The Diversity of Israeli Society

Experts discuss Israel’s demographic features, trends, and challenges
When our Communication team finishes a new magazine issue, I can’t wait to get my hands on a copy. This time was no different! You are holding our fifth issue and, as with the first four, we have the pleasure of presenting you with substantive and thoughtful writing about modern Israel.

The issue you are now reading is dedicated to answering a call to action by Israel’s president, Reuven Rivlin, urging Israelis, as well as those outside of Israel who are both personally and professionally invested in the country, to take a hard look in the mirror and acknowledge the current demographic state of Israeli society.

The contents of this issue examine various developments and challenges related to Israeli demographics. The Israel Institute’s president, Itamar Rabinovich, explores Rivlin’s statement in his piece on tribalism and pluralism in Israel’s political system. Israel Institute Post-Doctoral Fellows Assaf Shapira and Einat Lavee look at the expansion of female representation in the Knesset and current trends in poverty and inequality, respectively. Prof. Julia Lerner, a research grant recipient, shares her work on the cultural experiences of Israeli Russians nearly 20 years after the largest share of emigrants from Russia arrived in Israel.

This magazine issue also goes beyond demography to share with you some exciting happenings from around our Institute-supported academic community. These include a conversation with Amb. Zion Evrony, who became an Israel Institute visiting faculty member at the Catholic University of America, here in Washington, D.C., shortly after completing his stint as Israel’s Ambassador to the Holy See.

Also in D.C. was the pathbreaking dancer and choreographer Ella Rothschild, who spent the fall term at Howard University. Ella is the first instructor the Institute has sent to a historically black college and university (HBCU). Ella’s residency was a huge success and sets the stage for exciting new opportunities down the road.

As always, I encourage you to look at our News and Notes section for an overview of the amazing things our grantees and the greater Israel Studies community have been up to this academic year, across the United States and beyond!

Dr. Ariel Ilan Roth
Executive Director, Israel Institute
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A Vision for

In June 2015, the president of Israel, Reuven Rivlin, delivered a speech at the Herzliya Conference marking the first anniversary of his tenure. The speech has since been known as “the speech about the tribes” and has become an important text in Israeli public discourse.

“The [term] ‘new Israeli order’ is not an angry prophecy about the future,” said President Rivlin, “it is a reality. A reality that we can see today through the makeup of the first grades in the Israeli educational system. In the 1990s, as you can see in the slide behind me, Israeli society was composed of a clear and coherent majority alongside with minorities. A large Zionist statist majority with three minorities at its side: a national-religious minority, an Arab minority, and a Haredi minority. This image may have frozen in the mind of the bulk of the Israeli public, the media, and the political system. But reality, in the meantime, changed radically. Today’s first grades are composed of 38% secular (statist), about 15% national-religious (statist-religious), about a quarter of Arabs, and almost a quarter of Haredi. Numbers and definitions are a dynamic matter; identities and birth rates do not freeze in time. But one thing is clear: the demographic processes that are reshaping Israeli society have in fact created ‘a new Israeli order,’ an order in which there are no longer a clear majority and clear minorities. An order in which Israeli society is composed of four sectors, or – if we choose – four central ‘tribes,’ essentially different from one another who are progressing towards equal sizes. In this order of things, whether we like it or not, ‘the structure of ownership’ of Israeli society and the state of Israel is changing in front of our eyes.”

“When I describe this breakdown I’m always asked, ‘What about the division between Ashkenazi and Mizrahi? Right and left? New immigrants and veterans? Periphery and center? Rich and poor? Are these not fault lines which divide Israeli society and are tearing us apart?’ The answer is, of course, yes. These fault lines exist, regrettably, in each of the sectors and in all of them together and they need to be addressed and treated. But unlike these cleavages, this division into the four central tribes that make up Israeli society exposes its fundamental structure, a structure that we will never be able to obscure or erase, a structure that, for many of us, is perceived as a threat to the state of Israel’s secular liberal character on the one hand, and to the Zionist enterprise on the other.”
A Vision for the Future

I chose to quote from President Rivlin’s speech at some length for two reasons: unfortunately, his analysis and warning are well warranted, and his terminology – “the tribes” – became an important term in the Israeli public discourse.

As matters stand now, the president’s warning seems to have gone unheeded. The “tribes,” to use President Rivlin’s language, are also the bases of several Israeli political parties: Israeli Haredis vote for several Haredi parties; the Israeli Arab minority, in the last election, voted for the first time for a joint Arab list; the majority of the national religious sector that used to vote in past years for a dovish moderate National Religious Party (NRP) now votes for Naftali Bennet’s “Jewish Home,” also nicknamed the “settlers’ party.” Many of the secular liberal Israelis tend to vote for center-left parties (Yair Lapid’s Yesh Atid, the Zionist Camp, and Meretz). Predicated on this pattern and given the swing of many Israeli voters to the right, Netanyahu’s Likud won the 2015 elections and seems to be destined to govern for quite some time.

President Rivlin’s speech and terminology are not the ultimate key for understanding the current state of Israeli politics. Absent from his analysis is the governing issue of Israeli politics, namely the debate over the future of the West Bank and Israel’s relationship with the Palestinians. President Rivlin himself personifies a curious duality. When it comes to the future of the West Bank, he is a hawkish member of the Likud. But he is also a liberal democrat in the tradition of Jabotinsky and Begin, who fights for the values of democracy and the rule of law, trying to stem the tide of right-wing populism that is sweeping the Israeli Right.

But this does not take away from the importance of Rivlin’s analysis and warning, and Israel would be well advised to take note of them and draw the right lessons. In some cases, the particular issues of certain “tribes” can be addressed and ameliorated. Thus, when it comes to the Arab minority, it is clear that there is a discrepancy between a “silent majority” that accepts the state of Israel and, essentially, wants a larger piece of the Israeli pie, and a political and intellectual leadership that is much more radical than its constituency. But this “silent majority” requires attention and investment by the state. This is not happening. Netanyahu’s government announced that 15 billion NIS were going to be invested in the Arab sector, but implementation was entrusted to two hawkish ministers in his cabinet who, so far, have done precious little in this regard.

Likewise, significant developments are taking place inside the Haredi community. Many are not willing to accept the poverty and the insularity imposed by their leadership. Some move out, while others are incrementally modernizing certain aspects of life within their communities. Haredi women are acquiring higher education, joining the labor market, and even making movies. But, on the whole, the leadership fights to preserve the status quo, its core issue the insistence that mathematics and English not be taught in the Haredi school system. These academic subjects are seen by them and by the rest of Israeli society as the key to integrating the next generation of Haredis into the larger community and the labor force. So far, the political leadership, as represented in the coalition, has been able to force Netanyahu to rescind the progress that has been made in this domain under the previous government.

