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A Façade of Collaboration

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Abstract

The study presented in this article examined the relationship between philanthropic foundations (PFs) and the government in social policy-making. The Yaniv Project, which aimed to establish collaboration between PFs and the Israeli government in the field of children and youth at risk in Israel, is analysed as a case in point. The findings reveal that the collaboration that emerged was ceremonial and symbolic. The government and the PFs perceived the collaboration more as a technical means of achieving their own goals and gaining control than as a relationship that benefits both parties. The article discusses the implications of those relationships for PFs and the government.

Key words

Collaboration, philanthropic foundations, government, partnership

A FAÇADE OF COLLABORATION

Relationships between philanthropic foundations and the government in social policy-making in Israel

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, philanthropic foundations (PFs) have begun to play a key role in the formulation of social policy. As a result, various patterns of relations have developed between PFs and the government. One of those patterns is partnerships and collaborations, which aim to maximize the advantages of each sector through collaborative activity (Knott and McCarthy, 2007; Ramiah and Reich, 2006). Although extensive research has been conducted on partnerships and collaborations between nonprofit organizations (NPOs) and the government (Alexander and Nank, 2009; Gazley, 2008; Gazley and Brudney, 2007), only a few studies have dealt with cross-sector partnerships and collaborations between PFs and the government (Knott and McCarthy, 2007; Ramiah and Reich, 2006). Moreover, the emergence of the distinctive pattern of 'new philanthropy' highlights the need for research on this complex issue (Eikenberry, 2006; Hess, 2005). Following this preliminary research, we conducted an exploratory study, which examined the relationship between PFs and the government in a project that aimed to promote collaboration between the two sectors in social policy-making in Israel. The study also examined the impact of those relationships on the functioning of foundations and the government. In an era of government retrenchment and devolution, the study aimed to enhance understanding of the extent to which the PFs can and should play a role in public governance. In addition, the effects of the growing role of PFs in the process of policy-making were examined. The Yaniv Project is presented as a case study of an attempt to establish a collaboration between PFs and the government, and the outcomes of the collaborative relationship are discussed. The project was established by several foundations and philanthropists who sought to promote policies for children and youth at risk in Israel, and lasted from 2003 to 2007. The relationships that developed between PFs and the government during the four years of the project's development and operation were examined on the basis of qualitative thematic content analysis. Specifically, the study focused on the nature and development of the relationships that emerged between the PFs and the government, as well as on how each sector perceived the roles of the other sector in formulating social policies, and on the factors that shaped those relationships.

The article will begin by clarifying the term philanthropy as it was used in this study, with emphasis on the characteristics of new philanthropy. Afterwards, the existing literature on relationships between PFs and the government will be reviewed, with emphasis on collaborations between the two sectors. The review will be followed by a presentation of the research methodology and the Yaniv Project. The findings of the study will be presented according to three overarching themes: conflicting perceptions regarding the roles of government and PFs in policy-making processes; the emergence of collaboration (ceremonial and symbolic collaboration, and collaboration as a means of control); and structural and personal factors that affected the relationships between the PFs and the government (absence of a legal framework for cross-sector collaboration, the large financial scope of the project, the lack of policy regarding cross-sector

collaborations, and personal factors). Finally, the Discussion section will deal with the relationships that have emerged, as well as with the impact of collaborations on the activities of the foundations and the government.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Philanthropy and new philanthropy

Philanthropy is defined as ‘a social relation governed by a moral obligation that matches a supply of private resources to a demand of unfulfilled needs and desires that are communicated by entreaty’ (Schervish, 1998: 600). This kind of activity is voluntary, and seeks to promote a range of social issues. It is based on monetary donations for public causes, where funds are channelled through public foundations and organizations (Rudich, 2007). In the 1990s, a new style of philanthropy began to develop in the Western world. The new philanthropists are characterized by rapid accumulation of wealth, they focus on issues and innovation, and look for impact and accountability (The Philanthropic Initiative, 2000). The new generation of young philanthropists, who made their fortunes mainly in high-tech, seeks to introduce social changes based on the practices and perceptions of business entrepreneurship. They view philanthropic activity as an investment, for which they demand a clear return (Rudich, 2007; Shimoni, 2008).

This development is also evident in Israel, where large commercial donors have become more involved in philanthropy in recent years. The new philanthropists in Israel no longer follow the old corporatist model, which focused on raising funds for activities that are decided upon and approved by the government. Rather, like their counterparts in the United States and Europe, they seek to attain more control over the destination of the funds that they donate, and have become more involved in policy-making (Gidron *et al.*, 2006; Rudich, 2007). New philanthropists in Israel have a markedly negative view of the government, which they believe has failed to provide its citizens with the most basic services. Nonetheless, they believe that PFs should cooperate with the government entities (Shimoni, 2008).

