

**Title: Narrative repetitions and fragile rhythms: rituals and silences of care towards an end of (Jewish?) kibbutz life**

**Abstract:** This paper examines some of the narrative repetitions and silences of several octogenarian and nonagenarian elders who live(d) in kibbutzim near Israel's northern borders with Lebanon or southern borders with Palestine/Gaza, to consider what happens when war overlays aging and illness, (re)shaping the interpersonal dynamics of care as these collide with Israeli and Palestinian nationalist projects and geopolitical conflagrations. At the micro level, I describe, first, how elders in varying states of fragile health sought to establish ritualized daily routines that reinvoked a (lost) religiosity or reaffirm their internationalist, communist-inspired secularism, as part of enacting wellbeing while anticipating, at times with dread, at others with equanimity, the oncoming but temporally uncertain end of their life. Drawing on long-term observations and interviews with key participants, and on media and kibbutz archival materials that have also sought to portray the changing lives of kibbutzim and their elders, I then reflect on how rhythms were shattered and remade in the wake of Israel's latest war. Zooming out to a broader discursive level, I attune to the silences and gaps in these ethnographic and collective narratives, to attempt to explain a parallel nearing end, of the kibbutz itself and perhaps, as some might wish or fear, of Israel as a pluralist Jewish state. I conclude by highlighting the fraught nature of kibbutzim's nationalist and internationalist (anti-)religious settlement project and then asking more questions regarding how different scales of "endings" and forms of anticipated finitude may shape care experiences at the end of lives.