WAR, ATROCITIES, SOCIETY: SOCIOLOGY OF FRACTURE

The Israeli Sociological Society Special Conference –

May 31st, 2026

at Ben Gurion University

Abstracts Book – Not Inclusive

Organizing Committee:

Orly Benjamin , Ori Schwarz, Rafi Grosglik and Yaron Hoffmann Dishon

האגודה הסוציולוגית הישראלית
رابطة علم الاجتماع الإسرائيلية
Israeli Sociological Society

Preface

By: Orly Benjamin

During the 2025-2026 academic year the ISS (Israeli Sociological Society) did not have its annual conference. While many among ISS members believed in our role as sociologists to enter the public discourse with our human rights, social justice, equality and democracy, analytical instruments, others felt differently. Our institutional belonging to universities and colleges, higher education institutions committed to protect students serving as reserve forces from critical voices, silenced us. Given the defensive atmosphere, our critique might have strengthen the position of sociology as an outsider 'problematic' discipline. Thus, following an earlier meeting in which we mainly discussed our differing moral stances, we had a special conference that aimed at presenting sociological research on the war and its ramifications.

On 31 May 2026, the Israeli Sociological Society convened a special conference entitled ***War, Atrocities, Society: A Sociology of Fracture*** at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. The meeting was conceived as a response to an extraordinary historical moment. It emerged from the recognition that the events initiated on 7 October 2023—the massacre in southern Israel, the regional war that followed, the destruction of Gaza's cities, the mass killing of civilians, and the profound social transformations accompanying a prolonged state of war, constitute not simply another crisis, but a historical rupture whose consequences will shape life in Israel/Palestine for many years to come.

The conference was guided by two broad sociological questions. The first asked how we arrived at this moment: what social, cultural, political, economic and technological conditions made these events possible? The second asked what this moment is doing to us: how prolonged war and mass violence are reshaping society, politics, morality, knowledge, education, culture, migration, policing, inequality, and everyday life. Rather than seeking immediate political answers, the conference invited sociologists to bring the conceptual and empirical tools of the discipline to bear on these questions.

The meeting formed part of a broader initiative launched by the Israeli Sociological Society, which included dedicated research groups, new publication venues, and collaborative efforts across the Society's research communities. Scholars working on diverse aspects of the war and its consequences—whether individually, within these research groups, or through other

collaborative projects—were invited to present their ongoing work and engage in collective discussion.

The twenty-five abstracts collected in this volume reflect the breadth of sociological engagement with this period of fracture. They address a wide range of themes, including governance and state power, discourse and silencing, knowledge production, morality, inequality, displacement, education, culture, identity, collective memory, policing, technology, protest, and the changing relationship between Israeli society and the wider world. Although they differ in theoretical orientation, methodology, and normative perspective, they share a commitment to examining the social processes through which extraordinary violence is both produced and experienced.

This abstract collection is published to make these contributions accessible beyond the conference itself. As an open record of work in progress, it documents how members of the Israeli sociological community responded, in real time, to one of the most consequential and contested periods in the history of the region. It also reflects the Society's commitment to fostering rigorous sociological inquiry, intellectual pluralism, and scholarly dialogue in times when such dialogue is both especially difficult and especially necessary.

We hope that this collection will serve not only as a guide to the conference, but also as a resource for future research and as a record of the questions that sociologists considered urgent at this historical juncture.

Please use the e-mail addresses that appear next to authors' names to request more elaborate versions that could not be included here to preserve authors' chances to publish their work as academic publications.

האגודה הסוציולוגית הישראלית
رابطة علم الاجتماع الإسرائيلية
Israeli Sociological Society

Table of Contents

Preface 2

The Sociology of Destruction: Mechanisms and Justifications 7

Why was AI needed for indiscriminate killing and destruction? A sociology of the intelligence use of AI in the Gaza War By *Ori Schwarz* 7

The Right to Destroy: Identity, Violence, and Domicide from Gaza to Lebanon By *Ariel Handel*[I] *and Mori Ram*[II] 8

UNRWA, the International Community and Israel's War to Prevent Palestine in Historical Perspective By *Maya Rosenfeld* 9

An Institutional Ethnography of Hunger: How Public Procurement Makes Sense of Shooting at Food Distribution Points Operated by the Gaza Humanitarian Fund? By *Orly Benjamin* 10

Borderline Democracy: Political Sociology During Wartime 12

"It's Always the Jews": Ambivalent Victimhood and the Social Boundaries of Antisemitism By *Ben Bornstein* 12

The Colonial Trap and the Escalation of the Zionist-Palestinian Conflict By *Oren Yiftachel* 13

Language as a weapon: speech under the Hasbara regime and the rise of peer-propaganda By *Guy Shani*[I] *and Ori Schwarz*[II] 14

The Impact of the October 7 War on Democratic Values: Evidence from Pre- and Mid-War Surveys of Jewish Israelis By *Avital Sicron* 15

Gender and Family: Care and Exclusion in Times of War 17

Republic of Care: Hostages' Mothers in Israel after 0ct 7 By *Michal Hisherik* 17

Risk and Protective Factors Predicting Mental Health and Functioning During Wartime: A Comparison Between Jewish and Arab-Palestinian Women in Israel By *Niveen Hassan* 17

Gendered Experiences of the October 7 War: Young Arab-Palestinian Women and Men in Israel Between Fear, Exclusion, and Loss of Belonging By [I]*Raghda Alnabilsy*, [II]*Siwar Makhoul- Khoury* and [III]*Hanin Mordi* 19

The Muses and the Cannons: Cultural Fields During Wartime 22

Heteronomization and the Rise of Ideological Capital: Processes of Change in Israel's Cultural Field After October 7th By *Tal Feder* 22

Imprisoning Culture within Security Fences - Contraction of Cultural Discourse Amid National Conflict, By *Edna Harel-Fisher* 23

Urban Cultural Policy during Wartime: Emotions and Silence in the Cultural Public Sphere of Tel Aviv–Jaffa By *Noga Keidar and Beery Livnat* 24

Science, Technology, and Knowledge during Wartime 26

Bitcoin as a Boundary Object in Contemporary Warfare: Legal, Technological, and Discursive Contestation By *Ilan Talmud* 26

Epistemic Disruption: Social, Material, and Affective Consequences of the Destruction of Scientific Knowledge in Wartime By [I]*Talia Fried,* [II]*Dan Kotliar,* [III]*Clemence Pinel and* [IIII]*Rafi Grosglik* 27

The Political Economy of Israel (So-Called "Super-Sparta") in the War Against Iran By *Efraim Davidi* 28

War Veterans with Disabilities: The Wounded Chosen Body and Self 31

"Youth and Heroism": Religious and Spiritual Meaning-Making Among Religious Infantry Combat Soldiers with Physical Disabilities from the "Swords of Iron" War By *Oren Cohen Zada* 31

The Wounded Body's Dilemma: Between Normalization and Pride at Beit HaLochem By *Omri Tancman* 32

Thoughts in the Spirit of Levinas – On War, Illness, and Responsibility By *Ifat Schwarz* 33

Jews And Palestinians in Higher Education Institutions 34

The Sense of Belonging of Palestinian Citizens of Israel (PAI) Students during the Iron Swords War By *Irit Harboun* 34

How did the October 7th attacks and the ensuing war affect Jewish-Arab relations in Israeli higher education? By *Lior Yohanani*[I], *Lars Leszczensky*[II], *Yossi Shavit*[III], *Uri Shwed*[IIII] 35

The Political Economy of The Conflict during crisis 37

Precarious Labour in Times of Crisis: War, Political Economy, and Non-Citizen Workers By *Yahel Kurlander* 37

Changing Growth Patterns: The Political Economy of the (Protracted) War in Gaza By [I]*Assaf Bondy and* [II]*Asaf Yakir* 38

From Fracture to Protest, and from Protest Back to War: Political Activism and Social Movements in Times of War and Polarization 39

"Bring Them Home Now!" – And Now what? The Begin Gate Protest for the Return of the Hostages in the Months Following the Ceasefire Agreement By *Yaniv Ron-El* 39

The Lionesses' Roar: Women Scholars Respond to the Israel Iran War 41

Between the Spaces of Death and Somud: Narratives of Palestinian Women in the Negev By *Sarab Abu-Rabia-Queder* 41

Israel's Borderlands: Frontier and Border Regions in Wartime 42

Once in the Frontier and Once in War: A Historical Perspective on the Current Drainage of the Hula Valley By *Uri Schuser* 42

Belonging and locationality 44

The Emergence of New Haredi Rabbinic Leadership in Israel as a Product of the War Crisis By *Tehila Gado* 44

Police Legitimacy Among Israeli Arab Youth During the Iron Swords War: Policing, Law Legitimacy, and Social Identities By *Ameen Azmy* 45

Fashioning Settler Practices: Dress, Nativeness, and Erasure in Israel-Palestine By *Yarden Levy* 46

Evacuations and rehabilitation 48

Escape Fantasy or Emigration Intention? Examining Migration Tendencies Among the Jewish Population in Israel Following a Multi-Dimensional Crisis in Israel (2023-2025) By Michal Shamir[I] and Orit Shamir-Balderman[II] 48

Cake Surrogacy: Birthday Cakes, Displacement, and Maternal Agency among Internally Displaced Israeli Kibbutz Communities after October 7 By *Maskit Hodesman, Ortal Slobodin and Nir Avieli* 49

Collaborative Embroidery During Wartime: Gendered Civic Action and the Production of Solidarity By *Sharon Ramer Biel* 50

Place, Home, Family and War 52

"I'm a Combat Mother": Negotiating Affective citizenship Among Soldiers' Parents in Civilian Facebook Groups By *Noam Sar Shalom* 52

The Domestic Sphere in Arab Society in Israel Under Prolonged Emergency: Motherhood, Resilience, and the Everyday Management of Uncertainty By *Maysoon Raya* 53

From Trauma to Resilience? Living with Disabilities in the Shadow of War 55

Breathing Spaces: Trauma-Informed Design of Public Environments in Israel By *Michal Tenne Rinde* 55

Family Resilience in Emergencies in Families with a Person with Disability By [I]*Rotem Nagar Eidelman,* [II]*Nurit Guedj,* [III]*Lital Barlev* 56

"All That Remains Is to Stay in the Safe Room and Minimize the Damage": The Experience of Safety Among Women Aging with Long-Term Disabilities During the October 7 War By *Alexandra Halbani* 58

Closing Plenary: Sociology and the War 60

Sociology and current moral questions: a small discussion for big questions By *Orly Benjamin* 60

A Sociological Reading of War: Analytical Directions, By *Yagil Levy* 62

האגודה הסוציולוגית הישראלית
رابطة علم الاجتماع الإسرائيلية
Israeli Sociological Society

The Sociology of Destruction: Mechanisms and Justifications

Why was AI needed for indiscriminate killing and destruction? A sociology of the intelligence use of AI in the Gaza War By *Ori Schwarz*

Bar-Ilan University, ori.schwarz@biu.ac.il

The paper examines the use of AI for intelligence purposes in the Gaza War in order to solve a puzzle: AI is widely portrayed in the literature as a technology of distinction affording personalization and fine distinctions; so why was AI needed to produce what seems like indiscriminate mass killing and destruction of whole neighborhoods? Solving the paradox requires understanding technology within the legal, cultural, structural and moral contexts in which it is embedded. AI was used to dramatically accelerate target production, and was needed since the Israeli military has adopted the "lethalness" doctrine (aspiring to maximize killing) but had also embedded international humanitarian law (which requires distinction between military targets and civilians) within its organizational structures, with lawyers in the kill-chain. AI was used to personalize justifications for a uniform treatment, bombing: each target was attacked for different reasons, linked to Hamas based on unique data pieces. AI could legitimate mass killing and destruction since the automation of data fusion and analysis has made it possible to turn thousands of people and buildings into "legitimate targets" with individual probability scores. Even a perfect, bias-free and error-free AI system, could legitimize mass killing in this manner. The critical sociology of AI must therefore move its agenda beyond errors and bias. We must also understand that AI's social effects are context-dependent, as the same technological features can promote both personalized individuation and de-individuation, distinction and indiscrimination, simultaneously and at different levels.

