# Organizational Politics and its Effect on the Motivation of Workers and Volunteers in Emergency Organizations in Israel during the Coronavirus Period

Abitbul Shimon Eliyahu
Bibu Nicolae  - corresponding author
nicolae.bibu@e-uvt.ro
Dănăiață Doina
Sala Diana
West University Timisoara, Timisoara,  Romania

The paper discusses the results of a research study about the influence on organizational politics on the motivation of employees and volunteers from emergency organizations is Israel, after one year of intense activities to mitigate the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the population of Israel. It discusses the findings of the quantitative research and of the qualitative research and formulates conclusion sand recommendations for managers to reduce the negative impact of organizational politics on the motivation of their employees and volunteers.

Keywords:
organizational politics, motivation, volunteers, emergency, Corona virus pandemic

JEL Code: D02, D23, D73, I30, M12

## 1. Introduction

We have done a large study about the relationship between organizational politics and motivation, organizational commitment, work performance in emergency organizations in Israel, during January march 2020. Immediately after finishing the data gathering, the coronavirus pandemic impacted the whole world, including Israel. In order to identify if there were any differences and/or changes in the findings received during the study compared to the coronavirus year, which undoubtedly demonstrates a global emergency,we began conducteda new research in April 2021. As the recovery from the coronavirus in Israel began, a fighting began between Israel and the Hamas organization that controls the Gaza Strip, between May 10 to May22, 2021.  Once again, the employees of the emergency organizations found themselves at the forefront of the activity. We have distributed the same questionnaires to people from Magen David Adom, and collected them during these events. Also, the qualitative interviews were held prior to the fighting operations with Hamas. In this paper, we will discuss these findings about how organizational politics affects the motivation and performance of workers in emergency organizations in Israel. Several recommendations for managers of emergency organizations in Israel will also be presented.

## 2. Literature review
### Background

During 2020 - 2021, all countries worldwide faced the Corona Covid-19 virus, an aggressive and contagious virus. At the forefront of the war against this virus were the medical

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organizations in the world, with the aim of reduce its negative impact of the health and life of humans and finally eliminate it. Many research organizations and companies worked around the clock to develop fast vaccines and medication against Covid -19 and allow for the vaccination of the population against this virus.

However, until the vaccines were found and approved for medical use on humans, the medical communities worldwide faced the task of examining samples from the population in order to isolate the carriers of the virus and thus prevent further spread of infections. This task was assigned in Israel to Magen David Adom (MDA) through the Ministry of Health, due to its nationwide deployment with teams of paramedics who are experienced in pre-hospital care giving. Following the approval of vaccines for human use, MDA trained the teams to inject the vaccines to Israel citizens and also to the Palestinian population. It is important to emphasize that employees and volunteers of MDA faced a difficult dilemma since they had to deal with an "unknown" virus, and quite a few workers feared for their lives, many workers were infected by the virus and isolated in quarantine, and the workers themselves infected their family members.

In February 2020, the first case of a confirmed covid-19 patient who was not in quarantine was discovered in Israel .The Ministry of Health began taking steps and issued guidelines to the public in order to reduce the spread of the virus, among the measures taken were guidelines for maintaining social isolation and closure. In the first stage of the pandemic outbreak in Israel, media reports were observed about the low answer to The Ministry of Health's guidelines in Israeli society, particularly in Ultra-Orthodox Arab and Jewish society (Romem A, et al., 2020) (Itahki-Braun et al., 2020) Stein-Zamir C, Levine H. (2021). During March 2020, an outbreak of the coronavirus was identified that stood out mainly in Haredi population centers, and in mid-April reports began to emerge regarding the spread of the virus in Arab authorities, and there was concern that morbidity centers were about to develop in these authorities that would accelerate the spread of the virus (Waitzberg et al., 2020).

According to data, MDA medics and paramedics have taken samples from 458,096 people in their homes since the beginning of the crisis. In MDA's drive-in complexes throughout Israel 1,979,275 tests were performed in collaboration with the HMOs. MDA paramedics have also performed approximately 3,000 serology tests and MDA teams have transferred thousands of verified patients from their homes for hospitalization. As part of the "Magen Avot and Emahot" Program by the Ministry of Health for the elderly population, MDA medics and paramedics vaccinated more than half of the residents and staff of nursing homes in Israel with the second shot of the vaccine. The MDA's 101 emergency call centers also saw a significant increase in civilian inquiries. For example, 16,000 calls were received per day, an increase of about 265% compared to a routine day, before the Covid-19 pandemic. Reports published by Magen David Adom indicate that from the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis, from 24.2.2020 to 31.12.2020, MDA medics and paramedics took 3,905,599 samples of the Covid-19 virus. The samples were carried out during the last eleven months in various locations nationwide - in citizens' homes, in the drive-in complexes, and in nursing homes, as part of the "Magen Avot and Mothers" project, and in state and religious educational institutions, and more.

