

Community-Wide Planning for Faith-Based Service Provision: Practical, Policy, and Conceptual Challenges

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The context for this article is the public policy interest in the United States and the United Kingdom in the contribution that faith-based organizations can make to the provision of welfare and other public services, and the corresponding demands on such organizations to consider how they plan and deliver services. The authors present findings from a major research program that aimed to facilitate the planning of service provision within one faith group, the U.K. Jewish community. The authors outline the opportunities and obstacles found to be facing this “Jewish voluntary sector” and then discuss the lessons to be drawn from this kind of community-wide approach to the planning of services within and across a faith group in the current public policy climate. Specifically, the authors look at implications for planning in the U.K. Jewish community and other faith groups, for the research agenda on faith-based organizations, and for public and social policy.

Keywords: *faith-based organizations; Jewish social services; faith-based planning; planning social services; U.K. Jews*

INTRODUCTION: FAITH-BASED SERVICE PROVISION— THE POLICY PRESSURES AND THE RESEARCH

In both the United States and the United Kingdom, policy makers and politicians have shown increasing interest recently in faith-based organizations

Note: We are grateful to the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, London (JPR) for permission to draw on the findings of the Project on Long Term Planning for the British Jewish Community (LTP). We contributed to various stages and parts of the research project, but we wish to make it clear that the JPR was the sponsor of the LTP and we wish to acknowledge the major contributions to its management and content made by its own research staff, including Barry Kosmin, Oliver Valins, and Stanley Waterman. We would also like to thank Ram Cnaan, Keith Kahn-Harris, Carl Milofsky, Steve Rathgeb Smith, and three anonymous reviewers for very helpful comments on earlier versions of this article.

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(FBOs)—religious congregations as well as those voluntary and nonprofit organizations that are to some extent grounded in a faith tradition. The contribution that FBOs can and might make to providing welfare and other public services has been of particular interest (Farnell, Furbey, Al-Hagg Hills, Macey, & Smith, 2003; Smith & Sosin, 2001). Reflecting this public policy trend, there is now a growing body of research-based literature that examines aspects of service provision by FBOs.

Some of the research is anchored in the public administration, public policy, and social policy traditions. It focuses on the contribution that FBOs can and do make to public policy formulation and implementation, with or without dedicated governmental funding. Cnaan (1999) and Wineburg (2001), for example, provide overviews of the issues arising from the involvement of religious organizations in public policy. Smith and Sosin (2001) examine the extent to which faith-related social service agencies have characteristics and resources of a kind that enable them in practice to promote the Bush administration's social policy goals. Cnaan (2002) and Saxon-Harrold, Wiener, McCormack, and Weber (2000) provide comprehensive data on the capacity of religious congregations in North America to contribute to social welfare services provision.

A growing number of researchers in both the United States and the United Kingdom are providing qualitative and quantitative data about the implications of changing public policy goals for FBOs themselves, including not only congregations but also smaller and local-level organizations (Cameron, 1998; Campbell, 2002; Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001; Harris, Halfpenny, & Rochester, 2003; Lukka, Locke, & Sorteri-Procter, 2003). Some authors have used their research as a base for debating the capacity of FBOs to expand their social welfare and public services roles. Others have questioned the appropriateness and implications of shifts in public policy that entail direct funding of FBOs by governmental agencies and that encourage competition between FBOs for external funding.

Another body of research literature focuses on aspects of managing FBOs that provide public services. Thus, Gibelman and Gelman (2002) look at the "managerial track record" of FBOs involved in the delivery of social services and warn that their leaders are subject to the same human frailties as others, and Nitterhouse (1997) looks specifically at financial management in small religious nonprofits. Stone and Wood (1997) explore the impact on the boards of religiously affiliated social services providers of expanding their governmentally funded provision. Some authors have explored, empirically and theoretically, the extent to which management of FBOs can be seen as distinct from the management of other kinds of nonprofits (Brinkerhoff, 1999; Harris, 1998b; Jeavons, 1994). Like their colleagues working in the public and social policy traditions, some of the researchers looking at the management of FBOs have used their findings as a springboard for raising critical questions about, for example, the costs entailed in accepting government funding; not just

financial costs but also threats to mission and traditional forms of volunteer and philanthropic support.

Most of these studies of faith-based service provision have in common a focus on individual organizations. The relationship between an individual FBO and its religious denominational structure is occasionally mentioned, especially in studies of congregations (Ammerman, 1997; Chaves & Tsitsos 2001; Harris, 1998b). And there have been some studies of those “umbrella” or “intermediary” organizations that bring together organizations across faith boundaries or that bring together organizations of a particular faith into a confederation (Baum, 1994; Koch & Johnson, 1997). But even in these studies, the focus is essentially on *individual* organizations.

This individualized conceptualization of FBOs has proved to be informative, but it is no longer sufficient for scholarly or policy purposes. First, it does not reflect the fact that FBOs often function in practice as part of broader cultures, communities, movements, and networks into which they are organizationally embedded (Milofsky, 1999; Schneider, 1999). As with the neighborhood organizations studied by Chaskin (2003), we need to look at FBOs within their “broader ecology.” Second, a focus on individual FBOs does not fully reflect the new policy pressures. For if FBOs are to expand their capacity to deliver public services, to use their available resources more effectively, or to make their voices heard in public policy arenas, they, like other nonprofit and voluntary organizations, will have to consider maximizing their available resources by collaborating with other organizations (Mulroy & Shay, 1998; Stone, 2000). The need to consider collaborations across congregations and nonprofits of the same faith grouping becomes particularly apparent.