But beyond this particular treatment of the different tribes and their issues lies a larger challenge. Israel’s political system needs to be reformed and structured as a pluralistic political system. By definition, a pluralistic political system is predicated on a recognition of the diversity of the society and, while it seeks to minimize cleavages, it allows different groups to be represented in politics and in power. A brief review of the international system will readily show the difference between countries that have managed over time to build an effective pluralistic system, such as Switzerland, and those that have failed to do so, like Belgium. Israel’s future, as President Rivlin rightly said, depends on its ability to come to grips with the challenge of its diversity and to reform the political system so as to turn it into a genuine, pluralistic one.
The Road to Understanding

Israel Institute Visiting Professor and former Ambassador to the Holy See Zion Evrony speaks about his diplomatic experiences, the relationship between Israel and the Vatican, and his recent class on Jewish-Christian relations.

**IIM:** Among other diplomatic positions throughout your career, you served as the Israeli Ambassador to Ireland (2006–10) and to the Holy See (2012–16). How did your understanding of the role of Ambassador evolve throughout these two posts?

**EVRONY:** In every role throughout my 43-year career in the Foreign Service, especially as Ambassador to Ireland, I learned something new and gained experience which helped me do a better job representing Israel. Ireland was my first Ambassadorship, and I served there during challenging times. I had to deal with a critical media, anti-Israel demonstrations, hate mail, and much misinformation. However, the Irish people are very nice and hospitable, and we enjoyed our time there.

My four years in Ireland helped me greatly to do a better job in Rome, although the role of Ambassador to the Vatican is very unique and unlike any other Ambassadorship. It is a relationship between two states (Israel and the Vatican) based on political interests and, at the same time, between two religions, Judaism and Christianity.

**IIM:** One of your chief goals as Ambassador to the Holy See was the improvement of relations in the areas of academic and cultural cooperation, peace, and tolerance. Could you share with us some examples of initiatives during your tenure that were particularly effective in these areas?

**EVRONY:** I would like to mention two of many important initiatives. First, as part of our efforts to educate Catholics about Judaism and Israel and engage in interfaith dialogue, we organized visits for priests, nuns, seminarians, and other Catholic lay leaders to the Jewish Museum and the Great Synagogue of Rome. Close to a thousand Catholic leaders participated in these visits during my tenure. We also organized a special visit for the Diplomatic Corps and senior Vatican officials to these sites. For most of them, it was their first time visiting a synagogue.

The second initiative was both academic and cultural. We organized three delegations of Catholic university presidents and provosts from around the world to visit Rome and Israel, as our guests. The visit in Rome included an audience with Pope Francis, attending Friday night service at the Great Synagogue, and a Sabbath dinner in our home. The visit in Israel included, among other things, a visit to three universities and meetings with university officials and colleagues.

However, I must admit that the task I was encouraged to achieve by many Israelis – finding the lost Temple Menorah – I have not fulfilled...

**IIM:** How did you balance the priorities of your diplomatic mission with the greater, oft-changing political climate?

**EVRONY:** As an Ambassador representing my country, I always had to be mindful of whom and what I represent and the well-being of the state of Israel, regardless of the political environment. I had to set clear priorities, goals, and a working plan of how best to achieve these goals. This is especially important when you are the only diplomat at the embassy, like I was in Rome.

Amb. Zion Evrony meets with Pope Francis during his tenure as Israel’s Ambassador to the Holy See
**IIM:** You’re also teaching a theology course on Jewish-Christian relations. Could you describe this class? How would you characterize Jewish-Christian relations today?

**EVRONY:** The class I teach is titled “Jewish-Christian Relations.” In class, I emphasize the importance of interfaith dialogue, learning about “the other,” and religious tolerance. I took students to visit the Holocaust Memorial Museum and they attended a Friday night service at the synagogue Ohev Shalom. I also organized a dialogue between a priest and a rabbi.

The relationship today between the Jewish people and the Catholic Church is excellent. It is warm and friendly, maybe the best in 2,000 years. Pope Francis is a great friend of the Jewish people. He has spoken many times against anti-Semitism and has welcomed to the Vatican and met many Jewish groups.
Understanding the Demographics of Israel

By Abby Bergren, with Dr. Ilai Saltzman

In June 2015, President of Israel Reuven Rivlin spoke at the Annual Herzliya Conference where he asserted, “Israeli society is undergoing a far-reaching transformation. This is not a trivial change, it is a transformation that will restructure our very identity as ‘Israelis’ and will have a profound impact on the way we understand ourselves and our national home; there is no escape from this change.” President Rivlin then identified the transformative forces he argued were impacting Israeli society – demographic processes.

Generally speaking, the term demography relates to the study of all aspects of human populations and their change over time. In the Israeli context, however, the term has transcended its traditional academic definition. The statistics that demographers of Israel produce are increasingly politicized; that is, speakers from the left, right, and center often use them as an explanation of, and justification for, the policies they are advocating.

It is unsurprising, then, that demographics have become such a heated topic in Israel, given their potential impact on the country’s short- and long-term domestic politics and external affairs. Demographics underscore both similarities and tensions among ethnic and
relational subgroups, and they thus inform policy calculations on diverse topics ranging from religious liberties and economic participation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Therefore, unpacking the demographics of Israel involves close examination of state-specific trends and changes as well as the challenges facing Israel that are either caused or exacerbated by these trends and changes. Of course, demographic predictions should be taken with a degree of skepticism, as unanticipated factors may change the course of existing predictions. Nonetheless, the political salience and real-world implications of this topic make it a vibrant area of study.

ISRAEL’S DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Two intersecting trends have come to characterize Israel’s demographics since the foundation of the state in 1948: high population growth, including rapid changes over time, and the heterogeneous demographic character of the state. Israel’s annual population growth rate, propelled by both the rate of natural increase (the difference between the number of live births and the number of deaths occurring in a year) and, to a lesser degree, by immigration (called “making Aliyah”), currently hovers around two percent, making the country a “demographic outlier” among developed countries (nearly double the rate of the United States and much greater than that of western European countries). Data from Israel’s Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) show that Israel’s population has increased ten-fold since its establishment: from around 870,000 persons in 1948 to nearly 8.3 million as of 2014. The majority population, nearly 75 percent, is Jewish, of which an ever increasing share are native-born Israelis. While immigration continues to be a source of growth for Israel’s population, with recent migration driven largely by an influx of immigrants from France and Ukraine, immigration rates have largely stabilized at rates far lower than Israel’s historic levels of immigration.

The preponderance of Jewish immigration to Israel occurred in five earlier migration waves, beginning during the pre-state years in 1882 with the First Aliyah and ending in 1939 with the Fifth Aliyah. However, sociologist Ynon Cohen, in Changing Composition of Israel’s Population, marks the mass migration of nearly 700,000 Jews between 1948 and 1951 as the most crucial period in Israel’s demographic history. During this time, he argues, the simultaneous exodus of the local Palestinian population and the arrival of Jews radically altered Israel’s ethnic composition. Data originating from the British Mandate and the Jewish Agency’s statistics department show an increase in the proportion of Jews living in the area that later became part of the state of Israel from 44.7 percent in 1947 to 89 percent by 1952. Indeed, according to the CBS, between 1948 and 1960, more than 80 percent of Israel’s population growth resulted from immigration. This rapid population increase also set the stage for many of Israel’s demographic challenges, including issues caused by or related to social, economic, and political stratification.

