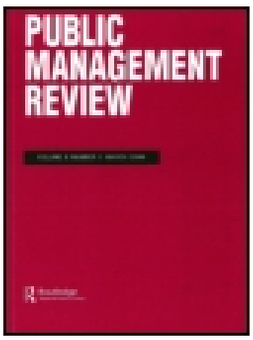

Public Management Review

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rpxm20

Playing defence: the impact of trust on the coping mechanisms of street-level bureaucrats

Maayan Davidovitz & Nissim Cohen

To cite this article: Maayan Davidovitz & Nissim Cohen (2020): Playing defence: the impact of trust on the coping mechanisms of street-level bureaucrats, Public Management Review, DOI: 10.1080/14719037.2020.1817532

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2020.1817532

Published online: 15 Sep 2020.

PUBLIC MANAGEMENT REVIEW
https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2020.1817532

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Playing defence: the impact of trust on the coping mechanisms of street-level bureaucrats

Maayan Davidovitz[a] and Nissim Cohen[b]

[a]Department of Public Administration and Policy, School of Political Sciences, University of Haifa, Haifa, Israel; [b]Department of Public Administration and Policy and the Center for Public Management and Policy (CPMP, University of Haifa, Haifa, Israel

ABSTRACT

According to public management literature, trust has a positive influence on behaviour. Why, then, do street-level bureaucrats (SLBs) appear to favour clients whom they do not trust, and give less attention to those they do trust? Do organizational conditions play a role in this dynamic? We investigate these issues as they affect Israeli social services providers. Our study improves our understanding of trust as a factor in public service delivery. When SLBs operate in an unsupportive environment, they prioritize clients whom they distrust, bending or breaking rules for them, yet ration services to clients whom they trust.

KEYWORDS Street-level bureaucrats; trust; policy implementation; discretion; coping

1. Introduction

Street-level bureaucrats (hereinafter: SLBs) are the ultimate arbiters of public policy. These frontline workers are pivotal players in influencing the implementation of public policy due to the discretion that they exercise in making decisions about how to apply the policy to their clients (Lipsky 2010). Understanding the factors that influence their discretion is crucial, for they may create a distinction between how different clients receive services that has implications for social welfare (Gofen 2014; Lavee 2020; Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2003).

In many cases, SLBs make decisions for their clients based on their attitudes and perceptions about them (Keiser 2010; Baviskar and Winter 2017). Recent studies demonstrate that SLBs may make differing decisions based on how they assess their clients' moral characteristics. For example, they may divide their clients into stereotypical categories (Raaphorst and Groeneveld 2018) that help them evaluate clients' level of 'deservingness' (Jilke and Tummers 2018).

Given that trust also has implications for behaviour (Kramer 1999), we maintain that it is reasonable to assume that it influences how SLBs evaluate their clients. Trust is the willingness of an individual to be vulnerable to the actions of the other, or to a group or institution that has the capacity to harm or betray the trustor (Mayer, Davis and Schoorman 1995; Levi and Stoker 2000). Although the public administration

CONTACT Maayan Davidovitz maayandavidovitz@gmail.com

This article has been corrected with minor changes. These changes do not impact the academic content of the article.

literature identifies trust as a critical element in the SLBs' work environment (Yang and Holzer 2006; Senghaas, Freier, and Kupka 2019), there is a theoretical gap regarding the impact of SLBs' degree of trust in their clients on how they cope with them. We aim to fill this gap in the literature, focusing on the weight of trust in clients in understanding the public service delivery process.

When there is a built-in distrust and an atmosphere of mutual suspicion between the state and citizens (Van de Walle and Bouckaert 2003) there may be a 'roll down' effect on the daily contacts between frontline workers and citizens at the street level (Uslaner 2003; Rothstein and Uslaner 2005). As trust is a strategic behaviour based on risk and expectations about how another individual will behave (Gilson 2003), we contend that it may help us to better understand SLBs' discretion when deciding how to treat their clients.

We seek to examine whether the level of trust that SLBs have in their clients is reflected in their mechanisms for handling them. What coping strategies do SLBs adopt when they have a great deal of trust in their clients as opposed to when they do not trust them? What role do organizational conditions play in this dynamic? As the literature already explains, together with personal characteristics and the environment, organizational conditions are critical in understanding SLBs' discretion when deciding how to treat their clients (Cohen 2018; Cohen and Hertz 2020). In accordance with Brodkin's (2011) claim that SLBs' personal preferences are mediated by organizational conditions, we argue that to better understand the phenomenon, these organizational conditions must be evaluated.

This study contributes to the literature in five ways. First, it expands the theoretical knowledge regarding the factors that influence SLBs' discretion when implementing public policy. Second, it provides a better understanding of the weight of trust as a factor in the delivery of public services. Third, it identifies the organizational conditions that lead SLBs to decide how to provide services to clients based on their degree of trust in them and how these decisions affect policy outcomes. Fourth, in contrast to public management literature, which regards the consequences of trust as normative, our study is the first, to our knowledge, to detect the unwanted consequences of trust that may subvert the goals of public policy. Fifth, the study contributes to a future agenda of studies about trust because it demonstrates how to combine the analysis of the micro-dynamics of SLBs' trust with the behaviour between two parties in other contexts such as between organizations and between states.

We test our theories empirically with a qualitative research design consisting of in-depth, semi-structured interviews and focus groups with Israeli teachers and social workers. These frontline employees must grapple with increased demands from the public along with simultaneous reductions in resources in the era of New Public Management (Vigoda-Gadot and Meiri 2008; Boehm, Vigoda-Gadot, and Segev 2011). They often have long-term relationships with their clients (Krumer-Nevo, Slonim-Nevo, and Hirshenzon-Segev. 2006; Mainhard, Wubbels, and Brekelmans 2014), giving them time to determine their level of trust in them. Drawing on findings regarding the implications of trust for the implementation of policy, we contend that when SLBs have a high level of trust in their clients, they tend to be less responsive to clients' demands. In contrast, when they have little trust in their clients, they will be more responsive to clients' demands. Our goal is to provide a theoretical framework to help understand this paradox wherein trust in clients can

lead SLBs to choose coping strategies that help them to survive in their work, but at the expense of their trustees.

2. Literature review

2.1 The discretion of SLBs

SLBs implement bottom-up public policy through their daily interactions with their clients, to whom they provide public services (Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2003). Lipsky's (1980) groundbreaking work has recognized the importance of these players, who are located in the interface between the state and the citizens (Thomann 2015). They are unique in the sense that they appear more like policy makers than policy takers (Lipsky 1980) in influencing the lives and fate of those they serve by the decisions they make that affect them (Tummers and Bekkers 2014). Therefore, they are very important players in the public service environment (Maynard-Moody and Portillo 2010).

SLBs have extensive discretionary autonomy (Hupe and Hill 2007) in implementing policy, enabling them to adapt policy as designed to the actual needs of the citizens (Hupe and Buffat 2014). They can decide in which clients to invest more time, energy, or attention (Baviskar and Winter 2017) and to whom to provide more or fewer resources (Clark-Daniels and Daniels 1995). In doing so, they draw a clear distinction between how different clients receive services (Thomann and Rapp 2018).

SLBs make these decisions in an attempt to manage their work successfully, reduce their stress (Lipsky 2010), and make uncomfortable choices (Evans 2016). Thus, for example, they cope by prioritizing certain clients (Jilke and Tummers 2018) while rationing services to others (Clark-Daniels and Daniels 1995), or adhering meticulously to the laws and procedures to face demanding clients (Tummers et al. 2015). In some cases, they are willing to risk their jobs for certain clients by bending and breaking rules to assist them (Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2003).

The literature emphasizes that SLBs often make these decisions based on their perceptions of and attitudes towards their clients (Kallio and Kouvo 2015). To make these determinations, they categorize them on a hierarchy of worthiness (Jilke and Tummers 2018), and adjust how they face them based thereon. We maintain that the degree of trust that they have in their clients is a factor in this assessment.

2.2 Trust and its implications

Trust is 'the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party' (Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman 1995, 712). It is based on one party's expectations, assumptions, or beliefs that the other party will act beneficially, positively, or at least non-destructively to the interests of the party who trusts (Robinson 1996). It is a strategic behaviour based on risk and expectations about how another individual will behave (Gilson 2003).

