

# PREPARING FOR ENTRY

## Concepts That Support a Study of What It Takes to Launch a Career in Jewish Education

FUNDED BY  
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JIM JOSEPH FOUNDATION

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

This work was supported by the William Davidson Foundation (grant number 1709-01132) and the Jim Joseph Foundation (grant number 18-55).

## BACKGROUND

CASJE has launched a multipronged project to study the Recruitment, Retention, and Development of Jewish Educators (RRDOJE) in the United States. For the purposes of this study, Jewish educators are defined as individuals who work for pay, either part time or full time, in an institutional setting geared to Jewish educational outcomes. Or, they're self-employed individuals intending to achieve the same outcomes. They design and/or deliver experiences for the purpose of facilitating Jewish learning, engagement, connection, and meaning through direct contact with participants.<sup>1</sup>

The Preparing for Entry strand of our inquiry addresses a set of questions that will shed light on what it takes to launch a career in Jewish education and, in turn, what interventions might encourage promising candidates to seek and take up employment as Jewish educators. These questions include: What attracts people, after they have completed a college degree or its equivalent, to work in the field of Jewish education?<sup>2</sup> What deters them from the field? What pathways into the field are most likely to yield committed and qualified educators? And what might make the field more attractive to promising candidates?

In this paper, we explore the central terms in this inquiry: What is a career? How different is someone's perception and experience of their work when it is seen as part of a career rather than a job? What factors and forces are salient in shaping the desire to pursue a career, and specifically a career in Jewish education? What experiences and resources are understood to

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<sup>1</sup> As defined in a previous working paper for the On the Journey strand of CASJE's RRDOJE study (Rosov Consulting, 2019), Jewish educators are paid professionals who work directly with people of any age who identify as Jews, in settings—whether virtual, brick-and-mortar, or outdoor—that aim to help participants find special meaning in Jewish texts, experiences, and associations (even if some who are engaged in these efforts may themselves use terms like “Jewish engagement” or “Jewish meaning-making” to describe their work). When we refer to Jewish educators, we specifically mean those working in five primary sectors: (1) *formal Jewish education* (day schools, early childhood education, supplemental schools); (2) *informal/experiential settings* including both immersive (e.g., camp) and non-immersive (e.g., youth organizations, Jewish community centers); (3) those involved in *engagement, social justice, and innovation* (e.g., Jewish Studio Project, Moishe House, OneTable); (4) *communal organizations* that may employ someone in a related role (e.g., scholars in residence at Federations or Jewish educators at Jewish Family Services); and (5) *non-organizational networks and online learning* (e.g., independent B'nai Mitzvah or Hebrew tutors). For a number of pragmatic reasons, we have excluded pulpit rabbis and university professors of Jewish studies from this definition. Please see Rosov Consulting (2019) for more details.

<sup>2</sup> By specifying our interest in people's work choices post-college, we make a distinction between those for whom Jewish education is their primary occupation (even if part time) and those for whom it is not. Many college students take a first job in Jewish education: the hours are good, the pay for very-part-time work is reasonable, and, for former campers or youth group participants, the ambience is appealing. Few of these individuals think of themselves as future Jewish educators; Jewish education is not their primary occupation. Choosing to work in Jewish education post-college involves, we assume, a markedly different set of calculations.

prepare individuals psychologically and materially to enter a field of work? What do we mean by deterrents and obstacles to pursuing a career?

To clarify these terms and to help shape the design of our research, our team turned first to three data sources during a preliminary, exploratory phase of work:

- (i) A comprehensive review of literature, blogs, and public statements that shed light on the contours of early careers more generally and careers in the field of Jewish education specifically. The sources we reviewed are concerned with a broad range of careers besides teaching. Fields include engineering, law, medicine, social work, nursing, and, in one unexpected instance, NASCAR racing. Inevitably, because almost all the peer-reviewed literature on entry into a career in education is associated with teaching, this is the largest single field from which we draw insights; still, it makes up only about a quarter of the citations that follow. This breadth of sources indicates that we did not attempt to impose a template from any single field on the scope of inquiry.
- (ii) Interviews with nine key informants, each of whom has extensive experience in one of the following domains: (a) the “seed sectors” from which Jewish educators often emerge—camping, Israel experience programming, and campus activism; (b) training programs, fellowships, and other frameworks—enabling opportunities—that typically launch individuals toward a first job as a Jewish educator; and (c) institutions (such as the Jewish New Teacher Project) that support new hires who are in a first job within various sectors of Jewish education.
- (iii) Six focus groups with a total of 24 young people (currently in college or just out of college) who are either (a) enrolled in training programs or fellowship opportunities that pave the way to full-time employment in Jewish education, or (b) have recently taken up a first full-time position as a Jewish educator.

This preliminary inquiry has encouraged us to assume that choosing to work as a Jewish educator and deciding to enter this field as a career result from the interplay of four *contributing components*, the relationships between which have not been systematically investigated until now. Provisionally, we call them *stimuli*, *personal assets*, *enabling opportunities*, and *inhibitors*. Stimuli are the factors and forces that whet an interest in and stoke a passion for work as a Jewish educator. Personal assets support an individual’s readiness and capacity to become a Jewish educator at any point along their pathway to the field. Enabling opportunities are the frameworks and programs that help translate an appetite to work as a Jewish educator into a readiness and capacity to be one. Inhibitors are the circumstances and pressures that discourage individuals from either working in the field of Jewish education altogether or making a career in this field.

We did not commence the key informant interviews looking to confirm these four contributing components. They surfaced first in our interviews with key informants, although the conceptual labels employed are our own. They were subsequently supplemented and sharpened during focus group conversations. It is possible that others might have identified fewer or more contributing components. We have found that these four concepts efficiently capture a large part of the dynamic that results in a person choosing to explore and enter a particular field of employment rather than others. We feel confident that the interplay we hypothesize between these components is not limited to the processes by which people become educators, let alone Jewish educators. In this paper, we synthesize what we have learned with respect to the central terms in this hypothesis.

## WHAT IS A CAREER?

*In my ideal world, I don't want a job ever. I think having a job is not a feasible goal in the social context I exist in. I think having a job puts me in a relationship with money and power in a way that ideally I wouldn't want to be.*

–Focus group participant

Beginning with the work of Bellah and his colleagues, in their landmark study *Habits of the Heart*, sociologists have distinguished people's relationships to their work as jobs, careers, and callings (Bellah et al., 1985). Wrzesniewski and her colleagues summarize the main features of this distinction:

People who have jobs are only interested in the material benefits from work and do not seek or receive any other type of reward from it ... people who have careers have a deeper personal investment in their work and mark their achievements not only through monetary gain, but through advancement within the occupational structure. ... A person with a calling works not for financial gain or career advancement, but instead for the fulfillment that doing the work brings to the individual. (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997, p. 22)

More recently, these distinctions have been popularized, for example by Wilding (2018)—“A job you do for others, while a career is what you do for yourself”—and by Achor (2011)—“the way a person sees his or her occupation—as job, career or calling—doesn't depend on the job title or position, but on the meaning he or she perceives in the work.”