The Right to Destroy: Identity, Violence, and Domicide from Gaza to Lebanon

By *Ariel Handel*[I] *and Mori Ram*[II]

[I]Bezalel, handelarie@post.bezalel.ac.il

[II]Newcastle University, mori.ram@newcastle.ac.uk

Since October 2023, Israel has demolished approximately 90% of the built-up area in the Gaza Strip, wreaked havoc in refugee camps in the West Bank, and dramatically accelerated the pace of demolitions in East Jerusalem and the Negev. At the time of writing, Defense Minister Israel Katz announced that he had instructed IDF forces in Lebanon to accelerate the demolition of homes near the border with Israel“ in accordance with the Beit Hanoun and Rafah models ”.Domicide – the intensive and systematic destruction of homes and living spaces – has become, it seems, the most distinctive feature of Israel’s actions over the past two and a half years. In our view, participation in destruction becomes symbolic capital, and therefore part of shaping self- and collective identity. The“ right to destroy ”is perceived as a resource for distribution, and as such it creates competition from various social actors. The debate is not about Israel’s fundamental right to destroy Gaza, the West Bank, or southern Lebanon, but rather about the right to participate in the act of destruction and enjoy the symbolic capital that comes with it. The purpose of the article will be to characterize in general the forms of demolition, and primarily to present the“ right to destroy ”,or the question of access to" legitimate means of demolition "as a key issue in understanding the Israeli regime and contemporary modes of socialization. In doing so, the article seeks to examine the phenomenon of demolitions in several complementary phases: understanding the deep structure of the fantasy of demolition, describing the forms of demolition, and examining the socio-political role of demolition for Israeli society.

UNRWA, the International Community and Israel's War to Prevent Palestine in Historical Perspective By *Maya Rosenfeld*

Hebrew University, maya.rosenfeld@mail.huji.ac.il

My presentation discussed findings from a research project that examined UNRWA's decreasing capacity to fulfill the mandate granted to it by the international community in the contexts of the acute emergency that prevailed in the occupied territories from October 2000 to October 7, 2023, and Israel's war of annihilation in Gaza (Oct 7, 2023 -?).

UNRWA was established in 1949 by UNGA Resolution 302, following Israel's refusal to implement Resolution 194 that called for the repatriation of the 1948 war refugees. It was mandated to provide aid, services and protection to Palestinian refugees in their countries of dispersion until a comprehensive solution is reached.

I show that the protracted failure of the international community to oblige Israel to implement UN resolutions pertaining to the rights of Palestinian refugees and the Palestinians' right to self-determination and statehood led to three fundamental shifts in UNRWA's modus operandi, which significantly affected the Agency's capacity to assist refugee communities.

The first shift was initiated by UNRWA in reaction to the stagnation in the implementation of UNGA resolution 194. Starting in the early 1960s, the Agency applied a strategic plan that transformed it from a relief-centered organization to one focused on education and the development of human capital. This transformation provided refugees of the second and third generations with an "educational advantage" over their peers in Arab states and opened up channels for upper social mobility.

The second shift unfolded in the early 2000s against the backdrop of the collapse of the Oslo process, Israel's withdrawal from its short-lived commitment to end the occupation, and the reluctance of the international community to intervene. The then unprecedented military measures that Israel employed to perpetuate its control over the OPT caused a steep deterioration in living conditions in the WB and an acute humanitarian crisis in the GS. UNRWA was called back to provide emergency aid to the majority of the refugee population

in the OPT. Relief, however, was unable to counterbalance the extent of harm wrought by Israel's measures and UNRWA increasingly lost capacity to fulfill its mandate.

The third shift occurred during the war in Gaza, wherein Israel moved to a strategy of annihilation; an all-out attack on Palestinian existence in the Gaza Strip. UNRWA was now forced to focus only on the very survival of the bombed and displaced population. Yet as the lifeline for the people Gaza, a bulwark of Palestinian refugees and as symbol of international commitment to their cause, the agency itself – its employees, institutions and facilities – became a target for elimination.

An Institutional Ethnography of Hunger: How Public Procurement Makes Sense of Shooting at Food Distribution Points Operated by the Gaza Humanitarian Fund? By *Orly Benjamin*

Bar Ilan University, Orly.benjamin@biu.ac.il

Humanitarian aid has been scrutinized more systematically in recent years, to investigate cases in which humanitarian aid has been used as a tool of control, of military action or as political leverage. In these cases, researchers have analysed the "weaponization" of aid in order to clarify the military and political implications of aid operations. Until recently, there have been no studies of cases in which a bureaucratic procurement process carried out by a state (Public) -civil society (Private) Partnership (Public Private Partnerships, took part in weaponization processes. Particularly exceptional in the field, is a case in which a stated objective of implementing aid on a contract basis, practically erases the aid agenda and leaves the project to focus exclusively on the military armament agenda. In the absence of such an examination, it is impossible to understand the extent to which PPP can be used in the field of weaponization. In other words, the possibility of using the bureaucratic procedure of public procurement to enable an allegedly civil society organizations to act as representative of the state in contracting out private armies under the guise of implementing aid. This article draws applies a public procurement perspective for the contracting out of humanitarian food aid

during times of starvation. The case is examined following Joshua Schwartz' (2011) study of a similar public procurement case. Schwartz studied the case of the contracting out procedure signed by public authorities when aid for the victims of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans was urgent. The point of similarity between the two cases is the slow pace in which contracting out occurs while urgency must save human lives. The implementation of aid based on contracting out likewise promotes the aid agenda while working on optimizing the slow bureaucratic process of selecting aid agencies.

In order to understand the dynamics of erasing the aid agenda in favor of leaving the armament agenda alone, I applied a partial institutional ethnography examining the establishment of the Gaza Humanitarian Fund (GHF), which was formally entrusted with providing food aid during the famine in the Gaza Strip between May and October 2025, and the process of drafting the operating specifications for the project to establish the aid points. My research methodology was based on the principle of following the stages of the bureaucratic process and analysing the knowledge transferred between stages.

The process I have elicited had as its starting point, the establishment of a civil society organization in Switzerland with the appearance of a food aid organization. In the face of widespread public criticism, the Swiss arm was closed, and an American arm was opened. In a second phase, a consulting agency was recruited. According to the specifications it prepared, contracts were signed with private military contractors for the following performances at each of the four aid points Planned: control and supervision of entry points; escorting aid convoys; crowd management; perimeter protection. Shooting became essential to the realization of these performances while food distribution became marginal. Contracts were not signed with entities skilled in food distribution. From the analysis, it can be learned that state-civil society partnerships (PPPs) have the power to operate private armies and advance military and political goals through contracts as part of a project presented as having an aid agenda.

האגודה הסוציולוגית הישראלית
رابطة علم الاجتماع الإسرائيلية
Israeli Sociological Society

Borderline Democracy: Political Sociology During Wartime

"It's Always the Jews": Ambivalent Victimhood and the Social Boundaries of Antisemitism

By *Ben Bornstein*
The Van Leer Institute, bnborn@gmail.com

The Hamas attack of October 7, 2023, was, among other things, a moment of discursive clash between competing interpretive frameworks, rooted in different temporalities. One dominant trope that overwhelmingly shaped the following Israeli public discourse was that of historical enmity toward Jews. This paper analyzes how Jewish Israelis employed this framework to understand the events, how it intersected with competing frameworks of violence, and what were the political and social implications of these interpretive choices.

The paper draws on a representative online survey of 1,000 Jewish Israelis conducted in December 2024, and complementary analysis of interviews with victims of politically motivated violence prior to October 7. It proposes a distinction between two dimensions of national victimhood: historical persecution and eternal hatred. Alongside this distinction, the research reveals the social life of victimhood narratives and the dynamic boundaries of antisemitism as a cultural scheme. Using Relational Class Analysis, the study exposes two main interpretive communities: while in the first, respondents experience tension between historical-antisemitic framings and contemporary geopolitical ones, in the other, respondents draw on them simultaneously and in mutually reinforcing ways.

Relying on a sociological understanding of ambivalence, the analysis argues that antisemitism is not a stable analytical category with fixed boundaries, but a dynamic interpretive resource mobilized to shape collective boundaries and moral reasoning in interaction with competing discourses. The centrality of the "enmity toward Jews" framing with its discursive intersections invites fresh perspectives on national victimhood and intergroup relations under conditions of interpretive ambiguity. The discussion concludes by

reconsidering the relationship between Jewish memory and political responsibility in the aftermath of October 7.

The Colonial Trap and the Escalation of the Zionist-Palestinian Conflict

By *Oren Yiftachel*

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and UCL, London;
yiftach@bgu.ac.il

It is widely asserted that the horrific Hamas massacre on October 7, 2023—the gravest security disaster in the state's history—led to "collapse of a paradigm" entailing the Israeli policy of 'managing' (rather than resolving) the conflict, alongside the ongoing colonization of Palestine. However, a critical examination of the "1,000-day war" since October 8th, 2023, reveals that no shift in the direction of Israeli policy. Rather, the evidence points to an *acceleration* and deepening of the settler-colonial project, accompanied by an escalation of the conflict, a genocidal war in Gaza, and the opening of additional regional violent fronts. Concurrently, it is evident that this policy intensification has neither enhanced security nor resolved any of the conflicts in Israel/Palestine or the wider region. Instead, it has culminated in an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza (and Lebanon); posed unprecedented risks to the domestic home front; triggered a severe decline in Israel's global standing; and fueled a worldwide rise in antisemitism.

How, then, can we explain the continuation and intensification of a policy that precipitated the most resounding failure in the state's history, alongside a series of unprecedented internal and external crises? I argue that the explanation lies in a "colonial trap" in which Jewish-Israeli society currently finds itself. This trap stems from the fact that the colonial project is driven by a series of powerful, hegemonic Jewish-Israeli institutions. Consequently, halting or reversing this project is perceived by all Jewish Israeli dominant political culture as carrying intolerable costs to Jewish society. The default path, therefore, becomes the perpetuation and deepening of this destructive hegemonic project.

This lecture offers a geopolitical analysis that highlights three intertwined conflicts shaping power relations in the country over the last sixty years: the geopolitical, the colonial, and the ethnocratic. The core of the conflict in the expanding settler-colonial Zionist project, which has intensified over the last two decades through a process of "negative dialectics" (Adorno) generated between the military and economic expansion and empowerment of the Jewish state, and steadfast, often violent Palestinian resistance—the latter of which also exacerbates a rhetoric of "counter-colonialism."

