Recruiting and Retaining a Professional Work Force for the Jewish Community:
A Review of Existing Research

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The Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University is a multi-disciplinary research institute dedicated to the study of modern American Jewry. Our mission is to enhance understanding of the Jewish community and the development of religious and cultural identity. The Center's faculty and staff includes psychologists, sociologists, and Jewish studies scholars, whose interests include Jewish identity, culture, family life, religious expression, and Israel-Diaspora relations. A broad range of research is conducted by Center faculty, spanning studies of individuals and institutions. Its research applies cutting-edge methods and theories to the study of modern Jewry and its work is disseminated to both public and academic groups.

About the Fisher-Bernstein Institute

The Fisher-Bernstein Institute for Leadership Development in Jewish Philanthropy focuses on the changing relationships between presidents and executives, staff and lay leadership, as well as the changing relationship between donors and institutions. It has conducted innovative Leadership Development Laboratories in communities around the country with leadership of federations, centers, synagogues and other Jewish institutions. The Institute also produces case studies, the first of which is on the refunding and structuring in the 1990's of what is now Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life.

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Introduction

The future of the North American Jewish community stands on several legs. One of these is human resources – the availability of skilled professionals to carry on the work of vital communal institutions. In communities large and small, and throughout all sectors of Jewish communal work – Federations, synagogues, JCCs, agencies, and educational institutions – leaders of Jewish organizations feel they are struggling to recruit and retain qualified professionals at all levels.

Although much is already known about the challenges of recruitment and retention in Jewish communal organizations, varying diagnoses of what the problem actually is have made it difficult for policymakers to identify and agree upon effective responses. In an effort to help clarify the issues facing policymakers, this report analyzes the existing literature on professional recruitment and retention in the private, not-for-profit and Jewish sectors. It represents the first stage in a broader research effort addressing recruitment and retention of professionals in Jewish communal work. The research is being conducted by Brandeis University's Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies and Fisher-Bernstein Institute for Leadership Development in Jewish Philanthropy through a grant from the Eugene and Marcia Applebaum Foundation, William M. Davidson, Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, and Jewish Life Network / Steinhardt Foundation.

Private Sector Approaches

Research on recruiting and retaining personnel in the private sector treats these as issues faced by individual organizations who compete with each other to attract talented people, not as a common challenge to be addressed cooperatively by a sector as a whole. It also sees retention and recruitment as separate and distinct elements of a broader strategic approach to human resources management.

Turnover in and of itself is not undesirable from an organization's perspective, but may be if it has dysfunctional consequences for the organization. Researchers have sought to understand the antecedents of this dysfunctional turnover. The core finding is that people typically do not simply quit their jobs. The actual resignation is the last step in a series of actions that may include interviewing elsewhere, planning the best time to leave, etc. Before people take these actions, they *think* about quitting, mulling it over, considering their options. These musings are motivated by thoughts and feelings they have about the job. Conceptualizing turnover as a multi-stage process allows organizations to determine where along the chain they wish to intervene, should they wish to prevent employees from quitting.

Weak *organizational commitment* and lack of *job satisfaction* are primary factors that set in motion the process through which people leave jobs. Organizational commitment is a set of value commitments and interpersonal obligations. Job satisfaction is a set of attitudes related to *job scope, role stress, burnout, work-family conflict, pay,* and *met expectations*. Although organizational commitment and job satisfaction are the strongest predictors of quitting and staying, they still fail to explain the majority of the variation in turnover.

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Studies of recruitment distinguish between generating an applicant pool, choosing from among these applicants, and convincing the chosen person to accept the job. Very little research has examined how organizations create appropriate applicant pools. More research focuses on how recruitment influences employees' tenure and success in their jobs. Strategic human resource management views the recruitment process as the point where employees generate first impressions about organizations. Although this might lead organizations to put on their best face, research suggests that an honest presentation of self may lead to a better employer-employee match and thus foster employee retention.

Not-for-Profit Approaches

Jewish communal organizations are not corporations. Their challenges of recruitment and retention, and the means they have to address them, are more akin to those faced by other non-profits, rather than businesses. Non-profits differ from businesses in their dual bottom line, which sometimes subordinates business considerations to social mission considerations; and in their dual lay/professional hierarchy, which blurs lines of authority and accountability, and sometimes subordinates considerations of business efficiency and professionals' self-actualization to maintenance of the non-profit's governance system. In spite of these differences, recent years have witnessed growing interest in bringing business models of management and leadership to non-profit settings.

Just under eleven million employees make up the non-profit workforce today, representing 7.1% of the paid U.S. workforce. There is no consensus among researchers about the extent to which they are committed to a lifelong career in the non-profit world. Research finds that they are less cynical, more intrinsically motivated to work, and more satisfied in their jobs than are their counterparts in the for-profit sector. At the same time, they are more likely to experience burnout, which entails feelings of fatigue, cynicism, and lack of a sense that one's work is worthwhile. The emotionally taxing nature of the work makes burnout a major cause of turnover among those in the caring professions (e.g., social workers, nurses and clergy).

Sector-wide vs. Organizational Strategies

Whereas the private sector conceives of recruitment and retention as challenges faced by individual organizations, the Jewish community frames the issue in systemic terms, seeing it not merely as the problem of specific organizations, but as a problem of Jewish communal work overall. In the not-for-profit sector, the perception of field-wide labor crises has been most pronounced in education and health care.

In health care, one of the most important causes of a shortage of registered nurses is their high level of dissatisfaction with their jobs. This creates vacancies by encouraging turnover, and makes it difficult to fill vacancies by creating negative images of the profession among potential recruits. The rise of managed care and other attempts to rein in health care costs contribute to the dissatisfaction. Other than proposals for legislative action, recommendation for addressing the shortage of registered nurses echo ideas for addressing the shortage of Jewish communal workers.

No comprehensive research exists specifically addressing the challenges and opportunities that small communities face in recruiting and retaining Jewish communal professionals. The shortage of medical personnel in rural areas offers an analogous situation where small communities struggle to recruit and retain non-profit professionals with specialized skills. If the experience of the American health care system is a guide, recruitment and retention issues in small Jewish communities may be thought of in terms of 1) the general lifestyle issues that make their community appealing or unappealing to potential recruits, 2) the Jewish lifestyle issues that tend to be of particular concern to Jewish communal professionals, 3) the way that work environments differ in small Jewish communities versus larger ones, and 4) the competitive environment vis-à-vis Jewish institutions in other communities.

Jewish Communal Approaches

A dominant trend in the history of the American Jewish community has been a steadily increasing reliance on professionalization to carry out Jewish communal functions. This has led repeatedly to waves of concern in the Jewish community over issues of staffing, leadership and training in Jewish organizations. The most recent of these waves began in the mid-1980s. Over the course of the past two decades, it has spawned a variety of recruitment and training initiatives. In spite of the widespread concern, there is little systematic data on vacancies and turnover rates in Jewish communal organizations.

Comparison of national benchmarks and proxy rates derived from Jewish organizational surveys shows that the rate of turnover for supplementary school teachers is exceedingly high (27%), whereas the rate for Jewish day school teachers (12%) is much lower than would be expected. In 2001, the turnover rate for all U.S. teachers was 15.7%, and for non-Catholic parochial schools 22.1%. Surveys of North American JCC personnel found that a proxy measure of annual turnover dropped from 37% in 1987 to 10% in 2001. The 2001 rate approximates the annual rate of employee turnover for the US economy as a whole, which in the 1990s averaged 11%.

Jewish communal discussions of its personnel concerns are themselves data to be analyzed. The way a problem is defined determines the nature of the solutions that are deemed appropriate. How is the issue being framed by the Jewish community, and what does this suggest about its proposed solutions? Eight themes characterize the Jewish community's discussion of the issue:

1. A problem is perceived to exist in both the *quality* and *quantity* of the labor pool available to the Jewish community.

Stakeholders express concern that too few people are choosing to enter Jewish communal professions. They also express concern that a disproportionate number of those who do choose to enter these fields lack the *dual skill-set* of combined Judaic and professional competencies. This dual skill-set is widely believed to be necessary to perform Jewish communal work successfully. The issue is clearest with regard to educators. Judaic learning does not a teacher make. Nor does training in pedagogy qualify one to be a *Jewish* educator.

Professionals in other areas of Jewish communal work may face this issue, but the need for Judaic skills and knowledge in addition to professional expertise may be more variable. Issues of quality posed by Jewishly-committed, but under-skilled young hires differ from those posed by mid-career switchers whose professional skills may outpace their Jewish cultural literacy.

2. The root of the "personnel crisis" is ascribed to three analytically distinct sources: people, organizations, and systems. Each of these implies a different target for intervention.

Person-centered approaches argue that not enough people are interested in entering Jewish communal work, and those who are interested are not qualified enough. When seen as a *lack of quantity*, a commonly proposed remedy is to market Jewish communal work to people making career choices. When seen as a *lack of quality*, the accepted response is to encourage training. In both instances, interventions are directed at existing or would-be professionals to improve their willingness and ability to serve.

Organization-centered approaches argue that Jewish organizations (individually or collectively) have failed to create work environments that inspire loyalty and commitment. Focusing on retention rather than recruitment, this conception is associated with reform efforts to address low salary, low status, unprofessional demands on time, family-unfriendly policies, poor career ladders, problematic lay-professional relationships, lack of mentoring, inadequate supervision, obstacles to professional effectiveness and other issues.

Systems-centered approaches see personnel shortages as a result of personnel flows through a system in which a) career advancement is a desirable element of professional life, b) mobility is limited within organizations, and c) Jewish organizations and communities compete with each other to attract talent. Seeing inequities in the distribution of labor as unavoidable, it focuses on the question of who wins and who loses under different intervention scenarios.

3. Graduate training may be as important for the signals it sends as for the education it provides.

Learning takes place throughout a person's career and in many settings - including training institutions, continuing professional education programs, and formally or informally on-the-job. Graduate programs benefit professionals both by the learning it fosters and by the official "seal of approval" it provides to degree-holders. Although there may be reason to assume that Jewish communal professionals with certain types of training will, on average, outperform professionals without such training, and that organizational effectiveness will improve as the proportion of employees holding advanced degrees increases, neither of these hypotheses have been systematically tested. The assumption that they are correct should be weighed carefully before they are invoked to inform policy.

4. Recruitment and retention issues are seen as affecting all career levels.

At the senior levels, the problem is phrased as a shortage of leaders and of leadership.

5. Gender bias in Jewish organizations continues to be widespread, and is seen as detrimental to recruitment and retention.

Gender-based barriers to advancement and salary gaps for women persist in Jewish communal work. Efforts to redress the status of women seek many of the same organizational reforms that are suggested to improve retention overall. Paradoxically, in spite of the inequities women face, the field disproportionately relies upon female labor, and finds it hard to attract men.

6. Some issues of recruitment and retention are common to rabbis, teachers, agency workers, etc., whereas some are unique to each profession.

Because many of the skills required to thrive in an office bureaucracy, a classroom, or a congregation are particular to each work setting, recruitment and retention interventions sometimes focus specifically on a particular profession. Other initiatives, emphasizing elements that link the diverse Jewish professions, adopt a broader approach, sometimes involving inter-organizational partnerships. These types of interventions invoke the rationale that Jewish communal work constitutes an integrated field where organizations rely upon each other to carry out their shared missions, and where professionals move across communities and organizations over the course of their careers.

7. Along with consensus about technical means of improving recruitment and retention, there is dissatisfaction with "technical" responses.