One of the integral elements of trust is that it is dynamic and evolves during a relationship. Some scholars see it as a process that develops by stages based on the degree of familiarity between the parties (Lewicki and Bunker 1995). This highlights

the reciprocal aspect of trust. It is an active exchange that arises when one party looks at the actions of another and adjusts its attitudes and behaviour based on these observations (Serva, Fuller, and Mayer 2005). Trust influences social interactions and relationships. It has diverse consequences for feelings and behaviour, such as cooperative behaviour (Dirks and Ferrin 2001), willingness to take risks (Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman 1995), commitment (Albrecht and Travaglione 2003), information sharing (Lewicki, McAllister, and Bies 1998), and satisfaction (Cho and Park 2011). However, when individuals feel a lack of trust, they tend to be driven by fear and try to avoid betrayal (Reina and Reina 2006); engage in defensive behaviour that translates into non-cooperation (Brann and Foddy 1987); and distort information (McKnight and Chervany 2001).

The public administration literature has also paid a great deal of attention to trust, considering it to be a social foundation and key concept in social relations and social capital (Uslaner 2002). It plays a central role in the development of modern societies (Freitag and Bühlmann 2009). Some argue that trust between people has institutional roots (Rothstein and Stolle 2008). According to Yamagishi and Yamagishi (1994), trust in strangers facilitates a healthy society. Trust in daily interactions between state agents and citizens depends on the broader context of trust between state and society (Uslaner 2003). This is particularly relevant in the Israeli context, which is characterized by low levels of public trust in institutions (Mizrahi, Vigoda-Gadot and Cohen 2010; Mizrahi, Vigoda-Gadot and Cohen 2019).

The public administration literature considers trust a crucial element in the relationship between public officials and citizens. This concept is of increasing interest considering evidence of a decline in trust over the past few decades (Braithwaite and Levi 1998), widely held to be caused by governments failing to act properly in the area of transparency and ethics (Van de Walle and Bouckaert 2003). According to Yang (2005, 273–274). 'The need for trust is considered a natural response to the rising power of professions and the state and a mechanism of social control over possible abuses of that power.' These studies highlight the inherent interdependence between the public administration's trust in citizens and the public's trust in the state as a solid foundation for effective policy implementation (Yang 2005).

While most of the literature addresses citizens' trust in public servants (Bouckaert and Van de Walle 2001; Van Ryzin 2011), studies have also cited the importance of focusing on public officials' trust in the citizens whom they serve (Yang 2005; Yang and Holzer 2006; Lee and Yu 2013). According to Vigoda-Gadot, Zalmanovitch, and Belonogov (2012), trust in citizens may make bureaucracy more flexible, reduce red tape and thus streamline public service delivery. Many of these studies provide empirical findings that elucidate the positive implications of trust for feelings and behaviour. For example, Yang (2005) points out that the trust of public officials in citizens is reciprocally linked to citizens' trust in government institutions, demonstrating that trust is a predictor of proactive citizen engagement efforts. Chen et al. (2014) illustrate how public administrators' trust in citizens encourages public service motivation. The literature also contains empirical findings that indicate the consequences of trust in clients for the work of frontline workers in teaching (Goddard, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy 2001), social work and nursing (Virkki 2008), law enforcement (Kääriäinen and Reino 2012), and medicine (Thom et al. 2011). However, examining how SLBs' trust in clients is reflected in their behaviour towards them when delivering services is particularly important for better understanding the implementation process.

2.3 Trust in the context of street-level work

SLBs have direct, face-to-face interactions with their clients that are often long term (Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2003; Keiser 2010), allowing them to develop attitudes towards and perceptions about their clients (Kallio and Kouvo 2015) that influence their degree of trust in them. Despite the fact that the power relations between SLBs and their clients are asymmetrical (Hagelund 2010), SLBs are often in vulnerable situations in their interactions with their clients. Their decisions about how to meet their clients' needs rely on their trust in the information that their clients give them (Yang and Holzer 2006). SLBs must also feel confident that their clients will not behave opportunistically and try to bend policy to benefit themselves (Chen et al. 2014). These concerns may be exacerbated when they meet clients whom they regard as manipulative (Maynard-Moody and Leland 2000), aggressive (Nguyen and Velayutham 2018), or untrustworthy (Raaphorst and Van de Walle 2018).

Studies have documented SLBs' trust in their clients being very relevant to the formers' decisions (Yang and Holzer 2006). Furthermore, various elements such as honesty (Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2003), trustworthiness (Raaphorst and Groeneveld 2018), and cooperativeness (Maynard-Moody and Leland 2000) play a significant role in how SLBs evaluate their clients' level of deservingness. Trust is a major factor in SLBs' assessment of clients' 'worthiness' (Yang 2005).

According to Destler (2017), trust between colleagues in street-level organizations affects performance behaviours. Senghaas, Freier and Kupka (2019) show how case workers use trust-building strategy as a tool to overcome barriers to collaboration in their interaction with clients. Raaphorst and Van de Walle (2018) exhibit how SLBs evaluate clients' trustworthiness through signs and cues. Surprisingly however, no research has examined how SLBs' trust in clients leads to differences in how they choose to handle them or considered the impact of organizational conditions on this dynamic. This study aims to fill this lacuna.

Do organizational conditions play a role in the link between SLBs' trust in clients and their mechanisms of coping with them?

We have long known that SLBs operate in a conflict-saturated work environment (Sager et al. 2014). They are required to implement policies effectively under particularly challenging conditions and thus have adapted ways that allow them to reduce challenges and 'survive' in their work (Lipsky 2010). Although personal characteristics may play a role, the organizational conditions under which they operate have a great deal of weight in their decision-making process and how they behave towards their clients (Brodkin 2011).

The literature shows that the organizational conditions under which SLBs operate have a significant impact on the delivery of services (Lavee, Cohen and Nouman 2018; Cohen 2018), their performance (Destler 2017), their willingness to implement policy (Tummers et al. 2012), and their choice of coping strategies when implementing policies (Cohen and Gershgoren 2016). Therefore, when we analyse the link between trust in clients and SLBs' choices in how to handle them, we must also consider the organizational conditions under which they operate.

It is particularly important to consider the broader context of trust between state and society. Many neoliberal governments have adopted New Public Management reforms (Brodkin 2011). To reduce the red tape and high legal costs associated with deterrence

mechanisms, they have adopted governance approaches designed instead to foster cooperation, trust and responsiveness to citizens (Raaphorst and Van de Walle 2018). The discretion of SLBs however may lead to a failure to realize this ambition. As SLBs have a broader action scope, their decisions are increasingly dependent on their own interpretation of their interactions with clients and less on formal rules (Raaphorst 2018). Contrary to the expectations of decision makers, SLBs have adjusted their actions based on whether they believe the client facing them is trustworthy and what level of risk to themselves they perceive in the situation (Raaphorst and Van de Walle 2018). The result is a more uncertain bureaucratic process characterized by distrust and suspicion (Raaphorst 2018). This environment of lack of trust between state and citizens is reflected in the relationship between SLBs and clients even when the organizational conditions under which SLBs operate are supportive.

Since lack of trust is pervasive in the work environment of SLBs, regardless if their organizations support them, it is reasonable to assume that, paradoxically, they will be more responsive to the demands of clients in whom they have little trust than to those in whom they do trust. When they operate under unsupportive organizational conditions, this phenomenon may intensify. This leads us to posit that when SLBs work under pressure in an unsupportive, onerous environment, they will try to meet the demands of clients in whom they have little trust. SLBs will 'play defense', doing more for clients they mistrust and less for clients they trust, in an attempt to avoid negative repercussions from the former or from their superiors.

4. Research approach

This study is part of an extensive research project wherein we examined the weight of trust in street-level work (approval number 056/19 of the ethics committee of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Haifa). We sought to explain the paradox that in some cases, SLBs appear to give undue attention to clients whom they mistrust and much less attention to those whom they do trust. We posited that the conditions under which SLBs work might interact with the degree of trust that they have in their clients to produce these differing outcomes. The qualitative approach seemed the most appropriate for investigating this issue. Therefore, we conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews, as well as focus groups with service providers from two sectors of social policy in Israel: education and social welfare.

