

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

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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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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.