A STUDY OF THE VALUE OF JEWISH HISTORY KNOWLEDGE IN JEWISH COMMUNAL PROFESSIONS

By

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Abstract

Little research exists on Jewish communal professionals' level of Jewish history knowledge and its importance to their jobs. This thesis aims to fill that scholarly gap through interviews with program directors from eight Jewish professional Master's programs, an examination of the history course offerings for each of the programs, and a survey that measured self-selected Jewish communal professionals' knowledge of Jewish history and how valuable it is to their careers.

Survey respondents demonstrated an average level of Jewish history knowledge, with greater than fifty percent "passing" the quiz. Though program directors and respondents asserted that modern Jewish history, American Jewish history, and the history of Israel were the most important elements of Jewish history for communal professionals, quiz takers did not answer questions related to those fields correctly at a higher rate than questions on other aspects of Jewish history. It was also expected that respondents with a certificate or master's degree from a Jewish professional program would have a greater level of Jewish history knowledge and perceive that knowledge to be more valuable to them, but this only held true for respondents with a degree or certificate in Jewish nonprofit management. The sole discrepancy among communal professionals in terms of their levels of Jewish history knowledge and the perceived value of that knowledge was between CEOs and development professionals.

Though the survey's sample population was rather small, the data concluded that history *is* important for Jewish communal professionals—but only to an extent. Knowledge of Jewish history helps frame their work as professionals, and understanding major trends in Jewish history can aid in problem solving. However, the survey data showed that knowing Jewish history plays

a greater role in enhancing their Jewish identity and connecting them with the global Jewish community than it does in advancing their career

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Finally, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to my research. The program directors shared invaluable insights about history's place in the field of Jewish communal service, and the responses of everyone who took the survey helped me gain a better understanding of the importance of Jewish history. History has been my passion since I was a young child, and I feel blessed to have had the opportunity to study the history of my community from such a unique perspective.

Introduction

Throughout my education, history has consistently been my favorite subject. I found myself in agreement with the notion that understanding the past plays a critical role in ensuring a vibrant future, and my personal experience attests to the fact that history can also facilitate students' connections with their community and enhance their sense of identity. When I began my career as a Jewish communal professional, I lacked any kind of formal Jewish training. I came into the graduate program in Jewish Nonprofit Management at Hebrew Union College without having taken a single Jewish studies course in my adult life. I had gone on Birthright and was active in Hillel but had no other significant connections to the Jewish community from my childhood onward. One of the first courses I took upon entering the program was an introduction to Jewish history, and it was instrumental in helping me foster a deeper connection with my Jewish community and my personal Jewish identity. The history classes I took as part of the program were by far some of my all-time favorite courses.

At the beginning of my second year in the program, the school was considering the value of these history courses relative to other subjects. In particular, the administration was contemplating discontinuing one of the history courses to make room for something else more directly related to leading a nonprofit organization. This proposal elicited a visceral response in me, and I began to realize the true impact that history courses had in framing my Jewish identity and determining my overall career choice. Ultimately, it prompted me to undertake this study of the value of Jewish history knowledge within the Jewish communal service field.

As such, this study focuses on Jewish history as something distinct from other forms of Jewish living and learning, such as religious practice or cultural customs. Jewish history is often lumped together with these types of Jewish knowledge, but this should not necessarily be the

case. Having an understanding of Jewish history is different from, for instance, being able to name what goes on a Seder plate, knowing the components of a Jewish wedding ceremony, or speaking Hebrew. For many Jews today, understanding Jewish history is the most basic and accessible form of Jewish knowledge. Compared to traditional religious practices with which one may not agree, Jewish history can function as a more significant link to one's Jewishness and fellow Jews. While some scholars and thinkers have lamented the ways in which Jews' turn to history often involved the abandonment of traditional beliefs and ritual observances, it is undeniable that Jews in the modern era view Jewish history as a major factor in who they are.

Before a study of the importance of Jewish history knowledge in communal professions can commence, it is worthwhile to determine what exactly is meant by Jewish history knowledge. History can most simply be defined as the study of past events (http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/history). But knowing the dates and details of significant happenings is only part of what history entails; it is also an understanding of big-picture themes and the way life used to be. In the case of Jewish history, one must also consider whether to include religious traditions and practices. For the purposes of this study, knowing history is an understanding of the basic facts and themes about important junctures in time, such as the destruction of the First and Second Temples, the Holocaust, and major developments in the Reform movement. As such, the questions contained in the quiz portion of the survey research ask respondents to identify particular people, places, and ideas.

And what actually constitutes a Jewish communal professional? The Jewish professional world is exceedingly complex, containing a variety of professional categories with a multitude of backgrounds and varying levels of Jewish involvement. Therefore, it is important to first establish what types of professionals this research aims to study. In this day and age, the lines

between different organizations— and even between different Jewish denominations —have become blurred, but for the purposes of this study, "Jewish communal professionals" will be limited to those individuals who work for a nonprofit organization that is committed to Jewish values or works with the Jewish community. These organizations range from federations and hospitals to cultural and advocacy organizations. It should be noted that this study excludes clergy and day school teachers but will include other administrative staff from synagogues and day schools. These two types of professionals are excluded because their work requires a deeper knowledge of Jewish history than that of a professional in most other positions. Additionally, all levels of seniority are included in this study in order to paint a fuller picture of the professional community. In the end, everyone included in this research worked for a non-profit organization and self-selected as Jewish communal professionals.

Through discussions with program directors of Jewish communal graduate programs across the country it became clear that some level of Jewish history knowledge is important and necessary for successful Jewish professionals. An understanding of Jewish history can help ground professionals in Jewish life and experiences. Dr. Jonathan Sarna, the Director of the Jewish Professional Leadership program at Brandeis University, for example, talked at great length about the value of history as a tool to teach young professionals about what has been done in the past and how to improve on it. The consensus of the program directors interviewed for this project was that some basic level of history knowledge was imperative. But even more so, they hoped that their students would see the value in history and know how to access historical information when needed.

In order to help shed light on the particular value of Jewish history knowledge in the field of Jewish communal service, I will answer the following research questions:

1. What is the level of Jewish history knowledge among Jewish communal professionals?

2. What is the perceived value of Jewish history knowledge in the Jewish communal field?

3. Is the level of knowledge and its perceived usefulness affected by a professionals' position or the organization that they work for?

4. Do professionals with an educational background in any type of Jewish studies have a greater level of Jewish history knowledge and perceive that knowledge to be more useful to them in their careers?

Literature Review

There is almost no published research on the topic of history and its impact on communal service professionals, Jewish or otherwise. The research that has been done on the importance of learning history in general is much more theoretical and not tied to any empirical analysis. Therefore, there is clearly a gap that my research can begin to fill. For decades, the Jewish community has been quite vocal about their need for specially trained professionals who have an understanding of the Jewish community, as well as the know-how to successfully run an organization. However, none of the existing research specifically singles out an understanding of Jewish history as being critical to an individual's ability to be successful in the Jewish professional world.

The following sections cover the most valuable literature I came across regarding the general significance of history, Jewish or otherwise, as well as the specific importance of Jewish history education for Jewish communal professionals. Most historians unsurprisingly conclude that there is great value in studying the past, and many find that it contributes to shaping identity as well as many other components of an individual's life. That valuation is not universally

positive, however, as there are also scholars who have highlighted the ways in which the study of Jewish history has supplanted traditional modes of connecting Jews to their past and their community. Overall, though, there is a general sentiment that while history can be beneficial, it is not the be-all, end-all connector of people, communities, and cultures. And while research expresses a need for Jewish communal professionals to be trained Jewishly, most scholars do not single out history as being more or less important than other types of Judaic knowledge.

The Importance of Studying History

> *We live our lives; we tell our stories. The dead continue to live by way of the resurrection we give them in telling their stories. The past becomes part of our present and thereby part of our future. We act individually and collectively in a process over time which builds the human enterprise and tries to give it meaning. Being human means thinking and feeling; it means reflecting on the past and visioning into the future. We experience; we give voice to that experience; others reflect on it and give it new form. That new form, in its turn, influences and shapes the way next generations experience their lives. That is why history matters.*
>
> *- Gerda Lerner, Why History Matters*

Jewish American historian Gerda Lerner beautifully sums up the value in studying history for all people across the world. It also applies to Jewish communal professionals, but I will start with history's value for the general population, which has been addressed for thousands of years in multitudes of communities. Why is it important to know where we came from or understand the past? Most scholars of the subject maintain that history is a valuable educational component because it can help create a sense of identity and connect our past with our future, but some are less sanguine about the benefits of history. Both views will be discussed in the following section to give a rounded picture of history and its place in society.