THIS ARTICLE

This article takes a step toward responding to the new policy and conceptual challenges by providing a description and analysis of a recent research initiative that had two distinguishing characteristics. First, it was conceived explicitly as a response to the changing policy environment for FBOs; the rising governmental interest in their service-providing role and the changing nature of governmental funding for such services. Second, the research initiative took a community-wide perspective; that is, it was grounded in a collective conceptualization of FBOs. The initiative was taken with respect to, and within, a single faith group, namely U.K. Jews.¹

We describe and analyze findings from this major research project, which was intended to facilitate the planning of service provision by Jewish organizations for the next 15 to 20 years. The project (officially titled Long Term Planning for the British Jewish Community [LTP]) broke new ground in moving beyond questions of planning by individual Jewish service-providing organizations; it aimed to encompass planning for all the organizations of the British Jewish community, that is, for the Jewish voluntary sector (JVS).²

In the following sections of the article, we explain briefly the background of the establishment of the LTP and outline some of its key findings about the opportunities and challenges facing the U.K. JVS. We build on the findings to discuss the lessons to be drawn from this kind of community-wide or collective approach to the planning of services within and across a faith group. Specifically, we look at implications for planning in the U.K. Jewish community itself and within other faith groups, for the research agenda on FBOs, and for public and social policy.

THE LTP PROJECT AND THE RESEARCH APPROACH

The current Jewish population of the United Kingdom is estimated to be in the region of 300,000, with two major concentrations of population in the southeast and northwest areas of England. This Jewish community is known to support nearly 2,000 financially independent organizations serving communal needs in various ways (Institute for Jewish Policy Research, 2003). Although many of these organizations composing the JVS (see Note 2) remain small and local, there are also several that employ hundreds of paid staff and volunteers. Many of the latter are the result of major growth and mergers within the JVS over the past 25 years in response to the changing needs of the Jewish community and the changing social policy role of the U.K. voluntary and nonprofit sector.

With funding and encouragement from Jewish philanthropists, infrastructure organizations, and major service-providing agencies, the LTP was established in 1997 as a 5-year project by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR).³ The initiative reflected an ongoing concern among the funders, providers, and users of Jewish service-providing agencies about apparent imbalances in the distribution of Jewish communal resources. It was felt that changes in the characteristics of the U.K. Jewish population and concurrent changes in U.K. public policy meant that there was a need to think more strategically about the future of the U.K. Jewish community. The overall aim of the LTP was to chronicle the current state of the JVS in the United Kingdom so that strategic planning decisions could, in the future, be guided by accurate information.

During the period 1997 to 2003, 10 research projects were commissioned and published by JPR. Some were intended to provide insights into a key issue currently affecting the Jewish community in the United Kingdom (e.g., care of the elderly or provision of Jewish day schools), some focused on matters of general concern to the JVS (e.g., funding or governance), and some were intended to provide demographic and sociological data on the Jewish community and/or the users of Jewish welfare and educational agencies. (Titles of the 10 LTP constituent reports are given in the appendix.) The findings of the 10 constituent reports were drawn together in an interim report. Volume 1 (Valins, 2003) provided a compendium of (mostly) quantitative descriptive

data about the characteristics of the Jewish population of the United Kingdom, the demand for services to meet needs, and the resources available to do so. Volume 2 (Harris & Hutchison, 2003) focused on broader issues and trends relevant to the U.K. Jewish community and drew out the key themes and issues that emerged from the 10 constituent reports taken as a whole.

The two volumes of the interim report were considered in detail by a panel of independent people selected by JPR because of their relevant knowledge of social policy, the Jewish community, or the British voluntary sector. JPR staff then drafted a final report of the LTP project that took into account the comments and suggestions of the advisory panel (Institute for Jewish Policy Research, 2003). The final report differed from all earlier reports prepared as part of the LTP in that it not only presented data on characteristics of the Jewish community and the issues facing it but also provided research-based recommendations for strategic planning of the whole JVS in the future.⁴

In the next two sections of this article, we outline the key opportunities and challenges found to be facing the U.K. JVS; opportunities and challenges that might be taken into account in planning for the future of both individual agencies and the JVS as a whole.⁵ The opportunities are summarized in Table 1 and the challenges in Table 2.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE U.K. JVS— FINDINGS FROM THE LTP RESEARCH REPORTS

VOLUNTEERING

The LTP research showed that existing volunteers display a strong commitment to the Jewish community as a whole, and to the particular cause or causes with which they are involved. The reports also showed that Jews, like members of other U.K. faith communities (Lukka et al., 2003) want to stay in touch with each other and with their religious, ethnic, and cultural roots. Identifying as Jewish occurs in a number of different ways and is not confined to attending religious events or being involved in welfare service provision.

Earlier research on volunteering among the general population in the United Kingdom indicated that the main route through which people become volunteers is friends and family and that the main reason why people do *not* volunteer is because they are not asked (Davis Smith, 1998). Taken together with the LTP study findings, this suggests, then, that the JVS has scope to capitalize on the strong sense of Jewish identity to secure a higher level and rate of volunteering.

