

Appendix: The JPR Leeds survey sample

After several decades of residential relocation within Leeds, the Jewish community is still spatially compact. It is highly clustered within the wards of North, Moortown and Roundhay, approximating to the LS17 postal district and immediately adjacent areas. This compactness implies that, in the search for a representative sample of Leeds Jewry, it would be relatively easy to locate areas with a high probability of containing Jewish households. A corollary of this concentration is that, at a practical level, it might be expected to aid in raising awareness of the survey among the population we wished to examine, both by conventional means such as newspapers and local radio and by word-of-mouth and neighbourhood networks, including synagogues.

Issues of sample selection were confronted very early in the preparation of the survey. Though we had no preconceived working definition of who is a Jew, a prerequisite in drawing a sample of Jewish households for the purposes of this survey was that the household should contain at least one Jewish adult (a person aged 18 or over). Because the main purpose of the study was to understand better the demand for Jewish voluntary services in the next decade, a strict definition on the basis of *halachah*, or Jewish legal precedent, was considered to be too narrow. With this practical aim in mind, it was clear that a definition based on functionality would be more appropriate than a legalistic one. Because of a desire not to influence or prejudice the designation 'Jewish', potential respondents in those households that received questionnaires were left to consider their own Jewishness and their differing approaches to being Jewish.³⁰

30 The *halachic* definition of a Jew is unequivocal: a person whose mother is Jewish or who converts to Judaism under the auspices of a proper rabbinical authority (in our age, this means an Orthodox rabbinical court) is Jewish; all others are not Jewish. Although this definition might satisfy Orthodox legal requirements, it is altogether unsatisfactory as a functional definition when in the business of planning services. To give just two examples of questions that arise: Should a man born Jewish, married to a Gentile and whose children have not been raised as Jews, be considered as a member of the Jewish community? Or, should a person who does not meet the *halachic* requirements (e.g. a woman born non-Jewish but converted to Judaism by a non-Orthodox rabbi and married to a *halachically* defined Jew) and who fully identifies and functions as a Jew be considered Jewish? And how should their children be considered?

There is no central population register in the United Kingdom, nor are people required to have an identity number, let alone carry an identity card; consequently, there is no arbitrary bureaucratic classification of the population into groups. Moreover, beyond peer pressure demands and certain external characteristics, an individual can adopt almost any identity she or he desires, within some broad parameters. It is considerably more difficult to pigeon-hole a person by any identity, other than the one adopted and expressed by the individual than it was even as recently as twenty years ago.

In a Jewish context, this means that preconceived notions of who is Jewish and who is not Jewish need to be modified. Clearly, although the core of the Leeds Jewish population comprises *halachic* Jews, there are anomalies at both ends of the spectrum. In other words, there are people who function as Jews but who are, by using a strictly legal Jewish definition, non-Jews. There are also persons of Jewish origin, even people born and raised as Jews, whose self-definition contains nothing that is Jewish and whose affiliation with the organized Jewish community is non-existent.

Sample selection

The starting point for drawing a sample was to produce a list of Distinctive Jewish Names (DJNs) for the study area. DJNs have been used in research for many years and their use is simply a variant of a more widespread use of ethnic names as aids in locating specific populations.³¹ Using ethnic names is problematic. At the least, they need to be used with considerable caution. Although many names are distinctively Jewish (in that almost all of the holders of such names or their forebears were Jews), what marks out a *distinctive* Jewish name from a *common* Jewish name is subjective and undoubtedly inexact. DJNs are names that are generally thought to be borne by Jews *and not by others*, and are thus distinguished from common Jewish names, names held by many Jews in

31 See F. W. Boal, 'Territoriality on the Shankill-Falls divide, Belfast', *Irish Geography*, vol. 6, 1969, 30–50 for a similar means of distinguishing between Catholics and Protestants in Belfast.

common with other people.³² The DJNs used in this study were adapted from the list devised and used in the 1995 study of British Jewish social and political attitudes.³³ DJNs vary from place to place, and they also change over time. Therefore, even 'distinctive' Jewish names do not always identify a Jew or even someone of verifiable Jewish origins. If the DJN method is regarded as no more than a crude way of uncovering areas in which there are Jewish concentrations, it can be useful, especially given the dearth of viable alternatives for extracting a Jewish sample in the British context. Thus, though it is not accurate for fine-tuning sample selection, it is useful as a starting point.³⁴

The DJNs used in this Leeds study were extracted from the CD-ROM database *UK-Info* produced and marketed commercially by 192.com. This database yielded 1,198 names and addresses that formed the core around which were added additional names and addresses furnished by means of other lists. Following the extraction of the DJNs, the LS17 and LS8 postal districts were then searched in *UK-Info*, street by street, for further households that, on the basis of both the surnames and given names, appeared to have a 'Jewish ring'. Other Leeds postal districts were examined but in less detail; streets on which DJNs had been located were searched, as well as adjacent streets. In addition, three lists were received from the Leeds Jewish Welfare Board (LJWB), each comprising addresses and postcodes. Later, Leeds addresses from a major national Jewish charity and a separate

list of addresses of young Jews in Leeds were added. When the amalgamation stage of the process had been completed, the master list contained over 18,000 separate entries. This master list was then sorted by postcode and street names to remove duplicates. Several sorts were needed to produce a list of 5,040 names and addresses. Questionnaires were mailed to each of these addresses, half randomly addressed to 'The Occupant', and the other half to 'The Resident'.³⁵

For reasons of economy, we wanted the questionnaires to be posted into as high a proportion of 'Jewish' letterboxes as possible. However, we also knew that many would reach households in which there was no Jewish adult. Moreover, we were also aware that several households containing at least one Jewish adult would probably not receive a questionnaire. The reasons for the latter varied: some people were too recently arrived in the city to appear on a list; others had a name that was *distinctly non-Jewish*; and still others lived in areas in which few other Jews lived and which, by virtue of the time and budgetary constraints of the study, were not fully searched.³⁶ The final distribution of households compared with the distribution taken from the LJWB lists is shown in Table 1.

