**Navigating Marginalities: Masculinities in Israel's Waste Disposal Industry**

**Introduction**

Most waste disposal and garbage collection workers in Israel – a non-hegemonic masculine group are considered as blue-collar laborer men (Kaplan; 2009). This article includes those involved in the chain of waste collection as a basic sanitation occupation composed of truck drivers, bin preparers, and disposal workers. Like other sites around the world, this is a precarious and adverse field of employment (Housman, 1997; Rogers, 2000; Hudson, 2001; Hamilton et al., 2019), which is presently undergoing accelerated processes of privatization and is characterized by indirect employment (Benjamin, 2015). Literature dealing with the sociology of labor relations has included only a limited amount of inquiry into the perspectives of employees (Terkel; 1974, Walsh; 1975, Rich ;1996, Burelle and Monterrat; 1985, Perry ;1998, Nagle; 2013, Hamilton et al; 2017). Moreover, this inquiry has not deeply focused on the waste workers over-lapping marginality. In the Israeli arena, Fried’s research (2014, 2021) discussed the policies of solid waste disposal, and some of it is devoted to describing the world of these workers. It presents, likewise, social analysis along several identity axes: an analysis of non-hegemonic locations along axes of non-hegemonic masculinity.

Over an urban garbage truck works a team that includes the driver, the waste worker, and the bin preparer. As I will argue in the following pages, these individuals, encompassing Palestinians, Mizrahi Jews, and African work migrants, experience marginalization due to various factors such as their ethno-national origins, blue-collar occupations, social class, and age. I ask What hierarchy rules the team and for what reasons; How do waste workers perceive their own occupation; What is their ethno-national origin; Does it make any difference in the social or spatial aspect; How do they perceive the people they meet during their shifts and how are they publicly treated; Who earns more money - a young, dedicated permanent African work migrant, a Palestinian with a job permit or a multi-experienced, respected Israeli-Palestinian driver; What kind of man do you need or must be to work in the waste disposal industry; What intersectional identities characterize waste disposal workers, how their characterised identities meets their occupation and why is it matter and to whom. These issues of masculinities and gender, labor relations and ethno-nationalism will be discussed in this article. The first part will overview the theoretical frameworks of masculinities in Israel. The second part will detail the materials and methods using ethnographic research. The research methods are used includes Participant observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and auto-ethnography, as an approach. Ellis (2011) describes auto-ethnography as an approach that aspires to describe personal experience to understand cultural experiences. I find this valuable as a researcher with similar background characteristics to the waste disposal workers, including being the daughter of a Mizrahi-Jewish father who worked as a waste disposal truck driver for three decades in indirect employment. His experiences during his work throughout the years, along with a challenging socio-economic reality, are written on my memory. As a child I was joining him over the truck and watching his social encounters, work practices, difficulties, and inspiring sense of self-respect to his occupation.

The third part will focus on intersectionality and hegemonic/non-hegemonic masculinities. In what follows I will delve into the ethnographic materials, to analyse the masculine marginalities of a five waste disposal workers representing diverse identities. To shed light on the multi-layered marginalities experienced by the waste disposal workers, in the last part, I will discuss their navigation and the echoing influences.

I suggest that there has yet to be intersectional research from a feminist perspective on the people involved in the labor of waste disposal, and even less so on how this arena shapes masculine identities in ethno-nationalist contexts. Thus, this article will address a gap in theory and research.

**Masculinities in Israel as an intersectional perspective**

*Repertoires of national hierarchy*

In the Israeli context, while there has been academic attention to issues of masculinity and its intersection with various aspects such as the military, labor market, and visual culture (Lomsky-Feder, 1998; Kaplan, 2009; Sasson-Levi & Misgav, 2017; Hirsch, 2017; Dekel, 2022), there remains a significant gap in ethnographic studies. These studies are necessary to explore the intersectionality of social positions and identities to understand how they shape masculinity across diverse social spheres beyond the ones previously studied. This poses a challenge in comprehending the diverse manifestations of masculinities in different social categories, including age, class, ethno-nationalism, religion, and more. The Sabra – the first generation of Israeli (Oz; 2000), the “Halutz” (pioneer) in the past (Roniger & Feige; 2009) the “blue-collar” soldier (Sasson-levy; 2003) and “combat soldier” are both seen as symbols of Jewish masculinity in Israel, with cultural inseparable components such as national pride and physical power. This hierarchy is considered a reflection of the hegemonic Israeli culture, and these repertoires align with Israel's racialized national hierarchy (Lahav-Raz; 2020). The state of Israel has been shaped as a "nation in-arms," (Ben-Eliezer; 1995) establishing a continuous connection between masculinity and militarism since its early foundation. This bond and ongoing social construction have persisted throughout the years, transitioning from a population in conflict to a nation actively engaged in security. This connection between masculinity and militarism has evolved in various forms, remaining significant in contemporary Israeli society. The dual engagement with the military and civilian life creates a unique dynamic in Israeli society, blurring the boundaries between military and civilian masculinities (Lomsky-Feder et al; 2008).

