CENTER FOR CULTURAL SOCIOLOGY
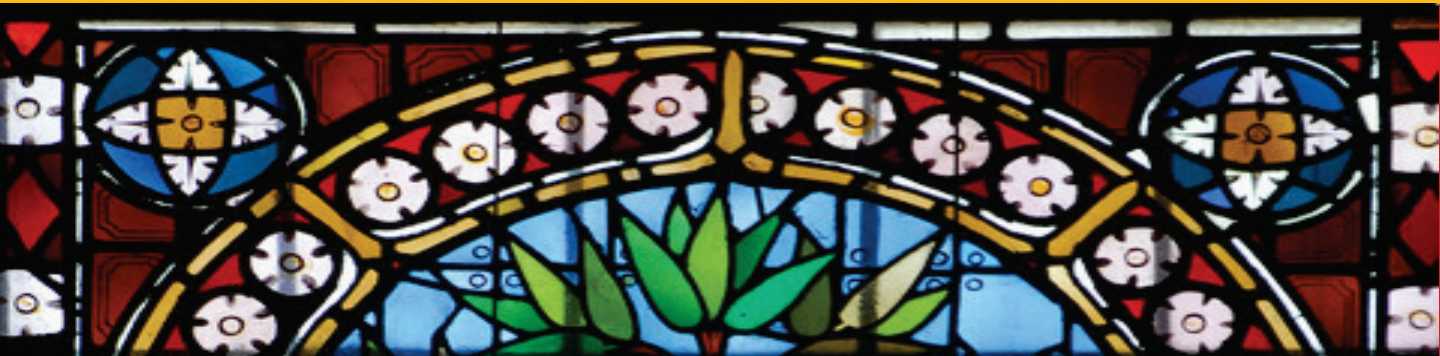
Spring Conference ~ 2017

