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Parents as the avenue of the resilience of Israeli society: a call to establish a national policy to strengthen parents in times of crisis and routine

Rina Cohen Sutzkever¹

The 21st century brought upon crises in unforeseen volume — COVID-19, wars, mass immigration, social gaps, poverty, and more. In Israel and the whole world, these crises and corresponding issues intensified, deepened, and increased social, educational and economic phenomena and problems. This new reality presents complex and diverse challenges to every individual, society and political system worldwide. The multiplicity of challenges and their intensity prompts the need to search for the relevant resources that may help to deal with some of the ramifications these issues have on society.

One of the essential and significant resources, identified and recognized as such, is the parents and parenting whose function and influence concern every child, family, and system. For parents to be able to exercise their leadership and influence, put them out of their power and make good use of their parental resources, professional and responsible parental guidance must be made available, available, and adapted to each parent according to his needs, aspirations and culture.

According to the experience of social-educational systems in Israel and around the world, these guidelines are what help parents develop literate, relevant, benevolent parenting that builds resilience and a good and enabling future for their children.

This article reviews the existing activity in Israel on the subject of parental guidance and proposes the establishment of a national policy for empowering parents. The article also reviews the essential benefits for the individual, family, and society in both routine times and in times of crisis, which are full of uncertainty, ambiguity, tasks, and parental controversies.

The article claims that leading and influential parental leadership is the need of our time and place. For every parent to receive professional and supportive

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parental guidance that accompanies them throughout the journey of parenting, there must be a national policy on the subject of ‘strengthening parents and empowering parenting’, operated by the government and societal systems, and under their responsibility and budget.

Implications of Covid-19 on the future of teaching the social work profession: observation of the transition experience to remote learning of social work students in Israel

Yaara Paz², Yael Latzer² and Liat Shklarski³

During the Covid-19 pandemic, academic studies worldwide transitioned to remote learning, the impact of which is still being felt. The challenges of teaching therapeutic professions, such as social work, remotely became particularly apparent in the transition’s impact on students’ learning experiences. Since research exploring the impact of the transition to remote learning on social work studies is nascent, the current study examines the influence of the switch to remote learning on the emotional and cognitive experiences of social work students and how they perceived the quality of the teaching they received. The study observed 150 Israeli social work students who participated in a survey based on a questionnaire designed in the United States, which included demographic queries, statements, and open-ended questions.

The findings highlight students’ mixed emotions. Although more than half reported a negative impact on the teaching quality (64.6%) and had difficulty achieving the same intimacy as in frontal practice classes (77.4%), most participants recognized the advantages of remote learning (71.3%) and were open to this option in the future (76%). In addition, in response to questions regarding the first stage of the pandemic, 52% of the participants positioned themselves in the “experimentation and adaptation” stage of the Kübler-Ross

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(1969) change curve. However, 62.6% reported that this period had an unsettling emotional impact on them, and 68% experienced feelings of confusion and helplessness. The current study perceives remote learning as a new phenomenon influencing the future of social work teaching policies. The findings provide the foundation for understanding the complexity of remote learning in the social work profession and offer opportunities to learn from experience and pursue further research in the field.

Integrating lay judges in judicial tribunals: a systematic scoping review

Naama Bar-on Shmilovitch⁴, Shay Tzafirir⁵ and Israel (Issi) Doron⁶

Many countries around the world have adopted various judicial models for integrating citizens into judicial tribunals, and this has become more widespread in recent decades. As “lay judges”, these citizens contribute their common sense, their sense of natural justice, and sometimes their professional knowledge to the legal process and to the specific court they are integrated into. There has been a lively debate about lay judges’ contribution to the legal process in Israel and around the world over the years. Our current study aimed to add another aspect to this discourse by using a Systematic Scoping Review (SSR) methodology to identify 57 empirical and theoretical studies on lay judges’ integration.

As a result of these studies, we sought to understand the position and role of lay judges within judicial tribunals, as well as the challenges underlying their integration. We examine the scope of the phenomenon and the main contributions of lay judges’ integration, both on a general social and legal level as well as on a particular and systemic level.

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Othering, poverty and law: the case of panhandlers in the Western Wall

*Shlomit Weiss-Dagan*⁷, *Netanel Dagan* and *Michal Krumer-Nevo*⁸

This study examines the legal proceedings in the *Schwartz and Moshia case* in order to analyze processes of othering and anti-othering in relation to people in poverty in court rulings. This case is unique because although it dealt with a relatively minor offense – panhandling in the Western Wall — it was discussed in three courts from the Magistrates' Court to the Supreme Court.

