PARALLEL POWER STRUCTURES, INVISIBLE CAREERS AND THE CHANGING NATURE OF AMERICAN JEWISH WOMEN'S PHILANTHROPY

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Although it has strong parallels to trends in the general society, Jewish women's philanthropy has also been distinctively Jewish. Two of its traditional functions—serving as parallel power structures and as a context for invisible careers—need to be redefined in light of changing gender roles. This discussion suggests that the past and current role of Jewish women's philanthropy provide an important key to defining its future. Serving as an important cornerstone of Jewish civil society, women's organizations can continue to be sources of innovation that promote continuity.

One of my most vivid childhood memories was the turquoise and white *pushke* or *tzedakah* (charity) box for the Jewish National Fund (JNF) in my grandmother's apartment. Many people share this memory. Jewish homes all over the world had JNF boxes to collect money to purchase land in Palestine and Israel. Researchers interested in understanding charitable giving have found that many of the Jews they interviewed specifically mentioned that *tzedakah* boxes served as an icon and a reminder of the central place of *tzedakah* in daily life (Havens & Schervish, personal communication, 1998; Odendahl, 1990; Ostrower, 1995). Other than her family, the focus of my grandmother's life were her "societies." The most important was the United Wilner Ladies Relief, the women's auxiliary of a *landsmanschaftn* or hometown society. Both the *pushke* and the society have had an important place in the lives of Jewish American women. However, their importance has changed as the result of cultural and social forces that have created both continuities and discontinuities in the nature of Jewish women's voluntary and philanthropic work.

This article describes the evolution of American Jewish women's philanthropy. It focuses on several questions. The first and central question is, How was Jewish women's philanthropy similar to the activities of other types of women in the United States, and in what ways has it been different? In addition, this article addresses two broader questions: What role did Jewish women's volunteering, fund raising, organization-building, and advocacy—efforts subsumed under the term "philanthropy"—play in building American Jewish communities over the last century? What is likely to be the future role of Jewish women's organizations?

FUNCTIONS OF PHILANTHROPY

Philanthropic organizations perform several functions, and women's organizations have two additional and distinctive functions. First, they are benevolent. They enhance the well-being of members of a community or a society through actions that are charitable or provide self-help or mutual benefit. A second purpose is that they are cornerstones in constructing a sense of community by serving a broad constituency, not just people who are in need. A third function is advocacy or reform. Associations and organizations investigate social issues and recommend policies and design programs. Often, this function involves establishing new organizations and lobbying public officials to support, create, or modify social institutions. A fourth and latent function of philanthropic activities is sociability and social support. Closely allied to community building but nonetheless distinct, philanthropic organizations bring together people with common

concerns, but participation also fulfills expressive needs. Philanthropic activities are important mechanisms in maintaining social networks, particularly those related to social class (McPherson & Smith-Lovin, 1982; Ostrower, 1995).

Women's organizations have several additional functions. Kathleen D. McCarthy (1990) observes that they engage in a distinctive type of advocacy since they are parallel power structures in designing social policies and stimulating social and political reform. This was particularly evident when married women were unable to own property or to vote. Women's organizations actively promoted social change in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Members of large national women's organizations and volunteers in settlement houses helped shape reforms during the Progressive Era and the New Deal (Ginsburg, 1990; Scott, 1992; Skocpol, 1992).

Arlene Kaplan Daniels (1988) outlines a second distinctive feature of women's philanthropic work: It provides a context for the development of *invisible careers*—those comprising a series of unpaid jobs. Invisible careers are shaped by different contingencies than paid careers. Clearly, there is no financial benefit. Daniels points out that women with invisible careers emphasized how their work benefited the community rather than themselves. The number of women involved in invisible careers expanded during the late nineteenth century and for the first half of the twentieth century. A growing number of middle-class women were able to devote time to community projects because they had fewer children and smaller households and could run their homes more efficiently because of labor-saving devices and mass-produced consumer products (Cowan, 1983).

GENDER AND PHILANTHROPY IN JEWISH TRADITION

Jewish tradition outlines two types of actions that correspond to the American notion of philanthropy: (1) *gemilut chasadim* or *chesed* or acts of lovingkindness and (2) *tzedakah*, a broader term than charity that encompasses acts of righteousness or social justice. Rabbi Israel Meir HaKohen, the *Chofetz Chaim* (1997), a late nineteenth and early twentieth-century rabbi, codified laws pertaining to acts of lovingkindness. He pointed out that *chesed* is superior to *tzedakah* as it involves actions, not just the giving of money like *tzedakah*. *Tzedakah* is limited in scope, whereas *gemilut chasadim* are unlimited. Ten percent of a person's earnings are to be devoted to *tzedakah*, and it is desirable but not required to give an additional ten percent. In contrast, there are no upper limits on the time one should devote to assisting and comforting those who are in need of assistance because they are sick, mourners, travelers, or require help for myriad other reasons.