The period of mass Jewish immigration following the founding of the State also

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<th>Jews and Non-Jews in Israel*</th>
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<td><strong>By the end of 2014,</strong> the population of Israel was 8,296,900 persons</td>
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<td><strong>During 2014,</strong> the overall average population growth rate was 2 percent:</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>75% Jewish</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>20.7% Arabs</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4.3% Other</strong></td>
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*Because of the protracted political conflict, Israel’s borders can be defined in several ways. Source: Data from Israel’s Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS)

Jewish Representation in Israel

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>53%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2030</td>
<td>46%</td>
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Evgenia Bystrov (University of Kiel) and Arnon Soffer (University of Haifa) (2010)
changed the intra-Jewish demographic makeup of Israel. Whereas before 1948, the vast majority of Jewish immigrants to Palestine were born in Poland and Russia, with far smaller numbers hailing from Asia and Africa, the years after Israel’s founding saw a tremendous increase of Mizrahi Jews. With the migration of the 1950s, Mizrahi Jews (Jews coming from Northern Africa and the Middle East) attained numerical parity with Ashkenazi Jews (Jews of Eastern, Central European or North American origins), although Ashkenazi Jews maintained a dominant social, political, and economic position. More recently, in the early 1990s, there was another large wave of immigration to Israel: approximately one million immigrants arrived from the former Soviet Union. According to the CBS, this immigration wave accounted for 65 percent of the overall Jewish population growth in Israel. Though all ethnically Jewish, these different groups brought with them their own values, languages, and cultures, as well as their own religious practices and customs. Over time, this ethnic flux contributed to the state’s heterogeneous demographic character beyond the “simple divide” between Jews and Arabs. (See By the Numbers: Immigration to Israel, 1948-2014 above)

With immigration rates steadied thereafter, fertility is currently the main driver for population growth in Israel – amongst both Jewish and Arab populations – and thus a big topic of contention. Specifically, fertility rates are often deployed in debates about what the respective sizes of Israel’s Jewish and Arab communities imply both about the future of Israel’s internal political and social dynamics but, moreover, as a factor in considering the implications of various proposals for the resolution of the status of Palestinian Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza. The expansion as a percentage of Israel’s Arab citizens as well as the growth of the ultra-Orthodox Jewish population have raised new questions about labor-force participation, economic subsidies, and military conscription. (See Israel and Fertility right)

Although Jewish population growth is disproportionately driven by the high birth rates among the ultra-Orthodox, the data on growth rates of all Israel’s subgroups yield a more complex picture. In July 2016, Dr. Barbara Okun, associate professor of population studies at Hebrew University, published new research demonstrating that even though the ultra-Orthodox maintain the highest fertility rate in Israel and, as such, continue to disproportionately contribute to Jewish population growth, the total fertility rate of Israel’s ultra-Orthodox population has

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**By the Numbers: Immigration to Israel, 1948-2014**

![Graph showing immigration to Israel from 1948 to 2014](image)

*Source: Israel’s Central Bureau of Statistics*
Institute, the primary determinants of Tel Aviv University, explained to the Israel Michal Shamir, a political scientist from Israeli domestic and foreign policy. As Dr. groups could have great impacts on future Shifting sizes of religious and ethnic sub

**DEMOGRAPHICS DRIVE CONVERSATION ABOUT RELIGION AND STATE**

Shifting sizes of religious and ethnic subgroups could have great impacts on future Israeli domestic and foreign policy. As Dr. Michal Shamir, a political scientist from Tel Aviv University, explained to the Israel Institute, the primary determinants of

public opinion and voting behavior are “the major lines of division between Jews and Arabs, and among Jews according to religious adherence.” Sectarian political party formation is just one example of how these differences – which are ethnic, religious, and also ideological in nature – are reflected in Israeli political life. For instance, Israeli religious parties advocate for a state run according to Halakha (Jewish religious law), including in matters of marriage and divorce, military conscription, and state support for religious institutions. However, despite these common aspirations, Shas Party presents itself as, above all, a Sephardic (Mizrahi) party whereas United Torah Judaism Party, an alliance of two smaller ultra-Orthodox factions, is more representative of Ashkenazi interests. Similarly, the Joint List comprises four ideologically diverse parties that ultimately came together to present a united Arab front while Yisrael Beiteinu, a secular, nationalist party, primarily represents Russian-speaking immigrants to Israel (although attempts to broaden the party base). Prof. Guy Ben-Porat, a professor of public policy at Ben-Gurion University, anticipates that Israel’s diverse makeup will “continue to influence party coalitions, official government policy, and, more broadly, Israeli national identity and social cohesion.”

One of the biggest domestic debates resulting from changes in population sizes and the relative representation of these various subgroups deals with the relationship between religion and state and the proper role of religion in Israeli public life. In addition to the divide between Israel’s Jewish population and Arab minority, a closer look at the Jewish population reveals deep rifts among the Haredi (ultra-Orthodox), Dati (religious), Masorti (traditional), and Hiloni (secular) communities. These rifts are made apparent by fundamentally different approaches to questions of identity and values, which translate to public policy differences over matters such as marriage and divorce, religious conversion, gender segregation, military conscription, and employment and transportation regulations. (See Israel’s Diverse Religious Landscape, pg. 10)

At the crux of their political differences lies a greater divergence: what it means to “be Jewish.” Whereas the ultra-Orthodox strongly believe that their Jewish identity is religiously based, secular Jews tend to embrace their identity in terms of ancestry and/or culture. To further complicate the issue, although individuals might describe themselves as “secular” or “religious,” these self-descriptions contain different sets of values, practices, and preferences that often change according to setting and context. As Prof. Ben-Porat noted: “Secular Israelis, for example, will often perform what may seem like a religious ritual (a Passover Seder, a mezuzah on the door, etc.) for different reasons and with different interpretations. Traditional Israelis will strictly observe some rules (avoid eating pork) but not others (shop on the Sabbath). Religious Israelis will observe more closely the rules but

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**Israel and Fertility**

- The average Israeli woman has nearly 3 children in her lifetime, nearly double the fertility rates of women in other developed countries signed on to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) which, as of 2014, recorded an average fertility rate of 1.7 births per woman.

- Between 2000 and 2005, the fertility rate of Haredi women was slightly more than 7.5 births per woman. Between 2005 and 2009, however, a dramatic decrease was recorded; ultra-Orthodox women gave birth to 6.5 children.

- A multi-decade analytical study conducted by social scientist Dr. Reuven Gal suggests that growth rates among the ultra-Orthodox are anywhere between 4 and 7 percent. In cities where the population is exclusively ultra-Orthodox, Dr. Gal discovered, birthrates are even higher, for example Beitar Ilit (8.8), Modiin Ilit (8.2), and Elad (7.6).

