Rating Rabbinic Roles

A Survey of Conservative Congregational Rabbis and Lay Leaders

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Introduction

Background: A Multiplicity of Roles and Changing Conceptions of Leadership

A recent volume of rabbis' photographs and corresponding essays highlights the great diversity of job descriptions held by contemporary rabbis.[1] The rabbis portrayed in this volume have job titles that include "executive director," "director," "comedian," and "dean," among others. Reading the rabbis' essays, it is clear that the brief description that accompanies the name of each is insufficient for summarizing the variety of roles which the rabbi is expected to fill. These portraits, in the words of the photographer George Kalinsky, "show [the rabbis] as the multifaceted people that they are: leaders, teachers, preachers, scholars, spiritual innovators, chaplains, as well as fathers, mothers, avid hobbyists, and professionals."[2]

The title of Kalinsky's book of portraits, *Rabbis: The Many Faces of Judaism,* alerts one to the need to understand rabbis' roles and functions against the backdrop of contemporary trends in Jewish identity and affiliation. Trends in the ways Jews interact with each other and see themselves as Jews affect the activities, expectations, and roles of the rabbi, and vice versa. Several changes in the contemporary sociological scene may have particular impact on the functioning of rabbis today. Religious adherents in the US and elsewhere have come to adopt a different approach to religion, spirituality, religious communities, and religious leaders. They are more personalist and less ideological, more grounded in personal experience and less in canonical teaching.[3] Religions and religious affiliations are more porous and dynamic,

with changes in identity, intensity, and involvement characterizing the entire life cycle, in ways more radical than in the past. (See Cohen and Eisen's *The Jew Within* and Horowitz's *Connections and Journeys* for further discussion of these points as they apply to Jews.[4])

The increased diversity and individuality of the Jewish population is occurring concurrently with a change in the way leadership is conceptualized in all aspects of life. Where previous leadership models may be described as more hierarchical and normative, recent models are more cooperative and deliberative.[5] With respect to clergy, religious leadership is conceptualized as involving such "modern" facets as setting and communicating a vision.[6]

All of these factors and more raise serious questions for rabbis and the lay leaders with whom they work. Rabbis may wonder about how to prioritize their roles, tasks, and responsibilities. For example, in a recent study of 45 rabbis, participants reported feeling unprepared for various areas of their work, particularly pastoral care, counseling and managerial/administrative responsibilities.[7] Congregants and their leaders may harbor exalted, competing, and divergent expectations of their spiritual leaders, potentially causing difficulties both for the congregants, as their unrealistic expectations are necessarily unmet, and for the rabbis, who must struggle with the symbolism of their role.[8] Further, these expectations can create a perception that a rabbi, in the words of Joshua Hammerman, "isn't so much a human being as a shredded fruit salad of contradictory skills and inflated expectations."[9]

As with other professions—and other clergy—rabbis confront an array of challenges managing conflicting skills, roles, and expectations that are inherent in those professions. Like many other clerics, rabbis must embody stability, familiarity, eternal truths, and connections with an authentic past, even as they instigate and manage personal and communal growth, enrichment, and development. In a word, they stand simultaneously for tradition and stability, as well as change and relevance. Rabbis must sensitively tend to the very idiosyncratic and personal needs of individuals (during life-cycle transitions, moments of crisis, and moments of joy). At the same time they need the skills of accomplished managers and politicians to guide complex and diversified communities. Rabbis must retain a measure of dignified distance from their congregants; yet they also need to effect personal connections with people seeking spiritual growth and renewal. They must tend to the internal needs of the congregation and at the same time manage relations with diversified outsiders. And through all of this, they must maintain the knowledge and persona of scholars, models of piety, teachers, administrators, visionaries, counselors, and community builders—certainly a highly variegated collection of roles and expectations.

Like other clerics, rabbis must learn to negotiate between the demands of their religious texts, norms, and traditions, and the constraints and realities of modern-day life. How do they articulate and teach authentic religious norms, yet at the same time remain relevant, accessible, and influential among their

congregants and others around them? The Conservative movement may pose even more complex challenges than others. For, in Conservatism, the gaps between the normative expectations of rabbi and of rank-and-file members may be wider than those characterizing their colleagues and congregants in the other major Jewish denominations.