Roy Rosenzweig, who was an American historian at George Mason University and the founder of the Center for History and New Media, took an interpersonal approach to the value of studying history. In his book *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*, which won awards from the Center for Historic Preservation and the American Association for State and Local History, Rosenzweig and his colleagues conducted interviews with Americans across the country to learn how they interact with and view history in their daily lives. The people that he spoke with talked about how the past and history aided them in building relationships. One woman lost her brother several years prior to the interview but still connected with him on a daily basis by writing letters to her deceased sibling detailing what was going on in her life and with her kids (Rosenzweig 40). Rosenzweig also wrote about how people revisited experiences from their past to help them understand how they came to be the way they currently are (Rosenzweig 45). On a broader scale, local and global events can be transformative and help shape the identities of those that live through them. One final point that Rosenzweig made in support of studying history is that people use history to avoid forgetting the past (Rosenzweig 60). Ultimately, these ways by which people use history to connect to their identities effectively create a continuum that goes from a personal or local connection (as in the case of the woman and her deceased brother) to a more national or global connection, such as the way that schoolchildren are taught stories about America's founding fathers or Jews worldwide commemorate *Yom HaShoah.*

Beverley Southgate, Reader Emeritus in History of Ideas at the University of Hertfordshire in the United Kingdom, discussed the value of studying history in terms of its practical applications. He wrote that the reasons to study history fall into two main categories: the "professed purposes" and the "hidden agenda." One professed purpose is the very practical

idea that studying history can provide students with transferable skills that can be used in the "real world." He cited a need for this justification because of the pressure put on humanities teachers to justify their subjects as meaningful and useful for students. He claimed that studying history can teach pupils how to analyze and synthesize data, as well as enhance written and oral communication skills. Additionally, Southgate repeated the argument of Bernard Williams, who argued that history helps people relate to others' needs; being told the story of our past can enable us to be more sympathetic (Southgate 38). Other "professed purposes" of history include history being used to dispel myths and history being marshaled either in support of or against theological claims. Finally, knowing and studying history may be an obligation to our dead, as many believe that we have a duty to remember them and what they stood for. On the other hand, the study of history can be used to support nefarious visions and "hidden agendas." Southgate used the example of Germany and Adolf Hitler, whose *Mein Kampf* utilized history to promote anti-Semitism and the aims of the Nazi party (Southgate 65). The study of history can thus be employed towards both good and bad ends. It can be used to instill positive and supportive visions of one's culture, or it can be deployed to advance injurious causes. History, then, can have many purposes.

In *What is the Use of Jewish History?* historian Lucy Dawidowicz used her own story of being an American Jew and historian during the Holocaust to examine modern Jewish history and peoples' connections to it. Writing in 1990, Dawidowicz wrote that history and studying the past "teach us how to confront the present and anticipate the future." (Dawidowicz 4) Dawidowicz cited the arguments of many famous Jewish historians, including Simon Dubnow and Yitzhak Baer, and used the former's notion of the "lachrymose" conception of Jewish history to suggest how a visceral feeling of the need to survive guides Jews actions in the present

(Dawidowicz 19). She additionally argued that history is used to celebrate, legitimate, and validate cultures around the world. This is certainly true for the Jewish community, but it also applies to other groups that use their history to celebrate their culture or nation through holidays and other commemorative events or practices. A people's history is part of what binds them together and makes them distinct from other groups.

Salo Baron, the most noted Jewish historian of his generation and the first Jew to have a professorship in Jewish history at any university, in a 1938 article about Jewish history and its value, wrote that "it is precisely the elasticity of history which makes its lessons so easily applicable to new situations and establishes its position...as an applied social science whose lessons are of practical significance" (Baron 219). Baron dissected how history is shaped by the methodologies of historians, and likewise noted how each generation re-interprets history for their own needs. Though we don't exactly fabricate our own history, the meaning of history has been, and remains, somewhat fluid. This fluidity is, in part, what makes history so easy to connect with, and it helps explain why studying history can be a valuable exercise in connecting to one's community. The idea of being able to take lessons from the past and apply them to our current lives makes history relevant and a crucial component to one's understanding of a community and a people. Stories of the past connect pupils of the present to a greater cause and enable them to identify with something larger than themselves.

Jonathan Sarna (2003), one of the most well-known American Jewish historians and the director of the Hornstein program at Brandeis University, also stressed the importance of learning Jewish history. He explained that one purpose is to give children role models with whom they might identify, so as to connect them to the greater community. Studying history "places present day problems in perspective and teaches valuable textual and evidentiary skills

that students can put to practical use later in life" (Sarna 3). Sarna also talked about the value of specifically studying American Jewish history; it provides children with role models, promotes pride and loyalty to the Jewish people, and teaches the potential of what people (Jews) can accomplish in the United States (Sarna 1).

Another proponent of studying Jewish history is Jonathan Krasner (2004), an Assistant Professor of American Jewish History at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati who argues that the Jewish community should be familiar with its history for social, rather than educational, reasons. In a 2004 article in *The Journal of Jewish Education*, Krasner chronicled how Jewish history and social studies became more popular and important to Jewish educators from the 1920s through the post-war era. He explained that following the Holocaust in the post-war era, teaching history to young Jewish Americans became especially important because it helped create a strong Jewish identity and bolstered pride for a community recovering from what seemed like an insurmountable loss (Krasner 35). However, Krasner also mentioned that Jews have been debating the value of studying their history since at least the rabbinic period.

This debate about this value in studying history continues today. In one of the most influential books on the topic, *Zakhor* (1982), Solo Baron's disciple, Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi examined the connections between Jewish collective memory and Jewish historiography. He argued that from the first century of the Common Era until the *haskalah*, a period of Jewish enlightenment in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, Jews were, with the exception of a limited spurt of history writing in the wake of the Spanish expulsion, not interested in historiography for the most part. But as Jews departed the ghettos and increasingly assimilated into European society, the secular study of Jewish history often served as a replacement for the traditional religious practices they were leaving behind. Prior to this dramatic re-orientation, connections to

the Jewish past were hard-wired into daily life through the performance of Jewish rituals, making the idea of studying history seem superfluous, irrelevant, or even sacrilegious. But as Jews' attachment to traditional Judaism declined, history became a religious connection for Jews. Oftentimes the study of their past even led the most important Jewish historians of the era to leave Judaism. As such, Yerushalmi was ultimately not convinced that knowing Jewish history was as solid a link to the Jewish past and the Jewish community as traditional Jewish practice was during the many centuries in which Jews did not engage in historiography. In the modern age, for better or worse, history has become ubiquitous and an undeniable factor in one's Jewish identity.

In summary, there are both benefits and drawbacks to studying history. Some scholars argue that the study of history helps connect people with the past, aids in shaping their identities, and creates a framework for their current endeavors. My story attests to this phenomenon, as I came to this profession as a result of my connection with the past. My experience at *Yad Vashem* on Birthright linked me to my community in a way that nothing else had ever before. On the other hand, scholars like Yerushalmi have shown how studying the Jewish past has been related to the diminishment or abandonment of religious practices. The study of history can essentially replace religion's traditional role, such that people leave behind an active faith and instead adopt a more secular identity. In my experience, though, I have found that studying history created a stronger connection to my Judaism and frames my future career. The following study will help to determine if this is also the case for other Jewish communal professionals.

The Importance of Jewish History Education for Jewish Communal Professionals

There is a fair amount of research on the importance of history education in general, and even a body of work on the importance of Jewish history knowledge in particular. However, there is a lack of research on the importance of studying Jewish history for Jewish communal professionals. One can find limited information about the importance of Jewish knowledge for Jewish professionals, but none of it covers history specifically. My research will help to fill this gap and shed light on history's importance in developing the identity and work of a Jewish communal professional.

In 1965, Arnulf Pins, once the Associate Director of the Council on Social Work Education in New York, wrote an article in the *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* entitled "What Kind of Jewish Communal Service Worker Do We Need?" In it, Pins talked about the need for Jewish communal workers that were well-rounded, possessing both Jewish knowledge and a variety of professional skills. He highlighted several qualities that would make someone an effective Jewish communal leader, two of which were particularly significant. First, Pins suggested that these professionals should "incorporate basic knowledge about past and present Jewish life, beliefs, practices and culture as well as the impact of forces, internal and external to Jewish life, on individual Jews, the American Jewish community and world Jewry." Additionally, they should "possess an historical, philosophical and comparative perspective on the goals and programs of various Jewish groups and manifest respect for differing individual and group beliefs and behavior" (Pins 67). In order to meet these two requirements, Jewish communal workers must have an understanding of Jewish history, even if only at the most basic level; what constituted this level of knowledge was not explicitly stated. Pins concluded his

article by claiming that the Jewish community needs "workers who know and care about Jewish life and the Jewish community and who possess professional competence to provide help and leadership to American Jews to preserve and enhance it" (Pins 67). But a Jewish communal professional with just one of these qualities will not suffice. Pins maintained that their Jewishness is equally as important as their professional skills.

