

UNIVERSITY BABES-BOLYAI
FACULTY OF EUROPEAN STUDIES
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND EUROPEAN
STUDIES SCHOOL
CLUJ-NAPOCA

**An Evaluation of Social Services Policy In
Israel: from Deciders to Receivers**

Long Abstract

PhD Coordinator: Professor PhD. Vasile Puscas

PhD Student: Shula Menachem

I.D 056506090

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Astract

The reality of our lives in the globalization era, is characterized by intensive and frequent changes that impact on policy formulation and implementation of social and welfare services in Israel and around the world. There is a demand for efficient management, reduction of government involvement in creating, producing and funding social services, pressures to decentralize and delegate, demands to include civil society, demographic changes, increase in life expectancy, entrance of additional stakeholders outside the political world and more. This complicated reality constitutes the basis for social services reform in Israel on the one hand, and clarifying the question regarding policy implementation and the gap between deciders and receivers on the other.

The overall aim of this research was to examine whether there is a gap between declared policy i.e. the deciders, its implementation, i.e. the receivers, to examine the nature of the gap: understanding and identifying the gap's components and reasons.

A comparison was carried out with social policy in England with the purpose of expanding and deepening research insights on the one hand, and creating a universal, international basis on the other. Two theoretical approaches constituted the conceptual framework for analyzing findings: stakeholders approach and complex adaptive systems. The research is qualitative, using the case study approach to examine the implementation of social services reform in Israel. The research population included interviews with senior policy makers in government, the Ministry of Welfare and local government both past and present, as well as focus groups. Data was processed using methodical content analysis and the findings consolidated into central themes.

The research found that there is a gap between deciders and receivers, with the gap structured and coming into being already during the policy formulation process and continuing into implementation. Processing the findings and conclusions created a model proposing a way of narrowing the gap using observations of three key processes: (1) Recognizing - "new politics", implementations resources, CAS – self hierarchy, changing arena; (2) Mapping – four sectors, big society, receivers, stakeholders; (3) Steering – vision, determination, passion, collaboration

The contribution of this research is both practical and universal: the conceptual conclusions arising from the research enabled development of a conceptual model to determine social services policy, and therefore this research is likely to be important to policy deciders whomever they are. In addition, the research contributes to and expands knowledge in the field of implementing policy and emphasizes the place and importance of receivers.

1. Introduction

1.1 Gap in Knowledge

The area of implementation in research and the literature is relatively new and still requires learning and much more research to produce a consolidated theoretical conceptual system. Indeed, many researchers have tried to formulate different models to understand and evaluate policy implementation, but there is still no consolidated and agreed theory that explains or knows how to predict implementation or non-implementation of policy. The area of evaluating and measuring policy and plans is a problematic area in Israel and it demands examination on recruitment to action because of there is no culture or tradition of measuring or evaluating execution. Also, it should be noted that past studies examining reforms in social services (Austin, 2003; Brick, 2008, Meyers, Glaser & MacDonald, 1998) were carried out a few years after implementation from a retrospective view. This research proposes a unique angle, introspective, of evaluating implementation the policy of reform in the social services in Israel, during and through the implementation itself, implementation that is still going on and is not yet completed.

As far as is known, there has been no research evaluating implementation of the reform itself as part of social service policy in Israel, by examining policy implementation on a continuum that moves between deciders and receivers.

1.2 Background: Local and Global context

In recent years, I have served in two roles that led me to be involved in social services policy determination processes in general and great involvement in formulating and implementing the reforms in Israel's social services in particular: In my main role, I serve as the Director of Social Services in a local authority in north Israel, and also in the role of chair of the Association of Local Authority Social Services Directors in Israel. These roles led to great and direct involvement in formulating and consolidating recommendations for reform in social services. Hence my personal and professional interest is in evaluating the implementation of the reform as a part of a new policy that was formulated in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services. In addition, the literature points out other factors that constitute a background for reforms and changes in the area of social services including severe criticism about inefficiencies, failing management, fixation and excess bureaucracy in the public

sector (Savas, 2000). That being the case, we see that the reality from which the research derives is a local, national and international reality in which old fashioned social services operate, unadjusted to changes that have occurred in the world with reference to the characteristics of the era in which we live: an era of rapid technological, economic development requiring new work methods and progressive involvement, demands for efficiency, expectation of cooperation and a variety of planning and producing social services, transparency, measurement and evaluation.

1.3 Research Aims

The overall aim of this research is to examine whether there is a gap between declared policy i.e the deciders and its implementation i.e the receivers, understanding and identifying the gap's components and reasons. The secondary aim of the research is to develop a strategy and thinking approach how to bridge the gap between stated policy and its implementation in practice in the field of social services.

Yin (1992) pointed out the need to evaluate public sector programs and projects in which great resources and thoughts are invested, using research measuring and explaining the results of actions, programs and more. This argument was the foundation of the considerations determining the aims of the current research.

In the current era, with the expansion of the new public management approach, which argues that private sector ideas can also succeed in the public sector (Hood 1991), ideas of planning, organizational methods, evaluation, control and more - require increasing concern with evaluation areas, especially as this approach remains popular and directs many reform initiatives around the world (Yang & Holzer, 2006). On the basis of these ways of thinking, the primary aim of this research was formulated, which is to develop an approach and operating means that are able to bridge the gap between stated policy, i.e. deciders and their practical implementation, i.e receivers in the field of social services, in order to reach maximal and optimal implementation of decisions and policies.

1.4 Research Questions

The research question in qualitative research is a declaration that identifies the "investigated phenomena" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 38). In the initial stage, the researcher poses an open question to people concerned with a study, collect initial information from different sources as well as relevant literature. As initial data is

consolidated, they can reformulate more focused research questions (Marshall & Rossman, 1998). This study too went through a process of initial clarification during conversations with senior Israeli Ministry of Welfare officials, professionals, academics, reading relevant literature, policy documents and reports, reform program etc. During this process, the research questions were redesigned to enrich the research and insights that emerged from the findings on one hand, and sharpen its uniqueness and contribution to the world of knowledge on the other. After aforementioned changes in the questions during the reading of subject literature, interviews and document analysis, three key questions to direct the current research were formulated:

- a. What are the components that constitute social services policy in Israel?
- b. What gap can be found between official declared policy and its implementation?
- c. What constitutes the gap and how can it be bridged?