Frontiers of Cultural Sociology

FRIDAY, APRIL 28 ~ 9:00 – 5:00
SATURDAY, APRIL 29 – 1:00 – 4:00
210 PROSPECT STREET – ROOM 203

CCS JUNIOR FELLOWS

ANDREW COHEN
ISABEL JIJÓN
DICKY YANGZOM

CCS FACULTY FELLOWS

SHAI DROMI
DMITRY KURAKIN
ANNA LUND
CAROLYN LY
ERIC MALCZEWSKI

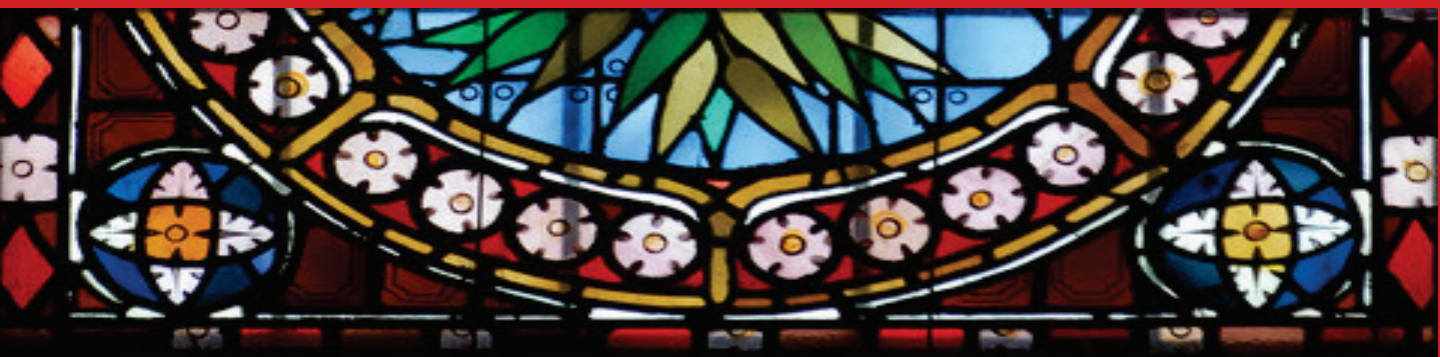## GUEST SPEAKERS

ANNA DURNOVÁ
HENRIK ENROTH
LILY IVANOVA
LARS JOHANNESSEN
STEPHEN OSTERTAG
PAVEL POSPĚCH
LIRON SHANI
DOMINIK ŽELINSKÝ

FRIDAY, APRIL 29, 2017

8:45 - 9:15 *Continental Breakfast*

9:15 - 9:30 **Opening Remarks: CCS Director Jeffrey Alexander**

9:30 - 10:15 **Session I ~ POLITICS**

Chair: Anna Lund, Linnaeus University, Sweden. CCS Visiting Faculty Fellow

Henrik Enroth, Linnaeus University, Sweden

Taking Meaning (Really) Seriously: Toward a Strong Program for Political Science

Respondent: Ian Sheinheit, SUNY Albany. CCS Predoctoral Fellow

10:15 - 10:30 *Coffee Break*

10:30 - 11:50 **Session II ~ OUTSIDERS**

Chair: Anna Durnová, Institute for Advanced Studies Vienna. CCS Visiting Fellow

Anna Lund, Linnaeus University, Sweden. CCS Visiting Faculty Fellow

Time, memory and class

Pavel Pospěch, Masaryk University, Czech Republic. CCS Visiting Fellow

Who are the "unadaptable citizens"?

Isabel Jijón, Yale University. CCS Junior Fellow

The dignity of working children?

Or, why working children in Bolivia and Ecuador defend child labor.

Respondent: Elisabeth Becker, Yale University. CCS Junior Fellow.

11:50 - 1:00 *Lunch*

1:00 - 2:05 **Session III ~ EMOTION**

Chair: Andrew Cohen, Yale University. CCS Junior Fellow

Anna Durnová, Institute for Advanced Studies Vienna. CCS Visiting Fellow

Cultures of Truth: Emotions in a Post-factual World

Stephen Ostertag, Tulane University

Where's The Effort?

Emotions and The Problem of Meaning-Centrism in Cultural Theories of Action

Respondent: Abby Stivers, SUNY Albany. CCS Predoctoral Fellow

2:05 - 2:30 *Coffee Break*

2:30 - 3:40 **Session IV ~ CONSUMPTION**

Chair: Dmitry Kurakin, National Research University Higher School of Economics, Russia. CCS Faculty Fellow

Andrew Cohen, Yale University CCS Junior Fellow

From Printer's Ink to Consumer Insights: A Brief Cultural History of Advertising

Dominik Želinský, University of Edinburgh

The Music of Spiritual Poverty: Against Jazz in Stalinist Czechoslovakia

Dicky Yangzom, Yale University. CCS Junior Fellow

Worn and wearing out: Theoritical explorations in material agency and fashion

Respondent: Melissa Aronczyk, Rutgers University. CCS Visiting Faculty Fellow

3:40 - 4:00   *Coffee Break*

4:00 - 5:00   **Session V ~ NARRATIVE**

Chair: Carolyn Ly-Donovan, Augustana University. CCS Faculty Fellow

Dmitry Kurakin, National Research University Higher School of Economics, Russia. CCS Faculty Fellow

Narrative structure of educational choice

Lily Ivanova, University of British Columbia, Canada. Yale International Fox Fellow.

Teaching empathy, teaching politics: Bringing political events into the moral sphere of genocide education in Canada

Respondent: Dana Hayward, Yale University. CCS Junior Fellow

5:00 - 6:30   *Reception ~ 210 Prospect Street, 1st Floor Lounge*

SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 2017

1:00 - 1:15   *Coffee/Cookie*

1:15 - 2:15   **Session VI ~ MEDICINE**

Chair: Eric Malczewski, Harvard University. Faculty Fellow

Carolyn Ly-Donovan, Augustana University. CCS Faculty Fellow
Evan Meyer, Daniel Schmidtman, & Reed Ritterbusch, Augustana University
Making Medicine Meaningful: Cultural Work By the South Dakota State Medical Association from 1882-1927

Lars Johannessen, Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Norway. CCS Visiting Graduate Student.
The semiotics of suffering: Untangling triage nurses' pain assessments

Respondent: Florian Stoll, Bayreuth University, Germany. CCS Postdoctoral Fellow

2:15 - 2:30   *Coffee Break*

2:30 - 3:35   **Session VII ~ NATURE**

Chair: Lily Ivanova, University of British Columbia, Canada. CCS Visiting Graduate Student

Eric Malczewski, Harvard University. CCS Faculty Fellow

The Autonomy of Orders: Three Animating Presuppositions

Shai Dromi, Harvard University. CCS Faculty Fellow
Liron Shani, Brandeis University

