LEISURE AND CULTURAL CHANGE IN ISRAELI SOCIETY

Edited by
Tali Hayosh, Elie Cohen-Gewerc,
and Gilad Padva

Leisure and Cultural Change in Israeli Society

Providing an inclusive, yet multi-layered perspective on leisure cultures in dynamic hegemonic, subcultural, and countercultural communities, this volume investigates the disciplinary and interdisciplinary aspects of leisure studies in the age of mass migration, nationalism, cultural wars, and conflicted societies in Israel.

Israeli society has struggled with complicated geopolitical, intercultural, economic, and security conditions since the establishment of the State of Israel. Consequently, the emergent leisure cultures in Israel are vibrant, diversified, exuberant, and multifaceted, oscillating between Western and Middle Eastern tendencies. The chapters in this edited volume reflect dramatic influences of globalization on Israeli traditions, on one hand, and emergent local practices that reflect a communal quest of originality and authenticity, on the other hand. This book opens up a critical perspective on the tension between contested leisure cultures that are interconnected with spatial and temporal changes and interchanges.

Examining leisure as a part of social, interethnic, physical, gendered, and sexual changes, the volume is a key text for scholars and students interested in leisure culture, Israeli society, education, cultural and media studies, and the Middle East.

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Contents

Illustrations

Photos

Tables

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Foreword

Robert A. Stebbins

This anthology enriches substantially a small but growing body of literature on Israeli leisure viewed through an Israeli lens (e.g., Collins-Kreiner and Kliot 2017, on hiking the National Trail; Hayosh 2018, on leisure-related adult education; Nimrod 2016, on leisure paradoxes in later life). In Israel, as elsewhere, this research approach is infrequently implemented, for the dominant tendency in Western social science has been to analyze leisure using broad abstract concepts typically conceived in isolation from the everyday leisure lives of the people supposedly explained by those concepts. In other words, to gain an in-depth understanding of leisure in Israel, or in any other country, we must at minimum identify the activities comprising it, then see how they are pursued, and then discover the motives and meanings that drive those pursuits.

This is an inductive process, wherein hypothetical generalizations are discovered while comparing the common properties exhibited by members of a sample, in this instance, people participating in the same leisure activity. This is also exploratory work, for confirmation of the generated hypotheses must be conducted later, as a separate process consisting of controlled research (Stebbins 2001). Nevertheless, the deep understanding of a country's mosaic of leisure activities is achieved through open-ended exploration, not controlled confirmation. At this initial stage researchers are in direct contact with the objects of research, namely, particular leisure activities and their enthusiasts. Among the typical research methods here are participant observation, open-ended interviewing, focus group sessions, and document analysis, all designed to facilitate discovery and new generalizations.

The research process narrows considerably in the second stage, the one where researchers test these hypotheses and where they sometimes use inferential statistics to help reach conclusions. Here deduction is the order of the day, in that testing hypotheses is a deductive process involving measures and sampling designs that lead logically to conclusions that support or fail to support those hypotheses. The inductive and deductive stages constitute the construction of grounded theory, in this discussion a grounded theory of leisure in Israel.

We could call this theory the *mosaic of Israeli leisure*. Its conceptual components should include, at minimum, Israel's leisure activities and classifications thereof, motives for and meanings of these activities, relevant histories of Israeli free-time passions, and their place in Israeli culture and social organization. Additionally, grounded theory is composed of concepts that have emerged from the open-ended research, known as "internal concepts" (Stebbins 2020). But external ideas that fit with the evolving theory – the "imported concepts" – may also find a place there, though some definitional adaptation is often necessary. Social science conceptual workhorses like role, social interaction, community, organization, and social class can be

employed as long as they do not force the emergent grounded data into a Procrustean bed. Some of the chapters in this anthology have been framed in whole or in part in the serious leisure perspective, showing thus how it, too, can be used to develop the mosaic.

What about the prominent, broad-brush Euro-American theorists who, since approximately 1950, have weighed in on some of the dominant leisure interests of the day? In general, they address themselves to current societal-level trends and their effects, as seen in the writings of Baudrillard, Ritzer, Bauman, Lefevbre, Marcuse, among others. Unfortunately, their approach, though it has produced some trenchant observations, is however too macroscopic for these thinkers to see the details of individual leisure activities, details on which the mosaic of a country's leisure is based (see Stebbins 2009, for evidence of this deficiency).

Theater, genealogy, archaeology, textile crafts, and the folk arts number among the leisure activities that often vary substantially from one society to the next. They help give a distinctive character to the larger mosaic. Then there is the matter of whether certain kinds of collective serious leisure (e.g., concerted music and dance, team sport and non-sport activities) lead to invitations to cross religious, ethic, or class lines in an effort to acquire the best possible participants for the activity in question? Thus, "we need the best oboist locally available to perform optimally this orchestral selection" or "we have an acute need for an excellent striker on our football team." As another example, does the Sabbath encourage an interest in leisure in Israel such that free-time activities gain an unusual level of credibility and importance vis-à-vis other Western societies?

This anthology shows Israeli scholars the way to fashion a grounded theoretic leisure mosaic for their country.

Robert A. Stebbins, PhD, FRSC
University of Calgary

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Introduction

Leisure, conflict, and change in Israeli leisure cultures

Tali Hayosh, Elie Cohen-Gewerc, and Gilad Padva

Leisure cultures are subjected to social, interethnic, physical, gendered and sexual changes. Leisure cultures reflect the systems of values, sideals, traditions, anxieties, and desires of the cultures and communities in which they emerge. In many traditional cultures, leisure and free time are often condemned, sanctioned, restricted, and even prohibited. In order to reproduce the labor division and its constituent political inequalities and to maintain religious routines, traditional cultures typically only allow and encourage leisure activities in holidays and folkloric celebrations. These limitations involve a conflict between production and recreation, work and leisure. In the age of late capitalism, however, leisured cultures and communities are highly commercialized. Transforming leisure activities from spontaneously joyful experiences to formulated, marketed, and consumed enterprises yields diverse tensions and conflicts between individuality and mass production, authenticity and conformity, freedom and industrialized leisure.

Leisure is romantically perceived as a universally magical time in which people feel attached to their most intimate feelings and yearn for new horizons and new encounters. Ideally, leisure experiences can transform a limited vision into a universal perspective that recognizes real, not "imagined" communities (Cohen-Gewerc 2017, p. 681). Moreover, every individual we meet during our leisure time embodies a new, authentic, and inspiring world, reflecting "the open air we respire in the vast field of humanity" (Renan 1992, p. 46).

Realistically, however, power relations and oppressive hierarchies between majorities and minorities are highly reflected by rival communities' leisure cultures. The tension between contested leisure cultures is interconnected with spatial, temporal, and intercultural changes and interchanges.

Leisure activities are often revealed as the locus of intercultural conflicts in changing societies because they involve struggles on public territories for leisure, particularly when one culture maintains its leisure activities on another culture's territory. White Christian racists and bigoted conservatives, for example, are currently discontented with Muslim people's public praying in Europe. In the eyes of these white Europeans, the Muslims' public praying is not an innocent leisure activity or a legitimate spiritual ceremony, but rather a provocative violation of the Western lifestyle and its liberal and secular values.

Another exemplary intercultural conflict, in regard to leisured tourism and traditional community, is the tension between the residents of Mea Shearim, the notorious Ultra-Orthodox Jewish neighborhood in Central Jerusalem. Tourists, particularly women, who visit this place, are requested by the locals to dress modestly in public, mainly to cover their bodies and heads,

whether they are Othodox Jews, secular Jews, or non-Jewish visitors (Fenster 2011). The separatists who live in this conflicted neighborhood feel that they are threatened and sieged by the West's apparently careless, promiscuous, vulgar, borderless, uninhibited, and unbearably commercialized leisure culture. Consequently, the tourists in Mea Shearim are required to temporarily sacrifice their freedom of (visual) expression, in order to access the Other's territory and inspect its habitus, lifestyle, and cultural taste.

The particularities of the tension between Western leisure culture and traditional culture are interconnected with dramatic changes in Israeli society since the State of Israel has been established more than seven decades ago. Israeli society has undergone significant changes in terms of its hegemonic ideology (the 1977 shift from socialist Zionism to capitalist Zionism), the relationship between seculars and religious people (the significant increase in the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox populations and the decline in the secular majority), and the relationship between the Jewish majority and the Palestinian minority (the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Golan Heights in 1967 and the growing Israeli settlements in these territories, from their early days in the mid-1970s until the current controversial situation in which a million Jewish–Israeli settlers live in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights).

Over the decades, the Israeli society has been progressed in regard to women rights and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community despite the continuous influence of the powerful Rabbinical courts in Israel, particularly in regard to family laws, e.g., divorce, custody, and alimonies. The Israeli society has also been significantly changed by the massive Jewish Russian immigration of about a million people in the 1990s, who are conspicuously secular and mostly right-winged, and, on a different level, the massive illegal immigration of about 60,000 Sudanese and Eritrean refugees who have fled from dictatorships to Israel, in which they are stigmatized as illegal migrant workers who involuntarily live in the harshest, lowlife neighborhoods in Israel's social periphery. Another dramatic change in Israeli society is the emergent Israeli high-tech industry and its significant worldwide success. The Israeli society, with its multiple communities, ideological tendencies, lifestyles, and tastes, continually changes, develops, and reinvents itself in multidirectional ways.

Notably, through lifestyle and taste people signify their social position and make their social world meaningful. Social groups' position is culturally mapped by their particular lifestyles. These lifestyles, including significant leisure activities, reflect diverse groups' economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital, knowledge, tradition, self-perception, and public image. Thorstein Veblen (1975), in his inquiry of different leisure consumption among social classes, suggests that wealthy people's abstention from labor, for example, is not only an honorific or meritorious act, but it presently comes to be "a requisite of decency" (p. 41) Pierre Bourdieu (1984) notes that lifestyle and taste, in particular, create social distinctions. For example, people of high social status consume a classic lifestyle that is distinct from the lower class' popular lifestyle.

Dichotomized leisure division and the culture industry of otherness

Different leisure consumptions by privileged and unprivileged classes characterize stratified and discriminatory societies, in which leisure is socially divided and hierarchized. In the age of late capitalism and its intensive consumerism, diverse commercialized leisure industries reshape the social order (Campbell 1987). Leisure cultures are often interwoven with hyperconsuming environments (Ritzer 1999). Consequently, contemporary leisure reflects an extremely unequal,

stratified, and conflicted society (Katz-Gero 1999; Shaw, Liang, Krause, Gallant, and McGeever 2010).

In the past, masculine traits such as courage, control, and self-direction were associated with men's participation in physical leisure activities, including extreme sports, whereas feminine traits, such as passivity and dependence, were connoted with leisurely practices like embroidery and reading (Kane 1990). This distinction is still prevalent today, particularly in societies in which parents encourage girls and boys to participate in distinct leisure activities (Perkins, Borden, Villarruel, Carlton-Hug, Stone, and Keith 2007). Such dichotomized leisure is identified with traditional societies that expect boys to spend time outdoors while demanding girls to stay at home with their families (Abu al-Hija and Hayosh, 2018).

Privileged classes typically consume ostentatious types of leisure, including extensive vacations, exuberant recreational activities, and membership of prestigious golf clubs, flying clubs, riding, tennis matches, theater shows, and classical concerts. They also enjoy traveling to exotic and highly expensive destinations, luxurious restaurants and designers' boutiques. In contrast, the leisure of members of unprivileged classes is self-organized and mostly comprises listening to popular music that is mediated by television, radio, and Internet website like YouTube.com. Unprivileged classes usually consume off-brand clothing and they have cheaper vacations to nearby destinations, motels and camping sites in which they enjoy buy fast food or prepare their own meals.

This dichotomized leisure division reconfirms the boundaries between the privileged and the unprivileged, the hegemonic and the marginalized, the standardized and the transgressive, the dominant and the Other, the upper-classed and the middle-classed. Although there is a sort of democratization or popularization of previously exclusive leisure activities like cruises and sporting golf clubs, this process does not blur the labor division and its hierarchical classifications. Otherness – understood as the (re)production of group boundaries between "us" and "them" – is considered as an effect of social relations of power (Bourdieu 1980; Delphy 2008; Guillaumin 1992; Schuft and Bergamschi 2013), on one hand, and "othering" reconstructs social differences, on the other hand. Significantly, the dominant classes stigmatize and transform the routines *and* leisure of subaltern "othered" communities.

Notably, many leisure activities take place in public spaces, such as city squares, parks, and natural areas. Because public spaces can be used by everyone, they are frequently considered contested spaces, that is, places where opposition, confrontation, resistance, and subversion can be played out (Mitchell 1995; 2003). Discrimination is a mechanism that stimulates these contestations. It can take many forms, all of which involve some kind of exclusion, rejection, or preference (Kloek, Peters, and Sijtsma 2013, p. 407). Various studies have investigated the influence of discrimination on ethnic minorities' leisure activities in public space, in particular. Michael D. Woodard (1988) examines African Americans whose leisure has been constrained by the fear of discrimination and racial prejudice. Woodard suggests that because of these fears, many African Americans preferred to pursue *domestic* leisure activities.

Likewise, Myron F. Floyd, James H. Gramann, and Rogelio Saenz (1993) note that Mexican Americans' uses of public recreation facilities are limited by the prevalent discrimination in American society tends to be negatively correlated with the use of some public recreation facilities. Paul H. Gobster's (2002), in his study of participation in outdoor recreation in Lincoln Park in Chicago, Illinois, indicates that one in seven African Americans has been discriminated when she or he spent their leisure time at the park. They often felt discomfort, reduced enjoyment and anger.

Katleen Peleman (2003), in her research on the participation in indoor leisure activities by Moroccan women in Belgium, showed that these Othered women sought leisure spaces that were not controlled by men or by people of other ethnicities. The women increased their opportunities to spend their leisure time by creating temporary ethnic spaces. They said that their main reasons to seek out these spaces were to escape from restrictions, to be able to be themselves, and not to be questioned about wearing the veil or about other cultural and religious signs.

Similarly, Simone Boogaarts-de Bruin (2011) suggests in her analysis of nightlife leisure in The Netherlands that some ethnic groups create spaces of their own, in order to be in control. She described, for example, a Turkish club scene in The Netherlands: The music played was predominantly Turk pop, the audiences mainly composed people of Turkish descent, and there was a no-alcohol policy. The ethnic spaces thus created enable especially young women of Turkish descent to enjoy nightlife leisure.

Marjolein E. Kloek, Karin Peters, and Mette Sijtsma (2013) suggest, however, that the impact of constraints such as discrimination on leisure participation is varied. Such constraints do not necessarily lead to non-participation. Notably, subaltern groups adopt different strategies to negotiate various leisure constraints, or clusters of constraints, and continue to be active (p. 409).

Despite the creative strategies of coping with prevalent ethnic prejudice in white-dominated societies, however, the hegemonic mechanisms of marginalization, exclusion, and exploitation of the Other are still very powerful and profitable. Paolo Favero (2007) uses the term "culture industries of otherness" to define global industries that capitalize upon the elaboration, representation, and display of somewhat exoticized cultures, places, and the world.

In particular Favero considers tourism as major "culture industry of otherness." He maintains that tourism is a "social activity that safely criss-crosses borders of 'otherness', capturing glimpses of 'other' worlds at high speed, and bringing these glimpses home in the shape of material culture (such as souvenirs or photographs)" (p. 57). The intersection of leisure, culture, and conflict is particularly dramatic in interethnic cultural battlefields. Ethnic conflicts between contested leisure cultures are heightened in the age of mass immigration, including dislocations, relocations, deportations, and forceful transfer of millions of refugees. These processes change the societies. These dynamics necessarily influence the newcomers' and the locals' leisure cultures, and they often stimulate new, hybrid leisure cultures that reflect diverse interethnic influences.

Industrialized tourism and conflicted territories

Tourism, one of the major and most profitable contemporary leisure industries, inherently involves leisured bodies, voyeurism, landscapes, and folklores, and consequent intercultural conflicts. Tourism, one of the main intersections of leisure, culture, and conflict, is dominated by powerful corporations, airline companies, chained-brand hotels, and immensely influential Internet websites. Recreational tourism primarily involves free time, disposable income, and the legal ability of having holidays abroad without mundane restrictions.

Therefore, most of the participants in world tourism are privileged Western people who can afford to travel and who reside in countries that recognize their right to go abroad. Developing countries are rarely visited by tourists from other developing countries. In such one-directional dynamics, local traditions are vividly, and often insensitively, inspected by masses of privileged, mostly white tourists who primarily yearn for adventurous, exotic, unforgettable, and particularly entertaining experiences.

For this reason, the culture industry typically regards the visited territories, and their inhabitants, as marketable and lively exhibits in a stunning cabinet of curiosities. The local population in the tourist destinations is commercially explored, toured, souvenired, and sometimes trivialized by masses of enthusiastic voyeurs and their tourist guides, tour bus drivers, hoteliers, restaurant owners, and other entrepreneurs inside and outside the visited sites.

The conflict between the tourists and the natives is seemingly unavoidable. The people who are Othered by the powerful Western tourist industry, i.e., the natives, locals, residents, villagers, and inhabitants of the visiting destinies, particularly in developing countries, are confronted by different levels of intercultural conflicts. The local people often find it difficult to maintain their heritage, traditions, and authentic folklore in negotiating the visitors' foreign cultural attitudes, perspectives, and values. The local's life is dramatically changed by the intercultural negotiations.

Schuft and Bergamschi (2013), in their analysis of the contestations over land use and management in the case of the Park National de Mercantour, a natural reserve created in 1979 in the South-Eastern French Alps, note that the conflict between the tourism entrepreneurs and the local inhabitants reflects significant power relations. The discourse surrounding the development of tourism and leisure activities in this park led to focus on "us–them" power relations between inhabitants and the park.

Although other entities are also the object of denounced power relations between the local "us" and the outsider "them," namely certain luxury hotels and tourist attraction sites, the park remains a central object of dispute in terms of the regulation of outdoor leisure activities: "Where outdoor sports (hiking, rock climbing) are by far the number one activity promoted by the park, many activities considered by the inhabitants as 'traditional' have been banned (e.g. hunting, fishing, gathering)" (Schuft and Bergamschi 2013, p. 8).

Favero (2007) criticizes the somewhat colonizing and paternalistic attitude of the affluent "culture industries of otherness." He suggests that with its (technologically informed) aestheticizations *sans frontières*, its "shameless" reconstructions of places, its phantasmagoric rewriting of local histories, its blurring of the borders between the "real" and the "fake," its fascination for exotica and consequent appropriation of otherness, "tourism appears as a perfect arena where to face all the 'evils' of 'our' modern industrial capitalist societies" (p. 58).

Max Weber (1922), however, contends that although economic status is necessarily interrelated with behavioral and cognitive patterns, it cannot solely explain people's social experience. Weber prefers a distinction between social classes that is based on structured economic positions and genuine lifestyles as well. The consumption, according to Weber, reflects the desired lifestyle. He perceives the consumer as an active and rational person who plays an important role in the production of lifestyles and ways of living. The multiplicity of lifestyles in modern societies, according to this approach, is a manifestation of multiculturalism and exuberant, multiple coexistent cultures, subcultures, countercultures and tastes (Bauman 1988, 1992; Habermas and Pensky 2000). This approach embraces blurred social boundaries and a variety of social circles, identities in motion, and diverse (counter)cultural leisure activities.

Leisured conflicts and the counterculture industry

One of the most significant leisure activities that had blurred the boundaries between peripheral countercultural communities and the hegemonic mainstream culture is body piercing. In the West, this particular body decoration emerged in the 1970s as a punk subculture's leisure

practice. It has been theorized by Dick Hebdige (2012) as a form of social subversion in which adolescents and young adults criticize the conservative British hegemony and its bourgeois body politics. Hebdige notes that these members of Punk communities are mostly British blue-collar workers who make a creative change. Instead of tightening and straightening their clothing, as their parents used to do, they deliberately insert pins into different body parts, particularly ears and nostrils. In a conflicted intergenerational society, this act is primarily a symbolic deviation. It does generate ostracism, but rather reflects discontent and alternative perspective on powerful social institutions.

Yet, this dissident corporeal manifestation is instantly used by entrepreneurs who produce pins, outfits, accessories, and regalia that are eagerly consumed by dissident countercultures. In other words, communities and individuals can express their authentic aspirations through leisure practices, on one hand, and they can challenge oppressive social structures and consumerisms and change common attitudes toward minorities, on the other hand.

The counterculture industry is often revealed as manifestation of industrially commercialized subcultures. Although subcultures are different from the mainstream culture in their size, agenda, cultural codes, aesthetics, and ethics and, consequently, in their profitability, they still can be highly valuable for entrepreneurs and producers of countercultural leisure, including arts, media, iconographies, performances, festivals, venues, and fandoms. Countercultural moguls, make a fortune of their subaltern communities, offering them means of recreation, fantasies, and diverse countercultural praxis (fashion, clubs, independent cinemas, maverick television, and alternative Internet websites).

Despite their conflict and discontent with the mainstream culture, however, most of them are primarily committed to capitalistic imperatives, primarily profitability, just like their mainstream counterparts. Alternative leisure entrepreneurs – whether these are organizers of gay and lesbian parties, producers of ethnic festivals or owners of nudist resorts, for example – are mostly interested in moneymaking. Hence, they often manufacture formulaic products that aim to satisfy and be popularized by their clienteles' conventional expectations, desires and aspirations.

Despite the financial motivation of numerous conventional *and* alternative leisure enterprises, they often challenge and resist the powerful social order. Leisure concomitantly contradicts the ethos of labor, in its notorious hedonistic manner, and discharges social and political tensions and disagreements. When playful and joyful leisure activities are shared by multiple and highly diverse groups and communities they seem to bridge over ideological gaps, political conflicts, and socio-economic and gendered hierarchies in changing societies.

Leisure, by its nature, creates free time and free space. The goal is to release people from the pressures of everyday life, from disturbing thoughts and emergencies, and to ease the pressures of life (Hayosh 2017). This release allows the individual to meditate on cultural issues that truly interest her or him. Leisure, as an enclave of freedom and emancipation, challenges our very identity. When we enter the field of leisure, not for escapism or distraction, we discover new traits of our own being that stimulate a new, more complex, deeper and more authentic self-definition than we can experience in our daily socialization.

Unsurprisingly, many political movements are initially envisioned during leisure activities (Rojek 2000). Further, relaxation makes leisure a unique space for challenging social values. Leisure is somewhat parallel to reality. It enables its participants to embrace their autonomous wishes, ambitions, and aspirations, without paying the price that would normally be paid in the real world.

In order to participate in leisure, individuals must escape, for a while, their commitments to family matters, work, and studies. There is a tension between the familiar and normative commitments of everyday life and the desire to enjoy unprofitable activities. This tension is significant in "serious leisure" (Cohen-Gewerc and Stebbins 2013) that requires significant resources, time, energy, specialized knowledge, training or skills.[1]

Free time becomes leisure time when people realize that it is legitimate to check new alternatives and experience them, when the individual finds in himself an aspiration for uniqueness and search for universality. Leisure's state of mind invites us to cross borders, to feel the human pulse toward a world that became global village. Indeed, this process is not prevalent, and for many people, such openness and blurred boundaries provoke feelings of fragility and insecurity. Therefore, they prefer to return to routinely secured and unchallenging frameworks.

An uncertain world often seems too open, too precarious. A growing stressful atmosphere stimulates separatism and instigates narrow communitarianism and fundamentalist religiosity. This, in turn, involves a disastrous regression as people are not ready to meet the Other, the stranger, and significantly avoid human encounters in a universal context (Cohen-Gewerc 2017).

Such emancipation is in contrast to the traditional establishments' endeavors to feel the citizens' free time with ceremonial contents, just like the industrialists' efforts to organize their customers in commercial frameworks. Such attempts contradict the spirit of leisure that encourages people to meet the intimate folds of their being, including their hidden talents. This beauty can be revealed during leisure time when people have the chance to encounter the Other. Such recreational encounters disrupt the oppressive patterns that imprison people's lives since childhood.

Emancipatory leisure and its unrestricted universality

Leisure time and space provide opportunities for self-emancipation and exploration of distant regions in which we can touch the universal – an initial foundation of any human particularity. The photographer Oded Wagenstein focuses on humane moments, such as a close-up of a child holding his father or mother's hand.[2] It is a precious moment that transcends different cultures, practices, beliefs, and garnitures. In Henri Verneuil's film, *The Cow and I* (aka *La vache et le prisonnier*) (1959)[3] a French prisoner (Fernandel) tries to comfort a couple of worried German parents. He tells them that if their son, who is a German soldier, is in Marseille – his city of birth – they can be assured that he's safe. The sincerity in his appearance and in his words, together with the typical parents' worry, enable the spectators to transcend the national differences, the particular circumstances (a French prisoner escapes Germany during the dreadful Second World War), and to find an authentic human feeling in each of these characters.

Leisure no longer has to do with brief intervals inserted between structured roles, tasks, and obligations; it has acquired a legitimate space and has become a realm within itself. Leisure, particularly in new and wider horizons that allow essential encounters with different people, stimulates the intimate dialogue between what we think and what we truly feel. Such a dialogue leads to a vital readjustment of definitions, including self-identity, community, and estrangement. Then the personal identity ceases to be an island surrounded by impermeable fences. Rather, it grows into an open place that is connected by bridges and human linkages, far beyond the limitedly imagined community (Cohen-Gewerc 2017, p. 669).

Leisure, and "serious leisure"[4] in particular, provides a new understanding of the human life. In experiencing leisure as part of our quest of signification and human dignity we discover the exuberance of being particular. We reconsider ourselves as intimate members of a family with strong ties to nationality, history, and common rituals, on one hand, and enjoy universality that encompasses pluralistic cultures, different natures, and diverse human destinies.

Leisure, as a sort of initiation, can genuinely emancipate people from their defined self that is shaped by education and constraining local mentality. Leisure then tends to join the realm of art and science, in its quest of unrestricted universality. It is a sphere in which the painting *The Lacemaker* (1669–1670) by Johannes Vermeer, for example, a banal and fleeting anecdote that has been painted centuries ago, can break all the boundaries of time, space and ethnicity, all the limitations that humanity has built in order to separate individuals, and to separate the individuals from their potential wholeness (Cohen-Gewerc and Stebbins 2013, p. 113).

Exploring the lure of leisure in conflicted societies

The edited volume *Leisure and Change in Israeli Society* suggests, however, that despite the notorious escapism connoted with leisure and recreation cultures, leisure is never detached from political decisions, crucial debates, dilemmas, social discomforts, and intercultural conflicts. Notably, leisure is highly formulated, elaborated, historicized, capitalized, commercialized, and fetishized by powerful industries and hegemonies. Consequently, current political, social, ideological, generational, gender, sexual, and labor divisions are reflected by numerous leisure cultures.

In *Leisure and Cultural Change in Israeli Society*, we are interested in disciplinary and interdisciplinary aspects of leisure studies in the age of mass migration, nationalism, cultural wars, and conflicted societies. This edited volume aims to provide an inclusive yet multi-layered perspective on leisure cultures as the result of dynamic negotiation between and within hegemonic, subcultural, and countercultural communities. This edited volume presupposes that current leisure traditions and practices are influenced by social, ethnic, gendered, ideological, religious, and consumerist conflicts.

The first section in this book, Freedom, Autonomy, and Leisure, addresses questions related to freedom in leisure, focusing particularly on practices of consumption. Michelle Shir-Wise's chapter: "Leisure, consumption, and freedom" contextualizes leisure in a broader critical discussion of consumer capitalism. Shir-Wise coins the term *conforming individualism* in order to examine and demonstrate the various ways by which consumer culture promotes a form of management of time and the self that adheres to autonomy, freedom and choice, even as it encourages conformity to cultural models. This chapter is based on interviews with 43 women and men from a suburban, upper-middle-class town in central Israel. Its findings shed light on the centrality of consumption in many leisure practices, and on the impact of conflicting discourses on leisure and self- management in contemporary life.

Tali Hayosh's chapter "Mass vs. autonomous consumption of serious leisure: its unexpected byproduct" suggests that the culture of consumption affects the desire to engage in leisure practices and the gains expected from such practices. Leisure courses are not associated with any formal framework and their participants do not obtain any sort of certification or academic degree. Yet they find themselves investing time, money, and effort. This chapter examines the effect of the capitalist ethos and the organization of the consumer world on motivations for serious leisure consumption. This chapter draws a distinction between factors associated with

manipulative consumption, and social influences and factors associated with autonomous consumption. This chapter compares between factors that motivate the pursuit of serious leisure and factors that evaluate the gains that are derived from this pursuit. Hayosh interviewed 63 people enrolled in yoga, ceramics, blacksmithing, and yachting courses. Her findings indicate that the participants' motivating factors were associated with both autonomous and manipulative consumption, whereas their perceived gains were associated primarily with autonomous consumption. The participants' gains were substantial and meaningful, exceeding their expectations in both scope and depth.

The second section, Nationalized and Minoritized Leisure, focuses on the philosophical, communicational, and pedagogical particularities of leisure rituality and consumption in traditional and modern Jewish communities in contemporary Israel. Elie Cohen-Gewerc's chapter "Shabbat is a space without work," stresses that the concept of Shabbat, the Fourth Commandment in the Bible, basically aims to fix a clear-cut difference between profane weekday activities, and the time and space dedicated to God, to the sacred dimension of human life, but it is not leisure. Notably, leisure is a relatively new concept that tends to transcend the simple notion of being on break. Nevertheless, Shabbat influences certain aspects of leisure, such as the dichotomy between profane and sacred activities, or between work time and holidays. The root of the word *holiday* stresses this ancestral impact. In a slow but consistent evolution, leisure has acquired its own significance as part of life and not only as a hiatus from routine. This chapter demonstrates the increasingly visible infiltration of leisure among the religious communities, in their quest of extra free time beyond the limits of the Shabbat. This chapter claims that these communities continue to have *Oneg Shabbat*, enjoying the Shabbat, yet they feel that they miss something. The Bible considers Shabbat as the seventh day on which God did not pursue creation, yet contemporary leisure is deeply concerned with creation and creativity.

Liat Steir-Livny's chapter "Dark tourism as controversial leisure enterprise in Israeli TV satire shows" criticizes the popular cultural representations of travels of Israeli high-school students and members of public and private Israeli organizations to Auschwitz, the main German extermination site in Poland during the Holocaust. While these travels are extremely popular, Israeli TV satire shows regularly mock this enterprise. This chapter problematizes the interconnections between collective memory, leisure, national and nationalist identity, and the particularly profitable yet controversial dark tourism and its critical representation in Israeli popular media.

The third section, Consuming Leisure, Gender, and Sex, reconsiders the influence of traditional and alternative sex roles, gendered hierarchies and sexual axioms in today's powerful leisure industries and imageries. Gilad Padva and Sigal Barak-Brandes' chapter "Naked leisure: recreational and domesticated male bodies in an Israeli home design campaign" focuses on the unexpected representation of leisure in a controversial Israeli campaign for a local furniture company starred by naked male models. This campaign reflects the growing popularity of (semi)naked male bodies in mainstream global advertising and the growing eroticization of male physique in contemporary Israeli popular culture. This chapter inquires the provocative campaign's universal, global, and cosmopolitan perception of men in domestic leisure and it questions traditional assumptions about masculinity, male sexuality, labor, and leisure, and the politics of sexual taboos. Padva and Barak-Brandes particularly reconsider this campaign's connotation of leisure and nudity, recreation and domesticity, hedonistic *habitus* and luxurious lifestyle.

Michal Zeevi and Esther Hertzog's chapter "*Playboy* as repressive leisure: feminists confronting Israeli patriarchy" is concerned with the entrance of *Playboy* into Israeli media in the beginning of the current millennium. This chapter contends that broadcasting *Playboy* TV channels in Israel paved the way for pervasive local consumption of pornography. It elaborates on the intense debates that followed this event, particularly the radical feminist struggle against launching a *Playboy* TV channel in Israel, and the radical feminists *and* Ultra-Orthodox parties' joint success in passing a law against broadcasting pornography in Israeli television. This chapter criticizes the contribution of *Playboy* to a reconsideration of pornography as a legitimate leisure activity. Inspired by the notion of *repressive leisure*, this chapter argues that *Playboy* preserves male dominance and female subordination and exploitation. Zeevi and Hertzog suggest that *Playboy*, as part of the pornographic industries, reflects a backlash against women's strengthening in society. Based on the authors' personal involvement in the local struggle against *Playboy*, and feminist anti-pornography scholarship, this chapter criticizes the power of patriarchy that favors male sexual predominance over female human dignity. Zeevi and Hertzog criticize their liberal feminist counterparts that condemn anti-porn censorship and support the consumers' free choice and prefer educational rather than legislative activities against objectifications of women. Moreover, the authors claim that the Israeli Supreme Court, in considering *Playboy* as harmless, tolerable leisure that manifests freedom of expression, paved the way for the currently flourishing pornography in Israel.

Tali Hayosh and Rakefet Erlich Ron's chapter "Consumption practices: uniformed yet unique? Finding individuality within conformist consumer culture" compares Tali Hayosh's research (see Chapter 2) about popular consumption of serious leisure courses and workshops among secular Jewish people with Erlich Ron's inquiry of ultra-Orthodox Jewish women's shopping of traditional wigs. This chapter problematizes the interrelations between leisure culture and consumerism. This chapter is interested in the way in which consumers balance their unique needs with the demands of their social framework. Hayosh and Erlich Ron focus on two populations that are both Jewish, yet one is liberal and the other one is highly conservative. Conspicuously, these groups differ in their moral attitude toward the world of leisure and consumption. This comparative ethnographic research reveals that although leisure practices in both societies are dictated by social mores, the participants construct an individualized consumer narrative, striving to maintain their uniqueness within a conformist consumer culture. Although these distinct populations differ in their attitudes toward consumption, they use significantly similar practices according to their spiritual purposes. Their conspicuously similar practices reflect an unanticipated flexibility of the consumer arena that satisfies individualistic needs.

The fourth section, Leisure Communities and Communal Hobbies, inquires the intricate relationships between leisure, hobbies, "serious leisure," and the tension between individualist, collectivist, and communal practices. Sima Zach and Assaf Lev's chapter "Long-distance running as a serious leisure activity and its influence on relationships within the family" concentrates on the growing popularity of marathon races in Israel. Long-distance running is typically perceived as highly challenging and demanding, both physically and mentally, and it deeply affects the participants' self-identity and their relations with the social world. They voluntarily invest time, effort, and money, and they are intensively involved in a world that is often external to the realm of partnership and marriage. This ethnographic research suggests that the runners' personal relationship becomes fragile and insecure due to their intense investment of time in marathon practices. This chapter contends that the non-runner partners of these sportspersons are often excluded from the sportspersons' new social world. Yet long-distance

runners report that their relationships with their children go through a dramatic and positive change. Whereas long-distance running may jeopardize the runner's marital partnership, her or his relationship between with the children is strengthened and improved.

Hagit Klibanski, Orit Gilor, and Drora Kfir's chapter " 'It's always up to the parents': parents' initiatives in response to the challenge of leisure time for children with disabilities" notes that children with disabilities rarely participate in leisure activities. The parents play a crucial role in their children's participation, and this chapter reflects these parents' standpoints. This ethnographic research reveals that most of the challenges are environment-based and either physical or social. Dealing with these difficulties often leads to fatigue and giving up, but on the other hand, it also pushes parents to initiate new leisure services for children with disabilities. This chapter contends that the Israeli government policy, in regard to disabled children's leisure activities, is inconsistent, the legislation on the subject of people with disabilities is incomplete and its enforcement is loose. Thus, existent leisure options for children with disabilities are not equally distributed, either geographically or economically.

Shahar Gindi and Avital Pilpel's chapter "The sabra, the genius, and the chess player: a socio-historical understanding of competing narratives," deals with chess as a widespread leisure activity and successful competitive sport in Israel and in the pre-state *Yishuv*. The popularity of this game in this region emerged not long after the beginning of the Zionist immigration to Palestine. Yet this chapter contends that the popularity of chess is somewhat inconsistent with the collectivist ethos of the Zionist and, later, Israeli *sabra* that predominantly glorified farming and physical vigor. This chapter suggests that this success of chess is interrelated with the myth of the Jewish genius that brings together the biblical myth of a chosen nation, and Jewish success in science and business. Yet this chapter stresses that the Zionist establishment perceived chess as evidence of the Jews' returning to live a "normal" life, a "nation like all other nations," for the first time in 2000 years.

We hope that this unique edited volume, *Leisure and Culture Change in Israeli Society*, would initially provide a comprehensive and inclusive perspective on the materializations of leisure and the conceptualization of recreation in conflicted, stratified and fragmented societies.

We hope that this international edited collection will be a significant contribution to scholars and students who are interested in an inspiring perspective on leisure, its social and self-perceptions, and its popular mediations and representations. This discourse genuinely integrates social studies, cultural and intercultural studies, ethnography, gender and sexuality studies, body and physicality studies, tourism and dark tourism studies, ethnicities and media studies. Indeed, leisure is a very serious matter and a multifaceted, often conflicted field of research.

1   This investment brings about continuous benefits for the participant. It enables the participant to fulfill her/his goals, to self-express her/himself, to enchant and experience social interaction and a sense of belonging, as well as developing a unique ethos. Furthermore, developing a career, in parallel to leisure, stimulates identification with the chosen pursuit.
2   Oded Wagenstein attempts to discover and record the universal dimension of humans' behavior around the world. See his works: www.youtube.com/watch?v=61hkXYRIR4E.
3   See a review of this film: www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9F0CE5DE1239EE32A25755C0A9609C946091D6CF.
4   See information about Serious Leisure: www.seriousleisure.net/.

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Part I

Freedom, autonomy, and leisure

1   Leisure, consumption, and freedom

Michelle Shir-Wise

Introduction

If there is one part of the day we consider to be "free" it is our leisure time. We envisage that time as a realm of freedom, when we are able to choose to do whatever we like. But is it really as free as we imagine it to be?

This chapter addresses questions related to freedom in leisure, focusing particularly on practices of consumption,[1] with leisure being contextualized in a broader critical discussion of consumer capitalism. I bring together insights garnered from various approaches including leisure studies, cultural sociology, and Foucauldian theory, as I focus on the cultural influences and discursive frameworks that may constitute subjects and construct meanings. My main argument is that culture plays a crucial role in shaping the way we think about leisure and selfhood. Cultural influences have an impact on both action and meaning so that free time may not be as "free" as it is generally thought to be. The current article explores and illustrates how culture sets the standards of what the individual should strive to be, defining who is worthy and what behaviors are reasonable (Lamont 1992) and in doing so, shapes the way we spend and think about our leisure time.

While abundant research has investigated leisure from various perspectives, less attention has been given to the relationship between leisure, freedom, and the self in the context of consumer culture in Israel. In an attempt to fill this gap, the chapter presents an exploration of leisure, hoping to shed light on the ways individuals manage the self, on questions of freedom and on how culture works in everyday life. To what extent is free time intrinsically directed or is it culturally constructed? In what ways does consumer capitalism shape, not only *how* we spend our time, but also conceptions of time and worthy selfhood? How is free time related to self-management in everyday life? In what way does consumer culture direct the individual toward certain practices and modes of consumption?

I propose the theoretical concept, *conforming individualism*, in order to better understand the cultural and discursive construction of leisure. This oxymoron captures the contradictory nature of discourses that may shape the way we use and think about leisure. I offer the concept to examine and demonstrate how consumer culture encourages a mode of self and time management rooted in ideals of autonomy, freedom, and choice even as it promotes conformity to cultural models. My use of the term is not intended to simply evoke the cultural contradictions underlying leisure, but to illustrate how the discourse of individualism may be precisely what encourages conformity. The concept, c*onforming individualism*, employs three analytic tools – freedom, culture, and the self – which, though they overlap in the chapter, are used to address its central issues.

The chapter begins by inquiring into the question of freedom in relation to leisure. I then look at the discursive framework of consumer capitalism and notions of self in contemporary life. This is followed by findings of the study that uncover how modes of consumption in leisure are connected to conceptions of the self and time.

Finally, I discuss the implications of the findings, particularly the impact of conflicting discourses on conceptions and actions related to free time and self- management in contemporary life.

Methods and sample

The findings presented in this article are from a wider study of free time among 43 men and women from an upper-middle-class town in central Israel. By focusing on the upper-middle class, I hoped that this would reduce the effects of socio-economic constraints on leisure options, as would the central location of the sample, which meant that participants had access to a wide range of leisure activities. Additionally, all were middle-aged and married, with children living at home, since differences in family status or age may affect one's free time. In light of the literature, I have reason to believe that this sample, while not presenting a full cross section of Israeli society, is likely to deepen our understanding of leisure and its meaning among middle-class individuals in Western cultures.

The research was conducted using two main methods: written questionnaires and semi-structured in-depth interviews. The first focused on personal information about the participants as well as quantifiable data about free time practices they performed including the types, their duration, frequency, and with whom they were done. The oral interview, on the other hand was intended to reach deeper into questions of subjective meaning related to perceptions, experience, and motives. Besides these two main methods, I also examined textual data drawn from local texts including commercial fliers and a popular local magazine, the purpose being to uncover cultural scripts of worthy time use and desirable selves. In addition, I participated in a number of activities mentioned by participants in order to enrich my sense of the town in general and the way people used their free time in particular.

The data from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics whereas the analysis of the oral interviews followed an inductive approach based on grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Transcripts were read thoroughly, uncovering concepts and categories that formed dominant themes. These served to formulate the theoretical basis of my exploration.

Leisure and freedom

A central concern of the current chapter is the question of freedom in leisure, thus I explore here the ways in which free time is differentiated from other time and how it may be considered to be free.

First, as traditional definitions of leisure suggest, it may be free in the sense that it is free from work or other duties (Dumazedier 1974; Giddens 1964; Parker 1976; Roberts 1978, 2006; Rojek 1995), however, the boundaries between work and free time are becoming increasingly more blurred due to technology that erases spatial and temporal boundaries between work and leisure. Second, leisure is conceived as being free from a sense of obligation, as opposed to working time, school time, or other such routine commitments. But is this true about all leisure practices? Third, leisure, in contrast with committed time, may be relatively free from structure or planning.

Yet many activities, particularly those involving consumption, such as gym classes or outings to movies and restaurants, are more structured and require some sort of organizing. Those planned, or "special" activities, may be understood by the individual as contributing to certain notions of self, while those that are less structured or conceived as mundane, like watching television, may be perceived as insignificant in the pursuit of life goals or the construction of identities, contributing to what I call the *hierarchization of free time*. In other words, certain leisure practices are deemed worthy while others are ranked low on the hierarchy of leisure. This chapter also hopes to shed light on what contributes to a positive evaluation of leisure.

Besides being free from obligations or planning, free time is perceived as *free* in the sense that one can choose what to do with one's time. Indeed much of the early literature defined leisure as characterized by choice and free will (Dumazedier 1974; Parker 1976; Roberts 1978). Other scholars have added to their definitions of leisure, characteristics of relaxation, amusement, satisfaction, and self-development as well as physical and mental benefits (Kaplan 1975; Roberts 2006; Stebbins 2012). These features stress the subjective aspect of time. The individual's experience of time is emphasized rather than an objective examination of time use.

The above distinctions link leisure with freedom, but the question is whether that time is indeed free with regards to choice and options available to us. The way we spend our free time is certainly influenced by external factors both on the micro and macro levels. For instance, if a couple with young children wishes to spend the evening at a restaurant, but is unable to find a babysitter, then, clearly they are left with little choice regarding their outing. If, however, the couple must stay home because they can afford neither a babysitter nor the cost of a restaurant dinner, the lack of choice is clearly ongoing and their economic situation is likely to affect many other decisions regarding their time use. Yet, in this case, the couple would probably be aware of these external factors that limit their leisure options. Moreover, these constraints on free choice would surely apply to many other members of their socio-economic class.

Structural factors certainly merit the attention of social scientists, and time use research has indeed examined differences according to categories such as class, gender and age (ATUS 2017; Bianchi and Robinson 1997; Katz et al. 2000; Robinson and Godbey 1977). However, the focus of this chapter is on more subtle influences on the actor's agency. I am interested here in cultural and discursive constructs, which are likely to shape the way we use our time, but also how it is subjectively perceived by the individual. Put differently, despite the association of leisure with freedom, I question whether the individual is entirely free regarding that time and what influences her/his choices.

An additional quandary that I address here is the experience of time pressure, so commonly expressed in contemporary life. While leisure was once considered to be a privilege of the upper classes, a reversal of this Veblenian leisure–status relationship (Gershuny 2005; Robinson and Godbey 1977) has been indicated in research that points to longer working hours among more highly educated, higher income workers (Gershuny 2005; Katz et al. 2000; Offer and Schneider 2011; Robinson and Godbey 1977; Sullivan 2008). Nevertheless, studies have shown that overall, working hours have decreased (Aguiar and Hurst 2007; ATUS 2017; Gershuny 2005; OECD 2009; Roberts 2006; Robinson and Godbey 1977; Rosa 2003), yet although we have more leisure time than in the past, people still seem to feel busy and time pressured (Gershuny 2005; Roberts 2006; Robinson and Godbey 1977; Wajcman 2014), a paradox that I seek to better understand by exploring the subjective experience of leisure embedded in consumer capitalism. Recent research has addressed contemporary time pressure and the acceleration of life (Rosa

2003; Sharma 2014; Wajcman 2014; Wajcman and Dodd 2016), however, less emphasis has been placed on leisure and selfhood.

Culture, time, and the self

My main claim in this chapter is that culture colors the way we think about time and the self, thus shaping the way we spend and relate to our leisure. By culture I mean the cultural scripts of discourses, which are internalized by individuals as desirable and worthy. The present chapter focuses on the cultural framework of consumer capitalism and its impact on conceptions of time and selfhood, particularly on the mass commercialization, not only of leisure, but also of the self.

The term *consumer capitalism*, in itself, suggests a contradiction as it is a culture that preaches both spending and saving. While consumerism promotes consumption as crucial to one's happiness, capitalism encourages hard work and productivity. The first directs individuals toward pleasure and self-gratification, but also promotes practices of commodified self-management. The second advocates the management of time so that it becomes a productive tool with which to achieve outcomes. I suggest that the commercialization of leisure relies on the consumer's association of consumption with notions of worthy time and ideal selves. Goods and services are perceived as having the power to transform the individual (Campbell 1987; Illouz 2002; Jhally 1989) and consumption is offered as a solution to problems of identity. Consumers are thus encouraged to invest both time and money so as to conform to cultural prescriptions of worthy lifestyles, bodies, and leisure. Yet, in order to ensure endless consumption, consumer culture instills and nurtures a sense of inadequacy among potential consumers so that individuals constantly monitor themselves. In this way, discourses may discipline the individual by encouraging self-surveillance, which, in turn, brings about conformity to cultural models of worth.

Late capitalism's culture industry offers scripts of self presented in media images and conveyed in subtle messages. Advertisements seduce consumers into consuming as a means of attaining a self in keeping with models that are presented as worth pursuing. Moreover, the commercialization of leisure hierarchizes free time, making some activities more highly valued than others. Indeed, as we shall see, consumption is often an integral part of special occasions and associated, not only with self- investment but also conceived as a means of investing in significant others.

To better understand the centrality of the self in conceptions and practices of leisure, it is crucial to look briefly at approaches to selfhood. Individualistic discourses imply an active agent with free choice, one who is in control of her/ his destiny. Giddens (1991) suggests that we are what we make of ourselves and that the "self project" means taking responsibility and creating a life plan. Similarly, psychological discourses rest on the idea of a free, autonomous individual (Rose 1998) that is capable of change through self-management. The therapeutic ethos permeates social and cultural life with language and practices that shape ideas of modern identity (Furedi 2004; Illouz 1991, 2008; Wright 2011). However, this approach does not always empower the individual. I argue here that it is precisely the individualistic sense of freedom and mastery over one's self that the therapeutic discourse uses to promote constant self-work, which is at the heart of advertising and self-help industries, and, as I shall claim, many leisure practices.

Conforming individualism emphasizes values of individualism such as freedom, entitlement, and agency yet, at the same time, encourages a self-gaze that gives rise to self-monitoring and self-work or a " belabored self" as McGee (2005) calls it, in an endless endeavor to conform to an ideal self as prescribed by cultural scripts. In the hope of shedding light on these issues, the

following explores how participants of the study spent and experienced leisure practices related to consumption and how these are linked to self-management.

Findings

Leisure as freedom

The question of freedom being the focus of this chapter, I begin by looking at participants' conceptions of leisure, which indicated freedom as a central thematic thread, inextricably interwoven into their understandings and experience of leisure, revealing a dual conception of freedom: *freedom from* and *freedom for*. I use the term *freedom from* to refer to time *free from* constraints such as family, work or other commitments, while *freedom for* implies a more positive notion of freedom as choice.

When asked how they would define free time, the language of participants was abundant with a vocabulary expressing autonomy and agency. As one participant put it, "When you *choose* to do what you *want*, when the individual can decide and take control" (my emphasis). Yet it was described, not only as time when one is *free to* "choose," but also when one is *free from* the restrictions of duties, as another participant says, "It's time when I don't do work, when I don't do things that I have to do.…" The repetition of the negative form suggests that leisure is not simply a matter of having time *free from* commitments, but that it also means that the individual does not feel a sense of obligation either to her/himself or to others. Participants expressed feelings of pressure and overload when talking about their committed time, describing it as a "race after time." They experienced their committed time, both at work and in the home, as stressful and allowing little choice or freedom. Indeed, the words, "I don't have time," were expressed by many participants. The appeal of leisure lay in its *freedom from* obligations, its scarcity and its *freedom to* do what one wants or enjoys.