The difficulty rabbis face in managing a diverse set of roles and expectations is compounded by the challenge of balancing a stance of authority with that of inclusiveness and sharing control with the congregants. The see-sawing balance of power between clergy and laity can be traced throughout the history of American religious leadership.[10] Neil Gillman points out that the current trend is toward sharing leadership and empowering the congregation, at least partially due to the increased educational level of the congregants.[11]

The conceptions of rabbinic leadership, the priorities attached to various roles and specific tasks, and the time devoted to them (both ideally and in reality) all pertain directly to the mission of understanding the complex and fluid nature of Conservative rabbinic leadership today. Both rabbis and congregants (for those rabbis serving in congregations) hold expectations of rabbinic leadership that may both resemble and differ from one another. Learning of those attitudes and expectations, and learning of the parallels and departures, can provide significant understanding of the rewards and frustrations of rabbinic leadership, and of how to address those issues in practice.

Methods

The study reported here was undertaken in conjunction with a project on Conservative religious leadership at the Jewish Theological Seminary and funded by the Lilly Endowment. During the course of a year (2001), we surveyed samples of Conservative rabbis and Conservative congregational lay leaders in the United States and Canada. The surveys focused on how the rabbis and the leaders think about Conservative rabbinic leadership, asking, in effect, where do they concur and where do they differ on their ideal models for good rabbinic leadership.

More specifically, in addition to demographic characteristics (respondent's age, gender, age at ordination for rabbis, etc.) and Judaic background, the surveys asked both rabbis and lay leaders a similar set of questions pertaining to congregational leadership. Both groups received a similar list of scales and ratings (all items and scales are presented in the relevant tables of this report), allowing the comparison of responses from two groups to ascertain areas both of agreement and of disagreement. We developed the survey items from a review of relevant literature, as well from as key informant interviews with Conservative rabbinic leaders and interviews and profiles of congregational rabbis. Both groups of participants were asked to rank the importance they ascribe to various rabbinic roles (e.g., pastor, administrator) in their ideal

conception of rabbinic leadership. Further, rabbis indicated the extent to which they *actually* invest time and effort in a variety of leadership activities (e.g., teaching, fundraising) and the extent to which they would *ideally* like to invest time in these same activities. Conversely, lay leaders indicated the extent, both actual and ideal, that their rabbi does/should invest his or her time in various leadership activities.

We distributed surveys to Rabbinical Assembly (RA) members who attended the 2001 RA convention in Toronto, and subsequently to the entire RA membership list through the mail. This survey elicited responses from 465 rabbis, 320 of whom serve in congregations. (This report focuses exclusively on these congregational rabbis because of the very different roles and expectations attached to the pulpit rabbis as opposed to their non-congregational colleagues.) The number of congregational respondents represents approximately 37 percent of the total number of RA members who serve in congregations. The leaders' survey went to UCSJ board members and synagogue presidents, some of whom apparently had completed their terms of office at the time of receipt. Of the 1070 that were mailed to the leaders, 560 (or roughly 52 percent) completed surveys were returned. Of those responding, 39 percent sit on the UCSJ board, and 88 percent serve on congregational boards. In order to preserve anonymity, we could not match rabbis with their particular congregation's lay leader, so all responses indicate the aggregate of all respondents in each group.

Results

Sample Characteristics

Demographic Background

Gender. The ordination of women as rabbis at JTS, beginning with the first female ordination in 1985, brought about changes in the rabbinate and in Conservative Judaism more generally. Of the rabbis in the congregational sample, only 6 percent are women.[12] By comparison, among Mainline Protestant denominations, 18 percent of the clergy are women.[13] The percent of women per year of ordination in our survey varies considerably, reaching a high of 40 percent of respondents ordained in 2000.

Age and Age at Ordination. The rabbis' mean age in this sample is 49, with ages ranging from 28 to 79.

Age at ordination has climbed over the years, rising from 28, to 29, to 33 in the early, middle, and most recent ordination cohorts (pre-1974, 1974–1989, 1990–present) respectively. This trend parallels those found among Mainline Protestant clergy, where age at ordination has risen from 26 approximately 30 years ago to 35 during the last ten years.[14] The entry of women in the later years helped to raise the age of ordination, as women's mean age at ordination

exceeds that of the men by about one year. However, the age at ordination for men also grew over the years to reach about age 32 most recently.

The advancing age at ordination at JTS and other Conservative training institutions, then, may be attributed to several factors: the addition of female students, the growth in rabbinical students coming to study as a second career, and the interest in rabbinic study by "late-blooming" Jews; that is, those who come to a deeper commitment to Judaism later in life, rather than as a predictable outcome of years of Jewish educational "grooming" from childhood to the present-day.[15] In his study of applicants for Wexner fellowships for Jewish professionals, Sarna writes of the "groomed" pre-professional:

> The parents of these leaders-in-training have painstakingy groomed their offspring, sending them to Jewish school, Jewish summer camps, tours of Israel, and the like. . . . Their passage from parental home to professional school, at least as they describe it, seems to have been relatively painless, without the diversions and crises that characterize so many other[s].[16]