The survey methodology

The choice of survey methodology involved three options: face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews or a direct mail survey. The *face-to-face* interview is the most desirable, allowing direct communication between interviewer and respondent. However, its main negative feature is the expense and time needed to arrange and complete each interview. Though using volunteers could cut costs, most of these would require prior training, which itself involves time and money; furthermore, as volunteers have no obligations as such, they constitute a risk. In contrast, *telephone* interviews need to be short; people are less willing to devote time to a telephone interview than they

32 Of course, this does not *need* to be a subjective procedure at all. Theoretically, if the universe of Jews was known and was then compared with the universe of all names, it would be possible to identify all those names that were held only by Jews. If the 'universe' were calculated state by state (and this exercise is feasible in several countries), then it is quite possible that those names that are distinctively Jewish would vary from country to country.

33 Steve Miller, Marlena Schmool and Antony Lerman, *Social and Political Attitudes of British Jews: Some Key Findings of the JPR Survey* (London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research 1996).

34 There *are* other methods available to the social researcher but whether these would work in the case of the population at hand is debatable. Random digit dialling, a method popular in North America, is based on a sampling procedure that uses computers to select statistically random samples of telephone numbers, dial and keep track of them, and tabulate the responses to the calls. Generally, a small number of key questions are asked and, from the responses, people are either eliminated as unsuitable to be part of the sample or retained. It is doubtful whether in the British context many people would be willing to answer a question that asked them their religion or ethnicity, especially if they were Jewish.

35 Names were not used so as to protect privacy.

36 This was confirmed by several phone calls to the help line: some Jewish people enquired as to why they had not received a questionnaire when a friend had, and some non-Jews asked why they *had* received a questionnaire. There is no way of knowing whether or how such people differed from the survey respondents in the areas searched. Analysis of Census data *may* throw up some information about differences on some social and economic variables.

are to a face-to-face interview. Questions need to be very direct, leaving little to chance or misunderstanding. Telephone-based surveys are popular in North America where people are less averse to answering market surveys than they are in the United Kingdom, where many people are particularly sensitive to answering questions put by someone they cannot see. *Direct mail surveys* are relatively cheap, the main expense being in mailing out and returning questionnaires. (Costs of printing, coding and keying/scanning in the responses are identical to those incurred by face-to-face surveys.) However, even with an awareness-raising campaign, response rates are likely to be low as the first actual contact with potential respondents is on receipt of the questionnaire itself. Although it is possible to prepare a more detailed questionnaire than in a telephone survey, several factors inhibit the success of a postal survey: questionnaires might be discarded before the envelope has been opened and, without the presence of a professional interviewer, there is a greater likelihood that the questionnaire will not be completed.

After piloting several prototypes of the questionnaire, refining and eliminating questions, the final rendering contained 151 separate questions, and could be completed within an estimated time limit of 45–60 minutes.

Response rates

Despite known drawbacks, we chose the direct mail option, and sent out 5,040 questionnaires. The questionnaires were printed and mailed by NOP early in July 2001, with reminders mailed at the end of the month to all addresses from which responses had not been received. All told, 1,496 valid responses were returned, giving a 29.7 per cent minimum response rate.³⁷ If the 1995 population estimate of 10,000 Leeds Jews by the

Board of Deputies of British Jews is close to the correct figure, and the mean household size of 2.18 is also correct, then the response rate rises to 32.6 per cent. If the Jewish population of Leeds is as low as 7,200,³⁸ then the response rate rises yet again, this time to 45.3 per cent. The 2001 Census of England and Wales, the first national census to include a religion question—albeit an optional one—gave the Jewish population of Leeds as 8,267. In addition, 16.8 per cent of the general Leeds population stated in the Census that they had no religion and a further 8.1 per cent refused to answer the religion question. This strongly suggests that the true number of Jews in Leeds may be as high as 10,000.³⁹

One of the reasons for the relatively high response rate was the awareness-raising exercise conducted by JPR in the month prior to the survey. This included two articles in the *Jewish Telegraph* (the survey itself indicated that over 90 per cent of respondents read this paper regularly), a notice in the *Jewish Chronicle*, local radio announcements, as well as letters to the president of the Leeds Jewish Representative Council and local rabbis. In addition, there was close co-operation with the Leeds Jewish Welfare Board from the outset.

As we had no control over which recipients of the questionnaire chose to respond and which did not, with people defining their own sense of Jewishness, and, furthermore, because we did not know how respondents differed from non-respondents, we cannot generalize about the entire 'Leeds Jewish community', let alone about other regional communities.⁴⁰ As a consequence, all our statements must necessarily refer to the sample or to those who responded to the voluntary question on religion in the 2001 Census, and we emphasize internal variations and trends within the sample.

37 As we had asked all households with no Jewish member to disregard the questionnaire, there is no accurate response rate. We estimate that non-Jewish recipients probably numbered between 1,000 and 1,500, so that the actual response rate was considerably higher.

38 Veteran local commentator Murray Freedman has calculated this to be the 'true' figure.

39 See Graham, 'So how many Jews are there in the UK?'

40 A rider such as this commonly attracts comment, with criticism aimed not only at the specific work in question but at survey work in general. It is not simply reserved for sample surveys but is often directed at compulsory surveys of the whole population, such as the Census, in which there is a legal obligation to complete and return a form, and failing to respond or giving false information may incur a fine.