

Academic achievement and engagement in Jewish life

First signs of a brain drain?

Stephen H. Miller



The **Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR)** is a London-based research organisation, consultancy and think-tank. It aims to advance the prospects of Jewish communities in the United Kingdom and across Europe by conducting research and informing policy development in dialogue with those best placed to positively influence Jewish life.

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A / Introduction

A great deal of empirical evidence points to the high level of academic attainment of Jewish populations across the world. Statistics such as the ten-fold¹ over-representation of Jews among Nobel Laureates, the 12–15 point IQ advantage of Ashkenazi Jews² and the observation that about 50% of the world's chess masters are Jewish, attest to the disproportionate impact of Jews on the intellectual, cultural and scientific output of the Western world. In the UK, records show that Jews are over-represented in the professions,³ have above average IQ scores⁴ and demonstrate significantly higher levels of academic achievement than the population at large.⁵ In the 2011 census, Jews (and Buddhists) were 50% more likely than the general population to have obtained a degree, and we estimate that Jews were roughly three times more likely than others to have gained a Masters or Doctoral level qualification (Appendix 1).

The explanation for differences in the academic performance of ethnic, religious and national groups is hotly debated. But for the present purposes, there is no need to engage in the scientific and political complexities of that debate. Instead, our starting point is the simple observation that, for whatever reason, a disproportionate number of British Jews achieve high academic standards. It is reasonable to assume that the Jewish community benefits from the contribution of such people both to national and communal life – and that the quality of the Jewish future will depend, at least in part, on our capacity

to retain people of academic stature. 'Retention', in this context, is not taken simply to mean that Jewish academics, scientists and professionals acknowledge their Jewish roots, but rather that they remain actively engaged in Jewish life.

This report attempts to assess whether that goal is being achieved. It does so by examining the relationship between academic achievement and Jewish engagement using four sample surveys of British Jews conducted over the past 23 years. In particular we focus on the way in which highly educated Jews differ from others in their sense of identity, their religious and ethnic behaviour, their marriage choices, their perceptions of Israel, and their social involvement in Jewish life. The issue to be tested is whether highly educated Jews are any more (or any less) actively engaged in Jewish life than other members of the community; and insofar as there are differences, to begin to examine how those differences might be explained.

In addressing that question, it is important to recognise that the link between secular education and Jewish identity has followed a complex and variable trajectory over time. In the Middle Ages the association between education and Jewish identity was, on some accounts, overwhelmingly positive. This was because literacy and numeracy were prerequisites for the practice of Judaism, but were not essential for many aspects of secular life; thus anyone wishing to identify as a Jew was effectively driven to acquire the

1 This is a conservative estimate which assumes that Jews make up about 2% of the global population with access to advanced educational resources. Jews actually constitute only 0.2% of the total world population, but that includes large populations in under-developed areas.

2 For a review of some of the relevant studies and a socio-biological explanation see: Cochran G, Hardy J and Harpending H (2006), 'Natural History of Ashkenazi Intelligence,' *Journal of Biosocial Science*, 38, 659–693.

3 Tropp, A. (1991). *Jews in the professions in Great Britain 1981–1991*. London: Maccabeans.

4 R.Lynn and D. Longley (2006), 'On the high intelligence and cognitive achievements of Jews in Britain,' *Intelligence* 34, 541–547.

5 Graham D, Schmool M, and Waterman S (2007). *Jews in Britain: A snapshot from the 2001 census*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.

necessary intellectual skills, at a time when literacy was by no means universal.⁶ By contrast, in twenty-first century developed economies, academic achievement is the gateway to most aspects of socio-economic success and is no longer the exclusive preserve of religion. If anything, academic achievement is now more likely to influence people's appetite for religious engagement than vice versa – and it has been argued that highly educated Jews have more to gain economically from time invested in secular pursuits than in religious or ethnic ones.⁷ Viewed in an historical context, therefore, the relationship between education and religion is complex and changeable. Our main goal, however, is not to examine the precise mechanisms by which academic achievement impacts Jewish engagement, nor to examine its historical development, but simply to chart the nature of that relationship at the present time.

In this report, we describe how academic ability is related to the many different expressions of Jewish identity; we draw out the implications of those relationships and identify some of the policy challenges that arise from them. Questions on the mechanisms by which achievement affects engagement are reserved for the final section where we offer some tentative explanations.

A1. Data sources and approach

The surveys

JPR has conducted five major surveys of British Jews over the past twenty-three years, three of which are examined in this study.⁸ These are the 1995 survey of the social and political attitudes of British Jews (SOC95), the 2010 survey of attitudes towards Israel (ISR10) and the 2013

National Jewish Community Survey (NJCS13). In addition, a team based at City, University of London conducted a national survey of the attitudes of British Jews towards Israel in 2015 (CITY/ISR15).⁹ These four datasets, which, together, provide information on over 11,000 British Jews,¹⁰ have been used to compile this report.

The four surveys each include measures of educational achievement, as well as a range of items relating to Jewish identity and communal engagement. Many of the questionnaire items have similar or even identical formats, but because of differences in sampling methodology, the four datasets cannot sensibly be merged into a single dataset; nor can the individual survey findings be used to reach robust conclusions about trends through time, even though the surveys span a twenty-year period.

Instead, the approach adopted has been to treat each survey as a separate snapshot of the community, providing its own evidence on the relationship between achievement and engagement. In general, the four sets of findings give a consistent picture, but where there are significant differences, an attempt has been made to interpret them.

A detailed description of the methodology employed in each survey is set out in the original reports. However, to provide some methodological context, Appendix 2 provides a brief summary of the sampling strategies employed in each of the surveys. For the reasons set out in Appendix 3, we have used the original, unweighted data for most of the comparisons reported here.

6 Maristella Botticini and Zvi Eckstein (2012). *The Chosen Few: How Education Shaped Jewish History, 70–1492*. (The Princeton Economic History of the Western World.) Princeton, N.J. Princeton University Press.

7 Carmel Chiswick (2014). *Judaism in Transition: How Economic Choices Shape Religious Tradition*. Redwood City: Stanford University Press.

8 The two excluded from this survey, conducted in 2012 and 2018, did not examine education in sufficient detail to allow for this level of analysis.

9 Miller S, Harris M, and Shindler C (2015), *The Attitudes of British Jews towards Israel*, School of Arts and Social Sciences, City University London: www.city.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/295361/Israel-Report-FINAL.PDF

10 It is likely that, by chance, about 300 of these 11,000 respondents will have been included in more than one of the four datasets. The impact of this 'double counting' on the overall pattern of results is negligible.

Liberties with labels

Throughout this report, academic achievement has been measured by reference to each respondent's highest level of academic qualification coded on a three-point scale (below degree level, first degree, higher degree). We have generally referred to the respondents falling into each of these categories as non-graduates, graduates and postgraduates, sometimes labelling the postgraduate group 'highly educated' or 'high achievers'. In one case – the CITY/ISR15 survey – the 'higher degree' category has been broken down into Masters and doctoral levels, thus generating a four-point scale for that survey.

In treating a degree or a higher degree as an indicator of academic ability, it is recognised that such qualifications do not necessarily reflect academic distinction, nor very high intelligence; some graduates and post-graduates may have relatively modest intellectual abilities. Equally, some non-graduates will possess a high level of intelligence and/or scholarship acquired outside of the university system (including, for example, some of those educated in *yeshivot*). Nonetheless, averaged over a large group, academic *qualifications* are known to be correlated with *cognitive ability*¹¹ and are therefore a reasonable proxy measure of this attribute.

To avoid unduly lengthy or convoluted prose, the term 'high achiever' is sometimes used as a shorthand for people who have demonstrated high levels of *academic* performance. Similarly, 'ability' is often used to denote *academic* ability.

The key variables and how the findings are organised

There are many different ways in which Jews can express their Jewish identity or participate in Jewish life. These modes of engagement or identification can be loosely classified as either (i) religious (e.g. ritual practice, religious beliefs) or (ii) ethnic (e.g. socialising with Jews, engaging in Jewish cultural events, supporting Jewish charities). In addition, Jewish identity is sometimes expressed through (iii) engagement with Israel. This third category could be regarded as a form of ethnic identity, but it turns out to have rather distinctive characteristics and is therefore treated as a separate category in its own right. We consider each of these expressions of Jewish identity in turn and, in the final section of the report, we examine possible explanations for the findings, comment on their implications and identify some of the policy issues that arise.

Hence, the remaining four sections of this report, are organised as follows:

Section B: Academic achievement and *religious engagement*;

Section C: Academic achievement and *ethnic engagement*;

Section D: Academic achievement and *attitudes to Israel*;

Section E: Reflections, implications and policy issues.

11 For example: Matarazzo, Joseph D. *Wechsler's Measure and Appraisal of Adult Intelligence*, 5th Edition. Oxford University Press, 1972.

B / Academic achievement and religious engagement

B1. Religious belief

Previous research

Over the past eighty years, a series of research studies has examined the relationship between education and religion. The findings are not entirely consistent, but in America and many European countries, there is strong evidence of a negative association between academic achievement and religious *belief* across a number of religious groups;¹² i.e. highly educated individuals are less likely to believe in God, place a positive value on prayer, accept the possibility of an afterlife or consider that the world was created by a divine source. In one of the most robust studies,¹³ the *negative* relationship between level of education and religious belief is shown to be substantially stronger among Jews in the Diaspora than among any other religious group.

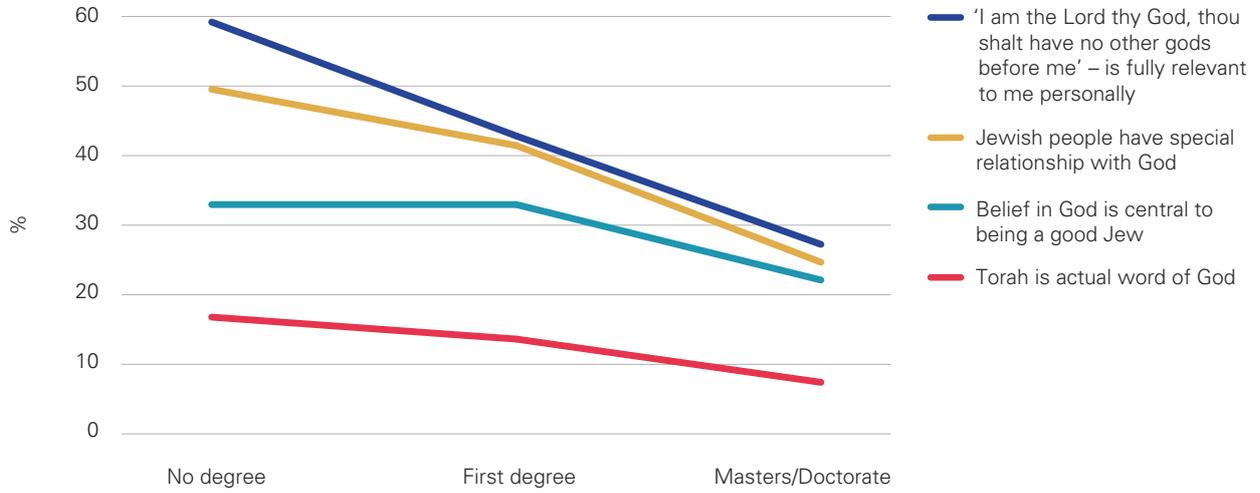
Explanations for this negative association include the argument that the highly educated are more likely to process arguments analytically than intuitively, and hence are less likely to entertain religious beliefs in the absence of conventional proof.¹⁴ Some theorists have suggested that the highly educated are more likely to have the intellectual resources to answer existential

questions for themselves, rather than to rely on established religious belief systems.¹⁵ And other commentators have argued that the negative 'effect' of education on belief may be mediated by factors that are related to educational achievement, such as higher social class, increased familiarity with science, or greater knowledge of other cultures.¹⁶

For British Jews these questions have never been examined empirically – not least because of the paucity of available data on patterns of belief. Whilst all four of our surveys contain measures of engagement in religious and communal *activities*, only the first survey (SOC95) and to a more limited extent NJCS13 provide reliable data on belief itself. Figure 1 examines the relationship between educational qualifications and four measures of religious belief included in SOC95. In each case, respondents *without* a degree are almost twice as likely to hold the belief in question than those with a post-graduate degree. For example, 50% of non-graduates agree or strongly agree that Jews have a special relationship with God, while only 25% of postgraduates do so; the graduates fall between these two groups.

- 12 For example: (i) E Glaeser and B Sacerdote (2001). *Education and Religion*, NBER Working Paper No.8080; (ii) M. Zuckerman, J. Silberman and J.Hall (2013). 'The relation between intelligence and religiosity: a meta-analysis, *Pers.Soc.Psychol Rev*, 6 August 2013; (iii) Pew Research Center (2011). *Religion and Education Around the World*; (iv) Johnson, D. C. (1997). 'Formal education vs. religious belief: Soliciting new evidence with multinomial logit modelling,' *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 36, 231–246.
- 13 G Meisenberg, H Rindermann, H Patel and M Woodley (2012). 'Is it smart to believe in God? The relationship of religiosity with education and intelligence.' *Temas em Psicologia* Vol. 20, no 1, 101–120.
- 14 Amitai Shenhav, David G. Rand, and Joshua D. Greene (2011). 'Divine Intuition: Cognitive Style Influences Belief in God,' *Journal of Experimental Psychology (General)* Vol. 141, No. 3, 423–428.
- 15 M.Zuckerman et. al., op. cit.
- 16 Daniel M Hungerman (2014). 'The Effect of Education on Religion: Evidence from Compulsory Schooling Laws,' *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, Volume 104.

Figure 1. % agreement with four belief statements as a function of educational achievement (SOC95)



Similarly, in the NJCS13 study (Figure 2), non-graduates were about 1.5 times as likely as post-graduates to judge prayer and belief in God to be 'fairly' or 'very' important to their Jewish identity.

These data show that British Jews resemble other religious groups in demonstrating a negative correlation between level of education and belief.

This trend is found in traditional members of orthodox synagogues and, even more so, in members of Reform, Liberal and Masorti congregations (Figure 3); strictly orthodox members have very high levels of belief that do not vary substantially with education (not shown).

Figure 2. % rating 'Belief in God' and 'Prayer' as fairly/very important to their sense of Jewish identity (NJCS13)

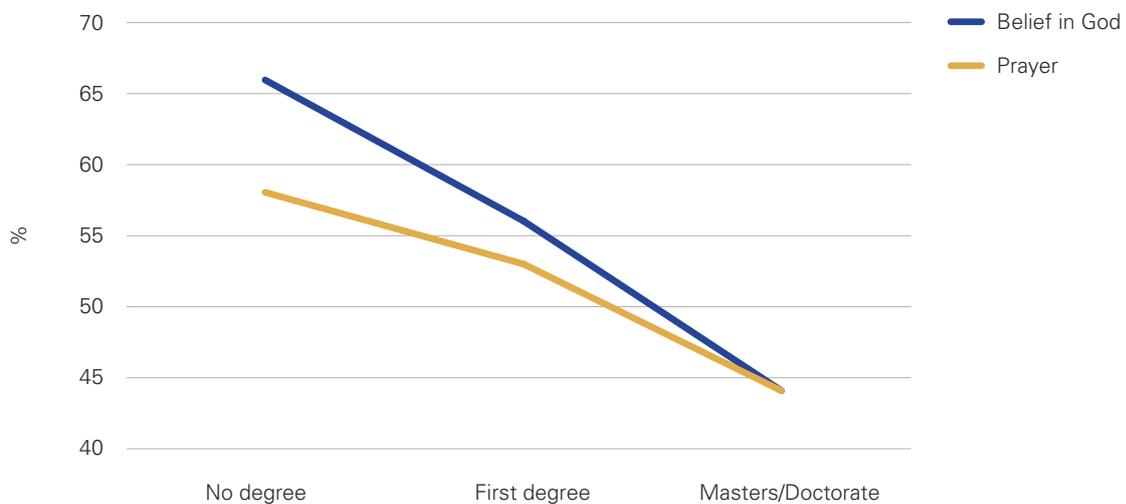
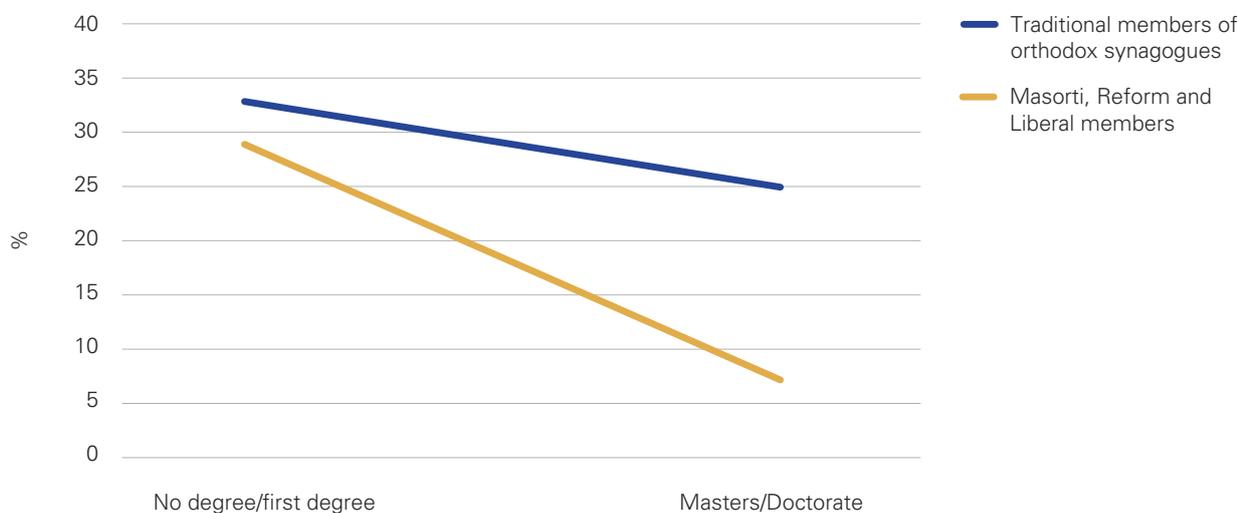


Figure 3. % agreement that “belief in God is central to being a good Jew” as a function of academic achievement and synagogue membership (SOC95)



B2. Religious behaviour and achievement

The fact that religious *belief* falls off with academic achievement does not necessarily extend to religious *behaviour* (e.g. attending a place of worship). Indeed, the thrust of the evidence from previous research is that although highly educated people are *less* likely to subscribe to religious beliefs, they are *more* likely to engage in religious activity.¹⁷

Synagogue membership and attendance

The standard indicator of involvement in a religious group is membership of, or attendance at, a place of worship. Several American studies¹⁸ demonstrate that both membership and attendance are positively related to level of education. The British Social

Attitudes survey for the period 2010–2014 shows the same trend for the UK.¹⁹

This positive link between education and religious *activity* (despite the negative link between education and belief) may reflect the general tendency of graduates to be more engaged in social activities than non-graduates. On this model, attendance at a place of worship is simply one form of social interaction.²⁰ Thus, highly educated people ‘pray less’ and ‘believe less’, but attend church, synagogue or mosque more. The driver, however, is more likely to be social than religious.