There is widespread consensus that certain personnel challenges can be addressed by improving recruitment efforts, training, salaries, status, time demands, family-friendly policies, career ladders, lay-professional relationships, mentoring, supervision and similar issues. At the same time, these are seen as alleviating the symptoms of the problem rather than addressing the deeply-rooted cultural challenges at the heart of the issue. Various cultural critiques have been offered, reflecting the diversity of opinion about the state of North American Jewry.

8. Underlying a consensus about the need to resolve pressing personnel problems are diverse reasons for commitment to the issue.

Jewish communal workers treat these issues as ends in themselves, because they touch upon matters of professional identity and self-interest. They and others also believe that solving personnel problems would enable Jewish organizations to better achieve communal goals. From this perspective, assessments of success would have to test not only whether improvements were made in the quality, quantity and condition of Jewish communal personnel, but also whether these positively influenced the effectiveness of the organizations in which they work and the Jewish communities that they serve.

Conclusion

Four key themes emerge in this review of the knowledge base about professional recruitment and retention.

Systemic Thinking

The issues are multi-faceted, involving a variety of institutional and individual stakeholders,

and combining conceptually distinct areas of new employee recruitment and existing employee retention. This invites comprehensive, holistic solutions rather than small, technical fixes.

Assessing Lines of Conflict

The multiplicity of stakeholders – including communal organizations, professional associations, training institutions, local communities, donors, junior and senior professionals, and lay leaders – generates the potential for conflict. Differences in motivation, preferred means, and desired outcomes are likely to exist. Perceptions of "winners" and "losers" may also generate support or resistance. Policymakers will therefore want to assess the potential lines of conflict in any proposed intervention strategies, in order to determine at the outset how best to manage these.

Avoiding Unintended Consequences

With multiple stakeholders and a multi-faceted problem, efforts to address one element in the system may have unintended consequences on other elements of it. Policymakers should attempt to think systemically in order to better anticipate and mitigate such problems.

Clarity of Intent, Diagnosis and Prescription

Although people often speak of "recruitment-and-retention" in one breath, this phrasing conflates separate issues and thereby fosters muddled thinking about solutions. Organizations and professional fields may have problems of retention, problems of recruitment, both, or neither. Clearly determining whether staffing challenges are more a problem of recruitment or a problem of retention can help policymakers adopt appropriate strategies and avoid responding in ways that leave the underlying issues unaddressed.

In the Jewish communal workplace, problems of both recruitment and of retention have roots in individual, organizational and systemic factors. Each implies different intervention targets and strategies. Because the problem is multi-faceted, the three layers are not mutually exclusive. But precision in articulating the diagnosis of the problem will lead to greater clarity in determining appropriate steps to address it and measures to evaluate success.

The goal of social science research is to produce a body of empirically-verified knowledge that builds cumulatively on that which has already been learned. This review suggests that much is already known about the recruitment and the retention of professionals. It also offers a framework for raising new questions that might not otherwise be asked, and thereby finding answers that might not otherwise be found.

Introduction

American Jewish organizational life is a multi-billion dollar industry that provides employment to tens of thousands of people. Some who work in this sector of the economy trained for it intentionally. They hold degrees from religious seminaries, schools of Jewish education, graduate programs in Jewish communal service, or other venues. Some, on the other hand, pursued degrees in law, finance, psychology, management, human resources, pedagogy, and more, and by the twists and turns of the career path came to apply their professional expertise for the betterment of Jewish organizations. Some did not or have not yet pursued professional training, but nevertheless have found the Jewish community a reasonable place to work.

Regardless of their path into Jewish communal work, or whether their paycheck comes from a synagogue, communal agency or day school, these professionals are indispensable to the functioning of American Jewish life as we know it. Much more than Jewish communities in the pre-modern era, American Jewry has relied upon professionalized institutions to carry out the basic tasks of Jewish life. As a result of this model, the future of the North American Jewish community rests on its human resources. Skilled professionals are required to carry on the work of vital communal institutions.

Leaders of Jewish organizations often feel they struggle to recruit and retain qualified professional talent at all levels. They have voiced this concern in communities large and small, throughout all sectors of Jewish communal work, and in relation to professionals of all types. The underlying reasons for the problem are far from clear. Does it reflect a shortage of people – in numbers and/or quality – interested in these careers? Does it reflect inadequacies in graduate school training and continuing education? Does it reflect negative experiences professionals have in the world of Jewish work – experiences that drive away current professionals and discourage others from applying? Does it reflect employers' unrealistic assessments of the appropriate tenures in the jobs they offer or inefficiencies in their hiring practices?

In an effort to answer these questions and develop appropriate intervention strategies, the Eugene and Marcia Applebaum Foundation, William M. Davidson, Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, and Jewish Life Network / Steinhardt Foundation commissioned in 2002 a multi-stage research project to be conducted by Brandeis University's Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies and Fisher-Bernstein Institute for Leadership Development in Jewish Philanthropy. As the research team began considering how to approach the issue, two things became immediately apparent:

1. Much is already known about the challenges of recruitment and retention in Jewish communal organizations.

2. Varying diagnoses of what the problem actually is have made it difficult for policymakers to identify and agree upon effective responses.

Recognizing this has shaped our approach to this research. Instead of embarking on a new study to rediscover what is already known, we began by reviewing the written knowledge base on professional recruitment and retention in the business, not-for-profit, and Jewish communal sectors. We have sought to systematize this knowledge to help clarify discussion about these issues and thereby enable more effective responses to them. The result of this literature

review is presented here. It will be supplemented by a Fisher-Bernstein Institute paper reflecting on the largely-unwritten expertise of practitioners who address these issues in their daily work.

By identifying what is known and by clarifying specific aspects of the issues involved, these documents will help reveal what remains unknown. They are intended to serve as the starting point for empirical research to be conducted in six Jewish communities across the United States. Final results of the research will be reported in 2004.

The knowledge base reviewed here includes analyses specific to the Jewish community, as well as work concerned with generic issues of recruitment and retention. Some of the literature addressing Jewish settings reflects the practical knowledge gained by organizational task forces planning interventions (e.g., CJENA, 1991; Flexner and Gold, 2003; Gold, et al., 1999; Heller and Bergman, 2001; Mandel, et al., 1987). Some represents the social scientific work of independent researchers engaged to assess specific programs or the state of a given professional field (e.g., Cohen, et al, 1995; Gamoran, et al., 1998; Raff, 2004; Rosov, 2003; Schor and Cohen, 2002; Tobin, et al., 1997). Much of the literature represents the reflections of experts who have devoted substantial consideration to the issues at hand (e.g., Bronznick, 2002; Elkin and Frank, 2001; Goldsmith, 2001; Marker, 2003; Moses, 2001; Wertheimer, 2003; Wexler, 2002). As many of these people are themselves professionals in Jewish communal settings or work closely with them, their writings amount to insiders' accounts of the situation.

Not surprisingly, there is a broader literature concerning recruitment and retention in non-Jewish settings. Students of organizational behavior have given systematic consideration to these issues in the private sector, where success in attracting and keeping skilled employees lowers the cost of doing business and confers advantages in a competitive marketplace. Much of this research can inform professional recruitment and retention in the Jewish community. In some ways, however, the private sector is a world unto itself, and offers a model not easily translated.

Studies of the not-for-profit sector offer another vantage point from which lessons can be drawn and applied to Jewish communal settings. This is a smaller literature than that devoted to the business world, but it shares key commonalities with Jewish communal work that make it particularly relevant. Among these are the strong intrinsic motivations among non-profit professionals, the role played by volunteer leadership, and the frequent lack of clearly measurable indicators of occupational and organizational success.

This paper is organized as follows: Part One introduces approaches popular in the business world, focusing on Strategic Human Resource Management and the relationship of recruitment to retention. Part Two considers the applicability of private sector models to Jewish communal settings, introduces research conducted in other not-for-profit settings, and reviews comparable instances where personnel shortages have become the target of sector-wide interventions. It also looks at specific problems faced by small communities. Part Three examines how the Jewish community diagnoses its professional staffing problems, and considers both the empirical evidence and the style of rhetoric that is used to frame it. The conclusion poses questions for further analysis.

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Almost a year after the Enron scandal broke, essayist Malcolm Gladwell penned a provocative article for the *New Yorker* entitled "The Talent Myth," in which he asked, "What if Enron failed not in spite of its talent mind-set but because of it? What if smart people are overrated?" (2002, p. 28). Gladwell wondered whether Enron's rush to recruit the best and the brightest placed too great a value on lone individuals, while neglecting other elements that make organizations effective, such as teamwork and communication. He contrasted the failed energy company with Southwest Airlines, an organization which "hires very few M.B.A.s, [and] pays its managers modestly.... Yet it is by far the most successful of all United States airlines because it has created a vastly more efficient organization than its competitors have" (2002, p. 30). The rival approaches can be likened to two basketball teams, one whose success derives from a star athlete, the other built around a team of solid, but not outstanding players, whose strength lies in the quality of their teamwork.

Most studies of recruitment and retention in the private sector do not address the deeper question that Gladwell hints at: How much does a company's success depend upon the quality of the personnel hired versus the organizational practices and procedures that enable people to work together most effectively? Instead, research into the topic concerns itself simply with understanding the processes by which individual organizations recruit and retain personnel and by which individuals make decisions to enter or leave jobs.

Strategic Human Resource Management

Human resource (HR) management has traditionally been concerned with serving individual employee needs. The typical HR department occupies itself with managing payroll, handling benefits, addressing employment disputes, and other such things. In recent years, however, these long-standing approaches have given way to a newer variant known as *strategic human resource management* (SHRM), which integrates traditional HR activities with long-term organizational planning. SHRM treats recruitment and retention as parts of a comprehensive approach to an organization's personnel strategy, alongside other matters like compensation, benefits, training and development, job analysis, and performance evaluation (see Mabey, et al., 1998; Oster, 1995; Pynes, 1997).

SHRM draws an analytic distinction between recruitment and retention. Both, of course, are related to the elimination of vacancies – one by filling them and the other by not allowing them to develop. Vacancies may be created by organizational growth or by employee turnover. Growth is typically deemed to be an indicator of organizational success, and as such will not be addressed beyond noting that it can be a source of personnel shortages. Turnover, however, is typically seen as an undesirable and potentially avoidable source of employment vacancies. The question of turnover, therefore, is twofold: Why does it occur? And how can the vacancies it creates be prevented or eliminated? In answering these questions, SHRM focuses exclusively on how individual organizations can address these issues by and for themselves. Although this differs from a common view in Jewish community work that its recruitment and retention issues transcend particular organizations to trouble the field as a whole, the SHRM perspective suggests that the issue might be approached not only on the communal level, but also on an organizational level as well.

Turnover

Turnover occurs when people leave their jobs. Researchers distinguish between *voluntary* turnover (where employees leave freely) and *involuntary* turnover (where employees are dismissed or laid off). Voluntary turnover can be either *functional* (undesirable employees leave) or *dysfunctional* (desirable employees leave), and *avoidable* or *unavoidable* (Griffeth and Hom, 2001).

Organizational impact of turnover

Functional turnover may yield substantial cost savings, as new, younger employees replace higher salaried employees (Capelli, 2000; Dalton and Todor, 1993). However, the cost of dysfunctional turnover may be higher than anticipated. Turnover costs include those associated with separation (e.g., administration, payouts, and temps), with actual replacement (e.g., recruitment, interviews, and moving), and with orientation and training. Other less direct costs include weakened quality of service and increased turnover among other employees (Griffeth and Hom, 2001).

The distinction between functional and dysfunctional turnover is often hard to assess. Promotion of skilled employees may benefit the organization as a whole, but entail a cost for the department that must find a qualified replacement. Even seemingly dysfunctional turnover can lead to improved opportunities for others to advance, and may help organizations avoid stagnation.

