

TOWARD THE MEASUREMENT OF JEWISH CONTENT IN JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER PRACTICE *

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IN the 1961 Samuel D. Gershovitz Memorial Lecture, Herbert Millman, the present Associate Executive of the National Jewish Welfare Board, addressed himself to the "assets and challenges" faced by the Jewish community center. First among these challenges he saw, "strengthening the Center's role in Judaism." And from this challenge he saw two principal implications for the program of the center:

- a. The program must address itself more to stimulating a seeking for deeper knowledge of Judaism. . . .
- b. The program must contribute to an American Jewish cultural renaissance.¹

As so many of his predecessors, Millman saw the Center's programmatic responsibilities as embracing both Judaism (the religion) and Jewish culture. Nowhere in his paper did Millman use the specific concept of "Jewish content," but the follower of Jewish social

welfare would recognize in the Gershovitz Memorial Lecture the same fundamental commitment which had moved Oscar Janowsky, to write that it was "Jewish content which rendered legitimate a distinct Jewish center."² *The Jewish Welfare Board Survey*, published in 1948 with its strong plea for "Jewish content" as the justification of a Jewish center, hardly burst *de novo* upon the center field.³ However, there is little question that the volume of concern has increased since 1948.

The record of polemics with regard to "Jewish content" would seem to indicate that there are many more experts with regard to its absence than its presence. Arnold Gurin captured this elusive quality in his summation of the discussion groups at the 1958 Conference of Jewish Communal Service. Gurin wrote: "There was general acceptance of the proposition that it is a responsibility of the Jewish communal services to enhance Jewish values. There

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¹ Herbert Millman, "The Jewish Community Center: Asset and Challenges," *Bitfutsoz Hagolah*, Jerusalem, January, 1962, p. 18.

² Oscar I. Janowsky, *The Jewish Welfare Board Survey*, The Dial Press, New York, 1948, p. 274.

³ Janowsky documents the lengthy history of concern that leaders in the center field have had for "Jewish content." Louis Kraft, Executive Director of the JWB from 1939 until after the JWB Survey, occupied a central place among those so concerned. Despite his "retirement," his concern is still very much in evidence. See Janowsky, *ibid.*, pp. 257-63.

continue to be, however, tremendous difficulties in the struggle to define just what we mean by this concept. While the term Jewish values does convey some reasonably clear meaning in regard to religious institutions, its specific application in the communal agencies continues to be an enigma enveloped in a mystery."⁴

Those in the Jewish center field who bemoan the paucity of "Jewish content" might take comfort in Irving Canter's recent observation that the dilemma of finding a way to be Jewish is generic to all American Jewish institutions and leadership.⁵ If Canter is correct, then one might argue that the constraints to Jewish living may lie in the American-Jewish experiences and not so much in the personal failings of professional and lay leadership. The tantalizing question becomes whether Jewish centers which find themselves in different environments have different experiences with regard to the achievement of "Jewish content"? Not only is the question a meaningful one for Jewish communal service—it may also be a manageable one, subject to empirical research.

The observer of the Jewish center field "knows" that centers vary in their Jewish practices and that communities, agencies and their leadership also vary. Could this "knowledge" be made specific in the form of hard data? Could patterns of Jewish achievement and patterns of situational variance be linked to each other statistically so as to suggest that their concurrence was not happenstance? The questions and the pur-

suit of their answers occupied the writer while a student at the Florence Heller Graduate School for Advanced Studies in Social Welfare.⁶

"Jewish Content" as the Focus of the Study

The neophyte in the center field must learn to answer the question, "so what's Jewish about basketball?" But with equal cogency one might ask, "so what's Jewish about social justice?" Can the center which deeply involves its membership in the struggle for civil rights claim that this is the finest expression of one's Jewishness. Yes and no. Yes, because social justice as a value surely has proud Jewish lineage. No, because social justice can no longer be the measure of a Jew—it is the measure of a man in our society. Social justice is now part of what we call our Judaeo-Christian heritage, and its practice may be considered normative for all of us, not just Jews.

