THE PLURALITY OF PLURALISM: YOUTH MOVEMENTS AND THE COMMUNAL DISCOURSE OF JEWISH DIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the ways in which British Jewish youth movements support, denounce and struggle with the concept of Jewish pluralism and how these actions mimic or diverge from wider communal debates. I argue that these young leaders often consider their approaches to intra-Jewish diversity to be more nuanced than the two dominant (and polarised) communal positions on pluralism. I conclude that youth movements provide an important space for engaging with notions of pluralism in more controversial and significant ways than can be seen in wider British Jewish debates on the issue, but these movements devise educational agendas that are still constrained by a fear of transgressing against the increasingly controversial concept of a singular 'authentic' Judaism.

WHAT IS [JEWISH] PLURALISM?

According to the philosopher David Archard, "[t]he starting point for any discussion of pluralism is a recognition that we inhabit a world of difference" (1996, p. 1). Pluralism is a basic tenet of (post) modern Western existence; existing alongside a plurality of other types of people is now often understood as a given fact. As a result, academic sociological literature tends to analyse attempts to live *with* pluralism (integration, assimilation and cohesion studies) rather than analyses of pluralism as a theoretical concept (ibid).

Yet the sociology of religion, or sociology about religious groups, requires a more careful consideration of pluralism as a theoretical category

of analysis. For religious people, pluralism is sometimes construed as fundamentally at odds with the basis of their religious belief, since belief itself is firmly rooted in an infallible dedication to a singular truth about God, life and the way to approach life in the spirit of God (Seul 1999). A pluralistic approach to religious traditions is interpreted as accepting multiple paths to truth. Since this pluralism is antithetical to the assertion of a singular truth, Orthodox religious belief often necessitates the rejection of pluralism.

Judaism is a religion rife with internal disputes about religious belief (Aviv and Shneer 2005), as well as having conflicting ideas about how best to exist in a pluralistic society with a pluralism of religions. Worldwide Jewry is a conglomeration of different approaches to Judaism, separated by physical miles and metaphorical distance in belief. In order to maintain a bounded community that can be separated from other systems of belief, world-wide Jewry must, to some extent, recognize multiple expressions of Judaism. Yet *intra*-Jewish plurality has often proved harder for Jews to accept than learning how to coexist in the Diaspora with expressions of other religions (*inter*-plurality).

In particular, Orthodox Jews have difficulties reconciling different approaches to Judaism as expressions of the same religion as their own. For many Orthodox Jews, Judaism is the embodiment of a singular truth that cannot be negotiated, even in the face of (post) modernity. Conversely, most non-Orthodox Jewish denominations stress that Jewish continuity depends on the cultivation of a sense of commonality which can be preserved and transported across physical distance and metaphorical chasms of belief and thus has room for the accommodation of different Judaism*s*.

Progressive Jews have accused Orthodox Jews of "imposing on the past a single mould [that] not only ignores the complexity of past Jewish experience but facilitates denial of the spiritual fragmentation which characterizes modernity" (Kimelman 1987, p. 143). Many Progressive Jews believe that Orthodoxy has been consumed by a "nostalgic yearning for a uniform past" that never existed (ibid). It is this tension, between pulls from the past or towards the future, which fuels debates about pluralism within the British Jewish community. Consequently, debates about pluralism form an important component of dialogue about the continuity and survival of a British Jewish community in the future: how to make sure there are British Jews, and what these Jews should look and act like.

ORIGINS OF THE CONTEMPORARY BRITISH JEWISH PLURALISM DEBATE

The contemporary Anglo-Jewish debate about pluralism may have begun with the official founding of the first Reform congregation in the

UK on the 15th of April 1840. As might be expected, the founding of a Reform synagogue prompted a plethora of articles and letters on the subject in the *Jewish Chronicle*. As a Mr. J. Cohen wrote in a letter to the *JC* on the 5th of July 1844 (p. 18):

> Reform is at the end; and we desire, though scarcely entering the career, at once to have its extremity! Not so: men, as well as nations, require prudent and progressive initiations. If we take the torch, let it not be to destroy, but to light the road for new generations…Yes, doubtless, there is something to reform. But let us be careful, lest the desire to disembarrass our worship of the too stringent bonds of the past, lead us to reject all, without distinction or discrimination.
>
> Placed between the ancient order of things, and that which is thought to be introduced, I say to those who hold with blind obstinacy to minutiae which have only the merit of antiquity-" Your time is past": And to those too pressing reforms, whose intentions, perhaps good at the foundation appear dangerous to us in the present day-"Your time will not arrive till you have accomplished the sublime duty of giving instruction to your fellow men." In the meantime, consider, that with trifling modifications, Judaism may still be the most majestic of religions, the most impressive of worships.

Arguments over the acceptability of intra-Jewish diversity continue today, albeit in a different guise. Few people today would dispute the existence of Reform Judaism, but many Orthodox Jews would question its legitimacy as an 'authentic' expression of the religion. For example, in his book *One People? Tradition, Modernity, and Jewish Unity*, Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks outlines his argument against pluralism. Pluralism, in Sacks' estimation, "rests on the dethronement of tradition" (1993, p. 140) because it "asserts that there is no single authoritative definition of Judaism… [pluralism maintains that] there are many valid interpretations, none of which excludes or necessarily includes the other" (p. 142).

Yet while the Chief Rabbi's Orthodoxy cannot accommodate pluralism, it can support attempts at 'inclusivism'. The concept of inclusivity is the farthest Judaism can stretch, according to Lord Sacks:

> Orthodox Jews, if they are inclusive, will see such willingness as a culturally conditioned error [rather than heresy]. Inclusivism involves a refusal to accept the self-evaluation of the outside tradition…attaching no significance to Liberal 'Jews' description of their own actions and intentions allows Orthodoxy to include individual Jews within the halachic community while excluding their ideologies (1993, p. 152).

Inclusivism seemingly warrants ethical objectivism, or the strongly held belief that there is one only correct set of moral beliefs (Bunting 1996, p. 73). The Chief Rabbi continues: "there is an authoritative set of beliefs that constitute the Jewish faith…Denial…is…an error. But—and this is the crux of inclusivism—it is an excusable error, not to be attributed

to defiance or rebellion. Inclusivism preserves Orthodoxy while not excluding the non-Orthodox from the covenantal community" (1993, p. 142). For Chief Rabbi Sacks, inclusivism is an enabling concept, as it allows Orthodox Jews to regard friends and family members who have defected from Orthodoxy as *Jews*, but as Jews who are under the sway of modernity and practicing a false *Judaism*.

The Chief Rabbi's position on pluralism is strongly contrasted by the unified position of many other major denominations in the UK, as expressed by the late Rabbi John D. Rayner CBE in a *Jewish Chronicle* article entitled 'Progressive Call for Unity with Integrity' (14 April 1997, p. 28). For Rabbi Rayner, intra-Jewish diversity (pluralism) was an established fact of life. For him, one of the most important issue facing British Jewry could be summarised with the question: "how, in spite of this diversity, to maintain communal unity where it exists, and to create it where it does not" (ibid). Unity was not a choice for British Jewry, according to Rayner. Instead, unity in spite of the fact of pluralism was *mandatory for* Jewish survival.