In addition to carrying out 4 million test of Covid-19 samples, MDA's blood services continued to donate plasma from people who recovered from corona for the treatment of critically ill patients and the production of passive vaccines. To date, 16,356 plasma doses were donated, of which 4,604 were provided to 2,302 corona patients who were in moderate and severe state (2 doses per patient). MDA continues performing tests and taking samples in

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collaboration with the four Israeli HMOs and transferring verified patient from their homes to hospitalization. It is important to emphasize that all these activities were done by MDA in addition to performing its routine emergency activities, non-Covid pandemic specific.

During the defense of the thesis in front of the internal committee, a recommendation was made to conduct a limited qualitative study aimed to compare the findings in the thesis based on the pre-Covid pandemic period to the new situation during Covid-19 period. The main issue was to examine whether there was an improvement in the influence of the organizational politics on motivation, or perhaps the contrary and the crisis have worsened the subject at hand.

**Emergency organizations in Israel**

Characterization and focus on the emergency organizations in Israel, as well as determining which organizations can be classified as emergency organizations, requires a preliminary reference to the conceptual framework underlying the activity of those organizations, that is, what is the definition of an emergency event, both in the social and private aspects. An emergency as a whole is a situation in which conditions that may disrupt the daily lives of individuals, groups, or society as a whole are usually created unexpectedly. This change requires evaluations, whether on the private and/or social levels. However, it is clear that this broad definition may dictate the inclusion of many activities and organizations as emergency organizations, which may make it difficult and possibly even disqualify in advance the significance of the study .

In order to focus on those organizations, the purpose of their activity is to deal with emergencies, the concept of emergency must be reduced and focused, in a way that creates as broad a conceptual common denominator as possible for the concept of emergency. In view of this concept, an emergency can be defined as an event or situation in which conditions are created that endanger the basis of the existence and continuity of the individual, group or society as a whole. The environmental conditions may affect the physical condition of the individual or society, the economic, social, environmental situation, and the range of related levels. On a global level, usually the reference to an emergency event includes events in which the individual and/or the group and/or society as a whole are in a situation in which conditions that clearly threaten their physical security develop. These conditions often also create a risk of material damage both at the individual and global level, including global damage to infrastructure: for example, in an earthquake event, or a war.

Emergency events in the global dimension may affect a number of elements in tandem with physical, economic, social, environmental and other elements. The global nature of some of the emergency situations therefore requires a systemic approach and coordinated integrated action in a range of layers of the number of factors, and in order to produce a complete and effective solution, which will enable a return to routine conditions, at a low cost to the level given to both the economy and the details that make up it. Creating conditions for ensuring this activity requires that two key activity characteristics be maintained in the emergency organizations: The first characteristic – a well-underlying doctrine for dealing with the emergency situations that may develop, such as war teachings (TSL) formulated in the IDF or other armies in order to cope with dynamic emergencies that may develop. Although, and perhaps even because emergencies are dynamic situations in nature, requiring rapid adaption, it is of particular importance to build a conceptual framework to address these dynamic situations. The second characteristic – the existence of cooperation and coordination between the various parties responsible for addressing the issues that are developing, in order to

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formulate a complete and effective appropriate response. This coordination by its very nature therefore requires integration and coordination both at the operational level and at the conceptual level to cope with the situations that are developing.

The combination of these two characteristics is a complex issue that requires dealing with a range of economic and other operational issues. These issues require addressing a number of issues, including eliminating duplications, determining areas of authority and responsibility, dealing with intra-organizational and general social aspects, determining preference between different tasks, Dealing with the characteristics of various organizations, dealing with intra-organizational politics, dealing with inter-organizational politics, and dealing with nationwide politics that affects the activities of the aforementioned organizations, understanding the importance of local cooperation between emergency organizations in Israel, as well as the need to create a basis for international cooperation and the professionalization of emergency bodies, is the driving factor for the first international conference on assessments and preparedness for emergency situations and disasters that took place in Israel in 2010. The background to the conference, held in Tel Aviv, was a joint venture of the Ministry of Health and the Medical Department of the Home Front Command. The conference was sponsored by who and attended by representatives from the universities in Israel MDA and the Medical Corps, as well as academics from Israel and abroad. The conference emphasized the existence of two main issue.

The first issue was a growing demand for a high level of professionalism required to deal with emergencies in the modern era and the need for regional and international cooperation, since it is impossible to prepare for disasters and emergencies based on the knowledge and experience of one country or individual organization (Engel, 2010) The second issue concerns global trends, in which conditions for the existence of joint emergency situations may arise in various parts of the world, requiring integrated coping (such as terrorist activity and environmental emergencies) .