Perhaps a way of skirting the dilemma of identifying as Jewish, practices which originated with the Jewish group but which now belong to others as well, is to focus on behavior which clearly *distinguishes* the Jew from the non-Jew. Conceptually, what is being looked for is behavior which is Jewish in origin and whose current practice demarks the Jew. Undoubtedly there will need to be descent from the heights of "social justice" to find such practices. Less lofty items such as "kashruth," Israel Independence Day, the wearing of skull caps, and so on may be what are left as the study moves to focus on distinguishing practices. Thus the study became concerned with that behavior *which would not or could not be found amongst non-Jewish groups.*

⁴ Arnold Gurin, "Summary of Discussion Groups," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Vol. XXXV, No. 1 (Sept., 1958), p. 75.

⁵ Irving Canter, "What Research Tells Us About Training for the Jewish Component in the Practice of Group Work in Jewish Settings," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 3 (March, 1963), p. 266.

⁶ The writer wishes to acknowledge receipt of a Brandeis University Fellowship, and a Lurie Fellowship (awarded by the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds) both of which made possible the study.

For some readers the conceptual problems in the study's transition from "Jewish content" to "distinguishing practices" will remain unsatisfactory. As an empirical study the issue may be resolved by going to the data. And here the reader must note that an item will only be used in measurement if it *distinguishes* Jews from non-Jews, if its practice can be *expected* in Jewish centers, and if it is *empirically* found in some centers and not in others. Further, the study has obtained consensus among "experts" in and out of the center field that the items which met these criteria are part of what the center field means when it talks of "Jewish content."

I anticipate that the concept of "practices which distinguish" will seem somewhat abrasive to participants in the center field. This is all to the good, for it underlines the assumption that the pursuit of differences is not an easy task in any society. The very concept of a society, sociologically speaking, implies mechanisms for integration and control of difference.

Methodology of the Study

One hundred twelve questions pertaining to agency practices in the 1961-62 program year were constructed. These were divided into the following 14 categories of 8 questions each: Israel, holiday observance, use of symbols and ritual, personnel practice, food practices, literature and public relations, teen inter-agency program, adult program, day camp practices, policy-making by non-Jewish membership, practices affecting professional positions, general membership practices, service to non-Jewish teen agers and service to the non-Jewish community.

Through the use of social theory a series of hypotheses were constructed predicting the circumstances under which a center would have a lower or higher level of "distinguishing prac-

tices." The study was thus restricted to a search for those relationships whose direction was suggested by social theory. Sixty-six different variables in the areas of communal, agency and leadership characteristics were suggested as variable indicators and their state was determined through the mail questionnaire or secondary sources of information (JWB records, census material, etc.).

A mail questionnaire comprising the 112 items of practice plus the questions pertaining to selected variable characteristics were sent to the 102 Jewish centers which met the following criteria: a) not organically linked to a synagogue; b) having an autonomous board of directors; c) not located in Canada or the metropolitan areas of Los Angeles, Chicago, or New York (Northern New Jersey centers were included).

The following table indicates the pattern of response:

When the results of the questionnaire were tabulated there was evidence on a purely descriptive level that centers differ greatly from one another in their pursuit of similar distinguishing practices and also differed along many of their identifying characteristics. The results of the survey have borne out what each practitioner "knows" on an intuitive level; centers vary in their Jewish practices (at least as measured by the 112 items on the study's questionnaire) and vary as to the environments

TABLE 1

Region	Re-sponders	Non-Re-sponders	Totals
Southern	17	0	17
New York State	12	1	13
New Jersey	13	0	13
New England	24	1	25
Middle Atlantic	12	1	13
Mid West	14	2	16
Far West	10	0	10
Totals	97	5	102

they find themselves in. The stage was set for an analysis of whether certain kinds of leadership, communal and agency situations were associated with particular levels of distinguishing practice. (For example, would the hypothesis be sustained that centers in larger cities had higher levels of "distinguishing practices?")

