

## 2 The relationship between upbringing and outlook

### Informal education

#### **Youth groups and youth activities**

Almost three-quarters of the sample reported that they had attended a Jewish club or organization before the age of eighteen. Of these, three-quarters described themselves as either Somewhat Secular or Somewhat Religious in roughly equal proportions (76 per cent and 77 per cent, respectively). The Secular group, however, was noticeably different in that a smaller proportion (61 per cent) had participated in such activities. Nevertheless, this still represented a substantial majority of this group.

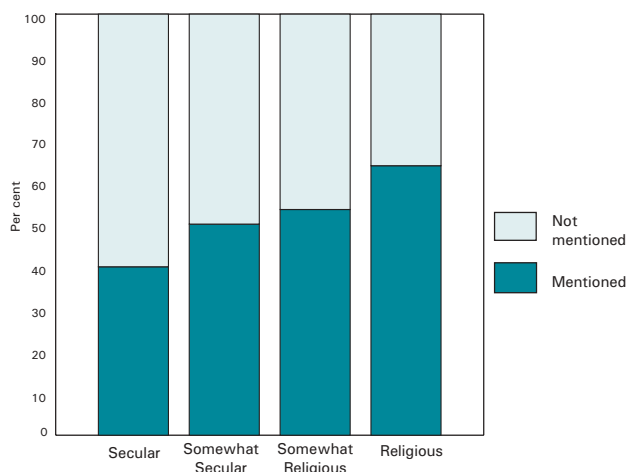
With regard to attendance of Zionist youth groups, a clear bias was evident. The Religious were 2.5 times more likely to have attended than the Secular (47 per cent against 17 per cent). The picture was similar for those participating in an Israel 'experience' or 'tour', although this was only applicable to 17 per cent of the sample. It is interesting to note that this does not reflect the pattern observed *vis-à-vis* recent visits to Israel, in which little difference exists between the outlook types.

#### **Summer schools and summer camps**

The more Jewish experiences a person had before the age of seventeen, the more likely they were to describe themselves as Religious. Just under a quarter of the sample said that they had had no teenage Jewish experiences (24 per cent), and this group were three times more likely to be Secular than Religious. The Religious stood out as having the most such experiences, even compared with the Somewhat Religious. Two-fifths of the sample reported having attended a summer school/summer camp (41 per cent). Of these, the propensity to attend seemed to be related to outlook, with three separate groups emerging: Secular; Somewhat Secular and Somewhat Religious combined; and Religious. Figure 3 demonstrates clearly that the 'Somewhat' categories have more in common with each other than either of the two other categories.

The final item of interest here concerns membership of a Jewish sports club, reported by 17 per cent of the sample. In this instance, unlike those mentioned above, there was no significant difference between the SSS and the SRR groupings or between each outlook type.

Figure 3: Attendance of summer school/summer camp, by outlook



### Education

#### **General education<sup>12</sup>**

The data show that there was no significant difference between the outlook groups in terms of general education, except that the SRR group was proportionately ahead on every measure, but only very slightly. Roughly comparable proportions of SSS and SRR had achieved A-Levels or equivalent qualifications (57 per cent of the SSS against 59 per cent of the SRR). For education to the level of a first degree, the proportions were about 39 per cent each for SSS and SRR. However, when the data are looked at from a 'per outlook' perspective, the balanced relationship vanishes.

For all indicators the Religious outperformed all other outlook groups by a statistically significant margin. However, the next most educationally successful group was the Secular, *not* the Somewhat Religious, while the lowest achievers were consistently the Somewhat Secular. This pattern was consistent across all educational attainment categories (except for the level of Ph.D., where the data were not statistically significant). This discontinuity in the outlook continuum (an issue

<sup>12</sup> The London and South-east survey included a separate section aimed specifically at parents of school-age children. A detailed analysis can be found in Oliver Valins and Barry Kosmin, *The Jewish DaySchool Marketplace: The Attitudes of Jewish Parents in Greater London and the South-east towards Formal Education* (London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research 2003).

discussed in depth in Part 2 of this report) suggests that a complex sociological analysis is required to explain what it is about the educational ethos of both the Secular and the Religious that should unite them so closely, compared to the middle ground.