My distinction between *freedom from* and *freedom to* echoes Erich Fromm's discussion of freedom (1984), though he does not relate specifically to leisure. Fromm claims that, despite the assumption of freedom, individuals conform to cultural patterns, which may hinder their freedom in the positive sense. *Freedom from* defines leisure in negative terms of what it is not, whereas *freedom to* highlights positive freedom when the individual is able to realize her/himself, make free choices and actively take control. Yet, even when individuals believe that their free will determines their actions, the very forces they wish to escape in their non-working time shape their will (Adorno 1991, p. 162). Horkheimer and Adorno (2006, p. 71) point out that the culture industry promotes "freedom to be the same," encouraging the compulsive imitation of cultural commodities, which limits one's freedom and leisure time. Marcuse (1966, 1969) too, suggests, that, despite the individual's sense of freedom, the creation of false needs in capitalist societies constrains real leisure, play, and imagination.

Indeed, while the participants' words expressed a feeling of freedom rooted in individualistic values of choice and autonomy, we shall see that the centrality of consumption in their leisure time may be driven by an unconscious desire to conform to cultural prescriptions of time use and worthy selfhood. Put differently, *conforming individualism*, may contribute to a need to utilize and manage time while still feeling that it is a matter of individual choice. Although participants associated leisure with freedom, the language, as well as the practices they reported, pointed to a productive approach to time. Participants talked of having to "get things done," "productive outcomes," "schedules," and trying to "utilize" their time. Time management was glorified and

fetishized and "free" time was considered to be a particularly precious resource. The ability to multitask was highly valued by many participants, who regarded it as a means of maximizing one's time, including leisure time. For example, one participant reported reading a newspaper, watching television, and using his laptop "at the same time." This culturally valued notion of optimizing time may mar one's sense of freedom in leisure, generating, rather, feelings of compulsion to get as much done as possible. Stated otherwise, while participants defined leisure in terms of freedom, time is regarded as a resource to be managed and utilized wisely, therefore certain practices may be motivated by a sense of need or obligation to maximize one's time.

Modes of consumption

The findings of the study indicated consumption as a dominant part of leisure time. I explore here practices involving consumption as indicated by participants, even though they may not all be typically construed as leisure activities. I nevertheless include them in the category of leisure for two reasons. First, they fit into participants' definitions of leisure as being *free from* commitment to work, domestic duties or other obligations, much like traditional definitions (Dumazedier 1974; Parker 1976; Roberts 1978). But, more importantly, as the focus here is on freedom and culture, if free time is considered to be a matter of free choice, then by exploring what people *choose* to do in their uncommitted time, we may attain a deeper understanding of what is regarded as worthy in our culture.

Indeed, the wide range of activities involving consumption that participants reported having done in their free time seems to suggest a positive conception of such practices. While shopping may be the most obvious form of consumption, other practices such as vacations, outings, enrichment classes or sport, all implied the commercialization of leisure. Some activities were linked to hedonic forms of pleasure whereas others suggested self-management as a central goal. The consumption of goods and services also emerged as an integral part of special occasions.

Vacations

One practice participants associated with *freedom from* commitments and being *free from* the stress related to them, was going on vacation. They described vacations as a means of "escape," to "switch off" from the everyday pressures of work or domestic obligations. *Freedom from* the duties of childcare is emphasized in Ilana's words, "Going on holidays without kids is the only time when it makes me switch off." For Ilana, mother of three young children, being *free from* parental obligations allows psychological release. For others, too, it was not just the absence of home or work commitments that was indicated as the appeal of vacations but also the mental freedom resulting from being *free from* those duties. As Yaron, a self-proclaimed workaholic says, "vacations clear the head, that is that I'm not … the phone is not for work and I don't sit in front of the computer or answer the phone." For Yaron, vacations allow *freedom from* constant availability and a sense of continual obligation, thus enabling him to "clear the head."

Yet, despite the sense of freedom associated with vacations, participants also expressed a need to utilize vacation time, particularly vacations with children. Maddy, 44-year-old mother of five, refers to family vacations saying, "I like to make sure everyday we are doing something, trips or just fun things to really make it a full holiday." Maddy considers vacations with her children as time that must be filled. A child-centered approach emerged as participants described vacations revolving exclusively around the needs of their children. One mother said, "We don't look for what interests us, that is we first of all do what interests them.… Still … we are theirs, we are

still theirs." These words suggest a form of self-sacrifice, highlighted by the use of possessive pronouns, which imply that parents are ruled by their children. Interestingly, however, participants did not present this as a constraint on their freedom but rather as a matter of free choice, perceiving vacation time as "quality time" with the family, as *freedom to* invest in family time.

On the other hand, vacations without children were considered the ultimate opportunity to pamper oneself through various forms of consumption. *Freedom for* hedonic pleasures was indicated as an integral part of devoting time to oneself or time with one's spouse. Participants specified massages and spas when describing these vacations in hotels or zimmers (guest room), which were perceived not only as personal pleasure, but also as a means to invest in quality time with one's spouse. Indeed when asked about special occasions such as birthdays or anniversaries, participants indicated massages and spas as the ideal way to indulge themselves and nurture their relationship with their partners. Such activities were considered to be a desirable way to celebrate special occasions. As opposed to day-to-day time spent with a spouse, these celebrative practices were presented as romantic. Commercialized symbols of love such as surprise vacations, secluded cabins in nature, pampering spas, or bestowing gifts and flowers were indicated as romantic tokens of love. The investment of time and money into culturally valorized practices is seen as the ultimate form of self-investment as well as evidence of one's love for significant others.

Conforming individualism is evident here, as, on the one hand, participants expressed an individualistic sense of freedom as they are *free from* commitments and stress, as well as being able to devote time to oneself or choose to spend that time with whomever one wishes. On the other hand, they still conformed to socially constructed notions of time management, worthy parenthood or romance.

Outings

Besides vacations or weekend getaways, participants indicated going to restaurants as a worthy way to celebrate anniversaries and birthdays. The quality of the food and the atmosphere were indicated as important components of such outings. In the words of one participant, "alone, we go to some restaurant, eat something special, you know, not some Humus place … a glass of wine." Distinguishing between a "place" and a "restaurant," the first suggests ordinary, everyday routine, whereas a restaurant offers quality food and wine in a more highly valued setting. When referring to children's birthdays, participants also talked about celebrating in restaurants together with all the family.

However, restaurants were not reserved for special occasions alone. The most popular leisure outing reported by participants was going to restaurants or cafes (see Table 1.1). In the month preceding the interview, 84 percent of participants reported having done so, with an average of almost two hours being spent on the outing. It was also indicated as a regular activity done once or twice a month. Going to restaurants or cafes was considered to be an opportunity for socializing. Manny emphasized the importance of meeting with his friends, saying, "We try to go out from time to time to a play or movie or some show, to a restaurant. Mostly it's restaurants or cafes or that kind of thing." The word "try" suggests that for Manny, it is worth making an effort to go out with friends, and that practices involving consumption may be conceived as a desirable way of doing so. Similarly, many participants said they "try" to make time to go out with their spouses, implying the conceived value of such outings for the sake of investing in the couple's relationship.

Shopping

While leisure studies classify vacations, spas, massages, and dining out as leisure activities, I present here a number of practices reported by participants that are not generally categorized as such. Yet, as previously stated, the fact that people choose to pursue certain activities in their uncommitted time, particularly since that time is considered scarce and precious, may shed light on what is valorized in our culture.

I thus include other practices that, in time use studies, may be classified as personal care rather than leisure. Eating and bathing, for example, are categorized as such, but clearly dining in a restaurant or going to a spa are not simply personal care. I suggest that the way people spend their free time reflects cultural expectations to which they may feel a need to conform, despite a sense of freedom. Moreover, since this chapter is concerned particularly with the impact of consumer culture on the way we spend our time, it is crucial to explore how people talk about their consumption of goods and services.

Table 1.1   Outings

Venue	Average time spent on activity	How often?*	Percentage in last month
Restaurant, cafes	1 hr, 57 mins	2	83.8
Movies	2 hrs, 28 mins	1	45.9
Concerts	2 hrs, 7 mins	1	45.9
Malls	1 hr, 50 mins	1	40.5

* 1 – sometimes
2 – once or twice a month
3 – once or twice a week
4 – every day

Shopping is an activity that is considered pure consumption, and though it may be conceived as a necessity, many participants described it as a form of recreation. Outings to malls often combined shopping with going to restaurants or cafes. Some considered it to be an opportunity for "quality time" with their children or spouses, and the acquisition of goods or services was seen as a form of indulging significant others. A number of participants described the practice of "fun days," when they took their children to malls, imparting individual attention to the child as a display of their love. Describing a "fun day" with her daughter Rona says, "we buy her all sorts … some clothes, a café, whatever she wants. Ice cream." By indulging her daughter through the unrestrained acquisition of commodities, time at the mall is conceived as being transformed into quality time. In this way, besides reflecting a child-centered approach, we see that consumption is considered to be a means of expressing one's love, and leisure is envisaged as a sphere for investing time, effort and money to do so.

Besides actually purchasing goods and services, shopping was experienced as a recreational activity, when "it's fun walking around," as one participant put it. Many stressed the importance of being *free from* time pressure as a major component of enjoyment from shopping. For example, Adina, mother of five, says she doesn't have much time for shopping but that, "shopping without pressure is fun. It's really fun." For others, the *freedom to* choose is what determines pleasure from the experience. Clothes shopping in particular was considered by many to contribute to a sense of freedom and enjoyment as opposed to shopping as a duty or shopping for others. Almost 70 percent of participants reported having shopped for clothes (Table 1.2) in the month preceding the interview and close to half had shopped for personal care products such as cosmetics, aftershaves, or creams. Shopping for oneself was experienced as self-investment

and a form of self-empowerment. The purchase of goods, as opposed to just looking, was indicated as an integral part of pleasure. Erez says, "I enjoy it, buying clothes, I could buy clothes all day. I enjoy the experience of buying." He explains saying, "that you've brought home something new. You don't need it, but you've brought another something." Interestingly, Erez realizes that his desire for "something new" may be a matter of consumption for its own sake. The creation of yearning for goods is crucial in consumer culture, making it difficult for consumers to distinguish between need and the temptation for consumption for its own sake (Bauman 1998).

The acquisition of clothes was often perceived as enhancing one's self-worth. It was described as generating a positive feeling in the consumer, as the following quote illustrates, "I like to look good, it, it makes you feel good. It's a kind of feeling good, renewing something." In this way, the act of shopping was linked to a sense of control over one's appearance and was experienced, not only as pleasure or time for the self, but also as producing desirable results intricately linked to one's self-image.

However, not all participants described shopping as a positive experience. For Betty, the abundance of choices and the decision-making involved made shopping malls "confusing" and "exhausting." She says, "there is so much choice and I don't know anymore what I need and want." Indeed, hyperchoice can be unsatisfying and psychologically draining (Mick, Broniarczyk, and Haidt 2004; Schwartz 2004), which may be intensified by the perceived impact on one's identity. Like Erez, Betty is also aware of the discrepancy between need and want. Her words suggest that the consumer's exposure to so many options may generate a sense of need as well as anxiety, perhaps due to the believed implications of the purchase on attaining a desirable self.

Leisure and self-management

This relationship between consumption and the self was evident in a wide array of leisure practices that involved consuming services as well as goods. Sport, for example, was found to be a particularly popular activity, with 70 percent of participants reporting having done sport in the month before the interview and almost half, in the 48 hours before. While sport does not necessarily require consumption per se, participants talked of country club memberships, exercise classes, and personal trainers. Moreover, the participation in popular sports, such as cycling or jogging, may involve the purchase of special equipment, clothing, or accessories.

Whether describing it as pleasure, or as a means to an end, all participants regarded sport as a valuable activity. When asked in the questionnaire about their main motive for doing sport, the majority marked health (83 percent) and/or pleasure (71 percent). The third option, improving one's physical appearance, was indicated by only 37 percent of participants as their main reason for performing sports activities. In the in-depth interview, however, participants talked differently about their motives. Sport emerged as an integral part of bodywork, designed to achieve an attractive body in keeping with cultural models. Participants, both men and women, indicated weight loss and shaping the body as their central aims, emphasizing the self-discipline involved. It was seen as something "you have to do" and "push" yourself to do. Sport was presented as a matter of personal responsibility, thus neglecting to perform it was construed as laziness. Participants expressed a need to conform, not only to ideals of a desirable body but also to free time practices that are hierarchized high on the ranks of leisure activities. Here too, *conforming individualism* is apparent in the individualistic values of agency and mastery conceived as crucial to attaining an ideal body, which, at the same time, dictates conformity to

socially accepted standards. Perhaps the fact that sport was considered to be productive and envisaged as a form of self-improvement contributed to the consensus regarding its value and its high position in the *hierarchization of leisure*. Nevertheless, despite the sense of obligation associated with sports activities, participants still experienced it as a matter of choice, as they felt they were *free to* invest in the self and take control over their bodies.

Besides sport, participants indicated other bodywork practices, such as going to cosmeticians, hairdressers, or manicurists. Although these may not be classified or perceived as leisure practices, they were described by participants, particularly women, as "time for yourself." Yet, beauty practices were also described as a "must." The words of female participants implied that women are expected to assume responsibility to work on their bodies in order to achieve a desirable female self. When talking about going to a cosmetician, one participant said simply, "I have no choice," yet described it as "taking care" of herself. As we can see in Table 1.2, consumption related to the body was, indeed, much more prevalent among female participants who may feel they must comply with cultural prescriptions of ideal female bodies.

Bodywork practices were not the only activities that were related to self- investment and self-improvement. Participants also reported spending their free time participating in various activities that were linked to self-development and psychological or spiritual growth. They reported a variety of practices, such as coaching, spiritual, or new age courses, enrichment classes, and academic studies as well as reading self-help books. Self-improvement emerged as both a motive and perceived outcome of these practices. Participants used words such as "change" and "process," as they described the transformation they wished for or believed they had undergone. Leisure was construed as a site for therapeutic self-management aimed at reaching a worthy self. By taking upon oneself certain practices, the individual may feel she/he is taking control over her/his selfhood. However, despite the emphasis on the self and agency, these practices of consumption involved extrinsic agents that played instrumental roles in directing individuals. On the one hand, it is the individual who is responsible for self-improvement and change, yet the paid expert is perceived as being needed in order to provide practical tools and guidance so as to achieve the rational goal of a desirable self. In this way, the consumption of such services is considered to be essential for solving problems, and leisure is seen as an opportunity when the individual is *free to* utilize the time productively in order to attain results.

Media scripts of self

As we have said, many of our consumption practices are designed to attain and maintain a self in keeping with models of desirable selves. Participants talked about the effects of media exposure on their consumption habits, as well as on their very conceptions of what is worth having. Advertisements on television and the Internet were indicated as generating a sense of need in potential consumers. One participant describes the influence of media on leisure, saying, "you see movies, you … all sorts of nature programs, all sorts of programs about places in the world and it really makes you want to go to travel there. It does have an influence on your free time." He suggests that even if one doesn't fulfill one's desire for consumption, the media may still shape the way we think about leisure and what is worthwhile pursuing.

Table 1.2   Personal care

Activity	Percentage in last month	Number of women	Number of men
Clothes shopping	67.6	17	8
Cosmetics/aftershaves/creams shopping	43.2	13	3

Hairdresser/barber	67.6	15	10
Beauty care	37.8	13	1

The consumption of media exposes individuals, not only to desirable ways of spending leisure but also to cultural models of the self, which are likely to be internalized as correct on two levels. First, the ubiquity of images or narratives presenting worthy selves reinforces the notion that they are correct and worthy and that alternative selves are undesirable. Second, they are perceived as correct in the sense that they seem to reflect reality. In this way, individuals may use these models as a yardstick for social comparison, thereby encouraging the pursuit of practices that are perceived as helping to achieve a self-worth having. The *conforming individualism* of media images and messages, particularly in advertising, is evident in the individualistic notion of freedom to choose to pursue such practices, yet the self-gaze that these models promote may in fact encourage conformity. Slogans such as, "because you're worth it," in an advertisement for face cream, present the product as a means of self-empowerment, while the image of a beautiful face with flawless skin, may in fact generate a sense of inadequacy and promote conformity to models of beauty. By creating feelings of inadequacy in consumers, consumption is presented as a solution to problems of selfhood.

Considering the fact that participants reported spending a significant amount of time on media use and doing so regularly, it is likely that media models play a major role in shaping conceptions of both time and the self. Television viewing, for instance, was reported by 97 percent of participants as a regular activity on which they spent an average of 1.5 to three hours a day. The scope of the current chapter does not allow for a discussion of the findings concerning the various forms of media use or texts consumed by participants. However, I briefly present here themes that emerged in the textual data, specifically the local magazine, reportedly read by all the participants, so as to illustrate dominant themes of media texts that may be related to the above-mentioned practices.

The theme of self-improvement, whether physical or psychological, emerged in a great number of advertisements in the local magazine. Advertisements for clothes, hairdressers, cosmeticians, personal sports trainers, and diet groups dominated the glossy pages of the magazine. Targeting women in particular, these ads encouraged them to manage every part of their bodies, including skin, nails, hair, and their body shape. Some even presented before and after pictures. Ads for counseling or therapy were also prominent, offering advice to adults and children. These services included the treatment of anxiety or stress, as well as counseling for personal growth. Moreover, leisure activities were presented in ads showing images of exciting or relaxing holidays, cafes and restaurants, as well as art, music, and sports activities.

The articles that appeared in the magazine, like the ads, were abundant with themes of self-work and productivity, while also promoting values of family and community. They presented personal stories of self-made heroes that emphasized the importance of setting goals and pursuing them, as the key to success in all areas of life. Both articles and ads reflected a discourse of freedom, advocating personal agency and free choice, presenting scripts for ideal selfhood and prescribing values of work and productivity. Such cultural prescriptions of *conforming individualism* are ubiquitous in contemporary Western culture, so that conceptions of worthy selves are likely to be internalized, and leisure may be conceived as an opportunity to pursue them through the management of both time and the self.

Discussion

The above findings suggest what I have called *conforming individualism*, as participants drew on conflicting discourses that extol personal freedom and self-oriented leisure on the one hand, yet encourage conformity to cultural scripts of time use and worthy selves. The discourse of capitalism promotes productivity, self-discipline, and hard work in order to optimize one's time. In a culture where *time is money*, the maximal utilization of one's time suggests an efficient productive self. I argue that this conception of worthy time use, rooted in the work ethic, is projected onto our leisure time, shaping, not only *what* we do, but also *how* we perceive it (Shir-Wise 2018). Thus, perhaps *filling* one's time, particularly with practices of consumption, is experienced as more satisfying, since these pastimes are conceived as a productive *utilization* of time, rather than simply *passing* that time. It follows then, that a failure to utilize one's leisure may be perceived as a *waste* of time, but also as a personal shortcoming. In this way, individuals are seduced by consumer culture into taking advantage of their leisure time by *filling* it with the consumption of goods and services that are considered culturally worth having or doing. Perhaps leisure involving consumption is thus ranked higher on the hierarchy of leisure practices since it is conceived as a productive use of time.

Leisure was experienced as being utilized when it involved self-improvement, such as bodywork. Such practices implied an individualistic worldview that celebrates freedom and autonomy as well as entitlement and personal responsibility. So, on the one hand, participants highlighted the centrality of freedom in their conceptions and experience of leisure. Yet, the management of time and the self may be driven by a sense of inadequacy as one strives to achieve a self that conforms to cultural scripts. This reflects a therapeutic approach that promotes self-investment and self-work as a means for self-transformation. It is not by chance that all these words begin with the word self. The self is both the *means* and the *goal* of self-management. We can supposedly become whoever we want by working on ourselves. This feeling of control over outcomes may be mistaken for freedom. The therapeutic discourse draws on individualistic values of entitlement and personal responsibility for one's life trajectory, themes that emerged in the textual analysis of the local magazine. At the same time, the discourse of self-help that dominates contemporary life (Illouz 2008; McGee 2005, 2012) calls for goal-oriented practices, emphasizing productive results, which are rooted in capitalistic, utilitarian values. Self-work in leisure, is thus valorized as a worthy use of that time.

Yet, we saw that pleasure and self-gratification were also valued as a worthwhile way to spend leisure time. The self is at the center of the discourse of consumer culture that promotes hedonic pleasure that one can buy. Leisure is thus conceived as a realm for self-indulgence when one is free to invest both money and time into oneself. In this way, consumerism promotes consumption by selling an individualistic notion of leisure that is based on freedom, entitlement, and self-investment. At the same time, these modes of consumption, such as restaurants or spas, are in keeping with cultural symbols of romance or prescriptions for quality time with one's children. In other words, culturally constructed ideals of romantic selfhood or worthy parenthood, promote conformity as individuals strive to achieve desirable selves that are associated with these cultural scripts.

The *conforming individualism* of modes of consumption in leisure reflects cultural contradictions. The contemporary self requires hard work, productivity, and self-discipline – central values in the discourse of capitalism and the therapeutic ethos – yet it also draws on notions of freedom, rooted in individualism. So, on the one hand, we feel that our free time practices are shaped by our personal choices. Self-management is thus considered to be an expression of this freedom. On the other hand, from a Foucauldian perspective, discourses

regulate individuals as conceptions of a worthy self promote a self-gaze, which in turn, generates a need for constant self-work as we pursue ideal models.

The above findings also shed light on the paradox indicated in research that suggests a feeling of time pressure and the acceleration of life despite us actually having more leisure time than previous generations (Rosa 2013; Wajcman 2014). Perhaps that feeling of time pressure, so commonly expressed, is not so much a result of the many duties that we need to get done, but rather due to the multiplicity of practices, particularly those involving consumption, that consumer capitalism promotes. Yet, because the values of individualism are so dominant in our culture, we believe we are *free* to choose. This may make us less aware of the disciplinary nature of cultural scripts that shape even that time we consider to be "free." By encouraging reflection about taken-for-granted actions in leisure, individuals may be better equipped to resist cultural scripts and thereby enhance their freedom, so that "free" time may become truly free.

1   It is important to note that the article's focus is on practices of consumption and their discursive framings. However, this is not to say that participants did not report other leisure activities, but that the present article explores leisure in the context of consumer culture, thus it focuses on leisure activities linked to consumption.

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2 Mass vs. autonomous consumption of serious leisure

Its unexpected byproduct

Tali Hayosh

Introduction

This research focuses on "serious leisure" (Stebbins 2001, 2007), i.e., activities that are characterized by perseverance; investment of personal effort; the learning of unique skills, values, and norms; participants' deep identification with the occupation; the discovery of a professional or vocational path; the development of a unique world in which a certain ethos is materialized; and the reaping of long-lasting benefits such as self-fulfillment, deep satisfaction, etc.

One type of serious leisure that has developed in Israel in recent years and which is the focus of this study is the participation in classes, workshops, and various leisure courses,[1] which operate in informal settings and do not grant participants diplomas or accreditation; yet participants spend time, money, and exert effort to participate in and complete them. The goal of the current study was to examine the factors that inform both the motivations for and the perceived gains obtained from participation in serious leisure activities and to compare the types of factors that influence each. To this end, a distinction was drawn between factors associated with manipulative consumption, whether related to media influences (e.g., the quest for status symbols) or to social influences (e.g., interpersonal interests and power struggles) and factors associated with autonomous consumption, whether irrational (emotions) or rational (goals and aspirations).

Manipulative consumption

Consumption and its motivations and gains are often criticized as irrational and manipulative. The most succinct example of this approach is the critical work of the Frankfurt School (e.g., Adorno and Horkheimer 1993), which views the consumer world as a means for advancing economic interests, a system that is sustained and nurtured by industry, advertising, and the media. These elements are perceived as binding the individual to the manipulative needs of the capitalist system. In this culture of consumption, individuals are not free to express their authentic choices, desires, and will. Instead, their consumerist motivations are imprinted upon them by the consumerist agenda. Baudrillard (2007) claims that current reality has turned everything into a value and a sign, so that the absolute absence of anything original and authentic

precludes the possibility of a *return*, as there is no model or notion toward which to strive. This approach emphasizes the oppressed state of individuals, who are perceived to be deprived of the option for change. Consequently, they are forever distanced from the ability to do those things that would make them happy.

Another approach to manipulative consumption views consuming leisure as the practice of rational consumption based on interests and power struggles (Beggs and Elkins 2010), when these activities are pursued in an attempt to construct social relationships with others (Douglas and Isherwood 1978). Veblen (1975) noted that social distinctions are created through increased use of goods and through accelerated participation in leisure activities, and that both point to the wealth of an individual. Veblen claimed that the rich are accorded prestige and respect, based on the fact that they have time and money for conspicuous consumption of, among other things, leisure. Bourdieu (1984), too, examined the formation of personal taste in consumption, and claimed that lifestyle and taste create social distinctions, as members of the high social group consume a lifestyle that is distinct from that consumed by the lower class. For example, in the past, people from lower socio-economic classes used to play soccer (before this became a professional sport), whereas people from the higher social echelons used to play polo (Ben Porat 2002).

Autonomous consumption

A different approach to consumption that can explain motivations and gains is the *irrational autonomous consumption*, motivated by emotional elements, whether positive or negative (Campbell 2005). As regards the positive elements, affection for and attraction to the particular field of activity may constitute a motivation for joining a serious leisure course. Some researchers have reported that among the motivations that lead people to join serious leisure activities are those rooted in a desire to experience feelings of joy, amusement, excitement, and involvement (Dworkin, Larson, and Hansen 2003). Stebbins (2015) expanded on this issue and in his latest book linked this topic to the field of positive psychology, which refers to interpersonal relationships, emotions, positive cognitive processes, exploration, spirituality, altruism, volunteerism, quality of life and well-being, and play and creativity, all of which can be experienced through participation in serious leisure activities.

As regards the negative emotional aspect, participation in leisure activities can also be motivated by the desire to diminish the repercussions of past negative experiences, such as a sense of alienation or the predominance of depressive moods (Mahoney, Schweder, and Stattin 2002). In this context, we note the model developed by Iso-Ahola (1989), according to which the motivations for engaging in serious leisure are related to dissatisfaction with one's personal or interpersonal surroundings and the need to find a way to compensate for these negative feelings. The expectation is that through participation in leisure practices, one will be able to cope with and even overcome difficulties, an expectation that has been confirmed in the findings of Iwasaki (2003). Participation in serious leisure was also found to serve as a means for decreasing stress and as a practice that helps people effectively manage stressors (Trenberth and Dewe 2002), especially during transition periods (Kleiber 1999).

Another approach to autonomous consumption that can help explain the motivations and perceived gains associated with the pursuit of serious leisure is rational–autonomous consumption. According to this approach, autonomous consumption opens up a world that offers a profusion of varied and endless products. It is up to the individuals to choose any one of them, finding the one or ones that could potentially address emotional aspects, encompassing inner

aspirations, loves, and desires. The abundance of options and the free choice enable people to select from among the plethora of opportunities the commodities that they desire, as they aim to satisfy their inner passions, passions that are not directed by "others." The scholars who espouse this theoretical view believe that goods produced by modern capitalism enable individuals – within their budget – to fulfill significant and inherent needs, to improve their well-being, and to find happiness.

The goal of the current study was to examine the motivations for joining and persisting in serious leisure activities as well as the perceived gains obtained through this participation, and to examine which of the following factors form part of the motivations and/or perceived gains: factors associated with irrational/rational manipulative consumption, and/or factors associated with irrational/rational–autonomous consumption.

Methodology

The research approach at the core of the present study is the qualitative paradigm, which focuses on people's interpretation of the world they live in and on the narrative that expresses explanations of intimate experiences, thoughts, and actions. It enables entry into a person's realm of consciousness and to the core of the meaning of that person's experiences (Starks and Trinidad 2007), which are considered to be a significant and valid source of knowledge (Denzin and Lincoln 2000). The assumption was that this sensitive approach would allow us to hear participants' voices, understand their wishes about their leisure motivations, learn about the reality within which they live, and examine whether this reality (participating in leisure courses) satisfies them or whether it creates discomfort.

A preliminary study revealed four courses that represent various types of leisure marketed in Israel. We observed yoga classes, selected as representing both a spiritual quest and a physical activity; blacksmithing and ceramics were selected to represent creative leisure activities (arts and crafts); in addition, we observed a course for yacht skippers, selected because we expected to find participants of a high socio-economic status. The courses took place in Israel's Northern, central, and coastal regions, and in Jerusalem. In addition to the observations, we conducted 63 in-depth interviews with 34 men and 29 women who participated in these four courses, all of middle or high socio-economic status. These interviews were intended to extract the meaning attributed to the experience of participating in a course during leisure time, and interview questions referred to the reasons that motivated the person to choose the course, the negative and positive experiences during the course, and the reward from participating in it.

Findings

The motivating factors, which led participants to join serious leisure courses (yoga, blacksmithing, ceramics, and yachting), are presented first. Then, the factors related to the perceived gains obtained from participation in leisure activities are presented and, finally, the types of factors that influenced the motivations and the perceived gains are compared.

Motivations

Motivational factors are reviewed in the following order: (a) factors associated with manipulative consumption, first – those related to the irrational influences of media and advertising, and then

the rational influences social and interpersonal interests; and (b) factors associated with autonomous motivations, first irrational and then rational influences.

Factors associated with manipulative consumption

None of the interviewees cited the media as a motivating factor in the decision to pursue the selected leisure course. This may be because people are unaware of or hesitate to openly confess to being subject to such influences. As to social and interpersonal factors, some of the participants were motivated to join a leisure activity by socialization-related factors: new social relationships. In some cases, participants wished to establish new relationships to substitute for their current ones. An example can be found in the words of an interviewee who chose the prestigious yachting course, motivated by social interests, among them, the struggle to establish/upgrade his own social status. This type of consideration features prominently in the literature on consumer culture in general (Slater 1997) and on consumption of leisure in particular (e.g., Bourdieu 1984). Thus, in this example, Saul, a 30-year-old high-tech retiree, was among the yachting course participants. He confessed that his motivations for participating included the desire to show off and to follow fashionable trends. He noted his underlying assumption, namely, that in this type of course he would be able to meet an "elite" social group, as well as potentially suitable female partners. This interviewee expected that participants in the yachting course would be characterized by a high level of personal skills, given that the studies involved in this course demanded the ability to comprehend, react quickly, control several systems simultaneously, and operate under stressful and extreme conditions.

> It was clear to me even before [I registered for the course].… These are high-level people; I did not see anyone there who had difficulty understanding the theoretical material or who found it even slightly challenging. Everyone there is very capable and can keep up. These are people who are fun to be with!

The following story, of Gail, is presented as an example of joining leisure courses in order to preserve a relationship with a significant other. For Gail, the yachting course provided a place where she and her partner could nurture their relationship as a couple, although she was not particularly drawn to the field itself.

> The truth is that I would never have gone to this [yachting course] if Gil my partner hadn't really pressured me to join; I'm not crazy about this course.… There is a kind of agreement between us that he works late every night of the week, and once a week we spend time together, so I said "okay – this course will be our together time."

The focus on social interactions as the main motivation for choosing leisure activities has been reported in a previous study (Beggs and Elkins 2010). However, attending an activity where friends are present does not guarantee a fulfilling experience; in fact, even the opposite may be true – the presence of friends can also lead to the cessation of activity (Sanderson and Richards 2010). The absurdity of choosing a leisure activity because of the influence of a significant other can be heard in the excerpt from Ziva's interview.

> He [my partner] wanted me to join so badly! I don't see myself having this dream or going sailing. I don't know how I will manage on a yacht! … I would never have chosen this!

This interviewee perceived the participants in the yachting course to have also unique personal characteristics, which are reflected in their skills and abilities, such as a grounded sense of self, a love of sports, a sense of calm; he found them to be amicable and sociable. It should be noted that the behaviors of this interviewee during the 6-month period when I was accompanying the course revealed that considerations of social status played an important role in his decisions in other contexts as well. Thus, for example, he repeated the story of his financial success, the events that led him to be a 30-year-old retiree millionaire; he would talk about his expensive vacations, and he opted to "share" his deliberations regarding the purchase of a flat on the marina, a location that clearly conveys a status symbol, with others who were not in his circle of intimate friends.

All of these examples lead to the conclusion that this interviewee may have included considerations of social status and prestige in his decision to pursue this leisure activity. Such motivations are in line with those noted in the literature, namely, the use of leisure consumption as an arena for conducting power struggles, pursuing social interests, and drawing social distinctions (Bourdieu 1984). However, although these considerations feature prominently in the literature on leisure consumption, they were downplayed by the participants themselves, perhaps because they hesitate to admit this. Nonetheless, there were those among the participants who did not attempt to hide these motivations, but rather admitted them frankly, as in the example of Ada, a psychologist by profession.

> I feel like I'm on a real holiday; there's also something prestigious about it … something special, related to status. It's an activity that is associated with people who have money. It is glamorous – related to fashion, sailing, and leisure. People don't know that it [yachting] demands blood, sweat and tears. People often fear the sea and so it is associated also with courage. If a woman can tough it out, then she's no sissy.

In a few cases, the decision to join a leisure activity was motivated by instrumental considerations. Thus, for example, there were a few interviewees who opted to join courses in order to evaluate potential occupational fields. As previously noted, the courses selected for the study were not intended to provide any type of certification. The story of Amir, a mechanical technician who is approximately 30 years old, is an apt example. He is married and has a child and had acquired some experience in blacksmithing and welding while working on making furniture and window frames for his own home. That experience, combined with financial difficulties associated with his current job, led him to believe that by participating in a blacksmithing course he might find a new occupational orientation. "The reason I came to this was that I wanted an additional source of income.… Nowadays, what I care about is finding a more solid occupation and that's why I came here."

An additional instrumental motivation for joining leisure activities was participants' perception that such an activity could potentially help them alleviate stress and cope with the difficulties in their lives (Hayosh 2017; Iwasaki 2003). This aspect is perceived in the motivation expressed by Deborah, a 40-year-old psychologist and a mother of two, who decided to take courses in ceramics and yoga. At the center of her personal story is the fact that several years earlier she was diagnosed with a severe illness that was accompanied by extreme pain. "One day I simply couldn't get out of bed; my entire body and all my joints ached terribly.… Over the next three years, things went from bad to worse and I reached rock bottom." Once she came to the realization that conventional medicine could not provide relief from her pain, she decided to look for alternatives for self-healing. She found various paths, including vegetarianism and other

"alternative methods," and read several books. Finally, she found yoga and her goal was "not to give up on life."

Another aspect of instrumental motivation can be found among those who opted for a course such as ceramics, in order to create beautiful objects. Here, much like in the case of choosing a leisure activity to nurture a friendship, the motivation unravels and these people end up abandoning the leisure pursuit of (Hartup and Stevens 1997).

Factors associated with autonomous motivations

Some people join leisure activities as a result of autonomous motivations, which are presented here according to two patterns. The first is the irrational pattern, which in this case refers to an emotional attraction to a particular field. The second pattern is the rational–autonomous motivation, which emphasizes the conscious aspect of selecting an activity, and relates to the individual's wish to realize independent aspirations and desires.

The notion of *irrational autonomous motivations* (i.e., emotions) leading to the pursuit of leisure activities is presented in the professional literature (e.g., Stebbins 2015) and was pertinent also to this study's findings. This aspect is reflected in the words of Ivan, a young single man who claimed that his involvement in blacksmithing began with "love at first sight," when he was first introduced to this field. "I came in and walked through the gallery; no one was here. I think they were out having lunch.… And I fell in love with this place." Falling in love with the statues and practical objects displayed in the gallery adjacent to the blacksmithing school was – apparently – a timely event for this interviewee, and he immediately decided to join the next blacksmithing course, which was to open a few days hence. It should be noted that love for a particular field or activity does not necessarily occur all at once, but can be a gradual process, as noted by the interviewee who stated "my love for sailing started when I was a child."

Rational–autonomous motivations that led to the pursuit of a leisure activity emerged in different contexts. Saul's decision to join the yachting course stemmed from a deep love of learning and the desire to pursue this pleasure through leisure. "I truly enjoy learning! … I am mad about it! I love adding to my pool of knowledge, discovering new things and implementing them." As I got to know him better throughout the study period and the informal discussions that were held, he repeatedly emphasized his love of the eternal search for self-renewal, enrichment, and learning. This revealed an additional dimension of his motivation, namely, that as a child he was perceived to be slow, due to dyslexia.

Most participants in ceramics and blacksmithing courses had joined in order to realize a creative and artistic potential, as expressed in the words of Deborah. "I always felt that there is something in the clay and in ceramic objects that touches me deeply … less so in the case of sculpture. And I had this sort of dream.…" The attraction to this activity is expressed also by Zehavit, who is 40 years old and manages a dance studio. Her attraction is related also to the physical properties of the material in space. This is expressed in her repeated use of the same lexical root in its various forms, which is interspersed throughout her narrative: magic, magical, and charming.

> It was like magic! I would stand and look at the pile of clay as people would start to work, and it would magically transform into some kind of bowl or vase.… It seemed like something I had to try and decipher.

Aaron, who is approaching 50 years of age, decided to join the yachting course after gaining insight about life following a severe health crisis.

> I was stressed at work and feeling unwell … I was hospitalised and [that's when] I realised that when you're in the hospital, you lie there in your pyjamas and it's only you! Nothing else, just you.… Not work, not the boss … I asked myself "what I have left?" Ever since then, slowly but surely, I have been increasing my involvement in [leisure] activities.

Gaining insight about life is related to the dialogue that takes place between the individual narrative, i.e., the desire to express one's internal aspirations and personal desires, and the social narrative, i.e., the requirement to fulfill certain social commitments (relating to work and family). In this context, it is worth noting that in many cases, the motivation for joining leisure activities and courses is related to the desire to distance oneself from the sources of stress and tension of daily life. It is a choice to "dictate a change" in one's way of life, through leisure. This aspect can be seen in the words of Ron who participated in the yachting course.

> You come to understand that you cannot just take a holiday and then relax, but rather you need to have some kind of parallel module in life. That's when I decided that I want to find some source of calm and tranquillity through some kind of hobby.… Something that would give me relaxation and relief from the pressures related to my regular daily activities.

Some participants chose to join leisure activities due to their desire to realize a certain worldview and certain values, such as the desire to decrease their reliance on materialistic values dictated by society. This worldview is related also to deemphasizing achievement and making do with less (Schor 1998). Ida's words reflect this type of motivation.

> The beautiful thing about yoga is that it does not categorise you by class or level. Yoga is for everyone everywhere and in any condition! You do it with or without a teacher, [and all you need is] a square metre of space. No optimal conditions are required; if you want it, you can do it – no matter what!

David is a 50-year-old film producer who was participating in the blacksmithing course. He described an experiencing a kind of sobering process, which led to a substantial change in his worldview. He went from a consumer's materialistic approach to an approach that is encompassed in Elgin's concept (1993) of *simplicity*, an approach that affects every realm of life.

> I think I'm going through some enormous changes in my life. I used to work until 10 o'clock at night – every night and sometimes through the night. I wouldn't sleep – I would only doze off intermittently. You live in something that is fake, other. My first 45 years were a constant and crazy race, but it was all fake, because the family set me up for it, and it took me many years to get out of it and to shed the mask.

This interviewee aimed to escape the rush of the city, to reduce his work hours and, as a result, he was prepared to reduce his income and to stop relying on outside workers, in order to independently plan and run the farm he had recently acquired. He came to the blacksmithing course in order to be able to manage blacksmithing tasks on his own. "I do almost everything [at the farm] on my own – everything related to practice and landscaping, except for the construction, I do on my own, and I made all the gates, doors, and locks."

In summary, the motivations for joining leisure courses included socialization goals, social interests (to maintain and create social relationships), as well as materialistic considerations, such as using the course as a potential platform for a professional shift. Moreover, motivations also included autonomous aspects, both rational and irrational. The irrational autonomous motivations included emotional components, such as the love of a particular field and the love of learning. Rational motivations were related to the search for meaning, self-investment, and the realization of one's personal potential, as well to the wish to apportion less significance to one's job, reduce one's dependence on materialistic values, and emphasize instead an ecological way of life and the removal of masks.

Perceived gains

For the most part, the types of gains most frequently reported were autonomous gains; however, their depth and breadth far exceeded expectations.

Mildred joined the ceramics course mostly due to an external motivation, namely, to overcome her feelings of loneliness, which she experienced since her move to the big city. Her loneliness derived from various types of gaps that she perceived between herself and those around her: she had only a high-school education (compared to her neighbors who had academic degrees), her socio-economic level (she had a job as an accountant and lived in a simply-furnished rental flat), and her status as a relatively young (26-year-old) mother of three, compared to her neighbors who were older mothers and had only one or two children. In hindsight, she found that the gains of participating in this leisure course exceeded her expectations; they were related to aspects of personal growth and development, as well as to the development and formation of her personal identity (Kuentzel 2000). Mildred fashioned beautiful ceramic objects that were highly appreciated by her peers in the course, who consulted with her and wished to learn about the shapes she formed and the glazes she used.

Mildred's participation in the ceramics course created a situation in which she had a focal role in discourse between herself and her peers. In other words, thanks to this course, her perceived social role had shifted (as proposed by Turner 2005), whereby despite her lack of education and feelings of inferiority, she functioned as the source of knowledge and confidence, whereas the other participants, with the academic education, relied on her for advice and sought out her highly specialized type of knowledge. Participation in leisure activity thus enabled her to experience social mobility and acceptance, despite the restructured inherent inferiority. Mildred even went as far as to say that she now wanted to pursue a higher education, something that until recently she had considered irrelevant to her. This aspect of development is reinforced also by Mildred's emotional-spiritual experience, which she described by referring to her past experience when participating in a needlework course.

> I remember one night I simply didn't sleep … I started making things and I had no idea how they would come out … I felt that the thread was flowing from my fingers – just like that – no less! … I felt as though … I was sitting and my fingers were working independent of me.

It appears that the experience of creativity as described by Mildred is related to the gains rendered from the effect of the creative process on the creator, among them the experience of self-expression and flow (Csikszentmihalyi 1997). The description of "thread … flowing from my fingers" expresses the dimension that Csikszentmihalyi describes as the merging of the person with the action, which presents the creator with new directions, objectives, and goals,

unprecedented in the individual's experience. The pursuit of a new direction is the most important of these elements; it is more important than attaining the goal. Experiencing a new direction is related to the previously mentioned development of gaining the appreciation of others in one's surroundings and, as a result, becoming more confident and increasing one's self-esteem.

In view of the perceived gains of participating in leisure activity, some of the participants spontaneously began a process of in-depth learning, an unplanned development, which eventually turned the leisure activity into the central occupation of their lives. This corresponds to what Stebbins (2007) described as a *leisure career*.

The following is a description of leisure as experienced by Regina. She is about 55 years old, married with two children, and a yoga teacher.[2] "I attended the instructors' course, for myself, not in order to become a yoga teacher." However, the course didn't satisfy her and she looked for new ways to develop: "I felt that I lacked depth. Although I can conduct a class, I felt that this wasn't good enough – I didn't feel completely whole." This interviewee proceeded to take various yoga courses, both throughout the country and abroad, but still did not feel she had enough tools at her disposal.

> I kept looking and looking; I even took one workshop that just wasn't good at all, until I found a different instructors' course that lasted three years.… Here I finally found sufficient depth. I understood that there are no shortcuts and that reading books cannot substitute for letting the body learn and understand, that one has to experience things independently within one's own body. One has to attain the spiritual and the energetic insights, and the ability to control it all, based on repeated practice.… That's when for me, the world of yoga was transformed, and I actually started practising yoga on a daily basis and had a breakthrough in my progress, in understanding, in gaining in-depth insights, in every aspect, both spiritual and physical. It also affected my approach to life, how to cope with life and with what it brings along, the good, the bad, everything.

This transformation also led the interviewee to develop expertise in other related fields (e.g., shiatsu, Ayurvedic massage, Chinese medicine, and acupuncture) and currently she is a widely renowned and sought after therapist.

Gil joined the yachting course to realize his childhood dream and as part of his attempt to reduce his work hours; he also hoped to meet new people with whom he would "click." He described the yachting experience as one that brought additional gains, such as the feeling of being spiritually calm and collected, and the development of acute sensory awareness, things he did not aim for in his initial motivation.

> First of all, you switch into a different phase.… You're not worried about income or turnover, accountants or reports.… It's like taking an oxygen tank and diving.… The tranquillity of being by yourself.… Listening to the bubbles you emit, watching the fish go by, wishing you could talk to them, but talking to them through the silence.… You [find that you] have a heightened ability to distinguish colours, something that doesn't exist when you're outside [of the water].… There is a sense of essence in small things, which you do not experience everyday.… Lots of tiny little things like that, when a person is left on his own.… The most amazing thing about this is that it gives you a lot of time to think on your own, and that's a big part of leisure.

From Ella, who took courses in yoga and tai chi, to substitute for her past involvement in dance which she had to abandon due to age-related limitations, we learn that she was able to apply in her daily life the knowledge and skills that she had gained from the leisure activities in which she participated. Thus, she felt the courses had enriched life. She gave the following example.

> Nowadays, when I'm under a great deal of pressure, I tell myself that I have 30 items I have to do now, that this is the time to close the office door, close my eyes, take deep breaths and practice pranayama for 2–3 minutes. Without this practice, I reach situations in which I am flooded to the point that I stall and choke…. [With the practice] I start a chain of behaviours that evolve within me, [behaviours] which originate from yoga and tai chi. Once I do that, the events take on a completely different proportion.

The knowledge and skills she acquired in the courses are applied to her daily life and practice; thus, they contribute to her sense of satisfaction. Her sense of satisfaction derives from improvements, which are related to various emotional, behavioral, and cognitive aspects. In terms of emotional aspects, the interviewee reported being less angry, less nervous, and less likely to "lose it." In terms of behavioral aspects, she sees herself as more in control and more capable of coping with situations of overload. As regards the cognitive aspects that have improved, the interviewee reported "the ability to be sharper and more attuned to the situation, and I don't trip myself up." The knowledge, instruments, and skills acquired in leisure activities contributed to improving her quality of life.

Riva, who is 44 years old, the mother of three children, and a chemist, participates in yoga and ceramics courses. She joined yoga in response to the development of a philosophical view of life, which she refers to as "getting closer to nature."

> About 3 or 4 years ago [there began] a kind of shift towards nature, [a process] of getting closer to nature. It came to me from my work at the chemist's actually: I found it very difficult to see people take anywhere between 10 and 15 types of medication, and [I found it difficult to be] the one behind the counter who takes the medicines out of the drawers and hands them to the customer!

The gains acquired from her participation in yoga classes began to infiltrate her personal, family, and professional life. She began studying alternative medicine and when she completed her studies she traveled with her family to India for a period of about six months. Upon the family's return, she and her partner continued practising yoga together, and at the same time she found a job at a chemist that allowed her to combine alternative and conventional medicine. In other words, after her role as a medications' agent selling conventional medications, this participant opted to partially withdraw from the ways of the *establishment* and was able to combine alternative curative approaches in her work. Moreover, she thinks more about where she wants to live and who she interacts with. "I would like to live among people whose ideas are closer to mine; the issue of the environment and ecological awareness is very dear to me." In other words, the dissatisfaction with work led to a dramatic shift in her life and to a desire to live according to a worldview that attaches importance to the values and beliefs that she maintains and which are related to quality of life. Here too, it is obvious that her motivations for enrolling in these courses were much simpler than the gains rendered.

Discussion and conclusion

According to the current findings, the consumption of serious leisure courses was motivated by two irrational, manipulative contexts: (A) The effect of social interests (creating or maintaining social relationships) and the effect of material aspects (the desire to improve one's income); (B) Considerations related to social status and power struggles (the desire to be associated with a prestigious activity frequented by social elites). The manipulative effects of media and advertising were not among the motivating factors found in this study, although it may be assumed that people would necessarily speak openly about such effects, as this may not be socially acceptable. Moreover, the consumption of serious leisure was motivated also by autonomous aspects. These included irrational factors, such as an emotional attraction to a particular creative craft, as well as rational factors, such as the pleasure derived from learning, a desire to experiment or create using certain materials, and the opportunity to gain insights about one's own life or to follow through on one's particular worldview. In this context, it appears that there were those who joined the leisure activity expecting that it would enable them to cope with the gap between their social narrative, namely their commitment to work and family, and their individualistic desire to pursue certain interests.

Unlike the motivations, which were varied, the rewards of the leisure experiences revealed in this study represent primarily the emotional aspect of consumption, as all participants reported that the courses gave them a deep feeling of personal contentment and enjoyment, which added joy and pleasure to their lives (Frey and Stutzer 2002). It was further found that participating in leisure courses helped participants gain insights, self-confidence, and tools, which in turn led them to consider – and even introduce – changes in various aspects (personal, interpersonal, and cultural values) of their everyday lives. All of these perceived gains are related to the theoretical category of rational–autonomous consumption.

The re-evaluation of one's values is manifested in a process, which begins with the experience of distancing oneself from everyday life. The immediate effects of this distancing were described as the release of everyday stress and burdens, withdrawal into oneself, and the discovery of significant insights about oneself. However, it appears that this process has a broader and more profound effect. The acquisition of new skills, tools, and rules pertaining to the leisure activity, which are entirely different from the routine activities of daily life (preparing the hot iron, navigating a yacht into the marina), gives participants also a means for distancing the mundane, allowing them to view their routine life from a new perspective. Participants are thus drawn to compare the world of leisure and the insights derived from it with their everyday life. This examination led a significant number of participants to realize that they wished to make changes in their lives, and in many cases, they followed through on the realization and actually made the desired changes.

A comparison between motivations and perceived gains reveals that while motivations may be related to either conspicuous or autonomous consumption, gains are perceived exclusively in terms related to the emotional and autonomous aspects of consumption, and include considerable benefits beyond the initial expectations. In other words, it was revealed that leisure, although embedded in the capitalist and consumerist construct, affords a space for personal empowerment, improved well-being, and even for protesting against the consumerist framework from which it stems.