Language as a weapon: speech under the Hasbara regime and the rise of peer-propaganda By *Guy Shani[I] and Ori Schwarz*[II]

[I]College of Management, guysh2@colman.ac.il

[II]Bar-Ilan University, ori.schwarz@biu.ac.il

Freedom of speech in Israel has narrowed during the war – not only regarding opinions, but also regarding descriptive statements that may be subject to proof or refutation – such as allegations of war crimes. The fierce opposition evoked by such statements often did not focus on their truth value but rather set an alternative criterion for evaluating the legitimacy of statements: their potential political effects and particularly their impact on Israel's image. In this unique language regime, that we call the *Hasbara regime*, statements are perceived and evaluated not as attempts to reflect reality but as weapons in the struggles over its representation. Relying on focus groups with Israeli students and content analysis of online political content, we characterize this regime and its internal logic. The *Hasbara* ethics views online peer-propaganda defending the state's image as a civic duty epitomizing good citizenship and comparable to reserve duty. It emerged in the 21st century with the rise of social media, which invites citizens to join the online struggle over the construction of reality and increases their awareness of the political effects of speech and its possible interpretations, including undesirable ones, thus contributing to the development of a propagandist

subjectivity that voluntarily commit to the states' PR project. This project reflects not only nationalism or fascization but also the colonialism of the PR logic. This logic was popularized by the mass media's growing use of the 'strategy frame', the framing of policy decisions and political statements as cynical PR moves, which helped transform the popular perception of language, from a mirror representing the world into a weapon in struggles over it. Thus, a new form of propaganda typical of the Internet era emerges: distributed and networked peer-propaganda. Consequently, descriptive statements turn into national loyalty tests: those whose statements reflect badly on the state's image, regardless of their empirical validity, turn into internal enemies.

The Impact of the October 7 War on Democratic Values: Evidence from Pre- and Mid-War Surveys of Jewish Israelis By *Avital Sicron*

Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Avital.Sicron@mail.huji.ac.il

Wars and armed conflicts have a detrimental effect on democratic governance, reducing government commitment to democratic practices and citizens' support for liberal democracy. In Israel, the war that began on October 7th 2023 seemed to create a similar effect: Netanyahu's right-wing government continued its previous efforts to curtail the power of Israel's Supreme Court, limit free speech and protest, and ensure government control of security forces. Though these actions weaken liberal democracy for Israeli citizens, they have been met with little protest. This is especially surprising as Israeli civil society reacted forcefully against similar measures taken before the war.

To investigate whether this behavioral shift reflects a change in core democratic values, this study analyzes two population surveys conducted pre-war (July 2023, N=813) and mid-war (April 2025, N=1005). Respondents were asked to rate the importance of different facets of democracy on a 1-5 scale: separation of powers, rule of the majority, equality for all citizens, and the separation of religion and state. Focusing on Jewish respondents and their views on Israeli democracy within Israel's internationally recognized borders, the study finds that

scores remained relatively stable between the two periods. Only “equality for all citizens” received a marginally lower score in the second survey (a mean difference of 0.12 points, $p<0.05$), while the rest did not change significantly. This level of similarity between the results of the two surveys indicates that Jewish Israeli citizens’ conception of democracy remained largely unchanged despite the war.

Therefore, the study concludes that the absence of protests during wartime is not due to reduced support for liberal democracy. An alternative explanation is that citizens’ priorities shifted due to the war, rendering issues of democratic governance secondary to immediate, existential concerns.

האגודה הסוציולוגית הישראלית
رابطة علم الاجتماع الإسرائيلية
Israeli Sociological Society

Gender and Family: Care and Exclusion in Times of War

Republic of Care: Hostages' Mothers in Israel after Oct 7 By *Michal Hisherik*

Beit Berl Academic College, michalh@beitberl.ac.il

Following the collapse of the social contract on October 7, 2023, Israeli hostages' mothers faced a profound personal rupture and the psychological reality of ambiguous loss. Drawing on 14 qualitative in-depth interviews with Jewish mothers, this article examines how they navigated an institutional vacuum by redefining the concept of family. The study identifies three core processes of transformation. First, the formation of voluntary kinship and a *communitas* within the Hostages Forum, a domesticated public space that serves as an alternative sanctuary and suspends traditional societal feeling rules. Second, the expansion of family sovereignty, wherein mothers integrate military liaison officers into the nuclear family unit to compensate for state abandonment. Finally, the research analyzes the transition from private grief to a Republic of Care. Through other mothering practices, these mothers transform private loss into collective responsibility, effectively turning their private hostage into everyone's child. In conclusion, this maternal activism collapses into iconic citizenship, challenging institutional hierarchies and establishing an alternative maternal contract grounded in an ethic of care that redraws the boundaries among the private, public, and national spheres.

Risk and Protective Factors Predicting Mental Health and Functioning During Wartime: A Comparison Between Jewish and Arab-Palestinian Women in Israel By *Niveen Hassan*

Zefat Academic College, Niveen_hs@hotmail.com

Based on Hobfoll's Conservation of Resources Theory, which posits that psychological distress and functional impairment result from threatened or lost resources, this study examined risk and protective factors associated with mental health and functioning during wartime among Jewish and Arab-Palestinian women in Israel.

The Iron Swords War, which began on October 7, 2023, exposed the population to ongoing security threats and prolonged stress. The study examined differences between Jewish and Arab-Palestinian women in risk and protective factors, mental health, and functional impairment, and explored the extent to which risk and protective factors predicted both outcomes.

A cross-sectional online survey was conducted approximately one year after the outbreak of the war among 149 Jewish women and 160 Arab-Palestinian women. Independent-samples t-tests and hierarchical regression analyses were performed.

Arab-Palestinian women reported greater financial hardship and higher levels of functional impairment, whereas Jewish women reported greater exposure to war-related events. No significant differences were found in mental health, resilience, family-social support, or prior stressful life events.

In both groups, prior stressful life events emerged as a central risk factor predicting poorer mental health and greater functional impairment. Resilience predicted better mental health, whereas family-social support predicted lower levels of functional impairment. Financial hardship predicted poorer outcomes only among Jewish women, whereas exposure to war-related events predicted functional impairment only among Arab-Palestinian women.

The findings indicate both shared and group-specific patterns of adaptation. While women from both groups relied on similar protective resources, differences in risk factors and functioning may reflect broader structural conditions, including socioeconomic disparities and social exclusion. Consistent with Hobfoll's theory, the findings highlight the importance of strengthening protective resources and developing culturally and gender-sensitive interventions to promote mental health and functioning during prolonged crises.

Gendered Experiences of the October 7 War: Young Arab-Palestinian Women and Men in Israel Between Fear, Exclusion, and Loss of Belonging

By [I]*Raghda Alnabilsy*, [II]*Siwar Makhoul- Khoury* and [III]*Hanin Mordi*

[I]Ruppin Academic Center, Israel. Raghadelnabilsy@gmail.com

[II]Tel Hai Collage, siwarmakhoul@gmail.com

[III] Sapir Academic College, haninmordi@gmail.com

Young people living in contexts of protracted political conflict face unique developmental challenges. For Arab-Palestinian young adults in Israel, these challenges intensified following the October 2023 war, profoundly affecting their sense of belonging, personal and collective security, and developmental trajectories. However, experiences of war are not gender-neutral. Arab-Palestinian young women face not only the psychological consequences of ongoing political violence but also gender-specific constraints, including social surveillance, traditional gender expectations, and family responsibilities, which intensify their vulnerability and silence their emotional experiences. During wartime, fear is particularly heightened among young women because of concerns about being targeted in public spaces due to their national identity, visible appearance, or traditional clothing, all of which may increase their exposure to discrimination, hostility, and violence. As members of an ethnic-national minority living within a society undergoing social change while remaining largely collectivist and patriarchal, their experiences are shaped by the intersection of gender, nationality, age, and social position.

Aim

Guided by the framework of Continuous Traumatic Stress Theory, this study explores the experiences of Arab Palestinian young adults in Israel during the October 2023 war, with particular attention to gender differences in how war is experienced and negotiated. Continuous Traumatic Stress conceptualizes trauma as an ongoing, socially embedded phenomenon reproduced through structural inequalities rather than as a single traumatic event. The study aims to examine how wartime distress intersects with civic marginalization,

institutional exclusion, emotional silencing, and gendered social control, particularly among young women.

Methods

A qualitative design was employed, drawing on six focus groups with 30 Arab Palestinian young adults (aged 19–25) from diverse regions of Israel. Data were analysed thematically, focusing on participants' subjective experiences while exploring gender differences in perceptions of war, feelings of safety, coping strategies, and the implications of war for developmental processes during emerging adulthood.

Findings

Three overarching themes emerged: (1) the loss of personal and collective security, (2) exclusion from public institutions and civic spaces, and (3) significant emotional, physical, and functional consequences. Although participants shared many experiences, important gender differences were identified. Young women described heightened fear, increased social surveillance, restricted mobility, and greater emotional silencing, alongside intensified family responsibilities and expectations to absorb and manage the family's emotional burden. Many reported avoiding public spaces because their physical appearance or traditional clothing made them feel more visible and vulnerable to hostility, discrimination, or violence due to their Arab Palestinian identity. The findings further demonstrate that the core developmental tasks of emerging adulthood including identity exploration, autonomy development, and critical thinking are profoundly disrupted during war, particularly under conditions of cumulative trauma, structural exclusion, and gender inequality.

Contribution to Research, Practice, and Policy

This study advances understanding of how social, political, cultural, and gendered contexts shape the wartime experiences of ethnic-national minority youth. It highlights that war cannot be fully understood without adopting a gender-sensitive and intersectional perspective. In particular, the findings illuminate the unique vulnerability of Arab Palestinian young women, who experience the intersecting effects of national marginalization and gender inequality. The study underscores the need for culturally responsive, gender-sensitive mental health and social interventions that strengthen resilience and well-being among young adults living

under conditions of ongoing conflict. Furthermore, it calls for the development of social work knowledge and interventions grounded in continuous traumatic stress, social justice, and gender-sensitive practice to better support Arab Palestinian young adults during periods of war and protracted political conflict.

האגודה הסוציולוגית הישראלית
رابطة علم الاجتماع الإسرائيلية
Israeli Sociological Society

The Muses and the Cannons: Cultural Fields During Wartime

Heteronomization and the Rise of Ideological Capital: Processes of Change in Israel's Cultural Field After October 7th

By *Tal Feder*

The Technion, talfeder@campus.technion.ac.il; talfeder@gmail.com

Shira Lapidot, Naomi Gorbat, Sapir Academic College

The events of October 7, 2023, and the ensuing war placed Israel's cultural field under acute strain, simultaneously disrupting its international ties, its domestic conditions of expression, and its funding base. Understanding how cultural agents respond to such a shock raises broader questions of how cultural fields behave in states of crisis. This paper examines processes of transformation in the Israeli cultural field following October 7th, and develops a theoretical conceptualization grounded in Bourdieu's theory of the field of cultural production, extended through frameworks on cultural policy, value-justification schemes, and conflict management.

The analysis combines 32 in-depth interviews with artists and cultural managers, a survey of roughly 100 cultural institutions' managers, a media review, and quantitative analysis of public cultural budgets. The findings point to a sustained, multidimensional crisis with professional, ideological, and economic implications, organized around three deep trends: (1) intensification of the international cultural boycott, producing lost opportunities, isolation, and uncertainty, and severing the foreign ties that anchor cultural capital and status; (2) a narrowing of domestic space for action, rising self-censorship and constraints on free expression alongside culture's expanded role as a mechanism of social and national resilience; and (3) erosion of public cultural budgets and the redirection of resources toward content identified with national identity and cohesion.

Theoretically, the paper foregrounds the rise of *ideological capital* as a third pole alongside cultural and economic capital. As foreign ties and external funding become inaccessible, the *ideological capital's* readily available, status-conferring, and convertible nature drives a recalibration of capital mixtures and a heteronomization of the field. The result is a shift from an internationally oriented field of critical expression toward a more constrained, locally bounded one perceived as serving social cohesion and resilience.