The concept of career has been under assault from many directions. The popularized, often quoted, and likely dubious claim that 65% of high school students are being prepared for jobs that don't yet exist (Sander, 2017) places in doubt the notion that many people can or should think beyond the near future about what their work might involve or what careers they

might pursue. Concerns about the expansion of the gig economy (Friedman, 2014) and the dismay inspired by the much-cited inference from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics that “today’s [high school student] will have 10-14 different jobs by the age of 38” (Fisch & McLeod, 2012) support the idea that many people won’t be able to stay in the same job (and perhaps not even the same field) for very long, even if they want to. And these futurist predictions are compounded by another widely cited (and frequently overinterpreted) finding that the generations born after 1980, essentially millennials and Gen Z, are less inclined than previous generations to remain in one job over time, rating work as less central to their lives, valuing leisure more, and expressing a weaker work ethic (Twenge, 2010).

Evidently, for a variety of reasons, people are less anchored to one institution or even to one field of work than they once were (Gratton & Scott, 2017). Similarly, some sectors of the population are more likely to expect their work to be aligned with a sense of personal mission than with an already demarcated runway (Hammer, 2015). And yet, the death of career as a construct has surely been greatly exaggerated. In fields of work, especially professions, where entry—to be precise, admission—is both highly selective and depends on a great investment of time and effort, employees are much less likely to exit or to transfer to altogether new fields of work (Fu et al., 2011). The perceived costs of doing so are that much greater, a phenomenon known as the Sunk Cost Fallacy (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). Similarly, concepts of work derived from the creative, high-tech, and cultural industries, which emphasize the fluid character of employment histories, do not yet apply to most fields of work or most sectors of society (Gottschall & Henninger, 2007).

In making a case for “rethinking the concept of career,” Cuzzocrea and Lyon (2011) review the changing meaning of career, from its origins in the Latin *carraria*, meaning a road or carriageway. They follow the concept through the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when it was associated with a racecourse and gallop, into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, where it was understood as “a linear trajectory of interconnected jobs in a single organization, with upward vertical mobility, and a sense of inevitability and closure” (p. 1031). Over the last few decades, this linear notion has been supplanted by concepts of boundaryless careers (Briscoe & Finkelstein, 2009) and protean careers (Hall, 1996), constructs that convey how individuals are not likely to stay within a single “bounded” career path or organization or rely on organizational promotions and internal career paths. Their employment choices are self-generated (truly protean). Following a narrative turn taken by scholars, career as a concept has evolved into a subjective construct that accommodates the greater uncertainty and fluidity associated with work today (Beck, 2000). In this form, the study of career calls for attending to how people render their employment trajectories backward and forward in time. For those studying employment choices, career continues to be a useful construct for making sense of how people choose over time and of how they retrospectively make sense of their own employment choices. Career is not just a linear, externally derived, or highly predictive concept anymore (Culbin et al., 2015). As Hall (1996) pronounces, “Career is dead, long live the career.”

Thinking about careers in the field of Jewish education is aligned with these larger patterns. There is much discussion about how to meet the shifting career aspirations of those now entering the workforce. We're told that these "young adults are less willing to remain in the same job, or even the same organization as long-term as their predecessors" (Eisen & Bornstein, 2019) and that "Jewish Gen X'ers and Millennials are exhibiting a dramatic transition in career preferences" compared with previous generations (Windmueller, 2017). Yet, our focus group data from college-age and post-college young people suggest that these claims apply more to those who work in less bounded sectors, such as the focus group participant quoted at the start of this section who was contemplating work in informal Jewish education. The more tightly defined the roles that new employees are expected to perform and the higher the level of certification they are required to achieve before taking up a position, especially in sectors of formal education, the more likely they are to plan their work life beyond the next couple of years. This finding is consistent with the few studies published in the last 10 years about the career plans of Jewish professionals and Jewish educators (Held, 2015; Schor & Cohen, 2001). That doesn't mean that the individuals working in these sectors are wedded to the positions they occupy, but it does mean that they are much more willing to think about their work as part of a longer-term trajectory. They have made a concerted effort to get to where they want to be; they're not going to move on so readily.

Synthesizing the literature reviewed here, we can say that the concept of a career as distinct from a job has a diachronic dimension; it is not only about someone's work at this particular moment. Employment choices are intelligible in relation both to what people have done previously (in their education and previous work) and what they expect to do in the future. It is part of a story they tell about themselves and about who they are in the world. The meaning of career is subjectively derived. No doubt, the relevance of this concept is resisted by those who see themselves as having multiple possible futures and not an occupational biography in just one particular field. For those who do find career a useful construct, it can help explain (to others and to themselves) a willingness to work in situations that in purely material terms are less than optimally desirable; these people are willing to tolerate a less than optimal job because of a larger set of career goals and perhaps some overarching calling.

In line with the narrative turn taken by those who study employment trajectories, we intend in this study to use the concept of career to help make sense of people's intentions and choices over time with respect to their work for pay. At the same time, we recognize that for some of our research subjects—perhaps because they are "accidental tourists," "late bloomers," or "disillusioned lawyers"—this is not a concept they are accustomed to and perhaps even comfortable with using to talk about their work choices.



## STIMULI

*My time at camp has shaped me and is what made me take this position ... The time I spent in camp—working with campers/CITs [counselors in training] ... that's really what motivated me. The nice thing is there are events that happened in the past but also every summer when I go back I'm reinvigorated and remotivated to continue working with kids, teaching things, living with Judaism in new and interesting ways, that's what powers me.*

–Focus group participant

As indicated above, a first question to address in understanding people's entry after college into any field of work is what prompted them to consider working in that field in the first place.<sup>3</sup> An extensive literature on motivations probes the reasons people choose one domain of work over others. When it comes to choosing to work as an educator (and in this respect the literature is almost entirely about schoolteachers), a century of scholarship repeatedly returns to five broad motivations for working in this field. First, people enjoy work with children—or as one early scholar (now anachronistically) put it, they have a “fondness for children” (Tudhope, 1944). Second, they wish to make a difference in the world through work with the next generation (Klassen, et al., 2011; König & Rothland, 2012). Third, they desire to remain engaged with a particular subject area, something that continues, it seems, to motivate a majority of teachers today (Manuel & Hughes, 2006). Fourth, they find pleasure and meaning in the act of teaching, and especially in the creativity that it calls for (Heinz, 2015). Finally, they appreciate the working conditions—the promise of “good salary, vacations and convenient working hours” (Avgousti, 2017). The overwhelming consensus is that, for the great majority who do this work, teaching is a calling, driven by a combination of intrinsic and altruistic motivations (Hansen, 1995; Kyriacou and Coulthard, 2000).