At times, the protest expressed through the leisure pursuit is built-in from the start and, hence, forms part of the motivation. Other times, this protest emerges through retrospection, when

participation in the leisure activity affords participants time to reflect on their everyday lives. In either case, at no time does this protest take the form of extreme or subversive acts, such as what Fiske (1989) refers to as *storming the Bastille*, namely, attacking of the capitalist street (using graffiti, dirt, noise, destruction, or theft) in order to destroy conspicuous pleasures or to define meaning via consumerist imagery. Nor is leisure a means utilized by organized protest groups (e.g., punks, as per Hebdige 2012). Instead, leisure allows individuals who are not organized to practice a culture of resistance; it provides a means for engaging in a quiet and deeply significant revolution. This revolution has the ability to change the manipulation and interest inherent in consumption, and significantly improve the lifestyle of individuals who prefer to determine their own fate.

Based on these observations, it may be claimed that the gains and rewards derived from participation in serious leisure activities exceeded all expectations, as one of the participants wrote in a letter he sent me, about one year after the interview.

> I have to admit that the gains were perhaps even greater [than I had anticipated] – and that is what is so wonderful! … I experienced a different view of the world.… Nowadays, my self-confidence is stronger [and] my self-esteem has been upgraded. I now have a better understanding of dynamics, motivations, the world, its spheres, and my place in the world, and I am able to appreciate all that exists.

Thus, participation in serious leisure activities led to gains that exceeded all expectations. Participants had no idea of the impact that the experience would have on them; to their amazement, they had stumbled upon El Dorado (The lost golden city of the Incas).

1 Hence, we will primarily refer to "courses."
2 Regina shared with me the personal journal that she had kept over a period of 2 years as she participated in the yoga course and in which she documented her experiences and insights about herself and her life as related to the yoga course.

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Part II

Nationalized and minoritized leisure

3   Shabbat is a space without work

Elie Cohen-Gewerc

Introduction

The concept of Shabbat, the Fourth Commandment in the Bible, has a basic aim: to establish a clear-cut difference between the profane activities of the workweek and the day dedicated to God and to the sacred dimension of human life. But the Sabbath is not meant as a day of leisure. The Sabbath is contrasted with the concept of labor, perhaps as a way of alleviating the harshness of the primordial punishment: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis, 3,19, King James Version). Shabbat means refraining from any kind of work. In this sense, the Sabbath is mistakenly identified as the ancient pioneering concept of leisure. The Sabbath is only a legitimization of a resting time for the entire human community as well as for animals used for labor. Thus, Judaism is perceived as the first religion to introduce into the Judeo-Christian culture the blessed concept of the Sabbath as a day of rest for everyone. This, however, concludes the analogy between the Sabbath, the one day of the week when labor is forbidden but demonstrations of worship are mandatory, and the concept of leisure, which refers to free days without any particular agenda.

The Sabbath is indeed a day of rest; however, it comes with a prescribed agenda that includes prayers that are longer than those said on weekdays. This is because a day of rest does not mean a true free day. The Sabbath cannot be perceived as a primordial version of the relatively recent phenomenon of paid vacation, an annual period of leisure, such as the French concept of *vacances* or even the English *holidays*, although the latter still alludes to holiness, which is absent from the etymological root of the French *vacances*, meaning vacant. Returning to the original intent of the Sabbath and its role vis-à-vis the community, we note that the Sabbath constitutes part of a prescribed agenda, a means of supervision that ensures that each individual remains loyal to the community. In this sense and, in contrast to the common claim that the Sabbath protects the individual, the Sabbath mainly protects the cohesive nature and routine organization of the community, where the individuals are a means to ensure its survival.

The focus of this chapter is on the various components that constitute the essence of the Sabbath, which differs substantially from the purpose of the concept of leisure as it developed since the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century. I will attempt to identify points where the two concepts meet or overlap, and examine the attempts of the leisure industry in Israel to increase the size of its clientele, if and when the endeavor to institutionalize Sunday as an additional day of rest in Israel succeeds. The purpose of the 2-day weekend endeavor is to allow for an additional Shabbat, a "secular" Shabbat, a Shabbat of real leisure.[1]

Time, Sabbath, and leisure

The Sabbath is both an important rest point in the flow of time and a time with its own unique characteristics. In its profound essence, time constantly offers multiple opportunities that can serve as alternatives to what already exists. Humans are by definition free and, hence, unpredictable. At any given moment, a person may choose an option that is different from one's prescribed routine. However, to embark on any of the multiple opportunities that time offers, humans need – in addition to personal freedom – to make themselves available. This crossroads can pose a challenge, either to the individual who may feel anxious about taking absolute responsibility for making a choice or to a community that wishes to create a secure sphere of existence, one that is both predictable and familiar. An established agenda and canonical "choices," divest time of its essence, thus "rescuing" the individual from having to assume personal responsibility and the community from facing the unpredictable. It is unlikely that the Fourth Commandment, "Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee," was intended to give people free rein to make their own choices. The supervision that characterizes the weekday routine could not be entirely forsaken on the holiest day of the week, and thus there is a strict schedule that characterizes the Sabbath activities and a host of prohibitions that accompany this schedule. Thus, labor is not the only activity that is forbidden on the Sabbath; there are many other restrictions and constraints.

Attending the prolonged prayer services on the Sabbath serves the same function as it does on weekdays, namely, to be present at roll call as part of the community. The implied surveillance serves the dual purpose of caring for and simultaneously supervising the individual. Should one be unable to attend prayers due to illness, the community immediately initiates a protocol for tending to the sick; however, should one's absence be a sign of weakening ties to the community, a different protocol is initiated. It is not a coincidence that the word for *synagogue* in Hebrew means *house of* gathering,[2] rather than *house of prayer*. Praying can be done anywhere; attendance for the purpose of seeing and being seen, for demonstrating one's place in the fabric of the community, requires a gathering. The purpose is to allow the individual members to repeatedly feel that they are well-assimilated into the familiar and sanctioned framework. Thus, the aim of praying together is to feel a sense of belonging, as an integral part of an unchanging world, thus creating the illusion of its everlasting nature, like the cycle of nature, where – by the way – there is no free will. Bergson explains it thus: "But, once these wills are organised, they assume the guise of an organism; and in this more or less artificial organism habit plays the same role as necessity in the works of nature" (Bergson 1935, p. 1). It appears that the laws of the Sabbath consistently work to appear in the guise of an eternal and natural organism, thus making the Sabbath seem like an integral and necessary component of a deterministic, interminable, and impenetrable framework.

The prescribed schedule of the Sabbath that takes place in the public eye divests it of any potential for discovering and following paths to alternative worlds. In this manner, temptation and the possibility of abandoning the religious world for a different one – which might be deemed better – are avoided. Nevertheless, the Sabbath is attractive and alluring, in the sense that it precludes the need to wonder how one wishes to use what presumably could constitute "free time."

Leisure, the Sabbath, and a sense of belonging

In addition to setting the rhythm of life and its customs, the Sabbath and the related gatherings for prayers and for family meals evoke an important emotion, that of commonality, which creates the consciousness of an imagined community (Anderson 1995). This is a community that aspires to feel a sense of belonging, to grow together, and raise its voice in unison toward the heavens during the ritual of taking pleasure in receiving and celebrating the Sabbath (known in Hebrew as *Oneg Shabbat*). This sense of commonality creates an excitement in the group, which results in a wondrous phenomenon: a heightening of emotion to the point that nothing can resist it – not even reason. When Bialik, Israel's national poet, initiated the tradition of celebrating the joy of the Sabbath (*Oneg Shabbat*) as a gathering which is not held at the synagogue, he emphasized the role of the Sabbath in strengthening and elevating the national spirit, rather than the spirit of the individual. "Naturally the importance of the Sabbath in their hearts … will strengthen, through the celebration of the Sabbath."[3]

The strengthening of group consciousness through excitement that bypasses reason is a device that is rooted in ancient tradition. Nowadays, we are witnessing a similar ecstasy of celebration with the World Cup finals, on July 6, 2018, when the Belgian team won the final game against Brazil. Billions of people worldwide were able to observe the excitement and the sense of belonging that characterized the frenzied celebrations of the Belgian people, who on most days find it challenging to maintain a sense of group consciousness, given that not all of them even speak the same language. This is a great example of the way common experiences can generate social cohesion. Among the Belgian people, it is no more than a passing emotion, but when this kind of common feeling is embedded in ceremonies produced every week, like the Shabbat, or annually like Passover, the emotion becomes deeply rooted in the soul, as was the case for the young Hugo Bergman. In his memoirs, Hugo Bergman tells of the dilemma he experienced following a visit with his good friend Franz Kafka:

> Franz, as a socialist, was against religion and attempted to steer me away from my Jewish beliefs. However, I used to love celebrating the first night of Passover, my father's traditions and the preparations for the holiday. I was deeply impressed by my friend's reasoning against religion; I prayed in my heart that I would remain faithful to my Judaism, at least until the next Eve of Passover. My prayer was answered.
>
> <div align="right">(Bergman 1976, p. 23)</div>

In addition to this sense of attachment to one's traditions, there is the feeling of belonging, to feel one is a part of a group, compared to those who are not. Some celebrate the Eve of Passover and some do not; some experience the celebration of receiving the Sabbath (the Oneg Shabbat), whereas others do not. Thus, the Sabbath not only distinguishes between the mundane and the holy but also between those who belong and those who do not. Having a ready-to-wear identity is both a comfort and a convenience, as it obviates the need for a prolonged and complex journey of self-discovery in life as a whole, or even for a quick peek into whatever leisure might offer beyond the walls enclosing the aforementioned communal consciousness. How nice to believe that it is enough to have "the trouble to be born … [Jewish]" (Beaumarchais 1784) and be able to gather in the embrace of the Sabbath Queen.[4] The Sabbath brings people together, creates cohesion, envelops and distances the individual from the open fields of leisure and its horizon that is open to what lies beyond. In this sense, we might say that not only is there no leisure in the Sabbath; rather, the Sabbath is the complete opposite of the spirit of leisure.

In contrast to the Sabbath that imprisons us in its unique glory, a person who has captured the essence of leisure seeks to breathe the fresh air of open spaces and transcend the prison walls of a

tradition that distinguishes between *us* and *them*. In the experience of leisure, one longs to set free the entire self and to experience a surge of emotions, which do not necessarily coincide with those that arise through the customs and rituals in which one is immersed.

Janine, the main character in the first story of *Exile and Kingdom* by Albert Camus experienced that kind of self-revelation in an oasis, far in the deep Algerian desert.

> Janine, leaning her whole body against the parapet, was speechless, unable to tear herself away from the void opening before her.… Over yonder, still farther south, at that point where sky and earth met in a pure line – over yonder it suddenly seemed there was awaiting her something of which, though it had always been lacking, she had never been aware until now.
>
> <div align="right">(Camus 1957, p. 9)</div>

> This kind of initiation can be a genuine emancipation from our defined self, shaped by education and local mentality. Leisure space then tends to join the realm of art and science, based on a real interest in and genuine search for universality.
>
> <div align="right">(Cohen-Gewerc 2017, p. 677)</div>

Leisure, the Sabbath, and personal freedom

To all of the above-mentioned characteristics of the Sabbath, we must add an important aspect, which distances the canonical day of rest from the essence of leisure, namely, a range of prohibitions. The list of prohibited activities becomes lengthier, the greater the fear of committing sin, to the point of building fences so as to limit one's movement through physical space on the day of the Sabbath. Moreover, in considering leisure in contrast to work, we discover that while work is absent from both, in the realm of leisure this is a privilege, whereas on the Sabbath is an imposed requirement. The requirements on the Sabbath include closely following the Jewish prayer book (*Siddur*), the written texts, the ceremony and rituals, and even the particular dishes served at the Sabbath meal. The imposition of requirements does not correspond to the notion that is equated with leisure, namely, freedom. In Hebrew, the equivalent word for *Vacances* and *Holidays* is etymologically rooted in the word *freedom*; when one is on vacation, one is free. The Sabbath does not afford one the miracle of unoccupied time, the sense of freedom and opportunity one feels in the transition from fulfilling a role to having no role to fill, from a hectic routine to a "day of rest":

> The passage from a tight schedule full of commitments, where an individual knows what he has to do and knows what I'm expected to be, to white empty pages in a diary can be a hard encounter with one's freedom. To all this, we must add that behind the intense activity, when the agenda was overbooked, we were not really assured of clear-cut concepts, or of any well-defined identity.
>
> <div align="right">(Cohen-Gewerc and Stebbins 2013, p. 13)</div>

First and foremost, leisure means free time, extra time left after having met all of our responsibilities, time free from any role or task, and especially free from care and supervision. In leisure, the individual is finally on his/her own, available to respond to any opportunity that may come one's way, immersed completely in one's personal freedom. In the context of our discussion of the Sabbath as a non- leisure time, we note that in leisure, there is no organization,

schedule, or captive audience; everything around one is open, available, and free of constraints. This situation is neither simple nor easy. Free time, a blank slot on one's calendar, and the void that awaits one's intimate decisions constitute an existential challenge that is simultaneously exciting and threatening.

> Is – and if so, to what extent is – the individual capable of coping with time that is truly free, time that is unmarked by any existing path of responsibilities and commitments, the sense of time we experience when we are on the threshold of life that is open in every direction?
>
> (Cohen-Gewerc 2003, p. 90)

As humans roam through spaces of leisure (which are often referred to as *vacation*), they experience freedom – but which freedom? This question is addressed in the book by Cohen-Gewerc and Stebbins (2013), as follows:

> Yet, which concept of freedom springs out in our minds? Are we sure that freedom is always synonymous with pleasure? Where does this freedom disappear to when Leisure is over? On the other hand, what happens when circumstances force us to be outside of our familiar and well-known space, disconnected from roles and obligations; from tacit but essential ratification of our existence? Do we conceive our freedom to be the basic axis of our human condition? Sometimes it seems that this whole issue remains a virtual one, until we genuinely and personally confront the fact that we are free. "Freedom" is a word that is so overused, misused, manipulated, and terribly challenging to define. Freedom accompanies life as an unarticulated background, while we embroider the cloth of time with roles, tasks, obligations – as if on a kind of autopilot. Freedom becomes acutely present at times when our schedule tends to empty, when free time makes it clear to us how difficult is to be free, to face up to what appears to be a void.
>
> (Cohen-Gewerc and Stebbins 2013, p. 12)

This is because, occasionally, the fear of emptiness, the undoing of the invisible threads that serve as our security net, motivates us to devote ourselves entirely to whatever might save us from the responsibly of having to choose how to fill our free time. It is around that corner that the leisure industry's offerings joyfully await.[5]

In contrast to this, the Sabbath is always full of activity. This is the main claim made by those who wish to save us from the secular "void," as they seek to impress us with their array of activities: they invite us to spend the Sabbath with them, to get carried away in the spiritually uplifting prayer songs in the synagogue, to participate in choreographing the captivating rituals of the Sabbath meal, and the joy of telling and hearing others recite legends, Biblical verses, and poems, which engulf the soul and move the heart. The individual, who is taken in, embraced and enveloped, turns away from the outside world. The main purpose is to gather inward.

The Sabbath indeed frees one from work obligations, but not from belonging to one's community, religion, identity, or from the cycle of commandments. Thus, the individual remains bound by one's identity, and by the canonical view of his or her predestined role in life. The Sabbath does not offer the freedom to be open to what may come or to transcend one's current boundaries. The notions of *freedom* and *time* are divested of their true meaning, as time is predesignated for certain activities, there is no sense of openness or opportunity, and life's effervescence remains beyond one's horizon. Thus, the true potential for discovery and enlightenment, the true essence of freedom, is lost.

With the tangible discovery of freedom, I recover the ability to see: the capacity to discern more and more things, aspects, and nuances that had remained out of our field of vision, its having been totally filled with the contents of the small stage on which we were confined. The horizon becomes wider and wider and I can perceive how, on the one hand, central items of my daily life lose their primacy; on the other hand, my inner dialogue, the dialogue I have with myself, grows up and becomes the most relevant criterion for my evaluations, my choices, my deeds. I sense, intuitively, that my freedom is intrinsically linked with my uniqueness.

(Cohen-Gewerc and Stebbins 2013 p. 16)

Contrary to the Shabbat, into which the believer enters as a predefined and known entity, one enters into leisure with one's whole self, i.e., with one's uniqueness, rather than with a set of definitions that situate one within the spaces and hierarchies of a given social framework. One intuitively notes that in the sphere of leisure, there is room to express one's talents and desires, including those that are not requisite in fulfilling the various roles one plays in daily life. Whereas the Sabbath is a stage exposed to divine and human supervision, where people play a predetermined role and complete predefined assignments, leisure can be likened to a workshop, where one is open to many possibilities, without any expectations as to the outcomes, a workshop in which one experiences a sense of freedom and the opportunity to create. As Bergson (1920) reminds us, life is meant for creating, including the creation of the self.

If, then, in every domain the triumph of life is creation, must we not suppose that human life has its goal in a creation which, unlike that of the artist and philosopher, can be pursued always by all men – creation of self by self, the growing of the personality by an effort which draws much from little, something from nothing, and adds unceasingly to whatever wealth the world contains?

(Bergson 1920, p. 30)

However, being free is one thing, but consummating one's personal freedom is quite another. The entrance into leisure mode is a crucial moment when a person experiences the way in which extra time, which might seem at first empty and threatening, becomes a crossroads in one's personal freedom, a crossroads for which one alone is responsible. This is no simple challenge.

For those who observe the Sabbath religiously, this dramatic crossroads is completely avoided. There is no emptiness to cope with; the rituals are prewritten and one's identity has been catalogued. The Sabbath day schedule is entirely full and, therefore, it is neither a day of leisure or of freedom. On the contrary, its eternal and preset agenda rescues one from the challenge of freedom, i.e., complete personal responsibility. How comfortable it is to follow the pre-paved path where everything can be anticipated, the views and spaces are familiar, and one's activities are bound to a cycle of commandments, which have nothing to do with taking personal responsibility.

That is essentially the "charm" of the Sabbath, the same "charm" that is being marketed by the leisure industry, the supplier of fun, excitement, and various distractions, to which a sense of freedom is added, although – for the most part – it is actually permissiveness. The essence of leisure is a far cry from the common enticement to "clear one's head," "not have to think," and to simply "pass the time." Leisure is a serious endeavor. In the individual's sphere of serious leisure, people go beyond their comfort zone to explore and discover the extensive spaces

available in this special realm, and in doing so they discover themselves and their unique and individual humanity.

In this sense, the spirit of leisure, not unlike that of art, turns toward whatever is neither routine nor cyclical, and seeks to explore the multiplicity that is not available on the stage that is our world, as Shakespeare referred to it. The person with free time embarks on a cruise to extra-territorial regions, which lie beyond, but mostly within. The openness of leisure can lead to a meeting with the self, with one's own unique individuality, which is often concealed in the inner folds of one's being. From early childhood, our sense of survival teaches us that our existence depends on our being seen by the relevant people that surround us, which in turn strengthens in us the very characteristics and skills that correspond to what is expected of us. Thus, we develop a personality that is well-suited to our reality and its expectations of us. The personality is a *persona*, a mask that is valuable, not only in terms of our existence but also for honing our self-image. "Many people mistake the term 'personality' *for dignity, moral authority, a prodigy of letters, of arts, or even of knowledge,* without realising that the greatness of the soul could never fit within the unbearable smallness of man's vile personality" (Gonzalez-Pecotche 1963/2009, p. 51).

Fitting into a mold that gives us a role in the human comedy (Balzac 1829–1850), or pouring oneself into "the mould of one's native land,"[6] neither cancels out nor squelches our rich internal world, which awaits patiently, sometimes for decades, like seeds in the streams that are caught between rocks and stones, only to be freed to bloom with the coming of the first seasonal rain. The same sometimes happens to the seeds caught in the inner folds of the individual, which can surface only with the dawning of one's inner availability. This is the true goal of leisure time, to tease out the self that is hidden in the inner folds, the self that seeks to sail beyond the stagnant interpretations; the beliefs which, due to endless repetition, disguise themselves as truths; and the cyclical habits that pretend to be eternal.[7] When a person discovers the essence of leisure, one feels the potential abundance of one's entire being.

> Beyond any role, without a care, I'm aware that every decision I will take – including doing nothing – will be no one else's "covered" responsibility but my own. Here I am: me and myself. What an encounter! What an opportunity! Or not?
>
> (Cohen-Gewerc and Stebbins 2013, p. 19)

This is indeed a unique moment, when the person feels the full force of one's humanity, an inner strength, when one's inner home and harbor is open to the universe. A person can delve into the depth of this harbor and explore one's individuality, thanks to the encounter with the multiplicity available in Creation, sail toward the endless horizon that is afforded through leisure. This experience is far from the "us versus them" world that is entrenched in the outer world, that world which tends to live as an autarchy and gathers inward every Sabbath day.

An Orthodox journalist, Shiffi Haritan, wrote the following in her article published the *Ha'aretz* newspaper,[8] on July 13, 2018, describing the Sabbath as one of the factors that contributes to the sense of happiness that her community experiences: "We have the holiest day of the week for resting, for clearing our minds, loving our families, and detaching from the outer world. How could we feel anything but happiness – how?" Whereas, in the context of this discussion, we ask: How can you call the Sabbath a time of leisure?

Leisure is perceived as a person's second chance to be exposed to one's comprehensive being, to experience complete openness and new affinities, curiosity, renewal, and especially the building of innumerable bridges between the self and the other worlds that form part of the

shared universe. While it is true that, like a fledgling that requires constant supervision until it is ready to spread its own wings, so too an individual needs support, training, habits, defenses, and a strong anchor to serve as a point of departure, in order to be equipped for the journey of developing and improving the inner self, which occurs through encounters with individuals, groups, races, peoples, and nations, and such encounters create affinities. The rich experiences of prior generations, which are supported by scientific evidence, indicate that seclusion leads to atrophy.

By contrast, the all-encompassing Sabbath embraces one's known personality and provides confidence and a sense of existential security within the boundaries of one's defined identity, the spirit of leisure enables the individual, the unique self, to breathe in the fresh air of one's essential humanity, which yearns for the universal. The Sabbath is a particular and distinctive tribal gathering, whereas leisure is essentially an openness toward new affinities.

> Leisure, occurring in new and wider horizons, with essential encounters with different partners, can rehabilitate the intimate dialogue between what we think and what we truly sense; a dialogue leading towards a vital readjustment of definitions, including self-identity, community and stranger. If that occurs, personal identity ceases to be an isle surrounded by impermeable fences and grows into an open place connected by bridges and human linkages far away from the limited imagined community.
>
> (Cohen-Gewerc 2017, p. 669)

The Sabbath in its entirety is grounded in the imagined community, which continues to struggle to maintain its status.

The Sabbath, leisure, and their appropriateness to the current times

I do not mean to ignore the important principles that are included in the concept of the Sabbath: the principle of equality, giving a day of rest to all humans and extending the privilege also to animals. The very act of setting aside a time for something other than the constant focus on material existence, a time that can be used to address more spiritual aspects of existence, undoubtedly has intrinsic value. My issue is with the fact that this day has been conscripted in its entirety to promoting group cohesion and accentuating a particularistic differentiation.

In the years that led to the establishment of the State of Israel and in an effort to introduce a Jewish ethos that was different from the ethos that characterized Judaism in the Diaspora, there were attempts to add non-ritualistic contents to the *Oneg Shabbat* that was held outside of the synagogue. An example is the project initiated by the national poet, Haim Nahman Bialik, who devoted these gatherings to addressing cultural issues that have a universal appeal. In this sense, he created a context in which the effort to observe the Sabbath was an act that was not only Jewish and Israeli but also humanistic.

> The Jewish nation will never forgo [the observance of] the Sabbath, which is the existential foundation not only for the Jewish people but also for all humanity: without the Sabbath, we are left without an image of either God or humanity.[9]

The same idea was aptly expressed by Muki Tzur, one of the contributors to the book *The Seventh Day* (2001), edited by Garzi and Tzimerman. Tzur attributes a humanistic value to the Sabbath, an approach that takes an overall look at human existence, a distancing of sorts in order

to gain a broader perspective, as artists are prone to do when examining their own work, so as to come back to it with a fresh perspective. This approach hints toward the essence of leisure:

> Had there been witnesses to the act of creation, they would certainly have found it curious that this creator, who worked intensively from one day to the next, having set in motion a wonderful pattern of creation and progression, suddenly chooses to stop on the seventh day. Clearly, this idleness was not due to fatigue, nor was this day of rest intended for recalibration; rather, it was an active decision of a consciousness that is free, attentive, dreamy, thankful, hopeful, and considerate of its own needs. That is what we need.
>
> <div align="right">(Garzi and Tzimerman 2001, p. 137)</div>

These attempts to imbue a humanistic content into the ritual that celebrates the Sabbath did not alter the Sabbath, which remained distinct from the weekdays, nor was it an attempt to alter the organized pattern of the day, which creates a framework for the community members, one of the ancient and repeatedly tested means for imposing order and supervision. Moreover, because of the holiness of this day, activities on the Sabbath are subject to more comprehensive and intensive supervision that are the activities on weekdays; however, this also precludes any room for leisure.

There were those who at the beginning of the Zionist revolution attempted to fit the square into the circle and make the Sabbath a time of leisure, but these efforts came to naught. Dr. Moshe Glickson, the first editor of the Hebrew newspaper *Ha'aretz*, wished to imbue the Sabbath with many aspects, reflecting the understandable desire of the Jewish people for renewal, at a time when the nation was experiencing an unprecedented feeling of openness toward the whole Creation. In this context, the concept of the Shabbat was no longer an end point but a point of departure, reminiscent of the potential multiplicity and splendour associated with leisure, but in this case, directed toward strengthening the particularistic character of the State of Israel that was soon to be established.

> Our world contains a wonderful gift, known as the Sabbath. And that is the amazing quality of the Sabbath, that it can be viewed from every possible angle: from a religious, humanistic, universal, and social perspective, or from a national, historical-cultural perspective; regardless, it always retains its holiness and fresh vitality. As members of the current generation, who are building the homeland and reviving the world of Hebrew letters, our souls should be attentive and open to all of this vital beauty, although individually we may not consider all of these aspects to be equally dear to us.
>
> <div align="right">(*Ha'aretz*, February 17, 1928)</div>

Clearly, these words constitute a concerted effort to remove the walls and barriers erected to keep the conservative Sabbath hostage.

By definition, the Sabbath is embracing and protective, shielding us from the agitation of life that is beyond its walls; it even attempts to subjugate weekdays to its own aggrandizing needs, thus maintaining a self-nourishing closed-circuit framework. By contrast, leisure appeals to otherness, to open spaces, to universal existence. The Sabbath sanctifies differentiation, turning inwards toward what is familiar; in the most Orthodox communities, this manifests as a desire to create an impermeable boundary between the communities' own particularity and the life that lies beyond.

And yet, the life outside these walls is effervescent and penetrates through all of the gaps and crevices that constantly appear. In an era of market economy and a growing culture of

consumption, those who observe the Sabbath are exposed to the abundance of temptations offered by the leisure industry, which is skilled at adapting to the needs of different audiences. Slowly we see that the perception of holidays as holy days is becoming less appealing. In May of 2007, Member of Parliament (MP) Orlev, who was heading the national religious party, proposed making Sunday an additional day of rest, so that "The religious and traditional population will have a leisure day to spend with their families" (Maranda 2007). Since this bill was proposed,[10] it has repeatedly resurfaced and been postponed, according to the needs of the politicians of the times, who undoubtedly recognize that this is a true and vital need for a large segment of the population. MP Orlev's claim that observant Jews need to spend time with their families is curious: what is it they do on the eve of every Sabbath and during the Sabbath day, if not spend time with family? The real issue at heart is the desire of the religious population to be freed from the bindings of the Sabbath and to enjoy a true space of leisure that is open to multiple possibilities. Whether consciously or not, this population seeks to enjoy a different aspect of time, as a window to unforeseen opportunities. MP Al'aluf, who headed the parliamentary commission that reviewed this bill, claimed that this bill would make it "possible for citizens not only to practice their particular religious principles but also to experience a freedom that all citizens can enjoy equally" (Commission reviewing the bill to make Sunday a day of rest 2006).[11]

MP Dov Hankin, of the Israeli communist party, claimed that

> The idea of establishing a long weekend in Israeli society will provide an important solution to a very large part of the population, which currently has no course of action, and I mean the religious, Orthodox population and all others who observe the Sabbath.
>
> <div align="right">(Commission reviewing the bill to make Sunday a day of rest 2006)</div>

The claim made by MP Eichler, a member of the Jewish Orthodox party, was that he feared that making Friday a regular workday, especially on winter days, would make it impossible for the women in observant families to do all the cooking necessary before sundown in preparation for the Sabbath. As a point of fact, however, MP Eichler was not worried only about the women completing their chores on time, but also about the temptations of leisure, a time with no framework or built-in agenda, which could lead to God-knows-what-kinds of dangerous developments. There is no need to press the point any further; it is clear that many of those who observe the Sabbath wish to enjoy an additional day of rest, which would give them the opportunity to experience a time of complete leisure. Undoubtedly, this wish in fact emphasizes the extent to which the Sabbath, although not a day of work, is not a day of leisure either.

Conclusion

We have noted that the Sabbath, a word that in Hebrew is etymologically rooted in the word that means *to strike, to cease activity*, established the notion of a universal day of rest. This is a day when all economic activity must cease for a period a little over 24 hours, from sundown on Friday evening until the following night when three stars are visible. In addition to providing rest and a change from the weekly routine, the Sabbath is an invitation to attend to dimensions beyond that of mere physical survival.

In the notion of the Sabbath, there is also an invitation to expand one's point of view and consider people as part of a larger human community, rather than the disparaging perspective

that views each individual in terms of his or her (professional or economic) "contribution" to the community. Nevertheless, we should be aware that while the Sabbath distances itself from issues of economic survival, it has everything to do with social survival. The Sabbath emphasizes one's place and position in the social order of the community, which is manifested by the quality of one's best clothes selected to be worn on the Sabbath, by whether one is given a role in the prayer readings, or by one's seating location in the synagogue.

We should note that the existence of a space free of work was an important principle for the cultural leadership of a nation that sought to establish a new Jewish society in the fledgling state. That was the rationale behind the efforts of the national poet Bialik to establish a modern form of the *Oneg Shabbat.* His wish was that

> [We] return to the Sabbath, our beautiful and graceful symbol, from which we can derive beauty that affects all aspects of our lives.… If we bemoan the lack of a unique lifestyle, we can use the Sabbath as a starting point to create our own lifestyle.[12]

Bialik served as the master of ceremony of these gatherings that took place in Tel Aviv and later provided a written summary of what was said by the authors, historians, philosophers, and educators whom he had invited to speak at these events. Bialik's *Oneg Shabbat* contained something of the spirit of leisure, in that he imbued this day of rest with content that differed from that of the cyclical ritual; instead, he sought to address the universal human dimension. This is, if you will, a first step in understanding that time, when it is freed of constraints, opens pathways that can transcend boundaries.

However, in the last two decades, we have experienced a resistance to the opening and erasure of boundaries of the global world, especially from the masses who are afraid to completely lose their sense of a framework.[13] Similarly, many factions in Israeli society wish to return to their particularistic Judaism, as becomes evident during parliamentary elections. In recent years, synagogues are filling up – and yet, many hesitate between attending prayer every week or saving this for the high holidays and using the Saturday as a day of amusement.

We are now far from the slow erosion that caused many of the observant Jewish immigrants to hesitate between spending their summer Saturdays in a hot and stuffy synagogue or taking the available public transportation to the beach. However, this trend of "erosion" did not alter these people's belief system, only their degree of observance. They return to the synagogue on holidays, fast on Yom Kippur, and at any moment of existential insecurity, they are apt to return to religion. And in that case, the Sabbath and its charms await them.

In the meantime, with the development of a strong economy in the State of Israel and a surge in the number of Israelis who travel abroad and are exposed to the ways of the West, the leisure industry has begun marketing its attractive offers. The celebration of the Sabbath, the *Oneg Shabbat a la* Bialik, i.e., a gathering that does not include prayers, has become an alternative means of entertainment, whether in the form of a nature walk, an outing to a restaurant, pursuing a hobby, or watching TV. Recently, municipalities have initiated a form of entertainment that they call "Cultural Saturdays," which seems to echo back to Bialik's initiative, albeit with a predominant presence of politicians rather than scholars.

Returning to the issue of the ambivalence experienced by a large portion of the population whether to observe the Sabbath as ordained or to allow themselves to pursue more secular forms of entertainment, it is important to reiterate that this tendency does not indicate a basic change in their worldview. Thus, it may be assumed that for many of those who have experienced such

ambivalence, an additional weekend day that is free of ritual would provide a solution to this inner conflict.

As to those who are careful to observe the Sabbath as ordained and have a clear understanding that the Sabbath is not a day of leisure, it is safe to say that they yearn to have a secular weekend day, when free time will present them with an array of opportunities, even beyond the ever-improving products offered by the leisure industry, such as the potential enrichment that can be found in serious leisure (Hayosh 2018; Stebbins 2007).

Adding a second day to the weekend could attenuate – to some extent – not only the never-ending controversy on the issue of the Sabbath but also the attempts of the Orthodox parties to impose these practices on the entire population. There are constant attempts to bridge the gap between the religious and secular sectors of Israeli society, which always include a debate about the observance of the Sabbath. The journalist Yossi Klein attempted to address this debate in the *Ha'aretz* newspaper:

> On the night after the Sabbath, we talked about the issue. What can religious people bring to the dialogue about the Sabbath? A lot. They can bring explanations, insights, stories, and sources. All of these are valuable and important. What do the secular bring to the conversation? Nothing. They have no verses, explanations, or quotes. All they have is freedom—the freedom to do whatever they want on the Sabbath.
>
> <div align="right">(Ha'aretz July 26, 2018)</div>

Finally, we might say that the definition of the Sabbath corresponds to the perception that "All the world's a stage," whereas leisure, and especially serious leisure, corresponds to the perception that "All the world's a *workshop*." Life on the stage of the *Human Comedy* is filled with numerous commands, verses, traditions, and rituals and its cast is comprised of characters who – to gain recognition as legitimate members – would expend all of their energy on performing a pre-scripted and well-known role. By contrast, the workshop is inhabited by individuals who bring their unique selves; they need not adhere to any given script, abide by any prejudices or instructions, or fit into any molds; they are free entities whose wish is to make not only a quantitative but also a qualitative contribution in this world.

The Sabbath observed in all its glory replaces the missions and assignments of the secular weekday with others that are no less strict and demanding. If leisure seeks to shed the chains that shackle us to our prescribed roles, the Sabbath merely exchanges these shackles for others that are highly embellished and more sonorous. The Fourth Commandment, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy," is about a day full of prescribed activities and therefore is not about leisure; hence the request for an additional day of rest, a secular Sabbath, when one's time can remain truly free.

1   The scope of this chapter precludes any reference to the public debates and arguments – violent at times – regarding maintaining the prohibitions associated with the Sabbath in the public sphere, a topic in which the entire Jewish population in Israel, from the secular to the radical ultra-Orthodox, is involved. This is also a major issue in the political sphere, as the religious parties attempt to impose their way of life on the entire population, albeit with limited success, because while it may be possible to isolate specific neighborhoods, it is impossible to bring life to a standstill in the entire country. The demand for leisure consumption, in the form of entertainment venues, restaurants, cinemas, dance halls and clubs overrides the demand to maintain the Sabbath prohibitions, especially in the larger cities, and even in Jerusalem, where large ultra-Orthodox communities reside.

2   The words *Eglise* in French, *Iglesia* in Spanish, from the Greek *ekklēsía* mean the same.

3   Without the Sabbath, we are a despicable and inferior nation – not even a nation. We must exalt the significance of the Sabbath among us, here and everywhere, especially in the eyes of the younger generation; if not, we are sure to wither and expire. We will not experience a rebirth or renewal … I have the idea of doing something – establishing a society or an institution for the purpose of strengthening the significance of the Sabbath. Thus, we will call this institution "The

Strength of the Sabbath" or "The Pleasure of the Sabbath". People will gather on the Sabbath and together consider verses from the Torah and sayings of the sages, while enjoying food and drink, and this will naturally strengthen the importance of the Sabbath in their hearts, through the celebration of the Sabbath.

Hillel Bavli, "In the Company of Bialik," published on August 3, 1959 in *Hadoar* (a Hebrew newspaper, published in the United States from 1921 until 2005)

4   "What! Because you are a great Man, you fancy yourself a great Genius.—Which way?—How came you to be the rich and mighty Count Almaviva? Why truly, you gave yourself the Trouble to be born!…" (The Marriage of Figaro, Act V, Scene 3)

5   We must stress once again that individual free time or unwatched space leads, sooner or later, either to freedom, which means consciousness and accountability, or to permissiveness with its escorts – ignorance and irresponsibility. The second option requires no training and entails the "fruitful" and lucrative field of leisure industries and an easy ground for consumption harassment.

(Cohen-Gewerc 2012, p. 76)

6   "A human being is only a small plot of land/ A human being is nothing but the mold of one's native land …" (Tchernichovsky, Manuscripts, Vol. 3, 1929).

7   The cycle of holidays (e.g., Purim will always come before Passover) attempts to imitate the cycle of nature (spring will always come before summer) and in this way to ratify it as an everlasting reality that can never be changed.

8   *Ha'aretz* newspaper existed even before the establishment of the State of Israel and its readership is comprised of the academically educated and intellectual segment of the population. This article was written to address the fierce debate regarding Israel's affinity to a Western–liberal vs. a Jewish–religious ethos.

9   In a letter written to Kibbutz Geva on March 11, 1933, in response to the news that members were working the fields on the Sabbath, see www.zemereshet.co.il/biography.asp?artists_id=5&id=67.

10 The bill proposed in 2016 included in the rationale the claim that the change that the bill would bring about "is likely to reduce the disagreements between the religious and the secular."

11 http://main.knesset.gov.il/ Activity/committees/Pages/ AllCommitteeProtocols.aspx?Comid=&fDate=05/ 04/2016&tDate=04/07/2018& subject=%u05D9%u05D5%u05DD %20%u05E8%u05D0%u05E9%u05D5%u05DF. Accessed October 2018.

12 From a speech delivered in 1928 at the ceremonial placement of the cornerstone of the cultural center known as *Ohel Shem*. http://benyehuda.org/bialik/dvarim_shebeal_peh66.html. Accessed October 2018.

13 Individuals can throughout much of the world look freely for anything and go easily everywhere, for those open global networks run to every taste. A consequence of this process is that individuals now enjoy access to a multitude of organizations, suppliers, dealers, publishers that can bypass through what remains of the weakened authority of parents, teachers, community leaders.

As we understand this, however, it does not mean that people now live in an era of personal freedom and autonomy. In most cases individuals have never emancipated themselves from compulsory influence of community and social frames. They have simply lost it.

(Cohen-Gewerc and Stebbins 2013, p. 5)

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4 Dark tourism as controversial leisure enterprise in Israeli TV satire shows

Liat Steir-Livny

Introduction

Dark tourism to former concentration camps in Poland has become increasingly popular in Israel in the past few decades. Since the late 1980s, Israeli high schools, universities, and colleges send groups to Poland to the extent that this has become something of a rite of passage. Many others visit the camps with their families or as part of guided tours. Criticism of these tours began in the 1990s and intensified with time, alongside their success. Surprisingly, black humor and satire were and remain key elements fueling this debate.

This chapter analyzes the satirical critique of organized and individual educational trips to the former concentration camps by focusing on examples from TV satire and poetry: *The Chamber Quintet* [*Hahamishia Hakamerit*] ("Matar" Productions, Channels 2-Tela'ad, Channel 1, 1993–1997), *Am Segula* [*The Chosen People*] (Keshet Broadcasting, Channel 2, 2011), *The Arbitrator* [*Haborer*] (HOT Telecommunication Systems, 2007–2014), *Vicki and I* [Vicki veani] (Channel 10, 2017–2018), and the collection of poems *A Visitor's Guide to Birkenau* [Madrich lamevaker bebirkenau, Shmuel Refael, 2005]. The main thrust of this chapter is that although Holocaust humor is considered in general to cheapen the trauma and dismiss the pain of the survivors (Rosenfeld 2013, 2015), humor and satire by the victims, their offspring, and their surrounding society is different, especially in Israel, which is a unique sphere of intense Holocaust awareness. Dark tourism satire does not ridicule the victims and their pain, but points to the faults of Holocaust commemoration in contemporary Israel. It reflects serious issues that continue to be debated concerning these trips. Holocaust humor, in this case, functions as a social–political wedge that addresses the problematic features of these tours, and challenges their organization, narrative, goals, effects, and necessity.

Dark tourism from Israel to the former concentration camps: the debate

John Lennon and Malcolm Foley (2007) coined the term "dark tourism" to describe a type of tourism interested in death, disaster, and atrocity, which they consider to be a growing phenomenon (pp. 3–4). The first Israeli delegations traveled to the former concentration camps in Poland and Czechoslovakia in 1965 and 1967, but after Poland cut off its diplomatic relations with Israel after the Six Day war, and the USSR invaded Czechoslovakia, this program came to a halt. In 1983 youth groups traveled to Poland to mark the fortieth anniversary of the Warsaw

ghetto uprising spearheaded by Israeli kibbutzim and the youth movement "Hashomer hazair." Beginning in 1988, educational trips to Poland and the former concentration camps have been organized by the Ministry of Education (Soen and Davidovitz 2011).

This initiative began slowly but has developed considerably in the last two decades. Every year around 25,000 17-year-old students (16 percent of the students that age) travel to Poland for an eight-day trip to visit the main locations of the former ghettos, concentrations camps, and mass killing sites in Poland. According to sociologist Jacky Feldman (2008), since their inception, these trips have become one of the most intensive and popular means of transmitting the Holocaust memory to future generations (p. xv). Sociologist Haim Hazan (2001) referred to it as "a taken-for-granted part" of the Israeli educational system (p. 51).

Hazan claims that the narrative put forward during the high-school trips depends on the orientation of the participating school. Groups with different organizational and/or ideological affiliations conduct tours tailored to different agendas, and "one's memory is another's amnesia" (pp. 51–52). Feldman has argued that Hazan based his conclusions on the preparatory program that takes place in Israel prior to the trip and that the itineraries and experiences of the groups in Poland are similar (p. 21).

The Ministry of Education considers this program a study trip that involves the acquisition of knowledge and the fostering of educational values (Feldamn 2008, p. 3) Its proponents claim that the exposure to these sites constitutes a crucial educational experience, and kindles an emotional reaction that strengthens Jewish solidarity as well as Zionism, humanism and democracy (Vorgan 2008). In addition, educational trips to Poland are organized by universities, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), the Israeli police, and are also offered by travel agencies. Dark tourism has become "bon ton" in Jewish–Israeli society.

Nevertheless, criticism and disapproval have become increasingly more vocal since the 1990s. Pilgrimages are historically one of the earliest form of tourism. It was and is often associated with deaths that have religious or ideological significance to a group of people. A pilgrimage is a physical as well as psychological journey. Researchers such as Tim Cole and Jacky Feldman differentiate between "tourism" and "pilgrimage" based on the argument that the Holocaust (and Auschwitz) have gone through a process of sanctification in Israeli culture and become a pilgrimage site. Cole (2015) suggested that "For Jews, visiting the death camps of Poland (and Auschwitz in particular) has become obligatory […] Auschwitz has become a sacred space of a secular religion and pilgrimage there has become a secular ritual" (pp. 1–22, 97–120). Feldman (2008) defined the trip as a "rite of pilgrimage," a "civil religious pilgrimage" and a transformative ritual (pp. 1–30, 254–268) where a group uses quasi-religious language to describe its experience through prominent symbolic displays and ceremonies. These trips are more like religious pilgrimages than diversionary tourism (pp. 4, 21). Both these researchers see the sanctification of the Holocaust through these trips as an unhealthy, problematic means of commemoration.

Some of the dark tourism objections relate to the high-school delegations, but others are opposed to dark tourism in general. The main points of contention refer to aspects of commercialization, lack of historical authenticity, emotional, ethnic educational, economic and nationalistic problems. These will be elaborated on below.

Alongside this criticism, TV skits and poetry books have taken a satirical stance on the subject. They are part and parcel of the changes in Holocaust commemoration in Israeli society in the last 20 years. For many years, Israeli culture recoiled from dealing with the Holocaust from a humorous or satirical perspective, and official agents of Holocaust memory continue to

maintain this approach. It is felt that Holocaust humor would threaten the sanctity of its memory, evoke feelings of disrespect, and offend Holocaust survivors. Since the 1990s, however, a new and unofficial path of memory has begun taking shape in tandem. Texts that combine the Holocaust with humor, satire, and parody are now part of the debate on the way Holocaust memory is shaped in Israel (Steir-Livny 2014, pp. 35–50; Zandberg 2006, pp. 561–579).

Obviously, some prevalent types of Holocaust humor relentlessly and viciously mock the Holocaust victims, their suffering, and their unbearable hardships, and it can be seen also in antisemitic texts (Steir-Livny 2014, pp. 29–31). The perception of Holocaust humor as dangerous is therefore an arguable point when dealing with Holocaust commemoration in the world. However, my own point of view is that Holocaust humor by the victims, their offspring, and their surrounding society is completely different, especially in Israel, which is a unique sphere of intense Holocaust awareness. This chapter focuses on Hebrew dark tourism satires and pose two main claims: first, dark tourism satires in Hebrew do not ridicule the victims and their pain but are targeted at Holocaust commemoration and Holocaust collective memory agents in contemporary Israel. Second, dark tourism satire is a reflection of the key criticisms of the serious debates listed above. Thus, they do not deride or scorn the Holocaust itself but constitute another layer of critique that both opposes the collective agents that promote these trips and work toward a re-evaluation of their value.

Satire aims to change society. It mocks certain events, sometimes with brutality, and emphasizes their negative sides to better prompt reconsiderations of current issues. Satiric discourse usually combines three major functions of humor and enacts them simultaneously: the aggressive function that serves to vent frustration, the intellectual function that gives the satirists a feeling of superiority, and a social function that helps reinforce intra- and intergroup bonds by strengthening the cohesiveness of interpersonal relationships, which is crucial in particular for opposition groups. It is the laughter of the helpless, a release of feelings of vengeance and contempt. This kind of humor allows the helpless to rise above their oppressors, even if fleetingly. By directing humor against persons of stature, they are removed from their pedestal and can be excoriated for their errors. For a short while, satire can make feelings of anger, depression, and anxiety disappear and can strengthen social cohesion among those who experience these feelings (Simpson 2003, pp. 1–11; Ziv 2017, pp. 47–73).

Most dark tourism satire relies on self-deprecating humor, incongruity theory, and relief theory. Incongruity theory involves the juxtaposition of conflicting ideas to reveal the incongruence between what is expected – the familiar and the known – and the real situation. It is an encounter between the reasonable and the unreasonable. In order for a joke to be funny, the audience needs to share the cultural or social knowledge the joke is based on. The "comic gap" refers to the level of incongruity between the extraordinary situation perceived by the audience and what is familiar and known to them. The relief theory claims that laughter helps to relieve stress and anxiety in individuals and groups (Sover 2009, pp. 19–20, 125–127). The following sections will discuss the debate over key issues in the trips to Poland and their satiric representations.

Commercialization of the trips

Lennon and Foley (2007) made the point that through its presentation in popular culture, death has become a commodity for consumption in a global communication market. The educational side of the death sites have been commodified into commercial tourism products (pp. 5, 11).

Cole (2015) found that foreign visitors to contemporary Poland are strongly encouraged to engage in Holocaust tourism as part of their visit. Holocaust sites are mapped out and the tourist guidebooks endorse Auschwitz as a "must see" destination (p. 94). Holocaust commemoration researcher Imogen Dalziel (2017) noted how intensively Holocaust sites are publicized, in a way that turns them into a tourist attraction, as symbolized in one advertisement she found entitled: "Book Auschwitz, Get a Free Lunch."

Critics of the Israeli trips to Poland maintain that the trips have become an industry tainted by commercialization and financial corruption. Former Minister of Treasury Avraham Hirchson was convicted in 2009 among other charges of misuse of funds earmarked for the annual "March of the Living," which takes place every year between Auschwitz and Birkenau. In January 2016, it became public that various travel agencies in Israel had coordinated and created a cartel to maintain the high costs of these trips for high-school students (Levi-Weinriv 2017).

Satirical skits on Holocaust commemoration in Israel have been broadcast on major Israeli TV channels since the 1990s. *The Chamber Quintet* was the first satirical show that dared protest the commercialization of these trips. The skits expressed the frustration of groups who feel that Holocaust memory is being manipulated (Zandberg 2006, 2014). In one skit called "The railway agents" ["Sochnei hamesilot"] an Israeli goes into a travel agency to book a vacation in Turkey. The travel agent begins discussing the vacation with him and then gets a phone call. She interrupts their conversation and begins to talk on the phone, describing various deals to the former concentration camps in Poland as though they were ordinary vacation destinations:

> I have a weekend in Poland that includes a visit to three concentration camps and a shopping day in Warsaw […] I have a whole week in Poland that includes seven concentration camps and a shopping day in Warsaw, and I have a tour throughout Poland that includes visits to all the concentration camps, including Auschwitz, but it doesn't have the shopping day in Warsaw.

The agent then recommends taking the full concentration camp tour and mentions in the same didactic tone that her nephew cried in Auschwitz. As she talks the camera focuses on the waiting Israeli fidgeting uncomfortably in his chair. When she hangs up, she resumes her conversation with the Israeli in her office about his vacation in Turkey in exactly the same tone of voice. He attempts to protest ("I don't want to offend you, but it sounded horrible"), but the travel agent does not understand the problem ("Well, what happened there was pretty terrible, wasn't it?").

