

Understanding American Jewry

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Transaction Books
New Brunswick (U.S.A.) and London (U.K.)

מכון למחקר יהודי
ברנדיס

Research Needs of Local Jewish Communities: Current Trends and New Directions

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Much Jewish social research has been conducted by or about local communities, a tradition which goes back to the early twenties.¹ While many of these studies exhibit a timid intellectual scope and questionable intellectual rigor, many classic works in Jewish sociology have been community studies. At the turn of the century Charles Bernheimer produced the first volume of research on the social conditions of American Jews.² Bernheimer's volume was a collection of community studies conducted in New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago. Louis Wirth's *The Ghetto* is a study of the areas of first and second settlement in Chicago.³ More recently Sklare and Greenblum's study of "Lakeville" is a community study in the grand tradition of "Yankee City" and "Middletown."⁴ Even our knowledge of intermarriage has been largely based on findings from local Jewish community studies.⁵

The ambitious scope of the National Jewish Population Study conducted in 1970 has not altered the trend of local Jewish research. Since the NJPS over twenty local communities have conducted local surveys on their own: Akron (1974), Allentown (1976), Boston (1975), Dallas (1974), Erie (1977), Hamilton, Ontario (1978), Houston (1978), Jersey City (1978), Kansas City (1976), Minneapolis (1972), New Orleans (1973), Norfolk (1974), Oakland (1979), Omaha (1976), Pittsburgh (1976), Portland, Oregon (1977), St. Petersburg (1972), Salt Lake City (1976), San Diego (1975, 1979), Seattle (1978), Vineland (1977), and Los Angeles (1980). Local Jewish federations probably represent a larger group of social research consumers than does the community of scholars. In the West an interest in social research has even taken root in the synagogue community. In Los Angeles, for example, one of the larger Conservative synagogues in the city recently commissioned a major survey of its membership. The Pacific-Southwest Council of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations

is currently working with individual Reform synagogues to include research as part of a larger effort to encourage long-range planning at the local level.⁶ On the national scene the Conservative movement has launched an ambitious research effort for long-range planning on a wider scale.⁷

Through the proposed Center for Modern Jewish Studies the academic community could make a significant contribution toward enhancing both the scope and quality of local Jewish communal research. Despite the importance of nationally conducted research, the local Jewish community itself should be considered a priority on the center's scholarly agenda. In the first part of this chapter I shall discuss the current state of local Jewish research along with new directions and standards which the center could be instrumental in developing. In the second part I shall argue for the importance of the local Jewish community as a research setting and object of research. I shall conclude with some recommendations for the agenda of the center itself with regard to the local Jewish community.

Local Jewish Research at the Dawn of the Eighties

Local Jewish communal research is conducted by and for the local federation, and it is this body that will be the focus of attention here. As Daniel Elazar has pointed out, federation-sponsored research is applied research — in the sense that it is designed to be used in decision making rather than as the exploration of causes or trends.⁸ The current state of applied research in the federations is both promising and disturbing. It is promising in that new directions are developing; disturbing in that many conceptual and methodological problems have remained unresolved over the years. I have divided my remarks into two categories here: the more traditional area of Jewish communal research, and the new areas being explored in agency-related research.

The Community Population Estimates and Demographic Surveys

Estimates of the local Jewish population are the most prevalent type of local social research. The *American Jewish Year Book* published estimates for communities as small as one hundred persons. Sampling techniques used in community surveys use the same basic techniques as population estimates and are thus weakened by similar methodological shortcomings. Both survey sampling and population estimates must identify Jewish households within the general population. Over the years a number of techniques have been used for population estimates including Yom Kippur school absences, extrapolating from U.S. Census count of "Russian foreign born" and "Russian foreign stock," and counting "distinctive Jewish names" (DJN) in the phone directory. Currently DJN is the most popular method for estimating the local Jewish population. In its most sophisti-

cated application the DJN method uses a list of distinctive names and counts their occurrence in the local phone directory. This number is multiplied by a numerical constant based on the relative proportion of these names among all Jews. The result is an estimate of Jewish households which is then multiplied by the average family size to produce the population estimate itself.