A major problem in methodology now presented itself. By what means might centers be characterized as having higher or lower levels of "distinguishing practices?" The simplest scheme would be to count. Centers which pursued most of the 112 items of practice would have higher levels, etc. The flaw in any accounting scheme is that it equates all practices—an equation which is absurd when one inspects the different items of practice. A more sophisticated technique would involve the assigning of weights to the various practices by a group of experts. Those practices about which there was the greatest consensus amongst experts would be used to categorize centers as to levels of practice. The literature pertaining to measurement abounds with questions as to the validity of such a procedure. Practically one has a right to question whether a heavily weighted Passover observance marks a center as "more Jewish" than one which celebrates three minor holidays. In fact, one might argue that an interest in observing a minor holiday is more difficult to pursue and therefore "more Jewish." Because so much of the study's credibility hinges upon the measuring of "distinguishing practices" it seemed advisable to look for a measuring instrument whose capacity to differentiate between centers would not rest upon outside judges or complex weighting schemes. Such an instrument is Guttman type scaling. The principal attractiveness of Guttman scale procedure stems from the fact that the population under study provides in its re-

sponses an ordering of the data. The Guttman scale "affords a procedure for ordering individuals or groups along a single dimension at the same time testing the assumption that several acts or items 'hang together' to represent a unitary concept."⁷ Conceptually a Guttman scale is disarmingly simple. It assumes that those practices pursued by the "lowest level" centers will also be pursued by the "highest level" centers, who in addition will have practices not found in the "lowest level centers."

These concepts can be illustrated with those items which eventually formed the scale on Israel practices. The mail survey indicated the following state of agency practice with regard to the four items on Israel which scaled out:

	Percentage of Centers Responding "Yes"
1. Did the agency sponsor any forums or lectures for adults on subjects pertinent to Israel?	74.2%
2. Did the agency sponsor a Hebrew conversation course for adults?	41.2%
3. Was an Israel Independence Day Celebration sponsored by the agency?	40.2%
4. Did the agency sponsor an Israeli song and/or dance group or course for adults?	36.5% N 97

It is apparent that item 1 above, is the "easiest" for agencies to pursue and item 4 is the "hardest". As already indicated, agencies which offer Israeli song and dance would also be expected to pursue the other three "easier" practices. It would defy the logic of the Guttman scale for an agency to do that which the center field finds "hardest" to achieve and yet not practice those items which are "easiest" of achievement. It would also be "illogi-

⁷ Matilda White Riley, and others, *Sociological Studies in Scale Analysis*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick; 1954, p. 18.

cal" for an agency to pursue the "easiest" and "hardest" items without also practicing the intermediate items.

The logic of Guttman scaling is impeccable on paper. Unfortunately, real life does not order itself so neatly. An agency may not offer any adult forums dealing with Israel because in that community it has become the prerogative of the synagogues. Yet it may offer the "hardest" item, Israeli song and dance, because it has an instructor on its staff. The protocols of Guttman scaling permit a 10 percent "error," in that the "logic" of the scale pattern may be defied as much as 1 in 10 times. If the "error" exceeds 10 percent, the items are assumed not to "hang together" and therefore do not constitute a uni-dimensional scale.

In addition to the "Israel" scale the following are the eight dimensions which "scaled out": holidays, use of symbols, personnel practices, literature, teen inter-agency program, adult program, food practices, day camp practices. Conceptually, all of these dimensions were seen as part of a single pie called "distinguishing practices." It was an unstated assumption that since all of the dimensions came from the same pie, those whose items formed a scale would not only meet the requirements of uni-dimensionality, but would also be strongly related to each other. It was assumed that these dimensions would be reconstituted into one scale, called a scale of "distinguishing practices." This unified scale would then be examined for association with the various measures of communal, agency and leadership characteristics. However, when the nine scales were intercorrelated it was found that only 7 of 36 correlations had an R or .20 or better.⁸ In

⁸ Pearsonian product-moment correlations were calculated for all associations. An R of .20 was considered significant in the findings. Significance in this instance is derived by

addition, 7 of the correlations had a negative R. *The levels of correlation offer meager promise that one may predict an agency's practices in any area by knowing the level of its practices in any other area.* It was apparent that the "pie" could not be put back together again.

