Postmodernism and the challenges it poses to the national security of Western liberal democracies

Michael Burke
Kanda University of International Studies (English Language Institute)
King's College London (Department of War Studies)
Burkemikeedward@gmail.com

Overview

1) What is creeping normalcy?
2) Prelude: The 1967 Six-Day War
3) Creeping normalcy in context: The Yom Kippur War
4) What do I mean by the contemporary postmodern paradigm?
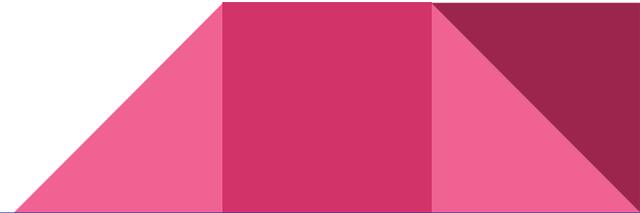5) Creeping normalcy and contemporary postmodernism in Western liberal democracies: the security challenges.

What is creeping normalcy?

What is creeping normalcy?

'the slow, evolutionary movement of events, possibly toward a crisis that should be warned about but may escape analyst observation because each individual change is small and does not alone produce a crisis. The colloquial metaphor for this phenomenon is the "boiling frog" fable: a frog in a pot ignores the water's slowly rising temperature until it is too late—it boils to death.'
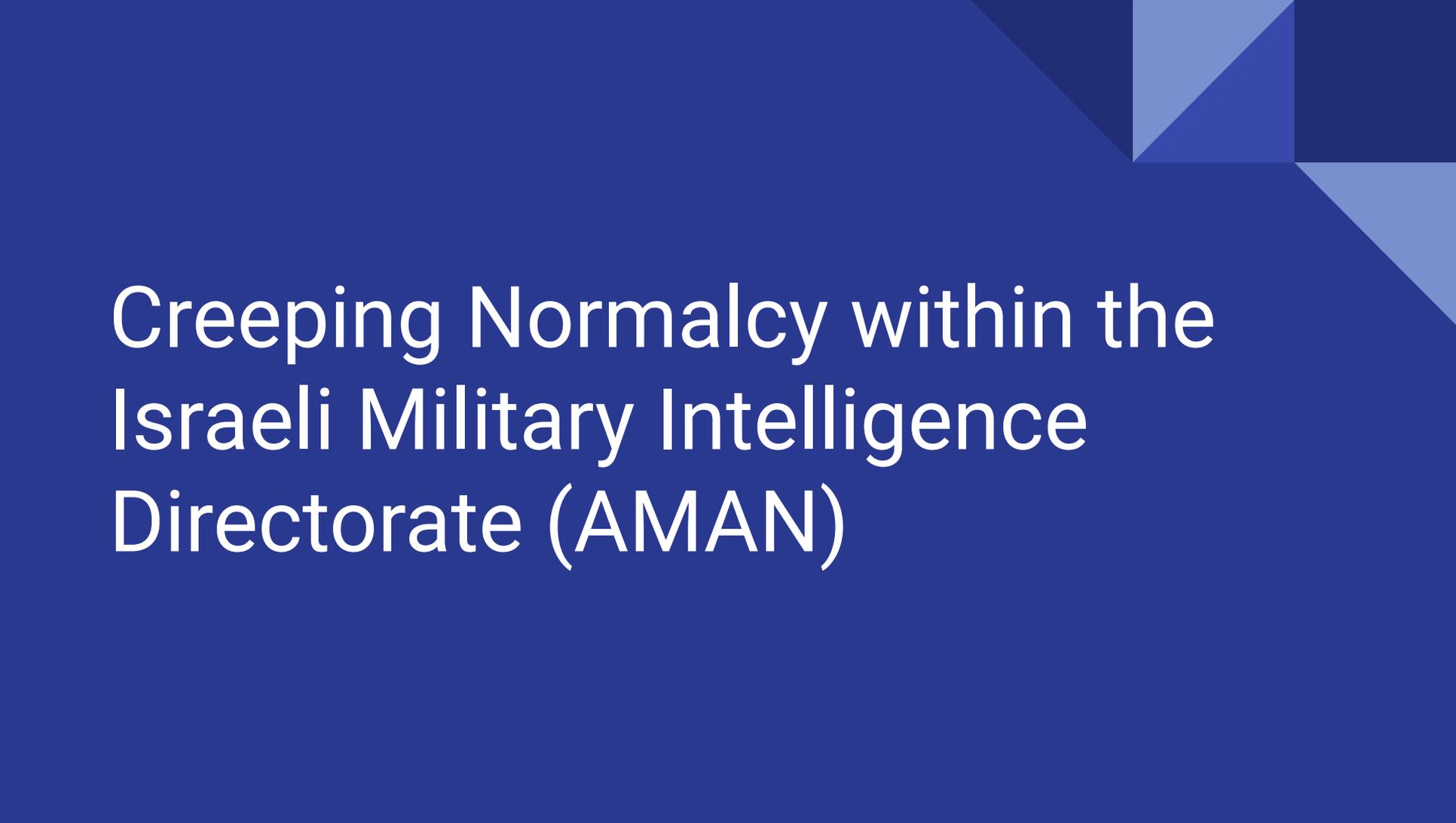
(Gentry & Gordon 2019, 6286).