In-depth interviews

Between July 2019 and March 2020, we conducted 62 in-depth interviews with SLBs (30 with teachers and 32 with social workers). Due to the sensitive nature of the questions asked, we utilized a convenience sampling. First, we recruited participants according to their professional positions and types of relationships with policy clients. Each participant then suggested others to be included in the study. With all of the participants, the initial contact was by phone. As part of the conversation, we described the research topic as addressing how public administration employees cope with their clients and superiors, and attitudes towards the policies that they are mandated to implement. Except for seven interviews conducted by telephone due to corona virus protocols, all interviews were conducted face-to-face, recorded, and transcribed by the authors. The interviews focused on the interviewees' experiences with their clients and

their superiors, and their feelings about the policies that they are mandated to implement. In particular, our goal was to understand the dynamics between them and their clients, and how these dynamics affect their methods for coping with them.

We asked our interviewees to describe the characteristics of the clients whom they trusted versus mistrusted. Given the ambiguity of the term 'trust', to clarify our definition thereof, we explained to each participant that 'trust' referred to the willingness of one individual to be vulnerable to the actions of another who has the capacity to harm or betray her (Mayer, Davis and Schoorman 1995; Levi and Stoker 2000). In addition, we detailed examples indicating that we were interested in their degree of trust in their clients, and no other variables.

Moreover, we asked them about their ways of coping with these clients in the past and present. Following Tummers et al. (2015, 1101–1102), we defined coping as 'behavioral efforts frontline workers employ when interacting with clients, in order to master, tolerate, or reduce external and internal demands and conflicts they face on an everyday basis.' We used their typology for each specific coping mechanism: rule bending, rule breaking, instrumental action, prioritizing, using personal resources, routinizing, rationing, rigid rule following and aggression. Finally, we asked the interviewees to explain their rationale for how they chose to handle clients whom they trusted and those whom they did not.

The following questions guided us in the interview: How do you characterize clients whom you trust and those you do not? How do you handle clients whom you trust and those you do not? Can you explain why? Are there any clients who make you feel more vulnerable than others? Can you explain why? How do you handle these clients? Do you bend or break rules or prioritize certain clients to avoid being harmed by them? Can you explain for which clients you do this? Why do you choose to do so? Do you know of colleagues who bend or break rules or prioritize certain clients to avoid being harmed by them? Can you explain for which clients they do this? Why do they choose to do so? Can you indicate to which of your clients (high-/low-trust clients) you tend to ration services? Can you explain why? How does this manifest in your co-workers' behaviour? Can you explain why?

After asking about the characteristics of clients whom they trust and those they do not, and how they handle each, we asked the interviewees about the organizational environment in which they work. We asked about their relationships with their superiors and co-workers, the resources available to them, and the degree of pressure under which they operate.

As with other qualitative studies, reliability challenges required our attention. In order to reduce possible bias in the interpretation given to the data, we sent our main interviews' transcriptions and findings to at least one other researcher to ensure intercoder reliability. We tried as far as possible to reduce biases and to make certain that the interpretation given by the two coders was uniform and reached the same conclusions.

Focus groups

To complete the picture presented in the interviews, we conducted two two-hour sessions with focus groups (one with 12 social workers and one with 10 teachers). All of the participants have direct contact with clients and work within institutions in which they implement public policy. As in the interviews, we tried to learn from the group's

discourse about the characteristics of clients whom they trusted and those whom they did not, how they handled both types, and the conditions that led them to adopt the approaches they did. Individual sharing prompted group brainstorming and discussion. For example, a statement by one of the participants about how trust in clients affects his work led to a group discussion wherein the other members variously corroborated or contradicted his comments. The discussion of the phenomenon helped us to better understand the conditions that allow it to occur.

Analytical procedure

As per qualitative analysis, we identified emerging themes in the data using the open-coding approach (Strauss 1987) and ATLAS.ti 8.0 software. As per grounded theory (Charmaz 2000), we explored the data without resting on prior expectations. In the first phase, we used open coding to compare the participants' statements and classify them into groups. For example, we grouped together any explicit or implicit reference by any interviewee to how s/he handles clients. When one of our interviewees stated, 'I have no doubt that I give more to these specific students and parents [in whom I have little trust] to be able to handle the workloads', we labelled the category coping carefully with clients. Likewise, statements such as, 'In many cases, we change grades for some students or children of certain parents. We know it's better to do so and not get involved with them later', we classified as coping with clients in order to avoid being harmed.

In the next stage, we consolidated the codes that we identified as related to each other as per axial coding (Strauss 1997), which involves placing the open codes around specific axes. Thus, using Tummers et al.'s (2015, 1108) categories, we classified the major coping patterns based on the degree of trust in the clients. Examples of these categories include moving towards clients who are not trusted and moving away from clients who are trusted. We also placed statements describing the organizational conditions that allow this phenomenon to occur in another category called organization conditions. An example of a statement in this category is: 'The principal's attitude towards the clients is favourable. It even comes at the expense of teachers who feel vulnerable in the system.'

Next, we identified four common coping strategies that street-level bureaucrats use in handling their clients based on the degree of trust they have in them. The first strategy is prioritizing clients who are not trusted, defined as 'giving certain clients more time, resources, or energy.' Statements such as, 'I will give individual sessions to specific students because I do not want to hear from their parents; others will not get the same treatment' were included in this category. The second strategy is bending the rules for clients who are not trusted, defined as 'adjusting the rules to meet a client's demands.' Statements such as, 'For these specific students, we change exam scores and give them extra time, even though this is not acceptable,' were included in this category. The third strategy is breaking the rules for clients who are not trusted, defined as 'neglecting or deliberately obstructing the rules to meet a client's demands.' Statements such as, 'Because I knew it would not pass quietly and I knew I would hear from the mother the second the pupil came home, I changed the grade to a B without updating the teachers,' were included in this category. The fourth strategy is rationing services for clients who are trusted, defined as 'decreasing service availability, appeal, or expectations to clients or client groups.' Statements such as, 'We invest more in a few

trouble-making students, at the expense of most students who receive minimal support' were included in this category.

Finally, we noted the unsupportive organizational conditions that allowed the above-described strategies to be employed. Statements such as, 'I feel that I don't have much backup from the principal facing my clients' or 'I stay for hours and hours at my own expense. I do everything necessary during work hours, and in the afternoon, I stay to work on writing reports that are an integral part of the work' were included in this category. In addition, in order to be as accurate as possible in the interpretation given to the findings, we verified with our interviewees that their responses to their clients were based on the degree of trust they had in them, based on our definition of the term.

5. Findings

Trust as a dynamic element in the relationship of SLBs and their clients

The findings indicate that trust is a very significant element of our participants' work. It influences everyday decisions and is critical in how they cope with clients. One of the teachers explained:

> My trust affects the comfort of being in front of my students and parents. It determines how careful I am about how I speak and how I present things to them. With students and parents that I trust more, I feel I can be more authentic and if I'm less trusting, I'll choose what is right for me to present.

Another teacher stated: 'Trust is the foundation for all contact with the students. Without it, nothing exists.'

As with the findings of studies that have identified the inherent mistrust between state institutions and citizens (Mizrahi, Vigoda-Gadot and Cohen 2019), our participants also reported how the lack of trust was rooted in a broader social context and inherent in the mutual relationship between the parties. According to one social worker: 'We have clients who are very critical towards the system. They have no trust in the system. I feel that they are testing me so I can't trust them.' The distrust between SLBs and clients thus emerged as an element in the wider citizen-to-system relationship. Another teacher described: 'In this work I work with defense mechanisms in advance. I preserve myself from getting hurt.'

The findings indicated that trust is a dynamic process that evolves over time and increases with the degree of exposure. Our participants described the effects of their increased familiarity with a client's behaviour. As one teacher stated: 'With students, trust is something that is built over time. Seeing them in situations with their friends, seeing how they interact with another teacher. This is the foundation of trust.' Similarly, a social worker stated: 'My trust is based on the interpersonal interaction with clients. When I know them over time and see that they are consistent.'