FUNDING

Both the wider voluntary sector funding climate in the United Kingdom and the current funding situation for Jewish voluntary organizations offer

Table 1. Summary of Opportunities for the U.K. Jewish Voluntary Sector

<i>Area in Which Opportunities Exist</i>	<i>Nature of Opportunity</i>
Volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong commitment of volunteers to Jewish community Volunteers' commitment to particular causes/issues Desire for association (religious, ethnic, or cultural) and sense of identity among Jewish people
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income of U.K. Jewish voluntary sector substantially exceeds expenditure U.K. Jewish voluntary sector relatively wealthy compared with U.K. voluntary sector as a whole U.K. Jewish voluntary sector includes large number and range of funding bodies British Jews generous in their donations to U.K. Jewish causes U.K. Jewish voluntary sector not highly dependent on governmental funding Government funding programs for voluntary organizations willing to expand their role in public services
Services provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> U.K. government supports expanded role for voluntary sector in provision of public services U.K. government encourages specialist provision for minority groups U.K. government supports faith schools Geographical concentration of Jewish population facilitates economies of scale Community-based and domiciliary care for older people High levels of use of information and communication technologies media among Jewish people offers scope for providing services in new ways and meeting needs of those living away from main centers of population

positive opportunities for the JVS. Halfpenny and Reid's (2000) study for the LTP estimated that income, expenditure, and funds of the JVS were each about 3% of the income, expenditure, and funds of the whole U.K. voluntary sector—about 6 times more than might be expected given the size of the U.K. Jewish community compared with the population as a whole. They also noted the number and range of funding bodies for the JVS, with organizations that include resourcing functions making up 48% of the JVS. Around half the JVS's income from known sources comes from individuals (donors and purchasers of services). British Jews are very likely to make charitable donations, both to U.K. Jewish and generalist organizations and to Israeli causes, but are most likely to give to Jewish causes in the United Kingdom (Becher, Waterman, Kosmin, & Thomson, 2002).

Given this background of relatively high individual generosity and a high number of Jewish funding bodies as well as the relatively low dependence of Jewish voluntary and nonprofit organizations on governmental sources of funds (compared with the wider voluntary sector), Jewish organizations are

relatively well placed to set their own agendas and priorities independently of government. At the same time, governmental funding programs (including EU sources) are likely to continue to offer interesting opportunities for Jewish organizations wishing to take an increased role in provision of services such as education, long-term care, or social welfare generally.

SERVICES PROVISION

Like other parts of the U.K. voluntary sector, the JVS could benefit substantially, should it so chose, from the U.K. government's drive to encourage the voluntary and nonprofit sector to take on a more substantial role in the provision of public services and area-based special programs—with governmental funding available to support this. The JVS could also benefit from a complementarity between the needs of the Jewish community and trends in U.K. government policies with respect to faith-based communities and minority ethnic groups. There are clear trends in U.K. public policy to respond sensitively to the growing diversity of British society by not only encouraging social cohesion but also by providing services tailor-made for specific minority groupings. The fact that a large proportion of U.K. Jews live in physical proximity to other Jews is a further advantage; geographical concentration of need and demand for welfare services allows economies of scale to be achieved in service delivery.

The age structure of the Jewish population (about a quarter being older than 65), and its relative longevity, suggests that the demand for support services for the older population will continue to grow. Low birth rates among all but the ultra-Orthodox sections of the U.K. Jewish population, combined with rising female employment rates among Jews, further suggest that fewer family members will be available to provide care for their older relatives, possibly prompting further increased demand for organized services. The fact that people are living longer with moderate levels of illness or disability suggests that there may be a growing demand for domiciliary and other community-based services.

Further opportunities for services provision arise in relation to the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs). The LTP constituent reports indicated a high level of awareness and use of ICT media among the British Jewish population. This opens up a range of possibilities in terms of service provision, including the possibility of providing by other means services that do not absolutely require face-to-face contact, provision of Jewish education via the Internet for those not attending Jewish day schools, and responding more flexibly to the needs of young people. ICTs could also enable Jewish nonprofits to provide "virtual accessibility" to their services (Kenyon, Rafferty, & Lyons, 2003) to meet the challenges of providing services for those currently excluded from mainstream Jewish services because of their geographical location away from the main population concentrations of Jews.

CHALLENGES FOR THE U.K. JVS— FINDINGS FROM THE LTP RESEARCH REPORTS

Despite these many opportunities available to the JVS—many of which arise from complementarity between current government policies and current welfare needs of the U.K. Jews—formidable challenges for the future also emerge from the LTP studies.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Although there is evidence of a high commitment to the Jewish community among current volunteers and a general inclination of Jews to associate with other Jews, the nature of the current volunteer workforce of the JVS poses a number of challenges. The LTP reports indicate that Jewish volunteer-involving organizations have found it increasingly difficult to find new volunteers, especially among younger people. The age profile of the community suggests that problems may lie ahead in maintaining and developing a sufficiently large group of volunteers able to take on governance, fund-raising, and service provision roles. There is a particular challenge for organizations providing welfare services, because many volunteers and potential volunteers prefer to devote their available time and energy to Jewish arts, cultural, and educational activities. In the case of volunteer service on boards, the findings indicate that the increasing weight of governmental control and regulation of third-sector governance is a demotivating factor.