Prelude: The Six Day War

The six day war (1967)

(Bar-Joseph & McDermott 2017,188-191)

- Israel takes Sinai Peninsula from Egypt

- The Golan Heights from Syria

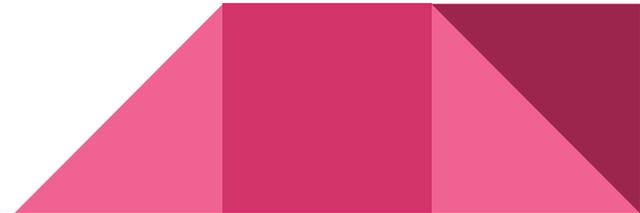- East Jerusalem and the West Bank of the Jordan River from Jordan

Creeping Normalcy within the Israeli Military Intelligence Directorate (AMAN)

Creeping normalcy within the Israeli Military Intelligence Directorate (AMAN)

- AMAN director Eli Zeira argues that Egypt will not attack because of their military inferiority (Bar Joseph 2016, 111; Gentry & Gordon 2019, 1303).

- Egypt identifies Israeli overconfidence as its key weakness.

- Egypt creates a 'Cry Wolf syndrome' through escalations and de-escalations

- The 'Cry Wolf' syndrome creates a 'paradox of warning' (ibid, 1399).

Accurate intelligence warnings ignored 1/2

- Escalations dismissed as noise or sabre-rattling for domestic consumption (Bar Joseph 2005, 3340)

- Israel overconfident in intelligence services (ibid, 3318-3327)

- Many powerful figures within Israeli intelligence ignored, not invited to discussions and designated 'alarmists' (ibid, 3391).

Accurate intelligence warnings ignored 2/2

- Out group stereotypes: Arabian leadership and military forces relatively incompetent

- Self-censorship

- Illusion of unanimity

- Direct pressure on dissident views

- Motivated reasoning

(ibid, 3386-4516)

The Yom Kippur War

(otherwise known as the War of Ramadan or Operation Badr)

1973

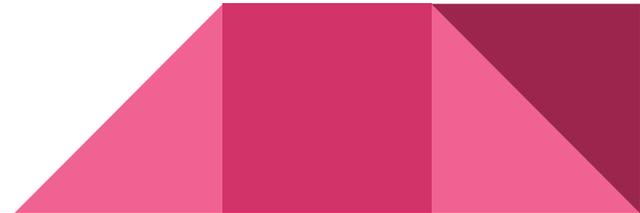# The Yom Kippur War (a very brief synopsis)

On October 6th 1973

- Egypt and Syria launch a surprise attack on Israel in the Suez Canal and in the Golan Heights.

- Syrian troops defeat Israeli forces on Mt. Hermon in northern Israel.

- Egyptians succeeded in inflicting heavy losses on Israel, which convinced them that the potential cost of future conflict was higher than that of returning to the negotiation table.

Creeping normalcy and the contemporary postmodern or Critical Social Justice paradigm

The contemporary postmodern or Critical Social Justice paradigm (CSJ)

Derives itself from two schools of thought:

(1) Frankfurt school post-Marxist Critical Theory (CT): Focuses on the various symbolic, linguistic, and ideological means to ensure obedience, conformity and submissiveness among the oppressed (Althusser 1977, 74), aims 'to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them' (Horkheimer 1982, 244).

The contemporary postmodern or Critical Social Justice paradigm (CSJ)

Derives itself from two schools of thought:

(2) French postmodernism: specifically Foucault's (1980, 52; 1993, 368) notion of *episteme*, that both knowledge and ways of knowing are the means of oppression and Derrida's deconstruction (2016, 157-295), which examines hows texts and meaning are constructed in order to be used for oppression.
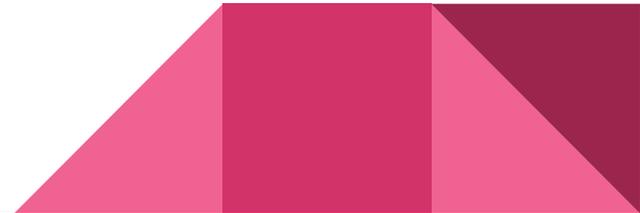
The contemporary postmodern or critical social justice paradigm: Key beliefs

The contemporary postmodern or Critical Social Justice paradigm (CSJ): Key beliefs

Key beliefs

(1) Extreme constructivism: Knowledge and ways of knowing, being subjective or intersubjective, are the means of oppression: e.g. deconstructing the curriculum, silencing, bullying or academics who disagree. E.g. genetic differences between groups.