Bernard Reisman, a founder of the Hornstein program at Brandies University, contributed an article to the *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* in 1976 that supported Pins' point about the need for professionals who are equipped with Jewish knowledge and professional skills in equal measure. His focus was on the need for different kinds of Jewish training knowledge for different types of communal professionals. Rabbis and educators need more Jewish knowledge than a professional working in another type of agency, but regardless of this, some Jewish knowledge is necessary for someone to be an effective Jewish communal professional (Reisman 339). But what kind of Jewish knowledge did Resiman have in mind?

Several years later in another article in the *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Reisman addressed the issue of "The Jewish Component in the Training Programs of Jewish Communal Workers" (1981). In this piece, Reisman claimed that it is impractical to try to define what kind of Jewish knowledge is necessary for a Jewish communal professional for all time because that body of knowledge should change and evolve with the community. Additionally, as he discussed in his previous article, the amount and kind of Jewish knowledge is different for professionals in different fields. Professionals in communal organizations need "sufficient mastery of the Jewish heritage to transmit information and values about that heritage." (Reisman 98) He also stated that this knowledge should include an understanding of Judaica, the contemporary Jewish community, Jewish specific skills, Jewish values, and a personal

commitment to Judaism. Here Judaica specifically consists of knowledge about the Jewish language(s), literature, religion and culture, and *history*. Reisman defined history as understanding the "origins and historic developments of the Jewish people from biblical times to the present, understood chronologically and in terms of recurrent themes, motifs, and tensions" (Reisman 98). This work may be the only one that specifically mentions history as a critical component of the Jewish knowledge necessary for an effective professional in the field.

In addition to recognizing that there is something different about Jewish communal professionals because of the Jewish component in their work, some community leaders have discussed the need and value of Judaica knowledge in terms of its place in professional development. Although different from formal education, professional development is an important component to review. One of the earliest studies on professional development was conducted in 1985 by Gerald Bubis, Bruce Phillips, Steven Reitman, and Gary Rotto. They surveyed Jewish communal executives to determine the type of background that entry-level employees would ideally possess. They found that approximately three-fourths of the executives they surveyed would like their employees to "apply a greater knowledge of Jewish values, knowledge of the organized Jewish community and contemporary Jewish issues" (Bubis et al. 104). These executives also stated that they felt their entry-level employees were ill-equipped to utilize this knowledge even if they possessed it. This showed that there was a great need for the graduate programs that already existed and how valuable the Jewish component of these programs was to the executives who hire recent graduates. It is also interesting to note that in this study there was a discrepancy between the views of executives from different types of agencies on this issue of the value of Jewish knowledge. Social service executives placed a low level of importance on employees being able to use Jewish knowledge in practice, whereas on the other

end of the spectrum, Jewish community center executives found workers with higher levels of Jewish knowledge to be extremely valuable in their agencies (Bubis 104). This divide was not reflected in the final results of my study, but this is in part due to the low number of responses in the sample. Again, in this case, history was not specifically mentioned, but it could be inferred that knowledge of Jewish history is included in Jewish values, traditions, and knowledge.

In the 1960s, several master's programs across the country were created to address the need to equip communal professionals with the unique skill set required by the community by offering degrees in Jewish communal service, Jewish professional leadership, and Jewish communal leadership, to name a few. Jewish history is certainly part of these programs' curricula, but few scholars of Jewish communal service, such as Arnulf Pins, Gerald Bubis, Bernard Reisman, or Jonathan Sarna, specifically wrote about Jewish history and the role that it plays in developing successful Jewish professionals. Jewish history is part of our identity, but to what extent does it affect how Jews see their work in their community?

Methodology

There were three main components to the research carried out for this study. They are interviews with program directors from Jewish professional masters and certificate programs, a review of the courses offered by these programs, and a survey of self-identified Jewish communal professionals.

Leadership from programs at Brandeis's Hornstein School of Jewish Professional Leadership, New York University's Skirball School of Hebrew and Jewish Studies, Spertus' School of Jewish Professional Studies, Gratz's School of Jewish Communal Service, Hebrew

Union College's School of Jewish Nonprofit Management, American Jewish University's certificate program in Jewish Communal Service as part of the Master's in Business Administration, University of Michigan's program in Jewish Communal Leadership, and Yeshiva University's Wurzweiler School of Social Work's certificate program in Jewish Communal Service all agreed to participate in the study. An interview was also requested from Towson University's Jewish Communal Service program, but the director declined. Interviews were conducted with each individual over the phone and lasted about 45 minutes each. A sample of the interview questions can be found in Appendix A. In addition to this information, a review of the required courses for each of the programs was conducted. The curriculum requirement shed light on the current value these programs place on history, and discussions with program directors helped determine the value these programs have placed on history over time as well as what the student response has been from these courses.

This information, in conjunction with a survey of communal professionals, created a clearer understanding of the value of Jewish history among Jewish communal professionals. The survey was conducted online through Survey Monkey. Two hundred and seventy-seven responses were collected between November 2011 and February 2012. The respondents were solicited through personal social networks and several organizations, including: the Jewish Communal Professionals of Southern California, Hadassah of Southern California, Hebrew Union College's staff and alumni networks, the Jewish Communal Service Association, the Wexner Fellowship program, Spertus' School of Jewish Professional Studies alumni network, the University of Michigan's Jewish Communal Leadership Facebook page, and current students in Yeshiva University's certificate program. Since the survey was distributed in this manner, no sample population was explicitly defined. However, the analysis excluded congregational rabbis,

day school teachers, and those not working in a nonprofit organization. With these exclusions, the number of responses analyzed in the final results totaled 260 participants.

The survey contained three sections covering background information on the respondents, questions regarding their perceptions of Jewish history, and a Jewish history quiz. It contained twenty-four qualitative and quantitative questions. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix B.

Findings

1. Interviews with program directors

Between October 2011 and February 2012 I interviewed eight program directors or professors in various Jewish nonprofit management, communal service, and leadership programs across the country about the place of history in the curricula of their respective programs. In addition to these interviews, I also completed a review of each program's on-line course lists to see what courses were being advertised and/or actually offered. In most cases, the program directors had been in their respective positions or working for their respective institutions for at least four years, with three being there for ten years or more. The interviewees were asked about the place of history in their programs, the student response from the history courses, the importance they place on particular historical periods or eras, and their thoughts on history in the Jewish communal service field. Additionally, each of these programs is a dual degree or certificate program in conjunction with a secular degree in subjects including public administration, public policy, social work, business administration, and others. The extent to which the degrees and certificate programs are integrated varies greatly between the programs. In

most cases the degrees or certificates are housed at the same universities but may be part of different schools. The certificate programs were generally part of the same school and only added a few additional classes to the students' work load. In the cases where the students are receiving two separate degrees there is some overlap between the programs, but it seems to be limited; in one case there was no overlap at all.

Each of the programs has different requirements regarding how many courses are *actually* required. The two certificate programs (Yeshiva University and American Jewish University) do not require any courses that specifically address Jewish history, though all of the programs claim to integrate history into as many of their courses as possible. Hebrew Union College and Spertus require the most history courses; entering students have to take two classes in Jewish history. Gratz also has more of an emphasis on history, with one general requirement and other elective options; students are also required to take a course about Israel that can be history-focused. Most of the other programs offer some history electives that students can choose from, but they are not required to take a specific history course. Students at Brandeis have been known to sit in on some history courses even though they are not required, often because world-renowned historians like Dr. Jonathan Sarna teach at their institution. Yeshiva University's certificate program has a particularly interesting method for integrating Jewish history into the required courses of their certificate program. In one course, students focus on values of Jewish communal service such as *tikkun olam* and *tzedakah*. The students are broken up into groups and asked to historically trace these values from biblical through modern times to see how they have evolved and how they are relevant today. In addition to this course work, most of the programs require some sort of final project or exam and an internship. Interviewees suggested that students

can focus on particular interest areas, and some of them elect to do something historical in these final projects or tests.

