**The role of philanthropic organizations in marginal groups: The Israeli case**

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Philanthropic activity has become an important component of the neoliberal state. This paper analyzes the unique role philanthropic activity plays in Israel, especially with respect to marginalized groups. To this end, we also examine the establishment of philanthropic organization for the benefit of Jewish marginal groups in the state of Israel. We conducted qualitative research, interviewing 23 leaders of philanthropic organizations in representing a range of voices working with marginalized Jewish groups in Israel. The focus of our analysis was on the motivations and methods behind the creation of these philanthropic organizations and the environment surrounding them. We suggest that our method of investigation may be useful for researching philanthropic organizations working with marginalized groups within the greater society.

***Literature review***

Philanthropy plays a major role within marginal communities, especially in neoliberal countries. (Dodgson & Gann, 2020; Maurrasse, 2020). In welfare states, government may either further marginalize or empower such marginalized groups, meaning philanthropic organizations working within or with such communities may react against or act in accordance with governmental policies for aiding marginal group members. Existing scholarship emphasizes the perception that there has been a transformation in community development that “puts people first,” a common feature associated with volunteer aid. Gamzu and Motzafi-Heller (2016) investigated the daily encounters of volunteers with members of their multiple marginalized host communities in southern Israel, revealing the complex social reality of what it means to “develop” and “empower” a population routinely framed as disadvantaged and targeted for aid.

As governments have shifted from welfare to neoliberal state approaches, their involvement in running certain services in the public sector has decreased. The retreat of governments from such functions has created a vacuum that non-profit and philanthropic “third-sector” organizations have filled. (Alexander & Fernandez, 2021; Eikenberry & Mirabella, 2018; MacLeavy, 2020;Raddon, 2008; Zimmer & Friese, 2008). ,mean better cope with daily challenges, framedPhilanthropic organizations are a significant proportion of this third sector (Leat, 2015), are growing rapidly in most industrialized countries (Adam, 2004), and are finding new forms and meanings within civil society (Fioramonti & Thümler, 2013; Harrow & Jung, 2011).

When discussing philanthropy, one must draw a sharp distinction between it and charity. (Schultz, 2009; Tracy, Philips, & Haugh, 2005; Wright, 2001). Both charitable and philanthropic organizations exist within power-deprived marginal communities. (Carboni & Eikenberry, 2021; Reece, Hanlon, & Edwards, 2022; Valenzuela-Garcia, Lubbers, & Rice, 2019). Abrahamson (2013) has demonstrated how many U.S. philanthropic organizations evolved out of charity organizations particularly religion-based organizations. Spero (2014) claims that this was also the case in Russia, China, India, and Brazil. It is our position that this also applies to Israel. In each of the aforementioned countries, the wider society was unwilling or unable to assist marginalized groups for a variety of reasons, and charitable efforts proved insufficient to meet their needs, thereby obliging marginalized groups to turn to philanthropic organizations, with their wider scale and scope, for solutions. Schuyt (2013) claims that while philanthropic organizations emerged from charitable organizations, their goals have differed, with philanthropic organizations offering a social arrangement to meet the needs of different communities.

While acknowledging the importance of the effect of philanthropy on society, this paper analyzes the motivation for philanthropic activity (Bornstein, 2009). We apply the social value of productive entrepreneurship theory, proposed by Acs et al. (2013) for studying financial institutions, in our investigation of philanthropic organizations devoted to marginalized groups.

Analyzing the role of philanthropic organizations in the lives of marginalized groups is vital, as these groups operate on the outskirts of society, either by choice or by necessity (Cullen & Pretes, 2019), often beyond the reach of or unable to access more official support systems. Marginalized groups, especially religious ones (Baratkowski & Regis, 2003), sometimes create philanthropic organizations in an attempt to maintain their voluntary separation from mainstream society (Tafoya, 2014) and often include a combination of financial, social, and political agendas in their formation (Fyall & Allard, 2017).