However, Rayner stressed that unity must not be confused with "majoritism", or the "fiction that the Establishment—the Chief Rabbinate and the United Synagogue, by virtue of representing the majority, may ride roughshod over the rights of dissident minorities, or buy them a few crumbs with tolerance" (ibid); Rayner's Jewish *unity* did not require Jewish *uniformity*. Rabbi Rayner took issue with the Chief Rabbi's willingness to embrace pluralism outside of Judaism while refusing to accept the authentic expression of Judaism in ways that diverge from Orthodoxy. Rayner wrote: "[i]n other words, Rabbi Sacks is prepared to say to non-Jews 'you don't have to be Jewish.' But he is not prepared to say to Jews 'You don't have to be Orthodox'"[1]. For non-Orthodox Jews, the Chief Rabbi's longstanding respect and support of other religions is in sharp contrast to his unwillingness to accept the authenticity of non-Orthodox Jewish traditions.

Rabbi Rayner recognised the Chief Rabbi's deep commitment to his role and his religious mandates yet was also deeply insulted by the Chief Rabbi's unwillingness to accord him the same respect. Rayner wrote: "as a matter of fact, my objections to Orthodox Judaism are every bit as principled as Orthodox objections to progressive Judaism" (ibid). Rayner remained loyal to his Jewish past, but did not believe that this loyalty mandated him to reproduce the Judaism of the past for a present that, according to Rayner, is fundamentally incompatible with Orthodox Judaism. It is this tension, summarised by the positions of Rabbi's Rayner and Sacks, that provides an overview for the debate about pluralism at a communal level in the UK. Yet younger members of the community do not necessarily recreate the same debate and positions when discussing pluralism amongst themselves.

THE CHANGING VIEW FROM THE NEXT GENERATION: YOUTH MOVEMENTS' ENGAGEMENT WITH PLURALISM

Values Education

Rayner's statement on pluralism specifies education as a fundamental tool for creating a cohesive, pluralist British Jewish society. Indeed, sociologists widely agree that formalised education is a vital way of creating and maintaining social norms: "[t]he values, norms, and customs of schools are used to identify certain activities as important, and they help to define social status by according greater prestige to students who participate in valued activities" (Schneider 2000, p. 371). Schools are places where "knowledge and meaning are explicitly constructed" (Quinn 2004; Bidwell 2000) and for this reason "educational institutions should themselves be problematised and subjected to critical scrutiny" (Youdell 2006a, p. 57). Both students and teachers constitute (and are constituted by) discourses of authenticity that are operating in wider society (Hey 2006), today often emphasising choice and individualism as a fundamental human right.

Yet while students are being taught to value their individuality and freedom of choice (Allard 2004), they are simultaneously subjected to on-going attempts to teach them what knowledge or behaviour is within the bounds of acceptable studenthood (Ali et. al. 2004); as Epstein claims, "Foucault's description of the panopticon [Foucault, 1977], as a prison in which the prisoner can always be seen by the warder but cannot be sure when he [*sic*] is under observation and therefore modifies his own behaviour, could equally be a description of any classroom" (1999, p. 28). By choosing certain social activities and by establishing rules about what constitutes acceptable student behaviour and what does not, teachers are able to manage (control) the boundaries of normalcy by imparting their own understandings of what is normal and what is not to their students.

Choice is presented as an inalienable right accorded to citizens in a democracy, yet students in formal educational spaces are only allowed to choose from a range of available discourses; choice is limited to the options presented as authentic and acceptable for a student to make (Epstein and Johnson 1998; Youdell 2006a, 2006b). Therefore, although individuality is constructed as a core value in contemporary education, students who make choices that are outside the range of acceptable student-subject positions are often subjected to immediate control by a teacher or the schooling system to ensure that they are brought back within the recognised purview of authentic student behaviour (Gordon 2006).

However, within Jewish youth movements (as spaces for informal education), the limits to authentic choices can be more readily communicated than within formal education. While formal education consists of both a taught curriculum (maths, science, English)

and a hidden curriculum (values that are considered important to the school, culture and/or the teacher), youth movements are able to make some of the 'hidden curriculum' known, since their entire (and overt) purpose is to impart specific moral values. This values education, based on specific cultural, moral or religious principles, is much more open and transparent (although by no means completely so) in youth movements than the education found even within Jewish faith schools, which are also open about their agendas of teaching young people to be good Jews.

Even as there is a growing amount of literature on formal faith education, there continues to be an obvious *lack* of empirical research on the informal education conducted within faith-based youth movements[2]. The British Jewish community has never restricted its understanding of education solely to the domain of the formal classroom (Kadish 1997) and voluntary organisations have always been an important part of the British Jewish community, as well as of British society more generally. Yet most research on Jewish education in the UK is based on the implicit assumption that learning to be Jewish takes place in schools or at home, a binary that ignores the significant in between location of the British Jewish youth movements.

INFORMAL EDUCATION AND JEWISH IDENTIFICATION

Taking informal education seriously in academic research

There is strong evidence to suggest that *informal* Jewish education plays a vital role in the struggle for British Jewish continuity. A 1997 Institute for Jewish Policy Research report entitled *The Social Attitudes of Unmarried Young Jews in Contemporary Britain* found that: "[i]t is likely that Jewish education is more indicative of parental attitudes and Jewish identity while youth [club or movement] attendance demonstrates an individual expression of their own identity and social preferences" (Goldberg and Kosmin 1997, p. 2). Cohen and Berkovitz have argued that a model for effective Jewish education in the future must include at least two or three forms of informal Jewish education for young people in order to strongly enhance Jewish identifications amongst the next generation (2004, p.18).

Many young British Jews participate in some form of youth movement and past research has found that this involvement is a strong predictor of future (adult) affiliation and feelings of belonging within the Jewish community.

Of a sample of young, unmarried Jews surveyed by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR), those 'closest' to Judaism[3] were much more likely to have attended a youth club or organisation than were those who did not identify as closely with Judaism. While many people who were classified as 'halfway' (somewhat close, somewhat distant to

Judaism) had often had a formal Jewish education, they, as well as those people who were not 'close' to Judaism, were less likely to have attended a Jewish youth club. The report concludes that informal education is a stronger predictor of future Jewish involvement than is participation in formal Jewish education.