The notion of a discontinuity between belief and practice is not new. As Mark Chaves noted in his 2010 review of studies in this field,²¹ the idea that “religious practices and behaviours follow directly

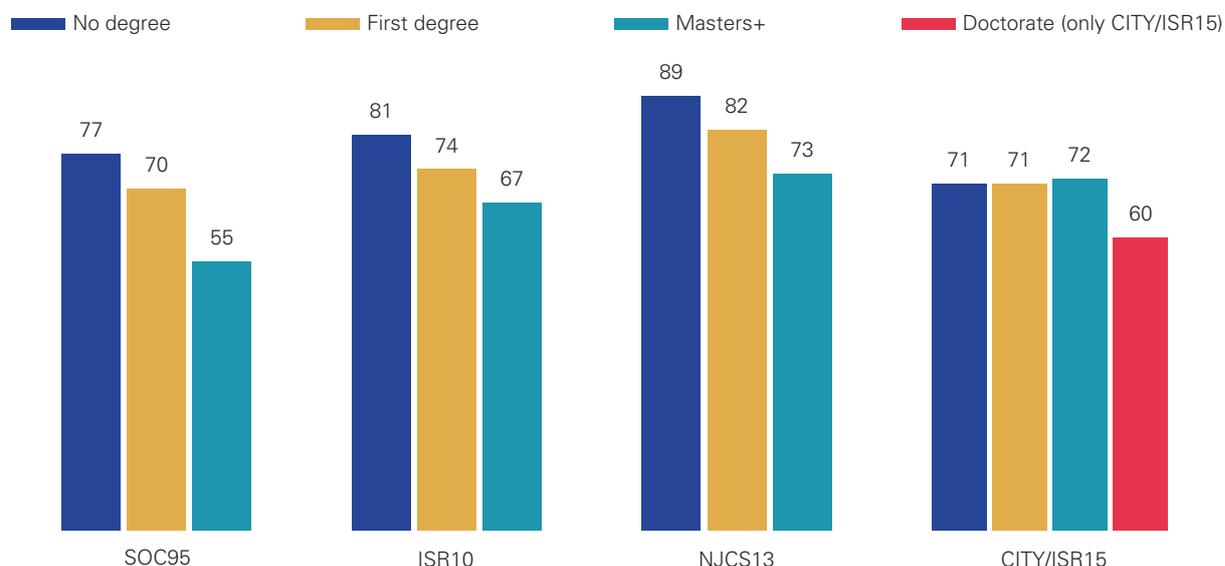
17 Glaeser and Sacerdote, op. cit.

18 Winseman, Albert L. (2003). “Does More Educated Really = Less Religious?” Gallup News, 4 February 2003; Edward L. Glaeser and Bruce Sacerdote op. cit.

19 The datasets can be accessed online. For example, for 2012 see: National Centre for Social Research. (2012). *British Social Attitudes Survey, 2010*. [data collection]. UK Data Service. SN: 6969, <http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-6969-1>

20 Glaeser and Sacerdote, op. cit.

21 M. Chaves (2010). ‘Rain Dances in the Dry Season: Overcoming the Religious Congruence Fallacy,’ *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. 49 (1): 1–14.

Figure 4. % of sample belonging to a synagogue by level of education

from religious belief” is rarely supported by research evidence. For British Jews in particular, JPR’s research has demonstrated a very weak association between Jewish religious practice and strength of belief in God.²² Hence it is by no means implausible that higher education might have a positive impact on practice while having a negative impact on belief.

However, the findings show that British Jews do *not* resemble Americans in demonstrating a positive relationship. On the contrary, Figure 4 shows that as academic achievement increases, synagogue *membership* declines. The negative trend is clear and reasonably consistent across all four surveys.

Similarly, the relationship between achievement and synagogue *attendance*

is also negative; the proportion of male²³ respondents who attend synagogue on most Sabbaths (or more often) declines quite steeply with academic level²⁴ (Figure 5).

British and American Jews – why the difference?

It is not immediately apparent why British and American Jews differ on these measures of synagogue engagement. The clear tendency of the highly educated to engage in social interaction²⁵ might have been expected to lead both American and British high achievers to seek stronger (rather than weaker) engagement in synagogue life.²⁶ That this does not happen in the case of the British may have something to do with a third factor, namely the ease with which the highly educated can relate to the religious ethos of their synagogues.

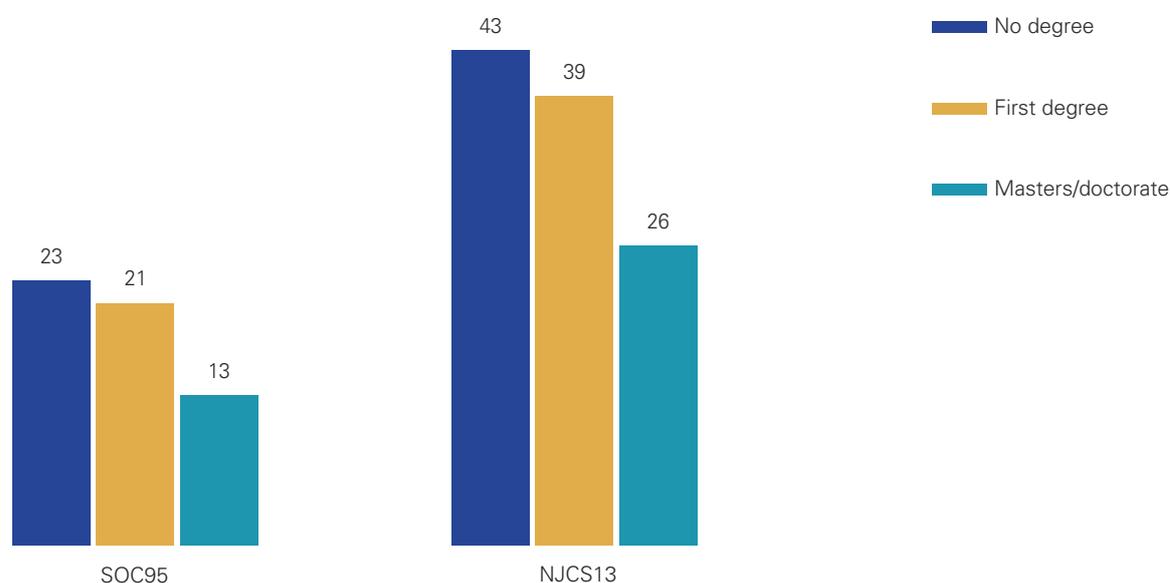
22 Stephen Miller (2000). ‘The Practice of Judaism in Britain,’ in: J. Neusner (ed), *The Encyclopaedia of Judaism*, Vol. 1, 20–32, Leiden: Brill.

23 The data report male attendance patterns only. The profile of attendance among women requires more complex treatment to tease out the differential effects of child care and attendance patterns across different synagogue groupings.

24 These data have been weighted to bring the NJCS data into line with the SOC95 data with respect to synagogue affiliation and age. This was done to improve representativeness and to aid comparison between the two datasets. The unweighted data produce similar trends.

25 Putnam, Robert D. (1995). ‘Bowling alone: America’s declining social capital,’ *Current* 373: 3–9.

26 Goode, Erich (1966). ‘Social class and church participation.’ *American Journal of Sociology* 72: 102–111; Glaeser and Sacerdote, op. cit.

Figure 5. % of sample (male) attending synagogue 'most sabbaths' by level of education

In a detailed study of American Protestants, Catholics, Jews and other groups,²⁷ Schwadel finds evidence that highly educated individuals tend to adopt a less exclusivist, literal or narrow approach to religious dogma; they are therefore more likely to switch from very traditional denominations to communities that are more pluralist and progressive in outlook. In this way, the high achievers can gain the social utility of religious participation without having to suffer too great a challenge to their more universal and liberal world view.

In the case of British Jews, it seems that – whether for cultural, family or other reasons – highly educated Jews are less likely than their American counterparts to switch to religious communities that better reflect their outlook; instead, a higher proportion either choose to remain members of more traditional synagogues

and simply attend less often, or perhaps disaffiliate completely.

To test this hypothesis, Figure 6 looks at the relationship between education and participation rates separately for mainstream orthodox and progressive synagogues.²⁸ We now find that among progressive synagogue members, the American pattern prevails – i.e. postgraduates are *more* likely to attend weekly than others. But in orthodox synagogues, in accordance with Schwadel's ideas, the highly educated are less engaged. Since, in the UK, the orthodox sector accounts for a higher proportion of total membership than the progressive movements, the combined sample of British Jews shows a negative education-attendance relationship. But under the surface, we see that education does show a positive link with synagogue involvement, but only among members of Reform, Liberal and Masorti congregations.

27 Schwadel, P (2011). 'The Effects of Education on Americans' Religious Practices, Beliefs, and Affiliations,' *Review of Religious Research*, Volume 53, Issue 2, pp 161–182.

28 As the data are restricted to male respondents, and six separate conditions are being compared, it was necessary to combine non-graduate and graduate categories to maintain meaningful numbers in each condition. The data for SOC95 yielded too small a subsample for meaningful comparisons to be made.

Figure 6a. % attending synagogue most sabbaths by academic achievement: mainstream orthodox and progressive synagogues compared (NJCS13)

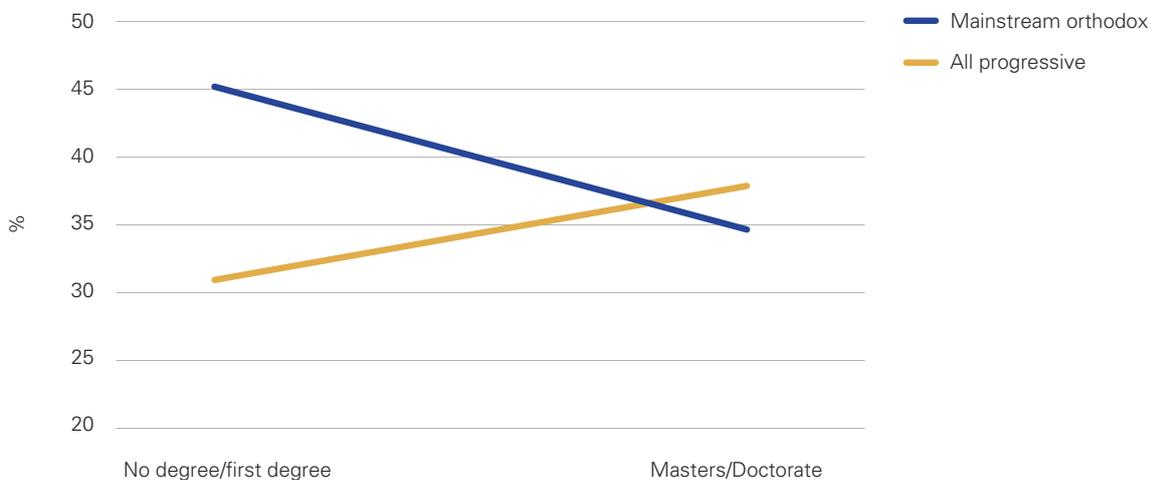
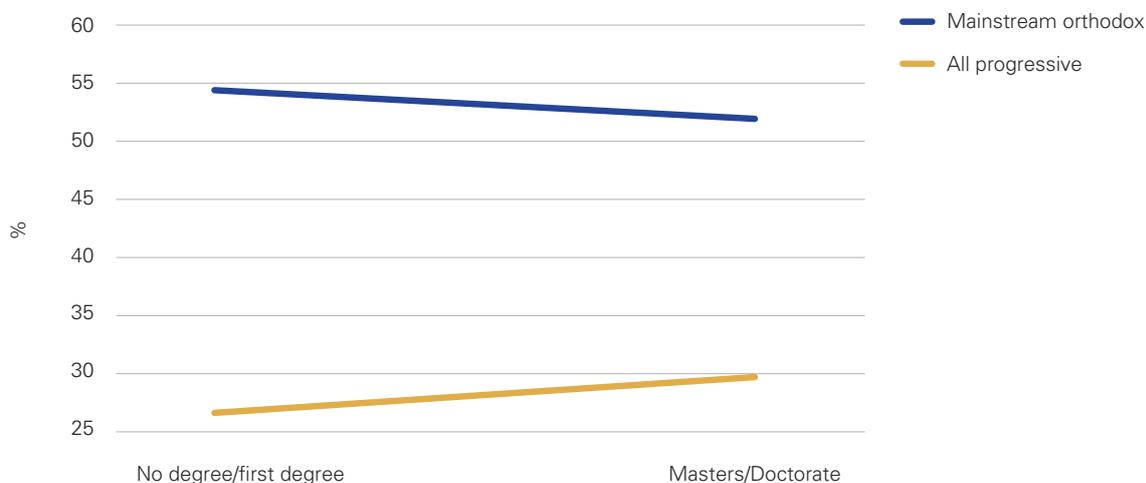


Figure 6b. % attending synagogue most sabbaths by academic achievement: mainstream orthodox and progressive synagogues compared (ISR10)



This is an interesting and important finding because it both explains the difference between American and British patterns of attendance and it hints at the possibility that mainstream orthodox synagogues, unlike their progressive counterparts, may find the educational profile of their membership shifting away from the highly educated.

Jewish rituals

A third measure of religious engagement is the performance of Jewish religious practices. There is a distinction to be drawn between demanding rituals, such as the strict observance of shabbat or *kashrut*, and more convenient annual practices, such as attending a seder or fasting once a year on Yom Kippur. For a religious Jew all these *mitzvot* have a religious significance, but for

those with a more secular outlook, the strict rituals may be set aside or minimally observed, while the more convenient annual ceremonies serve as expressions of ethnic or social engagement with the community.²⁹

Figures 7 to 11 examine the relationship between academic achievement and observance for a range of rituals ordered loosely from the least to the most demanding. Predictably, absolute levels of observance fall off as one moves from ‘convenient’ practices, such as seder attendance (70%–80% observance), through to more exacting rituals, such as not turning on a light on shabbat (10%–20% observance).

With regard to the impact of educational achievement on levels of observance, the trends are less clear-cut. Respondents with

a first degree are no less observant than those without one (data not shown), and indeed for some rituals, possession of a degree is actually associated with an *increase* in the level of observance. However, if a comparison is made between the most highly qualified (i.e. those with a Masters or Doctorate) and others, then the effects of educational achievement re-emerge with stunning consistency. In all four surveys and for all five rituals, observance is lower among the most highly qualified than among graduates and non-graduates.

Shifting religious lifestyle

Previous surveys have established a ‘scale’ of religious lifestyle³⁰ which seeks to capture where Jews feel they belong in terms of their approach to Judaism (e.g. Orthodox, Traditional, Progressive, Non-practising

Figure 7. % attending a seder every year/most years as a function of educational achievement

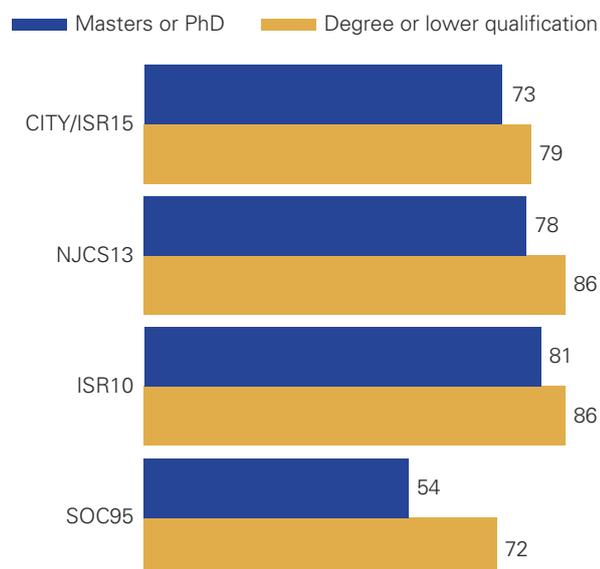
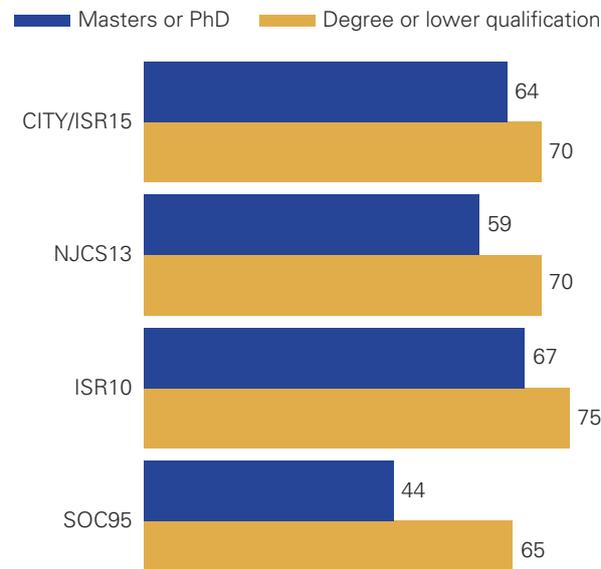


Figure 8. % fasting on Yom Kippur as a function of educational achievement



29 S. Miller (2000). ‘The Practice of Judaism in the United Kingdom,’ in: Jacob Neusner (ed.) *The Millennial Encyclopaedia of Judaism*, E.J.Brill: Leiden.

30 The self-classification ‘scale’ contains the following categories: Haredi, Orthodox, Traditional, Reform/Progressive, Just Jewish, secular/cultural and mixed/other.