### **Jewish education**

In the main the sample had received a reasonably high level of Jewish education. However, there were differences between the SSS and the SRR. For example, the survey examined Jewish education before bar/bat mitzvah age, and found that only 16 per cent of the sample had had no pre-bar/bat mitzvah education at all. Among this group there were twice as many SSS as SRR. Almost three-quarters of the entire sample had attended *cheder* (Sunday school) and, of these, the greater proportion were SRR although the differences were not too substantial (70 per cent SSS and 77 per cent SRR). Turning to Jewish education in the post-bar/bat mitzvah years, more than half of the entire sample said that they had had none (56 per cent), and the SSS were three times more likely to have had none than the SRR.

### **Jewish education in adulthood**

Those reporting having taken a course to further their Jewish education in the previous five years amounted to one-quarter of the sample (25 per cent). Such activity was the domain of the SRR who were almost three times more likely to have attended a course than the SSS.

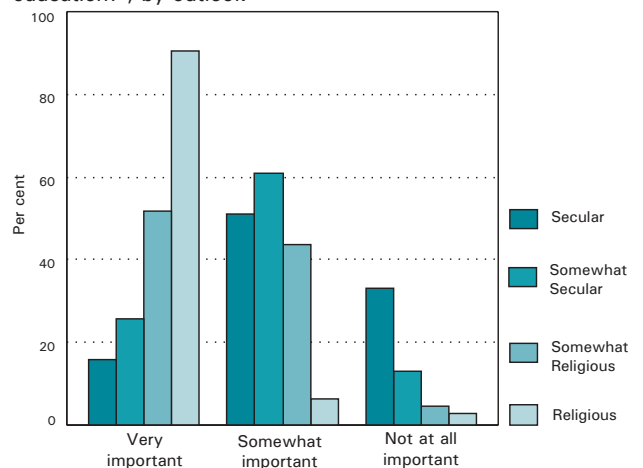
### **Perceived importance of education to a sense of Jewishness**

Respondents were asked: 'How important to your own sense of Jewishness is having a good Jewish education?' Overall 86 per cent of respondents felt that this was at least 'somewhat important' (again, a high figure possibly reflecting biases in the sample). Figure 4 shows the results of this question based on outlook. What is overwhelmingly clear is the smooth inverse relationship between outlook and attitude to Jewish education. The closer to the religious end of the spectrum, the more likely the respondent was to consider Jewish education to be very important to their sense of Jewishness, and the boundaries were very well defined. Perceptions of the importance of a good Jewish education are therefore a defining contributor to outlook.

An analysis of the results, outlook by outlook, shows that 90 per cent of the Religious considered a good

Jewish education to be 'very important'. For the Somewhat Religious, the equivalent figure was over half (52 per cent) but, even here, 96 per cent believed that a good Jewish education was at least 'somewhat important'. Crossing the secular-religious divide attenuates the importance level once more. Two out of three (61 per cent) of the Somewhat Secular believed that a good Jewish education was 'somewhat important'; even so, 87 per cent still fell below the important end of the 'importance' spectrum. Finally, the Secular complete the picture of a smooth shift away from the high importance attributed to Jewish education by the Religious. One-third said that a good Jewish education was 'not at all important', well over half (57 per cent) of all those that selected this option. Yet even here over two-thirds (67 per cent) of the Secular group selected at least 'somewhat important'. That substantial proportions of secular Jews considered Jewish education to be important is not only notable for its own sake, but is also highly visible in the examination of opinions towards Jewish secondary education.

Figure 4: Responses to the question: 'How important to your own sense of Jewishness is having a good Jewish education?', by outlook



### **Jewish secondary education**

To test the hypothesis that Jewish outlook affects an individual's attitude towards Jewish education, several attitudinal statements were presented to respondents (as shown in Table 5) relating to secondary education.