This low level of correlation between scales became an exciting and unlooked-for development in that it suggests that certain characteristics will be associated with some dimensions of practice and not with others. But because the study was now dealing with 9 measures of "distinguishing practice" rather than one, steps were taken to scale the study down to the energies of a single investigator. As a result, only 5 of the 9 scales (holidays, symbols, Israel, day camp, and teen inter-agency) were intensively examined for association with the independent variables.

Associations will now be presented between levels of practice as measured by these five scales and characteristics in the variable domains of the General Community, Jewish Community, Welfare Community, the Agency and Agency Leadership.

The General Community⁹

The three measures of communal diversity (percentage of native-born living

treating the study population as a sample of 97. With such a sample, an R of .20 or more is considered significant at the .05 level. (See Mueller and Schuessler, *Statistical Reasoning in Sociology*, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1961, p. 409). The reader should recognize this as an arbitrary procedure in that I am treating the study population as a sample. In actuality, because I am dealing with the universe of agencies that meet certain criteria all better-than-chance associations have potential significance.

⁹ The findings included in the following sections include only those variables which led to reportable associations with at least 3 of the 5 dimensions of practice. In the study, "reportable associations" were determined on the

in state of birth, percentage of foreign-born, percentage of native-born of foreign parentage) in combination, were associated with each of the five dimensions of practice. Some centers are in cities marked by a profusion of other cultural patterns, by inhabitants who themselves are but a step removed from their foreign antecedents, and by residents who are more recently arrived from other areas. Whatever the speculations as to what this community may feel like to its inhabitants, the fact remains that in these communities, centers are *more likely* to distinguish their practices.

The percentage of Jewish representation on the chest or fund board was seen as an indicator of Jewish "access to community dominants." Jewry was considered as being "over-represented" if the percentage of Jews on the chest or fund board exceeded the Jewish percentage of the general community's population. Communities where Jews appeared to be "over-represented" in the chest had Jewish community centers which had fewer distinguishing practices in three dimensions. There can be a number of interpretations as to why Jews are "over-represented"; whatever the specific reason, the fact of this "over-representation" is found to be associated with centers *less likely* to distinguish their practices.

Communities do differ, and this study has merely scratched the surface of these differences. In the present instance, who the inhabitants are and the

basis of Pearsonian R's which were calculated for each of the associations. If there was an R of less than .20 it was reported if the responses were ordered according to a patterned rather than a random scatter. Because the study deals with the universe of centers meeting certain criteria, rather than a sample, all better-than-chance associations are potentially significant. The above ground rules were adopted to help distill out the more significant relationships.

institutional arrangements which place Jews in contact with certain of them has found to be associated with the presence or absence of distinguishing practices in the center.

The Jewish Community

Measures of relatively extensive Jewish communal structure or Jewish institutional separation from the general community failed to be consistently associated with levels of distinguishing practices. The associations were either erratic or simply not present. In one instance, a combination of three indicators, reflecting a higher percentage of Jews affiliated with synagogues, higher per capita Jewish giving to the Jewish federation, and higher per Jewish capita expenditures by the center was significantly associated with *fewer* distinguishing practices in three dimensions. Further when the importance of federation as a source of center financing was examined, centers receiving a higher proportion of their funds from federation tended to have fewer holiday practices and less extensive contact with non-Jewish youth.

The extent of federation support is not therefore a useful predictor of lower levels of practice, to the same extent that a higher rate of total financing from the chest or fund will be found to be. It was the failure of higher federation support to be associated with centers *more likely* to distinguish their practices that was the unlooked for development. In fact, upon examining the percentage of center income received from internal sources, the study found the only variable related to financing which was consistently associated with the presence of more distinguishing practices. While greater chest financing is associated with fewer distinguishing practice in all five dimensions, greater federation financing is *not* associated with more practices. However,

those centers better able to cover their own financing without going to outside sources were also more likely to distinguish their practices in three dimensions.

