The Geographies of Jewish Education: Jewish Schools, Synagogues, and the Construction of Young People's Jewish Identities

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own, except where work which has formed part of jointly authored publications has been included. The contribution of the candidate and the other authors to this work has been explicitly indicated below. The candidate confirms that appropriate credit has been given within the thesis where reference has been made to the work of others.

Small parts of Sections 2.3.1 and 2.4.5, respectively regarding previous research into performance and performativity, and a critique of a body of Jewish identity research that reifies Jewishness, are derived from the jointly authored publication, Samson, M.G.M., Vanderbeck, R.M., and Wood, N. (2017, in press) 'Fixity and Flux: A Critique of Competing Approaches to Researching Contemporary Jewish Identities.' *Social Compass*. Whilst the majority of this article above was written by the candidate, most of the first paragraph of the section 'The reification of Jewish identity' was written by Dr Wood, and both Dr Wood and Professor Vanderbeck assisted with the scripting of the article more generally.

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Abstract

Faith schools represent controversial aspects of England's educational politics, yet they have been largely overlooked as sites for geographical analysis. Moreover, although other social science disciplines have attended to a range of questions regarding faith schools, some important issues remain underexamined. In particular, contestation within ethnic and religious groups regarding notions of identity have generally been ignored in an educational context, whilst the majority of research into Jewish schools more specifically has failed to attend to the personal qualities of Jewishness. The interrelationships between faith schools (of all kinds) and places of worship have also received minimal attention.

In response, this investigation draws upon a range of theoretical approaches to identity in order to illustrate how Jewish schools are implicated in the changing spatiality and performance of individuals' Jewishness. Central to this research is a case study of the Jewish Community Secondary School (JCoSS), England's only pluralist Jewish secondary school, with more extensive elements provided by interviews with other stakeholders in Anglo-Jewry. Parents often viewed Jewish schools as a means of attaining a highly-regarded 'secular' academic education in a Jewish school, whilst also enabling their children to socialise with other Jews. In the process, synagogues' traditional functions of education and socialisation have been co-opted by Jewish schools, revealing a shift in the spatiality of young people's Anglo-Jewish identity practices. Furthermore, JCoSS, as well as many synagogues, have come to represent spaces of contestation over 'authentic' Jewishness, given widely varying conceptualisations of 'proper' Jewish practice and identity amongst parents, pupils and rabbis. Yet, although JCoSS offers its pupils considerable autonomy to determine their practices, such choice is not limitless, revealing an inherent dilemma in inclusivity. The thesis thus explores how different manifestations of Jewishness are constructed, practised and problematised in a school space (which itself is dynamic and contested), and beyond.

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Glossary

Aliyah (Hebrew)**:** Permanent migration of Jews from the diaspora to the Land of Israel (Bowker, 2000).

Bar mitzvah: See *b'nei mitzvah*.

Bat mitzvah: See *b'nei mitzvah.*

Beit knesset (Hebrew)**:** 'House of assembly,' one of the three principal functions of a synagogue (Kaplan, 2009). See also *beit midrash*, *beit tefillah*.

Beit midrash (Hebrew)**:** 'House of study,' one of the three principal functions of a synagogue (Kaplan, 2009). See also *beit knesset*, *beit tefillah*. 'Beit Midrash' also represents a subject at JCoSS, involving the intensive study of religious texts.

Beit tefillah (Hebrew)**:** 'House of worship,' one of the three principal functions of a synagogue (Kaplan, 2009). See also *beit knesset*, *beit midrash*.

Beth Din (Hebrew)**:** Jewish court of law, which has historically been responsible for adjudging one's Jewishness under *halakhah* (Law and Martin, 2015).

Birkat Hamazon (Hebrew)**:** Grace after meals (Berlin and Grossman, 2011).

B'nei mitzvah (Hebrew)**:** Coming of age ceremony: *bar mitzvah* for boys and *bat mitzvah* for girls.

Chag (pl. chagim) (Hebrew)**:** Jewish festival.

Challah (Hebrew)**:** A braided, egg-enriched bread blessed and eaten on *Shabbat* (Ayto, 2012).

Charedi: (pl. charedim) (Hebrew)**:** Strictly/Ultra-Orthodox Jews.

Cheder (pl. chederim) (Hebrew)**:** Synagogue school, usually aimed at primary school-age children, which teaches rudimentary Judaism and Hebrew (Bowker, 2000).

Cholov Yisrael (Hebrew)**:** Dairy products derived from milk that has been milked under the supervision of an observant Jew (KOF-K Kosher Supervision, 2016).

Chumash (Hebrew)**:** The Five Books of Moses in printed form (Jacobs, 1999).

D'var Torah (Hebrew)**:** A sermon based on the weekly *Torah* portion that may be incorporated within a bar or bat mitzvah (Berman, 1996).

Eruv (pl. eruvim) (Hebrew)**:** A religious boundary demarcation, usually marked by wires, which symbolically extends the private sphere of the home into 'public' spaces, thus permitting individuals to undertake activities there that would otherwise be forbidden on

Shabbat (for instance, carrying objects such as keys from one domain to the other) (Watson, 2005).

Frum (Yiddish)**:** Adjective describing an individual who is pious and highly committed to Jewish religious law and practice (Speake and LaFlaur, 1999).

Gemara (Aramaic/Hebrew)**:** A component of the *Talmud* that comprises rabbinical commentary on the *Mishnah* (Knowles, 2005).

Haftarah (Hebrew)**:** A portion from the *Nevi'im* (Prophets) that is read or sung after the weekly *Torah* portion on *Shabbat* or the *chagim* (Berlin and Grossman, 2011).

Halakhah (Hebrew)**:** Rabbinic law (Cohn-Sherbok, 1993).

Hallel (Hebrew)**:** A Jewish prayer from *Psalms* (Jacobs, 1999).

Hasidim (adj. Hasidic) (Hebrew)**:** A sub-group within *Charedi* Judaism.

Havurah (pl. havurot) (Hebrew)**:** A small prayer and learning group (Diner, 2004). See also *independent minyanim*.

Independent minyan (Hebrew/English)**:** a small, lay-led prayer and study community, often existing independently of denominational and synagogue structures (Kaunfer, 2010).

Kabbalat Shabbat (Hebrew)**:** A service welcoming *Shabbat*. At JCoSS, students are invited to participate in song and prayer in the school's 'Heart Space' (its main reception and communal area).

Kabbalat Torah (Hebrew)**:** A confirmation ceremony used in many Progressive synagogues around the age of 15-16. Pupils typically continue the study of Hebrew and Jewish texts following their bar or bat mitzvah, alongside cultural and historical issues such as the Holocaust. Kabbalat Torah groups also often visit foreign Jewish communities in order to further illuminate their studies.

Kashrut (Hebrew)**:** Jewish dietary laws, i.e. 'keeping Kosher'.

Kedassia: A Kosher certification.

Ketubah (pl. ketubot) (Hebrew)**:** Jewish marriage contract, of some controversy given the historic challenges for many self-identifying (but non-halakhic) Jews to attain a Jewish marriage (Speake and LaFlaur, 1999).

Kibbutz (pl. kibbutzim) (Hebrew)**:** A rural collective in Israel in which volunteers live and work together to develop a society supportive of principles of social justice and equality (Mittelberg and Ari, 1995).

Kiddush (Hebrew)**:** A blessing recited over wine or grape juice to sanctify *Shabbat* and the Jewish holidays (Bowker, 2000).

Kippah (pl. kippot) (Hebrew)**:** a brimless skullcap. Also called a 'yarmulke' or 'coppel' (Yiddish).

Kosher: see *Kashrut*.

Krav maga (Hebrew)**:** A self-defence programme originally developed for the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), but now of more mainstream popularity.

Kvutzah (Hebrew)**:** 'Group'; at JCoSS this is a subject that teaches personal and social issues and development, corresponding closely with the more general subject, PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education).

Mechitza (Hebrew)**:** A partition that divides men and women in Orthodox and many Conservative/Masorti synagogue services.

Megillah (Hebrew)**:** Scroll.

Menorah (Hebrew)**:** Seven-branch candelabrum; a common symbol of Judaism.

Mensch (Yiddish)**:** Person of integrity and honour (Speake and LaFlaur, 1999). See also *menschlichkeit*.

Menschlichkeit (Yiddish)**:** Developing people of integrity and honour (Fishman, 2012). See also *mensch*.

Mincha (Hebrew)**:** Afternoon prayer service.

Minyan (Hebrew)**:** A quorum of ten Jewish adults (i.e. over the age of 13) required for religious obligations such as public prayer (Jacobs, 1999). More traditional streams of Judaism stipulate that only men may constitute a *minyan* (Weiss, 1990).

Mishnah (Hebrew)**:** Jewish oral law (Bowker, 2000).

Mitzvah (pl. mitzvot) (Hebrew)**:** describes either one of the 613 commandments, or a more general 'good deed' (Bowker, 2000).

Payot (Hebrew)**:** Curly sideburns worn by some Orthodox males.

Pesach (Hebrew)**:** Alternatively known as Passover, a festival commemorating Jews' liberation from slavery in Ancient Egypt.

Purim (Hebrew)**:** A Jewish holiday commemorating the rescuing of the Jews from extermination in the ancient Persian Empire.

Rosh Chodesh (Hebrew)**:** A minor holiday celebrating the first day of each month in the Hebrew calendar (Berlin and Grossman, 2011). JCoSS offers different forms of service to mark Rosh Chodesh.

Rosh Hashanah (Hebrew)**:** Jewish New Year.

Seder (Hebrew)**:** Ritual service and meal that marks the beginning of *Pesach*.

Shabbat (Hebrew)**:** The Sabbath or 'day of rest'. It is observed from sunset on Friday evening until sunset on Saturday evening and is traditionally welcomed through the lighting of candles and recitation of a dedicated blessing, followed by an evening meal. This meal is traditionally accompanied with further blessings and *challah*.

Shacharit (Hebrew)**:** Daily morning prayer.

Sheitel (Yiddish)**:** A wig or half-wig worn by some Orthodox Jewish married women to adhere to religious expectations that their head be covered as a sign of their modesty (Jacobs, 1999).

Shema (Hebrew)**:** A prayer in the *Torah*, which commands Jews to twice a day declare their faith in God (Jacobs, 1999).

Shiur (pl. shiurim) (Hebrew)**:** *Torah* lesson.

Shiva (Hebrew)**:** Week-long mourning period for close relatives (Knowles, 2005).

Shtetl (Yiddish)**:** Small settlement historically inhabited by Jews in Eastern Europe.

Shul (Yiddish)**:** Synagogue.

Shvitz (Yiddish)**:** To sweat (verb).

Sukkah (Hebrew)**:** A temporary hut constructed for *Sukkot* and typically topped with branches and decorated with fruits.

Sukkot (Hebrew)**:** A seven-day festival commemorating the Exodus, as well as acting as an agricultural harvest festival.

Tallit (Hebrew)**:** Prayer shawl.

Talmud (Hebrew)**:** Collection of rabbinic teachings comprising the *Mishnah* and *Gemara* (Berlin and Grossman, 2011).

Talmud Torah (Hebrew/English)**:** Synagogue school provided at primary school age, providing an education in Hebrew and the core religious texts, in preparation for further Jewish education within high schools or *yeshivot* (Homa, 1969).

Tanakh (Hebrew)**:** The Hebrew Bible. This is referred to by Christians as the 'Old Testament' (Jacobs, 1999).

Tefillin (Hebrew)**:** Two small, black boxes attached by leather straps and containing scrolls of parchment inscribed with verses from the *Torah*. Many observant Jewish males wear *tefillin* on their head and arm during weekday morning prayers (Jacobs, 1999).

Tikkun Olam (Hebrew)**:** 'Repair of the world,' i.e. a concern with the welfare of society.

Torah (Hebrew)**:** Definitions can vary from the Five Books of Moses (*Chumash* or 'Pentateuch') – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) – the entire Hebrew Bible (*Tanakh*), or the full body of Jewish law and teachings (Bowker, 2000; Berlin and Grossman, 2011).

Treif (Yiddish)**:** Non-*Kosher*.

Tzedakah (Hebrew)**:** Charity.

Tzitzit (Hebrew)**:** Tassels attached to the corners of a *tallit*.

Tu BiShvat (Hebrew)**:** Jewish holiday celebrating a 'new year' for trees.

United Synagogue (English)**:** The largest mainstream Orthodox movement in the UK.

Yeshiva (pl. yeshivot) (Hebrew)**:** Higher Jewish educational institution that focuses on the study of traditional religious texts including the *Talmud* and *Torah* (Jacobs, 1999; Bowker, 2000).

Yom Ha'atzmaut (Hebrew)**:** Israel Independence Day.

Yom Kippur (Hebrew)**:** Day of Atonement, widely considered the most sacred day in the Jewish calendar.

Zionism (English, from German)**:** A nationalist movement originally propounding the repatriation of Jews facing anti-Semitic prejudice to a Jewish homeland in the historic Land of Israel. Since its founding in 1948, the State of Israel has faced diverse security threats and challenges to its future existence, hence Zionists today advocate on the country's behalf (Jacobs, 1999; Knowles, 2005).

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Faith schools: introducing the issue

Faith schools[1] represent one of the most controversial aspects of England's educational politics (Clements, 2010). Successive governments of the past twenty years have actively promoted these institutions, claiming that they provide excellent educational opportunities for their pupils while also allowing them to learn in an environment that reflects their families' religious and cultural values (e.g. Department for Education and Skills, 2001; Department for Education, 2016a). For instance, in explaining her new government's vision for education and a 'meritocratic' society, Theresa May, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, stated:

> Britain has a long history of faith schools delivering outstanding education … I believe we should confidently promote them and the role they play in a diverse school system … fundamentally I believe it is wrong to deny families the opportunity to send their children to a school that reflects their religious values if that's what they choose (May, 2016).

However, this enthusiasm for faith schools, as well as their presumed purpose, is far from universal. Media reports frequently emphasise a range of incidents that cause faith schools to be portrayed as exclusivist, particularistic and anachronistic, and hence incompatible with 'modern,' 'liberal' society. In the case of Jewish schools, for instance, recent controversies include efforts to prevent pupils from answering public examination questions that contradict their teachings (such as regarding human reproduction and evolution) (National Secular Society, 2014), an attempt to ban women from driving their children to school given its deviation from particular gendered behaviour expectations (Martinson, 2015), and the uncovering of numerous illegal *Charedi*[2] schools (Rickman, 2016). Faith schools more generally have been criticised for restricting societal cohesion

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[1] The term 'faith school' is conventionally used in policy documents to refer to any school with a 'religious character.' Two of the five categories of maintained schools under Section 20(1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 can be designated as having a 'religious character' according to Section 5 of the Religious Character of Schools (Designation Procedure) Regulations 1998. Independent schools may also be designated as having a 'religious character'; see Sections 4-5 of The Religious Character of Schools (Designation Procedure) (Independent Schools) (England) Regulations 2003.

[2] See glossary for definitions of italicised terms.

(Berkeley and Vij, 2008; Social Integration Commission, 2015; The Challenge et al., 2017), with Professor Ted Cantle, whose Home Office-commissioned report had previously identified faith schools as partially culpable for creating the preconditions that culminated in rioting in several towns in 2001 (Cantle, 2001), recently arguing:

> Religious selection in school admissions is utterly deleterious for integration. And not just for religious integration, but for ethnic and socioeconomic integration too (Cantle, 2016).

Yet, events such as the 'Trojan Horse' affair in 2014[3] reveal that even where faith schools are not directly embroiled in controversy, they can quickly become implicated as scapegoats, given their associations with segregation, proselytisation, and, in cases, extremism (see Bingham, 2014; Hasan, 2014).

Such issues demonstrate how faith schools are central to debates regarding ethnoreligious identity construction and community relations in contemporary society (see Flint, 2007; Kong, 2013) and the role of religion in (particularly state-funded) education (Judge, 2001; Watson, 2013). Both supporters and opponents of the ongoing proliferation of faith schools in England regularly cite the perceived impacts of these institutions on pupils' identities. Indeed, these schools are alternately portrayed as spaces where pupils can be 'protected' from alternative worldviews and in the process 'imbued' with a religious identity (Ahmed, 2012; Merry, 2015), or, with contrasting emphasis, *indoctrinated* with epistemically controversial values (Hand, 2003, 2012; Jacobsen, 2016) and separated from other groups (Mason, 2003, 2005; Norman, 2012). Faith schools relatedly raise serious questions about the desirability of and ability to create a society that is both cohesive *and* multicultural (McCrudden, 2011; Maussen and Vermeulen, 2015), in a context in which the latter is increasingly viewed with ambivalence and even suspicion by national leaders such as David Cameron (2011) and Angela Merkel (see Siebold, 2010; Noack, 2015), as well as implicitly in globally-significant events including the UK's referendum result to exit the European Union (Demir, 2017) and the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States in 2016 (Abbas, 2017; Kreiss, 2017). Growing governmental pressure for these institutions to promote 'cohesion' or 'integration' (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007; Department for

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[3] An alleged attempt to impose an Islamist ethos into several Birmingham schools (Clarke, 2014; Wintour, 2014).

Communities and Local Government, 2008; DfE, 2016a) and 'British values' (DfE, 2014a) may imply that many are failing to fulfil their responsibilities in this regard (see Adams, 2014; Vanderbeck and Johnson, 2015), even whilst more faith schools continue to open with governmental support. Their rather ambiguous place in UK society is also reflected in survey evidence suggesting substantial public antipathy towards (especially *minority*) faith schools (Opinium, 2014; Woodhead, 2014a), even though their sheer numbers intimate considerable levels of popularity, with approximately one-third of state-funded schools in England now designated as having a 'religious character' (DfE, 2016b, 2017).

It is within this context that this thesis seeks to examine the changing role that Jewish faith schools have in shaping the lives and identities of Jewish young people in England. Recent years have seen a significant expansion in the number of Jewish day schools in England, as well as rates of enrolment in most cases (see Section 2.4.6). However, attitudes towards Jewish schools amongst Jewish families (Valins et al., 2002; Prell, 2007), as well as rabbis (e.g. Sacks, 1994; Romain, 2007, 2008) contrast considerably, revealing divergent perspectives of the role of these institutions in multicultural society, and the 'type' of identity they should help construct (see Rich and Schachter, 2013; Krasner, 2016). This interest in Jewish schools as shapers of young people's worldviews, practices and social engagement is implicit in debates regarding multicultural education (Short, 2002; Ipgrave, 2016; Mueller, 2016), community relations (Miller, 2011) and the inclusion or exclusion of non-Jews (Cohen and Kelner, 2007; Bruce, 2012).

However, many important issues remain under-examined within the dynamic context of both England's educational landscape and Anglo-Jewry. For instance, Jewish schools have become sites of contestation regarding the historic question of who may or may not be considered Jewish. This is most clearly encapsulated by a Supreme Court ruling[4] that has adjudged that state-funded Jewish schools in England may no longer select pupils based on matrilineal descent (2.4.6), in spite of the fact that Jewish identity is traditionally defined in such a way (2.3.6). Consequently, the ruling reveals a broader disjuncture within the Jewish community between those who conceptualise Jewishness as an 'essence' rooted in ancestry, and those who perceive it as more personally-defined. Other questions of Jewish identity that divide the Jewish community pertain (but are not

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[4] R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS and the Admissions Appeal Panel of JFS and others [2009] UKSC 15.

limited) to religious belief, adherence and practice, as well as attitudes towards wider society. However, these internal disagreements have to date been largely overlooked in a Jewish school context. In response, this investigation attends to *intra*-faith as well as inter-faith dynamics (a matter deserving scrutiny in broader faith school research too), enabling it to demonstrate the ways in which multitudinous and often conflicting forms of Jewishness are constructed and contested in a faith school context.

The growth of Jewish day schooling in England is also likely to have significant implications for synagogue communities, given that synagogues have historically played a key role in young people's Jewish education. Previous research has paid surprisingly little attention to the relationship between faith schools (of all kinds) and places of worship, hence this study makes a unique contribution to the literature on ethnoreligious communities by investigating the complex and evolving interactions between English Jewish schools and synagogue communities.

Furthermore, the conceptual approach of this thesis is distinctive. Previous studies of Jewish schools have generally resorted to reified conceptualisations of a collective Jewish identity in order to ascertain Jewish educational institutions' ability to 'strengthen' the supposedly 'weak' form of collective Jewishness that exists in contemporary secularising society (see Samson et al., 2017). Such research fails to attend to the complex and personalised ways in which individuals understand and negotiate their faith. By offering respondents the autonomy to define their Jewishness as they desire, via predominantly qualitative methods that can accommodate the nuances of personal identities, the investigation additionally pays greater attention to the ways in which individual Jews 'live' their identities, without imposing particular expectations of a (normative) Jewish identity upon them. Such an objective is perhaps especially (but not exclusively) valuable in research with young people, as their personal but distinctive ways of conceptualising and practising their faith have historically been marginalised in research regarding religion and religious identity (Ridgely, 2011, 2012). Consequently, the conceptual approach utilised by this study places the individual centre-stage, facilitating a greater understanding of the evolving spatialities and temporalities of Jewishness in multicultural, secularising society (Samson et al., 2017).

This approach to Jewish identity is mirrored in the ethos of the Jewish Community Secondary School (JCoSS) in North London, which is central to the thesis. Indeed, as England's only pluralist Jewish secondary school, JCoSS cannot be considered in any way representative of the country's Jewish schools, but it is valuable to the study because of its unique validation of *personalised* manifestations of Jewishness. Moreover, JCoSS

acts as a site of contestation over 'authentic' Jewishness given the diversity of denominational affiliations and practices present within the school community, and associated challenges to its pluralist ethos. The case study of JCoSS is supplemented by more extensive elements, including interviews with rabbis at a range of synagogues across North and Northwest London and Hertfordshire, and interviews with school leaders at other Jewish secondary schools. By utilising a predominantly qualitative approach that emphasises the personal qualities and validity of individuals' Jewish identities, the investigation facilitates an intensive understanding of the ways in which Jewish identities are constructed, negotiated and contested in relation to the Jewish educational institutions of the day school and synagogue. The investigation's specific aims and research questions will be introduced subsequently.

1.2 Research aims and questions

Within the context outlined above, this thesis seeks to address four specific questions (RQs) in pursuit of its overall aim to shed new light on the changing role of Jewish faith schools in shaping the lives and identities of Jewish young people.

1. **What influences parents' decisions to send their children to Jewish schools?**

Previous research has frequently indicated a desire for homogeneously Jewish environments amongst religiously observant parents, where their children can be inculcated with traditional Jewish beliefs whilst being sheltered from external, competing influences (2.4.3). However, the Supreme Court ruling – henceforward summarised as R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS – buttressed by broader public pressures for faith schools to become more inclusive (King, 2010), may constrain many Jewish schools' efforts at maintaining their desired school environments. This could in turn erode parents' *raison d'être* for selecting faith schools whilst rendering them more appealing to 'secular' and unobservant Jews; a situation intensified by the establishment of a pluralist Jewish secondary school (JCoSS) in 2010. Certainly, Glaser's (2010) endorsement of Jewish schools on the basis of their *secular* education standards raises the question of parental motivation in sending their children to specifically Jewish institutions. Consequently, it is necessary to ascertain the factors influencing Jewish parents' choice of JCoSS, with implications for the ways in which Jewish identities are understood and the school's broader role in contributing to their construction.

2. What is the role of Jewish schools in shaping young people's Jewish identities?

Substantial research has considered faith schools' relationships with other religious groups and wider society, yet the internal dynamics of these communities have largely been ignored. As such, accounts tend to homogenise faith-based communities, limiting their efficacy in attending to the role of schools in shaping social identities. However, the complex and contested nature of Jewish identity renders questions of identity construction within educational spaces highly fraught. In response, this study investigates the conceptions of Jewish identity propounded and challenged at a theoretically cross-communal and pluralistic school, and the potential implications for admissions in the wake of R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS.

3. How is the dynamic interplay between Jewish faith schools and synagogue communities manifested?

Although young people may be highly involved within places of worship (Youniss et al., 1999; Smith, 2003a), the relationship between faith schools and places of worship has been surprisingly under-examined. The fact that R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS has stimulated most Jewish schools to define (albeit in some cases reluctantly) Jewishness in terms of synagogue attendance (2.4.6; 5.2.1) renders an analysis of this potentially highly dynamic relationship even more pertinent. This will facilitate a greater understanding of the changing spatiality of contemporary Anglo-Jewish identity and practice.

4. How do young people in Jewish schools negotiate their Jewish identities?

Discourses of identity and survival have become central to Jewish educational research (2.4.3), with some ethnic minority groups even using Jews as an exemplar to emulate in terms of maintaining a distinctive identity through specialised education (Horenczyk and Hacohen Wolf, 2011). However, scepticism has long existed regarding the extent to which Jewish schools inspire immersion in Jewish education and practices (2.4.4), and it cannot be assumed that pupils will necessarily be influenced by the conceptions of 'Jewishness' propounded by faith schools. This investigation offers Jewish school pupils a 'voice' to define and express their identities as they wish, enabling in-depth analysis of

the ways in which their school contributes – if at all – to their identity construction. In order to attend to these research questions, the final section of this introductory chapter describes how the investigation will proceed.

1.3 Looking ahead

Chapter 2 positions this investigation within existing bodies of literature regarding schools and identity construction. Indeed, as the chapter demonstrates, acknowledgement of the complex, fluid and disputed nature of Jewishness is necessary to developing a profound understanding of Jewish identity construction and the role of Jewish schools in this process. Following justification of the methodology in Chapter 3, a detailed analysis of this investigation's empirical data will be provided in Chapters 4-7. First, the influences behind parents' choice of (Jewish) school will be assessed (Chapter 4), thereby facilitating an understanding of the ways in which diverse Jewish identities are constructed and contested in a Jewish school context (Chapter 5). Having ascertained parents' intentions in selecting a Jewish school, as well as the impacts of R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS for Jewish school admissions, it will subsequently be possible to explore the implications of these legislative changes and the growth of Jewish schools more generally for synagogue communities (Chapter 6). Finally, pupils' own perspectives of the issues raised through these chapters will be investigated in greater detail (Chapter 7). The concluding chapter (8) will explore the investigation's key findings and themes, clarify its contributions to various bodies of literature, and provide suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: The role of schools in identity construction

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a critical review of existing literature regarding education and Jewish identities. It identifies a pressing requirement for future research to explore the numerous spaces where (highly diverse) Jewish identities are constructed, contested and performed, and propounds a new approach to conceptualising and researching Jewish identities, emphasising the value of individual constructions of Jewishness, which will be executed in this thesis.

The chapter first positions the study within the existing body of research into the geographies of education, which has considered numerous questions of identity, but has to date largely neglected Jewish identities more specifically (2.2). The complex and contested nature of Jewish identities, related in part to accelerated processes of pluralisation, will be analysed subsequently, in order to justify this investigation's distinctive attention to Judaism's internal dynamics (2.3). This trend has been accompanied by growing concerns amongst many Jewish community leaders that diasporic Jewry is being eroded, and in response, Jewish day schools are often viewed as valuable means of 'protecting' and 'strengthening' young people's attachment to their faith (2.4). Section 2.4 additionally reviews previous research into Jewish schools as vehicles of identity construction, and contextualises the study by illustrating two major recent developments in the Anglo-Jewish educational landscape: the enforced openness of Jewish schools to families who previously would have been rejected on account of their identities, and the establishment of a school that is self-avowedly amenable to diverse expressions of Jewishness. The final section (2.5) summarises how this critical review demonstrates the need for research that intensively scrutinises personalised (and often competing) conceptualisations of Jewishness across a range of spaces, including within Jewish schools and synagogues.

2.2 Positioning the study: the geographies of education

This initial section of the literature review positions the investigation within geographies of education research. Reflecting a broader interest amongst many geographers in issues of identity (e.g. Longhurst, 2000; Valentine and Sporton, 2009; Wood, 2012), geographers of education (and, as Section 2.4.1 will highlight, religion) have explored various aspects of their formation and performance. Section 2.2.1 provides an overview

of the subdiscipline of the geographies of education, including its attention to the numerous spaces in which education occurs, and the ways in which it is intimately bound up with identity construction. However, as Section 2.2.2 illustrates, questions of Jewish identity have been largely overlooked within geography,[5] whilst faith schools have also remained surprisingly marginal. The present study is thus valuable in attending to the question of Jewish schools and Jewish identity from a geographical perspective, drawing, as Section 2.2.1 will subsequently demonstrate, on theoretical approaches to identity used by many geographers of education more generally.

2.2.1 Geographies of education: a growing subdiscipline

In the past two decades geographers have become more interested in questions of education. Challenging the historic tendency of educational research to treat place and space as passive 'containers' of education (Kenway and Youdell, 2011), geographies of education research now represents a varied subdiscipline that explores the ways in which educational spaces are implicated in the transmission of particular cultural values and knowledge and thus shape broader society (Cook and Hemming, 2011; McCreary et al., 2013). Indeed, education is increasingly viewed as a site where ideologies and identities are propounded, transformed and resisted, and hence central to the reproduction of social and cultural groups (Collins and Coleman, 2008; McCreary et al., 2013). Importantly, young people (as well as adults) may learn informally through an array of everyday (and often unrepeatable) spaces, practices and activities, including walking, travelling by car, or conversing with friends (Horton and Kraftl, 2006; Kraftl, 2013a). Moreover, in spite of their supposed banality, such practices are highly meaningful to individuals (Horton and Kraftl, 2006), necessitating attention to the diverse ways in which practice can be schematised. This issue will be explored further in the context of Jewish identity research specifically, which has tended to restrict the notion of 'practice' to tightly-defined religious ritual (2.4.5), but it is important to recognise here that any analysis of ethnoreligious identities (regardless of subjects' age) must consider all actions and spaces that are implicated in identity construction. Similar arguments have also been made in the geographies of religion, as Section 2.4.1 will demonstrate.

Certainly, all educational environments operate as spaces of continuous (re)construction and contestation (Allen, 2013; Bauer, 2015), and different scales can be

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[5] A few key exceptions include Valins (2003a, 2003b), Kudenko and Phillips (2009, 2010) and Mills (2016a).

closely intertwined (Waters, 2006, 2012; Helfenbein and Hill Taylor, 2009). Researchers are increasingly considering educational spaces beyond the 'formal' institutions of day school and university, such as homeschooling (Kraftl, 2013b), pre-school educational childcare (Holloway, 1998), extra-curricular 'enrichment' activities (Vincent and Ball, 2007), family learning programmes (Wainwright and Marandet, 2011), informal citizenship training (Mills, 2013), voluntary youth organisations (Mills, 2016b), the Internet (Lemke and Ritter, 2000) and the family (Pimlott-Wilson, 2011), as well as the interconnections between these spaces (Holloway and Valentine, 2000).

Nevertheless, schools have unsurprisingly attracted the majority of attention in the geographies of education subfield,[6] given that they may be seen as the primary sites of young people's social interaction (Collins and Coleman, 2008). School choice has represented a fruitful area of study, with researchers considering the influences behind parents' selection decisions (Schneider et al., 1998; Jacob and Lefgren, 2007; Jonsson and Rudolphi, 2011), as well as subjecting such dynamics to more critical analysis regarding the inequity of parents' abilities to exercise choice (Ball et al., 1996; Reay and Ball, 2003; Söderström and Uusitalo, 2010). Relatedly, researchers have explored questions of segregation by school, whether in terms of class (Butler and Hamnett, 2007; Allen, 2007), ethnicity (Burgess and Wilson, 2005; Johnston et al., 2007) or race (Mouw and Entwisle, 2001; Webb and Radcliffe, 2015). In particular, the notion of 'aspiration' has frequently been viewed as a classist device that frames (generally working-class) individuals as unsuited to competitive, neoliberal societies (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2011), in the process ensuring that education's impacts on social mobility are uneven (Jeffrey et al., 2004; Butler and Hamnett, 2011a, 2011b). These inequalities are exacerbated by neoliberal dynamics at a global scale, affecting students' relative ability to attain 'adult' goods such as employment and housing in future (Jeffrey, 2010), although in some contexts neoliberalism can also facilitate new sources of investment in public education (Waters, 2006).

The question of social class in education has also been explored at the micro-level by Reay (2006), who illustrates how this represents a highly impactful dimension of individual and social identities. For instance, segregation may occur within schools, such as between different class groups through ability setting, with detrimental impacts on many working class students' motivation and engagement (Reay, 2006). Furthermore,

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[6] Although universities and spaces within these have also attracted considerable interest (e.g. Reay et al., 2009; Hopkins, 2011; Holton and Riley, 2013; Jöns and Hoyler, 2013).

repeated processes of representation operate to shape social attitudes towards particular schools, affecting their (un)desirability, although stigmatised imaginings can be challenged by students (Reay, 2004, 2007). The role of schools in inculcating multicultural and liberal citizenship values (Hemming, 2011a) and levels of mixing between different racial and class groups (Reay et al., 2007; Hollingworth and Williams, 2010; Hemming, 2011b) have also attracted academic interest, facilitating a deeper understanding of intergroup dynamics and social cohesion within educational contexts. Indeed, numerous studies have argued that schools often propagate racialised understandings, practices and norms that marginalise minority populations whilst concealing the hegemony of particular (generally white) groups (Lewis, 2001; Lipman, 2005; Webb and Radcliffe, 2015). Moreover, schools can represent important sites of exclusion where young people are perceived as falling outside of general sociocultural expectations of embodied identity and practice (Holt, 2007), or where their upbringing is constructed as an obstacle to their education (Vanderbeck, 2005). Some forms of exclusion (including those rooted in processes of racialisation and ethnicisation) have been connected to growing attention within the geographies of education to the role of emotion (Zembylas, 2011; e.g. Leathwood and Hey, 2009; Kenway and Youdell, 2011), although it is important to recognise that emotions can also be valuable in helping individuals to understand their practices and learning (Kraftl, 2013b), and to develop preemptive coping devices before confronting the challenges of the labour market (Pimlott-Wilson, 2015). Collectively, then, these studies draw attention to the ways in which inequalities are not simply products of broader structures, but are additionally (re)constructed through repeated daily practices (see Reay, 2004).

Geographies of education research have additionally extended the scope of school-based research to attend to the geographies of numerous seemingly mundane sites within a school's boundaries, including the grounds (Titman, 1994; Tranter and Malone, 2004), library (Shilling and Cousins, 1990), locker rooms (Allen, 2013) and dining room (Pike, 2008). Schools are often conceptualised as spaces where young people's identities are regulated (Apple, 1979; Collins and Coleman, 2008), such as through processes of geographical surveillance and discipline that are facilitated in large part by the 'adultist' design of their built environments (Pike, 2008), restrictive curricula that may not correspond with young people's distinctive understandings of space (Catling, 2005), and the ability of teachers to physically separate students whose behaviour is deemed inappropriate (Barker et al., 2010). Moreover, teachers may place particular normative expectations on their pupils' learning and behaviour, influenced by their perceptions of

their abilities and attitudes (Holt, 2004a). However, young people are not powerless, and may resist disciplinary norms and representations (Shilling and Cousins, 1990; Barker et al., 2010; Allen, 2013), as well as contest identities and practices amongst themselves (Armitage, 2001; Catling, 2005). Therefore, through emphasising that young people are meaningful actors who actively negotiate and rework their education, rather than passive recipients of educational ideologies and processes of socialisation 'from above,' the geographies of education, influenced by children's geographies (Holloway et al., 2010), has facilitated new, deeper understandings of young people's life-worlds and identity construction. The importance of identity, and the role of this study within this subfield, will be clarified next.

2.2.2 Geographies of education and questions of (Jewish) identity

The previous section has intimated that a considerable proportion of geographies of education research is concerned, whether explicitly or not, with the types of identity that are (re)constructed in educational spaces. Schools are seen as playing a particularly important role in (re)producing a specific type of society and collective identity (see Collins and Coleman, 2008; Section 2.4), and although this may be related primarily to numerous states' impulses to create a globally competitive workforce (Hanson Thiem, 2009), the antagonism that often accompanies the establishment of new schools (Pennell and West, 2009) – and particularly faith schools (Gulson and Taylor Webb, 2013) – would suggest that these concerns are not merely economic.

Certainly, schools represent valuable spaces for considering the ways in which particular politics of representation and culture are lived and contested through education (Lipman, 2005; Mills and Kraftl, 2016). Moreover, faith schools more specifically may be seen as playing a clear and contested role in shaping young people's social identities, values and behaviours (Kong, 2013), reflected in the controversies described in Section 1.1. However, although faith schools have attracted considerable interest in a range of social science disciplines, such as educational studies, religious education and sociology, geographers have paid relatively little attention to such environments (Kong, 2013). An exception is provided by Dwyer and Parutis (2013), who illustrate the varied ways in which faith schools mobilise notions of 'community,' but focus upon community cohesion (as opposed to identity *per se*), a policy discourse that has faded over time. A further example is presented by Valins (2003a), who describes how boundaries delineating 'appropriate' Jewish identities from 'others' are constructed through Jewish schooling, but only hints at the potential for contestation between different movements.

The general geographical neglect of faith schools is striking given that geographers' attention to questions such as the (re)construction of space, processes of representation, inclusions/exclusions, citizenship and social inequalities would appear to be highly productive in faith school debates. Moreover, even though geographies of education research has attended to diverse forms of identity, including class, ethnicity and race (as described), as well as gender and sexuality (Hyams, 2000; Allen, 2013) and disability (Holt, 2004a, 2007), surprisingly little geographical research, regardless of subfield, has explored Judaism and Jewish identities (Mills, 2016a) or intersected with Jewish Studies (Lipphardt et al., 2008).[7] Relatedly, Anglo-Jewish History and Jewish Studies have remained largely separate from other disciplines (Endelman, 1997; Kushner and Ewence, 2012). This thesis consequently seeks to coalesce geographies of education research with two primary areas of broader literature that have been given insufficient attention within geography: faith schools and Jewish identity. The following section explores the schematisation of Jewish identity in detail.

2.3 Schematising Jewish identities

This section scrutinises the complexity of Jewish identity. First, it is necessary to consider some key developments in identity research more generally, which will inform the ways in which Jewishness is conceptualised in this thesis (2.3.1). Indeed, Jewish identity has become increasingly pluralised (2.3.2), reflected in the range of denominational affiliations available to Jews (2.3.3). However, at an individual level, too, Jewish identity has fragmented as Jews seek personal meaningfulness rather than necessarily adherence to group norms (2.3.4). Following a short overview of the ways in which 'community' has been theorised (2.3.5), it will be demonstrated that the nominal Jewish community is in reality profoundly divided, in particular regarding questions of Jewish 'status' or 'authenticity' rooted in notions of peoplehood and descent (2.3.6), but also more generally in terms of denominational affiliation, religious and cultural practices, and attitudes towards wider society (2.3.7). In response to concerns that Jewish identity is being eroded by associated processes of assimilation, communal leaders have thus sought educational strategies, which, they believe, will ensure the 'survival' of the Jewish community (2.3.8). Section 2.4 will subsequently illustrate how Jewish day schools have become central to these efforts.

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[7] Indeed, the vast majority of geographical research into Jewishness is limited to the socially-constructed spatiality of Israel-Palestine (Weizman, 2007; Long, 2011; Tzfadia and Yacobi, 2011) and the Holocaust (Cole, 2003; Giordano et al., 2014; Stone, 2016).

2.3.1 The theorisation of identity

Identity is a notoriously labyrinthine term that has received attention from a range of academic disciplines, as this section demonstrates. Identities can be conceptualised in several ways, but typically a distinction is made between social or collective identity – referring to "the individual's position(s) in a social structure" – and personal or individual identity, denoting "the more concrete aspects of individual experience rooted in interactions (and institutions)" (Côté, 1996, p.420). Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that this does not render individual and collective identities dichotomous. Rather, identity as a concept emphasises how individuals attempt to both share characteristics and qualities with others (sameness) and construct or portray their own uniqueness (difference) (Lawler, 2008).

Social psychological research has been particularly influential in explaining how individuals' personal identities are created through a mutually-constitutive combination of psychology and society (Mead, 1934; Layder, 2004; Lawler, 2008). As social identity theory (SIT) demonstrates, moreover, collective identities are also constructed through social relationships, with individuals defining their 'place' in society by exaggerating their differences from other groups, whilst emphasising positive internal characteristics (Tajfel, 1974, 1978, 1981; Turner, 1978, 1982). Crucially, then, the analysis of identity requires acknowledgement of the role of power relations in shaping the ways in which individuals negotiate their social context (Reicher et al., 1995; Valentine, 2007; Jenkins, 2008). Social constructionist perspectives are valuable here in explaining how identities can be 'imposed' – through internalising disciplinary norms and values (e.g. Foucault, 1977, 1978, 1986, 1990) – but also (and perhaps relatedly) 'imagined,' constructed in response to an 'other' (e.g. Hall, 1996, 1997a, 1997b; see Van T'Klooster et al., 2002). Relatedly, works on performance and performativity have emphasised the 'doings' of identity, rather than these being treated as fixed, defining forms (cf. Parker and Sedgwick, 1995; Diamond, 1996). Butler (1990, 1993) and Goffman (1959, 1974) have been particularly influential in theorising performativity – the former in terms of subjectivation and interpellation, the latter in terms of 'impression management' – with the effect of facilitating greater understanding of the ways in which identities are (re)constructed and contested through the negotiation of different social relationships and lived experiences (Gregson and Rose, 2000; Lawler, 2008). As intersectional research highlights, moreover, these contexts of people's identities may be numerous and highly relational rather than singular and separate (McCall, 2005; Valentine, 2007; Choo and Ferree, 2010), and can be emphasised or underplayed at different times (Lawler, 2008). Indeed,

individuals may see their identities categorised for them by powerful groups in society, but they can also resist these labels (Crenshaw, 1991), possibly performing hybrid identities that contest representations of supposed 'purity' (Bhabha, 1994).

Collectively, these perspectives emphasise how identities represent a continuous process of becoming, rather than existing as reified or innate components that can be revealed or attained (see Parker and Sedgwick, 1995; Van T'Klooster et al., 2002). Accordingly, many of the scholars of geographies of education cited in Section 2.2.1 have attended to these issues, reinforcing the notion that identities are performative rather than fixed, and both shaped by and able to rework their wider context (e.g. Hyams, 2000; Holt, 2004a, 2007), with implications for the ways in which spaces such as schools are (re)imagined, too (Reay, 2007). Moreover, the intersections between identity categories such as race, class and gender, and the dynamic ways in which these shape individuals' experiences of education have increasingly received attention (see Phoenix, 2002). However, as Section 2.4.5 will demonstrate, Jewish identity research has tended to ignore these developments in the broader identity literature (see Samson et al., 2017). Given that Jewish identities are highly diverse and contested at both an individual and collective level, as the following section will illustrate, it is necessary to emphasise the importance of individual subjectivities and 'voices,' as argued within much of the geographies of education literature (e.g. Reay, 2006; Holloway et al., 2010). Consequently, by drawing upon conceptual approaches from the geographies of education, this study will be able to facilitate a deeper understanding of Jewish identity and Jewish educational spaces.

2.3.2 Pluralisation

Jewish identity is widely perceived as a highly complex identity because it intertwines aspects of both a religion[8] and an ethnicity[9] (Hartman, 2001; Cohen, 2010), whilst most Jews also share a national identity with their wider social context (Webber, 1994, 1997; Boyd, 2013). Furthermore, in specific contexts 'Jewish' has represented an ascribed racial category based on biology, such as in the Former USSR (Markowitz, 1988; Persky and Birman, 2005) and in Nazi-occupied territories (Wieviorka and Rosset, 1994). As such, it is crucial to recognise that there is no single 'Jewish' identity. A growing body

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[8] Religion can be defined as "a system of beliefs and practices oriented toward the sacred or supernatural, through which the life experiences of groups of people are given meaning and direction" (Gill, 2001, pp.120).

[9] An ethnic group may be considered a distinctive cultural subgroup that possesses a shared history and exists within a wider population (Phinney, 1990; Hartman and Hartman, 2003), although it is socially constructed and belonging is self-perceived (Barth, 1969; De Vos, 1995).

of research documents the increasing pluralisation of Jewish identities, which are marked by long-standing yet nevertheless still evolving categorical distinctions based on movement (e.g. Orthodox, Reform) and ethnicity (Ashkenazi, Sephardi) as well as more individual differences related to, for example, levels of religious observance and personal philosophy (Schlossberger and Hecker, 1998; Kudenko and Phillips, 2010). Explanations for this pluralisation are complex but include processes of globalisation (Gilman, 2011), individualisation (Cohen and Eisen, 2000) and secularisation (Sacks, 1991) that, it is argued, serve to increase individuals' autonomy to self-fashion their identities.

The secularisation thesis, comprising the decline of individual religious belief and practice, its privatisation, and the institutional differentiation of social, political and economic systems from the religious (Casanova, 1994), has been particularly influential in explaining changes to contemporary patterns and processes of religious identification more generally. Although secularisation remains a highly contested concept (Kong and Woods, 2016), there is broad agreement that in many western societies there have been significant shifts in levels of individual identification with institutionalised forms of religion (Crockett and Voas, 2006; Bruce, 2002, 2013) and that social structures that once represented centres of collective identity have been eroded[10] (Brown, 2001; Taylor, 2007).

Judaism in numerous ways exemplifies these changes. Many Jews in pre-modern Europe lived in relatively insular, internally governed communities in which they were expected to sustain a particularistic and all-encompassing religious identity (Berkovitz, 1989; Endelman, 1990). However, following the French Revolution, European Jews were progressively afforded opportunities to become citizens of their host societies, and as a result were exposed to diverse 'new' ethnic and religious options with which to affiliate, while continuing to be subjected to anti-Semitism that served to re-inscribe a sense of difference (Brenner, 2008).[11] Thus, whereas some Jews developed largely insular movements resistant (though not impervious) to change, many Jews chose to establish new forms of instruction that integrated and reworked aspects of the surrounding culture (Woocher, 1986; Cohn-Sherbok, 1993). In Britain, 'emancipation' brought about reduced adherence to Orthodox practice, although it is worth noting that despite their inferior societal status to Christians, Jews did not face the same persecution here as their

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[10] This does not contradict the fact that religion remains embedded within UK law and state institutions (Beckford, 2012), including education (Sandberg, 2011; Johnson and Vanderbeck, 2014).

[11] It is also important to acknowledge that emancipation varied significantly in means and extent across different national contexts (Woocher, 1986; Clark, 2009).

counterparts in many other states (Bermant, 1970; Endelman, 1990), and were offered greater opportunities to integrate without having to abandon many key aspects of the faith (Sacks, 1995a). Rather than this new freedom being necessarily celebrated by Jews, however, it also created ambivalence regarding the modern condition, as Jews became more self-conscious of differences that were often perceived negatively (Clark, 2009).

Therefore, although Jewish secularism has existed since the beginning of Jewish history, modernity, emancipation and Enlightenment (*Haskalah*) catalysed the pluralisation of Jewish identifications, attitudes and cultures (Goodman, 1976), replacing ascribed identities with voluntarily-chosen and achieved, personally-defined, multiple identities (Ellenson, 1996; Waxman, 1997). Such fragmentation has occurred at both a collective and an individual level. In terms of the former, this is reflected in the range of movements or denominations that exist for communal affiliation. In the UK, the three main movements are Orthodox, Masorti and Progressive. The following section describes their broad characteristics.

2.3.3 Denominationalism

Progressive Judaism (comprising Reform and Liberal[12] subdivisions in the UK) emphasises the importance of modernising Judaism within wider society in order to maintain its relevance to individuals (Sacks, 1993), and it consequently regards many of the *Torah*'s teachings and the faith's traditional practices as open to revision or abandonment (Coyle and Rafalin, 2000). The Liberal movement in particular was designed as a more understandable and accessible form of Judaism, which emphasises the importance of social work, interfaith dialogue and human endeavour rather than praying for a personal Messiah (Neuberger, 1996). To this end, Progressive Judaism has become amenable to mixed-marriages (Chanes, 2008), gender equality[13] (Dashefsky et al., 2003) and the ordainment of homosexual clergy (Berlinerblau, 2012), although many U.S. Reform synagogues have also (re)incorporated traditional Jewish practices such as sitting *shiva* (Reimer, 1997), rather than their mutability being unidirectional.

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[12] It is important to recognise that Liberal Judaism in the UK is distinct from 'liberal Judaism' as described in much of the American literature, which represents a more generic category of non-Orthodox Jews (e.g. Reform, Conservative, Zionist, transdenominational, humanist Judaism) based on choice rather than ascription (see Diamant and Cooper, 2007). Moreover, whereas Reform Judaism represents the largest subdivision of Progressive Judaism in the UK (Kahn-Harris, 2009), it operates as the umbrella term in the USA.

[13] Including the ordainment of female rabbis, inclusion of women as part of the *Minyan*, removal of the *mechitza* and access to equal religious learning opportunities (Dashefsky et al., 2003).

In contrast, Orthodox Judaism emphasises adherence to *halakhah* (rabbinic law) and traditional Jewish scripture, such as rules regarding *Kashrut* and *Shabbat* (Brenner, 2010), and stresses that the *Torah* was divinely revealed, hence immutable (Coyle and Rafalin, 2000), with changes to religious practice occurring "only through limited institutionalised means" (Hartman and Hartman, 1999, p.282). Orthodox Judaism (including 'Modern' and 'Ultra' strands) developed in response to the perceived dilution of the faith by Progressive Judaism following emancipation (Stump, 2008), although changes within the former including the shortening of services and the inclusion of sermons in the vernacular represent direct influences from Progressive movements (Neuberger, 1996). This reflects how even religious orthodoxies are constructed through the continuous redefinition of an 'Other' and so their boundaries are susceptible to change (Henderson, 1998; Berlinerblau, 2001). Yet despite such mutability, Orthodox Judaism tends to portray itself as (and is presented as) largely resistant to change, reflected in Klaff's (2006, p.417) claim that "[t]here is no doubt that in contemporary America a small but strong Orthodox component of the Jewish community continues to maintain the behavior and customs of traditional Judaism." Orthodox Judaism is subdivided into groups and subgroups with varying levels of engagement with wider culture and religious laws (Sacks, 1993; Freud-Kandel, 2006). For instance, strictly Orthodox Jews tend to inhabit largely self-contained neighbourhoods with little external interaction (Goshen-Gottstein, 1984; Heilman, 1992). However, the majority of Orthodox Jews (primarily 'United Synagogue' Jews in the UK) are prepared to interact actively with non-Jews and share many of their cultural values, as long as *halakhah* is maintained (Cohn-Sherbok, 1993).

The Masorti movement (in some countries referred to as 'Conservative'[14]) represents the third major Jewish denomination and is often perceived to sit between the Orthodox and Progressive movements given its fusing of 'traditional' religious observance with certain adaptations to 'modern' society (Hartman and Hartman, 1999). Developing in reaction to 'radical' Progressive Judaism, Masorti Judaism maintains the fundamental legitimacy of *halakhah* but, in line with Progressive Judaism, disfavours gender-segregated synagogues and permits women to become rabbis (Cohn-Sherbok, 1993; Dashefsky et al., 2003).

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[14] More precisely, the U.S. Conservative movement is parallel to the British Masorti movement and the right-wing end of the Reform movement (Neuberger, 1996).

Thus, each movement shares a belief that Jewish identity and community can be maintained in the modern world, even if their approaches differ and are often antagonistic (Woocher, 1986; Sacks, 1993). However, at an individual level, too, Jewish identity has become fragmented, as the subsequent section demonstrates.

2.3.4 Individual fragmentation

Whereas Jewish practices had previously been prescribed by group norms, Jews post-emancipation were able to perceive themselves as (and be perceived as) individuals who could determine their own behaviours and identities (Diamant and Cooper, 2007). Such tendencies towards fragmentation, pluralisation and hybridity have been reinforced by two broad developments in Western societies: first, recent transnational migrations have exposed individuals to influences from diverse cultures (Vertovec, 2001, 2004; Afshar et al., 2006), and second, the rise of egalitarianism and multicultural citizenship have augmented the legitimacy of choosing and performing personally-defined identities (Kudenko and Phillips, 2010). Consequently, contemporary, consumerist Western societies have come to be perceived as religious 'marketplaces' where individuals 'shop' for a particular religion or denomination (Roof, 1999; French, 2003; Twitchell, 2007), or even cherry-pick seemingly disparate and inconsistent components of different faiths to create their own, personalised identities (Lazerwitz et al., 1998; Wuthnow, 2007). Waters' (1990) concept of 'ethnic options' relatedly illustrates individuals' growing autonomy to choose and (re)shape their own ethnic identifications. However, even the 'bricolage' metaphor described by Diner (2004) and Wuthnow (2007) is too static to fully recognise identities' multiplicity and dynamism, as individuals may vacillate between different identities and practise these in particular times and spaces, or imbue them with alternating levels of salience, rather than necessarily fusing them at any one moment (see Hecht and Faulkner, 2000; Peek, 2005).

Reflecting the decreasing general authoritativeness of traditional Jewish law (Kaplan, 2009; Magid, 2013), some Jews have created new rituals in order to align the faith with their own broader political attitudes, such as women's reappropriation of *Rosh Chodesh* as a special women's holiday for study and prayer (Diner, 2004; Alderman, 2014). Moreover, indicating a broader trend towards spiritual seeking[15] (Wuthnow, 1998a; Heelas et al., 2005; Zhai et al., 2009), individual Jews increasingly look inwards

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[15] Nevertheless, spiritual and alternative practices remain relatively uncommon amongst individuals in the UK (Glendinning and Bruce, 2006; Bruce, 2013), and membership rates of spiritualist movements are inconsiderable (Bruce, 2002).

to find (private, personal) meaning (Kaplan, 2009), as well as to groups that enable the development of unique subjectivities (Raphael, 2003; Pomson and Schnoor, 2008). Even where individuals continue to choose a collective affiliation, the growth of religious switching also reflects individuals' growing to personalise their religious consumer preferences (Lazerwitz et al., 1998; Phillips and Kelner, 2006), with rates of Jewish denominational switching particularly high from the mainstream Orthodox community both in the UK (Schmool and Cohen, 1998; Staetsky and Boyd, 2015) and USA (Goldstein and Goldstein, 2001).

Furthermore, the growing voluntariness of Judaism instigated by emancipation has enabled it to become increasingly perceived as a *religion* to be expressed privately, whilst public expressions of Jewish identity take a more cultural or social path, enabling even atheistic Jews to actively consider themselves Jewish (Webber, 1994). This is reflected in the fact that since the 1960s England's Jewish schools have tended to portray Jewish identity as religious (centred on prayer, festivals and texts, rather than on ethnic notions of Jewish peoplehood, cultural heritage and connection to Israel and Israeli culture), whilst Jewish educational organisations generally cooperate with other religious groups rather than ethnic minorities (Mendelssohn, 2011). Yet, large proportions of British Jews identify themselves as ethnically or culturally Jewish instead of perceiving themselves as religious (Becher et al., 2002; Graham et al., 2007), and favour the ethical and ethno-cultural aspects of Judaism to religious beliefs[16] (Graham et al., 2014). It is also important to recognise that Jewish self-definitions as a (purely) 'religious' or (dual) 'ethnoreligious' group fluctuate over time given alternating motivations to either minimise their 'differences' or to celebrate their typicality (Kudenko, 2007). Consequently, as individuals connect their (personal) senses of Jewish identity with other social markers, Jewishness (the identity) has become more difficult to distinguish and define, causing it to become in large part separate from Judaism (the religion) (Amyot and Sigelman, 1996; Kudenko and Phillips, 2009).

Nevertheless, although Malešević (2002) and Brubaker (2004) claim that such fragmentation renders the term 'identity' meaningless, groups and identities are in fact "experientially real in everyday life" (Jenkins, 2008, p.11). Whilst there may be a temptation to focus overwhelmingly on fluidity and individuality, boundaries continue to 'matter' as qualities of difference often remain constant across time and space and

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[16] It is important to note that a significant proportion of British Jewry identifies itself as 'secular' even where they undertake ritual practices that may be perceived by others as 'religious' such as the *Shabbat* meal (Miller et al., 1996; Becher et al., 2002; Graham, 2003, 2012; Davis, 2016).

contribute significantly to individuals' understandings and experiences (McCarthey and Moje, 2002). Indeed, ethnic minority groups often experience various boundaries including language (Sarup, 1996), whilst individuals may perceive their group identifications as important even where they are oppressed because of them (Young, 1990), illustrating how inclusions and exclusions persist and are not easily transcended. Religions provide an effective example of the ways in which certain identities may be portrayed as historically fixed (regardless of their mutability) and thus able to represent a stable 'marker' alongside which individuals can define themselves (Mol, 1976; Jacobson, 1997; Seul, 1999). Many individuals value the guidelines provided by religions as a means of directing their actions and rooting their desires in generations of ritual observance and supernatural beliefs (Mahoney, 2005), and through sacred texts and practices, religion can connect individuals with a transcendent divinity (Boyatzis et al., 2006) as well as those sharing similar beliefs and values in the past and present (Hervieu-Léger, 2000; Fiese and Tomcho, 2001). Moreover, Judaism's sheer endurance despite centuries of oppression can enable individuals to feel connected to a shared history and facilitate a desire to continue the faith (Davey et al., 2001). Consequently, individuals rarely devise their own faith entirely (Lazerwitz et al., 1998), but instead build upon a "bedrock of inherited tradition" (Cohn-Sherbok, 1993, p.7).

It is also important to acknowledge that individuals' autonomy to personalise and celebrate a minority ethnoreligious identity is partially dependent upon political context. For instance, in the former communist societies of Eastern Europe individuals today enjoy greater autonomy than previous generations to reshape their own Jewishness and integrate multiple identities rather than these being ascribed, concealed or 'forgotten' (Pinto, 1999; Mars, 2000; Gudonis, 2001). This has resulted in the reworking of Jewish identity as possession of a liberal philosophy or 'culture' (and thus able to be adopted by supposed Gentiles) (Kovács and Vajda, 1994), or the expression of 'virtual' Jewish identity markers regardless of one's 'real' faith (Gruber, 2002), as well as more 'conventional' forms of public religious expression via schools and cultural organisations (Gitelman, 1994, 2007; Kovács and Forrás-Biró, 2011), or alternatively separately from institutions (Chervyakov et al., 1997; Cohen and Kovács, 2013). The autonomy to determine one's identity is also influenced by upbringing and adherence to traditional religiosity (Fuligni, 1998; Vaidyanathan, 2011): for example, Sinclair and Milner (2005) found that Orthodox Jews believed they enjoyed little 'choice' over their daily practices because of their obedience in following religious codes, whilst Fader (2006) notes how *Hasidic* Jewish children are raised to avoid questioning the *Torah's* authority and to worship regardless of personal

scepticism. However, even strictly Orthodox Jews (whose stringency varies significantly) are open to (or accept as inevitable) some level of integration and influence from wider society (Schweid, 1994; Shaffir, 1995), and so it is crucial to recognise the ways in which *individuals* negotiate their collective Jewish identities (Samson et al., 2017). Before considering the challenges faced by many Jews in constructing personalised Jewish identities, it is necessary to acknowledge the ways in which communities are conceptualised.

2.3.5 Theorisations of 'community'

'Community' is a term that contains multiple meanings (Silk, 1999; Obst and White, 2005), but tends to refer to "the broad realm of local social arrangements beyond the private sphere of home and family but more familiar to us than the impersonal institutions of the wider society" (Crow and Allan, 1994, p.1). A community represents a process as well as an endpoint (Tigges, 2006), and although communities are regularly schematised in terms of spatiality (e.g. Bell and Newby, 1971; Silk, 1999), they may also be conceptualised via common goods (Etzioni, 1993; Putnam, 2000; Putnam et al., 2003) or interest (Crow and Allan, 1994; Bilewicz and Wójcik, 2010). Furthermore, commonalities can be 'imagined' regardless of one's personal knowledge of and relationship with other members (Anderson, 1983). Accordingly, community's conceptual ambiguity has enabled its usage across a variety of contexts (Lewis and Craig, 2014), with the 'Jewish community' often schematised as a global diaspora rather than being nested in local territories (Boyarin and Boyarin, 1993; Dwyer and Parutis, 2013). In these ways, 'community' is an abstruse term with complex implications.

Nevertheless, a characteristic of community is that it is almost invariably portrayed as desirable, being associated with positive values of harmony (Bauman, 2001; Karner and Parker, 2011), belongingness (Smith, 1994), reciprocity (Tönnies, 1957; Putnam, 2000), trust (Wuthnow, 1994) and tolerance (Walzer, 1997). Although many theorists argue that the rise of individualism with modernity has instigated community's decline (e.g. Tönnies, 1957; Bellah et al., 1985; Taylor, 1992; Etzioni, 1993), these trends are not necessarily correlated. In the USA, for instance, claims of diminishing civic engagement (e.g. Putnam, 2000) have been contested by evidence suggesting that this has merely become more flexible (Roof et al. 1993; Wuthnow, 1994, 1998b), and may in fact be growing (Ladd, 1996). In the case of religion, institutional affiliation and commitment have become based primarily on preference and active participation rather than ascriptive and passive loyalty, providing the potential to strengthen these organisations (Roof et al.,

1993). Furthermore, theorists such as Etzioni present an idealised perspective of communities that ignores their potential to exclude (Arthur and Bailey, 2000) or become internally contested and divided (Wuthnow, 1994; Karner and Parker, 2011). Indeed, it is important to acknowledge that these are politicised constructs that may be perceived or imagined in diverse ways (Cohen, 1985; Dwyer, 1999; Witten et al., 2003), and individuals may also belong in multitudinous ways and to varying extents (Kymlicka, 1990; Yuval-Davis, 2006).

Reflecting this politicisation, the term 'community' is often projected onto supposed groups rather than necessarily being consensual (Baumann, 1996; Dwyer, 1999). Even within a community there is unlikely to be uniformity or consensus (Hoggett, 1997), and "belonging does not necessarily require cultural cohesiveness or a collective identity" (Delanty, 2009, p.146). Individuals who share a religion, for instance, may not see themselves as members of the same community due to their other, intersecting identifications such as ethnicity and nationality (Daley, 2009), which may be emphasised to differing extents in particular contexts (Osler and Starkey, 2000). Such 'communities' may also feature widely disparate conceptions of particular topics, even where dominant individuals attempt to portray their groups as united (Sadgrove et al., 2010). As the following section demonstrates, the Jewish 'community' is characterised by disjunctures that can preclude individualised definitions of Jewishness, particularly – but not solely – linked to *halakhah*.

2.3.6 Halakhic restrictions

In spite of the tendency for contemporary research to treat identity as a fluid, personally-negotiated process (2.3.1), *halakhah* adjudges that Jewishness is based on having a Jewish mother and so arguably presents a much more fixed boundary structure for recognition as a member of the community than found in many other religious traditions. Indeed, Progressive Judaism's extension of Jewish identity to children of Jewish fathers as well as its alterations to religious marriage and conversion procedures have resulted in Jewish identities being 'granted' to individuals who are not considered legitimate by Orthodox and Masorti groups (Cohn-Sherbok, 1993), even though converts, in their determination to 'prove' their claim to a formal Jewish identity, often demonstrate superior proficiency and religious observance than their Jewish-born counterparts (Buckser, 2003a). In these ways, adherence to *halakhah* may be considered a religious commitment, yet this law defines Jewish identity as based on descent and unrelated to religious belief or practice, with consequences for the ways in which Jews view themselves and how they are

researched. The existence of individuals who consider themselves atheistic Jews or 'half-Jews' highlights how a sense of relation to a Jewish collectivity is intergenerationally transmitted, even if this transmission is sometimes only partial (and intriguingly, *halakhah* does not validate such claims of being 'half Jewish' as it adjudges that Jewishness is based only upon one's mother's ancestry and thus the father's genetics are irrelevant) (Imhoff, 2016). Given that Orthodox Judaism subscribes to exclusive definitions of 'Jewish' that restrict possibilities for personalised expressions and engagement, it is perhaps unsurprising that many researchers appear hesitant to conceptualise the Jewish faith as a personalised, lived experience: not all Jews believe that Jewish identity *is* fluid or socially-constructed, even if adherence to *halakhah* may be understood as such (see Samson et al., 2017). Certainly, the fact that many nominal Jews are required to officially 'prove' their Jewish status (Fernheimer, 2009) indicates how self-identification is generally insufficient to being validated as a member of the faith. Perhaps for these reasons, Scholefield's (2004, p.238) investigation of the indeterminacy of identity boundaries in a Jewish school is atypical in considering Jewish identity as performance.

Debates regarding *halakhah* therefore illustrate how an individual's Jewish identity may be determined by others, and reveal tensions at the boundaries between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Judaism, and between (particularly Orthodox) Judaism and Gentile society. Indeed, although boundaries are often deemed crucial to determining the existence of groups (Barth, 1969), boundaries between 'Jews' and 'non-Jews' have become increasingly difficult to define (Glenn and Sokoloff, 2010), because many Jews now appear to view Jewish identity as fluid and constructive, and enthusiastically welcome processes of assimilation and secularisation (Webber, 1994). Yet, simultaneously, other Jews attempt to reinforce clear distinctions from 'other' groups (Rohrbacher, 2016), revealing significant contestation over the meaning of Jewishness and the fact that it is developed via dialogue and exchange rather than being predefined (Bilaniuk, 2010). In particular, Orthodox Judaism regards itself as the sole authentic form of Judaism (at least officially) owing to its adherence to *halakhah*, denying the existence of denominational pluralism (Conyer, 2011), and for this reason, some Orthodox Jews consider their prefix unnecessary (Sacks, 1993). Moreover, given the perceived necessity of matrilineal descent to Jewishness, intermarriage represents a particularly fraught issue within the Jewish community, revealing divisions regarding its potential to 'threaten' Jewish continuity (Diner, 2004; Gordon, 2014), as Section 2.3.8 will demonstrate further. However, world Jewry is also characterised by disagreement regarding a range of other

issues, which further restrict conceptualisations of a united Jewish community, as the following section illustrates.

2.3.7 Internal Divisions

Jews are often now used as an exemplar group that maintains its distinctiveness whilst also actively contributing to wider society, but such assumptions neglect the variedness of Jewish identities and the dynamism of their relationships with 'other' groups (Kudenko, 2007), as well as internally. As Section 2.3.4 recognised, many Jews do not consider themselves religious (compromising their description as a religion) or share a common background (impeding ethnic or racial definitions), thus restricting the efficacy of their conceptualisation as a community (Kahn-Harris and Gidley, 2010). Indeed, whereas Jewish commonalities are sometimes invoked as rooted in cultural or secular traits including books (Davidman, 2003), humour (Ziv, 1993), food (Horowitz, 2014) and music (Friedmann, 2009; Hersch, 2015), these can demonstrate considerable geographic variation as well as being paralleled amongst local *non*-Jewish communities (Pinto, 1999). Moreover, in addition to the issues of *halakhah* described, divisions also exist regarding Zionism (Cohen, 1982; Graham and Boyd, 2010) and forms of or extents of adherence to religious practice, such as in the case of *eruvim* (Valins, 2000; Vincent and Warf, 2002; Watson, 2005) and *Kashrut* (Hornstein, 2013). Consequently, Judaism cannot be considered a "common denominator" across different national contexts, as manifestations tend to be "more distinct than they are similar" (Satlow, 2006, pp.26-27).

Furthermore, whilst (generally strictly Orthodox) Jewish groups may compartmentalise themselves against 'permissive' or 'corrupted' wider society (Davidman, 1991; Abraham, 1999), particular movements attempt to construct boundaries of identity that separate themselves from 'other' Jews, including by *halakhah* (2.3.6) but also national (Azria, 2002; Verkaaik, 2014), ethnic (Gudonis, 2001; Freedman, 2010) or class background (Roth, 1941). Reflecting the mutability of religion, many Orthodox congregations have become stricter in order to 'protect' their forms of Jewishness from less religiously observant Jews (Sharot, 1991; Freud-Kandel, 2006). Such boundaries (which are constructed primarily but not exclusively by the strictly Orthodox) can be physical, through concentrating themselves in specific neighbourhoods and wearing distinctive forms of dress (Goshen-Gottstein, 1984; Valins, 2003b); institutional*,* through opposing efforts at creating unified communal bodies (Mendelssohn, 2011); and temporal, such as through their refusal to participate in secular leisure activities on *Shabbat* (Punzi and Frischer, 2016). Indeed, given the potential

'threat' to one's Jewish lifestyle posed by alternative manifestations of Jewishness (that nevertheless claim to be equally legitimate), secular and non-Orthodox Judaism may be perceived as more dangerous to strictly Orthodox Judaism than self-identifying Gentiles, reflected in the fact that many *Hasidic* schools prefer to employ non-Jews than non-religious Jews to teach secular subjects (Shaffir, 1995). Simultaneously, 'mainstream' Jews may choose to separate themselves and their children from '*frum*' families whom they perceive as antithetical to desired acculturation and integration (see e.g. Rich, 1982).

It is also unclear why denominational mobility would reduce differences and improve relations between movements as Hartman and Hartman (1999) claim. Rather, relations between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews in the UK[17] and USA as well as between Orthodox and secular Jews in Israel have deteriorated, largely based on divergent attitudes towards questions associated with modernisation, revealing ideological as well as religious divisions (Sacks, 1993; Auerbach, 2001; Kaplan, 2009). In the case of Israel, contestation over definitions of Jewish identity for citizenship purposes under the Law of Return has even resulted in particular conceptions of the religion becoming hegemonic (Sacks, 1993; Ben-Rafael, 1998), whilst revealing a rift between those viewing Jewishness as a form of cultural belonging (secular) or genealogy (religious) (Rohrbacher, 2016), with implications for questions of 'authenticity' across the diaspora, too. Consequently, although Judaism has a long history of debate (Davey et al., 2001) and the faith has not shared a central authority since the Temple's destruction in 70 C.E. (Schlossberger and Hecker, 1998), Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews "are rapidly moving toward nonrecognition of one another, and this is already leading to the [permanent] creation of two separate Jewish peoples" (Kaplan, 2009, p.381). This is reflected in the contestation between (and inability of) institutions such as the Board of Deputies of British Jews to represent the entire British Jewish community (Kahn-Harris and Gidley, 2010; Finlay, 2015), as well as the growing confidence of non-Orthodox Judaism in challenging universal claims to authenticity (Magid, 2013). Thus, rather than representing a monolithic community, Anglo-Jewry ought to be considered a 'community of communities' that contains numerous sources of lay and religious authority and that often struggles or refuses to consider itself necessarily united (Cesarani, 1990; Finestein, 1999), except in response to threats of anti-Semitism (Alderman, 1992, 2014).

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[17] See for example, the controversial attack on the Masorti movement by the former Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of Great Britain and the Commonwealth, Jonathan Sacks (Alderman, 2014).

Nevertheless, the growing individualisation of identities (2.3.4) has instigated a blurring of individuals' Jewishness, even if group identities and affiliations remain, to a significant extent, distinctly bounded. It is important not to view Jewish movements and groups as "polarized stereotypes," because religiously observant Jews may demonstrate liberal politics and question their beliefs, whereas secular Jews may work actively in their synagogue communities (Cooper and Morrison, 1991, p.4). Indeed, although studies often reveal higher levels of religious and ethnic identification and pride amongst Orthodox Jews than their Reform counterparts (e.g. Hartman and Hartman, 1999; Friedman et al., 2005), many non-Orthodox Jews are highly involved in their faith too (Horowitz, 2003), even if this is often ignored by the Orthodox skew of many surveys of Jewish identity (see Section 2.4.5). Specific movements are far from uniform, and are instead characterised by internal tensions regarding forms of worship (Furman, 1987), gender equality (Magid, 2013) and their relationship with broader society (Elazar, 1984; Sacks, 1993).

Furthermore, some evidence of boundary blurring has occurred between denominations, even if at an institutional level most remain largely separate. For instance, individuals who transfer from one movement to another may bring particular traditions that become increasingly common within their new denominations (such as the wearing of *kippot* amongst American Reform Jews via the inward transfer of Conservative Jews), and maintain interpersonal ties with their source congregations (Sheskin and Hartman, 2015). In some cases, individuals worship at and belong to synagogues of different movements (Borts, 2014), perhaps owing to a desire to retain a connection with their ancestors' affiliation whilst enjoying the autonomy to reshape their own sense of Jewishness. Most significantly, the establishment of 'post-denominational,' 'transdenominational' or 'cross-communal' communities and organisations[18] that refuse to be affiliated with bounded and often exclusive movements, as well as the growth of 'DIY Judaism,'[19] reflects the ways in which individuals empower themselves to personalise their Jewish identities and expression (Boyd Gelfand, 2010; Shain et al., 2013), often separately from traditional Jewish organisations (Cohen and Kelman, 2007), such as via diverse information sources accessed through the Internet (Twitchell, 2007).

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[18] These Jewish organisations include day schools (Pomson and Schnoor, 2008; Miller, 2012a), *havurot* and *independent minyanim* (Prell, 1989; Diner, 2004), and new organisations such as music record labels and theatre companies (Cohen and Kelman, 2007), as well as collaborations amongst synagogues to create a cross-denominational Jewish community (Hoffman, 2004).

[19] Defined as "alternative forms of Jewish engagement that bypass the established infrastructure of American Jewish life" (Shain et al., 2013, pp.3).

This deepens the salience of listening to individuals' perspectives as a means of understanding the ways in which individuals negotiate multiple identities to construct their own Jewishness (Samson et al., 2017), as Section 2.4.5 will demonstrate further.

2.3.8 Continuity concerns

The discussion of the literature so far has revealed that Jewish identity is highly contested, with individual identifications increasingly pluralised even though *halakhah* adjudges that Jewishness is rooted in matrilineal descent and common peoplehood, and so personalised conceptualisations are irrelevant. However, although numerous researchers emphasise the centrality of peoplehood to Jewishness (e.g. Herman, 1977, 1989; Cohen and Wertheimer, 2006), many Jews are increasingly uncomfortable with such particularism (Kaplan, 2009), and believe that these attitudes restrict desired integration whist contradicting their commitment to universal social justice (Fishman, 2012). The growing tendency of young Jews (in particular) to view identities and ethnicities as fluid rather than fixed (Kaplan, 2009) thus accords with wider, contemporary theorisations of identity (2.3.1), even if this complexity is challenged by Jewish law. Yet, halakhic conceptualisations do maintain some implicit influence: despite their declared refusal to perceive Jewishness restrictively, when asked to define the term, many Jewish respondents use essentialist ideas such as the notion that one is born Jewish and that this identity is not contingent on observance or socialisation (Davidman, 2007) but is centred on a 'historical familism' (Cohen and Eisen, 2000, p.29). Accordingly, the Pew Research Center (2013) has highlighted how American Jews perceive that being Jewish pertains more to culture or ancestry than religion, and even Progressive Jews, who may be expected to demonstrate less adherence to *halakhah* than Orthodox Jews, tend to consider anybody born to a Jewish mother Jewish (Imhoff, 2016). Therefore, although it is problematic to suggest that an 'essential' Jewish identity exists, it is apparent that certain discourses 'naturalise' particular, fixed versions of Jewishness (Charmé, 2012).

Given this general treatment of Jewish identity as rooted in peoplehood, intermarriage represents a particularly significant concern, with Jewish communal leaders regularly advocating the 'responsibility' to in-marry, and often express concern regarding excessive mixing with non-Jews (e.g. Sacks, 1994; Packouz, 2004). Yet, even when Jewish identity is measured in terms of self-identification or community membership, erosion appears to be underway. In the UK, for instance, population and synagogue membership records indicate a general decline amongst most mainstream movements in terms of synagogue membership and involvement, as well as an apparent contraction in

the size of British Jewry since the 1950s[20] (Graham and Vulkan, 2010; Alderman, 2014; Casale Mashiah and Boyd, 2017), alongside a growth in strictly Orthodox numbers, largely due to higher birth rates and low mortality (Staetsky and Boyd, 2015). Consequently, an increasing proportion of the country's Jewish population is ultra-Orthodox, whose 'survival' as a group has been assumed owing to their isolationism and demographic momentum (Staetsky and Boyd, 2015).

Given these trends, commentators in both the USA and Europe (including the UK, e.g. Bermant, 1970), have argued that the future of Jewish identity, at least beyond the strictly Orthodox community, is under threat. Processes of assimilation, it is argued, are connected with increased socioeconomic and educational mobility, which have facilitated suburbanisation (Gans, 1958; Goldstein and Goldstein, 1996). This has reduced Jews' propensity to live and work in significant residential concentrations, exposing them to 'alternative' cultures whilst increasing the challenges of providing appropriate community institutions (Varady et al., 1981; Waxman, 1999) and retaining community involvement (Rabinowitz et al., 1995). Moreover, Jews' declining vulnerability to anti-Semitic discrimination is said to have diminished Jews' perceived sense of distinctiveness and solidarity (Friedmann, 1967; Wasserstein, 1996; Dershowitz, 1997). These commentators consequently suggest that evidence of rising intermarriage rates (Liebman, 1973, 1989, 2003; DellaPergola, 2011), the 'weakening' of families as socialisation agents (Rosenman, 1989), and the observance of only the most 'shallow' Jewish practices (Chein, 1955; Levine, 1986; Heilman, 1995) reveal a "crisis of boundaries" between Jews and non-Jews in open society (Waxman, 2003a, p.160). This thesis of 'decline' has in turn been challenged by those who argue that Jewish identity is in fact 'surviving' (Sherman, 1960; Silberman, 1985; Goldscheider, 2004), albeit via processes of 'transformation' (Goldscheider, 1986a; Sarna, 2004; Byers and Tastsoglou, 2008). Nevertheless, although a few commentators illustrate that considerable research on either side of the debate is limited by ideological biases (Goldscheider, 1986b, 2004; Cohen, 1988, 1989) and methodological restrictions (Prell, 2000; Schoenfeld, 1998) (see Section 2.4.5), the general perception that emancipation and modernisation have instigated challenges for Jews in balancing "full integration into modern society with maintenance

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[20] Nevertheless, these records are limited in their accuracy. For instance, the UK Census lists 'Jewish' as a (voluntary) religious category and so conceals those who do not identify as such (Graham and Waterman, 2005; Graham et al., 2007), with Graham (2011) estimating that the UK's Jewish population may be 12.7 per cent higher than that revealed in 2011 (301,000 rather than 267,000), and thus not in decline. Records of synagogue membership and attendance are also limited in their reliability as Graham and Vulkan (2010) demonstrate.

of a distinctive religious or ethnic identity" (Himmelfarb, 1989, p.5) have shaped communal concerns about the reproduction of Jewishness. Thus, although survival has represented an issue for the Jewish community since ancient times (Aberbach, 2009), it has become a significant concern to communal leaders given individuals' growing freedom to (re)define their own identities.