*Blue collar workers: hierarchy in tension*

In the Israeli labor market context in general, and in blue-collar work in particular, there is a constant tension within the hierarchy of masculinities, which places privileged Jewish white men of "Ashkenazi" or European descent at the top, Mizrahi-Jewish men in the middle, Palestinian men below, and African migrant workers at the bottom of the social hierarchical ladder (Shafir & Peled; 1998, Kemp et al; 2010, Rabinowitz & Abu-Baker; 2005). The marginalization occurs within subordinated groups in and out of the waste disposal industry. Therefore, it is impossible to critically think about masculinity separately from the way it intersects with social hierarchies, structures, and conditions. The combination of these factors constructs cultural perceptions of masculinity (Connell; 2005). The focus in this paper is on cross-marginal men (who embody multiple marginalities) involved in the waste collection chain, including mainly Mizrahi-Jewish, Palestinians, and African work migrants, and their unique characteristics. Within these groups, Mizrahi (“Sephardic”) Jews are Jews from Arab and Islamic countries, occupy a subordinate position in the stratification system compared to Ashkenazi ("European") Jews, continue to hold the lowest socioeconomic positions within Israeli Jewish society as a collective (Chetrit; 2000). Mizrahi-Jewish masculinity is characterized by the experiences of Arab-Islamic countries origin men who immigrated to Israel from Morocco, Yemen, Libya, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Algeria, Tunisia etc., in the mid-20th century, after being cut off from their previous sense of belonging. These men faced a changing social reality and were marked and treated as socially inferior and marginalized by an elitist, hegemonic gaze. However, gradually parts of them had become representatives of resistance, particularly through the activism of the Israeli Black Panther Movement and its social influences throughout the years (Cohen and Shemesh; 1976). The one and a half, second and third generation of Mizrahi-Jewish men have become a “sharp teethed” protest agent (Shochat; 2003, Dekel; 2013). There is a connection between different Mizrahi masculinities and class, as well as diverse and fluid identity definitions among Mizrahi men (Baruch; 2016). The first and second generations of Mizrahi-Jewish men in Israel were often employed in blue-collar jobs, including waste disposal work (Bernstein & Swirsky; 1982). This occupation is sometimes passed down to the next generation of Mizrahi-Jewish waste disposal workers.

The social construction of masculinity among Middle Eastern Muslim men is heavily influenced by their class and the opportunities it provides. Their ethnicity, rural or urban background, and religious orientation further strengthen their agency in shaping their masculine identity, which may diverge from external contradictions (Gerami; 2005). Studies in post-colonial contexts suggest that men often respond to their marginality in creative ways and reframe what it symbolizes for them (Morrell & Swart; 2005). Additionally, the connection between class and masculinities has become more flexible and fluid over time (Morgan; 2005). In Israel, Arab masculinity can be divided into three major categories: Islamic masculinity, which perceives the global west as a cultural threat to society and family values; modern secular masculinity, which questions the global west; and dynamic and pragmatic masculinity, which chooses to manage daily reality and avoid clear-cut ideological decisions (Monterescu; 2003). Palestinian citizens of Israel experience a strong sense of emotional alienation, deeply embodied in their experience as an ethnonational minority group, along with ambivalence toward the state and its services. On many occasions, the Palestinians discrimination within Israel is the opposite expression of the privileged Jewish rights. Moreover, most of the Palestinians workers are blue-collar workers (Rabinowitz & Abu-Baker; 2005). Palestinians Arabs face discrimination and hold a lower status rank as a minority group in terms of power, political culture, and access to job opportunities (Zureik; 2023). There is a difference between Palestinians and Israeli Palestinians which are Israeli citizens and permanent Arab minority living in Israel (Smooha; 2019).

