

IMPLICATIONS OF CHANGING ROLES OF MEN AND WOMEN FOR THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES

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It has been postulated that the family has become the beneficiary of community services rather than their support. This is not necessarily a negative phenomenon but it does call for a reordering of community priorities and a rethinking of the roles of the laity and professionals.

RECIPROCAL INFLUENCES OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

While it is often noted that changes emanating from the polity have profound implications for schools, religious institutions, working conditions and even informal social life (e.g. the Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. The Board of Education*), the forces flowing from micro to macro levels are less remarked. This is particularly so in the case of the family which is viewed as a structure influenced by external forces, but rarely as the initiator of social change. Yet the family has been recognized as the fundamental unit upon which society is based and through which the culture and values of any group are transmitted—if they are to be transmitted at all. The founders of the kibbutz movement learned the strength of the nuclear unit—leading them to co-opt this unit into the system and give up the attempt to dismantle it. Within the Jewish tradition the family, with its responsibility for socializing the young, caring for the old and reinforcing commitment of members of all ages to certain norms and life pat-

terns, has been viewed as the locus of the creation of loyalty to Judaism. The rabbinic image of the family table as an altar and of the home as a Temple writ small was an apt one meant to symbolize the centrality and power of the family as an institution. The core of family life was the relationship between men and women, husbands and wives, parents and children.

Within the United States Jewish community today there is reason to suppose that structural and normative changes in the family and in the roles of men and women have already had and will continue to have impact upon the polity in various ways. These will include the demographic composition of the pool of eligibles from which leaders are drawn for synagogues and federations and include, as well, the value priorities which will effect policy decisions made by these leaders. The changes in the family referred to here include: the emergence of singlehood as a legitimate state; delayed marriage and childbearing; a low birth-rate; a high proportion of single parent and blended households; a larger proportion of elderly nuclear units and, most importantly, a significant realignment of role relationships and responsibilities for economic support and parenting in intact families with children at home.

The leadership generation emerging from these families in transition may demand of society the creation of supporting institutions for families undergoing transi-

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tion. It will also be sensitive to the emergent role of women in communal leadership.

Finally, we may see a role reversal through which the polity and institutional arms become the supporters of the family rather than the family inculcating the values which enable the polity to function. The forces briefly delineated above will be analyzed in greater detail in the body of this paper. Particular attention will be given to changes in the delivery of services which might flow from the restructuring of the roles of men and women in particular and of the nuclear and extended family system in general.

Let us consider some of the spheres of demographic change and see how they will affect the community as we know it today. The emergence of a cadre of adult single Jews under the age of 35 is of special consequence to Jewish institutional life. Until recently, men and women have grown up with the idea that one is not a full, adult member of the Jewish community until he is married and perhaps not even until he is a parent. This conception permitted the singles on the one hand, and the community on the other, to let a pool of talent lie fallow. While this group needs services delivered to it, especially support in finding a life mate, they often have available leisure time to devote to a community, time which they will not have when they begin family formation in addition to their drive for upward mobility and security in their careers. We have customarily assumed and studies have shown that one who is single or even married without children will not be interested in Jewish children or Jewish education. However, times have changed and this assumption no longer holds true; many singles can and should be mobilized as workers in all facets of Jewish life.

The young leadership committees of federations around the country have done pioneering work in this area. However, their thrust is toward leadership develop-

ment, and not everyone can be a leader. In truth, only a small proportion of those who pass through leadership programs become leaders in federation, while most are motivated to become better citizens of the community than they would otherwise have been. The synagogue community has been less successful in reaching this age group. In the synagogue the definition of member as spouse and parent has been even more strongly inculcated, a definition detrimental to the development of leaders for the synagogue community of the future. By the time these singles are married and choose to have children they may have been habituated to live their Jewish lives without affiliation with a synagogue. Neither the synagogues nor any other institution of Jewish communal life can afford to ignore singles. They must be brought into the community as real members, whose needs are serviced while they in turn are encouraged to be providers of service to others.

One factor which must be taken into account when dealing with singles is the impact of the women's movement on the career patterns of Jewish women and on the attitudes of Jewish women toward Jewish men and vice versa. Jewish women under the age of 35 are likely to have college and graduate degrees. They are the first generation of Jewish women to consciously plan careers for themselves and to be involved in high attainment in the market place. Often determined to compete with men on an equal basis, they have been taught by their parents and teachers that they can excel. And thus they have the same pressures on them now that Jewish men did in the 1950's and 60's. These young women are particularly susceptible to a number of dilemmas because they are torn between two definitions of success.