The contemporary postmodern or Critical Social Justice paradigm (CSJ): Key beliefs

Key beliefs

(2) Oppressors versus oppressed ontology: 'The only long-term solution to the fascist menace is to undermine its pillars of strength in society grounded not only in white supremacy but also in ableism, heteronormativity, patriarchy, nationalism, transphobia, class rule, and many others.'

(Bray 2017, 3659)

The contemporary postmodern or Critical Social Justice paradigm (CSJ): Key beliefs

Key beliefs

(3) Subjective interpretation more important than intention, e.g. microaggressions and dog whistles: 'I believe that the most qualified person should get the job', is often given as an example of a racist microaggression (Lukianoff & Haidt, 2018, 41) because it conflicts with their views on the universality of systemic oppression against minorities.
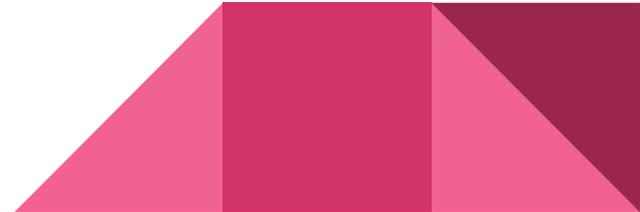
The contemporary postmodern or critical social justice paradigm: The security challenges

The contemporary postmodern or Critical Social Justice paradigm (CSJ): Some of the consequences

Violence

(1) As everything is reduced to a power struggle between the oppressors and the oppressed, free speech is sometimes equated with 'epistemic violence' (Pohlhaus 2017, 13-14), which justifies physical violence, such as during 2017 Berkeley 'free speech week' and Selina Todd being given a security guards at Oxford.

The contemporary postmodern or Critical Social Justice paradigm (CSJ): Some of the consequences

Fear of being accused of racism, raised following independent report of child-sex grooming in Rotherham (Jay 2014, 8; 91-93):

(1) So far: Aylesbury, Banbury, Bristol, Derby, Halifax, Huddersfield, , Keighley, Manchester, Newcastle, Oxford, Peterborough, Rochdale, Rotherham and Telford.

(2) Sarah Champion, UK Member of Parliament for Rotherham and then Shadow Women and Equalities Minister effectively sacked.

(3) UK Govt. refuses to release independent report.

The contemporary postmodern or Critical Social Justice paradigm (CSJ): Some of the consequences

Guilty until proven innocent:

Bo Winegard 2020, former assistant professor Marietta College: sacked for discussing the potential of there being generalised cognitive differences between ethnic groups; Laura Tanner 2019, grad. Student U. California Santa Barbara: denounced for arguing there are two sexes; Stephen Gliske 2019, Neuroscientist, U. Michigan called to retract paper for discussing gender dysphoria; Michele Moore 2019, denounced for arguing that trans suicides are a myth; Martin Medhurst editor of *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* denounced and boycotted for arguing for meritocracy vs. race selection; Abigail Thompson 2019, California Davis, denounced and called to resign for criticising diversity statements.

(Jussim 2020)

Bibliography

Althusser, Louis. 1971. *Lenin and Other Essays*. United States of America: Monthly Review Press

Bray, Mark. 2019. *Antifa: The Antifascist Handbook*. Brooklyn, NY: Melville House Publishing.

Bar-Yôsēf, Ûrî. 2005. *The Watchman Fell Asleep*. Albany: State Univ. of New York Press.

Bar-Yôsēf, Ûrî. 2016. *The Angel*. Epub Edition.

Bar-Yôsēf, Ûrî, and Rose McDermott. 2017. *Intelligence Success And Failures*. Kindle ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

Derrida, Jacques, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Judith P Butler. 2016. *Of Grammatology*. 40th Anniversary ed. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Foucault, Michel. 1980. *Power/knowledge: selected interviews & other writings 1972-1977*. Edited by Colin Gordon. New York: Pantheon.

Foucault, M. 1993. *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences*. Kindle Edition. New York: Vintage Books.

Gentry, John A, and Joseph S Gordon. 2019. *Strategic Warning Intelligence*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press.

Horkheimer, Max. 1982. *Critical Theory Selected Essays*. New York: Continuum Pub.

Jay, Alexis. 2014. *Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham 1997-2013*. Rotherham: Rotherham City Council. https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1407/independent_inquiry_cse_in_rotherham.pdf .

Jussim, Lee. 2020. *The Threat To Academic Freedom … From Academics*. Medium. https://medium.com/@leej12255/the-threat-to-academic-freedom-from-academics-4685b1705794.

Lukianoff, Greg, and Jonathan Haidt. 2018. *The Coddling of the American Mind: How good intentions and bad ideas are setting up a generation for failure*. New York: Penguin.

Pohlhaus, Gaile. 2017. "Varieties of Epistemic Injustice 1." In *The Routledge handbook of epistemic injustice*. Edited by By Ian James Kidd, José Medina and Gaile Pohlhaus, Jr. 13-26. New York: Routledge, 2017.