1.5 Research boundaries

This study focuses on evaluating social policy and the gap between deciders and receivers, taking the reform implementation as a case study to represent one of the principles of Israel's social services policy. The research deal with the macro level and do not touch on other areas included under the broad heading of policy and social policy: decision making, areas of social policy such as children at risk, elderly, people with special needs, families and more. The research took place in Israel during November 2015 until August 2016 .

Key words: Social services policy, globalization, Individualism, gap, new politics, stakeholders, Complexity Adaptive System ,deciders and receivers.

2. Literature Review

2.1 preview

This research relies on three core areas that require literary reading and examination: policy, globalization and implementing policy. The review includes learning via comparison of social services policy components in Israel and England in order to enrich and broaden insights and issues emerging from this research.

The comparison with England seems to be natural for two reasons: the effects of the British mandate rule in Israel until 1948 are still felt in some government and political institutions, and the second reason - England constitutes a leading model for inspiration and learning amongst welfare policy designers in Israel and worldwide.

2.2 National Social Policy

Titmuss, a key researcher and writer in the field of policy in England (1978) suggested the following definition for the concept of policy, "principles that govern action directed towards given ends" (p. 138). The definition based on moral values that see society as a framework with place for respect for humankind, sees society as responsible for providing opportunities to all, which will lead to solidarity and allocating state and social resources to narrow inequalities and take care of other social problems. Baldock et al. (2012) defined social services policy as a state's intentional intervention in the distribution of resources to citizens in order to accomplish the goal of well-being.

Economic, social and political permutations forced policy makers to reevaluate social policy, focusing discussion on four central issues: the extent of social legislation, the extent of social expenditure, universality versus selectiveness and roles and responsibilities for providing social services (government, local government, voluntary organizations, business organizations) (Aviram, Gal & Katan, 2007). This approach, in fact, determines and explains the deep connection between economic policy and social policy and wellbeing, as can be found in the literature dealing with social services policy. One can learn from the aforementioned definitions that policy is planned governmental action that intervenes in the life of citizens and society, with the purpose of improving their quality of life. Social policy is based on moral values on the one hand and socio-economic considerations on the other and expresses a desire for social

solidarity. Today, the leading need in the world is the advancement of economic growth through planning informed economic policy, especially in light of the subprime crisis of 2008 and the recession (Alcock & May, 2014). In fact, the oil crisis - in the mid 1970's, raised the necessity of a thorough reexamination of social policies at the fundamental economic and social levels that underpin it and to examine issues regarding its future development (Gilbert & Terrel, 2005). These approaches were strongly expressed in Britain under Margaret Thatcher, and in the U.S.A. during the presidency of Ronald Regan (Pierson, 1995).

2.3 Policy Design Processes

Kraft and Furlong (2010) proposed a cyclic model that may contribute to understanding the policy design process in every political system and to the understanding of phenomena and decisions in various cultures and different formal systems. The model depicts a logical sequence of actions that influence the development of public policy and include 6 stages: (1) Problem Identification (2) Policy Formulation (3) Policy Legitimization (4) policy Implementation (5) Policy Evaluation (6) Policy continuation or amendment or cease. This model has merit on the level of analysis and understanding the gaps between policy and implementation in research that examines policy implementation and components of

2.4 Globalization

Globalization as a phenomenon, is examined by researchers in every field of social and political science: economics, politics, geography, sociology, anthropology, international relations and more. (Guillen, 2001).

Korpi (2003) provided a broad and basic definition of globalization as a process in which there is worldwide free transfer of goods, capital, knowledge, services and products. Giddens & Hutton (2000) listed four major phenomena which they believed were caused by globalization:

1. A worldwide communication revolution (the Internet revolution) that enables global communication;
2. Economy led by financial market;
3. Post-Communist world after the fall of the iron curtain;

4. Changes on the level of everyday life, changes in women's status, demand for more transparency and openness.

In other words, globalization is a phenomenon that has led to supra-national, national and individual changes in a way that reflects on all aspects of individuals' lives

Two concepts: Individualism and collectivism - must be defined and clarified in the analysis and evaluation of social services policy, as they are central stepping stones in the formulation of social service policy in the modern world and in light of the development of globalization and its influences both on the macro levels of states and the micro level of an individual citizen and the development of his/her views.

The common denominator for definitions of individualism is a world view that focuses on an individual, his or her goals, uniqueness and control of self and environment. The definition of 'collectivism' reflects the group as the unit of analysis and the main concept in this approach. The assumption is that the group is a framework that envelopes individuals and creates mutual commitment among them (Oyserman, 2002). One can tell that there was transmission all over the world from the collectivism approach to the individualism approach, alongside the development of the Globalization and Neo-Liberal trends.

Brady, Beckfield & Seeleib-Kaiser, (2004) presented the most comprehensive research review of the relationships between globalization and social services, and they summarized their findings in these words: "Increased globalization and modest convergence of the welfare state have occurred, but globalization does not unambiguously cause welfare state expansion, crisis and reduction or convergence" (Brady, Beckfield &, Seeleib-Kaiser, 2004, p. 3). In an article reviewing trends and challenges to social services in the 21st century, Benish (2012) identified main issues in social services reforms in Israel and around the world:

(1) Adopting market principles., (2) Altering the state's role and place as being responsible for developing and providing services, beyond privatization and supervision, (3) Guarantee customer service levels and quality in detailed service systems, (4) Changing roles of social services workers and decision makers: from care to management, from developing services to supervision and regulation, (5) Altering

the role and identity of service providing organizations: dependency on government resources harm their advocacy role and their ability to develop new services,

(6) Guaranteeing the rights of workers providing services to clients in privatized organizations, (7) Safeguarding rights of service recipients both as citizens and customers, (8) Boundaries of privatization.

These issues are also the main issues emerging from the literature review of the development of welfare states around the world, in Israel and in England, as well as the review of the influence and role of globalization in processes of shaping policy in general and social services policy in particular.