On the one hand, they are rewarded by mentors and peers for career success while, on the other hand, their parents make them aware that they are not truly successful unless they are married and have

produced Jewish grandchildren. This double message and tension in their lives, together with the feeling for many of them as they reach their early 30's that their "biological clocks" are "running out," can produce severe stress. These young women need the support and assurance of the organized Jewish community. They need to be put in touch with each other and with older women who have gone through what they are going through now and who can help to show them that their dilemmas can be resolved.

However, this counselling must be done within the demographic context that there is a shortage of eligible Jewish males in every marriageable age group. The community which tells them that they must marry to be successful and yet does not provide enough Jewish males for them to marry is one which has a serious dilemma on its hands. While resolution of the marriage dilemma is not feasible for all these women, at least the community can provide them with reassurance that they are enfranchised members and potentially citizens whether or not they are married or have borne children.

The relationships between Jewish men and women have been the subject of research in the new field of ethnotherapy. Findings in studies by the American Jewish Committee¹, have shown that tensions between Jewish men and women may prevent those who are eligible from developing serious relationships. The almost anti-Semitic stereotypes which some Jewish men have and convey about Jewish women are partly at the root of this problem. Jewish women are led to believe that there is nothing better than to marry a Jewish man.

Jewish women cannot "marry out" to "marry up." On the other hand Jewish men grow up in an environment which

often vilifies Jewish women with stereotypes about Jewish mothers and Jewish American princesses. These stereotypes which denigrate Jewish women are much more prevalent in the Jewish community and the community at large than are stereotypes about Jewish men.² Jewish men are not taught that the ideal mate is a Jewish woman doctor. These stereotypes together with the paucity of Jewish males may result in a source of constant stress for Jewish women just when they are also under pressure due to evolving roles in the world of work.

Delayed marriage and childbearing also have an effect on the young marrieds in the community. Between the ages of 30 and 45 they are expected to be the major participants in community life, yet they are at a stage of family formation which in earlier decades was completed at a younger age. At the same time, many of them are struggling to gain a sense of security in their careers. Their dilemma in life is to resolve a balancing act. Now that they have found a mate and begun a family they find that their life is a long series of decisions about priorities. In general, they will opt for private time with a spouse before childbearing, and with spouse and children after childbearing, and focus on their careers rather than voluntary activities for the Jewish community. In single-parent households this balancing act is even more difficult and added to it is an economic constraint often particularly present in a female-headed single-parent family.

Finally, the most profound factor to affect the future of the Jewish community and the delivery of services within it is the realignment of the roles of spouses in intact families with children. These families which appear traditional in structure are

1. Judith Weinstein Klein, *Jewish Identity and Self-Esteem*. New York: American Jewish Committee, 1980.

2. On the other hand, stereotypes about Jewish men may be growing among Jewish career women. My own study of 950 Jewish career women shows that the single women consider Jewish men as a group to be less sexy, less macho, more dependent and more self-absorbed than non-Jewish men.

in fact going through changes. An analysis of the five dilemmas of these families will highlight issues which face all Jewish adults in families in this era. These dilemmas are overload, normative dilemmas, identity problems, social networking problems, and the quintessential dual career family dilemma "role cycling."³

DILEMMAS IN FAMILY CHANGE

The first dilemma to be considered is that of *overload*. Each dual career family really needs a "wife." The demands on the time of the couple are structured by our society in such a way that there is an assumption that there is one partner in the market place and another at home to manage the house and family affairs. This assumption is held not only by moving companies and the United States Postal Service but also by Jewish institutions such as religious schools and women's divisions of Jewish organizations. "Overload" is a dilemma not only to dual career but single-parent families and to some degree for singles living alone as well.

A second type of dilemma faced by dual career families arises as a result of the discrepancy between the way they have decided to live their lives and the way the world around them views that same decision. The discrepancy may be between the way they are acting and what they see in the media which is fairly far removed and does not exert a powerful force upon them, or it may result from a complaint by their parents about the decisions which they have made, especially those relating to care of young children. This type of dilemma has been termed by Rhona and Robert Rapoport a *normative dilemma*.⁴

3. Rhona and Robert Rapoport, *Dual-Career Families Re-examined*. New York: Harper & Row, Harper Colophon Books, 1976; and Robert and Rhona Rapoport with Janice Bumstead, eds., *Working Couples*. New York: Harper & Row, Harper Colophon Books, 1978.