These groomed may be distinguished from the bloomed:

> At the opposite end of the spectrum from those groomed for Jewish leadership stand those who might be termed late bloomers: individuals not previously connected to Jewish life who find their way to Jewish leadership, often after an extensive personal odyssey.[17]

Clearly, our data point to a steady shift from the steadily groomed to the recently bloomed, with the latter more heavily populating recent cohorts of Conservative ordained rabbis. The latter, we can only speculate, may be more attuned to the more personalist turn in Jewish life, even as they may be less familiar with the mainstream institutions of Conservative Judaism (day school, Camp Ramah, USY and even synagogues).[18]

Marital Status. Although the vast majority of rabbis are married, the proportion declines with advancing year of ordination—older rabbis are more likely to be married than younger, or more recently ordained rabbis. Fully 96 percent of those ordained before 1974 are married, as opposed to 87 percent of those ordained in the middle years (1974–89), and 84 percent of those ordained since 1990. Of the unmarried, among the older and younger cohorts, approximately even numbers were never married or divorced. However, in the middle cohort (ordained 1974–1989), of the 13 percent not married, divorcees outnumber "never married" 3 to 1. By way of comparison, rabbis report higher rates of current marriage than do Mainline Protestant clergy, where just 78 percent of all clergy are now married.[19]

Jewish Upbringing

Parents' Denomination. About three-quarters of the rabbis report that their parents were themselves Conservative, with the rest divided among the three

other movements. However, the denominational distribution does change over the years.

The proportion with Conservative upbringing actually rises and falls, from 60 percent (pre-1974 ordination) to 82 percent (1974–1989) to 73 percent (after 1990). Of the remainder, before 1974, most were raised Orthodox; while after 1990, most were raised Reform. Over the years, the proportion of those raised Orthodox has fallen dramatically (from 28 percent to 4 percent from the earliest to the most recent period), partly resembling the transition of the Conservative laity from "fallen Orthodox" in earlier years to homegrown Conservative in later years. Simultaneously, those with Reform background among the ordained grew considerably (from 7 percent to 15 percent). The rabbis reported a relatively large presence of Reconstructionist upbringing (approximately 6 percent over the years, as contrasted with their tiny representation in the larger Jewish population of 1–2 percent) The changing parental denomination points first to a decline in traditionally oriented households, and then to a decline in Conservatively identified households. Whereas before 1974 the non-Conservative minority in rabbinical school stood to the religious right of the Conservative majority, as of 1990, the minority was raised to the religious left of the Conservative core.

Childhood Jewish Education. Not surprisingly, Conservative rabbis experienced higher than average rates of participation in Jewish education in their youth. More than a quarter had attended day schools, about a third had been to Camp Ramah, more than half had participated in USY or LTF, and almost half had been to Israel in their youth. Substantial minorities (about two in five) had been to unspecified Jewish camps other than Ramah, and approximately the same number had participated in unspecified Jewish youth groups other than USY. These rates, higher than national averages, are on the order of two to three times those reported in studies of the rank-and-file Conservative Jewish population.[20] They are certainly high; but just as certainly, not all of the rabbis reported intensive Jewish educational experiences in their childhood and adolescent years.

Also instructive are the fairly steady rates of day school and Camp Ramah attendance over the years. During the years when the older-cohort rabbis were children, attending day school constituted quite an extraordinary indicator of Jewish involvement; by the 1970s, when most of the rabbis ordained in the 1990s were attending elementary school, day school attendance had started to climb in the larger Jewish population, yet the rabbis' rates remained unchanged relative to their predecessors. One may make a similar argument with respect to Camp Ramah, whose sheer number of beds and popularity grew steadily since the first camp opened in 1947. These patterns are further testimony to the declining traditionalism or Jewish intensity in the upbringing of later-graduating rabbis in the Conservative movement relative to the Jewish population from which they emerged.

Professional Characteristics

Higher education. About a third of the rabbis hold master's degrees, and about half as many hold doctorates. The oldest generation of rabbis is significantly more educated than the two later cohorts. Where they hold a slight lead with respect to master's degrees, almost a third of those ordained prior to 1974 report holding doctorates. Among the middle and most recent cohorts, 13 percent and 6 percent hold doctorates, respectively.

Job-related characteristics. JTS ordained about 80 percent of the rabbis in this RA sample, and has consistently done so over the years. Of those working in congregations, 14 percent are serving as senior rabbis, and 13 percent as associate or assistant rabbis. Predictably, the proportion of more recently ordained rabbis in subordinate positions is higher: 29 percent of those ordained since 1990 are serving in such capacities. In any event, the high proportion of rabbis in the roles of either supervising or being supervised by others suggests a potential need and market for addressing the relationships between senior and junior rabbis. In addition, it suggests an area where congregational leaders themselves need to pay attention.