Black masculinity in Israel (that includes the Jewish Ethiopian community who are not part of this study) has similar aspects of representations in the world: “Representations of black men are clearly a social construct, founded on gender-racial stereotypes. In the United States, for example, common stereotypes draw either on the myth of a powerful and frightening virility of black men that inevitably leads to sexual violence, incarceration, disease, or drugs, or else of a prodigious athleticism or musical genius” (Dekel; 2022). In Israel, common representations mark them in opposing identities: passive or strong men. Unlike their negative representations in Israeli media, which sometimes mark them as violent against their female partners, and only occasionally as positive men leading a successful life (Schrock and Schwalbe; 2009, Dekel; 2022).

African work migrants face additional challenges, including limited status and labor rights, placing them at the bottom of the hierarchy.

*Intersectionality and Masculinities*

Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) coined the term "intersec tionality" to describe identity that comprises several axes of oppression, with gender constituting one key axis. Masculinity encapsulates multiple dimensions of identity (Willis; 1977), and relations of power create and reproduce distinctions between different groups of men (Hirsch; 2017). Along with Bourdieu's contribution to the question of how gender and gender relations are embodied in the body, the habitus - the different practices which organize the social world of men, the socialization implications are expressed by patterns of thinking and action, and thus masculinity is a relational term. The sociological study of masculinity adopted an intersectional approach from its beginning, rather than viewing men as a monolithic group, as argued by Sasson-Levy and Misgav (2017). Connell, as a pioneering scholar in masculinity studies, has established the concept of hegemonic masculinity in her work. The dynamic approach to masculine patterns and the recognition of masculinity as multifaceted reinforce the repertoire of various manifestations of masculinity. For instance, non-hegemonic masculinity can be observed within different social classes. (Connell; 2005, 2009). Furthermore, there is no full matching between hegemonic social position and hegemonic masculine model, meaning that non-hegemonic dominated masculinity might embody certain aspects of hegemonic masculinity, and therefore power relations reproduce the distinction between various groups of men (Connell;1995, Hirsch and Kachtan; 2017). In fact, there is a constant tension between marginal and hegemonic masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt; 2005). The critical discussion about masculinities brings to light that hegemonic masculinity is different from hegemonic dominance, hence there are groups who give legitimacy to hierarchies between social groups of men and there are groups who do not (Messerschmidt; 2012, Connell; 2014). However, it is better to understand masculine practices as organized by a contradictory repertoire of cultural models that cannot include an "equal self" masculine existence (Hirsch; 2017). Hybrid masculinity is a critical concept that examines contemporary forms of masculinity. It involves the symbolic distancing of men from hegemonic masculinity, while situating alternative masculinities as more meaningful in terms of their "marginal worth." By redefining the hierarchy of masculine identities, hybrid masculinity offers a new perspective on gender and power dynamics. It sheds light on the complex ways in which men navigate their identities, challenging traditional gender norms and promoting inclusivity. This critical review of hybrid masculinity contributes to our understanding of the diverse and evolving nature of masculinities in contemporary society (Bridges & Pascoe; 2014).

# *Occupational Precarity*

The concept of the "commodification of labor power" originated during the early stages of the industrial revolution in Europe, where laborers began to sell their labor as if it were a commodity (Benjamin; 2006). Thomas Humphrey Marshall's essay "Citizenship and Social Class" explored social rights, including workers' protections and the right to economic welfare, in Britain (Marshall; 1964). Over time, the protection of workers' dignity and liberty, and the responsibility of the state and employers to ensure these rights, became increasingly recognized, with a greater understanding that the human beings providing labor power must not be overlooked (Benjamin; 2007, Rabin-Margalioth; 2009). However, research literature indicates that individuals from marginalized identity categories are often less protected and are more likely to have their rights violated (Radin; 1996).

