



## NATIONAL RESILIENCE, POLITICS AND SOCIETY

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## The Aims and Scope of NRPS

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from a national shock and to withstand serious adversity; it is the buffer capacity of a system to absorb different forms of shock. National resilience may be found in the large array of policies and resources that countries employ in order to cope with the challenges before them. This embraces the nation's readiness to contain a disaster and to maintain its social functions in an adaptive manner. National resilience refers to the measure to which the affected national community can react to a catastrophe in accordance with its severity and magnitude; and the ability of the affected community to recover from a low point of functionality to its normal – or even to an improved – level of functioning. National resilience in essence is the motion of a bounce-forward – the capacity of a nation to turn a crisis into a success.

*NRPS* provides an academic forum for original interdisciplinary studies in history, political science, sociology, military studies and political psychology regarding national resilience.

*NRPS* aims to publish original knowledge pertaining to matters of power, politics and influence in the wider context of nations' abilities to develop the resilience and vitality to recover from collective hardships and bounce back.

We are seeking theoretical studies as well as empirical and comparative research that examine the diverse expressions of national resilience. We welcome articles related, but not limited to the following topics:

- Social capital: political trust; social cohesion; social networks and shared values;
- Voluntarism and volunteering: the role of civil society in developing social capital and empowered, committed citizens;
- National ethos: public beliefs and concepts; patriotism and altruism;
- State and religion: godly and civil religions as sources of national resilience;
- Armed forces and society: civil-military relations; military sociology and military psychology: men and women's roles in the army and in society;
- Home front forces: the functions of rescue forces coping with crises at home and abroad; the response to natural disasters; efficiently organizing civil society;
- Social integration and equality: minority groups, immigrants and migrant workers – legal and illegal;
- War and peace: war enthusiasm and war fatigue; conflict management and conflict resolution;
- Leadership and governance in times of adversity;
- Recovering from and overcoming the impact of terrorist attacks.

*NRPS* strives to provide an essential resource to its readers from a variety of social science disciplines. The criteria for publication in *NRPS* are relevance to the journal's aims, scientific innovation and high quality. All submissions are peer-reviewed anonymously by two referees. The journal is published simultaneously online and in print.

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## Editor's Note

This issue is being published under fire – in the full sense of the word, in the midst of a war. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that it is being published in the midst of turmoil, since the war, like a fierce wind, swept Israeli society from one reality to another, from one agenda to an entirely different one – and some would say, from a nightmare to an even worse dream. A Martian who visited our world before October 7, 2023, would have been amazed to see a society falling apart. Doctors were demanding the shutdown of hospitals, highly educated young men and women were calling for Israel's high-tech industry to be moved abroad, and senior officers in the military reserves were declaring that they would no longer fulfill their duties. The controversy over judicial reform had dragged all of Israeli society into an unprecedented identity struggle, leading it to the brink of large-scale domestic violence.

The "Editor's Note" of this issue of *National Resilience, Politics and Society* was supposed to link the topics of the various articles to the clash within Israeli society. A conference of the Association of Civil-Military Studies in Israel held two weeks before the outbreak of the war focused on the contract between the citizen and the state; participants discussed the extent to which individual citizens were entitled or obligated to fulfill their part of the contract even if they felt that the state had not done its part. In the various conversations at the conference, a minority voice noted that there had never been a contract between citizen and state in Israel, but rather a covenant. This is not a give-and-take agreement, perhaps as a result of negotiations, but a family-like concept of unconditional giving.

Merely a fortnight separated the conference of the Association of Civil-Military Studies from the Hamas attack on communities near the Gaza Strip. Once war broke out, Israeli society moved all of a sudden from a contract discourse to an old-new alliance. The country abruptly switched from violent controversy over legislative matters to total mobilization and an extraordinary manifestation of national unity and solidarity. Moreover, civil society provided an effective response to the war crisis, demonstrating an astonishing ability to respond quickly and effectively where government institutions sometimes failed to do so.

Sociologists might argue that all this is no more than the well-known phenomenon of “rallying round the flag,” where societies in a state of war tend to unite. However, a closer look at a single case, one of thousands currently being documented, reveals some cracks in this potential sociological explanation. On the morning of Simchat Torah, Elhanan Kalmanson, the son of a rabbi at the yeshiva in Otniel, sensed that something unusual was happening in southern Israel. Despite the sanctity of the Sabbath, he turned on the radio and heard the breaking news. Because of his age, Elhanan was not eligible for reserve duty, but without hesitation he summoned his brother Menachem and his young nephew Itiel, who had served in an elite army unit, and the three drove off to the unknown. Otniel is 79 kilometers from Kibbutz Be’eri, where they were headed, and within an hour they were entering the killing ground, where thousands of terrorists were taking part in a massacre. They found an armored SUV and some abandoned equipment that they could use, and they immediately continued on to Kibbutz Be’eri, which by now was occupied by the Nukhba terrorists. They entered the kibbutz time after time, risking their lives, fighting terrorists, and most importantly, gathering more families, more children and women, anyone who could be saved. The vehicle, with a maximum capacity of four people, was filled with at least ten at a time. In between battles they managed to save another family and yet another. The survivors were taken out of the danger zone, and then Elhanan, Menachem, and Itiel immediately returned to the inferno to save more. They managed to rescue a hundred people before the terrorists’ bullets caught up with them. Elhanan was shot and mortally wounded; Menachem, too, was injured but managed to rescue his brother and his son Itiel. Unfortunately, Elhanan did not survive the trip to the hospital.