Rabbinic Roles and Activities[21]

Importance of Rabbinic Roles—The rabbis versus the congregants. Rabbis and congregational lay leaders were asked to evaluate the relative importance of various rabbinic roles (e.g., pastor, scholar, manager, etc.). The questionnaire included a list of such roles (as shown in Table 1) along with the following question:

> What is *your personal ideal conception* of Conservative rabbinic leadership? In your view, for a Conservative rabbi to be an effective religious leader, to what extent is each of the following roles important?

Results for both groups, reported in Table 1, show that they largely concur on the ranking of the roles listed. For both groups, the following constitute the five most widely endorsed items:

- Pastor
- Jewish educator
- Model of religiosity
- Spiritual guide
- Halakhic authority

At the same time, both samples gave the following relatively low rankings:

- Staff supervisor
- Manager
- Administrator

Table 1 Conservative rabbinic leadership: Your ideal conception

What is *your personal ideal conception* of Conservative rabbinic leadership? In your view, for a Conservative rabbi to be an effective religious leader, to what extent is each of the following roles important?

	Rabbis	Lay Leaders
Pastor	90*	88
Jewish educator	90	85
Model of religiosity	85	87
Spiritual guide	83	91
Halakhic authority	79	92
Community builder (in the synagogue)	79	82
Visionary	78	78
Social conscience	75	76
Counselor	73	79
Zionist	73	69
Problem-solver	71	69
Talmid Hakham	71	79
Worship leader	71	85
Representative in the wider Jewish community	70	76
Scholar	68	75
Representative in the wider "non-Jewish community"	64	68
Staff supervisor	59	50
Manager	55	50
Administrator	50	46
Institutional leader	—	61
Programmer	—	55
CEO (Chief Executive Officer)	—	35

*These are mean, composite rankings scored on a metric of 0 to 100, where 100 signifies the highest possible score, and 0 the lowest possible score.

The contrast between the two clusters of items is intriguing. The high-ranking cluster consists of items that combine two characteristics:

1. They entail personal or individualized service on the part of the rabbi; and
2. They encompass the sacred skills of learning and personal piety.

In contrast, the items with the lowest rankings are distinguished by two other features:

1. They refer to service to the congregation as a collective system; and
2. They draw upon what may be regarded as "profane" skills—those that are far from distinctive to rabbis (or any cleric) and that indeed are widely shared by communal workers, human service professionals, and business leaders.

Further support for the veracity of these rankings is found in other questions posed only to the rabbinic sample. The questionnaire to rabbis asked them to indicate the three roles they regarded as the very most important. Both Jewish educator and pastor vastly outscored all of the others. Most (over 50 percent) of the rabbis cited each of these as among their three most important rabbinic roles. In a second cluster of frequently mentioned choices, with each appearing on 29 percent of the rabbis' answers, were spiritual guide, visionary, and model of religiosity.

Still further support comes in answers to questions on specific rabbinic activities. Responding to a list of 22 activities, the survey asked rabbis to list the three they felt they performed best, and the three from which they derived the most satisfaction. Consistent with their earlier stress on the role of Jewish educator, 63 percent ranked "teaching" as among their three activities they did best (more than any other activity), and 67 percent cited teaching as among the three activities from which they derived the most satisfaction. By way of comparison, Mainline Protestant clergy rate "teaching people about faith" as only their third best task, significantly trailing preaching and slightly trailing worship.[22]

Among the other frequently mentioned activities in terms of what they do best, the rabbis cited funerals and comforting mourners (30 percent), preparing and delivering sermons (23 percent), and working with families around weddings and bar/bat mitzvahs (22 percent). These, along with helping Jews grow spiritually, ranked among the more frequently cited with respect to deriving satisfaction. When asked to pick the three activities they regard as most critical to their success as rabbinic leaders, again they cited teaching far more than any other activity (47 percent), followed by helping Jews grow spiritually (22 percent).

The survey of Conservative lay leaders differed from that administered to the rabbis in that it listed three additional roles: institutional leader, programmer, and CEO. Both substantively and empirically, these three items are related to the three low-scoring managerial functions listed above. These items also elicited relatively little enthusiasm among the lay sample, with "CEO" producing the lowest rankings of all.

In summary, these results demonstrate that both rabbis and their congregational leaders largely agree on the importance of Jewish educator or teaching as the role and activity with the paramount importance, and that of pastor and pastoral activities around life cycle transitions as of high importance.

The two samples also concurred on the low ranking attached to managerial and administrative roles and activities, however phrased.