Figure 9. % buying meat from a kosher butcher for the home as a function of educational achievement

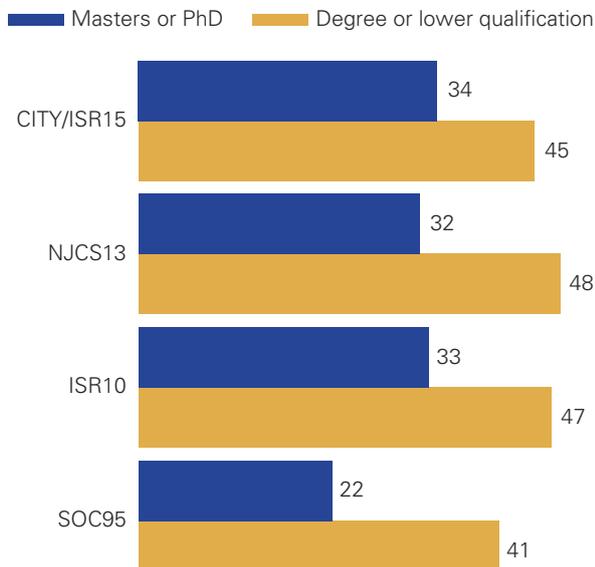


Figure 10. % not driving/travelling on shabbat as a function of educational achievement

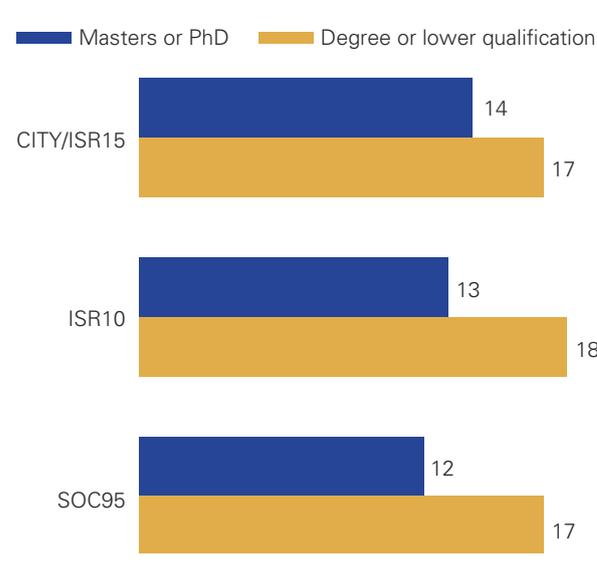
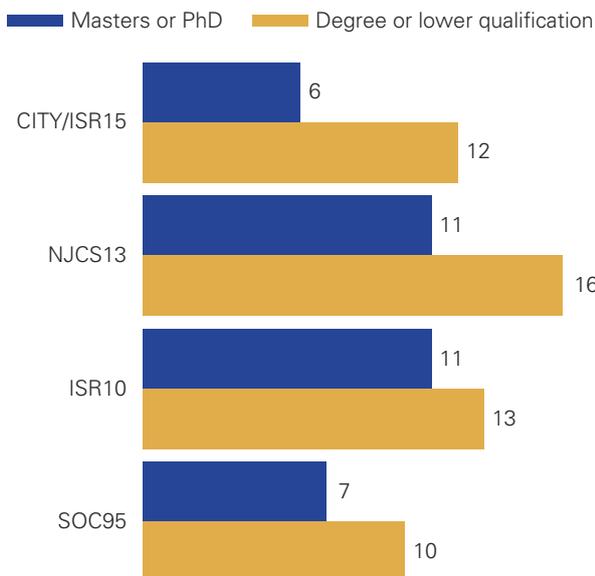


Figure 11. % who would not turn on a light on shabbat as a function of educational achievement



(secular/cultural)...). This classification system is statistically reliable and can be used as an effective predictor of Jewish ritual behavior and beliefs.³¹ Using this scale, the NJCS13 report³² provided a detailed analysis of generational shifts in lifestyle by comparing the respondents’ classification of their current Jewish lifestyle with the one they experienced when growing up.

The NJCS13 study reveals a significant migration from the mainstream ‘Traditional’ category (historically almost two-thirds of the community) towards progressive and secular Jewish lifestyles, and to a lesser extent, towards the orthodox wing. The authors aptly describe this as a ‘shakeout of the middle ground’. We consider here whether the shift towards the secular/cultural category is more marked among highly educated respondents than among others.

31 Miller S.H. (1998). “The Structure and Determinants of Jewish Identity in the United Kingdom” in Krausz, E. and Tulea, G. (eds.) *Jewish Survival: the identity problem at the close of the twentieth century*. New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, chapter 14. p.3.

32 Op. cit. pp.15–17.

Figure 12 looks specifically at the percentage of Jews in the secular/cultural category in two surveys – NJCS13 and SOC95. As can be seen, in both surveys, the proportion of Jews who currently classify themselves as secular/cultural (blue bars) increases with academic achievement – high achievers are more than twice as likely to fall in the secular category than those without a degree. Indeed, in the SOC95 survey, the proportion of high achievers who classify themselves as secular/non-practising was almost 50%.

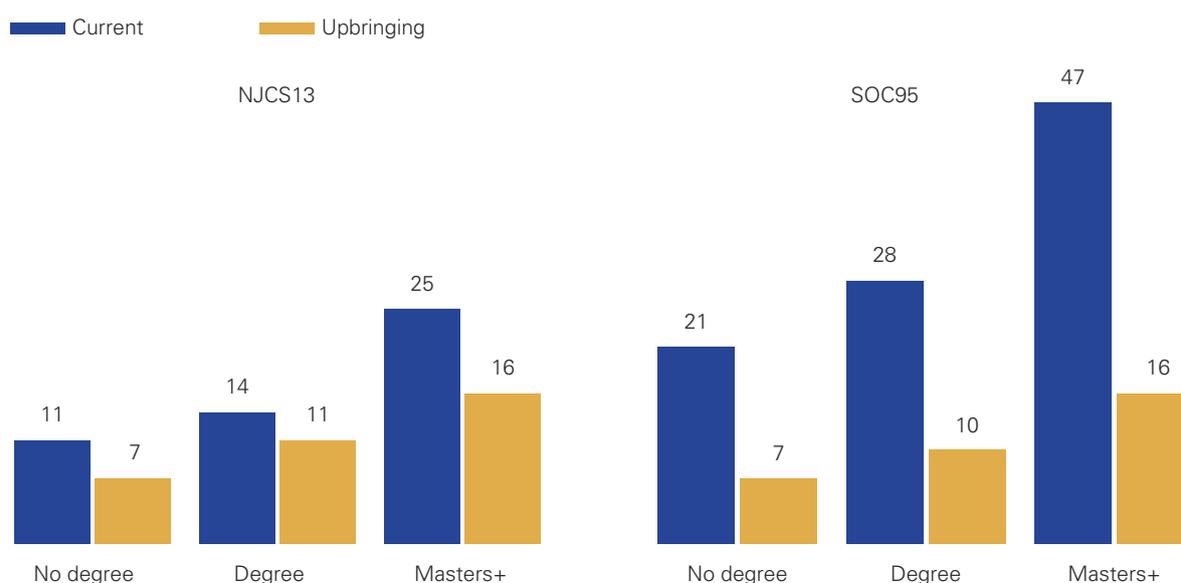
In addition, the chart compares the percentage of respondents who are now secular with the percentage who say they were in that category when they were growing up. In effect, this comparison (yellow versus blue bars) represents the shift in Jewish lifestyle across one generation (since lifestyle ‘when growing up’ usually reflects the lifestyle of a respondent’s parent/s).

Again, the effect of academic achievement is very clear. The shift towards a secular Jewish

lifestyle, when measured as an absolute change, is greater in the highly educated groups than the others; in the NJCS13 study the inter-generational *growth* in the proportion of secular Jews is 9% among postgraduates, but only 4% among non-graduates; in the SOC95 survey the secular percentage grew by 31% among postgraduates, but only by 14% among non-graduates.

The fact that the two samples differ substantially in the absolute percentage of Jews who see themselves as secular is of some interest. Ignoring the effects of achievement, it is very unlikely that the overall proportion of non-practising Jews in these two samples (26% vs 16%) has declined due to the eighteen-year interval between them – and much more likely that the variation is due, at least in part, to differences in sampling methodology. The higher percentage (26%) is probably closer to the true proportion given that SOC95 employed a quasi-random sampling procedure.³³

Figure 12. % of respondents who classify themselves as secular/cultural – current (blue) vs upbringing (yellow)



³³ NJCS13 employed organisational email lists and a modified snowballing approach, while SOC95 used random sampling of the electoral register boosted by sampling of distinctive Jewish names. NJCS13 is likely to have generated a more affiliated, and probably less representative, sample than SOC95. However, in the full NJCS study a weighting system was employed to correct for sampling bias.

C / Academic achievement and ethnic engagement

Taken in the round, the data on religious lifestyle show a substantially lower level of observance, synagogue membership and religious belief among high academic achievers than among graduates and non-graduates. Furthermore, the data on generational shifts suggest that the religious gap between the achievement groups is widening. However, those findings do not necessarily imply that highly educated Jews are less engaged in Jewish life defined in a broader sense. In this section we examine the link between academic achievement and engagement with the community through cultural, social, philanthropic and other secular modes.

C1. Ethnic behaviours

Friendship patterns

A standard measure of integration into Jewish social life is the proportion of a person's close friends who are Jewish. The response scale used in three of the surveys extends from 'all or nearly all' through to 'none or very few'. Table 1 gives the percentage of respondents saying that 'all

or nearly all' of their close friends are Jewish as a function of educational achievement.

The data are highly consistent and echo the negative association between education and engagement observed using religious measures. In relation to Jewish friendship patterns, those without a degree are roughly twice as likely to have predominantly Jewish friends as those with a higher degree.

Outmarriage

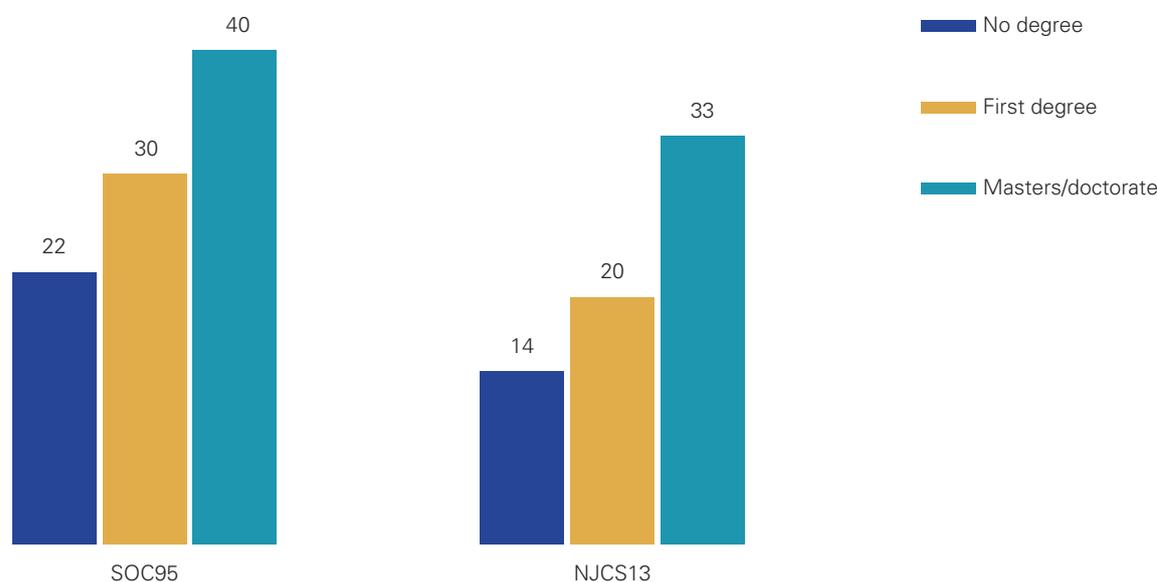
A key indicator of Jewish engagement is the choice of a Jewish partner. Two of the surveys (SOC95) and (NJCS13) provide data on marriage and partnership, and both show the same trend. The likelihood of having a non-Jewish partner³⁴ increases systematically with level of education and, again, it is roughly twice as high for Jews with a postgraduate degree as it is for those with no degree. This 2 to 1 ratio does not change substantially with age (not illustrated), so it would seem that the tendency for higher rates of outmarriage among high achievers is not a recent phenomenon.

Table 1. % respondents with 'all or nearly all' close friends Jewish

Survey	No degree	First degree	Higher degree	
			Masters or Doctorate	
SOC95	46%	31%	17%	
NJCS13	49%	39%	22%	
			Masters	Doctorate
CITY/ISR15	36%	32%	28%	20%

³⁴ Either the current partner or, if divorced, separated or widowed, the last partner. Those who have no spouse or partner and have never had one are excluded from these calculations.

Figure 13. % of Jews whose current (or last) partner was non-Jewish by level of education



The higher overall levels of inmarriage in the NJCS13 sample than in SOC95 are again probably explained by the differences in sampling methodology. More recent and reliable data based on the 2011 census show an overall rate of outmarriage that is similar to the SOC95 figure.³⁵ However, the key issue here is the trend across educational groups rather than the absolute level of outmarriage.

The SOC95 survey also provides data on the marriage choices of the children of respondents. Among those respondents who are themselves married to, or in a partnership with, another Jew, the educational status of the parents appears to translate into the marriage choices of their children.

Of the 496 respondents with Jewish partners and married children, the following proportions have one or more of their children married to a non-Jew:

- 32% of parents without degrees (104 out of 322);
- 36% of parents with first degrees (48 out of 134);
- 45% of parents with postgraduate degrees (18 out of 40).

These data should not be taken too seriously. The samples are very small and the trend across the three groups does not quite reach statistical significance.³⁶ In any case, the findings may simply represent the tendency of academically able parents to have academically able children. Nonetheless, these data do open up the possibility that when high achievement does not impact on Jewish marriage choice within a generation, it *may* carry over to the next generation.

³⁵ The JPR report on intermarriage (July 2016) provides the most reliable data on this topic and shows an overall rate of exogamy (for those with partners) of 28%. The SOC95 survey returned an overall figure of 29%.

³⁶ The probability that the trend arose by chance is just under 6 in 100. By convention, a result is regarded as statistically reliable if the probability of it occurring by chance is below 5 in 100.

Whether or not the impact of education on outmarriage is transmitted across generations, the main findings in Figure 13 demonstrate a highly reliable link between academic achievement and outmarriage *within* a generation. This raises significant issues concerning the future intellectual profile of the community if current trends persist (see E4).

Support for Jewish charities

Involvement in Jewish volunteering or charitable activity is a useful measure of engagement because these expressions of identity are open to religious, secular or even anti-religious Jews. Further, since there are ready opportunities to engage in charitable work and volunteering both within and without the Jewish community, the balance between the two can be used as an index of the extent to which altruistic behaviour is specifically oriented towards Jews.

SOC95 included questions on the priority given to four types of charitable endeavour: Jewish causes in Britain; General British charities; Israeli causes; and Overseas aid. The proportion of respondents selecting each of these as their “first priority” is shown in Figure 14. For those without a degree, the highest priority overall is British Jewish

causes, selected by 45% of non-graduates. This exceeds by two-to-one the proportion of high achievers who select Jewish causes as their first priority (22%). Instead, the highly educated are far more likely to prioritise Overseas Aid (38%), followed by General British Charities, with British Jewish causes ranked third. The proportions who prioritise Israeli causes (c. 12%) do not vary greatly with educational achievement.

These findings make it clear that Jewish postgraduates are considerably more likely to favour universal causes over more parochial ones, while the less highly educated tend to prioritise local Jewish causes.

When asked about their actual donations in the past year, a similar pattern emerges. For those who restrict their support to just one type of cause (either Jewish or non-Jewish), respondents without a degree were equally divided, whereas those with a higher degree were three times more likely to favour non-Jewish charities over Jewish ones (yellow vs blue bars in Figure 15). The proportions supporting both or neither category do not vary significantly with education – though the relative amounts donated may do.

Figure 14. % rating each cause as their top priority by education (SOC95)

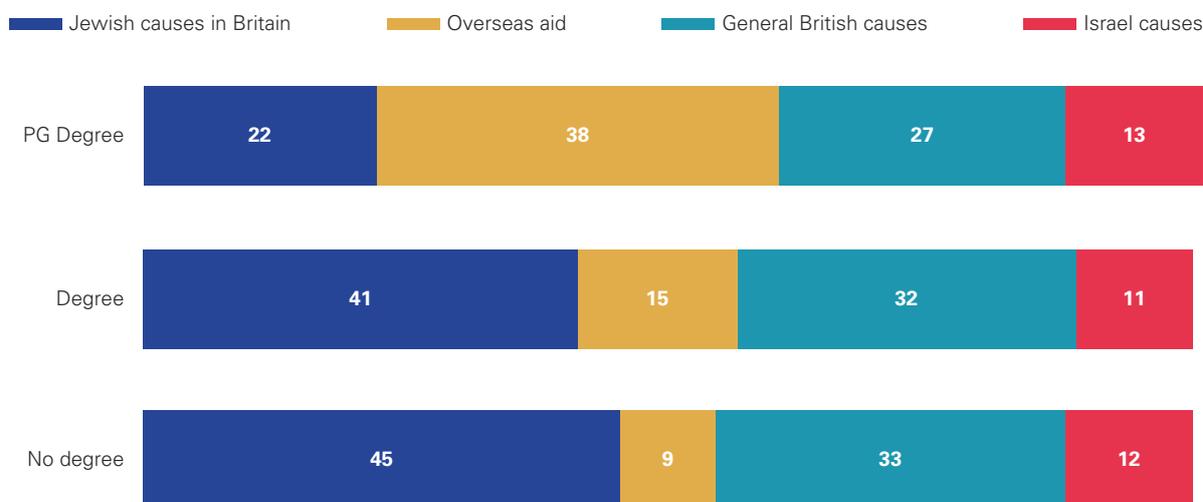
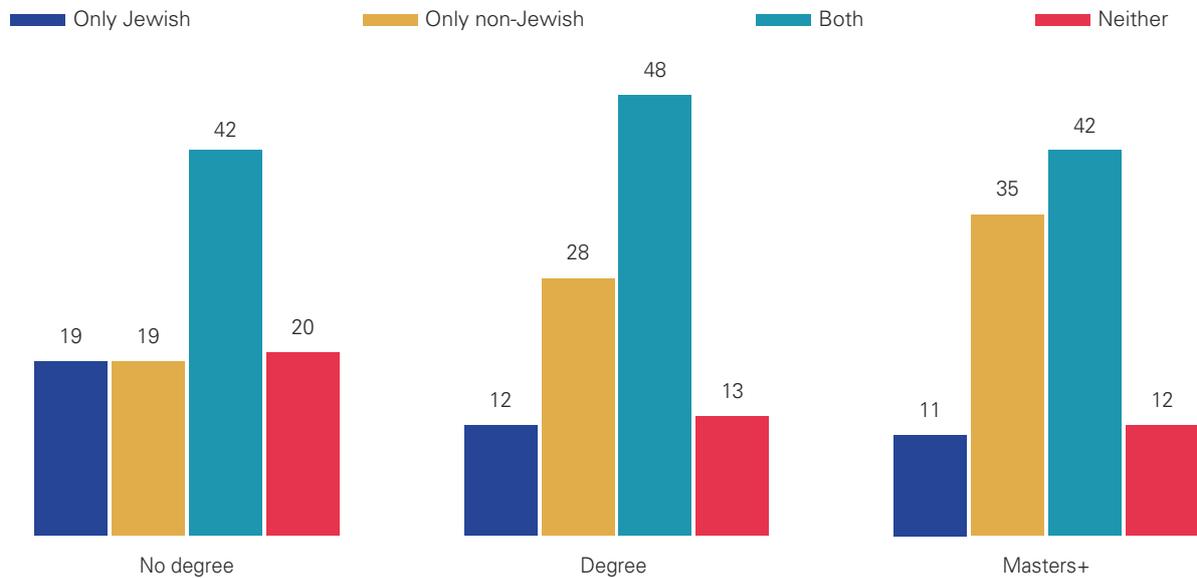