- Among Muslim and Arab cohorts of women, Dr. Okun’s 2013 research study on fertility and marriage behavior in Israel show a striking fertility decline, from 6.1 births (through the late 1960s) to about 3.7 births per woman today.
might defy the authority of [Israel's centralized rabbinate] when choosing to use the internet or study at university.” These features, according to Ben-Porat, turn Israel into a “de-facto multicultural state and society,” a point which emphasizes the heterogeneous demographic character of the state. Ultimately, “Israel is considered an archetype of a deeply divided society, and it is still searching for its collective identity definition,” concurred Dr. Shamir. “This is well reflected in its politics: from its permissive and representative electoral system of nationwide proportional representation, through its fragmented and polarized party system, and its vibrant and inexhaustible political discourse.”

Still, the notion of Israel as an archetype of social division is being challenged in some circles. Prof. Sammy Smooha, an Israel Prize-winning sociologist from the University of Haifa, believes that an emergent shared “Israeliness” has actually softened intergroup cleavages over time: “Israel’s Jewish and non-Jewish citizens have agreed on religious-cultural pluralism, the use of the Hebrew language and calendar, and ‘an Israeli way of life.’ The Jewish groups, including the ultra-Orthodox, are additionally bound by the Zionist core value of keeping Israel Jewish indefinitely.” Smooha also noted that “No doubt democracy plays a central role in Israel’s political and social integration by enabling groups to press their grievances and improve their lot without using violence.”

**DEMOGRAPHICS AND THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT**

Smooha contends that Israeli society is “far from being on the brink of disintegration,” but he also acknowledges that Israel must address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, “an issue that profoundly divides Israelis and alienates them from the international community.” Indeed, the debate surrounding the numbers of Jews and Palestinian Arabs residing between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean (i.e., including parts of the West Bank under Israeli military control as well as the Gaza Strip) is arguably the most charged aspect of the demographic discourse in Israel. This is due to the implication of these demographics in relation to the status of land within and beyond the Green Line, otherwise known as the 1949 Armistice border or the pre-1967 border. Specifically, arguments for or against formal Israeli annexation of the West Bank (in part or in full) often refer to the relative balance that this would create between Jewish and Arab populations in the territory. The underlying assumption here, of course, is that losing a Jewish majority among Israel’s citizenry would undermine the status of Israel as a Jewish state. In this framework, opponents of annexation argue that if Israel asserted sovereignty over the West Bank, the Jewish population between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean would quickly be an absolute minority compared to the total Palestinian community, including both Palestinian Arabs who are currently citizens of Israel as well as the Palestinian residents of the West Bank. Accordingly, they argue that it would be impossible to preserve Israel as a Jewish majority state while simultaneously extending full political rights to millions of new Arab citizens from the West Bank. In contrast, many supporters of annexation point to alternative demographic data that augurs a sustainable Jewish majority between the Jordan River and Mediterranean going forward. They thus believe it would be possible to annex some or all of the West Bank, afford voting and other political rights to West Bank Arabs, and still maintain a Jewish majority within the new borders.

**OTHER DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGES**

Surveying Israel’s current demographic landscape reveals myriad opinions on matters of politics, culture, society, and religion. Due to the politicized nature of demographics in the Israeli case, it can be difficult to separate religious-secular tensions and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from other challenges posed by Israel’s demographic trends. However, at least two additional topics will undoubtedly play a major role in Israeli public discourse in the years to come: the economics of immigration policy and environmental sustainability.

**The Economics of Immigration Policy**

Immigration and its effect on economic performance is one of the most
important topics in today’s global discourse and, certainly, in Israel. There is a strong causal connection between demographic change and economic growth, meaning the number of people in the workforce along with their skill sets can affect productivity and technological progress (to name but a few areas of impact). When the number of immigrants from “distress countries” like the former Soviet Union subsided, explained Dr. Ilana Shpaizman, a post-doctoral fellow at Hebrew University’s Federmann School of Public Policy and Government, and the global competition for skilled migrants increased, Israeli policymakers sought to encourage the Jewish population in Western countries to immigrate to Israel through “economic incentives such as absorption grants, increased vocational training vouchers, and extra Hebrew language hours.” Although it remains uncertain whether these policies succeeded in driving up immigration in an economically significant way, this change marked a shift in Israeli immigration policy from the encouragement of widespread immigration to a more selective process.

Another demographic issue facing Israel’s economy is maintaining healthy participation in the labor force over time. Current demographic trends present a daunting problem: the populations with the highest birth rates – the ultra-Orthodox and Arab populations – have relatively low employment rates. If these numbers hold, the increase of low-em- ployment populations and, in tandem, the decrease of working-age people will act to slow future economic growth. Looking ahead, barring a change in or reversal of current trends, Israeli policymakers will need to determine how to better integrate marginal population groups, including the ultra-Orthodox and Arabs but also the elderly and disabled, into the workforce to ensure the state’s long-term fiscal wellbeing.

Environmental Implications
Certain changes in Israeli demographics, in this case the country’s high population density particularly in urban areas, directly impact its long-term environmental sustainability. Far from the densest country in the world, Israel still sits in the top 15 percent when compared to the population densities of all other countries. According to the CBS, most Israelis live in the center of the country, with approximately 40 percent of the overall population living on less than seven percent of the land. For context, Prof. Alon Tal of Ben-Gurion University posits that Israel is about 1,000 percent more congested than the average of similarly developed countries. That number is likely to grow, as CBS data projects that, by 2059, the population of Israel will reach upwards of 11.6-20.6 million people. Such a high population density can have consequences in areas of transportation, the environment, and the economy. Population density is closely related to overpopulation, which can be revealed through the quality or, rather, lack thereof, of housing and infrastructure as well as access to resources and other public services.

Advancing discussion of environmental impacts can be difficult because such conclusions are often at odds with Israeli public discourse. As a small, young country, Israel’s policymakers have historically maintained an outsized priority of focus on issues pertaining to the economy and national security and, as such, Israeli environmental interest groups have struggled to advance their interests through traditional policy channels. Within this context, explained Dan Rabinowitz, head of the Porter School of Environment Studies at Tel Aviv University, “…thoughts of the environmental and quality of life aspects of population and, more importantly, overpopulation, were never legitimate. It is only recently that this issue has made a slow but gradual entry into public discourse in Israel. But the debate is still slow and often muffled.” For now, the discourse seems inextricably linked to the contemporary political situation in Israel and the greater Middle East. Modern “demographobia,” contends Prof. Erez Tzfatia of Sapir College, has exacerbated “the old ‘demographic imbalance’ argument, emphasizing the fear of human overpopulation. Surveying issues of citizenship and equal rights, shared society, environmental protections, and economic efficiency, rather than calling it an ‘urban catastrophe’, might be a new start for a better spatial policy.”