The consistency of these motivations has been extensively explored, and confirmed, across cultural and national contexts (Jungert et al., 2014; Wafaa, 2011), gender (Avgousti, 2017), and generational cohorts (DeLong, 1987). By contrast, much less attention has been given to what lies behind these motivations; in other words, what are the stimuli that prompt an adult to want, for example, to contribute to the lives of children, make a difference in their own community through the work they do, or dedicate their work to a subject area they enjoyed studying? Antecedent causes of this kind are harder to uncover or confirm, although, ironically, it was the search for such causes that prompted one of the earliest studies in this field: Valentine's (1934) “enquiry as to reasons for the choice of the teaching profession by

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<sup>3</sup> We recognize that personal disposition (i.e., personality) can impact a person's inclination and ability to enter an occupational field. We are not proposing to investigate the contribution of such psycho-emotional variables to entry into the field of Jewish education. These variables are not amenable to programmatic intervention, unlike the broadly sociological and social-psychological variables we explore in this paper.



university students." Valentine compared the impact of "interest in favorite studies," "parents' wishes," "influence of an admired teacher," and "persuasion by a teacher." The first of these explanations might be considered a motivation of the more conventional, self-generated kind. The other explanations (even though drawn from a narrow range of possibilities) point to different kinds of stimuli: the external circumstances and influences that shape the decision to teach and the influence of significant others on those making the choice.

### **Influence of parents and other family members**

The most commonly explored stimulus of this kind relates to the contribution or influence of parents. The exploration of parents' influence on career choice is a prominent part of inquiries in fields of employment where there is a high incidence of "family traditions of career following"—that is, where there is an increased probability of children following their parents' profession (Saleem et al., 2014; Oren et al., 2013). This is a phenomenon that can be observed and has been investigated in teaching, law, politics, agriculture, medicine, entertainment, and even NASCAR driving (Groothuis & Groothuis, 2008). The phenomenon has been noted in Jewish communal contexts, too: based on a study of Wexner Fellowship applicants, Sarna (1994) posited "the existence of a sizeable multi-generational leadership pool within the American Jewish community"; that is, a sizeable population of individuals "groomed" from an early age to follow family members into Jewish communal work.

Occupational inheritance, as this phenomenon is commonly called, is generally attributed to some combination of financial-capital transfer, cultural-capital transfer, brand-name loyalty transfer, and nepotism. In a consistent finding across domains, it seems that progeny exhibit greater initial interest in going into fields in which their parents are employed but are less likely than those whose parents work in other occupations to remain over time within those fields (Gubler et al., 2017; Pinchot et al., 2008).

In recent years, a few studies have examined the special case of occupational inheritance among engineering students, an increasingly competitive academic and occupational field (Martin et al., 2014; Jacobs et al., 2017). The findings are relevant to questions of what prompts young people to consider a career in Jewish education. In the course of studying the family occupational backgrounds of engineering students, Mannon and Schreuders (2007) found that around half of the men and women in a sample of student engineers had at least one engineer in their family. They concluded that family members are passing on engineering-related knowledge, interests, and aspirations to a segment of the student engineering population, a type of occupational inheritance that is especially crucial for paving the way into this field for women who otherwise lack relevant role models (Holbrook et al., 2008). These conclusions are consistent with those of Dorie et al. (2014) who identified the role played by parents in motivating an interest in the field from early childhood, by serving as role models if they themselves were engineers and by providing experiences for learning important engineering concepts and skills.

Of course, parents can influence or inspire a career-choice decision without working in the same field themselves. In general, parents function as socializers of achievement-related values, both positively and negatively. They contribute to adolescents' occupational visions of themselves (Jodl et al., 2001). This phenomenon has been long observed and has recently yielded vivid data in relation to immigrant communities, especially where the children of immigrants are encouraged, supported, or pressured by their families to apply to high-status academic programs and fields of employment (Kim & Bang, 2017; Huang, 2017). This can be a case of "right choice, wrong motives," as Kindt (2016) puts it.

As discussed in the concept paper associated with *On the Journey*, the first strand of our RRDOJE work, the most elaborate framework for exploring the antecedent contributors to career choice is Perry's Public Motivation Theory (PMT), which conceptualizes the prosocial values, such as compassion and self-sacrifice, that underlie a desire to help. In Perry's (1997) model, parent socialization occupies a significant place alongside religious socialization, professional socialization, political ideology, and individual demographic characteristics. As he writes, two aspects of parental socialization can be expected to be related to public service motivation: parental modeling of helping or altruistic behavior, and the extent of positive relations between young people and their parents. The young person needs to feel positively disposed to emulate the behaviors they have seen being modeled (although, of course, there are those—some of whom are characterized by Sarna (1994) as "bloomers"—who pursue a particular career in order to set themselves apart from their parents). As Moynihan and Pandey (2007) explain, PMT assumes that individual behavior is not just the product of rational, self-interested choices but is rooted in normative and affective motives as well. Rational choice theory does not adequately explain the career choices people make, especially in fields where poor financial remuneration deters many promising prospects. In those circumstances, normative and affective factors are especially important.

### **Inspiration of role models**

Interestingly, the PMT model does not specify other adults, besides parents, who play an explicitly inspirational or implicitly socializing role in the career choices of young people. The model allows room for the influence of "observational learning" and "religious socialization," but these constructs are less about the influence of significant others than about educational and acculturative experiences that nurture an ethos of public service. In this respect, the model is consistent with another widely validated career-choice theory that unpacks the contribution of "antecedent socialization experiences" to the decision to teach, the FIT-Choice (Factors Influencing Teaching) model. Richardson and Watt (2006), the model's developers, report that "earlier research found that previous teachers and family had been frequently nominated as influences on the choice of a teaching career" (they reference, for example, Lortie's 1975 much-cited research). However, in their own widely replicated study

“significant others were not highly influential in general, with mean ratings well below the scale midpoint” (p. 51).

Of course, there are any number of inspirational stories, some of which have received the Hollywood treatment, about teachers or alternative role models who changed people’s lives and the careers they pursued. But there is not a significant body of qualitative or quantitative data that shows how or how often people choose to become educators thanks to the role played by significant role models, and by teachers in particular. (The only exceptions are studies of gifted students, such as Marshall, 1981, and Jung, 2019.)