4. *Ibid.*

The norms which have been adopted by the dual career couple differ from those of the members of a reference group salient to them. These dilemmas are very real for a large majority of American Jewish families.

Closely related to normative dilemmas are those of *identity*. Here, the discrepancy is not between the norms of the couple and some other reference group in society, but rather between the rational and emotional sides of the same person. At various times, the husband or wife feels that their own self-definition as a male or female has been challenged by the new role definition which they have assumed. This stretching of identity is culturally bound and often relates to the norms of the household in which the spouse grew up. Thus, in one household taking the garbage out might be a masculine activity while in another grocery shopping would be a feminine activity. In other families these roles might have been reversed. The content does not matter so much as the fact that the individual involved feels that his or her identity has been shaken up to a degree which they are unable to accept with equanimity. Identity dilemmas abound in the contemporary Jewish nuclear family. In fact, they begin before marriage when the couple who are making the decision to commit themselves to a life together begin to develop their future orientation toward childbearing, career development, sharing of household tasks and decision-making. These dilemmas are of course even greater among intermarried couples, a subject to which we shall return later.

A fourth dilemma often faced by dual-career and two-paycheck families has been termed the *social networking problem*. Two-paycheck and dual-career couples have to set rigid time priorities if they are to accomplish their goals with a minimum of identity and normative dilemmas. They may resolve stress by setting up sacred times and sacred commitments. These commitments are most often to the crea-

tion of high quality intensive family life and achievement in their careers. Thus, it is very difficult to get them to engage in any activity, particularly while they have young children, which is not directed toward one of these two goals.

Often this leads to conflict because they must sever or severely diminish their social relationships with family and friends. They may also cut down or entirely eliminate voluntary activities for the general or Jewish community unless these are perceived as career- or family-related. Any demand upon them which is viewed as adding to the overload will be rejected if it does not enrich family life or substantially aid in career advancement. When these couples do have some private time they will either spend it with their children or each other or with other couples to whom they do not have to explain their way of life. Spending time with people who chastise them for not living up to their expectations produces more stress. Therefore, extended families and even old friends sometimes find themselves cut out of the lives of these couples.

The final dilemma faced by two-paycheck and dual-career couples is that of *role-cycling*. This dilemma occurs when one spouse has a chance to move on or up in a sphere of life while the other spouse has an opportunity which is contradictory to that of the first partner. For example, one may receive a job offer in another city while the other must remain in their current place of residence in order to have any job at all. Another common role-cycling dilemma has to do with the timing of having children or going back to school. One spouse may want to start a family while the other wishes to go back to school for career advancement. The role-cycling dilemma is the one usually referred to when people discuss dilemmas of dual career families.

This feeling of being unsynchronized in their life stages applies not only to couples under the age of forty but also to many in

their middle years. Many successful male executives in their fifties come home to be with their wives and children now that they are financially secure and discover to their chagrin that no one is at home. Their children are at school and their wives have just entered the job market and are enthusiastically pursuing careers. These men must adjust to a new definition of family life and it is as difficult for them as it is for those under the age of 40. In fact it may even be more difficult since they were surely socialized in families where these expectations were never dreamt of.

HELPING IN RESOLUTION OF DILEMMAS

The five dilemmas which have been delineated above must be understood by the organized Jewish community. Meeting the needs of families with these dilemmas may lead Jewish families to look at the community in a new way. For instance, if the Jewish community is perceived as adding to the overload then it is highly unlikely that dual-career couples with children will feel positively toward that community. On the other hand, if institutional services can be developed which meet the needs of the families whether the under-forties or those in mid-life crisis, then the Jewish community can become part of the solution rather than part of the problem for these families and will be viewed accordingly. Though the under-forties with children may be perceived as "takers" rather than "givers" to the Jewish community, this taking will have positive consequences for the community in the long run.

Let us give some specific examples. The major source of stress for couples who have made the decision to have children is how to care for these young children once they have been brought into the world. Even when a mother or father makes the decision to take a year off from work and stay home with the child—or even two

years which is even less likely, due to the rules of the workplace—the provision of excellent care for preschool children is a primary concern to them.