Our participants also emphasized the relational aspect of trust and its importance as the basis for successful policy implementation. As one social worker asserted: 'I have trust in those who trust me. When I feel the patients trust me, then my trust in them increases. It is like a wheel.' Another social worker stated: 'When the applicants trust me, this allows me to do everything to make things work properly.' **Table 1** presents the codes, examples and incidents summarizing the SLBs' coping mechanisms and dynamics of trust.

Code	Example	Incidence
Prioritizing clients who are not trusted	A social worker who devotes more time and attention to clients who are not trusted so as not to get involved with them later.	48 (77%)
Bending the rules for clients who are not trusted	A teacher who gives exceptional permission on a student's request for fear of confronting the mother.	25 (40%)
Breaking the rules for clients who are not trusted	A teacher who corrects grades for students to avoid confrontation with their parents.	18 (29%)
Rationing services for clients who are trusted	A social worker who devotes more time and attention to a client who is not trusted than to a trusted client because of fear of repercussions.	46 (74%)

SLBs' coping strategies for handling clients based on their trust in them

Our findings indicate that paradoxically, most of our SLBs were more responsive to the demands of those in whom they had little trust and were less responsive to the demands of those whom they actually trusted. Unsupportive organizational conditions intensified this phenomenon.

Prioritizing clients in whom SLBs have little trust

One of the ways SLBs prioritize those in whom they have little trust is by treating them with extra warmth and empathy. As per Eisenberg and Strayer (1990, 5), we define empathy as 'an emotional response that stems from another's state or condition and that is congruent with another's emotional state or situation.' Such expressions of warmth and empathy are attempts to convey to these clients that the SLBs are trying to help them. We know that SLBs tend to use differing strategies for satisfying their clients (Cohen, Benish and Shamriz-Ilouz 2016). Similarly, in our case, we noticed that SLBs express empathy in order not to 'get into trouble' with clients whom, based on their ongoing relationship, they know to be untrustworthy. According to one teacher:

> Many times, I prioritize these clients because they demand more. They don't give up, are unforgiving, and I don't want to get in trouble with them. This is why I treat them with kid gloves. The conversations are more pleasant. I catch a specific student in the hall and ask, "How are you?" smiling at him.

This strategy is often a result of hints from the administration about how to handle certain clients. For example, one teacher explained: 'Many times, I was told by the administration that there are certain parents who we need to "grease", to talk to them nicely.' The employment of this coping strategy is often initiated by the SLB without any demands from the client. For example, a social worker may proactively make a phone call to a specific client in order to appear concerned and caring:

> For some clients, I even pick up the phone and call them, just because I don't want to hear from them later. I'll make sure everything is calm, so as not to pay a price later. Make sure the silence is maintained. It does come at the expense of something else I can't do. I usually act like this toward people with a personality disorder.

Our participants emphasize that due to previous interactions with these clients, they already know what to expect and therefore choose to behave the way they do. As

a social worker pointed out: 'It happens with clients that this is a pattern in their behaviour. That they come daily, create chaos, … threaten to call the mayor, … go wild … Another way of prioritizing clients in whom SLBs have little trust is by providing them with extra time and attention. As Winter (2002) points out, SLBs tend to prioritize cases wherein the client is demanding. In this context, clients in whom SLBs have little trust might be perceived as more demanding. However, it was the increase in suspicion and the resulting fear of being personally harmed that prompted our SLBs to prioritize clients in whom they had little trust. According to one social worker:

> I give more resources of time and attention to very problematic families; [and] I want to keep them quiet because I don't know where it [trouble] will come from later. I don't feel good about it.

Similarly, a teacher stated:

> If I have time for only one individual session, I can honestly say that I will give it to a student I less trust instead of someone I trust [more]. Whether I want to do so or not, the child who has more belligerent parents will receive this hour even though the other one deserves [it] more. But you know that if you say 'no' to a student you trust [more], he'll accept it quietly. It's sad to say, but it's true.

Rule-bending for clients in whom SLBs have little trust

According to our findings, SLBs cope with clients in whom they have little trust by bending rules to meet these clients' demands. Prior studies have shown that SLBs act as citizen-agents (Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2000) who bend rules for clients in order to assist them and to build social capital (Portillo 2012). However, in our case, by bending the rules, our SLBs give clients in whom they have little trust unique privileges, such as providing them with special permits, just to head off problems with them later. Alongside studies showing that for SLBs these are rational choices allowing them to survive under heavy workloads and pressure (Lipsky 2010; Brodkin 2011), many of our participants provided a rational justification for bending the rules for these clients. They explained that if they did not do so, they would face even more difficulties facing these clients in the future, a situation that they wanted to avoid. A teacher reported: 'Sometimes, at the beginning of a relationship, you bend the rules for clients in order to respond to their needs. I think sometimes it's "quieter" when you give a person what he wants. To get it off my radar or vice versa.'

This finding highlights the wider context of underlying suspicion built into the relationship between public servants and citizens. It clarifies why SLBs use practices to satisfy and 'gain' trust, even before interaction between parties has allowed the initially low trust to decline further.

SLBs often used the term 'conflict avoidance'. They create simple classifications of clients as 'good' or as 'troublemakers' (Lipsky 1971). Our interviewees classified clients whom they did not trust as 'problematic' clients who needed to be dealt with flexibly to avoid conflict. Thus, they viewed bending the rules to 'keep them quiet' as a reasonable solution. A social worker stated:

> There's a mother here who demands that her daughter receive treatment for sexual abuse. From what we gather, there does not appear to have been any sexual harm [abuse] here.

> However, I recommended to the case worker who treated her to, despite the doubt, approve the suggested treatment. We did it just because we didn't want to confront her. To reduce the conflict and 'get out of it okay' with her.

Our participants emphasized that their low trust in these clients is based on the history of their relationship with them. Because the SLBs predict the future response if these clients are dissatisfied, they bend the rules to avoid an unpleasant situation. According to one teacher: 'When you have a history with the family, then you know that it's better to round the corners. We succumb to parental pressure. This is the only way to solve problems.'

Our participants noted that harm could manifest in various forms. For example, harm can appear in the form of a confrontation with an aggressive client, the filing of a complaint, a negative report, or even the jeopardizing of one's career. A teacher said:

> I bend the rules to avoid being harmed by clients. For example, I did it for someone's son. I was told that she [the parent] occupied a powerful position in the Education Ministry, so I really tried to get the boy everything he deserved and even more, and knew he was getting more, so as not to get involved with that mother.

Our participants emphasized that paradoxically they refused to bend the rule for clients whom they trusted. For example, one of the teachers noted: 'Students who are not trusted will be allowed to take a second exam. Conversely, if it is a student in whom trust is high, he will not be allowed to take a second exam. It happens.'

Previous studies have noted that bending the rules is often caused by organizational norms (Sekerka and Zolin 2007; Borry 2017). Similarly, our findings show that this strategy is often adopted in response to a directive from above. A teacher stated:

> I allowed such students to go on a [Holocaust study] trip to Poland when they were not supposed to go on school trips. I also changed internal grades for these students. If the principal says the student is going on a trip to Poland, I won't argue with her.

Similarly, another teacher reported: 'In many cases, I'm compelled to change certain students' grades. I get a call from the principal to "fix" the grade. With some parents, the principal has no choice but to comply with their demands.'

Rule-breaking for clients in whom SLBs have little trust

Our participants also reported breaking the rules for clients in whom they had little trust. In many cases they acted counter to official bureaucratic regulations to respond to specific clients' demands. Often the SLBs justified this behaviour on the grounds that they had no choice as previous experience allowed them to anticipate clients' reactions should they be refused. Unlike Morrison (2006), who cited that employees tend to break rules when they believe that it is the right thing to do in terms of pro-social decisions, our interviewees indicated that they did so in order to avoid being harmed. While on the surface their behaviour might be viewed as pro-social, the real motive behind it was utterly different. A social worker stated:

> I had a case, for example, with the father of one of the boys who drove everyone crazy. [I can say that] he received travel reimbursement for daycare, which is something really unusual. The probation officer gave it to him, although it wasn't allowed. There was no other choice.