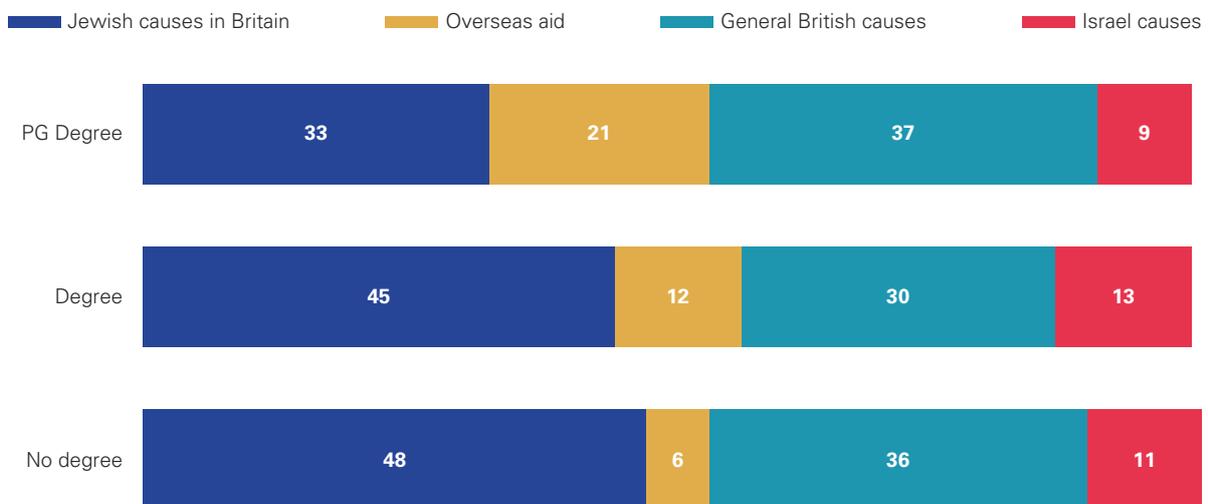
Figure 15. Patterns of giving by education over the past year (SOC95)



Similar questions were asked almost twenty years later in the NJCS13 survey. Again, this generated a clear preference for British Jewish charities among non-graduates (48% vs 36% prioritising general British causes). For the postgraduates, the preferences were in the reverse direction (Figure 16).

It is not, of course, suggested that any particular balance between Jewish and non-Jewish charitable support is to be preferred. Clearly, choices about charitable action are matters of personal preference. Viewed overall however, the weaker preference for Jewish as opposed to non-Jewish causes among high achievers

Figure 16. % rating each cause as their top priority by education (NJCS13)



is further evidence of less intense communal engagement in this sector of the community.

Accessing the Jewish media

Ethnic engagement is also expressed by consumption of Jewish cultural and media output. The practice of reading a Jewish newspaper on a regular basis is one specific measure that has been assessed both in the SOC95 and NJCS13 surveys (Figure 17).

Again, the findings are consistent; those without a degree are approximately 1.5 times more likely to read a Jewish paper regularly than those with a higher degree (c. 60% vs c. 40%).

It might be argued (perversely!) that high achievers are less likely to read newspapers of any kind and that the trend in relation to the Jewish media does not therefore provide evidence of disengagement. However, both in general surveys³⁷ and in Jewish surveys (e.g. SOC95), the practice of regularly reading a newspaper is, as might be expected,

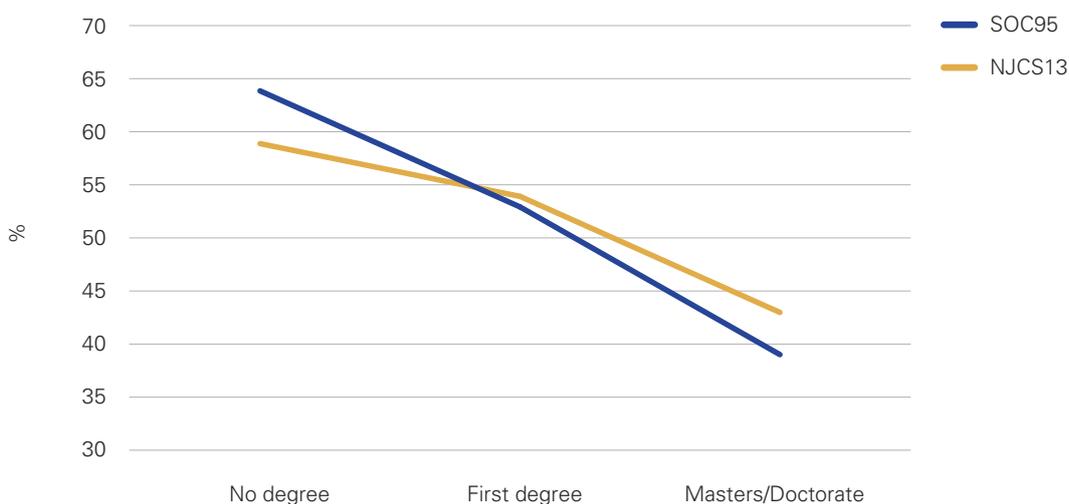
positively correlated with education. Given their greater appetite for reading newspapers, the finding that the highly educated are far less likely to read Jewish newspapers takes on additional significance.

Cultural engagement

In a similar vein, we examined the extent to which the highly educated participated in various cultural activities with a Jewish flavour. It is almost self-evident that participation in cultural events is strongly related to level of education.³⁸ It would therefore be very compelling evidence for the disengagement hypothesis if highly educated Jews were *less* engaged in Jewish cultural activities than those without degrees.

In fact, for a wide range of cultural pursuits, from accessing Jewish material on the web to buying a Jewish work of art or seeing a Jewish film, those with degrees and higher degrees are more strongly represented than those without one (Figures 18 and 19).

Figure 17. % who regularly read at least one Jewish newspaper by education



37 See Pew Media survey, March 12 2007: www.journalism.org/numbers/daily-newspaper-readership-by-education/

38 'Educational stratification in cultural participation: Cognitive competence or status motivation?' Natascha Notten, Bram Lancee, Herman G. van de Werfhorst, Harry B. G. Ganzeboom; GINI Discussion Paper 77, August 2013.

We cannot say whether the greater appetite for Jewish culture among the high achievers is as marked as their increased appetite for non-Jewish culture because that has not been measured.³⁹

But we can at least conclude that high achievers are more engaged in these aspects of Jewish life than their less highly educated peers.

Figure 18. % who engaged in various Jewish cultural activities in the past year by education (SOC95)

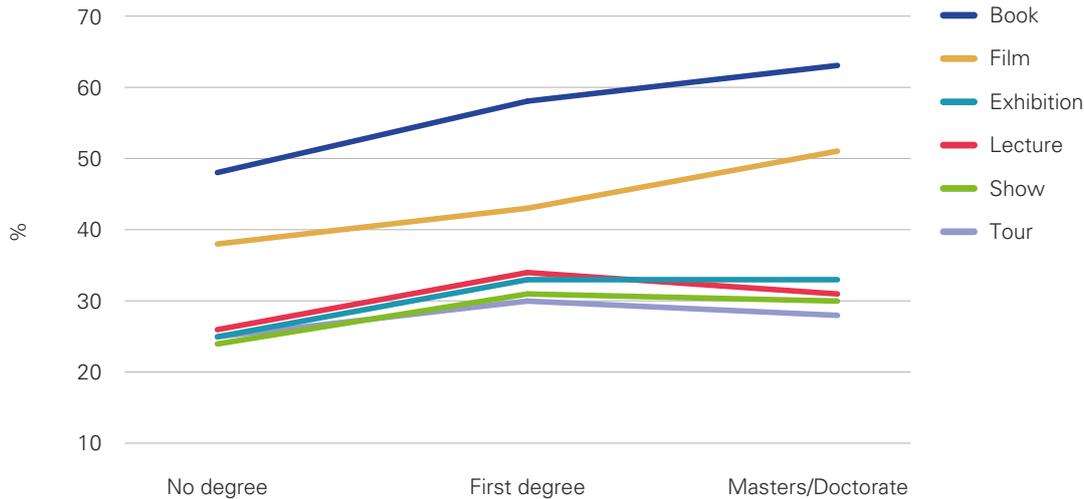
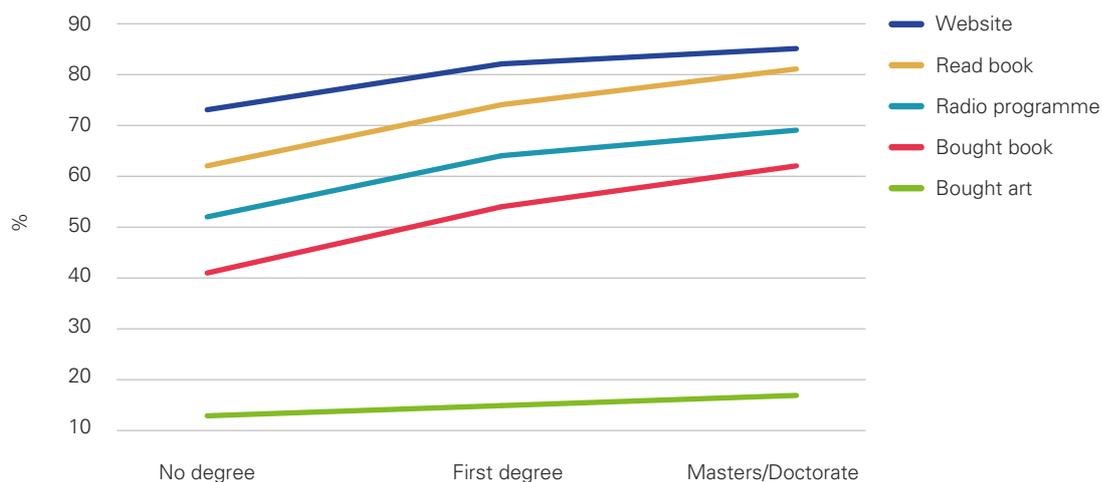


Figure 19. % who engaged in various Jewish cultural activities in the past year by education (NJCS13)



³⁹ SOC95 does provide some relevant data. Highly educated Jews are more likely than non-graduates to be 'interested' or 'very interested' in watching TV programmes on politics (80% vs 57%) and science (69% vs 51%). However, this does not provide a meaningful benchmark against which to measure their greater interest in specifically Jewish cultural products.

C2. Ethnic attitudes

The findings presented in section C1 relate mainly to behavioural measures of engagement. In this section we focus on the respondents’ *attitudes* and *feelings*, and examine how these vary with academic achievement. In particular, we look at variations in (i) personal Jewish identity and (ii) attitudes towards the British Jewish community. The relationship between academic achievement and these thoughts and feelings is interesting in itself, but it may also help to explain the basis of the negative relationship between achievement and more practical forms of engagement in Jewish life.

Personal Jewish identity

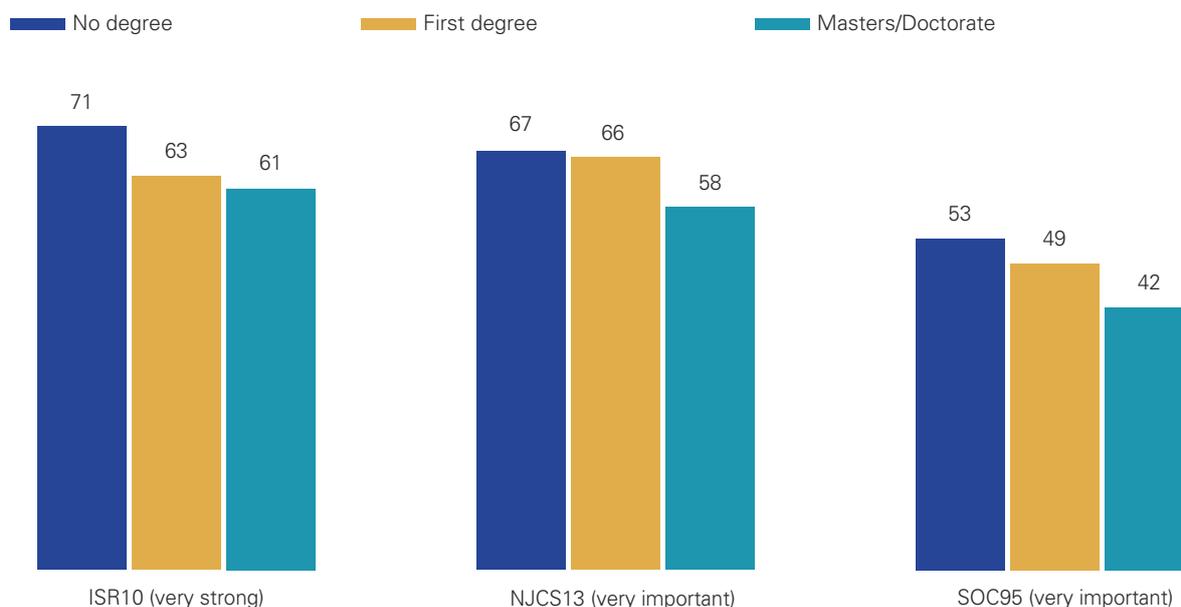
Strength of Jewish identity

Three of the surveys contain items that assess the respondents’ self-ratings of the state of their Jewish identity. The formulation of these items differs from survey to survey, but the items measure loosely similar constructs associated with the strength of a person’s attachment to their own Jewishness. The three measures are shown in the table below.

Across all three surveys, and all three levels of academic achievement (no degree, first degree, higher degree), respondents express

Survey	Questionnaire item	Response categories
SOC95	How important to your Jewish identity is “feeling Jewish ‘inside’ (i.e. personality, way of thinking, behaving)”?	Not at all Quite important Very important
ISR10	How would you currently describe the strength of your Jewish identity?	Very weak Fairly weak Fairly strong Very strong
NJCS13	How important or unimportant to your own sense of Jewish identity is... feeling part of the Jewish people?	Very unimportant Fairly unimportant Fairly important Very important

Figure 20. % expressing the strongest level of Jewish identity by academic qualifications (see text)



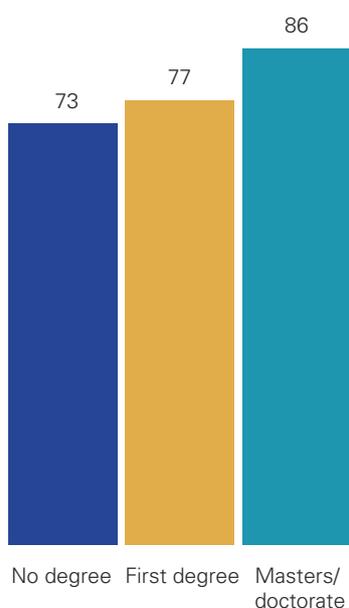
generally strong feelings of Jewish identity. The percentage of positive ratings (i.e. the emboldened responses above) is between 80% and 95% and these figures do not vary greatly with academic achievement (not shown).

However, if the index of identity is restricted to the strongest level of identity (i.e. the ‘very important’ or ‘very strong’ responses), there is a statistically significant decline in identity with academic achievement (Figure 20).

Jewish identity and personal characteristics

There is, however, a second aspect of personal Jewish identity which generates a somewhat different picture. This concerns the extent to which a person perceives their personal characteristics (e.g. their personality and values) to be a reflection of their Jewishness. This is an important measure because it locates Jewish identity within someone’s individual psychology.

Figure 21. % saying that their personal characteristics were influenced by their Jewishness by level of education (SOC95)

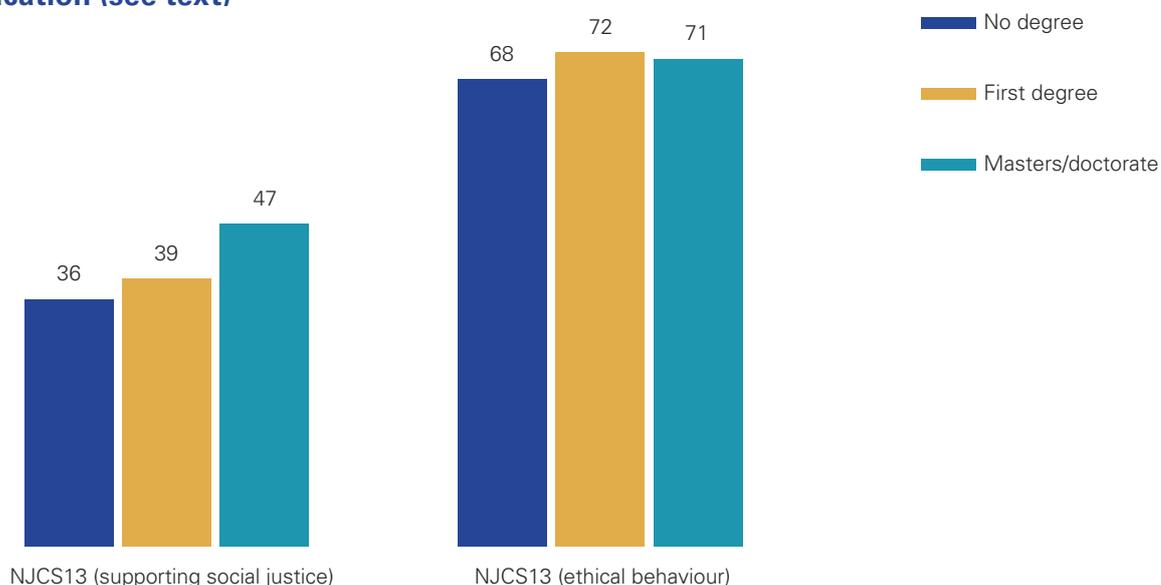


Only two of the surveys (SOC95 and NJCS13) generated data on this issue. SOC95 asked respondents whether they felt that their own characteristics had been influenced by their Jewish background – and requested examples from those who said yes. Although, as we have seen, high achievers were somewhat less likely to rate their Jewish identity as being very strong/very important, they were significantly *more* likely (86%) to see their personal characteristics as a reflection of their Jewishness than those without a degree (73%) (Figure 21). The key areas that distinguished postgraduates from others was a stronger perception that their Jewishness had created a *concern for morality*, a *desire to avoid prejudice* and a *love of learning*.