Recruiting suitably qualified Jewish staff is also proving problematic, especially in the fields of education and long-term care. Schools in London and the southeast of England have found it difficult to recruit Jewish studies and Hebrew teachers in particular (Valins, Kosmin, & Goldberg, 2001). For strictly Orthodox schools, there are even more complex challenges as gender segregation and the desire to cater separately for different sects dissipates resources.

Creating the Jewish ethos valued by so many users of Jewish voluntary sector provision is a challenge not only for schools but for providers of long-term care and other services such as day centers and sheltered housing. Valins (2002) notes that only 4% of staff working in JVS care homes in the United Kingdom are themselves Jewish.

FUNDING

Although the funding environment of the JVS currently looks relatively healthy, the future is less secure. The fact that the JVS receives a large proportion of its funding from individual donors is, in the short-term at least, a positive feature because it reflects lower dependence on governmental and corporate funding and the associated regulation and accountability demands. However, the constituent LTP reports raise questions as to whether the level of

Table 2. Summary of Challenges for U.K. Jewish Voluntary Sector (JVS)

<i>Area in Which Challenges Exist</i>	<i>Nature of Challenge</i>
Human resources	Recruiting new volunteers, especially younger people Competing for volunteers within JVS Recruiting suitably qualified Jewish staff, especially for education and long-term care Creating and maintaining a "Jewish ethos" in organizations with few Jewish paid staff Volunteer board members deterred by external regulation and legal responsibilities
Funding	Maintaining current levels of individual donations as older generations of Jews die Sustaining funding base in the face of reduced legacies Sustaining contributions from Jewish grant-making trusts Retaining independence while in receipt of government funding
Service provision	In education: meeting high aspirations of Jewish parents in relation to academic standards and quality of teaching In education: providing services for children with special needs In education: meeting needs of children who live outside the main centers of Jewish population Demonstrating to government the effectiveness and legitimacy of specifically Jewish schools Ascertaining future need and demand for Jewish care services in later life Assessing appropriate means of providing long-term care, e.g., in collaboration with other providers, opening up services to non-Jews Providing services to Jews outside the main centers of Jewish population Providing services for those people identifying as Jews culturally or ethnically but not religiously Meeting needs in new ways

individual donations can be maintained as older generations of Jews die. The following generations will not necessarily retain the same level of commitment to exclusively Jewish philanthropic activity. And it seems likely that legacies will decrease in numbers and amounts as older people are required by changing governmental policies to spend their life savings on their own care in later life. Another challenge is presented by the finding that although grant-making trusts (foundations) make up a substantial proportion of the totality of the JVS, they do not necessarily direct their funding to areas of greatest need, to mainstream Jewish groupings, or even to exclusively U.K. or Jewish organizations.

SERVICES PROVISION

A number of challenges present themselves in relation to the service-providing role of the JVS; some specific to particular fields of work and others more general.

As regards provision of Jewish education, the problem of recruiting suitable day school staff has already been mentioned. The LTP reports indicate further challenges in this area including meeting Jewish parents' high aspirations, especially in relation to academic standards and quality of teaching. More broadly, there are challenges of meeting the education needs of children who have special needs and/or who live outside the main geographical areas of Jewish population. Also, the data suggest, there will be an ongoing external challenge of demonstrating the effectiveness and legitimacy of specifically Jewish schools within the spectrum of faith-based schools and the wider U.K. educational sector.

Those responsible for planning the long-term care of older Jewish people are also faced with a number of uncertainties, not least the difficulties of ascertaining people's future care preferences. These difficulties are further complicated by demographic changes such as increasing numbers of marriages of Jews to non-Jews, the rise in rates of divorce and single parenthood among the Jewish population, and a steady decline in the overall size of the Jewish U.K. population.

While provision of education and long-term care poses especial challenges to planners, the issues that arise also reflect strategic challenges affecting service provision *across* the whole JVS. One of the most significant of these is the implication of population dispersal: how best to provide services to Jewish people living outside the main concentrations of Jews in the southeast and northwest of England. Strategic challenges to service providers are also posed by a sociologically distinctive feature of U.K. Jewry. In the U.K. population as a whole there is a high incidence of "believing without belonging" (Davie, 1994), that is, a low level of attachment to organized religion even though a high proportion of the population claims to believe in a supernatural being. The Jewish community differs from this in that its pattern can loosely be termed "belonging without believing," that is, a substantial proportion of those who identify as Jews join synagogues but many of them do not regard themselves as religious in outlook. What kinds of organizations and services, then, are appropriate for these Jews who identify culturally and/or ethnically with other Jews but who are at best indifferent to religious values and possibly antagonistic to them? The LTP constituent reports show that current service provision is heavily dominated by Jewish *religious* norms (e.g., adherence to dietary laws and strict public observance of the Sabbath). This is now challenged by findings about the secular outlook of many Jews as well as by findings about changing demographics such as rising numbers of non-Jewish partners of Jews, rising numbers of children of mixed partnerships, and rising proportions of self-identifying Jews who are not affiliated with synagogues or any other formal Jewish organizations.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE LTP FOR PLANNING IN THE JVS

The overall aim of the LTP was to chronicle the current state of the U.K. JVS so that strategic planning decisions could, in the future, be guided by accurate information and analysis. To what extent have these aims been achieved? And have there been additional benefits and lessons from the LTP for the U.K. Jewish community?