The emergency situations can be summarized and characterized in the required dimension of organizing as events in which crisis conditions develop that require the management of a crisis that requires coordination between emergency organizations, as well as preparing the public for a 100%-level stance against disaster situations (Bernard, 2011) Data indicated a low to moderate level of readiness among all emergency bodies practically and professionally, and gaps in actual preparedness. It is indicated that the lack of an integrative national doctrine for handling an earthquake is the main cause of the gap between the actual level of readiness and the one required. With the exception of the Israel Police and the Home Front Command, which have an orderly doctrine in this regard, the other rescue bodies lack a regulated plan of action to deal with earthquakes. This situation creates a lack of coordination and a common language between the rescue bodies. Beyond that, the rescue forces are not prepared to deal with in the aftermath of an earthquake due to non-performing exercises, a figure that undermines operational, organizational and logistical readiness (Catania & Randall, 2013). An example of the mismanagement of rescue forces occurred in Haiti in 2010, when Haitian emergency organizations lingered in handling the aftermath of a strong earthquake. The reasons for this were: lack of assessments for the treatment of earthquakes, lack of concentration of effort in saving lives, the police focused on preventing looting and maintaining public order rather than saving lives. It was also found that emergency workers did not report to their units (Jeong, 2014).

**The Health System Roles in Emergency and Disaster**

Disasters and emergencies underscored the need for the preparedness of the emergency health system. In recent decades, countries around the world have been required to prepare for natural and human-made disasters (Adini et al., 2010). From the perspective of the health system, disasters are defined by their impact on public health and the health system. A public health emergency is a situation that causes health consequences that threaten the ability of the affected community to cope with the state of emergency (Noji, 1996; Christopher et al., 2007). The emergency preparedness center is located in the health system and hospitals, and they are naturally at the center of action to develop emergency services and protocols. Emergency hospital assessments are a national mission that poses a constant challenge to hospitals and their staff (Charney et al., 2013). Emergency hospital readiness can be defined as the hospital's ability to maintain effective operations in a safe environment while adequately meeting the growing needs of the affected population (Barbera et al., 2009).The success of a community or region to deal with a disaster is closely related to the functioning capacity of its health systems in times of emergency. The inability of health organizations to function in times of emergency endangers the health of the residents and impairs the community's ability to recover (Albanese et al. 2008). Experience from disasters around the world showed that the public saw the hospital as a center for community support and assistance that provides a solution for the supply of basic needs such as food, shelter and accurate information  (Paturas, et al., 2010; Charney et al, 2013).

**Israel's Health System in Times of Emergency and Disaster**

Israel's health system prepares for threat scenarios divided into routine scenarios (such as a multi-casualty event, an outbreak of infectious diseases and earthquakes) and war scenarios (such as a missile war and a chemical warfare attack) defined by the National Emergency Management Agency, the Counter-Terrorism Bureau, and the Assistant Minister of Defense for Special Measures). The health system's readiness process is based on five main components: systemic planning, emergency command and control, central management of emergency preparedness and alertness, preservation of the knowledge and skills of health system staff, and coordination of the activities of the various emergency bodies (emergency and emergency preparedness) (Adini et al., 2010). Hospital readiness consists of the development of knowledge and capabilities required to effectively respond to possible negative consequences of disaster situations.  (Copoola as cited in Alruwaili, Islam, & Usher, 2019).

The institution responsible in Israel for operating the health system in times of emergency is the Supreme Emergency Health and Hospitalization Authority whose function is partially defined in the law (wartime only) (Koch-Davidovich, 2011). According to the Ministry of Health (2010), a document reviewing the roles of the Health Bureaus in times of emergency includes the following roles (partial list): public information, morbidity and mortality monitoring, nursing and milk care services, supervision of drinking water and food control, staffing of personnel in centers for anxiety victims, and more.  The initial medical response during routine and emergency time is provided at primary clinics in the community that serve as the community center for providing medical assistance. Since in times of emergency the population may encounter difficulties in accessing the regular clinics, the HMOs establish unified clinics (shared by several health plans). The unified clinics are designed to ensure the provision of services even to citizens who cannot reach their mother's

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clinic or that the health plan cannot provide service at its local clinic for various reasons (Ministry of Health, 2012).

### Responding to Cultural Diversity in Israel in Times of Emergency – Coronavirus pandemic

Each country has vulnerable population groups that require an adapted response from the authorities as part of dealing with the spread of pandemics. The need to build an adapted response stems from unique characteristics (such as culture and norms of behavior) of each vulnerable population, and low access of vulnerable populations to health services that worsen in times of crisis (Waitzberg et al., 2020).

