

Neighbourhood Policy and Programmes

Past and Present

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4 Israel's Project Renewal: Describing and Explaining a Relative Success

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Government-initiated neighborhood-targeted programs have frequently been in the focus of public attention since the Second World War. Limiting our survey to the American experience, salient landmarks are Urban Renewal, Model Cities and Block Grants for Community Development. Urban Renewal was sharply criticized during its time (Anderson, 1964; Gans, 1965). Even though thirty years later, one can observe impressive developments in what were once Urban Renewal areas, the social costs of evacuation, demolition, relocation and a very long process of redevelopment are considered too high to justify its method. Model Cities, with all its good intentions, barely had a chance to prove its potential, and is generally evaluated as a non-success endeavor (Frieden and Kaplan, 1975). The more recent CDBG program, which transferred decision-making power from Washington to local mayors and their staffs, also came under attack when the latter were accused of not targeting grants to the problems and populations with which the program was designed to deal (McFarland, 1978).

The initiators of Israel's Project Renewal tried to learn some of the lessons of these national renewal programs. They first determined the order of priority of economic-urban goals vis-à-vis social-urban aims; the latter prevailed and, as a consequence, only residential areas (not commercial or others) were selected for the Project, a decision that excluded some central city locations. In order to avoid the major social errors of Urban Renewal, Project Renewal's basic guideline of operation was rehabilitation without relocation of residents and without demolition of buildings. The 'New Federalism' concept reflected in the CDBG approach was not accepted by the Israelis, who preferred Model Cities ideas, some of which were more in line with their own former approaches to problems of disadvantaged populations. Hence, the other guidelines formulated for Project Renewal were: to combine physical and social rehabilitation, i.e. to operate

simultaneous programs in the areas of housing, physical infrastructure, education, health, welfare, employment, cultural and community services; to target public assistance by area need, thus making all the residents of a designated neighborhood eligible; and, last but not least – an alien notion in the centralistic regime of Israel – to encourage citizen participation in planning and implementation (Carmon and Hill, 1984).

Project Renewal was announced as a national program in 1976. Some 600 million US dollars were invested in its programs between 1979 (the year it started full-steam operation) and 1985. It gradually entered 84 distressed areas with 600 000 inhabitants, about 15 per cent of the Israeli population. Five neighborhoods were selected for the Project in Jerusalem, and five in Tel-Aviv; the selection included at least one poor area in each city and each development town in the country.

Evaluating national broad-aim projects which encompass many different programs and numerous participating organizations is a complex task, and evaluation studies usually relate to only one of the many facets of such projects. If the study is conducted by economists, it concentrates on economic efficiency (Irvin, 1978; Thompson, 1980); if by political scientists and those who follow their tradition, it emphasizes the process of planning and implementation (Thomas, 1981; Alterman, 1982); if by sociologists, psychologists or other behavioral scientists, the focus is usually on measuring outcomes, ignoring their costs and the ways in which they were incurred (Weiss, 1972; Finsterbusch, 1980). In contrast, the Integrated Evaluation Method (Carmon, Hill and Alterman, 1980; Alterman, Carmon and Hill, 1984) was designed to build on the strength of each of these different traditions and to integrate them into one effort, in order to provide better understanding of the causes of success and failure as well as more useful answers for decision makers. The developers of Integrated Evaluation were invited to conduct the comprehensive evaluation study of Project Renewal.

The field work of the evaluation study focused on ten carefully selected neighborhoods from among the seventy in which the Project was active when the research was begun in 1982. A team of twenty researchers devoted four years to data collection and analysis. A variety of research methods and tools were used: interviewing local informants, both public officials and active residents; structured observation; analysis of available documents; and a household survey of a representative sample of 150 residents in each of the ten neighborhoods.

