

**Social Policy Formulation and the Role of Professionals: The Involvement of
Social Workers in Parliamentary Committees in Israel**

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Presented at the Annual Social Policy Association Conference,

Edinburgh, July 2009

Social Policy Formulation and the Role of Professionals: The Involvement of Social Workers in Parliamentary Committees in Israel ¹

The changing nature of social care services, their governance and modes of provision, has implications for service-users, professionals and policy-makers. One consequence of the rapidly-changing social care landscape in various welfare states is the participation of additional actors in the social policy formulation process. The interventions of these actors take different forms and can occur at various points in this process. While traditionally the actors in this process have been politicians, bureaucrats or representatives of interest groups, the contemporary social policy-formulation process is seen to include much more diverse actors. These actors can be situated in the various institutions of the state, be they the administrative structure or the political system, and can be involved in varying decision-making and implementation levels of activity, either on the transnational, the national or the local levels. In addition to interest groups, representatives of advocacy organizations and voluntary sector providers, think tanks, citizen and community groups as well as interested professionals and academics all seek to influence this process in the modern welfare state.

Professionals have often been identified as playing a unique role in decision-making in welfare states due to their major role as the providers of services offered by the state or funded

¹ We would like to note that Dr. Shirli Avrami was an associate researcher in the research project. We would also like to thank Hani Neuman for her assistance in gathering the data. This study was funded by an Israel Science Foundation grant.

or regulated by it. However, as a consequence of the changing nature of governance in the welfare state, it appears the members of at least one profession - social work - are playing a growing, and more diversified, role in this process. No longer serving as primarily state employees charged solely with providing social care, in many welfare states social workers are playing much more varied roles in the social services. Social workers are now undertaking increasingly administrative roles on the local and national levels, but are also employers and employees in non-governmental voluntary agencies, leaders of advocacy organizations, and members of citizen groups.

The goal of this article is to explore the role of professionals in the social policy formulation process in the contemporary welfare state by presenting empirical data on the involvement of social workers in the social policy formulation process in Israel over a period of five years. The study reported here focused on a crucial institution in the social policy formulation process, parliamentary committees, in order to learn more of the nature of the engagement of members of this profession in this process.

Social Workers, Professionals and Social Policy

Theoretical developments in the study of governance and of public policy processes in welfare states underscore major changes in the policy formulation process. In particular, the ongoing governance discourse emphasizes the growing role of non-government actors in the policy formulation process (Pierre & Guy Peters, 2000), the blurring of boundaries, and the mixing of responsibilities in dealing with social and economic issues (Ahonen, Hyyryläinrn & Salminen, 2006). Observers have noted that deliberations over the content of policy (as well as its

implementation) have moved beyond the “core executive” that traditionally dominated decision-making and now include not only additional levels of government but also an array of actors and institutions (Richards & Smith, 2002) to form, what Jan Kooiman, has termed “social-political governance” (2003:3).

All this is true of social policy as well. A growing body of research seeks to apply the governance conceptual framework to the analysis of social policy (Daly, 2003). Transformations in the manner in which social services and benefits are decided upon and provided have led some researchers to describe the existing situation as a “disorganized welfare mix” in which more volatile and heterogeneous public-private partnerships have emerged, there is a growing distance between non-statutory providers and the welfare state and civil society, and there is more creative civic action (Bode, 2006; Milbourne, 2009). This research have often tended to focus on the role of local authorities and non-profits in the provision of welfare services, to emphasize self-governance – the increasing role of service users in decisions pertaining to social care services, and to underscore the impact of professional providers at various stages in the policy process (Bifulco & Centemeri, 2008; Hill & Hupe, 2006; Newman, Glendinning & Hughes, 2008). However while there is expressed interest in the practice of policy-making and the role of diverse actors in this process (Daly, 2003) and an empirically-based understanding that voluntary organizations engaged in welfare provision have undertaken more aggressive political campaigns as a means of influencing policy making (Bode, 2006), a focus on the policy-formulation aspect of governance in social policy appears to have enjoyed much less empirical interest.