An individual’s social identity is derived from their self-conceived membership in a distinct social group or multiple groups. These groups often relate to social identities that reflect class, academic performance, gender, sexuality, religion, (dis)ability, and/or race (Drezner & Huehls, 2014). People belonging to marginalized groups may wish either to maintain their sense of belonging or acculturate themselves to the dominant social norms. This results in two different types of marginalized groups, distinguished by their different attitudes toward social inclusion and exclusion. Social inclusion characterizes people and groups aiming to immerse themselves in the main social group (Lombe & Sherraden, 2008), while social exclusion refers to those who “lack effective participation in key activities or benefits of the society in which they live” (Razer, Friedman, & Warshofsky, 2013, p. 1152). Marginalization is more than a state of being; it also encompasses feelings about that state of being. To be marginalized is to have a sense that one does not belong and, hence, to feel that one is neither a valued member of a community able to make a valuable contribution to it or one able to access the range of services and opportunities open to others. In effect, one both is and feels excluded. For some, marginalization can be experienced as transient and context-related (Razer, et al., 2013), while social exclusion forms part of a person’s identity and lived experience. (Armstrong, Armstrong & Spandagou, 2011).

Jewish Israeli philanthropic ventures reflect the transition from pre-modern traditions to the new era of philanthropy (Calipha & Gidron, 2021; Katz & Greenspan, 2015). Berrebi and Yonah (2017) provide an in-depth survey of Israeli philanthropic activity, and other studies have shown that state-initiated privatization has enhanced non-profit organizations’ activity in Israel (Krauz-Lahav & Kemp, 2020; Shiffer, 2018). This study concentrates on two Jewish marginal groups: ultra-Orthodox Jews and immigrants.

Ultra-Orthodox Jewish organizations constitute a large proportion of the philanthropical organizations aimed at helping marginal groups in Israel. Many religious fundamentalists, (Almond et al., 2003) including ultra-Orthodox Israelis, also referred to as Haredim,[[1]](#footnote-1) do not accept the state as a sovereign entity with authority over them (Stadler et al., 2008), recognizing, instead, the authority of God and religious law. They further regard the nation-state as inimical, to their unique way of life, even threatening to undermine it. The Haredim seek to insulate themselves, partially or entirely, from the influences of modernization and secularization.

Our discussion of immigrant marginal groups focuses on immigrants from Ethiopia, as examined in Baratz & Kalnisky (2017) as well as those from the Caucasus, as studied in both Ellenbogen-Frankovitz et al. (2005) and Geist Pinfold and Peters (2021). Immigrants from the Caucasus are considered more marginalized than those from other former Soviet republics (Bram, 2006). These groups tend to cooperate in order to integrate as soon as possible into mainstream society, despite obstacles set by government and mainstream social groups, forming organizations that provide free services to newcomers struggling with hostile or inaccessible government policies (Binhas & Moskovich, 2015).

**Methodology**

Semi-structured in-depth qualitative interviews were employed to enables us to understand the formal and informal factors leading to the establishment of marginal philanthropic organizations for the benefit of marginalized groups. The 23 participants — 17 ultra-Orthodox and six immigrants interviewees — were asked how they viewed the process of establishing their organizations, along with their broader views, freely expressed, on philanthropic activity. The interviewers encouraged participants to address any areas that they felt were relevant to the survey. Additionally, the interviewers also encouraged the participants to engage freely in conversation about philanthropy in marginal groups. Questions focused on their intentions in personal and collective motivations for creating philanthropic organizations, the organizational aims and how those had evolved, the people targeted by the activities, the community environment, interface with other organizations, and how the COVID-19 pandemic had affected operations.

The marginal groups were categorized into three types: “cultural enclave organizations” , to varying degrees,in which to and preserving ies; “socially incorporating” organizations aiming to integrate into the social and cultural mainstream bodies; and hybrids of both the above types.

Six research questions were investigated:

1. The motives, social and personal, for establishing philanthropic organizations.
2. The aims of philanthropic organizations at their early stages.
3. Original beneficiaries of philanthropic organizations’ services.
4. Mapping the organizations’ communal environment.
5. Interface with the organizations’ surrounding environment.

**Findings**

***Cultural enclave organizations***

These organizations, also referred to as “conserving organizations,” seek to conserve the unique characteristics of the marginal group and strengthen their cultural enclaves, adhering to their distinct identity while resisting integration into mainstream society. These groups, ranging from conserving to very conserving, usually represent and serve ultra-Orthodox communities.

1.1

Motives for establishing philanthropic organizations

*Social motives for establishing philanthropic organizations*

Two different social motivations were found for establishing these philanthropic organizations: coping with the financial needs of the group, including earning a livelihood and preventing poverty; and coping with specific health and sexism issues within the group.