Other research has confirmed this theory; on 25 May 2007, the *Jewish Chronicle* published an article entitled *'Youth Group Involvement is Key'* (p. 8), describing research undertaken in the United States in which 793 graduates of an American Jewish cross-denominational youth movement were surveyed. This research found that only nine percent had married non-Jews (which is one fifth of the estimated figure for United States Jewry as a whole). He also found that fifty-three percent of the non-Orthodox general public married 'in', but that the figure rose dramatically to eighty percent for those with informal Jewish experiences in their youth. The *JC* article about these findings argued that "through a wide range of activities, [young people in youth movements] develop a sense of individual and collective Jewish identity and an attachment to Israel. They also form social bonds that are retained. This combination makes them far more likely to marry a Jewish partner" (Jeffray 2007, p.5). It is thus of vital importance that the informal educational sector is included in the discussions and debates about communal continuity and, by extension, pluralism and the negotiation of Jewish difference.
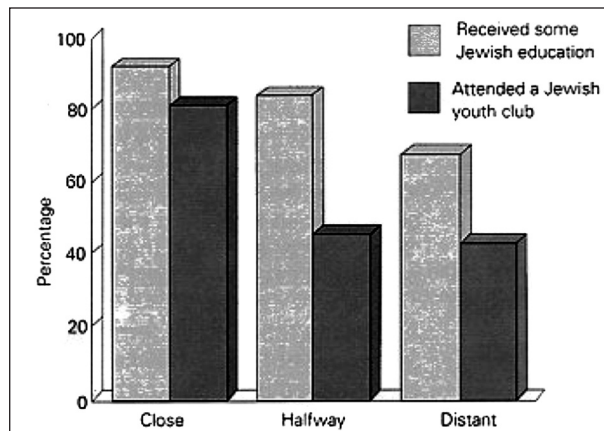
Source: (Goldberg and Kosmin 1997, p. 11)

Figure 1
Formal Jewish education and youth group attendance by social
network group

BRITISH JEWISH YOUTH MOVEMENTS IN OPERATION: THE WHO AND THE HOW

Virtually all British Jewish youth movements are peer-led; *mazkirim* (chairs of movements) are both male and female, usually between the ages of twenty-two and twenty-four. They are elected by *chanichim* (movement members) to act as full time, paid chair-people for one or two years. *Mazkirim* are almost always long-term members of the organisation and have usually participated in every training programme offered by the movement—from summer camps to leadership training courses; from Europe Holocaust education tours to year-long study abroad programmes in Israel. They are deeply committed to their organisations, and (as I found during my interviews with them) are self-reflexive about their own relationship with Judaism and the organisation they represent. These young leaders work diligently to promote a certain understanding of what it means to be Jewish that will appeal to as many young people as possible, while also striving to differentiate their movement from all others.

In his 1975 historical overview of Jewish youth movements in Great Britain, Bunt wrote that most people in the British Jewish community think that "…the Jewish youth worker is little more than an entertainer; others say that child-minder is an even better description. [The youth leader's] claim to be an educator is seldom ever heard, let alone taken seriously, by the Jewish man in the street" (1975, p. 6). Youth movement leaders, like teachers in formal education, are in positions of power relative to the members of the organisation (Delpit 2001; Youdell 2006a, 2006b) and "[t]here is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives" (Foucault 1981: 94–95). British Jewish youth movements have an agenda and it is the obligation of movement *madrichim*[4] to foster a strong sense of Jewish identity in their members. Movement leaders are charged with ensuring that individual members affiliate with their leaders' own movement; therefore they need to ensure that young people feel comfortable within the movement. Simultaneously however, leaders have also been tasked with safeguarding Jewish continuity by ensuring that young Jews learn to identify with (the movement's brand of) Judaism at a relatively young age since identification with Judaism is believed to be the antidote to intermarriage and therefore to the demographic decline being experienced by some parts of British Jewry.

Although leaders of youth movements are often compared to teachers, they are also generally engaged in more interactive learning processes than are possible within the confines of formalised schooling; informal education is predicated on more holistic approaches to teaching and learning which include the possibility for a reciprocal relationship of learning between leaders and members of the organisation (Kahane 1997; Batsleer 2008). Fine and Sandstrom argue that a leader is obligated

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to interact with those they are leading in an almost exclusively positive manner, but that this emphasis on positive interaction does not diminish the "legitimate authority" leaders have in relation to those being led (1988, p. 15).

Jewish youth movements "teach members of the group how to perform religious, cultural and other activities that the group has defined as worthwhile" (Barack Fishman 2007, p. 216; Halter 2000). Informal education has been described as an effective way of inspiring young people to prioritise their Jewish identifications; rather than indoctrination through lectures and desk-based activities, movements use stimulating activities in order to teach young people to identify *seemingly of their own accord* with certain values (Kahane 1997). Many movements are (to a greater or lesser extent) aligned with traditional frameworks of Judaism, but as I found during my interviews, even leaders of these movements express a growing desire to deliver informal education that transcends (and sometimes transgresses against) the boundaries of Judaism as defined by synagogual or denominational authorities.

YOUTH MOVEMENTS AND ANTI-PLURALISM[5]

From a community-wide vantage point, anti-pluralism sentiments are expressed primarily by the modern Orthodox. Yet distrust of pluralism is widespread throughout the 'youth movement world'. Ironically, denominationally aligned movements (Liberal, Reform, and Masorti) are some of the fiercest critics of a pluralist ideology, even though their parent denominations are some of its strongest supporters (as evidenced by Rayner's Call for Unity).

All *mazkirim* of denominationally aligned youth movements interviewed were adamantly opposed to pluralism, although with varying degrees of commitment and clarity. Reba, the *mazkira* for the reform youth movement *Gluke*[6], believed that her movement's greatest strength is its ability to create a safe space for the expression of Reform Judaism in both its cultural and religious manifestations. She felt strongly that being aligned to a particular denomination allows *Gluke* to delve deeply into contentious issues, since the movement is openly aligned with Reform views and practices. Pluralist organisations, according to Reba, do not have this ability. Reba believed that pluralist organisations do not usually engage much with religious issues, since religion is too contentious in such an environment:

> Um I think the thing…We work better, because we, erm. We can promote Reform Judaism and we want our chanichim to learn how to be good and secure in Reform Judaism.

Reba went on to say that pluralist youth movements try to do too much and, in the end, do very little, whereas movements with a specific

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denominational allegiance are freer to promote a very specific under-standing of Judaism and thus facilitate stronger Jewish identities in their members. Reba spoke with only one slight hesitation, nervous of criti-cizing other movements while strongly asserting her own movement's ability to educate more comprehensively than some other movements[7].

Gideon, the *mazkir* of a Masorti youth movement, agreed with Reba; he claimed that Masorti Jews are only ever entirely free to express their particular expression of Judaism in an exclusively Masorti environment. For Gideon, pluralist youth movements always defer to standards of Orthodox practice in order to maximize the number of people able to join the movement. In response to my question: "Is creating a trans-denominational space in the youth movement world achievable?", Gideon responded:

> I don't know, if you talk about a pluralist movement…I…yeah, I don't think that works, because everyone just goes to the Orthodox service, and they're not pluralist, because the service is Orthodox. All the pluralist movements are really Orthodox, but you can do a Masorti service in the corner, on, um, on the side. I mean, like, this is a funny example, but a true story. We had a kid come to Hadar after he had gotten, gotten fed up with pluralist movements. Like, the movement he was in didn't respond to his challenges erm, uh—he challenged that it was really pluralist. Like, he asked if he could have some cheese on his burger and he was told no, and then he said to them, to the madrichim, why not? It's pluralist and having cheese is therefore equally valid[8].