Although the two samples often agreed on the importance attached to dimensions of rabbinic leadership, with respect to specific roles, the responding rabbis and congregants differed in instructive ways. The rabbis' high rankings of pastor and Jewish educator slightly exceeded the scores awarded by the congregants. The latter, meanwhile, most highly prized rabbis as halakhic authority and as spiritual guide, modestly in excess of the rabbis' own evaluation of the importance of these roles. Somewhat significant gaps between congregants and rabbis are also found with respect to: counselor, talmid ḥakham, worship leader, and scholar. In all of these areas, the lay leaders' scores surpassed the rabbis'.

How do we explain these variations? One explanation may lie in the idealization of the rabbi sought by the congregants, but less keenly felt by the rabbis. Congregants prefer to see their rabbis as people of great piety, spirituality, and learning. Rabbis more often see the actual application of these qualities in teaching and pastoral care as the ultimate test of their effectiveness and success.

Allocation of Time—Actual and Ideal. Respondents were asked to estimate the amount of time that rabbis devote to various activities. In other words, rabbis reported on their own allocation of time, and the lay leaders offered their perceptions of their rabbis' activities. We also asked both for their views of the ideal amount of time the rabbis should devote to these tasks. These questions, then, yielded four sorts of responses, as summarized in Table 2:

- Estimates by rabbis of their actual time devoted
- Estimates by lay leaders of the rabbi's actual time devoted
- Ideal allocation of the rabbi's time, as expressed by rabbis
- Ideal allocation of the rabbi's time, as expressed by lay leaders.

The four columns of findings offer numerous opportunities for contrast and comparison. The following comparisons, in particular, are especially noteworthy:

1. The gaps between congregants' perceptions and rabbis' reports of the rabbis' time commitment to various tasks. In particular, do congregants see the ways the rabbis spend their time differently than the ways the rabbis see their own allocation of time?
2. The gaps between actual and ideal time commitments, suggesting areas where the respondents (be they rabbis or lay leaders) would like to see the rabbi invest more or less time. In other words, if a rabbi says he/she actually spends little time teaching but believes he/she ideally would spend much time teaching, we can readily surmise that the rabbi would like to spend MORE time teaching than he/she does currently. Similarly, parallel gaps for congregational leaders would tell us of areas where the leaders would like to see their rabbis devote more (or less) of their time.

3. The gaps between rabbis and congregants in their views on the ideal allocations of the rabbis' time. These would point to different emphases in rabbinic leadership.

Table 2 Rabbinic Leadership Activities: How much time and effort, actual and ideal?

Listed below are several rabbinic leadership activities. In each case, to what extent do [you/your congregation's rabbi] invest time and effort in this activity? And ideally, how much time should [you/your rabbi] invest in this activity?

	Actual		Ideal	
	Rabbis	Lay L	Rabbis	Lay L
Teaching	81*	68	89	83
Conducting worship services	74	86	68	88
Funerals, and comforting mourners	73	82	73	85
Program planning and execution	73	63	70	68
Working with families around weddings, bar/bat mitzvahs	70	69	67	79
Attending board and committee meetings	68	71	54	70
Preparing and delivering sermons	65	78	71	85
Visiting the sick	64	72	73	83
Helping Jews grow spiritually	59	66	83	86
Administration, including staff supervision	58	47	50	49
Involvement in a religious school	56	56	62	76
Thinking about and promoting a vision and goals for the future	56	52	79	79
Counseling	54	64	61	74
Involvement in community organizations and issues beyond your congregation	54	56	58	59
Managing conflict	52	44	45	62
Helping laity assume leadership	51	45	68	67
Involvement in the Conservative movement	44	59	57	69
Studying Jewish texts on your (rabbi's) own	43	72	82	77
Involvement in the larger ("non-Jewish") community	42	54	51	55
Fund raising	41	41	43	61
Your prof'l development, in-service training	33	48	61	65
Writing for publication	21	37	48	47
Working with youth	—	51	—	76

*These are mean, composite rankings scored on a metric of 0 to 100, where 100 signifies the highest possible score, and 0 the lowest possible score.

The table has been ordered in terms of reported time allocation (in descending order), as reported by the rabbis. Consistent with their earlier reported emphasis on Jewish education and teaching, they rank teaching as their most time-consuming activity, followed by conducting worship services; conducting funerals and comforting mourners; program planning and execution; working with families around weddings, bar/bat mitzvahs; and attending board and committee meetings.

