WAR AS CULTURE – THE ISRAELI CASE

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Does the Israeli war discourse play a part in the recurrence of war ?
If so, can we identify mechanisms or strategies that are typical of this discourse ?

The first question presents my basic assumption: that the Israeli war discourse plays an instrumental role in the ongoing participation of Israel in wars. The second question presents my basic hypothesis: that a mega cultural-discursive code enables and supports the use of military power in general and participation in wars in particular. We may call this code "war-normalizing discourse" (WND).

How do Israelis talk, write, and think about war? In the post–World War II period, Israel has taken part in ten wars, more than almost any other western democracy. In addition to "official" wars, Israel has experienced two Intifadas and repetitive long periods of bombings of its border-settlements. I argue that such an intensive involvement in military actions provides a natural arena for a uniquely fertile war discourse.

I identifie a special war discourse: a "war-normalizing discourse" (WND). WND is a set of linguistic, discursive, and cultural devices aimed at blurring the anomalous character of war by transforming it into an event perceived as natural—a "normal" part of life.

WND aims to portray "war" as a "normal" part of life. It masks, reduces, and even cancels out the negative and anomalous effects of war on citizens' everyday life.

Within the general framework of WND, I defines four specific analytical tools to facilitate the analysis of Israeli war discourse. I will refer to these as the functions of normalization (the "functions"): Euphemization, Naturalization, Legitimization, and Symbolic Annihilation.

I argue that the WND is served as a unique rhetorical compass and illuminates the basic organizing principle underlying the Israeli war discourse. WND has been in use throughout Israel's history, in periods of war as well as periods of relative peace. It has become a fundamental part of the Israeli public discourse concerning both peace and war and an integral part of Israeli identity. Moreover, the WND sheds light into how nations use rhetoric and tactical discourse to normalize their conflicts.

The
Normalization
of War in Israeli
Discourse,
1967-2008

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https://www.amazon.com/Normalization-War-Israeli-Discourse-1967-2008/dp/1498510973?ie=UTF8&*Version*=1&*entries*=0