He continued:

> In the pluralist movements….in them, it is always best to offend [makes quotes] 'more progressive' people…because progressive people can keep kosher, or, uh, they can not keep kosher, but they don't have to not. So there's always that thing. So I don't believe a pluralist movement works, I've not seen any pluralist movement where I think, yeah, this is pluralist.

Pluralist organisations' deference to Orthodoxy was reiterated by both the other denominational *mazkirim* I interviewed, and was acknowledged to be a problem by eleven other movement leaders. Sam, the leader of (as he described it) an "admittedly pluralist" youth movement *Herut* admitted:

> …it is completely impossible to create a trans-denominational environment. Yeah, it is definitely something we, we wrestle with. Like, on camps and stuff, we, we—make sure the lights are off in rooms on Shabbat up to modern Orthodox standards, because, because we have 16 kids sharing a room on camp, and we, well, we…can't split by denomination, since that would be segregation. But no one could sleep with the lights on. It, yeah, it definitely exists this understanding that if you are going to offend anyone it is best not to offend the Orthodox. There is definitely an understanding, like, that there is something 'stronger' about Orthodoxy than the others (I disagree, just for

the record). It creates a hierarchical shape…rather than lateral. That is why the lights go off.

Sam spoke delicately about the issue of pluralism and Orthodoxy; he wanted me to know this issue is something the movement *"wrestles with"* and that he personally did not believe that there is something *"stronger"* about Orthodox Judaism than other forms. However, Sam also used such phrases as keeping life on camps *"up to modern Orthodox standards"*. He acknowledged that Judaism is often seen as *"hierarchical"* and, although he claimed to disagree, it is a hierarchy he was not prepared to challenge on behalf of his movement. Sam spoke with a particularly regretful tone and seemed to recognize deference to Orthodoxy as a problem for a movement open to non-Orthodox Jews, but in the process of this recognition, believed himself to have absolved his movement of any responsibility to challenge it as the status-quo and the default position even of cross-communal movements.

Sam avoided more controversial examples of his movement's deference to Orthodoxy by choosing to illustrate his point with an example about sleeping with lights on over Shabbat. Sam could have chosen examples that prove much more troublesome for Liberal, Reform, and/or Masorti members than keeping the lights on; more controversial examples would have dealt with playing music on Shabbat (a key part of Liberal and Reform services, but forbidden by Masorti and Orthodoxy), allowing women to read from the Torah, and mixed gendered seating (fundamental to Liberal, Reform, and some Masorti, forbidden by Orthodoxy).

Sam's admission of his movement's impulse to Orthodoxy also echoed Stuart Charme's previous findings in a study of young Jews in the United States. Charme describes this impulse towards Orthodoxy as the commonplace recognition (even by non-Orthodox members of the community) that there is something more 'authentic' about Orthodox Jewry than liberal or progressive versions. He claims that "[a]uthenticity of a Jew is often identified as adherence to authentic Judaism, and is ultimately defined by a particular understanding of the concept of tradition that is accepted as normative and authoritative"; Charme argues that defining a version of Judaism as authentic is entirely dependent upon "accepting the authority of those who determine its authenticity"— or believing that those who claim a version of Judaism is more authentic than others have some moral authority to make such a judgement (Charme 2000, p. 138).

Anna, the *mazkira* for Liberal Judaism's youth movement *Chaim*, claimed that her organisation, as a denominationally aligned youth movement, was much better prepared to cater for the needs of their members, as it is purposefully and unashamedly positioned far outside the boundaries of authenticity as defined by the Orthodox Establishment. She said:

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we don't, um, we don't have to pretend or fake anything, or offend anyone. We are clear about what we believe in, and kids come because they know what to expect of us and, like, what we would expect of them. In that way, our kids are never put in situations that are offensive to them or their sense of Judaism.

For Anna and the other leaders of the denominationally aligned movements, the superficial surface-level pluralism some of the youth movements did not make them more appealing than denominational ones—indeed, often quite the opposite.

For leaders such as Anna, the success of their movements was largely built upon the fact that they exist to provide a safe space for the practice and development of an ethos that mirrors the Judaism of their parent denominations. When I asked Reba whether being aligned to Reform Judaism was help or hindrance to her movement, she replied with ease:

Definitely a help. Our—we're focused on Reform Judaism so our —we educate about it. We want our leaders and our chanichim to be engaged with it and it's much easier to, um, educate them about Reform Judaism when we are in a space when, like, the only Judaism being practiced is reform. Whereas in pluralist movements, they're trying to educate about all different streams of Judaism and more often that not the members of the movement are one stream of Judaism. And their education, I know, like, on Reform Judaism for example it is very poor a lot of the time and they don't actually have any reform madrichim so it's usually people who might care but, eh, they might not be reform themselves so might not actually have any special experience of it.

In Reba's estimation, pluralist movements can be dangerous for members who might not have strong affiliations with their own religious or cultural backgrounds, as they might feel pressure to conform to a Judaism which they would not otherwise. Gideon concurred:

[i]f some Masorti kids go to a pluralist youth movement and expect to get a, uh, a good Masorti informal education, well, they just aren't going to get it. And they might, then, end up just going along with what the movement does, like going to Orthodox services and getting used to that. It just isn't ideal.

These denominationally aligned movements had a self-selecting demographic pool; members came to their organisation because they belong to the parent denomination and are therefore previously familiar with the movement's ethos. Yet movements that attract a denominationally diverse membership also did not have easy time defining their own position on the issue of pluralism[9].

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CROSS-COMMUNAL BUT ANTI-PLURALIST[10]

Two of the eleven youth movements included in my research considered themselves to be cross-communal but explicitly anti-pluralism. Noah, the *mazkir* of one such movement, was asked if his movement, *Dor*, could be considered pluralist:

> **Noah**: we reject pluralism.
> SA: you reject the idea of pluralism? Or just the word pluralism?
> **Noah**: We don't use that word at all.
> SA: why n-
> **Noah**: it semantics and it goes back to the way we like to talk about everything. Pluralism is the acceptance of a plural environment. That there is—no one truth. That's nonsense, especially in a large number of fractions of Judaism. It you're an Orthodox Jew, it's torah mishamayim[11], you can't accept the Reform idea, because as far as you're concerned it is wrong. We use cross-communalism and tolerance is the word we like to use, you have to accept other peoples' right to be wrong…you are well within your rights to think someone else is wrong, but have the discussion, talk about it. And accept, not accept…deal with the fact that they are there. You don't agree with them, you don't think they are right, you may even think they're fundamentally wrong and are a, a heathen, but they're still there and you have to deal with that in a Dor world.