Regarding perceptions of current time allocation, rabbis see themselves spending more time than their leadership perceives them to spend in the following areas:

- Teaching (rabbis' score of 81 versus lay score of 68)
- Administration (58 vs. 47)
- Program planning and execution (73 vs. 63)

The gap with respect to teaching may reflect the rabbis' own idealized perception of self as devoted teachers, or they may define teaching more broadly than their congregants. The other areas are those falling under the manager rubric, suggesting that much of the rabbis' managerial work is less than fully visible to the congregants, or the rabbis see it as more onerous than the congregants.

In contrast, in some areas, rabbis actually report *lower* time investment than do the lay leaders. The largest gap in perception between higher-estimating congregants and lower-reporting rabbis is associated with studying Jewish texts. This gap may be explained either by the idealization of the rabbi on the part of the congregants or by very different conceptions of what constitutes a great deal of time studying texts. What to the rabbi may seem a paltry and inadequate devotion of time to text study may seem to the lay leaders both significant and substantial.

Other areas with similar, though not quite as large, gaps in perception between low-reporting rabbis and high-perceiving lay leaders include:

- Involvement in the Conservative movement
- Professional development
- Preparing and delivering sermons
- Conducting worship services
- Counseling
- Funerals and comforting mourners

Some of these are the very visible activities of the congregational rabbi. The congregants over-estimate the time devoted to the visible work and, as we have seen, under-estimate the time devoted to "behind-the-scenes" activities. The evidence can also be examined with an eye to seeing where and how the rabbis and lay leaders would like to see the rabbis modify their time commitments. As noted, the gaps between the rabbis' current reported time investment and their ideal allocation of time signify interest in changing time priorities in one direction or the other. In only one area would they want to

substantially cut back their time: attending board and committee meetings. That is, rabbis would prefer to invest less time in this activity than they currently report spending.

In most other areas, rabbis would ideally want to spend more time than they currently devote. This nearly uniform pattern may reflect a built-in frustration with a job that seems to require more time than the rabbis have available. The two areas with the biggest gaps, in terms of time and effort, between a low reality and a high ideal were:

- Studying texts
- Professional development, in-service training

In addition, they also expressed great interest in increasing their time devoted to:

- Thinking about a vision for the future
- Writing for publication

Two other areas with sizable gaps between the present and the ideal time commitment were:

- Helping Jews grow spiritually
- Helping laity assume leadership

These two activities relate to the rabbi as an effective teacher and inspiration, working to elevate congregants spiritually and in their leadership roles.

For the lay leaders, gaps between their current perceptions of the rabbis' time investment and their ideals point to areas where congregational leadership is especially concerned about change in rabbinical functioning. In this regard, the items with the largest gaps are as follows:

- Thinking about vision
- Working with youth
- Helping laity assume leadership
- Helping Jews grow spiritually
- Fundraising

Finally, we may compare rabbis' and congregants' views with respect to their notions of the ideal allocation of rabbis' professional time. In their ideal conceptions, congregants almost uniformly express higher aspirations than do the rabbis, perhaps reflecting the rabbis' greater appreciation for the limits of their workweek, or the relatively cost-free stance of the lay leaders who can readily demand more of their rabbis. With that said, congregants and rabbis report especially large gaps in their ideal time allocation with respect to conducting worship services (reflecting the high visibility of this activity). In addition, rabbis and laity divide significantly in three other areas:

- Fundraising
- Attending board and committee meetings
- Managing conflict

The lay leaders want more devotion of time and effort in these areas than do the rabbis. Significantly, all three fall under the rubric of manager and institution-builder.

Table 3 Dimensions of Conservative Rabbinic Leadership

Dimension *(Imputed)*	**Roles** *("For a Conservative rabbi to be an effective religious leader, to what extent is each of the following roles important?")*	**Leadership activities** *("Ideally how much time should you/your rabbi invest in this activity?")*
Jewish educator	Jewish educator	Teaching Involvement in a religious school Working with youth
Model of piety	Model of religiosity Halakhic authority Talmid Hakham Scholar	[None Asked]
Visionary	Visionary	Thinking about and promoting a vision and goals for the future
Pastor	Pastor Counselor Spiritual guide	Funerals, and comforting mourners Working with families around weddings, bar/bat mitzvahs Visiting the sick Helping Jews grow spiritually
Worship leader	Worship leader	Conducting worship services Preparing and delivering sermons
Professional	[None Asked]	Involvement in the Conservative movement Studying texts on your own Professional development, in-service training Writing for publication
Ambassador	Representative in the wider Jewish community Representative in the wider "non-Jewish community"	Involvement in community organizations and issues beyond your congregation Involvement in the larger ("non-Jewish") community
Manager	Community builder Staff supervisor Manager Administrator	Program planning and execution Attending board and committee meetings Administration, including staff supervision Managing conflict Helping laity assume leadership Fundraising

A Conceptual Mapping: Eight Dimensions of Rabbinic Functioning. Through the use of factor analysis, we were able to identify eight major rubrics, or dimensions, of rabbinic functioning as shown in Table 3.

