

Israeli Sociology

A Journal for the Study of Society in Israel

Special Issue on Health and the Environment

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Maya Negev and Nadav Davidovitch**

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Coping with Type 2 Diabetes among Bedouins in Israel: Issues of Social Justice, Health policy and relationships to place and community

Maya Maor, Moflah Ataika, Reli Mizrahi and Maya Lavie-Ajayi

Abstract. Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus (T2DM) is disproportionally prevalent among indigenous groups, with especially poor treatment outcomes and higher complication rates. This is also the case with the minority Bedouin population of Israel. Based on a critical review of the literature, we offer a typology of the main sociological approaches to the study of T2DM among ethnic minorities: 1. Bio-medical individual approach, 2. Minorities in transition to modernity approach and 3. T2DM as a symptom of social inequality approach. We use the stories of Bedouin men and women to show how the third approach allows us to: 1. Re-conceptualize concepts such chronic illness, health and man/place/community relationships; 2. Understand how the complex interaction between Israeli health policies and the living conditions of the Bedouin community shape the distinct challenges they face in coping with T2DM; 3. To develop concrete guidelines designed to improve coping with T2DM among the Bedouin community in Israel.

Keywords: Citizen science, radon, health, inquiry-based learning, environmental awareness

Environmental Preferences, Activities in Nature, and the Perceived Contribution of Time Spent in Nature to Health

Nasrin Fares, Shula Goulden, Maya Negev

Abstract. Spending time in nature can promote physical and mental health, however few studies have evaluated human perceptions of these benefits. Meanwhile, sociological research shows that perceptions of nature reflect different Bourdieuan environmental preferences. The aim of this study was to examine environmental preferences and perception of health benefits of nature in the Mount

Carmel Biosphere Reserve, based on a survey of 703 Jewish, Druze and Muslim respondents. The results demonstrate that all participants perceived that time spent in nature contributed to health, but the perception was stronger among Muslim and Druze respondents, and among visitors compared to residents. Environmental preferences and attitudes towards nature conservation were shown to be connected to the perceived physical and mental health benefits of nature. The preferences “landscape and coasts” and “flora and fauna” were found to be strongly connected to the perception that time spent in nature contributes to health. Factor analysis of health statements yielded three factors: nature contributes to mental health; nature contributes to physical health; spending time in nature contributes to mental health more so than spending time in the city. These findings can contribute to management of the biosphere reserve in a way that enables the whole population to benefit from time spent in nature, for example by including residents and visitors in decisions on access to nature, infrastructure and policy.

Keywords: public health, time spent in nature, environmental preferences, ecosystems, biosphere reserve

Is there a Public Health Advocate Around? Environmental Politics as Governance – Generating Politics

Michal Laron

Abstract. In the 1980s and 1990s, views advocating public involvement in arenas of governance gained momentum, leading to the institutionalization of public participation processes. Civic actors were subsequently recognized as legitimate public advocates and new arenas of governance emerged. Given that public advocacy positions are positions of authority, this paper explores the factors that enabled these public participation processes, with the focus on the planning arena and on environmental health issues. Two historical case studies of civil struggles are presented. Interviews, observations, document reviews, and press clippings indicate that environmental activism turned environmental health into a political issue and the environmental organizations into public advocates. The results allow to argue that dialectical relationships of change and institutionalization exist

between environmental politics and the political environment. Environmental activism changed arenas of governance, adopting action strategies accordingly. Historical understanding of these processes which I named “governance-generating politics” would promote environmental health activism.

Keywords: Environmental health, environmental activism, governance, environmental NGOs

Citizen Science and Public Involvement in Research Combining Science and Society: The Case of the Radon Home Survey

**Yaela N. Golumbic, Aline Peri, Maxim Shpak, Andrey Tsapalov,
Konstantin Kovler, Dani Ben-Zvi and Ayelet Baram-Tsabari**

Abstract. Citizen science is a growing field of research and practice, in which volunteers engage in active scientific research. This paper describes citizen science ability to promote environmental awareness and social involvement using the case of the Radon Home Survey – a citizen science project for measuring and mapping radon concentrations in buildings in Israel. The study has two research goals. Our scientific goal is to measure indoor radon concentrations and examine the feasibility of radon mapping through citizen science. Our educational goal is to examine students’ learning trajectories, building on interviews with teachers facilitating student participation (n=8) and student feedback (n=112). While initially unaware of radon, students have become interested and motivated about the topic, expressing interest in promoting awareness in their local communities and becoming agents of change. These findings emphasize the role of citizen science in raising awareness, empowering students and publics, and promoting environmental stewardship and responsibility.

