

# **The Construction of Diversity and Difference in UK Jewish Nonprofit Organisations**

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of the University of London for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## Abstract

In diversity studies, categories of difference are seen as building blocks. Critical organisational scholars emphasise the need to move from fixed conceptualisations of identity towards a more flexible, intersectional, multi-layered, and context-sensitive understanding of social difference and organisational inequality. This critique also involves shifting from a social psychology lens to a sociologically-oriented and historically-informed perspective.

The elusive and multi-dimensional nature of Jewish identity offers a unique opportunity to explore those complexities around organisations and social difference. Jewish difference seems to disrupt diversity scholarship and practice, problematising ideas of whiteness and otherness, dominance and marginality, diaspora and homeland. Bridging the gap between EDI and Jewishness—and between management and organisation studies and Jewish studies—is of theoretical, practical, and political importance.

The research study presented in this thesis examines the construction of diversity and difference in Jewish nonprofit organisations in the UK. It is positioned at the intersection of three main contexts: British society, the Jewish world, and the nonprofit sector. Adopting a sector-based approach, two data sources were collected and analysed: 45 interviews with employees, senior managers, and volunteers; and 102 online statements by 34 organisations within the sector.

The empirical discussion traces the construction of three main social differences: Jewishness, race and ethnicity, and political-ideological difference. Conceptualising the Jewish nonprofit as an identity-based and a diaspora organisation, the findings shed light on the boundary work around the Jewish space and the Jewish community, the relations between Jewishness and whiteness at work, and the role of Israel-Palestine in shaping diversity debates in the diaspora.

The study contributes to understanding the contextual and relational nature of diversity; disputes and paradoxes around identity in organisations; and diversity-inclusion gaps. It suggests the idea of the political case for diversity, elaborates debates around whiteness at work, and contributes to nonprofit literature around the construction and role of communities.

# Dedication

In the loving memory of my grandmothers

Dina Tavor

(née Rafaeli)

1927 – 2018

Tehran – Ramat Gan

Elisheva Liesel Pick

(née Kohan)

1917 – 2007

Berlin – Tel Aviv

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## List of abbreviations

BAME	Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic
BDS	Boycott, divestment, and sanctions
BLM	Black Lives Matter
DEI	Diversity, equity, and inclusion (US context)
EDI	Equality, diversity, and inclusion (UK context)
EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission (UK)
EU	European Union
IBNP	Identity-based nonprofit organisations
IHRA	International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance
NCVO	National Council for Voluntary Organisations
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPO	Nonprofit organisation
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States

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# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

Explorations of Jewish identity within management and organisation studies, and diversity management research in particular, are quite uncommon. The literature on inequality at work offers discussions on the Israeli context (Jakob Sadeh & Mair, 2023; Jamal, 2017; Lomsky-Feder & Ben-Ari, 2013; Payes, 2005), but the Jewish diaspora context is yet to be deeply investigated. The main angle taken by academic and think tank researchers who look at Jewish experiences in organisations has been that of antisemitism (Greene & Paul, 2021; Hirsh, 2013; Saxe et al., 2015; Shankley & Rhodes, 2020; Wright, Volodarsky, et al., 2022), which is crucial and urgent given rising levels of antisemitism in Europe and the United States. However, critical analysis of the complex, contested, context-rooted ways in which Jewish identities are constructed, positioned, discussed, and managed in organisations is still needed, as this can offer new insight not only into Jewish contemporary life, but also into organisational life and diversity management.

Context is critical in shaping theory development around management and organisations (Alvesson & Willmott, 2003; Nkomo, Syed, et al., 2019). Critical diversity researchers pointed out the need to develop more nuanced, flexible, and context-specific ways of understanding the construction of difference in organisations, in ways that challenge rigid conceptualisation of identity in diversity research and practice (Clair et al., 2019; Frenkel & Shenhav, 2006; Prasad, 2003; Zaroni et al., 2010). Their critique also pointed to the limitations of a social-psychology perspective in unravelling the complexity of organisational dynamics. Instead, it emphasised the need to adopt more sociologically oriented approaches that position organisational dynamics in wider contexts of power relations on communal, societal, national and global levels. This shift, often associated with deep-level interpretative qualitative analysis, is believed to provide a deeper understanding of the contextual, relational, intersectional, and contested dimensions of diversity and difference in organisations. Critical diversity studies have also emphasised how the meaning, rationale, and use of ‘diversity’ itself changes in national, social, and organisational contexts—moving between moral, legal and business motivations, rhetoric and practice (Healy, 2015; Kirton,

2009), and the ways in which the language and tools of EDI can be used to advance different social and political agendas, some of them going beyond the equality project (Berrey, 2015; Lombardo et al., 2009; Tatli et al., 2012).

Although diversity research is not new, and comprises a substantial body of literature, it seems that *critical* diversity research is needed more than ever, as societies are becoming not only more diverse; but more unequal, divided and polarised, and less stable and safe. In those conditions, the management of difference at the societal and organisational levels is a necessary and difficult task. What further complicates the management of difference in these contexts are polarised political trends. On the one hand, social movements are experiencing a wave of re-politicisation and re-radicalisation (such as Black Lives Matter, Me Too, and in some ways also the Palestinian liberation movement), and their demands for transformative social change need to be better translated into organisational practice (Nkomo, 2021; Nkomo, Bell, et al., 2019). On the other hand, nationalist and populist movements gain increased political power. Major political events and trends such as Brexit and ‘Trumpism’ shape power relations in society as well as its organisations (Kerr & Śliwa, 2020; Markham, 2020). This political landscape can turn diversity rhetoric into an empty shell within a wider racist, nationalistic, and violent discourse. The field of diversity is positioned at the heart of these political contestations. The diversity pushback is particularly strong in the US, but the usefulness of the EDI framework is being increasingly questioned in the UK too. Against this backdrop, looking at the management of difference around Jewish identity, which in recent years has been positioned at the centre of political debates in the UK, is of unique value.

A major contribution of the research study presented in this thesis is rooted in the gap between EDI research and practice, on the one hand, and Jewish identity on the other. Two related trends can be observed: researchers and practitioners struggle to ‘fit’ Jewish identity into the EDI framework, hence this identity is often overlooked or misunderstood; and Jewish groups are increasingly questioning the capacity of EDI to address Jewish concerns.

Moreover, some speakers linked the omission of Jews from EDI debates to latent antisemitism within the field itself (Baddiel, 2021; Greene & Paul, 2021). A key arena where this gap is discussed is on campuses, where political activism around Israel-Palestine is often at the centre of debate. A key question posed by researchers and practitioners is whether critique of Israel should be considered antisemitic (CST, 2020; Saxe et al., 2015), and if so, what types of critique. This research takes a step back from that particular question, and examines various meeting points between the field of EDI and the Jewish experience. This

intersection is not only overlooked in EDI research, it is also a missing building block in the wider struggle to advance intergroup relations, solidarity, and justice in the UK, in the Jewish diaspora, and possibly in Israel-Palestine too.

We can point out several dilemmas and tensions that may occur at the intersection of ‘diversity’ and ‘Jewishness’. First, while the field of EDI relies on classification and categorisation of social groups, researchers and employers struggle to grasp the ‘nature’ of Jewish difference, which spans and draws on religious, ethnic, national, and cultural collective identities, and carries a heavy historical burden around the concept of ‘race’. Second, Jews and non-Jews struggle to reconcile histories of racialisation and persecution of Jews in Europe as non-white with the current demands that Jewish people acknowledge a white privilege. This tension affects black-Jewish relations, and also ignores the experiences of Jews of colour and Sephardi/Mizrahi Jews. Third is the unique nature of antisemitism. As objects of racism, Jews are often imagined and stereotyped as both low and high status. Contemporary antisemitic debates that associate Jews with ‘the ultimate oppressors’, building on classical tropes around Jews and power, may contribute to the exclusion of Jews from EDI debates. Fourth, disagreements around the definition of antisemitism (including among Jews) complicates this discussion, particularly as it shifts the debate from anti-Jewish racism to hostility towards Israel as a nation and Jews as a unitary group. Fifth, the binary public discourse around Israel-Palestine pressures Jews to classify themselves and declare their commitment to a ‘pro-Israeli’ or ‘pro-Palestinian’, or Zionist/anti-Zionist stance, ignoring the complexity of diaspora-home relations for Jews. The complex nature of these issues is linked both to the multi-dimensional nature of Jewish identity, and to the characteristics and limitations of the EDI field.

From a bird’s eye view of the academic landscape, we can identify a separation between two fields of knowledge: the management of difference in society and organisations, which can be found in departments of sociology and politics, and in schools of public policy and management; and research on Jewish life, which is usually conducted in departments of history, religion, and Jewish studies. This thesis introduces into the study of management and organisations some of the ideas around the complex and contested nature of (Jewish) identity which have emerged in Jewish studies. For example, Jewish studies scholars have investigated the anomalous nature of Jewish identity which walks the line between perceived positions of minority and majority, insider and outsider, dominance and marginality, whiteness and otherness (Biale et al., 1998; Brettschneider, 1996; Diemling & Ray, 2016).

Building connections between those scholarly fields can help embed Jewish identity and Jewish concerns into the field of diversity, and can also develop the understanding of the relational and contextual nature of diversity discourse and practice. It can offer insight into the enigmas, dilemmas, and paradoxes around difference and similarity, inclusion and exclusion, voice and silence, recognition and distribution, and business and ethics, in organisational life more broadly (Berrey, 2015; De-los-Reyes, 2000; Ferdman, 2017; Smith & Lewis, 2011).

To bridge the gaps between these disciplines, this research study rests on two important foundations. First, in contrast to the majority of social research focusing on Jewish people, it intentionally **avoids adopting a particular categorisation of Jews as a group** (e.g., religious, ethnic, national, cultural). By suspending existing interpretations of Jewishness that are used in legal, public and scholarly debates, the study reveals the multiplicity and the complexity of ‘Jewish difference’, and the implications of this richness for organisational life. Grasping the intricacy of Jewish identity is a key factor in the challenge faced by researchers and practitioners to position Jews and Jewish experiences in the diversity matrix. This approach enables a deeper investigation of the changing construction of identity in different organisational, social, and political contexts.

The second foundation of this study is a focus on the **politics of difference and diversity within Jewish organisations**, and specifically UK-based advocacy and social action nonprofits. The study analysis seeks complexity and nuance: it looks at the discussions, perceptions, disagreements, managerial uses, tensions, inconsistencies, and critique around diversity as they emerge in Jewish nonprofits, through the eyes of Jewish and non-Jewish employers, employees and volunteers. This organisational setting is important for several reasons. First, the nonprofit world has been criticised for its unequal racial and socioeconomic foundations and binaries between givers and receivers, progress and backwardness. Jewish nonprofits’ engagement with both Jewish and non-Jewish communities challenges those assumptions. Second, diversity research usually looks at marginalisation and exclusion within ‘mainstream’ organisations. The construction of diversity within organisations of the ‘oppressed and marginalised’ received little attention. This research setting raises interesting anomalies, such as the role and voice of members of majority groups within minority-led organisations, and whether their marginality or absence can possibly be analysed as a form of exclusion. Third, in this context, Jewish organisations are unique because the actual categorisation of Jews as part of the ‘oppressed and marginalised’ is



sometimes called into question by Jews and non-Jews. This complexity offers a unique setting to investigate the construction of concepts such as privilege and marginality, whiteness and otherness, and the boundary work around social differences (Lamont & Molnar, 2002). Fourth, identity-based nonprofits are not only employers and communal spaces but also social agents that play a role in wider politics. The size of the Jewish minority in the UK has been estimated at around 300,000 people, making up 0.5% of the national population<sup>1</sup> (Graham & Boyd, 2022, 2024). The Jewish community engages in British politics largely through its representative bodies and advocacy groups, but the legitimacy and authority of those organisations to represent Jews in Britain is also challenged. This research study looks at internal diversity debates as they correspond with wider advocacy roles, such as Israel advocacy. Moreover, civil society organisations seem to provide a fertile soil for diverse and inclusive organisations to grow, due to their connection with marginalised communities and understanding of their concerns, their commitment to social justice, and their innovative and politically radical visions. Those ideas are questioned in the study. Lastly, during sections of the research analysis, the study conceptualises the Jewish nonprofit organisation as a diaspora organisation. The centrality of home-diaspora relations in Jewish life provides novel insights around organisational diversity, national sentiment, and political-ideology.

A conceptual and terminological note may be helpful here about the term ‘nonprofit organisation’ and related terms, and how they are used in this thesis. Nonprofits are usually understood as organisations that do not return profits to their managers or ‘owners’, are institutionally separate from the state or government, and are dedicated to creating social impact rather than profit (Rothschild & Milofsky, 2006; Salamon et al., 1999) (see 3.3). In academic and practitioner debates, the nonprofit sector is also referred to as the ‘voluntary sector’, the ‘third sector’, or the ‘civil society sector’. While each of these terms emphasises different dimensions of the sector, broadly speaking they are all used to distinguish it from the public sector and the private sector (or from the state and the market), in terms of their function and their guiding values, and sometimes also to differentiate it from the family private sphere (Alcock, 2010). While this thesis frequently uses the term ‘nonprofit sector’, other overlapping terms are also relevant to the discussion. The term ‘charity’ is of particular importance, as the vast majority of the nonprofit organisations that are included in this

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<sup>1</sup> According to the 2021 UK census, there were close to 280,000 Jews in the UK. However, since this figure is based on religious classification, it excludes people who identify as Jews in other ways (by ethnicity, culture, etc.). More inclusive estimations usually estimate the UK Jewish community at around 300,000 people (Graham & Boyd, 2024).

research are registered charities. This legal definition means they are established exclusively for charitable purposes, to benefit the community at large (HMRC, 2022). The study also includes some not-for-profit initiatives and groups that are not registered charities. Those groups either decided to operate informally, or have registered as nonprofit companies, often because of the restrictions on political activity that is associated with charitable status (see section 5.3.3.4).

This research study examines the construction of diversity and difference by focusing on three social differences. Each of the three dimensions has a different status in the UK field of EDI, and in the Jewish world, and each of them reveals different complexities of the intersection of organisational diversity and Jewish identity. First, the study traces the changing role of **Jewishness** as a category that does not have a fixed or agreed meaning, and whose location within diversity debates is unclear and contested, as it may signify positions of dominance and marginality, religious and ethnic collective identities, and so on. Second, it looks at **ethno-racial difference**. Race and ethnicity are ‘traditional’ diversity categories that lie at the heart of EDI research and practice. However, studying them in the UK Jewish context is unusual, as this context sits at the meeting point of painful Jewish collective memory, legacies of British imperialism and colonialism, and contemporary global social movements. Third, it looks at **ideological-political difference**, a social difference that has a complex and controversial position within the field of EDI, and is only partially accepted as a diversity dimension. However, given the crucial de facto role of ‘politics’ in organisational life (particularly in Jewish contexts), tracing the construction of political diversity and difference in Jewish organisations becomes interesting and important.

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This thesis was submitted a few months after what has been described as ‘the darkest day in Jewish history since the end of the Holocaust’ (JTA, 2023). Across the Jewish world, the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023 has been portrayed not only as an Israeli tragedy, but as a Jewish tragedy. At the same time, in some Jewish conversations, the war that started that day is also seen as ‘one of the greatest disasters in Jewish history... [in terms of] what we’re doing to others’ (Maté, 2024). The scale of the acts of violence, and loss of lives, homes and livelihood of communities in Israel-Palestine lie at the centre of this historical moment. Nonetheless, this is also an important moment in which to reflect on the discourse around identity and justice, on national, communal and organisational levels.

The thesis echoes numerous themes and debates that currently feature in public discourse, around the meaning of being Jewish, the relations between Jews and non-Jews (including the Palestinian ‘other’), the right to criticise Israel and the duty to defend it, and so on. These debates play a key role in shaping Jewish organisations, in the UK and beyond, on various levels: as social agents that engage in conversations with the British government and public; as identity-based institutions that set their own ideological and ethno-religious boundaries; as employers that shape the working lives of Jews and non-Jews; and as nonprofits that provide services, mobilise people, and shape communities. Thus, this thesis offers tools to interpret the current political events on organisational level.

Debates around diversity and difference in organisations tend to emphasise certain differences and sideline others based on the usefulness from a managerial or social-moral point of view (Healy, 2015; Janssens & Zanoni, 2005). During times of intensified conflict, when there is a sense of emergency and threat, collective identities tend to organise more strongly around existing boundary lines, shaping ideas of difference and similarity. Certain categories and binaries (Jewish/Arab, Israeli/Palestinian, pro-Israeli/pro-Palestinian) become extremely visible and dominant in defining collective affiliations, while other categories of difference may seem less relevant and important (man/woman, Jewish ethnicities of Ashkenazi/Mizrahi). Groups unite and divide around what they believe to be shared and conflicting interests. Particularly at this point in time, it is important to question the ways in which categories of difference are shaped. This importance is rooted in the connection between symbolic boundaries and social boundaries, discursive actions and material actions, the construction of categories of difference, and the real implications those delineations (and the beliefs around them) have on people’s lives. Organisations, and civil society organisations in particular, are a key arena in which social boundaries are forged and contested, identities are negotiated, and the future for communities is imagined. During times of crisis in particular, civil society is where people organize, dream and act. Examining and also challenging what stands behind such social and organisational visions is crucial.

An important debate that has emerged strongly across Jewish communities during the Israel-Hamas war, and is relevant to this thesis, is around the ‘betrayal of the global left’ (Booth, 2023; Medina & Lerer, 2023; Svetlova, 2023). Jewish groups and organisations in Israel and the diaspora which broadly associate with liberal Zionism have expressed feeling abandoned by those they believed were ideological allies. They point to the moral indifference of progressive scholars and activists towards atrocities that are aimed at Jews. The Jewish

critique argues that, particularly at this point in time, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should be analysed beyond binaries of oppressors and oppressed, settlers and natives, whiteness and blackness. They argue that critical and postcolonial theories, as they are being interpreted and used by many public speakers, do not do justice to the complexity of the Jewish/Israeli story. Jewish speakers have linked this one-sided interpretation to contemporary manifestations of antisemitism on the left. This debate is important for our discussion because it reveals the foundations of the gap that is at the heart of this thesis. The war exposed the breadth of the gap between the Jewish identity/experience, on the one hand, and on the other, critical scholarship and activism, of which diversity research, discourse, and practice (in its social justice interpretations) are part.

Another crucial factor that has strongly emerged during the current war since its early days, has been the silencing of critiques of Israel within Israeli society, across the Jewish world, and in different national contexts. This key theme is deeply discussed in this thesis, based on participants' work experience in Jewish organisations in the past decade or so. This discussion is related to issues such as the rise of the New Antisemitism paradigm, the ways in which ideological-political difference is managed and controlled in organisations, the implications of those efforts for employee experiences of belonging, and more.

These trends also highlight a possible wider theoretical contribution of this study. Much of the critical literature on organisational diversity that challenges diversity management is based on an anti-capitalist critique, which focuses on the neoliberal foundations of this framework; and on a feminist anti-racist perspective that criticises diversity management for re-affirming white masculine hegemony (Bell et al., 2018; Mayorga-Gallo, 2019; Swan, 2010). The unique context of this study offers a third pillar: it positions critical diversity research not only as an **anti-racist** and **anti-capitalist** project, but also as an **anti-nationalist** project. It examines not only how diversity discourse echoes economic/material benefits, and how it interacts with (challenges/sustains) gender, racial, and other social boundaries; but also how it echoes agendas, beliefs, and inequalities rooted in nationhood and nationalism, and how the utilisation of diversity may have not only economic and moral value but also political benefit to the nation state.

## 1.2 Research questions

This thesis is guided by one main research question, and three sub-questions. Each sub-question guides the discussion in each of the three empirical chapters (6, 7, and 8). The main

research question is: **How are diversity and difference constructed in Jewish nonprofit organisations in the UK?** To answer the central research question, and guided by the research aims, the following three research questions are investigated:

1. How is Jewishness constructed in diversity debates within Jewish nonprofits in the UK?
2. How is the construction of ethno-racial diversity and difference in UK Jewish nonprofits linked to the experiences of the people in them?
3. How can the representations of Israel-Palestine within UK Jewish nonprofits contribute to understanding the dynamics of political-ideological difference and diversity in organisations?

### **1.3 Thesis structure**

The thesis has nine chapters. This introductory chapter, Chapter 1, pointed out to the gaps in the literature that make this research topic new, unique, interesting, and of intellectual value for the study of management, organisations, and diversity. It also pointed out to the practical necessity and the urgency of deepening the knowledge of the investigated phenomena, given the political arena in which it is situated.

Chapter 2 discusses the conceptual background and the key theoretical debates that inform this study. It examines ‘diversity’ as a discourse, a descriptor of employee difference, a policy approach, and a conceptual construct. It looks at debates around the meaning, guiding values, and implementation of diversity. The discussion engages with related concepts such as similarity and difference, multiculturalism and assimilation, and equality and inclusion. It examines the limitations of diversity management, paradoxes around the socially constructed nature of identity, and how wider power relations in society are often left unspoken.

Chapter 3 looks at the organisational context—the nonprofit sector. It critically discusses how the ‘do-good’ ethos can shape diversity debates. It looks at binaries of givers and receivers, the for-profit logic of the nonprofit sector, and the forces that shape the sector beyond a commitment to marginalised communities. The chapter also looks at two specific models of nonprofit organisations that are relevant to the UK Jewish context: identity-based organisations, and diaspora organisations.

Chapter 4 looks at the social context—Jewish identity and the UK Jewish community. The first part delves into the gap between ‘Jewishness’ and EDI, and examines three puzzles that problematise this connection, relating to dominance and marginality, ethno-racial identity, and national-ideological dimensions. The chapter then examines the UK Jewish voluntary sector, looking at equality and diversity debates and the boundaries of ‘the Jewish Community’. The discussion returns to the conceptualisation of UK Jewish organisations as identity-based and as diaspora organisations.

Chapter 5 introduces the study methodology. It presents the research philosophy and guiding principles regarding knowledge development, as well as the research design: planning, literature review, data collection, and data analysis. It includes a detailed section on the researcher’s research positionality, as well as a discussion of the personal-professional-political nexus.

Chapter 6 looks at the construction of ‘Jewish difference’ within the sector. It examines how being Jewish or not Jewish shapes the experience and opportunities of workers, how Jewishness is understood in different organisational contexts, and how it shapes the boundaries of Jewish space. Particular attention is given to three sub-sectors that work with communities outside of British Jewry: organisations that engage in social action in the UK; international development organisations; and organisations that work around Israel-Palestine.

Chapter 7 looks at the construction of ethno-racial diversity and difference in the sector. It explores three main frames through which race and ethnicity are understood: when Jews are constructed as **white**, as **non-white**, and as **ethnically diverse**. The analysis examines how those multiple and changing meanings shape (and are shaped by) the working lives of employees, and the lives of communities and beneficiaries; and looks at who is excluded by these constructions of diversity, race/ethnicity, whiteness, and Jewish identity.

Chapter 8 focuses on political-ideological difference, particularly around nationhood. By tracing representations of Israel-Palestine, it unpicks the relations between diversity and politics. It suggests four main diversity-politics links: the **politics of diversity**, which places diversity within the particular Jewish context; the **political case for diversity**, which examines this third motivation for managing difference; **managing political diversity**, looking at the employer’s control over of political difference and dissent; and **diversity across political boundaries**, which reveals how people and voices travel between Israel-Palestine and UK Jewish organisations.

Chapter 9 reviews the positioning in the literature of the current study and its key findings. It suggests contributions to the scholarly literature around the contextual nature of diversity; the motivations for diversity management and diversity-inclusion gaps; the study of whiteness; and the study of diversity in nonprofits. The chapter suggests implications for policy and practice, research limitations, and directions for future research.

## CHAPTER TWO

# Conceptual background: Debates around diversity and difference in organisations

### 2.1 Introduction

The ways in which race, religion, gender, nationality, and other social differences are understood, discussed, treated, or ignored in organisations are influenced by broader historical and social contexts, and they echo wider philosophical, political, and sociological questions around diversity and difference. This chapter sets the conceptual background for the thesis, by positioning ‘diversity’ and the changing role of identity in organisations within discussions in organisation and management studies, and in the social sciences more broadly. Instead of adopting one definition of diversity, the chapter traces key debates around the meaning, role, and use of the concept in organisational contexts.

Gill Kirton’s theorising of diversity (2009) is used to navigate the ambiguous and fluid nature of the term. The chapter opens with **diversity as a conceptual construct**, looking at debates around difference, sameness, and the politics of recognition. Then it looks at **diversity as a policy approach**, tracing the rise of diversity management and how practice echoes ideology. The third section explores **diversity as a descriptor of employee differences**, and examines current debates around the different dimensions of diversity. The fourth theorisation, of **diversity as a discourse**, is interwoven into all of the other three discussions. The analysis of diversity as a discourse examines how it represents wider social norms, perceptions, beliefs, and processes. It is noteworthy that these different understandings of diversity are not mutually exclusive, and also overlap during the discussion in this chapter.

### 2.2 Diversity as a conceptual construct: On difference and sameness

As a conceptual construct (Kirton, 2009), the idea of diversity is often associated with the demand to acknowledge and represent social difference in social and organisational settings. In social justice theory, the ideal of diversity has its roots in multiculturalism, and is associated with **politics of difference** (Young, 1990a) and **politics of recognition** (Fraser, 1995). Broadly speaking, while the ‘politics of’ is usually used to discuss the use of power in public or organisational settings, in those debates the emphasis is particularly on the concerns and demands of identity/social groups.



While multiculturalism can be understood as a **descriptor** of reality, in the sense of having ‘several cultural groups who understand themselves as distinct in certain respects but nevertheless interact within the society’ (Young, 2001, p. 116), the **ideal** of diversity is associated with multiculturalism as a normative approach, one which ‘affirm[s] the value of such cultural diversity in terms of equality between groups, and the realization of these values in institutions and policies’ (Young, 2001, p. 116). The diversity ideal emerged in response to the ideal of assimilation as a route to equality and justice, which focuses on equal treatment based on values of universal humanity, and seeks to emphasise similarities and blur social difference (Fraser, 1995; Young, 1990a). Thus, the construct of diversity represents not only an approach towards how social difference should be **treated**; it also holds assumptions regarding what difference **is** and what it means in society—most fundamentally, accepting that social difference actually exists. As this chapter explores, these foundations reveal a tension within the field: the understanding that social difference is socially constructed, and the need to use categories of difference when ‘talking’ and ‘doing’ diversity.

### **2.2.1 The social construction of difference**

The question of how human and social difference should be understood, studied, and treated is key to political and social theory. For decades, critical thinkers have been discussing the false dichotomy of difference and sameness, arguing that men and women, black and white people, and other ‘distinct’ social groups are not born as inherently different, but rather become different in socio-political contexts (de Beauvoir, 1997). The complexity of understanding ‘difference’ has been linked to the dialectics between the imagined nature of social categories and their very real and powerful consequences on people’s lives; between the recognition that identity is socially constructed and the necessity to use its categories; an between the scepticism towards (and even rejection of) social delineations by social scientists, EDI practitioners and activists, and the reproduction of the same demarcation (Ásta, 2018; Haslanger, 2012; Shenhav & Yonah, 2009). These essentialist traps can be articulated as such: ‘We say we are aware of the dangers of essentialism, but we teach and write and think as though discrete categories of culture and language exist’ (Cole & Meadows, 2013, p. 31).

These philosophical and sociological tensions are echoed in organisational life.

Conceptualising **diversity as a discourse** (Kirton, 2009; Litvin, 1997) is useful in this discussion. If discourse is seen as the ‘representation of norms for accepted thinking and

thereby as a model for the interpretation and understanding of society' (De-los-Reyes, 2000, p. 255); then diversity discourse is how people collectively make sense of social difference and utilise it in organisational life, in ways that echo wider processes, beliefs, values and norms (such as the business case for diversity) (Kirton, 2009; Litvin, 1997). The idea of managing diversity in organisations was influenced by essentialist assumptions around difference that were developed in the natural sciences, based on similarities between organisms and differences between species. When those assumptions were translated into social spheres they formed the belief in 'natural' categories of humans (de Beauvoir, 1997; Fausto-Sterling, 1985; Litvin, 1997). Broadly speaking, an essentialist approach sees social difference as an inherent unchanging content of identity or collectivity, framed by clear boundaries (Haslam et al., 2000). It sees social, cultural and national differences as based on 'natural' divisions of societies, cultures, and nations over space and time (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992). It perceives identity as having an intrinsic content which is rooted in shared racial, cultural, and other codes and experiences (Hall, 1994). Historically, reproducing the idea that certain groups are essentially different from others served to justify, legitimise, and maintain social hierarchies: Simone de Beauvoir (1997) discussed how patriarchy uses disciplines such as religion, philosophy, theology, and science to construct the woman as the 'other' or the 'wrong' in relation to the 'neutral' man, and to 'prove' women's inferiority. Similarly, the idea that 'race' is an essential biological difference has been used to claim the inferiority of black people, Jews, Arabs, and other groups. Thus, sociological actions of racialisation and gendering—i.e., the imagination of physical, social, or cultural characteristics as natural static collective differences—serve to justify and strengthen societal and organisational inequality (Shenhav & Yonah, 2009).

The concept of 'boundaries' (Gieryn, 1983; Lamont & Molnar, 2002) is fundamental to understanding those social processes, as it links the discursive and the actualised dimensions of social difference. Symbolic boundaries, which can be seen as 'conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space' (Lamont & Molnar, 2002, p. 168) are intertwined with social boundaries, or 'objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources (material and nonmaterial) and social opportunities... [that are] revealed in stable behavioural patterns of association' (Lamont & Molnar, 2002, p. 168). The boundary framework was also found useful in understanding organisational inequality and diversity management (Kalonaityte, 2010; Langley et al., 2019), since 'the idea of an organisation is

inseparable from questions about where the boundary of the organisation lies and how it is maintained' (Lawrence & Phillips, 2019, p. 159). 'Boundary work' can be seen as an individual or collective effort to shape social, symbolic, material, or temporal distinctions and demarcations that affect groups, occupations, and organisations (Langley et al., 2019). Boundaries are produced, reproduced, and contested inside, outside, and across organisations: industries, departments, teams, jobs, and fields of professional expertise are formed and preserved by demarcations that differentiate them from their environments, and provide them with a unique value (Llewellyn, 1998; Santos & Eisenhardt, 2005). Crucially, organisational discourse reflects and constructs boundaries of identity. Collective identity can be seen as a dialectic interplay between internal and external definitions, a result of two processes: how individuals differentiate themselves from others and create a sense of shared belonging; and the recognition by outsiders of an objectified collective identity (Brubaker, 2004; Jenkins, 1996). Looking at social identity and diversity through the perspective of boundary work places the spotlight on the permeability of symbolic and social boundaries (Lamont & Molnar, 2002).

Critical perspectives on diversity are informed by feminist, postcolonial, and post-structural theory (Jones & Stablein, 2006; Kalonaityte, 2010; O'Reilly, 2017; Prasad, 2006), relating to the ways in which conceptual and lingual boundaries between social groups form social disparity and oppression. Postcolonial discussions emphasised the construction of binaries between the civilised West and the primitive Non-West—presenting the European as developed, modern, secular and scientific, and the rest of the world as backward, traditional, and archaic—and how those boundaries shaped contemporary organisational inequality (Ahmed, 2007a; Frenkel & Shenhav, 2006; Nkomo, 2011). Foucauldian discussions highlighted the power-knowledge mechanisms behind the construction of difference (Ahonen et al., 2014; Foldy, 2003): the authority of dominant groups and institutions to shape symbolic and social boundaries between the norm and the deviant, and to essentialise sexes, races, and other groups.

Post-structuralism offered an important critique of modernist philosophical traditions that reproduced social categories of difference, by attempting to deconstruct gender, race, and other categories and to 'avoid' essentialism. The non-essentialist approach rejected modernist ideas regarding the originality and authenticity of the self (Taylor, 1994), and saw identity as a temporary, constantly changing, relational, and unstable construct; as an issue of

positioning rather than of essence (Hall, 1994). Post-structuralist critique, often associated with the work of Jacques Derrida, confronted ideas of binary oppositions and of difference as having a pure, full, and true meaning. Instead, it saw difference as an incomplete concept, constantly changing across situations and contexts (Eagleton, 2011). Difference is assigned a certain value, which is dictated by hierarchical lingual and social contexts. Ideologies define clear boundaries between acceptable and deviant, central and marginal, true and false. Therefore, understanding how categories of difference are produced by sources of authority can reveal the way power operates in society (Foucault, 1980). ‘Deconstruction’ is the project of undermining binary oppositions of difference, challenging the structuralist assumption of the true, stable nature of language (Derrida, 1976; Eagleton, 2011).

Based on this tradition, post-structural feminists investigated how biological sexual differences became ontological differences and sought to dismantle gender and sexual binaries (Butler, 1986; Pilcher & Whelehan, 2013). They argued that theories about women that define, characterise, and speak for them essentialise women. They wanted to replace theories of gender and sexuality with ‘a plurality of difference where gender loses its position of significance’ (Alcoff, 1988, p. 407). Queer theory problematised binaries of difference by blurring boundaries of sexual identity, validating the deviant or outlaw, and celebrating the transgressive (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2013). Gloria Anzaldúa’s idea of the ‘borderland’ as a physical and symbolic hybrid sphere further challenged the boundaries between categories of difference. People living in the borderland embody what is considered to be opposite qualities, rejecting accepted classifications (Anzaldúa, 1987). In a similar way, Stuart Hall speaks about ‘creolic’ culture and identity, which is never pure but rather a result of a constant dialogue in which the native is immersed, between the coloniser’s presence (European) and the motherland’s absence (Africa) (Hall, 1994). However, feminist and anti-racist authors criticised the project of deconstruction of categories as idealist and ineffective as a strategy of resistance. Post-structural thinking was criticised for ignoring the material consequences of categories of difference, an approach that can lead to political relativism (Healy et al., 2011).

Numerous thinkers have discussed social difference beyond the essential-versus-constructed binary, emphasising that the context in which categories are used is crucial to determining how they should be understood, treated, and used. One factor has been the **type of difference** being discussed. While scholars generally agree that the use of biological essentialism in the

social sciences is not only false but also dangerous, there seems to be more room to accept—and sometimes even advocate for—cultural essentialism, for example in providing subordinated groups with models of identification necessary for collective action and resistance (Stephens et al., 2018; Yalcinkaya et al., 2017). The shift in some areas of social research from the use of race to ethnicity provides another example: The term ‘race’ is seen as discredited social construct due to its links with essentialist racist theories, while ‘ethnicity’ is associated with cultural and political references, rather than biological (Bradley & Healy, 2008).

Two other problematising factors were concerned with the **speaker**—the person making use of categories of difference—and with the **purpose** of their use. As Stuart Hall (1994) suggested, the essentialist stance, as well as the non-essentialist, is not only an approach towards the production of difference, but also struggle over difference. The effort of ‘rediscovering’ and emphasising the qualities of oppressed groups is seen as a political project that allows the silenced to be heard. Social movements asserted positive group difference as a form of political struggle, ‘offering an emancipatory meaning of difference to replace the old exclusionary meaning’ (Young, 1990a, p. 169). Theories of recognition sometimes referred to as ‘identity politics’ make demands on the basis of identity—as women, as black people, as gay, and so on—in order to ‘return’ to the self that was previously overlooked, oppressed, and ‘lost’, and to reclaim those social differences as a source of strength (Fraser, 1995; Taylor, 1994). Cultural theorists have searched for the feminine voice (Gilligan, 1993) or the black experience (Hall, 1994) as a form of resistance. However, theories that explicitly or implicitly claim that authenticity exists have also been controversial, because while politics of difference try to challenge the patriarchal structure and the masculine social order, they also reproduce the essentialist perception of distinct genders, races, and so on, instead of emphasising the fluid and relational nature of difference and contesting such dichotomies as masculine/feminine or neutral/other (Young, 1990a).

Postcolonial theory deeply engaged with this tension. According to Stuart Hall (1994), the native faces the following challenge of essentialism: Accepting established differences means adopting the perspective of the coloniser, but connecting to the ‘essential’ that has been ‘lost’—to lost ‘origins’ from which the native has been disconnected—provide a source of meaning and have liberating power (Hall, 1994). The idea of ‘strategic essentialism’—developed in postcolonial theory—highlighted a different political motivation for

emphasising group difference among groups that have been historically oppressed. It suggests that these groups may temporarily adopt an essentialist collective identity in order to represent themselves and achieve political goals (Chakravorty-Spivak, 1999).

### **2.2.2 The treatment of difference: Multiculturalism and assimilation**

The tension between similarity and difference were key to the debate around how gender, racial and other differences should be treated. Approaches that focus on ‘sameness’ argue that social justice is rooted in the emphasis of similarities across sexes, races, cultures and so on, while the ‘difference’ approach emphasises and celebrates differentials that were previously despised and marginalised (Fraser, 1995; Minow, 1991; Young, 1990a). These approaches result in divergent treatment of these issues in practice: on the one hand, the call to abolish unjust differentials, and on the other, the demand to acknowledge differentials that were previously misrecognised. Similarly, they are at the core of the tension between the establishment of organisational identity-blind structures, meant to advance decision-making that treats everyone the same; and identity-conscious structures that take both individual merit and demographic group identity into consideration (Foldy & Buckley, 2014; Konrad & Linnehan, 1995). Essentially, the question is: ‘Is equality achieved through treating people the same, or by recognising their differences and treating them according to their distinctive needs?’ (Healy et al., 2011, p. 3). For centuries, questions of assimilation, integration, and separation have been key to the politics of liberation movements of religious, racial, gender, and other minoritised groups, such as Jewish emancipation in Europe during the 19th century, women’s rights and feminist movements in the United States, civil rights and Black Power movements, and more recently the migrant and refugee crisis in Europe.

Nancy Fraser theorises **politics of recognition** and **politics of redistribution** as two routes for social justice. The redistribution paradigm focuses on social-economic inequality and the unjust distribution of resources in society. Its view on ‘difference’ is that it is a private matter, and it advocates for impartial universal equal treatment. It is difference-blind in the sense that it seeks to allocate resources regardless *of* difference, in order to replace unjust class-based distributions. For women and racial minorities this meant demanding equal treatment as equal members of society (Fraser, 1995, 1999). The recognition paradigm does the opposite: it emphasises social differences that have been historically oppressed and rejects the ideal of impartiality as contributing to cultural imperialism by allowing particular experiences of privileged groups to appear as universal and neutral. It sees the elimination of group

difference as oppression, and argues that the assimilation of minority identity into majority culture is an unjust price to be paid for equal treatment (Minow, 1991; Young, 1990a).

The **assimilation or 'sameness'** approach dominated social policy in the UK and the US from the 1970s on (in some ways, until today) as the basis for anti-discrimination legislation. The idea is that rights should be understood in universal terms and be equally applied to all, rather than be linked to social groups, emphasising fair and equal treatment of people as individuals, not groups (Greene & Kirton, 2009). Assimilationist ideas involve the elimination of group-based difference: in theory, this would be achieved when race, sex, and other social categories would have no significance in determining institutional benefits or political rights or obligations. In a way, in this imaginary scenario, social group difference would cease to exist (Wasserstorm, 1980). Assimilationist ideas of liberation had a significant contribution to the history of emancipatory politics: against the backdrop of racism, sexism, and other forms of interpersonal and institutional bias, they anchored the value of equal moral worth of all persons, and thus their right 'to participate and be included in all institutions and positions of power and privilege' (Young, 1990a, p. 159). Liberal feminists demanded equality based on the sameness of capabilities between men and women. Coming from an individualistic point of view, and ideas of rationality and autonomy (Taylor, 1994), they saw differences as obstacles to equality between the sexes, and sought to reduce or eliminate them. The problem with this project was that demanding equal treatment based on sameness inserted women into male-oriented structures, which are based on male experience and norms, instead of putting these structures under scrutiny (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2013). The critique of this approach was around the need to challenge not only social boundaries but also symbolic ones, meaning that 'women be given access to the symbolic tools to intervene in discourse, and opportunities to form meaningful subject positions that are not thereby behold to masculinist constructions of gender' (Biddle & Jarman-Ivens, 2013, p. 4).

The model of **diversity** as a path to belonging is linked to ideas of multiculturalism. In contrast to assimilation, this strategy involves the assertion of a positive group difference, claiming that minorities do not need to adopt the dominant culture for equality to take place (Prasad et al., 2006). It challenged traditional views of organisational culture as a singular system of shared symbols and beliefs, and sought recognition for the multiplicity of cultures (Mills & Tancred, 1992). Indeed, diversity research is interested in the idea of people 'being themselves' at work: diverse workplaces are expected to have less organisational control and

regulation of employee identity (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Kalonaityte, 2010), such that members of all backgrounds can express their distinctiveness and uniqueness when these diverge from the mainstream (Ferdman, 2017). However, this diversity rhetoric is far removed from the realities of daily organisational life. Despite extensive practitioner and scholarly discussions around the benefit of recognising social differences at work, openly talking about race, ethnicity, and other differences at work is considered taboo—particularly in a ‘colour cognizance’ manner that would affirm the importance of racial diversity and recognise the impact of race on people’s life experiences (Foldy & Buckley, 2014). To explain the urgency of diversity, it was argued: ‘In the current era, it is not so much visible and coercive forms of domination or suppression that are at play, but rather normalised discourses of exclusion. Discursive power is not about coercion or resistance but routinization, formalization, and legalization of everyday practice’ (Ponzoni et al., 2017, p. 223). One can question whether coercive domination and suppression are no longer an issue today. Nonetheless, discursive power—which is subtle, invisible and implicit—deserves special attention.

There are also limitations to focusing on discursive-symbolic dimensions of organisational life. Emphasising categories of difference that were historically marginalised can be liberating, as a means of reclaiming their value, but can also reproduce stereotypes and inequality (Foldy & Buckley, 2014; Minow, 1991). Labels of difference distinguish between normal and abnormal, between autonomous and competent individuals and those in relationships of dependency (Foucault, 1980). As such, they can be used to promote equality but also to preserve exclusion and marginalisation. Linguistic, legal, and social acts of classification hold moral and social consequences: treating people according to their assumed group membership ignores the internal heterogeneity of the group and can strengthen discrimination (Minow, 1991; Phillips, 1995; Young, 1990b). The **dilemma of difference** means that ‘the stigma of difference may be recreated both by ignoring and by focusing on it’ (Minow, 1991, p. 20). It can also be articulated as such: ‘Women can say they want to be treated the same—but this means being treated as if they were men; or they can demand laws that are specific to their needs—but this means being compensated for their lesser abilities or role’ (Barrett & Phillips, 1992, p. 20) (although, as affirmative action advocates repeatedly argue, race or gender should be considered only for **qualified** applicants).



Nancy Fraser articulates the ‘recognition-redistribution dilemma’ around different ‘types’ of injustice: Some groups suffer mainly from one type of injustice (for example, exploited classes mainly suffer economic injustice, and LGBT individuals mainly suffer cultural injustice), and thus can focus on demanding either equal or different treatment in that single regard. However, other collectives, such as women and racial minorities, suffer from both economic and cultural injustice, and therefore face a dilemma between economic restructuring and cultural symbolic change, or between abolishing difference and emphasising it (Fraser, 1995). Fraser addresses the dilemma by looking at different remedies for injustice and how they engage with social difference. She distinguishes between **affirmative remedies**, which seek to correct inequitable outcomes and operate within the structures of power that created them (for example, multiculturalism or the liberal welfare state); and **transformative remedies**, which focus on the causes of injustice and seek to deconstruct and restructure the framework itself (for example, queer theory in the case of recognition, or socialism in the redistributive context) (Fraser, 1995, 1999).

### **2.3 Diversity as a policy approach: Diversity management**

As an organisational policy approach (Kirton, 2009), diversity is seen as an ‘evolution’ of earlier approaches of equal opportunity and affirmative action, focused on utilising and valuing employee difference in organisations. This section discusses the emergence of diversity management in the United States and how it became understood in the United Kingdom, and looks at some current trends and debates around how it is being discussed, utilised, and also rejected.

#### **2.3.1 Equality, diversity, and inclusion**

The concept of ‘diversity management’ emerged in the United States during the 1980s, reframing earlier approaches—particularly equal opportunity and affirmative action—that were designed to tackle inequality and discrimination in the labour market. The idea of equal opportunity in employment took shape in response to demands by civil rights and women’s movements, and to the idea that people deserve the same opportunity in employment regardless of their background and that group-based discrimination is morally wrong (Kelly & Dobbin, 1998; Liff, 1999; Nkomo & Hoobler, 2014). Affirmative action policies were designed to actively correct the under-representation of historically disadvantaged groups (Jack & Lorbiecki, 2003; Kelly & Dobbin, 1998). While both concepts rested on legal and moral grounds, they were rooted in different rationales around justice, and offered different

remedies for inequality (Prasad, 2001)—the basic idea of equal opportunity being that since all individuals are of equal worth, they should receive equal treatment, rooted in values of fairness and impartiality. This difference-blind, colour-blind approach is based on ideas of meritocracy, individualism and procedural justice: ‘Equality of opportunity exists when all individuals are enabled freely and equally to compete for social rewards’ (Jewson & Mason, 1986, p. 307). Affirmative action can be seen as a shift from a liberal approach to equality to a radical approach, and from equality of opportunity to equality of outcome (Jewson & Mason, 1986): While the liberal approach emphasises ideas of sameness and fair procedures, the radical stance advocates for fair distribution, aiming for proportional equal representation in the workplace of all social groups available to it. Liberals often see discrimination as a **distortion of the rational market**, caused by prejudiced individuals who misjudge others on the basis of ‘irrelevant’ characteristics such as sex or skin colour. Such distortions can then be corrected by increasing formal bureaucratic control and establishing fair procedures (Webb, 1997). The radical approach, however, sees discrimination as a **structural feature of the market**, arguing that some groups are socially constructed as less talented and less able than others, and questioning the merit principle itself—although it does not entirely reject it: ‘Affirmative action is a radical development not because it threatens the merit principle, but because it seeks to counter the weight traditionally given to power, similarity, and familiarity in determining what constitutes merit’ (Malleon, 2006, p. 140). Since fair procedures are insufficient, affirmative action advocates seek to redistribute jobs and resources, marking a shift from similar to different treatment (Jewson & Mason, 1986; Kirton & Greene, 2010). While liberals view unequal outcomes (of seemingly fair procedures) a result of unequal merit, the radical approach sees it as a result of systemic discrimination. While the liberal view seeks to formalise procedures, the radical approach tries to politicise workplace decisions, making race, gender, and other social differences that shape inequality noticed and acknowledged (Webb, 1997).

In the 1980s, during the Reagan presidency, affirmative action began losing political support, as part of wider changes in the political economy and as a backlash against the achievements of feminist and racial equality struggles. The rise of neoliberal market-oriented ideology in the US and the UK advanced liberalisation and deregulation. The conservative political ideology, focused on individual rights and freedom, sought to minimise government regulation and intervention in the labour market and in social issues. It gave rise to **new managerialism** as the organisational arm of neoliberalism, spreading values of efficiency,

competition, and profit from the private sector to the forefront of the public and nonprofit sectors (Kelly & Dobbin, 1998; Lorbiecki & Jack, 2000; Nkomo, Bell, et al., 2019; Webb, 1997). In this political climate, employers started to abandon affirmative action policies, which were voluntary (not required nor prohibited), and paved the way for the rise of diversity management as an alternative approach to difference and inequality in the labour market (Kelly & Dobbin, 1998; Lorbiecki & Jack, 2000; Oppenheimer, 2016).

The rise of diversity management is also analysed as a response to an anti-feminist and anti-rights backlash against policies that were interpreted as causing ‘reverse discrimination’, mainly of white men (Kelly & Dobbin, 1998; Pincus, 2003). Hiring policies that were based on affirmative action were seen as an unwelcomed intervention in business affairs, providing unfair preferential treatment to certain workers. Against this backdrop, diversity management was perceived by employers as a ‘softer’, less political, and less confrontational approach (Faludi, 1992; Jones & Stablein, 2006). The diversity pushback is further discussed below.

As a policy approach, diversity emerged during the 1990s as a ‘management philosophy that seeks to recognize and value heterogeneity in organisations’ (Özbilgin & Tatli, 2008, p. 2). Diversity management shifted the debate around difference at work, from tackling discrimination to advancing diversity, using positive imagery and celebratory rhetoric around the value of difference (Kirton & Greene, 2010; Prasad, 2001). This marked a shift from blurring employee difference to emphasising it. What was unique to diversity management was the emphasis of the business case motivation, and of how employee identity can be utilised to increase organisation benefit and ensure organisational survival in times of change (Oswick & Noon, 2014). The *Workforce 2000* report (Johnston & Packer, 1987) is usually seen as a milestone in the positioning of employee difference within an economic framework. The report urged managers to address the growing diverse set of employees, and portrayed difference as a resource, a potential strategic asset that can provide companies with a competitive advantage (Prasad, 2001; Zanoni et al., 2010). Diversity management became a strategic approach to managing difference between individuals, dedicated to improving organisational performance. The diversity advantage approach argued that if well managed, diversity can serve as a powerful management tool: it can attract and retain skilled workers, allow better access to diverse markets, improve creativity, increase organisational flexibility, and so on (Litvin, 1997; Zanoni et al., 2010). In the decades since the report, a great deal of diversity management scholarship emphasised the business case for diversity, exploring how

diversity policies can increase organisational profitability; this strand of literature minimised issues related to discrimination, racism, and inequality, which were key to earlier debates around the concept of diversity (Bell et al., 2018; Lorbiecki & Jack, 2000).

Globalisation and the changing nature of work reinforced the business case for diversity: a diverse workforce, it was argued, could provide an advantage in the shift from a manufacturing economy to a service economy centred on human interaction and communication. In a competitive global market that relies on exchange of labour, goods, and information across countries, developing cross-cultural competence is necessary (Clegg & Bailey, 2010; Healy et al., 2011; Wentling & Palma-Rivas, 2000).

Equal opportunity, as a regulation-based approach, emphasised moral-legal concerns, and particularly discrimination, a term with a legal force behind it; diversity management, however, emerged as a performance-driven voluntary corporate initiative. Thus, the debate around diversity shifted the focus from **collective, group-based social differences** that shape inequality towards an **individualistic, depoliticised, a-historic concept of difference** (Foldy, 2003; Özbilgin & Tatli, 2011; Prasad et al., 2006). The business orientation shaped the mindset and commitment of practitioners: While equal opportunity specialists were focused on a legal framework and were dedicated to disadvantaged social groups as their primary constituency, diversity specialists became mainly committed to their employers (Kirton & Greene, 2009). This meant, for example, that the same logic of good-for-business can be used against diversity, if and when it proves to be bad for business (Noon, 2007).

Thus, despite its emancipatory potential for marginalised groups, when the diversity concept was consolidated into organisational policy and practice it was appropriated by managerialists, in what was critically seen as a threat to equality outcomes (Ahonen et al., 2014; Kirton, 2009; Noon, 2007). The transformation of difference and diversity into economic assets raised the worrying prospect of diversity and multiculturalism being turned into a commodity, such as celebrating diversity by selling merchandise of Martin Luther King (Mayorga-Gallo, 2019). The potential value of diversity gave rise to a diversity industry that was meant to help organisations benefit from diversity, leaving little room to advance the equality project (Kirton, 2009; Klein, 2000; Prasad, 2001; Swan, 2010).

During the 2000s, the concept of **inclusion** took centre stage in organisational thinking about difference. Like diversity, inclusion has been interpreted in multiple ways, encompassing

descriptive and normative meanings, resting on utilitarian and moral rationales (Bilimoria et al., 2008; Dobusch, 2014; Prasad, 2001). Inclusion was framed as a ‘force for good’ for tackling exclusionary practices that dominate organisations, but was also associated with the ‘process that incorporate difference into business practices and thereby help to realize the[ir] value’ (Oswick & Noon, 2014, p. 26). The idea of inclusion integrates emotional and material dimensions: it asks whether employees **feel** part of critical organisational processes, and have **access to resources** (Mor-Barak et al., 1998). Critical studies have discussed the blind spots of inclusion, how inclusion and exclusion are entangled, and who benefits from ‘inclusion’ (Adamson et al., 2021; Ahmed, 2012; Dobusch, 2014; Ortlieb et al., 2021).

Diversity and inclusion are often presented as complementing ideas: the former emphasises **organisational demography**, and the appreciation of the actual presence of different social groups; the latter emphasises **organisational culture**, highlighting issues of participation, voice, influence, and sense of belonging (Adamson et al., 2021; Roberson, 2006). Inclusion can work with diversity as a resource, allowing people to be and express their full, true ‘selves’ at work (Ferdman, 2017). As such, inclusion rests on essentialist conceptions of identity, relating to personal and collective authenticity (Charmé, 2022; Lindholm, 2008). Personal authenticity, or ‘the subjective experience of alignment between one’s internal sense of self and external expressions’ (Cha et al., 2019, p. 2), has been linked to the modern rise of individualism and the idea that people have a real self that they need to discover and connect to. These ideas also contradict the view of collective identity as a dynamic process that is shaped and re-shaped in context, and pressure minoritised employees to become representatives of collectives (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Jenkins, 1996). Indeed, inclusion scholarship and practice is full of anomalies and paradoxes (De-los-Reyes, 2000; Ferdman, 2017; Smith & Lewis, 2011) between difference and sameness, belonging and uniqueness, and relating to boundaries and norms, and safety and comfort. In recent years, political debates around transgenderism and transracialism have entered EDI scholarship and practice, asking whether people’s authentic selves (or their claims around authenticity) should always be respected and accepted by employers and institutions in the name of inclusion (Brubaker, 2016; Dembroff & Payton, 2020; Tuvell, 2017).

Another crucial development in diversity literature was provided by the concept of **intersectionality** (Gopaldas & DeRoy, 2015; Hearn & Louvrier, 2015; Ozbilgin et al., 2011). Intersectionality theory, which was developed by Kimberle Crenshaw (1989, 1991) and other

black feminists and feminists of colour, draws our attention to the often-ignored points where power relations meet. This perspective emerged as a critique on white feminism, claiming that feminism cannot speak universally for all women while ignoring intersecting positions of marginalisation and social disadvantage, particularly around race and social class (Ahmed, 2012; McCall, 2005; Nkomo, 2021). This blind spot appears in academic research, social movements, and public policy: ‘Although racism and sexism readily intersect in the lives of real people, they seldom do in feminist and antiracist practice’ (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1242). The intersectional lens offers tools to look at identity and oppression in multi-dimensional and complex ways. A key claim is that the experiences of black women are silenced and ignored twice: in gender research their experiences as black people are made invisible; and in debates around race they are ignored as women. This omission also appears in organisational and public policy: While gender equality policies mainly benefit white women, and anti-racist policies mainly benefit black men, black women are excluded from both. Thus, intersectional theory sheds light on identity dimensions and lived experiences that have been sidelined from social research and organisational practice. The contribution of the intersectional lens to diversity research is manifested in the shift from a unidimensional approach, focused on a single identity dimension at a time, towards the consideration of multiple dimensions of identity at once (Gopaldas & DeRoy, 2015); and from inter-categorical thinking, which rests on fixed categories, towards an intra-categorical approach that looks at the complex relationship between differences and recognises their unstable nature (Hearn & Louvrier, 2015; McCall, 2005). These developments make it possible to reach more inclusive, precise, and radical conclusions regarding identity, organisations and justice.

### **2.3.2 Diversity in the UK**

The construction of diversity in organisations is rooted in historical, national, and social context. Diversity is reinterpreted as it crosses national boundaries. Despite many shared themes, diversity holds different meanings in the US and in the UK (Healy & Oikelome, 2017), and is understood differently across Europe. For example, Tatli et al. (2012) show how regulatory and temporal factors shape diversity: they associate it with multiculturalism and a strong business case in the UK; with assimilation, secularism, and ethnic minorities in France; and with gender and integration in Germany. These national contexts also reveal local taboos, and show what is omitted from the diversity debate—for example, social class in the UK, religious and racial discrimination in France, and racism in Germany.

Britain's legacy of colonialism and the slave trade were fundamental to shaping the material conditions and the discursive foundations around work inequality and the field of EDI. This heritage shaped the make-up of the contemporary UK population and of inequality in the labour market; it gave rise to the ethos of multiculturalism, but also to nationalism and strong national sentiments; it shaped the messages of social movements around issues of migration, race, and ethnicity; and it affected how social difference is thought of and managed in workplaces (Byrne et al., 2020; Healy, 2015; Prasad, 2006). In the postwar era, when there was an economic need for service and manufacturing workers, the UK encouraged the immigration of British subjects from across the Empire. At the same time, the migrant influx of people who were not only foreigners but also not white was seen as posing a threat to British identity and values. This laid the foundations for racist segregation practices on the one hand, and to policies of multiculturalism and social integration on the other (Ashcroft & Bevir, 2018; Bradley & Healy, 2008). The consequences of institutional racism gained recognition after the Macpherson report<sup>2</sup> was published in 1999. More recently, multicultural policies were sidelined by UK governments in favour of a cohesion and assimilation agenda, as the former were seen as promoting sectionalism and separation (Nayak, 2012). These trends were related to a broader wave of anti-Muslim and anti-migrant feeling following the September 11 attack in the US, as well as the July 7 attack in the UK and the War on Terror of which the UK was part. Today, black and minority ethnic (BME) groups in the UK experience a degree of ethnic segregation socially, residentially, and in the workplace, as well as higher levels of unemployment, part-time work, and poverty than white Britons (Healy & Oikelome, 2017)—although there are significant differences in economic and ethno-racial inequality between various non-white groups, such as between Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, black Caribbean, and black African communities (Bradley & Healy, 2008; Byrne et al., 2020; Khan, 2020).

For people in the UK, 'Britishness' is strongly associated with ethnic diversity. However, ethnic diversity is mainly seen as positive among ethnic minorities and as negative among white Britons (Commission for Racial Equality, 2005). The rise of the Black Lives Matter movement in the UK in 2020 invigorated strong civil engagement around racial justice, but also revealed the refusal of the establishment to acknowledge racism in the UK. The government response to the BLM call (Sewell et al., 2021), which took place while the Brexit

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<sup>2</sup> The Macpherson inquiry looked into the Metropolitan Police handling of the killing of Stephen Lawrence, a black teenager, in a London bus station. Its final report (1999) led to major changes in law and policing, particularly around the treatment of racist crime, and is considered a milestone in understanding institutional racism in the UK.

process was at its peak, revealed the strong connection between nationalism and racism in the UK (Nkomo, Syed, et al., 2019; Tikly, 2022).

Multiculturalism has shaped the meaning of diversity in the UK, fixing and stretching its definition to address issues relating to race and ethnicity (Lombardo et al., 2009; Tatli et al., 2012). Diversity debates in the UK echo the multiculturalism debate: The idea of celebrating cultural, ethnic, and religious difference is challenged by rising authoritarian ideas that emphasise national security and the advancement of 'British values' (Nayak, 2012).

Unlike in the US, diversity debates in the UK tend to focus on the category of **ethnicity** over **race**. The legal framework provided by the Equality Act (2010) binds the two categories together, as it protects 'race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin'. But the political and scholarly debate tends to use the language of ethnicity (Bradley & Healy, 2008), while binding together dimensions of difference that are associated with race (white/black) with others associated with culture and geography. For example, the ethnic groups used in the UK national census reflect this politics of difference, and its main ethnic categories are 'white', 'Asian or Asian British', 'Black, Black British, Caribbean or African', or 'mixed' (ONS, 2021).

The UK was considered a European leader in anti-discrimination legislation when it passed the Race Relations Act 1965. However, in recent years political and socioeconomic trends have stalled (and even reversed) progressive anti-racism initiatives (Healy & Oikelome, 2017; Tatli et al., 2012). After EU regulations widened the scope of diversity in the UK by adding new demographics into anti-discrimination law, Brexit demonstrated an opposite trend, centred around the rise of English nationalism, alongside a wider trend of a regressive approach to social inequality (Kerr & Śliwa, 2020; Markham, 2020).

The UK Equality Act (2010) provides protection from discrimination on the basis of nine characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. These legal protections are provided to people at work, people in education, consumers, those using public services, and so on. However, some characteristics are excluded from the list, as the meaning of diversity in the UK 'is shrunk in a way that enables the exclusion of taboo areas from surfacing in public debates' (Tatli et al., 2012, p. 298). In particular, social class is absent from this legal framework even though (and possibly because) it plays a crucial role in the formation of hierarchical British society. This means that people can be unfairly treated



based on their postcode, accent, and other indicators of socioeconomic background. Although the absence of class from diversity debates is not unique to the UK (Post et al., 2021; Zanoni et al., 2010), it makes it harder to tackle socioeconomic inequality and advance social mobility in the country, where data shows that it is now harder for children to climb the social ladder than it has been during the past five decades (van der Erve et al., 2023). However, extensive scholarly work, as well as research by think tanks, has been dedicated to issues relating to social mobility, social exclusion, and breaking the ‘class ceiling’ in the UK (Friedman & Laurison, 2020; Maslen, 2019; van der Erve et al., 2023).

Diversity management has gained prominence in the UK since the 1990s, in part due to disappointment over the achievements of the equal opportunity paradigm and its focus on a ‘sameness’ anti-discrimination approach (Liff & Wajcman, 1996). In this process, diversity was ‘bent’ (Lombardo et al., 2009) away from a morally-driven equal opportunities agenda towards a pro-business approach (Tatli et al., 2012), which was guided by a free market ideology and the restriction of state intervention. On these ideological foundations, diversity emerged as a voluntary and individualistic approach, in the sense that institutions may choose to take action, and that it focuses on individual differences over group-based concerns (this is particularly true for private sector employers, while the public sector and trade unions formed their equality and diversity approach around traditional categories of disadvantage) (Özbilgin & Tatli, 2011). The business case and the voluntaristic approach are not only both compatible with neoliberal ideology, but also complement each other—the idea being that employers will voluntarily engage with diversity initiatives because this may confer a business advantage.

The business-oriented voluntary approach also produced a strong taboo around affirmative action as means of promoting diversity. Affirmative action, which is called ‘positive discrimination’ in the UK, and particularly quotas, are generally unlawful: ‘The belief that affirmative action results in unfairness to individual applicants and a reduction in the overall quality of those selected has led to a general consensus that such policies are incompatible with selection systems based on merit’ (Malleon, 2006, p. 126). The voluntary model that has been adopted in the UK is one of positive action, allowing employers to take into consideration a candidate’s demographic background when faced with two candidates who are of equal merit. Interestingly, while affirmative action in the US is focused on increasing the representation of minority groups, in the UK, majority groups that are underrepresented in specific contexts can also enjoy positive action measures.

## **2.4 Diversity politics: Paradoxes, inconsistencies and resistance**

The construction of diversity is dynamic, inconsistent, and ambiguous. Theorising diversity, and asking what diversity is and what it does, has been a key research question for diversity researchers (for example, Berrey, 2015; Kirton & Greene, 2010; Pincus, 2011; Zanoni et al., 2010). Scholars agree that the term ‘diversity’ does not have a fixed universal meaning. Instead, diversity is elusive and contextual, and is also contested, given the contested nature of ‘identity’ as a concept (Foldy, 2003; Jenkins, 1996). The understanding of diversity, and its management in the workplace, are rooted in historical, social, ideological, and political circumstances (Healy, 2015). The term is utilised for managerial instrumentalism, but also for resistance and the promotion of liberatory ideals; it can be used for descriptive, defensive or even self-congratulatory purposes; and as it travels across time and space, its meaning is shaped by various institutional and non-institutional policy actors, and by local, national, and international organisations. Different stakeholders (such as social movements, governments, employers, and unions) engage in intentional and unintentional negotiations and conceptual disputes regarding its meanings, goals, processes, and proposed outcomes—sometimes advancing opposing ideological messages, including agendas that contradict the equality project (Berrey, 2015; Lombardo et al., 2009; Özbilgin & Tatli, 2008, 2011). Conceptual clarity is not possible, and perhaps not needed, in order to advance research in the field (Kirton, 2009). However, mapping the **discursive struggle** over the term is required in order to understand its contextual and contested nature (Tatli et al., 2012). Among those inconsistencies and tension within the field is the question of how to reconcile the business case and the social-justice case for diversity. As discussed in the next chapter (section 3.2), it was argued that the nonprofit sector is where utilitarian and moral arguments for diversity coexist, at least in rhetoric (Tomlinson & Schwabenland, 2010). This section looks at some of the political tensions, enigmas, and inconsistencies that have relevance to this research.

### **2.4.1 The paradoxes of diversity**

The management of diversity in organisations is increasingly analysed through the perspective of paradox theory (De-los-Reyes, 2000; Ferdman, 2017; Nadiv & Kuna, 2020; Smith & Lewis, 2011; Sparr et al., 2022; Waldman & Sparr, 2023). Broadly speaking, this body of research examines areas of tension in organisational life in which competing demands, which represent conflicting ‘truths’, emerge. Many paradoxes in organisational life involve concerns, perspectives, and concepts that are related to EDI. For example, Ferdman (2017) identifies three paradoxes that pose contrasting perspectives while working toward

inclusion in diverse organisations and societies: The first is a paradox around self-expression and identity, in which inclusion and belonging are associated with sameness (that is, inclusion means that we can belong and be the same) but also with distinctiveness (that is, inclusion means that we can belong and be different). This paradox resonates with dilemmas of difference and politics of recognition as articulated by political theorists and discussed earlier (e.g., Fraser 1995; Minow 1991). Ferdman's second paradox relates to boundaries and norms, where inclusion is possible when boundaries and norms are stable and well-defined, but also when they are shifting and flexible; and his third paradox concerns safety and comfort, where inclusion can be about enabling people to do things their way, but also about leaving individual and collective comfort zones. Similarly, Waldman & Sparr (2023) suggest that many diversity initiatives fail because they cannot accept the paradoxical natures of diversity (a concept that emphasises difference) and unity (which emphasises sameness). Nadiv and Kuna (2020) also examined paradoxes that are inherent to diversity management: between necessary change and the desire for stability; bureaucratic control and flexible procedures; and long-term business gains versus short-term losses. They pointed out how, paradoxically, diversity initiatives create organisational tensions that undermine their success, and create a need for further diversity interventions. Some of the paradoxical tensions that emerge in organisations around the construction and management of difference are elaborated in the following sections.

#### **2.4.2 The diversity backlash**

Nkomo et al. (2019) point out the paradoxical tension whereby in the current global environment, the concept of diversity has become commonplace in the workplace, while at the same time, there are socio-political global trends of rising populism, nationalism, and white supremacy, representing resistance to diversity in society (Nkomo, Bell, et al., 2019). Since Nkomo's publication, this socio-political resistance has been backed by legal developments, particularly in the US, such as the 2023 Supreme Court decision on affirmative action that banned the use of race in admissions policies in public colleges and universities; and state-level legislation that banned and defunded diversity initiatives. In the UK, the legal framework around EDI is already more restrictive and cautious regarding active efforts to represent minority groups. However, socio-political changes demonstrate similar trends, including rising English nationalist sentiment and xenophobia around the Brexit referendum and agreement, alongside institutional denials of racism, a backlash against ideas

of multiculturalism, and the return of the colourblind approach (Sewell et al., 2021; Tikly, 2022).

The US Supreme Court ruling reflected a wider long-standing anti-diversity movement that sees diversity policies as a form of reverse discrimination. Very often, reverse discrimination is used to describe ‘a situation in which a white male does not get something (a job, promotion, contract, college admission) that he may have gotten if there were no affirmative action policy in place’ (Pincus, 2003, p. 3). The idea is that affirmative action policies (which were meant to tackle racial discrimination) are themselves racially discriminatory towards white people. The ‘reverse discrimination’ argument rejects the idea of providing different treatment to people based on their demographic ‘difference’; or more precisely, they object to the idea of granting ‘preferable’ treatment to people based on their belonging to historically disadvantaged groups. These claims portray diversity a ‘a system of ethnic favouritism that undercuts the principle of rewarding demonstrated merit and ability’ (Wood, 2003, p. 6). However, ‘reverse discrimination’ claims ignore the existing power relations in society. As Fred Pincus explains, institutional discrimination (though less so individual discrimination) are ‘actions by the powerful against the powerless’ (Pincus, 2003, p. 5). Therefore, labelling institutional-level remedies (such as affirmative action) that try to correct inequality and historical injustice as discriminatory acts is problematic.

### **2.4.3 Diversity and power**

Critical researchers raise another tension, relating to **assimilation** and **diversity** as oppositional concepts. Paradoxically, although the diversity ideal historically emerged as a competing paradigm to the ideal of assimilation (Young, 1990a), as diversity developed into a policy approach and organisational practice it became a mechanism that advances the assimilation of minority groups into the dominant culture (Berrey, 2015; Mayorga-Gallo, 2019). Since diversity management did not manage nor try to challenge the fundamental persistent dynamics of racial domination—of white privilege and racial minority disadvantage—it became a mechanism that integrates people of colour into predominantly white organisations (Berrey, 2015). Thus, diversity management is criticised not only as a managerial strategy that lacks commitment to social justice, but as an ideology that is meant to preserve the white male status quo (Embrick, 2011; Mayorga-Gallo, 2019; Nkomo & Hoobler, 2014). Fundamentally, as a business-driven, voluntary, and individualistic approach, diversity management was emptied of awareness and acknowledgement of power (Özbilgin

& Tatli, 2011) and became an affirmative remedy that does not address nor seek to transform power relations in organisations, or in society at large. Organisations that detach diversity from power and history use it as a ‘mantra of equality’, thereby restraining deeper investigation into racial and gender inequality (Embrick, 2011).

A key enigma around what diversity is and what it does is that the same term is associated with opposing ideas, values, and visions: of conflict and social change; multiculturalism and assimilation; belonging and absorption (Berrey, 2015; Ferdman, 2017). For some authors, diversity can advance transformational organisational change, depending on how it is used; others, meanwhile, advocate abandoning ‘diversity’ and adopting alternative models, since diversity is focused on the needs and feelings of white people (Mayorga-Gallo, 2019; Tikly, 2022). Anti-racism is promoted as more capable of tackling structural racism, as it focuses on core culture and institutional structures, revealing power relations and advancing power sharing in decision-making (Greene, 2007). Other authors argue that ‘diversity’ can maintain power awareness and advance liberation from group-based oppression. For example, Pincus suggests ‘conflict diversity’ as an approach to diversity, focused on ‘understanding how different groups exist in a hierarchy of inequality in terms of power, privilege, and wealth’ (Pincus, 2011, p. 5).

Interestingly, while critical race scholars see diversity as a racial ideology that **sustains whiteness** (Mayorga-Gallo, 2019), conservative diversity opponents see it as posing a fundamental **threat to whiteness** (Wood, 2003). In between, we can find other groups, such as those liberals (particularly white liberals) who are averse to debates around race and racism—what has been portrayed as white fragility (DiAngelo, 2018). These positions echo different ontological stances rooted in their awareness, or lack of awareness, of power in society: the first and the second see race and talk about discrimination in quite contrary ways, while the third ignores race as an analytical category altogether (sometimes supported by post-racial claims around race ceasing to make a difference in the post-Obama era).

