“We Are on the Horns of a Dilemma”

The Attack of Palestinian Homes during the Second Lebanon War

Ibtisam Marey Sarwan
supervised by prof. Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian
This presentation addresses the damage done to homes of Palestinian citizens of Israel during Hezbollah attacks in Northern Israel throughout the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Lebanon War in July 2006.
Methods

- The study was done by conducting in-depth interviews using subjects’ authentic voices.
- The methodology was qualitative.
- The interviews included narratives of 24 Palestinian citizens of Israel from Haifa and Majd Al Kroum, whose homes were damaged during the Second Lebanon War in 2006.
Destroyed Homes

Haifa

Majd Al Kroum
Research Questions

• 1. What does “home” mean for Arab families - whose homes were damaged during the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Lebanon War?

• 2. How did these families cope with the damage or loss of their homes?

• 3. How did they perceive the impact in terms of:

  Mental health,
  Domestic relations,
  Community relations,
  Relation to the state and religion.
The Meaning of Home

“Home? Home is life, when there is no home, there is no life. Home is dignity; home is a covering that keeps us; home is the past and the present; those who have no home and no four walls to protect them, are lost persons - wanderers - in fact, they are people without dignity.” (Voice of Mushira, 37)
Mushira’s Home- Haifa
The study shows that the meaning of home includes:

- Dignity
- Protection
- Sanctuary
- Safety
- Continuity
- Life
- Family bonds
- Investment
Findings:

- The loss of home results in post traumatic symptoms, marital difficulties, and disruption of previous social network and life.

- Two factors affected the mode of coping with the attack on the family's home:
1. The politics of identity

- The loss of home intensified the **dual identities** felt by Arab citizens of Israel; on one hand, they are Palestinians who feel a sense of belonging to the Arab nation, on the other hand, they are unequal citizens of Israel.

Jamal, 52: “We are on the horns of a dilemma.”

Fahema, 72: “It is difficult to be injured by another Arab. It is as if two brothers are fighting each other and one of them kills the other. It is very difficult.”
Disappointment by Treatment from Authorities:

Saber, 27:

“The government didn’t warn us [against the impending attacks]. Do you see Arab houses with bomb shelters? If, God forbid, there was another war, where would we go? There is nothing. Not like the Jews. Do we have what they have? Of course not.”

Moneeb, 75:

“[In regards to recovery efforts] The government threw us around like dogs. The bureaucracy is very, very, very, very difficult.”
Moneeb’s home

It took over two years after the war for Moneeb’s home to be rebuilt.
All of the male subjects were **emotionally focused**. Men turned to religion and were more angry and upset.

Ahmad, 43: “This is our fate, this is what God wanted.”

Allam, 27: “I'm pointing my finger at [Ehud] Olmert. Because of him what happened to me has happened.”
Allam’s room

A bomb landed while Allam was sleeping.
In Contrast to Male Subjects,

- Most female subjects were **problem focused**. Women searched for practical modes of coping. They employed direct action and sought information.

Olla, 32:

“*If, one day, someone comes and asks me what I did in this situation, I must be able to show others what I have done. I will tell them ‘Look here, here is what I did and what I sent. I was not silent. You have destroyed, you have killed, you and you and you everything you - not us.’ I write letters to help myself.”*
• Inaam, 25:

“When I woke up in the hospital, I wanted to see my children, I shouted, ‘bring the children! ‘ and then I relaxed.”

• Mushira, 37:

“I spoke on TV and I said, ‘I want to say to the Arab Knesset members, if you have self-respect and respect for the Arab people in Israel, quit [your position] and return to your homes.’”
An Ongoing Trauma of Loss: Historicizing Trauma

- This study is unique because it examines the meaning of “home” and the “loss of home” for a society that is living an ongoing trauma of loss.

Fakhreya, 65:

“Like those [refugees] who left their homeland and haven’t returned yet, we have had our homes destroyed and we haven’t come back. Like someone that has left and never came back, we are like men who are wandering and have lost their homes.”

Nabila, 35: “What has happened to us is a “nakba.”
The “Nakba” of 1948

• In the “Nakba” of 1948, 800,000 Palestinians were displaced and uprooted from their homes and lands, and hundreds of villages were destroyed.

• In the reality of uprooting from the “national home,” participants’ homes were portrayed as a symbol of resilience, resistance, continuity, and belonging.

• The attack on the “home” during the Second Lebanon War (both the direct one by Hezbollah, and the indirect one by the State’s negligence) evoked dormant memories.
Thank you

Ibtisam Marey Sarwan
8.1.2012