Turnover theories

Organizational equilibrium theory states that an employee will stay in a job as long as the incentive to stay is equal to or greater than the contributions the employee makes (March and Simon, 1958). The equilibrium is upset when movement out is seen both as (1) desirable and (2) possible. These two perceptions typically have been measured in terms of job dissatisfaction and perceived job alternatives. Dissatisfied workers are likely to quit when they see other opportunities for work elsewhere (Steers and Mowday, 1981).

The most popular model of the voluntary turnover process says that certain job attitudes precede "withdrawal cognitions," which precede quitting behaviors (Mobely, 1977). The point is that people typically do not just leave their jobs. The actual resignation is usually the last step in a series of actions that may include interviewing elsewhere, planning the best time to leave, etc. Before people take these actions, they *think* about quitting, mulling it over, considering their options. These musings are motivated by thoughts and feelings they have about the job. Conceptualizing turnover as a multi-stage process allows organizations to determine where along the chain they wish to intervene, should they wish to prevent employees from quitting. A meta-analysis of hundreds of turnover studies confirmed that intention to quit is the best overall predictor of turnover, suggesting that employees who have made up their minds to quit will not easily be dissuaded (Griffeth, et al., 2000). In addition, the availability of alternative job prospects is also a significant predictor of decisions to quit (Trevor, 2001).

The two antecedents to withdrawal cognitions that have been given the most attention in turnover research are *organizational commitment* and *job satisfaction*. Meta-analyses of

turnover research confirms that not only are these two antecedents related to each other, but they also predict whether people think about quitting and also whether they act on these thoughts (Griffeth, et al., 2000; Hom, et al, 1992; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). Organizational commitment predicts turnover better than job satisfaction does (Griffeth, et al., 2000).

Organizational commitment has been conceptualized in two ways. The more popular approach sees it as a combination of (1) accepting the organization's goals and values, (2) being willing to expend effort on behalf of the organization, and (3) desiring to stay with the organization (Mowday, et al., 1979). An alternative approach treats organizational commitment as (1) a combination of positive feelings about the job and the work environment, (2) a desire to continue working in the organization, and (3) a set of values and perceived obligations toward the employer that create a normative commitment to remain within the organization (Meyer, et al., 1993).

Job satisfaction has been defined both as an overall attitude about a job as a whole, and as a composite of attitudes about specific intrinsic and extrinsic facets of a job (Spector, 2003; Weiss, et al., 1966). A popular and widely validated Job Descriptive Index distinguishes five facets of job satisfaction (Smith, et al., 1969):

- Work
- Pay
- Advancement opportunities
- Supervision
- Co-workers

Among facets, low work satisfaction is the best predictor of turnover. Measures of facet satisfaction, however, are less able to predict turnover than measures of overall job satisfaction (Griffeth, et al., 2000).

Six features of jobs have emerged as important predictors of job satisfaction: *Scope, role stress, burnout, work-family conflict, pay,* and *met expectations*.

The **scope** of a position refers to its complexity and challenge. Employees are more satisfied and less likely to leave with greater job complexity. In a well-known *Harvard Business Review* article, Herzberg (1968) suggests several principles for enriching the scope of a job, based on a motivation theory that sees people as driven by desires for responsibility, recognition, growth and learning. Rather than simply assigning additional work, which "merely enlarges the meaninglessness of the job," Herzberg recommends increasing an individual's accountability (which affords both responsibility and recognition), and assigning new, challenging tasks (which enables growth and learning). Scope is positively correlated with job satisfaction (Fried and Ferris, 1987) and negatively correlated with turnover (Griffeth, et al., 2000).
Role stress involves ambiguity and conflict. When employees do not understand their responsibilities or have conflicting demands in their jobs, they become dissatisfied (Jackson and Schuler, 1985). Notably, supervisors can offer their employees clarity and help resolve conflicts.

Related to role stress is **burnout**. People who experience burnout become fatigued, cynical, and lack a sense that their work is worthwhile. The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) measures emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and feelings of personal accomplishment

(Maslach and Jackson, 1981). Particularly associated with the helping professions, burnout has been called "the cost of caring" (Maslach, 1982). Whereas studies of the business sector found that a lack of job satisfaction and organizational commitments were the best predictors of intention to quit, a meta-analysis of 25 turnover studies of child welfare, social work, and other human service employees found that burnout, and especially the emotional exhaustion associated with it, were even stronger predictors (Mor-Barak, et al., 2001). The authors conclude that, "in these emotionally intense fields…employees often feel a greater responsibility and commitment to their clients than they do toward their work organizations" (2001, p. 653). A clinical study of Christian clergy argued that burnout was fostered both by the nature of the work and by the "intrapersonal factors" commonly found among clergy, including "high idealism, Type-A personality… and perfectionism" (Grosch and Olsen, 2000, p. 619).

When the demands of work and family life conflict, job satisfaction suffers. A meta-analytic summary of **work-family conflict** studies found that work-family conflict is negatively correlated with job satisfaction (Allen, et al., 2000). This holds true for both men and women (Kossek and Ozeki, 1998).

Satisfaction with regard to **pay** is more strongly determined by wage equity than by the dollars themselves (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001). People tend to be more concerned with how much they earn relative to their peers and colleagues than with their earnings in absolute terms. Drawing on U.S. Census data and studies of the non-profit workforce, Leete (2000) argues that non-profit agencies, because they employ many intrinsically motivated employees, rely heavily on wage equity as a motivating factor. She points to the fact that non-profit employees, especially at the managerial level, are more likely than employees in the private sector to report being paid fairly.

Met expectations are an important determinant of job satisfaction (Porter and Steers, 1973). A person who enters a job with a set of expectations regarding pay, social relations, supervision and other such things, is likely to become dissatisfied if the organization fails to meet these. This suggests that managing expectations (through realistic job previews during recruitment and selection) may help to ensure that expectations are met. Meta-analyses have confirmed that met expectations increase both satisfaction and retention (Griffeth, et al., 2000; Wanous, et al., 1992). Because expectations change over time, they are in some sense a moving target.

Criticisms

Critics claim that the prevailing turnover model (attitudes → withdrawal cognitions → quitting) does not adequately explain why some people quit without first searching for alternative jobs. Nor does it explain why some satisfied employees voluntarily leave their jobs. Moreover, the results of hundreds of turnover studies conducted in this framework fail to explain more than a small part in the variance. A critique of one of the most comprehensive assessments of turnover research points out that "the proportion of shared variance between levels of satisfaction and turnover is 3.6% and that the proportion of shared variance between intention to leave and actual leaving is 12%. Clearly, a substantial portion of the variance in turnover remains unexplained" (Mitchell and Lee, 2001, p. 193).

In their "unfolding model of voluntary turnover," Mitchell and Lee suggest that "shocks to the system" could "jar employees toward deliberate judgments about their jobs and, perhaps, to voluntarily quit their job" (2001, p. 199). Examples of shocks may include the death of a loved one, the sudden loss of child care, unexpected pregnancy, or other life events. Moreover, whether satisfied or not, employees "could leave because their job no longer fits with their self-image or their images of their future plans and goals" (2001, p. 198). They offer as a new construct for voluntary turnover research, *job embeddedness*, or the extent to which a person is attached to people or groups at work or in the community, how well the person "fits" with them, and how much the person would have to sacrifice by leaving.

Mitchell and Lee (2001) cite separate studies of grocery store employees and hospital employees which found that job embeddedness predicts voluntary turnover to an even stronger degree than do job satisfaction and organizational commitment. However, this construct is meant as a supplement to, rather than a replacement for, these other variables. Job embeddedness is broader than organizational commitment in that it also looks at the connections people make outside the organization.

Filling Vacancies

In HR planning, the organization assesses its HR needs relative to the supply of available labor. When an organization is ready to fill a position it must generate applicants (*recruitment*), decide on one applicant to hire (*selection*), and convince the selected applicant to accept the offer and keep the job (Spector, 2003). Certain factors in the planning and implementation phases of filling a position can impact the quality of the applicant pool generated and whether an applicant accepts a job offer and keeps the job.

Job and Labor Analysis

Organizations determine the needs for specific positions through formal or informal job analysis. A *job-oriented* approach analyses the position's duties, tasks, and activities. Such an analysis can be helpful in providing applicants a "realistic job preview," which gives applicants an adequate impression of the job and organization and helps set realistic expectations. A *person-oriented* approach to job analysis describes the knowledge, skills, attributes, and other personal characteristics (KSAOs) required for the job. This approach helps the organization develop a profile of the ideal candidate. "Tasks define what is done on a job, whereas KSAOs describe the sort of person who can do the job well" (Spector, 2003, p. 56). The U.S. Department of Labor suggests a planning process that addresses six domains: Worker characteristics, worker requirements, experience requirements, occupation requirements, occupational characteristics, and occupation-specific information (O*NET, n.d.). This information can be used for several purposes:

- To develop effective job descriptions quickly and easily.
- To expand the pool of quality candidates for open positions.
- To define employee and/or job-specific success factors.
- To align organizational development with workplace needs.
- To refine recruitment and training goals.
- To design competitive compensation and promotion systems.

Recruitment

Recruitment can be defined as "those practices and activities carried on by the organization with the primary purpose of identifying and attracting potential employees" (Barber, 1998, p. 5). Recruitment is distinct from selection in that the objective of recruitment is to attract applicants, whereas selection is the process of choosing from among those applicants.

Several comprehensive reviews of recruitment research have been published over the past decade (Rynes, 1991; Breaugh, 1992; Breaugh and Starke, 2000; Barber, 1998). These have shown how certain recruitment practices influence the development of a quality applicant pool in the short term and help to ensure satisfaction, commitment and employee retention in the long term.

Generating and maintaining an applicant pool

Applicant pools have typically been treated as givens that explain other outcomes, rather than unknowns to be explained themselves. Very little research has examined how organizations create appropriate applicant pools (Barber, 1998). At most, some research has tried to identify attributes of the recruitment messages that help capture attention and generate an applicant pool. Effective messages are vivid and concrete, personally relevant, include unexpected information and are conveyed in face-to-face conversation (Breaugh & Starke, 2000). Research into the different places that organizations look for potential applicants or the different ways they inform people of job openings could answer the question of how appropriate applicant pools are generated. Unfortunately, the research in this vein has focused almost exclusively on the relationship between recruitment sources and post-hire outcomes (e.g., are applicants recruited by word of mouth more likely to stay in the job?).

Impact on satisfaction, organizational commitment and retention

The recruitment process can be the organization's opportunity to make a 'first impression' upon a potential employee. Recruitment is not only intended to identify and select new personnel, but to also to communicate an image of the organization to the potential hire. Some research suggests that rather than misrepresenting the nature of the organization or the work, recruiters should present a realistic image in order to improve the chances for a mutually satisfactory, long-term employer-employee relationship. In other words, it is in the organization's best interest to be honest about a job rather than to "sell" it. Applicants generally know what they want in a job, but employers help set their expectations. Organizations desperate to hire may be reluctant to inform applicants of potentially negative aspects of the work. Although bad jobs are no replacement for good jobs, some research shows that "realistic job previews" may avoid inflated expectations and thereby promote greater job satisfaction (Wanous, 1980; Wanous, et al., 1992).

Summary

Research into private sector recruitment and retention treats these issues as matters to be addressed by individual organizations, not by inter-organizational partnerships or third parties. It sees recruitment and retention as separate and distinct elements of a broader strategic

approach to human resource management.