Imprisoning Culture within Security Fences - Contraction of Cultural Discourse Amid National Conflict, By *Edna Harel-Fisher*

Israel Democracy Institute, Harel.edna10@gmail.com.

The paper examines the contraction of Israel's cultural discourse; a process accelerated under the guise of wartime exigencies. It describes atmosphere and portrays episodes showing how the state is increasingly delegitimizing artistic freedom of speech, which is the essence of culture and arts. Harel-Fisher identifies a three-tiered typology of suppression led mostly by the Israel Culture Minister:

1. Delegitimization and Negative Framing: The categorization of art works or artists as "treasonous", threats to society and to national security. This is specifically addressed at those using non-consensual narratives relating to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or challenging the image of the Israel Defense Forces.

2. Administrative Overreach: The deployment of threats and demands made by government officials to revoke budgets or prohibit activities, mostly without a proper legal basis.

3. Institutional Restructuring: The alteration of administrative institutions and legal frameworks aimed at facilitating direct political intervention in cultural content.

These developments undermine fundamental democratic tenets that rule the culture and arts sphere while necessary for its freedom of speech. A critical casualty of this shift is the internationally established "Arm's Length" principle, which is being supplanted by an allegedly "Freedom of Funding" agenda that asserts the state's right to influence repertoire based on its financial support.

The post-October 7th, 2023, atmosphere has worsened these trends, weaponizing collective trauma to silence non-consensual narratives. The resulting environment fosters self-censorship among artists and cultural institutions, that might avoid critical engagement. This is most acute for Arab Israeli artists, who faced heightened surveillance and a blurring of lines between incitement and legitimate artistic speech.

Other institutions of free speech in Israel face similar trends, especially Academia and Journalism, and the typology suggested is relevant for them as well. Harel-Fisher concludes that a functional democracy necessitates a "self-restrained government" that accepts the inherent risks of undeterred expression and critical speech, including artistic speech, as a prerequisite for a vibrant society and for social progress.

Urban Cultural Policy during Wartime: Emotions and Silence in the Cultural Public Sphere of Tel Aviv–Jaffa

By *Noga Keidar and Beery Livnat*
Tel Aviv University, nogakeidar@tauex.tau.ac.il beerylivnat@mail.tau.ac.il

In times of war, culture and the arts are often among the first domains to face budget cuts and intensified political pressure. Yet urban cultural policy does not simply disappear but is reconfigured, taking on new roles and meanings. This paper examines how municipal policymakers and cultural leaders in Tel Aviv–Jaffa navigate cultural policy during wartime and democratic backsliding, focusing on how the urban cultural public sphere is activated, governed, and constrained. Drawing on in-depth interviews with municipal policymakers and heads of arts and cultural institutions (N=28), alongside media analysis (N=272), we ask: How are arts and culture mobilized in a cosmopolitan yet patriotic city during wartime? And how does this reshape urban publicness? Building on recent developments in theories of the public sphere, we conceptualize the urban cultural public sphere as constituted through affective and spatial strategies developed by cultural decision-makers. We identify three recurring strategies. First, cultural infrastructures are redirected toward wartime needs, prioritizing urgency and social usefulness over artistic production. Second, the generation of integrative public emotions, through which cultural spaces shift from fostering cultural participation to sustaining collective endurance through affects like relief, fraternity, and the confrontation of grief. Third, artistic institutions create reflective spaces to dwell within the moral rupture, rather than offering the distance often associated with cultural reflection. Finally, we analyze an “ecology of silence” surrounding atrocities committed by Israel, demonstrating how the boundaries of legitimate expression shape the operation of the cultural

public sphere. By examining both the activation and silencing of cultural spaces, the paper offers a framework for understanding how urban publicness is transformed under wartime and democratic backsliding.

Science, Technology, and Knowledge during Wartime

Bitcoin as a Boundary Object in Contemporary Warfare: Legal, Technological, and Discursive Contestation By *Ilan Talmud*

University of Haifa, talmud@soc.haifa.ac.il

In the landscape of 21st-century conflict, Bitcoin has emerged as a critical **boundary object**, a concept from Science and Technology Studies (STS) that describes an entity that is plastic enough to adapt to different social worlds while remaining recognizable across them. During the USA-Iran sanctions regime and the Israel-Hamas war, Bitcoin possesses a shared, robust identity as a decentralized digital asset while maintaining high **interpretive flexibility**, allowing adversarial actors to assign it radically different meanings. It serves as a shared infrastructure through which wartime governance, sovereignty, and resistance are negotiated without requiring political or ethical consensus. As a boundary object, Bitcoin enables coordination across conflicting actors—governments, militants, markets, and activists—who interact with the same technical artifact to advance incompatible objectives. This dynamic is further illuminated by the concept of data shadows, which posits that the act of making data present is inseparable from what remains missing or invisible In the Bitcoin network. The technological dimension constitutes the most stable element of Bitcoin as a boundary object. Its **borderless, peer-to-peer architecture** and resistance to centralized control make it an attractive tool for both state and non-state actors during wartime. Conversely, the same technological transparency serves as a surveillance asset for enforcers. Because every transaction is recorded on an immutable ledger, authorities can exploit on-chain data for tracing and disruption. The legal dimension reveals how Bitcoin's status is negotiated through sanctions and enforcement actions. For "weak" actors like Iran and Hamas, Bitcoin is interpreted as a parallel financial system that circumvents state control. For "strong" actors like the United States and Israel, it is a domain of **financial warfare**. The discursive dimension exhibits the greatest flexibility, as Bitcoin accumulates contradictory meanings. In adversarial discourses, such as those from the Iranian regime, Bitcoin symbolizes

technological sovereignty and resistance to "dollar hegemony". The evolution of Bitcoin in wartime suggests a transition from a "thin" boundary object toward a "thicker" **boundary infrastructure**. Central to this transition are blockchain analytics firms like **Chainalysis, Elliptic, and TRM Labs**. These firms act as mediators, translating on-chain traces into actionable intelligence by pairing ledger data with off-chain records like KYC files and IP logs. Bitcoin does not resolve geopolitical conflicts; rather, it provides a **shared arena** in which they unfold. Its role as a boundary object allows it to persist amid intense warfare because its legal, technological, and discursive components can be interpreted in incompatible ways by adversarial social worlds. Ultimately, the interplay of presence and absence within the blockchain ensures that Bitcoin remains a contested interface between **sovereignty and resistance** in the digital age.

Epistemic Disruption: Social, Material, and Affective Consequences of the Destruction of Scientific Knowledge in Wartime

By [!]*Talia Fried,* [!!]*Dan Kotliar,* [!!!]*Clemence Pinel and* [!!!!]*Rafi Grosglik*

[!]Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, taliafried@gmail.com

[!!]University of Haifa, dkotliar@soc.haifa.ac.il

[!!!] Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, clemence@post.bgu.ac.il,

[!!!!] Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, rafig@bgu.ac.il

This paper examines the social and scientific meanings of an Iranian missile strike on Israel's Weizmann Institute of Science in June 2025 as a case of epistemic destruction in contemporary warfare. Situating the event within the broader context of escalating regional conflict since October 2023, we ask how the physical destruction of laboratories and other research infrastructure reconfigures the social, material, and affective conditions of scientific knowledge production. Our analysis draws on an ethnographic study combining in-depth

interviews with scientists, doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers, and administrative staff, field observations at the institute following the strike, and a systematic content analysis of media and social media representations of the event.

We conceptualize the impact of the strike as an epistemic trauma - namely, a rupture in the temporal, material, and relational continuities that sustain laboratory life. The findings show that laboratories were experienced not merely as workplaces but as intimate spaces of belonging, frequently narrated as “home,” where scientific practice is embedded in dense moral and emotional economies. In this context, scientific objects, including biological samples, documented and digitalized data, as well as model organisms, all acquire moral significance beyond their technical function, structuring decisions around care, preservation, and loss. Our study further demonstrates that epistemic destruction operates through both material loss and the destabilization of scientific subjectivities. Scientists described the collapse of experimental trajectories, professional identities, and long-term collaborative networks. Furthermore, we show that while institutional discourses of recovery emphasize efficiency, reorganization, and rebuilding, they simultaneously obscure the depth of epistemic rupture and the uneven temporality of repair.

We argue that wartime epistemic destruction should be understood as a form of epistemic violence that reorganizes hierarchies of knowledge, reshapes scientific priorities, and exposes the dependence of scientific practice on political and material infrastructures. In doing so, the article contributes to debates on science, war, and infrastructural fragility in Science and Technology Studies and the sociology of knowledge.

The Political Economy of Israel (So-Called "Super-Sparta") in the War Against Iran By *Efraim Davidi*

Tel-Aviv University, davidi@tauex.tau.ac.il

With a significant delay, the Knesset approved the 2026 state budget on March 30. This marks Israel's ninth budget since the outbreak of the war in October 2023. Current indicators

strongly suggest that this year's budget will also undergo revisions in the coming months, aligning with the pattern observed in recent years.

According to the approved framework, government expenditures for the year are projected at approximately NIS 851 billion within a formal budget of around NIS 622 billion, yielding an unprecedented fiscal deficit for the largest budget in the nation's history. The defense budget has similarly reached a historical peak, exceeding NIS 142 billion. This figure includes an addition of approximately NIS 32 billion following the war initiated by Israel and the United States against Iran on February 28. Current assessments already indicate that this allocation—double the annual budget dedicated to higher education—does not fully reflect the total costs of the war.

Furthermore, the Economic Arrangements Act accompanying the budget introduces several measures with profound economic and social implications:

- **Value-Added Tax (VAT) Increase** Raising the VAT rate to 18%, a move planned during 2024–2025 that entered full effect in 2026.
- **Freezing of Tax Credit Points and Brackets** Freezing the indexation of income tax brackets and credit points. This functions as a "silent tax," effectively increasing the tax burden on salaried employees as real wages rise.
- **Reduction of Tax Benefits on Workers' Savings** Limiting tax exemptions on accrued profits within specific tracks or above certain thresholds.

The 2026 budget and Economic Arrangements Act also introduce a substantial shift in the taxation policy governing major technology firms in Israel, following global tax reforms. Israel has adopted the international standard mandating that multinational corporations with an annual turnover exceeding €750 million pay an effective tax rate of at least 15% in every jurisdiction of operation. However, to offset this tax increase, the government included several incentives and compensatory mechanisms for high-tech companies within the 2026 Economic Arrangements Act. These include direct grants exceeding their projected tax liabilities, alongside expanding benefits to additional large employers, most of them American multinationals, outside the tech sector.