In February 2020, the first case of a confirmed Covid-19 patient who was not in quarantine was discovered in Israel. The Ministry of Health began taking steps and issued guidelines to the public in order to reduce the spread of the virus, among the measures taken were guidelines for maintaining social isolation and closure. In the first stage of the pandemic outbreak in Israel, media reports were observed about the low answer to The Ministry of Health's guidelines in haredi society and Arab society (Romem et al., 2021), Stein-Zamir & Levine, 2021)). During March 2020, an outbreak of the coronavirus was identified that stood out mainly in Haredi Jewish population centers, and in mid-April reports began to emerge regarding the spread of the virus in Arab authorities, and there was concern that morbidity centers were about to develop in these authorities that would accelerate the spread of the virus (Waitzberg et al., 2020).

In order to achieve the cooperation of a multicultural public as the case is in Israel and to overcome the barriers in implementing the guidelines, the authorities must take culturally appropriate measures. As part of the overall effort to implement measures and restrictions that require maintaining social distancing, policymakers are required to examine what cultural characteristics, norms of behavior, and needs of vulnerable populations can undermine the implementation of the restrictions. The limited access to health resources from which minority populations often suffer can be a barrier to access to medical examinations especially in times of crisis, and impair the overall ability to cope with the spread of pandemics (Solobodin & Cohen, 2020; Waitzberg et al, 2020).

### Organizational Politics (Corporate Politics) – Definition and Characteristics

Organizational politics is a well-known phenomenon in organizations (Vigoda-Gadot & Vashdi, 2012), and in respect to its essence and components it resembles government politics, only at varying degrees, since organizations, especially the larger ones, are in fact political entities (Pfeffer, 1992). The definition by Ferris et al. (quoted by Miller et al, 2008, page 210) is the following: "the perception of organizational politics involves an individual's attribution to behaviors of self-serving intent, and is defined as an individual's subjective evaluation about the extent to which the work environment is characterized by co-workers and supervisors who demonstrate a self-serving behavior." They also quote a definition of organizational politics given by Mintzberg in 1983, as the "individual or group behavior that is informal, ostensibly parochial, typically divisive, and above all in a technical sense, illegitimate, sanctioned neither by formal authority, accepted ideology, nor certified expertise (although it may exploit any one of these" (Miller et al, 2008)

Consequently, organizational politics can be described as the uses of power by people in an organization ("the power game in an organization"). Power in organizations is driven by personal or group motives and therefore it influences processes, actions, relationships and

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decision making within organizations, sometimes while conflicting. This power game combines all actions that an organization undertakes in order to achieve its goals, and the goal is to make others perform what is wished by those in power, whether or not they want to and/or it is in their benefit (Dinner, 2019) .The power in this case serves as a resource, and as a resource, there is no equal distribution among the various members of the organization (Vigoda - Gadot, 1997).

The examination of organizational politics is mainly carried out from two perspectives, one is the examination of the negative aspects of the phenomenon of politics within organizations, and the other is the examination of the phenomenon as one that develops naturally without emphasizing its negative aspects (Vigoda-Gadot &Vashdi, 2012.(Examination of the negative implications constitutes a major part of the research. In their original model, Ferris et al. (1989) argued that Perception of Organizational Politics (POP)negatively influences on one hand, the job involvement, job satisfaction and stress at work of employees and on the other hand, two outcomes related to organizational withdrawal of employees: turnover and absenteeism. In a later article, Ferris et al.'s (2002) have completed the original model suggesting that POP has a negative influence on employees' organizational commitment and in-role job performance.  They revised it to include seven new consequences: "in-role job performance, organizational commitment, trust, organizational cynicism, justice reactions, and organizational citizenship behaviors" (Ferris et al, 2002), because they considered to be correct in their conceptual sense.

Organizational politics is a central issue in any organization or society as political behavior within the organization influences almost every decision made within the organization (Bodla & Danish, 2009). The influence of the "political game" and the political behavior of the various parties, therefore, is of crucial importance for both, on one hand, the organization - the aspects of process, organizational efficiency, and, on the other hand, the employees themselves. Politics is usually identified as having negative implication due to the tensions attributed to organizational politics and their negative impact on employee motivation and their indirect influence on performance (Chang et al., 2013).

**Motivation**

The term motivation is derived from "movere", the Latin word for moving, and it expresses a psychological process that drives people to perform voluntary actions. The different definitions of motivation that refer to the different aspects and contexts share the principle that motivation is a personal or group willingness to exert considerable effort to support the organizational goals (Ramlall, 2004). Motivation is known as a force that influences direction, intensity and duration of work behavior. Understanding the elements that promotes motivation is essential in order to examine training, salary, incentives, and more (Catania & Randall, 2013). Managers use various systems of incentives for the purpose of motivating employees to work, to achieve strategic goals, to improve organizational and managerial behavior of firms in markets. Intrinsic incentives can satisfy personal needs directly by creating an intrinsic reward for those who perform the tasks and may be more important to public sector employees than performance-related extrinsic rewards. Coccia (2019) pointed out that "intrinsic incentives are important for increasing affective commitment (AC), job involvement and motivation of employees in organizations, while extrinsic incentives are important in relation to continuance commitment (CC) of employees to organizations".