Closely linked to governance in social policy discourse is the growing theoretical interest in the implications of changes in the structuring of welfare states and of social services, and the policy process within them, upon professionals. In the past, professionals in most welfare states were perceived as key figures with vast autonomy with regard to decisions over the provision of medical, educational and social services to citizens (Wilding, 1982). In addition, through their representative organizations they were seen as members of powerful interest groups that strived, often quite successfully, to maintain their unique domains (Immergut, 1992). Welfare state transformations have had a marked effect upon the roles and stature of professionals (Farrell & Morris, 2003; Hugman, 1998; Malin, 2000; Noordegraff, 2007). In particular, the impact of New Public Management upon professionals has been enormous. Professionals, such as doctors, teachers and social workers, within the welfare state are required to fulfill administrative and managerial roles. They are torn between demands to provide for the articulated needs of service users while adhering to the budgetary organizational concerns of the services in which they are employed (Martin, Phelps & Katbamna, 2004). Not surprisingly, social workers have been the subject of much of the often very critical literature concerning the impact of welfare state change upon professionals (Lymbery, 2000; May & Buck, 2000; Webb, 2006). This is a consequence of the identification of social work with the functions of the welfare state and the fact that these changes, especially in the UK case (due to the radical changes that have been introduced in community care in that country), have had a particularly strong impact upon members of this profession.

Yet, in the context of governance, these developments and others may conceivably also offer new opportunities for professionals, and particularly social workers, to be better able to engage in policy formulation rather than only policy implementation (Alavikko, 2008; Campanini & Fortunato 2008). While in the contemporary welfare state, social workers are undertaking administrative tasks that distance them from their service users, these very same tasks can presumably move them closer to the policy-formulation process. As administrators at various levels of the social services, social workers will be an integral part of the process by which the nature of services is discussed, access conditions are decided upon, priorities identified, and the forms of provision and funding are determined. At the same time, the outsourcing of services and the establishment of quasi-markets has led to a growing role for non-statutory providers. These providers are of course potential employers of social workers. They are also increasingly aware of their need to be involved in the policy process. A widening of access to the policy process has provided them, and an ever growing number of organizations that specialize in advocacy, with new opportunities to influence social policy formulation. Here again, social workers' unique knowledge should provide them with the credentials that enable them to play a major role in this process, at least in the case of providers and advocacy organizations, that are linked to, or seek to represent, the social groups traditionally served by social workers.

Alongside developments in the welfare state that offer options for social workers involvement in social policy formulation, an additional motivation for engagement in this process are the values that, at least formally, guide the professional activities of social workers.

More specifically, social work adheres to an ethos of social justice and typically calls on members of the profession to incorporate in their professional duties interventions that are intended to further the rights and means of excluded groups in society (Craig, 2002). This ethos is reflected in the codes of ethics of international and national social work organizations (British Association of Social Workers, 2008; Hare, 2004), in the professional literature (Reisch, 2002; Weiss-Gal & Gal, 2008), and in the professional socialization process (Gibbons & Gray, 2005; Weiss, Gal & Cnaan, 2005). This type of activity has been described as “policy practice”, defined “as efforts to change policies in legislative, agency and community settings whether by establishing new policies, improving existing ones or defeating the policy initiatives of other people.” (Jansson, 2003, p. 10)

Israel can serve as an interesting case for the study of the involvement of social workers in the social policy formulation process. Social work was first introduced into that country in the early decades of the 20th century and has since undergone a constant process of professionalization. It appears to currently enjoy a more solid professional status than that of social work in many other countries (Weiss et al, 2004). The occupation has received public recognition as a unique profession and “social work” has become a protected trade mark. The exclusive domains of social work within the Israeli welfare state have expanded over time and the level of professional autonomy has increased, with most social workers employed in social services headed by social workers. The adoption of the 1996 Social Workers Law by parliament formalized most of these achievements, and provided the professional code of ethics with a mechanism of enforcement. It also strengthened social work’s professional monopoly in

various fields of activity in the social services. The Law authorized the Minister of Social Affairs and Social Services to issue regulations that identify positions which may be filled only by qualified social workers. Indeed, a large number of positions in local welfare bureaus, hospitals, adult and juvenile probation and a number of other services have been decreed to be the exclusive domain of registered social workers. A study of the professional profile of the heads of local social services departments in Israel reveals that today the vast majority of managers are social workers (Spiro, et al., 1997). While in the past, most social workers were employed by the state, privatization and a rapid growth of civil society has led to a marked increase in the number of social workers employed by non-statutory employers or by advocacy organizations (Weiss et al, 2004).