Relationships between PFs and the government

The literature refers to different patterns that characterize the relationships between the government and the nonprofit sector, which range from repression, adversarial relations and competition at one extreme, to collaboration at the other (Coston, 1998; Young, 2000, 2006). Although research dealing with the relationships between PFs and the government and with the involvement of PFs in policy-making has gained momentum in recent years, this field is still in the initial stages of development (Eikenberry, 2006; Hess, 2005; Leat, 2005). Frumkin (2006a, 2006b) presented a model that relates to

four types of relationships between PFs and the government. In that model, a distinction is made between reactive and proactive relationships. Reactive relationships emerge as a result of decision-making processes in PFs, which depend on government policy as well as on the activities or oversight of the government. These relationships can be divided into three categories, as defined by Young (2000, 2006): *supplementary relationships* refer to philanthropy that tracks what the public sector is doing (Frumkin, 2006a); *complementary relationships* refer to a division of labour between the government and PFs in areas that the government does not deal with and *adversarial relationships* refer to philanthropic activities which actively challenge the assumptions of the public sector and aim to counter its influence.

In contrast to reactive relationships, proactive relationships are based on maintaining the autonomy of the foundations. That is, the foundations do not make decisions on the basis of the government's activities or oversight. Rather, they base their decisions on an autonomous process of assessing needs, which derives from the values that guide their activities. It is possible that in the course of time, the relations that develop will be characterized as supplementary, complementary or adversarial. However, the choice will be clearly based on the values and priorities of the foundation, taking the entire spectrum of factors into account – beyond the policy of the government. According to Frumkin (2006b), foundations need to maintain their autonomy in order to preserve their role as initiators of social policy. Thus, the reactive relationships are appropriate for collaborations based on unilateral initiatives of the government, whereas proactive relationships are appropriate for collaborations that strive towards equal participation.

One of the patterns of relationships between PFs and the government that has become more prevalent in recent years is partnership and collaborations (Person *et al.*, 2009). Cross-sector partnership, where nongovernmental actors (for-profit and nonprofit) are mobilized or become involved in efforts to promote public causes together with governmental actors is perceived as an essential, desirable strategy for coping with public challenges (Gazley and Brudney, 2007; Ghobadian *et al.*, 2004). The cross-sector partnership refers to a formal or informal organizational framework in which ongoing mutual relationships and exchange of information, resources, activities, and know-how are established among two or more sectors (governmental, nonprofit and business) that work together towards a goal which has added value, and which could not have been achieved solely through the activity of one sector (Babiak and Thibault, 2009; Bryson *et al.*, 2006; Gazley, 2008).

The distinctive character of cross-sector partnership derives from the nature of the encounter that it facilitates between organizations with different identities. In that context, each organization has a different perspective of its role in society, which affects the definition of its moral and social commitment as well as the rationale for its activities (Amirkhanyan, 2008). In the cross-sector relationships, there is a strong probability that conflicts or competition will develop between different types of institutional logic and organizational cultures, as a result of differences in the fundamental values of the organizations in each sector (Bryson *et al.*, 2006; Klijn and

Teisman, 2004). Hence, in order to facilitate an effective partnership based on mutual trust and on acknowledgment and understanding of the other sector, it is important to identify the added value of collaboration (Bryson *et al.*, 2006; Spath *et al.*, 2008). One of the main aspects that can ensure the development and success of a partnership is the nature of governance that characterizes the organizations engaging in the collaboration (Ferguson, 2004). However, this issue is also a source of tension. Notably, joint governance undermines the traditional concept of governance by the government, and requires governmental authorities and NPOs to change their perspectives. The desired change is reflected in the concept of public responsibility as part of the general civic culture (Stone and Ostrower, 2007). Accordingly, problems that were once indisputably acknowledged as the responsibility of the government are now perceived as general social problems that can be solved not only by governmental institutions but also by actors from other sectors (Nickel and Eikenberry, 2010). These changes are not easily assimilated, and have met with resistance in the governmental and nonprofit sectors. Such resistance can lead to excessive rigidity, which exacerbates intersectoral differences instead of promoting cross-sector partnership (Klijn and Teisman, 2004). As in other types of relationships, cross-sector partnerships and collaborations have various benefits and costs. The main benefits include: the ability to deal with shared problems more effectively than one sector would be able to do alone; reduced environmental uncertainty (strategic and economic) and the potential for economizing on costs (Gazley and Brudney, 2007; Spath *et al.*, 2008). The costs include blurring of differences and boundaries between the sectors, loss of autonomy in decision making; wasted resources, loss of organizational flexibility; and the reduction of the government's accountability and responsibility towards its citizens (Babiak and Thibault, 2009; Gazley and Brudney, 2007; Hess, 2005; Person *et al.*, 2009). A recent study commissioned by the United States government examined ways of maximizing philanthropic investments through cross-sector partnership (Person *et al.*, 2009). The study identified five main types of interaction between the government and foundations. Each is characterized by different degrees of alignment among goals, strategies, resources and implementation: incidental overlap, supplementary action, communication, coordination and collaboration. According to Person *et al.* (2009), only the latter three types of interaction represent true partnership, and each comes with its own opportunities and challenges. Hence, they claim, 'there is no best partnership model for all situations and in some program areas or initiatives, partnership may not be appropriate or possible' (Person *et al.*, 2009: xiii).

