’ behaviour into practice. For example, only 65% of respondents agree or strongly agree that being Jewish is about ‘Volunteering to support a charity’ and just 64% agree that ‘Supporting social justice causes’ is what being Jewish is about—indeed, one in ten does not know whether they agree or not with the proposition. Once again, there is evidence of dissonance between what respondents believe being Jewish ought to be about (the theory) and what they say it actually is about (the practice).

It should be noted that with respect to agreement with ‘Supporting social justice causes’, relatively little difference is evident between respondents based on their current Jewish practice. However, ‘Reform/Progressive’ respondents are most likely to agree with the statement (71%).

**Volunteering and charitable giving**

The survey also explored the extent to which students give up their time for others. Of those respondents who took a gap year after finishing school (55% of the sample), few took the opportunity to do any voluntary work during that year, either in Britain (5%) or abroad (mostly Israel) (17%).

Respondents were also asked to what extent they currently give time to Jewish and non-Jewish voluntary causes. Figure 35 shows that 62% do at least some voluntary work (similar to the 65%

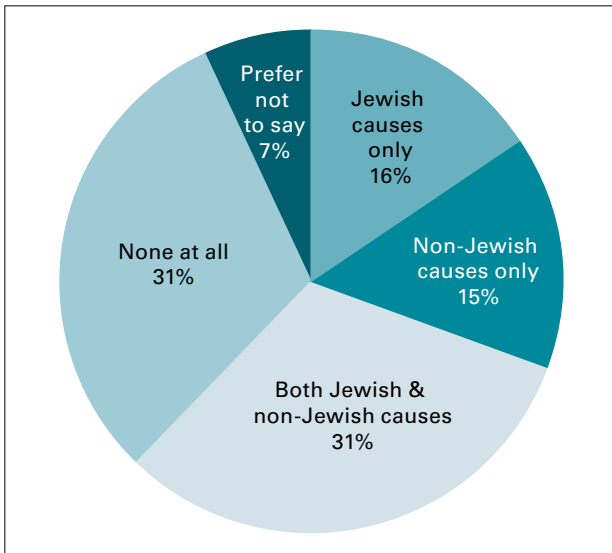
noted in Figure 34), although only 16% do so more frequently than once a month (Figure 36). Of those who do volunteer, about half volunteer for both Jewish and non-Jewish causes, with the remainder divided evenly between either only Jewish causes or only non-Jewish causes (Figure 35).

Figure 37 indicates that the propensity to volunteer is related to secular-religious outlook. Overall, religious respondents do more volunteering than secular respondents—79% of

‘Religious’ respondents volunteer, compared with 52% of ‘Secular’ respondents. Although religious respondents are more likely to volunteer for Jewish causes than secular respondents, they are also more likely than secular respondents to do more volunteering overall, regardless of the cause.

Similarly, religious respondents are far more likely to agree that being Jewish is about ‘donating funds to charity’ than secular respondents (Figure 38).

Figure 35: ‘Since the beginning of this academic year please say how often, if at all, you have done any voluntary work’

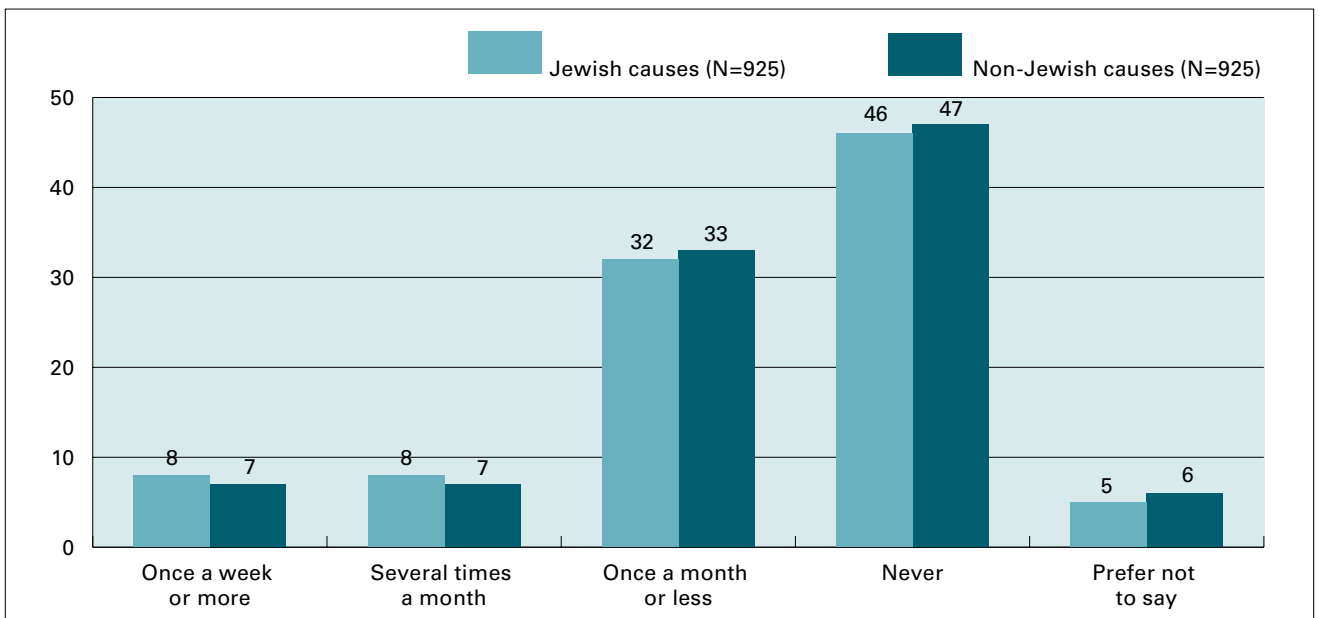


“Yes, everyone should volunteer. Do I have the time to volunteer? No, not always and that’s a shame but people... but I still think that that’s something that’s a virtue that people should try and do and I think that’s all it is especially when you’re at university and it’s a very modern lifestyle and whatever and it can be quite difficult when you get drowned with the work and then you’re getting to the social scene and it’s like, Mondays we’ll go here, Wednesday night we go here and Friday this, and then it’s like, where do I find the time?”  
*(Nathan)*

**Social life**

Although the primary reason people go to university is for education (as demonstrated by Figure 22, page 25), it is also true that university is an extremely important social experience. Campus life, in particular, presents opportunities

Figure 36: ‘Since the beginning of this academic year please say how often, if at all, you have done voluntary work’ (%)<sup>§</sup>



<sup>§</sup> Rows may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 37: Extent of volunteering by secular-religious outlook

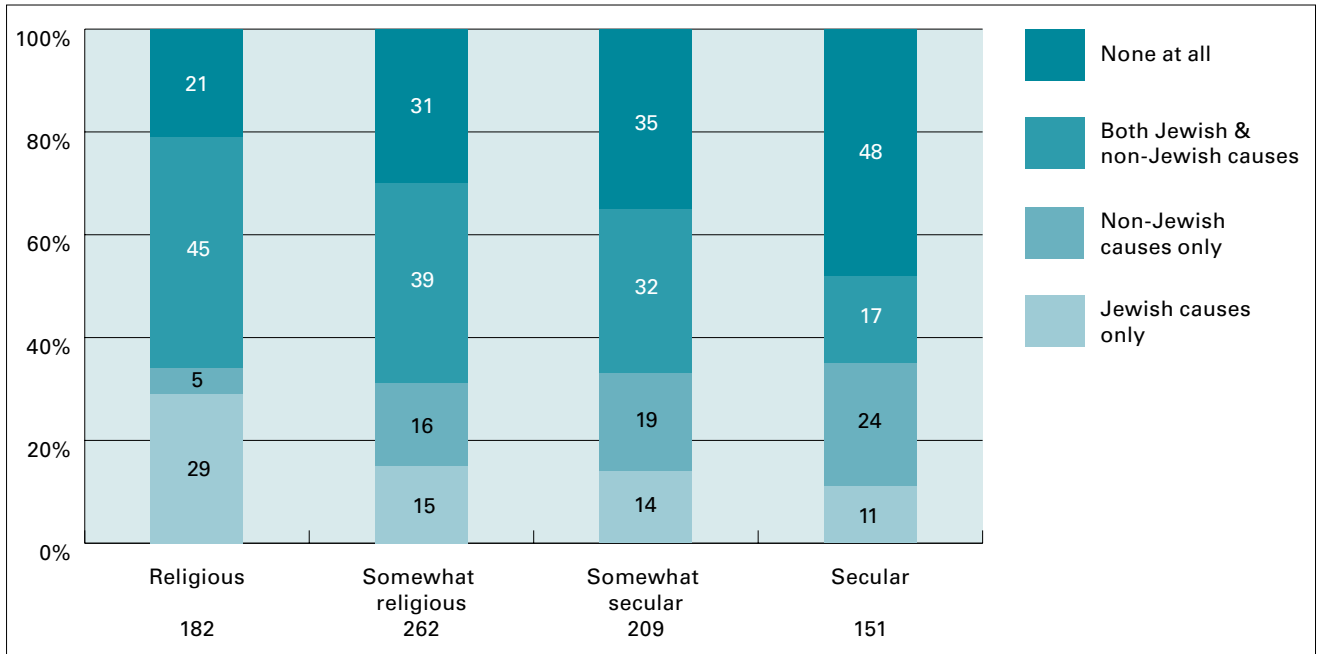
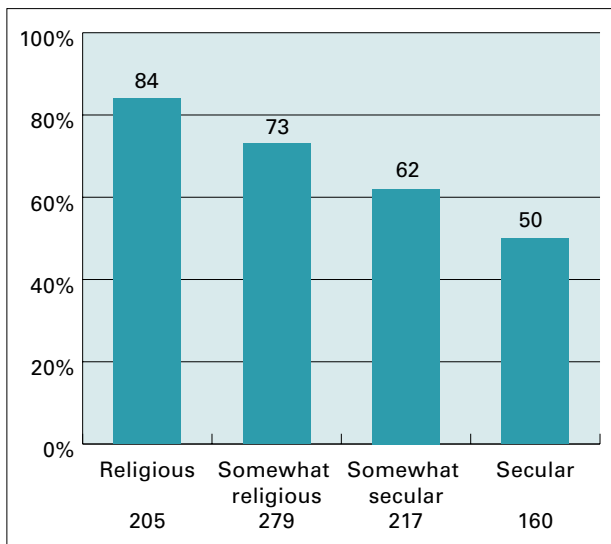


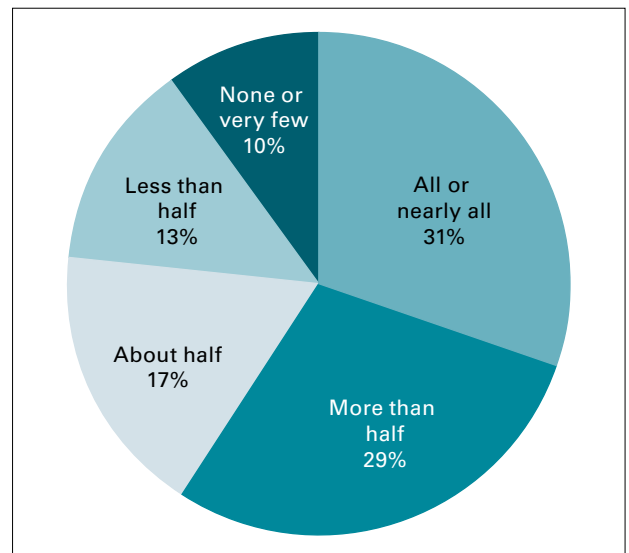
Figure 38: 'Do you personally feel that being Jewish is about donating funds to charity?' (percentage who 'Strongly agree' or 'Tend to agree')



to meet a wide range of people from a variety of backgrounds to an extent that most will not have experienced before and many may not experience again.

When asked if being Jewish is about 'Socialising in predominantly Jewish circles' just 34% of the sample agree or strongly agree. Yet here lies another contradiction. Whilst respondents reject this theoretical notion of segregative socialization, in practice, this is precisely what actually happens

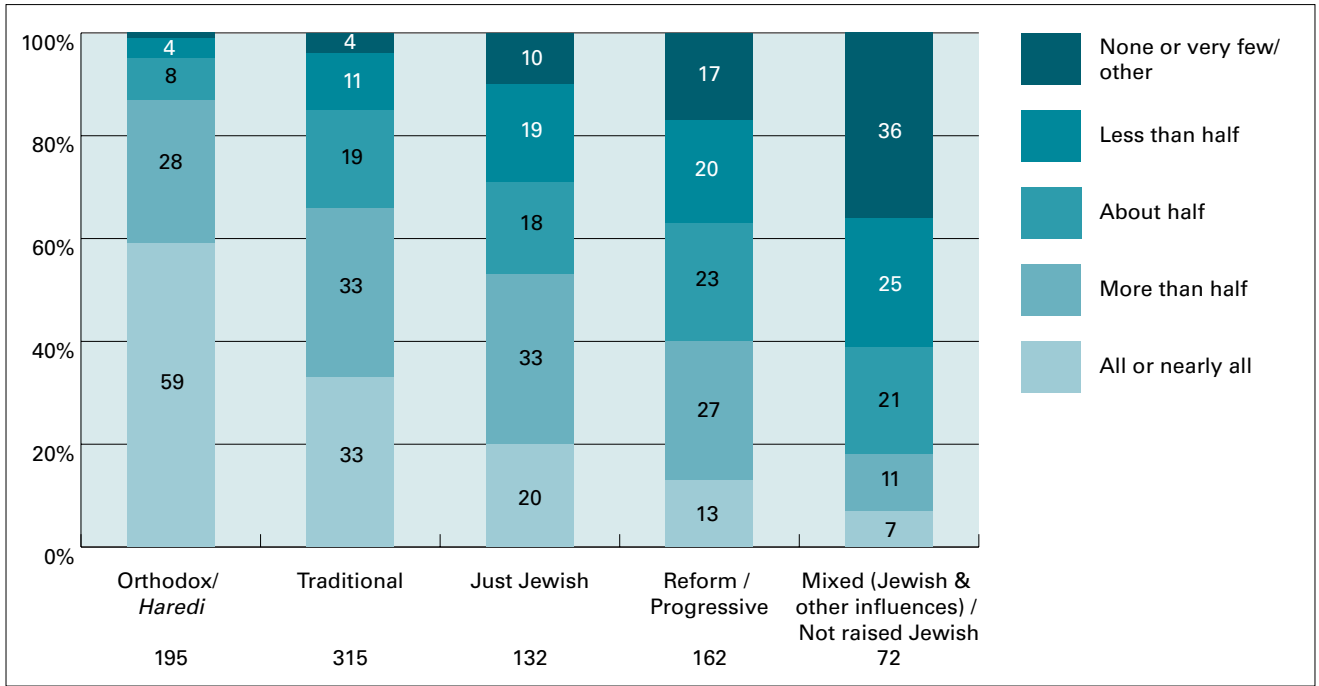
Figure 39: 'Thinking about your closest friends, what proportion, if any, would you say is Jewish?' (N=920)



among the majority of the sample. As noted in Table 1 (page 26), respondents exhibit a strong tendency to cluster in a relatively small number of institutions and follow a relatively limited variety of disciplines and courses. Further, most respondents (59%) report that more than half of their closest friends are Jewish (Figure 39).

The extent to which respondents socialize in Jewish circles is very closely related to the type of Jewish upbringing they experienced (Figure 40).

Figure 40: Type of Jewish upbringing by proportion of closest friends who are Jewish<sup>5</sup>



<sup>5</sup> Columns may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

For example, 88% of those with Orthodox backgrounds report that more than half of their closest friends are Jewish, compared with 66% of those with ‘Traditional’ upbringings and 40% of those with ‘Reform/Progressive’ backgrounds.

However, campus life is also an important factor in developing a Jewish social circle and one of the key pieces of data highlighting this is the fact that during term-time, 59% of respondents attend ‘Jewish social events most weeks’, whereas during vacation time the equivalent proportion is just 31%.<sup>26</sup> This finding is especially important if we consider the results shown in Figure 30 (page 31) indicating a general fall in Jewish ritual practice on campus. Thus, there is to a certain extent a *substitution* taking place of Jewish socialization for

“I guess I just drew a list of good unis, but really trying to make sure there was a JSoc basically. [...] I wanted to be around... I guess, mainly to make friends because there weren’t any where I grew up, so it was to meet other Jews, basically. I saw uni as an opportunity to get more involved with the Jewish community.” (Simon)

<sup>26</sup> Data refer only to those who live away from home during term-time (N=724)

Jewish practice when students are away from the confines of home life.

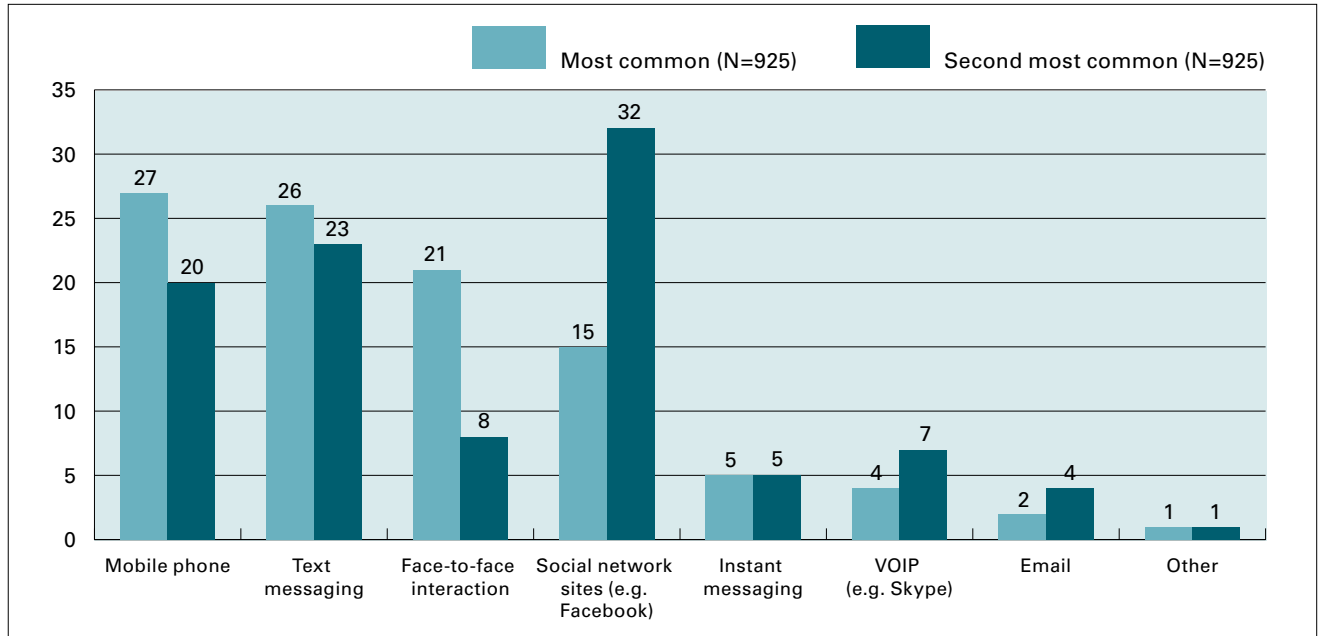
**Modes of communication**

Respondents were also asked how they prefer to communicate with their closest friends and it is in this context that the label ‘iGeneration’ is most apt. The primary modes of communication are by mobile phone (voice calls) (27%) and text messaging (26%). However, the preferred secondary mode of communication is via social networking sites (i.e. Facebook). Interestingly, email barely registers as a preferred mode of communicating with close friends. Indeed, three modes dominate: mobile voice calls, text messaging and Facebook. There are also slight differences by gender. The most common way female respondents choose to communicate with their closest friends is by text messaging (29%); for male respondents the most common method is mobile voice calls (27%). Males are also far more likely to use Facebook as their most common method than females (20% compared with 12% respectively).