#### **2.4.4 Diversity and unity**

The concepts of **diversity** and **unity** present an organisational paradox: they are seemingly contradictory, yet they are interdependent elements that persist over time (Waldman & Sparr, 2023), emerging as conflicting and complementary concepts. Interestingly, opponents and proponents of the diversity ideal both use arguments relating to national unity and social

cohesion: Diversity is portrayed as making organisations and communities more divided, but also more united.

As previously noted, the multicultural project is often contrasted with, or seen as undermining, the nationalist and assimilationist projects, as it expands what it means to be a citizen, or an organisational member, from the perspective of identity, background, and belief system (Tikly, 2022; Young, 1990a). Indeed, some diversity opponents see diversity as a force that pulls a nation apart. From the perspective of the dominant group, the assimilation of minority groups ensures stability and security, while the ideal of diversity may threaten the (convenient) status quo and social order (Wood, 2003). Diversity is portrayed as a threat to national, communal, and organisational unity (the nation-state itself emerges as an attempt to homogenise and organise social differences around a shared national identity). Diversity is portrayed as a source of national and social separatism and social discord: diversity ‘undermines the love of the country... “diversiphiles”... elevate the ideal of diversity above the ideal of national unity’ (Wood, 2003, pp. 16–17).

On the other hand, diversity is also portrayed as advancing unity as a source of strength. For example, in his response to the US Supreme Court affirmative action ruling (2023), President Biden said: ‘One of the greatest strengths of America... is our diversity... look at the United States military, the finest fighting force in the history of the world. It’s been a model of diversity. And it’s not only made our nation better, stronger, safer... our colleges are stronger when they are racially diverse. Our nation is stronger because... we are tapping into the full range of talent in this nation’ (The White House, 2023). As this quotation demonstrates, debates around diversity echo not only moral arguments regarding social justice and business arguments around profit, but also ideas of nationalism and national unity.

Two UK government reports demonstrate this dualism around ‘diversity’ and ‘unity’. The first, titled *Strength in diversity: Towards a community cohesion and race equality strategy* (Home Office, 2004), sought to ‘address’ diversity by encouraging ‘a sense of pride in being British’. In other words, when the report seeks ‘strength in diversity’ in the UK, it wants to achieve strength **despite** diversity. Diversity is portrayed as a danger that needs to be controlled by encouraging patriotism and national loyalty (McGhee, 2005; Runnymede Trust, 2004). In the second report, *Our Shared Futures*, issued by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (CIC, 2007), diversity management is portrayed as a necessary tool to ensure the safety and cohesion of communities, given the demographic changes in the workforce

(CIC, 2007). While this rhetoric of communal cohesion and social stability echo the language of ‘benefit’, it is different from the ‘classical’ economic benefit advocated by the business case for diversity (Johnston & Packer, 1987). The benefit that this discourse talks about extends beyond solely moral or economic benefit, and can perhaps be seen as more political in nature (discussed later, see 8.3). The ideas that these reports echo are fundamentally different from the rhetoric of diversity management as a managerial approach or an anti-discrimination discourse (Oswick & Noon, 2014). Diversity turns from being the solution to being the problem: While diversity management talks about social difference as valuable and desirable (in order to address inequality or to advance the business), these reports treat diversity as an obstacle that institutions should ‘control’ or even ‘overcome’ (addressing dangers of social fragmentation and divide).

Researchers, practitioners, and organisational members seek to reconcile diversity with ideas and values of social cohesion, oneness, and uniformity. One response to this duality has been that, to achieve a cohesive yet plural organisation, diversity can be advanced by difference but must remain ‘within the norms’ (Marvasti & McKinney, 2011; Rodríguez-García, 2010). It is possible that unity-centred diversity debates support a form of diversity management that offers affirmative rather than transformative remedy, in the sense that it is ‘aimed at correcting inequitable outcomes of social arrangements without disturbing the underlying framework that generates them’ (Fraser, 1995, p. 82).

### **2.4.5 Appropriation of diversity**

As discussed above, opponents of the ideal of diversity usually reject its terminology and language. An example of this form of hostility was given by US presidential candidate Ron DeSantis’s mocking statement that ‘DEI is better viewed as standing for Discrimination, Exclusion and Indoctrination’ (Diaz, 2023). However, in other instances, diversity opponents may choose to adopt its language. This can be seen as part of a wider trend in which vocabulary that emerged in human rights movements and political thought is appropriated by dominant groups to advance opposite messages, claim they are at risk, and maintain the status quo (Perugini & Gordon, 2015). Ellen Berrey (2015) shows how the concept of diversity can be used to advance both progressive and conservative ideological visions. In Israel, for example, the language of diversity has been embraced by conservative politicians in order to increase the representation of Jewish dominant groups in public media outlets and the court system (Schneider, 2023). The use of discrimination in the ‘reverse discrimination’ movement

offers another example of twisting the meaning of diversity language, as previously discussed (Pincus, 2003). The use of ‘privilege’ is also twisted: Conservative critics have described diversity as ‘treating groups as having saved up a right to special privileges in proportion to how much their purported ancestors were victimized in the past’ (Wood, 2003, p. 10). These examples demonstrate how diversity can be emptied of its original meaning and filled with another, in the service of difference agendas, revealing opposing conceptions of power in society.

#### **2.4.6 Diversity as a political action**

The political motivation behind diversity—and how ‘doing diversity’ is, can be, or should be, a political action—is also complex. It was argued that diversity management thrived and was embraced by employers because of its depoliticised nature. It replaced equal opportunities, a political anti-discrimination project, with a business-oriented project: ‘Diversity in organisations is often an attempt to take the politics out of change by individualising social power relations... [making] diversity initiatives into mechanisms for denial and control’ (Vince, 1996, p. 191). As a result, those approaching diversity from a social justice approach seek to politicise it and bring power awareness ‘back’ into the diversity conversation (Prasad et al., 2006a).

Bringing politics into diversity practice and discourse is sometimes portrayed as the solution and sometimes as the problem. Right-wing critics accuse diversity and its agents of being politically driven, particularly programs that seek a deeper change in organisational structures. ‘Diversity’ is sometimes used as a slur against progressive social movements (alongside ‘woke’). Since organisations are often expected to be, and declare that they are, politically-neutral spaces, then ‘political motivations’ become illegitimate (Swigart et al., 2020). In these circumstances, when diversity efforts are portrayed as politically driven, they are being delegitimised. When organisational members seek a deeper critical investigation of organisational inequality, they are often dismissed and silenced as being politically motivated. A researcher studying Cambridge University’s historical links to transatlantic slavery was accused of being ‘a “woke activist” with an agenda’ (Shackle, 2023). As a fellow historian of colonial slavery and the British empire observed: ‘We’re allowed to focus on and celebrate abolition, but the previous 200 years of slavery are apparently taboo. That doesn’t make any sense’ (Shackle, 2023, par. 23). In such accusations, ‘the political’ emerges as an attempt to change the status quo. This approach fails to recognise that the status quo itself is political,



and that the effort to sustain the status quo is a political action. Paradoxically, diversity is praised for being non-political; criticised for being non-political; and criticised for being too political. These debates around diversity as a political action position 'diversity' on the contested boundary between the scientific and the political (Gieryn, 1983). A critical analysis would argue that since everything is political, both diversity programs that work to maintain the status-quo and diversity efforts that seek to challenge it are political actions, as both take part in shaping reality and people's lives, while engaging with power dynamics.

## **2.5 Diversity as a descriptor of employee difference: The boundaries of diversity and its dimensions**

This section focuses on diversity as a **descriptor of employee difference** (Kirton, 2009), through some key debates concerning the scope of diversity, problems of dimensionality, and the question of managing political-ideological difference.

### **2.5.1 The scope of diversity**

The question of which social differences are and should be included (and excluded) in diversity management, and tracing this boundary work, has been key to critical diversity research (Kalonaityte, 2010; Zanoni & Janssens, 2004). Conceptually, diversity has an infinite number of dimensions (Prasad & Mills, 1997), but only certain ones gain recognition in legal, organisational, and theoretical conversations regarding diversity. As a descriptor of employee difference, what diversity means is a result of historical, national, socioeconomic, regulatory, temporal, and political processes and circumstances. These contexts shape the identities that require attention through legal protection, receive representation in decision-making, and become emphasised and celebrated in organisations (Healy, 2015; Tatli et al., 2012).

The normative debate around the scope of diversity often presents two main approaches (Hays-Thomas, 2004; Kirton, 2009): According to the **narrow** approach, workplace diversity should focus on collective differences, and on the inclusion of historically disadvantaged groups who suffer systemic discrimination. According to this stance, which is rooted in the legacies of social movements, workplace diversity should be dedicated to 'the inclusion of multiple voices [and to] reducing intergroup inequality in organisations, and, thus, the societies they operate in' (Pringle et al., 2006, p. 531). Supporters of the **broad** definition approach, meanwhile, include under the diversity framework all types of difference, collective and individual alike. This means that 'diversity includes everyone: it is not

something that is defined by race or gender. It extends to age, personal and corporate background, education, function and personality. It includes life style, sexual preference, geographic origin, tenure with the organisation' (Thomas, 1991, p. 12). This approach, which arguably 'benefits everyone', is criticised for removing power relations from the conversation and for ignoring how historical circumstances shaped contemporary processes of inclusion, exclusion, and hierarchies, and how workplace inequality is structured along the lines of difference between historically privileged and disadvantaged groups (Acker, 2000; Prasad & Mills, 1997). The 'All Lives Matter' slogan, which emerged as a response to the Black Lives Matter movement, demonstrates this debate. Its inclusive rhetoric is misleading: By emphasising the equal value of all humans, it actually suppresses the BLM demand to draw public attention to racial injustice related to police brutality, workplace discrimination, and other social justice issues. Similarly, the diversity discursive device of 'celebrating all differences' ignores the role of history and power in shaping contemporary lives (and working lives) of groups in society, and thereby advances an exclusionary vision.

Employment law offers a response to the normative debate about which differences should be included, as it defines certain collective differences as 'protected characteristics'. The legal construction of difference influences what employers and employees consider when they think and talk about workplace diversity. However, the legal perspective reveals only a fraction of the politics of difference within the diversity world. First, as previously discussed, the field of diversity management distanced itself from a regulation-oriented approach, instead embracing voluntarism (Özbilgin & Tatli, 2011). Second, although different protected characteristics may have the same sort of protection by law, each of them has a different historical background, and the field of diversity management is inclined towards certain identity strands. As discussed earlier, social movements and regulatory trends in the US led early initiatives to focus on gender and race at work. Despite changes in the social and legal environment, the overall focus of the field remained, even when 'new' demographic categories entered the discussion, such as disability, sexual orientation, religion, and age (Ozturk & Tatli, 2016). Third, the construction of difference at work takes place in a dynamic organisational and discursive arena: certain employee differences emerge and gain relevancy when they are perceived as either useful from a managerial point of view, or important from an emancipatory moral approach (Healy, 2015; Janssens & Zanoni, 2005). These 'relevant differences' are then framed by employers as 'diverse' and become actively managed. Critical

diversity researchers have attempted to trace the politics of difference in organisations and examine who benefits from these processes (Zanoni et al., 2010).

### **2.5.2 Problems of dimensionality**

The ‘protected characteristics’ framework is seen as a key pillar in advancing workplace equality and diversity. However, this lens also reproduces the perception of social difference as a fixed construct. When diversity debates use essentialist categories to signify diversity, it implies that ‘there can be no movement either within or across visible or invisible boundaries’ (Lorbiecki & Jack, 2000, p. S23). The repetitive use of social categories—women, black people, people with disabilities, and so on—constructs them as unitary groups, ignoring other similarities and differences between people in each group, such as socioeconomic background (Liff & Wajcman, 1996). They also define the boundaries of normality and abnormality, normativity and otherness in organisations, as a reflection of wider society (Ahonen et al., 2014). Critical and postcolonial thinkers discussed how racial and colonial dichotomies (Said, 1978) shaped the politics of diversity (Nkomo & Hoobler, 2014; Prasad, 2006).

At the same time, as previously noted, it is important to differentiate between categorisation which applied by employers for managerial purposes, and the use of categories by employees as a demand for recognition. A crucial question, therefore, relates to who sets the categories of difference and otherness in organisations, and what are the mechanisms behind the processes of positioning (Alvesson & Willmott, 2003)—in other words, exploring ‘what are the power relationships and types of knowledge by which certain bodies are allocated certain identities’ (Jones & Stablein, 2006, p. 150). As Simone de Beauvoir (1997) observed, it is a position of supremacy which allows ‘the One’ to define ‘the Other’ in relation to what s/he is not, so that while the former is the essential, the latter is the incidental.

For example, as Sara Ahmed discusses, when diversity discourses centre on ‘racialised others’ (black people or people of colour), they fail to name ‘whiteness’ and make it an explicit social category. In this way, whiteness remains invisible, normative, and universal, while being black or minority ethnic becomes the deviation from the norm, and therefore more visible in the workplace. Since whiteness is usually the institutional reference point and the grounds for decision-making, the white perspective is seen as normative and universal, and it is only the ‘non-white’ who are expected to represent ‘their community’ (Ahmed et al., 2006). This limits the degree to which tackling inequality is possible: ‘By appearing to

recognize difference, yet failing to appreciate white normativity and systematic inequality, current diversity discourse makes it difficult to construct a meaningful multiculturalism or genuinely progressive policies of race' (Bell & Hartmann, 2007, p. 896). The same logic can be applied to the emphasis on women as the gendered other and masculinity as the invisible norm.

In diversity studies, identities are often conceptualised as a singular stable concept; as fixed, readymade, clear-cut categories (Litvin, 1997; Nkomo & Cox, 1999; Zanoni et al., 2010). The categorisation of group difference is usually seen as necessary in order to talk about, measure, assess, and act upon workplace inequality. Since the 1990s, critical organisational scholars have been critiquing the positivistic ontology of identity that underlines diversity research, and emphasised the need to adopt more flexible, hybrid, context-sensitive epistemologies in studying inequality in organisations, beyond binary conceptions of men and women, black and white, and so on, which are rooted in rigid identity boundaries (Frenkel & Shenhav, 2006; Prasad, 2003). It has been argued that identities should be investigated as contextual, relational, multilevel, and intersectional constructs, in ways that capture the dialectic interplay between individual subjectivity and the structures that (re)produce it in organisations (Al Ariss et al., 2014; Brubaker, 2004; Jenkins, 1996).

The categorical thinking of diversity management also excludes people who identify in non-normative ways. Clair et al. (2019) suggest a framework for understanding demographic identities that 'deviate', or are misaligned with traditional diversity management categorisation systems. These include: demographic identities characterised by **intra-categorical multiplicity**, whereby people identify with two or more groups within one category (for example, people who are biracial, or have multiple religious affiliations); **intra-categorical mobility**, where people experience fluidity within a category (such as transgender); **intra-categorical uncertainty**, where individuals do not know which group in a category they belong to (such as people of mixed ethnic background); and **a-categorical identities**, in which individuals experience their self as in opposition to a particular category (for example a-gender). Indeed, identity fluidity and the construction of complex identities have been among the main themes in diversity studies during in the past two decades, which have been characterised by individualism, ideas of post-racialism (and realities of racism), the technology boom, and social media (Nkomo, Bell, et al., 2019). Identity is increasingly seen as an unstable construct, requiring individuals to engage in constant work of defining and

identifying themselves, in order to maintain a sense of coherence and meaning in a constantly changing world in which stable and traditional concepts of family, workplace, and community loyalties and commitments are increasingly called into question (Caldas-Coulthard & Iedema, 2016; Jenkins, 1996).

The dimensionality problem of diversity management can be seen as a problem of ‘prioritization of certain dimensions, the difficulty of clearly demarcating one dimension from another, and the unequal consideration of specific manifestations of each dimension’ (Köllen, 2021, p. 259). For example, looking at the overlaps of the category of ‘race’, the racialised ‘other’ can be constructed using multiple markers such as colour, ethnicity, culture, religion, and language (Grosfoguel, 2016; Nkomo, 2021). McCall (2005), by focusing on the limitations of gender as a single analytical category, discusses the methodological challenge of studying subjects of analysis that include multiple dimensions of social life and categories of analysis. Her intersectional lens was developed, for example, by studying the experiences of women in male-dominated sectors, at the intersection of gender, sexuality, and occupational group (Wright, 2016). Crucially, intersectionality is rooted in power awareness: it is interested in ‘the interaction of multiple identities and experiences of exclusion and subordination’ (Davis, 2008, p. 67). Black feminist studies highlighted the implications of overlapping, socially marginalised identities, and the failure of policies to address intersections between gender, race, age, sexual orientation, and so on (Crenshaw, 1998). In this sense, the problem of dimensionality can be seen as the focus on **one** aspect of ‘deviation’ from the ‘mythical norm’, instead of looking at the combination of ‘distortions around difference’ (Lorde, 1980, p. 855). Problems of dimensionality and categorical thinking pose more than just a technical challenge; they echo the fundamental contradiction between the understanding that identity is socially constructed, and the need to use categories of difference in advancing diversity, inclusion, and equality.

### **2.5.3 Managing political-ideological difference**

The management of political-ideological differences reflects earlier debates around the scope and boundaries of diversity. Political-ideological belief can be seen as ‘a set of beliefs about the proper order of society and how it can be achieved’ (Erikson & Tedin, 2003, p. 64). In this sense, it is different from ‘diversity of thought’, often understood as having and appreciating ‘multiple perspectives’ in the workplace, as one of the beneficial outcomes of demographic diversity (Bastian, 2019). In an era of increased social and political polarisation, and rising

nationalist and populist movements, political ideology becomes an increasingly salient feature of identity. It is even portrayed as a ‘mega-identity’ that merges race, religion, gender, sexuality, and other group identifications (Mason, 2018). Since identities are increasingly seen as building blocks of contemporary organisations (Caldas-Coulthard & Iedema, 2016), political difference becomes more prominent in organisational life. Indeed, major political events and trends, such as Brexit or Trumpism, are analysed not only as economic and social crises on a macro level, but also as factors that shape power relations at work (Kerr & Śliwa, 2020; Markham, 2020).

Within the field of diversity, political belief is situated differently from gender, race, and other protected characteristics. Its status is elusive and ambivalent: *de jure*, it is partially protected by law. Looking at the UK Equality Act (2010), there is a question around the overlap of political belief with characteristics such as religion and belief (defined as religious belief and philosophical belief) and nationality, an issue that was discussed in various court rulings (EHRC, 2016). *De facto*, political difference is an inseparable component of the diversity debates. Politics plays a key role in how organisational members think and talk about difference, position themselves and others at work, interpret organisational processes, and are treated by colleagues and employers. In some cases, employees can lose their job if they express views that are incompatible with the political ideology of their employer. Moreover, like gender and race, politics also shapes the positionality of organisational researchers (Kerr & Śliwa, 2020; Swigart et al., 2020).

Employers often aspire for ‘political neutrality’, at least in rhetoric, for example through ‘no politics at work’ policies. Organisations with a strong public presence, such as media outlets and nonprofit organisations, often seek political balance in panels, conferences, or coverage, to demonstrate their political diversity and inclusion. These efforts resonate with attempts to achieve gender balance and racial representation. Government bodies and universities are also expected to remain politically neutral in their organisational messages and policies, and can be accused of political bias if they provide unfair advantage to a certain political camp, candidate, or ideology (Yair & Sulitzeanu-Kenan, 2018).

However, the idea that organisations can actually be politically neutral, in the same way that they can be gender-neutral or race-neutral, is problematic not only because organisations are never neutral entities (Acker, 2006; Alvesson & Willmott, 2003; Nkomo, 2021). In order to understand the difference between political ideology and other diversity dimensions, we need

to shift from the **identity-based lens** to a **social lens** and look at social inequality (Swigart et al., 2020). The diversity paradigm, in its social-justice interpretations, is rooted in assumptions regarding power dynamics in society, and in how gender, race, and other social categories shape the opportunities and experiences of people in the workplace, and determine positions of privilege or disadvantage. Political-ideological belief has a different relationship with inequality: Unlike gender and race, it is hard to determine how political beliefs provide advantage or disadvantage at work, and when political belief turns from an individual into a collective difference.

Moreover, in many cases politically based discrimination is seen as legitimate, even within the EDI community itself. In fact, organisations are often expected to take a stance, to be politically ‘biased’, and to define their values and political boundaries—for example, towards supporters of white supremacy. This tension echoes Karl Popper’s ‘paradox of tolerance’ in liberal societies (Laumond, 2023): If an inclusive organisation seeks to remain inclusive, it must exclude, or at least be less inclusive towards, those who oppose inclusion. On the flipside of the coin, authors have wondered whether ‘real’ diversity can only happen in certain, left-leaning, politically-oriented settings (Paul, 2022; The Guardian, 2022). Indeed, the field of EDI itself is constantly marked in political terms (Lorbiecki & Jack, 2000), accused of being a political project of progressives by its opponents from the hard-right; accepted as a reasonable political compromise (in relation to affirmative action) by supporters from the centre-right; and rejected as being a depoliticised project (intended to advance profit and/or a white racial ideology) by many critics from the left.

The provision of legal and organisational protection around political belief is controversial. Some advocates of this idea argue that in some cases, demographic groups are defined through their political-ideological beliefs, and as such should be recognised (Kahn-Harris, 2019). Others claim that political difference has no relation to inequality and exclusion, and that diversity of thought is utilised to increase organisational performance and legitimacy, while minimising critical factors such as race (Bell et al., 2018). In an era when political belief can be key to people’s sense of self, this may raise questions of inclusion, such as whether restricting political expression is harmful for employees’ sense of belonging, whether political discrimination is morally wrong, how to manage conflicting political identities, and how these factors shape organisational climate (Ferdman, 2017).

Political contestation has always been part of other organisational life, beyond traditional political institutions. Since the 1960s, university campuses have been a key arena where political ideologies shape the behaviour of organisational members, and vice versa (Morgan & Davis III, 2019). In recent years, the rise of nationalist and populist movements around the world, and of mistrust in the ability and willingness of governments to serve their citizens, has also changed understanding of politics in the workplace. Workplaces are increasingly becoming an arena for political struggle over the future of society. Employee activism is becoming more common: employees try to influence their employers' stance or action on societal or environmental issues, and are more interested in the organisation's potential impact on social inequity. As such, this issue also becomes a higher priority for management (Reitz & Higgins, 2022).

## **2.6 Conclusion**

This chapter critically engaged with key debates that inform this research study, concerning 'diversity' and the construction of social difference in organisations and society. Instead of adopting a particular narrow definition of 'diversity', it demonstrated the multiple ways in which diversity is conceptualised and used (possibly also misused and abused), and surveyed the philosophical debates that underpin diversity management, the limitations of diversity management and related concepts such as equality and inclusion, and the role of politics in shaping diversity. These complexities, ambiguities, and inconsistencies are central to this study because they leave considerable room for 'diversity' to be shaped by political, social, and organisational contexts. Studying diversity in context, and examining how context-specific translations and manifestations of diversity echo and challenge wider trends and scholarly debates, lie at the heart of this study.



## CHAPTER THREE

### The organisational context: The nonprofit sector

#### 3.1 Introduction

Context matters. Organisations do not operate in isolation from their environment; they are embedded in communities, economies, sectors, cultures, histories, and nations. As previously discussed, how diversity is constructed in organisations is contextual (Healy, 2015; Tatli et al., 2012). Social and organisational context make certain social differences *become* important and relevant for employers to recognise and manage (Janssens & Zanoni, 2005). Diversity climates spill over from communities to organisations: they shape the composition of the workforce, inequality in the workplace, and the experiences of employees at work. For example, it was argued that when workers experience their communities as racially intolerant, they are less open to working in a diverse environment (Ragins et al., 2012).

Theoretically, ‘context’ is an unlimited web of historical, ideological, and cultural processes, norms, and material conditions that shape analysed phenomena. As previously noted, the subject of this thesis—the construction of diversity and difference in UK Jewish organisations—can be located at the intersection of (at least) three diversity contexts: the UK context, the Jewish context, and the nonprofit context. Obviously, these are not the only contexts in which the analysed phenomena take place, and not the only possible entry points to this discussion; neither do they constitute three coherent units of meanings, but rather represent a tangled skein of perceptions, assumptions, and norms. Still, positioning the analysis at this intersection enables the highlighting of key factors, trends, and debates that provide the foundations for a contextualised analysis. The complexities and multi-layered nature of these settings facilitates the generation of new insights into the contextual nature of diversity (Tatli et al., 2012). This chapter looks at the organisational-nonprofit context, by examining key debates in nonprofit literature from the UK and the US context, and uses some examples from the British civil society, social movements, and regulatory context. The following chapter (Chapter 4) looks at the social context of Jewish life, and specifically British Jewry.

Seemingly, the nonprofit sector offers the perfect environment for diverse and inclusive organisations to grow: their ethos is all about bringing good to society; they work with historically marginalised communities, and are familiar with their concerns; their trustees,

workers, and volunteers are ideologically driven and committed to social change; and they are independent and flexible entities, free of the private sector's obsession with profit and of the public sector's bureaucratic constraints. While these images are not false, they represent a partial and somewhat mystified picture of nonprofit organisational life.

This chapter unpacks some of these assumptions; critically examines how trends within the sector in recent decades echo and shape issues of EDI; asks how rhetoric-reality gaps in nonprofit work create challenges for the equality project; and explores how (even unwillingly) nonprofits can reproduce social inequality and marginalisation, both inwardly as employers and workplaces and outwardly as social actors in society. Reviewing the literature also suggests two types of potential contribution of this thesis: how a critical diversity lens can facilitate better understanding of the sector; and also how a critical investigation of NPOs can help unpack some of the tenets of the field of EDI. In its final section, the chapter zooms in to look at two types of nonprofit organisations which later become useful for understanding Jewish organisations: identity-based organisations; and diaspora organisations.

Although nonprofit organisations (NPOs) have not been a key arena in diversity research, nonprofit scholarship has been increasingly interested in diversity, identity, and inequality. However, critical scholars have pointed out the limitations of the emerging body of research on diversity in nonprofits, which a recent review classified as the 'least critical scholarship' among different strands of nonprofit research (Coule et al., 2020). Nonprofit scholarship is missing critical investigation of EDI that looks at the construction of identity and difference (Sandberg et al., 2019). Studies on diversity in nonprofits have been predominantly focused on descriptive demographic representation, and have failed to explore the fluid, complex, and contextual aspects of identity and group categorisation (Weisinger et al., 2016). Focusing on 'traditional' diversity dimensions such as gender and race also meant that diversity within those groups, as well as intersectional positions of marginality, was under-investigated.

### **3.2 The ethos of doing good**

Echoing scholars such as Michael Walzer and Robert Putnam, countless contemporary texts on nonprofit organisations open by stating that a vital civil society is a precondition for democracy (Putnam, 1994; Walzer, 1995). Since nonprofit organisations are seen as providing the infrastructure of civil society, nonprofit researchers often engage in the project of advancing their prosperity and sustainability. The theoretical underpinning of nonprofit

research tend to adopt the liberal view that NPOs enhance pluralism and provide balance between government and business (Roelofs, 1995).

The do-good ethos of the nonprofit sector is linked to the historical circumstances in which the sector emerged, particularly during the 1990s, when it was portrayed as an alternative to the declining, discredited welfare state (Martínez, 2015). Nonprofits became the ‘solution’ to the crisis of the state around the globe: the seeming failure of social welfare policies in the Global North; and the alleged failure of state-led efforts towards ‘progress’ and democratisation in the Global South (Anheier, 2014; Salamon et al., 1999). The enthusiasm about NPOs rested on the idea that they are more efficient and cost-effective than governments in providing services. The dramatic growth of the nonprofit sector—particularly in its role as service provider—has been linked to the rise of neoliberal ideology and privatisation policies. Shifting the responsibility for service provision from governments to NPOs (sometimes while maintaining government funding) was believed to provide a ‘middle way’ between market-led and state-led approaches (Giddens, 2013), a new balance between capitalist and socialist approaches (Anheier, 2014; Salamon et al., 1999). However, as Billie Sandberg critically argues, ‘in this viewpoint, the nonprofit sector maintains its position as the proverbial good (albeit fallible) guy, whereas the state and the market play its nemeses in an old-fashioned tale of good versus evil. As such, the prevailing notions of the nonprofit sector are reinforced rather than critiqued’ (Sandberg, 2019, p. 938).

In these idealised depictions, NPOs are often portrayed as the ‘space’ between the state, the market, and the family, in which people associate voluntarily around common interests to advance public good (Anheier, 2014). Instead of seeking commercial benefit, NPOs are believed to be driven by the value of solidarity (Chandhoke, 2010). They are ‘motivated by the desire to articulate and actualize a particular social vision... [while representing] the shared normative values of their patrons, members, and clients’ (Najam, 2000, p. 378). Philanthropists are portrayed as people who choose to dedicate their personal wealth to ‘solve common social problems such as poverty or ignorance’, a step driven by their ‘love of humanity’ (Anheier, 2014, p. 8). As social agents, NPOs are seen as purely value-driven—guided by ideals such as pursuing equality, empowering people, making voices heard, and transforming lives (Blake et al., 2006). Clark (1991) describes the pro-nonprofit bias as such: ‘After all, it is governments that we, the public, love to hate; non-government organizations can’t be suspect. It is large bureaucracies we mistrust; small, voluntary organizations are our friends. It is the profit-motive that we find vulgar; altruism is noble’ (Clark, 1991, pp. 52–53).

These imaginations of NPOs are particularly strong in the context of charities. While some NPOs exist to benefit their members, nonprofit charities are meant to benefit wider society (HMRC, 2022). Indeed, the legitimacy and value of NPOs have been increasingly questioned in recent decades. This was linked to a disconnect between NPOs leadership and the communities they serve; to financial instability of organisations leading to a shift of agenda toward funding sources (and away from community needs); to the growing role played by grassroots social movements in shaping public agenda on social issues; and to various scandals involving NGOs (Cooper, 2018).

The roles of NPOs go beyond providing services and responding to unmet community needs. They include advocacy, bringing community needs to public and government attention (at times through confrontation); community building, or providing social capital; and acting as the guardian of collectively held societal values (Najam, 2000; Salamon, 2003). These functions highlight the role nonprofits play—or are expected to play—in representation, a concept traditionally seen as speaking for, acting for, and looking after the interests of respective groups (Pitkin, 1967). Representation became key to the sector’s ethos particularly with regard to voicing the concerns of marginalised communities that have been historically excluded from political arenas (Greenspan, 2005; Maddison et al., 2004). However, research reveals a substantial diversity gap: the NPO workforce, and particularly nonprofit leadership, is far from representing the diversity of the communities they work with, which typically contain high rates of disadvantaged groups (Mor Barak, 2015; Schwartz et al., 2011; Weisinger, 2017). In the US, a major survey of the sector argued that ‘boards are disconnected from the communities they serve’, with around half of executives sharing that they do not have the right board members to ‘establish trust with the communities they serve’ (BoardSource, 2021, p. 29). In the UK, an independent inquiry into the future of civil society (CSF, 2018) made similar arguments about charities being perceived as out of touch and lacking significance for people’s lives, and particularly marginalised communities. This problem of trust is intensified by inequality within British civil society along lines of race, gender, age, and other characteristics (Afridi, 2023). Legally, charities that deliver public services on behalf of the government have a public-sector legal duty to promote equality, as per the Equality Act 2010 (NCVO, 2022b).

The representation of beneficiaries in decision-making has become a key theme in nonprofit literature on EDI (Derwin, 2022; Fredette & Sessler Bernstein, 2019), as well as in practitioner literature. According to the UK Charity Governance Code (2017): ‘Board

diversity, in the widest sense, is important because it creates more balanced decision-making. Where appropriate, this includes and centres those communities and people the charity serves.’ (CGC, 2017, p. 21)

This disconnect between those who lead nonprofit work and those who are meant to benefit from it problematizes the idealised image of the nonprofit sector. Thus, the first challenge to the NPO ‘do-good’ ethos can be stated as: **Doing good for whom?** The legal and proclaimed *raison d’être* of nonprofit organisations is to benefit society, or more specifically, the communities they work with. The multiplicity of names used to refer to this group—beneficiaries, recipients, clients, service users, constituents—reveals their provisional and often marginalised position, as well as their construction as passive recipients of service or aid, rather than active participants or equal partners in decision-making. This gap is particularly evident in the context of nonprofit social services, and in the unequal power balance between social service providers and service users (Woolford & Curran, 2011). These relationships are gendered and racialised: for example, people of colour are significantly more likely to be an NPO’s clientele than to serve in NPO leadership (Bell et al., 2006). Critical scholars have rejected the term ‘beneficiaries’ in an attempt to challenge assumptions regarding ‘benefit’ within the sector (Townsend et al., 2004). The social construction of beneficiaries as those needing assistance relies on a process of othering, which differentiates between ‘selves’ (NPO staff, leaders) and ‘others’ (service users), thus reinforcing the construction of others as ‘inferior’ to selves (Wettermark, 2023). These unequal power relations shape how NPOs approach issues of accountability: NPOs tend to prioritise donors’ expectations and demands over those of beneficiaries and other stakeholders who are less financially powerful (Raggio, 2019). However, tracing who benefits from nonprofit work is complex, because nonprofits do not legally have owners, and cannot distribute profits to their founders or managers (Salamon et al., 1999). Donors often benefit from philanthropy indirectly, through tax advantages, and by gaining power over setting the agenda for social programs and community life (in ways that may even undermine democratic values) (Corwin Berman, 2017; Oelberger, 2018). In fact, it has been argued that nonprofit work and philanthropy actually serve to maintain the economic, social and political hegemony of elites, thus contributing to perpetuating inequality rather than to fixing it (Maclean et al., 2021).

The complexity around the ideas of benefit and representation in the nonprofit world creates dilemmas for the task of ‘managing diversity’. The first concerns the scope of representation: Should diversification efforts focus on the organisation’s direct ‘client base’, the wider local

community, or society at large? These questions echo the obscure meaning and boundaries of ‘community’ (Bauman, 2013). The second question is whether representing the demographic diversity of the beneficiaries is the way to advance their interests. Scholars have examined whether descriptive representation (stand as) is indeed necessary or sufficient to promote substantive representation (speak/act for) of community interests (Guo & Musso, 2007; Pitkin, 1967), particularly if there are conflicting ideas within the community over what the community needs are or how to address them. Tomlinson and Schwabenland (2010) pointed out possible conflicts between the expectations of NPOs to ‘do well’ and to ‘do good’: between the need to respond to service users’ concerns in a sensitive, efficient, and cost-effective manner; and to respect and recognise their diverse workforce. Third, the ideal of community representation assumes that NPOs work to serve marginalised social groups that are disadvantaged in the labour market. This idea is problematised when the beneficiaries are not, or not all, members of underrepresented groups in the workforce. Another issue revolves around the motivation for diversity. Community representation has been advocated for from various viewpoints, which can largely be clustered into the business case and the social-justice case for diversity: mirroring the charity ‘client base’ in the workforce is said to increase outreach to new communities, improve mission attainment and performance, and potentially translate into increased funding (Weisinger, 2017). It also enables NPOs to better understand and advance the interests of their clients (Donaldson, 2008; LeRoux, 2009). In the context of nonprofit advocacy, beneficiary representational input (‘voice-in’) has been linked to meaningful advocacy output (‘voice-out’) (Guo & Saxton, 2010). The representation of beneficiaries emerges as both a moral imperative and a pragmatic need. It has been linked to issues of accountability (Mercelis et al., 2016; Wellens & Jegers, 2016) and authenticity (Cha et al., 2019; Chapman & Lowndes, 2014), through the lived experience that beneficiaries bring to the organisation.

Interestingly, the social justice arguments focus on serving communities better, but abandon ‘traditional’ diversity arguments that concentrate on the organisation as a workplace—tackling discrimination, ensuring equal opportunity, and creating an equitable and inclusive work environment. Indeed, the nonprofit context offers a unique case study for challenging the binary between the business case and the moral case for diversity, and possibly for reconciling the two. Nonprofits, as organisational entities, are not solely social-justice driven, nor entirely business motivated (in a way, their ‘business’ is all about social justice ); as such,

they can possibly challenge the perception of the business case and the social-justice case for diversity as oppositional and mutually exclusive (Tomlinson & Schwabenland, 2010).

Another challenge to the nonprofit ‘do good’ claims concerns the question: **What constitutes the ‘good’?** What is ‘good’ for society, and for particular groups within it, is of course debatable, and in the nonprofit world is largely defined by donors and board members, rather than by the communities they claim to serve (Maclean et al., 2021; Oelberger, 2018).

Nonprofits can promote a wide range of social, economic, and political agendas, including ideologies that fundamentally contradict values of equality and inclusion, such as white supremacy (ADL, 2021). The nonprofit sector’s ‘do good’ image obscures ‘the fact that nonprofits can advance diverse and often competing political projects: from alternative grassroots initiatives to neoliberal reformist agendas’ (Martínez, 2015, p. 10). Clearly, the extent to which openly racist groups can create diverse and inclusive workplaces is inherently restricted, although they might still adopt EDI rhetoric. Indeed, it has been argued that the concept of diversity can be utilised to advance both progressive and conservative ideological messages (Berrey, 2015). Researchers have warned about the co-optation of EDI concepts to pursue organisational priorities and political agendas beyond the equality project (Lombardo et al., 2009). These processes reveal discursive struggles over what constitutes a ‘good’ society, in ways that go beyond the traditional liberal-conservative divide between ideas of social justice, women’s rights, combating racism and poverty; and values of religion, social order, capitalism, and nationalism (Sterling et al., 2019). Particularly in the ‘post-truth’ era, political divisions increasingly manifest in struggles over facts and meaning. Researchers have investigated how NPOs that are associated with dominant groups and conservative agenda use (appropriate) emancipatory discourses (such as that of human rights) that are associated with the counter-hegemonic struggle for historical justice, in order to reinforce their domination (Perugini & Gordon, 2015). For example, using anti-apartheid language, Israel’s National Security Minister Ben-Gvir argued that in the West Bank there is an apartheid system against Jews (Breiner, 2023). Earlier, when Israeli Justice Minister Shaked led efforts to appoint right-wing Jewish judges, she claimed they were ‘diversifying’ the court system (Rosner, 2017).

A third challenge to the nonprofit ethos has been **whether the sector is actually able to provide the ‘good’** and the social benefits for which it is celebrated, in terms of addressing community needs. NPOs may contribute to the wellbeing of communities, or even lead to certain policy changes, but their ability (and perhaps even will) to lead deeper social change

is inherently limited. In fact, the thriving of the nonprofit sector in itself advances neoliberal forms of governance and sustains the capitalist economic structure (Martínez, 2015). It has been argued that by filling gaps and needs that governments fail to address, nonprofit work legitimizes and preserves social inequality, protects capitalism from dissent, and prevents real social change from occurring (Roelofs, 1995; Stoner & Sullivan, 2009): ‘The image of nonprofit organizations that contemporary theory conveys—as organizations specially designed to provide aid when our economic and democratic systems fail us—serves to disguise nonprofits’ role as an aide to the forces of marketization. This disguise of neoliberalism’s operation is of paramount importance to its success’ (Sandberg, 2019, p. 939). Moreover, nonprofits are limited in their ability to challenge power dynamics between majority and minority groups, due to their dependence on the state for legitimacy and funding. Therefore, they usually provide technical rather than political solutions to problems (Payes, 2003). Thus, regardless of their good intentions, nonprofits are often doomed to engage in reaffirmation rather than transformative change (Fraser, 1995).

Moreover, it has been argued that the space for civil society organisations to operate and lead social change is gradually closing. This ‘closing space’ manifests in restriction of foreign funding and of freedom of speech, assembly, and expression (Carothers, 2015; Rutzen, 2015). Since the September 11 attack in 2001, governments around the world have taken regulatory, legislative, and practical steps—as part of counter-terrorism efforts and the fight against violent extremism—which have had a constraining impact on human rights organisations (Cooper, 2018; ECNL, 2019). Another wave of constraints on civil society around the world took place following the Arab Spring (Rutzen, 2015).

NPOs often face institutional constraints when they seek to engage in deeper transformative social change. In 2021, the UK Charity Commission investigated whether the National Trust had breached charity law by publishing a report on the links between its properties and histories of colonialism and slavery. The charity was accused of leading a political agenda and promoting one side of history (McGrady, 2020), echoing the expectation of charities to remain ‘neutral’ as part of the public benefit requirement, and in order to ensure their stability. In this case, the regulator saw the report as harmful to the charity’s reputation and to public trust in charities more widely (The Charity Commission, 2021). It warned that a charity should avoid engaging in what are framed as public controversies that may risk its stability, and ‘remain mindful of the opposing views and diverse opinions within its membership and wider society’ (Stephenson, 2021). This case demonstrated the prevailing



business logic in the nonprofit sector, and how the links between neoliberalism, racism, and nationalism push charities into reaffirming the status quo and the national, social, and economic order.

NGOs have been described as agents of the neoliberal project, in that they hamper grassroots efforts to lead transformative social change, by co-opting and depoliticising social movements, and they use language of social movements (e.g., gender equality, anti-racism) while collaborating with donors and government agencies that seek to suppress confrontational activity. NPOs offer community leaders resources and jobs, and encourage grassroots activism to turn to ‘pragmatic’ courses of action, while abandoning its radical nature and potential to bring deeper social transformation (Pearce, 2010; Petras, 1997). It has been argued that NPOs:

...emphasise projects, not movements; they ‘mobilise’ people to produce at the margins but not to struggle to control the basic means of production and wealth; they focus on technical financial assistance of projects, not on structural conditions that shape the everyday lives of people... The local nature of NGO activity means that ‘empowerment’ never goes beyond influencing small areas of social life, with limited resources, and within the conditions permitted by the neoliberal state and macro-economy. (Petras, 1997, p. 14)

The ‘do-good’ self-perception of the nonprofit sector becomes a barrier to addressing structural racism: How can institutions that are dedicated to doing good possibly incorporate racism? This bias leads nonprofit workers to view discrimination as **local and individual** acts of meanness rather than as an **institutional** problem, and to treat conversations about racism in their workplace as a personal insult (Greene, 2007). These ideas echo DiAngelo’s concept of ‘white fragility’, in which racism is associated with immoral individual actions, which good and moral people cannot possibly engage in (DiAngelo, 2018). Indeed, these ideas are particularly strong given the racial inequality within the sector, which has been portrayed by critics as an institutionally white space, where black people and other minoritised groups are positioned at the receiving end of aid (Heckler, 2019). Institutional whiteness, as a form of institutional racism, also means that black and minority ethnic staff members become hyper-visible within organisations, which creates immense personal and political pressures (Ahmed et al., 2006).

Critiques concerning the ‘white saviour’ phenomenon are particularly strong in the context of international development, as a sub-sector of the nonprofit world. The debate around

‘development’ itself demonstrates the possible damaging effects of the nonprofit promise of bringing ‘good’. Critical and postcolonial critiques reject the idea of bringing ‘progress’ and question the claims of the sector to tackle poverty. Instead, they point to the institutionally racist foundations on which the sector is built, rooted in colonial discourse and binaries of East and West, progress and backwardness. The ethos that guides the development enterprise is associated with a Eurocentric and capitalist modernity rather than being defined by the communities that this project is meant to serve (Crush, 1995; Dar, 2007; Srinivas, 2009). In this global context, NPOs serve as instruments of control by the Global North over the Global South, and maintain relationships of hierarchy and dependency, rather than offering genuine opportunities for marginalised communities and contributing to transforming the global economic order (Pearce, 2010; Townsend et al., 2004).

### **3.3 The for-profit mindset in the nonprofit sector**

Traditional definitions of NPOs portray them as ‘not-for-profit’, meaning not returning profits to their managers or ‘owners’; ‘private’, which means they are ‘institutionally separate from the state’; and ‘self-governing’, meaning ‘fundamentally in control of their own affairs’ (Salamon et al., 1999, pp. 3–4). All the above assumptions have been challenged in the literature.

Since the 1990s, nonprofit organisations have become increasingly embedded in discourses of **managerialism** and **professionalism** (Maier & Meyer, 2011; Marberg et al., 2019; Sandberg, 2019), thus blurring the boundaries between the public, nonprofit, and for-profit sectors. Those trends distance NPOs from the ‘values, passions, and ethics from which they sprang’ as they developed into ‘full-blown bureaucratic organizations with extensive rules, procedures, and professional staffs’ (Rothschild & Milofsky, 2006, p. 138).

Neoliberalism infused market principles into the nonprofit sector. In an era of privatisation, the nonprofit sector grew as a result of contracting-out policies, on the assumption that they are more efficient and cost-effective in providing services than governments (Kaboolian, 1998; Savas, 2001). The managerialist discourse has pushed NPOs into a mindset of a ‘business enterprise’ that produces goods and services for customers, bringing to the forefront themes of effectiveness, efficiency, resources, strategy, performance, and marketing. The ‘rationalisation’ of the sector—manifesting in the widespread use of practices such as quantitative program evaluation, strategic planning, and consultants (Hwang & Powell, 2004; Moore, 2000)—advanced a perception of actors in the nonprofit world as self-interested,

autonomous, instrumentally rational, and agentic. As a result, it became appropriate to prioritize the organisation's self-interest of survival over issues such as employee benefits. The managerialist discourse turned the nonprofit environment into a 'market': other NPOs became 'competitors', funders turned into 'investors', and communities became 'customers' (Maier & Meyer, 2011). Ideas such as 'effective altruism', guided by values of utilitarianism, advanced the idea that 'giving' should be done in the most effective way possible, and sidelined values of participation, inclusion, and mutuality (Choi & Mirabella, 2019). Paradoxically, the need to quantify, measure, document, audit, and report to donors, the chase after effectiveness, and the need to provide evidence of impact have all shifted attention away from the work at the grassroots, and hindered the ability of NPOs to commit to the values that guided the social movements from which they historically developed (Dar, 2007; Pearce, 2010; Rothschild & Milofsky, 2006).

State regulation, reporting requirements, and tax benefits incentivize trends of professionalisation in NPOs (Hadjievaska & Stavenes, 2020). The diffusion of the discourse of professionalisation makes the nonprofit organisation 'a pool of experts who use their discretionary knowledge to solve complex problems' (Maier & Meyer, 2011, p. 745). Researchers identify a shift from the sector's roots in ideas of voluntarism and a dynamic civil society, towards a sector 'staffed by paid professionals holding specialised expertise and advanced degrees and guided by standards and norms of professional associations', such as legal or financial professionals, including the unique professional class of 'nonprofit managers' (Stewart, 2014, p. 2). The professionalism discourse emphasises themes such as standards, quality of work, expertise, and knowledge. It has been argued that staff themselves fear that these trends of modernisation and professionalisation will corrupt their identities, weaken their guiding idealist visions, and reduce their capacity to question and propose (Bebbington, 1997; Pearce, 2010). Given these trends, researchers have questioned the capacity of NPOs to serve community needs and to represent and speak for marginalised communities, and have criticised the nonprofit 'tendency to act... as if they have the legitimacy of social movements, when they are in fact professionalised and well-resourced institutions with a much greater stake in the status quo' (Pearce, 2010, p. 629). Researchers criticise NPOs' tendency to engage in self-interested organisational advocacy (e.g., to protect funding contracts), rather than in progressive advocacy that is guided by constituents' interests and that engages those communities in the advocacy process (Donaldson, 2008).

Managerialism and professionalism push NPOs as employers to adopt the ‘human resource management’ lens—to view employees as assets, and treat them in ways that are believed to produce greater productivity and commitment, in order to create competitive advantages and increase ‘profit’ (Collings et al., 2019). NPOs are encouraged to adopt this HRM mindset in order to survive in an uncertain and competitive environment, in which there is declining governmental and private financial support, greater demand for provision of services, and thus a need to become more effective and get the most out of the ‘human resource’ (Ridder & McCandless, 2010).

These trends shape the nonprofit workplace and impact issues of EDI. Heckler (2019) discusses how legal and economic realities pressure nonprofit organisations to conform to the institutions that organize society, such as in terms of masculinity and whiteness: ‘The further NPOs move toward professionalisation and the Masculinity and Whiteness that accompany it, the more severe the hurdles will be for beneficiaries and employees who are not White men’ (Heckler, 2019, p. 274). Since the economy is controlled by white men, conforming to the gender and racial norms that are dominant in society enables NPOs to secure resources; for example, having financial experts in leadership positions is believed to give nonprofits a competitive advantage—since white men are stereotyped as more financially savvy, nonprofits with white-dominant leadership are more likely to appear as maintaining industry standards, and to attract the favourable attention of donors (Heckler, 2019). Thus, Heckler’s analysis demonstrates the critique of the business case for diversity—that diversity can be abandoned when it is bad for business (Noon, 2007). Moreover, the business logic shapes the ways in which communities benefit from NPO work. For example, NPOs sometimes differentiate between groups of clients according to their ‘achievements’, prioritising clients who comply with market and industrial logics over those who do not (Wasserman & Clair, 2013; Wettermark, 2023).

Practitioner literature also reflects an instrumental and managerial approach to EDI. For example, when the UK Charity Governance Code (2017)—produced via a nonprofit cross-sector collaboration—refers to EDI best practices, it repeatedly emphasises the business case for diversity: addressing EDI ‘helps a board to make better decisions... make sure that a charity achieves its aims... contribute to decision-making... creates more balanced decision-making... this increases the charity’s legitimacy and impact’ (CGC, 2017, p. 21). The sidelining of the social-justice case for diversity is somewhat surprising, and even paradoxical, given the sector’s ethos of ‘doing good’.

### **3.4 Employee perspective: The NPO as a workplace**

As previously noted, nonprofit organisations are often analysed as flatter, more flexible, less bureaucratic, more connected to citizens, and as workplaces that enable employees more involvement and control over their work. As such, they are believed to be able to ‘solve’ many organisational ills that are created by hierarchy and bureaucracy, such as employee alienation and workplace inequality (Wilson, 2018). Nonprofit organisations are often portrayed as mission-driven entities with a strong communitarian ethos and highly committed workers, volunteers, and members. Since financial remuneration in the sector is relatively low, it is often assumed that what attracts staff to join are passion for the mission and nonmaterial intrinsic rewards (Eun Kim & Wook Lee, 2007; Mirvis & Hackett, 1986). Where monetary compensation is minimal or non-existent, nonprofit work is constructed as a spiritual calling (Scott, 2007), as an individual sacrifice for the betterment of others (Smith et al., 2006), or even as a form of resistance: ‘Going to work is fundamental to their [the employees] view of the world and what they want their role in the world to be. Working in a particular organisation becomes an expression of resistance against conditions that are unacceptable’ (Blake et al., 2006, p. 42). However, organisational settings that emphasise social justice narratives and aspire to a better society do not necessarily make NPOs more inclusive, diverse, and equitable as workplaces (Glass, 2022). Nonprofit boards, leadership, and staff are not typically diverse (Boyarski, 2018), and those with racially diverse workforces are not necessarily inclusive, with white normativity found to be present in racially diverse nonprofit organisations (Ward, 2008).

Feit (2019) argues that while nonprofits often adopt the language of valuing diversity, nonprofit human resource management is characterised by a colour-blindness norm. This lack of colour cognizance (Foldy & Buckley, 2014) leads nonprofit employers to approach race as ‘irrelevant’ to employment, to ‘look beyond’ race, and to aspire for neutrality as a value that is believed to allow equal opportunity for all (Feit, 2019). Thus:

[a] significant disconnect exists between the stated values and beliefs of nonprofit organizations regarding the importance of racial diversity, and their attempts to proactively increase diversity and inclusiveness within their organizations... employees described the nonprofit organizations where they work (or worked) as entities that value racial diversity and inclusiveness; yet, they view their organizations as not making significant strides to turn those espoused values into action and results. (Schwartz et al., 2011)

As a result, the experience of people of colour in NPOs is often one of frustration with being pigeonholed and expected to ‘represent’ a community to which they are believed to belong, and of experiencing loneliness and isolation in their organisations, as they report higher levels of discrimination than white colleagues (Feit, 2019; Thomas-Breitfeld & Kunreuther, 2017).

In the UK, the voluntary sector is disproportionately staffed by women (67%) and is less ethnically diverse than the public and private sectors, with 90% of its staff identifying as white (NCVO, 2022a). UK trends reflect wider patterns around diversity gaps in nonprofit boards. As previously noted, nonprofit literature has been increasingly interested in the gap between the composition of nonprofit leadership (particularly around race and gender) and the constituencies these organisations serve (Bradshaw & Fredette, 2013; Fredette & Sessler Bernstein, 2019; Weisinger, 2017). Researchers have noted that, despite romanticised ideas of nonprofit organisations as inherently ‘good’, racism and sexism permeate the sector, serving the maintenance of white supremacy and patriarchy (Nickels & Leach, 2021). People of colour are less likely to gain promotion in the nonprofit sector despite having similar qualifications as white colleagues (Biu, 2019). The traditional role of board members in attracting funding creates a bias in favour of white men, who tend to have greater personal wealth and more links to relevant networks (Heckler, 2019). This inequality is reproduced because new recruitment often depends on existing trustees’ networks and friendships (Ostrower, 2007). Indeed, lack of social capital and relevant networks lead people of colour to report that it is harder for them to fundraise (Thomas-Breitfeld & Kunreuther, 2017).

Intersectionality is key to understanding inequality within the sector: racial and gender barriers to advancement are particularly evident for women of colour, who are more likely (than white women, men of colour, or white men counterparts) to work in administrative roles and are the least likely to hold senior leadership positions, despite high levels of education. Similar to other industries, women of colour are ‘sometimes left out or ignored and sometimes hyper-visible under intense scrutiny, with both conditions creating burdens’ (Biu, 2019, p. 4). In this sense, NPOs are not fundamentally different from other work organisations, as sites where gender, racial, and class inequality is created and re-created (Acker, 2006). As previously noted, masculinity and whiteness are embedded in NPOs through business-like practices, legal structures, and resource dependency. These factors pressure NPOs to resemble other organisations and to conform to the institutions that organize society (such as capitalism, masculinity, and whiteness). This pressure manifests at a cultural-symbolic level, through discourse, and also has material consequences on the lives of

people within and around NPOs—for example, through patterns of hiring that benefit white men (Heckler, 2019).

### 3.5 Conceptualising Jewish nonprofit organisations

The current chapter sets the **organisational nonprofit landscape** for this thesis. This section connects the nonprofit discussion with the next chapter, Chapter 4, which sets the **social and political landscape** by exploring UK Jewish context. It does so by exploring what type of NPOs UK Jewish organisations constitute, or can constitute, and what those conceptualisations can mean for EDI analysis.

Jewish nonprofit organisations can be conceptualised in many different ways: as faith-based organisations (Bielefeld & Cleveland, 2013; Franken, 2020; Schneider, 2010; Valins, 2003a), ethnic organisations (Kudenko & Phillips, 2010; Nayak, 2012), advocacy organisations (Sucharov, 2011), community-based organisations, and so on. Each of these conceptualisations would portray a different picture, emphasising and ignoring certain aspects of the organisational *raison d'être* and workplace dynamics and different dimensions of Jewish identity and experience. In an attempt to grasp the complex and multi-dimensional nature of Jewish identity, and the richness of meaning that diversity has in the UK Jewish workplace, two conceptualisations of the UK Jewish organisation were chosen in this thesis: **identity-based organisation**; and **diaspora organisation**. Each of these organisational models highlights different key dimensions of the Jewish nonprofit.

‘Identity-based organisation’ emphasises Jewish identity as the key organising factor of Jewish nonprofits. Instead of narrowing and committing to a certain dimension of Jewish identity (e.g., faith, ethnicity, culture), it intentionally keeps the meaning of Jewishness broad and vague, thus emphasising the socially constructed nature of Jewish identity. This ambiguity becomes useful later in analysing how the meaning of Jewish identity changes in different organisational contexts.

‘Diaspora organisation’ does quite the opposite, by emphasising a particular dimension of Jewish identity. However, instead of focusing on religion, ethnicity, or other well-researched identities within organisation and EDI literature; it approaches (Jewish) NPOs as spaces that organise around a diasporic collective identity. As discussed in Chapter 4, on the UK Jewish context, the concept of ‘diaspora’ is crucial to understanding Jewish life past and present, and diaspora-homeland relations play a key role in shaping the political landscape in which UK Jewish NPOs operate.

Thus, each of the two conceptualisations offers a different type of contribution to diversity literature. Later in the thesis, the empirical chapters (Chapters 6–8) utilise both concepts. The following sections review some key issues that are discussed in the literature regarding these two organisational models, and suggest possible implications for EDI research.

### **3.5.1 Identity-based nonprofit organisations**

Studying diversity in identity-based nonprofit organisations (IBNPs) is somewhat paradoxical, since IBNPs are, by definition, exclusive spaces. At the same time, in the diversity literature, identity-based organisations, and particularly minority advocacy groups, are assumed to be progressive equality and diversity stakeholders (alongside trade unions, statutory equality bodies, and social movements), since historically, these types of group have contributed to stretching the meaning of diversity towards a more comprehensive and fair agenda (Tatli et al., 2012). This makes the investigation of their dynamic as workplaces and member organisations particularly interesting.

IBNPs are organised around a particular group identity and are meant to advance the concerns of their members—or more broadly, the identity-based community in which they operate—through service provision, culture, education, representation, advocacy, and so on. They are believed to provide members of marginalised groups with cultural validation, enabling them to preserve their social identity and culture, form supportive and safe spaces, and develop their sense of belonging to the identity group. It has been argued that members join these spaces particularly if they were negatively stereotyped or felt unwelcomed in other organisations. IBNPs also provide space for mobilising a community for shared action, such as combating racism against the group (Kodama & Laylo, 2017). Identity-based organisations are rooted in an identity-based community, and the two are interlinked. The relationship with the community is seen as a key factor in consolidating the organisation's accountability and advancing its mission (Ospina et al., 2002).

As a workplace, it has been argued that IBNPs provide a more inclusive environment for workers of the identity group. For example, Bui (2019), who studied people of colour and immigrant identity-based organisations in the US, argued that the experience of women of colour in IBNPs was fundamentally different than in the wider nonprofit sector, where they faced the highest rates of racial and gender barriers (compared to white women, men of colour, and white men). Women working in IBNPs reported that their race or ethnicity helped them relate to, and better serve, their communities, and positively impacted their career



advancement. Bui argued that this enabled women of colour to become trusted figures, and thus enable employers to identify their leadership potential. Women of colour working in IBNPs indicated that their gender also helped their career progression (Bui, 2019), which interestingly turns this intersectional position of sex and race—normally expected to produce double marginalisation (Crenshaw, 1998)—into a resource. It has also been posited that IBNPs manage to challenge common racialised and gendered connotations of leadership that are widespread in the wider nonprofit sector (Kodama & Laylo, 2017). It is argued that although members of disadvantaged groups often internalise beliefs around leadership, whiteness, and masculinity, the identity-based organisation can offer a space in which to challenge ideas around what it means to be a leader and who can be one, and to validate different styles of leadership (Kodama & Laylo, 2017). However, other researchers emphasise how IBNPs are not free of inequality and discrimination. For example, Ward (2008) shows how organisations that are attentive to structural factors, have a reputation for multiculturalism, and have racially diverse workforces and a visible presence of people of colour in leadership may still hinge on white normativity. Surprisingly, it was the adoption of diversity management ideas (e.g., utilising diversity to build reputation) that highlighted the white normative culture of the workplace, as employees of colour reported (Ward, 2008).

The strand of research relating to diversity and the construction of difference in identity-based organisations offers new opportunities for studying EDI. In particular, two main gaps emerge from the existing research: First, the research tends to focus on the experience of members of the particular group the organisation is concerned with, and less on the experiences of other groups within this space. It also tends to accept the boundaries of the identity group as a given, paying less attention to controversy around group membership. Second, the research assumes that IBNPs organise around **disadvantaged** group identity. Indeed, within the field of EDI, the legitimacy of exclusive spaces is usually limited to groups that have been historically marginalised (New, 2016). However, global political trends in recent decades challenge this assumption, as dominant groups increasingly (and more openly and explicitly) claim to be under threat and organise in order to protect their rights. The rising diversity backlash in the US, with the spread of the concept of ‘reverse discrimination’ (Pincus, 2003), emphasises the need to investigate areas in which positions of minority and majority are contested.

Identity-based nonprofits can offer a unique setting for the study of inequality and cultural marginalisation. IBNPs are an unusual type of homogenous, monolithic organisation (Cox,

1991), where structural integration is not only minimal but ideological. In ‘typical’ segregated work contexts, such as male-dominated industries or professions, occupational segregation is critically analysed as a result of discrimination, marginalisation, and essentialist beliefs around gender-based capabilities, tendencies, and preferences (Acker, 2006; Kirton & Robertson, 2018; Wright, 2011, 2016). By contrast, the segregated and exclusive nature of IBNPs has moral-historical roots, with separation adopted in response to a wider landscape in which the identity group is marginalised and disadvantaged.

Interestingly, in both cases, the presence of an ‘other’ in the workplace can challenge and expose assumptions around identity and work, and how certain identities become resourceful and skilful. An intersectional lens is crucial here, since the positioning of employees is determined through their multiple identities. For example, Wright suggests that the voice of women in male-dominated professions (such as construction and transport) should be studied at the intersection with sexual orientation, given the role of sexuality as means of control over women at work (Wright, 2011, 2016). In male-dominated spaces, the ‘value’ attached to sex categories is analysed as biased, irrelevant, and unjust, whereas in IBNPs, emphasising the ‘value’ of the group identity is not only legitimate but offers ‘justice of recognition’, by upwardly revaluing an identity that suffered institutionalized stigma (Fraser, 1999). Thus, looking at ‘the other’ within IBNPs may be puzzling, as they may be members of the majority group against which the IBNP was formed, members of other minorities, or both.

Theoretically, IBNPs create a minority-dominated space, where the group members not only constitute a numerical majority but can also control the organisational culture and narrative, and establish different ways of organising and managing. This setting can potentially transform traditional intergroup power relations, and ‘flip’ minority and majority positions on a symbolic, normative, and material level, normalizing the minority culture and othering the majority. Those complexities offer new prospects for studying diversity and inclusion paradoxes (Ferdman, 2017; Smith & Lewis, 2011).

### **3.5.2 Diaspora organisations**

The concept of ‘diaspora’ is concerned with the dispersion of a population in space, outside its putative homeland (Brubaker, 2005). This in-between positioning, as Stuart Hall observed, creates hybrid cultural identities, which transcend clear and stable ideas of time and place, constantly moving between vectors of similarity and difference, continuity and rupture (Hall, 1994). ‘Diaspora organisations’ can be seen as places where diaspora relations are shaped: where minorities connect to, celebrate, long for, debate, or reject ideas around a real or an

imagined homeland; where questions of belonging and loyalty arise; where material, social, and emotional relationships with ‘home’ are formed; and where nationalist narratives are reproduced, echoed, or challenged. In this transnational setting, diaspora organisations become mediators in the construction of ethnic and national identities. They can mobilise imagined communities into collective action and practice around their shared diasporic identity (Ghorashi, 2004; Van Gorp & Smets, 2015).

The concepts of ‘diaspora’ and ‘diasporic identity’ have been extensively discussed in fields such as migration and ethnic studies, history and culture studies, and international relations. However, the ‘diaspora organisation’ has received less research attention. Reviewing the literature around diaspora organisations reveals three main research themes: One strand, in migration and ethnic studies, revolves around the role of diaspora organisations, mainly in Europe, in facilitating integration, constructing identity, or forging belonging among migrants in their country of residence (Molodikova et al., 2018; Van Gorp & Smets, 2015; Yabanci, 2021). The second stream is interested in the role of diaspora organisations in their home communities—as change agents that can bring ‘progress’ (Bruyn, 2008; Lampert, 2014; Ong’ayo, 2014) or as agents that reproduce inequality and entrench authoritarian practices at ‘home’ (Lampert, 2012; Yabanci, 2021). A third type of research is interested in the role of diaspora organisations in international relations and conflict resolution, given the border-transcending networks they possess (Aydin, 2014; Dijkzeul & Fauser, 2020). The extent to which these organisations engage with ideas of diversity and difference internally (for example, as employers) is under-investigated.

Diaspora organisations are political spaces in the sense that they reflect historical relations of domination and subordination and enable negotiation over the status quo (Gerring, 1997; Ophir, 2009; Sartori, 1969). As such, these organisational spaces can contribute to diversity research: Diversity management is often seen as a depoliticised a-historic adaptation of the equal-opportunity paradigm, by removing power from organisational analysis, replacing moral concerns with bottom-line motivations, and emphasising individual differences over structural causes of disadvantage (Bradley & Healy, 2008; Tatli, 2011). Diaspora organisations can also illustrate the movement of EDI across borders, by echoing and negotiating inequalities in their ‘home’ countries. Building on Stuart Hall’s ideas (Hall, 1994), ‘diaspora’ is not a fixed entity or experience, but is socially constructed through collective cultural and emotional attachment to an imagined homeland. Diaspora can be seen as a community beyond state borders. In the organisational setting, this hybrid cultural

identity and belonging, which cross state borders, can problematize assumptions regarding employee identity that are rooted in particular national contexts (Ghorashi, 2004; Van Gorp & Smets, 2015). Moreover, the role of nationalist sentiment in diaspora organisations, which again crosses political boundaries (Yabanci, 2021), enables exploration of the movement of EDI across national borders—how it echoes and shapes inequality not only within the diaspora community, but also in its ‘homeland’.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

Nonprofit organisations are a unique and under-investigated arena for diversity research. Implicitly or explicitly, NPOs hold assumptions and make claims regarding the status quo and regarding the ‘good society’ within a particular social context. As such, their study can make a real contribution to understanding the contextual nature of diversity, which lies at the centre of this thesis. What is particularly interesting about these arenas are the relations between the ‘outward’ and ‘inward’: the connections and gaps between NPOs as social agents at a local, national, or international level, enjoying a do-good image, and being ideologically-driven by good morals; and NPOs as employers, workplaces, or member organisations, which may be low-paid, unequal spaces, heavily engaged in financial and legal processes and constraints. Indeed, as discussed in this chapter, the research reveals considerable diversity gaps, such as that between organisational leadership and the communities they serve. As noted, some areas within the nonprofit literature require further investigation—in particular, moving from traditional diversity dimensions to examination of the complex, fluid, multi-layered, and contextual aspects of identity. The two particular organisational models that this thesis focuses on—identity-based nonprofits and diaspora organisations—open the door to exploring the complex nature of identity in organisations.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### The social context: Jewish identity and the UK Jewish community

#### 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter situated the research study in an organisational context by surveying the nonprofit landscape and key diversity debates within it. It also provided some background for conceptualising the unit of analysis—UK Jewish nonprofit organisations—as **identity-based organisations** and as **diaspora organisations**. This chapter continues these contextualising efforts and positions the study in its social context by focusing on Jewish identity and the UK Jewish community. The chapter opens with a discussion on contentious meeting points between Jewishness and diversity in the UK and in the Jewish diaspora more broadly. Then it surveys the UK Jewish community, discussing some key historical and contemporary debates around diversity and difference.

#### 4.2 Jewish identity and EDI

‘Jewishness’ (or the ideas and perceptions that are attached to ‘being Jewish’) has a complicated relationship with ‘diversity’ as a field of scholarship and practice. The Jewish experience in Europe during the 19th and 20th centuries was one of the building blocks for theorising processes regarding othering and social exclusion. Concerns and conceptualisations that underpinned debates around equality and justice in political and social theory—such as the other, the stranger, diaspora, belonging and (dis)loyalty, religious and racial discrimination—emerged to a great extent from the history of Jews in European societies (Morris-Reich, 2004; Simmel, 2008; Sutcliffe, 2021). However, the concept of diversity has a somewhat different genealogy, going back to the civil rights and feminist movements in the United States, as discussed earlier. Despite interrelations between these theoretical, historical, and discursive contexts, Jewish identity did not form nor become an integral part of contemporary diversity research and practice.

The gap between the field of EDI and the Jewish experience is also reflected in the ways academic knowledge is organised. We can identify a separation between research into the management of difference in society and in the workplace, which is often located in

sociology and politics departments and in schools of management and policy; and research on Jews, which is usually conducted in departments of history, religion, and Jewish studies. Indeed, the rich literature concerning the diverse and complex nature of Jewish identity has hardly entered studies in management and organisation. Work inequality is studied in the Israeli context (Jakob Sadeh & Mair, 2023; Jamal, 2017; Lomsky-Feder & Ben-Ari, 2013; Payes, 2005), where Jews are the majority group, but is under-investigated in the Jewish diaspora context. Research on diaspora Jewish experiences in organisations, both within academia and think tanks, often centers on antisemitism. This body of literature is hesitant to adopt a critical lens that examines the nuanced and complex positioning of Jewish identity in organisational contexts (Greene & Paul, 2021; Hirsh, 2013; Saxe et al., 2015; Shankley & Rhodes, 2020; Wright, Volodarsky, et al., 2022). Studies on diversity management hardly engage with Jewish identities. For example, in the 2023 Academy of Management annual conference, in over 1500 sessions, only two included the word ‘Jewish’ (one of which was a paper by the author of this thesis), and the terms ‘antisemitism’ or ‘Judaism’ did not appear at all.

This gap also manifests in public debates around EDI, where two related trends appear: While researchers and practitioners struggle to ‘fit’ Jewish identity into the EDI framework, some Jewish speakers question the capacity of this approach to address Jewish concerns (although there are discussions around diversity within Jewish spaces, as discussed later). In some cases, speakers interpret this omission as an indication of dismissal of antisemitism. Some Jewish authors and activists express disappointment with the blind spot of ‘identity politics’ towards antisemitism. In his book *Jews Don’t Count* (2021), which was widely discussed across the UK Jewish community, David Baddiel argues that antisemitism fails to register as a cause for concern for ‘progressives’ in the UK, who would rush to support other minority groups, and is often seen as a ‘second-class racism’ (Baddiel, 2021). Other speakers and activists even accuse diversity work (particularly on campus) as being inherently antisemitic (Greene & Paul, 2021; StopAntisemitism, 2022).

To some extent, this Jewish resentment can be interpreted as part of a larger conservative backlash which originated in the US, against diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), critical race theory, radical feminism, and other agendas and social movements that may challenge the status quo (for example: (Rufo et al., 2023; Savage, 2023)). These claims echo ideas of reverse discrimination (Pincus, 2003), which are usually expressed by dominant groups, as previously discussed (see section 2.4.1: Diversity backlash). However, since Jews are not

simply an integral part of the white majority, a more nuanced reading of the Jewish critique towards ‘diversity’ is necessary, paying attention to the complexity of Jewish positionality.