Given the absence of well-established evidence about the contribution of significant role models to the decision to become an educator/teacher, it’s hard to know what to make of the comments of one of the key informants we interviewed. This person, the director of a graduate program in Jewish education, reported that almost everyone who comes into her program can point to the moment when a senior staff person—at a camp or synagogue, for example—tapped them on the shoulder and said, “You really should consider working as an educator or rabbi.” This phenomenon was confirmed by focus group participants, too, who talked about having been inspired for the first time to think about themselves as an educator thanks to the example or encouragement of a formative individual, typically a Jewish educator or rabbi. Recent blog postings tell a similar story. As one author describes it, “I felt like a Jewish leader for the first time because someone told me that I was” (Shames, 2017).

Might the apparently widespread occurrence of this phenomenon in Jewish education—at least as suggested by anecdotal reports, and by the very limited research into the contribution of “influentials” on career choice (Goodman, 2000)—be a consequence of employment in this field being such a countercultural choice? If there are people who still ask ironically about Jewish educators “what kind of job is that for a nice Jewish boy or girl?” this option might well need the intervention of an inspirational individual to become genuinely attractive or plausible. That might account for what seems to be the widespread tap-on-the-shoulder phenomenon in the field.

### **Love of subject matter**

Our focus groups indicate a further inspiration that is echoed in the broader field. Repeatedly, studies of motivations to teach identify “love of the subject” or a “passion for the field” as a prominent intrinsic reason why people choose to teach, especially in the middle school grades and above (Mee et al., 2012; Hennessy & Lynch, 2017). The higher the grade level, the more prominent this particular stimulus (Kyriacou et al., 2006; Book & Freeman, 1986), with those who teach at the university level being most motivated by a passion for their subject and a desire to share it with others (Mitten & Ross, 2018). It seems that the driver here is not simply one of having excelled in the subject, but of having found meaning and joy

in encountering or becoming proficient in a field of human creativity and of wanting to enable others to experience those same satisfactions (Hobbs, 2012; Younger et al., 2004).

For both key informants and early-career focus group participants, this particular theme loomed large for those interested in teaching Judaic content in formal education settings. The director of one program described how people (especially men) enroll in her program because “they’re turned on by Torah ... They love learning Torah and want to teach it to others.” Or as another informant put it, they see the life of a teacher as providing an opportunity “to learn Torah every day.” One focus group participant conveyed the passion that can fuel this particular mentality: “For me it’s my life. I can’t separate ... I need to create boundaries and I do, but learning Torah, teaching Torah, is living for me.” For these young people, then, love of Torah is more than just love of subject matter in a conventional sense; it is a commitment to a way of life realized most fully in work as an educator.

## **Altruism**

These last comments indicate why it can be so difficult to distinguish intrinsic from altruistic motivations—that is, to separate (a) those impulses that derive meaning, fun, and a sense of achievement from engaging in the practice of education itself from (b) purposes that are concerned with serving or inspiring others through education. This is consistent with a dispute between those scholars who see altruistic reasons for teaching as an extension of intrinsic reasons and others who view them as part of a distinct motivational construct (Thomson et al., 2012). As Parker Palmer (1998) famously put it, it takes courage to teach. Education calls for taking risks. It can be a brutal experience; it is as challenging as it can be rewarding. Many of those who are attracted to the profession are familiar with what can make it so tough, and yet they continue to be drawn to this work by a set of purposes beyond themselves. Those purposes, classified by Richardson and Watt (2006) as instances of “social utility values,” include a desire to “shape the future of children/adolescents,” “enhance social equity,” “make a social contribution,” and “work with children and adolescents.” These motivations are paradigmatically altruistic and have been well documented across national and ethnic contexts (Heinz, 2015).

The origins of such altruistic motivations are less commonly explored but have been documented in a series of disparate studies. They can stem from an intent to compensate and correct painful early (educational) experiences, especially those associated with discrimination and disadvantage on the grounds of color and class (Su, 1997; Kass & Miller, 2018). They originate in the experience of wrestling with (and perhaps overcoming) a learning disability of one’s own (Benchetrit & Katz, 2019). They can be prompted by observing the struggles of family members with the education system and determining to ensure that others shouldn’t have the same experience (Lavian, 2014). And, drawing from the broadest canvas, they can stem from a political worldview in which education is seen as the

most powerful, accessible vehicle for effecting social change, a dynamic poignantly depicted in Casey's (1993) life histories of women working for social change.

A strain of idealism has long been recognized as compelling people to enter the field of Jewish education. As Kaunfer sardonically put it almost 50 years ago, "Jewish education is an unrewarding profession financially and in terms of status. It is also part-time work. The result of all this is that only the very dedicated or the very incompetent would choose to enter the field." (Quoted by Strassfeld & Strassfeld, 1976, p. 208). Others writing in more measured fashion spell out what impelled them, or those they were studying, to become Jewish educators: Bennett Solomon (1992) wrote of feeling compelled to ensure that others don't experience the gap-filled, "disappointing Jewish education" he received. Nechama, a teacher in Ingall's (2006) study of early-career Jewish educators, talks about her passion to ensure that "these kids know the stuff so that they can become more involved in their religion and their community and then not intermarry" (p. 45). Morah Shifra, a participant in Pomson's (2002) study, explains that she came to this work "to awaken the students' *neshama* (spirit/soul) ... and to develop their *frumkeit* (observance/piety)" (p. 28). These educators, the last two of whom emerged from intensive Jewish upbringings, express a missionary impulse not widely shared today, at least not outside Orthodox circles. The impulse they express is consistent with a concept of the Jewish educator as *kli kodesh*, a vehicle for bringing God's will into the world to be shared with others.

### Putting it all together

To summarize, we anticipate that when studying the entry of educators to the various sectors of Jewish education, we need to pay attention to *stimuli*—the factors and forces that whet an interest in and stoke a passion to work as a Jewish educator. As indicated here, we can expect these stimuli to include inspirational role models, such as educators or family members who demonstrate what Jewish educators can and do achieve; social contexts in which Jewish education is celebrated as a value; and positive experiences of Jewish learning that foster a thirst to learn and to share one's learning with others.

## PERSONAL ASSETS

*Networking is huge. The saying is, "It's who you know, not what you know." While what you know is a big part, making connections, people knowing you within the industry is huge. And then knowing people who were in my position before and made their way up the ranks. My current boss used to be in my position and then she was promoted and that's why I was hired. So, there is that ability to make your way up the ranks ... and knowing these people and them knowing me and my work ethic is just really beneficial.*

—Focus group participant

We do not know the extent to which individuals at one time or another were interested in becoming a Jewish educator and yet did not do so. We aim to explore if indeed there is such a phenomenon and what accounts for it. We wonder, for example, whether people might feel inspired to ensure that others don't experience the kind of impoverished Jewish education they had suffered (the altruistic stimulus described above) but then find that their education was so insufficient they are not able to achieve the minimum thresholds of Jewish literacy needed to embark on a career.