There was one further variable as regards financing from Jewish sources. It was particularly marked by the extent to which it reversed the hypothesis. In those communities where centers received a greater share of the funds raised by federation, centers were *less* likely to distinguish their practices in four dimensions and more likely to in the inter-agency program dimension. (This unique behavior of the teen inter-agency dimension was anticipated in that it was negatively correlated with four of the other dimensions).

There was but one other variable in the domain of the Jewish community as strong as the percentage of federation funds given to the center, in generating reportable associations. This was the density of Jewish population as measured by determining what percentage of the general community population was Jewish. The greater the density of Jewish population, the more likely was the center to distinguish its practices in all five dimensions. It was apparent that "density" was a very different kind of indicator than the other measures of Jewish communalism. This was corroborated when the study sought association between density and indicators of Jewish communal structure. It was found that communities with a *greater* density of Jewish population have their centers and their Jewish casework services spend *less* dollars per Jewish capita, give *less* per Jewish capita to the Jewish federation, join synagogues *less* frequently, give *fewer* of their centrally-raised dollars to the center and in each of the five dimensions have centers *more* likely to distinguish their practices. In short, when it comes to generating associations with practices which distin-

guish, no characteristic is more powerful for the center than being in a community marked by a higher percentage of Jewish population.

If sheer numbers and concentration of Jews are associated with centers more likely to distinguish their practices, the kinds of Jews that they are also proved an important indicator. The more frequently they listed Yiddish as their "mother tongue" on census reports and the less frequently they were affiliated with Reform Judaism, in each case were the centers in those communities *more likely* to distinguish their practices in four dimensions.

Interpretation—Jewish Community Findings

Observers of Jewish life have been impressed with the upsurge of synagogue affiliation, the continued high levels of Jewish fund-raising and the decentralization of the Jewish population.¹⁰ A sensitive observer like Herbert Gans has documented Jewish efforts to build the structures of community, and has suggested that these structures are simply new forms for the kind of communal life the Jew left behind in the core city.¹¹ The evidence in this study strongly supports Gans' observations. Jews in communities having a lower density of Jewish population join synagogues more frequently, raise more communal funds per capita, have relatively more extensive center operations and relatively more extensive social services than do their co-religionists in densely constituted Jewish communities. One might conclude that these evi-

¹⁰ Joshua Fishman, "The Emerging Picture of Modern American Jewry: Some Recent Studies and the Role of Research," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 1 (Sept., 1960), pp. 21-34.

¹¹ Herbert Gans, "The Origin and Growth of a Jewish Community in the Suburbs", in Marshall Sklare, ed., *The Jews*, Free Press, Glencoe, 1958, pp. 247-8.

dences of structure offer some promise that the Jewish group will survive in its surroundings. But this study's data suggests *that the survival will be more a matter of form than of content*. Where Jewry is most densely situated, where Orthodoxy is the strongest, where connection to the "shtetl" is embodied in living representatives in the Jewish community—here Jews who come together in their community centers continue more frequently to distinguish their behavior in keeping with the "segregating norms" of Jewish life.

A quotation from Amos Hawley may throw light upon these findings. "Redistribution of a minority group in the same territorial pattern as that of the majority group results in a dissipation of subordinate status and an assimilation of the subjugated group into the social structure."¹² In the face of this, it can be argued that Jews may build community centers as the functional equivalent to "territory," but the Jewishly rooted behavior inside of these centers remains influenced by the spatial distribution of the Jew. The findings offer evidence that as the Jew has become "redistributed", he has energetically pursued the building of institutional territory, but that at least in one of these institutions, the center, his practices are associated with the facts of his new environment.

The Jew in his *new* locations surrounds himself with a myriad of structures. And these structures sustain and perhaps even increase the velocity of Jewish contact. But within one of these structures, the study has evidence that there is less that distinguishes the Jew. Instead of linking him with his unique past, the center may become a structure for sustaining the "compartmental"

way in which the Jew draws upon the norms and values of the larger society. The institutional and political differences often measured among the Jewish group no doubt are real, but this study indicates that these differences may be less Jewish in origin, and more a product of the structural separation of a Jewish community becoming cut off from its past.