In Israel, there are 6,377 registered foundations and funding organizations. This group of organizations comprises 17.9 per cent of the total number of registered NPOs (Gidron *et al.*, 2006), and operates in three major areas of activity: welfare, education and health (Brenner *et al.*, 2010; Gidron *et al.*, 2006). Monetary transfers (grants and payments) distributed by philanthropic institutions in Israel amounted to NIS 5.1 billion in 2006 (0.8 per cent of GDP that year). Between 2002 and 2006, the total amount of transfers increased at an average annual rate of 2 per cent. The majority of monetary

transfers originated outside Israel (68 per cent). Only a small share of the transfers originated in Israel, including: the government and national institutions (16 per cent); contributions from households (6 per cent); the business sector (5.5 per cent); other NPOs in Israel (2.5 per cent) and unknown sources (2.7 per cent). In 2006, 35 per cent of the organizations that received support from PFs were governmental agencies (national and local) (Brenner *et al.*, 2010).

Despite the large number of PFs operating in Israel and their increasing role in funding governmental social services, there has never been a clear policy towards PFs in Israel. According to the prevailing view in the national government, foundations are a convenient source of funding which replenishes public budgets (Bar and Gidron, 2009). No policy exists to govern the flow of funds from foundations to different areas of activity, some of which overlap with those of the public sector (Gidron *et al.*, 2006). Thus, PFs have developed strong work relations with the government over the years, and have provided funding for governmental projects and services (Bar and Gidron, 2009; Yishai, 2003).

THE YANIV PROJECT

The Yaniv Project was established in 2003, at the initiative of several Israeli foundations and philanthropists who sought to promote a new policy for dealing with children and youth at risk in Israel. The initiators of the project were new philanthropists, who claimed that the government had not succeeded in offering a comprehensive solution for the problems of children and youth at risk in Israel. They defined the project as a start-up social initiative which aimed to change the situation of those children and youth, and enlisted PFs, NPOs and government ministries in that effort. Three foundations headed the initiative. The first was a well-established foundation that has been operating for two decades, mainly in the field of social services and education for children and youth in the peripheral regions of Israel. The foundation provides funding for different projects, and operates social services by developing partnerships with private donors, PFs, and government ministries and agencies. The other two foundations were young, and lacked experience in the field of services for children and youth. One of them was established by a new philanthropist who made his fortune in the Israeli high-tech industry. The other foundation, which was established by an Israeli citizen who lives in the US, engaged primarily in funding health projects for children. The three foundations undertook to raise 250 million dollars for the Yaniv Project over a period of five years, and that sum was to be matched by the national government. The objectives of the project were: to reduce the number of at-risk children and youth; to alleviate the severity of risk situations that those children and youth are exposed to; and to provide those children and youth and their families with assistance and support in coping with the consequences of existing risk situations (Tamir and Dolev, 2003).

The Prime Minister at the time, Ariel Sharon, and the members of his government were in favour of promoting the project. Accordingly, a process of policy development began, with the expectation that the government would endorse the initiative as a national project and allocate the anticipated funding. Two main forums were involved in developing the project: (1) the strategic committee and (2) the forum of partners (the Yaniv Administration). The strategic committee was established by the foundations that initiated the project, and it consisted of representatives of various government ministries (the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption and the Ministry of Public Security), as well as representatives of the local government (heads of social services departments in different localities), academic scholars in the field of children and youth at risk, and representatives of nonprofit and business organizations. However, the government representatives participated in the committee discussions as observers and not as regular members. The forum of partners (the Yaniv Administration) consisted of representatives and employees of the foundations that initiated the project.

The strategic committee held ten meetings, and submitted a report to the foundations that initiated the project. The report included recommendations for the continuation of comprehensive work through subcommittees. The strategic committee recommended implementing a general strategy at the national, regional and local levels in order to respond to the needs of children and youth at risk and overcome the challenges faced by the existing system of local government services that provide assistance to those children and their parents. In addition, it was recommended that the programme operates through a national administration, which would be accompanied by the establishment of a public council whose members include representatives of government ministries, NPOs and the business sector, as well as experts in the field.