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Motivation determines largely the ability of an employee to achieve his or her personal goals and it is a key resource in realizing his or her needs and expectations while achieving its task related goals. Management can influence employees' motivation through the reward policy it practices. Human resources (HR) management practices aim to allow organizations to make most of their human capital (Jiang et al., 2012), by strengthening employee knowledge, skills, and abilities, and also their motivation, because all are needed for employees to perform their work (Iddekinge et al., 2018). Motivation is a driving force in work and other activities directed by will rather than by coercion to invest a physical, intellectual and mental effort (Bergner et al, 2019). The central role of work in people's lives makes motivation a central factor in our lives (Judge et al., 2014). Employee motivation is essential for employee behavior and influences the employee wellbeing and employee attitudes (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Hence, employee motivation has the "potential to contribute to organizational success, defined in multiple ways and through multiple pathways" (Jiang, et al., 2012).

**Public Service Motivation (PSM)**

Yudiatmaja (2017) defines public service motivation as a "specific motivation of employees in the public sector that is derived from general theories of motivation". Ritz et al. (2016) argue that the idea that public service motivation is primarily based on combination of altruism and self-interest. They quote the research of Brewer and Selden (1998) that indicated that "public service motivation consists of the motives that induce people to perform meaningful public service, regardless of what those motives are". There is no generally accepted definition of the concept of PSM by researchers in the field. Some researchers define it as a tendency to respond to the unique challenges that exist primarily in public institutions. A common thread of several definitions "emphasize a person's desire to serve the public interest due to an altruistic, non-economic motivation while placing that interest before his or her own interests" (Abitbul et al., 2020). A more particular definition of PSM considers it to "express the desire, ambition, adjustment, and willingness to choose public service not only as a field of practice but as a career and life-work" (Miller-Mor & Vigoda-Gadot, 2016). Additional definitions refer to "broad pro-social motivation that encourages a person to take actions to help the community" (Yudiatmaja, 2017).

Van de Walle, et al. (2015) had undertaken an internationally comparative approach using data from 26 countries to study the preference for public sector employment. Their research indicates that public service motivation (mainly helping other people, being useful to society) and extrinsic motivation (mainly job security, a high income, opportunities for advancement) are both important driving factors for people across several countries to choose to work in the public sector. In addition, they found that intrinsic motivation is negatively related to respondents' preference to work as public servants, results that is contradicting several other researches. However, as expected to a large extent, they have found considerable differences between countries.

Public administration managers should make use to a much larger extent of the relevant findings of public service motivation research, mostly about what actions to take to improve the performance of public service employees, such as: "among them using public service motivation as a selection tool, facilitating public service motivation through cooperation in the workplace, conveying the significance of the job, and building leadership based on public service values" (Christensen et al., 2017).

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### 3. Research methodology

This research methodology is a quantitative-qualitative (quan-qual) type of research. We used it because it provides several advantages: it is simple, fast, and cost-efficient. In addition, it can be conducted in an objective manner, and it is possible to identify the relationship between the variables and their strength, as well as to rank variables according to their connection to the dependent variable. There are, however, disadvantages, including that it does not enable to know how the variables influence each other (Birnbaum, 1993).

We have performed a second survey using the same questionnaire and method of distributing them of a new sample of respondents in the month of April 2021 to explore the same hypotheses, in order to identify if there were some changes happening due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have used a complex questionnaire having several components. First, we used the empirical index for measuring perception of organizational politics (Vigoda, 2007), referred to as Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS). This study employs its shorter version that is composed of 9 items. The concept of perception of organizational politics was defined as the extent to which the employee assesses his or her organizational environment as political and thus as unfair and unjust (Vigoda, 2007).

Second, the variable of employees' motivation was examined by a motivation questionnaire, prepared by Adler-Caberty (1999). The questionnaire included 10 questions (using a 1 - 5 Likert scale).

Next, in order to overcome the biases outlined above, printed questionnaires were randomly distributed among a group of employees and volunteers in organizations, with the aim of neutralizing unclear or irrelevant questions.
After this stepw as completed, the questionnaires were distributed via email and WhatsApp, all the answers were entered into the SPSS software, and the following results were obtained about the reliability of the **Organizational Politics Scale which** show a good Cronbach's alpha reliability of $\alpha = 0.810$ for 9 items scale, and for the **Motivation Scale t**he analysis show a good Cronbach's alpha reliability of $\alpha = 0.889$ for a 10 items scale.

The research population included employees and volunteers from two very important emergency organizations in Israel, Fire and Rescue Authority and Magen David Adom (MDA). The sample included 235 respondents, both men and women, 110 employees and 125 volunteers, from all around Israel.