Patriotic environmentalism: The national meanings of environmental responsibility in struggles over new Israeli communities

Respondent: Celso Villegas, Kenyon College. CCS Visiting Fellow

3:35 - 3:50   **Closing Remarks: CCS Director Philip Smith**

6:30 - 8:30   *Banquet - Geronimo Restaurant*

ABSTRACTS

SESSION I - POLITICS

Henrik Enroth, Linnaeus University, Sweden

Taking Meaning (Really) Seriously: Toward a Strong Program for Political Science

In this paper, I argue that political research has yet to do justice to the ways in which political phenomena essentially involve meaning. While students of politics increasingly acknowledge that interests, identities, actions, and institutions in politics entail meaning in context, dominant approaches to the analysis of meaning fall short of a serious and productive engagement with this vital aspect of political life. Partly for historical reasons discussed in the paper, students of politics tend to conceptualize and theorize meaning in a flawed manner, neglecting or distorting much of what is arguably distinctive about meaning in politics. I identify and discuss what I take to be the flaws in three dominant approaches to the study of meaning in political research, all of which offer valuable insights but also reductive or overly selective accounts of the nature and role of meaning in politics.

Suggesting a way forward, I draw on work in cultural sociology and philosophy to sketch, in rough outline, the contours of a strong program for political research, centered on the autonomy and primacy of meaning.

SESSION II - OUTSIDERS

Pavel Pospěch, Masaryk University, Czech Republic. CCS Visiting Fellow

Who are the "unadaptable citizens"?

In the 1990s Czech Republic, people had no experience with beggars, street people, drug abuse in public and graffiti. All these phenomena were new and seemed to appear simultaneously with the transition to a democratic, free-market society. Consequently, a „language of incivility and disorder" was established in the media and popular discourses to refer to the negative experiences people were associating with these phenomena.

Building on a large-scale analysis of the development of this language, this paper analyses a particular sub-plot: the spread of the term "unadaptable citizen". Originating partly in right-wing extremist scene, the term became a widely accepted umbrella term for "troublemakers" in public space. On the one hand, the term has successfully entered the official discourses of politics and media, on the other hand, its meaning remained highly confusing, with inconsistencies and internal contradictions in its usage. The paper will suggest an explanation for that. It will argue that while appearing to describe specific groups of "unwelcome" people, the signifier "unadaptable citizens" actually refers to larger feelings of disappointment with the society's development and the inability to express to the corresponding frustrations in a legitimate way.

Anna Lund, Linnaeus University, Sweden. CCS Visiting Faculty Fellow

Time, memory and class

In this paper, Paul Willis' book Learning to Labour (1977) is reconsidered through the lens of time, memory and class. An additional reading of the "the lads" orientation toward different temporalities and conscious practices of memory work is pursued. In this perspective, sociology as a project focused on outcomes is problematized. This is especially true in relation to effects on what is perceived as social success in life and how success is connected to bourgeois values, where upward social mobility often is seen sacred. In the concluding discussion, time is connected to civil and anticivil motives and their possible effects on social differentiation, class privilege and political unrest.

Isabel Jijón, Yale University. CCS Junior Fellow

The dignity of working children?
Or, why working children in Bolivia and Ecuador defend child labor.

On July 17, 2014, Bolivia legalized certain forms of child labor. The government rejected globally institutionalized scripts regarding children's exclusion from labor markets. Existing theories on the global diffusion of culture do not adequately address why or how this diffusion fails. In this paper, I draw on interviews with politicians, activists, members of national and transnational child welfare NGOs in Bolivia and argue that diffusion fails when local actors reconcile local and global narratives through a compelling moral performance. I conclude by discussing the implications of these findings for theories of globalization and debates about morality and markets.

SESSION III

Stephen Ostertag, Tulane University

Where's The Effort?
Emotions and The Problem of Meaning-Centrism in Cultural Theories of Action

Cultural sociological approaches to action are largely meaning-centric. Meaning is that which must be understood to explain action. Yet, action involves bodily movement, which requires effort, an implied but under theorized component of action. This paper develops a theoretical framework of effort designed to address the problem of meaning-centrism in the sociology of action. It suggests that motivated action is rooted in oppositional sets of emotional energies associated with attraction and aversion. Emotional energy sets of attraction include pride, joy and happiness, and are rooted in normative pulls associated with social worth and self-enhancement. Emotional energy sets of aversion include worry, fear and anxiety, and are rooted in pragmatist pushes associated with uncertainty and ontological insecurity. Empirically, I apply this framework to the emergence of social relationships using the communication and consumption of news and an example. I then discuss how the theoretical framework of effort might complement meaning-centric approaches to better explain and understand collective action and the use of cultural resources.