Men and women are equally obligated with respect to both *chesed* and *tzedakah*; they are expected to tithe, to visit the sick, prepare the dead for burial, comfort the mourner, give to the poor and the needy, support widows and orphans, offer hospitality, provide dowries for brides, and support community institutions. There are, however, qualitative differences in the ways that men and women have fulfilled these requirements at different times and in different contexts. Under strict interpretation of Jewish law, which governed most communities until this century, women were not held to the same standards of ritual performance or expected to devote significant amounts of time to learning Torah as men.

Because of different religious expectations for men and women, philanthropy has been a principal vehicle for religious expression for Jewish women, giving them a separate sphere, an arena for contributing to community life and sometimes operating as a parallel power structure, a context for exercising influence in the larger community or society.

Our knowledge of Jewish women's philanthropy is fragmentary until the nineteenth century. During the sixteenth century, German Jews began to replace informal acts of *chesed* with formal burial and sick care associations as Jews moved into urban settings. Initially organized by men with women as

participants, women-only burial societies were established during the seventeenth century. In contrast to Christian women, who had a central place in caring for the sick, Jewish women restricted their activities to caring for women because the value of modesty in Jewish tradition limits physical contact between men and women (Marcus, 1947).

Many more publications describe Jewish women's philanthropy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. During the nineteenth century, Ladies' Benevolent Societies were founded in most American communities, with the first one established in Philadelphia in 1819 (Kohut, 1931). They had a parallel existence to men's Benevolent Societies. The Atlanta Hebrew Ladies' Benevolent Society, for example, was established by members of the city's major Reform congregation in 1870. Members provided immigrants with food, coal, clothing, financial assistance as well as cooking lessons, temporary housing, and cash assistance (Wenger, 1987).

Over time, Benevolent Societies altered their functions and began to be called Sisterhoods. The first Jewish women's group given the title of Sisterhood was established as the *Unabhaegiger Orden Treuer Schwestern* at New York City's Temple Emanu-El in 1846. The name was changed to the United Order of True Sisters five years later to reflect the group's use of English rather than German. By the 1890s, the number of sisterhoods had expanded, and many were involved in community service activities.

For some organizations, the transition from Benevolent Society to Sisterhood involved a shift in focus. Jenna Joselit (1987) points out that some Sisterhoods became less involved in charitable work as their activities were taken over by professional social workers. Groups turned their attention inward and focused on serving congregations rather than the community at large. They raised money for synagogues, organized social events, supported Hebrew schools, and started shops whose ostensible purpose was to raise money but were also intended to encourage use of the ritual objects and books that they sold.

By the turn of the twentieth century, a broad array of local volunteer opportunities existed for American Jewish women. These included participation in synagogue-based sisterhoods and working with children in Jewish orphanages. The New York Hebrew Orphan Asylum's Godmothers Association founded in 1920 was "a society of clubs led by women who would take on the role of confidante for a small number of children" meeting in their homes to "give the children a taste of family life." These women took children to concerts, to art galleries, to parks, to the theater, and sometimes to their country homes (Bogin, 1992, p. 209). At the Jewish Children's Home in Rochester, neighborhood women formed a Mother's Club that sponsored collations and luncheons for each child's Bar Mitzvah, obtained clothing for Jewish holidays, and raised money to improve the quality of life. More importantly, however, they were aunts (*tantes* in Yiddish) to the children: "They did what aunties are supposed to do: dote, indulge, provide for, celebrate, honor, and preserve ritual and tradition" (Goldstein, 1995, p. 104).

A second strand of organizational development comprised large national and international Jewish women's organizations established after 1890. A similar development took place in the United Kingdom, Germany, and Australia (Cohen, 1987; Kaplan, 1979; Kuzmack, 1990). These organizations played a central role in domestic and international philanthropy, providing health care, education, vocational training, and social services. The first large national organization in the United States was the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) founded in 1893 at the World Congress of Religions of the Columbian Exposition in Chicago. NCJW was modeled on the Protestant woman's club, which sponsored social, literary, and cultural activities for middle-class women. Like women's clubs, NCJW's purpose expanded to include service and advocacy for Jewish women and children. NCJW provided an important mechanism for women to exercise public roles at a time when relatively few

middle-class women were employed and when women were unable to vote.