SEEKING CLARITY AMIDST COMPLEXITY
In sum, the demographic discourse is multifaceted and exceptionally politically charged. Although the intensity of the debate and the complexity of the topic make rigorous study of demographic issues challenging, it is exactly this intensity and complexity that make it necessary for scholars to perform an extensive analysis of the subject. Prof. Kobi Michael, currently a senior research fellow at the Institute for National Security Studies, is justified when he asserts that “any discussion of demography, as it relates to Israel, requires the mapping and analysis of other demographic spheres (regional and global) and an analysis of their interrelations.”

Recently, and in direct response to President Rivlin’s tribes speech, the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya launched a new research center devoted to the study and identification of tangible policies that would allow all sectors of Israeli society to find common ground, peaceful and prosperous coexistence, and overcome various schisms, including those reflected in extant Israeli demographic trends. The demographic discourse so prevalent in Israel is not going away anytime soon; thus, scholars have a great responsibility to provide rigorous data and analysis through their academic work and engagement with the questions and implications that arise from it.
At most universities, summer is a time for professors and scholars to take a break from classes and, instead, focus on developing and implementing new ideas that advance their individual research and their field as a whole. Inspired by this idea of summer as a time of growth, the Israel Institute hosted, for the second time, a Leadership Summit for Israel experts this past June. The interdisciplinary and intergenerational event, which brought together rising and senior experts in academia, the policy world, and the arts to share their different perspectives on Israel, sought to foster rigorous and illuminating conversations about the country.

The 2016 Leadership Summit was designed to explore Israel's domestic and international challenges through multi-faceted dialogue. The three-day gathering was comprised of interviews, panels, and small group discussions that examined various aspects of Israeli domestic politics and foreign relations, including demographics, the economy, security and defense, peace negotiations, and more. Summit participants included junior and senior academics, current and former legislators, members of the security establishment, civil society practitioners, journalists, and others with expertise in a range of subjects from literature and anthropology to economics and law. By bringing such a diverse group together, the summit's objective was two-fold: to serve as an expansive platform for studying modern Israel and, simultaneously, to foster a sense of community among Israel experts from disparate disciplines in order to maximize knowledge creation and professional collaboration.

**BY NOA LEVANON KLEIN**

**Israel Studies in Scope**

The Israel Institute brought together leading experts to discuss Israel’s domestic and international challenges.
The summit’s first panel was a discussion on “Israel in the Mirror: Demographic and Socioeconomic Trends.” This panel brought together experts studying or working with key sectors within Israel’s body politic. A conversation between Tziona Koenig-Yair (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission), Aiman Saif (Authority for the Economic Development of the Arab, Druze, and Circassian Sectors in the Prime Minister’s Office), Prof. Sammy Smooha (University of Haifa’s Department of Sociology), Manuel Trajtenberg (MK, Zionist Union), and moderator Prof. Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) offered an intense exploration of the challenges and opportunities for members of rapidly changing sectors in Israeli society, including women, Arabs, and the ultra-Orthodox. The panel discussed economic and cultural ways for these subgroups to participate more fully in the Israeli economy and more equally in Israeli society.

Another panel, “Tectonic Shifts: The Changing Tenor of Israel’s Political Culture,” examined the complexities of Israeli democracy. In exploring this issue, Shlomo Avineri, Prof. Emeritus at the Hebrew University, spoke to Mordechai Kremnitzer and Yedidia Stern of the Israel Democracy Institute and moderator Nahum Barnea of Yedioth Ahronoth, in a conversation about the delicate balance between the Jewish character and the democratic character of the state. The panelists discussed various approaches to minority rights, issues of growing nationalism and even racism within certain parties and legislative acts, and the effects on the Jewish-democratic balance in Israel caused by changes in the nature of Israeli party politics and evolving media norms.

“Israel’s New Strategic Challenges” were the topic of another panel, featuring retired Major Generals Yaakov Amidror and Amos Yadlin in a
“Livni underscored that “the real question is not whether we can revive the peace process but [whether it is] possible to end the conflict at the end of the peace process, and this is a completely different question than whether we can revive the peace process.”

discussion moderated by Yohanan Plesner, President of the Israel Democracy Institute. The generals gave their assessments of Israel’s safety and security from both regional and global perspectives, while also discussing Israel’s place in a changing world. The conversation weighed in on a wide-ranging set of issues from Israel-Turkey relations, Hamas, the conflict in Syria, the status of Iran’s nuclear program, and even the effects on Israel of rising populism in the United States and Europe.

A plenary discussion between Israel Institute President Amb. Itamar Rabinovich, MK Tzipi Livni, and Amb. Dennis Ross tackled the question: “Is the Peace Process Dead or Dormant?” Addressing prospects and challenges of reviving the peace process, the participants discussed what Ross termed “the consequences of what happens when there’s a vacuum” in the peace process, noting that the current stalemate has made it harder to resume a meaningful process toward resolution between Israelis and Palestinians. Livni underscored that “the real question is not whether we can revive the peace process but [whether it is] possible to end the conflict at the end of the peace process, and this is a completely different question than whether we can revive the peace process.” Later, an off-the-record discussion between Amb. Rabinovich and then-American Ambassador to Israel Dan Shapiro on “U.S.-Israel Relations: Then and Now” further examined the peace process, as well as domestic Israeli issues, through the lens of U.S.-Israel relations.

For the first time, the 2016 Summit also included one-on-one interviews with Knesset members Merav Michaeli, Ayman Odeh, and Rachel Azaria as part of a “Leadership: Voices of a New Generation” series. These three young MKs have rapidly risen to prominence within their parties and in public debate in recent years, and are all publicly associated with distinct political constituencies within Israeli society. The sessions sought to engage such MKs – who all came of age after the significant geopolitical changes of 1967 – and, through substantive conversation about their core legislative issues and approaches, to illuminate emerging trends in Israeli politics and society.

In addition to plenary panels and interviews, the summit created the opportunity for smaller group interactions, including breakout panels on teaching about the peace process, the effects of natural gas and other resources on geopolitics, and the role of religion in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as a roundtable on Israel Studies in global perspective.
Representing the cultural sector – the third pillar of the Institute’s work – the summit was bookended by two active and much-translated Israeli authors. David Grossman gave the keynote lecture, discussing the role of culture and cultural figures in Israeli politics and society. Dorit Rabinyan, whose book – soon to be published in English as All the Rivers – was the topic of heated debate within Israel, discussed the effect that Israel’s social and political realities had on shaping Israeli art, in an intimate conversation at the conclusion of the summit.

We at the Israel Institute believe these types of interactions between Israel experts and conversations about modern Israel are crucial to advancing knowledge and study of the state. Israel Studies is an internally diverse, and often fragmented, field of study. While there are events that engage the various dimensions of Israel Studies separately, none of them bring together representatives from these different groups in a single forum to capitalize on the totality of what the study of Israel can be. This summit, in contrast, encouraged cross-pollination between disciplines and bridged the gap between scholars and cultural and policy practitioners in an attempt to build partnerships between different sectors of Israel experts. It is our hope that in-depth dialogue and research engendered and inspired by this summit will leave Israel experts better poised to understand the myriad complex challenges and opportunities facing Israel today.