The great attraction of this method is its relative economy. However, there are a number of methodological issues which have not been adequately addressed. First, the numerical constant used for multiplication, demands, but has never received, ongoing revision to include the effect of factors such as intermarriage or new groups in the Jewish population without distinctive East European names, such as Iranian or Israeli Jews. Second, the same numerical constant is not necessarily valid in all parts of the city. In Los Angeles, for example, the older Beverly-Fairfax neighborhood is overrepresented with older, first-generation Jews more likely to have distinctive names. To this overrepresentation is added the influx of recent Russian immigrants most of whom have distinctively Jewish names. Third, the DJN method assumes that each surname has equal prevalence, while there may be important differences. Finally, the rate of unlisted phone numbers, which varies in different parts of the city, is not taken into account.

When communal surveys are done the most generally used sample frame is the federation list itself. Of the over twenty community surveys cited earlier only two used a sample frame other than the federation list. The Los Angeles survey was entirely based on a random sample, and the Boston survey was partly based on a random sample and partly on a list sample.⁹ The problem with list sampling is that it includes only affiliated Jews. This not only biases the sample but makes it impossible to compare affiliated with unaffiliated Jews. In only one study where list sampling was used did the researchers make any attempt to test the completeness of the federation list.¹⁰ Other studies either assume that the federation list covers the majority of Jews in the community or fall back on one or both of two rationales.

The first rationale is that community studies are intended for planning services and unaffiliated Jews do not use federation services. An example of this argument is found in the recently completed survey of the San Diego Jewish community where the researchers assert that "the first priority of this initial analysis was the identification of needs within the existing 'up front' community. These are the individuals who *are* found on the U.J.F. mailing list, who fund the Federation and the JCC, and who comprise the community which utilizes most of these services."¹¹

This reasoning is correct in terms of the Jewish Community Center. However, if there is a sizable number of poor and elderly Jews (as in Los

Angeles), it is doubtful that these persons, who are in need of services, will be sampled from the federation list. A second rationale, rarely put in writing but asserted with some frequency, is that Jewish households which do not contribute to the local campaign have forfeited their right to be considered a part of the community. All but the most hard-nosed campaign leadership would find this statement philosophically objectionable. Yet it gains sudden credence when a local community ponders the cost of obtaining a sample at random from the community at large. Ironically, it is usually the same professionals and lay people who balk at sampling the unaffiliated who will elsewhere emphasize the importance of "reaching out" to this group.

In Los Angeles we experimented with a methodology that was addressed to both the population estimate problem and the problem of sampling. The literature on survey research suggests that locating Jews at random is a special application of "screening to locate rare populations."¹² Using a recently developed technique for telephone sampling called Random Digit Dialing, a sampling of 24,000 phone numbers was generated by computer, yielding 12,000 residential phone numbers of which over 900 were Jewish households. Using the 12,000 residential households as one sample, we were able to estimate the number of Los Angeles Jewish households within a few percents.¹³ The 900 plus Jewish households yielded 823 interviews which formed the sample used for analyzing characteristics of the Los Angeles Jewish population.

Despite the Los Angeles success in demonstrating the feasibility of exploring new sampling techniques, the individual local community does not have the resources, institutional commitment, or personnel needed for a serious effort at upgrading community survey methodology. Were the proposed center to take on this commitment, four methodological issues should be addressed immediately. First, it may not be economically feasible for all communities to undertake a random sample from the population at large. However, it is imperative that the biases introduced by list sampling be more carefully assessed. How do the age, size, and regional location of a community affect the validity of list sampling? Who tends to be excluded when list sampling is employed? In an effort to address this question, the Los Angeles federation undertook a small experiment that can serve to exemplify the kind of fruitful work the center might undertake on a larger scale. Using federation lists for the Jewishly sparse San Gabriel Valley, a sample of fifty households was interviewed. These will be compared with fifty households sampled at random from the population at large.

Second, there are two ways to screen from the population at large: directly and indirectly. In direct screening, the nature of the survey is explained to the sampled household and the respondent is asked whether

there are any Jewish persons living there. Indirect screening involves a preliminary questionnaire (which could form part of a larger study) in which religion is included as a question. If the respondent would otherwise be reluctant to identify himself/herself as Jewish in a direct question, indirect screening should include this respondent in the survey. In theory the indirect approach should be more inclusive of marginal Jews, but more expensive given the time taken for the preliminary questionnaire. Conversely, the direct approach should be less expensive but less inclusive. Are these assumptions correct, and if so, what are the relative costs in dollars and in the accuracy of the two techniques?