The skit criticizes the way Israeli society has turned the Holocaust into a commodity. Its aggressive black humor does not deal with the historical trauma or the survivors themselves, but with individuals in contemporary Israel who have turned the Holocaust into an industry. The skit writers explained that the commercialization of the Holocaust has basically numbed reactions to the Holocaust and that the skit was designed to denounce the superficiality of Holocaust memory and the way the historical trauma has been turned into a tourist attraction.

Another critique of the commercialization of the Holocaust in Israel was broadcast in a skit on the popular weekly show *It's a Wonderful Country* in 2004. The skit was screened after a terror attack in the Sinai desert (a popular holiday destination for Israelis) and at a time when the government had issued warnings against traveling abroad. In the skit, a travel agent suggests that a couple worried about flying to dangerous places should consider flying to a former concentration camp museum. When they get there, the woman remarks that she feels very safe because of the watchtowers and the electrified fence. The skit thus criticizes the "industry of fear" in Israel. It is a part of the continuous conflict between right-wingers and left-wingers and it

feeds off recurrent warnings about the likelihood of terrorist attacks and the creation of a constant state of anxiety in Israel (Bar-Tal 2007, pp. 112–137; Zertal 2002, pp. 13–15). In this skit, criticism was directed not only at the threats but their reflection in the media, and the way the death camps have been turned into generic sightseeing attractions.

Israeli black humor goes beyond its criticism of the commercialization of these trips to also deal with the commercialization of the former camps themselves. The book of poems entitled *A Visitor's Guide to Birkenau* (2005) was written by Shmuel Refael, a second-generation Holocaust survivor. Refeal, a second-generation Holocaust survivor, is a Ladino researcher who has documented the Holocaust in Greece. His collection of poems was the outcome of his trips to Poland with his students and colleagues. In this book, the gravity pathos and national tone, which are integral features of the canonical remembrance and of many volumes of poetry on the Holocaust, are replaced by cynicism and black humor. Auschwitz is depicted as a tourist attraction like any other, where the tourists are completely detached from the meaning of the site and are preoccupied with trivialities. "Industrialized Memory" ["Zikaron metoas"] is about the thoughts of an overweight 15-year-old German high-school student who was sent to Auschwitz "to visit relatives from the recent past." Throughout her visit there, she deliberates constantly on what she should buy: "a Twix bar, for three and a half zloty?/Orange Miranda/ in a can? Or/ in a bottle?/Perhaps a diet coke.…" The "souvenirs" sold at the museum mean nothing to this outstanding student who was selected to make the tour. They are no more than commodities and her choice is governed by the same mechanisms she would use to buy a blouse in a boutique: "the thoughts would not rest, would not rest/ Anne Frank in Swedish, Turkish or Japanese? A poster of leg amputees/ or a Jewish dwarf seated on a wicker chair?"

Another factor that is often voiced in the serious critique is the lack of historical authenticity in the former camps. Cole (2015) notes that the Auschwitz tour poses as authentic but lacks historical authenticity. The tourists pass "artificially aged" barbed wire that has replaced the rusted originals on their way. Along the way visitors are shown authentic relics including piles of shoes, suitcases, human hair, and Zyklon B gas containers taken from Auschwitz II and placed behind glass in Auschwitz I. This creates a mediated past and "the greater the intervention at historic places, the greater the manipulation […] as we stray from strict preservation, we come closer to pure entertainment […]" (p. 111). Refael's poems also relate to the lack of authentication discusses by Cole.

> In Birkenau, electrical barbed wire is replaced every day, the old one is rusted, crumbles, it's are not worth the effort to come from afar/the overpriced flight ticket and hotel/ and tourists demand, and rightfully so, their money back.
>
> <div align="right">("Barbed Wire" ["Hutei Tail"]).</div>

The poems, loaded with pain, reveal the open wound of the second-generation Holocaust survivors and demonstrate that the cynicism or the discussion of the tragedy imbued in black humor is not a form of disparagement or disrespect. It is the way a second-generation survivor, living his parents' trauma, chose to cope with what he perceives as the problems of this form of tourism. Rafael, who knows and understand the importance of museums and commemoration, is basically inquiring whether this is the way to remember, or whether it only creates a superficial perception of the atrocities. Instead of drawing the visitors closer to the historical events, the poems suggest that they distance them by turning the horror into kitsch representations that contribute to the process of forgetting. However, he remains ambivalent in that in other poems he

writes about the way the site brings back his parents' memories. This complexity, according to the poems, has no definitive answers.

Emotional, educational, and ethnic factors

Research has discussed intensively the complex encounter between the Ashkenazi[1] majority and the hundreds of thousands of Jews from North Africa and Asia (Mizrahim)[2] who immigrated to Israel in several waves from the late 1940s until the 1960s. The marginalization of the Mizrahim has also been expressed in Holocaust memorialization (for example: Eliav and Alfi 2006; Kimmerling 2001; Shalom Chetrit 2004; Svirsky 1981; Tsur 2000). Until recently, the Holocaust in North Africa was rarely discussed and the Holocaust was perceived and commemorated solely as an Ashkenazi trauma. Thus, Mizrahim were marginalized not only in Israeli culture in general, but also in terms of Holocaust commemoration (see for example, Avrahami 1989; Avramski-Blai 2007; Satloff 2006).

Mizrahi authors of the first school immigrant generation, such as Sami Michael, Eli Amir, and Amnon Shamosh expressed their profound identification with European Holocaust survivors. They included the Holocaust in their plots and manifested great empathy toward the survivors and their pain (Yablonka 2008, pp. 268–289). The second- and third-generation Mizrahim identify with the memory of the Holocaust in Israel alongside a rejection of the issue as a reaction to the way in which Mizrahim were marginalized. The sense that Israeli Ashkenazim have made the Holocaust a dominant component of Israeli identity, thus excluding the Mizrahim – not only from the particular memory of the Holocaust but also from "Israeliness" in general – is a constant theme in in the works of researchers, artists, authors and public figures (Hajbi 2013; Yablonka 2008, pp. 268–289).

Critics of the journeys to Poland claim that these trips turn the Holocaust as an Ashkenazi tragedy and marginalize Mizrahi students, their history, and the Holocaust in North Africa (Broyda 2013).

Critics also often cite the heavy emotional burden of these trips that may be difficult for young students and can create psychological trauma (Segev 1991, pp. 451–465), since supervision of emotional reactions is scanty. The argument is that the Ministry of Education does not know how to handle this issue and ignores the fact that there are guides who "order" the students "to feel" as though they were in the Holocaust (Kashti 2017).

The skit show *Am Segula* was created by the Mizrahi members of the comedy trio *Ma Kashur*, who also play the lead roles. One series on the show was about two Mizrahi high-school students, both named Yossi, who are part of a high-school trip to the former concentration camps in Poland. Each skit opens with a pseudo newspaper clip praising the educational trips ("Zionism at its best") and the "outstanding Israeli youth" before shifting its focus to the two Yossis. Ignorant, inarticulate, and vulgar, they are completely detached from any learning experience. Instead of engaging with the horrors of this tragic space, they mumble a series of emotionless clichés ("How sad … inconceivable … the saddest thing ever") but they remain unable to feel real sorrow or pain. Most of the time, they are shown squabbling and searching for video and online games to pass the time.

For example, in a skit called, "They Didn't Have Facebook in the Holocaust" ["Lo haya facebook bashoah"], after going through the necessary clichés quickly ("How sad," "Totally"), Yossi informs Yossi that things are bad: he has not logged onto Facebook for two days. "All the sheep on my farm are probably already long dead," he complains, referring to the online game

Farmville he plays. "How sad," they mutter, "inconceivable" thus equating the Holocaust and the video game. "How am I going to get to Facebook now? There were no computers in the Holocaust" whines Yossi. But they suddenly hear the guide explaining that they can use the computers in the Auschwitz Museum to find information about their family's roots by entering their family's last name. Yossi and Yossi, however, highjack the computer to send their friends messages through Facebook such as "Hey, what's up…." When the teacher asks them if they have found relatives in the database they claim that they have "plenty." Then the jungle of a Facebook message is heard. "Our grandfather, may he rest in peace": He just texted us …" they tell the outraged teacher.

In the skit, "The Germans Lost" ["Hagermanim hefsidu"], the two very bored Yossi and Yossi, still on the trip, are made to watch a film about the war. "When is this going to end?," one asks, "it depends, if they broadcast the entire war now or just the highlights," the other replies. They begin to quarrel over who is a better PlayStation player, and when the teacher tells the students to congregate near the Eternal Flame, they connect their PlayStation to the projector used to screen Holocaust films to settle their argument. The camera simultaneously pans between the Ashkenazi students silently standing near the Eternal Flame and the two Yossis playing. "The Germans lost because they had the broken remote" Yossi tells the teacher as she approaches them.

In the skit, "Blessed Is the Match" ["Ashrei hagafrur"], the clueless Yossi claims: "If I was alive then, I would have joined the parasites, the ones who fought in the woods." "They weren't called parasites!" the similarly clueless Yossi scolds him, "They were called partiNazis." Next to them, Moran, the beautiful Ashkenazi teenager that they are pursuing, sings the Hebrew classic "A Walk to Caesarea."[3] Yossi and Yossi are scheduled to perform after Moran. They pass the time drinking and trying to flirt with her. They get on stage, Yossi lights a match while the other Yossi starts to sing "Ashrei Hagafrur" [Blessed is the match consumed in kindling flame] (another famous Holocaust song performed at many ceremonies). He blows on Yossi's match to extinguish it, but his alcohol-filled mouth sets the match on fire, burning Yossi's shirt who is screaming, "Fire, My Brother, Fire."[4] "Yossi was burned in the Holocaust," weeps his friend, while melancholic music plays in the background.

The "Yossi and Yossi" skits forefront the emotional, ethnic, and educational problems of these trips. The skits suggest that there is no educational value to these visits since the students do not have the emotional capability to process what they witness. Some detach themselves completely, while others simply do as they are told. The "learning experience" turns into a series of superficial clichés.

These skits also voice an ethnic critique. Yossi and Yossi are Mizrahi students, who nevertheless are asked by their teacher to look for their family in the Auschwitz computers. This absurd scene points to the obtuseness of the educational system regarding ethnic differences, and highlights the marginalization of the North African Jews during the Holocaust and the disregard of the family roots of students whose grandparents did not immigrate from Europe. This critique is part of a wider critical debate regarding the absorption of Mizrahim and the commemoration of the Holocaust in North Africa.

The Yossi and Yossi skits can be analyzed in various ways: First, they can be read as racist skits about ignorant buffoons which reinforce negative stereotypes in Israeli culture regarding Mizrahim. The skits seemingly display the Mizrahim's lack of understanding of and sensitivity to the Holocaust, while simultaneously emphasizing Ashkenazi-phobia and its sophisticated mechanisms in current Israeli popular culture. They reinforce axiomatic ethnic dichotomies and

Ashkenazi and Mizrahi separatist tendencies that consider all Ashkenazi Jews to be a somewhat omnipotent and predatory hegemony, while overlooking the vast changes in Israeli hegemony in the last 40 years (Kimmerling 2001). However, these skits can be interpreted as a form of resistance undermining these perceptions: the fact that Mizrahi comedians repeatedly engage in the issue suggests that they are actually profoundly interested in it rather than detached from it. In addition to and along with claims that the vulgarization of stereotypes shatters them (Shifman 2008, pp. 143–150), the Mizrahi characters in the skits are an inclusive collection of overstated negative stereotypes. These skits undermine these stereotypes rather than confirm them.

Another frequent representation of the so-called detachment of Mizrahim from the Holocaust that still showed their interest in the trauma appeared in the comedy-crime series *The Arbitrator* [Haborer] (HOT Telecommunication Systems 2007–2014) ,which tells the story of Israeli criminals, most of whom are of Mizrahi descent. In the fifth episode of the third season, one of the most preposterous and exaggerated characters on the show, Naomi "Spoon," the daughter of a Mizrahi crime family who has repented and found God, decides to travel to Poland. She scolds her husband for not wanting to join her with a series of absurd sentences:

> Shame on you. Have a bit of culture! We're going to fall on the graves of the righteous. People in the Holocaust went to sleep in fear, they were terrorized in their own homes, they were humiliated for years and couldn't live peacefully […] I know they're Ashkenazim. If there had been some Moroccans in the Holocaust, trust me it wouldn't have come to that. Wow wow wow, the things I would have done to them had I been in the Holocaust, all the Kapos would have been sent to the hospital by the end of the first day. Like someone could wake me up at four in the morning and tell me to go take a shower in the snow???? […] I'd tell them: pal, all Holocausts come to an end and you're on my list!!!

This skit again can be analyzed in two different ways: It can be read as displays of well-known stereotypes regarding Mizrahim (ignorance and a lack of understanding of the horrors of the Holocaust) and as reinforcing dichotomic ethnic observations, which overlook changes that have taken place in Israel over the past few decades. But alternatively, it can be interpreted as another way of expressing how Holocaust commemoration has been integrated into the lives of Mizrahim who have no biological connection to the trauma.

In the comedy series *Vicki and I,* Vicki, the youngest Minister of Education, who is of Mizrahi origin, and constantly fights with her political enemies, finds out that a pupil of Mizrahi origin was forbidden to travel to Poland, because in the preliminary visit to Yad vaShem, he urinated on the Janusz Korczak monument. At first, she could not care less but when she understands she can derive political capital from this incident she declares that, from now on, there will be trips to Morocco so the Mizrahi students can "bond" with their roots. The pupil bursts out in anger. He feels no need to find out about his familial roots, he insists on going to Poland because in Poland there are bars, alcohol, and shopping malls, while in Morocco "there is only desert." This episode combines several critical themes: it highlights the commercialization of the trips, the way they are perceived by young people as fun, and devoid of historical emotional or educational values, the way the educational system had failed ethnically in explaining to Mizrahi students why this trip is an integral part of their identity, and its dismissal of the Holocaust in North Africa. As opposed to the *Yossi and Yossi* skits and *The Arbitrator, Vicki and I* breaks the perception of Ashkenazi hegemony, represents the new Mizrahi elite, and implies that the educational trips become an ethno-political tool as the hegemony changes.

In addition to these critiques, two other issues have not been dealt with in Israeli dark tourism satire: the cost, and the question of nationalistic ideology. The cost of the trip per student is approximately US$1,200. Those who cannot afford it miss out on a significant experience and are many times socially marginalized because they cannot take part in the experience together with the rest of their classmates, or afterwards in organizing the High School Holocaust and Heroism memorial days ceremonies (Broyda 2013). In addition, critics maintain that sending 17 year olds to Auschwitz, a year before they are drafted into the IDF, only strengthens nationalist motivations and deepens resentment and violent attitudes toward the "enemy" – currently the Palestinians (Zunshein 2012). Feldman (2008) indicated that research shows the predominance of nationalistic rather than universalistic reactions in students upon their return from Poland (p. 21); the ultimate purpose of the trip is to ground the sanctity of the State in the experience of the Holocaust, create dichotomy between "us" and "them," Israel and Exile, and construct a "religion of nationalism in which the nation is created as an object of devotion" (p. 6).

For all these reasons, alongside the popularity of these trips, a certain number of high-school principals have decided to stop sending their students (Skup 2016). Some Israeli parents even started a Facebook page entitled "We stopped sending the kids to Poland," and provide support to parents who are opposed to these journeys.[5]

Conclusion

The perception of Holocaust humor as dangerous is an arguable point when dealing with Holocaust commemoration in the world. However, "Holocaust humor" is a wide umbrella and the black humor of the victims, their offspring, and their surroundings, especially in Israel, should be examined separately. Dark tourism satire in Hebrew, which is a part of a wider genre of Holocaust humor, satire, and parody in Israel, mostly does not deride or scorn the Holocaust, nor does it engage with the Holocaust itself. Rather, it confronts topics that appear in serious debates on the purpose and value of dark tourism. Alongside the serious claims, opponents of dark tourism in Israel use satire as another device to rethink its role in shaping Israeli identity. The incongruity and self-deprecating humor deals with contemporary forms of commemoration and not with the Jewish victims in Europe and their suffering. As such, dark tourism satire does not tarnish the memory of the Holocaust, but is fueled by pain and a desire to reconsider these trips by highlighting, what the satirists see as its problematic and often absurd facets.

1   Jews who immigrated from Western countries and their offspring.
2   Jews who immigrated from Islamic countries and their offspring.
3   "A Walk to Caesarea" ["Halicha lecaesaria"] – a song written by Hannah Szenes, one of several dozen Jewish Eretz–Israeli parachutists (including three women) who were dropped behind enemy lines in Eastern Europe and the Balkans during the Second World War. Szenes was caught by the Nazis and executed. The song is one of several always played on Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Day on the radio and in ceremonies.
4   A word play on another classic song often performed during Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Day ceremonies.
5   www.facebook.com/StopJourneyToPoland/?fref=ts. Accessed December 22, 2019.

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Part III

Consuming leisure, gender, and sex

5 Naked leisure

Recreational and domesticated male bodies in an Israeli home design campaign

Gilad Padva and Sigal Barak-Brandes

Introduction

The intricate relationship between leisure, lifestyle, and advertising demonstrates a quest of meaningful sociality, sociability, and societal belonging in the age of multicultural yet fragmented, stratified, alienated, and conflicted societies. Anthony Giddens (1991) contends that today, leisure participation serves a life instead of lifestyle politics, that is, a politics of self-actualization. Under the current conditions of high-modernity, external legitimations of fate, vocation, tradition, or estate have given way to self-referential systems of legitimization. People increasingly have to make choices as part of the construction of a narrative of the self (Giddens 1991, 1992), instead of being able to refer to tradition or custom. In this context, Eijck Koen and Hans Mommaas (2004) suggest that individuals must produce, stage, and cobble together their own do-it-yourself identities. We suggest that one of the significant external legitimations of fate, vocation, tradition, estate, and cultural identifications in contemporary societies, however, is the powerful advertising industry. The advertisers have given way to apparently individualistic self-referential systems of taste, style, distinction, and prestige. Masses of consumers are required by the advertisers to make apparently individualistic choices as part of the construction of an apparently truthful narrative of the self.

One of the most intimate aspects of the narrative of the self is its relationship with the body and its perilous pleasures. The exposed body, in particular, is at the center of conflicted desires, restrictions, inhibitions, narratives, attractions, and anxieties. Despite this embarrassing complexity, however, nakedness is often connoted with hedonistic leisure and recreational activities. People usually take off their clothes when they change outfits in locker rooms at their local gym, swimming pool, beach or high-school's communal showers. Leisured nakedness is also connoted with nudist beaches and resorts, sexual intercourse behind closed doors or adventurous public sex, pranks such as "streaking" and "mooning" (Forsyth 1992) intended as a humorous assault on social decorum, and more deliberately sexual forms of exhibitionism practiced at Mardi Gras in New Orleans, Spring Break destinations for college students, motorcycle Bike Rallies, etc. (Jones 2010, p. 254). As Matthew T. Jones (2010) puts it, "culture and social context compromise any sense of stability or consistency with respect to a set of social norms governing nude performance" (p. 254).

In the age of cyber culture, however, mediated exhibitionism – intercommunicated images of self-nudity – is generated in different formats. When it relies on user-generated content, it is arguably more authentic and more intimate than producer-generated content. Jones suggests that,

> in cutting out the industry of sexual fantasy production that attempts to appeal to a mass audience of homogeneous sex consumers, new media offer a forum where real people actualize sexual fantasies, employing their own bodies as instruments of participation.
>
> (2010, pp. 262–263)

Jones embraces popular Internet websites for exhibitionists that are entirely dedicated to amateurs who submit nude imagery they have taken of themselves, "providing further evidence of the authenticity implicit to amateur presentation" (p. 263).

Full-frontal nudity or semi-nakedness, however, are often involved with non-leisure and non-authentic business enterprises, in which people undress as salaried exotic dancers, go-go dancers, pool dancers, striptease performers, exhibitionists, prostitutes, adult entertainment actors (porn stars and "amateur porn film" performers as well), burlesque artists, art models, and performers in some modern ballet shows and theater shows, and mainstream and arthouse films comprise numerous nude scenes.

Certain exhibitionist enterprises, however, integrate spontaneous and leisurely erotic exposures with commercialized striptease practices. Internet websites like Cam4.com and Chaturbate.com, for example, give the chance for individuals to present themselves live via webcam as well as to spend time watching them. Everyone using the Internet and a webcam can show him/herself to a worldwide audience. Patrich Henze (2013) contends that although the website Cam4.com, for example, is for free, there is the possibility to give tips, win a prize for the best or most popular cam of the month and to turn to (paid) private chat rooms via other webcam applications. "Cam4 forms a porn 2.0 community where you can interact by chatting, screening, connecting profiles or commenting" (Henze 2013).

Apparently, the naked body is essentially a leisured body because it is free of clothing that signifies class affiliation, socio-economic status, and (counter)cultural identification. A fully naked body is supposedly displayed "as it is," free of societal classifications and ideological demarcations. It allegedly celebrates the beauty of the human physique in its multiple shapes, colors, shades, curves, angles, orifices, and hairiness and smoothness. Notwithstanding, the human body is highly invested and processed through working-out, diets, shavings, depilation, plastic procedures and surgeries, etc. In fact, the naked body is mostly cultivated, stylized, reorganized, invested, transformed, and metamorphosed. The modern male and female body is a highly worked and labored body. When the human physique is displayed in diverse leisure activities it is often carefully designed as attractive, appealing, and sexy, according to prominent cultural codes and hierarchical classification and its consequent glorification and exclusion of human bodies.

As Richard Dyer suggests in his book *White* (1997), a naked body is a vulnerable body. Clothes are bearers of prestige, notably of wealth, status, and class: to be without them is to lose prestige. Nakedness may also reveal the inadequacies of the body by comparison with social ideals. "It may betray the relative similarity of male and female, white and non-white bodies, undo the remorseless insistences on difference and concomitant power carried by clothes and grooming" (p. 146).

Dyer contends that the exposed white male body, in particular, is liable to pose the legitimacy of white male power. By this argument, "whites – and men – are where they are socially by

virtue of biological, that is, bodily superiority. The sight of the body can be a proof" (p. 147). Although the white man has been the center of attention for many centuries of Western culture, there is a problem about the display of his body, which gives another inflection to the general paradox of whiteness and visibility.

This chapter concentrates on the imagery of naked Israeli (white) men in the 2014–2015 campaign of Elemento, a Tel Aviv furniture and décor company founded in 1998 by the designer Yossi Goldberg. The discussed campaign includes a series of printed ads that depict leisured male models in suggestive positions. The ads were published in the weekend edition of *Galleria*, the art and culture section of *Ha'aretz*, a small-scaled yet highly prestigious Israeli daily newspaper that is typically read by urban middle-upper-class left-winged Israelis (Gavriely-Nuri and Lachover 2012; Korn 2004). This campaign also comprised ads published in *Designer,* a home and design magazine of *Ha'aretz,* in addition to the advertising in Elemento's Internet website.

This chapter is interested in eroticized leisure, domesticated masculinity, leisured male bodies, commercialized nudity and effeminate hedonism in the Elemento campaign and its apparently radical representation of the male physique. Considering the rarity of male nudity in contemporary popular culture, particularly in mainstream advertising, and the culturally constructed Israeli masculinity that oscillates between traditional machismo and fashionable metrosexuality, this chapter critically examines the Elemento campaign as genuine hybridization of leisure, privacy, voyeurism, and flamboyantly cosmopolitan urban habitus.

Beefcakes' nudity in contemporary mainstream advertising

Kenneth Clark (1956) suggests that artistic representation – high art – has the ability to render the naked as nude, as if "nude" is another form or style of clothing, leaving behind "naked" as the truly disrobed. Rob Cover (2003), however, contends that treating the naked body in this way ignores how it is always already represented and constrained by codes of behavior, contexts, differentiation from the clothed body, loose significations, and cultural rituals: "Although nakedness is most often performed during, with or alongside practices of sexuality, it appears in frames that connote otherwise" (Cover 2003, p. 53). Cover stresses that despite the codes and conventions that work to separate nakedness from the sexual – to prevent slippage between non-sexual and sexual frames of nakedness and gazing – there is a notable difficulty or instability in maintaining the discrete separation of these contexts.

The use of sex and nudity in advertising, in particular, was once associated almost exclusively with shoddy or undesirable products. For at least four decades, however, it has been incorporated into the marketing and promotional strategies of many highly respected companies. Products as diverse as transmissions, aftershave lotion, liquor, and hair dryers, to name a few, are being promoted by female models in various states of undress. Even in the conservative mid-1980s, a glance through almost any largely circulated magazine revealed that the use of female, as well as male nudity, is on the upswing (Reidenbach and McCleary 1983, p. 444).

The "commercial masculinity" (Edwards 1997) is interconnected with objectification and commodification of men that infuse contemporary culture, driven by relentless consumerism and practices of consumption (Shugart 2008). Hence, men in their leisure time are encouraged to take a part in the carnival of consumption, to become concerned about their appearance, and to get in touch with their emotions, while male bodies became objects of display which are subjected to the female *and* male gaze (Patterson and Elliott 2002, p. 241).

Sex appeals in advertising now comprise displayed eye-catching beefcake – male models (Kuriansky 1995; Miller 1993) as well as cheesecake – sexy female models (Jones, Stanaland, and Gelb 1998). Male frontal nudity, however, is still a perilous advertising device in a patriarchal society that is based on hierarchical consideration of female and male bodies and reconfirms hierarchized masculinities (Connell 1995), which are mediated by powerful popular communications dominated by (mostly heterosexual) men.

Notably, men's bodies in contemporary Western ads are mostly white, young, and muscular, while their faces often express softness and strength at the same time, including solid jaw, big lips and eyes, and smooth skin. Significantly, they are often eroticized, objectified, looked at, and explicitly desired by women and men alike (Gill 2009). This integration of hardened muscularity and a certain extent of softness reflects contradictory cultural expectations regarding masculinity. On the one hand, men are supposed to be strong, and on the other hand, they are expected to be gentle (Edwards 1997). Rosalind Gill (2009) identifies an increasing representation of thinner and more vulnerable male bodies in advertising while focusing on muscular models' genitals covered by tight underwear.

Images of frontal male nudity are still uncommon in mainstream advertising. While exposed male buttocks in ordinary ads are erratic, uncovered penises and exposed testicles hardly exist in heterosexual advertisements. Only a few advertisers provocatively sexualize the male body in the 1990s, e.g., Calvin Klein's ad that shows a male model in tight underwear spreading his legs and flaunting his bulge, and Versace's ad that focuses on a muscular man pulling down his trouser in exposing his tight underpants. Likewise, a male model exposes his muscular buttocks in a Gucci Underwear ad.

A particularly uncommon, sensational, and unique campaign, however, is Yves Saint Lauren's 2002 promotion of his masculine fragrance M7, which exhibits full-frontal male nudity. The male model, the angelic and muscular martial arts champion, Samuel de Cubber, did not shave his body before shooting. He nonchalantly spreads his legs and displays his perfect hairy chest, thick pubic hair, and flaccid uncut cock. This ad, designed by the creative director Tom Ford, had been destined for publication in upper-end fashion magazines such as *French Vogue*, as well as low-circulation titles directed at trendsetters and the French gay community. Unsurprisingly, editors at a number of prestigious glossy men's magazines had balked at publishing this full-frontal nudity.

Consequently, Yves Saint Lauren initiated a tamer, alternative head-and-torso shot, leaving readers to wonder about the rest of de Cubber's anatomy (Speer 2002). The M7 campaign is significantly rare in a culture in which to be a *passive* is to be socially stigmatized (Bordo 1999). Other advertising images of naked men, carefully hiding their genitals, include Yves Saint Lauren's own nude performance in his 1971 and 2011 iconic campaigns for his first male fragrance Pour Homme; a nude male in profile in Dolce and Gabbana's 2000s campaigns; Valentino's advertisement exposing a naked muscular man with a woman in elegant suit; and numerous ads for Gianni Versace's campaigns in 1993–1995 in which female supermodels (e.g., Claudia Schiffer and Christy Turlington) appear together with anonymous naked men in highly suggestive positions.

In a culture in which sexually objectified men are misperceived as threatening the heteronormative male dominance, advertisers often deploy diverse visual strategies in order to cope with existent homophobic tendencies. Numerous ads display male models together with female models in order to highlight the men's straightness, while other commercials focus on male models characterized by a "phallic muscularity" (Gill 2009, p. 147) in which their hard and

large muscles stand for male power. Aesthetically, such ads are often characterized by artistic mise-en-scéne, particularly black-and-white photographs of "sculpted" male bodies that connote classical iconography, sophistication, and classiness (Gill 2009, p. 146). Dyer (1997) connotes the male models' godlike musculature in popular visual communications with a certain "sculptured" physique, props, or montages that often explicitly relate body shape and pose to classical Greek and Roman antecedents.

Deana Rohlinger (2002) notes that in contemporary American advertising, the image of the erotic male with an unknown sexuality is considered as sexual, but it is devoid of a specific sexual context. Thus, "the male body becomes a blank canvas on which the viewer can project meaning" (p. 71). In contrast to feminine images in advertising that connotes subordination (Goffman 1979), however, men tend not to smile or pout, nor to deploy any of the bodily gestures or postures that might imply their permeability. Nor do they show in mirror shots which might connote homoerotic narcissism (Gill 2009, p. 146).

In "sixpack advertising," specifically, men usually stand or are involved in physical activities, since activeness has been traditionally associated with masculinity (Siibak 2010). They often tend to look back at the viewer in a somewhat arrogant manner, or, alternatively, they look away or up as if their interests are elsewhere (Dyer 1982; Gill 2009). When the model looks away from the camera, however, he is offered to the viewer as an object to be consumed. In contrast, a model's direct look at the camera (and hence at the spectator) indicates a perilous demand to objectify the viewer (Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996). These diverse patterns of representation of the male physique in mainstream visual culture, reflecting multiple attitudes toward the popular commercialization of the male nude, demonstrate the complexity of male exposure in contemporary mainstream culture. In particular, posting the male in the conflicted Israeli culture involves perilous pleasures and their subsequent anxieties (Padva 2009).

Leisured domesticity and its naturalized bodies

This study focuses on 2014–2015 Elemento ads that mainly include black-and-white images of (semi)naked men who are sitting, lying, or reclining on multicolored furniture. In some of these ads, each piece of furniture is titled with a masculine name, e.g., Fabian, Billy, and Spencer. In this way, the male model personifies the furniture and connotes it with sexiness and layback joyfulness. At the same time, the model's interaction with the branded item implies a somewhat homoerotic relationship between these two male entities – the man and the furniture – in which a naked male model sits on a "male" sofa or lies on a "male" bed or lays back on a "male" armchair.

In this manner, the ads sensually blur the boundaries between nature and artificiality, human beings and props, human and posthuman, and heterosexuality and homosexuality. The nakedness of these male models intensively ruptures these dichotomies and generates a sort of a "third place," in which the commodity and its human promoter are merged. The furnishing items are fetishized whereas the male models are objectified. The models' leisured positions, poses, and postures are placing the male as an arousing temptation. The models in these ads concurrently try to seduce the customers to purchase the designed items and to consume their fantastic male bodies.

Elizabeth Grosz (1998), however, categorizes different social situations of (female *and* male) nakedness gazed by others. She suggests three situations in which a naked body is legitimately gazed at by others. The first one is a corporeal exposure within the context of power relationships such as parent/child or doctor/patient, in which the lesser member of the

relationship permits a gazing at his or her body. The second situation is nakedness which involves subjects who are lovers or in other forms of intimate sexual context. The third nude situation, which is apparently most relevant to our critical interpretation of the male nakedness in the Israeli campaign, emerges when "we are mediated in a relationship to nudity through representations – in art, in pornography, *in advertising*, in medicine, in cinematic and fictional contexts and so on" (Grosz 1998, p. 6, emphasis added).

For Grosz, these three contexts are the privileged spaces of bodily intimacy, not where nakedness takes place, but rather where nakedness is automatically coupled with the desire, possibly even the imperative, to look and with *the leisure of looking*. "It is in intimate and/or nurturing relations that we are encouraged not just *to look* but also *to show*" (Grosz 1998, p. 6, emphasis added) Cover (2003), however, contends that we might add a fourth category or context that comprises physical spaces in which nakedness is shared for practical or pleasurable purposes in ways that are ostensibly non-sexual: "the locker-room showers, streaking as a cultural theatrics of transgression, performance street art, the clothing-optional beach which is set apart from the 'textile beach' by a sign, or screened from the highway by shrubbery and dunes" (p. 56).

Although the male nudity in the Elemento campaign corresponds to Grosz's third category, namely male nude publicly and extensively mediated by advertising representation, they also connote domestic nudity, in which a person's body is only exposed to himself as part of his leisure enjoyment. In the domestic sphere in which a person is not seen and surveilled by the public eye, clothing is optional (particularly if a person lives on her/his own). A naked person is not labeled by outfits and clothing items that signify one's class and socio-economic affiliations and subcultural identification. In his domestic zone, a naked person can experience a narcissistic pleasure in looking at the reflection of his or her invested and worked-out body, or, alternatively, enjoy his regular body without being criticized for being overweight, having skin imperfections, hairiness, baldness, or any other physical appearance that does not match the common ideals of beauty. In the domestic sphere one can feel and behave in the most natural way, exposing his body without been socially sanctioned or sexually objectified.

Arguably, even when a person is fully exposed in private, she/he is not free from cultural constructions of the human body and its interaction with domestic decoration, artifacts, furniture, props, and accessories. According to this neo-idealist perspective, we are choreographed and taught by a flaw of melodramas, TV commercials, reality TV studios, and home style magazines, in what posture we should sit near a desk, what is the right way to lay back on a sofa, in what position we are supposed to have a nap on a TV armchair, what suggestive poses in bed are desirable, and even how to make love with our partners in a certain order and routine that reflects a publicly recognized vocabulary of erotic uses and gratifications. According to this somewhat pessimistic point of view, even our most personal, intimate, and individualized leisure time is essentially scripted and formulated by powerful popular communications and political and social institutions.

If so, the homely sphere in the Elemento campaign and the male models' interaction with this domesticity is *not* the natural environment of the natural, naked body. Instead, the domestic zones have been carefully fabricated and amalgamated in order to create a desired setting and cultural contextualization for the advertised furniture *and* to merge the settings and the promoted items with the potential clientele's erotic fantasies.

Leisured machismo and consuming leisure class

For decades, male models hardly appeared in campaigns for domestic products. They have almost never been associated in ads with home or with children, at least until the appearance of the new, nurturing man in the 1980s (see Gauntlett 2008; Gunter 1995). These American and European liberal trends affected the Israeli advertising, although they were often confronted by traditional masculinist identifications.

In their analysis of men in Israeli advertising in the 1990s, Dafna Lemish and Irit Lahav (2004) initially recognize "the sensitive man" (p. 149) in contemporary advertising, who is connected to his romantic feelings. His counterpart, "the sensual man," is a young attractive man with a melancholic look whose appearance is somewhat associated with gay masculinity that is stereotypically represented as a passive sexual object. Lemish and Lahav stress that these types, at least in Israeli advertising in the late 1990s and early 2000s, are highly contested by more conventional, stereotypical, and hegemonic masculinities that reflect conservative portions of the Israeli society.

In particular, new models like the "new masculinity" (empathetic fathers and men who are represented as dorks) and "sexual masculinity" (men portrayed as lovers and sexual objects) have been contested by "classic masculinity" (men of a higher status, including male experts) that reaffirm male superiority. Interestingly, most male models in Israeli advertisements, about two decades ago, were photographed outdoors or in public spheres, and only fathers were shown in domestic environments (Lemish and Lahav 2004). Notably, these new, sexual, and classic men in Israeli advertising are often smiling and flaunting their sexiness, in contrast to local ads prior to the 1980s in which Israeli men typically demonstrated toughness and machismo (First 1998).

The emergence of the cultivated and sophisticated men and their uncovered shaped bodies, as reflected by the Elemento stylized ads, contradicts the prevalent male imagery in Israeli popular media in previous decades. Gabriel Weimann (2000) notes that until the 1990s men were televised as authoritative experts who offer professional information. Moreover, for decades, Israeli men were more clothed than female models in the local advertising. Whereas semi-naked women often advertised cars, chocolate, and furniture, men were significantly less eroticized. When Israeli men advertised these products they were fully clothed and they were usually located in their workplace. Clothed women typically advertised food, soft drinks, and cleaning supplies where they are surrounded by domestic settings.

The Elemento campaign in the 2010s apparently demonstrates a new, dramatic phase in the popular visualization of the Israeli masculinities. At first glance, Elemento's representation of Israeli men as conspicuously arousing objects "to-be-looked-at" (Mulvey 1975) disrupts the traditional media formations of traditional masculinity, male consumerism, *and* consumed masculinity. While the "feminine" associations that have historically surrounded consumerism and its pleasures must be acknowledged, however, it would be misleading to see this as a field from which men have been totally (or even largely) excluded (Osgerby 2003, p. 60).

Hegemonic masculine identities may have stressed production, the work ethic, and the responsibilities of family life but dominant articulations of masculinity have always had to contend with competing masculine identities (Tosh 1994, pp. 192–193). Herewith, in this narrative of negotiation and struggle over the "meanings" of masculinity, a male personality predicated on narcissistic and leisure-oriented modes of consumption possesses a long and connected history (Osgerby 2003, p. 60). Bill Osgerby (2003) notes that this consuming male, absorbed in cultural codes so closely bound up with feminine associations, sometimes came close to compromising his claims to tough "manliness." Yet his engagement with consumer

pleasures and stylistic display "was always carefully mediated, his milieu of hedonistic consumption painstakingly signposted as a bastion of robust heterosexuality" (p. 60).

Osgerby stresses that masculine identities premised on hedonistic leisure and narcissistic display were not unprecedented. Geoffrey Ashe (2000) chronicles a rich history of libertine, male excess in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Europe, while during the early nineteenth century Beau Brummell and his fellow dandies enthralled fashionable English society and the *flăneur* meandered through Parisian arcades. In nineteenth-century America Thorstein Veblen (1953 [1899]) identified a privileged "leisure class" – men of substance who celebrated their cultural ascendance through proud displays of "conspicuous consumption" in the spheres of fashion, leisure and social ritual. Osgerby (2003) suggests that beyond this "leisure class" elite, however, there emerged other configurations of masculinity "also distinguished by their predilection for hedonistic consumerism" (p. 62).

Like the historic "leisure class" elite, the Elemento campaign highlights the pleasures of leisure, expediency, homeliness, and contention. This company, according to a manifesto published on Elemento's Internet website, aspires "to create cozy and comfortable settings." These ads primarily reconnect the marketable furniture with domestic spheres: bedrooms, living rooms, kitchens, dining rooms, and homework rooms. The male models are apparently at ease with their (restricted) nudity in these private and intimate spheres. Their symbolic domestication, however, is vastly different than conventional representations of men in ads that typically place the male models in offices, factories, and natural and recreational outdoor locations that emphasize the men's career, sportiveness or naturalness (Barthel 1992; Goffman 1979). In this respect, the domestication of Elemento's male models subverts previous ideological framework and embodies a new sort of aestheticized gazing at men's (fantasized) private lives.

Unrealistic leisured nakedness and prude nudity

Apparently, been unclothed is strongly interconnected with leisure. Nudity is allegedly an emancipatory recreational activity that frees humans from the burden of clothing that prominently signifies hierarchical social classifications. Nudity apparently enables people to show their unmediated naturalness and their authenticity. In contrast to the labor division, which is often connoted with dress code, representative outfits, and required uniforms, nakedness is typically connoted with pleasurable leisure practices like resting, relaxation, and erotic delights.

The male models' leisure in the discussed campaign, however, is not authentic but rather formalized according to the advertiser's marketing strategy. Their positions are more theatrical than realistic. They are primarily men at work, not men at home. In their staged masculinities they do not reflect spontaneity or authenticity but conform to the industrial conventions of modeling, posing, and playfully manipulating their audiences. In contrast, real men who live on their own in real domestic environments and occasionally enjoy nakedness (particularly in Israel with its notorious Mediterranean climate) wouldn't care to hide any part of their exposed bodies. If nobody is watching you, you have no reason to cover anything.

Yet the discussed ads significantly limit the male model's physical exposure. The models cross their legs, cover parts of their physique by blankets or sheets, and are partially hidden by pieces of furniture. These devices guarantee that no pubic hair, genitalia, or buttocks will be shown. In this way, the campaign avoids realistic depictions of leisured nakedness and male privacy. This is in contrast to radical gay magazines like *Butt* and *Kaiserin: A Magazine for Boys with Problems* that diversify male nudity, aspiring to show their readers some real men and their real bodies in authentic environments and in different levels of sexual arousal in their real leisure

time (Mac and Bhreithiún 2011), the Elemento campaign conservatively and heteronormatively evades authentic depiction of real naked men and real bodies at their real homes.

In particular, this Israeli campaign prudently hides the penis. The male models are staged and situated in the domestic spheres, including bedrooms, in ways that avoid an exposure of their loins. Hiding the penis in this campaign echoes the hiding of a young man's crotch in Hyppolitye Flandrin's 1835 painting *Figure d'Etude*. This artwork depicts a young male nude in profile as he is seated beside the sea, pressing his forehead against his close knees. Although in reality, such a pose necessarily exposes the testes and part of the penis, the young model's genitals are conspicuously invisible in this painting.

However, Michael Camille (1994) suggests that this emasculation is not a "feminization" of the male body. Rather, Camille stresses that the line that enclosed and circles the figure is an ungendered line, containing and marking the boundaries of a body that is ambiguous. The only parts of the body to subvert the rigid planarity of silhouette are the hands, the right hand and thumb drooping to represent the undepicted phallus. "Circumscribed and enclosed within itself as a body without sexual organs, this was the ideal icon of Victorian bodily consciousness in all its fear of fetishism and castration" (Camille 1994, p. 167).

In a way, the Elemento campaign's prudishness, exemplified by its careful hiding of the models' penises, embodies a conservative Victorian body politics. Technically, a man in such a pose is able to hide his loins by pushing them up between his tight legs. Yet fully naked men who leisurely sit beside the sea, particularly on a wildly natural and assumingly secluded beach like the site in this painting, wouldn't normally bother to hide their penis and testicles. Likewise, a naked man who is private in his room, like the models in this campaign, wouldn't normally bother to conceal his private parts. Nevertheless, the Elemento models significantly hide their loins, avoiding any real naturalness, never getting real. Such manipulative exposure of virility highlights the complexity of the links between man's anatomical sex organ (penis), the symbolic sex organ (phallus), and identity (Aboudrar 2016, p. 583).

The sex appeal of these male models derives from their erotically amalgamated youth and adulthood, innocence and sophistication, smoothness and maturity. In contrast to their rather effeminate positions, their unshaved faces look serious and tough. Their masculine physique is not challenged by their effeminate positions. Notably, these Israeli male models never expose their genitals, buttocks, and anuses. They never look permeable. In hiding their sex organs, these Israeli guys do not feminize but mythicize their virility and sustain their "phallic mystique" (Dyer 1982). In this respect, a naked (male) body is never stripped of myths, mystique, angsts and lustfulness.

Abigail Solomon-Godeau (1993) stresses that "the image of the nude – a discrete aesthetic category, if not strictly speaking a genre – is itself a palimpsest of aesthetics and sexuality, locus and producer of cultural and psychic meanings that are themselves inseparable from ideologies of gender" (Solomon-Godeau 1993, p. 287). Male bodies in advertising embody capitalist and patriarchal ideologies (Van Zoonen 1994). In canonizing desired masculinities, they affect male and female perspectives of gendered dichotomies, sex roles and sexual identifications (Lemish 1998).

The male bodies in the Elemento campaign, in particular, are erotically displayed as objects to be gazed, inspected, and leisurely consumed like the furniture they advertise. The model in the Spencer bed ad, for example, is lying on white clean sheets, partly covered by a blanket, in a scene that connotes classiness, and the settings in the Fabian desk ad and the Belfast table ad include art books that are also associated with an upper-class culture. Conspicuously, the brands'

names are not Israeli but European: Fabian, Spencer, Billy, Parco, and Hector. Whereas the exhibited items have names, the male models are nameless. In this respect, the human beings in this campaign are represented as less humane than the exhibited furniture. Arguably, the photographed men, shown in black and white, are more aggressively objectified than the colorful objects they sell. Moreover, such naming and branding relocates the furniture from their original Israeli sphere. They are symbolically transformed into universally prestigious commodities in this age of massive globalization (First and Avraham 2009) and internationalization.

Cosmopolitan leisure culture and universalized Israeli men

Interestingly, these ads sophisticatedly transcend the prevalent ethnic division in the conflicted Israeli society that hierarchically categorizes Jews of Western origins, Jews of oriental origins, and Palestinians. Arguably, the social hierarchy that was formed in Israel quite rapidly from the 1950s, presented the Ashkenazis, Jews of European descent, who constituted majority and hegemony prior to Israel's independence in 1948 and controlled both the economic and political resources, at the top; the Palestinian–Arab population at the bottom; and the oriental Sephardi Jews from the Middle East and North Africa in between (Semyonov and Lewin-Epstein 2004, p. 4).

The discussed ads display Israeli men who cannot be easily categorized as Ashkenazi or Sephardi or Palestinian.

These models are not particularly light-skinned or dark-skinned, their eye color cannot be easily identified, and there's no evidence whether they are circumcised or not. In a universalized culture, these handsome young men can be easily (mis)perceived as Jews, Arabs, Italians, Spanish, or French men. Although the furnishing items' names and their designing style are identified with West European culture, the models' visibility exceeds the ethnic divide in Israeli society. Their performance sustains a sort of utopian cosmopolitan manhood. Ulf Hannerz (1995) suggests that "world culture" is emerging as a result of the "increasing interconnectedness of varied local cultures as well as through the development of cultures without a clear anchorage in any one territory" (p. 237). The contemporary global cultural flow and its alluring mediascapes, however, provide large and complex repertoires of images, narratives, and "ethnoscapes" to viewers throughout the world in which "the world of commodities and the world of 'news' and politics are profoundly mixed" (Appadurai 1995, p. 229).

These phenomena highly influence the present-day consumerism. Dana L. Alden, Jan-Benedict E.M. Steenkamp, and Rajeev Batra (1999) note that the social elite clientele particularly desires consumption experiences and objects that they consider as "signs" of glamor and success "in order to act out imagined or real participation in the more cosmopolitan global consumer culture communicated by the media" (p. 76). Indeed, the discussed campaign creates a cosmopolitan mediascape that transcends national, tribal, ethnic, and racial boundaries. Such a universalized reality provides a sort of international consumption experiences. The stylized bodies and their settings invite the Israeli customers to participate in a cosmopolitan global consumer culture that is trendily communicated by these ads.

Moreover, David J. Moore and Seung Pil Lee (2012) note that effective hedonic advertising appeals must first ensure that message recipients can visualize the consumption experience, and this imagery visualization process in turn serves as a catalyst that ignites anticipated emotions, taste anticipation, and hedonic rationalizations (p. 107). The Elemento ads visualize the consumption experience by showing men who are joyfully and leisurely sitting, lying, stretching

out, or taking a rest on the advertised furniture. They are colorfully portrayed as hedonist professionals who appreciate luxury, refinement, and high-status brands.

This campaign reflects a world that Watson and Kopachevsky (1994) recognize as a realm in which image, advertising, and consumerism – as framed by style, taste, travel, "designerism," and leisure – take primacy over production per se, and in which "commoditization is shaped and honed by specific, influential groups in society utilizing a mixture of social, cultural, and political resources" (p. 647). Under these circumstances, the "secret" of the commodity is played out through imagistic advertising that specializes in reproducing and expanding the commodity *sign* as well as the commodity *form* (Watson and Kopachevsky 1994, p. 650).

The home design commodities in the discussed campaign are aesthetically mystified and fetishized. Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright (2004 [2001]) note that in a process of commodity fetishism, mass-produced goods are emptied of the original meaning of their production – the context in which they were produced and the labor that created them – and then "filled with new meanings in ways that both mystify the product and turn it into a fetish object" (p. 200). Indeed, the furniture in the Elemento campaign are emptied of their genuine meaning (useful furniture for daily activities) and then connoted with the perfect bodies that advertise them which are invested, worked, fitted, and shaped in an alluringly cosmopolitan manner.

Effeminate hedonism and the social politics of taste

Notably, the muscular bodies in this campaign are posted effeminately. In contrast to popular gendered images in advertising, these Israeli men are passive, and they are situated in bed or even on the floor. They are stylishly raising or bending their legs (Hector sofa), crossing their legs (Karl and Ben armchair), leaning backwards on the floor while using a supporting hand (Bencho seat), or touching themselves (Spencer bed and Hector sofa). In this manner, they embody a somewhat feminine sexual subordination. Abigail Solomon-Godeau (1993) suggests that whether femininity is effectively banished and expelled, assimilated and interiorized within the image of masculinity, or itself metamorphosed into a hybrid gender, the common denominator remains the flight from difference and its recuperation under the sign of the same. "It is in this sense that the uneven development of gender ideology is given visual expression" (p. 307).

Mary J. Thompson (2000) notes that advertisements showcase ideologies, attitudes, and ideas. The corresponding power to influence is formidable because "advertising can also change values, such as those surrounding the display and meaning of the body" (p. 178). Elemento, in its quest of prestige, originality, uniqueness, and trendiness, yearns to be publicly recognized as "a design house unlike any other," according to its Internet website. This company flamboyantly praises itself as a manufacturer of smartness and luxuriousness that are typically associated with hedonistic and self-indulgent lifestyle. Although the male models are stripped of clothing items, their social identification *is* clear. They are undoubtedly surrounded by furniture and accessories that are identified with elegance and exclusiveness. The models and their settings embody prevalent bourgeois formulation of good taste in the age of late capitalism.