Center Membership

The kinds of people (Jews and non-Jews) in the community were found to be associated with the presence of distinguishing practices in the center. When something is known about the kinds of people who use the center, even broader associations with practices present themselves. Centers marked by a greater percentage of non-Jewish membership and usage, and those whose Jewish membership tends toward Reform affiliation are in each case *less likely* to distinguish their practices along four dimensions. The breadth of these relationships suggests that membership characteristics are crucial variables in seeking association with distinguishing practices.

Leadership Characteristics of the Agency

As in the domain of the Jewish community, the study found that indicators of center linkage to other Jewish institutions were minimally or inversely associated with centers more likely to distinguish their practices. Whether the rabbinate was active on the center board, or whether board members also served on the boards of synagogues and federation seemed not to be associated with differences in certain practice. Apparently one must know something about the people themselves, rather than the fact that they are also involved in other Jewish institutions. And here the study found that the more the board member tends to be self-employed, over

¹² As quoted in Stanley Lieberson, "The Impact of Residential Segregation on Ethnic Assimilation", *Social Forces*, Vol. 40 (October, 1961), p. 52.

forty, a non-college graduate and foreign-born, the more the center to which he furnishes leadership will distinguish its practices. All of these are indicators of a leadership which is first or second generation. The Polsky study of Orthodox Jewry in Milwaukee noted a diminution of distinguishing practices among the third generation.¹³ In the present study, centers whose leadership tends to be a third generation type have lower levels of distinguishing practices.

Kramer and Leventman in their study of second and third generation Jewry in a midwestern city suggest that the second generation is more typically a businessman, while the third generation participates more heavily in the professions and has more non-Jewish contacts in the community and the large organizations he works for.¹⁴ This study found that where board members more frequently dealt with non-local clients or primarily with Jews among their local clients, the centers they led were more likely to distinguish their practices.

Attempts to establish "communities of orientation" for the center executive and president produced erratic associations. Perhaps the most notable finding in this area was one's capacity to predict the executive's "giving ratio" by knowing the center's rate of financing from the chest as compared to the federation. The executive tends to give a proportionately greater share of his charitable dollars to that agency which supplies a greater portion of the center's deficit financing.

The Center and the Welfare Community

No matter what indicators were used to conceptualize the center's relation-

ship to the welfare community, the resulting associations were almost the same. The dimensions of Israel program and Teen Inter-Agency reveal a consistent pattern of association with the extent of Jewish communal or center relationship with the welfare community. Eight of ten different indicators (or combinations of them) revealed an association between more extensive relationship with the welfare community and more extensive contact between center youth and non-Jewish youth in other agencies.¹⁵ Eight of ten indicators (or combinations of them) showed an association between more extensive welfare community contact and centers *less likely* to distinguish their practices with regard to Israel.¹⁶ To the extent to which inter-group contact is a center goal, the relationship to the welfare community seems highly functional. Further, the indicators of welfare community relationship seem to have little association with dimensions other than Israel and Teen Inter-Agency program.

The consistency of relationships involving the dimensions of Israel and teen inter-agency contact, with variables in the welfare community will make for

¹⁵ The indicators of welfare community relationship used were: percent of Jewish leadership on chest board, percent of chest leadership that is Jewish, financing from chest as a percent of total center income, financing from chest as a percent of center deficit financing, trend line in chest financing of center, percent of chest to center compared to density of Jewish population, chest to center compared to chest to YMCA-YWCA, chest allocation process with center, center lay involvement in chest budget process, chest representation on center board, line-by-line budgeting of center by chest, council offices held by center leadership, use of center facility by other social welfare agencies, percent of chest allocated to the center.

¹⁶ The center's likelihood of having programs related to Israel is diminished in association with almost every variable which implies more extensive Jewish contact with the non-Jewish community.

¹³ Norman Polsky, "A Study of Orthodoxy in Milwaukee" *The Jews*, op. cit., p. 332.