Jesse, the field worker for the *Alizah* youth movement, was also more comfortable with the term cross-communal than pluralist. When asked why, he responded:

> When I think of, the idea of pluralism…erm it's…it's not people coming together. I, well, it is people coming together but it's people going in the same direction. It's about…and…maybe this is a very naive way of looking at it, but it's about, people doing something together but not necessarily, er, in the same direction…erm…it's kind of…we…we don't discourage, but if someone really wanted to do a traditional, erm, morning prayer or something then they can go and do it, but really we want to encourage everybody, we are openly doing the same thing together as a group, which together they need to find what's right for them all as individuals and together but moving in the same direction as in, we're –we're not only gonna come together and, to do this, but, we **wanna** come together, create something that all of us can do, and move together in the same direction, in openness.

Jesse was strategic with his word choice; he took his time, thinking out-loud about exactly what he wanted to communicate about pluralism. Through a careful choice of descriptors and qualifiers, Jesse equated pluralism with a system of "*separate but equal-ness*"—a system that he did not think achieved the goals which *Alizah* sets out for itself. Instead, he preferred to label the movement as cross-communal because it signifies more of a sense of togetherness. For Jesse, cross-communal means asking people to negotiate their differences and arrive at a compromise that is comfortable for all participants.

CROSS-COMMUNALISM AND SHABBAT

Dor youth movement had produced its own *siddur¹²*, specifically developed to represent the movement's cross-communal stance. The prayer book opened up so as to show two pages at a time, with two distinct sections on each page: an explanation section, an English translation section (page one), and a Hebrew section and transliteration section (page two).

The introduction to the prayer book read: "While *Dor* believes that the service is similar enough to allow us to pray together, we also feel that to truly cater for everyone we need a *siddur* that sets out clearly where we act together and where there are differences in the prayers, even if the leader chooses to follow one particular tradition".

For *Dor*, its cross-communalist nature mandated equal space for four different approaches to prayer: a humanist-Jewish approach of thoughts and explanations; an English translation for those who do not speak Hebrew; a modern Orthodox version of Shabbat services; and a transliterated section for those people who want to follow the Hebrew service but might not be quick enough Hebrew readers to follow along without transliteration.

However, this prayer book was noticeably missing religious services (in Hebrew) that were equitable with more liberal traditions. Indeed, this prayer book was only cross-communal in that it includes one section for people interested in explanations for the prayers, and three sections for those interested in following the modern Orthodox standard service, in English, Hebrew or transliterated Hebrew. While there were four sections to the *siddur*, there were really only two distinct options for praying—namely Orthodox and non-religious.

After I pressed Noah for the specifics of how the prayers were led out-loud, Noah admitted that the modern Orthodox section of the prayer book was the one that was usually recited by a service leader. This decision is significant, since it relegated non-Orthodox expressions of Judaism to the position of 'other'. *Dor's* cross-communal nature mandated that all members attend one service together, but in doing so, the movement required non-Orthodox members to practice their own variety of Judaism silently (in their heads). *D*or also, Noah admitted, usually asked male and female members to sit separately, as again, Reform members *can* sit separately but Orthodox members cannot. Yet as a basic tenet of Reform and Liberal Judaism, this sex-specific seating is a rebuttal of a primary part of their expressions of faith and allows Orthodoxy to remain the undisputed norm of publicly displayed religious expression. Just as Kimelman maintains, it seemed that the cross communalism *mazkirim* spoke eloquently about came to a "screeching halt" in practice (2002).

As discussed in reference to the wider community, many Jews intellectually accept a plurality of beliefs, but still require the manifestation

4 | **Friday night Siddur: Kabbalat Shabbat – Six Psalms**

Psalm 99

EXPLANATION: This psalm discusses what will happen in a messianic age, and celebrates God's faithfulness.

QUESTION: Why is Shabbat traditionally compared to the messianic age? Does the comparison mean anything to us?

COMMENT: Recite the Psalms in a very low voice. Cry out quietly, saying the words with all your strength. This is the meaning of the verse "All my bones shall say 'God, who is like You?'" (Psalms 35:10). A cry that results from complete attachment [to God] is absolutely silent. – Chassidic teaching

Psalm 29

EXPLANATION: This psalm describes God's power over nature, showing that all forces are the voice of God. Orthodox and Masorti communities stand up because it contains God's name so many times. In the psalm the great thunderstorm is followed by calm, perhaps symbolising that the weekly struggle in the world of achievement is at an end and that we can rest.

THOUGHT: a person is like the "ladder standing on the ground, with its top in the heavens" (Genesis 28:12). He can do worldly, physical things here on earth, but 'its top is in heaven,' since he meditates on lofty concepts. – attributed to the Baal Shem Tov (founder of Chassidism)

THOUGHT: In the Kabbalah, Shabbat symbolises the union of the male and female metaphysical properties that provide the foundation of the universe. – Rabbi Walter Wurzburger

THOUGHT: Work is a symbol of conflict and disharmony; rest is an expression of dignity, peace, and freedom. – Erich Fromm (psychoanalyst)

Insight

Psalm 99

The Eternal rules, let the nations tremble. He judges the cherubim, let the earth shake. | 1
The Eternal is great in Zion, high above all peoples. | 2
They shall praise Your name, great and awesome, holy is God. | 3
God is a strong ruler who loves justice. It is You who established honesty, | 4
justice and righteousness. It is You who formed them in Jacob. | 5
Exalt the Eternal our God, bow down before God's footstool, holy is God. | 6
Moses and Aaron were among His priests, and Samuel among those who | 7
Called on His name. They called to the Eternal who answered them. | 8
In a pillar of cloud God spoke to them. They kept His teaching and the law | 9
He gave them. Eternal our God, You answered them. To them You were a | 10
forgiving God, though You punished their wrongdoing. | 11
Exalt the Eternal our God, bow down before God's holy mountain, | 12
For holy is the Eternal our God. | 13

Psalm 29
Orthodox and Masorti communities stand

A psalm of David. Praise God, children of the angels. Praise God's glory and might. | 14
Praise God, honouring His name. Worship God in the beauty of holiness. | 15
The voice of the Eternal echoes over the waters, the God of glory thunders, | 16
the Eternal is echoing over the mighty waters. | 17
The voice of God breaks cedars, He has shattered the cedars of Lebanon. | 18
They begin to leap about, Lebanon like a calf and Sirion like a young ox. | 19
The voice of the Eternal splits the lightning shafts, the voice of the Eternal whirls | 20
the deserts, the voice of the Eternal whirls the desert of Kadesh. | 21
God's voice makes the wild deer calve, it strips the forest bare – while in His temple | 22
all cry "Glory". God sat enthroned at the flood, He is enthroned, sovereign forever. | 23
The Eternal will give strength to His people, the Eternal will bless His | 24
people with peace. | 25