**Relationships**

Focus groups participants were asked for their thoughts about dating non-Jews. A variety of comments were elicited, such as:

Figure 41: 'In general, how do you tend to communicate with your closest friends?\*' (%)



\* The question was accompanied by the following note: 'If you live with them, think about how you communicate when you or they are not at home.'

*"[...] I decided that I like my Jewish identity and I like Israel and all that, but I don't think it's the most important thing in my life [...] really, if I find someone that I want to spend the rest of my life with, it's not going to matter hugely to me if they're Jewish or not. But it will matter to my dad [...]" (Anna)*

*"[...] my university is basically non-Jewish, so I can't... it's either I don't date or I date a non-Jew, and right now, I'm dating someone who is [not Jewish], and he doesn't particularly have a view on Judaism. We have only been dating for a few months, but if I were to marry him, I would bring up... I do want to give my children the right... I want to bring them up as Jewish until they're 13, and then let them decide, because I enjoyed my upbringing so much as a Jew, that I want to give that to them as well." (Rachel)*

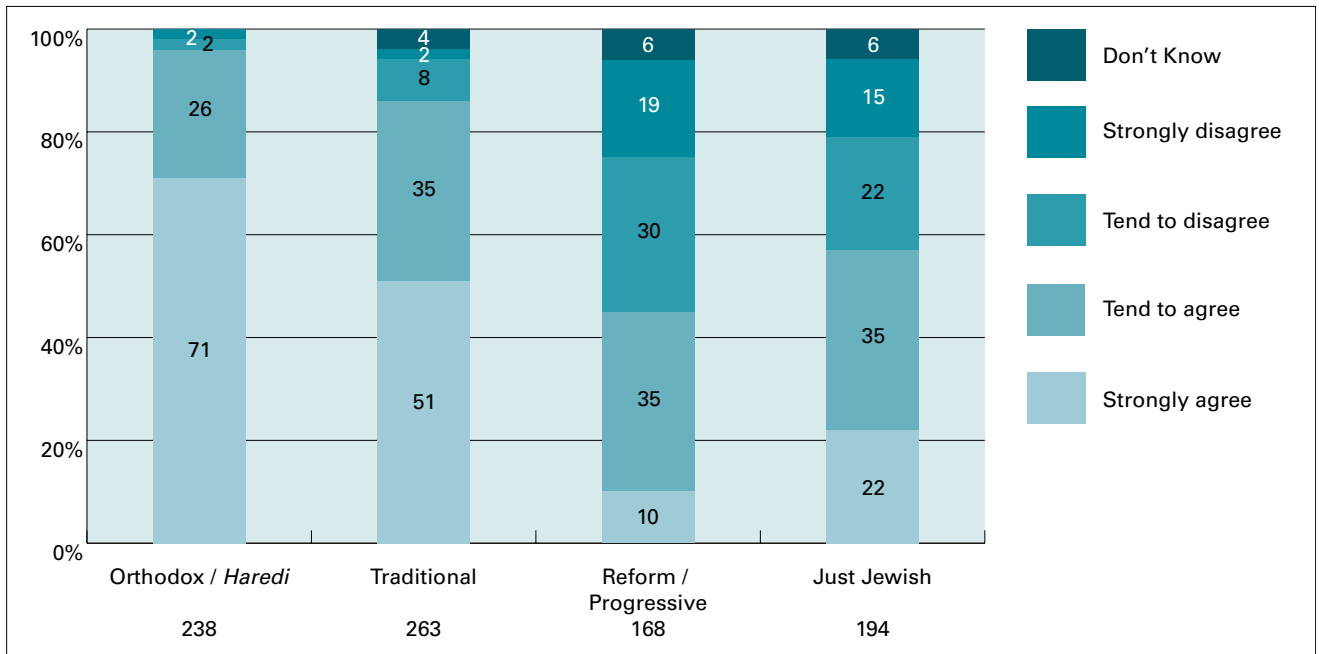
*"It would never even enter my mind [to date a non-Jewish girl]. I think especially for men, it's very important even more so, to have only Jewish relationships, because obviously you want your kids to be Jewish [...] Yes, it's... like, it would never enter my head to ever... I've got plenty of non-Jewish friends, but it would just not even enter my head to have anything more than just friendship with them, because that's just not the way it works." (Jeremy)*

Respondents were also asked to what extent they feel that being Jewish is about 'Marrying another Jew'. Almost three in four (72%) agree or strongly agree; however, as Figure 42 shows, responses were closely related to current Jewish identity. Whilst 86% of 'Traditional' respondents agree with the notion, this is the case for just 45% of 'Reform/Progressive' respondents.

Of course, for most students cohabitation and marriage (whether to a Jew or otherwise) lies several years off in the future. Nevertheless, the survey did ask respondents about their current relationship status. Although the majority (65%) said they are 'currently single', most respondents (85%) are either currently in or have experienced at least one relationship in the past. As is the norm, being in a relationship is closely related to age; for example, 81% of 18 year-old respondents said they are 'currently single', compared with 59% of 22 year-olds.

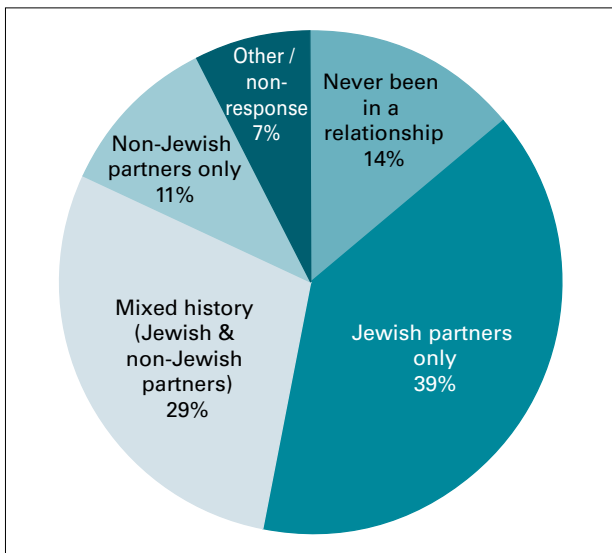
Respondents' relationship history is summarized in Figure 43 and shows that in addition to those who have never been in a relationship (14%), two out of five (40%) have only ever had Jewish partners, 29% have had Jewish and non-Jewish partners, and one in ten (10%) has only ever had non-Jewish partners. Exactly 50% of those who are either currently, or have ever been, in a

Figure 42: 'Do you personally feel that being Jewish is about ... Marrying another Jew?' by current Jewish position<sup>5</sup>



<sup>5</sup> Columns may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 43: Partnership history by identity of partners (N=925)



relationship have only ever had Jewish partners; conversely half (50%) either currently has, or has had, a non-Jewish partner (N=726). Once again, it is worth pointing out the dissonance between the theoretical and the practical: 72% agree it is important to marry another Jew but only 50% of those who have ever been in a relationship have exclusively dated Jews. Needless to say, a relationship with a non-Jewish partner in your late teens and early twenties is not the same

as marriage but, arguably, this is indicative of possible future trends.

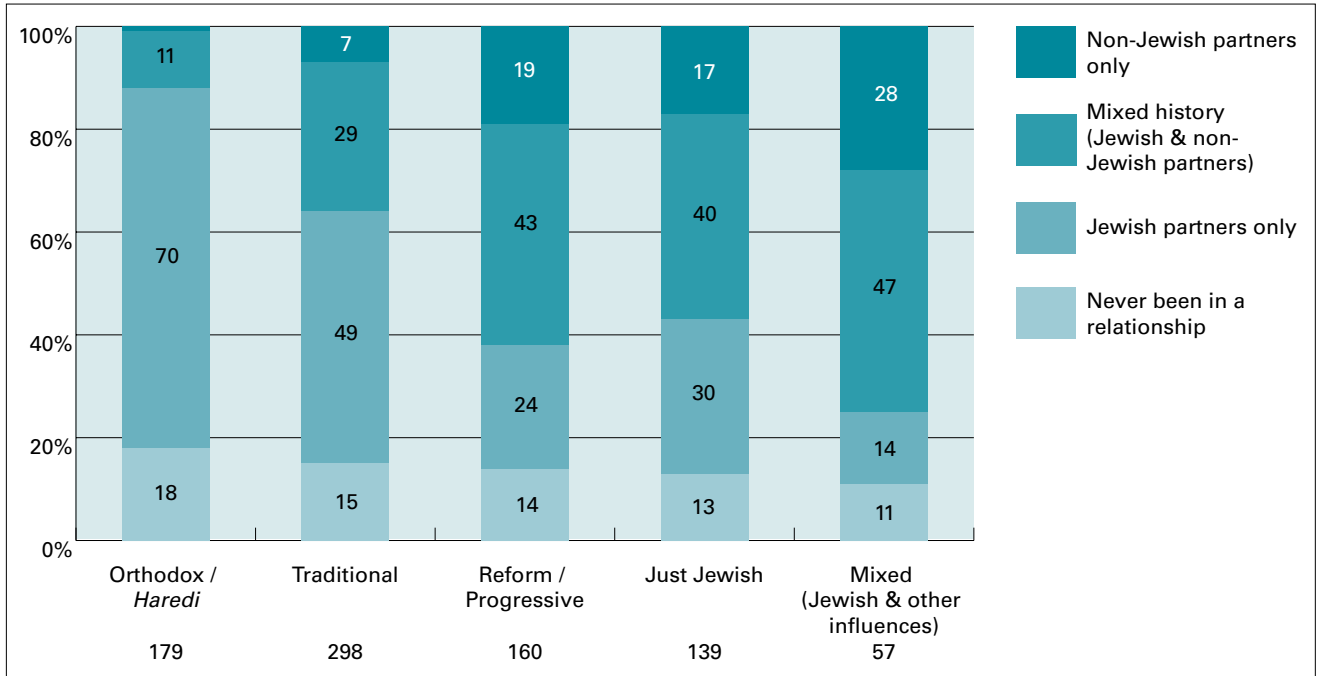
The likelihood of relationships with non-Jews is closely related to Jewish upbringing (Figure 44). The majority (70%) of those with Orthodox upbringings has only ever had Jewish partners, whereas this was the case for just under a quarter (24%) of those with Reform/Progressive upbringings. Of those with Traditional upbringings over a third (36%) either currently has or has had a non-Jewish partner.

Just as striking is the relationship between partnership history and friendship circles. Respondents with the greatest proportion of Jewish friends are the least likely to have had non-Jewish partners. As Figure 45 shows, 63% of respondents whose closest friends are 'All or nearly all' Jewish have only ever had Jewish partners, compared with just 29% of those who report that about 'half' of their closest friends are Jewish.

Since relationships can be a source of stress, respondents were also asked to what extent they are concerned about 'Relationship issues (finding a partner, maintaining or ending a relationship etc.)'. Those who currently have, or have only ever had, Jewish partners are the least worried (26%

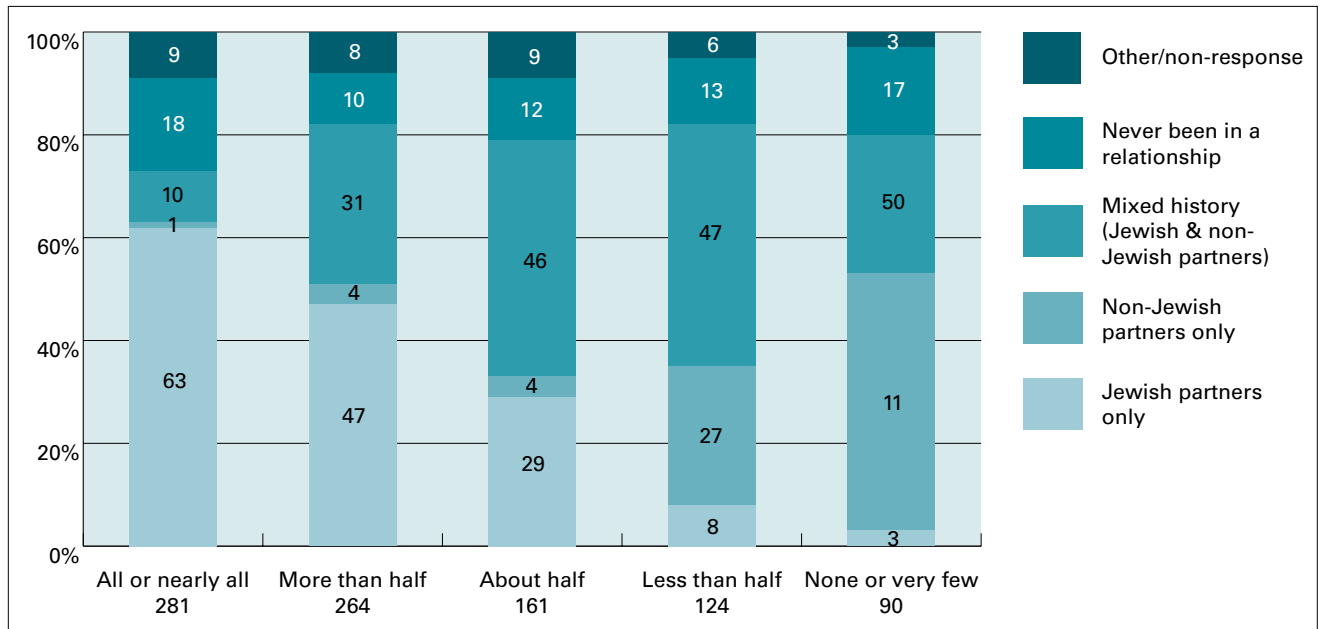


Figure 44: Type of Jewish upbringing by partnership history<sup>§</sup>



<sup>§</sup> Columns may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 45: Proportion of closest friends that is Jewish by partnership history<sup>§</sup>



<sup>§</sup> Columns may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

are ‘very’ or ‘fairly worried’ N=355) whereas those who currently have, or have only ever had, non-Jewish partners are more worried (39% are ‘very’ or ‘fairly worried’ N=97). However, respondents who are the most concerned about relationships are those who have never been in a relationship (49% are ‘very’ or ‘fairly worried’ N=122).

Finally, it is clear that Jewish students are more concerned about relationship issues than students in general. Whereas 47% of Jewish respondents said that they are ‘Very worried’ or ‘Fairly worried’ about ‘Relationship issues’, this is the case for just 23% of students in the general population (see Figure 68, page 56).

## JSoc involvement and other student providers

*“I wanted to get involved with JSoc, but my aim was to go to JSoc and have Jewish friends as well, and I just found that by being on the [JSoc] committee, for example, it was a way in, so already when you’re on a committee, you go on a training weekend, so you make friends that way [...]”* (Andy)

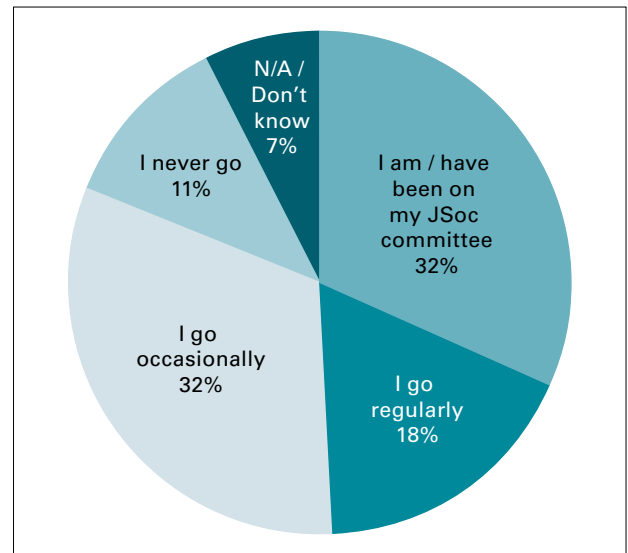
The Union of Jewish Students (UJS) is by far the single largest Jewish organization working with Jewish university students. Most students interact with UJS through their Jewish Society (or ‘JSoc’), assuming their institution has one. Three quarters of NJSS respondents (75%) said that they were currently (February/March 2011) members of UJS and a further 9% were lapsed members. Only 10% said they were not, nor had ever been previously, members, and 6% were not sure whether they were currently members (but had not been members in the past) (N=925 for all percentages).<sup>27</sup>

To better understand the extent to which students actually engage with their local JSoc, whether members or otherwise, respondents were asked if they ever attended JSoc meetings and events. Figure 46 shows that half the sample (49%) regularly attends and a further third (32%) attend

*“[...] But stuff like the ‘Booze for Jews’ I think they’re always going to be successful. People like getting drunk. People like doing it for relatively cheap and people like seeing their friends at other universities where often you don’t have an opportunity to do that during the year. [...] So it’s a one stop shop. I get to see everyone and likewise when they come to [my university] and I think that’s why something like ‘Booze for Jews’ will always be successful and why it disproportionately is more successful than every other [JSoc] event because every other event is like it’s nothing special. [...]”* (Nathan)

27 Note: Since UJS membership lists were a major source of contact information for building the sample, it must be assumed that data in the following section relating to overall sample proportions overstate the opinions of UJS members (current or former) compared with non-members (see Appendix).