The third issue the center should address is the effectiveness of the telephone survey in Jewish community surveys. In the sociological literature telephone surveys are gaining increasing acceptance.¹⁴ While they are considerably cheaper than house-to-house surveys, the effectiveness of telephone surveys in the Jewish community has yet to be studied. If shown to be effective, the general introduction of this method might make the random screening sample an economically viable option for many communities that could not consider it at present.

Finally, there is the effect of sponsorship. Some communities conduct surveys directly, while others employ a university-connected researcher who can downplay the sponsor and add credibility to the study. Do respondents react differently to a university-conducted study than to one conducted directly by the Jewish community?

The focus of community surveys tends to be largely on the immediate provision of services rather than on more long-range planning issues. Historically the federation movement has been oriented toward alleviation of social distress rather than of social change. The academic training of most communal professionals is in community organization rather than in disciplines such as urban planning, health planning, or public administration. In the absence of established Jewish communal planning models, community surveys tend to be cautious and unambitious even in terms of applied research. While most community surveys are described as "demographic" studies, they do not tend to treat demographic issues seriously, settling instead for a market research approach to "demographic variables." This represents a loss not only to the serious scholar but to the user of applied information as well. The federation planner does not have access to the kind of information which will project the kind of community that lies ahead. The treatment of occupation is a good case in point. Questions about inter-generation mobility, occupational choice, and career are notably absent from community surveys. To the majority of federation personnel and lay people such questions are considered too "scientific." Occupational identity may well be competitive with Jewish identity, and the changing occupational structure clearly has implications for the fund-raising apparatus.

The family is another demographic issue that receives only superficial treatment. Community surveys usually identify target family groups such as single-parent families or families with school-age children, but ignore the family *per se*. There is no sociology of the Jewish family. Community surveys measure intermarriage rates by inquiring about the religious identification of respondent and spouse, but are hesitant about exploring such related factors as where and how respondent and spouse met, parental attitudes toward intermarriage, or the intermarrieds' perception of themselves in relation to the Jewish community. These are all applied questions in the sense that they have the potential to impact programs. If, for example, the organized community wishes to find ways to include intermarrieds in its midst, knowing their perception of the Jewish community would be useful information.

The treatment of Jewish identity by community surveys is particularly problematic. The inclusion of identity is limited to items on objective behavior and in some studies, to a number of social-distance questions. Jewish identity and the future of Jewish survival are generally considered crucial issues facing the community today. If the federations are serious in their intention to strengthen Jewish identity, research in this area must be regarded as applied. If Jewish social research could identify the relative effects on Jewish identity of such factors as generation, Jewish education, Jewish camping, exposure to Israel, and growing up in a Jewish neighborhood — the organized community would have a more conceptually concrete set of theoretical materials from which to build programs.

A Center for Modern Jewish Studies could be a moving force in helping federations bridge the gap between what surveys inquire about now and what they might more fruitfully investigate. It could do so first by moving beyond research into the development of conceptual planning models adapted to the local Jewish community. This would involve the center in policy and planning disciplines as well as in research. However, it is the lack of such perspectives in the organized Jewish community that is at least partly responsible for the unambitious standards current today. With or without this first focus, the center should strive to be a methodological resource for local communities who now turn either to a local social scientist or to a market research company. The former is usually not familiar with the Jewish community, while the latter is generally not committed to rigorous methodology or to a potential contribution of the research. Finally, the center should be encouraged to conduct its own research which could serve both as a model and a stimulus to the local community in broadening its research horizons.

Local Jewish communities tend to underanalyze their findings. Once the report to the federation is prepared the research effort ends — precisely at the time when (assuming the research is valuable) it should just be begin-

ning. The 1975 Boston community survey and the National Jewish Population Survey respectively represent models to be emulated and avoided in encouraging the secondary analysis of Jewish survey data. The 1975 Boston survey is well documented and available on magnetic tape. It has been the basis of an article published in 1979 on Jewish giving.¹⁵

The outcomes of the NJPS have been disappointing. Although it was the basis of an excellent dissertation,¹⁶ little in the way of scholarly analysis has resulted from the NJPS over the past decade. I suspect this situation results less from a lack of interest than a lack of access to the data.