The interaction between the foundation and the government in the process of policy development was limited, and focused on two levels: the first level was characterized predominantly by informal interactions between philanthropists and politicians, including the Prime Minister and ministers. The second level was characterized by interactions with senior staff members of government ministries. At that level, policy proposals were formulated mostly in the forums of the foundations and in the strategic committee, and the representatives of the government were 'observers' who had not been officially involved in the formulation of policies. Among the government representatives, the two ministries that met frequently with the foundations to discuss the policy proposals were the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Finance. The other ministries and the local governments were less involved in these policy discussions. The foundations that initiated the project aimed to achieve a substantive policy change at the national level. Hence, they perceived the local government as a minor player, and most of the interactions were with the national government and government ministries.

In November 2004, after the government had not made a clear decision regarding its commitment to the project, the foundations that initiated the Yaniv Project decided to disband the strategic committee and terminate the collaboration with the government. As a result, the project was reduced to several service programmes, most of which were local, and the management was transferred to one of the foundations. The project ended in 2007.

METHOD

The study presented in this article examined the relationships between PFs and the government in the process of formulating and developing public policy. We used qualitative research methods to explore these relationships and their development, because these methods are particularly appropriate for exploratory studies in understudied areas, and they serve as a ‘catalyst for conceptualization’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 19). Qualitative methods also provided a basis for examining the participants’ subjective perceptions and experiences in the process of collaboration, and they provided comprehensive insights into the activities and relationships among these organizations as the participants perceived them (Marshall and Rossman, 1995).

Population and data collection

Data were collected from November 2008 to July 2009 through eleven semi-structured in-depth interviews, which were conducted with key figures who represented the government and the PFs involved in the abovementioned policy-making process. All of the participants played a significant and active role in decision-making processes related to the project. The key players were identified after analysing documents related to the policy-making process, and after consulting with key figures in the PFs that initiated the project. These individuals included ministers, deputy ministers and heads of departments in the three governmental agencies that played the most active role in the policy-making process examined: the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services, the Ministry of Finance and the National Insurance Institute. We also interviewed chairs of the boards, CEOs and other senior staff members from the three main PFs that were involved in the project. We used an interview protocol which consisted of fifteen open-ended questions, relating to the activities of the PFs and the governmental agencies and the interactions between them in the policy-making process (e.g. ‘tell me about the initiation of the program’; ‘who did you consider as a partner’ and ‘describe the interaction with the governmental ministries’ – for a detailed list of questions, please contact the authors). The interviews, which lasted between 1 and 2 hours, were audio-recorded and later transcribed. In addition, we collected data through relevant documents, including minutes of internal and external meetings and correspondence

between parties in NPOs and governmental agencies, as well as various reports that were published while the project was being conducted and media coverage of the process.

Data analysis

A qualitative design was used to explore the social meaning attributed to relationships between PFs and the government. This approach derived from the theoretical framework of social construction. (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). This interpretive paradigm assumes that multiple realities are constructed by the different actors and institutions involved in the policy-making process. Thus, the interviews and documents portray a process in which beliefs and ideas are socially produced, and they reflect a specific social, cultural and political context in which interactions and transactions take place. Against this background, we used a qualitative thematic content analysis to explore the relationships between the PFs and the government by identifying key issues and arguments as they were constructed in the interviews and documents. To ensure reliable results, the data were analysed by two analysts. Each analyst independently searched for emerging categories relating to the aim of the study in the eleven interviews (Ryan and Bernard, 2000). Afterwards, the analysts discussed the categories that they identified. In that process, they summarized the content of each category, established boundaries for the categories and searched for negative evidence. Data that could not be classified were analysed later to determine whether they represented new categories or subcategories. Data analysis was repeated several times, until all categories were agreed upon by the two analysts. Comparison of the data assigned by the analysts confirmed that their application of the fifteen categories was consistent. The transcripts were independently coded by the two analysts to ensure the quality of the coding. Finally, the fifteen categories were grouped into a smaller number of meaningful thematic clusters (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996) according to recurrent themes identified across the texts. In addition, we analysed the content of the relevant documents collected in a similar manner to the interviews analysis. The categories were grouped into three overarching themes. One theme related to conflicting perceptions of the roles of the government and PFs in formulating social policies, and conflicting perceptions of the legitimacy of PFs in governance. The second theme related to the process of creating collaboration and the nature of collaboration (definitions of collaboration, ceremonial and symbolic collaboration, and collaboration as means of control). The third theme related to structural and personal factors that affected the relationships between the PFs and government (e.g. the absence of legal framework for cross-sector collaboration, the large financial scope of the project, the lack of policy regarding cross-sector collaboration and personal factors). The reliability of these themes was ensured through peer debriefing and audio-recording of the data analysis process (Johnson and Waterfield, 2006; Morse *et al.*, 2002).