2.5 Reforms

The literature dealing with reforms (Kingdom, 1995) emphasized a number of conditions necessary to consolidate and implement social policy reforms: raising the subject with great power onto the public agenda, relating reform to real problems, establishing a state program alongside a strong political coalition that is committed to promote reform and establishing an enterprising and active leadership that works to exploit opportunities. Reforms and initiatives may be 'top-down' (decision of policy makers) or 'bottom-up' (decisions made in the field, by professionals or an interested group) or both (Brager & Holoway, 1974; Patti, 1974). When the initiative and a change derive from a 'top-down' approach, interruptions and 'noises' in implementations are to be expected (Korazim et al., 1988). Alongside psychological explanations for reform failures like resistance to change, fear of the unknown (Samuel, 1996), defensive resistance, preferring to deal with what is known out of inertia, moral opposition, fear of losing status, freedom of action (Fox, 2001) - there are organizational governmental explanations pertaining to the lack of 'implementation resources'. Implementation resources are the mechanisms for anchoring the reform in laws and regulations, and provide practical tools to those who implement them in the field, who simplify and explain policy and its application (Hill, 2003). On the other hand John Kotter (2012) presented an eight-stage model with steps that may lead to successful change. The first four stages are required to help unfreeze the rigid status quo. The next stages (5-7) seek to introduce the new methods and regulations, and the last, eighth stage expands the solid grounds on which the change relies, and agreement to change, and therefore, skipping stages according to this model, or transition to an advanced stage without

grounding earlier stages invites implementation failure. Weimar and Vining (2015) pointed to three central factors in the process of successful implementation: (1) reasonable policy – policy has to meet genuine needs of the public on the one hand and delegation of authority to the executive ranks on the other;(2) inter-organization cooperation – there is a need to act and recruit cooperation of all parties that are involved in implementation; (3) managing the implementation process – developing commitment to the implementation process by appointing a designated role holder for that purpose. In summary, Dooley (1997) drew the principles and stages for successful change implementation in the context of the environment and complexity of organizations: creating a common goal based on common values and principles, developing complex creative thinking through experiences and learning, promoting internal connections through better communication and technological means, anchoring fast feedback circles to increase self-control and attribution of success, encouraging and dealing with differentiation alongside integration and creating a small number of boundaries and clear behavioral structures.

2.6 Implementation

Policy implementation research is a young area in the research world, and the literature notes limitations and criticism of the models and theories proposed, mainly in the absence of a consolidated conceptual framework and clear definition. The literature lists three generations in the development of policy implementation research (Paudel, 2009). Each generation emphasizes different aspects, parameters and tools for analysis and understanding policy implementation.

- The first generation of implementation models focused on theories that tried to explain how a government decision is implemented, and studies focused on mapping implementation problems and identifying obstacles to implementation processes. Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) argued that the existence of many players, who interpret policies differently and hold diverse interests, constitute an obstacle to implementation in the attempt to create cooperation and coordination among all players.
- The second generation of implementation research focused on describing and analyzing the relationship between policy and practice, and raised the issue of the local level and the difficulty of central government to determine actions for

the local level. These studies provided explanations for success and failure of implementation, and added new influential parameters in implementation: time, timing, government arrangements and so forth. The second generation of researchers in this area presented two approaches to understand the implementation process itself. The top-down approach presented by Mazmanian and Sabatier (1983), according to which movement and direction of implementation is done from top to bottom, and as such, the power of senior administrators in bureaucratic systems to change the direction of policy implementation from how they were worded by politicians is expressed. And the bottom-up approach, according to which actions taken by those at the bottom of a hierarchy have great influence and power on the way in which policies are implemented (Berman, 1978). This approach is better known as 'street level bureaucrats' (Brodkin, 2011, Lipsky, 1980; McLaughlin, 1987).

- The third generation of researchers in the area of policy implementation sought to integrate the macro level of policy makers and the micro level of the lowest local implementer (Paudel, 2009). The most prominent model of policy implementation researchers is Goggin's (1990) communication model, which provides a more complex framework to understand implementation and refers to multiple variables in the implementation process, and includes the principles of the top-down and bottom-up approaches, and emphasizes the influence of expected agreements and objection on the level of government, while using communication theory (Goggin, 1990).

To conclude the literary review regarding policy implementation, one can state that research in the field is still young and is not sufficiently consolidated with consensus and theories that account for or can predict successful implementation. Nevertheless, there are a number of core principles accepted by all researchers in the various approaches in the field:

- Implementation is a multi-stage and multi-level process whose movement is not linear;
- Key factors that influence implementation positively: leadership, need for accompaniment and consult in the process of implementation and assimilation,

belief in implementation and use of several strategies in the process (Aarons, Hurlburt & Horwitz, 2011).

- Implementation requires resources and policy makers declared and genuine preferences.

It appears that in light of this complexity, changes and instability that characterize the current era, and the absence of a consolidated and solid social services model in the global world, the need to examine and try to understand the components of the gap between policy making and implementation and the variables that affect it, is enhanced in order to increase the chances of implementation that seeks to realize the aims of welfare state's defined goals.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

Weiss-Gal and Gal (2011) and Starke (2006) consolidated the various existing theories in social services policy making and implementation into four groups of core theories: functional/neo-functional approaches, Political approaches/conflict theories, Idea based approaches and Institutional approaches. This research employed two different main theories: "Stakeholders Analysis" and the CAS. The stakeholders approach is an approach that gradually taking a significant place in policy research, analysis and implementation, and also it broadens perspectives with regard to the political system in the process of making and implementing policy via examining sub-systems that affect these processes in the public space: players in the decision making arena, beliefs motivating them, structures created in creating agreement based coalitions, mobilizing resources – all that to influence decision makers (Weibel, 2007). To supplement the stakeholders approach the research used the Complex Adaptive System (CAS). According to this approach, change is characterized by blurring boundaries between policy makers, stakeholders and consumers, and the influence of each, complex interactions among all stakeholders, a rapid pace of change and more (Schneider & Somers, 2006). The CAS approach offers innovative tools that are adjusted to understanding and analyzing implementation and assimilation of change and policy in the dynamic environment in which we live. Dooley (1997) defined the main elements of this approach and claimed it uses systematic investigation to present a multi-layered, multi-disciplinary and vague reality. CAS behavior develops according to two key

principles: order is not accomplished through hierarchy and authority, and is not pre-planned but rather come into being. The second principle refer to the fact that the state of the system is irreversible and unpredictable. Integration of concepts from the stakeholders' approach and the CAS approach is central to this research.

2.8 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this research, as presented in the figure, expresses the main aspects of the Stakeholders' approach (Weibel, 2007), the CAS approach (Dooley, 1997) and the Kraft and Furlong's (2007) cyclic model of policy making. This framework presents the research concepts, the connections among players and the processes with regard to policy making, implementation and gaps on the way to implementation.