Tyler (2006) claims that we obey laws because we need to be rewarded for obeying them and avoid punishment for breaking them. However, for our SLBs, the benefits of

breaking the rules outweighed the cost of having to face the negative backlash from dissatisfied clients. The SLBs behaved this way even at the risk of jeopardizing their relationships with their co-workers. A teacher reported:

> At the end of the year when a teachers' meeting was held and we discussed the behavior of one of the students, the overwhelming majority of teachers voted to give a particular student a C. Because I knew it would not pass quietly and I knew I would hear from the mother the second the boy came home, I changed the grade to a B without apprising the [other] teachers.

The same participant emphasized how for another highly trusted client the rule would not have been broken. She stated: 'If it was a different mother, whose reaction I don't fear, I wouldn't change the grade.' Another teacher asserted: 'Students who are not threatening us really do not receive the same privileges. For them, teacher doesn't change grades.'

This practice of changing grades for certain students appears to be a common way of breaking rules for clients whom teachers do not trust. Another teacher stated: 'If there's a numerical grade for the exam or the assignment, I'll change it from 79 to 80, because you know these students and you don't want to hear from them or their parents later.' Our participants also reported that the administration endorsed this practice. A teacher stated: 'The requirement to change grades always comes from above. [I learned that] when you work in an organization, you have to bend and break rules to avoid conflicts.'

Many of our SLBs used words such as 'fear' and 'anxiety' in this vein. A social worker reported: 'I know that many of our case workers change or break rules when facing violent people. They're afraid, and therefore, they give them what they demand. They write certain things or fudge certain data because they're afraid. They don't feel protected, [and] so they do this.'

Rationing services for clients in whom SLBs have a great deal of trust

Paradoxically, our participants noted that they tend to ration the services and attention that they extend to clients whom they do trust. They regard clients whom they trust as 'easy to handle'; such clients do not object and accept the offered service as is. Therefore, the SLBs are willing to ration the services that they provide, knowing that doing so will not endanger them. A teacher admitted about clients her experience showed to be untrustworthy, and she referred to as 'problem' due to the difficulties they cause:

> One of the things that disturbs me the most in my work is that we invest a lot of energy and resources in these ['problem'] students. [Our efforts are] wasted on these kids. It's precisely the good kids who deserve more who don't receive enough attention from us. We invest more in a few trouble-making students at the expense of most students who receive minimal support.

Rationing services is often indicated when the pressure is particularly heavy (Tummers et al. 2015). Given the limited resources available to them, our interviewees found themselves providing the trusted clients with only 'leftovers': 'I can say that people I have more trust in, who are more "transparent," … get less and actually lose more.'

Fear of clients who threaten them is a crucial factor in SLBs' decision making. They explained that they are compelled 'to put out fires' when it comes to clients who threaten them in order to avoid personal harm. A teacher reported:

> The reality is that those who receive the least are those who are in the middle: The ones who are super amazing, get more [than the prescribed services] because they're beloved. On the other side are the students [whose parents'] response [you fear], those you totally distrust, so you give them more attention and time. It's unpleasant to say, but we don't have enough resources: You can't give everyone everything.

Perceptions about unsupportive organizational conditions

Although most of our findings refer to SLBs operating in an unsupportive environment, a few participants described how supportive organizational conditions allow them to deal with clients with the confidence that the system will 'be there for them'. These feelings give them a sense of confidence in their work and allow them to make decisions without fear of being hurt by clients. As one teacher described: 'I am freer in front of students and parents, I allow myself to be me, the principal always backs us up. Even if we are wrong, facing the parents reverses the situation. She always gives the feeling that the teachers are right.' The same teacher added: 'There have been a lot of instances where parents have been violent, and she confronted them and defended me.'

When our participants felt organizational support, they were not afraid to confront clients with whom they had little trust. As one teacher described: 'In most cases, our teachers do not give in to students who can hurt them. There is a backup for teachers here.' Similarly, a social worker stated: 'Even if I don't trust clients, I'm not afraid that they will complain about me or turn to higher ranks, because I have a backup.'

However, these same participants also reported that they have heavy workloads and a great deal of frustrating organizational pressure. This workload was evident in their reports of having to work outside working hours, meet unrealistic goals, and comply with inefficient requirements. As Walker and Gilson (2004) found, an increase in workload increases the pressure on SLBs and impairs their ability to do their jobs.

Our SLBs emphasized how the gap between the demanding requirements they must meet and the resources at their disposal places them in a position that is nearly impossible:

> There is a lot of study material that needs to be taught, … I am a high school teacher. The amount of … material exceeds the number of hours I have. Even in school, the number of tasks I have exceeds the number of hours allotted for them. I'm always behind. I have no resources at all.

Another teacher in the focus group reported: 'Stress is also manifested in the mad pursuit of being able to teach the material in the time allotted. Constantly chasing; constant stress. The teachers are running on fumes when they get to the final exams. It's crazy.'

In many cases, our SLBs regarded these workloads as indicative of a lack of organizational support, not only from their direct superiors, but also from senior administration and co-workers. Brewer (2005) has shown that public sector administrators have considerable impact on their organization's performance, so it is incumbent upon them to create a productive organizational culture that motivates and empowers its employees.

Similarly, our participants cited the impact of administrational support on their feelings and behaviour. We found that senior administrators' lack of interest in SLBs

leads the latter to feel that they are invisible within the system. A teacher reported: 'The administration will never be interested in me and the workload I'm dealing with, but will only look to burden me more. They don't see the employee; he doesn't exist.'

Many of our participants reported how in situations where there are common interactions between them and the administrator and clients, the administrator supports the clients instead of them. A teacher reported: 'I feel that I don't have much backup from the principal facing my clients. Although we are one system, and the client is not always right, I know that in most cases, I will not get any backup from her.' Another teacher noted:

> It's always for the child's benefit, the parent's benefit. As a new principal, she probably doesn't want negative reports about her in the municipality. Conversations with parents and students are always pleasant, and, in the end, bottom-line, the child wins. She [the principal] will always be the one who tries to emerge okay and pleasant and good and nice.

These feelings of lack of administrative support impact SLBs' choice of how to handle clients whom they do not trust in ways that meet or satisfy the latter's demands. As Catney and Henneberry (2012) cited, policy implementers tend to take a cautious approach in their decision-making process in order to avoid blame for not doing so. Indeed, our SLBs indicated they choose these coping strategies because of their fear of being criticized by their superior or to survive in the workplace in the absence of their superiors' support. A teacher stated: 'With aggressive parents, I'm really careful. They can contact the Education Ministry, the municipality, the principal directly. I'm nicer to those from I don't want to hear complaints later. Once the parent is happy and calm, I know that I will not be "hit over the head" by the principal.' Similarly, consistent with (Cohen 2018), our participants reported how they tend to bend the rules for their clients in order to overcome organizational barriers. Thus, a teacher reported: 'When my coordinators also tell me, "Forget about it; give this student what he wants", to "iron out" the problem, I have no choice, so I do it.'

Our participants find themselves in conflict between the demand to implement policies and the fear of harming the status of the institution in which they work and thus feel compelled to exercise a great deal of caution. As a teacher stated, 'There's no doubt that administration puts quite a bit of pressure on teachers to avoid conflict with students and parents.' A social worker reported: 'All day long, we're careful not to get hurt. We're vulnerable to both the system and clients. Constantly walking on eggshells.' Similarly, as a teacher focus group participant reported, 'This week I had a case with a student who attacked me. I stood my ground, but then the principal told me in no uncertain terms, "You have to shut it down". I told the pupil's mom that I didn't think it was the right thing, that it's a grave mistake, but that's what administration said.'

These administrators' attitudes can be attributed to the norms of the new public service that underscore the need to satisfy clients. Thus, elements such as focusing on the quality of the service provided and tailoring the service to the clients' needs (Denhardt and Denhardt 2000) have become the guiding principles in the service delivery process. According to one teacher, 'From the moment the education system is one in which the clients are the students, the administrator as the "store manager" says, "The customer is always right" and "Satisfaction guaranteed".' Another teacher stated: 'We must not forget that today parents are "semi-school principals." If they contact the principal, most often a positive response will be given, so we need to take that into

account when facing parents.' A social worker reported: 'I feel the administrator is the system's soldier, and she sometimes give us directives from the system. She's a yes-man, to please her superior, the Health Ministry. She is unequivocally measured on these things and so are we.'