Consequently, Jewish leaders have sought means of 'protecting' or 'strengthening' Jewishness. The communal response to assimilation fears has been evocatively described as a 'drink-your-milk' model in which a healthy Jewish identity is assumed to be produced through a diet of Jewish education and experience during childhood and adolescence (Charmé et al., 2008, p.117). One only has to consider the disproportionate amount of Jewish community infrastructure that is provided for children, adolescents and young families to recognise the level of anxiety that exists about sustaining intergenerational religious transmission (Boyd, 2013). Adolescence in particular has long been conceptualised as a period central to individuals' long-term identity construction (e.g. Hyde, 1965, 1990; Kroger, 1989), with Erikson's (1950, 1959, 1968) work particularly influential in describing the ways in which teenagers rework or reject childhood identifications and make decisions based upon biology, cultural milieu and personal experience that aim to stabilise their sense of self. In these ways, Erikson (1959) recognised that young people's identities are insecure and malleable rather than being final, although his ideas have been rightly criticised for implying that adolescents develop their identities via conflict with parents even though many teenagers enjoy harmonious relationships with their families (Willits and Crider, 1989; Steinberg, 2001), and their identities tend not to be radically different from their parents (Dudley and Dudley, 1986). The development of new cognitive capacities, as well as growing concerns with self-image and the future (Steinberg, 2011), enables young people to conceptualise challenging spiritual concepts and reflect on epistemological and ontological questions (Gervais et al., 2011; Flum and Kaplan, 2012), and although plausible arguments exist that identity formation does not become salient until 'late adolescence' (Duriez and Soenens, 2006) or 'emerging adulthood' (generally considered ages 18 to 25) (Arnett, 2000, 2015), notable developments may nevertheless occur earlier, particularly given the blurring of chronological boundaries by changing historical, cultural and socioeconomic trends and influences (Kerig and Schulz, 2012).

Typifying the perceived salience of education to transmitting Jewishness to future generations, the former Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of Great Britain and the Commonwealth, Lord Jonathan Sacks (1994), advocated a Jewish educational

strategy combining Jewish day schools with parental and communal reinforcement.[21] Sacks (1994, p.2) viewed this as a necessary response to Anglo-Jewry's "crisis of continuity," marked by rising intermarriage and declining birth rates and observance in open society, as well as a failure of existing Jewish schools to teach Jewish culture and practice effectively, in spite of growing enrolment. Although the British Jewish community now emphasises 'renewal' rather than continuity (Kahn-Harris and Gidley, 2010), Sacks' recognition that Jewish schools were at the time failing to develop pupils' Jewish knowledge and influence their practices is significant in illustrating how Jewish schools do not axiomatically strengthen Jewishness. Moreover, his argument reflects a broader – though arguably erroneous – insinuation that Jewish identity is contingent on being 'protected' from a separate, wider society (e.g. Liebman, 1973; Rosenman, 1989), such as through avoiding intermarriage. It is apparent that Jewish schools have been propounded at least in part for political purposes, reflecting the fact that such spaces are highly contested, as the following section demonstrates.

2.4 Jewish schools

This section illustrates the perceived role of schooling in the (re)construction of young people's identities. First, it highlights how faith schools can represent 'unofficially sacred sites,' as understood within the geographies of religion (2.4.1), although schools in general are often viewed as spaces where children can be imbued with a particular identity (2.4.2). Section 2.4.3 highlights how attitudes towards Jewish schooling are varied, and Section 2.4.4 demonstrates disagreement amongst researchers of Jewish identity regarding the 'efficacy' of Jewish schools as vehicles of identity construction. Indeed, as Section 2.4.5 argues, much of this body of research has reified Jewishness, viewing Jewish schools as unproblematic 'providers' of a Jewish identity. Finally, Section 2.4.6 contextualises this thesis by describing the contemporary context of Anglo-Jewish education, acknowledgement of which is essential both in order to understand the spaces investigated within this thesis, as well as to speculate, in turn, on the ways in which Jewish schools are reshaping this Jewish educational landscape.

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[21] Sacks' (1994) advocacy followed that of his predecessor, Immanuel Jakobovits, and was realised in the establishment of Jewish Continuity and the United Jewish Israel Appeal (UJIA), organisations committed to revitalising British Jewish life through education (Graham, 2014a).

2.4.1 Schools as religious spaces

As Massey (2005) argues, space is constantly constructed through the interactions of multiple trajectories which ensure that it is never 'complete.' Moreover, given that hegemonic groups are able to conceal their power through the "illusion of transparency… [and] the illusion of opacity" (Lefebvre, 1991, p.27), space is reproduced to permit and forbid particular behaviours, with implications for individuals' actions (Cresswell, 1996). An understanding of such is central to recognising how a particular, potentially unremarkable site can be sacralised through "formalized, repeatable symbolic performances" that demarcates it from 'ordinary' spaces in the eyes of adherents, to create an "extraordinary ritualized place" that reflects and reinforces the desired worlds of religious groups, whilst subordinating others (Chidester and Linenthal, 1995, p.9). Through education and socialisation, including the learning of 'appropriate' practices within such spaces and their identification with them, individuals including children are enabled to develop a sacred identity and in the process reinforce these spaces' significance (Mazumdar and Mazumdar, 1993).

Given the objective ordinariness of many such spaces, as well as the fact that such spaces are (re)constructed via collective understandings and processes, geographers of religion are now challenging the dichotomous compartmentalisation of 'sacred' and 'secular' (Kong, 2001). Indeed, whereas the geography of religions has historically emphasised the ways in which religious systems are distributed geographically, organise territory, and modify (and are modified by) their environments (e.g. Sopher, 1967; Park, 1994), researchers in this subdiscipline now explore the diverse spaces where religion is performed and contested (Kong, 2001, 2010; Stump, 2008; Hopkins et al., 2011), the means by which these spaces are themselves imbued with contrasting significance (Hassner, 2003; Ivakhiv, 2006; Kong and Woods, 2016), and the ways in which religious beliefs contribute to identity construction and practice (Holloway and Valins, 2002). Such developments accord with the growing interest in everyday spaces within the geographies of education (2.2.1).

Of especial significance to this investigation is the growing interest in 'unofficially sacred sites' such as home spaces and schools, which illustrates how the (re)construction of religiosity cannot be restricted to 'reservations' such as places of worship (Kong, 2005, 2010). In particular, ritual practices in Judaism are often associated with the home (Borts, 2014), yet even where the synagogue is emphasised, it is important to acknowledge that this space has historically played a much broader community role than merely as a 'house of worship' (*beit tefillah*), additionally representing a 'house of

study' (*beit midrash*) and 'house of assembly' (*beit knesset*) (Kaplan, 2009). Moreover, given Judaism's primary emphasis on *community*, synagogues do not necessarily constitute buildings (Kosmin and de Lange, 1977; Sacks, 1995a). Consequently, rather than congregating for worship, individuals may attend synagogues for education, volunteering and socialising (Buckser, 2000; Punzi and Frischer, 2016), as well as a growing diversity of explicitly *leisure* pursuits (Kaufman, 1999; Verkaaik, 2014). Indeed, synagogues often have particular significance to Jews in the UK because relatively few alternative opportunities exist for Jewish collective expression here, at least compared with the USA (Endelman, 1990; Borts, 2014). Jewish day schools, then, may come to represent alternative, 'unofficially sacred sites,' given their potential to enable individuals to negotiate their religion (Sarna, 1998; Kong, 2005), as well as the large proportion of time individuals spend in such spaces during childhood and adolescence (Parker-Jenkins et al., 2005). Accordingly, the following section explores the role of (faith) schools as spaces of ethnoreligious socialisation.

2.4.2 Schools and ethnoreligious socialisation

As spaces, all schools are inherently power-laden. Hegemonic groups may use schools to promulgate and reinforce particular cultural conceptions and norms that influence students' identity construction (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Collins and Coleman, 2008). Simultaneously, however, this constant (re)production ensures that such spaces (and the cultural meanings they propound and represent) are subjected to resistance (Dwyer, 1993). For instance, teachers may express a practical, lived school identity but they can also challenge and reshape aspects of the school's official mission or curriculum (ter Avest et al., 2008; Cohen, 2016; Deitcher, 2016), whilst pupils can resist different ideas and attempts at identity transmission (Gill, 2004; Avni, 2012). Faith schools more generally may be contested between individuals and groups seeking to present their religious worldviews as primary, with implications for their pupils and even wider society (Berglund, 2011, 2014).

Durkheim (1956) paid particular attention to the ways in which education is used as a means of instilling children with a society's values and aptitudes. To Durkheim (1956), the objective of schooling is not to develop an individual's uniqueness, but rather to enable young people's development of particular intellectual, moral and practical skills that reflect and will perpetuate the prevailing ideologies of that society. Vermeer (2009) has drawn upon Durkheim's argument to suggest that faith schools' role is to reinforce parents' influence in preparing children for a religious lifestyle. However, compared with

Durkheim's context, young people today must negotiate a greater range of competing viewpoints and values, whilst parents increasingly view schools (as opposed to the home) as the primary place of religious instruction and education (Vermeer, 2009). Collectively, this has instigated some faith schools to restrict children's access to oppositional, 'secularising' ideologies, such as by limiting pupil admissions and staff recruitment to those who actively practise the faith (Vermeer, 2009). Although young people may not appropriate all of the religio-cultural elements presented, these resources are available to construct and communicate an individualised identity that is *based* upon wider social values (Vermeer, 2009). However, whilst Vermeer recognises that Durkheimian perspectives of religious socialisation focus overwhelmingly on structures and neglect the existence of individuals' agency, his use of the term 'transmission' also understates the importance of young people's individual autonomy.[22] Furthermore, Vermeer primarily focuses on religiosity, rather than acknowledging the important ethnic aspects of a Jewish identity, for instance. Nevertheless, Vermeer's overall argument that faith schools can play a significant role in constructing a lived religious identity is highly plausible. This is critical to understanding the Jewish community's endorsement of Jewish schools, as the following section demonstrates.

2.4.3 Jewish schools and identity

Ethnic and religious groups often justify parochial schools on the basis that they can 'protect' and reinforce their distinctive group identities from competing cultural messages and identities (Singh, 1998; Cohen-Zada, 2006; Mchitarjan and Reisenzein, 2013). Accordingly, through their presumed ability to 'shelter' children from "the disturbing influences of secular culture" (Poll, 1998, p.158) and hence 'strengthen' Jewish identity[23] (e.g. Cohen, 1995, 2007; Waxman, 2003b), Jewish day schools have become central to discourses of continuity and survival, particularly (but not exclusively) in the USA (see Jacobs, 2013; Krasner, 2016). Indeed, they are regularly portrayed as key means of transferring cultural heritage (Bullivant, 1983; DellaPergola, 2011); reversing supposedly declining levels of Jewish knowledge (Dershowitz, 1997; Kramer, 2013) and practice

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[22] Whilst this term is often used in academic literature to describe the ways in which young people accrue and internalise key aspects of an ethnic or religious identity, it is more appropriate to describe this process as one of 'socialisation' (see Arweck and Nesbitt, 2010).

[23] Similarly, informal Jewish education such as youth movements and summer camps (Cohen, 1998; Graham and Boyd, 2011; Graham, 2014b), organised Israel trips (Mittelberg, 1992; Saxe et al., 2002, 2013; Aaron, 2013, 2015; Miller et al., 2013; Scott and Miller, 2015) and *kibbutzim* (Mittelberg and Ari, 1995) have all been framed and investigated as vehicles for strengthening Jewish identity.

(Leviton, 2004); facilitating pupils' engagement in their communities (Lazerwitz et al., 1998); contributing to long-term increases in various forms of religious involvement (Himmelfarb, 1974, 1975, 1977); and stimulating graduates to avoid intermarriage in future (Fishman and Goldstein, 1993; Kalmijn et al., 2006). Such outcomes were desired by Sacks (1994) (see Section 2.3.8), revealing certain international commonalities in Jewish schools' 'purpose,' even if variations between countries exist in terms of funding, governance, parental perceptions of alternative schools, and attitudes towards Jewish and wider society (Pomson, 2009).

Jewish schools are often favoured by religiously observant Orthodox parents (both 'mainstream' and strictly Orthodox) who desire their children's inculcation with Jewish beliefs within an environment where they are separated from external, competing influences (Jewish Leadership Council, 2008). Strikingly, all three Jewish schools in Allen and West's (2009) study declared that they contained completely Jewish cohorts, and some Orthodox schools refuse to teach about faiths that are excessively distinctive from Judaism,[24] such as Hinduism due to its polytheism and usage of icons (Short and Lenga, 2002). Miller (2001, p.506) identifies the following four reasons for the increased interest in Jewish day schools in England:

- "to counteract the prevailing trend of assimilation;
- to provide a strong foundation of Jewish learning;
- to counteract the perceived influences of wider society;
- to provide an academically excellent education in preference to other local options."

The first and third factors thus imply that only through Jewish schooling can a Jewish identity be safely maintained, even if this means minimising the external influences of 'other' groups. These 'others' may include less observant Jewish children, who are feared lest they dilute their peers' identities and observances (Braverman, 1981), further demonstrating the internal diversity and divisiveness of the Jewish community. Such isolation simultaneously deters parents who disfavour 'segregation' lest it facilitate the growth of intergroup prejudice (Black, 1998; Becher et al., 2002) or make pupils 'too religious' (Nulman, 1956; Cohen and Kelner, 2007; Prell, 2007), thus entrenching these

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[24] Nevertheless, the Department for Education (2014c, 2014d, 2015) obligates schools to teach a second faith for GCSE Religious Studies from September 2016.

schools' insularity further. Indeed, some Jewish parents send their children to non-Jewish schools (including Christian schools) in order to respect and relate with other faiths and cultures (Elgot, 2010). Nevertheless, several of England's Jewish schools contain significant numbers of *non*-Jewish pupils[25] (particularly where they are undersubscribed) (Valins, 2003a; Margolis, 2007), provide multi-faith Religious Education (Ipgrave, 2016) and regularly welcome visitors of other faiths (Miller, 2011), rendering them popular with Jewish parents who desire the study of Judaism within a multicultural community (Valins et al., 2002).

However, the presence of non-Jewish pupils introduces the dilemma of protecting a specifically Jewish ethos whilst welcoming and integrating students from other backgrounds (Bruce, 2012), and the responses to these questions reflect different movements' attitudes towards Jewish group distinctiveness and particularism (Ipgrave, 2016). Similar issues have been acknowledged by Mills (2015, 2016a) in the context of youth work, as Jewish youth organisations may welcome non-Jews (as organisers as well as participants) and attempt to instil 'British' values, whilst also aiming to stimulate young people's loyalty to the Jewish faith. As such, non-Orthodox (including pluralist) Jewish schools have tended to be more amenable to teaching about and offering visits to alternative places of worship than Orthodox schools, whose interactions with 'others' can be more circumspect (Miller, 2011; Ipgrave, 2016). Crucially, Jewish schools cannot be homogenised, and parents also display diverse personal reasons for selecting or rejecting Jewish schools, even if identity construction, however this is conceptualised, is generally cited as a goal (Valins et al., 2002). The following section demonstrates the disagreement that exists regarding Jewish schools' 'success' in constructing these identities.

2.4.4 Identity construction: success or failure?

Faith schools (whether Jewish or more broadly) are widely perceived as effective means of developing pupils' identities. This is because they offer the potential to increase pupils' understanding of their faith (Bruce, 2012) and ability to participate in ritual practice (Morris, 1959; Lichtenstein, 2013), whilst connecting them with their cultural heritage (Pecenka and Anthias, 2015) and peers from a similar cultural background (Heilman, 1983). Faith schools are also favoured for their greater accommodation of specific religious and cultural needs than mainstream schools (Shah, 2012; Pecenka and Anthias,

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[25] Faith schools may appeal to non-religious parents due to factors including perceived superior academic and behaviour standards (Butler and Hamnett, 2012; Merry, 2015).

2014), where pupils from minority groups may be subjected to numerous forms of discrimination and marginalisation (Gillborn, 1990; Gilbert, 2004; Gross and Rutland, 2014b). Children in faith schools can develop friendship networks that extend to other organisations (such as study groups, camps and youth groups), reinforcing their identity construction (Wertheimer, 2005; Cohen, 2007; Miller et al., 2013), and graduates may continue to seek learning opportunities and friendships with peers who share a similar religious background in religion-based education institutions or in specific groups within larger organisations (Uecker, 2009; Fishman et al., 2012). Furthermore, teachers (in all schools, but perhaps particularly in faith schools given the presence of a shared mission) may influence pupils by modelling the school's ethos (Rymarz, 2010; Cohen-Malayev et al., 2014), hence inspiring positive attitudes towards their faith (Shah, 2012). Teachers may also share personal values with students (even if implicitly, via their choice of learning resources) (Jones et al., 1999), although teachers' own faith identities (and their willingness to express these) may vary significantly within and between schools (ter Avest et al., 2008). Such characteristics can appeal to parents seeking their child's construction of a faith identity.

However, in contradistinction to the largely theoretical contributions to identity construction described at the start of Section 2.4.3, several researchers (e.g. Sanua, 1964; Chazan, 1978; see Dashefsky and Lebson, 2002) are sceptical of Jewish schools' 'success' in developing pupils' Jewish identities, at least on their own. Whereas some studies suggest that graduates' Jewish identities are correlated with the time they spend in Jewish schools – or alternatively these institutions' 'intensiveness' – with the effect of 'justifying' the desirability of day over supplementary schools (Cohen, 1974, 1995, 2007; Bock, 1976, 1977; Fishman, 2012), other studies have indicated that beyond a particular threshold, additional hours have minimal impact on identification (Sigal et al., 1981; London and Frank, 1987) as well as knowledge, involvement and attitudes (Schiff, 1988a). Perhaps in particular, pupils with special educational needs may struggle to access historic texts (Braverman, 1981) and feel excluded by curricula that place significant emphasis on challenging subjects such as Hebrew (Ross, 2006). When religious background is controlled, studies of other religious schools have noted that pupils' religiosity and institutional involvement can appear no different from their counterparts in mainstream schools (Johnstone, 1966; Mueller, 1967), and that these schools can have negligible (Uecker, 2009) or even negative impacts on adolescent religiosity (Francis and Brown, 1991). It ought to be apparent that children who attend faith schools do not necessarily develop religious beliefs, which also implies that

indoctrination through faith schooling is unlikely to be successful (Vermeer, 2009), even if this is largely ignored by critics such as Hand (2003, 2012) and Norman (2012). Indeed, pupils may actively resist perceived attempts at proselytisation (Mueller, 2016), and *should* indoctrination 'succeed,' this is likely to be owing to external influences such as parents and religious bodies (Short, 2003a).

Certainly, alongside the probable importance of the quality of instruction (Shapiro, 1988; Cohen, 1995), parental influence appears salient (Francis and Brown, 1991; Schiff, 1988a, 1988b), even if this is difficult to quantify or distinguish (Fishman, 2000). Parents generally provide the initial influence on children's identity construction (De Ruyter and Miedema, 1996; Voas and Storm, 2012) and determine most forms of contact that children have with wider society (Cornwall, 1987, 1989; Maccoby, 1992). Individuals may thus be conditioned to desire familiarity as they mature (Sherkat and Wilson, 1995; Maliepaard and Lubbers, 2013), demonstrated by the finding that adolescents generally relate their worldviews to those of their parents in spite of their growing autonomy (Bertram-Troost et al., 2009). Thus, although Hofmann-Towfigh (2007) claims that pupils in religious schools value 'tradition' to a greater and 'hedonism' to a lesser extent than students in non-religious schools, the school's impact is unclear because pupils may have developed these values before joining the school and they may not be manifested consistently.

Nevertheless, the general view that parents represent the principal influence risks Jewish socialisation becoming portrayed as solely unidirectional, from parents to pupils via schools. In response, a few studies have illustrated the ways in which Jewish school pupils increase their families' Jewish social and cultural capital, such as by discussing or teaching their parents about Jewish themes (Pomson and Schnoor, 2008, 2009). Moreover, previously unknowledgeable parents may aim to increase their own Jewish understanding and practice in order to support their children's learning (Pinkenson, 1987; Ravid and Ginsburg, 1988; Pomson, 2007), demonstrating the potential for Jewish schools to strengthen identities in *non*-observant families (Rosenblatt, 1999; Leviton, 2004; Pomson and Schnoor, 2009). However, these studies fail to recognise that these impacts may only be temporary (see Fishman, 2012), and so educational programmes' effectiveness cannot be considered at just one point in time (Horowitz, 2003).

Furthermore, in spite of the reservations above regarding Jewish schools' efficacy as identity-builders and mirroring the arguments regarding Jewish survival or transformation (2.3.8), evidence is often used selectively. This is reflected in Cohen's (2007, p.37) claim that "the evidence [of previous studies] uniformly demonstrates

significant long-term effects" of Jewish day schools on identity, Cahan's (2013) suggestion that the mere existence of some studies indicating a favourable impact (which he accepts uncritically) renders them valuable, and Perl's (2009) unequivocal rejection of all prior negative research evidence and refusal to even question whether Jewish continuity can be guaranteed by Jewish schooling, in his call for new Jewish school places in England. This widespread tendency to treat Jewish schools rather uncritically, which is in large part rooted in a palpable ideological desire for these institutions to 'work,' has thus reinforced an *assumption* that Jewish schools strengthen children's identities and restrict assimilation, such as Schick's (2000, p.15) contention that parents who reject day schools subject "their children's Jewish future to an unnecessary risk."

Simultaneously, communal confidence in Jewish parents as socialisation agents has declined, resulting in a "politics of blame" that views them as complicit actors in blurring boundaries with 'other' groups whilst 'justifying' the continued establishment of Jewish schools (Berman, 2010, p.91). This is apparent in the proclivity of many researchers to portray parents as 'uncommitted' to their children's Jewish socialisation, delegating 'responsibility' for transmitting Jewish knowledge to Jewish schools and other educational institutions (e.g. Rosenman, 1989; Pomson, 2009). For instance, Cohen (1997, p.23) laments that few Conservative Jewish day school parents in the USA "measure up to standards of observance and involvement typically set by rabbis and educators" and are "remote from what most movement leaders would consider active Jewish life." Some UK studies (e.g. Leviton, 2004; Mendelssohn, 2011) relatedly suggest that non-practising parents send their children to Jewish schools in the hope of socialising them in a 'loose' Jewish lifestyle (including *b'nei mitzvah* preparation and familiarity with ancient Jewish history and Bible stories) rather than a comprehensive understanding of Jewish history and culture, owing to a perception that they are personally incapable of fulfilling an intergenerational 'obligation' to educate their children Jewishly. In part this reflects the growing universalisation of Jewish day schooling in countries such as the USA and UK, which was historically dominated by observant Orthodox families who had themselves attended Jewish schools, but is today also populated by children of parents who did not receive an intensive Jewish education as children and whose religious practice varies considerably in form and extent (Pomson, 2009; see Section 2.4.6). This 'gap' between the largely 'assimilated' home and generally religion-centric environment represented by the Jewish school (Mendelssohn, 2011) may consequently be used to free schools from culpability in transmitting a Jewish identity, whilst reinforcing their perceived salience within the Jewish community.

Given its traditional emphasis on ritual practice (Freud-Kandel, 2006) as well as its usage of a language that is highly distinctive from most individuals' vernacular, Judaism may be perceived as a faith that requires substantial cultural 'literacy' (Chiswick and Chiswick, 2000; Kramer, 2013), the absence of which can act as a barrier to further learning and religious practice (Horowitz, 2003). Accordingly, several researchers have criticised Jewish schools' prioritisation of a supposedly vague and reductive Jewish identity at the expense of more traditional forms of *Torah* study, intensive learning and *mitzvot* (Chazan and London, 1990; Kramer, 2013; Spokoiny, 2016), with the effect of creating a "Jewish identity industrial complex" (Krasner, 2016, p.156). Although identity development may in fact be mutually constitutive with knowledge rather than separate or oppositional (Kaplan and Flum, 2012), they reveal how the emphasis of Jewish schools upon questions of identity is not unchallenged. Moreover, where identity *does* represent the focus, it is necessary to explore the ways in which individual Jews live their Jewishness, as this can facilitate a greater understanding of Jewish schools' roles in (re)shaping their pupils' identities.

2.4.5 Reification of Jewish identity

Research regarding Jewish schools' impacts upon Jewishness must be placed within a broader context of social scientific work into Jewish identity. Prell (2000) and Zelkowicz (2013) illustrate how sociologists since the mid-1960s have encountered considerable challenges in defining and describing Jewish identity and identification, generally developing and utilising particular 'indicators' of religious or ethnic practice or group attachment in order to gauge its 'survival' or 'decline' (see Section 2.3.8). Given that these 'indicators' aim to ascertain the extent to which individuals meet researchers' expectations of a fixed Jewishness, they implicitly and inevitably construct some individuals as somehow identity-deficient (Prell, 2000; Charmé et al., 2008), resulting in a 'Humpty-Dumpty narrative' of Jewish identity being 'broken' and needing to be 'fixed' (Zelkowicz, 2013). Reflecting the assumption that some (invariably more 'traditional') versions of Judaism are more 'authentic' than others (Charmé, 2000), these indicators are commonly skewed towards traditional Orthodox practices and attitudes, such as keeping Kosher and lighting *Shabbat* candles regularly (e.g. Haji et al., 2011; Sheskin and Hartman, 2015) or parental in-marriage and an Orthodox upbringing (e.g. Saxe et al., 2013) and often draw rigid distinctions between 'religious' and 'cultural' or 'ethnic' practices (e.g. Friedlander et al., 2010) that fail to acknowledge the personalised ways in which individuals perceive their practices or identities.

Such issues are exacerbated by the fact that participant expression is generally restricted to questionnaires, which limit respondents' freedom to specify details of and motivations behind their practices (Prell, 2000), even though practices such as *Kashrut* can be spatially and temporally contingent (Scholefield, 2004; Kudenko and Phillips, 2010). Relatedly, the Pew Research Center's (2013) dichotomisation of 'Jews by religion' and 'Jews of no religion' using criteria such as synagogue attendance and *Seder* participation – which may be experienced *non*-religiously – constrains understandings of how religiosity is schematised in different ways by different people. Furthermore, despite the fact that Judaism "does not negate the possibility of other covenants with other peoples" (Sacks, 1995b, p.120), a 'Jewish' identity is often presented as something fixed that can be understood primarily in its relation to a 'non-Jewish' (and typically 'secular') 'Other' (Levisohn, 2013; Rohrbacher, 2016). For example, Saroglou and Hanique (2006) deem Jewish identity theoretically compatible with a broader, Belgian national identity, but 'measure,' compare and consequently reify it using cultural and religious indicators (including importance of God, importance of religion in life, and frequency of prayer) that do not attend to the complex spatiality and temporality of individual religious belief (see McGuire, 2008). In these ways, sociologists have inadvertently 'invented' a normative Jewishness that they aim to measure (Prell, 2000), regardless of its relevance to individual Jews, and have facilitated the emergence of a master narrative that utilises "nearly identical questions" and engages in "the same survivalist versus transformationist debates" (Zelkowicz, 2013, p.27). Moreover, the persistent use of such measures reflects an underlying reluctance to acknowledge other modes of Jewish identity, even though a single, 'authentic' version of Jewish identity is illusory because all identities intersect with multiple others including nationality, gender, sexuality and politics (2.3.1).

An implication of seeking to measure Jewish identity in this way is that it contributes to a form of reification that allows Jewishness to be marketed (Zelkowicz, 2013; Krasner, 2016). For example, Fishman et al. (2012) suggest that an 'intervention' of Jewish 'social capital' is required for Jewish teenagers so that they can develop a long-term Jewish identity based upon Jewish friendships and education. Moreover, the very title of Graham's (2014b) study *Strengthening Jewish identity: what works?* is indicative of research that insinuates that a Jewish identity can be produced through the intervention of Jewish organisations and the provision of the 'right' resources. Accordingly, studies of Jewish schools traditionally seek to establish causal links between Jewish education and a number of quantitative indicators of Jewish practice or identification. For instance, Graham (2014a, p.51) suggests that communal intervention programmes such as Jewish

schools have a 'measurable and statistically significant effect on the sample across all six dimensions [cognitive religiosity, socio-religious behaviour, student community engagement, Jewish values, ethnocentricity and cultural religiosity] of Jewish identity,' but the measures impose certain assumptions of 'Jewish' behaviour (including *Yom Kippur* fasting and Jewish Society involvement) that may not correspond to all individuals' experiences or perceptions. Such indicators also struggle to distinguish external influences, hence the fact that young people reappropriate adults' perspectives and draw on multiple sources to form personalised and hybrid religious identities (Hopkins et al., 2011) is ignored.

Crucially, as Samson et al. (2017) argue, these indicators are largely skewed towards public or communal forms of expression. For example, Sheskin and Hartman (2015) emphasise synagogue service attendance, synagogue membership, familiarity with and membership of Jewish organisations and donations to Jewish Federations and charities, thus revealing an assumption of institutional participation, rather than legitimising forms of Jewishness that exist separately from such organisations. This emphasis on collective identity at the expense of individual identities reflects an ideological bias towards the maintenance and strengthening of Jewish institutions given a prevailing assumption that they are necessary to sustaining Jewishness, epitomised by Waxman's (1997, p.34) recommendations for the Jewish community to "teach Jews what it really means to be Jewish." Similar tendencies are also evident in non-peer reviewed research into Jewish youth movements and Israel trips, which continues to view collective identities as a necessary objective to which these institutions are intended to contribute, rather than intensively investigating the personal significance of these experiences (e.g. Miller et al., 2013). Consequently, the emphasis of this research is less on the meaning that Jewish identity has to individuals, and more on gauging the impacts of these organisations on a collective sense of presumptive, fixed and reified Jewishness.

However, permitting respondents to prescribe their own faith identities (e.g. Buckser, 2003b; Cohen and Kovács, 2013) is interesting in itself, as it offers the researcher the ability to acknowledge the ways in which individuals perceive their self-belonging and the contexts in which these perceptions are formed (Jenkins, 2008). Moreover, it enables individuals to express changes in their religious identities over time, deconstructing notions that people identify with just one religion throughout their lives, and that these are mutually exclusive categories (Rohrbacher, 2016). Indeed, a 'snapshot' approach to identities and behaviour can be highly misleading as these may fluctuate substantially during an individual's lifetime, responsive to particular events and contexts

(Prell, 2000; Beaman, 2001), including stage in the life cycle (Stolzenberg et al., 1995). Synagogue affiliation, for example, is often connected with life events such as marriage and childbirth rather than necessarily remaining constant (Abramson et al., 2011).

Certainly, Samson et al. (2017) posit that a deeper focus on individuals would facilitate a stronger understanding of the ways in which people negotiate multiple identities to construct their own senses of Jewishness. Relatedly, Horowitz (2002, p.14) suggests that rather than asking "How Jewish are…Jews?" a more effective approach would be to enquire "How are…Jews Jewish?" In this way, respondents are enabled to describe and define their own experiences and understandings of their Jewish identity construction, rather than the researcher creating normative indicators of Jewishness for them to 'meet' (or not). Using such an approach, Horowitz (2003) discovered that although many American Jews would maintain some mode of Jewish identity, this tended to be focused on community values and relationships rather than on religious observance, and would be susceptible to fluctuations in significance over time based on personal events, experiences and relationships. However, Horowitz (2003) avoids suggesting a decline in American Jewish identity, and instead emphasises its *reinvention* based on voluntary experiences such as summer camps and Israel trips; a persistence that no longer relies on religious practice. Such nuances regarding the evolution of Jewish life would not have been attained through a rigid conceptual approach and the focus would have instead been on a decline in Jewish (or rather, religious) practice. Thus, instead of being conceptualised as a fixed goal to be attained, Jewish identity can be understood as a 'journey' over time, highly responsive (voluntarily or not) to social interactions, experiences and events (Horowitz, 2002, 2003) and therefore dynamic and never complete (see Roof et al., 1993; Wuthnow, 1999).

Indeed, by drawing upon the geographies of education, it is possible to acknowledge that 'practice' is far broader than has been conceptualised by most Jewish identity research, incorporating diverse activities and actions that may appear mundane but are far from meaningless (2.2.1). Recent developments in England's Jewish school landscape, including the establishment of the country's first pluralist Jewish secondary school described in the following section, have increased the salience of research exploring such personalised conceptualisations of Jewishness and Jewish practice.

2.4.6 The changing Anglo-Jewish educational landscape

The relationship between religious institutions and education in England is well-established (Walford, 2001; Parker-Jenkins et al., 2005), and Jewish day schools specifically have existed since Jews' re-admission to England in the seventeenth century (Romain et al., 1988). Nevertheless, Jewish day schools have attracted fluctuating levels of communal (and particularly parental) interest over the past century-and-a-half, largely due to competing desires to anglicise and integrate (Finestein, 2002; Mendelssohn, 2011). Indeed, from the late-nineteenth century other Jewish educational institutions, usually aimed at primary school-age children and based within synagogues (including *chederim*, *Talmud Torah* classes and later, part-time suburban synagogue classes), were typically preferred because they did not prevent their pupils from receiving a more general education in community schools (Lipman, 1954; Bermant, 1970). Although Anglo-Jewish community leaders increasingly promoted the notion of Jewish day school education after World War One owing to their concern that 'anglicisation' had been too thorough, eliminating Jewish 'distinctiveness' almost completely (Gartner, 1973), these institutions did not enjoy widespread popularity until the launching of the Jewish Educational Development Trust in 1971, a fund-raising campaign that aimed to raise the profile of Jewish education (Miller, 2001).

However, many of the Trust's proposed schools failed to attain desired voluntary-aided[26] status during the 1980s (Miller, 2001). This demonstrates the additional importance of government context and state funding to the place of Jewish day schools within England's educational landscape. In particular, Tony Blair's New Labour government's education agenda provided explicit endorsement of faith schools on the basis of their distinctive ethos and perceived benefits to morality and academic achievement, and consequently increased their opportunities to receive state funding (Department for Education and Employment, 2001; DfES, 2001; see Walford, 2008a; Clements, 2010). Given the pressures of attracting parents willing to pay school fees, some Orthodox Jewish schools that had long relied upon independent financing duly converted to voluntary-aided status (JLC, 2008). The subsequent coalition and

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[26] Voluntary-aided schools today receive state funds via local education authority (LEA) for their everyday running costs and the majority of capital costs (including playing fields), with the remainder (such as boundary walls and fences) paid by the governing body (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, Schedule 3, Part II, S.3(1-2)). Although they are able to select all pupils based on faith (DfE, 2016a), voluntary-aided schools are obligated to meet state standards regarding inspections (including for religious education) under the Education Act 2005, S.5(1-2) and S.48(1), and the National Curriculum under the Education Act 2002, S.80(1).

Conservative governments have continued to diversify schools' legal and funding statuses, in particular by extending the existing academies programme and enabling non-governmental organisations such as faith groups to establish 'free schools' that are separate from local authority control (DfE, 2014b), under the rubric of increasing parental choice[27] (Watson, 2013; Patrikios and Curtice, 2014). Accordingly, the DfE (2016a) has recently advocated faith schools in order to increase the availability of good school places, augment parental choice and facilitate social mobility, reinvigorating debates regarding faith schools' supposed contributions in these regards (Andrews and Johnes, 2016; Cantle, 2016).

Reflecting a high degree of government support, 36 out of 42 of England's 'mainstream'[28] Jewish schools today receive state funds (Staetsky and Boyd, 2016), the vast majority being defined as 'voluntary-aided' (DfE, 2016b, 2017). Moreover, these schools are generally popular amongst Jewish families: it is estimated that 63 per cent of England's Jewish pupils now attend Jewish day schools (compared with one in five in the 1970s), including a not-inconsiderable 43 per cent from 'mainstream' Jewish backgrounds,[29] rendering England's Jewish children far more likely than those of other faiths to attend a faith school (Staetsky and Boyd, 2016). Although these schools are concentrated in just a few areas of the UK, primarily North and Northwest London and Hertfordshire, as well as Leeds, Manchester and Liverpool, such trends mirror the general distribution of Anglo-Jewry (Hart et al., 2007; Staetsky and Boyd, 2016).

Section 2.4.2 explained how schools represent politicised spaces in which particular values are propounded and reinforced as well as resisted. Notably, the majority of England's Jewish faith schools have been founded under an Orthodox ethos and are sponsored by Orthodox Jewish bodies[30] (Bruce, 2012), with correspondingly precise

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[27] The notion of a 'choice' system for parents, often termed the educational 'quasi-market,' can be connected to the 1988 Education Reform Act (Carroll and Walford, 1997; Exley, 2014). In the case of state-funded schools, parents submit an application form to their local authority, which subsequently assigns pupils based on each school's admissions code, where they are oversubscribed (DfE, 2014c; see Burgess et al., 2009). Although the majority of schools utilise criteria based on distance and whether the applicant child has siblings or has at any previous point been in local authority care, state-funded schools with a 'religious character' can include additional criteria to give preference to members of a specific faith or denomination. Thus, it is important to note that there is no guarantee that children will be assigned to their preferred school where these are oversubscribed (Burgess et al., 2009).

[28] Centrist Orthodox, Progressive or pluralist (see Staetsky and Boyd, 2016).

[29] In comparison, strictly Orthodox children's attendance at Jewish schools is practically universal (Vulkan and Graham, 2008; Staetsky and Boyd, 2016).

[30] Of England's 139 Jewish schools, 97 are affiliated with strictly Orthodox movements, and almost all of the remaining 42 'mainstream' schools are centrist Orthodox, 33 of which operate at primary level (Staetsky and Boyd, 2016; DfE, 2017).

definitions of Jewish identity, which may result in particular constructions of Jewish identity becoming dominant (Valins, 2003a). Importantly, however, two significant developments have altered the complexion of Jewish schooling in England in recent years. First, the Supreme Court ruling R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS has complicated questions of Jewish identity, adjudging that selection based on matrilineal (i.e. genetic) descent under *halakhah* is racially discriminatory. This ruling followed the controversial rejection of a nominally 'Jewish' boy by the Jewish Free School (JFS) in North London. The boy's father was recognised as Jewish by *halakhah*, but his mother, a convert into Judaism through a non-Orthodox synagogue, was not, and so *ipso facto* the boy was rejected for not being religiously (as opposed to ethnically) Jewish under Jewish law despite being recognised as such by his Masorti community. The case emphasises the difficulty in separating religion from ethnicity as required by the Equality Act 2010[31] for oversubscribed voluntary faith schools, and demonstrates how the state – rather than the individual (or indeed *Beth Din*) – has become the arbiter of definitions of Jewishness (Dwyer and Parutis, 2013).

The ruling also illustrates how Jewish identity is contested between movements, with many self-identifying but non-halakhic Jewish pupils now able to gain access to Jewish schools under their oversubscription criteria. Admissions arrangements for Jewish schools are set by a rabbinic authority,[32] and many schools have established points-based entry criteria such as Certificates of Religious Practice (CRPs) in order to ascertain children's 'Jewishness' (JLC, 2011). Ironically, this may create a *less* diverse school population in terms of Jewish *practice* in the sense that successfully admitted pupils are generally obligated to demonstrate particular commitment to their faith through synagogue attendance, rather than their identities being based upon halakhic status, largely separate from adherence to religious practice (Kahn-Harris and Gidley, 2010). Subsequent efforts at creating 'fair,' non-halakhic entrance procedures have not been free from controversy either, as highlighted by a pluralist Jewish primary school that was

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[31] Schools designated as having a 'religious character' under Section 69(3) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 are exempt from Sections 85 (1) and (2)(a-d) of the Equality Act 2010, which forbid discrimination in aspects of pupil admissions and treatment where this relates to 'religion or belief' (Schedule 11, Part 2, S.5(a) Equality Act 2010).

[32] A listed rabbinic authority constitutes the representative body for schools designated as having a "religious character" (Jewish) under Schedules 3-4 of the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012. JCoSS' rabbinic authority (along with three primary schools) is the Jewish Community Day Schools Advisory Board (The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012, Schedule 4: Rabbinic Authorities).

forced to change its admissions criteria based on synagogue membership and Jewish nursery attendance on the basis that these were deemed socioeconomically discriminatory (Shaviv, 2013), whilst an Orthodox secondary school was ordered to remove from its admissions criteria a requirement that prospective parents answer questions regarding their adherence to religious sexual laws, being deemed not only 'embarrassing or intrusive' but also impossible to verify (Fair Admissions Campaign, 2015). Existing academic research has yet to investigate the implications of R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS on faith school admissions practices, yet these are of critical importance to understanding the ways in which a faith identity is constructed and contested between individuals, schools and state.

Second, whereas non-Orthodox families historically avoided Jewish schools both on principle (due to a concern with integration and ambivalence towards an Orthodox ethos) (Miller, 2012a) and force (often not being able to meet the *halakhah*-based admissions criteria), the recent establishment of Progressive[33] and pluralist schools has enabled Jewish families beyond the Orthodox community to send their children to Jewish schools that will theologically validate and cater for diverse expressions of Jewishness through their ethos and formal and informal curricula, without forcing or even encouraging pupils to adopt particular Jewish behaviours or beliefs (Miller, 2012a). Pluralist schools can vary in their treatment of Judaism (Kress, 2016), but typical characteristics may include the provision of different types of religious (or secular) service, critical analysis of historic texts in lessons, active interaction with alternative perspectives of Judaism, and an emphasis on individual meaning rather than meeting a restrictive, singular conceptualisation of Jewishness (Shevitz, 2007; Shevitz and Wasserfall, 2009; Miller, 2012a). This may extend the appeal base of Jewish schools to families who would not otherwise consider a specifically Jewish education (JLC, 2008; Rocker, 2015), as England's mainstream Orthodox schools' curricula are in comparison distinctly Orthodox Jewish in design, even though many contain a relatively large degree of heterogeneity in their pupils' levels and forms of observance given the necessity of filling all available spaces (Miller, 2012b). Such burgeoning interest in inclusive Jewish education and socialisation is also reflected in the growth of Limmud, a cross-communal Jewish educational charity that provides numerous events including a five-day conference, and which in fact lay much of the groundwork for other pluralist initiatives

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[33] Until the opening of a Reform primary school in 1981, every Jewish school in the UK was affiliated with Orthodox Judaism (Miller, 2012a).

such as the Jewish Community Centre for London (JCC), JW3,[34] the Jewish Film Festival, and Jewish Book Week (Miller, 2012b; Shaviv, 2012).

However, rather than being accepted by all movements, England's one pluralist Jewish secondary school, the Jewish Community Secondary School (JCoSS),[35] has been subjected to criticism by Orthodox rabbis who claim that its pluralism renders it "pan-non-Orthodox" and "theologically, completely and irreconcilably at odds with Orthodoxy" (Belovski, 2009; see also Rocker, 2009a). Such attitudes reflect Jewish Orthodoxy's discomfort with 'pluralistic' perspectives (Conyer, 2011), perceiving that such a mission is in reality non-Orthodox given its validation of diverse expressions of Jewishness. The present study makes a distinctive contribution to the academic literature by exploring *internal* contestation over identity construction in a faith school context, with previous research into all religions' faith schools largely underplaying such dynamics and instead emphasising (singular) faiths' relationships with other religious groups and broader society (e.g. Breen, 2009; Flint, 2009; Berger et al., 2016). Intensive analysis of these issues is, however, essential to an understanding of faith schools and their implications for other spaces where ethnic and religious identities are constructed.

2.5 Conclusion

Research in both the geographies of education and the geographies of religion is increasingly considering the multiple spaces in which individuals, including young people specifically, construct and perform their identities. Schools, and faith schools perhaps in particular, represent important spaces where identities are constructed given the amount of time young people spend in these environments as well as the role they play in promulgating certain cultural norms. However, the geographies of education has largely overlooked both faith schools and Jewish identity, in spite of significant attention to these questions in other disciplines. Geography's emphasis on issues of spatiality renders it highly relevant to debates surrounding faith schools. Moreover, growing attention within geography (including the geographies of education) to identities' socially-constructed and performative nature, as well as the importance of individual subjectivities, provides a valuable counterpoint to the majority of research into Jewish schools and Jewish identity (generally in Jewish Studies), which has tended to neglect the

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[34] A major cultural and community centre in North London.
[35] JCoSS (2017a) describes itself as a 'pluralist Jewish learning community' that encourages "debate and dialogue" regarding "diverse approaches to Jewish belief and practice." It was established in 2010.

personal qualities and nuances of Jewishness in the context of education. Indeed, it has been recognised that the Jewish community is in reality deeply divided in terms of denominational affiliation (to the extent that some movements refuse to validate the authenticity of others) as well as more individualised identifications, philosophies and practices. England's Jewish schools encapsulate these issues, reflected in the denominational contestation that exists over the notion of pluralist education (but also its potential to facilitate more personalised forms of Jewishness), alternative attitudes to engagement in multicultural society, and enforced changes to Jewish schools' admissions practices that are at odds with traditional understandings of Jewish identity. Furthermore, simultaneous with the growth of Jewish day schools, many synagogues (at least within the mainstream community) have diminished in number and membership. Such issues merit intensive scrutiny, with a geographical standpoint helpful in understanding the ways in which Jewish schools operate as spaces of identity construction and contestation, as well as their interrelationships with other sites of Jewish education and community, which may have implications for Anglo-Jewry as a whole.

Kraftl (2013b) argues that three principal agendas for the future of the geographies of education have been advanced: research into the impacts of school boundaries on identity construction (Collins and Coleman, 2008); an 'outward-looking' approach emphasising the contexts in which education systems function (Hanson Thiem, 2009); and alignment with children's geographies work in order to explore a wider range of issues regarding the built environment, mobilities and everyday practices (Holloway et al., 2010). This thesis contributes to all three, illustrating the ways in which different manifestations of Jewishness are constructed and contested in a school space, in large part through boundary maintenance; the role of Jewish schools (and JCoSS in particular) in reshaping the performance and spatiality of Jewish identities in England; and the ways in which pupils practise their Jewishness in diverse and meaningful ways. The following chapter will explain how this investigation aims to tackle its research questions.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 contended that previous research has tended to conceptualise Jewish identities restrictively, precluding an understanding of their complex and contested nature. Such research has generally viewed Jewish educational institutions as suppliers of a reified collective Jewishness, reflecting an ideological bias towards notions of Jewish group continuity and survival, without exploring the more personal ways in which Jews conceptualise and live their Jewishness (2.4.5). In contrast, this investigation utilises a new approach to studying Jewish identities that values the potential ambiguities and contradictions of individuals' constructions and conceptualisations of Jewishness (Samson et al., 2017). Qualitative methods, used flexibly, are suited to this objective, as they can enable respondents to define and explain their identities on their own terms, without imposing a researcher's own assumptions of a (potentially monolithic) 'Jewish identity' upon them. This is additionally important in an investigation that seeks to explore diverse and potentially conflicting manifestations of Jewishness, practised in different spaces, and by actors across a range of age groups. The present chapter explains the investigation's methodological approach and methods of data collection.

Central to the thesis is a case study of England's only pluralist Jewish secondary school, the Jewish Community Secondary School (JCoSS). As Section 3.2.1 explains, case studies can facilitate an intensive understanding of a particular issue (or issues), with JCoSS' distinctive ethos rendering it ideal for analysis of the ways in which diverse constructions and conceptualisations of Jewishness are practised, negotiated and contested. In order to scrutinise these dynamics thoroughly, the perspectives of numerous actors at the school (staff, parents and pupils) were included. Furthermore, to attain a more extensive understanding of the place of Jewish schools within the Anglo-Jewish educational landscape (including their interrelationships with synagogues), as well as JCoSS' distinctiveness as a Jewish school, interviews were undertaken with other stakeholders in Anglo-Jewry. These comprised school leaders at other (Orthodox) Jewish schools, rabbis representing a range of denominational affiliations, and researchers at Jewish research and educational organisations. Consequently, the study acknowledges the ways in which a range of actors and educational spaces are implicated in young people's lives and identity construction (Pimlott-Wilson, 2011; Holloway, 2014).

The structure of this Methodology is as follows. Section 3.2 justifies the conceptual and methodological approach of the research. Sections 3.3 - 3.6 subsequently describe the methods of data collection with, respectively, parents, pupils, staff at JCoSS, and participants beyond the case study school. Before concluding, the chapter describes the ways in which the data were analysed (3.7).

3.2 Conceptual and methodological approach

This section justifies the case study (3.2.1) approach utilised within this research. It subsequently advocates the value of qualitative research in revealing the personalised qualities of Jewish identities (3.2.2). Questions of power and reflexivity in inter-subjective research (3.2.3), and the importance of adhering to research ethics (3.2.4), are explained thereafter.

3.2.1 Case study

Adolescence represents an important period of identity construction during which individuals often enjoy greater autonomy to define their religious identities and practice than their younger counterparts (Ozorak, 1989; Smith et al., 2002), justifying this study's focus on secondary rather than primary schooling. JCoSS, which is attended by approximately 1,350 pupils, was selected for three principal reasons. First, JCoSS (2017a, 2017b) is a pluralist school hence it actively encourages different Jewish movements and expressions of Jewishness. This distinguishes JCoSS from England's other Jewish secondary schools, which are either affiliated with or default to a single (Orthodox) strand of Judaism. Indeed, the concept of a pluralist or cross-communal Jewish school has proven controversial in Anglo-Jewry (2.4.6), and so JCoSS' ethos enabled analysis of the intra-faith dynamics of Judaism in a Jewishly-diverse space (RQ1, 2, 4). Second, an understanding of the ways in which the school is constructed and contested as a pluralist space (RQ2) was facilitated by the fact that JCoSS is a voluntary-aided (VA) school and so its governing body is afforded considerable freedom to determine its admissions and religious education policies.[36] Third, JCoSS is located in the Borough of Barnet, an affluent North London suburb home to over 54,000 people

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[36] The governing bodies of voluntary-aided schools are permitted to determine admission arrangements under Sections 88-89 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, and arrangements for religious education under Schedule 19 para. 4(3) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

declaring themselves 'Jewish,' more than any other district in the UK[37] (Office for National Statistics, 2011). This enabled an analysis of the ways in which the school relates to its wider (physical) Jewish community (RQ3).

Although definitions are highly contested (Gerring, 2004; Woodside, 2010), most case studies seek to empirically investigate "a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context" (Yin, 2014, p.16). Certainly, case studies necessitate the researcher's proximity to the subject at hand and so engender context-dependent knowledge that does not rely on general, predictive theory (Flyvbjerg, 2006) or idealised, laboratory-style conditions (Orum et al., 1991). Case studies can reveal hidden groups and identifications, and increase awareness of intersecting categories, illustrating the "complexities of experience embodied in that location" (McCall, 2005, p.1782). Given that this investigation aimed to uncover internal ethnoreligious differences within the faith school's wider (social, political and geographical) context, with particular emphasis on (explanatory) 'how' questions (Yin, 2014), the case study approach was appropriate to highlighting intra-faith diversity and the range of identifications negotiated and constructed by young British Jews.

In opposition to positivist understandings of objective truths (Kitchin, 2006), determinism and general laws (Lincoln and Guba, 2000), case studies are particularly compatible with constructivist and post-positivist principles emphasising the socially-constructed and pluralistic nature of reality, because they enable researchers to appreciate the contrasting ways in which individuals perceive experience (Noor, 2008). However, although qualitative methods have typically been favoured in case study research owing to their ability to give respondents a 'voice' to represent their own, diverse religious perspectives and understandings (Barker and Weller, 2003), the use of quantitative evidence is not uncommon (Yin, 2014) and should not be portrayed at one end of a dichotomy from qualitative methods as Stake (1995) implies. Mixed methods approaches are often used to facilitate greater understanding and rigor, as well as allowing the research matter to be studied from a variety of academic and conceptual positions (Baxter and Jack, 2008). Consequently, case studies' rigour is derived from their ability to zoom in on actual situations and test perspectives directly, without being distracted by preconceived assumptions and theoretical stances (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

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[37] The 2011 Census additionally revealed that several of Barnet's adjoining districts, including Hertsmere and Harrow, also contain large Jewish populations.

Case studies have been criticised for an inability to generalise theories and for uncertain or biased case selection (Gerring, 2007). However, generalisations are acontextual and so inappropriate to understanding the complexities of the social world (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). Indeed, although researchers may desire some wider relevance to illustrate their work's significance (Gomm et al., 2000), generalisability is not a necessary feature of an in-depth investigation of a particular issue (Flyvbjerg, 2006), and by studying somewhat exceptional situations, it becomes possible to recognise issues that may otherwise be overlooked (Stake, 1995). Given the particularity of JCoSS' ethos and its ethnically diverse location, this investigation did not aim to be representative of England's Jewish faith schools, nor did it consider this possible, in contrast to the claims of Short and Lenga (2002) and Pomson (2007). Rather, the investigation used a single, critical case study in order to explore an unusual example of a Jewish school that actively attempts to attract a broad range of Jewish movements, whilst a more extensive element was provided by additional data from other sources (Section 3.5). Flyvbjerg (2006, p.229) describes critical case studies as 'most likely' or 'least likely' cases with "strategic importance in relation to the general problem." Since JCoSS may be deemed the Jewish school least likely to be dominated by a particular Jewish movement (RQ1-2) and most likely to contain pupils involved in a wide variety of synagogues (RQ3-4), evidence to the contrary would have particular implications for other Jewish schools. Furthermore, the school's theoretical attention to individualised manifestations of Jewishness renders qualitative research valuable in attaining the personalised nuances of identity, as the following section highlights.

3.2.2 Qualitative approach

Quantitative techniques have great value in recognising wider trends through generating considerable amounts of data, but they tend to aggregate respondents (Cloke et al., 2004) and so struggle to cope with 'soft' data such as attitudes that are not easily quantifiable (Holt-Jensen, 1988). Indeed, in spite of attempts to impute individuals' Jewish identities from quantitative data (2.4.5), these methods reveal static levels of Jewishness that conceal the fact that identities can vary over time and can seemingly contradict an individual's actual beliefs or practices, which may be drawn from a variety of faiths (Charmé et al., 2008; Hackett, 2014). Several researchers of Jewish identity have recognised that quantitative methods such as censuses are also often limited in their reliability given diverse definitions and expressions of Jewishness (Graham and Waterman, 2005; Hartman and Kaufman, 2006) and their 'snapshot' treatment of

Jewishness as static rather than evolutionary (Prell, 2000; Feldman, 2004). Moreover, these methods struggle to accommodate local specificities (Kosmin, 1998) and the meanings and motivations behind particular practices (Gans, 1994; Alexander, 1997). Thus, by utilising solely quantitative techniques, there is a risk that individuals are denied a 'voice' to express their personalised identities and the nuances of their Jewish lives.

To be clear, this is not to suggest that qualitative methods should be used at the expense of quantitative methods. Qualitative research may also be used to conceptualise Jewish identity restrictively: for instance, questions may not be answerable or appropriately-focused, as Short and Lenga (2002) demonstrate by questioning Headteachers about parental attitudes towards multicultural education, instead of asking the parents themselves. Rather, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods can facilitate stronger research into Jewish identity (Hartman and Kaufman, 2006), with effective qualitative work offering the opportunity to understand how Jewish individuals conceptualise their faith and illuminating individuals' embodied and lived experiences of Jewishness (Crang, 2003; Charmé et al., 2008). Qualitative data can facilitate a deeper appreciation of place specificity (Johnston, 2003) and the "multiplicity of meanings, representations and practices" (Smith, 2001, p.24) that characterise complex issues such as religion and ethnicity. Methods such as interviewing enable researchers to relate closely to their respondents and gain a greater understanding of each person's opinions, beliefs and life context than would be possible through questionnaires alone (Shurmer-Smith, 2002), with accomplished qualitative work permitting participants to express their opinions without the researcher "predetermining their perspective" (Patton, 1987, p.11).

Accordingly, in spite of the traditional dominance of quantitative methods in Jewish identity research, which risk imposing normative assumptions of a Jewish identity (2.4.5), qualitative techniques are becoming more common, including in-depth interviews (Cohen and Eisen, 2000; Davis, 2016), focus groups (Gross and Rutland, 2014a) and ethnography (Davidman, 1991; Erdreich and Golden, 2017). Studies into religious socialisation more generally, which were once almost by definition quantitative in approach (see Benson et al., 1989; Boyatzis et al., 2006), are also increasingly using qualitative means in order to understand its complexity (e.g. Park and Ecklund, 2007; Chaudhury and Miller, 2008). To this end, this investigation used semi-structured interviews and focus groups, *alongside* questionnaire data as a means of acknowledging wider trends (Hemming, 2008), and in contrast to exclusive definitions of 'Jewishness' (such as those based upon *halakhah* or religious practice), it recognises all forms of self-identification as validly Jewish (Horowitz, 2003), enabling it to highlight the multifaceted

ways in which Jews negotiate and live their Jewish identities. The following section illustrates the importance of positionality and reflexivity in inter-subjective research.

3.2.3 Power and reflexivity

Feminist literatures are instructive in illustrating that all knowledge is positional and constantly renegotiated through the fluid and power-laden researcher-participant relationship (Rose, 1997; Gregson and Rose, 2000), necessitating acknowledgement of the ways in which one's own identities influence one's research. This is a particular concern in qualitative research, as the researcher represents an 'instrument' of data collection and analysis (Patton, 1987). Although a small (but nonetheless growing) number of researchers of Jewish identity have described aspects of their own identities and practices (Shapiro, 1999; Kelner, 2010; Braine, 2014) and the ways in which these may shape their relationships with their research subjects (Lichtenstein, 2013), most continue to neglect or marginalise these questions (see Zelkowicz, 2013). It is undoubtedly important for Jewish researchers to consider any personal denominational affiliation in their research, given significant variations in conceptualisations of Jewish identity and practice. For example, as a non-religiously-practising Liberal Jew I was aware that it may have been easier for me to achieve an immediate rapport with those who share similar beliefs than with observant Orthodox Jews (who would have noticed that I do not conventionally wear a *kippah*,[38] for instance) potentially implicating their relationship with me. Although in practice none of the parent or pupil participants at JCoSS wore a *kippah*[39] (including the Orthodox boys), it was important for me to consider my relationships with participants in this way, as Section 3.4 will elucidate further. The following section illustrates how the study adhered to research ethics.

3.2.4 Ethics

In order to reduce the impacts of my research on respondents, I was careful to comply with particular ethical behaviour (Hay, 2003). This was perhaps especially important when working with young people, as "[c]hild participants in research often occupy positions of vulnerability and powerlessness" (Hopkins and Bell, 2008, p.2). Nevertheless, it is important not to distinguish too rigidly between adults' and children's

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[38] I did however wear a *kippah* in the synagogues and other Jewish schools to respect convention. The Orthodox (and some Masorti) rabbis and teachers unsurprisingly also wore *kippot*.
[39] JCoSS' school policy is distinctive amongst Jewish schools in its facilitation of pupil choice (both boys and girls) in wearing a *kippah* (JCoSS, 2017b).

competencies (Alderson, 1995), and given that religion can be a sensitive topic due to the existence of (sometimes controversial) internal and external disagreements, its personal significance to many people, and associations with difficult topics such as death (Nesbitt, 2000), I ensured that I was vigilant to any topics that might have caused stress and acted respectfully towards respondents' opinions (Matthews et al., 1998). In only one parental interview did I sense that a respondent was becoming slightly anxious as she referred to a relative's death, and so I was careful to subtly steer the interview towards a lighter topic.

I made sure to explain my research project to all interview and focus group participants before commencing in order to offer them the opportunity to ask questions (Alderson, 2000) or 'opt out' if desired (Skelton, 2001). Consequently, all respondents were enabled to understand the investigation's purpose and the form and implications of their involvement (Valentine, 2001). Advantages of digitally recording interviews and focus groups are the ability to include verbatim quotations in analysis, which can illustrate the articulation of meanings by respondents (Baxter and Eyles, 1997), and the facilitation of a fluent research process, as interviewers can engage comfortably in conversation without being forced to write responses by hand (Rapley, 2004). Although individuals may become less willing to contribute their thoughts when voice-recorded (Burgess, 2003), all interview and focus group respondents were asked for their consent beforehand (Longhurst, 2003), and all were happy to be recorded. Participants were also informed that they were permitted to switch off the dictaphone should they wish to speak 'off the record,' and that they were welcome to retract any or all of their data up until 22 July 2016, the end of JCoSS' academic year, which ensured that consent was an ongoing process (Valentine, 1999). Interview guides were compiled for each interview and focus group, both to provide a basis for the themes and questions to be asked (Valentine, 1997; Robinson, 1998) but also to ensure greater rigour through providing largely standardised questions (Baxter and Eyles, 1997). By using semi-structured interviews, I was nevertheless able to adapt my questions based on interviewees' responses (Fontana and Frey, 2000), and create space for participants to identify areas of personal importance (Hayes-Conroy and Vanderbeck, 2005). Indeed, the usage of open-ended questions enabled interviewees to emphasise and omit points of their choosing (Skelton, 2001), construct accounts based on their experiences and consequently enjoy a certain authority to represent their lives and perspectives as they wished (Shurmer-Smith, 2002). Although interviews are less reliable than participant observation (for instance) in revealing actual actions (Berg and Lune, 2014), they represent valuable means of attaining detailed

viewpoints and feelings (Hoggart et al., 2002). All interview guides were checked by academics at the University of Leeds in order to avoid using loaded or unclear questions.

Ensuring anonymity is not always feasible given the 'uniqueness' of some situations or institutions, rendering it implausible that pseudonyms and generalised or decontextualised place descriptors would ensure the 'invisibility' of JCoSS (and by extension its senior leadership) (Stein, 2010; Saunders et al., 2015). This is also true of the two research organisations included in this research, which have consequently been named: the Partnership for Jewish Schools (PaJeS) and the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR). In contrast, the large numbers of synagogues in the region rendered the anonymisation of rabbis and their synagogues feasible. Although some rabbis (as well as school leaders at other schools) claimed to be happy to be named, I opted to anonymise all names of rabbis, synagogues and other schools in order to reduce the potential for disclosure whether by accident or process of elimination (Saunders et al., 2015).

Pupils, parents and classroom teachers were automatically allocated a pseudonym as their anonymity was possible, and desirable for ethical reasons. Pseudonyms are valuable because they can enable the personal qualities of qualitative data to be retained, as opposed to describing participants by general gender and age-range characteristics (Saunders et al., 2015). The pseudonyms chosen were intended to resonate with individuals' religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds (Saunders et al., 2015), in order to facilitate the investigation's exploration of the ways in which individuals construct and live their ethnoreligious identities. However, references to activities in particular places (such as specific synagogues) that might reveal participants' personal identities were anonymised by concealing places names and generalising activities and professions in transcripts (Saunders et al., 2015). All parents, pupils and classroom teachers at JCoSS were informed that the school has granted me permission to use its name in the final report, enabling me to be honest about the extent of their personal anonymity and the ways in which their contributions would be subjected to analysis (Stein, 2010). In contrast, I did not specify that I was using JCoSS as a case study with rabbis and other schools' staff in order to encourage them to describe their broader inter-institutional relationships. I elucidated to rabbis and other schools' senior staff that any mention of other schools and synagogues would be anonymised, in order to protect each institution's public reputation. Table 1 highlights the anonymity status of the research participants.

Table 1: Anonymity of research subjects

Research subjects	Treatment of names
Pupils at JCoSS	Anonymous
Parents of pupils at JCoSS	Anonymous
Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher at JCoSS	Not anonymous
Other teachers at JCoSS	Anonymous
School leaders in other Jewish schools	Anonymous
Jewish research organisations: JPR and PaJeS	Although the organisations were necessarily named, the respondents were offered a choice whether they individually would be named. The Executive Director of the JPR opted to be named; the employee at PaJeS asked to be anonymised.
Rabbis at local synagogues	Anonymous

I was issued with a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate, registered with the University of Leeds, on 10 July 2015. The proposed research attained ethical approval from the ESSL, Environment and LUBS (AREA) Faculty Research Ethics Committee on 21 August 2015 (reference no. AREA 14-198). The methods utilised will be described next; these are summarised in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2: Summary of methods (JCoSS case study)

Method	*Research subjects*	*Sample size*	*Research Question*
Questionnaires	Parents of pupils at JCoSS	58	1, 2
Interviews	Parents of pupils at JCoSS, either individually or as a couple	32	1, 2, 3
Year 7 focus groups	Year 7 pupils	4	2, 4
Year 8 focus groups	Year 8 pupils	9	2, 4
Year 10 focus groups	Year 10 pupils	12	2, 4
Year 12 focus groups	Year 12 (sixth-form) students	13	2, 4
Interviews	Senior staff at JCoSS: Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for Jewish Ethos	2 (including 3 separate interviews with Headteacher)	1, 2, 3
Interviews	Classroom teachers at JCoSS	3	1, 2

Table 3: Summary of methods (other sources)

Method	*Research subjects*	*Sample size*	*Research Question*
Interviews	School leaders in other Jewish secondary schools	5	1, 2, 3
Interviews	Jewish research organisations: JPR and PaJeS	2	2, 3
Interviews	Rabbis (and one Director of Education) at local synagogues	16 (4 each of Liberal, Reform, Masorti, United synagogues)	1, 2, 3

3.3 Methods of data collection: parents

Parents were central to the case study. Two research techniques were utilised with parents: questionnaires (3.3.1) and interviews (3.3.2).

3.3.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were used to facilitate an initial and broad analysis of parental attitudes (Parfitt, 2005) as they can generate a larger number of responses than interviews (Kitchin and Tate, 2000). By ensuring that the questionnaire (Appendix A) was relatively short (requiring no more than 5-10 minutes to complete, depending on responses), I aimed to minimise issues of 'fatigue bias' (Parfitt, 2005, p.87) and maximise the completion rate (Toyne and Newby, 1971). Respondents often name fewer items where questions are left open (Hoggart et al., 2002), hence the questionnaire began with a checklist for parents regarding their reasons for choosing a Jewish school in general (although space was also provided for individuals to add any other significant reasons). Subsequent questions regarding parents' reasons for choosing JCoSS more specifically (RQ1) included ordinal measurement levels to facilitate comparison (Bernard, 2002), whilst Likert scales permitted attitudes to be gauged and data quantified, such as pertaining to attitudes towards Jewish identity (RQ1) and the school's role in facilitating pupils' Jewish education and identity construction (RQ2) (Parfitt, 2005). These questions were closed and unambiguous in order to ensure respondents' understanding and to permit straightforward comparison (Hoggart et al., 2002). The order of questions followed a logical progression, with more personal questions about Jewish identity and practice left towards the end to reduce the risk of respondents failing or refusing to complete the questionnaire (Hoggart et al., 2002). The questionnaire concluded with a nominal variable question regarding denominational affiliation in order to provide context to the responses (Parfitt, 2005), although an 'Other' box was also available for parents who defined their Jewishness alternatively. It was piloted with Jewish acquaintances who are themselves parents, although not all had children in Jewish schools. Nevertheless, the pilot group was able to provide feedback regarding my question wording and the options offered, stimulating a few fine changes (Kitchin and Tate, 2000).

The questionnaire was developed through Bristol Online Surveys (BOS) and was distributed by the school as an attachment in an email to the main parent or carer contact of each pupil in Years 7, 8 and 10. This email also included details of the other research methods I was hoping to conduct with pupils (focus groups) and parents (follow-up interviews), with a student-friendly 'Pupil Guide' to my research (Appendix B) and a pre-

tested consent leaflet ('Ethics Q&A') (Appendix C). These forms were designed to clearly explain the purpose of my research and the desired involvement of participants, as well as an overview of the topics to be covered (Alderson, 2004). They also included my university email address in case any potential participants wanted to ask questions before providing consent. The pupil guides and consent leaflets were checked for clarity and readability by a small group of pupils in a separate (non-Jewish) school (Alderson, 2004), using contacts from my previous teaching experience. In order to consent to their own participation in the questionnaire (and separately, a follow-up interview), parents were required to tick the appropriate boxes at the start of the questionnaire. Given the age of the pupils, parental consent to their focus group participation (and auxiliary tasks) was also required via the applicable boxes. Nevertheless, parents were encouraged to discuss the information with their children first in order to afford the latter greater autonomy in determining their participation[40] (see also Section 3.4.2). These boxes were accompanied by reminders that all participants' names would be anonymised, and data could be withdrawn by the assigned date. Parents who consented to their own involvement in an interview were asked to include their name and an email address or telephone number in the appropriate section, in order for me to contact them directly. Parents who consented to their children's participation in a focus group were asked to include their child's name and form group so that I could contact their form tutor and Head of Year. They were also assured that all personal data would be treated confidentially. All pupils and parents were welcome to participate regardless of faith, and I made it clear that I would adapt my questions for those not self-identifying as Jewish. Nevertheless, all participating pupils considered themselves Jewish to some 'extent,' and all but one of the parents (the exception instead being married to a Jew).

In total, 58 parents completed the questionnaire, the majority of whom were parents of Year 8 or 10 pupils. Whilst I had hoped for a greater response rate, the findings revealed certain trends, and it is important to acknowledge that the online questionnaire also represented a useful medium for gaining parental consent, given that it was quick and straightforward to complete and did not require parents to go through the tedious process of returning it via the school. It is possible that the requirement for respondents to provide consent at the beginning of the questionnaire, and therefore include their name if they intended to participate in an interview, detracted some individuals who feared a

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[40] In order to facilitate parent-child discussion, the pupil guide and consent leaflet were also distributed to pupils via form tutors. However, by sending these attachments to parents directly, the risk of the literature being lost on the way home from school was mitigated.

violation of their confidentiality (Hoggart et al., 2002), but both the questionnaire and the consent guide clearly explained that answering the questionnaire alone would not necessitate any sharing of personal information, and completing the questionnaire did not obligate further involvement in the research. Interestingly, over half of the questionnaire respondents also provided their consent for either their own involvement in an interview or their child's participation in a focus group, or both, indicating a general willingness to participate beyond the questionnaire. It is possible, therefore, that those parents who received the email but did not complete the questionnaire simply misunderstood the desired involvement and opted not to participate. Alternatively, several parents mentioned offhand that the school sends numerous emails per week, which may have resulted in some recipients ignoring my email if they had become apathetic about such constant contact,[41] whereas others claimed that they had not received my email prior to the sending of a reminder email several weeks later. The following section describes the parental interviews.

3.3.2 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with parents (mothers and fathers, individually or together) of Year 7, 8 and 10 pupils. Parents were recruited via the online questionnaire as described in Section 3.3.1. In total, the parents of 32 pupils were interviewed. Respondents represented a range of denominational affiliations, and included converts and mixed-faith families as well as those unaffiliated with a movement. Mothers comprised the majority of respondents, although two interviews were conducted with couples. I contacted each parent to arrange an interview, with most taking place in their homes, in order to increase their levels of comfort and, potentially, their candidness (Elwood and Martin, 2000). Nevertheless, I also permitted parents to select an alternative location, which included their workplace, a booked classroom at JCoSS or via Skype. I ensured that I was adaptable to parents' own schedules, with most interviews taking place during a weekday when their children were at school. Three other parents agreed to an interview through the questionnaire, but after three attempts to arrange an interview via email and telephone with no response, I abandoned my efforts, assuming that they must have changed their minds.

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[41] Indeed whereas one's access to email could provide sampling issues in the past (Hoggart et al., 2002), the fact that JCoSS primarily uses email to contact parents meant that parents should have been aware of the survey's presence.

Interviews were conducted from October 2015 until March 2016. Revealing JCoSS' considerable catchment, parents covered a geographic range that stretched from Hertfordshire in the north to Central London in the south, and from Essex to the western edge of Middlesex. Reflecting the large range of parental loquacity (as well as the restrictions imposed by any additional work commitments), interviews varied from 30 to 75 minutes in length, although most required 45-50 minutes. The semi-structured nature of my interviews enabled me to be adaptable to the parents' time preferences (as well as develop new questions based on their responses), and I ensured to ask for a time limit in advance so that I could ensure that all key themes would be covered.

The parental interviews were important because research into the impacts of Jewish schools on identity has often ignored the 'parent factor,' even though family environment and parental concern can play a crucial role in influencing their children's Jewish identity construction (Schoenfeld, 1998), and parents are generally expected to select and apply to schools on their children's behalf (Allen and West, 2011). My initial questions were intentionally open-ended (e.g. "How would you describe your own faith identity?"), as I enquired into respondents' personal faith backgrounds and upbringing, allowing them to relax, share anecdotes and represent their lives as they desired (Skelton, 2001), which additionally provided me with valuable context for future questions and ensured that I did not stereotype their perspectives and identities (Hackett, 2014). By learning of parents' current denominational affiliation as well as the one in which they were raised (where relevant), I was also able to recognise any denominational transferring of identification. I subsequently asked parents about the perceived primary influences on their children's Jewish identities, and any activities in which they participated together. As our rapport developed, respondents became more confident in sharing their experiences, with many providing extensive narratives (Wiles et al., 2005), permitting me to ask increasingly probing questions (Baxter and Eyles, 1997). Once I had attained a detailed overview of participants' Jewish identities and actions, I directed the interviews towards a discussion of Jewish schooling, ensuring that all transitions to new topics were made clear (Berg and Lune, 2014).

Pertaining to RQ1, the interviews aimed to facilitate a greater understanding of the parental role in school selection, their desired outcomes from Jewish schooling and the parent-school relationship in contributing to their child's Jewish 'lifestyle.' To this end, I continued to use predominantly open-ended questions so as not to guide parents into particular answers: for instance, "What was the process for deciding whether to send your child to a Jewish school?" and "What do you hope your child will get from their

education?" Moreover, it is not uncommon for parents to be actively involved in school governance including through parent-teacher associations, hence it was necessary to investigate such home-school interactions and parents' perceptions of their efficacy. Furthermore, Jewish schools vary significantly in ethos, admissions criteria and curriculum, necessitating the ascertainment of parents' levels of satisfaction with JCoSS' formal and informal curricula and their ability to influence them (RQ2).

The interviews additionally contributed to RQ3 through exploring parents' experiences of synagogue with their children. In particular, it was necessary to learn about parents' experiences of synagogue since childhood, their children's involvement in these communities (or not), and the ways in which individuals negotiate their faith in relation to synagogues when applying for a Jewish school. Through recognising the potential presence of activities that compete with synagogues for time and money, any constraints on synagogue involvement were also acknowledged. I emphasised that organisations external to JCoSS such as synagogues and other schools, as well as people, would be anonymised (Valentine, 2001) in order to encourage parents to speak openly about their experiences (see Section 3.2.4). Most parents were duly willing to discuss other institutions and spaces that they perceived influenced their Jewish identities.

Overall, the interviews were used to expand upon and strengthen the credibility of the questionnaire findings through facilitating triangulation (Baxter and Eyles, 1997; Greene, 2007), as participants were offered greater freedom to express their opinions (Kitchin and Tate, 2000) and place their responses within personal context (Lewis and McNaughton Nicholls, 2014). In terms of my reflexivity, it is interesting to note that some parents asked me about my own faith identity following interview, and several claimed that my questions had stimulated them to reflect on their faith in a deeper way than before (Hislop et al., 2005). Two parents even told me that they hoped an interview would help them to develop greater certainty in their own Jewish identities! A few parents were also curious to learn how I became interested in this topic, as well as my Geography specialism, which they viewed as unusual because they assumed that any research into Jewish identity would necessarily be Jewish Studies or Jewish Education. Section 3.4 next illustrates the research approach and methods used with pupils.

3.4 Methods of data collection: pupils

This section illustrates the methods utilised with pupils at the case study school. First, it justifies the youth-centred approach of the research (3.4.1), before providing an overview of the focus groups (3.4.2). The specific design of the focus groups, including auxiliary tasks, are highlighted in Sections 3.4.3 - 3.4.5.

3.4.1 Youth-centred approach

Although this investigation incorporates the perspectives of various adult stakeholders, it is youth-centred in its general attention to Jewish young people's involvement in and negotiation of Jewish education. Crucially, this includes consideration of young people's agency to construct and define their own identities. Excluding references to methodologies (which tend to emphasise 'child'-centred methods regardless of young people's age), the study uses the more age-appropriate term 'young people' to describe JCoSS' pupils. Children's research – admittedly a wide-ranging and highly interdisciplinary subfield (Holloway, 2014) – increasingly engages young people as meaningful and relevant actors rather than objects or proxies of 'adultist' procedures (Saporiti, 1994; Holloway et al., 2010). Indeed, young people do not necessarily accept a 'transmitted' religious identity from adults (Christensen and Prout, 2005; Bunge, 2012) and may even reject their authenticity (Olson et al., 2013), instead attaching their own importance to particular religious concepts and practices by drawing on diverse sources and understandings (Coles, 1990; Hemming and Madge, 2012). Moreover, these identities are constantly (re)constructed through everyday sites, necessitating attention to young people's experiences of (often highly interconnected) spaces beyond the school that can also be used for educational purposes, including the home (Holloway and Valentine, 2000; Holloway and Jöns, 2012) and, I would add, places of worship. Consequently, children's researchers and geographers of education aim to understand young people's perspectives and social worlds (Jones, 2001; Tucker, 2003; Holloway, 2014), rather than imposing their own assumptions upon them.

