

# Changes in the Recruitment Patterns of Jews by the United Way: 1960-1978\*

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*. . . Jewish people who want to serve in the United Way, for whatever reason, no longer feel that they need to use the Jewish community as a pathway to a position in the United Way.*

Over the past two decades the United Way has changed its recruitment pattern of Jewish leaders, and some Jewish leaders have changed their opinions about serving in non-sectarian philanthropic organizations, in particular, the United Way. These conclusions are based on the findings of a recent study on Jewish communal leaders and their involvement in the United Way.† The purpose of this paper is to describe these changes in the United Way recruitment process of Jewish leaders and to suggest that some of the implications of these changes may be for the Jewish Federation. In addition, the paper will offer some explanations as to why such changes in the United Way recruitment process have taken place.

## The Study

The purpose of the study was to discover the reasons why some Jewish leaders participate in the United Way and not the Jewish Federation and why some leaders participate in both organizations. The method of inquiry was survey research of three groups of leaders: those involved in only the United Way, those involved in only the Jewish Federation, and those involved in both organizations. It was felt that a comparative analysis of the responses of these groups of leaders to a

questionnaire would identify reasons for the differential patterns of association between the two organizations, the Jewish Federation and the United Way. The primary goals of the questionnaire were to measure the respondents' degree of Jewish identification, perception of the functions of the Jewish Federation and the United Way, and demographic characteristics. Four hundred and twenty-four questionnaires were sent to people who had served on decision-making committees of the United Way and the Jewish Federation during the period of 1970-1977 in five New England cities. Decision-making committees were defined as the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, or Allocations Committee. The response rate was 79 percent.

The data were analyzed in relation to the three groups of leaders: leaders only in the United Way, leaders only in the Jewish Federation, and leaders in both organizations. We have referred to these groups as the "United Way leaders," the "Jewish Federation leaders," and the "dual leaders," respectively. The primary tools of analysis were proportions and the chi square test of significance, and when the data were measured on the interval scale, measures of central tendency were computed.

## What Are the Changes in the United Way Recruitment Process?

In the 1960's Sanford Kravitz studied the selection process of individuals by the United Way and health and welfare planning councils, and his findings have contributed to our knowledge about the recruitment process of

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† Deborah Kaplan Polivy, "The Differential Association of Jewish Volunteers Between Voluntary Community Organization Agencies: The Jewish Federation and the United Way" unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1978.

Jews by those organizations. Kravitz found that in the 1960's two groups of Jews were recruited by the United Way. The first group he labeled "the independent, economic elite" or the financially successful entrepreneurs of the community. According to Kravitz, these individuals were selected to serve the United Way on the basis of their economic positions within the community. These people were accorded decision-making power in the United Way, and their orientation was toward the "good of the general community." These individuals did not demonstrate any particularistic interest toward the Jewish community in their positions in the United Way.

The second group of Jews who were involved in the United Way, according to Kravitz, were representatives of Jewish social service agencies. These individuals were not chosen because of their financial status in the community and they were also not accorded any decision-making power in the United Way. According to Kravitz, these individuals were chosen because they served as "symbols of cooperation among diverse religious groups." Furthermore, Kravitz explained that it was not "the individual non-elite leader" who was "accorded a key leadership role but the representative of a particular agency or sub-group with a particular supply of resources and a general value orientation common to other agencies in the system." Furthermore, Kravitz also found that in spite of the fact that these individuals served as representatives of the sub-group within the United Way, their orientation was toward the welfare of the total community. They did not in fact demonstrate any particularistic interests of the Jewish sub-community within the general community forum of the United Way.<sup>1</sup>

Our findings demonstrate that in the 1970's

there are also two different groups of Jewish people who are recruited by the United Way. However, our data also demonstrate that the characteristics of Jewish individuals who are recruited by the United Way in the 1970's are different from those characteristics of Jews who were recruited by the United Way in the 1960's.

We have referred to the two groups of Jewish people involved in the United Way in the 1970's as the "dual leaders" and the "United Way leaders." The dual leaders, for the most part, are not much different from Kravitz's economic elite for these individuals remain the wealthy elite of the community. They are most often self-employed—primarily in manufacturing, in retail or in wholesale businesses. Approximately 70 percent of the dual leaders indicated incomes above \$50,000.

Whereas Kravitz was never specific as to what roles, if any, the Jewish economic elite who were involved in the United Way played in the Jewish community, our data indicate that these individuals are enormously involved in the Jewish community. Furthermore, these individuals hold decision-making positions in both the Jewish Federation and the United Way and for that reason they have been referred to as "dual leaders."