Turnover in and of itself is not undesirable from an organization's perspective – as when promotions of good employees create vacancies. But it may be if it has dysfunctional consequences for the organization. Researchers have sought to understand the antecedents of this dysfunctional turnover. Finding that it is the result of a process that translates feelings about the job into thoughts about leaving and then into eventual action, they have identified weak organizational commitment and lack of job satisfaction as the two major factors that set the process in motion. Commitment refers to a set of values, whereas satisfaction is a set of attitudes about the work and its environment. These findings, while consistent across many studies, still leave most of the variation in turnover unexplained.

Studies of recruitment recognize that it incorporates several distinct phases, each amenable to intervention. Much research views the recruitment process as the point where employees generate first impressions about organizations. Although this might lead organizations to put on their best face, research suggests that an honest presentation of self may lead to the best employer-employee match and thus foster employee retention.

Although people often speak of "recruitment-and-retention" in one breath, this phrasing is potentially misleading because it conflates separate issues. Organizations may have problems of retention, problems of recruitment, both, or neither. To speak of a "retention problem" is to say that turnover adversely affects an organization or field. To speak of a "recruitment problem" is to say that organizations are unable to attract and hire enough people or enough qualified people to fill vacancies. The need to continually recruit does not necessarily mean that a problem exists. Recruitment is fundamental task that all organizations must attend to, even if it is often perceived as burdensome. It reaches "problem" or "crisis" status only when there is a significant gap between supply and demand for professionals (i.e., too many fishermen, not enough fish), or when organizations consistently fail to tap an adequate supply because they approach recruitment in a poorly-organized manner (i.e., fishermen set out late and leave the outboard motor running.)

Clearly determining whether staffing challenges are more a problem of recruitment or a problem of retention can help organizations adopt appropriate strategies and avoid responding in ways that leave the underlying issues unaddressed. If "dysfunctional" turnover creates costly vacancies, with valued employees quitting, then retention strategies to address the causes of turnover can be an alternative to investing heavily in recruitment strategies. On the other hand, if turnover is "functional" but positions remain unfilled, or organizational success expands the number of positions that need to be filled, efforts would be better directed at recruitment than retention. In addition, knowing whether recruitment and/or retention issues are restricted to specific positions or are endemic to the organization as a whole can also produce more informed responses.

Not-for-Profit Approaches

Organizational Environment

Jewish communal organizations are not businesses. Driven by mission rather than monetary motives, they are part of the not-for-profit sector of the American economy. The challenges of recruitment and retention that non-profits face differ somewhat from those in the business sector, as do the available and appropriate means to address them. These are introduced

here, and will be elaborated in a separate document based on leadership development laboratories with leaders of Jewish organizations.

Because non-profits are legally restricted from making and distributing profits, they face certain challenges and advantages over for-profit entities. First, non-profit professionals are motivated more by intrinsic commitment to the cause than by extrinsic rewards like salary (Mirvis and Hackett, 1983).

Second, while there are potential proxy indicators (e.g., campaign growth), non-profits do not enjoy uniform measures of individual performance or organizational effectiveness (Anthony and Young, 1999). Part of this results from inherent tensions between pursuing the *dual bottom line* of organizational efficiency and fulfilling a social mission. An airline may make a calculated decision to shift its target market away from some customers and towards others. It can reinvent itself next week, and has no ethical obligation to those it ceases to serve. In contrast, a synagogue trying to ensure its survival by attracting younger members has to pay attention to its tradition and make decisions in a Jewish ethical framework. Reorienting toward a younger membership may be the organizationally rational decision, but the community-building social mission means that the synagogue cannot simply cast its elderly aside. This, however, may prevent it from fully pursuing a strategic shift toward the young. The dual bottom line complicates the definition of organizational success, which in turn makes it difficult to assess how well individuals are contributing to the achievement of organizational goals. As a result, non-profits frequently abandon outcome-based measures of performance and focus instead on controlling inputs – staff time, expenses and other behavior. This, however, tends to clash with the independence and autonomy typical of non-profit professional work, and can encourage employee turnover (Oster, 1995).

Another distinguishing feature of not-for-profits, particularly Jewish communal agencies, is their *dual hierarchy*. Jewish communal professionals answer to (and manage) not only their co-workers, but also lay people who are vested with authority of their own (Elazar, 1976). It is not possible to describe the work process of Jewish communal organizations without reference to lay leaders. From donors to decision-makers to on-the-ground workers, the presence of volunteers shapes the work experience of non-profit professionals.

In the Jewish community, the lay/professional dual hierarchy exists not only to mobilize the support of donors and volunteers but because it is seen as proper that power rest not only with career officials but also in the hands of all members of a community. In spite of these reasons for the dual hierarchy, it has the drawback of blurring lines of authority and accountability. As a result, professionals sometimes cite problematic relationships with lay leadership as a source of frustration about their work. If an implication of the dual bottom line is that business considerations may sometimes be subordinate to mission considerations, the key implication of the dual hierarchy is that considerations of business efficiency and professionals' self-actualization will sometimes be subordinate to the non-profit's governance system.

In spite of these basic differences between not-for-profit organizations and businesses, recent years have witnessed a greater application of business models in the not-for-profit sector. Tighter budgets and increased concern over efficiency and effectiveness have led to calls for a more professional, flexible and better-educated workforce, and for better management to oversee them (Pynes, 1997). This reconceptualization of non-profit management as a distinct

skill-set that requires specialized training cuts against established traditions in non-profit management. Typically, talented practitioners (who were trained to be professionals, not managers) were promoted into management positions (Young, 1987).

Graduate programs in Jewish communal service were initially established, in part, out of a recognition that typical programs in social work were inadequate in this regard. Even so, lay leaders of Jewish Federations and agencies often continue to express dissatisfaction with the skills of seasoned professionals who would assume executive positions (Edell, 2002). The issue is less the absence of managerial skills in a technical sense, than the leadership skills required to guide complex organizations through periods uncertainty and change.

Workforce Characteristics

In the United States today, 10.9 million employees work in non-profit agencies, representing 7.1% of the domestic paid workforce (Independent Sector, 2002). Research into the characteristics and attitudes of these workers is scant, yet revealing. There are at least four published national studies on the topic: Two based on surveys of working adults in the business, non-profit, and government sectors (Mirvis, 1992; Mirvis and Hackett, 1983), one based on graduates of top-ranked public policy and administration schools (Light, 2000), and one based on a randomly-dialed national sample of 1,140 non-profit workers (Light, 2002).

Mirvis (1992) finds that non-profit and government employees are less cynical than their counterparts in the for-profit sector. In addition, both Mirvis and Hackett (1983) and Mirvis (1992) find that non-profit employees gain more satisfaction from their jobs than those in business and government. Light (2002) reports that their intrinsic motivation to work is higher, as well:

> Nonprofit employees were much more likely to say that they took their job in the sector for the chance to help the public, to make a difference, to do something worthwhile, and [because of] pride in the organization [rather than because of] the job security, the salary and benefits, or the paycheck (Light, 2002, p. 9).

The portrait was not entirely positive, however. Light also found a high potential for burnout, a common cause of turnover among professionals in not-for-profit work (2002, p. 6). Burnout, as noted earlier, combines fatigue, cynicism, and sense that one's work is not worthwhile. Professionals whose work primarily consists of engaging in caring relationships with other people (e.g., social workers, nurses and clergy) are especially prone to burnout because of the emotionally taxing nature of their jobs (Mor-Barak, et al., 2001). Work by the Fisher-Bernstein Institute suggests that the emotional effort required to manage relationships between personalities in highly political environments may also be a source of burnout. Even if they are highly committed to their jobs, burned out employees will likely quit (Mor-Barak, et al., 2001).

There is no consensus among researchers about the extent to which non-profit professionals are committed to a lifelong career in the non-profit world. Light argues that "sector switching is a defining characteristic of the new public service" (2000, p. 26). Of those public administration

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graduates currently working the non-profit sector, about one quarter say they would rather work in another sector, compared to about 20% of those in government and 40% in the private sector. Examining behavior rather than attitudes, however, Mirvis (1992) found that non-profit employees in 1990 tended to stay with their jobs longer than they were doing back in 1977. He concludes, "more people are making a 'career' of work in their non-profits. And, whether first choice or not, many who have entered non-profits have decided to stay" (1992, p. 32).

Sector-wide Shortages

Most of the private sector research surveyed here conceives of recruitment and retention as challenges faced by individual organizations. In contrast, Jewish communal discourse frames the issue in systemic terms, seeing it not merely as the problem of this or that organization, but as the problem of the entire field of Jewish communal work. This perspective is more common to the not-for-profit sector, where the perception of a field-wide labor crisis has been pronounced in education, health care and the clergy. Before describing these cases, however, it is worthwhile to review a recent instance in which even the business community became concerned with a field-wide personnel shortage.

Information Technology

In the mid-1990s, the NASDAQ's rise brought with it a global shortage of Information Technology (IT) professionals. Individually, firms responded by competing aggressively for workers, offering generous compensation packages in real dollars or stock options, and recruiting heavily among college students and faculty (Arnold and Niederman, 2001; West, 1998). Although the popular impression of tech-savvy teenagers being hired straight out of high school was greatly exaggerated (the U.S. Commerce Department estimated that only 6% of the IT workforce did not continue their education past high school), between one-quarter and one-third had less than a bachelor's degree (Meares and Sargent, et al., 1999). Some argued that by keeping already-skilled individuals out of the labor force, colleges were exacerbating the problem. Others countered that the profession was "eating the IT seed corn" by poaching from universities those who would otherwise train future generations of IT professionals (Arnold and Niederman, 2001; Beise and Myers, 2000). Governments around the world responded by adopting policies designed to interest young people in IT, to support math and science education, and to ease hiring of foreign IT workers (Arnold and Niederman, 2001; Gherson & Co., 2002; Meares and Sargent, et al., 1999; West and Bogumil, 2001). In the United States, state governments also competed with each other to attract IT workers to local businesses (Meares and Sargent, et al., 1999). Although these policy responses had an impact, the crisis was ultimately "solved" by the collapse of the high-tech sector, which reduced the demand for IT professionals (Arnold and Niederman, 2001).

Teaching

The responses to a nationwide shortage of teachers offer particularly important lessons to those concerned with the Jewish communal labor pool. In both the educational and the Jewish communal arenas, shortages have led to calls for increased recruitment. In contrast to the Jewish community's paucity of employment data, however, the educational field actually has

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comprehensive figures on teacher employment rates, enabling an informed diagnosis of the cause of the shortage. These data provide information on the numbers of people entering and leaving teaching, and distinguish between attrition out of education altogether and migration from one school to another (Ingersoll and Smith, 2003).

In the most comprehensive study to date of the teacher shortage, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future concluded that recent teacher recruitment efforts have succeeded in increasing the supply of new teachers from 178,000 in 1987 to 232,000 in 1999.[1] But even though "the United States produces enough new teachers to meet its needs each year," the shortage grows worse because attrition is spiraling upward even faster. Whereas 173,000 teachers left the profession in 1987, 287,000 left in 1999. This led the NCTAF to conclude, "They are leaking out of the bucket faster than we can replace them" (2003, p. 23-24).

Analysis of the U.S. Department of Education's nationally representative Schools and Staffing Survey reveals that retirees account for only a small part (12%) of this turnover (Ingersoll, 2002). Much of the attrition is among new recruits themselves. Between 40% to 50% of all beginning teachers leave the profession within five years (Ingersoll and Smith, 2003; NCTAF, 2003).

Efforts to address the teacher shortage suffer from a clear gap between the researchers' diagnosis and the policymakers' prescription. Although the research indicates that the primary cause of the teacher shortage is less a failure to recruit than a failure to retain, the most popular policy response remains recruitment efforts to increase the supply of new teachers. For example, the Teach for America program places college graduates with no prior pedagogical training into classrooms across the United States for two years, in the hope that they will choose a career in education. Established in 1990, Teach for America reports that 63% of it 6,400 alumni are still teaching, serving as school administrators, or pursuing advanced degrees in education (Teach for America, 2003). This 37% attrition rate is somewhat lower than the 40% to 50% national average reported above, but it is calculated differently, and includes those working in education for less than five years.