Nevertheless, Ridgely (2012, p.239) notes that the majority of research into world religions has neglected children's religious practices and perspectives, presenting instead a "thoroughly adult-centered view of religion" in which children are almost invariably portrayed as "the powerless and the weak." Research into religious rituals, for instance, has tended to ignore children's understandings, resulting in adult-centric accounts that emphasise *adults'* perceptions of children's religious experiences (Boyatzis, 2011). Accordingly, the majority of Cohen's (1995) data investigating the impacts of Jewish

education on Jewish identity were drawn from parental questionnaires, with comparatively little data attained from the young people themselves; Rosenblatt (1999) uses several qualitative and quantitative methods to ascertain adult stakeholders' perceptions of Jewish day school kindergarten rather than enabling pupils to share their own experiences; whilst Scholefield's (2004) study of a Jewish school includes just one verbatim quotation from a student. Yet, one cannot use adults' views of their own childhood religious experiences in lieu of children's perspectives, since the former rely on memory and so can disguise the understandings and meanings they had at the time (Hayward et al., 2012; Ridgely, 2012). In comparison, this investigation aims to provide pupils with a 'voice' in order to draw upon their ideas and experiences (McDowell, 1997; Smith, 2001), and to understand how they represent spaces such as schools (Reay, 2007), facilitating analysis of the distinctive ways in which they (re)construct a Jewish identity.

Section 3.2.3 illustrated the importance of considering one's reflexivity. Power relationships between researchers and young people are particularly complex, as adolescents may be sensitive to differences in status and class as they attempt to define their positioning between 'child' and 'adult' (Fine and Sandstrom, 1988), causing positionality to be constantly renegotiated (Barker and Smith, 2001), and it is important to acknowledge that children's agency (or lack of) cannot be taken for granted (Vanderbeck, 2008). It is indisputable that certain facets of my identity will have implicated the research process. My previous employment as a secondary school teacher (albeit in a different school) has helped me construct a firm but friendly and sensitive stance when interacting with young people, which may render me more 'familiar' to pupils in style of address than other adults. Whilst I clearly indicated my reliance on pupils' engagement in the research, and represented an 'outsider' given that I was a visitor to the school, I could not ignore my overall greater power in terms of age and ability to control the focus groups where necessary (see Mayall, 2000). In contrast to Hemming's (2008) efforts to reduce his semblance of authority by dressing more casually than the teachers, I wore a suit in order to show my respect for the school's professionalism, whilst positioning myself in a less authoritative and disciplinary role than a teacher (Holt, 2004b). Nevertheless, it was also apparent through my discussions with pupils and teachers that the school welcomes visitors on a regular basis, and so I did not represent much of a 'novelty' to the students. Moreover, the ways in which young people participate in the research process are also often different from adults (Alderson, 2000; Christensen, 2004). 'Traditional' methods such as questionnaires and one-to-one interviews are often unsuitable for research with children because they rely on strong

verbal or literal proficiency (a major issue for those with special educational needs in particular) (Valentine, 1999) and may be perceived as intimidating or tedious (Barker and Weller, 2003). Thus, in addition to remaining conscious of the fluctuating power relations that exist in inter-subjective research (Barker and Weller, 2003), I aimed to design young people-centred methods as the following sections demonstrate.

3.4.2 Focus groups: overview

Confidential focus groups were conducted with a total of 38 pupils across Years 7 (aged 11-12), 8 (aged 12-13), 10 (aged 14-15) and 12 (aged 16-17). More girls (22) than boys (16) participated, although it would be simplistic to suggest that this was related to greater female interest in Jewish identity (Davey et al., 2001, 2003) or general religiosity as revealed in many previous studies (Benson et al., 1989; Boyatzis et al., 2006). The proportions were also slightly skewed towards the older age groups (four students in Year 7; nine students in Year 8; twelve students in Year 10; thirteen students in Year 12) owing to relative levels of opt-in, but a broad range was nevertheless evident. By engaging with pupils of different ages through this opt-in approach, a more comprehensive research sample than that used by Short (2003b) and Pomson and Schnoor (2008) was garnered, with the former randomly selecting students from four out of five of the secondary schools in his study, resulting in a sample dominated by sixth formers, and the latter including the entirety of one elementary school class, which additionally raises ethical questions of pupil autonomy to participate. In contrast, all pupils in the present study were required to volunteer in order to participate, rendering the method both more ethical and possibly more representative of pupils than that used in previous studies (e.g. Press, 1989; Gill, 2004), which have often required teachers to select students, potentially (and in Press' case, intentionally) resulting in samples dominated by the most articulate pupils.

Focus groups were used because they provide opportunities for respondents to construct ideas and gain confidence through discussion, and for researchers to observe the ways in which individuals interact, validate and challenge one another's responses (Hoggart et al., 2002). Thus, individuals' feelings and opinions can be viewed as "socially situated rather than independent" (Hoggart et al., 2002, p.214), further illustrating the ways in which young people construct an identity. Given their conversational characteristics, focus groups also seemed more accessible to young people than formal one-to-one interviews (Berg and Lune, 2014), reducing the power differential and increasing respondents' willingness and ability to participate in the research process. Each focus group contained students of the same age in order to reduce the possibility of

some pupils dominating discussions, to enable them to draw on shared experiences and anecdotes at JCoSS, and to increase the chances of complying with one another.

Although Year 7, 8 and 10 pupils required their parents' consent in order to participate (3.2.1), Year 12 students' superior age ensured that they were uniquely able to consent to their own involvement.[42]   These sixth-formers were recruited via the dissemination of a 'Sixth Form Guide' (Appendix D), similar but not identical to the aforementioned Pupil Guides, to all Year 12s via their form tutors. The sixth-formers were given a few days to consider the information, with the Head of Year 12 subsequently visiting the form groups with a register for consenting students to sign their names.

The length of the focus groups partly depended upon the specific Year Managers' preferences: the Head of Year 10 requested that I use the 20-minute tutor period; the Head of Year 8 suggested 25 minutes during the lunch break; the Head of Year 7 permitted me to conduct a focus group during a tutor-led activity for around 35 minutes. Thus, in all cases I avoided removing pupils from crucial lessons or providing logistical difficulties for their homeward travel by arranging sessions after school. The Year 12 focus groups were more flexible, being based around students' free study periods and in a few cases, the lunch break. An online Doodle poll was created for the sixth-formers to input their available times; I subsequently contacted them via their tutors and by email with their times, which were based on shared availability. The Year 12 focus groups ranged from 25 minutes to 55 minutes, although most lasted 35-40 minutes, with these variations largely due the numbers of participants: the longer focus groups contained three students resulting in more opinions and experiences being discussed than those with two.

The school's boardroom was booked for all of the focus groups, and a message detailing the location and time sent to pupils via their form tutors. The boardroom represented a suitable location because, like a vacant classroom, it ensured greater privacy than other locations at the school (Nesbitt, 2000), although the door was kept partially open in accordance with child (and researcher) protection procedures. The focus groups comprised a similar structure but the resources used and types of questions asked were differentiated by year group, as shall be described next.

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[42] I learnt this at a workshop at the University of Leeds regarding ethical issues in research with children, and through a separate conversation with the University's Research Ethics department.

3.4.3 Initial focus groups

In order to clarify my motivations and situatedness to pupils (Stein, 2010), I first explained that I was interested in JCoSS' pluralist ethos as well as the main influences on their own personal Jewish identities. Most pupils had remembered the key aspects of my research, but it was useful to elucidate their desired involvement because it was unlikely that many of the pupils had previously participated as subjects in a research project, especially one organised by an external researcher. Moreover, by reminding pupils of the upcoming tasks and their contributory role, the quality of their responses and thinking ought to have been improved (Bourdillon and Storey, 2002). It was re-emphasised that all names would be anonymised, and pupils were subsequently re-asked whether they were still willing to take part, in order to ensure that consent was continuing and to provide a clear opportunity for pupils to withdraw if desired (Alderson, 2004). This contrasts with Lichtenstein (2013), who sought consent from parents but not her adolescent research subjects. All students who arrived agreed to continue, and indicated their consent by signing their names on a register (Valentine, 2001).

The pupils were also asked if they were happy to be voice-recorded (and all agreed willingly), and were assured that they could turn off the dictaphone at any point. Furthermore, they were reminded that should they retrospectively change their mind about participating, they could contact me prior to the end of the academic year to withdraw part or all of their transcript. Expectations that participants wait their turn to speak were expressed beforehand, both in order to facilitate a safe and positive research climate (Matthews et al., 1998) but also so that my dictaphone would be able to distinguish between voices. I aimed for each Year 7, 8 and 10 focus group to include four students, because teachers often consider this number optimum for group work, as it enables all participants to contribute actively whilst minimising the risk of some either dominating or 'coasting.' Four is also consistent with academic recommendations that focus groups should be small in order to facilitate all participants' involvement, as well as greater ease of management and transcription for the researcher (Berg and Lune, 2014; Finch et al., 2014). Although some focus groups nevertheless comprised pairs or threes owing to pupil absences, odd numbers by year group or, in the case of Year 12, unavailability at certain times, this did not prove problematic given the pressure to cover numerous questions in a relatively short period of time.

The focus groups' structure was differentiated slightly by age group in order to ensure their appropriateness. Following the official duties described above, pupils were asked to introduce themselves through a simple 'ice-breaker,' which aimed to relax them

and also enable me to develop an initial rapport (Lees and Horwath, 2009). The ice-breaker had the additional benefit of permitting me to describe the pupils in their own words during data analysis, rather than imposing my own assumptions (Berg and Lune, 2014). This is particularly important in a study that seeks the active participation of young people, because it is the researcher's responsibility to write a report that fairly reflects their viewpoints (Alderson, 2004). The Year 7 and 8 ice-breaker involved a diamond nine ranking exercise, whereby the students placed nine cards with aspects of Jewish faith and lifestyle (including schooling) in order of personal significance (Appendix E). Diamond nines were ethically appropriate because they are often used by teachers as learning activities, rendering them potentially familiar to pupils (O'Kane, 2000), consequently increasing their confidence to engage in the research process. They are also highly flexible activities (O'Kane, 2000), enabling their content to be finely amended by age (and academic ability), as well as providing greater possibilities for respondents to direct focus groups' course, empowering them to contribute more candidly (Christensen, 2004). The diamond nine activity and some follow-up focus group questions were piloted at the separate, non-Jewish school (3.3.1), although this necessitated the inclusion of more universal cards, and subsequently with a small group of pupils during form time in one of the Jewish schools where I conducted an interview (3.6.1), which informed the addition of a 'synagogue or camp activities' card.

Once the diamond nine exercise had been completed, each pupil was asked to justify their opinions regarding the most and least important influences to them. The fact that this task – as well as the focus group as a whole – was based on opinion (hence there were no 'right' or 'wrong' answers) was emphasised in order for pupils to feel more comfortable participating (Morrow, 2008). They were also encouraged to add their own ideas regarding the major Jewish influences, to highlight the diverse spaces in which religious identities are constructed (Hopkins et al., 2011) and to prevent them from being overly directed by the nine suggested influences. Indeed, unlike Nesbitt (2000), I avoided bringing photographs or versions of typically 'Jewish' objects lest they guide pupils' responses. Consequently, the diamond nine task was effective in enabling a group discussion about their Jewish identities.

In contrast, and based on my instinct and experience as a fully-qualified secondary school teacher, the Year 10 and 12 students appeared sufficiently confident and articulate during our initial discussion of the research not to require the same degree of structure. Thus, these students were asked to introduce themselves based on the same opening question asked to parents ("How would you describe your faith?") in order to avoid

patronising them and to afford them greater freedom to include the key aspects of their identity without 'leading' their responses.

Moderating focus groups represents a balancing act, requiring researchers to cover all desired topics without forcing participants towards them in a heavy-handed manner (Berg and Lune, 2014). I permitted the students substantial freedom to discuss the aspects of their Jewish identities and experiences that were most important to them, based around a few, general questions, such as regarding the school's role and effectiveness in constructing or reinforcing Jewish identities. Nevertheless, there were also some key issues that I ensured we discussed, including the impacts of the school's formal and informal Jewish curricula on their identities and practices. Any pupil agency regarding the choice of school was also discussed (Reay and Lucey, 2000), since pupils' responses had the potential to reveal valuable information about the role of friendship groups (within and without the Jewish community) in influencing school selection decisions. Young people may experience greater feelings of personal worth where they are given opportunities to discuss their ideas on a personal level (Worsley, 2004), and by listening attentively to pupils' perspectives, the value of their input was emphasised (Matthews et al., 1998), maximising the data gained. Furthermore, by speaking with young people without their parents being present, it was also possible to attain information that might not otherwise be revealed should it be a source of family tension, for instance (Schoenfeld, 1998). The focus groups concluded with a request that pupils undertake a straightforward but crucial auxiliary task: to record an audio diary of their everyday Jewish experiences and encounters for up to four weeks, the experiences of which would be discussed in a second focus group.

3.4.4 Auxiliary task: audio diaries

Audio diaries seemed appropriate as novel and engaging methods that draw on many young people's technological capabilities and interests (Worth, 2009), and incorporate the advantages of 'traditional,' written diaries including individualised reflection and expression (Griffith and Papacharissi, 2010), and insights into everyday activities (Barker and Weller, 2003). Given that they do not require individuals to write, they can also avoid associations with 'demotivating' school work (Barker and Weller, 2003), stimulating richer data (Hislop et al., 2005) and are inclusive of individuals with low levels of literacy. Crucially, audio diaries are highly flexible, enabling young people to control their forms of involvement by recording at personally suitable times (an important issue for some religiously observant Jews), without the presence of a conventional interviewer who may

reinforce 'traditional' power relations (Worth, 2009). However, in spite of the fact that clear instructions were provided (including a sticker[43] detailing the task, my University email address for questions and completed recordings, and some suggestions to stimulate their reflections), and all pupils claimed to have access to recording technology on android phone, iPhone or iPad (or similar), I did not receive any audio diaries.[44] I had not requested extracts from Year 12 students owing to the pressures of coursework and examinations, but given the apparent enthusiasm of most of the younger pupils, this was surprising. Some pupils explained that their other commitments had taken priority, including school work and broader extra-curricular or leisure activities, or simply that they had forgotten. There also remains the possibility that pupils changed their mind whether to participate, or felt too embarrassed to decline in person. Overall, this issue illustrates the risks associated with voluntary 'take-home' research activities, and I opted not to enquire further because I was grateful for pupils' participation in the focus groups, which had garnered considerable data, ensuring that the research was not jeopardised. Nevertheless, the removal of the audio diary method required the structure of the follow-up focus groups to be amended, as described next.

3.4.5 Focus group 2

I originally intended to conduct two 20-minute focus groups involving each student. However, because I was offered greater time with Years 7 and 12 (3.3.2), these pupils only participated in one, longer focus group that incorporated the topics above and below. In addition, it was agreed with the Head of Year 12 that one focus group would be more appropriate with these students owing to their greater academic responsibilities. The Year 8 and 10 pupils were invited to a second focus group via their form tutors, with a small number (three in Year 8, five in Year 10) attending. Focus groups began with a simple 'starter' activity: pupils were asked to share the first three words that they associated with the word 'synagogue.' This was effective in highlighting attitudes towards synagogue as well as any involvement pupils had in this space. Subsequently, pupils were encouraged to discuss their synagogue experiences in greater detail, and enjoyed significant freedom to direct the course of the discussion. I also asked specific questions pertaining to synagogues and their supplementary schools, youth movement involvement and (in the

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[43] A sticker was distributed to pupils who claimed to be open to undertaking this task. The advantage of a sticker is that it can be adhered inside a homework planner and is thus unlikely to become lost.

[44] Nevertheless, two Year 8 pupils gave me written diary extracts (which I had specified as a valuable alternative) at our second meeting.

case of the Year 10s) participation in JCoSS' annual Year 9 Israel trip. In addition, by informally discussing any other significant experiences of Jewish life since the first focus groups, pupils revealed some fascinating anecdotes, enabling me to receive data that may have otherwise relied upon the audio diaries' completion, and permitting pupils to provide greater context to their experiences and interpret them in their own ways (Barker and Weller, 2003). Overall, the focus groups were effective in generating data regarding pupils' experiences of Jewish school (RQ2) and the influences upon their Jewish identity construction (RQ4). Section 3.5 next describes the interviews utilised with staff at JCoSS.

3.5 Methods of data collection: case study school staff

Interviews with senior staff (3.5.1) and classroom teachers (3.5.2) completed the JCoSS case study.

3.5.1 Interviews: senior school staff

In order to attain a greater understanding of the school's role in the Jewish community, JCoSS' Headteacher was interviewed on three separate occasions, each focused on a particular topic: ethos and curriculum; admissions policy, including the impacts of R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS, and student body; putting pluralism into practice. These interviews were conducted in the Headteacher's office, each taking 35-40 minutes. I also conducted a 60-minute interview with the school's Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for Jewish Ethos, again in her office. This interview primarily explored the development of JCoSS' ethos over time (including its attempts to include diverse forms and expressions of Jewishness) and the school's evolving relationship with the Orthodox community (see 2.4.6). By interviewing these key staff, I was additionally able to gain valuable demographic data regarding the student body, including (rough) numbers of students by Jewish movement (as well as non-Jews), which provided an indication of the potential competing claims to Jewish identity within the school (RQ2). Furthermore, by exploring the ways in which JCoSS facilitates opportunities for pupils to engage with their local communities (including synagogues), data valuable to the execution of RQ3 were attained. Classroom teachers were also interviewed, as described next.

3.5.2 Interviews: classroom teachers

Given that teachers may represent but also challenge a school's official mission (2.4.2), it was necessary to learn about teachers' perceptions of working at JCoSS and their

autonomy to teach contested subjects. Three classroom teachers were interviewed in order to learn about their understanding of the school's mission, the guidelines provided for the teaching of their subject, and any controversial aspects of their subject from a religious perspective. These interviews also enabled me to discover the ways in which teachers support pupils' integration in a new school (particularly those coming from non-Jewish schools), any experiences of classroom disagreements including those pertaining to Jewish identity, and any means by which pupils are encouraged to enquire into their faith. The data were therefore used to explore RQ2 regarding the validation of different Jewish movements' perspectives, and also provided an indication of parents' interests in Jewish identity for RQ1.

I originally attempted to recruit teachers for interview via internal staff email (sent by the school office or leadership team) and through staff briefing. However, it later transpired that the message had never been disseminated. Nevertheless, two teachers had become interested in my research when distributing the Pupil Guides and consent leaflets to their tutees, and contacted me of their own volition to offer themselves for interview. Through snowballing, I also managed to contact a third teacher. The three teachers represented a range of subjects, one being Jewish Studies, enabling me to learn how the school's pluralistic ethos is executed in a range of academic contexts.

At the start of these interviews, I requested teachers' faith identifications (in a similar manner to the parents) to contextualise teachers' perspectives of the school's pluralist ethos and the ways in which they negotiate their own beliefs in their teaching. Interestingly, only one of the three teachers (Jewish Studies) was Jewish. Whilst such heterogeneity cannot axiomatically be considered representative of the school's wider staff body, it illustrates JCoSS' openness to employing teachers regardless of their faith. Based upon schedules and preferences, one teacher opted to be interviewed alone, whereas the other two chose to be interviewed together. This did not appear to compromise their candidness largely given the enormous discrepancy between their two disciplines. In order to provide a more extensive element to the study, interviews were also conducted beyond the case study school, as the following section demonstrates.

3.6 Methods of data collection: beyond the case study school

This section describes the interviews undertaken beyond the case study school, which provided a more extensive element to the research. These interviews were conducted with other school leaders (3.6.1), two Jewish education and research organisations (3.6.2), and rabbis at synagogues across Hertfordshire and North and Northwest London (3.6.3).

3.6.1 Interviews: other school leaders

I contacted every applicable secondary school listed on the website www.findajewishschool.co.uk requesting an interview: in the first instance I spoke to the school office to receive the contact details of the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher, and I followed this up with an email requesting a school leader's participation in an interview. I also asked whether it would be possible to spend a day shadowing at the schools for greater context. I mentioned my former employment as a teacher and my possession of the DBS certificate in order to allay any concerns they may have had about such speculative requests. In total, five schools granted interviews, with one also permitting me to speak to a group of pupils during form time and to observe an assembly, and a second offering me a tour. Three of the schools were situated in North London, two of which contained an Orthodox ethos and the third a *Charedi*[45] ethos. The remaining two schools were located in cities outside of London and catered to a more diverse cohort of students, although their ethos were also predominantly Orthodox. Interviews were conducted with either the Headteacher or a Deputy Headteacher at each school, and lasted between 25 and 60 minutes, depending on interviewee availability. These interviews enabled me to recognise the ways in which other Jewish schools attempt to provide a Jewish (and secular) educational curriculum (RQ2) and encourage synagogue involvement (RQ3), and indirectly provided a deeper understanding of JCoSS' distinctiveness as a pluralist school. Section 3.6.2 next describes interviews with employees at two organisations concerned with Jewish education and research: the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) and Partnerships for Jewish Schools (PaJeS).

3.6.2 Interviews: JPR and PaJeS

The JPR (2016) is an independent research institute and think tank that undertakes research into Jewish communities across Europe on behalf of its clients and in order to inform policy. It has produced several research articles into Jewish schools (whether specifically or indirectly), including Short (2002), Valins et al. (2002), Graham (2014b) and Staetsky and Boyd (2016). I contacted the JPR's Executive Director requesting an

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[45] Importantly, the *Charedi* school, unlike the others included in the study, was an independent school and so it enjoyed much greater freedom to determine its own admissions policy and ethos. For example, Section 85(1) and (2)(a) to (d) [pertaining to discrimination against a pupil in terms of admissions and educational provision] "so far as relating to religion or belief" of Equality Act 2010 "does not apply in relation to" a school "listed in the register of independent schools for England or for Wales, if the school's entry in the register records that the school has a religious ethos" (Equality Act 2010, Schedule 11, Part 2, Paragraph 5(b).

interview, to which he kindly agreed. The interview was undertaken at his office and covered his organisation's work and remit, the main concerns and challenges for Anglo-Jewry and the JPR's general findings regarding Jewish schools (RQ2, 3). Although the Executive Director admitted in advance that Jewish schools were not his specialism, the interview enabled me to develop a stronger understanding of the wider context of Jewish schools in England.

PaJeS is part of the Jewish Leadership Council (2017), an organisation that operates as the 'umbrella body' for the UK's Jewish community. PaJeS (2014) specifically identifies areas for collaboration between Jewish schools and provides them with educational and curricular support and strategy. Having emailed PaJeS requesting an interview, I was referred to an employee specialising in strategic objectives and data regarding Jewish schools, who produced a presentation for me regarding the organisation's role, based on broad research questions I had provided (as requested). In addition, the employee agreed to the interview, which furthered my understanding of Jewish schools' broader context in England (RQ2-3), although it is important to acknowledge that the employee was not authorised to speak about any school in particular. Section 3.6.3 describes the interviews with rabbis.

3.6.3 Interviews: rabbis

Rabbis of various movements were interviewed in order to gather their perspectives of Jewish day schools' impacts on their synagogue communities, including any supplementary schooling such as *chederim*, as well as the ways in which they encourage young people to become involved in their synagogue communities (RQ3). In order to attain a representative spread of denominations, I originally asked JCoSS' senior leadership for a list of synagogues at which pupils were members, and contacted these via email, either to the general email contact provided on the synagogues' websites or more specifically to the rabbi where an email address was listed. In cases where synagogues possessed more than one rabbi, I emailed the office in the first instance requesting an interview with any rabbi who might be interested. However, I also contacted a range of synagogues in North and Northwest London and Hertfordshire in order to broaden the geographical spread, with the advantage of including synagogues whose members might prefer other Jewish schools for reasons of location (in addition to ideology), as well as increasing the possibility of anonymising all synagogues through sheer numbers. In total, I contacted 26 synagogues, with rabbis at 15 agreeing to participate in the research. Helpfully, the synagogues also reflected the range of

mainstream Jewish movements in the region: Orthodox (4), Masorti (3), Reform (4) and Liberal (4). In addition, one of the Masorti rabbis referred me to the synagogue's Director of Education for a further interview, effectively resulting in four interviews per religious movement. All of the Orthodox and Masorti rabbis were male, whereas two of each the Reform and Liberal rabbis were female. Given that this research is only focused on mainstream Jewish movements, I did not contact any strictly Orthodox synagogues, as their general insularity, including children's near-universal enrolment at (generally private) *Charedi* Jewish schools (Abramson et al., 2011), was considered too dissimilar to be beneficial to the research.

Most interviews lasted 40-45 minutes, although they ranged from 20 to 65 minutes depending on rabbis' availability and loquacity. Interviews were generally conducted in rabbis' offices, although a few requested a Skype interview or an interview at their home. In order to allow rabbis to settle into the interviews gradually, I started by asking them an open question about the key aspects of their movement's ideology ("Would you describe the main aspects of […] Judaism, what makes it distinctive?") followed by a series of closed questions regarding their synagogue's membership and attendance sizes, and community functions. This additionally permitted me to gather important contextual information and subsequently guided future questions regarding rabbis' relationships with Jewish schools. Section 3.7 next describes the data analysis strategy utilised.

3.7 Data analysis

The investigation used an interpretative analytical approach to recognise layers of meaning in the findings (Berg and Lune, 2014). Case studies are typically characterised by substantial raw data (Baxter and Jack, 2008), hence NVivo was utilised to create nodes for data management and organisation. NVivo also assisted analysis by enabling me to collate copies of transcripts and PDFs of research documents by Jewish research organisations including the JPR, Board of Deputies and the Jewish Leadership Council (JLC). Voice recordings of interviews, focus groups and audio diaries were personally transcribed to guarantee accuracy, including complementary sounds and pauses for a fuller record (Robinson, 1998). These transcripts were subsequently analysed through coding to maintain the data's contexts and meanings (Miles and Huberman, 1984) and to detect patterns of action (Saldaña, 2013), thus expediting comparisons between sources (Strauss, 1987; Strauss and Corbin, 1990) and facilitating the inclusion of quotations within the final report (Berg and Lune, 2014). The questionnaire findings were collected online through BOS and subjected to nonparametric descriptive and correlational analysis

and data presentation via spreadsheet. In order to ensure that data analysis was an ongoing process (enabling me to make methodological adjustments, including the addition or removal of questions from the interview guides where necessary), I made and coded regular field notes and memos in a research diary, acknowledging nonverbal cues and the contexts of the research process (Miles and Huberman, 1984; Saldaña, 2013). I also used NVivo for coding during the data collection phase in order to generate categories and connect themes, which were further developed and refined as more data were attained and I returned to earlier sources (Saldaña, 2013). Thus, I was able to reflect on and react to the data as they were collected, facilitating more effective analysis of beliefs within contexts of social interaction (Orum et al., 1991), as well as permitting conclusions to be verified and potentially altered (Miles and Huberman, 1984). Many respondents, including parents and rabbis, have expressed an interest in seeing a summary of the research findings, which will be provided to the synagogues and JCoSS in gratitude for their participation (Valentine, 2001).

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the ways in which this investigation's methodology is designed to tackle particular gaps and limitations in the existing body of literature regarding the geographies of education, faith schools and Jewish identity. The predominantly qualitative approach of this investigation facilitates a more nuanced understanding of the complexity of individual Jewish identities than in many previous studies, which have instead generally sought to ascertain the 'successfulness' of Jewish educational institutions in 'providing' a fixed and reified Jewishness. By utilising a case study of a Jewish school that is distinctive in its validation of diverse conceptualisations and manifestations of Jewishness, the investigation attends to the complex ways in which Jewish identities are (re)constructed, negotiated and contested within a faith school environment. This also enables the research to illustrate intra-faith as well as merely the inter-faith dynamics that have characterised many previous studies of faith schools in general. Questionnaires additionally enabled a broader analysis of parental attitudes, including regarding their reasons for selecting a Jewish school, facilitating a greater understanding of Jewish schools' wider societal context.

The investigation is not, however, limited to its case study approach. In particular, the study makes a distinctive contribution to the faith school literature in its scrutinisation of the interrelationships between faith schools and places of worship, necessitating analysis beyond the school. Rabbis were interviewed in order to explore the ways in

which the recent growth of Jewish schools has affected their synagogue communities, including the implications for these institutions' educational functions. School leaders at other Jewish schools were interviewed for a fuller understanding of Jewish schools' similarities and differences, facilitating a deeper understanding of JCoSS' distinctiveness as a school, as well as Jewish schools' broader roles within their local communities. Furthermore, by interviewing employees at two Jewish research and educational organisations, I was able to consider the place of Jewish schools within Anglo-Jewry more fully. Consequently, the methodology enabled me to approach the four research questions, explored through the following four empirical chapters.

Chapter 4: The messiness of school choice:
reasons for seeking a Jewish day school

4.1 Introduction

Enabled in part by the general amenability of the State since the 1990s to the opening of faith schools, a number of new Jewish schools have been established in Hertfordshire and North and Northwest London in recent years. One school, JCoSS, has become particularly controversial owing to its pluralist ethos, which some Orthodox community leaders claim contradicts the unique 'validity' of Orthodox Judaism, instigating them to discourage their congregants from selecting the school for their children (2.4.6). Nevertheless, JCoSS appears to be *rising* in popularity, a situation also mirrored by several other Jewish schools, reflected in the growing difficulty of attaining a Jewish school place in North London (Oliver, 2015; Rocker, 2015; Staetsky and Boyd, 2017). Given that the availability of Jewish educational provision has historically depended to no small degree on parental interest, it is necessary to ascertain parents' motivations in selecting a Jewish school. Indeed, by drawing upon the parental interviews, with elaboration from rabbis, teachers, pupils and the Jewish research organisations, as well as the parental questionnaires, this chapter aims to assess the reasons why parents[46] have opted to send their children to JCoSS (both specifically and as a Jewish school more generally), with implications for the (re)construction of Anglo-Jewry and Anglo-Jewish identity more broadly, which will be explored further in later chapters.

It is important to acknowledge that international comparability in parents' reasons for choosing faith schools is restricted by significant contextual differences in educational politics and minority group and religious toleration. Most research into Jewish schools has been based in the USA, yet the privatised (and thus fee-based) nature of American faith schools renders a parent's choice of Jewish school arguably more consequential than the equivalent decision to send a child to a 'free,' state-funded Jewish school in the UK.[47] Nevertheless, certain themes are apparent across American, Canadian and British contexts, including parental interest in a school that reflects their own home in its provision of ritual observance, develops pupils' Jewish and Hebrew knowledge (perhaps

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[46] Although pupils may also play a role in selecting a school, parental preferences tend to predominate (Allen and West, 2011). This was reflected in the present study, with parents generally perceived (both by the parents and the pupils) as the primary decision-makers.
[47] This is reflected in the fact that the pupils who attend American Jewish schools often appear to be from more religiously-observant homes (Fishman, 2000).

especially where parents personally feel incapable of providing this), permits socialisation amongst other Jews, and provides 'secular' benefits including a high-quality academic education (e.g. Kelman, 1978; Valins et al., 2002; Cohen and Kelner, 2007; Miller et al., 2016). Rather than necessarily existing separately, this chapter illustrates how these desired outcomes are often perceived as mutually reinforcing; moreover, parents' school selection decisions can be considerably 'messy,' regularly contradicting their expressed intentions. The chapter also problematises this very notion of 'choice,' revealing that parents' selections partly reflect the ways in which they try to present themselves within the (Jewish) community (as well as shape their children's Jewish identities as they desire), and can facilitate the creation of their own vicarious Jewish community, rather than focusing solely on their child's education. More specifically, each section investigates a particular factor involved in parents' choice of school: Jewish schools' perceived role in constructing Jewish identities (4.2); the role of friendships (whether with Jews or non-Jews), which encapsulate the numerous contradictions and messiness of parents' school selection decisions and understandings of Jewishness (4.3); and the intertwining of 'secular' benefits such as academic and behavioural standards with supposedly 'Jewish' qualities that, alongside the school's universalistic Jewish ethos, enabled parents to overlook any personal reservations towards faith schools (4.4), further revealing the complexity of school choice.

4.2 Jewish identity construction

As Section 2.4.3 illustrated, Jewish schools have become central to discourses of Jewish identity and continuity (Jacobs, 2013; Krasner, 2016). Section 4.2 illustrates the desirability to parents of JCoSS' validation of diverse forms of Jewishness that have traditionally been marginalised in older, Orthodox Jewish schools, as well as its role in enabling pupils to personalise their identities. It finds that JCoSS was favoured by many parents for enabling pupils to determine their own religious practices and thus develop a degree of autonomy in their identity construction. JCoSS was also viewed by some parents as a means of increasing their children's Jewish knowledge, often with implications for their identity construction, too. Finally, JCoSS may represent an extension of some pupils' Jewish home environments through its flexible ethos and ritual provision, facilitating a congruence of Jewish values with parents' identities.

4.2.1 Validation of Jewish identities

Previous research in the UK (Valins, 2003a; Graham et al., 2014) has revealed that parents regularly view Jewish schools as means of strengthening their children's Jewish identities, often with the intention of reducing their future propensity to intermarry (Black, 1988). However, as Section 2.4.6 illustrated, the country's Jewish educational landscape has been substantially altered by two key developments. First, whereas schools with an Orthodox ethos historically excluded a great number of self-identifying Jews who failed to meet their stringent admissions criteria (given Orthodox Judaism's refusal to validate non-halakhic and non-Orthodox forms of Jewishness), the establishment of Jewish schools that not only accept but celebrate these identities represents a clear shift towards Jewish pluralism. Second, and simultaneous with the greater – albeit compulsory – openness of all state-funded Jewish schools following R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS, many non-Orthodox Jews have become increasingly amenable to the concept of Jewish schooling. Several parents explained how their own parents had championed integration in wider society, influencing their own scepticism towards (particularistic) Jewish schools (see Section 4.3.5):

> Natasha: "We were *always, always* brainwashed by our parents"/
> Daniel: "Second generation!"
> Natasha: /"second generation, integrate"/
> Daniel: "Integrate."
> Natasha: /"don't segregate."
> Daniel: "*We* never went to Jewish schools because integration, that was the big thing, and when we went to school there were more Jews, so we weren't the only Jew in the school."

Certainly, Jewish day schools were of little appeal to most Anglo-Jewish parents from the late-nineteenth century until the mid-1960s given their desire to become anglicised and avoid the discrimination that isolation was perceived to foster, even as community leaders increasingly propounded them following World War Two as a means of encouraging attachment to the faith and community (Mendelssohn, 2011). In contrast, within the more openly multicultural context of contemporary society, in which minority rights and

cultural difference may be recognised or even celebrated[48] (Boyd, 2013; Taylor-Gooby and Waite, 2014), as well as the influence provided by pluralist Jewish day schools in North America and Australia (Miller, 2012a), Progressive and Masorti Jews have become inspired to construct and celebrate their *non*-Orthodox Jewish identities (Diamant and Cooper, 2007). As the Executive Director of the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) explained:

> "In previous generations, people from Progressive or Reform backgrounds were particularly concerned about integration into British society, so the vast majority of Jews who belonged to a Reform, Liberal or Progressive synagogue would have sent their children to non-Jewish schools almost as a matter of principle: their type of Judaism was *about* integration into British society. So the emergence of cross-communal and Progressive schools is a fairly new phenomenon in British Jewry, that is partly about multiculturalism, but it's also about a change happening within the Progressive sphere more generally: a greater confidence in one's Jewishness, and a response to the general challenge of assimilation and the question of "How do we preserve, maintain and strengthen the Jewish identity of our children in a multicultural, open context?"" (Executive Director of the JPR).

Consequently, through the development of schools such as JCoSS, non-Orthodox families no longer need to choose between multicultural schools that promote integration and Orthodox schools that endorse some degree of segregation alongside Orthodox beliefs and practices (see Valins et al., 2002; Valins, 2003a). Indeed, some parents had either been rejected from these Orthodox schools as children or had older children who had been denied entry more recently on the basis of denominational or halakhic status (prior to 2009), or alternatively had attended them but had become disillusioned by their perceived exclusivity. These experiences had instigated their present reluctance to select these schools even with the removal of their *halakhah*-based admissions criteria:

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[48] It is worth acknowledging, however, that multiculturalism has effectively been disavowed as UK public policy since the 1990s (Taylor-Gooby and Waite, 2014), even if it may remain useful to individuals as a loose concept expressing cultural difference.

"I wouldn't have been accepted into a Jewish school as a child because the United[49] didn't approve; even though my mother had converted, they still didn't consider us Jewish or Jewish enough … [and] I would not send my children to [Orthodox School A] because even though they would accept us now, it's not because they believe that we are properly Jewish, it's just because of law, and we're very against the United to be honest" (Abby).

"[Husband] is very very proud of his Judaism but he also has a real problem with intolerance, he really does, and that's I think is some of the problem he has with the Orthodox community, and that's why he will never send his child to an Orthodox school, and I think that's what he learnt at [Orthodox school B as a pupil], that a lot of the Orthodox community are very intolerant of any Jew that thinks or practises in a different to them" (Jacqui).

Gender politics represented a particular area of concern. The *Talmud* is commonly seen to exempt women from communal prayer in order to ensure that they have the necessary time to successfully fulfil their obligation as homemakers, and by extension, women are not counted in Jewish law as part of a *minyan* for prayer, rendering public reading from the *Torah* an exclusively male activity in Orthodox Judaism, although interpretations are not uncontested (Weiss, 1990). Certainly, women's education has become a source of tension in many Orthodox communities as growing numbers of women seek to develop a knowledge-based form of Jewishness that has traditionally been reserved to men (Dashefsky et al., 2003). Accordingly, many parents believed that Orthodox schools' curricula (and associated restrictions on women's involvement in community leadership and worship) were somewhat antithetical to contemporary liberal perspectives:

"In general I don't really feel comfortable in the Orthodox world because, you know, they're sexist and they're, don't know, just, I don't like the fact that they're segregated in worship and girls can't read from the *Torah*, so I wouldn't have felt comfortable sending my children, because I have a daughter and a son, and I just don't like to send them to a school where it's all based on the fact that they're not equal" (Zoe).

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[49] United Synagogue: the largest mainstream Orthodox movement in the UK.

Often rooted in their own personal experience, parents were also generally determined to avoid sending their children to such stringently religious environments given their scepticism of obligatory religious practice (Merry, 2015) and 'traditional' values, which were incongruent with their less pious lifestyles and thus at risk of compromising their children's broader Jewish identities:

"We knew we didn't want a religious Jewish school as in they had to wear *kippahs* and *tzitzit*, we didn't want that, we didn't want that *at all*, and my husband specifically didn't want it because he went to a very religious Jewish school" (Rita).

"I found [Orthodox School C] *too* religious […] I feel that they shove it down their throats and a lot of people have come out of [Orthodox School C] very despondent, and I am not keen on that" (Sarah).

Consequently, schools that were deemed excessively religious or Orthodox-oriented were generally disfavoured.

Relative to these schools, whose combination of mandatory religious practice and discrimination towards alternative forms of Jewishness was said to instigate Progressive pupils to 'pass' as Orthodox in order to be included within the school community, JCoSS was viewed as amenable to diverse, individualised forms of Jewishness:

"The thing is at [Orthodox School A] there are a similar number of children I think from Reform, from Liberal, from non-practising, but the difference is whereas at JCoSS you are allowed to be who you want to be, you are allowed to be who you are openly and you are, whereas at [Orthodox School A] you are forced to pretend that you are Orthodox and that you keep Kosher and that you do all these things, whereas at JCoSS it's up to the individual to make those decisions, and they don't treat anybody badly or differently for doing so" (Talia).

Prever (2013) similarly claims that in their determination to secure any Jewish school place, many Progressive Jewish pupils in Orthodox Jewish schools are obligated to "masquerade as Orthodox" and undertake practices incongruent with their lives at home. Such findings may be related to the closeting of Jewish identities noted by Cutler (2006)

and Hecht and Faulkner (2000), as individuals attempt to 'pass' as non-Jewish or conceal their Jewish identities for fear of incriminatory remarks and behaviours. However, in contrast to these studies, this investigation illustrates how some Jewish individuals feel compelled to conceal aspects of their public Jewish identities even within a nominally (but predominantly Orthodox) Jewish space. Consequently, JCoSS was favoured by parents for its greater leniency in the Jewish identities it validates:

> Natasha: "It's pluralistic, it suits all needs I think, if you want to be more religious you can, and if you want to do nothing you can."
> Daniel: "It accepts you for what you are and it says "Come on in, you are what you are, come and join us.""

Relatedly, the school was perceived as egalitarian and hence attractive to those seeking a non-Orthodox but nonetheless religious Jewish environment:

> "[I liked] the possibility, particularly for my daughter, the possibility of being in a school where her religious practice, that she would have a place in religious practice, an active place and not a secondary place" (Isabella).

JCoSS was thus deemed capable of coalescing gender and faith identities, in part by de-emphasising strict religious adherence and recognising individual agency. Such autonomy will be addressed in greater detail next.

4.2.2 Autonomy in religiosity

Given the diversity of Jewish movements (and their distinctive forms of religious practice) present at JCoSS, as well as families unaffiliated with a denomination, achieving a pluralist ethos represents a considerable challenge for the school; an issue that will be explored in detail in Section 5.4. In order to meet the needs and expectations of practising families, the school provides religious services at Rosh Chodesh, a celebration of the arrival of the new month. Notably, however, the Rosh Chodesh provision is sufficiently varied that individuals do not need to practise religiously and can instead participate in a range of *secular* activities:

"There are basically three types of activity that go on every time it's Rosh Chodesh, so there's a kind of, there's a worship strand, there's a creative strand and there's a current affairs-y strand or a thinking strand, so during the course of their time they will have *some* exposure to, at their choice, traditional worship, or some form of Jewish worship, it might be Orthodox, it might be Progressive, it might be Reform, it might be kind of secular service, it might be singing; then in the creative strand they're doing some kind of artistic or creative expression of Jewish faith, Jewish yoga it might be, or art or drama or whatever; and then in the thinking strand they might be looking at Jewish-based current affairs or philosophy or ethics, issues like that, so for an hour each month or most months, they're taken off timetable and doing Jewish stuff that way" (Headteacher).

Thus, the four major movements in Anglo-Jewry are all represented – United, Masorti, Reform and Liberal – whilst pupils may alternatively participate in activities unconnected with religious worship. Parents, particularly those affiliated with the Liberal or Reform movements, were duly satisfied that their denominational identities were validated through such services, rather than their children being obligated to attend Orthodox services, as required in other Jewish schools:

"I'm happy that it's inclusive and cross-denominational so when they have services they have services for all, they have Liberal and Reform and Masorti and Orthodox services" (Zoe).

Moreover, by permitting pupils to determine their Rosh Chodesh involvement, JCoSS affords them substantial autonomy to determine their own Jewish identities, possibly transferring fluidly between movements rather than remaining restricted to that of their upbringing. As Debbie, a Masorti mother, said of her daughter:

"I know that she's gone to the Liberal ones, and the Reforms, she hasn't yet gone to the more Orthodox versions, because the more Orthodox version doesn't have egalitarian seating[50]" (Debbie).

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[50] Men and women are traditionally separated in Orthodox synagogues by a *mechitza* (partition), reinforcing gendered behaviour norms and expectations (Goldman, 2000).

Secular and mixed-faith families also favoured JCoSS' legitimisation of irreligious Judaism and felt confident that their children would not be 'indoctrinated':

> Victoria: "I don't think you can get heavy-heavy in JCoSS."
>
> Alex: "Yeah, I mean I think that, you know, if you're very *frum*, the religion controls your life, you live your life within the guidelines of the religion; if you are non-religious you live your life, and you get to pick and choose what you want to do."

These parents thus believed that their children would be able to define the components of their individually-determined identities instead of being immersed in a particularistic Jewish space with forcible *expectations* of religious practice and adherence. Although one parent was sceptical of pupils' autonomy to 'choose' a Jewish identity given the relatively minimal *experiential* practice available, she agreed that JCoSS can expose pupils to more than one viewpoint which can help them define their identities within certain boundaries:

> Sarah: "I *like* the ethos here, I love the openness of the fact that it's not a United school and they're not taught in one way, they're taught different things, they're taught "these people do it how they do it; these people," and they can choose, I don't *believe* they can choose because I think, unless you *really* know, you can't choose, but they're given different perspectives."
>
> Interviewer: "You can't choose being a young person, or you can't choose just in general?"
>
> Sarah: "I think unless, unless someone's going to *shul* every week in a United Synagogue, I don't feel you can know that you don't like that, what they say and how, and their ethos and their way, or unless you're actually involved within that community, just by being *told* it at school or going to one service on Rosh Chodesh, I don't think."
>
> Interviewer: "So you need more experience of it?"
>
> Sarah: "I think it's all by experience, I really do, but I think what it *does* do, it just gives them a different perspective, especially for a girl, they can, they can be free here to choose how they want to practise Judaism if at all; I remember being at [Orthodox School A] and telling my teacher that I had a

bat mitzvah and I was reading the *Haftarah*, and I got a detention, I mean it was ridiculous."

Thus, Sarah did not consider JCoSS capable of increasing pupils' practice or developing a 'genuine' Jewish identity without the support of other influences, but favoured its openness to diverse Jewish perspectives that can facilitate greater personalisation. This reveals a broader paradox highlighted in this thesis of parents valuing the school's acceptance of individualised constructions of Jewishness whilst also perceiving that particular conceptualisations are 'proper,' with the implication that external, parental role modelling is (or should be) more impactful on a young person's identity than their schooling. Such tension between pupils' personalised identity constructions (via their schooling) and parents' own attitudes towards Jewishness will be investigated specifically in Section 5.3.4. A further factor that accounted for JCoSS' appeal was the desire for a specifically Jewish education, as the next section demonstrates.

4.2.3 Jewish understanding

Several critics of Jewish schools have argued that the traditional focus on identity construction has inadvisably drawn attention away from Jewish understanding. For instance, Spokoiny (2016) claims that 'Jewish identity' is a vague, undefinable term that enables individuals to express "a nebulous sense of loyalty to a Jewish collective which, itself, was vaguely defined," in a context of declining Jewish 'content.' Spokoiny thus advocates the funding of (traditional) Jewish education rather "identity making" projects in order to provide 'content,' practice and literacy. Similarly, Kramer (2013) suggests that American Jews' understanding of their faith is often limited to a secular or Christian American lens in spite of their self-identification as Jews, necessitating an emphasis on knowledge construction. It is certainly plausible that Jewish literacy requires considerable effort and resources to construct in comparison to identity, as Kramer suggests (see Chiswick, 2014). However, these critics' claims risk reifying Jewish identity and retreating to the 'traditional' paradigm of survivalism: for instance, by resorting to measurability and descriptors such as 'Jewish language' and 'Jewish practices,' Spokoiny reinforces particular assumptions of committed 'Jewish' behaviour rather than engaging in individuals' perceptions of their (subjective and immeasurable) identities. Instead, a reshaping of Jewishness ought to be acknowledged: for example (and reflecting Kramer's argument above), the Pew Research Center (2013) has found that over one-third of American Jews claim that a person can be Jewish *and* believe that

Jesus was the messiah, but this may indicate a fusing of Jewish, Christian and secular values rather than necessarily a decline in Jewishness (see Levisohn, 2013). In response to those who claim that emphasis on Jewish identity restricts the development of Jewish knowledge, the two should be viewed as mutually constitutive: "the foci on knowledge and on identity [can] converge in education" (Flum and Kaplan, 2012, p.171).

Indeed, attending a Jewish school was perceived by some parents as capable of developing a sense of Jewishness via introducing and inculcating Jewish knowledge:

"It would strengthen her understanding of who she is, and the history and the culture and the philosophy behind which I wish us to live" (Debbie).

In particular, and reflecting JCoSS' pluralist ethos, numerous parents suggested that their children's Jewish identity could be developed through questioning diverse perspectives, rather than receiving a singular message, with its potential to cause disaffection:

"He'll have had a range of views from which he can actually pull out his own meaning and purpose, hopefully" (Pippa).

Although one Orthodox parent emphasised the importance of religious teaching and practice, viewing such content as essential to a 'traditional' Jewish identity – "I would like them to have a little bit more Jewish input than there is, because it is a Jewish school after all" (Madeleine) – most therefore believed that a Jewish identity is strongest and most significant where it has become personally meaningful (Mirsky, 2013), reflecting the growing tendency to view identities as chosen, constructed and performed (Roof et al., 1993; Hetherington, 1998). Accordingly, parents such as Pippa above selected JCoSS ahead of closer Jewish schools in order that their children would be able to develop a personalised Jewish identity rather than necessarily being influenced by their own beliefs. This reflects Grusec and Goodnow's (1994) findings that some parents do not seek their children's appropriation of their own beliefs and instead prefer their development of critical negotiation skills, and contrasts with suggestions or insinuations that faith schools are selected by parents seeking to indoctrinate pupils in a singular worldview (2.4.4).

However, a few parents who desired their children's development of Jewish identities similar to their own were sceptical of the value of Jewish education during adolescence. Indeed, given that adolescents' burgeoning mental and metacognitive capacities can facilitate their negotiation of religious concepts and beliefs (Markstrom,

1999; Good and Willoughby, 2008), these parents, several of whom were religiously observant, feared that in-depth study would detract their children from their faith. In contrast, Jewish primary schools were often favoured for providing a 'fun' formative Jewish education based upon 'universally desirable' cultural elements, concomitant with their home environment:

> "Because the identity's less steeped in an intellectual way of understanding Judaism [at primary school], it's much more about the festivals, about the music, about the stories, and I think it's kind of then lodged in your mind as something really positive, Judaism; I think secondary school you can actually be put off your Jewishness, and I was much more ambivalent about sending my eldest to a Jewish secondary school" (Letitia).

Other research has relatedly indicated greater enrolment in Jewish primary than secondary schools (Hart et al., 2007), although further, extensive research is necessary in order to ascertain factors behind parents' apparently superior amenability to Jewish education at this level (Abramson et al., 2011). Indeed, it is feasible that many Jewish parents reject Jewish education by secondary level (or earlier), with the present study only capturing those who opted for a JCoSS education. Miller at al. (2016) suggest that most parents view primary school as the site for children's acquisition of Jewish literacy, and secondary school for the development of Jewish friendships, but do not analyse this apparent distinction further. On the other hand, some non-observant and unaffiliated families preferred secondary faith education because their children would be able to attain Jewish knowledge and develop a personalised relationship with Judaism as a result of their adolescent enquiry (Good and Willoughby, 2007), within an environment devoid of 'undesirable,' staunch religious instruction:

> Victoria: "We thought the secondary school it's kind of more important because it sets you up, because the children start to develop, they start to realise maybe what they would like to be when they're 16 or 18 … [but] I wouldn't be happy and I don't think you [Alex] would be happy if they went to a completely religious school."
> Alex: "No, no no no."

Thus, a discrepancy existed in attitudes towards Jewish enquiry between those seeking a Jewish cultural environment with limited in-depth intellectual study, and those desiring a basis of Jewish knowledge but without immersive Jewish cultural or religious practice.

Evidently, it cannot be assumed that the parents who seek greater Jewish study are those who may be described as more Jewishly 'involved,' but rather may be those who desire their children's development of a Jewish understanding that they themselves lack (Pomson and Schnoor, 2008; Mueller, 2016). Certainly, parents at JCoSS were relatively confident in Jewish schooling's impacts on Jewish knowledge, with 62 per cent of questionnaire respondents believing that this increases with greater time in Jewish education, compared with just 37 per cent amongst Jewish school parents in Valins and Kosmin's (2003) study. In addition to implying a degree of parental satisfaction in JCoSS' Jewish educational provision (to be explored further in Section 5.4.1), this discrepancy could reflect the fact that Valins and Kosmin's research was dominated by parents at Orthodox schools, who may be more demanding of a comprehensive Jewish education that (in many cases) they also received as children, and were consequently more critical of the standards available. In comparison, and especially given the historic *un-availability* of non-Orthodox Jewish day schools, parents from Progressive and Masorti backgrounds (several of whom had immigrated from countries where Jewish educational options are even more limited) appreciated that the opening of JCoSS allowed their children to receive a non-Orthodox Jewish education (including voluntary rather than mandatory religious practice) that they themselves had been unable to access:

> "I was deprived of the possibilities to have non-Orthodox but Jewish education […] JCoSS is a beauty in that they don't force you to do anything, it's a modern Jewish school" (Stan).

Many parents expressed or insinuated a sense of personal obligation to ensuring that their children would be able to develop their Jewish knowledge and identities, a phenomenon that will be discussed in greater detail in Section 4.2.4, as well as being recognised by rabbis (6.3.1) and pupils (7.4.5). It is important to acknowledge here that such sentiments reveal how parents may select a Jewish school in order to validate their own senses of Jewishness (to themselves as well as to others) and thus develop a vicarious Jewish community via their assurance that their children are receiving a Jewish education. Certainly, several parents expressed their intention that their child would be enabled to

become involved within a Jewish (school) community whilst recognising that this endeavour was often more significant to themselves:

> "I think it's just me fitting in, me feeling part of a group and I want them to be part of the same thing, and enjoy it" (Lydia).

Moreover, the successfulness of pupils' knowledge or collective identity construction was viewed by some as less relevant than the more personal and unquantifiable aspects of a Jewish education:

> "I'm not sure why *doing Jewish stuff* should need to be driven by outcomes, or given standards … I kind of think like, you know, we should do it for its own sake, and, I'm not, you know, we live in a society where everything's very driven by, you know, outcomes and performance indicators and, you know, monetary outcomes and "If we invest this much money we'll get this many Jews out of it," what? And I kind of think actually just living a good life through a Jewish perspective, through that Jewish opportunity, teaching Jewish stuff, going to services for its own sake, actually may be much more powerful than kind of, you know, "Does this produce more people who grow up and are proud, involved Jews?" I mean, I don't know, if my kids grow up and decide they're never going to be part of the community, will it have been a waste of time sending them to Jewish schools and being Jewish in our home? I don't know, I wouldn't think about it like that. I might well be very sad if that happens because it's an important thing to *me*, it's very valuable to *me* and I know how much I get out of it in my own life, and I'd be very sad that my children would choose not to have access to that, but would I look back and go "Well we wasted all of that time," or "The school's wasted all of that resource?" […] How can you quantify what it means to be Jewish, for example?" (Rosanne).

Thus, in stark contrast to the common assumption that Jewish schools' purpose is identity construction, clearly reflected in Dashefsky and Lebson's (2002) research entitled "Does Jewish schooling matter?" and Himmelfarb's (1975, p.3) argument that Jewish education is a "waste of time" for those who do not receive a certain number of hours of teaching, Rosanne demonstrated her interest in Jewish education as a means of developing her son's

broader positive *human* values as well as to endorse her own approach to Jewish life. This reflects Alexander's (1997) argument for greater emphasis on pupils' discovery of their unique, authentic self, rather than more common questions of communal survival and continuity; an objective that will be explored further in Section 4.4.2. The interviews hence revealed the variedness of parents' attitudes towards Jewish knowledge and identity, with many seeking to reinforce their own approaches to or conceptualisations of Jewishness through their choice of Jewish school. JCoSS' flexibility in this regard enables it to appeal to parents whose ritual practices (in particular) differ substantially, as the following section highlights.

4.2.4 Extension of the Jewish home

Faith schools may be perceived by parents as 'non-alienating' milieu in which young people participate in religious and cultural practices that reflect their home environments (Vermeer, 2009). Generally drawing upon Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, which demonstrates how parents attempt to influence their children's behaviour through role modelling verbal and imagined symbols that enable them to memorise and recall particular experiences in future, numerous researchers have illustrated the effectiveness of parents' modelling of religious behaviours to their children (Lee et al., 1997; Vermeer and Scheepers, 2012). Accordingly, through ritual practice, education and community involvement, parents have historically been considered the most important influence on Jewish identity (Rosen, 1979; Semans and Stone Fish, 2000; Davey et al., 2001, 2003). Parents' Jewish role modelling in this study was also said to be manifested in numerous ways, including ritual participation and involvement in Jewish communal or organisational life:

> "We are regular synagogue attendees, and obviously we keep *Shabbat* and keep festivals and we'll have big, you know, are probably just your typical Jewish family, you know, we have *Seders*, you know, we have events for *Tu BiShvat*, we normally have a fruit festival at home, you know, so we do all those sorts of things" (Pippa).

> "The Jewish life that we model to our children is very present, both of us work in the Jewish community, my husband goes to synagogue every weekend and, we have three children, two of them, the synagogue has always been central for them although one is less committed, but, I mean, less committed

personally but his friends are from there and so it's very much the frame that marks their life" (Isabella).

Reflecting the salience of role modelling, parents were often cognisant of the impacts their behaviours were perceived to have: providing a Jewish upbringing and instilling a Jewish identity in their children was viewed as a conscious decision, with emphasis clearly placed on the 'doing' rather than 'being' of Jewishness:

"We take them to synagogue, we show them things, traditions at home, we *always* get together as a family for all the different festivals we will take" (Lydia).

Given such self-consciousness, some parents claimed to have augmented their levels of Jewish practice on having children due to a personal responsibility to pass on Jewish identity via observance, in accordance with Prell (2000), Davis (2016) and Hochman and Heilbrunn (2016):

"We decided what we would do when we had children … it was a very conscious decision" (Jacqui).

"He [husband] gets dragged along for *Yom Kippur* every so often just for the children's sake" (Claire).

Prell (2000) notes that many Jews struggle to conceptualise Jewish observance without intergenerational transmission, reflecting the dynamism of identities and individuals' determination to construct their own family's Judaism. In contrast, a few parents did not perceive their actions as intentionally impactful, but rather 'natural' aspects of their lives:

"I don't really think about it that way, I mean they're very super Jewish because pretty much everything they do is Jewish, so they do go to Jewish school, we go to *cheder*, most of our friends are Jewish, so, I don't know, we just live a Jewish life, I don't, I haven't sat down and, you know, wondered what I could do to make my kids Jewish" (Zoe).

Nevertheless, although parents' attitudes towards Jewish practice and their parenting styles to achieve their intentions were varied, most claimed to be keen to communicate certain Jewish values to their children.

Accordingly, JCoSS was perceived by some observant parents as a means of reinforcing their own Jewish practices and facilitating their children's involvement in Jewish life beyond the home (and synagogue):

> "It was really important to me at the time as a sort of single parent that I had that sort of support, a congruence of values between home and school particularly as [son] moved towards being a teenager more, but also because I felt, you know, it would really help sustain his Jewish identity, because otherwise there was just me and the synagogue and I'd already felt that he needed something broader" (Pippa).

In particular, the school's celebration of Jewish holidays was favoured because it reflected many families' Jewish lifestyles:

> "One wants to believe that they'll make Jewish friends and that also the cycle of their life will be the Jewish calendar, and they're going to be off on the holidays that we care for and not the others and things like that" (Isabella).

In this sense, JCoSS was valued for providing a Jewish education that complements the Jewish socialisation and practice undertaken at home and in synagogue. This was especially apparent in the case of parents who sought to 'protect' their children's Jewish identities from 'alternative,' 'secularising' influences (Vermeer, 2009):

> "Because they've been in Jewish schools then my children's lives are 100 per cent Jewish" (Simon).

However, other parents were sceptical of any parent's ability to direct their children's Jewish behaviours within a multicultural context, particularly given the growth of young people's autonomy and the diversity of cultural influences to which they are exposed. Rather, the *encouragement* of a child's attachment to their family's Jewish heritage was deemed more impactful than imposed expectations or obligations:

"Because we live in a multicultural society and not in little *shtetls* in Eastern Europe, you can't hope that he will become a little tailor! *[Laughs]* … I can't hope that my children will do whatever it is … [but] without forcing it, they remain linked with it" (Stan).

Nevertheless, the vast majority of *observant* parents suggested that a careful balancing act had to be negotiated in immersing their children in a Jewish lifestyle without this appearing forced, and thus conceptualised Jewish identity as a socially-constructed process, susceptible to change (Horowitz, 2003):

Simon: "I hope that they won't be turned off from serious Jewish engagement when they get older. However, my expectations regarding the *Jewish* side of it are very low."
Interviewer: "At JCoSS?"
Simon: "At any Jewish school."
Interviewer: "Why's that?"
Simon: "Because I don't think Judaism is best taught in a school setting, I think Judaism is an all-embracing culture, that one is, that is captured by immersion, you *catch*, you *catch* Judaism, you don't *teach* or *learn* Judaism that way, so a school can do, a good school will do no harm, and even do *some* good, but the risk is the school will do harm."

In this way, sending one's child to a Jewish school for identity construction purposes may represent a calculated risk, as significant responsibility is placed on the shoulders of parents as well as the school to provide a familiar Jewish environment that will not create disaffection from the faith. This ambivalence was shared more broadly by parents, with only 49 per cent of questionnaire respondents believing that greater time in Jewish education strengthens pupils' Jewish identities; far lower results than previous studies (80 per cent in Graham, 2014a, 2014b; 77 per cent in Graham et al., 2014). This discrepancy appears to be partly related to differing conceptualisations of Jewish identity between parents (in the present study) and university students (in Graham, 2014a, 2014b), as definitions of 'Jewish identity' amongst the latter may be more open and they may identify fine influences from their own Jewish education which are missed by parents. It also demonstrates the restrictiveness of quantitative methods, which may conceal the influence of parents (for instance) as well as personalised qualities of identity construction

when asking for schools' specific impacts. This partnership between parents and school was often perceived as critical to identity construction, with 'not practising what you preach' widely condemned for jeopardising the development of a Jewish identity (Bader and Desmond, 2006; Lees and Horwath, 2009):

> "My parents were not very religious, *not*, but they wanted me and my brothers to *be* very religious, so we were put in a situation where we were at the synagogue all the time, Orthodox, *all* the time, you know, the Hebrew classes, having to go often, even choir practice, whatever, we were there every day, and then my father took it even *further* and put us, or *me* into a *yeshiva*, bless us, with *very*, you know, the Orthodox religious people, *way* beyond what my father was because my father was not keeping a properly Kosher home or anything, so it put us into conflicts" (Sam).

Although this represents a particularly extreme example, it reflects a broader parental concern that forcible participation in religious activities and spaces, alongside parental refusal to adhere to the same standards, can inhibit identity construction work. Moreover, as demonstrated in Section 4.2.3, it epitomises how the decision to send one's child to a Jewish school can represent a form of Jewish self-validation and reflect a desire to shape their identities in a particular way. Accordingly, most pupils believed that their parents represented the principal school choosers, and in some cases perceived that their own opinions had been ignored due to their determination to socialise them within a specifically Jewish environment (see Section 4.3), although most claimed that they had enjoyed a degree of autonomy:

> "I don't think I had a choice" (Ellen, Year 10).

> "When I applied for JCoSS it was my mum making me; I wanted to go to [non-Jewish school], but my mum was afraid of anti-Semitism so I ended up here" (Lizzie, Year 12).

Nevertheless, the distinctiveness of JCoSS as a Jewish school is that families whose conceptualisations and performances of Jewishness vary substantially can all view the school as reflective of their home environments, given its openness to diverse forms of practice and identity (4.2.1), whilst parents who claim to be more amenable to their

children's personalised identity constructions may also feel satisfied that such autonomy will be respected (4.2.2).

Overall then, JCoSS' appeal for identity purposes was perceived to be greatest amongst two oppositional groups: those who are non-observant and loosely affiliated but hope their children can develop a degree of Jewish knowledge and attachment to their family's heritage; and those who are so observant that they desire their children's protection or reinforcement of a distinctly Jewish identity. As the Headteacher explained:

> "I think JCoSS works best for parents who are either not engaged at all in their Judaism, and then JCoSS actually gives them a way, gives their children a way to become engaged, and I can cite particular examples of how that works; I think it also works well for parents who are very very engaged, because then their children are so kind of ideologically and personally committed anyway that the school simply enhances that, and gives them a community in which they can exercise it" (Headteacher).

This reflects Pomson and Schnoor's (2008, 2009) finding that Jewish schools can develop the Jewish social and cultural capital of previously unengaged pupils (and their parents), rather than parental interest in Jewish schools being directly correlated with existing Jewish commitment. In contrast, families with moderate levels of observance (characterising in large part the mainstream Orthodox community) were considered difficult to attract:

> "The sort of moderately engaged, they may be the group where we could do even more to make things look really attractive, to kind of hook them in, their Jewishness not simply being a kind of default, background, cultural thing but something where they have, where they've got a bit more personal investment in, and it may be that the United Synagogue members, it may be that a lot of them are in that group, I don't know, that's pure speculation" (Headteacher).

Thus, this community is not intentionally neglected by JCoSS, but may simply see its ethos as less appealing than that provided in nominally Orthodox schools. Nevertheless, given the difficulties of securing a place in most Jewish secondary schools (4.1), and a growing propensity for Jews to refuse to narrowly associate with a particular denomination (Boyd Gelfand, 2010), many Orthodox parents are increasingly amenable

to JCoSS, even if their reasons for selecting the school are less rooted in its ethos (given that their Jewishness is validated anywhere) than a desire for any Jewish school:

> "I think *everybody's* so desperate to get a place that they put us all down in one order or another, in most cases, I think *we* will get some parents at the Progressive end who would not consider any Jewish school at all if we didn't exist, but because we do, they think, "OK, maybe I will give it a go after all" … [and] there's probably a majority of our parents who would perfectly happily go to [Jewish School A] and vice versa" (Headteacher).

Such perceptions were reflected in the fact that many Orthodox parents only considered Jewish schools and made their selection decisions based on criteria including location and the possibility of developing Jewish friendships:

> "He goes to JCoSS because it's local, and he could not do the journey [to Jewish school A]" (Lydia).

> "We felt we wanted them to mix with other Jewish children … you need some grounding, and something in common, so to me, we didn't even look at any non-Jewish schools" (Leah).

The following section extends this discussion by exploring parents' desires for a Jewish social environment.

4.3 Jewish friendships

Jewish friendships provided an interesting paradox. As illustrated in Section 4.3.1, most parents viewed Jewish friendships as a highly desirable aspect of their children's education. However, the qualities of these friendships often drew upon stereotyped assumptions of an ambiguously-defined Jewishness that contrasted with many parents' supposed openness to diverse forms of Jewish identity, as Section 4.3.2 demonstrates. Section 4.3.3 highlights how most parents sought a minimum number of Jewish pupils in a Jewish school environment, resulting in a 'flight' of Jews from non-Jewish schools as they feared their children becoming the 'only Jew in the class,' whilst Section 4.3.4 describes the general interest in a majority-Jewish environment as a means of 'protecting' children's identities from 'other' influences, particularly for the purpose of reducing the

perceived risk of intermarriage. Yet, many parents were simultaneously concerned that by attending a Jewish school, their children would become *undesirably* separated from other cultures and faiths (4.3.5). Consequently, the choice to send their children to a Jewish school provides a noteworthy dilemma with implications for the ways in which Jewishness is conceptualised and lived.

4.3.1 Desirability of Jewish friendships

Substantial research has illustrated the interest of many Jewish families in socialising amongst other Jews (e.g. Sinclair and Milner, 2005; Graham and Boyd, 2011), although younger generations appear to be increasingly open to interactions with 'other' groups (Kivisto and Nefzger, 1993; Pew Research Center, 2013). Whereas a desire to send one's children to a school with perceived 'similar' individuals – whether defined on religious, ethnic or socioeconomic grounds – appears almost universal (Ball and Vincent, 2007; Bunar, 2010; Butler and Hamnett, 2012), JCoSS' Headteacher suggested that Jews' long history as an ethnoreligious group (one that for a considerable proportion of its history has been somewhat segregated from wider society) has rendered such an issue particularly pertinent to Jewish parents:

> "I think there's more of it in the Jewish community, because of the history of 5,000 years, but I would, I would guess, yeah, all parents, ideally, want their child educated with people like them, and that's kind of natural, really" (Headteacher).

Indeed, most parents believed that JCoSS would enable their children's development of Jewish friendships as desired. Orthodox families in particular tended to emphasise the importance of Jewish friendships as means of sharing similar cultural and religious practices and experiences:

> "Jewish friends is obviously the number one [attraction of Jewish schools], the social aspect of it is tremendous, I mean *I* went to [Orthodox school B] myself and some of those guys are still my best friends now, 30 years' later, so there's got to be something in that, a Jewish education […] one is always going to able to relate more to people who are going through similar sort of life experiences as them, if you're a religious Jew that's easier" (Rabbi, Orthodox synagogue 1).

"I think if you have friends that share similar values and also similar kind of timetables, that we'd all be celebrating *Rosh Hashanah* together or fasting together, I think *that* helps build on friendships for later on in life, and I hope they would see the benefit of, you know, being within a community of Jewish friends and family" (Talia).

The implication here is that by forming long-term friendship networks, their children would (or should) be able to remain fixed within a geographically-bound Jewish community, again revealing the ways in which parents attempt to shape their children's identities and community involvement in the future. Such concerns were not, however, limited to Orthodox Jews, with parents in general valuing Jewish schools as a means of encouraging their children's involvement within a wider Jewish community network (Cohen, 1995, 2007; Fishman et al., 2012). Parents with other children in *non*-Jewish schools[51] believed that they were unlikely to develop a sense of Jewish community to the same extent:

"If I look what [daughter] gets from JCoSS that [son, at non-Jewish school] doesn't have, so [daughter] has got a huge network of Jewish friends, and as she grows up, she gets older and she leaves school, she will probably keep a lot of those, so, you know, wherever [daughter] goes, she will know, you know, a name comes up in the *JC*[52] and [daughter]'s all "Ooh, I know that family," or, you know, she's gone on a couple of really amazing Jewish trips at JCoSS, she went to Israel last year for two weeks and it was a great experience, she really got a lot from it; [son] will never do that, that won't be something offered by his school" (Jacqui).

The importance of this social group was also illustrated by parents who claimed that their secondary school choice was partly informed by their children's friendships in Jewish primary schools:

"It was very simple, he had friends there from his primary school … it was purely about a comfortable social group" (Simon).

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[51] See Section 4.4.2 for a discussion of children attending different schools, including non-Jewish schools.

[52] The *Jewish Chronicle*, a British Jewish newspaper.

Consequently, attending Jewish schools can facilitate children's continued socialisation amongst other Jews.

Apparent too was a desire for Jewish schools as a means of integrating *parents* within a Jewish community and supporting a perception that Jews share commonalities. Some parents suggested that JCoSS represents an extension of *their* own social environments,[53] strengthening their place within the community:

> "Both [husband] and I are sufficiently involved in the Jewish community that
> we felt that we would be more comfortable in a school where we knew a lot
> of people, so we knew a lot of the teachers and a lot of the senior people at
> the school" (Rosanne).

Thus, Rosanne suggested that her decision to select a distant Jewish school rather than her local primary school was influenced by her family's greater sense of belonging to the Jewish than neighbourhood community, and her associated desire to extend her son's existing Jewish social network to the school (see also Davis, 2016):

> "We didn't really feel so much a part of *that* community as much as we did
> this one […] what being at a faith school gives him is being part of a big,
> wider community of, in this case the Jewish community that we are a part of,
> and the sacrifice of that is, well, he's not part of his, our local community, and
> I think that's, that's the challenge and the trade-off" (Rosanne).

Relatedly, Pomson (2008, 2009) notes how parents may select a Jewish school based on their Jewish social networks. Certainly, pupils often travelled long distances in order to attend a Jewish school, reflecting parents' desires for a specifically Jewish school environment:

> "We don't just get kids from the area, they can live miles away … some kids
> will travel an hour and a half to get here every morning, a long way"
> (Orthodox school 1).

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[53] More tangibly, JCoSS provides comedy evenings and guest speakers in order to involve parents actively within its community.

Faith school critics such as Allen (2007) and Allen and West (2009, 2011) argue that rather than representing 'local' schools, these institutions often segregate pupils of different faiths by overriding traditional admissions policies based on proximity, although Burgess et al. (2009) have suggested that proximity remains the most significant determinant of school choice. Regardless of these broader trends, parents often sought a school environment they perceived as 'comfortable,' invariably defining this in terms of a shared 'Jewishness,' as well as commonalities in terms of social class (see Section 4.4.1), which would enable their children – and possibly themselves – to become part of a specifically Jewish community:

> "It's a bit more comfortable, I suppose, a bit kind of, you know, a bit more, you kind of go to the parents' evenings, you know sort of a bit more background about things, I suppose it's a bit touchy-feely … I think that would be different as opposed to, I suppose, in a mixed school, I think you wouldn't feel that kind of comfortableness as you go in, the community feel, I think he probably settled in fairly easily because there were other kids from sort of maybe from similar backgrounds and stuff" (Claire).

The following section explores this phenomenon further.

4.3.2 Jewish distinctiveness?

Section 4.3.1 illustrated how Jewish schools were favoured as means of assembling 'similar' individuals. Shared traits were widely believed to be rooted in a common sense of Jewishness, enabling individual pupils to relate to a *global* Jewish collectivity at a *local* level:

> "You're with like-minded people, you're not the only Jew in the village, town, school, wherever, so you're not perceived to have horns and, you know, be strange, and … because he's at a Jewish school, he's part of everyone else, he's part of *the group*, which is a Jewish group" (Daniel).

> "It's that identity, you've got an identity with these people … you *share* something with them" (Beth).

Thus, parents often believed that their children enjoyed commonalities with other Jewish children by virtue of their Jewishness, whereas other values (including interests, national identity or academic ability, for instance) were not viewed as sufficiently unifying. However, the qualities of this 'shared' identity were rarely articulated clearly. Indeed, although most parents claimed to be proud of their Jewish identity, not all were certain why. Such findings correspond with those of Valins et al. (2002), who argued that 'a strong sense of identity' is often evoked through Jewish schools even if this is defined vaguely. It has been acknowledged that 'being' Jewish enabled these individuals to connect with a shared group identity:

"I don't quite know *why* I feel proud, whether or not it's Jewish or whether it's just a good feeling to be part of *something*, and to have an identity I think is, and to have somewhere that you know that you can always go, you could always walk into a synagogue or you could always find people and find, yeah, find a place, I think is important" (Talia).

Social identity theory research demonstrates how individuals may 'define' their 'place in society' by self-categorising themselves into particular groups (Tajfel, 1974, 1978, 1981, 1982), instigating them to perceive their in-group as superior to out-groups (Reicher and Hopkins, 2001). Parents often suggested that their Jewish pride was based in cultural achievements and family values:

"I like a lot of the cultural achievements and educational emphasis and expectations and family values and traditions" (Yasmin).

Nevertheless, it was clear that parents tended to struggle to identify anything intrinsically 'Jewish' of which they were proud or attached, and merely considered belonging to a group and solidarity with others (quite generally) as important. The implication of such actions was the drawing of a rigid division between 'Jews' and 'non-Jews.' Rohrbacher (2016) illustrates how such artificial boundaries are constructed and 'naturalised' in order to protect a mythologised Jewish identity from others, even though significant fluidity exists between groups in reality. Given this distinction – and simultaneous homogenisation of 'Jewish' values – some parents claimed that their own positive experiences in (often staunchly Orthodox) Jewish schools had contributed to their decision to send their children to Jewish schools too, even where these schools' values

appeared   incommensurate   with   those   of   JCoSS:

> "I think familiarity, you know, I know *what* the system is and I understand it
> and I've experienced it; I imagine there's something of wanting to repeat,
> wanting my children to have an experience, different but the same kind of
> experience" (Letitia).

Thus, these parents viewed Jewish schools favourably to non-Jewish schools owing to their common 'Jewishness' and potential to induct their children into a wider Jewish community, regardless of significant differences amongst these schools in ethos and practice. Hence parents often trusted that the combination of their parenting with a Jewish school social environment would facilitate their children's identity construction, even if conceptualisations of a 'Jewish social environment' were generally only loosely defined.

By the same token, many parents were concerned that their children would share minimal commonalities with 'other,' *non*-Jewish children. Several parents explained how they withdrew their children from schools where few other Jews were present, or did not apply to them in the first place:

> "We sent him to the local school originally, up to Year 2, and decided actually
> to take him out, because we had nothing in common with the parents there
> and the people there, out of 90 kids in his year, there were only three Jewish
> kids, who actually now *all* go to JCoSS, interestingly enough" (Natasha).

> "I would like my son not to be the only Jew in the school" (Abby).

Arweck and Nesbitt (2011) have relatedly highlighted how parents often seek schools where their children will not represent a 'minority,' whilst Merry (2015) argues that where parents claim to favour a 'diverse' school, they only desire diversity to the extent that their child belongs to the majority group but has some contact with 'others.' In the context of Jewish schools, Leviton (2004) also recognises how parents often select schools where they are confident that their child will not be 'the only Jew.' In part, parents' own experiences of being a 'minority' at school had stimulated them to seek a school where their children would not feel 'hypervisible' (Cutler, 2006), and instead their Jewishness would be celebrated rather than merely tolerated:

"Because I think I was often the odd one out, the only days that I would have off school were *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, no other festivals were observed at all, and as a consequence I think I felt quite different […] when you were going to birthday parties, so for me when I was a little child, McDonald's opened when I was a kid, OK, and I would be invited to a birthday party but I couldn't eat *[laughs]*" (Lara).