The venue chosen in this study for examining the involvement of social workers in social policy formulation is that of parliamentary committees. Parliamentary committees are a feature of parliaments the world over and play a central role in the legislative and policy-formulation process (Agh, 1998; McAllister & Stirbu, 2007; Wehner, 2006). Despite the diversity in the characteristics of parliamentary committees in different national settings and in the functions that they fulfill, researchers (Hazan, 2001b; Shaw, 1979) have identified assorted tasks common to these committees. These tasks can be grouped into two comprehensive categories. The first focuses on legislative functions, while the second emphasizes oversight functions of the committees (Longley & Davidson, 1998).

As is the case of parliaments in other liberal democracies, parliamentary activity in the Knesset, the Israeli parliament, takes place both in plenary sessions and in its committees (Sager,

1985). Four types of parliamentary committees exist: permanent committees (12 in all); temporary committees established to deal with specific issues; two "housekeeping" committees; and parliamentary committees of inquiry that are formed occasionally. In addition, the permanent committees can, and frequently do, delegate authority to sub-committees (Hazan, 2001a). Parliamentary committees in the Knesset engage in diverse discussions. They scrutinize proposed bills and motions referred to them by the plenary. In order to become law, bills must be discussed by the committee and returned to the plenary. The committees can amend the bills prior to returning them to the plenary for the final (second and third) readings. In addition, they can initiate new bills and they have statutory powers to make changes in existing laws. Moreover, ministerial regulations and orders must have the approval of a committee in order to be adopted. Knesset committees also undertake oversight tasks. They often engage in overseeing the executive and initiate discussion of additional issues linked to policies in their broad field of interest.

According to Knesset by-laws, committees can invite ministers, state officials, experts and other interested parties to testify before them. While not required by law, the participation of experts and other interested parties in the deliberations of Knesset committees is the norm. Representatives of relevant state agencies participate in deliberations touching upon their fields of activity and jurisdiction. In addition, professionals, representatives of diverse organizations and interest groups, and citizens are regularly invited to take part in the discussions of the permanent committees. In recent years committee chairs have tended to adopt a policy of

greater openness to the public and to invite growing numbers of outside observers and witnesses to the committees (Rubinstein & Medina, 2005).

An examination of the influence of parliamentary committees in the Knesset indicates that there is a gap between the two types of tasks undertaken by these bodies (Hazan, 2001a). A lack of statutory powers to summon witnesses and of investigative tools severely limits the oversight role of parliamentary committees in Israel. However it appears that the committees do have a major impact upon the legislative process. This is a result of the formal role and statutory powers that committees have in the stages of this process (Segal, 1988). This influence is apparently particularly the case for social issues, which have generally had little salience in the political debate. Not surprisingly perhaps, Knesset members believe that their greatest influence over social policy is through their participation in the workings of the Knesset committees (Ben-Arieh, 1999).

Method

This article then seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the role of professionals in the social policy formulation process by studying the involvement of social workers in parliamentary committees in the Knesset, Israel's parliament. It is based on a quantitative content analysis of all the minutes of the meetings of parliamentary committees, in which at least one social worker appeared on the list of participants, during the 15th and 16th Knessets, a period of seven years between May 1999 and April 2006.

The process by which the relevant minutes were identified and a data base compiled consisted of a number of stages. Initially the Knesset website, which contains the minutes of all the parliamentary committees, was searched. Each of the minutes on the site includes the following details – the date of the committee meeting, the committee title, the topic discussed, the name of the committee chair, a list of the participants (and generally their affiliation and position), and a full transcript of the meeting. Two search engines (Google and the Knesset site search engine) were employed to search the Knesset committee minutes. Keywords included terms such as “social worker”, “social”, “welfare”, “probation officer”, “community worker”, and so forth. In the second stage, a manual search of the minutes of ten Knesset committees, which were identified in the previous stage as those in which social workers were most likely to participate (Labor, Welfare and Health; Education, Culture and Sport; Status of Women; Immigration Absorption and Diaspora Affairs; Rights of the Child; Foreign Workers; Drug Abuse; School Dropouts; The Committee of Inquiry on the Trafficking of Women; The Committee of Inquiry on Social Disparities) was undertaken.² The lists of participants in all the minutes of these committees were searched.