One of the ethical problems in this study is employees' tendency not to expose sensitive issues that may harm them in some manner. In order to overcome this ethical problem, each employee was promised anonymity and the use of the data collected in this current study only .

The main purpose of this study wass to investigate the relationship between organizational politics and employee motivation, to isolate the disruptive factors and to create healthy organizational politics (transparency, establishing trust, etc.) to preserve the human capital that will promote motivation. We have formulated the following research question: Is there a negative relationship between organizational politics and workers' motivation in emergency organizations in Israel (Fire and Rescue Authority and MDA) during the coronavirus period? In other words, does a high level of organizational politics leads to a decline in motivation and vice versa?

### 4. Findings and Discussion

We have tested the formulated following hypotheses: first, hypothesis H1 that a negative relationship will be found between organizational politics and motivation of

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employees and volunteers in emergency organizations in Israel; second, hypothesis H1a. that a negative relationship will be found between organizational politics and motivation of employees in emergency organizations in Israel the Pearson test was conducted; and , third, hypothesis H1b, that a negative relationship will be found between organizational politics and motivation of volunteers in emergency organizations in Israel. We have use the Pearson test and calculated the Peasrson correlation coefficient for each hypothesis. The results are presented in table 1, below.

**Table 1. Pearson Correlation index for organizational politics and motivation**

| Employees or volunteers | | | Organizational Politics | Motivation | Employees or volunteers |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employees and volunteers | Organizational Politics | Pearson correlation | 1 | -0.335** | .b |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .001 | |
| | | N | 335 | 231 | 335 |
| Employees | Organizational Politics | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -0.296** | .b |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .001 | . |
| | | N | 120 | 117 | 120 |
| Volunteers | Organizational Politics | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -0.377** | .b |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 | . |
| | | N | 115 | 114 | 115 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
b. Cannot be computed because at least one of the variables is constant.

In the case of all employees and volunteers in emergency organizations in Israel, we found a moderate negative relationship between organizational politics and motivation (rp=-0.335, p=0.01, thus validating the Hypothesis H1. The variation of organizational politics explains 11.2% of the variation of the motivation of employees and volunteers in emergency organizations from Israel.

In the case of employees, we found a moderate negative relationship between organizational politics and motivation was found (rp = -.296, p=0.01) (see table 1) below, so that as organizational politics increases, employees' motivation declines. Consequently, Hypothesis H1a was validated, too. The variation of organizational politics explains 8.8.% of the variation of the motivation of employees in emergency organizations from Israel.

In the case of volunteers, a moderate and negative relationship between organizational politics and motivation was found (rp = -.377, p=0.01), so that as organizational politics increases, employees' motivation declines.

Consequently, hyptoehsis H1b was validated, too. The variation of organizational politics explains 14.2 % of the variation of the motivation of volunteers in emergency organizations from Israel.

Compared to the previous results (Abitbul Eliyahu et al, 2020) the data from the pandemic period (see table 2, below) indicates that the intensity of the correlation is lower compared to the data from the first round of the research, before the pandemic, however still has an average negative correlation. This requires preserving human capital while reversing the trend of the organizational politics from positive to negative, and methods to do so were introduced in this paper.

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However, we are pointing out that since we have different respondents, we can only to compare the results of the correlation coefficients. The results are presented in a synthetic form in Table 2, below

**Table 2. Comparison between before Covid 19 and after Covid -19 pandemic of formulated hypothesis**

| No | Hypothesis | Pearson correlation coefficient   rp Before | Situation | Pearson correlation coefficient rp After | Situation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | H1 | -.416 | Validated | -0.335 | Validated |
| 2 | H1a        6 | -.482 | Validated | -0.296 | Validated |
| 3 | H1b | -.411 | Validated | -0.377 | Validated |

The major conclusion we can draw from the results of the quantitative research during the COVID-19 pandemic is that the situation is quite similar to the first research, executed before the beginning of the pandemic.  Since H1, H1a and H1b, were validated also in this second research, still respondents from MDA consider that organizational politics in the MDA is negatively influencing their work motivation. We assume that their motivation level was less influenced by the existing at not changed organizational politics, mostly because of other factors, mainly intrinsic motivating factors such as their own personal values of providing care and service to their beneficiaries, their dedication to the mission of the organization, their dedication to preserve the heath and save lives of their fellow citizen, the Israeli people, in very dangerous times for every individual.

Discussion of the findings of the qualitative research during the pandemic period
During the defense of the thesis in front of the internal committee, a recommendation was made to conduct a limited qualitative study aimed to compare the findings in the thesis based on the pre-Covid pandemic period to the new situation during Covid-19 period. The main issue was to examine whether there was an improvement in the influence of the organizational politics on motivation, or perhaps the contrary and the crisis have worsened the subject at hand.