The study proposes two tests for analyzing the processes of othering and anti-othering: (a) the human subject test (how the human subject is represented in the text); and (b) the context test (how the context is represented). In terms of the human subject test, we found that the appellants were physically and symbolically absent in the various proceedings. The few references made to them were characterized by the attribution of negative qualities, especially in the proceedings in the Magistrates' Court. In terms of the context test, the Magistrates' Court, the District Court, as well as the State Attorney in various courts, paid little attention to the broad life context of the two. On the other hand, other important figures, such as the Association for Civil Rights and most Supreme Court Justices emphasized the context of the social conditions and dynamics that bring about panhandling and the need to create welfare policies that will aid those living in poverty. The article discusses the fruitfulness of analyzing othering and anti-othering strategies in the debate on the access of marginalized people to justice.

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To be an immigrant caregiver: the burden experience of immigrants from the former Soviet Union caring for a family member with severe mental illness

*Evgeny Knaiifel*⁹

Family caregivers who care for relatives with severe mental illness (SMI) experience high degrees of stress and burden in their daily lives. Immigrant caregivers, who care for a family member with SMI and simultaneously cope with cross-cultural transition, are exposed to multiple stressors. However, little is known about how immigrant caregivers experience this burden and what its long-term implications are for their personal and family lives.

This qualitative study aims to examine the factors that shape the burden experience among former Soviet Union (FSU) immigrants in Israel who care for a family member with SMI. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 32 FSU immigrant caregivers. The interviews were analyzed by using categorial content analysis. The participants described their burden as an accumulation of economic, linguistic, cultural, social, emotional, and health-related adversities that negatively affect their coping and adaptation on the personal and familial levels.

The findings showed that the objective and subjective burdens they experience include dimensions pertaining to their role as family caregivers, their immigrant status, and the circular interaction between these two, which intensifies the overall experience of burden. The study proposes a new term – “the double adaptation burden”. This term helps to deepen an understanding of immigrant caregivers’ experience within their unique context, identify high-risk groups among them, and promote interventions and social policies that better suit their needs.

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The role of guardian or supported decision-making: readiness of brothers and sisters whose siblings have developmental disabilities (autism or intellectual disabilities)

*Adi Sharabi*¹⁰

The goal of this study was to explore the differences between sisters and brothers regarding their perceptions of their readiness for the future role of guardian for their siblings with developmental disabilities (autism or intellectual disabilities), their belief in their siblings' ability to make decisions independently – as part of their readiness for the supported decision-making role, and their involvement in their lives. Self-report questionnaires examined the readiness, perceptions, involvement, and feelings of 175 siblings aged 18 and above, including 118 sisters and 57 brothers. The study was conducted using a mixed-methods approach. Based on the quantitative data, the results of the study showed that sisters reported greater belief in the ability of their siblings with disabilities to make independent decisions about their lives, and higher social involvement than brothers. However, no significant differences were found between sisters and brothers in the perception of readiness for guardianship and in the level of overall involvement. Participants' feelings toward their siblings with disabilities and the nature of their involvement in their lives were assessed through qualitative content analysis of the open-ended question.

The findings revealed that most of the sisters and brothers reported positive feelings, about a quarter of the expressions included mixed feelings and a minority of them included powerful negative feelings. The nature of the involvement and the feelings it evokes also arose from the analysis of the expressions in different contexts and in relation to the future. The present study highlights the importance of gender differences in future planning processes and the siblings' readiness for possible legal representation or caring for the affairs of their siblings with disabilities (guardians) or assisting and supporting their decisions (support decision-making).

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Default occupational pension plans in Israel: issues in pension policy

*Iddo Kalir*¹¹, *Alex Kaplun*¹² and *Israel (Issi) Doron*¹¹

The State of Israel underwent a significant process of reforming its occupational pension system, which was characterized by a deep regulatory intervention that included, among other things, a tender process in 2016 to select default occupational pension funds, while creating a competition for management fees. Despite the significant implications of the above reform, to date, the scope of writing or research on them has been limited.

In light of the above, this study aimed to try and assess the manner and meaning of adopting a pension policy based on default pension funds, all from the perspective of key figures in the field. It should be noted however, that the study was based on data for the years 2017-2019, before Covid-19 and its implications, and before the investment houses “Hellman Aldubi” and “Psagot” were sold, which held the two least successful out of four default pension funds.

The methodology used was a phenomenological qualitative one, in which the assessment of the above policy was made based on a content analysis of in-depth interviews conducted with 12 participants, all of whom are key figures in the world of pensions and insurance.

The findings revealed three main themes: 1) The need for government-regulatory involvement in the pension market. 2) The degree of willingness of regulatory intervention in management fees through a default fund tender. 3) The long-term sustainability of default funds.

The implications of these findings highlight the need for a comprehensive and open public discussion regarding the goals and purposes of the Social Security Arrangements for Aging in Israel, while involving all the relevant bodies involved.

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