It seems that there are two primary objectives in offering history courses in many of these programs. Several of the interviewees mentioned that their students may not come in with a strong Jewish studies background, so teaching them Jewish history is important in helping them frame their future careers. Additionally, there is an emphasis on the ability to integrate what history teaches into the particularities of current communal life. This helps professionals address problems that might arise, provides insight for the students, and informs their work as Jewish professionals and community leaders. Richard Siegel at Hebrew Union College also specifically mentioned that working in the Jewish community is different from working in the secular community, so it requires a different base of knowledge, part of which is an understanding of Jewish history.

The place of history in the various programs also seems to be relatively stable with few changes to the curricula over time. None of the program directors talked about major additions to, or subtractions from, the current curricula except for Richard Siegel. In the spring of 2011, the school was discussing discontinuing one of the history courses but ultimately decided against the idea because a survey of students showed a strong appreciation for these courses. A couple of the interviewees also talked about how the programs may have offered more electives in the past, and others mentioned that they have recently added or re-worked courses. Overall, though, the curriculum in these programs seems to be fairly stable over time.

The interviewees were also asked if one era or topic in history is more important for students to know than any other. The ones that gave a specific answer immediately said American or Modern Jewish history. Those who didn't mention a particular field of Jewish

history talked about the ability of students to connect history with contemporary life and to understand the key trends and issues that remain relevant today. The director at Yeshiva University, Saul Andron, also spoke of the particular importance of studying communal life in Jewish history. The interviewees talked about wanting their students to feel comfortable with major trends in Jewish history, to use that knowledge to aid in critical thinking skills, and to put current issues into perspective by thinking historically. Additionally, the interviewees indicated that students generally have a positive response from the history course offerings. However, no one mentioned that students were seeking additional courses in the subject.

Students in these programs are working towards becoming leaders in the Jewish community, so I also addressed with my interviewees the issue of how the community views Jewish history knowledge. Almost everyone that I spoke with agreed that the field currently looks favorably on professionals having background knowledge in Jewish history, though there was one dissenting opinion. Two also mentioned that this has not always been the case, and that the view of Jewish history knowledge has changed over the past decade with professionals seeing more value in Jewish history knowledge, as well as in business acumen. However, no one seemed to believe that a lack of Jewish history knowledge would be detrimental to one's career. Some commented that one could easily have a vibrant career without this knowledge, but those who fully believe in the value of Jewish history knowledge talked about how it helps bring in perspective and how this knowledge is particularly helpful when talking with donors and lay leaders. Saul Andron talked about how having a knowledge of Jewish history helps to show that one is part of a historical chain of values; the lessons from the past are where we derive our core values, and it is key to be able to share that knowledge with lay leaders and other professionals in order to connect with them on a deeper level.

Qualitatively speaking, Jewish history is seen as a valuable and necessary component in the education of Jewish communal professionals. Even though few courses are actually required, the students and directors in these programs find value in the history curriculum. Jewish history knowledge helps frame and solve problems, and communal professions can use this knowledge to identify trends and patterns in their work, thereby enabling them to be more adept at working with the community. As many of the interviewees mentioned, there is something different about the work of a Jewish communal service professional. For me personally, I feel a responsibility to my community as a result of the meaningful connection I made to it on my Birthright trip. Knowing the history of our people creates a sense of purpose for professionals with more weight than the purpose felt by professionals working in other types of organizations.

2. Who is the sample population?

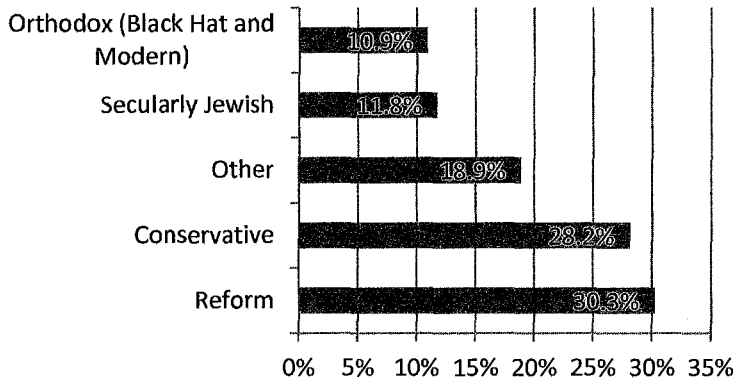
Before analysis of the survey data can take place, it must be determined who constitutes the sample population. Since only 260 responses were collected and qualified for use in the following analysis, it is clear that the results will not be representative of the entire field of Jewish communal professionals. Therefore I will compare my sample profile to Steven Cohen's 2010 study of Jewish communal professionals to help frame the results. His study included data from 2,435 respondents, providing a much more accurate picture of the population. My profile of respondents will include a discussion of their age, gender, religious denomination, employment, education, participation in Jewish activities, and perceptions of history. Geographic location was not included in this study because location should have little to no bearing on one's knowledge of Jewish history.

Of the 260 responses included in the data analysis, 238 of them completed the demographic questions relating to age, gender, and denomination. In the study, 164 participants selected female as their gender, which is roughly 63.1% of the total population. Those who selected male accounted for roughly 72 participants, or 27.7% of the population. The remaining 9.2% either skipped this question or chose the "prefer not to answer" option for question 24 on the survey, a sample of which can be found in Appendix B. When compared to Steven Cohen's study, the results are fairly similar with his population being roughly two-thirds female.

However, there is a slight variation from Cohen's study when it comes to the age range of the sample population. Cohen's study shows a fairly uniform distribution of ages between early 20s and mid-60s. The survey population of this study is slightly less uniform, with about 52.4% being under the age of 40 and 38.8% between the ages of 40 and 69. As with the previous question, the remaining 8.8% skipped this question.

With regard to denomination, the sample population was somewhat similar with the participants in Cohen's study. Figure 1, below, shows the percentages for the major response groups in this study. The largest group identified as Reform, with 72 respondents selecting this choice. In Cohen's study, the largest group of respondents (38% of his population) identified as Conservative. His study also mentions that when his results are compared to the 2001 Jewish Population Survey they skew more religious, with 50% of professionals identifying as Orthodox and Conservative compared with 37% of the national population in the Jewish Population Survey. As the results indicate, the sample population of this study more closely represents the denominational mix of the national population.

Figure 1: Denomination Frequencies



For the sake of easy comparison, this survey used the same questions as Cohen's survey to address the organization that participants work for and their position. There were more than twenty organizational categories and more than fifteen position options for respondents to select from. With such a small sample size, the responses vary widely, with most categories only receiving 1% to 4% of total responses. In two cases some of the smaller groups were combined to have a more significant group to use in other analyses. The largest groups for organization and position are listed in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Most Frequent Organization and Position

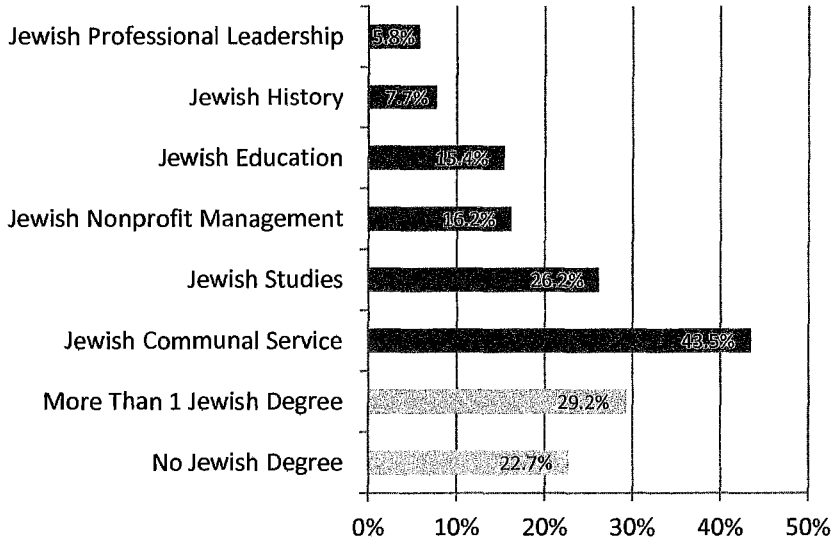
Organization			**Position**	
Federation	16.9%		CEO or ED	10.0%
Youth*	13.9%		Planning/Program/Project Director	12.7%
Family/Social Services/Elder Care	11.2%		Manager or Department Director	11.2%
JCC	3.8%		Development/Fundraising	6.9%
Hillel/Campus	5.4%		Program Coordinator	6.5%
Israel Related	5.0%		Vice-President or Sr. Vice President	6.2%
*includes Camping, Education, Youth Movements				

Note: The organizations and positions on the same line do not coordinate with one another in any way.