For those interested in a more in-depth look at the 2016 Leadership Summit, videos of plenary events are available on the Israel Institute’s website at israelinstitute.org/Event_Jun16.html
Predicting the Future: Peace and equality top the agenda for young MKs

MK RACHEL AZARIA (Kulanu), in an interview with Prof. Lihi Ben Shitrit of the University of Georgia, identified cost-of-living, state and religion, and women’s issues as close to her heart, noting the importance of “minimizing the gaps between the different groups in Israeli society” and being driven by the question, “How do we help people just live their lives?” She also spoke of the challenges and opportunities of navigating coalitional politics in order to effect change through legislation.

MK AYMAN ODEH (Joint List), speaking to Northwestern University Prof. Elie Rekhess, said that his biggest challenge was “to convince the two peoples [Jews and Arabs in Israel] that they have mutual interests, that their interests are not in conflict but complementary.” While emphasizing the importance of civil society and civil resistance in driving change for his constituency, he emphasized the importance of the Knesset as a platform for Arabs, as well as a tool for building meaningful connections with other groups and leaders.

According to MK MERAV MICHAELI (Zionist Union), one of her main challenges as caucus leader was building a strong opposition, with a coherent alternative policy vision. She told University of Maryland Prof. Yoram Peri that, in her eyes, “the political agreement with the Palestinians and with our neighbors in general is definitely a key issue.” On purely domestic issues, she identified the problem of real wages in Israel: “The inequality is just devastating for the society and for the state. This must be taken care of with major affirmative action, very rapidly.”
Women in the Knesset

A closer look at the institutional, sociocultural, and demographic forces shaping female political representation in Israel

DR. ASSAF SHAPIRA

For the past few decades, the issue of women’s representation in politics has taken central stage in academia and in public and political discourse. The basic premise of the issue is that equal representation of men and women in political affairs is consistent with the democratic values of citizen participation and equality. Additionally, equal representation promotes social equality as well as advances interests and viewpoints often shared by women. Indeed, my research (written together with Ofer Kenig, Chen Friedberg, and Reut Itzkovitch-Malka) has shown that among members of the 17th and 18th Knessets (Israel’s national legislature), women concern themselves more than men with matters categorized in the literature as “women’s issues,” such as education, health, and children and family.

A COMPARATIVE VIEW OF WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT

Although there has been genuine improvement in the parliamentary representation of women around the
“Scholars present various factors that may affect women’s parliamentary representation at large, many of which are demographic factors that serve as barriers to female political participation.”

world in recent decades, women remain underrepresented in the parliaments of all democracies; as of November 2016, among democratic countries, the Icelandic Althing had the highest proportion of female legislators (48 percent). However, much lower rates of below 30 percent are still common in many established democracies, such as the United States (19 percent), Canada (26 percent), France (26 percent), Australia (29 percent), and the United Kingdom (30 percent).

Female representation in the Knesset shows a genuine upward trend over the past twenty years but is still far from satisfactory: as of November 2016, Israel ranked 99th in the world. A record 29 women out of 120 MKs – 24.2 percent – were elected to the 20th Knesset in 2015. While this is a significant improvement from the low point of 1988, when only 7 women, or 5.8 percent of MKs, were elected to the 12th Knesset, this percentage is still much lower than the ratio of women to men in Israel, which is slightly more than 50 percent. It should also be noted that women’s representation in other political arenas in Israel, like the Cabinet, is even lower. Despite statistics showing that more women are entering politics, they still make up only a small share of the nation’s political leadership relative to men.

**INSTITUTIONAL, SOCIOCULTURAL, AND DEMOGRAPHIC DETERMINANTS OF FEMALE POLITICAL REPRESENTATION**

Scholars contend that various factors may affect women’s parliamentary representation at large, many of which are demographic factors that serve as barriers to female political participation. These factors – which include age, race, marital status, level of education obtained, occupation, income level, and household size – are also difficult to advance in the short term. With regard to Israel, the literature also suggests that the underrepresentation of women in the Knesset derives from prominent sociocultural features of Israeli society, including the influence of religion on public affairs; the securitization of Israeli society, resulting in men having substantial leverage over women to build political careers due to their salience in the military; and, especially, the patriarchal political culture that excludes women from the public sphere prevailing among various social groups, in particular ultra-Orthodox Jews and religious Arab Muslims. The increase over the past few decades in the parliamentary representation of the ultra-Orthodox, who do not place women in their candidate lists, and of the Arab parties was deleterious to the overall representation of women in the Knesset.

Institutional factors, such as electoral systems, are even more consequential because they can be altered more easily than demographics or sociocultural norms. Many scholars of political institutions work under the assumption that women
have access to fewer resources than men do in running for office, including but not limited to financial resources, media coverage, and ties to interest groups. Thus, when a female candidate competes against a male candidate, the man usually has the upper hand. For these same reasons, women often get pushed to the bottom of party lists during the process of candidate selection.

Accordingly, we would expect certain electoral systems to make it easier for women to get elected because their structure dilutes the inherent advantages that male candidates have over female candidates. These include electoral systems based on party lists (compared to those that are candidate centered), electoral systems with larger districts and, therefore, deeper party lists, and proportional representation (PR) electoral systems (compared to plurality or majority electoral systems used in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada).

**IMPROVING WOMEN’S REPRESENTATION THROUGH INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE**

While, at least in theory, the structure of the Israeli electoral system – proportional representation, closed party-lists, one large electoral district (of 120 representatives) – should make it easier for women to get elected to the Knesset, we are not seeing that outcome.

Since the 1990s, voluntary party representation quotas have been common in some Israeli parties. For example, in the elections for the 19th Knesset, five parties (of those that exceeded the electoral threshold) implemented quotas, though the percentage set by three of them was rather low (20 percent or less). Higher quota levels, as practiced in many democracies, were adopted only by the Balad and Meretz

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**Gender Quotas Around the World**

Data from Global Database of Quotas for Women (www.quotaproject.org)
parties (33 percent and 40 percent, respectively). As a result, the quotas adopted did not contribute greatly to enhancing the percentage of women in the Knesset. All of these factors beg the question: how can we improve women's representation in the Knesset?

One institutional tool to achieve greater gender parity is a legal gender quota, based on a state law declaring that each party must guarantee that women constitute an absolute number or some portion of its candidates – usually 30 to 50 percent – and/or that women be placed in specific slots on the party list. Such quotas, in addition to voluntary party quotas, are common in many democracies, among them Spain, Portugal, Belgium, France, Ireland, Poland, Slovenia, Argentina, and Brazil. There are many examples for the success of these quotas; for example, in 1995, the percentage of women in the Federal Parliament of Belgium was only 12 percent. In the following elections, legislated gender quotas came into effect and, in 1999, the percentage of women in parliament immediately rose to 23 percent and has continued to gradually increase, reaching more than 39 percent after the 2014 elections. Contemporary research and the body of evidence from these countries suggest that, if formulated correctly and enforced, legal gender quotas are the easiest and most effective way to achieve greater gender parity in national legislatures.

