

סמינר מחקר

בית הספר ע"ש פדרמן למדיניות ציבורית וממשל

הנכם מוזמנים
להרצאה במסגרת
סמינר המחקר של
ביה"ס למדיניות
לשנת תשע"ד

ההרצאה תתקיים
ביום שני, 9 ביוני,
2014, בשעה 10:30,
בחדר הסמינרים של
ביה"ס למדיניות

A CHECKPOINT EFFECT? EVIDENCE FROM A NATURAL EXPERIMENT ON TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS IN THE WEST BANK

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Does nonviolent repression prompt subject groups to obey or rebel? By what mechanism does it do so? To address these questions, we exploit a natural experiment based on a 2009 policy toward the "easement" of checkpoints—nonviolent impediments to movement—in the West Bank. We sample populations across 17 villages ($n=599$), beside one checkpoint slated for easement (treatment) and one that will undergo no change (control), before and after the intervention. We then pursue difference-in-difference estimation. This design is experimental, as easement was orthogonal to Palestinian attitudes; for robustness, we test our findings against an independent panel ($n=1200$). We find that easement makes subject populations less likely to support violence; we suggest humiliation as the mechanism bridging nonviolent repression with militancy. This warrants rethinking Israeli security policy, as short-term concerns over Palestinian mobility may be compromising Israel's long-term interests. By extension, checkpoint easement may positively affect peace negotiations.