As with Walker and Gilson (2004), our participants also reported that the collegial atmosphere affects their perceptions of their organizational environment. As a participant in the teachers' focus group reported: 'There's a lot of emotional fallout in the teachers' lounge; lots of teachers ignoring each other.' A social worker in the focus group described it more radically: 'We also face aggression and violence from coworkers.' Additionally, our SLBs reported that when their co-workers do not adhere to a uniform code, they become disconnected from one another, which harms their sense of organizational support. A participant in the teachers' focus group stated, 'In a very large group, when teachers don't speak the same language, and when there's no uniform policy, it makes the environment unpleasant.'

6. Discussion

Our goal in this paper was to investigate how SLBs' trust in their clients affects their discretion in implementing policies, and the coping strategies that SLBs use when interacting with clients. The theoretical framework that resulted from this investigation emphasizes the important role of trust in the implementation of policy and how SLBs' organizational environment affects the link between their trust in their clients and their strategies for handling them.

Our findings indicate that when SLBs feel that their organization does not support them, they are more responsive to the demands of those clients in whom they have little trust, and less responsive to the demands of those whom they actually trust. Under such conditions, they prioritize clients whom they do not trust, bending and breaking the rules in order to meet these clients' demands. They 'play defensively' to avoid negative repercussions from these clients or from their unsupportive organization. Alongside this, these SLBs ration the services they provide to clients whom they do trust. Such a situation exemplifies the saying, 'The squeaky wheel gets the grease.'

Our study makes five important contributions. First, along with studies focusing on how clients' attitudes and perceptions shape SLBs' discretion (Kallio and Kouvo 2015), this study provides insights for the implementation literature. It underscores the major role that trust in clients plays in how SLBs deliver public services. Consistent with other studies citing the need to investigate the rationale behind SLBs' coping strategies (Baviskar and Winter 2017; Jilke and Tummers 2018), this study improves our understanding of the factors that influence the choices that SLBs make when deciding how to provide services to clients.

Second, consistent with studies with studies that focus on the effect of organizational conditions on the work of SLBs (Brodkin 2011), particularly on how they handle their clients (Cohen and Gershgoren 2016; Cohen and Hertz 2020; Cohen and Golan-Nadir 2020), our study identifies the role of organizational support in the response of SLBs to their clients' demands.

Third, we validate our observations using information from two policy areas – social welfare and education – as well as two types of frontline professionals – social

workers and teachers – both of which are considered classic examples of SLBs (Lipsky 2010).

Fourth, in practical terms, our study provides operative recommendations for practitioners by citing the importance of a supportive organizational environment as the basis for optimal decision making by SLBs. It is incumbent upon administrators to realize that allaying SLBs' fears, suspicions, sense of risk, and insecurity in their interactions with their clients will promote optimal public service outcomes.

Fifth, our demonstration of how to combine the investigation of the dynamics between SLBs' trust and the behaviour of other parties can serve as a model for a future agenda of studies in other contexts as well. Examples include between organizations, and between states.

Our findings demonstrate a paradoxical situation. In contrast to the public administration literature that always regards trust as a normative element (Yang 2005; Mizrahi, Vigoda-Gadot and Cohen 2010), our research exposes the unwanted consequences of trust in service delivery. It shows that in the SLBs policy implementation process, most often trust in clients leads to outcomes that contradict the designed goals of policy.

7. Limitations and future research directions

As with other studies, ours has limitations and recommendations for future studies. First, our interpretation of the findings is subjective, leading to the possibility of bias. Second, most of our research findings deal with SLBs operating under unsupportive organizational conditions. The paucity of findings on trust-shaped coping of SLBs operating under supportive organizational conditions reduces our ability to discern the full picture and influence played by the working environment. Third, our findings come from two specific groups of frontline workers who usually have long-term relationships with their clients; it may not hold for other SLBs such as police officers or judges, who have short-term or even single interactions with clients. Additional studies on the issue of trust are needed to address such situations. A study that examines the phenomenon among police officers operating in dangerous or life-threatening situations (Carlier et al. 2000) might provide insights into the significance of considerations such as risk assessment and fear of actual harm by clients as the basis for deciding how to handle them. Fourth, there is a need for more research to shed light on the dynamics between power and trust in their effects on SLBs' discretion. Clients' power plays a role in SLBs choosing how to handle them, and may have implications for the SLBs' trust in them. Fifth, given that trust has a significant effect on feelings and behaviour, future research should examine the implications of trust in clients for other variables such as burnout, helplessness, or frustration among SLBs. Furthermore, there is a need to investigate whether under supportive conditions SLBs might give some favour to untrustworthy clients to make life easier for themselves, or to forestall any potential harm to their organization. Finally, we wonder whether there is a threshold at which SLBs' pro-social instincts or public service motivation lead them to apply the rules uniformly to untrusted clients, but beyond which they begin treating them more favourably due to vulnerability fears. We also speculate whether there is a point at which a trusted client rebels against service rationing and inattention,

becoming more threatening in an attempt to access more services. Future studies might address these hypotheses.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributors

Maayan Davidovitz is a PhD candidate at the Department of Public Administration and Policy in the School of Political Sciences at the University of Haifa in Israel. Her research interests include street-level bureaucracy, trust in public administration, policy implementation, educational policy and social policy. email: maayandavidovitz@gmail.com

Nissim Cohen is the head of the Department of Public Administration and Policy and the head of The Center for Public Management and Policy (CPMP) at the University of Haifa in Israel. His research interests include public administration reform, interactions between politicians and bureaucrats, public budgeting, street-level bureaucracy, policy entrepreneurship and social welfare and health policies. email: nissimcohen@poli.haifa.ac.il

ORCID

Maayan Davidovitz http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9893-9283

References

Albrecht, S., and A. Travaglione. 2003. "Trust in Public-Sector Senior Management." *International Journal of Human Resource Management* 14 (1): 76–92. doi:10.1080/09585190210158529.

Baviskar, S., and S. C. Winter. 2017. "Street-level Bureaucrats as Individual Policymakers: The Relationship between Attitudes and Coping Behavior toward Vulnerable Children and Youth." *International Public Management Journal* 20 (2): 316–353. doi:10.1080/10967494.2016.1235641.

Boehm, A., E. Vigoda-Gadot, and N. Segev. 2011. "Market Orientation in SocialServices: An Empirical Study of Motivating and Hindering Factors among Israeli Social Workers." *Administration in Social Work* 35 (2): 138–160. doi:10.1080/03643107.2011.557593.

Borry, E. L. 2017. "Ethical Climate and Rule Bending: How Organizational Norms Contribute to Unintended Rule Consequences." *Public Administration* 95 (1): 78–96. doi:10.1111/padm.12304.

Bouckaert, G., and V. D. W. Steven 2001. "Government Performance and Trust inGovernment." In *Ponencia presentada en la Annual Conference of the European Group on Public Administration*, Vaasa, Finlandia, vol. 2: 19–42.

Braithwaite, V., and M. Levi, eds. 1998. *Trust and Governance*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Brann, P., and M. Foddy. 1987. "Trust and the Consumption of a Deteriorating Common Resource." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 31 (4): 615–630. doi:10.1177/0022002787031004004.

Brewer, G. A. 2005. "In the Eye of the Storm: Frontline Supervisors and Federal Agency Performance." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 15 (4): 505–527. doi:10.1093/jopart/mui031.

Brodkin, E. Z. 2011. "Policy Work: Street-Level Organizations under New Managerialism." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 21 (suppl 2): i253–i277. doi:10.1093/jopart/muq093.

Carlier, I. V. E., A. E. Voerman, P. Berthold, and R. Gersons. 2000. "The Influence of Occupational Debriefing on Post-Traumatic Stress Symptomatology in Traumatized Police Officers." *British Journal of Medical Psychology* 73 (1): 87–98. doi:10.1348/000711200160327.

Catney, P., and J. Henneberry. 2012. "(not) Exercising Discretion: Environmental Planning and the Politics of Blame-Avoidance." *Planning Theory & Practice* 13 (4): 549–568. doi:10.1080/14649357.2012.728002.