The objective of this lecture is to examine the government's socio-economic policy amidst the ongoing war, focusing specifically on the state budget approved by the Knesset. It aims to address several key questions: Does current government policy contradict the neoliberal socio-economic agenda pursued by Israeli administrations over the last generation? Is the financial burden of the war poised to fall once again on the shoulders of the working class, or is the state diversifying its funding sources by targeting sectors that recorded windfall profits in 2025? Notable examples include the Israeli banking system, whose profits broke all historical records in previous years to reach NIS 32 billion; the five largest insurance groups, whose profits doubled in 2025 to over NIS 12 billion; and the defense industries, which also registered record profits last year. The latter is led by the "big three": Israel Aerospace Industries ($742 million), Elbit Systems ($534 million), and Rafael Advanced Defense Systems ($432 million)—the last of which, along with Israel Aerospace Industries, is currently facing privatization

Note: Far-right Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu originated the conceptual of framework of "Super Sparta" in what the Israeli media dubbed the "Sparta Speech" On September 15, 2025, Netanyahu addressed a Finance Ministry conference in Jerusalem. Facing growing international diplomatic isolation because the extermination war in Gaza, threats of arms embargoes, and the economic strain of a prolonged multi-front conflict and occupation in Syria, Lebanon and Gaza, he argued that Israel had no choice but to transform into a globally isolated "Super-Sparta" with "autarkic features". He famously noted that if forced to choose between Athens and Sparta, Israel would have to become "Super-Sparta" The capitalist neo-liberal political economy for the 2026 war against Iran represents the direct manifestation and implementation of Netanyahu's "Super-Sparta"

War Veterans with Disabilities: The Wounded Chosen Body and Self

"Youth and Heroism": Religious and Spiritual Meaning-Making Among Religious Infantry Combat Soldiers with Physical Disabilities from the "Swords of Iron" War By *Oren Cohen Zada*

Talpiot Academic college, cohenzad@gmail.com

The "Swords of Iron" War left many young combat soldiers with severe limb injuries and physical disabilities. For the religious soldier, transitioning from a "valiant warrior" to a person with a disability triggers a profound identity, existential, and faith-based crisis. This study examines faith as a resilience resource and meaning-making mechanism in adapting to this new reality. The Research Question was How does religious faith shape the experience of disability, identity reconstruction, and psychological healing among religious infantry combat soldiers wounded in the war? The Methodology I used was A qualitative study using an interpretive-phenomenological approach. In-depth interviews were conducted with 40 religious combat soldiers (ages 20–25) who sustained limb injuries (25 active-duty, 15 reserves). The interviews explored the interface between physical disability and their spiritual and Halakhic world. My findings show that faith serves as an "anchor of meaning", allowing soldiers to interpret their injury as a spiritual mission rather than a random event. The need for meaning-making is intensified by their young age and disrupted future plans ("emerging adulthood"). Religious practices (prayer, study, and community) provide a "safe space" for rehabilitating the masculine-warrior identity. Active-duty soldiers framed coping as a faith-based "trial", while reservists highlighted spiritual responsibility toward their families. The theological question of "why me?" is transformed into "spiritual heroism" by sanctifying the coping process. This study broadens the "religious model of disability" among young adults experiencing military trauma. It highlights the crucial need to integrate religious and spiritual sensitivity into rehabilitative practice. For these soldiers, faith is not merely a source of comfort, but an active driving force enabling full social participation and a meaningful life alongside disability.

The Wounded Body's Dilemma: Between Normalization and Pride at Beit HaLochem By *Omri Tancman*

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem omri.tancman@mail.huji.ac.il

In the negotiation of people with disabilities with their identity, a central challenge concerns the tension between normalization (Shakespeare, 2013; Zaks, 2023) and a "Crip," affirmative identity that regards disability as a source of pride (Kafer, 2013; Swain & French, 2000). I seek to examine how this tension manifests among IDF disabled veterans, for some of whom their pre-injury identity was rooted in an ethos of hegemonic, military masculinity (Connell, 1995; Weiss, 2002).

I argue that this tension does not necessarily express an opposition between fixed identities, but rather reflects fluid orientations performed in a context-dependent manner. IDF disabled veterans, embodying a unique paradox, simultaneously disempowered by their bodies and celebrated as national heroes in Israel (Youcht, 2021), constitute a case study for how this fluidity may exist among people with disabilities. Drawing on ethnography at Beit HaLochem, Israel's largest community center for disabled veterans, I will show how two ostensibly opposed performative orientations may coexist within the same space:

- **A performance of normalization,** expressed through aggressiveness and hyper-masculinity, competitiveness, and toughness. For example, the social norm of refusing help after falling from a wheelchair, accompanied by a language of "hard work" and "combat." Such displays reflect the "supercrip" narrative and the "triumph" over disability (Oliver, 1990).
- **A performance of pride and affirmative identity,** in which the basketball court becomes a stage for building community, camaraderie, and black humor, illustrating how the affirmative model (Swain & French, 2000) forms part of the tools available to these veterans.

The navigation between these models may illustrate that normalization and pride do not necessarily exclude one another, but rather express the fluidity made possible in the

performance of IDF disabled veterans, the tactics enabling them to move between ostensibly contradictory aspects of their identity as men with disabilities injured in a military context.

Thoughts in the Spirit of Levinas – On War, Illness, and Responsibility

By *Ifat Schwarz*

Ben Gurion University ifat.schwarz@gmail.com

In various texts within his ethics, the French-Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas links **"human evil"** and **"natural evil,"** pointing to a deep affinity between them. Their connection manifests in different forms: on the one hand, natural evil often brings about expressions of human evil; on the other hand, natural evil can attain meaning and interpretation only when there is a person beside the (bed of the) sufferer who responds humanly to their distress.

Drawing on this Levinasian idea, I wish to discuss the contemporary phenomenon of **institutional non-recognition of combat trauma** cases in which a person who experienced a traumatic event during military service and suffers from PTSD as a result struggles to receive official recognition, and consequently is denied the rights to which they are entitled.

Later in the lecture, I will discuss the moral problem of institutional non-recognition of combat trauma and refer to the case of **secondary PTSD** that arises as a result of this very lack of recognition. In fact, secondary trauma constitutes a painful and significant meeting point between natural evil and human evil

Ultimately, I wish to show that **secondary PTSD**, in Levinasian terms, is a form of natural evil that not only fails to receive recognition, but – according to Levinas – also fails to receive meaning or interpretation from the very institution that sent the soldier into battle. And here lies the profound rupture. I argue that in light of Levinas's conception of the meaning of illness and suffering, the only way to "do justice" to the traumatized individual is to recognize PTSD as a direct result of human evil and to provide the resources necessary for coping with it.

Jews And Palestinians in Higher Education Institutions

The Sense of Belonging of Palestinian Citizens of Israel (PAI) Students during the Iron Swords War By *Irit Harboun*

The College of Management Academic Studies iritha@colman.ac.il

This study examines the sense of belonging among PAI undergraduate students in Israeli higher education during the Iron Swords War. Existing literature suggests that in times of crisis, minority students withdraw, self-silence, and experience alienation and detachment, appearing largely passive. This research argues that belonging is not a passive feeling stemming from structural conditions and campus racial climate; rather, it is actively shaped by the agency students exercise within and against institutional constraints.

The study draws on 30 semi-structured interviews conducted between December 2024 and the end of the war, with PAI students across ten universities and colleges in Israel. It identifies a campus environment characterized by overlapping layers of silencing: institutional (disciplinary committees, surveillance, suspensions), peer-driven (monitoring, harassment, and persistent demands to condemn Hamas), and a pervasive sense of physical and symbolic threat linked to the growing presence of weapons on campus, alongside external political pressures.

Within these conditions, students enact three patterns of agency: resistance (acting against the conditions through protest, petitions, and political organizing), navigation (locating or creating spaces for free expression), and adaptation (acting within the silencing through self-censorship, whether from fear or as a principled choice). Each pattern shapes belonging differently.

Findings show belonging fluctuates during crisis rather than disappearing. The fear students experience does not necessarily translate into a loss of belonging; rather, belonging is repeatedly reshaped through their agency, despite the negative racial climate. The study's

contribution lies in demonstrating that belonging is co-produced through student agency, challenging deterministic structural accounts and dichotomous perceptions of belonging. What strengthens belonging for one student may undermine it for another, and what proves effective in routine times does not always hold during crisis. 25 of 30 students rated belonging as highly important, and only 20% reported low belonging. Over nearly two years of war, belonging to campus became an indispensable resource, one that students actively try to preserve.

How did the October 7th attacks and the ensuing war affect Jewish-Arab relations in Israeli higher education? By *Lior Yohanani[I], Lars Leszczensky[II], Yossi Shavit[III], Uri Shwed[IIII]*

[I]The Israel Democracy Institute and Tel Aviv University
lioryohanani@gmail.com
[II]Lars Leszczensky, Goethe University Frankfurt Leszczensky@em.uni-frankfurt.de
[III] Tel Aviv University ys@tauex.tau.ac.il
[IIII]Ben Gurion University of the Negev shwed@bgu.ac.il

Terrorist attacks and wars influence majority-minority relations, yet existing research has focused predominantly on the responses of a single group – typically the majority, and on attitudinal outcomes, while neglecting cross-group friendships. Drawing on panel data of Jewish and Arab university students in Israel collected before and after the October 7th Hamas attack on Israel and during the ensuing military campaign in Gaza, we examine whether majority and minority group members respond differently to extreme violent events in which the majority perceives the minority as affiliated with an external enemy. Using individual fixed effects models that enable within-person comparisons, we examine two dimensions of intergroup relations: attitudes towards the outgroup and cross-group friendships. We find consistent evidence of asymmetric responses. Jewish students exhibited increased segregative attitudes towards Arabs following October 7th while Arab students' attitudes toward Jews remained stable. Cross-group friendship patterns diverged as well: Arab students reported a significant increase in cross-group friendships, whereas Jewish students showed no

meaningful change. These asymmetric responses reveal the complex dynamics of majority-minority relations in times of crisis, particularly when the minority is perceived by the majority as affiliated with the external threat. Crucially, attitudes and friendships did not move in tandem, underscoring the importance of examining multiple dimensions of intergroup relations simultaneously.

האגודה הסוציולוגית הישראלית
رابطة علم الاجتماع الإسرائيلية
Israeli Sociological Society

The Political Economy of The Conflict during crisis

Precarious Labour in Times of Crisis: War, Political Economy, and Non-Citizen Workers By *Yahel Kurlander*

Tel Hai – University of Kiryat Shmona in the Galilee yahelak@gmail.com

This presentation is based on the publication: Niezna, M., & Kurlander, Y. (2026). Precarious labour in precarious times: the impact of the war in Israel/Palestine on non-citizen workers. *Comparative Migration Studies, 14(1), 9.*

The presentation examines how the war in Israel/Palestine has reshaped labour migration policies and the political economy of non-citizen labour. While research on migration and crisis has traditionally focused either on forced migration or on political responses to immigration, the presentation explores a different dimension: how an ongoing political and military crisis transforms labour migration governance and employment regimes.

Drawing on qualitative analysis of government decisions, parliamentary debates, legal proceedings, reports by international organisations and NGOs, and media sources, the presentation analyses developments following the events of 7 October 2023. It focuses on two interconnected processes: the exclusion of Palestinian workers from the Israeli labour market and the accelerated recruitment of migrant workers through private recruitment channels that had previously been largely abandoned due to concerns over excessive recruitment fees, debt, and labour exploitation.

The presentation argues that these developments can be understood through the interaction of three competing logics underpinning the political economy of non-citizen labour in Israel/Palestine: a capitalist logic that seeks a flexible and low-cost workforce, an ethno-nationalist logic that differentiates between Jewish citizens and non-citizen populations, and a colonial logic driven by the far-right settlement agenda. Rather than operating independently, these logics intersect, reinforce, and occasionally contradict one another. The current crisis has intensified these tensions, strengthening colonial and security-oriented agendas while weakening institutional mechanisms that previously provided at least limited protection for workers' rights and more regulated recruitment practices.

Beyond documenting recent policy changes, the presentation situates these developments within broader debates on migration governance, crisis politics, racialised labour markets, and

political economy. It argues that the Israeli case offers broader theoretical insights into how political crises can rapidly reshape labour migration regimes, weaken democratic and legal safeguards, and redefine the balance between economic interests, national security, and workers' rights in contexts of protracted conflict.