A detailed description of the method and the field work appears elsewhere (Carmon, 1985); the following is just a comment regarding the dilemma of cause and effect. The question is how the given research construct can ascertain that certain outcomes found in the neighborhoods are due to Project Renewal and not to other processes occurring at the given locations during the relevant time period. Owing to difficulties in finding suitable control groups for large, complex units of analysis like neighborhoods, we had to forego the advantages of a semi-experimental research design. In order to overcome this limitation, we utilized various types of control (Rossi and Freeman, 1982). We collected 'before' and 'after' data on most topics using, whenever possible, time series, which compared trends in the period preceding the Project with those during the Project. For all subjects examined, we employed shadow control (Ibid); that is, estimation of the net influence of the Project with the aid of experts, in our case, a combination of our field researchers and reliable local informants. For over two years, each field researcher visited his/her neighborhood two to three times a week and established relationships with knowledgeable and reliable local residents and officials. This system, and the evaluation of the implementation process made possible by it (see the article by Rachelle Alterman in this volume), enabled us to make a small opening in the 'black box' between inputs and outputs and helped us to follow the causal process. We did not always have 'hard' data (quantitative data, which appear precise) on which to base our conclusions, but in most cases we obtained 'good' data—data to which a high degree of validity and authenticity could be attributed.

In contrast to many other evaluations of social programs, where lack of implementation or poor implementation led to the conclusion that 'nothing works' (Gibson and Prathes, 1977), Project Renewal did work; budgets were utilized, and the programs reached their target populations in the selected distressed neighborhoods, even though not without some budget displacements and other problems (Alterman with Hill, 1985). The current paper, based on a specific part of the study (Carmon, 1985), concentrates on research findings related to achievement of Project goals.

EVALUATION OF GOAL ACHIEVEMENT

There is no formal statement of Project Renewal goals. Through a long process and many meetings with decision makers as well as with

neighborhood residents, the researchers constructed a set of Project goals to be evaluated. They include two main goals and several sub-goals, as follows:

- (1) To reduce social disparities between the haves and have-nots in Israeli society:
 - to improve physical living conditions in the neighborhoods;
 - to improve social living conditions in the neighborhoods;
 - to promote social mobility of individuals residing in the neighborhoods;
 - to provide residents opportunities for more control over their lives.
- (2) To improve the image of the selected neighborhoods and prevent their future deterioration.

Improving Physical Living Conditions in the Neighborhoods

Physical conditions in the neighborhoods were not all that bad before Project Renewal entered the scene. Each household had a hard construction dwelling unit with the usual amenities: a private kitchen, a toilet and a bathroom with clean running water and electricity. Forty-six per cent of the households in the ten research areas owned their dwellings, and almost all the rest rented from public holding companies, i.e. they paid very low rents for secure tenure. However, compared to other residential areas in Israel in the late 1970s and early 1980s, density rates per room were high, numerous buildings looked unattractive on the outside and many needed repairs on the inside. There were problems with water and sewage systems, there were not enough paved sidewalks in some locations and street lighting and open spaces were frequently neglected.

Close to 50 per cent of Project revenues were invested in programs for improving housing conditions and physical infrastructure in the neighborhoods. The following four housing programs accounted for most of this investment.

Encouraging purchase of rented dwellings by their dwellers

Some 10 per cent of the households took advantage of the convenient terms offered and purchased their homes from the public holding companies. The average rate of owner-occupancy in the ten neighborhoods increased to 55 per cent.

External renovations

The buildings of about one-third of the households, more than half of them occupied by renters, were externally renovated. At the beginning, the public holding companies did most of the work, with hardly any participation of tenants in either the planning or the financing and execution of the renovations. In 1982 the Do It Yourself External Renovation program was introduced, under which residents were encouraged either to obtain materials from the local Project manager and to do the work themselves, or to plan and choose their own executer and share the expenses fifty-fifty with the Project. In 1985 two-thirds of the renovations were of the Do It Yourself type, and evidence of higher satisfaction and longer sustainability was found in several places.

Internal renovations

Six per cent of the dwellings in the neighborhoods were internally renovated, while their occupants remained in them. Three-quarters of the renovations were done in rented apartments, most of whose occupants were from the poorest groups. The other quarter was implemented by owner-occupants who received subsidized loans from the Project.

Self-help housing enlargements

Close to 10 per cent of the housing stock in Project neighborhoods was enlarged with Project assistance. Enlargements added 15 to 115 per cent to apartment areas. Most big enlargements were executed in two-storey buildings, but with the gradually increasing administrative and technical assistance made available by Project Renewal, big enlargements were also carried out in apartments in three and four storey buildings. Most of these improvements were initiated by owner-occupants, planned by them or with their active participation, financed by them with the help of Project loans (loans, not grants), and implemented while they were living in the dwellings, inspecting every step and sometimes doing some of the work with their own hands. This is why they were termed 'self-help' enlargements.

