**THE REPRODUCING ACT OF INSTITUTIONAL LOGICS: THREE PATHS TO EXAMINING THE COMMITMENT TO PROTECT SURVIVORS OF ECONOMIC ABUSE**

**INTRODUCTION**

Economic abuse is defined as the behavior of an intimate partner who controls his partner and prevents her from using and managing her own as well as the joint financial resources, including preventing her from pursuing education or employment (Adams et al. 2008). While awareness regarding the phenomenon has risen in Israel and around the world, economic abuse is not included in the Domestic Violence Prevention Act of 1991. Thus, Israel is identified with a complex patriarchal approach. On the one hand, the state has formally adopted the principle of being committed to protecting women. On the other hand, on the practical level, this commitment is limited in three ways. First, the extent to which the rights of intimate partner abuse survivors are exercised remains limited (Yasour Borochovitch, Benjamin & Renan Barzilay 2021). Second, budgets allocated to the Ministry of Welfare earmarked for intimate partner abuse programs are sometimes returned to the Treasury because they have not been exhausted; moreover, the programs do not rescue economic abuse victims from financial dependence (Oxenberg 2020). Third, patriarchal priorities effectively preserve the hegemonic masculine norms, which include the husband’s role as provider and economic leader (Renan Barzilay & Youseri 2016).

This complexity, along with the increase in awareness of the nature of economic abuse and its long-term implications on women’s lives, creates an opportunity to examine ask how this complexity is reflected in the activity of the state’s welfare organizations. These include the National Insurance Institute, social services, including violence prevention centers, and family court assistance units that women turn to during divorce proceedings. The question arises whether the commitment of these welfare organizations’ employees to meet the needs of economic abuse survivors increases as the organizations become more aware of the nature of economic abuse. Our dual aim here is to understand the welfare authorities’ treatment of economic abuse survivors as an expression of the encounter between the institutional logic characteristics of each welfare organization and the patriarchal institutional logic, and to examine the commitment of the welfare organizations’ employees towards the survivors’ right to recognition and rehabilitation.

The institutional logics perspective emerges as particularly relevant when focusing on welfare organization employees as those whose level of commitment is likely to be significant in terms of making solutions accessible to economic abuse survivors. According to Thornton, Ocasio and Lounsbury (2012), institutional logic is the aggregate of sources from which social actors in organizations draw their commitments and guidelines for action. It informs their ability to endow a situation with meaning and experience it as logical; it provides the vocabulary and justifications they use as well as their identity or self-perception. Institutional logic constitutes the totality of principles, practices, and symbols of the institutional order that is acceptable and beneficial to the social actors and differentially shapes the manner in which conclusions, thinking processes, considerations, and deliberations take place. In short, institutional logic outlines the way rationality is perceived and experienced within the institution. The relevance of the institutional logic perspective to understanding the actions of welfare organizations is rooted in its contribution to understanding the normative, ethical, and moral context in which organizational loyalty and the commitment to those turning to the organization for support grows and develops. In addition, the term “embedded agency” (Thornton, Ocasio & Lounsbury 2012, 79) has the potential to map the tension between reproducing the organizational action, which diminishes the significance of information regarding economic abuse, and challenging the organizational action, by amplifying the significance of information regarding economic abuse. This can be done by addressing four dimensions of institutional logics: sources of authority, occupational identity, sources of legitimacy, and the normative base (Toubiana & Zietsma 2017). According to this approach, both loyalty to organizational routines and the level of commitment to those seeking support are embedded in the identities of individuals just as much as they are embedded in the system of organizational guidelines that constrain the individuals’ agency (Thornton, Ocasio & Lounsbury 2012). Until recently, research in the field investigated replicating behaviors as opposed to challenging behaviors without addressing the possibility that “embedded agency” was shaping the level of distancing from replication available to those acting within organizations, as expressed in challenging actions. Implementing the institutional logics approach to investigate the growth of the employees’ commitment to the women turning to them for support, when this commitment is not part of the organizational practice, allows us to analyze various types of challenging actions. These are expected to emerge from the analysis of encounters between welfare organization employees and women turning to them for help, while taking into account occupational identities and identification with trends of social change. The responses of those whose agency is embedded in specific welfare organizations may answer the question of whether a woman who is not exposed to physical violence can nevertheless be recognized as eligible to receive the range of solutions provided to victims of intimate partner abuse as well as unique solutions tailored to her rehabilitation requirements.

**ECONOMIC ABUSE**

Economic abuse in intimate partner relationships is gendered and generally inflicted upon the woman (Renan Barzilay 2017). Researchers propose assessing three aspects of the phenomenon. The first deals with economic supervision as representing men’s tendency to supervise and restrict women’s ability to freely use family resources. The second focuses on economic exploitation as reflecting these men’s tendency to create debts and damage their partner’s credit rating. The third refers to men economically blocking their partners by thwarting employment opportunities or opportunities these women have to establish themselves and advance in their work (Stylianou, Postmus & McMahon 2013). These three aspects include a dimension of coercive control (Stark 2007), which distinguishes economic abuse from the normative male commitment to take on the role of the “good provider.” However, the blurring of the distinction between the two is still commonly typical of professional discourses, and this is strengthened by the legal system’s marginal treatment of non-physical abuse (Renan Barzilay 2017). A recent study found that the aspect of coercive control in the context of economic abuse also includes the intention to take over resources by isolating the partner and undermining her knowledge and ability to manage financially (Duron et al. 2020). Therefore, social support and accompaniment in dealing with financial institutions are central to the rehabilitation of economic abuse survivors (Schrag, Ravi & Robinson 2020).