Figure 46: Frequency of attendance at ‘JSoc meetings or events’ (N=925)



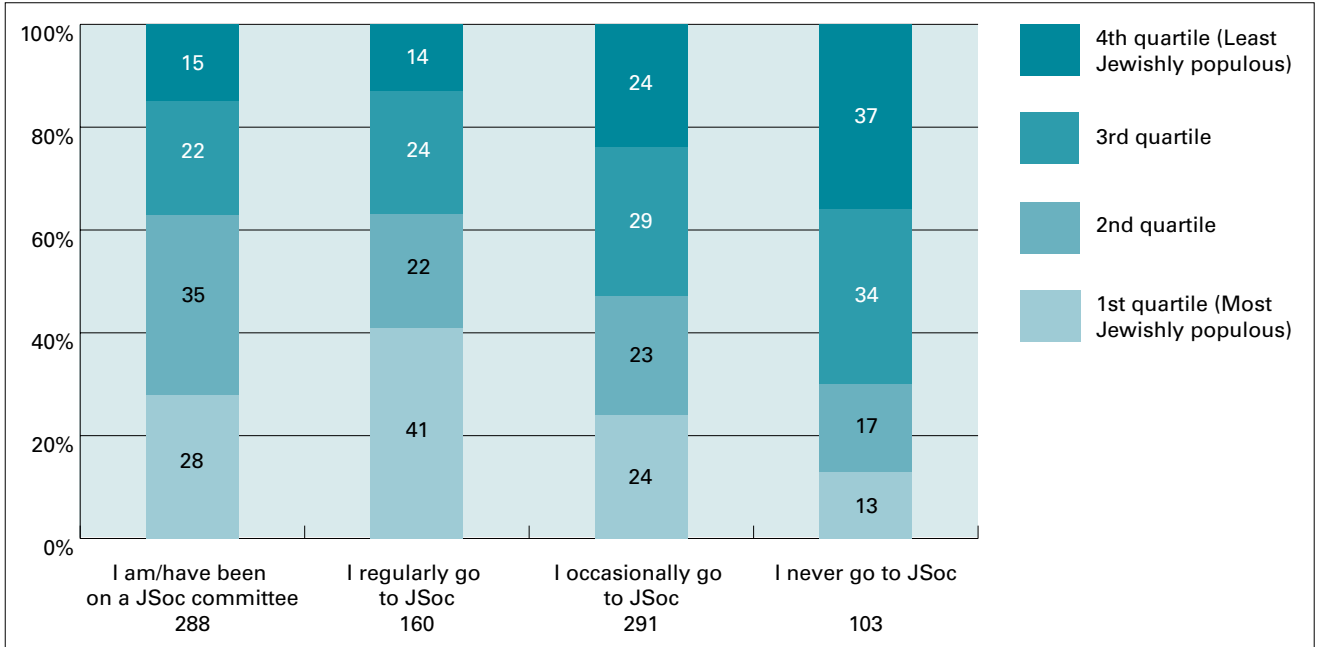
‘Occasionally’. A high proportion (32%) said they are, or have been, on a JSoc committee.<sup>28</sup>

One of the benefits of the NJSS dataset is that it allows us to examine what differentiates those who are highly engaged with their JSoc (assuming their university has one) and those who are less engaged or not at all engaged. Figure 47 shows that the most engaged generally attend institutions with larger Jewish populations (first and second quartiles). (The anomaly in the first bar, which shows a relatively small proportion (28%) of first quartile JSoc committee members, is most likely due to there being just three institutions in the first quartile (Table 1 page 26) and therefore relatively limited opportunities to serve on committees.)

*“... so I think I went to uni mainly for the course and if there was Jewish stuff that fitted, then that was great, and over the three years, I’ve found there hasn’t been that much that the JSoc does that particularly fits with what I particularly look for in a JSoc, so I’ve dipped in and out, [...] the JSoc, as far as I’ve found has been generally slightly more synagogue. I don’t know if that’s a massive stereotype, and I hesitate to put that label on it, but it’s felt...it’s just not the direction of Judaism I’ve grown up with [...]”* (Nick)

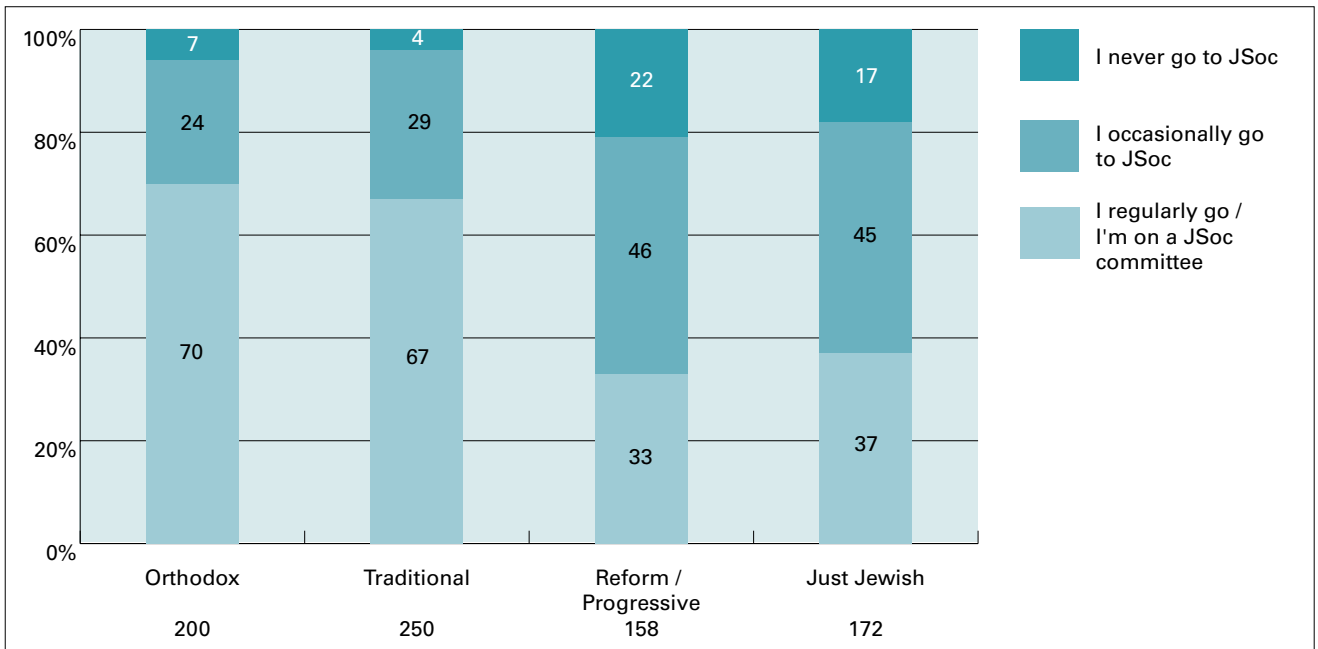
28 Focus group participants noted that some of the larger JSocs rotate office holders on a termly basis.

Figure 47: Frequency of attendance at 'JSoc meetings or events' by size of institution's Jewish population (arranged in quartiles)<sup>§</sup>



<sup>§</sup> Columns may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 48: Current Jewish position by frequency of attendance at 'JSoc meetings or events'<sup>§</sup>

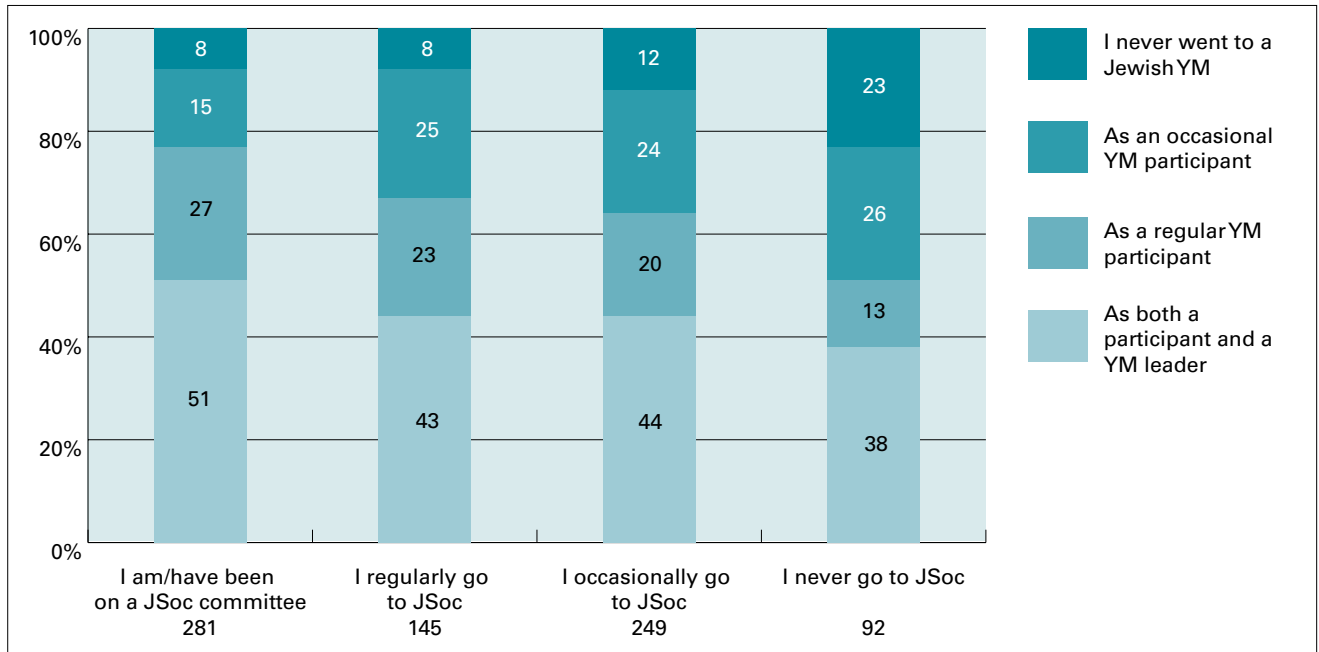


<sup>§</sup> Columns may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 48 indicates that current Jewish identity is strongly related to the likelihood of JSoc involvement. 'Orthodox' and 'Traditional' respondents are twice as likely to regularly attend JSoc meetings and events or be on JSoc committees as 'Reform/Progressive' respondents and those who are 'Just Jewish'. More than two in

"[...] JSoc is to some extent what you make of it. I found JSoc this year not very supportive for me just because all the events were 'Booze for Jews' type events, clubbing, getting drunk which I don't go clubbing so it was very hard to participate in JSoc, that doesn't fit with my understanding of being Jewish." (Shelly)

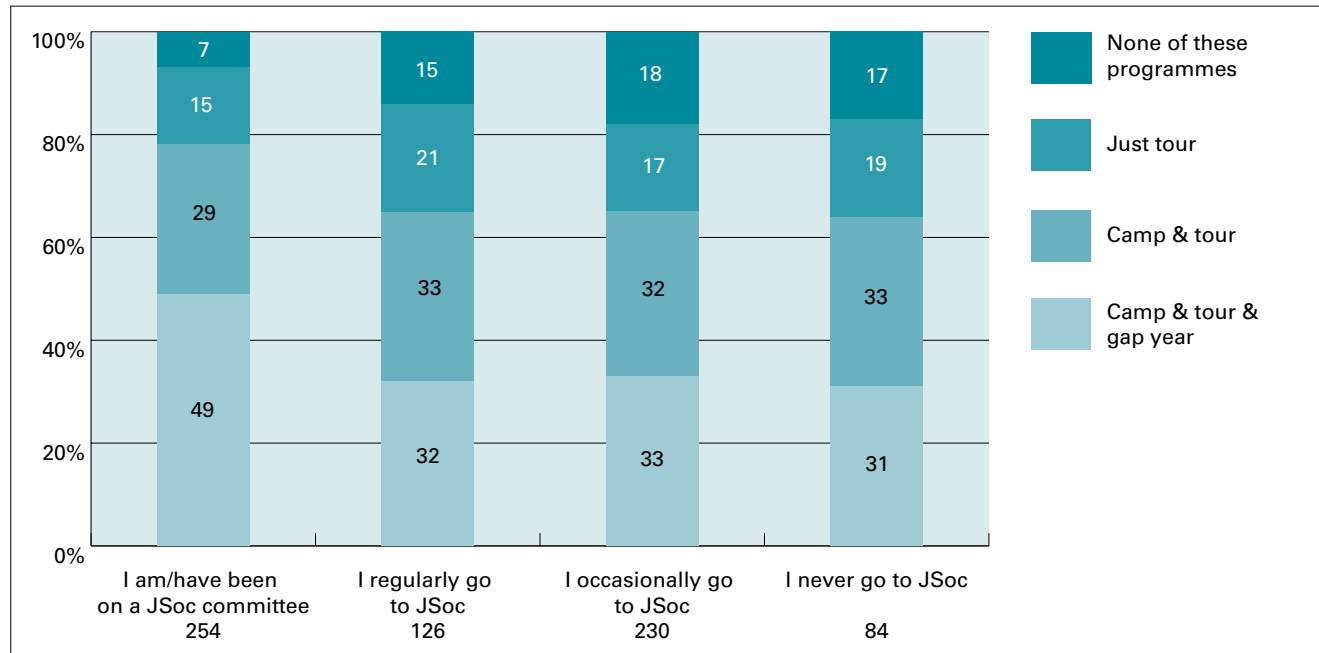
Figure 49: Attendance at JSoc meetings and events by participation in Jewish youth movements (YM)\*§



\* UK born only

§ Columns may not add up to 100 due to rounding

Figure 50: Attendance at JSoc meetings and events by participation in Jewish youth programmes\*§



\* UK born only

§ Columns may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

five 'Reform/ Progressive' students 'Never' go to JSocs. Linked to this is the finding that those who are more heavily involved in a JSoc are also more likely to have a higher proportion of close Jewish friends (not shown in the graph).

Figure 49 shows a close relationship between current involvement in JSocs and previous involvement in Jewish youth movements. Over half (51%) of those who were on JSoc committees have previously been leaders in Jewish youth

movements. Conversely, half (49%) of those who ‘Never’ go to JSoc were either ‘Never’ involved or only ‘Occasionally’ involved in a Jewish youth movement. Similarly, involvement with Jewish youth programmes is also associated with higher levels of JSoc involvement (Figure 50), as are frequency of visits to Israel.

“Our JSoc is really, it’s one of the most Orthodox. The committee is really Orthodox and everyone is quite Orthodox there. I never go to Friday night anyway, because girls aren’t allowed to sing in the service, and stuff like that, so it’s just not what I want to do, so we Reform people decided to start our own egalitarian service, [...] and we are made to feel like intruders, and so no one, no one stays for Friday night dinner, because everyone feels unwelcome [...]” (Nicole)

**Other Jewish student organizations**

UJS is not, of course, the only Jewish organization with which Jewish students are involved. Figure 51 shows that of all the Jewish organizations students are associated with, ‘home synagogue’ is the most prominent—over half the sample (53%) reports being connected with one ‘in any way’. Although this does not necessarily mean that students are members of synagogues (in their own right), it does highlight the importance of the home synagogue to many Jewish students.

Over a third of respondents (34%) said they are connected to University Jewish Chaplaincy. However, it is clear that Jewish identity is an important factor in determining the likelihood of connection with the organization’s chaplains. For example, almost all (94%) of ‘Orthodox’ respondents have a connection, and this was the case for 78% of ‘Traditional’ respondents. In contrast, just 29% of ‘Reform/Progressive’ respondents are connected and 24% of ‘Just Jewish.’

Figure 51 also shows that almost one in five respondents (19%) is not connected to any of these Jewish organizations at all. However, of these 174 people, 58% are currently members of UJS and 21% have served on a JSoc committee.

The more religious respondents are, the more organizations they are likely to be associated with. Thus, 52% of ‘Religious’ respondents are connected to three or more organizations, compared with 19% of ‘Secular’ respondents. However, perhaps the most important finding is shown in Figure 52, which indicates that involvement with a JSoc and involvement with other Jewish organizations is not a zero-sum game. In other words, it does not seem to be the case that involvement with other Jewish organizations diminishes the likelihood of students’ involvement with UJS. On the contrary, the opposite is the case.

Figure 51: ‘Are you currently connected, in any way, with any of the following Jewish organizations?’ (%) (N=925 for each column)

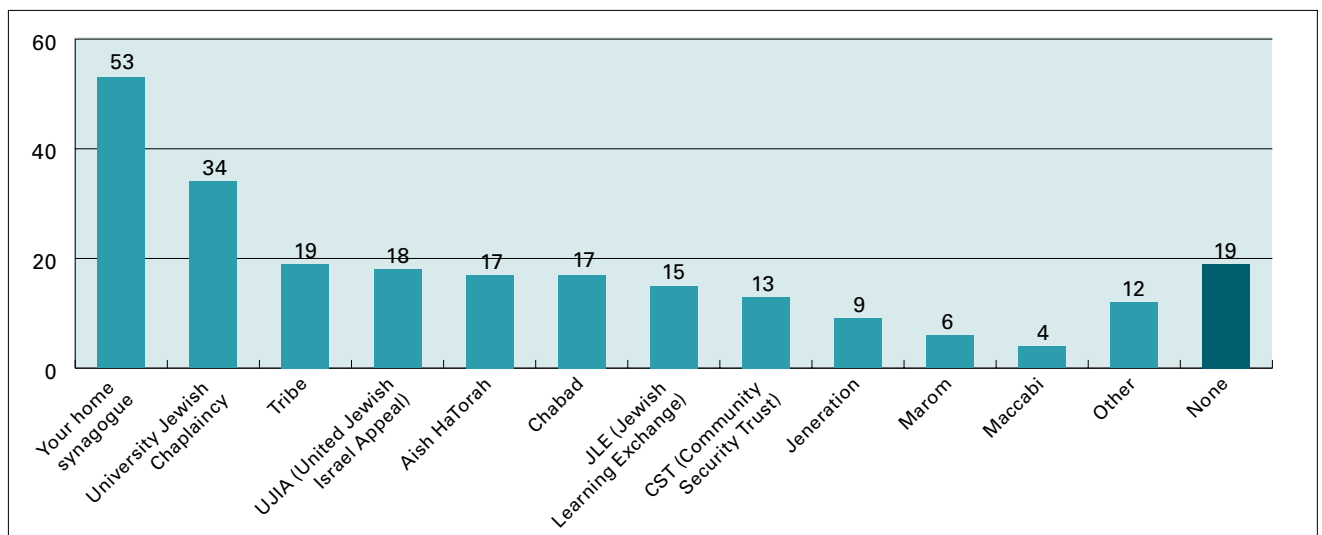
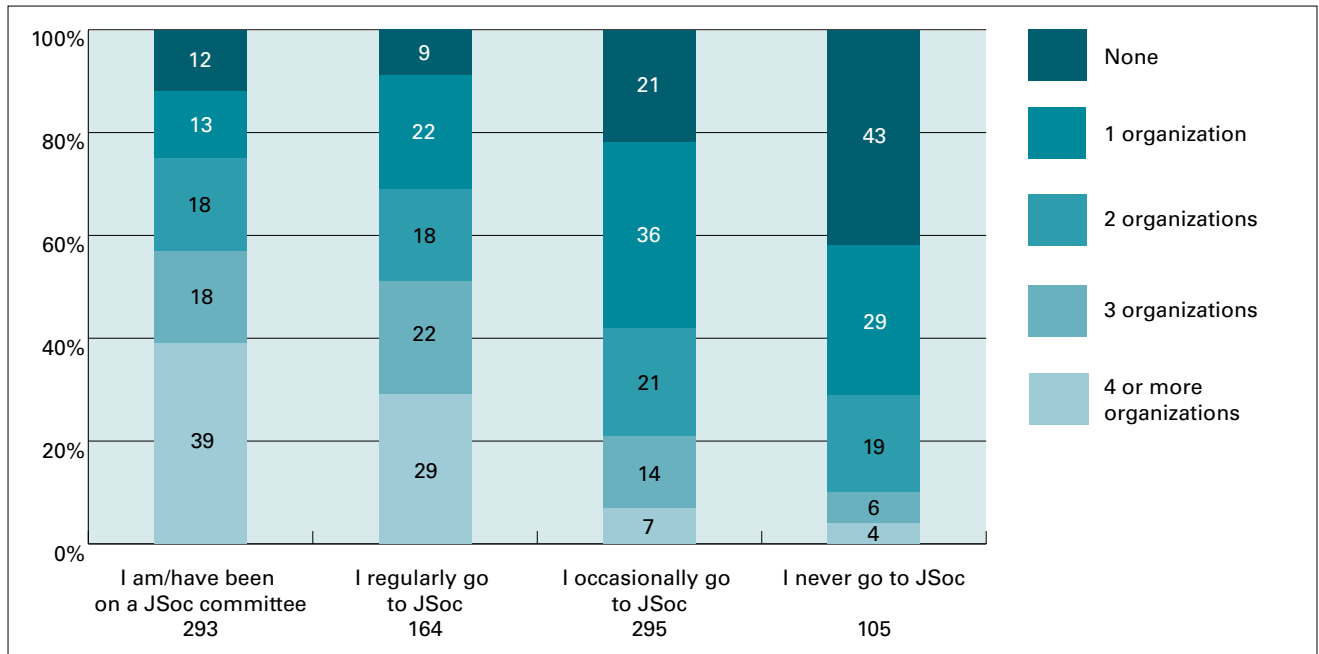


Figure 52: Attendance at JSoc meetings and events by number of other Jewish organizations to which students are connected<sup>5</sup>



<sup>5</sup> Columns may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

### Openness of Jewish students on campus

Jewish students make up about 0.5% of the 1.6 million students in full-time higher education in the UK (see footnote 21, page 24). Therefore, they are very thinly distributed in the world of higher education. However, as has been noted, Jewish students tend to cluster in certain universities and university towns, which gives the impression that they are more numerous than they actually are. In fact, many do find that they are often, to quote one of our focus group participants, ‘the only Jew in the room’, which results in them feeling a degree of responsibility to represent Judaism and Jews in a positive light. For those who have spent most of their education in Jewish day schools, university is the first time they have been placed in such a situation.