Educational policymakers find themselves concerned not only with the immediate need to fill vacant teaching positions, but to do so in a way that avoids unintended consequences. They are particularly concerned that programs to place uncertified or under-certified teachers in classrooms not compromise educational quality. Research has not yet offered a definitive answer to the question of quality. The New York City Council's Committee on Education concluded that this lack of data was hampering its efforts to make informed decisions about recruitment and retention programs (2003). Studies that rely upon school principals' perceptions of teacher effectiveness (e.g., NCTAF, 2003) can be challenged for the lack of objective outcome measures: Principals may be biased in favor of teachers with certification. One attempt to answer this question by analyzing standardized test scores found that students with under-certified teachers were two months behind their counterparts learning under certified teachers (Laczko-Kerr and Berliner, 2003).

Recommendations for improving teacher retention focus on a variety of issues. Some of these are applicable to other professions as well, such as providing supportive work environments,

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[1] These numbers include former teachers re-entering the profession.

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mentorship, and respect for teachers as professionals (Darling-Hammond, 2003; New York City Council, 2003). Others are particular to teaching, such as socialization into teaching ideologies, and ensuring appropriate class sizes, teaching loads and teaching materials (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Feiman-Nemser, 2003).

Health Care

In health care, a shortage of registered nurses (RNs) has received significant industry, philanthropic and governmental attention because the crisis threatens the health of the entire populace. A variety of indicators – including high turnover rates, declining numbers of RNs, and low unemployment among RNs – suggests the extent of the crisis, but the exact contribution of the many hypothesized causes remains unknown (GAO, 2001). Among the presumed causes are an aging population that increases the demand for nursing care; a continued reliance on a predominantly female workforce even as women's expanded job opportunities have drawn them elsewhere; and a failure to replace a retiring workforce with young recruits. The difficulty of hiring new recruits is attributed to the smaller size of the age cohorts currently entering the labor market, the increased competition to employ those who do enter, and a widespread sense among young people that nursing is an unattractive career option (GAO, 2001; Kimball and O'Neill, 2002).

Researchers agree that one of the most important causes of the nursing shortage is the high level of dissatisfaction among RNs (GAO, 2001; JCAHO, 2002; Kimball and O'Neill, 2002). This creates vacancies by encouraging turnover, and makes it difficult to fill vacancies by creating negative images of the profession among potential recruits. Part of the problem is attributed to managed care's focus on the "bottom line," which has led hospitals to restructure nurses' work in ways that leave many of them dissatisfied (JCAHO, 2002; Kimball and O'Neill, 2002).

A report commissioned by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) argues that responses to the problem can be understood as representing four stages:

- The *scramble* stage treats the nurse as a "commodity," and emphasizes recruitment and monetary incentives.
- The *improve* stage treats the nurse as a "customer," and emphasizes improvements to the work environment, including expanded flexibility, continuing education, mentoring and recognition.
- The *reinvent* stage treats the nurse as a "valued asset," and emphasizes improved career ladders and autonomy.
- The *start over* stage treats the nurse as a "professional partner," and emphasizes new models of care that allow nurses to "practice at the upper limits of their professional licenses" (2002, p. 9).

In choosing to present the various types of response as a series of advancing "stages" (and by labeling the lowest of these stages with the disparaging term, "scramble"), the report makes clear where its authors' preferences lie. To its credit, however, it takes pains to describe the multiple stakeholders involved in this issue – from professional organizations to training institutions, to governmental agencies to health care delivery organizations and more – each of which holds particular interests and prefers particular strategies of response (2002, pp. 28-34).

Overall, the proposals advanced to address the shortage of registered nurses echo some of the ideas proposed to address the shortage of Jewish communal workers, with the major exception being the existence of a legislative dimension. The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations offers a three point plan that calls for creating organizational cultures of retention, bolstering nursing's educational infrastructure, and establishing financial incentives for investing in nursing (2002, p. 7). The RWJF report recommends the creation of a "National Forum to Advance Nursing" that would convene stakeholders in order to create new nursing models, reinvent nursing education and work environments, systematize the collection of national data, and create a clearinghouse for the sharing of best practices (2002, p. 10).

Clergy

Mainline Christian religious denominations in the United States and Canada are experiencing a shortage of clergy to fill pulpits. Observers of the Roman Catholic church have typically attributed the shortage of priests to the requirement of celibacy and to the inability of women to enter the priesthood. In Protestant denominations, an influx of women into the ministry has helped maintain an adequate supply of clergy during the past decades. However, officials in the United Church of Canada, the country's largest Protestant denomination, say that a decline in this trend is one reason behind their current shortage of ministers. They also blame early retirement among baby-boomers and among second-career clergy from the 1980s, as well as a greater propensity among newly ordained ministers to opt for non-congregational positions (Todd, 2001).

Research conducted for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the liberal wing of American Lutheranism, identified other reasons for its shortage of pastors. This included increased student debt, restrictions on mobility due to spouses' careers, and a shift in the congregational profile towards smaller, less affluent congregations that could afford to pay only modest salaries (Walker, 2001). Others have suggested that the quality of life is increasingly seen by potential clergy as undesirable, due to excessive time demands, low pay, and overly-demanding parishioners (Brozan, 2000; Walker, 2001). One solution to the shortage of ministers and priests has been to allow or encourage lay leaders to take on roles that mainline churches have typically reserved for clergy (Todd, 2001; Walker, 2001).

Non-Profit Professionals in Small Communities

Sector-wide initiatives to address professional recruitment and retention may sometimes neglect aspects of the problem that are peculiar to certain organizations or sub-sets of organizations. For example, the causes and consequences of personnel shortages may differ in important ways when comparing small and large communities.

When the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (now the Union for Reform Judaism) assessed the recruitment problems faced by its synagogues in small communities, it identified two reasons why graduates of the Reform seminary often "rule out" such places. First, they typically prefer "places that offer a richness and diversity for their own Jewish living and practice," and see larger communities as more conducive to this. Second, those in two-career families are often reluctant to move to places where "only one family member can find work in his or her chosen field" (Berger, et al., 2002). A seminar on educator recruitment and retention

identified additional factors that increase the challenges faced by small communities – in particular, smaller communal budgets and a lack of access to training and support systems for educators (Bechhofer, 2001).

Beyond this, to the best of our knowledge, no comprehensive research specifically addresses the challenges and opportunities that small communities face in recruiting and retaining Jewish communal professionals. There are, however, analogous situations in which small communities struggle to recruit and retain non-profit professionals with specialized skills. One that has received considerable attention from researchers and policymakers is the shortage of medical personnel in rural areas. Although the analogy has clear limitations – (many of the small Jewish communities are located in metropolitan areas) – there are still things to be learned. Similar to the Jewish community's recruitment and retention problems, the nursing shortage is a national issue that has particular impacts in small communities. But the personnel crisis in rural medicine goes beyond nurses to encompass physicians, as well. Writings on the topic have addressed both, and include both systematic research and health care managers' reflections on practical solutions.

Filling nursing vacancies in rural areas takes up to 60% longer than in urban areas. Recruitment to these locales faces all the problems that have led to a nurse shortage nationwide, and compounds them with problems specific to rural communities. Commonly-cited barriers include people's reluctance to adopt a rural lifestyle, and salaries that do not offer a premium to entice them to overcome their reticence. For some, a lack of access to continuing education or academic institutions is a problem. For others, the highly specialized training in nursing school leaves people feeling unprepared to be the 'generalists' that rural areas need (Tone, 1999).

Family issues are also crucial deterrents. Lack of a sizeable marriage market deters many unmarried nurses from seeking work in rural areas. For married nurses, the difficulty for spouses to find work is a formidable barrier (ASRAP, 2001; Tone, 1999). There is a substantial gender-related aspect of this problem. Nursing is an overwhelmingly female profession. This means that the decision to move to a rural area in order to take a nursing job is typically a decision made in order to support the wife's career advancement. Such a choice confronts the gender-biased presumption – reinforced by continuing wage differentials – that men's careers are more important than women's.

In other ways, rural communities are not at a disadvantage in recruiting medical personnel, and may even have some advantages. Research demonstrates that rural locations are no better or worse than other areas in terms of nurses' job satisfaction and positive perceptions of the workplace. Nurses working in these communities even tend to be more committed to their organizations than their counterparts in urban environments, enhancing the possibilities for employee retention (Ingersoll, et al., 2002).

Governmental programs to reduce the shortage of medical personnel in rural areas exist on the federal, state and local levels, and are complemented by hospital-based efforts (Full, 2001; Pathman, et al., 2000). Some attempt to recruit from within rural communities by investing in the education of promising junior-level personnel. Distance learning is one way to provide training without having to send people out of the communities, losing their immediate labor and risking that they might not return (Frase-Blunt, 2000). Others try to give people a taste of work in rural communities by recruiting people to "preceptorships." People are given

four- to eight-week work placements typically followed by job offers that often include loan repayment as an incentive (Tone, 1999). Evaluation research has found that financial incentives may be less effective than simply providing good work environments, and that the intention to serve in a rural community tends to develop before enrolling in medical school, although any exposure to work in a rural area increases the likelihood of choosing a career there (Connor, et al., 1995; Rabinowitz, et al., 2001; see also, ASRAP, 2001).

If the experience of the American health care system is to be any guide, small Jewish communities should assess their particular recruitment and retention issues in terms of 1) the general lifestyle issues that make their community appealing or unappealing to potential recruits, 2) the Jewish lifestyle issues that tend to be of particular concern to Jewish communal professionals, 3) the way that the work environments differ in small Jewish communities versus larger ones, and 4) the competitive environment vis-à-vis Jewish institutions in other communities (see Full, 2001).

Jewish Communal Approaches

"There is not an educational director in a Jewish school in North America who isn't scrambling every fall to find teachers" (Wolfson, 2001, p. 6). The observation, made by a prominent Jewish educator in a journal issue devoted to "The Looming Crisis in Personnel," strikes a familiar chord with many, not only in the Jewish educational system but also in synagogues, Federations and other Jewish communal agencies. In recent years, issues of staffing, leadership and training have been of increasing concern and have spawned a variety of recruitment and training initiatives.

The concern is not new. It was prevalent in the 1950s, when a baby boom and Jewish institutional expansion created increased demand for Jewish communal professionals. Susan Shevitz's historical study of the "teacher shortage" in the Jewish community found remarkable consistency in the discourse and proposed solutions over the decades, going back to at least the mid-1950s. In 1956, a conference devoted to the topic identified ten causes of the teacher shortage including, "inadequate social and economic status," "poor recruitment procedures," "few chances for advancement," and "growing enrollment" (cited in Miller, 2000).

Sociologist Marshall Sklare's classic 1955 study of Conservative Judaism addressed "the problem of recruitment" into the Conservative rabbinate. Originally, the movement's growth had been fueled by defections from Orthodoxy, and much of its leadership had received Orthodox religious training prior to enrollment in the Conservative rabbinic seminary. By the mid-1950's, although "there has *not* been any serious lag in the number of recruits coming from Orthodox homes," the movement was concerned about its failure to develop indigenous sources of rabbinic recruitment (p. 196). Questions of quality and quantity were raised. Would cultural gaps hamper Orthodox-raised rabbis from effectively leading the new Conservative congregations that dotted the suburban landscape? Would there be a shortage of rabbis once the well of Orthodox-raised recruits ran dry?

