

# **SOCIAL SECURITY**

Journal of Welfare and  
Social Security Policy

## **Civil Society in Israel - Changes, Trends and Future Directions**

**Guest Editor: Hillel Schmid**



Published by

THE NATIONAL INSURANCE INSTITUTE OF ISRAEL

December 2015

No. 98

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## **Summaries of the Main Articles**



## **Work in Discontent: Occupational Instability, Partial and Temporary work, and Low Wages in the Israeli Third Sector**

*Hagai Katz<sup>1</sup> and Hila Yogev-Keren<sup>1</sup>*

Recent decades have seen considerable growth in the size, scope and importance of the third sector in Israel. Third sector organisations are faced with increased complexity and are expected to confront problems on an ever-growing scale and scope. Consequently, their role in the Israeli labour market and importance as employers is becoming evident. Nevertheless, to date there has been very little research on employment and wages in the Israeli third sector. Studies worldwide show that the third sector provides temporary and part-time employment as well as relatively low wages, but some argue that this is a feature only in certain fields in which third sector weight is relatively large. Studies in the US and the EU also reveal consistent wage and fringe benefit gaps between different groups of workers in the third sector, and particularly gendered gaps.

This study examined selected parameters in the composition and nature of Israel's third sector workforce in the last decade (2000-2009) for which data is available - stability and continuity of employment, part-time and temporary work, and wages. Examination was conducted on the basis of the widest data possible, and encompassed all hired employees in the third sector. This dataset was obtained by integrating employment figures from the Income Tax Commission datasets, data on nonprofits from the Israeli Center for Third-Sector Research (ICTR) database, and the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics 2008 Census.

The findings indicate that employment in the third sector is characterised by high employee turnover, part-time or seasonal jobs and low wages. Evident are also significant wage gaps between different workers, particularly a smaller group of full-time and steady employees and employees in non-standard employment, and between men and women. These findings are consistent throughout the decade and

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remain the same in 2008-2009. They indicate that this troublesome employment picture is stable and is not the result of the 2008 economic crisis.

The findings raise questions about the ability of the third sector to play its role as an employer and provider of social services that complement the dwindling services of the Israeli welfare state.



## **Service Procurement in Israel as a Gendering Process: Negotiation between the State and Tender-Winning Employers**

*Orly Benjamin<sup>1</sup>*

A rich body of literature discusses outcomes of the cost-reduction orientation in the operation of social services which New Public Management has managed to apply in education, welfare and health services in many OECD countries. In contrast, only a few studies have dealt with the negotiation processes typical in the contract preparation stages. In other words up until recently, gendering implications in the process of contracting between a public agency seeking a service deliverer and the tender-winning body has been left unnoticed. Rare too, has been the potential of civil society bodies to challenge such gendering processes from their position as bodies participating in tenders, thus contributing to the appearance of competition which stands at the heart of outsourcing social services. My goal in the current paper is to decipher the gendering character of such contracts. For this purpose I engage with two research questions: (1) how are employment conditions being gendered in the negotiation between occupational and budgeting administrators? And (2) do civil society organisations who apply gendering employment conditions, possess the capability to challenge this gendering process? The *Institutional Ethnography* Methodology led me to focus on contract negotiation processes. As part of this method, 40 interviews were conducted with occupational and budgeting administrators at the Education, Welfare and Health Ministries, as well as with service deliverers and employees. It emerged from the analysis that budgeting administrators cut costs through a perception of caring skills as redundant and by devising practical ways to minimise paying for this. In addition, the power of civil society organisations in the negotiations examined has emerged as limited. I discuss the policy implications of these findings.