Could this be done in the Israeli case? Over the past two decades, more than 20 private members’ bills for the adoption of gender quotas in Israel have been put forward – some seeking to disqualify candidate lists which do not include a minimal number or proportion of women, others offering a financial reward to lists or factions in which women’s representation is relatively high – but none were approved. Certainly, factors such as patriarchal political culture and the strenuous opposition of the ultra-Orthodox parties, which are almost always a member of the ruling coalition, made it very difficult for such reforms to be accepted. But at least two additional barriers can be identified. The first is the fear of male MKs, even those representing non-religious parties, that their chances of reelection will be harmed. The second is a legal opinion submitted by the Knesset’s legal advisors, according to which any decision to adopt legal quotas requires the support of 61 MKs, as the proposal conflicts with one of the principles of the Basic Law, The Knesset (section 4), which states, “The Knesset shall be elected by . . . equal elections . . . this section shall not be varied save by a majority of the members of the Knesset.” This opinion is based on the premise that the “equality” discussed in the law refers to the equality between lists and not between individual candidates (who would benefit from the quota).

In other democracies, including established Western democracies, attempts to adopt gender quotas have encountered several hurdles, many of them similar to those found in Israel. In spite of this, some attempts have succeeded; France is a striking example of a country where supporters of a gender quota had to overcome such barriers and, ultimately, succeeded. Based on the experiences of other countries, we can identify several tools that may help to overcome barriers, such as building a strong public movement in support of gender quotas, as well as anchoring the principle of equality between the sexes in Israel’s Basic Laws, which may eventually eliminate the need for a Knesset majority to enact gender quotas. Attempts to form a mass movement in support of gender quotas in Israel have failed so far, and the struggle for the legislation of a gender quota has remained limited to women’s organizations and academic circles. It seems, then, that identifying the conditions for building such a movement, and the actions that may motivate it, remains an important task ahead for scholars of Israeli politics who believe that increasing women’s parliamentary representation can indeed reinforce the democratic character of Israel.

Dr. Assaf Shapira

Assaf Shapira is currently a Visiting Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Center for European Studies (CEE) at the Sciences Po (Paris). After earning his Ph.D. in Political Science from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, he served as a Post-Doctoral Fellow at Hebrew University’s Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations and taught in the Department of Political Science. Dr. Shapira’s research largely focuses on the representation and participation of citizens and various social groups, especially minorities and other marginalized communities, in politics and particularly in Israeli politics. He has previously worked on issues relating to the representation of women in politics and expanding immigrants’ citizenship rights, among others. Dr. Shapira is a 2016-2017 Israel Institute Post-Doctoral Fellowship recipient.
Israel has, in many aspects, a solid and growing economy. From a macroeconomic perspective, the country enjoys high economic growth vis-à-vis other developed, economically modern countries that participate in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). However, the benefits of this growth are not evenly distributed, a fact that is reflected by the deep social and economic divisions in Israeli society. Among OECD member countries, Israel has one of the highest rates of economic inequality. Israel also holds the highest poverty rate, meaning that the country has the highest ratio of the number of people (in a given age group) whose income falls below the poverty line (as of 2013).

How do we define poverty? There are several approaches, and challenges, to defining what it means to be poor. According to the monetary approach, a person is in a state of poverty when their income...
“In Israel, the formal definition of poverty is based on a monetary relativist measurement: the poverty line is defined as half the median disposable income, weighted by household size. A household with a disposable income that is lower than this poverty line is considered poor.”

decreases below a pre-determined “poverty line.” The assumption underlying this approach is that the degree to which an individual can access economic resources defines their ability to fulfill their basic needs and to provide for other family members. Another approach to understanding poverty is by defining its relative and symbolic characteristics. Accordingly, poverty is not only experiencing a shortage in economic resources but, also, a state of social exclusion, in which individuals cannot fully participate in society. In Israel, the formal definition of poverty is based on a monetary relativist measurement: the poverty line is defined as half the median disposable income, weighted by household size. A household with a disposable income that is lower than this poverty line is considered poor.

According to the recent Poverty and Social Gaps Annual Report, published by the National Insurance Institute of Israel in 2014, 444,900 families and 1,709,300 individuals, of whom 776,500 are children, live in poverty (for context, the population of Israel is about eight million). These numbers reflect an increase from previous years in the incidence of overall poverty in Israel. Moreover, the report shows that some populations are more exposed to poverty than others. For example, one-fifth of the elderly population, more than half of Arab families, more than half of ultra-Orthodox families, and more than one-third of single parent families are living in poverty. Finally, there is a steady rise in the percentage of poor working families, with the incidence of poverty among working families reaching 13.1 percent in 2014. These data alone disprove the commonly held assumption that “those who work are not poor” and its equivalent surmise, “those who are poor do not work.”

In this context, recent studies focus on the problematic nature of the current Israeli labor market, which is characterized by the widespread use of employment agencies for temporary workers, large numbers of foreign workers, and the existence of a dual job market. In this market, skilled workers enjoy the economic and social benefits of regulated jobs while unskilled workers work in unstable, unregulated jobs for low wages, often without job security or any social benefits.

Those who belong to marginalized populations (for example, in terms of gender, ethnicity, geographical location, race, religion, etc.) are often located at what is called “the bottom of the labor market” and earn minimum wage. Often, even a family with two earners cannot surpass the poverty line. Under these circumstances, the situation of single parent families is also extremely difficult. These families have one earner, 97 percent of whom are women. According

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**Dr. Einat Lavee**

Einat Lavee is currently a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Poverty and Social Exclusion at the University of Haifa. Previously, she held a Post-Doctoral position at Stanford University’s Center on Poverty and Inequality. A sociologist and social psychologist, her areas of interest include poverty, the welfare state, work-family conflict, and motherhood in the Israeli context. Her published articles deal with the ways in which macro-level institutions and social discourse shape the experiences of individuals, particularly low-income mothers, in their day-to-day lives. Dr. Lavee earned her Ph.D. from Bar-Ilan University in 2014. She is a two-year recipient of an Israel Institute Post-Doctoral Fellowship.
to the recent Poverty and Social Gaps Annual Report, a single parent mother with two children, who works full time for minimum wage, has to obtain additional income at 25 percent of her wage income in order to overcome the poverty line. Another major strain for single parent, breadwinning mothers is that, often, they are the main and/or only caregivers for their children, a fact that can make it even harder for them to hold a full-time job. The positions open to low-wage mothers, who often lack education or adequate professional training, do not consider their familial obligations. Many times, employers demand their presence at work even when children are at home and require an adult presence. Even shift work, which often characterizes the bottom of the labor market, is, at worst, impossible and, at best, inconvenient for mothers, as it means being out of the home during afternoons and nights, when children are most likely to be at home and in need of time and attention.