Keywords: Citizen science, radon, health, inquiry-based learning, environmental awareness

Scientific knowledge between extension and reduction: The Precautionary Principle in environmental health policy

Liat Lifshitz-Milwidsky and Tammy Sagiv-Schifter

Abstract. Recently, the Precautionary Principle (PP) is adopted in environmental health regulation design, especially when based on controversial scientific knowledge. Under PP, if an activity raises concerns of environmental health harm, precautions must be taken. This study aimed to understand and explain PP usage by society at risk theory, boundary work theory and boundary object. Experts' perceptions of PP and of its scientific knowledge foundation were examined, regarding a case study of regulation design concerning non-ionizing radiation (NIR) from cell phones in Israel. Data included documents on NIR, participating observation and 21 semi-structured interviews with relevant experts. Findings reveal that PP serves as a boundary object, and is flexible enough to enable combination between reduction and extension of scientific knowledge. The strategic value of PP as a boundary object, is used as a compass in regulation design and allows its establishment on controversial scientific knowledge in the name of health.

Keywords: Precautionary Principle, boundary work, boundary object, environmental health regulation, risk society

What are the Boundaries of One Health? Studying Brucellosis in the Negev

Barak Hermesh

Abstract. One Health (OH), a paradigm for the study of diseases, ecologies and policy, aims to cross boundaries between disciplines, but ignores the social factors of diseases. To test this claim I ask which boundaries are dealt through the OH prism and which are neglected. I study Brucellosis, a disease that harms Bedouin communities in the Negev and researched through OH tools,

and the “boundary-work” it entails. During a governmental campaign to reduce Brucellosis between 2014-2017, I interviewed health workers and livestock breeders, conducted observations and collected policy documents. Using thematic analysis I form four types of boundaries: Geographical, Professional-Political, Disciplinary and Participatory, which test the assumptions underlying the intervention – its geographical demarcation, the professional/political separation and the stakeholders’ roles. This article presents socio-political layers of illness that are seldom discussed through the OH framework and reframes factors of infectivity, distrust and health inequities.

Keywords: Brucellosis, health inequalities/inequities, neglected zoonotic diseases, One Health

Middle actors unique role in supporting public health from the Middle-Out

Yannai Kranzler, Yael Parag and Nadav Davidovitch

Abstract. Collaboration in public health faces numerous obstacles. Programs implemented across and impacted by diverse environments offer opportunities to learn how professionals in the field address these obstacles in real-time. We used the socio-technical analytical approach “from the middle out,” to elucidate the significance of middle actors – stakeholders between policymakers at the “top” and the public at the “bottom”. Through participant observation in the forums where the National Program to Promote Active, Healthy Lifestyle in Israel was formed, interviews with 30 stakeholders, and document analysis, we examined three aspects of influence from the middle out: (1) directions of influence, (up, down, and sideways); (2) modes of influence (facilitation, mediation, and aggregation); (3) mechanisms of influence (strengthening agency and capacity to act). We conclude that integrating the middle out approach can contribute to the understanding and pursuit of policies, innovation and collaboration to foster sustainability and improve public health.

Keywords: Public health, environmental health, health in all policies, middle Actors

The Impact of Population Density on Public Health in Israel: Where We Are; Where We Should Be; And Where We Are Heading

Alon Tal and Ya'ara Tsairi

Abstract. Over the years, the number of residents living in Israel has increased dramatically. The negative impacts of population density on public health are reflected in four different contexts: deficient infrastructure for treating illness which reduces health care quality; a shortage of doctors, nursing staff, increased risk of infectious disease spread; and mental health consequences from discomfort at living in a crowded society. The article documents the primary health risks associated with rising population density in Israel. While it is essential to adopt policies that reduce the negative impact of population density on public health, given budget constraints and practical limitations, these negative phenomena are likely to grow worse. Accordingly, along with adaptive measures designed to allow Israel's health system to adjust to higher population density, it is important to emphasize demographic stability as the only long-term solution to the damage of crowding to Israeli public health.

Keywords: Health System, density, hospitals, medical personnel, demographic change

Israeli Sociology

Founded in 1998, Israeli Sociology is published in Hebrew twice a year. The journal serves as a platform for local research that maintains a dialogue with sociological scholarship around the world. The journal invites manuscripts from a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches, in line with the heterogeneity of the discipline, as well as review essays and research notes, all subject to a peer review process. The journal also includes an extensive book-review section that offers a wide-range view of the Israeli social science scene. Israeli Sociology was founded by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Tel-Aviv University and is supported by the Institute for Social Research (established by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Tel Aviv University), by the David Horowitz Institute for Social and Economic Research and by the Israeli Sociological Society.

Editors: **Adriana Kemp, Talia Shiff, Rami Kaplan**

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- Israeli Sociology invites submissions of manuscripts, from a variety of methodologies and with distinct theoretical and empirical contributions to Israeli sociology in particular and to sociology in general.
- Israeli Sociology will consider publishing only manuscripts that have not been published and are not under review elsewhere, in any language.
- The journal uses an anonymous peer review process.
- Manuscripts should include a cover page with the title of the manuscript in Hebrew and English, authors' name in Hebrew and English, address, phone number, e-mail address, and their academic or professional affiliation.
- Submissions should not exceed 9,000 words in length, including footnotes and bibliography and should include a 150-word abstract in Hebrew and English detailing the research question, method, findings and contribution.
- Manuscripts will be submitted in Word, font David, size 12, double space.
- Tables and graphs should be attached in the body of the manuscript where they should appear, and in an editable format. Pictures that appear in the body of the manuscript should also be attached in a separate image format.
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