As with Cohen's study, Federation, Youth organizations, and Family and Social Services were some of the organizations for which people most often worked. The survey respondents' positions also varied slightly from Cohen's results. This study contained far fewer CEO and Executive Directors than Cohen's, but all other results were relatively similar. Additionally, 5.4% of participants in this study were interns, whereas only 1% had that position in Cohen's survey. This could be due to the fact that my survey was initially sent to (in addition to other groups) my network, which consists mostly of other interns and students.

When it comes to the education level of the participants of this study, 64.6% had a master's degree, 11.9% had an advanced degree, and 20.4% had a bachelor's degree but no advanced degrees. This varies greatly from Steven Cohen's study. His results showed that 46% of respondents had a bachelor's degree but no advanced degrees, and only 4% had an advanced degree. Cohen's study focused on Master's of Social Work degrees, so his results are broken down differently, making them harder to compare. On the other hand, this study was particularly focused on participants with master's degrees in Jewish programs such as Jewish communal service, Jewish studies, Jewish history, Jewish education, and others. Figure 3 below shows the percentage of respondents who have Master's level degrees or certificates from Jewish programs. For this question, participants were able to select more than one degree option so the percentage of these groups adds up to more than 100%. It is interesting to note that of those who had completed one of these programs, almost 30% had completed *at least* one additional degree in another Jewish program; this is highlighted by the orange bar in the figure below. Additionally, 22.7% of respondents had not completed a degree in a Jewish master's program, as shown in green below.

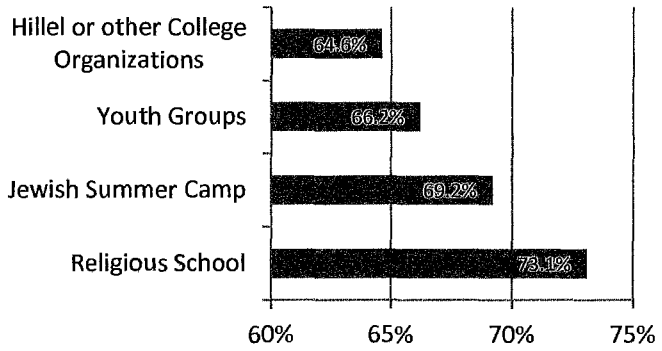
Figure 3: Frequencies of Jewish Master's Degrees or Certificates



Another salient aspect of the respondents' education has to do with whether or not they attended Jewish day school for some or part of their pre-college education. This information is relevant because attendance at a Jewish day school generally means a greater level of Jewish knowledge since it is studied as part of the core curriculum rather than as additional knowledge. Of survey participants, 28.9% attended a Jewish day school for at least one year. Of those, 21.2% attended day school for seven years or more. Again, this result is similar to those found by Steven Cohen in his recent study of Jewish communal professionals.

In addition to day school attendance and degrees from Jewish programs, the majority of this sample population also participated in a variety of Jewish youth activities, such as summer camps, religious school, youth groups, and Hillel or other college organizations. Figure 4 below shows the percentage of respondents who participated in each of the activities. The findings here indicate that 34.6% of participants partook in all four activities and another 28.5% did three of the four activities. Additionally, only 5.8% of the population was not involved in any of these activities during their adolescence.

Figure 4: Frequency of Participation in Jewish Activities



Finally, to help complete the picture of the sample population, it was important to also look at the Jewish communal professionals' perceptions of history. Two questions on the survey addressed this issue, and for each of these almost 30 people did not respond, which is just over 10% of the total survey population. Of those who did respond, 48.5% agreed that history is "very important" for Jewish communal professionals. No one selected "not at all important," and only 1.9% selected "a little important." This showed that the community of Jewish professionals sees values in history knowledge. The survey respondents were also asked to select the era or topic in Jewish history they felt to be the most important. The respondents were given ten options, ranging from Ancient history to the Modern era. Of the respondents who completed this question, 30.4% selected "Modern" as the most important era or topic in Jewish history, followed by the "State of Israel" with 18.5% and "American" with 16.5%. This also reflects the sentiment of many of the program directors who were interviewed about the era of Jewish history they find to be the most valuable.

In summary, the sample population for this study turned out to be very similar to Steven Cohen's most recent work. The main difference between the two groups revolved around educational background, which is to be expected due to the sampling method. A few of the institutions that were asked to distribute the survey would not do so, and time did not allow for

reaching out to as many desired groups as would have been necessary to achieve a larger sample size. Those that took the survey and passed it along came from my network, which is mostly students, but it turned out to represent the overall population fairly well. The following chapters will focus on the respondent's level of Jewish history knowledge and their perceptions of the value of that knowledge. Since the sample has a similar composition to Cohen's, it might be possible to infer that the results are somewhat reflective of a larger population of Jewish communal professionals in America.

3. What is the level of Jewish history knowledge among Jewish communal professionals?

In order to address the first research question, "What is the level of Jewish history knowledge of Jewish communal professionals?" survey respondents were asked to rate their own personal level of Jewish history knowledge, as well as to take a short quiz about Jewish history. They were also asked about how they access Jewish history information, which may shed some light on their level of knowledge. The results of these three components were used to help determine the level of Jewish history knowledge of the sample population. Due to the sample size of the study, these results cannot be used as a reflection of the entire field of Jewish communal professionals, but it would be reasonable to assume that to some degree the following trends may exist at large.

When asked to rate their own level of Jewish history knowledge, 21.5% ranked themselves "highly knowledgeable," and the majority of respondents (45.0%) selected "fairly knowledgeable." Only 3.8% of respondents selected "a bit knowledgeable." Additionally, only 15.8% of the population that completed the survey scored seven out of seven, but over half

(54.3%) scored at least five out of seven. Also, between 7% and 9% did not answer the quiz questions, which works out to about twenty respondents of the 260 included in the data analysis.

One of the response choices for each quiz question was "I don't know," and several respondents selected this for all seven questions. Unfortunately these respondents skew the following results, but that will be mitigated as best as possible. Some interesting information was gleaned from the wrong answers as well: 80% or more of the respondents could identify Moses Mendelssohn, locate where Reform Judaism began, and name in which domain during the Middle Ages life was easiest for Jews. Respondents performed less well on the other quiz questions. Only 55.8% knew one effect the destruction of the Second Temple had on Judaism, 53.5% knew what Theodor Herzl's vision was for a Jewish state, 49.6% knew which country was the first to give Jews citizenship, and 40.8% knew the origins of the first Jews that settled in Colonial America. This was just a very cursory quiz of a respondent's history knowledge, but it shows that Israel and American history are not the areas that respondents knew the most about. This is significant because both program directors and survey respondents mentioned these as the two areas of greatest importance.

Finally, what might be another indication of the level of Jewish history knowledge of Jewish professionals is how they access Jewish history information. Respondents were allowed to select more than one choice for this question, so there is some overlap among the groups. Respondents most frequently accessed Jewish history information through the Internet (89.6%) and through their own personal libraries (71.95%). The other response choices included "work library," "other library," and "from friends or colleagues." Additionally, there was a statistically significant difference between respondents that accessed Jewish history information from their personal and work libraries and how they performed on the history quiz. Those who gathered

information from work had a higher average quiz score. This was not anticipated because those who access history information at home do it of their own volition; it would therefore be expected that they would know more. Since this is not the case, it may be that respondents who accessed history information from work need to know more because of its impact on their careers.

It is significant to note that roughly fifty percent of the population "passed" the quiz. This shows that the population is at least somewhat knowledgeable about Jewish history. Additionally, it seems that the population does not know more about one era or period in Jewish history over another. There were no trends when looking at the percentage of wrong responses for each question. If programs and professionals place a greater importance on Modern Jewish history and Israel, this was not reflected in the quiz responses. Finally, the data could not determine why there was a difference on the quiz score among respondents who accessed Jewish history information from their personal libraries and those from their work libraries. However, this could be due to the fact that people who access information from their work libraries have to be more interested and invest more in the study of the subject because they seek it out for purposes of their career rather than recreation.

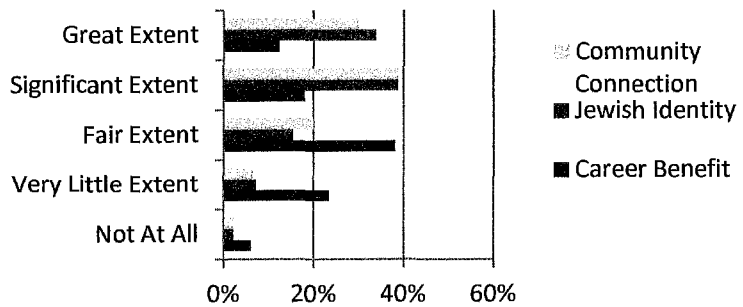
4. What is the perceived value of Jewish history knowledge in the Jewish communal field?