By 1985 half of the households in the investigated neighborhoods benefited from at least one of these housing improvement programs,

and this fact represents a great achievement. Each of the programs had some success in making living conditions more similar to those in 'mainstream' residential areas in the country and, as such, contributed to the goal of reducing disparities.

The self-help enlargement program was by far the most significant program. It was not the biggest, and certainly not among the most expensive ones, but it was evaluated as the one with the largest multiplier (economically speaking) and the longest lasting positive social impacts (Carmon and Oxman, 1986; Carmon and Gavrieli, 1987). It brought about considerable gains for three groups of beneficiaries. The first was the enlargers, who received more pleasant and spacious dwellings for their households, increased family property for both present and future use, and gained experience in implementing an economic project which required long-range planning and bargaining with many public and private bodies (thus, it is also related to the Project sub-goal of giving residents more control over their lives). The second beneficiary was the neighborhoods, the housing conditions of which were considerably improved; they benefited from a reduction in out-migration of socially and economically 'strong' households, those who could purchase their apartments from the public companies and enlarge them (This involves a contribution to the achievement of the goal of improving the image of the selected neighborhoods and preventing future deterioration.) The third beneficiary was the State of Israel; for a relatively small public investment it gained an improved housing stock that could be used over a longer period of time, thus extending utilization of existing physical infrastructure as well as public and social services.

It should also be noted that strong statistical association was found between personal evaluation of the Project's contribution to one's dwelling and satisfaction with housing conditions. The latter, in turn, explains satisfaction with the neighborhood and the intention to continue living in it.

Improving Social Living Conditions in the Neighborhood

Project Renewal allocated over half of its resources to social services provided to the residents of its selected neighborhoods. The beneficiary rates were usually high, as reported by Table 4.1, based on three-year data collection in the ten research neighborhoods:

Allocations for improvement of educational services were

Table 4.1 Allocations for social services and rates of beneficiaries in the research neighborhoods, 1982-84

Area of project activity	% of yearly budget*	% beneficiaries of relevant age group
EDUCATION	27.0	
● Toddlers		25
● Kindergarten Age		75
● Elementary School Age		90
● High School Age		40
● 'Alienated' Youth	1.5	
COMMUNITY SERVICES		
● Cultural and Social Activities	20.0	20
● Community Organization	0.2	minor
HEALTH	2.5	minor
EMPLOYMENT	0.5	minor
PERSONAL WELFARE	3.0	minor
ELDERLY	3.5	35

*The rest was allocated to housing and physical infrastructure.

particularly high, especially if one considers that only one-third of the education budget was invested in renovation and equipment of classes, while the rest went for educational activities. The evaluation study included a special sub-study of Project programs for elementary school students. This was, in fact, another stage in a series of comparative studies made of Israel's educational inputs, initiated by the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs (Minkowitz, Davis and Baschi, 1977; Raz'el, 1978; Davis, Sprinzak and Ossizon, 1982). It relied on the same questionnaire for school principals that was used by its predecessors. The earlier studies concluded that despite the formal policy of 'positive discrimination' in schools with a large percentage of educationally deprived students, children in schools in middle and higher-status neighborhoods still enjoyed more educational inputs than those in poor neighborhoods. Our very detailed comparison showed that Project Renewal funding tipped the balance, so that the 'positive discrimination' policy was indeed successfully implemented in Project neighborhoods. The schools in the research neighborhoods received more educational enrichment programs of

numerous and varying types than did other schools with the same high rates of educationally deprived students which did not have the benefit of Project involvement. Moreover, Project research neighborhoods were found to offer more programs than schools in well-established neighborhoods with small numbers of educationally deprived students. The reader should note that this evaluation relates only to service provision and not to students' achievements, for which appropriate data were not available.

With the aid of Project Renewal, a considerable change was achieved in the availability of *cultural and leisure time services*. In each of the studied neighborhoods, the Project funded the construction and/or renovation of buildings serving as community centers and public libraries, and in each one of them it added sports facilities. However, these physical improvements were not accompanied by comparable increases in cultural and social activity; patterns of spending leisure time did not change significantly.