For the purpose of this qualitative study, we have interviewed 5 volunteers, 5 employees and 5 managers from MDA, in April 2021. It should be noted that firefighters and volunteers of the Israel's National Fire & Rescue Authority were not sampled, since Magen David Adom workers and volunteers were at the forefront during the Covid-19 crisis. They were the same people we have interviewed during the pre-Covid pandemic period.

The qualitative research was conducted through an interview that included questions from the organizational politics questionnaires (nine statements) and the motivation questionnaire (ten statements) that were used in the empirical research. Below is a presentation of the qualitative findings about the opinions of interviewed employees, volunteers and managers.

The aim of the study is to examine how organizational politics affects the motivation and performance of workers in emergency organizations in Israel (Magen David Adom, Israel's National Fire & Rescue Authority). Existing findings in the literature indicate that there is a negative relationship between organizational politics and the quality of work in

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emergency organizations and that high levels of organizational politics to decreased quality of work and lower levels of motivation (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007).

Emergency organizations in general, and MDA and the Fire & Rescue Authority in particular, are important organizations that provide help during emergencies through their human capital. Therefore, it is important to examine the human factor in these organizations and its function, as they deal with saving lives. Knowledge and study relating to ways to increase motivation has implications on saving lives of civilians, while examining whether the politics exercised in these organizations affect the motivation. It is interesting as the researcher is employed in such an organization. Hence, such a study may lead to results that will enable to provide recommendations to these organizations as to what should be maintained as well as what should be improved.

**Discussion of findings related to employees**

First, analyzing the content of the employees' interviews we have identified a general negative perception (although not explicit) of the impact of organizational politics on motivation. This subject was expressed most clearly by the fact that during the pandemic period employees felt more intense the existence of preferred small groups within MDA formed by members who are remarkably close to each other. Interviewed employees referred to this situation as "equals" and "more equals".

For example, all employees received bonuses, but the members of those preferred small groups received additional reward regardless of their investment and contribution to the carrying out of testing samples and providing vaccines. Since the degree of infection and risks were unknown, these preferred employees enjoyed more "sterile conditions" than the other employees did. The employees' response was to take sick leave days on the pretext of symptoms of illness and therefore were placed in isolation. There were several employees who went into isolation several times. The transfer of verified infected patients required protective clothing, which made driving and providing care to the patients quite difficult. Some employees found themselves working for many hours wearing this protective clothing while the "preferred" employees were not assigned such tasks, and in case they had to do such work it was for a limited time only. These situations of work force deficit required to use more volunteers to fill the ranks on the one hand and save expenses on the other hand. In order to carry out the activities that is part of the organization's mission requires flexibility, this flexibility is sometimes misinterpreted in a way that has political influence on the employees and their work.

**Discussion of findings related to volunteers**

The volunteer in general may relate to the organizational politics as a given situation, which he or she must contain in order to achieve his or her value goals. The analysis of the content of the volunteers' interview indicates first that there is a high level of emotional and functional tension between those who serve as the coordinators of the volunteers, the volunteers and the employees. Second, it indicates the existence of a negative perception expressed in their interpretation, same as the employees, "equals and more equals". The volunteers, who are not rewarded enough with simple things such as provision of uniform, or the volunteer who does so out of his or her values, understands that in order to gain proper attention, be rewarded and to participate in decision-making such as assignment of shifts, one must be close to the group that is in charge and close to the management. The volunteer in

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general may relate to the organizational politics as a given situation, which he or she must accept in order to achieve his or her own value goals.

Third, another problem that came out of interviews is that, fulfilling the need for volunteers to perform the work tasks of those employees who were isolated at home due to being infected with Covid-19 virus, has created intolerable situations for volunteers, by suggesting that the volunteers are taking the jobs of employees.

Fourth, the accumulation of "power" by these "preferred" groups, often allows the group to treat badly a volunteer who is not willing to accept their authority. Often, an employee or a manager creates friction and conflict between a coordinator and a volunteer in order to create a situation of divide and conquer.

Fifth, due to the large number of work tasks during the pandemic, it was decided to accept volunteers as employees, at least for the period during which the activity was overloaded and required professional workers, a situation that could be solved immediately by using people who volunteer at the organization. Many volunteers considered themselves qualified enough to be hired, but those who were eventually accepted and hired were the same volunteers who were recommended by the "preferred" employees or volunteers. Many volunteers considered this as a personal insult as they performed their job very well in comparison to those who were accepted. Consequently, this highly negative situation led to the reduction the volunteers' trust in the managers of MDA.

Over the past year (2020), things in MDA have come to situations where the volunteer has concluded that he will not be able to achieve his valued goals due to the existing tension between the employees and the volunteers and between the volunteers themselves. Consequently, the result was negative since many volunteers have abandoned their volunteer work in MDA.