The general availability of computing facilities and statistical packages has greatly encouraged secondary data analysis and the distribution of data sets. The U.S. Census has a data users division to facilitate the use of its materials. Similarly, the Roper Poll sells its survey tapes to interested researchers. Thus the technical groundwork and administrative structures already exist for the center to adapt in making local community research available to the social scientist. Both communities would profit from the center's active involvement in local communal research. The local community would have access to higher quality and more usable (as well as used) research. The center in turn would have greater confidence in the quality of local materials it would use by virtue of its involvement in their development.

Agency Research

Because of the visibility of the community survey, local research has been identified with these large-scope endeavors. Increasingly important on the local scene will be a research agenda oriented toward service delivery agencies. This agenda has emerged from three related trends. First, the federations are in step with state, local, and federal government in their concern with cost containment. Phrases like "zero-based budgeting," "cost effectiveness," and "accountability," are now a part of the federation vocabulary. Because they depend on the federation for funding, local agencies realize the need to more objectively demonstrate both the need for and effect of their services. Second, professional staffs of local agencies are aware of the evaluation research done in their broader fields such as social work, counseling, and education. They want to keep pace with their own professional fields. Finally, Jewish agencies which have received public monies in the form of grants often find themselves required to produce an evaluation study at the conclusion of their program. The possibilities for agency research are best explored by looking separately at the three generic agency types: casework, groupwork, and Jewish education.

Casework and Counseling. Casework agencies deliver service (usually counseling) to individuals and/or families on a case basis, such as Jewish Family Service or Jewish Vocational Service. The most basic need of these

agencies is for administrative data about their clients. Counseling agencies typically need reliable and meaningful data about administrative areas such as the following: (1) a profile of the client population including age, sex, marital status, household composition, source of referral, and focus of service; (2) data on the use of "treatment modalities" such as individual counseling, family counseling, job placement, etc.; (3) case data on length of treatment and patterns of multiple case openings; (4) data on the cost of delivery service to different client populations. Social workers are by training ill-equipped to conduct research and by professional temperament more disposed to helping clients than collecting data about them. Hence Jewish casework and counseling agencies are to varying degrees ignorant about the population they serve. Setting up workable systems for the collection and analysis of service delivery information is an important agency priority over the next decade. While the appropriateness of the center's involvement in the development of information systems is dubious (being primarily a management tool), it illustrates a newly emerging agency orientation toward research and information.

A related trend, more in keeping with the academic nature of the center, is the emergence of evaluation research in the field of social service.¹⁷ In a Jewish setting, evaluation research takes on two dimensions: the clinical aspect of the service and the Jewish impact of the agency. The clinical goals of the agency are articulated as the goals of the social services field in general. The Jewish goals of these agencies tend to be more vague. On the campus, the schools of Jewish communal service address the problem of the Jewish component in social work practice. In the field, this proposition has yet to be tested. The center might contemplate a two-phase program to examine the explicit and implicit goals of Jewish casework agencies and then devise and implement demonstration evaluation projects which would serve as models for the local community. As with the community survey, the demonstration project approach is seen as stimulating similar work in local communities.

Jewish Community Centers. The Jewish community center, like the casework agency, is in need of information about its user and member populations (not always the same). While such studies have been undertaken in the past, they tend to be oriented toward an immediate decision such as program planning or site relocation. The question of the viability of centers and their relationship to issues such as Jewish continuity has gone unasked and unstudied. In this regard evaluation research is relevant to the Jewish community center in two areas. First, to the extent that centers undertake Jewish programming there is the opportunity to evaluate its impact. Second, there is a need to evaluate the basic assumption on which the center movement is based: that by bringing Jews together through informal activities in a nonideological setting the social network and communal ties of its

membership are ultimately strengthened. This is a sensitive question, but given the large capital costs of building and maintaining a Jewish community center, it ought to be investigated.

Jewish Education. In terms of agencies of the organized federation community, the Bureau of Jewish Education (BJE) is the topic of concern here rather than Jewish education per se. At the administrative level, the BJE requires accurate administrative data about the "school system." It uses information about school enrollments and financial expenditures to make grant allocations and scholarships available to local schools. To the extent that the BJE functions as a coordinating body and educational resource for local schools it is in an excellent position to undertake and encourage evaluation studies of curricula (old and new), teaching approaches, and alternative learning settings. The last decade has seen the emergence of a new generation of Jewish educators who sponsor their own alternative organizations such as the Conference for Alternatives in Jewish Education. These educators are found in the local Jewish school where theory is put into practice. By developing models for the evaluation of Jewish education, the center could have a dual impact on both the BJE and local schools. First it could conduct evaluation research of its own. Initial efforts would encourage the local community to pursue such directions on their own. Second, it could develop easily applied evaluation models for use in the local community. All this is in addition to, not in place of, other work in Jewish education.