The LTP generated a plethora of research data which has value in its own right for the managers and leaders of *individual agencies* as they plan their future activities and services provision and develop their organizational policies. Indeed, the comprehensive data now available about the characteristics of the Jewish community and the financial and human resources available to it is already enabling individual Jewish organizations to move beyond anecdote and the preferences of governmental and philanthropic funders to develop policies grounded in research-based evidence about welfare needs and consumer preferences. For example, the range of reasons for the choice of Jewish schools by parents is now known, as are preferences for care in old age and the reasons why Jewish people volunteer for board service.

Beyond this contribution to planning and policy making within individual nonprofits, the LTP findings also offer a unique opportunity to make an informed assessment of the opportunities and challenges facing the U.K. JVS as a whole. By taking a wide perspective on the U.K. Jewish community and its services and by setting its research within the context of the broader U.K. voluntary sector and social policy, the LTP has brought to light some key trends, features, and opportunities that would have been unlikely to surface from one-off microlevel studies. For example, it is now apparent that Jewish voluntary organizations could deliver services more efficiently by taking advantage of high population concentrations in some areas, but, at the same time, there is an emerging question of how to deliver services to those Jews who are geographically dispersed. Also more apparent in the light of the LTP is the changing nature of consumer expectations and demand in relation to Jewish welfare and education services.

Thus, an informed basis for strategic visioning and planned change on a subsectoral basis has been established. And by providing, for the first time, a set of research-based recommendations for the sector as a whole, the LTP final report (Institute for Jewish Policy Research, 2003) gives the Jewish community a firm foundation for an evidence-based debate about its future deployment of resources and allocation of priorities.

Taken together, the LTP research findings suggest a plethora of opportunities and challenges facing the JVS and suggest a range of difficult but crucial strategic questions. It seems, for example, that new thinking is urgently needed about the methods through which British Jewry delivers services to itself. Traditionally, there has been heavy investment in buildings and staff as a response to found need, but the findings from the LTP studies suggest that other ways of meeting social and welfare needs for the Jewish community

could now be considered; for example, services delivered at a distance using ICTs, community-based services, and intermediate-level services such as respite care, sheltered accommodation, and supplementary education. New thinking may also be required about meeting the welfare and educational needs of the large proportion of Jews who identify as such but who do not see themselves as religious.

When the research findings about the JVS and the Jewish population of the United Kingdom are considered within the context of social policy trends—as the LTP was able to do—it becomes apparent that there are important complementarities between the needs of the U.K. Jewish population and the governmental policy agenda in relation to matters such as delivery of public services, specialist services for minorities, and faith-based education. The LTP findings thus open up the possibility of the JVS taking a more proactive approach to innovation and pioneering new forms of provision using governmental and EU funding sources.

If the LTP findings provide a firm foundation on which the Jewish community can now take a strategic approach to the future development of the JVS, they also provide pointers to the possible obstacles to a strategic planning approach. For such an approach would require some kind of consensus and a willingness for individuals and groups within the Jewish community to cooperate with each other. Yet, the LTP findings point to a high degree of fragmentation and competition within the current JVS. Ways will need to be found to achieve greater cooperation, information sharing, resource pooling, and collaboration between individual voluntary organizations. Possibilities suggested by the LTP studies include collaborations between Jewish and non-Jewish voluntary organizations engaged in similar areas of activity, collaborations between voluntary and for-profit organizations and voluntary and governmental organizations meeting similar needs, and establishment of Jewish network or infrastructure organizations to share information, achieve economies in bulk purchasing, and/or lobby governmental agencies.

Even supposing that the barriers to strategic planning on a community-wide basis can be overcome, there will remain issues about the sustainability of such an approach. For a further challenge to the U.K. Jewish community, following the LTP, is to build on the investment already made and to develop a bank of intelligence about Jewish voluntary organizations and the needs and wants of the U.K. Jewish population. The LTP, extensive though it was, was only able to address some of the gaps in existing knowledge. Moreover, the information it yielded are a “snapshot in time” that will need constant updating if it is to remain useful to planners in the future. In addition to basic statistical and attitudinal data, there is an ongoing need among policy makers and planners for evidence about what works as a means of responding to the needs and wishes of contemporary Jewry. Because developing and maintaining a data bank of this kind is a largely invisible investment, it is not one that is obviously attractive to philanthropic or governmental funders.

LESSONS FOR OTHER FBOs AND FAITH GROUPINGS

The LTP provides a number of lessons for other faith groups contemplating a community-wide approach to planning services provision. First, we would note the political, practical, and financial challenge of collecting sufficient relevant data to facilitate planning for a whole faith community, and then maintaining and updating the databases. The key sources of data on faith groupings and members of faith organizations are the myriad of (generally small) organizations that together make up a subsector. The LTP process indicated that reaching a high proportion of such organizations and obtaining cooperation such that valid data are obtained can be a challenge in its own right, especially for smaller faith groups that lack established and centralized mechanisms for collecting, analyzing, and updating data about local congregations and groups.