In conclusion, the findings about the influence of organizational politics on the motivation and commitment of volunteers in MDA during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, indicated a negative influence that persisted from the before the pandemic period. In our opinion, the main causes were the fact that management of MDA did not act to reduce the negative perception of employees and volunteers about organizational politics. So, despite the major crisis situation that MDA had to address, the situation of the negative perception of organizational politics remained unchanged.

**Discussion of findings and conclusions related to managers**

The findings related to managers of MDA, as stated before, during the "Covid-19 Year", the workload increased as well as the numerous requirements for carrying out activities such as sampling different population, for example nursing homes citizens. Diversity of ethnic populations and national cultures have forced and are forcing managers to delegate authority to line employees and volunteers. For example, delegating assignment and responsibility for various vaccination sites, as well as for tests done at residents' homes and drive-in complexes, and vaccination complexes. All these activities specific to the pandemic situation were done in addition to the already very busy routine activities.

The perception that arises from conversations and personal observations is that those who received the delegation of authority were usually from those groups of workers who enjoyed proximity to power groups and hence were more rewarded than the other workers who did their job faithfully.

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Over the past year, the nurturing of preferred employees and volunteers has been greater than what was during routine while utilizing and receiving information about employees' relationships among themselves and the relationships between employees and volunteers and vice versa. These groups are often referred to as "close associates". These "close associates" are driven out of interest in achieving their interests, such as improving status through a position or a role, shortening the period between shoulder ranks and salary ranks. The "close associates" in the eyes of ordinary employees are perceived as bad employees whose professionalism is low, and that their close relationships with those in charge develops around them an aura of credible professionalism.

Another conclusion that should be noted is that the manager himself feels a kind of discrimination when he sees how much other managers are preferred over other managers and how they are rewarded accordingly. This raises the question, why does the manager, who experiences such feelings, behaves exactly as he does not want other to behave towards him?

## 5. Conclusions and recommendations

The results of the quantitative survey and the summary of the content analysis of all the interviews indicates clearly that the perceptions of all the respondents are perceptions driven by self-interest of each according to one's views. In the case of this study, we consider that the main problem of MDA is that there is no clear definition of the involvement and engagement of employees and volunteers. Direct managers are expected to bridge conflicting interests and act to retain the volunteers as a necessary human resource for emergencies and times when costs must be reduced. The results of the quantitative and qualitative research show that the situation has not changed in the Covid -19 period compared to the previous period and study.

We suggest the following recommendation to managers of the emergency organizations in Israel. Organizational managers may need to do a much better job of paying attention to the various factors that can lead to politics perceptions and high turnover intentions with all workers, especially those employed in government or non-profit firms. For instance, practitioners may need to do a better job of communicating expectations, policies, procedures, and standards of behavior with workers, and in communication forms and languages appropriate for such organizations. (Miller et al., 2008)

Managers do whatever is reasonable to diminish such subjective evaluations of employees about organizational politics. For example, to reduce worker uncertainty about how and why decisions are made, managers could regularly include workers in organizational decision-making processes, particularly in judgments related to resources allocation (e.g., Ferris et al. 2002).

In addition, increasing worker understanding of organizational policies and procedures related to performance evaluations, rewards, and discipline can aid in reducing the psychological feelings of ambiguity that workers in uncertain environments often experience (e.g., Ferris et al. 1996b; Hochwarter et al. 2006; Vigoda 2003).

Consequently, our recommendations for managers of emergency organizations in Israel to plan for and implement organizational actions to explain to employees and volunteers the mission, vision, strategy and the organizational values and appropriate behaviors of their organization, the motives of the existing organizational procedures about performance standards, system of rewards and incentives, and discipline in the workplace. We also recommend to managers to apply in an objective manner theses procedure in order to increase

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the trust of their employees and volunteers that they are applied equally and in an equitable manner.

We recommend to managers of public emergency organizations from Israel to make use of two categories of human resource best practices: the first, skills enhancing HR practices, and second, opportunity enhancing practices. They should ensure that the organization has appropriately skilled employees and volunteers by doing comprehensive recruitment, rigorous selection of candidates, and extensive training of both employees and volunteers.

From the second category of best HR practices, we recommend their HR specialists and line managers should amplify employee and volunteer motivation applying practices such as developmental performance management, competitive compensation, use of appropriate incentives and rewards, extensive benefits, provide a system for promotion and career development, and increasing job security.

We also recommend managers to use HR best practices for empowering employees to make the best use of their skills and motivation to achieve organizational objectives. Such HR practices are allowing for a flexible job design, extensive use of work teams, providing opportunities for involving employees in the decision-making process regarding their work, increased organizational agility and information sharing by managers for all employees and volunteers.

We consider that it is very important for managers of emergency public organizations in Israel that are working extensively with employees to create, develop and implement human resource management specific procedures for volunteers, taking into account their specific motivation, level of expertise and work experience.

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