NCJW provided a social space for Reform Jewish women, mostly of German descent, who wanted to express themselves both as Jews and as Americans. Its members collaborated with other women's groups in the international effort to reduce the white slave trade. They also performed many of the traditional activities of benevolent societies. NCJW sections organized Sabbath schools and Jewish study groups so that girls and women could expand their knowledge and commitment to Jewish life. Members of the New York section of NCJW visited patients in city hospitals and established a kosher kitchen and a synagogue for patients in public hospitals on New York's Welfare Island; they also sponsored a settlement house, a therapeutic nursery, and a home for wayward girls.

NCJW's founding coincided with the beginning of the period of mass immigration of Jews. The organization established various programs designed to assist new immigrants, especially young women. Volunteers and paid agents met young women as they disembarked at Ellis Island, particularly those arriving without families, who might become prey to white slavers. Its immigrant work continued through the post-Holocaust period (Welt, 1948).

Initially envisioned as an organization for a broad cross-section of Jewish women, NCJW was unable to bridge religious and ideological differences (Rogow, 1993). Others were attracted to Zionist women's organizations and groups like the Organization for Rehabilitation and Training (ORT). Reform Judaism's initial opposition to Zionism diverted members to other organizations like Hadassah.

Hadassah had its origins in a Zionist study circle begun in 1898. It was founded by Henrietta Szold in 1912 to raise money to support public health nursing and medical clinics in Palestine. By the 1930s, Hadassah was a major provider of health care and social services in Israel. One of its programs, Youth Aliyah, rescued Jewish children from Europe and resettled them in Palestine (Levin, 1997). Many of its members were Orthodox or Conservative compared to NCJW's Reform members. Whereas NCJW experienced a great deal of dissension in its early years over the religious standards of its members (Rogow, 1993), a commitment to Zionism overshadowed religious diversity within Hadassah. Several other women's Zionist organizations with a narrower purpose or ideology were established during the 1920s, including American Mizrachi Women (now Amit, founded in 1925), Pioneer Women (1925) now called Naamat, and the Women's League for Israel (1928).

The rise of large, autonomous Jewish women's organizations in the early twentieth century occurred at an historical moment when more Jewish women were able to spend time volunteering and when they mainly chose to devote their time to Jewish organizations. Commitment to Jewish organizations was due both to choice and to barriers to their involvement in non-Jewish groups. The pool of potential volunteers expanded further after World War II as Jewish families achieved even greater prosperity and moved to the suburbs where a welter of groups were created.

WAS JEWISH WOMEN'S PHILANTHROPY DISTINCTIVE?

In some respects, there was nothing distinctively Jewish about the form and the content of these volunteer activities. Their evolution parallels women's groups in the broader society. Nineteenth and early twentieth Jewish and non-Jewish women channeled domestic skills into philanthropic activities like sewing societies that supplied immigrants, orphans, and soldiers with clothing and blankets. Beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century, Jewish and non-Jewish women began to establish asylums for dependents, orphanages, and old age homes. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, both Jewish and non-Jewish women began to form large national organizations. A great deal of their work was focused on

women and children or directed to the adjustment and well-being of immigrants, like settlement house work.

A second similarity is that some women's organizations relied on men's business expertise. Organizations begun by women included men as board members. In some cases, the organization became dominated by men in order to ensure its financial viability. The Philadelphia Jewish Foster Home, established in 1855, and the Brooklyn Ladies Hebrew Home for the Aged, founded in Williamsburg in 1907 and later relocated to Brownsville, were established by women but later recruited male donors and board members (Bodek, 1983; Landesman, 1971). This transition from female to male dominance also occurred for organizations founded by Catholic laywomen and by Protestant women in Chicago (McCarthy, 1982; Oates, 1995).

Yet, a great deal was distinctively Jewish about Jewish women's philanthropy in the past. For the past century, the philanthropy of most American Jews has been guided by Jewish values that stress the obligatory nature of giving both money and time (Chambré, 1998; Woocher, 1986). A strong sense of Jewish identity and commitment to Jewish survival was palpable in many of these organizations. NCJW's policies and programs drew upon a wellspring of Jewish tradition including the important philanthropic role of the *Eshet Chayil,* the Woman of Valor extolled in verses from Proverbs that are sung at the Sabbath table in Jewish homes (Rogow, 1993). Although NCJW's work was directed toward Americanizing immigrants, its support for Jewish education and Jewish tradition was central in the creation of the American Jewish community.