However, unlike the Jewish economic elite involved in the United Way in the 1960's, many of the dual leaders maintain particularistic orientations toward the Jewish sub-community while serving in their positions on the United Way. Sixty-eight percent of the dual leaders indicated that an important reason for joining the United Way was their "desire to help the Jewish community."

The characteristics of the "United Way leaders" are unlike any other group discussed heretofore. The United Way leaders are for the most part employed professionals in large organizations, primarily government, corporations, and institutions of higher learning (75%). Seventy percent of the United Way leaders indicated incomes of less than \$50,000. The United Way leaders express a Jewish commitment; their average gift to the Jewish

<sup>1</sup> Sanford Kravitz, "Sources of Leadership Input for Social Welfare Planning" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1963), pp. 120-121.

federation is \$2500 and their average gift to other Jewish drives is \$1300, and the majority of them (80%) belong to synagogues or temples. However, they spend very few hours per month in Jewish voluntary activities. They indicated that they spend an average of three hours per month in Jewish communal activities and thirty-four hours per month in non-sectarian activities. Furthermore, very few United Way leaders maintain particularistic attitudes toward the Jewish community while serving on the United Way. Only 28 percent of the United Way leaders indicated that a "desire to help the Jewish community" was an important reason for their joining the United Way.

It does appear from these findings that the United Way has changed its recruitment patterns of Jewish people since the 1960's. The most obvious change is that Jewish people who are neither the economic elite nor who are involved in Jewish communal agencies are serving in leadership positions within the United Way. These are the "United Way leaders," and for the most part these are professional people who are employed in managerial positions in large organizations.

The second major change from the 1960's appears to be that the dual leaders who remain the economic elite of the community are serving in decision-making positions in the United Way while at the same time they are maintaining the particularistic interests of the Jewish sub-community. In other words, while the dual leaders might hold an interest in the welfare of the total community, at the same time they are clearly aware of and maintain the interests of the Jewish sub-community while serving in the general community forum of the United Way. Furthermore, while these dual leaders are highly involved in the Jewish community, they do not appear to be recruited by the United Way as representatives of the Jewish community due to their economic positions within the community and the numerous decision-making roles which they are accorded within the United Way. Thus, the specific change in the recruitment pattern of

the United Way is that the United Way is recruiting individuals who hold particularistic orientations and is also allotting to them decision-making roles. Table I indicates the changes in the United Way recruitment pattern of Jewish individuals.

Not only does it appear that the United Way has changed its recruitment pattern of Jews since the 1960's, but it appears that Jewish people may have changed their opinions about being recruited by the United Way. Our findings indicate that some Jews feel that the opportunity to serve in the United Way is attractive. Furthermore, a majority of our respondents indicated that Jews could become involved in non-sectarian health and welfare fund-raising and planning organizations with relative ease. These attitudes which were expressed in the 1970's are very different from those expressed by Jews in the 1960's.

In the 1960's Arnold Gurin conducted a study of Jewish people who served on the boards and other decision-making committees of the Jewish Federation and its member agencies in Detroit, Michigan. In addition to this larger group, he studied a select sub-group of leaders whom he referred to as the thirty "Top Leaders" who served as officers or policy-makers within the Jewish Federation and who also served in the United Way and non-sectarian health and welfare planning council. (At that time the former organization was referred to as the Torch Drive and the latter as United Community Services.) Gurin reported that these "Top Leaders" agreed that the United Way provided only peripheral roles and very little status to Jews. Based on his findings, Gurin concluded that "ethnic and religious affiliation provide channels for leadership roles and community participation which are not as readily available through other types of affiliation which exist in American communities."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Arnold Gurin, "The Functions of a Sectarian Welfare Program in a Multi-Group Society: A Case Study of the Jewish Welfare Federation of Detroit" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1965), p. 219.

