

Measuring resilience:

A new methodological approach to benchmarking societal resilience

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Resilience is primarily a metaphor designed to characterize the capacities of a system to stand up to a natural or manmade disaster, to respond in accordance with its severity, to cope and adapt to its consequences, and to bounce back swiftly.

My presentation deals with the rate of the Israeli societal resilience during the 48 months of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Palestinian Intifada (2000-2004). The study is built on the assumption that protracted terror is a disaster for all practical matter. Hence it challenged the societal resilience of the population in different levels. The research indicates a clear connection between the magnitude of the terrorist acts and the level of the public's societal resilience. Specifically, the study shows the extent that this connection was expressed in the actual conduct of the Israeli public at that period.

In most cases the response of a social system to disasters is assessed by surveys. This study takes another methodological approach, which is based on analysis found in economic and organizational resilience quantitative studies, which test the actual behavioral patterns of individuals and communities following a disaster. In this study the connection was found between two variables: The intensity of terror and the public's conduct, which has been tested in three spheres of activities: Normative conduct, stress-related conduct, and deviational conduct.

The study confirms the hypothesis that the Israeli public reacted flexibly to the terrorist attacks, in accordance with their intensity, changed, adapted and coped, while reducing its regular performance for short and shortened periods, and consequently rebounded in an increasing pace to its routine functionality and to an enhanced level of conduct. This pattern represents a high rate of societal resilience.