In the final stage of the search, an effort was made to identify social workers who participated in committee meetings but were not identified specifically as such in the minutes. At this stage, a list of potential social workers (generally on the basis of their affiliation, say the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services or a non-profit or a local authority) was drawn up. This was distributed to various experts (social workers and social work academics) who were

² For details on the various Knesset committees, see the Knesset website, www.knesset.gov.il.

asked if any of the names on the list were familiar to them. Organizations and institutions were also approached in order to determine whether the participants identified as being employed by them were indeed social workers. Finally, access to the membership list of the Israeli Association of Social Workers was granted to the research team. Any committee meeting in which at least one social worker participated was included in the list of minutes to be analyzed. By the end of this process, 1013 parliamentary committee meetings in which at least a single social worker participated had been identified.

A quantitative content analysis (Holsti, 1969; Miles & Huberman, 1994) was then undertaken. This type of analysis entails a systematic and objective analysis of the content of relevant documents through the employment of a coding schedule that depicts the variables and a coding manual that contains the possible values of each of the variables (Bryman, 2001). The unit of analysis in the study was the committee meeting minutes, each of which was coded according to the following coding schedule and manual: 1. Meeting date; 2. Knesset (15th or 16th); 3. The committee title; 4. The topic of discussion (on the basis of a list of topics devised by the researcher team after reading the minutes); 5. The population group discussed (on the basis of a list of populations identified by the research team); 6. The type of discussion (a private member's bill prior to a first reading in the plenum; preparation of a bill for the second and third readings in the plenum; a discussion initiated by the committee; a discussion of motions for the agenda; a discussion of regulations; field tours); 7. The identity of the committee chair (on the basis of a list of names compiled by the research team); 8. Did the social worker initiate the committee discussion? (yes/no); 9. Did the social worker initiate his or her participation in

the meeting? (yes/no); 10. The identity of the social worker (on the basis of a list identified by the research team); 11. The affiliation of the social worker (on the basis of a list compiled by the research team, e.g. “government department”, “local authority”, “advocacy organization”); 12. Gender (female/male); 13. Nationality (Jew/Arab/Other). If more than one social worker participated in the meeting, each of them was coded on an individual basis.

Findings

Social Worker Participation in Committee Meetings

As noted, social workers participated in 1013 meetings of parliamentary committees in the 15th and 16th Knessets. Of these 74% were women, which reflect the fact that social work in Israel, as in other countries, is predominantly a female profession. Nevertheless, this proportion is lower than that of women in the profession as a whole (89%), thus indicating that a higher proportion of male social workers participated in parliamentary committee meetings than their actual representation in the overall social work population (Bar-Zuri, 2004). The vast majority of the social workers participating in the committee meetings were Jews (90%). Interestingly, while only 4.3% of social workers in Israel are Arabs, a tenth of the social work participants in the parliamentary committee meetings were members of this national group.

Table 1 shows the number of meetings in which social workers participated in each of the Knessets.

- Table 1 about here –

Table 1 indicates that the number of meetings in which social workers participated was similar in each of the Knessets. The slightly higher number of meetings in the 15th Knesset may be a result of the fact that this Knesset lasted a bit longer than the Knesset that followed it (three years and eight months as compared to three years and two months in the 16th Knesset). An examination of the proportion of meetings in which social workers participated out of all the meetings of all the committees indicates that the proportion was similar (8% and 9%). If we ignore those committees which deal with issues unrelated to social work (House Committee; Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee; Internal Affairs and Environmental Committee; Science and Technology Committee), it emerges that social workers participated in 13% of the relevant parliamentary committee meetings in the 15th Knesset, and 14% of the meetings in the 16th Knesset.

In the 1013 committee meetings in which at least one social worker participated, a total of 667 social workers took part. Obviously there were social workers who participated in more than one meeting, and there were meetings in which more than one social worker was present. Table 2 presents the distribution of the number of committee meetings in which social workers participated.

- Table 2 about here -

A large majority of the social workers that participated in parliamentary committee meetings took part in less than eight meetings in all. Specifically approximately 50% of the social workers participated in a single meeting, 16% participated in two meetings, 7% in three meetings, and another 4% in four committee meetings. 2% of the social workers participated in five meetings.