NJCS13 also examined this issue by asking respondents to rate attributes and behaviours in terms of their importance ‘to your own sense of Jewish identity’. Two of these (‘strong moral and ethical behaviour’ and ‘supporting social justice causes’) correspond loosely to the ones identified in the SOC95 study as being linked to a person’s Jewish background. Again, a *higher* proportion of postgraduates than non-graduates rated these areas as being important features of their Jewish identity, although the difference is only statistically reliable in the case of ‘supporting social justice’ (Figure 22).

The overall findings in this section are counter-intuitive. Firstly, in contrast to the *behavioural* measures of ethnic attachment, the negative relationship between academic achievement and *feelings* of Jewish identity is relatively modest. Furthermore, high achievers are actually *more* likely than others to see their personality and values as a reflection of their Jewishness – and specifically, to associate their Jewishness with moral values. Taken together, these findings do not suggest that highly educated Jews substantially downplay, deny or under-value their personal identity as Jews.

Figure 22. Perceived influence of Jewish identity on personal characteristics by level of education (see text)



Jewish social and communal identity

Separateness and interconnectedness

The picture reverts to the normal pattern when measures of individual Jewish identity are replaced by measures of group identity – i.e. the extent to which respondents value the Jewish community and their connection with it.

Table 2 shows the responses of the three achievement groups to a series of items related to social and communal aspects of Jewish identity. These items measure support for the notion of Jews as an interconnected people, separate from others, mutually reliant and emotionally bonded. In contrast to the measures of personal identity, there is a very marked fall-off in agreement with these statements as a function of achievement. In general, those without a degree are about 1.5 to 2 times more likely to give a communally identified response than those with a Masters or doctorate. For example, 45% of non-graduates say they are more comfortable mixing with Jews, compared to 29% of postgraduates.

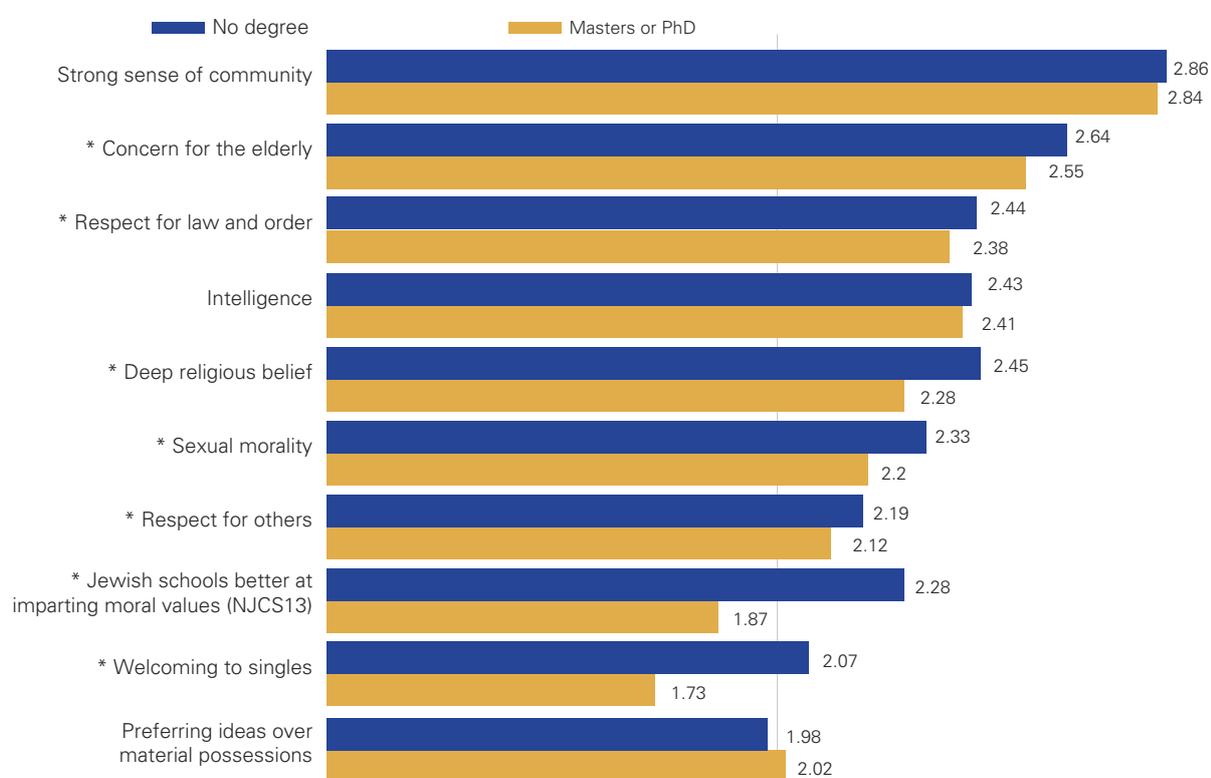
Perceived character of the Jewish community

A second aspect of Jewish communal identity is the extent to which Jews as a group, or Jewish organisations within it, are seen as having positive characteristics that might reinforce the desire to be part of the community. SOC95 (supplemented by one example from NJCS13) examined perceptions of the Jewish community in some detail, asking whether a series of desirable and undesirable characteristics were more common among Jews, or in society at large, or whether there was no difference. Figure 23 summarises the findings for ten attributes generally regarded as positive (though some are a matter of judgment). To ease interpretation we have compared the responses of those with no degree to those with a Masters or doctorate (omitting the middle category – those with a first degree). The graph shows the average rating of each characteristic on a scale from 1 (more common in society generally) to 3 (more common in the Jewish community). 2 corresponds to an attribute that is seen as equally common in the Jewish community and in society as a whole.⁴⁰

40 For the NJCS item, 2.0 represents a group of responses in which those who agree with the statement are equal in number to those who disagree.

Table 2. Closeness and perceived inter-dependence of Jews

Questionnaire item (and response)	% giving the response specified in column 1		
	No degree	Degree	Masters/ PhD
SOC95			
An unbreakable bond unites Jews all over the world (strongly agree + agree)	78	71	56
When it comes to a crisis Jews can only depend on other Jews (strongly agree + agree)	41	37	28
How important to your personal sense of Jewishness is... a feeling of closeness to other Jews? (very important)	34	23	15
Would you say you feel more comfortable mixing with Jews or non-Jews or no difference? (Jews)	45	36	29
NJCS13			
How important to your own sense of Jewish identity is... socialising in predominantly Jewish circles (very or fairly important)	61	52	35

Figure 23. Perceived prevalence of positive attributes in the Jewish community compared with society at large (1 = less, 2 = same, 3 = more)

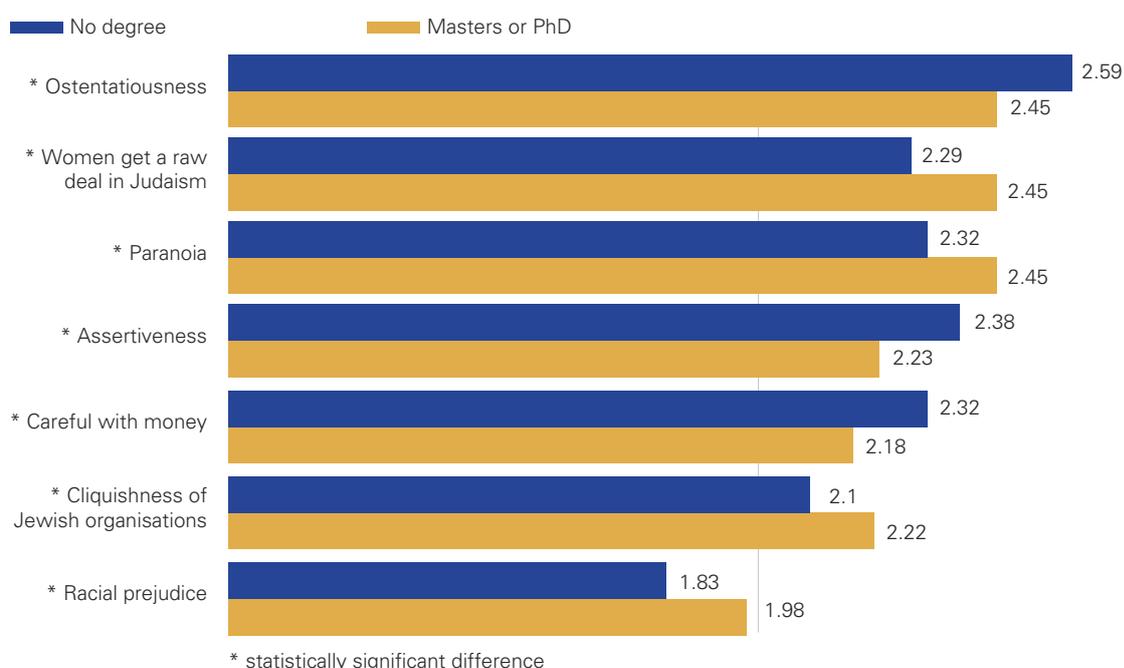
* statistically significant difference

As can be seen, all but three of these positive attributes have a mean rating clearly above 2; i.e. they are seen as more common in the Jewish community than in society at large (the exceptions being 'preferring ideas over material possessions', being 'welcoming to singles' and the perception that 'Jewish schools are better at imparting moral values'). However, of particular interest here is not the average rating, but rather the finding that in nine out of ten cases, high achievers are *less likely* to associate positive attributes with the Jewish community than are non-graduates. The differences are not large, but they are consistent, and in seven cases they are statistically reliable. Thus, whilst these positive attributes are generally seen as more prevalent in the Jewish community by *both* achievement groups, the highly educated are somewhat less likely to reach that conclusion than the non-graduates – and in two cases (relating to Jewish schools and single people) high achievers rate the Jewish community less positively than society as a whole.

SOC95 also examined the extent to which negative characteristics such as paranoia or racial prejudice were seen as being more (or less) common among Jews/Jewish organisations than in the rest of society (Figure 24). With the exception of racial prejudice, most of these negative attributes are seen by Jews as being somewhat *more* marked within the community than outside it.⁴¹ But again, the main point of interest is not whether Jewish respondents view the community as having some negative attributes, but whether high achievers are more likely to entertain such negative perceptions than others.

In fact, the findings are equivocal. In four cases (*racial prejudice, cliquishness, paranoia* and *a raw deal for women*), high achievers are more likely than non-graduates to associate the negative attributes with Jews. But in the remaining three cases (*ostentatiousness, assertiveness* and *being careful with money*)

Figure 24. Mean rating of negative attributes (more common or agree = 3, less common or disagree = 1)



41 For some items (e.g. "Women get a raw deal in Judaism") the respondents are asked whether they 'agree' (3), 'disagree' (1) or 'neither agree nor disagree' (2). For these items, a mean rating of 2 would imply that on average respondents are neutral on whether the attribute applies to Jews/the Jewish community.

the highly educated take a *less* negative view than others. And in all seven cases the differences between the highly educated and those without a degree are statistically significant, so they are unlikely to be chance variations.

Viewed overall, the findings on communal identity suggest that high levels of academic achievement are associated with substantially weaker levels of attachment to the Jewish community as a social collectivity – and this despite the finding in the last section that high achievers retain a fairly strong sense of personal Jewish identity.

The reason for the disjunction between personal and communal identification may be due, at least in part, to the fact that high achievers take a more negative view of the community and its organisations on a wide range of attributes, including those that relate to ethical dimensions of Jewishness.

Thus, highly educated Jews gave more negative ratings of the community's status on attributes such as *respect for others, racial prejudice, cliquishness, treatment of women/singles, concern for the elderly, the capacity of Jewish schools to impart moral values and sexual morality*; all of these might be expected to discourage communal engagement among

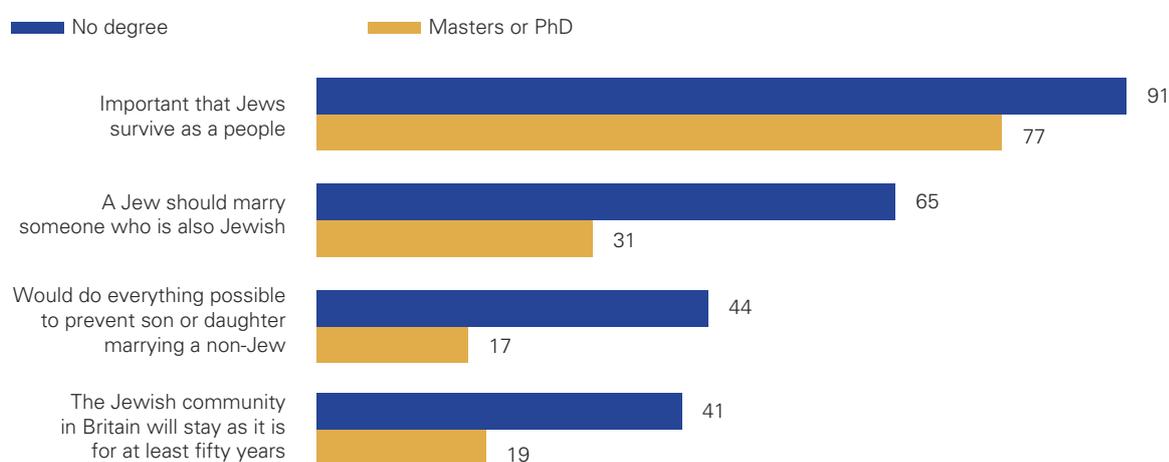
those who see their Jewishness as being centrally connected to moral issues.

This should be seen as a tentative hypothesis bearing in mind that the behavioural differences in communal engagement are large, while the differences in communal evaluations are relatively modest. It is also possible that the perceptions of the postgraduates arise from their particular experiences of the community, which may differ systematically from those of non-graduates. Hence the more negative perceptions of the high achievers could be the consequence of their weaker or partial engagement in communal life, rather than the cause of it.

Attitudes to Jewish continuity

Concern about the survival of the Jewish community is an additional indicator of a person's level of identification with it. Data from SOC95 (Figure 25) indicate that those with a postgraduate degree are significantly less likely to rate Jewish survival as important (although 77% still do); they are half as likely as non-graduates to support in-marriage, and they are half as likely to be ready to 'do everything possible' to prevent out-marriage if their son or daughter wished to marry a non-Jew. They are also substantially less confident that the community will remain as it is for the next fifty years.

Figure 25. % agreement with statements associated with a Jewish future



These findings could be said to flow logically from the respondents' views on the Jewish community as a whole. Given that those with high academic qualifications are less positive about the quality of the community and less interested in an association with it, it is not surprising that they are also less concerned about its future and less confident of its survival.

Jewish communal identity – summary

The conclusion to be drawn from this section is that high achievers are more or less equivalent to other Jews in terms of their personal Jewish identity (i.e. the extent to which they recognise and value their personal status as Jews). But paradoxically, they are very much less inclined

to see themselves as part of an interconnected Jewish community, less attuned to the idea that Jews are reliant on each other, less positive about the characteristics of the community and less likely to prefer Jewish company. And they are very much less concerned about the survival of the community.

We have used the term *Jewish communal identity* to refer to the construct underlying this collection of attitudes towards Jews as a social entity. Statistical analysis supports the notion that the attitudes towards membership, value, interdependence and survival of the group are correlated with each other and represent a common variable.⁴²

42 The separate attitude items mentioned in this section are statistically correlated with each other ($p < 0.0001$) and generate a Cronbach Alpha of 0.738 if treated as elements of a scale.

D / Academic achievement and attitudes to Israel

For many Jews, Israel functions as a means of externalising their Jewish identity. It falls about half way down the list of ‘elements’ of Jewish identity examined in the NJCS13 study, with 69% of respondents rating it as ‘very’ or ‘fairly important’ to their sense of Jewish identity. It follows that Israel’s actions and policies, and a person’s feelings about those actions and policies, may affect their sense of identity and possibly also their attachment to the Jewish community.

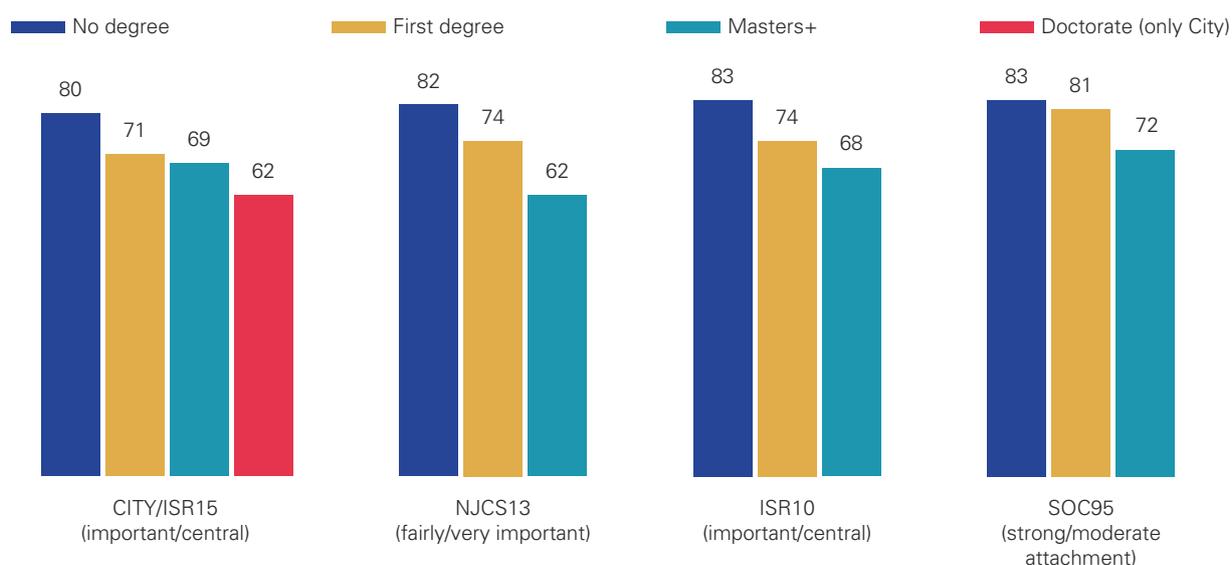
Of the various attitudes examined so far, the ‘fault lines’ between the three achievement groups are particularly clear-cut in relation to Israel. The differences reported here are all

highly significant when subjected to statistical testing. And all sixteen attitude statements examined in this section divide the respondents in exactly the same way; i.e. non-graduates are reliably far more hawkish and far more supportive of Israeli policy than graduates and postgraduates.