**Table I**  
**Changes in Recruitment Patterns**  
**of Jews by the United Way**  
**1960-1978**

<b>Economic Elite (1960's)</b>	<b>Representatives (1960's)</b>	<b>Dual Leaders (1978)</b>	<b>United Way Leaders (1978)</b>
Financially successful entrepreneurs (usually self-employed)	Financial status not primary concern	Self-employed, primarily in manufacturing, retail or wholesale businesses (70%)	Employees of large orgs., such as government, corporations, universities (75%)
Selected on the basis of their economic position within a community	Selected as representatives of Jewish community	Earn more than \$50,000 (70%)	Earn less than \$50,000 (70%)
Decision-making power	Little decision-making power	Average gift to Jewish Federation is approximately \$10,540 Average gift to other Jewish drives is \$3,500  Average gift to United Way is \$1,000  Average gift to other non-sectarian drives is \$1,900  Almost 100% belong to synagogues/temples  Average number of hours per month in voluntary activities: 26 in Jewish communal 25 in non-sectarian	Average gift to Jewish Federation is approximately \$2,500 Average gift to other Jewish drives is \$1,300  Average gift to United Way is \$440  Average gift to other non-sectarian drives is \$1,200  80% belong to synagogues/temples  Average number of hours per month in voluntary activities: 3 in Jewish communal 34 in non-sectarian
Interest in total community welfare	Interested in total community welfare	Majority join United Way for Jewish purposes	Do not join United Way for Jewish purposes

In comparison, a majority of our respondents who were involved in the United Way, the dual leaders and the United Way leaders, indicated that they joined the United Way to obtain status. We used two items to measure if reasons of status conferment by the United Way were important to our respondents in joining that organization. The two items asked if the "opportunity for leadership" and the "opportunity to meet other community leaders" were important to the individual in joining the United Way.<sup>3</sup>

Approximately 80 percent of the United Way leaders and approximately 70 percent of the dual leaders indicated that the "opportunity for leadership" and the "opportunity to meet other community leaders" were important reasons for their joining the United Way. Thus, Jewish individuals who are involved in the United Way in the 1970's perceive that organization as providing opportunities for leadership and for meeting other community leaders, opportunities for status, which is an entirely different perception from that reported by Gurin in the 1960's.

All of our respondents, whether they were involved in the United Way or not, seemed to think that "times had changed" since the 1960's and that the latter organization is open to Jewish involvement. In the 1960's, both Gurin and Kravitz had found that members of the Jewish community had limited access to non-sectarian philanthropies unless they were

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<sup>3</sup> The latent function of both the Jewish Federation and the United Way was identified as the conferment of status which is defined herein as the prestige or honor received from being affiliated with either of the two organizations. Two measures of status were used. The first, which was identified by Gurin, was "opportunity for leadership." The second was the "opportunity to meet other community leaders." These were included in a list of potential reasons for joining the Jewish Federation and the United Way and these measures were used because we felt that they were sufficiently subtle to obtain some measure of response and because they had been used with some degree of success in other studies.

of the economic elite or had served as leaders in the philanthropic institutions of the sub-community. However, not only did our demographic data indicate that "times had changed," but the opinions of our respondents corroborated our other findings. We asked our respondents if they agreed or disagreed with the following two statements: "In general, it is necessary for a Jew to be a leader in the Jewish community before he can become a leader in the general community," and "In your community, it is as easy for a Jew to become a leader in the general community as in the Jewish community." A majority of all of our respondents agreed that a Jew need not be a leader in the local Jewish community before he or she could become a leader in the general community. This fact is obviously true given the group of United Way leaders who had never served as leaders in the Jewish community. Furthermore, approximately 50 percent of all of the leaders agreed that it was as easy for a Jew to obtain leadership positions in the general community as in the Jewish community. This finding represents a change in attitude since the 1960's when Gurin found that no Jewish leader would agree with such a statement.

The findings reported herein seem to indicate that the United Way recruitment pattern of Jewish leaders has changed over the past twenty years and, correspondingly, the attitude of Jewish leaders toward the recruitment process of the United Way has also changed. The explanations for these changes seem to have their sources in two phenomena. The first phenomenon is related to the changes in the patterns of recruitment and voluntarism within our general communities and the second phenomenon is the demographic changes within our own Jewish community.

#### **Explanation of the Changes**

A major change in the recruitment policy of the United Way is probably a result of the pressures of minority groups on that organization in the 1960's. These groups demanded that the United Way change its modus

operandi to better reflect the needs of inner city populations. While these groups primarily wanted a different distribution of United Way resources, Wenocur documents that an often used response of the United Way to such pressures was the expansion of minority representation on United Way boards of directors.<sup>4</sup> It appears that a side effect of such an expansion might have been to widen United Way volunteer opportunities to all sub-community members, including Jews. In addition, as the United Way explicitly began to recruit minorities, it implicitly agreed to the concept of particularism wherein minorities were not only chosen as representatives of their communities, but were *expected* to represent their sub-community interests. In the same way, it probably became acceptable for Jewish individuals to do the same, and thus the phenomenon might be explained of the dual leaders who simultaneously hold decision-making positions within the United Way and hold particularistic sub-community interests.