FINDINGS

Conflicting perceptions of the roles of the government and PFs in formulating social policies

The relationships between NPOs and the government as well as the relationships between different actors in policy-making processes are based on each party's perceptions of the other party's role (Coston, 1998; Young, 2000, 2006). The interviews revealed different and conflicting perceptions of the roles of PFs and the government.

The role of PFs

The representatives of the government ministries believed that the main role of the PFs is to engage in the development and implementation of services, but not to 'interfere' in the process of policy-making. Moreover, a representative of the Ministry of Finance indicated that the government should set policies, and that PFs should be involved only when there is a need for supplementary activity. In her view, 'a voluntary organization should not use government funds to manage a national project'.

In contrast, the three foundations that initiated the project perceived themselves as autonomous entities with new ideas and administrative abilities deriving from the world of philanthropy, business and high-tech, which enable them to improve bureaucratic government processes. In their view, because they were the ones who took the initiative, they should be key actors in the policy-making process. The desire of the foundations to be involved in policy-making conflicted with the traditional perception that PFs should play a passive role in the partnership and serve as external advisors to the government. One of the government officials interviewed in the study mentioned: 'A new philanthropy has emerged in Israel. These philanthropists are rich people. . . They not only want to influence, but they think they can manage their projects on their own, that they are better than the government'.

In this study, the major difference between the representatives of the PFs and the government representatives related to the perceived role of PFs in governance. The government representatives perceived PFs as illegitimate actors in setting government policies, whereas the representatives of the PFs believed that the lack of legitimation for their involvement in the policy-making process was based on the government's desire to utilize the contributions for its own purposes, without considering the wishes of the funding source. One of the representatives of the foundations offered the following explanation: 'In principle, the government's approach was, "You bring the money, we'll decide what to do with it"'.

The government's role

Second, the findings revealed conflicts in the perceptions of the government's role. The foundations perceived the government as a rigid, bureaucratic body which has difficulty establishing comprehensive programmes and evaluating their outcomes. Hence, in their view, the government needed external funding and assistance with policy-making. One of the representatives of the foundations explained:

The government acts as a millstone, it does not allow any innovation and does not support activities towards change in its systems, it is bound to its old conceptions. . .therefore, in order to achieve a long lasting systematic change it needs to create partnerships with philanthropic foundations.

Although the government representatives interviewed in this study acknowledged the existence of budgetary shortfalls and recognized the need for external funding, they clarified that 'policy-making should remain the domain of the government', and that external entities should not be involved in that process.

These conflicting perceptions regarding the roles of philanthropy and the government, as well as conflicting perceptions regarding the extent to which PFs should be involved in policy-making, were the basis for the relationships between the two sectors. Those differences affected the definitions of collaboration that each sector attempted to establish in the Yaniv Project.

The relationships between the government and PFs: Collaboration?

The literature indicates that the relationships between the government and PFs can take different forms, ranging from adversarial relationships to incidental overlap, and ultimately to collaboration (Person *et al.*, 2009; Young, 2006). In the interviews, and in the documented material, the term 'collaboration' was used more often than other expressions to describe the relationships between the government and the PFs. It appears that the participants from both sectors perceived the relationship that developed in the Yaniv Project as collaboration. Nonetheless, each of the actors had different perceptions of the collaboration, which were influenced by their views regarding the roles of each party in the policy-making process, presented above.

Definitions of collaboration: Collaboration as an asymmetric interaction versus collaboration as an interaction between equal partners

The representatives of the government considered collaboration between the government and the foundations to be an asymmetric interaction, in which the government has the right to veto decisions, and can choose the time and place for the involvement of the foundations. The collaborative project could be developed and implemented jointly with

the foundations – but under no circumstances should the foundations be the sole managers. The government representatives viewed this asymmetric collaboration as an opportunity to promote issues and projects on their agenda.

In contrast, the representatives of the PFs viewed the collaboration as an interaction between equal partners, where the relationships remain symmetrical at all stages of the policy-making process. Therefore, from the philanthropists' point of view, the collaboration does not have to be led by the government. One philanthropist claimed:

[We] did not become involved in the project as passive investors who sought to give the government money to deal with children at risk. Rather, [we became involved in the project] because the government was not dealing with the problem effectively. Therefore, the government representatives were partners in the process, but they did not make the final decisions. The aim of the strategic committee was to choose an alternative that is not necessarily recommended by the government.

