**Statement of Purpose**

**Research Subject**: This is the first study to examine the professional authority of quality engineers in Israel during a state of exception, such as occurred in the coronavirus pandemic. Other r in Israel and worldwide,, and food production,also ——

Such authority is particularly endangered in a state of exception, when a head of government can unilaterally decide to take on much more power and authority, even to extremes. In such cases, norms, rules, and laws are suspended and even repealed (Agamben, 2008). This transfers power to political structures that would normally reside with subject matter experts—such as public health experts—who staff regulatory or standards-making agencies. In Israel, laws defining emergency powers provide for such a state of exception. Israel is not the only nation that allows this, although worldwide, the norm is that experts determine the response to an emergency.

In Anker and Lurie (2022), we defined two main types of organisations for which quality engineers work. The first includes organisations working according to government regulations (for example, pharmaceutical companies and food producers). In these types of organisations, the quality manager enjoys high levels of authority. However, the level of the quality engineer’s authority varies from one organisational structure to another. In addition, individual quality engineers are accorded different levels of influence, usually at the discretion of their employing organisations (Anker & Lurie, 2022).

Production, manufacturing, and construction companies fall within the second type of organisation: less regulated by governments but subject to standards-based certification by ISO, GMP, and other standards-making bodies. Here, again, quality engineers should have a high level of authority to prevent incidences, such as those that recently occurred in Israel’s food industry where Unilever, Strauss, and Abbott products were found to be infected (Ronen, 2016).

When extreme events result in a state of exception and the political apparatus takes over the decision-making about technically complex procedures, quality engineers’ authority is likely to diminish drastically. This study will investigate the extent of their authority during such scenarios.

**Area of Expertise**: Quality

**Methods:** The empirical part of this study combines two research methods: in-depth interviews with quality engineers to explore how they perceive their roles, and a questionnaire to examine the professional authority of the quality engineers.

**References**

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