Street Level Bureaucrats, Local Government Regimes and Policy Entrepreneurs

Abstract

Can street level bureaucrats act as policy entrepreneurs and affect policy *design*? Does the transition from traditional, hierarchical administrations to local governance systems play a role? We further develop the notion of street level policy entrepreneurs using the case study of waste separation in Israeli local authorities. We maintain that the attributes of local governance can explain their success in affecting policy. Our findings demonstrate how street level policy entrepreneurs use the structural characteristics of governance as a window of opportunity for reform. When the mode of governance is less traditional, street level bureaucrats have a better chance of acting as policy entrepreneurs.

Key words:

Street Level Bureaucrats; Policy Entrepreneurs; Local governance; Reform

Introduction

In recent decades, the public administration literature has analyzed the influence of both street level bureaucrats and policy entrepreneurs on policy outcomes from various perspectives and in various domains. While the former affect outcomes and are considered players who influence policy outcomes mainly through

implementation practices (Lipsky, 2010), policy entrepreneurs are considered players who affect outcomes by influencing the *formation* of policies (Kingdon, 1994; Mintrom & Norman, 2009).

Street level bureaucrats are frontline workers who interact daily with citizens. They provide public goods and services for citizen-clients, while enforcing and implementing dictated policies and regulations. They are considered pivotal players in the making of public policy (Brodkin, 2011; Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2003) and *de facto* policymakers in the sense that they informally construct or reconstruct their organizations' policies (Brodkin, 1990), thereby directly influencing the lives and fate of many people (Hill & Hupe, 2014, p. 53). In a reality of limited resources, contradictory demands and unclear policies, street level bureaucrats practice discretion in matching the requirements of policy with the demands of the field (Cohen 2016a; Tummers & Beckers, 2014). Using their discretion, they implement policy and address the needs of their clients (Lipsky, 2010).

Policy entrepreneurs are innovative individuals from the private, public or third sectors who pursue opportunities to influence policy formation and outcomes to a degree that is far beyond the resources they hold. Successful policy entrepreneurs invest a great deal of effort in garnering attention for their proposed policies (Mintrom, 2000). They are active *throughout the policy process*: defining problems and placing their proposed solutions to them on the political agenda, formulating policies in the direction they desire, legitimizing them, facilitating their implementation and promoting their evaluation. These persistent individuals are willing to risk what they have—time, money and reputation—in order to promote a policy they favor (Cohen, 2016b; Kingdon, 1994; Mintrom, 2013; Zahariadis, 2016).

Due to the high level of motivation and skills required to accomplish these goals, the literature on policy entrepreneurs has focused mainly on high-level decision makers and ignored low and middle-level bureaucrats (Arnold, 2015). However, in the last decade, several studies have linked street level bureaucrats with policy entrepreneurs, resulting in a new category called street level bureaucrat policy entrepreneurs. This category highlights the fact that street level bureaucrats can adopt entrepreneurial strategies via *implementation* practices in order to affect policy. For example, Arnold (2015) focuses on the implementation of policy in wetland management. Petchey, Williams and Carter (2008) describe policy implementation and cancer treatment in Britain. Durose (2007) deals with policy implementation in neighborhoods. These important efforts, however, focus on the policy implementation stage, when a policy exists and street level bureaucrats must convert it into action. The first argument of this article focuses on street level policy entrepreneurship, positing that street level bureaucrats can use entrepreneurial strategies to influence the *design* of public policy in addition to the well-researched notion of street level policy implementation.

The multiple streams literature has been criticized for a lack of focus on institutional context (Jones et al., 2014; Sætren, 2014). In contrast, the policy entrepreneurship literature does not suffer from a similar vacuum (Christopolous, 2006; Mintrom, 2007; Mintrom & Sulisbury, 2014; Zerbinati & Souitaris, 2005). These studies argue that institutional change can create a window of opportunity for a skilled policy entrepreneur who wants to promote change. In our second argument, we add to this claim by positing that a specific type of institutional change, the shift from hierarchical, traditional public administration to lateral governance, can facilitate street level policy entrepreneurship.

In order to test these claims, we examine the characteristics of the governance in local authorities where street level bureaucrat policy entrepreneurs operate. Specifically, we focus on the treatment of waste separation in local authorities in Israel from the point of view of environmental inspectors. Environmental inspectors are street level bureaucrats in charge of waste management in local authorities. They may be defined as street level bureaucrats, because they are on the frontlines of the local authority in handling sanitation and environmental issues. They have a professional identity, are entrusted with the provision of public goods, namely, protecting the environment, and ensuring cleanliness and sanitation, and exercise discretion in providing these public goods (Lipsky, 2010).

This case offers an excellent opportunity to investigate the role of street level bureaucrat policy entrepreneurs in affecting the design of policy due to the three waves of entrepreneurship, representing three levels of street level policy entrepreneurship, involved. The vague policy of the central government in Israel on waste treatment (Knesset Research Center Report, 2010) left in the hands of local government considerable latitude in designing domestic policies. This ambiguity resulted in different levels of entrepreneurship among street level bureaucrats, ranging from entrepreneurship and autonomy in designing policies, to reaction to regulations dictated by the central government. Thus, we interviewed environmental inspectors in Israeli regional councils in three waves of the adoption of waste separation. The eight inspectors in the first wave before 2010 preceded the call for financial participation by the Ministry for the Protection of the Environment. The four inspectors in the second wave from 2010 to 2013 came from authorities that responded to the call for financial participation by the Ministry for the Protection of the Environment. Finally, the two

inspectors in the third wave came from authorities that began separating waste after the passage of the Packaging Act, which we will describe in detail below.