It is commonplace that many individuals desire to enter competitive fields of work but are not able to do so because of inadequate qualifications, insufficient financial resources, or a lack of awareness of or access to the available opportunities. These difficulties—associated with insufficient access to cultural capital, financial capital, and social capital—do not seem widespread in most sectors of education beyond higher education thanks to an undersupply of qualified personnel and relatively low entry requirements (Boyd et al., 2005). With so many available pathways and opportunities to become a teacher or early childhood educator, for example, it is rare that special forms of capital are needed in order to enter these fields. In fact, for precisely these reasons, teaching has historically been one of the most accessible occupations for immigrants seeking to gain a professional/white collar foothold in society (Kobrin, 2009).

We propose to explore whether the various sectors of Jewish education have more in common with historically competitive fields, such as medicine and law, than with the labor market for teachers. There are grounds to expect so because of the relatively high Jewish or Hebrew literacy required in some positions, and because of the extent to which one needs to be a community insider to be aware of the training opportunities or entry-level positions that might exist. Indeed, the degree to which insiders are advantaged in this fashion might be why so many people need a tap on the shoulder from some influential individual to help them get started or to find their way.

As noted above, research into the personal assets that enable access to fields of employment tends to focus on the role played by three forms of capital: social capital (who you know), cultural capital (what you know), and financial capital (what you own)—with it being frequently difficult to disentangle one from the other. To demonstrate this entanglement, we can ask: what specifically accounts for why people in higher status socioeconomic groups access higher status employment? Their social network, their knowledge of how to talk and what to say in job interviews, or the financial assets they can deploy to access frameworks for improving their competitiveness? It seems reasonable to expect that all of the above are relevant.

Here we review each of these forms of capital separately, since we assume that within the context of the labor market for Jewish educators each plays a distinct role.

## Social capital

Granovetter's (1974) claim that approximately 40 to 50 percent of all jobs in the United States are found through help or information from friends or relatives still seems to hold true (Belli, 2017), even though Granovetter's (1995) argument that weak social ties are more advantageous in job searches than strong ties has been widely challenged. As Mouw (2003) suggests, the old axiom "it's not what you know but who you know" still seems compelling. Job searches and job hirings are embedded in social networks. Social capital is a critical element in becoming aware of job opportunities and securing them (Flap & Boxman, 2017).

More recent studies of the contribution of social capital have nuanced these general principles. First, it has been established that individuals do not necessarily take advantage of their network contacts (Kwon & Adler, 2014) and that job seekers' social capital does not predict well the likelihood of using contacts to search for jobs, even though those who use contacts do improve their job search outcomes (Obukhova & Lan, 2013). As McDonald (2010) puts it, "social resources provide access to [job] opportunities but a person must mobilize these resources through instrumental action before the social resources can be considered social capital" (p. 4). These conclusions indicate the degree to which the sociological literature on social networks needs to be integrated with the approach often used by psychology scholars, which takes into account job seekers' perceptions, motivations, and emotional reactions (Manroop & Richardson, 2015),

Evidently, when it comes to finding a job, access to social capital benefits some more than others, and the outcomes secured as a result are also more nuanced than once thought. The association between using networks to find jobs and job quality is stronger for high socioeconomic status workers than for low socioeconomic status workers and stronger for men than for women (Ioannides & Loury, 2004). The quality of those networks is also important. Loury (2006) demonstrated that male workers who were helped by male relatives from a prior generation (fathers, grandfathers, uncles) in their job search activity ended up earning higher wages than similar workers who obtained jobs through formal search methods. In one more example, Franzen & Hangartner (2006) found that social networks improve the non-pecuniary characteristics of job searches, such as the speed with which someone finds a job, but don't seem to bring a similar monetary pay-off. In the field of Jewish education, a field that serves a relatively small ethnic community where there are few degrees of separation between colleagues in the same workplace and between educators and those they educate, it is easy to imagine that social capital, when mobilized, could facilitate both entry and advancement in the field.

## Cultural capital

A second asset that makes a difference to people's capacity to access educational and employment opportunities is that of cultural capital, a construct that in its broadest sense



connotes the cultural traits that are rewarded in fields like education and in society more generally. Unfortunately, Bourdieu, who coined the term, used it differently in his various writings. His interpreters have most often taken the construct to refer to familiarity with the culture of the “dominant” class. Advantaged youth are therefore seen to acquire an ease with the dominant culture as their families expose them to its formal manifestations in cultural products and to its informal manifestations in everyday interaction styles (Davies & Rizk, 2018).

Although the empirical usefulness of cultural capital theory has been challenged (see, for example, Tzanakis, 2011, and Sullivan, 2002), it has been and continues to be influential in broadly explaining persisting inequalities in education and specifically the contribution of the family to educational advantage. Lareau’s painstaking qualitative work (1989, 2002) has offered vivid evidence of the ways in which parents (especially mothers) engage in the “concerted cultivation” of advantages for their children as “projects in the making.” Her ethnographies bring to life the kinds of “home advantages” that Bourdieu theorized. Reay (2005) has made a similar, smaller-scale contribution in a British context.

There has been less work that examines the role of cultural capital in labor markets or in contributing to employment opportunities other than in terms of occupational inheritance, that phenomenon described above of children entering professions or elite occupations in which their own parents or other family members work (Egerton, 1997). We believe, however, that within the context of Jewish education—a field in which broad cultural virtuosity is as valuable as technical or subject-matter expertise—the concept is surely useful to making sense of individuals’ readiness for employment. Future educators may acquire Jewish cultural virtuosity at home, but they are as likely to gain it in other immersive settings such as day schools, summer camps, and educational experiences in Israel (Pomson, 2019). Those experiences may enable future educators to achieve sufficient fluency in Hebrew, help them become adept in leading prayer services, or provide them with a special appreciation of Jewish memes in millennial subculture. One way or another, the culture they gain positions them to educate others. Individuals who lack broad cultural literacy of this kind simply may not be ready to become Jewish educators, no matter how inspired they are to take on this role.