Jewish speakers express three main arguments about how EDI fails to address Jewish concerns and grasp the diversity and complexity of Jewish identity. These claims can be broadly analysed as a critique of the binarism and categorical thinking that are characteristic of diversity management (Clair et al., 2019). The three issues are elaborated in separate sections below, in which the ‘puzzles’ around the intersection of Jewishness and EDI are discussed: One critique is concerned with **socioeconomic difference** (see section 4.2.1) and accepting that a group can be both marginalised and over-represented; the second relates to **ethno-racial difference** (section 4.2.2) and the collective identification of Jews as white, and as such, as privileged; and the third focuses on **national-ideological difference** (section 4.2.3), Israel-diaspora relations, and anti-Zionist agendas within the field of EDI. Together, these arguments challenge racial, national, colonial, and ideological binaries such as black/white, settler/native, coloniser/colonised, and pro-Israel/pro-Palestine that exist in critical scholarship and political activism, and are also utilised in many diversity debates. The main claim is that when oppressor/oppressed binaries are adopted, Jews are (explicitly or implicitly) associated with the (white, wealthy, Zionist) oppressor.

The multi-dimensional nature of Jewish identity seems to disrupt the institutionalised habits of categorisation and classification that are considered necessary for the task of managing diversity and difference (Clair et al., 2019; Litvin, 1997; Nkomo & Cox, 1999). It problematises the tendency of diversity management debates to ‘conceptualize... [identities] as ready-made, fixed, clear-cut, easily measurable categories’ (Zanoni et al., 2010, p. 13).

Diaspora Jews walk a precarious line between perceived positions of dominance and marginality, whiteness and otherness, insider and outsider (Biale et al., 1998; Brettschneider, 1996; Diemling & Ray, 2016). Despite historically being an oppressed minority, Jews are often associated with dominant groups. Diversity research tends to focus on ‘traditional’ minority groups (women, black, and so on), and growing studies investigate ‘majority’ identities to understand structures of domination, looking at whiteness, masculinity, and so on (Al Ariss et al., 2014; Heckler, 2019; Nickels & Leach, 2021). Still, such discussions usually hold similar assumptions regarding social difference and how power in society and organisation works.

But even if the marginalisation of the Jewish minority is recognised and accepted, it remains unclear what type of minority Jews constitute. Jews and non-Jews struggle to grasp and define the ‘nature’ of Jewish difference, which spans and draws on religious, ethnic, national, cultural, and historical collective identities: ‘Are Jews a national entity with a common history based on collective experiences? Are they best understood as a religious community with shared beliefs and rituals? Or are Jews an ethnic group with common cultural traditions? The truth is that no one category is entirely accurate’ (Baskin & Seeskin, 2010, p. 1). The question of what ‘being Jewish’ means, and should mean, became increasingly central to Jewish thought and public life in recent centuries, with the rise of secularism, nationalism, and multiculturalism, which expanded Jewish identity beyond its traditional religious meaning. As the definitions and expressions of Jewishness became more diverse and fluid, they revealed conflicts about the boundaries of the Jewish collective, maintaining a distinctive Jewish identity, and increasing inclusion. These boundaries are constantly being negotiated, transgressed, and contested, revealing the fragmentation of Judaism into competing claims to membership (Diemling & Ray, 2016).

Three issues in particular problematise the position of Jews and ‘Jewishness’ within EDI debates. Articulated rather simplistically (and even provocatively), they can be presented as three puzzles: **Are Jews a dominant or marginalised group? Are Jews an ethno-racial minority? Should speech around Israel-Palestine be restricted?**

The puzzles presented below, based on these questions, are important in setting the background for this thesis for several reasons: they show the limitations of analysing Jewish identity as a single category, and show how Jewishness intersects with other categories of difference (race/ethnicity, political difference, socioeconomic difference); they reveal the complex ways in which Jews and non-Jews think about Jewishness, work, and justice; they shed light on the unique nature of Jewish nonprofits, as identity-based organisations; and they highlight the importance of the Jewish context and ‘internal’ Jewish debates for the wider EDI literature. Indeed, the experiences and ideas expressed by the participants in the current study echo those wider landscapes.

#### **4.2.1 Puzzle #1: Jews and discrimination (or: Are Jews a dominant or marginalised group?)**

At the heart of this puzzle is the charge of **disproportionate representation** (Sarna, 2004): if Jews are overrepresented in certain social domains, they cannot possibly be marginalised.



Historically, the discrimination and exclusion of Jews from public life, and their forced segregation, were central dimensions of their oppression in Europe. In many ways, until the mid-20th century, this exclusion was official and legal. Before the systematic killing of European Jewry in the Holocaust, explicit signs such as ‘Jews and dogs not allowed’ were commonplace in shops, parks, and restaurants in Germany. While the lived experiences of Jews in the post-war era are dramatically different, those histories continue to play a crucial role in Jewish collective memory. For example, in a recent survey of British Jewry (Dellapergola & Staetsky, 2021), participants argued that the main aspects essential to forming their Jewish identity were the Holocaust (78%) and antisemitism (68%). These factors were significantly higher than believing in God (35%), Jewish culture (33%), and supporting Israel (48%) (see discussion in section 4.2.3).

Historians point out ‘the disparity in post-Holocaust Anglo-American culture between expressions of prejudice and even hostility towards Jews... and Jews’ actual legal status and social standing in British society, where the absence of legal or institutional discrimination is the prevailing norm’ (Dubnov, 2023, p. 227). The idea that a group can simultaneously be both marginalised and over-represented challenges beliefs about dominance and subordination. The European-Jewish historiography of the 20th century tells a story of marginalisation and segregation, and also of economic and intellectual ‘success’. Despite the persistence of antisemitism, in many European societies Jewish communities experienced upward social mobility and gained more agency, and their political representatives became more networked (Kahn-Harris, 2019). In the post-war era, many reconciled this tension by constructing antisemitism as a form of prejudice and hostility rather than exclusion and material dispossession. From an EDI perspective, this focus on **cultural marginalisation** echoes (and can possibly work well with) the politics of recognition in which diversity management and the inclusion framework are rooted, over issues relating to equality and equity. But the narrow focus on legal and cultural dimensions ignores historical and contemporary manifestations of antisemitism that are also physical and violent, as well as the re-emerging white nationalist sentiment across Europe and the US. It also ignores the diversity of Jewish experiences and social standing, which cannot fit into a single framework. This complexity is linked to the unique nature of antisemitism: ‘Jews are the only objects of racism who are imagined—by the racists—as both low and high status. Jews are stereotyped... in all the same ways that other minorities are—as lying, thieving, dirty, vile, stinking—but also as moneyed, privileged, powerful, and secretly in control of the world.

Jews are somehow both sub-human and humanity's secret masters' (Baddiel, 2021, p. 19). Fundamental to antisemitism is the belief in 'the power of Jews as collective, such as... the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions' (IHRA, 2016). Baddiel (2019) argues that since Jews do not fit into the category of the 'oppressed', they are automatically pushed into that of the 'oppressor', thus echoing antisemitic tropes around power and control. The anomalous status of Jews, and this high-low duality or double-sided hate, often leaves Jews outside of EDI debates. Baddiel cites Malcolm X's 1963 statement: 'But let us not forget the Jew. Anybody that gives even a just criticism of the Jew is instantly labelled antisemite... make a true observation about the Jew, and if it doesn't pat him on the back, then he uses his grip on the news media to label you antisemite' (in: Baddiel, 2021, p. 86). Thus, 'revealing' Jewish power and the Jewish 'grip' on the economy is portrayed as a shout-out against power and 'clothes the speaker in the robes not of racism but revolution' (ibid).

Reading though discussions around the over-representation of Jews in certain professions and industries (Burstein, 2007; Chad & Brym, 2020; Hollinger, 2004), it seems necessary to differentiate between essentialist, mystified, ideas around Jews and work (e.g., the supposed Jewish intellectual pre-eminence, or the Jews' desire for control), and historically informed analyses that focus on human capital and cultural factors (such as the traditional Jewish focus on text and literacy) and social capital (e.g., established self-help communal organisations). These debates discuss Jewishness in the context of history and culture rather than biology and heredity (Hart, 2011a), emphasising factors such as dispersion, repressive legislation, anti-Jewish violence, enforced residence in ghettos, prohibitions on owning land, and the emergence of trade networks and engaging in money lending. A factor often dismissed in the literature is that of nonlinear and conflicting trends whereby Jews may be over-represented in certain work/organisational contexts and discriminated against in others at the same time.

#### ***4.2.1.1 British Jews***

In England, Jews faced persecution from their arrival in 1066 until their expulsion from the Kingdom by Edward I in 1290. However, modern British Jews did not suffer large-scale pogroms, and 'scientific' antisemitism did not take hold in the UK, as it did in other parts of Europe (Kahn-Harris & Gidley, 2010). Modern UK Jewish history dates back to the mid-17th-century (re)settlement of Spanish and Portuguese Jews, followed by a large wave of Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe and Russia, fleeing pogroms and poverty, at the end of the 19th century. Consequently, Britain started to control movement into the country, with

the first restrictions introduced in the Aliens Act of 1905 (Shankley & Byrne, 2020). Therefore, although the UK Jewish community is considered well-established with roots of over three centuries, contemporary antisemitism in the UK is analysed in the context of racism, xenophobia, and anti-migration sentiment (sometimes compared to that directed at the Irish). Indeed, a rise in antisemitic attacks was recorded following the EU referendum (Byrne et al., 2020; Fekete, 2009).

As new immigrants, Jews were part of working-class movements, allying with Irish and other minorities to form radical anti-fascist struggles, notably in the East End of London (Fishman, 1975; Gidley, 2003; Rosenberg, 2011). By the 19th century, most legal-official barriers to full Jewish participation in political and civic life were removed, and in the 20th century many unofficial barriers to participation in cultural and social British life were reduced (Kahn-Harris & Gidley, 2010). The post-war era brought trends of assimilation and upward mobility for Jews in Britain, who benefitted from the rise of multiculturalism and the expansion of UK universities. Concerns around immigration and absorption were superseded by the Jewish rise into the middle class (Kahn-Harris & Gidley, 2010; Kranson, 2017).

Today, British Jewry is analysed as overwhelmingly Conservative politically, and tending to focus on particularistic Jewish concerns and security for Jews over wider social and political issues (Barclay, 2020; Barclay et al., 2019). This political positioning is particularly striking in comparison to American Jewry, the largest and most dynamic community in the Jewish diaspora, which is among the most consistently liberal and Democratic groups in the US (ICES, 2020; Sarna, 2004; Wald, 2019). The difference between the two contexts also manifests in the relative share of the Jewish progressive movement, which constitutes a significantly higher proportion of American Jewry than in the UK, where the Orthodox movement (United Synagogue) is the leading voice (Casale Mashiah & Boyd, 2017; Graham & Boyd, 2024). Israel plays a key role in British Jewish politics, given its central role in defining Jewish identity in the UK (Greene & Shain, 2016; Miller et al., 2015). It is possible, as Barclay (2020) argues, that for Jewish voters, those politicians and parties that are critical of Israel are seen as undermining the security of Jews in the diaspora, irrespective of the personal views of those Jewish voters regarding Israeli policies. Indeed, criticism of Israel became increasingly common across the labour movement in the UK since the 1980s, a trend that in many ways reached its peak with the election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader. The Conservative leaning of the community also manifests in the agenda of the Jewish

representative bodies and their funding resources (Finlay, 2015; Lerman, 2012), as other sections of this thesis explore.

Data provided by the UK Office of National Statistics clearly indicate the Jewish rise into the middle class: ‘median hourly pay was highest among those who identified as Jewish, partly reflecting a greater likelihood among this group to be employed in high-skilled occupations and as managers’ (Evans & Welsby, 2020, p. 3). In terms of education, Jews reported higher percentages of having a degree (56%) alongside Hindus (59%) and Buddhists (48%), particularly compared to Christians (30%) in England and Wales. People who identified as Jewish were also less likely to live in overcrowded accommodation than the overall population, with the exception of Jews living in the North East and the North West of England, where the opposite was true (Howells et al., 2023, p. 9). Another group that requires closer attention is that of the Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) Jewish population, which is often linked with higher rates of overcrowding housing, child poverty, and deprivation (Boyd, 2011).

Like other ethnic and religious minorities, Jews live the tension between integration and separation: 90% of UK-born Jews feel a sense of belonging to the country (Staetsky & Boyd, 2014), while at the same time British Jews preserve residential, educational, and cultural spheres of separation (Staetsky & Boyd, 2016; Valins, 2003a, 2003b). The Jewish minority is often portrayed as well-integrated, and even as a success story. In 2019, the then Prince of Wales explained the ‘special and precious’ connection between the Crown and the Jewish community in the ‘faithfulness’ of Jews in Britain (Wales, 2019). His words about Jewish inclusion echoed some transactional business-case diversity logic: the Jewish community contributes ‘to the health, wealth and happiness of the United Kingdom’, and even more so to the Royal family itself: ‘British synagogues have, for centuries, remembered my Family in your weekly prayers. And as you remember my Family, so we too remember and celebrate you’ (Wales, 2019). These claims demonstrate the ongoing role of the concept of ‘loyalty’ to Jewish life and politics of belonging.

In many ways, Jewish communal life seems to coincide with wider British political trends. When Prime Minister David Cameron introduced his Big Society paradigm, which was meant to mitigate the impact of austerity policies via the work of voluntary groups, Jewish organisations were portrayed as an example of a successful third sector (JLC, 2010). However, such debates around the ‘success’ of Jewish integration tend to imply that

individuals have the ability to ‘integrate’ through behaviour, overlooking the structural forces that make belonging possible (e.g., Jews being largely white-presenting, as the next section explores).

Antisemitism is a key issue on the agenda of Jewish organisations, but not necessarily in the context of work. When the UK Community Security Trust collects data on antisemitism, it uses the following categories: assault, abusive behaviour, threats, damage and desecration to Jewish property, antisemitic literature, and extreme violence (CST, 2020). Data shows that 34% of British Jews experienced antisemitic harassment in the past five years; and 60% of British Jews avoid wearing or displaying in public items that could identify them as Jewish (FRA, 2018). While some of these incidents can happen in the workplace, typical EDI language (e.g., discrimination) is not central to such debates. When antisemitism is discussed in the context of work, the focus is on themes associated with inclusion such as organisational culture, sense of belonging, and voice, over issues relating to equality such as equity, access, and discrimination.

Several reports by Jewish and non-Jewish bodies have investigated the manifestations of antisemitism in contemporary British society, with limited reference to organisational life (Ashe et al., 2019; CST, 2020; Staetsky, 2017; Tuck, 2023). Staetsky (2017) argues that while only a small minority (2%) of British adults can be categorised as hard-core antisemites, antisemitic ideas are pervasive across the British population (30%). This may reveal the likelihood of British Jews encountering antisemitic attitudes in the workplace. Antisemitic ideas may also appear when speakers are not aware that colleagues are Jewish, as Jewishness can be a hidden difference (Lowles & Merron, 2018). A report by the UK’s Trades Union Congress noted how racist comments and jokes by colleagues, or inappropriate remarks by managers, revolve around antisemitic tropes such as Jewish disloyalty, greed, or looks (Ashe et al., 2019).

This thesis is not interested in determining whether and how Jews are discriminated against at work. Instead, it is concerned with how these complex relations between ideas of Jews, work, and (in)justice challenge the positioning of Jewishness within diversity debates, and can elaborate diversity literature. Moreover, this discussion adds nuance to the analysis of Jewish organisations as identity-based organisations (see section 3.5.1). While in the literature, identity-based organizing is usually associated with marginalised minority groups (Biu, 2019; Kodama & Laylo, 2017; Ospina et al., 2002), the elusive Jewish identity is not always

associated with marginalisation and discrimination (including, sometimes, in Jewish eyes). As previously discussed, nonprofit organisational membership (board, leadership, staff, volunteers) is increasingly expected to represent marginalised groups in society, or at least the demographic diversity of ‘clients’. At the centre of this call is the assumed power gap between decision-makers and beneficiaries, as ‘givers’ and ‘receivers’ of charity, where beneficiaries have limited or no power in shaping how the organisation is led and uses its resources (Guo & Musso, 2007; Mor Barak, 2015; Weisinger, 2017). Some debates around EDI in Jewish community organisations have looked at issues of representation in decision-making, but they focused on the representation of minority groups within the Jewish community, especially women and Jews of colour (Bush, 2021; Marks & Brier, 2017). A critical discussion concerning the voice of Jewish beneficiaries (as a group that challenges binaries of dominancy/marginality) and the representation of the wider communities who are impacted by the work of community organisations (beyond British Jews) is missing.

#### **4.2.2 Puzzle #2: Jews and ethno-racial difference (or: Are Jews an ethno-racial minority?)**

The second puzzle, which is both descriptive and normative, is whether Jews are (and should be considered) an ethnic/racial minority. Race and ethnicity are key categories of EDI in the UK (Bradley & Healy, 2008; Byrne et al., 2020): ‘Race’ is central to the UK legal framework, where it includes colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins (Equality Act 2010). ‘Ethnicity’—often associated with cultural, historical, and lingual collective identities—has become increasingly prevalent in academic and practitioner literature in the UK, often replacing ‘race’, which is seen as discredited because of its association with essentialist racist theories (Bradley & Healy, 2008). This section looks at some of the complexities around Jewishness as an ethnic/racial difference. To emphasise the socially constructed nature of race (and ethnicity), the term ‘ethno-racial difference’ is sometimes used. Ethno-racial status, as an analytical concept, can be seen as integrating race and ethnicity in a way that does not essentialise racial characteristics nor reinforces racial group membership. At the same time, it takes under consideration beliefs/perceptions of observable characteristics, issues of ancestry, and self-identification (Brubaker, 2004; Paredes, 2018).

##### ***4.2.2.1 Jewish religion, race, and ethnicity***

The construction of ‘Jewishness’ in the UK manifests the dialectic interplay between self-identification and external-identification in the construction of identity (Brubaker & Cooper,

2000). The shift from ‘race’ to ‘ethnicity’ in the UK corresponds with similar discursive shifts regarding Jewish difference in Europe. At the turn of 20th century, racial ideas and theories were well established in Western science, and ‘race’ was central not only to the writing about Jews, but also that of Jewish thinkers; however, following World War Two, a taboo around the racial categorisation of Jews emerged (Endelman, 2004; Hart, 2011b). ‘Jewish ethnicity’ was replacing not only ‘race’ but also ‘religion’, and the rise of non-Orthodox Jewish streams that advocated a wider understanding of Jewishness beyond its traditional religious boundaries. A recent survey on British Jewry shows how the experience and practice of Judaism encompasses dimensions of religion, culture, ethnicity, heritage, and parentage (Dellapergola & Staetsky, 2021).

Diaspora Jews, including in the UK, are usually categorised as a religious group, and Jewish civil society is analysed as faith-based activity (Bielefeld & Cleveland, 2013; Everett & Gidley, 2023; Nayak, 2012; Samson, 2020; Schneider, 2010). Historically, UK Jewish leaders asked that Jews are identified as a **religion**. This enabled Jews to assimilate into Britishness while maintaining their cultural identity (Finlay, 2021). UK Jews are also protected as a **race** following the Race Relations Act 1976 and defined as a race/ethnicity for anti-discrimination purposes (Klaff, 2023). **Ethnicity** was later advocated for in Jewish circles as a ‘beneficial’ category in multicultural Britain, for representational purposes (JPR, 2000). More recently, a debate emerged on whether Jews should be seen as ‘white’ or be considered part of the aggregate category BAME—Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (Bush, 2021). Those debates were limited, largely instrumental, and also homogenised British Jewry, while overlooking the experience of UK black Jews.

The ways in which data concerning Jews is collected by national authorities demonstrate the discursive politics around Jewish identity, and its positioning in the UK. Jews were identified as a **religious group** when the UK government started collecting data on religion in the 2001 national census (Boyd, 2021; Dellapergola & Staetsky, 2022). In 2018, the UK Statistics Authority led a national consultation process, as part of a periodic review (C. Smith, 2018) and explored whether the category ‘Jewish’ should be added to the question, ‘What is your ethnicity?’, in addition to the traditional ‘religion’ section. This change could have been interpreted as an act of inclusion, acknowledging the richness and multi-layered nature of Jewish identity. Instead, Jewish representative bodies raised concerns about discrimination: ‘the inclusion of a Jewish ethnic group tick-box was perceived as a negative attempt to “single out” the Jewish population and evoked comparisons to World War Two Germany...

Some participants described personal experiences of antisemitism and discrimination, and said they were already reluctant to disclose their Jewish identity in certain social situations' (Office of National Statistics, 2018). Most participants were uncomfortable with the recording Jewish identity as an ethnicity on an official form and the ethnic Jewish tick-box was rejected.

Moreover, the Jewish ethnicity question reveals a gap between EDI research and Jewish identity, where ethnic minorities are usually studied as a disadvantaged group in the labour market (Bradley & Healy, 2008; Wright, 2007), and work inequality is emphasised over cultural marginalisations. These assumptions may exclude the Jewish experience: 'It is widely accepted... that social groups bearing particular [ethnic] characteristics are more likely to be crowded into bad jobs, while others gain access to higher paid, more secure and more challenging paid work' (Bradley & Healy, 2008, p. ix).

#### ***4.2.2.2 Ethno-racial diversity within British Jewry***

Ethno-racial diversity within the Jewish world is a key dimension of the relations between Jewishness and race/ethnicity. In Jewish studies and public discourse, the Jewish ethnic divide is between two main groups: Ashkenazi, usually referring to Jews originating from Europe; and Sephardi (used mainly in the diaspora) or Mizrahi (used in Israel), referring to Jews originating from Arab lands and the Muslim world across the Middle East and North Africa (Shohat, 1999). Sephardi ('Spanish' in Hebrew) Jews originated from the Iberian Peninsula, from which they were expelled in the 15th century during the Spanish Inquisition. Many migrated to other parts of the Mediterranean, North Africa, and the Middle East, including Palestine/Land of Israel. The Mizrahi category ('Eastern' in Hebrew) emerged in modern Israel to signify Jewish migrants from across the Middle East, echoing the racial and colonial hierarchy of East/West (Shohat, 1999). These ethnic categories raise various problems of dimensionality (Köllén, 2021): for example, they exclude communities such as Ethiopian Jewry that do not fit into this scheme; they reproduce imagined delineations between East and West; and they fail to grasp social changes such as mixed marriages and generational cultural shifts.

Jewish ethnic divides have been linked to injustice of recognition and redistribution. While ethnicity is strongly linked to social disparity and work inequality in Israel (Swirski et al., 2022), questions of cultural domination also appear in critical debates across the Jewish world (Israel and the diaspora). In the Jewish diaspora, the term 'Ashkenormativity' has been



used to describe the Eurocentric culture and privileging of Ashkenazi culture, customs, and norms within Jewish communities and organisations (Ali, 2020; Rand, 2023). Moreover, mainstream Jewish historiography is criticised for being Eurocentric, overlooking Jewish cultural heritages, intellectual histories, and social movements that emerged outside of the European/Western world (Raz-Krakotzkin, 2017; Tsur & Morris, 2007).

Comprehensive research on the ethno-racial composition of British Jewry is absent, but in the UK census, 90% of British Jews ticked the ‘white’ box, around 2% identified as mixed-race, around 1% as Asian, and 0.5% as black (Bush, 2021). According to synagogue membership data, the Sephardi community accounts for 3% of British Jewry (Casale Mashiah & Boyd, 2017). The modern Jewish community in England was established by Sephardi Jews in the 17th century, and Ashkenazi Jews began migrating to England during the 18th century, with a large wave of migration escaping persecution in Europe at the end of 19th century. A wave of Iraqi Jewish migrants arrived during the 1950s to 1970s, due to hostility following the establishment of the State of Israel (Dweck, 2020). Historically, the Sephardi community was considered wealthier and more integrated into Englishness than the Ashkenazi (Dweck, 2020; Endelman, 2002). The Sephardim ‘saw themselves as the aristocracy of Anglo Jewry. They had already undergone an acculturation two centuries earlier... In this rare case, as contrasted with the other Sephardic communities of the contemporary world, they, not the Ashkenazim, were the “establishment” and founders of Anglo Jewry’ (Dweck, 2020, pp. 87–88). Despite this uniqueness of the British case, cultural marginalisation of Sephardi voices is present in community life, as the empirical discussion later shows (7.4).

#### ***4.2.2.3 Ethno-racial diversity and inclusion in Jewish spaces***

As British organisations, Jewish charities echo debates, binaries, and social hierarchies that are rooted in legacies of colonialism—a discursive heritage that shaped contemporary thinking around workplace difference in the UK (Healy, 2015). Postcolonial scholars have linked workplace diversity to legacies of colonialism through the discursive production of hierarchical dichotomies between East and West, progress and backwardness (Prasad, 2006). As British employers, Jewish organisations also reflect power structures and debates linked to multiculturalism and the backlash against it, and to questions of assimilation, integration, and separation of religious-ethnic minorities and migrant groups (Nayak, 2012).

While issues relating to racial equality, diversity, and inclusion became commonplace on the agenda of (non-Jewish) UK nonprofit organisations decades ago, they remained marginal on

the agenda of UK Jewish organisations until the wake of Black Lives Matter in 2020 (Bush, 2021). A small number of Jewish charities had been working on issues relating to racial justice, but they were mainly outward-facing, advocating and mobilising Jews to get involved with racial justice in wider British society, rather than working on racial equality within Jewish community and institutions. Jewish ethnic diversity received more attention: a number of initiatives advanced inclusion of Sephardi heritage, identity, and tradition into Jewish education, historiography, and cultural life. Thus broadly speaking, the community focus has been on **ethnic** over **racial** difference and diversity, and on **politics of recognition** (cultural-symbolic change), over **politics of redistribution** (economic-material change).

The BLM movement, which gained global attention after the killing of George Floyd, triggered debates around racism in Jewish spaces. In 2020, the Board of Deputies of British Jews initiated its Commission on Racial Inclusivity in the Jewish Community, which published its report the following year (Bush, 2021). The report had several limitations. It largely portrayed racism in the community as a series of localised incidents, rather than as a systemic problem; embraced concepts of diversity and inclusion and paid less attention on equality issues; overlooked intersectional positions of race with class, gender etc.; largely adopted a conservative and idealising approach towards Israel, and particularly race in Israel; and intentionally avoided the debate around Jewishness and whiteness (discussed below, in section 4.2.2.4). The report engaged in politics of recognition—looking at representation in Jewish media, the advancement of welcoming communal spaces, the incorporation of black and Sephardi histories into Jewish curriculums, and the celebration of black culture and heritage in educational programmes.

Despite its limitations, the report drew unusual attention to experiences of marginalisation and discrimination of ‘Black Jews, Jews of Colour, and Sephardi, Mizrahi and Yemenite Jews’ in Jewish society, as workers, beneficiaries, clients, and members of Jewish organisations. To some extent, the report also managed to place the manifestations of racism in Jewish spaces within a wider context of race in the UK, for example regarding the discriminatory practice of profiling (which was adopted in synagogues), and the debate around the aggregate category of BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) and its inclusive or exclusive nature (towards Jews).

#### ***4.2.2.4 Jews and whiteness***

The relationship between Jewishness and whiteness is paradoxical: Although historically Jews were racialised and persecuted as non-white (and to some extent still are), today Jews are often associated with (and expected to recognise) a white privilege. The complex relations between the concepts of ‘Jewishness’ and ‘whiteness’ have been widely discussed in Jewish studies literature (Berkovits, 2018; Biale et al., 1998; Goldstein, 2006; Levine-Rasky, 2008; Schraub, 2019). However, this scholarship is largely historical or theoretical, with limited engagement in contemporary empirical social research, particularly of work and organisations; and current debates around Jews and whiteness tend to centre on the United States (Brodkin, 1998; Burton, 2018; Goldstein, 2005; Singer, 2008).

Campus life is a key arena, and a core debate revolves around the claim that Jewish students are being ‘grossly mislabelled as a white model-minority’ (StopAntisemitism, 2022, p. 1). This mislabelling, it is argued, leads to the exclusion of Jewish students from diversity initiatives (not offering Jewish affinity groups, not prioritising fighting antisemitism, refusing to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism [IHRA is further discussed below]). A complaint filed against Stanford University argued that ‘DEI committee members justified the omission of anti-Semitism by insisting that unlike other minority groups, Jews can hide behind their white identity’ (Redden, 2021). It further suggested that DEI programs were ‘endorsing an anti-Semitic narrative that designates Jews collectively as “oppressors” and responsible for systemic racism, while simultaneously denying the uniqueness of Jewish ancestral identity... [and by doing do] the DEI committee fosters anti-Jewish sentiment and encourages hostility toward Jews’ (Redden, 2021).

The categorisation of Jews as unambiguously white is problematic for various reasons, some of which were identified by the 1997 Runnymede Trust report on the persistence and dangers on antisemitism in the UK (Runnymede, 1997). Attributing ‘whiteness’ to Jews demonstrates an a-historical approach, as it assimilates one of the most persecuted minorities in European history to the dominant majority, thus downgrading the significance of antisemitism (Berkovits, 2018). Given the historical burden of race on European Jewry, many European Jews who may **look white** do not **feel white** or identify as white. One of the interpretations of this gap was that Jews do not feel white because they do not feel safe, thus linking whiteness to safety (Baddiel, 2021). Data on antisemitism may reinforce this claim, showing that 29% of British Jews considered emigrating because of not feeling safe in the UK as Jews (FRA, 2018). Moreover, categorising Jews as white sees race as a signifier of visible difference. This

approach ignores the multiple markers through which racialisation takes place beyond skin colour, such as language, culture, religion, or national sentiment (Grosfoguel, 2016; Nkomo, 2021). It ignores the legacy of antisemitism as a form of racism which is not necessarily rooted in colour: the Nazi ideological project of racial purity considered Jews an inferior race regardless of their looks (despite attempts to scientifically prove Jewish racial inferiority). Today too, white supremacy ideology excludes Jews from whiteness, and often blames Jews for driving the war against the white race (e.g., the antisemitic roots of the ‘Great Replacement’ theory).

Thus, diversity debates that focus on visible ethno-racial difference may exclude Jews: ‘The assumption appears to be that because they [Jews] are not immediately visible, they don’t suffer racism. Jews don’t really suffer from being considered different, because they don’t *look* different’ (Baddiel, 2021, p. 33). This was the idea expressed in Labour MP Diane Abbott’s claim that ‘Jews experience prejudice, not racism’ (Macaskill, 2023). Moreover, the categorisation of Jews as white approaches Jews as a homogenous group and ignores the ethno-racial diversity within Jewish society, and the different lived experiences that Jewish groups have within Jewish spaces and in wider society. Stating that Jews are white also distances the struggle against antisemitism from the fight against other forms of racism, thus harming the prospect for inter-group solidarity between Jewish and other racialised communities.

It has been argued that the categorisation of Jews as white/non-white depends on the politics of the observer (Baddiel, 2021). In their analysis of the Labour Party’s antisemitism crisis, Gidley et al. (2020) discuss how ‘antisemitism on the left’ has deeper roots than the context of Israel-Palestine (with which it is often associated, see section 4.2.3). They discuss the long histories of anti-capitalist antisemitism: intensifying the uncertainties that global capitalism creates pushes people to search for simplistic explanations. This is where conspiratorialism emerges and brings back old antisemitic beliefs (Gidley et al., 2020). In some cases, anti-capitalist and anti-racist activists imply that Jews are the ultimate white privileged who benefit from the current oppressive economic and racial system. In a way, stereotypes around Jews, power, and privilege makes them the ‘super-white’ or the ‘whitest of white’ (Baddiel, 2021). Hence, it was argued, ‘anti-racism defined solely by conceptions of whiteness and power... has proven unable to fully acknowledge and account for anti-Jewish racism’ (Gidley et al., 2020, p. 413). The binary nature of government racial categories, as well as that of diversity categories, leave many Jews frustrated that there no room is left for them to identify

in any way other than white (Goldstein, 2005). Thus, both actions—essentialising Jews as white and essentialising them as non-white—are analysed as acts of racialisation of Jews (Schraub, 2019).

Another question that emerged in public debates was: If Jews ‘present’ as white despite not actually ‘being’ white, are they ‘white-passing’ (Burton, 2018)? ‘Passing’ has been defined as ‘a cultural performance whereby one member of a defined social group masquerades as another in order to enjoy the privileges afforded to the dominant group’ (Leary, 1999, p. 85). In this view, passing leads people to classify others ‘incorrectly’, not noticing a devalued social identity; for example, people of multiracial background may pass for white, gay people for heterosexual, and chronically ill people for healthy (Clair et al., 2005). The Jewish case is different. It was argued that Jews would often continue to enjoy the prerogatives of whiteness even when their ethno-religious difference is revealed. According to this claim, white-presenting Jews are ‘functionally white’ (Burton, 2018), although this argument is focused on a limited conception of discrimination and exclusion, focused on race.

What is important for this thesis is that the critique regarding the discursive act of categorising Jews as white is linked to the critique of EDI categorisation systems and the need to ‘loosen’ the categorical thinking in the field (Clair et al., 2019). In particular, critical diversity literature has highlighted the need to challenge binary black/white categories and develop more context-sensitive and nuanced approaches to studying race in organisations (Frenkel & Shenhav, 2006; Prasad, 2003). The Jewish experience, and Jews’ anomalous status, can offer an ‘undoing’ of conventional categories of race, and challenge the ‘polar opposition between a majority “white monoculture” and a marginalised “minorities of colour multiculture”’ (Biale et al., 1998).

The complex relationship between Jewishness and socioeconomic marginalisation (first puzzle) and between Jewishness and race (second puzzle) suggests that research on Jewishness and diversity can elaborate the discussion regarding **intersectionality**. Broadly speaking, we can identify three main trends in writing about Jews/Jewishness and intersectionality. One is the growing research on Jews of colour, Mizrahi Jews, and black Jews (Chetrit, 2009; Dekel, 2022; Dorchin, 2020; Lachover, 2022). This body of literature is largely focused on the Israeli context, and broadly speaking is less interested with the problematization of whiteness. A second trend argues that (and explores how) Jews are being excluded from intersectional research that is focused on gender, race, and social class; and

how antisemitism often remains off the radar in intersectional research and activism (Branfman, 2019; Fischbach, 2020; Greenebaum, 1999). A third strand explores how an intersectional lens can help elaborate the understanding of Jewishness. For example, it was argued that an intersectional approach to the meeting point between Jewishness and whiteness is necessary in order to understand antisemitism and the Jewish experience in depth (Levine-Rasky, 2008; Schraub, 2019): ‘what whiteness “does” to Jewishness is act as an accelerant for certain forms of antisemitic marginalization... [while also ratifying] a racialised hierarchy within the Jewish community’ (Schraub, 2019, p. 379). Thus, an intersectional lens that looks at what various social differences ‘do’ to one another can shed light on elements of Jewish experience—and of whiteness—that otherwise remain obscure.

Thus, the relevance or implications of ‘being Jewish’ in the workplace seem different than those of ‘being black’, ‘being a woman’, or ‘being working class’. Indeed, as previously argued, EDI research often ignores Jewish identity as a factor that defines one’s position or prospects at work. Thus, considering Jewishness (and in some contexts, non-Jewishness), and the intersections of this unique and fluid difference with other identity dimensions, can shed light on areas where multiple identities can (but do not necessarily) play a role in shaping people’s voice, role, and agency at work.

### **4.2.3 Puzzle #3: Jews and national-ideological difference (or: Should speech around Israel-Palestine be restricted?)**

The debates around diaspora-homeland relations and Jewish nationalism/nationhood are also important in setting the landscape for this thesis. They reveal how the politics of difference in the Jewish workplace echo wider tensions beyond the national, political, and cultural context in the UK.

#### ***4.2.3.1 Diaspora-homeland relations***

The Jewish context is considered paradigmatic in the study of diaspora and in understanding diaspora-homeland relations from historical, theological, and sociological perspectives (Boyarin & Boyarin, 1993; Brubaker, 2005). The idea of exile (*galut* in Hebrew) is key to Jewish thought and theology: the story of the deprivation of Jews of their ancestral homeland and the struggle of life under foreign rule go back to biblical literature. Hostility and prejudice against Jews, which was later defined as antisemitism, has been linked to the diasporic position. For centuries, Jews represented the ‘ultimate other’ in Europe, a process which intensified with the rise of nationalism. In the 19th century, the ‘Jewish problem’ debate was increasingly preoccupied with the Jewish (un)belonging in Europe, reaching a

horrific peak with the Nazi ‘final solution’ of the systematic genocide of six million Jews across German-occupied Europe.

Diaspora-homeland relations are key to the construction of Jewishness. The rise of the Jewish national movement brought the idea of ‘negation of the diaspora’ (Raz-Krakotzkin, 1993) to justify Zionism and encourage Jewish immigration to Israel (in Hebrew, ‘*aliya*’): The idea was that Jews can only live a safe and meaningful life in a sovereign Jewish state, and that diasporic Jewish life is doomed to result in discrimination, persecution, and cultural decadence, or alternatively in assimilation and the loss of Jewish identity (Schweid, 1984). The Zionist movement developed the ideal of the New Jew, a strong independent man who is a diligent farmer and a brave fighter, in contrast to the diaspora Jew who was portrayed as dependent and helpless. The New Jew model, which underpinned the Israeli ethos, did not only negate diaspora Jews but also excluded Palestinians, women, non-white Jews, and other minorities (Lomsky-Feder & Ben-Ari, 1999; Shapira, 1997). Gendered imagery played a role: the Zionist movement associated exile with femininity and weakness, and saw itself as the cure to the femininity ‘disease’ of diaspora Jews (Boyarin, 1997). These ideas were used to encourage immigration to Israel and to justify the emotional, ideological, and material connection of diaspora Jews to Israel. Today, when around half of the Jewish population lives in Israel and around half in the diaspora, these ideological roots take different shapes. For example, the Jewish Agency for Israel, which is the largest nonprofit Jewish organisation in the world, was established in 1929 (as the Jewish Agency for Palestine) to encourage *aliya* and support the integration of new migrants. Since then, its mission has shifted, or at least expanded, towards ensuring global Jewish safety and strengthening Jewish identity and the connection to Israel (Sharansky, 2019). In other words, the political work of reinforcing Zionism within Jewish diaspora communities became the centre of attention.

The term Zionism is multi-dimensional and anomalous: it represents a historical social movement, a (set of) national ideology(ies), a political project, a national identity, and an emotional state (Penslar, 2020). Zionism is associated with conflicting ideas: with a religious and a secular project, with the embodiment of historical justice and with a colonialist enterprise, with a value and a slur, with a historical phenomenon and a symbol. British Jewish author Brian Klug offers a useful definition of political Zionism which emphasises the conflation, or unification, of the Jewish people with the State of Israel: ‘Political Zionism is thus the nationalization of Jewish identity’ (Klug, 2019, p. 8). The processes of ‘Zionization’ and ‘Israelization’ of British Jewry (Greene & Shain, 2016), involving the Zionist movement

and later the State of Israel, constructed Israel as central to Jewish identity but also provoked and shaped complicated relations between diaspora Jews, Israel, and Zionism (see section 4.2.3.2). Yet broadly speaking, British Jews today express strong connection and loyalty to Israel, with 48% of the community agreeing that supporting Israel is a ‘very important’ aspect of Jewish identity (Dellapergola & Staetsky, 2021).

If we adopt Klug’s critique, then ‘anti-Zionism’ is more than simply ‘a generic opposition to the Zionist movement and the State of Israel’ (Loeffler, 2021, p. 41); it is an opposition to the conflation of people and State. As such, it legitimizes the diverse ways of living a full and fulfilling Jewish life in the diaspora, independent of a connection to Israel. Moreover, anti-Zionism, as a form of political antagonism towards Zionism, may or may not be anti-Jewish in origin and intention, largely depending on the context in which it is used and expressed. The relationship between anti-Zionism and antisemitism is one of the main themes in contemporary Jewish studies and politics. A key question is whether anti-Zionism is ‘an ideological offshoot of antisemitism... [or] a wholly distinct political concept that only intersects with antisemitism intermittently’ (Loeffler, 2021, p. 39). Active efforts to blur the line between anti-Zionism and antisemitism (and in a way, between Zionism and Judaism) have been critically analysed as anti-democratic attempts to censor and penalize pro-Palestinian speech and activism (Feldman, 2020; Goldberg & Segal, 2019). However, it is noteworthy that while today anti-Zionist Jews often express concerns about the risk and harm that Zionism poses to Palestinians, early anti-Zionist Jews focused on the risk that Zionism poses to Jews. In the early 20th century, many European Jews saw Zionism as a harmful doctrine that played into the hands of antisemites who wished to solve the Jewish Question through Jewish immigration outside of Europe (Loeffler, 2021). From this perspective, anti-Zionism emphasised universalist dimensions of Judaism that ensured the belonging and safety of Jews in Europe.

‘Non-Zionism’ can be seen as a moderated form of anti-Zionism. One of its early manifestations was in Anglo-Jewry following the Balfour Declaration (1917), which expressed British government support for the establishment of a national home for Jews in Palestine (Shimoni, 1986). While non-Zionism and anti-Zionism share scepticism, suspicion, and even opposition to Zionism and ideas relating to a Jewish national homeland in Palestine, non-Zionism does not actively oppose Zionism, to the extent that non-Zionist organisations have historically cooperated with British Zionist organisations (Hakim, 2012).



The Zionist conflation between people and state, which narrowed Jewish identity to focus mainly on a national project, also explains the rise of the New Antisemitism paradigm (discussed below): since Israel is seen as ‘the collective Jew’, then when Israel is confronted, Jews are attacked (Klug, 2003; Lerman, 2022). However, these are not only discursive theoretical debates. Data collected by Jewish agencies, including in the UK, show that during military operations in Israel-Palestine, antisemitism rises sharply (including harassment in the workplace). The Israeli-Palestinian conflict affects British Jews’ feeling of security: People report feeling accused or held responsible for the actions of Israel’s government, and public criticism of Israel during times of intensified conflict increases the feeling they are not welcome in the UK (CST, 2020; FRA, 2018; Graham et al., 2023).

British Jews navigate multiple and overlapping identities, belongings, and loyalties between Jewishness and Britishness (Greene & Shain, 2016). This ideological-emotional ambivalence manifests, for example, in Jewish religious texts: Jewish prayer books include blessings for the monarch alongside blessings for the State of Israel and for Israeli soldiers. Cultural ambivalence emerges around the legacy of British imperialism and European orientalism towards the (Middle) East (Said, 1978), in terms of British Jews’ connection to the Empire as British citizens, and their connection with the Land of Israel as Jews; their affiliation with British values and culture, and with the Israeli ethos; and the British Western story of modernity and progress versus Jewish Eastern roots associated with primitivity and backwardness.

#### ***4.2.3.2 Complex Israel-diaspora relations***

Israel is often portrayed as the epicentre of Jewish peoplehood, defining Jewish life not only within its own borders but also the lives of diaspora Jews. However, this position of centrality has multi-layered and sometimes conflicting meanings, implications, and manifestations. Israel plays a dual role in Jewish life in the UK: It serves as a source of inter-connectedness and a cause of division, as a unifying and a dividing factor, as glue and the main source of dissent (Greene & Shain, 2016; Kahn-Harris & Gidley, 2010; Miller et al., 2015). This duality is linked not only to the voice of Israel in the Jewish world, but more importantly to the silence of Palestine in Jewish diasporic life, as a reflection of its silencing in the Middle East itself.

Changing political realities in recent decades have intensified the diasporic ambivalence of diaspora Jews, including in the UK. The Second Palestinian Intifada in 2000, Israel’s political

‘right-turn’, the erosion of Israel’s democratic foundations and its effect on Palestinian citizens of Israel, the deepening of the occupation in the West Bank, and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza all contributed to increased criticism on an international level, and led to the rise of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement. They also influenced the emergence of different trends in diaspora (including British) Jewry.

The first such trend was the strengthening of the Israel-advocacy camp and the idea of a ‘united front’. The Second Intifada and long-held feelings of insecurity merged with political pressures, and the pro-Israel community leadership urged Jews to unite in their solidarity with Israel and to marginalise dissent. Political divisions were portrayed as weakening British Jews as a community. This trend reinforced the role of Zionism as a source of unity within mainstream Jewry (Kahn-Harris, 2014; Lerman, 2007). During those years, the ‘fight’ shifted from Israel’s borders to Europe: immediate threats from neighbouring Arab countries declined (particularly after the Arab Spring and subsequent internal political-societal-economic crises across the Middle East), and non-violent pro-Palestinian resistance increased. The focus of this ‘war on consciousness’ was an international media campaign aimed at harming Israel’s image and global standing, thus undermining its national security (Magen, 2017). Many British Jews saw themselves at the forefront of the struggle for Israel. This push for Israel advocacy also provoked debates around patriotism and loyalty, but this time **within** Jewish communities. A key question was whether criticizing Israel makes Jews less loyal to their people and tradition, or even less Jewish (Wright, Saxe, et al., 2022).

Second, the failure of the Oslo Accords, and the weakening of the belief in and feasibility of a two-state solution, created cracks in the unambiguous connection of liberal Zionist Jews in the diaspora to Israel. Particularly, younger generations increasingly experienced an ideological crisis in relation to Israel (Beinart, 2012). The Zionism crisis was characterised by feelings of alienation and resentment towards Israel, and a struggle to reconcile Zionism with a commitment to universal human rights.

A third (related) process was the rise and institutionalisation of a number of non/anti-Zionist groups at the margins of mainstream UK Jewish community. The silencing of dissent around Israel-Palestine pushed people who shared anti-Zionist, anti-occupation, socialist, and other agendas critical of the status quo to organise and raise a collective voice. This form of activism has more informal emergent grassroots manifestations, alongside nonprofit

organising (Everett & Gidley, 2023). These independent organisations formed around their commitment to a universal human rights agenda, and particularly justice in Palestine.

All three trends have affected the formation, mission, and guiding values of Jewish institutions and organisations, explicitly and implicitly. As this chapter reveals, they are also reflected within those spaces, as workplaces.

#### ***4.2.3.3 New antisemitism controversies***

In recent years, ‘antisemitism’ has become an increasingly contested term (Ury & Miron, 2023). The debate around the definition and nature of antisemitism in the UK is unique. It revolves around the implications of the definition for Jews in Britain; for non-Jewish groups in Britain (particularly freedom of speech of pro-Palestinian activists); and for (in)justice in Israel-Palestine (Klug, 2018).

The term antisemitism was coined in 1879, but the phenomenon has ancient roots. Historically, what Jewish leadership saw as the main threats to Jewish communities have changed over time, reflecting socio-political trends (Feldman, 2018; Kahn-Harris & Gidley, 2010). Yet despite these changes, ‘classical antisemitism’ retained constant elements:

An ingrained European fantasy about Jews *as* Jews. Whether they are seen as a race, religion, nation, or ethnic group, and whether antisemitism comes from the right or the left, the image of ‘the Jew’ is much the same. To an antisemite, Jews are a people set apart, not merely by their customs but by their collective character. They are arrogant, secretive, cunning, always looking to turn a profit. Loyal only to their own, wherever they go they form a state within a state, preying upon the societies in whose midst they dwell. Mysteriously powerful, their hidden hand controls the banks and the media. They will even drag governments into war if this suits their purposes. Such is the figure of ‘the Jew’, transmitted from generation to generation. (Klug, 2005, p. par. 8)

The meaning of antisemitism has shifted in recent decades. Particularly following the Second Palestinian Intifada in 2000, ‘New Antisemitism’ emerged as the main perceived threat to diaspora Jewry (Kahn-Harris, 2010). This form of antisemitism was said to reveal a new type of hostility toward Jews: hostility towards Israel, and a shift from anti-Jewish racism to hostility against Jews as a nation (Gidley & Kahn-Harris, 2012; Klug, 2003). At the centre of attention were the efforts of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, a Palestinian-led nonviolent movement aiming to ‘delegitimize’ Israel. BDS efforts were interpreted as seeking the isolation and destruction of the State of Israel, and possibly also of Jews in the diaspora (Fishman, 2012; Topor, 2021).

This approach was largely accepted by Jewish diaspora institutions. The political controversy around antisemitism in the UK is often associated with the adoption (or institutions refusing to adopt) the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of antisemitism (IHRA, 2016), an issue that is rooted in the New Antisemitism paradigm. Between 2016 and 2023, 39 countries (including the UK and the US) adopted the IHRA definition, as did many international and national organisations in the UK and in other countries around the world. Successful Israel advocacy efforts have led governments to adopt anti-BDS resolutions and take legal steps (e.g., the ‘Israel Anti-Boycott Act’) to criminalize and penalize certain types of BDS speech, in the name of fighting antisemitism. In the UK, the debate around the management of difference (particularly on campus) has raised questions such as whether (and if so, what type of) critique of Israel should be considered antisemitic; whether Jewish and/or Palestinian nationalism deserve protection; and whether pro-Israeli/pro-Palestinian speech should be restricted.

UK Jewish communal campaigns against antisemitism have focused on pressuring institutions to accept the IHRA definition. While the definition’s sections on classical antisemitism were largely accepted across the political spectrum, its Israel-related sections proved highly controversial (stating, for example, that arguing that Israel is a racist endeavour, or comparing Israeli policy to that of the Nazis, denies the right of the Jewish people to self-determination and is therefore antisemitic). Institutions that refused to accept the full definition, such as the Labour Party under the Corbyn leadership, were accused of blindness to the Jewish community’s fears. Community leaders warned that a Corbyn-led government would pose an existential threat to Jews in Britain (JC, 2018). The dispute, followed by an investigation by the Equality and Human Rights Commission into antisemitism in the Labour Party (EHRC, 2020), demonstrated the role of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and politics within UK institutions, and its possible implications for issues relating to EDI—in particular, freedom of speech around Israel-Palestine, and the legitimacy of organisational members to express ideas regarding Israel-Palestine.

Interestingly, claims of Israel-related discrimination appear on different sides of the political spectrum: In 2021, a Jewish woman argued that she was being discriminated against by the Labour Party for her anti-Zionist beliefs, which she claimed are protected under the Equality Act (MEE, 2021). In the US, Google was accused of using diversity initiatives to silence its own employees who protested against military contracts with Israel (Grant, 2022).

This debate demonstrates the political nature of diversity, through what Edward Said calls ‘the permission to narrate’ (Said, 1984). While the Israeli narrative is adopted by official institutions, and as such as deserves protection, the Palestinian narrative is portrayed as a political statement or even a threat to security and justice. Hence, it is only the Palestinian voice that has to be controlled, restricted, and managed to ensure an inclusive and safe space. This debate echoes and reinforces the power balance not only not only within UK institutions, but also in Israel-Palestine.

The Labour antisemitism row was analysed as an example of Jewish leadership using the charge of antisemitism to divert criticism of Israel and silence legitimate advocacy for Palestinian rights. This was part of a wider critique (inside and outside the Jewish world) against New Antisemitism as a political project, arguing that Israel-advocacy groups instrumentalise antisemitism in order to delegitimise pro-democratic activism on behalf of Palestinian human and political rights (Behar, 2022; Lerman, 2022).

However, a more nuanced analysis reveals a more complex picture (Baddiel, 2021; Gidley et al., 2020), as the EHRC report (2020) and the National Union of Students’ independent investigation into allegations of antisemitism within NUS (Tuck, 2023) also pointed out. These debates show how anti-Zionism can spillover into antisemitism, for example, by using classic antisemitic tropes around Jewish power, and alluding to Jews as fifth-columnists who control and manipulate the political process (EHRC, 2020; Wright, Volodarsky, et al., 2022). In many ways, antisemitism on the political left has roots that are deeper than Israeli-Palestinian politics, involving anti-capitalist antisemitism (marking Jews as drivers of capitalism), and anti-racist activism in which Jews symbolise white privilege (Baddiel, 2021; EHRC, 2020; Gidley et al., 2020).

The reports referred to above also demonstrated how left-leaning spaces can become unwelcoming to Jews (particularly Zionist Jews, but also Jews in general on occasion)—for example, by accusing Jews of the actions of the State of Israel, or expecting Jews to be answerable for Israel (EHRC, 2020; Tuck, 2023). In other cases, Jews are expected (explicitly or implicitly) to reject Zionism as an ‘entry requirement’. The binary public discourse around Israel-Palestine pressures Jews to self-classify and declare commitment to a pro-Israeli/pro-Palestinian stance, a demand that ignores the complexity of diaspora-home relations in Jewish life. When EDI debates reflect this approach, they may exclude Jewish participants. In 2022, nine student groups at the UC Berkeley Law School adopted a bylaw in which they

agreed not to invite ‘speakers that have expressed and continued to hold views... in support of Zionism, the apartheid state of Israel, and the occupation of Palestine’. The School Dean criticised the pledge, noting that ‘this would mean that I could not be invited to speak because I support the existence of Israel, though I condemn many of its policies’. What the groups defined as a ‘pro-Palestine bylaw’ was portrayed by others as creating ‘Jew-Free Zones’, thus as antisemitic (Patel, 2022). Campuses are often portrayed by Jewish activists and scholars as a hostile environment for Jews, regardless of their involvement with Israel advocacy (Saxe et al., 2015; Wright et al., 2017). EDI staff are sometimes accused by Jewish students of being ‘obsessed’ with Israel-Palestine, being driven by political agendas of anti-Zionism, and downplaying or even reinforcing antisemitic threats (Greene & Paul, 2021).

The debate around New Antisemitism can be seen as an attempt to delimit the boundaries of antisemitism (Berkman, 2021), as a form of ‘bending’ (Lombardo et al., 2009) the category of antisemitism: emptying antisemitism of its liberatory potential (tackle racism against Jews) in order to advance agendas that are different from its original intention, and possibly counter to the equality project (and harmful for the Palestinian community). This discursive shift links to discussions around social justice language, and to how EDI rhetoric and tools can be utilised to advance opposite political projects. Indeed, New Antisemitism was criticised as damaging the struggle against antisemitism, as a form of racism which drove the persecution of European Jewry (Klug, 2003). This discursive shift created a ‘parting of the ways between anti-racism and opposition to antisemitism’ (Gidley et al., 2020, p. 413): it distances debates about antisemitism from other forms of racism, reshapes the relationship between Jews and other racialised groups, and limits the prospects of cross-racial solidarity (Behar, 2022). These trends shape the position of Jews within the field of EDI, and how ‘Jewish difference’ is understood inside and outside of Jewish communities.

Finally, the discussion around the meaning of antisemitism poses a challenge on policy level. For example, widespread definitions of antisemitism and Islamophobia present contradictory ideas of justice and injustice: while Jewish advocacy bodies portray the BDS campaign as posing a threat to Jews as a nation, and thus as antisemitic (ADL, 2022), Muslim civil rights organisations see anti-BDS efforts (prohibitions to engage in boycotts, divestment, and sanctions) as Islamophobic (Shahbaz, 2022). Thus, in data collection, the same incident may be counted as Islamophobic, and at the same time as a success in the fight against antisemitism; or alternatively, as antisemitic, and at the same time as a success in the fight against Islamophobia. Attempts of practitioners to tackle both—such as President Biden’s

2022 Task Force that aims to ‘counter antisemitism, Islamophobia, and related forms of discrimination’ (Jean-Pierre, 2022)—may face real dilemmas in their fight against discrimination.

### **4.3 The UK Jewish nonprofit sector and EDI**

This section looks at debates around diversity and difference within the UK Jewish nonprofit sector, the boundaries of The Jewish Community<sup>3</sup> and its organisations, and inequality and power dynamics in the sector.

#### **4.3.1 Debates around diversity and difference**

A key factor shaping ‘diversity’ within British Jewish society is what key Jewish leaders (whose authority to represent and shape community life is sometimes disputed, as discussed later) have framed and prioritised as contributing to the safety and thriving of Jewish life.

##### ***4.3.1.1 Religious differences within Jewish society***

The first point of reference for this discussion is the shift that occurred during the 1980s and 1990s, from the historical focus on protection from persecution to an identification of assimilation as the main threat to Jewish continuity (Kahn-Harris & Gidley, 2010). These changes were linked to the relative safety that Jews experienced in the UK, alongside the rise of multiculturalism and of Jewish progressive movements that challenged Orthodox ideas around what ‘being Jewish’ means. Multiculturalism did not only legitimize Jewish identity in Britain; it also enabled a pluralisation of Jewish selves (Kudenko & Phillips, 2010). During the 1990s, an internal debate emerged concerning ‘Jewish continuity’, containing two main narratives: one emphasised the shrinking of the community as a result of assimilation and mixed marriage; the other focused on opportunities for Jewish revival (Graham, 2011). Indeed, on one hand, since the 1990s, synagogue membership has been in decline, particularly among young people (Casale Mashiah & Boyd, 2017; Kahn-Harris & Gidley, 2010). On the other hand, other ways of engaging with Jewish life have flourished, including Jewish schools and youth movements (which are partially related to synagogues) (Abramson, 2010; Horup et al., 2021; Staetsky & Boyd, 2016).

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<sup>3</sup> As discussed in the methodology chapter (in section 5.3.1), the capitalised form of The Jewish Community is used to refer to the mainstream of British Jewish society (and its organisations), defined primarily through its Zionist stance. It is deployed to emphasise the idea of a united Jewish community, and the marginalisation of dissenting voices and groups.

The assimilation debate and the dispute between Orthodox and non-Orthodox streams brought discussions of religious difference within Jewish society to the forefront. The Orthodox Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, who served as Chief Rabbi, portrayed the divide between religious denominations as a threat to the theological and social ideal of ‘one people’ (Sacks, 1993). The task of reuniting the Jewish fragments produced new organisational initiatives. While synagogue affiliation was in decline, cross-communal and non- or post-denominational spaces offered new models of engagement with Jewish life (Cohen, 2005). These were considered less unified, and more inclusive and egalitarian in terms of sexuality and gender equality (Boyd-Gelfand, 2011).

However, despite the promise of cross-communalism to work ‘across the community without judging any single group’ (Graham, 2011, p. 154), early initiatives were considered to be failing. Cross-communalism was portrayed as a ‘minefield’, laden with mistrust between Orthodox and non-Orthodox streams. It was criticised for reproducing Orthodox-normative culture, labelling non-Orthodoxy as the deviant. Interestingly, the first success in rising above religious divides happened in a large Israel fundraising organisation. During turbulent times, Israel and Zionism ‘provided a smokescreen’ (Graham, 2011, p. 170) and emerged as the main unifier, the source of consensus of across the religious divides (Kahn-Harris, 2014). As Chapter 8 later discusses, cross-communalism became a key concept and practice in managing diversity within the sector.

#### ***4.3.1.2 Political differences within Jewish society***

Another key development in the debate around diversity emerged during the 2000s. As previously discussed (in section 4.2.3), New Antisemitism—broadly defined as hostility towards Israel and Jewish nationalism—is increasingly portrayed as the main threat to British Jewry (Klug, 2003). Jewish leaders urge Jews to unite around Israel and seek to sideline dissent. In Jewish organisations, this dynamic foregrounded political difference, both explicitly and implicitly (Kahn-Harris, 2010). As the empirical discussion later elaborates, as much as political diversity was celebrated *within* the Zionist boundaries of the Jewish mainstream, political disagreement was suppressed *along* those boundaries. The idea was that while Jews may be (more or less) culturally, ethnically, and religiously diverse, and may hold a (certain) range of opinions regarding Israel, they should remain united in their loyalty to Zionism. This agenda reinforced Zionism as the hegemonic discourse within Jewish organisational life.



These trends are manifested in the agendas of Jewish NPOs on different levels, from representation and advocacy vis-à-vis the British government to youth movements increasingly emphasising ‘engagement with Israel’ (H. Miller, 2014). Key initiatives of this kind include the Israel Tour, a UK-born initiative which attracts around 50% of Jewish 16-year-olds; Birthright, a major international programme in which diaspora Jewish young adults visit Israel for free, and which is devoted to fostering Jewish ‘long-distance nationalism’ (Sasson et al., 2014); and Israel Gap Year, which also strengthens the connection of participants to the Land of Israel (Graham, 2011; Miller, 2014). Funding for these programmes comes not only from individual donors, but also from the United Jewish Israel Appeal, the Jewish Agency for Israel, and the Israeli government (see section 4.3.2).

The above analysis has highlighted the significance of religious and political differences within Jewish society in constructing diversity in the investigated sector. The empirical discussion later elaborates how these unique motivations for managing diversity (e.g., bridging internal religious divides and uniting the community around Israel) manifest within UK Jewish organisations.

#### **4.3.2 Boundaries of and within the community**

It is common to find interrelation between diversity climates in organisations and in the communities in which they operate (Ragins et al., 2012). However, the ways and extent to which Jewish organisations are linked to the Jewish community are unique. A report published by the Jewish Leadership Council argued that ‘the Jewish community in Britain today is most visible through its institutions’ (JLC, 2010, p. 2). Indeed, when the Jewish community is discussed in British public life, it is often imagined and represented through its organisations and institutions. To an extent, the nonprofit sector is enmeshed with the community (or possibly, The Sector is enmeshed with The Community) in ways that do not characterise the broader nonprofit world. While this interrelation may also appear in other identity-based communities, the Jewish case is unique given that the community structure is particularly centralised, in terms of representative bodies, umbrella organisations, and funding sources (Kahn-Harris & Gidley, 2010).

‘Community’ is a social construct: particularly in the context of diaspora, the idea of a community is rooted in reproducing the imagination of a people, a nation (Anderson, 2006; Bauman, 2013). What can be drawn from the above discussions is how Jewish organisations play a unique role in defining, constructing, and delineating the boundaries of the community,

and vice versa. This issue is further investigated in the empirical analysis, looking at the links between organisational boundary work (inclusion/exclusion of employees/member); community boundary work (inclusion/exclusion of organisations); and boundary work around Jewish *identity* (who is a Jew; which Jewish voices are stronger than others). Chapter 8, for example, analyses ‘cross-communalism’ as a diversity metaphor (Kirby & Harter, 2002), corresponding with wider perceptions of what The Community is and should be.

#### **4.3.2.1 The non-Jew**

The concept and role of the non-Jew, gentile, or ‘*goy*’ (in Hebrew), is central to Jewish thought and historiography. The construction of non-Jews in Jewish eyes (and of Jews in non-Jewish eyes) shapes the boundaries between groups, interactions across boundaries, and internal Jewish community dynamics. The gentile categorisation is limited: it separates groups in a binary manner, lumps together all non-Jews (and possibly, all Jews), and changes with time and political circumstances (Novak, 2011; Rosen-zvi & Ophir, 2011). For example, the Hebrew-biblical term *goy*—originally referring to the nations among which Jews lived—is today considered derogatory and offensive (Bush, 2021; Gidley, 2003). Such terms can also be used to de-emphasise particular non-Jews, such as the Palestinian/Arab ‘other’. In the Jewish organisational context, the debate around inclusion of non-Jews is limited and centred on the US (Ellenson, 2006; Munley, 2022). A key debate revolves around the ‘Who is a Jew?’ question, and the inclusion of Jews who are not recognised as such by Orthodox institutions. In the UK, the High Court ruled that classic Jewish matrilineal tests are ethnically discriminatory, in the context of Jewish schools (Lyall, 2009).

The ‘non-Jew’ is a unique category: it is used in Jewish spheres, but is entirely meaningless and non-existent in the non-Jewish world. As gender and race theorists observe, it is a position of supremacy which allows ‘the One’ to define ‘the Other’ in relation to what they are not: for example, being a woman gained its meaning by not being a man (de Beauvoir, 1997) and being black was defined by the white gaze (Hall, 1994). The construction of the Other enables dominant groups to reinforce their position of power while naturalising and concealing their own collective identity and privilege. In other words, from this perspective, whites have no race, just as men have no gender (Nkomo, 1992). However, the binaries of ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal’, essential and accidental, are challenged when difference is described and represented by the minority. Reimagining and redrawing categories of difference from the margins enables historically oppressed groups to reclaim and revalue cultural differences that were misrepresented and disrespected (Fraser, 1999).

These issues are important for a nuanced analysis of Jewish NPOs as identity-based organisations. Crucially, Jewish organisations are not entirely Jewish. The traditional understanding of Jewish organisations as spaces ‘for and by’ Jews is challenged: they accept non-Jewish members (e.g., interfaith families in progressive synagogues); hire non-Jewish employees (e.g., care workers in elderly homes, bookkeepers); and serve non-Jewish beneficiaries (e.g., refugees in the UK) (Ellenson, 2006; Munley, 2022). These changes are interpreted as a reaction to demographic changes (intermarriage), and also managerial needs (low-paid physical workers) rather than intentional justice-oriented EDI efforts. Non-Jewish inclusion has raised questions and concerns regarding the ‘Jewishness’ of Jewish organisations (Harris, 1997; Staetsky, 2023). However, it is interpreted as an expansion of the traditional organisational boundaries—shifting the focus from Jewish *people* to Jewish *values, learning, and culture* (Bielefeld & Cleveland, 2013; Ellenson, 2006). As Chapter 6 later discusses, what makes the non-Jew position particularly interesting is the unusual nature of Jewishness, being in itself sometimes associated with the white majority in the UK. This raises the question of whether, for example, a white non-Jewish man becomes a ‘minority’ within a Jewish space.

#### ***4.3.2.2 The Zionist boundaries of The Jewish Community***

Diaspora organisations reproduce, negotiate and challenge nationalistic discourses and narratives (Van Gorp & Smets, 2015; Yabanci, 2021). The connection between Jews/Jewishness and Zionism has been analysed as an example of identity being closely aligned with politics (Kahn-Harris, 2019). Zionism can be seen as a ‘hegemonic discourse’ (Lombardo et al., 2010) in Jewish communities and spaces. Thus, people’s affiliation with Zionism can influence their position and voice in Jewish organisations, and shape positions of hegemony and marginality. Accepting or rejecting related narratives can potentially impact the working lives of employees, determine their employment opportunities, and influence their sense of belonging, voice, and agency.

Indeed, it has been argued that Zionism marks the boundaries of the Jewish mainstream, or The Jewish Community, and shapes issues of legitimacy, participation, and status accordingly (Kahn-Harris & Gidley, 2010). Anti-Zionists have been portrayed as disloyal and self-hating Jews, and fierce critics of Israeli state policies positioned as marginal and delusional. As such, these voices are largely excluded from communal public debates and mainstream media, and denied access to Jewish representative bodies such as the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Chief Rabbinate (Finlay, 2015; Lerman, 2012). The legitimacy of the

Board as a representative body was called into question when it refused to recognise a Zionist group critical of Israeli government policies (Shaviv, 2013). The ways in which knowledge is organised in The Community reinforce those boundaries. When the Institute for Jewish Policy Research writes about Jewish organisations, ultra-Orthodox nonprofits are dealt with separately from mainstream ones (Flint-Ashery, 2020; Graham & Boyd, 2016), but non/anti-Zionist organisations are excluded from the reports altogether.

The particularistic model of Jewish mainstream bodies has focused on Jewish nationalism and ethno-centrism as the answer to the perceived threats to Jewish life. Against this, independent Jewish groups developed moral-organisational models based on ideas of universal justice and equality (Lerman, 2012, 2022). Given how Zionism is ingrained in Jewish institutions in the UK, dissenting groups that are located on the (political) margins of British Jewry are seen as contesting dominant communal conceptions of Jewish identity. Independent groups (some of which are registered as charities) are organised around, for example, socialist, anti-occupation, or anti-Zionist agendas.

What these groups usually share is their critique and rejection of the ways in which The Jewish Community is led and represented, and they are particularly concerned about its unequivocal support for Israel (Kahn-Harris & Gidley, 2010). As the empirical chapters later discuss, in such spaces, debates around difference and diversity within Jewish society often give way to an emphasis on mobilising and organising Jews to promote wider social agendas. Interestingly, while these organisations demand a shift in focus to (injustice in) Israel-Palestine, they also try to shift the focus away from Israel-Palestine: The Jewish left rejects the view of anti-Zionism as antisemitism, and instead frames antisemitism as part of a broader problem of racialisation, which has to be addressed in alliance and solidarity with other minority groups. Resistance against oppression in Israel-Palestine is not only accepted as a legitimate message, but is seen as a moral Jewish duty (Klug, 2003; Lerman, 2012). These debates demonstrate the complex role of Israel in shaping boundaries in Jewish society: being both a *unifier* and a *divider*, an engine driving interconnectedness, and a key source of division (Greene & Shain, 2016; Kahn-Harris, 2014).

As previously mentioned, diversity within UK Jewish nonprofit sector is shaped by multiple contexts (British, Jewish, nonprofit). Jewish workplaces also echo and are shaped by inequalities and EDI debates that take place in Israel-Palestine. Disputes over the definition of antisemitism revolve not only around what antisemitism means for British Jews, but also

how each definition impacts injustice in Israel-Palestine (Klug, 2003). This is a unique cross-national context for diversity research. This form of boundary crossing is elaborated in the empirical discussion.

Diaspora organisations, Jewish ones in particular, can offer new insights for equality and diversity studies. The Jewish homeland—as a real place or an idea—plays a role in shaping Jewish organisations even when Israel is not officially on their agenda. The ‘homeland’ shapes how diaspora organisations perceive their role, define their guiding values, and manage difference. At the same time, Jewish NPOs are unique diaspora organisations because Israel is not a typical ‘home country’: while social research usually links diaspora communities with contexts of migration and displacement, the Jewish exile from the Land of Israel (a formative narrative of Jewish collective identity) is far from a lived experience. The manifestations and implications of transnational tensions on issues of EDI within Jewish diaspora organisations are explored in the empirical discussion.

#### **4.3.2.3 Funding**

Like many other NPOs, Jewish NPOs constantly need to secure income from different funding streams. This gives funding stakeholders power in shaping nonprofit agendas, boundaries, and approaches to EDI. In terms of funding sources, the Jewish sector raises a larger share of its total income from individual donations compared to the wider UK voluntary sector. Data shows that British Jews are significantly more likely to give to charity than the wider population (Graham & Boyd, 2016; Halfpenny & Reid, 2000). The sector emphasises values of *tzedaka* (‘charity’ in Hebrew) and *tikkun olam* (‘repairing the world’)—two key concepts in Jewish theology—as driving giving for Jews and non-Jews (Bielefeld & Cleveland, 2013; Graham & Boyd, 2016; Kahn-Harris & Gidley, 2010). What is more implicit in this discussion is that as a community, British Jews are better off materially than the general population (Kahn-Harris & Gidley, 2010).

A second source of income is UK government funding—for example, to cover security costs in synagogues and other Jewish institutions (Home Office, 2022). Charitable foundations (such as family foundations) are a significant financial source. Here, diaspora-homeland relations are key to the politics of funding. For example, the *United Jewish Israel Appeal*, a merger of the *Joint Israel Appeal* with *Jewish Continuity*, demonstrates how the ideas of fundraising for Israel and securing the future of British Jews are interlinked. Like many other organisations, UJIA’s work binds together Jewish education with Israel advocacy (Graham,

2011; Kahn-Harris & Gidley, 2010). The UJIA is also the main provider of professional development for youth movement leaders. As the empirical discussion later shows, this type of work is not framed as ‘political’, but as necessary for securing and sustaining Jewish life and identity.