D1. Attachment to Israel

Figure 26 illustrates the variations in self-rated strength of attachment to Israel as a function of achievement. The formulation of the questions varied slightly from survey to survey⁴³ but it is clear that in all cases the percentage of respondents with a moderate or strong

Figure 26. % of respondents falling in the highest two categories of attachment to Israel (see footnote 43)



43 CITY/ISR15 and ISR10 both employed the same scale extending from ‘Israel plays no role in my Jewish identity’ through ‘a small part’, ‘important’ to a ‘central’ role. NJCS13 asked whether supporting Israel was very or fairly important or unimportant to ‘your own sense of Jewish identity’. SOC95 asked whether the respondent had strong, moderate, no, or negative feelings of attachment to Israel.

attachment drops from 80%+ in the non-graduate group to around 65% (on average) in the Masters/doctorate category.

These general measures of attachment are likely to be influenced by (i) long-term feelings of connection to Israel as a Jewish state and (ii) more immediate reactions to Israel's current (at the time) actions and policies. To separate out these two elements, Figures 27 to 29 show the responses to a series of more focused attitude statements taken from ISR10 and CITY/ISR15.

D2. Attitudes towards Israel: general and specific issues

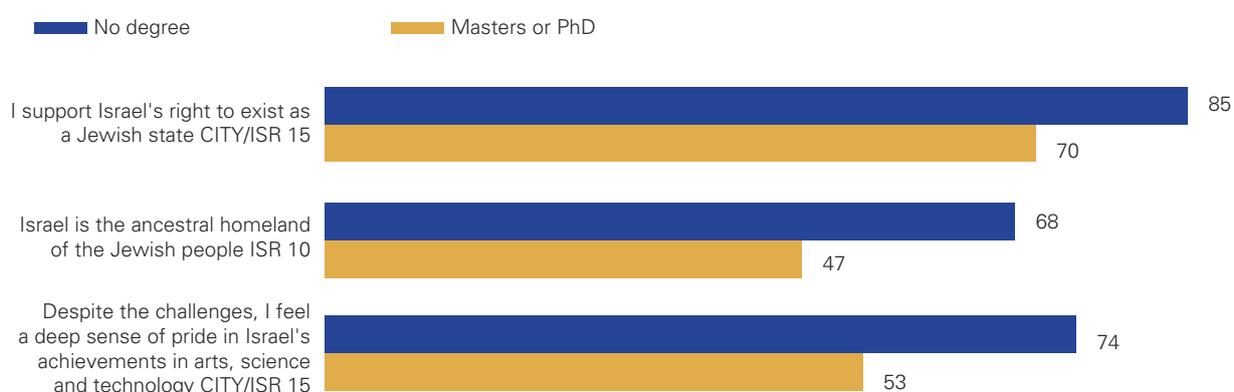
The first three items (Figure 27) assess what are assumed to be relatively stable, long-term feelings about Israel: levels of support for its existence, recognition of its status as the Jewish homeland, and feelings of pride in its cultural and scientific achievements. These generic statements elicit fairly high levels of agreement (averaging about 70%), comparable to the levels of attachment to the country.

And there is again significant variation as a function of academic achievement; for these three items, levels of support are 15%–20% lower among postgraduates than among non-graduates.

The next six items (Figure 28) assess support for specific views that are broadly in line with Israeli government positions on the conflict with the Palestinians (e.g. the legitimacy of operation Cast Lead,⁴⁴ settlement expansion); they also measure support for attitudes to peace negotiations that fall to the right of the political spectrum (e.g. rejection of Palestinian rights to a land of their own). In all six cases the postgraduates are far less likely than the non-graduates to agree with such statements.

With differentials of up to 33%, the political distance between high achievers and non-graduates is significantly greater on these items than on those associated with general attachment to Israel and support for her existence. In other words, the disengagement of high achievers intensifies as we move from existential support for Israel to approval of its recent policies and actions.

Figure 27. % agreement – long-term expressions of attachment



44 Operation Cast Lead was a three-week period of armed conflict between Israel and the Palestinians in Gaza that took place in December 2008 and January 2009 – i.e. in recent memory in the context of the ISR10 study.

Figure 28. % agreement with centrist and right-leaning attitudes and policies

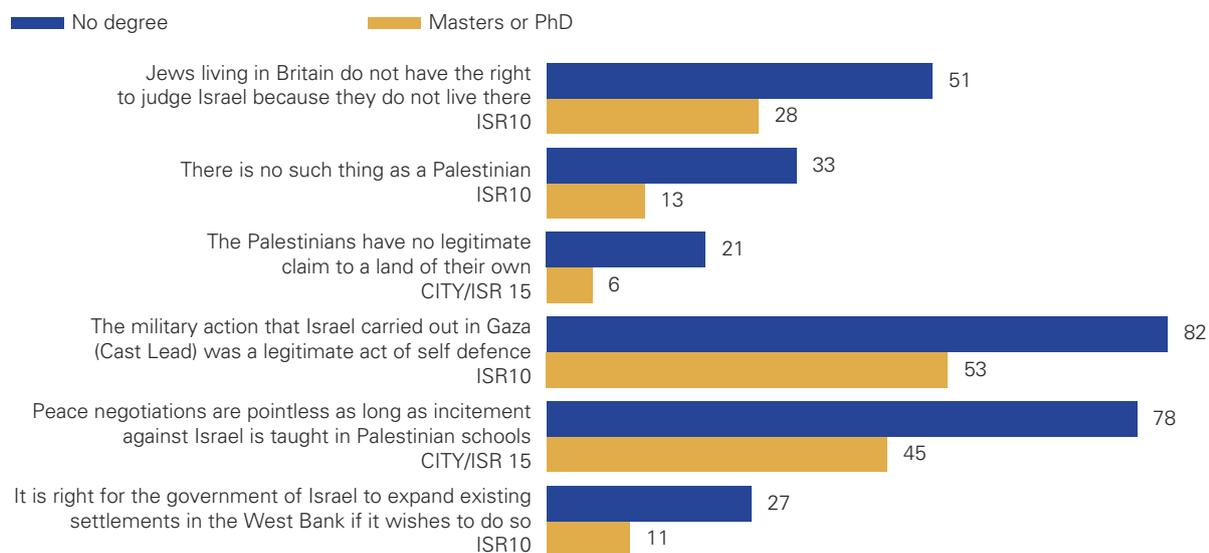


Figure 29. % agreement with dovish and left-leaning attitudes to Israel



The final set of statements (Figure 29) represents views that are dovish⁴⁵ in nature (e.g. the ceding of land for peace) or left-leaning in terms of their judgements of Israeli policy

(e.g. despair at the expansion of settlements, weakening of attachment to Israel due to its treatment of Palestinians). Here again, the political differences are very apparent.

45 The term 'dovish' is used here as a shorthand for a group of correlated attitudes which endorse (i) the pursuit of peace; (ii) the making of concessions for peace; and (iii) opposition to policies and conduct judged by the respondents to be inconsistent with these goals (e.g. the view that the expansion of settlements is an obstacle to peace).

Respondents with postgraduate degrees are about 20%–30% more likely to embrace these progressive sentiments than those without a degree.

This strong relationship between high academic achievement and the endorsement of dovish attitudes to Israel is replicated

across more than sixty items examined in the ISR10 and CITY/ISR 15 surveys. Dovishness on Israel – and, to a lesser extent, weaker attachment to Israel – therefore co-exist with fragile communal engagement and lower levels of religious belief and practice as part of the cluster of features that characterises academically able Jews.

E / Reflections, implications and policy issues

E1. How robust are the findings?

Jews with postgraduate degrees are not a homogenous bunch. Although they constitute the most highly educated 20% (or thereabouts) of the Jewish population of the UK, the individuals within that group vary substantially in their ability and academic achievements. Similarly, although they are *on average* the least engaged members of the community, there are still big variations in the degree of engagement; indeed, it is clear that some Jewish academics and professionals are very actively involved in communal life. It follows that the negative relationship between academic achievement and engagement is a general trend, not a precise and universal rule. Expressed on a scale from 0 to 1, the correlation coefficient⁴⁶ between achievement and Jewish engagement varies between -0.2 and -0.4 depending on the particular survey and particular index of engagement. This means that there is a firm, but moderate negative association between level of education and Jewish engagement. That said, given the large size of each of the samples, the trends are statistically very reliable. In each of the four surveys, the probability that the negative relationship between engagement⁴⁷ and achievement could have arisen by chance is less than one in one thousand. Taking the four surveys together, that probability is vanishingly

small; in other words, the downward trend in engagement with increasing achievement is unquestionably a real one.

Since levels of engagement in Jewish life are likely to be influenced by many different variables, it is not surprising that any one factor (like academic achievement) may account for only a small fraction of the total variation. In the present case, differences in academic achievement account for between 5% and 15% of the variation in Jewish engagement, depending on the precise measures used to assess engagement.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, the data show a consistent trend towards weaker engagement of the highly educated across a wide range of religious and ethnic behaviours, and across four independent surveys. On some specific measures, the gap between the level of engagement of postgraduates (especially doctoral graduates) and others is very substantial – e.g. the outmarriage rate of postgraduates was found to be double that of non-graduates. Similarly, on measures of Jewish friendship, synagogue membership, charitable priorities, Jewish media access and support for Israeli policy, the indices of engagement were sometimes 1.5, 2 or even 3 times higher among non-graduates than among Jews with a Masters or doctoral qualification.

46 A correlation coefficient (r) expresses the extent to which two variables (e.g. height and running speed) are associated with each other in a linear manner. The coefficient falls on a scale from 0 (no link at all) to 1 (a perfect association). An r value may be positive (e.g. 0.4) meaning that on average, the taller you are, the faster you can run, or negative (e.g. -0.4) meaning the taller you are, the slower your speed. In social research, where there are many variables influencing the behaviour of interest, correlation coefficients are often modest (e.g. 0.1 to 0.4) but may still be statistically significant (i.e. they reflect a reliable relationship between the variables, not a chance outcome).

47 For these purposes engagement was assessed by a composite index of between 5 and 22 items relating to ethnic and religious behaviour and attitudes. Different measures were used on each survey.

48 This includes both single measures (e.g. proportion of Jewish friends) and the composite measures referred to above.

Alternative explanations

Academic achievement is correlated with a number of other variables; these include age, intelligence, socio-economic status, cultural and factual knowledge and so forth. In principle, any one of these 'covariates' might be the real cause of the lower levels of engagement, rather than achievement itself.

For example, since high achievers tend to be somewhat younger than Jews in general, it could be that their weaker engagement is simply a feature of their (younger) age rather than their level of achievement. Whilst this is theoretically possible, analysis of the partial correlation between education and engagement *within each age group*, reveals that the negative relationship is still present. Hence age cannot be a significant factor in explaining the weaker engagement of high achievers.

With regard to the other 'covariates' such as intelligence or professional status or academic knowledge, we have taken the view that (unlike age) these variables all form part of a cluster of measures closely related to ability and achievement. Whilst we do not have the data to disentangle the separate effects of each strand, it could be argued that the precise cause is irrelevant; the fact that academically able Jews are less engaged in Jewish life raises significant issues for the development of the community whichever feature of the achievement cluster is the most influential.

E2. Why are highly educated Jews less engaged?

Knowing precisely which aspect of achievement or ability sets off the process that leads to weaker engagement may not be a critical issue. But understanding the process itself is another matter.

For a community that depends, at least in part, on its intellectual resources, it is important to understand how it is that highly educated Jews

turn out to be less actively involved in Jewish life and less committed to its preservation. This is particularly so if there is to be any attempt to address or reverse the trend. For that reason, an attempt has been made to identify some of the intervening mechanisms that account for the link between achievement and disengagement.

Socio-economic pull factors

We noted in the introduction that, historically speaking, the nature and causal direction of the link between academic achievement and Jewish engagement has probably changed through time.

In their seminal work on education and Jewish history, Botticini and Ekstein⁴⁹ argue that Jews living in the Middle Ages had to be willing and able to be educated in order to engage in the dominant expression of Judaism at that time – one that was grounded in Jewish textual learning. Such Jews could also use their intellectual skills to train as lawyers, physicians, financiers and scholars, thereby entering a professional, urban elite. But the essential dynamic was that the desire to maintain one's Jewish identity caused people to acquire the necessary academic skills, while a lack of education prevented Jewish identification and effectively propelled uneducated Jews into the prevailing, non-Jewish, agrarian economy. On this view, a survey of Jewish engagement and academic achievement in the year 1000 CE would have revealed a strong positive association between Jewish engagement and education, with the *desire for engagement driving the pursuit of education*.

Fast forward a further thousand years to the twenty-first century and the link between economics and Jewish life choices seems to operate in the reverse direction. Some economists argue that Jews choose between competing lifestyle options in such a way as to maximise the social and economic benefit of their choices.⁵⁰ For highly educated middle class Jews, the utility derived from participation in secular, non-Jewish activities may be greater in terms of social networking, professional challenge and financial opportunities than

49 Maristella Botticini and Zvi Eckstein (2012), op. cit.

50 See Carmel Chiswick (2014) op. cit.

the investment of similar amounts of time in Jewish endeavours. For the less highly educated, the social and economic benefits of non-Jewish pursuits may not be as great and hence there is more room for Jewishly-centred activity. In other words, in the current climate, it is argued that the *level of education determines the value of Jewish engagement*, rather than vice versa, and that the nature of the relationship is now negative.

Put another way, this hypothesis implies that non-Jewish pursuits represent a stronger ‘pull factor’ for academically accomplished Jews than for those with less advanced qualifications.

This is a plausible hypothesis, though it remains untested in the case of British Jews. But in any event, it is unlikely to be a complete explanation because it ignores the other half of the process – i.e. the extent to which Jewish life and Jewish pursuits compete with, or perhaps reinforce, the presumed socio-economic drivers of disengagement. We therefore examine how a person’s relationship with the Jewish community might influence the process by which able Jews are drawn towards disengagement.

Personal Jewish identity

The conventional wisdom is that the strength of one’s Jewish identity is a powerful determinant of engagement in Jewish life. When strong, it is seen as a means of resisting the lure of assimilation and disengagement, and when weak, as an explanation for it. If highly educated Jews had substantially lower levels of Jewish identity, then this could explain their reduced engagement in Jewish activities of all kinds.

The data in section C2 do not support this hypothesis; there is no evidence of a close relationship between Jewish identity (in the

sense of personal attachment to one’s Jewishness) and academic achievement.⁵¹ Whilst high achievers are somewhat *less* likely to use the label ‘very strong’ rather than ‘strong’ to describe their Jewish identity, they are *more* likely to see their personality and character as being influenced by their Jewishness. And they are *more* likely to cite⁵² positive traits and values (fairness, respect, dislike of prejudice, love of learning) as examples of how they feel their Jewishness has affected them. As noted earlier, these findings do not suggest that highly educated Jews downplay or undervalue their Jewishness, nor that there is any substantial difference between them and other groups in the strength of their identity. If highly educated Jews do not have a substantially weaker sense of personal Jewish identity, then this cannot be the reason for their weaker engagement in Jewish life.

This is borne out by examining the *partial correlation*⁵³ between achievement and engagement after removing any influence of Jewish identity. This analysis shows that achievement is still negatively related to engagement even if it is measured for people with equal ratings on the Jewish identity scale. Accordingly, differences in the strength of an individual’s Jewish identity cannot explain why high achievers have significantly weaker levels of engagement.

Jewish communal identity

There is, however, an important distinction to be drawn between one’s personal identity as a Jew and one’s feelings about the Jewish community as a whole. We have referred to the latter as ‘Jewish communal identity’ so as to include perceptions of the value and appeal of the community *and* feelings of attachment to it.

51 Obviously, if Jewish identity is defined more broadly to include Jewish social and religious behaviour, or attitudes to Israel and the community, then there is strong evidence for a difference between high achievers and others. But not if the concept of Jewish identity is restricted to a purely personal sense of being Jewish and valuing it.

52 Unpublished data from SOC95.

53 Partial correlation is a technique for measuring the strength of the relationship between two variables (e.g. the height of a child and spelling ability) after removing the influence of a third variable (e.g. age). In this example, the height of children will have a strong positive correlation with spelling ability, but this is only because taller children tend to be older. The partial correlation between height and spelling ability will be reduced to near 0 once age is ‘partialled out’ i.e. for children of the same age, height and spelling ability will be unrelated.

The attitudinal data (SOC95) reported earlier show the disjunction between the high achievers' positive attitudes towards their personal identities as Jews and their far weaker, if not negative, sense of Jewish communal identity. Highly educated respondents are about half as likely as non-graduates to see their fellow Jews as a source of natural support or to express concern about Jewish continuity. They are less likely to accept that 'an unbreakable bond unites Jews', or to see Jewish organisations as open and welcoming, or to attribute positive characteristics to the community as a whole (such as respect for others, fair treatment of women⁵⁴ or avoidance of racial prejudice).⁵⁵

These findings reflect a tendency to see the community as being less committed to equality, less open and less moral than do other respondents – and yet these are the very qualities highly educated Jews tend to associate with their personal status as Jews. It seems likely that these more negative feelings about the nature of the Jewish community may well be driving their lower levels of participation in Jewish life.

To test this hypothesis, we constructed a scale to measure the strength of Jewish communal identity by combining levels of agreement with attitudes and opinions of the kind discussed above. We then examined the strength of the partial correlation between achievement and engagement in Jewish life among individuals with the same level of Jewish communal identity. Under these circumstances, the negative association between achievement and engagement almost disappears (the correlation shifts from -0.25 to around -0.05). In practical terms, this means that the drop in Jewish engagement among highly educated Jews can be largely attributed to their more critical evaluation of the Jewish community, rather than any weakness in their personal identity as Jews.