Charmaz, K. 2000. "Grounded Theory: Objectivist and Constructivist Methods." In *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln, 509–535. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Chen, A. Chung, W. H. Chih, and Y. C. Don. 2014. "Fostering Public Service Motivation through Workplace Trust: Evidence from Public Managers in Taiwan." *Public Administration* 92 (4): 954–973. doi:10.1111/padm.12042.

Cho, Y. J., and H. Park. 2011. "Exploring the Relationships among Trust, Employee Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment." *Public Management Review* 13 (4): 551–573. doi:10.1080/14719037.2010.525033.

Clark-Daniels, C. L., and R. Steven Daniels. 1995. "Street-level Decision Making in Elder Mistreatment Policy: An Empirical Case Study of Service Rationing *Social Science Quarterly* 76: 460–473.

Cohen, N., and S. Gershgoren. 2016. "The incentives of street-level bureaucrats and inequality in tax assessments." *Administration & Society* 48 (3): 267–289.

Cohen, N., A. Benish, and A. Shamriz-Ilouz. 2016. "When The Clients can Choose: Dilemmas of Street-Level wWorkers in Choice-Based Social Services." *Social Service Review* 90 (4): 620–646.

Cohen, N. 2018. "How Culture Affects Street-Level Bureaucrats' Bending the Rules in the Context of Informal Payments for Health Care: The Israeli Case." *The American Review of Public Administration* 48 (2): 175–187.

Cohen, N., and U. Hertz. 2020. "Street-Level Bureaucrats' Social Value Orientation On and Off Duty." *Public Administration Review* 80 (3): 442–453

Cohen, N., and N. Golan-Nadir. 2020. "Why Do Street Level Bureaucrats Risk Themselves for Others? The Case of Israeli Police Officers." *Australian Journal of Public Administration*. doi:10.1111/1467-8500.12417

Denhardt, R. B., and J. V. Denhardt. 2000. "The New Public Service: Serving Rather than Steering." *Public Administration Review* 60 (6): 549–559. doi:10.1111/0033-3352.00117.

Destler, K. N. 2017. "A Matter of Trust: Street Level Bureaucrats, Organizational Climate and Performance Management Reform." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 27 (3): 517–534.

Dirks, K. T., and D. L. Ferrin. 2001. "The Role of Trust in Organizational Settings." *Organization Science* 12 (4): 450–467. doi:10.1287/orsc.12.4.450.10640.

Eisenberg, N., and J. Strayer, eds. 1990. *Empathy and Its Development*. Cambridge England: CUP Archive.

Evans, T. 2016. "Street-level Bureaucracy, Management and the Corrupted World of Service." *European Journal of Social Work* 19 (5): 602–615. doi:10.1080/13691457.2015.1084274.

Freitag, M., and B. Marc. 2009. "Crafting Trust: The Role of Political Institutions in a Comparative Perspective." *Comparative Political Studies* 42 (12): 1537–1566. doi:10.1177/0010414009332151.

Gilson, L. 2003. "Trust and the Development of Health Care as a Social Institution." *Social Science & Medicine* 56 (7): 1453–1468. doi:10.1016/S0277-9536(02)00142-9.

Goddard, R. D., M. Tschannen-Moran, and W. K. Hoy. (2001). "A Multilevel Examination of The Distribution and Effects of Teacher Trust in Students and Parents in Urban Elementary Schools." *The elementary school journal* 102(1) 1:3–17.

Gofen, A. 2014. "Mind The Gap: Dimensions and Influence of Street-Level Divergence." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 24 (2): 473–493.

Hagelund, A. 2010. "Dealing with the Dilemmas: Integration at the Street-Level in Norway *International Migration* 48 (2): 79–102. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2435.2008.00497.x.

Harrison, M. D., and N. L. Chervany. 2001. "What Trust Means in E-Commerce Customer Relationships: An Interdisciplinary Conceptual Typology." *International Journal of Electronic Commerce* 6 (2): 35–59. doi:10.1080/10864415.2001.11044235.

Hupe, P., and A. Buffat. 2014. "A Public Service Gap: Capturing Contexts in a Comparative Approach of Street-Level Bureaucracy." *Public Management Review* 16 (4): 548–569. doi:10.1080/14719037.2013.854401.

Hupe, P., and M. Hill. 2007. "Street-level Bureaucracy and Public Accountability." *Public Administration* 85 (2): 279–299. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9299.2007.00650.x.

Jilke, S., and L. Tummers. 2018. "Which Clients are Deserving of Help? A Theoretical Model and Experimental Test." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 28 (2): 226–238. doi:10.1093/jopart/muy002.

Kääriäinen, J., and S. Reino. 2012. "Do the Police Trust in Citizens? European Comparisons." *European Journal of Criminology* 9 (3): 276–289. doi:10.1177/1477370811435737.
Kallio, J., and A. Kouvo. 2015. "Street-level Bureaucrats' and the General Public's Deservingness Perceptions of Social Assistance Recipients in Finland." *Social Policy & Administration* 49 (3): 316–334. doi:10.1111/spol.12094.
Keiser, L. R. 2010. "Understanding Street-Level Bureaucrats' Decision Making: Determining Eligibility in the Social Security Disability Program." *Public Administration Review* 70 (2): 247–257. doi:10.1111/j.1540-6210.2010.02131.x.
Kramer, R. M. 1999. "Trust and Distrust in Organizations: Emerging Perspectives, Enduring Questions." *Annual Review of Psychology* 50 (1): 569–598. doi:10.1146/annurev.psych.50.1.569.
Krumer-Nevo, M., V. Slonim-Nevo, and E. Hirshenzon-Segev. 2006. "Social Workers and Their Long-Term Clients: The Never-Ending Struggle." *Journal of Social Service Research* 33 (1): 27–38. doi:10.1300/J079v33n01_03.
Lavee, E., N. Cohen, and H. Nouman. 2018. "Reinforcing Public Responsibility? Influences and Practices in Street-Level Bureaucrats' Engagement in Policy Design." *Public Administration* 96 (2): 333–348.
Lavee, E. 2020. "Who Is in Charge? The Provision of Informal Personal Resources at the Street Level." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*. doi:10.1093/jopart/muaa025
Lee, J., Sook, and H. J. Yu. 2013. "Factors Affecting Public Servants' Trust in Citizens: A Case Study of South Korean Central Government Officials." *International Review of Public Administration* 18 (3): 85–114. doi:10.1080/12294659.2013.10805265.
Levi, M., and L. Stoker. 2000. "Political Trust and Trustworthiness." *Annual Review of Political Science* 3 (1): 475–507. doi:10.1146/annurev.polisci.3.1.475.
Lewicki, R. J., and B. B. Bunker. 1995. "Trust in Relationships." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 5 (1): 583–601.
Lewicki, R. J., D. J. McAllister, and R. J. Bies. 1998. "Trust and Distrust: New Relationships and Realities." *Academy of Management Review* 23 (3): 438–458. doi:10.5465/amr.1998.926620.
Lipsky, M. 1971. "Street-level Bureaucracy and the Analysis of Urban Reform." *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 6 (4): 391–409. doi:10.1177/107808747100600401.
Lipsky, M. 1980. *Street-Level Bureaucracy. "Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*." New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
Lipsky, M. 2010. *Street-level Bureaucracy: "Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Service."* 30th Anniversary Ed. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
Mainhard, T., T. Wubbels, and M. Brekelmans. 2014. "The Role of the Degree of Acquaintance with Teachers on Students' Interpersonal Perceptions of Their Teacher." *Social Psychology of Education* 17 (1): 127–140. doi:10.1007/s11218-013-9234-6.
Mayer, R. C., J. H. Davis, and F. David Schoorman. 1995. "An Integrative Model of Organizational Trust." *Academy of Management Review* 20 (3): 709–734.
Maynard, M. S., and S. Portillo. 2010. "Street-Level Bureaucracy Theory." In *The Oxford Handbook of American Bureaucracy*, edited by R. F. Durant, 252–277. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Maynard-Moody, S., and S. Leland. 2000. "Stories from the Front Lines of Public Management: Street-Level Workers as Responsible Actors." In *Advancing Public Management: New Developments in Theory, Methods, and Practice*, edited by L. J. O'Toole, J. L. Brudney, and H. G. Rainey, 109–123. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press.
Maynard-Moody, S., and M. Musheno. 2000. "State Agent or Citizen Agent: Two Narratives of Discretion." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 10 (2): 329–358. doi:10.1093/oxfordjournals.jpart.a024272.
Maynard-Moody, S. W., and M. C. Musheno. 2003. *Cops, Teachers, Counselors: Stories from the Front Lines of Public Service*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
Mizrahi, S., E. Vigoda-Gadot, and N. Cohen. 2010. "Trust, participation and performance: The Case of the Israeli National Insurance Institute." *Public Management Review* 12 (1): 99–126.
Mizrahi, S., E. Vigoda-Gadot, and N. Cohen. 2019. "Drivers of Trust in Emergency Organizations Networks: The Role of Readiness, Threat Perceptions and Participation in Decision Making." *Public Management Review* 14: 1–21.
Morrison, E. W. 2006. "Doing the Job Well: An Investigation of Pro-Social Rule Breaking." *Journal of Management* 32 (1): 5–28. doi:10.1177/0149206305277790.