As indicated by Table 4.1 above, the Project allocations for *health and individual welfare services* were quite limited and, therefore, no significant change was found in these areas. The only other field of social services on which the Project had a sizeable effect was *services to the elderly*, who constituted, on average, 10 per cent of the population. The greatest improvement for the elderly was in community services, including a slight increase in home services (household help, meals on wheels and the like) and a higher increase in services outside the home, like new clubhouses and day centers. The primary beneficiaries were the healthier and independently functioning; only a very limited percentage of the disabled and ailing benefited from the increased services.

Promoting Social Mobility of Individuals Residing in the Neighborhoods

Changes in personal status are effected through the channels of education, employment and/or politics.

Adult education was promoted somewhat by Project Renewal, through assistance provision to residents of the two extremes of the educational scale. The Project supported adult basic education; over twelve hundred participated in such classes in the ten neighborhoods studied; and the Project provided several dozen university students in each neighborhood with modest fellowships. For the first group, it

was a real step ahead in their social status; for the second group it involved only limited financial aid, which probably did not have much impact on the basic decision to pursue higher education.

Male *employment* was not affected by the Project. Most males of working age, except for the disabled, were employed, the great majority as laborers, both skilled (41 per cent) and unskilled (25 per cent), and the Project supported only a few short training courses aimed at improving their occupational status. Unemployment was frequent among the women, and their situation was somewhat changed through the Project. As a matter of policy, the Project employed a few women in each neighborhood, mostly as para-professionals. Moreover, the Project had an impact on the motivation of women to work outside the home which went beyond the small increase in the number of employed women. We found significant differences between unemployed women who took part in Project activities and those who did not: 44 per cent of the former group, in comparison to 29 per cent of the latter, expressed a desire to work for money ($p < 0.00$). A reasonable hypothesis is that the opinions and attitudes transmitted in the course of the women's participation in various study and special interest groups generated greater motivation to work.

A third channel of social mobility is the *political channel*. We found that participation in bodies set up to make decisions on neighborhood matters provided an opportunity for the accumulation of power resources for those residents who took part (Churchman, 1985). In each place there were a few (usually no more than twenty) activists, who obtained positions of power in the neighborhood and even at the local government level. Moreover, in the course of their participation, these residents learned the ropes of dealing with local and national institutions, a lesson that is likely to assist them in future contacts with any organization or workplace.

In summary, the findings show that Project Renewal promoted the social mobility of some of the residents and improved the chances for mobility of others. This was achieved by increasing formal and informal educational services, particularly for children but also somewhat for adults, by increasing the motivation to work among some of the participants in its programs, especially women, by altering attitudes toward political participation, and by offering a few opportunities for the accumulation of political power. These changes directly promoted the social status of a few – not many – residents, at least within the context of their own neighborhoods. In coming years

there may be further impacts, but it is doubtful whether it will be possible to relate them to Project Renewal.

Providing Residents with Opportunities for More Control Over Their Lives

The possession of adequate economic and power resources is considered a precondition for controlling one's life. Residents of distressed neighborhoods frequently do not have enough resources, and they therefore tend to exhibit over-dependency and lack of personal initiative. The Project aimed at providing them with opportunities for more control over their lives. Although it did not open new higher-income opportunities for them, it did provide some possibilities for political participation and encourage self-help activities.

A Project innovation and a great achievement in this respect was the creation of a local steering committee in each neighborhood. It included 22 voting members, half of whom represented local, regional and national authorities, and half neighborhood residents. Under the auspices of the steering committee, subcommittees were established to deal with special issues (pre-schoolers, the elderly, housing and the like); these were also comprised of a combination of residents and professionals, and they were often chaired by residents.

According to Churchman (1985), 'full partnership' in the design of programs was achieved in only three of the ten research neighborhoods, in four of them the residents had some impact, and in the other three, almost all decision-making power remained in the hands of officials. In each neighborhood, including those which reached high levels of partnership, only a small number of residents participated in the process. But when we add this modest achievement in advancing democracy to the more widespread activities of self-help housing renovations and enlargements, and to the changes in women's motivation to work for pay, discussed above, we may conclude that the Project had a significant impact on encouraging people to take personal initiative and control over their lives. In addition, it seemed to influence the institutionalization of local groups, as well as the dissemination of new ideas about resident participation in planning and implementation.