Indeed, non-faith schools were often perceived as oblivious or insensitive to these Jewish families' religious and cultural needs (Parker-Jenkins, 2008; Shah, 2012), especially as they can reflect a hegemonically Christian ethos or culture (Hemming, 2011a; Dupper et al., 2014), reinforcing a sense of difference and hypervisibility:

"Things come up, you know, "You were off school, what were you doing, why were you doing that, what's that all about?", you don't want that, you don't want the questions […] what he *didn't* like was being the only one taking all the holidays off and then, once he said to me "There's a whole bit of my life that I can't share at school," you know, because they really, a lot of people there had never even met anybody Jewish, and they, like for example, once he said, "Oh, in RS[54] they were doing Judaism and they were doing circumcision" and I was like, "Oh, God," and someone sort of shouted out, "Why do you Jews cut your knob off?" or something like that, so you don't really want to bring attention to it" (Madeleine).

Certainly, although it is feasible that parents of children in all types of school hope that their children 'fit' into their school communities, significant numbers of studies have illustrated the discrimination faced by minority racial, religious and ethnic groups in multi-ethnic schools in particular (Gillborn, 1990; Levine, 2006; Kuusisto, 2010). Moulin (2016) highlights how for many Jewish pupils in England, attending a non-Jewish secondary school is a potentially alienating experience characterised by undesired and uncomfortable curiosity (including anti-Semitic remarks), or awkward attempts to explain their 'othered' identity, whilst Gross and Rutland (2014b) reveal diverse forms of anti-Semitism in Australia's multicultural schools. In the present study, parents were conscious of their children's simultaneous hypervisibility (as Jewish

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people) and invisibility (of their culture) in non-Jewish schools; spaces that were perceived as dominated by undesirably 'different' cultural groups. Although Lara accepted that "everything has come on a bit" since her own school experience, it was apparent that parents desired their children's socialisation in a community where their experiences would be shared, rather than them being marked as different. Consequently, a minimum number of Jewish pupils was deemed necessary to a school's desirability, as the subsequent section illustrates.

4.3.3 Jewish critical mass

Given the desire for a Jewish social environment, most parents appeared to deem a critical mass of pupils necessary to constructing a sufficiently 'Jewish' space. The implications of this were that Jewish schools were generally valued more highly than non-Jewish schools, whilst also reinforcing a perception that Jewish identity is highly distinctive from 'others.' Importantly, the presence of other Jews appeared to represent a more significant selection criterion than the Jewish ethos or teachings of the school, given that some Jewish schools are populated by relatively low proportions of Jews and have suffered in popularity as a result (Oliver, 2015):

> "They're bringing them 11 miles into a school when they've got one on their doorstep, but they don't want to go to it because it's not so Jewish anymore, you can't win" (Natasha).

Such issues revolved in part around the question of inclusivity of non-Jewish pupils, and so where a school's non-Jewish population became perceived as undesirably large, the school's schematisation as a 'Jewish' space was compromised. A similar issue has been recognised by Rymarz (2010) in the context of Canada's Catholic schools, whose 'Catholic-ness' was perceived to be jeopardised where highly committed, religiously practising Catholic teachers came to represent a minority. Van T'Klooster et al. (2002) argue that places may develop particular 'regional identities' via the (re)definition of certain images, and considerable research has indicated the value of 'clustering' to the (re)construction of Jewish identities. Jews may congregate in order to facilitate their access to religious and community resources (Newman, 1985; Alper and Olson, 2013) and for security (Altman et al., 2010; Alper and Olson, 2011), as well as to develop Jewish friendship networks, with particular attention given to neighbourhoods (Waterman, 2003; Kudenko and Phillips, 2009), Jewish organisations such as synagogues (Kadushin and

Kotler-Berkowitz, 2006; Scheitle and Adamczyk, 2009), universities (Graham and Boyd, 2011), and formal (Heilman, 1983; Pomson, 2009) and informal educational institutions (Fishman et al., 2012). However, just as a regional identity may be developed through social processes, it may be 'lost' where re-imaginings become weak or cease completely (Van T'Klooster et al., 2002). The result of this 'loss' of Jewishness in certain schools has been "a chicken and an egg situation" (Rabbi, Liberal synagogue 2), in which parents attempt to avoid their child being the last remaining Jew, stimulating other parents to also withdraw their children from these establishments.

By attending a school with a 'sufficient' number of Jewish pupils, the concerns of discrimination described in Section 4.3.2 were also abated. Indeed, parents tended to value Jewish schools for protecting their children from anti-Semitism and allowing them to fully express their Jewishness, which could facilitate their confidence in interactions with other groups in future (Parker-Jenkins et al., 2005; Berglund, 2014):

"Having kids go to a Jewish schools gives them more confidence in their Jewish identity because they're not bullied, I mean I went to a non-Jewish school and it was always like, "Yiddo" or, you know, "Hooknose," and whatever, and it was just part of it; going to a Jewish school, I don't think you get that so much, certainly not in the school, so it gives you a bit more confidence in being Jewish, so when you leave and go to university, you haven't really had that experience of anti-Semitism from other students, so it makes you go to university with a bit more confidence, and you can be more brazen about being Jewish because you've never had to defend" (Daniel).

Consequently, parents believed that their children could develop their senses of Jewishness through their personal engagement with the faith, facilitated by the friendships and cultural symbols associated with a 'Jewish' social environment (Kudenko and Phillips, 2009, 2010; Alper and Olson, 2011, 2013). It is also important to acknowledge the wider political context, as the fieldwork was undertaken from September 2015 until March 2016, a period marked by several high-profile, fundamentalist Islamic terrorist attacks, most notoriously in Paris in January and November 2015. Terrorist attacks on Jewish businesses, synagogues and museums had also occurred recently in cities such as Brussels and Copenhagen. Accordingly, a small number of interviewees expressed their growing anxieties about their safety, reflecting empirical evidence of increasing incidents of anti-Semitism in the UK too (Community Security Trust, 2014, 2016):

"[I fear] anti-Semitism, especially now. It's just getting worse and worse, isn't it?" (Sarah).

Thus, parents' choice of a largely segregated Jewish environment was Janus-faced, rooted in a desire for both a milieu facilitative of Jewish identity construction through Jewish learning and socialisation, and one that would protect their children from oppositional attitudes:

> "Negatively they want their child not to be a risk of anti-Semitic abuse, they
> want to know their child is *safe*, both from the kind of playground taunting,
> and for that matter, from more hostile forces out of the community, so I think,
> to feel, you know, at the height of the *Charlie Hebdo*[55] thing, although in one
> sense you could say "My child is *more* at risk at a Jewish school because the
> Jewish school is therefore a target," but actually what the parents said is "We
> know our kids are safe when they're with you"; put more positively, they want
> to feel their child is among parents who are like them, part of community that
> they will be part of for the rest of their lives, so they are networking and being
> friends with and learning alongside and picking up the values of other Jewish
> children" (Headteacher).

As a result, the relative exclusivity of Jewish schools enabled parents to feel that their children's Jewishness was being protected. The following section explores this further.

4.3.4 Protection of Jewishness

Previous research has indicated that (Orthodox) Jewish schools are valued by religiously observant parents who seek their children's education within distinctly (and often halakhically) Jewish environments where they can mix with 'similar' families and be inculcated with Jewish beliefs, whilst being sheltered from external influences which may draw children away from the faith, including via future intermarriage (2.4.3). In this study, several parents relatedly demonstrated a sense of obligation in ensuring that their children would mix with other Jews and perhaps even develop a long-term romantic

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[55] In January 2015, 11 people at the French satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* were killed by Islamist terrorists. Two days later, a Kosher supermarket in Paris was subjected to a siege by Islamist terrorists, in which four hostages were killed and 15 others held. The timing of the events and the close relationships between the perpetrators has often caused them to be associated with one another.

relationship, facilitating the continuation of their family's Jewish line in future. Certainly, a small group of parents were insistent that their children marry within the faith, rendering the Jewish school desirable as an almost-exclusively Jewish social environment. This attitude was particularly prevalent amongst Orthodox parents:

"To me most important, please God, that they marry Jews: I will, as much as I love my daughters, and I love them and would do anything for my children, I would disown them if they married out of the faith, I feel very, very strongly about that, that's just the way I am, to me there's no half-half, to me, that's the way it is" (Leah).

Therefore, Leah portrayed Jewish identity in essentialist terms as a form of 'being' reliant upon a halakhic sense of descent rather than practice. Interestingly, however, and in contrast with Gordon's (2014) dichotomisation of Orthodox and Progressive families' attitudes towards intermarriage, several Liberal parents demonstrated a similarly fixed understanding of Jewish identity, instigating them to desire their children's future marriage within the faith and revealing the burden of identity:

"It would be lovely if he married a Jewish girl … I mean there are several reasons, and actually some of them have got to do with keeping the Jewish line, he's an only child of two older parents, he's got no family, really, he's got no cousins to speak of, no extended family, no aunts and uncles, all the rest of it, so I think, it would offer him, it would keep him within an extended Jewish community and Jewish family in a way, in terms of that sense of belonging" (Barbara).

Indeed, whereas Barbara's son is halakhically Jewish given her own ethnic Jewish background (whilst her husband's Christian upbringing is deemed irrelevant), the halakhic status of any future grandchildren would be contingent on her son's marriage to a Jewish woman. Consequently, Barbara felt able to celebrate her Liberal synagogue's acceptance of non-halakhic Jews and individuals from other faiths, such as her husband ("my husband's not Jewish so kind of Liberal Judaism will accept that, so they'll be welcoming when I bring [husband's name] along and all that, so I like that"), whilst retaining a restrictive conceptualisation of Jewishness as rooted in matrilineal descent. Stan, a Reform Jew, similarly suggested that *halakhah* continues to play an important role

in defining and protecting Jewishness, rendering it particularly desirable that boys are socialised as Jewish in order to encourage their future in-marriage, whereas girls' (and hence their offspring's) halakhic status will always exist. This is in spite of the fact that the Reform movement has recently accepted patrilineal descent as a valid determinant of a child's Jewishness (Lewis and Sokol, 2015):

> "In a way it's more important for a boy to be growing up in a Jewish environment because a Jewish girl will always be Jewish and her children will always be classed as Jewish" (Stan).

However, parents were highly split on perceptions that Jewish education reduces one's openness to intermarriage, with 32 per cent in agreement but 40 per cent in disagreement. This contrasts with previous research revealing a majority of British Jews perceive that Jewish schools reduce intermarriage[56] (Graham, 2014a; Graham et al., 2014). Nevertheless, many parents feared their children's Jewish identities being 'diluted' through exposure to other faiths and beliefs – including the increased risk of future intermarriage – and so believed that by restricting 'alternative' influences they would 'protect' their progeny's 'Jewishness' (Mills, 2016a):

> "Some Jewish parents, they don't want their kids to have non-Jewish friends, I mean that's not just JCoSS, in fact, that is the Jewish community, there are people in the Jewish community that don't like their children mixing with non-Jews, that's the way it is" (Jacqui).

Such disagreements over pupils' interactions with 'other' groups is reflected in the dilemmas faced by parents seeking their child's involvement in a majority-Jewish school environment but also their socialisation amongst non-Jews. The following section illustrates parents' scepticism of faith school-based segregation.

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[56] Graham's (2014a) research into Jewish university students' attitudes revealed that 60 per cent believe that Jewish schools increase the chances of children eventually marrying other Jews, whilst Graham et al. (2014) found that 61 per cent of British Jews perceive that Jewish schools reduce intermarriage. 54 per cent of Jewish school parents in Valins and Kosmin's (2003, pp.18) study agreed or strongly agreed that 'More Jewish education means less inter-marriage.'

4.3.5 Scepticism of segregation

Most parents demonstrated significant reservations about their children's 'segregation' in Jewish schools in spite of their proclivity to send their children to these institutions as a means of facilitating their children's socialisation amongst other Jews. In particular, parents were concerned that by sending their children to Jewish schools, they would become accustomed to socialising in a 'homogeneous' group separated from 'others':

"Starting off in a Jewish primary school, you know, they could go through life not meeting a non-Jewish person, and in fact some do go to universities, 'Jewniversities' as my [eldest] daughter [*laughs*] calls it, and the same thing, she says that, you know, some of the people she knew from school and went to [university] as well, and they're just, you know, mixing with only Jewish people there as well" (Claire).

"I think it makes you quite insular if all you've ever known is Jewish friends and Jewish schools" (Charlotte).

Some parents provided examples of companions who had attended a Jewish school and subsequently struggled to relate to people of other cultures:

"She went there and had *never* not mixed with Jews, and she came to college and there were a couple of us, and she couldn't deal with that, she had never not been with Jews" (Natasha).

"[My friends from Jewish school] still don't mix, at all, you know, they married Jewish women, they do not have non-Jewish friends … they don't mix with black people or Muslims" (Sam).

Indeed, many parents feared that by attending a Jewish school, their children would become unable to interact meaningfully with people from other backgrounds and develop broader liberal values such as tolerance and respect for difference:

"You're being taught to separate yourself, and at an impressionable age, a young age, and *not* to mix with other people, and *not* to see other people's

points of views … and so you're growing up not really understanding, and those non-understandings are causing divisions" (Sam).

For instance, Jacqui contrasted the ignorance of her eldest daughter – who attends a Jewish school – regarding other faiths, with her son's more respectful attitude, which she connected with his enrolment at a non-Jewish school:

"[Daughter 1] has never met a real Muslim, whereas [son], his school is very, I mean it's an ethnic mixing pot, he's got Sikh friends, he's got Muslim friends, and they are all, you know, they are growing up together in a way that is so positive, and they're learning from each other, and a few days ago [son] had about nine of them sort of came back from school on Friday to sort of celebrate, and [daughter 1] was here, and there was one guy who's sort of very very black-skinned, he's, I think he's from Ethiopia, and then there was a Sikh boy, and [daughter 1] sat here, and they came in and out and [daughter 1] said "They look so weird," I said "They don't, that is life, when you leave JCoSS and you go to university, that is what you will see in the refectory, a whole mix of people, you'll see Sikhs and Muslims and, you know, very dark-skinned people and you'll see people like yourself, but that is the world," she has never seen that, she has never seen that, she was literally, *[mouth gaping]* "Wow!" she said, "why does he wear a turban?" and just because I happen to know I had to explain to her why; it's sad though, because they did Sikhism and they learned all about it" (Jacqui).

Thus, although faith schools are often idealised by proponents as places where children can develop an identity through receiving a specific faith education (e.g. Ahmed, 2012), Jacqui feared her daughter's incapacity to interact sensitively with those from other backgrounds. Other studies have also illustrated parental concerns that Jewish schools are segregatory, isolating children from the 'real world' through a lack of engagement with 'difference' (Valins et al., 2002; Prell, 2007), and consequently failing to deconstruct intergroup prejudices (Black, 1998; Cohen and Kelner, 2007). Although it is problematic to assume that separation axiomatically results in intolerance (Short,

2003b), with considerable research misinterpreting Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis[57] by overemphasising ordinary interactions as Valentine (2008) has illustrated, parents such as Jacqui thus tended to believe that their children required greater contact with other cultures lest they exoticise them (Ho, 2011). Such findings lend support to claims that faith schools do not offer pupils sufficient opportunities to learn from individuals of diverse religions (e.g. Judge, 2001; Cantle, 2016). Parents also feared that such 'segregation' would reinforce anti-Semitic charges of elitism, furthering restricting the potential for positive intercultural interactions:

> "I think it creates a bubble, and that ignorance creates anti-Semitism, and people in the outside world are not seeing and are not with Jewish people, they think "Well they think that they're better than us"" (Sarah).

Moreover, and reflecting parents' struggles to identify clear group boundaries (4.3.4), several expressed regret that they had sent their children to Jewish schools for Jewish socialisation purposes without being able to define Jewish group 'qualities':

> "I think the other thing was mixing with children who *were like them* … and I look back and I think "What does that mean, what does that mean?" and I still believe that at that time I lived in a bubble, there's no amount of money you could pay me to go back into it, at all, under any circumstances" (Lara).

Thus, Lara feared rather than desired her children's restriction to a particularistic Jewish social environment that extends from home to school.

Given such concerns, several parents claimed that their willingness to send their younger children to Jewish schools had been compromised:

> "My thoughts about faith schools have changed having seen my kids in practice, I have to say, and my decision about my younger child is probably going to be that we won't send her to one" (Jacqui).

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[57] Allport (1954) suggested that greater contact between individuals of diverse groups reduces prejudice, but also set out a series of optimal conditions including recognition of the other group as equal, the existence of common goals, intergroup cooperation, and institutional support.

Similarly, Asher was hopeful that his son would opt to attend a non-Jewish sixth form in order to facilitate his intercultural mixing:

"One of the reasons I *hope* that [son] might go to a non-Jewish school or a non-faith sixth form is, you know, that he has the chance to have lots of *other* friends … at the moment most of his friends are Jewish, *primarily* because he goes to a Jewish school […] I'm hoping he might want to go to a non-Jewish sixth form or certainly to go to university as a sort of antidote to that" (Asher).

Asher's claim that an 'antidote' is necessary reflects the ambivalence in which Jewish schools were viewed by some parents owing to the perceived homogeneity of their pupil cohorts. On the other hand, other parents were sufficiently concerned that their children would be marginalised as Jews in non-Jewish schools that they tolerated Jewish schools' exclusivity, reinforcing Section 4.3.3's argument that a school's desirability is partially contingent on the existence of a perceived critical mass of Jewish pupils. Indeed, owing to the sudden growth in popularity of Jewish schools, numerous parents claimed to have been 'forced' to select Jewish schools because they guaranteed a Jewish social circle:

"In the world we live in today we're almost *forced* to send our kids to these schools […] you don't want your child to be alone" (Sarah).

This dilemma is also illustrated by the fact that 60 per cent of parents agreed with the statement 'Jewish day school education insulates children from other faiths and cultures'[58] (Figure 1), and only 24 per cent wanted 'all or most of my child's friends to be Jewish' (Figure 2). Previous studies have similarly revealed considerable disagreement amongst Jewish parents regarding the relative merits of Jewish and non-Jewish schools in terms of preparing pupils for wider British society (Valins and Kosmin, 2003; Graham et al., 2014). Thus, it may be inferred that parents were conscious of (and concerned about) faith schools' segregatory implications whilst maintaining an interest in a social environment marked by some degree of 'Jewishness.'

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[58] In contrast, Valins and Kosmin (2003) only attained a figure of 31 per cent for this question, perhaps reflecting the Orthodox ethos and pupil cohorts of the schools utilised in their study.

Figure 1: Parents' attitudes to the statement 'Jewish day school education insulates children from other faiths and cultures'

Figure 2: Parents' attitudes to the statement 'I would like all or most of my child's friends to be Jewish'
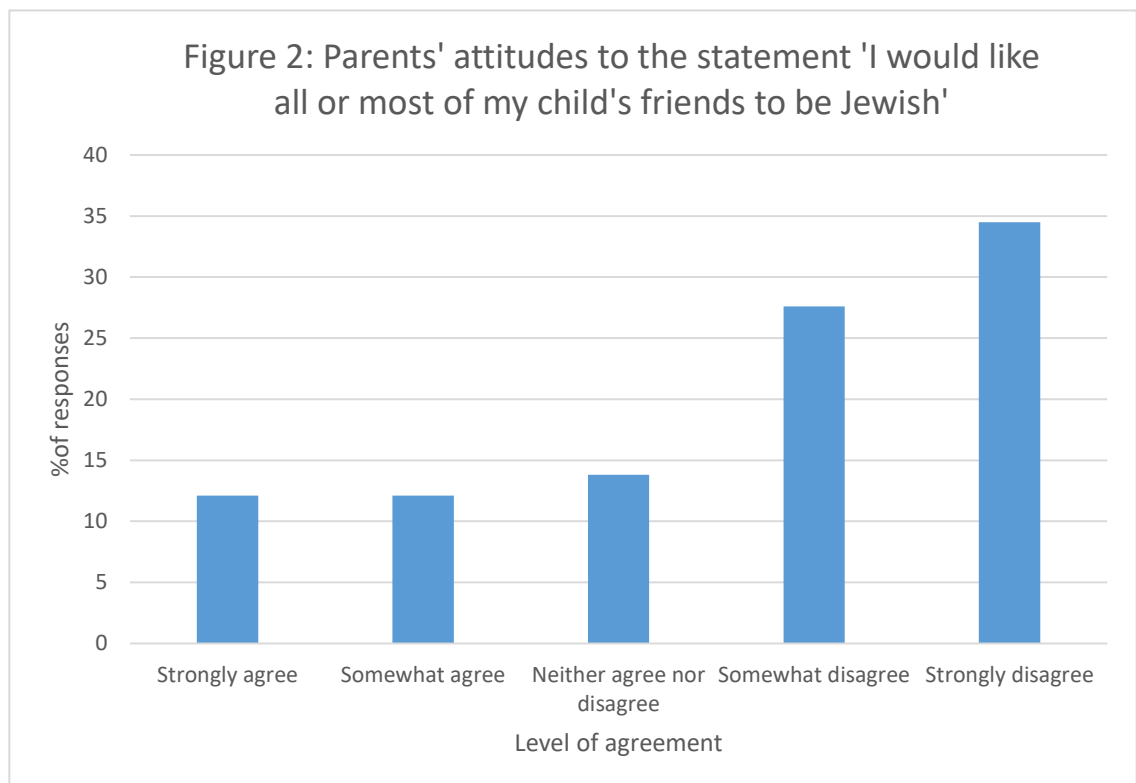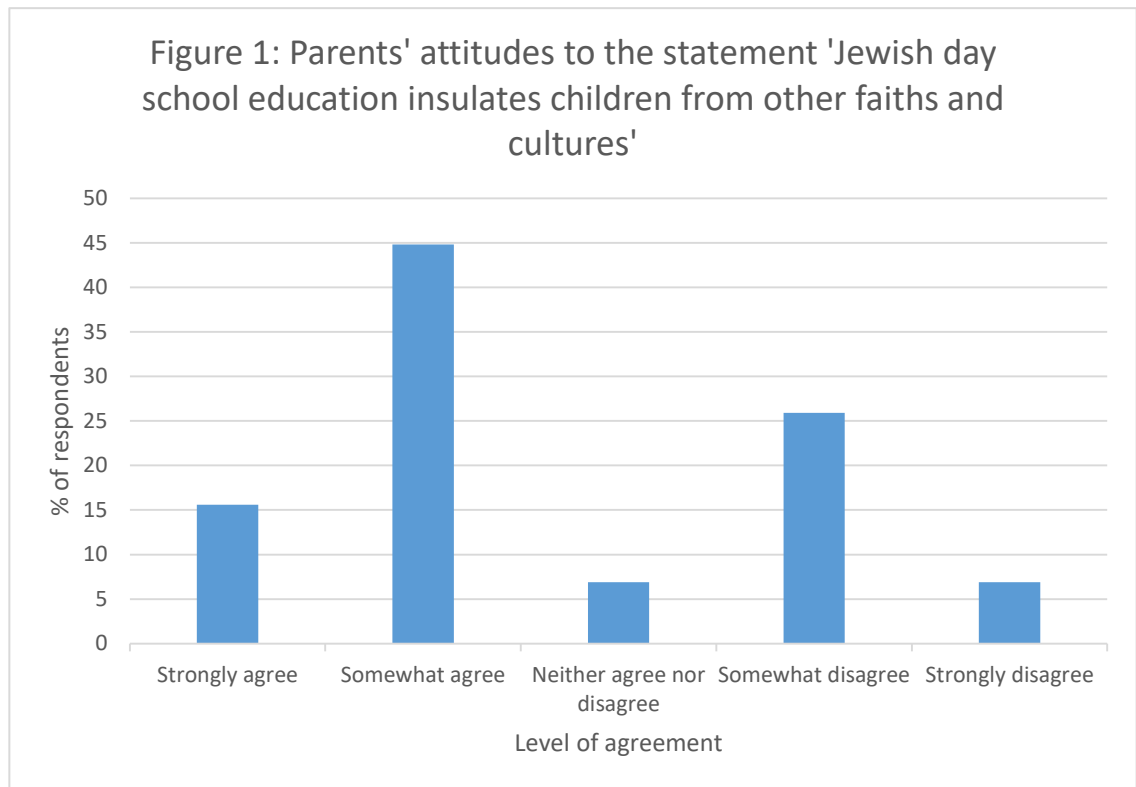
Consequently, a cycle exists in which parents continuously fear their child becoming the 'only Jew in the class' and so send them to Jewish schools, in turn encouraging other parents to follow suit. Reflecting this perceived lack of agency, one parent claimed that his only reason for selecting JCoSS was the absence of any realistic non-faith choice for his son:

"I had no choice, I wasn't given a choice, I mean my choice actually for [son] who's at JCoSS, and JCoSS is a really nice school, was a Church of England faith school: that was my choice, "Church of England or Jewish school?"" (Sam).

Therefore, Sam selected the Jewish school owing to his halakhic but unobservant Jewish identity, and JCoSS' relatively 'soft' ethos, in spite of his ideological opposition to faith schools and religion, demonstrating the (perceived) limits to school choice:

"I went to see it, saw the bishops walking around and thought "No, I don't really want to put my son into that environment" … I chose the Jewish one because I'm Jewish over the Christian one" (Sam).

Moreover, the widespread perception that separate schooling is necessary (albeit often reluctantly) contradicted the fact that several parents claimed to be unconcerned with their minority status during their own (non-Jewish) school education:

"At my primary school there were, I can't remember, in my secondary school, it was a school of 800, and there were only eight of us who were Jewish, but that was kind of enough" (Madeleine).

Similarly, several parents explained that they had personally attended Jewish youth movements, which permitted them to develop their Jewish identities whilst also interacting with individuals of other faiths and backgrounds in (mixed) schools:

"My social life was *out* of school, so there was no cross-over, so I had the people in school who I saw Monday to Friday, and then my closest friends were out of school, but then I went to Jewish organisations … I went to JLGB,[59] I went to BBYO,[60] I went to Jewish youth club" (Beth).

In these ways, other factors were also influential in parents' school choice decisions. Indeed, although segregation was perceived as a disappointing aspect of Jewish day

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[59] Jewish Lads' and Girls' Brigade.
[60] B'nai B'rith Youth Organization, a pluralistic youth movement.

school education, its impacts were said to be offset by the academic excellence that Jewish schools were perceived to provide, as Section 4.4 highlights.

4.4 'Secular' benefits

Section 4.4 illustrates how Jewish schools were particularly valued for 'secular' reasons. However, favoured qualities, including academic and behaviour standards, were widely perceived to be fused with one's Jewishness, as parents sought for their children to be socialised amongst perceived like-minded peers, often defined in ethnic and class terms (4.4.1). This has resulted in the essentialisation of supposedly 'Jewish' qualities as academically desirable, and reveals further the complexity of school choice, with diverse selection factors closely intertwined. Section 4.4.2 highlights the importance of JCoSS' pluralistic ethos in emphasising the value of human integrity (a trait widely portrayed as distinctively 'Jewish') whilst downplaying any exclusive or particularistic religious elements. Thus, although many parents were sceptical of faith schooling as a concept, they were enabled to view the school largely separately, even whilst emphasising how these desirable qualities of secular education and inclusive ethos were connected with the institution's 'Jewishness.'

4.4.1 Academic and behavioural standards

The majority of research into school choice has indicated that academic factors represent parents' main selection criterion (e.g. Kleitz et al., 2000; Elacqua et al., 2006), and faith schools in general are often associated with and thus popular because of their perceived academic and behavioural standards (Denessen et al., 2005; Pecenka and Anthias, 2014; Woodhead, 2014a). Moreover, although Gibbons and Silva (2011) and Andrews and Johnes (2016) suggest that faith schools' supposed superior academic outcomes compared with other schools are misleading given the often high quality of their pupil intakes, Schagen and Schagen (2005) found that Jewish schools specifically do tend to produce better grades even after controlling for background variables. As Section 4.3.1 explained, the majority of parents of all backgrounds also appear to select schools that they perceive to contain 'similar' pupils, including in terms of Jewishness (Valins, 2003a; Miller, 2012a). This investigation not only corroborates these previous findings that parents tend to seek both a strong academic education and socialisation amongst other Jews, but reveals how they are mutually constitutive. Indeed, education was portrayed as a fundamentally 'Jewish' value, supported in part by the 'inherently' demanding nature of Jewish parents:

"There is something inherent in the Jewish psyche that promotes education in your children, it's just there, and I think even if you've got one person in the family that is Jewish, I still think it's there, I think you see it very much in Asian families as well, in Asian cultures, there are certain cultures, and it's the silent inherent, so as a consequence you *do* have a higher standard of education, regardless of the teacher, and that's regardless of the students, because you've got a marriage between the three" (Lara).

"I think the parents are more pushy so their standards are higher … you just *know*, it just seems a known thing within the community that if you send to a Jewish school it's going to be a better school" (Sarah).

In this way, the 'Jewish' label was used almost synonymously with 'ambition' or 'aspiration,' reflecting assumptions that educational and socioeconomic mobility are distinctly Jewish (Goodman, 1976; Goldscheider, 2004) and corroborating Fishman's (2000) suggestion that many Jewish and secular values are increasingly coalesced. Such findings also partly reinforce Hartman and Hartman's (1996) findings that Jews are often highly committed to secular education, although the researchers claim that this is due to a generalisation of their positive attitude towards Jewish education and involvement in Jewish ritual and community life, whereas the present study reveals less widespread interest in such practices, and a greater emphasis on secular education in its own right. Orthodox schools as well as Progressive schools also now tend to emphasise their achievements in this regard rather than necessarily their Judaic studies[61] curricula (Heilman, 1995), which in the UK has been identified (somewhat ironically) as the 'weakest link' in many Jewish schools (Valins et al., 2002; Valins, 2003a). Accordingly, senior staff at *all* the Jewish schools in this study emphasised the importance of secular education to parents:

"They want good results, they want good discipline, they want, you know that the school works efficiently and knows what it's doing, they want to feel their children will come out of that school and go on to a nice university and then into a nice career" (Headteacher).

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[61] This often comprises Jewish Studies, Ivrit (Modern Hebrew) and Biblical Hebrew (Valins, 2003a).

"Jewish Studies definitely comes first, but they want their kids to come out of
here with a good grounding in secular studies as well" (Strictly Orthodox
school).

Moreover, some *non*-Jewish families were perceived to favour Jewish schools to
institutions representing their own faith, reflecting the salience of academic standards
rather than religious affiliation:

"Lots of children [from Catholic primary schools] come here […] if the
Catholic schools aren't as good as some of the others of course you might just
take your child elsewhere" (Orthodox school 3).

Although some parents at JCoSS were however critical of *aspects* of its academic
provision, the existence of such concerns demonstrates the importance of educational
standards to parents.[62]

Behaviour standards were also perceived as superior in Jewish schools. Such
perceptions were associated with an assumption that Jewish children would be disciplined
by virtue of a Jewish 'culture' or 'essence' that champions assiduousness, even where
poor standards had been observed in Jewish schools:

"It's just a feeling that I have that they're more, I don't know, they [Jewish
schools] kind of push their students more and they have higher expectations
in terms of behaviour and kind of work ethic" (Zoe).

"I have to say I've been a bit disillusioned to find out that some of the
behaviour of the kids is not as good as you might hope from sort of nicely
behaved Jewish kids" (Asher).

Nevertheless, regardless of their anecdotal examples of good or poor behaviour, most
parents were convinced that pupils' 'inherent' Jewishness ensured that they possessed
favourable social qualities, rendering Jewish schools safe educational environments for

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[62] Amongst the minority of pupils who suggested that they rather than their parents had been
central to their school selection decisions, academic standards were also critical, whereas the
extent to which Jewishness was significant varied: "I picked JCoSS because it was a good school
rather than because it was a Jewish school" (Isaac, Year 12).

their children:

> "I'm not saying Jewish kids are angels by any stretch of the imagination because they're not, you know, a lot of Jewish teenagers are right little sh*ts *but* I don't think they'd be out stabbing" (Naomi).

In comparison, many parents perceived non-Jewish schools as containing 'undesirable' pupils from 'other' backgrounds, jeopardising their popularity:

> "Some of the children that go to these schools are not the kind of kids I would want my kids to mix with … I mean, in primary school, you know, they're only tiny there, but you could *see* it there, you could see some of the chavy parents *[chuckles]*, and the school is right next door to a very big secondary school, you know, and I see some of their, I mean, I was there every single day, and I didn't like really what I saw coming out of those doors, I was insulted once by a kid in Year 8 or 9, and I thought "Do I really want..?" and that's where they would have ended up and I thought "No, that says it all really, I've made my mind up, if we get the opportunity to send them to a Jewish school locally, that's where they're going to go"" (Aaron).

This reflects the fact that parents may choose a school that enables their children to socialise amongst 'desirable' groups whilst avoiding the 'Other,' whether this is defined in terms of social class (Ball, 2003; Francis and Hutchings, 2013), ethnicity (Munniksma et al., 2012) or both (Butler and Hamnett, 2012), with Sigal et al. (1981) noting that Jewish schools often appeal to less-observant parents who desire high standards of education and fear criminal activity in other schools. Indeed, school choice may reveal unconscious or implicit discrimination, with Schneider and Buckley (2002) noting that many parents in reality seek schools with low percentages of black students even if this is not admitted in surveys, and Merry (2015) arguing that (particularly middle-class) parents often make selection decisions founded in institutional racism through comparing schools' pupil compositions, even if their motives are not consciously discriminatory. Such findings also correspond with Mendelssohn's (2011) argument that the growing amenability of Anglo-Jewish parents towards Jewish day schools since the mid-1960s primarily reflects their perception that mainstream schools, implicated directly by mass immigration from the British Commonwealth, are less able to provide

a safe and high-quality educational environment, and so ought to be avoided, rather than any revival of interest in Jewish culture or religiosity (see also Butler and Hamnett, 2011b regarding middle-class parents in London). Accordingly, several rabbis perceived parents' reasoning to be rooted in racist and classist prejudices:

"I suspect that the Jewish parents select these schools because they want their kids to be with other white, middle-class kids" (Rabbi, Liberal synagogue 2).

"I think there's a little bit of racism involved, I think there's a little bit of like, you know, "We don't want our kids to sit next to all the Asian kids" or whatever; I mean, I don't think it's conscious racism but I think there is a little bit of the fear of the 'Other'" (Rabbi, Liberal synagogue 3).

Teachers at JCoSS also emphasised the desire of Jewish parents to construct barriers from non-Jews by attending Jewish schools:

Jack: "I think parents want to keep them confined, they want them to go to Jewish school for two reasons: one, they think that Jewish schools are very academically good and then they're going to get results; I think they also think that if they keep them within a Jewish school they'll meet similar-minded people"/
Adam: "No brown faces … that's what happens in Jewish communities, brown flight."

As a result, parents were widely perceived as justifying their choice of school by their fear of the 'Other.' Nevertheless, it is important not to portray parents' interests as reductively academic, as JCoSS' inclusive and universalistic ethos also proved a significant – albeit largely interconnected – factor in their choice of school.

4.4.2 Ethos and ethics

The concept of *menschlichkeit* is central to JCoSS' ethos, emphasising the importance of positive human values and 'ethical integrity' (Jacobs, 2013), without the potential particularism of a more culturally-based mission (Fishman, 2012). Indeed, when asked about the ways in which JCoSS measures its success, teachers viewed *menschlichkeit* as paramount:

"Our core value is based around character, and not based around results, on the basis of "If we can get the character right, the results will follow," so I think if you ask anybody at any level within the institution, they will be able to talk about *menschlichkeit*, you know, decent, upright, honest, people of integrity, hard-working, accomplished and all of that … it's very hard to measure, but it's probably the most important measure of our success" (Headteacher).

"It's much more important that I produce children with *menschlichkeit* than shoving knowledge down their throats" (Adam).

Accordingly, many parents claimed to favour JCoSS for its inculcation of broad social values and its attention to developing these Jewish ethics:

"Particularly at JCoSS I think part of the reason that he is there is this whole kind of *mensch* programme and this whole idea about "Well what are the sorts of people that we'd like to encourage and foster and help inspire for the next generation?" and it's not simply A-grade students or A* students, so those things are laced throughout so many different levels of the curriculum: they can get reward points for being a *mensch*, as much as they can for a wonderful comment when they know something perfectly in Science or Maths" (Pippa).

Indeed, Feinberg (2006) suggests that faith schools typically place significant emphasis on pastoral values and religious ethics rather than necessarily prioritising academic attainment, whilst Cush (2005) and Halstead (2009) argue that such institutions often represent caring environments where children can develop positive social values as well as confidence in their identities. Many parents favoured *menschlichkeit* as a means of uniting families whose identity expressions differed substantially:

"It was very important, their whole emphasis around the *mensch* programme, looking at the values and the ethics which you are raised with and what is important, but set in a very much pluralist way, one which didn't ever suggest that people, outside of the Jewish faith, were in some ways contaminant or inferior or a host of other things, and that sort of negative message" (Pippa).

Such advantages are perhaps particularly pertinent to parents such as Pippa who had converted into Judaism, enabling them to express a Jewish identity without feeling treated as 'outsiders,' reducing boundaries between 'Jews' and 'non-Jews' as a result. The school's inclusivity was also enabled by its dedicated provision for pupils with autistic spectrum conditions (ASC) – the Pears Special Resource Provision (PSRP) – which appealed to parents whose children experience such needs, whilst also facilitating a form of diversity and mutual respect that satisfied some parents who were concerned about the school's 'homogeneous' Jewishness (4.3.5):

"I knew I wanted him in the PSRP at JCoSS […] I was going to fight for a place for him no matter what" (Lara).

"If you can't have an ethnically-mixed school and a very mixed school on a class basis, having at least some form of difference in the sense of having the Pears unit and having a lot of kids there with special needs I think is *great* so that the kids actually experience other ways of being in the world and how to cope with that" (Rosanne).

Related traits such as *tikkun olam* and *tzedakah* were also perceived as 'Jewish' values that were both inherent to the Jewish community and its schools but also universalistic in outlook:

"What I think is that the Jewish education and the curriculum that underpins that is quite important, because there are a lot of social concepts that kind of delve into Judaism and again, they kind of reflect the nurturing and the support and so the charitable aspects of life, of the world that we live in that I don't think secular schools would offer" (Aaron).

"I think the morals of the schools, hopefully the proudness of being Jewish and not shying away from it, the like-mindedness, and I think those Jewish morals, the high standards of Jewish morals, *tzedakah*, and looking after others, and, yeah. We have this thing in our family: service before self, and I think Jewishness promotes that, and that's important to us" (Natasha).

Similarly, pastoral care was perceived to be facilitated by the school's 'Jewishness':

> "I thought that in a Jewish school, it would be really good pastoral care, and they'd be very, it would be more nurturing in a faith school" (Yasmin).

Such values were therefore favoured because they were deemed 'unobjectionable,' representing a broad *Jewish* ethos devoid of more exclusive religious associations and facilitative of a *universalistic* ethics.

Crucially, this ethos was deemed sufficiently outward-looking to parents who were otherwise ambivalent about faith schools, for reasons including a scepticism of religion and a concern that their children would become segregated from other cultures (see Section 4.3.5), reflecting other studies that demonstrate many Jewish parents' fears of their children becoming 'too religious' (Cohen and Kelner, 2007; Prell, 2007). Merry (2015) also highlights how faith schools may be particularly popular where religious teaching and observance is not excessive and where common values are emphasised, and it might even be argued that the term 'faith school' is a misnomer for JCoSS, as the words 'religion' or 'religious' do not appear on the school's website or prospectus aside from discussion of the Jewish Education syllabus. Indeed, JCoSS' 'soft' Jewish ethos enabled it to instead be aligned with the positive traits frequently associated with faith schools, including strong educational and behavioural standards and pastoral care, permitting these parents to overlook their general opposition to faith schools (see Shaviv, 2012):

> "My wife and I are actually to be quite honest, we're not really in favour of faith schools […] I would say that 90 per cent of the reason for sending [eldest son] to JCoSS was simply that it was a way of getting what we felt was likely to be a better *education*, and there I'm talking about the secular side of things obviously, you know, get higher grades" (Asher).

> "It was the *nearest* I could get to a non-religious school, obviously it is, I'm not stupid, I know it is, but it's not continuously drummed down you, you know, it doesn't tell you that you have to have your daughter's bat mitzvah in a strictly Kosher venue, or a strictly Kosher caterer, so that was really important" (Beth).

Certainly, one parent who was otherwise antithetical towards faith schooling argued that JCoSS' Jewish ethos and pupil population enables it to coalesce 'secular' academic excellence and 'Jewish' ethical values, reflecting the wider perception that Jewish schools provide an excellent education by virtue of their Jewishness (4.4.1):

> "I don't *believe* in religious education. So how's that for you, you know, you're looking at a living conundrum, and I'm living with it daily; I don't really *like* it, actually, I'd much rather she was at a *really* good, *really* well-organised, *non*-Jewish school, or multi-, you know, truly pluralist school, that *still* taught her how to be a *mensch* […but] who couldn't like the idea of being a *mensch*, and the idea of being good to people and responding well to people? […] The reason she's at JCoSS is because it was the best option I had for her education, and a *rounded* sense of education, and there's your conundrum, because *part* of the reason is that it's because it's a Jewish school, but the Jewish stuff is the *least* that interests me about it, on a certain level, and yet what interests me is because it's a Jewish school" (Cecilia).

In these ways, even parents who claimed to be cautious of particularistic schools nevertheless sought supposedly specific – albeit relatively universalistic – 'Jewish' values. Thus, in spite of their professed interest in broader societal interaction, parents operationalised their Jewish identity as a means of securing a desirable school place in socially or ethnoreligiously segregated schools. Other research in the UK (Valins and Kosmin, 2003; Miller et al., 2016), USA (Nulman, 1956; Prell, 2007) and Canada (Pomson and Schnoor, 2008, 2009) has similarly revealed Jewish parents' general prioritisation of 'secular' academic factors[63] despite proclaimed concerns of parochialism. Moreover, these interviews reveal how the two most prominent factors when selecting a Jewish school identified by the questionnaire – academic factors and Jewish ethos – are closely intertwined. Indeed, the questionnaire first asked parents to tick as many reasons as desired that justified their choice of Jewish school (in general), which revealed the salience of academic factors (83 per cent of 58 respondents), compared with, for example, learning about Jewish beliefs (55 per cent), becoming

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[63] Indeed, the history of Jewish education in England since the nineteenth century has been marked by a general prioritisation of schools that were perceived to facilitate socioeconomic mobility rather than necessarily a specifically Jewish or religious education (Finestein, 2002; Mendelssohn, 2011).

prouder of one's Jewish identity (50 per cent) and being surrounded by other Jewish children (47 per cent) (Figure 3).[64] Similarly, Miller et al. (2016, p.545) argue that Jewish education represents a 'bonus' to most parents, rather than a "key determinant of choice." However, when asked about the importance of certain factors at JCoSS, the school's Jewish *ethos* was perceived as most important, with 83 per cent of respondents viewing this as 'very important' compared to 66 per cent who deemed the school's academic reputation 'very important' (Figure 4). It may therefore be inferred that parents seek an academic education first and foremost, which they associate with Jewish schools more broadly, but JCoSS was favoured *specifically* owing to its addition of a universalistic ethos. These desired traits are underplayed by Shargel (2013) in her argument that Jewish identity construction represents the *raison d'être* of Jewish day schools, and illustrate how the historical portrayal of Jewish schools as means of ensuring 'Jewish continuity' (2.4.4) fails to correspond with parents' general tendency to view these institutions less ideologically and more practically.

This is also reflected in the fact that 35 per cent of the 37 parents with other children of secondary school age had a second child enrolled at a *non*-Jewish school (Figure 5), and claimed to prioritise each institutions' 'compatibility' with their children's individual personalities (Valins et al., 2002; Prell, 2007), rather than necessarily seeking a Jewish education:

> "You have to look at *your* child and the school, it's the biggest advice I give
> to my friends at the moment going through the selection process, fit your child
> to the school, don't think "Oh I love that school, my child will go there""
> (Jacqui).

Although the survey question ignored parents whose children had not yet reached secondary school age (or had already left), such findings suggest that for most parents at JCoSS, its 'Jewishness' is viewed as desirable but not critical.

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[64] In contrast, Valins and Kosmin (2003) found that parents of children at Jewish secondary schools prioritised school ethos, followed by the number of other Jewish children at the school, with quality of teaching and academic standards only third in importance. This discrepancy may be related to the fact that the only Jewish schools available at the time of this study were Orthodox in ethos and thus likely to attract (and admit) almost-exclusively Orthodox families.

Figure 3: Reasons for selecting a Jewish school
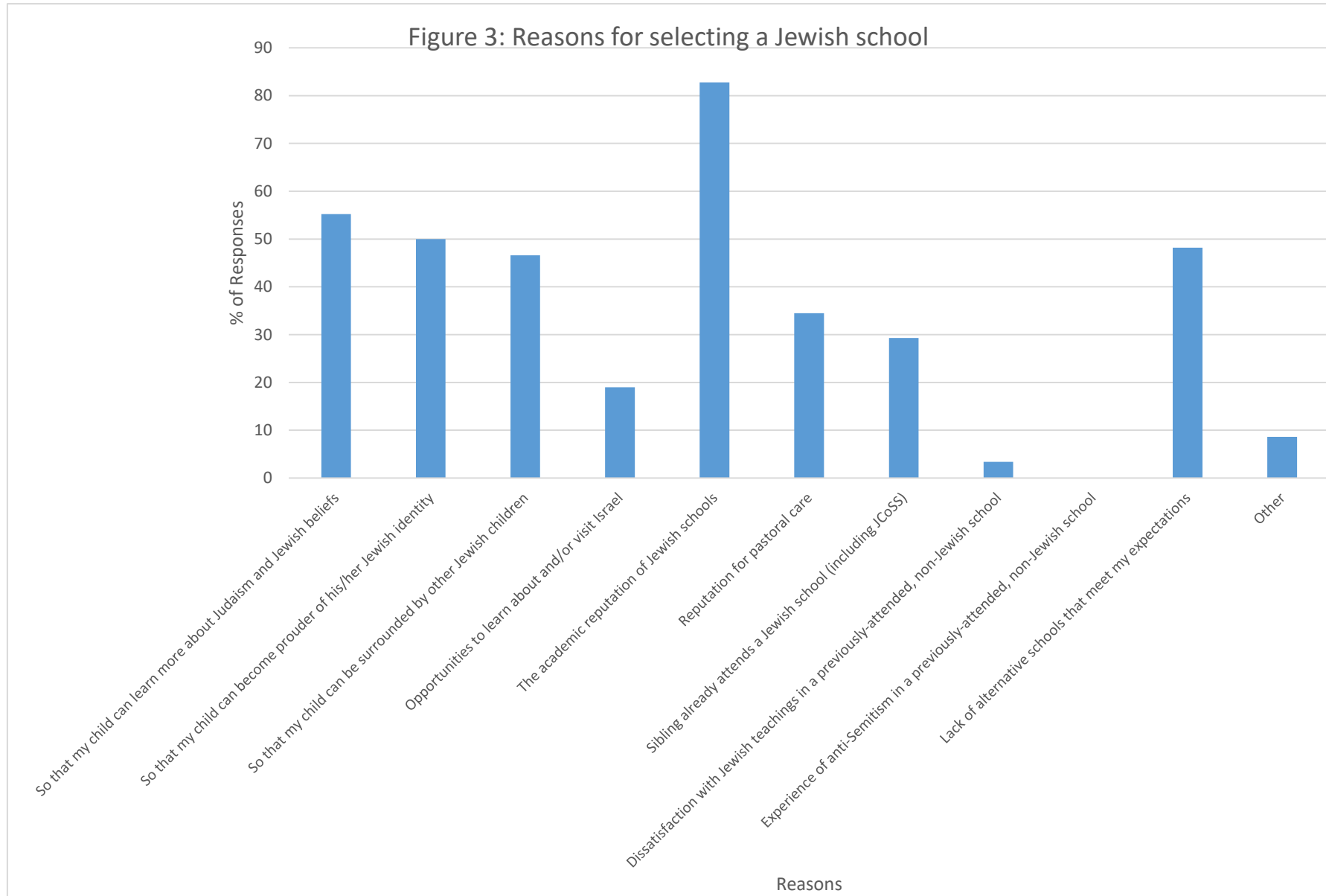
Figure 4: Relative importance of reasons for choosing JCoSS

Figure 5: Education of other secondary school-aged children
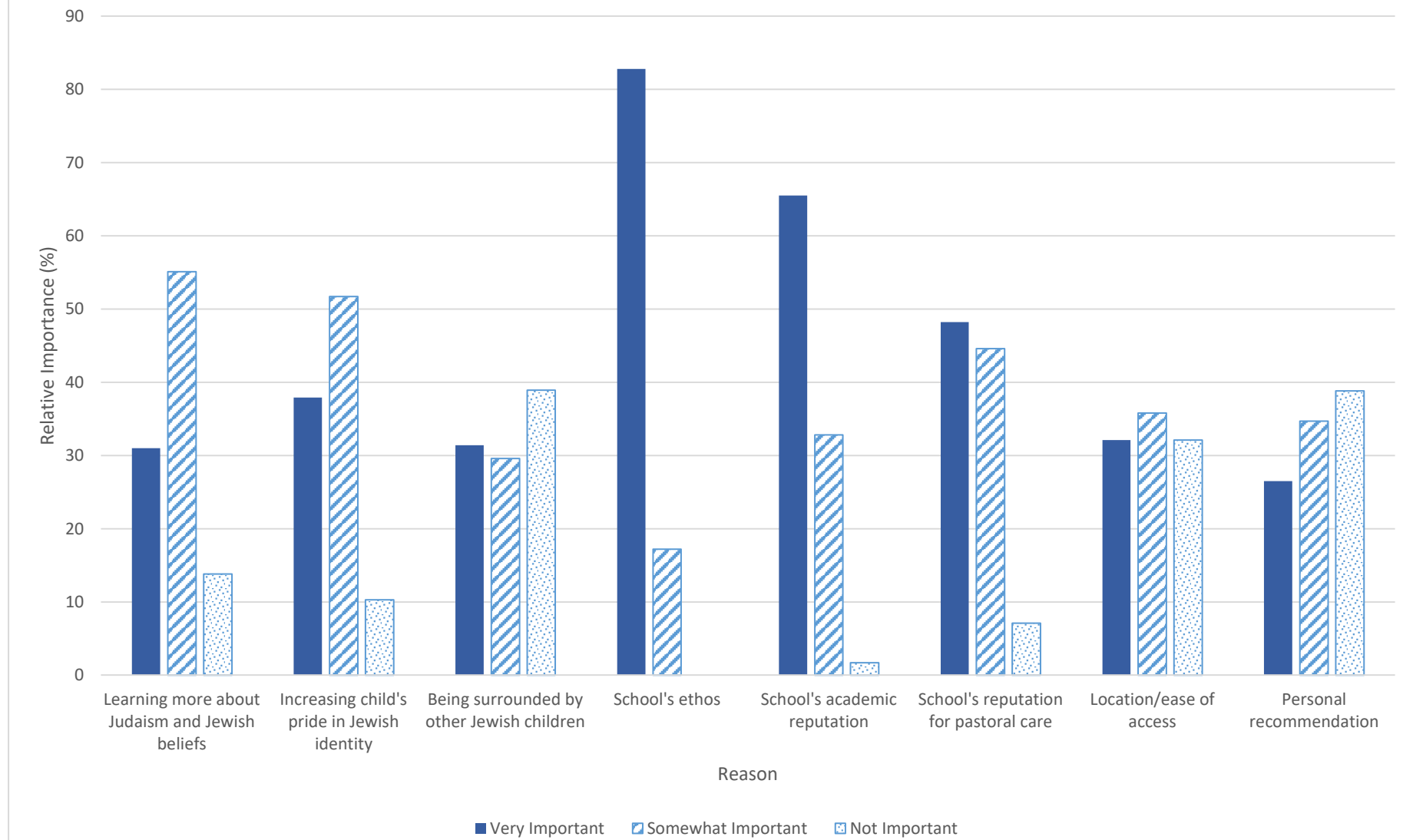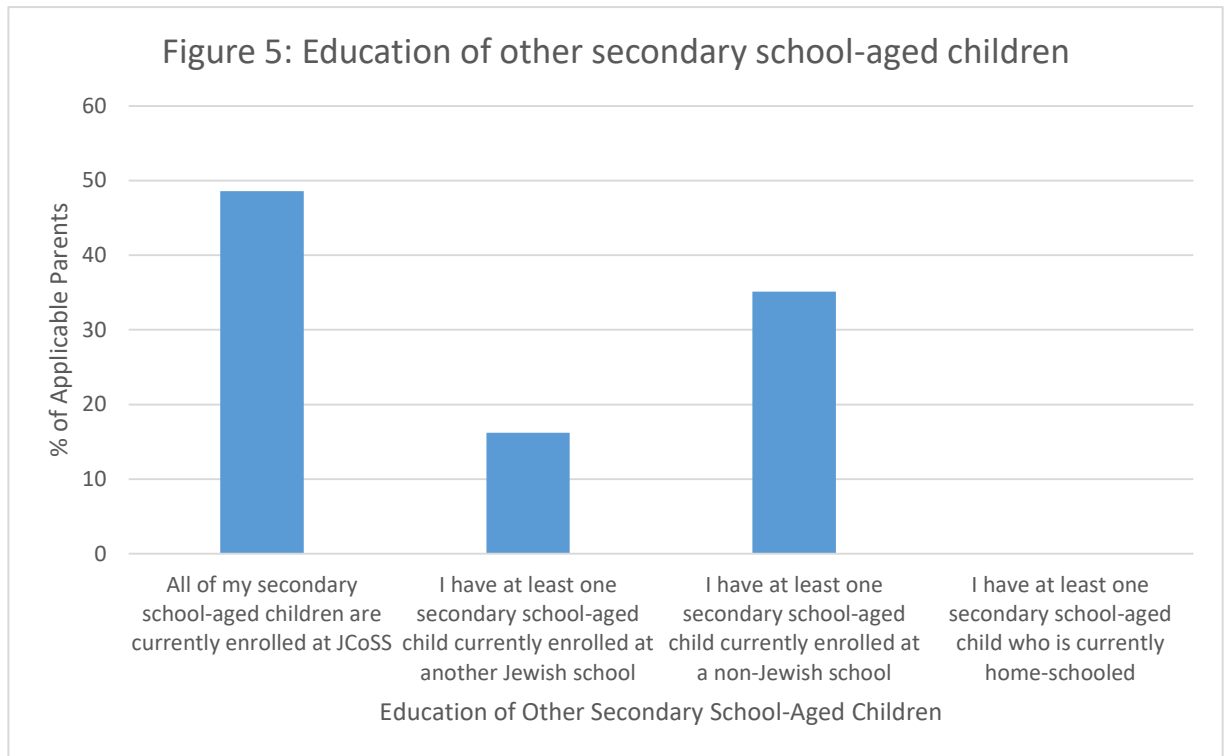
A further factor was the school's location, which, again reflecting the general salience of academic standards, ensured its popularity relative to other well-regarded schools located further afield. As such, whilst not all parents perceived JCoSS as an 'ideal' option for the reasons described, they viewed it as a sufficient (and free)[65] educational option that was located in or close to their vicinity:

"We're in a bit of a hole in this part of North London, so we're not any feeder to any state school … any of the good local schools we're kind of a little bit too much out of the catchment, and private school's not in our remit" (Letitia).

The fact that only 32 per cent of survey respondents claimed that location/ease of access specifically represented a 'very important' factor in their choice of JCoSS demonstrates how school choice factors were not treated separately but rather collectively. It was not possible to record whether parents had indeed ranked JCoSS in first position in their school

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[65] Indeed, Miller et al. (2016, p.549) argue that state-funded Jewish schools can represent "cheap substitutes" for private schools. Moreover, it is noteworthy that most Jewish children in England who do not secure a Jewish school place instead attend private or selective non-Jewish schools (Miller and Pomson, 2015a), arguably reflecting the primacy of academic standards to most Jewish parents as well as their general proclivity to prefer selective institutions that enable their children to avoid comprehensive schools.

applications, in part owing to the fact that many could not remember and numerous parents also applied to independent schools which select or reject pupils separately from local authorities' admissions processes for state-funded institutions (DfE, 2014c), rendering JCoSS' relative popularity difficult to ascertain. Furthermore, parents may not send their children to schools that correspond with their stated preferences (Schneider and Buckley, 2002) or succeed in attaining their desired school place for all or any of their children[66] (Warrington, 2005; Burgess et al., 2009). Nevertheless, these findings suggest that while families may exercise considerable autonomy in selecting a school, they may also be somewhat restricted in the choices available. In these ways, the process of choosing a school is far from straightforward, with preferences regularly shaped by a number of potentially conflicting considerations.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has revealed the complexity of school choice. Rather than basing their choice of JCoSS upon single or even numerous but distinct factors, parents expressed varied and often seemingly contradictory reasons: for instance, the interest in a Jewish school that can facilitate individualised expressions of Jewishness, whilst deeming particular constructions to have greater legitimacy than others; and favouring a non-Orthodox educational milieu that champions individual autonomy whilst retaining adherence to halakhic concepts such as matrilineal descent and in-marriage. Other selection factors were deemed to be closely intertwined and mutually-reinforcing, particularly the treatment of academic and behavioural excellence as intrinsically 'Jewish.' In addition to reflecting classist (and perhaps also racist or xenophobic) attitudes, the result has been an essentialisation of particular (but largely ambiguous) 'Jewish' qualities that facilitates a drawing of boundaries with 'non-Jews.' Consequently, and supplemented by the perceived advantages of socialisation amongst other Jews for friendship and identity construction purposes, and the avoidance of prejudicial or insensitive attitudes, Jewish (or at least Jewish-dominated) schools have come to be preferred to more multicultural institutions. Yet, and again reflecting how decisions may be paradoxical, many parents were simultaneously concerned about the long-term implications of their children's 'segregation,' which, as Chapter 6 will demonstrate, has affected the

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[66] Indeed, in both 2016 and 2017 fewer than 69 per cent of London's children were offered their first choice secondary school (Coughlan, 2016; Burns, 2017).

desirability of their participation in other Jewish spaces.

Parents seeking to facilitate their children's Jewish identity construction valued the school for its validation of diverse and personalised forms of Jewishness as well as its provision of Jewish knowledge, from which it was often felt a Jewish identity could emerge. However, most parents viewed the school's potential to facilitate their children's Jewish identity construction as less salient than its academic standards, reflecting the general secularisation of the UK, even if many Jews – and those from the Progressive movements perhaps in particular – have become increasingly confident to publically express their ethnoreligious identifications. Mirroring the larger growth in faith schooling in England, this demonstrates how JCoSS' popularity is itself built upon seemingly contradictory parental desires: for a Jewish school place but without substantial Jewish (and especially religious) input or instruction. Such a situation is most clearly epitomised by JCoSS' ethos of *menschlichkeit*, which utilises a distinctly Jewish concept (and associated traditional 'Jewish' values such as charitability and social justice) that is also fundamentally *universalistic*, enabling the school to be viewed as sufficiently inclusive and liberal-minded to those otherwise ambivalent about faith schooling.

These findings provide important context to Jewish schools' place in Anglo-Jewry, as they reveal some of the ways in which Jewish parents conceptualise Jewish identity and their relative interest in encouraging their children's participation in a Jewish community. Moreover, rather than merely representing a decision based on the child's perceived needs, their reasoning for selecting JCoSS was rooted in their determination to present themselves (and thus channel their children) within the Jewish community in a particular way. Via their children's Jewish education, parents were also able to develop a vicarious Jewish community of their own, particularly where they had not personally attended a Jewish day school as children. Consequently, Jewish schools, and JCoSS perhaps in particular, are playing an important role in the reshaping of Jewish identity in England. This will be explored further in the subsequent chapter.

Chapter 5: The role of Jewish schools in
shaping young people's Jewish identities

5.1 Introduction

This chapter emphasises the diverse and contested nature of the Anglo-Jewish community (see Sections 2.3.7 - 2.3.8), centred on the issue of Jewish day schools. More specifically, it draws upon interviews with staff at JCoSS and other Jewish schools, interviews with rabbis, questionnaires and interviews with parents, and focus groups with pupils, in order to demonstrate JCoSS' particular role in (re)shaping denominational relations and identity construction, within a Jewish educational context that is itself highly dynamic and disputed. Indeed, as Section 2.4.6 illustrated, state-funded Jewish schools are today obligated to develop admissions criteria that avoid defining Jewish identity based on matrilineal descent, facilitating the admission of self-identifying (but not necessarily halakhic) Jewish pupils to Jewish schools. Moreover, many non-Orthodox Jewish families are increasingly amenable towards Jewish day school education owing to a growing collective confidence in non-halakhic Jewishness, concerns about assimilation in non-Jewish schools, and the establishment of new pluralist (and Progressive) Jewish schools that validate and cater for their distinctive beliefs (4.2.1). Encapsulating the ways in which Jewish schools have become central to competing discourses of Jewish identity (Kahn-Harris and Gidley, 2010; Dwyer and Parutis, 2013), JCoSS' validation of these non-halakhic forms of Jewishness has attracted criticism from Orthodox leaders, who view such an ethos antithetical to Orthodox Judaism (Rocker, 2009a). Furthermore, even executing a pluralistic ethos is likely to prove a challenging endeavour, as alternative forms of festival observance, prayer and dietary needs must be accommodated in order to appeal to all movements, and it seems inevitable that schools will start with a particular movement's theological perspective (Miller, 2012a), underlining how Jewish schools are not uncontroversial even within the Jewish community.

Through its analysis of denominational contestation (as well as cooperation) within a Jewish school regarding the teaching and practice of Judaism, the chapter makes a distinctive contribution to the Jewish school literature. Indeed, previous studies into England's Jewish schools have tended to portray Jewish identity and Jewish pupils as clearly distinguishable from 'others,' without intensively analysing Judaism's internal dynamics, causing them to

reinforce tropes of 'us' (Jews) and 'them' (non-Jews)[67] (see Rohrbacher, 2016). Although Valins (2003a) goes further than most in acknowledging internal differences and, in relation, the boundary-drawing processes undertaken by some Orthodox Jewish parents to 'guard' their identities from 'others,' including non-Orthodox Jews, his primary focus remains on the Jewish/non-Jewish boundary rather than comprehensively exploring the ways in which a specific Jewish space is constructed. Moreover, his data are largely drawn from interviews with parents and past surveys rather than listening to the perspectives of pupils who experience Jewish education. Where pupils have been included in studies of Jewish schools more generally, researchers have often recognised acts of resistance towards a Jewish school's mission or curriculum regardless of denominationalism (Schoem, 1984; Gross and Rutland, 2014a), and so it seems highly plausible that such issues would be magnified where a wide range of observances and identifications are assembled in a single school space. Certainly, the predominant themes of this chapter are that competing schematisations of Jewish identity are constructed and contested within a (pluralist) Jewish school context, but interdenominational power relations are far from unidirectional; and that although JCoSS is contributing to a general acknowledgement of and improvement in interdenominational relations amongst its pupils, its very pluralism deters families who view Jewishness as more particularistic, somewhat inhibiting its broader impact within Anglo-Jewry.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, the implications of changes to admissions requirements for Jewish schools will be explored, in an educational context that has additionally seen the emergence of JCoSS (5.2). Indeed, JCoSS' pluralist ethos has been considered a controversial development amongst many members of the United Synagogue in particular, with Section 5.2 subsequently illustrating the evolution of this relationship, as well as the school's usage of feeder schools as a means of facilitating the Jewish diversity of its pupil cohorts. The implications of increased interdenominational contact at JCoSS will be explored in Section 5.3, as well as the distinctive ways in which 'diversity' has been conceptualised at Jewish schools more generally. Before concluding, Section 5.4 illustrates

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[67] This focus on 'Jews' versus 'non-Jews' is evident in UK research exploring questions of secular or multicultural teaching and engagement (Abraham-Glinert, 1997; Short, 2002, 2003b; Ipgrave, 2016), community cohesion (Miller, 2011), and the inclusion of non-Jews (Valins, 2003a; Bruce, 2012). Ipgrave (2016) does at least acknowledge intra-faith variations in the sense that she illustrates how an RE lesson in a 'pluralist' Jewish primary school recognised differences in ritual observance within Judaism, but she pays far greater attention to the school's treatment of and interactions with other faiths than internal variations in Jewish identity.

some of the challenges in constructing a pluralist ethos: in particular, the difficulties in providing universally-accepted Jewish Education and religious worship, the contestation that exists over *kippot* as identity markers, and the dilemmas associated with reconciling diverse performances of Jewishness in terms of *Kashrut* and *chagim*.

5.2 Admissions and their implications

R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS, and the establishment of JCoSS as a pluralist Jewish secondary school, represented highly controversial developments within the Jewish community, with significant implications for Jewish identity. As Section 5.2.1 illustrates, Jewish schools have largely implemented similar admissions practices theoretically inclusive of non-halakhic Jews in response to the ruling, but in practice significant polarisation has resulted from their differing attitudes towards Jewish identity and openness towards varied forms of Jewish expression. Accordingly, Section 5.2.2 illustrates the continuing challenges for JCoSS in being recognised as a Jewish school by many Orthodox leaders, who deem its pluralist ethos incongruent with *halakhah*. Section 5.3.3 demonstrates JCoSS' usage of feeder schools as a means of facilitating its inclusivity to diverse expressions of Jewishness, and the controversies entailed within this policy as its popularity grows. Thus, school admissions are crucial to an understanding of JCoSS' role in reshaping the expression of Jewish identities and intra-faith relations.

5.2.1 Inclusivity in theory; polarisation in reality

R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS illustrated a deep rupture within Anglo-Jewry (and beyond) over contrasting conceptualisations of Jewish identity between *halakhah* and self-identification. Following the ruling, all state-funded Jewish schools were required to develop new admissions practices that avoided defining Jewish identity based on matrilineal descent. Paragraph 2.21 of the School Admissions Code (DfES, 2007) states that "religious authorities may provide guidance for the admission authorities of schools of their faith that sets out what process and criteria may be used to establish membership of the faith."[68] Secondary schools under the religious authority of the Chief Rabbi (United Synagogue schools) have consequently developed tests of Jewish religious practice, the

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[68] A listed rabbinic authority constitutes the representative body for schools designated as having a "religious character" (Jewish) under Schedules 3-4 of the School Admissions Regulations 2012.

criteria of which are achieved through completing a Certificate of Religious Practice (CRP). The specific details of the CRP differs for each school, but all versions require evidence of synagogue attendance (normally at *Shabbat*), a child's involvement in formal Jewish education and either a parent or child's involvement in recent, unpaid/voluntary, Jewish communal, charitable or welfare activities. Although schools that do not fall under the Chief Rabbi's authority (including JCoSS) do not necessarily mandate the CRP, they have tended to develop similar admissions criteria.[69] Notably, JCoSS was established at a similar time to the JFS case, and whilst the school has, in the former Headteacher's words, "always looked to include, not exclude Jewish children" (Stowe-Lindner, in Rosen 2009), its proposed admissions policy of welcoming any child with at least one Jewish grandparent regardless of matrilineal descent would have continued to portray Jewish identity as based upon descent and thus racially discriminatory. This was explained by the current Headteacher:

> "The JFS case made it impossible to do things on that basis; it had to be done on the basis of practice and not on the basis of effectively ethnicity or race" (Headteacher).

Consequently, the school's admissions policy has been partially influenced by the ruling (see Miller, 2012b). In order to be considered as a first priority case at JCoSS, prospective pupils must now 'prove' their Jewishness through demonstrating "commitment to the Jewish faith or involvement in recognised Jewish faith activities," the criteria of which comprise either:

A) Documentary evidence of attendance by a parent/carer or child at a minimum of 4 synagogue services in the six months prior to the application.

B) Documentary evidence of a child's engagement in formal Jewish education (either provided, where relevant, at a school having a Jewish religious character, a Cheder/Hebrew school, or equivalent, or by a tutor) AND documentary evidence of a parent/carer or child's involvement in any Jewish communal, charitable or welfare activity in the last 2 years. This

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[69] State-funded Jewish schools also require families that seek to apply as priority candidates to complete a supplementary information form (SIF).

must have been in a volunteer capacity, with no financial value or practical

benefit to JCoSS or any associated body. (From JCoSS, 2016).

Thus, these criteria emphasise Jewish practice within a Jewish institution such as a synagogue or Jewish charity, rather than lineage, and unlike London's other Jewish schools, JCoSS permits *parents*' (rather than necessarily children's) synagogue attendance to be taken into account, reflecting its commitment to greater openness.

However, although controversies regarding admissions have appeared in recent years in several Jewish schools, including on the basis of observance (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2015; Fair Admissions Campaign, 2015) and synagogue membership (Rocker, 2012; Shaviv, 2013), as well as a lack of clarity regarding criteria pertaining to religious practices[70] (Office of the Schools Adjudicator, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2014d, 2014e, 2015), the *direct* impacts of R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS on Jewish schools appeared to be rather limited. Indeed, it was clear that several schools were already implementing admissions criteria distinctive from JFS' focus on matrilineal descent. For instance, senior staff at other Jewish schools prioritised religious observance:

"You need to be an Orthodox family […] they are *all* Jewish, they have to be Jewish, they have to be observant. We don't have any non-Jewish kids at all" (Orthodox school 1).

Given that the aforementioned changes to school admissions laws have enabled non-halakhic Jews to be validated as sufficiently 'Jewish' to qualify under any mainstream, state-funded Jewish school's oversubscription criteria, parents desiring their children's socialisation amongst other highly observant Jewish families are now less willing to perceive many such schools as sufficiently exclusive. In response, they seek the small number of Jewish schools that may be theoretically more inclusive than in the past but demand additional religious observance criteria that are only likely to appeal to particularly pious families (see Kessler, 2013), resulting in increasingly homogeneous pupil bodies in some schools (a similar trend

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[70] The School Admissions Code requires admissions authorities at schools designated with a religious character to "ensure that parents can easily understand how any faith-based criteria will be reasonably satisfied" (DfE, 2014c, p.16).

has been identified by Perry-Hazan, 2014 in Belgium). Senior staff at these Orthodox schools described this as a right-ward shift (see also Kress, 2016):

"We're going quite towards the right […] you will have a certain value that "I want my child in this school and not in a less Orthodox school, because I don't want them to mix with non-Orthodox children" … I think the parents probably feel they're getting a safety net, they very much want to protect the lifestyles that they lead" (Orthodox school 2).

"I think we're getting slightly more religious, it's becoming slightly more to the right […] if you are a non-observant Jew and you want to send your child to a school, there are plenty of schools who will take non-observant Jewish boys, but there are not many state schools for observant Jewish kids" (Orthodox school 1).

Certainly, one Orthodox rabbi claimed that he would not send his children to a specific Jewish primary school in spite of its Orthodox ethos and majority-Orthodox student cohort owing to his desire for his children to socialise with exclusively *religiously* Jewish children:

"That [school] would not necessarily be on the level of observance and interest in Judaism that I would want my kids to play with their kids" (Rabbi, Orthodox synagogue 1).

In these ways, changes to these Orthodox schools' pupil cohorts following the ruling owe largely to the indirect influence of growing parental determination to 'protect' their children's religious socialisation from the potentially 'diluting' forces perceived to be apparent in other Jewish schools (represented by religiously 'weak' and non-halakhic Jews, as well as those not self-identifying as Jewish at all), rather than the admissions criteria themselves. They also demonstrate the mutability of religious Orthodoxy in reaction to wider societal trends, rather than this being fixed (Berlinerblau, 2001; Sadgrove et al., 2010).

Evident in such perceptions is a belief that children's Jewish identities are insufficiently strong to 'resist' alternative, 'lighter' forms of Judaism, compromising the 'successfulness' of parents' own Jewish identity transmission. These concerns reflect

cultural broadening theory, as parents fear that their children's involvement in wider 'secular' activities would reduce their adherence to religious ideals (Cornwall, 1987; Hoge et al., 1993; O'Connor et al., 2002). The resulting boundary-drawing practices were recognised by JCoSS' Headteacher too:

> "Well I think they would fear either a confusion, because "I'm Jewish, you're Jewish, but we do things differently, and that's weird to me," which is understandable, or they might fear an actual watering down that the confusion would then lead to "Well, it's supposed to be OK to claim to be Jewish without *Shabbat* and *Kashrut*, without attending synagogue," and if that's the case, it would then become harder for the parent to require it of the child, if the child can see, if you like, a 'lighter' *[with air quotes]* form of Judaism being treated by a Jewish institution as an entirely valid expression of Jewish tradition, the parent fears that that will encourage the child to become lighter in their own Jewish affiliation and practice themselves, which again, I can totally understand the fear there" (Headteacher).

The implication that pupils adopt the 'easiest' forms of Judaism available will be addressed further in Section 5.3.4. Important here is a conflict in values between some Orthodox schools' intentional exclusivity and JCoSS' principled validation of diverse forms of Jewishness (4.2.1), which may render the latter undesirable to parents seeking to 'protect' their form of religious Orthodoxy from 'other' self-identified Jews. As the FAQs section of the school website highlights:

> [Q.] How can I ensure that my child won't meet non-Halachically Jewish children?
> [A.] You can't. We live in a multi-cultural society and part of the JCoSS ethos is to prepare and educate pupils to understand the meanings and implications of this. As such, if this is a major concern for you, JCoSS may not be the school for you (JCoSS, 2017b).

In these ways, JCoSS' approach to admissions is distinctive from Orthodox Jewish schools,

which have either attempted to retreat into a stringent Orthodox ethos that is unattractive to unobservant Jews but appealing to pious families, as described, or have resigned themselves to greater inclusivity whilst maintaining a conviction that they do not validate particular forms of self-identification as validly Jewish. Reflecting the latter approach, several (generally more mainstream) Orthodox schools have attempted to assure Orthodox parents that they do not validate non-halakhic Jewishness even whilst admitting self-identifying but non-halakhic Jewish pupils. For instance, Yavneh College (2016, 2017), a Modern Orthodox school in Borehamwood, Hertfordshire, uses the CRP whilst stating that this "does not confirm that the child is Jewish in accordance with Jewish law," reflecting some of the opposition that exists towards externally-created definitions of Jewishness and a persistence of exclusively Orthodox values in such schools. Indeed, although the pressure on Jewish schools to attract pupils has obligated many to broaden their appeal, such as by demonstrating less antagonism towards previously denigrated forms of Jewishness – "I think they're all keen to get their creditor of youngsters now … the last thing they want is for us to say to our parents "This is not a school that your children should go to"" (Rabbi, Reform synagogue 4) – most continue to provide a solely or predominantly Orthodox ethos.

Consequently, R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS has been accompanied by a degree of polarisation within Anglo-Jewry, as pluralist Jewish schools such as JCoSS welcome diversely-practising families at the same time as many Orthodox schools either increase the stringency of their admissions requirements to reinforce their appeal to religiously observant parents, or admit heterogeneously-Jewish families but retain a predominantly Orthodox ethos. Of course, each Jewish school's ability to define whether an applicant is appropriately 'Jewish' depends to a large extent upon demand, as oversubscribed schools enjoy greater freedom to apply exacting religious admissions requirements than schools that are desperate to fill available places (Perry-Hazan, 2016), but, and as Section 5.2.3 will demonstrate further, most Jewish day schools in Hertfordshire and North and Northwest London are highly sought-after, facilitating this disjuncture in criteria and general school environment. Certainly, JCoSS' validation of non-halakhic forms of Judaism has proven highly controversial within the Jewish community, and as Section 5.2.2 highlights next, the school continues to face challenges in being acknowledged as a 'Jewish' school environment by members of the Orthodox community, placing it at the front line of contestation over Jewish identity.

5.2.2 Orthodox challenges

It is important to acknowledge the resistance of many Orthodox community leaders towards JCoSS as a Jewish institution. The issue is centred on opposing attitudes towards Jewish pluralism. JCoSS aims to play an active role in facilitating greater inclusivity in Anglo-Jewry. Its pluralistic ethos operates to enable pupils to personalise their own senses of Jewish identity (4.2.2) and in so doing see their forms of Jewishness 'validated':

> "JCoSS exists to be a pluralist, Jewish, aspirational learning community, welcoming Jews from all backgrounds of mainstream Judaism, and treating them all, teaching all those Judaisms with equivalence; in our small way we seek to be building the Jewish community of the future, where the things that divide that community are less significant than the things that unite them" (Headteacher).

In this sense, JCoSS seeks to perpetuate Jewishness through facilitating the (re)production of increasingly pluralised – and perhaps 'unconventional' – forms of Jewishness that are nevertheless significant to many individuals in contemporary society. Whilst the degree to which a single school can enable its pupils to negotiate their faith and also influence others in the wider society is debatable, JCoSS' former Headteacher also described the school's perceived potential in reshaping British Jewish culture through recognising the validity of non-Orthodox movements and reducing inter-denominational tension:

> "The impact of these graduates will be felt in a generation's time. They will influence how the community relates to itself. We are on an unashamed mission to fertilize not just tolerance – because that's co-existence – but respect for difference throughout the community" (Stowe-Lindner, interviewed in Shaviv 2012).

However, such propagation of pluralism and inclusivity is denigrated by some Orthodox leaders who fear a disparaging of Orthodox values (e.g. Belovski, 2009). Consequently, JCoSS has been treated with suspicion by members of the Orthodox community, who fear weakening commitment to *halakhah* and the facilitation of intermarriage through the school's admittance of non-halakhic pupils (Shaviv, 2012):

"I've had some very fierce conversations within the Orthodox world, like I've had conversations with various rabbis who have said "We will not encourage our congregants to send their kids to your school," because it's more than a tension, it's just, the notion of pluralism is foreign, you know, I might as well be saying that I'm giving them a Christian education, because according to Orthodoxy and Orthodox doctrine there is an ultimate truth, there is a right and a wrong, there is a black and a white, and so their truth is the ultimate, absolute truth, whereas what I'm saying is there are multiple truths and we respect all of those multiple truths, so the Orthodox community find it incredibly challenging" (Deputy Headteacher).