The second research question asked about the perceived value of Jewish history knowledge in the field of Jewish communal service. In order to answer this question, survey respondents were asked the degree to which they felt Jewish history knowledge was important for Jewish professionals, what their own level of Jewish history knowledge was, to what extent

Jewish history knowledge affected their sense of Jewish identity or connection to the Jewish community, and if there was a career benefit from having more Jewish history knowledge. They were also asked an open-ended question about how they use Jewish history knowledge in their professional careers. All of these components combined to create a picture of how and why communal professionals value Jewish history knowledge.

The response option for the questions about identity, community, and career benefit was a five point scale, from "great extent" to "not at all." Figure 5 below shows the frequency of the responses for each of the three questions. The majority of respondents selected "great extent" or "significant extent" when asked about the effect Jewish history knowledge had on their sense of Jewish identity and connection to their Jewish community. However, the opposite was true when asked about the extent to which their career would benefit from a greater level of knowledge in Jewish history. For this question, the majority of respondents selected "fair extent" or "very little extent." As the figure shows, we can see a divide between the level of importance in career benefit, community connection, and Jewish identity. Although the survey respondents did not value history knowledge as much for their career, Jewish degree programs need to continue to teach Jewish history to help foster Jewish identity and community connection. And respondents have indicated that this is where Jewish history makes a significant difference.

Figure 5: Perceived Value of Jewish History Knowledge



Additionally, survey participants were also asked to what degree they thought Jewish history was important for Jewish professionals and what they thought their level of Jewish history knowledge was. These questions also indicate how Jewish communal professionals perceive the value of Jewish history knowledge for their careers. For both of these questions, not a single survey respondent selected the highest response of "very important" or "highly knowledgeable." Additionally, 48.5% of respondents said that history was "not at all" important for professionals, and only 1.9% said that it was "somewhat important." In terms of perceptions of their own history knowledge, the results were similar. Forty-five percent said that they were "a bit knowledgeable," and only 3.8% selected "fairly knowledgeable."

In order to look at this information on a larger scale, a total for all of these variables was created. A higher score meant greater importance since that would indicate a higher selection for the level of importance for each individual question. The possible range was from 5 to 24, but the actual range for participants was from 10 to 24. The average score for all of the participants was 18.36, with the greatest range of frequencies between 17 and 21, which is well over half. This shows that although the individual components of what makes history valuable in this study may not be ranked very highly, history overall has some importance to these individuals.

The final indication of the perceived value of history for Jewish communal professionals was how they use history in their professional lives. This was an open-ended question on the survey, and several themes came from those who chose to respond. The major ideas most frequently given were that participants used Jewish history in helping others understand; creating context for various situations; in discussion and discourse with colleagues, donors, and other constituents; to help build community; in creating a sense of purpose; and finally, Jewish history knowledge attributed to many respondent's personal sense of identity. For many, Jewish history

seemed like an important part of their life and their career even if they weren't teachers or historians. Some of the participants had trouble separating Jewish history from other forms of Jewish cultural knowledge, but most specifically mentioned aspects of history such as the Holocaust, American Jewish history, and Israel as important aspects of Jewish history to know.

In summary, respondents cared much more about history in terms of its value to their connections with the Jewish community and with their personal Jewish identity than with history's value for their professional career. Survey respondents rated the global aspects of history's value on the survey much higher than the questions regarding its value to respondents' careers. This was somewhat reflected in the open-ended questions as well. The respondents who chose to answer this question talked a great deal about how history helps them connect with others and frame their work and their personal lives.

5. Is the level of knowledge and its perceived usefulness affected by a professional's position or the organization they work for?

In order to answer this question, the six organizations and positions with the most responses were used for an analysis of their quiz score and their perceived value of history knowledge. Descriptive statistics, nonparametric tests, and an ANOVA post-hoc test were used to derive the conclusion that where a person works has no bearing on their history knowledge or how valuable they perceive that knowledge to be. There is, however, a difference in what position someone holds and how well they scored on the quiz.

The six types of organizations used in this analysis included family service organizations, federations, Hillels and college organizations, Israel-related organizations, Jewish community centers, and Jewish education services organizations. The mean quiz score for participants that

worked at these organizations was between 3.89 (JCCs) and 5.33 (Hillels) on a scale of zero to seven. The median score for each of these groups was between 4 and 5.5. A nonparametric test was then used to determine if there was a difference in quiz score between the employees of these organizations. This type of analysis was used because the data did not meet with necessary assumptions for an ANOVA; the sample sizes for the groups included were too unequal. Jewish community centers were excluded from the nonparametric test because, with only nine valid responses, the group was too small. The P-value of the nonparametric test was 0.704, which shows that there was no significant difference between these groups.

The six position groups that were included in this portion of the analysis included chief executive officer or executive director, senior-vice president or vice-president, planning/program/project director, manager or department director, program coordinator, and development/fundraising personnel. The mean quiz score was between 3.50 (development) and 5.12 (program coordinator). The median score for the groups was between 3 and 6. A nonparametric test was then used to determine if there was a difference between the position that a respondent held in regards to their level of history knowledge. Again, a nonparametric test was used because the assumptions for an ANOVA could not be met. Additionally, the senior vice-president position was not included in the nonparametric test because the sample size for this group was too small as well. The P-value of the nonparametric test was 0.023, which shows that there was in fact a significant difference between the groups in regards to their level of history knowledge. An ANOVA was run with a Tamhane post-hoc test to determine that there was a statistically significant difference between CEOs and development professionals, but not a significant difference between any of the other groups.

The same set of tests and process was used to determine whether there was a difference among the six organizations and positions in terms of how they perceived the value of history. The mean score of the total history value, a computation of all questions as used to answer research question two, for the six organizations ranged from 17.43 (Jewish education service) to 20.78 (Israel-related), with median scores ranging from 18 to 21 on a scale of 5 to 24. This again is well above the median of the overall scale and shows that there is some perceived value in history knowledge among Jewish communal professionals. However, the P-value from the nonparametric test was 0.392, which shows that there was no significant difference among these six groups; again, Israel-related organizations were not included in this test because the sample size was too small. When looking at the various positions, the means ranged from 17.44 (development) to 18.33 (senior vice presidents), with median scores ranging from 18 to 19. Again, for this nonparametric test, program coordinators were not included because their sample size was also too small; the P-value equaled 0.960 so there was no significant difference among the groups in regard to the perceived value of Jewish history knowledge.

In conclusion, it is interesting to note that both the positions and organizations used in this portion of the analysis scored much lower on the quiz score than the average of the entire sample population. The organizations represented a wide range of Jewish organizations, and there was no significant difference in their levels of history knowledge. This is not what was expected, since some organizations such as Federations or Israel-related organizations have a much more Jewish cultural focus than organizations like social service agencies. It was hypothesized that organizations that serve more Jewish populations would have more Jewish history knowledge. Additionally, respondents from the different organizations and in different positions valued history similarly since there was not a statistically significant difference in the

combined total of the questions dealing with history value on the survey. This may be the case because of the sampling method used. If fewer survey respondents had a Jewish degree there may have been a greater discrepancy.

6. Do professionals with an educational background in any type of Jewish studies have a greater level of Jewish history knowledge and perceive that knowledge to be more useful to them in their careers?

The method employed to answer the final research question was the same process used for the previous research question. Descriptive statistics, nonparametric tests, and an ANOVA post-hoc test were used where necessary to analyze the variables of highest level of education, participation in a Jewish certificate or master's program, Jewish day school attendance, and participation in extracurricular Jewish activities. There was a difference in the level of Jewish history knowledge among some of the education levels and Jewish degree programs, but there was no difference in regards to how long someone was in day school. Finally, whether or not survey respondents attended summer camp, religious school, or were part of a youth group made no difference to their level of Jewish history knowledge, but participants of Hillel had a statistically significant difference from those that did not participate in Hillel. This pattern of significance is also reflected in the value of Jewish history when broken down by each of these groups.

The following discussion about the level of history knowledge based on highest education level excludes respondents who had either an AA degree or just a high school diploma because there were not enough responses for these options. The mean history quiz score based on education level was between 4.42 (Bachelor's degree) and 5.86 (Advanced degree). The median score for all groups was 5 or 6, which is greater than 70% correct. The nonparametric test for this

variable delivered a P-value of .001, which showed that there was a statistically significant difference among these groups. The Tamhane post-hoc test showed that there was a difference between those who held Advanced degrees when compared to those that held Bachelor's or Master's degrees. It is noteworthy that there was not a difference between Advanced degrees and certificate programs. Based on the sample populations, these certificates are most likely in Jewish subject areas, so it would be expected that they would have a high level of Jewish history knowledge when compared to those holding more non-Jewish degrees.