A tenth of the social workers participated in over eight meetings of the parliamentary committees. Half of these social workers took part in between 9 and 13 meetings, while the remainder participated in 14 or more committee meetings. Four social workers participated in between 45 and 55 meetings. Noticeably, a single social worker participated in 153 meetings and a second social worker took part in 69 of the parliamentary committee meetings.

A breakdown of the level of participation of social workers in parliamentary committees by committee name and type can be found in Table 3.

- Table 3 about here –

Social workers took part in the deliberations of diverse Knesset committees. Nevertheless, most of the participation was in five of the committees, four of which are permanent committees and one of which is a temporary committee. The permanent committees were the Committee on the Status of Women (in meetings that dealt with issues concerning gender equality in education and the family, labor market and economic disparities linked to gender, and violence against women), the Immigration Absorption and Diaspora Affairs Committee (immigration, initial settlement policies, Jewish education in the Diaspora); the Labour, Welfare and Health Committee (labour rights, social security, health issues, social care services, rehabilitation, juvenile offenders); and the Education, Culture and Sport Committee (the educational system, cultural institutions, arts, mass media, sports). The temporary committee in which there was a particularly high level of social worker participation was the Committee for the Rights of the Child.

An analysis of the participation levels of social workers in meetings of these five committees indicates that they participated in over 30% of all the committee meetings in three of these committees (a low of 33% of the meetings in the Immigration Absorption and Diaspora Affairs Committee and a high of 47% in the Committee for the Rights of the Child). Surprisingly, social workers took part in only 12% of the meetings of the committee, which one would assume deals most directly with issues linked to social work - the Labour, Welfare and Health Committee.

In addition to these five committees, a relatively large number of social workers participated in the meetings of an additional three parliamentary committees (all of which were temporary committees): the Committee on Foreign Workers; the Committee on Drug Abuse; and the Committee of Inquiry on the Trafficking of Women. In each of these cases, social workers were present in over half of all the committee meetings. In the case of an additional temporary committee, the Committee on School Dropout, social workers participated in virtually all of the committee meetings.

The Nature of Participation

Table 4 offers an insight into the types of discussions to which social workers were a party to in the various parliamentary committees.

- Table 4 about here -

While social workers participated in a number of types of discussions in the committees, in a clear majority of cases the discussion was one that was initiated either by the committee or by

organizations or individuals. A second type of discussion in which social workers frequently took part was discussions linked directly to the various legislative roles of the committees, either to prepare a private member's bill for its first reading or to discuss the details of a bill in preparation for the second and third readings in the plenum. Finally, 7% of the cases were those in which social workers played a role in discussions relating to motions for the agenda that were referred to the committee from the plenum.

The topics upon which the discussions in which social workers participated were diverse, as can be observed in the data presented in Table 5.

- Table 5 about here –

The major topic of discussion in committee meetings in which social workers participated was that, which we described as, social and civil rights. Here the emphasis tended to be upon the thorny issue of the rights of foreign migrant workers and, in particular, of the families of these workers. Interestingly, issues relating to violence and crime also topped the list of topic of meetings in which social workers participated. This most probably reflects the statutory involvement of social workers in dealing with cases of domestic and sexual violence and the fact that correction services in Israel are an exclusive social work domain (Weiss & Wozner, 2002). Issues related to education, media and culture were the topics of a similarly high number of committee meetings in which social workers took part in. Issues such as the protection of children against harmful television or internet contents, or school payments were prominent in these discussions. In addition to these topics, the more traditional fields of social work involvement also figured prominently in their participation in parliamentary committees.

A third of the committee discussions in which social workers took part in the two Knessets concerned social welfare services, immigration and addiction issues.

The Affiliation of Social Worker Participants

Data relating to the affiliation of the social worker participants in the meetings of parliamentary committees in the Knesset reflect the diversity of professional employment in the social welfare sector in Israel. While many Israeli social workers are still employed in the state and local government sectors, a growing number also find work in the Third Sector (service provision, advocacy, and community and citizen organizations) and in for-profit organizations. The findings of the analysis are presented in Table 6.

- Table 6 about here –

As can be seen from the table, social workers employed by the state were those most likely to participate in the committee discussions. Most of these were high- or intermediate- level civil servants in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services. In addition, a large proportion of the social workers taking part in parliamentary committee discussions were employed by local authorities. In most cases these were case workers or community social workers. Significantly a quarter of the social workers participating in the committee meetings were Third Sector employees. These worked in service provider agencies, advocacy organizations, or served as representatives of women's groups or of the social work association.