The rest of the article is organized as follows. The next section elaborates on policy entrepreneurship, street level bureaucracy and local government regimes. We end this section by offering two theoretical propositions. Next, the data and the method are presented, followed by a description of the development of waste separation in Israel. The following section presents an empirical analysis of the role that street level policy entrepreneurs played in the three waves of the adoption of the waste separation policy. Finally, the conclusions are discussed.

Street Level Policy Entrepreneurship and Policy Design

According to Lipsky (2010), street level bureaucrats are professional frontline workers operating in the public sector. They are often low-level workers, coping with a heavy workload and subject to ambitious policy objectives, along with insufficient resources. Therefore, there is a constant conflict between the demands of their position and their personal values (Cohen, 2016a; Hill & Hupe, 2009; Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2003; Tummers et al., 2015). Furthermore, they must use their own discretion to adapt the policies to each case they review (Brodkin, 1997; Buffat, 2011; Hill & Hupe, 2009; Tummers & Bekkers, 2014).

Discretion is a key term in the literature on street level bureaucrats. It refers to selecting a certain tool from those available to meet the demands of the policy makers (Lipsky, 2010; Prottas, 1979). The decisions that street level bureaucrats make create the policy the public encounters in practice. According to most of the literature, the impact that street level bureaucrats have is limited to the micro level, as they affect

only the specific citizens they encounter (Burke, 1987; Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2003; Riccucci, 2005). This point is critical in capturing the difference between a street level bureaucrat who exercises discretion and thus becomes a policy entrepreneur.

Policy entrepreneurship is only one form of a larger phenomenon of political participation. It is a process that involves individuals who are willing to take risks, identify policy problems and solutions, and use their political and timing skills to achieve a specified outcome. The focus on *policy making*, meaning, the will to pursue the formulation of a policy, is important in differentiating between policy entrepreneurship and street level discretion. While the latter aims to shape the implementation of a policy that is already in place, a policy entrepreneur focuses on the design of that policy. In addition, policy entrepreneurs have strong, transformative individual ambition, which leads them to be willing to be held accountable for the policy they pursue. Thus, the difference between a street level bureaucrat who exercises discretion and a policy entrepreneur is about scope and accountability, and is rather significant.

Arnold (2015) lists three factors causing the literature to ignore the possibility that street level bureaucrats act as policy entrepreneurs: 1) the assumption that policy entrepreneurs are from the political elite and that policy is determined by the elites, 2) the assumption that the policy initiatives of the policy makers will be fully implemented (Pralle, 2006), and 3) the fact that the majority of the literature dealing with policy entrepreneurs focuses on external entrepreneurs outside the bureaucratic system. These gaps are even wider when considering street level policy entrepreneurs who aim to shape the formation of policy.

The literature claims that when there are differences between formal policies and the bureaucrats' positions, we will find deviations from the declared policy. Gofen (2013) lists three factors that cause street level bureaucrats to stray from the stated policy: ethical and moral matters, professional identity and rational decision-making. It is reasonable to assume that the reasons that cause street level bureaucrats to stray from policies are the same reasons policy entrepreneurs have to set the agenda on other policies they favor. However, the latter try to affect the policy not only at the implementation level but also at the macro level.

Street level bureaucrats have unique advantages in the institutional setting due to their position within the organizational pyramid including their intimate knowledge of the field, their interfacing with different groups and their professional expertise. For example, they can initiate a local pilot test that proves the feasibility of an initiative (Huitema & Meijerink, 2010) or use disasters or failures to prove the need for the initiative (Birkland, 1988; Westlet, 2002).

Policy entrepreneurs function in a reality in which they usually do not have the resources they need to realize their initiatives, so they must solicit support by building coalitions. To do so efficiently, they must be attuned to the needs of the field and align their initiatives with them. Furthermore, they must connect different issues and actors to their initiative to increase the basis of their support. Thus, policy entrepreneurs must identify needs that are of public interest and 'ride' them to promote their own agenda or distance themselves from controversial political issues (Mintrom, 1997).

Street level bureaucrats are well-positioned for building successful coalitions, because they are an integral part of the local government and can maximize their political power but are also close to the citizens who are in daily contact with them.

Furthermore, as professional bureaucrats, they have professional colleagues in other authorities with whom they can consult (Arnold 2015). These ties enable them to build a coalition of supporters and even more importantly to improve the proposed initiative so it is more consensual. Finally, unlike politicians who are replaced often, street level bureaucrats usually hold their positions for an extended period (Lipsky 2010). Therefore, they have the time and close ties to build trust and strong, stable social networks.

Moreover, the time and place in which policy entrepreneurs operate have a significant effect on the extent to which they can realize their goals. They need a window of opportunity that is usually open for a short period of time. Policy entrepreneurs must identify it and act on it (Huitema & Meijerink, 2010; Kingdon, 1984; Sætren, 2016). Once again, the position of street level bureaucrats within the local authority gives them an advantage in identifying the right time and place to launch the initiative.

Thus, we posit that:

Proposition 1: Street level bureaucrats may act as policy entrepreneurs and influence the shaping, not only the implementation, of policy.

However, not all street level bureaucrats can or want to affect policy formation. We maintain that amongst those who aim to shape policy, the institutional setting is key for the entrepreneurial potential of street level bureaucrats, as we explain in our next proposition.

How Governance Enables Street Level Policy Entrepreneurship

The term 'governance' refers a developmental stage in Western governments (Rhodes, 1996). Stoker (1998) notes that on the local level, governance 1) refers to institutions and actors from within and beyond government, 2) identifies the blurring of boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues, 3) identifies the power dependence in the relationships between institutions involved in collective action, 4) concerns the autonomous self-governing networks of actors, and 5) recognizes that the ability to get things done requires the government to use its authority.