Nguyen, T., and S. Velayutham. 2018. "Street-level Discretion, Emotional Labour and Welfare Frontline Staff at the Australian Employment Service Providers." *Australian Journal of Social Issues* 53 (2): 158–172. doi:10.1002/ajs4.35.

Portillo, S. 2012. "The Paradox of Rules: Rules as Resources and Constraints." *Administration & Society* 44 (1): 87–108. doi:10.1177/0095399711413714.

Raaphorst, N., and S. Van de Walle. 2018. "A Signaling Perspective on Bureaucratic Encounters: How Public Officials Interpret Signals and Cues." *Social Policy & Administration* 52 (7): 1367–1378.

Raaphorst, N. 2018. "How to Prove, How to Interpret and What to Do? Uncertainty Experiences of Street-Level Tax Officials." *Public Management Review* 20 (4): 485–502. doi:10.1080/14719037.2017.1299199.

Raaphorst, N., and S. Groeneveld. 2018. "Double Standards in Frontline Decision Making: A Theoretical and Empirical Exploration." *Administration & Society* 50 (8): 1175–1201. doi:10.1177/0095399718760587.

Reina, D. S., and M. L. Reina. 2006. *Trust & Betrayal in the Workplace: Building Effective Relationships in Your Organization*. Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

Robinson, S. L. 1996. "Trust and Breach of the Psychological Contract." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 41 (4): 574–599. doi:10.2307/2393868.

Rothstein, B., and D. Stolle. 2008. "The State and Social Capital: An Institutional Theory of Generalized Trust." *Comparative Politics* 40 (4): 441–459. doi:10.5129/001041508X12911362383354.

Rothstein, B., and E. M. Uslaner. 2005. "All for All: Equality, Corruption, and Social Trust." *World Politics* 58 (1): 41–72. doi:10.1353/wp.2006.0022.

Sager, F., E. Thomann, C. Zollinger, N. van der Heiden, and C. Mavrot. 2014. "Street-level Bureaucrats and New Modes of Governance: How Conflicting Roles Affect the Implementation of the Swiss Ordinance on Veterinary Medicinal Products." *Public Management Review* 16 (4): 481–502. doi:10.1080/14719037.2013.841979.

Sekerka, L. E., and R. Zolin. 2007. "Rule-bending: Can Prudential Judgment Affect Rule Compliance and Values in the Workplace?" *Public Integrity* 9 (3): 225–243. doi:10.2753/PIN1099-9922090302.

Senghaas, M., C. Freier, and P. Kupka. 2019. "Practices of Activation in Frontline Interactions: Coercion, Persuasion, and the Role of Trust in Activation Policies in Germany." *Social Policy & Administration* 53 (5): 613–626. doi:10.1111/spol.12443.

Serva, M. A., M. A. Fuller, and R. C. Mayer. 2005. "The Reciprocal Nature of Trust: A Longitudinal Study of Interacting Teams."*Journal of Organizational Behavior* 26 (6): 625–648. doi:10.1002/job.331.

Strauss, A., and J. M. Corbin, eds. 1997. *Grounded Theory in Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Strauss, A. L. 1987. *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Strauss, A. L. 1997. "Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists." In edited by A. Strauss and J. M. Corbin. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Thom, D. H., S. T. Wong, D. Guzman, W. Amery, J. Penko, C. Miaskowski, and M. Kushel. 2011. "Physician Trust in the Patient: Development and Validation of a New Measure." *The Annals of Family Medicine* 9 (2): 148–154. doi:10.1370/afm.1224.

Thomann, E. 2015. "Is Output Performance All about the Resources? A Fuzzy-Set Qualitative Comparative Analysis of Street-level Bureaucrats in Switzerland." *Public Administration* 93 (1): 177–194. doi:10.1111/padm.12130.

Thomann, E., and C. Rapp. 2018. "Who Deserves Solidarity? Unequal Treatment of Immigrants in Swiss Welfare Policy Delivery."*Policy Studies Journal* 46 (3): 531–552. doi:10.1111/psj.12225.

Tummers, L., B. Steijn, and V. Bekkers. 2012. "Explaining The Willingness of Public Professionals to Implement Public Policies: Content, Context, and Personality Characteristics." *Public Administration* 90 (3): 716–736.

Tummers, L., and V. Bekkers. 2014. "Policy Implementation, Street-Level Bureaucracy, and the Importance of Discretion." *Public Management Review* 16 (4): 527–547. doi:10.1080/14719037.2013.841978.

Tummers, L. L. G., V. Bekkers, E. Vink, and M. Musheno. 2015. "Coping during Public Service Delivery: A Conceptualization and Systematic Review of the Literature." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 25 (4): 1099–1126. doi:10.1093/jopart/muu056.

Tyler, T. R. 2006. *Why People Obey the Law*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Uslaner, E. M. 2002. *The Moral Foundations of Trust*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
Uslaner, E. M. 2003. "Trust, Democracy and Governance: Can Government Policies Influence Generalized Trust?" In *Generating Social Capital*, edited by M. Hooghe and D. Stolle, 171–190. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
Van de Walle, S., and G. Bouckaert. 2003. "Public Service Performance and Trust in Government: The Problem of Causality." *International Journal of Public Administration* 26 (89): 891–913. doi:10.1081/PAD-120019352.
Van Ryzin, G. G. 2011. "Outcomes, Process, and Trust of Civil Servants." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 21 (4): 745–760. doi:10.1093/jopart/muq092.
Vigoda, G., Eran, and M. Sagie. 2008. "New Public Management Values and Person-Organization Fit: A Socio-Psychological Approach and Empirical Examination Among Public Sector Personnel." *Public Administration* 86 (1): 111–131.
Vigoda-Gadot, E., Y. Zalmanovitch, and A. Belonogov. 2012. "Public Servants' Trust in Citizens: An Extension of Theory and an Empirical Examination with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)." *Public Organization Review* 12 (4): 383–399. doi:10.1007/s11115-012-0179-6.
Virkki, T. 2008. "Habitual Trust in Encountering Violence at Work: Attitudes Towards Client Violence among Finnish Social Workers and Nurses." *Journal of Social Work* 8 (3): 247–267. doi:10.1177/1468017308091039.
Walker, L., and L. Gilson. 2004. "We are Bitter but We are Satisfied': Nurses as Street-Level Bureaucrats in South Africa." *Social Science & Medicine* 59 (6): 1251–1261. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2003.12.020.
Winter, S. 2002. "Explaining Street-Level Bureaucratic Behavior in Social and Regulatory Policies." Paper prepared for the XIII Research Conference of the Nordic Political Science Association in Aalborg, August 15–17.
Yamagishi, T., and M. Yamagishi. 1994. "Trust and Commitment in the United States and Japan." *Motivation and Emotion* 18 (2): 129–166. doi:10.1007/BF02249397.
Yang, K. 2005. "Public Administrators' Trust in Citizens: A Missing Link in Citizen Involvement Efforts." *Public Administration Review* 65 (3): 273–285. doi:10.1111/j.1540-6210.2005.00453.x.
Yang, K., and M. Holzer. 2006. "The Performance–Trust Link: Implications for Performance Measurement." *Public Administration Review* 66 (1): 114–126. doi:10.1111/j.1540-6210.2006.00560.x.