Another example of the role of Israel-Palestine politics in funding the sector is the Pears Foundation’s decision in 2021 to withdraw its funding and its name from the Pears Institute for the Study of Antisemitism. The move was explained as an attempt to distance the Foundation from ‘divisive issues’ (Foundation, 2021). The decision came after the Institute’s director, a prominent Jewish studies scholar, published an op-ed titled: “The government should not impose a faulty definition of antisemitism on universities” (Feldman, 2020). In the article, he warned against a forceful shutdown of speech around Israel-Palestine on campus, as this would be harmful to the fight against racism, including antisemitism. The director’s stance was framed in the Jewish media as contributing to antisemitism (Rich & Spencer, 2020) and the withdrawal of funding was celebrated by some NPOs as an achievement in the fight against antisemitism (Campaign Against Antisemitism, 2021). This case demonstrates the power of charitable foundations to draw the boundaries of the sector—in this case, along ideological lines. Chapter 8 discusses how other instances of funder pressure have shaped Jewish work environments (e.g., Kaddish for Gaza).

The politics of funding in the community also mean that non/anti-Zionist civil society initiatives tend to be smaller, less institutionalised, and almost exclusively reliant on volunteers rather than paid staff. As Chapter 5 (methodology) explains, in order to include these voices in this research, some of these groups were included in the analysis despite not being registered as charities.

### **4.3.3 Inequality and power dynamics in the sector**

Historically, Jewish charities in the UK, as in other parts of Europe, have focused on supporting the poor and providing Jews with social services that were not provided centrally, or that Jews had restricted access to. This changed when restrictions on Jews were removed, the welfare state developed, multiculturalist ideas spread, and Jewish communities experienced socioeconomic mobility. Consequently, the sector’s focus gradually shifted onto community building and cultivating Jewish tradition (education, religion, culture, heritage). Jewish philanthropy also engaged with supporting needs outside the community (Graham &

Boyd, 2016; JLC, 2010; Kahn-Harris & Gidley, 2010; Kaplan, 2020). The sector's shift from class to identity resonates with wider trends in recent decades (Chapter 2).

The continuous presence of Jews in Britain for over three centuries enabled them to build 'an extensive and sophisticated network of institutions' (Kahn-Harris & Gidley, 2010, para. 2). The Jewish voluntary sector, comprising over 2,300 organisations, is considered large for a community of around 280,000 people (Graham & Boyd, 2016). It encompasses a wide range of activities, mainly aimed at British Jews, but also at Jewish and Arab-Palestinians in Israel (e.g., education, vocational training); non-Jews in the UK (e.g., asylum seekers, refugees); Jewish communities globally (e.g., poverty in Eastern Europe); and non-Jewish communities in the 'developing' world (e.g., volunteering programs). Key roles and services of the sector include religious-based services, informal education programs and youth movements, advocacy and representation, social service provision (especially elderly care and disability), cultural institutions and programs, and social action (Bielefeld & Cleveland, 2013; Graham & Boyd, 2016; Harris, 1997; Harris et al., 2003; Harris & Rochester, 2001; JLC, 2010).

The way in which the community is organised is influenced by wider national and societal contexts. Jewish communal life in the UK has been characterised as hierarchical and centralised (not only geographically, being London-centred, but also in terms of power), in contrast to American Jewry, which features multiple centres of power and authority (Kahn-Harris & Gidley, 2010; Sarna, 2004). This structure includes well-established national institutions such as the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Chief Rabbinate, which date back to the 18th century. However, the legitimacy of these institutions is sometimes contested from within, raising questions around representation and power. The Board of Deputies of British Jews (established 1760) is considered a 'quasi-parliament body' that represents the concerns and interests of Anglo-Jewry to the British government and public. However, the democratic credentials of this representative body have been repeatedly questioned, particularly around the sidelining of ultra-Orthodox Jews, anti-Zionist Jews, progressive Jews, and secular Jews (Finlay, 2015; Kahn-Harris & Gidley, 2010). The Chief Rabbinate (formed in 1704 and institutionalised by act of parliament in 1870) is often considered the primary Jewish religious authority, and as representing British Jewry. However, the Chief Rabbi is the head of a *particular* religious stream—modern Orthodoxy (United Synagogue)—and thus other religious movements do not recognise him as their representative (Kahn-Harris & Gidley, 2010).

This example of the sector's politics of representation demonstrates the power of the Orthodox establishment, and reflects the debate over its grip on the concept of Jewish authenticity and voice (Abramson, 2010). Moreover, the dominance of Orthodox Judaism in Jewish life raises questions around inclusion in Jewish spaces. A key issue has been the 'Who is a Jew?' question: While Orthodox Judaism preserves the traditional legalistic view that a Jew is a child to a Jewish mother, or one who went through Orthodox conversion, progressive movements opened the doors to Jewish life beyond those boundaries. Emerging non-denominational and cross-denominational spaces further challenge the boundaries of Jewish organisations.

The authority of representative bodies to speak for Jews is questioned, as 'power frequently remains in the hands of the great and the good: a self-appointed collective of wealthy individuals leading negotiations with the outside world' (Finlay, 2015, p. 14). This critique is important because it raises questions regarding the *composition* of those bodies—i.e., who is and should be included; the *messages* of those bodies – i.e., whose voice is and should be represented; and the *boundaries* of those spaces – i.e., whose access into the debate is restricted, on physical and symbolic-ideological levels. The community's hierarchical and centralised structure also perpetuates gender inequality. A gender equality report pointed to the practice of recruiting leaders based on their ability to donate personal wealth and raise money from their networks, rather than based on professional skills (Marks, 2012), thus reproducing patriarchy and male dominance in Jewish spaces and in the community more broadly.

The concept of diversity entered the Jewish sector in recent years. A number of reports were produced addressing issues such as gender equality in Jewish leadership (Marks, 2012; Marks & Brier, 2017), the wellbeing of LGBT+ students in Orthodox schools (Mirvis, 2018), representation within Jewish communal institutions (JPR, 2000), and racial inclusivity in the Jewish community (Bush, 2021) (see section 4.2.2). Some new educational and advocacy initiatives emerged, mainly focused on gender and sexual inclusion. These growing debates within the community opened the door for naming and recognising discrimination, exclusion, and marginalisation in British Jewish society. However, such efforts were limited: they focused on a single issue, disregarded problems of intersectionality and socioeconomic inequality, tended to adopt a liberal approach focused on individual bias, and avoided touching upon the power structures within the sector. They also favoured a siloed approach, focused on Jewish concerns as separate from universal questions of social justice. This



separation is linked to a wider gap between ‘Jewishness’ and wider EDI concerns and agendas—a gap that is central to this thesis.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

The chapter described the socio-political landscape in which the investigated phenomena of this thesis can be situated. The ambiguities and inconsistencies around Jewish identity (in the UK and in the Jewish diaspora more broadly) demonstrate the gaps between Jewishness and the field of diversity scholarship and practice. The discussion also highlighted the potential contribution of this study to critical research in organisation studies and diversity management, which does not accept categories of difference as a given, and is interested in how they are shaped in context, with awareness of issues of power (Alvesson & Willmott, 2003; Zanoni et al., 2010). Indeed, this thesis approaches identity as a social construct. This does not mean that experiences such as ‘being Jewish’ are imagined, but rather that lived experiences are not ‘natural’—they are shaped by social, political, historical and discursive factors. Therefore, as the next chapter explains, the empirical analysis intentionally avoids adopting (and temporarily ‘suspends’) any existing particular interpretation or meaning of Jewish identity. Instead, it looks at Jewishness more broadly, as it intersects with other categories, in order to listen to the voices that emerge from the field, and interpret them in context, as they interact with wider perceptions, norms, debates, and material conditions.

Moreover, diversity research is usually focused on organisational dynamics. Researchers who place organisational dynamics in a wider context often concentrate on the nation-state societal level (Oikelome, 2011; Tatli et al., 2012). This chapter has shone a light on two under-investigated factors that shape diversity debates: *the identity-based community* in which organisations operate; and the *diaspora-homeland relations* in which organisations/communities are embedded. Each of those socio-political contexts (local identity community and diasporic transnational context) has its own complexities and internal tensions. This complex picture makes it possible to gain a better understanding of the contextual nature of diversity in organisations.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## Methodology

### 5.1 Introduction

This thesis engages in a paradoxical task: On the one hand, it is part of a wider scholarly project of developing social scientific understanding of ‘diversity’ in organisations. This task assumes that EDI/diversity is a field of knowledge and practice, with boundaries that we can roughly draw and agree on, that we can study and develop our understanding of. On the other hand, the thesis does the opposite: it reveals the unstable, contextual, relational, and contested nature of ‘diversity’ (and related concepts such as race and whiteness) in organisational life. In a way, the thesis contributes to understanding diversity, while challenging the assumption that we can define, conceptualise and grasp it. This tension is woven through the research methodology that is the focus of this chapter (for example by focusing on lived experiences and perceptions over facts, and adopting a reflective practice). The chapter discusses the research philosophy and guiding principles; describes the research design, which includes the three main steps of literature review, data collection, and data analysis; and concludes with a reflective discussion of my positionality as a researcher.

### 5.2 Research philosophy

This research study is an inductive inquiry. As such it seeks to generate theory from the particular setting of UK Jewish nonprofit organisations for diversity, management, and organisation studies more broadly. Key concepts that guide this process are **meaning**, **experience**, and **context**: I am interested in the interrelations between the meanings of ‘diversity’; the lived experiences of people in (and around) organisations; and the wider social, historical, and political context. Ontologically, the assumption is that reality is socially constructed. Epistemologically, is it that ‘meaning is fluid and constructs reality in ways that can be posited through the use of interpretive methods’ (Halperin & Heath, 2020, p. 332). Meaning is never fixed; it is a temporary outcome of interpretation and negotiation between human actors and social factors (Crotty, 1998). Adopting a social constructionist approach means that I am aware of interpretive processes of my research participants, as well as my own. This effort requires an attempt to temporarily ‘suspend’ the acceptable meaning of key concepts—sometimes referred to as ‘epoche’ (Bednall, 2006)—in order to trace how concepts gain meaning in context. Therefore, instead of adopting or determining certain meanings of

‘diversity’ in the investigated context, I seek to engage in the delicate task of trying to understand ‘the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it’ (Schwandt, 1994, p. 221). In this process, I am interested in ‘the importance of meaning in social life, particularly the meaningful world of the people who are the subjects of research’ (Layder, 1993, p. 5).

My approach is influenced by constructionist grounded theory. Constructivist grounded theory, as a development of grounded theory, emphasises the role of the researcher as a co-participant in the study rather than a neutral observer: ‘Rather than assuming that theory emerges from data, constructionists assume that researchers construct categories of the data’ (Charmaz, 2008, p. 402). Social constructionists developed and remodelled grounded theory: they emphasised that in making sense of the social world, knowledge should be viewed as constructed, rather than created. Accepting that society exists both as a subjective and objective reality, the emphasis is on how knowledge is shaped (Andrews, 2012). In this process, the interaction between the researcher and the field setting is crucial, as it shapes the interpretation. Therefore, a reflective research process is necessary, relating to how the researcher’s own positions in society, standpoint, worldview, status, and power—or lack of it—influence what she sees (Charmaz, 2006) (see 5.4: positionality discussion and appendix 4: reflective research practice).

Critical researchers highlighted the importance of studying diversity in context, and shifting organisational analysis from a social-psychology lens to a sociologically-oriented perspective, one that is aware of wider social power dynamics (Janssens & Zanoni, 2005; Prasad et al., 2006; Zanoni et al., 2010). Thus, my approach emphasises the wider social, economic, cultural, national, historical, and political contexts that shape the material, discursive, and cultural-symbolic dimensions (Lamont & Molnar, 2002) of the participants’ lived experience. To some extent, it also reflects on the boundaries of the field of diversity studies itself (Gieryn, 1983). This dynamic research landscape requires anchors to be identified in order for inquiry to be conducted. To grasp how diversity changes in context, I decided to ‘stop’ at three junctions at which diversity is shaped, experienced, and given meaning. These junctions are the construction of Jewishness (Chapter 6), the construction of race and ethnicity (Chapter 7), and the construction of political-ideological difference (Chapter 8).

I adopt a critical approach to management and organisations, which seeks to produce knowledge *of* management, over knowledge *for* management (Alvesson & Willmott, 2003). In doing so, I try to challenge rather than accept managerialist assumptions as given (e.g., rational decision-making, gender-neutral and race-neutral meritocracy). The critical approach is also a reminder that management takes place in contexts of power relations. Therefore, while management can offer ‘solutions’, it is often also the source of the problem (Parker, 2002).

Inspired by ideas of critical theory, Alvesson and Willmott (2003) suggest five foci for critical studies of management. The first focal point is **de-naturalising assumptions and ideologies** that are taken for granted. In this process, critical management researchers can be seen as bringing ‘noise’ into organisational silence. The second principle is **exposing asymmetrical power relations**. Organisational practices and debates are never politically neutral and are embedded within asymmetrical power relations, which I seek to highlight in the analysis. Third, **revealing the partiality of shared interests**. Here, I seek to draw attention to contradictions and latent conflicts in organisational life and society at large. Fourth, **developing a non-objective view** of management techniques and organisational process. The assumption is that social reality (in which management practice and scholarship take place) is precarious, and therefore managerial and scholarly knowledge cannot mirror reality ‘as it is’. Fifth, **appreciating the centrality of language** and communicative action. This dimension emphasises the relations between language and the social construction of reality: ‘language... carries historically established meanings and distinctions that tend to create a certain version of the social world’ (Alvesson & Willmott, 2003, p. 18). These ideas have been translated into critical diversity management (Janssens & Steyaert, 2019; Ponzoni et al., 2017; Zanoni et al., 2010), as previously discussed in Chapter 2. They have also inspired critical research into nonprofit organisations (Coule et al., 2020; Sandberg et al., 2019), as Chapter 3 discussed. This study continues those efforts.

### **5.3 Research design**

Broadly speaking, this qualitative research study was conducted in a traditional way, including a literature review, data collection (interviews and organisational mission statements), data analysis, and writing up. However, this process was not entirely linear, and included, for example, reiterations of the literature review, rearticulations of the research questions, and refining of the research tools. This section reviews the main building blocks of

the study: literature review, research planning (recruitment and access), data collection, and data analysis.

### **5.3.1 Literature review**

To familiarize myself with the field of diversity, most of my time during the early stages of the research was dedicated to reading literature on diversity management—especially qualitative and critical discussions—and on the politics of difference in organisations. I was also interested in literature on the social construction of difference beyond the context of management and organisations, and familiarised myself with some key discussions among critical theory scholars and feminist and postcolonial authors. While these ideas influenced my thinking, and my identity as a researcher, I decided not to commit to one of those theoretical perspectives in my research. These foundations are mainly discussed in the conceptual background chapter (Chapter 2).

The second stage of reading was dedicated to deepening my understanding of the contexts and landscapes that were relevant to my research focus. Theoretically, ‘context’ is an unlimited web of historical, ideological, and cultural processes, norms, and material conditions that shape an analysed phenomenon. So, early on in the research process, I positioned the organisations I wanted to study at the intersection of three main contexts: The UK/British society; the Jewish world; and the nonprofit sector. Of course, these are not the only contexts that shape the analysed phenomena, or the only possible entry points to this discussion; nor do these three contexts constitute coherent units of meanings. On the contrary, they represent a tangled web of perceptions, assumptions, and norms, which may be overlapping or contradictory. But this complexity is precisely the source of my passion for this research study. I wanted to shed light on the contextual and complex nature of diversity and the management of social difference in organisations (Tatli et al., 2012). Positioning the analysis at this intersection enabled me to highlight key factors, trends, and debates that form the foundations for a contextualised analysis. These foundations were later organised in the literature review as the organisational context—focusing on nonprofit organisations broadly as well as in the UK (Chapter 3); and the social context—looking at Jewish identity broadly, and the British Jewish community specifically.

During the literature review process, my language and approach towards the concepts and categories that are key to my research started to consolidate. Two examples of methodological and terminological decisions that emerged through the reading are: how to

approach Jewish identity and the Jewish organisation, and how to discuss the Jewish community. One decision I took was not to adopt any particular definition or meaning of Jewishness (religious, ethnic, cultural, and so on) (see also 4.2.2.1: Jewish religion, race, and ethnicity). Instead, I was interested in how the meaning of ‘being Jewish’ changes in context, and at the intersection with other social differences. I also decided to conceptualise Jewish nonprofit organisations as identity-based organisations, and as diaspora organisations (rather than as faith-based organisations, which is more commonly used) (see section 3.5 on conceptualising Jewish nonprofits).

Another step was to differentiate ‘the Jewish community’ from the capitalised ‘The Jewish Community’ in my analysis. Broadly speaking, ‘the Jewish community’ is closer in meaning to British Jewish society, or even British Jews. ‘The Jewish Community’, however, is used to emphasise the imagined boundaries of this group, and the *idea* of a united Jewish community. As such, ‘The Jewish Community’ reveals positions of centre and periphery: it emphasises the ‘mainstream’ of British Jewish society (and its organisations), which is defined primarily through its Zionist stance, and the marginalisation of dissenting Jewish voices, groups, and organisations (which are usually not represented or recognised by institutions such as Jewish representative bodies, the Chief Rabbi, and mainstream Jewish media) (see also section 4.3.2: Boundaries of and within the community).

### **5.3.2 Recruitment and access**

This section looks at the main steps and considerations around the recruitment of participants. It presents the sector-based approach of the research; inclusion and exclusion criteria; and the recruitment process and issue of access.

#### ***5.3.2.1 Sector-based approach***

In order to understand wider trends and debates within UK Jewish organisational life, I decided to adopt a sector-based approach, instead of an organisational case study approach. While diversity research tends to focus on the individual or organisational level, the sector level offers unique value (Tatli & Özbilgin, 2012). I acknowledge that there is no one coherent UK Jewish nonprofit sector that can be identified, studied, and characterised; in the same way as there is no one coherent ‘Jewish community’. Indeed, I did not seek to portray a full and accurate picture of diversity management within the sector. Instead, I was interested in exploring the multiple and changing interpretations and uses of diversity within the sector,

including inconsistencies and controversies. The particular areas, or subsector(s) that I was interested in, are discussed below (5.3.2.2)

The sector-based approach also meant that during the interviews I did not narrow the conversation to a specific employer or organisation that interviewees were affiliated with. Instead, I was interested in their experience (particularly work experience) *across* the sector more broadly. Indeed, the vast majority of the interviewees were involved with several Jewish organisations (e.g., currently employed in A, volunteer for B, members of C, professionally trained in D, donating to E, previously involved with F). Within this wide and complex web of organisational affiliations, my main interest was in work experience (paid and unpaid), but other positions and affiliations were included and analysed when they provided valuable insight to work-related discussions.

### ***5.3.2.2 Inclusion/exclusion criteria of organisations and participants***

UK Jewish organisations encompass a wide range of roles, missions, constituencies, and visions for Jewish life and wider society (see 4.3). Within this broad sector, I had particular interest in organisations that are involved with advocacy and social action; meaning, organisations that are trying to shape Jewish life, or to lead wider social change as Jews. I was interested in this subsector, or sub-type of UK organisations, because of the political dimension of their work. An organisation's involvement with 'the political' is of course linked to my own understanding of this concept, and to my interpretation of the organisation's work. Defining or specifying what I mean by 'political' is crucial here because in the UK, 'charities' freedom to engage in political activities is limited and they cannot have political objects. They are constrained by law to reasonable lobbying to further their non-political objects' (HMRC 2022, n.p.). Thus, I approach 'political' work or action in a broader sense of engaging with the state of affairs in society or in a community, in a way that echoes historical power relations of domination and subordination (Gerring, 1997; Ophir, 2009; Sartori, 1969). This approach does not say much about the nature of that political orientation: organisations that negotiate with the status quo may make efforts to change it or to maintain it. Thus, my interest was in organisations that hold a wider vision for Jewish life and/or wider society, seek to advance certain social goals, and engage with language of social change or social justice, rather than focusing on social service providers that seek to address a particular need.

The sample included organisations that were involved in advocacy and representation (e.g., representing Jewish concerns vis-à-vis British government/public, advocacy within Jewish society); social action and equality (e.g., human rights, international development); informal education (e.g., youth movements); and (Jewish) charitable foundations that support causes of that kind. Within this sub-sector of the UK Jewish nonprofit world, I attempted to include a wide range of political agendas, missions, and visions: established representative bodies and groups advancing a ‘niche’ agenda; organisations focused on Jewish concerns and activism aimed at wider society; Israel advocacy and human right activists; Zionist, non-Zionist and non-affiliated. This inclusion/exclusion criteria meant that organisations such as Jewish care homes and synagogues were largely excluded, as they are mainly focused on service provision. I did include synagogue-affiliated youth movements, as they play a crucial part in Jewish political life. I also excluded Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) organisations. As a segregated sub-sector (Valins, 2003b) that is excluded from Jewish representative bodies (see 4.3), Haredi organisations have unique characteristics that required changing the research’s focus. I also faced problems of access to those spaces. Appendix 5 lists of the organisations included in the statement analysis, and there is partial overlap between those and the interviewees’ employers for confidentiality reasons (see also section 5.3.3).

The main recruitment criterion for participants was people who worked or volunteered in UK Jewish nonprofit organisations (with a particular focus on the sub-sector defined above) at the time of the interview or shortly beforehand. This meant that they did not necessarily have to be Jewish, nor British (see section 5.3.3.3 on demographic data). My focus was on paid and unpaid work rather than other forms of engagement and membership (e.g., beneficiaries, donors). Since the majority of participants shared their experience with multiple organisations in the community, some of those experiences went beyond the scope of this research (e.g., work in a non-Jewish organisation). These perspectives were included if they added value to the analysis.

It is also noteworthy that many of the UK Jewish nonprofits that are discussed in this thesis challenge and stretch the scope of that definition, thus demonstrating the constructed nature of that ‘sector’. Several organisations are not entirely ‘British’ (e.g., UK-based organisations working on or in Israel-Palestine or in the Global South), many are not entirely ‘Jewish’ (e.g., employing non-Jews), and some are not entirely ‘nonprofit’ (operating informally, or registered as companies—see discussion in section 5.3.3.4). The marginal position of such



‘troublemakers’ adds another layer to the task of this research of challenging accepted categories of thinking about organisations.

### ***5.3.2.3 Recruitment process and securing access***

In terms of securing research access and recruiting participants, my personal identity and professional background played a significant role. As a Jewish person living in the UK, and particularly given my professional background within the sector, I was considered part of the UK Jewish community, at least to some extent. Prior to starting my PhD journey, for two years I worked for two UK Jewish nonprofit organisations and developed a wide professional network across the sector. This later contributed to building trust with research participants. Other dimensions of my identity, such as being an Israeli woman, had less influence on securing access in my eyes, but they did shape my interaction with participants during the interviews (see 5.4 positionality). Being white may have restricted my access to non-white participants (see discussion below).

My main recruitment strategy was snowballing, which is a useful approach to gaining access to a particular community or sector where participants form a broad network, and where access requires a degree of trust (Parker et al., 2019). I started with my own professional network within the sector, focusing on people with diverse experience (and contacts) within the sector, who come from a relatively diverse background in terms of gender, ethnicity, nationality, organisational political orientation, age, and seniority (as much as this existed within my network). From there, the recruitment process developed mainly through the research participants’ networks. In general, I did not encounter significant problems of access (with one important caveat, see below). On the contrary, the vast majority of people I contacted were happy to participate, and all of the participants were open, collaborative, and enthusiastic to share their experiences.

However, a key limitation of snowballing, as a network-based recruitment method, is around the representativeness of the selected research participants. Since participants are likely to refer other participants who share similar characteristics, this raises questions of bias (Parker et al., 2019). To address this concern and diversify the group, I paid attention to forming a (relatively) diverse group of participants at the outset. Second, during the referral process, I was guided by the idea of appreciating knowledge that comes from the margins. More broadly, studies in and of management tend to focus on managers. By doing so, they accept the dominant role of elites in shaping reality. The perspectives of other organisational

members are often silenced and untold in organisational scholarship. Bringing in those voices is crucial for revealing the asymmetrical power relations in which organisations are embedded, where top management is routinely privileged in setting agendas defining human needs and shaping social reality (Alvesson & Willmott, 2003).

To some extent, in this study I was interested in understanding the perspectives and perceptions of people who hold power on a social and organisational level. But being mindful of the limitations of this prism, it was only part of the story: the study aimed to bring both dominant voices (dominant by role or identity), and participants who are (or see themselves as, or who I see as) positioned in the margins of the organisation, sector, community, or society. In particular, I tried to recruit and include three types of marginalised voices: First, on the **organisational** level, junior employees and workers who hold peripheral roles. Second, on the **sectoral** level, members of organisations that are marginalised, non-mainstream, or independent in terms of their agenda, size, or legal status. To do this, I included a number of organisations that are not, or not yet, legally registered as charities. I approached those grassroots groups as nonprofit organisations because they operated as such: they were organised groups, working regularly and systematically to promote a shared and defined mission and social vision, and had publicly-available mission statements. Third, on the **social** level, I attempted to include minority group employees. This included minority identity in the broader sense (gender, ethnicity) and in the Jewish-communal sense (e.g., non-Jews or non-Zionist Jews). Learning from the margins played a significant role in tracing and unravelling the boundary work within the sector: how dominant categories, hegemonic discourses, and established power structures in organisations are maintained, negotiated, and challenged.

There was one important caveat regarding ease of access to research participants: I struggled to recruit black interviewees, and particularly black Jews. This was challenging both through my own professional network and when I approached potential interviewees independently. Those attempts failed: some people ignored my emails, others were not interested in participating. I interpret this failure as related to several factors. First, as the Bush report discussed (Bush, 2021), black Jews and Jews of colour face discrimination within Jewish society, and are underrepresented in the sector. Possibly, past experiences of discrimination made it harder for them to trust me, particularly as a white Jewish person. Moreover, the fact that they constitute a small proportion of the sector may have raised confidentiality concerns— that they will be identified from the study. Also, the recruitment criterion was an

obstacle, since I focused on people who were already involved in Jewish organisations. Had I framed the recruitment criterion differently (e.g., British Jews in general), I might have been able to reach people who were not involved in the sector and gained a better insight of experiences of exclusion. Nonetheless, the absence of black Jews in this research is an interesting finding in itself.

Despite the lack of racial diversity, I believe that the study managed to generate important findings around race, diversity, and organisations. First, I did manage to achieve **ethnic** diversity among Jewish participants (Sephardi Jews or mixed ethnicity). Minority ethnic perspectives can offer important insight on racial diversity and racism. Second, Ashkenazi/white participants offered immeasurable value to understanding the construction of race and whiteness, as well as the positioning and representation of blackness within Jewish communal spaces. Lastly, the sole black interviewee provided precious insight that formed a significant portion of Chapter 8 on ethno-racial difference.

### **5.3.3 Data collection and fieldwork**

In order to examine how diversity and difference are constructed in and by UK Jewish nonprofit organisations, the research study used two data collection methods: conducting semi-structured interviews with senior managers, employees, and volunteers (see section 5.3.3.1); and collecting and analysing publicly-available organisational mission, vision, and value statements (section 5.3.3.4).

The two data sources have different roles in this research: the interviews form the heart of the thesis, as they provide rich, deep, complex, and nuanced understanding of the construction of diversity in the sector, which lies at the centre of the epistemological approach.

Organisational statements formed a secondary, complementary, source. In a way, while the online statements present official organisational stories and *raison d'être*, the interviews revealed how organisational members make sense of and challenge official rhetoric, concepts, narratives, and myths (Katz & Liss, 2021; Warikoo & De Novais, 2014).

I intentionally created a partial overlap between the interviewees' employers and the organisations captured by the statement analysis (listed in appendix 5). This means that many (but not all) of the interviewees worked/volunteered in an organisation that was included in the list; and that many (but not all) of the organisations in the list had an employee/volunteer who was interviewed for the research. The partial overlap was meant to ensure the

confidentiality of participants, while positioning the statement analysis within the same sub-sector as the fieldwork. The type (rather than name) of the organisations that participants belong to is listed in table 2.

### ***5.3.3.1 Semi-structured interviews***

I conducted 42 semi-structured interviews with senior managers, employees, and volunteers in the sector, and three scoping interviews (described below). The semi-structured interview method was chosen because it combined two important elements: one, a basic structure of general questions and topics, based on a pre-written interview guide, which provided a degree of consistency across interviews (see appendix 2); and two, flexibility and spontaneity for both the interviewer and the interviewee, and an ability to shape the conversation according to the context of the interview and to the interviewee-interviewer interaction (Knott et al., 2022).

All interviewees received an information sheet and a consent form before the interview, and all signed it (see appendix 1). As the consent form stated, the identity of all participants was kept confidential at all research stages. Participants were informed that they will only be referred to by characteristics such as gender, nationality, and role. Issues of confidentiality were discussed once again at the beginning of each interview. All of the interviewee names in this thesis are pseudonyms.

At the beginning of the fieldwork, I also conducted three scoping interviews with key informants. The informants were: (1) a senior manager in a major Jewish charitable foundation; (2) a long-time Jewish human rights activist; and (3) a CEO of a major Israel-based nonprofit that works with the UK Jewish community. Unlike the other interviews, the scoping interviews did not focus on interviewees' personal experiences, but provided a broader overview of the sector's characteristics and challenges. However, given the sector-based approach that was adopted, almost all of the 42 interviews had a 'scoping' dimension, in the sense that participants often shared wider observations regarding the sector.

All interviews were held through videoconferencing (Zoom), apart from one semi-structured interview and two scoping interviews that were held in person (see section 5.3.3.5 on COVID). Interviews lasted for 1.5 hours on average. All interviews were conducted in English, including when interviewees were native Hebrew speakers, like myself. While I always used the interview guide as a basis, the interviews were very different from each other. Broadly speaking, the direction of the conversations was guided by a combination of

the topics that interviewees felt passionate about or wanted to delve into; and what I felt was unique about their perspective and valuable to the research.

### **5.3.3.2 Demographic categories**

Collecting and presenting quantitative demographic data regarding my research participants was important for two main reasons. First, as a tool during the recruitment process, which guided my efforts to diversify the communities and voices that this research brings. Second, the demographic information helps the reader contextualise the research data both broadly and in relation to particular testimonies.

Extracting the demographic data was done organically during the interview, rather through a questionnaire. All of the participants (excluding informants) talked about their own identities quite extensively. I sometimes asked participants how they identify or would like to be identified in the research, but in most cases this was not necessary. This also means that this classification is shaped by my own interpretation, as the following discussion shows. The following are the categories that were used:

- (a) **Jewish background:** ‘Being Jewish’ means different things to different people, as this thesis acknowledges. Jewish identity is associated with religion, ethnicity, parentage, nationality and so on; and different Jewish groups hold different ideas regarding who is and should be considered Jewish (see section 4.3). I adopted a broad and inclusive definition and classified as **Jewish** all participants who identified as such. For participants with no Jewish background, I used **non-Jewish**, although those participants identified in a variety of ways (e.g., other faiths, or atheist). Focusing on Jewish/non-Jewish (instead of Jewish/Muslim/Christian for example) is an intentional decision *not* to decide what Jewishness means. This ambiguity serves the task of tracing the construction of this category. Favouring the broader ‘non-Jewish’ also served confidentiality considerations, given the small proportion of non-Jews within the sector. Several participants indicated that they come from intermarriage families (Jewish and non-Jewish). Since they all identified as Jewish, I classified them as such.
- (b) **Ethnicity and race:** I used two sets of ethno-racial sub-categories, one for Jewish participants and one for non-Jewish participants. This enabled me to conduct a contextualised and nuanced discussion in relation to Jewish ethno-racial differences. Since the Jewish ethnic categories (presented below) do not apply to non-Jewish participants, for non-Jews I followed the main ethnic categories used in the 2011 UK

census (White; mixed/multiple ethnic group; Asian/Asian British; Black/African/Caribbean/Black British; Other ethnic group). I did not use ethnic sub-categories for non-Jews (e.g., Irish, Welsh), as those were less relevant for the discussion. The only exception was with non-Jewish interviewees who were Arab-Palestinian, a group with particular importance for this research. Those were classified as ‘Arab’ by ethnicity (instead of ‘other ethnic group’).

For Jewish participants, I used the main categories accepted in social research on Jewish communities (which also broadly resonated with the language used by participants): **Ashkenazi** to refer to Jews of European origin, and **Sephardi/Mizrahi** to refer to Jews of Middle Eastern and North African descent. I recognised that not all Jewish ethnicities are included in this typology (e.g., Ethiopian and Asian Jews), and was open to adding particular identifications of participants, but this did not happen. Several participants indicated that they have both Ashkenazi and Sephardi backgrounds. I categorised these as ‘**mixed Jewish ethnicity**’. It should be noted that in the literature, Ashkenazi and Sephardi/Mizrahi are usually referred to as ethnic categories, but in some cases they are also analysed as ‘racially constructed differences’ (Shenhav, 2006; Shenhav & Yonah, 2009).

- (c) **Nationality:** I classified participants according to their main nationality as it emerged from the interviews. For example, when people identified as British Jews throughout the interview, I categorised their nationality as UK, although they may have held various dual citizenships that I was not aware of. Participants who were born and raised in Israel, identified as Israeli, and lived in the UK, were categorised as Israeli (regardless of their legal status in the UK). What mattered to me was their identity as it emerged from their story—what they chose to emphasise, rather than legal documentation. In some cases, when participants clearly discussed two national identities, I included both (e.g., US-UK, UK-Israel). In some cases, I decided to use a regional category (e.g., Europe, Oceania) to ensure confidentiality, given the limited number of workers from specific countries within those geographic regions.
- (d) **Gender:** Since this research study is not interested in studying gender identity, I adopted a traditional approach and used the categorisation of **men** and **women**. I was open to adding other gender categories as stipulated by interviewees, but these did not emerge from the field.

- (e) **Age range:** I collected data on age because I was curious about generational differences, and also in order to make sure that I included multiple perspectives. Eventually, this information did not emerge as central to the discussion, and thus in the empirical analysis, age range is indicated only where relevant for the discussion.
- (f) **Position in the sector/organisation:** Interviewees’ position in the organisation/sector was also important for the analysis, although it was not a demographic characteristic. I broadly used the sub-categories of **senior manager**, **employee** (including mid-level manager), and **volunteer** (unpaid activist or lay leader). However, given the nature of the sector, the majority of interviewees held multiple roles in different organisations, sometimes simultaneously (e.g., employee in organisation A, volunteer at B). I used a combination of categories only when participants themselves emphasised those multiple roles/positions (e.g., senior manager and employee). Otherwise, I focused on the main role they discussed and shared with me.

Of course, this list of categories is limited, and there were categories that I decided not to include—for example, ‘Jewish religious denomination’ (e.g., Orthodox, Reform, Liberal). The construction of Jewish religious difference is not a key dimension in this thesis, despite its centrality to the study of Jewish diaspora communities in the social sciences. By not focusing on religious differences among interviewees, I seek to shift the focus from well-represented towards under-investigated dimensions of Jewish identity and organisational life, which are yet important and topical. However, I discuss the *management* of religious difference in parts of the literature review and of the empirical discussion. The issue of ‘political-ideological difference’ was central to the research but harder to classify on individual level. I decided to look at it on organisational level (see section 5.3.3.4). Finally, on reflection, I would have put more emphasis on socioeconomic differences during the recruitment process, data collection, and data analysis (see section 9.6: Research limitations).

### 5.3.3.3 Participant demographic data and organisational affiliation

The following table presents the demographic background of the 45 participants. This includes 42 semi-structured interviews and 3 scoping interviews.

Jewish background	
39	Jewish
6	Non-Jewish

<b>Race-ethnicity</b>	
<i>Jewish participants</i>	
30	Ashkenazi Jewish
7	Mixed Jewish ethnicity (Ashkenazi-Sephardi)
2	Sephardi/Mizrahi Jewish
<i>Non-Jewish participants</i>	
4	White non-Jewish
1	Black non-Jewish
1	Arab non-Jewish
<b>Nationality</b>	
26	UK
9	Israel
3	Europe
3	UK-Israel
3	UK-US
1	Oceania
<b>Gender</b>	
24	Women
21	Men
<b>Age range</b>	
17	20–29
15	30–39
6	40–49
4	50–59
3	60–69

Table 1. Demographic data of participants

The table below outlines participants’ organisational affiliations and primary roles within the nonprofit sector at the time of the interview. While the data captures their main roles or affiliations during that period, it is crucial to note that most interviewees have been involved with multiple Jewish nonprofit organisations throughout their lives. This broader engagement was frequently reflected in their interviews, offering a rich perspective on their experiences within the sector.



<b>Position in the sector</b>	
25	Employee
9	Senior manager
7	Volunteer
4	Senior manager and employee
<b>Type of organisation(s) participants belong to</b>	
11	Human rights, social action, advocacy (beyond Jewish concerns)
10	Jewish advocacy / Israel advocacy (within this category: 5 belong to representative/umbrella bodies)
10	Charitable foundations
7	Informal education / youth movements
3	Research / adult education
3	International
1	Culture

Table 2. Organisational affiliations and roles of participants

#### **5.3.3.4 Organisational statements**

Organisational statements—particularly mission, vision, and value statements—formed a secondary and complementary source to the interviews that lie at the heart of this research, as mentioned. Nonetheless, official statements have a unique value in qualitative analysis: they offer a glimpse into how organisations see themselves and wish to be seen, and into the stories they tell themselves and the world, including their stakeholders, about their identity and social role. Often unintentionally, they also construct and naturalise certain perspectives and beliefs. Official *raison d’être* can offer insight into the priorities, assumptions, values, roles, and institutional standpoints (Barniskis, 2016).

As such, official statements also reveal organisational mindsets around diversity: how organisations construct the meaning of diversity; which diversity dimensions they find important, beneficial, or irrelevant; and what drives their diversity efforts (Pick, 2024; Point & Singh, 2003; Wilson et al., 2012). Diversity statements became so central to organisational life that they are sometimes seen as a proof of ‘doing’ diversity (Ahmed, 2007b). Still, learning about organisational approaches to diversity through online statements is limited. For example, organisations may have internal, offline, diversity statements and policies that elaborate and shed more light on their publicly-available statements. The focus on official

narratives also ignores unwritten unofficial practices, concepts, and norms around diversity. The interviews shed light on those dynamics on a sector-based level.

I collected and analysed 102 publicly available online statements of 34 UK Jewish nonprofit organisations from their official websites. The types of statements collected were mainly vision, mission, and value statements, and organisational slogans. In some cases, I included excerpts from other website sections such as ‘Our history’, or ‘What we do’. Although most of the organisations did not have a publicly-available diversity statement per se, references to diversity were repeatedly and frequently made within their vision, mission, and value statements.

A full list of the organisations that were investigated through online statement analysis is presented in Appendix 5. In this section, I present data that provides an overview of those organisations. This includes the organisations’ main field of action, ideological stance in relation to Israel, legal status, and size (see table 2 below). The categories that were used are as follows:

- (a) **Main field of action:** As noted above in relation to the inclusion/exclusion criteria (see 5.3.2.2), I was mainly interested in organisations that had a political dimension to their work, in the broader sense of ‘politics’ (as well as in the political dimensions of their work).
- (b) **Political-ideological stance in relation to Israel/Zionism:** The vast majority of the organisations that were included (like many others across the sector) are engaged in some kind of educational work, advocacy, or social action in relation to Israel-Palestine. Determining what their general stance was in relation to Israel involved my own judgement and interpretation of their work and public messages. What I saw as **mainstream Zionist** organisations were those that actively and openly engaged in pro-Israel advocacy. These groups can broadly be positioned on the political centre-right, in relation to their Israel politics. **Liberal Zionist** organisations were openly Zionist but emphasised democratic values such as Arab-Jewish equality and a two state solution. **Non-Zionist** organisations either distanced themselves from Zionism or took a critical stance towards Zionism. Given how charged the ‘anti-Zionist’ label is within Jewish communities, I preferred to use the more moderate ‘non-Zionist’, particularly since the particular organisational stance towards Zionism is often

implicit, unknown, and based on my own interpretation (see discussion on anti- and non-Zionism in section 4.2.3).

**(c) Legal status:** Data regarding organisations' legal status is based on the UK Charity Commission for England Wales database<sup>4</sup> and UK Companies House database<sup>5</sup>.

While the vast majority (28) of the organisations that were included are **registered charities**, the analysis also included three **unregistered organisations** that operate informally (see section 5.3.2.3), and three **nonprofit companies** (see below).

Organisations that are registered as both charities and companies were classified as charities.

The term 'nonprofit company' is used here to indicate organisations that are registered companies but do not work for profit (limited company by guarantee without share capital). These organisations are registered companies that act, talk and 'behave' as civil society, not-for-profit organisations<sup>6</sup>. As one of the research participants explained: 'In terms of why we didn't register as a charity, in the UK charities have very strict restrictions for what sort of political work they can do. It is often very hard to register as a charity if the purpose of the organisation is to conduct political activity or lobbying. To remain flexible in our activities and avoid falling foul of charity commission rules, we opted to register as a company'. These claims are also echoed and recognised by the government: 'Many such [not-for-profit] organisations choose not be charities. Charitable status brings with it many restrictions on the use to which funds can be put. Some organisations prefer to retain freedom to spend money on non-charitable activities' (HMRC 2022, n.p). However, companies that are limited by guarantee cannot keep any profit they make, and instead must invest it back into the company.

**(d) Organisation size:** The subcategories of charity size are based on NCVO income bands<sup>7</sup>. Data regarding charities' income was collected through the register of charities by the UK Charity Commission for England Wales (2022)<sup>8</sup>. The number of

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<sup>4</sup> See <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search>

<sup>5</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/companies-house>

<sup>6</sup> For example, We Believe in Israel, is a registered company that identifies on social media as 'nonprofit organisation' and defines itself as 'a UK grassroots network of people united in believing in the right of the State of Israel to live in peace and security'. See <https://twitter.com/webelieveisrael>

<sup>7</sup> See <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/news-and-insights/news-index/uk-civil-society-almanac-2023/about/definitions/>

<sup>8</sup> See <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search>

employees in the investigated charities was also collected from the same source (see appendix 5: List of organisations).

<b>Main field of action</b>	
8	Jewish advocacy / Israel advocacy
7	Human rights, social action, and advocacy (beyond Jewish concerns)
6	Informal education / youth movement
4	Charitable foundation
3	Representation / umbrella body
2	Research / adult education
2	International
2	Culture
<b>Political-ideological stance in relation to Israel/Zionism</b>	
18	Mainstream Zionist
7	Liberal Zionist
7	Non-Zionist
2	Liberal Zionist/Non-Zionist (unclear)
<b>Legal status</b>	
28	Registered charity
3	Nonprofit company
3	Unregistered organisation
<b>Charity size (income-based)</b>	
0	Micro
3	Small
10	Medium
10	Large
4	Major
0	Super-major
7	N/A <sup>9</sup>

Table 3: Typology of organisations

<sup>9</sup> Companies and unregistered organisations.

### *5.3.3.5 The sociopolitical environment*

A number of important socio-political events—or periods of intensive social and political dynamics (MacKenzie, 2008)—took place during my fieldwork time, which was conducted from March 2020 to July 2021.

In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global health emergency (following the emergence of the virus in December 2019), and by March 24 the UK was under lockdown. The pandemic had dramatic consequences for my fieldwork. While the vast majority of my interviewees were all based in London, as was I, I could not meet them in person as I planned. I managed to conduct only three face-to-face interviews (two scoping interviews and one semi-structured interview), and the remaining 42 interviews were held via video conferencing (Zoom). Literature on online data collection methods suggests different findings (Gray et al., 2020; Meherali & Louie-Poon, 2021): while some participants are more willing to disclose intimate-personal experiences online, feeling comfortable in their home environment, others hesitate to share personal stories, because they experience the medium as impersonal, or due to confidentiality concerns.

I was surprised by the extent to which my interviewees were open, honest, and often even enthusiastic to share their experiences and thoughts with me. In my opinion, two main factors played a role: First, the abrupt shift of white-collar workers, like my interviewees, to the online world of work left people without access to the ‘hallway conversations’ and more personal, informal interactions that normally happen outside of meeting rooms, and are not directly work-related. The interviews provided some space for that. Moreover, given the sudden shift to remote work, the interviews offered participants an opportunity to reflect on their working lives in recent years, at a distance from their regular workspace dynamics, during a timeframe when this memory was still fresh. However, I decided not to focus on the actual shift to online work as a research theme.

The second dramatic event was the re-emergence of the Black Lives Matters (BLM) movement, particularly after the killing of George Floyd in May 2020. As previously discussed, BLM did not only shape the general public discourse around racism and racial justice in the UK, it also had specific implications for the Jewish community. Issues related to racial inclusion started appearing in Jewish media outlets, online events were held, and representative bodies placed it on their agenda. In April 2021, the first-ever report on racial inclusivity in the community was published (see 4.2.2). Many participants referred to BLM

and the acceptance of its messages within Jewish organisations, which reinforced race and ethnicity as a key theme in the research.

The third political event was the Labour Party antisemitism row. While the controversy was long, broadly overlapping with Jeremy Corbyn's leadership (starting 2015), it reached its peak towards the end of his leadership in April 2020. The debate around it, in and outside Jewish society, continued afterwards—for example, around the publication of the EHRC report on the investigation into antisemitism in the Labour party (EHRC, 2020). While the Labour antisemitism row itself did not emerge as a key theme in the interviews, the event shaped the political landscape in which those conversations took place. In particular, it placed the question of whether and how anti-Zionism and criticism of Israel are (or should be) considered antisemitic, an issue which was central to my analysis.

A fourth political event took place in October 2023, long after my fieldwork had ended, towards the end of my writing-up phase. The 2023–24 Israel-Gaza war had an enormous impact on Jewish diaspora communities, which this thesis does not cover. However, the war also exposed some areas in which the thesis can contribute to emerging scholarly, practitioner, and political debates (see 1.1). It also had a major impact on me personally, as I later discuss (see 5.4: Positionality).

### **5.3.4 Data analysis**

This section looks at the analysis of interviews and organisational statements. Both analyses were conducted using qualitative data analysis software (NVivo).

#### ***5.3.4.1 Interview analysis***

There was no delay between data collection and analysis. After each interview, I manually transcribed the recorded conversation (no human or technological assistance was used). During the transcription process, I took notes, and also highlighted key points in the text, a process which had a reflective dimension to it (see appendix 4). When I finished transcribing an interview, I conducted a thematic analysis of the transcription using NVivo, identifying and interpreting patterns of meaning. This working method enabled me to extract a rich analysis of each interview while it was still fresh in my mind. I conducted the thematic analysis by reading through each interview and coding the main themes that emerged (see appendix 3: Nvivo code list). When I started the fieldwork I created a list of initial codes that emerged from the literature (e.g., identity, race and ethnicity, gender, Jewish, Israel), and during the analysis the list developed into around 250 codes and sub-codes. Later in the

process, while merging and re-organising the codes, I chose three main themes to guide the empirical discussion, which became the empirical chapters. The factors guiding my decision to focus on those themes were: (a) the quality of the data—original ideas, contribution to the literature, new perspectives; (b) the quantity of materials; and (c) my own passion towards the topic. During this process, I also revised the research questions.

While all interviews were conducted in English, some participants used some terms in Hebrew and Yiddish. I translated the terms and also kept the transliteration for two reasons: first, I did not want to make major changes in the original text; and second, I considered the use of Hebrew and Yiddish an interesting finding in itself. Here, my own Jewish-Israeli identity is important. The use of ‘Jewish languages’ can be interpreted as a signal by interviewees that we share an identity—not only lingual, but also cultural, historical, political; that I understand their perspective; an expression of trust.

As with any data analysis, interpreting the interviews was influenced by my own positionality (see 5.4). Maintaining a position of critical listener was sometimes challenged by my own political positioning, when I quietly disagreed with participants’ interpretation of events. Yet I tried to recognise both the interviewee’s and my own interpretation of reality as subjective and equally valid. The attempt to maintain a critical eye was challenged by the thought: What right do I have to argue that the interviewee’s consciousness is false? (Kunda, 1995).

Indeed, I found the process of transcribing the interviews (which included initial coding) a key reflective moment. To support this reflective process, I used NVivo tools to create the code ‘My positionality’. During this coding, I used the annotations to elaborate and reflect on my experiences and dilemmas, on the interviewer-interviewee interaction, and on the impact of my positionality (e.g., what interviewees assume about me, or how my interpretation is shaped by my politics).

#### ***5.3.4.2 Online statement analysis***

The analysis of the online statements was also conducted using NVivo, but was shorter and more simple than the interview analysis, as the texts are concise and the messages less complex. As a complementary source, the statements offered a better understanding of the construction of diversity within the sector, and provided context to the interviews, in two ways. First, they shed light on the relationship between rhetoric and reality. Official narratives shape and reflect organisational climate, mindset, and debates, and can also reveal gaps between official narratives and the experiences of employees or organisational members

(e.g., which social groups are mentioned or ignored). A future systematic comparative analysis of statements and interviews could shed more light on these interrelations and gaps (see also 9.6). Second, the statements revealed the meeting points between organisations' view of diversity in society and in the workplace, offering insight into the relation between the 'inward' perspective of the organisation as an employer/workplace and the 'outward' perspective of the organisation as a social agent/advocate in the wider community. This tension is particularly relevant for nonprofit organisations, since their *raison d'être* centres on their role in society. For example, the statements analysis enabled me to trace the term 'cross-communalism', to conceptualise it as a 'diversity metaphor' (Kirby & Harter, 2002), and to examine its role, scope, and use across the sector.

It should be noted that in the empirical discussion, organisations' real names are mentioned, since statements are publicly available. Sometimes a short description of their field of action is added, if relevant. However, given the **sector-based** approach of the research, the statements are used as illustrations within wider discussions, and none of the organisations is discussed in depth.

#### **5.4 Positionality: Life-research relationship**

It is common to think that researchers' personal involvement in a field compromises the necessary professional distance that is required to generate 'serious' insights. I tend to embrace the idea that 'learning from the field entails upholding both distance *and* involvement' (Anteby, 2013, p. 1277). The complex relations between the personal and the professional, which are central to the topic of this thesis, are also crucial when reflecting on my own positionality as a researcher.

Feminist methodology rejects the idea that knowledge discovery is or can be an objective process, in which researchers are neutral detached observers of the studied phenomena, committed to revealing the truth (Kromer-Nevo et al., 2014). Instead, conducting social research is embedded in the researchers' personal positionality, experience, perceptions, and beliefs around the studied phenomena.

While often focused on theory building and intellectual credibility, management scholars have rich, complex lives outside of academia. Their non-work lives may inform the phenomenon they choose to study, the research questions they ask, and even how they engage with the field. We suggest management scholars may benefit from becoming more transparent about the connections between their lives and their



research, and about how these connections inform the research process. (Greenberg et al., 2021, p. 400)

Greenberg et al. (2021) identify four main complexities that appear when conducting research that connects to the researcher's personal experience: engaging personal and professional selves; managing power dynamics; integrating emotional and rational understanding; and advancing theory and practice. The next section looks at these complexities from a personal perspective.

#### **5.4.1 My personal-collective story**

My PhD journey started in front of the 18th-century Novo Jewish Sephardi cemetery in London. The cemetery is located at the centre of Queen Mary University of London's Mile End campus, at the foot of its School of Business and Management. The university is located at the heart of London's East End, which used to be a vibrant Jewish area, especially during the late 19th century until the gradual movement of Jews to North West London. My grandfather, Harry Wasserman, was born in the East End in 1920 to Polish parents who were part of a large Jewish migration from Eastern Europe in the late 1800s. His grandfather had a button factory and was involved in trade in Brazil and the United States. Like many of his generation, Harry immigrated to Palestine/Land-of-Israel in the mid-1930s when Jewish life in Europe felt threatened, and the Zionist movement held promise for independent Jewish life. In mandatory Palestine, Harry became an English teacher, played the flute, and married Dina, a Persian Jewish migrant. Dina was born in Tehran in 1927, when her mother was just 13. She lost her father shortly afterwards, and the family moved to Palestine. For a living, her mother and grandfather manually produced mannequins in their living room. My grandparents were among the first ethnically mixed couples in the pre-State Jewish community. Until minutes before the wedding ceremony, the rabbi tried to dissuade the groom from marrying a '*shvartze*' ('black' in Yiddish) woman.

Thirty years later, in Tel Aviv, their daughter married the son of German immigrants who fled Nazi Germany in 1938, and they had me as their only child. My grandmother was active in the Zionist movement, and when she left Berlin, lived in Italy and Sweden, helping to smuggle Jews out of Germany. After my parents divorced, my mother met her partner, who is of Afghan descent, and my father met his French-Algerian partner, each carrying their own family stories and recollections. My own children are half Iraqi, with their father identifying as an Arab-Jew and very connected to his Middle Eastern roots. No wonder my daughter,

who was born in London and now lives in Boston, finds the hardest question in the world to be: *Where are you from?*

Personal stories reveal collective narratives and memories. In the Jewish world, my family history is not unique: the deep roots of Jewish identity as a diasporic minority identity; the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Jewish experience; the constant movement across the globe fleeing persecution, or for economic and ideological reasons; experiences and fear of not belonging. My family story also reveals the racial-ethnic inequality within Israeli-Jewish society: My Iranian and my German sides of the family were positioned on different sides of the social structure in the emerging Eurocentric Israeli society. While European Jews enjoyed cultural and symbolic capital and formed the Jewish cultural elite in Mandatory Palestine, Jewish migrants from the Arab/Muslim world suffered socioeconomic exclusion and cultural marginalisation.

These family narratives also shaped my identity as a woman. Gender issues became particularly evident as I was developing my feminist awareness within Israel's militarised society, which included compulsory service in the military. For several years I navigated my fascination with how systems of power work (working with senior government officials and conducting research on decision-making) with being involved in civil society groups that try to challenge power structures. I started noticing how experience and language are shaped in context, and became interested in the relations between organisations, discourse, and politics.

But more than anything, in the Israeli-Palestinian socio-political map, my main privilege was rooted in my national identity as a Jew. Israel, as a Jewish State, is an ethnocracy and a highly segregated and stratified society, particularly along ethno-national lines. Growing up in Tel Aviv, the so-called progressive bubble of Israel, I hardly ever met Arab-Palestinians during my childhood. Or more correctly: I saw but did not notice them. This started to change when I became involved in Arab-Jewish shared society initiatives and Israeli-Palestinian encounters as a student. Moreover, growing up, I was not exposed to any challenge to the mainstream Zionist narrative, and it was only later in life that I developed a more complex and critical understanding of Israel-Palestine, nationalism, and institutional racism.

Moving from Jerusalem to London in 2016 changed my positionality and also shaped my passion as a researcher. As a foreigner, I faced cultural and lingual barriers for the first time. As a Jew, I moved from the majority position to an ethno-religious minority group. Although I never felt an integral part of 'British Jewry', being white-presenting eased my access into

the Jewish community and wider British society. Working in Jewish communal organisations opened my eyes to new dimensions of Jewish identity and work. In Israel, an environment of Jewish hegemony, being a ‘Jewish person’ or working in a ‘Jewish organisation’ were differences that went unnoticed. In the UK, the same terms became a thing: not just a thing to experience but a phenomenon to study. As an expatriate, I was in a comfortable position to reflect on the new social and political landscape, and later pursue a PhD. My unique position of insider-outsider stimulated new insights around issues of diversity, inclusion, and exclusion in the Jewish community. I became interested in investigating the roles played by religion, race and ethnicity, gender, social class, and politics in Jewish organisations, and how these differences are constructed. Ten months after giving birth to my daughter, I began my PhD journey, and my son was born three years later. Raising my children during those formative years with my husband, but with no family support, in an environment that was very different from that of my own childhood, opened new ways of thinking about identity and belonging.

During my studies, I moved from London to Boston for family reasons. The move opened new gateways to understanding the DEI world in the US (research and practice), and how American Jewish communities engage with it. While maintaining the focus of my thesis on the UK, those new debates demonstrated how my research can generate new insights around the meeting points and gaps between diversity management and Jewish identity more broadly.

In October 2023, the Israel-Gaza war erupted. At the time of writing these words (end of 2023), the war is expected to continue in the near future and is already the deadliest in the history of the Israeli-Arab conflict. Several people I know were killed on its first day, October 7th. My writing is shaped by the war, not only because the place I still call home is changing, but also because of how the war is experienced and echoed in Jewish diaspora communities. This adds another layer to my positioning as a researcher. What is particularly salient is how diaspora Jews struggle to bridge the gap between the Israeli narrative of a no-choice war, which is largely backed by Western leaders, and often accompanied by a refusal to acknowledge the loss of Palestinian lives; and the massive street protests around the world, supported by prominent scholars and intellectuals, calling for a ceasefire and freedom for Palestine. Jewish and Israeli writers, teachers, journalists, artists, and activists experience explicit and implicit pressure to align with the mainstream Israeli narrative. At this point in

time, calls for a ceasefire are often portrayed as anti-Israeli, even antisemitic. As a Jewish-Israeli researcher writing about political topics, this is a challenging situation to navigate. I find inspiration in Jewish organisations and speakers (in and outside Israel) who dare to challenge the Jewish-Arab dichotomy and raise critical voices *as Jews*. But I am also aware that these activists pay a personal price within their own communities. In Israel, during the first weeks of the war, dozens lost their jobs for making peaceful statements on social media and opposing the war. Others, particularly Palestinian citizens of Israel, have been arrested for online statements. The spirit of national unity currently prevailing in Israel is spilling over into diaspora Jewish communities. Moreover, writing about organisations, identity, and justice during these painful times, when thousands of civilians have already lost their lives and the war continues, can feel somewhat meaningless. I had to remind myself of the link between discourse and practice, between the collective imagination of social difference and the realities that those imaginations may create and reinforce.

Thus, echoing Greenberg et al. (2021), what do those connections between my lived experience and my research mean for the research process? My personal-familial histories shape me and my understanding of the complexities of Jewish life, and Jewish organisational life. They also shaped my interaction with research interviewees. Here, several factors played a crucial role. First, as previously discussed (see section 5.3.2.3), my identity **as a Jew** enabled me not only to access the field, but also to build trust with research participants. Being **Israeli** helped me do the same with Israeli participants. Being an Israeli-Jew also helped me in interpreting the data and in theory-building, as I had prior familiarity, knowledge and political-cultural understanding of the research field. However, **as a foreigner**, who is not from the UK and is not a native English speaker, I experienced some challenges in grasping cultural and lingual nuances during fieldwork. However, being an outsider to the community was also an asset, as an observer and a researcher. In terms of my **ethno-racial positioning**, despite having some Middle Eastern family roots, my skin colour and name do not reveal those origins. As a person who is **white-presenting**, I did not experience racial discrimination during my fieldwork, and possibly also enjoyed a degree of bias from participants around my credibility (knowledge, seriousness, expertise) as a researcher. However, being white might have been an obstacle in recruiting black participants (see section 5.3.2). **As a woman** who is researching a feminised sector, I did not face problems of access or suspicion when contacting people of all genders. Also, during interviews I could easily relate to experiences of gender-based discrimination and silencing.

Lastly, my **political positionality** is a key issue discussed in more detail below, as I navigate a deep emotional, cultural, and biographical connection to Israel as a place and as a society, alongside a critical perspective and mixed feelings toward this political project.

#### **5.4.2 The personal-professional-political nexus**

The research process, and particularly the writing-up stage, required navigating my personal, professional, and political selves. The complexity around political positioning can, perhaps, offer a fifth complexity that exists in conducting research that connects to researchers' personal experience, adding to the four suggested by Greenberg et al. (2021).

The relationship between my personal story and research, in which this research is embedded, is particularly sensitive when it comes to political-ideological beliefs. As Chapter 4 discussed, Israel-Palestine and Zionism are increasingly discussed not only as unifying but also as dividing factors across the Jewish world. This requires me to subtly navigate my political positionality and voice as a researcher, and a community member.

In times when the definitions and use of 'antisemitism' are increasingly stretched to include critique of Israel, Israel critics experience silencing. This silencing appears in different areas of academia (Landy et al., 2022) where critics may face accusations of antisemitism (see section 4.2.3: New Antisemitism), and Jewish scholars and activists may face accusations of self-hatred (Lerman, 2008). Thus, my personal identity and academic-professional voice are closely entangled. This entanglement of personal, professional, and political selves is not only my own story, but the story of many of the voices that I present in this research.

The challenge of conducting critical research on issues related to Israel-Palestine is particularly strong at the PhD stage, before researchers have secured an academic position. Becoming a critical researcher, while remaining personally connected to the field, can risk the researcher's standing within their social circles, professional communities, or both.

### **5.5 Conclusion**

This chapter explained how the research study was planned and conducted, and discussed the key questions and dilemmas that guided those processes. It revealed how research methodology binds together philosophical, ethnical, emotional, material, and political issues. Based on these foundations, the next three empirical chapters shift the focus back from the challenges, deliberations, and positions of the researcher, to the experiences, thoughts, fears, and dreams of the research participants—which lie at the centre of this thesis.

## CHAPTER SIX

# Constructions of ‘Jewish difference’ and perceptions of diversity in the UK-based Jewish charity sector

### 6.1 Introduction

The empirical discussion in this thesis is organised into three main social categories: Jewish difference (Chapter 6), ethno-racial difference (Chapter 7), and political-ideological difference (Chapter 8). Each of the three categories has a different position both in diversity research and in Jewish scholarly and public life, as the theoretical chapters discussed. This chapter examines the following question: **How is Jewishness constructed in diversity debates within Jewish nonprofits in the UK?** Looking at ‘Jewish difference’ broadly, without committing to a specific dimension of Jewish identity (e.g., religion, ethnicity, culture, nationality) maintains and emphasises its ambiguity. It makes it possible to trace how the meaning of Jewishness is shaped in context, and what the complexity and multi-layered nature of this identity mean for organisations, the people within them, and the communities around them.

Chapter 4 discussed the gap between Jewish studies and EDI literature and asked how the Jewish context can contribute to the understanding of the dynamic of diversity and difference in organisations. It presented two problematising factors that challenge widespread assumptions within the diversity field: Are Jews a dominant or marginalised group? And what type of a minority do Jews comprise? Instead of trying to answer these questions, the current chapter approaches them as puzzles that underline debates around diversity within the sector. Drawing on interviews with senior managers, employees and volunteers—and giving particular attention to non-Jewish voices and silences—this chapter examines the ways in which Jewish difference is constructed and represented within the sector, and how these constructions and representations echo broader debates, assumptions, and trends.

This chapter conceptualises UK Jewish nonprofits as identity-based organisations. This enables a focus on Jews as an identity group, but allows space for multiple meanings of Jewishness to emerge (unlike ‘faith-based organisations’, for example, which is the dominant frame in the literature; see Chapter 4). It also makes it possible to trace how different constructions of Jewishness are utilised in organisational life. The chapter explores how the

boundaries of Jewish organisations are shaped, and the case for a separate Jewish space, largely through the positioning of non-Jewish employees, members and beneficiaries. Then, it focuses on Jewish organisations (i.e., a sub-sector) that work with non-Jewish beneficiaries and communities, and examines how the meaning of diversity and the boundaries of the organisation change in different identity contexts. Finally, the chapter examines some alternative motivations and rationales for forming Jewish spaces.

## **6.2 The case for a separate space: Internal Jewish conversations**

That the Jewish organisation is a Jewish space seems to be stating the obvious, like pointing out the Muslimness or blackness of organisations that form around Muslim or black identity. Minorities have long made a legal and moral case for self-segregation in order to promote equality goals (Minow, 1991). From a multicultural perspective, forming separate spaces enables minorities to preserve their culture and language, protect their ethnic identity, support and represent their members, and so on. Yet the legitimacy of the separation, and of its exclusionary nature, depends on the recognition of particular power structures. It requires us to accept that a certain group constitutes a minority and another group forms the majority, not only in terms of their numerical ratio, but in terms of their access to power in society. Indeed, white nationalist organisations and men's advocacy groups exist, and seek to challenge assumptions regarding power relations in society. However, these two examples are fundamentally different (historically and politically) from diaspora Jewish organisations that represent a historically oppressed community. Nonetheless, compared to Muslim, black, and other minority groups, the positioning of Jews as a minority in British society—and in the field of EDI—is complicated and contested, even among Jews themselves, as the discussion below shows. Hence, given the elusive status of Jews as a minority, the Jewish context problematises the 'case' for separation.

Moreover, since the meaning of 'Jewish' is so unclear, the meaning of 'non-Jewish' is dynamic too. This problematises the boundaries of Jewish spaces and the logic behind inclusion/exclusion. For example, it is unclear if the hiring of non-Jewish employees creates space for the management of religious, ethnic, or political diversity. These issues have implications for the working lives of Jews and non-Jews in the Jewish organisation.

An important entry point into the study of diversity is through the silences and taboos in organisational spaces (Lombardo et al., 2010; Tatli et al., 2012). Organisational diversity debates reveal collective differences that are present and welcomed, alongside implicit

attitudes towards groups and differences that are absent or marginalised. This perspective enables a tracing of the fluid, changing, and at times contested organisational boundaries, and of the politics behind questions of belonging at work. ‘Non-Jew’ emerges as a difference that gives meaning to the Jewish space and constructs its boundaries by its presence or absence, voice and silence. Tracing the construction of Jewish (and non-Jewish) difference, and more importantly of what different constructions of Jewish difference do in organisational life, is part of that effort.

The interviews revealed different perspectives around whether and how non-Jewish employees should be represented in the Jewish space. Each of these perspectives is entangled with different ideas regarding the ‘Jewish difference’.

Michael, a white British employee in the sector, explains why the all-Jewish or mostly Jewish space makes sense to him:

[Jewish charities] are very small... [and] largely consciously Jewish organisations. So almost **inevitably**... there is going to be a tendency toward a **monoculture**... I think coming from the specs of the sort of ‘**dominant culture**’ as I do, I would expect and completely respect sort of **minority** organisations to be much more **guarded** about diversity than **dominant white culture** organisations will be. I mean, I think that seems **fair**, you know. I would expect, you know, an African-Caribbean organisation, especially a small one, to be largely black run and, you know, black staffed... There is a certain **inevitability** that that’s how those organisations **work best**. But also I think, you know, from an **identity** point of view, it is completely reasonable and understandable.

Michael—a British, non-Jewish, white male employee

Michael accepts and rationalises the Jewish staffing (and lack of cultural diversity) by providing moral and utilitarian arguments: monocultural organisations enable the protection of the minority identity; and minority employees can maximise the effectiveness of minority organisations. Since Jews are a cultural minority, the Jewish-only space makes sense to him. Michael sees Jews as non-white, and whiteness as a cultural rather than a racial-ethnic difference.

Julian echoes those ideas. I asked him whether issues of equality and diversity are on the agenda of employers in the sector.

I would say no, it is not on the agenda. Because essentially, in most Jewish organisations you would find Jewish people working there, and that’s fine for them... People don’t engage with the question because they kind of feel like, well, **we are our**



**own minority** and we are **well represented** within this space... The only way that we do engage with it on a stronger level is of course on gender.

Julian—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male employee and senior manager

Here, diversity becomes irrelevant for identity-based organisations: since belonging to a minority group already makes the group members ‘diverse’, an identity-based workplace is ‘diverse’ by definition. These organisations are therefore ‘exempt’ from the moral imperative of including and representing other ethnic or religious minority groups. Julian adds that Jewish employers are not diversity opponents: diversity remains relevant in other domains, such as gender. What this stance does is to legitimise and justify the homogeneity of the space. While non-Jews are not explicitly excluded (they may be hired according to particular needs), their inclusion is not a goal in itself, so no particular diversity efforts are needed in order to make the workplace more equal or fair. It is sufficiently diverse as it is.

While Michael and Julian justify the lack of diversity by constructing Jews as a minority, we see that diversity can also be resisted by perceiving Jews in a position of advantage. Asher was involved in both Jewish and non-Jewish civil society organisations in the UK (particularly around refugees). I asked him whether issues of diversity were important to funders.

Not in this sector [the Jewish sector]. In the refugee sector, it’s a huge issue. To make sure you are **led** by the **beneficiaries** is hugely important in that sector, where the beneficiaries are very clearly a **disadvantaged** minority. But in the British Jewish community, where our beneficiaries are British Jews, it doesn’t work...

Asher—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male employee and senior manager

Here, the need for diversity is rejected because Jews are not considered a disadvantaged or underrepresented group. This means there is no difference between Jewish leaders and Jewish beneficiaries, and there is no diversity gap to justify efforts for beneficiary representation. This statement rests on the understanding that in the UK, nonprofits that work with marginalised groups are often led by white British people. Addressing this challenge is irrelevant for Jewish organisations. However, this perspective bypasses issues relating to intra-category diversity. It homogenises British Jewry and ignores power structures and racial-ethnic inequalities inside the Jewish world. The case of Jewish organisations that work with non-Jewish beneficiaries problematises this issue further, as this chapter later discusses.

Daniel is a senior manager in a member organisation in the sector. For him, diversity refers first of all to the organisation's approach towards its members.

I think we tend to talk more about inclusion than diversity... As a Jewish organisation, you know, the **assumption** is that most people who are involved with us are Jewish. So that's one area... you know, we're not trying to be **inclusive beyond those boundaries** particularly. Although we have done some work around mixed-faith families, and how do we make sure that our community is inclusive for mixed-faith families... We don't have an **agenda** of having mixed-faith families. Maybe even the **opposite**... we would not want to **sell** that. But we want to make sure that when they exist, they are included.

Daniel—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male senior manager

For Daniel, diversity is not only irrelevant but unwanted. He recognises that diversity policies express organisational values and can impact its reputation. Accepting mixed families as members positions his organisation on the progressive side, and Daniel echoes those agendas. At the same time, the organisation also carefully distances itself from openly supporting or celebrating intermarriage, a trend that is often discussed in mainstream Jewish community as a threat to Jewish life (Staetsky, 2023). Daniel gives his own interpretation of inclusion, where non-Jews are not fully welcome: they should feel comfortable when already in the space, but are not encouraged to join it. The relations between the Jewish organisation and The Jewish Community—or between organisational diversity and the context in which it is shaped—are strongly echoed here. When drawing the boundaries of organisational inclusion, Daniel is very mindful of the boundaries of The Jewish Community. He embraces diversity with caveats.

Using business-minded language, Daniel reveals a utilitarian logic: While diversity can be a valuable organisational asset in some cases, in other cases exclusion is the right managerial decision to make (Noon, 2007). Later in the interview, the links between diversity and organisational marketing arise again, when we talk about religious differences within the Jewish world:

We definitely have diversity—I mean this isn't a kind of protected characteristic—but definitely we have a lot of diversity around religious practice. Which for us is kind of important, because we're **selling** this particular religious message, and our team are very diverse.

Daniel—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male senior manager

For a nonprofit organisation in a neoliberal world, the message is to some extent the product. Here, religious diversity is encouraged as an idea the organisation wants to ‘sell’. The idea that the composition of the workforce benefits both The Community and the business, echoes the argument that nonprofit organisations can reconcile the tension between the moral and the business case for diversity (Tomlinson & Schwabenland, 2010).