Beyond this, there is the challenge posed by the *range* of data that ideally is needed as a base for strategic planning. The LTP was concerned with a faith community that is estimated to encompass little more than 300,000 people and it included 10 major research projects conducted over 5 years. It focused on what were hypothesized at the outset to be key topics, including, for example, governance, care of elderly people, and financial resources. All the same, it had neither the funding nor the time to collect data about some key aspects of the U.K. Jewish community. For example, only limited data were obtained on volunteers and paid staff, and no information was obtained on adult learners or those with special educational needs. It was fortunate that in the case of the U.K. Jewish community, there was some earlier research that could be drawn upon for LTP purposes to mitigate the impact of the knowledge gaps. There is also some expectation that the success of the LTP will encourage further investment in planning-relevant research in the future. Other faith communities may not be so fortunate. Certainly, the problem of finding funding to develop the evidence base needed for community-wide policy making and planning is set to endure because the philanthropists of faith communities generally favor funding tangible services rather than research infrastructure.

In addition to these lessons about the research process for community-wide planning, the LTP findings also offer some lessons and ideas that could be useful to other faith communities. For example, the findings draw attention to the way in which the agendas of faith groups and governments can complement each other such that governmental funding is available for programs that are actually a priority for FBOs themselves. The findings also raise the possibility that faith groups might benefit from economies of scale when their adherents are geographically concentrated and also find innovative ways of reaching adherents who are geographically isolated from each other.

Finally, by providing comprehensive research data on a single faith community in one country, the LTP opens up the possibility that other minority faith groupings might conduct similar exercises. Conducting community-wide planning exercises will enable faith groups to develop their own assessments of their welfare and educational needs rather than simply reacting to governmental

initiatives and pressures. Moreover, if conducted by several faith groupings, such exercises would enable commonalities in opportunities and challenges to be identified, and this, in turn, would provide a basis to explore cross-faith cooperation in the delivery of welfare and education services.

QUESTIONS ARISING FROM THE LTP ABOUT RESEARCH-BASED COMMUNITY-WIDE PLANNING

We noted above the practical, political, and financial challenges posed by attempts such as the LTP to collect community-wide data on one small faith group as a precursor to community-wide planning. A number of further questions and challenges are raised by the findings and process of the LTP.

One question concerns the very concept of service planning as applied to faith-based organizations and groupings. That is, what is the rationale for planning in a faith community to be research based or evidence based in the way that the LTP was? The idea of research-based or evidence-based policy and planning derives from secular social sciences, and it has been heavily promoted by the new Labour government in the United Kingdom as part of its agenda of modernizing government (Nutley & Webb, 2000). But how far is this kind of approach to establishing priorities and envisioning the future applicable to faith groupings? They have their own long-standing traditional practices and norms (Salipante & Golden-Biddle, 1995), they have special views of charity and philanthropy (Stauber, 2001), and they also have traditional and charismatic leaders whose viewpoints are widely respected. Any or all of these might suggest priorities for services and resource allocation that differ from those emerging from a research-based exercise grounded in secular social sciences. How are such differences to be reconciled or resolved? Do views about policy and priorities grounded in religious tradition take precedence over those grounded in research findings and market research? Or is the evidence from research studies to be treated as a greater truth? For example, in a faith tradition that gives very high priority to caring for elderly people, how is a choice to be made about priority service focus if research evidence suggests that the various educational needs of the faithful are more pressing and more resource intensive, or if research suggests that there is strong consumer demand for priority to be given to cultural and social activities? In short, the argument in favor of research-based planning cannot be taken for granted in a faith context.

A second challenge raised by the LTP experience is how to move from the collection of data to planning, action, and change. This conundrum is not confined to the faith context. It has long been the subject of debate among practice-oriented scholars of policy and administration and no solution has yet been found (Barrett & Fudge, 1981; Deacon & Mann, 1999; Hart & Bond, 1995). For despite the enthusiasm of some politicians to see social scientists at the heart of policy making and giving views about what works and why (Blunkett, 2000),

research data do not, in fact, lead inevitably to policy solutions or recommendations. Research in and about nonprofit organizations and human needs can provide information and perspectives and it can show “where the shoe is pinching”; that is, it can point to problems and issues that seem to require attention by policy makers and planners. But the move from there to recommendations for planning and action requires the application of values and principles (Bryson, 1995; Fischer, 2003). A range of possible responses has to be generated, demands of a range of stakeholders have to be attended to, and choices have to be made between competing priorities and needs. When the objective is community-wide planning rather than planning for individual service providers, the problem of moving from data to action is compounded. Within a fragmented faith community the chances of reaching any kind of agreement seems even more remote.

Faith communities contain within them a range of theological and ideological perspectives on how best to meet human needs (Jeavons, 1994; Loewenberg, 1995). They also have a range of stakeholders—individuals and groups who can place a claim on them. Are these multiple perspectives and stakeholders to be acknowledged, as nonprofit and other strategic planning literature suggests they should be (e.g., Bigelow, Stone, & Arndt, 1996; Bryson, 1995; Mintzberg, 1994)? Are the differences and competing viewpoints and claims to be openly debated or are some views to be censored? Is an attempt to be made to reach some common understanding or consensus? (Doing so is itself a principle of faith within some religious groupings and is also highly recommended in the nonprofit strategic planning literature.) Or are recommendations to be made and decisions reached by other means such as by spiritual leaders, secular leaders, major philanthropists, or infrastructure bodies? In short, whose values, views, and needs are finally to prevail when not all stakeholders can be satisfied and when difficult resource decisions must be made?