Occupational precarity signifies a lack of social mobility and stability, an insecurity which not only affects one's income but also their lifestyle and social and professional identity (Han; 2018, Standing; 2014). This condition is not limited to a particular historical period but rather is a recurring human experience. Even so, due to globalization and its impact on politics and finance, individuals have limited control over their circumstances, and their ability to predict changes that may affect their status is restricted. Scholars like Hirst and Thompson (1999) emphasize the persistent inequality within the contemporary international capitalist order, suggesting that globalization fails to deliver its promised benefits, and a significant portion of the population remains excluded from the advantages of globalization such as social choices (Schor; 2005). This argument stands in opposition to Anne-Marie Slaughter's viewpoint (2004), who argued that globalization has reduced poverty and deprivation in both developed and developing societies (Amadi; 2020). The role of waste is significant in shaping the discourse on urban visibility and promoting public health and sanitation services (Fried; 2021). Yet, the waste management and cleaning labor market in Israel is known for its vulnerability, particularly for workers in sectors with low wages, such as sanitation services that deal with waste, garbage, sewage, and more. For many poor heads of households, this work is their only option, and they are forced to endure precarious and discriminatory working conditions to maintain their livelihoods (Maor; 2012, Talit; 2012). Moreover, these workers might feel shame associated with the visible nature of their work (Benjamin et al.; 2011, Doron & Jeffrey; 2018). Most of these workers are employed through contractors and occupy the lowest tier of the employment pyramid (Mundlak; 2004, Rubinstein; 2012). Still, there is a lack of data about contract workers in Israel, further exacerbating their vulnerable position. In the job industry, waste work is considered a low-status and low-wage occupation (Nagle; 2013, Doron & Jeffrey; 2018) mainly occupied by blue-collar marginal men. The waste disposal workers work in teams consisting of a bin preparer, a waste worker, and a driver. Each local authority employs many teams, often through an external contractor. Local municipalities are responsible for maintaining proper sanitation standards and regular waste collection from urban areas. However, in some cities, such as Jewish central cities, waste disposal workers are considered privileged, and their working conditions are better. Unfortunately, an increasing number of municipalities are using indirect employment through outsourcing contractors to ensure workers' rights (Konor-Attias and Liberman; 2017). Nevertheless, the local authority may not finalize the working conditions between the hired contractor and the waste disposal workers, especially in marginalized or less privileged cities. The growing use of outsourcing in waste management highlights the social and financial neoliberal path, which is part of the privatization and contractors' control over the public sector (Bondy; 2012). Indirect employees, particularly those living in the geographical periphery of Israel, face discrimination twice: first, by the local authorities that do not supervise their working conditions through contractors, and second, by the contractors who deduct portions of their wages. Indirect employment is characterized by precarious practices and limited opportunities for excluded social groups. While direct employees of the public sector have greater representation in workers’ unions and better working conditions, indirect employees suffer from low wages and a lack of job security. This leaves them unable to participate in decision-making processes, demand their rights, or have their voices heard, resulting in a lack of social and work security both in the present and future (Mundlak; 2004). Furthermore, the waste workers may not have a comprehensive understanding of the broader impacts of their work on a large scale (Nagle; 2017).

The COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the demand for waste workers both in Israel and globally. With people staying at home due to quarantine measures, there has been a surge in consumption and consequently, an increase in waste production. This has put immense pressure on waste disposal workers. The relationship between the Israeli government's policies and the local authorities has also been significantly affected, leading to the development of creative solutions to manage the situation. However, this has left the workers, with limited capacity to resist governmental policies (Bondy; 2012). Despite the increased public attention on the waste disposal industry during the pandemic, it has not resulted in any significant economic or social benefits for the waste workers.

**Methods**

This article employs an intersectional analysis to explore the live experiences of municipal waste disposal workers in Israel and the waste collection process using ethnographic research. The research methods used are participant observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and a reflexive approach (Aktinson & Hammersley; 1998, Ellis et al; 2011, McIntosh & Morse; 2015).

*Participants and Field*

The focus in this article is based on five waste disposal workers who represent a diversity of multi-marginal masculinities from ethnonational, age, gender, social-economic class, and occupational status aspects. These include a Mizrahi-Jewish waste disposal driver, a Palestinian-Muslim waste disposal driver, a Jewish driver who immigrated from the former USSR, a Palestinian waste worker with a temporary work permit, and an African work migrant bin preparer. All five workers are between 35 to 64 years old.

I was joining the urban waste-removal system as the daughter of a father from a Mizrahi family who worked as a garbage truck driver for many years. Thus, my aim was, on the one hand, to approach the topic from an ethnographic and feminist reflexive research perspective and, on the other hand, to take an active part in urban waste-disposal work in two comparative locations. One is Ramat Gan central city and the other is Ramat HaSharon city. Both cities are central and differ from one another demographically and geographically. Moreover, the former research field is hiring mostly direct employees, and the latter non-direct. These factors impact the waste disposal workers from the aspect of labor conditions, layer of marginality and precariousness.