Dorit, an Israeli woman, talks about her Jewish workplace:

There were mainly Jewish [people] there. And there weren’t, like, black people. But I can’t see where they could **fit in**. I mean, it’s a big question of diversity... it’s always very tricky to [know] if we’re doing it because of kind of **racism**, underestimating other groups, or because, you know, the **identity was necessary** for the role... It was a very Jewish space. Which if it was in Israel, it was a **racist** space. But in the UK there was, you know, the identity **rights** of a group. Because **they are a minority**.

Dorit—an Israeli, Jewish, Sephardi female employee

Dorit constructs Jewishness as an ethno-religious identity. Trying to rationalise why non-Jews do not seem to fit in the Jewish space, she considers three possible explanations: racial discrimination; occupational requirement; and the right of minorities to separate themselves. The elusive nature of Jewish identity, and the elusive position of Jews in the UK, makes it difficult to justify the exclusion of non-Jews: if British Jews are an ethno-religious minority, they are morally ‘entitled’ to exclude non-Jews (unlike in Israel, where Jews constitute an ethno-religious majority). But when Dorit thinks of Jews in ethno-racial terms, British Jews become white and move to a majority position. When black people do not ‘fit’ in the Jewish organisation as a white space, then Jewish exclusivity becomes racist. Dorit demonstrates how the religious lens is insufficient for understanding the dynamics of diversity in the Jewish space. Like all organisations, Jewish organisations are never race neutral (Nkomo, 1992, 2021). However, Dorit’s view ignores the possibility of being both Jewish *and* black, as Chapter 7 later explores.

### 6.3 ‘Jewish knowledge’ prerequisites

Questions of diversity revolve not only around who enters the organisations’ doors, but also where they are located within the organisation. To examine the role of non-Jews within Jewish spaces, it may be helpful to think of Jewish organisations as monolithic organisations (Cox, 1991) in which the degree of structural integration is minimal (keeping in mind that the concept was originally used for organisations characterised by substantial majorities of white men, not for minority-led organisations). Monolithic organisations are not only highly

homogenous, but are also characterised by occupational segregation, where minority employees are ‘segregated in low-status jobs such as receptionists and maintenance people that do not have a significant impact on organisational policies and practices’ (Mor Barak, 2022, p. 227). Those ideas can be useful for analysing the relations between identity and *power* in Jewish organisations. What makes the Jewish organisation particularly interesting in this sense, is that the categorisation of Jewish people between minority/majority positions is confusing even for Jews themselves.

First and foremost, employers are expected to decide whether candidates are suitable for a job based on their skills, more than their identity. In an identity-based organisation, for which a particular identity forms part of its *raison d’être*, examining the links between identity and skills is important. The following discussion asks what type of skills, expertise, or knowledge is constructed as relevant, important, or necessary for workers in the sector.

For some employers, ‘being Jewish’ emerges as a prerequisite, as it builds the capacity of candidates to perform (at least some) jobs in the sector. Daniel, Matt, and Yoav—three white Jewish men—held middle to senior leadership positions in mid-sized nonprofits. I asked them about hiring non-Jews.

I think it depends on the role... [It wouldn’t] be easy to be the chief executive or the person responsible for community development... if you didn’t **identify with the values** of the movement. That would be **tough** I think. Coz you are trying to **sell**... you are really trying to promote this **ideology** and these values... Whereas you know, to run our finances... obviously that’s less important.

Daniel—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male senior manager

[The] senior leadership is all Jewish. In my time there, there was a non-Jewish member of senior leadership, but actually it was a very difficult role for someone not with a Jewish background... If you’re the bookkeeper... you work with the money, [the money] comes [in], the money comes out. Doesn’t really matter what your faith background [is]. But if you’re the chief executive... the more understanding you’ve got of Jews, Jewish **communal politics and dynamics**, [is] just gonna help you to **do your job better** I guess.

Matt—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male employee

Nobody ever attempted to recruit non-Jews for any kind of roles... [Org X] rarely ever advertised outside the Jewish press. Even for jobs that didn’t require any **Jewish knowledge**... I suppose a lot of it is about Jewish **education**, and the standing **intricacies** of the Jewish community. There was a sense that non-Jews **wouldn’t**

**grasp** it from the same way... The **learning curve** would certainly be different for somebody who isn't Jewish.

Yoav—a British-Israeli, Jewish, Ashkenazi male senior manager

The 'Jewish knowledge' that is required to perform certain jobs in the sector seemed to consist of: comprehension of Jewish education, culture, and tradition; political understanding of Jewish communal dynamics; and moral commitment to particular Jewish values and ideology. The 'Jewish difference' emerges as a result of socialisation and acculturation, more than being a question of religion or ethnicity: A person who is fully Jewish by family origin, but received no Jewish education, would not meet this standard. Speakers represent a managerial perspective: Jewish knowledge simply allows people to do their job better.

However, for other employers, 'being Jewish' was a requirement that transcended questions of skills and capacity and became a moral principle. Ella spoke about her Jewish-only workplace:

We also have a few other workers [beyond the core team] who are just like the secretary, or the person who is answering phone calls and stuff... [but] they will **always be Jewish**. Everyone in the office is Jewish. I think it's very **important for the CEO**.

Ella—an Israeli, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

As Ella implies, the intentional exclusion of non-Jews can be ideological. But as Dorit discussed before, it is yet unclear if this exclusion should be interpreted as structural discrimination or as a legitimate, and even important, step from a moral perspective of an historically oppressed minority.

Interestingly, based on the data collected in this research, non-Jewish staff members were only hired by mainstream, Zionist (often conservative) employers. Non/anti-Zionist Jewish groups, which may adopt more radical interpretations of diversity in terms of their wider social visions, did not hire or try to include non-Jews. The main reason is funding: While mainstream organisations are larger in size and hire staff for multiple roles, non-Zionist groups are largely volunteer led. Possibly, in those organisations, the few paid staff members perform 'core' roles that require 'Jewish knowledge', and therefore are largely irrelevant for non-Jewish candidates.

## 6.4 Centre-periphery and occupational segregation

The focus on ‘Jewish knowledge’ may justify and prioritise hiring Jews for certain jobs, but not for other roles. This difference, this unofficial requirement, has equality implications, because it links identity to organisational positions of centre and periphery: ‘core’ functions and roles that involve ‘Jewish knowledge’; and other, peripheral roles that do not. While Jewish employees have some mobility between the two positions, this opportunity is denied from non-Jewish employees. Seemingly, one could argue that this unequal structure exists in other sectors too, where career prospects depend on a particular core skillset (even for highly educated and skilled workers). For example, medical training in the healthcare sector: While a doctor can work in an administrative job, an administrator cannot work as a doctor, or a hospital ward manager. But in the Jewish sector, where skills are linked to identity, the situation is different. At least in this study, there were no cases found of non-Jewish professionals who had training or experience around Jewish culture and education, and held a ‘core’ role (although this angle should be further investigated).

This structure creates divisions along ethno-religious lines—both vertically (the type of role employees can perform) and horizontally (given prospects of promotion). And to some extent, it forms divisions along socioeconomic lines, too. It also affects issues of voice and belonging in the workplace:

So we have a bookkeeper who is Hindu, but she works one day a week and isn’t really **involved** with the staff dynamics. But yeah, [other than that] everyone’s Jewish. But I wouldn’t see that as **unrepresented** within the organisation, because we are a Jewish organisation for Jewish [people].

Hannah—a British, Jewish, mixed ethnicity female employee

When I was working at [X], one of the vital people who was making sure that the entire building ran was the caretaker, and he wasn’t Jewish. But also he was **treated** as staff rather than an employee... which is not to do with him not being Jewish, but more with his caretaker, cleaning, doing care **manual roles**. I think it’s more of like a **class divide** than a religious or identity divide.

Laura—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

The data reveals an intersection between the Jewish difference, race/ethnicity, and social class. First, Jews and non-Jews have different entry points to the Jewish workplace. The ‘Jewish difference’ shapes people’s work and promotion prospects in the sector. Jobs that do not require ‘Jewish knowledge’ are often peripheral: some high-skilled jobs (such as

accounting) are peripheral by their content (do not engage with the Jewish-focused organisational mission or vision); others are low-skilled manual jobs, that often have low pay and low status. This creates structural inequality in the Jewish workplace (regardless of whether it is just or not). As the section later discusses, ethnicity is another key factor here.

A more nuanced analysis can suggest that some high-skilled jobs are located in a ‘grey area’ between jobs that are ring-fenced for Jews (require Jewish background) and peripheral low-ranked jobs that do not require a Jewish background (e.g., cleaner, caretaker). It is in this in-between space, of professional jobs that do not fit into either of these two categories (such as finance officer or director), that an important discussion around equality and fairness in the Jewish workplace can take place. For example, an important question concerns whether those jobs are also informally reserved for Jews, although being Jewish is irrelevant for the role. Munley (2022), for example, highlighted the role of transparency in job postings by Jewish organisations (e.g., whether a job is open to people of all backgrounds), in order to allow equal opportunity for non-Jews (Munley, 2022).

The Jewish difference shapes not only material dimensions of work, such as hiring and promotion, but also issues of voice and belonging. A key question is whether Jewish and non-Jewish workers are treated differently—not because of their position in their organisation, but due to their identity. One explanation for marginalising and excluding non-Jewish staff members was the ‘internal conversation’ argument: non-Jews cannot genuinely understand Jewish concerns and matters.

I felt that everyone was treated **the same** really. [Although] when it came to the non-Jewish employees, sometimes the **difference** was... some of the discussions in the office when it came, for example, to Israel engagement... it was more like we didn’t want to **give the impression** of [our organisation] and Israel being that linked. You know, all the funding issues. So that was the one thing I would say. For more, like, **confidentiality** reasons. Sometimes we wouldn’t necessarily **involve** the non-Jewish employees in some of those conversations... over funding, and Israel agenda, and this sort of, like, issues. Just because, you know... they might think about the Zionist lobby and some of these things that they might hear, and they don’t really **understand** all the background, and how, like, Jewish organisations work, and so on. So they might... **misunderstand** the whole situation.

Jon—a European, Jewish, mixed ethnicity male employee

The actual links between UK Jewish organisations and the Israel lobby remain outside the scope of this research. Yet this testimony reveals how some issues relating to funding by

Israel advocacy bodies were intentionally hidden from non-Jewish staff members. Excluding them from these politically sensitive ‘internal’ debates was based on the assumption that they would (at best) misinterpret the Jewish-Israeli link, being ignorant of the context, or influenced by stereotypes or political motivations. Crucially, this is a question of trust. The exclusion of non-Jewish workers reveals a fear of the non-Jewish gaze and judgement, an anxiety which is embedded in collective memory of antisemitism and accusations of disloyalty.

This form of exclusion demonstrates the difference between diversity and inclusion, presence and belonging: while non-Jews may be hired and be present, they are not fully included in the sense of participating and accessing resources and information, involvement in work groups, and ability to influence decision-making (Mor-Barak & Cherin, 1998). Jon’s account illustrates how diversity and exclusion can coexist and be rationalised from a managerial perspective. This discussion can be linked to Daniel’s arguments made earlier around the limited inclusion of mixed-faith families (in Chapter 8, Daniel describes how non-Zionist members are accepted but intentionally silenced and marginalised).

‘Jewish difference’ emerges here as a national-political difference. The ‘Jewish knowledge’ that makes a good (and in this case, loyal) worker is associated with a political-ideological commitment. ‘Jewish values’ are charged with rather specific content: not only commitment to Zionism as an idea, but to Israel advocacy efforts in practice. However, the assumption that Jews are more trustworthy creates fundamental divisions and hierarchies between Jewish and non-Jewish employees. It also ignores a much more complex and nuanced reality in which many Jews are deeply critical of the Israel advocacy ‘industry’, being either critical of Israeli government policies, or anti-Zionist; while on the other hand, many non-Jews support these ideologies and policies.

Seemingly, the marginalisation of non-Jews in the Jewish workplace flips existing power structures: non-Jewish employees, who have enjoyed religious and ethnic privilege in British society, are denied access to certain roles, responsibilities, and influence at work precisely due to their faith, ethnicity, or politics. However, as the data reveals, these peripheral roles are often held by members of (other) ethnic and religious minorities, while non-Jewish British white men maintain (some) access to power within the Jewish charity world—as the next section explores.

The case of Sam takes this unequal power structure a step forward. Sam is a non-Jewish



migrant from Eastern Europe, working as a security guard in the sector. His account reveals the great significance of being part of The Community for how much one is trusted, and the potential threat that ‘the other’ may pose. Here he talks about his role:

So basically what you do is... make sure... [people] can work in a **safe** environment... When someone comes to visit the place, you’re the first point of contact, so in a way you are **representing** the organisation, the **community**, the place that you work for... Let’s say you’ve got someone visiting that they’re **not part of the community**... You see people come in and you’re like, Yeah, I’ve seen them before, it’s fine. But then you see **someone new** and you just, like, **alarm bells** are starting. And you’ll be like... let me keep an eye on that.

Sam—a European, non-Jewish, white male employee

Security guards engage in boundary work, maintaining the physical boundaries of organisations (Lawrence & Phillips, 2019, p. 159). In his organisational and socially peripheral position, Sam is not only the gatekeeper of the Jewish space, but also the embodiment of its exclusive nature. As a security guard, and a non-Jew, he is physically and symbolically located on the borderline between in and out. Ironically, in this marginal position, he represents the organisation and The Community, and reproduces their boundaries, at the same time. When Sam binds together the organisation and the community, he reiterates how the (physical and identity) boundaries of Jewish organisations are shaped by those of The Jewish Community (and how the physical boundaries are linked to identity boundaries in both arenas). The constructions of the boundaries of The Community are later discussed. This perspective highlights another key difference, which is not deeply investigated in this thesis: the ‘British difference’. Sam’s marginalisation is not only linked to being non-Jewish, but also to being non-British, and specifically an Eastern European migrant of lower socioeconomic background. The particular case of Israeli nationals and workers is discussed in Chapter 8.

Moving the spotlight from organisations that operate within British Jewish society (with British Jewish groups) to organisations that work with other communities (non-Jewish and/or non-British) raises new diversity questions. The shift from ‘inward-facing’ to ‘outward-facing’ work is important, because it problematises the position of Jews as a minority, as the findings suggest. When British Jews work or volunteer with refugees in the UK, with communities in poverty in the Global South, or with the Arab-Palestinian community in Israel, they may speak *as* a historically oppressed minority, but are often perceived as white British people, more than anything else. This shifting of the spotlight is important because it

demonstrates the relational dimensions of diversity (for example, when the beneficiary group changes). However, these Jewish organisations do not engage with social action as white Brits; on the contrary, speaking as Jews is central to their work, as the following organisational slogans demonstrate:

Jewish Council for Racial Equality: ‘**Jewish voice** on race and asylum’

René Cassin: ‘The **Jewish voice** for human rights’

Independent Jewish Voices: ‘Independent **Jewish Voices** for human rights and a just and peaceful solution’

What also emerges from those type of statements, and is later elaborated through the interviews (6.6.1), is how the organisational mindset that underpins them remains centred on ‘Jewish voice’ rather than on making a change in the communities they work with.

Moreover, while within inward-facing organisations non-Jewish identities may be considered irrelevant or even interfering, in outward-facing organisations certain, relevant, non-Jewish (and/or non-British) identities can potentially bring relevant and valuable lived experience, or cultural competence, and become a resource within the Jewish space. These contexts may also challenge arguments regarding the need to preserve an ‘internal conversation’, or the importance of having a Jewish background (‘Jewish knowledge’) in order to perform the job. So is the ‘internal conversation’ maintained or dismantled in these organisations?

The following three sections explore these issues in outward-facing Jewish organisations that operate in three spheres, or three sub-sectors of the UK Jewish nonprofit world: Jewish organisations that work in wider British society; in international development; and in Israel-Palestine.

## **6.5 The benefits of non-Jews: The UK social action sub-sector**

Jewish nonprofit organisations that operate in wider British society (particularly on issues related to human rights, refugees and asylum seekers) reveal that hiring non-Jews can be beneficial. Eden talks about hiring of non-Jews:

[What they] enable us to do is... to constantly check whether our tone and our message really fulfils the mission we have of [bringing] a **Jewish voice** on something... in the sense that they **understand** where we’re coming from. Because we’re coming from identifying particular **Jewish experiences** [and] underlying **Jewish values**... So it’s really interesting having them on board.

Eden—a British-Israeli, Jewish, Ashkenazi female senior manager

In some cases, there is a business case for employing non-Jews. The perspective of non-Jewish employees helps the Jewish organisation refine its message and build its connections and relationship with non-Jewish audiences. In other cases, it is the presence of non-Jewish employees that may contribute to the positioning and reputation of the organisation among non-Jewish groups:

One of the staff workers is black... I guess it helps... it sort of reinforces the **reputation** of [our organisation] as not a **Jewish advocacy** group. The fact that its employees... are not, you know, the Jews who happened to be around, but rather something more **representative of society** as a whole... It gives some kind of **confidence** for **non-Jewish** [participants in our programmes] to know that [our organisation] has black workers, and has, you know, Christian employees. You know that we're **not here as a Jewish group**. That this is not the **essence** of what we do.

Alex—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male employee

Interestingly, when Alex discusses the black employee, he does not explicitly state that the person was not Jewish, instead assuming this to be understood. Unintentionally, this reflects an implicit assumption—or unconscious bias—that being Jewish and being Black are mutually exclusive. Alex later explained that the employee was hired based on their merits rather than their identity. Nonetheless, this hire ultimately proved beneficial for the organisation. The non-Jewish (black) employee played a role in building trust with non-Jewish audiences and signalling to participants that the organisation's agenda extends beyond exclusively advancing Jewish concerns and advocacy.

Matt is a mid-level manager in a 'hybrid' organisation that serves Jewish communities and also runs programmes for non-Jewish communities in the UK.

We've employed people with a really broad amount of diversity... possibly my boss is happy that I'm doing that because I'm essentially the person in charge who, you know, has no **lived experience** with it... I had an... officer who is African Muslim. And he was the **best person** for the job... I hire people to deliver kind of specific projects and I often also look for people with specific background, you know, an Iranian-American Muslim was working for me for a while... a daughter of Eritrean refugees runs a project for me. The daughter of Somalian refugees worked for me on a particular project... The [organisation] has always been very encouraging of that... I'm looking to hire the person who is going to **do the job best**. I'm not looking to make a **diversity hire**... that **lived experience** allows a certain type of person to be able to just speak the most eloquently and be the most **capable** person for the job.

Matt—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male employee

In this case, it is the lived experience of candidates that grants them the professional skills to perform the job best. Thus, identity is constructed as a human capital resource that enhances professional capability for certain roles. Further, this business-oriented approach enables the hiring of non-Jewish ‘diverse’ employees. Matt admits that hiring non-Jews of particular backgrounds enabled the organisation to compensate for his own lack of relevant lived experience, as a British white Jewish man. However, he also reveals the limitations of these hires, and how the centre-periphery dynamic endures: Most of these ‘diverse employees’ were recruited on project-based short-term contracts, and in that sense did not become a permanent and integral part of the organisation. Later in the interview, Matt admits that non-Jews face a glass-ceiling when their identity-based skills are no longer required.

I think [the organisation] is probably still more **comfortable** hiring people in kind of **mid and low-level positions** of a very varied background, than in more senior positions.

Another barrier for the inclusion of non-Jewish workers is the assumption that they will not ‘fit’ in a Jewish workplace.

I guess you’re also always trying to hire someone who is going to **flourish** in the organisation. You know, one part of it is the outward facing piece of delivering the work. And then the other one is kind of **fitting in** in the organisation that they’re working, so that they’re gonna do the **best work**.

Matt—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male employee

Interestingly, concerns around non-Jews ‘fitting’ into the Jewish workplace disappear with British middle-class white male applicants. Harry talks about his recruitment as a CEO in the sector.

I think that [the funders] definitely saw me as being a **competent** CEO... When they offered me the job to step over, I was still under contract... they needed an answer but they couldn’t do anything formally. It wouldn’t have been appropriate. So I said, ‘Look, I’m happy to do this on a hand shake’. And they said, We can’t **trust** [this], we need to know you are going to be here on February the third. And I said, ‘I am going to be here on February the third. but I am going to do it as a hand shake’. And so they **had** to do that, and so I turned up.

Later in the interview he admits:

I think that they [the funders] felt more **comfortable** with me being white, than if I had been Muslim, or if I had been black. I think that that definitely did me a favour. I never

got the impression that [the funders] cared about the fact I wasn't Jewish... The **white male** always means that you do OK, right? So there's always a **privilege** that's attached to the white male. So I **benefit** from that everywhere I go. So I certainly benefitted from that in [the organisation]... [also] I'm quite **confident**. Like, the bit I haven't said is **middle-class**. I went to a private school... I think that can often lead to a level of being **comfortable** in social situations. And being quite **well-mannered** and being able to **know how to talk** to people.

Harry—a British, non-Jewish, white male senior manager

Harry used the 'glass escalator' (Williams, 1992) to reach his position as a CEO in the feminised Jewish charity sector. His gender and racial privilege proved to be stronger than religious boundaries, as his identity as a British white man overshadowed his non-Jewish background. Class also played a role. Harry's socioeconomic background, linguistic habitus, and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991) built his employers' belief that he was the best person for the job, and granted him the confidence and skill to navigate the situation and gain their trust despite the bureaucratic obstacles. The symbolic act of the handshake—a traditional masculine custom for completing business agreements—provided a reminder of the unspoken bond between identity and power.

Out-of-ordinary practices of hiring non-Jewish employees were facilitated through the business case for diversity, as well as the power of intersectionality.

## **6.6 From Jewish knowledge to white knowledge: The international development sub-sector**

While in some outward-facing contexts, hiring non-Jewish employees is possible and even beneficial, in other settings such employees are absent and muted—particularly in the context of Jewish international development and Israel-Palestine activism. The next two sections explore these two contexts.

Jewish international development charities fund or run programmes in so-called 'developing countries'. I explored their approach toward the representation of non-Jewish beneficiaries. The testimony of Dana, an Israeli Ashkenazi woman, reveals the following justification and rationalisation for the exclusion of non-Jews:

I was responsible for the grants that we gave to organisations in third world countries... And from that point of view you are the rich person—if you want, the Jewish rich person—that has a bucket of money. It wasn't a big budget at all, but the point is you **have the money**, and also you **have the knowledge** of how to do it... thinking that we, here in London, know best to judge which application will work [best] in the most rural

village in [country x]!! ...So it's a bit of... mixed emotions about how not to become, you know, the arrogant white person who **knows best** for everybody how it will work in their countries, without ever living one day in their conditions... We are the **privileged** ones. And we are the **knowledgeable** ones, and we are the **experienced** ones. And these were basically our **working tools** to decide where are we going to put the money... [We were] trying to be modest, and cooperative, and listen, and be there for them, visiting them, talking to them... and we would also call them 'partners' [to] try and bring us back to *gova eynayim* ['eye level' in Hebrew].

Dana—an Israeli, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

Dana illustrates how Jewish international development charities have adopted the logic of the development sector. The idea of 'development' is rooted in colonial discourse and is associated with Eurocentric and capitalist modernity. The development project is constructed along geographical lines (North and South), economic status lines (affluent and poor), social classes (decision-makers and the marginalised), and histories (progress and stagnation) (Bell, 1994). As such, it is built on hierarchical, unequal foundations. The regular movement of money and 'knowledge' in the development industry legitimises these delineations and reinforces global power relations, while maintaining a language of social change (Dar, 2007). Development NGOs represent Western ideas of bureaucratic rationality and the neoliberal chase for effectiveness, trying to spread these values to communities in poverty in order to stimulate their 'development' (Pearce, 2010). In doing so they undermine non-capitalist and non-white forms of knowledge.

Dana is not convinced that valuable knowledge can only be produced in Europe and owned by white people, but accepts the rules of the game. She reveals how unequal power relations are sustained through **material mechanisms**—the movement of money from Jewish communities to developing countries; **racial mechanisms**—narratives of progress and backwardness; and **discursive mechanisms**—language that conceals structural inequality, such as the use of 'partners' that is meant to make both sides feel equal. Her organisation's clumsy efforts to bridge the gap between the staff and the beneficiaries (listen to them, visit them, talk to them) can be seen as a form of 'educated racism' (Ahmed et al., 2006) where well-meaning, subtle, and polite steps are taken to 'help' black and minority ethnic colleagues to 'overcome' racial barriers, which end up maintaining (rather than challenging) the institutional whiteness of the organisation.

Dana hints at her concern that this power structure might reproduce antisemitic stereotypes and tropes around Jews, power, and money. But she also acknowledges that the development

sector is a European project rather than a Jewish project, and is embedded in white privilege rather than Jewish privilege. Therefore, the exclusion of non-Jews is rooted in ideas around ‘white knowledge’ (Nkomo, 1992, 2021) as distinct from ‘Jewish knowledge’. Beneficiaries cannot participate in decision-making not because they are not Jewish, but because they are not white. The construction of ‘Jewish difference’ around an ethno-racial difference shapes the boundaries of the Jewish organisation and determines issues of inclusion and exclusion.

In the development world there’s a lot of **white saviour** stuff and a lot of **privilege**. And a lot of challenging things that happen when you’re working with people in communities who are mostly not white. And you’re mostly white Jews... you use your **power** in that way that can kind of promote this **racist system** that exists. Rather than addressing some of the **inequalities**.

...You kind of **get used** to that power... there’s no one [in your team] who is actually **looking like** the people that you are working with, who can **understand** the **experience**. Because the Jewish community itself is not as diverse as we kind of would **like** it to be. When there are, let’s say, Jews of colour, their voices are **not really heard**. And it’s kind of **new** and **different**, and people stare at people in the street, and don’t include them in synagogues, and question them... I think that the Jewish community is actually very **privileged** and doesn’t really know that. And tends to focus on antisemitism, and oppression, and you know, ‘We had the Holocaust!’ et cetera. But we have at some point moved on from that, and live in the UK, and primarily the Jewish community votes for the Conservative party... It does come a lot from **anxiety**, I think. And post-Holocaust siege mentality. But I don’t think that’s an **excuse** anymore.

Charlie—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

The debate around whiteness within Jewish organisations (are Jews white? Can they be? Should they be?) is elaborated in Chapter 7. For now, Charlie touches upon a crucial issue: Race is a social construct, and therefore categories of ‘whiteness’ and ‘blackness’ are relational and contextual. When white-presenting Jews work with communities in the Global South, their internal deliberations around identity are meaningless if they are seen as white by those communities. Charlie takes this argument a step further: She criticises what she sees as Jewish people clinging onto collective memory of racialisation as an ‘excuse’ to deny the white privilege that Jewish people enjoy. By doing so, she not only disregards the role of history in the construction of difference, but also ignores contemporary manifestations of antisemitism across Europe and the US, which occur regardless of questions of skin colour. For Charlie, Jewish organisations are white spaces because of the context in which they operate. The development context charges Jewish identity with ethno-racial meaning, and

constructs Jewishness as an ethno-racial difference. This homogeneity makes it harder to recognise ethno-racial differences within Jewish society. Charlie's account reveals push-pull dynamics between Jews and whiteness, where being white is sometimes desirable and sometimes a burden; where whiteness is denied and emphasised in order to differentiate themselves, but also to connect and belong.

The emergence of the Jewish development sector, and the absence within it of the 'non-Jew', sheds light on Jewish politics of belonging in the UK. It reveals how Jewish groups fear and hope to be seen in non-Jewish eyes. It demonstrates the shaky position of Jews—between minority and majority, whiteness and otherness, marginalisation and privilege. It can be interpreted as an attempt by an ethnic minority to integrate and in some ways assimilate; particularly, a desire to construct Jews—a historically racialised minority—as white European.

### 6.6.1 Defining the beneficiaries

As previously discussed, the nonprofit literature emphasises how beneficiary representation is crucial in bringing the lived experience of communities into organisational decision-making processes. Previous sections in this chapter explored how beneficiary representation is partially and selectively adopted in the Jewish charity sector. Charlie's important critique suggests that the work of Jewish international development organisations is not intended to create change or benefit communities in the developing world in the first place. Here, she talks about a specific volunteering programme in the Jewish development sector:

It became about... **building Jewish identity** through seeing the poverty in the world. Which I also hate... And there's a lot of **poverty tourism**, and a lot of harm that is done when you take a group of 17-year-old Jews from Hendon<sup>10</sup> to [a country in the Global South] and you kind of show them the poor people. You are not actually doing any work there... they are literally going on a tour to see poor people, to get **inspired**, to know that there are **Jews doing this work**. And then to come back home and get on with their lives.

Charlie—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

So who is meant to benefit from the work of outward-facing Jewish NPOs? The definition of 'beneficiaries' emerges as an organisational mechanism that legitimises and justifies the exclusion of non-Jewish stakeholders. Charlie demonstrates that the mission does not

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<sup>10</sup> Hendon is an area in North West London with a large Jewish population.



necessarily serve the vision: organising British-Jews does not (seek to) transform, or even influence, global inequality. It mainly serves to reaffirm Jewish identity and social position. Jewish organisations' involvement in international development work positions British Jews on the side of the European white providers of aid, not the receivers of aid, thus reinforcing the Jewish space as an institutionally white space (Heckler, 2019). This dynamic echoes the wider hierarchical and unequal foundations on which the development industry is built, and its role in reinforcing racial and economic delineations on a local and global scale (Bell, 1994; Dar, 2007).

Analysis of some official statements may shed more light on the construction of beneficiaries in outward-facing Jewish organisations (noting that this is not a systematic analysis of all Jewish organisational statements). Analysing vision, mission, and value statements reveals a possible gap between (1) an aspiration to combat inequality and advance social justice beyond the British Jewish community (often resting on Jewish values of *tikkun olam* ['repairing the world'], histories of persecution, and narratives of exile) in wider British society, the global south, or Israel-Palestine; and (2) the construction of British Jews as the main beneficiaries of this work. The desired impact is often described as increasing awareness, shifting opinion, organising for action, developing leadership, or creating volunteering networks **among British Jews** around those wider social goals (assumingly, as means of contributing to broader social change). This aim may be more attainable than changing the face of the Middle East or eliminating global poverty; however, shifting the spotlight back to British Jews also justifies the exclusion of other relevant groups from decision-making, and ignores their real concerns. It also positions Jews as speakers for the oppressed.

For example, one organisation decided to focus its mission on British Jews, and made no official statement regarding its vision or desirable social impact regarding refugees and asylum-seekers in the UK:

We work **to engage the Jewish Community** in social action in the wider society, focusing on race equality and justice for refugees and asylum seekers.

Jewish Council for Racial Equality

A second organisation tried to combine wider universal social change with Jewish-particularist social change in its mission and vision:

Our vision is (a) a world where **everyone** fully enjoys all their human rights; and (b) a **Jewish community** actively engaged in promoting [them].

Our Mission is to promote and protect the **universal** rights of all people, drawing on **Jewish** experiences and values.

René Cassin

A third organisation's vision also focused on global issues, but rests on the role of Jews in it. Its mission is focused on British Jews.

Our vision is to reduce extreme poverty in some of the poorest regions of the **world**, driven by **the expertise** of the UK Jewish community...

Our mission is to build strong partnerships, deep connections, and future leaders to create sustainable, long-term change... all of our work impacts **non-Jewish beneficiaries** overseas... Simultaneously we work with the **UK Jewish Community** to increase its own sense of global social responsibility. Through informal education, and by providing opportunities to volunteer and learn with our partners overseas...

Tzedek

These statements reveal different approaches and models regarding the tension between the universal and the particular role of Jewish organisations, but they all reveal the tension inherent to their work—relating to the question of who does and who should benefit from their work. These tensions are reflected in the testimonies of various interviewees in this study.

## **6.7 Deliberate absence: The Israel-Palestine sub-sector**

The third type of outward-facing UK Jewish organisations are those working on issues relating to Israel-Palestine. The dynamics within this sub-sector are further elaborated in Chapter 8, but this section is important as it continues the discussion of the representation of beneficiaries and the construction of difference outside the boundaries British Jewry. For example, the 'Jewish difference', which was previously constructed as an ethno-racial difference (associated with whiteness), here turns into a national-political difference (largely associated with Zionism and Israel advocacy). This sub-sector also sheds light on the exclusion of beneficiaries.

Jewish organisations working on issues related to Israel-Palestine represent a wide range of political orientations, from pro-Israel advocacy to anti-Zionism and Palestinian liberation. Gili, a Jewish Israeli woman, works for an organisation that has a liberal Zionist political

agenda. She talks about the place of Israelis and Palestinians in her workplace:

I am the first Israeli to work in the organisation... And my **knowledge** about Israel and about the conflict and my own **experience** is clearly **valuable** and important... This issue [of] diversity and hearing **plurality of voices** from Israel-Palestine I think is something that we do quite well when it comes to public events, when we have panels, or if it's like articles we share [on social media]... In recent years I think almost every panel we did had a Palestinian speaker on it—a Palestinian citizen of Israel or a Palestinian from [the West Bank]... There can be something a bit **superficial**, by just sticking to **identity politics** as your only measure to [whether] the panel is diverse... If we don't hold an event at all, about what is going on in Gaza, because I can't get a **diverse enough** panel, then who is winning from this?... [but] we still do our best.

Gili—an Israeli, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

While Israelis bring crucial lived experience and knowledge of Israel-Palestine that justifies their inclusion in the workforce, Palestinian voices belong in the 'event speaker' box. Gili acknowledges that as a worker she has more impact than ad-hoc Palestinian speakers. She admits that the tokenistic attempt to comply with diversity standards around 'plurality of voices' overshadows the potential meaningful contribution of those individuals. When asked about the representation of Palestinians in the workforce, the organisational mechanism of beneficiary definition emerges. Gili argues that although her organisation seeks to contribute to the ending the occupation, ultimately it is not necessarily the benefit of Palestinians that they are aiming for.

We never claimed to **represent** or speak on behalf of the **Palestinian interest**. We speak **as Jews** who support the existence of the State of Israel and believe that for that [purpose], peace and the end of the occupation is [necessary]. It's not a **moral** principle, a human rights **universal** [value]... that's not where this is coming from.

Gili—an Israeli, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

From this Zionist-Jewish particularistic perspective, ending the occupation is only a building block for advancing the broader project of a secure and thriving Jewish state. Gili realises that a universalistic moral standpoint would emphasise the unequal nature of Israeli-Palestinian power relations and require the representation of Palestinians in Palestine-related projects. Yet she sticks to the bureaucratic argument. When Jews are framed as the beneficiaries, the silencing of Palestinians is legitimised.

Asher further unravels how the exclusion of Palestinians is rationalised. He takes Gili's argument a step further: instead of ignoring the moral case for their inclusion, he provides moral and pragmatic arguments for actively supporting their exclusion.

It's an **elephant in the room** that [we] don't really know how to tackle... Do we want a Palestinian in the Board?... A, they bring a huge amount of **lived experience** that will be really powerful. B, depending of who they are, they may bring really good **contacts** in the Palestinian society that I think will be very **beneficial** for our advocacy and our work... [But] you know, we are here **for the British Jewish** community. We are pro-Israel pro-Peace. That's a very hard thing to find someone who would be willing put their name to. And also it comes with a lot of **risk**, in terms of how we are **perceived**... [also] we want the conversation to be internal... [in] the programming we run for students... we try **not to invite** non-Jews because it changes the nature of the conversation. People are more willing to be open and honest when it's an **internal conversation**.

Later in the conversation we return to the question of the Palestinian voice:

I think its absence is telling. But I also think its **absence is deliberate**. With Israelis I think their inclusion is important. I am not sure the opportunity has presented itself but even if it has, I think including Palestinian voices would be a **challenge** to what the organisation is trying to do... It has to be **Jewish-led**. Which is because we are a **marginalised community**, in many ways, and we have to be able to talk about **our own oppression**... I think strategically there is the **pragmatism**... there is the sense that if we include Palestinian voices that creates a **discomfort** and that will create **risk**. But then I also **morally** agree with this idea that we need to be a **Jewish-led** movement for what we are doing.

Asher—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male employee and senior manager

As previously noted, in some cases the exclusion of ethnic minorities is more beneficial for the organisation than their inclusion. This argument has been used to demonstrate the fatal flaws of the business case for diversity (Noon, 2007). Like Gili, Asher also recognises the double standard: His organisation advocates for equality and liberation of Palestinians outwardly, but refuses to include Palestinians inwardly. Combining business and moral arguments, he explains this exclusion by arguing that (a) Palestinians would not want to join a pro-Israel organisation; (b) Palestinians might risk the organisation's reputation and stability by alienating Zionist supporters; (c) as a minority, Jews must keep their 'conversations' internal and Jewish-led. Those claims highlight that regardless of their particular mission and vision, UK Jewish organisations are part of a sector, and a community, that has a certain dominant culture and ideology. Going against the grain can therefore undermine the

organisational belonging to the sector, and The Community. As the discussion later reveals, Jewish organisations that challenge those ideological boundaries indeed find themselves excluded from The Jewish Community. This pressure can create self-censorship and taboo areas that these organisations choose to avoid dealing with.

Asher's claim around an 'internal conversation' justifies the exclusive space on the basis of historical oppression and minority rights (Minow, 1991). But who is the minority in this case? His organisation's focus on Israel-Palestine moves the spotlight from the UK to the Israeli-Palestinian national context, and therefore changes the power dynamic. As previously discussed, inward-facing organisations (that work to protect and represent the interests of British Jews) make a certain moral case for separation. But outward-facing organisations that work on Israel-Palestine re-position their British Jewish members and activists. In the Israeli-Palestinian arena Jews are not a minority, nor 'neutral' actors. As Jews, they already enjoy political privileges in Israel. The movement from the diaspora context to the Israeli-Palestinian sphere shifts Jewish employees and activists from a minority to a majority position and turns the spotlight from historical oppression to current political privilege. This position challenges the moral case for exclusion of Palestinians from those organisations.

Unlike Gili and Asher, who represented liberal Zionist ideology, Emily comes from a non-Zionist Jewish advocacy organisation that works on justice in Israel-Palestine. Despite the political difference between them, Emily reiterates the idea of the 'internal conversation', but supports it with different moral and practical arguments.

*Interviewer:* You don't have any Palestinians living in the UK within [your organisation]? Or any relations with Palestinians... anything of that kind?

*Emily:* No, I suppose that's the part of it being a Jewish organisation. Like, we made that really conscious decision not to... [she mentions a specific UK-Palestinian advocacy group that they decided not to collaborate with]. We want this to be two **separate** things. Because what we're doing is **talking to Jews**, and that's not what you're doing. And it doesn't work, and it distracts from what we're doing if we're joining with you basically... [Also, they are] saying some things that we wouldn't necessarily be **comfortable** with... like 'from the river to the sea' chants, [or saying] 'you've got blood on your hands, you've got blood on your passports'. Like, **as if we were Israelis**... It's also a question of how much that [advocacy group] is genuinely **authentic Palestinian voices** and how much that's also kind of **lefty white British** people. But it just is a difficult one when it's like, ok, we are trying to **appeal to the Jewish community**, we've got to do that through our **Jewish voices**. But we also want to, like, **amplify Palestinian voices** because those are the ones that we think matter.

Emily—a British, Jewish, mixed ethnicity female volunteer

Emily continues Asher’s arguments. Here, too, a combination of business and moral arguments is made to explain why Palestinians cannot be part of the conversation. Palestinians might alienate the Jewish Zionist mainstream (which the organisation seeks to influence) by stating their anti-Zionist One State agenda (‘from the river to the sea’) or expressing racist statements (‘blood on your hands’). This leads to the conclusion that only Jews know how to ‘talk to Jews’—how to adapt, tailor, and perhaps soften the messages so that they suit Jewish ears and can potentially influence Jewish public opinion. Later in the interview, she acknowledges that this pragmatic approach is morally problematic:

[We] obviously **recognise** why [if] you are a Palestinian you would say, like, Zionism is a problem... So I suppose, like yeah, it’s messy but, like, it’s complicated. We can’t reduce [it] to being, like, well [we] only like talk to these **certain** Palestinians who meet our **threshold** of what is and isn’t **OK to say**.

Emily—a British, Jewish, mixed ethnicity female volunteer

Emily acknowledges the exclusion of Palestinians from her organisation, but also questions the authenticity of UK Palestinian advocacy groups. Ultimately, this is a debate between two groups of British white people, in which Palestinians are being overlooked.

On the other side of the political spectrum, a right-wing Israel-advocacy organisation welcomes non-Jewish members who share their political cause. Interestingly, in official statements, the reason for their inclusion goes beyond strengthening the political camp: It is about celebrating the diversity of Israel supporters, and providing opportunities for non-Jews to engage in this political project (see further discussion in section 8.3.1):

We believe... [the] **diversity of opinion** amongst British supporters of Israel should be a source of **strength**. We therefore support a **broad tent** approach: a **united front** of all Israel’s supporters, across the political spectrum... [We] provide **opportunities** for Jewish and non-Jewish supporters of Israel to express their support for Israel

We Believe in Israel

This official statements does not reveal **which** non-Jewish groups are encouraged to join (and do join) the organisation. Indeed, Israel advocacy efforts utilise Arab-Palestinian speakers, mostly Arab citizens of Israel (see e.g., Green, 2019); nonetheless, the above statement welcomes all non-Jews in the UK, regardless of their particular identity.

Comparing the international development context and the Israeli-Palestinian context sheds light on diversity and the politics of Jewish difference. Both models demonstrate how the boundaries of the Jewish organisations are formed, and how the exclusion (and in rare occasions, inclusion) of non-Jews is rationalised—the former using racial-ethnic difference, the latter using national difference. But there are differences between the two. The power dynamic between Jews and non-Jews (and between employees and beneficiaries) is clearer in the development sector: The Jewish group (as a ‘Western’ group) is marked as the one holding the power (and as such the knowledge) to contribute to the ‘development’ of local communities. The exclusion of non-Jewish beneficiaries is justified by their irrelevant, non-useful, non-white knowledge. This argument is rooted in racial divisions between North and South, modernity and primitivism. Interestingly, although Palestinian knowledge could have been constructed as non-white, inferior, and irrelevant, Jewish speakers do recognise its value, acknowledging that including Palestinian voices could be beneficial from a managerial perspective, and also the right thing to do. Other arguments are used to explain the absence of the Palestinian voice, such as pragmatic considerations of alienating Jewish supporters, or the ‘internal conversation’ that is rooted in Jewish historical oppression. Ironically, this historical collective memory is used to silence current Palestinian voices of oppression and prevent them from participating in debates and activism around equality in Palestine.

The dynamics and complexities of hiring Palestinian employees in the sector are further discussed in Chapter 8 on national and political diversity.

## **6.8 The matchmaker: Alternative roles and constructions of the Jewish organisation**

This section takes a different angle in examining the relations between the Jewish organisation, the Jewish nonprofit sector, and Jewish society in Britain. Previous sections traced the construction and dynamics of ‘Jewish difference’ in relation to various organisational missions and roles. This section explores ‘Jewishness’ in light of unofficial social roles of the sector in Jewish society. This can shed light on the boundary work around the Jewish space. The data relate to two roles that revolve around employment and preventing assimilation. A third role, around the unity of the community, is later elaborated in Chapter 8.

### **6.8.1 The job provider**

As many interviewees argue, working in a Jewish organisation is far from prestigious:

Often, people that end up working... within the Jewish community are the people who maybe **couldn't quite hack it** in a professional business context... or possibly, they may have previously worked in business but... they would rather work somewhere locally, or communally, more **flexible** workplace. And there's the understanding of saying like religious festivals and holidays, having to leave early on a Friday... When I started my role at [X], I think after a week, one of the guys who was working there came up to me in the kitchen and he's like, 'So what are YOU doing here?' and I'm like, 'What? What do you mean? am I a spy?...' It was kind of like, 'Why are you here? You are clearly **intelligent**, why are you doing this job?' He was like, 'Are you writing a book?' And I'm like, 'No, I'm an artist.' And he's like, 'Oh OK! That explains [it].'

Laura—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

My parents... they didn't want me to do Jewish stuff you know. That was like a little bit of a **failure**... [My youth movement] I like built myself into, and then I became a movement worker, that was a **success**. [But] then they were, 'OK, time to get a **real job** now!' ... It feels that the Jewish world is like a **division below the real world**... For them it's like, 'You're not **challenging** yourself... You're just taking the **easy route**'... Is the Jewish world a **copout**? Is it just a **safety net** for people who **aren't good enough** to make it in the real world? It sounds harsh, but that's kind of how I feel.

Joel—a British, Jewish, Sephardi male employee

I know it's the most **racist** thing ever, but I don't want to be in a Jewish environment all the time. I mean, I'm here in the UK, I want to be closer to **real** British people! I mean, I don't want to be **stuck** in the **Jewish Ghetto**!

Lior—an Israeli, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

The speakers differentiate between the Jewish sector and the 'real world'. The sector suffers from an image of failure and copout not only because of its Jewish nature, but its nonprofit nature. This perception of the Jewish (job/sector/community) versus the real (career/industry/world) rests on binaries between corporate and charity. While the 'real' world is associated with money, career progress, high professional standards, networks, and success, the Jewish workplace is seen as a compromise, a last resort for those who did not manage to make it in the business world, or a conscious choice for losers. These binaries also echo the gendered and racialised nature of the world of work, where men/women and white people/people of colour are often channelled into different career paths, building on social expectations around money, family, status, and achievement.



The majority of jobs in the sector (excluding some leadership positions) emerge as not very attractive for British Jews (and non-Jews). Qualified individuals who seek competitive wages and professional development opportunities should look to other sectors. Instead, Jewish organisations emerge as a convenient and safe working space, alongside the ideological-moral motivation for working in the sector. Another important point, which remains outside the scope of this research, is what interviewees did not suggest: that Jews work in the sector because they experienced discrimination in the UK labour market.

These accounts reveal that Jewish organisations are far from ‘exclusive spaces’ that enjoy the privilege of carefully selecting their employees (this may be different when it comes to recruiting members/clients). This landscape challenges some assumptions around diversity management (for example, the discussion around the best ‘talent’). It is also possible that employers and funders in the sector may approach this role, of providing work to Jewish community members, as a value that guides their recruitment efforts.

### **6.8.2 Matchmaking and preventing assimilation**

Another role of the sector that emerged from the data is the prevention of assimilation of Jews in Britain. Hence, a category that can be constructed from the data is that of the sector as a ‘matchmaker’.

I think the main challenges... across all the [Jewish] places that I worked were how to keep Jewish people engaged with the Jewish community... that Jews were basically not interested in Jewish stuff... How do we stop people from having **interfaith marriage**... How do we keep young people engaged... In general the Jewish community is very kind of, like, ‘**Oh God, we are running out of Jews! Make more Jews!** Where are they all going? No, don’t run away!’... so this kind of like ‘argh, we are under a **constant existential threat!**’... At some levels like yes, Jews are threatened, but I feel like it’s a sort of a displaced pogrom Nazi thing... [because] actually the UK Jewish community is very well-established, it’s relatively **safe**. So that kind of **worry** and **fear** has to go somewhere, and it’s manifested in you know, we are gonna run out of people.

Laura—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

As previously discussed, concerns around assimilation were portrayed as a critical threat to Jewish life in the UK for decades. This fear was particularly emphasised by the Orthodox leadership as a response to the rise of progressive religious movements and their alleged tolerance towards intermarriage (Kahn-Harris & Gidley, 2010; Staetsky, 2023). This narrative

emphasises the role of the sector in bringing Jews together and sustaining the continuity of The Jewish Community.

Jessica was a youth movement worker. As she and other participants reveal, concerns of ‘marrying out’ prevail in progressive spaces too.

I think that so many see it [the Jewish organisation] as a space for meeting the right person... Like, parents send their kids to [our youth movement] a little bit because they are like, ‘It would be nice if they can meet a Jewish guy, or girl’. You know, and there’s something really uncomfortable in this idea of like, we’re an **inclusive environment**, and we’re trying to teach all these like **inclusive values**, but also, like, **carry on the Jewish race!**... But there’s also something uncomfortable in knowing that I would feel more **comfortable** being with a Jewish person, and that’s what I want on a personal level. So I think a lot of our **values** [as an organisation] are kind of **complicated** by that kind of like ‘**racial purity**’ that’s attached to, like, encouraging romantic connections.

Jessica—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

The sector is portrayed as a mechanism for reproducing The Jewish Community and maintaining its boundaries. But as Jessica observes, this unofficial role creates a paradox, particularly in progressive spaces: Organisations echo and celebrate universal ideas of religious and racial inclusion while preaching for particular ideas of Jewish exclusivity. As a product of these socialising institutions herself, Jessica wonders whether her own in-group favouritism is a result of internalising social expectations, racism, or simply a natural tendency.

Josh describes how this approach affects the working lives of non-Jews in the sector:

The biggest Jewish employers across the country—it’s the care sector. Or schools. In both those sectors the vast majority of employees are not Jewish... We haven’t done enough looking inside... to make sure all people, at least from a **racism** point of view... are **safe**. And treated **fairly** and **respected** in the workplace... There is a broader point which is the dominant narrative around **don’t marry out**. So hold on, so all of these people are good enough to run our organisations—you know, our community could not survive without them!— but [not] if your child was to marry one of them?... Lots of practical **discrimination** comes from that place.

British, Jewish, mixed ethnicity male senior manager

Josh links workplace discrimination to fear of assimilation. In parts of the sector, non-Jews are essential workers, particularly in low-paid physical jobs such as elderly care and cleaning. They become part of the Jewish workplace due to their vital role in supporting Jewish life. At

the same time, they are (perhaps sub-consciously) suspected as posing a possible threat to Jewish continuity. This invisible structural barrier prevents them from becoming equal members in the Jewish workplace.

A third (official and unofficial) crucial role of the sector is the political role of uniting British-Jewry. This important aspect is discussed in depth in Chapter 8.

## **6.9 Conclusion**

This chapter expanded the understanding of the management of ‘relevant difference’ (Janssens & Zanoni, 2005), and the contextual nature of diversity more broadly (Lombardo et al., 2010; Tatli et al., 2012) by examining the role of ‘Jewishness’ in British Jewish nonprofit organisations.

The exclusive nature of identity-based organisations is often taken for granted. This exclusion is, in a way, a response to the broader landscape of marginalisation and inequality that the organisation was meant to address, and therefore has a social-justice case. In this sense, studying exclusion (and inclusion) within identity-based spaces is different from doing so in mainstream organisations. Guided by the idea of challenging the taken-for-granted in organisational life (Alvesson & Willmott, 2003), this chapter examined how the construction of ‘Jewish difference’ shapes perceptions of diversity within the sector. It examined not only at what Jewish identity means, but also what these identity constructions serve on organisational, communal, and ideological levels. Weaved throughout the discussion was the complex and diverse nature of Jewishness on one hand, and the relational and contextual nature of organisational diversity debates on the other hand.

Participants had different ideas around the type of minority that diaspora Jews constitute, their positioning in wider society, and what this should mean for organisational boundaries and organisational diversity (or lack of it). For example, the claim that diversity management is irrelevant or unnecessary in Jewish organisations was supported by two opposite arguments: one claimed that Jews are a minority group in the UK, and therefore Jewish organisations are already ‘diverse’; and the other claimed that Jews are *not* a marginalised, under-represented, group in the UK – and therefore Jewish organisations should not be considering how Jews are represented in leadership positions.

The inclusion of non-Jewish employees combined business and moral arguments, demonstrating the overlap between the two in the nonprofit world (Tomlinson &

Schwabenland, 2010), but managerial-utilitarian language was emphasised more than was social justice rhetoric. For example, second-generation African immigrants brought lived experiences that resonated (or were believed to resonate) with those of beneficiaries; a black non-Jewish staff member helped attract non-Jewish participants to a program; and a non-Jewish British employee helped refine messages to the wider public. Meanwhile, the exclusion of non-Jews was also supported by both type of arguments (managerial-pragmatic and social justice), to present a case against diversity (Noon, 2007): on one hand is the discussion around Jewish knowledge as a requirement that enables people do the job better; and on the other, the debate around the case for a separate space, as described above.

Zooming in to the sub-sector level revealed contextual dimensions of diversity. The chapter examined how the construction and role of Jewish difference changes according to different types of organisational mission: serving British Jewish communities; human rights in wider British society; international development; and Israel-Palestine. This enabled a more substantial contribution concerning the contextual and relational nature of diversity.

First, it was clear that different constructions of ‘Jewishness’ emphasise different ‘others’, and charge the ‘non-Jew’ category with different meaning. If Jews are an ethnicity, then other ethnic groups are othered in the Jewish space; if Jews are a religious group, then members of other religions become noticed; and if Jews organise according to an ideological belief, then supporters of other ideologies are in the spotlight, and their inclusion becomes questionable. This dynamic was demonstrated by the ways in which Jewish identity is constructed in different sub-sectors.

The analysis went beyond questions of othering, investigating issues of power and how the construction of diversity in identity-based spaces can serve, echo, and maintain (rather than challenge) wider social inequality. One finding pointed to ‘grey areas’ in which there is no obvious case for giving preference to Jews (for example, roles where being Jewish is irrelevant, or the inclusion/exclusion of non-Jews staff members from decision-making).

Looking at diversity debates across the three sub-sectors can also shed light on some essentialist dimensions, assumptions, and generalisations around who Jews are and what they believe (though of course, stereotypes tend to have a grain of truth). Interestingly, these constructions shape the positions of both Jews and non-Jews, of mainstream Jews and those who ‘deviate’ from the norms. In international development organisations, the construction of Jewishness as an ethno-racial identity, particularly associated with whiteness, reinforced the

Jewish-black binary (see also Chapter 7). This conception of Jewish identity also marginalised non-white Jews from and within the Jewish space. In organisations working on Israel-Palestine, associating Jewishness with an ideological position assumed that Jews ‘naturally’ identify with Israel and Zionism, and that non-Jews ‘naturally’ do not. This excludes not only non-Jews, but also Jews who are critical of Israel and/or Zionism (see also Chapter 8).

The links between knowledge and identity were examined. In international development work, the relevant ‘knowledge’ that is arguably necessary to perform the job was structured along ethno-racial lines. It was linked to ‘white knowledge’ more than ‘Jewish knowledge’, to being positioned in the Global North. The language of Jewishness worked to associate Jewishness with whiteness, to reinforce Jewishness as whiteness. Beneficiaries were excluded as black people, not as non-Jews. In that sense, this exclusion served the politics of belonging of Jews in the UK and in European society. Somewhat similarly, in the context of Israel-related organisations, exclusion was structured along political-ideological lines. Palestinian beneficiaries were excluded as non-Zionist, not (only) as non-Jews. On the other hand, non-Jews who accepted the ideological narrative were welcomed (and even encouraged) to join the space. This dynamic served an ideological-national project, more than a Jewish project (that could be Zionist or non-Zionist).

The Jewish difference also shaped power relations within these spaces, through structural barriers faced by non-Jews. Examples included hiring non-Jews for ad-hoc projects or peripheral roles according to managerial needs, or excluding staff members from politically sensitive meetings. In rare cases, specific intersectional positions—white British male—allowed non-Jews to reach leadership positions. The chapter suggested managerial methods that are used to sustain the Jewishness of the organisation, such as defining beneficiaries and articulating job requirements. Wider unofficial social roles of the Jewish sector might improve understanding of the importance of maintaining a Jewish space (such as providing employment or preventing intermarriage and cultural assimilation).

The analysis of both sub-sectors (international development and Israel-Palestine) reveal how Jewish organisations engage with power structures and with equality and diversity debates that extend beyond the local UK Jewish community.

The next two empirical chapters continue this discussion by delving into two key categories, or social differences, that emerged in this chapter: race and ethnicity (Chapter 7); and national

and ideological difference (Chapter 8). The next chapter examines the role of race and ethnicity in shaping diversity in UK Jewish organisations.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# Ethno-racial difference and diversity, and lived experiences within Jewish nonprofit organisations

### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the following question: **How is the construction of ethno-racial diversity and difference in UK Jewish nonprofits linked to the experiences of the people working in them?** Delving into the borderland between diversity and inclusion, the chapter examines how the meeting points between Jewishness and race/ethnicity echo debates around difference and sameness, whiteness and blackness/otherness, privilege and marginality, voice and silence, affirmation and transformation, business and ethics.

The chapter argues that there are three main frames that construct ethno-racial difference in the sector, and examine how each frame shapes (and is shaped by) the experiences of organisational members. The use of the concept ‘diversity frame’ builds on other studies that investigated the role of frames in social and organisational life (e.g., Small et al., 2010; Warikoo & De Novais, 2014). The discussion in this chapter shifts the focus from diversity/race frames as ‘lenses through which individuals understand the role of race [and diversity] in society’ (Warikoo & De Novais, 2014, p. 860) towards frame as the lens through which people understand diversity/race **in context**. Thus, in this chapter, diversity frames represent how people approach the relations between race/ethnicity and Jewishness.

The findings reveal two frames that portray Jewishness as a largely homogenous identity—the first perceives **Jews as white**, and the second frame constructs **Jews as non-white**. A third frame approaches Jewishness as an heterogenous social identity, and sees **Jews as ethnically diverse**. While for analytical purposes, these are presented and discussed as three distinct frames, in practice these ideas and perceptions around Jewish and ethno-racial differences intertwine and overlap within the sector. Moreover, representations of different frames often coexist within the same organisation, the same social group, and sometimes even the same individual. Building on interview data, the discussion reveals how participants make sense of different constructions of race/ethnicity and Jewishness and how they experience social differences, and positions these interpretations and experiences in a wider social context. The chapter also looks at the interrelations and tensions between the categories of **race** and **ethnicity** around issues of colour, culture, and politics. The analysis also examines

who benefits and who is forgotten and marginalised in Jewish organisations, using these diversity frames.

As Chapter 4 explored, the relations between Jewishness and race/ethnicity are complex and ambiguous, particularly in the UK. Historically, Jews were excluded from notions of ‘whiteness’ in Europe. For centuries, the racialisation of Jews lay at the heart of the mystery around ‘the Jewish difference’ and the positioning of Jews as the ‘ultimate other’, questioning their belonging and loyalty to European societies and nation states. Yet in contemporary Britain, Jews are often expected to recognise a white privilege. Despite a historical taboo around the use of ‘race’ and the racial categorisation in relation to Jews since the Holocaust (with ‘ethnicity’ replacing ‘race’ as a descriptor of difference), racial categories re-emerge in debates around and within the UK Jewish community and its institutions (see 4.2.2) (Behar, 2022; Bush, 2021; Gidley et al., 2020). This chapter explores Jewishness and whiteness in the UK, by critically examining the construction of these categories within Jewish organisations.

The discussion also examines how the construction of diversity within the sector echoes multiple contexts (see section 3.1)—in particular, British society (e.g., binaries, social hierarchies, and discriminatory practices rooted in legacies of colonialism); the Jewish world (taboos around racial categorisation, ethnic categories, Jewish ethno-nationalism); and the nonprofit sector (giver/receiver binaries and structural inequality along ethno-racial lines). While tracing the representations and manifestations of these wider contexts, the chapter examines the limitations of fitting Jewishness into fixed, a priori categories of difference, particularly whiteness (Gidley et al., 2020; Goldstein, 2005; Schraub, 2019). It also examines how the elusive and complex nature of Jewishness can elaborate the understanding of race and whiteness.

The chapter is structured according to the three frames. The first frame looks at the construction of Jews as white and the Jewish organisation as a white space. It also looks at EDI efforts to bridge the Jewish-black gap. The second frame looks at the construction of Jews as non-white in the context of EDI, and investigates the acceptance of this idea as an act of reclaiming a historically marginalised identity, and as an appropriation of racial difference. In the third frame, Jews are perceived as an ethnically diverse group. The section explores the manifestations of Ashkenazi-Sephardi relations in diaspora Jewish organisations, and the sidelining of race.



## 7.2 First frame: Jews are white

In this first approach, participants critically portray the Jewish organisation as a white space, based on an image of Jews as white. This section explores how different debates around race (explaining the whiteness of the sector, critiquing its white homogeneity, and trying to promote diversity and inclusion) echo and reinforce ideas around Jewish whiteness. It examines how the perception of Jewishness and blackness as two separate constructs affects the place, voice, and experience of (Jewish and non-Jewish) people of colour in the Jewish workplace.

As interviewees portray the sector's landscape, 'blackness' is absent or marginalised:

Our bookkeeper was **black**, but everybody else was **white**... she was **part time** and worked mainly from home... It was **weird**, no one introduced me to her... I didn't know what her role was, I just picked it up... She definitely didn't feel like **part** of the team... But had she been a Jewish woman from North London who came in every two weeks to do the books, she would probably have felt a bit more like **part** of the team... Yeah, maybe **race** was also a factor.

Alice—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

As Alice identifies, the distance between the bookkeeper and 'everybody else' was not only due to her peripheral job in the organisation, but also to her racial identity. But this critique also reveals underlying assumptions regarding Jewish identity: By omitting the bookkeeper's non-Jewish identity, and the Jewish woman's white identity, Alice reveals the assumption that a black woman cannot possibly be Jewish, and that a Jewish woman cannot possibly be black.

When I had my Bar Mitzvah<sup>11</sup>, some of my Yemeni relatives came over [from Israel]... People in the synagogue were really **shocked** to see people who were so **dark**. And it was, like, really **jarring**. Because... here, they would be considered, like, **black**... [My synagogue] was **so white**... [People] were like... We've **never seen** Jews like this!... These are, like, **different types** of Jews!

Joel—a British, Jewish, mixed ethnicity male employee

Participants linked the absence of black people in the sector to their alleged absence within Jewish society:

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<sup>11</sup> Bar Mitzvah: coming-of-age ceremony for Jewish boys who reach the age of 13.

Like **every** Jewish space... [our organisation] lacks Jews of colour... But that's a wider Jewish thing, British Jewish thing... Growing up, it's just a **fact** I guess. Especially in a more Orthodox Jewish community... There aren't brown Jews or black Jews.

Eli—a British, Jewish, mixed ethnicity male volunteer

I never **thought** of it before... [a Mizrahi colleague] **opened my eyes** to just how **ingrained** it is in the British Jewish community. Because I think it's something I probably just didn't really **see** or **think** about.

Alice—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

Participants raise a 'chicken and egg' situation: Jews of colour are not seen within Jewish spaces and therefore are not considered as part of Jewish society, or perhaps vice versa.

If all you ever **see** are white men doing that job then you have to have a special kind of **mind** to see somebody who is not a white man doing that job... We are not just a community of middle-aged white men with beards!

Sharon—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female senior manager

The white leadership prevents black people not only from accessing Jewish spaces, but from imagining they can belong there (Batchelor-Hunt, 2021). But how did the marginality of Jews of colour become a 'fact'? 'Social facts' (Durkheim, 1982) should be approached with a critical eye. Participants explain the whiteness of the sector using three main arguments: the fact that Jewish society itself is white; nonprofit financial constraints; and anti-black racism.

A repeated argument centres on the issue of ratio: The small proportion of people of colour in Jewish society does not seem to 'justify' their representation in the Jewish workforce.

I'd say, like, coloured [sic] Jews [are under-represented], but that's not REALLY... Because it's such a small percentage of [our members], I didn't **feel** it was lacking [in the team] as much. Because it's simply... they were not as **relevant**... they were not as **represented**, sorry, within [our members].

Jon—a European, Jewish, mixed ethnicity male employee

According to Jon, the absence of black Jews is not problematic because it mirrors their numerical marginality in Jewish society. As the Bush report (2021) points out, the proportion of black people in the UK Jewish population (excluding mixed-race) equals the proportion of Jews in the British population. The Commission Chair suggests the following provocation: 'I would invite any British Jew inclined to dismiss the importance of black British Jews to reflect on the dangerous argument that a group numbering "just" 0.5 per cent of a larger

whole is not worth consideration and respect.’ (Bush, 2021, p. 25). Jon’s slip of the tongue regarding the ‘irrelevance’ of black Jews embodies the link between presence and voice: Black Jews are missing from the workforce not because they do not exist in Jewish society, but due to their lack of agency.

Julian and Sharon further demonstrate the limitations of the ‘small numbers’ argument:

In opposition to the States, we also have much **lower percentage** of Jews of colour in the British Jewish community. So they are just, like, not very **visible** anyway. And there is **not enough** of them to [justify] a big recruitment campaign to make sure that every major organisation has a Jew of colour working there.

Julian—a British Jewish, Ashkenazi male employee and senior manager

I would be **delighted** for us to have [participants] of Asian, Afro-Caribbean [sic], whatever kind of background! But there are precious few of them in our communities. So it’s not like there’s a great pool of people out there... [Maybe] we are not projecting the right image or... maybe we need to be actively out there recruiting them. But again, it’s sort of not so easy to find these people in Anglo-Jewry!... [Also] we are so **small**, and the **financial sustainability** is a real issue!

Sharon—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female senior manager

These perspectives echo business-related arguments, using arguments of supply and demand, and financial constraints. Enthusiasm, appreciation, and a welcoming approach seem insufficient without the allocation of resources and change in organisational priorities.

Charlie speaks about racist ideas she witnessed in Jewish institutions. But in her speech, she implicitly associates Jewish identity with whiteness:

[Jews] have a lot of **privilege** and they are just not aware of it. I find it really challenging when racist comments are made... I grew up in a Jewish school and the word *shvartze*<sup>12</sup> is used all the time. There are stories from the bible where people say, like, Kushite<sup>13</sup> tribes are this and this, and black people were created as a punishment... Stuff like that is **drawing** on the Jewish faith, but **using** it in a really problematic way to **promote racism**. There are... stories about rabbis even... This [is] kind of a **system** thing.

Charlie—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

Yet racism is not unique to Jews. Josh extends the perspective to wider British context:

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<sup>12</sup> Shvartze: ‘Black’ in Yiddish, used as a derogatory term.

<sup>13</sup> Kushite: People of the African kingdom of Kush. In Hebrew, ‘Kushi’ is considered a derogatory term for black people.

We're dealing with **anti-black racism** within the Jewish community towards **black Jews**. And actually, from the Jewish community to **black people** in general... It is around the experiences linked to **slavery** in the US, **imperialism** in the UK, and modern-day experiences of **visual-based racism**, on the basis of skin colour.

Josh—a British, Jewish, mixed ethnicity male senior manager

In many ways, Jewish UK organisations are no different from other UK organisations. As such, they adopted their racial delineations and some of their discriminatory practices, such as racial profiling (see: Bush 2021, p. 13, 52–58). A security guard says:

There was a gentleman while I was doing security at [a synagogue]... he was [with] **darker skin**. And he thought he's being **targeted** by us... [When] he was coming in, that person was stopping [him] and asking questions, 'What brings you here?', that sort of thing. And in fairness, the guy was only doing his job. He was **equally stopping** the other people... There was actually a big issue with that. He went to the CEO of the synagogue and said, 'Well I feel I'm being **unfairly treated** because of that.'

Sam—a European, non-Jewish, white male employee

In other words, the 'whiteness' of the sector reflects not only assumptions and narratives that are particular to the Jewish context, but also legacies of British colonialism and the social structures they produced. Daniel admits that Jewish employers are often perplexed when faced with racism in the workplace:

There are definitely... people of colour in our [community]. And those people definitely had **negative experiences**... The catalyst really was the Black Lives Matter movement I think, that brought it all out... [A mixed-race Jewish worker] experienced **racist bullying**... [she] took it really badly obviously... [The team] didn't know how to **manage** it, and then that [got] to me. [I realised] we don't have adequate, like, policies, or procedures, or training around that stuff.

Daniel—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male senior manager

This environment might help explaining why black Jews hesitate to enter the sector.

I had a friend, she was of Ethiopian descent... But she is **not part** of the [Jewish] community at all. I think maybe people of colour... [have] **worries** about **racism** from within the Jewish community. Or maybe they just don't **see** anything out there that is, 'Oh yeah, you **CAN** be black and Jewish!'

Sophie—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female volunteer

Blackness is missing not only from the Jewish workplace landscape, but also from Jewish culture and vocabulary. The absence of the black employee is linked to the marginalisation of the very idea of a black Jew. The white Jew is constructed as essential, and the black Jew as accidental.

But, if the Jewish space is white because Jewishness is imagined as white, what is the experience of non-Jewish black workers in the sector? James, a non-Jewish man of African descent, reveals surprising meeting points between race, faith, and class. Being black and from a working-class background has shaped his otherness more than being non-Jewish:

The most obvious difference is I'm black. And I was the only black person there... [And] like, me being like born and bred [in] London. There were times where I, like, I get lazy with my English... So sometimes instead of using standard English I'd, like, shorten my words or shorten my sentences, just because it's easier for me... Sometimes people **didn't understand** me... sometimes people **make fun** of it, but... I don't mind, I'm used to it...

James—a British, non-Jewish, black male employee

Linguistic interactions bear traces of the social structure. Speech is a sign and a symbol: it reflects and reiterates a person's presumed social status (Bourdieu, 1991). James's 'wrong' linguistic habitus and cultural capital revealed and reproduced his position in society and at work, and determined his right to speak and be heard.

I don't think that's to do with like [the employer] being a Jewish organisation. I feel like that's how I am **everywhere** really. My current [non-Jewish] workplace is exactly **the same**. In shops it's exactly the same. Everywhere it's the same...

My parents weren't the wealthiest... So things like going to fancier restaurants, I'd always be **uncomfortable**... A lot of my **life experiences** are completely **different** to the people that work at [that organisation] or the people that I work with now... There will **always be a difference**, so it's not necessarily to do with [the Jewish workplace].

James—a British, non-Jewish, black male employee

In James's eyes, the Jewish organisation is 'the same' as other British workplaces, and his Jewish colleagues are fundamentally 'different' from him, based on life experience. In both cases, James emphasizes race and class differences over faith. He did not belong in this workplace because he experienced it as a white elitist space, not because he was Christian. James not only exempts his Jewish employer from responsibility over his experiences of racism; he even tries to connect his own experience of marginalisation to that of Jews:

I feel like **all minority groups** kind of **resonate** with each other... that's what made me even more **interested** in this [organisation]... The discrimination that the Jews get is not exactly as what black people get... because there's different derogatory terms **they** use, there's different discriminatory acts **they** use. So I wanted to **learn** that situation and how they **felt**.

James—a British, non-Jewish, black male employee

James perceives Jews as a discriminated minority. His use of 'they' highlights the picture he portrays, binding together the Jewish and black minority groups, in contrast to the majority group. However, his curiosity to learn more, and his assumptions regarding the Jewish-black connection around experiences of racism seem to weaken with time. His assumptions regarding Jews as a racialised group conflicted with his actual experience of Jewish spaces as projecting racial and class privilege.

I remember one situation... [of] use of derogatory term. Which was very difficult to deal with, because I was the only black person there, so it was tricky... If I say something then there's already a stereotype of us being, like, **angry and loud**. I didn't wanna come across as **aggressive**... That was probably the most **hurt** I felt in [that workplace]. The most **lonely** I felt in [that workplace]. And the most **disrespected** as well... it was **sad**, because like – **we both face racism!** So, like, how can you say something like that to me?