Respondents were broadly in favour of Jewish secondary schooling regardless of outlook type, with the main anomaly being, as already

Table 5: Views on Jewish secondary education, by outlook

Statements with which respondents agreed or agreed strongly	Secular (%)	Somewhat Secular (%)	Somewhat Religious (%)	Religious (%)	Base
A non-Jewish secondary school is fine if Jewish studies are on the curriculum	49	58	57	41	1,432
A non-Jewish secondary school is fine if it has sufficient Jewish pupils	47	58	53	35	1,368
A Jewish secondary school would be fine if it had a secular cultural outlook	51	53	51	33	1,326
A non-Jewish secondary school is desirable to prepare a child for contemporary society	56	43	34	17	1,073
A non-Jewish secondary school is fine if a child attended a Jewish primary school first	16	22	29	30	609
Jewish children should attend a Jewish secondary school	10	14	29	61	598
Jewish children should attend a Jewish secondary school regardless of cost	5	8	16	47	355

mentioned, the Religious who strongly favoured an all-Jewish environment. All three of the other outlook types were, significantly, in almost harmonious agreement on most of the issues explored.

This Religious/Others cleavage was visible in the responses to several of the statements. The statement, 'Jewish children should attend a Jewish secondary school regardless of cost', produced 26 per cent of Religious strongly in favour. They were three times more likely than even the Somewhat Religious to select either 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' (47 per cent against 16 per cent respectively). This pattern was repeated for the statement 'Jewish children should attend a Jewish secondary school'. Here the Religious stood out with one-third (32 per cent) strongly in favour. This was the single largest response for any extreme position. For the statement regarding a school with a 'secular cultural outlook', the Religious were much more likely to disagree than agree, in stark contrast with all the other outlook types which again displayed a remarkably similar pattern. Also there was a clear avoidance of selecting 'Strongly agree' among even the Secular group, which resulted in a large bunching of responses in the 'Agree' category.

The fourth statement on which the Religious stood out related to a non Jewish secondary school being 'fine if it has sufficient Jewish pupils'. The above pattern was repeated, with the Religious tending to disagree more often than the other groups which

showed a homogeneous response pattern. Similarly, but to a lesser extent, the fifth statement regarding a non-Jewish secondary school being 'fine if Jewish studies are on the curriculum' also repeated this response pattern and two points were of particular interest. First, the Somewhat Secular and the Somewhat Religious shared an almost identical response pattern and, second, there was a clear vote from the Secular in favour of this Jewish studies option. The final statement on which the Religious stood out posited that a non-Jewish secondary school was 'fine if a child attended a Jewish primary school first', but on this option the difference was far less pronounced.

### Upbringing and current practice

A key advantage of the outlook continuum is that it compartmentalizes and therefore simplifies what is, in fact, a very complex sociological concept, i.e. Jewishness. This advantage is brought into sharp relief when set against the use of such vague categories as 'Traditional' and 'just Jewish' for defining both Jewish upbringing and current practice. In terms of outlook, the only clear finding was that no simple overlap between, say, 'Traditional' and Somewhat Religious, or 'just Jewish' and Secular, existed. This emphasizes the limitations of such categorizations.

Although the trend for the whole sample was away from the religious end of the continuum when comparing upbringing and current practice, it would be incorrect to conclude that a straightforward shift

had occurred over time. For example, the majority of the sample had had a 'Traditional (not strictly Orthodox)' upbringing (55 per cent) and the current outlook of this sub-group was equally split between SSS and SRR. Three-quarters of those with a 'Traditional' upbringing fell into the 'Somewhat' categories. However, one-fifth of the sample was brought up 'just Jewish' (19 per cent) and over a fifth of those described their current

outlook as Somewhat Religious (22 per cent), the opposite of what might be expected.

In conclusion, it seems that the expected patterns (whereby 'just Jewish' maps Secular and Somewhat Religious maps 'Traditional' and so on) do not occur when comparing Jewish upbringing and current Jewish practice with current outlook. However, these are complex relationships that need further study.