Therefore, although JCoSS aims to cater for Orthodox religious needs (5.4) and is avowedly cross-communal rather than Progressive, its validation of self-identified but non-halakhic Judaism reveals an impasse in the conceptualisation of Jewish identity. Whereas some Orthodox families were perceived as desiring all pupils' adherence to certain components of a 'Jewish' identity, JCoSS' permissiveness towards alternative, reduced or *non*-practice (see Section 5.4.1) jeopardised its status as a Jewish school in their eyes:

"Overall, the feeling we get from some Orthodox parents is the school is not, well to use the shorthand, the school is not 'Kosher' enough, I mean it *is* Kosher enough but it's not *Jewish* enough, it doesn't *require* enough in terms of Jewish practice whilst in school to satisfy *some* of those parents, but having said that, 30 per cent of children are affiliated to the United Synagogue, and, you know, I very much believe that we *do* cater, we don't oblige anyone to do it but we will cater for it where there is sufficient demand" (Headteacher).

Accordingly, a few Orthodox rabbis demonstrated Orthodoxy's reluctance to perceive JCoSS as a Jewish school:

"They're teaching Reform and Liberal doctrine as an alternative and we would say that that's not something I suppose that Orthodoxy believes in … how do you

teach that on the same level as teaching Orthodox beliefs?" (Rabbi, Orthodox synagogue 1).

Consequently, Orthodox rabbis often perceived it easier to present their faith in *non-Jewish* schools where 'alternative' forms of Jewishness were not privileged:

"I go into the local *non*-Jewish schools, you know, to do assemblies" (Rabbi, Orthodox synagogue 3).

"The engagement with the Orthodox is inevitably more difficult because their view of pluralism is different from everybody else's view of pluralism, and it's a view of pluralism that I entirely respect, but for *them*, it would be easier for them to go into a non-Jewish school and talk about Judaism than it would be for them to come *here* and talk about Orthodoxy" (Headteacher).

Until recently the result was a reluctance amongst Orthodox rabbis to visit JCoSS in a rabbinical capacity. This highlights an intriguing tension in world Jewry, in which Orthodox Jews often privilege non-Jewish groups above those who represent (self-identifying) movements they do not validate (see Shaffir, 1995). Indeed, a form of internal 'othering' is apparent, by which (official) Orthodox Judaism presents non-Orthodoxy (represented by JCoSS) as an external threat, at the same time as the latter perceives itself as central to Judaism and hence connected to this in-group. Given such denominationalism, alongside the wider impacts of R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS (5.2.1), Jewish schools (and JCoSS in particular) appear to represent a proxy for the state of Anglo-Jewry; as Randall (1997, p.61) argues, education can "function as a cultural flashpoint where many of the underlying social tensions surface and are played out."

Certainly, rather than necessarily facilitating a reshaping of Jewish identity and community relations, JCoSS' school leaders were disappointed that many Orthodox rabbis still appear to feel uncomfortable engaging with the school, unwilling to be associated with or have any personal influence upon the space:

"I had an Orthodox rabbi come and have a meeting with me here, one of the local rabbis, to talk about whether or not he would feel yet ready to come into the school and I took him on a little tour … and we walked past two or three classrooms along this corridor, and his kids from his community saw him and they were *so* excited, and he was a little bit overwhelmed that here were his kids from his congregation, waving and so excited and thrilled to see him, and he had to sort of slink out and won't come and do anything here, you know, it's a shame for *them*" (Deputy Headteacher).

Whilst none of the rabbis interviewed expressed any personal antipathy towards the school, it may be posited that the aversion of some of their peers is rooted in a sense of guilt about being seen to condone the school's pluralism, with potential implications for their ability to personally represent their more restrictive forms of Jewishness, whether in their synagogue or in other spaces such as JCoSS. Their stigmatisation of JCoSS may also affect the identity construction of the school's Orthodox Jewish pupils, as they face contradictory messages regarding JCoSS' Jewish 'status' and what it means to be Jewish more generally, possibly fostering a perception that the exclusivity of Orthodox Judaism is indeed incongruent with JCoSS' inclusivity and forcing them to decide upon their preferred future affiliation. Several parents also recognised that JCoSS is yet to enjoy the same status as other Jewish secondary schools amongst members of the Orthodox community:

"I know many people who wouldn't send their kids to JCoSS, even people who are not as observant as we are, I think there is a slight fear factor when it comes to ideas of pluralism and the whole concept of cross-communal … I think that the United Synagogue establishment has discouraged people from looking at JCoSS" (James).

Indeed, amongst those Orthodox parents attending the school, some demonstrated resistance to the school's provision of egalitarian (mixed-gender) Rosh Chodesh services (4.2.2), given their incompatibility with the traditional forms of practice to which they adhered (see Section 4.2.1):

"I mean it's maybe a little thing but we got an email last week for Rosh Chodesh,
if you want mothers and daughters to read from the *Torah*, that was not for me,
that's just me personally, I know this sounds very sexist, but I just don't want
that (Leah).

Thus, even though pupils are not forced to attend such additional provision, some parents
perceived that its very presence necessarily marginalises Orthodox perspectives, again
stimulating them to doubt JCoSS' 'Jewishness.'

Nevertheless, whilst tensions and disagreements clearly remain, many Orthodox
rabbis appear to have become open to greater engagement with JCoSS. Indeed, the
popularity of JCoSS amongst Orthodox parents has been recognised by some Orthodox
rabbis, facilitating thawing between school and synagogue:

"We're working on it together to get a better working relationship with JCoSS,
before it opened, the United Synagogue stood very firm against it, that it
shouldn't open, that it would be detrimental to the Jewish community; now that
it *has* opened, and the facts on the ground are that 50, 60, whatever per cent of
our kids are *going* to JCoSS, well then, you know, we have to now confront it
head-on, we can't just pretend that it's not happening … I wouldn't want the
United Synagogue to turn around in 20 years' time and say "Well where did 50
per cent of our membership go?" "The answer is they went to JCoSS because
there was no support and love for them"" (Rabbi, Orthodox synagogue 1).

Hence a pragmatic decision is involved in acknowledging JCoSS' popularity amongst
Orthodox parents, with support rather than condemnation coming to represent a more
plausible strategy to encouraging their continued denominational affiliation. This rabbi felt
that the solution to questions of pluralism is rabbinic participation in Rosh Chodesh services,
enabling Orthodox beliefs to be presented to Orthodox pupils, rather than Orthodox Judaism
being viewed as one option amongst many in front of a pluralistic audience:

"We're gearing towards going in for the Rosh Chodesh assemblies, *as opposed*
to the general assemblies, because the general assemblies, one week you'll have

an Orthodox rabbi, the next week you might have a Liberal minister, and I think
the concern is, again you're making the children think that Liberal, you know,
they're all alternatives for each other" (Rabbi, Orthodox synagogue 1).

However, challenges in convincing other Orthodox rabbis to validate the school remain, and
even Orthodox rabbis open to interacting with JCoSS often feel obligated by the United
Synagogue to maintain a low profile:

"I have gone into JCoSS twice but it had to be under the radar, just readings, not
to speak because I don't think the United Synagogue would want that [… there
are rabbis who] still don't think we should have any engagement with JCoSS"
(Rabbi, Orthodox synagogue 1).

Thus, misgivings still exist between Orthodox rabbis and JCoSS, with many fearing
reputational damage if they are seen as condoning pluralist Judaism, even whilst others do
not personally share Orthodox Judaism's 'official' objections. Indeed, JCoSS has attempted
to demonstrate its inclusivity of Orthodox Judaism, but many Orthodox Jews (including
rabbis) appear to remain hesitant of its pluralism. Feeder schools represent an important
vehicle for the shaping of pupil cohorts and thus ensuring that children from particular Jewish
(educational) backgrounds are included, as the following section illustrates.

5.2.3 Feeder schools
Secondary schools in England are commonly supported by a network of feeder primary
schools that facilitate pupils' transition from Year 6 to 7 within the local area. Consequently,
the pupils admitted by JCoSS are partially dependent upon admissions at primary level.
JCoSS currently has three feeder schools, two of which also define themselves as 'pluralist'
(Clore Shalom School, Clore Tikva School) and the third more specifically as 'Progressive'
(Akiva School). In this sense, it may be expected that pupils from Clore Shalom and Clore
Tikva will represent similar levels of Jewish diversity to JCoSS, whereas Akiva draws
primarily upon Reform and Liberal Jewish families. Section 5.2.2 demonstrated the
suspicion with which JCoSS is treated by members of the Orthodox community, and the very
fact that self-identifying but non-halakhic Jews are considered Jewish at JCoSS may render

the school's ethos predominantly Progressive, further facilitated by the theoretical prioritisation of non-Orthodox pupils via its feeder schools. However, although this may appear to render the school predominantly Progressive, JCoSS' less insidious justification is that it aims to ensure that all forms of Jewishness are treated as valid in a context in which other Jewish secondary schools are reluctant – but obligated – to admit non-Orthodox families (5.2.1), to their perceived particularistic educational environments (4.2.1). In contrast, JCoSS aims to develop a pluralistic pupil body by combining substantial numbers of Progressive pupils with a 'sufficient' number of Orthodox Jews:

> "[We seek to ensure that pupil numbers] reflect the size of the community but *also* reflect the fact that we are the only school that specifically, you know, we are the only school where you could go as a Reform or Progressive Jew and be told "Your Judaism is entirely valid," so we have a duty to ensure that we have probably slightly *disproportionate* numbers of those families, and beyond that, to try to have *some* representation from both those to the right of that and those to the left of that, so it's not a precise science by any means and neither can we engineer it, we wouldn't want to engineer it, you know, we absolutely don't want to say "There's a quota for members of the United Synagogue," absolutely not at all, but we just want to be mindful of it because actually we think what we've got here is really quite special and quite precious, and it wouldn't work if there were *no* Orthodox families, and it wouldn't work if there were not enough Progressive families" (Headteacher).

Thus, although the school does not specifically ask prospective families for their Jewish affiliation, the school aims to subtly maintain pupil cohorts that reflect the diversity of Anglo-Jewry. Consequently, the governors, as the admitting authority of a voluntary-aided school,[71] are careful to attract a range of movements without permitting one to become (or be perceived as) dominant:

> "They have to be mindful of the admissions code and mindful of the law, but above all what they are trying to do is to make sure that we get the kind of

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[71] School Standards and Framework Act 1998 S.88.

community that we want, by which I mean, you know, they actually *want*, as far

as they can, to create a school community that is genuinely cross-communal, you

know, they don't want it to be too much skew … we know we've been very clear,

we are *not* a Reform school, we're not an anti-Orthodox school, we are genuinely

a cross-communal school" (Headteacher).

Feeder schools thus represent important means of ensuring this pluralism.

Certainly, feeder schools' role in shaping JCoSS' Jewish environment was identified by some pupils, who described fluctuating forms of affiliation and observance connected with the characteristics of the students admitted:

"I'd say [the lower years are] more Reform. But also I don't think it's always sort

of, that gradually they're more Reform; I think it varies year to year, it's just sort

of the pick of the bunch, it depends how many people from an Orthodox

background get brought in, because every year the admission changes, like with

what feeder schools, it just depends that year on what rules they set. So, like, I

think one year they got quite a lot from feeder schools, and there was sort of a

more Jewish identity if you will, but then, for example in my brother's year, he's

in Year 9, that it was quite a lot of people from non-Jewish schools so you sort

of, it seems very much more pluralistic than straight up" (Nathan, Year 12).

Hence Nathan perceived pupils from Jewish primary schools as contributing more clearly to the school's Jewish environment through *denominationalised* adherence to practice, whereas pupils from non-Jewish schools were more closely associated with greater diversity of expression, which he described as 'pluralistic.' Nathan also suggests here that Reform Jews can be dominant within the school community, facilitated by the feeder schools. Other pupils believed that JCoSS was becoming more 'Jewish' owing to the tightening of its admissions requirements necessitated by its desirability:

Seb (Year 12): "I think it's something like 60 per cent of the school *belongs* to

an Orthodox synagogue, and then *of* that 60 per cent you could probably find

maybe 10 per cent that actually observe full Orthodox custom, and then there's a

whole spectrum of people who would probably more identify as Reform, Liberal, secular, onwards, within that group, and then you've got the groups that are technically belonging to a Reform group and then would consider themselves different"/

Isaac: "I think our year especially is very diverse because, because it was a new school they didn't have too many applicants so they couldn't, like the lower years are a lot more Jewish."

Thus, as JCoSS has received greater numbers of applicants over time, it has become increasingly able to prioritise Jewish pupils rather than admitting substantial numbers of non-Jews. Whilst the perceived proportions of pupils representing each movement differed significantly amongst interviewees, the role of feeder schools in shaping JCoSS' school community was deemed significant.

However, feeder schools are not uncontroversial. Given fluctuating numbers of prospective pupils (whether in the three feeder schools or more broadly) and all local schools' relative popularity, as well as JCoSS' specific aims in welcoming the full range of Jewish denominations, the school must carefully (re)define its admissions practices over time. The growing popularity of many Jewish schools in the region has instigated a shortfall of places (Prever, 2013; Rocker, 2015), with many families struggling to attain a place at *any* desirable school for their children:

> "We are *phenomenally* highly oversubscribed, there's a massive problem at the moment, we've taken in our biggest year group ever this year" (Orthodox school 1).

Given such competition at secondary level,[72] feeder school places are highly sought as means of 'guaranteeing' children's long-term Jewish education. Indeed, although Barnet London Borough Council (2016) – as JCoSS' local authority – organises the allocation of school places rather than this responsibility falling to the school, the fact that at present "a third of the year group at each of the feeder schools has a guaranteed place [at JCoSS], *on top of* any

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[72] As illustration, JCoSS received 672 applications for entry to Year 7 in 2015, with only 180 places available (Barnet London Borough Council, 2016).

siblings" (Headteacher) illustrates the value of feeder primary school places.[73] Consequently, some parents made a strategic decision to apply for Jewish primary school in order to increase their child's admissions prospects at a Jewish secondary school in the future, believing that the alternative options at secondary level were more limited:

> "We felt if they're going to a Jewish primary it might be easier to get into a Jewish secondary, knowing what was to come, there just wasn't much out there" (Sarah).

Yet, by restricting school places to just a few feeder schools, JCoSS' Jewish community could become less heterogeneous than may be expected of a cross-communal school. Moreover, given the recent establishment of further Jewish primary schools, JCoSS' leadership is aware that "there's no way we can make them all feeder schools or we'll just be a total closed shop" (Headteacher). Therefore, and controversially given its burgeoning popularity, JCoSS was at the time of the fieldwork seeking to sever its links with these primary schools over the following years in order to increase its openness to the wider Jewish community, including Orthodox families who may find it difficult to attain a place at the feeders:

> "Over time we've recognised that actually if we kept those feeder schools with guaranteed places, we would end up in a situation where nobody else would be able to get a place, we ended up I think with six, once we'd given places to siblings and to the feeder schools we only had six places left, and the risk there was, there's a twofold risk: risk one was nobody would apply at all and then we'd end up not being able to fill the places, because people just give up on the school, but secondly, that actually that *could* end us up squeezing out the Orthodox or at least squeezing them out from ever considering us as a school, so we took the decision to start limiting, gradually over time to start limiting the number who would have a guaranteed place, we started off limiting it to 30 places per year,

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[73] For the 2016 Year 7 intake, 42 of JCoSS' 180 available places were allocated to Jewish children attending the three primary schools, and a further 77 places available for Jewish siblings. Five places were given to pupils with statements of special educational needs (SEN), one to a pupil with Jewish social or medical needs, and 18 were allocated on the basis of distance. Only 37 places remained for 'other Jewish children' (Barnet London Borough Council, 2016).

then 20 per year, in addition to the siblings, and the direction of travel is to
actually remove the feeder schools altogether" (Headteacher).

Unsurprisingly, this proposal to remove the feeder schools was not welcomed by parents of
children already within them (see Oliver, 2015; Rocker, 2016), who feared the loss of their
relative advantage:

> "I suppose predictably, the parents at the feeder schools have said, you know,
> "This is really really bad news for us," you know, "we went to these feeder
> schools upon the expectation that we would have a kind of guaranteed ticket to
> ride through to JCoSS, and, you know, we're unhappy that that's now been taken
> away, albeit gradually," whereas the families who are *not* at feeder schools say
> "Well why can't we go to a lottery straight away?" you know, "It's clearly unfair
> that just because you managed to get into [Jewish primary school] you therefore
> have a guaranteed ticket to ride," so there is strong feeling on both sides"
> (Headteacher).

JCoSS has subsequently undertaken a consultation process regarding its Year 7 and Year 12
admissions policies, placing particular attention on the feeder school issue (JCoSS, 2017c).
The addition of five feeder places for pupils at a fourth primary school was mooted,
accompanied by the reduction of proximity place numbers, a policy proposed as a means of
protecting JCoSS' pluralist intake given the expected opening of at least one new Modern
Orthodox Jewish free school, which would theoretically create numerous new Jewish school
places in the area (JCoSS, 2017c). Following the failure of both free school applications,
JCoSS' governors have in fact opted to maintain a similar admissions policies as before, with
guaranteed feeder places at only the original three feeder primary schools and no change to
current proximity place numbers (JCoSS, 2017c). Although it is important to acknowledge
that some primary school students will inevitably move to other secondary schools through
choice, it is apparent then that feeder schools are seen to play a significant role in shaping the
secondary school community, rendering admissions policies highly contested. The
remainder of this chapter extends the discussion to JCoSS' efforts at constructing a pluralist
educational space, focusing first on matters of denominational relations.

5.3 Denominational relations

It has been recognised that JCoSS' inclusivity of varying forms of Jewishness distinguishes it from other Jewish secondary schools, which are Orthodox in ethos and often exclusive (whether through highly stringent religious admissions criteria or provision of a solely Orthodox curriculum) to non-halakhic and non-Orthodox Jews. Furthermore, JCoSS has faced challenges in appealing to Orthodox community leaders (at the same time as many Orthodox pupils send their children to the school) and through its usage of feeder schools, has attempted to shape its school community to some extent. JCoSS' role in stimulating denominational relations will be illustrated here. Section 5.3.1 highlights the benefits for intra-faith relations instigated by the congregation of Jews of differing forms of observance within a space supportive of Jewish diversity, and Section 5.3.2 demonstrates how JCoSS facilitates self-identification rather than restrictive forms of ascription. The ways in which 'diversity' was schematised also varied across Jewish schools, reflecting how denomination does not represent the only additional descriptor of one's Jewishness (5.3.3). Nevertheless, Section 5.3.4 acknowledges how the coalescing of diverse forms of Jewishness has also brought challenges over Jewish identity and practice. As a result, a valuable contribution to the faith school literature is made through this analysis of *intra*-faith dynamics.

5.3.1 Improving denominational relations

Many faith school critics suggest that these institutions segregate pupils, restrict intercultural contact and thus prevent them from building meaningful relationships with members of other religions, possibly even developing an intolerance of them (Bald et al., 2010; Cantle, 2016). Although this view has been contested by some academics (Barker and Anderson, 2005; Flint, 2007, 2009), it remains pervasive amongst faith schools' opponents. However, it cannot be assumed that the simple process of admitting different children from different religions axiomatically improves intergroup relations[74] (Donnelly and Hughes, 2006; Yablon, 2013), and by the same token, that separation automatically results in intolerance (Short, 2003b). Research into pupil dynamics has revealed that pupils often choose individuals with similar cultural backgrounds or forms of religious observance as friends (Moody, 2001; Baerveldt et al., 2004; Cheadle and Schwadel, 2012), regardless of school

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[74] See also criticisms of the 'contact hypothesis' (e.g. Connolly, 2000; Dixon et al., 2005; Valentine, 2008).

environment, and the discrimination experienced by minority racial, religious and ethnic groups in multicultural schools (4.3.2) would relatedly suggest that intergroup contact does not axiomatically reduce prejudice. Rather, the quality of contact needs to be acknowledged (Pettigrew, 1998), and as research into 'micropublics' indicates, the acknowledgement of 'other' groups' legitimacy and their access to particular spaces may enable improved relationships via everyday encounters (Amin, 2002; Selim, 2015; see also Section 4.3.5).

Several media articles reveal the exclusivity of (Orthodox) Jewish schools towards other self-identifying Jews (Shaviv, 2012; Kessler, 2013), and the forthright denominationalism of many Jewish schools has been acknowledged (5.2.1):

"[Pupils here are] meant to be Orthodox Jews, not Reform" (Orthodox School 1).

In contrast, JCoSS was widely deemed facilitative of *intra*-faith cohesion. First, each mainstream Jewish movement is well-represented at the school, as illustrated by the Deputy Headteacher's description of the Year 7 demographics: [75]

"About 30 per cent, maybe 25-30 per cent are United Synagogue kids, about 25 per cent are Reform, about 30 per cent are Masorti" (Deputy Headteacher).

Nonetheless, the mere presence of pupils of varying movements is inadequate in defining a school as 'pluralist'; rather, a school's active validation of different perspectives towards Jewish identity and Judaism is of greater salience. Pupils who had attended other, Orthodox Jewish schools in the past believed that this culture represented a distinguishing characteristic of JCoSS:

"You can speak to anyone, like, [previous Orthodox school] you couldn't really do that, I have friends from there and they told me how different it was and they were like "Oh my God," like, "we can't speak to them," but here we can, I prefer that" (Claudia, Year 12).

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[75] It is important to acknowledge that some families are not affiliated with a denomination, but such statistics indicate remarkable evenness and all year groups were perceived as largely similar in the cohorts represented.

Indeed, the families involved at JCoSS deemed the school (and themselves) open to all forms and extents of Jewish (religious or ethnic) practice (4.2.1), creating a non-judgemental school environment conducive of greater interaction and communication between individuals representing different movements (or indeed no movement). In relation, the school's Jewish Education curriculum encourages pupils to question and constantly (re)define their place within the faith through the teaching of diverse strands of Judaism, rather than imposing a singular conception of 'Jewishness.' The aim is for pupils to see their Jewish identities as personally meaningful:

> "We've got to not just present a single, monolithic view as the Jewish way, but a whole pluralism of different Jewish ways […] we're not saying "Here's the rules, some people follow it and some people don't," or "Here are the rules, if you don't follow them you're a bad Jew," of course not, but it is "Here's how different traditions have interpreted these over the centuries, and now let's talk about "Why do we have a non-observant Orthodox but a highly observant Reform?"" or whatever it might be, so those conversations take place within the classroom" (Headteacher).

Given the school's additional espousal of inclusive and 'unobjectionable' Jewish values such as *menschlichkeit* (4.4.2), JCoSS supports different forms of Jewishness through its ethos and teaching whilst enabling pupils to interrelate in a school environment that is Jewishly-diverse.

Parents at JCoSS were almost unanimously positive about the school's intra-Jewish diversity and pluralistic ethos, viewing these as facilitative of the sharing of differing perspectives:

> "I know that my son has friends whose families really don't do very much outside of school in a Jewish way, but they do want them to learn and be part of that community, and you know, that's fine if someone doesn't want to go to synagogue very often or they're working or they have other commitments, but I think that's great that the children can still be included and learn and that it doesn't matter which grade of observance you are" (Abby).

In contrast, the other Jewish secondary schools were widely perceived as providing a particularistic (or even fundamentalist) form of Orthodox Judaism incongruent with these parents' desires for an ethos of acceptance and Jewish diversity:

"It's understood that although many of the people who go there have an extremely wide of observance or interest in Jews' things, they're only taught one version of the story, which is United" (Debbie).

"We walked into their Jewish Studies department, so they were kind of showing you around, "This is the Science room," "English room," and then they opened the doors and there is a lady in a *sheitel* and a man with a beard and with black hat, and I was like "No-ho-ho! No way! That's not going to happen!" There's nothing, there was no diversity, *that* was it, *they* were the Jewish department" (Letitia).

Although Orthodox School 4 demonstrated certain amenability to diverse strands and performances of Judaism ("Collective worship is offered, but students have to want to take it up, they don't have to do it"), its ethos and curriculum remains discernibly Orthodox ("[Jewish Studies] would always be Orthodox as a starting point"), and so JCoSS' pluralism and internal diversity renders it highly distinctive. Reflecting the basic premise of the contact hypothesis (see Section 4.3.5), some parents believed that their children's exposure to differing levels of observance within an inclusive space would increase tolerance of 'alternative' forms of Jewish observance and improve intra-faith relations:

"I guess like in world politics, the way you break down stigma and prejudice, ignorance, is just by *being* with people who are from different walks of life, so I think it's positive in that way" (Letitia).

In contrast to Valins' (2003a) claim that some Jewish pupils feel awkward when socialising with fellow Jews who possess varying levels of adherence to religious laws such as *Kashrut*, pupils claimed to enjoy learning from varying forms of practice, enabling them to perceive

themselves as part of a unified (school) Jewish community whilst distinguishing particular denominational performances of their Jewishness:

"I think we're all the same with the religion, but we just do them in different ways, like Reform, that I'm from, we do way more singing than actually reading in Hebrew, and Orthodox, they do more Hebrew and less singing, but it just depends on the synagogue, but actually we are Jews, and we're all exactly the same, just with different beliefs and sayings" (Thea, Year 8).

"It's good to see how the services differ from when I maybe go to my friend's bat mitzvah and she's at a different *shul* that's maybe Masorti or Orthodox or Liberal" (Lily, Year 8).

Pupils who do not adhere to *Kashrut*, for example, were said to value the learning about Jewish food laws and supporting their friends in practising their personalised identities:

"I think that's actually quite healthy, because there's a real mix of kids and I really like that some of them are Kosher, some of them aren't Kosher, we adapt to what we need to do, you know, [daughter] will tell me "This one's Kosher," you know, "can we have Kosher sausages for lunch or dinner, or could we just do pasta?" I like that, I like that about them, that there's a real mix of kids" (Rita).

The presence of these pupils who do not adhere to *Kashrut* outside of school also instigates those who do keep Kosher to actively contemplate and (re)define their personal practices:

"My children keep Kosher and many of their friends don't, and so they do have to think about it and they do have to make a choice every time" (Isabella).

The notion of 'identity work' is useful here in illustrating how continuous boundary-defining and -policing is used to construct a situated and collectively-negotiated identity that provides individuals with "a sense of belonging, feelings of personal significance, a sense of location

relative to others, a sense of continuity and coherence, and feelings of worth" (Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock, 1996, p.122). Pupils' autonomy to express their identities as desired thus represents an important aspect of JCoSS' approach to Judaism (see Section 7.2.2), with the school seeking to empower pupils to "make informed choices[76] about how to live their lives" rather than "wrapping up teenage minds in cotton wool" (Stowe-Lindner, interviewed in Shaviv 2012). Indeed, JCoSS can be said to facilitate 'generative pluralism,' in which pupils develop their identities through active, respectful interaction and collaboration with those whose beliefs may differ (Shevitz and Wasserfall, 2009), rather than viewing them as having the potential to dilute their own practices as Braverman (1981) argues. Consequently, JCoSS was viewed as an environment in which self-identification, rather than external ascription as halakhic (or not) was celebrated, as the following section highlights.

5.3.2 Self-identification rather than halakhic (non-)ascription

Through enabling all pupils to feel part of an inclusive school culture regardless of identification, JCoSS aims to ensure that pupils develop the confidence and pride in their personal (Jewish) identities to be able to engage with non-Jews in other spaces as well (Wright, 2003; Halstead, 2009). As one teacher explained:

> "I want them to know that firstly that they can be part of a culture that is really inclusive, when for many it's quite exclusive, and also that they are knowledgeable about the world, that they know beyond North London or Essex what's out there, and that they feel confident that they can mix with *all* types of people, not just Jews" (Gary).

This is in contrast to the particularism and exclusivity perceived to exist in other Jewish schools (4.2.1). Certainly, JCoSS appears to be reflective of a wider shift in the Jewish community towards self-identification. This was highlighted by some sixth formers who disparaged Jewish schools that had favoured halakhic definitions of Jewishness prior to R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS, given their personal experiences of rejection owing to their non-halakhic status:

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[76] 'Informed choice' was a term also used frequently by the current Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher, reflecting its centrality to the school's ethos.

Nicola (Year 12): "I got refused for [School B] I think,"/

Seb: "Yeah."

Nicola: /"because I wasn't 'Jew enough' to go there *[chuckles]*, so."

Seb: "Yeah, I wasn't, I wasn't allowed into [School A] or [School C]"/

Nicola: "Yeah."

Seb: /"when I applied; I put [School C] down but I didn't get let in because they were just like "You're not a Jew," and I was like, "Well, *technically*…""

Nicola: *[Laughs]*.

Interviewer: "How did that make you feel?"

Seb: "It's, well, it *did* feel stupid because my mum converted, she was a Christian, now she's a Jew, but she converted through means of Reform synagogue and not Orthodox, and [School C] were like "Well she's clearly not Jew-*enough*", and it was just, like, "What is a Jew-, what *level* of Jewish should I, should I be like a Level *4* Jew to come to [School 3]?""/

Nicola: *[Laughs]*.

Seb: /"So like, sometimes"/

Isaac: "You have to be *this* Jew!" *[Gestures height with hand]*

Seb: "You have to be *this* Jew to ride this school!"

[Isaac and Nicola laugh].

Thus, whereas Orthodox schools were perceived as requiring a certain (halakhic) 'level' of Jewishness, in accordance with the 'traditional' approach to Jewish identity research that seeks to 'measure' Jewish identity based upon particular normative (and Orthodox-oriented) criteria (Zelkowicz, 2013; Samson et al., 2017), JCoSS was deemed more accepting of individuals whose Jewish identities were non-halakhic, including those who had converted or were the children of converts. One teacher also illustrated how pupils at JCoSS generally demonstrate a disregard for *halakhah* as the sole determinant of Jewishness:

"I've got two girls in my class, and they were talking the other day, and one didn't know that the other one's mum was a convert, and they've known each other, they went to secondary school together at another Jewish school for five years and have known each other for two extra years on top of that, so I don't think

they care actually, I think it's older generations that care more, I don't think they care as much" (Gary).

Hence a reworking of Jewish identity is underway, in which pupils demonstrate less particularistic Jewish identities than older generations and instead desire a pluralistic range of perspectives from which to choose and derive personal meaning (Gross and Rutland, 2014a). Indeed, these pupils felt that JCoSS had positioned itself as part of a 'new' paradigm that recognises self-identification as a valid form of Jewishness:

> "Sometimes I feel like, that a very sort of, maybe adult way of looking at religion is that there are levels of it, as opposed to, I think, a view that is coming in more for our age group now, and I guess youth groups are trying to just instil in young people, that all ways of practising are valid, and you can do whatever yours is and still call yourself a Jew, or not call yourself a Jew, but it's up to the person's own perspective if they are or not" (Seb, Year 12).

Consequently, JCoSS was viewed favourably for its openness to 'alternative' but nonetheless 'authentic' forms of Jewish identity. Reflecting the school's validation of personally-meaningful Jewish identities, 'diversity' was conceptualised in other ways as the following section highlights.

5.3.3 Other conceptualisations of 'diversity'

Sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 illustrated how pupils at JCoSS encounter some degree of diversity as they interact with students whose beliefs and practices may differ significantly. Rather than expectations of Jewish practice being imposed upon pupils, they are enabled to interact first-hand with others' forms of engagement and personalise their own performances of Jewishness. However, diversity was not merely conceptualised as Jewish denominationalism (see also Kress, 2016). For instance, JCoSS was perceived as open to 'alternative' forms of Jewish family and identity and thus diverse in terms of marriage and sexuality:

> "Obviously kids at school are all Jewish, although there's a lot of mixed marriages, and I'm not even just talking about one partner's Jewish and the other

is Christian perhaps, we have same-sex marriages as well, and I'm all for that"
(Abby).

The presence of these families enabled such parents to feel that their children were being educated in an environment marked by some form of diversity, somewhat assuaging their concerns of segregation (4.3.5), even if the school represented a predominantly Jewish space. Moreover, JCoSS' (2014) 'Sex, Relationships and Family Life Education (SRFLE) Policy' claims to promote "sensitive, honest and balanced consideration of sexual orientation" and "actively tackle[s] homophobic bullying," reflecting the school's receptiveness to sexual diversity.[77] SRFLE includes teaching pupils "about reproduction, sexuality, sexual health, and relationships including within families," although parents are able to withdraw their children where the content is not included in the National Curriculum,[78] or request that their children are taught in groups segregated by gender where this is "deemed appropriate by the leadership of the school" (JCoSS, 2014). Whilst Progressive Judaism is theologically more open to mixed marriage (Gordon, 2014) and homosexuality (Raphael, 2003; Schnoor, 2006) than Orthodox Judaism, it is important to acknowledge that these identities cannot be considered axiomatically fused with one's 'Jewishness.' Rather, individuals negotiate these identities in individual ways that may not be contingent on denomination (Schnoor, 2006), illustrating how a person may demonstrate numerous identities and express them in different ways depending on the context (Pratt, 1999; Faulkner and Hecht, 2011). Furthermore, whereas some parents in the present study claimed to fear intermarriage as a potential, undesirable by-product of the school's openness to 'diversity' (4.3.4), the school was also viewed by one parent as facilitative of more open attitudes towards intermarriage given its legitimisation of diverse expressions of Jewishness and welcoming of non-Jewish parents:

"I think it's easier nowadays, *because* of schools like JCoSS, definitely … in that, you know, you *can*, it's OK to have, for the kids to have one parent that's not

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[77] Most of the SRFLE curriculum is delivered through *Kvutzah* (akin to Personal, Social and Health Education) lessons and directed by the Head of this subject, in conjunction with the Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for the school's 'Jewish Ethos'; the remainder of the programme is provided in Science or Jewish Studies lessons, where applicable (JCoSS, 2014).
[78] Education Act 1996, S.405.

Jewish and one parent that is, and that they still can do whatever, they can pick and choose almost, do whatever they want of it" (Claire).

In these ways, JCoSS was favoured for enabling young people to recognise cultural *similarities* with non-Jews, rather than differences, enabling them to become receptive to alternative viewpoints whilst also contributing towards their Jewish identity construction.

Yet, in spite of the fact that all of the Jewish schools contained almost exclusively self-identified Jewish pupils, senior staff in the Orthodox Jewish schools also highlighted the 'diversity' of their pupil cohorts. Whereas diversity at JCoSS was described on the basis of denominational affiliation, sexuality and special educational needs, the Orthodox schools schematised diversity in terms of religious *practice* including varying levels of adherence to *Kashrut* and religious clothing:

"If I were to take you around and ask Sixth Formers what they love about this school, they will tell you the diverse range of religiosity in this school, so whilst everybody is Orthodox, there's such a broad spectrum, and that's where the kids learn the basics and the fundamentals of respect for those who are different from them, and that gives them a very firm foundation to go out into wider society, and interact with people who are even more different from them […] we have students who will eat food from the London *Beth Din*[79] and the United Synagogue *Kashrut* list, and we've got kids here who will only eat *Kedassia*; we have some kids who will drink milk from Tesco's, others who will only have *Cholov Yisrael*" (Orthodox School 2).

A second school emphasised diversity in terms of religious practice and knowledge as opposed to religion *per se*:

"It's a massively diverse range of kids here, from kids who will just about keep *Shabbat*, to those who are very very very religious […] some kids come in reading Hebrew, some do not, some come in with a very good basic knowledge

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[79] Jewish court of law. The London Beth Din has its own Kashrut Division and claims to represent "the leading UK authority on Jewish Dietary Laws" (Kashrut London Beit Din, 2014).

of *Gemara*, others do not, some know very little about the *chagim*, about the festivals, others know a lot, and we have to deal with that, that's our job, because we're *so* diverse, we're so broad, we'll have a lot of different kids come in" (Orthodox School 1).

Even the strictly Orthodox school was said to demonstrate some level of diversity (based on religious practice) in its pupil cohort, regardless of the fact that all pupils were *Charedi* (see also Perry-Hazan, 2014):

"There are *greyer* boys rather than black and white ones, but it's a holy school for holy boys […] we've got boys who go off to *yeshiva* at the end of Year 9, they'd be the right, and then we've got boys at the left or boys who would *not* pray in the regular kind of very *Charedi shul*s, or we have *slightly* more left: they're not carrying the *eruv*, they might not eat *Kedassia* meat, those kind of things which you'd find amongst other *Charedi*" (Strictly Orthodox School).

It is plausible that these Orthodox schools schematised diversity in terms of religiosity because they are reluctant to validate the Jewish 'identity' of non-Orthodox Jews given Orthodox Judaism's disavowal of pluralism (Sacks, 1993; Conyer, 2011), and so Jewish diversity can only be understood in terms of differing levels of religious practice. Indeed, it was noteworthy that some of the school leaders in the Orthodox Jewish schools were unaware of the word 'movements' to describe Jewish denominations, viewing, it would appear, any non-Orthodox Jew as 'inauthentic.' Thus, the Orthodox schools in this study perceived themselves as facilitators of intra-faith engagement but did not describe this in denominational terms.

In these ways, the diversity that exists within faith schools ought to be acknowledged, as conceptualising these institutions as reflective of a singular faith and that contain pupils who all represent the school's ethos or majority religion has the effect of reifying the faith by bounding it instead of recognising students' (and teachers') fluid relationships with religion and culture. The following section illustrates how the commingling of individuals representing diverse forms of Jewishness has nevertheless produced challenges for Jewish identity.

5.3.4 Denominational challenges

As Section 5.3.1 explained, it cannot be assumed that contact necessarily improves community relations. Reflecting the boundary-drawing processes described in Section 5.2.1, some parents also desired the construction of certain boundaries between movements at JCoSS. In particular, several parents feared their children's exposure to perceived minimal levels of Jewish practice amongst their peers, inspiring them to reduce their faith involvement too. Importantly, whereas Orthodox Jews are frequently portrayed as more observant or practising than their Progressive counterparts (e.g. Liebman, 1989; James et al., 2014), this concern was not unidirectional. For instance, Orthodox Jewish girls are not traditionally expected to publically observe Jewish rituals, rendering Orthodox coming-of-age ceremonies more minimal than bat mitzvah ceremonies in other movements.[80] Some observant Progressive parents were disappointed that their daughters expressed a preference for the former, rather than a 'proper' bat mitzvah:

> "She doesn't really want to do the bat mitzvah in *shul*, she'd rather just do a *D'var Torah* at the party because some of her friends are doing that" (Sarah).

A second Progressive parent argued that her son had been influenced away from religious practice by children who choose not to practise their faith within a school context that emphasises pupil autonomy and hence optionality:

> "I'm not so sure that it's put across enough, too much is optional. Too many parents just won't take it up, and what I end up having to do is my son, a lot of his friends won't do those choices, and because he's of an age where he'll only do what his friends do, he refuses" (Alice).

Thus, although it is often suggested that Jewish friendships can strengthen young people's Jewish identification (e.g. Cohen, 2007; Fishman et al., 2012), researchers of Jewish schools less commonly acknowledge that they may also influence individuals away from their parents' conceptualisations of faith. Consequently, the mixing of Jewish movements in a

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[80] Nevertheless, the *Talmud* does not explicitly discuss bar or bat mitzvah ceremonies and so the latter appear not to be expressly forbidden, even if communal expectations vary (Weiss, 1990).

cross-communal environment has enabled pupils to develop a culture of 'least possible practice,' combining the more minimal practices of different movements, partly based on friendship groups as well as a general passivity to 'traditional' faith-based rituals. Prever (2013) has similarly suggested that some parents in Orthodox Jewish schools 'police' their children's friendships in order to ensure they are not offered *treif* food, reflecting wider concerns that parents can implicate their children's socialisation with certain peers at school and within their homes (Edmonds and Killen, 2009; Hollingworth and Williams, 2010; Windzio and Wingens, 2014), and demonstrating how the identity influences of parents and pupils may conflict (Fuligni, 1998; Özdikmenli-Demir and Şahin-Kütük, 2012). Some Orthodox parents were also disappointed that their daughters' coming-of-age ceremonies were not treated with the desired respect by Progressive children, given the comparably low levels of ritual performance:

"Because we belong to a United Synagogue she hasn't been able to, she didn't do as much for her bat mitzvah as the girls who were in a Reform synagogue, so the girls from the Reform synagogue do almost the same as a bar mitzvah boy, whereas [daughter 1] didn't, she did her *D'var Torah* and that was it, she wasn't allowed to, you know, go up to the *Torah* or anything like that, and there were a *few* occasions where the girls said to her "You didn't really do much for your bat mitzvah, did you? There wasn't much point for *that*?" so I suppose it's just about teaching them to respect people's identity and their views" (Beth).

Thus, although Orthodox girls who opt for *D'var Torah* are following their movement's practices, they may be treated as less 'Jewish' given the inferior levels of practice required of these occasions and the school's perceived dominance by Progressive Jews who favour *b'nei mitzvah*. As a result, whilst the school may instigate improved relations between movements, there remains the possibility that intergroup encounters reinforce uneven power relations, causing some expressions of Jewishness to be preferred to others.

Certainly, Progressive movements were generally perceived to dominate the school both numerically and culturally (5.2.3). Friendships were often described on denominational grounds and the school's ethos deemed 'Progressive' owing to its broad-mindedness:

"The school's quite Progressive in its attitudes … all of my friends, we all share the same things, the same social group, the same understanding of each other, and that I suppose can like influence our opinions of stuff" (Ryan, Year 12).

Such openness was simultaneously perceived as *un*-appealing to Orthodox parents, who were often 'othered' as intolerant of non-halakhic and Progressive Judaism, restricting the school's pluralism in reality:

"I think it excludes the Orthodox, because they want to be Orthodox … they're more closed-minded. I think there are very few Orthodox kids here, maybe some [but] I think they just don't want it" (Sarah).

Several Orthodox Jews accordingly believed themselves to represent a minority group:

"Being United, I think that puts us in a minority here" (Beth).

In particular, difficulties remain in integrating strictly Orthodox Jews under a single Jewish umbrella given their distinctive needs, resulting in a predominance of 'moderate' perspectives:

"I think most of the views are quite similar, I wouldn't, there's no one here that's particularly religious, I'd say the majority of people are Liberal or Reform … and there aren't really people here who would be for example from a *Hasidic* perspective, so we haven't got that kind of counteracting force in our debates, they're most, we've never, for example, we've never had a debate about if homosexuality is a sin, because there would be very few people in this school who would advocate for "It is a sin"" (Samantha, Year 10).

In this way, and contradicting some critics' assumptions of faith schools (e.g. De Ruyter and Miedema, 1996; McDonough, 1998), JCoSS represents liberal social values and marginalises 'extreme' views (see Rawls, 1971, 1985, 1988; 1993; Kymlicka, 1990). Mouffe (2005) and Swyngedouw (2014) convincingly argue that such consensual politics

restricts democratic debate, whilst Hayes-Conroy and Vanderbeck (2005) demonstrate the imposition of particular boundaries of 'acceptable' worldviews within an educational institution's 'culture,' encouraging students to place themselves in centrist positions, with the effect of marginalising more extreme viewpoints and limiting individuals' ability to develop their own identities through exploring others' perspectives. Although the absence of staunchly Orthodox voices at JCoSS appears to owe more to these families' avoidance of the school on matter of principle, it is apparent that its diversity of perspectives may be limited in practice. However, in spite of perceived Progressive dominance in the present study, most interdenominational discrimination was said to be performed by a minority of Orthodox pupils:

> "There is someone in my year, a couple of years ago I was talking to him about Judaism and he goes "Oh, well, what do *you* know, *you're* a Liberal Jew, you're not a proper Jew," and I was just like "Well, first of all I am a proper Jew and I see Judaism how, and like, I'm Jewish as *I* see fit, and I will do what I, like what I want within Judaism, because it's not *your* religion, it's *everyone's* religion"" (Matt, Year 10).

This reflects both a form of resistance to the pluralistic ethos of the school, and broader antipathy within Orthodox Judaism towards other movements. Indeed, although other internal divisions based upon political disagreements such as attitudes towards Israel and Zionism were also evidenced by parents and pupils, denominational disagreements were most salient.

Notably, a school policy once existed to dissuade interdenominational competition and discrimination. Nevertheless, reflecting how the school appears to be gradually improving interdenominational relations (as well as enjoying increasing 'buy-in' from the Jewish community), it has been removed. Indeed, most forms of 'rivalry' between movements were deemed harmless and could be tackled through low-level means of behaviour management:

> "We certainly originally kind of explicitly mentioned in our behaviour policy that along with, you know, sexism and racism and homophobia and all the rest of it,

we talked about the word, sort of 'supremacism,' by which we meant the idea that "*my* tradition is more important than *your* tradition" … we would deal with those sorts of things in line with the normal behaviour code, if it was grossly offensive then it would be the same as if someone had said something grossly, I don't know, sexist or racist or whatever, but generally speaking I think people just get the pluralist ethos and they just adapt accordingly, and there's also I'm sure a fair amount of common banter of that kind and a lot of those things can just be kind of corrected with a look or a good-humoured correction" (Headteacher).

Certainly, most parents of all movements claimed to be unconcerned by such issues, perceiving them to be rare and rooted in immaturity rather than genuine prejudice:

"There is even at JCoSS surprisingly enough, there is a small little set, a playground set who will turn round and call the Liberal and Reformers "fake Jews," it does happen, even in Year 7 … I think that *isn't* a pervading view, and it isn't one that's done very openly, people *know* it exists and they have their holier-than-thou syndrome; I'll say to [son], "Well it's Year 7, maybe they need that right now because they're a little bit unsure of themselves and how to mix with others, let's not decide that they're fundamentalists just yet!"" (Pippa).

Pupils also viewed incidents of discrimination towards alternative forms of Jewish practice and identity as unusual, and instead emphasised how the school environment fostered tolerance and supportiveness for different forms of Jewish expression:

"I don't really think there's, not like harsh competition, it's all friendly, I don't think we talk about it a lot, because we come to this school, because we know that it accepts everyone, I think everyone just accepts everyone and we get along like no matter what sort of denomination you are because that's what we learn about during our Jewish Ed.[81] lessons, like other denominations, we know what things they might have to do in comparison to us" (Lily, Year 8).

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[81] Jewish Education.

It is feasible that these exclusivist attitudes often reflect parental prejudices, hence by assembling diverse forms of Jewishness within an environment in which discussion and debate is encouraged, JCoSS appears to be playing an important role in shaping greater tolerance for alternative expressions. Relatedly, those pupils more open to varied forms of Jewishness are likely to have been influenced to some extent by their parents' attitudes, with the school *reinforcing* such amenability. Section 5.4 explores the challenges in providing a pluralistic curriculum and permitting equal expression of these diverse versions of Jewishness.

5.4 Pluralistic challenges

Geographers of religion are becoming increasingly interested in 'unofficially sacred sites' where religion is practised and negotiated (Kong, 2005, 2010; Brace et al., 2006), and as Section 2.4.2 illustrated, schools represent socially-constructed and thus highly politicised spaces that play significant roles in transmitting and shaping particular beliefs and values, whilst being simultaneously challenged by multiple forms of resistance. Section 5.4 demonstrates three challenges for JCoSS as a pluralist school in validating all forms of Jewishness as equal: the provision of pluralistic Jewish Education and religious practice; the usage of *kippot* as identity markers; and the challenges in coalescing contrasting forms and extents of adherence to *Kashrut* and *chagim*.

5.4.1 Jewish Education and Rosh Chodesh

Providing a pluralistic Jewish curriculum in terms of Jewish Education and religious worship represents a distinctive challenge for JCoSS. In order to meet the needs and expectations of practising families, the school provides religious services at Rosh Chodesh. However, reflecting the UK's Jewish population more broadly (Becher et al., 2002; Graham et al., 2014), only a minority of pupils at JCoSS are perceived to practise their faith regularly or consider themselves religious ("Maybe 2 to 5 per cent are actually practising … in, like, keep *Shabbat* in the traditional way" (Deputy Headteacher), and so a range of activities are offered that do not require religious involvement (see Section 4.2.2). The religious services are nevertheless intended to reflect the practices of the movement in question, facilitated by discussions with local rabbis, and appropriate pupil conduct is contingent on denomination:

"What we say is "If you have chosen to go to an Orthodox service then we would expect you to respect that tradition," so that would also apply, you know, if for example the particular Orthodox service that we were running had a *mechitza*, we wouldn't then allow a girl to say "Well look, it's my free choice, I'm going to go and sit on the boys' side," we say "Well no, the tradition that you've chosen to come to separates the seating and you have to respect that and you need to wear your *kippah*, or not wear it if you're a girl, and if that isn't what you're willing to do, then you need to choose a different service"" (Headteacher).

In this way, pupils are obligated to respect the expectations of their preferred denomination rather than enjoying unchecked agency to define their own practices within a service. Most questionnaire respondents were highly satisfied that JCoSS enables their children to celebrate their beliefs, with 41 per cent of questionnaire respondents arguing that the school operates 'very successfully' in this regard and a further 50 per cent claiming 'somewhat successfully' (Figure 6), whilst 79 per cent believed that JCoSS provides a sufficient amount of religious worship (Figure 7).

Figure 6: Parents' perceptions of JCoSS' success in enabling their children to celebrate their beliefs
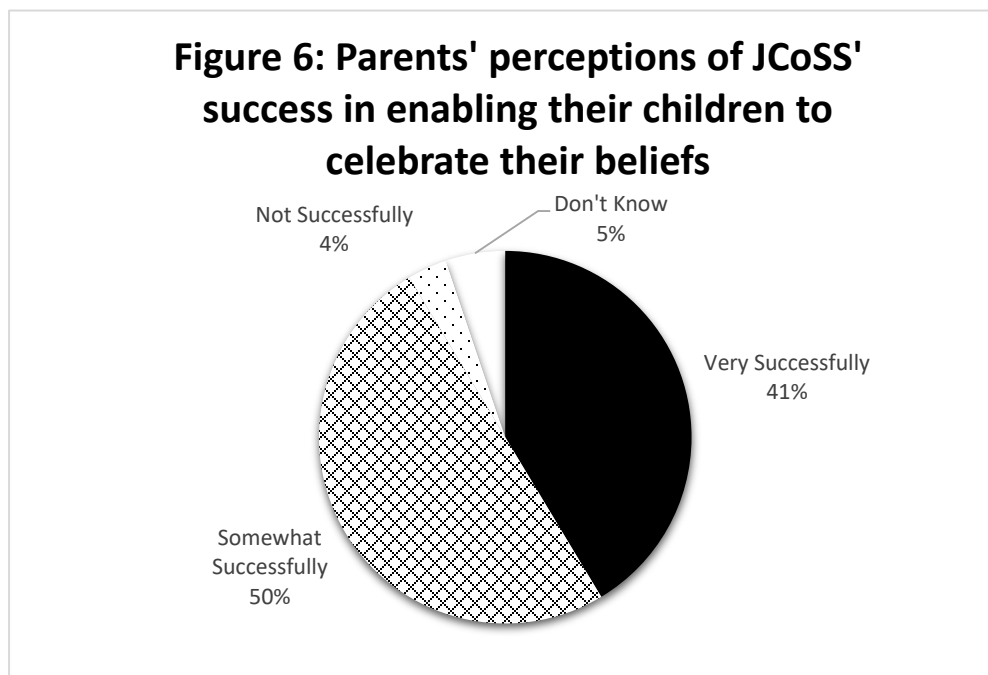
Figure 7: Parents' attitudes towards JCoSS' religious worship provision

Too much
2%

Too little
19%

About right
79%
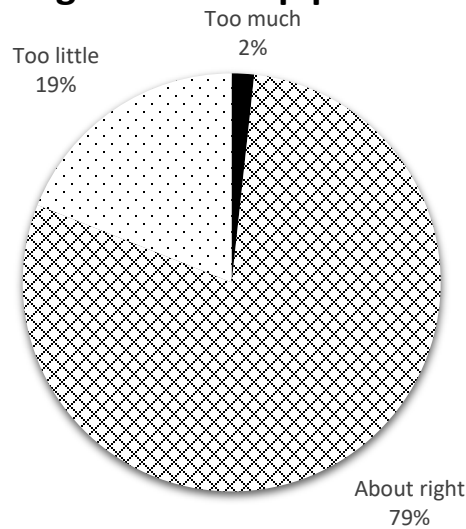
Nevertheless, difficulties occurred where parents' and pupils' desires conflicted. For instance, Charlotte desired her daughter's attendance at Orthodox Rosh Chodesh services in line with her beliefs, whereas her daughter sought to participate in an alternative movement:

"She's not very happy because I put her down for the Rosh Chodesh, for the religious bit, and she wasn't enamoured with that, but I said "But I don't really want you doing the non-Orthodox bit because we're not non-Orthodox, I wouldn't put you down for Reform because we're not"" (Charlotte).

Other parents intervened to determine their children's religious participation:

"My son did come home and say he didn't know which box to fill in, so he ticked 'spiritual' and we put him right [Orthodox] and he went and changed it the next day, so" *[chuckles]* (Talia).

Hence parents may attempt to prescribe their children's identity construction indirectly by socialising them within a particular denomination, but also directly through determining their involvement in a specific service. This reflects broader issues of (dis)engagement from religious education and worship in community, foundation and voluntary schools, with

Section 71 (1-2) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 unevenly affording parents the right to withdraw their children from these activities, but not the children themselves. Consequently, identity construction can become a contested issue within families where pupils' intended behaviours are not supported by their parents' expectations and interests. This also reflects a more general tendency acknowledged in Sections 4.4.2 and 5.3.4 in which parents seek to 'protect' a preferred Jewish identity from alternative manifestations, whilst valuing the school for its inclusivity of these different conceptualisations. A common result in such instances is the intentional curtailing of pupils' agency (Holloway and Valentine, 2000).

Rosh Chodesh celebrations also provided a paradox. The concept of celebrating the new month may seem benign and thus unobjectionable (see Section 4.4.2), but it is rooted in Orthodox practice rather than being typical of other movements. Thus, whilst pupils have a choice of service, they cannot choose to opt-out (an issue replicated in Jewish Education lessons),[82] reflecting the limits to pupil choice at the school:

"I think for Rosh Chodesh you should kind of be able to choose if you want to go or not, because, like, although I might choose *to* go, there might be some people that go who aren't that Jewish and don't feel that they *need* to celebrate the new month" (Lexie, Year 7).

"I think the thing with JCoSS right now is that, like, it's optional for a few things but all the important stuff is not optional; I think rather than, like, *forcing* us to do Jewish Ed., *forcing* us to sit through speakers that aren't very interesting, is to try and make these things *more* interesting, and then *offer* the option and more of us will take it" (Isaac, Year 12).

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[82] The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 S.69(1) requires that "religious education is given in accordance with the provision for such education included in the school's basic curriculum" in all community, foundation or voluntary schools. See also Schedule 19, S.4 of the same Act, which details the required provision for religious education in voluntary aided schools with a religious character.

Consequently, several pupils claimed that their involvement in 'Jewish' activities was compelled, instigating a sense of reluctance. In contrast, some observant parents perceived the school JCoSS as excessively permissive in its provision of religious practice:

> "JCoSS is not doing a lot on religious practice, I don't think there's a synagogue at JCoSS, or a room for prayer" (Isabella).

> "There isn't opt-in *shacharit*, and I don't mind there not being so much praying because it can be quite time-consuming in the school day actually sometimes, but they don't do *Birkat Hamazon* and I think they mark things in a very shallow way, but that's because it's pluralist … it's really to make everyone else feel comfortable because a lot of people there do absolutely nothing" (Madeleine).

Through such a 'soft' approach to Judaism, some feared that JCoSS' distinctiveness as a Jewish school was compromised, as its inclusivity precluded the development of a 'meaningful' core around which to unite:

> "There is a tendency to kind of be *so* open-minded, which is wonderful, but you can't grasp onto anything, so I'd love there to be something that's more in-depth" (Letitia).

These parents thus demonstrated concerns congruent with Gans' (1979) claim that American Jewish identity has become largely symbolic, privileging a loose cultural attachment rather than regular religious practice; an issue that will be explored in greater detail in Section 7.3.

It is important to acknowledge that efforts have been made to provide particular religious services for Orthodox pupils, but these have often been restricted by low rates of uptake:

> "We wanted to run a *Mincha* service, which we did, voluntarily of course, because everything religious is voluntary here apart from Jewish Ed., but there wasn't the take-up of numbers, and in the end you can't run something which is just non-viable" (Headteacher).

Reflecting Kress' (2016) findings in an American pluralist Jewish school, this reveals how 'choice' is contingent on critical mass, rather than being absolute, and in this sense one's decision to participate (or not) in a particular form of religious worship represents a microcosm of the fact that faith schools themselves only exist in areas with sufficient parental demand. As such, the successful operation of certain religious services is dependent on geography as well as the (not necessarily unrelated) presence of individuals seeking such forms of practice. Certainly, one student recognised that Orthodox services at Rosh Chodesh can suffer from low uptake due both to the relatively low critical mass of practising Orthodox pupils at JCoSS as well as a tendency for Orthodox pupils to gravitate towards services that do not correspond with their familial affiliations:

> "You very much see many more Reform or Liberal sort of Jewish people here, so although they offer the facilities for Orthodox, more religious sort of activities, they're just not filled, and so you sort of see, for example, when we used to have Rosh Chodesh[83] every month, and there'd be the opportunity for either an Orthodox, a Reform, or like a multi-faith singing service, you'd get so many more people running to the sort of the more Reform end … I think the school tried to be really pluralistic, but ultimately, it's not *that* pluralistic in reality because there are many many more Reform people here" (Nathan, Year 12).

In these ways, JCoSS' efforts to create a pluralistic environment have been somewhat compromised by the combined creation of a culture of 'least-possible-practice' – in which pupils, either through peer pressure or social convention, privilege 'lighter' and generally more Progressive practices – and low rates of religious participation even amongst Orthodox pupils. Barrett et al. (2007) demonstrate how adolescents may reinforce their social status at school by aligning their beliefs, practices and identities with the dominant affiliation, and relatedly, Shevitz and Wasserfall's (2009) study of a pluralist school reveals how students of diverse levels of religiosity can feel pressurised to meet particular social norms (such as regarding *Shabbat* and *Kashrut*), with observant Orthodox pupils in particular often struggling to coalesce their religious attitudes and practices with the school's more liberal environment. Indeed, although pupils of all movements in the present study tended to suggest

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[83] Sixth formers do not attend Rosh Chodesh services.

that Orthodox Jews *on average* demonstrate greater religiosity than their Progressive peers, few of the Orthodox pupils interviewed demonstrated substantial interest in service-based practice (7.4.4), reinforcing the general perception that the school is dominated by Progressive (and in particular, non-practising) Jews (see Section 5.3.4).

These contrasting perspectives illustrate the challenges of creating a pluralist ethos. Given the internal divergences of Anglo-Jewry (Freud-Kandel, 2006; Alderman, 1992, 2014), a loose form of commonality based upon Jewish ethics was thus invoked (see Section 4.4.2). In contrast, religious and ideological components of Judaism were perceived as unsuitably diverse and contested to facilitate unity, limiting the provision of whole-school religious and political activities (and necessitating the provision of separate services and forms of practice):

> "When I worked at the other school I used to work at, the Orthodox school, you know, *Yom Ha'atzmaut* for example was like this massive day and we would all pray together, like we would do morning service together and we would do *hallel* together and the whole thing was absolutely beautiful, but we don't have those moments because everybody does things totally differently, so, I suppose that's one of the challenges" (Deputy Headteacher).

As Punzi and Frischer (2016) have acknowledged in the context of voluntary synagogue activities, constructing an inclusive Jewish environment is challenging, as disparate conceptions of services (egalitarian versus traditional) or identity (halakhic versus non-halakhic) can alienate particular groups and observant families may contest attempts to present a more 'open' approach to Jewish identity (including the organisation of voluntary activities on *Shabbat*) than they perceive possible. JCoSS must provide a Jewish education accessible to all levels of observance and understanding in order to facilitate inclusivity to pupils from all (denominational, ideological and educational) Jewish backgrounds, but this can crystallise frustration amongst parents who seek greater practice or depth of Jewish study. Indeed, several of the parents of children who had attended a Jewish primary school believed that the school repeated substantial content they already knew, given its efforts to ensure a basic Jewish education for all:

"I thought that since being here the Jewish Studies is a bit disappointing … I wasn't keen when my daughter was coming home from school, learning about what's in a synagogue, because she'd done that at primary, it's like, "I don't know what they're trying to achieve," that was all" (Sarah).

Other parents feared that their children would become disengaged from further Jewish instruction, and so sought greater attention to other faiths, whilst recognising that many of their counterparts would disagree:

"I think if JCoSS tried to say "Right, we're doing a course of History in different [non-Jewish] topics," I think they'd get an outcry from a lot of parents, they did do something last year when I think they tried to take the kids to a mosque or something, they had a visit to a mosque or they proposed this visit, and I don't even know which subject it was supposed to be in, and on the sort of the Facebook group of JCoSS where parents chat, there was *such* an outcry by some parents, and then there was a *huge* argument, because some parents said "But this is important for the kids to see this," and other parents said "Actually it's not, why do they need see that?" and JCoSS is in the middle […] the school is between a rock and a hard place … they really are on a balancing act for everyone" (Jacqui).

Parents also disagreed regarding the teaching of Jewish Studies and Israel, further illustrating the dilemmas of pluralism, as the school attempts to reconcile fundamentally opposed opinions, competencies and values. The subsequent section illustrates how *kippot* have also come to represent an area of contestation over the school's pluralistic ethos.

5.4.2 Kippot

Just as Jewish Education and religious practice provided an area of contestation regarding the school's pluralism and facilitation of pupil choice, *kippot* also represented an area of controversy. Whereas other Jewish secondary schools enforce boys' wearing of *kippot* as a key marker of Jewish identity (at the very least in lessons, generally all day), pupils (whether male or female) are not obligated to wear a *kippah* at JCoSS (2017b). The reasons for this

policy are twofold: to avoid low-level behaviour issues by facilitating students' agency[84] (see also Stowe-Lindner, in Rosen 2009), and to reinforce the school's egalitarianism. As the current Headteacher explained:

> "I think there's two answers to that, there's a principled one and a pragmatic one, the principled one was if we stand by informed choice, it then doesn't make sense to make anything religious a matter of compulsion, so we thought "Well, let's make it optional": some children do, not very many, but a few do; a few do throughout their time at school and a few do for a phase and then stop and then they start again, but it was an ideological decision that that was not going to be enforced; there was a pragmatic element to it which is also if you make it compulsory you then have to have an awful lot of conversations telling people to put their *kippah* on, *plus* there's the added issue of you could make it compulsory for boys but then what do you do about girls, would you make it optional for them, and then you'd have girls being able to take them on and off at will, the boys not; it just wouldn't work, so the pragmatism and the principle kind of coincided with each other" (Headteacher).

This arguably privileges Progressive Judaism because Orthodox synagogues traditionally expect boys to wear *kippot* whilst forbidding them amongst women, whereas Reform and Liberal Judaism's emphasis on individual autonomy can enable females to adopt these items if they desire too. However, any Progressive dominance owes more to its greater openness, as Orthodox Judaism remains able to retain its practices amongst its own affiliates. Consequently, this policy allows all Jewish students to perceive their identities as valid. It is also noteworthy that the Headteacher refers to *kippah*-wearing as a "phase." Such temporariness reflects young people's growing autonomy to determine their religious identities, possibly disidentifying from or discontinuing certain practices that had been important in childhood (Arweck and Nesbitt, 2010; Lopez et al., 2011). Alternatively, it is plausible that, akin to the case of religious practice described in the previous section, peer

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[84] Similarly, the pluralist school described by Shevitz and Wasserfall (2009) did not mandate the wearing of *kippot* when studying Judaic subjects, but allowed pupils to voice complaints about such a policy.

pressure instigates pupils to avoid *kippot*. Nevertheless, given the denominationalised disjuncture in the wearing of these items, *kippot* were said to be used by some Orthodox boys as markers of an exclusivist – but supposedly 'authentic' – Jewish identity in contrast to ('invalid', 'transgressive') Progressive female self-identification:

> "[Particular boy] uses it, not just the fact that he wears a *kippah* but the fact that he's Orthodox, he uses it to kind of show everyone how much more 'Jewish' he is than everyone else and how much more intelligent he is than everyone else, he always says things like "Oh, if you're a Liberal Jew you don't know as much about Judaism" or, like, "Liberal Judaism isn't a proper thing," and then once I was in a *Kabbalat Shabbat* service and I was wearing a *kippah*, and he said "Take that off, you don't have the right to wear that," and it's a pluralist school, I would never dream of telling him how to be Jewish or how to practise in any way, but he seems to think that's OK" (Josie, Year 10).

Therefore, where some pupils had ceased wearing *kippot*, this may have owed in part to discomfort with these items' occasional association with perceived exclusivist attitudes amongst their wearers at JCoSS:

> Matt (Year 10): "I'd say that the Orthodox Jews here, I wouldn't say are bullied but there was a boy in Year 7 who used to wear a *kippah* every day to school, and he got teased so he stopped wearing it, which I think is disgusting, but."
> Josie: "That's not just why he stopped wearing it though."
> Matt: "Yeah, he had like, conflicting issues with like, what he thought about Judaism."

Hence *kippot* represented markers of Jewish identity that were not desired by pupils hoping to be incorporated within the dominant, Progressive Jewish school culture. This reflects how the decision to publicise and perform one's identity through clothing may affect one's self-consciousness as a group representative, illustrating a "two-way relationship between identity and performance" (Hopkins and Greenwood, 2013, p.446). Significantly, no pupil interviewed wore a *kippah*, and all favoured the school's provision of individual autonomy

in this regard:

> "I think if you were forced to wear a *kippah*, if it was part of the uniform it would
> kind of go against everything JCoSS does, really" (Holly, Year 12).

Thus, in comparison to studies that have illustrated how Jews may 'mask' their Jewish practices and 'markers' in non-Jewish social environments such as multicultural schools (Moulin, 2015) and Christian-normative communities (Cutler, 2006), this investigation reveals how pupils in Jewish schools may also seek to disguise or reduce the visibility of their specific faith affiliation, resisting Jewish markers owing to a desire for social status that conflicts with the nominal identity of the space.

In contrast, and reflecting some parents' interest in greater stipulations at JCoSS (5.4.1), several parents believed that such markers of a Jewish identity ought to be enforced for boys owing to the school's nominal Jewishness:

> "I think in a way sometimes I feel it's not Jewish enough, like, you know, boys
> don't have to wear a *kippah* for example and, I would be happy with a bit more,
> I don't know, like I think they should be wearing a *kippah* for example" (Zoe).

> "I think if you're inside a Jewish school, it's a symbol, *I* don't believe you have
> to wear one walking down the street, but you're inside a Jewish school, I don't
> think it's necessarily the religious significance, for me it's more, again part of
> your identity … it's a marker, I don't think they should be wearing *tzitzit* hanging
> out and have *payots*, but I think that a *kippah* wouldn't harm" (Alice).

By wearing religious clothing in this way, the body is constructed as a religious space that facilitates an individual spirituality as well as relating the self to others (Secor, 2005; Gökarıksel, 2009). Alice's attention to *kippot* but not larger-scale items of clothing reflects a desire for a physically small garment that would be 'acceptable' to non-Orthodox Jews, whereas *tzitzit* and *payot* would be excessively 'religious.' Nevertheless, her treatment of *kippot* as constitutive of a 'proper' Jewish identity and pupils' ambivalence towards these items as 'obvious' identity markers reflects the discrepancy between older generations'

particularism and younger generations' universalism described by Gross and Rutland (2014). Moreover, the fact that both Alice and Zoe are affiliated with Progressive rather than Orthodox movements reflects how traditions such as the wearing of *kippot* have been adopted from different movements over time (Sheskin and Hartman, 2015). In contrast, one Orthodox parent agreed with JCoSS' policy that *kippah*-wearing ought to be a choice, and consistent between home and school:

"You don't do it at home, they don't need to do it here" (Beth).

Thus, whereas the former parents perceived that a Jewish school requires constant sacralisation as a space through the performance of certain actions (Mazumdar and Mazumdar, 1993; Chidester and Linenthal, 1995), Beth did not view the Jewish school as a more significant Jewish space than the home, reflecting the salience of the latter (as well as parents) in facilitating Jewish identity construction and socialisation (see Sections 2.4.4, 6.3.1). Furthermore, numerous parents – including those from Progressive denominations – disfavoured *girls'* wearing of *kippot*:

"I didn't want her wearing a *kippah*: that was a personal preference, some of the girls do … but to me it just looks funny" (Naomi).

Consequently, certain assumptions of the performance of Jewish identities within a Jewish space existed, which often tended towards more 'Orthodox' or 'traditional' forms of practice even amongst Progressive families. However, JCoSS' efforts at facilitating Jewish expression amongst practising Orthodox families through its policies towards *Kashrut* and *chagim* were not as willingly accepted by Progressive and non-practising families.

5.4.3 Kashrut and chagim

Section 5.4.1 demonstrated that many observant parents desired greater religious practice and provision at JCoSS. It has also been acknowledged that JCoSS actively recognises non-halakhic Jewish identities (4.2), and that this may be considered a form of Progressive dominance at the school (5.2.3, 5.3.4). Yet, particular school policies caused JCoSS to be perceived as reinforcing observant *Orthodox* dominance by some less observant parents,

most of whom were affiliated with Progressive movements. Indeed, in order to appeal to Orthodox Jews, particular measures must exist that require pupils, regardless of denominational affiliation, to meet Orthodox standards of practice. One example is the requirement for all food to be Kosher. Different spaces within the school are allocated for the eating of either meat (canteen) or milk (Food Technology department and coffee shop), and packed lunches must be vegetarian. In order to avoid disagreements and tensions between groups, breaking such religious rules "is dealt with through the normal discipline procedure in accordance with school rules" (JCoSS, 2017b). However, such rules are not uncontested. Andersson et al. (2012) have illustrated disagreements regarding a British university's accommodation of various national groups' dietary requirements, and, as Fischer (2015, p.684) argues, *Kashrut* can "be seen as an instrument of control, regulation and inspection" in its necessitation of an audit culture. Accordingly, several parents recognised JCoSS' challenges in enforcing all students' adherence to *Kashrut* within the school space:

> "They go to *enormous* lengths to forbid, you know, for instance when they went
> on the school trip to York, they had to have Kosher food ferried up to them; now
> my feeling is, and this is sort of guesswork but I would imagine that 75, 80, 90
> per cent of the kids don't keep Kosher, well, not to the extent, they don't keep
> Kosher to the extent of the food that they were being given, but because of the
> possibility that one or two kids *are*, everybody else has to go to that level, and
> that can be a bit annoying actually" (Asher).

In this way, all pupils are required to adhere to levels of *Kashrut* that they would not in other spaces, including their homes. Given that relatively few pupils keep strictly Kosher, these rules were perceived as constraining to many of the students, including those who are not Jewish:

> "I understand why it's Kosher, like at the end of the day we *are* a Jewish school,
> but there are also non-Jews here, so I think, like, maybe there should be a section
> that could be *un*-Kosher … everything is literally Kosher to the point where you
> can't have a chocolate bar on the table from your own house, which I think is a
> bit over-the-top" (Joe, Year 12).

This issue may be of particular concern to pupils on free school meals (FSM),[85] as the pricing of Kosher food was deemed exclusive on economic grounds:

> Lizzie (Year 12): "We definitely get the Kosher prices! *[Laughs].* That's true though, isn't it?"
> Andrew: "Yeah, that's true."
> Lizzie: "Like, it's just, like, for students on free school meals it's just terrible because they get a set limit every day … they should at least have a cheaper option, which I don't think they do."

Consequently, pupils are obligated to pay premium prices to adhere to Jewish practices with which they may not agree, and the space of the canteen may be deemed more staunchly religious than others on the school site as it determines pupils' acquiescence. Although *Kashrut*-adherent parents were satisfied that JCoSS supports such needs, it is important to acknowledge that these practices are also highly personalised, as individuals may only follow certain rules in particular spaces (see also Section 2.4.5):

> "I don't have to go to a Kosher restaurant, but I don't eat non-Kosher meat out, and neither do my children" (Beth).

This corresponds with Scholefield's (2004, p.237) description of the 'fuzzy frontiers' of Jewish identity, in which boundaries between public 'Jewish' and 'non-Jewish' practices and behaviours are becoming less distinct, reflected in her respondents' neglect of Kosher rules when eating out even if many keep Kosher at home. One parent even argued that within her Orthodox synagogue it is tacitly recognised that most members do not adhere to most Kosher laws, but that they feel compelled to portray themselves as doing so regardless:

> "No-one tells anybody, you know, they're not keeping it Kosher at home … people do what they want, but you don't, no-one tells" (Lydia).

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[85] Children of families with low incomes or who receive benefits may be eligible for free school meals.

In this way, individuals may publically portray themselves as 'committed' to the supposedly key practices of their faith, a form of 'impression management' (Goffman, 1959) that does not necessarily correspond with their private, home-based practices. Consequently, any attempts to impose the 'highest' standards of *Kashrut* upon all families during all school hours are thus not uncontested and encapsulate the inherent difficulty in implementing a pluralistic ethos.

Chagim highlighted a similar issue. Orthodox Judaism typically requires adherents to take two days off from work on each religious festival, whereas Progressive movements generally require only one. In order that observant Orthodox families are provided religious holidays as desired, JCoSS closes to *all* pupils for two days on the *chagim*,[86] resulting in at least one day of rest for pupils who do not draw any significance from such observance; indeed, a large proportion of parents claimed not to celebrate Jewish holidays at all. Several parents expressed frustration at providing child-care on these days:

"There is a little problem we've noticed which is quite understandable but there's a sort of philosophy at JCoSS that you have to be as observant as the most observant amongst you, so for instance, pretty much all the High Holy Days holidays are taken off, and that can be quite, you know, we're very willing to do *Yom Kippur* and *Rosh Hashanah*, we would do that anyway, but when it comes to some of the much more minor ones it's a bit of an irritation because [wife] and I are both working on those days and *my* feeling is that the great majority of the JCoSS parents probably are as well, but because they march at the speed of the slowest man or the most observant man in this case, and I can understand why they do that, they have that sort of policy, it does make it quite problematic for people who actually wouldn't choose to live their lives that way otherwise" (Asher).

Thus, alongside its *Kashrut* policy, JCoSS restricts certain choices regarding religious observance in its efforts to cater to all. Although some parents recognised that extensive religious holidays are also provided in other Jewish secondary schools, such issues are more

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[86] This policy has changed over time, as optional programmes were previously provided on the second day (Shaviv, 2012).

noteworthy at JCoSS given its declared pluralism. Nevertheless, not all parents in the present study were critical of this phenomenon: one parent supported the fact that JCoSS could determine pupils' (non-) attendance at school on religious holidays as it *removed* her undesired autonomy to define her own Jewish engagement:

> "We decided that actually having arguments about whether children were going to take second-day *Rosh Hashanah*, seventh-day *Pesach*,[87] whatever, off of school, were like conversations we just didn't really want to have to have; it was very nice to send them to school where we didn't have to have those conversations" (Rosanne).

Moreover, some non-observant parents opted to use *chagim* for practical, secular benefits:

> "He's a musician like me, so he gets to spend a lot of time practising, so it's worked out great that he's hardly at school, and I do mean hardly at school, it really does feel like that" (Sam).

In these ways, several families viewed the *chagim* as opportunities to perform personally-meaningful identities, whether these incorporated Jewishness or not. JCoSS' attention to observant families' needs has thus created some intriguing implications for Jewish identity, which may not correspond with Jewish community leaders' assumptions of Jewish practice. Chapter 6 will attend to such questions more fully.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the ways in which Jewish schools, and JCoSS specifically, are implicated in the (re)construction and contestation of Jewishness. This is especially significant in contemporary England given both the aftermath of R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS, which necessitated changes to admissions practices, and the establishment of pluralist Jewish schools whose inclusivity and ethos contrast with the traditionally halakhic emphasis of (Orthodox) Jewish schools. Indeed, Section 5.2 found that Jewish school admissions illustrate significant polarisation between pluralist schools and

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[87] Like most other major Jewish festivals, *Pesach* can be celebrated over a number of days.

Orthodox schools, which is centred on conflicting perspectives towards (Orthodox) Jewish particularism. It also illustrated the suspicion with which JCoSS has been treated by the United Synagogue owing to its avowedly non-halakhic approach to Jewish identity. Thus, it can be posited that JCoSS' very inclusivity and acceptance of diverse manifestations of Jewishness deters Orthodox families who see Jewishness as halakhic and particularistic. In this sense, then, the school appears to seek to embrace some families (additionally through reconsidering its feeder school policy) who do not in fact want to be included. Nevertheless, JCoSS' receptiveness to alternative forms of Jewishness simultaneously ensures its popularity amongst families favouring a more universalistic approach to Jewish identity, as had been illustrated in Section 4.2.

Sections 5.3 and 5.4 highlighted the challenges for JCoSS in executing this pluralistic ethos. Whilst the school has played a significant role in coalescing diverse strands of Judaism, facilitating greater tolerance for alternative practices and identifications, increased interdenominational contact has also stimulated some parents to fear their children's 'dilution' of desired identities, although such perceptions are not unidirectional, such as from the Orthodox 'downwards,' but rather depend on the issue at hand. Implicit is the possibility that attending a faith school will 'lessen' one's commitment to faith, particularly where pupils are able to (de)select and thus avoid certain services and practices. Yet, pupils' autonomy can also be *restricted* where their parents choose to determine their ritual involvement on their behalf (at least where sufficient critical mass exists to provide and maintain these activities), revealing intra-familial contestation regarding ethnoreligious practice.