Jewish women's philanthropic activities also occurred in several types of organizations that were distinctive although not entirely unique to Jewish communities. The first were hometown societies or *landsmanschaftn.* Initially restricted to men, Soyer (1997) suggests that the women's suffrage movement was the major impetus in expanding women's involvement. A small number of the 2,500 *landsmanschaftn* that responded to a survey done in the 1930s were Ladies Societies: 71 were founded by women, and 287 were women's auxiliaries. However, a majority of the women's *landsmanschaftn* had male presidents or secretaries.

Women also actively participated in another distinctive type of organization, the free loan society. Women founded and were the donors of free loan societies in several cities. The Ladies' Hebrew Free Loan Society of Providence only lent money to women, but groups in Seattle and Chicago assisted both men and women. Because of the nature of their work, women are probably even more dominant in a second type of free loan society, the *gemach,* which lends goods. Since histories of Jewish philanthropy fail to mention *gemachim,* it is not possible to assert whether they are a modern development or were so informal as to escape the historical record. The only systematic discussion of contemporary *gemachim* is based on Julia Bernstein's (1993) informal survey in Jerusalem. Bernstein found that most *gemachim* were started by one person and operate on a small scale, usually out of the founder's home and sometimes with the assistance of a few friends. They tend to specialize in lending only one or two types of objects, such as bridal gowns, baby formula, ritual objects, and tables and chairs. One *gemach* in Jerusalem, Yad Sarah, has grown into a large charitable organization that provides medical supplies and equipment. Today, *gemachim* exist in densely populated Orthodox communities such as Boro Park in Brooklyn and Monsey in Rockland County New York.

For large numbers of American Jews during the first half of the century, the dominant force in their lives was neither religious tradition nor particularistic ties to their hometown. Rather, they viewed themselves as workers, often as Socialists or Communists. In many cases, they brought these strong ideological commitments with them from Poland or Russia. Jewish women took leadership roles in unions, particularly the ILGWU (International Ladies' Garment Workers

Union). Beginning with the kosher meat boycott of 1902 and followed by food boycotts, riots, and rent strikes, working-class Jewish women engaged in activism that expands our definition of social housekeeping (Baum et al., 1975; Blumfield, 1982; Brodkin, 1998).

This important strand of Jewish life was reflected in the Emma Lazarus Federation of Jewish Women Clubs (ELF). Its founder, Clara Lemlich Shavelson, was instrumental in calling the first massive strike of garment workers in 1909. Founded in the 1940s, later than other national women's groups, it combined social, political, literary, and maternalist welfare activities. The organization commissioned biographies of notable Jewish women; members participated in the March on Washington in 1963, fought actively against anti-Semitic acts, and generally promoted a progressive, secular Jewish agenda that reflected the working-class and European origin of many of its members. They established the first day care center in Israel for Jewish and Arab children and supported the Mogen David Adom. With the demise of both the Jewish working class and the immigrant generation that had formed this group, the Federation disbanded in 1989 (Antler, 1995).

CONTEMPORARY JEWISH WOMEN'S VOLUNTARISM

Factors external and internal to the Jewish community have had a profound impact on the nature of Jewish women's voluntarism. The first is a major change in gender roles (Fishman, 1993; National Commission on American Jewish Women, 1995; Schneider, 1984). Jewish women are better educated than they were in the past; fewer are full-time homemakers, and many are unwilling to participate in parallel power structures. In the past, Jewish women had circumscribed roles or had token involvement in major national organizations as well as in local federations. Although there were exceptional women who played key roles in male-dominated institutions, like Rebecca Gratz of Philadelphia who started the Jewish Orphan Society in 1815 and the Hebrew Sunday School Society in 1838, and Pauline Perlmutter Steinem, President of the Toledo, Ohio Hebrew Free Loan Society, large Jewish communal institutions were dominated by men.

In addition to autonomous single-sex organizations, many Jewish women were involved in the woman's divisions of large local or national organizations. Some of them were affiliates of national or international groups, such as B'nai B'rith Women's Organization and the Women's Divisions of the American Jewish Congress and the United Jewish Appeal. Usually they were auxiliaries, a separate sphere for women within a small local group like a *landsmanschaftn* in which women carried out charitable and communal work without necessarily being included in the organization's power structure. Although women's auxiliaries were often represented on boards, membership did not always lead to authority or influence.