... I didn't say anything [because] I just wanted to **keep my job**, work for a year, and [until] then just like take all the **punches** really. The second reason why is because I just felt completely **alone**. So if I'd said something it would be, like, this is my opinion **versus everybody** else's opinion... [Also] I get **tired fighting** sometimes. You know, fighting racism is very tiring. Especially when you're, like, dealing with, like, very **ignorant** people... tired of having to **explain** to people.

James—a British, non-Jewish, black male employee

James's disappointment was of a system that failed to see him. He acknowledged his fragile situation: in terms of employment, as a new employee in a peripheral role; identity-wise, as a minority in an intersecting position of disadvantage; emotionally, as the only black person, having to carry the burden of constantly 'explaining' and resisting racism; and socially, risking the consequences of the troublemaker label, and reproducing stereotypes against black people. But above all, James was heartbroken because he expected more respect and solidarity from the people with whom he believed he shared experiences of racism.

## 7.2.1 Diversity and inclusion efforts

The diversity era did not skip Jewish communities. Participants describe attempts to represent and include blackness within the white Jewish space, and bridge the gap between Jewishness and blackness (while still maintaining them as two separate constructs). Two surprising EDI strategies emerge from several interviews: content diversity and beneficiary diversity.

Creating content around racialised groups in advocacy and educational programs, as a form of cultural representation, can be seen as ‘inclusion without diversity’:

[At work] we’re entirely European, like, white essentially... We didn’t have any diversity in that respect... [but] we **spoke** a lot about Ethiopian Jewry. I mean, it’s kind of a **buzzword**. Anybody taking a critical stance on Israel looks at Ethiopian Jewry... We were also involved with refugees within the UK... [The current team] have been posting a lot of things... pledging support for Black Lives Matter, and grounding [it]... on **Jewish experience of persecution**. As our responsibility to stand up to injustice.

Jonathan—an Oceanian, Jewish, Ashkenazi male employee

Diversity can ‘travel’ across organisational locations—here, diversifying the work content enabled ‘compensation’ for lack of workplace diversity. Educating about anti-black racism counterbalanced the whiteness of the team, without challenging normative ideas regarding the Jewish worker and workplace. Jonathan echoes James’s desire to link Jewish and black experiences. Talking about the marginalisation of Ethiopians in Israel enabled British Jews to engage with Jewish identity beyond its white boundaries. It also helped shift the debate around racism and Jews from historical into contemporary contexts. But dealing with the Ethiopian exclusion was also safer because it takes place in Israel, outside the moral jurisdiction of British Jewry. British Jews can then engage with anti-racist activism as a Jewish issue, without dealing with racism within the community itself.

Amy points out an obstacle for Jewish groups to engage in anti-racist conversations. Here she talks about her organisation’s attempt to discuss BLM in an educational youth program:

We wanted to discuss Black Lives Matter... My CEO felt that we couldn’t address that without addressing the claims around antisemitism [within BLM]... We wanted to encourage the idea that they [participants] could still **support the idea** of, like, anti-racism, without necessarily **supporting the people** within the [BLM] movement who are saying antisemitic things... Obviously a lot of the antisemitic comments were centred around the Israel-Palestine situation... so one of the things we talked about was about how **solidarity** between groups who **experience discrimination** is incredibly important.

Amy—a British, white female employee

Introducing ideas of Jewish-black solidarity into mainstream UK Jewry is restricted by the image of BLM (and other grassroots movements) as antisemitic. As Amy recognised, this image not only stems from antisemitic comments made by individuals within the movement. It is related to BLM's moral stance on Israel-Palestine, and their solidarity with the Palestinians as an oppressed minority. From a postcolonial perspective, which many BLM members adopt, Israel is associated with the white colonizer, Palestinians with the native colonised people. Given the New Antisemitism trend and the 'Israelisation' of British Jewry (Greene & Shain, 2016) and its institutions, this position is interpreted as a real threat to Jews.

Another mechanism for bringing 'blackness' into the white space is by diversifying the sector's beneficiaries. The gap between the white charity worker and the black beneficiary is particularly strong in the development sector, which is analysed as resting on racial and economic delineations between giver and receiver, progress and backwardness (Dar, 2007). A small group of Jewish organisations have entered the development field and adopted its logic:

In the development world there's a lot of... **privilege**... You're working with people in communities who are mostly not white, and you're mostly white Jews... [We tried to] bring back **connection** rather than you know... 'We came to **help** you', which seems very **white saviour-y**... We [do] **care** about you... because we are all **humans**.

Charlie—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

Ironically, by working and engaging with black communities, the Jewish organisation becomes even whiter. Charlie's arguments regarding the white saviour mentality, which was also discussed earlier (see Chapter 6.6), may demonstrate how some Jewish organisations fit into a wider discourse that reinforces the 'natural' place of black people in the beneficiary box, as passive recipients of charity, while also reinforcing Eurocentric images of the Orient as needy, primitive, and inferior (Said, 1978).

Emily also identified the power relations between the (Jewish) white charity worker and the (non-Jewish) black beneficiary. She talks about an educational program she was leading in East London:

So the first two camps, I think all [the] leaders were from [my Jewish youth movement]. And it was very much a kind of **white privileged Jews leading black kids** from Hackney. And that wasn't working, and we knew that. And have kind of



shifted a lot away from that now... I wouldn't really call it a Jewish organisation [now].

Emily—a British, Jewish, mixed ethnicity female volunteer

Emily reinforces the image of Jewish as white and privileged, and black as disadvantaged, and not-Jewish. For her, the class and race gap between staff and beneficiaries harmed the project. To make the project morally sustainable, the team had to be diversified, giving up the project's Jewish nature.

### 7.3 Second frame: Jews are non-white

This section places the re-emerging discussion around Jewishness as an inherently non-white identity in the context of EDI, and investigates its acceptance as an act of reclaiming a historically marginalised identity and as an appropriation of racial difference.

The external gaze of three non-Jewish workers offer different perspectives on 'the colour of Jews'. Sam's perception of Jewishness changed during his employment in the sector:

I used to think that they [Jews] are, like, white, but not anymore. I've seen a lot of **different colours**, different nationalities... [A Jewish colleague] was telling me a joke about this: 'So an Israeli guy goes to China... he goes into a synagogue, has a sit down. And obviously being in China, all the Jews there in the congregation, they are Chinese. So one of them goes to the rabbi and says, "I think we have a **foreigner** amongst us!... Look at that guy, he doesn't **look Jewish!**"'... You see what I mean? Anyone can be [Jewish].

Sam—a European, non-Jewish, white male employee

The joke unpacks essentialist assumptions regarding Jewish difference. It also ridicules the Zionist depiction of the Israeli as the 'ultimate' Jew: ironically, the Israeli becomes the foreigner when (Jewish) context changes.

While for Sam, Jews are non-white because some Jews are not white, for James, non-whiteness is rooted in Jewishness itself:

I feel like white is English... But Jews are from Israel... So when I see racism... white men are at the **top**. And I feel like that's such an **exclusive club** that it can't really include... Israelis for example... I don't think [my colleagues] saw them[selves] as white either.

James—a British, non-Jewish, black male employee

These perspectives reveal not only the multiple meanings of Jewish difference; but also how non-whiteness is constructed. James sees whiteness as a question of ancestry rather than colour. But while his own connection to Africa as a second-generation migrant is fairly recent, the mythical origin of Jews from the historical Land of Israel is far from a lived experience. As previously discussed, James's perception of Jews as non-white created hopes for connection and solidarity with Jewish colleagues, but tragically conflicted with his experience of the Jewish workplace as a white space. This dissonance led to his feelings of estrangement and loneliness at work.

Amy is also confused. She works with white people who identify as non-white. This presents her with a dilemma: Who determines what workplace diversity looks like?

I've always felt weird about the fact that I'm the minority [in our office], and it's just because I'm not Jewish... Essentially, we're all white... In terms of ethnicity or race there's very little diversity... I'm not sure that I would be able to **identify** the difference. I know that there are kind of Jews who **identify** as non-white, who I might not **recognise** as non-white. Because I don't **understand** the kind of background... But, like, my **perception**... I have not met anybody that I would have **overtly** noticed as non-white.

Amy—a British, white female employee

Working in a Jewish organisation changes Amy's perception not only of Jewish difference but also of racial difference. Amy doubts her assumption that race is a matter of visible difference, attributing her 'mistake' to a lack of understanding of Jewish history, culture, and ethnicity, assuming there is certain (Jewish) knowledge that she is missing.

Jewish workers are also perplexed about how to identify and where to position themselves within existing diversity categories. It emerges that for many Jewish interviewees, whiteness is not only a question of colour.

So I mean, I **consider** myself to be **white-passing**. But I don't consider myself to be white. I don't consider myself to be white British. Some kind of **White Other**.

Matt—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male employee

There's a whole problem of definitions... We can't even **decide** if we're white or not!... Like, there's no way of talking about it without agreeing [on] the definitions.

Daniel—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male senior manager

I do think that Judaism... is an **ethnicity**. As opposed to just a religion. So... when it says 'How do you identify?', I'd identify as **White Other**... I think the Jewish community needs to **decide** its stance before it can start sort of criticising the government for not putting that as an option tick-box on their surveys. All the surveys, they don't have 'Jewish' as an ethnicity. And I find it really **uncomfortable!**... because it's like, 'You've not found me a category!'... Look, I have **white privilege**... because I **look** white, I don't have the struggles or hardships as someone that doesn't appear white. But I'm just **not white**... I'm just very much not.

Hannah—a British, Jewish, mixed ethnicity female employee

Intertwined in those perspectives is the tension, and dialectic interdependence, between perception and lived experience, and between self-identification and social categorisation by others (Al Ariss et al., 2014; Brubaker, 2004). Although participants emphasize Jews as white-presenting, or 'white-passing' (treating whiteness as a visible difference), they still construct whiteness and non-whiteness as ethnic Jewish differences (emptying ethnicity of its cultural content).

The pigeonholing logic of diversity management (Litvin, 1997) is so internalised and ingrained in organisational and societal discourse that it almost grants identity labels the power of speech acts: The category of 'White Other' emerges as more than a reasonable compromise for bureaucratic purposes of diversity questionnaires; it actually becomes Hannah's identity. The official recognition she seeks is meant to confirm her Judaism as an ethnicity and accept her non-white Jewish difference. Hence, ethno-racial categories of difference emerge not only as tools for institutions to map their workforces, clients, or society, but also as a means for self-determination of groups. Therefore, the absence of an accurate tick-box emerges not only as a problem of data collection, but as a problem of recognition. The language of diversity holds the power to grant or deny recognition, to offer remedies for cultural injustice, and to create new injustices of marginalisation and devaluation (Minow, 1991). Hannah acknowledges the privileges she enjoys when presenting as white, but she cannot **feel** white. As she argues, Jews may look white, act as white, and enjoy life and work opportunities as white people, but they **are not white**. This debate rests on the historical burden of Jewish racial-ethnic difference. Jews suffered racialisation, persecution, and extermination in Europe based on their imagined non-whiteness, and contemporary manifestations of antisemitism continue to rely on ideas of racial supremacy. Hannah's decision to identify as non-white, despite being white-presenting, can be seen as an act of reclaiming (Fraser, 1999) Jewish racial otherness.

### 7.3.1 Consequences for workers

The construction of Jewish non-whiteness has several possible implications for the lives of workers in organisations. Josh formulates one of them as follows:

[As Jews] we are also not **ethnically singular**... Well, if Jews are an ethnicity, how can you have **ethnic diversity** within it?

Josh—a British, Jewish, mixed ethnicity male senior manager

When Jewishness becomes an ethno-racial identity, it has a homogenizing effect and overlooks ethno-racial diversity within Jewish society. This restricts the possibility of recognizing and managing ethnic diversity in the Jewish workplace.

The second implication has to do with racial presentation. But first, the stance of Jews as ‘BAME’ has to be presented.

The BAME voice is definitely missing in [our organisation]. Well, no! We [Jews] are an ethnic minority. But **people of colour** are missing... [When you] say BAME you think black people, but actually Jews are there... We’re a minority ethnic group, AND a minority religious group... [we] can be **white** or **non-white**. You have Sephardi Jews, Jews come from all over the world. There are Jews from Arab lands... we can definitely be within that category.

Rebecca—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female senior manager

Rebecca echoes both Sam and James’s ideas of Jewishness, presented earlier: Jews should be considered BAME because (a) they are an ethnic minority; and (b) some of them are non-white.

When Jews are identified by others as white, the historical baggage behind claims of Jewish identity as non-white is overlooked; but they can also enjoy more life and work privileges. In this context, for white-presenting people to insist on their non-white identity can be seen as disregarding the very real lived experiences of people of colour who are socially identified and treated as such. Sophie argues that the white privilege that Jews may enjoy collectively makes their collective identification as BAME improper:

I would consider myself white. I mean I wouldn’t say **Jewishness is whiteness** universally because obviously non-white Jews exist... There is a trend towards Jews **identifying** under the, like, BAME umbrella... [But I think] it would be, like, **inappropriate** for me to take **resources** that are like meant for BAME people.

Sophie—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female volunteer

While diversity management is often associated with politics of recognition, Sophie reminds us that discursive debates can hold material consequences.

Like many other communities in the UK, Jewish communities enjoy a certain level of public funding (for example, state-funded faith schools, or government funding assistance for security arrangements in Jewish institutions). These resources are meant to address genuine needs and concerns over safety and cultural continuity, regardless of the discursive struggle over the categorisation of Jews. However, some of the debates within the Jewish community echo Sophie's concerns. A controversial report issued by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research recognised the value of the 'minority ethnic' category and advocated its adoption 'for the purposes and benefits of representation' (JPR, 2000, p. 3). Echoing a pragmatic utilitarian approach (more than a historical-moral perspective), it argued that such an identification would allow Jews free participation in public, economic, and social life, while maintaining cultural spheres of separation. However, most of the interviewees in this study grounded their ideas around Jewish ethno-racial difference in issues of experience and self-identification, rather than in terms of benefits. Charlie implies the two may be linked, pointing out a possible psychological benefit:

[Identifying as BAME] I think it is not unrealistic, but I think it's sort of a **get-out clause** in order to not do the **work of accepting your privilege** as a white person.

Charlie—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

Josh argues that whiteness and non-whiteness can coexist, making an important distinction between personal and social identification, or between self-presentation and social identity:

**Practically**, many Jews are light skinned and white-passing. And when we're talking about combating... structural racism we have to **acknowledge** that, we have to understand the different **experience**... in terms of stop-and-search, in terms of what **assumptions** people make about them, **visual-based racism**... [But] **philosophically**, I don't think that any Jew is white. Unless they **chose** to identify [as such]... In the way that whiteness is understood **historically** and certainly in European context... to suggest that Jews are white... I find it **insulting**... [But in the] 21st-century fight against structural racism for dark skinned people... we need to understand our **privilege** of being white-passing...

Josh—a British, Jewish, mixed ethnicity male senior manager

Jews cannot possibly *be* white, given histories of Jewish racialisation in Europe; but they can *be identified* as such in contemporary Britain. Implied in this duality is the privilege to

**choose** how to identify, an option that is denied to people who are socially identified as non-white. Acknowledging this, Emily reflects on her (non-Jewish) day job in the public sector:

We [Jews] are white-passing, but actually I don't think I'd **lose** much of my privilege when people **know** that I'm Jewish... I work with Bangladeshi service users... they **see** me as white... [not] as someone who is Jewish... And that HAS to be part of how I **see** myself... Even if I **decide** that I want to **re-define** that, I think it is important how others **perceive** us. I think sometimes it can be derailing for Jews to be, like, we're white.

Emily—a British, Jewish, mixed ethnicity female volunteer

Emily's privilege is based on her social categorisation (as white) rather than her self-identification (as Jewish). Since in the non-Jewish space, she is white before being Jewish, she can choose not only her colour, but also her Jewishness. Revealing her Jewishness is not expected to harm her white privilege. For Emily, Jewishness itself is not associated with disadvantaged nor advantaged position. However, in the diversity literature, invisible minorities (like visible minorities) are discussed in the context of disadvantage and silencing (Bowen & Blackmon, 2003). Is the Jewish hidden identity different? Gillian Merron, former CEO of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, argues that employers do not have to see the Jewish difference in order to discriminate against Jewish workers: 'Often a "hidden minority", many Jews have experienced casual anti-Semitism when colleagues do not realise they are Jewish, or through references made to "Jewish insurance claims" or assumptions that a third party is wealthy because they are Jewish' (Lowles & Merron, 2018). But what does it mean for a person who does not **look** "racially different" to claim to **be** ethno-racially different? Could they possibly hold the lived experience of a racial minority without being visibly recognised as such? Although 20th-century European history offers an affirmative answer to this question, contemporary public debate in Britain seems less certain. The Jewish case manages to problematise two types of critical debates around the construction of racial difference: the **reclaiming** of historically marginalised identities on the one hand, and the **appropriation** of minority difference for utilitarian purposes on the other hand.

#### **7.4 Third frame: Jews are ethnically diverse**

The third frame focuses on ethno-racial diversity in the Jewish organisation. As the data reveals, Sephardi-Ashkenazi relations dominate this approach. Drawing on Nancy Fraser's ideas on social justice (1995), the analysis presents the following points: First, debates around Ashkenazi-Sephardi relations emphasize marginalisation of **Sephardi culture** over

discrimination or racism towards **Sephardi people** in Jewish organisations. As a result, diversity debates focus on politics of recognition over politics of re-distribution: on cultural and symbolic remedies regarding the representation of Sephardi identity and heritage, over economic-material remedies relating to equal opportunities or workforce diversification. Since the diversity rhetoric remains, this brings up the question of ‘inclusion without diversity’. Second, EDI efforts emerge as affirmative remedies which tend to reinforce Ashkenormativity (as a form of Eurocentrism). Interviewees portray a push-back against attempts to promote transformative change towards deeper inclusion of ‘Sephardiness’. Third, constructing Jewish ethnic diversity along Sephardi-Ashkenazi lines excludes Jews who do not fit into one those categories, such as black Jews, converted Jews, and Jews by choice.

The dominance of Sephardi-Ashkenazi categories in the data echoes the Israeli political and scholarly debates, where this divide is considered formative of ethno-racial stratification. In the Israeli context, ‘Sephardi’/‘Mizrahi’ (relating to Jews originating from the Middle East) and ‘Ashkenazi’ (relating to Jews originating from Europe) do not only indicate different geographies and cultures, but also embed power relations rooted in orientalist ideas of West and East, progress and backwardness (Shohat, 1999). Interestingly, ethnic relations within British Jewish society do not fit into the Israeli scheme, mainly because participants do not link ethnicity with social class (Jewish ethnic minorities are not perceived as economically disadvantaged). Also, though in the Israeli context ‘Ashkenazi’ and ‘Sephardi’ mainly signify ethnic and cultural differences, in the UK these terms conflate language of race:

In terms of actual **representation**... [the sector is] very white. So like, not a lot of Jews from different **ethnic** backgrounds. Very **Ashkenormative**.

Laura—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

Interestingly, while participants seem to agree on the ‘whiteness’ of the sector, they do not claim there is discrimination or racism towards Sephardi workers. The sector’s whiteness is accepted as representative of Jewish society. Instead, the injustice towards Sephardi Jews centres around the marginalisation of their culture:

British Jewry as a whole is very Ashkenazi dominated... and [our organisation] is the same... We do have Sephardi and Mizrahi members... There is sometimes tension around it... people getting upset that there is no sort of **religious recognition** for Sephardi **customs**... [asking for] more space for that part of their **identity**.

Daniel—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male senior manager

Daniel identifies a problem of recognition: Ashkenazi tradition became the norm, Sephardi identity the exception. Members demand mainstreaming of Sephardiness into Jewish identity and the Jewish space.

That was an incredibly Ashkenazi [workforce]... [but] the fact that we didn't have a huge number of Mizrahi-Sephardi employees is **representative** of them not being, like, a huge sector of Jewish British society... Trying to have Sephardi... **voices** brought in was something that we had to do **externally** and **include** those from our **members**.

Jessica—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

Jessica echoes a form of diversity resistance that is based on ratio in Jewish society at large. In a way, the composition of British Jewry justifies the Ashkenazi dominance. Attempts to represent Sephardi culture demonstrate once again how diversity travels from its traditional contexts of employment into new organisational locations: in the absence of Sephardi culture within the workforce, it was 'imported' from the members.

The Sephardi issue is seen as a cultural problem, rather than related to discrimination, for another reason: The Sephardi community is not associated with economic disadvantage.

The Sephardim came [to the UK] before the Ashkenazim, and were typically quite wealthy... There was originally a tension between the **Sephardi elite** and the **Ashkenazi rebel** from Eastern Europe... So I wouldn't say here, like, Sephardism is related with inequality... It's neither associated with privilege or oppression... it's more in the realm of *minhag* [tradition].

Sophie—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female volunteer

Interestingly, cultural marginalisation coexists with economic advantage. For organisations, this places the Sephardi community as a potential financial resource, emphasizing the business case for ethnic diversity.

There is a perception of the S&P [Sephardi and Portuguese] community being very wealthy... Definitely from a **fundraising** perspective, it's like, 'We want to get into the S&P community because they've got money'...

Julian—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male employee and senior manager

Shirley describes how this potential resource can lead to diversity hiring, illustrating the business case for diversity:

*Interviewer:* Which aspects of diversity are important or have become important to employers [in the sector] at all?



*Shirley*: I think it's **funder-led**. A lot of it. And I think it's **donor-led**. So for example a lot of people are desperately trying to get into the Sephardi community and they realise they may not have a lot of people that work for them that are Sephardi. Or their output isn't reaching that community. Especially if you are trying to get money from that community. A lot of communities are turning round saying, 'What are you **doing for us?**'... The Ashkenazi community, a lot of our identity is based on the Holocaust... Sephardi Jews—that is not their same **motivation**. And the minute you say that that is the reason why we're here and you put that identity on everyone, then you're automatically **excluding** them. And then people realise, 'Well that's why we're not getting money from them'... You'll often see with who a fundraising team is trying to get—they will **curate their staff to reflect** that.

Shirley—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee and senior manager

In the Ashkenormative workplace, the European Jewish experience, heritage, and priorities are the norm. Shirley's language of 'us' and 'them' (as essentially different) illustrates this ethnocentrism. In the data, the only instance when the Sephardi category appears in relation to actual representation in the workforce is when their inclusion can have economic benefit. However, an alternative reading, of a 'lived experience' interpretation, could suggest a moral case for those recruitments: Minority employees can strengthen the workforce-beneficiaries connection, make their concerns heard, bridge gaps between descriptive and substantive representation, and between nonprofits' declared values, their employees' background, and the life experience of constituents (Holma et al., 2018; Mor Barak, 2015). Hence, the benefit of such diversity hires is not entirely business-driven: in the nonprofit sector, funds are meant to benefit the community. These overlapping rationales demonstrate how the nonprofit sector reconciles the binary between the business and social-justice cases for diversity (Tomlinson & Schwabenland, 2010).

David also walks the fine line between moral and utilitarian arguments. For him, organisational outputs that rest on ethnically diverse Jewish perspectives are more genuine and more effective:

Had [our organisation] been composed of a more diverse Jewish group... beyond the confines of an Ashkenazi identity, it would have **made a difference**... in terms of **enriching our message**... embodying... idea of Jewish identity that's bigger than North West London.

David—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male volunteer

The problem of Sephardi representation is not linked to discrimination, but is not entirely business-related either. David echoes issues of justice: he is seeking historical justice for

Sephardi narratives and voices, rather than social justice for Sephardi people in contemporary Britain. David acknowledges that **cultural** representation depends on **actual** representation, particularly in the context of advocacy. Ethnic diversity enables civil society organisations to represent richer, perhaps more ‘authentic’, realities and narratives. Constituent participation promotes advocacy outcomes (Guo & Saxton, 2010).

Participants also reveal tension between affirmative and transformative EDI remedies that are being, and can be, utilised:

There is a huge gap in **understanding**. Like, people just don’t know that term ‘Ashkenormative’, [which is] like ‘heteronormative’. What people **assume** ‘is Jewish’... it’s a real **shame**.

Josh—a British, Jewish, mixed ethnicity male senior manager

Workers’ attempts to expose patterns of cultural domination in the Jewish space faced resistance:

I did a session once... the word ‘Ashkenormative’ written on the board. And [my boss] was like, ‘What is that?!’... I think he was just like, ‘Oh yeah, **PC** [politically correct] young people nowadays!’... It’s interesting because obviously a lot of the work [we] support in Israel is about **discrimination** against Mizrahi Jews... and we can very **confidently talk** about how terrible this is in Israel... But yeah, I guess it was less of an issue within the British Jewish community for him.

Alice—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

The boss’s dismissive comment is a reminder of the power of naming in uncovering forms of domination. It also suggests there is a gap in ‘power awareness’ in diversity management (Prasad et al., 2006b) in nonprofit spaces, between the recognition of power in the community with which the organisation works, and a denial of power relations inside nonprofit as a workplace. Ben tried to challenge the dominant discourse in his workplace by politicizing his Sephardi identity and introducing the Arab-Jewish category:

[I’m] very connected to my **Arab-Jewish identity**. It’s something that was very **new** to them [my colleagues]... ‘What do you mean “Arab-Jew”?! You’re Jewish!’ Yes of course, but my father was born in Syria. My mom’s side is from Morocco. They don’t speak Yiddish there, they speak Arabic... My grandmother used to listen to Umm Kulthum, and Fairouz... Our food is from Arab culture... It was **weird** to them... ‘What do you mean Arab?!... **Jews are Jews!**’... I felt that it was my role, and duty, to educate them!

Ben—an Israeli, Jewish, Sephardi-Mizrahi male employee

Critical Jewish scholars and activists have been reclaiming the Arab identity of Sephardi-Mizrahi Jews, which was eradicated and muted by the Zionist movement and the State of Israel, particularly after the immigration waves of Jews from Muslim countries in the 1950s. As Ben's story demonstrates, the fear of traces of 'Arabness' in Jewish life echoes in diaspora organisations. His colleagues saw Arab and Jewish identities as mutually exclusive. The 'Arab-Jew' category has shaken their understanding of what being Jewish means, based on Zionist narratives. Yet Ben chose to engage in the political project of 'bringing back' the Arab-Jewish option in an attempt to revive neglected and silenced histories of Arab-Jewish culture, language, heritage, and shared life in the Middle East. Introducing the Arab-Jew category into the Jewish organisation can be seen as a transformative remedy for cultural injustice. This symbolic step disturbed the Zionist space and deconstructed its assumptions regarding what being Jewish and being Arab mean. It destabilised existing group identities and differentiations. Ben's voice did not only raise the self-esteem of Mizrahi-Sephardi Jews, due to their disgraced 'Arab connection', it challenged everyone's sense of belonging, affiliation, and self (Fraser, 1995). This destabilizing action led to backlash and resistance.

Ben's step is contrary to the logic of diversity. Rooted in ideas of multiculturalism, diversity management is seen as an affirmative remedy for social and workplace inequality. It seemingly welcomes under-represented identity groups, but uses and reinforces existing differentials (Swan, 2010). The non-confrontational depoliticised nature of diversity avoids questioning the power structures that caused discrimination, social inequality, and misrepresentation in the labour market in the first place. While Ben's organisation was happy to accept him as Sephardi, it was when he voiced his critique that he was silenced.

There were Sephardi [workers] before... But I was the first one who **talked** about it... I wasn't afraid to emphasise my **criticism**... in Israel and in the UK... The **challenge**... wasn't because the fact that I was, I am, Mizrahi. It was the criticism that I brought on the history of Mizrahim.

Ben—an Israeli, Jewish, Sephardi-Mizrahi male employee

Thus, the gap between diversity and inclusion is rooted in politics, in the sense of a challenge to the status-quo: Ben's Sephardi-Mizrahi identity became threatening when it shifted from being a heritage, culture, and ethnicity towards a political position.

## 7.5 Conclusion

The findings reveal how the meaning of race and ethnicity **shape** and are **shaped by** the experiences of people in organisations. Those experiences take place both at work, through

the presence and absence of different identity groups, daily interactions with colleagues, the organisation's messages, and so on; and **in society** more broadly, involving various material and cultural-symbolic dimensions of their lives, as group members more than as individuals (e.g., racial profiling, collective memory of the Holocaust, being a visible or a hidden minority).

Through the three frames of diversity, the analysis revealed the exclusion of people of colour, and particularly Jews of colour. An intersectional lens around the meeting point between Jewishness and race/ethnicity was helpful here: People of colour were mainly marginalised by the 'Jews are non-white' frame, a frame that downplays the role of visible difference. But theoretically they could still enter the Jewish organisation through the other two 'doors' (though in practice this hardly happened). However, Jews of colour were marginalised in all three frames: the two homogenous frames looked at racial difference, but ignored diversity within the Jewish world; the heterogenous frame focused on ethno-cultural diversity and inclusion within the Jewish world, but sidelined race. Crucially, Jews of colour were not only absent from the Jewish space, but the very idea of Jews of colour was not even part of the organisational imagination. Moreover, efforts to engage with racialised communities were mainly focused on organisations' beneficiaries, and organisational messages, rather than on creating a diverse and inclusive workplace. This demonstrated the exclusive nature of the Jewish identity-based space, not only towards non-Jews, but towards members of Jewish society.

Jewish/non-Jewish interactions in the workplace were an opportunity to re-shape identity boundaries. For example, when white-presenting Jewish employees identified as non-white, this challenged not only what non-Jewish colleagues believed about Jewishness, but also what they thought they knew about race. However, those interactions were somewhat limited, because of areas of silence and taboo around race and whiteness, which often left non-Jews confused and avoiding talking about diversity.

Historical and contemporary experiences of Jews as a racialised minority could have led to building allyships and cross-movement solidarity and action with other minority groups in the UK. However, these opportunities were often restricted, not only because Jewishness was misunderstood (the gap between self-identification as non-white and social categorisation as white); but also because of the strong Jewish national sentiment and connection to Israel (which prevented connection with BLM). The findings highlighted the importance of an

intersectional analysis of diversity, and the limitations of race as a standalone analytical category—and particularly, the importance of social class and political difference. The dynamics of religious difference were rather surprising, as they played a minor role in determining issues of inclusion in the Jewish workplace, compared to race and socioeconomic background.

The discussion also highlights the diversity era as a linguistic turn, a discursive shift: its role in shaping not only the management of difference, but also how individuals and groups *think* about identity, form social relations, position themselves and others, and articulate their recognition concerns. The diversity logic of social categorisation, and the production of classification mechanisms that were meant to fix historical injustices, can also (re)produce forms of bias. The research demonstrated this dual nature of the diversity logic and revealed the complex role of diversity language: as a means for social mapping and control; as an emancipatory tool for minority groups; and as a mechanism for reproducing social delineations on an organisational, communal, and national level.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# Diversity and politics: Nationhood, ideological difference, and representations of Israel-Palestine in the UK Jewish workplace

### 8.1 Introduction

This chapter continues the previous discussion regarding the construction of Jewishness, by looking at debates around political difference in UK Jewish organisations, particularly focusing on national and ideological dimensions of ‘the political’. It focuses on the main political question in contemporary Jewish life: Israel-Palestine. By analysing representations of Israel-Palestine within the sector, it seeks to learn about the complex and contentious relations between diversity and politics. The chapter addresses the question: **How can the representations of Israel-Palestine within UK Jewish nonprofits contribute to understanding the dynamics of political-ideological difference and diversity in organisations?**

As previously discussed (in section 4.2.3), Jewish nationalism and nationhood can be analysed as a problematising factor in the positioning of Jewishness within the field of EDI. The conceptualisation of Jews as a national collective raises dilemmas regarding the management of difference, such as how political-ideological differences about Jewish/Palestinian nationalism should be treated by employers; whether anti-Zionism is the new antisemitism; whether anti-Zionism makes a Jew less Jewish, or self-hating, and makes a non-Jew an antisemite; whether Zionism deserves protection in the workplace; and whether speech around Israel-Palestine should be restricted.

The postcolonial lens is one of the main paradigms used by critical organisational researchers (Frenkel & Shenhav, 2006; Kalonaityte, 2010; Prasad, 2006). In postcolonial scholarship more broadly, Israel and Zionism are often analysed as a settler colonial project. Jewish communities and institutions do not only reject the postcolonial analysis but portray it as posing a real threat to Jewish life:

...ideological bias and political activism work to delegitimize the State of Israel by maligning Israel and Zionism in mainstream British public discourse. Postcolonial

theory is one weight against any objective treatment of the Jewish state. The demonization of Israel in the press draws on conspiracy theories and stereotypes familiar from anti-Semitic tropes... The analysis of public discourse in Britain... draws attention to the local context of race relations as well as the global Jihad against Israel and the West. (Sicher, 2011, p. 1)

This chapter does not examine the debate between those political ideologies per se, but instead positions them as the background against which diversity in Jewish organisations is discussed and analysed. In Jewish-Zionist eyes, as reflected in many UK Jewish organisations, Israel is not only a legitimate national project but the embodiment of historical justice. The critical analysis in this chapter does not adopt a postcolonial lens, but it does correspond with its perspective on the construction of diversity and difference in organisations. As previously discussed (1.1), the gap between critical theory and the Jewish experience became particularly evident during the period when the final revisions of this thesis were made. As the 2023 Israel-Hamas war started, a massive wave of civil protest was unleashed, bringing hundreds of thousands of demonstrators onto the streets of London, Washington, and other world capitals, and eliciting strong critique against Israel from leading intellectuals and social activists (some of whom are Jewish). Across the Jewish liberal Zionist camp (in Israel and the diaspora), this call was interpreted as a betrayal and abandonment by the ‘global left’. A core argument which echoed the controversy around antisemitism on campuses was that Israel (and consequently, ‘the Jews’) is immediately classified as the oppressor, while Jewish suffering is ignored (Booth, 2023; Medina & Lerer, 2023; Svetlova, 2023). This chapter also builds on the British Jewish context more specifically. As previously discussed (see 4.3), Israel has been analysed as an epicentre of Jewish peoplehood, being both a unifying and a dividing factor in British Jewry (Gidley & Kahn-Harris, 2012; Klug, 2003). Young liberal Jews in particular echo a ‘Zionism crisis’ (Beinart, 2012), struggling to reconcile Zionism with their commitment to universal human rights.

Against this backdrop, this chapter explores the dynamics of political-ideological differences in Jewish organisations. By tracing the voices and silences around Israel-Palestine and Zionism, it sheds light on the relations between diversity and politics. The chapter suggests four types of links between diversity and politics, and traces the reflections of Israel-Palestine across each of those meeting points: (i) **the politics of diversity** places the construction of diversity in a historical-societal context, conceptualising Jewish organisations as diaspora organisations; (ii) **the political case for diversity** explores whether political gains from diversity can replace traditional thinking based on economic/moral considerations; (iii)

**managing political diversity** examines how political-ideological difference is treated, particularly since political belief lies on the border between philosophical belief (protected characteristic) and political stance (not protected); and (iv) **diversity across political boundaries** looks at national difference, focusing on the role and voice of Israeli and Palestinian employees within the sector.

## **8.2 Meeting point #1: The politics of diversity**

‘Diversity’ is a politically charged construct: it does not carry a universal fixed meaning, and its understanding and usage in organisational settings often involves political views, political sentiments, political messages, and political ideologies. Debates around diversity, and its management in the workplace, are rooted in historical, social, ideological, and political circumstances (Healy, 2015). This section explores some of the contextual foundations for the centrality of political difference in the Jewish charity sector. It does so by focusing on three main themes: the ethos of ‘giving to Israel’; alternative and marginalised non-Zionist visions; and the binary nature of the discussion around Israel-Palestine that pressures organisations and employees to self-classify, politically. The sections that follow delve more deeply into the management of political diversity and difference, and workplace dynamics related to the national and ideological identities of employees.

UK Jewish organisations can be conceptualised as diaspora organisations. As Chapter 3 discussed, the Jewish context is considered paradigmatic in the study of diaspora (Boyarin & Boyarin, 1993; Brubaker, 2005). Diaspora organisations can be seen as places where home-diaspora relations are shaped, negotiated, reproduced and contested; where minorities connect to, celebrate, long for, and debate or reject ideas around a real or an imagined homeland; where questions and dilemmas of identity, belonging, and loyalty arise; and where material, social, emotional, and ideological relationships with ‘home’ are formed. The diasporic dimension of Jewish organisations reveals real and symbolic representations of Israel, as an actual place and as an idea. As such, it conceptualises Jewishness, or the ‘Jewish difference’, as a national, ideological, and political collective identity, emphasising those dimensions over issues of religion, culture, or ethnicity.

### **8.2.1 Giving to Israel: The charity ethos within The Jewish Community**

The material, ideological, and emotional foundations of the UK Jewish charity sector are linked to the diasporic position of British Jewry. Broadly speaking, ‘giving to Israel’ can be seen as one of the sector’s tenets. While at its core ‘giving’ carries a meaning of financial



support, it can also manifest in other forms of support such as advocacy, campaigning, informal education, community organising, and so on. The socialisation process of British Jews from a young age within the institutions of The Jewish Community plays a crucial role in sustaining this ethos. Noah, a young employee in an Israel-related charity says:

I attribute a lot of my **connection** to Israel to my [Jewish] primary school... Yom Ha'Atzmaut [Israel's Independence Day] was the **highlight** of our primary school year... We had, like, a flag dance, which is a very common thing. You take the Israeli flag and you march up and down and you wave it.

Noah—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male employee

Those profound connections have been translated into material support for generations. Noah shares this story about the 1973 Arab-Israeli war (Yom Kippur war) from diasporic eyes:

It was a Kol Nidre night [Yom Kippur] that the news [about the war] had been announced. And my dad tells a story of how, like, the women are taking off their jewellery and throwing it into boxes. And there's a huge **outpouring of connection**, of like, we are going to **do everything**. Which I still feel, like, I'm quite **emotional** when I'm talking about it. Like, it's quite a **profound** moment of **giving**.

Noah—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male employee

Noah's account reveals the deep historical, ideological, and emotional grounds on which 'giving to Israel' rests. These foundations have been crucial in shaping the narrative of the sector and its institutions, explicitly and implicitly. As this chapter reveals, they also form the personal and professional identity of its various stakeholders: employees, leaders, donors, members, and beneficiaries (particularly Jewish ones).

Jonathan argues that the involvement of British Jews in Israel also involves a dimension of guilt for not 'making aliya' (immigrating to Israel):

The trustees are... [people who] had to **decide** whether to make aliya [immigrate to Israel] or to stay, and they decided to stay in the UK. And they feel **guilty** they didn't make aliya. They are usually highly qualified legal professionals, accountants, some are social workers or involved in education... The reason they volunteer as trustees... is because they feel like they want to tap into their youth... to stay **connected** to the idealism of their youth. Despite the way they live their lives... They're all like upper middle class... Bohemians... They wanna celebrate Marx while toasting a glass of champagne. The **champagne socialists**.

Jonathan—an Oceanian, Jewish, Ashkenazi male employee

Jonathan points out the intersection of social class and ideological difference. What motivates people to volunteer as trustees is a sense of blame around their ideological commitment, choosing to stay in their comfortable socioeconomic position in the UK instead of actualising their Zionist ideology and emigrating to Israel. With a dash of ageism, Jonathan identifies the guilt of becoming economically established and abandoning the radical socialist ideals and activism of their past.

Ben, an Israeli man, echoes these links between Zionism, guilt, and giving.

There's that **safe land** that they [British Jews] know they can **always be part of**, but they're not really [part of]... [A land] that **they have**. [And] because they're **not part** of the building of the state for the Jewish people in the world, they feel the need to **support** it from afar, you know. If it's by money, if it's by raising awareness, if it's by supporting different programmes in Israel.

Ben—an Israeli, Jewish, Sephardi male employee

Ben relates to the overlapping national identities of British Jews, and dilemmas of belonging and loyalty they face between two nations that are both 'theirs'. British Jews carry a moral responsibility to support, build, perhaps save, 'their' land from a distance, through financial donations. The British Jewish charity emerges as more than an economic mechanism for 'solving' social problems. It is the mediator between diaspora and homeland, with a crucial emotional and ideological role. In a way, it enables British Jews to clear their conscience, as a privileged group that decided not to carry the actual burden of 'building the nation'.

While previous interviewees focused on the relations between diaspora Jews and their perceived homeland, Dorit concentrates on their relationship with their country of residence, the UK:

We were sitting in the UK, dealing with Israeli shared society... There is something, like, **abnormal** about it! ...I think that the reason for the Jewish community in the UK to deal with it is since they themselves are a minority... they feel that they need to **prove** that they work for minorities in what they considered **their nation state**... It supports the[ir] case, they **walk the talk**... practicing what they preach... 'My **home nation** also needs to behave in the ways that I want the nation that I'm living in now [to] behave toward me'.

Dorit—an Israeli, Jewish, Sephardi female employee

As Dorit observes, the centrality of Israel-Palestine on the sector's agenda is not only related to the Middle East, but also reflects the politics of belonging of Jews in the UK. British Jews

are engaged in charity work for Israel-Palestine, not only as Jews, but also as Brits. These accounts reveal the elusive position of British Jews, who (like other diaspora communities) navigate their multiple loyalties and belongings between home and diaspora.

As Chapter 4 explored, to some extent, the sector experiences opposite political trends: on the one hand, increasing public visibility of Israel advocacy bodies; on the other, a decline in Israel-related charity among (mainly young) British Jews. Eden describes how signs of the ‘Zionism crisis’ affect funding:

The two biggest challenges for the Jewish community [charity sector] are one, funding. And the second one is the **split** that’s created because of the behaviour of the State of Israel. And if there was up until recently a fairly strong **united front** when it came to Israel, no matter what, we are closely following suit what is happening in the US where there is (a) the existence of Israel [as] the **homeland** for the Jews; and there is (b) Israeli **government**, Israeli policy. And they are not the same... [You] see it when it comes to organisations... It’s not for no reason that [a left-wing nonprofit] in the last couple of years have had phenomenal breakout with British Jewish community... not only fundraising, also public support.

Eden—a British-Israeli, Jewish, Ashkenazi female senior manager

While Jewish liberals maintain their belief in Zionism as an idea, for many of them, the ideological and material commitment to the State of Israel as an actual political entity is on the wane. This development manifests in funding trends.

Noah, who works for an Israel-related charity (and previously described how emotional he gets when thinking about the outpouring of emotion and material support for Israel during the 1973 war) talks about his own diasporic ambivalence:

I am deeply connected, deeply invested [in Israel]... [The idea of] Israel [as] one of the largest population centres of Jews, and it is Jewish in a way that is unique to the rest of the Jewish world, that it’s [a] **Jewish power!** [But] the way that Judaism is **enacted** and lived out as a majority with that power, I think that sometimes, or a lot of the times, **doesn’t work** that well.

Noah—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male employee

This ideological crisis affects not only donors, but also employees. Shirley explains why she left her role as a fundraiser in an Israel-related charity:

Arguing about Israeli politics, and settlements, it gets boring frankly. And nothing in Israel changes. I got bored of having to **defend** Bibi Netanyahu’s actions really, to raise money... When there was a war, Cast Lead [2014 Gaza War]... [it] was the first

time that I've ever in my career... [seen] people call up and they're like, 'We want to give money'. Rather than you asking... [But] raising money for Israel right now is an absolute **bloody nightmare!**... We've got our own issues here [elaborates on COVID and antisemitism in the Labour Party].

Shirley—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee and senior manager

Shirley and Noah echo debates concerning a crisis of Zionism (Beinart, 2012) which is increasingly experienced by young diaspora Jews who struggle to reconcile their commitment to Zionism with their commitment to universal human rights. This 'Israel fatigue' stems from frustration with the enduring Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and from the limited ability of diaspora Jews to contribute to significant change in Israel. Interestingly, during wartime, when the sense of a real threat on Jewish lives increases, many Jews reconcile the dissonance and reconnect to Israel.

However, it should be noted that these accounts offer a glimpse of the relations between diaspora Jews and Israel charities **within the liberal Zionist community** that broadly supports the idea of Israel as a Jewish democratic state. **Non-Zionist** progressive organisations and individuals tell a different story, which is explored later in this chapter.

There was a fundraiser who really struggled... with Israel's identity. Didn't want to call himself a Zionist... he couldn't **switch off** his own **morals** for the greater good of [the organisation] to get the money. Which was his job. And he struggled and left... that was his red line. But then that organisation is not the place for you. You have to **believe** in what you're doing to work in the Jewish community. Because... it **IS** your identity! Or such a huge part of it.

Shirley—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee and senior manager

Shirley highlights how personal and professional identity are intertwined in the Jewish workplace. In this case, what binds them together is political belief. Therefore, for an employee to survive and thrive they need to either believe in the sector's ethos or be able to switch off their moral beliefs.

The following participants shed light on some of the narratives that sustain the blind support for Israel. Naomi, an experienced informal educator, describes a widespread approach to reconciling the dissonance between idealism and reality:

The idea [is]... this concept of hugging and wrestling... that I'm **in love** with this country but it isn't easy! And I **hug and wrestle** with it. But it's the AND... Because this [Israel] is part of **your story**. My idea is having a **mature relationship** with

Israel... you know their good points, and you know their bad points. And you're still willing to be in the relationship... [People say] how can we love Israel if... there's racism? If there is misogyny? If there isn't true democracy?... These things are temporary... We need to have enough people in it and to change systems.

Naomi—a British-Israeli, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

Our members... it was really hard for them to criticise Israel because they felt like they're... not **supporting** Israel as much as they should. And I was trying to say, if you criticise Israel it's not because you don't **believe** in its existence. It's the opposite. If you, like, **love**, have **strong feelings** towards Israel—even though you criticise it—it means that you **care**. It means that you really thought it through and you still love it.

Ella—an Israeli, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

The donor community... even if they think that they are aware of the difficulties in the Israeli society, there is still a bit of this deference to, well we don't live there, we're in the diaspora, **our role** is to be **supportive**. If we ARE going to say difficult things, that should be behind closed doors.

Josh—a British, Jewish, mixed ethnicity male senior manager

These accounts echo theological ideas around the love of God and faithfulness to the Holy Land. They also demonstrate how nationalist discourse is embedded in gender imagery: the relationship with the Jewish homeland that requires protection is used to justify the eternal loyalty to this imagined political entity. Indeed, feminist scholars have discussed how home and diaspora can become gendered concepts: the nation/homeland is seen as the female body (the mother, wife, lover) that needs to be possessed and protected; thus the diasporic condition represents separation from the homeland, and is associated with exile and loss of a mother or a wife (Najmabadi, 1997; Yuval-Davis, 1993).

The narrative that emerges from those quotations portrays inequality in Israel as a temporary circumstance rather than inherent to the Zionist project. Therefore, fixing these problems does not involve resistance; on the contrary, it requires recruiting more people into the Zionist project. This has various implications for the Jewish workplace. What these narratives 'do' on individual level is to regulate the political identity of employees (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002)—for example, by 'allowing' workers to criticise Israel only within the Zionist boundaries. By doing so they reveal the unclear position of political identity/belief, between philosophical belief (a protected characteristic) and political stance (not protected). On a managerial level, they serve as mechanism of control, ensuring workers' loyalty to the organisational ethos and mission. On a communal level, these narratives ensure the

commitment of workers to the Zionist project, which is reproduced through their work in The Community. They ensure that Jewish loyalty to Israel exceeds changing political realities. On an ideological discursive level, they shape the understanding of the political within the sector and The Community: Zionism is portrayed as a bigger and stronger value/concept than temporal and spatial dimensions; it is positioned beyond politics, beyond political contestation. Ironically, in the Jewish organisation, Zionism becomes a non-political issue.

### 8.2.2 Too busy being Marxist: From liberal to radical spaces

Broadly speaking, political difference, and particularly what can be seen as ‘the Zionist difference’ plays a crucial role in defining the Jewish organisation, regardless of its particular view of Zionism. This section shifts away from Zionist Jewish organisations to look at progressive non-Zionist groups (as Chapter 5 mentioned, non-Zionist ultra-Orthodox groups remain outside the scope of this research).

As Chapter 4 discussed, non-Zionist groups hold a fundamentally different approach towards home and diaspora. In particular, they reject the centralised leadership of The Jewish community, which speaks on behalf of British Jews in one voice, and particularly deny its unequivocal support for Israel (Kahn-Harris & Gidley, 2010). These independent groups are largely marginalised from Jewish life in the UK, and are not represented in Jewish representative bodies and in the Jewish media (Finlay, 2015; Lerman, 2012). Sophie explains the radical understanding of the term ‘diasporism’:

I would like to think that [our organisation] is like a space that, you know, **celebrates identity**, and I suppose that’s also connected to, like, **diasporism**... Diasporism is about **rejecting** the tenet of Zionism that sees, like, Jewish life as having to revolve around Israel... that, like, we have to live a completely rich Jewish life in the diaspora without **needing** Zionism, without needing a State of Israel. And that, like, we can be safe here, and, like, we can be creative here... you know, against the kind of model that sees a **flattening** of Jewish identity outside of Israel.

Sophie—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female volunteer

Rejection is also a form of connection. Indeed, through rejection, Zionism and the idea of Israel are building blocks of Zionist and non-Zionist organisations alike, as the next section examines. The idea of ‘Jewish diasporism’ (as a form of non-Zionism) is shared by the organisation and its members. In fact, the idea that political belief (around Israel-Palestine) defines both the organisation’s ethos and its members’ identity is found in both Zionist and non-Zionist organisations. In both cases, ideological positioning is important in defining

employee/member belonging to the workplace/organisation. This phenomenon contradicts ideas of diversity and inclusion at their core: While gender and racial identities are (at least in theory and rhetoric) welcomed across the gender/racial spectrum, political beliefs are accepted as long as they fit with defined national-ideological boundaries. Interestingly, despite these clear boundaries, Sophie uses diversity language (the ‘celebration’ metaphor) to describe her organisation’s approach to Jewish identity.

Sophie returns to political difference to describe what diversity means to her organisation:

We have diversity—we have, like, anarchists, communists, socialists. That’s what diversity I guess means to us in [our organisation].

Although the non-Zionist organisation is defined through its non-Zionist political boundaries, it is important for Sophie to emphasise the political diversity and inclusion that exists within those boundaries. As this chapter later discusses, this finding of political diversity being restricted by clear political boundaries is a building block of diversity across the sector.

David is a founding member of another non-Zionist organisation. His story offers a different angle on diversity and political difference. Here, the strong sense of shared political identity of the members made diversity irrelevant:

*Interviewer:* Were there discussions around the composition of the group? Did it matter?

*David:* It never was an issue... [because] we were **defining** ourselves over and **against** a certain sort of idea of what ‘the Jewish community’ is. You know, **the mainstream**. And because of that... I don’t think our attention was on people who fall between the two stools. Who aren’t part of that **establishment**, but who aren’t part of [our organisation]. I think it was like a **blind spot** when I look back... We were too busy being active, **opposing**, you know, the line that was being pushed by the Board of Deputies. It was probably over some demonstration over Gaza... I remember that we organised a rally... [We were standing in front] of the Jews who came to support [Israel], who of course spat at us and called us names and all the rest of it. So our identity as [an organisation], was so **formed** as a kind of **reaction** to something else—not that it was purely negative, it wasn’t, there was a positive content... [but] the sort of people that we didn’t include, we didn’t think about.

David—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male volunteer

Difference is a comparative concept: it gains its meaning only in relation to what it is not (Minow, 1991). As David describes, the focus on the shared commitment to resist the Jewish establishment overshadowed internal differences within that oppositional camp. Later in the

interview, David linked his organisation's ethno-religious homogeneity and blind spots to its ideological roots:

With hindsight, I see a certain kind of either Marxist or Marxist-conditioned view of the world. As being conspicuous amongst a lot of those Jews, who identified as secular, who didn't really have any involvement with the Jewish world other than through protesting against Israel. And I think in other words it was a very **European perspective** conditioned by a **left-wing politics**. That ultimately went back to certain figures like Marx. Had we had voices coming from other parts of the Jewish world, it might have been different. And I'm talking about radical voices... There was, I think, a fairly **narrow view**... Because we were **defined by a common enemy**... the differences that we're now touching on didn't **NEED** to come into it. We could say that we were **NOT the mainstream** Jewish community, that we were **NOT represented** by the Board of Deputies, they don't speak for us... Without bringing in all the sort of varieties of Jewish identity for whom they don't speak... [such as] the Haredi community for whom the Board don't speak... Certain denominations within the Haredi community are no less anti-Zionist than the most secular of secular Jews... But we **didn't NEED that**... I think it [including them] would have made a difference, I think it would have **enriched our stance** towards the so-called mainstream.

David—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male volunteer

Ideas around redistributive justice are often portrayed as contradicting the recognition paradigm: Rooted in Marxist theory, the politics of class disregards identity and cultural difference (Fraser, 1995). The socialist agenda of this (and other) radical Jewish groups makes questions of identity irrelevant, a distraction, an interference, in the broader struggle for social justice. The focus on the class-order of society pushes aside issues of cultural injustice through cultural-symbolic change. The fundamental contradiction goes back to questions of difference: politics of redistribution demand the **abolishment** of unjust differentials, while politics of recognition seek to **emphasise** and celebrate devalued differences and identities. This conflict between similarity and difference, universalism and particularism, equal treatment and special treatment, also echoes the tension between the equal opportunity and the diversity paradigms discussed in Chapter 2. David points out how these ideological foundations meant that the Eurocentric (Ashkenazi) nature of the space was naturalised, and non-white perspectives were ignored. Interestingly, his argument for ethnic representation is rooted in a business logic: Diversity was needed because it could have contributed to the organisation's advocacy efforts, not because ethnic minorities were



silenced and excluded from the space. Indeed, similar exclusionary reasoning and rhetoric plays out in Jewish organisations across the political spectrum.

Einav is an Israeli Jewish woman who was involved in another anti-Zionist activist group. I asked her whether people of any certain background had more influence and voice than others in that space.

I guess it's just like a question of **who's there**, who's feeling **confident** about, like, organising things, and then they kind of take up the space. But of course, it's such a **niche**, you know, group of people... and kind of small, right? Like, it's all about, like, being a bit of a **contrarian**... half the time taking the piss. So it's not gonna be, like, a **representation** of, like, you know all of the people who identify as Jewish and living in the country. It's just gonna be, like, **whoever is around**, whoever is **confident** enough to take the space.

Einav—an Israeli, Jewish, mixed ethnicity female volunteer

Einav echoes David's argument that the radical contrarian position pushes aside questions of internal difference. Moreover, for Einav, representation requires institutionalisation—the dynamic, fluid, flexible, non-hierarchical nature of her specific group did not leave organisational space for seriously and systematically thinking about or 'doing' diversity. However, in this situation, as she admits, 'confident' individuals win the stage, a characteristic that tends to overlap with dominant social position.

### 8.2.3 Organisational political-ideological positioning

Jewish organisations and Jewish individuals face the similar expectation to self-classify politically in relation to Israel-Palestine. The pressure on organisations to publicly position themselves on the Zionist spectrum shapes the organisation's stakeholder map, influencing how employees, donors, members, beneficiaries, partners, and communities perceive the organisation and whether they wish to engage with it.

What frustrates me is that every organisation here feels that it **has** to take a side. And there's a spectrum of sides. But there's **no scope** for organisations to say, like, we don't have a stance on Israel... [My employer] was the first Jewish organisation I ever worked for, or even knew about... [that] has an actively **a-political** [approach]... [But actually] if you don't have a stance on Israel, why is your biggest office in Jerusalem?

Joel—a British, Jewish, mixed ethnicity male employee

Arguably, even taking 'no stance' on Israel is a stance in itself in the Jewish world. From the non-Zionist side of the spectrum, David reiterates the crucial role of politics in organisations'

raison d'être:

These [independent] groups, they are always **defined in relation** to Israel-Palestine. It's always about Zionism, one way or another. Because this is where Jewish politics becomes so fraught... [so] hard-headed.

David—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male volunteer

The political positioning of Jewish organisations affects their positioning in the broader UK nonprofit sector. Ruth's organisation works with both Jewish and non-Jewish communities in the UK. It does not hold an official stance on Israel-Palestine and it does not work in the Middle East, but it still engages with it:

I think one of the challenges that we do face is doing a lot of interfaith work. And I think we have... had some **pushback** from some of our other faith partners... They said, like, that we're **funded by Zionists**... [that's] the reason that we don't have a deeper Israel piece to our puzzle.

Ruth—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female senior manager

Analysing the tight matrix of funding, social action, and advocacy in British Jewry is beyond the scope of this research, but what is important for this discussion is the crucial role of the (Zionist) political difference in shaping organisational life, and the approach to diversity both within the sector and between Jewish organisations and non-Jewish partners.

Jonathan worked in a Zionist left-leaning organisation:

[Our organisation] has always been **isolated** from other socialist groups... [We] **should** be able to affiliate, should be able to go along, join marches, with socialist groups within the UK. But we don't. Because we know there is such an issue of antisemitism within socialist groups generally... You say to these groups that you're a Zionist movement—that's like the **end of the conversation**... There's a real tension between **wanting** to be active in social issues, and feeling **constrained** and **restricted** from doing so because of the concern of antisemitism or being **excluded** from these events... It seems like our social activism is really just **confined** to the Jewish community who already understands our position.

Jonathan—an Oceanian, Jewish, Ashkenazi male employee

Jonathan describes the silo effect of Zionism, or what can be called the 'Zionist walls' that surround The Jewish Community. Zionist political affiliation emerges as a barrier that prevents Jewish organisations from cooperating with non-Jewish allies. Jonathan echoes the paradigm that identifies anti-Zionism with antisemitism, rather than seeing it as a valid

political stance. He attributes the disconnect from non-Jewish groups to hostility towards Jews, rather than legitimate political boundaries that organisations draw (like Zionist organisations do), which influence who is seen as belonging/included in the space, and who is excluded. This issue links to the debate in Chapter 7 on race and ethnicity: Amy described the barriers inside and outside The Jewish Community around the connection with the Black Lives Matter movement. BLM's expressions of solidarity with the Palestinian struggle, as an oppressed group, was interpreted as hostile and posing a threat to Jews.

Aaron's employer works with Jewish and non-Jewish audiences and faces suspicion towards their politics from both sides. Here he talks about pressure from the left.

[There's a] discourse that sort of **singles out** Jews whose Zionism is used as a **slur**, you know. As some kind of, as a **discrediting** aspect that makes their scholarship and their activity **problematic** because it kind of paints them as, you know, activists for a cause which is **not honourable**. So that's also some of the considerations that is also, you know, in the air... People who don't know [our organisation] will very often **assume**... that this is another, you know, sort of pro-Israel kind of **half-political** [organisation] that wants to... defend Israel's right to occupy the territories or to bash any criticism of Israel as antisemitism... It's not what my [organisation] does, but the **suspicion** exists, among the left... The **pressure** [to be categorised] is on both sides... or at least to be **categorised** in the **right category**, in the right folder. And sometimes it's difficult to maintain some kind of integrity without just being **labelled** as someone who's doing something that is not right.

Aaron—a European, Jewish, Ashkenazi male employee

The pressure on Jewish organisations to identify politically is applied by both Jewish and non-Jewish groups. The Zionist label automatically includes them within The Jewish Community and excludes them from critical activist circles; the non- or anti-Zionist label does the opposite. As discussed in section 8.4 ('managing political diversity') below, Aaron's employer tries to navigate this puzzle by turning to diversity management.

To summarise, the political debate around Jewish nationalism and Israel-Palestine, which has been central to Jewish public life since the rise of the Jewish national movement, and increasingly since the establishment of the State of Israel, echoes strongly within UK Jewish diaspora organisations. Political-ideological beliefs around Israel-Palestine—and particularly adopting or rejecting the Zionist label—are not only central to the ethos of Jewish organisations, but also link to the construction, perception, and implications of identity in those spaces. They play a crucial role in mainstream groups and in independent groups,

among those that directly deal with Israel-Palestine and also among those that do not. They form and sustain the split between mainstream and radical groups; they affect fundraising, member recruitment, organisational reputation, and prospects of collaboration; and they determine employees' sense of belonging in the workplace. Against this backdrop, the sections below explore how political difference is treated in practice, and what tensions and dilemmas this form of diversity management creates on an individual and organisational level.

### **8.3 Meeting point #2: The political case for diversity**

From its inception, diversity research was based on the assumption that there are two main motivations for diversity management: economic benefit (the argument that diversity is good for business) and the moral-legal rationale (driven by a commitment to social justice or by a more pragmatic focus on compliance). The nonprofit sector was suggested as a space where the two approaches overlap and potentially complement each other, since for nonprofit organisations, the business **is** social justice (Tomlinson & Schwabenland, 2010). However, this attempt to challenge business and ethics as competing rationales also reproduced the binary: The field was still seen as relying on the two building blocks.

The British Jewish context enables exploration of a third pillar: the **political case** for diversity. It can potentially demonstrate how political motivations—being neither entirely utilitarian nor clearly moral (yet linked to both)—can unpack the traditional dispute between the two logics. While the economic approach to diversity is rooted in managerial instrumentalism and neoliberal ideology, and the social-justice case is guided by emancipatory ideals and sees diversity as a moral imperative, the 'political case' can reveal the political gains of difference, and show how diversity can echo and reproduce the language and logic of nationalism.

This section explores how diversity is utilised for political purposes, particularly to promote Jewish communal social cohesion and Jewish national unity. It does so by focusing on a central Jewish diversity concept: cross-communalism. For this analysis, two types of data are utilised: interviews and online organisational statements.

#### **8.3.1 Cross-communalism: Religious and political diversity**

Cross-communalism can be seen and conceptualised as a diversity metaphor, or a diversity managerial metaphor (Kirby & Harter, 2002). For many organisations in mainstream British

Jewry (what became known as The Jewish Community), the word ‘diversity’ is coupled with the term ‘cross-communalism’. Organisations that identify as cross-communal claim that they work across the UK Jewish community. The term is used by representative bodies, educational initiatives, member organisations, and advocacy groups. It usually refers to the organisations’ members and beneficiaries, but can also appear in relation to the workplace. ‘Cross-communalism’ speaks the diversity language: When it seeks to include and welcome all groups across the community, it assumes and maintains a priori social differences, and does not challenge them (unlike the ‘post-denominational’ Jewish space, for example, which is more common in the US).

Chapter 4 discussed how societal, religious, and political developments within and around The Jewish Community in recent decades placed two particular ‘Jewish differences’ under the spotlight: (a) religious difference within Jewish society, or Jewish religious denominations (mainly referring to ultra-Orthodox/Haredi, modern Orthodox, Reform, Liberal, Masorti, and Sephardi, which is sometimes included as a religious stream) (Casale Mashiah & Boyd, 2017); and (b) political difference, particularly in relation to Zionism and Israel-Palestine, as this chapter discusses.

Thus, the idea of cross-communalism translates this particular social and political landscape into organisational language and practice, while strongly echoing the ideas of ‘diversity’ as a policy approach to managing difference, a point of reference for discussing employee differences, a conceptual construct rooted in politics of difference, and a discursive practice that echoes a wider social context (Kirton, 2009). As the data reveals, the term is used to express the appreciation and recognition of—as well as active efforts to represent and include—religious and political diversity.

The following are examples of organisations of different type of mission: The Union of Jewish Students (founded 1919) is a representative and advocacy body that is focused on Jewish concerns; Limmud (founded 1980) is a major cultural-educational initiative, aimed at advancing Jewish learning; and René Cassin (established 2000) is a human rights organisation, which promotes universal human rights by drawing on Jewish values and experiences.

In its online statement, Limmud listed ‘diversity’ as one of its core values. The description of this value reveals how it is to be enacted:

We value the **rich diversity** among Jews, and so we seek to create **cross-communal**

and inter-generational experiences.

The Union of Jewish Students (UJS) in the UK listed ‘cross-communalism’ as one of its four core values, describing it thus:

We believe that UJS and J-Soc [Jewish Societies] activities should be **open to all** Jewish students regardless of **political** or **religious** affiliation or denomination.

René Cassin dedicated a separate value statement to cross-communalism:

[We work] **across** the Jewish community... We acknowledge the **rich diversity** of the British Jewish community and seek to work with individuals and groups from the whole **spectrum** of the Jewish community... transcend[ing] any **denominational** or **ideological division**.

Cross-communalism seems to follow the celebratory tradition of diversity rhetoric. Rooted in the politics of recognition, it portrays Jewish difference in festive terms. The language of ‘openness’, ‘valuing’ the ‘richness’ of Jewish life, and ‘belief’ in inclusion hint that the motivation is not (only) utilitarian but also moral.

### 8.3.2 Cross-communalism, diversity and unity

To understand the meaning and importance of cross-communalism, one has to turn the spotlight to the relations between **diversity** and **unity** in Jewish communal life.

The Jewish world is diverse. Has been for several millennia diverse. And that has added something to who we are and what we are. It has made us **stronger**, more **resilient**, more interesting, more engaging, more meaningful community.

Sharon—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female senior manager

You know, we [British Jews] are **divided** by many things, but what we’ve been very good at is an **external united front**. And that has been I think one of the things that has **sustained** us, and **protected** us as well, that no matter how much we disagree internally... you don’t take your dirty laundry outside. We’ll **manage** it **internally** but we’ll be **united**.

Eden—a British-Israeli Jewish Ashkenazi female senior manager

Sharon and Eden present two complementary positions: in the former, Jews are collectively stronger **thanks to** their internal differences; in the latter, Jews are resilient **despite** internal differences. Either way, Jewish unity emerges as a central value, and there is an understanding that differences should be well managed and controlled. Ruth suggests that cross-communalism offers that bridge by turning differences into assets.

Something that seems very important to me... [is] how we do things cross-communally... I think there's a real **strength** and **unity in coming together**... [under] a broader framework... Of course there's politics, that's always going to be a challenge... I'm always seeking roles... that **bridge** those **differences**. And say that, OK, so you may believe in something slightly different to what I believe, but actually we're still people, we still have the **same values!** And really, how do we bring those values together... I think that's what makes our community **stronger**.

Ruth—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female senior manager

Official statements of cross-communal organisations shed more light on the complex relationship between diversity and unity. The following statements were published by The Jewish Community Centre for London (known as JW3), a major arts and culture institution:

**Our Mission:** To increase the quality, **variety** and volume of Jewish **conversation** in London and beyond.

**Our Vision:** A vibrant, **diverse, unified** British Jewish community, inspired by and engaged with Jewish arts, culture, learning and life.

JW3 echoes the belief that Jews in Britain must stay 'unified'—although the questions of why and what for are not addressed, neither is the question of how 'varied' Jewish conversations can possibly be within a unified society. Given these lacunae, the tension between celebrating cultural differences while reinforcing political sameness remains a matter of interpretation. The proximity of diversity and unity is particularly odd in the context of arts and culture, a field that is often associated with challenging the conventional and dominant modes of thinking. It should also be noted that JW3 has no official agenda or stance around Israel or Zionism. This example may shed light on the role of political-ideological unity in depoliticising diversity (and depoliticising Jewish culture, too).

Debates around cross-communalism reveal a difference-sameness duality: Jews may have diverse backgrounds, beliefs, and perspectives, and these are accepted and appreciated, but there are overarching values that bring them together. The cross-communal space can include the differentiating factors, but it also reaffirms the shared beliefs, and thus eventually contributes to sustaining communal unity and cohesion.

The speakers and statements above (Sharon, Ruth, Eden, JW3) represented Jewish organisations that have no official agenda around Israel-Palestine. The link between diversity and unity—particularly through religious and political diversity—becomes more explicit as we turn to organisations that take a clearer, official, stance on Israel.

The Federation of Zionist Youth (FZY), founded in 1910, is Britain's oldest Jewish youth movement. As its name indicates, it represents more clearly ideas of Jewish nationalism and the construction of Jews as a national group.

FZY embraces a framework of **religious** and **political pluralism** which not only respects but actively **celebrates diversity** as an integral part of the rich tapestry of **Jewish Peoplehood**... [We value] the **unity** of the Jewish people, its bond to its historic homeland Eretz Yisrael ['Land of Israel' in Hebrew], and the centrality of the State of Israel and Jerusalem, its capital, in the life of the **nation**.

What is apparent in several organisational statements is the nationalist context of the Jewish diversity discourse. The 'rich tapestry' metaphor is a common discursive device in diversity statements (Kirton, 2009). Yet celebrating the richness of Jewish identity is portrayed here as a means for promoting another agenda, beyond EDI tenets. FZY's members may hold different political beliefs, but they remain united by their commitment to Zionism. The term 'Jewish Peoplehood' is not used to **describe** the existence of Jews as a people, but to **reinforce** Jewish identity as a national identity and strengthen the commitment of diaspora Jews to Jewish nationalism. Interestingly, Jewish organisations insist on using the depoliticised 'neutral' diversity language (around the respect and celebration of differences) within highly politicised organisational environments.

In the following statements, it is clearer that political diversity can become an asset in a larger political project. The British Zionist Federation (ZF) was established in 1899, and operates as the umbrella organisation for Zionist groups in the UK. We Believe in Israel is a newer UK-based Israel advocacy organisation (established 2011). As the two organisations demonstrate, whether political diversity becomes a source of organisational (and national) strength or cause for division depends on the scope of legitimate differences. Here the scope is clearly defined around Israel support:

We Believe in Israel seeks to provide a **united front** that brings together all the existing **supporters of Israel** in the UK, across the **political spectrum**... **diversity of opinion** amongst British supporters of Israel should be a source of **strength**.

The ZF **celebrates Israel** and challenges **our enemies**... it promotes the real face of Israel... [Our members hold] a **range** of **political** opinions and affiliations. The ZF is an organisation where all of these **views** can **come together**... ZF **values** debate but believes that it is our **commonality** that **unites** us rather than our **differences** that **divide** us.



Through the use of ‘us’ (our enemies, our commonality, unites/divides us), the Zionist Federation binds together the organisation, Jews, and Zionists. Zionism and national unity are organisational, communal, and national values. In both statements, loyalty to the nation is intertwined with loyalty to the organisation. Indeed, as Zygmunt Bauman observed, communities hold a promise of providing protection, a sense of meaning and belonging, of pleasure and confidence—but they also demand loyalty (Bauman, 2013).

Interestingly, as discussed above (section 6.7), We Believe in Israel welcomes both Jews and non-Jews from across the political spectrum, as long as they are united around a single national narrative (which corresponds with the value/benefit that non-Jews bring to the Jewish organisation). In these diversity statements, moral, managerial, and political motivations overlap: political debate is ‘valued’, but is also instrumental. Diversifying the support base makes it possible to expand it, which serves both managerial and national interests. The political case for diversity emerges as an important complementary approach to diversity management. Moreover, in this context, organisational belonging is strongly enmeshed with national belonging, through political ideology and national sentiment. This connection presents novel dynamics in terms of how diversity is constructed and then used as a discursive device, and how it interacts with inclusion and exclusion at work.