Anna Durnová, Institute for Advanced Studies Vienna, Austria. CCS Visiting Fellow

Cultures of Truth: Emotions in a Post-factual World

Post-Truth was pronounced the word of the year 2016. What followed was a vivid defense of truth by scientists, journalists and politicians. Prominent scientific journals emphasized and praised the rationality of scientific inquiry together with urgent calls for action, which culminated in the organization of the March for Science in April 2017.These discussions have been directly connected to Trump presidency, seen as a crucial moment of the failure of both facts and scientific truth.

The paper sees "post-factual times" as a particular and timely erosion of the institution of truth we have accommodated as a cornerstone of modern democracies. It looks at this erosion through the March for Science reflecting actual performance of scientific truth in public discourse. The paper analyzes the establishment of the March for Science through the accompanying media coverage with special regard to "truth", "science" and "politics". This material is contextualized within Editorials of scientific journals, and official statements of Scientific Associations addressing the current role of science in politics, endorsing the March for Science and calling for affirmative action.

The analysis of truth in this data leads us to defining emotions as "performed experiences of values and beliefs". The paper suggest decoding through this notion the recurrent argument of "political" character of science, by distinguishing politics as "critical inquiry into truth production" from politics as "instrumentalist politicizing of science for personal gain".

SESSION IV - CONSUMPTION

Andrew C. Cohen, Yale University. CCS Junior Fellow

From Printer's Ink to Consumer Insights: A Brief Cultural History of Advertising

This paper presents an analytical description of the cultural history of the (American) advertising industry, concluding with an analysis of the three leading modes of thought for how to succeed in advertising.

In this paper, I recount the emergence of the advertising industry to highlight its origins as profession oriented around media sales, with the creative function emerging later as an added service to clients. I then follow the industry in the United States through the 'creative revolution' of the 1950s and '60s, in which a competition between two schools of advertising thought emerges. However, that model itself is further complicated by the role of the Account Planner, which first appears in the late 1960s and establishes itself as a unique craft through the '70s. Often positioned as a mix of left- and right-brain thinking, the planner (sometimes called strategist) has become a third ideal type.

I argue the emergence and development of these roles emerges from an overarching cultural logic that has always driven the advertising industry, deeply rooted in a market logic

Together, the account executive, creative director, and account planner constitute the 'trifecta' of the modern advertising process. I explore the logics of these three departments from a regimes of justification perspective (Boltanski & Thevenot 2006). Yet all three logics, despite the heated arguments they may create and their emphases on creativity, cannot escape their origins in a market logic.

Dominik Želinský, University of Edinburgh

The Music of Spiritual Poverty: Against Jazz in Stalinist Czechoslovakia

This presentation explores the situation of jazz music and subculture during the period of Stalinism in Czechoslovak history (1948-1956). The communist coup d'état in February 1948 crucially shifted the status of jazz music, by then thriving around major Czechoslovak cities. Only recently freed from the denigrating label "Entartete Musik", jazz was now subject to vilifying jeremiads once again. This time, however, it was not a 'degenerate art', played and enjoyed by inferior races, but an imperialist attempt to poison the minds of the Czechoslovak proletariat. It was a reactionary art form of provocateurs and nitwits – the music of spiritual poverty, as Russian music critic Viktor Gorodinsky wrote in his eponymous treatise. To code jazz as such had important social and institutional effects, as musicians were expelled from official unions and were often forbidden to perform publicly. Based on research of music criticism of the period, this presentation argues against simplifying political explanation of communists' animosity towards jazz, which tends to claim that jazz was targeted simply because it was American. Instead, it argues for a more nuanced cultural explanation that focuses on the discordance between Stalinism as a cultural system with characteristic normative logic and the way the 1940s and 50s jazz music sounded, was performed, and consumed.