This gender inequality is being reduced but parity has yet to be achieved. Adoption of feminist ideology, the greater number of highly educated women, and more women with organizational skills all led to challenges to the restricted role of women in Jewish communal affairs. Jacqueline Levine first raised the issue nationally in 1972 at the annual General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds (Cohen et al., 1976). Seven years later, Aviva Cantor (1979) pointed out that volunteering served as a "sheltered workshop" for Jewish women: they engaged in tasks that provided them with the sense that they were participating in communal life but in reality they had little influence.

Energy once devoted to women's organizations has been redirected to community-wide organizations. Rather than accept second-class citizenship or involvement in parallel organizations, Jewish women have been challenging the male dominance of many communal institutions. In 1975, 17 percent of the board members in Jewish federations were women. By 1993, nearly one in three federation board members were women (Kosmin, 1994). Increased participation is uneven, however. A major study, sponsored

by Ma'yan: The Jewish Women's Project (*Power and Parity*, 1998) found that while 25 percent of board members of 45 key national organizations were women, variations are enormous. Less than 5 percent of board members of several large national Orthodox organizations are women. This is also the case for the Zionist Organization of America.

An allied development is that Jewish women's organizations may have lost the kinds of volunteers they once relied upon: young and middle-aged women who are full-time homemakers. Although widely assumed to have left some organizations with an aging pool of active volunteers, the impact of women's employment on their volunteer participation has yet to be systematically studied in detail. Fragmentary data based on the population as a whole suggest that the pattern is more complex than merely a zero-sum relation between working and volunteering. Among all American women surveyed in 1996, volunteer participation was higher among employed women (56%) than unemployed (47%) and retired (46%) women. When asked to estimate how many hours each week they spent volunteering, the number of hours was higher among working women (4.3) than unemployed (4.0) or retired (3.8) women (Independent Sector, 1996). A slim majority of women serving as lay leaders in Jewish federations are employed. In 1993, 34 percent were working full-time and approximately 20 percent worked part-time (Kosmin, 1994).

The transformation of Jewish women's philanthropy is taking place at the same time as Jewish philanthropy and patterns of civic engagement in the general society are changing. For much of the twentieth century, joining organizations and donating money were important ways in which many Americans expressed their Jewish identity. The ideology of *civil Judaism*, which draws upon Jewish notions of charity and communal responsibility combined with support for the State of Israel and concern for the survival of the Jewish people, sustained Jewish philanthropy (Woocher, 1986). Several trends suggest that this situation is changing.

Jews are becoming more integrated into the philanthropic organizations of the broader society. They are less exclusively involved in Jewish organizations and a significant portion of their donations are directed to non-Jewish organizations (Wertheimer, 1997). Declining social barriers combined with an increase in the number of very wealthy and philanthropic Jewish families have meant that Jews are courted as donors and board members for mainstream institutions that excluded them in the past, such as non-Jewish hospitals, art museums, orchestras, and public libraries (Ostrower, 1995). Commitment to Jewish philanthropy is declining in each succeeding generation. The 1990 National Jewish Population Survey data reveal that seven in ten first- and second-generation American Jews contributed to Jewish philanthropies. By the third generation, this declined to half and was reduced further to 36% in the fourth generation (Tobin, 1995).

More is known about the organizational affiliations of women than their patterns of giving money. Each generation of women selected different types of organizations. In his study of a small New England city, which he called Yankee City, W. Lloyd Warner (1945) found that immigrant women joined the Jewish Ladies' Aid Society and their daughters joined Hadassah. To continue the analogy further, were Warner to revisit, he might find some of their granddaughters in Hadassah or UJA-Federation but others in the Junior League, an organization once closed to Jewish women. Alice Goldstein (1990) points out that women's involvement in Jewish and non-Jewish activities should not be assumed to be mutually exclusive. In fact, she concludes that they rise in tandem. Another pattern of changing participation, noted by Susan Weidman Schneider (1992), is the involvement of younger Jewish women in new philanthropic organizations like the New Israel Fund and the Shefa Fund. These attract women who want to synthesize their commitment to feminism, social justice, and to Jewish community life.

HAS JEWISH WOMEN'S PHILANTHROPY LOST ITS PURPOSE?