The following selection of comments from the focus groups provides a flavour of such experiences.

*“In my university, there were a lot of people from very rural areas who had never met Jewish people before and they were genuinely interested. They genuinely wanted to know more about the faith, the culture and stuff, and I liked that because I was happy to do them a favour by telling them, as you say, we are normal people, we just have*

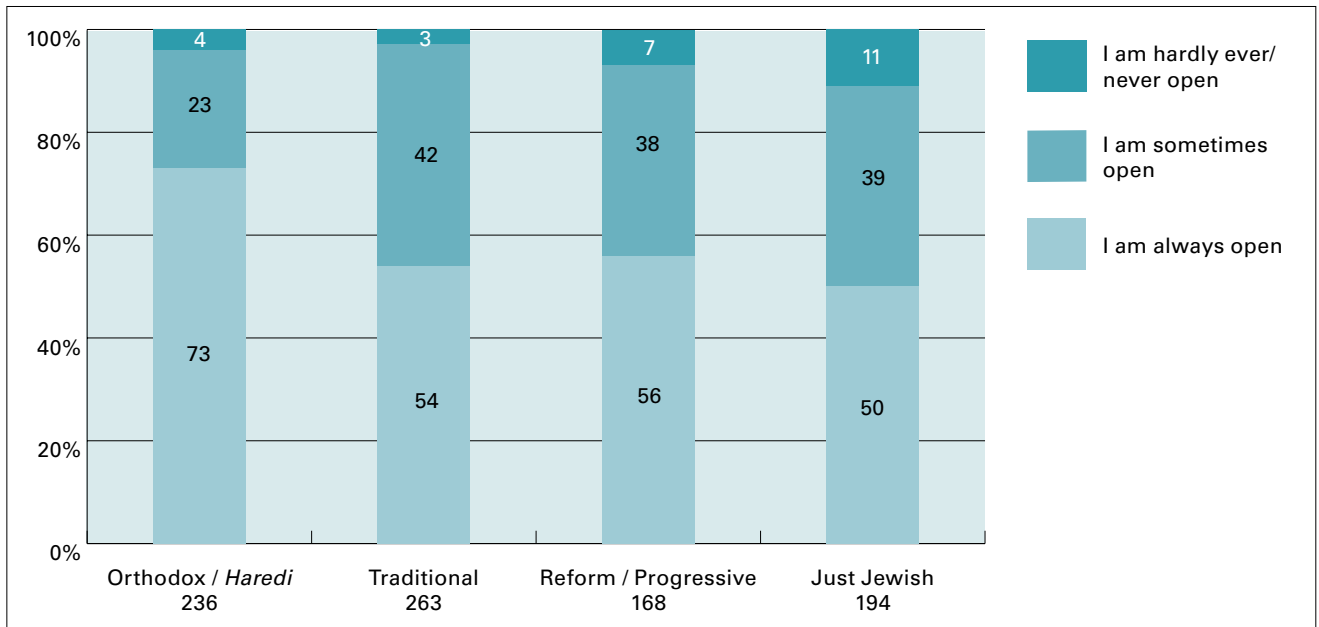
*a different faith, that’s all. Dispel some of these random myths and rumours and stuff.” (Elliot)*

*“I do feel that I’m capable [of answering questions about Judaism from non-Jewish students]. Not to the highest level, and it’s actually a lot harder to simplify what we’re trying to say and make it sound normal. I find that’s more of a challenge than getting across the information, making yourself not sound like a complete and utter lunatic.” (Michelle)*

*“I’d actually say, before I went, when I came to university, because there are so many Jews where I live, I actually took it [being Jewish] for granted and didn’t think much about it, and now I’m much more keen to learn [about Judaism] and excited to learn because people ask questions and I want to be able to answer them [...]” (Adrian)*

*“At [my university], there aren’t enough Jews to be able to create a [Jewish] Society. [...] so I’m the only Jew amongst my friends, and I’m the only Jew in my course and the only Jew, I think that I know in the whole of [my university’s town]. [...] and it’s weird because most of my friends have never actually met a Jew before, and so they’re often...what? You can’t eat bacon? You can’t eat shellfish, and even now, after my first year, they still ask me loads of questions, and they are also*

Figure 53: Current Jewish practice by how open respondent is about his/her Jewish identity on campus\*<sup>5</sup>



\* The following explanatory note accompanied this question: "By 'open' we mean visibly displaying your Jewish identity or speaking openly about it in front of strangers."

<sup>5</sup> Columns may not add to 100% due to rounding

*a bit worried. They say, sorry if I'm asking too much, or if I'm being racist or anything, because they literally have no idea about Judaism.*"  
(Rachel)

*"I think it was just comfort knowing other Jews. Or, well, for me, I wanted to make new friends. [...] But I went to uni knowing that all of my friends went to different unis just to seek new Jewish friends. [...] Because they [Jewish students] understand, like, sometimes, for example, when you tell people at university that you're Jewish, it's, like, you've just popped out of space. Like you're someone else. I'm normal and I'm like you, but it was like a whole new thing to them."*  
(Keren)

Moderator: "Pride, what do you mean by that? Being proud of your religion?"

Respondent: "Because, if I went out on a Sunday, when I was at school, all my friends wouldn't be wearing a kippah [skullcap], so I would be the sore thumb and people would be looking at me, so I just went with the crowd and didn't wear it or took it off. But because after my gap year [on a religious-Zionist programme in Israel], I started mingling with the people who were at the same level as me, then I didn't see it as such a problem, in a way." (Rob)

*"[...] not Israel specifically, but a representative of the whole of Judaism, the whole time. At the beginning of last year, basically I missed every single one of my lectures for the first three weeks, because of different [Jewish] festivals or whatever, [...] I had a group presentation at five o'clock on a Friday afternoon, and I had to explain to them that we're probably going to have to organize another time, because I wasn't going to be there, so honestly, within the first three months, it became blatantly obvious that I was the one wearing skirts every day. I was the one who bunked every Friday afternoon. It's like, it became obvious and then for a while, people were, why? And, asked questions, so when we go to lunch, lunchtimes are the hardest..."* (Michelle)

The survey asked respondents to what extent they feel able to be open about their Jewishness on campus. Despite evidence (discussed below) from some respondents that they sometimes feel pigeonholed into a politically 'right wing' position on Israel simply because they are Jewish, as well as other evidence of a relatively high prevalence of antisemitic experiences, the vast majority of respondents are Jewishly open. A majority (59%) of respondents said that they are 'Always' open, and a further 35% said that they are 'Sometimes'



open. Just 6% reported being closed about their Jewish identity on campus (N=922).

The difference between those who are ‘always’ open and those who are ‘sometimes’ open appears to relate to levels of religiosity and Jewish consciousness. Figure 53 shows that Orthodox/ *haredi* respondents stand out with respect to openness: 73% are ‘always’ open about being Jewish, compared with an average of 53% for non-Orthodox groups. Similarly, students who are most conscious about their Jewish identity are more likely to be more open about it: 72% of those who are ‘extremely’ conscious of being Jewish are ‘always’ open about their identity, compared with 51% of those who feel ‘quite strongly Jewish’.

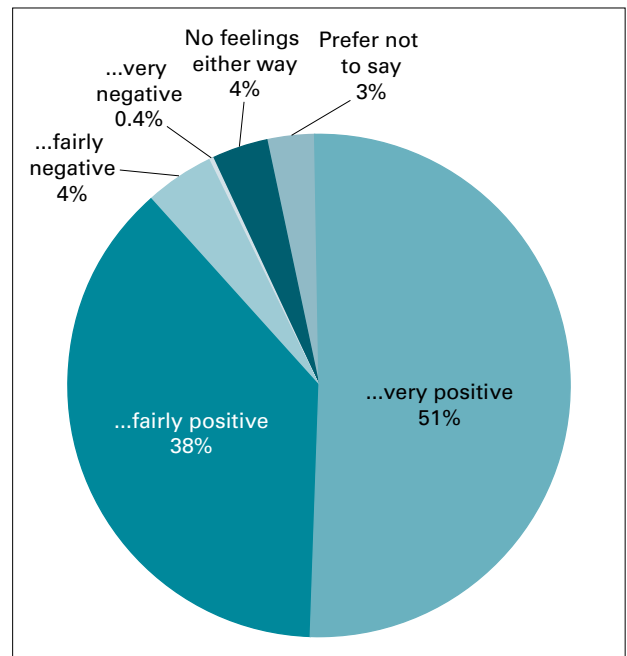
### Experiences of and feelings towards Israel

The majority (92%) of respondents have visited Israel; indeed, 12% have lived there for more than one year, and a quarter (25%) has visited the country on more than ten occasions. Of the 8% who have never been to Israel (a proportion which is in line with findings from other surveys<sup>29</sup>), the vast majority (83%) hope to visit one day.

Respondents were asked whether they plan to move to Israel in the near future. This is the ‘most preferred path’ for 8.5% of the respondents (N=925) and a further 9% said this is their ‘second most preferred path’ (see Figure 69 on page 57).

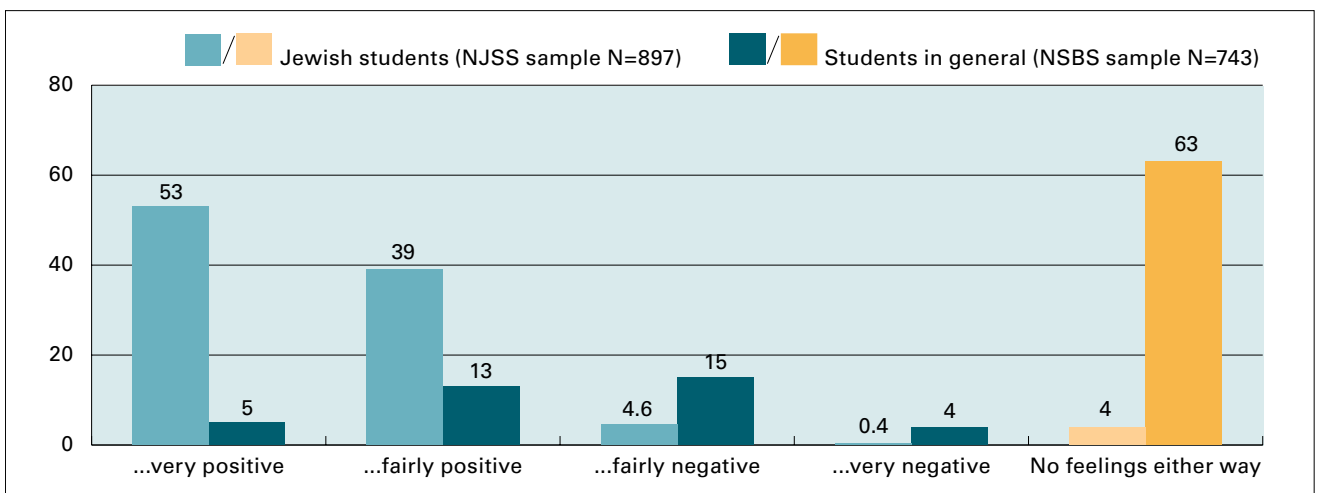
As noted (Figure 33, page 33) most respondents (72%) agree that being Jewish is about ‘Supporting Israel’. When asked about their attitudes towards Israel, half (51%) said they have ‘Very positive’ feelings towards Israel and a further 38% have ‘Fairly positive’ feelings; only 11% of NJSS respondents are either negative or ambivalent about Israel.

Figure 54: ‘My feelings towards Israel are ...’ (N=925)<sup>§</sup>



<sup>§</sup> Total does not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 55: ‘My feelings towards Israel are ...’ NJSS data compared with NSBS data (%)



29 Graham and Boyd (2010); Becher, Waterman, Kosmin and Thomson (2002); Waterman S. (2003), *The Jews of*

*Leeds in 2001: Portrait of a community*, London: JPR/ Institute for Jewish Policy Research.



These results are in stark contrast to comparable data from the general student population. As Figure 55 indicates, most students (63%) in the general population simply have no feelings either way about Israel. Further, of the minority (37%) that do have an opinion, half (49%) has positive feelings and half (51%) has negative feelings. Indeed, just 4% of the general student population harbours ‘very negative’ feelings about Israel.

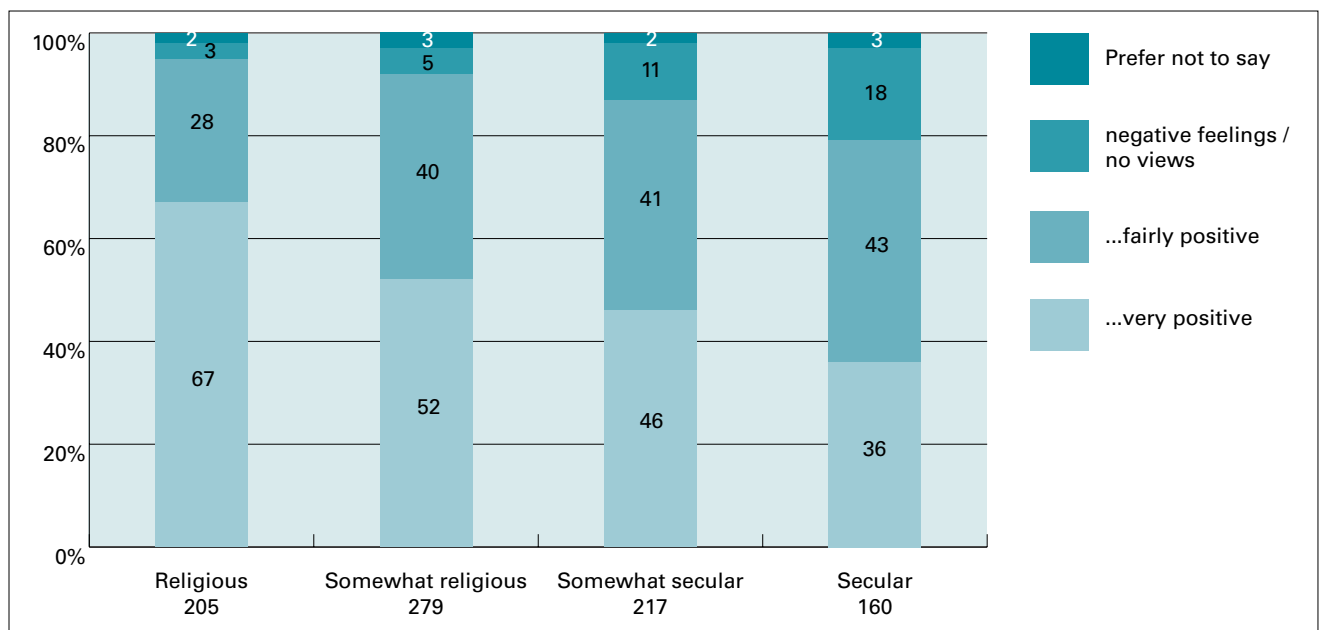
Returning to the Jewish sample, it is instructive to explore the difference between those who are very positive towards Israel and those who are less positive. Attitudes towards Israel were explored in great detail in JPR’s Israel Survey 2010<sup>30</sup> and this noted a clear, positive relationship between attitudes and self-defined religious position. The same relationship is evident in the NJSS sample. Figure 56 shows that feelings towards Israel go hand in hand with religiousness. This relationship was also present with regards to Jewish upbringing, current Jewish position and Jewish consciousness.

The more involved respondents have been with a Jewish youth movement, the more likely they are to have positive feelings towards Israel. As Table 2 shows, 55% of those who have ‘regularly’ attended a Jewish youth movement (which are mostly

“So that’s why I didn’t really answer when you asked a minute ago about do you ever like to talk about that you’re Jewish. I get a bit awkward, and I never used to, because it used to just be Jews, it’s what we do. But now it’s, like, at my campus, it [Israel] does come up quite a bit in certain conversations, and it just feels as if you have to justify why you’re a Jew and why you’re interested in Israel, as opposed to just anything else. But it’s not necessarily a bad thing, which is why I prefer to just avoid that whole conversation. I get uncomfortable but, at the same time, I’m happy to rant about it.” (*Sophie*)

“I think I’d probably rather discuss it [Israel] with my non-Jewish friends [than my Jewish friends] because I feel if I discuss Israel with Jews, there’s straight away, an expectation, essentially, that I’m going to be in support of Israel, by and large, on what I say. And if I’m not in support, then, at least I’d be an out-and-out anti-Zionist. I come from a position where I feel quite strongly that Jewish identity and Zionist identity are far too strongly correlated. That by having the one, I’m expected to have the other [...]” (*Alan*)

Figure 56: Secular-religious outlook by feelings towards Israel



30 Graham D. and Boyd J. (2010)

Table 2: Feelings towards Israel by youth movement and youth programme participation\*

		N	Very positive (%)	Fairly positive (%)	Neutral / negative / prefer not to say (%)
Sample average		925	51	38	11
Jewish youth movement participation	Regularly / As a leader	556	55	35	9
	None	100	40	39	21
Summer camp, Israel tour or Israel gap year participation	Just Israel tour	135	53	36	11
	None of these	103	41	40	19

\* Rows may not add up to 100% due to rounding

Zionist) are ‘very positive’ about Israel, compared with 40% of those who have never attended these. Similar trends can be seen with respect to youth programme involvement. (Note the direction of cause and effect cannot be determined in this table.)

### Israel on campus

Communal discussion about students’ experiences at university often focus on the way in which Israel is portrayed on British campuses, in particular the perception of significant anti-Israel sentiment. This issue was explored in both the quantitative and qualitative parts of the survey, and the following quotes provide insights into the situation from the perspective of the students themselves.