As regards the LTP process, the JPR has struggled with the practical implications of these theoretical questions about research-based planning and its implementation in the Jewish community context. As a think tank within the U.K. Jewish community, it can command the support of a fairly wide range (theologically and ideologically speaking) of leaders and philanthropists. But it cannot enforce consensus or implementation. Instead, it has tried to build wide support for its recommendations on LTP in a number of ways:

- (a) By ensuring that all recommendations are clearly grounded in research findings;
- (b) By seeking advice on the research findings and their implications from independent experts from within and outside the Jewish community; and
- (c) By encouraging debate on the research findings and related recommendations through publications, meetings, and seminars.

This approach combines evidence-based practice with sensitivity to multiple stakeholders—in line, incidentally, with best practice in secular policy making and planning. It remains to be seen whether the approach will prove to be acceptable and implementable within the context of the Jewish community in the United Kingdom.

CONCEPTUAL ISSUES RAISED BY THE LTP

At the start of this article, we argued that it was time to move beyond an individualized conceptualization of FBOs. In the light of the current policy pressures on FBOs to deliver public services, we argued that we also need to see them collectively, as embedded in networks and communities comprising, for example, other local nonprofits, other FBOs, and, especially, other organizations of their own faith grouping. What lessons, then, does the LTP offer about the usefulness and appropriateness of a collective conceptualization of faith-based service providers?

First, the LTP experience suggests that a collective conceptualization can open up practical benefits for FBOs themselves. For individual FBOs, there is the benefit of seeing their own organizational challenges within the context of a broader collectivity of organizations that not only share a similar organizational environment but also have at least some similar features to themselves. Problems formerly thought to be unique to one organization can be revealed as common across a faith community and perhaps, therefore, open to communal solutions. (In the case of the LTP, this applied to the question of volunteer and paid staff recruitment, for example.) And new opportunities can also be revealed; possibilities for interorganizational collaborations, for example, or new ways of thinking about fund-raising and resource allocations. These factors have the potential to make faith-based service providers, individually and collectively, better able to respond, if they so wish, to the current policy pressures.

At the same time as pointing to the practical benefits of a collective conceptualization of FBOs, we should also note that the LTP provides some lessons and warnings for researchers. We found that the analytical work entailed in synthesizing disparate data drawn from multiple sources—a task that is implied by any research focused on a faith community rather than individual FBOs—posed formidable intellectual and methodological challenges. We had, in effect, to “invent” a collective conceptualization of Jewish FBOs or a U.K. JVS, a process recalling Hall’s (1992) argument about the invention of the U.S. nonprofit sector. In our case, our invention was achieved through the process of synthesizing disparate data and by looking across it to envisage a Jewish community or a JVS that was more than, and distinct from, the sum of its parts. As has been pointed out by social theorists (e.g., Beck, 1992; Giddens,

1990), this is a common role for social researchers in contemporary society: They do not just reflect the social world, they also construct it as a knowable object for intervention. Yet, engaging in this kind of reflexivity is challenging and time-consuming for researchers and equally challenging for practitioners who have to come to terms with a new way of understanding their work environment.

PUBLIC AND SOCIAL POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND ISSUES

The context for this article was provided by the growing public policy interest in both the United States and the United Kingdom in the contribution that FBOs can and might make to providing welfare and other public services. What light, then, is shed on these policy trends by the process and findings of the LTP?

The fact that the U.K. Jewish community found the will and resources to conduct a major exercise such as the LTP as a precursor to taking a strategic overview of its service provision will provide encouragement to policy makers who favor an expanded role for faith groups in public services provision. In the case of this one faith group, at least, there seemed to be a willingness to respond positively to the prevailing public policy agenda. Moreover, the form of the LTP suggests a rational and managerialist approach that aims to use available resources effectively and to meet consumer needs responsively. The findings of the LTP exercise are also encouraging to public policy makers in that taken as a whole, they suggest that at least one faith group has the organizational capacity to respond positively to the changing public policy environment and the funding opportunities it offers. Moreover, that group appears to see a complementarity between its own interests and aspirations and the policy agenda of government in relation to public services provision and specialist services for minorities.

At the same time as the LTP offers encouragement to current policy makers, its findings are remarkable in that they reflect very little skepticism about the governmental policy agenda. Among the myriad of challenges facing the JVS identified by those consulted by the researchers, there was little mention of the possible costs to Jewish organizations or to the wider JVS of a closer relationship with government and its policy agenda—even though there is now clear evidence from British research that involvement in the provision of public services and receipt of governmental funding on a large scale can rapidly erode the autonomy of partner voluntary organizations (Balloch & Taylor, 2002; Lewis, 1999).

We can only speculate on the reasons why little concern was expressed in any of the LTP reports about such threats. The comments of the experts consulted by JPR prior to the drafting of the LTP final report suggested that the U.K. JVS is widely seen externally as exemplary as regards quality of service provision. Such a view may have shielded the Jewish subsector so far from

experiencing the full impact of the more draconian monitoring and accountability systems accompanying governmental funding to the nonprofit sector. Or it may be that the leadership and management of the U.K. JVS is dominated by entrepreneurs who feel that the benefits of governmental funding, and the opportunities it provides for growth and expansion, far outweigh any possible negative impacts in terms of loss of organizational autonomy.