English

Friday night Siddur: Kabbalat Shabbat – Six Psalms | **4**

Psalm 99

יְהֹוָה מָלָךְ יִרְגְּזוּ עַמִּים יֹשֵׁב כְּרוּבִים תָּנוּט הָאָרֶץ:
יְהֹוָה בְּצִיּוֹן גָּדוֹל וְרָם הוּא עַל־כָּל־הָעַמִּים:
יוֹדוּ שִׁמְךָ גָּדוֹל וְנוֹרָא קָדוֹשׁ הוּא:
וְעֹז מֶלֶךְ מִשְׁפָּט אָהֵב אַתָּה כּוֹנַנְתָּ מֵישָׁרִים
מִשְׁפָּט וּצְדָקָה בְּיַעֲקֹב אַתָּה עָשִׂיתָ:
רוֹמְמוּ יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהִשְׁתַּחֲווּ לַהֲדֹם רַגְלָיו קָדוֹשׁ הוּא:
מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן בְּכֹהֲנָיו וּשְׁמוּאֵל בְּקֹרְאֵי שְׁמוֹ.
קֹרְאִים אֶל־יְהֹוָה וְהוּא יַעֲנֵם:
בְּעַמּוּד עָנָן יְדַבֵּר אֲלֵיהֶם שָׁמְרוּ עֵדֹתָיו וְחֹק נָתַן־לָמוֹ:
יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אַתָּה עֲנִיתָם אֵל נֹשֵׂא הָיִיתָ לָהֶם וְנֹקֵם עַל־עֲלִילוֹתָם:
רוֹמְמוּ יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהִשְׁתַּחֲווּ לְהַר קָדְשׁוֹ
כִּי־קָדוֹשׁ יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ:

Psalm 29
Orthodox and Masorti communities stand

מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד: הָבוּ לַיהֹוָה בְּנֵי אֵלִים הָבוּ לַיהֹוָה כָּבוֹד וָעֹז:
הָבוּ לַיהֹוָה כְּבוֹד שְׁמוֹ הִשְׁתַּחֲווּ לַיהֹוָה בְּהַדְרַת־קֹדֶשׁ:
קוֹל יְהֹוָה עַל־הַמָּיִם אֵל־הַכָּבוֹד הִרְעִים יְהֹוָה עַל־מַיִם רַבִּים:
קוֹל יְהֹוָה בַּכֹּחַ קוֹל יְהֹוָה בֶּהָדָר:
קוֹל יְהֹוָה שֹׁבֵר אֲרָזִים וַיְשַׁבֵּר יְהֹוָה אֶת־אַרְזֵי הַלְּבָנוֹן:
וַיַּרְקִידֵם כְּמוֹ־עֵגֶל לְבָנוֹן וְשִׂרְיֹן כְּמוֹ בֶן־רְאֵמִים:
קוֹל־יְהֹוָה חֹצֵב לַהֲבוֹת אֵשׁ: קוֹל יְהֹוָה יָחִיל מִדְבָּר.
יָחִיל יְהֹוָה מִדְבַּר קָדֵשׁ:
קוֹל יְהֹוָה יְחוֹלֵל אַיָּלוֹת וַיֶּחֱשֹׂף יְעָרוֹת וּבְהֵיכָלוֹ כֻּלּוֹ אֹמֵר כָּבוֹד:
יְהֹוָה לַמַּבּוּל יָשָׁב וַיֵּשֶׁב יְהֹוָה מֶלֶךְ לְעוֹלָם:
יְהֹוָה עֹז לְעַמּוֹ יִתֵּן יְהֹוָה יְבָרֵךְ אֶת־עַמּוֹ בַשָּׁלוֹם:

Hebrew

Psalm 99

Adonai malach yirg'zu amim, yosheiv k'ruvim, tanut ha'arets.
Adonai b'tsi'on gadol, v'ram hu al kol ha'amim.
Yodu shimcha gadol v'nora, kadosh hu.
V'oz melech mishpat aheiv, ata konanta meisharim,
Mishpat utsdaka b'Ya'akov ata asita.
Rom'mu Adonai Eloheinu, v'hishtachavu lahadom raglav: "Ka-dosh hu!"
Moshe v'Aharon b'chohanav uShmu'eil b'kor'ei sh'mo,
Korim el Adonai v'hu ya'aneim.
B'amud anan y'dabeir aleihem, shamru eidotav v'chok natan lamo.
Adonai Eloheinu ata anitam, eil nosei hayita lahem, v'nokeim al alilotam.
Rom'mu Adonai Eloheinu, v'hishtachavu l'har kodsho,
Ki kadosh Adonai Eloheinu.

Psalm 29
Orthodox and Masorti communities stand

Mizmor l'David: Havu Ladonai b'nei eilim Havu Ladonai kavod va'oz
Havu Ladonai k'vod sh'mo hishtachavu Ladonai b'hadrat kodesh.
Kol Adonai al hamayim eil hakavod, hirim Adonai al mayim rabim.
Kol Adonai bako'ach. Kol Adonai behadar.
Kol Adonai shoveir arazim Vay'shabeir Adonai et arzei hal'vanon.
Vayarkideim k'mo eigel l'vanon v'siryon k'mo ven r'eimim.
Kol Adonai chotseiv lahavot eish. Kol Adonai yachil midbar.
Yachil Adonai midbar Kadesh.
Kol Adonai y'choleil ayalot vayechesof y'arot uvheichalo kulo omeir kavod.
Adonai lamabul yashav vayeishev Adonai melech l'olam.
Adonai oz l'amo yitein Adonai y'vareich et amo vashalom.

Transliteration

Figure 2
Dor Prayerbook

of these beliefs (the religious practices) to uphold a singular (traditionally authentic) understanding of Judaism as Orthodox. Most youth movements welcome disagreement as an intellectual exercise and claim to be spaces welcoming of a diverse expression of Jewish belief. However, these same movements require uniformity in religious practice as the basis of movement cohesiveness, thereby undermining their own intellectual acceptance of cross-communalism with their enactment of restrictive and Orthodox practices. Indeed, I found that even 'fully pluralist' movements struggle to enact pluralism in a way that is equally as respectful to Progressive Jews.

FULLY PLURALIST

Only two of the movement leaders I interviewed comfortably identified their movements as pluralist. *Herut* considered itself to be pluralist, and yet the movement was cognisant of the fact that it was, according to the *mazkir* Sam, "*completely impossible to create a trans-denominational environment*". For *Herut*, a pluralist environment was entirely reliant on tolerance and separation of denominational beliefs when necessary. As Sam said:

> let's take Shabbat as an example. The way I see it, there are four alternatives: modern Orthodox, Reform, hybrid, and alternative…tolerance is key, but, um, so is having spaces for everyone to practice their different beliefs and not feel threatened.

Sam considered pluralism to be achieved when differing beliefs were treated equally, even if they were treated differently or separately from one another.