A more refined portrayal of the identify of social workers participating in parliamentary committee meeting is afforded by a closer analysis of the characteristics of the 29 social

workers who took part in over 20 committee meetings. While most of these social workers were civil servants (69%), a relatively large proportion (28%) was representatives of advocacy organizations. Of the 29, 19 were women and all but one was Jewish.

Discussion and Conclusion

The analysis in this article employed the conceptual framework of governance in order to examine the role of professionals in the formulation of social policy. More specifically, it focused upon the involvement of social workers, a professional group particularly relevant to the institutions of the welfare state, in parliamentary committees in the Knesset, the Israeli parliament. The findings appear to provide ample support for the claim, central to the governance discourse, that social policy is no longer the domain of a small group of decision-makers in the upper echelons of the government and its bureaucracy. The fact that social workers participated in over a tenth of all relevant parliamentary committee meetings over the period studied would appear to indicate that members of this professional group are active participants in the policy formulation process. While the actual number of times in which individual social workers were party to these meetings fluctuates greatly, the data indicates that 667 social workers participated in at least one meeting of these committees. The implication of this is that an impressive proportion of the estimated 12,000 active social workers in Israel (around five per cent) (Bar-Zuri, 2004) were involved in the policy process at one of its crucial junctures.

Additional support for the governance thesis can be found in the data concerning the organizational affiliation of the social workers that participated in the parliamentary committee

meetings. While a significant proportion of the social workers taking part in the committee deliberations were civil servants, a large proportion was affiliated with organizations and agencies outside the traditional social policy formulation realm. The fact that 28% of these were employed by local authorities and 31% represented diverse Third Sector organizations (service providers, advocacy organizations, hospitals, women's organizations and the social work association) reflects the active involvement of non-governmental actors in the social policy formulation process and appears to reflect Kooiman's (2003) notion of "social-political governance".

The findings of the study offer evidence not only of the diversification of the social policy process but also of the changing nature of the social work profession. Traditionally serving as case workers at the very bottom of the welfare state hierarchy and providing social care services to members of disadvantaged groups, social workers were far removed from the decision making process. As a professional group, they may have acted as an interest group seeking to protect their domain of activity, but the rank and file members of the profession certainly did not play an ongoing role in the policy process. This study offers a very different portrayal of social work in the welfare state. Members of the relatively large group of social workers involved in the policy process are employed across a wide range of organizations, ranging from the top echelons of the civil service to much lower levels of the state bureaucracy as well as local authorities, advocacy organizations and non-profit service providers. Judging by the topics of the discussions in which they participated, the social workers are engaged in a

wide range of fields of activity and deal with very diverse population groups and social problems.

The analysis here did not seek to follow the trail of particular policy decisions, nor did it attempt to assess the impact of the social workers upon the discussions in which they participated. As such, while the findings do offer evidence of social workers involvement in the policy process they do not offer direct evidence of the influence of social workers on policy formulation. Indeed given that only a minority of the discussions in which social workers participated was apparently linked directly to the legislative process, it appears that social workers were more involved in the oversight functions of the Knesset parliamentary committees and less in their legislative functions. Social workers were most often asked to testify in committee deliberations in order to offer expert opinions or to present first hand testimony on the nature of social problems and the status of disadvantaged groups. Given the limited impact of the oversight role of the committees, the influence of social workers may be more limited than the incidence of their participation suggests. This is clearly a subject for further research.

The data presented in this study pertains specifically to social workers in the Israeli case study. As comparable studies on social worker participation in the policy process in other welfare states do not exist (to the best of our knowledge), we do not know whether there is a similar degree of involvement in the social policy process in other national contexts. It is clear however that the diffusion of power within the policy formulation process, the changing contours of social work employment and the profession's expressed commitment to an agenda

of social change have the potential to lead to greater involvement of social workers in the social policy process. Israeli social workers appear to be willing to play an active role in this process. Additional research in other nations can offer evidence of if, and how, this is the case elsewhere.

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Table 1. Parliamentary committee meetings in which social workers participated.