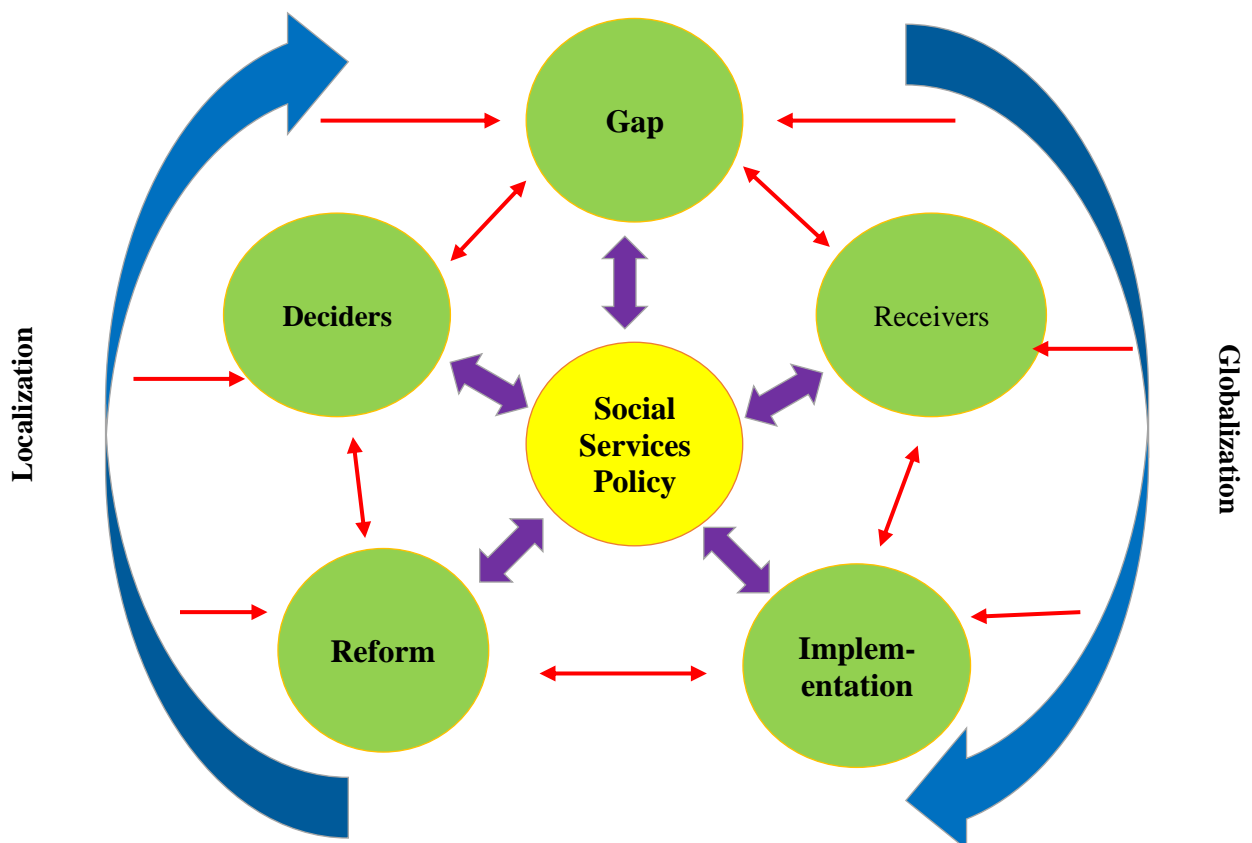


Figure1: Dynamic Bidirectional & Multidirectional Process

The concept of Social Service Policy (SSP) is in the center of the figure, because it is the heart of this research. The research sought to examine the components of social services policy on the one hand, and its implementation on the other. The research

examined the gap between policy and implementation as expressed by **deciders** and **receivers**. The gap is actually developed in the course of **implementation**. The two theories of localization and globalization hover over the entire framework of concepts, which both influence and are influenced by one another, theories with direct affiliation to each concept and naturally, mutual influences.

In the conceptual framework, one can see the system of ties and interactions. This system is multi-dimensional, multi-directional and multi-level, when multi-streams power mutually influences all the components, which influence one another: each component influences and is influenced, and creates a new reality as presented in the CAS approach, in an ongoing dynamic and active process. When these components are joined and act in the way described here, a synergy is created, which allows for the formation of social services policy in the global world.

3. Research Methodology

This research sought to evaluate social services policy in Israel on a continuum from policy makers, the deciders, through mid-levels professionals and bureaucrats who are required to implement it, to receivers, by examining the gap between policy and its implementation. It investigated the components of this gap and possible means of bridging it. The research focused on examining the implementation of reform in social services, which represents one policy component. The research was carried out using the qualitative paradigm and the case study approach to the issue of the reform and its implementation. The data was collected in the field, from policy makers, mid-level professional, bureaucrat and receivers, and from official documents published on the matter as well.

3.1 Research Aims

The overall aim of this research is to examine whether there is a gap between declared policy i.e. the deciders and its implementation i.e. the receivers, understanding and identifying the gap's components and reasons. The secondary aim of the research is to develop an approach and operating means that are able to bridge the gap between stated policies and their practical implementation in the field of social services, in order to reach maximal and optimal implementation of decisions and policies.

Yin (1992) pointed out the need to evaluate public sector programs and projects in which great resources and thoughts are invested, using research measuring and

explaining the results of actions, programs and more. This argument was the foundation of the considerations determining the aims of the current research.

As a longstanding employee in public services, and a partner in a number of national forums to formulate policy, new programs, field instructions and more, I have noticed that there is not enough reference to the issue of evaluating and measuring the performance of diverse decisions, whether referring to policies or programs.

3.2 Research Questions

"The research question in qualitative research is a declaration that identifies the investigated phenomena" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 38). That is to say, the research questions in fact demonstrate a phenomenon that the research seeks to investigate and examine. This is, in fact, one of the characteristics of qualitative research, when a researcher seeks to investigate a phenomenon or problem. In the initial stage, the researcher poses an open question to people concerned with a study, collect initial information from different sources as well as relevant literature. As initial data is consolidated, they can reformulate more focused research questions (Marshall & Rossman, 1998). This study too went through a process of initial clarification during conversations with senior Israeli Ministry of Welfare officials, professionals, academics, reading relevant literature, policy documents and reports, reform program etc. Three key questions were formulated as the research questions:

- a. What are the components that constitute social services policy in Israel?
- b. What gap can be found between official declared policy and its implementation?
- c. What constitutes the gap and how can it be bridged?