Moreover, the range of denominational affiliations represented engenders particular difficulties in providing universally-accepted approaches to Jewish Education and religious worship. *Kippot* encapsulated this contestation over 'correct' or 'preferable' practice, both within the school and within families, as they were viewed by many parents as important markers of one's Jewishness, in spite of the school's openness to *not* wearing these items, but by pupils as symbols of a particularistic, Orthodox (or Orthodox-oriented) Judaism that should be avoided. Finally, the chapter demonstrated the inherent dilemmas of producing a pluralistic ethos through the examples of the school's policies towards *Kashrut* and *chagim*, as all families are required to adhere to certain practices and standards in order to ensure the school's inclusiveness of more observant Jews. Yet, in spite of JCoSS' commendable efforts to accommodate for varied Jewish 'needs,' it may also reasonably be speculated that should

more school places come to fruition in Orthodox Jewish schools, they will be prioritised by many Orthodox parents, causing JCoSS to become increasingly perceived as a predominantly Progressive Jewish school, rather than one that truly facilitates substantial interdenominational contact. This process might be mitigated to some extent by any future removal of feeder school places, as more places will become available to children from other educational backgrounds, but it is apparent that efforts to welcome Jewishly-diverse families is a challenging endeavour sensitive to fine dynamics within Anglo-Jewry.

Nevertheless, JCoSS has largely managed to develop an educational environment conducive to varied forms of Jewish expression. Consequently, it has contributed to a growing sense that Jewishness represents a form of (inclusive) self-identification rather than (exclusive) ascribed status via *halakhah*. As such, the school appears capable of stimulating improved intra-faith relations, at least amongst its pupils, and, as Chapter 7 will explore further, it permits them to construct personalised identities. Chapter 6 will next explore the relationship between Jewish schools (more generally) and synagogue communities, in order to ascertain the former's role in reshaping Jewish identities and community.

Chapter 6: The dynamic interplay between
Jewish day schools and synagogue communities

6.1 Introduction

Synagogues have historically played a significant educational role in the Jewish community. Originally developed as places of study (Morris, 1959), synagogues are still often referred to as *shuls*, whilst *rabbi* translates as 'teacher' (Sacks, 1994). Whereas adults rather than children were originally educated within synagogues, the importance of Jewish schooling as a means of preparing individuals for synagogue worship (Cohn-Sherbok, 1993) – and somewhat relatedly, ensuring Jewish survival (Black, 1988) – is thus long-established. However, the considerable growth of Jewish day schools in recent years necessitates an analysis of the relationship between these institutions and synagogues. To this end, the present chapter explores the ways in which synagogues have been affected by the rise of Jewish day schools, and the implications for the spatiality and expression of Jewish practice, identity and community.

This relationship between synagogues and state-funded Jewish schools in England has become particularly important – at least in theory – following R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS in 2009. As described in the previous chapter, this ruling has required Jewish state schools to develop oversubscription criteria that avoid defining Jewish identity based on matrilineal descent, with the vast majority (including JCoSS and all United Synagogue schools) requiring evidence of synagogue attendance, involvement in formal Jewish education or recent, unpaid/voluntary, Jewish communal, charitable or welfare activities. Consequently, synagogues have become central to definitions of Jewish identity and Jewish schools' admissions practices.

Nevertheless, previous research has largely failed to intensively investigate the interactions between Jewish faith schools and synagogues, generally concentrating (at best) on the former, such as in terms of curriculum issues (Schoem, 1984), parental perspectives (Leviton, 2004) or pupils' social, cultural, religious and human capital (Kaplowitz, 2015). A rare exception is provided by Pomson and Schnoor (2008, p.85), who argue that Jewish schools in the USA may act "as a substitute for the synagogue by providing a surrogate community" as they mirror synagogues' historic sociological functions as houses of meeting, study and prayer, but rather than exploring the implications for these institutions further, the

researchers present this development quite positively as a means of facilitating pupils' personalised construction of a Jewish identity. Research into other faiths has also tended to neglect the relationship between faith schools and places of worship, although significant contextual differences exist. A notable anomaly is provided by Rymarz and Graham (2006), who found that Australian Catholic school pupils did not generally participate in parish-based youth groups, instead limiting themselves to school-based activities such as reading or serving at school masses, which did not facilitate interactions with others; moreover, those who did attend church tended to be motivated by familial rather than personal concerns. Given that these researchers' sample was heavily skewed towards those who attend church and other religious organisations regularly, it may be inferred that other pupils in the school participated even less in the wider religious community. Other studies have suggested a deleterious impact upon places of worship: Francis and Lankshear (2001) found voluntary church primary schools to have a positive effect on the number of confirmands, yet involvement in wider church activities often declined subsequently, whilst Pring (2005) has recognised the enormous discrepancy between church school and church attendance, which may suggest that these schools fail to engage pupils to participate in religious services.

Moreover, in spite of the new centrality of synagogues to England's Jewish day schools' admissions practices, several articles have appeared in the Anglo-Jewish media that indicate rabbinical disquiet towards these institutions. Some synagogues have expressed frustration at the administrative demands necessitated by the new school admissions policies, which obligate them to certify children's attendance each week; a task discommoded in some Orthodox synagogues that forbid writing on *Shabbat* and religious festivals (Rocker, 2009b). One rabbi has argued against faith schools on the basis that they segregate religious groups and threaten the existence of synagogues' supplementary schools (Romain, 2007, 2008), and a second suggests that Jewish day schools stimulate parents and children to attend synagogue services strategically on a temporary basis, solely to gain admission (Tobias, 2013); claims corroborated by some parents, too (Prever, 2013). Research into England's faith schools in general – which in reality tends to focus on Christian schools of varying denominations – has similarly suggested (anecdotally) that affluent parents often attend church strategically in order to secure their children's places in well-regarded schools (Butler and Hamnett, 2012; Francis and Hutchings, 2013). Moreover, negative experiences of religious education may cause young people to reject places of worship (Hoge and Petrillo, 1978). Focusing on

England's Jewish community, Miller (2001) has even suggested that some families consider enrolment at Jewish schools an *alternative* way of expressing 'Jewishness' to attending synagogue, and with her colleagues has recently argued that Jewish schools' growing significance as sites of meeting and cultural provision has caused them to assume "functions historically performed by synagogues, not coincidentally at a time when participation in synagogues is in decline" (Miller et al., 2016, p.554). Whilst the ways in which synagogues' roles as religious and communal spaces have been affected by Jewish schools remains unstudied, it is thus plausible that the relationship between these two institutions is not necessarily mutually beneficial.

Given that the knock-on effects of rising Jewish school enrolment on other Jewish educational institutions have yet to be explored beyond an occasional acknowledgement of the apparent erosion in supplementary schools such as *chederim*, whether in the UK or elsewhere (e.g. Schiff, 1997; Hart et al., 2007; Staetsky and Boyd, 2016), this chapter makes a unique contribution to the literature. In particular, it raises three principal concerns for synagogues: the implications for 'community' raised by parental strategies to secure desirable school places through short-term attendance at services (6.2); the devolution of parental responsibility for their children's Jewish education and socialisation to Jewish schools, resulting in a co-option of traditional synagogue functions (6.3); and a lack of dialogue between these institutions regarding the issues described, particularly where schools and synagogues represent different Jewish movements (6.4). Although Section 6.5 addresses the potential benefits of Jewish schools for synagogue communities, these were seen to be largely theoretical, symbolic and optimistic, as most rabbis were critical of Jewish schools' impacts upon their congregations. This chapter includes rabbis' and parents' perspectives, with pupils' views of Jewish schools and synagogues comprising the entirety of Chapter 7. The present chapter also highlights differing conceptions of Jewish identity and its construction between these broad groups, which have contributed to discrepant attitudes towards Jewish day school and synagogue-based education, revealing how parents' decisions to send their children to one of these institutions (although some will send to both) can reflect their own conceptualisation of Jewishness.

6.2 Temporary attendance

Section 6.2 illustrates the implications of Jewish schools' usage of admissions criteria that base Jewish identity upon synagogue attendance. The new criteria were widely believed to instigate a tendency amongst parents to treat synagogue services merely instrumentally, rather than viewing them as meaningful aspects of their Jewishness (6.2.1). Moreover, these criteria marginalise self-identification by requiring prospective pupils to meet particular nominal criteria of a supposed Jewish identity, creating relational (as well as administrative) challenges for synagogues as community institutions (6.2.2).

6.2.1 Strategic attendance to maximise one's admissions prospects

The new requirement for pupils to attend synagogue services a prerequisite number of times in order to qualify under state-funded Jewish schools' oversubscription criteria represented a significant issue for rabbis. Although Coldron et al. (2010) are sceptical of the extent of parental 'fraudulence' (including sudden involvement in religious communities as well as the usage of false or temporary addresses) when applying to favoured schools, rabbis in the present study perceived the criteria as being so low that they are easily met even by the least 'committed' or observant families. As a result, parents' strategic attendance at synagogue services was widely considered an inevitable and unwelcome outcome. This phenomenon was recognised by numerous rabbis:

> "I think it's all a big game that people have to play, and they play it well, I don't know anybody who wouldn't be able to attend four services just before, and that's all they do, these people don't attend synagogues, you're not accepting people to these schools because they have practice, they're only accepted because they fulfil the minimum criteria and people will fulfil the minimum criteria, people will; I know somebody who rented a house near a school near here, for a couple of years, only so their kids could attend that school, so what is attending synagogue four times? Nothing. It's nothing" (Rabbi, Liberal synagogue 2).

Moreover, by requiring only loose synagogue-based commitment, regular involvement in a synagogue community represented no advantage to securing a school place. This was demonstrated most clearly by a rabbi who failed to attain a school place at an oversubscribed

primary school for her child because her synagogue attendance was treated as no more significant than the 'pragmatic' attendees:

"They are so sensitive to making this open access, that all they're doing is asking everybody to jump through the same hoop, so anybody, 'Muhammad Ali' from down the road can come to synagogue four times and why shouldn't he, and then I am more than happy to sign his form if his parents have a reason to want to send him to a Jewish day school, so the benchmark of how you distinguish between who is Jewish and who is not is so low that you're creating a completely level playing field, which is why lots of members when my son didn't get into a Jewish day school were horrified, I mean "How can the rabbi's child not get in?" Well, because it's just a completely level playing field and that's what you all want for your children, you want a level playing field because otherwise your child wouldn't get in, but that means, you know, the rabbi's child doesn't get in" (Rabbi, Reform synagogue 1).

Thus, even a non-Jewish person seeking a Jewish school can meet the admissions criteria if they endeavour to attend a synagogue the prerequisite number of times. Indeed, parents perceived such criteria as easily exploitable, rendering synagogue attendance a tokenistic form of Jewish engagement:

"I think it's tacitly recognised that a lot of kids never go to synagogue, they just go to synagogue to get in" (Yasmin).

Therefore, the admissions criteria neither specify Jewishness based on spiritual or religious attachment, nor do they encourage individuals to become more engaged in faith. Yet the system also defines Jewishness as necessarily *religious*, given that families are expected to attend synagogue services rather than other activities that may be more accurately conceived as cultural or ethnic, for instance. Such criteria ignore the fact that many British Jews identify themselves as ethnically or culturally Jewish rather than perceiving a religious affiliation (Becher et al., 2002; Graham et al., 2007, 2014), and that new pluralist schools (JCoSS being

the only such secondary school) theologically validate forms of Jewishness that are neither halakhic nor religious (Miller, 2012a, 2012b).

Certainly, the school admissions system in reality represents a simplistic measure of synagogue *attendance*, rather than one's 'Jewishness,' as families seeking to gain admission to a Jewish school must negotiate pre-defined Jewish criteria that are relatively easy to achieve but bear little personal relevance to many Jews' lived experiences of their identities. Forms of Jewish identification that exist beyond synagogue communities are largely neglected in Jewish school admissions practices, reinforcing an assumption that synagogue is necessarily central to Jewish identity (as demonstrated in numerous surveys, e.g. Cohen, 1988, 2007; Ravid and Ginsburg, 1988). Whereas one individual might participate widely in Jewish activities, including cultural events and employment at a Jewish organisation, their claim to a school place may be disregarded in favour of a second individual who does not even self-identify as Jewish but attends synagogue the prerequisite number of times. Accordingly, several parents were disappointed to learn that their meaningful involvement in alternative Jewish spheres proved insufficient:

> "I was very active in [Jewish sports organisation] … I was more than involved, I was at the top of the tree, and I thought that *might* carry some weight, but it didn't, not a thing. We just got turned down flat" (Alex).

Instead, Alex was required to bring his daughter to a synagogue for several weeks given that the practice of institutionalised religion (regardless of sincerity) is effectively considered a more accurate measure of one's Jewish identity or commitment than genuine involvement in wider (ethnic, cultural or sporting) Jewish life. Hence a dilemma exists in defining Jewish identity for school admissions purposes: any attempt to measure Jewish identity based on such additional criteria would axiomatically impose new assumptions of Jewish identity that would prove more difficult to implement than the current system. Indeed, the admissions criteria have sought to construct a top-down definition of Jewish identity rather than permitting individuals to self-identify through their own interest in Jewish schooling.

A further implication of collapsing Jewish identity or commitment with synagogue attendance is that the latter is decreasingly perceived as a meaningful activity of community

engagement or worship. Rather, synagogue attendance has become almost mandatory for entry to a Jewish school and so is treated as a checklist-style task:

> "I don't like the fact that they're using services as an admissions criteria, because it's sending the wrong message about services, it's making services a checklist thing rather than actually about becoming part of a community" (Rabbi, Reform synagogue 2).

Indeed, in support of rabbis' perceptions that many Jewish families attend for pragmatic reasons, several parents were open in admitting to instrumental synagogue attendance at the time of application:

> Beth: "I think we had to go to *shul* on *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, and, then another six times maybe."
> Interviewer: "Is that something you were doing anyway?"
> Beth: "No, not really, no, no."

Beth's claim that her family does not normally attend *shul* "through having to work and not being able to go" reflects the challenges faced by many individuals in balancing a number of parental responsibilities, with synagogue attendance often deemed less crucial than other aspects of their lives.[88] Although two rabbis perceived families' attendance at a small number of services as an opportunity to attract new members, the majority were more sceptical:

> "One could say "Well hey, it's an opportunity to make that experience enjoyable enough that the parent feels "Hey, even once I've satisfied the requirement I will still come at least to *some* services," but that's not my experience" (Rabbi, Reform synagogue 3).

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[88] Other parents justified their irregular attendance via uninterest in formalised religion, challenges in motivating their children's attendance (reducing their own involvement in turn) and time pressures imposed by weekly chores.

Thus, rather than providing an opportunity for synagogues to increase their vitality, few rabbis believed that their congregations had benefited from new synagogue attendance-based admissions criteria. The following section continues the discussion by highlighting the perceived challenges in promoting community values.

6.2.2 Community challenges

Instead of offering them greater power in defining Jewishness or in determining Jewish community involvement, rabbis felt that they had been compelled to undertake undesirable administrative responsibilities with little benefit to their congregations. Recording prospective pupils' attendance provides a particularly significant dilemma, as the *Torah* forbids work on *Shabbat* (Rocker, 2009b):

> "You can't write anything down, you can't keep full records" (Rabbi, Masorti synagogue 2).

In order to circumvent restrictions on writing, as well as expedite record-keeping, synagogues utilise different strategies to check young people's attendance; tokens being particularly common. However, the bureaucratic requirements of completing paperwork for attendance were disfavoured by some *shuls*, which have instead developed trust-based systems:

> "We kind of go with the guilt system, what I personally say to parents that I don't know because they're not that involved, is I normally say to parents "If you want to lie to a rabbi, then be my guest," "I would never dream of doing that, of course not, no!" *[laughs]*, that's our policy though, we do the honour system. We can analyse but for us it's so much paperwork, we just, you know, if we had a strong relationship with the schools we might consider it, but we don't" (Rabbi, Reform synagogue 2).

In these ways, rabbis have proven resistant to the administrative demands imposed by Jewish schools. Although rabbis claimed to be comfortable in signing off on forms of parents they knew due to their regular attendance, they were often resentful that their time to interact with committed synagogue members was being jeopardised in order for them to support

somewhat-resented 'insincere' families.   Consequently, community bonds were being strained as two broadly-defined groups competed for rabbis' attention:

> "It does mean that twice a year we have what is called the 'school point crowd' that show up, and that annoys our regular congregation, so the parents are there with the kids in tow because they have to get their six or eight, whatever, visits in, and it does get irritating … crowd control can be an issue" (Rabbi, Reform synagogue 2).

Indeed, some rabbis felt that their role had become one of 'gatekeeper,' signing off on children's application forms instead of developing a meaningful relationship with families:

> "I spend my life signing school forms at this time of year, and it's a ridiculous process, I don't need to be the gatekeeper for Jewish day schools" (Rabbi, Reform synagogue 1).

Certainly, although changes to school admissions have ensured that a prospective parent no longer needs to demonstrate a halakhic Orthodox Jewish identity, increasing the ability of non-Orthodox families to access these schools, these Progressive rabbis were largely sceptical of many families' commitment to their faith or denomination (see also Section 6.3.2).   Numerous parents were also frustrated with their counterparts of other movements whom they perceived as manipulating the admissions system, particularly where the primary school in question represented Progressive Judaism:

> "Lots of families joined synagogues to get into a school and then left once their child was in the school, you know, you actually had a situation where Orthodox families were joining our Reform synagogue to get into [Progressive primary school], because you have to be a member of a Reform or Liberal synagogue, and then they would leave the Reform and Liberal synagogue" (Jacqui).

Therefore, perceived boundaries were reinforced between Progressive Judaism, represented by the desired school and Progressive parents, and 'Orthodox imposters' who sought their

child's place at the school in spite of the availability of Orthodox primary schools elsewhere. Several parents were also quick to differentiate, sometimes crudely, between 'committed' and 'non-committed' families:

> "I remember we had people coming just to get the points and it was so frustrating, we were trying to get members, they don't have to become a member of a synagogue, all they have to do is tick a box, so they come three times" (Sarah).

Thus, an idealised image of a community based on reciprocal, long-term relationships between members (see Putnam, 2000) was said to have been compromised by the presence of supposedly insincere 'visitors.' In these ways, and revealing how communities are highly politicised constructs marked by contestation and exclusions (Cohen, 1985; Dwyer, 1999), the attendance criteria have created internal divisions within congregations, potentially jeopardising the desired experiences of communality for regular attenders. Indeed, few of these individuals believed that an affective relationship to synagogue (or Judaism more broadly) could be developed through temporary attendance:

> "I don't see how it can make you more Jewish by going to *shul*, people go to *shul* to get their points" (Sarah).

Consequently, many parents were also ambivalent about the impacts of Jewish school admissions processes on their synagogue communities, and were suspicious of other parents' motivations in attending services. Jewish schools' co-option of particular synagogue functions represents the focus of Section 6.3.

6.3 Co-option of synagogue functions

This section explores the co-option of synagogues' traditional functions of Jewish education and socialisation by Jewish day schools. This has been facilitated by Jewish schools' greater convenience as providers of a Jewish education, enabling parents to delegate their own perceived responsibilities in this regard (6.3.1). Although parents demonstrated varying approaches to and degrees of Jewish instruction and practice (6.3.2), rabbis were frustrated that Jewish schools have caused additional synagogue attendance to be perceived as

excessive to most families. This is further illustrated by the case of Jewish education, with day schools rendering supplementary schooling largely undesirable in spite of criticisms of the quality of education available in the former (6.3.3). Consequently, rabbis feared that children would not be inducted into their communities more generally, with implications for their future viability as social institutions (6.3.4). Overall, Section 6.3 identifies a disjuncture in rabbis' and parents' conceptualisations of Jewish identity between (respectively) a process requiring regular practice and more straightforwardly as a reification that can be 'attained.' This is reflected in rabbis' general preference for *non*-Jewish schools as means of facilitating Jewish pupils' identity work within a multicultural community, as opposed to their general complacency towards a largely compartmentalised form of ethnic attachment, which they associated with Jewish schools (6.3.5).

6.3.1 Devolution of responsibility

Parents are generally portrayed as the main influences on a young person's religiosity (Benson et al., 1989; Hyde, 1990; Spilka et al., 2003) and ethnicity (Davey et al., 2003), with the committed practice of religious rituals in the home as well as at a place of worship often considered essential in transmitting religious values (Marks, 2004; Lees and Horwath, 2009). Although children may not perceive their parents' identities in the same way as the parents themselves (Cashmore and Goodnow, 1985; Okagaki et al., 1999) and they may choose to re-appropriate rather than necessarily adopt or reject their parents' modelled identities (Hopkins et al., 2011; Ridgely, 2011, 2012), parents' behaviours appear to be highly influential in influencing their children's identity construction. Moreover, learning occupies a central position within Judaism, with education viewed as the paramount commandment and a moral and religious duty to ensuring the faith's survival (Schlossberger and Hecker, 1998; Aberbach, 2009). However, many parents claimed to be incapable of providing a Jewish upbringing for their children, especially given that relatively few of those interviewed had personally attended a Jewish day school, owing to a failure to meet past halakhic expectations of Jewishness, differing generational attitudes towards assimilation and multiculturalism, and the relative shortage of Jewish school places (Hart et al., 2007; see also Section 4.2.1). Furthermore, the growth of Jewish day schools in England occurred after concerns were raised by Jewish leaders (most notably Sacks 1994) that synagogue-based education was failing to increase children's commitment to the faith in a secularising society.

Parents thus justified their interest in Jewish day schooling by highlighting both their own perceived inadequacies (Hart et al., 2007; Pomson and Schnoor, 2008) and an assumption that day schools, with their constant Jewish ethos and opportunities to socialise their children within almost entirely Jewish pupil cohorts, were most effective in providing a Jewish education and 'grounding':

> "I hope they'll get excellent grades, lifelong friends, and quite a like, a big Jewish grounding … because I don't think I can give that to them" (Yasmin).

Accordingly, parents often demonstrated a rather essentialist and ambiguous view of inherited Jewish *group* identity based upon fears that without providing their children's Jewish education through Jewish schools, they are at risk of breaking the familial Jewish chain:

> "I started her because I know nothing and I do nothing, so if she doesn't get it from somewhere she'll grow up without having that religious-into-a-kind-of-cultural history of it, and I think that without that as a child, you'll be like my other Jewish friends who have *absolutely* no link whatsoever with it, zero link" (Cecilia).

Similarly, Rita selected a Jewish school as a means of developing her children's Jewish knowledge, which she associated with identity, rather than increasing their (religious) *practice*:

> Interviewer: "What do you hope your children will get from their Jewish education?"
> Rita: "I think a sense of identity, of this is who they are, I think a big sense of identity, I think that's what I *see* now from their Jewish education, they are Jewish, this is them, and that's only my expectation, I don't want them to become more religious, I don't want them to become any more religious, but I think to understand the festivals, to understand where they've come from, to understand, to have a deeper understanding of what it means to be Jewish."

Reflecting the identities described in Section 4.3, as well as the findings of Valins et al. (2002) who argued that 'a strong sense of identity' is often evoked through Jewish schools even if this is defined ambiguously, parents conceptualised Jewishness as a form of broad, loosely articulated collective identity to which they hoped their child would feel attached. Thus, and corresponding with Section 4.2.3, parents often hoped that by sending their children to a Jewish school, they would be able to develop a vicarious sense of Jewish community, an imagined (and romanticised) form of belonging that they do not perceive themselves to enjoy. Given the apparent diminishment in religious identity in the UK, Mendelssohn (2011) also doubts British Jewish parents' interest in a comprehensive Jewish education and instead emphasises the desire for a 'minimal' Jewish education that includes familiarity with festivals and ancient Jewish history and Bible stories rather than an in-depth understanding of Jewish history, culture and language. Accordingly, parents in the present study felt that they did not need to provide many Jewish practices at home or bring their children to synagogue, lest it *jeopardise* their identity construction through excess:

"I think because they're at a Jewish school they *get* it, constantly" (Rita).

Thus, parents often sent their children to Jewish schools due to an assumption that they deliver (or at least provide the potential to deliver) a Jewish identity, resulting in its conceptualisation as a singular, reified 'product' that can be attained (Charmé et al., 2008; Zelkowicz, 2013; Samson et al., 2017).

Crucially, a disjuncture was perceived to exist between rabbis and parents in their attitudes towards Jewish observance and identity. Numerous rabbis also identified parents' conceptualisation of Jewish identity as *individualised* but ambiguous descent-based reifications that can be consumed. Indeed, their decision to send their children to Jewish schools was viewed as rooted in a sense of nostalgic familial obligation to continue their Jewish 'line' (Schoem, 1989), from which it was felt a Jewish identity could emerge regardless of practice:

"I think that a problem of our time is that many parents, they don't do anything Jewish at home but they deliver their kids to the school or to the *shul* and they expect *us* to make him a proud Jew, and it's difficult when they don't have an

example at home … I suppose the question that comes up is "Why do they bother?" I think that they feel the moral obligation of continuity, they want their children to find a Jewish partner and they want their children to feel connected to Judaism, and I think that it's a little bit of a chain because they weren't motivated when *they* were children, so they lack also the ability or the motivation to pass on to their *own* kids, so they have a very low standard of what they want, and mostly they expect *others* to care for it, so it's very hard to teach a child about the importance of *Shabbat* when in their house there's absolutely no practice of *Shabbat* whatsoever, and I'm not even speaking here about "keeping Shabbat or not keeping *Shabbat*," no, they're not even having a *Shabbat* dinner, you know, they don't see *any* aspect or *any* practice of *Shabbat* in their home, so they will have a hard time understanding why *Shabbat* is important" (Rabbi, Masorti synagogue 3).

In particular, Jewish holidays were highlighted as days in which Jewish school pupils and their parents would demonstrate minimal commitment to their faith,[89] as defined via synagogue attendance:

"One of my favourite little bugbears is that when it comes to the Jewish holidays, Jewish schools will close for the Jewish holidays, but the parents won't even contemplate sending them to synagogue … so the kids, there's a day off school, they don't come to synagogue, they go to Alton Towers, they go to Thorpe Park,[90] and the reason they love it so much, or at least they used to, is that it is out of season, and so they get a cheap trip to Thorpe Park, and I know Thorpe Park have now got wise to it, and they actually, as they set their prices they charge Jewish holidays as full price days, which is really funny, but that's the truth, you know, one of my favourite jokes is "Why do we pray for rain on the festival of *Sukkot*? So that it falls on the heads of the parents who take their kids to Alton Towers for the day!" Because that's where they go, that's where they

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[89] JCoSS' Headteacher has recognised a related issue of unusually high absence rates on days immediately adjoining Jewish holidays, as well as on Fridays, before *Shabbat* (Jewish Chronicle, 2017), which may imply these families use the Jewish holidays to travel.
[90] Both Alton Towers and Thorpe Park are theme parks.

go, so the idea of bringing your children to the synagogue on a Jewish holiday because the school is closed is like, not even in the frame" (Rabbi, Liberal synagogue 1).

Thus, in contrast to parents, rabbis deemed Jewish identity a *process* that must be reinforced via long-term and regular practice (often as a *community*). This discrepancy reflects the findings of previous research into Jewish day and supplementary schools, in which rabbis' and school leaders' demands for a theoretical, religious and knowledge-based Judaism conflicted with parents' and pupils' interest in personal meaning, non-practice and often vague ethnic attachment (Schoem, 1984; Valins, 2003a; Gross and Rutland, 2014a), or a 'positive Jewish experience' without substantial Jewish learning (Woocher, 1989). Other studies have also illustrated general uninterest amongst parents in reinforcing their children's learning and ritualism at home (Sklare and Greenblum, 1967; Schiff, 1988a), or their ambivalence and even antipathy towards religious practice (particularly within the synagogue) whilst feeling personally obligated to socialise their children within a Jewish group (Davis, 2016). Consequently, numerous rabbis deemed the growth of Jewish schools an opportunity for parents to delegate responsibility for Jewish learning (Himmelfarb, 1989; Pomson, 2009), and were critical of parents who fail to extend Jewish *learning* within the school to ritual *practice* in the home or synagogue:

> "One of the problems and ironies of the Jewish schools is that they've exonerated parents from having to take any responsibility for their children's Jewish upbringing […] Jewish identity and responsibility is something that is devolved to the school; the parents wash their hands of it" (Rabbi, Liberal synagogue 1).

Indeed, in opposition to many parents' concerns at their perceived shortage of 'prerequisite' Jewish knowledge, several rabbis argued that participating in any Jewish ritual meaningfully imbues it with significance, regardless of theological or cultural 'accuracy':

> "I just don't think you can kind of delegate Jewish responsibilities outside the home, I think the most powerful thing you can do to make sure your children have a strong Jewish identity is to do things at home, even if you do it full of

mistakes, it doesn't matter how many mistakes you're making in the *Kiddush*, if you make *Kiddush* every Friday your children will have an appreciation of what *Shabbat* means, you know, having memorised the blessing in a car will not give them that same experience" (Rabbi, Liberal synagogue 3).

This accords with Kidd's (2012) endorsement of 'DIY Judaism' for largely unaffiliated Jews: a form of Judaism based upon personalised, empowered engagement rather than necessarily conventional practices. Moreover, it illustrates how popular claims that Jewish schools can contribute to identity construction (2.4.4) often neglect the processes by which a living identity is developed (see Chazan, 1983). Whereas Orthodox Judaism understands Jewish identity as based upon descent owing to its adherence to *halakhah*, and previous research has indicated that Jews often conceptualise Jewishness as contingent on birth and ancestry rather than observance or socialisation (Cohen and Eisen, 2000; Davidman, 2003, 2007; Pew Research Center, 2013), social constructionist research views identity as a continuous process of becoming (Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock, 1996; Sarup, 1996) and hence practice *in some form* appears critical. One rabbi expressed disbelief that the 'link' of parental modelling had not received greater attention from community leaders:

"I think we are missing a trick here in that we are not going to the parents and not explaining to parents how important their role is in imbuing in their children the importance of Judaism, I think it's madness" (Rabbi, Orthodox synagogue 4).

The result is a paradoxical situation in which Jewish schools often appeal to parents who desire their child's basic Jewish identity construction without significant personal input, yet such socialisation is deemed more effective in families that demonstrate an active role (2.4.4).

Therefore, rabbis considered the family essential in developing a wider context for Jewish socialisation, to which Jewish schools can *contribute* but not carry, and so attempts to 'attain' an identity through schooling alone were censured. Certainly, most rabbis were sceptical of parental claims that they lack understanding of Jewish ritual observance, and instead believed that an absence of genuine commitment was key. Faith schools have *magnified* these perceptions: whereas broader issues were also cited as 'threats' to

synagogues, including assimilation, secularisation (comprising deinstitutionalisation and a suspicion of religion), anti-Semitism, and out-migration due to high housing costs, Jewish day schools have come to represent the threat *par excellence* given that they represent a unique means for parents to outsource responsibility for providing a Jewish upbringing – and as Section 4.4.1 has demonstrated, attain a high-quality secular education – for five days per week, whilst possessing the critical mass to actively replace synagogues' traditional functions of education and socialisation (Section 6.3.4 will illustrate the latter in greater detail). At the same time, the main function to have remained largely in synagogues' control – worship – is of seemingly little interest to most parents in secularising society. This discrepancy in rabbis' attitudes towards day schools compared to other Jewish institutions was epitomised by the fact that JW3, a cultural and community centre recently established in North London, was by comparison *not* perceived to be co-opting synagogues' educational and social functions, instead being viewed as an institution that may strengthen Jewish identity and pride:

"If JW3 'keeps the Jew Jewish,' Jewish enough to want to raise Jewish children, that's great and I have no problem personally with JW3 and have attended some of the lectures there so I think it's a great asset" (Rabbi, Reform synagogue 3).

It is of course possible that rabbis have romanticised the historic 'commitment' of individuals to their *shuls*: synagogue membership numbers (Graham and Vulkan, 2010; Casale Mashiah and Boyd, 2017) and community involvement (Hart and Kafka, 2006) have been in decline since at least the 1980s whereas many Jewish schools have been established more recently, and overall synagogue numbers have diminished since the 1930s (Alderman, 2014). Whereas it is important to acknowledge that synagogue membership and attendance alone are inadequate methods of 'measuring' a person's religiosity (Stolzenberg et al., 1995; Hackett, 2014) – especially given that synagogues' community role is not limited to worship (2.4.1) – it would appear that synagogues' struggles to maintain significance to many Jews are not new. Moreover, key components of 'secularisation,' including institutional differentiation and the privatisation of religion (see Casanova, 1994), represent broader societal trends (Brown, 2001; Bruce, 2002). However, Jewish schools' current mainstream popularity has rendered the accompanying issues particularly acute. Consequently, few rabbis were supportive of their continued growth, highlighting a rift in attitudes with many

Jewish community leaders and parents. Nevertheless, some parents did perceive themselves as central to their children's Jewish education, as the following section demonstrates.

6.3.2 Parental commitment to Jewish instruction

It would be unfair to suggest low rates of parental commitment to their children's Jewish instruction, as some rabbis insinuated. Several of the parents interviewed were clearly highly involved in Jewish ritual practice in both the home and synagogue, and viewed Jewish school and synagogue as symbiotic aspects of their children's lives:

> "I think that the functions that the synagogue fulfils are much stronger than the ones that the school does, in terms of Jewish identity and belonging, I mean if the kids were *not* in a Jewish school I think that the anchor of the family and the synagogue would give them much more weight than if it was the other way around" (Isabella).

> "I don't think that you can just rely on the Jewish school to give your kids that sense of identity … if you want your kids to play a more major role in the community as they get older, and if you want them to have that real sense of Jewishness that I'm proud to have had then, I don't think it's all about school, I think, you know, you've *got* to be doing stuff at home, you've got to be encouraging synagogue attendance" (James).

These parents viewed continuous practice as a critical aspect of Jewish identity construction, rather than perceiving this identity as a form of reification, and as a result did not expect the school to represent as significant a space of Jewish socialisation as the home and synagogue (see Miller and Pomson, 2015b; Miller et al., 2016). Partially supporting rabbis' claims of parental uninterest in Jewish practice, these parents were keen to highlight their own 'committed' Jewishness in opposition to that of their counterparts:

> "There are families whose kids were at Brent Cross[91] on *Yom Kippur*, just because it doesn't have any meaning to them, and certainly there were a fair few

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[91] A large shopping centre in North London.

of [daughter]'s school friends that were out on *Yom Kippur*, shopping, just socialising, because it's not what their family do" (Jacqui).

"I think there are a lot of kids that don't go to synagogue, that go to JCoSS. I find that a bit bizarre, but each to their own." *[Laughs]* (Abby).

Indeed, one parent perceived the existence of "minimum" standards of Jewish practice and knowledge, and was astonished at its absence amongst some other day school parents:

"I had people, a friend of his, a mother contact me just before *Yom Kippur* and say to me "My son says there's some kind of festival coming up, what exactly is it?" That to me is alien, just before *Yom Kippur*" (Lydia).

Hence certain 'committed' parents deemed their non-practising peers to be failing to fulfil their Jewish 'duties,' whether owing to a lack of knowledge or lack of motivation. Although such issues undoubtedly exist in all spheres, Jewish day schools can highlight many families' disregard for Jewish festivals; for instance, whereas parents at non-Jewish schools are generally able to withdraw their children on significant religious holidays, pupils in Jewish schools are officially designated a day off from school, clearly revealing those families who choose not to attend synagogue in spite of their free day and hence facilitating this internal othering process. Of course, parents at non-Jewish schools may also withdraw their children so that they can participate in 'non-Jewish' activities, but the growth in Jewish schools has increased rabbis' *expectations* that families will attend synagogue, and cemented disappointment where these expectations are not realised.

However, whereas parental commitment was perceived as an important influence amongst these observant families, the vast majority of *all* parents emphasised the importance of their children's autonomy. This reflects a substantial body of research exploring the ways in which adolescents construct a personalised engagement with faith as they break from familial expectations (e.g. Potvin and Lee, 1982; Ozorak, 1989) – a phenomenon often desired by parents (Spera, 2005; Vermeer and van der Ven, 2006) – rendering their own perspectives and modelled behaviour of little significance beyond a certain period (usually *b'nei mitzvah* or the completion of secondary education):

"We don't *force* it on them … I want them to enjoy going to synagogue and not
be forced to go to synagogue" (Abby).

Some parents also expressed an openness to their children's (temporary) disaffiliation from synagogue life whilst remaining personally committed to their communities and hoping for their children's eventual 'return':

"My feeling is ultimately a liberal one and not necessarily the one that synagogue
would like [which] is so long as he's continuing his journey and exploring, that
doesn't have to take a set route, and I actually think it may be quite a natural
thing post-bar mitzvah or *KT*[92] for a youngster to break away and want to explore
for a while, and go outside, I think that's actually quite a healthy one" (Pippa).

In opposition to cultural broadening theory's premise that identities are competitive and can be weakened by alternative social experiences (5.2.1) – and the comparable assumptions of some Jewish identity researchers (e.g. Liebman, 1973; Levitz, 1995) – parents such as Pippa perceived that access to alternative cultures and practices can facilitate their child's personalised identity and possibly even strengthen their commitment to faith in the long term. Therefore, even parents who are committed to synagogue life may condone and encourage their children's participation in other spheres, particularly where they view Judaism as an individualised choice for their children (see Alba, 1990; Prell, 2007). However, given that Jewish day schools continue to be popular amongst many Jewish parents regardless of levels of observance, contestation with rabbis' desires is likely to persist. As one rabbi argued, "school has replaced the *shul*" (Rabbi, Orthodox synagogue 1), as synagogues and their *chederim* have been profoundly affected by the rise of Jewish day schools. Given such devolution of responsibility, many rabbis feared for the viability of their synagogues' *chederim*, as the following section demonstrates.

6.3.3 Disengagement from further Jewish education

It has been recognised that diasporic synagogues have historically represented important providers of Jewish education (Homa, 1969; Schiff, 1978; Ziderman, 1989), but the growth

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[92] *Kabbalat Torah.*

of Jewish day schools has come to represent a direct threat to the continued functioning of *chederim*. Two interconnected factors accounted for Jewish day schools' superior popularity. First, parents believed that Jewish day schools provide a far more immersive Jewish education than 'informal' *chederim*:

> "The depth and breadth of topics and discussions and scope that takes place within his day school by far and away eclipse what's possible and doable, you know, in a three-hour slot, which is largely seen as socialisation" (Pippa).

Miller (2001) has also mooted that the greater time available to immerse children in faith has rendered Jewish day schools more popular with parents than synagogues' supplementary schools. Certainly, numerous empirical studies have suggested that Jewish education needs to be provided for a considerable number of hours during a young person's upbringing, and that day schools are supported by higher levels of teacher education and parental motivation than supplementary schools (see Dashefsky and Lebson, 2002). Accordingly, many parents prioritised Jewish day schools owing to their own negative experiences of *cheder* (Hart et al., 2007) and perceptions that these schools are largely ineffective as educational institutions (Prell, 2007):

> "I hated going, having to go to school on a Sunday, and I thought "You know what? I don't have to, and they get everything they want within the week, and then they even get a *better* education"" (Sarah).

Sarah demonstrated the second major factor explaining day schools' privileged status: parents desired their children's involvement in non-Jewish 'leisure' activities during their free time (Borts, 2014), and consequently viewed *chederim* as detrimental to such interests (Ziderman, 1989; Chiswick and Chiswick, 2000). As one rabbi explained:

> "Faith schools take away the pressure for some families because they think "Well, Judaism's taken care of there so therefore we can dedicate our time to do walking in the Lake District or karate championships," and then I think, you know, in our secular culture, I think and probably more in the branches of

Progressive Judaism, non-Orthodox Judaism, the commitment weakens, the commitment weakens, if there's that degree of choice then I think commitment struggles" (Rabbi, Liberal synagogue 4).

In this way, 'secular culture' was presented as a potential threat to Jewish commitment through its superior appeal to families than synagogue services and educational programmes. However, broader leisure activities were not only favoured to synagogue involvement (including supplementary schooling) for reasons of entertainment, but also owing to parents' scepticisms of single-faith schooling and their children's perceived segregation from other groups (see Section 4.3.5). Thus, weekends were widely viewed by parents as opportunities for children to engage with non-Jews:

"My kids do [local drama organisation], which is non-Jewish, to try and do different activities, there's no way I, and I've had this argument with the rabbi over the years, and he's always said to me "Your kids should come to *cheder*," "No, not if they're at a Jewish school, absolutely no way," […] the rabbi will say to you "There's always more learning," but actually most parents would want to have something other in their life, we didn't want our kids to be at Jewish school all week, and then have to go to do more Jewish learning on a Sunday morning" (Jacqui).

Therefore, reflecting a concern for multiple identities rather than a particularistic form of Jewishness (Kaplan, 2009; Magid, 2013), Jewish day schooling was often considered the maximum acceptable amount of 'Jewish' provision for a child, as parents perceived a personal responsibility to raise children who could participate actively with non-Jews, too.

Given this preference for Jewish day schools, *chederim* were generally perceived as irrelevant or even undesirable. Indeed, most parents believed that Jewish schools (particularly at primary level) had replicated the Jewish education and social provision of *chederim*, rendering them unnecessary:

"My kids didn't go to the *cheder* because they're at Jewish school" (James).

Certainly, most parents felt that *chederim* today solely exist for the Jewish education of children who do *not* attend Jewish day schools:

> "She was there because of course she didn't go to a Jewish primary school" (Debbie).

Accordingly, most rabbis were sceptical that Jewish day schools encourage greater interest in synagogue-based study. Rather, weekends were rendered holidays *from* Jewish learning and practice:

> "When we tried to do the *cheder* parents would tell us "My child needs one day of resting from Judaism, Monday to Friday they're in school, then *Shabbat*, then on Sunday you want them to come to *cheder*, it's too much"" (Rabbi, Masorti synagogue 3).

As a result, the majority of rabbis claimed that their *chederim*'s existence had been threatened by the growth of Jewish schools:

> "There was a *cheder* but with very small numbers and it's becoming increasingly difficult to sustain financially. This is because of course people went to Jewish schools and therefore the *cheder* was decimated" (Rabbi, Orthodox synagogue 4).

> "One of the *chederim* where I have worked I noticed that there was a drift out, you know, people who went to Jewish schools, either primary or secondary schools, had stopped from attending *cheder*, and their parents would say "They don't need to attend *cheder*, because they're going to a Jewish school"" (Rabbi, Liberal synagogue 2).

In relation, whereas many synagogues once provided GCSE Jewish Studies programmes, the growth of Jewish schools (in which the course is compulsory) has significantly reduced its availability in synagogues. It is feasible that parents of children who do not attend Jewish

day schools are consequently forced to seek a Jewish education at a separate synagogue, potentially reducing the membership of such congregations in turn.

Crucially, many rabbis also feared that Jewish schools instigate their pupils' disengagement from further Jewish education. In part, and reflecting Gross and Rutland's (2014a) finding that Australian Jewish pupils are often frustrated by their lack of Hebrew proficiency despite years of study, this was viewed as a consequence of perceived poor standards of Jewish Studies and Hebrew teaching in Jewish day schools:

"The main problem I would say is the levels of [Jewish] cultural proficiency of children coming through the faith school system is very low … and I think that kicks back in terms of, you know, a child who's been through a segregated education system and then emerges without cultural competence, it's very hard to turn to that kid and say "Well, why don't we go and do some Jewish learning so that you can gain the core cultural competences that you should have got in school over the last 13 years when you've been segregated from other people," and kids are kind of bemused by it, I think children are kind of frustrated and bemused, like "Why, if I've been through this segregated system, why can't I do the things that you expect me to do?"" (Rabbi, Masorti synagogue 1).

Thus, given the discrepancy between one's expectations and reality, failure to attain key cultural and religious skills at a Jewish day school may prove more damaging to a child's sense of Jewishness than failure to attain them through a non-Jewish school. Furthermore, where individuals do not value religious and cultural practice, their motivation to develop the prerequisite skills may be limited, ensuring that this issue is self-fulfilling. Since a minority of rabbis claimed that Jewish schools do provide a high standard of Jewish and Hebrew education ("I think Jewish literacy is amazing at Jewish day schools" – Rabbi, Reform synagogue 1), it is possible that significant variations exist in the quality of education available, and pupil ability and motivation may also represent more accurate determinants of achievement than schooling. Nevertheless, most rabbis were disappointed by day school education and condemned its impacts upon their congregations. In particular, several Progressive rabbis argued that teaching in all but the explicitly Progressive or cross-

communal schools emphasise Orthodox values and beliefs without acknowledging other movements, and so portray the faith in an uninspiring and unrelatable way:

"The level of *Jewish* education, if that's what they're supposed to provide, is laughable, and it's ultra-Orthodox for the most part, and completely uninspiring and inadequate and it leaves the kids with no greater sense of what it means to be Jewish, and probably a lesser sense of what it means to be Jewish than if they continued to attend synagogues and go through the courses and youth activities out there that are run by the Liberal movement, and other movements too" (Rabbi, Liberal synagogue 1).

"The message they're getting at school isn't what we're teaching them" (Rabbi, Reform synagogue 2).

Schoem (1989) relatedly illustrate pupils' identification of inconsistencies between their school's teachings and their parents' practices and behaviours, to the potential detriment of their identity construction, whilst Gross and Rutland (2014a) highlight pupils' criticisms of 'Jewish' topics they deem personally irrelevant (even though older generations portrayed them as constitutive of their ethnicity) and didactic rather than interactive forms of teaching. Importantly, Orthodox Judaism is reluctant to validate the existence of other Jewish movements, seeing itself as the sole authentic form of Judaism owing to its adherence to *halakhah* (2.3.6). Thus, a disjuncture was evident between the willingness of Progressive Judaism to question and adapt faith to contemporary society, and Orthodox Judaism's maintenance of its 'tradition' through 'indoctrinatory' teaching:

"It's a very Orthodox traditional line, and I think kids want to be able to question more because that's what Liberal Judaism does, that's why I give them the opportunity to do it in their bar and bat mitzvah classes and in their *Kabbalat Torah* group, but I just don't think, from what I've seen and what I've heard, it's just presented as a very one-dimensional view of what religion is and what it has to be for it to be done properly […] my perspective on Judaism is that the role

of Jews is to question and challenge their religion rather than just blindly accept it" (Rabbi, Liberal synagogue 1).

"I'm not into gendered education and I think that a lot of the messages that people get from the [Orthodox] school systems is kind of gendered, so there's a mismatch between the messages they're getting from synagogue and from school and that's probably destructive in terms of a young person's kind of understanding of the Jewish world … there's a kind of a misalignment that happens, and I don't know whether that serves the children well, a lot of kids who've been through Jewish schools come out sort of bemused as opposed to passionate, I would say … there's definitely some mixed messages coming in the clash between school and *shul*" (Rabbi, Masorti synagogue 1).

Consequently, some rabbis feared that pupils would be restricted from questioning – and thereby defining their relationship with – the faith, constraining their development of a proud sense of individual Jewishness (Forrest-Bank and Dupper, 2016). Instead, they would feel obligated to assume – or more likely, reject – the singular, homogenised form of Jewish identity offered by the school.

Accordingly, amongst the minority of parents who had opted for their children's additional involvement in *chederim*, many experienced challenges in motivating their children's participation given the repetitiveness of their learning, and feared that their children would become less, rather than more, engaged in synagogue life:

Daniel: "There was a stage before his 'bar-mi,'[93] I suppose between the ages of 8 and 11, where we actually stopped him from going to *cheder* because there was no point, because what was happening was he was going to *cheder* and the education that he was getting was not as good obviously as the education at the Jewish schools, so he was bored"/
Natasha: "He was bored."
Daniel:/ "so in lessons he'd already covered it, so we actually stopped him from going to *cheder*"/

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[93] Bar mitzvah.

Natasha: "Yeah, it wasn't because he was bored we stopped him, because he was bored it was a vicious circle, he misbehaved, and instead of making friends with our community, he was making enemies with the community, so we thought we'd pull him out."

Daniel: "But also"/

Natasha: "There was no point him being there."

Daniel: "I think with regard to *cheders*, I think *cheders* are certainly on the decline because, because we've got the Jewish education there's not the same need for it."

Natasha: "Yeah."

Daniel: "At our *cheder*, the numbers have greatly diminished to what they used to be […] [and] by sending kids to Jewish school to get more of an identity, fewer of them go to synagogue because they don't need the synagogue identity because they're getting it all from school."

Natasha: "That's another thing, because he's got Jewish education all week, we struggle to get him into synagogue."

Hence young people's involvement in both educational institutions was perceived as excessive, reducing their engagement in synagogue life, even where parents were able to model their own commitment to their communities. Consequently, rather than merely affecting the likelihood of sending their children to *chederim*, a perception existed that Jewish day schools had rendered synagogues *in general* alternative rather than complementary Jewish environments for families. Importantly, the impacts of Jewish schools on *chederim* (and by extension, synagogues) were uneven: in particular, synagogues located within medium commuting distance of a Jewish day school identified significant declines in their *cheder* numbers, whereas those either distant from Jewish schools, or centrally located but large enough to sustain membership numbers (particularly given the desirability of these districts to families seeking school places via proximity criteria) were "not … massively affected" (Director of Education, Masorti synagogue 2). Nevertheless, given the threats to synagogues' educational roles, most rabbis believed that "on a local level … the fact that all our kids have gone to Jewish schools has mainly negative effects" (Rabbi, Masorti synagogue

1). Day school pupils' non-involvement in *chederim* was also perceived as reducing families' wider involvement in synagogue life, as the following section highlights.

6.3.4 Disengagement from wider synagogue life

Chederim do not only provide Jewish education to children, but also operate as the entry point for a young person into a synagogue community. Indeed, *chederim* were often credited by rabbis for facilitating children's friendships and therefore, it was hoped, long-term involvement in synagogue life including committee involvement and leadership positions. Children's participation may instigate other family members' community involvement, too:

> "What would happen is, you start by sending your children to a religion school, and then you get called into all sorts of committees and the parents' association, and so on and so on and then from there you start looking at adult education and maybe ritual and basically that would have been people's entry into community life, people would start being involved by their children being involved at religion school" (Rabbi, Liberal synagogue 2).

However, beyond spiritual engagement including prayer, synagogues are easily usurped by organisations such as Jewish day schools that – given their superior funding, critical mass and resourcing of materials and personnel – can 'provide' Jewish education and socialisation more 'efficiently.' Rabbis feared that a resulting decline in *chederim* would denigrate the appeal of synagogue more broadly to parents, causing wider disaffiliation and a decline in these institutions' community role:

> "Jewish children at Jewish day schools aren't brought to the synagogue for *cheder*, so in that way it has starved us of some potential membership, because they delay until, let's say the child has reached 11, that means neither the parent nor the child has had a chance to form real friendships here, so the parents then often disappear once they have taken from the synagogue what they wanted, i.e. a bar or bat mitzvah, whereas if they joined when their child was five, friendships are made, both for the parents as well as the children, and hopefully both sides' parents and children are integrated into the life and membership of the *shul*, I

think that's much more difficult now for those parents at Jewish day school, who only join the *shul* once the oldest child reaches 11" (Rabbi, Reform synagogue 3).

In these ways, Jewish day schools are perceived to impede the formation of a new generation of synagogue leaders, whilst parents' lack of long-term involvement in the synagogue inhibits their own development of friendships that might encourage further commitment and affiliation. Consequently, the additional co-opting of synagogues' *social* functions by Jewish schools represents a significant concern:

> Rabbi, Reform synagogue 3: "With many of our parents having youngsters at Jewish day school, they feel "Well look, my child's got a whole *network* of Jewish friends, and doesn't need to make more, so," and many Jewish kids are comfortable and I guess complacent with their own Jewish network, and they're not necessarily looking to expand it … I think there is this feeling, "Right, my child's at Jewish day school, but hey, I don't want him to become or her to become *too* Jewish.""
>
> Interviewer: "In the sense of being restricted to solely Jewish friends?"
>
> Rabbi, Reform synagogue 3: "Yeah."

Such fear of becoming "too Jewish" suggests that parents often conceptualise Jewish identity as an ambiguous but reified quality that individuals possess to differing extents (Zelkowicz, 2013; Samson et al., 2017). Thus, rather than being understood as fluctuating in different spaces, individuals may instead seek to distance themselves from Jews (in a fixed sense) when outside of a single Jewish social environment (the Jewish school). Indeed, Jewish schools were not necessarily viewed as means of providing 'continuity' with pupils' observant home environments as identified by Valins (2003a). Rather, they were commonly perceived as contributors to a secularised identity that includes broader cultural components of Jewishness – including the extension of Jewish friendships and learning about one's cultural identity – and which is limited to certain spaces. In this sense, Jewish socialisation becomes a balancing act, full of contradictions: Jewish communality is perceived as desirable

and normal in a Jewish school setting, but excessive elsewhere. As a result, most rabbis were pessimistic that they would be able to entice parents and their children 'back':

> "The thing that really matters is that we have a grip on their Jewish education, this was a way into the community; now we don't have a grip on their Jewish education, we also don't have people coming into our community" (Rabbi, Liberal synagogue 2).

Parents' and children's involvement in synagogue thus becomes not only pragmatic, but fundamentally individualistic and therefore contrary to traditional understandings of the synagogue as a community or meeting place. In opposition, rabbis generally favoured non-Jewish schools owing to their alternative conceptualisation of Jewish identity, as the following section demonstrates.

6.3.5 Discrepant attitudes towards schools and identity
Considering the collective challenges for synagogues described above, it was unsurprising that rabbis tended to favour non-Jewish schools. In large part, their championing of these institutions was related to the general consensus that group identities are constructed in response to the presence of an 'Other' (e.g. Tajfel, 1978, 1981; Hall, 1996; Jenkins, 2008), rendering the comparative absence or scarcity of non-Jews in Jewish schools potentially obfuscating to perceptions of Jewish distinctiveness. Indeed, previous research has revealed how pupils develop Jewish group identities in non-Jewish schools through negotiating their sense of difference from others, including by teaching them about their faith (Moulin, 2016) and celebrating Jewish holidays, as well as via experiences of anti-Semitism that may instigate them to learn more about their backgrounds and develop friendships with other Jewish students in safe spaces at school (Shapiro, 1999; Gross and Rutland, 2016). Accordingly, individuals living in areas where Jews represent a minority may make conscious decisions to practise Jewish rituals and in the process 'protect' their identities (Cutler, 2006; Alper and Olson, 2013), although other studies have highlighted attempts by some to minimise their perceived differences from others and 'pass' as part of the majority group (Hecht and Faulkner, 2000; MacDonald-Dennis, 2006). Alongside the role of *chederim* in inculcating Jewish values, community and pride in one's identity, as well as

parental role modelling and encouragement of ritual or cultural participation, non-Jewish schools were hence considered capable of stimulating a sense of difference that necessitates young people's continuous identity work (5.3.1):

> "Kids who are Jewish, who identify as Jewish, can group together in a non-Jewish school, create their Jewish societies, and we often hear people who go to non-Jewish schools, "You know what, I was even more positive about my Jewish identity" because you felt the need to express that identity, otherwise you felt assimilated, basically, or you were lost" (Rabbi, Orthodox synagogue 4).

Moreover, pupils at non-Jewish schools may be able to develop their Jewish pride and distinctiveness through 'positive' Jewish experiences such as missing school for fun, *practice*-based religious holidays:

> "Those kids are much more likely to be the ones who are then in synagogue on a Jewish festival, even though they've had to take the day off school and the others haven't, or they'll be the ones that have built a *sukkah* in their home and taken a picture into school to show their teacher, because there's a sense that "I have to be building up your Jewish identity in a world where this is not taken for granted"" (Rabbi, Reform synagogue 1).

In contrast, children in Jewish schools may view their Jewish identities as ascribed rather than personally-defined and chosen, and possibly reject it due to its potentially negative associations with schooling:

> "I have a sense that those [non-Jewish school] kids will have much more of a *practice* ethos of their Judaism that they will pass onto their children down the line, rather than the Jewish day school kids, who will be very knowledgeable but take it for granted and perhaps not do it in adult life, and because also, by associating it with school, it's infantilising, so "Eurgh, yeah, we said the *Shema* every day when I was a kid, I don't need to be doing things like that as an adult," rather than "This is what my family do, and therefore it's what grandparents,

parents and children do," and you don't grow out of it […] I think they [Jewish schools] create a sense that Judaism no longer makes you unique, so it's no longer something that you're proud of" (Rabbi, Reform synagogue 1).

Heilman (1997, p.24) has similarly suggested that Jewish individuals are in danger of considering Judaism (and synagogue attendance in particular) as "kid stuff," given its association with life-cycle events such as baby blessings, Jewish education and bar or bat mitzvah, and other studies have illustrated a propensity for Jewish themes to be compartmentalised from secular themes in Jewish schools and synagogues, causing them to become perceived as marginal to students' broader lives and identities beyond limited times and spaces (Chein, 1955; Bekerman and Kopelowitz, 2008). Alongside many rabbis' concerns about school-based segregation – "It's like a 21st century version of a ghetto" (Rabbi, Reform synagogue 2) – and desire for their active exposure to children from other backgrounds, Jewish schools were consequently considered limited in their ability to develop Jewish identity and pride. Again, this reflects the disjuncture between parents' and rabbis' attitudes towards Jewish identity (6.3.1): whereas the former often desired their child's construction of a loose ethnic Jewish identity via cultural learning and friendships within school (with intercultural engagement occurring in other spaces), rabbis generally preferred the former components (and religious practice) to be undertaken outside of school, with school instead viewed as an opportunity for intercultural socialisation. Certainly, the few rabbis favourable towards Jewish schools tended to qualify that they are only valuable to parents who desire their children's socialisation in a religious environment that reflects their broader upbringing (see Section 6.3.1).

> "For me as a religious person, and for my kids I think that [Jewish school] was the main option, because to be religious … you really need to be in an atmosphere where they're doing it, where you're learning *Chumash*, you're learning *Tanakh* or whatever it is" (Rabbi, Orthodox synagogue 3).

Therefore, as Section 6.3 has demonstrated, Jewish schools were widely perceived as co-opting synagogue functions, in part owing to the divergent conceptualisation of Jewish

identity between rabbis and parents. Yet, in spite of these challenges, a lack of dialogue appears to have occurred between Jewish schools and synagogues, as Section 6.4 illustrates.

6.4 Minimal dialogue

The interviews with rabbis revealed that little interaction has taken place between Jewish schools and synagogues, entrenching a sense of distance between the institutions. This scarcity of engagement was particularly significant between institutions representing different movements, given Orthodox Judaism's refusal to validate other movements (2.3.6), as Section 6.4.1 shows, but interactions were also negligible within movements, as Section 6.4.2 describes. This may help to explain some rabbis' antipathy towards day schools, as well as the aforementioned discrepant approaches to Jewish education and identity, with numerous rabbis desiring greater communication in order that the Jewish school boom benefits rather than threatens their communities.

6.4.1 Denominationalism

Chapter 5 addressed how Jewish schools are central to denominational relations within Anglo-Jewry. Divisions based on religious interpretations of Jewish texts have become a broader rift with political ramifications: an implication of *halakhah* is that non-Orthodox Jews' practices, however meaningful or committed, are of inferior validity to the *status* of a non-observant, Orthodox-born Jew. Indeed, reflecting the ways in which Orthodox groups draw boundaries to 'protect' their identities from nominally Jewish groups whose Jewishness they dispute (Shaffir, 1995; Valins, 2003b), Orthodox schools were perceived as resistant to communication with non-Orthodox synagogues, particularly those with female rabbis, given their traditional exclusion from *minyan* and by extension from leading communal prayers (Weiss, 1990; Dashefsky et al., 2003):

> "[These schools are] Orthodox-controlled and quite nervous about Reform influence […] I think it's part of the Orthodox-Reform problem in Britain, and it *is* a problem, and I think the Jewish community is weaker for it, and I suppose it's also power, you know, if you've got a power base where you teach people your particular values you may not want someone saying "Actually," you know,

"there's no reason why women *shouldn't* be rabbis," it undermines, it might undermine their Orthodoxy" (Rabbi, Reform synagogue 4).

"They're Orthodox schools and I'm a woman rabbi, I'm A) a Reform rabbi and B) I'm a Reform *woman* rabbi, so I have nothing going for me" (Rabbi, Reform synagogue 2).

This reflects the dominant status of Orthodox Judaism in Jewish education, as Orthodox schools can direct their interactions with other groups in a way that sustains exclusive conceptions of the faith, even though they have theoretically become obligated to admit non-Orthodox pupils since R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS (5.2.1). Such silencing of oppositional influences was deemed to constrain their pupils' autonomy and negotiation of different perspectives, in turn jeopardising their personalised identity construction:

"I'd like better interaction, particularly with the Orthodox-Reform issue, you know, we're no longer fighting each other, but we're not truly working together, I think it would be to the benefit of the students if synagogues and rabbis were welcomed in, *all* their assemblies are Orthodox, whereas my daughter went to [non-Jewish school] and their assemblies have got all kinds of people coming in to the Jewish assemblies, and the pupils I think cope with that very well, and can challenge or enjoy speakers from across the community" (Rabbi, Reform synagogue 4).

However, limited dialogue was not just an issue of denominationalism. As the following section demonstrates, little interaction exists between Jewish schools and synagogues regardless of affiliation.

6.4.2 *The minimal relationship between Jewish schools and synagogues*
Rabbis were almost unanimous in describing a negligible relationship with Jewish schools. Time was viewed as a particular constraint, especially for synagogue-based rabbis who often bear numerous congregational responsibilities:

"We're resource-limited in terms of personnel and the number of hours that I can put in to that; *that* limits the relationship" (Rabbi, Orthodox synagogue 4).

Nevertheless, regardless of rabbinic staffing, interactions have largely been limited to rabbi speakers in Jewish schools or school visits to synagogues (see Section 6.5.2), rather than thorough deliberation of significant – but somewhat marginalised – issues in Anglo-Jewry. Certainly, no rabbi claimed to be aware of any attempt to develop a strategy exploring and tackling the challenges for synagogues imposed by Jewish schools, reinforcing most rabbis' negative attitudes towards the latter, although the majority were open to future interaction:

Rabbi, Masorti synagogue 3: "I think we should cooperate more, I think we're in a stage that many synagogues … are angry at Jewish schools because they are taking our kids away, and I think that it shouldn't be like that actually, I think they should be more, "OK, so let's work *together* to see how we enhance, how we improve the Jewish education for our kids," we should be working together and stuff instead of competing or in the worst case working separately and just being polite to each other."

Interviewer: "There just isn't much dialogue at the moment?"

Rabbi, Masorti synagogue 3: "Not really, and I think that even though they do have a constant communication, I'm not talking about inviting the rabbi to the school to teach a lesson once a month, though many schools do, both Orthodox and non-Orthodox, I think that we should try at some point to think even further to maybe try to develop some kind of strategy plan, a *giant* strategy plan for how we can work together, maybe, of course there are many questions and many challenges we want to think about but, well that's part of sitting together and thinking about it."

Consequently, the present situation differs substantially from Morris' (1959, p.11) claim that Jewish education enjoys a "close and intimate connection with the Synagogue, which is stronger now than ever before." Ideas were provided for facilitating greater interaction between schools and synagogues, including a "forum" in which school leaders could "gain

advice from local rabbis into what the schools should do" (Rabbi, Orthodox synagogue 3), thus handing rabbis a greater role in children's (social as well as Jewish) education, or alternatively an incentive scheme in which pupils' involvement in synagogue becomes part of a youth award such as Duke of Edinburgh. Indeed, one rabbi was concerned about Jewish schools' perceived failure to increase pupils' community involvement alongside their Jewish education, with the effect of limiting their construction of a Jewish *communal* identity:

> "It'll be interesting to think how *schools* could engage with more communities by having, as it were, an ongoing relationship to say, you know, for the Jewish schools to say "You belong to such and such community, we *expect* you to be able to mark up half a dozen things you did in the last six months in your *community*," because Jewish life is education *and* community, not just school; that would be very interesting for the schools to do actually" (Rabbi, Masorti synagogue 2).

Therefore, by including synagogue involvement within Jewish schools' extra-curricular schemes, it was hoped that pupils would be enabled to develop both their individual and collective Jewish identities, with the effect of increasing pupils' 'richness' of Jewishness whilst also assisting synagogue communities. As Section 6.5 highlights, Jewish schools possess the *potential* to support synagogue communities in other ways, even if most rabbis felt that these benefits were yet to be realised.

6.5 Mutual benefits

Thus far, this chapter has addressed the severe impacts of Jewish day schools upon synagogue communities. However, Jewish schools may provide a degree of support, too. First, Jewish day schools, often with parental impetus, may encourage greater community involvement amongst their pupils (6.5.1). Second, some Jewish day schools and synagogues have developed partnerships in order to actively shape their relationships (6.5.2). Finally, R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS has resulted in certain (largely symbolic) benefits for non-Orthodox synagogue communities, as their versions of Jewishness are increasingly validated (at least legally) with the effect of increasing their members' access to

once-exclusive Jewish schools, whilst some such institutions have also relinquished bar mitzvah functions they had previously appropriated from synagogues (6.5.3).

6.5.1 Encouraging community involvement

It is necessary to acknowledge that some Jewish schools actively encourage their pupils to participate in synagogue life. Although most parents and rabbis doubted that the minimal levels of synagogue attendance required to qualify for a Jewish school place under their oversubscription criteria would stimulate any long-term commitment to synagogue communities (6.2.1), JCoSS' leadership viewed long-term involvement in the Jewish community (whether this includes synagogue attendance or not) as highly desirable and perceived itself to have some responsibility in this regard:

> Interviewer: "Do you as a school encourage the pupils to get involved in the Jewish community more broadly – obviously when it comes to admissions that can be one of the criteria – but when they're actually here, is that something that's desirable?"
>
> Headteacher: "Yeah it absolutely is, part of the goal I suppose is in whatever way suits a particular a student or family, for them over time to build *some* kind of connection and that might be through youth group, it might be through year course, it might be through volunteering, it might be obviously through synagogue; there's never an *expectation* of it, but I think the way we talk to them has the assumption that what we would like for many of them to do is to build I suppose kind of like a life-time relationship with the community; what that means in practice will vary quite a lot from person to person."

Nevertheless, reflecting its universalism, non-Jewish organisations were also deemed appropriate spheres for community engagement:

> "Certainly within the Jewish community we do summer camp fair every year and encourage them to go on camp…we have a charity event that a number of charities come into the school and they get the kids involved, all of the year groups, specifically Year 12 and 13 are expected to do a number of volunteering

projects within the school year, within their academic career, but that will be external, if that is a Jewish charity, brilliant, if it's not, brilliant, it doesn't matter to us as long as they are out there in the community *doing* stuff" (Deputy Headteacher).

Thus, JCoSS' position on community involvement is one of gentle endorsement, in line with its wider ethos of pupil choice (4.2.2) and *menschlichkeit* (4.4.2). Accordingly, some parents described their children's involvement in their synagogue communities, where they were able to develop wider social skills (such as leadership training and support for others) than often feasible within the school:

> "I think at the schools they're taught, but in the synagogues because it's not just about religious learning it's also about youth leadership, which is not taught in school, but it's actually helping to give the kids responsibility for helping others during their education process, and social progress as well, and that's something the school doesn't provide" (Aaron).

> "My daughter is now a *cheder* assistant, so, yeah, and they train them, which is great actually, because they actually give them proper training … my daughter had a classroom management workshop and stuff which is great" (Zoe).

As a result, these pupils were able to reinforce their commitment to their synagogue communities for several years beyond *b'nei mitzvah*. Relatedly, a few rabbis believed that Jewish schools can facilitate pupils' socialisation within the Jewish calendar and inculcate ethical, community-based values that would provide a sense of 'grounding':

> "I think Jewish day schools give a great rhythm to the Jewish year in a way that's very difficult to gauge outside of those settings, so that whole ebb and flow of leading up to Jewish festivals, that kind of thing, and I think, you know, an amazing sense of community" (Rabbi, Reform synagogue 1).

"My perspective is that religion brings with it, often, some sort of stability … so I think often the Jewish schools provide a very strong family life and morals and ethics regarding family ties which I think perhaps might be missing from others" (Rabbi, Orthodox synagogue 1).

In particular, through developing friendships that stretch beyond school boundaries, a minority of rabbis suggested that Jewish schools can encourage pupils' involvement in further Jewish activities, even if "*Shabbat* morning services are not the primary focus of that engagement" (Rabbi, Masorti synagogue 2):

"I think choices you make a little later in life, the university you attend, whether you go on Israel tour before at 16, a lot of that is determined I would guess from what your friends are doing, so if you're at a Jewish day school, and your friends in Year 11 are going on Jewish tour, or if in gap year they're doing *something* that has a Jewish content at some stage … you're likely to see that because you're likely to be there with a strong nucleus of Jewish students, and friendship choices will be determined too, and Jewish choices will be made that much easier, if you are at a university with a good, strong, Jewish student body, and I think all of that, those choices are more likely to be positive from a Jewish point of view if the youngster is at Jewish day school" (Rabbi, Reform synagogue 3).

Indeed, Jewish schools may encourage pupils' participation in other Jewish organisations, including university 'JSocs'[94] (Cohen, 1995), study groups and youth groups (Cohen, 2007), overnight camps and Israel trips (Wertheimer, 2005; Miller et al., 2013), deepening young people's Jewish identities through providing an immersive, experiential education that is more difficult to create in a formal school environment (Himmelfarb, 1989; Gross and Rutland, 2014a). The potential influence of day schooling and friendships on community participation most clearly demonstrated by one parent whose daughter sought to 'switch' from her own Modern Sephardi *shul* to a Reform synagogue:

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[94] Jewish Societies, developed by students at university.

"Our synagogue has got a massive community, but we're not part of it, through our own choice, we don't, you know, we don't participate in it; my daughter literally wants to join a Reform *shul* and go every week, she *loves* that sense of community … she feels at home there, she likes the fact that women have the same roles as men, and she loves the whole, she loves the, she's embraced the whole Reform movement … and a lot of her friends are [there], and they're from JCoSS" (Rita).

A second parent believed that her son's synagogue involvement, including his decision to have a bar mitzvah, was influenced by his day schooling, which in turn facilitated his development of intergenerational relationships within the congregation (Smith, 2003b; King and Furrow, 2004), impossible in a day school environment:

"When he went to JCoSS he really liked the teachers, and then he decided to have a bar mitzvah, and that was his choice, and then we started going to synagogue, we used to go on Friday nights, he liked, it, he didn't always want to go, but he would like it, and he likes the older people there and everything, and then when he had his bar mitzvah I think that was a bit of a turning point for him, but he was strongly influenced by the very nice Jewish teachers, the Jewish Ed.[95] teachers they have at the school" (Barbara).

In these ways, pupils may be enabled to feel sufficiently strongly about their burgeoning Jewish identities that they *choose* to become more involved in a synagogue community, rather than feeling obligated to do so by their parents, with the effect of retaining synagogues' social functions to some extent (see Section 6.3.4). Although the majority of pupils are likely to be most profoundly influenced by their parents' own interests and attitudes (Schoenfeld, 1998) – with Sections 7.4.2 and 7.4.5 relatedly identifying the importance of upbringing in encouraging synagogue involvement amongst Jewish school pupils – it is thus apparent that Jewish schools can play an important role in reinforcing the influence of other spaces such as synagogues on individuals' Jewish identity construction:

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[95] Jewish Education.

"I think it's a partnership, we're not working in isolation, so we are working with the families and we're working with the synagogues, so I think the families, where the parents are committed, their commitment, you know, remains" (Deputy Headteacher).

Some Jewish schools have accordingly developed partnerships with local synagogues, as Section 6.5.2 demonstrates.

6.5.2 School-synagogue partnership

Section 6.4 highlighted a lack of interaction between many Jewish schools and synagogues. However, in order to enact its cross-communal responsibility, JCoSS' leadership plays an active role in numerous local synagogue communities. For instance, the Headteacher has spoken at several *shuls*:

"It's funny, the Principal, Headteacher came to our synagogue on Saturday to speak, it really feels a part of the family, I mean it's really felt like it has a big, big, strong connection to our community" (Isabella).

Some rabbis have also become involved in activities at JCoSS, including at Rosh Chodesh:

"Our rabbi often goes to JCoSS, you know, they see a tie-up there, and that's quite important so it's seamless really for them, in that sense" (Aaron).

In these ways, pupils are enabled to ascertain the connections between their school and synagogue, and so the synagogue becomes an extension – rather than rival – of the school (or vice versa). Several non-Orthodox rabbis were also avid about their interactions with pluralist schools such as JCoSS, valuing opportunities to work with a Jewish school, instead of being denigrated for their affiliation (as can be the case in Orthodox schools):

"JCoSS and us have a more active relationship because they're keen to welcome our rabbis into their school and invite us from time to time to do something" (Rabbi, Reform synagogue 4).

Moreover, in some synagogues (all of which were Orthodox), a rabbi may play an advisory role at a local Jewish school, facilitating particularly active collaboration between these institutions, distinguishing this form of school-synagogue relationship from JCoSS, which engages with multiple schools:

"*Purim* this year, I grabbed the opportunity when I heard, when I was speaking to the Head of Jewish Studies [at affiliated Jewish primary school], about instead of them having a half-day of *Purim* activities in the school, they're going to do their entire thing, the school is going to move into the synagogue for the day; so I thought that was quite a creative way, and then when we've read the *Megillah*, when we do the *Purim* activities, we can involve our community, they can come in and be a part of the school" (Rabbi, Orthodox synagogue 4).

"We've established the school … and that has created a strong relationship between us and the school and the parents of the school" (Rabbi, Orthodox synagogue 2).

Thus synagogues and schools may share capacity and resources, bringing school children into the synagogue building so that they can learn and interact with other members of the community, as well as develop a more practical understanding of festivals, although this strategy is less likely to be effective in cross-communal schools given the diversity of expressions of Jewishness they would need to acknowledge. Furthermore, even where valuable community connections exist between particular Jewish schools and synagogues, they are by themselves insufficient to addressing the issues illustrated in this chapter. Despite these issues, Section 6.5.3 demonstrates how R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS has instigated greater validation of non-halakhic Judaism, with important implications for many non-Orthodox synagogues.

6.5.3 Symbolic support for non-Orthodox synagogues

The impacts of R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS on Jewish school admissions practices were explored specifically in Sections 5.2 and 6.2. The ruling has, however, also had certain positive – albeit fairly limited – implications for synagogues. First,

some non-Orthodox rabbis enthused that their members now enjoy equal standing with their Orthodox counterparts when applying for (often highly desirable) Jewish schools, because self-identifying but non-halakhic Jewish children cannot be rejected on this basis:

"I think that from a totally selfish point of view that change of law which meant that schools had to be more open suits me personally as a rabbi who's got some of my active members, a few of them, are converts with children, they couldn't get into Orthodox Jewish schools a generation ago, but now by British law they do get in *if* they're actively involved in a synagogue or at least in attendance, so I'm pleased for them because I think these are families that often have a lot to give" (Rabbi, Reform synagogue 4).

"[The ruling offers] more choice over schooling, more access to schools, there's less kind of 'differentiation,' to use a nice word, on the grounds of which affiliation you belong to" (Rabbi, Masorti synagogue 2).

Indeed, whereas Miller et al. (2016) argue that Jewish schools' new entry requirements based upon adherence to faith are "problematic for a religion where attending synagogue or the observance of other forms of practice is not a test of "how Jewish" a person is," rabbis – at least those affiliated with non-Orthodox synagogues – tended to favour the fact that involvement in any synagogue can be seen as a passport for entry rather than Jewish schools resorting to "the potential racism in defining who a Jew is" (Rabbi, Liberal synagogue 4). Consequently, synagogues' enforced bureaucratic measures of recording attendance were generally perceived by non-Orthodox rabbis as tedious and unreflective of 'true' commitment to faith (6.2), but nonetheless preferable to halakhic criteria of Jewish lineage:

"Those kind of attendance tests and the slips you have to dole out and whatever, they're not stunning or great either, but they're certainly an alternative to having to prove, you know, produce *ketubot* and prove, and prove status, so yeah, it is an important landmark … from the point of view of my community I think it's been definitely more positive" (Rabbi, Masorti synagogue 2).

Thus, although most rabbis were frustrated by their gatekeeper role (6.2.1), some felt simultaneously satisfied that they – rather than traditional 'measures' of Jewishness they dispute – were now more able to contribute to processes of determining non-halakhic Jewish identities. In this sense, R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS has facilitated a more open, inclusive treatment of Jewishness that may be seen as adopting from Christianity (perhaps in particular) an understanding of faith as rooted in practice rather than ancestry, but which crucially also facilitates a universalistic conception of Jewishness that could *theoretically* be used to reiterate the importance of ritualism and engagement, including in the synagogue. Given that this chapter has revealed that such developments have not yet been forthcoming, one might question whether some of these rabbis were stretching for benefits of Jewish schools. It would appear that these non-Orthodox rabbis were more amenable to Jewish schools than their peers because they felt that their own conceptualisations of Jewish identity were at least increasingly being treated as valid, in large part enabled by R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS, even if such advantages were merely symbolic.