## **Financial capital**

Financial capital, specifically in the form of family wealth, has been extensively associated with educational attainment and occupational prestige even in comparatively egalitarian societies such as Australia and Sweden (Chesters, 2018; Mood, 2017). These advantages are multigenerational. Hällsten and Pfeffer (2017) and Knigge (2016), for example, identify the consequences of wealth and socioeconomic status for the distribution of opportunity from grandparents to grandchildren. In societies where educational opportunities can be accessed by purchasing a home in a more desirable neighborhood, by drawing on some form of

equity to support a child's postsecondary education, and most obviously by paying the fees at independent schools, these effects are still greater (Pfeffer, 2011). Nevertheless, as the previous discussions of cultural capital and social capital indicate, the parental assets that make a difference to children's educational attainment extend beyond their financial wealth to other resources, such as the amount of time they devote to their children, the quality of their attention, and their own educational attainment (typically associated, in turn, with wealth; Kim & Sherraden, 2011).

Specific (and occasionally direct) associations between family wealth/financial capital and employment choices (as distinct from educational opportunity more broadly) have been most extensively investigated in relation to a small number of particular issues: the contribution of financial capital to "entrepreneurial entry" or self-employment—where financial capital is apparently less important than human capital (Kim et al., 2006; Frid et al., 2016); individuals' capacity to wait out a superior job opportunity or endure unemployment (Algan, 2003; Bloemen & Stanca, 2001); and the capacity of college students and college graduates to take up "prestigious"—and apparently career advantageous—unpaid internships (Hora et al., 2019; Swan, 2015).

These topics may not all seem to be immediately relevant to the career entry of Jewish educators. We have learned from our focus groups, however, not to underestimate the ability to draw on financial capital as a factor in shaping entry to the field. Focus group participants noted that they saw peers, without sufficient financial support from home, miss out on the inspirational and formative experiences they themselves had at summer camp or in day school. Others noted that without financial support from their own parents they could not have participated in fellowship opportunities that were designed to launch their careers as educators. No matter how well subsidized these experiences are, they are not equally accessible to all. Finally, some shared how they could afford to contemplate a career in Jewish education because a partner would be earning a good wage in a different field of work. If they had been the primary wage earner for their family, they might not have been able to afford to enter this field.

### **Putting it all together**

To summarize, we anticipate that when studying the entry of educators to the various sectors of Jewish education, we need to pay attention to *personal assets*—those resources that support an individual's readiness and capacity to become a Jewish educator, at any point along their pathway to the field. These assets can be conceived as forms of capital: cultural capital in the form of Jewish literacy gained, for example, during a day school education or an intensive Jewish gap-year program; social capital in the form of access to settings (such as camps and synagogues) and to individuals (such as mentors, rabbis, and former bunkmates) that enhance readiness to become an educator; and financial capital that makes it possible to

access powerful, but often expensive, formative experiences that shape readiness and capacity to be a Jewish educator, or even finally to take up a poorly remunerated job.

## ENABLING OPPORTUNITIES

*I knew that I wanted to eventually work in the Jewish world, possibly as a rabbi. But I wasn't 100% sure. So, I wanted to get some experience working in the Jewish world first, to make sure that's what I want to do in my future. And I figured [this] was the best place to start.*

—Focus group participant

Many fields of work include an entry stage—a kind of portal and occasional purgatory—in which interested candidates have an opportunity to acquire “on-the-job” skills, demonstrate their preparedness or potential, and at the same time explore for themselves their suitability and readiness for work in the field. In medicine, trainee doctors are required to complete a residency as a stage in their transition from education to employment. In many countries, novice lawyers and accountants are required to be “articled” under the supervision of someone already in the profession. These are often highly competitive opportunities that also serve to filter out borderline-appropriate candidates. Serving related functions, the continually expanding internship economy (estimated in the US to employ 2 million interns a year in fields as diverse as pharmaceutical research, green energy development, dance, and museum curatorship; Rogers et al., 2019) provides opportunities for prospective workers/employees to gain hands-on experience of particular fields of work and for interns to demonstrate their potential to possible employers.

The field of education does not include so many frameworks of this kind. In some jurisdictions, teachers must complete a probationary year, typically with the support of a mentor, before they are fully certified; this is not dissimilar to being an articulated lawyer. Teach for America can also be seen as performing a kind of entryway function; framed as a two-year commitment, it is a highly competitive resume-building experience that both socializes and inspires more than half of those who participate to enter the field of public education (Donaldson & Johnson, 2011). Finally, there are graduate-level preservice education programs that perform these same functions, providing a mix of classroom-based and field-based experiences that enable matriculating students to transition directly into employment.

In the field of Jewish education, there are few internship experiences, although seasonal work at camp probably performs such a function. Camp directors certainly feel that when they're trying to fill middle-management positions they are competing within the marketplace for college student summer internships (McCole et al., 2012; Zigmond, 2017). There is a small (and dwindling) number of graduate-level, degree- or certificate-granting Jewish education programs designed, sometimes with a practicum component, to launch alumni

straight into full-time work. There are also numerous fellowships that serve as gateways to various subsectors of Jewish education ranging from campus work with Hillel through synagogue education to social justice activism in any number of countries. Taglit-Birthright Israel has begun to explore the degree to which serving as a Birthright *madrich* (a bus counselor on its Israel experience programs) serves as an entryway to Jewish communal work.

The broader research literature on the functions performed by enabling-opportunity/career-entry programs indicates that these frameworks perform two broad roles: one of personal and professional growth for the candidate/new employee and one as a sorting agent for employers and for society in general, especially in those frameworks where fewer than half of those who enter the portal continue to the field. We review below what is known about the first of these functions. In doing so, we sharpen our understanding of what to investigate among the participants in similar frameworks within the field of Jewish education. The second “sorting” function is not of immediate concern to our exploration of the choices and experiences of potential and early-career Jewish educators. This function is, however, of interest in the third strand of our work, Mapping the Market, where we propose to study the intentions and experiences of training, fellowship, and career-entry framework providers, and the function these programs serve in the field.

## **Socialization**

A prominent element in studies of learning to becoming a physician is the concept of socialization, whether that means socializing the emotions of new doctors or socializing them into professional norms. In Becker’s classic (1961) study, *Boys in White*, he depicted the process of “learning to play the role” of doctor, which Fox (1988) in equally influential qualitative work depicted as a training for uncertainty and the cultivation of “detached concern.” The common denominator in these accounts, and in those such as Hojat’s (2002) that have charted a shifting towards more empathetic norms in medicine, is how practitioners-in-formation learn appropriate emotions and appropriate norms through the hidden curriculum of the residency experience and day-to-day practice (Underman & Hirshfield, 2016). In those jurisdictions where lawyers are required to be articulated to a professional mentor, the learning of lawyering—responding emphatically and ethically to complex problems or real clients—is what is celebrated (Hamilton & Brabbit, 2007). When this kind of hands-on, on-the-job learning is absent from the law school curriculum it is bemoaned (Sullivan et al., 2007). This mix of ethical standards, ethical comportment, social roles, and responsibilities of the profession is what Benner and her colleagues (2009) identified as valuable outcomes of the most successful apprenticeships in the nursing field.