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**"Can Two Walk Together  
Except They be Agreed?"<sup>1</sup>**  
**Relationships Between the Government and  
Philanthropy in Israel – Current Situation  
and Thoughts for the Future**

*Hillel Schmid<sup>2</sup> and Hanna Shaul Bar-Nissim<sup>2</sup>*

This article presents a conceptual framework and research conducted between the years 2013-2014, documenting and analysing the reciprocal relationship between the government and philanthropy in Israel. It describes the relationship's transformation in recent decades and the outcomes. These outcomes are the direct product of the **Interfacing Roundtables** which serve as the place in which dialogue is conducted between government, the business sector and nonprofit organisations. Research findings indicate several main themes: the formation and characteristics of government policy towards philanthropy; the role of philanthropy as perceived by the government and philanthropists; personal and structural barriers in the relationship between government and philanthropy; and the dynamic process of the relationship from rivalry to collaboration. These findings indicate a gradual and slow movement from an alienated relationship towards an accepting and positive approach. The setting allows stronger co-operation between the actors towards developing innovative and creative social, economic and educational initiatives to benefit the country's citizens.

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1 Amos, 3:3.

2 Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

## **"You Feel You Hit a Wall and Then You Have No Choice but to Form an Association": Characteristics of Grassroots Organisations Providing Welfare Services in Civil Society**

*Michal Almog-Bar<sup>1</sup> and Mimi Ajzenstadt<sup>2</sup>*

During the last two decades, civil society around the world as well as in Israel has become an important arena for the provision of social services to excluded and marginalised populations. In light of the retrenchment of the welfare state and the growing needs of different populations who have relied on state services in the past, civil society has become an alternative arena in which social services are initiated and provided, and claims for policy changes are raised, articulated and mobilised. Grassroots organisations, which are the focus of this article, are defined as 'locally based, significantly autonomous, volunteer-run, formal nonprofit groups that manifest substantial voluntary altruism as groups and use the associational form of organisation'. They have official memberships of volunteers who perform most of the activity done in and by these nonprofits. These organisations are unconnected to state institutions in any long-term or substantial manner. Thus they are entirely different from non-profits that supply services for government by contracting in welfare states. In many welfare states, grassroots organisations become a massive provider of social services to such excluded populations as children, women and, people with disabilities. Despite their growth in size, variety and importance as social actors, providing social services and advocating changes in social policy, they have not received much scholarly attention and have seldom been studied as a distinctive group.

This article presents a study which focuses on grassroots organisations operating in the field of social services in Israel. The study aims to analyse the activities of these organisations systematically and in depth, and to provide comprehensive data

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about the unique characteristics and dynamic relations between them and welfare state institutions and about the implications of this phenomenon for the welfare state and civil society. Facets of the organisations' activity examined are: (1) the organisational aspect; (2) services provided; (3) client populations, and (4) relations with the welfare state. Using a qualitative research method, the study examines the services and operating modes of 44 organisations in the field of welfare services serving three different target groups: women, children and people with disabilities.

The findings relate to several themes: Characteristics of the grassroots organisations and their clients, the importance of the communities they serve, the holistic and sporadic nature of the social services they offer, and their loose, yet tense relations with institutions of the welfare state. The research findings shed light on a significant aspect of civil society organisations active in the field of social services in Israel, which serve many citizens from excluded populations. The findings highlight the strengths and limitations of grassroots organisations' activities and the challenges they present to the welfare state.

## **Are Contractual Relationships a Partnership?**

*Ester Zychlinski<sup>1</sup> and Michal Mahat-Shamir<sup>2</sup>*

The first shelter for battered women in Israel was founded in the late 1970s at the initiative of the Feminist Organisation (Yanai, 2005). Today there are 14 shelters (Ministry of Social Affairs and Services, 2014), all established by nonprofit organisations, although not necessarily feminist ones. Interrelationships between these organisations and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Services has changed over the years. First, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Services joined the initiative and independent activity of women's organisations by providing minimum funding. Later, and due to growing awareness of battered women's needs, the Ministry took more responsibility for financing the shelters. As the state's financial participation increased (particularly from the mid-90's), so has the professional involvement and oversight of the ministry (Yanai, 2005). At this time, government policy has also begun to encourage and support partial privatisation policy (Katan, 2007; Zichlinsky, 2010), which is expressed primarily by encouraging different suppliers (third sector organisations and/or businesses) to compete for the operating contracts offered by the State.

Partial privatisation policy was adopted by the Ministry of Social Affairs in the field of shelters for battered women. A first tender was held in 2002, the third one was held in 2011. This tender failed and the State had to hold another one.

