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## **Summaries of the Main Articles**



## Poverty-Aware Social Work Practice: Service-Users' Perspectives

*Yuval Saar-Heiman<sup>1</sup>, Maya Lavie-Ajayi<sup>2</sup> and Michal Krumer-Nevo<sup>3</sup>*

Critical social work with people living in poverty has recently been undergoing development under the title “poverty-aware social work”. Nonetheless, only a few studies investigating the method have been carried out within this multi-faceted framework, and none documenting the way service-users experience this kind of practice. This article presents a qualitative study that explored the experiences of female service-users, who took part in a poverty-aware social work training program for students. The study used an interpretative interactionist approach. In-depth interviews with nine women were held three times over a period of two years. Findings reveal a high degree of satisfaction with the program on the side of the women. The satisfaction was derived from four main experiences: an experience of visibility; of students' actively engaging in the fight against poverty; of a close, hierarchy-challenging relationship with students; and an experience of concrete and emotional needs being provided for. The findings are discussed in light of the practices used in the program and in light of the women's lived reality and their social position.

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- 1 Spitzer Department of Social Work, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.
  - 2 Spitzer Department of Social Work and Academic Coordinator of the Israeli Center for Qualitative Research of People and Societies, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.
  - 3 Spitzer Department of Social Work and Head of the Israeli Center for Qualitative Research of People and Societies, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev; Founding Director of the Casework for Social Change program.

## **Adjustment to Separation and Divorce: Emotional Adjustment and Parental Adjustment**

*Erga Kapulnik,<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Anson<sup>2</sup> and Vered Slonim-Nevo<sup>3</sup>*

This longitudinal quantitative study examines the process of adjustment to separation and divorce during a period of several weeks to four years following separation. The first stage included 151 male and female respondents, who were parents of at least one child under eighteen at the time of separation, and were within a period of several weeks to four years since the beginning of the separation process. The second stage of the research, conducted about a year later, examined the same respondents. The respondents answered a self-reporting questionnaire that examined adjustment to separation, mental wellbeing, levels of stress and depression, acceptance of divorce, communication between the parents, and attachment style. The sample was a convenience sample of the Israeli-Jewish population.

Research was based on models explaining adjustment and coping with difficult life events: The 'crisis theory' views separation and divorce as a crisis situation that presents at varying degrees of severity and affects functional, cognitive, and emotional aspects. Coping with the crisis may result in one of two situations: (1) Exiting the crisis and returning to the level of functioning prior to its onset; (2) Chronic stress, namely exiting the crisis, but performance does not resume its former level before the crisis. In addition to the 'crisis theory', this study examined adjustment to separation and divorce by means of the 'two-track model of bereavement', typically applied to coping with grief and bereavement.

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- 1 Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Spitzer Department of Social Work, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.
  - 2 Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Spitzer Department of Social Work, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.
  - 3 Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Spitzer Department of Social Work, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

## Hypotheses

The adjustment process to separation and divorce will include two dimensions: (1) Personal adjustment, which will resemble the crisis model; (2) Parental adjustment, which will resemble the chronic distress model. The dimensions will interact with each other.

1. Women's adjustment will be better than men's.
2. Initiation of separation, avoidant or secure attachment style, and steady employment will have a positive effect on adjustment.
3. Joint custody will have a positive effect on adjustment, whereas difficulties in reaching an agreement will have a negative effect on adjustment.

The sample at the initial stage included 151 participants: 101 women (66.5%) and 50 men (33.5%). The second stage included 132 respondents: 83 women (63%) and 49 men (37%), who comprise 87.4% of the sample at the first stage.

The study found two parallel tracks, which together comprise adaptation to separation and divorce: emotional adjustment and parental adjustment. These tracks do not predict or affect each other, but exist side by side. We also found that gender affects adjustment, and that women adapted better than men did. In addition, we found that adjustment was also affected by whoever initiated separation, steady employment, custody arrangements, difficulties in reaching agreements, and attachment style. These findings shed new light on understanding the process of adjustment to divorce, primarily the ability of divorced parents to function on both tracks, to separate parental performance from emotional adjustment and to construct separation on the personal plane.