The two cities provide an important contrast in defining the waste disposal work model, both environmentally and in terms of labor relations. Ramat-Gan owns its waste disposal trucks, while Ramat HaSharon uses a contractor’s trucks and services. This distinction not only affects the workers' sense of belonging but also their self-perception of their occupation. By comparing the waste disposal workers of the two cities, it aims to examine differences and similarities in masculinity perception, ethnonational identity, social class, labor relations and age.

*Data and analysis*

Data was collected from five teams and trucks, three drivers, one waste disposal worker, and one bin preparer (out of 10 trucks, 10 drivers, and 45 waste workers in the wider research project). All the names used to refer to the waste workers in this article are pseudonyms. The research also included semi-structured interviews with the labourer men. This study challenges canonical research methodology and the representation of others by treating research as a political and explicitly social action. Furthermore, it is conducted from a feminist anthropological perspective, which aims to provide accessible knowledge about waste disposal workers themselves. This includes not only analytical insights, but also a socially responsible approach that ethically represents their views and opinions, such as political observations, recognizing diverse perspectives and viewpoints, critical self-awareness, and other similar concepts, while still operating within a humanistic framework (Lather; 2013, Motzafi-Haller; 2023). The mixed research methods used in this study enable a rich analysis of the diverse waste disposal workers in Israel and the social, and cultural structures within which they operate.

**Findings**

*Marginalized masculinities of waste disposal workers in Israel*

Waste disposal workers occupy different statuses within their profession. The truck driver is mostly considered the highest-ranking member of the team, responsible for driving, safety, and shift coordination. The bin preparer is responsible for setting full bins on the pavement's edge, sometimes also replacing them after they are emptied. The waste disposal workers who hop on and off the truck to empty the bins vary in seniority and experience and work in teams, usually on a fixed urban route.

**Roni** is a 46-year-old Mizrahi-Jewish waste disposal driver, who has been working for the Ramat Gan municipality for the past two years. He comes from a challenging socio-economic background, having been a former criminal, rehabilitated who turned his life around and became religious for a few years (Hassidic). Roni is a tall and vital man with fantastic social skills and ability to reach out people. He deals with health challenges, but these days he is physically strong and maintains a positive outlook on life. Despite his present secular lifestyle, Roni still observes Jewish traditions. He is divorced twice and a father of three children from two different marriages. Roni's father was also a waste disposal worker, and he followed in his footsteps to find therapeutic relief from his depression and get back on his feet.

While Roni appreciates the daily routine that his work provides, he struggles to make ends meet due to the low pay and limited shifts. After paying his expenses and taxes, he barely has enough to live on. Roni has an enormous debt to the National Insurance Institute, and his bank account was confiscated as a result. He relies on his old mother for support, and if he didn't live with his partner, he would have to move in with her mother. He says that the framework, the daily routine stands for him higher than the unfair work conditions (Radin; 1996).

Despite his precarious situation, Roni remains a kind-hearted person who is always willing to help others, especially those in positions of social or physical weakness. Working in waste disposal industry provides order to his life and keeps him from getting involved with criminals. However, bureaucratic challenges and health issues weigh heavily on him, and he must use a special device to monitor his breathing while sleeping. Roni complains about the confiscation of his bank account, which prevents him from having any money for an entire month of hard work. Roni's multi-faceted identity as a Mizrahi-Jewish man, second-generation waste disposal worker, ex-convict, and someone who deals with physical health challenges make him a multi-marginal man. Despite his struggles, he maintains a positive attitude towards life, thanks to the support and positive attitude of those around him. This is strengthening the argument of the way non-hegemonic masculinity can shape aspects of hegemonic masculinity (Hirsch & Kachtan; 2017) such as resilience, resourcefulness, positiveness, and strength. In addition, it can also demonstrate hybrid masculinity (Bridges & Pascoe; 2014). To compare another waste disposal driver experiences from different ethno-national background, age and religion, Hafez will be an interesting contrast to Roni.