Using a qualitative method, the present study examines the interrelationships between the Ministry of Social Affairs and Services and third sector organisations before tenders, during the tender period, and immediately after the third one which failed. Analysis of in-depth interviews conducted with third sector organisation representatives and those of the Ministry, raised three main themes we called: "voluntary relationships", "non-agreed subcontracting relationships" and "agreed subcontracting relationships".

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By describing these themes and the changing interrelationships expressed in the abject failure of the third tender, we aim for a better understanding of co-operation between nonprofit organisations and the government.

The discussion focuses on the promoting and inhibiting factors influencing interrelationships between third sector organisations and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Services, expressed in the three periods.

We conclude with recommendations for the establishment of a round table that would act as a public council for the development and promotion of policies on women's shelters and for reducing violence against women in general. Council representatives would also be agents for the shelters, for government agencies, academics as well as representatives of battered women. Such a forum could promote knowledge and information-sharing, the development of new solutions and offer models of the best shelters with reference to existing realities and organisational capabilities with government funding. It could also build a policy document that would be the basis for tenders. Moreover, such a forum would find other solutions for funding shelters, not necessarily through tenders.

# Development and Change in the Israeli Environmental Movement: From State Orientation to Civil Society and Partnerships

*Itay Greenspan<sup>1</sup>*

**Goal:** The Israeli environmental movement – the epicenter of this study – has been active since the 1950s, but experienced its notable growth only during the 1990s. This paper offers a framework for analysing development and change processes in the Israeli environmental movement through a civil society lens. The question guiding the paper is how can these developments be described and conceptualised? I examine changes in the Israeli environmental movement in relation to two processes: macro-level on the movement aspect and micro-level on the organizational aspect. A macro-level perspective links global and state-wide processes in civil society to observed transitions in the environmental movement. A micro-level perspective denotes changes in organizational characteristics of environmental NGOs (specifically, human capital, financial capital and environmental discourse) that influence the environmental movement as a whole.

**Data and methods:** The study is based on analysis of primary and secondary sources, as well as empirical data collected in 2010-2011 using a survey tool among Israeli environmental organizations (Tal et al., 2013).

**Findings:** The analysis divides the Israeli environmental movement into three periods using the above distinction between micro- and macro-level perspectives. The three periods of the environmental movement point to shifts in the relationships of government and the environmental movement: **in the first stage** – the "state-oriented" stage – only a dozen environmental NGOs existed, and the movement was characterised by close connections to political elites, identification with government agenda, public funding of activities, and discourse that did not challenge government positions on environmental issues.

In the second stage, the environmental movement shifts its orientation toward civil society. The movement is characterised by significant growth in size and visibility

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and by adoption of conflicting, civic, non-governmental agendas. At this stage, the array of strategies to achieve goals were expanded and included both radical and moderate tactics, while the range of environmental discourses widened too. Interestingly, Anglo-Saxon immigrants to Israel – from the US, Britain, Australia and even South Africa - are taking leadership roles in the movement. They are involved in founding new organizations, introducing new values and attitudes to advance environmental policy and legislation, and are raising larger amounts of funds mostly from Jewish philanthropic foundations overseas.

The third stage in the movement's lifecycle starting around 2007, is characterised by adoption of partnership orientation. This entails, in line with trends in Israeli civil society, a greater inclination of environmental NGOs to form coalitions within the movement, and to develop cross-sector partnerships with government agencies and businesses. At this stage the movement is also experiencing diversity in organizational forms, founder identity, funding sources, and the environmental discourses being used. This partnership orientation of the environmental movement reflects trends of reduced conflict relations between government and environmental organizations, similar to trends across Israeli civil society in the last decade or so.

Discussion and implications of this framework in light of the critical literature about the level of Israeli civil society's independence is suggested in the paper.