*“Yes, so we have an Israel Week at university. [...] and it’s completely apolitical and it’s supposed to be nothing, but just to show Israel in a good light. [...] showing the achievements of Israel, in communications and electronics, so it’s just to show what Israel can offer. And so we obviously get people passing, coming out and trying to give us grief, and there was one guy who was saying that he was going to offer, going to give aid to Gaza in a couple of month’s time, [...] and he was just having a complete rant about Israel, and we were having a completely apolitical week.”* (Simon)

*“When I walk onto [...] campus, the first thing... you come in through the entrance and then the first notice board is the teachers’... not the student union, like the university lecturers’ union, their notice board... and it’s basically taken up by a big poster saying something like ‘boycott settlement*

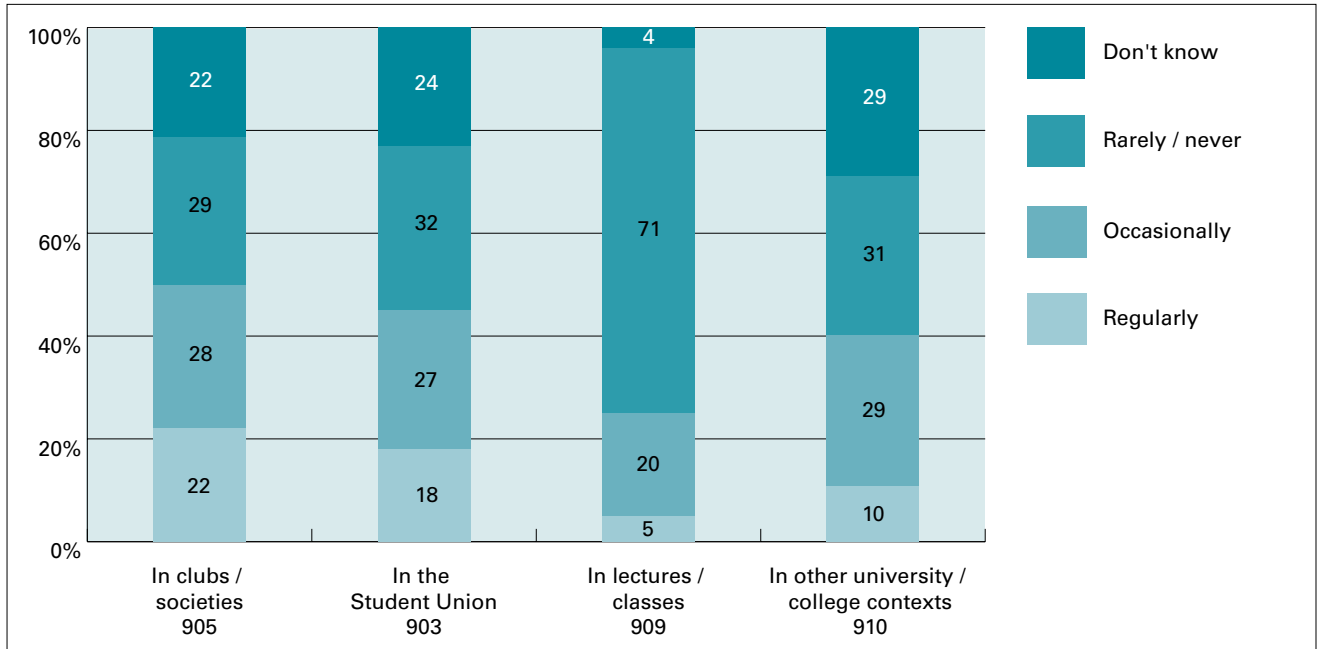
*in Palestine,’ and I feel it every time I walk into university... Even if Jews agree with the message, the assumption is that they don’t, and so we are all made to feel uncomfortable... Every time I walk into uni, I feel I’m being punched in the face...”* (Richard)

*“In my university, actually anti-Israel [activity], I don’t think I’ve ever seen, but I think because the community of Jews isn’t... or Zionists isn’t big enough, we’re not so worried. People aren’t going to attack us, because technically, I guess we’re not really there to be attacked. We aren’t doing anything they could regard as provoking. Just having coffee [with the JSoc]. So, I never notice posters, no nothing.”* (Michelle)

*“I’m going to Israel with my dad in September, and I told my [non-Jewish] friends, and they’re like, oh, are you going to pray? No, actually, I’m going to go off-road biking and stuff like that. You can actually do that? Is that what you do in Israel? They imagine Israel being this place of really, really observant Jews, just always praying by the [Western] Wall and stuff like that, and they were so shocked to hear about what I was going to be doing.”* (Claire)

*“First, I’d start by saying that the [Jewish media] is doing a huge disservice to the Jewish community in its campus coverage of Israel related issues. I think that [the Jewish media] portrays Israel, Jewish students, it portrays life for Jewish students as a chore, constantly battling to help Israel’s survival. It’s just simply not the case. In reality, the amount of Jewish students who campaign for Israel is 1%, if that, probably less.”* (Phil)

Figure 57: 'How often, if at all, does the topic of Israel arise during term-time?' (NJSS data)<sup>5</sup>



<sup>5</sup> Columns may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Survey respondents were asked how often the topic of Israel arises in various university contexts. The most common context is in clubs and societies with half (50%) saying that the topic arises 'regularly' or 'occasionally' (Figure 57). 44% said that the topic arises 'regularly' or 'occasionally' in the Students Union. Interestingly, in both of these contexts, almost a quarter of respondents do not know how often the topic arises. However, in contrast to the NJSS sample, data from the general student population paint a very different picture. The general student sample is far less aware of the topic of Israel arising in any context at university: just 11% reported that the topic arises 'regularly' or 'occasionally' in the Students Union, compared with 44% reported by NJSS respondents.

Both samples were also asked how fairly they feel the topic of Israel is dealt with when it does arise in these various contexts. The results are summarized in the next two graphs which show that many Jewish students simply do not know whether the topic of Israel is treated fairly or otherwise. For example, although 38% of respondents feel that Israel is treated unfairly in their Students Union, 37% do not know either way (Figure 58). A similar picture emerges regarding 'clubs and societies'. However, among

the National Benchmark sample, a very different picture emerges (Figure 59). Students in the general population are far less likely to consider that Israel is dealt with unfairly in each of the contexts examined.

NJSS respondents were asked the extent to which they are 'worried or concerned' about 'Anti-Israel sentiment' at their university. Relatively few (8%) said they are 'very worried', but a further 30% said they are 'fairly worried'. However, compared with other student concerns, such as passing exams or finding a job, worries about anti-Israel sentiment rank quite low (see Figure 66 on page 55).

In the course of conducting the focus groups discussions, something of a contradiction emerged. On the one hand, students are well aware of the tensions surrounding the topic of Israel on campus, and many give the impression that Israel could not be discussed in any way without attracting some form of criticism. However, on the other hand, respondents are equally keen to point out that any trouble in this regard could be easily avoided by Jewish students who are not particularly interested in the issues, and that only a small minority of students (on both sides of any debate) are actively involved in

Figure 58: 'When the topic of Israel does arise at your university/college, in your opinion how, fairly or not would you say it is dealt with?' (Jewish students sample, NJSS data)

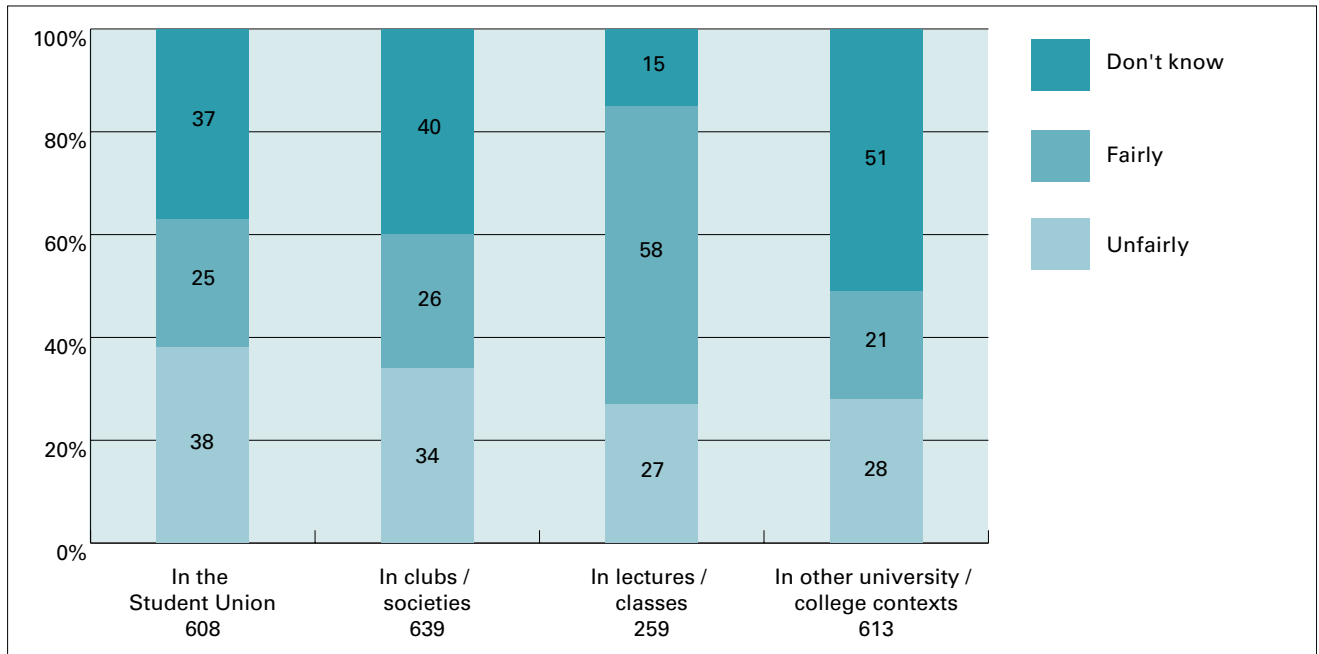
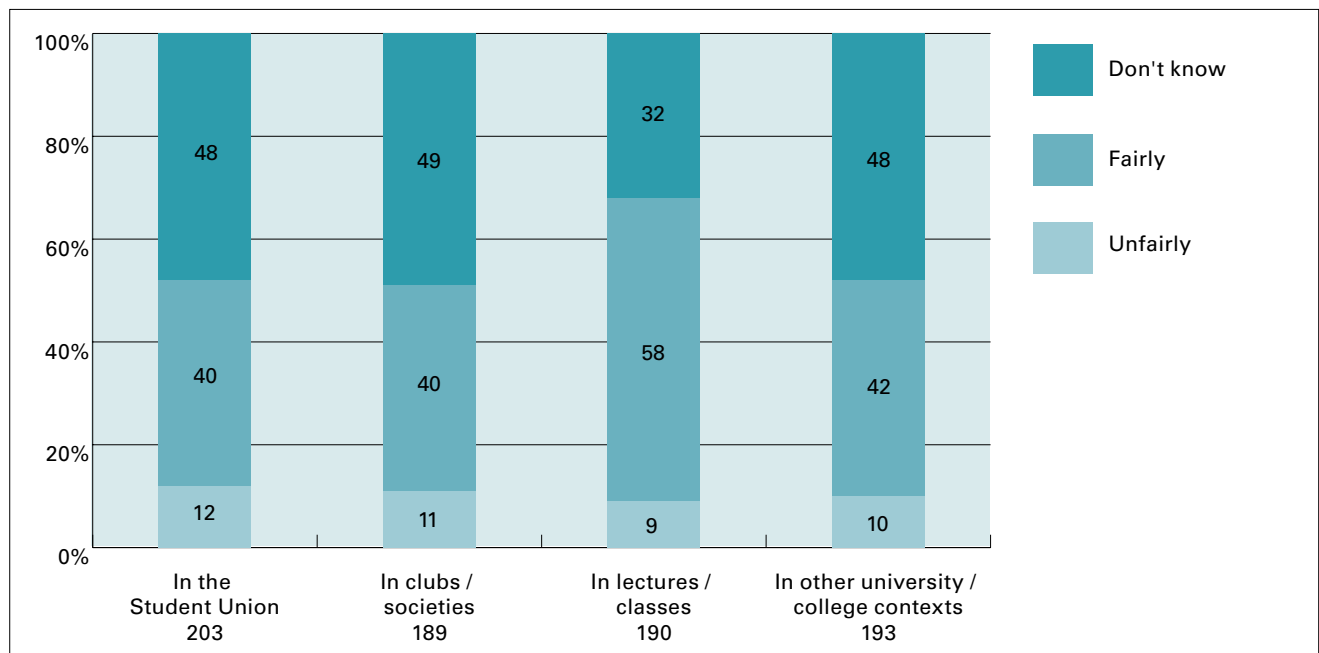


Figure 59: 'When the topic of Israel does arise at your university/college, in your opinion how, fairly or not would you say it is dealt with?' (General students sample, NSBS data)<sup>5</sup>



<sup>5</sup> Columns may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

such encounters. Furthermore, several are quick to point out that, in over-emphasizing anti-Israel incidents at universities in Britain, the Jewish press sometimes conveys a rather unrealistic and overly negative image of life for Jewish students on campus.

### Experiences of antisemitism on campus

Antisemitism continues to be a significant issue on campus, but it is also quite subtle and complex. Some of the experiences witnessed by respondents are interpreted as being unambiguously

antisemitic, but others are less black and white, especially if it is clear that comments are being made out of ignorance rather than malice. The following selection of comments from the focus groups provides an initial flavour of respondents' experiences.

*"I haven't experienced antisemitism. I know a lot of people at uni who I've made friends with had never met a Jew before. You do get the odd comment about money, and I think you have to laugh along with it. They don't mean it in any bad way, and we're friends, and you just accept it and get on with it. I think you can make a big deal out of something...everyone, you make comments about, everyone has stereotypes."* (Sarah)

*"If he [my friend] is making comments, I'll make comments back, as a joke, and then when someone starts to talk about Palestine, then we can laugh. But I once went to a club where I showed my ID and I've got a Jewish [sur]name, and then they were joking, where's the number on your arm? And, I just left and took my money back [...]. And that wasn't funny."* (Adrian)

*"I was actually with a tutor and we were playing a 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire?' game, which involved electronics on a Friday night [sic] and he happened to know I was Jewish. This is a class of about 100 people. He turned to me and said 'I looked up the times, so you're okay until about 3:50, 4 o'clock is it this week?' And I said yes, [...] he'd actually taken the effort to consider whether I could do this and how much of it I could do, which I thought was above and beyond the call of duty really."* (Ed)

In the context of discussions about Israel, it is often unclear to students whether criticism is purely political or whether it has antisemitic undertones. Examples of students grappling with where the line should be drawn are included below:

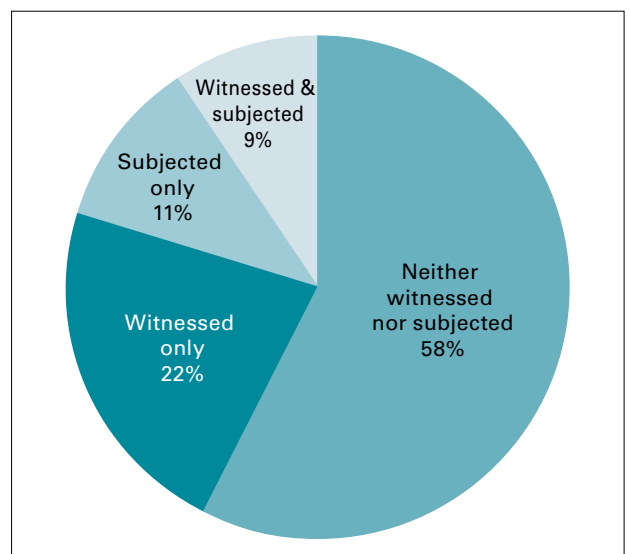
*"Like, people work themselves up [about Israel], but it's never really... yes, it's good to have the debate and things like that, and it's good that people are passionate and they're getting involved but there's never really anything serious. There's never really any... whether or not it's antisemitic, you never know. It's difficult to tell. It's certainly anti-Israel, but you think there might be something in it, but who knows?"* (Jeremy)

*"We had an Israel Awareness Week been going on, and then someone came up to us and said, we were talking to someone, and he goes, you're a Jew. And, I said, yes. He goes, well, I'm not talking to you about this then, on the basis that because I'm Jewish, I'm automatically really pro-Israel, and I thought that was quite... because it's a false generalization, so one of the old antisemitic stereotypes is accusing Jews of having more allegiance to the Jewish people or to Israel than to their own country, [...]"* (Andy)

*"I've had the odd slogan shouted at me on the way home from shul, like 'You Jew!', but in uni, it's generally just posters up, like [Israel] apartheid but what you've got to do is take them down, and your problem is solved."* (Rob)

The quantitative survey found that just over two out of five (42%) respondents reported either having witnessed, and/or having being subjected to antisemitism in the seven months prior to the NJSS (i.e. since the beginning of the 2010-11 academic year) (Figure 60). Almost one in three (32%) respondents have witnessed something they regarded as antisemitic, and one in five (20%) respondents reported that they have personally been subjected to antisemitism in the same time period (Figure 61).

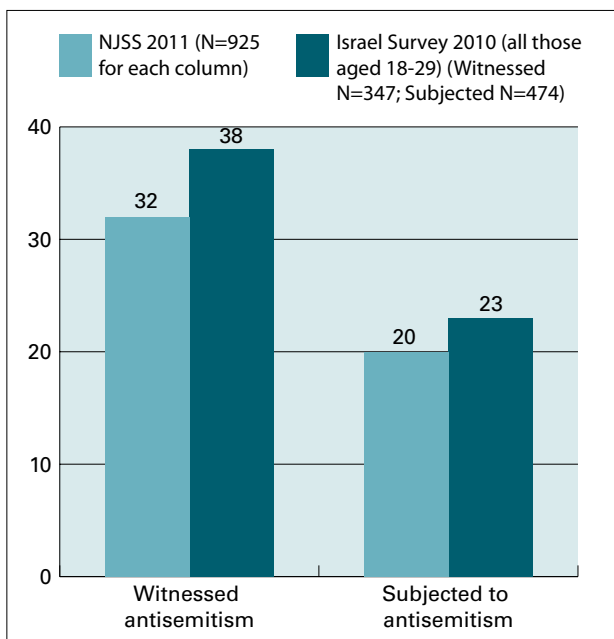
Figure 60: Proportion of respondents who have witnessed and/or been subjected to antisemitism during the current academic year (Percent answering 'Yes' in any context)\*



\*The question was asked in February/March 2011 and was worded: "Although different people have different views as to what constitutes antisemitism, would you say that you have witnessed or personally been subjected to antisemitism in any of the following contexts, since the beginning of this academic year (since September 2010)?"

As Figure 61 shows, the data are roughly comparable with the results obtained in JPR's 2011 Israel Survey on the same topic. Although NJSS respondents do not appear to report quite as high levels, it should be noted that their responses relate to a seven month rather than a twelve month period.