This is also reflected in the second positive, albeit fairly limited, implication of R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS for non-Orthodox synagogues: the unintentional 'return' of many young people's *b'nei mitzvah* ceremonies to these communities. Where previously several Orthodox Jewish schools offered bar mitzvah ceremonies for male pupils, they are today no longer able to discriminate on the basis of ancestry when admitting pupils, creating the possibility that they would provide a bar mitzvah for a student whose Jewishness they contest. In response, these schools often now refuse to offer bar mitzvah ceremonies to any students, resulting in the renewed importance of synagogues as spaces for such events. As one rabbi argued, this has facilitated greater connectivity between young Jewish individuals and broader, intergenerational Jewish communities, unfeasible in a classroom setting:

"The [Orthodox] Jewish day schools have stopped doing bar mitzvah and bat mitzvah because they can't be sure the child is halakhically Jewish, and that's great, because I think of all the damage they did to us in the past, they would have peer group bar mitzvahs or the sort of Thursday morning pre-breakfast service, and the youngsters and families often didn't bother joining synagogues

because they got their bar mitzvah, but it was, you know, it was among the school kids and then there's a party on a Sunday, whereas now they're doing bar mitzvah in a synagogue programme; for us, the bar mitzvah numbers went down and now they're going up again, because the Jewish day schools have stopped, we are having youngsters coming, and they have their bar mitzvah in a cross-generational synagogue, so there's, you know, there's old people happy to see young people becoming adults, and there's the whole community, I think it's more of what a bar mitzvah should be, not, you know, your class group having a nice service, and they still have their Sunday parties, they haven't lost that!" (Rabbi, Reform synagogue 4).

Indeed, Miller and Pomson (2015c) discovered that fewer than two per cent of male Jewish school pupils today celebrate their bar mitzvah in their school's synagogue, with this event now almost universally performed in the synagogue. Although questions undoubtedly remain regarding pupils' freedom to express a non-Orthodox Jewish identity in these schools (see Section 4.2.1), Orthodox Judaism's invalidation of non-halakhic identities (and by extension non-halakhic *b'nei mitzvah*) has therefore ensured that other movements' synagogues – whose criteria for Jewishness are far more open – can attract and enrol children within their own coming-of-age classes. This may encourage further synagogue involvement thereafter:

"People *are* joining, sometimes … they come when they're an 11-year-old child and join the synagogue, so at least for two years we've got them, and sometimes they stay on for longer, and again it's up to us to retain them and interest them" (Rabbi, Reform synagogue 4).

In this way, the determination of many Orthodox Jewish schools to restore (and even increase) their own exclusivity (see Section 5.2.1) may have the unintended effect of strengthening non-Orthodox synagogue communities. Whilst this is hardly an endorsement of such schools in terms of stimulating a more unified Anglo-Jewish community as a whole, it reveals certain inchoate potential for Jewish schools to reinforce individual synagogue communities and to facilitate a reshaping of the ways in which Jewish identities are lived. As the conclusion to this chapter summarises, the relationship between Jewish schools and

synagogues therefore highlights the complexity of questions of Jewish identity and community.

6.6 Conclusion

Three broad and significant issues for synagogues in Hertfordshire and North and Northwest London (and possibly England more widely) have been raised by the recent growth in Jewish day schools and changes in admissions requirements necessitated by R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS. First, rabbis have become frustrated by the tendency of many parents to treat synagogue attendance merely instrumentally, with the result of reducing Jewish identity to short-term presence at services rather than multiple, meaningful forms of self-identification. Moreover, community bonds have become strained as short-term attendees disrupt the close relationships expected between members, in part through competing for rabbis' attention for the single purpose of securing a Jewish school place. Consequently, rabbis felt that they had become reluctant 'gatekeepers' to Jewish schools.

Second, traditional synagogue functions of education and socialisation have been largely co-opted by Jewish schools owing to many parents' devolution of responsibility for their children's upbringing to the latter. Reasons for this trend include parents' perceived inability to instruct their children Jewishly, their privileging of a broader academic rather than 'Jewish' education, and their desired involvement in 'non-Jewish' leisure activities at weekends. Furthermore, most rabbis believed that Jewish day school pupils had become 'saturated' from and hence disengaged by additional educational and social involvement in their synagogue communities. This is not to suggest that the growth in Jewish schools has axiomatically triggered synagogues' declining community role, but rather that they represent part of a wider process of secularisation that prioritises *individualistic* values including academic education to *communal* religiosity and association, and also magnify suspicions that most Jewish parents rarely participate in Jewish religious and ethnic ritual. In contrast, rabbis favoured a more constructionist and practice-based approach to Jewish identity comprising active engagement with 'other' ethnic and religious groups in non-Jewish schools, alongside regular, family-based ritual practice, revealing a disjuncture in the ways in which Jewish identity is conceptualised and lived between rabbis and (many) parents.

Third, minimal dialogue has occurred between Jewish schools and synagogues regarding these challenges, which is related to both denominationalism (with Progressive

synagogues in particular neglected by Orthodox schools owing to their theological differences) and a more general proclivity to treat these spaces as distinctive rather than interactional. Although Section 6.5 identified some benefits for synagogues, including the encouragement of wider community involvement, development in some cases of school-synagogue partnerships, and the return of *b'nei mitzvah* ceremonies to synagogues, these were largely theoretical rather than necessarily empirical, as most of the rabbis were highly critical of Jewish day schools' impacts upon their congregations. Collectively, these issues reveal a seemingly paradoxical situation, in which faith schools are propounded by Theresa May's Conservative government for academic reasons (DfE, 2016a) whereas rabbis often denigrate them on the basis of their impacts on Jewish identity. Thus, Jewish day schools' place in Anglo-Jewish society is complex and marked by divergent conceptualisations of these institutions' purpose and efficacy.

The findings of this chapter additionally demonstrate the challenges of conceptualising a common 'Jewish community' at a range of scales. For instance, rabbis often romanticised synagogue communities of the past as places characterised by strong internal bonds and regular attendees, set in contrast to the necessarily bureaucratic and fractured communities that exist today; a development they regularly connected with Jewish schools and changes to admissions law (6.2). Whilst in reality many synagogues were experiencing diminishing community involvement and membership *prior* to the recent growth of Jewish day schools, such imaginings reflect how any community has the potential to exclude (Arthur and Bailey, 2000) rather than necessarily being harmonious. Indeed, rabbis (and parents) frequently described internal divisions within their synagogues and, often in reaction, a desire to 'protect' their own vision of what a synagogue community should be. As such, parents who were deemed 'uncommitted' to the synagogue community were disfavoured. Not only were these parents often described in terms of their 'genuine' affiliation to a particular movement, but denominationalism was also identified more broadly through the example of Orthodox-affiliated Jewish schools that were said to exclude non-Orthodox rabbis owing to their interest in protecting their conceptualisations of Jewishness from alternative constructions. Again, this illustrates how no single Jewish community exists, and instead the Jewish community may be better understood as a constellation of movements, some of which attempt to build stronger relations with other denominations (such as by

seeking a broader Jewish school-synagogue strategy) that simultaneously choose to operate separately (see also Section 5.5).

Finally, the notion of a larger 'Jewish community' is problematised by the competition between many Jewish day schools and synagogues to attract families and become the centre of their Jewish communal life. Parents often viewed the Jewish school as a more convenient provider of a Jewish community for their children, enabling themselves to also perceive a vicarious sense of collective Jewishness through sending their children to such institutions. The resulting co-option of synagogues' historic community functions of education and socialisation was viewed by numerous rabbis as a threat to the future operation of their own visions of a Jewish community, further revealing their own nostalgic imagination of 'correct' Jewish practice, centred on a past where the synagogue was said to enjoy greater authority to direct Jewish behaviours rather than struggling for relevance in a broader religious, social, cultural and educational 'marketplace' where individuals enjoy substantial autonomy to determine their own ethnoreligious practices and choices (Bellah et al., 1985; Waters, 1990; Roof et al., 1993). For all of these reasons, synagogues must be viewed as sites of contestation over Jewish identity, instigated in large part by the growth of Jewish day schools, and the Jewish community cannot be considered homogeneous or united.

Chapter 7 extends the discussion of synagogues' place within contemporary Anglo-Jewry by exploring pupils' perspectives of Jewish identity construction, particularly within the Jewish day school and synagogue. This will facilitate a more holistic understanding of the interrelationships between these institutions and the role of different spaces in contributing to Jewish identity construction.

Chapter 7: The negotiation of Jewishness by young people in Jewish schools

7.1 Introduction:

This chapter explores the role of Jewish day schools – and JCoSS specifically – in contributing to pupils' Jewish identity construction. It places particular emphasis on the ways in which identities are developed and lived at the school, as well as in other spaces, including the synagogue. Indeed, the chapter utilises qualitative data to acknowledge the complexity of individuals' embodied and lived experiences of Jewishness (Charmé et al., 2008; Cohen, 2010). This methodological approach renders the present investigation distinctive from the largely quantitative focus of the majority of studies into Jewish schools and identity, which, as Sections 2.4.4 to 2.4.5 explained, have traditionally sought to establish causal links between Jewish education and a number of restrictive and predefined 'indicators' of Jewishness, rather than listening to the ways in which pupils construct and conceptualise their own identities and practices. Similarly, even where qualitative studies have sought to explore young people's experiences of Jewish schooling, they have generally failed to investigate what being Jewish means to pupils personally (e.g. Heilman, 1983; Ipgrave, 2016). In response, this chapter demonstrates the value of permitting respondents to personally define and describe their faith identities in order to consider how Jews 'are Jewish' (see Horowitz, 2002; Section 2.4.5). This requires a reconceptualisation in the notion of 'practice' from its traditionally narrow connection to religious ritual to a broader focus on personally-meaningful, culturally-understood behaviours. As Samson et al. (2017) suggest, such attention to *individual* identities can facilitate a greater understanding of the dynamic ways in which Jewishness is lived and reconstructed; an issue of particular relevance to young people as their faith identities may be shaped by various influences and expressed in distinctive ways (see Hopkins et al., 2011; Ridgely, 2011; Olson et al., 2013).

Although the Australian Jewish context is distinctive from Anglo-Jewry, Gross and Rutland's (2014a) study provides a valuable point of comparison owing to its specific emphasis on young people. Gross and Rutland demonstrate a discrepancy in perspectives of Jewish identity and citizenship, between older generations (staff, parents and grandparents) who stressed a *particularistic* approach comprising Hebrew education, the Holocaust and Israel, and younger generations (Jewish school pupils) who desired greater *universalism*,

including active involvement in the broader, global community and a curriculum that includes learning about other faiths. Many pupils were thus frustrated by their older counterparts' exclusive attention to Jewish issues that failed to accord with their own identities, causing some to disfavour Judaism more broadly. Instead, informal Jewish education such as Jewish Studies camps proved far more meaningful to these adolescent Jews, as they were offered constructivist opportunities to question their beliefs and be immersed experientially in Judaism. Accordingly, this chapter provides an analysis of the ways in which pupils at JCoSS present and live their Jewishness, and thus how Jewish schools (and JCoSS specifically) are playing an important role in the reconstruction of Anglo-Jewish identities.

To this end, the chapter proceeds as follows. Section 7.2 explores JCoSS' role in facilitating pupils' personalised identity construction, whilst Section 7.3 demonstrates how JCoSS utilises certain cultural qualities to 'remind' pupils of the school's Jewishness as a space, with the effect of developing 'symbolic' Jewish identities based upon loose (but impactful) cultural commonalities rather than regular religious practice. Before concluding, Section 7.4 investigates pupils' varied engagement (and non-engagement) in synagogue communities, addressing the impacts of their growing autonomy as well as their identity construction within certain non-institutional spaces, such as political groups and 'Jewish' districts. Overall, the chapter finds that JCoSS represented a space where pupils could negotiate – rather than necessarily adopt – multiple, competing constructions of Jewishness, enabling them to develop personally-meaningful Jewish identities. Indeed, pupils' Jewish identities were highly diverse and complex, revealing substantial 'messiness' in the ways in which Jewishness is conceptualised and lived. Nevertheless, the chapter identifies a general proclivity to see Jewishness through a largely cultural lens, and concentrated in spaces beyond the synagogue, including the Jewish school.

7.2 Identity personalisation

Section 7.2 explores the ways in which JCoSS is directly implicated in pupils' personal identity construction. More specifically, Section 7.2.1 demonstrates how the school, via its teachers, facilitates debate and enquiry, enabling pupils to personally negotiate their faith. Consequently, as Section 7.2.2 highlights, pupils enjoy substantial autonomy to express a personally meaningful form of Jewishness, in contrast to the dogmatic adherence perceived

to be obligatory in other Jewish schools. Indeed, through such individualisation and exposure to other movements' practices and beliefs, some pupils were able to construct transdenominational identities or switched from their parents' denominational affiliations, reflecting the personalisation of their Jewishness, as Section 7.2.3 illuminates.

7.2.1 Debate and enquiry

Schools represent important sites for identity construction (see Lannegrand-Willems and Bosma, 2006) given the considerable amount of time young people spend in these environments (Parker-Jenkins et al., 2005) and their exposure to the viewpoints of influential adults such as teachers (Faircloth, 2009; Cohen-Malayev et al., 2014). Yet, in contrast to Hand's (2003) apparent assumption of teacher uniformity within faith schools, pupils at JCoSS were cognisant of teachers' own religious diversity and did not feel subjected to a singular Jewish worldview. Rather, teachers were often perceived to represent a range of faith identities (Jewish and non-Jewish), ensuring their role as facilitators of critical engagement congruent with the school's pluralistic ethos:

> "I think it's quite evident in the diversity that exists in the teachers' levels of observancy, for example when I was in Year 7 I had a Jewish Ed.[96] teacher who comes from quite an Orthodox perspective but he's very liberal in his, for example *political* views, but then I also had a teacher in Year 8 who was very liberal in her *Jewish* views, and I think their teaching styles differ and are probably influenced by their personal views, but there's definitely room for your own personal expression, and your own exploration, regardless of what [academic] Year and regardless of which teacher you have; the school doesn't really want the teachers to be there to influence you, they want them to be there to provide some kind of input into one way of doing things" (Samantha, Year 10).

Short has similarly recognised that pupils are often aware of teachers who are prominent members of their religious communities (2003a), and acclaim the provision of teachers who represent a range of faiths in order to provide an 'unbiased perspective' (2002, 2003b), whilst

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[96] Jewish Education (also known as 'Jewish Studies').

Shevitz and Wasserfall (2009) and Kress (2016) describe the diversity of teachers' viewpoints and religious beliefs (as well as sexual identities) in pluralist schools, which ensured that opposing opinions were debated rather than silenced. Certainly, young people enjoy being listened to and value opportunities to construct a personalised religious identity rather than feeling compelled to adopt or reject others' beliefs (Dollahite and Thatcher, 2008), and tend to approve teachers who connect learning activities with their own interests and backgrounds (Faircloth, 2009). Consequently, teachers who facilitated class discussion and debate, encouraging pupils to find individual, exploratory meaning in their studies (Rich and Schachter, 2012; Sinai et al., 2012), were preferred to those deemed to represent a rigid, 'official' view of Judaism:

Seb (Year 12): "You don't want to get bored of it [Jewish Studies] by Year 10."

Isaac: "Yeah."

Nicola: "That's what happened to me, really, it was a combination of the teachers I had. You two obviously seemed to have much more interesting teachers than I had."

Isaac: "I don't know."

Seb: "[Teacher] was great."

Isaac: "Yeah, which is kind of why you liked,"/

Seb: "That's why I liked"/

Isaac: /"you liked GCSE Jewish Ed.!"

Seb: "I didn't, I mean, it was one of my most *interesting* subjects; it wasn't my favourite subject just because, like, the content isn't particularly interesting, but the way we did it, and the way our teacher sort of allowed us to question, so long as we got the content down, we got what was required of us down, and noted down so that we could revise from it, she didn't mind us going on for 40 minutes discussing "Well *why* don't Orthodox Jews allow abortion?" and "*Is* it moral?" and "Is this moral?" and "Is abortion moral *at all*?" and going on for, like, for a good *hour* on topics like that, but, then I think it comes down to specific *teachers* in faith schools, where some are up for those sorts of debates, and although they have their own views, don't *mind* students having *other* views, but I've also had teachers who don't like "the Jewish view" *[air quotes]* being questioned, like,

"You get the content down, and *that's* the Jewish view, that's what you put in your answer.""

The latter perspective was represented most clearly by the GCSE Jewish Studies examination syllabus,[97] as views that were perceived to oppose examiners' perspectives were necessarily marginalised:

> Nicola (Year 12): "Yeah, I remember once I did put something pointing towards my own view in it,"/
> Seb: "Yeah."
> Nicola: /"and [teacher], he just wrote down, like "No!" or something like that!" *[Laughs].*
> Isaac: "Yeah, I remember at the start of Year 11, on one of the first pieces of work that I did with my new teacher, because I went into Seb's class in that Year, like the teacher sat me down and just said "Look, I understand you've got some pretty," like, "strong,""/
> Seb: ""Bold" views!"
> Isaac: ""strong views about this sort of thing, but it's not going to get you the marks.""

Thus, in accordance with Schoem (1984), pupils were critical of teachers who restrict debate or impose certain perspectives as 'correct' or 'advisable,' especially where these failed to accord with pupils' own lived identities (although it is also possible that the teachers were merely encouraging pupils to be more circumspect in their opinions). Indeed, even though some pupils demonstrated forms of minor resistance through telling "the examiner *just how I thought!*" (Seb, Year 12), most felt compelled to provide 'suitable' answers that did not necessarily correspond with their own beliefs:

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[97] Whereas Jewish secondary schools define their own Jewish Studies curricula at Key Stage 3 (typically Years 7-9), pupils at Key Stage 4 (Years 10-11, during which most pupils take their GCSEs) must pursue an externally-defined (and generally more restrictive) GCSE Religious Studies syllabus (Kohn, 2012).

Isaac (Year 12): "That was the unfortunate thing about doing Jewish Ed. as a serious subject, you just feel very spiteful, because you're learning things that are basically opinions, that you've got to take them as fact and revise them and put them down, and just because there are multiple opinions, doesn't mean it's, doesn't, that's still not a problem because, you know, you might be learning three different opinions, but if you agree with *none* of them, you're still learning opinions and being forced to revise them and treat them the same way you would, like, rules in Maths or facts in Science, that sort of thing."

Nicola: "Yeah, I kind of had to just act like they were my opinion and"/

Isaac: "Yeah, as long as your opinion was saying that, it's fine"/

Nicola: /"sort of like, internally I'd be like "no, no, no, I don't like this!""

Therefore, the GCSE syllabus was criticised for its rigid treatment of Judaism and Jewish identity, restricting more fluid forms of engagement and opinion. Further demonstrating the importance of considering young people's perspectives regarding curriculum issues (Catling, 2005), the GCSE syllabus was also viewed as hegemonically Christian and hence constraining of comprehensive understandings of Judaism:

"The thing is, the GCSE course itself is not written for Jewish kids, so it focuses on a lot of things, in fact it's quite Christian-centred actually because it focuses on the things in Judaism that are important to Christianity, but actually that Jews don't focus that much … [such as] God as Redeemer, God as Sanctifier" (Josie, Year 10).

Moulin (2016) has relatedly argued that the 'Judaism' taught in numerous Christian and non-affiliated schools fails to correspond with many (particularly Progressive) Jewish pupils' understandings of their faith (see also Ipgrave, 1999 regarding Muslim pupils). Yet, these pupils' very criticisms of Jewish Education lessons (at both a school and national level) reveal how they actively and consciously negotiated their Jewishness, identifying disjunctures between the ways in which Judaism and Jewish identity are 'officially' presented, and their own perceptions of what can legitimately constitute Jewishness (see

Samson et al., 2017). Consequently, pupils developed *personalised* senses of Jewishness at JCoSS (as Section 7.2.2 will demonstrate further) via their critical enquiry.

JCoSS' facilitation of a questioning approach to faith was most clearly reflected in its optional Beit Midrash programme, which allows students at Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9) to study historic texts such as the *Torah* and *Tanakh*. Indeed, pupils enrolled on this programme favoured it for permitting them to engage in interactive, interpretative study:

"I like learning about stuff you wouldn't normally learn about, so there's the famous stories from the *Torah* and then the not so much, smaller stories that don't really come up as much which are more interesting to learn about, and the teacher's a lot better as well!" (Raphael, Year 8).

"I'm part of the Beit Midrash which is also, it's not normal Jewish education I suppose, it's also like studying text, but it's different because you don't actually only learn about the Jewish text because there's also like views on it, so you can challenge the views, not necessarily the text, as well" (Rebecca, Year 8).

Nevertheless, regardless of their subject choice (and in spite of the restrictions imposed by the GCSE syllabus as well as by extension some teachers as described), students generally suggested that they enjoyed substantial opportunities to debate their faith and choose from a diverse range of perspectives and beliefs. Importantly, then, they did not feel obligated to assume a dominant model of Jewishness (Groothuis, 2004; Kress, 2016):

"I'd say pretty successfully JCoSS is pluralistic and definitely, you know, it encourages the pluralistic values of this school, and I don't think they really make you try and be anything that you're not going to be, like they don't try and push you to believe something or, you know, try and teach you something that isn't something that everyone else believes in or not, so I think they try as much as they can to stay impartial and pluralistic in anyone's views" (Lizzie, Year 12).

Accordingly, disagreements between pupils were viewed as opportunities to develop personalised Jewish identities through negotiating alternative perspectives and

conceptualisations of religious practice and observance, rather than being forced to accept or adopt a particular viewpoint:

> "We had a debate in class a few weeks ago about if women should be able to wear *tallit* and *tefillin*, and there was one boy who comes from quite a U.S.[98] perspective and he said something about how the only reason that women want to do that is so that they can be on the same level as men, which is the only reason why women ever do things, which of course riled me slightly *[Chuckles]*, so we had a bit of, it wasn't, it wasn't really an argument because I genuinely, I get on with him quite well outside of that, but it was good to be able to *challenge* someone else and be able to practise my own arguing styles, I think it was important that I had that" (Samantha, Year 10).

These findings reflect those of Mueller (2016), who identifies pupils' enjoyment of Religious Education classes that facilitate their autonomy rather than attempting to proselytise, as well as Shevitz and Wasserfall (2009), whose case study school provided numerous opportunities for pupils to engage with and debate alternative ideas and beliefs (most notably through its 'de-bate midrash'),[99] take risks, and transcend denominational boundaries, including by subverting common assumptions that Orthodox Jews are more religious than Reform Jews. They also contradict Hand (2003, 2012), Norman (2012) and Jacobsen's (2016) claims that faith schools impose particular worldviews upon pupils, although it is apparent that JCoSS' curriculum is highly distinctive amongst faith schools, with these pupils' experiences contrasting with those in Gross and Rutland's (2014a) study, who felt that their school's Jewish Education curriculum treated Judaism as an essentialised commodity for them to 'acquire,' as well as the caution about unchecked exposure to 'other' influences and concepts demonstrated by school leaders at the Orthodox schools described in Section 5.2.1. In these ways, JCoSS' pupils enjoy substantial autonomy to define their personalised Jewish identities via manifold learning opportunities that prioritise debate and active, critical enquiry. Such autonomy to express personalised senses of Jewishness will be explored further in the following section.

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[98] United Synagogue.
[99] A play on words of *beit midrash*.

7.2.2 Autonomy in expression

Section 4.2.2 demonstrated that JCoSS offers pupils substantial autonomy to determine their Jewish identities and practices. This is most clearly demonstrated by the school's Rosh Chodesh provision, which introduces pupils to varied ritual practices that they might not otherwise encounter. Several pupils claimed that they attend different Rosh Chodesh services each month, enabling them to personalise their Jewish identities and participate in practices that correspond with their evolving interests and desires, rather than their religious affiliation being treated as static (see also Section 7.2.3):

> "Sometimes I go to the spiritual service, but it just depends on how I'm feeling"
> (Matt, Year 10).

Indeed, given that individuals exercise agency in diverse ways and display varying interpretations of religious and social issues, informed by other topics of interest, their identities cannot be considered fixed (Beaman, 2001; Horowitz, 2003). One pupil even suggested that the autonomy to determine one's identity represents an integral component of Judaism and a Jewish identity in general:

> "I think making your own choices is, like, a big thing in Judaism, because I think
> that part of Judaism is being able to decide what kind of services you go to, or
> on *Shabbat*, and what *shul* you go to" (Jason, Year 7).

Nevertheless, in comparison to JCoSS' openness to diverse Jewish perspectives, pupils – often based upon their own prior experiences at primary or secondary level – often perceived *other* Jewish schools as denominationalist, religiously dogmatic and restrictive to personalised Jewish expression. Consequently, these schools were 'othered,' rather than being conceptualised as part of a broader, *inclusive* Jewish community:

> "[Orthodox School A] is much more, like, strict, and also [Orthodox School D],
> I've got quite a lot of friends there, they learn much more, like Biblical Hebrew
> I think they were doing for the past three years in Jewish Ed., whereas in the past

three years in Jewish Ed. we've been taught to put our opinions and write about our opinions" (Sophie, Year 10).

"[Here] they don't make you be like an Orthodox Jew, like, it doesn't matter … in other schools they'll make you pray, they'll make boys and girls sit separately, like in [Orthodox School E], but here it's kind of you pray if you want to pray and there's no judgement, which is pretty cool" (Lizzie, Year 12).

It is important to acknowledge that this 'othering' process did not exist along simplistic religious/secular binaries – a common tendency in Jewish identity research (e.g. Becher et al., 2002) – but rather inclusivity/exclusivity and autonomy/dogmatism. Indeed, JCoSS is not a secular school environment, as it provides for religiously observant pupils too (5.4). Rather, the optionality of much of its religious provision renders the school amenable to diverse expressions of religious *and* irreligious Jewishness, without attempting to shape pupils' identities in a particular way:

Archie (Year 7): "I'd *love* to see more of these things but I'd also like there to be a *choice* about them, so I don't believe you can say "this is something you should do" to people who don't do it, so it's not a question of whether I want more or less of something, it's about, it's about kind of helping everyone, in a way."

Interviewer: "Do you think there's enough provision for the people who are the most religious here?"

Archie: "I think there is, there's services, there's Rosh Chodesh, they're Kosher here, and on a Friday you can get home in time for *Shabbat*."

The school's logo is emblematic of such openness, simply displaying the text 'JCoSS' without any 'typically' Jewish symbol. Such plainness was said to ensure that particular, normative images or behaviours that may be associated with Judaism are not implied, facilitating the school's inclusivity of all forms of Jewishness (and others):

"I think it's quite interesting that on the blazer they chose not to have any sort of badge or logo, and I think it was a mix of security and then also sort of identity because I think the school would be perceived quite differently if it *did* have a sort of logo or a Jewish symbol on the blazer; I think it would sort of seem, not *forceful* but it would lose the sort of, the complete, like, pluralistic sense … if you were to look at somebody with a *menorah*, you'd sort of make that assumption, "Oh, well they must be quite Jewish," if they've got this, they're sort of out there saying "Yeah, I'm really Jewish," but other people, they may not be, they might be at the school for different reasons, and I think people, like, that I've spoken to or I know go, were quite happy and accepting that there wasn't any logo because they were allowed to pursue their own beliefs in a way that they choose suited them"[100] (Nathan, Year 12).

This was also reflected in the fact that some pupils appeared comfortable expressing a Jewish identity that did not include 'traditional' or 'expected' components, such as *b'nei mitzvah*, especially where they sought to engage in alternative leisure activities in their free time:

"I don't think it would be possible for me to commit to it *and* do all this stuff that I also care about outside of Judaism, and I knew that I could still celebrate it but just don't make it into a big bat mitzvah" (Lily, Year 8).

Yet, for students desiring additional explicit or 'traditional' Jewish education, a range of informal and extra-curricular provision exists, enabling them to advance their Jewish knowledge and identity construction:

"It [school] never makes me *less* interested in being Jewish, I definitely, for example, I think the Jewish, the, *especially* the informal Jewish Education department, that the Jewish Education department in general, has really really supported my Jewish learning, I'm in quite a lot of lunchtimes, just doing like, studying and things, and I'm involved in a lot of their clubs and their schemes,

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[100] The uniform's plainness also enables pupils to avoid explicit Jewish 'markers' that may attract undesired attention: "I think it was a mix of security as well" (Nathan, Year 12).

so it's actually a central part of *my* life here at JCoSS, and also just being surrounded by other people who kind of are from the same community as me, it strengthens the identity" (Josie, Year 10).

In these ways, JCoSS was perceived as open to all forms of observance or non-observance and thus facilitative of pupils' self-defined identity construction. Consequently, several pupils felt able to develop a Jewish identity that drew upon different Jewish movements or triggered a switching of denominational affiliation from their parents' choice of movement, as the subsequent section demonstrates.

7.2.3 Denominational switching

Although researchers have acknowledged the existence of denominational mobility and switching in Judaism (Lazerwitz et al., 1998; Hartman and Hartman, 1999; Smith, 2009), these trends have rarely been applied to young people. However, given their exposure to different identity influences, whether through Rosh Chodesh celebrations, class debates or socialisation amongst individuals representing other movements, JCoSS facilitates pupils' construction of Jewish identities that may not correspond with their parents' beliefs. Consequently, some pupils expressed an identity that could be described as 'transdenominational' or 'post-denominational' owing to their lack of ties to a single movement (Cohen and Kelman, 2007; Schick, 2009; Boyd Gelfand, 2010):

"I go to a Masorti synagogue, but I'd probably say I have quite Liberal or Reform religious views" (Samantha, Year 10).

Borts (2014) has similarly recognised that individuals may worship in a synagogue of a different movement from where they are a member, which can reveal a preference for the religious content provided at one synagogue's services but the communal socialisation available elsewhere. Other pupils appeared keen to disengage more fully from their families' practices or communities owing to a preference for a separate movement. For instance, Ellen's pluralist education and friendships with peers who hold alternative perspectives instigated her scepticism of the United Synagogue and a desire to switch to Masorti Judaism:

Ellen (Year 10): "I don't exactly believe Orthodox Judaism is the right thing for me, I think I'm more Masorti."

Interviewer: "Do you think the school helps you to learn more about Masorti Judaism?"

Ellen: "Yeah, I think, yeah, and also talking to, because I have a lot of like Reform friends, talking to them is really helpful because they kind of show me what I believe now."

Thus, whereas her parents were perceived to apply "quite a lot of pressure" on her adoption of their Jewish practices, Ellen felt that "JCoSS kind of gives you more of a choice," enabling her to develop a more personalised identity. Similarly, Claudia's limited understanding of Hebrew and her desire to practise alongside her school friends stimulated her disengagement from her synagogue community:

"When you're just there in *shul* listening to Hebrew you sort of lose the, like, meaning of it because you don't know what they're saying, unless you speak Hebrew, but like, yeah, it's just quite like boring when like none of your friends are there and stuff like that, yeah, because all my friends go to, like, [Masorti synagogue], or like [Orthodox synagogue A], but I go to [Orthodox synagogue B], which like only one of my friends goes to" (Claudia, Year 12).

Her interest in re-affiliating was reinforced by her participation in a Reform youth movement, to which she had been exposed via friends at JCoSS:

"Basically, on tour I went with RSY which is Reform, and I preferred how you did like the prayers in English, and stuff like that, just because I thought I understood it more [than Orthodox Judaism]" (Claudia, Year 12).

Certainly, unlike other Jewish schools which often seek to direct pupils into a particular youth movement (which are typically characterised by their affiliation with a certain Jewish movement or approach to Zionism), JCoSS invites a diverse range of youth movements, potentially facilitating pupils' wider Jewish community life beyond the school and enabling

them to make an informed decision regarding their identity work. Consequently, several students chose a tour that did not correspond with their family's choice of Jewish movement, demonstrating their growing freedom to define their own ethnoreligious beliefs and involvement, often influenced by friendships[101] (Gunnoe and Moore, 2002; Schwartz et al., 2006). Whilst others claimed to have become more committed to their parents' movements instead of seeking to switch, reflecting the continued centrality of the family in influencing their identities (Schoenfeld, 1998), exposure to different expressions of Jewishness can therefore enable pupils to (re)define and rework a personalised Jewish identity that challenges, corresponds, complies or conflicts with that of their parents (Hopkins et al., 2011). Indeed, antagonism may be created where parents fear a 'dilution' in their children's attachment or commitment to their own conceptualisations of Jewishness, revealing contestation within families over 'appropriate' Jewish practice and identification (5.4.1). As Section 7.3 illustrates next, the identities constructed by pupils can be related to the concept of 'symbolic ethnicity' described by Gans (1979), which collectively encapsulates their (predominantly) cultural expression, general universalism, and personal significance.

7.3 Symbolic identities

Broad societal changes including multiculturalism, secularisation and globalisation have exposed individuals to a growing range of influences, and in a context in which individuals are increasingly able to redefine their identities, a Jewish identity is often now considered a personal choice (Lazerwitz et al., 1998; Kaplan, 2009). Furthermore, as Judaism has become more voluntary, it has also progressively become perceived as a religion to be expressed privately (Herberg, 1956; Webber, 1994; Cohen, 2010), and perhaps inevitably, less commonly (Liebman, 1973, 2003; Levine, 1986). Gans (1979, p.1) argues that this decline in religious observance has resulted in a "symbolic ethnicity," as 'secular' Jews' practices are used nostalgically rather than being genuinely participatory. Whereas ethnic identity for previous generations was ascribed or taken for granted, latter generations actively choose to express it lest it become forgotten, but given their assimilation within wider society, they opt for "easy and intermittent ways of expressing their identity … that do not conflict with other ways of life" (Gans, 1979, p.8). In this way, ethnicity is used as an "expressive rather than

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[101] Nevertheless, it is also important to acknowledge that friends may reinforce rather than contradict parents' influence (Cornwall, 1987, 1989; Arnon et al., 2008).

instrumental function in people's lives" (1979, p.9), a "feeling of being" (1979, p.1) based upon symbols that are 'abstracted' from the culture of their heritage. In order to demonstrate the increasingly voluntariness of American religion, Gans (1994, p.585) later added the concept of 'symbolic religiosity' – "the consumption of religious symbols in such a way as to create no complications or barriers for dominant secular lifestyles" – reinforcing his previous argument that identities are increasingly 'felt' rather than constantly or dogmatically practised (at least in the sense of attending religious services, for instance), although the notion has remained less clearly defined.

Whereas several quantitative studies have attempted to measure the extent to which American Jewish identities have become symbolic, generally with the larger goal of illustrating any 'decline' in Jewish identification, the findings of which have been inconsistent (Kivisto and Nefzger, 1993; Winter, 1996; Rebhun, 2001, 2004), the concept may be more valuable to qualitative research exploring the personally-meaningful ways in which Jewish identities are reworked or redefined (see Horowitz, 2002, 2003). For instance, Kudenko and Phillips (2010) illustrate how Jewish individuals value their symbolic identities for providing a sense of belonging that connects them to their heritage as well as friends in the local community. By treating their Jewishness as cultural rather than religious, the research participants were enabled to express Jewish identities that may appear contradictory, such as keeping Kosher at home but not when dining out (Kudenko and Phillips, 2010). Similarly, Davidman (2003, 2007) has drawn on Gans to illustrate how unsynagogued Jews freely select particular aspects of Judaism and adapt rituals to their own needs, such as serving pizza on a Friday night in order to sanctify the arrival of *Shabbat* whilst ensuring it remains convenient to their working lives. Certainly, rather than dismissing symbols as final vestiges of a collective identity, they can represent powerful (and disputed) means of expressing and practising a purposeful, shared identity (Smith, 1991, 2000; Midgley, 2003; Kolstø, 2006), including at an everyday level (Billig, 1995). Thus, Gans' work is valuable in indicating how individuals increasingly engage in a process of personal meaning-making, with ethnic identity representing a personal choice rather than a form of ascription typical of first-generation immigrants (Krasner, 2016).

Accordingly, Section 7.3 finds that the Jewish identities constructed and lived at JCoSS were symbolic in the sense that Jewishness was regularly perceived to be rooted in unobjectionable (see also Sections 4.4.2 and 5.4.1) but nonetheless impactful and diverse

cultural practices and interests. Sections 7.3.1 and 7.3.2 first illustrate how Jewish 'reminders' and friendships respectively are used to reinforce the school's Jewish ethos and environment through interpellating a loose, cultural form of Jewishness. However, whilst this symbolic Jewishness facilitates the inclusion of diverse expressions of Jewish identity, some pupils demonstrated ambivalence towards any implications of particularism as Jews, and instead sought greater 'meaningful' interaction with 'others' (7.3.3). Some pupils also criticised the symbolic nature of Jewish identity at JCoSS, perceiving it to be tokenist, or believed that their Jewish identity construction was jeopardised by the absence of non-Jews at the school, rendering the 'reminders' ineffective. Nevertheless, the section demonstrates that pupils' conceptualisations of Jewish identity were complex and often contradictory, desiring an inclusive form of Jewishness whilst reiterating an essentialised identity, or viewing regular religious practice as crucial to one's Jewish identity without seeking personal involvement. This reveals contestation over what it means to be and practise Jewishness, and the challenges of negotiating one's personalised identity construction.

7.3.1 Jewish reminders

As Section 4.3.3 demonstrated, places can develop regional identities through "social processes of interaction and representation," responsive to redefinition across time and space (Van T'Klooster et al., 2002, p.118). By articulating particular ideas and images, policy-makers may construct an imposed or imagined identity that is stabilised and reinforced by other stakeholders, should they be convinced of its 'authenticity' (Van T'Klooster et al., 2002). In the context of nationalism, Billig (1995) argues that 'banal,' everyday signifiers such as flags are used to remind individuals of their society's national identity; a process so subtle that individuals may not realise their influence in spite of their constant presence. Similar acts of signifying were evident at JCoSS, with the effect of reminding pupils of the school's Jewish ethos and, for some, extending the Jewish environment they experience at home. Key Jewish ideals such as 'being a *mensch,*' *tikkun olam* and *tzedakah* are continually but subtly present at JCoSS, including on the windows in the 'Heart Space' area at the entrance to the school, whilst the school bell is a Jewish song. These concepts represent unobjectionable aspects of the school's ethos that can be constantly interpellated and used to

accommodate families of differing religious or ethnic affiliations, Jewish backgrounds (halakhic or otherwise) and ideologies, issues that are far more contested.[102]

Many pupils illustrated the importance of these Jewish 'reminders' in supporting their Jewish identity construction:

"When there's a Jewish holiday they make a really big deal out of everything, so yeah, it does [remind you] … what it means to be Jewish" (Josh, Year 10).

"I think that going to a Jewish school wouldn't necessarily make you feel more of a Jewish person or a Jewish identity, but it'll just remind you that you are Jewish and you should be proud to be Jewish, because if I think if I was to go to a non-Jewish school, where they would not have Jewish Education or Religious Education studies, I wouldn't be reminded that I'm Jewish at school" (Aimee, Year 8).

Although pupils such as Aimee doubted the influence of the school upon their Jewish identity construction, others identified significant impacts, especially where they had felt their Jewishness had been ignored in non-Jewish schools in the past:[103]

Interviewer: "Do you think going to a Jewish school makes you feel more Jewish?"
Kelly (Year 12): "Yeah."
Chloe: "Yeah."
Ryan: "Yeah."
Kelly: "100 per cent."
Interviewer: "Why do you think that is?"
Ryan: "Because it's like shown on, like a daily basis and they incorporate it into stuff,"/

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[102] See also Punzi and Frischer (2016), who illustrate synagogue volunteers' emphasis of non-religious rather than religious activities lest those unfamiliar or uncomfortable with religious practices feel alienated.
[103] Anti-Semitism in non-Jewish schools was also identified by some pupils (e.g. Lizzie, Andrew) as a factor in their attendance at a Jewish school.

Kelly: "Mm."

Ryan: /"so, like, we had a Holocaust memorial event the other day,"/

Kelly: "Like you go on trips, to like Jewish places, not necessarily but you *can*."

Chloe: "Like before, I didn't do anything for my, like religion, like I *did*, but not, and a basic thing, and I think being here I feel really good about myself, and actually, like, because in my old school, I didn't, nobody else knew" *[Laughs]*/

Kelly: *[Laughs].*

Chloe: "No one even thought I was Jewish, and when I told them they were like "*really*?" like, I don't see, like, how you would normally know, whereas now I feel like, like, I love it."

Indeed, several pupils who had previously attended non-Jewish schools favoured JCoSS in contrast for facilitating wider recognition of their distinctive cultural identity (Taylor, 1994):

> "Going to a Jewish secondary school means that, like if you have to go off one day for a festival, it doesn't mean that you have to explain to everybody why you weren't at school and things" (Aria, Year 7).

Thus, reflecting some parents' concerns in Section 4.3.2, these pupils believed that by attending a faith school, their religious and cultural needs were accommodated (Walford, 2008b; Ahmed, 2012), enabling them to openly celebrate their identities. Subtle and constant reminders of the school's Jewish 'culture' were provided via Jewish-themed activities and the naming of classes:

> Ryan (Year 12): "They keep it relatively minimal, even though it's a Jewish school."
>
> Interviewer: "In lessons for example, do you ever touch on Jewish themes at A-Level?"
>
> Chloe: "Well we have, every Wednesday we have *Kvutzah* which is like a JE[104] lesson, and like, yeah, that's about Jewish stuff; but like other than that, in lessons, we don't talk about Jewish stuff."

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[104] Jewish Education.

Interviewer: "What do you talk about in *Kvutzah* specifically?"

Chloe: "Well"/

Ryan: "It's kind of Jewish PSHE."[105]

Kelly: "Yeah."

Chloe: "Like, we learnt self-defence, it was called"/

Ryan: "*Krav maga.*"

Chloe: "*Krav maga.*"

Kelly: "Yeah, it was like the Jewish version, like, *krav maga.*"

Ryan: "Yeah."

Chloe: "Yeah, yeah. So it was like, incorporated, into, like, class."

In these ways, and akin to the notion of interpellation applied by Butler (1990), performative, repetitive acts were used to facilitate the social construction of pupils' collective Jewish identities, reminding pupils of their Jewishness and naturalising their belonging to the Jewish school, whose dominant ethnic culture was simultaneously stabilised (Fortier, 1999). Activities such as *krav maga* may be effective in this process because they can be viewed as 'new' (and thus exciting), but nonetheless able to be fused with more familiar Jewish concepts and practices, creating dynamic and meaningful understandings of Jewishness as a result (see also Wood, 2012 on Scottishness). Indeed, although it may be argued that such activities are 'tokenist,' constructing only a loose attachment to the faith (whether defined as religion or ethnicity), it was apparent that these pupils perceived themselves as being in a distinctly Jewish environment that allowed them to openly express a symbolic Jewishness based on self-identification and cultural practice rather than religious observance (Gans, 1979, 1994). Thus by rooting symbolic Jewishness in general cultural 'commonalities' rather than religious practice, the school was able to ensure its greater inclusivity of diverse forms of Jewishness. Section 7.3.2 highlights how other cultural traits were used by friends to develop a common sense of Jewishness.

7.3.2 Jewish friends

In addition to the influence of the school's Jewish environment and 'reminders,' friendships were used as means of defining the school space as Jewish. Considerable research illustrates

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[105] Personal, Social and Health Education.

the influence of specific social environments in shaping individuals' ethnoreligious friendships and identities (e.g. Kudenko and Phillips, 2009, 2010; Alper and Olson, 2011). In relation, Jewish community leaders have often advocated Jewish schools on the basis that they facilitate the development of a Jewish social environment for young people, often with the aim of limiting intermarriage (2.3.8). In particular, pupils who had previously studied in non-Jewish schools claimed that by attending a Jewish school, they were more able to celebrate their Jewish identities given the congruence of shared values permitted (Gilbert, 2004; Kuusisto, 2010). In contrast, non-Jews in non-Jewish schools were deemed oblivious to components of the Jewish faith:

> Chloe (Year 12): "Going to a Jewish school, being surrounded by people with the same religion, it's nice, you have something like in common, and it's just nice being in that environment…. there was only two Jewish people in our year, including me, and like, being Jewish, you know like when you say things and people get it, in my old school, like, I'd say something and they'll look at me and be like "what?" so I enjoy this school so much more."
>
> Interviewer: "What kinds of things would they not get, do you have an example?"
>
> Chloe: "Certain words"/
>
> Kelly: "Like *challah*!"
>
> Chloe: "Yeah, like the food we eat, it literally goes over their heads."

Challah was not the only Jewish symbol described by pupils to represent their shared Jewish identity. For instance, some pupils utilised cultural stereotypes of over-attached Jewish mothers and their constant supply of food to suggest a common 'Jewish' experience:

> Andrew (Year 12): "Obviously with Judaism, like the way that your families are, you know, you've got the typical Jewish mothers"/
>
> Lizzie: *[Laughs]*.
>
> Andrew: /"and, you know, grandmas, and it's all sort of that way that you sort of understand each other and you're on like the same level as them, because they

know, like, the same thing that happens to you happens to them, so it's more that sort of identification with them, as being very similar to you."

Interviewer: "Just to make sure I'm clear, what would you characterise as the Jewish mother, Jewish grandmother?"

[Both students laugh].

Andrew: "Just being, you know, like a bit"/

Lizzie: "Helicopter-y."

Andrew: "Yeah."

Lizzie: "Helicoptering food, like a helicopter parent, like one that constantly hovers over you, constantly"/

Andrew: "Yeah, like, quite, I can't think of the word"/

Lizzie: "Over-attached."

Andrew: "Yeah, like, over-attached, and, you know, like, chicken soup."

Lizzie: "We weren't going to get through this without mentioning chicken soup!" *[Laughs].*

Certainly, Lizzie suggested that chicken soup represented a rather clichéd but by no means inconsequential cultural symbol that enabled pupils to share a sense of common Jewish experience:

"We just talk about chicken soup, like that's the most Jewish thing we talk about [here]!" (Lizzie, Year 12).

In these ways, students enjoyed playing with shared cultural symbols of everyday Jewish life, which in turn informed their own views of collective Jewish identity. It may be speculated that the pupils felt 'safe' to express such facetious perspectives owing to their awareness that they were speaking in a shared Jewish space, whereas had non-Jews been present they may have been determined to portray their Jewish identities more seriously or less stereotypically (see Klein, 1976). This was most clearly reflected in the following exchange between students who deemed that their Jewishness enabled them to share a similar sense of humour (see Ziv, 1993):

Isaac (Year 12): "I've had Jewish friends and non-Jewish friends, and there isn't *really* that much of a difference from what I can tell."

Nicola: "Yeah, I haven't seen much of a difference, apart from maybe the relatable jokes you can have,"/

Seb: "Yeah."

Nicola: /"really, and sort of you can relate with other Jewish people."

Seb: "It's like you can make certain types of jokes around your Jewish friends because everyone sort of relates to them in a similar way."

Interviewer: "What kinds of jokes are you talking about?"

Seb: "I don't know, jokes that take the mick out of stereotypes of Jews, jokes that take the mick out of, like, atrocities that happened in Jewish history," *[Chuckles]*/ *[Nicola laughs]*.

Interviewer: "Just morbid jokes?"

Seb: "Yeah, just jokes that you wouldn't, like if a non-Jew made in, like a synagogue, then they'd probably have like a lot of trouble!"

Isaac: "Lynched!" *[Laughs]*.

Seb: "Yeah!"

Thus, self-deprecating jokes were used to illustrate Jewish commonalities based on the fact that only they, as Jews, are 'permitted' to behave accordingly (again, it seems unlikely that the students would feel comfortable making such remarks in the presence of non-Jews). Finally, language was identified as a unifier amongst Jewish friends, facilitating the development of an imagined Jewish community that extends beyond the school (whilst distinguishing Jewish pupils from non-Jewish teachers):

"Jewish slang, like "I'm shvitzing," like I was talking to my tutor the other day and I was like, "Oh, I'm shvitzing," just like, I said it casually and he was like "W…hat? What are you saying?" and, like, it's just easier I guess, because you understand, like, things and it's like, you have that, like, connection" (Claudia, Year 12).

Yiddish terms may be used ironically by younger Jews as a means of making their group distinctiveness more personally relevant (Benor, 2015), and accents can be used as indicators of identity (Hecht et al., 2002). Such boundary-drawing processes enabled pupils to distinguish themselves as Jews from their largely non-Jewish teachers, and perceive themselves as part of a wider, distinctive Jewish group without defining themselves so rigidly that they would become separated from 'others' in more 'consequential' aspects. Therefore, respondents believed that Jewish school enabled them to strengthen their senses of Jewishness through the perceived existence of a shared (and 'natural') collective identity. Such perspectives reflected those of parents in Section 4.3.2:

"I think it's good because you have a lot of things in common with other pupils" (Sophie, Year 10).

"You could, like, connect more and everything like that, you can connect more to another Jewish person whereas, compared to a non-Jewish person, like you can always start off a conversation a lot easier I would say, than having a conversation with a non-Jewish person … it might just be something in your heritage, just like, just a natural instinct or something, it's just something natural that comes from being Jewish" (Joe, Year 12).

Indeed, these supposed Jewish 'commonalities' were rather ambiguous, representing loose cultural factors rather than adherence to (more consequential) religious practices, and as such, it cannot be assumed that developing Jewish friendships is tantamount to constructing a personally meaningful Jewish identity as Heilman (1983) implies, because these friendships may not include 'Jewish' as anything more than a label. Schoem (1984, p.55) similarly found that respondents would express their Jewish identities in rather simplistic ways, as "not non-Jews,"[106] although importantly, the looseness of the traits described by pupils in the present study ensured that they were inclusive of diverse forms of Jewishness.

Nevertheless, numerous pupils also demonstrated rather contradictory attitudes towards Jewish identity. Reflecting the findings in Sections 7.2.1 and 7.2.2, pupils claimed to favour JCoSS' openness to all expressions of Jewishness. Yet, in emphasising the

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[106] National identities are also often crafted in rather simple, direct opposition to others (Smith, 1991).

irrelevance of ritual practice or performance to Jewish identity construction, many suggested that Jewish identity is a state of 'being,' with implications of halakhic status:

> "Being [Jewish] obviously, it gives you something, it's obviously different to others, like you feel closer to other Jewish people than you do with non-Jewish people, and bar mitzvah as well is obviously quite special, not many people, obviously if you're not Jewish you don't do that; even if you *are* Jewish, some people opt out of it, I mean it doesn't have a *real* meaning, like I'm going to be honest, it doesn't; I'm Jewish but I don't, like, do anything" (Joe, Year 12).

Such claims reflect Cohen and Eisen (2000) and Davidman's (2003, 2007) identification of Jewish respondents' usage of essentialist notions of Jewishness. Other pupils did not consider their and their friends' 'Jewish' qualities – defined in terms of practice – as strong enough to make them distinctive, echoing Schoem's (1989) finding that pupils refused to perceive any differences between Jews and non-Jews even whilst feeling part of a Jewish group:

> "I think most of my Jewish friends are so liberal that, there's such a blurred line in-between what *they* do and what non-Jewish people do, I don't think it really matters" (Nathan, Year 12).

Thus, whereas Nathan believed that Jews demonstrate few distinctions from non-Jews in terms of practice, he still perceived the existence of 'Jews' and 'non-Jews' as descriptors. Moreover, even amongst pupils who *did* assert the importance of practice, this was often rendered mutually constitutive with descent. Such a view was particularly prevalent amongst girls, which may reveal a presumption that they represent the providers of Jewishness in the future under *halakhah* and so feel obligated to continue their family's Jewish line (Cooper and Morrison, 1991; Fishman, 1993):

> "I kind of feel that your parents have brought you up as Jewish and you kind of do their traditions that they have done, and, yeah, it feels that you're Jewish given the fact that you've been Jewish from when you were born" (Aria, Year 7).

"I think if you're born into a Jewish background that's kind of what inspires you to carry it on as you get older" (Maria, Year 10).

This reflects Judaism's traditional gender roles with women tending to bear primary responsibility for Jewish continuity, child-raising and the teaching of ritual practice (Davey et al., 2001), and accordingly Fishman (2012) notes that Jewish women tend to be more concerned with intermarriage and Jewish education and identity than Jewish men, whilst Rossi and Rossi (1990) identify greater perceived obligation to kin amongst women than men in general. Consequently, in spite of the openness of JCoSS to non-halakhic Jews (4.2.1; 5.2.1), these pupils resorted to a sense of Jewishness as a somewhat ascribed identity into which one is 'born.' Further reflecting pupils' seemingly contradictory attitudes, one pupil implied that regular ritual practice is essential to reinforcing Jewish identity and understanding in a manner akin to Dewey's (1916, 1938) philosophy of experiential learning, but was ambivalent about undertaking such behaviour herself:

Ellen (Year 10): "The disadvantages are like, they don't actually *practise* it and, like, I guess that's a bad thing but in the end I don't care whether we do or not, it's just, it's all just learning, but I think we should also like, practise it."
Interviewer: "Would you like there to be more practice here, at the school?"
Ellen: "Not *really*, but it would be good maybe once in a while; I wouldn't want it to be like every day."

This reveals a personal conflict between perceptions of 'proper' or 'traditional' Jewishness, and a desire to self-fashion a personalised Jewish identity that does not involve regular ritual practice, revealing how identities are constantly reconstructed and renegotiated. Indeed, identities require validation by others (which may instigate individuals to resort to certain, socially-agreed components), but they must also be personally meaningful (Jenkins, 2008). The following section reveals other contradictions towards and challenges regarding Jewish identity, as pupils tended to desire greater universalism and openness to non-Jews whilst also struggling to identify particular Jewish distinctions given the absence of an 'Other' against which to define their identities.

7.3.3 Ambivalence towards Jewish particularism

Schoem (1984, 1989) and Gross and Rutland (2014a) identify challenges for Jewish day and supplementary schools in delivering a curriculum that resonates with the identities of largely assimilated and non-observant Jewish families, with the latter noting a disjuncture in values between older generations' particularism and younger generations' desire for greater universalism. Other studies have also ascertained discomfort with implications of Jewish group superiority (Rosen, 1958; Lichtenstein, 2013) and explicit attention to Jewish themes (Klein, 1976), or of being perceived as 'too Jewish,' that is, pious and particularistic (Fishman, 2012). Accordingly, numerous pupils in the present study sought greater attention to *non*-Jewish themes, fearing that their school represented a Jewish 'bubble' where they enjoyed minimal interaction with other groups and issues. Some students consequently appeared ambivalent about engaging in additional Jewish life and education, reflecting many rabbis' and parents' concerns in Sections 6.3.3 - 6.3.4:

> Holly (Year 12): "We're surrounded by Jewish people all the time and it's like too much"/
> Zara: "Yeah."
> Holly: /"of a bubble, because everyone you know knows someone so you do"/
> Zara: "Yeah."
> Holly: /"feel very Jewish, but at the same time, like, that's a bit too much, like it's always Jews, Jews, Jews!" *[Laughs]*. "We're always learning about Judaism."

In relation, many pupils were critical of attempts to connect 'secular' subjects to Judaism in an attempt to increase the 'Jewishness' of the school (see Section 7.3.1), deeming this a form of superfluous smothering at odds with their resistance to being ascribed Jewish first and foremost:

> "Why has everything got to be Jewish here, like, why has everything got to have a Jewish name? I mean … so we have like PSHE here but they call it '*Kvutzah*,' like why? What's the point? Just call it 'PSHE' which is what it's called, we're not in Israel" (Joe, Year 12).

"They sort of link just extra-curricular activities, but with Jewish themes, and even when it's really vague they still try to incorporate Jewish themes … it seems sometimes a bit forced" (Nathan, Year 12).

The minority of pupils who desired deeper Jewish and Hebrew education also perceived that the school prioritises loose, symbolic reminders based upon subject names, rather than developing students' Jewish practice and 'literacy':

"I used to like, speak Hebrew and stuff [at Orthodox primary school], and I've completely forgotten it all, like, I used to, like, pray every day at primary school, and I don't know *that* anymore; I feel like they don't really involve it that much, but they still, like, celebrate festivals and they do, like, things like, call PSHE '*Kvutzah*' to make it more 'Jewish,' but they haven't really done much" (Claudia, Year 12).

This may limit pupils' ability to engage in religious practices, including in spaces such as the synagogue as some rabbis explained (6.3.3; see also 7.4.5). Nevertheless, whereas Claudia appeared regretful that her religious practice and knowledge had diminished, the vast majority of students were largely uninterested in such particularistic or 'traditional' religious Jewish practice, and instead hoped to develop more 'universalistic' values.

Indeed, pupils hoped to interact with and learn about other faiths and cultures owing to a perception that exclusive attention to Jewish themes was disengaging, and a fear that their lack of knowledge of 'others' provided poor preparation for multicultural society (Short, 2002):

"I think the thing is that there's not *enough* in Jewish Ed. to learn about, and still be interesting" (Isaac, Year 12).

"I think that I don't have a good knowledge of it [other religions] and I feel like people should … because in England especially there are so many different cultures, so many different, like, religions obviously, and I feel like I should learn

about that, because I will meet people and, like, "You're not Jewish obviously,"
and I won't know anything" (Claudia, Year 12).

This is congruent with Fishman et al. (2012)'s suggestion that young American Jews are more likely to seek interactions with 'other' groups than their ancestors, and Kudenko and Phillips' (2010) claim that young British Jews with a secular outlook are often open to interfaith mixing as a means of developing social unity and understanding. Relatedly, nearly all pupils sought to study other religions rather than focusing solely on Judaism (see also Mueller, 2016) in order to facilitate their respect for others' perspectives and to develop their understanding of Judaism's place alongside other faiths:

> Josh (Year 10): "Sometimes it can actually help you learn about your own religion, and how they can see your religion from their perspective, of their laws and what they follow."
> Sophie: "I think it's good to have a wider knowledge of other people's religions so when you go out, like out of a Jewish school, out of a Jewish environment, you don't just think about Judaism, you think about the other perspectives and other religions."

Certainly, rather than the school's Jewish 'reminders' (7.3.1) operating to imbue the pupils with a sense of Jewish distinctiveness, numerous students were unable to identify any distinctive features of their self-described Jewish identities (see also Schoem, 1989), particularly where they had only attended Jewish schools:

> "I've been in Jewish education, so my primary school is Jewish and this school's Jewish obviously, so I've been in that like my whole life so, I don't really, so I've kind of been brought up like it, I don't really, I wouldn't really know any different to being Jewish and not, so I wouldn't know" (Noreen, Year 10).

As Section 6.3.5 demonstrated, identities are constructed in relation to an 'Other,' hence the near-absence of non-Jews constrained pupils' consciousness of Jewish group distinctions, and in some cases instilled passivity towards their faith:

"I feel less Jewish being at JCoSS because it's so mainstream that it's not talked about, whereas … I usually feel more Jewish when I'm away from Jewish people because I know for are a lot of people that's going to be my defining factor and I *am* going to be 'the Jewish girl,' so being labelled as that definitely makes me feel more Jewish and kind of heightens my sense of Judaism because I am going to be a representative" (Lizzie, Year 12).

This example demonstrates how social identities are contingent on individuals' participation in particular evolving contexts, as individuals may define their identities in positional terms (Drury and Reicher, 2000). Indeed, Jewish individuals in 'non-Jewish' spaces may perceive themselves as representatives of the Jewish collectivity (Sklare and Greenblum, 1967) and feel determined to undertake greater identity work – including the self-conscious observance of religious and ethnic rituals – than they would in a largely homogeneously Jewish environment where this identity appears more 'natural' and 'normal' (Alper and Olson, 2013; Hochman and Heilbrunn, 2016). Such perceived distinctiveness was described by pupils who had previously attended non-Jewish schools:

"I went to a non-Jewish primary school, and I felt I was different to most others there, and that made me proud to be Jewish" (Ben, Year 10).

Thus, whereas Gans (1979) argues that younger generations may consciously invoke their ethnic identities, pupils often believed that the absence of a clear 'Other' could render such a task more challenging, whilst also restricting their development of multicultural citizenship. In spite of these criticisms, JCoSS provides interfaith activities and trips in order to facilitate pupils' exposure to other religions, and has recently introduced multi-faith Religious Studies[107] in the lower school following significant pupil demand.[108] This reflects JCoSS' openness to pupil feedback and flexibility to universalistic forms of Jewishness rather than rigid adherence to 'traditional' conceptions of Jewish identity construction. Moreover, it demonstrates pupils' agency to demand particular courses and services and thus determine

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[107] Often alternatively termed 'Religious Education' (RE).

[108] Since September 2016 (subsequent to the fieldwork), this will have been accompanied by the teaching of a second faith in GCSE Religious Studies, owing in part to changes in national requirements (DfE, 2014d, 2014e, 2015).

their values construction (Jones et al., 1999; Shevitz and Wasserfall, 2009). Nevertheless, pupils desired the more regular presence of an 'Other' from which to learn and simultaneously construct a sense of universalistic citizenship against and alongside, revealing a disjuncture between pupils' desires to avoid a restrictively or even predominantly Jewish label and the school's efforts at providing a Jewish ethos that is inclusive yet also distinctively Jewish. Section 7.4 next explores pupils' involvement in synagogue communities.

7.4 Synagogue involvement

Research into synagogue life has tended to investigate questions of community (Buckser, 2000; Wolfson, 2006, 2013) including welfare (Hart and Kafka, 2006), volunteering (Scheitle and Adamczyk, 2009; Punzi and Frischer, 2016) and broader leisure functions (Kaufman, 1999). Many studies have emphasised the contestation that exists over differing conceptions of identity (Furman, 1987; Heilman, 1998; Ebaugh, 2003) including regarding gender roles (Davidman, 1991; Goldman, 2000), demonstrating how synagogues, as spaces, are not immune from controversy and change. However, academic research has tended to neglect young Jewish people's voices regarding their synagogue engagement. For instance, Scholefield (2004) uses a questionnaire to explore schoolchildren's attendance at services, but does not investigate other forms of involvement, whilst Heilman (1997) highlights how some synagogues provide specific programmes or enable adolescents to run their own *Shabbat* service at particular points of the year, but he fails to seek young people's perspectives regarding these activities or the synagogue in general. Research into supplementary schooling has also tended to marginalise young people's views (e.g. Schiff, 1978, 1988a, Reimer, 1997; Wertheimer, 2007, 2009), although an exception is provided by Saxe et al. (2000), who consider teenagers' perspectives of their participation in the Jewish community, and find that levels of involvement in the Jewish community including synagogue decline considerably after *b'nei mitzvah* (particularly amongst boys) given the growing competition for time provided by 'secular' extra-curricular activities, school study and paid work, as well as disengagement instigated by negative experiences of Hebrew lessons. Although research into other faiths has considered differing forms or extents of adolescent involvement in places of worship, qualitative methods are relatively uncommon (examples include Rymarz and Graham, 2005, 2006; Smith and Denton, 2005; Good and

Willoughby, 2007; Layton et al., 2011). In contrast, Section 7.4 demonstrates the varied forms of synagogue involvement described by pupils at JCoSS.

Sections 7.4.1 and 7.4.2 highlight how attending pupils often derive personal meaning from their synagogue involvement (particularly where they participated alongside friends), manifested in varied ways. However, whereas regular attenders emphasised the importance of the synagogue as a community, non-attenders tended to assume that this space was fundamentally religious and thus irrelevant to their (largely secular) identities. Synagogue-based education also revealed a discrepancy in attitudes, with some seeking further Jewish learning (7.4.3) whereas others claimed that their attendance at a Jewish school rendered any 'extra' Jewish experience unnecessary and undesirable (7.4.4). Nevertheless, as Section 7.4.5 explains, pupils' disengagement from synagogue life must also be related to adolescents' growing autonomy to determine their own practices as well as parents' often-permissive attitudes towards synagogue involvement following *b'nei mitzvah*, and as Section 7.4.6 highlights, other, non-institutional spaces were largely more significant to pupils' Jewish identity construction.

7.4.1 Engagement in synagogue life

Places of worship can help religious individuals to 'ground' their identities and conceptions of meaning (Chidester and Linenthal, 1995), but they may have varying levels of significance for different people, which can reflect their ideologies and social position (Ivakhiv, 2006). In the present study, a noteworthy discrepancy existed in perspectives towards synagogues, depending upon levels of attendance in *any* capacity.[109] Non-attenders at synagogue (who were invariably also irreligious) tended to conceptualise it as a religious space and hence irrelevant to their personal identities:

> "I think because I don't go to synagogue a lot, I don't really consider myself [religious], even though I'm Jewish I wouldn't consider myself a very religious person, I feel like, if you're more religious then you go to synagogue" (Lily, Year 8).

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[109] Similar findings were garnered among parents.

Certainly, in the word association exercise (3.4.5) Lily proffered 'religion,' 'prayer' and 'celebration' as fundamental descriptors of synagogue life, revealing a tight entwinement of religious functions with the synagogue.   In justifying the word 'prayer,' for example:

> "I think, the initial, unless you're like doing a youth group or a different service, most things revolve around prayer, and whatever like synagogue you go to, whether it's an Orthodox one or a Reform one, like, you still do prayers" (Lily, Year 8).

A second pupil, in contrast to some of his peers in Section 7.3.2, similarly suggested that a Jewish identity was dependent upon religious practice including synagogue attendance and observance of *Kashrut*, and given his lack of personal religiosity and religious participation, was consequently sceptical of his own Jewish identity:

> "I don't think that you can call yourself Jewish if you, say, don't keep Kosher or don't go to *shul* at all, or just sort of don't follow the festivals; if you're going to sort of call yourself then you need to sort of follow what it comes with rather than just say "I am Jewish" when I don't keep Kosher, I don't go to *shul*, I don't do any of that" (Ray, Year 10).

Ray thus appeared personally uncomfortable about the concept of symbolic Jewishness, viewing a Jewish identity devoid of regular religious practice oxymoronic.

However, synagogue membership and attendance do not equate to religiosity (Stolzenberg et al., 1995; Graham and Vulkan, 2010), as synagogues contain a variety of auxiliary community and leisure functions (Feldman, 1975; Kaufman, 1999), rather than merely representing places of worship. Certainly, in opposition to non-attending pupils' perceptions that synagogues represent religious buildings first and foremost, relatively frequent attenders perceived their synagogues as community spaces, illustrating the range of their involvement in cultural or leisure activities including volunteering schemes, youth clubs and youth movements:

"It's [synagogue] also a nursery during the week, and during the evening sometimes or in half-term, I can volunteer there to help like, they have children's clubs so I volunteer to be a helper there, to be a leader" (Aimee, Year 8).

"I do this club at *shul*, but it's not related to Judaism, where we play table tennis, PS4, really anything there" (Luke, Year 8).

"I used to be on the youth committee, my synagogue has tight links with [youth movement], and I go on camp, and I'm also in the [youth movement] youth committee as well for my year group, so that has ties with my synagogue and I tend to do that with my synagogue" (Samantha, Year 10).

In contrast, religious participation only represented a secondary aspect of synagogue life even to many of the most regular attenders:

"I don't really participate in prayer services necessarily" (Samantha, Year 10).

"You *do* worship there, you *do* pray, but you can do other things as well in the synagogue, because you have, sometimes you might have youth groups there, and you might have clubs and libraries and learning groups and things like that within the synagogue, that makes it more of a community" (Aimee, Year 8).

This also highlights how individuals tended to understand their Jewish identities in terms of (often loose) community and cultural similarities (see Section 7.3.2), connected with familial background rather than religious practice.

Nevertheless, perceptions of ethnoreligious 'practice' were entirely relative. Even amongst pupils who attend synagogue and celebrate *Shabbat* regularly, few viewed themselves as regular practisers:

"I would describe myself as Jewish, but I don't really practise it that often … [I] have dinner with my, like, family, my cousins, light the candles, but it's more, like, once or twice a month, not every week" (Zara, Year 12).

Similarly, religiosity represented a highly subjective term, with most pupils associating it with strict adherence to Jewish practice, and thus incongruent with their own Jewish identities, rather than defining it as personal engagement with the transcendent:

> "Like, praying every day, I don't know, like going to *shul* on *Shabbat*, like every single Saturday, keeping 100 per cent Kosher, like, I'm not like that!" *[Laughs]* (Claudia, Year 12).

Yet despite the fact that only a minority of pupils claimed to pray or participate religiously in *any* space, and most synagogue-attending pupils claimed that these primarily represent *socio-cultural* community structures, the synagogue was perceived as a more significant *religious* space than any other, including the Jewish day school. Thus, whereas prayer can occur in any space, the synagogue continued to be imbued with paramount sacred meaning:

> "I think you *can* pray outside of a synagogue, but if you were asked, like, "what is the place *to* pray?" if you think about it, you would think of a synagogue, or something similar like that for a different religion, like there's like a specific place to pray, but you can pray in other places" (Aimee, Year 8).

Indeed, no pupil associated prayer or worship with JCoSS' Rosh Chodesh services without my prompting, indicating that the school was not considered a religious space. Consequently, and illustrating the ways in which an identity can fluctuate in different spaces and situations (Pratt, 1999; Peek, 2005), some pupils claimed that their Jewish identities were stronger in religious 'reservations' (Kong, 2010) such as the synagogue, where they were able to construct a Jewish identity based upon shared behaviour as a community and connection with the supernatural (Layton et al., 2011):

> "Whenever I go to a *shul* I feel more Jewish than at school or at home, just because you're in an environment with people that are praying" (Andrew, Year 12).

"It's where I can like connect with all my, like, praying and connect with God and using all my knowledge of Judaism there" (Raphael, Year 8).

Certainly, one pupil claimed to favour prayer where it represented a communal rather than individual activity (Levitz, 1995):

"I think one of the main like, key parts of being Jewish is like having a community, and like for me your community is your family, like all the traditions, but also if you're with your friends you might feel like you're spiritually enhanced, because I don't feel really that comfortable like praying by myself in my room, that's not like I do that, but if I'm with my friends in like a service, I feel more like keen to participate and stuff" (Rebecca, Year 8).

In this way, Rebecca perceived Judaism as a community-based faith, reinforcing synagogues' historic salience as community structures (Zeitlin, 1931; Roth, 1941). Their associated role as places of socialisation will be addressed next.

7.4.2 Socialisation

Section 6.3.4 demonstrated rabbis' concerns that their synagogues' significance as places of Jewish socialisation were compromised by the development of Jewish day schools. Pupils' attitudes towards synagogues as personally-relevant social spaces varied considerably. Certainly, one's commitment to a place of worship may largely depend on personal relationships with other congregants (Wolfson, 2006, 2013; Dougherty and Whitehead, 2011), facilitating a degree of 'ownership.' Accordingly, one pupil who claimed not to have friends at her synagogue perceived it as a social space of little personal significance (see Cohen and Kelman, 2007):

"All my mum's friends go, like, to that synagogue, and like my brother, like they always have like people in my brother's year, but then my brother attends a club at synagogue on a Monday or something, and actually he might be taking like a leadership thing there, and, yeah, it's like all my mum's friends and stuff" (Claudia, Year 12).

In contrast, her school represented her primary place of Jewish socialisation, justifying many of the rabbis' concerns about co-option (6.3.4):

> "I guess the school is more, like, social, like, all your friends and stuff, like, everyone I've grown up with has been Jewish, I mean there are a few *non*-Jewish people here obviously but like everyone I've grown up with" (Claudia, Year 12).

Nevertheless, synagogues retained significance as social spaces amongst most pupils who visited relatively regularly, as they deemed friendships within their communities as the principal incentive for their attendance:

> "I enjoy seeing other people, I have friends at the synagogue and it's a good chance to catch up" (Ben, Year 10).

> "Without, like, friends to go to *shul* with, you know, you wouldn't really *want* to go to *shul*, *ever*; sometimes yeah, *shul* gets a bit boring, but sometimes it's cool because you're with friends" (Jason, Year 7).

Notably, a large proportion of pupils (including all four Year 7 pupils) in the present study listed 'friends' as the primary influence on their Jewish identities during the diamond nine exercise, and Good and Willoughby (2007, p.407) relatedly indicate how Christian adolescents may enhance their attachment to their religious community through the "relational aspects of religious faith," comprising friends and mentors, rather than necessarily their participation in religious rituals. Indeed, places of worship can be valuable to young people as places in which they receive support that contributes to their religious identity construction (Layton et al., 2011; Forrest-Bank and Dupper, 2016). As such, although a minority of pupils were resistant to perceiving Jewish friends differently from others – "I don't see them as Jewish, I see them as a normal people because it's not really about the religion, it's just mostly about who you choose" (Thea, Year 8; see also Section 7.3.2) – one pupil suggested that friends may participate in Jewishly-focused activities that appeal uniquely to Jews:

"When you go to synagogue together you can pray together as a community together, but if you're both going to a Jewish school together, you can go through Jewish experiences with them, just, volunteering with them together for Jewish charity projects, that maybe a non-Jewish friend might not be able to do" (Aimee, Year 8).

Consequently, attendance at both Jewish school and synagogue provided the potential for pupils to strengthen their friendships with others:

"I do have friends there, like, so I've been there all my life so I know quite a lot of people there" (Joel, Year 10).

In these ways, attending a Jewish school was able to reinforce particular friendship networks through extending these to other spaces, including the synagogue, as desired by numerous members of the Jewish community (6.5.1). Many pupils were also involved in synagogues' educational functions, as the following section highlights.

7.4.3 Synagogue-based education

Section 6.3.3 illustrated the challenges for *chederim* in appealing to Jewish families who tend to view the growing number and diversity of Jewish day schools more favourably. Nevertheless, several pupils at JCoSS were or had been involved in *chederim*, whether as volunteers or as students. Although many pupils claimed that *cheder* classes were "boring" (e.g. Aria, Jason, both Year 7), in consonance with Schoem (1989), others favoured their generally greater informality (Press, 1989), often characterised by discussion and enquiry:

"I think in my *cheder* lessons, like, we kind of have discussions more than just writing in books and not being able to talk and stuff […] the teachers try and make it, like, as fun as possible, and like, we use iPads and like research stuff" (Lexie, Year 7).

The enthusiasm of some pupils towards further Jewish education was also demonstrated by their voluntary involvement as *cheder* teachers or through participating in adolescent or adult

synagogue-based educational classes, which they perceived as means of deepening their knowledge and personal attachment to Judaism:

> "I go to my *shul* a lot, I do help out with like the Sunday *cheder*, so I think that really helps with my Jewish side because I also learn more about Judaism at the same time" (Josh, Year 10).
>
> "Even though I don't believe in God I'm at synagogue every week, I teach at the *cheder*, and they do a course, an adult course actually, a leadership course, and so I'm kind of, I'm really into the learning aspects, sort of reading into how our ancestors saw the world, that fascinates me, and also a sense of community is kind of important to me" (Josie, Year 10).

Consequently, Josie manifested a personally-meaningful form of Jewishness rooted in her synagogue involvement, and particularly her diverse participation in its educational provision, which does not require her to demonstrate any belief in God but nonetheless permits her to feel considerable ownership of her community. Similarly, other pupils valued their synagogue involvement for enabling them to develop strong intergenerational and non-familial relationships with other congregants (King and Furrow, 2004; Vanderbeck, 2007), which contributed to their burgeoning understanding of Jewish themes:

> "I go to a learning scheme kind of thing every week at my synagogue and I am the youngest person there, I think the oldest person is about 94 and she was in concentration camps and whatever, and, yeah, that's really interesting" (Matt, Year 10).

Furthermore, reflecting how pluralist day schools may act to reinforce, rather than imperil, pupils' participation in the synagogue (6.5.1), one student demonstrated a desire to extend JCoSS' culture of questioning to his role as a *cheder* volunteer, facilitating his (and, he hoped, his own pupils') enthusiasm for Jewish learning and critical analysis:

> "I feel like I'm teaching them all the facts they need to know to make their own decision, but there are some teachers at the *cheder* who have been teaching for

years now and they're, like, their soul has died there … what I think Jewish and Religious Studies should be, it's teaching you how to *think*, and then you can *use* all this knowledge that you've got to inform your decision, which I hope is improved upon in the future" (Seb, Year 12).

These findings may reassure community leaders concerned at the largely negative impacts of Jewish day schools upon synagogues described in Chapter 6. Nevertheless, a not insignificant number (approximately one-quarter) of the pupils suggested that attending a Jewish school had reduced their interest in further Jewish activities. The following section explores their disengagement from wider Jewish life.

7.4.4 Disengagement

Reflecting rabbis' claims in Section 6.3.3, several students, especially in the sixth form, suggested that their interest in Jewish faith and practice had been jeopardised by their attendance at a Jewish school:

"Definitely as soon as I started going to a secondary school I took less interest in the religious aspect of things […] Jewish Ed. made me less Jewish. I'm not sure if it's just because that was at a time when I was growing out of Judaism anyway but I'm pretty sure it definitely had some hand in it because the stuff that we were doing was *incredibly* dull and just generally very, like; it sort of like assumed that you were already Jewish and it took that for granted and took it for granted that you're going to, like, believe everything here" (Isaac, Year 12).

Isaac's claim that "Jewish Ed. made me less Jewish" indicates his personal schematisation of Jewishness as rooted in practice and a sense that this identity requires some degree of religiosity to be performed. It also demonstrates how a Jewish Education curriculum that fails to accord with young people's own understandings of Jewishness is at risk of instigating their wider disaffiliation from the faith, with didactic and repetitive – rather than interactive and 'authentic' – forms of teaching identified by other researchers as contributing to

disengagement from compulsory Jewish study[110] (Schoem, 1984; Gross and Rutland, 2014a). Nicola relatedly believed that her enrolment at a Jewish day school had diminished her interest in attending synagogue, perceiving that only one institution is desirable:

"I'd probably say it became a bit tedious to me, pretty much, every single day… when [I was] back in primary school when I wasn't going to a Jewish school, it made going to *shul* a bit more special because it was done a bit closer to me because it was my grounding culture at the time, and, yeah, now that I'm grounded quite a lot, I don't feel like I need to be held as closely to it really" (Nicola, Year 12).