Pierre Bourdieu (1984) maintains that taste is an acquired disposition to "differentiate" and "appreciate," to establish and mark differences by a process of distinction that is not (or not necessarily) a distinct knowledge, since it ensures recognition (in the ordinary sense) of the object without implying knowledge of the distinctive features that define it. In the Elemento campaign, the visual schemes of the upper-class habitus, the primary forms of socio-cultural classification, owe their specific efficacy to the fact that they function below the level of

meaning. These ads privilege an upper-class lifestyle in selective social spaces. These ads are powerful agents of the correspondence between goods and particularly privileged social group of well-off, hedonistic, and self-confident men, who display their desired bodies *and* their tasteful social spaces and stylish habitus.

The furniture company, in its efforts to emphasize its exclusivity, articulates itself in its 2015 Internet website as "a design house unlike any other." It claims that its distinctive, one-of-a-kind pieces, blend modern, high-quality materials and cutting-edge craftsmanship that are inspired by the 1960s and the 1970s aesthetics. It apprises its clients that it aims "to save furniture design from the machine-made, mass-manufactured industry in today's world, and to re-focus on a unique human touch." Hence, the commodification of male nudity in this campaign is interwoven with self-glorified authenticity, originality, and classiness.

According to Bourdieu, class distinctions and social inequalities hinge on and arise through enculturated symbolic economics as much as they are based on material or political grounds. The symbolic economy in the Elemento campaign centers on a modern, sophisticated, fashionable, updated, and luxurious lifestyle that is connoted with upper classes who can afford such expensive products.

Progressive homoerotic campaign and its naked truth

About 15 years ago, Lemish and Lahav (2004) identified gender flexibility in Israeli ads centered on male models. They claimed that the emergent new types of men in Israeli advertising – the "new-manist" and the "sexual man" – indicate a possibility of blurred dichotomy between masculinity and femininity, a process that stimulates a growing "gender fluidity" that undermines the traditional heterosexual male identity (p. 160). The exposure of male physique in Israeli advertisements in the mid-2010s, however, objectifies the male models and avoids any real, authentic, and unleashed exposure of their male bodies. The young men's genitals are carefully kept hidden and they never look permeable. They never spread their legs and never show their body orifices. Hereby, the male nudity in this campaign and its highly restricted and limited vocabulary of postures, gestures, and mimics, hardly reflects any change in the Israeli cultural perception of the male nude and its perilous pleasures and emancipatory potentialities.

Notwithstanding, the undressed male models in this Israeli furniture campaign signify the emergent universalized masculinity and its unidentified ethnic and national affiliations. These men enact a rather hedonistic, stylized, and fashionable "consumer masculinity" (Clarkson 2005), an elaborated and expansive version of the "commercial masculinity" (Edwards 1997) that embodies a standardized masculinity subjected to cosmopolitan fetishization. This masculinity, just like the furniture that it promotes, aspires to be globally consumed by highbrow clientele.

Unsurprisingly, the Elemento campaign was targeted at mainly upper-class readers of *Ha'aretz*, the most liberal, secular, left-winged, and prestigious newspaper in Israel. The assumed clientele's yearning for innovation and newness merges with the advertisers' need to provide the customers some new, exciting, and provocative images, on one hand, and to respect the conventional distinctions between erotica and pornography, innovation and transgression, acceptability and outrageousness, on the other hand.

Stripping the Israeli macho, however, is certainly a complicated and intriguing task. Despite its notorious conformity, the Elemento campaign, with its (semi) naked male models and their suggestive positions, erects a lively discussion of contemporary masculinities and their exploitive commercialization. In a way, the 2014–2015 Elemento campaign genuinely anticipated this

company's 2017 campaign (see https://elemento-design.com/pages/campaign-2017) that comprises explicit homoerotic images, mainly male couples in tight black underpants, muscular physique involved in domestic yet theatrical situations. They wear flamboyant big hats in the middle of their living room, eating spaghetti while using their cutlery as phallic weapon, and joyfully jumping in the air. In contrast to the discussed campaign that merely included images of single models, the newer campaign embraces domestic same-sex partnership in a highly explicit homoerotic manner, in a way that is still rare in Israeli mainstream advertising.

Although both campaigns avoid full-frontal nudity, the 2017 campaign includes one ad in which one semi-naked male model is situated in bed while his assumed lover is standing up and exposing his muscular buttocks. The more constrained 2014–2015 campaign, however evolutionary, enabled the company's current homoerotic campaign. Yossi Goldberg, the creative designer of Elemento campaigns and this company's owner, however, refutes the apparent homoerotic appeal of his advertising:

> The campaign is properly art. In my eyes, it has no sexual connotation. It is like a good photography displayed at a museum. A piece of furniture is motionless, so what can be innovated by another photograph of someone drinking coffee? I'm interested in doing something new and in constantly reinventing myself. The pictures are extremely aesthetic and they are stylishly artistic and clean … I'm going all the way with my truth.
>
> <div align="right">(Cited by Binyamin 2017)</div>

Notwithstanding, Goldberg's art and design *are* sexy, sexed and sexual, stimulating and tempting, innovative and sensually transgressive. In retrospect, his previous 2014–2015 campaign should be regarded as an essential stage in a liberalized mediation of male nude, intimacy, physicality, leisure, and domesticity, particularly in Israeli advertising and popular culture that still struggle with prevalent machismo and masculinist and patriarchal attitudes. The naked truth cannot be easily (un)covered.

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6 *Playboy* as repressive leisure

Feminists confronting Israeli patriarchy

Michal Zeevi and Esther Hertzog

Introduction

Hugh Hefner's death (September 27, 2017) raised public attention to some provoking issues related to the commercialization of young women's sexuality. This chapter discusses the significant contribution of Hefner's *Playboy* to the global and local popularization of pornography as a legitimate form of social and cultural leisure. From a feminist perspective, *Playboy*, aiming to fulfill men's sexual desires and to reclaim manhood, is inspired by sexist and misogynic approach that perceives men's rights to enjoy women's sexual services, at any age and setting, as self-evident. Moreover, it is contended that establishing the *Playboy* "empire" on the objectification and commercialization of young women and their sexuality, entails a symbolic degradation of all women, and not only that of the women who are directly involved in the *Playboy* industry.

The chapter is based on one of the author's experiences participating in the struggle against pornography and in the appeal to the Supreme Court against broadcasting *Playboy* programs in Israel. The chapter is also based on both authors' profound acquaintance with feminist activism in Israel, and with contemporary Israeli feminist discourse on the Internet. The main argument of the chapter is that the *Playboy* channel served to introduce pornography into Israeli society by providing its legitimization. Presenting *Playboy* as a legitimate entertainment of harmless eroticism, widely accepted by most countries, paved the way for pornography to be accepted in Israel as a harmless leisure. This "success" was made possible by the sweeping support of the Supreme Court, of the media and of the Knesset.

The process of legitimizing the *Playboy* channel endorsed harsh conflicts in Israeli society, between two main audiences, feminist groups included, holding opposing approaches to the subject of pornography, mainly "liberal" and "radical."

The liberal approach to pornography derives its main support from John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* (1865). Mill wrote: "the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant" (p. 6).

This liberal approach to pornography perceives the right to purchase and watch pornography as based on freedom of speech or expression, which protects the freedom of individuals to express their opinions and to communicate those opinions to others, however mistaken, disagreeable, or offensive others may find them. This right is preserved to consenting adults who should not be prevented from making, publishing, exhibiting, distributing, and consuming

pornography in private. Censorship of pornography can take place only when there is extremely reliable evidence of especially serious harm to others caused by the publication or voluntary private consumption of pornography by consenting adults.

Other arguments that have been raised by the liberal groups against legislation aimed at regulating or banning pornography are: such legislation entails censorship that harms women's sexual freedom; it will bring back the institutional regulation over women's sexuality through the state paternalistic protection; pornography is in the eyes of the beholder and sexual messages are perceived differently by people; pornography is about accepted fantasies and therefore it is not a violent text; the studies about the harmful impact of pornography failed to indicate a causal connection between violence and consumption of pornography; although violence by itself is widely spread in movies and television it is not regulated by law.

In some cases, pornography is examined as a genre of popular culture and its cultural significance is examined (see Kipnis 1996; Williams 1999). Feminists like Carole Vance (1984), Annie Sprinkle (1998) and Amalia Ziv in Israel (2013), advocate "feminist pornography" and "pro-sex feminism." Marilyn Corsianos (2007) argues that "we need to create and promote more diverse forms of pornography and make it more accessible to more people" as a way to move "towards creating possibilities for 'sexual agency' for human beings" (p. 882). Jane Juffer (1998) investigated how women are using pornography in their everyday life, and *The Feminist Porn Book* (Taormino, Penley, Shimizu, and Miller-Young 2013) "brings together writings by feminist porn producers and feminist porn scholars to engage, challenge, and re-imagine pornography" (p. 9).

The "radical" feminist coalition[1] against pornography in Israel followed scholars and activists like Andrea Dworkin (1974, 1981), Catharine MacKinnon (1991), Donna Hughes (2000), Melissa Farley (2004), and the prominent anti-pornography German activist, Alice Schwarzer (2013). It perceived prostitution, trafficking in women, and pornography – in any form or context – to be a crime against the women involved, as well as a worldwide misogynistic movement. This view is well expressed in Robin Morgan's (1980) statement – "Pornography is the theory and rape the practice" (p. 139).

In the first part of the chapter, we shall briefly describe the concept of leisure culture as discussed by various researchers, and then we will continue to describe how Hefner founded *Playboy* as part of a leisure culture and marketed it as a symbol of the "good life." In the following part we shall present the argument that the Hefner's financial empire addressed men's desires. Thus, *Playboy*, marketed by Hefner as soft eroticism, normalized the pornography industry and cleaned it of its "sleazy" image. The normalization process of *Playboy* that accompanied its entrance to Israel and the conflicts that were part of the feminist struggle attempting to prevent the broadcasting of *Playboy*, will be illustrated in the last part of the article.

Methodology

The chapter's authors are both feminist activists who are extensively involved in the feminist arena in Israel. They are familiar with women's organizations in Israel and with the activists involved in them and are aware of the prevailing discourse and conflicts among them. The chapter emerged from Hertzog's experience, as an activist in the feminist coalition against pornography and *Playboy* from 2001–2004. Together with Vicki Shiran[2] RIP, from the Achoti movement and Chen Nardi, from the Newmanism movement, she took part in the Knesset discussions relating to the law that prohibits the broadcasting of pornography; She was

extensively involved in the struggle against *Playboy* which took place in the Supreme Court; Also, she participated in demonstrations against the legalization of *Playboy*; During and following this activity she published articles on the subject (Hertzog 2001, 2002, 2013). Thus, the chapter is partially based on an autoethnographic study.

Autoethnography is perceived as research, writings, stories, and methods that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political realms (Ellis 2004). Carolyn Ellis and Arthur Bochner (2000) suggest that autoethnographies are political in nature, as they engage us in important social issues, and often ask us to consider or do things differently (p. 739). Similarly, Sarah Wall (2008) contends that "auto-ethnography offers a way of giving voice to personal experience to advance sociological understanding" (p. 39). Thus, this chapter strives to call social activists and scholars to become (if they are not yet) involved in the struggle against pornography and to give voice to social activists' experience.

Leisure, Playboy and pornography

Pleasure, freedom, and choice are often associated with leisure. Thus, for example, Dumazedier (quoted in Page 1968: p. 1025) defines leisure as "the expression of a whole collection of man's aspirations on a search for a new happiness, related to a new duty, a new ethic, a new policy, and a new culture." Cohen-Gewerc (2014) argues that leisure provides plentiful temptations, requiring decision-making that can be experienced as a burden, since there are no clear criteria. This approach views leisure as a dimension of life.

Thinking of leisure as an experience with a tangible dimension raises questions such as – Is it possible to get lost in it? What are the choices it offers? Is it possible to stay in control? (Mashiach, Spector, and Ronen 2004(. The tension, created by multiple options, can be relieved by doing what everyone is doing, thus it becomes difficult to identify which are one's real personal desires (Cohen-Gewerc 2014; Mashiach, Spector, and Ronen 2004).

Mashiach, Spector, and Ronen (2004) argue that "leisure can be almost anything, anytime anywhere. As a result, leisure is not necessarily positive and constructive; leisure can be wasteful, destructive, and dangerous … leisure can include exploitation … [and] leisure can give expression to cruel and dark sides …" (pp. 24–25).[3]

Brissett and Snow (1969) suggest defining *Playboy* in its early years as "vicarious behavior or more specifically, vicarious leisure, (that) includes those situations in which an individual, while acting, cannot be made responsible for his activity by others in the situation" (p. 429). They emphasize, further, that:

> Vicarious behavior is not unreal. In fact, it is a consciously motivated activity and not, as some would have it, unconscious or subliminal.… In brief, vicarious experience most fundamentally entails a person's involvement in a situation without a commitment on his part.
>
> (pp. 430–431)

According to Brissett and Snow (1969), vicarious leisure is a behavior that enables one to act without being trapped in moral norms.

Using the case of the *Playboy* and the porn industry in Israel, we intend to focus on the negative aspects of leisure activities that entail cruelty, as suggested by Mashiach, Spector, and Ronen (2004). We contend that pornography is a conspicuous example of certain negative implications of leisure activities in the capitalist–patriarchal society, especially toward women.

According to the feminist claim, the identification between women's objectification and " 'sexy' and sexual arousal, works with tremendous force to perpetuate the patriarchal social structure and the systematic discrimination of women by it" (Kamir 2007, p. 198). Thus, our analysis follows studies (see: Roberts 2010; Rojek 1995) that point to the connection between leisure and commodification in capitalist regimes.

Taking Mashiach, Spector, and Ronen's (2004) argument (that leisure can be "wasteful, destructive, and dangerous") further, we shall propose to view *Playboy* as *repressive leisure*. Thus, we focus on the understanding that *Playboy* (and pornography) represents leisure activities that have harmful consequences, especially for girls and women.

Playboy – repressive leisure and the good life for men

The first issue of *Playboy* magazine was printed in December 1953 and, from the outset, its audience was clearly defined. Hefner aimed at young, white, heterosexual, affluent men by stating in the first issue:

> If you're a man between the ages of 18 and 80, *Playboy* is meant for you.… We want to make it clear from the very start, we aren't a "family magazine." If you're somebody's sister, wife or mother-in-law and picked us up by mistake, please pass us along to the man in your life and get back to your Ladies Home Companion.
>
> (Quoted in Dines 1998, p. 39)

The *Playboy* character was portrayed as a "young, affluent, urban bachelor – a man in pursuit of temporary female companionship and a good time, without the customary obligations of marriage and fatherhood" (Fraterrigo 2009, p. 1). The "girl-next-door" look of *Playboy* girls served to create soft pornography that was tolerable by the middle-class male's wife since it did not have the negative connotation of pornography (Brissett and Snow 1969). The message was that any man can live the *Playboy* lifestyle and "would be able to exercise as a sexual superman" (p. 433). The "Playmate of the Month" was portrayed as a nice and lighthearted young woman who wants to have a good time and is always available for men (Kallan and Brooks 1974). The main message conveyed by *Playboy* magazine was that men were entitled to have beautiful and sexy women because of who they were (ibid.).

One of the means used to pave the way for *Playboy's* legitimization was Hefner's self-presentation as a feminist who sets women's sexuality free, thereby improving their social status. Another mean was to position *Playboy* as soft, enjoyable, and harmless erotica ignoring the implications of its consumption. Cline (2013) points to the "escalation effect" in which "with the passage of time they required more explicit, rougher, more deviant, and 'kinky' kinds of sexual materials to get their 'highs' and 'sexual turns on' " (p. 233).

Fraterrigo's (2009) book *Playboy and the Making of the Good Life in Modern America* points to the profound connection between *Playboy* and the growth of a consumer society. *Playboy* magazine promised that young males could "express themselves through consumer practices and leisure pursuits" (p. 9). In a similar vein, Natalie Coulter (2014) argues that *Playboy* "cultivated a narrative of male consumer who happily participated in the hedonistic materialism of the postwar era" (p. 139), as part of the Capitalist ideology. The success of *Playboy* allowed Hefner to expand his business and to launch "an international *Playboy* business empire that embraced publishing, movie production, and a chain of nightclubs, casinos, and hotels" (Osgerby 2003, pp. 77–78). *Playboy's* monthly circulation "skyrocketed to nearly a million a month by 1959 and soared to in excess of 4.5 million over the next ten years" (Osgerby 2003, p. 76). At its peak,

Playboy's sales were over $200 million and 5,000 people were employed by Hefner (Dines 1998).

The fact that the sex that *Playboy* marketed was pornographic but not sleazy facilitated the absorption of *Playboy* into mainstream culture (Dines 1998). Sexual activity with the young women of *Playboy* was perceived as moral, clean, and full of pleasure (Brisset and Snow 1969).

Backlash and exploitation of women

Playboy magazine was published in the post-Second World War period when women exhibited their wish to actively participate in the labor market and their potential contribution to the economy. The threat to male dominance has enhanced a forceful backlash, and the emergence of *Playboy* magazine was part of it. It was "a new style of male rebel" (Ehrenreich 1983, p. 41). According to Dines (1998), women were accused of degrading men and destroying the American man by being mean, stupid, and greedy. *Playboy*'s editors defined women as a threat to men, being gold-diggers who knew just how to spend the money earned by men (ibid.). The negative portrayal of women and an invitation for men to rebel against their so-called weakness and exploitation were entangled in the *Playboy*'s image and in the message of masculinity.

Catharine MacKinnon (1989) discusses the significant difference between men's and women's sexuality in the context of pornography, which produces images that serve to construct gender hierarchy and control. She argues that the construction of this sexuality is essentially asymmetrical, so that while male's sexuality is active and characterized by forceful control, female's sexuality is passive and perceived as accessible to men and is characterized by the woman's pleasure in being controlled.

The profound connection between sex and violence as embedded in men's determination to sustain superiority and domination, has been noted by Deniz Kandiyoti.[4] She claimed that a new phenomenon, "masculinist restoration," is emerging as patriarchy is threatened and,

> requires higher levels of coercion and the deployment of more varied ideological state apparatuses to ensure its reproduction. The recourse to violence (or the condoning of violence) points not to the routine functioning of patriarchy or the resurgence of traditionalism, but to its threatened demise at a point when notions of female subordination are no longer securely hegemonic.[5]

While *Playboy* is seen as an enjoyable leisure activity, various studies indicate that women who watch pornography and *Playboy* are well aware of its misogynistic messages, of women's objectification, and of the commercialization of their sexuality. Examining the effect of pornography (including *Playboy*) on women by interviewing a diverse group of 32 women of all ages and with a variety of educational and occupational backgrounds, Susan Shaw (1999), found that, for the women who were interviewed for the study

> it was clear that pornography was not a leisure activity … the kinds of pornographic materials that are easily available to the general public (namely "soft core" magazines like *Playboy* and "adult videos"), were rarely perceived positively, or thought of as "sexy" or as enjoyable entertainment.
>
> <div align="right">(p. 208)</div>

Shaw also described reactions of fear and disgust revealed by the interviewees. Her findings suggest that watching porn caused women to feel dissatisfied with their body, up to the point of

losing self-confidence in their appearance. Silencing and de-legitimizing women's feelings were another outcome of watching porn. Many of the women interviewed by Shaw felt that they did not have the right to speak out. They worried about being seen as "antisex," or as "prudes." Resistance to pornography was perceived as contradicting ideologies of individualism and freedom of expression. This ideological view perceives leisure as individual freedom of choice "a view often embraced by leisure researchers and one which, again, tends to obscure the negative outcomes or harm perpetuated by individual leisure 'choices' " (ibid., p. 210).

Playboy in Israel and the feminist struggle against it

"Masculinist restoration"[6] through sexual exploitation and abuse in response to feminist achievements, and associated with *Playboy*, fits well the Israeli context. The role of the media, the Knesset, and the Supreme Court in accommodating and welcoming *Playboy* in the early 2000s is illuminating with regard to mainstreaming processes of pornography through *Playboy*. Not less interesting is the successful feminist campaign to pass the law against pornography and the failure of the struggle against the legalization of *Playboy* in Israel, which ended with the Supreme Court's approval of broadcasting the *Playboy* channel.

The intensive pressure exerted by *Playboy* to introduce its channel to Israel included various means of persuasion: presenting it as promoting women, as decent, harmless erotica, and more. One example is Christie Hefner's (Hefner's daughter) visit to Israel, while the feminist struggle against the broadcasting of *Playboy* was on. Her support for *Playboy* was published in *Ha'aretz*, a daily newspaper affiliated with the left-wing liberal sector:

> There is much evidence for *Playboy*'s contribution to the advancement of women. *Playboy* magazine is celebrating its 50th anniversary as the most popular magazine for men.… From the early years of its activity, as an inseparable part of its mixed content, which won many prizes and was awarded many accolades, the voices of many powerful women have been expressed in the magazine…. Along its 50 years of operation, *Playboy* magazine has never been found to be harmful, infringing, or violating any law – in any country in the world.[7]

During that period, *Playboy* was consistently portrayed, by Israeli media and by *Playboy*'s representatives, as a soft erotic channel that is undeniably different from pornographic content. Thus, for example, when *Playboy* channel was launched, a report in Globes, an economic daily, described *Playboy* as a channel of soft erotic content, clearly distinct from "Yes Blue" which is a "hard-core sex" channel. In advertising the *Playboy* channel, the cable company declared that "*Playboy* channel is broadcasting for the first time in Israel.… The channel will broadcast erotic films and series…. The [erotic] channel package includes another channel of 'hard-core sex' … called 'Yes Blue'."[8]

Playboy editors claimed that *Playboy* was an intelligent magazine that loves tits-and-asses just like men, and this is not a bad thing (Pitzulo 2008). This claim was fully adopted by Yair Hasson, who purchased *Playboy*'s franchise in Israel. In an interview in *Ha'aretz* Hasson said:

> First of all, *Playboy* is not a porn channel, it's an erotic channel, and it's not by chance that in the United States it was marked NR-Not Rated, while other channels get two or three Xs. It's the softest channel that can be…. There is no violence, no minors, no animals, no male nudity, no close-ups of sexual intercourse … [*Playboy*] is a brand that has existed for fifty years, and there is a good reason why it was defined as an erotic channel and nothing else….

Who said, as people in *Playboy* say, that it's impossible to make intelligent TV, talk-shows, and good series in which eroticism is just added value?[9]

Ron Gazit, the company's lawyer, claimed similarly that the channel should be broadcast because it is light erotic, it is being broadcast in 175 countries, and that attributing to it harm to women is misleading. He said that "no connection between watching an erotic film and violence against women has been established … the law that was passed by the Knesset against obscene broadcasts, does not apply to soft erotic … of the kind shown in *Playboy*."[10]

Indeed, legitimizing *Playboy*'s content was critical for the purposes of the cable channels and it necessitated the solid support of the media to gain public approval. This will be discussed in the following section that describes the feminist struggle to prevent the introduction of the *Playboy* channel to Israel.

The feminist struggle against Playboy (and pornography) in Israel

As part of the struggle against pornography in Israel, the struggle against *Playboy* continued for almost three years, from July 2001 till March 2004. A group of feminist activists from various feminist organizations cooperated to prevent the entry of pornographic channels to Israel. In the first stage the group concentrated on passing a law that would bring about the closure of pornographic channels. The law that was approved by the Knesset on July 8, 2002, included revision 27 [section 6 (25:2)] which determined that "broadcasts that are associated with one of the following" are not allowed:

1   Showing sexual relations that contain violence, torture, debasement, humiliation, or exploitation.
2   Showing sexual relations with a minor or a person seen as a minor.
3   Showing a person or one of his/her body parts as an object accessed for sexual use.

This amendment has abandoned the conservative, moralist approach, which rejects presentation of sexual intercourse and broadcasts which aim at sexually arousing the viewers. Instead, the amendment adopted the humane social feminist approach according to which it is forbidden to broadcast documented prostituting solely for the reason of protecting human dignity in general and women's dignity in particular.

(Kamir 2007, p. 180)

However, this amendment contained the word "obscene" which contains religious connotation, such as condemnation and persecution of lesbians and homosexuals.

The second stage of the struggle started after the law was passed. Play TV submitted an appeal to the Supreme Court demanding the right to broadcast *Playboy* programs. They also turned to the cable and satellite television council demanding to be allowed to broadcast *Playboy*. The council declared that its previous decision, which banned broadcasting *Playboy*, was based on a mistake and hence its members decided that "the right balance … does not ban the broadcasting of the channel … but rather permits the broadcasting of the channel under the conditions and restrictions that are detailed…."[11]

Against this second decision of the council, two appeals were submitted on June 18, 2003, to the Supreme Court of Justice: the coalition's[12] and MK Gila Gamliel's (from Likkud, a right-wing party), who headed the Knesset's women's status committee, with another 52 MKs. In the

hearing on June 26 the two appeals were combined. On March 3, 2004 the 11-judges' panel, headed by Judge Dalia Dorner, decided to turn down the two appeals.

Although the harmful implications of *Playboy* for the status of women was admitted by the Supreme Court's panel, their final decision sanctified, explicitly, the supremacy of freedom of expression over human and women's dignity. Moreover, the panel ignored the violent descriptions of *Playboy*'s scenes that were submitted to court by the coalition. These scenes described by Kamir (2007) as following:

> Think about the videotapes of Playboy's broadcasts described by the petitioners in the Playboy case: the woman figure who groans of sexual pleasure when a man penetrates her body forcefully despite her begging him to stop; the woman figure who is happy to be sold to her master and steps towards him on her fours, while he is pulling the chain around her neck, and the woman figure who is suffocating in the hands of a man as a punishment for seducing, stimulating and sexually arousing him by her mere existence. All of these are powerful visual images, processing patriarchal perceptions of women and femininity as an "objectifying display" of women. Constructing the gender discriminating and subjugating world, these images promote it and perpetuate it. Being catchy and repetitive they educate according to these values and illustrate them.[13]
>
> <div align="right">(Kamir 2007, p. 196)</div>

The severe implication of the sweeping rejection of the feminist coalition's appeal by the Supreme Court is accentuated by the fact that Dalia Dorner, who had been credited for her feminist decisions on various well-known feminist legal struggles, chaired the panel. This antifeminist ruling pilloried the Supreme Court but, in particular, Judge Dorner. Thus, for instance, Gila Stopler (2005) criticizes Judge Dorner as follows:

> Does the fact that the violation of women's constitutional right to dignity, which Judge Dorner's is ready to assume, which according to her is a violation that takes place "here, there, and everywhere" can justify its approval by the Court? Would it be possible to consider that, for instance, in times of increasing expressions of racism against Arabs the Court would rule that Arabs' constitutional rights for dignity and equality should be withdrawn in the face of the right to freedom of expression for racist speakers, especially because racist talk is heard "here, there, and everywhere"?
>
> <div align="right">(p. 408)</div>

Soon after passing the law against pornography on television and the *Playboy* ruling by the Supreme Court, the significance of the feminist achievement faded away. In practice the porn culture is spreading into every possible sphere of our lives, resting heavily on technological developments, on the economic–political power of patriarchal organizations and governing institutions, and on the financial establishment and the media.

Moreover, even though most feminists in Israel today are aware of the damage caused by pornography and its negative effects on society and on women in particular, we are able to determine that feminism in Israel is not fighting either against *Playboy* or against pornography. Some organizations[14] offer sex education and healthy sexuality workshops,[15] but there is no data about the scope of teenagers exposed to them or the actual effect the workshops have on them.

Our conclusion concerning the lack of feminist activity confronting pornography (*Playboy* included), is provided indirectly by Strichman's (2018) research about women organizations in

Israel, based on interviews with hundreds of Israeli feminist activists. The research mapped the field of feminist activism, emphasizing successes and achievements alongside failures and challenges. The list, which details the various subjects in which Israeli feminists are involved, does not mention any activity or struggle against pornography. Furthermore, the report is 102 pages long and includes more than 55,000 words, it does not mention the words *Playboy*, or porn/pornography even once.[16]

Silencing feminist voices with liberal discourse

As soon as it became clear that the law banning broadcasting pornography stood a real chance of being passed, the coalition's members began to be delegitimized and sometimes ridiculed, either collectively or personally. The struggle was portrayed as reactionary, puritan, and as supporting religious coercion and dark forces. When the law was passed the denouncing voices grew even stronger. Among the opinions highlighted in the press were those such as former MK Michael Eitan's (from Likkud, a right-wing party), who led the opposition to the law. He claimed: "Iranian-style darkness fell on Israel." Former MK Avraham Poraz (from Shinui, a liberal party), another conspicuous opponent of the law, expressed his contempt by declaring that the prohibition of broadcasting pornography meant joining the company of the Ayatollahs. This attack strived to delegitimize and ridicule the critical moral claims of the feminist coalition, presenting supporters of the law as enemies of enlightenment, while blurring the implications of women's oppression that pornography entails.

The delegitimization of the efforts to pass the law against pornography and of the struggle against *Playboy* relied heavily on misinforming the public, and ignoring, marginalizing, or degrading the coalition's activity and activists. Opponents presented the struggle as harming basic liberalism and hard-core values like freedom of expression, and as enabling religious coercion.

The Israeli media did not cover this controversy fairly. Although supporters of the law against pornography like former MK Tamar Guzansky (from Hadash, a Jewish–Arab left-wing party), the RIP former MK, Marina Solodkin (from Yisrael BaAliyah, a Russian immigrants center-right party) and former MK Nehama Ronen (from Mifleget Hamerkaz, a center party) could not be suspected of having religious tendencies, they were typically ignored by the media. In contrast, former MK Zehava Gal'on from Meretz (a social democrat, left-wing party), and former MK Yael Dayan (from the Labor party, who chaired the Knesset's women's status committee), were invited to several TV and radio programs and were widely cited as opposing pornography yet preferring the freedom of speech.

Claiming that the law against pornography violates the freedom of expression was the main argument in this public debate. Gal'on prioritized the freedom of expression over women dignity in an article published in the Israeli liberal newspaper *Ha'aretz* on June 2002:

> Pornography presents women as a mere sexual object, provides a legitimation for treating them unequally, for their oppression and discrimination and perceives them as accessible for sex at any time. However, with all my repulsion and objection to pornographic publication, I cannot give a hand to reactionary elements who seek to censor pornography … the law proposal that will be raised in the plenary will dictate to the citizens of the state what is considered "obscene." The danger is that a regime that tells the citizen what to watch will end up telling one what to think.

The feminist rift – opposing the law against pornography

The intense controversies with regard to the law against pornography took place also within the feminist movement and not in the political–public context alone. The feminist coalition was confronted with severe criticism and shaming from some of the feminist groups that participated initially in the coalition. This clash led to a split in the coalition between those who support passing a law and those who had reservations with regard to its passing. The opponents to passing the law offered to assume more solid alternatives in this struggle, such as providing sexual education and information (neither of which were ever implemented). Some of them argued that feminist activists should lead an open public debate on sex and pornography, acknowledging women's sexuality.

This view was expressed by Dalit Baum,[17] interviewed by Dorit Abramovich, a journalist and a feminist activist, in an article in *Ha'aretz*: "We believe that feminists should talk more about sex and not less, and the way [MK Yigal] Bibi[18] is defining pornography will fail us."[19] Others expressed their concerns from introducing regulation that may lead to censorship of erotic scenes in films and series and of homosexual or lesbian relationships on television.

Although the objection to pornography is common to all women's organizations in Israel, some of them objected the law since it required the cooperation with the religious–Othodox parties.[20] One of the main critics of the law against pornography was the feminist organization "Woman to Woman." In a leaflet, this organization stressed that the "blurred phrasing of the law may enable anti-democratic and anti-liberal elements to limit the freedom of expression of underrepresented groups, if they wish to do that."

Another opponent to the law was Zehava Gal'on, head of Meretz at the time. Meretz is a party that was established by feminists and maintained an unequivocal feminist agenda. Notably, Gal'on is a prominent Israeli feminist who initiated and promoted important laws for women's rights. She established and headed a parliamentary committee against trafficking in women. Gal'on was among the leading female parliamentarians who struggled to pass the law of criminalizing prostitution consumers, a law against trafficking in women, a law casting minimum punishment for sexual offenses and domestic violence, and more. However, Gal'on rejected a legislation against *Playboy* TV channels and preferred an educational, rather than juridical struggle against pornography. She criticized the joint efforts of radical feminists and ultra Orthodox parties to censor *Playboy* television:

> We need to combat pornography through a comprehensive worldview by education and providing information.… Precisely out of my deep objection to pornography, I argue that cooperating with the religious parties is a double-edged sword.… Legislation is not the ultimate goal, and certainly not the essence.[21]

This objection is surprising because Gal'on and Meretz party's agenda glorify human rights and a struggle against discrimination and violence toward women and minorities.

It's not about freedom of expression, it's all about the money

Like the arms and drug industries, pornography is, more than anything else, a huge industry. Already in the first decade of this millennium, the pornography industry was estimated in 2007 to circulate about 97 billion dollars a year in the world and about 10–12 billion dollars a year in the US alone.[22] According to US government sources, the child porn industry profited some 20

billion dollars a year.[23] However, the estimates are characterized by "nebulousness, even confusion" (Gabriel 2017, p. 109), which is explained by the fact that this industry is "highly secretive," generating "uncertainty around both numbers (how much money and how many people are involved) and practices (the nature of financial, labor, and other kinds of transactions) in the industry" (pp. 109–110).

The Israeli sex industry is flourishing, and Israeli feminists claim that the legalization of the *Playboy* TV channels in Israel has played a crucial part in its prosperity. The day after the amendment to the "Bezeq Law" was approved, Ha'aretz reported that "according to estimates, income for the cable companies [from the pornographic channels] will be 220 million NIS a year."[24] Hence, it appears that the economic interests of the cable companies in legalizing pornography can explain the pressures that were exerted on Knesset members to prevent the passing of the law against porn. The economic motivation explains, equally well, the extreme efforts of *Playboy*'s representatives to ensure the legalization of this channel. Access to the media was a crucial element in recruiting political support and annulling the coalition's and the public's objections.

The cable and satellite television companies and the representatives of *Playboy* expressed their objections during education committee meetings in the Knesset, as well as in the media. They did not hide their economic interests and stressed the damage that will be inflicted on their companies by passing the law against porn. Thus, for instance, Amit Levin (CEO of Matav-Cable TV) said that if the law

> proposed by the women's organizations and Knesset members would be accepted, it would cause huge economic damage … our loss today [even before the law has been passed] is hundreds of millions of shekels a year, and the state is not helping us.[25]

Shmuel Daklo, a journalist, wrote in 2003 in *Globes* that YES, the television satellite company, told the Supreme Court that the denial of broadcasting the *Playboy* channel in Israel violates its property rights and the right to freedom of expression, freedom of occupation, and to equality:

> The cable companies Arutzey Zahav and Matav also claimed that closing *Playboy* channel constitutes a serious infringement on freedom of expression. The VP of content at Arutzey Zahav, Anat Zisman, claimed that this is an extreme amendment and interpretation of the law, which is sweeping, disproportionate, and unreasonable.[26]

The cable companies' spokespersons emphasized that *Playboy* complies with moral conventions, since it does not contain any "hard-core" content and the sex shown in its programs is consensual. Thus, for example, Michal Raphael Kaduri (VP of regulation in Yes-Satellite Television) contended that they do not broadcast anything "that has violence, coercion, something that is seen as violence, something related to children…. We broadcast what an adult person is allowed to do with consent."[27]

Linda Efroni, a prominent critical Israeli economist, wrote in an op-ed column (May, 2002) in *Globes,* an economic daily, that,

> Pornography is a matter of big money [the title].… On the background of the huge losses of Tevel [one of the cable companies] which lost in 2001 over 200 million dollars, it is easy to

evaluate the extent and power of the pressures that are exerted on members of Parliament who deal with the issue. The satellite company also lost over 200 million dollars in 2001. In the company's reports, Tevel, was written that "there is a fear concerning its ability to continue its activity as a live business in the future." But Tevel and Yes [another satellite company] are not alone. Matav [a cable company] announced recently its loss of about 80 million dollars in 2001.[28]

Efroni's proposed explanation for MKs' readiness to support the demands made by the cable and satellite companies was: " it is possible that Knesset members take into account the possibility of the cable and satellite companies' economic collapse and instead of taking care of the public good they look after the capitalists whose big investments have failed.…" It appears that the political interests of Knesset and government members and their connections with owners of the satellite and cable companies can explain the legalization of pornography on TV.

The importance of the *Playboy* channel for the communications companies in Israel was revealed in Cellcom's[29] invitation in 2009 of Christie Hefner as a guest of honor at a national media conference, aimed at branding Cellcom as a leading media company.[30] In an op-ed article on Ynet[31] (November 16, 2009) Yael Itzchaki[32] criticized Cellcom's legitimation of Hefner's daughter and of *Playboy*. Cellcom's CEO is quoted in the article saying that "the conference is a milestone in establishing [Cellcom's] position as an internet-mobile leader." Thus, Cellcom publicly admitted the crucial importance of legalizing *the Playboy channel* for economic reasons.

The media's support of Playboy's public legitimization in Israel

The fact that owners of television companies in Israel are also the owners of other media bodies, such as newspapers and Internet portals, can explain their indirect support of *Playboy*'s entry into Israel. A captivating example for this argument is *Playboy*'s campaign to choose the Israeli *Playboy* channel's hostess. This campaign revealed the importance of "purifying" *Playboy* as a channel with legitimate content, and the media's extensive support of this channel.

A few weeks before the ruling of the Supreme Court, the *Playboy* Company in Israel held a campaign to select the channel's hostess. As part of the campaign, young women were invited to propose their candidacies. The press reported that 500 young women applied. Selecting the hostess from the finalists was a well-publicized event with the participation of celebrities and was widely covered by the media. Noga Shachar was chosen as the Israeli *Playboy* channel hostess.

We argue that this massive campaign for choosing the *Playboy* hostess, which was marketed as a glamorous and lucrative job offer that will promise the winner a successful career, was a PR campaign, in which the media whole heartedly provided immense publicity, free of charge, in the dailies and on television channels.[33] Thus, the media was just as interested in promoting *Playboy* as *Playboy* itself.

The most conspicuous evidence for the faked campaign was the selection of Noga Shachar as the *Playboy* channel's hostess. Shachar had a "tomboy" look, lacking any typical feature of a *Playboy* girl. Choosing a "non-sexy" girl, with no appealing "tits and ass" for the "glamorous" job, served the obvious purpose of the PR campaign driving *Playboy* into the Israeli social mainstream. This campaign was sharply ridiculed by Ra'anan Shaked, a journalist who exposed its ludicrousness in presenting Noga Shachar as *Playboy*'s hostess as part of a PR manipulation:

Shachar, in short, was placed in front of the *Playboy* meat refrigerator and was asked to minimize her presence…. What exactly is Shachar's contribution to *Playboy*? The Public Relations that preceded her selection [as playboy hostess], apparently. Does *Playboy*'s audience really need a Hebrew-speaking mediator to understand the value of the assets presented to it? Silicone is an international language.[34]

Interviewed by Tzipi Shochat, a journalist, in *Ha'aretz*, in 2011, Noga Shachar confesses openly that choosing her as the *Playboy* program's hostess was sheer public relations for *Playboy*. Shachar's description of the exceptionally warm embrace she received from the media provides a clear convincing evidence for the extent of the media's cooperation with *Playboy*:

I was not a channel hostess, I was not photographed naked, I did not live abroad, I did not have a program, I moderated nothing. All I had to do was public relations for the *Playboy* brand. I was interviewed on all the talk-shows – at Cafe Tel'ad, at Yatzpan, Yehoram Ga'on, Ya'ir Lapid, Assaf Har'el, who not?![35] They asked a lot of questions with no content: "What do I think about women, about men." The money I earned was less than the average monthly wage per family, but for a 20-year-old girl it was a lot of money.[36]

In an article by Yuval Abramovich, a journalist, on the Israel Hayom website,[37] the journalist called Noga Shachar "Ex-*Playboy* girl" and she commented:

This is a very inaccurate definition. I was just their spokesperson.… Actually, I was not really a bunny. I was never photographed nude, and I did not meet the criteria with the short hair I had and my flat bosom. They chose me because I knew how to talk. Even then, if you read old interviews with me, I talked about women's rights and tried to promote women's agendas. For me it was very subversive to be on a channel that exploits women and to say things in favor of women.

In regard to Hefner's public image, Shachar contends: "He turned out to be an old and kind grandfather who lived in a very big show he had created. So, more than ever, I realized how much it's all a matter of image and façade."

The reality behind the faked glamor and the image of harmless erotica is also described on Habama website.[38] Summarizing the documentary film (from 2004) "The First Zionist Bunny," which tells Noga Shachar's story, she is described as follows:

Noga Shachar (21), boyish and sophisticated – an absolute anti-thesis image of the classic *Playboy* girl, joins the competition by chance as a "tomboy." Through Noga's eyes, the film presents an encounter with a hypocritical, sexist, "prestigious" world in which the exploitation of women and the contempt for sex surround it from all over.…

Shachar's story is similar to the stories told by the women who lived in *Playboy* mansion.[39] The stories reveal that these women were merely an "instrument" used to advance *Playboy*'s business interests and not to empower them or to advance women's status in general.

Conclusion: *Playboy* as repressive leisure

The *Playboy* printed magazine and TV channel is being read and watched by men and women who perceive it as a leisure activity. Using the liberal discourse and the ideal of powerful manhood, Hefner and *Playboy*'s editors created, developed, and positioned *Playboy* as soft, enjoyable, and harmless erotica, which is perceived as a decent leisure activity. This strategy facilitated the social acceptance of *Playboy*, paving the way for the pervasive penetration of pornography into mainstream culture in Israel.

Playboy's penetration into many spheres of life in Israel has been supported by various power systems. The Knesset, the media, the Supreme Court, and others, have contributed to the accommodation and legitimization of the *Playboy* channel. Their intensive support enhanced and established the normalization of *Playboy*, followed by the massive dissemination of pornography, as a legitimate leisure activity.

Most feminists in Israel are aware of the harmful nature of pornography. However, following the failure to prevent the legalization of *Playboy* they also failed, later on, to combat pornography as a whole. Hence, at present, pornography is taken as a self-evident reality that cannot be challenged. We offer to view the consumption of *Playboy* and pornography as two similar tiers of the sex industry that can be called *repressive leisure*. We suggest that this perception is both rational and moral. This approach is based on the understanding that although an individual's act of watching sex shows in private can be easily seen as an innocent, harmless, and enjoyable activity, this is not the case. The accumulated involvement in this activity of numerous individuals implies it has huge social implications. That is, the support of the criminal sex trade and the dissolution of moral human values.

1   The coalition against Playboy's broadcasts in Israel included feminist women and men from various organizations – Shin-For Equal Representation of Women, Achoti-For Women in Israel, the Newmanism movement, WIZO, the Israel Women's Network, No to Violence against Women, Hen-Herzliya Women and Women's Parliament.

2   Vicky Shiran was a prominent social and feminist activist for the rights of women and Mizrahim and criticized the feminist movement in Israel for the exclusion of Mizrahi women. Shiran led and participated in many social struggles and in 1983 she ran for mayor of Tel Aviv. The struggle against *Playboy* and pornography in Israel was the last one that she led. She died of cancer shortly after the Supreme Court decision to allow *Playboy's* broadcasts.

3   Translated from Hebrew by the authors, as all other citations in this chapter, which was originally written in Hebrew.

4   The connection between sex and violence is contended also by Alexandra Brodsky (2017). Studying online communities who defend stealthing (nonconsensual removal of condoms during sexual intercourse) as a male's "right" to "spread his seed," Brodsky notes that "proponents of 'stealthing' root their support in an ideology of male supremacy in which violence is a man's natural right" (p. 189).

5   Kandiyoti Deniz in Open Democracy website (January 10, 2013) Fear and fury: Women and post-revolutionary violence, www.opendemocracy.net/5050/deniz-kandiyoti/fear-and-fury-women-and-post-revolutionary-violence. Accessed July 19, 2018.

6   See note 5.

7   Christie Hefner in *Ha'aretz* (December 16, 2003), "Ignorance, Hypocrisy and Prejudice," www.haaretz.co.il/misc/1.932118. Accessed May 22, 2018.

8   Aviva Krol, a journalist, in *Globes* (August 2, 2000), "*Playboy* channel is launched in Yes the satellite company," www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=256943. Accessed May 22, 2018.

9   Aviv Lavi, a journalist, in *Ha'aretz* (November 3, 2003), "Looking for a Girl with an Erotic Look," www.haaretz.co.il/misc/1.921645. Accessed May 22, 2018.

10 Editorial in iWomen, an Internet website (January 3, 2004), "Will Playboy Channel be Removed? Tomorrow We Will Know the Answer," www.iwomen.co.il/item.asp?aid=85228. Accessed January 1, 2015.

11 Supreme Court verdict on appeal 5432/03: Shin-For Equal Representation of Women vs. The Council for Cable and Satellite broadcasts. Piskey-Din, Volume 58, part 3, 2004, p. 75.

12 This appeal is known as the "Shin Supreme Court appeal." For a detailed description of the struggle against the entry of the *Playboy* and the events that led to the approval of its television broadcast, see: Smadar Ben Natan's and Esther Hertzog's articles in Hertzog and Shadmi (2013).

13 Descriptions of these scenes are also detailed by Kamir (2007, pp. 176–178).

14 See for example: "Open Door" association – www.opendoor.org.il; "To Touch it – Sex and Gender Education for Youth," http://talsbarnea.wixsite.com/lagaatbeze; "The Conversation-Sexuality in a Clear and Direct Language." Accessed July 28, 2018. https://hasicha.org.il.

15 According to the organization's websites, in these workshops the trainers talk with the youth about the harm caused by pornography, explaining them why they should not consume it and how to develop sexuality not based on what is shown in

pornographic films.

16 As a comparison the word "violence" (against women) is mentioned 40 times, and the words prostitute/prostitution are mentioned 20 times.

17 Dalit Baum is a feminist activist and co-founder of Black Laundry, a LGBTQ and social justice organization, that opposes the Israeli occupation. She was involved in drafting the law against pornography but withdrew from the coalition because of its cooperation with the religious parties.

18 MK Yigal Bibi was one of the initiators of the law to bann *Playboy* broadcasts, together with MK Zevulun Orlev, both from the National Religious Party, a right-wing party.

19 Dorit Abramovich in *Ha'aretz* (February 14, 2002), "Carrie Will Not Undress Samantha Will Not Masturbate," www.haaretz.co.il/misc/1.772142. Accessed July 12, 2018.

20 It should be mentioned that Othodox parties in Israel are taking an active role in legislation and other practices, which preserve the low status of women and the discrimination of LGBT people. The Israeli case, in which feminists cooperated with the religious–Othodox parties, is in a way similar to what happened in other places, where the feminists cooperated with right-wing conservative parties who are against women's rights, such as the right for abortion.

21 See endnote 20.

22 Medium Internet website reported on February 19, 2017, that

currently, the porn industry's net worth is about $97 billion…. Every year, Hollywood releases roughly 600 movies and makes $10 billion in profit. And how much does the porn industry makes? 13,000 films and close to $15 billion in profit. https://medium.com/@Strange_bt_True/how-big-is-the-porn-industry-fbc1ac78091b. Accessed July 19, 2018.

Los Angeles Daily News reported (June 5, 2007) that "porn is a $12 billion industry" (in the US), www.dailynews.com/2007/06/05/porn-is-a-12-billion-industry-but-profits-leave-the-valley/. Accessed July 19, 2018.

23 Carl Bialik in the *Wall Street Journal* (April 18, 2006). "Measuring the Child-porn Trade," www.wsj.com/articles/SB114485422875624000. Accessed July 15, 2018.

24 Hadar Horesh, a journalist, in *Ha'aretz* (July 27, 2001), "Everybody Profits a Little, but the Cable Companies Profit a Lot," www.haaretz.co.il/misc/1.720945. Accessed July 18, 2018.

25 Quoted from a meeting protocol number 420 (p. 7) of the committee of education and culture, held on February 28, 2002 (the 15th Knesset). Accessed July 18, 2018.

26 Shmuel Daklo in *Globes* (March 3, 2003), "The Supreme Court: *Playboy*'s Appeal is a Constitutional Question," www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=668666. Accessed July 12, 2018.

27 Quoted from a meeting protocol of the committee of education and culture, number 388, held on January 8, 2002, (the 15th Knesset).

28 Linda Efroni in *Globes* (May 26, 2002), "Pornography is a Matter of Big Money". Accessed May 21, 2018. www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=588426.

29 An Israeli cellular phone company.

30 See media reports:

Ayala Tzoref, a jounalist, in The-Marker (an economic section in *Ha'aretz*) (November 16, 2009), "Cellcom wants to be a media company," www.themarker.com/markets/1.554114. Accessed: June 19, 2018.

Yehuda Sharoni, a journalist, in *Makor-Rishon* (a weekly newspaper affiliated with the religiousnational writing sector) (October 20, 2009), "Cellcom is recruiting *Playboy* founder's daughter to the annual media conference," www.makorrishon.co.il/nrg/online/16/ART1/956/152.html. Accessed: June 19, 2018.

31 Ynet is the website of *Yedioth Ahronoth*, a daily newspaper considered as the largest newspaper in Israel by sales and circulation.

32 Yael Yitzhaki, head of Netta-Career Development Center, in Ynet (November 16, 2009), "Do You Want Your Bunny in Purple?," www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3805833,00.html. Accessed June 17, 2018.