Local authorities have been moving from being service providers to caring for the social and spatial needs of the community (Clarke & Stewart, 1998; Kersting et al., 2009; Morrell, 2009; Rhodes, 1997; Stoker, 1998, p. 2). Furthermore, they have been moving from being the only actor in the political field to being part of a network of various actors in the public, private and third sectors (Beeri & Yuval, 2012). These changes have led to many operational distinctions such as the centralization of power vs. decentralization, operation and administration, and input based management vs. strategic and results based management, producing services vs. managing services, monopolistic services vs. differential services and technical reporting vs. organizational transparency (Hood, 1991).

New public management and governance modes of local government have stressed the importance of cross management in which street level bureaucrats must collaborate with networks providing public services (Stoker et al., 2004). For example, a municipal social worker is no longer the sole caregiver the family has but rather coordinates a network of service providers: organizations, private companies and volunteers. This situation differs substantially from the view of street level

bureaucrats in the literature (Durose, 2007). Thus, we must investigate how these changes affect street level work.

In a governance system, the role of street level bureaucrats has changed in two ways. First, instead of supplying a service, they work with networks that provide services. This transition requires pragmatic innovation to recreate the organization (Bardach, 1998). Moreover, scholars have demonstrated how networking tends to facilitate policy entrepreneurship (Arnold et al., 2016; Mintrom and Vergari, 1998). Finally, a flatter organizational structure in a governance regime allows street level bureaucrats easier access to decision-makers as well as fewer veto points (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973). The second change is the increased involvement of citizens in decision-making (Taylor-Gooby & Bromley, 2003), which actually empowers the street level bureaucrats. As those in daily contact with citizens, they can build coalitions, recruit supporters, create pilots and maintain policy networks.

The many actors and the unclear division of authority redefine the role street level bureaucrats play in the decision-making process. They are no longer passive policy implementers. They are active policy makers who are part of the decision-making process. We therefore claim that:

Proposition 2: The shift from hierarchical, traditional public administration to lateral governance facilitates street level policy entrepreneurship. The closer the local authority is to the mode of local governance, the more the street level bureaucrats will act as policy entrepreneurs.

Next, we investigate these two propositions using the case study of waste management in local authorities in Israel.

Local Government Regimes in Israel and the Development of Waste Separation

As in other countries, decentralization in Israel began in the mid-1980s. This change did not occur as part of a comprehensive, organized, unified reform. Rather, it was created by the leakage of norms, guidelines and procedures from the central to the local government, resulting in major gaps between these local authorities (Derry, 1999; Razin, 1998). However, the decentralization and transfer of responsibilities to local governments was not accompanied by resources, thereby empowering some local authorities while weakening others that could not keep up with the growing demands and responsibilities (Blank, 1994). The central government's tight fiscal policy that advocates reducing the financial involvement and responsibility of the central government, widened the gap between the wealthier competent-based authorities who ensure the provision of regular services, and the authorities who have difficulty in providing services.

Moreover, the non-comprehensive process of decentralization created a gap between the legal control of the central government and the ability of the local government to design a clear policy and monitor its implementation (Razin, 2003). As a result, stronger local authorities were better able to shape local policy, but weaker local authorities were left in chaos, threatening their economies, democratic principles and ability to function (Beeri, 2009). Thus, there are major differences within the local authorities in Israel. While some hold conservative worldviews and use traditional processes, others operate in non-hierarchical governance modes that emphasize their unique characteristics, allowing open debate in decision-making (Ben Elia, 2006). The case study of waste management in Israel provides a vivid example of the shift from hierarchical, traditional public administration to lateral governance in

some authorities and the role of street level policy entrepreneurship in promoting this endeavor.

Waste Separation

Municipal solid waste is defined as waste collected by local authorities and consists of household waste and commercial waste, not including industrial, construction, agricultural and hazardous waste (Ayalon et al., 2010). There are two methods of treating municipal waste. Landfill is a method in which all waste (without distinction between or the separation of materials and their properties) is dumped into a landfill, sometimes far from where it was created. This method is costly in terms of transportation and land. Moreover, there are side costs such as the damage caused by air pollution, water contamination, the perception of open spaces and the creation of greenhouse gases (Eshet et al., 2006).

Due to the additional costs of landfill, many countries have moved to a method of separating waste at the source. In this method, it is the citizens' responsibility to separate waste in their homes, thus transferring the costs from the local government to the people (Dean, 1995). Therefore, the local government must promote this solution to the public and train them in how to separate the waste. The government often relies on two rationales for advocating this solution: economic reasons and social-ecological reasons.

Until the 1990s, all local authorities in Israel used the landfill method for waste management. Over the years, with the growth of population and the increase in consumption, landfills began to overflow, creating negative environmental effects such as greenhouse gas emissions, disease transmission, air pollution and possible contamination of groundwater and soil (Friedman, 2012). Some of these landfill sites

planned in the suburbs of major cities have become mountains of garbage in city centers.

During the 1990s municipal landfills were closed in favor of major landfill sites, out of a desire to reduce and concentrate the damage to soil and water (Tal 2008). As a result, the local authorities had to transport the waste for longer distances at a higher price. In 1998 a law entitled "The Collection and Disposal of Waste Recycling" was passed, forcing local authorities to recycle certain products such as paper and cardboard. In 2007, a landfill surcharge ,came into effect aimed at reducing landfill. This surcharge was scheduled to rise gradually beginning in 2010 to up to 500% of the initial surcharge the local authorities paid for every ton buried (Tal, 2008).

The landfill surcharge policy and attendant legislation were not accompanied by specific directives about how to implement them. As a letter from the Ministry for the Protection of the Environment Division of Research in the Knesset notes, "Local authorities are given the opportunity to determine the separation arrangements suitable for them. There are authorities who chose separation into two streams and other select three or more" (Knesset, 2010). Following the imposition of the surcharge, the authorities had two options: maintain the status quo and increase the amount of money allocated to the handling of the waste or change the system for separating waste at the source in residents' homes (Marshmallow, 2015; Reich, 2014).