These questions were chosen as a basis for evaluating social services policy and its implementation in Israel, by defining policy components, evaluating external influences on policy determination (globalization) and enriching evaluation and data by comparing Israeli and English Social Services Policy. England represents a country that is a précis of the globalization implications and Israel's legal basis from the day of the British mandate.

3.3 Research Paradigm

The research paradigm chosen for this study was the qualitative paradigm, taking into account and examining the criticism directed at it. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) argued that qualitative researchers examine things in their natural place, try to find meaning or interprets phenomena in terms that people use. This paradigm is based on context dependent narratives and subjective descriptions (Shkedi, 2003). The research topic, aims and questions in fact dictate and direct the type of research used. Since the nature of the current research is inductive, in which learning and analyzing information is carried out from data collected in the field, using analysis of official documents, in-depth semi-structured interviews with people in the field, where the richest and most detailed knowledge and the optimal key to answering the research questions and formulating a unique understanding with regard to narrowing the gap between policy and implementation are found. In considering and examining the advantages and disadvantages of qualitative research, this paradigm was chosen because its advantages were found to be most congruent with the research aims and questions: evaluating social services policy on a continuum from decision makers to receivers.

3.4 Research approach

The current research employed the case study approach since this approach is nourished from diverse fields of knowledge and applicable approaches to research evaluation (Tzabar-Ben Yehoshua, 2016). Other researchers argue that the theories of social policy are not yet consolidated enough, and therefore policy researchers are helped by the case study approach to understand factors that influence policy design (Aviram, Gal & Katan, 2007). Therefore, the case study approach was found to best meet both the research aims and questions.

3.5 Research Design

The conceptual framework of the research dictated its two-stage design:

- First stage to collect and analyze documents.
- Second stage of interviews and focus group.

The research design is presented in the following table:

observation is in-depth focus in relatively small and sometimes single cases that are deliberately chosen. This population provides the key to understanding solutions and answers to research questions. In qualitative research, choosing a research population is deliberate purposeful sampling, and this is in order to reach an understanding and learn about an examined phenomenon. In contrast to quantitative research, there is no question here of the level of representation among subjects (Shlaski & Alpert, 2007).

Based on these considerations the research population was chosen and included deciders and receivers as detailed below:

- Senior post holders, both currently and in the past, in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services in Israel.
- Chair of the National Union of Social Workers in Israel.
- Mayors who responsible by law for the implementation of social services policies in the local authorities.
- Heads of Social Service Departments in local authorities who represent street level workers, i.e – receivers.
- Receivers, clients of social services, the services users themselves.

Three groups were chosen: seniors, people with special needs and people living in poverty and exclusion. The reason for choosing these three type of population is because they were mentioned in official policy documents as target populations with high priority, and these groups are mentioned in the literature - as dominant groups in the populations because of the dramatic increase in worldwide life expectancy and because of the global increase in demands for equal rights and services for people with special needs, and economic crises and changes in labor markets as well. Choosing participants for the focus groups followed "convenience sampling" (Miles & Huberman 1994) in order to reach participants who were easiest to get to and known as comfortable in an open and frank discussion ,and participants who are known to be verbal and basically willing to cooperate.

3.7 Research tools and analysis methods

Creswell (2009) argued that the most widespread and appropriate tools for qualitative research are: interviews, documents, pictures, text analysis and analysis according to

patterns and categories. Data collection in this research was from diverse sources, using different tools to reflect a variety of opinions and perceptions with regard to policy, reform and implementation on the one hand, and acquire a broad and rich picture of data on the other. The research employed 3 different tools: document analysis, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and focus groups as they were found to best suit the research aims and questions. Use of three different tools was meant both to strengthen (triangulation) and enrich the findings arising from the data collection stage and examining findings.

The data analysis process is the heart of qualitative research and allows researchers the transition between reporting and knowledge, by creating order and links between actions and phenomena in structuring information and providing interpretations and meaning to texts (Creswell, 2014; Shkedi, 2003; Tzabar Ben-Yehoshua, 2016).

In this study, Content Analysis was carried out on the data collected from interviews, focus groups and official documents. The work process included extricating themes allocated to categories (Shkedi, 2014) aligned and congruent with the research questions: The analysis process was systematic and carried out according to the stage proposed by Kacen and Krumer-Nevo (2010): Holistic reading of the data, Initial mapping: organizing the data and reducing it, 'Breaking' the data down into small units of analysis, Coding and naming: restructuring the data into categories and theoretical conceptualization, Holistic rereading, Verifying findings and the last stage – Writing.

3.8 Triangulation, Reliability, Validity and Generalizability:

3.8.1 Triangulation

Kadusin (2008) defined triangulation as a measurement of the same concept by two or more research tools. In addition, triangulation includes the use of a number of information sources, researchers, theoretical points of view and methods (Denzin, 1994). This research, as stated, employed three different tools to collect data: semi-structured in-depth interviews, analyzing official documents and focus groups and divers sources of information Thus it was possible to present simultaneously a multitude of realities without identifying one objective reality.

3.8.2 Dependability

In qualitative research we refer to the concepts of validity in terms of trustworthiness and reliability in terms of dependability. (Yosefoon, 2016).

This research relied on Yin's (1989) recommendations regarding the strength of dependability using full documentation of data, employing protocols and formal documents. All interviews and focus groups were recorded with the full agreement of participants, the recordings were fully and faithfully transcribed. A rich and varied data store was created that is available to other researchers, reflecting the empiric support for the categories created. Another means of strengthening dependability was the methodical content analysis work carried out according to the stages proposed by Kacean and Krumer-Nevo (2010).

3.8.3 Trustworthiness

Paton (1980) determined that trustworthiness is a concept in the ongoing transition from deduction to induction. One must ensure that analyses and interpretations are appropriate and explain the examined phenomenon. In this research, diverse sources and different tools were used to collect data in order to strengthen and enrich the obtained findings. The use of varied methods and tools reinforces identification of patterns into a phenomenon and not a random event. And the dependability was expressed by transparent, detailed description of every research stage and the considerations in making decisions and choosing criteria as a researcher (Shkedi, 2003).