33 See for example: Eran Hadas in Ynet (October 27, 2003), "*Playboy* is Looking for an Israeli Bunny." Accessed June 17, 2018. www.ynet.co.il/articles/1,7340,L-2808072,00.html.
Also Roni Koren-Dinar, a journalist, in *The-Marker* (October 27, 2003), "International *Playboy* Company is Looking for an Israeli Television Hostess." Accessed June 17, 2018. www.themarker.com/advertising/1.183638.

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35 Names of well-known talk-show hosts.

36 Tzipi Shochat in *Ha'aretz* (January 27, 2011), "The Israeli *Playboy* Girl Noga Shachar in her First Role in the Theatre." Accessed June 17, 2018. www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/1.146987.

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38 Habama-Cultural Events Guide, "The First Zionist Bunny.," Accessed June 17, 2018. www.habama.co.il/Pages/Event.aspx?Subj=4&Area=1&EventId=9199.

39 See for example Izabella St. James (2010) and Holly Madison (2016) and an exclusive interview to the "Mirror" that was given by Carla and Melissa Howe – "Inside Playboy Mansion: 'It's Like a Prison and Hugh Hefner Prefers Tennis to Sex' " (January 3, 2015). Accessed October 14, 2018. www.mirror.co.uk/news/real-life-stories/inside-playboy-mansion-its-like-4915348.

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7 Consumption practices

Uniformed yet unique? Finding individuality within conformist consumer culture[1]

Tali Hayosh and Rakefet Erlich Ron

Introduction

There is at present a consensus regarding the prevalence of consumer culture in the Western world (Warde 2014). Consumer culture is perceived as a phenomenon that dictates the social order, an order that is made patently visible by means of the merchandise acquired, and is imbued with significance through the ritualistic nature of marketing and commerce (Slater 1997). Lifestyle and personal taste are the means through which individuals indicate their social status, construct meaning in their world, and categorize these meanings according to varying levels of import, which they then replicate (Bourdieu 1984; Ollivier and Fridman 2001).

Reporting on a survey of 60 societies, comprising 75 percent of the world's population, Ingelhart (1997) found that due to economic and technological changes, these societies were undergoing a profound social change. The essence of this change was a shift from traditional to secular values. Nevertheless, these societies demonstrated an adherence to cultural values. Ingelhart and Baker (2000) claimed that the cultural change was non-linear, and that religion, among other factors, still exerted an influence on the course of the developments that ensued. Ingelhart and Baker (2000) noted that people still tended to cling to traditional values, although in a less apparent manner. The authors found that in one form or another, many of these societies upheld their heritage, while incorporating its values in a more secularized context, in the spirit of the aforementioned cultural shift. Hence, the cultural change is expressed in a multitude of ways by the various societies.

In line with these observations, the authors of the present study suggest that contemporary society is characterized by people's tendency to manage their lives like an operation headquarters (Dawson 2011), Thus, they place themselves at the center of the arena and plan their activities to correspond to their personal narratives, their reciprocal relationships, and their skills. This is not a different culture; rather the differences are expressed in the scope and degree to which individuals attempt to integrate their cultural heritage within mainstream society's contemporary practices (Beck and Beck-Grenshein 2002; Dawson 2011).

The focus of the current study is on the ways in which value-based consumption is expressed in the Jewish secular and in the Jewish Ultra-Orthodox population in Israel toward leisure. Approximately, this group comprises 12 percent of the Jewish population in Israel. In the secular population, we observed the voluntary consumption of leisure studies, in the form of

extracurricular courses and workshops (henceforth referred to as *courses*), which are not intended for attaining any academic or professional certification. Participants from this population group were Jewish secular men and women of various ages, residing in various areas of Israel. The Jewish secular population is not homogeneous; hence, there is no adherence to one particular lifestyle. On the contrary, the Jewish secular society prides itself on having virtually unlimited access to potentially infinite options. Indeed, choice, autonomy, and individualism are the hallmarks of what may be cautiously referred to as Israeli secular culture (Jewish or otherwise), One way that individuals choose to articulate these values within the social framework is through the consumption of leisure, a sanctioned way to express one's unique and individual self.

The Orthodox population group consisted of Jewish Orthodox women of various ages residing in Israel's central region. The Jewish Orthodox society is characterized by its separation from the mainstream and emphasizes rules of conformity and obedience to authority. One important religious tenet demands that married women keep their head covered and their hair hidden from view, which is why Orthodox Jewish women need wigs. Their shopping and purchasing choices are limited to merchandise that is considered acceptable for use in their community. In contrast to the secular group, Orthodox society directs its members to seek conformity in terms of their external appearance, and to lead a predefined lifestyle. The way they shop and consume their wigs is guided by a central value inherent in the Orthodox social construct, namely, modesty and uniformity; hence, an Orthodox woman's social esteem is measured by this principle. Within the constraints of this social framework, the Orthodox women manage to consume modesty in a creative manner that expresses their unique personal taste in leisure practices.

As will be shown herein, we claim that despite the difference in the approaches and attitudes of each society toward consumerism and leisure, they exhibit similar consumption practices. Inherent in these practices is an expression of individual creativity, a type of value-based consumerism, which takes place within the permitted social boundaries. This type of consumerism reflects the claim of Ingelhart and Baker (2000) regarding the varied ways in which the cultural change is assimilated into contemporary societies. It is also in line with Dawson's (2011) concept of the individual as the central operations manager, who takes into account the context and the cultural values of his or her social framework and, without breaking the rules, finds a way to embrace self-expression through spiritual, value-based consumption.

The tension between uniqueness and uniformity

The approaches to consumerism that are mentioned in the professional research and literature can be described as forming a theoretical continuum, according to the degree of dependence or independence exercised by the consumer. At one end of the spectrum is the theoretical approach that views the consumer as a passive player in a manipulative market (characterized by Fordism) (Adorno and Horkheimer 1993; Baudrillard 2007; Marcuse 1966); at the other end of the spectrum is the approach that views the consumer as a sovereign and active player in the consumption process market (characterized by post-Fordism) (Campbell 1987). In addition, there are theoretical approaches that link and combine the two extremes, thus presenting a more complex reality (Ingelhart and Baker 2000). According to the latter approaches, the manipulative market forces are extremely effective. Using innovative methods of temptation and multiple media channels, the range of options available to consumers is constantly being increased and

expanded (Featherstone 1991). A consumer can be found anywhere along this continuum, representing one of the endless possible combinations (Dawson 2011).

The individual aspires to attain "optimal distinctiveness," that is, to combine a sense of uniqueness within the boundaries of social uniformity. According to Brewer (2003a, 2003b), this aspiration for optimal distinctiveness exists not only within the group to which one belongs, but is manifested also when the individual encounters other social groups. Although perceived as contradictory, these two motifs (i.e., uniqueness and uniformity) actually counterbalance each other. When individuals perceive themselves as absorbed within and engulfed by their society, the need emerges to activate their individuality, independence, and uniqueness. Activating the individual's uniqueness is done in a manner that does not transcend the boundaries of one's group affiliation. As soon as the tension between the two extremes becomes too great, individuals will moderate their behavior and return to the group. To ensure one's belonging to the group, one must successfully balance the two motifs and thus maintain optimal distinctiveness: the desire to be special and unique is counterbalanced by the need to simultaneously maintain the affordances derived from belonging to the group. Consequently, individuals define their personal uniqueness only within the boundaries of the conditions acceptable to and set by the social framework to which they belong, and they refrain from adopting characteristics that the group considers to be extremist (Sheldon and Bettencourt 2002).

Like Brewer (2003b), Shoham (1995) maintained that the individual's life is motivated by two vectors working simultaneously: the separating vector and the unifying vector. The former motivates the desire for separateness, to differentiate oneself from others, other lifestyles, objects, and symbols that are not an inherent part of the self, to keep one's identity distinct and separate from external factors. At the same time, the unifying vector expresses the basic human need to maintain reciprocal relationships with one's affiliate social group. *Unifying* means the ego's identification with and desire to be integrated among people, objects, or symbols outside the self. Shoham claims there is a constant tension between the two vectors, and only upon attaining a certain equilibrium can the individual manage to function.

A more recent study (Mandel et al. 2017) has proposed a compensatory model of consumer behavior, whereby the desire to reduce the discrepancies between desired and current self-perceptions (related to self-image, professional aspirations, or social standing, for example) constitute the major factor driving consumer behaviors. Similarly, in the current study, we propose that the relevant consumers' consumption practices are driven by the desire to compensate for the perceived discrepancy between their ideal and their current position vis-à-vis the two motifs, or vectors, of individuality and uniformity.

At this point, we wish to demonstrate how the above-mentioned theories are pertinent to the purposes of the current study. We present the similarities in consumer practices that characterize the two societies, despite their very distinct cultural values regarding consumerism. The unique creativity that characterizes the secular and the Orthodox consumer takes place within the particular social context of each group. Within the constraints of the social framework, each individual consumer stretches the particular boundaries that define his or her society, boundaries that are likened to a protective rubber band that must not be ruptured. Thus, each consumer constructs a unique creation within the structured framework of belonging, which coincides with the various cultural manifestations posited by Dawson (2011).

Manipulative consumption in a prohibitive vs. a non-prohibitive social framework

In the manipulative consumption process, individuals are motivated by external forces, which plant in their minds an imaginary and irrational need for consumer goods (Featherstone 1991). In other words, the desire for consumption does not come from within, but rather it is implanted in the consumers, by agents that intentionally create these desires (Campbell 1987). According to Adorno and Horkheimer (1993), the process presumably attends to the consumers' needs, by providing the necessary markets and creating affluence; however, in effect, this is a way to regenerate the consumerist mentality, which is used to control people's lives and preserve the peace (Adorno and Horkheimer 1993; Slater 1997). Thus, this approach, known as the Frankfurt School, tends to view this cultural industry as creating a homogenous mass culture, which effectively threatens the individual's uniqueness and creativity (Featherstone 1991).

In this sense, the Jewish secular and the Jewish Orthodox societies are similarly exposed to the affluence and choices associated with the consumer world, despite the obvious differences between them. In other words, both operate within worlds affected by manipulative consumption, although the Orthodox women are subject to the additional restriction of adhering to a uniform code of fashion and behavior.

Leisure culture has become widespread in the capitalist world. Influenced by cultural dominance (Jameson 2001), leisure practices, tourism, and entertainment have been objectified and transformed into components of the reigning consumer industry (Bourdieu 1984; Butsch 1990; Ilouz 2002a, 2002b). The secular individual finds a wide selection and a variety of leisure products, which correspond to a hierarchy of style, taste, and culture found in various spheres. This hierarchy plays a significant role in maintaining the existing social stratification (Järvinen, Ellergaard, and Larsen 2014). In contrast, in the Jewish Orthodox society, affluence and the culture of leisure and luxury are viewed as exerting a harmful effect that contradicts the principles and hence threatens the existence of Orthodox society and its way of life (El-Or 1997; Layosh 2014). Thus, to maintain their society's distinctive and unique characteristics, the Orthodox consumers' behaviors are more controlled than those of secular consumers (Taraggin-Zeller 2014). To conform to this pattern, Orthodox women must "consume modesty" as a way of life (Layosh 2014; Levy 1989; Oryan 1994), selecting from a restricted range of goods, as in the case of selecting a wig.

Consumerism as an enabling platform

In contemporary society, there is diversity also in the act of consumerism, which enables a certain blurring of traditional social boundaries (Bauman 2013; Habermas 1991). Thus, the existence of various styles of consumerism increases the options for constructing the self and for exercising free choice, given the large selection of cultural symbols available. These symbols change periodically, according to demands and circumstances of the particular social groups (Ingelhart and Baker 2000). This type of autonomous consumption is the outcome of the abundant supply available through the free market today, manifesting a view of consumerism as derived from the individual's true and inherent needs. This is a sovereign and active consumer, who feeds on the copious stimuli, which enables one to actively and freely select from among the numerous and varied choices available. This type of consumer operates within the market according to his or her own individual pace, examining or ignoring the panorama of available consumer items, in order to select the products that address one's particular values, aspirations, and desires (Dawson 2011; Gabriel and Lang 1998). Examples of this type of consumerism can be found in value-based consumption of organic produce and "green" products (Pecoraro and Uusitalo 2014).

Dolan (2002) notes that ironically, value-based consumerism endows the consumer with a sense of power, demonstrating the ethical consumer's need to negotiate between a sense of personal responsibility and the pulls of the manipulative consumer arena (Pecoraro and Uusitalo 2014). As a result, consumer's money is no longer used solely to obtain and purchase basic products (i.e., food and clothing); rather, it is used to purchase the added ethical value attributed to said merchandise. Hence, what I eat, wear, and do – all reveal something about who I am (Fine and Leopold 1993).

As previously noted, for the secular individual, the consumption of leisure, an item selected from among an infinite variety that exists in the market, expresses one's values, desires, and aspirations. As regards the consumer behaviors of Orthodox women, it is the claim of the authors of the current study that despite the previously mentioned restrictions imposed by the cultural norms and the tenets of the religious social framework, the consumerist platform as such enables Orthodox consumers to similarly engage in value-based consumption. In other words, in both societies, consumerism enables the emergence of creative, value-based consumer behavior, which implicitly expresses symptoms of resistance (de Certeau 1984, 1997; Elhanti 1991). This type of consumerism challenges the ruling order – either the rule of the manipulative consumer industry (in the case of the secular society) or the rule of the restrictive cultural framework (in the case of the Orthodox society), while the individual consumers nevertheless continue to consume the same products. It should be emphasized that the implicit resistance is not part of a group effort, but rather, it takes the form of individualized guerrilla warfare. The consumer practices are altered not only to express personal cultural values, but also to contrast with the original intent of the producers of consumer culture. In this sense, this type of consumerism involves creativity, improvisation, awareness, cunning, and deviousness on the part of the consumer. An example of such resistance in the case of a secular consumer is the decision to consume leisure in the form of a yoga class, as an expression of one's opposition to capitalist values and the destructive pace of life of the modern world. In the context of the Jewish Orthodox society, in which members are expected to use similar external signs to communicate their identity and thus demonstrate that they are following a predefined way of life, an example of such resistance involves the development of a consumption system that gives expression to their sense of individuality. Given that in uniform societies the possibilities of self-expression are relatively limited, individuals find their own way to reconcile the individual with the collective identity (Barzilai 2003, p. 202). Thus, young Orthodox girls and women internalize modern patterns of consumption and construct their own unique entertainment frameworks, which are suited to the values of the Orthodox society, such as going to spas that have separate baths for men and women, dining in Kosher restaurants, staying at Kosher hotels, etc. (Layosh 2014). Similarly, soon-to-be brides in Jewish Orthodox society carefully examine the merchandise in wig salons, looking for the right fit, quality, and style, so as to convey their position vis-à-vis the motifs of individuality and uniformity.

Research goals and questions

The current research examines two populations whose approach to consumer culture stems from distinct ethical perspectives. We examined the practice of leisure consumption in the Jewish secular population and the practices of Jewish Orthodox women as consumers of wigs. Although these are two very distinct products, each represents a value-based, spiritually-motivated purchase for each of the respective populations: leisure consumption is equated with the pursuit

of well-being in the secular population, while the wig is an external symbol of the holy bond of matrimony, in the Jewish Orthodox society.

In this study, we compared consumption practices that are manifestations of an individual and creative approach to value-based consumption in two different societies. In line with the claim made by Ingelhart and Baker (2000), the two populations are not viewed as dichotomous; rather, their approaches to consumerism may be described as located at different points along the socio-cultural continuum, while the individual consumer in both societies constructs (Dawson 2011) his or her own unique consumption practices. Whereas, in general, secular consumers may appear to have greater freedom of choice and fewer restrictions than do Orthodox consumers, the underlying assumption of the current study is that secular as well as Orthodox consumers are subject to the influences of social mores. At the same time, members of both populations find ways to devise what they perceive as their own unique and individualized consumption practices, within the predefined social restrictions.

Two questions guided the research: (a) What are the manifestations of constrained consumption in the two populations under study (the secular and the Orthodox)? (b) What *practices* do consumers from the (relevant) populations use to create their own unique and individualized consumption narrative?

Methodology

The chapter is based on two qualitative research studies, one of which examined the practices of consuming leisure activities in a secular community and the other examined the consumption of wigs in a Jewish Orthodox community. These two communities have different approaches to consumer culture. The study on the consumption of leisure activities examined the motivations of people participating in extracurricular courses, workshops and classes that constitute serious leisure, and considered the significance of this consumption in contemporary society. The study about the consumption of wigs examined the various motivations of Orthodox women who purchase wigs, and considered the degree of freedom exercised when selecting a wig.

Method

The qualitative methodology is the choice for this study, because it is considered a means to perceive the individual and subjective narrative of each participant, enabling the investigator to enter the participant's sphere of consciousness (Berger and Luckman 1967; Denzin and Lincoln 2000). The participant's core experiences are considered a significant and valid source of information, which takes precedence over any interpretation of general theory (Creswell 1998). The categories of meaning are not predetermined, and the goal is to identify structures of meaning as the participants experience them in their daily lives. An underlying assumption was that there is no single given or absolute truth: rather, it is redefined each time by the individuals operating in the arena (Berger and Luckman 1967; Denzin and Lincoln 2000). Using Garfinkel's (1967) ethnographic methodology, the focus of the investigation was on participants' constant and regularized activities. This methodology rendered a rich and detailed description of each participant's personal world. The ethnographic investigation seeks to reveal the routines and practical arrangements that participants use consistently to manage their personal social world (Ritzer 2006). In the current study, we sought to examine and understand the consumption practices of secular consumers of leisure and of female Orthodox consumers of wigs.

The sample

The study of leisure involving the secular group included 63 interviewees, 34 men and 29 women, involved in various extracurricular leisure activities: ceramics, metalwork, sailing/yachting and yoga. The distribution of secular participants' characteristics is presented in Table 7.1.

The study of consumption practices among married Orthodox women (i.e., who routinely purchase wigs) included 51 women affiliated with various streams in the Orthodox society (Lithuanian, Hassidic, Habbad, and Modern Orthodox). The distribution of characteristics of religious female participants is presented in Table 7.2.

Research tools

Data in both studies were collected using in-depth interviews, which is a major instrument used in qualitative studies (Bevan 2014). In-depth interviews enabled researchers to access the internal experience of the individual, based on the participant's subjective experience and to review the meanings, explanations, and interpretations that the participant attributes to the subject under study (Laverty 2003; Starks and Trinidad 2007). The current study included interviews, which are informal and unstructured. As Denzin and Lincoln (2000) claim, this type of interview is important for creating a trusting interpersonal relationship with the informants.

Table 7.1 Distribution of secular participants according to leisure activity, gender, and interview completion

Type of Leisure Activity	Men	Women	Total
Ceramics	2	9	11
Metalwork	16	2	18
Yachting	12	8	20
Yoga	–	8	8
Total number of interviewees	34	29	**63**

Table 7.2 Distribution of participants according to community affiliation and interview completion

Orthodox stream	Number of participants according to their self-definition
Lithuanian	18
Hassidic	14
Chabad	7
Modern Orthodox	12
Total number of interviewees	**51**

Research location

Interviews on the subject of leisure consumption were conducted at four different locations in Israel, whereas interviews regarding the consumption of wigs took place three different locations: a famous wig salon located in Israel's central region, which caters to Orthodox and secular customers from Israel and abroad, a locally based wig salon that caters only to Orthodox women, and a home-based wig salon that caters only to Orthodox women who live nearby.

Findings

In this section, we first review the interviewees' use of the consumption culture in which they operate. First we focus on the social and ethical constraints perceived by the participants of both populations, and then we present the manner in which they attempt to construct a personal and unique approach that they perceive as being different from the one dictated by the social framework and which allows them to express their individuality.

Consumption in a socially constraining arena

According to the participants, it appears that in both societies, the culture of consumption is similarly constrained by social concerns regarding status, prestige, and the influence of significant others.

Social status and prestige

Leisure courses and wigs are consumption items available to each consumer according to one's personal taste and wallet. Prices for the leisure courses considered in the study range from approximately triple the nation's minimum monthly wages (for sailing), to the least expensive course, available at a price equivalent to one month's minimum-wage salary (for a year-long course in yoga or ceramics). Also the price of wigs made of natural hair that are custom ordered to fit the consumer's size and personal taste can be higher than the minimum monthly salary. The price is determined by the length of hair desired, the hair quality, the amount and length of natural hair used in the wig, the coiffure, and the quality of the dye. In other words, it is of no surprise that interviewees testified that part of the selection of leisure activity among secular participants and the selection of a wig among Orthodox women was determined by considerations related to perceived social status and prestige.

Ada, a 55-year-old mother of three, included considerations of social status when choosing a yachting course for herself and her partner.

> It gives me a sense of true leisure. It also has something prestigious about it, something special that indicate status – yachting or navigating a yacht. This is a prestigious area inhabited by people with money. It's … glamorous. It is surrounded by a lot of glamor – as related to clothing yachting and vacationing.

Her words clearly demonstrate that she perceived the yachting course as related to successful and affluent people, associated with glamor, freedom, daring, and fashion consciousness. An additional example can be found in the interaction between Hovav and Hanna, which reveals their interest in social status and materialistic consumption:

HOVAV (the skipper): I always tell my daughters that it's important to mingle in the right circles.…
HANNA: My daughter wanted to get a membership at the Ganei Tikva country club, and I told her to come with me to the (more prestigious) one in Savyon, but she didn't get the picture.…

In other words, it is understood that Hovav attributes a great deal of significance to the social circles that he and his family members frequent, and he also noted that the choice of leisure activity could provide a useful arena in which to realize social aspirations. Hence, he encouraged his daughters as well to include such considerations in their choice of leisure.

Considerations of status and social prestige were found also in relation to the consumption of wigs among the Orthodox women participants. Zehava, an Orthodox woman in her fifties who owns a wig salon, said the following.

> In my neighborhood, there is a woman whose husband studies at "yeshiva" and they are probably supplementing their income through welfare. Yet she will buy the most beautiful wig (as I said, *through a charitable fund* [known as *Gemach*]) and will stride along Rabbi Akiva Boulevard on the Sabbath showing off the latest fashion. These women do not compromise.…

According to this participant, it is clear that according to her experience of people's consumption patterns, observed among her Israeli as well as international clientele, the consumption of wigs is dictated by – among other things – considerations of status and prestige, regardless of the financial conditions in which these women live.

Yael, an Orthodox woman from the same (Lithuanian) Orthodox stream, speaks with embarrassment about her wig and emphasizes the different status associated with the various wigs:

> My wig is nice; I hope it's fashionable enough [laughs]; I don't think it's long enough.… It's fashionable enough, lots of women wear it, and it is what's *in* right now. I don't care that much, it doesn't make a difference and I'm no expert in fashion.

Yael is aware of the fashion, although she does not feel she understands it. In her opinion, she needs to consult with an expert or an Orthodox woman who is interested in fashion to find out whether the wig she chose is fashionable enough.

Findings from both studies indicate that leisure courses, as well as wigs, constitute a *prestigious product* (According to Bourdieu (1984) and Simmel, Park, and Wirth (2004), lifestyle and personal taste are the ways that consumers indicate, via prestigious products, their social position and social differentiation). As participants' interpretations demonstrate, prestige and social status are important factors taken into account by people from the secular and the Orthodox societies, despite their different ethical approaches to consumer culture.

The influence of significant others

Significant others were found to play an important role in the process of selection, among participants from both studies. Significant others function as social agents and thus are part and parcel of the constraining social framework that imprints external desires on the individual involved in the process of consumption.

The study focusing on leisure indicated that among the considerations in choosing a leisure activity is the desire to be among "people like me" and the desire to engage in interpersonal relationships. Saul, a 30-year-old high-tech "retiree" who participated in the yachting course, admitted that he chose this activity to meet new people who he considers suitable for him. He assumed that the yachting course would provide a potential place for meeting other members of the elite society, as well as potential romantic partners.

> I knew the course would draw first-rate people … because as I and other perceive it, it is a somewhat elitist pursuit […] and sure enough, none of the participants had any difficulty with the theoretical materials; everyone there is fairly capable and manages well. These are

people that are fun to be with!… I perceive them as extremely unique people; people who are at one with themselves.

Saul expected to meet highly capable people of high social stature, an image which conforms to his perception of himself. In addition, he considers his fellow course participants to have unique characteristics, expressed in the form of skills and abilities.

The following example is of a participant (Ziva) who joined the yachting class to take part in the leisure activity of her partner/spouse, despite the fact that she does not enjoy being at sea.

He (her partner) REALLY wants to do this! It's his dream that we get a yacht and take off. Me? I'm actually scared of it all. As a kid I was always afraid of the water. This is not my dream – I even hate being in the sun. I'm not sure how I'm going to manage.…

Despite her fear of the sea and her aversion to this pastime, she decided to join the course, at first as an "auditor," in order to be able to help when necessary.

I would never have chosen this! I mean, never! [… But] what is leisure? Why do couples break up? Because one doesn't want to let the other express him-or-herself and the other stops [developing]. Or else, one of the partners develops in one direction, while the other becomes stagnant…. I come here because I want to be of help! To be useful!

Returning to the Orthodox women, examination of the social constraints under which a bride operates as she selects her first wig reveals that among the many preparations for the wedding, the wig is of primary importance, as it includes a change of image, a change in the appearance of a woman once she is married. As regards the bride's motives when deciding which wig to purchase, it appears that she is impelled by external social forces that exert pressure on her, influence, and lead her in the decision-making process. Among these forces are the identity of the more-experienced family member who is appointed to advise her on this purchase (mother, elder sister, future mother- or sister-in-law, as well as a professional wig maker), a number of peers from the religious seminary who are considered knowledgeable about the current fashions, and the person paying for the wig (usually the future mother-in-law). The fashion advisor serves as an information source, someone experienced on whom she can rely. The words of Helen, a member of the Lithuanian Orthodox stream, serve as an apt example.

I went there with my sister-in-law … I didn't really understand much about wigs. She was more experienced in the matter and she told me what was recommended [fashionable] in the market.… Nowadays I wouldn't chose to wear it; it's too puffy and dry.

Thus, in her first purchase, Helen did not include her authentic motives, personal wishes, or any predetermined desire to purchase a wig of a particular style or texture. Yehudit, a Lithuanian Orthodox woman living in Benei-Brak, also noted her lack of experience upon first purchasing a wig and the influence that the wig maker had on her decision:

I really didn't understand much about fashion, so I accepted whatever I was told. I had no idea and followed the advice of the wig maker. I was very dissatisfied. It was extremely puffy, no matter how much they tried to adjust it….

We found also the input from Asher, the CEO of the *Gold Wig Salon*, who insisted on adding his perspective regarding the issues that brides consider when selecting and purchasing their first wig, worthwhile. Based on his 30 years of experience, he sees the person paying for the purchase as exerting the greatest influence.

> There are a few things: some of the brides to be … are guided by others.… There are groups of women, peers and friends who attend the seminary with them, and a few of them are always dominant in the class, so that if Sarah and Rachel and Tzipi all go to one salon, then the rest of the girls in the class will follow their lead. Or if there is a wig stylist in the family, she'll decide. Or else, the mother-in-law, who is paying for the wig, is the one who decides to bring the bride here.… She follows because this was the arrangement that was made. Her opinion doesn't figure into the equation […]. Also in terms of the style and which wig to choose and so on. At first they'll tell her: "look, this one is too modest, but this one isn't …" that's how the person paying for the wig guides the bride's choice.

To summarize, in the consumption of leisure activities as well as in the consumption of the wigs, participants from both societies acknowledged the influence of prestige, status, and significant others on their purchasing decisions. In other words, in both societies there is an external agenda, namely, constraining social factors (considered *manipulative factors* in the sense suggested by the Frankfurt School) that not only influence, but also constrain the consumer's choices.

Unique, value-based consumption

Within the constraining and manipulative frameworks in which players from both populations operate, it is possible to maintain unique, value-based consumption practices.

Consumption of leisure and wigs – practices that allow for a respite from the constraining social framework

Secular participants' descriptions of leisure reveal a tendency to use leisure consumption as a means to distance oneself from the constraining social framework and thus create a unique and personal space. A few participants drew an analogy between this personal space and access to oxygen: "it's like a breath of fresh air" (the ceramics teacher describing her leisure activities); "I need it the same way I need oxygen, that is, I couldn't manage if I didn't allot some time for myself" (Adi, a yachting course participant); "when I was working, leisure was like oxygen" (Riva, attending yoga and ceramics courses), Gilad, a participant in the yachting course, extended the metaphor even further:

> It's like taking an oxygen tank and diving. Here you breathe contaminated oxygen. But if you ever go diving, you'd feel the kind of oxygen you breathe. And it's quiet. [You feel] the peace of being with yourself.… You have many more senses [at your disposal] for distinguishing between colors, something you don't have when you are on the outside, when there is too much of it [stimuli]. There is a kind of concentration on small things that you don't see on a day-to-day basis….

Ella, who was taking yoga and tai chi, interpreted leisure as a different way of experiencing life, and compared it to water:

It's like water because it quenches my enormous thirst and revitalizes and refreshes me, and it washes away everything prior and prepares me for the next thing. It even purifies at some point, as it creates new grooves and directions of flow. It carries me to unknown realms, bypassing obstacles on the way. And because it's always the same and yet never the same.

Occasionally, in the course of the ethnographic interviews, the interviewees would integrate descriptions and explanations related to their general consumption habits, in an effort to clarify their meanings, explanations that did not pertain directly to the context of wigs. For Bruria, a member of the Gur Hassidic stream and a resident of Bnei-Brak, shopping in a mall was an extraordinary experience, which she interpreted by comparing her feelings while in the mall with her feelings when shopping on Rabbi Akiva Street (the main street in her city).

I don't feel different; there are so many different women at the mall. I suppose people recognize that I am an Orthodox woman, but I don't care, I don't like it when sales clerks try to help; I like to be left alone, to wander around…. For me, going to the mall is a big deal, a real outing. You don't go looking for just one thing. You start exploring.

Bruria prefers the advantages of an air-conditioned mall, and going to the mall is a shopping experience and a source of entertainment. She is not bothered by the fact that others recognize that she is an Orthodox woman – she does not *feel* different from any of the other shoppers.

Also Hannah, who is a member of the Gur Hassidic stream, described the pleasure of shopping at the mall. She examines the new trends and enjoys purchasing new objects that make her feel good:

[The experience at the mall] is fun – shopping. It's very convenient, just to walk around, look at the people, look at new things. Because I enjoy fashion, it interests me. What's new? What's trendy today? It's kind of nice, the good feeling when you buy something new.… The mall is a public place and you can find people there from each and every social sector.

Much like the consumers in the secular society, members of the Orthodox cultivate consumption practices that enable them to distance themselves from the constraints of daily life and transcend into a sphere in which their experience is anything but routine. It enables them to "disappear" to a certain extent. Among the consumers of leisure activities, there is a sense of peacefulness and restfulness from the burdens of daily life, while among the Orthodox women, being consumers gives them a sense of connecting with or belonging to a different sphere, one that is separate from their typical world.

Consumption of leisure and wigs – practices that afford difference and uniqueness

In the course of their leisure activities, participants gained insights about themselves and about life, insights that they projected onto their daily lives. Neta talked about her experience in the yoga course.

Maybe I understood that what is important to me is the process, the way … so that through yoga I found significant answers to some of life's essential questions.… I used to work the way I did, because that was the essence, and if that has changed, then the essence itself and the pleasure gained have also changed.

Neta recognizes the fact that her leisure activities have allowed her to let go of some of her commitments to certain social values and norms. A similar example can be found in the description of the young high-tech retiree:

> I went from one extreme to another on this issue. I took the yachting course and I went to work as a guide at an Institute for kids [with a criminal record], at a hostel … without asking for any remuneration.… The joy of seeing young man, who a month earlier was on the streets, suddenly becoming a human being, suddenly thanking people, suddenly having a hobby and self-discipline and going and doing things. It's amazing! … You see these things? Now you're getting some perspective! You say [to yourself] "Wow, with those 15 million dollars [you made]? Think how many kids you could have helped rehabilitate!"

Also the Orthodox women have creative methods for coping with the constraints of their social framework, demonstrated in their method of purchasing desirable and fashionable secular items, and making alterations so that they can still adhere to the values of modesty. Galia, a wig stylist affiliated with the Modern Orthodox stream said "you and I both can buy a tank-top at Castro (a fashionable clothing store); you'll wear yours as is, and I'll wear mine under a black, long-sleeved blouse." Sara, who is a member of the Gur Hassidic stream, described at length the process of altering "secular items," a practice that is common among women in her society.

> As of yet, there is no Orthodox fashion stylist, so that the style is greatly influenced by that of the general sector […] I read magazines and newspapers, [watch] movies. Not everyone is like that. [Just] a few [women], and they introduce things smoothly. They go to Galit Levi [a famous secular designer], see something amazing and then go to a seamstress who makes them the same thing but with long sleeves. There is one woman who studied at Shenkar [a well-known design school] and she has Orthodox values, but also a great sense of fashion. Nowadays, halter-tops are trendy, so she'll make them styled for religious women.

All of these examples demonstrate that the Orthodox consumer, not unlike the secular consumer, uses alternative consumer practices, which allow for self-expression. They produce a consumption narrative that they perceive as being unique, distinguishing and differentiating them (Shoham 1995) from others in their society. However, as noted by Brewer (2003a, 2003b), their consumption practices do not cause a severance from their value-based societies. Rather, they maintain an *optimal distinctiveness* that allows for a balance between individual uniqueness and social uniformity. In each population, *optimal distinctiveness* is manifested in different ways, according to each society's ethical attitude toward the consumer culture.

Summary and discussion

This chapter examined characteristics of leisure consumering behavior found in two different consumer communities, one secular and one Orthodox, which are subject to the influences of social constraints and/that reflect manipulative market forces. In general, it is obvious that although these two societies have distinct attitudes toward the consumption culture, they use similar consumption practices. Despite the pressures exerted on individuals by various interested parties in the consumer arena, they find creative ways through which they avoid being swallowed within the uniformity that envelops them. Instead, they find creative ways to express themselves in a unique and self-differentiating manner.

The consumption arena is flexible and is not confined by specific boundaries; thus, it enables each community to set its own rules regarding status, gender, and social guidelines. Within this arena, consumption is bound by status, gender, religiousness, and ethnicity, and in it, each community chooses and displays its own stylistic preference. Thus, the arena includes various kinds of stores, each of which is frequented by the appropriate consumer type. Within this arena, leisure consumers as well as wig consumers are able to find "islands" of autonomy, thus addressing their unique wishes, aspirations and desires. To apply this autonomy, consumers take creative measures and use consumer practices that differ from the normative, value-based consumption patterns that are characteristic of their societies. The secular consumers observed in this study use leisure consumption to escape the pressures of daily life, creating a space where they can replenish their energies before returning to routine. The Orthodox women's practices when purchasing wigs, especially among the more experienced consumers, reflects a desire to express their individuality in a conformist social framework. As the Orthodox participants explained, shopping at malls frequented by the general public is yet another example of consumption practices intended to provide a respite from their daily milieu, while the items purchased give them a sense of uniqueness within their community. Thus, the choice of consumption practices offers a change from the routine and a chance to assimilate within the broader social realm beyond the community's boundaries.

However, these unique and different leisure consumption practices take place within the range of optimal distinctiveness (Brewer 2003a, 2003b), defined by the ethical, value-based boundaries of each population. As a result, people are able to find ways to express their unique individuality, to address their need for self-expression and still remain attached to their societies, without the risk of severance. Thus, it may be deduced that whether through the consumption of leisure or shopping wigs, each consumer produces a personal narrative, which bridges between the *separating vector* and the *unifying vector* (Shoham 1995). In this manner, people are able to remain functional within society's boundaries, by striking a balance between the social self and the inner self.

We wish to emphasize that the similar leisure consumption practices seen in both societies, specifically, consumption as a mark of social status, consumption that expresses uniqueness and autonomy, and consumption that seeks the balance of optimal distinctiveness, are available to all consumers. Anyone in the consumption arena can adopt these practices, without experiencing a clash of values, regardless of their attitude toward consumer culture. Access is ensured by virtue of participation in the consumer market. Thus, the Orthodox consumers are not barred from shopping in the "secular" mall, where they purchase products that they can take back and use within their own society. The same is true of the secular consumers of leisure: their practices and experiences do not bar them from returning to and functioning in their society; they do not cease to belong. Neither the secular nor the Orthodox consumers experience any ethical conflict. Thus consumers are constantly shifting their location along the continuum between uniformity and distinctiveness, in search of "islands" of autonomy and self-expression. Given the pragmatic nature of the consumer arena, practices are not judged as ethical or unethical, and the arena adjusts to any practice or demand. The consumer arena is a space where any and all ethical approaches can live in peace side by side, and all consumers find solutions to their needs. This arrangement is likened to a carefully negotiated contract, whereby one side seeks to feel unique and distinguished through the act of consumption, and the other side agrees to provide "ethically appropriate" goods.

In summary, the findings of the current study are in line with Ingelhart and Baker's (2000) claim regarding the variability with which societies incorporate change while still clinging to moral and social values. As shown, the consumer arena in general and the leisure arena in particular are able to contain such variability, thus allowing individuals to gain a sense of self-realization without having to separate themselves from the ethical and cultural dictates of the social context to which they belong.

1   This chapter compares between Tali Hayosh's research (see Chapter 2) about popular consumption of serious leisure courses and workshops among secular Jewish people and Erlich Ron's inquiry of ultra-Orthodox Jewish women's shopping of traditional wigs. Whereas Hayosh's chapter inspects the tension between serious leisure's motivations and rewards among upper-middle-class secular Jews, this chapter genuinely identifies common aspects of consumptions among vastly different populations.

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Part IV

Leisure communities and communal hobbies

8   Long-distance running as a serious leisure activity and its influence on relationships within the family

Sima Zach and Assaf Lev

Introduction

Running, which was considered an individualistic physical activity, has lately become a social activity, with the emergence of a great number of running groups (Robinson, Patterson, and Axelsen 2014), a wider range of participants' ages, more females participating, and a greater number of recreational runners than in the past (Loughran, Hamilton, and McGinley 2013).

In the current study, we aim to demonstrate that running is not merely a hobby. Rather, it has become a serious leisure activity, based on Stebbins' (2004, 2007) theory that differentiated between "casual leisure" – characterized by short-term activities designed for pleasure and the release of tension, and "serious leisure" – aimed at the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and self-fulfillment, and necessitating deep identification and perseverance of the participant. Running has become so prevalent in participants' lives that it forms the basis for their identity and social life (Getz and Andersson 2010; Lev 2016, 2018).

The recreational marathon has globally increased in the last two decades (Garcia-Pinillos, Soto-Hermoso, and Latorre-Roman 2017). In Israel, according to the Israeli runners' most popular website "Shvoong" (Borshavskie 2017), there has also been a sharp increase in the number of Israeli long-distance runners. While in 2008 only the Tiberius Marathon was held in the country, with 843 runners, in 2017 six marathons took place. It is estimated that the total number of Israeli marathonists in 2017 was about 6,500. In the half marathon, 9,704 runners participated during 2015, whereas during 2017 their number increased to 12,518. Most of the marathon runners are between the ages of 20–70 ($M = 41.9$; $S.D. = 9.59$), and only about 10–15 percent are females. In other countries, the average age is similar – 38.7 years old (40.2 for men, 36.5 for women), and the percentages of females in the UK and in the USA are 34 percent and 45 percent, respectively (Carter 2015).

Research conducted with Israeli marathon runners is very scarce. The one study we found was a quantitative study, which suggested a theoretical model that describes the motives for running a marathon (Zach et al. 2017). The model was based on the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan and Deci 2000), which claimed that to initiate and preserve motivation, three basic needs have to be addressed: autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Zach et al. (2017) identified the following 11 factors as motives for running a marathon: psychological coping – emotional-related coping; psychological coping – everyday life management; life meaning; self-esteem;

recognition; affiliation; weight concerns; general health orientation – reducing disease prevalence and extending longevity; general health orientation – keeping fit; competition; and personal goal achievement. The 11-factor model supported the SDT premise that satisfying the individual's needs is the underlying mechanism that drives marathon runners. No gender and age differences were examined, nor were any social or emotional aspects. Hence, the researchers recommended that the main dilemmas of the Israeli runner – their conflicts and social intercultural struggles – still need to be examined.

Back in 1982, Stebbins asserted that seriousness and casualness as personal approaches to leisure are poles of a complicated continuous dimension, along which individuals may be ranked by their degrees of involvement in the activity. He mentioned six qualities of serious leisure, and we found that all of them exist in long-distance running during leisure time: (1) the need to persevere at it – understanding that the positive feelings about the activity come from improvement through persistence; (2) the tendency of amateurs, hobbyists, and volunteers to have careers in their endeavors, (3) compelling effort that is based on knowledge, training, and skills; (4) benefits such as empowerment of the self and feelings of accomplishment – those related to the social interaction and those related to physical products of the activity, or real true fun; (5) developing a social world or subcultures with a particular ethos comprised of special beliefs, values, moral principles, norms, and performance standards; (6) identifying with the chosen activity, and being proud and excited about it (Stebbins 1982). Later, Gould, Moore, McGuire, and Stebbins (2008) developed an inventory and measure from 18 operations, namely: perseverance, significant personal effort, a career course in the pursuit (progress and contingencies), identity with the pursuit, a unique ethos, and the durable outcomes of personal enrichment, self-actualization, self-expression (abilities and individuality), enhanced self-image, self-gratification (satisfaction and enjoyment), recreation, financial return, group attraction, group accomplishments, and group maintenance, and they reached a fit model of the same six qualities of serious leisure.

In addition to Stebbin's (1982) theory, we will rely on Oldenburg's (1989) theory, which also focuses on the social implications of leisure activities. This theory presents a "third place" between home and work, which are considered as first and second places, to describe social sites where individuals gather informally to converse with each other. The third place is characterized by accessibility, informal pleasant discourse with no sense of obligation to visiting the place, where everyone can converge without regard to rank or class, and with the focus there on relaxation and support that fosters a feeling of acceptance. Physical third places provide safe environments, welcome community members, and communication services, without drawing attention to themselves (Frey and Codispoti 2010; Waxman 2006).

Hence, in the current study the two purposes were: first, to critically analyze the marathon sportspersons' attraction to this extreme serious leisure activity, and second, to achieve a comprehensive understanding regarding the runner–family relationships both with their spouse and with their children, considering the running group as a third place.

Method

The current chapter is based on a multi-sited ethnography approach that defines and investigates the field from several sites (Marcus 1995). Stebbins' (1982) and Oldenburg's (1989) theories were employed to analyze the data that involve inductive logic, and a procedure of thematic networks was used. We used that technique by breaking up text and finding within it explicit

rationalizations and their implicit significance (Attride-Stirling 2001; Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2006; Richards 2009). Following Attride-Stirling (2001) and Strauss and Corbin (1990), each of the two authors of the current study independently analyzed the data and searched for themes that were relevant to marriage/partnership/spouses and family life, within the framework of the two theories.

Instrumentation

Participating observation

The second author followed marathon runners, who were enrolled in two different running groups in Israel, for 3.5 years. All the runners were amateurs who participated on a regular basis in worldwide marathons, as well as in the local Israeli marathons. The groups were located in the North and center of Tel Aviv, which is the largest city in Israel. The second researcher took part in these groups as a registered runner, and attended all training sessions and social meetings and events. Immersing himself into the runner's social world enabled the researcher to experience and be part of the daily life of the researched phenomenon from within. It also provided him with the capacity to notice emerging experiences that require attention were not planned in the original research design (Sparkes and Smith 2013). As an insider, the second author physically participated in the activities, but also experienced the mental aspects of belonging to these groups. That is, he listened to their unique terminology, experienced a variety of feelings and emotions, became acquainted with an array of behaviors, participated in their conversations, and used the same gadgets and technologies as they did, becoming part of their whole social world. The second author made a recorded summary of each session's conversations, in addition to taking notes in his notebook during meetings and at social events. This strategy was chosen to prevent recording on site, as well as to keep the field as "clean" as possible from his intervention, as suggested by others (e.g., Malterud 2001). Along the 3.5 years of participating in and observing the two running groups, the second author also participated in their social forum websites, and registered for popular runners' websites. In these sites, psychologists, coaches, and experienced runners publish items about the marathon on a weekly basis.

Facebook groups

These groups served as another source for data collection. Themes that emerged relating to married life were collected and saved for data analysis.

Semi-structured interviews

Interviews were conducted by the two authors separately. Interviews were chosen, for the most part, because of their great potential for "eliciting and inviting participants' stories, their understanding of reality, their place in that reality, and the different meanings they give to events, emotions or behaviors in messy and detailed ways" (Sparkes and Smith 2013, p. 85). Participants were 31 runners ranging from 29 to 56 years of age (M = 37.68; SD = 13.36), 21 males and ten females, including veteran runners who had participated in more than three marathons, very experienced runners (one who had participated in 49 marathons), mid-level experienced runners who had participated in two or three marathons, and rookie marathon runners. Concerning their marital status, seven were married with no children, 12 were married with young children, and 12 were married with older children. Prior to the beginning of each interview, the participants were briefed on the study's aims and methods. Interviews took place in various places, either in a quiet place or along the running sessions while running shoulder-to-shoulder. Nine of the participants approached the first author and expressed their willingness to volunteer and participate after they had heard or read about the study on the website; two were approached because they were very experienced runners (28 marathons for one and 49 for the other), and the researchers thought that interviewing them could provide a deeper insight into the research findings. The duration of each interview ranged between 55 and 100 minutes.

Results

The first purpose of the current study was to critically analyze the marathon sportspersons' attraction to this extreme serious leisure activity. In the following sections, we will try to highlight a linkage between Stebbins' (1982, 2004, 2007) six qualities of serious leisure, and the long-distance runners' social life. We believe that by briefly emphasizing first Stebbins' model, and its applications to the runner's realm in general (e.g., pain), we can establish a precondition before discussing the family, given its influence on their life on the whole.

(1) The need to persevere at it. Understanding that the positive feelings about the activity come from persistence through improvement

Runners testified that in the beginning, they suffered, they had pains, and they felt incompetent compared with other runners in the group. Hockey and Allen-Collinson (2007) posited that during their ongoing practices runners adjusted their body, and that adjustment included aspects of all sensations. Along this process they learned how to tolerant pain or even to feel its essentiality (Lev 2018). The following example can demonstrate the above:

   After a training session, Hana arrived with an orthopedic recommendation. She said:

   "The doctor was astonished when he heard what distances I run every week. She smiled and proudly repeated what he told her: 'I don't believe how you are running with a condition such as you have with your knee. According to the X-rays, you cannot run at all. With your

will power, I have no doubt that if you choose to have arthroscopy surgery you will return to running very soon.' " She said that the doctor claimed that her knee was in a terrible condition and she needed urgent surgery. After the second author read the doctor's recommendation, he realized that there really was a tear in the meniscus, but much smaller that was described by Hana. The other constructs were undamaged as well. One of the teammates asked Hana if she intended to stop running. She replied that she did not know yet if she would have the surgery, and meanwhile she will continue running with the pains. A few days later, Hana wrote on Facebook: "From the morning thoughts … with every injury I become more connected to the privilege of running; every time I experience heartbreak or feel helplessness, I get justification for being active."

Toward the Tel Aviv Marathon, a year and a half after her injury, Hana wrote on Facebook:

> OK, I have registered, even though I declared no more … seven year I run, two marathons, a lot of half-marathons, long-distance runs every Saturday, still, there is nothing like running. I return from every running session like with a feeling of drunkenness, with feelings of joy and a great feeling of self-efficacy. Mental and physical power that brought me to what I am today. Marathon Tel Aviv – here I come, wish me luck!

From the citations above we can understand that marathon runners, especially beginners, perceive their pain and even injuries as something they have to overcome or ignore. Beginners might think about the hurdles on their way, but not as obstacles. Rather, they determinedly and persistently proceed with their running goal. Some see the running as an opportunity to escape from daily hassles, or life-event stressors. They find satisfaction in their increasing physiological competence and in their coping with enormous effort. Along the line of the SDT theory (Ryan and Deci 2000), the need for autonomy and competence serves as a motive for these runners.

(2) The tendency of amateurs, hobbyists, and volunteers to make careers out of their endeavors

This quality, as Stebbins stressed, "is characterized with special contingencies, turning points, and stages of achievement or involvement" (Stebbins 2001, p. 9)
    As mentioned by Avi, one of the interviewees:

> I entered a world that demands long training sessions that take place on a regular basis, and although it is a hobby, I totally relate to it like my second job … I mean, very seriously. I became totally devoted.
>   The adoption of rigid life habits requires long hours of absence from home.
>   What is running for me? An old lover, my partner, the love of my life, it turned from a health promoting instrument into an independent entity. My time while running is so powerful and condensed that it moves away everyday life disturbances and makes me completely egocentric, self contend with all the positive aspect of being selfish.
> <div align="right">(Lan, Avrahami, Marmur, Hoshen, and Keren, n.d.)</div>

Immersion into this demanding hobby is reflected in the total commitment of the runner. The beginner runners gradually devote more time and effort in order to increase their competence. However, high levels of effort and long hours of time devoted to training sessions stem from a passion for the running activity and characterizes all runners. Some attach the metaphor "job" to

their commitment, while others use "love" to describe their feeling toward running; both reflect a meaningful motive for running.

(3) Compelling effort that is based on knowledge, training, and skills

While sitting down to drink coffee after a training session, Gary said

> You have to acquire a new, unique vocabulary, with books that you'd better demonstrate that you read, and to have the required knowledge about training principles including nutrition, sleeping hours, and so on. It's not only about knowledge; it's about real understanding of what each and every specific training target means, and getting adjusted to it.

Then he added, "You have to be familiar with the rules and rituals of our community. It takes time."

Interviewees emphasized that running a marathon is a complex hobby that requires knowledge. One cannot train without learning the physiological, tactical, nutritional, and even the psychological aspects of long-distance running that are fundamental – not only to success, but also to their ability to continue and persist with this endeavor. At the same time, team knowledge that involves habits and rituals is to be learned. Thus the knowledge is multifaceted as are the efforts to acquire it.