The Ministry for the Protection of the Environment's strategy of allowing each authority the ability to choose how to handle its waste created three waves of adoption of a waste separation policy amongst the local authorities in Israel. The first wave consists of the early adopters of waste separation before 2010, when the Ministry for

the Protection of the Environment began to address the issue of waste separation in local authorities. The second wave includes the local authorities where street level bureaucrats recognized the benefits of the separation policy and used the financial aid from the Ministry for the Protection of the Environment's "Calls for Proposals" in 2010 to support the implementation of waste separation. The third wave consists of the local authorities that waited until the enactment of the Packaging Act in 2014, which forced them to separate waste (Shochat & Klignov, 2012). In our study, we analyze the activity of street level policy entrepreneurs in each of these waves.

Research Design

Our case study is the role of environmental inspectors as the promoters of waste separation in Israeli regional authorities. Although we base our findings on a single case study (Yin, 2013), it not only has strong internal validity, but also sheds light on the causal effect of a specific type of institutional change, the shift from hierarchical, traditional public administration to lateral governance, on street level policy entrepreneurship. Regional authorities in Israel are a local form of government incorporating a number of rural communities within a specific geography. We focus on this pattern of local authorities, because they are relatively similar socio-economically, demographically, and politically. Of the 53 regional authorities in Israel, we chose cases from the three waves described above. As we will demonstrate, the main difference between these waves is the extent to which the local authority adopted a governance regime and the effect it had on the entrepreneurship of the environmental inspectors in the local authority, the street level bureaucrats responsible for treating waste.

We conducted the study using textual analysis of primary and secondary resources and in-depth, semi-structured interviews we held between 2015 and 2016

with 15 environmental inspectors employed by the local authorities. First, we contacted *all* of the environmental inspectors in the regional authorities by email, asking them to participate in the research. Then, we conducted interviews with 15 respondents (a 25% response rate), the majority of whom were from the first wave, and the rest from the second and third waves. Although this may be a small sample, we believe that the interviewees are representative of the classes of respondents important to target, because our purpose was to gain insights into how government regimes affect the feasibility of street level policy entrepreneurship. The final sample of interviewees provided these insights. The interviews took place in the respondents' offices, and each lasted for about an hour.

The questions dealt with mapping the actors in the local authorities and the ties between them, and describing their resources, motivations, access to decision makers and strategies. We also asked questions about the mode of governance and its influence on the players. Amongst the questions, we asked: What was the process of developing a recycling policy in the authority? Who were the main actors? What were their motivations, goals and strategies? Who and what motivated you in the process? What impact did other players have on the process (residents/organizations)? What were the milestones in the process?

We analyzed the interviews using grounded theory, because we assumed that people behave based on a theory even if it is not conscious (Glaser, 1978). First, we conducted an open coding of the interviews that identified the key sentences. Then, we engaged in axial coding, classifying these key sentences into a number of themes. Several referees who specialize in street level bureaucracy and local governance reviewed the resulting themes.

The First Wave

The first wave of waste separation in Israeli authorities was an initiative of the local environmental inspectors (Zafrir, 2011). These interviewees underscored that they were the ones proposing the policies: 'Part of the informality is that people listen to what I have to say. The head of the local authority is my neighbor, a friend, a partner...' (Anonymous 1). All of the respondents noted that they felt they could create change, which is a result of the non-hierarchic management in the local authority. One of the respondents called it 'wearing sandals' [informal dressing] when she said, 'Here we wear sandals, in more than one way...' (Anonymous 2). When everyone wears sandals, including the head of the local authority, there is a feeling of equality, making it possible for the street level bureaucrats to be more significant in policy making.

The flatter management of the local authorities did not end with the workers who are part of the decision-making process. It continued in deep and fundamental processes with many different actors being part of the decision-making. For example, the respondents referred to writing a strategic master plan for the local authority as reflecting the decision-making process. The master plan is a long-term strategic plan examining all aspects of life in the local authority. It varies in different authorities, but in all cases all of the residents and interested parties were offered the opportunity to become part of the team choosing the strategy and focuses for the local authority. Committees were established with many actors making decisions about the master plan and implementing them. These committees had representatives from the local authority, the residents and industry, and in most cases were run by the environmental inspectors. This policy of the authority working together with many players is an

important element in its definition as a mode of governance. Reviewing the protocols of the committee shows that it dealt with issues ranging from manpower and waste recycling to the distribution of authority between authority departments.

Legitimacy and motivation for entrepreneurship

The mode of governance served as a catalyst for the street level bureaucrats to act as policy entrepreneurs in several ways. First, it legitimized their personal agenda, even if it was not financially worthwhile for the authority. This legitimacy should not be taken for granted. Indeed, we will show that it did not exist in conservative systems. Second, the policy of joint decision making in the authority allowed them to create coalitions to promote their agenda. These partnerships can exist only in an authority that encourages independent social networks. Third, waste separation involves privatization, transferring it from the local authority to the citizens. Only in local authorities that allow private companies to work within them, managed by the bureaucracy from afar, is this approach considered legitimate.

Local authorities that began waste separation in the first wave did so prior to the involvement of the national government and even before the dramatic rise in the landfill tax (Tal, 2008). These policy entrepreneurs brought the issue of waste separation into the agenda, without there necessarily being a policy problem. Most of the respondents interviewed in the first wave called themselves 'environmentalists' who believed in the idea as an ideology, with an inner motivation to change the public agenda and the state's treatment of waste. They wanted to affect policy not only in their local authority but also at the national level. They believed that the guidelines set for the authorities after 2010 were a result of their active initiation to change the policy at the state level. 'We conducted a pilot waste separation process and we

convinced the Ministry that it is worthwhile. It took them a long time to develop standards...' (Anonymous 3). 'I went and brought partners and funds from the European Union, long before it interested anyone in the Ministry for the Protection of the Environment. I brought them to see and hear after there was success. These examples encouraged them to enter the field of waste treatment…' (Anonymous 4).