Dicky Yangzom, Yale University. CCS Junior Fellow

Worn and Wearing Out: Theoretical exploration in Fashion and Material Agency

In sociology, the burgeoning field of fashion has been discussed within the production of culture perspective (PoC) (Crane 1992, 2000; Blumer 1969). Focusing on how symbolic facets of culture are shaped by social structure (Peterson and Anand 2004), this perspective studies fashion as the result of institutions, elites, and ideological interests. As part of a larger study on second-hand clothing (SHC), this paper challenges the PoC perspective by bringing into discussion theories of materiality. In doing so, it provides an alternative explanation on fashion, where cultural agency is neither determined by social structure nor is the result of meanings constrained by social life. Rather it demonstrates how 'worn' and the process of 'wearing out' generate new meanings that are produced by the objective material qualities of clothing. In shifting away from PoC's 'black box' approach, this paper explores 1) how meaning affects identity formation in social life by looking at how SHC consumers interpret their relationship to worn and used-clothing; 2) how the autonomy of culture here creates new markets and schemes of valuation (i.e. secondary markets of re-commoditized goods), and 3) how in the 'profane creativity' (Willis 1978) of cultural codes, the old/mundane becomes the new/sacred in fashion.

Dmitry Kurakin, National Research University Higher School of Economics, Russia. CCS Faculty Fellow

Narrative structure of educational choice

This paper aims to bring temporality into thinking on education and the analysis of educational choice. The mainstream way to deal with educational choice is to study how existing measurable states and dispositions (such as cognitive abilities, academic achievement, etc.) affect following history (educational trajectory and career development). This view can be best illustrated by the metaphor of the tree, growing from the seed which momentarily contains all the future development. However, this type of explanation bears on the inappropriate for interpretive analysis mechanistic determinism. I argue instead that the continuous should be explained by the continuous. The narrative is currently the most developed paradigm of the continuity of the social processes; most importantly, the idea that the human mind is able to conceive the continuity by virtue of the experience of narration paves the way to an interpretive explanation of the educational choice. Following Paul Ricoeur, the relation between narrative and action is structured through the configuring act. I argue, that the configuring act is, in turn, dependent from the type of identity, described by the theorists of modernity, such as Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck. This allows building an approach which enables not only explicating causal effects of narratives on educational choice, but also understanding how this causal relation is connected with the identity and what it has to do with the identity change conditioned by education.

Lily Ivanova, University of British Columbia, Canada. Yale International Fox Fellow

Teaching empathy, teaching politics:
Bringing political events into the moral sphere of genocide education in Canada

The late 1990s and early 2000s saw a rise in research dedicated to the prospect of "global memories". Drawing on the example of the Holocaust, Alexander (2002) and Levy and Sznaider (2002) have illustrated the process of how national and local tragedies can be re-framed as "moral universals" and "cosmopolitan memories", in this way expanding their moral resonance to a broader global community. As Alexander aptly puts it, "Becoming evil is a matter of representation" (2002: 10). This paper follows up on the concern that other national tragedies may not be gaining the same status of moral universality in Western nations. I use the case of Canadian high school education to trace the representation of over 30 genocides and conflicts (including formally recognized genocides, crimes against humanity, colonial genocides and war crimes) in social studies textbooks across six provinces. In each case, I focus on the framing of four sets of actors (victims and survivors, perpetrators and bystanders, resistance leaders, and external actors), paying special attention to how descriptions encourage or restrict identification processes. I find that while the Holocaust is invoked as a case study of civic responsibility to be emotionally embraced by Canadian students, the genocides in Rwanda, Cambodia, Bosnia and others are presented as examples of global governance at work – high level political conflicts with little personal accessibility. This differential construction of events as "political" or "moral" conflicts has important repercussions for Canadians' identification with genocide and conflict abroad.