Another reason for change in the United Way recruitment process may be a result of two complementary occurrences. The first is increased competition for dependable and capable leaders as a result of an increased number of federally mandated citizen boards for such planning and allocating organizations as Health Planning Councils, Mental Health Planning Councils, and Area Agencies on Aging. Secondly, corresponding to the increased competition for citizen leaders as a result of these new agencies, is the realization, as Gurin has noted, that there are only a limited number of "strong and influential leaders" who are "willing to commit" their resources to "community efforts." Many of these individuals are Jewish.<sup>5</sup>

Lastly, it may be that Harry Lurie's prediction of the 1960's has merely come true in the 1970's. Lurie wrote that at some time in the future "outstanding personalities in the Jewish community" would "find greater

acceptance than previously in the civic affairs of the total community."<sup>6</sup> It may be that the non-sectarian community, at this time, has accepted Jewish leaders as decision-makers. Moreover, this change very much corresponds to Kutzik's hypothesis that throughout history Jews have had differential access to decision-making positions in non-sectarian philanthropies.<sup>7</sup>

However, changes in the non-sectarian community only explain some of the change in the United Way recruitment pattern. Much of the change in that pattern can be explained by changes within our own Jewish community, in particular the recent demographic changes wherein Jewish youth are with less frequency entering the entrepreneurial enterprises of prior generations and with more frequency are assuming professional positions in large companies which have traditionally served as sources of volunteers for the United Way. Thus, as the United Way continues to recruit individuals from these large organizations, and if Jews enter the latter with increasing frequency, it will become more and more likely that Jewish people will be included in the United Way recruitment process. The demographic changes in the Jewish community have not only been demonstrated by population studies on the Jewish community, but these changes have also been the subject of several articles recently published in the *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, our

<sup>6</sup> Harry L. Lurie, *A Heritage Affirmed* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1961), p. 339.

<sup>7</sup> See Alfred Jacob Kutzik, "The Social Basis of American Jewish Philanthropy," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1963).

<sup>8</sup> For example, see Floyd J. Fowler, Jr., *1975 Community Survey*, (Boston, Massachusetts: The Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston, 1977); Steven M. Cohen, "Will Jews Keep Giving? Prospects for the Jewish Charitable Community," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Vol. LV, No. 1 (September, 1978) pp. 59-71; and Sanford Solender, "The Changing Situation in the Jewish Community and Implications for Federations," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Vol. LV, No. 2 (Winter, 1978), pp. 148-54.

<sup>4</sup> Stanley Wenocur, "The Adaptability of Voluntary Organizations to External Change Pressures," *Policy and Politics*, 3(June, 1975), p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> Arnold Gurin, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

data clearly demonstrate that these professional Jewish individuals who are employed in large organizations are indeed being recruited by the United Way.

Another change in the Jewish community is a change in attitude of Jewish individuals toward the United Way recruitment process. It appears that Jewish people who want to serve in the United Way, for whatever reason, no longer feel that they need to use the Jewish community as a *pathway* to a position in the United Way. Thus, the historical route, whereby a Jew would "start" as a leader in the Jewish Federation and its member agencies and then move on to the non-sectarian philanthropic agency, is no longer a primary pathway. Jews believe that they can obtain positions in the non-sectarian funds and councils on the basis of their own personal credentials. Whereas the locus of this change is clearly within the Jewish community, it is also obviously linked to the willingness on the part of the non-sectarian organizations to accept Jewish people without considering prior positions of leadership within the sub-community.

#### **The Implications of These Changes for the Jewish Federation**

It seems that for the Federation there are two major implications of the changes in the United Way recruitment process of Jewish leaders. The first is an increased competition with the United Way for Jewish leaders, particularly those leaders who are referred to herein as the United Way leaders. The second implication is that if the United Way continues to recruit these United Way leaders, the articulation of Jewish interests within the United Way may be threatened, given that the United Way leaders have shown little interest in expressing such particularistic interests within the general community forum of the United Way.

Based on the considerable number of articles which have recently been published in the *Journal* on the Jewish demographic changes and their implications for the Jewish

community, it appears that the Jewish Federations have recognized these changes and the resultant need to alter to some extent their fund raising and leadership recruitment processes. However, in doing so, a Federation might find that it is seeking to recruit the same individuals whom the United Way is recruiting, the young, professional class of Jews who are employed in large organizations. Thus, the Federation, in responding to the current demographic changes in the Jewish community, might find itself in competition for leaders with the United Way.