Sklare identified two problems besetting Conservative Judaism's efforts to recruit from within the movement. The first was an issue of status. The upwardly mobile Conservative Jewish

laity "ranked other professions far ahead of the rabbinate," and would likely not encourage their sons[2] to enter such a low-status field. The second was an issue of education. The general lack of post-*bar mitzvah* religious training among Conservative Jews would either limit the number of qualified applicants to rabbinic school or "force the lowering of the Seminary's scholastic level" (pp. 195-198).

Two decades later, things had changed enough that political scientist Daniel Elazar could assert in his classic work on American Jewry's organizational dynamics, that "the American Jewish community has done very well in attracting professional talent and is in no way inferior to other polities in that respect" (1976, p. 267). But the pendulum swung back over the course of the following ten years, with a perception of a personnel crisis reemerging in the mid-1980s. This has continued unabated to the current day.

In 1987, the Council of Jewish Federations (CJF) published the report of a task force it had established under the direction of Morton Mandel. The report forecast a "developing crisis" in meeting Federations' personnel needs, which were projected to grow by 30% (1987, p. 3). In the field of Jewish communal service, the publication of the Mandel Commission's report is treated as a watershed in public recognition of staffing issues as an area for concern (Edell, 2002; UJC, 2001). Its recommendation to "embrace an integrated network of recruitment, basic education, training, continuing education, supervision, placement, career tracking [and] counseling," while ensuring competitive compensation packages, continues to represent much of the consensus about what steps would need to be taken should the Jewish community wish to improve its ability to recruit, retain and empower its professionals (p. 3). The report led CJF to institute immediate changes in its personnel services department and to launch a summer program in continuing education. Several years later, it led to the development of an Executive Development Program which, in the 1990s, helped network and train a number of rising young professionals, some of whom now sit at the helm of community Federations. Nevertheless, there is a sense that the issues flagged by the report were allowed to languish as the decade progressed (UJC, 2001).

A year after the CJF released its findings, a blue-ribbon Commission on Jewish Education in North America (CJENA) set out to mobilize "systemic, across-the-board improvement in the quality of Jewish education," and arrived at similar conclusions. It identified the underdevelopment of the profession of Jewish education one of the system's primary deficiencies. Entitling its 1991 report *A Time to Act*, the commission sought to address this by establishing the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE), later renamed the Mandel Foundation. CIJE would work as a "catalytic agent" to help other organizations improve the "salaries, training, working conditions and status of Jewish educators" (pp.43-44, 70). The Commission believed that these improvements would enhance the recruitment, retention and quality of education professionals.

The sense of crisis deepened during the 1990s, as the economic expansion, programmatic activism of Jewish foundations, and "baby boomlet" of the previous decade (Keysar, et al., 2000) restructured personnel flows and generated additional needs. A variety of new initiatives emerged to recruit and develop educators and school administrators (e.g. JERRI, DeLeT, York-Western Canada Jewish Teacher Education Initiative), rabbinic and synagogue professionals (e.g. UAHC Task Force on the Shortage of Jewish Professionals), and

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[2] At the time, the profession was still restricted to males.

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communal service workers (e.g. UJA-Federation of NY's Muehlstein Institute) (Chazan, 2001; Elkin and Frank, 2001; Flexner and Gold, 2003; Goldsmith, 2001; Heller and Bergman, 2001; Miller, 2000; Wolfson, 2001). The *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* devoted its Fall 2001 issue to "Recruitment and Retention," labeling them "Imperatives for the Field of Jewish Communal Service." Several months prior, Jewish Life Network had devoted a special Summer 2001 issue of its journal, *Contact,* to the topic, which its cover headline billed a "Looming Crisis." Hanukat CAJE, the advocacy arm of the Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education, made recruitment its focus in 2001, and retention its focus the following year (CAJE, 2002).

In spite of the widespread concern, systematic data on vacancies and turnover rates in Jewish communal organizations are hard to come by. One imperfect proxy for ongoing record-keeping by organizations is survey research that measures tenure in office. In 1998, a three-community survey of 983 teachers in Jewish day schools, supplementary schools and pre-schools found data consistent with Wolfson's observation of an autumn scramble. Approximately one-quarter (27%) of supplementary school teachers were new hires. This can either reflect teacher turnover, as new personnel replaced those who left, or the creation of new positions that needed to be filled. Because it may reflect organizational expansion, the statistic probably overstates the actual degree of employee turnover. The comparable figure in day schools and preschools was lower, with 12% and 13%, respectively, being new to the school. Overall, 59% had been working in their schools for five years or less. In spite of the turnover at individual schools, the teachers tended to remain in the field of Jewish education for considerable amounts of time. Two-thirds (67%) had six or more years experience as Jewish educators (Gamoran, et al., 1998, pp. 17-18).

These proxy turnover rates may be compared against national benchmarks collected by the U.S. Census Bureau, which has measured actual turnover rates in a nationally representative sample of public and private schools.[3] In 2001, the highest rate of annual teacher turnover, 22.1%, occurred in non-Catholic parochial schools (a category that, obviously, includes Jewish day schools). Moreover, the bulk of this was composed of people who left teaching entirely, rather than teachers who simply moved to another school. The lowest rate, 12.9% was for public school teachers in areas with few poor students. The average for all teachers was 15.7% (Ingersoll, 2001;NCTAF, 2003). Comparison of the national benchmarks and the proxy rates derived from the three-community Jewish teacher survey shows that the rate of turnover in supplementary schools is exceedingly high, whereas the rates in Jewish day schools are much lower than would be expected based upon the norms for American parochial or non-sectarian private schools. These rates more closely approximate the annual rate of employee turnover for the US economy as a whole, which in the 1990s averaged 11% (cited in Ingersoll, 1998).

The high teacher turnover in supplementary schools is not necessarily reflective of Jewish communal work overall. A recent survey of North American JCC personnel found lengthening tenure rates compared to those found the last time the survey was conducted, in 1987. The proportion of employees working one year or less (indicative of turnover) dropped from 37% to 10%. In addition, professionals' average tenure in their present position, present JCC and in the JCC field all increased. The mean number of years in the JCC field was 9.3, as against 6.5 in 1987, although this varied greatly by position. Just over half of the respondents said that

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[3] The rate includes both voluntary and involuntary turnover (i.e., people who were fired).

they intended to continue working in the JCC field, with 14% intending to leave and the remaining third uncertain (Schor and Cohen, 2002, pp. 12, 15).

Although the Jewish community generally lacks systematic data detailing where recruitment and retention are actually problems and where they are not, it is making efforts to gather data in another area: The effects of interventions to entice people into Jewish community careers. In Jewish education, for example, recruitment programs for college students have been found to attract people who have participated extensively in Jewish activities like camps, Israel experience programs and Hillel; who have already worked in formal or informal Jewish education during their high school years; and whose interest in Jewish work has been inspired by mentors in the Jewish community (Goodman, 2000; Raff, 2004; Rosov, 2003). These findings accord with other research indicating that work in the Jewish community provides committed Jews with an opportunity to express and explore their Jewish identities (Belzer, 2003).

Process evaluations and short-term impact evaluations also suggest that recruitment programs are more likely to provide a positive experience for participants when they collaborate with employing organizations and approach recruitment systemically – planning ahead to ensure that those recruited will find meaningful work and receive ongoing support (Bechhofer, 2001; Rosov, 2003). A seminar on educator recruitment and retention co-sponsored by the Covenant Foundation and JESNA raised doubts about the ability of long-term evaluations to determine whether the programs ultimately "succeed," in part because there is little agreement about what constitutes success (Bechhofer, 2001, p. 12).

The difficulty in defining "success" is symptomatic of the lack of conceptual clarity that has plagued Jewish communal discussions of its personnel concerns. Without a clear specification of the problem, it is difficult for policymakers to make informed choices from among the multitude of possible responses. The remainder of this report will analyze how the Jewish community understands its "personnel crisis," bringing to light unstated assumptions and demonstrating how different ways of conceptualizing the issue imply different types of policy responses. Eight themes characterize Jewish communal discourse on its personnel issues:

Quantity, Quality and the Dual Skill-Set

A problem is perceived to exist both in terms of the *quality* and *quantity* of the labor pool available to the Jewish community.

As noted by the Mandel Commission's report, "While the field has attracted a number of outstanding people, it is not getting enough with the necessary education and training. And worse, we are not getting enough overall" (1987, p. 2). In seeing lack of quantity as a more severe problem than lack of quality, the report implies that it is better to have a less-than-qualified (but potentially trainable) individual than to have no one at all.

The emphasis on attracting people with "education and training" implies that the preparation of Federation personnel should come prior to hiring, and from sources external to the organization. At the same time, the Mandel Commission also recognizes that one possible solution, hiring "specialists" who already possess expertise in their fields leads to another educational challenge – acculturating people new to the Federation system into the norms of

the organization, the Jewish communal field and the Jewish community (p. 6). Although they are frequently discussed under the same rubric, the challenges posed by Jewishly-committed-but-under-skilled young hires in fact differ from those posed by mid-career switchers whose professional skills outpace their Jewish cultural literacy and communal knowledge.

To varying degrees, jobs in the Jewish community require a dual skill-set of both professional competencies and Judaic knowledge. In discussions of how to rectify supposed shortcomings in one or both aspects of this dual skill-set, policy recommendations have focused on formal training prior to entering the field and on continuing professional education. Commentators have show little interest in informal on-the-job learning as a means of acquiring necessary skills and knowledge.

The importance of the dual skill-set comes into relief when considering Jewish education. Goldsmith, describing the conception of the DeLeT — Day School Learning Through Teaching – initiative, wrote of the great difficulty in "find[ing] teachers who can integrate general and Jewish studies" (2001, p. 7). Judaic learning does not a teacher make. Nor does training in pedagogy necessarily qualify one to be a *Jewish* educator. Gamoran, et al.'s (1998) portrait of teachers in Jewish schools found that only one out of five had training in both Jewish studies and in education. One third was trained in neither. When people assess the quality of teachers in Jewish schools, both of the words in "Jewish education" are invoked.

Different Diagnoses of the Problem

The root of the "personnel crisis" is ascribed to three analytically distinct sources – professionals, organizations, and systems – each of which implies a different target population for intervention.

In practice, communal responses tend to address some or all of these simultaneously without necessarily recognizing that the interventions imply multiple and sometimes contradictory definitions of the problem.

Professionals

One approach frames the problem as residing in the would-be professionals. To paraphrase the Mandel Commission report's conclusion, there are not enough people interested in entering Jewish communal work, and those who are interested are not qualified enough (1987).

When conceived as a *labor shortage*, a commonly proposed remedy is to market Jewish communal work to people making career choices, typically college students (e.g. Berger, et al., 2002; Heller and Bergman, 2001; Miller, 2000; Wolfson, 2001). The assumption, which is generally left unstated, is that a larger applicant pool at the entry-level will a) alleviate shortages in entry-level positions, and b) lead to an increased number of people who will pursue long-term careers in the field even if attrition rates remain stable.

When conceived as a *lack of quality*, the accepted response is to encourage training. In both

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instances, responsibility for the personnel problem is eventually placed on the potential applicants, and interventions are directed to influence their willingness and ability to serve as Jewish communal professionals.