Changing Growth Patterns: The Political Economy of the (Protracted) War in Gaza

By [I]*Assaf Bondy and* [II]*Asaf Yakir*

[I]University of Haifa and University of Bristol, abondy@univ.haifa.ac.il
[II]University of Padua

The Gaza war (2023-2025) inflicted unprecedented destruction on the Strip and imposed high costs on Israeli society, yet Israel's political economy proved surprisingly resilient: growth remained relatively stable, unemployment stayed low, and the governing coalition retained broad public support through most of the fighting. How can this resilience be explained, and what political-economic mechanisms allowed the war to continue? This article argues that the answer lies in a deep but remarkably rapid shift in the *drivers* of Israel's economic growth; one that left the aggregate, consumption-led growth *model* intact while reconstituting the political relationships on which it rested. In the decade before the war, private consumption was powered chiefly by rising real wages, made possible by the incorporation of organized labour into the growth coalition through institutional channels for negotiation and contestation – what we term *deliberative incorporation*. The war undermined wages as the central driver behind consumption: mass mobilization removed workers from their workplaces, a patriotic atmosphere delegitimized distributional demands, and the fiscal pressures of the campaign foreclosed the compensatory policies that had previously reconciled employers to wage growth. In their place, from the outset the government substituted wage increases with fiscal transfers channelled through reserve-duty compensation – an *instrumental* mode of incorporation in which the state distributes resources through institutions it controls (above all the military), leaving beneficiaries little capacity for autonomous political action. Civilian wages were simultaneously restrained, through a frozen convalescence-pay quota earmarked for reservists, public-sector wage cuts, and regressive taxation, thus suppressing the old driver to make fiscal room for the new. Notably, organized labour facilitated its own marginalization under the banner of national sacrifice. This substitution excluded organized labour from the growth coalition and tied a growing share of household purchasing power to the war's continuation, which became a condition for growth even as the institutional tools to contest it eroded. The economic arrangements that stabilized growth, the article shows, are the very ones that entrenched the political mechanisms sustaining the war – producing a *binding legitimation* that deepens the erosion of democratic governance in Israel.

האגודה הסוציולוגית הישראלית
رابطة علم الاجتماع الإسرائيلية
Israeli Sociological Society

From Fracture to Protest, and from Protest Back to War: Political Activism and Social Movements in Times of War and Polarization

"Bring Them Home Now!" – And Now what? The Begin Gate Protest for the Return of the Hostages in the Months Following the Ceasefire Agreement By *Yaniv Ron-El*

ChainGE Lab (ERC Funded), Tel Aviv University, yanivr@uchicago.edu

What happens to a protest movement characterized by determination, persistence, and sustained commitment when the goal for which it has struggled is achieved virtually overnight? Within the broad nationwide movement for the return of the hostages that emerged after October 7, 2023, the relatively small protest community at Begin Gate stood out as a radical vanguard. Unlike the larger rallies at Hostages Square, which were held primarily on Saturday evenings and adopted a more mainstream, "neutral" tone, the Begin Gate demonstrations were marked by sharp criticism of the government, Prime Minister Netanyahu, and often the war itself. They took place almost daily for nearly two years, with many activists returning to protest evening after evening.

The study is based on thirty in-depth interviews with Begin Gate activists conducted in the six months following the October 2025 ceasefire agreement. Interviewees were asked about their motivations for the sustained protest activity and the challenges it generated, their retrospective assessments of the movement and its success, and their reactions to the agreement itself. The present paper focuses on the latter aspect, the reactions to the ceasefire and hostage-release agreement, and on the movement's activity during the subsequent period.

Alongside feelings of joy, relief, achievement, and satisfaction at reaching the protest's main goal, the interviews reveal more complex and less positive emotions. These stem partly from the broader context of the war and its consequences, including perceptions that the agreement

came too late and remained incomplete, as some of the deceased hostages had yet to be returned. Additionally, the interviews highlight the challenges of parting with the identity, community, and routines forged through prolonged protest activity, and of returning from a sustained struggle for a deeply meaningful goal to the mundanity of everyday life. The paper examines how individual activists and the movement as a whole navigated these challenges and considers the broader implications for the study of protest movements.

The Lionesses' Roar: Women Scholars Respond to the Israel Iran War

Between the Spaces of Death and Somud: Narratives of Palestinian Women in the Negev By *Sarab Abu-Rabia-Queder*

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev sarab@bgu.ac.il

This article examines how wartime conditions intensify the gendered necropolitics of settler colonial governance among Palestinian Bedouin women living in unrecognized villages in the Naqab/Negev. Focusing on the period of emergency and armed conflict in Israel between 2023 and 2025, the article explores how the denial of official recognition produces forms of radical unprotection, exposing Indigenous Palestinian citizens to lethal risk while simultaneously erasing their vulnerability from the state's protective imagination. Based on in-depth interviews with thirty Palestinian Bedouin women from two unrecognized villages, the study analyzes how women narrate and inhabit everyday life under missile fire in the absence of shelters, warning systems, and state infrastructures of security.

Drawing on theories of settler colonialism, necropolitics, and Indigenous feminist thought, the article argues that unrecognized villages are not merely neglected spaces, but "death-worlds": spaces in which exposure to death, dispossession, and existential insecurity are normalized as conditions of life. Women's narratives reveal everyday practices of survival, including dispersing children across rooms during attacks to reduce the possibility of collective death, living with the fear of *tashrīd*—ongoing displacement and expulsion—and navigating a militarized public sphere in which the veiled Muslim woman is constructed as suspect, threatening, and out of place.

The article conceptualizes these experiences as part of a gendered settler colonial mechanism in which Indigenous women's bodies become central sites of governance. As biological,

territorial, and symbolic signifiers of Indigenous continuity, women are positioned at the intersection of land, reproduction, and elimination. By foregrounding Palestinian Bedouin women's narratives, the article contributes to sociological and feminist analyses of necropolitics by showing that Indigenous elimination is enacted not only through spectacular violence, but also through routinized abandonment, infrastructural deprivation, and the normalization of life lived in proximity to death.

Israel's Borderlands: Frontier and Border Regions in Wartime

Once in the Frontier and Once in War: A Historical Perspective on the Current Drainage of the Hula Valley By *Uri Schuser*

urischu@gmail.com

This paper examines the socioeconomic collapse of Israel's Hula Valley, focusing on the frontier town of Kiryat Shmona, as a local instance of a broader global pattern of rural decline under neoliberal economic restructuring. Rather than treating the 7.10 war as the cause of the valley's crisis, it argues that the war served as a catalyst, exposing and accelerating a rural collapse already underway, in which the erosion of agricultural and industrial bases drives internal displacement and the slow abandonment of frontier communities.

The paper traces the valley's persistently marginal yet strategically vital position, shaped by difficult topography and climate, shifting borders and dependence on (currently blocked) transit routes to Syria and Lebanon. It identifies two parallel and partly contradictory dynamics that structured mid-twentieth-century industrialisation: an "oil stain" pattern in which capital concentrated along the coastal centre and a hierarchical "hive" model through which the state directed resources towards frontier towns such as Kiryat Shmona for security purposes. From the late 1960s, financialisation, privatisation and a political shift in priority towards the settlement project eroded this rural developmental compact, while

suburbanisation and a credit-dependent service economy disguised underlying agricultural and industrial decline. Climate change, including desertification and heightened heat exposure, compounds this rural vulnerability.

The paper contends that the war exposed long-standing infrastructural collapse, land speculation and depopulation, accelerating a shift in which rural communities persist mainly through residents who lack alternatives rather than through a sustainable economic base. It raises the risk of a governance vacuum being exploited by paramilitary groups, criminal organisations and far-right political forces, and critiques the prevailing discourse of "resilience" as a neoliberal framework that legitimises the abandonment of unprofitable peripheries. It closes by arguing that this rural decline poses a risk not only to the valley but to the nation as a whole.

Belonging and locationality

The Emergence of New Haredi Rabbinic Leadership in Israel as a Product of the War Crisis By *Tehila Gado*

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, The Israel Democracy Institute
Tehila.Gado@mail.huji.ac.il

For decades, Haredi rabbinic leadership in Israel relied on a centralized model of authority, associated with the doctrine of Da'at Torah and the figure of the Gadol HaDor ("the leading rabbinic authority of the generation") as an almost exclusive source of religious, social, and public guidance. Over the past two decades, however, this model has gradually weakened alongside the expansion of Modern Haredism – a Haredi subgroup that does not seek to leave the Haredi world, yet can no longer be fully served by leadership models, institutions, and solutions developed for the classical "society of learners." As a result, a need has emerged for a different type of rabbinic leadership, one better suited to the challenges of a community that simultaneously inhabits the worlds of the yeshiva, the community, the workplace, and the state.

This study examines the emergence of a new Haredi rabbinic leadership against the backdrop of a series of crises that have affected both Israeli society and the Haredi community in recent years, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the Meron disaster, the judicial reform crisis, and the Swords of Iron War. In this presentation, I focus on the ways in which the war accelerated this process. I argue that periods of crisis reveal significant changes in patterns of authority, belonging, and responsibility within Haredi society. Unlike the traditional rabbinic leadership, which tends to frame crises in theological, isolationist, or reactive terms, the new leadership addresses the public through a language of responsibility, partnership, repair, and action. It recognizes the legitimacy of work, community involvement, and citizenship, seeks

to establish religious and communal frameworks consistent with these values, and reformulates the relationship between Haredi identity, the state, and Israeli society.

The central argument is that this leadership emerges at the intersection of three processes: the gradual decline of the traditional centralized Haredi leadership model; the consolidation of Modern Haredism as a distinct intermediary group; and a succession of crises that intensified the demand for a more responsive, community-oriented, and practical leadership. The crisis – and in this case, the war – acts as an accelerating mechanism: it exposes the limitations of the older leadership, highlights the gap between its discourse and the needs of the contemporary Haredi public, and legitimizes alternative forms of leadership. In doing so, the presentation contributes to two broader questions: What social conditions enabled the emergence of this new leadership, and how does war reshape the boundaries of authority, citizenship, and belonging within Haredi society?

Police Legitimacy Among Israeli Arab Youth During the Iron Swords War: Policing, Law Legitimacy, and Social Identities By *Ameen Azmy*

Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge, UK, Ameen.Azmi@gmail.com; aa2791@cam.ac.uk

What shapes police legitimacy among ethnic minority youth during periods of war and conflict, when insecurity is heightened and police-minority tensions intensify, remains underexplored in criminology. Drawing on survey data from 1,055 Arab adolescents in Israel collected during the Iron Swords War, this study analyses the independent and conditional effects of perceived procedural justice, police effectiveness, law legitimacy, Arab ethnic attachment, and attachment to the Israeli society on police legitimacy. The findings show that procedural justice, police effectiveness, law legitimacy, and attachment to the Israeli society are positively associated with police legitimacy, while Arab ethnic attachment has no direct effect. Attachment to the Israeli society moderates the associations between procedural justice, law legitimacy, Arab ethnic attachment, and police legitimacy: law legitimacy and

Arab ethnic attachment are more strongly associated with police legitimacy when attachment to the Israeli society is higher, whereas procedural justice is especially consequential for youth with weaker attachment to the state. No other moderating effects were found. These findings suggest that, under conditions of threat and insecurity, national attachment functions as a key mechanism through which legal norms, ethnic identity, and procedural fairness are connected to trust, confidence, and respect for the police. The study highlights three policy implications: institutionalising police-youth programmes in schools and community settings; targeting procedural justice interventions towards youth with weaker attachment to the Israeli society; and improving effective protection in Arab communities without reproducing coercive over-policing

Fashioning Settler Practices: Dress, Nativeness, and Erasure in Israel-Palestine By *Yarden Levy*

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, yarden.levy2@mail.huji.ac.il

This paper lays the theoretical and historical groundwork for my doctoral research on dress styles in contemporary Religious Zionism. Responding to the conference's question of how we arrived at the current moment of mass destruction and genocidal violence, it asks how dress should be examined as one of the cultural conditions through which Palestinian presence becomes erasable. Rather than approaching dress as a merely symbolic or representational field, I examine dress as a material and social practice through which Jewish settler presence is produced as natural, local, and self-evident within Israel-Palestine, while Palestinian presence is displaced from the visual and material field.