As mentioned, there was also a difference among respondents with various degrees in Jewish subjects. The survey gave respondents six degree choices, as well as the option to select "no Jewish degree." Many of the participants selected more than one degree. However, due to the small survey population, some of the degree options could not be included in the following analysis because there were not enough responses. The groups that were included in this analysis include degrees or certificates in Jewish Studies, Jewish Nonprofit Management, Jewish Communal Service, two degrees, three degrees, and those with no Jewish degree as a control group. The mean score for these groups ranged from 3.78 (no Jewish degree) to 5.58 (Jewish Nonprofit Management). The nonparametric test produced a P-Value of .003, which shows that there was a statistically significant difference between respondents with no Jewish degree and those with a degree or certificate in Jewish Nonprofit Management or two Jewish degrees. It is interesting to note that this was the *only* difference between degree or certificate holders from any of the programs and those with not Jewish degree.

The last variables used in this portion of the analysis had to do with childhood educational opportunities, one being formal education in a Jewish day school, and the other more experiential learning opportunities including summer camp, religious school, youth groups, and

Hillel or other college organizations. Respondents' levels of Jewish history knowledge were not affected by the amount of day school education they received. The mean score was 4.77 for 4-6 years, 7.65 for 7-9 years, and 4.67 for 10+ years of day school education. Respondents were allowed to select more than one option for their extracurricular activities, so those factors were analyzed on an individual basis by comparing those that did participate in each activity with those that did not. The means for these activities ranged from 4.74 (summer camp) to 4.99 (Hillel), and the median score for all of the groups was five. The only activity that had a statistically significant difference between those that participated and those that did not was Hillel or other college organizations.

The same method of analysis was used to answer the second half of this research question, and it revealed very similar results for the value placed on history by each group. Those with advanced degrees had the highest mean history value total at 19.92, and there was also a difference between this group and respondents with bachelor's degrees and master's degrees. The means for the various degrees or certificates ranged from 17.0 (Jewish Studies) to 19.27 (two degrees). There was a statistically significant difference among these groups, but the ANOVA post-hoc test did not indicate between which groups. There was no difference among day school attendees, and the mean score hovered around 19 for all of the groups. Finally, there was no difference between respondents that did or did not participate in any of the extracurricular options.

In order to fully understand the career benefit breakdown for each of these groups, an analysis was also done with just this variable. The only statistically significant difference was between professionals with Jewish communal service degrees and those with two degrees or

more. This particular question on the survey was on a five-point scale, and the mean score for all of the groups was between two and three, or "very little extent" to "fair extent."

In summary, the most interesting aspect of this portion of the analysis is the relationship between the quiz score and history value total for these groups: they are virtually the same. Groups with a statistically significant difference in quiz scores also had a statistically significant difference in history value total. One reason for this might be that these groups just stand out more than the others. When talking about the position and the organization that participants work for it could also be that these participants were more Jewishly involved or more Jewishly educated than participants in other positions and at other organizations.

Conclusions

The preceding research has shed some light on the place of Jewish history in the Jewish communal field. The interviews with the program directors and the survey of professionals drew similar conclusions that help begin to explain the value of history in the field and the level of knowledge that professionals possess.

Across the board, there was a general consensus on the value of Jewish history knowledge. This value has more to do with a professional's connection to their Jewish identity and to the Jewish community at large than with professional advancement. My research illustrates that program directors and survey respondents who answered the open-ended question about how they use history value history because understanding historical trends helps them frame their current work. History knowledge also helps professionals connect with lay leaders and colleagues on a deeper level. However, the data I collected seems to indicate that a lack of Jewish history knowledge would not be terribly detrimental to a Jewish communal professional's career.

With regard to which specific topics in Jewish history are most important for communal professionals, there was resounding support amongst program directors and survey respondents for the value of American Jewish history, Modern Jewish history, and the history of Israel. But while they clearly voiced such an evaluation, they did not display a correspondingly higher knowledge of these fields; survey respondents did not correctly answer questions on these topics any more accurately than they did questions about other aspects of Jewish history. This suggests that if those topics are as important as people profess them to be, then perhaps these master's programs should place a greater emphasis on American, Modern, and Israeli history in their curricula.

Jewish professionals that participated in the survey had an average level of Jewish history knowledge. Over fifty percent "passed" the quiz by answering at least five questions out of seven correctly. There was a statistically significant difference in quiz scores between CEOs and development professionals. The survey data were not able to give a conclusive answer as to why this is the case, but it could be due to the possibility that CEOs use more Jewish knowledge in their jobs or that they are more seasoned professionals. When analyzing education levels, respondents with advanced degrees scored higher on the quiz than those with bachelor's degrees and master's degrees, but they did not score better than certificate holders on a statistically significant level. This is probably the case because most of these certificate holders are graduates of these Jewish programs. As expected, there was also a difference between survey respondents with no Jewish degree and those with degrees in Jewish nonprofit management. It was hypothesized that participants with Jewish degrees would have more Jewish history knowledge and would value that knowledge more highly, though this turned out to be the case for only one of the degree programs. It is also interesting to note that this degree required two history courses, while others required just one or zero such classes.

Additionally, participants of Hillel and other college organizations were more knowledgeable about Jewish history than those that did not participate in this activity. An analysis could not be done to compare participants across Jewish extracurricular activities, but Hillel participants had the highest average score out of all of the activities respondents that identified participating in summer camps, youth groups, religious school, or Hillel. The data could not determine why this was the case, but it could be due to the age of the participants, since this was the only post-adolescent activity included. It could likewise be due to Hillel's significant impact on many participants' connection to their Jewish community, to Israel, and in

fostering their Jewish identity. In my case, I would not have pursued a profession in the Jewish communal world had it not been for my participation in Hillel (and by extension on Birthright).

Finally, one's level of Jewish day school attendance had no bearing on one's level of Jewish history knowledge. Day school includes significant attention to Jewish learning, so it was expected that this would have some impact on Jewish history knowledge; however, that was not the case in this study. Unfortunately, the data could not determine why this was so.

The overall findings regarding quiz scores also held true for survey respondents' perceptions of the value of Jewish history for Jewish communal professionals. From this it was possible to infer that the perceived value of history knowledge is related to a Jewish communal professional's level of history knowledge, although the survey data did not conclusively prove this point. However, it would make sense that there is a connection between one's level of history knowledge and perceptions of the value of that knowledge.

In summary, Jewish communal professionals' level of history knowledge and its specific value for their careers may not be comprehensively measured by this study, but this research does show that history knowledge continues to have some value for Jewish communal professionals. Survey respondents and program directors both professed its value in shaping identity and for problem solving. Having a strong connection to Judaism and the Jewish people, as well as being able to frame one's work within the context of Jewish historical trends, may be what separates an outstanding Jewish professional from an average one. Masters and certificate programs exist to provide their students with this type of background, and they have been successful in doing this even if their graduates don't know every detail of Jewish history.

Implications for the Field of Jewish Communal Service

The conclusions of this study have a couple of implications for the field of Jewish communal service. These implications deal with how the current degree programs educate their students in history and what kind of history knowledge is considered most valuable in the field. This study makes great progress in confirming that there is value in Jewish history knowledge, but there are still questions to be answered.

First, programs that educate Jewish communal professionals should continue including history in their curriculum. Interviews with program directors revealed that current students have a positive response to these courses and appreciate the knowledge they are receiving. This study stands as evidence that although lacking an understanding of major trends in Jewish history may not be detrimental to one's career, Jewish history knowledge is nonetheless valuable in helping professionals connect with lay leaders and each other. Knowing the Jewish past also helps create a framework for solving the problems that currently face the community.

Secondly, some aspects of Jewish history are more important than others. In particular, this thesis revealed that Modern Jewish history, American Jewish history, and Israel are the most important topics of historical study for Jewish communal professionals in nonprofit settings. Program directors argued that this is because these eras most easily relate to the work being done in the field today. Students connect better to these topics and find studying trends in these eras most relevant to their careers. Most of the degree programs cover these topics to a degree in their course work, and they should continue to do so.

As the history quiz showed, professionals do not necessarily have a good handle on the topics they consider most important, and they could benefit from a deeper understanding of the

major trends in these fields. Finally, history is the sort of subject that, if not used regularly, may be easily forgotten. In order to mitigate this problem and continue to connect professionals to their past, history might also be addressed in professional development programs.