If the Jewish community can meet this need for its middle- to upper-middle-class young families it will win their devotion for the decades following their use of the services. If excellent childcare is provided in a Jewish environment such as a synagogue and thus endorsed by the Jewish establishment, not only is there overload relief but normative and identity dilemmas are also dealt with for the couple. If the rabbi endorses the daycare center, if it meets in the neighborhood synagogue, if the teachers include friends and neighbors, and the curriculum is Jewish, then the feeling about using such a service will be positive. Moreover, it can be explained to members of one's reference group as an accepted and acceptable part of establishment Jewish life. For those who wish childcare in the home, imagine their delight if they could call their local synagogue or Jewish family service and be sent five people to be interviewed for the childcare job who exactly fit the specifications which they had stipulated. There is no more frustrating task for Jewish parents than the location of excellent childcare personnel and there is no more important task for them in their own minds and in the minds of the community.

A second need which must be met for these families is emotional support for the parents themselves as they deal with identity and normative dilemmas. This might take the form of support groups which meet regularly and include a variety of people who had lived through these dilemmas. Another possibility is the provision of counseling services staffed by rabbis and social workers working in a team. Needless to say, single parents could also benefit from these services as would those in reconstituted or blended families.

Intermarried couples to whom I referred earlier, even where a conversion has taken place, also have many extra problems to

deal with. For instance, there is a set of non-Jewish grandparents to be related to as well as relationships with extended family members who are not Jewish. Inter-married couples must also grapple with childhood allegiances to social and religious customs which they may now reject intellectually but to which they are still emotionally attached. Community centers, family services and synagogues can help these families, but the services can only be delivered if people are aware of their existence. Therefore, informing the public about these services in a way which makes them appear desirable and easily accessible is nearly as important as creating the services in the first place. Free ads in local Jewish newspapers and synagogue bulletins would heighten awareness of services.

Services need to be delivered to these families in the primary groups of which they are a part. The services need to be delivered to their homes, to their place of work, to their synagogues, to their community centers. One can no longer say that the community only reaches into certain spheres and not to others. For instance, the dichotomy between federation and synagogue is counter-productive in the case of delivery of service in these personal spheres. Federation agencies and synagogues must work together on the professional and lay levels in order to deliver services to these families. In the next section of this paper we will detail the way that a variety of community institutions might provide special services for the men and women going through the process of evolving new roles in this transitional generation.

ELASTICITY AND VARIETY NEEDED IN SERVICES

Many institutions can provide help to Jewish families—institutions as disparate as the synagogue, the Jewish family service, the Federation, traditional women's organizations, and Jewish community centers. Potential roles for each of these in-

stitutions will be considered as sources of delivery of services to the populations already delineated.

The synagogue is the institution usually thought of as the one which deals with the total family throughout the life cycle. However, we have already noted that the synagogue is particularly weak in dealing with those aged 18 to 30. Even in much of their programming for those over 30 traditional role models predominate. The rabbi can have a powerful impact on normative and identity dilemmas within Jewish dual-career families. He or she can also make a single person feel a part of the community or feel left out of it. The ambiance of a synagogue will be set by such simple matters as the dues schedule, whether couples rates are the only ones found on invitations and the way women are listed in the synagogue bulletin. Life cycle events, which are the points at which almost all American Jews interact with the synagogue community, provide a springboard for reaching out to Jewish families. The synagogue can serve as a support in a wide variety of ways ranging from the most inclusive, such as sponsoring a daycare center or a day school, to those more limited in scope such as making available a baby-sitting service during meetings or opening a Passover store. The synagogue can capture individual Jews when and if it meets their needs. Meeting a need which seems relatively minor such as relieving overload by receiving packages can reverse the attitude of a Jew who has felt that the synagogue is not "his" institution.

The Jewish family service has been seen as serving lower income Jewish families when they were in need rather than as a source of services for upper middle-class families or individuals, except in extreme cases of disruption. The "new look" of Jewish family service might include a preventative program for intact families. This would be parallel to "well" baby care offered by pediatricians. Groups might be formed to help children, husbands and wives to communicate better with each

other through the normal "ups" and "downs" of family life. Secondly, the family service might acquire a new image and also reach out to different populations by teaming up with other agencies in the community. A social worker from the family service may serve as a counselor on the staff of a Jewish day school or participate in a team working out of a synagogue on outreach to intermarried couples. Of course, such innovative patterns require openness and a collaborative mind set rather than one of antagonism to other agencies in the community. Too often the federation itself undermines cooperative efforts by pitting agencies against each other in battles over turf so that they may receive funding for new projects.