Reduction of Social Disparities in Israeli Society

The combined achievements of the above sub-goals were expected to

contribute to the main goal of reducing social disparities in monetary and money-equivalent resources, in power resources, and in prestige, between groups of haves and have-nots in Israeli society.

The most common measure relates to *monetary and money-equivalent resources*. With the exception of very few cases, Project Renewal barely had an impact on household income from work, because it operated almost no employment programs. Neither did it affect the level of transfer payments (such as children's benefits and old-age pensions), which represent an important part of family income in the neighborhoods. It probably did lead to greater expenses in many homes, certainly for those who took out loans for housing improvement, but also for those who increased their consumption of paid-for social services. However, when one considers not only money but also family property and the services it utilizes, the conclusion is that the total resources held by many of the families increased as a result of Project Renewal activities. During its first five years of full operation the Project spent, on average, \$700 annually per household in the selected neighborhoods. Little of that was given as service-directed money (housing loans, school fellowships), less than 10 per cent was spent on administration and planning, and the rest was invested in improving neighborhood services.

Looking at the distribution of benefits among the various socioeconomic groups in the neighborhoods, it was found that both the 'stronger' and the 'weaker' groups benefited. Improvements in formal education in the elementary schools, to which a prominent part of the budget was devoted, reached 90 per cent of the children of the neighborhoods, and these children came from all groups. Exterior renovations were carried out mainly in buildings populated by renters, generally the 'weaker' among the residents; loans for housing expansions were given primarily (though by no means exclusively) to 'stronger' households with relatively greater resources. Additions to cultural and community services were also utilized more by the latter group than by the former, but here, too, there were special programs for 'weaker' residents, such as the elderly.

Housing, physical infrastructure and educational and cultural services in Project neighborhoods were rendered more similar to the services generally found in middle-class neighborhoods in Israel. This is particularly salient in terms of housing, especially in small, low-rise buildings, which were enlarged and coated so as to resemble private homes in prestigious neighborhoods. The white stucco sprayed on many of the blockhouses also increased the visual similarity between

the different types of neighborhoods. Some criticize this, saying that it involved only cosmetic treatment, and is therefore meaningless. However, cosmetic treatment is also valuable, as evident in the amount of time and effort people invest in it. This is particularly true with regard to housing, which serves as a central status symbol in modern society in which many of traditional status symbols no longer exist.

Eshel and Peres (1973) found that acquiring an 'Israeli' *lifestyle* had a direct effect on socioeconomic status. The lifestyle of the upper-middle class, which is generally that aspired to by those seeking social mobility, is that of modern Western society. Our research included no special investigation of the elements of lifestyle, but there was some evidence that the Project had a 'Westernizing' and 'modernizing' impact on families involved in its programs. The fairly extensive community activities generated by the Project highlighted the importance of attaining status in the community, and not only within the family. By increasing the social-cultural programs available in the neighborhoods, they encouraged people to spend more of their leisure time outside of the family. The cultural offerings such as physical fitness, pottery, Western music, or European theater, were often borrowed from higher-status groups and unfamiliar to the majority of the population of the neighborhoods. In some of the families there was a gradual change in women's self-image and in their status within the family and outside of it, a change related to going out of the house on their own, whether to work for pay or to participate in community activities. In addition, greater resemblance to higher-prestige neighborhoods emerged in the patterns of cultivation of the home and surroundings, sometimes through increased involvement with engineers and architects who accompanied Project Renewal.

The Project also had an impact, albeit weaker, on the distribution of *power resources*. The power (i.e. the ability to influence others) of a few residents of each neighborhood increased considerably as a result of their participation in the decision-making bodies of the Project, the steering committees and their sub-committees. Moreover, a sense of increased power became quite widespread, as indicated by the responses of 24 per cent of the Household Survey interviewees, who reported that they felt they had the opportunity to influence Project activities in their neighborhood.

Very little if any change occurred in the amount of *prestige resources* of the residents of the neighborhoods affected by the Project. Material resources added by Project revenues were widely

distributed amongst the population in the neighborhoods, as were the power resources. Thus, a large portion of the target population advanced, and this group mobility reduced the impression of personal advancement, as well as the rewards of prestige generally enjoyed by individuals as they advance. The finding that a project directed to the population of an area as a whole contributed more to group mobility than to individual mobility is not surprising. At the same time, it is no wonder that individuals whose situation had improved materially, and perhaps also in terms of power, were disappointed because they were not rewarded with more prestige. It may be that they were deprived of this benefit because they responded to the aim of the Project and continued living in their neighborhoods.