3.8.4 Generalizability

The literature describes three types of generalization in qualitative research (Maxwell, 1992): Generalization from case to case - in the sense of insights and inspiration to understand other cases; Analytical generalization - in the sense of presenting evidence in the research supporting theory; Population generalization - in the sense of generalization from a limited research sample to a broad population.

The current study employed the population generalization since it expresses the perceptions, beliefs, experiences and authentic voices of subjects, and especially people who participated in focus groups, the receivers. This refers to people who are clients of

social services, groups with characteristics and universal prominence as reflected in social trends throughout the world: elderly people, people with special needs and people living in poverty and exclusion.

3.9 Researcher's Role and Involvement

Strauss and Corbin (1989) wrote that in qualitative research subjectivity is taken into account and researchers' involvement is part of research itself. Researchers bring and represent detailed, rich and profound knowledge about an examined topic and the value of this unique knowledge overcomes the obstacles of their involvement. My strong involvement over 8 years in all the processes and stages of the reform is highly valuable and also provides a perspective over the course of the process during which policy makers and those charged with implementation changed from those at the beginning, including professionals appointed to implement the reforms without being partners in the policy determination stages themselves.

3.10 Ethical Issues

The researcher's closeness to the subjects in qualitative research create some ethical issues that demanded the researcher's ethical strength to deal with ethical questions referring mainly to maintaining the rights of subjects (Tzabar Ben-Yehoshua, 2016).

In this research, safeguard individual's autonomy (Howe & Dougherty, 1993) achieved by getting their informed consent to take part in the research. Participants were guaranteed discretion and anonymity: there are not details in the research identifying participants in the focus groups and interviewees. All participants were also given the opportunity to leave the research at any stage of their choice. Official consent was obtained from the Ministry of Social Services and Social Affairs to carry out the research, consent that enabled interviews with senior professional officials, heads of social services departments and of course receivers in focus groups. In the course of the research the authenticity of participants' words was maintained through recording and transcribing exactly what they said, providing respectful conditions at all meetings and maintaining an accepting and open environment in order to acquire honest and free answers and statements from all participants.

4.FINDINGS

The findings will be presented in two parts. The first part will show the findings that emerged from the data collected from the three research tools employed in this study: documents analysis; in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus groups, broken down by research question. The second part will present the integrative findings from the three research tools with reference to the research questions.

4.1 Findings Emerging from Research Question No 1: What are the components that constitute social services policy in Israel?

4.1.2 Document Analysis

England:

The findings that emerged from a content analysis of the data collected from official English policy documents and the two text books raised three central themes, also pointed out in Alcock and May's (2014) book, and they constitute the dominant components of SSP in England:

- **Ideology** - this component refers to the existing economics involved in England and from which the model of mixed welfare is cut, in which service funding is mixed and includes the private and business sectors, the existence of selective and universal services simultaneously, an ongoing process of decentralization and delegating authority to local government, public and private bodies, and of course anchoring the principles of welfare in broad legislation, international regulations and treaties.
- **"Positive welfare"** - with the end of Thatcherite regime in which a hostile and narrow approach to welfare was prominent, a new era of positive welfare that redefined citizens' rights and obligations, including citizens responsibility to meet their needs and those of their family, identification of vulnerable target populations to whom services were directed - children at risk, helpless adults, disabled people as well as an approach promoting extended partnerships and cooperation between all sectors, including those needing services in determining SSP.
- **Emphasis on needs** - this component defines clients as consumers, a definition that places the client in a position as having the right to be a partner in choosing services, their acquisition and thus, the government has to be provide accessibility to services in public and available information, and the existence

of quality services striving for excellence and setting standards whilst providing ongoing inspection regarding the nature and quality of services presented to clients.

Israel :

The content analysis of the 2014-18 SSP document, revealed that **ideology** (promoting welfare state values, expression of state responsibility, narrowing gaps and including civil society), **values** (aspirations of excellence, citizen's rights, inclusion and partnerships), **means** (laws and regulations, training social workers, providing government funding) and **multiculturalism** (culturally sensitive work, recognizing unique groups) are the components building SSP in the state of Israel.

Israel – Report of the Committee for Formulating Reform Proposals in Local Social services (2010) :

Content analysis of the reform document in social services departments revealed that its **worldview** (state responsibility, partnerships, utilizing advanced technology and placing family at the center of interventions), **values** (excellence, service improvement, citizen rights and priorities in care of poverty and isolation) and **means** (laws, funding - actions and personnel, organizational development and employee training and a system of inspection and setting standards) constitute central components in the reform document.

4.1.3 Findings Emerging from the Semi-Structured Interviews

From content analysis of the data collected from 14 interviewees, three central themes emerged, which constitute components of Social Services Policy in Israel:

1. Worldview (state responsibility, individualism, target populations and ethical moral dimension)
2. External globalization influences (multiculturalism, complex and changing arena, decentralization, rights discourse and learning from abroad)
3. Other aspects (legal, security, administrative, financial and priority aspects)

4.2 Findings Emerging from Research Question No.2: What gap can be found between official declared policy and its implementation?

To summarize the findings gathered from interviews in response to research question No. 2, it emerges that there is a gap between declared policy and implementation. There is a detailed, declared policy of reform, and in examining the implementation process, as revealed in the in-depth interviews, a gap between decisions, deciders, declarations and actual execution i.e, receivers were identified. Three types of remarkable characteristics that describe and define this gap were found:

- characteristics linked to governmental components, including issues of governability difficulties due to frequent changes in government, politics of internal struggles, problematic organizational structure and absence of legislation.
- characteristics referring to organizational components including a time dimension, prolonged reforms, public management culture of 'programs with a beginning and no end', absence of broad agreement among interested parties, lack of budgets for reform and absence of visibility, presence and marketing of the reform.
- characteristics linked to personal dimensions: issue of strong, trustworthy, steadfast leadership, with personal commitment to the process and leading the change, interested parties' fears of change and loss of status.