Analysis of over 700 applications submitted to the Wexner Graduate Fellowship Program during its first five years (1988-1992) found that 87% had held some form of paid position in the Jewish community prior to applying to graduate training programs in the rabbinate, cantorate, Jewish education, Jewish communal service or Judaic studies. Two thirds of the applicants had worked in education, just under one half in camps or youth organizations, and just over one third in social service agencies. Many worked in more than one setting (Cohen, 1995, p. 14). Detailed analysis of the application essays revealed that "in shaping the career decisions of applicants in every field except for the rabbinate…. [p]ositive professional experiences, in fact, rank above every other factor that these candidates mention" (Sarna, 1995, p. 44). All "serious" applicants to education programs had obtained Jewish teaching experience while in college. The "great majority" of applicants to communal service programs had worked after college in a service agency. Only a minority of applicants to rabbinic school had served in their chosen field as interns or in para-rabbinic positions, but many had found previous employment in educational, youth or communal service settings (Sarna, 1995, p. 44-45, 49-50). The finding that an overwhelming majority had already worked in the Jewish community prior to applying for degree programs for Jewish communal careers suggests the training programs are not necessarily the first point of entry into the field, but rather, are utilized by existing communal workers (usually entry-level or part-time) who wish to advance further within it or pursue specialization.

Organizations

A second approach to the perceived personnel crisis focuses on retention issues, rather than recruitment. The problem is portrayed as a failure of specific organizations to create work environments that inspire loyalty and commitment among professionals, or as a failure of Jewish communal work and the Jewish community overall to construct the field in this manner (Fishman, 1995; Flexner and Gold, 2003; Bronznick, 2002; Heller and Bergman, 2001; Marker, 2003; Miller, 2000; Moses, 2001; Sheanin, 2001; Wertheimer, 2003; Weiner, 1999; Weiner and Wartenberg, 1997/8; Wolfson, 2001). This conception is associated with suggestions for organizational or field-wide reforms to address problems of low salary, low status, unprofessional demands on time, family-unfriendly policies, gender-biased career ladders, problematic lay-professional relationships, lack of mentoring, poor supervision and other similar issues.

In these cases, training may remain an intervention strategy, but the goal changes from improving the employee's ability to serve the organization, to nurturing the employees' professional self-development as a means of fostering his or her satisfaction and communicating the organization's interest in the employee's welfare. The difference, though subtle, is unmistakable to employees. At a recent meeting of a UJC task force on personnel issues, one of the few young professionals around the table of elders repeatedly voiced the concern that talk of improving the talent pool in Jewish communal service through recruitment efforts might send an unmistakable message to those already working the field: You are not valued.

This professional's cautionary note highlights the problem of unintended consequences. With the personnel challenge attributable to multiple factors, defining the problem in one way may lead to policies that have negative consequences for other elements of the system.

A parallel concerns efforts to attract better-credentialed individuals. Graduate schools, whatever their ability to confer technical skills, commonly instill among their graduates an identity as a professional. This professional identity includes a self-image about how one is to perform at work, and what the nature of the job, career and work environment should be like. In a personal essay from the standpoint of a young Jewish communal professional, Sheanin (2001) explains that although Jewish communal service allows her and her colleagues to express their Jewish identities, it often undermines their identities as professionals:

> ... what we have been taught to strive for is often not consistent with the choices in front of us. Consequently, professionals entering the field often find themselves disappointed at best, demoralized at worst (2001, p. 10).

Conceived as a dearth of talent, the personnel crisis may be addressed by providing graduate or continuing education. But conceived as an organizational failure to retain staff, the very efforts to improve the talent pool may themselves impel people to leave the field, if Jewish communal organizations do not keep pace.

Systems

The third approach to the personnel crisis sees it not as the outcome of the inadequacies among professionals or weaknesses of Jewish communal service, but as a result of the way the community organizes itself. This exists in two main variants. One sees the community as a victim of its success, or in the words an executive recruiter, "The current personnel crisis stems from the unprecedented growth in the 1990s in the size and number of communal institutions and programs" (Edell, 2002, p. 62). The other variant sees the problem in static terms, as an endemic feature of the organizational structures. In their study of Jewish teachers, Gamoran and his colleagues found that, "Because there are few opportunities for job advancement within teaching, often a teacher must leave the classroom to advance professionally" (1998, p. 13). The promotion of qualified teachers may help alleviate the shortage of school administrators, even as it exacerbates the shortage of teachers.

Competition for qualified personnel also occurs across organizations. Identifying the factors leading to a shortage of professionals in congregations, a Reform movement task force wrote that, "Jewish professionals have a wide array of choices in addition to congregational jobs. Hillels, agencies, hospitals, Federations, and the Reform movement itself all offer opportunities to serve the community" (Heller and Bergman, 2001, p. 3).

This approach envisages shortages as a result of personnel flows through a system in which a) career advancement is a desirable element of professional life, b) mobility is limited within organizations, and c) Jewish organizations compete with each other to attract talent. From this point of view, efforts directed at the personnel would have to avoid the pitfall of simply reproducing the existing inequities in the distribution of labor. Efforts directed at the labor flows would have to fundamentally alter the nature of Jewish organizational structures and interrelationships, or shut down avenues of mobility in order to constrain workers' ability to

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move (a policy adopted by the then-UAHC, which placed a hiring freeze on rabbis in its non-congregational settings).

Certification, Effectiveness and Signaling

No one has systematically tested whether degree-certified Jewish communal professionals outperform those without such training. Degree certification may be as important for the signals it sends as for the education it provides.

Educational attainment is commonly measured as a means of assessing the preparedness of the Jewish communal workforce. A recent study of JCC workers noted the decline in the proportion of professionals holding master's degrees (Schor and Cohen, 2002, p. 33). Similarly, a study of professional leaders in Jewish educational settings found that only 16% had formal schooling in all three of the areas relevant to their job (pedagogy, Jewish education and educational administration), although 45% had training in two of the three (Goldring et al., 1999, p. 10).

Graduate programs that prepare students for careers in Jewish organizations can enhance skills and knowledge in ways that can prove useful in the workplace. Indeed, communal professionals tend to feel that their degree programs, whatever their shortcomings, were necessary for them to succeed in their chosen fields (Fishman, 1995). There has been no systematic testing of the hypothesis that Jewish communal professionals with certain types of training outperform professionals without such training. Neither have researchers tested the hypothesis that organizational effectiveness is a function of the proportion of employees holding advanced degrees. This does not mean that the hypotheses are necessarily incorrect, only that assumptions that they are correct should be weighed carefully before they are invoked to inform policy. Part of the reason for the lack of testing is the difficulty of establishing objective measures of performance and effectiveness. Whatever the value of graduate training, Jewish organizations are cognizant that learning takes place throughout a person's career and in many settings – including training institutions, continuing professional education programs, and formally or informally on-the-job.

The value of degree certification in Jewish communal work may derive not solely from competencies it provides, but also from the official "seal of approval" it provides to professionals. The degree can be used to signal to potential employers a candidate's fitness for a given job. It can also confer upon its bearer a competitive advantage vis-à-vis other candidates, particularly if it is the "right" degree from the "right" school (see Collins, 1971; Spence, 1973). As notions of the desirable degree evolve, particularly in Jewish communal service, the training institutions are placed under pressure to adapt their programs in order to remain competitive.

In Jewish communal work, one can argue that the credentialing provided by an advanced degree is important not only vis-à-vis other job candidates, but vis-à-vis the laity, as well. Perennially troubled by perceptions of low status, Jewish communal work has an interest in appropriating symbols of higher status. Degree certification, and professionalization more

broadly conceived, are important elements in demonstrating the seriousness and respectability of the work, and in claiming autonomy and authority.

Entry-Level and Executive

Recruitment and retention issues are seen as affecting all levels of the career ladder.

The framing of the crisis at the entry and junior levels has been described above. At the senior levels, the problem is phrased as a shortage of school administrators (Elkin and Frank, 2001), pulpit rabbis (Heller and Bergman, 2001), and Federation or agency executives (Edell, 2002). Leadership is a key issue. Edell describes an increased level of organizational complexity that has changed the nature of the executive's role.

> Old and new generations of volunteer leaders look to executives more than ever for guidance…. They talk openly about how the pool of service providers (often called MSW's) [sic] do not have the skills to run the 'organization's business'" (2002, p. 63).

The critics Edell mentions who disparagingly refer to Jewish communal professionals as "MSW's" may misperceive to some extent the nature of Jewish communal training. But, though the professionals might wish it otherwise, this misperception is currently a part of the organizational environment in which they must function. Some observers have taken the position that that the open talk Edell describes is itself a symptom of a more deep-rooted status problem plaguing Jewish communal workers. In Marker's words,

> This not so subtle message is heard enough that it signals to many that it would be better to enter the executive ranks from a successful career in a non Jewish [sic] sector than to work one's way up the ladder internally. Why choose a leadership path in Jewish communal life if it is not valued at the end? (2003, p. 4)

Gender Biases

Gender bias in Jewish organizations continues to be widespread, and is seen as detrimental to recruitment and retention.

The question raised by Marker (2003) – why bother? – may also be asked with some justification by women given the persistence of barriers to women's advancement in Jewish communal work (Bronznick, 2002; Cohen, et al., 2004; JCSA, 2001; Horowitz, et al., 1997; Mandel, et al., 1987; Schor and Cohen, 2002; Weiner, 1999; Weiner and Wartenberg, 1997/8), gender-based salary gaps (Schor and Cohen, 2002), and the devaluing of predominantly female professions such as teaching (Sapiro, 2002). A recent article on the under-representation of women in senior positions in the Jewish community noted that of the 20 largest Federations, none were headed by women. Of the 39 largest, only two had women in the top leadership position (Bronznick, 2002). Drawing on data from a study of JCC personnel, Bronznick also pointed out the discrepancy between the paucity of women at the top compared to the preponderance of women in the ranks: Overall, 72% of JCC professionals were women, but only 23% of executive directors were (Bronznick, 2002, p. 47; Schor and

Cohen, 2002, p. 39). Moreover, as with the Federations, the larger the JCC, the more likely it was to be headed by a man (Schor and Cohen, 2002, p. 38).

In 1987, the Mandel Commission argued that "The failure to take account of the talent, energy, intelligence and experience of women compounds the existing shortage of competent and committed candidates for executive and sub-executive posts" (1987, p. 10). In spite of this, the prestigious Executive Development Program established in 1995 in response to the commission's report selected only six women for its cohort of 21 fellows (JCSA, 2001, p. 11).

Efforts to redress the status of women typically seek many of the organizational reforms that are suggested to improve the attractiveness of Jewish communal work overall, including instituting more family-friendly policies, and better safeguarding the boundaries between professional and personal life (JCSA, 2001, p. 6; Moses, 2001, p. 6). The lack of progress in these areas is cited by men and women who have left Jewish communal work as important reasons motivating their decision to abandon the field (Fishman, 1995, pp. 105-109). In spite of these efforts, a paradox remains: A field that displays an "inability… to honor, empower, and promote women" (Moses, 2001, p. 6) continues to disproportionately attract women into its ranks.

Unique Problems, Common Problems

Are the issues of recruitment and retention the same for rabbis, teachers, agency workers, etc.? Some are common to them all, some are unique to each profession.

Consider the differences between the job of a congregational rabbi, supplementary school teacher and Federation campaign associate. The amount and nature of contact that each has with clients and lay leadership is very different. The amount of training required to enter into the fields varies, from lengthy ordination programs at rabbinic seminaries, to the hiring of uncertified high school and college students in supplementary schools (Gamoran, et al., 1998). There are differences in pay, prestige, and pathways of advancement. The transferability of skills, should one wish to leave Jewish communal work, varies. The ability to move to other organizations within the Jewish community also differs, with teachers and congregational rabbis usually restricted to the institutions of a particular denomination. Even the basic nature of the work – full-time vs. part-time – differs, with teaching more often than not being a part-time occupation (CJENA, 1991; Gamoran, et al., 1998).

Because many of the skills that are required to thrive in an office bureaucracy, a classroom, or a congregation are particular to that work setting, recruitment and retention interventions sometimes focus specifically on a particular profession (e.g., DeLeT, which supports teachers in Jewish day schools, and FEREP, which provides support to people entering Federation work).