Improving the Image of the Selected Neighborhoods and Preventing Their Future Deterioration

The second main goal of Project Renewal was related less to people and more to places, i.e. to the neighborhoods as functioning urban units. The fear that a neighborhood formally labelled as a 'distressed area' would suffer from increased social stigmatization did not materialize, probably because the designated neighborhoods were anyhow so low on the scale of prestige that they had nothing to lose and everything to gain from being included in the Project. But the hope for a significant positive change in the image of treated neighborhoods did not materialize either, and actually there was no reason to expect such an outcome from a project that followed the principle of working with current low-status populations and avoiding relocation and gentrification. A more realistic goal is the prevention of deterioration and the achievement of stability at an acceptable level, one at which there is a moderate gap between the neighborhood and its environs, so that it is attractive enough to serve as a residential area, not only for the lowest-status group, but also for working people with stable families. In order to establish long-term stability at this level, and assuming that the standard of living in other neighborhoods rises, one must strive for constant improvement in the neighborhoods. Hence, relative stability requires absolute improvement.

This goal is important, of course, to the residents of the neighborhoods, and particularly to the weaker ones who cannot afford to move elsewhere. It is also important to the local authority and the nation (all the more so, as deterioration is a contagious disease), in

order to avoid the tremendous waste of resources invested in housing, infrastructure and existing services in the neighborhoods, as well as the investment of means necessary for establishing new infrastructure elsewhere for the population that abandons existing neighborhoods.

All the programs of Project Renewal were intended to contribute to image improvement and prevention of deterioration. The attainment of this goal does not depend on success in any one particular area, but rather on the impact of the Project as a whole. Therefore, its achievement is measured on the basis of aggregate changes which may serve as indicators of neighborhood status.

A most significant indicator of neighborhood change is the overall *migration balance*. In the ten neighborhoods studied this balance was found to be stable: the number of households hardly changed during the years of the Project (there was a slight increase of 1.5 per cent). However, some turnover did occur; most of the out-migrants and most of the in-migrants were relatively young and of a relatively high educational and income level, compared with the average in the neighborhoods. The in-migrants during the Project's first three years of operation were on a slightly higher level in terms of these characteristics than in-migrants in the three years prior to the Project. They were also of higher status than those who stated that they intended to leave the neighborhoods in the near future. Even though no 'gentrifying' tendency was found, the fact that the in-migrants resembled the stronger segments of the existing population caused a slight improvement in the average socio-economic status of residents of the neighborhoods.

An important aggregate indicator for identifying processes of neighborhood improvement is *apartment prices*. Our data show that absolute dollar prices rose considerably in all the neighborhoods studied, as did apartment prices throughout Israel, and that the relative prices of the former either remained stable or rose moderately. The price of an apartment in the research neighborhoods remained approximately half that of a similar apartment in a middle-class neighborhood in the same town; in half of the neighborhoods there was a slight improvement in this respect. Where we could compare prices with those of similar apartments in a comparable neighborhood in the same town not included in the Project, a change was found – sometimes substantial – in favour of the research neighborhood.

Another widely used indicator is *infiltration of privately initiated investments* into the neighborhoods, which may be expressed in the

opening of new businesses and the initiation of construction projects by private contractors. New businesses were not opened, and actually there was no reason to expect this. Success in business depends on the economic situation and the purchasing power of local residents, and these cannot be changed significantly by a policy which prevents relocation and gentrification. Neither did private building contractors enter the neighborhoods; in some of them there is no land for further construction of residences, and others have apparently not gained enough strength to attract contractors.

As in deteriorated neighborhoods throughout the world, the research neighborhoods suffer from an excess of *vandalism, delinquency* and *crime*. Relative to distressed areas in other countries, the situation in Israel is not so bad; there are few serious crimes (especially manslaughter and murder), and in most places residents are not afraid to walk the streets. In the Households Survey, 80 per cent of the interviewees stated that they felt safe in their streets; only 11 per cent reported that they usually or often did not feel safe.