Jared, the *mazkir* of *Ehud*, agreed that his movement is pluralist, but approached the issue differently. He said:

> our version and our take on pluralism…it's a lot to us, it should be a lot more than it is, but theoretically it's a fair bit.
> SA: in what ways?
> **Jared:** we view pluralism as an opportunity for people from different religious backgrounds, upbringings, and beliefs to come together, and, and unite our differences and learn more about each other though being in that cross communal environment…part of pluralism is, it is about sharing our discomfort, there's all these different approaches to it. And for us, pluralism is about making people, like…making them question their own Jewish identity, whether it was to change it, whether it was to strengthen it, whatever it might be, just to um get people to question.
> SA: interesting-
> **Jared:-**our take, we believe, that pluralism doesn't need to be boxy. So like, we want people to have formed their own opinions through a-political, non-partisan, informal education, where we give them as broad an opinion as possible, like as broad an education as possible on a particular topic, both sided. Then they can take that information, and like form their own opinion, and then go do something about it together.

For Jared, pluralism requires a basic acceptance of the legitimacy of a range of opinions and positions. Jared's movement purposefully presented arguments from across the Jewish denominational spectrum, and crucially tried not to specify which way of thinking was the correct (or authentically Jewish) way of thinking even within the movement.

In *Ehud*, pluralism was based on a togetherness that requires a negotiation of difference. Similar to arguments in favour of pluralism from the more liberal communities of British Jewry, Jared believed that a system based on the separation of denominational thinking was fundamentally flawed. For Jared, pluralism could not be achieved if there was separation between people within a movement; movements that were pluralist in their membership approval process, but supportive of separation within the movement, could never really uphold pluralism to its highest standards. He said:

> those semi pluralist movements, like, their take is ‚we'll take everybody, we're all different and we all believe different things, and so Orthodox people go and have an Orthodox service, Reform, Masorti, and it's, well, I don't want to make it sound like I'm putting them down or whatever, but it's a boxy way, like I said before, a boxy way of…you categorise people put them in there are you get them to do a service of whatever, but its boxy…we don't do that.

Like *Alizah*, the *Ehud* experience necessitated togetherness at the expense of strict religious observance according to an individual's own tradition[13]. Pluralism, for Jared, had to avoid the "*boxy fake togetherness*", as forced in movements that perpetuate separate but equal space, especially during Shabbat. Pluralism meant being together no matter how uncomfortable.

Notably, my interviewees were exceptionally careful to make clear that they respect and admire other Jewish youth movements—they just happen to prefer their 'brand' of movement. *Madrichim* were also keen to offer cross-movement support, in recognition of their shared aim of securing Jewish continuity, albeit through different means. This cross-movement support was evidence of a fundamental difference between this younger generation and the battle over pluralism and continuity being waged in the pages of the *JC*. Whereas the *JC* articles are predominantly in one of two camps, for pluralism or against it, these youth movement leaders employed much more fluid interpretations of the concept and demonstrated an openness and support of other interpretations.

FULLY PLURALIST AND SHABBAT

The introduction to the *Ehud siddur* was entitled: 'What is a Pluralist Bencher?' The authors wrote:

> We asked ourselves at the start [of writing the prayerbook] how it would be possible for a group of diverse Jews to sit together and bench[14] together, while not everyone follows the same text, and not everyone believes in the prayer. The answer, we believe, lies in these pages. Every word said by every major movement is found here, and for those who don't believe in the liturgy, there is some poetry, prose or philosophy, relevant to the theme of each blessing.

This prayerbook was built on a similar foundation to *Dor's* cross-communal prayer book. However, this bencher was used to guide one cohesive service led by someone well trained in pluralist praying, according to the movement *madrich* Jared. He said:

> a good pluralist prayer leader will be someone who, who makes you share your discomfort, there's these different approaches to Judaism that can all be expressed together.

The differences between religious traditions were clear; cultural/humanist Judaism was delineated in bordered boxes; transliteration of the exact Hebrew was in italics; and the parts which were different for various denominations were highlighted in grey, with footnotes to explain. The service was not based on a modern Orthodox version, with other prayers given as an alternative. Instead, Liberal and Reform liturgy and prayers had been effectively integrated into one service that will be familiar and/or comfortable for most participants; all aspects were explained for those who are not familiar with various components of the service.

I pressed Jared, as I had done Noah, about whether this pluralist ethos was practiced beyond a written discourse; I asked: *"Is the service conducted out-loud based on a modern Orthodox one?"* Jared, unlike Noah, said no: *"Just because real pluralism is extremely difficult does not mean we shouldn't try to the best of our abilities"*. While he recognised that *Ehud* did not attract "the super religious", he also claimed that anyone who wanted to learn how to lead[15] a service, regardless of belief or background, was more than supported in doing so, even at the expense of pushing the boundaries of legitimacy in some peoples' minds.

Yet even under this model, some form of communal prayer is required; opting-out of Friday night and Saturday morning services was not an option for members. Religious *belief* is not forced upon anyone, but *attendance* at religious services was mandatory during *Ehud* gatherings (meaning that some form of ritualised, communal performance of Judaism is considered fundamental to *any* type of Jewishness).

At the end of the *siddur*, there was a small box which read: "Whether one believes in the religious value of the rituals or not, no one can deny that the Jewish Friday night is part of the essence of Jewish culture". The spirit of Friday night, whatever that may mean to individuals, was identified as the one common strand throughout Judaism*s* and can be emphasised in a pluralistic setting. For *Ehud*, pluralism necessitated

Figure 3
Ehud Prayerbook

refraining from insisting on any amount of belief/non-belief beyond the basic difference between *Shabbat* and the rest of the week.

CONCLUSION

In 1998, Harry Freedman, the then-Director of the Masorti Movement in the UK, wrote an opinion piece entitled *Judaism's Need to Respond to Change* saying:

> [a]t a time when Jewish institutions across the world are working hard to encourage young people to remain within the Jewish community, and to adopt a Jewish lifestyle, such dissension and strife [as evident within British Jewry] are counter-productive…we need to create an environment in which differences of outlook are tolerated. Recognising that fellow Jews may hold different views does not in any way undermine the convictions of one's own ideology. Mutual respect is the key to co-existence, as is an awareness that the modern world is necessarily pluralist. The clear message from many of today's young people is that the sooner a post-denominational age dawns, the better. It is not always easy to respond to the pace of change in the world

> around us. But Judaism has always been a synthesis of modern ideas and traditional values…The faster the world changes the more we need to hold on to our key values, which include tolerance, intellectual openness, and respect for the whole of Creation (22 May 1998, p. 26).

Freedman's assertion that younger people are anxiously awaiting a 'post denominational age' summarises the sentiments of many of my interviewees. Yet Freedman writes as someone heavily influenced by the secular discourse of multiculturalism and diversity. He stresses the need for 'tolerance' and 'respect', key tropes that were being introduced in 1998 by the newly elected Labour government in an effort to help Britain come to terms with its increasing diversity (Worley 2005). However, for many modern Orthodox British Jews, the modern agenda of choice and equality of positions—the understanding that there is not a right or wrong authenticity—is fundamentally at odds with the very core of religious belief. Although few modern Orthodox Jews would deny the existence of denominational Jewry, many would firmly denounce the authenticity of denominationalism, since all deviations from Orthodoxy are often regarded as perversions of authentic Judaism.