*Personal motives for establishing philanthropic organizations*

Two types of personal motives for establishing the organizations were found: addressing community needs in person; and sustaining heritage. Most ultra-Orthodox interviewees identified their initial intentions as providing solutions mostly in the areas of: economic aid, assisting families with low financial means: social and health issues, such as aiding people with kidney disease and creating awareness in the community about the issue; and cultural issues involving creating awareness of Jewish core values. The founders of these organizations also referred to their personal past experiences as a motivating factor. For example, in relation to the above-mentioned efforts regarding kidney disease, the organization was established by an entrepreneur who had personally encountered this issue. Another founder drew on his own experience in identifying the need to assist families with many children experience. Some organizers were motivated to act by spiritual leaders or family predecessors.

1.2 Organizational aims

Two types of organizational aims were identified: those seeking to offer social welfare such as the provision of food, appliances, transportation, and clothing; and those concentrating on specific issues, such as preventing the phenomenon of school dropouts in the community, helping kidney failure patients, and preventing sexual violence.

The original people targeted by these organizations were either the entire marginalized community in a particular locality, that community or subgroups of it, such as youth, on a nationwide basis. Organizations that operated solely in the community engaged in charity, especially food provision, religious study, and welfare.

* 1. Interface with the organizations’ surrounding environment

*Socially incorporating organizations*

These are organizations that seek to help the marginal group to integrate into the social and cultural mainstream. One motive noted for creating these groups was to nurture young immigrants so they could exercise leadership in the community by empowering academic undergraduates and graduates and paying special attention to adolescents Another was encouraging the ability to cope with prejudice toward the community, especially in the workplace, this while maintaining cultural and social identifies. No personal motives in these organizations were mentioned by the interviewees.

All interviewees focused on the general needs they had identified. Two major reasons stood out: the need to assist marginalized groups – especially young people – appear in two cases: assisting Ethiopian young academics’ placement in the labor market and supplying technological education enabling integration in the high-tech industry. The need to confront the social and cultural stigmatization of young Caucasus immigrants was also mentioned. One organization incorporated aiding marginal groups within its general vision of supporting the Galilee inhibitions.

*Hybrid Organizations*

Key aims of these organization were identified as empowering adolescent dropouts and young members of the community, job placements for university graduates and for those entering high-tech industries.

Existing organizations within the community engaged in cultural issues, not in communal development. These socially incorporating organizations evolved out of existing governmental or semi-governmental agencies. Government funding ranged from a minor fraction of their budgets to a major one.

*Hybrid Organizations*

These organizations seek social inclusion in the mainstream while also conserving some group social or cultural uniqueness.

The social motives for establishing philanthropic organizations included Providing educational and economic assistance, supplying financial support to all members of the local settlement, and enhancing traditional Jewish values. No personal motives for establishing this type of philanthropic organization were mentioned by the interviewees.

The intentions at time of establishing philanthropic organizations in marginal groups related to just three organizations: One was created since no parallel body existed; the second was initiated by the spiritual mentor of the founder; the third was established to support local avant-garde core groups efforts in non-ultra-Orthodox settlements.

The aims of hybrid philanthropic organizations included enhancing financial skills, enhancing educational skills, and supporting groups that advance core values of Judaism.

Original beneficiaries of hybrid philanthropic organizations were both newand potential members of the community.

The organizations’ communal environment: Existing organizations within the community engaged different subjects.

Interface with the organizations’ surrounding environment: Government and municipal funded part of the budget, resources, facilities, and funds came from the municipality.

[Place “Table 1: Philanthropic organizations’ objectives” here]

***Discussion***

Existing research focuses on groups facing marginalization by the governing bodies of society (Alexander & Fernandez, 2021). This narrative suggests that marginalized group’s organizations are formed in reaction to the discriminatory policies of the dominant social forces (Bram, 2006). We argue that, when analyzing marginal organizations, a deeper investigation of the creation of these institutions is needed. We offer here a new way of categorizing philanthropic organizations in marginal groups.

We identified three types of philanthropic organizations for marginalized groups: conserving organizations aiming to preserve a cultural enclave; socially inclusive organizations aiming to integrate into the social and cultural mainstream; and hybrid organizations aiming to integrate into the social mainstream while conserving some cultural uniqueness.