Entrepreneurial strategies

Prior to the waste separation initiative, most local authorities had a sanitation department that was responsible for treating waste, issuing business licenses and dealing with veterinary issues. Policy entrepreneurs in different departments chose to convince local politicians that there was a need for a department dealing with environmental issues. The street level bureaucrats used their in-depth knowledge of the system to change the departmental structure in the authorities from within, creating new opportunities to promote their initiatives (Baumgartner & Jones, 1991). Zahariadis (2003) determined that the extensive presence of policy entrepreneurs has a significant effect on their influence. Bureaucrats usually remain in the same system for a long time (Lipsky, 2010), gaining the trust of colleagues and managers and establishing their influence. Three of the entrepreneurs interviewed transferred from different departments to the new department they worked to establish: 'I have been working for the authority for a long time. When the environmental field started to interest me, I created this position for myself…' (Anonymous 5). 'I started out as a security officer and then I became interested in the environmental field. I spoke to the head of the local authority and he told me to put together a plan. I worked closely with others and learned. It took four years to approve the establishing of a department…' (Anonymous 6). 'When I became interested in this field, I asked to establish a

division…' (Anonymous 7). The bureaucrats interviewed noted that they remain in their positions, whereas politicians are replaced, and cited the power this gives them to affect policy.

To draw attention to the issue, policy entrepreneurs try to steer the public debate to the initiative they want to promote and stress one problem out of many existing problems. The respondents noted the importance of this stage in promoting their initiative. Particularly in the first wave, when recycling and waste separation were ideas that were new to Israel, they had to work hard to have this matter discussed and even more so, to convince decision makers that the ecological problem had a feasible solution. They mentioned two stages in this process. The first was creating media awareness of waste separation to pave the way for expanding activity. The local pilot efforts were reported in local newspapers and Internet sites with slogans such as 'a green local authority', 'a green lung', and 'a green valley'. Analysis of the content of local press and authority websites shows extensive focus on ecological issues when the initiatives were on the agenda, until the implementation of the separation policy. The main themes we found had to do with joining the global 'environmental movement', stressing the ecological dangers the landfill method creates, promoting a value discourse about environmental issues, the educational value of recycling, and pictures and stories from the pilots conducted. To give a problem priority, it must be described in a clear and simple way and in a manner that makes it seem urgent (Barzelay, 2001, 56). The reports on this matter stressed the dangers of landfill and how it affects our quality of life.

In the second stage, the entrepreneurs conducted pilots, often very small, to prove that their proposed solution was feasible and effective. In some cases the pilot was conducted amongst residents with whom the entrepreneurs were acquainted or in

their own neighborhoods as personal initiatives. The pilots had two objectives: 1) to produce results showing the authority that waste separation reduces the costs of transportation and landfill, and 2) to show residents that it is an easy, feasible solution, thereby encouraging their participation.

Social networks are crucial in policy change, connecting policy problems to decision makers. The policy entrepreneurs interviewed used two strategies to maximize the benefits of existing social networks in promoting their initiatives. They empowered those who believed in the initiative and convinced residents who had no prior interest. First, the entrepreneurs identified the residents who were ready and began the pilot test with them: 'The kibbutz…there was one crazy guy who was insistent and the entire kibbutz followed after him. They recycle very well…' (Anonymous 8). 'We started from the field. An awareness and initiative developed in three communities. They came up with solutions on their own…' (Anonymous 9).

In the next stage, after the pilot succeeded, the entrepreneurs attempted to convince residents with no prior interest. 'I am the only one who organizes conventions presenting the matter to the residents. They have known me for many years and that is how I convince them' (Anonymous 5). The entrepreneurs mentioned the issue of the resources they had that they used to strengthen the social networks created, 'I play around with the budget. I give back money to towns that recycle to use for other things. I have a lot of money, a lot of power' (Anonymous 5). A central strategy that was repeated in the interviews was establishing a joint environmental committee that operated as a social network and a source of pressure and monitoring: 'A deep connection developed between the residents' initiatives and the local authority's planning and thinking. A steering committee was established, we met every week for four years…' 'We have a council and we have assembly meetings

with representatives of all the towns. They decided we are a biospheric, green local authority…' 'Here we encourage any initiative from the communities. There is real understanding here that the residents need to choose what is right for them…' (Anonymous 10).

Mintrom (2000) states that in preparing the ground, policy entrepreneurs should be focused on entrepreneurs in other fields or initiatives taking place elsewhere that may pave the way and promote their initiative. In our case, an additional significant coalition the entrepreneurs built was a professional group of street level bureaucrats in other regional authorities who wanted to promote waste separation. They met and learned from each other, worked together against the regulators from the Ministry for the Protection of the Environment and joined forces to maximize their power within their authorities and outside them. This type of collaboration with colleagues is common amongst street level bureaucrats who are professional workers in a specific field (Arnold, 2015).

Close acquaintance with the political agreements, conflicts and intrigues, as well as the places that can become opportunities, is crucial to the success of the initiative. The street level bureaucrats in the first wave had been in the system for many years and knew it well. Furthermore, they were more veteran and experienced than the politicians in the local authority. The entrepreneurs interviewed mentioned their in-depth knowledge of the field as an advantage: 'I know everything here, I can play with the numbers, so they work for me'. 'Believe me I know the head of the local authority better than he does. I know he wants as many projects as possible, to look good' (Anonymous 2). Others also mentioned their acquaintance with the head of the local authority who might want to leave a legacy as possible leverage for applying

pressure. Others noted the issue of cost, because they knew it was the most important measure for their authority.