(4) Benefits such as empowerment of the self and feelings of accomplishment – those related to social interaction and those related to physical products of the activity

These benefits were mentioned by others as motives to participate in a marathon (e.g., Masters, Ogles, and Jolton 1993; Zach et al. 2017). Runners were motivated to achieve personal benefits such as life meaning, personal goal achievements, normalizing their weight, and improving their psychological coping, in addition to social benefits such as recognition and feelings of affiliation.

Idit, a 38-year-old woman with three young children, wrote in her blog:

> It is the first time in my life that I am running. I found that by improving my endurance abilities I am not only strengthening my body, but also my soul. My self-confidence is improving, and this is the most valuable benefit that I find in running.

Tiki, 43 years old, divorced with two adolescents, wrote in her blog:

> Surprisingly, I find that running gives meaning to my life. I feel myself getting stronger mentally and physically. I eagerly wait for the training sessions, and I am proud to announce that I feel better with myself than I have ever felt before. I also received a wonderful gift – new friends for life. Friends are there for me without masks. No one can wear a mask while getting exhausted, sweating, and with a heart beating like crazy.

Participants demonstrated that the personal aspects of running fill them with self-worth and satisfaction, and that increasing their ability and their physical activity products/achievements encouraged them to invest even more effort and continue to train. Self-actualization was the reward that was achieved by hard work, and the runners felt that it was worth it**.**

(5) Developing a social world or subcultures with a particular ethos comprised of special

beliefs, values, moral principles, norms, and performance standards

Along this line, Shipway (2008) portrayed a typology of a distance running social world that differentiates among the depth of belonging to the running groups with four types of runners, from sporting outsiders – having no particular interest in running specifically at one end of the continuum, and experienced insiders at the other side of the continuum. Those whom we found in our current study are normally a member of a distance running club and are familiar with the rules and rituals of that distance running community. Shipway, Holloway, and Jones (2012) followed two distance running clubs for two years, and wrote about the use of signifiers among long-distance runners, such as clothing and language, that can be seen as a consequence of the desire both to portray a social identity and to conform to the role identity associated with the running group.

Lizzi, a 32-year-old unmarried woman, spoke about brotherhood:

> Along the last 5 kilometers of my first marathon Gary stayed by my side and did not let me give up. At the finish line I burst into tears and he held me tight. A stranger would not understand such brotherhood.

While the personal aspect of running can be easily understood, the social aspect of running is unique in its current contextual meaning. The need for relatedness is a motive for running, and the feelings of brotherhood, encouragement, and support become part of a physical activity that used to be considered individualistic. Actually, the social aspect while belonging to a running group has been described as having a strong impact on the runner. The group is an entity with specific characteristics, vocabulary, norms, and standards of behavior and achievements that have to be learned if one wants to become a member of the group.

(6) Identify with the chosen activity, and being proud and excited about it

Smith (1998) distinguished between elite runners or athletes and joggers – who run short distances occasionally or are motivated by health or appearance motives, and runners – who are highly committed to running, with better achievements then joggers. According to 48 interviews that he conducted, people who run are not only aware of this distinction, but they also keep declaring the "boundaries." In other words, runners are proud to be runners; they work hard and consider themselves "higher" in the hierarchy of people who run, compared with joggers.

Jonatan, 52 years old and a member of a running team, told me while we were sitting together in a café after a training session: "When we go home be sure to download the pictures from today's session on your wall and tag me." Shimie, his friend, said on that occasion:

> Open your Facebook now and give me lots of likes, I would like everyone to know that today I made it! I crossed 17 kilometers for the first time! My biggest achievement ever! And I will improve this achievement!!

The need for competence, and for receiving acknowledgment from others, came into actualization not only during the actual physical effort during the training sessions, but also after the sessions. Participants competed with each other for who runs faster and longer, and who achieves better. They happily shared their thoughts with others, declaring proudly orally or via social media. They consistently compared themselves to others, and sometimes even cliques

were established according to the group member's achievements, which increased the competitive atmosphere in the group.

Hence, after analyzing each of Stebbins' serious leisure characteristics (1982, 2004, 2007), and matching them with our findings from multi-site sources, we can claim with confidence that long-distance running can be labeled as serious and demanding, but also personally and socially a highly rewarding leisure activity.

The second purpose of the study was to obtain a comprehensive understanding regarding runner–family relationships, both with their spouse and with their children.

Runners' partnerships within their marriage

Four blogs that we analyzed yielded a description of a typical process that runners described regarding their experiences that influenced their marriage. This process can be broken down into distinct stages, as follows: (1) running contributes to self-confidence and self-esteem. This stems from improvement in physical abilities, losing weight, having a healthier and more attractive appearance, attaining goals, and receiving social approval from others; (2) improvement in self-confidence, which led to improvement in feelings of self-worth and contributed to an increase in their independence. Talia, a 42-year-old female runner, wrote in her blog:

> I love the training sessions – it is an opportunity for me to be outside of the home, to be free from household duties, to take a break from life stress/demands, and to enjoy investing in the "self." I find myself doing what I want and succeeding in attaining my goals, I enjoy realizing how independent I have become since I started to run.

However, others look at this process of becoming independent as "a way out" from marriage. Interestingly, rates of divorce among marathon runners are high. To illustrate, Glover and Schuder (1988) reported that the divorce rate among New York Marathon runners was 3.5 times the national average, and cited a poll taken in the Boston area that found that 40 percent of married runners who ran more than 70 miles a week got divorced.

In these blogs expressions were made concerning the fact the participants in running groups find in them a place to escape from home; they are absent from home long hours, often they become emotionally involved with other participant in the group or are having love affairs.

Jonatan, 52-year-old male wrote: "If you feel better when you are outside, it is guaranteed that you will go out eventually. It is a natural and safe road to divorce."

Irit, a 38-year-old female wrote in her blog:

> Running will take you out from your home, and eventually out from your marriage. I know so many people who went through this process and got divorced. If you choose to run in a running group, you buy a ticket to your freedom. But, you will pay for it with your marriage.

Shifra, a 48-year-old experienced long-distance runner, expressed her frustration:

> It is very, very hard to manage family life; you are absent from home for hours. For example, in the most critical hours, 7–8 AM, you have to prepare the children to go to school, and you are not there. Then you are absent on Fridays and Saturdays, and when you return you are so tired … and in the evening, the time to be with your husband, you are tired and go to sleep."

Relying on Oldenburg (1989)'s theory, which presents the "third place" as social sites with characteristics such as an informal pleasant discourse among the people, where everyone can converge without regard to rank or class, and where the focus is on relaxation and support that fosters feelings of acceptance (Frey and Codispoti 2010; Waxman 2006), we consider the running group as the "third place." Sometimes it might turn into the "first place."

A central theme that emerged from data analysis along all sources is the need of unconditional support, encouragement, and even permission from the spouse. As coined by Barrell et al. (Barrell, Chamberlain, Evans, Holt, and Mackean 1989), when they had to "take time" from family life, they also felt that they had do something in everyday life in order to "buy time" for their being out of home. Probably, without such support and consideration, the running partner will have to give up running long distances, or else the relationships will be under a threat. In other words, as suggested by Lev and Zach (2018), among marathon runners, married life is susceptible to deterioration or even to undergoing a serious crisis.

Orit, a 35-year-old woman, said: "I had my husband's support all the way through until my first marathon. I knew that there would not be a second one. He won't let me, and I would not dare to ask so much."

Given these examples, we affirm Lev and Zach's (2018) description of the thin line of behavior that is not to be crossed by the runner, in order to save his/her marriage.

Runners' relationships with their children

To our best knowledge no research was conducted concerning this issue. Therefore, our findings and the discussion that follows have a high potential to establish a new knowledge. Unlike the fragile partnerships in marriage that were described in the former section, relationships with the runners' children seem to be positive.

Two main themes emerged from data analysis:

(1) Admiration, being proud of the parent, and getting closer

Runners told about their child admiration. Especially their adolescents' attitude. This feeling was reflected when they noticed their children telling their friends about their achievements, "my mother is a marathoner" sounds like the greatest compliment. "My father is under 3.30" is something that they say aloud among their friends with pride. "I am going with my family to Jerusalem for the weekend. My father is running the marathon, and we are going to support him."

Zach and Netz (2007) examined the patterns of leisure time physical activity and factors influencing those patterns among family members in three generations. They examined 908 participants, ages 12–90, from three generations of 298 families, and found a significant correlation between the activity level of children and their mothers. No correlations were found for other family members. The researchers concluded that the parent who usually spends more time with the children probably has more influence on their everyday activity and life style. Following this line, our interviewees perceived that they were not only influencing their children, but also getting closer to them. This was especially true for the adolescents. They were approached, their children initiated conversations, they were invited to the room to briefly chat while friends came home – small but meaningful gestures that reflected positive healthy relationships. Judith, 49 years old and mother to three children, said:

> I feel closer than ever to my 17 years daughter. She is proud of me as if I am not "that old" … I have "cool" friends, I wear cool outfits, and I am an achiever. She is coming especially when she is down, get some good advices. Who would believe it?

The quality of the relationships between parents and their children has a variety of implications that have been extensively researched, such as having influence on both the parents' and the children's well-being, as well as the children's heathy lifestyle behavior, academic achievements, and self-esteem (e.g., Coleman 2018; Cyril, Halliday, Green, and Renzaho 2016; Vukovic, Boothroyd, Meins, and Burt 2015). We also have evidence concerning parent–offspring transactions (e.g., Jenkins, McGowan, and Knafo-Noam 2016; Jenkins, Rasbash, and O'Connor 2003), meaning that there is a reciprocal influence between the parent and child. Hence, if our findings show that the relationships between the running parent and his/her child improved since the parent began running, and this encourages the parent and rewards his/her activity, we would recommend nurturing this venue of relationship.

(2) Adopting a healthy and active life style, looking at the parent as a model, having something in common

Participants in the interview were asked how they perceive the health aspect of their demanding hobby. Most of the interviewees admitted that running the marathon might be too demanding. Nevertheless, running long distances as a life habit was perceived as healthy both mentally and physically. The married-with-children interviewees described that they created an atmosphere of an active life, and added healthy nutrition, with strictness about sleeping hours. Along the lines of Sallis, Prochaska, and Taylor (2000) and Gustafson and Rhodes (2006)' reviews, our findings also show that parents' support and direct help to their children, especially adolescents, were associated with a higher probability of the children being physically active. However, Gustafson and Rhodes (2006) reported a mixed association between parental and child physical activity levels. In addition, in their review there were some weak inter- and intra-generational sex correlations, but these results were mostly inconclusive. Our participants talked about mechanisms that might have an effect on the correlations between children's and parents' physical activity. For example Oded, a 37-year-old male, married with two children, told us that: "When I plan to participate in a running event, the whole family joins me. We either get to the place a day before and spend the night together, or my wife drives all of us early in the morning." Alon, a 46-year-old male with two boys, said: "My two sons, who had never run before, started to go to the fitness center with friends. Later, they joined a running team of adolescents and became even more Orthodox than myself." Billy, 48 and a single mother, said: "My son joins me on Fridays in the afternoon. We go out to run and I feel we have become closer since then. Many talks are conducted along the road." Oded, a divorced 47-year-old male said:

> Since I began running my 14 and 16 years old children talk with me about sport, about training habits, methods of training, I see that their interest in the subject increased. At least we have something in common. More words then the usual yes/no at their age.

Modeling is considered to be an effective way of learning (e.g., Raaijmakers et al. 2018; Willingham, Hughes, and Dobolyi 2015). Modeling is also a source of information that helps to create one's self-efficacy (Bandura 1997), by comparing his/her competencies to standards,

norms, and to others, whether similar or different. Therefore, when parents serve as a model for keeping a healthy and active lifestyle, they increase the likelihood that their behavior will serve as a model to all the offspring in the family.

Discussion

As systematically shown in our findings, long-distance running is a serious leisure activity. Furthermore, we would like to argue that it is a *very* serious leisure activity with the potential for negative consequences. When people have great feelings of self-actualization and self-confidence, with an increase in their self-efficacy, which leads to positive consequences such as independence and life satisfaction, then the implications are positive. However, if these feelings gain control over the people, if they feel drunken or drugged so that they are willing to taking risks or knowingly cause harm to themselves, the implications are negative and therefore undesirable.

Two main results that emerged from the data analysis pointed to our term *very serious* leisure. The first is the understanding that the six characteristics of serious leisure that were described by Stebbins (1982) cannot be considered "as is," meaning without an evaluation concerning their costs and benefits. We have shown that preparing for a marathon is a demanding activity that is projected onto all aspects of life, including at work, and within the family.

Moreover, in addition to the family/home and work, running creates what Oldenburg (1989) called a "third place." Most of our participants were so occupied and drawn into by their third place and the runner identity they adopted, that they allowed themselves to give up many of the habits they used to have in the past, including friends and family routines. They got injured, but ignored the signs from their body as long as they could. They invested a great deal of time and effort, usually on the account of others.

The second point is that they stretched their relationships with their spouse to the edge, and sometimes preferred this new, absorbing activity over married life. By *very serious* we mean an activity that, if not considered thoroughly from all aspects with support and understanding, and does not enable the ability to control feelings and balance life and social relationship, might do harm to the participants or others and have seriously negative consequences.

A very different point of view concerning long-distance running appeared from the runners' children. Unlike the two aspects that shed a judgmental, evaluating attitude on long-distance running as a very serious leisure activity, the children perceived their parents as role models. It appears as if the flavor of youth encompasses parents' behavior as runners. Moreover, it seems that being a runner is acknowledged as "a title" to be proud of and that deserves following. Along the lines of Zach and Netz's (2007) study about three generations' family exercise patterns, physically active parents probably inspire their adolescents children to be active as well. However, while Zach and Netz found statistically significant similarities among mothers' and children's physical activity patters, and Yao and Rhodes (2015) found father–son similarities in exercise patterns, the current study results showed that both parents have the potential to inspire their children so that they will follow their habits. The term inspire is a unique term, especially because parental encouragement was not a significant predictor of children's physical activity behavior (e.g., Yao and Rhodes 2015). We reached this conclusion due to some of the children saying that their parents' habits inspired them so much that they found themselves participating in physical activity on a regular basis. Others chose running as their own physical activity as well, and accompanied their parents to running events. They explained that during their

childhood the whole family joined the runner parent to the running events, and when they grew up it was natural for them to do the same activity.

Israeli marathon runners were examined concerning their perception about long-distance running. It appeared that one of the major dilemmas that they encounter is how to divide their leisure time between running, which is a demanding activity, and all the other duties in life. They are split in their attitude toward running. While some describe it as a "love," others describe it as a second job/career. One way or another, both attitudes demonstrate passion, accountability, and being proud of the lifestyle that they have adopted, as well as wishing to continue and striving to persist. A second specific challenging feeling that emerged in the current study is the need to balance the relationship within the marriage and married life. They feel that they should recognize and maintain the thin line of marriage reciprocity. Lastly comes the cultural struggle between woman and men – and numbers shows that only about 20 percent of Israeli marathon runners are females (Elizra 2018), while in other countries women participate twice as much as their counterparts in Israel (Carter 2015). Another cultural struggle is demonstrated between those who are highly competitive and those who run for fun. They sometimes interrupt each other in and out of the training sessions. It is recommended that future research examines what prevents more Israeli females from running long distances, and what implications stem from these cultural battles.

Hence, one of the bright sides of running long distances is that it increases a positive relationship with the children. Another side, more fragile, is the need for supportive and cooperative relationships with the partner, in order to continue running. The dark side of running is when the runner adopts running as a *third world* on the account of partnership, which may jeopardize married life. It should be noted that most probably every extreme practice – not only that of long-distance running – should be categorized as a source of extreme conflict.

The current study sheds light on marathon running as a serious leisure activity in an Israeli context, while showing its influence on relationships within the family. We demonstrated the fragility of marriage life in the case that one spouse is a runner and the other is not, and we also showed slightly different, more balanced relationships in the case where both partners are runners. In addition, our findings pointed out that the relationship and communication between the parents who are runners and their children seems to improve.

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9   "It's always up to the parents"

Parents' initiatives in response to the challenge of leisure time for children with disabilities

Hagit Klibanski, Orit Gilor, and Drora Kfir

Introduction

In the 1990s, Western countries increased their interest in leisure activities for children and youth, emphasizing the benefits they offer. In the relevant literature, there is broad agreement about the importance of participation in leisure activities in general and especially among children and adolescents, since they provide fertile ground for experiences as well as personal and interpersonal development (Hansen, Larson, and Dworkin 2003). However, despite awareness of its importance, and despite declarations supporting equal opportunity and the rights of children and youth with disabilities, in particular to participate in leisure activities (WHO IFC-CY 2007), not everyone is given an equal chance, if any, to do so (King, Petrenchik, Law, and Hurley 2009). Reducing the leisure options of children with disabilities is related to personal factors dependent upon the child and environmental factors that include the family. Family characteristics and resources influence leisure patterns of leisure and recreation, and parents play a major role in the shaping of the leisure time of children with disabilities (Lauruschkus, Nordmark, and Hallstrom 2017). Despite the central role of parents, most studies dealing with children with disabilities focus on the children and ignore their parents and families (Neikrug and Roth 2015). This chapter aims to present the challenges of leisure time and how parents of children with disabilities deal with them, in view of their critical role in their children's participation in leisure activities.

Leisure activities and their contributions

Participation in leisure activities, as part of everyday life, is common among young people in Western countries. These are defined as voluntary activities engaged in during one's free time (King et al. 2003). Informal leisure activities are spontaneous, usually initiated by the child (King et al. 2006) while formal ones are organized and structured, often with a professional instructor with a focus on nurturing skills (Mahoney, Lord, and Carryl 2005). Because of the benefits that many studies indicate (e.g., Larson et al. 2004), great importance is attributed to leisure activities, especially for children and teenagers. Participation in leisure activities is a way to build friendships (Callus 2017) and develop physical, emotional, and communicative skills (Darcy and Dowse 2013). They are seen as the context that gives life purpose and meaning (King

et al. 2006), contribute to the promotion of physical and mental health, as well as well-being, positive development, and quality of life (Dahan-Oliel, Shikako-Thomas, and Majnemer 2012).

Leisure patterns of children and youth with disabilities

Most people with disabilities now live in the community and have an interest and a need to belong (Overmars-Marx, Thomese, Verdonschot, and Meininger 2014). Participation in activities of daily living, including leisure activities, is important for children with disabilities (Aitchison 2003) and is anchored as part of children's rights in the treaties of the United Nations (UN) and the World Health Organization (Dahan-Oliel, Shikako-Thomas, and Majnemer 2012). These treaties encouraged policies and practices that allow children with disabilities to participate and belong to the community. However, it turns out that children with disabilities participate less in leisure activities of any kind than their non-disabled peers (Bult, Verschuren, Lindeman, Jongmans, and Ketelaar 2014; Shields and Synnot 2016). Snaefridur Egilson et al. (2016) found significant differences between children with and without disabilities in all aspects of participation. Although children with and without disabilities like to participate in the same leisure activities in the community, children with disabilities, especially girls, take part in a limited range of activities in general, and social activities in particular (Schreuer, Sachs, and Rosenblum 2014). As a result, they have less social experiences with friends outside of school and family and fewer relationships with peers, and many of them experience loneliness (Orsmond, Shattuck, Cooper, Sterzing, and Anderson 2013).

Factors that affect participation in leisure activities

The World Health Organization (WHO ICF-CY 2007), as well as the Social Model of Disability (Oliver 1996), and the theoretical model of King et al. (2003), identify the environment as a key factor affecting participation in leisure activities. The environmental factors include the physical, social, and institutional environment and attitudes toward disability, and present disabled children with more barriers than their non-disabled peers (Shields and Synnot 2016). Factors affecting the participation of children with disabilities in leisure activities are expressions of support for their participation, or barriers that restrict and even prevent it. Common supporting factors are encouragement from family and friends, geographical location, the child's willingness and ability to be active, proximal and accessible facilities, distribution and access to information, skilled staff and opportunities that are sensitive to the needs of the child. However, the most common barriers are negative attitudes toward disability, lack of programs and opportunities in the immediate vicinity, policy, costs, and physical accessibility (Anaby et al. 2013; Thompson and Emira 2011). Having appropriate inclusive educational programs and available facilities in the community encourage the participation of children with disabilities in leisure activities (Kang et al. 2010). Barriers can also be a result of the features and requirements of the activity versus the needs and abilities of each child. Disability-related personal characteristics, such as the level of physical, cognitive, and social function affect participation, especially the social aspect (Mei et al. 2015). But beyond all this, the family, especially parents, has a decisive effect on the participation of children with disabilities in leisure activities (Piškur, Beurskens, Jongmans, Ketelaar, and Smeets 2015).

The effect of family on children's participation in leisure activities

Most of the studies dealing with the participation of children with disabilities focus on the child and rarely address the disabled children's parents and family (Neikrug and Roth 2015). The family characteristics as a whole determine the nature of their support for leisure activities for their children with disabilities. Some of the characteristics are the attitudes and values of those closest to the children, family involvement in leisure activities in the community, and the importance attached to the subject (Bult, Verschuren, Lindeman, Jongmans, and Ketelaar 2014).

Economic resources clearly affect the parents' ability to allow their children to participate in leisure and recreational activities (Egilson, Snaefridur Jakobsdottir, Olafsson, and Leosdottir 2016), especially when the cost is added to the expenses related to the treatment of their particular child (Shields and Synnot 2016). In their study, Mary Law et al. (2006) highlighted the connection between the lesser participation of children with disabilities and the family's socio-economic background. Family cohesion plays an indirect but important role in the intensity of the participation of children with disabilities. Hence, family adversity of any kind, or the parents' lack of a sense of efficacy, pressure, and lack of time can limit the children's participation (Anaby et al. 2013; King, Petrenchik, Law, and Hurley 2009).

Several studies in recent years have examined parents' perceptions and family characteristics and their impact on the leisure-time behavior of children with disabilities (Piškur et al. 2012; Shields and Synnot 2016). The study by Piškur et al. (2015) shows that parents of children with disabilities rank leisure as a high priority and consider it one of their most essential needs. However, most of the parents mentioned having difficulty in finding appropriate activities for their children and identifying activities with their peer group, whether with or without disabilities. Parents indicated that they are faced with challenges and questions such as how to support the child correctly and how to choose challenging yet enjoyable leisure activities. They debate issues such as encouraging independence in activities with peers versus the child wellness (Thompson and Emira 2011). Common difficulties parents have reported relate mainly to the social and physical environment (Piškur et al. 2012) and include negative attitudes toward disability, comments and other prejudices against the child with a disability, the economic burden, the lack of time, and barriers to access (Bennett and Hay 2007). Parents recognize the value of participating in the community through leisure activities, however sometimes they, themselves, interfere with their children's participation. Parents' decisions for their children limit their independence (Mei et al. 2015), prevent the child from participating as much as they wish to, and affect their motivation, interest, and involvement in the activity. The same overprotection, misperception of the child's abilities, and reactions to their disability reduce the options of leisure and recreational activities.

Despite its critical importance and influence, few studies have focused on the role of parents in the context of leisure activities for disabled children. This chapter seeks to give a voice to parents of children with disabilities and presents the challenges and methods of coping with them.

In order to make the parents' voice heard, we chose the qualitative research approach, which offers an opportunity to listen to vulnerable and/or excluded social groups (Oliver 1996). We interviewed 17 parents of boys and girls with various disabilities. All children were between the ages of ten and 21 and in most cases had a complex disability

Content analysis (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber 1998) of the interviews made it possible to create a comprehensive picture out of the individual experiences of the interviewees, thereby making it possible to gain insights through bottom-up observation, from the individual to the general. The analysis of the interviews revealed two main themes, which are described

below. One is the challenges of parents with regard to the recreational activities of their children with disabilities. The second theme deals with the ways in which parents cope with challenges.

Leisure-time challenges for parents of children with disabilities

As in previous studies (e.g., Piškur, Beurskens, Jongmans, Ketelaar, and Smeets 2015), parents related to the importance of leisure time for their children with disabilities, but they all talked about the difficulties for them and for their children regarding participation in such activities and they frequently used the term "challenge," as one of the mothers described: "Actually finding what to do with these children in their free time is a very, very challenging task." The challenges of leisure time are linked to the child's functioning and disability as well as to factors in the physical and social environment.

Challenges linked to the function and disability of the child

Leisure-time challenges linked to the function and disability of the child, at both the personal and interpersonal levels, affect the participation of children with disabilities in leisure activities, which is linked primarily with the child's desire to be active and to his or her preferences, needs, and abilities (Anaby et al. 2013).

Parents spoke of difficulties arising from lack of cooperation and motivation of the child to participate in leisure activities: "My difficulty is that he doesn't want to.….." This leads to a sense of helplessness and despair among the parents and/or carers: "What makes me despair is that he doesn't cooperate." The extent of the influence of the disability depends on the skills required for involvement in the activity (Kanagasabai, Mulligan, Hale, and Mirfin-Veitch 2017). Therefore the mismatch between an activity and abilities is yet another obstacle: "For example, the youth movements have camps – she can't go, complicated trips – she couldn't go." The option of participating in a leisure-time activity is also connected to the type and severity of the disability (Tonkin, Ogilvie, Greenwood, Law, and Anaby 2014): "She understands everything. But the fact that she does not talk makes it very difficult … for the people around her to communicate with her … and then in most cases people refrain from trying"; "The difficulty is in understanding the social code …, he will respond inappropriately or disproportionately to what happens … violent incidents, temper tantrums." Communication disorders or lack of social and behavioral skills make participation difficult and have been found to be connected to low levels of participation (Mei et al. 2015; Ullenhag et al. 2012). Another difficulty is linked to leisure activities suited to different disabilities and levels of functioning: "For us, finding free-time activities is challenging …, on the one hand we want to – let's do something together – and on the other, the children are very, very different."

Participating in leisure-time activities is an opportunity to develop social relations and to integrate (Melboe and Ytterhus 2017). However, personal characteristics relating to the disability, such as the level of physical functioning, cognitive and communicative ability, and social skills affect participation, mainly from the social aspect (Kanagasabai, Mulligan, Hale, and Mirfin-Veitch 2017). Parents stressed the implications of the disability in the social context, as a result of the difficulties in making and/or preserving social contacts: "My daughter does not have girlfriends; autistic children don't really have friends, they don't manage to stay in touch." Similarly, in a study conducted in Sweden, parents mentioned that it is hard for their children with disabilities to make friends and, as they get older, the need for friends increases, but their

children find it harder to keep in contact with them (Lauruschkus, Nordmark, and Hallstrom 2017).

Only a few interviewees referred to another obstacle related to the child's disability – the parents themselves **(**Mei et al. 2015). Parental stress (Tonkin, Ogilvie, Greenwood, Law, and Anaby 2014), overprotection (Antle, Mills, Steele, Kalnins, and Rossen 2008), their assessment of their child's abilities and fear for their safety (Piškur et al. 2012) might prevent participation in leisure activities (Coyne and Chung 2015): "There was a period when he did want to go on a two-day trip through Bnei Akiva [a youth movement], but we were worried." Another mother said: "I need to learn to let go."

Environmental challenges

The environment refers to the expanding social circles – from the family through the local community and the professional community to the state authorities and society at large (King et al. 2003).

The family and its resources

Obstacles in the physical environment also make it difficult or even impossible to take part in leisure and recreational activities. In a study examining environmental factors that promote or limit the participation of children and adolescents with cerebral palsy, 73 percent of the parents reported that their children have no access to suitable leisure facilities (Badia, Orgaz, Gomez-Vela, and Longo 2014). Transportation constraints prevent participation in community life (Melboe and Ytterhus 2017). Mainly, getting to an activity requires transportation (Shields and Synnot 2016), either because of a lack of any suitable activity near the home or because of the disability: "Around here for sure there is nothing"; "It's not so possible and practical for him to go on his own." Transportation by the parents or by someone else on their behalf is a further burden, in terms of both time and money: "He is not independent … transportation is a really heavy burden, because I am on the road all the time"; "The boy is now taking part in the 'training apartment' … there is a ride in one direction … and we parents pick him up or pay for his ride home."

The cost involved in leisure activities was a key issue mentioned by all the parents interviewed. The costs of such activities for children with disabilities often includes special expenses because of the activity framework and/or transportation: "A riding lesson.… If they call it therapeutic riding … it will always be more expensive"; "Very high costs … usually it is small groups, and then in order to run something like that you mainly need to take from the parents. It's not established things." The difficulty increases in light of the fact that the payment for leisure activities is added to the other expenses connected with the disability. Thus, participation in leisure and recreational activities depends on the financial capabilities of the family and its order of priorities, even when the family is doing well financially: "We spend huge amounts of money, we are lucky that we can afford to do so."

Parents' low income was found to be linked to low levels of participation of their children (Shikako-Thomas, Majnemer, Law, and Lach 2008; Law et al. 2006). Antle et al. (2008) reported that low-income parents feel stressed when they lack the resources needed to register their children for recreational activities. The cost of the activity affects the options, and since in many cases parents cannot afford these expenses, their children do not take part in leisure activities, as

the parents we interviewed mentioned: "But not all the children do it … again, it is something that is an extra expense."

Community consciousness – information, knowledge, and attitudes

Formal and informal support within the community can facilitate the involvement of children with disabilities in leisure-time activities (Coyne and Chung 2015). However, the local community, like the professional community involved in leisure-time activities, does not recognize the special leisure and recreational needs of children with disabilities. Similar to findings in other studies (Piškur et al. 2012; Thompson and Emira 2011), the parents stressed that lack of available information about activities suitable for children with disabilities is, thus, a key challenge: "You need to be on the alert all the time, it won't come to you …, you need to be looking all the time … it has to be your initiative"; "Finding these places [for activities] is really, really difficult." The main source of information is by word of mouth, mainly from other parents (Heah, Case, McGuire, and Law 2007), as we heard in the interviews: "I listen, I ask mothers"; "It will always happen by word of mouth with parents who talk to us…." In their efforts to find information about leisure options for their children, the parents use the Internet, but the information they find there is incomplete: "A lot I look on the Internet, scouring websites, all sorts … and even then, when you find one, I don't know what the instruction is like." In other words, very often questions arise about how professional the staff is. In a study by Barbara Piškur et al. (2016), parents mentioned that finding suitable activities is a "long, quite traumatic journey" because of the limited options, the lack of suitable information, and the lack of experience and professional knowledge of the staff regarding their children. In the current study, too, parents spoke about the lack of knowledge among staff and instructors in leisure activities for the children: "There were very few guides who really took responsibility for this … I think because they lacked the knowledge." Another mother said: "she is not welcome everywhere because they don't know … these are normative places, they don't know."

Thompson and Emira (2011) suggest that staff training should be improved so that they recognize the needs of children with disabilities and their families, since their awareness and understanding greatly influence the parents' approach to leisure. Parents would be satisfied and feel safe if their children had instructors who were qualified and competent to help their children participate in activities (Lauruschkus, Nordmark, and Hallstrom 2017). Lack of knowledge often leads to the instructor's refusal to include children with disabilities in their activities and the parents make great efforts to advocate for their children to be included: "I would have to give a motivational talk to the troop leader … I organized an explanatory talk with the Scouts cadets … to enable them to accept him." Joining in an activity is just the starting point. Due to the staff's lack of knowledge and professionality, the parents must then explain the needs and strengths of the child (Coyne and Chung 2015) and continue to accompany the instructors: "There is also a lot of investment in showing them 'how' … giving guidance to the staff, too."

Society and the establishment

The institutional environment includes the policy, modes of action, and procedures that determine the perception of leisure and its patterns in society, in a particular population, or community (Coyne and Chung 2015). Attitudes and values may influence leisure options (Law et al. 1999). A particularly significant challenge is negative attitudes toward disability that may stem from ignorance, lack of understanding and sometimes from prejudice (Piškur et al. 2012;

Shikako-Thomas, Majnemer, Law, and Lach 2008), as they constitute a basic barrier to participation in the community (Thompson et al. 2016):

> A population that doesn't understand that she [the girl] is grown up in size but is mentally young and she goes to see Disney movies … so she hides it and then she makes some kind of noise and gestures and then the parents start making all kinds of comments.

These kinds of situations show a lack of support from the environment and leave the parents with an unpleasant feeling: "You can't be with a child who is different in this kind of environment … it's an unpleasant feeling." Negative comments, attitudes, and reactions from others have restricted parents and their children from coming to play in leisure areas (Fallon and MacCobb 2013), harmed the family experience, and thus affected the children's participation (Lawlor, Mihaylov, Welsh, Jarvis, and Colver 2006). And as if that were not enough, even those who are supposed to be helping often create obstacles. These public institutions, from government ministries through local authorities to public and private organizations, are responsible for setting and/or implementing policy and they can influence the recreational options for children with disabilities. Policy obstacles relate to the availability of programs and services in the community (Obrusnikova and Miccinello 2012). Parents shared their struggles and spoke of burdensome procedures: "About welfare … we don't have enough adults and they want to close down the club"; "There is coping with all the bureaucracy and all the various permits." In earlier studies as well, parents reported that they had to fight in order to get information, assistance and proper treatment for their children with disabilities (Lauruschkus, Nordmark, and Hallstrom 2017). In the study by Stuart Schleien et al. (2014), the most common issue mentioned by the parents in the focus groups was their ongoing struggle to find leisure options and social opportunities for their children with disabilities. Similarly, in the study by Heah et al. (2007), parents in Canada claimed that programs in the community do not offer adequate opportunities for children with disabilities.

Most of the obstacles pertaining to leisure time were dropped on the local authorities, since usually they are the ones who deal with leisure services in the community. As in other countries (Tisdall 2006), municipal resources and public services affect how children spend their leisure time (Ullenhag et al. 2012). Parents spoke of local authorities that don't relate to leisure activities for children with disabilities: "Here there is absolutely nothing for these children." Many people with disabilities and their families described their lives as a constant struggle for resources and support. There were those who said that they were exhausted by the ongoing battles and many expressed frustration at the bureaucratic nature of the formal social services (National People with Disabilities and Carer Council 2012).

All the challenges the parents face regarding leisure and recreational activities for their children with disabilities leaves their mark over time. Parents mentioned fatigue or simply giving up: "When he was little there was still energy, now, actually there is no energy to find him something enjoyable"; "From that point of view, too, I am tired … the very unkind comments from the community."

However, alongside these disclosures, we found parents had other ways of coping.

Parents' initiatives as a response to the challenges of leisure-time

Parents' initiatives, as a way of coping with the challenges stem from dissatisfaction with the current situation of children's leisure services for the disabled (Gilor, Klibanski, and Kfir 2017).

Dissatisfaction with public services, which are supposed to cater to the needs and wishes of the citizens, leads them to create alternative and innovative services (Gofen 2012).

The challenges drive parents to adopt a proactive approach, to present their needs and wishes, and take action (Piškur et al. 2016). In the current study, parents interviewed also reported that the difficulties, personal experience, familiarity with the needs, and the lack of suitable responses pushed them to initiate leisure activities for children with disabilities and even undertake the task themselves in their attempts to create a change.

Private initiatives

On a personal level, parents initiated meetings to respond to their children's social needs; "At younger ages we always organized birthday parties with friends … we also went out to do fun things with classmates in order to create interaction"; "Social life … it is a lack that has no words, what I did for her was I got her into lots of clubs … regular ones"; "A boy and a girl from the Scouts visit him … those are things that we created and initiated, and again, it is not a friend who visits him on his own initiative." Parents create leisure options by arranging or changing the physical or social environment, such as choosing peers and venues (Melboe and Ytterhus 2017), in order to increase their children's participation in social and community interactions (Antle, Mills, Steele, Kalnins, and Rossen 2008; Heah et al. 2007). Some of the initiatives are one-time or very specific: "At my place in the summer … every day there were mothers with their children.… Once you have the idea and you are willing … there is no problem."

Parents use their experience to "educate" others, adults and peers by giving guidelines of how to act and adapt, and explanations how to support their child (Lauruschkus, Nordmark, and Hallstrom 2017; Lawlor, Mihaylov, Welsh, Jarvis, and Colver 2006; Piškur et al 2012; Piškur, Beurskens, Jongmans, Ketelaar, and Smeets 2015). In the current study there were parents who undertook to guide instructors: "I supported the instructors … I explained to them"; "In the Scouts … I took … her behavior analyst and paid her to explain to them how to work."

Corporate initiatives

Quite often parents of children with disabilities maintain networks to provide their children with options for leisure-time activities and social encounters (Antle, Mills, Steele, Kalnins, and Rossen 2008; Piškur, Beurskens, Jongmans, Ketelaar, and Smeets 2015; Shelley 2002). Most of the parents spoke about group initiatives. Parents of children with disabilities have joined together to implement an initiative that will address their children's leisure time as well as their social needs, for example:

> We set up a bowling group for them … also with the idea of what would happen next year when they would no longer have school and do something for them for their free time … we parents … set it up.

Other initiatives were meant to provide long-term responses to social needs: "We organized a group … we brought a coach … he works with them on social skills"; "I already work a lot, all year round, trying to create a group for her … the long-term goal is … that they will be friends."

Making a change

Beyond these initiatives, parents are involved in initiatives aimed at creating a change in attitudes toward people with disabilities in the community: "Mentoring … we founded the project … so

that the normative community … will integrate the children with special needs." Furthermore, mother of two girls with disabilities decided to educate the young generation following a personal experience:

> I give lots and lots of lectures in schools …, why did I start? … I took my daughter to a show.… When she enjoys herself she shouts and claps, and waves her hands noisily.… She sat next to me in a wheelchair, at some point all the mothers around me, without exception, gave me a look of "how come you can't control your daughter?" … I left.… Because of that I said I have to educate a different generation.

Another mother explained the significance of creating change in society:

> These events … none of the activities are suitable for my daughter … but I am still deeply into this, because I think that if the general atmosphere, the climate is right, then my family and I will feel more comfortable in it.

Among these initiatives, parents undertook positions in local or national organizations dealing with populations with disabilities: "Public activity for people with autism … I was elected to the executive board and … all these years on the Parents Committee at school." A father of two children with disabilities said: "I was the chairperson of the municipal Special Education Parents Committee."

Entrepreneurial citizens are changing the rules of the game as they provide new solutions in areas that are considered professional. Therefore, more often than not, they have to fight to gain cooperation or recognition for their initiative. Parents' initiative can be private and be a one-time event, but it takes on new meaning when others join it, thus testifying to its necessity, and giving it social recognition. These initiatives may contribute to the development and implementation of new ideas and create new options that become available to the general public. Moreover, they can develop and lead to a change in official policy (Gofen 2012).

Community cooperation and support

For successful initiatives in the community one needs cooperation, and involvement of the local authority is vitally important for implementing initiatives of leisure activities for children with disabilities: "This project which started, the local authority sponsored it. Through it, in fact, I reached families … encouragement … enlistment in terms of thinking"; "Together with the Council, they created a club of 11 children to teach them social skills."

Parents' activism might yield collaborations and motivate local authorities and organizations to take action regarding the leisure activities of children with disabilities (Shelley 2002). However, the demand and/or initiative always comes from the parents, who are also part of the implementation, as we can learn from the story of one of the mothers about an initiative that led to action, and also led to a change in the attitude of the local authority:

> I was at some meeting with the Council's department heads. I stood up and said to them … "I intend to organize the parents, I would prefer to do it with you" …, and they immediately rose to the challenge, to their credit, and I launched activities here in the Council to unite all the parents of children with special needs … I opened a cross-regional forum of parents and local authorities.… The stated purpose of this forum is to enrich our children's social life and leisure time.… The idea was mine, the initiative, the push to make it happen was mine

> … but I definitely didn't do this alone.… In my opinion, in our Council today … the door is wide open to all families who have special needs.

Given the experience of the parents, they are aware of the responsibility, even if it is one that they did not want, for driving the process, making contact with the local authority, and the actions of the public organizations are based primarily on the parents' initiative: "The authority knows … but it works the other way, if you come to us and if you ask us, and you chase us, we will give you the information"; "It is always the parents … it is the initiative of the parents, it is not the local authority"; "In the end, I say, the process begins and ends with us, the parents."

The findings suggest that the process begins with the parents where the local authority, i.e., the administration of community, is the significant field of activity. In Israel the local authority is responsible for providing essential services to its residents, including education, culture, and welfare; areas that have a direct impact on their lives. As such it is the main public institution providing non-formal education services and leisure activities for children and youth. Therefore, the amount and quality of the services and the types of leisure activities are determined by the local policy makers. Furthermore, the local authority is also an important tool for integrating social groups through their participation in the formulation of differential solutions and allowing the expression of specific community needs in the public domain. Moreover, accessibility and proximity, within a local area, allow citizens to come together and organize around common struggles or initiatives in the belief that they can influence the decision-making processes affecting their lives (Waxman and Blander 2002). All this justifies recognizing the local authority as an essential factor for promoting the issue of leisure and the local community as the preferred platform for running leisure initiatives for children with disabilities. This might explain the tendency of the entrepreneurial parents to appeal to the local authority in an attempt to seek help with promoting their initiative and recognition for their activity.

Summary and implications

This chapter deals with the experiences of parents of children with disabilities, the challenges that accompany their participation in leisure activities in the community, and how the parents cope with these challenges. Bronfenbrenner's socioecological theory (Bronfenbrenner 1979), which focuses on the interaction between humans and their environment, emphasizes their reciprocal influence, seeing the family as the most influential factor on the functioning of the child. However, the environment affects not only the children but also the parents' needs, challenges, and coping ability (Resch et al. 2010). Social policy affects the functioning of the parents, but they also have the power to influence the policy makers and change the policy, as demonstrated in this study.

Disability, policy, leisure, diversity, and complexity in Israeli society

Israel has signed international treaties and over the years has passed various laws pertaining to people with disabilities. In the 1980s, parents of children with disabilities began to fight for services for their children. Thanks to the efforts of parents and civil society organizations, the Special Education Law was passed in 1988. At the end of the 1990s the "Headquarters for the Struggle of the Disabled" was set up, which led to two long-lasting protests by people with

disabilities. Since then policy and legislation regarding disability in Israel have gradually shifted from a needs-based approach to one of human rights and equality (Rimon-Greenspan 2007).

In 1998 Israel passed an Equal Rights Law for people with disabilities, but for economic reasons it did not include issues such as access to public venues and services, life in the community, individual assistance, education, culture, and leisure. The Commission for Equality for People with Disabilities, established in 2000, was put in charge of the implementation of the Law, but it encountered difficulties due to the lack of budget and the authority needed to implement and enforce it. As a result, the struggle of the parents and civil society organizations shifted mainly to the courts, demanding their rights by law. However, government policy for people with disabilities is inconsistent and depends on varying political pressures and circumstances (Soffer, Blanck, Hill, and Rimmerman 2010). Thus, in the 2000s there was a rise in the public struggles of people with disabilities, as well as an increase in the number of disability organizations, advocacy groups, and initiatives of parents from all sectors on behalf of their children with disabilities. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that not every parent has the necessary skills and means to cope, guide, and advocate. Not all parents can be entrepreneurs and/or devote their time and energy to fight for children with disabilities and sometimes even not for their own children.

Israeli society consists of multiple groups and cultures, among which there are many tensions and harsh controversies, which have split society nationally (Jews and Arabs), religiously (religious and secular), ethnically (Ashkenazi-Sephardi), ideologically (left and right), and economically (rich and poor).

Arab society in Israel, which constitutes 20 percent of the population, is a minority composed of different cultural–religious groups (Muslims, Christians, Druze, Circassians, Bedouin) who differ from the Jewish majority, which is also divided into sub-groups. The power relations between Arabs and Jews are unequal, and there are significant political, economic, and social gaps (Hermann, Cohen, Omar, Heller, and Lazar-Shoef 2017) expressed, among other things, in ongoing inequality in many areas and discrimination when it comes to the allocation of resources. Arab culture is different and has its unique characteristics, such as living in the periphery, mostly a rural society, speaking Arabic, with a high rate of poverty, problems with infrastructure and transportation, a lack of services, including social and leisure activities for children and youth, alongside difficulties with physical and linguistic access to services. All these are linked to barriers to the integration of people with disabilities in society (Monikendam-Givon 2017). Thus, in addition to the barriers for everyone with a disability, Arab citizens in Israel have to cope with a reality that forces families with a child with a disability to confront unique challenges (Neikrug, Roth, Judes, and Zmiro 2014), such as the lack of information and counseling, harsh personal feelings (shame, fear, humiliation) as well as exclusion, prejudice, and stigmas, which are particularly severe toward females with a disability (Sandler-Laff and Shahak 2006). Studies show that parents and people with disabilities mention the attitude of the community as one of the main barriers to participation in leisure activities. In contrast, the more accessible the physical and social environment was reported to be, the greater the participation in leisure activities (Anaby, Law, Majnemer, and Feldman 2016). Moreover, very often the needs of people with disabilities receive insufficient attention from the government institutions and/or local authorities that are supposed to help, and this is particularly evident in Arab communities (Sandler-Laff and Shahak 2006).

The assorted groups within both the Jewish and the Arab sectors have different attitudes toward disabilities and also toward leisure-time. The social mindsets and attitudes toward people

with disabilities vary from one culture to another (Ibrahim and Ismail 2018), and this can be seen in studies that explored attitudes toward people with disabilities in Israel. Yona Leyser and Shlomo Romi (2008) found different attitudes toward inclusion among students in the sub-groups, both in Jewish and Arab society, where the Ultra-Orthodox Jews displayed less positive attitudes, similar to those of the Arabs. According to Victor Florian (1982), this kind of result can be explained in the context of modern cultures as opposed to traditional ones, which have more conservative values. This may also explain the more positive attitudes of secular youth in Jewish society toward people with disabilities, compared to their religious peers (Weisel and Zaidman 2003). Each sub-group is also heterogeneous, as we learn from the study by Yoav Bergman and Ela Koren (2016), who found that immigrants from the former Soviet Union (FSU) had significantly more negative attitudes toward people with physical disabilities compared to native-born Israelis. Immigrants from the FSU and Ethiopia are two cultural groups in Israeli society that typically have special needs because of financial distress, language difficulties, and lack of orientation in terms of bureaucracy and culture, as well as in the understanding and acceptance of disabilities (Abraham, Neon, Ben-Rabbi, and Brodsky 2013).

There is also evidence of variance regarding leisure, since the concept of leisure and the legitimacy of recreational activities are culture-dependent (Davidovitch and Soen 2016). Patterns of leisure are affected by many variables, including cultural background, degree of religious observance, place of residence, age, gender, and socio-economic situation. The importance attributed to recreational activities and accepted leisure habits vary according to the values and norms of each cultural group, and even within each one. For example, the modern meaning of leisure clashes with the values of Jewish religious society (ibid.), and in Arab society, too, there are limitations on leisure habits (Stodolska and Livengood 2006). Batya Engel-Yeger and Tal Jarus (2008), who examined the influence of culture in children's participation in leisure activities among different groups in Israel, found that there are differences between Jewish and Druze children's preferences for leisure activities. The difference was attributed to the different living environment (rural vs. urban) and to the influence of religion and the more traditional norms in Druze society. Like the Druze children, who represent a conservative religious society, Muslim children also differed in their patterns of participation in leisure activities compared to Jewish children. These differences were explained by the differences between the cultures, given the ethnic and religious background alongside the impact of sociodemographic factors (age, gender, parents' education, size of family, socio-economic status of the family, place of residence), which are linked to leisure patterns and the participation of children in activities outside school (Engel-Yeger 2013). Cultural differences were also found in leisure activity preferences between secular and religious children within Jewish society (Engel-Yeger 2012). These comparative studies conducted in Israel revealed that in the conservative cultures – the Druze, the Muslims, and the religious Jews – there were also differences between boys and girls in terms of opportunities, preferences, and participation in leisure activities, as a natural outcome of gender role definitions, norms, and values. Hence there is a need to raise public awareness about adopting a culturally sensitive approach when dealing with the issue of young people with disabilities and leisure-time activities (Coles and Scior 2012).

Moreover, existing leisure options are not equally distributed, neither geographically, i.e., in terms of access, nor in terms of economics. As mentioned, financial ability is a critical factor for the participation of children with disabilities in leisure-time activities. Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics show that a large proportion of Arab and Jewish Ultra-Orthodox citizens, two communities that constitute a religious minority and uphold traditional values and a separate

socio-cultural framework within Israeli society, belong to the low socio-economic deciles (1–5) (CBS 2013), as do about one-half of the new immigrants (Abraham, Neon, Ben-Rabbi, and Brodsky 2013; Swirski and Konor-Attias 2017). The poverty in these groups does not allow them to consume services individually, and so they are completely dependent on public services. Conservativism or limited resources in these groups are what determine, to a great extent, their children's leisure activity options. Given that, for children with disabilities, such activities are an important source of learning, development, and creating social ties, the significance of non-participation is considerable damage to their present and future quality of life.

Twenty years on, the legislation process remains incomplete, and is being held up, among other things, by a government policy of reducing social budgets and services, including education and leisure services. Beyond that, the policy reflects the accepted mindset in Israeli society that has not yet assimilated the principle of equality (Avrami and Rimmerman 2005). According to Dina Feldman (2009), former Commissioner for Equal Rights of People with Disabilities (2002–2007), Israel has invested a great deal in legislation, budgets, and services to ensure the social rights of children with disabilities, but is still in the early stages of implementation, because the change in approach toward the model of human rights has not yet occurred. Furthermore, she claimed that the implementation process is also connected to other characteristics of life in Israel, such as the power of Israeli democracy, the status of national security, the connection between religion and the state, and the commitment to the concept of the welfare state.