4.3 Findings Emerging from Research Question No 3: What constitutes the gap and how can it be bridged?

The last findings to be presented in this section of interviews with policy makers were collected from data emerging from in-depth interviews and were meant to answer the third research questions: To summarize the findings collected from interview data with regard to the third research question, what constitutes the gap and how can it be bridged, it is possible that components in the implementation process such as: politics, broad coalitions, visibility and marketing alongside components in implementation content such as: leadership, priorities and personal dimensions are components that influence the gap and they are also those that are likely to narrow the gap and provide a bridge between declared policy and its actual implementation in the field.

4.3.1 Findings Emerging from the Content Analysis of the Focus Groups

To summarize, findings that emerged from the data provided by the three focus groups revealed three themes constituting an explanation on the one hand and recommendation for action on the other, in order to bridge the gap between declared policy and the deciders and its practical implementation, the receivers:

- A worldview that refers to state responsibility for its residents and an ambition to see a generous social services policy, discourse on rights leading decision makers and reducing the bureaucracy that exists today;
- Priorities with regard to precedence given to vulnerable target populations such as children, disabled and elderly, as well as budgets that will cover most needs,
- Emotional dimension - feelings of imperviousness, threat and shame result in residents not getting and even not exercising their rights to receive services.

To summarize the findings gathered from the focus group made up of local authority social services department heads, two key themes emerged to explain the existence of a gap between declared policy and its implementation as well as the way and actions that should be taken in order to bridge this gap: one theme identified components in the policy implementation process including bureaucratization, budgetary problems and an absence of legislation to support and organize reform policy. The second theme is components found in the implementation itself and include the need for firm leadership from government ministries heading reform, personal emotional aspects of those who work on in the field, fear of change, sense of alienation and compartmentalization and the issue of priorities showing that ongoing workloads are so heavy that it is impossible to implement a comprehensive and intensive reform alongside ongoing work.

4.4 Integrated findings to the first research question: What are the components that constitute social services policy in Israel?

The picture painted by the integrated findings to the first research question that emerged from the three research tools show the following components making up social services policy in Israel:

- Ideology: ambition to promote social services policy in the spirit of a social democratic regime
- Worldview: state responsibility for its citizens' social services

- Values: aspire to equality and reducing gaps, civil rights, aspire to excellence and cooperation
- Means: financial, laws, treaties, regulations, professional training, employing advanced technologies
- Multiculturalism: culturally sensitive response to diverse population groups, minorities.

4.5 Integrated findings to the second research question: What gap can be found between official declared policy and its implementation?

The picture emerging from the integrated findings to the second research question show that a gap exists between declared policy- the deciders and its execution and implementation – the receivers in the field. In all three research tools used to examine this question, the findings indicated the existence of a clear gap between policy and implementation and it was defined as having three main characteristics:

- Characteristics linked to governmental components, that is to say amongst policy makers: internal struggles, frequent changes of government, absence of legislation and problematic organization structure.
- Characteristics regarding organizational aspects such as: time dimension and prolonged reform, management culture, absence of broad agreement.
- Characteristic linked to personal dimension: charismatic and effective leadership, psychological fear of change.

4.6 Integrated findings to the third research question: What constitutes the gap and how can it be bridged?

The picture emerging from the integrated findings to the third research question illustrate components of the gap between policy and its execution as well as indicating directions to bridge this gap:

- Component in the implementation process: employing mediating tools and political power to promote determined policy.
- Personal components: Leadership, commitment, personal opinions and outlook, and reducing the gap between declaration and implementation in practice.

That is to say, bridging the gap between policy - deciders and implementation - receivers demands resources -political forces pushing for implementation and enabling it to happen.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

5.1 Conceptual Conclusions: The conclusions that emerged from this research

enable development of a conceptual model to the deciders, dealing with policy formulation processes, to determine policy that is more adjusted and has greater chances of being implemented in the field and be accepted by receivers with a minimum of gaps between declarations and actions in the field.