## **Skill building**

A second major element in medical residencies, legal articles, and much of the internship industry is the opportunity to learn a professional craft. Whether in medicine or in other

fields, it's appropriate to characterize this learning as the acquisition of clinical skills—what Sergiovanni (1984) characterized under that label, in a school context, as bringing expert professional knowledge and bearing to effective practice. Writing as a law professor, Holmquist (2012) formulated a similar notion, seeing this learning as involving a fusion of thinking and doing. In his words, in the legal context,

working with messy, human facts, in ways that real lawyers might is at the heart of thinking like a lawyer. [This is] the context and content that lawyers work within while, together with their clients, solving problems. [It involves engaging] in sophisticated higher order thinking about law and policy, problems, and goals, and about potential paths, obstructions, and solutions. (p. 357)

With less elaboration, this is also the kind of learning Teach for America promises its Corps members. When promoting the program, it heavily emphasizes the opportunity to develop leadership skills that can be applied to other contexts (Teach for America, n.d.). These are the skills that make it possible to survive and thrive in the classroom. On an aggregation website for college internship opportunities (<https://www.letsintern.com>) the outcomes most prominently promised are of a similar kind, the so-called “soft-skills,” such as teamwork, problem solving, adaptability, time management, and communication. These are shallow forms of the clinical skills cultivated in intense medical apprenticeships, but they're readily recognized as the kinds of things one can't learn very well through simulations or through watching videos. You have to get your feet wet if you're going to learn to swim.

## **Self-assessment**

A last dimension of entry-stage frameworks is the opportunity they provide for individuals—the career explorers—to assess whether or not they're suited to the field of work they had planned for themselves. This can be a case of discovering that life-work balance in professional law firms, especially for junior staff, is intolerable (Thornton, 2016) or that the physical and psychological demands made of early career physicians are not sustainable (Dyrbye et al., (2006). There's an extensive literature on attrition from preservice teaching programs, a phenomenon attributed in large part to a collision between naïveté or idealism about what this work involves and the challenging reality discovered (Hong, 2010). Internships, even if they rarely match the intensity of regular employment, do enable career explorers, without risking too much, to learn whether they are well enough suited to particular employment fields (Rothman & Sisman, 2016).

Rosov Consulting's (2018) study of alumni of Onward Israel's 7-week internship in Israel clearly reveals that these experiences can help clarify what particular career path a person wants to pursue:

*Before Onward, I was a volunteer at a nursing home, doing some health care volunteering. On Onward I was actually in the hospital, working with nurses and*

*doctors, talking to them. It really helped me to focus and narrow it down. I realized I want to work in the hospital, not just generally in the health care field (p. 5).*

## Putting it all together

We anticipate that our study of entry to the field of Jewish education needs to investigate how career explorers gain access to, make use of, and benefit from *enabling opportunities*—the frameworks and programs that help translate an already stimulated appetite to work as a Jewish educator into a willingness and ability to be one. We hypothesize that these time-limited, and often selective, fellowships and degree-program experiences might enable individuals to picture and develop an imagined future for themselves. They have the potential to enable people to reach the threshold of career entry, socializing them into the field; building useful, real-world skills; and then, finally, perhaps enabling them to see themselves, unambiguously, as Jewish educators.

## INHIBITORS

*My concerns relate to salary and burnout. When it comes to salary, is it fair that someone has to work during the day and then work during the evening in preparation and then they're paid the same entry level salary as someone without a Masters? Also, there's the issue of burnout, for the same reasons. Teachers' workload is not just nine to five.*

—Focus group participant

The components we have reviewed until now share the property of contributing to individuals' interest in and capacity to become Jewish educators. They stimulate a desire to enter the field, draw on assets that support a move in that direction, and finally provide opportunities that translate these forces and factors into a particular career interest or commitment. Most people, we assume, do not become Jewish educators because they did not experience these forces or access these resources. This is a field of work that was never an interest nor option for them. It was neither appealing nor plausible. And yet we expect that there are also individuals who *might* have become Jewish educators but chose not to do so. To put it colloquially, at some point in their lives these people were "at risk" of working in the field; they might even have shared many capacities and concerns with those who did become Jewish educators. We hypothesize that this population (whose size and features are currently unknown) were inhibited from doing so in some way; some combination of forces held them back. In fact, we can conceptualize the choice to become a Jewish educator—whether as a first career after college, or a later life career change—to emerge from the interplay between stimuli, personal assets, and enabling opportunities on the one hand, and inhibitors on the other. This is a dynamic experienced by all Jewish educators as well as by those who might have become Jewish educators but did not.

In this final section, we explore what these inhibitors might be and how they might function to deter prospective Jewish educators from either preparing to enter or from entering the field. We conceive of three kinds of inhibitors: *benign*, *constricting*, and *circumstantial*.

### **Benign inhibitors**

A focus group participant, currently participating in a post-college fellowship in the Jewish camping sector, described how he has loved experiencing Jewish education all of his life, both as participant and as quite an effective provider. And yet at the end of the fellowship year, he intends to take up a place in medical school. It's not that he's been put off Jewish education by economic or personal pressures, or that he is somehow unqualified to go any further in the field; it's just that he has a passion to do something else with his life.

This is an instance of what Nussbaum (1995), following Aristotle, calls "competing goods." It is by no means easy to choose one over the other, but this is not a decision made under duress no matter how bittersweet. This is an instance of what we mean by a benign inhibitor—one which results in a regret-free decision not to become a Jewish educator. In fact, this young man has conceived of a scenario which takes all of the sting out of the choice, imagining a future in which he becomes a physician and spends his summers as a camp doctor.

A key informant we interviewed drew our attention to an additional kind of benign inhibitor. We previously noted how many applicants to the teacher education program she leads are fueled by a love of learning Torah. Torah is their passion. They have admired many teachers of Torah in their lives, and they find it admirable and desirable to become a teacher of Torah themselves. That way they can live their passion. Very quickly, however, and quite often before even completing their preservice program, some of these Torah enthusiasts realize that their passion for Torah is much more a passion for learning than for teaching. After a short spell in the classroom, some discover, for example, that they're not sufficiently comfortable being a teacher of Torah, at least not beyond the intimacy of a one-on-one *havruta* (partnered learning). The key point is that arriving at such a conclusion is not painful. It's benign. It may even come with a sense of relief at discovering that they should pursue their passion without having to be something they are not. This, essentially, is an instance of what Neapolitan (1992) and what Gault and his colleagues (2000) describe as the kind of aptitude clarification associated with the best kinds of internship. Risking little, a person discovers what they're suited to doing in their working life. And in this instance, it turns out that it is not to become a Jewish educator.