## The Underdog Organisation's Strategy in the New Public Management Era

*Karni Ziv-Efrati<sup>1</sup>*

**Introduction:** This self-action research examines cross-sector collaborations of service providers, in which the main actor is an underdog organisation. In a social context, an underdog is socioeconomically disadvantaged, or suffers from political or societal injustice (Jun, Sung & Gentry, 2015). A limited literature describing underdog organisations has been published. Therefore this study will present the new public management (NPM) era effect on an underdog's goals, strategies and effectiveness. The literature suggests two main types of relationship between underdogs and topdogs: Cross-sector coalitions, which might cause clusters of power and monopolies of services providers (Kimerling, 1995; Orbach, 2008; Raptov & Weiss-Gal, 2011) and net-control, in which services are delivered by networks of government offices, NGO's and private sector organisations (Beeri, 2014). The nature of control is defined here according to the network gate-keeping theory (Shoemaker et al., 2001). Gate-keeping acts can take place for example, on a regulatory level by forcing contracts and procedures on the 'gated': individuals, groups or organisations which are classified by their level of importance for the gate-keepers (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008). Therefore, this study will address the ability to fulfill customer needs in light of the conflict between an underdog organisation and its collaborators.

**Methods:** The study was conducted using a qualitative approach to self-action research which legitimises the knowledge and experience of subjects. Thus, it becomes a tool for a critical observation of social arrangements (Krumer-Nevo & Barak, 2006; Zeira, 2011).

**Results:** Findings are based on data from eight cross-sector collaboration cases, chosen since they reflect the way NPM affects collaborative actions and the ways an underdog organisation copes with relative remoteness from resources while pursuing its goals. The findings show that the underdog organisations initiated a collaborative approach according to the WHO's Community Based Rehabilitation

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1 Founder and CEO at Katef Chama NGO.

Model (CBR), aiming to use current communal infrastructures for the benefit of its target audiences. It also shows that gate-keepers' motivation to benefit customers might change course, and direct itself to the conservation of the status of favorite organisations. Tactics, conflicts and solutions are demonstrated in light of Lukes' (2005) three dimensions of power theory (Barzilai- Nahon, 2008; Shemer & Schmid, 2006).

**Discussion:** NPM impacts the effectiveness of all actors involved in public services delivery. It leads to the implementation of transactional and transformational leadership tactics by underdog organisations (Boehm & Karni-Efrati, 2010). If they fail, people in underdog organisations move on to a better co-operative surrounding but the clients are left behind. This reality preserves monopolies and withholds the capacity to fill public needs by delivering the same services to the same limited clients over and over again.

**Conclusion:** The findings are in line with the WHO's evaluation of CBR programs, arguing that collaborations are diminished by lack of time or interest of governmental officials (Deepak, 2004). Therefore, the recommendation for NGO managers is to endorse tailor-made strategies and to include socio-political action in their set of options.

## **Co-operation Between Israeli and Palestinian Organisations in Civil Society**

*Edith Blit-Cohen<sup>1</sup> and Amira Jaber<sup>2</sup>*

The current study is an attempt to review the shared experience of directors of Israeli and Palestinian civil society organisations which collaborate in joint projects. The research questions relate to managers' perceptions about the experience of their partnership and their attempt to verify their difficulties and how to deal with them. The literature deals extensively with co-operation among different organisations, but only a small number of studies directly address partnership between Israeli and Palestinian organisations who want to change the reality between the two sides. The research was qualitative, and based on in-depth interviews with ten organisation directors: five Israelis and five Palestinians. The findings raised three main themes: the social legitimacy of co-operation between the organisations, the inequality of Israeli and Palestinian organisations, and power relations in co-operation in light of the socio-political context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The research findings indicate the complex experience of partnership which managers have to negotiate. It seems that the co-operation experience moves on a continuum between opposition and interest or indifference. Also there are elements of inequality and imbalance of power between the Israeli and Palestinian organisations following differences in budgets, personnel training level, restrictions in movement and language barriers. This imbalance may be reflected in the dominance of the Israeli side in joint activities and the active role that the parties may take at various stages, from project initiation to implementation. All these add to the complexity that already exists in co-operation between organisations. The study contributes new knowledge in the field of co-operating organisations working under a reality of conflict, as well as understandings about partnership between organisations from the perspective of their managers.

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