Whatever the reason for the apparent willingness of the JVS to embrace the new policy agenda, it seems that it will fall to academic commentators in the future to point out the need for faith groups to be aware of the possible costs of responding uncritically to the current policy pressures to accept an expanded role in public services provision. Thus, although governmental funding opportunities are likely to increase for those organizations able to address the specific needs of faith and minority ethnic communities, we know from other research into the government/nonprofit relationship (e.g., Brown & Moore, 2001; Frumkin & Andre-Clark, 2000; Harris, 1998a; Smith & Lipsky, 1993) that faith organizations that choose to benefit from these opportunities will face the challenge of retaining their independence—their freedom to appoint their own board members, to decide for themselves which needs are most pressing, to determine how those needs can best be met, and to recover the full costs of services they provide under contract to governmental agencies. Moreover, taking an expanded role in the provision of public services may be at the expense of their ability to identify new needs, to meet needs in specialist ways, or to provide services exclusively for their own faith adherents or according to traditional religious principles.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

In sum, it can be said that the LTP process produced immediate practical benefits for the planners and providers of Jewish services in the United Kingdom. It demonstrated the many challenges facing the JVS, but it also showed how many opportunities it has before it in a public policy climate that is largely sympathetic to services provision by faith-based nonprofits. In addition, the LTP offered lessons for other faith communities that might wish to consider conducting similar exercises in community-wide planning of services.

Beyond these immediate implications for practice, the LTP provides lessons for scholars of public policy about, for example, the realities of implementing evidence-based planning and about reconciling the views of competing stakeholders in services planning. It also suggests some further questions to be explored by future researchers. What, for example, are the factors that drive FBOs and other third-sector organizations to collaborate with each other for the purposes of planning services? And how are views formulated within faith communities and other subsectors about the extent to which they wish to accept a role as providers of public services? The LTP offers an extensive case

study of services planning across one faith community in one country. Future research will tell us whether the approaches and experiences of the U.K. Jewish community are applicable to other faith communities and other potential providers of public services.

Appendix

Institute for Jewish Policy Research Constituent Reports

- Becher, H., Waterman, S., Kosmin, B., & Thomson, K. (2002). *A portrait of Jews in London and the south-east: A community study*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.
- Halfpenny, P., & Reid, M. (2000). *The financial resources of the U.K. Jewish voluntary sector*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.
- Harris, M. (1997). *The Jewish voluntary sector in the United Kingdom: Its role and its future*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.
- Harris, M., & Rochester, C. (2001). *Governance in the Jewish voluntary sector*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.
- Schlesinger, E. (2000). *Grant-making trusts in the Jewish sector*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.
- Schlesinger, E. (2003). *Creating community and accumulating social capital: Jews associating with other Jews in Manchester*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.
- Valins, O., Kosmin, B., & Goldberg, J. (2001). *The future of Jewish schooling in the United Kingdom*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.
- Valins, O. (2002). *Facing the future: The provision of long-term care facilities for older Jewish people in the United Kingdom*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.
- Valins, O., & Kosmin, B. (2002). *The Jewish day school marketplace: The attitudes of Jewish parents in greater London and the south east towards formal education*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.
- Waterman, S. (2002). *The Leeds Jewish community survey*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.
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Notes

1. For the purposes of this article, we take Jews to constitute one of the many faith communities or faith groups within the United Kingdom. Our conceptualization of Jews as a faith group is itself open to debate because many who identify themselves as Jewish do not consider themselves to be religious and because Jews can also be conceptualized, additionally or alternatively, as an ethnic grouping (Becher, Waterman, Kosmin, & Thomson, 2002). However, the conceptualization of Jews as a faith group is sufficiently widely accepted to make it appropriate for purposes, as here, of discussing public policy and related issues (see also Harris, Halfpenny, & Rochester, 2003).

2. It is common in the United Kingdom to understand the totality of the nonprofit or voluntary sector as containing within it a number of subsectors. Thus, Butt (2002) discusses the United Kingdom's "Black and minority voluntary sector," and Smith (2003) refers to the "faith sector" as a subset of the U.K. voluntary sector. It is also common in the United Kingdom for Jews to refer to themselves as a "community."

3. The Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) is an independent think tank that informs and influences policy, opinion, and decision making on social, political, and cultural issues affecting

U.K. Jewish life. Its current programs focus not only on planning of Jewish services (as in this article) but also on Jewish culture, Israel, and civil society matters. Further details are at www.jpr.org.uk

4. For the purposes of the Project on Long Term Planning for the British Jewish Community (LTP), the British Jewish community and the British Jewish voluntary sector (JVS) were conceptualized according to Harris (1997) as comprising a range of voluntary organizations including social welfare agencies that provide care services, membership associations and clubs, self-help and mutual aid groups, synagogues and confederations of synagogues, fund-raising charities, grant-making trusts, educational institutions including schools and museums, housing associations, pressure groups and advocacy groups, ad hoc consultative or event-organizing groups, and umbrella, intermediary, and representative bodies. The prime focus of LTP was those organizations that provide services to British Jews, although the various research reports also investigated factors concerning the future of Jewish membership organizations, fund-raising organizations, grant-making bodies, and advocacy and representational groupings.

5. A more detailed synthesis and analysis of the data and findings contained in the 10 constituent reports, set within the broader context of trends in the U.K. voluntary sector and in U.K. social policy, can be found in Harris and Hutchison (2003).

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