¹⁴ Judith Kramer and Seymour Leventman, *Children of the Gilded Ghetto*, Yale University Press, New Haven; 1961, pp. 197-213.

ease in interpretation. However, there is one series of associations in this domain which seems to be *sui generis*. Centers which receive a greater proportion of their total financing from the chest or fund tend to have fewer distinguishing practices in all five of the most commonly used dimensions. It was also found that centers receiving a greater share of their deficit financing from the chest or fund were significantly associated with centers having a larger proportion of non-Jewish members.

**Interpretation of Welfare
Community findings**

One can't help but be impressed by the consistency of association the indicators of more extensive chest-center relationship have to more teen inter-agency program and less Israel program. A higher rate of contact between Jewish and non-Jewish youth is no doubt an anticipated consequence of an intensive relationship with the welfare community. Few would argue that insulation of Jewish youth from non-Jewish contacts is desirable. With regard to the Israel scale, the study has noted its sensitivity to almost every variable which implies more extensive Jewish contact with the non-Jewish community. Here again, the study has evidence of a pattern of relationship suggested by other observers of American-Jewish life.

Within the domain of the welfare community I would argue that the percentage of the center's total income received from the chest or fund is a much different variable than all of the others in the welfare community relationship. The others capture a piece of the relationship; financing captures its totality. The center, as any organization, must be constantly concerned about its resources if it is to survive. When the center receives a greater share of its financing from the welfare community,

its distinguishing practices tend to be lower in each of the five dimensions. This is a relationship which was strongly re-enforced during the course of a preliminary field study. It was noted that chest or fund representatives actually convey to the center their desire that the center be more concerned with its "general" (i.e., non-sectarian) functions.

I would hardly risk the argument of "causality" in this relationship. It may be that centers with fewer distinguishing practices were those who were originally more acceptable to the chest or fund as constituents. However, I would suggest that there may be the element of a "self-fulfilling prophecy" in this. Centers seek to (or are invited to) enter the chest or fund because their programs and policy are more *en rapport* with a general community orientation. In turn, these centers can feel least able or interested in raising the levels of their distinguishing practices. A Jewish federation director in the field study lent credence to this interpretation by noting that centers used their chest or fund constituency as an excuse for *not* becoming involved in additional "Jewish programs".

The suggestion that a major source of funds may subtly or specifically have impact upon a center's capacity to achieve its Jewish purposes can be expected to meet with a great deal of resistance in the center movement. If a lower level of distinguishing practices is a consequence (rather than a precursor) of the chest or fund relationship, it may be unintended by both chest or fund and center leadership.

**Reflections on the use of
Social Theory**

The study's conceptual scheme rested heavily on the use of social theory in the selection of variables which might be associated with different levels of dis-

tinguishing practices in the center. The concepts of "reference group" and "systematic linkage"¹⁷ were used to hypothesize that when centers and their leadership had "significant others" who tended to be more "white, Protestant, and middle class" those centers were more likely to have lower levels of distinguishing practices. These hypotheses were further supported by Robin Williams observations that Jewish life in America is *centrifugally* oriented.¹⁸ The hypotheses drawn were only selectively sustained. (This was inevitable in that there were a number of different measures of distinguishing practices, many of which were minimally or negatively correlated with each other). Thus, when the center is more strongly linked to, and integrated with, the welfare community, center practices with regard to Israel tend to be curtailed and teen inter-agency program is pursued. However, there is little association with other dimensions of practice. When the link to the welfare community is made specific in the form of a higher level of financial support, many centers evidence a general curtailment of their distinguishing practices. The field suggested that the norms of the welfare community did not have to be imagined; in a number of instances they were specifically transmitted as not favoring "distinguishing practices." Charles Loomis suggests that there can be a "sharing of norms" in systemic link-

age.¹⁹ Centers having stronger financial links to the welfare community are an illustration of Loomis' hypothesis. In these centers, there is a convergence toward welfare community norms by less frequently maintaining practices which distinguish Jews from non-Jews.