While the broader doctoral project focuses on Religious Zionism as a contemporary sociological and political group located at the forefront of Jewish settlement and territorial expansion, this paper turns to the broader sartorial genealogy through which such

contemporary styles can be understood. Drawing on settler colonial theory, sociology of dress, and visual-material analysis, I argue that Israeli fashion and dress history can be read as the fashion history of a settler society. In this history, dress operates as part of a cultural mechanism of replacement and erasure.

The paper moves between historical and contemporary examples in order to trace this process. Historical accounts of Zionist dress reveal how the formation of a new Hebrew and local style was entangled with knowledge of Palestinian dress and its appropriation, while simultaneously denying Palestinian nativeness and political presence. This dynamic is not confined to the past. A visual comparison between historical Zionist fashion imagery and contemporary Religious-Zionist fashion photography demonstrates how signs of locality and rootedness persist, while the Palestinian figure that once mediated this locality is increasingly absent.

The central claim is that fashion is not only a representation of power or violence. It is part of the cultural mechanism through which settler presence is produced, normalized, and made to appear natural, alongside the ongoing erasure of Indigenous Palestinian presence.

Evacuations and rehabilitation

Escape Fantasy or Emigration Intention? Examining Migration Tendencies Among the Jewish Population in Israel Following a Multi-Dimensional Crisis in Israel (2023-2025) By Michal Shamir[I] and Orit Shamir-Balderman[II]

[I]The Max Stern Academic College of Emek Yezreel michals@yvc.ac.il

[II]The Max Stern Yezreel Valley College orits@yvc.ac.il

This study examined emigration tendencies among the Jewish population in Israel during the multi-dimensional crisis of 2023-2025, encompassing the constitutional crisis initiated by the judicial reform and the "Iron Swords" war that erupted on October 7, 2023. The study included 554 participants and examined emigration thoughts across three temporal horizons.

The need for this research stemmed from the absence of comprehensive empirical research examining the relationships between the constitutional crisis, the war, and brain drain as an integrated crisis system. The Israeli case offers a unique opportunity to examine how democratic backsliding processes develop in a developed country under continuous security tension.

The findings revealed a statistically significant increase in emigration thoughts from the pre-crisis period to during the crises. A clear gap was found between the cognitive and behavioral dimensions—emigration thoughts increased more than concrete action intentions. The study introduces the concept of "escape fantasy" as a temporary psychological coping mechanism that allows individuals to mentally manage stress without necessarily translating into actual behavioral intentions.

Religious identity emerged as the strongest distinguishing variable—secular individuals showed significantly higher emigration thoughts compared to religious and ultra-Orthodox Jews. Those with higher education and divorced individuals also showed elevated tendencies.

Notably, no significant differences were found between genders or across employment sectors.

The study provides in-depth understanding of public responses to multi-dimensional crises and emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between demographic groups in Israeli society. It contributes to understanding social coping mechanisms during national crises and proposes a novel theoretical framework for examining citizens' responses to multi-dimensional crises.

Cake Surrogacy: Birthday Cakes, Displacement, and Maternal Agency among Internally Displaced Israeli Kibbutz Communities after October 7

By *Maskit Hodesman, Ortal Slobodin and Nir Avieli*

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, hodesman@post.bgu.ac.il, ortalslo@bgu.ac.il, avieli@bgu.ac.il

The birthday cake, a culinary object and an intimate familial practice, acquires new meanings in contexts of internal displacement. This paper examines a civilian initiative established following the October 7, 2023 attacks, in which volunteer women baked birthday cakes for children displaced from a kibbutz in the western Negev and temporarily housed in Dead Sea hotels.

The study is based on rapid ethnography conducted between October 2023 and February 2025 and combines participant observation, in-depth interviews, and the analysis of digital materials. It explores the social, emotional, and cultural meanings attached to birthday cakes and the practices surrounding their ordering, preparation, transportation, and celebration under conditions of displacement.

The findings suggest that the birthday cake functioned as a material-ritual practice through which displaced families partially reconstructed continuity, belonging, homemaking, and parental agency while coping with biographical disruption and institutional dependency.

Through the processes of ordering, baking, and delivering cakes, a form of civilian care work emerged, mediating between domestic and institutional spheres and enabling the maintenance of routine and continuity despite loss, uncertainty, and prolonged displacement.

The paper introduces two conceptual contributions. The first ,**Cake Surrogacy** ,describes the transfer of an intimate maternal practice to a volunteer baker while preserving maternal identity, responsibility, and emotional ownership. The second ,**Reception Fatigue** ,captures the emotional exhaustion associated with prolonged dependence on assistance and the tension between receiving care and maintaining a sense of agency. Together, these concepts illuminate how everyday food practices become sites of negotiation over identity, separateness, care, and belonging in contexts of displacement.

By examining birthday cakes as material and symbolic objects situated between home and institutional life, the study contributes to broader discussions of displacement, gendered care work, homemaking, and community resilience during times of crisis.

Collaborative Embroidery During Wartime: Gendered Civic Action and the Production of Solidarity By *Sharon Ramer Biel*

Tel Aviv-Yafo Academic College, sharonra@mta.ac.il

In the months following the outbreak of war in October 2023, collaborative embroidery initiatives emerged as important arenas of collective action. While studies of craftivism and textile practices in contexts of political violence have highlighted their role in community-building, protest, and the emotional processing of trauma, most have focused either on political activism or on retrospective responses to crises. This paper examines material practices that develop during an ongoing war and explores how they generate solidarity and forms of civic participation under conditions of uncertainty.

The paper argues that everyday practices associated with femininity, such as embroidery, function during wartime as a form of gendered civic action. Within this framework, civic participation is mediated through material and emotional creation outside formal political

institutions. Embroidery is distinctive as a material, repetitive, and collective practice that combines individual expression with collaborative production while enabling movement between domestic and public spheres.

This argument is examined through two case studies: *Embroidering for Them* and *Embroidering Psalms*, selected as complementary examples of solidarity-making in real time. The study draws on interviews with project initiators and organizers, semiotic analysis of the embroidered works, and analysis of public responses to exhibitions in which the works were displayed.

Both initiatives share several structural characteristics: broad intergenerational participation spanning approximately eight decades; the involvement of women for whom embroidery was sometimes a first-time experience; collective works composed of individual units; and the use of embroidery as a space for emotional and social expression. These features demonstrate the accessibility of embroidery as a practice that enables women to engage in civic action regardless of prior expertise and fosters social ties across age and experience.

At the same time, each project realized this mechanism differently and at distinct stages of the war. The analysis shows that collaborative embroidery enabled women to act as civic agents and produced solidarity through shared creation, transforming embroidered works into public objects that invited identification, participation, and response from wider audiences. In doing so, these initiatives contributed to social cohesion during a period of crisis and uncertainty.

Place, Home, Family and War

"I'm a Combat Mother": Negotiating Affective citizenship Among Soldiers' Parents in Civilian Facebook Groups

By *Noam Sar Shalom*
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Noam.sarshalom1@mail.huji.ac.il

With the rise of social media and the digital transparency it enables, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) has begun developing formal collaborations with several Facebook groups of soldiers' parents, managed by civilian mothers. In contrast to the past, when parents were defined as an external oversight group, namely, one that maintained no formal relationship with the military (Levy, 2010) these groups indicate a shift toward strategic partnership between the military and parents. Accordingly, this study asks how relationships between the military and parents are constituted and reshaped through Facebook groups of soldiers' parents, focusing on the group "Parents' Headquarters for Soldiers."

Using a qualitative methodological approach and drawing on the concept of "Affective citizenship" (Fortier, 2016), the study examines how group administrators assign meaning to parents' emotions and define which emotions are considered appropriate for participation in matters related to military arrangements. The methodology combines semi-structured in-depth interviews with parents and group administrators, alongside a communicative analysis of posts and comments from "Parents' Headquarters for Soldiers" (pseudonym), a public Facebook group and the largest one to receive official recognition from the IDF.

The findings show that group administrators, occupying an intermediary's position between parents and the military, function as gatekeepers who establish and enforce strict rules privileging rational, non-emotional discourse, often using formal military language. In exchange for access to information and assistance, parents internalize military norms and accept emotional restraint. This process fosters the emergence of a new form of parental citizenship, grounded in practicality rather than emotion and aligned with the security

mission, resembling a form of civilian parental action (Erdreich et al., 2025). The groups themselves become educational and socializing agents in this process of internalization.

The Domestic Sphere in Arab Society in Israel Under Prolonged Emergency: Motherhood, Resilience, and the Everyday Management of Uncertainty By *Maysoon Raya*

Ben Gurion University Raya.maysoon@gmail.com

Most research on emergencies looks at what crises do to individuals, families, and communities, treating the home itself as little more than a backdrop—a physical space meant to offer shelter and protection. This study takes a different starting point. It argues that under conditions of prolonged emergency, the home stops being just a place people live in and becomes something more like a living social institution, one where gender relations, parenting, community ties, and resilience get worked out again and again in the course of daily life. The research is grounded in the experience of Arab society in Israel, a setting marked by long-standing security threats, structural inequality, and its own distinct communal and cultural fabric. Within this setting, the study looks at how women come to redefine what "home" means to them and how they renegotiate their roles within the family and the wider community when crisis becomes a recurring condition rather than an exception.

The analysis draws on three theoretical lenses: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, the Double ABC-X Model of Family Stress and Adaptation, and an intersectional framework. Methodologically, it takes a qualitative, interpretive approach, built on semi-structured in-depth interviews with Arab women in Israel and analyzed thematically.

Two conceptual contributions emerge from this work. The first is the notion of "domestic security work" itself—a largely invisible form of labor that bundles together care, mediation, organization, and the countless small acts of managing everyday life under a lasting threat. The second is a reframing of the home as a Mediating Social Unit: a space that sits at the junction of private and public life and, in doing so, becomes a site where collective coping

strategies are actually produced. The study offers a fresh conceptual framework for thinking about everyday life under conditions of prolonged emergency, and lays theoretical groundwork for policies and services that are more attuned to gender and community.

From Trauma to Resilience? Living with Disabilities in the Shadow of War

Breathing Spaces: Trauma-Informed Design of Public Environments in Israel By *Michal Tenne Rinde*

Ono Academic College michal.rinde@gmail.com

What makes a public space accessible and safe? A question that classic accessibility discourse seemed to have already answered takes on entirely new meaning in the context of collective crisis, life under war, and the return to routine in its aftermath. The gap between attention to physical safety and attention to psychological safety is striking, both in legal regulation and in social practice in Israel, so much so that the discourse on psychological safety is almost entirely absent from accessibility discourse and from the planning of space and service in the country. Accordingly, this lecture will argue, from the standpoint of the social model and the affirmative model of disability, that adapting the public environment for people living with post-traumatic stress, or with anxiety and depression stemming from trauma, is a social obligation. Testimonies from the field and applied examples will anchor a discussion of our shared responsibility to design spaces that afford everyone an experience of safety, the experience of a "breathing space."