The eight dimensions, in fact, may be further combined. The congregational rabbis, it seems, group these dimensions into two groups of four. One consists of pastor, worship leader, model of religiosity, and educator. The other collection comprises visionary, manager, professional, and ambassador. The first cluster consists of functions that touch individual congregants directly. The second cluster represents those functions that occur either behind the scenes, from a congregant's perspective, or that only indirectly feed into the direct delivery of service to the congregant.

We may compare the relative importance that rabbis and congregational leaders attach to these dimensions. This information is included in Table 4. For the rabbis, Jewish educator is the highest-ranked dimension and manager is the lowest-ranked dimension. Other low-ranked dimensions include ambassador and professional. The congregants agree with the rabbis in assigning least importance to manager, ambassador, and professional. Moreover, they assign about as much importance as the rabbis to the role of Jewish educator.

However, the lay leaders differ markedly with the rabbis with respect to at least two dimensions that they (the lay leaders) value more highly: worship leader and pastor. Significantly, these are the two areas of rabbinic functioning that are most visible to the congregants. Alternatively, they may be viewed as the areas where the congregational consumer is most demanding of high rabbinic performance and attention. In addition, congregants' rankings tend to exceed those of the rabbis, suggesting that the former are simply more demanding of the rabbis' time and attention than the rabbis are of themselves.

Table 4 Importance of Rabbinic Leadership Dimensions to Rabbis and to Congregational Leaders

Dimension	Congregational Rabbis	Congregational Leaders
Jewish educator	81	81
Visionary	78	79
Pastor	76	83
Model of piety	76	83
Worship leader	70	86
Professional	64	66
Ambassador	61	66
Manager	59	61

Note: Scales of 0–100

The low scores assigned by both groups to the managerial dimension (e.g., administrator or staff supervisor) versus those assigned to other dimensions (e.g., talmid ḥakham, Jewish educator, visionary) may be seen as a result of available nomenclature. "Talmid ḥakham," is a title with great traditional symbolism and idealized rabbinic status. It connotes notions far more prestigious and powerful than "administrator." But to attribute the findings to available nomenclature ultimately begs the point. The absence of distinguished language to describe the rabbis' managerial functioning is itself testimony to the extent to which these functions are not especially prized, at least not in comparison with Jewish educational or pastoral functions. The notion of the rabbi as an institutional leader, manager, or CEO of a complex communal system evokes no role-titles whose very description commands respect, admiration, and importance.

Summary and Conclusions

Rabbis and their congregants largely agree on the relative importance of aspects of rabbinical leadership. For the most part, they emphasize teaching in various ways and pastoral care—providing personal services in times of joy and sorrow. Congregants may also place more emphasis than rabbis on worship services. However, amidst all of the legitimate concern over relations between rabbis and their lay leaders, one major finding achieves special significance: On the whole, rabbis and congregational leaders largely concur on that which is important and critical for the rabbis' success. The differences between the two, typically, are relatively minor and reflect different perceptual vantage points but not sharply differing values or ideology.

At the same time that both groups value teaching and pastoral work, both groups attach relatively less value to managerial functions: administration, staff supervision, conflict resolution, attending committee meetings, and fundraising. The laity would want the rabbi to do more fundraising; the rabbi would want to spend less time and effort on board and committee meetings. The congregants tend to idealize their rabbis and want them to serve as models of learning, piety, and goodness. The rabbis undoubtedly struggle with these expectations.

We found that community-building, institutional leadership, and management may be the most crucial area in need of attention. Significantly, neither rabbis nor congregants seem to place significant emphasis on this area of functioning and its related activities. Rabbis see themselves, and are seen by lay leaders, primarily as teachers, pastors, and models of piety; in short, as modernized "holy men." But when they lead congregations, they also lead and need to advance a complex institution replete with history, personalities, memories, challenges, dreams, and fears. These complex communities generally consist of sub-communities, factions, and stylistic enclaves that seek recognition, attention, and influence. Congregations require and consume resources, be they human, financial, cultural or otherwise. Accordingly, rab-

bis who serve as spiritual leaders of their congregations are almost always institutional leaders, in partnership with other leaders, both lay and professional. This has the potential to create dissonance, both internally for the rabbi, as idealized role functioning comes into conflict with day-to-day demands of leadership, and between lay leaders and rabbis, when expectations held by the one may go unfulfilled by the other. Our data suggest that both rabbis and lay leaders may lack the language of leadership within the vernacular of veneration of the role of the rabbi. Psychologists have long discussed the importance of "personal constructs" in helping to guide behavior.[23] As we define the constructs through which we understand the world, these constructs, in turn, impact on our thoughts, feelings and action. If the managerial duties of the rabbinate are constructed as undesirable, "profane," or secondary, this will likely affect the functioning of the rabbi and the job satisfaction of the rabbi in these domains. Further analyses should be conducted to elucidate the relation between expectations for managerial roles and job functioning. Moreover, the data suggest that efforts should be made to understand administrative/managerial roles in relation to, rather than in opposition with, other rabbinic functions.