Dovishness on Israel

The more universal, liberal and less ethno-centric values reflected in high achievers' attitudes towards the community are also reflected in their more dovish views on Israel and their more critical stance on Israeli government policy. Not only are the highly educated more dovish, but about two-thirds of them consider that Jewish communal leadership does not adequately reflect their views on Israel. This suggests that variations in dovishness⁵⁶ may also play a role in explaining why high achievers are less engaged in Jewish communal life.

Repeating the partial correlation analysis used in the previous section we find that the correlation between achievement and Jewish engagement also drops to a very low level (again around -0.05) if the effects of dovishness are held constant. In other words, it seems that the more critical views of Israel's conduct and policies held by high achievers may also mediate their weaker engagement in Jewish life generally, just as their more critical views of the Jewish community do the same thing.

There is no need to choose between these two explanations; it is clear that the items that make up the dovishness and community identity scales each represent different expressions of a more fundamental dimension – namely, the intensity of the respondents' socially liberal and egalitarian value systems.⁵⁷ The tendency towards more progressive and liberal values among high achievers is statistically sufficient to explain why they are less well disposed towards the concept of an ethno-centric Jewish community, less supportive of Israel's current policies and conduct and less strongly engaged practically in Jewish life.

54 This phrase is based on the higher level of support for the item "women get a raw deal in Judaism".

55 Note that highly educated Jews as a whole do not necessarily reject these positive attributes of the community, but they are less likely to regard them as characteristic than non-graduates.

56 Each survey (other than NJCS13) included items that could be combined to produce a measure of dovishness extending from very hawkish views on the peace process (low scores) to very dovish views (high scores).

57 The SOC95 data show strong and statistically significant correlations between socially liberal attitudes, dovish positions on Israel and low levels of Jewish communal identity; i.e. they represent a common underlying factor.

E3. Is the link between high achievement and weak engagement more prominent in the young?

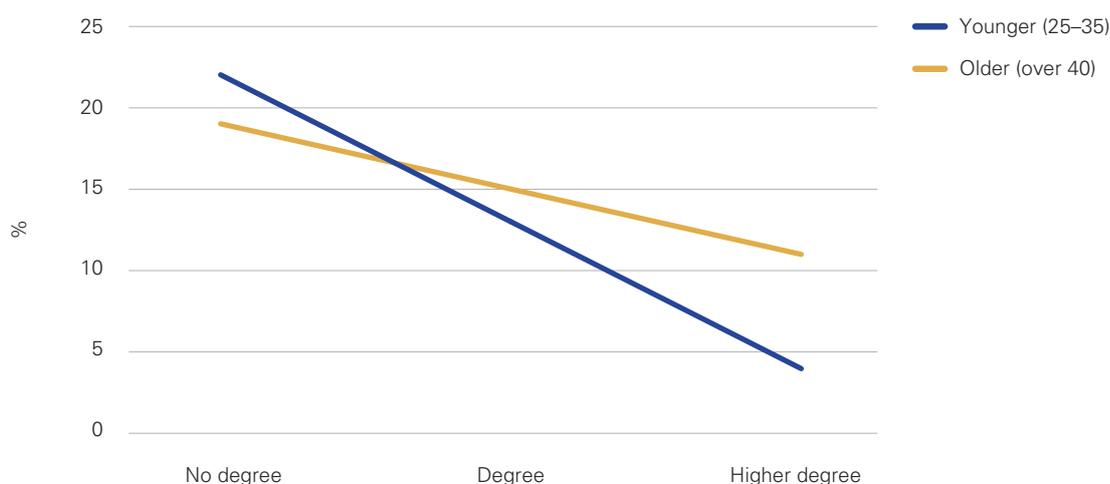
Although younger members of the community are somewhat more likely to be highly educated, we have shown above (see E1) that age cannot explain the relationship between education and engagement. However, there is a separate and important question to be asked about the involvement of age. This is whether the negative effect of higher education on Jewish engagement is stronger among younger people than older ones? This is important because of the longer-term implications. If the relationship is stronger among the young, then it is possible that the trend towards disengagement with academic achievement will accelerate in the future.⁵⁸

It turns out that this is a difficult question to answer for three reasons. First, younger Jews (in the 25–35 age range) may not have had sufficient time to achieve a Masters or doctoral qualification, even though they are on track to acquire one.

Second, in the age range 30 to 55, a proportion of the cohort is likely to become more engaged in Jewish life, sometimes on a temporary basis, as a consequence of their involvement in child rearing. Thirdly, in all four surveys, there is evidence of a tendency to sample a higher proportion of engaged respondents in the younger age groups than in other age groups. All three factors muddy the waters and probably depress the *apparent* strength of the achievement-disengagement relationship in younger respondents.

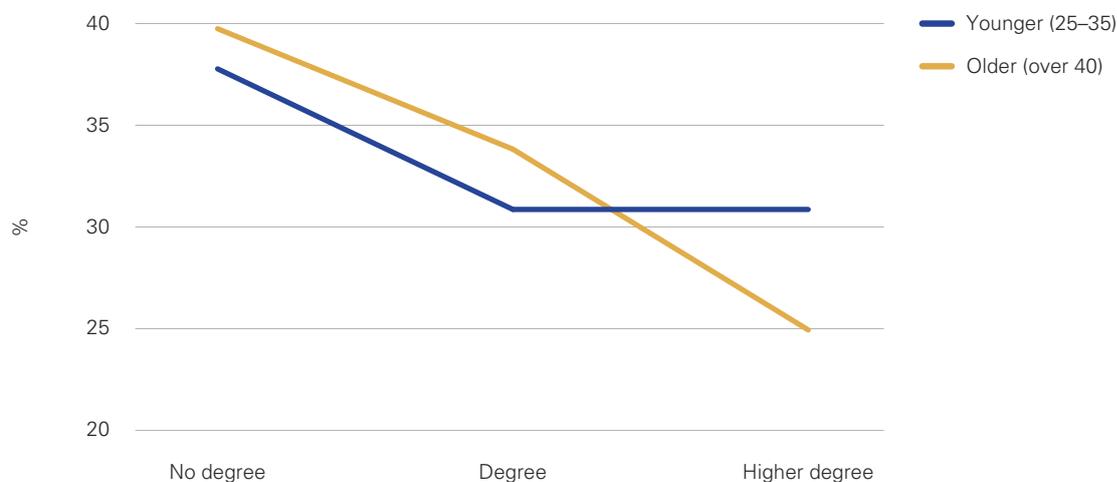
Given these confounding factors, it is not surprising that the findings are unclear. Whilst engagement declines with achievement in *all* age groups, the rate of decline is sometimes greater in the young, and sometimes greater among older respondents. For example, in relation to religious belief (“Jews have a special relationship with God”, SOC95) the negative effect of academic achievement is considerably stronger in the younger age group (Figure 30). Conversely, when using ratings of “closeness to other Jews”, the effect of achievement is more obvious in the older group than the younger one (Figure 31).

Figure 30. % who strongly agree “Jews have a special relationship with God” [SOC95]



⁵⁸ This is not an inevitable conclusion. It may be that in every generation the link between achievement and disengagement is strongest among the young, but that the tendency weakens as the young cohort ages. Such a model would be consistent with a disproportionate loss of high ability people, but at a rate that is constant, rather than accelerating through time.

Figure 31. % rating “closeness to other Jews” as very important to their identity [SOC95]

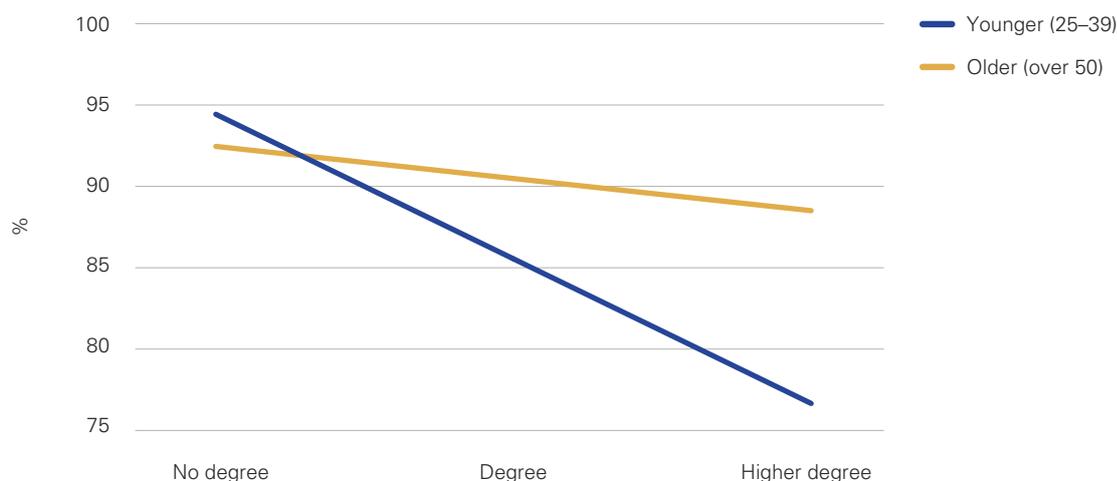


Thus, there is no consistent pattern with regard to the effect of age on the Achievement-Disengagement relationship; i.e. the link is present in all age groups, but its strength does not *appear* to vary with age.

There is one exception to this general rule and that relates to the respondents' attitudes to

Israel. In this area, the general tendency for high achievers to be less 'pro-Israel'⁵⁹ does vary with age. In the four examples below (Figures 32 to 35), the decline in pro-Israel sentiment as a function of academic achievement is significantly greater among the younger age groups.

Figure 32. % who agree “Israel is the ancestral homeland of the Jewish people” [ISR10]



59 This term is used as a shorthand description for those who express attachment to Israel and support for its current policies. It is not meant to imply that opposition to Israel's current policies is necessarily anti-Israel.

Figure 33. % who disagree that “The government of Israel should negotiate with Hamas in its efforts to achieve peace” [ISR10]

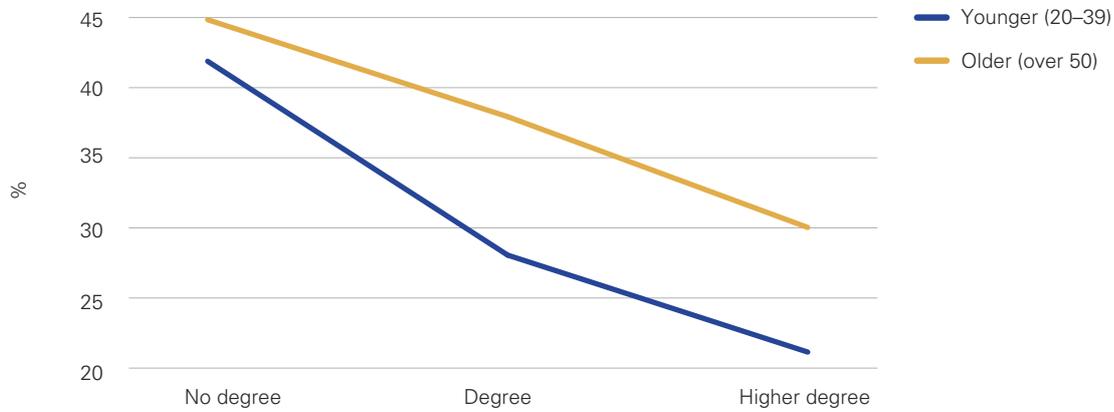


Figure 34. % who agree “The British Jewish community is not firm enough in its defence of Israel” [CITY/ISR15]

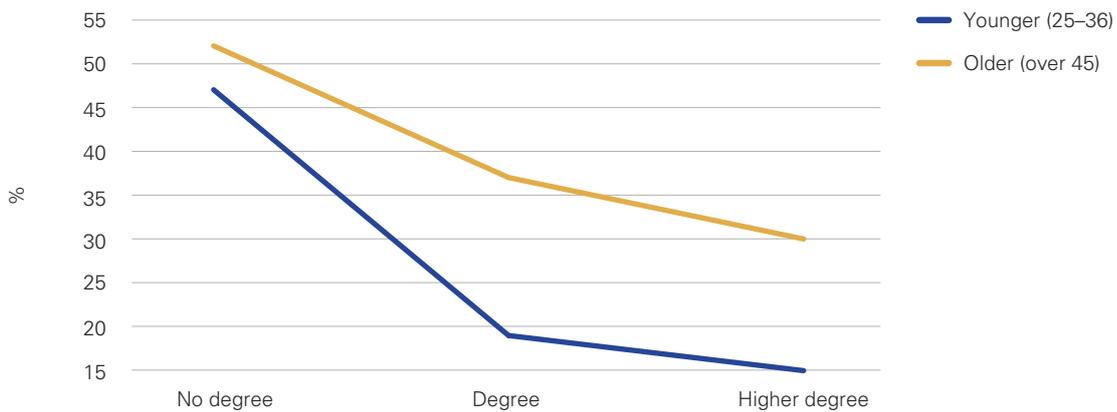
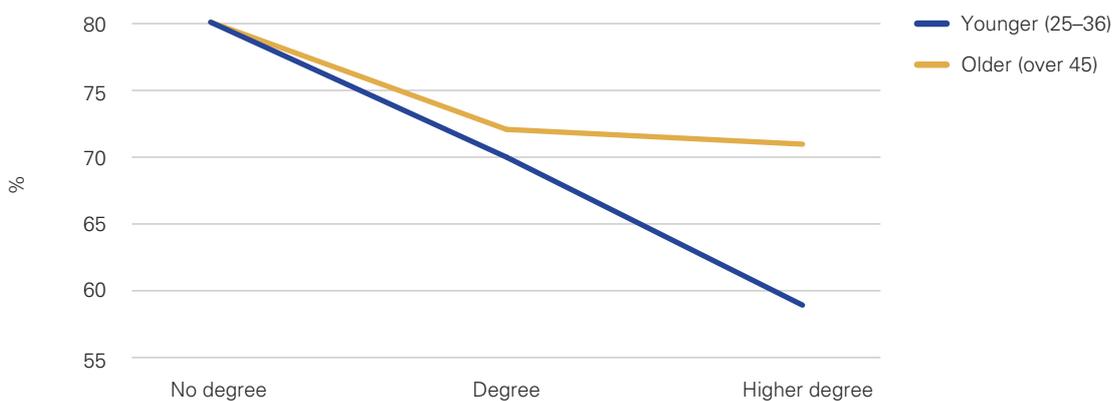


Figure 35. % who say that Israel is “central to” or “important to” their Jewish identity [CITY/ISR15]



These data demonstrate two well-established findings – that both high achievers and younger adults are less attached to Israel and less supportive of its current position than Jews generally. The data also demonstrate a new finding that the weakening of support for Israel among high achievers is significantly more marked in younger age groups than in older ones. Put another way, the differences in opinion between the highly educated and the less highly educated on Israel are largest in the younger sectors of the community. This raises questions, beyond the scope of this paper, about the way in which the community represents Israel-related issues to younger people.

E4. The risk of a brain drain

The evidence presented so far shows that within the current British Jewish community, the most academically qualified Jews are, on average, the least engaged. This means that the active Jewish community, whilst it undoubtedly contains many exceptionally accomplished people, is failing to retain a representative proportion of such people. In effect, the intellectual resources available to the community are less than they would have been if the community were equally attractive to individuals at all levels of ability and achievement.

It is one thing to conclude that the current state of affairs is not as rosy as it might be, and another to conclude that the under-representation of the highly educated is likely to continue or even spiral – i.e. that the Jewishly identified community will become progressively denuded of its most able members. On the basis of the data we have available, the notion of a continuing ‘brain drain’ over a considerable period of time turns out to be a possibility, but not a certainty. From a scientific perspective, the question is unanswerable on the available data, but it is worth listing some of the variables that are relevant to the answer. There are at least four significant factors that bear on the issue:

i) Is the current tendency for the highly educated to be less engaged a permanent phenomenon?

Clearly this is the fundamental question and it is untestable because it depends on future events. If the current trend toward weaker engagement and higher levels of outmarriage were to work itself out, or even reverse itself, then the conditions for the disproportionate loss of highly educated Jews would disappear at a stroke.

It is possible to imagine changes in the way the community organises itself and engages with its most able members that would influence the intellectual demography of the community quite dramatically. There may also be external social and political developments that will affect the relationship between highly educated Jews and the organised Jewish community.

These are matters for communal debate (see E5) rather than scientific analysis. But it would be prudent to recognise that the proportion of academically gifted people within the engaged community is likely to decline if present trends continue.

ii) Do high achievers run in families and, if so, how will that affect future trends?

There is a substantial raft of evidence for a genetic basis for variations in intelligence.^{60,61} But even if genetic mechanisms are ignored and the transmission of intelligence is assumed to be based on environmental and cultural factors alone, it still follows that highly able children will be more likely to come from highly educated families. This means that such children may have an inherent tendency towards weaker engagement arising from their own academic abilities, reinforced by the weaker levels of Jewish engagement of their parents. Hence the correlation between the academic ability of parents and children would be likely to speed up the process of disengagement, compared with a situation in which the ability of

60 Neisser, Ulric; Boodoo, Gwyneth; Bouchard, Thomas J., Jr.; et al. (1996). ‘Intelligence: Knowns and unknowns,’ *American Psychologist* 51 (2): 77–101.

61 R.Lynn and S. Kanazawa, op. cit.

children was unrelated to that of their parents. Of course, this expectation of the accelerated disengagement of highly able young Jews would change if the underlying relationship between academic achievement and engagement were itself to change (as discussed in (i)), but there is currently no evidence for such a reversal.

iii) Can Jewish education break the cycle?

Conventional wisdom has it that Jewish schooling strengthens Jewish identity, enhances engagement and reduces the probability of outmarriage. The research evidence is unequivocal; it confirms that adults who attended Jewish schools do indeed exhibit higher levels of Jewish engagement. But that is not to say that the schools themselves can claim much of the credit. Once we allow for the more intense Jewish background of children at Jewish schools, it turns out that the school itself has little independent impact on their later communal engagement. In statistical terms, the Jewish character of the home accounts for 30%–40% of the variation in the engagement of adult Jews, while the *additional impact* of Jewish schooling explains about 5% at best; and on some measures, whether or not someone has attended a Jewish school, has no impact whatsoever on adult engagement.⁶²

How does this affect our findings on the erosion of communal engagement among academic high fliers? First, the trends we have presented in this report are based on the whole community, including those who did and did not attend Jewish schools. If we were to separate out those two groups, we would find (for the reasons set out above) that adults who attended Jewish schools had higher levels of engagement than those who did not. But the more interesting question is whether the decline in engagement with academic achievement would work in the

same way for each group. In other words, does attending a Jewish school confer some kind of immunity on its graduates such that the negative impact of higher education on engagement is reduced or even reversed?