Summary

Except for the areas of Jewish and welfare community relationships, these findings have been presented without interpretation. The reader is in a sense left with "half a loaf," which may be better than none, but hardly sufficient to act on. Statistical evidence does not immediately translate itself into policy. To the policy-maker interested in absolutes, this research (or many others for that matter) will have little utility, for *the findings deal with probability not certainty*.²⁰

Further, the reader must be aware that what has been presented are associations, *not* causative relationships. In many instances it is possible to argue that the state of distinguishing practices preceded the factor it is associated with. For instance, the policy-maker who is impressed with the seeming "consequences" of a pervasive relationship between more extensive chest or fund financing and lower levels of distinguishing practices, must wonder whether in some communities a low level of distinguishing practices might have been a

¹⁷ An excellent bibliography with regard to the reference group concept can be found in Alan Klein, "Role and Reference Group Theory: Implications for Social Group Work Research" *Social Science Theory and Social Work Research*, ed. Leonard Kogan, NASW, New York, 1960. The concept of "systematic linkage" is most fully dealt with by Charles Loomis, *Social Systems* D. Van Nostrand, Princeton, 1960.

¹⁸ Robin Williams, Jr., "Unity and Diversity in Modern America," *Social Forces*, Vol. 36 (October 1957), p. 3.

¹⁹ Loomis, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-34.

²⁰ The analogy to cigarette smoking and lung cancer may be appropriate. Non-cigarette smokers will get lung cancer, and most non-smokers will not get lung cancer. Yet it appears that given a body of smokers and non-smokers, the former will develop more lung cancers. Not certainty is involved here but probability. Some find the pleasure of smoking too great to be swayed by the probabilities; others are influenced by the better-than-chance opportunity to avoid lung cancer and stop smoking.

precursor to major chest financing rather than a consequence of it.

Another important limit owes to the fact that the items of practice were lifted out of context and may not be truly representative of the state of a center's distinguishing practices. There is also little material in the study which permits one to speak of a trend in any of these relationships. The study offers no insights as to what these relationships were like a year ago or what they may be like next year. As a general caution, the scientific method would demand some attempt at replication, so that one might infer with greater confidence from these findings.

Conclusions

In undertaking this study, I was deeply impressed by Philip Selznick's case history of *TVA and the Grass Roots*. Selznick presented a stunning example of the way in which an organization's goals might be compromised by the nature of its commitment to certain elements outside of the organization.²¹ Under the influence of Selznick's work, and other materials in the literature of the social sciences, I set about to construct a conceptual scheme which would offer hypotheses about the success or failure of Jewish centers in achieving their Jewish goals. Broadly speaking, I built upon the notion that center linkage to the welfare community would be associated with relative failure in the achievement of Jewish goals and linkage to the Jewish community would be associated with their more successful pursuit. As reported, the first notion of "lower levels" of distinguishing practice being associated with greater welfare community linkage is in large part sustained. However, the findings indicate that one must know a good deal more about the Jewish

community before hypothesizing that strong linkage to it is associated with higher levels of distinguishing practices.

My material suggests that had I pursued differentiation *within* the Jewish community I would have found a communal type marked by greater density and size of Jewish population, relatively *less* formal structure, a greater percentage of Yiddish speakers and Orthodox affiliation, Jewish federations which raise *less* money per Jewish capita and give *less* of what they raise to the center. The findings indicate that centers located in communities marked by phenomena of this latter type tend to have a *higher* level of distinguishing practices. The problem for the center field is that many of these characteristics associated with higher levels of practice are representative of first and second generation Jewry—and the continuing disappearance of these generations is irreversible.

The conclusions and even the data of this study have already been the subject of contention and refutation. It is difficult for some in the center field to accept the possibility that two of its major goals may be irreconcilable. These goals, as indicated by Herbert Millman are the strengthening of Jewish practices and strengthening of connection to the social welfare community. The words of Philip Selznick apropos his analysis of *TVA* may be instructive: "For the things which are important in the analysis of democracy are those which bind the hands of good men. We then learn that something more than virtue is necessary in the realm of circumstance and power."²²

Until such time as there is support or refutation of the study's findings its unique contribution may be the building of uni-dimensional scales which validly discriminate between agencies with dif-

²¹ Philip Selznick, *TVA and the Grass Roots*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1949.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 266.