Figure 61: Comparison of proportions who have witnessed and/or been subjected to antisemitism;\* NJSS and the Israel Survey<sup>5</sup> (%)



\* It should be noted that the Israel Survey asked the question with reference to the previous year, as opposed to the present academic year of which 6-7 months had elapsed at the time of the NJSS. Also it was not possible to filter out students only from the Israel Survey due to low counts.

<sup>5</sup> Calculations based on JPR's 2010 Israel Survey dataset.

Figure 62 shows the data in terms of context. Respondents are more likely to have witnessed antisemitism rather than been subjected to it with the exception of antisemitism 'From an individual student' (13%). A relatively high proportion of respondents reported witnessing antisemitism in university 'clubs and societies' (13%), though very few were subjected to antisemitism in this context. A similar pattern is noticeable with respect to the 'Student Union'. The all encompassing 'In another context' is also notable for the relatively high proportion of respondents witnessing (13%) and being subjected to (10%) antisemitism.

Figure 63 suggests a relationship exists between one's experience of antisemitism and one's consciousness of being Jewish, i.e. the more conscious students are of their Jewishness the more likely they are to report having experienced antisemitism. For example, 47% of those who are 'extremely conscious' of being Jewish had witnessed or been subjected to an incident they regarded as antisemitic during the academic year, compared with 32% of those who are 'aware of their Jewishness but little more'. (It should be noted, however, that there is no clear relationship between experience of antisemitism and Jewish practice.)

Similarly, the more positive students feel about Israel, the more likely they are to report having experienced antisemitism (Figure 64). For example, 48% of those who feel 'very positive' about Israel say they have experienced

Figure 62: Proportion of respondents who have witnessed and/or been subjected to antisemitism in various contexts (%) (various bases, minimum N=931 on any column)

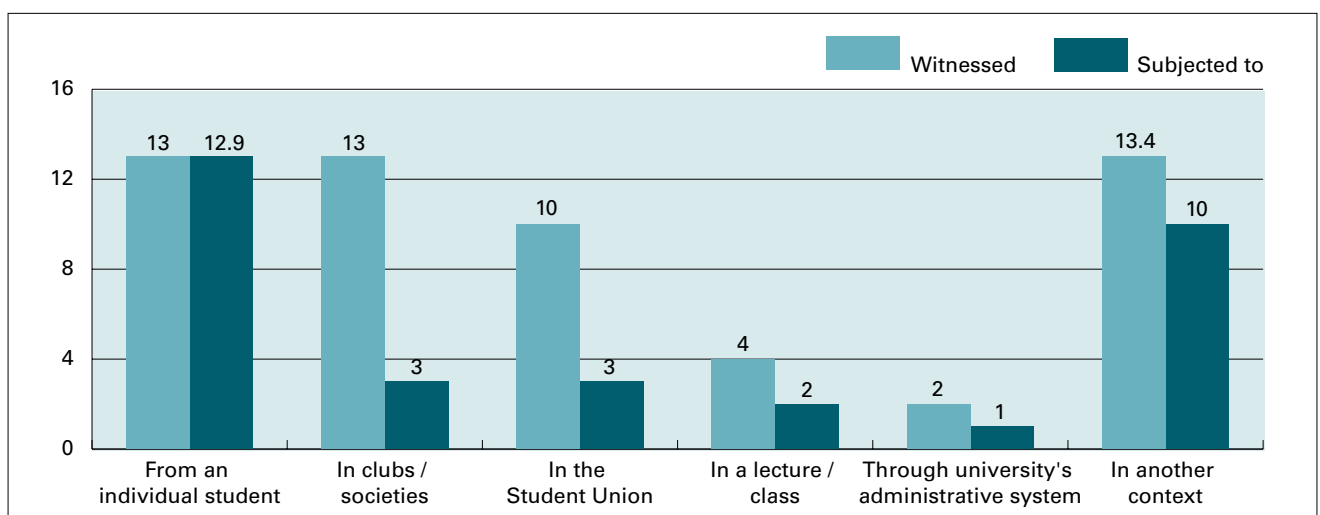


Figure 63: Experience of antisemitism in the current academic year by consciousness of being Jewish

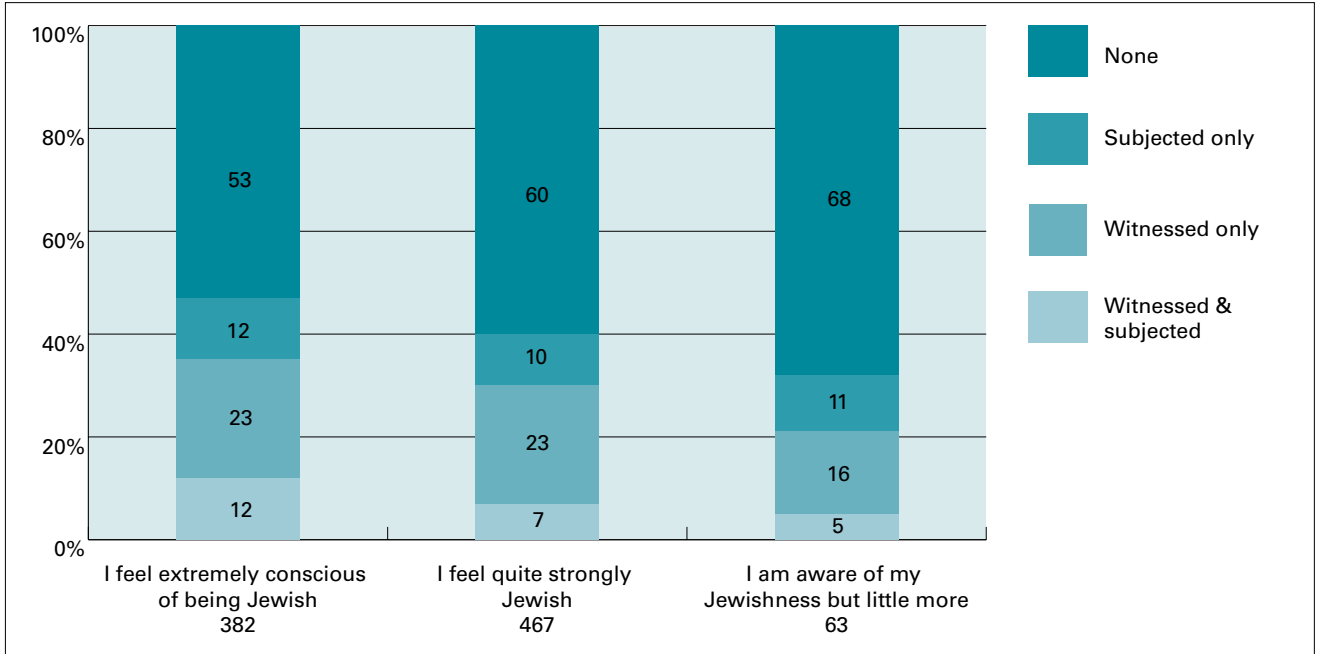
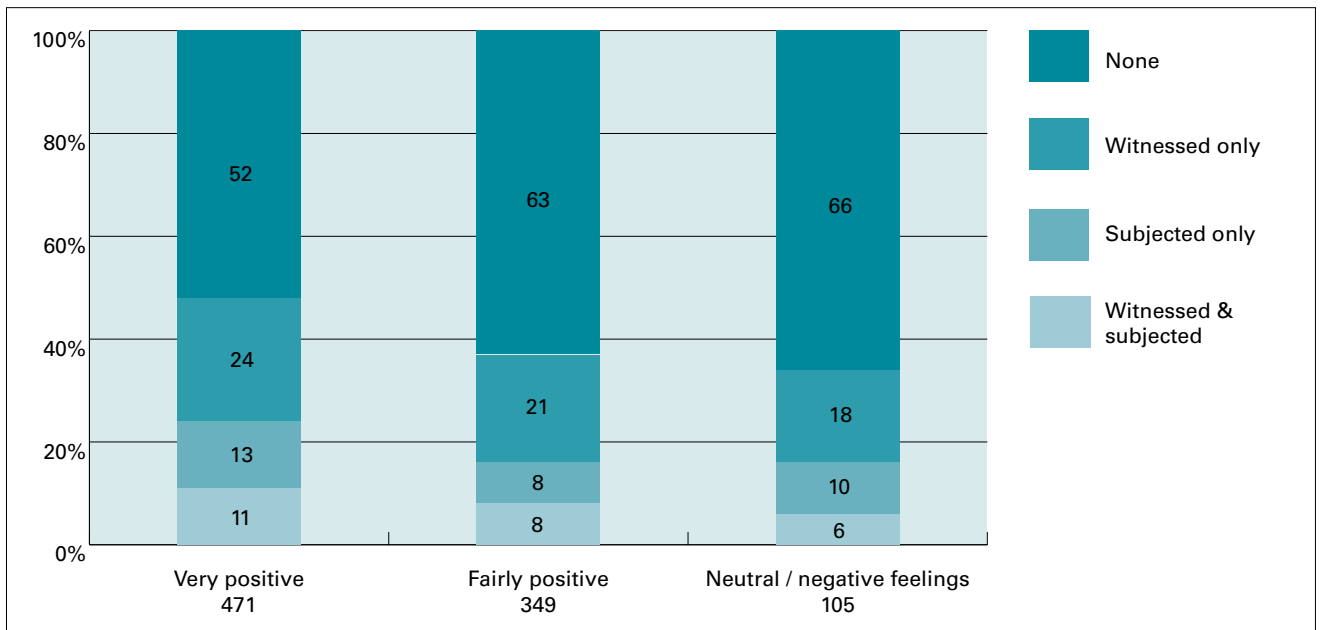


Figure 64: 'How do you feel about Israel?' by experience of antisemitism in the current academic year (%)



antisemitism at university, compared with 37% of those who feel 'fairly positive'.

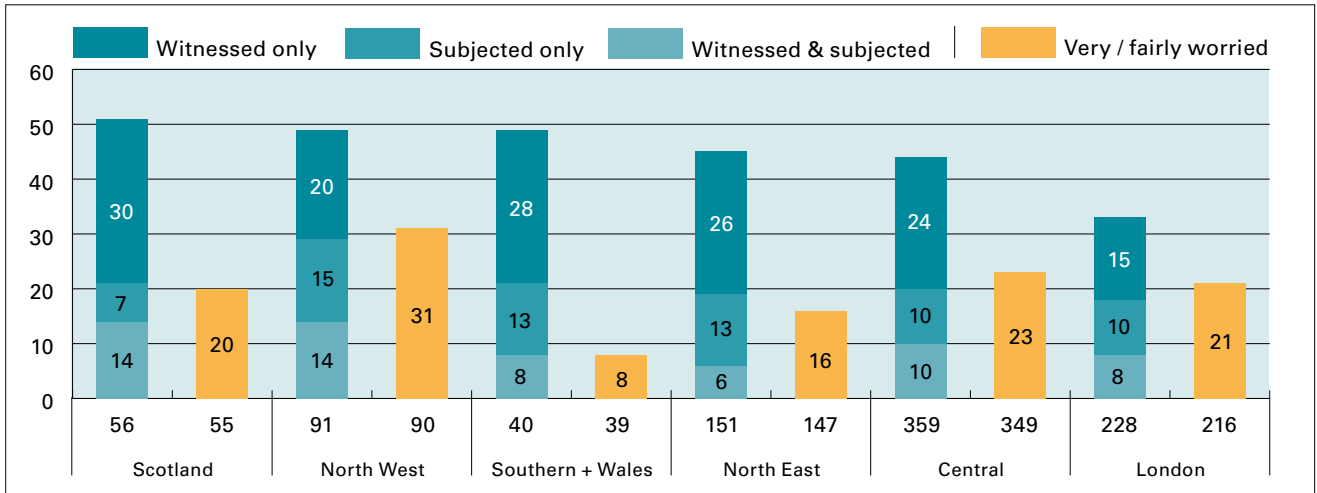
Figure 65 provides the regional picture and shows the extent to which antisemitism has been experienced by respondents and how concerned they are about it. Regionally, respondents in Scotland are the most likely to report having experienced some form of antisemitism—over half (52%) have witnessed and/or been subjected

to antisemitism. By contrast, a third (33%) of respondents studying in London has experienced antisemitism. Respondents studying in the North-west are the most likely to have been subjected to antisemitism (29%).

However, it is also apparent in Figure 65 that experience of antisemitism does not directly correlate with concern about it. Overall, very few respondents report being 'very worried' (4%)



Figure 65: Whether witnessed and/or been subjected to antisemitism and extent to which 'Very or fairly worried' about antisemitism, by region (%)



about antisemitism, although 17% report being 'fairly' worried about it (see Figure 66). Whilst students in Scotland report experiencing the most antisemitism, they are actually the third least concerned about it (20% are very or fairly worried) of the six regions in Figure 65. Similarly, although almost half (48%) of respondents in the 'Southern + Wales' region have experienced antisemitism, just 8% are 'very' or 'fairly worried' about it. On the other hand, in London, where 33% have experienced antisemitism, 21% are 'very' or 'fairly worried'. The exception is the North-west where a relatively high level of experience (49% have witnessed and or been subjected to antisemitism) is matched by a relatively high level of concern (31% of North-west respondents are 'very' or 'fairly worried' about it).

The discrepancy appears to be related to the fact that concern about antisemitism closely correlates with the size of the Jewish population at an institution. In general, the larger the Jewish population, the more likely respondents are to report being concerned about antisemitism. Interestingly, the size of an institution's Jewish population does not appear to be related to experience of antisemitism.

## Looking ahead

### Worries and concerns

Taking on new responsibilities and making life decisions for the first time can be daunting. Students' 'worries and concerns' have been

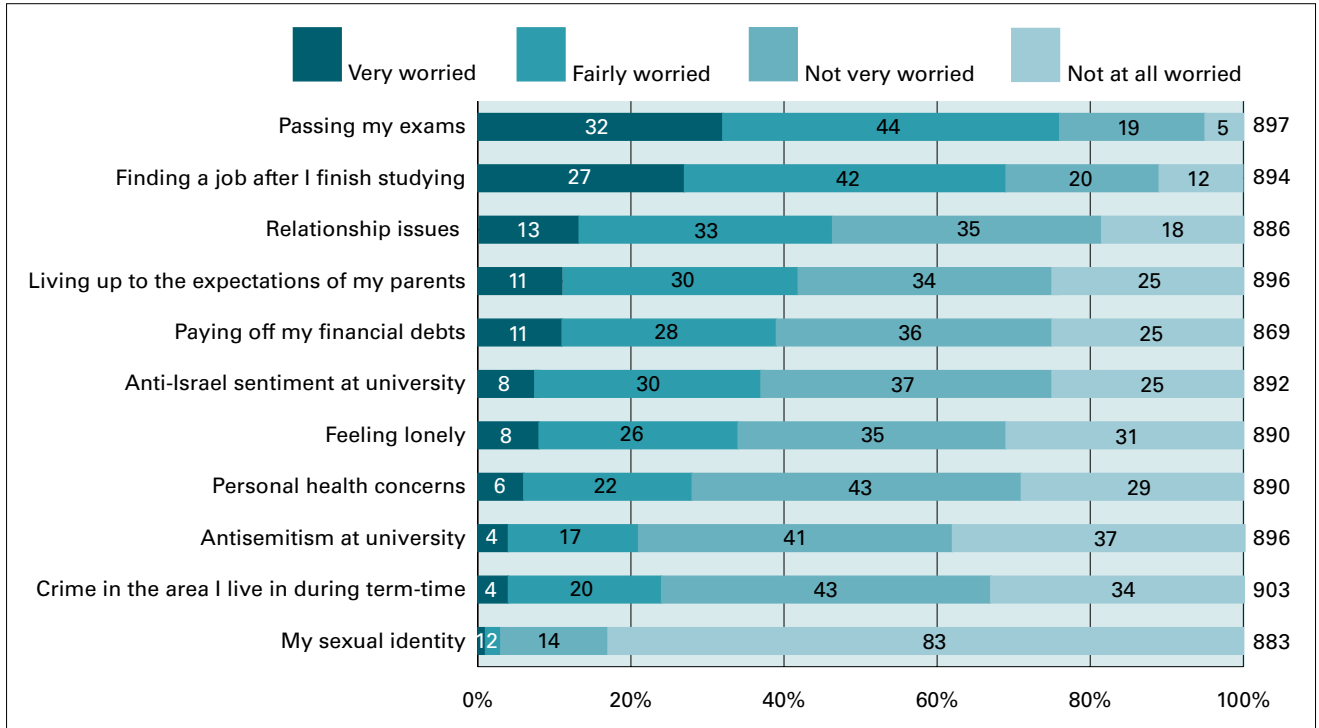
referred to several times in this report, especially with respect to personal relationships, the topic of Israel on campus, and antisemitism. However, in the broad scheme of things, Israel and antisemitism appear to be of relatively low concern to students compared with other issues. Figure 66 shows that two such issues stand out above all others—'Passing exams' (a worry for over three-quarters (76%) of respondents) and 'Finding a job after university' (a worry for over two-thirds (68%) of the sample).

Indeed, the most striking aspect of Figure 66 is the relative lack of concern about antisemitism and anti-Israel sentiment. For example, students are half as likely to express any concern about 'Anti-Israel sentiment at university' (38%) as they are about 'Passing exams' (76%). 'Antisemitism at university' is of even less concern in relative terms—21% are 'very' or 'fairly' concerned about this, i.e. Jewish students are twice as likely to be worried about 'Living up to parent's expectations' (41%) and 'Relationship issues' (47%) as they are about antisemitism. Nevertheless, antisemitism is clearly a problem at university and one that merits attention.

Overall, third years are the most worried about finding a job (75%) and first years are the least worried (60%), a reflection of a more general pattern showing that students' worries in this regard increase as they advance through university towards life in the wider world. It should also be noted that female respondents are more likely to be worried about each of the items listed than male



Figure 66: 'To what extent, if at all, are you personally worried or concerned about the following?'<sup>§</sup>



<sup>§</sup> Rows may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

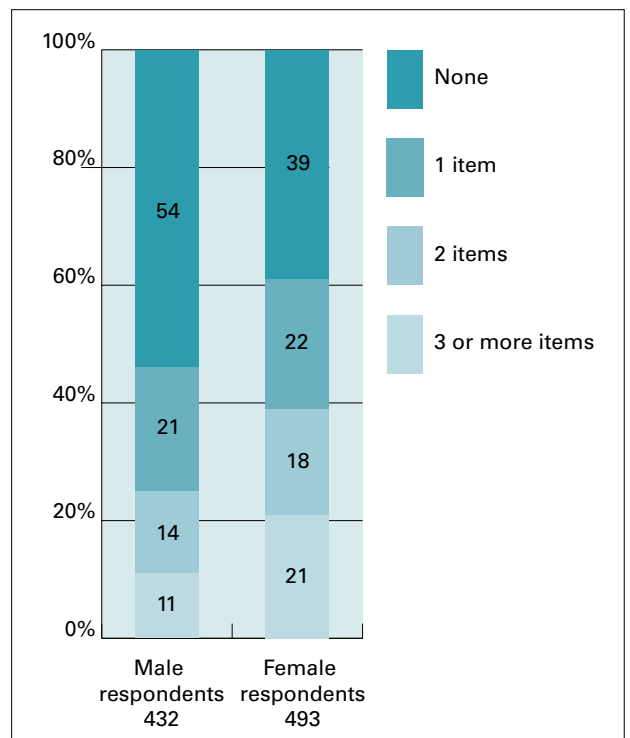
respondents (Figure 67). Indeed, 61% of all female respondents are 'very worried' about at least one of the items listed in Figure 66, compared with 46% of male respondents.