The role of the federation is key to everything which has been mentioned thus far. As an essential planning agency for the community, the federation can affect the ability of an institution to serve its constituents best. Long-range planning including representatives of a wide segment of the leadership of the community rather than putting "patches" on immediate problems is an important avenue to the creative allocation of funds. Agencies should be encouraged to adjust to the new reality of Jewish life. They should also be enabled to work together and be rewarded with allocations for cooperation rather than having their funding cut. There should be funds available each year for special proposals in areas designated by the federation's long-range planning committee. This money would be used to nurture seed projects which would then be taken over by the agencies themselves if they were successful.

The key is to reward innovation where appropriate and to give agencies incentives to engage in a planning process which parallels that of the federation itself. Finally, federation leadership must be aware that they are not the sole representatives of the Jewish community and that they have to cooperate with the profes-

sional and lay leadership of synagogues and of various organizations to achieve the best use of community funds. This would require a tolerance and understanding of disparate viewpoints, but it does not mean that a dogmatic pluralism must always prevail. There are times when individual groups must be allowed to plan for particular populations.

Not every project or program will be appropriate for everyone. In fact, well-targeted programs may provide the best use of community money for the next decade. This does not mean that the community cannot cooperate in certain efforts. A shelter for battered women, for instance, may be nondenominational. On the other hand, other activities such as youth movements might best be supported within denominational or ideological frameworks.

One example of a set of community organizations which have not been well integrated into the federation structure, or that of the synagogue, is the traditional women's organization such as Hadassah or the National Council of Jewish Women. These groups seem to have lost many of their functions in the last decade. However, they are uniquely organized to provide support to certain groups of women and should be arms of the community as well as purveyors of individual ideological messages. For instance, the best source of a "hotline" for battered women or women in divorce or women who have just suffered the loss of a spouse may be traditional women's organizations. Yet, such support groups and "hotlines" have not been seen as functions of these groups.

Too often women's organizations have focused very altruistically on helping everyone but themselves. A most important function of these groups in the decade of the 80's can be as support systems for widows, for divorcees, for women in single-parent families and perhaps for women who do not plan to marry and are looking for meaning in

their lives outside of traditional familial structures. Ironically, the traditional women's organizations have been stereotyped as havens for women in intact marriages who have chosen to be professional volunteers. This group may remain as the backbone of the traditional women's organizations; however, if these groups are to grow and flourish they will have to appeal to the population referred to above. Groups such as Hadassah and ORT may be uniquely equipped to support women in the crises which they will inevitably face due to the longer life span of women than men in our society.

The Jewish community center is another organization which provides a framework for reaching out to unaffiliated or marginally affiliated Jews. However, to maximize effectiveness the center must be an instrument of Judaization rather than of Americanization. To the intermarried and to those estranged from Judaism, centers have the advantage of appearing as "neutral turf." This image, however, should not stop the Center staff from bringing rabbis and Jewish educators onto their team of professionals. Many Centers sponsor day care and nursery schools as well as summer day-camps and overnight camps.

These are primary institutions of Jewish education in the broadest sense for the next generation. They must reflect the reality of Jewish life in America of the '80's, a reality which includes the search for meaning in life through identification with the Jewish people, and, for many, with Judaism as a religion. Jewish community centers have excelled in the past in cultural as well as in athletic programming. Now, they will have to delineate carefully their new role as a Judaizing agent so as not to conflict with synagogue life. They may serve as feeders of marginally affiliated Jews into synagogue life. This necessitates a partnership between the professional staff of the Jewish community center, the local rabbi, and Jewish educators. Moreover, it requires

that the board members of these various agencies respect each other and the missions of each other's agencies, so that they can help this new vision to be actualized.

In this article a broad picture had been drawn of the impact of the changing roles of men and women on the delivery of services to the Jewish community. It has been postulated that the family has become the beneficiary of community services rather than their support. This is not necessarily a negative phenomenon but it does call for a reordering of community

priorities and a rethinking of the roles of the laity and professionals. For, if institutions are to mesh and to cooperate with each other, then the personnel that staff and lead them must also learn to work together. This reordering is crucial because it will enable the strengthening of the family, which has been recognized as the fundamental unit upon which society is based, and through which the culture and values of the Jewish people will be transmitted to the next generation.