Like the case-worker and group-worker, the Jewish educator is not specifically trained in research. Moreover, the Jewish educator has more pressing responsibilities which preclude involvement in such innovative works as those described above. The center alone could serve as a catalyst to move Jewish education in the direction of evaluation research.

In the first section I have concentrated on one aspect of the organized Jewish community, the federation and its family of agencies. The federation is the only institution primarily concerned with the local community and is the major user and only doer of research there. In discussing the research needs of the federation and agencies I have concentrated on applied research that would directly impact Jewish life as well as federation activities. In discussing the community survey I have stressed the upgrading of its methodological basis and the broadening of its horizons in doing applied research. In discussing agency research I have suggested two areas where the center could contribute: administrative data and evaluation research. In each area the center was portrayed as contributing to the local community in two ways: first as a demonstration research agency which would pioneer new directions, and second as a resource to provide tools and techniques to the local community.

The Local Community as a Research Setting

From one point of view there should be no locally conducted research. Research should be conducted on a nationwide basis to maximize methodological consistency and minimize regional peculiarities. While this is true for subjects such as intermarriage, occupational mobility, and the Jewish family, other issues are best understood in the context of the local community. I have selected three such issues for discussion here: new immigrants, fund-raising, and the elderly. These are not only intimately connected with the dynamics of the local community, but are typical of the kinds of issues with which local communities are increasingly concerned. Finally, I shall argue for the legitimacy of local Jewish community studies in their own right, and not just as a tolerable substitute for nationally conducted studies.

New Immigrants. Israeli and Soviet Jewish immigrants to the United States are the most recent and publicized new American Jewish populations (one might also include Iranians, but this phenomenon is too new to assess). They share the onus of not living in Israel, but the contrasts are more interesting. Soviet Jews are resettled with much attention and publicity. The local news runs footage of arriving immigrants being greeted at the airport, job placements are solicited in the local Jewish press, and the Soviet Jewry movement itself is still very much alive. Israelis arrive individually and unobtrusively. Soviet immigrants have a variety of formal and semiformal institutions they have created or which have been created for them. In Los Angeles these include a Russian-language newspaper, special clubs at the Jewish community center, a separate unit of the Jewish Family Service, and a Russian synagogue set up by Chabad. Israelis, on the other hand, are well known for their lack of specific institutions and organizations. They are organizationally invisible.

Because both groups reside in local communities, these communities share two research questions: How are these groups being integrated into the community (both general and Jewish) and what will their impact be? Because it is difficult to discuss these questions outside of the communal context, and because these two immigrant groups are of such great local concern, the study of new immigrants should be considered as part of local research needs. Treating Israelis and Russians separately, let us detail the kinds of research needed by the local community.

The organized Jewish community has been ambivalent toward immigrants from Israel. On the one hand the organized community desires to include them and provide social services. On the other hand, this might be construed as encouraging immigration and thereby creating problems in and with Israel. As a result, there have been no organized efforts to "resettle" Israelis and include them in the community. Only recently has the Los

Angeles federation created a division of the campaign for wealthy Israelis who have lived in the city for as long as twenty years or more.

Thus from the point of view of the local community the place of Israelis in it is the major research question. First, how have Israelis gone about becoming integrated? What (if any) informal networks have they set up to facilitate housing location, job finding, and so on? In other words, how have Israelis done for themselves what the community does for Soviet Jews? What are the predominant patterns of occupational and residential mobility? What sorts of social networks have been developed, and are they based on cultural-ethnic differences or on class differences? Most important, how do Israeli-Americans view themselves in relation to the rest of the Jewish community?