Thus, the street level policy entrepreneurs' acquaintance with the field was an advantage in identifying the flow of problems and offering a focused solution to the problem that would also serve their interests. They are the authority the politicians turn to when they want a better understanding of a problem or a solution. The street level bureaucrats we interviewed stressed the ability they have to play with the power they have as professional experts: 'If I do not clear waste, there will be a problem and the residents will drive the call center crazy with calls' (Anonymous 2). 'I have years of experience, I could explain what waste separation can save the authority…' (Anonymous 10).

The Second and Third Waves

While the transition to local governance smoothed the way for the street level policy entrepreneurs in the first wave, the experience of the second and third waves illustrates the effect that non-governance systems can have.

Motivation for entrepreneurship

In contrast to the first wave of initiatives that were characterized by the willingness of the authority to invest resources in promoting the environmental agenda, the second wave resulted from external pressure such as the call for action from the Ministry for the Protection of the Environment. This difference suggests different motivations and strategies for the street level bureaucrats who were influenced by the government actions promoting waste separation. Differences in local government regimes also affected their motivations and strategies. Thus, in the

second wave the respondents mentioned the entrepreneurs' being able to do whatever they wanted in their own limited field and the need to save money: 'The mayor went along with me from the beginning. He wanted to save money and that was what I promised him' (Anonymous 10). This method of governance does not believe in including everyone in decision-making, but it does enable the street level bureaucrats to implement policy in their own fields, as long as they can justify it as economic efficiency for the authority. From the interviews we learned that the street level bureaucrats needed the politicians' approval for their initiatives, but they could recruit supporters and lead actions to convince the decision makers.

The interviews showed that the citizens were seen as a factor to be convinced and recruited, rather than as partners, as they were perceived in the first wave: 'At first I conducted a pilot test amongst all types of population groups. I saw that everyone sorted waste. It was with a lot of help and support from us but also with the support of the residents' (Anonymous 10). 'There was no demand from the residents, we encouraged residents to join our environmental leadership programs… we gave the towns that joined support from the authority…' (Anonymous 11). The initiative came mostly from the local authority, and the residents could choose whether to accept or reject it.

Unlike the local governance system in which an ideological entrepreneur emerged, in this system the entrepreneur operated out of a desire to be more economically efficient and to maximize the power of the local authority. Faced with increasing costs for landfill and the option of receiving financial support from the Ministry for the Protection of the Environment to sort waste, the street level policy entrepreneurs seized on the window of opportunity, the offer of financial aid, to resolve a fiscal problem. 'I saw the trouble the authority faced with the rise in the

landfill tax and I realized that I have to think of creative solutions for saving… I have friends in high offices. I send birthday presents to the secretaries, meet with the minister, I knew before everyone that the landfill tax was increasing and that we need to find a solution…' (Anonymous 10). The entrepreneurs gathered support from residents and decision makers to help them become more economically efficient and solve the policy problem that had arisen. In this mode of governance, the policy will be implemented only through enforcement and sanctions. The street level bureaucrats noted the penalty aspect of the law as a factor that prompted the local authority to join the waste separation project.

Entrepreneurial strategies

Unlike the ideological entrepreneur, the financial entrepreneur does not have to invent anything. The solution already exists and has been tried in other authorities. Kingdon described 'the politics flow', the process through which an idea moves to become policy. Zahariadis (2003) distinguished between two dimensions that affect accepting a solution to a problem: ideas and time. Is the idea new or a variation on old ideas? How much time does it take decision makers to realize that, in an array of problems, this is a problem with a solution. Economic entrepreneurs offer ready-made ideas that have been tried before. Therefore, their proposals are just variations of existing ideas, which shortens the process of gaining support for them.

Surprisingly, the street level bureaucrats interviewed in systems classified as conservative considered themselves entrepreneurs: 'I am an entrepreneur, entrepreneurship is a trait, a character, it is up to you…' (Anonymous 5). 'I have a lot of ideas for action…' (Anonymous 9). However, they contended that this entrepreneurship had not materialized due to organizational obstacles: 'It is very hard

to see things through here… the authority has the reputation of being a land thief, they draw up a master plan for waste, but it is not implemented. It was just a political matter to give the authority an environmental image… there is no clear vision here. Things here are run only based on budget. Whatever costs a lot is not carried out…' (Anonymous 9). Anonymous 5 expressed even greater frustration with the management methods in the local authority: 'The authority is not logistically and organizationally available. The legal advisor does not function; there are no tenders. I did everything in the end. All they did was sign'.

Discussion and Conclusion

We open the article with the questions can street level bureaucrats act as policy entrepreneurs and affect policy *design*? And does the transition from traditional, hierarchical administrations to local governance systems play a role. Our study reveals that street level bureaucrats can strategically affect the shaping of policy by using their professional knowledge and in-depth acquaintance with the needs of the citizens and by adopting entrepreneurship strategies. It also demonstrates that the format of the government regime affects the ability of street level bureaucrats to act as policy entrepreneurs. In an administrative system that is governed in a less traditional and more governance way, street level bureaucrats will find it easier to act as policy entrepreneurs.