When the key concerns of the NJSS sample are compared with those of the general student population clear differences emerge (Figure 68). Overall, Jewish students exhibit a greater propensity to be worried in general than the wider student population. In particular, Jewish students appear to be more concerned about 'Passing exams' than 'Finding a job'; in the general student population the opposite is true. Jewish students are twice as worried about 'Relationship issues' as students in general, but far less worried about 'Paying off financial debts'. They are also more likely to be worried about 'Living up to parents' expectations', 'Feeling lonely', their 'Personal health', 'Antisemitism/racism', and local 'Crime'.

**Opinions about the Jewish community**

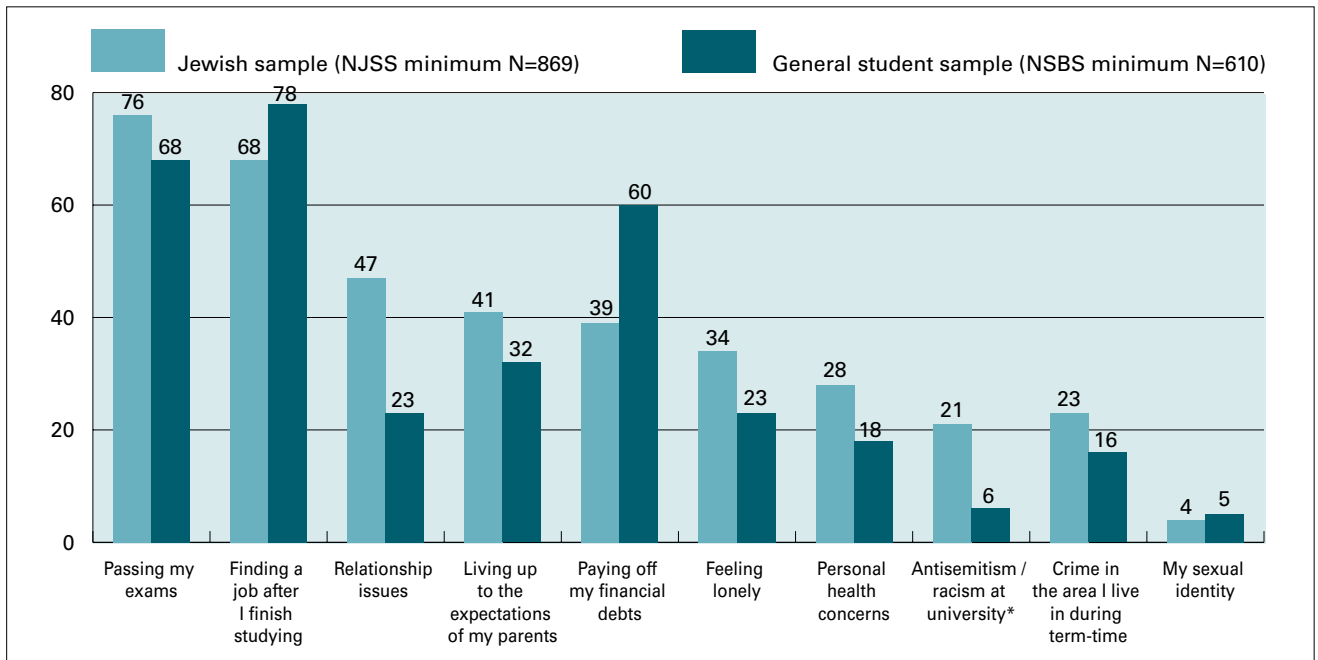
Focus group respondents raised several topics that were not directly addressed in the quantitative survey and among the more heartfelt and consistent themes raised were attitudes

Figure 67: Total number of items respondents were 'very worried' about by gender



towards the British Jewish community which, it must be said, were largely negative and/or gloomy.

Figure 68: Proportion of respondents who are 'Very worried' or 'Fairly worried' about each item: Jewish sample (NJSS) compared with general student sample (NSBS) (%)



\* NSBS asked 'Racism against my religious/ethnic/national group at university/college'

*"[...] what's become more and more apparent over the last few years is that I'm not proud to be a British Jew because I really don't like the way the community's heading. Like the organizations that have the voice and have the power [...] I don't think they listen to people who disagree with them and I really feel that I don't have much of a voice. And I know there are a few organizations on Israel and Judaism that are trying to put forward a different viewpoint but, to be honest, I don't feel that they will be successful given what I've experienced."* (Zac)

*"I really do think it's a community thing. You've got neo-Orthodoxy and more religious versus Progressive and Reform and there's a massive split and people aren't recognizing that people are Jewish and that to me is the most painful thing because from both sides people are really passionate and they do care and they just want to bring the community together and do good things."* (Michal)

*"I wouldn't say it [the British Jewish community] was dying, I'd say it was*

*changing. [...] I don't think it's a bad thing, I don't really think it's a good thing; it's just the way life goes. Things change and people have just got to deal with it."* (Steve)

*"I do have a very, in my opinion, catastrophic belief on the future of Anglo-Jewry, so much so that I see no future and I'm planning on making aliyah [moving to Israel] within a year of me finishing university."* (Richard)

### Next steps ...

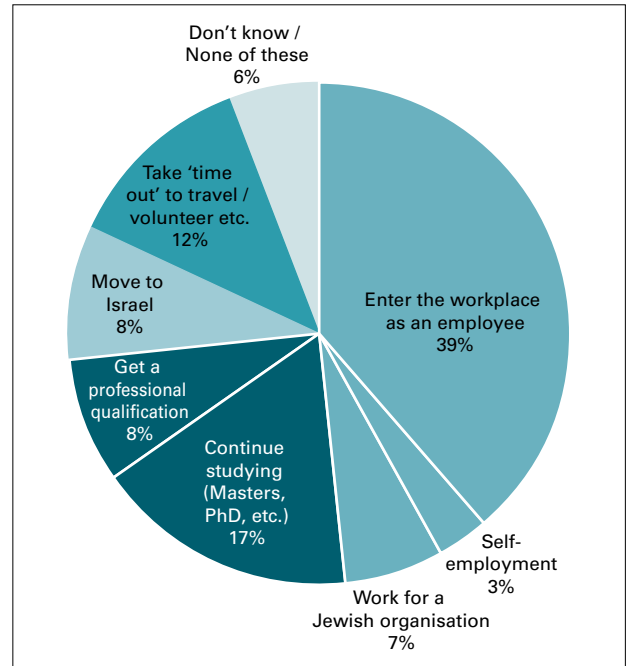
Respondents were finally asked to look beyond their studies and think about their future plans. These differ depending on what stage students are at. For undergraduates, a varied selection of paths is being considered, as shown in Figure 69. The most popular option is finding a job, this being the aim of almost half (48%) of this group, the majority of whom want to enter the workplace as employees. A quarter (25%) is considering continuing to study (either academically or professionally), and 9% plan to move to Israel.

Postgraduates differ slightly in that they are more likely to be planning to work (57%)

and less likely to be looking to take time out (6%) or be unsure (4%) about their plans. Interestingly, the same proportion (25%) of postgraduates plans to continue studying (either academically or professionally) as undergraduates (N=141).

“In terms of myself, personally, I tend to just take it ... it scares me, the future, so I just tend to take each day, week, month as it comes. Because to think too far ahead scares me too much because being a student and not knowing what I want to do after university, now knowing where I want to live, all these questions are unanswered at the moment, so I'll just see what happens and have a bit of fun in the meantime.”  
 (Steve)

Figure 69: ‘What do you hope to do in the year or two after completing your course?’ (N=759) (Undergraduates only – ‘Most preferred path’)





## 4 Discussion of findings

**“An accurate understanding of Jewish students is essential to help ensure a vibrant future for Britain’s Jewish community.” Discuss.**

### ‘Home and away’

In the course of conducting this survey and examining the results, the research team identified a number of discussion points, several of which are included in this chapter in order that they might be used to guide constructive policy debate.

One of the overarching insights, which ultimately informed the title of this report, is the notion of students being both at ‘home and away’. Students are in a transitional stage of their lives, between dependence upon, and independence from, their parents. They are moving away from the Jewish home environments that nurtured them, and are starting to evolve their own ideas about Jewish identity and lifestyle. However, ‘home and away’ is not simply a reference to two distinct places; it also seeks to capture the relationship between them. It refers to the process of creating homes when away, even in the context of a university dorm room, using the Jewish tools they have acquired during their Jewish upbringing. It refers to the process of bringing new insights about themselves back into the parental home, based on experiences and encounters they have had whilst ‘away’. And, particularly for those who have been brought up in intensely Jewish environments, it involves learning how to encounter difference, and to respond to views and perspectives about Judaism and Israel that they have rarely had to confront previously.

This ‘home and away’ duality suggests the importance of adopting an integrated approach to Jewish student life. Students do not operate in a separate universe, independent of the mainstream community; they are, or at least should be, integral to it, and as much part of the community as any other Jewish cohort. It should not simply be an issue of how they are supported when they are ‘away’; it should also be an issue of how they are reintegrated when they are at ‘home’. Today’s Jewish students are the future of the Jewish community; they will comprise its voluntary and professional leadership, and its donors and planners. Most of those who will go on to lead British Jewish charities, organizations and foundations in the future will be graduates of

British universities. The ‘home and away’ stage represents a critical and formative period in their lives; it entails learning new ideas, expanding minds and horizons, and it involves a combination of excitement and anxiety, opportunity and risk, pleasure and pain. How the Jewish community supports, engages, challenges and cultivates its students as they navigate the experience says a great deal about the type of community it is.

### Everybody’s business

Given their future importance to the community and the challenges associated with being both ‘home’ and ‘away’, students are rightly targeted by a wide range of Jewish organizations. Nevertheless, some key organizations appear to be less engaged than others. In particular, we observed that whilst more than half of our respondents have a connection to their home synagogue, very few of the twenty largest synagogues in the country have the capacity to email people from their communities who are currently at university. Furthermore, we encountered a number of students who feel alienated by what is being provided for them on campus because it fails to respond appropriately to their needs or interests. Two questions therefore emerge: first, are community organizations sufficiently conscious of the important roles they could play in supporting and engaging with students on campus? And second, are they investing sufficient time and energy in understanding Jewish students’ interests and determining how they might be able to respond to them?

### The more you do, the more you do

We observed that Jewishly engaged students tend to associate with multiple Jewish organizations, whereas less engaged students associate with few, if any. In essence, the more Jewishly engaged they are, the more organizations they associate with. The Jewishness of one’s upbringing in general is critical; the most engaged have been through multiple Jewish experiences during their childhood and adolescence, whereas the least engaged are far less likely to have done so. In other words, the more you do, the more you do. It is

too late to alter upbringing at university stage, but multiple Jewish experiences can still be offered and encouraged. The critical questions therefore are: what is the range of experiences that should be available to students? What opportunities should they be given in order to encourage them to become more involved? And what links should exist between the different opportunities, in order to encourage and facilitate further involvement?

### **Creating an upbeat narrative**

We observed that many Jewish students are rather downbeat about the inner workings and future outlook of Britain's Jewish community. They express frustration about a lack of open debate and an inability to input into decision-making processes that affect them, pain about denominational tensions and splits, and ultimately proffer pessimistic forecasts about the community's future. The renaissance of activity that the British Jewish community has witnessed over the past two decades appears to have had little influence on their communal narrative. Furthermore, whilst supporting Israel and combating antisemitism are significant aspects of what many students believe to be core aspects of being Jewish, they express dissatisfaction with how Jewish student life is portrayed in the Jewish media, and argue that an over-simplistic and exaggerated emphasis on anti-Israel activity and antisemitism distorts the reality they experience. The questions arising from these findings include: how might we cultivate a more positive and uplifting view of the community in Jewish students? What initiatives and approaches are needed to enable them to feel more engaged and valued, and to take ownership of and responsibility for the community's future? What messages should comprise the contemporary British Jewish narrative?

### **Order of priorities**

Whilst many students exhibit a strong sense of Jewish peoplehood and appear to be comfortable with the idea of a shared Jewish destiny, what 'being Jewish' means to these students is biased towards notions of external threat over and above individual responsibility. Remembering the Holocaust, combating antisemitism and supporting Israel are all more likely to define what being Jewish means to them than charitable giving, volunteering or supporting social justice causes. Without wishing to understate the importance of

the former, it is striking that, at this stage in their development, the Jewishness of this cohort appears to have been informed more by the forces that seek to do damage to the Jewish People than by the values that seek to underpin what the Jewish People ought to be. The Jewish practices and values of volunteering and charitable giving are at least partially lost on this group. We might ask, is this set of priorities in the right order? Similarly, to what extent should Jewish identity be informed by the genuine external threats that exist, and to what extent should it be informed by our own internal Jewish texts and values? If an adjustment towards the latter is desirable, what Jewish habits should students and young people be encouraged and empowered to adopt in order to facilitate the development of a more robust identity of this type?

### **Provision in proportion**

We observed that the 'home and away' period generates a range of concerns or worries for Jewish students, chief among which are passing exams, finding a job, relationship issues and living up to parental expectations. Strikingly, concerns about anti-Israel sentiment or antisemitism at university feature much lower down the list. In part, this may be explained by the finding that the proportion of British students in general that harbours 'very negative' feelings towards Israel is actually very small; it may also be a result of students' claims that anti-Israel activity is, on the whole, fairly easy to avoid. The questions that therefore arise include: are communal investments in student life currently in proportion to the actual concerns of students? To what extent do communal fears about antisemitism and anti-Israel sentiment cloud our view of the predominant issues that concern Jewish students on a day-to-day basis? What new support infrastructures, if any, should be introduced to support them with their primary concerns?

### **Social clustering**

The decisions that Jewish students are taking and the choices they are making are resulting, consciously or otherwise, in quite remarkable, though not unusual, levels of Jewish 'clustering'. Through biasing choices to traditional degree paths, expressing preference for a rather narrow range of institutions and 'university towns', and selecting courses from a relatively limited range of disciplines and subjects, over half of today's

Jewish students are filtered and funnelled into just eight out of 113 higher educational institutions. Strikingly, there are as many Jewish students studying at the three universities of Leeds, Birmingham and Nottingham, as there are in the 73 least Jewishly populous universities put together. How should Jewish student providers respond to this reality? Should student provision be restricted to those few places where Jewish students are most likely to congregate? What provision should be made available to Jewish students based at the vast range of ‘peripheral’ universities where there is little, if any, Jewish infrastructure at all? In an era of limited funds, what decisions should be taken about where scarce resources should be most efficiently targeted?

### Israel in perspective

Israel matters enormously to Jewish students. For most, it is fundamental to their Jewish identities. Almost all have been there, most feel positive towards it, and for a clear majority, supporting Israel is considered to be an important part of being Jewish. But in spite of this, many report that they are unable to raise the topic of Israel publicly on campus, even in ostensibly apolitical contexts such as ‘Israel Awareness Weeks’, without the prospect of being chided by a hostile minority for doing so. This is not an acceptable situation. Nevertheless, it is important to contextualize the issue from the perspective of the students themselves. First, the notion that students in the general population tend to harbour negative views about Israel is false. On the contrary, the majority is disinterested and holds no opinions at all, and of those who do have an opinion, half hold a positive view and half hold a negative view. Only a very small minority holds very negative views; whilst this minority is more than sufficient to make life difficult and unpleasant for Jewish students, it is in no sense omnipresent. Second, many make it clear that anti-Israel campaigns or activities can easily be avoided if students wish to do so—indeed, many have no interest at all in the political issues that Israel engenders. Third, perhaps most importantly, Jewish students are not overwhelmingly worried about the negativity, neither in absolute nor relative terms; compared with other issues such as passing exams and finding a job, anti-Israel sentiment on campus is of relatively marginal concern to them. The important questions, therefore, include the following: how should the community respond

to the genuine challenge of anti-Israel sentiment on university campuses in an effective way? How should students and the community respond to these serious problems, whilst at the same time maintaining a sense of proportion both about the extent of the issues and the position they hold in Jewish students’ consciousness?

### Addressing alienation

In both the quantitative and qualitative data we observed evidence that several groups of Jewish students do not feel that they are being appropriately provided for on campus, and worse, feel alienated from what is on offer. If the overarching purpose of Jewish student provision is to ensure that *all* Jewish students, irrespective of background or upbringing, are supported, it is apparent that some are being short-changed. Chief among these, though not alone, are students who identify as ‘Reform/Progressive’. Some of these describe how they have felt rejected by their more ‘Traditional’ peers, and frustrated in their desires to create spaces in which to practise their type of Judaism. Related to this is the observation that Reform and more secular Jewish students are generally less involved in organized Jewish student life, a fact which may be accounted for both by the nature of their upbringing and a seeming lack of attractive opportunities on offer. Other Jewish students, from a range of backgrounds, feel alienated from large-scale social events, such as ‘Booze for Jews’, and appear to be struggling to find opportunities to engage with their Jewishness on a more meaningful and values-based level. The emerging questions include: what range of provision is required to ensure that students’ individual needs and interests can be catered for in a respectful, relevant and positive way? What frameworks are required to achieve this, and what should the relationship be between them? Are Jewish organizations that are active on campus sufficiently varied in their ethos and approach to be able to meet the needs of a diverse student body?

### Looking towards the future: Continuity or renewal?

In the foreword to this report, we noted that this generation of students is a particularly interesting cohort to investigate because it was born into, and has grown up within the context of a community that has invested heavily in its own future. The book that launched the British Jewish educational



organization 'Jewish Continuity' in the 1990s famously asked a highly provocative question: will we have Jewish grandchildren? We will have to wait some time before knowing the answer, but these data offer us a first insight into an interim question: will we have Jewish children? The answer, at this stage at least, appears to be yes. The students in this sample are, on the whole, Jewishly engaged and involved, and seem more than likely to 'continue' the Judaism with which they have been brought up; indeed, in many respects, they are strikingly similar to their parents. Their Jewish identities, their characteristics of behaviour and belonging and the ways in which they practise their Judaism are all familiar. In that sense, they are continuity personified. That said, there are some concerns: their identities are informed more by external threats than by internal Jewish values, they feel misrepresented and voiceless, some feel alienated, and a number are rather pessimistic about the Jewish community's prospects.

However, 'continuity' was not the only term employed to capture the new educational agenda which emerged in the early 1990s; the preferred

term subsequently adopted was 'renewal.' In contrast to the word 'continuity', which suggests a desire to maintain the status quo, 'renewal' suggests an element of cultural renaissance and creative change. In this respect, this cohort does not appear to be exhibiting any obvious or clear signs of 'renewal' at this stage. Nevertheless, the jury is still out; the post-university years of emerging adulthood will also shape and inform the types of Jews they ultimately become. Some things can be more confidently predicted than others. Those who grew up involved and 'Jewishly busy' have remained so at university and, are likely to stay involved in the future. Those who have grown up less involved and are not finding new reasons to become more involved at university are at risk of drifting away from the community. The home and away years represent a critical period during which new and important messages about, and opportunities for, Jewish engagement can be created. Determining what these are, and how they can be tailored to genuinely meet the diverse needs and interests of all Jewish students, is arguably one of the most important priorities for the Jewish community today.