**Hafez** is a 59-year-old waste disposal truck driver who is an Israeli citizen of Palestinian origin and a Muslim. He has been working as a waste disposal truck driver for the past 15 years in Ramat HaSharon city, located on Israel's central coastal strip in the south of the Sharon region. Hafez comes from a family of farmers and was born and raised in Qalansawa, an Arab-Israeli city. Hafez lost his mother at the age of 10. He is a diabetic, prioritizes his health and tries to maintain good habits. As a religious Muslim, he attends mosque every Friday. Hafez values his family and small farm and tends to avoid socializing in coffee houses and public events. Hafez is a short, sharp, and concentrated person with a small beard and a beautiful deep gaze. I met him a few hours after a terror attack made by a young Palestinian in the center of Tel Aviv-Yafo. Whenever terror attacks take place by Palestinians, it raises the levels of racism and violence towards Arabs in Israeli public spaces. Despite having Israeli citizenship and an Israeli ID, Hafez, like other Arab citizens within Israel, suffers from accusations of belonging to the Arab ethnonational minority and being identified with the Palestinians living in the occupied territories. A night before one of our mutual shifts, there were gunshots towards Israeli Jewish citizens in the center of Tel Aviv-Yafo. The streets were closed, and tensions were high due to several recent terror attacks made by single Palestinians. This happened after a very tensioned wave of terror attacks – gunshots in Bnei Berak, Hadera, and Beer Sheba, a few weeks before the Ramadan. However, I knew that the early morning would rise, and I would meet Hafez over the truck, and we discuss the atmosphere, the complex reality, and the political situation. Due to the tension at such a time, dozens of Palestinian men contractor’s workers – who usually cross the security barriers of the occupied territories into Israel and work under indirect conditions – cannot cross now. That morning felt the same. I asked Hafez if he worried about the Israeli public around and he said that this situation is such a mess, it is never simple. Each time that terror attack occurs, it takes us all 300 steps backward. It generates hatred, crashes the livelihood and bread-winning opportunities, and makes everyone alert and suspicious. In that shift, Hafez worked with a very young Palestinian waste disposal worker who had apparently succeeded in crossing the checkpoint. The worker did not speak Hebrew but was a great force during that shift from efficiency aspect. In this field of work, the most marginalized people are the first to be hurt. Hafez was worried but acted in a very sensitive manner towards the young temporary waste worker who looked like a 15-year-old teenager. He explained that the current situation generates actual danger for both at work among Jewish citizens. He shared that once, after a terror incident, he had to call the police to save himself from a violent racist event. That morning, he felt the same and even asked his son not to go to his day job to avoid expected troubles. Hafez has experienced racism and violence in the past due to his Arab identity. Once, when he was working in a regular waste disposal shift during a tense Palestinian Israeli time, a 16-year-old Jewish boy, a neighborhood resident who knew him approached and asked, “What the hell are you doing here, lousy Arab?! Go away right now!” Hafez immediately reported his work manager, who called the local municipal police. After that incident, he took some time off to rest. In some other occasion, when Hafez was working as a Coca-Cola company truck driver with an Israeli license number sign, and drove near a Palestinian village, he was a target for being a "Jewish" driver. He is proud of his work as a waste disposal truck driver and remains grateful for what he has despite his constant low wage. While Hafez is known to be functional, he may come off as unfriendly to Jewish-Israeli residents in the city where he works. He is focused on his job and generally does not interact with others outside of his co-workers and changing waste working team. Given the multi-marginal context and the current state of political and cultural relativism, it is understandable that Hafez does not aim to elicit local empathy. This description is enhanced by Hafez position as a privileged comparing Amjad or as Connell argument that non-hegemonic masculinity can comprise with different classes (Connell; 2005, 2009). To have another example of marginal waste work that intersect with citizenship issues, Amjad is a proper representation of freedom of movement ability.