As our case study illustrates, in the first wave, street level bureaucrats with an ecological and environmental agenda promoted waste separation, because it was aligned with the agenda they wished to advance. Their strategic position with the local authority and their ability to draw attention to an issue and its solution, as well as create a social network with a lateral form of governance, paved the way for their

success. In contrast, in the second and third waves of the waste separation policy, the entrepreneurs used ready-made programs and leveraged the issue of cost to shorten the time it would take a hierarchical government to approve a new program and offered an incentive to it in the form of government subsidies for doing so. Thus, acting as a policy entrepreneur and experiencing success as one need not be linked, although in many cases they may be. A street level policy bureaucrat could have all the traits of a policy entrepreneur and work very hard at advocacy, but yet be unsuccessful at having the policy adopted. Conversely, someone could do very little to push a policy forward and it might nonetheless pass due to structural or contextual factors such as the move to a flatter, less hierarchical governance regime.

Analysis of the main themes in our interviews shows that there is a connection between the extent of the street level bureaucrats' entrepreneurship and the mode of governance in which they operate. In a local mode of governance that is less hierarchical and more lateral, street level bureaucrats are full partners in decision-making. This system represents a change in the political flow, serving as a window of opportunity for promoting ideas. In contrast, in the more traditional hierarchical system identified in the second and third waves, the street level bureaucrats had difficulty acting as policy entrepreneurs because policy-making is considered to be the politician's job and the bureaucrat is regarded as simply responsible for implementing it. Even if these bureaucrats have the qualities and skills needed, they will have great difficulty promoting initiatives. Our study highlights the significant impact that this transition has on the work of street level bureaucrats (Ellis 2011). It adds to the entrepreneurship literature by detailing how changes in the political flow affect policy entrepreneurs, a claim made in the three-streams model but one that needed fine-tuning (Sætren, 2016).

Finally, this study reiterates one of the basic questions about street level bureaucrats: Does public policy derive from a top-down or a bottom-up process? Some have argued that public policy is not devised top-down by senior levels. Rather, it is implemented and executed bottom-up by street level bureaucrats (Bovens & Zouridis, 2002). Our case study indicates that sometimes policy will eventually be shaped top-down by senior levels – but only because of the influence of low and medium-level bureaucrats who seek to influence the design of that policy directly.

References

Arnold, Gwen. 2015. "Street-level policy entrepreneurship." *Public Management Review*, *17*(3): 307-327.

Arnold, Gwen , Le A. Nguyen Long, and Madeline Gottlieb. 2016. "Social Networks and Policy Entrepreneurship: How Relationships Shape Municipal Decision Making about High-Volume Hydraulic Fracturing." *Policy Studies Journal*, doi:10.1111/psj.12175.

Bardach, Eugene. 1998. *Getting agencies to work together: The practice and theory of managerial craftsmanship*. Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press.

Barzelay, Michael. 2001. *The new public management: Improving research and policy dialogue* (Vol. 3). Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

Beeri, Itai. 2009. *Recovery plans for failing authorities in Israel: a comparative view, in light of the British experience*. Jerusalem: Florsheim Institute. (Hebrew).

Beeri, Itai, and Funny Yuval. 2012 *The performance of the local government in Israel: analysis of resident's positions and a national situation evaluation*. Beer Sheva: Series of research papers in public policy and administration. (Hebrew).

Birkland, Thomas. A. 1998. "Focusing events, mobilization, and agenda setting." *Journal of public policy*, *18* (01): 53-74.

Bovens, Mark, and Stavros, Zouridis. 2002. "Street-level to system-level bureaucracies: How information and communication technology is transforming administrative discretion and constitutional control." *Public Administration Review*, *62*, 174-184.

Brodkin, Evelyn. Z. 1997. "Inside the welfare contract: Discretion and accountability in state welfare administration." *The Social Service Review*: 1-33.

Burke, John P. 1987. "A Prescriptive View of the Implementation Process: When Should Bureaucrats Exercise Discretion?" *Review of Policy Research*, *7*(1): 217-231.

Clarke, Harrold D., and Marianne C. Stewart. 1998. "The decline of parties in the minds of citizens." *Annual Review of Political Science*, *1*(1): 357- 8.

Cohen, Nissim. 2012. "Policy Entrepreneurs and the Design of Public Policy: The Case of the National Health Insurance Law in Israel." *Journal of Social Research and Policy*, *3*(1): 5- 26.

Cohen, Nissim 2016a. "How Culture Affects Street-Level Bureaucrats' Bending the Rules in the Context of Informal Payments for Health Care: The Israeli Case.", *The American Review of Public Administration*. doi: 10.1177/0275074016665919.

Cohen, Nissim 2016b. 'Policy Entrepreneurs and Agenda Setting'. In *Handbook of Public Policy Agenda-Setting*, ed. Nicholas Zaharadis. Northampton MA : Edward Elgar, 180-199.

Cohen, Nissim and Tamar Arieli. 2011. "Field research in conflict environments: Methodological challenges and snowball sampling." *Journal of Peace Research*, *48*(4), 423-435.

Cohen, Nissim and Michael Naor. 2013. "Reducing dependence on oil? How policy entrepreneurs utilize the national security agenda to recruit government support: The case of electric transportation in Israel." *Energy Policy* 56: 582-590.

Christopoulos, Dimitrios. C. 2006. "Relational attributes of political entrepreneurs: a network perspective." *Journal of European Public Policy*, *13*(5): 757-778.

Derry, David. 1999. Local Governance: De- Facto Decentralization. *Public Policy in Israel,* 159-173. (Hebrew).

Durose, Catherine. 2007. "Beyond 'street level bureaucrats': Re☐interpreting the role of front line public sector workers." *Critical Policy Analysis*, *1*(2): 217-234.

Ellis, Kathryn. 2011. "'Street level Bureaucracy' Revisited: The Changing Face of Frontline Discretion in Adult Social Care in England." *Social Policy and Administration*, *45*(3): 221-244.

Glaser, Barney G. 1978. *Theoretical sensitivity: Advances in the methodology of grounded theory*. Mill Valley, CA : Sociology Press.