Lack of discourse in the collaboration

Besides a basic disagreement about the nature of the collaboration between the government and the foundations, the interviews revealed that there was no discourse regarding the content and structure of the collaboration. One of the senior government representatives explained: 'I think that at the beginning of the project, before we talked about dealing with the children, we should have talked about the nature of the project and the meaning of collaboration'.

The interviews reveal that each of the sectors engaged in internal discussions that were characterized by high levels of defensiveness, reactivity and emotionality. In those discussions, each party focused on formulating responses to actions that they believed the other party was planning to take against them. A representative of the PFs explained: 'The government and the foundations worked separately. There was no system of working together'.

Two main defensive patterns of behaviour were found to characterize the nature of the relationship between the government and the foundations: ceremonial and symbolic collaboration; and collaboration as a means of control.

Ceremonial and symbolic collaboration

Throughout the process, both the PFs and the representatives of the government described their concerted efforts to maintain a façade of collaboration through technical processes, such as appointing members of the strategic committee, developing committees and preparing position papers. It therefore appears that most of the efforts focused on the technical and symbolic aspects of the collaboration. For example, in one case, the staff of the PFs decided that there would be two levels of membership on the

strategic committee: regular members and observers. Practitioners in the field, academic scholars, and the representatives of nonprofit and business organizations would be invited to serve on the strategic committee as regular members, whereas the representatives of government ministries would be encouraged to participate in meetings and provide assistance as observers. Considerable thought was invested in planning how the appointments would be made, without considering how that decision would affect the collaboration – especially when the foundations themselves had defined the government as a partner in the project. In another case, when preparations were being made for the meeting of the strategic committee at the building of one of the foundations, the organizing team decided to arrange the seating in two circles: ‘regular’ members would be seated in the inner circle, and the observers (i.e. representatives of the government) would be seated in the outer circle. Here, too, the foundations did not take into consideration the nonverbal ceremonial message that was being conveyed, and the implications of those seating arrangements for the collaboration. The committee members from the foundations and the government interviewed described this incident as a formative event, which reflected the gap between the perceptions of the two partners as well as the foundations’ lack of sensitivity towards the government.

Partnership as a means of control: A necessary means without added value

The findings of the study revealed that throughout the process, both parties sought to control the collaboration. In their view, they had been drawn into the collaboration out of necessity, and gaining control over the process would enable them to achieve their goals. Hence, the collaboration was perceived as a necessary means, and not as a cooperative relationship that would have added value for the project. The foundations representatives indicated that they needed financial assistance and recognition from the government in order to achieve a systematic change in policy. Besides that, they considered the collaboration to be an incentive for donors which would provide leverage for contributions. The government representatives, in contrast, explained that the collaboration was necessary in order to implement programmes for children and youth at risk that would not have been conducted otherwise owing to lack of government funding. Thus, the government’s main objective was to manage the collaboration in order to implement those programmes.

Both parties explained that they tried to take advantage of the collaboration as a means of gaining control and promoting their own goals. This became a source of constant conflict, which ultimately did not promote the process. As one of the representatives of the foundations mentioned:

One party set the policies, and the other party had the money. Essentially, it turned into a situation where each party tried to dominate the other instead of collaborating, and there was a constant attempt to gain the upper hand – to determine who would make the decisions.

STRUCTURAL AND PERSONAL FACTORS THAT AFFECTED THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE FOUNDATIONS AND THE GOVERNMENT

The findings of the study reveal that the relationships between the government and the foundations in the Yaniv Project were also affected by structural and personal factors:

1. The absence of a legal framework or arrangement in Israel for cross-sector collaboration based on matching was mentioned by the representatives of the government and the PFs as an obstacle that seriously impeded the development of the Yaniv Project. Both the government and the foundations tried to reach a legal arrangement for managing the joint project. However, it was not clear how that arrangement would fit the regulations of the Ministry of Finance.
2. The relatively large financial scope of the project was perceived by the representatives of the PFs as another structural obstacle that exacerbated the problems in the relationship between the government and the PFs. For the government, and especially for the Ministry of Finance, the extraordinary scope of the proposed budget (500 million dollars) intensified fears of changing budgetary priorities.
3. The lack of a clear policy regarding governance of cross-sector partnerships was presented by both the government and PFs representatives interviewed as a major structural obstacle in the relationship between the government and foundations. Despite a historic decision in 2008, in which the government recognized the nonprofit sector and its contribution to Israeli society for the first time (Bar and Gidron, 2009), there has never been a clear policy towards PFs. Nor has a clear policy been formulated with regard to collaborative projects with PFs, definition of the roles of PFs and the desired relationships between PFs and the government. Therefore, the representatives of government as well as the representatives of the foundations described the nature of governance and the nature of the collaborative relationship itself as unclear. The foundations claimed that the government had not clarified its priorities, and the government representatives agreed that there had not been any internal discussion about the issue of governance. Nor had the government presented a clear platform or delineated priorities regarding its relationship with the foundations in the project.
4. Finally, the interviews revealed that personal factors played a major role in the process examined. Cross-sector collaborations, such as other interactions, are highly dependent on the people and personal dynamics that emerge among the actors. In the Yaniv Project, the dynamics between the representatives of the government and the foundations were characterized by suspicion and mistrust. This created an atmosphere in which it was difficult for the parties to engage in dialogue.