Pluralism is a contentious issue within British Jewry, and debates about the topic can and do engender deeply felt animosity, fear, and protectiveness. Whereas the wider community is polarised between pro-inclusivism and pro-pluralism, the younger generations are beginning to grapple with pluralism in (often) more complex and nuanced manners. Within British Jewish youth movements, this impasse between plurality and Orthodoxy is not unbridgeable. While movements often defer to Orthodoxy in practice, many have begun to realize that a "total commitment to a vision of truth need not necessitate the belief that the truth is exhausted by the vision" (Kimelman 1987, p. 138), or that a plurality of opinions on what constitutes Jewish truth need not necessarily lead to paralysis. Many movements attract a wide variety of Jews, and although a movement promotes a particular ethos of Jewish truth, there are some attempts to make space for other opinions to sit alongside, and not be eclipsed by, the historically more powerful Orthodox claims of authenticity, as evidenced particularly by *Ehud*'s approach to pluralism as an uncomfortable investigation of Jewish difference.

Jewish youth movements recognize that they represent a possibility for a collective moment of interception – interception between formal education and values transmitted in families, interception between the binary opinions of Orthodox and Progressive communal opinions on pluralism, and interception between an individualised Judaism based on personal belief and a Judaism which is supported and negotiated by the wider community. Although youth movements are shaped and somewhat constrained by wider communal expectations, as demonstrated here in relation to pluralism, they are not entirely determined by

them—and it is this point which makes their inclusion in research about Jewish education and continuity in the UK so important. Indeed, the study of young people in youth movements introduces new discourses about innovative performances of Judaism to discussions about Jewish continuity. Hey writes:

> The idea of performativity of identity as simultaneously asserted and 'under threat' in relations to its (ethnographic) others creates conceptual-empirical space for elaborating how, and under what conditions, subjects can come to cite themselves in recognised *as well as unpredictable ways* (Hey 2006, p. 452, italics added).

Youth movements enable young people to learn to 'do' Judaism in ways that are simultaneously recognisable but also unpredictable. This Judaism as a verb, the act of 'doing' Judaism, is a way of redefining the noun 'Jew' to include broader and more fluid understanding of what it means to 'act', 'talk' and 'be' Jewish. Further explorations of doing Judaism in informal education contexts will prove an invaluable component of sociological research on the British Jewish community in the future.

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NOTES

[1] The unease over the Chief Rabbi's excellent inter-faith record, and his continued reluctance to engage with Liberal Jews, continues to enrage many people. For example, a letter to the editor of the Jewish Chronicle by Mr. Neil Levitt on 26 October 2007 was entitled: 'Chief's Hypocrisy?' Levitt, a member of the public, echoed Rabbi Rayner's sentiments from a full ten years earlier when he wrote: "Whilst…[the Chief Rabbi] is happy to attend at Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's and no doubt has visited the Mosque and Temple near his residence, he steadfastly refuses to set foot in a Liberal or Reform Synagogue" (p. 34).

[2] There is research on informal education in other contexts, and some theoretical writing on the importance of informal education, most notably Coffield's *The Necessity of Informal Learning* (2000), designed to introduce informal learning as a topic in need of more theoretical explanation, but there is still a dearth of empirical research on informal education in faith-based youth movements, particularly Jewish ones.

[3] The study used a scale of identification with Judaism, with 'closest' referring to those young adults who were actively involved in Jewish life and had mostly Jewish friends. 'Distant' refers to those young adults who had little or no involvement in Jewish communal life and had mostly non-Jewish friends. Additionally, the report found that involvement in informal education was a better predictor of future communal involvement than was formal education. Over 70% of the distant people had experiences of Jewish formal education.

[4] *Madrichim* is the term for youth leaders more generally, as opposed to *mazkirim* which refers to the movement chair-people specifically.

[5] The chart below sets out the movements and leaders discussed in this article:

Movement	Interviewee
Gluke: Reform Zionist Jewish Movement	Reba; 24 years old
Chaim: Liberal Jewish Zionist Youth Movement	Anna; 22 years old
Hadar: Zionist Masorti Youth Movement (egalitarian)	Gideon; 23 years old
Herut: Zionist movement open to all denominations	Sam; 24 years old
Ehud: Zionist youth movement open to all denominations, mostly for those students over the age of 16.	Jared; 24 years old
Dor: Zionist, pluralist youth movement	Noah; 24 years old
Alizah: socialist, Zionist youth movement	Jesse; 24 years old
ABG: inclusivist youth movement	Jeremy, 28 years old

[6] All youth leader and organisation names have been changed.

[7] I often found that leaders initially hesitated to criticize other movements, because there is an underlying appreciation for a general youth movement culture that often is forced to band together for the purposes of fund raising or even demonstrating why the education they undertake is important at all. However after the initial hesitation, most leaders consistently compared their own movement to others (in order to demonstrate why their movement was better), even when comparison was not particularly warranted. The impulse to compare was particularly strong when movement leaders' understood their position as a defensive one—defending their way of doing things in relation to other movements, as with pluralism, cross communalism or denominationalism.

[8] The particular challenge Shabbat represents to pluralism is discussed at the end of this article.

[9] Only one movement leader described his movement as inclusivist. Jeremy, the chief executive of *ABG* originally had no trouble defining his movement as pluralist; in our first meeting, held during October 2006, Jeremy defined ABG as "a pluralist Jewish youth organization, open to all boys and girls who call themselves Jews". However, during our final wrap-up meeting eighteen months after I first approached him, he was eager to re-evaluate his position:

> You know, Sarah. Um, you know how you are calling us pluralist? I know I said that, but I have been doing a lot of thinking lately just on that. I really don't think we should really describe ourselves like that, since, [ahem] we really are more like a Modern Orthodox movement, but we accept everyone and are inclusive of everyone. But, you know, you have seen it—once we are in a movement setting, we are modern Orthodox.

[10] This section discusses movements who have open admissions —movements which do not require adherence to a particular denomination of Judaism (or any denomination). In practice, membership is often drawn from a particular part of the community (due to reputation or friends wanting to attend with friends), but the movements' ethos's all make clear that they are open to anyone who self identifies as Jewish.

[11] The sacredness of teachings from the Torah.

[12] Prayerbook.

[13] See Appendix four for Ehud's Tips for Pluralist Programming, which interestingly focus particularly on gender equality as a fundamental part of pluralism (the exact issue that is seen as a primary reason why Orthodoxy cannot accept pluralism).

[14] Bench refers to saying grace after meals.

[15] *Ehud* was the only movement that offered a short course for members and leaders interested in leading pluralist prayer or activities more generally.