The elements of vandalism, delinquency and crime were given almost no direct attention in the context of Project Renewal. It was expected that the combination of the numerous Project efforts related to reducing housing density, occupying the free time of children and youth, improving street lighting and generally encouraging preservation of public and private property would act indirectly to reduce the incidence of vandalism and delinquency. Indeed, in nine of the ten neighborhoods, the expectation regarding vandalism was realized; reliable informants from these neighborhoods reported a reduction in damage and destruction to public property, attributing this, at least partially, to Project Renewal. In contrast, only four of the ten neighborhoods experienced a drop in the crime rate, and in only three of these was the decrease attributed to Project activity. In these three neighborhoods we found the impact of the Project to be indirect. No substantial resources were invested in crime prevention programs, but the very presence of the Project, which turned the attention of the government to the selected neighborhood, also stimulated special notice by the police and more active law enforcement. The intensification of police operations, which resulted in the apprehension and imprisonment of some of the criminals living in the area, led to a noticeable reduction in the crime rate.

Along with the three objective indicators mentioned above, there are also subjective indicators that point in the same direction: Project Renewal had a positive impact on indices of improvement in the

neighborhood. Using multiple regression to analyze the findings of the Household Survey, we found that being beneficiaries of Project Renewal and having a positive attitude towards its contribution to the neighborhood were significant in explaining the variance in rates of residents who expressed satisfaction with their neighborhoods and intention to continue residing in them in the foreseeable future. The *image* of most of the neighborhoods as perceived by their residents changed for the better during the Project period, and this – usually slight – improvement was credited to the Project. Moreover, in half of the neighborhoods it was reported that other residents of the same locality – those whose socioeconomic status was similar to that of residents of the research neighborhoods – also had a better image of the neighborhood. This is an evidence that some progress was made towards the goal of transforming these areas into acceptable places of residence for wider groups of citizens.

We do not know what developments would have occurred in the designated neighborhoods in the absence of Project Renewal. Experience accumulated throughout the world, including Israel, indicates that places like the ten research areas tend to deteriorate, and that without public intervention the situation almost inevitably worsens. Accordingly, and on the basis of the findings reviewed above, we estimate that the Project has helped to save the neighborhoods from deterioration, stabilized their situation and contributed to some improvement in their relative status.

EXPLAINING THE RELATIVE SUCCESS

Over ten years have passed since Project Renewal was first announced, and it is still alive and kicking. It is still based on the same guidelines described above, and according to a careful evaluation study it has contributed significantly to the promotion of its original goals. About 70 per cent of the residents of the areas studied benefited directly from at least one major Project program, and another 20 per cent testified that they had received indirect benefits. Neighborhood rehabilitation (or at least the prevention of neighborhood deterioration) without relocation and without gentrification seems to be possible. Compared to other neighborhood programs, this is a success story.

An exploration of the causes of the success of Project Renewal will enable us to learn from the experience and apply the lessons to other

neighborhoods. A number of explanations are suggested below, presented here as hypotheses, since none of them guided the evaluation study. Rather, they are post factum interpretations, which may serve as points of departure for future studies.

The selection of appropriate target neighborhoods seems to be a critical factor. Like other poor residential areas in Israel, none of the studied areas had reached the stage of extreme deterioration, whether we are talking about physical or – most important – social deterioration. Spontaneous processes had not yet resulted in complete segregation of different socioeconomic groups. There were many very low status households in each neighborhood, but in most cases the majority of residents belonged to the working class, and there were also quite a few lower-middle class families. This population was able to take advantage of the new opportunities provided by the Project, to take out loans on good terms for housing renovation and to encourage their children to participate in extra-curricular activities. The major beneficiaries were the stronger elements of the population, but there is evidence that even the poorest benefited. Since 'services for the poor (only) are poor services' (Titmuss, 1966), selecting heterogeneous populations as target groups seems to be an important supporting condition for success. In addition to its substantive importance, it may be tactically effective, because it is likely to arouse sympathy and support among wider publics.