The field of Trauma-Informed Design has grown over the past two decades out of research and practice with people living with formally diagnosed post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or with trauma-related characteristics following collective or personal crises. To this end, SAMHSA formulated foundational principles for implementing trauma-informed design; studies in the United States, Japan, and the United Kingdom have demonstrated its effectiveness, and the field has been recognized as a key model for promoting social participation and supporting recovery processes after collective trauma. Despite the importance of applying this model in Israel, where PTSD rates rose significantly following the events of October 7th, this knowledge has yet to be translated into policy or structured professional practice.

The lecture will present the trauma-informed design model and its core principles, and will introduce an adaptation developed for the unique features of trauma in Israel, based on a position paper written on the subject during the war (Tenne Rinde, 2025). The lecture will feature lived experiences and testimonies from experts by experience, as well as preliminary findings from an ongoing study on "breathing spaces in Israel after collective trauma." The research is being conducted in the Department of Occupational Therapy at Ono Academic College, together with numerous additional partners. The lecture will also present applied examples drawn from field-based projects.

"We sometimes forget that emotional safety is as precious as physical safety, but it's essential that we learn to protect both." (Sundine, N.)

Family Resilience in Emergencies in Families with a Person with Disability

By [I]*Rotem Nagar Eidelman,* [II]*Nurit Guedj,* [III]*Lital Barlev*

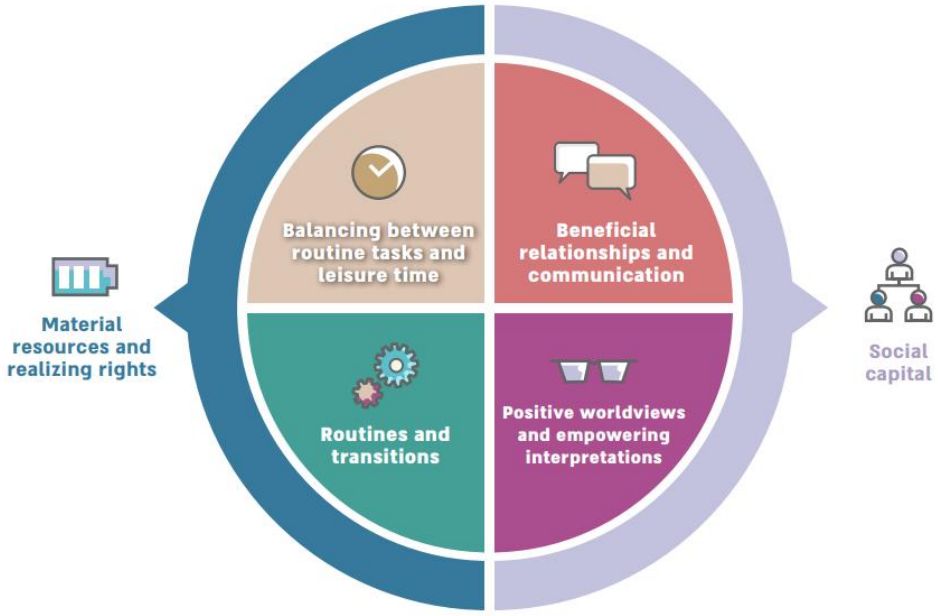
[I]Brookdale Institute RotemNag@jdc.org
[II]Brookdale Institute NuritGu@jdc.org
[III]Brookdale Institute litalB@jdc.org

Like any other person, persons with disabilities are affected by and affect in turn their families. Therefore, the families share in their experiences of the systemic, social and personal consequences of their disabilities. The family's ability to cope with these effects depends on family resilience: the family's ability to withstand the challenges of life. Each family has a set of resources and strengths that enable it to cope successfully with crises or ongoing challenges, to recover from and grow out of them.

This study aimed to: (1) characterize the needs and challenges of families with a person with disability following the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war; (2) characterize the interventions provided to help families cope with the erosion of family resilience; and (3) identify key success factors and barriers in the provision of emergency responses.

The study was based on 17 interviews with professionals in the disability field, family members of persons with disabilities, and persons with disabilities; a focus group with family caregivers; and information collected from government ministries, civil society organizations, official documents, public discussions, and conferences. The data were analyzed according to an applied family resilience model developed by JDC-Ashalim, the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs, and the ERI Institute.

The findings contributed to the development of an **applied model of family resilience in families with a person with disability** (as shown in the figure):



The study highlights how emergencies intensify existing family challenges while emphasizing the importance of strengthening resilience through coordinated services, emotional and practical support, and family-centered interventions. For further details, see the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute reports on family resilience in emergencies and in routine.

"All That Remains Is to Stay in the Safe Room and Minimize the Damage": The Experience of Safety Among Women Aging with Long-Term Disabilities During the October 7 War

By *Alexandra Halbani*

University of Haifa apt.ishi@gmail.com

Background: War profoundly disrupts people's sense of safety by threatening physical security, disrupting support systems, and, at times, causing displacement. Marginalized populations, including women, older adults, and people with disabilities, face heightened vulnerabilities related to accessibility barriers, increased risk of violence, and weakened social support. Lifelong experiences of disability may also shape how crises are experienced and navigated. Although previous research has examined the experiences of these populations separately, little is known about safety at the intersection of older age, female gender, and long-term disability.

Aim: To explore the experience of safety during the October 7 war from the perspective of women aging with long-term disabilities.

Methods: A qualitative study using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), based on in-depth interviews with 10 women aged 50–75 with congenital physical or sensory disabilities living in northern and southern Israel.

Findings: Three themes emerged: (1) Safety in a threatening reality: an embodied and spatial experience; (2) Safety as a dynamic negotiation between vulnerability and resilience during war in the context of lifelong disability; and (3) Safety during war through the reshaping of everyday routines and relationships.

Discussion and Conclusions: The chronic reality of armed conflict in Israel, together with living with disability from early life, blurs the distinction between routine and emergency, making feelings of being unsafe an enduring feature of everyday life. The findings highlight safety as an embodied, relational, and contextual experience, suggesting that emergency preparedness should extend beyond physical protection to encompass accessibility, continuity of everyday routines, and social support.

Closing Plenary: Sociology and the War

Sociology and current moral questions: a small discussion for big questions By *Orly Benjamin*

Bar Ilan University, Orly.Benjamin@biu.ac.il

At the beginning of my talk, I would like to express my deep gratitude for this conference to Prof. Ori Schwartz, Dr. Rafi Grosglick, and the excellent doctoral student and treasurer of the association, Yaron Hoffman-Dishon, as well as to the association's administrative manager Raz Danieli and Deborah Zagau. From September 2025, Ori Schwartz spotted the crisis we were in and came up with the idea of organizing the empirically based special conference we had here today. Is idea was a huge source of support for myself and or all members of the ISS board. Thank you Ori.

I would also like to thank the Dean of social sciences faculty Prof' Nirit Debbi-Ben Arie, who kindly opened our conference this morning strengthening us by a wave of recognition for the importance of our war focused research. I also thank the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Ben-Gurion University - and Prof. Jackie Feldman, head of the department and finally a special thank you goes to to Ben-Gurion University itself and the caterer - we greatly enjoyed his handiwork today, the excellent food he and and all the women and men behind the scenes, prepared for us. With these feelings of gratitude and excitement I now turn to my talk on morals during war times.

In his book Modernity and the Holocaust, Sigmund Bauman was interested in the bureaucratization of evil. Bauman asked how people manage to commit immoral acts without feeling that they are immoral, and he raised the possibility that bureaucratic fragmentation is the structural characteristic that allows each of the accomplices in crimes against humanity to experience himself as moral. How? Through two mechanisms: the first is excellence in

operating the section for which each official is responsible; And the second is the disconnection of the segment for which he is responsible from the general sequence, from the big picture and especially from the products of the process as a whole.

Today, two adaptations of Bauman's argument about bureaucratic fragmentation can be found. One comes from the philosophical-feminist direction of Judith Butler. For her, it is important to continue to clarify the essence of fragmentation, but not necessarily in the context of modernity, industrialization or bureaucratization, but in the context of fragmentary diagnoses about who is the person whose humanity we must protect. In the spirit of Boltansky's argument about distance suffering, indicating that suffering is distanced for us by the media, much like the suffering of the gladiator devoured by a lion, Butler shows that when a social category is exposed to suffering, a mechanism is activated that fragments humanity so that for that category exposed to torture and suffering, humanity is denied.

The second adaptation of Bauman's moral fragmentation is currently proposed by the psychologist Joshua Green, who argues for the disintegration of humanity into Tiny tribes, each of which defines a unique 'we', a tiny circle of collective belonging; and alongside such a 'we', each tribe defines some kind of 'they': an enemy that must be fought to the bitter end. The fragmentation between the tribes is the fragmentation between moral worlds, each of which, in its moral consciousness, renders all other moral concepts superfluous.

In the context of such a disintegrated moral reality, I have led the Sociological Society since 2023, knowing that I must give expression to my moral tribe that has been struggling, for many years, since about 1985. I knew I had to recognize the cruelty of neoliberalism that does not recognize the sanctity of life for those living in poverty as well as the cruelty of militarism that does not recognize the sanctity of life for Palestinians in the region. With these views I am part of a tiny moral tribe that is struggling to strengthen resistance to the denial of humanity from Jews and Palestinians in the region. But I restrained this knowledge and did not give full expression to this moral tribe except in a few statements. Why? I conducted our public voice in this way because of my feeling that I must show responsibility towards the Israeli Sociological Society as a whole. I wanted to respect the realization that the future of the discipline is in question worried that any specific stance might be powerful in playing a role in its disintegration into distinct moral tribes. I sought to moderate the disintegration on

the one hand and to protect our reputation as a discipline committed to empirical research, on the other.

A Sociological Reading of War: Analytical Directions, By *Yagil Levy*

The Open University of Israel, Yagil.Levy@gmail.com

This lecture seeks to bring back to the center of discussion the question of how Israeli society shapes war and grants it legitimacy, rather than focusing solely on how war affects society. But does a critical analysis of war necessarily require opposition to it? Critical sociology is often associated with a critique of militarism. While I personally oppose the war on normative grounds, I argue that critical theory can offer powerful tools for the in-depth analysis of war without necessarily opposing it, provided that we distinguish between analytical inquiry and normative judgment. Beyond its role in challenging existing social institutions, critical theory also serves to strengthen deliberative democracy, which war tends to erode, by raising issues and informing public debates. This is the task of public sociology, carried out not only through media engagement but also through research that is accessible to the wider public.

The lecture illustrates three analytical contributions sociology can make to the study of war. First, sociology can restore context by uncovering the historical and political conditions that shaped the war, including Israel's strategic decision to freeze the peace process, thereby returning political choice and judgment to the public. Second, it can apply dialectical reasoning to show how security regimes may unintentionally empower marginalized actors in neighboring countries and enable them to challenge the very security order they seek to contain. Third, it can employ the sociological imagination to reveal the social meanings embedded in everyday wartime practices that help sustain war.

In conclusion, even if sociologists disagree on whether they should oppose war, there is likely broader agreement that they should foster public deliberation through the distinctive analytical tools of their discipline. Following Michael Burawoy, public sociology need not be tied to any particular ideological position, but it should regard the preservation and expansion of public deliberation as a normative value in its own right.