There is nothing unusual about the story of the Kalmanson brothers. The history of the State of Israel is full of events in which everyone was engaged in rescue and fighting. Ultra-Orthodox, national-religious, secular members of yesterday’s protest, and Arabs from all parts of the country all joined together, committed to an alliance, expressing a deep collective willingness to sacrifice whatever it might take.

This is our reality these days, moving rapidly from protest to war, from terrible division to national unity. Even though Israel still faces some crucial challenges of



national resilience, we have chosen to focus this double issue of *National Resilience, Politics and Society* on other issues. Although they are somewhat detached from the war that began in October 2023, bear in mind that the papers in this issue were carefully collected and patiently edited to ensure that each of them in its own way contributes to the general comprehension of aspects of social resilience. Perhaps from an academic point of view it is even better to disconnect a little from current events and concentrate on other matters.

In our forthcoming issues of this journal in 2024, we will deal with the war and its various implications. In the meantime, here we focus on a selection of topics, some military and some civilian, some belonging to the more distant past and some touching on the here and now. However, an examination of the fabric that connects the various articles shows that we have before us a substantive, intriguing, and thought-provoking preparation for future discussions of the war being waged at the time of writing.

The Hebrew section of this issue begins, according to chronological logic, with an article by Dr. Hagai Frank and Prof. Yossi Goldstein of Ariel University about one of the most brilliant moves during the 1948 War of Independence, in which the country's leadership managed to purchase fighter jets and, no less important, arranged for training in the Czech Republic of pilots who would later form the basis of the Israel Air Force – without whose power it is doubtful whether the State of Israel would have survived any of its wars.

Dr. Chen Kertcher of Ariel University then takes us to a new reading of Clausewitz's classic work *On War* and, from the Prussian thinker's point of view, examines social and military relations before, during, and after war. The main issue is who is in charge, the civilians or the military – or in children's parlance, who is the dog and who is the tail, and who wags whom.

Dr. Kercher's theoretical study leads into a practical study conducted by Dr. Itamar Rickover, CEO of the Association of Civil-Military Studies in Israel. Dr. Rickover looks at the influence of the military echelon on the political echelon, with emphasis on political-strategic planning and national intelligence assessments. Dr. Rickover examines the model of bureaucratic-organizational dynamics as practiced in Israel

during the First Intifada of 1987 and finds that the Israeli system still follows the model, reflecting the balance of power between elected officials and leaders of security agencies.

Skipping over years to a somewhat different situation, Dr. Erez Cohen of Ariel University takes us to an in-depth examination of political instability, suspicions of government corruption, and above all, the COVID-19 pandemic in which the individual freedom of Israeli citizens was limited. The findings explain the constancy of Israeli election results over the years and point to the significant role of citizens' political group identity in influencing the perceived legitimacy of the government.

Moving from one Israeli crisis to another, Prof. Sarah Zamir of Ben-Gurion University and Achva Academic College and Dr. Leah Baratz, also of Achva Academic College, investigate the experience of evacuated residents of localities near the Gaza Strip during the 2021 round of fighting with Hamas. Among the evacuees interviewed, the researchers identify a severe crisis in trust in the state and its institutions. No less importantly, there was also a decrease in their trust in Israeli society, whose solidarity with the evacuees was perceived to have eroded.

A kind of summary, or overview, of almost a quarter-century of Israeli struggle against Palestinian terrorism in Judea and Samaria is presented by Dr. Omer Dostri, a researcher at the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security and a member of the research team of the Israel Defense and Security Forum. Dr. Dostri reviews the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from a security perspective, from the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993 through the Second Intifada that broke out in October 2000, and on to August 2023. Dr. Dostri's research concludes with a lesson from history: the more Israel increases its military pressure and strives to defeat terrorism, the less successful terrorism is.