### **Constricting inhibitors**

The research literature and the blogosphere have much to say about a different set of inhibitors, those associated with having to abandon a field (often a beloved one) because of



malignant pressures. It seems that there are three forms of pressure of this kind: economic, professional, and personal.

### *Economic*

Those who are drawn to fields of work from a sense of calling often do not consider whether they can afford, in the long term, to support themselves financially through this work. Driven at first by intrinsic and even altruistic motivations, their family circumstances might change or their economic needs might evolve to make it financially challenging to remain within the field (Hall & Chandler, 2005). In a variation on this scenario, they may have been attracted by an adequate starting salary but find that the salary and benefits they receive do not substantially improve over time. Whether or not their personal needs change, they become frustrated by the lack of reward commensurate with their efforts and seniority (Kuron et al., 2015). These are all themes identified as accounting for early career dropouts in fields such as teaching, nursing, and social work (Smithers & Robinson, 2003; Wermeling, 2013). In the Jewish blogosphere these patterns are echoed in periodic stories about “why, given the cost of engaged Jewish life, I couldn’t afford to be a Jewish educator” (Rosenthal, 2015). Evidently, leaving a field for these reasons is freighted with psychological stress and a sense of guilt given the admirable intentions that motivated entry in the first place.

### *Professional*

Professional inhibitors can take many forms, such as those associated with the toxicity of the workplace culture, gender imbalance in the profession, the hours demanded of junior employees and the life/work imbalance entailed, and the emotional challenges that come with the work—especially for those providing care for populations that are experiencing acute socioeconomic, health, or psychosocial difficulties (Maslach et al., 2001). Some of these challenges result in burnout and disillusionment for those who have already embarked in the field (Buchanan et al., 2013; Beheshtifar & Omidvar, 2013; Ghorpade et al., 2007). Other challenges, we expect, when widely known, deter prospective employees from entering the field in the first place. We don’t imagine that career explorers wait to find out for themselves whether stories of sexual harassment or racism are true; they look for other ways to earn a living. Some may imagine that they can tough out the emotional challenges, but those can quickly become overwhelming, too (Gosseries et al., 2012).

Some professional inhibitors may not be especially constricting in their own terms but appear singularly unattractive when compared to other fields of employment. It’s hard, for example, to recruit into fields that are perceived to provide few opportunities for professional development or that don’t offer a clear sense of how one can advance from the entry level to a senior position (Grissom et al., 2016). Prospective or junior employees may not expect their workplace to give them the freedom to pursue the equivalent of a Google Passion Project, but they do want to know that their ideas will be valued and that the work will be enjoyable. While these professional inhibitors may not be malign, they are nevertheless experienced as

deterrents by potential employees (De Hauw & De Vos, 2010). Thanks to the annual surveys of Leading Edge about workplace culture and career opportunities in Jewish organizations, there is much more awareness about the importance of these issues when recruiting and retaining talent. We don't know much, however, about how these matters are viewed by the individuals who have considered or are considering becoming, or who have become, Jewish educators.

### *Personal*

On the borderline between constrictive and circumstantial is a last set of inhibitors associated with the personal status of the employee. To take an example, not much can be done for those candidates who, for personal reasons, are not geographically mobile and can't find work locally in the sector of Jewish education for which their skills are best suited. There may, however, be a more systemic problem if that person can't access "enabling opportunities" that would make it possible to retrain for the kinds of positions that are available locally. Sometimes the inhibitors associated with personal circumstance—say, becoming a parent—are neither benign nor malign; they are what they are. But sometimes those inhibitors say less about the person and more about the profession and its structure, if, for example, few if any employees in the field get help with access to childcare or support for maternity leave. That's when a personal inhibitor becomes constricting, imposing uncomfortable constraints on individuals' ability to enter or remain in the field.

### **Circumstantial inhibitors**

A last set of inhibitors has little to do with the particular field of employment under consideration or the personal circumstances of those considering employment in this field. They are associated instead with broad sociocultural phenomena. Our key informants have encouraged us to pay attention to two phenomena which they argue complicate the task of recruiting promising Jewish educators. One can be described as the discomfort of young Jewish adults with parochialism or what some call tribalism, a perceived privileging of Jews over others (Levisohn, 2015). The other is the contemporary phenomenon of provisional or emerging adulthood among those who reached their twenties since the turn of the millennium—what social psychologists call delayed adult identity achievement (Sheehy, 1996; Arnett, 2000). The first of these phenomena makes work in a Jewish communal or educational context less attractive than performing the same activity in the service of the broader society or even humanity. The second phenomenon results in substantial, and oftentimes indefinite, delays in committing to long-term employment in a single organization to the point where it becomes especially difficult for employers to build effective teams over time.

There has certainly been much discussion about the need to design Jewish workplaces to engage the generational cohorts who have been shaped by these forces. Feldman (2019) lays out a checklist of 10 best practices Jewish communal employers should adopt if they are

to appeal to millennial and Gen Z cohorts of prospective employees. Some members of these generations have explained what attracted them to their current work and what turns them off elsewhere (Sherman, 2018), but it's not clear how representative these individuals are of nascent Jewish professionals more generally. Our focus groups suggest, as we indicated in the first section of this paper, that employee expectations are strongly related to the kind of employment sectors to which they're drawn.

### Putting it all together

Our study of entry to the field of Jewish education needs to explore *inhibitors*—the circumstances and pressures that may discourage individuals from working in the field of Jewish education or from making a career in this field. We presume that it is because of these inhibiting factors that more people who might have become Jewish educators do not. As has been indicated, we expect that some of these inhibitors are benign, others are more constricting, and still others are simply circumstantial, neither benign nor brutal. Whichever it is, these forces, we believe, act to deter or defer the choice to become or remain a Jewish educator.

## CONCLUSION

The concepts we have reviewed lay the foundations for two layers of research questions that we intend to address through our research on entry into the fields of Jewish education, as a career: (i) *descriptive questions* about the characteristics of each of the four components (stimuli, personal assets, enabling opportunities, and inhibitors), their origins, and the forms they take; and (ii) *predictive questions* about the relative importance of these components and their salience among different populations in predicting whether someone will enter the field of Jewish education or not.

Alongside the other components—On the Journey and Mapping the Market—of our work for the CASJE study on Recruitment, Retention, and Development of Jewish Educators, these are the building blocks that will ultimately enable us to propose what it would take to recruit significantly greater numbers of talented people to the field of Jewish education and what would be needed to sustain and retain those personnel once they have started to work in the field.

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