Project Renewal's success may be partially explained by its *arousal of wide public support* and by its *recruitment of a high degree of longstanding commitment on the part of the political system*. These were apparently the result of the choice of the *right slogans*, together with *appropriate timing*. The central slogan of the Project was the reduction of social disparities in Israel. For nationalistic and/or socialistic reasons, this is supported by Israeli politicians and their constituencies on both the Left and the Right. Verbal approval of this notion could always be enlisted, but the mobilization of support that included considerable resource allocation became possible due to the special circumstances of the late 1970s. In 1977 the Likud-led coalition came into power, largely because of votes from distressed neighborhoods and development towns. In search of a way to repay its political debt to these citizens and to maintain their support, the Likud found the answer in the plans for neighborhood rehabilitation that had been prepared by the former Labor coalition government. The Likud's later coalition with the Democratic Movement for Change (DASH), a party that stressed internal issues in general and

the war on poverty in particular, increased the government's commitment to the Project. When seven years later the Labor party returned to power, it could not help supporting a Project which had gained the reputation of contributing to a more egalitarian society.

The second slogan of the Project – the rehabilitation of old neighborhoods – was also appropriate, in both substance and timing, for inspiring a high degree of commitment. In contrast to other countries, where the general public identifies residents of deteriorated neighborhoods with a relatively small minority, in Israel they are identified with people originating from the Islamic countries, a group that constitutes approximately half of the national population. Moreover, the political strength of this group has increased considerably over the last decade. In addition, the call to free resources for the treatment of older urban areas emerged at a time when the public was ready for it. At the time of the founding of the State of Israel, there was normative preference for the rural over the urban, and a prominent favoring of 'pioneering' which involved new development (conquest of the desert, construction of development towns and the like) over preservation of the existing or the old. Both these tendencies were expressed clearly in the institutional organization and in the allocation of economic resources of the young state (Alexander, 1979). Decades passed before changes occurred in the attitudes of the public and its leaders and they began to recognize the multiple needs of the urban settlement. This recognition included acceptance of the world-wide trend of environmental preservation, including giving special attention to older neighborhoods and attempting to cultivate and preserve them. Project Renewal is part of this trend.

The timing was right from other points of view, as well. The decrease in immigration freed budgets, particularly in the Ministry of Construction and Housing. A period of quiet on the national borders and of relative economic prosperity with full employment facilitated recruitment of the required resources. These factors also had a positive influence in terms of the contribution from the Diaspora: the Jewish Agency needed a new incentive to stimulate the involvement of Jews and found it in the concept of helping Israel save distressed neighborhoods.

Those in charge of social programs in Western countries have in recent years been influenced by the findings which indicate a growing dependence of the poor on the authorities that give them aid, dependence which prevents them from being productive members of

society (Murray, 1984). Conservative economists have recommended limiting direct assistance to the poor and extending indirect aid through 'public-private partnership', for example, subsidies to capitalists for investments in housing and/or the creation of workplaces in distressed neighborhoods. In contrast to this trend, Israel's Project Renewal chose to extend direct aid. In some of its programs, such as those for housing, a strategy of 'public-individual partnership' was employed, not between public investors and private capitalists, as in the US, but between public funds and the personal investment of each individual helped. The success of these programs is reflected not only in the direct transfer of the subsidy to the persons in need, but also in enlarged input, only part of which derives from public funds, in enhancement of the chances of sustainability of the product and in a series of additional benefits for both individuals and neighborhoods. Furthermore, it involves the development of personal motivation to work and improve living conditions, which might entail a reduction of dependence of the residents on the authorities. This may be the main reason for the fact that the neighborhoods in which the program for self-help housing renovation and enlargement was particularly successful are those in which the aggregate indicators show the greatest success for the Project in general.

Finally, a plausible explanation for the relative success of Project Renewal is related to its moderate nature. It did not involve radical change and it included very few innovative programs; it represented a sort of 'booster shot' for social and institutional processes that were already underway in Israeli society. Specifically, I am referring to initial processes of decentralization in the centralized Israeli regime, and to the processes of social integration – broader integration into the society of those immigrants of the 1950s and 1960s and their children who remained in distressed neighborhoods and less developed development towns. Radical social change requires social revolution. If we intend to affect directed social change without upheaval, it seems that we must sail with the winds and not against them. We must discover the direction of existing currents, including those that lay deep and hidden, identify from among them those that lead in the direction of the desired change and ride these waves. The hypothesis suggested here is that the combination of identification of a few spontaneous developments that incorporate the desirable attributes with the investment of deliberate effort in their direction are crucial, if not necessary, conditions for success in promoting deliberate changes in a democratic country.

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