In terms of educational implications, rabbis seem willing and able to turn to professional development opportunities to enhance their professional practice. Moreover, congregational leaders seem to understand the importance of these development opportunities, although rabbis and congregants may have overlapping but distinctive ideas as to the sorts of development they might seek. Both groups would want rabbis to become more adept at helping congregants grow spiritually and helping them assume more leadership. The congregational leaders might want some work on fundraising and related skills. Both are interested in perfect rabbis' skills as builders of communities and transmitters of vision, but both may hold insufficient appreciation for the importance of a variety of administrative skills.

In any event, the rabbis are seeking and would demand a thorough integration of text study into most of their in-service training experience. This demand flows from at least two sources, one inherent and one instrumental. Inherently, rabbis love text study. It is, in part, why they became Conservative rabbis: to study, learn, and teach the sacred texts of Judaism. Instrumentally, rabbis want to learn how to translate the teachings of Judaism into actualities in their congregants' lives and how, specifically, to teach the texts they love to teach.

A further area for educational and professional activities concerns the complementary roles of assistant/associate and senior rabbi in a congregation, as suggested by the high proportion of newly-ordained rabbis in an assistant or associate position. Such positions provide excellent opportunities for mentor-mentee experiences, which should be fostered by working with each party individually, as well as both together, to best negotiate the roles and responsibilities inherent in such a relationship.

Finally, the data raise the possibility that educational efforts can target the

communication between rabbis and lay leaders around perceptions and role expectations. One possibility is that each group be addressed individually, with the goal of how to begin a dialogue with the other group regarding issues of role expectation. Another possibility involves conjoint training for rabbis and lay leaders around negotiating tasks and roles within the congregation, tracking the progress of the resulting division of labor, and making changes as new needs arise.

NOTES

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10. Jay P. Dolan, "Patterns of Leadership in the Congregation," in *American Congregations (Vol. 2): New Perspectives in the Study of Congregations,* James P. Wind & James W. Lewis, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 225–56.
11. Neil Gillman, "Empowering the Congregation," *Jewish Education News* (14) 2:26–7, 1993.
12. Rabbinical Assembly records indicate that women comprise approximately 8 percent of their congregationally-based membership. This sample, therefore, slightly under-represents female congregational rabbis.
13. *Telephone Survey from Pulpit & Pew: Research on Pastoral Leadership* (Durham, NC: A project of Duke University Divinity School, 2001).
14. Ibid.
15. Jonathan D. Sarna, "The Road to Jewish Leadership," in *Expectations, Education, and Experience of Jewish Professional Leaders: Report of the Wexner Foundation Research Project on Contemporary Jewish Professional Leadership,* Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies Research Report #12 (April 1995), pp. 31–60.
16. Ibid., p. 34.
17. Ibid., p. 35.
18. Op. cit., Cohen and Eisen, and op. cit., B. Horowitz.
19. Op. cit., *Telephone Survey.*
20. Involvement in these Jewish educational opportunities varies by age cohort, generally

decreasing across time. Camp Ramah attendance, for example, reaches a high of 18 percent in the youngest—under-age-35 cohort, and involvement in USY/LTF ranges from 4 percent to 54 percent across the age spans. See Jack Wertheimer, *Conservative Synagogues and Their Members: Highlights of the North American Survey of 1995–96* (New York: Ratner Center, Jewish Theological Seminary, 1996).

21. A note on reading the forthcoming tables on rabbinic roles and activities: On several questions pertaining to rabbinic roles and activities, the questionnaire asked respondents to answer using scales that ranged either from 1 to 5 or from 1 to 7. For example, 1 was labeled, "not at all," 3 meant "somewhat," and 5 signified "to a great extent." For clarity of presentation, the entries in many of the tables in this article represent means (arithmetic averages) recalibrated on scales from 0 to 100. Thus, if for a particular item, everyone were to have answered "to a great extent," the maximally favorable response, the entry would read 100. At the other extreme, 0 would imply that all respondents answered "not at all," and 50 would signify an average response of "somewhat."

22. Op. cit., *Telephone Survey.*

23. George A. Kelly, *The Psychology of Personal Constructs* (New York: Norton, 1955).

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