As with most research projects, some questions remain unanswered. For starters, a similar study could be done on a larger population to confirm the accuracy of these results. Such research might be able to answer many of the questions that this data was not able to address, such as why there was a difference between CEOs and development professionals but not among other positions, or why Hillel was the only Jewish extracurricular activity that generated significantly different results. Finally, this study was not able to fully separate Jewish history from other kinds of Jewish knowledge. Even though the survey questions asked specifically about Jewish history, the open-ended questions indicated that some professionals may not be able to separate Jewish history from other Jewish knowledge.

Whatever the measure of Jewish history knowledge, it seems clear that an understanding of the Jewish past is an important component of communal professionals' identity, even if it may not be central to their careers or their education. As such, the current Jewish history course requirements in Jewish professional master's programs are most likely sufficient to prepare the next generation of successful Jewish communal professionals.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions for Jewish Program Directors

1. How long have you been in your current position?
2. What is your objective in offering Jewish history courses?
3. What place does Jewish History have in their respective programs?
4. Has the value of history courses changed over time for your program?
    a. Where do you see its place in the curriculum going forward?
5. What is the student response from Jewish history courses?
6. What kind of history do you think is most important? (topics/themes/eras)
    a. Is *all* history important?
7. What is the meaning of Jewish history?
    a. What lessons do you expect your students to gain from studying history?
    b. What information is important to takeaway personally/professionally?
8. How do you think the field of Jewish Communal Service views history knowledge?
9. Do you find Jewish history knowledge necessary for a career as a Jewish communal professional?
10. Do you offer additional history courses that are not listed on your website?
11. How often do you offer your Jewish History elective courses?
12. Would it be possible for me to send my survey to your alumni lists?

Appendix B

Jewish Professionals Jewish History Knowledge Survey

Thank you for your time! I'm a graduate student at Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion and the University of Southern California pursuing Master's degrees in Jewish Nonprofit Management and Public Administration. As part of my program I am doing research for my Master's thesis on the value of Jewish history knowledge in the field of Jewish communal service. As a Jewish communal professional I am interested in your opinions on this subject and would greatly appreciate it if you would fill out this survey. The survey should take you less than 15 minutes to complete. Your identity will remain confidential—no names or other identifying information will be disclosed.

PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS: Please understand that your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact—anonymously, if you wish—Richard Siegel, Director of the HUC-JIR School of Jewish Nonprofit Management: rsiegel@huc.edu, 3077 University Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90007, or toll-free at 800-899-0925.

By completing this survey, you give permission for your responses to be included in the study and any published results.

Thank you for your help!

1. Which one of the following organizations best describes the organization where you work (now or most recently)? (Choose one)
   a. Advocacy
   b. Anglo-Jewish Press/Media
   c. Camping
   d. Community Relations
   e. Congregation/synagogue
   f. Consultancy
   g. Elder Service/Nursing Home
   h. Environment
   i. Family Service
   j. Federation
   k. Foundation
   l. Government Relations/Public Policy
   m. Hillel/Campus
   n. International
   o. Israel related
   p. JCC
   q. Jewish Education Services
   r. Jewish School/Educational setting
   s. Library
   t. Museum
   u. National Organization
   v. Outreach
   w. Professional Development
   x. Startup/Entrepreneurial Venture
   y. Social Services
   z. Synagogue
   aa. University College/Faculty
   bb. Vocational Service
   cc. Youth Movement
   dd. Other (please specify)

2. Which of the following best describes your current position?
    a. CEO or Executive Director
    b. Senior Vice-President or Vice-President
    c. Associate or Assistant Executive Director
    d. CFO
    e. Controller, auditor, or bookkeeper
    f. Managing Director or Branch Director
    g. Planning Director or Program/Project Director
    h. Manager or Department Director
    i. Assistant Manager or Department Director
    j. Program Coordinator
    k. Program Associate or Direct Service Professional, Caseworker
    l. Jewish School Principal
    m. Jewish School Teacher
    n. Congregational Rabbi or Cantor
    o. Entry Level
    p. Development/Fundraising
    q. Administrative/Executive assistant
    r. Other

3. Please select the answer that best describes the highest level of education that you have completed.
    a. High School Diploma
    b. AA Degree
    c. Bachelor's Degree
    d. Master's Degree
    e. Advanced Degree
    f. Certificate Program (please specify)

4. Have you completed a degree or certificate in any of the following areas of study?
    a. Jewish Studies
    b. Jewish History
    c. Jewish Nonprofit Management
    d. Jewish Education
    e. Jewish Professional Leadership
    f. Jewish Communal Service

5. In what year(s) did you complete this/these program(s)?

6. Did you attend a Jewish Day School?
    a. Not at all
    b. 1-3 years
    c. 4-6 years
    d. 7-9 years
    e. 10+ years

7. Have you participated in any of the following Jewish activities? Please select all that apply.
    a. Jewish Summer camp
    b. Religious school
    c. Youth groups
    d. Hillel or other Jewish college organization

8. To what degree do you think that Jewish history is important for Jewish professionals?
    a. Very important
    b. Somewhat important
    c. A little important
    d. Not at all important

9. Which era/topic in Jewish history do you consider to be the most important?
    a. Ancient History
    b. Babylonian Exile
    c. Second Temple Period
    d. Hellenistic
    e. Middle Ages
    f. Early Modern
    g. Modern
    h. American
    i. State of Israel
    j. Holocaust

10. How would you rate your level of Jewish history knowledge?
    a. Highly knowledgeable
    b. Fairly knowledgeable
    c. Moderately knowledgeable
    d. A bit knowledgeable
    e. Not at all knowledgeable

11. To what extend do you feel that your career would benefit from a greater level of knowledge in Jewish History?
    a. Great extent
    b. Significant extent
    c. Fair extent
    d. Very little extent
    e. Not at all

12. To what extent does your Jewish history knowledge affect your sense of Jewish identity?
    a. Great extent
    b. Significant extent
    c. Fair extent
    d. Very little extent
    e. Not at all

13. To what extent does your Jewish history knowledge affect your sense of connection to your Jewish community (locally or globally)?
    a. Great extent
    b. Significant extent
    c. Fair extent
    d. Very little extent
    e. Not at all

14. How do you use Jewish history in your professional life? (Fill-in)

15. How do you access Jewish history information? (Check all that apply)
    a. Personal library
    b. Workplace Library
    c. Other library
    d. Internet
    e. Friends or colleagues

Jewish History Quiz:
Instructions: Please DO NOT research the answers to the following questions. Answer the questions to the best of your ability with your current, personal understanding of Jewish history. Your answers will remain anonymous, so please be as honest as possible.

16. Who was Moses Mendelssohn?
    a. Considered to be the first modern Jew, he was also a key figure in the Haskalah movement.
    b. The first rabbi in America.
    c. A leader of the Kabbalistic movement.
    d. I don't know.

17. What is one way that the destruction of the Second Temple affected Judaism?
    a. It led to the flowering of Rabbinic Judaism.
    b. It began the Jewish experience of Exile/Diaspora.
    c. It caused the explosion of Jewish philosophy.
    d. I don't know.

18. Where did Reform Judaism begin?
    a. Germany.
    b. The United States.
    c. France.
    d. I don't know.

19. Under which domain in the Middle Ages was Jewish life most harmonious with the host culture?
    a. Islam.
    b. Christendom.
    c. Both domains equally.
    d. I don't know.

20. What did Theodor Herzl envision as the Jewish state?
    a. A modern, liberal, European-style country with religious freedoms.
    b. A thoroughly Jewish, Hebrew-speaking state.
    c. An independent state that could be erected only in Palestine.
    d. I don't know.

21. Which was the first European country to give Jews citizenship?
    a. France.
    b. Germany.
    c. England.
    d. I don't know.

22. Where did the first Jews to settle in Colonial America come from?
    a. Brazil.
    b. Germany.
    c. England.
    d. I don't know.

23. What is the primary denomination that you associate with?
    a. Black Hat/Yeshivish or Chassidish
    b. Orthodox (neither Black Hat nor Modern)
    c. Modern Orthodox
    d. Reform
    e. Reconstructionist
    f. Renewal
    g. Humanistic Judaism
    h. Post-denominational
    i. Multiple denomination
    j. Secular or culturally Jewish
    k. Just Jewish
    l. Not Jewish
    m. Other (please specify)

24. Which category below includes your age?
    a. 18-20
    b. 21-29
    c. 30-39
    d. 40-49
    e. 50-59
    f. 60-69
    g. 70 or older

25. Are you male or female?
    a. Prefer not to answer
    b. Male
    c. Female

May I contact you with further questions? If so, please write your phone # or e-mail address:
PHONE #_____
E-MAIL ADDRESS_____

Thank you for participating.