As one philanthropist involved in the project indicated:

They're always suspicious of ... Israeli philanthropists. [They're always thinking]: What is their real goal, what do they really want to achieve ... those businessmen, the ones with capital, who come with their money and tell the state what to do.

The representatives of the foundations who were interviewed in this study had expected that the government would appreciate their contribution and involvement in the field. Instead, they felt that the government representatives viewed them as unprofessional, as having amorphous goals, and as trying to undermine the authority of the government. One of the representatives of the foundations explained:

They told us: You [the philanthropists] do not bring any professional platform that has added value for us, and what you really want is to get to the heart of the matter. If you want to do that, then bring the money and leave.

At the same time, however, representatives of the government ministries felt that the PFs did not respect them as professionals. One of the representatives of the government explained:

We heard that they [the foundations] were saying that we [government officials] are not serious, that we have no knowledge and that the government cannot handle such a project by itself.

Personal factors were also reflected in the philanthropists' relationships with government ministers and with the Prime Minister, as well as in their relationships with the senior staff of the government ministries. In order to achieve their goals, the representatives of the foundations and the philanthropists utilized their political connections and informal access to influential politicians. The foundations initially approached high-level politicians, including the Prime Minister and ministers in the government. They had expected that those connections and endorsements would help promote the project – but that was not the case. Thus, in retrospect the philanthropists explained that they learned that connections with the senior staff of government ministries are no less important than connections with political figures.

DISCUSSION: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PFs AND THE GOVERNMENT UNDER THE FAÇADE OF COLLABORATION

The study aimed to examine the relationships between PFs and the government in the process of formulating social policies and programmes. Both the government and the foundations in the Yaniv Project characterized the relationship as collaboration between the government and civil society. However, the findings of the study indicate that the

actual relationships that emerged were far from the prevailing definitions of cross-sector collaboration. In this section, we will summarize the dynamics that emerged in the project, and discuss the implications of those relationships for collaborations between PFs and governments.

First, the relationships examined in this study fit Frumkin's (2006a, 2006b) definition of proactive relationships. Notably, the foundations sought to maintain their autonomy, and aimed to develop and promote a policy in accordance with their values. However, their desire for autonomy posed an obstacle for collaboration with the government. As a result, even though the foundations defined the relationship as collaboration, it did not progress beyond the point of communication (Person *et al.*, 2009). The findings indicate that the foundations' desire for autonomy, initiative and innovation conflicted with their desire for collaboration with the government. By definition, collaboration includes sharing of power. Hence, it seems that effective collaboration between foundations and government could have been achieved only if the foundations would have been able to move from a proactive pattern, which enables them to promote their agenda and policies at the beginning of the policy-making process, to patterns that would have been less threatening to the government at later stages of that process. However, in order to achieve effective collaboration, the government also needs to share some of its power with PFs. In order to do this, the government first needs to accept PFs as a legitimate partner in policy-making processes. Second, we found that each party's perception of the other party's role was one of the major factors that shaped the relationships between the foundations and the government. This hindered the development of an effective collaboration between them, and prevented the establishment of a common basis for dialogue. In the absence of mutual trust and respect, and in light of each party's feeling that the actions of the other party were intended to undermine their power, it appears that the collaboration was on shaky ground from the very outset. Ramiah and Reich (2006) argue that a basic condition for creating an effective partnership is recognition and understanding of the different perspectives and values that guide each of the sectors in the partnership. Moreover, the findings of this study indicate that beyond recognition and understanding of the different perspectives, there is also a need to engage in dialogue and work through the differences between the parties. This kind of dialogue can enable coordination of expectations and formulation of common goals which provide a more stable basis for collaborative activities.