In this way, synagogue attendance may seem comparatively meaningful for pupils in non-Jewish schools as it can be connected to a sense of familial culture and 'background,' revealing a conceptualisation of Jewishness rooted (at least partially) in descent rather than practice, whereas students possessing a stronger (or perceiving themselves to possess a stronger) understanding of their faith due to their involvement at a Jewish school do not necessarily seek this additional instruction or participation. Schoem (1984) similarly found that supplementary school attendance represented by far the most regular form of Jewish practice amongst children, rather than it encouraging Jewish behaviours more widely. Furthermore, reflecting some parents' criticisms of JCoSS' Jewish Education provision (5.4.1), pupils who felt confident in their Jewish knowledge often perceived these lessons to be disengaging owing to their perceived emphasis on students with little Jewish understanding (a broader issue recognised by Michaelson, 2011):

"You know that kind of stuff already, and they [teachers] just enforce it more … because we go to *shul* and like some people in this community go to *cheder*, I don't go anymore, but some people go, and they teach you there and then like Jewish religion we know; like, some things we don't know, and that's absolutely fine with it, some people are actually quite intrigued about it, but some people

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[110] Other researchers have also identified a tendency towards didactic methods in Jewish and Hebrew Studies classes (e.g. Backenroth et al., 2006; Shargel, 2013; Miller, 2014).

are just like "Why are we learning it?" and it just depends on what you know"
(Thea, Year 8).

Thus, corresponding with the challenge for pluralist schools in ensuring their inclusivity of the least knowledgeable or practising members of the Jewish community[111] (5.4.1), and rabbis' concerns that Jewish schools fail to complement pupils' learning in other Jewish environments (6.3.3), highly engaged pupils revealed the potential *un*-desirability of involvement in both educational institutions. Indeed, overall, pupils did not treat Jewish-themed lessons and practices with the same salience as other subjects, perceiving them as superfluous to their secular education:

"Well whenever we did prayers [at primary school] I never really paid attention, I never really listened to any of it, I didn't really care about it, like, I'd care more about the, what, well, for me important subjects like English, Maths, so I never really paid attention to all the Jewish stuff, *Shiur Torah* or prayers" (Zach, Year 8).

"When everyone was doing GCSE in Religious Education we only learnt Judaism, and a lot of Jewish people chose to do the short course and just couldn't be bothered with it and they just accepted Cs, like, they just kind of went with the C, so it's just not really cared about as much" (Lizzie, Year 12).

These claims accord with parents' interests in selecting a Jewish school (4.4.1) as well as rabbis' concerns (6.3.1).

Relatedly, and reflecting the tendency towards 'least-possible-practice' described in Sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2, some pupils posited that a peer culture exists at JCoSS that renders synagogue attendance *un*-desirable:

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[111] This was also reflected in the fact that several pupils appeared surprisingly uncertain of key aspects of the Jewish faith, such as that bat mitzvah ceremonies typically occur at an earlier age than bar mitzvah.

Claudia (Year 12): "I feel like in JCoSS, if you went to synagogue every Saturday, I feel like people in my year would, like, they'd judge you; I don't know why, like, I feel like that's, because it's like, because also it's the 21st century, like, people are like doing stuff on weekends and like, they'd be like, "Why are you going to *shul*?""

Interviewer: "Have you seen that before, or it's just a feeling you have?"

Claudia: "I think it's just a feeling I have, but, because it's like no one in my year goes to *shul* on Saturday, and not a lot of people go on like festivals and stuff like that; a few do but not like, a lot."

Accordingly, *non*-attendance (apart from at *b'nei mitzvah*) was widely portrayed as typical of the student body, demonstrating the irrelevance of synagogue (and particularly religious) life to most pupils:

Kelly (Year 12): "I can't remember the last time I went."

Chloe: "Like, when friends have their bar and bat mitzvahs, like, I'll go,"/

Kelly: "Yeah."

Chloe: /"and a few festivals I'll go."

Interviewer: "So just very special occasions?"

Chloe: "Yeah."

Interviewer: "Does it not mean much, would you say, synagogue to you?"

Chloe: "No."

Ryan: "No."

Kelly: "No."

Yet, a few pupils perceived that their attendance at synagogue was rendered *more* meaningful owing to its infrequency:

"I think because I don't go to the regular services, what I associate with *shul* is going there for a celebration […] I think because I don't go that much it's more special when I do go" (Lily, Year 8).

In this way, synagogue may be associated with special occasions and voluntary attendance rather than dogmatic adherence to regular, repetitive practice. Moreover, and mirroring the symbolic identities described by Gans (1979, 1994), the Jewish *theoretical* knowledge pupils garnered at JCoSS was often perceived as an alternative to religious practice or synagogue-based Jewish *experience*:[112]

> "Because we learn about Judaism here we don't really need to experience it as much, because we're here" (Joel, Year 10).
>
> "I've never gone to *shul* like regularly, so I don't, personally I don't find it [community] within a synagogue, but obviously as I go to a Jewish school then I find Jewish community there, and also like, there are like, I do like performances, like music, for like Jewish things and stuff, and like the people there just form a Jewish community" (Deanna, Year 10).

Rather than viewing her Jewish identity as synagogue-based or defined via practice, Deanna thus demonstrated how one's commitment to Judaism may be manifested via broader personal interests, facilitating the personal significance of a (symbolic) Jewish identity. Given that Deanna was not alone in believing that JCoSS – whether through explicit instruction or encouragement (see Section 6.5.1) or via a strengthening of individuals' resolve to affiliate – had no impact on her likelihood of attending synagogue, greater or lesser, it was clear that pupils did not feel pressurised to perceive synagogue involvement as critical to Jewishness or view 'traditional' forms of Judaism as authoritative. Instead, they sought to practise their identity on their own terms (see Magid, 2013):

> Andrew (Year 12): "Because they don't push going to a synagogue here, we don't have to; other schools, you know, have services all day and, there's no push for that … any desire is mainly from myself, from my family, to make me want to go."
>
> Lizzie: "I'd have to go with that, there's genuinely no pretence to try and make you more or less religious, it's just "Do what you want," basically."

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[112] Arweck and Nesbitt (2011) similarly found that young people would not generally connect their Religious Education lessons with lived religion in practice.

Thus, in contrast with the Jewish community participation expected by school leaders in Gross and Rutland (2014a) and Schoem (1984)'s studies, pupils felt confident in defining their own, often non-institutional relationships with Judaism. However, it is important to reiterate that Jewish day schools have not contributed to pupils' disengagement from synagogue life alone, with the subsequent section illustrating the contributory roles played by adolescents' growing autonomy and parents' often-permissive attitudes towards their Jewish practice.

7.4.5 Growing autonomy

Although numerous pupils believed that excessive emphasis on Jewish learning within a day school context had contributed to their disengagement from wider Jewish life, disaffiliation can be commonplace amongst young people regardless of educational type. Certainly, as adolescents mature they may enjoy increased autonomy to determine (and thus general reduce or redefine) their religious and cultural behaviours (Ozorak, 1989), including involvement in places of worship (Willits and Crider, 1989; Smith et al., 2002). Although other researchers have posited the existence of a life-cycle model in which religious participation is cyclical (e.g. Stolzenberg et al., 1995; O'Connor et al., 2002), a number of studies have revealed a general decline in levels of religiosity and involvement in the UK's places of worship over time, both within the Jewish community (Hart and Kafka, 2006; Graham and Vulkan, 2010; Alderman, 2014) and more widely (Voas and Crockett, 2005; Bruce, 2002, 2013; Woodhead, 2012, 2013, 2014b).

Many of the older pupils, particularly those in Year 12, related their growing autonomy with their declining synagogue involvement, as well as the perceived personal salience of their Jewish identities:

> Nicola (Year 12): "I would say my sense of my family and my heritage and, like where my family come from, I think that's where, to an extent, I would consider myself Jewish, really, and if probably asked a few years ago, or something like that, I'd say "I'm definitely very Jewish" because I would often keep a lot of traditions and go to *shul* and do all those sort of things and be very involved with Jewish people but *now [laughs, with slight embarrassment]*, I don't know, I

don't adhere to it so much partly because I have more choice in what I want to keep, really."

Interviewer: "Compared to your family directing you?"

Nicola: "Yeah, I mostly do things now, or only really at home, just to keep my mum happy, really."

Interviewer: "What kind of age do you think that shift happened?"

Nicola: "I think probably after my bat mitzvah, that's when I was allowed a lot more freedom to, not really pick-and-choose but just be a lot less religious than I was being told to."

Thus, in comparison to her association of her childhood Jewishness with communal values such as family and heritage, Nicola perceived her adolescent Jewish identity as more individualised. Even by Year 8, numerous pupils expressed their burgeoning autonomy, often influenced by friendship groups:

"I do go to *shul* quite often, but when I was younger I did it way more often because my parents, I had to, but now I choose not to […] after my bat mitzvah, like I don't really choose to go, partly because none of my friends really go anymore, so I don't see them there" (Rebecca, Year 8).

These examples reflect how *b'nei mitzvah* events, which are typically celebrated during Year 7 (girls) or 8 (boys), can mark the culmination of a child's Jewish education and involvement within their synagogue community (Saxe et al., 2000; Chiswick, 2014). Certainly, several pupils suggested that their independence was facilitated by their parents' growing indifference towards their Jewish identity construction and practices following their completion of this Jewish milestone:

Seb (Year 12): "So, directly after my bar mitzvah my parents were like, well, leading up to my bar mitzvah they said "OK, you're going to have a bar mitzvah, that's, just, you're going to have one, but the way you approach it and what you do *after* it and all that is up to *you*," so it was down to me to learn everything for it and then after it, it was down to me if I wanted to continue practising religious

things, but, yeah, it's, after bar mitzvah age I think there's no, there's no further step that a parent is obligated to *do* for their child, so they just go "OK, you can do what you want now; but *I've* done *my* job, *I'm* a good Jew,"/

Isaac: *[Chuckles]*.

Seb: /"*I'm* a good parent Jew because I did what I was told and that's finished now so you can do what you want."

Interviewer: "So that's their goal, they just have to get their child through the bar and bat mitzvah stage?"

Seb: "I think that's what a lot of parents, *Jewish* parents consider, that's their duty done."

In this way, parents may deem their child's *b'nei mitzvah* a personal responsibility, validating their own 'success' in transmitting a Jewish identity, without mandating or expecting any further Jewish community involvement. This highlights the permissiveness[113] of many parents' attitudes towards Jewish instruction and practice, and corresponds with rabbis' claims that Jewish parents often feel obligated to ensure their children's Jewish education as a means of continuing a loose attachment to familial tradition, even if they are open to their subsequent disaffiliation (6.3.1). Indeed, a sense of duty to respect one's ancestry and continue familial Jewish traditions was cited as the key reason to prepare for this event, rather than personal religious, cultural or spiritual conviction:

Joe (Year 12): "It's not *100* per cent compulsory as a boy to have a bar mitzvah but it's obviously the right thing, *really*, to do."

Interviewer: "It's like an expectation?"

Joe: "It's like an expectation, it's just, it can be seen as like a sign of respect."

Interviewer: "Respect for whom do you think?"

Joe: "Just obviously for your family, especially if you *do* have people in your family that *are* religious compared to you and your parents [...] it shows respect to them, show respect to, just to being Jewish in itself."

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[113] Research in the USA (Sklare and Greenblum, 1967) and Israel (Mikulincer et al., 1993) has also described most Jewish parents' parenting style as 'permissive.'

Joe's emphasis on 'being' Jewish again reveals how for many students, Jewishness was perceived as an identity that one is born into, rather than representing a process that one can develop via regular ritual practice (7.3.2). Consequently, many pupils did not consider the latter important or desirable, and instead viewed their Jewish identity as an essentialised and symbolic part of themselves, related to a loose sense of heritage.

Given this lack of personal significance, it was unsurprising that many students stopped attending synagogue thereafter. Indeed, synagogue life (both in terms of services and more broadly) was generally described negatively. The most common word used to describe synagogue was "boring," with services viewed as particularly disengaging even amongst pupils who claimed to be religiously observant:

"One of the things that's really annoying about being Jewish is the services, because they're long and boring" (Rosa, Year 8).

"The services are too long" (Ben, Year 10).

A further barrier to pupils' interest and practice at synagogue was language (Horowitz, 2003; Avni, 2012), with many claiming to struggle to read or speak Hebrew in spite of their day school education. This reflected some of the rabbis' criticisms regarding Hebrew proficiency and cultural and religious practice amongst many Jewish school pupils in Section 6.3.3:

"I don't understand most of it, because it's not in English, and I don't speak Hebrew myself, I don't understand what they're saying, so in some sense I sit there and I'm oblivious like to what is actually being said" (Chloe, Year 12).

"It [synagogue] doesn't really mean *anything* to me, I don't know a load of Hebrew that I hear them saying" (Luke, Year 8).

Scepticism of religion, which was commonly associated with dogmatism, also represented a significant factor in pupils' disengagement from synagogue life.[114] Instead, a secular

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[114] As Section 7.4.1 demonstrated, non- or infrequent attenders at synagogue generally associated this space with religiosity and thus irrelevant to their personal identities.

morality was emphasised as personally significant, generally separate from synagogue involvement:

> Seb (Year 12): "In terms of like practising Judaism, it sort of *diminished*, because my morals *increased*, I guess, I'm not quite sure; like, not that I became more moral, it's just I solidified my thinking versus my beliefs and it's backed up by Judaism and whatever, but that's, I don't need to go to *shul* to like, show that."
> Interviewer: "So you felt more confident in your personal morals"/
> Seb: "Yeah."
> Interviewer: /"without needing to go to synagogue to kind of validate them?"
> Seb: "Yeah."

In this way, many of the students demonstrated a lack of interest in 'traditional,' institutionalised forms of Judaism and instead were able to carve out individualised meaning from their faith, revealing heterogeneous and contrasting ways of expressing Jewishness (Samson et al., 2017). It is feasible that Seb's morals were developed in part via JCoSS' openness to different understandings of Judaism and Jewish identity, which may result in the construction of Jewish identities that are largely disconnected from synagogues. Furthermore, Seb's emphasis on not 'needing' to attend synagogue reveals a consumerist attitude towards a reified sense of identity (according with rabbis' criticisms in Section 6.3.1), as he believed that he had 'acquired' the necessary morals and so did not desire their reinforcement (as a process) via synagogue attendance and religious practice. Yet some pupils also viewed the broader *community* functions of synagogues negatively, associating their involvement with tedium and a sense of familial obligation. As Joel's associations with the word 'synagogue' revealed:

> "'Community' because, like I know quite a lot of people there, and it's like, sort of like a massive family; 'family' because my whole family go there, and 'boredom' because I don't enjoy it" (Joel, Year 10).

Significantly, several pupils did not even know if they were members of a synagogue (and if they did, they were often not certain of its name or movement), or were unfamiliar with terms

such as '*cheder,*' indicating their lack of involvement in these activities, and perhaps a weakness in their Jewish understanding. Overall, and corresponding with previous studies, familial role modelling of (Bader and Desmond, 2006; Güngör et al., 2011) and personal experience within a place of worship (Francis and Gibson, 1993; Brañas-Garza et al., 2011) represented critical influences, with Jewish school unlikely to successfully encourage pupils' attendance on its own. Indeed, pupils were largely aware of the impacts of their parents' actions (or inaction) as they developed the autonomy to determine their own Jewish practices and behaviour:

> Ben (Year 10): "I've always been involved at synagogue so…I would go anyway, I always have."
>
> Josie: "Yeah, I'm the same as Ben, I've gone from when I was very young and I don't think Jewish school can make you want to go to synagogue, it's more something that you're raised in."

Consequently, any understanding of young people's Jewish identity construction must be related to family as well as Jewish institutions (see Sections 2.4.4 and 6.3.1). Accordingly, it is plausible that numerous rabbis' perceptions that Jewish schools unintentionally deter their pupils from attending synagogue (6.3.3; 6.3.4) are somewhat overstated, as it would appear that many young people would not participate in these spaces whether they attended a Jewish day school or not. Instead, the growth of Jewish schools has merely magnified rabbis' awareness that a considerable proportion of Anglo-Jewry is largely uninvolved in synagogue life (see Section 6.3.1), although some parents did draw a clear and direct correlation between their children's attendance at a Jewish school and non-attendance at synagogue (6.3.3). Rather than necessarily seeking to practise their Jewishness within synagogues, some students instead viewed non-institutional, unofficially' Jewish spaces as significant to their Jewish identity construction, as the following section illustrates.

7.4.6 Other spaces

Reflecting claims that religion has become individualised in secularising society (Wallace, Jr. et al., 2003; Ivakhiv, 2006), American Jews (perhaps in particular) are increasingly performing their Jewishness beyond traditional Jewish institutions (Cohen and Kelman,

2007; Pew Research Center, 2013). For instance, Saxe et al. (2000, p.6) argues that American Jewish adolescents are today less likely to consider the synagogue a place of personal spiritual significance or express their ethnic Jewishness through Jewish institutions, and instead regard their Jewishness as "a kind of symbolic ethnicity" based on values such as Holocaust remembrance, ethical behaviour, *tikkun olam* (but not in the practical sense of volunteering) and care for Israel. Similarly, Shain et al. (2013, pp.3-4) illustrate how young Jewish adults often favour "home-based or self-organized ritual practice and small, niche initiatives" that "empower participants…to define their own Jewish identities and create their own forms of Jewish expression," rather than 'traditional' religious institutions such as synagogues, associating these trends with declining (Putnam, 2000) or loosening (Wuthnow, 1994, 1998b) communal affiliation in the USA, as well as the Millennial generation's championing of values of individualism and active participation. In the UK, too, Borts (2014) demonstrates how *Shabbat* is increasingly celebrated in the home rather than the synagogue, whilst Williams (2010) suggests that many young adults express their Jewish identity through avenues that do not rely on membership of a particular religious institution or relationship with a rabbi, but rather through becoming a religious 'expert' oneself.

These non-institutionalised forms of Jewishness are critical to an understanding of young people's geographies. As Samson et al. (2017) argue, whereas the majority of research purporting to explore Jewish identity has in reality sought to ascertain the effectiveness of Jewish institutions in providing a restrictive, reified notion of Jewish collective belonging, a deeper focus on individuals would facilitate recognition of the diverse ways in which people 'live' their Jewishness. Young people more generally are increasingly recognised as expressing ethnic and religious identities in multitudinous and often seemingly-banal spaces (Hopkins et al., 2011), necessitating attention to the non-traditional locales that pupils in the present study deemed of personal importance. Indeed, even though numerous pupils viewed synagogue involvement as irrelevant to their individual Jewish identities (7.4.5), many claimed that other spaces pertaining to *cultural* practice were of personal significance, including charities and care organisations.[115] For instance, Lizzie felt minimal belonging to a synagogue community following her personal experiences of exclusion related to her

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[115] Israel tour and Jewish camps were also cited, although pupils tended to suggest that their long-term impacts upon their identities were negligible (see also London and Frank, 1987; Kelner, 2010). For instance: "I don't feel more Jewish after going to tour" (Zara, Year 12).

familial background. However, she became aware of a Zionist group that enabled her to 'reconnect' to an alternative manifestation of Jewish community, instigating a desire to move to Israel (an action termed *Aliyah*) in the future:

> "Being part of that group kind of reconnected me and made me want to make *Aliyah* because of how, like, how much I realised that I'd just completely under-appreciated Israel, and I didn't realise how mainstream anti-Semitism was and how common the belief was, and this group kind of opened my eyes to a lot of that" (Lizzie, Year 12).

Although her statement implies a rather fixed notion of attachment to Israel being important to Jewish identity, it is evident that Lizzie perceived her Jewishness to be personally meaningful owing to its basis in her political views rather than any form of religious or cultural practice derived from her parents. Consequently, she felt enabled to see herself as part of a wider Jewish community that shares similar values beyond the space of the school. Apparent also is a tendency to construct one's collective Jewishness in relation to an opposing threat (Colley, 1992; Alderman, 2014), revealing the continued importance of anti-Semitism in facilitating a sense of Jewish group distinctiveness. Yet, simply socialising in a specific, 'Jewish' district was also imbued with importance by some:

> Ryan (Year 12): "Like the community of the synagogue isn't the community, isn't like the Jewish community I identify with,"/
> Kelly: "Yeah."
> Ryan: /"so like I identify with the school and my friends and like, we have our own things within the community, but like in the synagogue, there's not many people my age."
> Interviewer: "I was about to ask what spheres you actually do identify with, where you think you *most* feel Jewish, what kinds of places?"
> Kelly: "Like Northwest London, like when you go"/
> Chloe: /"yeah, and like friends."
> Ryan: "And like everyone knows everyone."
> Kelly: "You see people you know."

Interviewer: "Northwest London just in general?"

Kelly: "Yeah."

Interviewer: "What is it about Northwest London that makes it feel Jewish?"

Ryan: "It's just Jews!" *[Chuckles].*

Kelly: "A lot of Jews live there. And we all go to school, like in the main [Jewish] schools, and there's other schools, but like, we know a lot of people who are Jewish."

Kong (2005, 2010) has illustrated how geographers of religion are becoming increasingly interested in 'unofficially sacred sites' that exist beyond traditional 'reservations' such as synagogues. As such, Northwest London was constructed as an 'unofficially' Jewish space where pupils socialise informally as Jews and develop their own Jewish youth culture away from adult intervention (Arnon et al., 2008), rather than their Jewishness being operationalised through formal institutions. Instead of distinguishing between secular and sacred places or interactions, it is necessary to recognise that ethnoreligious identities are constructed across all institutional and social contexts, and are subjected to contestation over power as in any space (Ammerman, 2003). Moreover, rather than reinforcing a sense that ritual practice and community involvement are necessary to the 'correct' manifestation of a Jewish identity – as evidenced by Shain et al. (2013) who argue that low rates of attendance at Jewish organisation-sponsored events and celebration of *Shabbat* reveal minimal Jewish engagement – it is important to acknowledge that these deinstitutionalised and individualised performances of Jewishness can be imbued with personal meaning even if they conflict with 'traditional' assumptions of Jewishness. In these ways, individuals may participate actively in Jewish social circles and deem these to be Jewish interactions, without feeling any affiliation to or ownership of a nominally Jewish organisation. Such dynamics necessitate further research exploring the reworking of such individual Jewish identities in diverse 'unofficially' Jewish spaces.

7.5 Conclusion

In contrast to the majority of research into Jewish schools, which has largely marginalised young people's views (such as by imposing particular assumptions of practice and identity upon them), this chapter has illustrated pupils' own perspectives towards their education. As

such, it has emphasised the importance of enabling individuals to describe and present their personalised forms of Jewishness, facilitating analysis of the ways in which Jewish identities are lived and reconstructed (Horowitz, 2003, 2003; Samson et al., 2017). The chapter has highlighted three broad themes. First, JCoSS was largely favoured as a pluralistic school environment for its role in permitting pupils to personalise their Jewish identities, rather than feeling compelled to adopt a hegemonic and top-down form of Jewishness. This was reflected in the school's approach to Jewish Education, which enables students to critique alternative perspectives of Judaism and consciously negotiate their own identities through identifying disjunctures between 'official,' rigid portrayals of their faith and their own perceptions of 'legitimate' Jewishness. Pupils felt that they were able to experiment with diverse forms of Jewish practice, drawing upon the influences of their friends as well as opportunities to attend different Rosh Chodesh services (for instance), and thus develop the autonomy to express their Jewishness as desired, sometimes in ways that contrasted with their parents' denominational affiliations and conceptualisations of faith. In these ways, JCoSS' approach to Jewish Education and identity constructions differs to previous studies that have demonstrated a disjuncture in values between school leaders and pupils (Schoem, 1984; Gross and Rutland, 2014a), facilitating pupils' personalised identity construction.

Section 7.3 next drew upon Gans' (1979, 1994) concepts of symbolic ethnicity and religiosity to illustrate how pupils constructed Jewish identities that were generally characterised by loose cultural commonalities rather than being rooted in regular, religious ritual practice. However, although most pupils were enthusiastic about the identity reminders provided by the school and the Jewish friendships they had developed, others sought greater universalism, including the teaching of multi-faith Religious Studies or engagement with non-Jews. The general absence of non-Jews was also perceived by some as restricting their own Jewish identity construction. Overall, these findings demonstrate the openness of JCoSS' pupils to diverse expressions of Jewishness, alongside a determination not to be marked as substantially 'distinctive' from non-Jews, reflecting their interest in becoming active in wider British society. Whilst such findings are not necessarily generalisable to other Jewish schools, given the potential for individuals with more universalistic attitudes to self-select at JCoSS, they are therefore significant in revealing the heterogeneity and inclusiveness of segments of Anglo-Jewry.

Finally, Section 7.4 highlighted pupils' diverse involvement in their synagogue communities, as well as the perspectives of those largely or completely unaffiliated with such institutions. Whereas several pupils were enthusiastic about their participation, largely as a cultural or educational community, others claimed that synagogue was irrelevant to their lives, with some even believing that their Jewish schooling rendered further Jewish involvement unnecessary. Given adolescents' growing autonomy, and often permissive parenting, many claimed that their synagogue involvement had declined since *b'nei mitzvah* (where they had undertaken this event at all). Such findings also reflect a considerable degree of secularisation because few pupils exhibited personal religious beliefs and behaviours, and many viewed their Jewishness separately from central Jewish institutions including synagogues. Again, this demonstrates how many pupils repudiated – or were at the very least *considering* repudiating – such 'traditional' expectations of Jewish identity both in theory and in practice, and instead sought to develop highly personalised manifestations of Jewishness. Nevertheless, and reflecting the findings of Chapter 4, pupils' conceptualisations of Jewishness were highly complex and often contradictory, such as favouring the school's inclusiveness of diverse Jewish identity performances whilst perceiving that Jewish identity remains rooted in ancestry, or desiring the greater availability of religious practice without actually wanting to participate. In sum, then, this highlights how identity formation is a constant process, with pupils continuously negotiating differing (and often contradictory) constructions of Jewishness when developing their selfhood. Moreover, the fact that non-institutional spaces were often accentuated as significant to pupils' Jewish identity (re)construction justifies the importance of future research exploring a broad range of environments where Jewish identities are developed and lived, rather than being centred on key Jewish institutions such as the school and synagogue. The concluding chapter will provide other suggestions for future study.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 Overview

Although the subdiscipline of the geographies of education is increasingly attending to the ways in which individuals develop their identities in specific spaces, geographical research in general has largely overlooked both Jewishness and faith schools as issues meriting analysis. In response, this thesis has provided an intensive analysis of the ways in which Jewish schools are implicated in the construction and negotiation of individuals' lived identities. It has addressed the complexities and ambiguities of Jewishness, and the ways in which Jewish identities are performed in particular (but often interdependent) spaces, with Jewish day schools progressively central to the performance of young people's Jewish identities. In the process, the study has advanced understandings of the changing spatialities of Jewishness, especially amongst adolescents, and the place of faith schools more generally in secularising, multicultural society (as this chapter will explain further).

A crucial aspect of this investigation has been its very approach to Jewish identity, emphasising the diverse, complex and personalised ways in which Jews live their Jewishness (see Samson et al., 2017). This distinguishes it from the majority of previous social scientific studies into Jewish identity and schools, which have frequently portrayed the latter as vehicles for the construction (or more accurately, *delivery*) of a collective, reified sense of presumptive Jewishness, rather than on the meanings that Jewish identities have to individuals (Samson et al., 2017). Such an approach is perhaps particularly important when working with young people, given their historic marginalisation in research regarding issues such as religion. The case study school typifies the investigation's inclusive approach to Jewish identity and recognition that one can express a Jewish identity in varied ways. As a pluralist Jewish school, JCoSS has been central to the validation and celebration of diverse conceptualisations and expressions of self-identified Jewishness, in contrast to the more restrictive, Orthodox-oriented approaches utilised in England's other Jewish secondary schools. Although challenges remain in creating a pluralistic Jewish ethos, with contestation existing between differing movements regarding contrasting – and often contradictory – manifestations of Jewish identity, this investigation has highlighted JCoSS' role in facilitating greater intra-faith cohesion and understanding, at least amongst its pupils. Moreover, it demonstrates how an emphasis on pupils' personalised identity construction via

enquiry and the autonomy to determine one's own practices is likely to imbue a Jewish identity with greater significance than through the singular provision of 'correct' or 'appropriate' Jewish practice. Through including more extensive elements, such as the voices of rabbis and school leaders at other Jewish schools, the thesis has also facilitated a deeper understanding of Jewish schools' dynamic place within Anglo-Jewry, and their implications for other spaces of Jewish education and socialisation, particularly synagogues.

Collectively, the results of this study underline the fact that England's Jewish community (or, indeed, *communities*) is exceptionally diverse (Cesarani, 1990; Neuberger, 1996) and that expressions of Jewish identity can vary significantly in different spaces (Scholefield, 2004; Faulkner and Hecht, 2011). Indeed, the contestation identified throughout this investigation regarding the schematisation of Jewish identity and practice – whether between and amongst Jewish movements, Jewish institutions, and individual families – illustrates how Jewishness is necessarily plural and that no single 'umbrella' of Jewish community can seamlessly unite all of its manifestations. Following a brief summary of each empirical chapter's findings (8.2), the key themes identified throughout this thesis will be analysed: the operationalisation of Jewishness for 'secular' purposes (8.3); contestation regarding 'authentic' Jewishness' (8.4); and the problematisation of choice in debates regarding faith schools (8.5). Finally, this concluding chapter will clarify this investigation's contribution to several areas of analysis, and in the process posit some areas for future research (8.6).

8.2 Key arguments of the empirical chapters

Chapter 4 explored the complexity of parents' reasons for choosing a Jewish school, and JCoSS specifically. Parents' reasons were 'messy': in some ways their selection criteria appeared to contradict one another, whereas in others they were mutually-reinforcing and closely intertwined. In general, parents prioritised secular academic factors such as quality of education and behaviour, but often viewed these as inherently 'Jewish' characteristics. JCoSS' specific appeal was rooted in its 'soft,' pluralist ethos, which was favoured for validating diverse manifestations of Jewishness and for refusing to impose strict expectations of religious practice upon its pupils. Consequently, the school was widely viewed as a faith school devoid of the more exclusive and dogmatic associations of a religious group.

Chapter 5 scrutinised the role of Jewish schools in shaping young people's Jewish identities, paying particular attention to the ways in which JCoSS' distinctive pluralist ethos is executed, with elaboration from other Jewish schools. Following the Supreme Court ruling R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS, England's Jewish schools have become increasingly polarised in terms of pupil admissions owing to contrasting attitudes towards (Orthodox) Jewish particularism and (pluralist) universalism. The chapter also identified numerous challenges for JCoSS in executing its pluralist ethos, owing to the diversity of Jewish expression and outlook amongst pupils and parents, and related contestation regarding desired Jewish practice and identification.

Chapter 6 investigated the relationship between Jewish day schools and synagogues. In contrast to previous research that has largely treated Jewish schools as assets within the Jewish community, the chapter illustrated that the growth of Jewish schools has been accompanied by particular concerns for synagogues, rooted in differing conceptualisations of Jewish identity. This includes the instrumental rather than 'meaningful' attendance at synagogue services in order to attain a Jewish school place; the co-option of synagogues' traditional educational and social functions; and a general lack of dialogue between these institutions, in part owing to denominationalism. Although a minority of rabbis identified certain positive impacts of Jewish schools, most believed that these benefits were theoretical rather than tangible.

Finally, Chapter 7 illustrated the ways in which pupils negotiated their personalised senses of Jewishness at JCoSS. It highlighted the opportunities available to pupils to shape their Jewish identities as desired, often drawing upon diverse influences such as peers and teachers. Pupils' Jewish identities were largely expressed through cultural symbols rather than regular religious ritual practices, and most favoured a universalistic approach to Jewishness. Pupils' participation in synagogue communities was extremely diverse, with some highly active in their synagogues' educational and social functions (in particular), whereas others claimed to express their Jewishness entirely separately from such spaces. The following section explores the first key themes of this thesis – the operationalisation of Jewishness for 'secular' purposes – in greater detail.

8.3 Operationalisation of Jewishness for 'secular' purposes

In spite of the general emphasis on Jewish schools as vehicles of identity construction, the majority of studies have indicated that 'secular' values, in particular a school's academic standards, are critical to most 'mainstream' Jewish parents' decisions to send their children to a Jewish school (e.g. Pomson and Schnoor, 2008, 2009; Miller et al., 2016). This thesis not only corroborates such findings, but adds that 'Jewish' and 'secular' concerns are in fact highly intertwined, with Jewish parents frequently operationalising their Jewishness for explicitly 'secular' purposes. By acknowledging this relationship, the apparent contradictions and paradoxes of parents' decisions to select a Jewish school for their children become clearer.

For instance, parents were regularly concerned about academic and behavioural standards within non-Jewish (comprehensive) schools, with some additionally viewing them as prone to anti-Semitism. Such issues were associated with families of 'other' classes and ethnicities, and in contrast, Jewish schools were almost invariably perceived as providing a superior standard of education. However, many parents were simultaneously apprehensive that by 'segregating' their children in a Jewish school, their children would become unable to engage meaningfully with non-Jews. Moreover, most parents had themselves attended non-Jewish schools during their childhood and adolescence, and generally believed that they had not disliked their minority status therein. The fact that these parents sent their children to a school where almost all of the pupils are Jewish therefore indicates that the segregation concern was less pertinent than the desire for a high-quality secular education, in accordance with Mendelssohn's (2011) historical analysis of Jewish education in England. However, this thesis adds that 'Jewish' concerns were bound up in such secular academic interest, rather than these categories existing separately. Particular academic qualities were essentialised as 'Jewish,' such as conscientiousness, aspiration and good behaviour, which enabled parents to 'justify' their decision to send their children to a Jewish school and be surrounded by predominantly Jewish peers. Indeed, parents could invoke their supposedly inherent interest in their child's academic success and in the process draw rather ambiguous boundaries to separate themselves from 'non-Jews.' In this way, their Jewishness was employed as a 'ticket' to attain a place in a school that would be unlikely to appeal to or admit those groups they disfavoured, whilst also facilitating their children's socialisation amongst other Jews.

This is not to claim that Jewish parents did not want their children to engage with non-Jews: many emphasised the importance of multicultural leisure activities, for instance. Crucially, though, Jewish day schooling enables parents to direct their children's encounters with non-Jews on their own terms. Indeed, by sending their children to a Jewish school, they were able to socialise them amongst (predominantly) other Jews – impossible in contemporary, multicultural comprehensive schools – whilst offering them the ability to engage with non-Jews in other activities, where their participation was less regular and, perhaps, less impactful. Such dynamics echo broader tendencies for parents to attempt to police their children's social interactions in order to shape their friendships and minimise their relationships with disfavoured 'others,' whether in terms of class (Hollingworth and Williams, 2010) or ethnicity and religion (Windzio, 2012; Hochmann and Heilbrunn, 2016). Moreover, as growing numbers of Jewish pupils attend Jewish schools – as well as independent schools (see Miller and Pomson, 2015a), again reflecting a prioritisation of academic goals and an amenability to separate education – comprehensive schools simultaneously become less appealing given the widespread concern about being 'the only Jew' in the school. Indeed, it may be speculated that should state-funded Jewish schools cease to exist, these parents would prioritise independent schools owing to their determination to avoid comprehensive establishments (and certainly, some parents did suggest that they had considered or applied to such institutions but had failed to attain a place for their child). In these ways, state-funded Jewish schools enable parents to utilise their Jewishness – an easier task than relying upon the ability to pay independent school fees – to secure a desirable (and 'free') secular education (see Miller et al., 2016).

The relationship between Jewish schools and synagogues, explored in Chapter 6, also reveals the ways in which Jewishness was operationalised for secular purposes. Following R (on the application of E) v Governing Body of JFS, Jewish schools generally require applicants to attend synagogue services a small number of times in order to be considered 'Jewish,' rather than stipulating long-term engagement in the Jewish community or regular ritual practice. Given that such criteria were not perceived by rabbis or parents as challenging to meet, they have instigated a tendency amongst many families to view synagogue services as a mere 'checklist' activity. Consequently, rabbis viewed Jewish schools' popularity as being rooted in their broad academic appeal rather than reflecting a resurgence of interest in Jewish identity and education, with synagogue attendance a mere hurdle to achieving their

objective. Accordingly, parents tended to regard Jewish day schools as *alternative* educational options to synagogue-based education, being uniquely able to offer an additional (but prioritised) secular academic education. Instead of generally seeking Jewish education and practice within synagogues' educational structures, parents tended to fear that their children were already excessively segregated through their day schooling, hence they encouraged them to participate in multicultural, secular leisure activities in their spare time instead. Accordingly, pupils tended to be cautious of particularistic forms of Jewishness and were nervous about their separation from 'others,' stimulating them to seek greater engagement with non-Jews outside of school. Consequently, growing enrolments in many day schools were found to have been accompanied by declining attendance in the majority of the synagogues' educational structures. The fact that rabbis were often highly critical of the quality of Jewish education provided by (particularly Orthodox) Jewish schools, deeming it incongruent with many young people's own experiences and expressions of Jewishness and thus likely to instigate disengagement from Jewish life more broadly, reinforces the argument that parents select Jewish schools primarily to secure a desirable secular education rather than paying significant attention to their Jewish educational provision.

Therefore, Jewish schools have co-opted the functions of synagogues that are most likely to appeal to parents: education (in the sense that Jewish education represents a 'bonus' to a largely secular curriculum – see also Miller et al., 2016) and socialisation with other Jews. The functions that remain primarily with synagogues, in contrast, are those that are generally less appealing in secularising, individualistic society, in particular communal religiosity. This was echoed in many pupils' perceptions that synagogues represent religious institutions and thus irrelevant to their culturally-manifested Jewish identities. In these ways, Jewish schools and synagogues are implicated in a general prioritisation of secular objectives and concerns, attained through invoking one's Jewishness. Conceptualisations of Jewishness were, however, highly diverse and contested, as the following section demonstrates.

8.4 Contestation regarding 'authentic' Jewishness

This thesis has recognised that schools represent spaces constructed to reflect and propagate the ideologies of a particular society or group, but that may also be subjected to resistance (see Collins and Coleman, 2008). Pluralist schools are distinctive in that they do not seek to advance a single or dominant cultural or religious message, and instead aim to facilitate

personal meaning through negotiating diverse constructions of faith (Shevitz and Wasserfall, 2009; Miller, 2012a). Questions of authenticity are highly contested in Judaism (Kunin, 2009; Freedman, 2010), although 'authenticity' is itself a political and social construct (Charmé, 2012), and so 'new' Jewish authenticities can be constructed and imagined (Prell, 1989; Gruber, 2009). In contrast to previous studies of Jewish identity, which have often attempted to 'measure' the extent to which respondents meet researchers' normative 'level' of a reified Jewishness, this thesis has asked individuals to describe their own conceptualisations in order to explore the complex and diverse ways in which individuals live and construct personally-meaningful Jewish identities (Samson et al., 2017). In so doing, it has identified a tendency amongst many respondents to deem particular qualities – and *practices* – 'essential' to a Jewish identity. Moreover, by attending to the diversity of personal Jewish practices undertaken by Jews within the space of a Jewish school, this thesis makes an important contribution to the literature in its recognition that this very notion of practice is itself highly contested and subject to multiple meanings (see Horton and Kraftl, 2006), far beyond religious ritual. As such, it is intimately implicated in questions of what it means to be Jewish or to live a Jewish identity.

Just as the previous theme identified certain paradoxes in parents' interest in a Jewish school, this theme hints at contradictions in the ways in which Jewish identities are conceptualised and constructed. In particular, parents and pupils invariably claimed to value JCoSS' validation and facilitation of diverse, individualised constructions of Jewishness, yet many also perceived that particular expressions and practices constitute a 'proper' Jewish identity, such as regular synagogue attendance, participation in communal prayers, and the wearing of *kippot* within a Jewish school environment (particularly for boys). This discrepancy has implications for Jewish schools and identity construction. First, it reveals contestation between parents and other potential influences (not least the school and its pupils) over 'correct' Jewish expression, with parents regularly insinuating that their influence should be more impactful on their children's identities than their schooling. Thus, a Jewish school (and particularly one that offers pupils the possibility to participate in negligible religious ritual practice) can be seen as a site where one's own perspective of a 'correct' Jewish identity can be 'diluted' rather than reinforced. Crucially, such perceptions were not unidirectional, such as from the Orthodox community 'downwards,' but rather depended upon the issue in question, demonstrating how perceptions of 'desirable' Jewish

practice were highly contested both within the school and within families. These concerns reflect how parents favoured the school's openness to the extent that it enabled them to feel included, and did not necessarily feel that other Jewish families were sufficiently engaged in their Jewishness.

Complicating the situation further is the more general disjuncture between Jewishness based on practice and Jewishness based on descent, and related debates regarding the extent to which modern-day Judaism ought to maintain its historic associations with notions of peoplehood (see Samson et al., 2017). Parents and pupils claimed to favour JCoSS' openness to all expressions of Jewishness, as described, and accordingly, they exhibited diverse forms and extents of religious and cultural ritual practice. However, they also often suggested that they shared a common sense of Jewishness with others via their ancestry, portraying this as a state of 'being' with implications of halakhic status, at odds with their proclaimed universalism. Other research has similarly identified a tendency amongst Jews to conceptualise their Jewishness as contingent on birth rather than observance and practice (see Section 6.3.1), indicating a tension between desired universalistic values on the one hand, and an internalised (but nevertheless also socially-constructed) notion of Jewishness-as-halakhic on the other. Importantly, reflecting the fluidity that can exist between movements, such attitudes were not defined on clear denominational lines: some Progressive parents, like most of their Orthodox counterparts, were opposed to intermarriage, which indicates a sense of obligation amongst Jews to continue their Jewish 'line' and meet 'official' expectations of passing on the faith.

Hence, as Taylor (1992, 1994) recognises, questions of 'authenticity' reveal a tension between individual autonomy and a desire to be 'validated' as, for instance, Jewish. This was reflected in the personal conflict experienced by some pupils in acknowledging the importance of ritualism to a Jewish identity (in a theoretical sense), whilst demonstrating ambivalence about undertaking such behaviour themselves. In this way, a notion of 'official' Jewishness was perceived to exist, obligating individuals to negotiate group identities and be acknowledged by others (in cases instigating them to express certain consensual components), whilst also hoping to derive personal meaning, and thus an individualised authenticity, from their own conceptions of desirable Jewish practice. Indeed, a dialectic relationship exists between individual and collective identities, as individuals seek to influence others' impressions of themselves by portraying a socially-defined (and thus

'acceptable') public identity, before reflecting on the feedback provided to modify their future self-identification (Goffman, 1959; Jenkins, 2008). An excellent example of this tension between practising a Jewish identity as desired and being externally-validated as Jewish comprised *Kashrut*, with some Orthodox parents arguing that they felt compelled to follow Kosher rules in the company of peers, whilst also suggesting that it was tacitly recognised that few would adhere to the same extents in private.

Such challenges were also encapsulated by the issue of denominationalism. It has been recognised throughout this thesis that world Jewry is highly divided on a range of issues pertaining to religious practice and adherence, as well as more cultural questions such as interfaith mixing and assimilation. Anglo-Jewry is emblematic of such contestation, and JCoSS itself has been criticised by Orthodox leaders for its pluralist ethos, which is seen to contradict the 'unique' 'authenticity' of Orthodox Judaism. The thesis found that JCoSS' relationship with the Orthodox community has nevertheless evolved over time: many members of the Orthodox community send their children to the school, and in recognition of this trend, some Orthodox rabbis have become more amenable to its pluralism, lest they offend their congregants in a context in which large numbers are already disaffiliating from Orthodox Judaism (Staetsky and Boyd, 2015). In this sense, JCoSS may stimulate a shift in the ways in which Orthodox Judaism relates to other movements, with future research necessary to explore the long-term implications of these interdenominational interactions and the role of pluralist schools in remoulding what it means to be Orthodox Jewish today. Nevertheless, reflecting the historic contestation over 'authentic' Jewish identity, much of the Orthodox community remains suspicious of or even hostile to JCoSS' ethos, epitomised by the reluctance of many Orthodox rabbis to contribute to religious activities at the school, and thus being seen to validate its cross-communalism. Similarly, many Orthodox schools were said to refuse access to non-Orthodox rabbis in any official capacity, minimising interdenominational contact. Future research into Orthodox rabbis' and school leaders' engagement with non-Orthodox Judaism would be useful to ascertain whether these individuals felt obligated by the United Synagogue (including, perhaps, its parents) to present a public face opposed to pluralist and non-Orthodox institutions, or whether these views were indeed profoundly-held at a personal level.

The question of denominationalism also reveals a disjuncture in Anglo-Jewry regarding pluralist education more specifically, because JCoSS attempts to ensure its

inclusivity of children from diverse denominational backgrounds (including across the Orthodox community), yet this very inclusivity also deters families whose conceptualisations of Jewishness are highly particularistic. Indeed, in response to the growth of pluralist schools, as well as the new opportunities for non-halakhic Jewish children to access even Orthodox schools (given the enforced removal of *halakhah*-based admissions criteria), some Orthodox schools now demand additional religious observance criteria that are unlikely to appeal to most 'mainstream' Jewish families, enabling them to 'protect' (and possibly even enhance) their pupils' religious lifestyles and education. In addition to demonstrating the mutability of religion and the ways in which orthodoxy reconstructs itself in response to perceived secularising tendencies in wider society (Henderson, 1998), this trend encapsulates the ways in which conceptualisations of 'authentic' Jewishness are internally contested.

JCoSS therefore represents a key site where Jewish identities are challenged and negotiated. Pupils favoured the autonomy afforded them to negotiate different manifestations and perspectives of Judaism and Jewish identity, rather than forcing them to adopt certain dominant constructions of 'authentic' Jewishness. Indeed, they acclaimed teachers who encourage debate and personify JCoSS' inclusive and pluralistic ethos, setting this approach in contrast to the (externally-created) GCSE Jewish Studies syllabus, which was deemed restrictive in its conceptualisations of Jewish life and identity. Certainly, many students felt that their personal opinions contradicted the 'correct' answers sought by examiners, instigating frustration towards Jewish Education as a subject because they felt compelled to provide answers that did not correspond with their own beliefs. Nevertheless, the fact that pupils were able to critique Jewish Education in such a way reveals how they actively and consciously negotiated their Jewishness through their schooling, identifying disjunctures between 'official' constructions of Judaism and Jewish identity on the one hand, and their own perceptions of legitimate Jewishness on the other. This allowed them to make particular choices regarding where and when to share their personal expressions of Jewish identity. JCoSS, then, represents a Jewish educational institution that enables its pupils (as well as, perhaps, their parents) to explore different aspects of their faith and discover their own sense of meaning within it (Alexander, 1997). Given the recent growth of other institutions in North London that explicitly emphasise pluralism and Jewish diversity and inclusivity (such as the JCC and JW3), there is significant purview for future research to

extend the ways in which different manifestations of Jewishness are lived and negotiated in other spaces, and the challenges inherent in pluralism.

Finally, divergent notions of 'authentic' or 'proper' Jewishness and the question of descent versus practice can be identified in the context of synagogue attendance. Rabbis suggested that a Jewish identity is a process that relies upon regular practice as a community, whereas parents would often conceptualise (or were deemed to conceptualise) Jewishness as a fixed state that can be 'attained' via Jewish education. As such, rabbis tended to perceive that parents would view Jewish schools as convenient 'providers' of this reified Jewishness, 'freeing' them from any additional responsibility to encourage and participate in Jewish learning and ritualism. In contrast, rabbis emphasised the value of practising any form of Jewish ritual in order to imbue it with personal significance and possibly facilitate empowered engagement in one's Jewishness. Rabbis' (as well as some parents') criticisms of parents who fail to stipulate their children's participation in religious and cultural practices, including synagogue attendance, reflected this disjuncture regarding 'authentic' Jewishness. Indeed, although it might have been expected that the new admissions criteria that base Jewishness on synagogue service attendance rather than ancestry would be welcomed by rabbis of Progressive synagogues, considering their potential to facilitate greater validation of the Jewishness of many of their congregants, the fact that these changes have stimulated an instrumental attitude amongst many parents towards synagogue-based practice has greatly limited their popularity. Consequently, Jewish schools were widely said to appeal to parents who desired their children's development of a (loose) sense of ascribed Jewish identity, without necessarily requiring any practices on their own part, whereas such socialisation was only deemed effective where parents would actively and regularly practise the core rituals of the faith. Rabbis' general preference for non-Jewish schools as means of stimulating greater identity work amongst pupils and their parents reflects the notion that the synagogue and the home ought to be central to Jewish ritual practice and learning, rather than these facets being outsourced to other institutions. Given that many rabbis were also critical of the quality and content of the Jewish education provided by Jewish day schools, it is evident that expectations of the 'components' of a 'proper' Jewish identity can be highly divergent (Schoem, 1984, 1989; Woocher, 1989; Gross and Rutland, 2014a), and that 'authenticity' as a concept can be invoked by Jews to legitimise or de-legitimise particular

practices that adherents deem 'Jewish' (Charmé, 2000). The final theme to be addressed is the complexity of the notion of 'choice' in faith school debates.

8.5 Problematisation of 'choice' in debates regarding faith schools

The thesis has problematised the notion of choice in the context of faith schooling in several ways. First, it has been acknowledged that parents cited varied and often seemingly incongruent goals when selecting a Jewish school. By recognising the fluidity and coalescence of these reasons through qualitative means, the research thus makes an important contribution to the ways in which school choice is understood, with previous research regularly treating desirable criteria as somewhat bounded (e.g. Kleitz et al., 2000; Woodhead, 2014a). Instead, and as Bunar (2010) has also demonstrated, it is crucial to consider the ways in which parents negotiate an array of factors when selecting a choice, often for considerable lengths of time. Moreover, some parents did not feel they enjoyed a sufficient choice of school, and accepted a place at JCoSS with varying levels of reluctance, generally rooted in an ideological opposition to faith schooling. Indeed, reflecting in part the prevalence of faith schooling in England, a small number of parents claimed not to have had access to *any* non-faith school options. Given that JCoSS did not represent all parents' first choice, the findings corroborate and expand upon the small number of studies that have considered the appeal of faith schools to parents who do not share the institution's religion (Butler and Hamnett, 2012; Merry, 2015), as well as research exploring parents' uneven access to desirable schools (Gewirtz et al., 1994; Warrington, 2005; Bell, 2009).

Importantly too, where parents had decided to send their children to a Jewish school, this regularly represented an expression of their own Jewishness, rather than merely being concerned with their children's education. Indeed, whereas many Jewish children in the past would struggle to attain a Jewish school place, for diverse reasons including a failure to meet stringent halakhic admissions criteria, a common desire to integrate into the wider society, and a relative absence of Jewish schools, Jewish children today may access one of several Jewish day schools in Hertfordshire and North and Northwest London at both primary and secondary level. In particular, the emergence of Progressive and pluralist Jewish schools has enabled many parents to attain a Jewish education that corresponds more closely with their own Jewish and broader identities than existing Orthodox schools. As such, parents who had themselves failed to receive a Jewish day-school education in the past can now utilise their

children's day schooling as means of expressing their own Jewishness. Consequently, parents were able to develop a vicarious Jewish community for themselves, believing that they had fulfilled a perceived parental obligation to educating their child Jewishly. In this way, their decision to send their child to a Jewish school is more than a choice of education for their child; it also reflects the ways in which they portray a public Jewish identity and approach to Jewish community participation. Future research ought to pay greater attention to the potentially distinctive means by which men and women seek to socialise their children Jewishly (see for instance the gender roles identified within Jewish families by Hartman and Hartman, 1996a, 1996b and Prell, 2007), and by extension their attitudes towards Jewish schooling.

A further way in which the thesis has problematised the notion of choice is its attention to the challenges faced by pluralist schools such as JCoSS in reconciling diverse expressions of Jewishness. The previous theme demonstrated numerous parents' concerns that their own conceptualisations of a 'proper' Jewish identity would be undermined through their children's exposure to alternative Jewish practices. As a result, a small number of parents attempted to channel their children into activities that they believed constituted 'authentic' Jewishness, and consequently limited their children's autonomy to define their own practices. Rosh Chodesh encapsulated these dynamics because JCoSS offers pupils a range of services, but the possibility remains that parents will intervene to determine their children's (generally religious) participation as desired. Such issues capture the unevenness of legislation that enables parents to withdraw their children from religious education and worship, but does not allow pupils to do so themselves. Furthermore, even within Rosh Chodesh services certain choices are (perhaps not unreasonably) withheld from pupils, requiring them instead to meet the general expectations of the denomination in question, such as segregation by sex in Orthodox services. In these ways, pupils enjoy a degree of choice regarding their religious (or irreligious) practices, but this is not unlimited. These findings into the limits of choice add to the existing literature regarding schooling (and faith schooling in particular), religious worship and individual autonomy (Parker-Jenkins et al., 2005; Sandberg, 2011; Richardson et al., 2013), and by extension these schools' place within liberal society (McDonough, 1998; Singh, 1998; Burtonwood, 2000, 2003; Dagovitz, 2004).

A further issue pertaining to student choice is the mandatory nature of Jewish Education. Some pupils believed that this compulsoriness had caused them to have

disengaged from further Jewish learning, and relatedly, numerous studies have identified resentful attitudes amongst adolescents who are forced to attend religious services by their parents (e.g. Rymarz and Graham, 2005; Regnerus and Uecker, 2006), revealing the detrimental impacts of limiting young people's right to determine their participation in religious learning. The challenge for JCoSS in providing an engaging Jewish Education curriculum at Key Stage 3 is exacerbated by the sheer diversity in pupils' levels of Jewish knowledge and understanding. Not only must JCoSS accommodate children whose prior Jewish learning as well as home-based practice is minimal, alongside those who have attended Jewish primary schools and/or *chederim*, or who undertake numerous ritual practices with their families (for instance), but its Jewish Education curriculum must also be amenable to the broad range of parental attitudes towards issues such as multi-faith education and Israel. These issues illustrate the challenges in providing a truly pluralist curriculum, as well as the value in considering pupils' voices regarding curriculum issues (Catling, 2005).

Lastly (and not dissimilarly), choice was complicated by the inherent dilemma faced by the school in accommodating strict religious adherence towards *Kashrut* and *chagim*. Although only a small number of highly-observant Orthodox Jews attend JCoSS, the school seeks to ensure its inclusivity of diverse forms of Jewishness, and hence requires all pupils to adhere to these students' practices and standards within the spatial and temporal confines of the school. Consequently, some parents and pupils disparaged their obligation to participate in Jewish practices they deemed irrelevant to their own identities, underlining the challenges of creating a pluralistic Jewish school community. Collectively, these issues reveal how choice is not unconditional, even where a school is theoretically conducive to varied expressions of faith, and further encapsulate the ways in which JCoSS is subjected to particular challenges rooted in contrasting Jewish identifications and practices. Some suggestions for future research have been provided throughout this chapter, with the following section specifying broader areas requiring further academic attention, and the contributions of the present study to developing a greater understanding of these issues.

8.6 Future research

This investigation's predominantly qualitative methodology and its conceptual approach that prioritises attention to the ways in which individual Jews live their Jewishness has facilitated a nuanced understanding of contemporary Jewish identity. Attention to the individual

qualities of Jewishness can reveal important collective forms of identification, too (Samson et al., 2017), and so innovative conceptual and methodological approaches should be utilised to hand individual Jews the autonomy to self-identify. Such a focus will be essential if research into Jewish identity – as well as other faiths – is to remain relevant to those it seeks to describe. This section illustrates three broad bodies of research to which this investigation has contributed in order to suggest issues for future academic attention: geographies of education, religion and Jewishness (8.6.1); secularisation (8.6.2); and multiculturalism (8.6.3).

8.6.1 Geographies of education, religion and Jewishness

Kong argues that the geographies of education ought to pay greater attention to faith schools (2013), and that the geographies of religion must not restrict analysis to places of worship (2005, 2010). This thesis thus makes an important contribution to these subdisciplines through identifying a growing tendency for young people's Jewish identification and practice in North and Northwest London and Hertfordshire (with potential implications for other areas) to be concentrated in the space of the Jewish school. In the process, this investigation has demonstrated the ways in which geographies of education and religion (as well as Jewishness more specifically) can be coalesced rather than being treated as separate. Moreover, through its intensive analysis of a Jewish school, the thesis has explored the ways in which Jewish identities are negotiated and contested in such an 'unofficially sacred site' (Kong, 2010). Indeed, distinguishing it from other studies of faith schools throughout the social sciences, the research has placed particular emphasis on the diversity of denominational affiliations and the ways in which intra-faith contact is played out, in a school context amenable to multiple forms of practice and identification. Although JCoSS' pluralism is atypical of faith schools, in reality these schools often contain a large degree of heterogeneity in their student cohorts (whether in terms of religious practices, ethnic identifications or otherwise). Furthermore, as Section 5.3.3 illustrated, 'diversity' can be conceptualised in numerous ways, with implications for interpretations of community cohesion in particular (see Dwyer and Parutis, 2013). Given the significance of schools in shaping the cultural and religious norms of future generations – perspectives that are simultaneously challenged and remoulded – there is considerable scope for geographical research to consider questions of representation and exclusion in a range of faith school

contexts. Consequently, future research into the ways in which ethnic and religious identities are constructed and contested in a faith school context is necessary to ascertaining a greater understanding of their dynamic spatialities and the ways in which they intersect and interact.

This would also facilitate greater interdisciplinarity with the geographies of young people. Research into young people's religious geographies increasingly engages young people as meaningful actors who can resist or reappropriate adults' perspectives and develop hybrid, personalised religious identities in a range of spaces (Hopkins et al., 2011; Ridgely, 2012). Questions of authenticity may be contested amongst young people and adults (Olson et al., 2013), with this thesis demonstrating how faith schools can be key sites for the negotiation of alternative conceptualisations of 'appropriate' practice. Certainly, a related contribution of this investigation to the geographies of education, young people, religion and Jewishness is its explicit attention to the relationship between Jewish schools and synagogue communities. Previous studies of faith schools (regardless of academic discipline and faith affiliation) have paid surprisingly little attention to the interconnections between these institutions and places of worship, yet, as this thesis has demonstrated, the growth of faith schools may have detrimental impacts upon traditional religious communities and notions of practice. Whilst the perspectives of JCoSS' pupils and parents cannot be considered representative of Anglo-Jewry more broadly, rabbis' criticisms of Jewish schools do suggest that Jewish schools are increasingly co-opting many roles historically held by synagogues. Moreover, the growing popularity of Jewish schools, illustrated by the increasing difficulties of securing a Jewish school place, at least in Hertfordshire and North and Northwest London, alongside evidence of declining synagogue membership, also intimates a shift in the primary space where Jewish identities are practised and constructed. Future research into the experiences of pupils and parents involved in synagogues' supplementary educational structures would be valuable to increasing understandings of this relationship. Although it is important to acknowledge that the relationship between Jewish schools and synagogues is likely to differ from 'equivalent' relationships in other faiths (given the ethnic aspects of Judaism and their implications for the ways in which Jewish identity is 'passed down,' as well as the distinctive ways in which state-funded Jewish schools are permitted to or prevented from discriminating between prospective pupils), there is scope for future studies to consider the ways in which places of worship in other faiths have been affected by the

growth of faith schools. This would reveal new understandings of these schools' place in contemporary society (see Kong, 2013).

Rather than merely focusing on places of worship, geographical research also ought to consider the ways in which faith schools interact with *non*-institutional spaces in the construction of young people's ethnic and religious identities. Jewish identity research has almost exclusively focused upon institutions such as synagogues, Jewish schools, youth movements and camps, in order (at least implicitly) to ascertain their efficacy in 'strengthening' a collective sense of Jewishness (Samson et al., 2017). However, a small number of studies in the USA now acknowledge the growing individualism of Jewish identities and their severing from 'traditional' Jewish institutions (e.g. Cohen and Eisen, 2000; Cohen and Kelman, 2007; Davidman, 2007), and although Anglo-Jewry in contrast remains largely anchored in its communal institutions (Kahn-Harris and Gidley, 2010), there is considerable capacity to explore 'new' spaces of Jewish identity construction. Technological advances in particular are likely to facilitate the creation of new, less geographically-bound forms of Jewish identity and community (Boyd, 2010; Lieber, 2010), which challenge existing manifestations and rework what it means to be Jewish in contemporary society. This would also enable Jewish Studies and research to become more integrated within larger bodies of geographical and sociological research (see Lipphardt et al., 2008). Two issues within these disciplines that are intimately tied to questions of faith schools are secularisation and multiculturalism. The final two sections elucidate this thesis' contributions to these subjects.

8.6.2 Secularisation

British society is generally agreed to be undergoing processes of secularisation, including social differentiation as well as the decline and privatisation of individual religious belief and practice (6.3.1; 7.4.5). Although the secularisation thesis is limited in its applicability to Judaism given its prioritisation of beliefs (in contrast to Judaism's emphasis on ritual observance, largely separate from personal religiosity) (Buckser, 2011), the UK's Jewish community is widely said to be characterised by an overall decline in (particularly religious) Jewish identification and communal affiliation, at least beyond the strictly Orthodox community (Alderman, 2014; Casale Mashiah et al., 2017). Given that faith schools can be

regarded as a proxy in debates over religion's place in the public sphere (Oldfield et al., 2013), their recent growth (including Jewish schools specifically) thus presents a paradox.

` However, although Hart et al. (2007) argue that this new interest in Jewish schooling reveals a growing desire amongst Jewish parents to sustain their children's Jewish identity (whilst perceiving themselves personally incapable of inculcating the necessary values and practices), it is important to acknowledge that the principal reason for JCoSS' popularity was its 'secular' academic provision. Whilst this finding cannot be generalised to other Jewish schools, previous studies have also tended to indicate a prioritisation of such values. This is not to claim that Jewish identity was not important: many parents did demonstrate an ideological interest in (particularly pluralist) Jewish education as a means of imbuing their children with greater Jewish pride and interest in their faith. However, it would be premature to argue that a significant growth in Jewish expression is underway. Instead, Jewishness was frequently used merely instrumentally as a means of securing a desirable school place, and few parents sought regular or long-term involvement in synagogue services, for instance. Moreover, the fact that parents often sent their children to a Jewish school in order to provide the Jewish education and cultural practices they personally felt incapable of offering reflects a sense of social obligation to transmitting their heritage rather than a profound interest in Jewish education and identity in their own right. Given that few respondents viewed themselves as religious (and many were even antithetical towards the dogmatic adherence to religious practice stipulated by some faith schools), it is also important to highlight that these findings do not support the post-secular paradigm's thesis that religion is either returning to or persisting in the public sphere (see Eder, 2006; Habermas, 2006, 2008). Rather, they reflect how faith-based organisations may in fact be secular in tone (Tse, 2014), as well as the fact that British Jews increasingly express their Jewishness through a cultural lens (Alderman, 2014; Graham et al., 2007, 2014). Future, intensive research into school choice via qualitative means will help to ascertain whether a faith school's popularity does not necessarily reflect religious identification, and whether 'secular' interest in faith schooling is a more general phenomenon.

8.6.3 Multiculturalism

Finally, this thesis has broached questions of multiculturalism, a particularly prolific area of the faith school literature (e.g. Wright, 2003; Gokulsing, 2006; Flint, 2007). Research in the

UK (Kahn-Harris and Gidley, 2010; Kushner and Ewence, 2012) as well as the USA (Biale et al., 1998) has identified considerable ambivalence (and even hostility) amongst Jews towards the concept of multiculturalism, largely owing to their discomfort with the language of ethnicity, multiculturalism's general failure to perceive Jews as worthy of attention owing to their 'whiteness,' unease regarding their own liminality, and, particularly in the USA, their frequently strained relationships with minorities such as African-Americans. Thus, although multiculturalism has simultaneously enabled many British Jews to feel more comfortable expressing their Jewishness in public (Hart et al., 2007; Mendelssohn, 2011), Jews can be viewed as "ambiguous whites" given the complexity of their societal integration (Frank, 1997, p.735).

The findings of this thesis reflect many of these tensions: Jewish parents generally viewed their children's interactions with other ethnic and religious groups as crucial to their preparation for wider society as adults, but simultaneously many were frightened of anti-Semitism, and did not want their children to socialise with potentially hostile groups or individuals. Whilst such 'others' were generally phrased in classist rather than ethnic, racial or religious terms, it is important to acknowledge that these identity categories frequently intersect (Burnett, 2004; Reay, 2004). As Section 8.3 explained, parents tended to overlook any personal ambivalence regarding faith schools because these institutions enabled them to define multiculturalism on their own terms: it is easier to separate one's children from interactions with disfavoured groups in voluntary, extra-curricular activities than it is in a comprehensive school, for instance. Interestingly, parents' goals for their children here were similar to rabbis': the construction of a proud Jewish identity as well as engagement in multicultural society. However, and in large part owing to their contrasting conceptualisations of Jewishness (as a reification or as a process) their strategies differed: Jewish day school education with multicultural activities during weekends (parents), and non-Jewish school education with synagogue- and home-based Jewish activities during weekends (rabbis). Indeed, possibly reflecting the fact that many were highly active in interfaith work, rabbis generally favoured non-Jewish schools because they believed that intergroup interactions are important to the construction of both a proud Jewish identity (via the tautology that identities are formed in relation to an 'Other') and broader vales of tolerance and respect for difference. Pupils similarly tended to seek greater opportunities to engage with non-Jews and believed that their Jewish schooling had inhibited their learning

about other faiths, which corresponds with other studies identifying increasingly universalistic and inclusive attitudes amongst younger generations compared with their parents (Fishman et al., 2012; Lichtenstein, 2013; Gross and Rutland, 2014a).

It is possible that the recent introduction of multi-faith Religious Studies, following pupil pressure as well as changing legal requirements for faith schools, will assuage some of these concerns. Therefore, future research exploring the extent to which multi-faith religious education can compensate for limited regular contact with other faiths would be valuable in ascertaining the potential of classroom learning in facilitating improved intergroup relations, compared to the 'meaningful [face-to-face] encounters' propounded by many commentators (e.g. Amin, 2002; Hemming, 2011b; Ho, 2011). Jewish schools are unlikely to decline in popularity in the near-future, and so such opportunities to learn about other faiths may prove critical to improving intergroup relations in other spaces.

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Appendix A: Paper-amended version of the online questionnaire

Page 1. Before starting the questionnaire, please read the following and tick the boxes to which you give consent. Continue to the next page if you do not want to give consent.

1. Taking part: pupil focus groups
- I give my consent for my child to take part in the project. Taking part in the project will include participating in an audio-recorded focus group and completing an audio diary exercise.
- I understand that I can withdraw my child from the study at any time and I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want them to take part.
- I understand that my child's words may be quoted (anonymously) in publications (for instance, doctoral thesis and peer-reviewed journal articles).

If you agree to the terms above, please add the name and form of your child below. I can guarantee that their name will be treated confidentially.

a) Child's name:
b) Form:

Page 2

2. Taking part: parental interview
- I agree to participate in an interview.
- I understand that my personal details will not be revealed to people outside the project.
- I understand that I can withdraw myself from the study at any time and I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part.
- I understand that my words may be quoted (anonymously) in publications (for instance, doctoral thesis and peer-reviewed journal articles).

If you agree to the terms above, please add your name and email address or telephone number below so that I can get in contact with you. All of your details will be treated confidentially.

a) Your name:
b) Email address:
c) Telephone number:

Page 3. This is the final page before the questionnaire itself. To take part in the questionnaire, please tick both boxes:

3. Questionnaire data

- o I understand that the answers I provide to this questionnaire may be included in publications (for instance, doctoral thesis and peer-reviewed journal articles).
- o I understand that my questionnaire responses will be anonymised and so I will not be identifiable from them.

Page 4. Choice of school

4. Why did you select a Jewish school (in general)? Please tick all that apply.

- ☐ So that my child can learn more about Judaism and Jewish beliefs;
- ☐ So that my child can become prouder of his/her Jewish identity;
- ☐ So that my child can be surrounded by other Jewish children;
- ☐ Opportunities to learn about and/or visit Israel;
- ☐ The academic reputation of Jewish schools;
- ☐ Reputation for pastoral care;
- ☐ Sibling already attends a Jewish school (including JCoSS);
- ☐ Dissatisfaction with Jewish teachings in a previously-attended, non-Jewish school;
- ☐ Experience of anti-Semitism in a previously-attended, non-Jewish school;
- ☐ Lack of alternative schools that meet my expectations.
- ☐ Other

If you selected Other, please specify:

5.   **Why did you choose JCoSS? Please rate the following: [Checkbox]**

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important
So that my child can learn more about Judaism and Jewish beliefs			
So that my child can become prouder of his/her Jewish identity			
So that my child can be surrounded by other Jewish children			
School's ethos			
School's academic reputation			
School's reputation for pastoral care			
Location/ease of access			
Personal recommendation			

6. Do you have any other children of secondary school age?

- o   Yes
- o   No

Page 5. Other children [opens where parents click 'Yes' on Q6; otherwise it skips to Page 6].

7. Please choose the statement(s) that most accurately describe the education of your secondary school-aged children:

- o   All of my secondary school-aged children are currently enrolled at JCoSS;
- o   I have at least one secondary school-aged child currently enrolled at another Jewish school;
- o   I have at least one secondary school-aged child currently enrolled at a non-Jewish school;
- o   I have at least one secondary school-aged child who is currently home-schooled.

Page 6. Jewish faith

8. Do you identify yourself as Jewish?
- o   Yes
- o   No

Page 7. Jewish identity [opens where parents click 'Yes' on Q8; otherwise it skips to Page 8].

9. Please choose the statement that most closely corresponds with your own Jewish identity as a parent:

- o Although I was born Jewish, I do not think of myself as being Jewish in any way;
- o I am aware of my Jewishness, but I do not think about it very often;
- o I feel quite strongly Jewish, but I am equally conscious of other aspects of my life;
- o I feel extremely conscious of being Jewish.

10. How important is it that your child considers himself/herself Jewish? [Checkbox]

	Level of importance
Extremely important	
Quite important	
Not particularly important	
Not important at all	

` **11. Please choose the statement that most closely corresponds with your own opinion:**

- o My child should attend both Jewish day school and synagogue regularly;
- o It is acceptable for my child to attend synagogue only occasionally as long as they attend a Jewish day school;
- o Synagogue attendance is unimportant as long as my child attends a Jewish day school;
- o Synagogue attendance is unimportant regardless of where my child goes to school.

12. How far do you agree with the following statements? [Checkbox]

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
'It is important that my child learns about the Jewish faith'					
'It is important that all Jewish children have some formal Jewish education'					
'Judaism (as a religion) is central to being Jewish'					
'Nowadays one can be secular and Jewish'					
'Nowadays Jewish people are free to choose and to change their own identities'					
'To be Jewish, it is necessary to have a Jewish mother'					
'The more time spent in Jewish education, the greater the knowledge about Judaism'					
'The more time spent in Jewish education, the stronger the Jewish identity'					
'The more time spent in Jewish education, the less likelihood of intermarriage'					
'I would like all or most of my child's friends to be Jewish'					

Page 8. Nearly finished!

13. How far do you agree with the following statements? [Checkbox]

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
'Jewish day school education insulates children from other faiths and cultures'					
'Jewish schools are better at imparting positive moral values than non-Jewish schools'					

14. Is the amount of teaching about the Jewish faith at JCoSS…

- o Too much
- o About right
- o Too little

15. Is the amount of religious worship at JCoSS…

- o Too much
- o About right
- o Too little

16. How successfully do you think JCoSS enables your child to celebrate his/her own beliefs?

- o Very successfully
- o Somewhat successfully
- o Not successfully
- o Don't know

17. Finally, how would you describe your religious identity? Please include the movement/denomination.

- o   Jewish (Orthodox/United)
- o   Jewish (Strictly Orthodox)
- o   Jewish (Masorti/Conservative)
- o   Jewish (Reform)
- o   Jewish (Liberal)
- o   Other Jewish. Please state below
- o   Other religion. Please state below
- o   No religion

If you selected Other, please specify:

Page 9. Thank you for completing the survey, all of your answers will be treated anonymously and confidentially.

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Jewish Schools and Synagogues: Pupil Guide

Shalom! My name is Max Samson, and I am a PhD student at the University of Leeds, where I am studying Jewish schools and their role within the Jewish community. JCoSS has very kindly offered me the chance to speak with pupils because I need your help!

What am I hoping to do?

I would like to run focus groups with pupils in Year 8 (a focus group is like a discussion between 3 or 4 people about a particular topic). If you agree to take part, you will have the opportunity to share your views about the ways in which JCoSS teaches you about Judaism and Jewish identity, and the things that influence your feelings of 'Jewishness' (or not). There are no right or wrong answers, and the experience will be very empowering. I hope that participants will each attend **two** focus groups, containing pupils from the same year group. Focus groups will take no more than 25 minutes at lunch or form time.

I will also ask you to make an audio diary outside of school, in which you will document the things you do that have something to do with being Jewish, and your feelings about these activities. Although this might sound like a big responsibility, it should be fairly simple, and crucially, it is personal to you, so again, there are no right or wrong answers! You can use a mobile telephone to record yourself whenever you want, and of course you can delete or re-record sections that you are not happy with.

Please do discuss whether or not you would like to take part with your parents/carers, as you will need their consent. Should you change your mind, you can withdraw by emailing me before the end of the data collection phase: the final day of the school year (Friday 22 July 2016). If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me before deciding whether to take part.

My contact details: m.g.m.samson@leeds.ac.uk

I look forward to meeting many of you, if I haven't already!

Many thanks,

Max Samson (University of Leeds)

Jewish Schools and Synagogues: Ethics Q&A

Q. What will you do with the things I say?

A. I will use the data to write my PhD thesis, by selecting certain quotations and including them within the text. All audio and transcribed records of interviews and focus groups will be destroyed within three to four years, after I have submitted my thesis and published my findings.

Q. But then surely my name will be included in a report for lots of people to see?

A. Although [Headteacher] has agreed that it will be impossible to anonymise the name of the school, all participant names will be made anonymous, in order to protect respondents' confidentiality. There will be no way of a reader being able to identify the person being interviewed.

Q. Will pupils be interviewed alongside parents?

A. No, in my research, interviews will be with parents only. The focus groups are for pupils. If you would like to take part in an interview and/or have your child participate in a focus group, please tick the relevant boxes at the start of the questionnaire, or email me at **m.g.m.samson@leeds.ac.uk**

Q. If I agree to participate in an interview or focus group, will I be voice-recorded?

A. I would ideally like to voice-record all participants because it helps me gain far more data and also means that our conversations can run a lot more smoothly without me having to stop and make notes. However, I will ask all participants for their permission to use the voice recorder immediately before interviews/focus groups, and participants also have the right to turn the voice recorder off during the research process.

Q. Can I change my mind about participating?

A. Yes. I respect the right of all participants (including pupils) to change their mind and withdraw their consent. Please email me if you want to withdraw from the research process (this can be at any time up to the end of the data collection phase: the final day of the school year (22 July 2016)). You may also change the topic of the conversation.

Q. Is the online questionnaire only for Jewish parents?

A. No, not exclusively. Although some of the questions are only to be answered by Jewish parents, many of them can be answered by parents of other or no faith (and in fact I would encourage you to complete the questionnaire even if you are not Jewish; all data will be useful for me).

Q. Can I complete the questionnaire but not do anything further?

A. Absolutely. I would of course love to have as many people as possible agree to an interview (or consent to their child's involvement in a focus group) but I understand that not everybody will be willing to commit to this. Even if you do not want to take part in an interview or have your child involved in a focus group, I would still encourage you to complete my questionnaire. My research can only be strong with a certain number of responses, so I would be most grateful for your participation in this matter!

Q. Will the research provide any benefit to the Jewish community?

A. Hopefully! I am intending to send a version of my research to the main Jewish policy organisations in the country in order to share my recommendations for effective Jewish schooling. This could help Jewish schools to become even more desirable to parents, as well as strengthening the community bond between Jewish schools and synagogues.

Q. You work in Leeds, so why are you coming all the way to Barnet to undertake your research?

A. I feel that JCoSS is the most interesting Jewish school for my research in the sense that it is pluralist and therefore aims to attract a range of Jewish movements, as well as being open to non-Jewish pupils. I believe that this distinctive ethos makes JCoSS a fascinating example of a Jewish school.

Q. Are you being paid to do this research?

A. I am fortunate enough to receive a studentship from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

Q. How would you describe your own religious identity?

A. I describe myself as a Liberal Jew (I am a member of The Liberal Synagogue Elstree, despite its distance from Leeds!) I love listening to other people's religious views, and I am very excited to talk to parents and pupils at your school.

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Appendix D: Sixth Form Guide (including Ethics Q&A) (reformatted and compressed for submission within thesis)

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UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Jewish Schools and Synagogues: Sixth Form Guide

Shalom! My name is Max Samson, and I am a PhD student at the University of Leeds, where I am studying Jewish schools and their role within the Jewish community. JCoSS has very kindly offered me the chance to speak with students because I need your help.

What am I hoping to do?

I would like to run focus groups with some sixth-formers. If you agree to take part, you will have the opportunity to share your views about the ways in which JCoSS teaches you about Judaism and Jewish identity, and the things that influence your feelings of 'Jewishness' (or not).

Overleaf is a Q&A that covers some potential questions you may have. If your question is not included, please feel free to contact me before deciding whether to take part.

My contact details: m.g.m.samson@leeds.ac.uk

If you would like to participate, a register will be made available during form time for you to sign; alternatively, you can email me at the above address. Should you change your mind, you can withdraw by emailing me before the end of the data collection phase: the final day of the school year (Friday 22 July 2016).

I look forward to meeting many of you!

Many thanks,

Max Samson (University of Leeds)

Jewish Schools and Synagogues: Ethics Q&A

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Appendix E: Diamond nine cards

Synagogue or camp activities

Shabbat meal

Prayer at school/ Rosh Chodesh

Friends

Religious holidays

Family history

Synagogue services

Teachers and lessons

Rabbi