**Welfare Organizations and Economic Abuse:**

**Street-Level Bureaucrats’ exclusionary practices**

**Abstract**

The slow pace, in which economic and emotional types of IPV receive legal recognition, is a good illustration of the feminist argument that state’s responses to violence against women suffer “many faults in the goals and procedures.” In contrast to the fact that 28 legal systems around the world include EA in their legislation, EA is not even mentioned in Israeli law governing IPV. Nevertheless, feminist organizations have promoted a public campaign on the topic and created some public awareness to the concept. Most research on economic abuse dealt with mapping the diverse forms of economic abuse and the extent to which men are exploiting lack of legislation to enlist state support for their abusive action. Up until recently, the unique ambiguous characteristic of the Israeli law was not investigated, and the ambiguity generated by awareness next to no legislation, was not used to invest how street level bureaucrats who are in charge of allocating state support, respond to women’s stories of economic abuse. Neglecting this aspect, the possibility that racism, sexism and classism are used as bases for exclusionary processes, cannot receive its due attention. To examine how the ambiguity between some public awareness of economic abuse and lack of legislation or formal guidelines operates in situations where encounters with those who suffer economic abuse routinely occur, we conducted 45 interviews with street level bureaucrats in three institutional spaces: (1) centers for domestic violence prevention; (2) institute of social security offices; and, (3) welfare services bureaus. We found three process of exclusion from state assistance: a racist process where cultural attributions justify leaving women with no response; a sexist process where women’s pathologizing as passive, justifies the institutional neglect and a classist process where economic abuse is constructed as a response to women not participating in the labor market. We discuss the meaning of these exclusionary process for the power position of street level bureaucrats in shaping forms of exclusions.