# Academia, Social Work and Social Policy: What Can We Learn from Faculty Engaged in Social Policy Formulation?

*John Gal<sup>1</sup> and Idit Weiss-Gal<sup>2</sup>*

Social work discourse perceives the engagement of social workers in policy processes as a crucial form of professional undertaking and it has become an integral component in the curricula of social work schools. As a result, the engagement of faculty in policy formulation has been the subject of a growing body of research. This study seeks to contribute to this research by enhancing our knowledge about the forms that policy engagement of social work academics takes (its domains, strategies, impact and partners) and the factors associated with this type of activity. The study is based on structured interviews with 24 faculty members from eight schools of social work in Israel, all of whom are actively and continually involved in the policy process. The findings of the study reveal that participants are motivated by ideology and values to engage in policy and that they do so despite their perception that there is a lack of institutional support for this type of activity. Social work academics engaged in policy report that they successfully manage to combine their policy-related activities with teaching and research and to find opportunities to further this agenda within their schools. The study also indicates that the social policy formulation process in Israel itself offers opportunities for the policy engagement of social work faculty.

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1 Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare, Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Principal Research, Taub Center for Social Policy Research in Israel.  
2 Bob Shapell School of Social Work, Tel Aviv University.

# **Expanding the Day Care System for Young Children in Israel in the 1970s: A Case Study of Social Policy**

*Abraham Doron*<sup>1</sup>

Child care continues to be an important issue high on the social policy agenda of governments. This article reviews the 1970s Israeli government policy of expanding the system of child care centers for young children. The purpose of the paper is to describe and analyze the factors that motivated the government to adopt this policy, its main goals, the manner of implementation, and the impact on the welfare of children, working mothers and families in need.

The main goals of the program were to facilitate the entrance of mothers with young children into the labor market and to promote the social and personal development of young children from deprived backgrounds. The policy achieved considerable success during its operation in the 1970s and 1980s by increasing the number of new day care centers and the children they absorbed. The other aspects of the program were however, less successful, mainly because the government had limited control over other parameters of the program.

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1 Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare.

# The Community Rehabilitation of the Mentally Disabled Act: Entrepreneurship, Leadership and Seizing Opportunities in Policymaking

*Nadav Perez-Vaisvidovsky<sup>1</sup> and Uri Aviram<sup>2</sup>*

This paper examines the circumstances and processes leading to legislation in 2000 of the Community Rehabilitation of the Mentally Disabled Act in Israel, and analyzes the factors that impeded or enabled it, its nature, standing in stark contradiction to the general direction of Israeli social policy in that period.

The Community Rehabilitation of the Mentally Disabled Act is considered progressive by comparative international standards, and constitutes a conceptual change in society's attitude toward people with severe mental illness. In this case study, research attempts to highlight critical factors enabling the act at a time of environmental change in the area of mental health policy and social policy in general.

The theoretical basis for this paper is Kingdon's 'policy streams' theory, and others explaining the actions of policy entrepreneurs and their part in promoting reforms and change. The paper analyses the factors and circumstances in the decade beginning in 1990 to the completion of legislation leading to rehabilitative reform in mental health. It focuses on the participating stakeholders and the main issues arising in the struggle for legislation and policy change.

The findings emphasize the importance of different converging streams in creating necessary conditions for policy change, and the importance of policy entrepreneurs working to fulfill the potential for legislation. The discussion points to conditions necessary for policy change, and the

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1 School of Social Work, Ashkelon Academic College.

2 (Emeritus), School of Social Work and Social Welfare, Hebrew University; School of Social and Community Sciences, Rupin Academic Center.

characteristics required of policy entrepreneurs to move change from the realm of possibility to actuality.