The competition with the United Way might not only be as a result of these demographic changes and the Jewish Federation's response to them, but it also may be a result of the increased willingness on the part of the United Way to recruit Jewish leaders. As a result of this new openness of the United Way, the Jewish community no longer serves as the primary outlet of leadership potential for Jewish individuals. In other words, the increased opportunity for leadership for Jewish people in non-sectarian philanthropies may lead to increased competition for leaders between these philanthropies and the Jewish Federation.

Whereas competition for Jewish leaders may be one implication of the changes in the recruitment process of the United Way, it seems that a second implication may be that Jewish interests might not be maintained within the United Way forum as more and more United Way Jews are recruited by that organization. Our data indicate that the ability and the desire of the United Way leaders to articulate a Jewish point of view within the United Way is questionable. Whereas the dual leaders are capable and are willing to express the interests of the Jewish community within the forum of the United Way, it seems that it depends upon the Jewish Federation to ensure that sufficient numbers of dual leaders are involved in the United Way in order to guard the interests of the Jewish community within that organization. This presence of the dual leaders within the United Way is

particularly important as Jewish communal agencies seek to maintain and often to increase their allocations from the United Way.

Thus, the changes in the United Way recruitment process of Jewish leaders will have an effect on the Jewish Federation and its member agencies. However, it appears that the Jewish Federation can respond to these changes to its own advantage. The Jewish Federation might develop a cooperative exchange of leaders with the United Way. In such an exchange arrangement, the United Way would help to recruit the present United Way leaders for the Jewish Federation and in return the Jewish Federation would encourage the potential dual leaders to serve as leaders in the United Way. Whereas both organizations might initially feel a "loss" of leadership due to such an exchange, in the long run gains would accrue to both organizations. The United Way would obtain the dual leaders who give fairly substantial gifts to the United Way and who are experienced volunteer fundraisers and decision-makers. (The average gift of the dual leaders to the United Way was \$1000 and in comparison the average gift of the United Way leaders to the United Way was \$440.) The Federation in turn would have access to just that group of Jews whom it is interested in attracting, the young, professional employee. Furthermore, by bringing these United Way leaders into the Federation organization, the latter will have the opportunity to educate these individuals about the interests of the Jewish community so that these leaders might better serve the Jewish community within their positions on the United Way. However, probably more importantly, by encouraging the participation of the potential dual leaders in the United Way, the Federation will ensure that its interests are well expressed in that forum.

Whereas the proposal of a leadership exchange with the United Way may be a new one, others within the Jewish community have encouraged the Federation to assume a role in selecting the Jewish leaders who take part in the United Way. For example, Avrunin writes,

Beyond the question of participation of Jewish laymen in the United Way is the selection of laymen who also have a strong identity with the organized Jewish community. This does not mean that Jews participate in the United Way as official representatives of the Federation. It does mean that they recognize the common interest of the Jewish and general community.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, the concept of competition for leadership between the Jewish and general community philanthropies is also not new; it has its origins with other Jewish academics and professionals. Approximately twenty years ago Lurie wrote ". . . increasingly, Jewish associations may have to meet the competition from other parts of the health and welfare field for leaders."<sup>10</sup> Gurin also noted that

For the United Fund, as for the Federation, the exigencies of fund raising make stern demands upon the time and resources of leaders. The professionals of both organizations are dependent upon strong and influential leadership for the success of their efforts and devote their major efforts to recruiting and holding such leaders. Since the number of people with influence and resources as well as willingness to commit these to a community effort is always severely limited, the organizations are inevitably in a competitive situation.<sup>11</sup>

And Benjamin Rosenberg foresaw a time when Jewish institutions would lose potential leadership to non-sectarian agencies.<sup>12</sup>

However, whereas these individuals implied a negative prognosis in terms of a loss of leadership from the Jewish community when such a competitive situation would occur, what

<sup>9</sup> William Avrunin, "Relationship with United Ways," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Vol. XLIX, No. 2 (Winter, 1972), p. 121.

<sup>10</sup> Harry L. Lurie, *op. cit.*, p. 339.

<sup>11</sup> Arnold Gurin, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

<sup>12</sup> Benjamin Rosenberg, "Jewish Agencies and Jewish Responsibility" (paper presented at the 29th General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, Detroit, Michigan), pp. 4-5.



we are suggesting is that the implications of the situation may be beneficial to the Jewish community. Through the process of a leadership exchange with the United Way, the Jewish Federation might ensure itself a strong, potential leadership pool in the United Way

leaders and it also might ensure that its interests are constantly upheld within the general fund-raising, planning, and allocating forum of the United Way through the participation of the dual leaders in that organization.