Knesset	Total number of committee meetings	Meetings in which at least one social worker participated N (%)	Meetings of “relevant committees” ³	Proportion of meetings of the relevant committees in which social workers participated
15	5,710	520 (9%)	4,050	13%
16	5,459	493 (9%)	3,498	14%
Total	11,169	1013 (9%)	7,548	14%

³ Excluded are the House Committee, which deals with Knesset procedures, the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, the Internal Affairs and Environmental Committee, and the Science and Technology Committee.

Table 2. Distribution of the number of meetings in which the social workers participated
(N = 667)

Number of meetings	Social workers N (%)	Cumulative proportions
1	367 (55%)	55%
2	104 (16%)	71%
3	47 (7%)	78%
4	26 (4%)	82%
5	15 (2%)	84%
6	11 (2%)	86%
7	13 (2%)	88%
8	12 (2%)	90%
9 – 13	35 (5%)	95%
14-20	14 (2%)	97%
21-30	9 (1%)	98%
31-39	8 (1%)	99%
45-55	4 (0.5%)	99.5%
69	1 (0.25%)	99.75%
153	1 (0.25%)	100%
Total	667	100%

Table 3. Distribution of meetings in which social workers participated, by committee type
(N = 1013)

Name of Committee	Type of Committee	Number of meetings in which social workers participated	Proportion of all the committee meetings
Committee on the Status of Women	Permanent	206	43%
Immigrant Absorption and Diaspora Affairs	Permanent	167	33%
Rights of the Child	Temporary	155	47%
Labour, Welfare and Health	Permanent	130	12%
Education, Culture and Sport	Permanent	123	11%
Drug Abuse	Temporary	88	52%
Foreign Workers	Temporary	41	25%
Trafficking of Women	Committee of Inquiry	41	53%

Law and Judiciary	Permanent	15	0.4%
Social Disparities	Committee of Inquiry	13	45%
School Dropout	Temporary	8	4%
Public Petitions	Temporary	7	0.4%
Finance	Permanent	5	
Women in the Arab Sector	Sub-committee	4	
Women in the Labour Market	Sub-committee	2	
Economic Affairs	Permanent	2	
Women's Health	Sub-committee	2	
Learning Difficulties	Sub-committee	2	
State Comptroller	Permanent	1	
Research and Scientific Development	Permanent	1	

TABLE 4. Distribution of meetings in which social workers participated by type of discussion(N=1026⁴)

Type of discussion	N(%)
Initiated discussion (by the committee, one of its members, citizens or organizations)	750 (73%)
Discussion of a private member's bill	125 (12%)
Preparation of bills for the second and third readings	56 (5.5%)
Discussion of motions for the agenda	73 (7%)
Discussion of regulations	18 (2%)
Tours	4 (0.5%)
Total	1026 (100%)

⁴ The number is greater than the total number of meetings in which social workers participated (1013) because some of the meetings were devoted to more than one topic.

TABLE 5. Distribution of meetings in which social workers participated, by topics (N=1061⁵)

Topic	N(%)
Social and civil rights	157 (15%)
Violence and crime	154 (15%)
Education, media and culture	148 (14%)
Social services and social welfare institutions	97 (9%)
Immigration	109 (10%)
Addictions	95 (9%)
Health	61 (6%)
Social security	60 (6%)
Trafficking of women	47 (4%)
Labour rights and unemployment	42 (4%)
Macro economic and social issues	29 (2.5%)
Adoption	12 (1%)
Terror and security	12 (1%)

⁵ The number is greater than the total number of meetings in which social workers participated (1013) because some of the meetings were devoted to more than one topic.

Poverty	12 (1%)
Others	26 (2.5%)
Total	1061 (100%)

TABLE 6. Distribution of social worker participants in committee meetings, by affiliation

(N = 667)

Affiliation	N (%)
Government	198 (30%)
Local authorities	188 (28%)
Non-governmental service providers	69 (10%)
Advocacy organizations	51 (8%)
Hospitals and health funds	32 (5%)
Women's organizations	25 (4%)
Social workers association	27 (4%)

State authorities	18 (3%)
Quangos	13 (2%)
Academia	12 (0.7%)
National Insurance Institute	5 (0.7%)
For-profit organizations	9 (1%)
Think tanks	4 (0.5%)
Unknown	7 (1%)
Others	4 (0.5%)