Two traditional functions of Jewish women's philanthropy—as parallel power structures and as a context for invisible careers—have taken on a different meaning. At a time when Jewish women are taking their place at the table, the parallel power structure function might seem to be insignificant. Yet, the traditionally maternalistic concerns of women's organizations continue to have an important place in communal life. Jewish women's organizations are more likely to be sensitive to otherwise unidentified or emerging issues. They can mobilize the expertise of women to do the kind of "domestic housekeeping" that continues to be meaningful at a time when women confront such dilemmas as balancing career and family. This involves both raising issues, which larger organizations might later address, an advocacy function, but also creating new organizations. It can be done by auxiliaries as well as by autonomous organizations.

The advocacy function of NCJW is well documented. Less well known was the important role of women in establishing the largest kosher supervision service, which is under the auspices of the Orthodox Union. Writing in 1931, Rebecca Kohut (1931, p. 195) pointed out, "Not only are the women exhorted to observe scrupulously the Jewish dietary laws in their own homes, but as an organization, they have undertaken to investigate the *Kashruth* of manufactured food products." A more contemporary example pertains to violence against women. The Shalom Task Force in New York City and similar organizations in other areas have raised the issue of domestic violence in the Jewish community. Notices are discreetly posted in synagogue ladies' rooms as well as in ritual baths in order to reach out to women who are unlikely to go to a federation-sponsored agency that may not be sensitive to these women's religious needs. This role has been institutionalized with the creation of Jewish women's foundations, a trend that parallels a development in the broader society. The Jewish Women's Foundation of New York, established in 1995, has a maternalist agenda including support for domestic violence programs (Ain, 1998).

Fewer women are seeking invisible careers in Jewish women's organizations, which poses some important challenges. While there are still some full-time volunteers, like the board members of many of the large national organizations, an overwhelming proportion of younger women are in careers, and few are able to choose the unpaid career paths of their mothers and grandmothers. Yet, it is important to recall the organizational involvement of the women of Johnstown Pennsylvania so vividly described by Ewa Moraska. These women combined volunteering and work—as men always have—and yet many made significant contributions as volunteers.

This suggests a need to redefine the notion of invisible career. Arlene Kaplan Daniels (1988) developed this concept in a study of elite women who were not employed. Yet, the idea can apply to a volunteer worklife that exists both parallel to and in interaction with one's paid career. Volunteers are valuable to organizations when they can apply skills from their paid job to volunteering. Jewish women's philanthropy needs to adapt to changing social roles and historical conditions in ways that it did in the past by tailoring activities to women with jobs and careers.

Women's philanthropic organizations can continue to fulfill one important latent function: serving as a context for sociability. Arlene Kaplan Daniels (1988) points out that women are not only attracted by the importance of doing good works but simultaneously having good times in the course of volunteering. In an era when many women are engaged in a delicate balance between family, work, and community, women's organizations can provide a space for sociability and personal growth while at the same time enabling them to improve the well-being of others. And, in the case of Jewish women, engage in activities designed to enhance this subsector of civil society.

Jewish women's organizations might look to their past role in creating institutions that promoted identity and continuity. Several organizations, including Hadassah, Amit, Emonah, and the Women of Reform Judaism, have made a renewed commitment to promoting serious study of Jewish texts as well as distinctive issues that confront Jewish women, such as Jewish divorce laws, and contemporary problems affecting Jewish women, like ethnic stereotyping (Bohm, 1997; Diament, 1997). Participation in youth organizations, like Hadassah's Young Judaea, strengthens Jewish identity and is associated with a lower rate of intermarriage (1998 Young Judaea Continuity Study, N.D.). At a time when many are alarmed and concerned about Jewish survival, Jewish women may once again take a leadership role in the kind of municipal housekeeping that led to past reforms and programs.

CONCLUSION

Jewish women's philanthropy has played an important role in the development of Jewish communal institutions—engaging in acts of *chesed*, initiating new institutions, raising funds, and identifying issues for the broader communal agenda. The nature of Jewish women's philanthropy has echoed trends and patterns of women's philanthropy in the broader society both in the kinds of organizations women have created and in the nature of their activities. Yet, at the same time, the work has been distinctively Jewish both in terms of its normative quality and its emphasis on building Jewish institutions both domestically and internationally. With major changes in gender roles, many Jewish women are less interested in working in women-only organizations that have traditionally served as parallel power structures. Increasingly, women have taken on leadership roles in previously male-dominated communal institutions.

What, then, might be the future function of Jewish women's philanthropy? The lessons of the past are a key to the future. Jewish women's organizations have served a vital role as incubators for developing new policies and programs. Much of this work has focused on a maternalist agenda, activities directed toward women and children. At a time when the issue of Jewish continuity has a central place in the communal agenda, women's organizations need to continue to rethink their vital role in Jewish civil society.

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