On the other side of the political spectrum, non/anti-Zionist Jewish groups claim that Jewish unity around Zionism is false and misleading. Independent Jewish Voices was established in 2007 by a group of 150 British Jewish intellectuals and artists:

The initiative was born out of a frustration with the widespread misconception that the Jews of this country speak with **one voice**, and that this voice supports the Israeli government’s policies... Our project was to create a climate and a space in which Jews of **different affiliations and persuasions** can express their opinions about the actions of the Israeli government without being accused of **disloyalty** or being dismissed as **self-hating**.

Independent Jewish Voices (IJV) challenges Zionism as the hegemonic discourse in British Jewry and its institutions, and seeks to disconnect the taken-for-granted link between Jewishness, Zionism, and Israel support. This statement echoes a wider critique of the New Antisemitism paradigm, and of the idea that when Israel is criticised the ‘collective Jew’ is under threat (Klug, 2003; Lerman, 2022). Crucially, IJV also offers a new approach to political diversity, and what it can and should mean in Jewish organisations, beyond the Zionist boundaries. However, what is implied is that while IJV has a different definition of

politically diversity, its own organisational space is politically exclusive, too. There, political diversity is bounded by anti-Zionism. This tension demonstrates how, despite the centrality of political-ideological difference and diversity to Jewish organisations, they do not attempt (and perhaps should not attempt) to be genuinely politically inclusive.

### 8.3.3 The boundaries of cross-communalism

Cross-communalism echoes the constant need to preserve the boundaries of the UK Jewish community. While attempting to include, cross-communalism also reveals who is excluded from ‘The Community’. First, the seemingly obvious has to be said: By focusing on Jewish differences, the cross-communal organisation excludes non-Jews (see discussion in Chapter 6). The second limitation of cross-communalism is that by focusing on religious and political diversity, it omits, marginalises, and silences other group-based differences and inequalities present in British Jewish society.

[Within the sector] everything is rooted in **denominations** or **Israel**... That’s it. No one **cares** about anything else. No one thinks about Sephardi-Ashkenazi, no one thinks about global Jewish issues. It’s just how religious are you, and what’s your relationship like with Israel. Those are the only two questions that concern 99% of the Jewish organisations in this country. So the other stuff [is] just being **ignored**.

Joel—a British, Jewish, mixed ethnicity male employee

The third limitation of the cross-communal space is that it does not include the full range of religious and political differences present in British Jewish society. In fact, two groups, who are possibly the most excluded religious and political minorities in British Jewry, are left outside of the allegedly diverse space: ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) Jews, and anti-Zionist Jews. This exclusion is implicit: it is absent from official organisational statements, and largely from public debates, and is concealed by the celebratory rhetoric of diversity. In a way, the boundaries of the cross-communal space are taboo.

In a media interview, Laura Marks CBE, a prominent Jewish communal leader, talks about Mitzvah Day, a major annual charity event that she initiated:

It’s a Jewish-initiated event that actively, deliberately, and joyfully reaches out to our non-Jewish neighbours to share the projects together. **All** the Jewish communities join in—we’re **staunchly committed** to cross-communalism—except the Haredi (strictly Orthodox) Jews, who have such a strong care network within their community that it’s perhaps **difficult for them** to think about taking on anything else. (Macmath, 2020)

Haredi Jews, who suffer the highest rates of poverty within Jewish society, are portrayed as a group that is segregated by choice (Valins, 2003a, 2003b) and refuses to take part in the celebration of Jewish difference. But by casting the responsibility of separation on the Haredim themselves, Jewish leadership avoids admitting that the cross-communal space fails to (and perhaps cannot possibly) fulfil its promise to include all religious streams.

The promise of cross-communalism to bring together Jews from across the political spectrum, in a politically inclusive space, may create an impression that the cross-communal space is political-neutral. However, as previously discussed, cross-communal Jewish spaces tend to identify as Zionist.

I chose to work for [organisation x]... because I felt that it did fit into the things that I thought were important. So the idea of working cross-community, not just working with one sector of the community... you have to work with people at **different ends of spectrum of ideas**... you need to make sure that **everyone's included** while still trying to be **true to the ideas**. But the basic part of it is that [organisation X] is a **Zionist organisation**. It supports the work of what goes on in Israel.

Naomi—a British-Israeli, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

The political-ideological boundaries of cross-communalism reveal how this diversity metaphor is used to reinforce Zionism as the hegemonic discourse (Lombardo et al., 2010). Indeed, within The Jewish Community, anti-Zionism is considered beyond the political horizon: Zionism is understood as a core value, an identity; it is the meaning of being Jewish, rather than a political question. Against this background, creating politically inclusive spaces that are explicitly Zionist is not paradoxical.

Cross-communalism can be seen as a call for Jewish groups to transcend social divisions, promising to address, even heal, religious and political divides. Within the framework of the social-justice case, it can be linked to values of social cohesion more than to the equality project. However, this paradox does have equality implications. Jon worked in one of the cross-communal organisations that declares on its website that it welcomes Jewish members from across the religious and political spectrum:

[Our programmes] didn't include all Jewish [members]... [they] were not feeling **welcomed**... Politically, we always had the issue of [members] who let's say, who disagreed with the mainstream... and didn't feel that they had a **space** within [our programmes]. And this could be both political, like within the UK, let's say Labour-Conservative; but mainly it was more about Israel and Palestine... Some [members] were very vocal about being pro-Palestinian, not recognising Israel. They **never felt part** of

[our programmes]... So yeah, on a **principle** level, [our] approach tries to **represent** everyone, [but] on local level it might not be as straightforward.

Jon—a European, Jewish, mixed ethnicity male employee

This rhetoric-reality gap reinforces how within The Jewish Community, political diversity is bounded by Zionism. The explicit and implicit goals and benefits of cross-communalism cannot be clearly positioned within the moral case for diversity, nor the economic one. Its goal of promoting communal cohesion and unity echoes and utilises both rationales, but does not exactly fit either. From the moral perspective, cross-communalism does not seek to contribute to the equality project. It does not address the real inequalities within Jewish society; at best, it seeks to bridge divisions within Jewish society. From a utilitarian perspective, it does not seek material benefit, nor does it seek benefits on an organisational level. What it does benefit is a broader political project—specifically, reconstructing The Jewish Community as a national collective. Cross-communalism thus demonstrates the potential political gains from diversity management.

## **8.4 Meeting point #3: Managing political diversity**

This section explores how political-ideological difference and diversity are approached, treated, and managed in Jewish spaces.

### **8.4.1 Balance and neutrality**

Public events are the face of many nonprofit organisations, and as such are where much of the debate around diversity takes place. In the heated political climate of the UK Jewish community, the political diversity of panels plays a crucial role in the positioning, acceptance, and legitimacy of organisations.

[When] we had to consider different options of speakers, one of the considerations would be, ‘What would people **think** about **our politics**?’... We knew that if it’s just another list of... left-leaning academics, it might make it easy to paint [us] as you know, **hotbed of leftists**, ultimately... [We were already accused that we] bring in people who deny antisemitism or who discredit the legitimate concerns of Jews.

... [We] attempt to apply principles of an **open discussion** between different political sides... [but] do I want to invite someone who actually, you know, it would be a compromise in the intellectual level of the discussion but the discussion **appear** to be more **balanced**? Or you know, more inclusive, or **not silencing** anyone? And it’s a **price** that I think is often paid even consciously. Just for the sake of not giving the wrong **impression**, and also not to **alienate** ultimately the Jewish community... So [the] question of intellectual standard versus **political visibility**... is there.

Aaron—a European, Jewish, Ashkenazi male employee

Aaron acknowledges that unlike other social differences, political-ideological beliefs are not (and should not be) of equal value. While in the interview he shares his employer's (and his own) ideological leaning, he admits that outwardly they must demonstrate political neutrality. This manifests in maintaining balance in political representation. **Political balance** emerges as inherently different from gender and racial balance: while the latter is based on equality, the former rests on pragmatic grounds; while morally judging gender and racial difference is unethical, critically assessing ideological difference is crucial; while unequal treatment based on gender and racial difference can be unjust and discriminatory, excluding people based on their political positions may be the key to justice; while gender and race debates were behind the establishment of the EDI field, political difference never seemed to fit in; and while gender and racial balance is morally crucial, political balance is a moral compromise. Moreover, a person's politics often translates to how they perceive other social differences and approach the actual idea of diversity. Thus, having no restriction around political boundaries can be harmful for the equality project itself. As Landy et al. (2022) also observed, institutions often insist on maintaining 'balance' in discussing Israel-Palestine, but this expectation is unfair: 'the realities of occupation and racism needing constantly to be balanced by denials that such realities actually exist' (Landy et al., 2022, p. 21).

Aaron uses the language of EDI (e.g., inclusion, silencing) but he also admits that politics does not (and perhaps should not) 'fit' into EDI debates. To rationalise why political difference plays a crucial role in his organisation's diversity management, he portrays it as a pragmatic business decision. Here, political difference takes the business case a step further: while organisations often promote the business case for diversity while being morally indifferent to the social-justice case, Aaron feels compelled to advance political diversity for the benefit of the organisation, while morally opposing this form of diversity and its effect of compromising the organisation's own values.

This complexity demonstrates the ambivalence of the EDI field towards political diversity more broadly: de jure, it is absent from the EDI legal framework (not included as a protected characteristic); yet de facto, it plays a crucial role in organisational EDI debates, particularly around representation.

While Aaron is cautious about including the political right, Daniel is suspicious towards the political left. Daniel makes a clearer statement around his organisation's political boundaries. But first he emphasises the importance of political inclusion to his organisation:

I think our **political message**... it's about inclusion. So you know, we don't want the **extremes**. We don't want it to be that to be a Zionist you have to be right-wing for example. You know, it has to be more **representative** than that... My own political views are quite left-wing, but as [an organisation] we don't have a left-wing agenda. But we do think that it should be pluralistic, and inclusive and representative of the **breadth of opinions**... One of [our] important values... [is] **Jewish peoplehood**. So the idea of how can we operate as **one Jewish people** and **include everyone**.

Daniel—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male senior manager

The concept of 'Jewish peoplehood', which has been linked to ideas of Jewish unity (Reinhartz, 2014), is translated in the Jewish organisation into political inclusion. Daniel sees the Jewish organisation as a microcosm of Jewish society. Hence, the politically inclusive Jewish organisation demonstrates hopes for Jewish unity across the (political) board. But is this idea realistic? On reflection, Daniel acknowledges the limitations of political inclusion:

The vast majority of our members would have **pro-Zionist** perspectives, whether or not they would use the [Zionist] label... But there are definitely people who identify as **non-Zionist**... I suppose there is a question about how included or excluded those people **feel**. And whether that's ok or not as well, actually. You know, it's not a protected characteristic first of all. So it might be that we are **comfortable** with people feeling a bit **out of place**... [I want] someone who is a non-Zionist Jew, you know, who believes in one-state solution for example, to still feel **comfortable** in our communities. But would I want them **to influence** the way we celebrate Yom Ha'azmaut [Israel Independence Day]? Probably not, honestly... I am more comfortable with a bit **less inclusion** around political views—and also around religious views now when I think of it—than I am around protected characteristics. You know, you never want a situation where someone feels excluded because they are a woman or because they are gay or because they are disabled. But is that ok... that someone feels **excluded because of their views**? Yes, sometimes. Because you can go somewhere else.

Daniel—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male senior manager

Political inclusion is problematised by non-Zionist perspectives. Daniel justifies (a degree of) exclusion of non-Zionist members, using three main arguments: First, it is legal; political stance is not a protected characteristic in the UK, and therefore political discrimination is not unlawful. This highlights the fine line between political opinion (not protected) and

philosophical belief (protected) in UK law. With some hesitation, Daniel echoes the idea that Zionism is integral to Jewish identity. But as he is well aware, these issues are debatable: Is Zionism (and anti-Zionism) a personal belief, a political stance, or a national identity? Is discrimination based on Zionist/anti-Zionist position or affiliation wrong? While these questions remain contentious, they should be examined in light of the campaign of UK Jewish institutions to frame anti-Zionism as antisemitism, which has crucial EDI implications for organisations in the UK (see Chapter 4).

Daniels's second argument is that non-Zionists 'can go somewhere else'. While 'diverse and inclusive' organisations commit to remain accessible to all genders, races, and other protected characteristics (and would not limit their gender or racial inclusion), they are entitled to specify their political positioning (the question of religious denomination remains outside the scope of this discussion). This means that stakeholders can (and sometimes are expected to) choose between different institutions based on their political inclination.

Lastly, there is the argument around the degree of inclusion. This quantitative argument welcomes non-Zionist members as passive participants, as long as they do not influence the ideological Zionist foundations of the organisation. This limitation around voice and agency is contradictory to the idea of inclusion, where everyone is meant to feel respected, that they equally belong in the space, and that their contribution is equally valued.

Adam volunteers in a cross-communal organisation. He describes how it deals with dilemmas of political representation while navigating political controversies in Jewish society:

So we're having a little thing [event] with the Israeli ambassador at the moment... She is perhaps not the most popular person in the Jewish world. And with my organisation it was, like, she's the ambassador that **represents**, you know, the State of Israel. You know, it's not really about her **as [an] individual**. You know, we're an [organisation] which caters to what Jewish people in the UK care about. They care very much about, you know, Israel and its politics and history and so forth... If she was sort of, like, you know **[a] private citizen**, then we would say something [about her opinions]. We have left-wing Knesset [Israeli parliament] members and we have right-wing Knesset members... The **experience** of the event is going to be **better** by being exposed to a **range of views**... [We] have a tent, have a range of participants **as wide as possible** even if it **upsets** sort of sub-group of people... [Also, there's] a **practical** point. The Israeli ambassador is a lot more **popular** in this country than some of the left-wing organisations who are asking us to not invite, to **uninvite** her.

Adam—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male volunteer

Tzipi Hotoveli, the Israeli ambassador to the UK (at the time of data collection) is considered a controversial figure, not only in British society, but also in parts of Jewish society, for what have been described as her anti-Palestinian racist positions, and fierce Nakba<sup>14</sup> denial (Spence, 2021). As such, she is unwelcome in some progressive Jewish spaces. Adam uses three main arguments to legitimise her invitation, which correspond with diversity management logic. First, his moral justification rests on the idea of political neutrality. From Adam's perspective, his organisation does not hold a stance on Israeli-Palestinian politics. In order to set the boundaries for political debate, and determine issues of political inclusion/exclusion, it adopts the position of 'the establishment'. According to this logic, an ideology is legitimised when it becomes 'official'. This means that bias can only exist in the private sphere, while governments ironically represent political neutrality. Interestingly, as a diaspora organisation, the official authority to draw those boundaries of legitimacy is the Israeli—not the UK—government. The organisation's political boundaries are determined by 'home' rather than 'diasporic' definitions. This idea is reinforced by Adam's second argument around political diversity: His organisation invites speakers who represent political stances across the political spectrum. He argues that this principle is maintained regardless of resistance from participants. However, one can question whether speakers who challenge the Zionist narrative are also welcomed (see debate below). Adam's third argument is purely managerialist: Within The Jewish Community, the ambassador's supporters outnumber her opponents. In other words, the beneficiaries' preference, as clients, is stronger than questions of morality.

Adam repeatedly links values of diversity and inclusion with issues of political difference:

In terms of our **value of diversity**... we want to move **beyond visible differences**, denominational differences, and create, you know, an event which works for **everyone** that wants to attend.

...[Our organisation] initially was this much more openly **counter-establishment** than it is now... [with] strong **progressive** presence... Over time... [there was a] **pulling back** from getting involved in particular types of debates which were sort of **unproductive** in order to create an environment where **everyone** felt welcome and accessible.

Adam—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male volunteer

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<sup>14</sup> The Nakba (in Arabic: Catastrophe) refers to the mass displacement and dispossession of Palestinians during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, when the State of Israel was established. The term and the narrative it presents are strongly rejected by the Israeli establishment.



Adam reveals how within The Community, Zionist affiliation and the ethos of political neutrality can coexist. Interestingly, it is the idea of political diversity and inclusion which sustains this paradox. When the organisation retracted from its (political) anti-establishment position, and in a way depoliticised itself, it became inclusive for ‘everyone’. However, a critical analysis would challenge two underlying assumptions: First, was this a process of de-politicisation or of political re-orientation? Zionism, as a central tenet of the Jewish establishment (in and outside the UK), is repeatedly portrayed as a non-political issue, a moral value that is ‘beyond’ politics. Second, does being inclusive mean including ‘everyone’? Who is ‘everyone’? Critical approaches to EDI would emphasise that justice lies in the inclusion of marginalised groups, rather than the inclusion of ‘more’ people. In some cases, these efforts might be mutually exclusive. Perhaps, behind the organisation’s ‘inclusion shift’, lies an act of pulling back from deeper involvement in social change and justice, and a shift towards reflecting the establishment political agenda.

When talking about the boundaries of political inclusion, and the limits of political diversity, other guiding principles arise:

There is an ongoing discussion about... what are the **limits**... you know, who would we not allow to present... We generally agree [we] should not be the only place that you see this person, or this presenter or this topic in the Jewish community. That’s a very rough rule of thumb... [we] should not be the place that opens the door for involvement in that way... [Our organisation tries] to have a wide range of participants. But also it operates within the **wider context** of sort of the Jewish community... [We] want to make sure that **reputationally** we are not seen as being, like I said, a **gateway to bring people in** from either side.

...If there are presenters who are potentially **controversial**... we’re not here to start **fight**s. We’re not here to do sessions that **delegitimise** or are **polemical**.

Adam—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male volunteer

Interestingly, ‘opening doors’ for new people and perspectives is portrayed as dangerous. This model of political inclusion is meant to maintain the status-quo: to give voice to perspectives that are already established within The Community. Implicitly, the limits of inclusion are drawn along the Zionist boundaries of the mainstream Jewish community. The ‘political troublemaker’ depends on the speaker’s politics. While the Israeli ambassador, a highly controversial and provocative figure, was welcomed in the name of political diversity, critical left-wing speakers are excluded for causing disagreement. The term ‘delegitimise’

hints at an anti-Zionist position, as pro-Israel advocates use it to refer to attempts to delegitimise Israel (particularly by the BDS movement).

Aaron is well aware of this debate around ‘troublemakers’, as an employee. Here he describes the implicit pressure from Jewish employers:

I write with the knowledge that everything I say can and will be used against me... what is called a bit, you know, deceptively ‘pro-Israel position’, like this is at least now a more **powerful force**... Institutions don’t like to have **troublemakers**... If you have some kind of a visibility that is considered politically **controversial**, that can lead to, you know, all sort of storms, complaints, grievances, you know, from [members], from colleagues, from media, from activists. You know, it can **deter** some institutions.

...And there’s the other direction... which is more [pressure] from the left ...on whether your **loyalty** actually is with the Jews and not with other, you know, minorities... **pressure** to prove that you are a human being, you have good ethics, you’re not indifferent to the suffering of Palestinians, of black people, of Muslims. And that’s also something that you need to **perform** sometimes. Or to assure people that you’re not, you know, just someone whose entire world is narrowed down towards defending the rights of Jews or the rights of Israel.

Aaron—a European, Jewish, Ashkenazi male employee

When Aaron navigates his political identity at work, he faces a double bind: He tries to avoid possible backlash from The Jewish Community for being ‘too’ critical, which might risk his position at work, and this leads to self-censorship. Simultaneously, expectations from non-Jewish partners and colleagues to ally with (other) marginalised minorities can echo antisemitic ideas around Jewish disloyalty (implying that Jewish devotion to Jewish causes or concerns poses a threat to others, or is part of a wider Jewish conspiracy). Through this political intricacy, Aaron shows how the Jewish workplace is not (and perhaps cannot possibly be) politically inclusive.

More broadly, this discussion demonstrates how political difference does not seem to fit into the diversity paradigm. Despite the multiple ways in which diversity is understood and approached, among diversity practitioners and scholars there is a general understanding regarding the nature of social inequality, and how the meaning that has been attached to being a man or a woman, or white or black, in society shapes people’s opportunities and voice in organisations. This works to justify the efforts of making organisations open and inclusive to all, across social differences. As the discussions above demonstrated, unlike gender and race,

political exclusion and discrimination are not only legitimate but even necessary from an emancipatory perspective. This makes the use of ‘political diversity/inclusion’ in itself, at least in some cases, counter to the social justice foundations of EDI (Lombardo et al., 2009).

#### **8.4.2 Silencing dissent: The limits of political inclusion**

Eli was 16 when his youth movement group was preparing for their upcoming Israel Tour:

I remember at the pre-tour weekend... they were saying, ‘How would you have drawn the Israeli flag?’ You know, would [you] add a Magen David [Star of David] or whatever. And I said: ‘Oh, why can’t you have maybe a half Palestinian half Israeli flag?’ And they were like – ‘Oh, no, no, no!’... It was only until kind of the end of my university experience that I realised I was able to **vocalise** some of my **questions** or **doubts** about the **narrative** that I’ve been told about Israel, kind of growing up.

Eli—a British, Jewish, mixed ethnicity male volunteer

Jewish informal education plays a crucial role in the socialising process of ‘Israelization’ and ‘Zionization’ of British Jews. These strong ideological foundations shape the ethos of organisations in the sector, as employers and as social agents that operate on a communal, national, or international level. The same foundations also shape (and are shaped by) the personal-professional identity of Jewish individuals in those organisations as employees, volunteers, members, leaders, donors, participants, or service recipients.

This section explores the organisational dynamics related to dissent over Israel-Palestine. It focuses on organisations that can be broadly defined as liberal Zionist or positioned in the mainstream of British Jewry. As previously discussed, in recent years many diaspora Jews who are broadly part of this camp have experienced a tension between universal and Jewish-particularist dimensions of their identity, struggling to reconcile their commitment to Zionism with their obligation to universal human rights (Beinart, 2012). This section examines workplace dynamics around two specific conflicts that were mentioned in several interviews: the Gaza War (2014), and the Kaddish for Gaza following the Palestinian Great March of Return (2018).

##### **8.4.2.1 The Gaza War, 2014**

Harry is a British non-Jewish white man. He talks about his experience with Jewish colleagues in a shared workspace:

[I was] anti-Israeli government policy and pro-Palestine, and, like, I **couldn’t say** that. I **struggled** a lot, for example, during the 2014 conflict [in Gaza]. I mean, that was really **tough** for me... There were people who quite understandably were worried

about their families living in Israel. And I completely get it. But the risk factor for their families was just so ridiculously low compared to the risk factor and what was going on for the Palestinian families. And the really weird thing was that no one was talking about it! Nobody talked, like, it **did not get mentioned!**... I was absolutely **furious**... There were few hundred kids who have been killed you know! [Colleague x] was amazing. [She] just came across and said you know, it's the first place she's ever worked where she wasn't looked at as the Jew who had to bear responsibility for all of the actions of the Israeli government... I still found it **frustrating**. Because if that was happening in **my culture**, I would be standing up, and I would be saying, This is unacceptable! But I **don't know** what it feels like to be a Jewish person who has grown up amidst all of this antisemitic fear and actions and history. And feel the very **real threat** of where Israel is placed, right? So it was something I found very hard, and I think it did affect my relationship with a couple of people... That's how my identity led me to struggle within a Jewish workspace.

Harry—a British, non-Jewish, white male senior manager

Harry experienced the deafening silence around the war as jarring, because of the strong ties of diaspora Jewry (and its institutions) to Israel. It was for this reason that his colleague's remark confused him. On the one hand, he felt empathy for Jews, acknowledging that as a British white man he cannot grasp the Jewish experience and concerns as a minority. On the other hand, he struggled to understand why they would not stand up for the Palestinians, as the 'real' minority in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In a way, for Harry, when diaspora Jews get involved in issues related to Israel-Palestine, their positionality shifts from minority (as Jews in the UK) to majority (as potentially-Israelis). As such, they have a responsibility to speak up against injustice (a position that is reflected in the work of some non-Zionist Jewish organisations). Harry's critique is sensitive to the ambivalent diasporic position of Jews in relation to Israel, and the complex position of his colleagues: having familial and emotional ties to Israel; and facing antisemitic backlashes, particularly during wartime, when they are accused of responsibility for the actions of the Israeli government. Still, he struggles to accept their silence around the war, given their deep involvement in Israeli politics:

When the [Israeli] elections came up, people were more prepared to **voice** the fact that they thought Netanyahu was a dick. Which was quite a **surprise** to me... So I think that to not hear any criticism or empathy expressed [around the war], nothing!... And then to hear discussion around the Israeli elections... [I was like] 'OK, so this is a **non-political space**. Got it. Oh no, it IS a political space! It's just not **THAT political space**. OK, think I've got it now.'

Harry—a British, non-Jewish, white male senior manager

Ideology can manifest not only in what is being said but also in what is being ignored and avoided. The taboo around the war emphasised the political nature of the Jewish space: political difference is welcome only within the Zionist boundaries.

Laura tried to explain this silence:

[When] there was the Gaza offensive, various people were like, ‘Should we put out a statement? Should we say anything?’ And the decision was not to say anything... That has led to **tension**... [It was] too **controversial** because people had different views, but also in many senses too immediate and too **painful**... People have families there, and it’s not just a thing that is happening.

Laura—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

Laura returns to the diasporic ambivalence, rooted in Jewish identity being strongly linked to the Jewish-Israeli collective. These accounts demonstrate how politics is tied up with Jewish identity. While in Laura’s workplace the distress around the war led to silence, for Jonathan the Jewish workplace offered a space for reflection and identity formation:

I wanted a place to explore my **relationship with Israel**, especially in that political climate around 2014 Gaza war... [At] university I felt that I didn’t have the **vocabulary** or the **knowledge** to engage in that debate. And so I looked for the place where I can speak to **like-minded people**... And that was [my Jewish workplace]. It felt like, wow, all this time... I didn’t realise how important it was to me!

Jonathan—an Oceanian, Jewish, Ashkenazi male employee

For Jonathan, the Jewish organisation provided a safe space to reshape diaspora-home relations, escaping the binary UK public debate, where people must classify as pro-Israel or pro-Palestinian, lacking understanding of the complex Jewish diasporic position.

#### ***8.4.2.2 The Kaddish for Gaza, 2018***

Around four years later, in March 2018, thousands of Gaza residents initiated weekly demonstrations along the Gaza-Israeli border calling for an end to the Israeli blockade and demanding the right of return of Palestinian refugees. The Great March of Return, which was based on the idea of nonviolent resistance, faced a military response by the Israeli army as protesters approached the fence, leading the deaths of hundreds and wounding of thousands of Palestinians.

In May 2018, a group of young British Jews involved in a wide range of Jewish organisations decided to organise a ‘Kaddish for Gaza’. In the gathering, which took place in London’s

Parliament Square, participants read Jewish mourning prayers (Kaddish) dedicated to the Palestinian victims.

Jessica worked in a youth movement at the time. She and several other colleagues were involved in the event in a personal capacity:

It has been fairly obvious for us that... we **believe** in the State of Israel, but we're going **question** it. We gonna say, like, we don't feel **comfortable** with this... It was a very **Jewish form of protest** for what was a very Jewish issue for our members.

Jessica—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

Jonathan worked in another youth movement. He describes the deliberations in his team on whether to attend:

The trustees, they definitely **discouraged** us from attending the event... [Eventually we] decided that we shouldn't go. They seemed like it was a relief... How **independent** that decision was, I am not sure looking back. Because of the amount of **pressure** that was being applied from our trustees and from [a certain funding body]... And also we knew that if we took a decision like this, parents may no longer send their children... [so] it was a question of the **sustainability** of the movement... The fact we didn't attend was probably the **safest** position.

Jonathan—an Oceanian, Jewish, Ashkenazi male employee

The hesitation of the young leaders was not around the legitimacy of the event itself, but rather the personal and organisational consequences of participating in it, given the organisational ecosystem. But the pressure applied by trustees, funders, and possibly beneficiaries (parents), was too strong. In a personal capacity, attending was the right thing to do; in a professional capacity, it seemed bad for business and bad for their careers. Once again, personal and professional selves emerge as inseparable in the Jewish workplace. Indeed, the course of events following the protest had a major effect on the participants' personal and working lives.

Jewish employers seem to engage in a unique form of organisational control (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002) which is meant to produce 'appropriate individuals' and is multi-dimensional: it is implicit and explicit, involves the regulation of personal and professional selves, and rests on moral and managerial justifications. It involves issues related to employee commitment and involvement, and to loyalty to the workplace, to the community, and to a political project at the same time.

There was a lot of **abuse** in the Jewish press. And a lot of the people have been **exposed**. Those who have attended, their names have been, you know, released online.

Eli—a British, Jewish, mixed ethnicity male volunteer

There was a HUGE response from the Jewish community. We were getting, like, an outrageous amount of **abuse** on Facebook, from parents, people saying they were going to pull their children from our Israel Tour: ‘Why would we want our children to go on Israel Tour with leaders who don’t believe in the State of Israel?!’ Which... it wasn’t true! There was no kind of real **nuanced** understanding of it.

Jessica—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

These accounts of abuse reveal how the Jewish organisation and The Jewish Community are enmeshed. They also point out a possible generational shift, where young community members are more open to challenging rigid ideas around the meaning of Zionism and freedom of speech. These participants did not see an expression of solidarity with Palestinian victims as contradictory to being Zionist; or at least, were willing to challenge the Israeli/Palestinian or pro-Israeli/pro-Palestinian binary. In their eyes, these nuanced conversations belong not only at the Jewish dinner table, but within Jewish institutions, youth movements, and workplaces.

The backlash went beyond spontaneous reactions by community members. Powerful institutions were also involved:

[After the event] it all went crazy... This guy posted on a blog, like, ‘This person was there, they work here; and this person was there, they do this’. And so, like, listing me and my connection to [my workplace], and it was **horrendous**. [My boss] called me in for a meeting... and was, like, ‘This is very serious. We’ve had donors calling up and cancelling their donations because of your association with this event. That’s costing us money. People don’t want you going into their schools and teaching their kids... it’s going to **hamper your ability** to do your job’... It was **hideous**... I was just very **distressed** anyway, and then for them [my employer], who **share the political goals**... to be so **unsympathetic** and to be making it very difficult for me at work...

Alice—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

Alice’s employer failed to provide her with the support she was expecting, despite sharing the same political position. Favouring managerial interests over employee wellbeing and over moral-political integrity, he justified her silencing by claiming that it was for her own benefit, that she could not perform her job properly. It was Alice’s political-ideological voice that

made her lonely and destabilised her place at work:

Because a pool of funding comes from [a certain funding body], they suddenly **exerted** a huge amount of **influence** that we hadn't actually seen before... They asked one of our leaders... to write a public apology... because she wrote a blog... explaining her attendance [of the Kaddish for Gaza]... So she was, like, this 19-year-old girl being pulled in like a 100 different directions by different members of the Jewish community, in ways that were, like, really uncomfortable to watch. Eventually... [the funding body] were just putting a lot of **pressure** on [our movement] to say that she couldn't lead Israel Tour anymore... This was a girl that, like, really **represented** [our movement's] opinions! ...I think it was a huge shame. That's a real evidence of, like, funders and other **powers** being able to, like, **exert control** over our leadership.

...For me it challenged the idea of, like, **autonomy**... We were, like, the face of a movement and it felt, like, we're being **puppeteered** by the older generation... After Kaddish for Gaza happened, we were all kind of shaken... We were like, well, **our opinion doesn't matter**... We stood away from current political issues... even when it came to, like, antisemitism in the UK... Kaddish for Gaza really **shut down** so much discourse in our movement, because everyone only wanted to make space for, like, **incredibly safe opinions**... Everything felt **censored**.

...The big thing for me was the idea of... people who **owned** different portions of what we were doing. I think that was the thing that **complicated ideology from practice**... It was funding that felt, like, the big complicating factor... That like, even though it was a movement with years of history and years of ideology to back it, how we could actually perform this ideology was super **limited** by the fact that we ultimately needed funds. And the people that would provide these funds would hold certain things as **negotiating factors**.

Jessica—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

Jessica's feeling of 'awakening' echoes those of Alice and Jonathan. Kaddish for Gaza left them feeling powerless and led to a trust crisis with their employers. Realizing the power of funding bodies to influence the composition of the workforce aggravated issues of employee agency, autonomy, and voice. Kaddish for Gaza exposed the power dynamic behind the scenes: how employers navigate pressures between various stakeholders (funders, trustees, members, and staff), and how in this power struggle, employees are doomed to lose. Eventually, business motivations determine how organisations steer this complex political map, more than moral-ideological considerations. When funding was involved, the dilemma between universal human rights and loyalty to Zionism seemed less complicated. In a way,



while gender and racial diversity are portrayed as organisational assets in the progressive nonprofit world, political diversity (beyond certain boundaries) is seen as a problem.

### **8.4.2.3 Language policing**

The discursive struggle over categories of difference is central to the dynamics of diversity management. Dorit, an Israeli employee in a nonprofit that works in the field of Israel-Palestine, describes the debates around three controversial terms that were meant to be used on a daily basis (in communications and in educational work), and how these debates were acts of silencing:

[In my organisation] officially they were called ‘Arab citizens of Israel’... because of the **political connotation** of the word ‘Palestinian’... ‘Arab’ is more like a general term to describe the minorities in Israel, considered **less political**... It was very clear that it’s a complicated terminology for the British Jews to **accept**. Because the ‘Palestinians’ are [seen as] the **enemy**... So you know, in order to **keep my work**, sometimes you need to round some corners [i.e., compromise].

...We weren’t **allowed** to use specifically ‘discrimination’... [A person we invited] to speak was talking about discrimination. And I remember my boss [being] **furious**... [Our members,] some of them found it really hard to realise that... [people] are being discriminated [against] in Israel! ...You need to speak in a way that will not make some of the members... **unhappy**... [In the] strategic plan... one of the objectives was having this and this amount of members... we were **slaves to this plan**.

...We weren’t **allowed** to say ‘inequality’. It was too **sensitive** a term! You just needed to show it, without saying ‘inequality’. [But] people that have brains and eyes can see it. So that was the **political complication**. That we shouldn’t say things that will sound **too critical** against Israel.

Dorit—an Israeli, Jewish, Sephardi female employee

Language is a reflection of reality, but it also constructs reality. As these striking examples of language policing demonstrate, the debate around the representation of Israel-Palestine has various EDI implications: First, it regulates how employees talk and express their agenda and voice at work. Second, it silences the real concerns of the organisations’ beneficiaries (in Israel-Palestine). Third, it contributes to reinforcing the unequal power balance between diaspora Jewry and the people in Israel-Palestine, and more broadly, the power relations within the Middle East itself. Last, it weakens EDI as an equality project, as ‘diversity’ and ‘inclusion’ become empty terms if they cannot be discussed in connection to lived inequality and discrimination.

Alice, who worked in another nonprofit in the field, reveals other business-oriented

considerations behind the restriction of language:

‘Apartheid’... not only that we wouldn’t use in our Comms, but that like, you just wouldn’t say in the office if you are having a discussion about things. It was very clear **boundaries** and **acceptable political views**... It’s worth saying that [the organisation’s office] in the UK is a lot more conservative than [the office] in the US or in Israel. I think that reflects maybe partly the community, but more [the CEO’s]... perceptions as to how far you can go in the community and keep our donors onside.

Alice—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

Interestingly, employees are expected to ensure that their official (communications) language is consistent with their unofficial (office) talk. This form of boundary work by Alice’s employer can be alarming, as it shifts the focus from what is acceptable for workers to say/write in the workplace, to what is acceptable for workers to think and believe, anywhere. This gives donors power not only in shaping Jewish workplaces, but also in shaping The Jewish Community.

Ella describes a terminology dilemma faced by young leaders:

[Our members,] they had a real big problem with the word ‘occupation’. And I think what bothered them the most is that they are now becoming *madrachim* [‘youth leaders’ in Hebrew] themselves... [and] they don’t know how to explain it... They didn’t know how they can **justify** it when they are running sessions for younger kids. When we go to Jerusalem, on Israel Tour, or like any trip that they do with the movement—should we **ignore it**? How should we **talk** about it? How should we **call** this wall, this fence, whatever?... I [can] call it ‘occupation’, I [can] call it ‘separation wall’ but I can’t really **force this opinion** on a younger kid that I am guiding. So how... [do] I give all of the **different sides** of it?... I think that was a bit **overwhelming** for them.

Ella—an Israeli, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

The attempt to create balance in representing the reality in Israel-Palestine ignores the power relations in the Middle East—and particularly in a Zionist organisational setting, where the Palestinian voice is absent anyway. The young leaders acknowledged the injustice of the occupation, but felt the need to ‘justify’ it as Zionists. However, their deliberations around the representation of the occupation and the separation wall revealed their biased starting point (considering the option of ignoring the occupation and the separation wall; seeing the use of these terms as forceful acts). This example of seeking balance and political neutrality in representation, particularly in a deeply political setting, reveals the moral implications of the political diversity paradigm, by reproducing injustice.

## 8.5 Meeting point #4: Diversity across political boundaries

This section continues from the previous sections investigating the management of political-ideological differences in relation to Israel-Palestine, and focuses on the management of national identity (and its intersection with political ideology), by examining the presence and voice of Israeli employees in UK Jewish nonprofit organisations. This perspective serves to reveal how the construction of political-ideological difference in organisations shapes the lived experiences of employees who are ‘by definition’ nationally different. The focus here is on people who grew up in Israel and moved to the UK as adults for work. The first sub-section focuses on **Jewish Israelis** who work in the sector; the second sub-section looks at **Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel** in the sector. It should be mentioned that organisational dynamics around other national differences and backgrounds such as European or American (which are represented in the sector and also in this research) are beyond the scope of this thesis. The discussion below sheds light on the ways in which diversity and equality concepts ‘travel’ between the UK Jewish context and Israel-Palestine.

The extent of national, social, and political inequality in Israel becomes particularly relevant. As a Jewish and democratic state, Israel is often analysed as an ethnocracy (Smootha, 2017; Yiftachel, 2006). It is rooted in ethnic nationalism, and therefore prior to its commitment to all its citizens, it is a state ‘of and for’ the Jewish people, which is committed to maintaining and promoting their numerical majority, culture, language, wellbeing, and political interests. Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel, who make up 20% of the population, are largely excluded from national power structures (Smootha, 1997). This statistic, and this discussion, does not include Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, despite their being an inseparable part of the wider Israeli story.

These unequal power relations are intensified by the Arab-Palestinians being the native population, who remained following the expulsion of most of the Palestinian population during Israel's war of independence in 1948 and became Israeli citizens (Rinawie-Zoabi, 2006; Rouhana & Ghanem, 1998; Yiftachel, 2006). This superstructure created and re-creates injustices of distribution, shown in deep socioeconomic inequalities, as well as injustices of recognition around issues of identity, belonging, culture, language, and narrative (Jamal, 2007; Rinawie-Zoabi, 2006). Palestinian citizens of Israel are given unequal treatment under Israeli law in terms of citizenship rights, particularly around immigration and nationality laws that privilege Jews and Jewish immigration (Hesketh et al., 2010).

But before delving into the Palestinian difference in The Jewish Community, and in the UK Jewish workplace, the Jewish-Israeli perspective is discussed. Here, the voice of Palestine is sometimes intertwined, sometimes silenced, and sometimes irrelevant and absent.

### **8.5.1 Within the Zionist boundaries: Israelis and Israeliness in the Jewish workplace**

Chapter 6 explored how the sector reacts when the **Jewish** pillar of its British Jewish collective identity is challenged (by looking at the role of non-Jews). Non-British Jews, such as Israeli Jews or European Jews, demonstrate how the sector responds to stretching the **British** building block of its British Jewish identity. The data reveals ambivalence towards the Jewish-Israeli employee.

#### **8.5.1.1 Authentic representatives of Israel**

[At work,] being Israeli was part of who I am, my **professional abilities**. It was like the ‘ticket’ [pigeonhole] that I’m sitting in... the tag that I was holding on myself, like, ‘the Israeli lady’.

Dorit—an Israeli, Jewish, Sephardi female employee

With Zionism being the hegemonic discourse (Lombardo et al., 2010) in The Jewish Community, Jewish-Israelis are granted with a special status. Israeli national identity becomes an asset, not only on a personal level, but in the workplace too. Ella, an Israeli woman who worked in Jewish informal education, talks about her agency:

Sometimes I went to [Jewish] schools and I had a session about women in the army, or about the IDF [Israel Defence Forces], whatever. And I can talk about different opinions in Israel and outside... but then I show pictures of **myself** when I was in the army. And it makes it **really different** when it’s coming from a **personal** point of view.

Ella—an Israeli, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

Israel is analysed as a militarised society (Lomsky-Feder & Ben-Ari, 1999). While in Israel, military service is commonplace, in the diaspora it becomes an added value, positioning Ella as an authentic representative of ‘Israeliness’. Dorit elaborates on the ‘Israelization’ of the Jewish diasporic workplace:

There was one young woman, that worked there, that she was fired... [The boss told her] she doesn’t **fit** the **culture** of the organisation. It was a very **masculine**

organisation. You know, I think it was very much built on the Israeli model of, like, the army, youth movement, kind of... masculine atmosphere.

Dorit—an Israeli, Jewish, Sephardi female employee

Dorit's account is a reminder of how symbolic-cultural boundaries are intertwined with social-material boundaries (Lamont & Molnar, 2002). The boundary work around organisational culture can have very real implications on its workers' lives.

Asher explains how Israeli-Jews contribute to organisational positioning and reputation. He talks about two advocacy nonprofits working on issues related to Israel-Palestine, the second one being his own employer:

[Organisation X] have successfully **marketed** themselves as an educational **non-political** organisation... [to do that] (a) they don't say anything that scares anyone; and (b), they put Israelis [i.e. Israeli-Jews] in interesting **positions of power** in the organisation. In the past five years, the two directors of [X] are Israeli. So they can... **frame** the debate in the way that they want... [coming from] a place of being **native** and being **authentic**.

There was a very clear... **lack of authenticity** in the work we were doing when we didn't have an Israeli in our workforce... Until we hired an Israeli, we were very much speaking from a diaspora perspective.

Asher—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male employee and senior manager

In the nonprofit world, 'authenticity' emerges as both a moral value and an economic asset, as it serves to demonstrate a real connection to the community the organisation serves. Israeli-Jewish employees seem to represent the 'real' voices, lived experiences, perspectives and concerns of Israelis—better than the biased, politicised, diasporic views of British Jews. Ironically, this approach grants Israeli employees a position of political neutrality (though of course, no social context is free of politics and politicisation). This issue echoes wider debates, where the representation of beneficiaries is believed to increase an NPO's authenticity and bring it closer to the 'objective' reality (Guo & Saxton, 2010). What is unique about this context is the focus on Israeli-Jews as the only authentic representatives of the Israeli-Palestinian story. In a way, it makes sense for a Jewish-Zionist organisation in the UK to recruit Jewish-Zionist employees, as Jewishness is the relevant difference (Janssens & Zanoni, 2005). However, the way that ideas of diversity enter the conversation, echoing social justice language and rationales (authenticity, natives), creates a dissonance. In this

context, Palestinian identity is far from an irrelevant difference, yet it is a difference that is intentionally absent, as Asher will later argue.

The construction of Israeli-Jews as ‘native’ demonstrates the paradox of diversity in Jewish organisations, and the deep gap between the Jewish context and the wider EDI debates, particularly in the context of civil society and social activism. In these arenas, echoing critical and postcolonial theory, Israeli-Jews are analysed and viewed as a settler colonial group, not as the natives of the land.

Another discursive pattern can be mentioned here, which resonates with findings of the previous chapter on black-Jewish dichotomy. Throughout the interview (including the two excerpts above), when Asher uses the ‘Israeli’ label, he is referring to Israeli-Jews. This is also the norm in other interviews, as across the sector more broadly. When Israeli-Arabs appear in the conversation, their Arab/Palestinian identity is mentioned. Like being male, or being white, being Jewish is the norm in Israel, and being Arab is ‘the other’. Whenever this otherness is mentioned, it is also being reproduced.

The perception of Israelis as ‘authentic’ and ‘native’ also reveals traces of orientalism in the British Jewry approach towards Israeli society, and of the European (Jew) towards the Middle Eastern (Jew) (Said, 1978). In diasporic eyes, Israelis are simultaneously idealised and disparaged. This ambivalence demonstrates the complex position of British Jews between overlapping identities, belongings, and loyalties, as Brits and as Jews (Greene & Shain, 2016).

### ***8.5.1.2 Cultural and ideological ambivalence***

[I was the] **rude** Israeli. As much as I **tried** to be really polite, I found myself from time to time getting these looks... of, ‘Oh my God, she is making too much noise’... [A colleague once said] ‘I find it really annoying that you were talking over me while I was talking’. I felt so **embarrassed**... But then you could see in [organisation X] that ‘Israeliness’ was something to be **proud** of!... It’s a **love and hate relations**... They have some kind of **admiration** for Israelis. We served at the **army**, you know, we are kibbutznikim<sup>15</sup>. We worked at the fields... we are protecting our country... but then they are also embarrassed with us... so it’s a very **dual relations**.

Dorit—an Israeli, Jewish, Sephardi female employee

They [my colleagues] felt sometime that I’m too direct, like, saying what I feel... But overall... they wanted to work with Israelis, they **loved** Israelis, it was part of our

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<sup>15</sup> Kibbutznikim: members of kibbutz, a communal Zionist settlement.

**magic!**... The way that we speak, the way that we sometimes are very direct, our humour... they would **laugh at us** behind our backs, but they... [also] thought it was **charming!**

Ella—an Israeli, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

Dorit and Ella portray the home-diaspora relationship as resting on a connection-rejection duality, culturally and emotionally. This ambivalence is rooted in the multiple (perhaps conflicting) identities and loyalties of British Jews, and can be linked to legacies of colonialism and to an orientalist approach towards the Middle East (Said, 1978). British-Jews are ideologically and emotionally connected to Israel **as Jews**, but **as Brits** they struggle with their cultural ties with Israel. Employing Israelis revealed how connecting to the idea of Israel may be easier for some British Jews than connecting to the actual place with its actual people.

Shirley, a British Jewish woman, talks about her experience leading an Israel-advocacy organisation.

It was bloody horrendous... standing outside of buildings and **shouting** at ‘**the other**’... They are just right and they are not **listening**... [The chair] is pushing his own Zionist **racist agenda** forward. And I didn’t want my name associated with that... frankly I was **embarrassed**... [When they hired me] they were really excited that I was a woman... [but] when I left... I got a lot of flak and a lot of shit off people, saying: It’s because she’s a woman. It’s because of her age. She can’t hack it.

Shirley—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee and senior manager

Shirley illustrates the gendered reflections of ‘homeland’ in diaspora organisations. Ideas of masculinity and femininity are translated from Israeli society into the diasporic workplace: Israel-advocacy is portrayed as a battlefield. Like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict itself, it is seen as a ‘place for men’. In this militarised organisational context, hiring a woman was an asset from an EDI perspective. But her gender also enabled her employer to explain why her recruitment failed: She did not belong there in the first place.

By questioning the ‘Zionist racist agenda’, Shirley revealed the political nature of diaspora organisations, where the meaning of ‘homeland’ is not only shaped but also contested. Shirley’s dissonance in relation to Israel extends beyond cultural gaps. The Zionist project (and the Israel-advocacy project included) embodies a logic that is alien to the diasporic mind-set: the former is based on conflictual binaries between us/them, and calls for unity of (Jewish) citizenship, religion, and ethnicity; the latter is rooted in the logic of multiple loyalties and belongings and hybrid identities, where (British) citizenship can coexist with

multiple ethnicities and religions (e.g., Jewish). Interestingly, this binary thinking around identity reflects the legacies of British colonialism—the geographical, political, and cultural divisions between Jews and Arabs in the Middle East. Shirley continues and reveals her Zionism crisis:

It was just such a horrible side of Zionism. And my own **morality** was called into question. I was actually told by someone [that] I'm not moral, because I don't stand outside buildings with megaphones and defend Israel... The experience of the flag-waving Zionism that I grew up... **unwavering support** of whatever Israel did... is starting to **wane**... [This is] not the Israel that... I'm proud of today. A lot of those actions I'm actually quite **ashamed** of. So I'm really struggling with the term 'Zionist'. Also, I think a lot of people that are using it in the UK right now are absolute nutcases. And if I say the term 'Zionist' I don't want to be put in the same box with them.

Shirley—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee and senior manager

Shirley's account demonstrates the gap between connection to the idea of Zionism and the resentment towards Israel as a political entity (Beinart, 2012). The important contribution of this discussion is how the Jewish workplace struggles (and possibly does not try) to include more complex, hybrid, and ambivalent approaches to and interpretations of Zionism and of Jewish identity, which are already present within mainstream British Jewish society (not only on its anti-Zionist margins).

A non-Jewish man mentions a conversation with a Jewish colleague:

I did have that rabbi telling me the joke that there's a guy going to Israel for holiday, and at the custom control a person says to him, 'Occupation?' And he says, 'No, just a holiday'.

Harry—a British, non-Jewish, white male senior manager

The joke demonstrates the link between the Jewish and non-Jewish gaze on Israel, and how both of them realize the absurdity of the silence around Palestine.

### ***8.5.1.3 Jewish Disneyland: Israeli workers challenging the images of Israel***

So what is the voice of Israeli employees around Israel-Palestine within the Jewish diasporic workplace? Interestingly, while they are expected to competently represent and advocate for Israel, they often challenge those expectations.

Politically, when it comes to like, their [my colleagues'] views on Israeli politics... they are a bit more **purist** than me... [This] is something that I personally try to, like,



**fight**... when this 'Israel' is, like, [so] faraway – it's like Jewish Disneyland. You don't think about it as a **real** place with **real** problems... you don't have to **compromise** anything.

Gili—an Israeli, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

Almost all the Israeli-Jewish interviewees shared the same experience of becoming the only staff members to raise difficult questions around Israel, and challenge idealised images of 'the homeland'. This inquisitive position is particularly surprising given the expectation of employers and colleagues to serve the Israel-advocacy mechanism best.

My chanichim [Hebrew term for youth movement participants], they just **loved** Israel... I always thought that it's very healthy to question that... There was a really big **educational challenge** for me, to work in this really Zionist environment... They grew up **loving** Israel... as a youth movement they always had a shaliach or shlichah ['emissary' in Hebrew]... [they] have like a staff member who's from Israel **as a principle**... they go [to Israel] with schools, they go with family, they go with the youth movement...

Ella—an Israeli, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

The desire of Israeli employees to challenge romanticised imaginings of Israel is particularly surprising given that some of the interviewees were themselves emissaries of the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), and as such played a role in the Zionist socialisation of young British Jews (see also Ben's attempt to challenge his colleagues' view on ethnic inequality in Israel in Chapter 7). However, these critical opinions should be positioned in context: they are voiced within mainstream communal organisations, and largely remain within its Zionist ideological boundaries.

[The organisation] **expected** me... to bring the Jewish Agency's mission... to bring Israel [in]... [JAFI's mission] used to be to bring Jews from the diaspora to Israel. But now it's more, we bring **Israel to the diaspora**. So it's about making those **connections**... bringing the Israeli story to the diaspora.

Ella—an Israeli, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

Ella's urge to challenge the members' axiomatic 'love' for Israel can be linked to her comfortable majority position within Israeli society, which enabled her to adopt this critical eye, and feel comfortable airing dirty Israeli laundry outside.

It was easier for me... to **criticise** Israel because I am Israeli. I think it was harder for them because they don't live there, I mean they know they can make aliya [immigrate to Israel], [but] they **chose** not to make aliya. So who are they to **judge** or **criticise**?

Interestingly, at this point Ella introduces the term ‘diversity’:

They **didn’t know** how to criticise Israel!... [That] youth movement is so **in love** with Israel that in a way... I HAD to expose them to criticism!... And the way we did it was that we tried to make it as wide and as **diverse** as possible. So for example, we tried to do panels. Or if we talk about one opinion, we tried to bring the other opinion... [although] if we talk about the conflict and I can bring an opinion from the left and an opinion from the right, but I didn’t bring anyone who is Palestinian, then obviously it’s not all of the opinions.

Ella—an Israeli, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

Diversity emerges as a powerful tool for challenging groupthink and like-mindedness. In this educational setting, introducing a range of political opinions enabled Ella to recognise and reaffirm existing beliefs and narratives while gently suggesting that others exist. This moderate approach enabled her to challenge beliefs that are so deeply rooted in The Jewish Community mindset and public discourse. At the same time, she recognises the limitations of the diversity tool, which must abide by the rules of the game, and the limitations of The Jewish Community. In the Jewish Zionist organisational setting, diversity is doomed to be bound by the Zionist borders.

### **8.5.2 Along the Zionist boundaries: The voice and silence of Palestine**

This section examines another dimension of the dynamics of political diversity in the sector, occupying the borderland between diversity and inclusion: It looks at how **Arab-Palestinian people** and how their **Arab-Palestinian voices** are treated and managed in the sector. Israeli-Palestinian employees disrupt the foundations of the UK Jewish sector three times: in terms of their ethno-religious identity, they are not British, and they are not Jewish. But unlike other non-Jewish and non-British employees in the sector, their national sentiment and ideological beliefs (particularly the question of their affiliation with the Palestinian people and cause) are a third problematising factor. This third level of alienation, echoing wider debates around the loyalty of Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to the Zionist project, shapes issues related to belonging and voice in UK Jewish workplaces.

As previously mentioned, ironically, Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel are more likely to be employed in Zionist Jewish organisations in the UK than in non-Zionist Jewish organisations; simply because the non-Zionist organisations are very few and are largely volunteer-based.

This section elaborates the discussion around the hiring of Arab-Palestinian in Chapter 6 (see section 6.7: Deliberate absence). There, employers argued that despite the value of

‘authenticity’ that Palestinians may bring to Jewish organisations that work on issues related to Israel-Palestine, their presence might also risk organisational stability and reputation (for example, by alienating members and supporters). This section explores the recruitment of Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel. As it reveals, the issue of diversity quickly moves into the realm of inclusion: It is not only the **identity** of employees that determines their belonging to the workplace, but their **ideological-political voice**.

#### *8.5.2.1 The Palestinian anomaly: Recruiting Arab citizens of Israel*

Naomi and Dorit are British/Israeli Jewish women who worked in two Israel-related nonprofits. They discuss two different cases where Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel applied for jobs.

She had the interview... And I said, ‘If we have an **opportunity** to employ a Palestinian citizen of Israel, why would we not do that?!’ ...I much prefer to be ‘**for us by us**’... Yeah, we would need to look at ourselves. How we deal with Palestinians within our community, the **sensitivities** that we need to be aware of. Whether around religious ideas of... Ramadan or Eid or stuff like that. But also around Yom Ha’atzmaut [Israel Independence Day]. Because as much as she is happy to work for a Zionist organisation, I’m not sure she is particularly [happy] to be sitting there having a Yom Ha’atzmaut barbeque, right?

Naomi—a British-Israeli, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

Naomi acknowledges that employing an Arab-Palestinian may be challenging due to religious and ideological differences, but still finds this a unique opportunity to diversify the team.

One Arab lady came to the interview... She was lovely, she was smart, she could do this job. No doubt about it. But didn’t have a [work] visa... My boss... she wasn’t even trying. And I was really upset about it... [I said] it should be an Arab citizen of Israel that does it [this job]! Not a Jewish [person] that loves Arabs!... How far do we go in order to bring someone that **fits the diversity** that we **need** in our organisation?... There was an extra mile... that the organisation... wasn’t willing to do... She was perfect for this role. But she was Arab. I think that somewhere **deep inside** there were cultural issues also. Although... culturally she seemed **like us**. She wasn’t like the stereotypical Arab.

Dorit—an Israeli, Jewish, Sephardi female employee

Bureaucratic arguments prove to be useful tools in both justifying and tackling workplace discrimination (Palmer & Kandasami, 1997). Dorit finds the visa issue an insufficient excuse for not hiring the perfect candidate. She hints at discrimination: the candidate was not one of ‘us’. Cultural similarities were not sufficient for challenging prior beliefs around the

essentialist difference between ‘us’ (Jews) and ‘them’ (Arabs). These beliefs eventually determine issues of belonging: Those who ‘belong’ to The Community are believed to also fit in the organisation.

For Dorit and Naomi, the candidates were suitable not only because of their skills, but mainly due to their identity background, ‘authentically’ representing the Arab-Palestinian experience. As previously discussed, in many employment contexts within the sector, identity becomes a resource (lived experiences provided Jewish candidates an advantage in Jewish workplaces, benefitted Jewish-Israeli candidates in Israel-related charities, and facilitated the hiring of non-Jews to run social action projects).

The next section cautiously corresponds with scholarly historical discussions around ‘good Arabs’ (Cohen, 2010), which critically examine the question of loyalty of Palestinians to the Zionist project and the willingness to accept Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel into the Israeli mainstream. These questions have been discussed in the literature on work inequality in Israel, which is characterised by structural discrimination of Arab-Palestinian citizens (Khattab & Miaari, 2013; Ram & Berkowitz, 2006). Unlike other contexts of employment of national minorities, the Israeli-Palestinian case is unique, as Israelis and Palestinians are involved in an ongoing violent national conflict. The majority of Israelis see Palestinian nationalism as a threat to Israel’s existence as a Jewish state, and therefore assume that Palestinians cannot possibly be loyal to the State of Israel (Hermann et al., 2017). This argument has been widely used to justify their exclusion from Israeli public life. In recent years, public attention has been drawn to cases of discrimination against Arab-Palestinian employees based on their affiliation with the wider Palestinian people and cause, and the Palestinian struggle for independence (e.g., Bachner 2018; Haaretz 2017; Kashti, Ashkenazi, and Hasson 2014). Moreover, it has been argued that in Israeli workplaces, diversity initiatives that seek to ‘include Palestinian citizens of Israel in the predominantly Jewish workforce, conducted against the backdrop of a continuous conflict between the two nations, and a country context in which political inequality at the state level is particularly blatant’, end up reinforcing political inequality (Jakob Sadeh & Mair, 2023, pp. 30–31).

Thus, the following discussion explores how the construction of national-ideological difference within Israeli society is echoed within diaspora Jewish organisations. It looks at how Arab-Palestinian workers are implicitly pressured to comply with the guiding values of

the Jewish organisation (or, arguably, of the Jewish people), as a form of organisational control and regulation of (political) identity (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002).

### 8.5.2.2 *The ‘wrong’ Palestinian*

Colleagues describe the challenges around the employment of Amal, an Arab-Palestinian citizen of Israel:

We were able to include within our organisation identity and culture of Reform Jews, and Orthodox Jews, and they were able to get along more or less... But having a Palestinian voice seemed to be really difficult... [She] was **proudly representing** a narrative that was not-Zionist... And talked about Nakba as... a **personal experience**, or like familial experience. Which is very different than just educating about it as something that happened to somebody else... That **voice of the OTHER**.

Noah—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male employee

I could really **help** her in... how to present the information [to a Jewish audience]. Because she needed to basically change from being an **activist** to being an **educator**. And if you want to talk about **balance**... she needed to be **taught** through the process... to mention the Nakba, [without mentioning] that’s what Yom Ha’atzmaut [Independence Day] is called in the Jewish-Israeli society!? ...[We had] to **make her aware** and **sensitive** to the fact that there are people in our community that are **nervous** about the word ‘Palestinian’. They think... [it] means that Israel has to go. So when you stand up in front of a group and say ‘I am a Palestinian,’ you might want to help people understand what that means.

Naomi—a British-Israeli, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

The speakers reveal the dilemma that ‘authentic representation’ poses to employers, when the voice of minority employees cannot be controlled or managed. Although Amal’s ‘authentic’ Palestinian knowledge was an asset during her recruitment, soon after, she had to be ‘taught’ how to present her own narrative. For Naomi, this is an issue of ‘packaging’: The Palestinian narrative is acceptable, as long as it is wrapped and served to beneficiaries in the ‘correct’ balanced and sensitive way. Yet implicitly, the actual debate over how to communicate her story/identity questioned what the Palestinian story/identity is all about, and whether it had any validity at all.

While for Jews, ethno-religion and ideology are conflated and inseparable dimensions of identity, Amal is expected to keep them fractured: Her **ethno-religious identity as an Arab** is accepted, but her **national-political affiliation as a Palestinian** is denied. While her presence is allowed, her voice is restricted. As the diversity paradigm often dictates, Amal’s

identity is depoliticised: being Arab-Palestinian is reduced to a religious-ethnic difference, while its political-national dimensions are suppressed. The liberal Zionist stance struggles to open the door for transformative recognition of the Palestinian identity; instead, Amal's bringing the 'voice of the other' is used (somewhat tokenistically) to reaffirm the Zionist boundaries of the Jewish space.

Naomi represents the liberal Zionist approach: By seeking 'balance', she assumes that the Israeli and Palestinian narratives are two alternative stories of the history of the Middle East. The assumption that Israelis and Palestinians have two legitimate narratives that should both be heard and represented have been rejected by both Israelis and Palestinians, claiming that it misrepresented the power relations between Israelis and Palestinians, or between Jews and Arabs in the Middle East more broadly.

For Amal, her Palestinian identity embodies the position of the oppressed. She is then asked to treat and represent her Palestinian identity as a matter of perspective. This request (which is not posed to Jewish employees) not only neglects the power relations in Israel-Palestine, but is particularly problematic given the already imbalanced setting of the Zionist-Jewish workplace. To justify her silencing further, Amal is told that her identity makes beneficiaries 'nervous'. As a Palestinian, Amal lacks what Edward Said called 'the permission to narrate' (Said, 1984). She is denied the agency to tell a counter-narrative, to communicate her own story and history to so-called Western audiences. In this Jewish Zionist setting, this task was especially difficult.

Naomi differentiates between activism and education: While activists enjoy the privilege of being biased, advocating 'one side of the story', educators are obliged to 'equally' represent both sides. Advocacy is portrayed as a political action, education as neutral and objective. While Palestinian activism is seen as a political action, and as such is illegitimate in educational context, Israel advocacy is depicted as apolitical, neutral and legitimate within the same space. Naomi's account reveals the implicit role of the Jewish sector in Israel advocacy, and the institutional effort to depoliticise and conceal its inherently political nature.

Then Naomi saw Amal's post regarding a Palestinian rally on social media:

[I told her,] 'In the Jewish community... [those ideas are] deeply **threatening**. And very **scary**... [Our partners] won't take you [to deliver sessions] if they know that is on your [social media]... So it's **stopping you** from doing the work that you're employed to do'. And she's like, 'Are you trying to **silence my voice?** This is **who I am**. This is me as a person. You can't take that away!' And the whole idea of being...

you know the strong Israeli silencing the weak Palestinian was definitely something that she felt. That I was the colonialist imperialist Israeli imposing my opinion... [Eventually] it went to the funders. And it went to the trustees... it got to senior management level and almost went to the press as well... [I said] 'I'm not trying to silence you. I'm trying to **give you a platform** where you can talk about this, but... if you want to work within this community, you need to meet them where they are and not where you want them to be, and that is a challenge **for you**'.

Naomi—a British-Israeli, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

As Naomi describes, when it comes to political inclusion (unlike religious inclusion, for example around Ramadan) it is the employee that needs to adapt to the workplace environment (and the sector's landscape more broadly), not the other way round, while the organisation is reluctant to reflect on and question its own assumptions. This adjustment is presented as in Amal's own interest: Her critical voice prevents her from performing her role properly, and she may be risking her job.

In her story, Naomi intertwines business practical considerations (funding, reputation), moral arguments (the wellbeing of beneficiaries who feel threatened and scared), and political motivations (rejecting the postcolonial analysis around both the Middle East and the specific work situation). Her story demonstrates how crucial the political dimension is to managing diversity in the Jewish workplace, and how it is intertwined with the utilitarian and social justice argument.

This account also reveals how personal and professional identities are deeply intertwined in diaspora organisations that engage with complex home-diaspora relations. When Amal is asked to modify her educational approach, she is also silenced as a member of a marginalised minority group.

Noah is optimistic that hiring a Palestinian could work in a Jewish-Zionist setting:

[It's] more about **organisational practice** and how you incorporate somebody that has a very different culture... On Yom Ha'Atzmaut, we had Israeli flags on all of our desks. And it was like, 'Oh, maybe the Palestinian [employee] doesn't want the Israeli flag on their desk'... You know, there is a **different narrative**... not that we should also have Palestinian flags up! But sensitivity around that.

Noah—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male employee

The liberal Zionist organisation happily adopts the diversity paradigm tenets. The workspace can adapt to include diverse groups, as long as they do not challenge the foundations of the

space. The Israeli flag can be temporarily removed, but the Palestinian flag will never be raised.

[I told her,] if you're working **within the system** then we can talk about it. And if you're working to **smash the system**, then this organisation is not going to work for you. Because this organisation is, so much, THE system!

Naomi—a British-Israeli, Jewish, Ashkenazi female employee

### 8.5.2.3 The 'right' Palestinian

The hiring of Aida in another Israel-related charity appeared less conflictual. Aida seemed to represent the type of Arab-Palestinian the sector was striving for:

*There was something **exciting** about it... [There] was a nice dynamic as well. It led to interesting thinking about certain projects and topics to talk about and engage in... it also brought **realism** to the work, of, like, it's not just a bunch of Jews talking about some faraway place.*

*...[Sometimes] we talked about stuff that she **couldn't relate to**. And I definitely remember about her, she corrected my language on various occasions, to be more **politically correct**, to be more inclusive, and I really appreciate that. I don't think I perceived any big underlying tension, but that's from my experience.*

*...[Also] I think, like, **opportunistically** yes, it **looks great**... I'm sure it looked good for donors. She even went to some donors' meetings. It was like, why not?*

Julian—a British, Jewish, Ashkenazi male employee and senior manager

Aida's 'authentic' Palestinian perspective enriched the work of the organisation, raised the awareness of the team to issues of EDI, and contributed to fundraising efforts. Workplace dynamics also went quite smoothly on interpersonal level. Aida sheds light on what made this hiring successful:

When you start a new [work]place, you need to be **careful**. Like, you don't go and say crazy statements right?... I'm not coming with a very **extreme** attitude. That's me as a person. So I would rather focus on the things we have **in common**.

...I really struggle to remember big arguments. Also, it's important to remember—for us, for minorities, even if we are in, like, a **safe zone**... you won't really take the **risk** of, like, sharing too much information... Let's say, Gaza. I wouldn't start now [a] debate about Gaza... Luckily, we didn't have any war during my time! But sometimes there are things we keep for ourselves.

Aida—an Arab, non-Jewish, Israeli female employee



Aida managed to survive and thrive in the Jewish workplace largely due to her conscious strategic decision to avoid disagreements and controversies, focus on commonalities, and restrict her political self. As an Arab-Palestinian woman, she knew she could not take risks when debating Gaza—unlike other non-Jews, such as Harry, who could take those risks as a British white man. As Amal’s case demonstrated, expressing political opinions that challenge the Zionist narrative was indeed dangerous.

However, working in a Zionist environment did generate an internal conflict:

[The organisation] describes itself as a Zionist organisation. They do believe that [Israel] has to be a Jewish state and a democratic state... I understand the history of course, and I respect it, but it can’t come **at my expense**... Of course I want Israel to be more democratic... but do I want to fight for it to remain a Jewish country?... I want to fight for a country where I feel **belong** to, where I feel **respected**, where I have full [rights]. Where I am **part** of the discourse.

Aida—an Arab, non-Jewish, Israeli female employee

These internal deliberations destabilised Aida’s feeling of belonging at work. Regardless of her employer’s open mindset and welcoming approach, the organisation’s vision created a dissonance that she struggled to reconcile.

Aida’s choice to create a façade of conformity (Hewlin, 2009) despite her own beliefs, which may conflict with those of her employer and colleagues, is linked to her minority status. This limited and restricted representation of her Arab-Palestinian identity, a sense of inauthentic behaviour (Cha et al., 2019), is particularly interesting given that according to her employer, her value in the workplace was actually rooted in her Arab-Palestinian authenticity.

For Israeli-Palestinians and Israeli-Jews to meet and work together in the diaspora—particularly in a Jewish diaspora organisation—raised interesting discussions between them about belonging:

All my life... I had, like, identity issues... in Israel, being a minority in my country basically. And then when I moved to London, I kind of continued with this, like, identity seeking... It was really interesting... that the people who make me feel **at home** are Jewish-Israelis, who are also coming from the left... The community of [my Jewish workplace] was composed of these people... [Jewish] Israelis **understand** how a minority feels, because they feel [like] a minority in England. I had a lot of conversations with a friend... She said, ‘I know how you feel, you are a minority, I understand’... I really wanted to tell her... and I **never told** her, that it’s **not the same**. Because yes, you feel [like] a minority in a foreign country, but we feel [like] a

minority in our **HOME country**. It's a different feeling, it's not the same power relations... you have a **home waiting** for you. And [it's] another thing when you feel [like] a minority, and you'll always be a minority. You are forever a minority, and you will **never feel a part of anything**.

Aida—an Arab, non-Jewish, Israeli female employee

Aida experienced an ambivalent relationship with her Jewish-Israeli colleagues, between connection and rejection, sameness and difference. On one level, there was friendship that was based on cultural connection, as well as similar status in the diaspora, all being left-wing Israeli migrant workers. But that connection was complicated by their different status at home, by the meaning of 'home', the relationship with 'home', and their treatment and belonging to 'home'. These eventually determined their positioning in the Jewish-Zionist workplace. As Aida observes, unlike Jews, her diasporic situation is eternal, and persists 'at home' too. While Jewish-Israeli colleagues failed to acknowledge this power balance, Aida internalised it to an extent that restricted her from voicing those differences out loud.

As this section reveals more broadly, Jews and Arabs from Israel-Palestine both experience ambivalent treatment by the UK Jewish employer. As a **Jewish** organisation, their 'authentic', 'native' lived experiences become assets, and add value to the organisation's 'biased' diasporic perspective. But as a **British** workspace, their Middle Eastern culture does not fit in. Their stance as migrants contributes to their alienation. Yet the positioning of each group is fundamentally different, due to the national difference. While Israeli-Jews share Jewish nationhood, Palestinians suffer the historical baggage of the 'ultimate enemy', and are thus faced with suspicion (see Chapter 6). In the Israeli-Palestinian context, national and political identities are intertwined. Israeli-Jews have more space to express critique around Israel than Arab-Palestinians (particularly within the Zionist boundaries), whose voice can potentially destabilise the organisational and communal-national Zionist narrative. They therefore remain an asset insofar as they do not cross these boundaries.

## 8.6 Conclusion

Politics is central to diversity debates, but the relations between the two are ambiguous. Each of the four meeting points between politics and diversity that were examined in this chapter, tracing representations of Israel-Palestine in UK Jewish organisations, revealed different dimensions of this strange relationship. These included 'real' representations (hiring Israeli/Palestinian employees) and symbolic representations (ideas, voices, and beliefs around Israel-Palestine). Central to the discussion was the construction of Jewishness as a national

identity (Jews as a national collective), and the conceptualisation of Jewish organisations as diaspora organisations. In diaspora organisations, diversity travels across national boundaries: The analysed organisations are all UK-based, but often when they ‘think’ about difference and diversity, Israel (and to a lesser extent Palestine) is a key frame of reference. By tracing the role of politics and ideology (particularly around national identity and nationhood), the findings revealed the interrelations between the Jewish people, The Jewish Community, the Jewish organisation, and Jewish identity; and how the boundary work around these arenas is interconnected.