## 5 Appendix

### Methodology

Randomly sampling Jews is notoriously difficult. This is primarily because there are no comprehensive and up-to-date Jewish contact lists available from which samples can be drawn. Therefore, alternative approaches must be used to build up Jewish samples. That said, Jewish students are perhaps more readily contactable than most other Jewish sub-groups since most, if not all, have email addresses and a high proportion are members, or have been members, of Jewish student organizations, especially the Union of Jewish Students (UJS). On the other hand, of all Jewish cohorts, Jewish students are perhaps the least likely to be motivated to take part in a sample survey of this type.

Therefore, it was decided early on that UJS should be the major partner helping the survey team to contact the Jewish student population but it was also decided that a cash incentive in the form of a prize draw<sup>31</sup> would be necessary in order to maximize response levels. The UJS database contained about 6,000 email addresses and all of these were used in an effort to recruit respondents. In addition, the survey team set up a network of seventeen ‘nodes’ who were Jewish students whom the survey team and its partners recognized as being at the centre of various student social networks. Nodes were not necessarily chosen for their access to large numbers of Jewish students—rather, they helped the team locate and recruit students who were less Jewishly engaged or formally connected by means of their own personal email address lists. Nodes were offered a small fee for their assistance. Further, a modest advertising campaign was conducted in the run up to, and during, the fieldwork period. It consisted of eye-catching advertisements that were distributed as posters to Jewish societies (JSocs) and to nodes, and emailed to Jewish students and JSocs to promote the survey.

The NJSS questionnaire was developed following consultations with various experts who work

31 Respondents were offered the opportunity to enter into a prize draw for an Apple iPad worth £500 on the condition that they provided mobile phone contact details.

with students and understand their needs, as well as professional advice from Ipsos MORI. However, final decisions on questionnaire content and question wording remained the sole preserve of JPR.

The fieldwork was conducted by Ipsos MORI and the survey was delivered via an online instrument<sup>32</sup> between 15th February 2011 and 15th March 2011. The participation criteria were for respondents to be ‘Jewish and currently registered to study full- or part-time at a UK-based university or college.’ A total of 925 valid responses was received from respondents attending 95 different UK institutions. This total is estimated to represent between 11% and 14% of the total Jewish student population in Britain (see Technical Details).

It is interesting to note that the survey itself revealed that email is not necessarily the most effective method for contacting Jewish students. Indeed, it appears that email may now be one of the least common ways in which students themselves tend to communicate with each other (see Fig. 41, page 37). Less than 6% of respondents said email was their most preferred, or even their second most preferred, method of personal communication.

Respondents heard about the survey through multiple sources, but a majority (60%) responded to a request from UJS. Of those who did not hear about the survey through UJS, Facebook was an important source (a further 19% heard about it this way), as were the ‘nodes’ recruited by JPR to help publicize the survey (14% were recruited this way).<sup>33</sup>

32 For a more detailed summary of the potential pitfalls of online surveying and the type of control and security measures that the survey team was able to utilize: Graham D. (2011, forthcoming), *Surveying minority groups online: an assessment of the methodological approach used in the 2010 Israel Survey of Jews in Britain*. London: JPR / Institute for Jewish Policy Research.

33 It should be noted that less than 1% of respondents said they ‘received an email from my synagogue’, despite 53% of respondents stating that they were connected to a home synagogue in some way. JPR approached the country’s 20 largest synagogues

In addition to this part of the project, a parallel survey was undertaken on behalf of JPR by Ipsos MORI using a random sample of British students taken from its own panel. This was carried out because of the lack of credible baseline datasets with which the NJSS sample of Jewish students can be directly compared.<sup>34</sup> A total of 761 valid responses were obtained from this National Student Benchmark Survey (NSBS).

In addition to this quantitative aspect of NJSS, five focus groups were also carried out shortly after the questionnaire fieldwork was completed. A total of 43 Jewish students took part in this stage of the project between June and July 2011 and each was paid a small fee for their time. They were selected both from the list of questionnaire respondents and through two Jewish youth movements (the Reform group RSY-Netzer and the Orthodox group Bnei Akiva). The focus groups allowed the survey team to hear the voices of the students themselves, and quotations are presented throughout the report to enhance the understanding of the identity of Jewish students and experience by adding nuance, insight and narrative. In general, quotations have been selected to enrich the quantitative findings. The names of all speakers have been changed to protect anonymity.

A full analysis and discussion of how representative the NJSS sample is can be found in the next section. In summary, although the sample resembles the wider Jewish community in terms of geography, certain demographic characteristics, and Jewish background variables, it is almost inevitable—given the sampling technique used—that it has captured the more Jewishly engaged sections of the student population at the expense of the less Jewishly engaged. Thus, for example, the proportion of respondents who participated in an Israel Experience programme is about 23% higher than

(by membership) to see if they might be willing to contact people who grew up in their communities and were currently studying at university. In almost all instances, however, synagogues were unable to do so because they lacked the necessary email contact details.

34 Even the Census is of limited value in this instance since it enumerated 'students' from age 16-24 and only limited data are collected for those living away from home during term-time.

would have been the case had a strictly random sample of Jewish students been obtained.

Unfortunately, because of the lack of appropriate baseline data for Jewish students, it is not possible to weight the NJSS dataset to take account of this particular bias. We have to accept, therefore, that the data reflect the characteristics of the more active and engaged sector of the Jewish student population. Whilst the majority of Jewish students fall into this category, the sample does under-represent students who are the least Jewishly engaged, though the extent to which it does so cannot be determined with the currently available data. That said, many of the trends within the data (such as the extent to which students volunteer disaggregated by Jewish identity) are likely to be true of the under-sampled sectors as well. It is mainly whole sample estimates (such as the percentage of students overall who volunteer) that are more applicable to the more engaged sections of the Jewish student population in general.

## Technical Details

### *Estimating the NJSS sample proportion*

In order to contextualize the NJSS sample it is important to gain an understanding of the proportion of all Jewish students it represents. However, to do that requires knowledge of the total size of Britain's Jewish student population, a figure that can only be approximated, at best. This is because, like all identities, Jewish identity is a fluid concept; the boundaries between Jew and non-Jew are blurred, especially when the definition of 'Jewish' is self-defined, as is the case with this survey. Thus, the very notion of a 'fixed' number of Jewish students studying at any one time is problematic. However, in order to provide some context, it is necessary to produce a rough estimate, at least, of the Jewish student population size. Unfortunately, even after factoring in for Jewish undercount, even Census data do not provide a wholly accurate picture because they assume a broader definition of 'student' than the one being used in this survey and, at the time of writing, were ten years out of date.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, the size of the Jewish student population must necessarily be inferred.

35 Data from the 2011 Census will only become available up to a year after the publication of this report.

Jewish students aged 19, 20, and 21 in 2011 would have been aged 9, 10, and 11 years old when the Census was carried out in 2001. Rolling the 2001 Census figures forward to 2011 for these Jewish cohorts provides an estimate of the total Jewish population size (ignoring net immigration) at the time of the survey, which is approximately 8,400 people.<sup>36</sup> Census data can also be used to estimate the proportion of this group that will have gone to university (see lines 7-9 in Table 3, page 67), which turns out to be about 71%. Taking into account the presumed national undercount for Jews in the 2001 Census of 7.7%<sup>37</sup> due, in part, to the voluntary nature of the Census question on religion, we arrive at a figure of almost 6,500 Jewish students. However, this total does not include postgraduates, or those taking undergraduate courses lasting more than three years, who were also included in this survey. Since there are no data sources available that can be used to even approximate the size of this group, a generous upper estimate can be made by simply making the somewhat improbable assumption that all third years continue with their studies for a fourth year, whilst ignoring any fifth years and above. Inelegant as this approach may be, it produces a sample pool size of about 8,600 Jewish students. Given that the NJSS sample contains 925 valid responses, this suggests the sample proportion is in the region of 11% to 14% of the total Jewish student population in Britain.

### **How representative is the NJSS sample?**

Locating relevant baseline data to assess sample representativeness is particularly challenging, although some assessments are more straightforward than others. The simplest comparison is for gender. The sample contained slightly more females (53.3%) than males (46.7%). This female skew also exists in the general student population and to a greater extent (58.4% is female).<sup>38</sup> Similarly, in terms of country of birth, 84.3% were born in the UK, which closely resembles the 2001 Census proportion for this age group (85.2%).<sup>39</sup>

36 Based on data from ONS 2001 Census Table KS07

37 See <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/dataqualityevrep.asp>

38 Ibid.

39 Sample of anonymized records (SAR) for Jews aged 16-24 in 2001.

Clearly, the way in which the sample was built will impact on its representativeness. UJS membership lists were a key source of contact data and, as a result, 38% of respondents said they had heard about the survey solely through UJS, with a further 22% mentioning UJS as a contact source alongside others (such as Facebook). If members of UJS are not 'typical' of the general Jewish student population (as some of the findings in this study suggest), then it is possible that the sample is biased. However, it is not clear how, or even whether, UJS membership, in and of itself, skews responses. Rather, the factors that impact on the likelihood of a student joining UJS—such as Jewish upbringing and previous experience of Jewish youth movements—may be more significant.

One important baseline relates to Jewish identity. Data are available from previous JPR surveys,<sup>40</sup> Board of Deputies' synagogue membership surveys,<sup>41</sup> and the 2001 Census,<sup>42</sup> which indicate the expected proportions of 'Orthodox', 'Non-Orthodox'<sup>43</sup> and 'unaligned' Jews we would expect to find in a random sample of Jews, and these can be compared with the proportions found in the NJSS sample. The comparison is not straightforward since the surveys mentioned above encompass the whole community, whereas NJSS is restricted to students alone. Therefore, only data on Jewish students' upbringing are presented in Figure 70, and are compared with current identity data for the whole Jewish population based on Census, Board of Deputies and JPR datasets. This shows that the NJSS

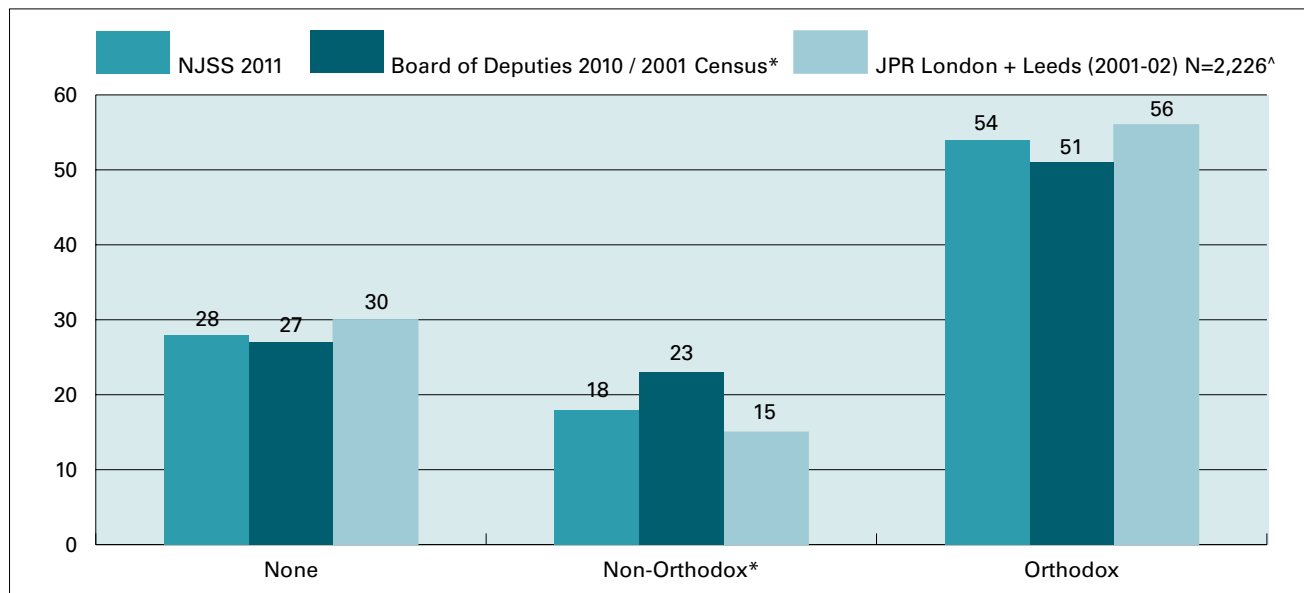
40 Becher, Waterman, Kosmin and Thomson (2002); Waterman (2003).

41 Graham and Vulkan (2010).

42 Although the Census does not record Jewish denominations, neither does the Board of Deputies collect data on those who are not affiliated to a synagogue. Subtracting the Board of Deputies data from the Census gives an approximation of the size of this 'unaligned' group.

43 In the JPR survey data, 'Orthodox' encompasses the categories 'Traditional (not strictly Orthodox)', 'Orthodox (e.g. would not turn on a light on Sabbath)', and 'Haredi (ultra-Orthodox, Hassidic)' whereas 'Non-Orthodox' encompasses 'Reform/Progressive', 'Non-practising (i.e. secular/cultural)', 'Just Jewish', and 'None'. In the Board of Deputies' data 'Orthodox' refers to Strictly Orthodox, Central Orthodox (including the United Synagogue), and Sephardi aligned movements, and 'non-Orthodox' refers to Masorti, Reform, and Liberal movements.

Figure 70: NJSS data on Jewish upbringing compared with available Jewish identity baseline data (%)



\* Non-Orthodox refers to progressive Jewish denominations, including Masorti, Reform and Liberal Judaism. 'Orthodox' includes mainstream Orthodox (e.g. United Synagogue)

^ The Board of Deputies data are taken from Graham and Vulkan 2010, and use 2001 Census data on Jewish households as a baseline. JPR data are based on analysis of the original datasets.

sample closely resembles the national Jewish population. Just over half (54%) of NJSS respondents were brought up in (nominally) 'Orthodox' households, similar to the proportion of 'Orthodox' households recorded in the general Jewish population (51%). It is also evident that the proportion of the NJSS sample that is 'unaligned' (28%) is very similar to data for the general Jewish population (27%).

A second key baseline relates to levels of Jewish engagement. One of the primary concerns of the survey team was the possible over-sampling of students who are more Jewishly engaged. This is based on the assumption that, by definition, the more Jewishly engaged people are, the more likely they are to appear on Jewish email lists such as those used by the NJSS survey team. They are also presumably more likely to take an interest in completing such a questionnaire in the first place. Unfortunately, it is not possible to place accurate margins of error on either of these possibilities. However, Table 3 presents a calculation using UJIA data on the numbers of young people that take part in Israel Experience summer programmes ('tour') each year. Using tour data as a proxy for 'Jewish engagement' it is theoretically possible to estimate the extent to which NJSS over/undersampled tour participation.

In summary, we estimate that approximately 67% of all Jewish 16 year-olds (who go on to university) take part in Israel Experience programmes annually; the equivalent proportion in the NJSS sample is 82% (Table 3). This suggests that the NJSS has oversampled 'engaged' Jews by almost 23%. In other words, there are 23% more Jewishly 'engaged' students in the sample than would be expected if it had been entirely random based on this definition of 'engaged'.

Neither of these 'baselines'—on Jewish identity or tour participation—is ideal but, on balance, in the absence of satisfactory alternatives they are better than none. Taken at face value, they suggest that the sample is reasonably representative in terms of the students' Jewish denominational background, but that their current levels of Jewish engagement are probably higher than is the case for Jewish students as a whole. So for example, when NJSS reports that up to 84% of respondents are currently, or have formerly been, members of UJS (see page 40) it is likely that the 'true' figure is nearer 68% (assuming the 23% over-sample estimate in Table 3 is accurate).

To what extent does this oversampling matter? It means that extrapolation of results to the whole

Table 3: Estimation of over/undersampling of Jewish engagement using Israel Experience programme ('tour') data<sup>i</sup>

<b>Year NJSS respondents went on tour</b>		
Average age of NJSS students (18-23) (years)	20.5	(1)
Age for going on tour = 16, therefore 20 year-olds in 2011 were 16 in:	2007	(2)
<b>Total number of Jewish 16 year-olds in 2007</b>		
16 year-olds were 10 in 2001 – number of Jewish 10 year-olds in 2001 Census	2,808	(3)
Rolling 2,808 forward using lifetables produces the number of 16 year-olds in 2007	2,766	(4)
Subtracting the proportion that were foreign <sup>ii</sup> from (#4)	2,351	(5)
Adding to (#5) the proportion undercounted in the Census (7.7%) <sup>iii iv</sup>	2,547	(6)
<b>Number of 16 year-olds in 2007 who went on to university</b>		
Average rate of increase in numbers gaining degrees by Census cohort <sup>v</sup> (%)	32.4	(7)
Expected proportion of 2011 cohort at university (%)	73.7	(8)
Number that will have gone to university (#8 as % of #6)	1,878	(9)
<b>Average number per year on tour 2006-08 (UJIA data)</b>	1,249	(10)
<b>Average proportion of university students in 2011 that went on tour in years 2006-08</b> (#10 as % of #9) (%)	66.5	(11)
<b>Proportion of NJSS respondents that went on tour</b>		
Number of UK-born NJSS respondents who went on tour	677	(12)
Total number of UK-born NJSS respondents	830	(13)
Proportion of UK-born NJSS respondents who went on tour (#12 as % of #13) (%)	81.6	(14)
Percentage point difference (#14 subtract #11)	15.1	(15)
Percent oversampled – proportionate difference (#15 as % of #11) (%)	22.6	(16)

<sup>i</sup> Source: we are grateful to Dr Helena Miller of the UJIA for these data;

<sup>ii</sup> Using samples of anonymized records (SAR) data from ONS shows that 15% of Jews aged 16-24 were born outside the UK;

<sup>iii</sup> Source: ONS 2001 Census – Table KS07;

<sup>iv</sup> This calculation does not attempt to account for the strictly-Orthodox (haredi) component of the population who were less likely to appear in the Census, participate in Israel Experience programmes or go to university;

<sup>v</sup> The 2001 Census reported that 55.7% of Jewish 25-34 year-olds held degrees, compared with 43.8% of 35-49 year olds and 31.8% of 50-59 year olds (ONS Census Table S158).

Jewish student population (i.e. external validity) must be done carefully, especially when focusing on issues relating to Jewish engagement.

As indicated above, whole sample estimates of, for example, the proportion of Jewish students who volunteer, are likely to be inflated. However, some of the most important findings of NJSS relate to trends within the sample itself, such as the relationship between type of Jewish upbringing

and involvement with Jewish youth movements. The pattern of such within-sample relationships is less likely to be influenced by the oversampling of the more engaged Jewish students.

In the final analysis, the thrust of most communal policy and planning work is aimed at the majority of Jewish students who are reasonably engaged. In that context, the bias towards Jewish engagement is acceptable.

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