Carolyn Ly-Donovan, Augustana University. CCS Faculty Fellow
Assisted by: Evan Meyer, Daniel Schmidtman & Reed Ritterbusch, Augustana University

Making Medicine Meaningful:
Cultural Work By the South Dakota State Medical Association from 1882-1927

Existing research has established the development of medicine and health care institutions in the U.S., especially the growth that occurred during the early and mid-20th century. This time period is often noted as the rise to power of the "golden age" of medicine wherein medical authority and autonomy became the norm in American society. Through cultural analysis of archival data we show that physicians in the voluntary professional association in South Dakota worked hard at making medicine in South Dakota meaningful in ways that both echo larger patterns of institutionalization while also navigating local contexts. By focusing on culture as a "strong" and identifiable structure of meaning we are able to illustrate how narratives of professionalism were contingent on the establishment, reinforcement, and negotiation of this local medical culture by the physicians and other interested parties. Primary archival documents were derived from the "SDSMA Collection" (Center for Western Studies. Sioux Falls, SD, USA). The folders within this collection contain materials such as association annual meetings minutes and proceedings; photographs; scrapbooks; and other research documents officially kept by the association. By exploring the goals and issues made important by the association, we are able to reconstruct the culture of the organization and the embeddedness of critical meanings and practices that were made significant over time by medical professionals in the State of South Dakota. Thus, beyond cultural signification, our analysis has the potential to additionally provide insight into the role of seemingly neutral organizational structures as they contribute to issues of structural inequality, particularly, as burgeoning within the process of organizational development. While medical professionals must make something meaningful to their profession, what (and who) become relevant tells us even more regarding the priorities and institutionalization of inequalities over time.

Lars E. F. Johannessen, Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Norway. CCS Visiting Graduate Student

The semiotics of suffering: Untangling triage nurses' pain assessments

Pain is widely considered a subjective experience; yet in emergency medicine, triage nurses have to make an "objective" assessment of the intensity of patients' pain to determine their place in line to see a physician. The present paper draws on data from a fieldwork study of a Norwegian emergency primary care clinic (EPCC) to analyze how triage nurses performed pain assessments – an under researched topic within a sociological literature that focuses predominantly on patients' rather than professionals' perspectives on pain. Nurses in the EPHC were required to quantify their assessments on a scale from 0-10 based on patients' own report and observable signs of pain. The paper shows that nurses seldom asked patients about their "subjective" score; instead, they relied solely on their "objective" estimation. They acknowledged the subjective nature of pain but emphasized that "subjective" scores were unsuitable for determining patients' relative priority. Nurses based their "objective" scores on a widespread array of medical and non-medical signs, and their pain assessments were mediated by variables such as patients' age, gender and perceived cultural background. In addition to describing these signs and mediating variables, the paper reconstructs the beliefs nurses had about pain, which made it logical for them to assess pain in solely "objective" terms. By analyzing nurses' interpretive practice, the paper contributes to our understanding of triage assessments and nursing epistemology and sheds light on a source of arbitrariness in nurses' priority setting that might be highly consequential for patients.

SESSION VII ~ NATURE

Eric Malczewski. Harvard University. CCS Faculty Fellow

The Autonomy of Orders: Three Animating Presuppositions

This paper systematically disambiguates the several referents of the concept of "presupposition" (Voraussetzung) as used by Max Weber. Three main forms of the concept are identified. Life orders (Lebensordnungen) emerge from presuppositions that constitute key sources of such orders' law-like autonomy. The implications of one form of presupposition – the ontological stand – are analyzed with reference to current work on the transformation of nature in the 19th century.

Shai Dromi, Harvard University, CCS Faculty Fellow
Liron Shani, Brandeis University

Patriotic environmentalism: The national meanings of environmental responsibility in struggles over new Israeli communities

Numerous studies have examined how notions of nature protection are embedded in local cultures, and yet few studies have examined in detail the ways in which nationalism and environmentalism intertwine. This study highlights the interplay between environmental and national worldviews by examining two Israeli activist groups: a settler movement that aims to establish new communities in the fast-dwindling Israeli open expanses, and an environmentalist movement intent on preserving open spaces by preventing the establishment of new townships altogether. The paper draws on an ethnography conducted between 2005 and 2009 with these two groups as they struggled over the establishment of a new rural community in East-Central Israel. The ethnography shows that both groups believe themselves to be committed to the protection of nature, and that both groups see this as an integral aspect of their Israeli patriotism, but in diametrically opposed ways. The environmentalist movement sees abstaining from interventions in nature and adhering to sustainable development as the way to preserve Israel for future generations. By contrast, the settler movement sees active intervention in nature—in the form of building new communities, planting trees, and other such practices—as a way to protect Israeli territories and maintain the livelihood of Israeli society. The findings show that nationalist cultural framework may include notions of environmental responsibility, which manifest themselves in different (and even contradictory) ways.