In the wider EDI landscape in the UK, political-ideological belief has an unclear position, and the management of political difference is somewhat hidden in organisational life. By contrast, in Jewish organisations, political-ideological difference is central, impactful, and often explicit. Political-ideological difference is key to Jewish organisational discourse regardless of organisations’ political affiliation (Zionist, liberal Zionist, non/anti-Zionist, or taking no official stance). Political difference shapes symbolic-cultural dimensions of EDI (trust, voice, authenticity, legitimacy) and material dimensions (funding, hiring, dismissal) of work.

Jewish organisations (particularly ‘cross-communal’) revealed a paradox: They declare political diversity, but they are also Zionist, and struggle to tolerate criticism of Israel. While political diversity was celebrated **within** the Zionist boundaries, political disagreement was suppressed **along** those ideological boundaries. In other words: Jews may be (more or less) culturally, ethnically, and religiously diverse, but they should remain united as a nation and loyal to Israel. More broadly, the idea of ‘political diversity’ reveals an inherent rhetoric-reality gap: The tenets of diversity disappear, but the language of diversity remains.

‘Politically-diverse’ employers admitted that not all political beliefs are of equal value; that political belief should not be fully protected; that political expression should be controlled; and that political discrimination is fair and even necessary in order to secure the future of the organisation, of The Community, and possibly of the Jewish people. The question of protecting political belief is particularly salient given the demands made by the Jewish leadership for UK institutions to protect (Zionist) Jews from anti-Zionist speech and activism (see the discussion on IHRA in section 4.2.3).

Indeed, political belief is different from other diversity dimensions such as gender and race. Unlike those protected characteristics, organisations are not expected to equally include and respect all political differences. Sometimes they are even pressured to take a stance, to draw

their boundaries of inclusion, to reject ideologies that risk the equality project. Thus, political neutrality is not only impossible, it is not even aspired to. Therefore, what was striking in the findings was not that Jewish organisations draw their political boundaries, but how they do that, by emphasising ‘political diversity’ as a core value.

The chapter traced representations of Israel-Palestine not only in the context of restrictive measures, but also as a source of agency. An Israeli/Palestinian background was often a resource for employees. These national identities allowed ‘authentic representation’ of the Middle East, provided relevant knowledge, and even conferred cultural capital (although simultaneously, some cultural attributes were also disparaged). However, employers’ expectations from these representatives to align with the organisation’s agenda often did not match their actual voice. Most of the Jewish-Israeli participants reported feeling uncomfortable with their colleagues’ idealised images of Israel, and tried to challenge them. Arab-Palestinian staff members had limited space to challenge the taken-for-granted. This was not only related to their identity, but to their voice: Broadly speaking, critique of Israeli Jews remained within the Zionist boundaries, while the Palestinian narrative seemed to destabilise the foundations of Jewish identity and organisations.

These discussions also revealed the complex motivations for managing diversity. While the business case and the social-justice case for diversity emerged as insufficient for grasping the case for diversity in the Jewish Zionist space, the **political case for diversity** emerged as the missing link. To a great extent, the celebration of diversity in the sector was meant to re-affirm its Zionist boundaries, and Zionism as the hegemonic discourse in British Jewry. Hiring Israeli employees demonstrated the political case: Bringing Israeli ‘native’ lived experiences was the right thing to do, and also contributed to the advocacy impact. But this act also had a political dimension: to strengthen the Jewish-Zionist link and the construction of Jewishness as a national identity. Hiring Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel complicated this gap further: While their ethno-religious identity was an asset, their national-ideological identity was restricted.

The next chapter is the concluding chapter. Building on the theoretical foundations of this research study, it ties together the findings of the empirical discussion and examines the contribution of this thesis to the diversity literature, and to management and organisation research more broadly, as well as to policy and practice.

# CHAPTER NINE

## Concluding discussion

### **9.1 Introduction**

This thesis investigated how diversity and difference are constructed in Jewish organisations in the UK. This concluding chapter reviews the positioning of the thesis in the literature, pointing out some of the key gaps that formed the foundations for this research study. It then revisits key findings in response to the research questions. Next, the contribution of the study to the scholarly literature is discussed, focusing on how the empirical insights attained could advance diversity research. Finally, the chapter suggests implications for policy and practice, notes the research limitations of the study, and proposes directions for future research.

### **9.2 Positioning the research study in the literature: Reviewing key gaps**

The conceptual framework of the research study (Chapter 2) is rooted in critical perspectives on diversity in organisations. These foundations point to a crucial gap between the emancipatory potential of the concept of diversity towards marginalised groups, and the ways in which diversity is understood, approached, and utilised in organisational life and scholarship (Nkomo, Bell, et al., 2019; Prasad, 2006; Zanoni et al., 2010). The main issues identified were the shift from a social-justice-focused approach to a business-oriented rationale (Lorbiecki & Jack, 2000; Noon, 2007); the bending of diversity away from the equality project (Lombardo et al., 2009; Tatli et al., 2012); the de-politicisation of diversity, towards an ahistorical approach that ignores the wider power structures (Kossek et al., 2006; Özbilgin & Tatli, 2011); the limitations of diversity categories for grasping the complexity of social life (Clair et al., 2019; Köllen, 2021; Litvin, 1997); and the relations between diversity, boundary work, and control (Kalonaityte, 2010; Zanoni & Janssens, 2007). The current study responds to the calls made by critical organisational scholars to study diversity in wider societal and political contexts (Healy, 2015; Nkomo, Bell, et al., 2019); to develop more flexible, nuanced, and context-sensitive ways of analysing identity, inequality, and marginalisation in organisations (Frenkel & Shenhav, 2006; Janssens & Zanoni, 2005); and to examine the paradoxes and inconsistencies within the field (Berrey, 2015; Ferdman, 2017; Foldy & Buckley, 2014).

Based on these foundations, the literature review identified specific gaps that exist in the scholarly debate around nonprofit organisations (Chapter 3). It emphasised the importance of challenging and revealing idealised depictions of nonprofits (Eikenberry, 2009; Sandberg et al., 2019; Srinivas, 2009); the unequal foundations of nonprofit work (Dar, 2007; Pearce, 2010); relations between identity and power (Heckler, 2019; Nickels & Leach, 2021); the spread of managerialism (Maier & Meyer, 2011; Marberg et al., 2019); and gaps between organisations and the communities they serve (Thomas-Breitfeld & Kunreuther, 2017; Weisinger, 2017; Wettermark, 2023). The discussion looked at two nonprofit models that have been under-investigated in diversity research: identity-based organisations (Biu, 2019; Kodama & Laylo, 2017; Ospina et al., 2002) that maintain a broad approach to identity; and diaspora organisations (Ghorashi, 2004; Van Gorp & Smets, 2015; Yabanci, 2021) that emphasise relations to a real homeland, or to an idea of one.

The third building block of the thesis is Jewish identity, and the specific context of British Jewry (Chapter 4). Reviewing the literature highlighted the lack of a critical dialogue between Jewish studies, on the one hand, and management, organisation, and diversity studies on the other. The discussion suggested that the ambiguous and multi-layered nature of Jewish identity disrupts the institutionalised habits of classification that are key to diversity management, particularly around dominance and marginality (Biale et al., 1998; Diemling & Ray, 2016); the construction of race/ethnicity and whiteness (Berkovits, 2018; Goldstein, 2005; Schraub, 2019); and political-ideology and nationhood (Brubaker, 2005; Klug, 2019). Key trends and debates in the British Jewish context were examined, relating to equality, diversity, and community boundaries (Gidley et al., 2020; Greene & Shain, 2016; Kahn-Harris & Gidley, 2010; Kudenko & Phillips, 2010).

In order to examine how UK Jewish nonprofit organisations respond to the concept of diversity, and how people within those spaces experience diversity and its dimensions, the study focused on three main social differences:

The first research question focused on ‘Jewish difference’ and asked:

**How is Jewishness constructed in diversity debates within Jewish nonprofits in the UK?**

The second question focused on ethno-racial difference and asked:

**How is the construction of ethno-racial diversity and difference in UK Jewish nonprofits linked to the experiences of the people in them?**

The third question focused on political-ideological difference and nationhood, and asked:

**How can the representations of Israel-Palestine within UK Jewish nonprofits contribute to understanding the dynamics of political-ideological difference and diversity in organisations?**

### **9.3 Revisiting the research questions**

The main research question that guided this thesis was: **How are diversity and difference constructed in Jewish nonprofit organisations in the UK?** This section makes some general observations based on the research findings, and then summarises the key findings from each of the three sub-questions.

A key theme in diversity scholarship is examining how dominant groups are advantaged and subordinate groups are disadvantaged in the workplace. This study contributes to this discussion by showing how broader racial, gender, and other identity-based inequalities manifest within the sector—for example, how people of colour are marginalised in the Jewish workplace; how diversity initiatives intended to promote racial justice can inadvertently reinforce the exclusion of black Jews; and how militaristic codes imported from Israel shape organisational culture in ways that marginalise women. It also reveals how, in some cases, British white men use a ‘glass escalator’ to climb to managerial positions within the sector, a privilege that other non-Jews may have restricted access to.

However, the main contribution of this study goes beyond these specific manifestations of structural inequalities—such as male privilege and anti-black racism—within Jewish organisations. It is rooted in the multifaceted nature of Jewish identity and Jewish life, on one hand, and the ambiguity of ‘diversity’ as a discourse, concept, and practice on the other.

Indeed, the intricacies and limitations around thinking, talking, and doing ‘diversity’ in Jewish organisations, as traced in this research, revealed a larger story. In some ways, they **exposed two intersecting crises: the crisis of ‘diversity’ and the crisis of ‘Jewishness’** in contemporary society. ‘EDI’ and ‘Jewish community/life’ are two concepts (and sets of practices) that hold promise for belonging and social justice. Yet, each increasingly struggles to fulfil its promises, visions, dreams, and commitments to its members and supporters.

Jewish diaspora, identity-based, organisations could offer new ways of thinking through these issues, and their intersection.

Diaspora organisations and identity-based organisations are uniquely situated to offer nuanced ways of imagining and approaching social difference, conceptualising social justice, and advancing inclusive spaces. Their in-between, ambiguous position between categories of difference and social affiliations provides them with an intimate connection to human experiences that embrace multiple and overlapping identities, belongings, and loyalties beyond clear national, racial, and religious boundaries. This position holds promise for challenging binary oppositions that often emerge in EDI debates—for example, between us/them, dominance/marginality, whiteness/blackness, East/West, oppressors/oppressed, settlers/natives. This unique position also creates opportunities for cross-movement solidarity and for advancing a broader vision of justice. The people who shaped this research—the participants—offered precious, critical, and reflective insights into what a Jewish space could be. Yet, in reality, as the research revealed, **Jewish organisations often emerge as a story of missed opportunity.**

The following sections explore how this research expands our understanding of diversity and difference in organisations by addressing each research question.

### **9.3.1 How is Jewishness constructed in diversity debates within Jewish nonprofits in the UK?**

Chapter 6 traced the complexity of ‘Jewish difference’ through the eyes of Jewish and non-Jewish organisational members, as it moves between religious, ethno-racial, national, and ideological dimensions, and between perceived positions of dominance and marginality. Conceptualising the Jewish nonprofit as an identity-based organisation (unlike the faith-based organisation that is more common in the literature) enabled these complexities to be traced. The findings revealed how the **meaning of Jewishness** as a collective identity is interlinked with the **meaning(s) of diversity**, and how different constructions of Jewishness shape (and sometimes are shaped by) organisational boundaries and the lives of the people in and around them (with particular focus on employees and beneficiaries). The key themes and arenas of organisational life on which the analysis focused were: (a) the case for a separate exclusively Jewish space; (b) the (Jewish) knowledge that is required in order to work in a Jewish organisation; (c) the benefit and ‘value’ of non-Jewish employees; and (d) how Jewishness



shapes centre-periphery positions and prospects of promotion.

The analysis showed the importance of boundary work in understanding construction of difference in a contextualised manner. Boundary work, which is used to maintain the Jewishness of the space, draws on multiple (sometimes conflicting) constructions of Jewish identity. For example, some participants claimed that advancing beneficiary representation in leadership positions is irrelevant for Jewish organisations. This diversity resistance was justified in two opposite ways: One claim was that since Jews are a marginalised minority, and Jewish organisations are led by Jews, then the leadership of the organisations is already 'diverse'. Others claimed that since Jews are a well-represented group in society, the need to amplify the voices of (Jewish) beneficiaries is irrelevant. This finding demonstrated how identity-based organisations (particularly Jewish, given the elusive nature of this identity) can challenge literature on diversity gaps in the nonprofit world.

The analysis showed how exclusion takes place along not only 'Jewish' lines but also ethno-racial lines and national-ideological lines. Since 'Jewish' is (mostly) associated with 'Zionist', non-Jews were excluded based on their (assumed) political-ideological beliefs; when 'Jewish' was associated with 'whiteness', non-Jews did not seem to fit the ethno-racial boundaries of the space. The analysis also identified grey areas where the necessity for a Jewish background was unclear. The discussion shed light on the changing role and value of non-Jewishness within the space, according to organisational needs: a non-Jewish background can be a resource (e.g., non-Jews can help recruit non-Jewish audiences), an irrelevant factor (e.g., Israel supporters are equally welcomed regardless of their Jewishness), or harmful (e.g., non-Jews cannot be trusted on sensitive Israel-related issues).

The analysis looked at three sub-sectors that are outward-facing (i.e., work with communities outside of British Jewry): social action in the UK; international development work; and Israel-Palestine. These discussions revealed relational dimensions of diversity: how Jewishness defines non-Jewishness, and vice versa. In particular, in the international development organisations, ethno-racial identity constructed the boundaries between Jews and non-Jews, while in Israel-related organisations, national-ideological difference created those (imagined) boundaries. Crucially, these boundaries were constructed through (a) the relations between the (Jewish) staff/leadership and (non-Jewish) beneficiaries; and (b) relations between the (Jewish) minority group and the (British, white, non-Jewish) majority group, thus emphasising the role of belonging and positioning within British/European

society. A key finding concerned the construction of beneficiaries: Surprisingly, Jewish volunteers and participants were often constructed as the beneficiaries of international development work and advocacy efforts around Israel-Palestine. These findings revealed that the definition of beneficiaries can serve as a mechanism that legitimises and justifies the exclusion of non-Jewish stakeholders, and maintains not only the Jewishness of the space, but also its ethno-racial (white) and ideological (Zionist) boundaries.

### **9.3.2 How is the construction of ethno-racial diversity and difference in UK Jewish nonprofits linked to the experiences of the people in them?**

Chapter 7 developed the discussion of Jewish nonprofits as identity-based organisations, by focusing on the intersection of Jewishness with ethno-racial identity. The findings discussed how the construction of ethno-racial difference shapes and is shaped by the experiences of organisational members. Those experiences may occur at work or in society more broadly. The experiences examined emphasised collective over individual differences.

Jewish and non-Jewish participants struggled to reconcile general and Jewish-particular dimensions of EDI—interpretations of diversity that associated whiteness with visible difference, and with power; and the Jewish context, where whiteness is multi-layered and contested. Dilemmas of categorisation also echoed questions of Jewish belonging in the diaspora—attempts to differentiate the (Jewish) minority from the (English) majority group by preserving its (non-white) identity; alongside a desire to assimilate and be accepted as a (white) part of wider (British-Western) society.

The construction of diversity was inseparable from context and history, echoing debates in the UK generally (profiling, race/class intersection), the Jewish world (Ashkenazi-Sephardi divide, whiteness complexity), and the nonprofit sector (funding limitations, beneficiary identity). The complexity of the meeting point between Jewishness and ethno-racial difference was not only due to the unclear, ambiguous, contested nature of Jewishness, but also the ambiguous nature of categories such as race and whiteness. Indeed, non-Jews struggled with the idea of white-presenting Jewish colleague who identify as non-white, because it challenged not only what they believed about Jews, but also their beliefs about race. These interactions could have provoked stimulating debates among organisational members around the tension between self-identification and social categorisation, lived experiences and collective memories. In practice, however, they were largely left unspoken in the organisation, and left many participants feeling confused or silenced.

Three main frames of through which race and ethnicity are understood in Jewish organisations were identified: associating Jewishness with whiteness; constructing Jewishness as non-whiteness; and understanding Jews as an ethnically diverse category. The analysis discussed the implications of each frame on the experiences of organisational members, and also how each of them is shaped through those experiences. Crucially, an intersectional analysis revealed how people of colour, and Jews of colour in particular, are excluded in all three frames.

### **9.3.3 How can the representations of Israel-Palestine within UK Jewish nonprofits contribute to understanding the dynamics of political-ideological difference and diversity in organisations?**

Chapter 8 conceptualised the Jewish nonprofit as a diaspora organisation, thus emphasising how diversity is shaped through the diaspora-homeland relationship and by representations of Israel-Palestine, as a place and as an idea or ideology, within the Jewish diasporic space. The chapter showed how national identities are embodied and approached in the physical space (e.g., presence/absence of Israeli and Palestinian employees); and how national sentiments are perceived and treated (e.g., position in relation to Israel-Palestine). The links between the two dimensions of nationhood revealed the relations between material and symbolic boundary work in Jewish organisations. Representations of Israel-Palestine contribute to shaping the boundaries within the sector (mainstream/independent), and influence issues of voice, legitimacy, and participation within organisations.

The chapter discussed how the Jewish diversity debate transcends UK national borders, as it echoes, reproduces, and sometimes challenges ideological beliefs, national sentiments, and political visions present in the wider Jewish diaspora and in Israel-Palestine. While Israel is not the only epicentre of Jewish life in the UK, it constitutes one of the building blocks of its diversity framework. Two of the foundations for this framework are: the social differences that are being emphasised and managed; and the motivation to manage diversity.

In terms of **what is being managed**, the findings reveal that in UK Jewish organisations, diversity as a descriptor of employee difference seems to have shifted away from traditional EDI dimensions (gender, ethnicity) towards other categories, particularly political difference. Paradoxically, the cross-communal Jewish space, which celebrates political (and religious) diversity does not include, nor pretends to include, the full range of political beliefs (and religious denominations) present in Jewish society. Cross-communalism, as a diversity

metaphor, worked not only to include but also to exclude groups from Jewish spaces. The focus on political diversity sidelines gender, racial, and other inequalities within and outside Jewish society, and reinforces the marginalisation of Jews of colour, Jews by choice, interfaith families, and other groups. The chapter discussed how this dynamic works to maintain the Zionist boundaries of The Jewish Community.

As for **why diversity is being managed**: In most cases, as official statements and employer perspectives reveal, diversity rhetoric was not particularly interested in tackling discrimination, reducing cultural marginalisation, or making Jewish spaces more accessible. Neither was it directed at increasing economic profit. Moral and utilitarian arguments seem insufficient for interpreting the enthusiasm for diversity in these spaces. Instead, the language around the management of difference reveals a strong political case: a desire to re-connect religious and political fragments of Jewish society, bridge social divisions, advance community cohesion, and particularly reinforce unity around Israel.

In many ways, mainstream Jewish organisations manifest not only the voice of Israel but also the silence of Palestine. Given the strong ideological and material support and involvement of diaspora Jews in Israel, these ‘internal’ organisational dynamics and conversations can have an impact on reinforcing oppression and inequality in Israel/Palestine.

#### **9.4 Contribution to the scholarly literature**

To discuss the contribution of this research study to diversity studies, and to management and organisation literature more broadly, we can start with a core question that has been asked in Jewish Studies: What does whiteness do to Jewishness? (Levine-Rasky, 2008; Schraub, 2019). This study reversed and elaborated this question, and offered insight not only into what Jewishness does to whiteness, but more broadly, **what Jewishness does to diversity**. The multi-layered nature of Jewish identity seems to disrupt the logic of diversity management, which has been widely criticised for its ahistorical, decontextualised, and rigid approach to social difference, and its reliance on fixed, a priori categories of identity (Clair et al., 2019; Frenkel & Shenhav, 2006; Litvin, 1997; Zanoni et al., 2010). Thus, the study encourages the rethinking of diversity as a concept, as a descriptor of employee difference, as a discourse, and as a policy approach (Kirton, 2009). This section presents key areas in which the findings shed light, problematise, and elaborate the understanding of diversity in organisations, under five broad categories: (1) the contextual nature of diversity; (2) mending

the broken link between diversity and inclusion; (3) a political case for diversity; (4) challenging the boundaries of whiteness; and (5) diversity in nonprofit literature.

#### **9.4.1 The contextual nature of diversity**

The current study deepens our understanding of how ‘diversity’ is (or can be) shaped in context, and calls for a context-sensitive reading of diversity debates. It suggests three main areas in which contextual analysis can develop the understanding of organisational diversity. First, diversity research can benefit from shifting the focus from single contexts to multiple and multi-layered contexts of analysis. The research suggested that diaspora organisations, through their transnational nature, demonstrate how diversity can ‘travel’ and assume new forms across borders. Second, the study highlights the centrality of a context-sensitive approach to organisational paradoxes. And third, it invites researchers to accept and appreciate inconsistencies and ambiguities in studying diversity, which are rooted in context.

Central to this contribution was the definition of diaspora organisations suggested by the research. Diaspora organisations were portrayed as spaces where relationships with a real or imagined homeland are shaped; as entities that mediate material, social, and emotional ties to ‘home’ while either reproducing, challenging, or reshaping nationalist narratives; as places where individuals and groups navigate questions of belonging and loyalty; and as spaces where people connect, celebrate, mourn, or reject their ‘homeland’ and its multiple meanings. As transnational entities, diaspora organisations construct complex ethnic and national identities, mobilizing imagined communities into collective action, though not necessarily towards a clear direction.

##### ***9.4.1.1 From single context to multiple contexts***

The research study broadens the scope of contextual analysis of diversity from a single context to multiple and multi-layered contexts. Diversity literature tends to focus on organisational and interpersonal levels. This de-contextualised approach, which is often associated with the social psychology lens, has been criticised for downplaying the role of societal contexts in shaping organisational life (Prasad et al., 2006; Zanoni et al., 2010). When diversity researchers position organisational dynamics in a wider context, it is usually at the national level. Researchers are interested in how identities gain meaning and how social inequality is created within national histories, economies, and regulatory frameworks (Healy, 2015; Oikelome, 2011; Tatli et al., 2012). By shedding light on **transnational** factors and debates, the study elaborates attempts to explore how diversity is shaped through

discursive politics (Lombardo et al., 2010; Tatli et al., 2012), involving negotiation between different stakeholders beyond the nation state.

The research suggests that **broadening the single-nation analysis to a transnational perspective** can help understand the wider socio-political landscape in which categories are constructed in organisations. What makes the UK Jewish context useful for demonstrating this complexity is the diasporic dimension of this community. Diaspora organisations demonstrate how diversity concepts can ‘travel’ across national borders. Diaspora-homeland relations shape, bend, and stretch the meaning of diversity (Lombardo et al., 2009). In this process, employees’ relationship with the homeland (through nationality, citizenship, or political-ideology) becomes a factor that shapes their position and voice at work. The study discussed how diversity rhetoric can be utilised to reinforce national interests and nationalistic ideas of the homeland in the diaspora, and sometimes to challenge them. In particular, the emphasis and celebration of ‘political diversity’ (while political expression is actually restricted) can be used to reinforce the ideological boundaries of the diaspora community through connection and loyalty to the homeland. This discussion revealed the problem of placing political-ideological differences within EDI frameworks, and the fallacy of political diversity, political inclusion, and political neutrality as ideals and aspirations in organisational life.

Considering diaspora-home relations can move thinking about diversity and representation beyond the local-national context: These relations can shape the motivation to manage diversity (see 9.4.3: the political case for diversity); define the relevant differences that are noticed and sideline others (Janssens & Zanoni, 2005); define the boundaries of inclusion based on people’s relationship with ‘home’; shape organisational culture, norms, and values in relation to the ones ‘at home’; and enable or restrict employees’ agency regarding their position in and towards the homeland.

Moreover, the study shows not only how the homeland shapes diversity in diaspora organisations, but also how diversity debates can shape the homeland. Critical researchers are interested in the wider implications of organisational EDI practices for social equality and inequality (Ahonen et al., 2014; Janssens & Steyaert, 2019; Swan, 2010), but these implications are usually analysed at a local/national level. The case of diaspora organisations suggests that organisational diversity discourse and practice can shape communities that are geographically remote from the investigated context, albeit being closely connected to it.

#### ***9.4.1.2 Context-sensitive approach to organisational paradoxes***

The above insights around the contextual analysis of diversity also contribute to literature on organisational paradoxes around the management of difference (De-los-Reyes, 2000; Ferdman, 2017; Smith & Lewis, 2011). Researchers trace and analyse areas of tension in organisational life, where organisations face competing demands that represent conflicting ‘truths’. The current study suggests that a contextual analysis of organisational paradoxes can offer tools to understand inclusion paradoxes better.

A key inclusion paradox that the study revealed, which echoes what Ferdman (2017) calls ‘paradoxes around boundaries and norms’, is: How can Jewish organisations be (self-proclaimed) politically diverse and at the same time exclude anti-Zionist Jews? Or more broadly: How can organisations emphasise and celebrate political diversity while also drawing their political boundaries?

The thesis (Chapter 8) suggested two ways of navigating this paradox. The first approach was sceptical about political diversity statements and saw them as mechanisms for marginalising dissent within British Jewish society. More broadly, this paradox was used to demonstrate how diversity rhetoric can become an empty shell, utilised to sustain the status quo and reproduce inequality. While this may be a valid interpretation, the second approach offered a more context-sensitive reading of the terms ‘Zionism’ and ‘support for Israel’, placing them within the context of the Jewish diaspora mainstream. From this perspective, Zionism is not a political ideology that Jews may or may not adopt, and Israel support/advocacy is not a political action that Jews may or may not engage in. Instead, Zionism is constructed as an inseparable, fundamental, and inherent dimension of Jewishness; and anti-Zionism poses a real threat to Jewish life. From this perspective, questioning Zionism is positioned beyond the political spectrum; it is beyond political dissent. This interpretation may explain why political diversity is bounded by Zionism in Jewish spaces. Indeed, non- and anti-Zionist Jews reject the Jewish-Zionist blend; nonetheless, the ingrained coupling of Jewishness and Zionism within the UK Jewry mainstream requires giving this perception due consideration when analysing the paradox. More broadly, this example demonstrates the role of contextual analysis in analysing EDI paradoxes.

A second paradox that the thesis looked at—and in which contextual analysis was key—echoes what Ferdman (2017) called ‘inclusion paradoxes around self-expression and identity’. Here the complexity was around Jewishness and ethno-racial difference: How can

white-presenting Jews be/feel non-white? Or more broadly: How can people be/feel white and non-white at the same time? The implications of these questions for organisational life were examined in Chapter 7—for example, for the sense of belonging of employees of colour. A de-contextual analysis may emphasise pragmatic utilitarian considerations, for example around the ‘value’ of non-white ethnicities in some progressive environments, or the benefit of minority ethnic categories in multicultural Britain. This approach would emphasise ethno-racial identification as a conscious ‘decision’ that (white-presenting) Jews can make. However, broadly, the research findings did not align with this reading. A contextual, historically-informed analysis of this paradox revealed a more nuanced picture, where lived experience is shaped, among other factors, by collective memory, and where race has multiple markers beyond skin colour (Grosfoguel, 2016; Nkomo, 2021). Thus, the thesis provides insights into the centrality of collective history in making sense of organisational paradoxes vis-à-vis EDI, and argues for a recognition and integration of societal and international history into the analysis of the construction of difference in organisations and emergent paradoxes.

#### ***9.4.1.3 Accepting inconsistencies, ambiguities, and the multi-layered nature of identity in studying diversity***

Critical organisational scholars identified the need to move beyond a priori defined, fixed, singular diversity categories (e.g., race, religion, nationality), and to adopt more context-sensitive and flexible conceptions of social difference which are less binary and rigid (Clair et al., 2019; Frenkel & Shenhav, 2006; Kalonaityte, 2010; Köllen, 2021; Prasad, 2003). This loosening of categorical thinking is crucial given the relational, multilevel, and intersectional nature of identity, the dialectic interplay between self-perception and social categorisation, and the multi-layered factors—psychological, sociological, historical, and political—that reproduce identity in organisations (Al Ariss et al., 2014; Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Jenkins, 1996, 2000). In this sense, the contextual analysis in this study contributes to the task of **de-essentialising diversity** (Litvin, 1997; Zanoni et al., 2010). Thus, it can be seen as a call for diversity scholars (and practitioners) to tolerate, accept, and appreciate inconsistencies and ambiguities. The study demonstrated this approach by temporarily ‘suspending’ the common categorisation of the studied group, and of the studied organisations, as these appear in legal, public, and scholarly debates. When a single-dimension approach is adopted, a wide range of meanings, layers, histories, and memories are neglected.



Since Jewish identity is usually studied as a religion, Jewish nonprofits are usually analysed as faith-based organisations (Bielefeld & Cleveland, 2013; Franken, 2020; Schneider, 2010; Valins, 2003a), with some authors focusing on ethnic dimensions (Kudenko & Phillips, 2010; Nayak, 2012) or political-ideological dimensions as advocacy groups (Sucharov, 2011). Nonetheless, such studies all look at Jewish organisations through a single-identity prism. Expanding the view from a single-identity lens to a more layered perspective revealed the complex, inconsistent, and contested nature of identity, spanning multiple dimensions of social difference. In particular, ethno-racial and political-ideological dimensions were entangled with Jewishness, and surprisingly, were sometimes more meaningful than faith in defining organisational life and its boundaries.

#### **9.4.2 Mending the broken link between diversity and inclusion**

Many diversity scholars have identified the broken link between diversity and inclusion, seeking ways to mend this gap in both theory and practice (Adamson et al., 2021; Ahmed, 2012; Oswick & Noon, 2014; Roberson, 2006). They often emphasise that having a ‘diverse’ workforce, talking about diversity, and even having diversity policies in place does not tell us much about how minoritised employees feel at work and whether their voice is heard.

A key area that the research helps elaborate relates to racial and cultural awareness in organisations. Diversity efforts often echo ‘politics of difference’ ideas around the recognition of historically marginalised groups (Young, 1990a, 2001). Diversity scholars and practitioners often see colour-awareness as key to advancing more fair, equal, and inclusive spaces (which can mean having official policies in place, or simply being able to talk about socio-cultural differences in the workplace). However, as Foldy and Buckley (2014) point out, one of the challenges of diversity research is how to contextualise the call for racial and cultural awareness in organisations, and understand the micro-interactions that enable colour cognizance (‘colour’ in a wider sense, which includes ethnic, religious, and cultural differences) to gain a foothold in a particular environment (Foldy & Buckley, 2014). The current study can highlight elements that may support shifting diversity, or ‘diversity talk’, into meaningful inclusive practice, particularly in identity-based organisations. The study suggests two of those elements: recognising (and even emphasising) the **multiple meanings of social difference**; and allowing **power awareness** to enter debates around difference.

Identity-based organisations are focused on politics of recognition not only in their mission but also in their internal composition, by emphasising and revaluing historically-marginalised

identities (Biu, 2019; Kodama & Laylo, 2017). However, as the study revealed, this recognition does not necessarily make those spaces inclusive spaces for all group members, and for members of other groups. In a way, the core identity can become an empty signifier in the absence of meaningful and critical discussions around identity. While the core identity may be emphasised and utilised outwardly, for advocacy purposes, it can also be avoided, flattened, or used in a rigid and suppressive way inwardly, within the organisational space.

The study highlighted two particular dimensions of colour-awareness that can make diversity debates more meaningful in advancing inclusion and fairness: First, moving from a unified to a **multi-layered understanding of identity**, and particularly recognising the multiple, sometimes conflicting and contested meanings of the core identity (for organisational members and in general). Using colour-cognizance language (Foldy & Buckley, 2014), meaningful discussions involve talking about what ‘colour’ means (‘colour’ in the broad sense of ethnic, religious, cultural, and other social difference). And second, allowing and even **encouraging power awareness to enter debates around difference**, and engaging in critical debates around power in society, and specifically in relation to core identity. The absence of power is not unusual in diversity debates, which have been criticised for being depoliticised and lacking power awareness (Özbilgin & Tatli, 2011; Prasad et al., 2006), but this absence is particularly jarring when organisational messages are focused on justice and recognition while the same values are not applied inwardly.

### **9.4.3 A political case for diversity**

A key contribution of the study is the conceptualisation of the political case for diversity. Diversity management literature discusses two main historical, ideological, and empirical motivations for organisations to notice and manage diversity (Kirton & Greene, 2010; Kossek et al., 2006; Lorbiecki & Jack, 2000; Noon, 2007): the moral-legal case for diversity, rooted in the recognition of social inequality and cultural marginalisation, in which diversity is portrayed as an anti-discrimination solution; and the business case for diversity, which emphasises economic benefit, whereby employee diversity is utilised to provide organisations with a competitive advantage.

The approach to diversity management observed in Jewish organisations echoed these two foundations. Very often the two foundational motivations overlapped, demonstrating how in the nonprofit world, when social justice is ‘the business’ of organisations, moral and business considerations are interlinked (Tomlinson & Schwabenland, 2010). However, neither

motivation managed fully to grasp the complexity of what drives diversity management, and what it serves, within UK Jewish nonprofits.

The unique foundations of diversity management within the sector are rooted in its diasporic dimension (see section 4.3.1, regarding debates around diversity in the UK Jewish community). The empirical discussion (see section 8.3) revealed how diversity efforts were largely driven by an attempt to advance national unity across political differences (which was utilised for Israel advocacy and evolved in response to attacks on Israeli policies and the legitimacy of Zionism), and to advance communal cohesion across religious differences (in response to fragmentation of Jewish society into religious streams). In other words, diversity management was meant to serve different socio-political roles beyond the business case relating to material benefit, and the moral-legal case relating to the representation and inclusion of disadvantaged groups.

The ‘political case’ shows how in the diaspora organisation—a space where national identities are celebrated, reinforced, and also challenged—diversity management is used as a mechanism of control (see 9.4.5) in order to limit this wide range of debates, feelings, and connections with the ‘homeland’ and direct them towards advancing a particular national project. While the business case and the social-justice case echo economic and moral approaches to diversity, diaspora organisations reveal how diversity management can echo political rationales and reproduce nationalistic ideas. In other words, the ‘political case’ prism reveals diversity management as a project that is not only driven by material profit, nor by a desire to advance equality and fairness, but also by demands to reinforce a national-ideological story.

More broadly, this contribution may expand the points of critique of critical diversity research (Zanoni et al., 2010). In particular, the study suggests that critical diversity research can advance not only an anti-capitalist project that challenges the neoliberal foundations of diversity management; or a feminist anti-racist project that rejects diversity management for re-affirming white masculinity in organisations; but also an anti-nationalist project that critically examines the oppressive role of the nation state in shaping power relations in and around organisations.

#### **9.4.4 Challenging the boundaries of whiteness**

The study can also contribute to advancing the study of whiteness in organisations. Critical whiteness studies criticise ‘mainstream’ organisational theory scholars for approaching

organisations as race-neutral structures, and try to develop conceptualisations of diversity and inclusion that are rooted in power and history (Al Ariss et al., 2014; Heckler, 2019; Mayorga-Gallo, 2019; Nkomo, 2021; Ray, 2019). A key area that requires further investigation is how the boundaries of whiteness are shaped in organisational contexts, and in relation to other dimensions of identity.

The Jewish case offers an unusual entry point to examining whiteness in management and organisation studies. Research that deals critically with the construction of Jewish difference—beyond categories of advantage and disadvantage, whiteness and otherness—is mainly located in fields such as history, religion, and literature (Berkovits, 2018; Biale et al., 1998; Goldstein, 2006; Schraub, 2019) and is less focused on contexts of work and organisations. At the same time, studies on whiteness in organisations either ignore Jews, or see them as a group that has been subject to ‘whitening’ and incorporation into mainstream organisations (like the Irish) (Ray, 2019), implying that this type of research belongs in history departments. Thus, by presenting new meeting points between diversity and Jewish identity, the study offers new ways of engaging with inconsistencies, ambiguities, and taboos in the study of diversity and race in organisations, challenging the boundaries of the field itself (Gieryn, 1983; Lamont & Molnar, 2002).

The Jewish case demonstrated how **whiteness can coexist with non-whiteness** within the same organisational space and the same group of people. Grasping this inconsistency is important for advancing researchers’ understanding of exclusion and racialisation, processes that occur through multiple markers beyond skin colour, including ethnicity, culture, religion, and language (Grosfoguel, 2016; Nkomo, 2021)—and as the Jewish case demonstrated, also national sentiment. This complexity can also elaborate debates concerning authentic representation in organisations, which have emerged for example around questions of transracialism, racial importers, and the privilege of ‘choosing’ a race (Bey & Sakellarides, 2016; Brubaker, 2016; Dembroff & Payton, 2020). The contextual analysis in this study elaborates those debates, discussing whiteness beyond categories of real and imagined, authentic and fake, while criticising the desire to find truth, accuracy, and authenticity in representation, on the one hand, and maintaining a critical engagement with questions of power on the other.

#### **9.4.5 Diversity in nonprofit literature: Lessons from diaspora organisations and identity-based organisations**

The study of UK Jewish organisations offers new insights into the understanding of diversity in the nonprofit sector, particularly with regard to the relationship between organisations and the communities they represent, serve, or work with. The construction of Jewish organisations as identity-based, diaspora organisations shed light on an under-investigated dimension of diversity in nonprofit spaces. This section highlights two main contributions, relating to (a) duality in community representation between liberation and control; and (b) rethinking diversity gaps and the construction of beneficiaries as a mechanism of control.

##### ***9.4.5.1 Duality in community representation between liberation and control***

Critical researchers argue that managerial discourses of diversity serve not only as a positive empowering discourse, but also as **control mechanisms** (Zanoni et al., 2010). Critical diversity scholars usually study employee agency and organisational control in the context of mainstream organisations (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Bowen & Blackmon, 2003; Zanoni & Janssens, 2007). Through the case of diaspora and identity-based organisations, this thesis deepens our understanding of the role of communities in identity regulation and organisational control.

This perspective is particularly important given the do-good ethos of nonprofit organisations and minority advocacy groups. The study expands the critical nonprofit literature, which calls into question idealised depictions of NPOs as representing the marginalised and advancing social equality (Eikenberry et al., 2019; Martínez, 2015; Sandberg, 2019). It challenges the image of minority advocacy groups as progressive equality stakeholders that stretch the meaning of diversity to advance a wider fairness agenda (Tatli et al., 2012). In this study, communities emerge as more than a source of accountability and legitimacy for the nonprofit organisation (Lewis, 2017; Ospina et al., 2002; Raggo, 2019), but also as a source of control. In this sense, the study points out a duality in community-rooted organisations, between **liberation and control**.

As the study shows, the community plays a role in defining and constructing the boundaries of identity within the organisations; and also vice versa. In a way, the diversity spillover goes both ways: not only from communities to organisations (Ragins et al., 2012), but also from the organisations to the community. In this process, research should pay attention to the relationship between organisational boundary work (e.g., inclusion/exclusion of

employees/members); community/sector boundary work (e.g., inclusion/exclusion of organisations in representative bodies); and the boundary work around the ingroup identity (e.g., who is a group member, and what ‘should’ members believe). A central plank for understanding the role of the community is tracing the construction of ‘The Community’ and the controversies around its boundaries.

As the Jewish case demonstrated, identity-based organisations are where fears, hopes, and sensitivities that permeate the community are projected; but these projections can also be restricting. For example, the study demonstrated this boundary work through issues of Jewish assimilation (limited inclusion of mixed-faith families), antisemitism (conditional inclusion of non/anti-Zionist Jews who may legitimise anti-Zionism), and belonging in the UK (efforts to associate Jewishness with whiteness).

Shifting the spotlight to the community also demonstrates the role of hegemonic discourse (Lombardo et al., 2010) in shaping diversity debates. Zionism, as a hegemonic discourse at the community level, was fundamental in shaping organisational boundaries. In fact, while political diversity was celebrated within the Zionist boundaries of the sector, political disagreement was suppressed along those boundaries. This role of communities in defining the loyalties of their members (Bauman, 2013) also suggested that ideas around loyalty to the workplace can be closely related to ideas around loyalty to the nation.

This boundary work shaped and limited employee agency. Participants shared their frustrations regarding this restricting environment (e.g., expressing support of BLM; demonstrating for peace in Israel-Palestine; discussing Ashkenormativity in British Jewry). Their attempts were restricted by senior management, trustees, Jewish charitable foundations, Jewish beneficiary groups, and Jewish media. Moreover, employers also operate within a closing space: challenging community norms and standards might risk their legitimacy, funding sources, and member recruitment. The power of The Community to shape organisational identity and boundaries also creates missed opportunities for allyship with partners outside of The Community around shared values and concerns. Zionism may provide a source of unity and strength for The Community internally, but it also builds ‘Zionist Walls’ around the sector that prevent cross-movement allyship and connections—for example, regarding anti-racist agendas, socialist agendas, or interfaith work.

#### *9.4.5.2 Eliminating diversity gaps through the construction of beneficiaries*

A key theme in nonprofit literature is the problem of **beneficiary voice and representation**. Researchers point to diversity gaps between the composition of nonprofits—staff, and more importantly leadership—and the communities they serve, which are usually constructed as disadvantaged (Fredette & Sessler Bernstein, 2019; Schwartz et al., 2011; Weisinger, 2017). Some studies take a business-oriented approach and emphasise how beneficiary voice can improve nonprofit outcomes (Guo & Musso, 2007; Guo & Saxton, 2010; Weisinger, 2017); while critical scholars discuss structural inequality through the whiteness and masculinity of nonprofit spaces as mechanisms that reproduce exclusion (Heckler, 2019; Nickels & Leach, 2021), or highlight how unequal structures of ‘givers’ and ‘receivers’ of aid reinforce racial delineations and economic control (Dar, 2007; Srinivas, 2009; Woolford & Curran, 2011). What is common to all these perspectives is the construction of the community as oppressed or disadvantaged, often in contrast to the service provider or advocacy agent. As previously discussed (section 3.5), studies on identity-based and diaspora organisations echo this construction of the community as disadvantaged, although they do emphasise community agency within these spaces (Biu, 2019; Kodama & Laylo, 2017; Molodikova et al., 2018; Yabanci, 2021).

The unusual case of identity-based organisations working with other communities offers new insight around beneficiary representation. Looking at this kind of outward-facing work (working with communities outside of British Jewry) generated new insights about diversity gaps. What was striking about the findings was that these communities were not constructed as the beneficiaries of social action and advocacy work. Officially, such projects sought to mobilise British Jews to support human rights, encourage volunteering, strengthen involvement in social action, and strengthen Jewish identity around issues of social justice. A critical analysis of unofficial roles suggested that engaging with these communities involved the politics of belonging of Jews in the UK. Interestingly, the two motivations are somewhat contradictory: positioning Jews as part of British/European societies; and validating, reaffirming, and consolidating Jewish identity. This is a simultaneous attempt to assimilate within and differentiate from the British. This position of in-betweenness echoes questions of Jewish belonging and identity between binary oppositions of whiteness/non-whiteness, East/West, and homeland/diaspora. In this sense, it once again reinforces the importance of the nuanced, context-aware lens in analysing diversity in organisations.

This mechanism of diverting the definition of the beneficiaries justifies the exclusion of communities from decision-making. Moreover, it makes it possible to portray their exclusion as an issue of social justice. Some participants argued that this mechanism enables Jewish organisations to maintain their Jewishness, to get involved as Jews, to bring a Jewish voice into social action. But such arguments shift the spotlight back from the ‘target’ communities to Jewish concerns and even reputation. From the perspective of diversity research, this mechanism enables organisations to eliminate the diversity gap. As such, it serves as a mechanism for institutionalising inequality in the nonprofit sector.

## **9.5 Contribution to practice and policy**

The study contributes to advancing management practice for creating inclusive organisations in several areas. At the nonprofit management level, it can be seen as a call for transparency in diversity management: transparency around why diversity is desired, what type of diversity is desired, and more importantly, where the organisational boundaries of inclusion lie.

Engaging employees and volunteers in debates around the value, benefit, and limitations of diversity is important. Reflecting and openly discussing the meaning and scope of diversity and inclusion is of particular importance in Jewish nonprofit organisations. As the study demonstrated, several participants tried, or hoped, to engage in critical conversations and challenge how social issues and identities are ‘normally’ thought of and discussed at work. Many shared a sense of frustration and experiences of silence regarding taboo subjects, working environments that are not open to challenge, restriction of employee agency, and limited openness towards allyship with other groups and social issues. The boundaries of debate, expression, and action around Israel-Palestine lie at the centre of attention of employees and volunteers and require an honest, open, and transparent approach from employers.

Advancing Jewish inclusion in mainstream (non-Jewish) organisations requires broadening the debate from antisemitism to Jewish identity or Jewish experience (for example in training and education, surveys on inclusion, organisational culture). The shift from focusing on the injustice that Jews have or may suffer to a broader, deeper, more nuanced conversation around this collective identity can enable the diversity and complexity of Jewish experience to be fully expressed. In such discussions, it is important to expand Jewish life beyond the religious dimension with which it is usually associated, to include ethnic, cultural, and national-ideological dimensions. At the same time, in terms of planning anti-racist policy, the



study demonstrates and supports the claim that efforts to tackle racism defined solely by conceptions of whiteness and power will struggle to include anti-Jewish racism (Gidley et al., 2020).

The findings also reveal the problems with inserting ‘political belief’ into EDI frames. This dimension of employee difference has become central to diversity debates in organisational life, although it is not protected by UK law. Indeed, political belief is different from gender, race, and other diversity dimensions. While employers may justly aspire to be gender- and race-neutral, political neutrality should be treated with more caution and sincerity. Indeed, feminism, anti-racism, and other legal/moral commitments are political positions. The critical managerial approach can benefit from a degree of scepticism around the idea of political neutrality and engage cautiously and transparently with ideas of political diversity, which can be harmful for the equality project.

## **9.6 Limitations and future research**

Gender and religious differences and inequalities were largely left outside this study. This approach was chosen in order to shift the focus away from the common ways of looking at social identity in Jewish studies and public life, towards dimensions that are under-investigated in the scholarly literature, and largely ignored (and even silenced) in organisational life. Nevertheless, the gender and religious dimensions could be usefully explored in future research on Jewish spaces and diversity, particularly at the intersections with the social identities that this study focused on. Further research could also explore the construction of class and socioeconomic differences in Jewish organisations. The importance of this discussion is rooted in the sidelining of social class in diversity management literature on one hand, and the complexity and taboo around socioeconomic difference in the Jewish world, given the nature of antisemitism.

Another angle that requires further elaboration is that of employee agency within the mainstream Jewish diasporic spaces: how organisational members challenge and re-shape organisational boundaries, and engage with diversity management as a mechanism of control. The discussion around non/anti-Zionist individuals, groups, and organisations requires expansion. Critical, independent, voices were included and analysed in this study, but they deserve more attention, particularly given the political importance of their voice. Moreover, the relations between funding and diversity management require further investigation. This is particularly relevant in diaspora communities, where diaspora-homeland relations are shaped

not only through ideological and emotional dimensions, but also through material dimensions.

An interesting development of the thesis would be to conduct an empirical application of a specific theory that deals with the limitations of binary thinking and analysis or social and organisational life (see for example: Clair et al., 2019; McCall, 2005). Also in terms of methodology, further research on public, outward-facing organisational positioning (via web statements) could be very useful for understanding the construction of diversity and rhetoric-reality gaps. This is particularly important given changes in the political landscape in recent years, and the rise of diversity backlash; these trends re-shape not only diversity practices, but also how the language of diversity is approached and used in organisations. It is important to trace how these wider trends manifest in organisational statements in Jewish communities. Furthermore, other data collection methods can offer deeper insight into the construction of diversity. For example, observations of workplace interactions in real time can reveal characteristics of informal spontaneous interactions between organisational members.

The beneficiary angle can be elaborated by interviewing (Jewish and non-Jewish) members of the communities the organisations work with. The focus of this study on people who are already engaged in Jewish organisations meant that it reveals only a fraction of these dynamics. Interviewing people who were rejected and/or discriminated against in a job interview, or British Jews who are not even interested in joining the sector, would be important in understanding how its boundaries are forged. Of course, gaining access to such non-engaged individuals would be difficult, if interesting.

Future comparative studies can examine the study findings alongside other contexts. Other diaspora communities in the UK (e.g., Indian/Pakistani) that experience national conflict at 'home' could offer new insights into the diversity-politics link. In these contexts, it would be interesting to examine how established nationalist narratives are reproduced and challenged in the workplace. Exploring organisations in Jewish diaspora communities outside the UK (e.g., United States, France, or Germany) could offer additional insight into the construction of race and ethnicity, and the role of Israel-Palestine in shaping the meaning of EDI and workers' lives in different national contexts, each with its own history and politics of race and racism.

## 9.7 Concluding words

As this research project comes to an end, the need to bridge the gap between the field of EDI and Jewish identity is more urgent than ever. The Israel-Palestine war that began in October 2023 – at the time of writing these lines, is still ongoing – is reshaping the Middle East, destroying lives, livelihoods, and communities. At the same time, it is provoking new debates around Jewishness and social justice in multiple (Jewish and non-Jewish) communities around the world, as institutions struggle with questions relating to freedom of speech and the restriction of debate around Israel and Palestine, Jews and Arabs, antisemitism and Islamophobia. Jewish speakers have expressed frustration, claiming that Jewish pain and concerns are being ignored by progressive activists, speakers, and thinkers. Some Jewish institutions and leaders have been criticised for being blind to Palestinian suffering, and for working to silence urgent critique of Israel. And other Jewish groups have detached themselves from Israel and Zionism and say: Not in our name.

These tensions are not only of political importance. They also enter and destabilise organisational life, as the controversies around antisemitism on UK and US campuses have demonstrated, reaching their peak with the resignation of the presidents of both Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania. These trends require a re-thinking of Jewish inclusion in organisations. They are also a call for Jewish activism and scholarship to reflect on inclusion beyond the Jewish lens. More broadly, they raise new questions regarding the relations between organisations, society, and justice.

This study offers new ways for critically embedding Jewish identity, experiences, concerns, and political dynamics into diversity scholarship. Hopefully it can contribute to developments that are not only of scholarly importance, but that can also make a real difference to people's lives.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Information sheet and consent form

### Invitation to participate in a research project and information for participants

#### Diversity in Civil Society Organisations: A Study of UK Jewish Charity Sector

We would like to invite you to be part of this research project. Please read the following information before you decide to participate. This will tell you what the research is about and what participating in it involves. Please ask if anything is unclear or if you would like more information. If you decide to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form, but you are still free to withdraw at any time.

**About the research:** This research deals with diversity in not-for-profit organisations, and especially those engaged in social change or advocacy work. It looks at those organisations both as workplaces and as agents for change, and explores the dynamics between identity, work and social change. We are interested in learning about your experience and views as an employee or an employer in the sector, based on your current or past work experience. This research project is part of a PhD thesis undertaken at Queen Mary University of London, and is expected to end by January 2023. The Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee has approved this research.

**Taking part in the research:** Participation includes one interview held in the workplace, in a public venue, or online (video chat). Audio and/or video recording of the interview will only be used for research purposes. The identity of all participants (individuals and organisations) is kept confidential at all research stages, including any future publications or presentations. Participants will be referred to by characteristics such as gender, nationality, or role. The research is designed to ensure that participants feel free to express their thoughts. However if any inconvenience occurs around any topic, please point it out during the interview. We hope that participation in the research will be an interesting experience for you, and an opportunity for reflection.

For more information about your personal data and your rights please read Queen Mary's privacy notice for research participants<sup>16</sup>. If you have any questions or concerns about how the study was conducted please, firstly, contact the researcher. If this is unsuccessful, or not appropriate, please contact the Secretary at the Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee, Room W104, Queens' Building, Mile End Road, London, E1 4NS or [research-ethics@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:research-ethics@qmul.ac.uk). If you have any questions relating to data protection, please contact the Data Protection Officer, Queens' Building, Mile End Road, London, E1 4NS or [data-protection@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:data-protection@qmul.ac.uk). Looking forward to our conversation.

Edith Pick, PhD researcher  
School of Business and Management  
Queen Mary University of London

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/media/arcs/policyzone/Privacy-Notice-for-Research-Participants.pdf>

## Consent form

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

Title of Study: Diversity in civil society organisations: A study of the UK Jewish charity sector

Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee Ref: MERC2019/84.

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The person organising the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part.

If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time. If you are willing to participate in this study, please mark the appropriate responses and sign and date the declaration underneath.

Statement	Please mark your response
I agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction in verbal and/or written form	YES / NO
I understand that if I decide at any other time during the research that I no longer wish to participate in this project, I can notify the researchers involved and be withdrawn from it immediately	YES / NO
I have read both the notes written above and the Information Sheet about the project, and understand what the research study involves	YES / NO
I agree to take part in the study, which will include use of my personal data	YES / NO

### Participant's signature

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Investigator's statement:

I \_\_\_\_\_ confirm that I have carefully explained the nature, demands and any foreseeable risks (where applicable) of the proposed research to the volunteer and provided a copy of this form.

## **Appendix 2: Interview guides (employees and employers)**

### **Interview questions: Employees/volunteers**

1. Can you tell me about your background: where you are from, an overview of your work experience, your involvement with the sector, and what you are doing today?
2. What was your motivation in working/volunteering in the sector?

#### *Identity and diversity*

3. How would you define your own identity? How do you identify?
4. Who works in your organisation and/or the sector more broadly? In general, what are people's identities and backgrounds?
  - Are there any groups that are under-represented? Any voices that are missing?
  - Are there any barriers that prevent certain groups from entering the sector or getting promoted?
5. What comes to your mind when you think of diversity in the context of your work, or the sector more broadly?

#### *Inclusion, belonging*

6. Which aspects of your identity do you feel more/less comfortable with at work?
7. Do you feel that people/everyone can express themselves in the same way at work?
8. Was there any change that you tried to lead within your organisation? Do you feel that you have influence?

#### *Relationships, workplace dynamics*

9. How would you describe the relations between the different groups at work?
  - Are some groups more dominant than others? How? (e.g., numbers, position, status, voice, influence, etc.).
  - What are your connections/relations with the communities/beneficiaries the organisation works with? Who are they?
  - What is the role of your identity in those relationships?
10. What kinds of debates or disagreements rise at work?
  - Are there political debates at work?
  - Are any issues being avoided?
11. Can you tell me about any work-related incidents where you think that your identity played a role?

#### *Equality, discrimination, diversity*

12. Do you feel that you are being treated the same or differently than others by your employer?
13. Have you experienced discrimination at work?
  - Can you give examples of unfair treatment?
  - Were there incidents that involved other people that you would like to share?

## **Interview questions: Employers**

2. Can you tell me about your background: where you are from, an overview of your work experience, your involvement with the sector, and what you are doing today?
  - What was your motivation in joining the sector?

### *Organisation's mission and work*

3. What does your organisation do in your own words?
  - What type of change are you seeking?
  - Are you interested in issues related to equality, diversity and inclusion in the Jewish community/wider society?
  - Which group(s) do you serve/represent?
  - How would you describe the identity of your organisation?
  - What is Jewish about your organisation? (e.g., mission, workforce, values, culture)
4. What are the main challenges of your organisation these days, or yours as a senior manager?
5. Who are your allies, partners? Do you see your organisation as part of a wider movement or network that shares ideas, concerns, and values? (local/national/global)
  - How do you connect or work together?
  - What prevents you from working with partners?

### *Diversity*

6. How would you define your own identity? How do you identify?
7. Who works in your organisation and/or the sector more broadly? In general, what are people's identities and backgrounds?
  - What is the diversity on different levels: board, management, employees?
  - Groups that are under-represented? Any voices that are missing?
  - Are there any barriers that prevent certain groups from entering the sector or getting promoted?
  - Are there non-Jewish employees or members? What is their role?
  - What comes to your mind when you think diversity in the context of your work?
  - Which dimensions of diversity matter to you? Matter in the sector more broadly?
  - Why are you interested in diversity? Why should it matter to employers? (e.g., justice, performance, reputation, becoming a model).
    - Do you believe that being a diverse workplace helps you to make your case?
    - Are any stakeholders interested in diversity? Why? (e.g., managers, employees, board, funders, communities, etc.)

### *Relationships, workplace dynamics*

8. How would you describe the relations between the different groups at work?
  - Are some groups more dominant than others? How? (e.g., numbers, position, status, voice, influence, etc.).
9. What kinds of debates or disagreements arise at work?



- Are there political debates at work?
- Are any issues being avoided?

*Equality, discrimination, diversity policy/approach*

10. Is diversity important to you? How?

- Diversity of whom: your staff/members/beneficiaries etc.?
- Who should the organisation represent better: the British Jewish community, the Jewish world, the UK, Israel...? Any other context?
- Why is workplace/organisational diversity important?
- What are your thoughts on inclusion? Do you actively try to make people comfortable with their identity, voice, culture at work?


11. What do you do/have you done to make the organisation more equal, diverse and inclusive?

- What are your challenges in promoting EDI?
- Were there any debates or disagreements around EDI?

## Appendix 3: Nvivo code list (nodes)

(Table 4)

### Nodes

Name	Files	References
1 Diversity discourse		41 1579
Age dynamic, ageism		28 52 1
Barriers		7 9 2
Business vs moral-social justice case		33 89 0
CLASS		27 70 0
Cross-communalism		17 39 1
Denominations, religion, faith, belief		17 32 0
Disability, health, wellbeing, access		7 11 1
Discrimination, harassment, abuse of power -- mov		21 56 0
Diversity discourses -		12 17 2
UK level diversity		6 7 0
We don't need diversity		8 10 0
EDI language and jargon		3 7 0
EDI practices, methods, policies		7 14 0
Employment, employer-employee relations		11 23 1
Equality, pay, work conditions		17 37 0
FUNDING -		22 92
Education - fundraising tension		9 22
Funders setting the agenda		15 32
Funding and fundraising		14 38
GENDER -		32 160
Feminisation of professions		1 2
Gender & leadership		15 32
Gender balance & equality		23 37
Gender dynamics & roles		22 52
Male privilege		12 28
Women's bodies		3 9
Haredi		12 16
Intersectionality		10 14
Language at work - use of		10 22
Used to challenge		4 12
Used to control		2 2
Used to exclude		2 2
Used to include		1 1
Used to maintain		2 2

## Nvivo code list – continued (2)

### Nodes

Name	Files	References
Used to reduce	2	2
Language of D and multiculturalism -	19	78
Balance, hugging & wrestling, push-pull	13	32
Celebration	8	12
Explore one's 'own way' of engaging with...	6	9
Narratives	2	5
Pluralism, multi-vocal	5	18
Languages used & mentioned in interviews	11	20
LGBT	11	19
Locations - diversity of whom	24	72
Beneficiaries	7	9
Members, participants	8	12
Programmes, content	6	8
Speakers	12	16
Staff	7	10
Trustees	9	17
MISSION, VALUES -	15	19
Engagement	3	4
Mission, values - general	13	15
Motivation - EDI on the agenda of employers	11	25
Nationality, immigration, cultural-language barrier	1	4
NON-JEWS -	29	123
Jews-non-Jews relations, exclusion of non-Jews	15	29
Non-Jews - general	26	72
Should there be non-Jews in Jewish orgs	11	17
The non-Jewish Rabbi	5	5
Orthodox default	9	16
Political diversity	19	37
RACE & ETHNICITY -	34	144
Racial-ethnic diversity and inclusion	24	43
Racism	12	27
Whiteness Blackness	29	74
Recognition-distribution	18	38
Recruitment	19	32
Sephardi, Mizrahi, Arab-Jew	26	60

## Nvivo code list – continued (3)

### Nodes

Name	Files	References
Size	11	16 0
Training	6	8 0
Unity-cohesion-plurality	16	26 0
Universalism-particularism	22	56 0
What is diversity	5	6 1
Workforce diversity - who works in Jewish orgs	12	20 0
<b>2 Voice</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>1142</b>
Angry feminist	5	10 0
As a Jew	2	5 1
Avoidance, taboos, non-confrontation, self-control	29	69 0
Awakening, questioning, radicalisation	11	31 2
Being seen, unseen, care	2	6 1
Belonging, home, family, feeling different, comfort	32	125 0
CHANGE - structure-agency	26	90 0
Constituencies - who they represent	8	19 0
Controversy, political debate	30	71 0
Creation of difference	13	20 1
Essentialism-complexity, stereotype	14	21 0
Inclusion-exclusion, in-out, accomodation	31	118 1
Language, terms, naming, PC, inclusive language	15	36 1
Mainstream-radical	10	37 2
Multiple identities, loyalty, identity search	21	59 2
Personal-professional	8	12 1
Power, hierarchy, control, dominant-marginal, cent	24	60 2
Privilege-oppression	16	38 0
Radical, hybrid, marginal identity	3	15 2
Representation - legit speaker, authentic, descriptiv	31	117 0
Silencing, silence, self-censorship, internalising	18	49 1
Similarity-difference	13	40 2
Solidarity, outward facing, mutual aid	18	47 2
The political	19	44 0
Tokenism	3	3 0
<b>3 Israel and Zionism</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>540</b>
Advocacy Israel-Jewish lobby PR	17	60 2
Avoiding Israel	17	28 0
Israel as non-political	10	18 0

## Nvivo code list – continued (4)

### Nodes

Name	Files	References
Israel Engagement	13	38 C
Israeli identity at work, ISR at work	19	69 C
Love-hate relations, blind support, Jewish disneyla	19	38 C
Nation, nationalism, nationality-citizenship	4	7 1
Non-Zionism, anti-Zionism, diasporim	16	42 1
Occupation elephant in the room	9	18 2
Palestinian voice	26	107 C
Zionism crisis, criticism of Israel	24	66 1
Zionist socialisation, Israelisation	18	37 2
Zionist walls	7	12 2
<b>Case studies</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>52</b>
Annexation 2020	5	9 C
Gaza war 2014	4	5 C
Kaddish for Gaza 2018	4	13 C
Labour antisemitism row	17	24 C
<b>Context - charity sector -</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>302</b>
Affirmative-transformative, social action vs justice	14	32 C
Bias neutrality symmetry	4	7 2
<b>Career in the sector -</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>172 C</b>
Career	6	6 2
Entering the sector, leaving, not entering	23	44 1
Motivation1 - Convenience, network	16	33 0
Motivation2 - Identity search, reward	12	21 0
Motivation3 - Passion, moral arguments, giving	22	35 0
Motivation4 - financial	2	2 2
Volunteering	8	17 0
Youth movements	8	14 2
Charity context, neoliberalism, big society, marketi	18	38 2
Development	3	10 2
Organisational boundaries	6	33 2
Security	5	10 2
<b>Context - UK Jewish -</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>271</b>
<b>Antisemitism -</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>70 C</b>
Antisemitic remarks	8	12 0
Antisemitism campaign	16	26 0

## Nvivo code list – continued (5)

### Nodes

Name	Files	References
Antisemitism debates	18	32 0
British-English culture identity	7	9 1
Geography - segregation, separation, integration	10	18 2
Jewish charity sector overview	22	36 0
Jewish community overview	22	39 0
Minority-majority	12	27 2
Org culture, the Jewish org	21	50 0
Relations with other minorities	5	19 0
Covid	12	25
Inward-outward relations	25	47
My positionality	9	20
Knowing the participant	3	4 0
My personal identity - Jewish Israeli woman	4	7 0
My politics	2	2 0
My professional identity	3	3 0
Positionality dilemmas	3	4 1
Organisational statements	35	110
Our history	4	4 1
Our mission	34	37 1
Our values	22	26 1
Our vision	11	11 1
Our work - what we do	10	12 1
Slogans	20	20 1
Really good quotes	34	150
Titles	33	129

Table 4: Nvivo code list (nodes)

## Appendix 4: Reflective research process – examples from Nvivo

I found the process of transcribing the interviews (which included initial coding) to be a key reflective opportunity. I usually transcribed the interviews on the same day or the day after the interview to keep the conversation fresh in my mind. To support this reflective process, I used NVivo tools by creating the code ‘My positionality’ (see section 5.3.4 Data analysis). During the coding, I used the annotations to elaborate and reflect on my experiences and dilemmas, on the interviewer-interviewee interaction, and on the impact of my positionality (e.g., what interviewees assume about me, or how my interpretation is shaped by my politics). Below are some examples from Nvivo.

1. Excerpt from Nvivo code list: Tracing and reflecting on the interviewer-interviewee interaction and my own positionality (‘My positionality’ code):

My positionality	9	20
Knowing the participant	3	4
My personal identity - Jewish Israeli woman	4	7
My politics	2	2
My professional identity	3	3
Positionality dilemmas	3	4

2. Examples of some of the references in the ‘My positionality’ code above (full list not attached for confidentiality reasons):

(1)

### Reference 2 - 0.94% Coverage

And I felt like I am worrying my Israeli-ness very... that it's a thing... or I mean, I don't want to say that it's an issue, **I am sure you have this as well**, when you meet with Israeli friends in London and it doesn't take more than two minutes till everyone are like – oh those Brits, what's up with that? – and whatever.

(2)

### Reference 3 - 0.68% Coverage

**I don't know if you'll sympathise with this**, if you had a Goy [a Jewish name for a non-Jew] asking you something about something Jewish, like – why do you do... and then when you need to explain it you are like – why *do* I do this?

(3)

### Reference 2 - 0.35% Coverage

they will bargain you down to the last... whatever. **But it wasn't "he will", it was "they will"**. You know, this is what they do, this is **why they are so rich**. You know, the stereotype I'm sure you've heard millions of times.<sup>7</sup>

(4)

8% Coverage

!: Don't think badly of me!

(5)

Reference 2 - 0.08% Coverage

I hope I haven't horrified you too much!



## Appendix 5: List of organisations included in the online statements analysis

The table below (table 5) presents the list of organisations whose online statements were analysed. Please note, in order to protect the confidentiality of research participants, there is only partial overlap between this list and the employers of the interviewees.

	Organisation	Status	Employees (2022)	Income (2022)	Size (income-based)	Main field of action	Political orientation	No. of statements
1.	Board of Deputies of British Jews (BoD)	Registered charity	18	1.6M	Large	Representation / umbrella	Mainstream Zionist	3
2.	Campaign against Antisemitism	Registered charity	7	1.1M	Large	Jewish advocacy / Israel advocacy	Mainstream Zionist	3
3.	Community Security Trust (CST)	Registered charity	96	22.2M	Major	Jewish advocacy / Israel advocacy	Mainstream Zionist	2
4.	Federation of Zionist Youth (FZY)	Nonprofit company <sup>17</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	Informal education / youth movement	Mainstream Zionist	3
5.	Habonim Dror	Registered charity	5	708K	Medium	Informal education / youth movement	Liberal Zionist	3
6.	Independent Jewish Voices (IJV)	Unregistered organisation	N/A	N/A	N/A	Human rights, social action, advocacy	Non-Zionist	3
7.	Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR)	Registered charity	10	950K	Medium	Research / adult education	Mainstream Zionist	2
8.	Jewdas	Unregistered organisation	N/A	N/A	N/A	Human rights, social action, advocacy	Non-Zionist	2
9.	Jewish Council for Racial Equality (JCORE)	Registered charity	N/A	92K	Small	Human rights, social action, advocacy	Non-Zionist	4

<sup>17</sup> A charity exists mainly to provide grants (Friends of FZY, income of 15K).

10.	Jewish Leadership Council (JLC)	Registered charity	13	1.3M	Large	Representation / umbrella	Mainstream Zionist	1
11.	Jewish National Fund (JNF)	Registered charity	27	15.7M	Major	Charitable foundation	Mainstream Zionist	3
12.	Jewish Solidarity Action	Unregistered organisation	N/A	N/A	N/A	Human rights, social action, advocacy	Non-Zionist	2
13.	JW3	Registered charity	46	3.2M	Large	Culture	Mainstream Zionist	4
14.	Keshet	Registered charity	N/A	183K	Medium	Jewish advocacy / Israel advocacy	Liberal Zionist / Non-Zionist	2
15.	Leo Baeck College	Registered charity	20	1.6M	Large	Research / adult education	Liberal Zionist	4
16.	Liberal Judaism (research focused on its youth movement LJY-Netzer)	Registered charity	14	1.7M	Large	Informal education / youth movement	Liberal Zionist	4
17.	Limmud	Registered charity	5	920K	Medium	Culture and education	Mainstream Zionist	3
18.	March of the Living	Registered charity	2	630K	Medium	Informal education / youth movement	Mainstream Zionist	1
19.	Masorti Judaism (research focused on its youth movement Noam)	Registered charity	16	1.3M	Large	Informal education / youth movement	Mainstream Zionist	2
20.	Mitzvah Day	Registered charity	N/A	189K	Medium	Human rights, social action, advocacy	Mainstream Zionist	3
21.	Na'amod	Nonprofit company	N/A	N/A	N/A	Human rights, social action, advocacy	Non-Zionist	4
22.	New Israel Fund UK (NIF)	Registered charity	8	3.7M	Large	Charitable foundation	Liberal Zionist	2

23.	Pears Foundation	Registered charity	8	23.8M	Major	Charitable foundation	Liberal Zionist / Non-Zionist	4
24.	Reform Judaism (research focused on its youth movement RSY-Netzer)	Registered charity	23	2.7M	Large	Informal education / youth movement	Liberal Zionist	4
25.	Rene Cassin	Registered charity	N/A	134K	Medium	Human rights, social action, advocacy	Liberal Zionist	5
26.	Sephardi Voices UK	Registered charity	N/A	48K	Small	Jewish advocacy / Israel advocacy	Mainstream Zionist	2
27.	Stand With Us UK	Registered charity	1	482K	Medium	Jewish advocacy / Israel advocacy	Mainstream Zionist	4
28.	Tzedek	Registered charity	N/A	35K	Small	International	Non-Zionist	4
29.	Union of Jewish Students (UJS)	Registered charity	12	840K	Medium	Representation / umbrella	Mainstream Zionist	4
30.	United Jewish Israel Appeal (UJIA)	Registered charity	31	6.7M	Large	Charitable foundation	Mainstream Zionist	3
31.	We Believe in Israel	Nonprofit company	N/A	N/A	N/A	Jewish advocacy / Israel advocacy	Mainstream Zionist	3
32.	World Jewish Relief	Registered charity	49	15.9M	Major	International	Non-Zionist	2
33.	Yachad	Registered charity	N/A	250K	Medium	Jewish advocacy / Israel advocacy	Liberal Zionist	4
34.	Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland (ZF)	Registered Charity <sup>18</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	Jewish advocacy / Israel advocacy	Mainstream Zionist	3

Table 5: Organisations included in the online statements analysis

<sup>18</sup> A charity under the name Shalom Foundation of the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland is registered with no income or employees.