These philanthropic organizations are distinguished across six parameters:

1. Motives for establishing philanthropic organizations: Cultural enclave organizations seek to preserve the relevant group and provide for the its immediate and specific needs. Organizations aiming to integrate into cultural mainstream society face two challenges in doing so: nurturing young immigrants for leadership and coping with prejudice towards the community. Hybrid organizations combine providing immediate assistance with enhancing group values in the long run. Only cultural organizations’ initiators discussed their personal motives for involvement.
2. Intentions at time of establishing philanthropic organizations in marginal groups: Cultural enclave organizations seek to providing economic aid and/or cultural solutions. Organizations aiming to integrate into the cultural mainstream of society assist young members of the community and foster the ability to cope with cultural and social prejudice is the intent of. Culture enclave organizations thus offer concrete solutions for essential needs, while social incorporation organizations deal with the long-term needs of group members and with legitimizing the group. Hybrid organizations arose since no parallel body existed and were inspired by spiritual mentors.
3. Aims of philanthropic organizations at early stages: Cultural enclave organizations offer an overall package of assistance to group members by providing social welfare safety nets and by responding to specific issues, such as health-related matters and sexism with specific populations. Incorporating organizations engage with specific issues such as empowering adolescent dropouts and the employment of university graduates, thus relating to subgroups within the marginalized groups. Thus, culture enclave organizations offer general and specific solutions to the entire group, while incorporating organizations of enhance group members enabling them to create a better future. Hybrid organizations enhance sustainability skills and advancing core values.
4. Original beneficiaries of philanthropic organizations: Cultural enclave organizations address the needs of community members nationally and locally. Incorporating organizations engage with community members, mainly disadvantaged populations and young people. Hybrid organizations target populations consisting of new and potential members of the group members that identify with their causes with specific needs.
5. Interface with the organizations’ communal environment: Prior to the establishment of cultural enclave philanthropies, charity organizations existed. This corresponds with the claim that philanthropic organizations appear as a rebirth of charity organizations in modern marginal societies (Abrahamson, 2013; Spero, 2014). Incorporating organizations and hybrid had no precedent within the communal environment.
6. Interface with the organizations’ surrounding environment: Cultural enclave organizations have no interaction with other organizations in their surrounding environment. Incorporating and hybrid organizations had interactions with the surrounding environment, both on governmental, quasi-governmental, and municipal levels.

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***Table***

Table 1: Philanthropic organizations’ objectives in marginal groups.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Types of organization | Cultural enclave organizations | Incorporating organizations | Hybrid organizations |
| Number of interviewees | 13/22 | 6/22 | 3/22 |
| Number of quotations\* | 25 | 21 | 14 |
| Features of philanthropic organizations | | | |
| Motives | Social motives:  Coping with the needs of the group  and with specific needs within the group.  Personal motives:  encountering in person and family heritage. | Social motives:  Nurturing young immigrants to obtain leadership.  Coping with prejudice towards the community.  Personal motives: none. | Social motives:  Providing aid.  Enhancing  Jewish values.  Personal motives: none. |
| Intentions at time of establishing | Providing economic aid and / or cultural solutions.  Personal experience. | Assisting young members of the community.  Coping with cultural and social prejudice. | No parallel body existed. Inspired by the spiritual mentor of the founder. |
| Aims | Providing a social welfare jacket.  Specific issues: health and sexism. | Specific issues:  Empowering the adolescent dropouts and employment of University graduates. | Specific issues:  enhancing sustainability skills and advancing core values of Judaism. |
| Originals customers | Marginal community members – nationwide including  local subgroups. | Marginal community members, mainly  disadvantaged populations, and young people. | New and needy members of the group and potential members outside the group, identifying with its causes. |
| Mapping the organizations’ communal environment. | Charity organizations. | Cultural issues Organizations | Organizations within the community engaged in different subjects. |
| Interface with the organizations’ surrounding environment | No interaction with surrounding environment organizations. | Governmental or quasi-governmental organizations agencies.  Government funding. | Government and municipal funding. |

\*The number of quotations in which this objective appeared in all the interviews. Note that there was some overlapping because some of the quotations were relevant to more than one primary objective.

***Appendix***

Interview information

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date of interview | Number of interviewees |
| December 20, 2020 | 1 |
| January 7, 2021 | 2 |
| January 24, 2021 | 3 |
| January 24, 2021 | 4 |
| February 7, 2021 | 5 |
| February 10, 2021 | 6 |
| February 10, 2021 | 7 |
| February 11, 2021 | 8 |
| February 11, 2021 | 9 |
| February 15, 2021 | 10 |
| February 17, 2021 | 11 |
| February 18, 2021 | 12 |
| February 18, 2021 | 13 |
| February 19, 2021 | 14 |
| February 21, 2021 | 15 |
| February 22, 2021 | 16 |
| February 23, 2021 | 17 |
| February 23, 2021 | 18 |
| February 23, 2021 | 19 |
| February 24, 2021 | 20 |
| February 24, 2021 | 21 |
| February 24, 2021 | 22 |

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)