**Amjad** is a 39-year-old waste disposal worker from Tulkarm, a Palestine city in the West Bank. He lives during the weekdays in Qalansawe, an Arab city in the Central District of Israel and visits his family in the West Bank on weekends. Amjad has a temporary job permit and has been working in the waste disposal industry for six years as an indirect employee in Ramat HaSharon. He collects various items during his shifts, including clothing, computer equipment, and furniture, among others. Some items he takes with him to his family in Tulkarm, while others he sells. Amjad is married and has six children, and his eldest son, aged 18, is also employed by the same contractor as a waste disposal worker in Israel. Education is crucial to Amjad, and he spends a lot of money on private lessons for his young children. He is determined to provide his children with a better education than he had, especially given the challenges of poverty under the restrictions of the Israeli occupation. Despite being a Palestinian worker who does not live with his family and works in challenging conditions, Amjad considers himself lucky compared to Palestinians without job permits in Israel. He works the longest shift line of the city, nearly 7 hours, without complaining. He tries to maximize his side jobs by finding valuable items to sell. Amjad's team includes Hillel, the driver, and Saleh, a Palestinian bin preparer. Although Saleh has also a job permit, he is still underprivileged compared to Amjad, for not speak the Hebrew language, while Hafez, the Israeli-Palestinian driver mentioned earlier, faces different layer of marginalities: age and health condition. Amjad is a fashionable and stylish man, far from the stereotype of a waste disposal worker. He has a positive and communicative personality; he speaks fluent Hebrew and Israeli-Jewish residents of Ramat HaSharon appreciate him. Despite his marginalization, he is easy to like, and he is willing to accept less favorable working conditions for the chance to make more money in creative ways. These characteristics of hegemonic masculinity (Hirsch & Kachtan; 2017) place Amjad to the theoretical frame of hybrid masculinity (Bridges & Pascoe; 2014). To demonstrate another kind of marginality to masculinities “mosaic”, Hillel represents the former USSR ethnonational origin within Israel. He works in the same team with Amjad and has the identity of a migrant. In addition, he considered relatively old age worker who suffers from stigmatized “outsider” image reflected throughout his social encounters.

**Hillel** is a 64-year-old Jewish immigrant driver from the former USSR who was born in Uzbekistan, maintain his Russian-Soviet cultural repertoire (Lerner; 2011) and currently lives in Petah Tikva, a city in the Central District of Israel. He is married and has three children, one of whom unfortunately is dealing with high-stage cancer. Hillel is also a grandfather. He has been working as a driver for his entire life and only got into the waste disposal industry six years ago. He is a big man, a former smoker who suffers from heart health problems and moves slowly without hurrying. He is an indirect employee, and his wage is very low. His wife works as a hospital nurse, and the taxes she pays are equivalent to a third of his salary. Hillel considers waste disposal work to be just a way to make a living, and not a profession. He has experienced racist attitudes around him, especially in recent years due to his Russian origin and accent. He still speaks poor Hebrew and receives little social patience in return. He is frustrated with being judged and keeps saying, "I am not Russian; I am from Russia!" His identity as an immigrant adds another layer of marginality and difficulty to his status and ethnicity (Shumsky; 2001). Despite the working conditions, Hillel finds joy in his professional identity as a truck driver. He served in the Russian army in the past and later as a driver in the IDF. He believes that ethnonationalism and class issues are strong in the waste disposal industry. He says that social cliques of waste disposal workers exist in many cities in the country, especially in privileged ones. He once tried to apply to the Tel Aviv-Yafo waste department and was asked to pay thousands of NIS just to get on the waiting list. According to Hillel, most indirect employees in Israel are Israeli Arabs, which he believes has to do with the municipal socio-economic status. If the city is highly ranked, it means there is money to employ "high-quality" workers, meaning Jewish. Sometimes, even direct municipal workers are Jewish. In contrast, low-ranked cities often hire contractors to operate the municipal waste disposal services. These contractors bring their own indirect employees, pay them minimum wage, and hire whoever wants to work. Many times, these workers are multi-marginal, like Palestinians or African work migrants. Their working conditions are precarious, and they have no choice because they are not privileged enough to have another option. Hillel's future pension will not allow him to retire at the age of 67, as determined by law and relatively common among Israeli men. He understands that he will have to keep working and not retire. Hillel's experience as a waste disposal driver is not positive. He faces a lack of respect for his work from those around him, and deals with daily complaints from residents about the noise and traffic caused by poor infrastructure—not because of his own responsibilities. He feels that people around him do not respect his work. Even after finishing his workday, he goes home and parks the truck, and his neighbors complain about the smell of the empty and washed truck. The waste disposal truck is often associated with negative connotations and suffers from a negative public image. To anchor Hillel’s marginal masculinities to the central argument of the article – each layer of marginality is a challenge to navigate.

