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Global Challenges in Local Setting: Social Policy in Israel

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Pressures on the traditional provision model of delivery in the welfare state

- Ineffectiveness in addressing “stubborn” social problems
- Accountability and responsiveness
- Lack of conditionality
- Lack of activation and dependency
- Blindness towards identity and gender
- Expansion and “growth of services to limit”
- Criticism over the “one size fit all”- Its personal
- Management of case load and evaluation
- Neglect of prevention
- Neglect of material needs and promotion of labor market participation

The wider context : beyond the stable wage based society

- Labor market inequality: the 30 30 40 society and the missing middle.
- Different experiences of old age and pension status.
- Poverty concentrated among two identity groups (Ultra Orthodox and Arab Israeli citizens).
- Polarized labor market and use of negative income tax.
- Emphasis on rate of participation in the labor market and far less on human capital.

Changing age cohorts and lifestyles

- Adolescence stretching into early twenties.
- A whole new sphere of social networks.
- The third and fourth age – new old age.
- Demands for well being services such as recovery from trauma, loneliness, depression, active social life and participation in community activity.
- The nucleus family and new forms and relationships.

Impact on the profession

- **Value change:** loss of confidence and ideological turns towards radicalism, social change, authoritative social work, “comodification” of relationship with clients, some conditionality.
- **Governance:** standards, introduction of managerial models that shift decision making away from the social worker, an effort to reshape the profession through technology.
- **Individualization:** more personalized services, emphasis on identity, responsiveness and participation of clients in decision making, maintaining the definition of wellbeing in therapeutic terms.
- **Scope:** New fields of practice and intervention in labor policy, health, old age, young adults, families, recidivists, more differentiated categories, collaboration with other “human improvement professions”, withdrawal to over specialization.
- **Agenda setting:** moral panic and populist symbolic clashes over sensitive issues such as holocaust survivors, food insecurity and disability.

Where are we heading ?

- Fog lights metaphor
- Beyond left and right , small or big government
- Growing professional differentiation and more interdisciplinary fields
- New spheres of intervention
- More fluid identities and diversity of life experiences
- Less stable economic and social structures as context of social work
- Complexity and blurred boundaries of profession in the welfare state