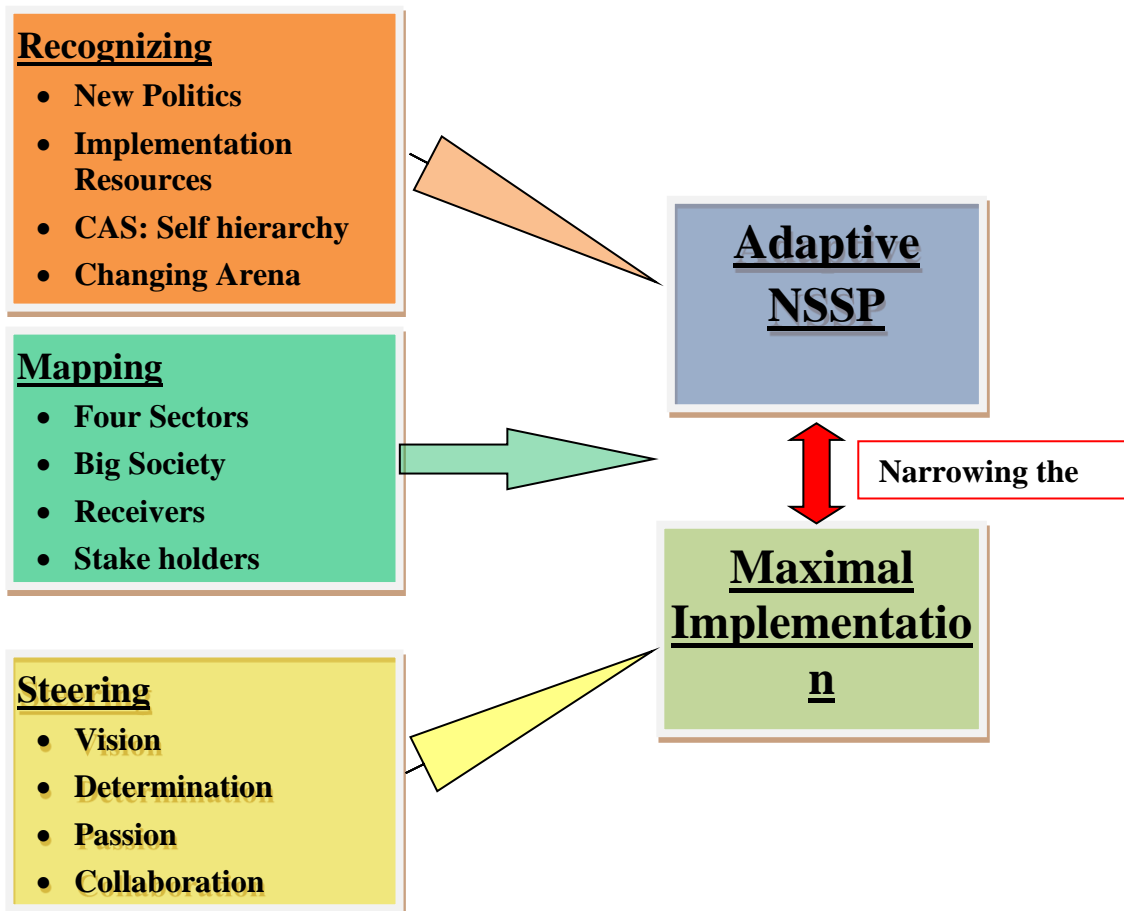


Figure 2: Model for narrowing the gap between deciders and receivers

5.1.2 Recognizing

- "New politics" - deciders must recognize the fact and reality of changes in the political arena, routine dispersal of power to decide, and the existence of "new politics", which is no longer structured on left or right ideologies, politics of power divided among different parties, groups and organizations, politics in which it is possible to find simultaneously a variety of world-views and values in the same party or group.

- **Allocating implementation resources** - Recognizing the fact that allocating governmental resources for implementation is critical for the execution of policy in general and social services policy in particular.
- **CAS (Complex Adaptive System)** - CAS approach argues that in circumstances of multiple actions, multiple participants and a sense of chaos and disorganization, hierarchies have neither the power nor the ability to restructure order. In this situation, the new order evolves by itself and through environmental adjustments, an outcome of the interaction, power and actions of the involved.
- **Changing arena** –There is enormous pressure to decentralize and delegate roles that were once the responsibility of the state, pressure for efficiency and reduction of governmental involvement, pressure to privatize and more. Deciders must acknowledge changing arenas, governmental and deciders' roles: the public sector is not necessarily meant to be the initiator, decider, determiner and executor.

5.1.3 Mapping

The second process requires mapping, observation, review and recruitment of all those concerned with policy.

- **Four Sectors** - Mapping all four sectors existing in western societies: the public-governmental sector, the business-private sector, the third sector - all types of voluntary organizations, and the fourth sector - the sector of 'private' social entrepreneurs who offer non-profit services and responses.
- **Civil society**: in the spirit of individualism, encouragement for self-expression and variety of ideas, civil society must get a more significant, active and broader place in deciders' policy formulation processes.
- **Receivers**: Receivers can contribute authentic information from the reality of their lives, information that will help structure an appropriate, friendly, accessible policy that provides a real answer to the needs of customers as they experience them.
- **Stakeholders**: It is necessary to map all stakeholders concerned both with policy and its implementation, and make them partners from the first stages of planning and consideration. Stakeholders can be bodies, organizations and people directly concerned with policy or those concerned with certain interfaces of policy. The integration and collaboration of many factors outside politics can also guarantee continuity in case of governmental turnover.

5.1.4 Steering

This stage deals with navigating and outlining the way to implementation, a process that expresses the movement of operational forces in the direction of execution and realization both in determining policy and its implementation.

- **Vision:** defining a clear focused vision that constitutes the 'northern star', supreme aim that is important for all those involved, and because of this importance, they unite and join forces to realize it.
- **Determination:** Determination alongside vision pass on to both deciders and receivers a message of seriousness, responsibility and true recruitment to realize policy implementation.
- **Passion:** Passion is an important emotional form that drives receivers and mid-level personnel to be recruited to act, implement and believe in a policy's ideas. This is a stage when it is important to consolidate leadership that will lead procedures cooperatively and transparently.
- **Collaboration:** collaboration is one of the most significant core components in all three aforementioned dimensions: recognition, mapping and steering. In the complex and challenging world in which we live, in a reality of multiple opinions, ideas, initiatives, services, suppliers and more - collaboration between all these components is a significant and critical touchstone in the process of formulating and implementing policy.

That being the case, the three dimensions appearing in the conceptual model, influence and lead the deciders to sets more adaptive policy that meets the real needs on the one hand, and to **maximal implementation** procedures on the other.

5.2 Practical Implications and Recommendations

The conclusions drawn from this research may have a number of significant applied implications on the level of recommendations for policy makers, the deciders and implementers – the receivers in order to narrow the developing gap between policy determination and implementation. These recommendations pertain to accepting and acknowledging distribution of power to determine and implement, the need for a

dynamic ongoing process of examination of policy determination and implementation processes, and finally, the crucial place of leadership in positively influencing policy implementation. The synergy between those components enable to formulate social services policy in the global world.

5.3 Research Limitations

The limitation of the research has to do with the qualitative paradigm it employed: Critics of the approach noted the researcher's active involvement (Mason, 1996), a conclusion drawing process that cannot be free of values and political and moral attitudes whether consciously or not (Alpert & Shlasky, 2007). Another limitation maintains that case study can only lead to insights limited to the time and space of that case (Harvey, 1990). A further limitation pertains to the research sample, which was not a representative sample but rather a purposeful one (Patton, 2002), involving, in most cases, a small research population, but examines the research questions in depth.

Examination of the disadvantages of the qualitative paradigm with awareness of the limitations of case study, led to employing this approach as preferred in this study, as it allowed the researcher to examine the issue of policy determination and its implementation in the natural environment where it is applied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2001), obtain direct first-hand information from the informants who are involved in the issue (Shkedi, 2003), while emphasizing receivers' interpretation, voices and world-views. Finally, this approach was found to be congruent with the research aims and questions.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributed new knowledge regarding the gap between deciders and receivers in the process of policymaking and implementation, new insights that expand existing theoretical approaches of stakeholders and the CAS approach. Based on these insights, the study proposes a model for narrowing the gap. The research reinforced and sharpen existing knowledge concerning the implications of globalization and individualism at all levels: central government, local government, and the simple citizen.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

In order to expand and deepen the insights that emerged in this research, it is hereby recommended to undertake a number of directions for follow up research:

1. A practical-applied examination of the effectiveness of the applied model proposed in order to bridge the gap between deciders and receivers. This examination can be done in the case study approach, and as such increase generalizability and applicability.
2. An in-depth examination of the organizational structures components in central/local government as influencing processes of policy design and implementation.
3. In depth research examining the influence of the individualism approach on the development of social services policy in the era of globalization.

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