Given the organized nature of Soviet Jewish resettlement, there is an evaluation aspect involved here as well as a sociological one. The local community is as interested in the work of its agencies as in the situation of immigrants. The following research questions were developed in Los Angeles as part of a pilot evaluation study. They indicate the kinds of concerns felt by the local community with respect to the Soviet immigrant: (1) How successful is the integration of the Soviet Jewish immigrant into American life? What are the patterns of occupational and residential mobility in the United States? What background factors are most associated with successful job placement, for example? (2) How is their integration into the Jewish community proceeding? What practices, if any, appear in the home? What are their Jewish aspirations for their children? How do they see themselves in relation to the rest of the Jewish community? (3) To what extent do they participate in the resettlement of future Soviet immigrants? Will they, like the members of the earlier Russian immigration, assist in their own acculturation? Will they share the economic burden? If so, will this be organized institutionally or simply on the basis of family?

Fund-Raising. While the future of Jewish giving is a national issue (some say a national crisis), it is at the local community level that fund-raising is typically conducted. For many Jews fund-raising and Jewish giving are their principal communal activities. Earlier I made reference to the implications of community survey content for fund-raising. Here I would like to propose that fund-raising itself is an appropriate and necessary field of inquiry.

In a sociology of Jewish giving there are a number of research questions significant to the local community: (1) What is the background of givers both in terms of Jewish exposure and class structure? (2) What is the social process of solicitation? To what extent is it predicated on generation-specific assumptions of lifestyle, identity, and locus in the economic structure? (3) What are the motivations behind Jewish giving? What are its operational psychic rewards? (4) What is the effect of "the book" on

Jewish giving? (5) What research tools might be developed to locate potential new givers? (6) How is leadership developed, and what is the potential for the "young leadership" movements in the community?

To some these issues may sound more like the agenda of a UJA meeting than a research center. They are, however, representative of the kinds of questions asked in the local community. To the extent that giving is a Jewish behavior, such questions are appropriate areas of sociological inquiry.

The Aged. The aging of the American Jewish community is a national trend confronted by the local community. In deciding how to care for the elderly, the local community must begin with the reality that homes for the aged are full and that other alternatives must be found. In this respect, most research questions relevant to the Jewish elderly are topics in public health and gerontology. The Jewish aged share the problems of all American elderly: inadequate health care, inadequate housing, and inadequate alternatives once the private home or apartment is no longer a viable living arrangement.

The organized Jewish community has responded to the crisis with governmental and sectarian supported services and programs. Still, it is overwhelmed with the immensity of the tasks. As a research institution the center might investigate such public health and gerontological questions as the following: (1) Alternatives to board and care and nursing homes which could be developed in the Jewish community. For example, shared housing and case management have been tried as ways to keep older persons in their homes. (2) Researching the level of physical, economic, and emotional impairment among the Jewish elderly. This type of agenda moves far afield from a strictly academic agenda. On the other hand, the care of elders is a core Jewish value as well as a central problem in the local Jewish community.

There are more sociological issues to be investigated as well. For example, these same elderly who are the subjects of care are also the carriers of traditions and values. We have yet to give serious attention to the question of their effect on Jewish identity, and what will be the effect of their eventual absence from the community.

The Local Community as an Object of Analysis. In addition to doing research for and in the local community, the dynamics of the Jewish community itself should be an integral part of the center's research agenda. Without working out the details of specific studies, there are two research items which would form the basis for a Jewish community sociology: the community as a variable and as a system.

Whatever national research might be undertaken by the center will inevitably be conducted on a community basis. In the analysis of the data, the effect of region, community size, and age of the individual communities sampled would be intermediate variables. Beyond its implicit scientific

merit, this sort of analysis would also be valuable to the local community. All communities have an interest in what makes them unique and what they share in common. Since communities operate on the assumptions they have of themselves, accurate data comparing communities would make a difference in how those communities carry out their organizational life.

In general sociology the study of the community is a venerable tradition. In Jewish sociology the study of the community as a system of institutions and values has not been given serious attention. The center could rectify this shortcoming by developing a sociology of the Jewish community to study the fundamental dynamics of the Jewish community. How do informal social networks affect formal institutions? Do Jewish communities have a life cycle, and if so, what are its parameters? What functions do older inner-city neighborhoods play with regard to the Jewish identity and stability of suburbs? The list of potential questions is as intriguing as it is beyond the scope of discussion here.

In addition to its obvious academic merits, the study of community dynamics is important to the local community itself. Community organization and development are social work modalities taught and used in Jewish communal service. An understanding of the dynamics of the Jewish community as a community would contribute toward the development of new models both for keeping older areas viable and for encouraging Jewish communal life in new areas and environments.