In a way, the English section of the issue begins where the Hebrew section ends. Dr. Joel Fishman, an associate of the Jerusalem Institute for Public Affairs, takes a critical look at the establishment of the Oslo process in the early 1990s, and especially at how, in addition to turning a blind eye and ignoring facts, the government took quite a few measures to manipulate the public into believing in the process. Dr. Fishman's research suggests that the biggest mistake was clinging to the

belief that the process was reversible. Perhaps the Hamas assault of October 7, 2023, is yet another reminder, certainly not the first, of the irreversibility of the so-called peace process.

From regional security affairs, Dr. Joel Fishman's second article in this issue turns to domestic matters, analyzing the strategies adopted by some of the organizers of the recent demonstrations in Israel before the war. It focuses mainly on leaders such as former prime minister Ehud Barak and former defense minister Moshe Ya'alon, who preached civil disobedience and the overthrow of the government at any cost, using the paranoid myth of the imminent end of democracy. Analyzing the subject from the perspective of a historian, Dr. Fishman reveals how these tactics of dismantling society had been used by the Soviets for years, and were also used by Israel's enemies, first and foremost the PLO. This comparative analysis should disturb readers, irrespective of their political views.

Still in the internal Israeli social sphere, a study by Prof. Mariana Ruah-Midbar Shapiro of the University of Haifa and Tal Elohev of Zefat Academic College and Tel Aviv University reveals the hitherto-unknown origins of the first alternative community in Israel. Their article describes the hippie community of Rosh Pinna and compares and contrasts the hippies' lives with Israeli Zionist life. Beyond the historical look at some of Israeli society's roots in the 1960s, this paper also touches on the present, when three images prevail in Rosh Pinna: Zionist, touristic, and alternative-spiritual.

The next article brings us back to Israel's troubles in the global sphere. Dr. Luis Fleischmann of Palm Beach State College delves into Iranian propaganda indoctrination in Latin America, which is based on anti-Zionism and antisemitism. He examines how Iran operates in each country and shows how its actions everywhere are based on local populist trends and intellectual support for the various regimes. Dr. Fleischman's work highlights Iran's success, combined with a rise in antisemitism throughout South America, as an extremely disturbing phenomenon.

From South America, Dr. Dmitry Strovsky of Sichuan University and Ariel University takes us to Russia, where he gives us a glimpse into media coverage of Islam in Russia, as it has evolved over several centuries. An examination of

three leading Russian television channels shows that the tradition of government oversight of media content blocks any reporting about Muslims or Islam that might be perceived as problematic.

In another sphere, the Internet, Prof. Elina Vladimirova Chepkina and Elizaveta Sergeyevna Golousova of Ural Federal University trace how territorial identities are constructed in modern media discourse. Their research is based on 50 interviews on popular YouTube blogs. The results show that territorial identification is significant mainly in the context of personal narration, and it becomes an inseparable part of one's personal values and belief system.

The book reviews in this issue are wide-ranging and diverse. Our regular reviewer, Dr. Orit Miller-Katav, reviewed Ari Shavit's book *The Third Temple: From People to Tribes to People*. As Dr. Miller-Katav indicates, this book can serve as a brief index to the existence of a state trying to find a uniform and appropriate definition for itself.

Dr. Miller-Katav also reviewed Ran Sharir and Avi Zelinger's book *The Man Who Shouted Blanks: New Revelations in the Rabin Assassination Affair*. Twenty-eight years after the murder, this book turns out to be an important document for understanding the sociopolitical background that prevailed at the time in Israel. The book should also stimulate critical thinking about the functioning of the Israeli security systems in their role of preserving public life in Israel and guarding elected officials.

Another book reviewed by Dr. Miller-Katav is Mark Lugovskoy's *Atheist in Gush Katif*. According to Dr. Miller-Katav, this book is the fascinating testimony of a man who took an active part in civil protest and who sees Israeli society as a spectacular complex of humanity, cordiality, and ideology that may be found at both ends of society, yet one that exceeds the sum of its parts.

Dr. Gadi Hitman reviewed Dr. Shaul Arieli's book *12 Israeli Myths about the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, which relates to Hitman's area of expertise. The book discusses 12 myths concerning the complex relations between Israel and Arabs/Palestinians. In Dr. Hitman's professional opinion, we have here an important book in an era of ongoing political stalemate and a bloody conflict that has not yet been resolved.

The English section of the issue contains a book review in which Prof. Tamer Mohamed Mahmoud Metwaly, an Egyptian scholar of religions, analyzes Ahmed Shalaby's Arabic book *Judaism and Comparative Religion* and reveals a worrying anti-Jewish bias – in Shalaby's work as well as in the writings of other Muslim academics. The book being reviewed here is not just another essay about Jews; it is widely read, having gone through ten editions until 1992, and is compulsory reading for undergraduate and graduate-level courses in many Egyptian and international universities. This makes Prof. Metwaly's report all the more important.

**Eyal Lewin**