Hill, Michael J. and Peter L. Hupe. 2002. *Implementing public policy: governance in theory and practice*. London: Sage Publications.

Hood, Christopher. 1991. "A public management for all seasons?" *Public Administration*, *69*(1): 3-19.

Huitema, Dave, and Sander Meijerink. 2010. "Realizing water transitions: the role of policy entrepreneurs in water policy change." *Ecology and Society*, *15*(2): 26-36.

Hupe, Peter, and Aurélien Buffat. 2014. "A Public Service Gap: Capturing contexts in a comparative approach of street-level bureaucracy." *Public Management Review*, *16*(4): 548-569.

John, Peter. 2013. *Analyzing public policy*. Oxford: Routledge.

Jones, Michael D., Holly L. Peterson, Jonathan J. Pierce, Nicole Herweg, Amiel Bernal, Holly L. Raney, and Nikolaos Zahariadis. 2016. "A River Runs Through It: A Multiple Streams Meta- Review." *Policy Studies Journal*, *44*(1): 13-36.

Kersting, Norbert, Janice Caulfield, Andrew R. Nickson, Dele Olowu and Hellmut Wollmann. 2009. *Local governance reform in global perspective* (Vol. 12). Verlag: Springer.

Kingdon, John. W. 1984. Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies. Boston: Little, Brown.

Lipsky, Michael. 2010. *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services* (30th Anniversary Edition). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Maynard-Moody, Steven, and Micael C. Musheno, 2003. *Cops, teachers, counselors: Stories from the front lines of public service*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

Mintrom, Michael. 1997. "Policy entrepreneurs and the diffusion of innovation*." American Journal of Political Science*, 41(3): 738-770.

Mintrom, Michael. 2013. "Policy Entrepreneurs and Controversial Science: Governing Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research." *Journal of European Public Policy 20*(3): 442-57.

Mintrom, Michael and Philipa Norman. 2009. "Policy entrepreneurship and policy change*." Policy Studies Journal*, *37*(4): 649-667.

Mintrom, Michael, and Sandra Vergari. 1996. "Advocacy coalitions, policy entrepreneurs, and policy change." *Policy studies journal*, *24*(3): 420-434.

Morrell, Kevin. 2009. "Governance and the public good." *Public Administration*, *87*(3): 538-556.

Ostrom, Elinor. 1999. "Coping with tragedies of the commons." *Annual Review of Political Science*, *2*(1): 493-535.

Petchey, Roland, Jacky Williams, and Yvonne H. Carter. 2008. From Street-level Bureaucrats to Street-level Policy Entrepreneurs? Central Policy and Local Action in Lottery funded Community Cancer Care." *Social Policy and Administration*, *42*(1): 59-76.

Pralle, Sarah. 2006. "The 'mouse that roared': Agenda setting in Canadian pesticides politics." *Policy Studies Journal*, *34*(2): 171-194.

Prottas, Jeffery M. 1978. "The power of the street-level bureaucrat in public service bureaucracies." *Urban Affairs Review*, *13*(3): 285-312.

Razin, Eran. 1999. *Budget gaps in local municipalities in Israel*. Jerusalem: Florsheim Institute. (Hebrew).

Rhodes, Rod A. W. 1997. *Understanding governance: Policy networks, governance, reflexivity and accountability*. Open University Press.

Riccucci, Norma M. 2005. "Street-level bureaucrats and intrastate variation in the implementation of temporary assistance for needy families policies." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *15*(1): 89-111.

Sætren, Harold. 2016. "From controversial policy idea to successful program implementation: the role of the policy entrepreneur, manipulation strategy, program design, institutions and open policy windows in relocating Norwegian central agencies." *Policy Sciences*, *49*(1): 71-88.

Shochat, Tal. And Tamir Klignov. 2005. *Landfill surcharge*. Jerusalem: the ministry for the protection of the environment. (Hebrew).

Stoker, Gerry. 1998. "Governance as theory: five propositions." *International Social Science Journal*, *50*(155): 17-28.

Stoker, Gerry, Fransesca Gains, Stephan Greasley, Peter John, and Nirmala Rao. 2004. *Operating the new council constitutions in English local authorities: A process evaluation*. London: Office of the Deputy Prime Minster.

Tal, Uri. 2008. *Domestic waste in Israel*. Jerusalem: The Knesset Information Center. (Hebrew).

Taylor☐Gooby, Peter, Charlotte Hastie, and Catherine Bromley. 2003. "Querulous citizens: welfare knowledge and the limits to welfare reform." *Social Policy and Administration*, *37*(1): 1-20.

Tummers, Lars, and Victor Bekkers. 2014. "Policy implementation, street-level bureaucracy, and the importance of discretion." *Public Management Review*, *16*(4): 527-547.

Tummers, Lars L. G, Victor Bekkers, Evelien Vink and Michael Musheno. 2015. "Coping during public service delivery: A conceptualization and systematic review of the literature." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *25*(4): 1099-1126.

Ugur, Mehmet, and Dilek Yankaya. 2008. "Policy entrepreneurship, policy opportunism, and EU conditionality: the AKP and TÜSİAD experience in Turkey.*" Governance*, 21(4): 581-601.

Zafrir, Rinat. 'A cold shower on waste separation'. *Haaretz*, 4.11.2015. (Hebrew)

Zahariadis, Nicholas. 2003. *Ambiguity and choice in public policy: Political decision making in modern democracies*. Georgetown: Georgetown University Press.

Zahariadis, Nicholas. 2016. "Delphic oracles: ambiguity, institutions, and multiple streams." *Policy Sciences*, *49*(1): 3-12.

Zerbinati, Stefania and Vangelid Souitaris. 2005. "Entrepreneurship in the public sector: a framework of analysis in European local governments." *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, *17*(1): 43-64.