In the first section I dealt with research specific to the local community: community surveys and agency research. In this section I have isolated certain issues of national scope but best studied in the local context and having specific implications for the local community.

If the implicit model in the first section was a kind of Jewish survey research center, in the second section it is the urban laboratory. Understanding the dynamics of the community is a legitimate sociological concern and an area of inquiry which would benefit the local community.

Concluding Remarks: Structure of the Center

I have attempted to outline the research needs of the local community. Some issues may be deemed appropriate for the center while others will not. I have spoken as a researcher in a local community in arguing for the latter's importance in the center's research formulation. Such a focus may or may not come about. In concluding, I would like to extend further the point of view of the local Jewish community in proposing some structural considerations for the center which evolve from the previous discussion.

In the first section it was proposed that the center be a kind of survey research center through demonstration projects, original research, and the

development of resource materials. In the second section an additional model of the urban laboratory was offered. In this model the center would undertake a program of aggressive research at the local community level. The impetus for both models is that they could significantly impact the organized Jewish community as well as the community in its sociogeographic aspect. I would like to conclude by exploring the implications of these two models for the center itself.

Action Orientation

The perspectives and programs outlined in the foregoing discussion imply an action commitment on the part of the center; a commitment to engage in research oriented toward social change. This does not mean that the research will bring about social change; rather, it is research which can form the basis of social change. Most of the research projects proposed here have been related to social change in some form or another. Evaluation studies are action-oriented research. So too are some of the more mundane possibilities described, such as information systems or impairment studies of the elderly. These are action research because they are related to action agencies. I have argued for the inclusion of applied research with more and better applications.

Working Relationships

If the center pursues a research direction related to the local communities, it will have to establish a working relationship with those communities. This will not always be easy. There is both awe and fear of the academy in the organized Jewish community. There is respect for the scholar and even hope that "the professors" may have the answers. But there is also a lack of understanding and empathy with academic thinking and concerns. There is a fear that the academic community cannot identify with the decision-making structure and action orientation of both the lay and professional leadership. If the center seeks to encourage more meaningful research and more consistent methodologies in the local community, it will have to engage in some sort of educational process. With the entrance into a new decade the community is open to new ways of thinking and doing, and thus open to working with a Center for Modern Jewish Studies.

Administrative Structures

Some of the projects proposed here will require special administrative structures. For example, if the center adopts the survey research center model it will need access to adequate computing and personnel to facilitate the distribution of data sets in such a way that they can be set up on a variety of computers. Similarly, if the center adopts the urban laboratory ap-

proach, it must be prepared to set up an administrative structure that can supervise and coordinate field work in geographically distant locations.

Linkages will have to be created with methodological specialists who have Jewish concerns, and I include non-Jews as well as Jews in this category. The center should explore relationships with established survey research centers, as these centers are both a potential model and a source of data. Los Angeles, for example, conducts the LAMAS (Los Angeles Metropolitan Area Study) and the University of Michigan conducts its Detroit Area Studies.

New Methodologies

The center should give serious consideration to moving beyond survey research alone. Participant observation has initiated much important work in sociology, and would be particularly useful in researching issues such as the organization of the Israeli or Soviet sectors of the community. Similarly, social history (including oral history) could be a valuable tool in studying the dynamics of the Jewish community. An openness to methodological stances is an extension of what I would like to see as a broader perspective: an openness to exploring new relationships between the academic Jewish community and the larger Jewish community of which it is a part.

Notes

1. Bureau of Social Research, *Jewish Communal Survey of Greater New York* (New York, 1928); Ben Seligman, "Some Aspects of Jewish Demography." In Marshall Sklare (ed.), *The Jews: Social Patterns of an American Group* (New York: Free Press, 1958).
2. Charles Bernheimer, *The Russian Jew in the United States: Studies of Social Conditions in New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago* (Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1905).
3. Louis Wirth, *The Ghetto* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1928).
4. Marshall Sklare and Joseph Greenblum, *Jewish Identity on the Suburban Frontier* (New York: Basic Books, 1967). See also 2nd ed. (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1979).
5. See Erich Rosenthal, "Studies of Jewish Inter-marriage in the United States," *American Jewish Year Book* (1963).
6. Union of American Hebrew Congregations, "Forming Your Congregation's Future Planning Committee" (New York, 1980).
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