

**The Weizmann Institute of Science
Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science**

Foundations of Computer Science Seminar

Room 1, Ziskind Building
on Monday, Feb 10, 2025
at 11:15

Amos Korman
Haifa University

will speak on

Abundant resources can trigger reduced consumption: Unveiling the paradox of excessive scrounging

Abstract:

"In the 2004 Olympics, the US national basketball team failed to win the gold medal despite featuring superstars such as LeBron James. This event raises a fundamental question: Why do teams with highly skilled players sometimes underperform compared to teams with less skilled players? In this talk, I will explore situations where such an outcome can be attributed to a surge in free-riding behavior resulting from rational choices by self-interested players. Specifically, I will demonstrate how, under certain incentivizing schemes, improving individual efficiency can inadvertently promote excessive free-riding behavior, ultimately leading to reduced outcomes at both group and individual levels. I will illustrate this phenomenon through two simple games: one on group foraging and the other on workplace cooperation. In the foraging game, an increase in available food can paradoxically lead to a decrease in food consumption, while in the workplace model, replacing workers with more skilled individuals can worsen both individual payoffs and group performance."