The last representation of multi-marginal masculinity is William who represents intersectional connection between working migrant, ethnonational African origin, and age. **William** is a 35-year-old African work migrant who has been living in Tel Aviv-Yafo for the past few years. He was born in Eritrea and has a wife and two children back home whom he works very hard to support financially. In addition to his job as a bin preparer, William also works as a dishwasher and cleaner in a restaurant to save money on food and other expenses. Following his challenging circumstances as a labor migrant, not an asylum seeker (Sabar; 2010) William is a quiet, modest, and hard-working man who is small and fast, with a hyper-focused work ethic. He has chosen to make sacrifices in his family life to give his loved ones a better future. William does not speak fluent Hebrew. He works alongside Hafez as a bin preparer and is highly respected by his co-workers. This ability to maximize his income relates to Morrel & Swart’s argument – the more you are marginalized, the better you are creative (2005). However, his various marginalities, including his African ethnonational identity, his status as a work migrant, his blue-collar occupation, and his temporary residential permit, place him at a disadvantage relative to others like Hafez and Amjad. Unlike William, Hafez and Amjad are privileged by their citizenship or job permits, speaks fluent Hebrew and are not men of color. They are ranked higher in the waste disposal industry as a driver and waste disposal worker. William's temporary job permit is set to expire soon, and he will be forced to return to his country of origin, further cementing his position of marginalization.

All five waste disposal workers in Israel considered as marginalized due to their blue-collar occupation, which requires physical labor in all weather conditions. Each worker has a unique perspective on the increasing urban waste and its impact. From an intersectional perspective, the top of the social-professional hierarchy includes Roni, a Mizrahi-Jewish driver, followed by Hillel, a Jewish driver and former immigrant from the USSR, then Hafez, an Israeli-Palestinian driver, and Amjad, a Palestinian waste disposal worker with a job permit. At the bottom is William, an African work migrant bin preparer, who is most marginalized due to his ethnonational identity, job role, employment status, social class, and transnational status. Theoretically, it emphasizes the assumption of non-hegemonic masculinity as a challenge when it intersects with different marginalities (Radin; 1996). Despite facing the hegemonic masculine ideal that values control, domination, authority, and autonomy (Barret; 1996), waste disposal workers hold a significant and fundamental occupational role that cannot be overlooked. The functioning of urban spaces would be impossible without their services. These workers sometimes distinguish themselves from others through their ability to construct their work within norms of masculinity, and may even generate a heroic masculine persona, which is connected to the respect they receive and the way they perform their own manhood in different contexts (Snow & Anderson; 1987, Gutmann; 1997, Hamilton et al.; 2019).

**Conclusion**

The waste disposal workers in Israel represent a multi-marginalized group, with only a few hired in direct employment, mostly Mizrahi-Jewish, while Palestinians or work migrants are employed indirectly. This marginalization is compounded by their intersectional identities in a transparent industry. However, within this field, a sub-hierarchy exists based on professional status. Despite the precarious nature of their work, each worker has strengths, such as age – vitality, good health, freedom of movement – from and to the Israeli territory, social-economic status, and creativity in earning money – the ability to get paid by selling items that were found along the waste disposal shift or work in another job. Their occupational identity is only one aspect of their complex and rich lives, although their precarious integral aspect of their daily life. This research carries knowledge production of a waste work. Waste disposal occupation, like other transparent or blue-collar jobs, carries a professional knowledge that many times can only be physically learned by disposing heavy bins from garbage rooms, backyards, and other urban spots. Through combining skills of physical and mental endurance, attention to details such as placing the bin exactly in the right angle on the sidewalk. By driving a waste disposal team through narrow streets and safely and constantly face social interactions. There is no tutorial for studying to become a waste disposal worker. This is a fundamental field that we cannot live without it services. Therefore, this non-hegemonic profession is rooted in the Global South and another step towards balancing relationships in the global system of knowledge production (Klob; 2017). The study adds to the literature on masculinity and gender studies, as well as labor studies in marginalized communities, specifically the structure of work in waste disposal. Overall, the present article highlights the importance of intersectionality in understanding the complexities of labor relations and marginalities as a challenge and as a force, in waste work in Israel, and vis-a-vis global common blue-collar occupations. It also highlights the strengths and resilience, and the creative navigations of waste disposal workers and the importance of recognizing and valuing their contributions to society.

**Notes (endnotes)**

For numbered lists

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