In addition, in the case presented here, it appears that the differences in the perceptions of the PFs and the government are rooted in the culture and tradition of relationships between the government and the nonprofit sector in Israel. Historically, these relationships have been based on a strong, centralized government that actively intervenes in civil society and has difficulty conceiving of civil society organizations as autonomous entities (Gidron *et al.*, 2004). Thus, over the years, most NPOs operated alongside the state without challenging its policies (Yishai, 2003). In that context, PFs were perceived as an important tool for promoting national goals, and the government collaborated with them as long as they agreed to finance programmes in accordance with the priorities of the state. Over the past two decades, however, the nonprofit sector in

Israel has grown, its activities have expanded and it has begun to function more independently. This includes new PFs, which emphasize autonomy and involvement in policy-making. Even though the Israeli government has sought to establish more partnerships with NPOs in recent years, it is important to examine what lies behind the rhetoric of partnership. In the Israeli case, the main motivation for partnerships has been neo-liberal ideology, which advocates privatization and outsourcing of social services (Bar and Gidron, 2009). In the context of philanthropy, the government seeks to establish partnerships primarily in order to compensate for budgetary cuts in the state welfare system. Nonetheless, the idea of PFs taking an activist position and promoting their autonomous agendas in policy-making processes is still considered unacceptable. Thus, the core value of the supremacy of the state over civil society hinders the establishment of effective cross-sector partnerships. In the case of partnerships and collaborations with new philanthropists, this difficulty has intensified. Notably, the government perceives new philanthropists as a threat because their activities are based primarily on private capital that derives from high-tech industries, and their approach to philanthropy represents the values of the free market which conflict with those of the public sector. The case of the Yaniv Project supports the argument that cross-sector collaboration is strongly influenced by ideology, culture and the political environment (Gazley, 2008; Ramiah and Reich, 2006). Hence, it is important to take these factors into account in research on collaborations between PFs and the government.

Third, the perceptions of the collaboration as reported by the government representatives and the philanthropists in this study served as a façade for other activities that took place under the cover of collaboration. As such, the case examined here raises questions regarding the suitability, effectiveness and costs of collaborations between the government and PFs.

First of all, the findings revealed that the collaboration between the government and PFs focused on sharing of financing, or on a division of labour in which each party performed a different role. This perception was problematic, because it did not consider the concept of collaboration in a deeper sense. Effective cross-sector collaboration is a developmental learning process which requires preparation, understanding, examination, discussion, planning, and development of a dialogue about the nature of the relationship, and an investment of resources in building and maintaining the collaboration (Ramiah and Reich, 2006). Hence, it seems that an approach which views collaboration as a division of labour rather than as a mutual relationship and as a developmental process that involves a dialogue and learning leads to narrow and unstable collaborations.

The government and the PFs perceived the collaboration more as a technical means of achieving goals and less as a relationship that benefits both parties. As a result, the collaboration becomes ceremonial and symbolic. In the case presented here, the ceremonies were manifested in an ostensible process (or façade) of collaboration, which involved control over the composition of participants and the content of the discussions. Even when processes, such as transmission of information, joint meetings and consultations took place, there was no sharing of power, which is essential in a

collaborative relationship. Beneath the façade of ceremonial and symbolic collaboration, the partners in the Yaniv Project attempted to control each other and sought to promote goals and interests that were not necessarily related to – or sometimes even contradicted – those of the other party. In this context, because PFs are interested in changing policies, they need to engage in an ongoing discussion about the added value and contribution of the collaboration. In line with the conclusions of Person *et al.* (2009), the case of the Yaniv Project suggests that the cross-sector collaboration is not necessarily a feasible or optimal way of promoting the goals of each sector. Hence, there is a need to think carefully about the added value of collaboration, and to assess the benefits versus the costs of promoting an issue through collaboration with the government before entering into such relationships. By the same token, the government also needs to carefully consider its position on collaboration, especially in the age of ‘new governance’. In the Yaniv Project, for example, it appears that the government was pulled into the partnership, and that its positions were confused and inconsistent. Moreover, there is a need to find appropriate legal and administrative frameworks for cross-sector collaborations. As indicated, the absence of such frameworks was one of the factors that hindered the collaboration in the Yaniv Project.

Lastly, the characteristics of new philanthropy posed difficulties for the development of cross-sector collaborations in the Israeli case, because the government was more threatened by the ‘new philanthropic’ foundations than it was by other types of NPOs or traditional PFs. From the government’s point of view, the values of new philanthropy – especially its adherence to practices borrowed from the business sector and its aim to be involved in policy-making and governance – challenged governmental values, perceptions and activities. This was in contrast to the traditional PFs, which had worked closely with the government in the past and conformed to its goals, values and policies. Hence, more extensive research is needed on the relationships between PFs and the government in general, and on partnerships between the government and new PFs in particular.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that the article presented only one case of a collaboration between PFs and the government. Even though the findings of this study provide important insights into those relationships in general, they need to be understood in terms of the specific context in which the collaboration took place. Hence, in order to broaden knowledge on this topic and gain further insights into partnerships and collaborations between PFs and the government, we recommend that future studies focus on a larger number of cases, and that comparative analyses examine different types of relationships that are emerging between PFs and the government in different countries.

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