Even among professionals in the same field, there is considerable diversity in the types of organizations that eventually employ them. A recent study of Jewish educators, for example, found that people who shared common professional training experiences ended up working in all sorts of settings, including *yeshivot*, day schools and supplementary schools; Jewish communal agencies on the international, national, regional and local levels; universities, colleges, seminaries and other institutions of higher learning; organizations specializing in

adult education; advocacy organizations; and more. Some were even self-employed, working as educational consultants (Horowitz and Mevorach 2002).

In spite of the diversity, there are still elements that link the varied Jewish professions and workplaces. Recognition of these commonalities has led to more broadly-encompassing interventions. The Wexner Graduate Fellowship Program provides a unified professional development curriculum to mixed groups of aspiring clergy, educators, academics and communal service workers. Hillel, JESNA and UJC have developed a partnership to recruit people into a variety of Jewish community professions. Programs like these are based on the premise that the diverse professions share common interests and face common issues, at least in part (Arian, 2001; Moses, 2001).

Technical Fixes vs. Systemic Solutions

Along with consensus about technical means of improving recruitment and retention, there is dissatisfaction about "technical" responses.

In an address to the JCSA, Moses (2001) argued that

> The challenges of recruitment and retention… are not isolated technical problems, and the solutions are not technical or simply programmatic either. These challenges cannot be addressed or "fixed" by a set of interventions or committees alone. Rather they are adaptive or more deeply rooted challenges (2001, p. 5).

He identified three such challenges: 1) to address "recruitment, training, support networks, career placement ladders and standards in credentials," at the continental level, with the involvement of national umbrella organizations and major training institutions; 2) to build a senior leadership team that bridges competing organizations and that will function as a "group of driven pioneers who will not sleep well until this is done;" and 3) to accept the premise that responsibility for building the Jewish communal professions rests with the professionals and not with the volunteers (2001, p. 7).

Marker's self-described "contrarian approach" affirms the need to implement "all of the well known solutions: higher status, higher salaries, better career ladders, etc." But he argues that "because the challenges are truly systemic, the solutions will have to go beyond these methods" (2003, p. 2). The problem, in his view, is that "organized Jewish life becomes a closed circle" that devalues outsiders, fosters a suffocating parochialism and erects barriers between the "super-Jews" who control the system, and the masses of American Jews who see the Jewish organizational system as alien to their culture (2003, pp. 1-4). Taken together, these prove to be formidable barriers to large-scale recruitment and retention. His solutions, which he admits are only partial, are to "encourage Jewish employment as part of a lifetime of work and not as an entire career," create opportunities for volunteers to serve as part-time professionals and for full-time professionals to serve as volunteers, and institute a ten-year statute of limitations on employment within the Jewish community (2003, pp. 5-7).

In a recent article in *Commentary* entitled, "The Rabbi Crisis," Wertheimer (2003) eschews any reference to technical solutions, and focuses instead on the need for a reassertion of rabbinic authority over the congregants. This, he contends, would restore the prestige of the

position, which he claims has been eroded by anti-hierarchical and personalistic trends in American Jewish life dating back to the 1970s. Were rabbis to fight for change in American Jewish religious culture, they might escape the role of chief functionary for lay-led congregations and instead "speak with authority… for the Jewish tradition, the Jewish people, and God" (2003, p. 44). Only by reclaiming power from the laity, and reconceiving the rabbinic role to once again legitimize the use of this power, will the rabbinate prove an attractive career to larger numbers of people. Wertheimer recognizes that the deeper culture change he is calling for is a long and conflict-ridden path. Even framing the issue in these terms will likely prove controversial.

Although they offer seemingly incompatible critiques of American Jewish organizational life, Marker (2003) and Wertheimer (2003) share a conception of Jewish life that sees it not only as a venue for consensus and community, but also as an arena for competition and conflict. They contribute an important conceptual dimension to Jewish communal discourse on personnel issues. Their writings caution policymakers to consider the multiple stakeholders, the ways in these groups' interests coincide and diverge, and the possible sources of support for and resistance to different intervention strategies.

Systemic responses to personnel challenges need not only be national. A recent task force of the Jewish Education Service of North America advises that local initiatives also adopt a systemic approach. It recommends a multi-stage model for making educator recruitment, development and retention a priority in local communities, primarily by building a constituency of lay and professional advocates who take ownership of the issue. JESNA recommends that this leadership group gather pertinent data about the need and capacity for educator positions and the current personnel policies in place at the hiring organizations, collectively engage in a process of articulating their core principles, develop from this a community-wide action plan, and monitor carefully its implementation (Flexner and Gold, 2003).

Multiple Stakeholders, Multiple Motivations

Underlying a consensus about the need to resolve pressing personnel issues are diverse reasons for commitment to the issue.

On one level, concern over personnel issues reflects a basic desire for organizational survival. Schools that cannot find teachers cannot carry out their mission. Beyond this, the reasons for taking interest in the issue diverge.

For the professionals, rectifying the organizational and cultural issues that lead to "inadequate salaries, low communal status, [and] unrealistic professional expectations" (Fishman, 1995, p. 111), is a matter of professional self-interest and identity. Hence Moses' assertion that responsibility for the issue rests with the professionals themselves (2001). By organizing into professional associations, such as the Jewish Communal Service Association and the Coalition for Advancement of Jewish Education, they establish vehicles for advocating their collective interests.

Four key themes emerge in this review of the knowledge base about professional recruitment and retention.

Systemic Thinking

The issues are multi-faceted, involving a variety of institutional and individual stakeholders, and combining conceptually distinct areas of new employee recruitment and existing employee retention. This invites comprehensive, holistic solutions rather than small, technical fixes. This is recognized in the Jewish community, whose past attempts to confront these issues have led to consensus about the need for a community-wide approach, even if this principle has yet to be realized in practice. It is also recognized in the private sector, which is abandoning traditional human resources approaches in favor of a *strategic* HR management (SHRM) perspective that integrates HR issues into the very fabric of organizational strategic planning.

Assessing Lines of Conflict

The multiplicity of stakeholders – including communal organizations, professional associations, training institutions, local communities, philanthropic funding sources, junior and senior professionals, and lay leaders – generates the potential for conflict. So too does the existence of multiple interventions addressing aspects of the same issues. The interests of each in addressing recruitment and retention issues may differ in terms of their motivation, preferred means, and desired outcomes. Perceptions of "winners" and "losers" may also generate support or resistance. Policymakers will therefore want to assess the potential lines of conflict in any proposed intervention strategies, in order to determine at the outset how best to manage these.

Avoiding Unintended Consequences

With multiple stakeholders and a multi-faceted problem, efforts to address one element in the system may have unintended consequences on other elements of it. Two examples were offered to illustrate this point. The first suggested that efforts to recruit and train new personnel may communicate to current professionals a lack of faith or lack of interest in them, and may contribute to demoralization. The second suggested that efforts to increase the professional training of Jewish professionals lead them to hold higher professional standards for the organizations in which they work – expectations that many Jewish organizations may not be able to meet.

Clarity of Intent, Diagnosis and Prescription

The phrase "recruitment-and-retention" is at risk of becoming a shorthand phrase that fosters muddled thinking about solutions. The perceived personnel crisis in the Jewish community has several roots, each implying different intervention targets and strategies. Because the problem is multi-faceted, the various conceptions are not mutually exclusive. But precision in articulating the diagnosis of the problem will lead to greater clarity in determining appropriate

steps to address it and measures to evaluate success.

Three motivations for addressing the problem were identified: (1) Organizational survival, (2) quality of professional life, and (3) enhanced organizational effectiveness. Clarity in motivation allows policy-makers to ask otherwise unasked questions, such as, "Should this organization survive?" or "Will organizational effectiveness be sufficiently addressed by improving the quality and quantity of its personnel?"

Three potential sources of the problem were identified: (1) the professionals, (2) the organizational environments, and (3) the inter-relationship among organizations. The first diagnosis leads to efforts at recruitment and training, depending on whether the professionals' problem is seen as one of quantity or quality. The second diagnosis leads to efforts at retention. The third diagnosis leads to acceptance of some degree of personnel shortages as inevitable or to efforts to change flows of personnel through the system. These take the form of policies to create or block opportunities for mobility, or to attract professionals from one area in the system to another. In this conception, Jewish organizations are seen as competing for personnel, with the inevitable emergence of winners and losers.

Interventions at one level may have intended or unintended consequences on other levels as well. For example, efforts to improve retention by changing the organizational work environment may create a more attractive image of the field and thereby enhance recruitment. Alternatively, a recruitment strategy that leads to a large influx of new personnel might increase competition among workers for scarce, desirable positions, creating a less trusting work environment. In assessing strategies that target one aspect of the system, it is important to consider the possible effects on other elements, as well.

Questions

The goal of social science research is to produce a body of empirically verified knowledge that builds cumulatively on that which has already been learned. This review suggests that much is already known about the recruitment and the retention of professionals. It also raises new questions that remain to be answered, including the following:

- How do Jewish communal professionals integrate or balance their professional identity and Jewish identity? How does this influence their career expectations, satisfaction and decisions?

- Do professionals typically perceive job satisfaction and dissatisfaction in organization-specific terms, or in terms of Jewish communal work overall? What is the relationship between organizational commitment and commitment to Jewish communal work as a field?

- Given that the existence of realistic job alternatives is a strong predictor of voluntary turnover, what do Jewish communal professionals see as their realistic job alternatives, both inside and outside the Jewish community?

- How do specific educational credentials come to be seen as necessary for specific positions? Which skill-sets are primarily learned in graduate training and which typically are learned on the job?

- How might issues of professional "quality" be more precisely articulated? What empirical measures can be used to assess quality?

- What are the potential fault lines where conflict over issues of recruitment and retention might erupt? What definitions of the problem are held by various stakeholders? Where are the areas of consensus that may help to bridge gaps?

If this review has been successful, it will have offered a framework that enables the reader to raise questions of his or her own – questions that he or she would not otherwise have asked. For only if the questions are posed can answers ultimately be found.

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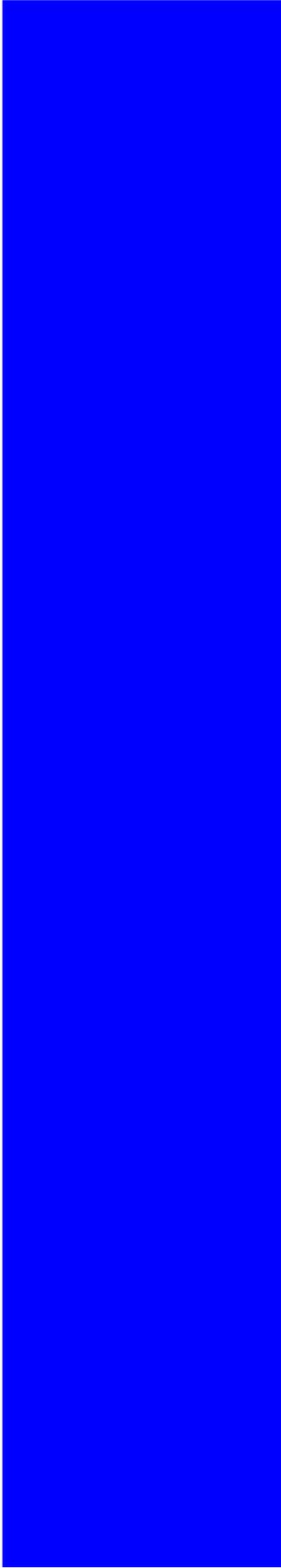
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