Analysis of the data does not support such a model. Taking outmarriage as one index of disengagement, we have examined its relationship with academic achievement for three sub-groups of the SOC95 survey: adults who attended Jewish schools for all, part or none of their school years. As expected, graduates of Jewish schools had lower average rates of outmarriage, but there is still a strong upward trend with academic achievement in all three groups; postgraduates are almost twice as likely as non-graduates to have a non-Jewish partner *whether or not they attended a Jewish school*:

SOC95	% of Jews whose current (or last) partner was non-Jewish		
	No degree	Degree	Higher degree
No FT Jewish schooling	29	52	55
Jewish Primary or Secondary	20	32	40
Jewish Primary and Secondary	18	19	30

What these data show is that those who have attended Jewish schools are no less susceptible to the effects of achievement on outmarriage than those who did not. And the findings are similar for nearly all of the indices of engagement described in earlier sections of this report. In practical terms this means that Jewish schooling, at least as constituted in the past few decades, is unlikely to impact on the community's capacity to retain its academic high fliers.

62 Graham, David (2014). 'Strengthening Jewish Identity: What works?', London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research; Miller, S.H. (1988). 'The impact of Jewish education on the religious behaviour and attitudes of British secondary school pupils', *Studies in Jewish Education*, 3rd edition, ed. Aviad J. Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press.

iv) Does disengagement = demographic loss?

The fact that highly educated Jews are about twice as likely as non-graduates to choose non-Jewish partners suggests that they are exiting the community at a high rate and that the community's academic profile could change quite dramatically as a consequence.

However, this conclusion needs some qualification. Firstly, by no means is it the case that all of those whose partners are non-Jewish cease to participate in Jewish life. Indeed, the evidence from SOC95 is that outmarried Jews have only marginally lower levels of Jewish identity than inmarried Jews though their Jewish behaviours are attenuated.⁶³ Secondly, the effect of the differential rate of outmarriage is not necessarily to deplete the numbers of high ability, Jewishly identified members of the community. This would only arise if the offspring of outmarried, highly educated Jews were significantly less likely to be Jewishly identified than the children of highly educated inmarried Jewish parents. More precisely, the probability that the child of an outmarried parent was Jewishly identified would need to be *less than half* that of a child born to two Jewish parents for there to be a net reduction in the proportion of academically able children.⁶⁴

There is evidence from JPR's recent analysis of intermarriage that the probability of a child of outmarried parents being raised Jewishly is about 30%,⁶⁵ whereas the children of inmarried parents are nearly always raised Jewishly. So the greater rate of outmarriage of able Jews would be likely to produce an ongoing net outflow of more able children on current trends.

However, these projections are further complicated by (i) the effect of the growth of the *haredi* sector

of the community (where outmarriage is very low and the impact of academic ability on engagement is unknown); (ii) the fact that outmarried women are more likely than men to raise their children as Jewish, and that for these children Jewish *halachic* (Jewish legal) status is not an issue; (iii) the possibility that communal attitudes to encouraging conversions or greater involvement of mixed-faith couples may change through time; and (iv) the possibility that identification rates of children within endogamous and exogamous marriages may change. For these reasons, it is difficult to predict the extent to which the association between outmarriage and high achievement will diminish the proportion of academically able children within the community.

E5. Levers for change

The ideological tension between the more liberal and universal values of high achievers and the more ethno-centric position of the organised community has some parallel to the situation of young Jews in America. One view of the American research⁶⁶ is that the more liberal ideology of young Jews on campus has greater traction than the call of the established community and traditional Zionist movements. Our data (particularly sections C2 and E3) suggest that a similar trend may characterise highly educated British Jews.

What does this research say about the potential to reverse such trends?

First, it is clear that the weaker engagement of highly educated Jews is a broadly-based phenomenon. It appears to be the product of fundamental differences between the world view of many of the highly educated respondents and the ethos of the organised community.

63 Miller S.H. (1998), op. cit.

64 This is because an outmarried man and an outmarried woman will (since they each have non-Jewish partners) produce about twice as many children as would have been the case if the Jewish man and Jewish woman had married each other. So, provided half of the children from an outmarried Jew remain Jewish, the numerical effect on the size of the Jewish community is neutral. Clearly the halachic status of the children of outmarried Jewish men complicates this calculation.

65 David Graham (2016). *Jews in couples: Marriage, Intermarriage, cohabitation and divorce in Britain*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.

66 Peter Beinart, 'The Failure of the American Jewish Establishment,' *The New York Review of Books*, June 10, 2010.

It seems unlikely that their more liberal ideology and reluctance to buy into the communal model of Jewish interdependence will easily change (for example, less than 30% of high achievers feel more comfortable with Jews than non-Jews or would consider fellow Jews as *the* group to be relied on in a crisis).

It follows that any communal strategy that aimed to promote the engagement of high achievers in communal life would need to generate alternative constructions of community that were at once meaningfully Jewish and reasonably compatible with the existing communal structures, yet attractive to socially liberal minds.

Second, the finding that high achievers retain a relatively strong sense of Jewish identity and have positive feelings about their personal Jewishness provides a possible basis for that engagement, as does their greater involvement in Jewish cultural activities. Any new initiatives would, however, need to engage the more universal Jewish values that high achievers appreciate – the tolerance, human rights and social justice agendas, rather than the ideas of ethnic distinctiveness and separation.

Third, the tendency for society in general to become more pluralistic and ethnically

diverse means that Jews who value their personal Jewish identity can express and even share that distinctiveness in a non-Jewish milieu; the need to manifest one's Jewishness within a specifically Jewish environment is correspondingly reduced. Put crudely, one can access and share the experience of Seinfeld or Klezmer or even Elie Weisel without passing through a Jewish portal. This increases the challenge of building engagement on the foundation of personal Jewish identity.

The fourth, and potentially most challenging issue is the tendency to assume that traditional models of Jewish continuity remain effective in the face of changing societal norms. The notion that Jewish engagement flows seamlessly from Jewish identity, Jewish education and family structures is challenged by many of the findings reviewed in this paper – particularly in the case of the most highly educated members of the community. Indeed, even the assumption that personal Jewish identity underpins communal loyalty and engagement is called into question in the case of highly educated Jews (C2). A readiness to acknowledge and adapt to such unexpected findings may be crucial to any effort to address the issues of intellectual mobility highlighted in this report.

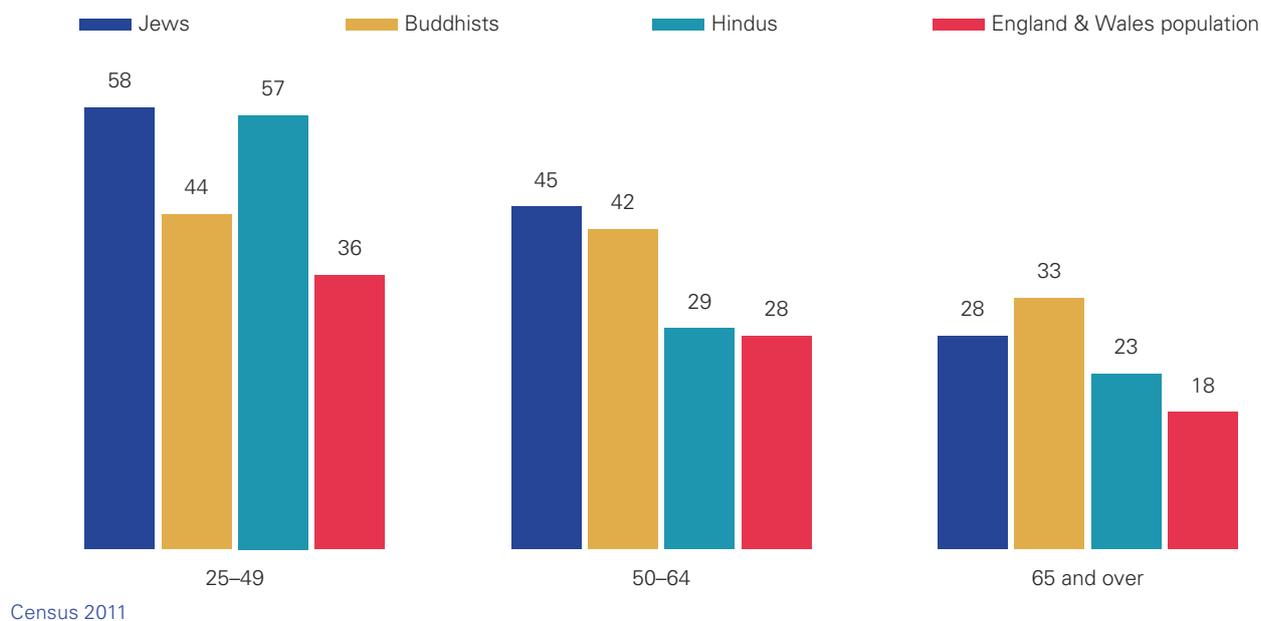
/ Appendix 1. Academic performance – how do British Jews compare?

First degrees

The 2011 census, in common with earlier census protocols, uses a five-point classification of educational achievement. This extends from level 0 ('no qualifications') through to 'level 4 and above'⁶⁷ (first degree or higher degree or equivalent). The census data do not discriminate between those with first degrees and those with higher degrees.

Using the 2011 data we find that British Jews, together with some other minorities such as Buddhists and Hindus, are significantly more likely to have obtained a degree qualification than other groups. In the case of the Jewish population, some 45% of those over 25 years of age have a degree or its equivalent, compared with 30% of the population at large; i.e. Jews are about 1.5 times more likely to have a degree than those in the population of England and Wales as a whole – and that ratio is relatively constant across the adult age range (Figure A1.1).

Figure A1.1. % obtaining a degree or equivalent qualification by age and ethnic group



67 Level 4 and above is defined in the 2011 Census as: "Degree (for example BA, BSc), Higher Degree (for example MA, PhD, PGCE), NVQ Level 4-5, HNC, HND, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher level, Foundation degree (NI), Professional qualifications (for example teaching, nursing, accountancy)".

The 1.5 ratio is somewhat lower than the 1.8 ratio recorded in the 2001 census;⁶⁸ the change may be due to the significant expansion in national participation rates in Higher Education during the ten-year interval, while Jewish participation may have been near a natural ceiling.

Postgraduate qualifications

Given that almost 50% of British young people now attend university, the academic categorisation used in the census, which combines bachelors, Masters and doctoral qualifications, is a fairly blunt instrument. In this section an attempt is made to estimate comparative rates of postgraduate qualifications for Jewish and national populations.

The four surveys reviewed in this paper distinguish between those achieving first degrees and those with a postgraduate qualification – and in the case of the City survey, there is also discrimination between Masters and doctoral level. The unweighted data on the prevalence of each qualification are set out in Table A1.1.

Although these detailed statistics on British Jews cannot be compared directly with national census data, some interesting conclusions can still be drawn:

i) The highly educated are more likely to contribute to Jewish surveys

The three most recent surveys have each returned samples containing c.75% graduates, compared with the 2011 census figure for Jews of 45%. Jewish graduates are therefore overrepresented in these sample surveys by a factor of 1.66 (75/45). This implies that *either* the techniques used to sample Jews accessed a disproportionate number of graduates ('sampling bias') *or*, having contacted a fairly representative sample, those *without* a degree were less likely to *respond* ('non-response bias'). Almost certainly both factors were at work in these studies.

To make comparisons between national and Jewish levels of qualification, it is first necessary to correct for the overrepresentation of graduates in these samples.

Table A1.1. % of respondents with a first degree or a postgraduate degree in four sample surveys of British Jews

Survey	Highest qualification achieved (% of sample)		Total with first degree, Masters or Doctorate
	First degree	Masters or Doctorate	
SOC95	26	12	38
ISR10	39	37	76
NJCS13	45	29	74
		Masters	Doctorate
CITY/ISR15	40	27	7*

* Based on a sub-sample of the full survey for the reasons set out in the main text

ii) Jews and higher degrees

The three most recent surveys of British Jews return a crude estimate of around 33% for the percentage of British Jews with a postgraduate degree (see Table A1.1). But since we know that Jewish graduates are overrepresented in these surveys by about 66%, it follows that the true percentage of British Jews with a postgraduate degree is likely to be of the order of 20% (i.e. 33%/1.66). However, we have assumed a more conservative figure – say in the range 15%–20%, to allow for the possibility that people with postgraduate degrees are more prone to overrepresentation than those with first degrees.

As noted, the census does not provide a national baseline figure for postgraduate qualifications, but the British Social Attitudes Survey has returned a figure of approximately 6% in annual surveys through the period 2010 to 2014. It follows that British Jews are likely to be about two-and-a-half to three-times more likely to possess a postgraduate degree of some kind than the population at large (i.e. 6% nationally compared to approximately 15%–20% among Jews).

iii) possession of a doctorate

Using similar logic, the observed percentage of doctorates in CITY/ISR15 was 7.3%.⁶⁹ After adjustment for various factors⁷⁰ we consider that a conservative estimate of the true percentage of Jews with doctorates is about 3.0%–4.0%.

Again, the census does not provide a baseline figure for the general population, but the Higher Education Statistics Agency records approximately 10,000 UK-based doctoral graduates per year; this represents about 1.25% of the age cohort. The number has grown by about 30% over the past ten years alone, so a generous estimate of the percentage of the entire adult population with a doctorate would be around 1%. This puts the percentage of Jews with a doctoral qualification at around three to four times the national average.

iv) the overall trend

The above calculations are summarised in Table A1.2.

These data suggest that the gap between national and Jewish rates of qualification increase as one moves up the scale of educational achievement. The estimated differential in the case of doctoral qualifications is the least reliable, but it is based on a conservative model.

Table A1.2. Estimated percentage of adults with (i) any degree; (ii) a postgraduate degree; and (iii) a doctoral degree in the Jewish community and in the population of England and Wales

(Postgraduate and doctoral figures are approximate)			
	Any kind of degree	Postgraduate degree	Doctorate
Jewish percentage	45%	15–20%	3.0–4.0%
National percentage	30%	6%	1%
Jewish:National ratio	1.5	2.5–3	3–4

69 This estimate is based on a sub-sample of the whole survey – namely those selected randomly from the electoral register on the basis of their possession of a distinctive Jewish surname. This is likely to be a more representative sample than that obtained by other means.

70 The 7.3% figure is based on a relatively small sample of 563. As with any sample estimate, it is subject to a margin of uncertainty due to random factors. In this case, the true figure can be shown to be likely to fall in the range 5.2% to 9.5%. In addition, there is a possibility of ‘non-response bias’ – i.e. once invited to respond, people *without* a doctorate may be less likely to do so than those with a doctorate. Assuming that respondents with a doctorate were over-represented by a factor of 1.6, the estimated confidence interval for the prevalence of doctoral graduates becomes 3.3–6.1. An estimate of 3–4% would therefore be a highly conservative estimate of the percentage of British Jews with a doctorate or equivalent.

/ Appendix 2. Sampling strategies

Survey	Year of survey	Sample Size	Brief overview of sampling strategy	Reference to full report and methodology
SOC95	1995	2190	Random sampling of all households on the electoral register in areas of high Jewish population density. Random sampling of Distinctive Jewish Names (DJNs) on the electoral register in all other areas of the UK. Snowball sampling of outmarried Jewish women (since these would not be contactable by either of the other methods).	http://archive.jpr.org.uk/download?id=1443
ISR10	2010	4081	Contacts were made via the email lists of five seed organisations selected to reach proportionately into different pockets of the Jewish population by age, geography and Jewish identification. This was supplemented by a five-week advertising campaign in the Jewish press and by word-of-mouth contacts. An estimated 26,000 people were contacted.	www.jpr.org.uk/publication?id=94
NJCS13	2013	4072	Contacts were made through the email lists of more than twenty seed organisations, including media bodies, synagogues, Jewish online networks, and key community representative organisations. The seed organisations were selected to reach proportionately into different pockets of the Jewish population by age, geography and Jewish identification and were also used to initiate an additional 'snowballing' process to help access the less engaged and unaffiliated. An exhaustive parallel sample using all Jewish members of Ipsos MORI's research panel was also surveyed for analytical purposes.	www.jpr.org.uk/publication?id=3351
CITY/ISR15	2015	1131	Three sampling strategies were employed: a comprehensive sample of all Jewish members of Ipsos MORI's market research panel; a random sample of DJNs on the electoral register; and a snowball sample using seeds broadly representative of the synagogal, age and geographical distribution of British Jews.	www.city.ac.uk/___data/assets/pdf_file/0008/295361/Israel-Report-FINAL.PDF

/ Appendix 3. Use of unweighted data

In the original surveys, various sampling biases, including the overrepresentation of graduates, were corrected by appropriate weighting of the data. Such an adjustment is *not* necessary here because the aim is to compare the different achievement groups to each other, *not* to combine them to estimate the characteristics of the Jewish population as a whole.

To understand this argument, consider a possible sample made up of 500 Jews, 500 Muslims and 500 Christians. Such a sample would *not* need to be weighted if the intention was to compare Christians, Muslims and Jews; it *would* require weighting if the aim was to use the combined sample of 1500 to *estimate the proportion of individuals in the British population* who, for example, undertake religious fasts. In that situation, weighting would be needed to ensure that the overrepresentation of Jews and Muslims did not distort the population estimates of the percentage of people who fast for religious reasons.

Since the present study is designed to compare different sub-groups (i.e. non-graduates, graduates and post-graduates), the main consideration is whether the sub-groups are sufficiently large to allow reliable

comparisons between them; the fact that some groups may be overrepresented with respect to the population at large is irrelevant.

It is possible that bias on other variables (e.g. age) might distort comparisons between the achievement groups. This would happen if, say, the oversampling of young respondents had a different effect on graduates than on non-graduates. We took the view that these kinds of interactions would be unlikely to have much effect on the findings and, in order to avoid some technical complications, we have used the original, unweighted data for most of the comparisons reported here.

One of the consequences of not using weighted samples is that the *overall* proportion of respondents with a given characteristic (e.g. belonging to a synagogue) will vary somewhat from survey to survey depending on the particular sampling biases in each one. The reader should ignore such differences, since the purpose of this study is to examine whether variables such as synagogue membership change with level of education, not to estimate the absolute percentage of synagogue members in the population.

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