It seems that in Israel in 2018, people with disabilities, including the parents of children with disabilities, have to fight for each right separately, since legislation clearly does not ensure implementation. In this context, it is worth noting the current ongoing "struggle of people with disabilities" under the slogan of "a person with a disability is not half a person." Similarly, the struggle of parents of children with disabilities is yet unfinished. It seems that without an educational process and with the lack of legislation regarding leisure services in general, and for young people with disabilities in particular, the road to change is still a long one, and here, too, the parents will be the ones to spearhead the battle.

Acknowledgments

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10 The sabra, the genius, and the chess player

A socio-historical understanding of competing narratives

Shahar Gindi and Avital Pilpel

Introduction

In 2012, Boris Gelfand represented Israel in the chess world championship final match against the then reigning world champion Viswanathan "Vishy" Anand. After his loss he was greeted in Ben Gurion Airport by dozens of fans waving Israeli flags showing their support. This event was the culmination of many years of chess development in Israel. Nonetheless, Gelfand represents some of the duality Israelis have experienced over the years with regards to chess. He is not a "sabra," a native Israeli, and he did not partake in Israel's most prominent social initiation ritual – military service in the Israel Defense Force (IDF). But the partial identification with chess players like Gelfand began many years before that: when chess became a prominent leisure activity in Israel, at the beginning of the twentieth century, despite its lack of congruence with the Zionist ideals.

Chess as leisure

The game of chess can be played as a casual hobby, as an individualistic leisure activity, or as a profession. For many non-professional chess players, chess holds a much deeper meaning and therefore is characterized by serious leisure literature (Gould et al. 2011).

The chess game can be characterized by the six characteristics that define serious leisure (Stebbins 2007). The first is perseverance, expressed in the systematic pursuit of participation in the field, and indeed many players tend to play for years (deBruin, Rikers, and Schmidt 2007). The second involves the investment of personal effort such as time, money, and effort motivated by the desire to learn, to deepen, and develop in the field. According to research findings, amateur players invest time and effort in personal and group training sessions, reading books, and watching videos because they want to improve and play at a high level (deBruin, Rikers, and Schmidt 2007). The third characteristic, continuous benefits from the occupation, is reflected in the rewards of participation in occupations that include the development of cognitive skills (Kazemi, Yektayar, and Abad 2012) and a strategic concept (Ferrari, Didierjean, and Marme`che 2008). The fourth characteristic of serious leisure, the development of a unique ethos for practitioners, is expressed in jargon and joint practice in competitions and in a ranking that is published every three months (deBruin, Rikers, and Schmidt 2007). Fifth, career development in leisure is related to chess because many participants who are not strictly professionals can work as trainers, have blogs or YouTube channels, and even write books (Stebbins 2007). Moreover,

the players tend to identify with the occupation (e.g., defining themselves as "chess players"), an aspect that is the sixth characteristic of the definition of occupation as serious leisure (Gould et al. 2011).

The sabra

Chess as a significant individualistic leisure activity in Israel is interconnected with the Zionist established and its dominant nationalist ideology. Zionism has endorsed the creation of "new" Jews, the sabras, with their straightforward manner, love of the land, fighter and athletic rather than professorial demeanor (Almog 2000). As Padva (personal communication, September 24, 2018) notes, one of the appeals of chess is that of a bloodless battlefield that can be Zionized and fits with the sabra fighting spirit. The majority of Zionists in Palestine at the time – the British mandate, 1919–1948 – were socialists: making agrarian, proletarian life their ideal, and praising the "working man." The sabras' recreational culture was that of bonfires and singalongs, and the sports communities that they created were based on the fighting biblical figures such as (Yehuda) Macabi and Samson. Chess was seen as a sedentary, mental, "Diaspora" activity. The ideal sabra was no chess player.

On the other hand, chess as a game symbolized European condescension and stood in sharp contrast to the oriental game of backgammon. In January 22, 1909, *Hatzvi* newspaper, edited by Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, the driving spirit behind the revival of the Hebrew language in the modern era, published an article criticizing the indecent habit of playing backgammon that took root among the new immigrants who came to Israel in the "Second *Aliyah*":

> This is a decline for the Jewish masses who always sought spiritual sustenance in their daily lives, whose pleasures and entertainments were either found in noble things that spoke to the emotions, or that were rational. The chess game, a game that has art, depth and ample mental satisfaction, was the game loved by Jews for generations from the Rabbis … to the tailors.
>
> <div align="right">(Ben-Yehuda 1909)</div>

Here we see that even Ben-Yehuda, one of the paragons of Zionism and the denial of the Diaspora, nevertheless wished to retain the Diaspora's Jewish love for chess in the new Zionist community. This should be contrasted with his and the Zionist community's ideal of denying the Diaspora's influence in most other walks of life: e.g., the desire to have Jews return to manual and agricultural labor.

Chess has indeed been a prominent sports and leisure activity in Israel since the beginning of the Yishuv, the Jewish community in Ottoman and (especially) British Palestine. Chess players identified as Zionists and saw their chess success (which was considerable) in Zionist terms, and vice versa: there was praise for the "Jewish genius" showing itself in chess.

Was this merely a marriage of convenience? The chess players dressing themselves up in Zionist lingo, while the Zionist establishment used chess for propaganda purposes since it was de facto the only sports activity where the *Yishuv* had much success abroad at the time? We can say that the enthusiasm for Zionism among chess players and that for chess among the Zionist was authentic, despite its "Diaspora" origins. The key connection was in seeing chess in Zionist terms.

In the *Yishuv* (the name for the pre-state Jewish community in Palestine), Jews' success in chess was seen, by both the players and the wider Zionist community, in Zionist terms. It was not

seen as evidence of chess being a Diaspora activity, but as evidence of the alleged Jewish genius for thought and high intelligence flourishing in a new land, just like they did in the Diaspora. Zionism could take credit, if not for Jewish genius exactly, at least for its cultivation: especially for doing things (such as publishing chess works in Hebrew, establishing a national chess team, and having chess personalities visit the *Yishuv*) that could only be done in a Zionist state (or at least mandate), not by individual Jews, however talented. Conversely, the players themselves were also, usually, Zionists, and saw their international achievements in such terms: they were not just Jews winning chess tournaments, but – "for the first time in 2000 years," as the Zionist *cliché* has it – Jews winning tournaments *as* representatives of a (future) Jewish state, as a national team, etc.

The chapter has two parts. First, we deal with pre-Zionist Judaism and chess: chess' place in Jewish society in general and in Jewish religious practice in particular. This includes issues such as the idea that Jews have a special genius for chess, whether chess is allowed religiously, etc. Then we deal with chess in the *Yisuhv*, and show the constant emphasis on putting chess achievement and Zionism together by both the players and the wider community. Here, we emphasize particular examples – the first Jewish team in the Olympiad, the first visit of an international master, success of a Jewish player abroad, etc. We note also that when Zionism could *not* be conveniently used – such as in the case of Jews who came as "chess players" to the *Maccabiah* merely to escape from Europe – the events were usually passed on in silence.

Jews and chess and the ethos of the "Jewish genius"

Chess brings to the surface another Jewish ethos, different than that of the sabra – the "Jewish genius." This ethos has roots in the biblical notion of Jews as the chosen people and their isolation from other nations (called gentiles, "goyim" – literally "nations," i.e., *other* nations) for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. This ethos was later complemented by the cultural emphasis on study and scholarship in the Jewish communities, where (male) children were all taught to read and write during periods in history where most of the European population was illiterate, often to the benefit of the surrounding population (Johnson and Koyama 2017). Some researchers suggest that literacy helped Jews succeed in finance and international trade (Ferguson 2008) while others claim that the limitations placed on Jews in the Diaspora forced them to seek these vocational avenues that helped them develop intellectually (Cochran, Hardy, and Harpending 2006).

Bolstered by the high percentage of Jewish Nobel prize winners, the unsubstantiated "fact" that Jews are of superior intelligence complemented the notion of the Jews as the chosen people to form a notion of a "Jewish genius" (usually articulated in the German pronunciation) as superior to the gentiles in their intelligence. This well-known myth is so prevalent that it is often considered a "fact" even by "intellectual" anti-Semites such as Kevin MacDonald (MacDonald 1994), who claimed Jews have an average IQ of 117 (for criticism, see, e.g., Cofnas 2018).

Chess is often used as another example of the Jewish genius (e.g., the references given by Winter 2005). World champions Steinitz, Lasker, Botvinnik, and Tal were Jewish, as were challengers such as Zukertort, Gunsberg, Korchnoi, and Bronstein; numerous others can be named, from Reshevsky to Gelfand, as well as the trio of the Polgar sisters (their father, Laszlo Polgar, is a strong player in his own right). The fact that many non-Jewish prominent players have Jewish origins (e.g., Kasparov, Fischer) also supported for some the view of a "genetic" Jewish genius for chess.

Jews played, and were good at, the game for hundreds of years. The game was occasionally mentioned in Jewish literature since the early Middle Ages. The first documented Jewish figure to recommend chess was Ali ben Rabbi Saul of Taberistan, in the ninth century (Steinschneider 1873). Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Itzhaki, 1040–1105) and the Rambam (Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, or Maimonides, 1155–1204), the two greatest rabbis of the early Middle Ages in Christendom and the Muslim world, respectively, both mention the game (Pilpel 2008).

Abraham Ibn-Ezra (*c*.1092–*c*.1167), who lived in Spain during the "golden age" of Muslim rule, wrote his "Song of Chess" about the game. A superb example of medieval Hebrew poetry, it is also notable for *not* using the game as a mere allegory for the battle between good and evil (or the sexes), fate's control of human affairs, or similar subjects. It deals with the game itself: praising its inventors as "men of understanding and intellect," describing the board and pieces, their movement, attack, and defense, checkmate, and the hope for the resurrection of the pieces "killed" in one game by the playing of another one (Keats and Abramsky 1995, pp. 65–74). Obviously written by an avid chess player, it sheds light on the laws of chess at the time. The poem's popularity is such that it is rare to find a Hebrew-language chess column or magazine that does not reproduce it, or at least its famous opening lines, in its first issue or on other special occasions (e.g. Bar Ilan 2003, Marmorosh 1930). Many other examples exist (Keats and Abramsky 1995). Thus, we can see how chess has a long historical tie to Judaism that serves the Jewish genius ethos. Nonetheless, chess has also had a delicate status vis-à-vis the Jewish religion as we will review now.

Chess and the Jewish religion

As among Christians and Muslims, chess among the Jews aroused the suspicion of the religious authorities, and the question of whether a Jew may play chess – and if so, under what conditions – was often discussed in Jewish law. Shaul Hon undertook the task and, "in order to get a clear and authentic answer" (Hon 1965, p. 21), asked no less a religious figure than the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel at the time, Dr. Isaac Halevi Herzog, what is chess' status.

The rabbi's reply notes that the two main objections to chess were its connection with gambling, and chess being viewed as frivolous, "a skill of no use," wasting time which is better spent in religious study or other useful pursuits (Hon 1965). Chess being played for money, as a rule, was forbidden, as was all gambling. Hence, Herzog notes – as does Murray (1913) – that the Rambam banned playing chess for monetary stakes and considered professional chess players to be unworthy of giving evidence in court.

Herzog gives no examples for the second objection, but Keats and Abramsky (1995) note as one such case Eliyahu Kohen of Smyrna who, in his *Shebet Musar* ("Rod of Correction" 1712, ch. 32) "objects not to the game of chess itself but to its effect of wasting time and leading to the contempt of study" (Keats and Abramsky 1995, p. 147). In particular, Kohen is angry with those who claim chess sharpens their mind to better study the Torah: "will they say to God on judgment day, "I played chess to make my mind sharp to understand your Torah"? They will be thrown from heaven into the pit like a stone from a catapult!" (Bar-Ilan 2003).

But even as playing for money was forbidden and playing chess was seen as a frivolous activity, this was not enough to ban chess when not played for stakes; even Kohen, for all his dramatic language, does not ban the game. Only rarely did particularly stern rabbis ban chess itself, such as Kalonymos ben Kalonymos in *Eben Bohan* ("The Touchstone" 1546 [1332]) – unsurprisingly, since, according to Murray, he came from "a scion of a long line of distinguished rabbis who spoke out against the playing of chess whether it was for money or not" (Murray

1913, p. 446). But such views were in the minority. Indeed, even some of the rabbis that condemned chess as a frivolous game has also allowed it – for just that reason – to be used as a cure for melancholy, or allowed chess as a tool for sharpening the minds of children who have not yet reached the age of bar mitzvah when one is required to study the Torah, who therefore are not yet at risk of the sin *bitul torah*, wasting time that could be used to study the Torah (Bar Ilan 2003).

Herzog notes (Hon 1965, pp. 21–22) that a third objection one might have expected – the suspicion that chess pieces might constitute a forbidden "graven image" due to their depiction of realistic figures – is not relevant, since the prohibition against making a "graven image" only forbids the making of idols. In other contexts, images and realistic figures are allowed, as long as they do not violate another prohibition (which has nothing to do with the "graven image" one) that forbids the painting or sculpting of a *complete* human figure. This, too, does not forbid chess, at least when played with the more common sets and not with the elaborate sculptured ones.

The above three concerns about chess – gambling, frivolity, and the prohibition on making images – were common to some degree to Christian (the first two) and Muslim (all three) religious writings about chess as well (Murray 1913). A fourth, uniquely Jewish, concern is the possibility that playing chess on the Shabbat (from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday), the "day of rest" when all work is forbidden. Throughout the ages, for complicated reasons, Jewish law came to consider numerous activities, including playing the piano or carrying a handkerchief in one's pocket, as "work" forbidden on the Shabbat. An idea of the degree of complexity of the issue can be seen by the fact that Neuwirth's popular "practical guide" for keeping the Shabbat is over 1,500 pages long (Neuwirth 1997). Is chess "work" according to Jewish law?

Playing chess was generally allowed on the Shabbat: chess was viewed as essentially a recreation and a game, which are allowed on the Shabbat, and not work, even formally speaking. That chess was allowed can be seen explicitly, for instance, by the fact that *Shiltey ha-Gibborim* ("The Signs of the Heroes"), by the eleventh-century scholar Rabbi Isaac Alfasi (the "Rif") recommends playing chess on special sets of silver, as one way of fulfilling the general command of marking the Shabbat as a special day, but does not forbid playing on regular sets (Hon 1965, p. 22; see also Murray 1913, p. 446; Keats and Abramsky 1995, p. 146).

To conclude, chess' status in Judaism is a bit "uncomfortable." It is not actually banned – not even on the Shabbat – since it is a game, and games as such are not forbidden. But, it is precisely the fact that chess *is* a game that made many religious leaders suspicious of it, as a time-waster, a frivolous activity, which should be discouraged in general and especially discouraged on the Sabbath, a day where religious matters should take precedent. This view is quite similar – the *shabbath* issue excepted of course – to the status of chess in Islamic law (Murray 1913), where it is not actually *haram* (forbidden) but is only allowed when not used for gambling, and does not interfere with religious devotions

Chess and Hebrew

By the time chess was invented – let alone spread to Arabia or Europe – Hebrew had long since ceased to be a living, spoken language by the Jews, and was reserved for prayer, religious and intellectual writing, and so on, much like Latin in medieval Europe. Most Jews in late antiquity, the Dark Ages, or the early Middle Ages, spoke little if any Hebrew, and used the vernacular of the people around them. Later, in the Middle Ages, two languages used almost exclusively by Jews developed: Ladino (used mainly by Jewish communities in Mediterranean countries) and

Yiddish (in Europe). These became the Jewish languages, replacing Hebrew; most Jews learned the language spoken by the local gentile society only later in life (if at all). But while written in Hebrew letters and containing many Hebrew words, these languages – for historical reasons too complicated to repeat here – were based mostly on Catalan (Ladino) or Middle High German (Yiddish). Knowing either did not enable one to speak Hebrew, any more than knowing English (likewise written in the Latin alphabet and containing many Latin words) enables one to speak Latin. For a detailed history, see Spolsky (2014).

It is no surprise, then, that until the twentieth century, Hebrew did not have its own words for chess terms (Murray 1913). Jews writing in Hebrew about chess usually directly transliterated into Hebrew script the terms from the vernacular of the wider population, or used the already-transliterated Catalan or German words used in Ladino or Yiddish (Murray 1913). For example, the game itself would be called *Shach* or *Shachspiel* in Hebrew works printed where German (or Yiddish) was spoken, while the word *Isqaqi* would be used both there and in areas where Ladino was the Jewish language, since Rashi uses this word – a transliteration from the medieval French – and learning Rashi's commentary on the Talmud and the Torah was an integral part of Jewish education.

Rarely, Jewish authors would translate instead of transliterate. This was done almost exclusively for the name of the pieces. This, however, did not help matters much, since different European languages – to say nothing of Arabic or Persian – had different terms for the pieces. Hence some works would translate "pawn" as *ragli* (lit. "foot soldier," from the Arabic *baidaq*), others as *ikar* (lit. "farmer," from the German *Bauer*); some would translate "queen" as *gvira* (lit. "noble woman," from the French or German Dame), others as *malka* (lit. "queen"), and so on (Keats 1995; Murray 1913).

In the late nineteenth century, the Zionist movement embraced the revival of the Hebrew language as one of its goals in creating the "new Jew" (Almog 2000). Press began to be printed in Hebrew out of sympathy, or support, of the Zionist movement, which also meant that they wrote Hebrew-language chess columns or other chess news from time to time. *Ha'Zfira*, printed in Warsaw, published the first chess problem in the Hebrew press on February 10, 1888 and covered the celebration given to the Russian champion Chigorin in the St. Petersburg club on May 25, 1891. Indeed, even before Zionism, we have the medieval works in Hebrew – such as Ibn-Ezra's *Song of Chess*, already mentioned, as well as nineteenth-century Hebrew works: e.g., Rubinstein's primer (1973) – a work which, significantly, was a dual-language, Hebrew and Yiddish – or Eichenbaum's *Ha'Krav* (1840). The latter is exceptional also for giving a move-by-move description of a specific game. But such columns or books were quite rare, and, again, rarely used professional chess terms. Zionist chess players had their work cut out for them when it came to deciding on, or creating, Hebrew language chess terms.

The first regular chess column written in Palestine was published – of all places – in *The Palestine News*, which, as its masthead declares, was "The weekly newspaper of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force of the British army in occupied enemy territory," published "at G.H.Q. [General Headquarters], First Echelon, Palestine." It was published in separate English, Hebrew, and Arabic editions. The English edition came out in Cairo; chief editor of the paper was a British Lt. Colonel. The paper came out at first in Jerusalem, but soon (May 1918) moved to Cairo as well due to paper shortage. The chess editor was Shaul Gordon, "a well known personality in Jerusalem in those days" (Melamed 1987, p. 11). Gordon immediately sought out Hebrew chess terms and – in the Hebrew-language version of *The Palestine News* (on which

more below), asks in June 7, 2018 column: "Can any of our readers suggest Hebrew terms for the following terms: 'Remis' [draw]; 'Patt' [stalemate]"? (Czerniak 1963, p. 155).

To sum up: chess interested the Jews, was allowed by Jewish religion, and there were chess works in Hebrew before the Zionist movement. What is more, in chess, since the late nineteenth century at the latest, Jews were indeed prominent. Yet in early Zionism in what was then (still) Ottoman Palestine, there was very little chess activity, and until chess activity began in earnest after the First World War. But the conflict remains: Is chess a worthy activity for the "new Jew"? Should the ethos the Jewish genius be continued along this route or left in the Diaspora?

Chess in the Yishuv and mandatory Palestine

The term *Yishuv* ("settlement") refers to the Jewish residents in Palestine prior to the establishment of the State of Israel. In the 1880s, there were about 25,000 Jews living across this Southern part of Ottoman Syria. The Zionist movement and the emigration from Europe led to 700,000 Jews living in British mandatory Palestine when the State of Israel was established (for a full exposition see McCarthy 1990).

The first official chess club opened in Jerusalem in the same year the British mandate was established and the first chess column in Hebrew (or at all) in Palestine published – 1918. It was named the "International Chess Club" with its president being the British military governor of Jerusalem, Col. Reginald Storrs (Pilpel and Gindi 2014). Storrs was a chess fan and a strong player (photo 10.1).

The club was intended as a club for all the different chess players in Jerusalem, and included Arabs, Jews, and British players. As the blog post above notes, Storrs writes in his memoirs (Storrs 1937) that the club started "with a Christian (myself) President, Jewish Treasurer, Latin Catholic Secretary, and Moslem [sic] Members of Committee" and adds that in the first tournament held, "the first four prizes were won by Jews, and the fifth by the Military Governor [himself – A.P.]" (p. 332).

Photo 10.1 Storrs playing Rabbi Citron.

Source: Avital Pilpel's collection.

From a Zionist strategic point of view, we can see several merits to this activity. Zionism in its beginning and particularly in these years espoused comradery with its Arab neighbors. "Recruiting" Col. Storrs to the club is also a common strategy as chess is often used as a bridge between cultures. This united club made history by hosting the first formal tournament ever held in Palestine, but only lasted for about a year. *Ha'shachmat* (1924) cautiously says only that the club lasted only a year "for various reasons." Later sources (e.g., Czerniak 1963, p. 155) give the growing tension between Jews and Arabs as the real reason.

This marked the end of possible Jewish–Arab national cooperation in chess with one much later exception: the 1962 Olympiad. In this Olympiad, the Tunisian team agreed to play with Israel despite the fact that Tunisia, an Arab nation, did not (and to date still does not) recognize Israel (see Olimpbase 2018). This was a diplomatic "coup" for Israel, the first time it was not boycotted in a sporting event by Arab players. This, too, was an example of Zionist goals – here, peace or normalization of relations with the Arab world – was seen as an important part of what playing chess can do for Israel. As we shall see *infra* the goal of supporting cooperation with Arab–Israeli citizens through chess is also considered important.

Chess enthusiasts did not have a club to play at until the Lasker Chess Club was founded in Jerusalem in 1922. The strategy that incorporated this club into the Zionist worldview was different than in the International Chess Club. First, it was pronounced by its founders as a

political, Zionist act. The article detailing the club's activities in its first 18 months ends with, "Our hope is that the young club will grow strong, and will proudly hold high the flag of Jewish chess in Zion!" (Czerniak 1963, p. 155). Second, it was named after the Jewish world champion Emanuel Lasker, who was also elected to the honorary president of the [Jerusalem Chess] federation, adding to the "Jewish genius" ethos (although in this case, naming clubs after prominent players is a common practice in many countries). Connecting chess to the Jews in the Diaspora will also become a strategy that will help chess players overcome their rift with the "sabra" image throughout chess history.
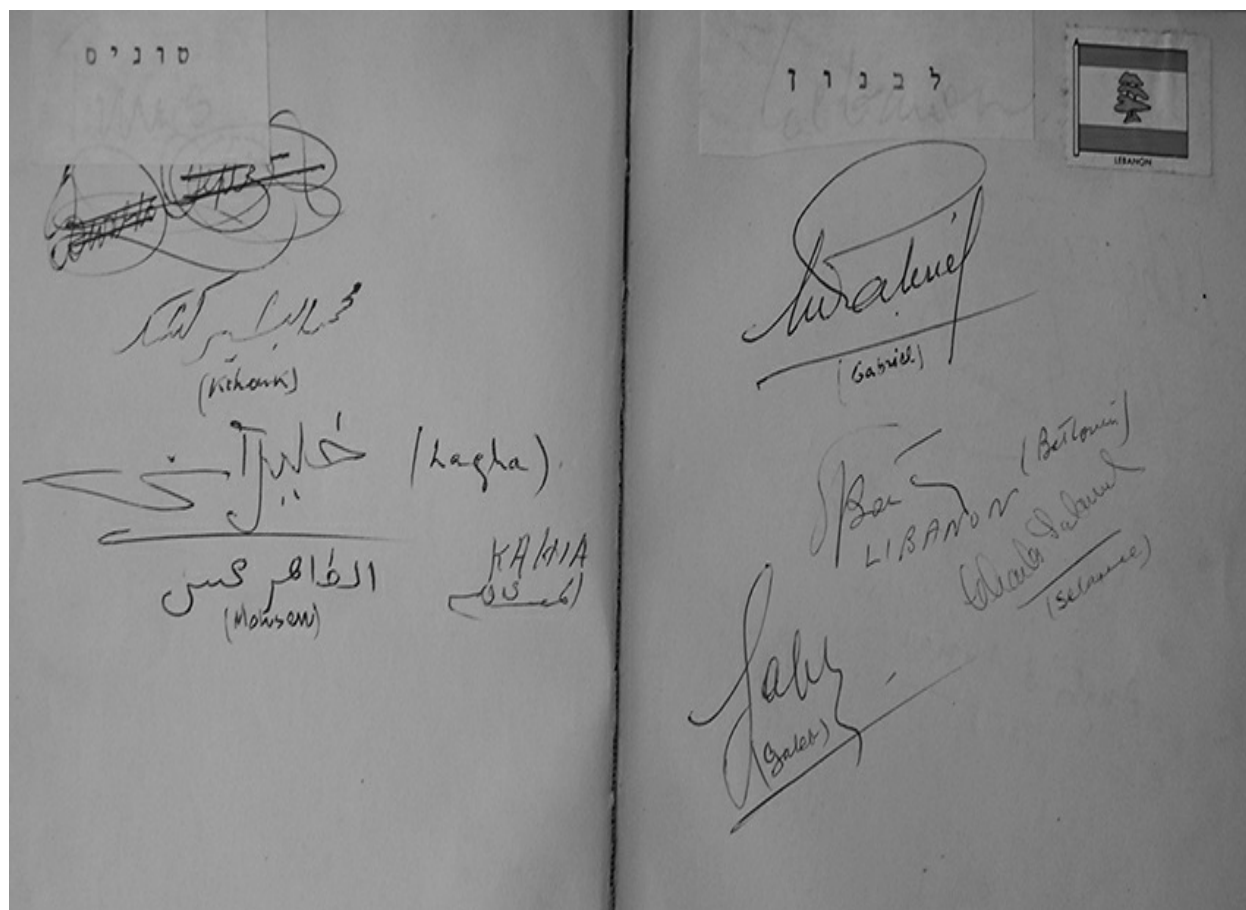
Photo 10.2 Tunisian (left) and Lebanese players signing Eliezer Pe'er's autograph book in the 1962 Olympiad.

Source: Avital Pilpel's collection.

For the dedicated individuals in the independently established chess clubs such as the Jerusalem club, chess was the passion, but Zionism came at least a close second. They, too, saw themselves as promoters of the Zionist dream in their own small way. In fact, they had two distinct goals. First, they wanted to show to the world at large that Jews in Palestine, just like Jews abroad, can succeed in chess, and that chess success thus helps prove the ability of the Jews to become a "normal" nation again – to not just have their own government or state, but also their own chess clubs and leisure activity. Different chess activities with a Zionist aspect were initiated to prove to other Zionists that chess is not *against* Zionism, not just an activity of the

sedentary, passive Jew in the Diaspora, but also appropriate for the renewing, Zionist Jew (Pilpel and Gindi 2014). As the individual efforts went into some decline due to various reasons, the Zionist establishment, while by no means treating chess as more than a minor after-thought, at least made sure that chess *was* a part of the establishment, however minor.

> For example, A year and a half after the establishment of the Lasker chess club, the editors of its official paper, *Ha'shachmat*, proudly released that "the number of members is above sixty" and "the era of establishing ourselves is over, from now on we are on a path of safe and steady improvement."
>
> <div align="right">(Ha'Sachmat 1923)</div>

In September 1923, the Lasker chess club in Jersualem scored another accomplishment: the publication of *Ha'shachmat*, "Yarchon Lehovevey Ha'shach Be'eretz-israel U'be'hutz-La'aretz" [Chess: A Monthly for Chess Enthusiasts in Palestine and Abroad], "published by the Jerusalem chess club 'Emanuel Lasker'." It adds on the first issue's first page that "great Jewish masters abroad promised their regular contribution." The magazine's hopes were dashed – only three issues appeared, in September 1923 (Vol. 1 No. 1–2), June 1924 (Vol. 1 No. 3), and September 1924 (Vol. 1 No. 4) (However, Rubinstein – one of the masters who promised to contribute – had indeed published "Al Dvar Ha'tchalat Ha'partia" [About the Opening] in *Ha'shachmat,* Vol. 1 No. 3 (June 1924), p. 34.)

Ha'shachmat noted, on the last page of its June 1924 issue, many such contributions by Akiba Rubinstein. J. K. Speiser, Y. Hizershreik, Dr. S. Tartakover, J. Mieses, and Rabbi I. Gross. Rubinstein, a Jewish Polish chess grandmaster who is considered to have been one of the strongest players never to have become World Chess Champion, deserves a note for his historical importance. His article is the first written especially for a Palestinian chess magazine by any leading master. Rubinstein, who learned Hebrew as part of his upbringing in a Jewish Othodox family, further wrote the article in Hebrew. The editors emphasize that the article is not a translation, but that it is presented "as originally written" by Rubinstein in his (excellent, if "old-fashioned") Hebrew. We can thus see how Zionism is recruited in an attempt to make Palestine the center of chess activity to which Jewish chess grandmasters around the world send their contribution.

Analogously to Rubinstein writing his article in Hebrew, one of Speiser's problems published in *Ha'shachmat* in 1924 (Vol. 1 No. 3) had the pieces lined up in the shape of a Star of David with the title "Star of David—Dedicated to the renewal of chess life in Palestine." (Key: 1.Qe2.)

The Lasker club was a great success. It not only organized the first serious club tournaments, but the first inter-club tournament (with Tel Aviv); the first regular chess column in a daily newspaper (*Doar Ha'Yom*), edited "by the Lasker Chess Club" (starting in May, 1922, starting using mixed Hebrew – for pieces – and English – for squares – notation; see, e.g., the July 30, 1922, p. 5 column: e.g., 2.Nf3 being written, from right to left, as f32.פ-); the first simultaneous exhibitions, first live chess exhibitions; first official "matches," and first visits of foreign players to Palestine. In all of them, Zionism played a prominent social part.

The first chess column in a daily newspaper – *Doar Ha'Yom* – was the first to publish a game played in Palestine, on August 13, 1922. While starting with the mixed Hebrew–English notation, as noted above, the column made an attempt to "Judaize" chess by removing "foreign" notation when the column insisted on using "Jewish" notation. To avoid the gentiles' way of numbering the files a–h from left to right, they numbered (for a while) the files in the "Jewish" way, from right to left – i.e., in the same direction Hebrew is written. This means the first

Hebrew letter, Aleph, donated the h-file, and the eighth one, Chet, the a-file: the reverse of the standard way. The result was in effect "mirror house chess" annotation, with a game between Mohilever and an amateur in Passover 1923, for example – a Scotch opening – starting 1.d4 d5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.e4…. The Zionist intention was clear, but the outcome was unsuccessful as it was confusing for chess fans.
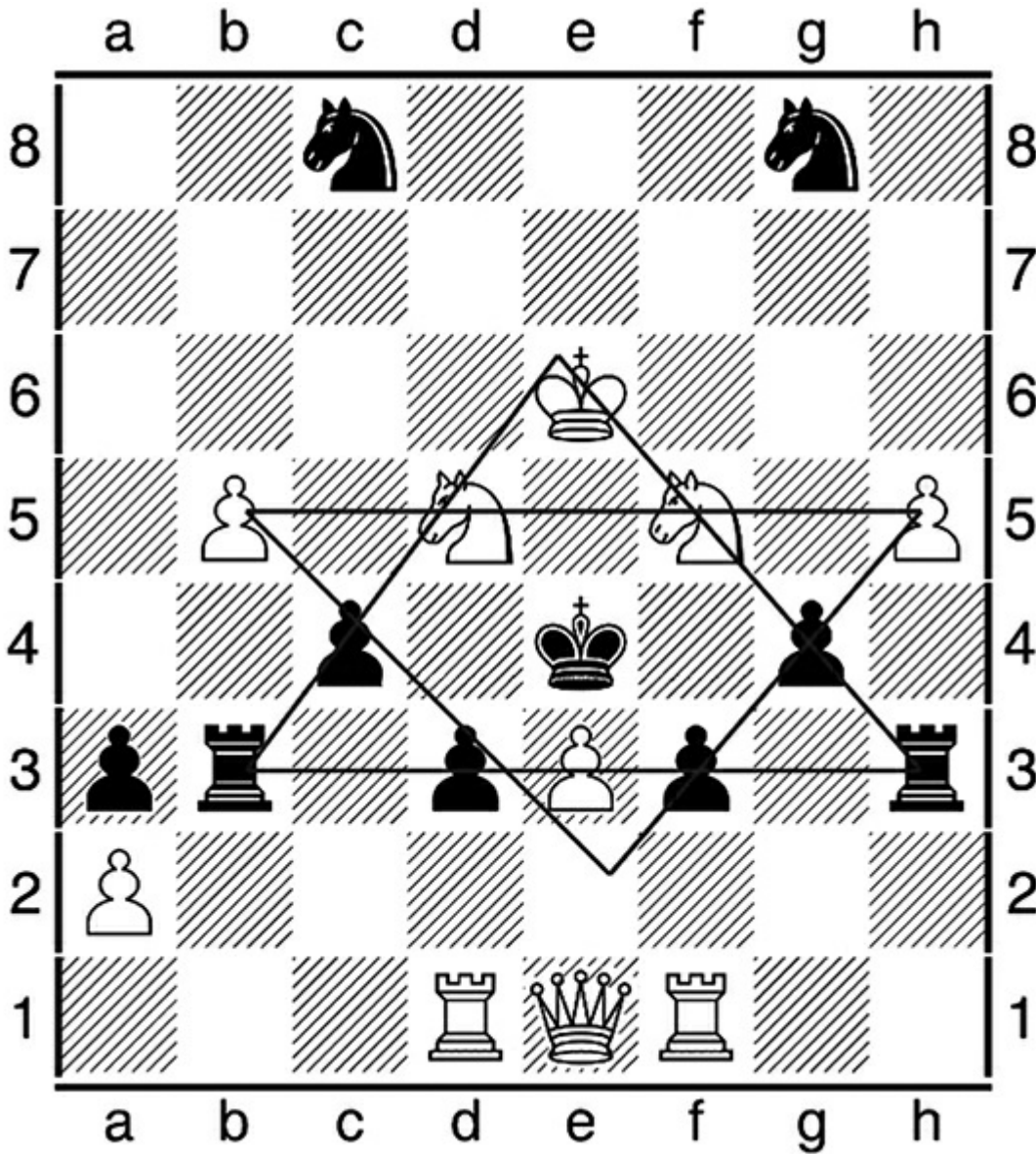
Photo 10.3 Speiser, J. K. (*Ha'sachmat* 1, Vol. 1 No. 3, p. 31, July 1924). Mate in.

The Zionist goals of both groups – the dedicated chess players and the wider Zionist establishment – both, for slightly different reasons, pushed for spreading and establishing chess in Palestine and abroad. Indeed, the joining of chess with Zionism, despite its *prima facie* sedentary, Diaspora-Jew reputation, was the great success of the chess activists in Palestine, and set the tone for the development of chess in Palestine and Israel in general until the 1980s (Pilpel and Gindi 2014).

משחק ד׳

שחקו ביום 29 יולי במועדון ״עמנואל למקר־

דר׳ א. מאובר . א. מוהילבר

5 e—7 e	4 e—2 e .1
6 c—8 b פ	4 c—1 f ר .2
6 f—8 g פ	3 f—1 g פ .3
5 d—7 d	3 d—2 d .4
5 c—6 c פ (1	5 d:4 c .5
2 a b—4 c ר (2	a d—o f ר .6
4 c—8 c ר	5 g—1 c ר .7
c—o (3	6 h—7 h .8
4 h—5 g ר	3 b:5 a פ .9
3 g—7 g	3 b:2 a .10
5 d:5 f פ	3 g—4 h ר .11
8 h—2 h	5 h—4 g ר .12
2 d—1 b פ	4 f—5 d פ .13
4 f:3 g ר	4 f:5 g (4 .14
1 e—1 d נ	6 f—7 f .15
4 e—1 e נ	8 c—8 d ג (5 .16
4 d—3 d	5 f—6 f .17
5 d—4 e נ	7 f—5 h ר .18
X 5 b—5 d ג	6 c—7 c .19
4 a—5 d נ	4 c—5 e .20
1 e—1 f צ	8 g—8 h צ .21
5 e:6 d ר	5 e—3 f פ (6 .22

5 e:4 d	3 f—4 f .23
3 g—2 g	4 f—5 f .24
4 g—3 g	X! 4 g:8 g צ .25
1 h—1 g פ	X!! g—4 g צ 7) .26
1 g:1 h פ	3 h:8 c ג .27
3 f:2 d פ	3 f:4 e .28

לבן מותר

1) יותר פשוט ונכון היה אמנם
פ 4 d:6 f.

2) אבל־ מטפו. אין כמוכן להתירא
שמא פ ד : ר כי ח׳׳פ יחזק יותר את החיל
5 d.

3) מוטב היה מקדם לכצר את עמדת
התחיל ע׳׳י 5 d פ b 1—6 c 3.

4) השחור פותח את השורה g לפעולות
הצריח.

5) מנין על b 7 ומתעתד לתקף את
3 h.

6) איננו במקומו. תחת זה היה נחוץ
לעשות איזה מהלך־ הגנת, כגון מ 2 h ורק
כשהשחור סר במלכו צריך היה לבן לוז
בפרשו.

7) אם במקום זה היה השחור תלך
צ 2 g, היה משיב חלבן ח 6 e! ואחיב
צ 4 e:1 e.

Photo 10.4 *Doar Ha'Yom*, August 13, 1922, p. 6.

Another example of the way chess and Zionist goals converged can be seen in the first "live chess" game, an exhibition whereby each chess piece is played by an actor, was played on April 24, 1924 (Maccabi Sports Organization 1924). The game was more than just chess news – it was Zionist news, being played in "National Passover Festivities," one of many public events at the time arranged to forge a sense of unity and nationhood among the Jews in Palestine. Other events included a soccer match between two Palestinian teams, athletics events, an opening ceremony by the police's marching band, and so on. This was also done in an attempt to reestablish ancient traditions from biblical times: in this case, the ancient Israelite custom of celebrating Passover in Jerusalem from all over the country.

Paradoxically, then, the fact that chess was popular among Jews in the Diaspora enabled the chess players in Palestine to justify their status as Zionists – as "revivers" of chess in the Holy Land, and as "messengers" or even "leaders" of chess players of the Jewish people in the world. It was with such a "selling point" that the Jewish masters abroad were contacted, and the polite sentiments or contributions they made were emphasized, especially when they could be linked to Judaism or Zionism in some way – as in Rubinstein writing in Hebrew and Speiser using a Star of David in his composition.

In other sports, such as football, there was not much Jewish participation in the field abroad. For this reason, footballers in Palestine could hardly be seen as the "pioneer corps" of Jewish soccer players in the Diaspora, because the latter almost did not exist. They could only be used as an example of the "normalization" of Jewish life in Palestine in general. The Zionist puzzle of chess – how to turn the "diasporic" chess into a Zionist activity – was thus solved. It was, in effect, no different from the paradox of Zionism, especially religious Zionism, itself: how to transform Judaism into Zionism, without giving it up when Judaism developed for thousands of years in exile? This dilemma is still important and was even more so in pre-state and earlier Zionism. In the words of the editors of the collection *Zionism and Religion* (Almog, Reinharz, and Shapira 1998, pp. xi–xii):

> More than all other nationalist currents in Judaism, Zionism felt the need to define its specific position on religion and Jewish tradition. Zionism chose the historical homeland, the Holy Land, and Hebrew, the Holy Language, thus linking its fate to a sanctified and binding patrimony. Right from the beginning of the Zionist movement, its supporters were divided over the meaning of the obligation they had taken upon themselves by their embrace of the historical heritage … [s]ome saw religion as the essential foundation of Zionism, while others viewed it as a traditional component amendable to modern interpretation. Still others wished to wrench Zionism from the arms of religion. And some rejected Zionism out of hand, regarding it as the antithesis of traditional Judaism.

Many Zionists have indeed given up any religious expression of their Jewishness. It is likely that some stopped playing chess because they saw it as belonging to the Diaspora. But the way to integrate chess with Zionism was already clear.

We see the same linking of Zionism to chess in other events, such as the visit of Akiba Rubinstein to Palestine. Rubinstein's commitment to chess in Palestine led to him visiting Israel in 1931 playing simultaneous games against many, including celebrities such as Israel's national poet Nachman Biyalik. Photo 10.5 shows Rubinstein playing Biyalik (head on hand) in Tel Aviv, Beit Ha'am, April 16, 1931. On Rubinstein's immediate right stands Menachen Marmorosh, one of the leading figures of chess in Palestine for many years.

Photo 10.5 Rubinstein playing Bialik.

This photo was often reproduced in Hebrew chess literature, for example in Hon's (1965) opening book, in the historical introduction, under the title "a genius meets a genius." Rubinstein played over 100 simultaneous games in Palestine. It is significant that the event was not covered

only in chess columns, but was covered in headlines in many newspapers, as it was an event of national significance: for example, on April 27, 1931, *Doar Ha'Yom* put Rubinstein's visit on the front page: Finally, other Jewish masters – Flohr in 1934 (Fasher 1980, pp. 168–171) Mieses in 1936) *Davar*, May 7, 1936, May 14, 1936, etc.) took a page out of Rubinstein's book and also visited Palestine soon afterwards, with similar interest.

Marmorosh and Biyalik were later recruited for another Zionist chess endeavor when *Va'ad Ha'Lashon,* the Zionist "Language Committee" responsible for reviving the Hebrew language in everyday use, nominated them (with two others) to systematically organize Hebrew chess terms: a natural consequence of Biyalik's long-time love of chess, and the fact that Rubinstein's first display took place in the cultural center he established, Ohel Shem in Tel Aviv. This committee published its decisions for 60 chess terms on March 24, 1932. The success was complete: all the committee's proposals were accepted and are used mostly to this day. This example illustrates the victory of Hebrew in the "war of languages" that took place in Israel at since the beginning of the twentieth century, especially around the ability to use Hebrew for technical and professional issues. Once more, chess helps Zionism no less than Zionism helps chess.

Photo 10.6 Doar Ha'Yom, p. 1, April 27, 1931.

In 1934, the Palestinian chess association was established (Mohilever 1936). It is significant that Flohr, at the time in the country, came to the meeting and signed the founding document. It is significant that Flohr, at the time in the country, came to the meeting and signed the founding document. Mohilever notes that the official founding was in the "Zidon" cafe in Tel Aviv, where "about 30 players, mostly from Tel Aviv and a few from Jerusalem and Haifa" met on June 30, 1934.

This association's immediate two projects were to organize the 1935 *Maccabiah* chess championship, and decide on a team for the 1935 Olympiad. This was a banner year for Palestinian chess. The re-organization and re-energization of chess in Palestine came just in time: with the rise of Hitler to power began the escape of strong Jewish chess players from Europe. A number of strong players came to Palestine, which largely replaced the "founding generation" of the 1920s, Marmorosh, Mohilever, and others. Suffice to say that Marmorosh, one of the two or three strongest players in Palestine in the 1920s, was only sent as a reporter to the 1935 Olympiad, as many players that would be part of the group that would dominate Palestinian and Israeli chess for the next 20 years or so – Czerniak, Porat, Macht, Blass, Oren, and others – arrived in Palestine during this time. See Fasher and Porat (1989), Kandelshine (1989) for the story of Fasher and Oren, respectively; and Czerniak (1963) for an overview of the period. The following snapshot of the first Palestinian championship, the following year (1936) – was fittingly published in a new magazine edited by Czerniak. No better summary than an article by "A. M." (presumably, Aryeh Mohilever) in Czerniak's *Ha'Shachmat* (2 issues, 1936–1937; not to be confused with the earlier *Ha'Shachmat*), it is short enough to be quoted verbatim (our translation from the Hebrew).

> The reports about the upcoming championship emphasizes several important points. First, it emphasizes the achievements of the Palestinian chess players in their home-countries ratifying the Jewish Genius ethos. In addition, the Zionist zeal of all the players is depicted and the fact that they all have day-jobs that contribute to the Zionist endeavor.

Contemporary reports of the Palestinian team's success in the 1935 Olympiad, the Maccabiah championship, and so on, are all similar to this report in tone. The emphasis is on the increased strength of the Palestinian team, its reception and success as a representative of the new nation of the Jews, etc. Little is said about the fact that most of the new players are refugees. For example, it is rarely if at all mentioned in reports in the 1935 Olympiad that Blass, despite being the winner of the Maccabiah championship and thus having the best claim to first board, had not gone to Warsaw since he was an illegal immigrant, fleeing Europe. Players merely "settled a while ago" in Palestine, "emigrated" to the country, "came" to the country, etc. It is possible to argue that one need not state what was, then, a very painful point for many, but later on the dramatic stories of their lives were told. For example, Czerniak (1979, p. 7) notes that Blas was not on the Palestinian team for the 1935 Olympiad because he was considered an illegal immigrant by the British authorities in Palestine.

Perhaps the most dramatic case of "silence is wisdom" is seen in the case of two amateur players who used the Maccabiah in 1935 to escape from Luxemburg, despite their chess level not being up to par. Aryeh and Yaakov Zilbershats (preferred English spelling of Yaakov's grandson, Boaz Zilbershats, from the original Polish name Zylberszac) from the Luxemburg team. Their participation is noted on April 4, 1935 in Marmorosh's *Davar* column, but their scores are *not* given on April 12, while everybody else's is (Pilpel 2011). But from the scores of the other participants, it is easy to show that they lost all their games to all the other players. The Maccabiah was a round robin tournament of ten rounds (11 players); there are 55 points (11*10/2) to be divided among all the players. All the other players together gained 54 points. This leaves the brothers a single, solitary point between them – which is the absolute minimum they could have got, since they had to play one game between themselves! Czerniak explicitly confirms this – but 45 years later (Czerniak 1979). Boaz Zilbershats confirmed (Pilpel 2015), adding a copy of Jacob Zilbershats' life-saving visa.

Once more, the emphasis is on Zionism: for "the first time in 2,000 years," the Jewish nation is sending its own national team, the Palestinian team, to an international sporting event; the Jewish team is getting stronger in Palestine due to the "lucky" influx of a series of strong players (no doubt, for purely Zionist reasons), and so on.

The Second World War naturally stopped all chess activities in Palestine over the next six years. By this time, however, the foundations were strong and after the end of the war and with the founding of Israel in 1948, chess continued to be a treasured leisure activity.

Notably, the *Yishuv* had a population ranging from a few tens of thousands in the 1880s, to 700,000 when the modern State of Israel was founded in 1948. The higher number is less than the population of an insignificant American city. Yet, chess clubs were established all over the country, and local players visited the smallest villages to give lectures and simultaneous exhibitions. Chess columns were published, problems and studies composed; even live chess and blindfold exhibitions took place. A group of top players including Czerniak, Porat, Aloni, Oren, and others, led the chess activities in Palestine (and, later, Israel) from the 1930s to the 1960s. *Yishuv* chess composers, for their part, became a vigorous community by the 1940s, and a major international force by the 1950s. The chess community in the *Yishuv*, in short, has a strong claim of being the strongest in history relative to the size of the population. What's more, it flourished in what was (and still is) a war-torn community far from the centers of culture of Europe and the USA.

How did chess become so popular in the *Yishuv*? Neither the Jewish general inclination to chess nor the Second World War are sufficient to explain the phenomenon. Moreover, chess was a "diasporic" activity that stood in vast contrast to the "sabra" image that was sanctified during that period. Two factors played a major part in the success of chess in the Yishuv and later in Israel. The first factor was the way chess was recruited in the service of the Zionist ideology and Zionist ideology in the service of chess. Most of the players and promoters in the *Yishuv* were fervent Zionists, and Zionism's goal was the rebuilding of a Jewish community (and state) in the Jews' ancient homeland of *Eretz Israel* – the land of Israel. This goal extended to all walks of life – chess included. Promoting chess activity was seen in Zionist terms: chess was used to prove to the world that Jews can establish a chess community in their homeland, just like the English have one in England, or the French in France.

Supporting chess for ideological reasons automatically brings to mind the USSR's support of chess as part of the government's struggle to prove the superiority of *homo sovieticus*. It would be wrong, however, to see chess in Palestine as remotely similar. In the USSR, seeing chess as part of the greater struggle for communism was official *government* policy. In Palestine, seeing chess as part of the struggle of Zionism was the *popular* sentiment. Those who felt it most keenly were, of course, the small group of promoters and activists: they usually saw everything they did to promote chess within the greater frame of promoting Zionism. But the rank-and-file players and fans, as well, felt their participation in chess life in Palestine was, in a small way, supportive of the Zionist enterprise of making the Jews a "normal" nation again. The somewhat breathless accounts of the *Yisuv's* chess achievement as the epitome of Zionism were not dictated, but the genuine feelings of the writers, and for that matter of their audience, the chess fans.

The second key factor was that chess was used to expand the ethos of the Jewish genius. In the global arena, news items about chess never missed an opportunity to mention that the winner of a tournament was Jewish. On a local level, chess was seen as superior to backgammon and that fed the covert subtext that the Jews were smarter than their Arab neighbors. Politicians from

David Ben Gurion to the current member of Israeli Parliament, Zeev Elkin, spread their wings over chess events with the notion of the Jewish Genius mentioned or alluded to.

We return to Boris Gelfand's welcome at Ben Gurion Airport. The year is 2012, many years have passed since the period that we discussed in this chapter, and yet many of the same themes remained. Gelfand, who is sometimes called "the professor," is a marked example of the Jewish Genius and Israeli politicians, including the prime minister, did not miss photo opportunities with him. Nonetheless, even in the second decade of the twenty-first century, chess fans feel compelled to inform the media and constantly remind the Israeli public that Gelfand lives in Rishon Lezion with his family and speaks Hebrew fluently, despite not being a sabra.…

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Index