My personal research interests start from here: the understanding that mothers who live in poverty, and who are also the main breadwinners as well as the primary caregivers of their children, must accumulate economic resources from various sources to make ends meet and fulfill their children's basic needs. In my research, I found that in order to maneuver between their parental and financial responsibilities, mothers combine several mini-jobs at various parts of the day. For example, a typical day for one mother might include a housekeeping job in the morning, returning home at noon to serve lunch when children come back from school, providing manicure services from home throughout the afternoon, returning to “mommy-role” in the evening for homework and dinner, and then telemarketing from home after the children go to sleep. Through this unorthodox schedule, mothers are better able to fulfill all of their commitments than would otherwise be possible with one full-time, steady position.

Furthermore, my research found that poor mothers, in addition to the exhaustive maneuvering in the labor market, must also locate other sources of income to ensure their family's economic survival. In most cases, these sources are social networks – mainly parents and siblings – and agency-based support, such as public agencies (public social services) or private NGOs and other charity organizations. Many times, it is only the combination of all the above that offers a sufficient income.

Nevertheless, these miscellaneous economic resources as well as sources of irregular income cannot be considered steady breadwinning sources and, more specifically, do not help mothers and their families overcome poverty. For these women, as for the vast and growing population who live in poverty in Israel, a real state commitment is required. Such commitment could be reflected in a social policy that aims to reduce social inequality and poverty, in ways that enable all people to live and provide for their families in dignity.

Such a governmental commitment was made in 2013 by the Israeli government with the appointment of a special War on Poverty Committee (the Alaluf committee), by the (now former) Minister of Welfare and Social Services Meir Cohen. The committee’s mission was to develop recommendations for reducing poverty and expanding equal opportunities in Israel. Committee members were comprised of academic experts, NGO representatives, and delegates from both the central and local governments. The final committee report was submitted to the government in June 2014. The report included detailed recommendations over vast areas, including at the levels of the individual, the family, the community, and society. However, according to recent data, the financial governmental allocations for implementation of the recommendations are only one-quarter of those needed to reduce Israeli poverty rates to the OECD's standard within ten years.

One of the committee’s main insights was the acknowledgment that poverty is not only an issue of low income levels but also a broader, multidimensional problem. Thus, in order to understand the unique experience of people living in poverty, there is a real need to develop a multidimensional poverty measure.

Today, at the Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Poverty and Social Exclusion at the University of Haifa, we are developing a research initiative that aims to respond to this need through evidence-based data, in order to inform policy that would enable the targeting of specific populations and, ultimately, contribute to a reduction in poverty. We are launching an initiative aimed at building an infrastructure for systematically monitoring the qualitative experience of poverty and how that experience may change across different social groups. This large-scale research is based on an on-going study taking place in the United States and Canada, headed by world experts in poverty research. The results coming out of this study have the potential to inform future Israeli policy as well as advance basic research in the areas of poverty and inequality.
One of the key participants in my ongoing anthropological research, a sharp-eyed senior woman who emigrated from St. Petersburg to Israel several years ago, offered the following observation: “Soon, Israel will constitute a unique case of reverse assimilation. Israelis will become like us; they will turn into Russians!” The huge wave of Russian emigration in the 1990s, followed by a smaller stream that continues today, brought about one million immigrants to Israel from the former Soviet Union and, undoubtedly, impacted Israeli society. This highly heterogeneous collective was welcomed to Israel in accordance with the Law of Return and was considered by the state to be a mass Jewish homecoming to its historical homeland. Less formally, Israel encouraged and welcomed this immigration because of its potential contribution to the “demographic wars” taking place within the Israeli space. These conflicts included those between Jews and Arabs, Ashkenazim (Jews of European origin) and Mizrahim (Jews of Middle Eastern/
North African origin) and, also, secular and religious Israeli Jews. Indeed, Israeli society has been impacted by the arrival of such a massive number of immigrants to a country with a population of around six million at that time.

Today, the Russian cultural presence seems evident to all. Russian-speaking immigrants are Israel’s largest ethno-linguistic group from a single country of origin, comprising 12 percent of the population. Besides their demographic significance, Russian-speaking immigrants in Israel also show a particular pattern of integration: they adopt the major Israeli ethos and national values but keep their cultural particularities, especially the Russian language, Russian cultural institutions, and educational activities. Notable among the numerous manifestations of their quest for “cultural autonomy” in Israel are the Russian and bilingual theaters, as well the establishment of networks of Russian-language schools and kindergartens, which operate in most Israeli cities. Finally, there is a most unprecedented phenomenon of Russian media in Israel, or media for Russian speakers, produced by ex-Soviets themselves: more than 130 periodicals were published in Russian during the 1990s and, later, an extensive array of electronic media, TV channels, and web portals.

One might have predicted that a desire for cultural preservation would come to an end after one generation, that Russian-speaking immigrants’ children – who were socialized within the Israeli educational system, served in the Israeli army, and whose native language was Hebrew – would not have a need for Russian-language cultural institutions and would abandon the Russian and especially Soviet cultural baggage. Apparently, the opposite took place. An informal activist social organization, the “1.5 generation” of young Russian-Israelis, promote a revival of Russian-Soviet identity in Israel and even try to extend it to the broader Israeli society through various educational and artistic activities. During the 2015–2016 holiday season, this group launched the project “Israeli Novy God” (New Year), aiming to teach Israelis about the most important secular Soviet holiday, celebrated by ex-Soviets on December 31. The project mobilized such support that Israeli officials of the highest echelon – Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Rivlin – opened the 2016 Novy God celebrations on the Russian-Israeli TV channel and saluted the Russian immigrants in their broken Russian. This group also initiated a Russian-Israeli cookbook project, quickly collecting more than 150,000 NIS (almost 40,000 USD). The “1.5 generation” epitomizes the new generation of Russians in Israel: they master social media; their main language is Hebrew and not Russian; many of them have never been to Russia; yet, they see their Russian-Soviet heritage as a crucial resource for their personal and cultural identity and self-presentation. The phenomenon is so notable that Timeout Tel Aviv magazine even highlighted this Russian renaissance with a special issue in February 2016 on the influence of the Russian presence on Tel Aviv’s artistic, musical, entertainment, and culinary life.

Are we indeed witnessing a case of “reverse assimilation,” a sort of “Russification” of Israel? Not necessarily. Alongside the celebration of the Russian-Soviet revival, the scholarly research shows that some important features of the Russian-Soviet Jewish identity and lifestyle have changed dramatically in Israel.

Maybe the most evident transformation of the Russians in Israel is that they have become religious. Raised as Soviet citizens, new immigrants of Jewish and non-Jewish origin prior to their emigration held secular worldviews (almost all declared themselves to be non-religious upon their arrival to the Holy Land) and were unfamiliar with communal forms of religious expression. During the Soviet era, Russian Jews defined their Jewishness mostly in ethnic terms; their

Dr. Julia Lerner

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affiliation with the Jewish religion was not seen as formative for their collective and personal identities. The existence of two different terms for the expression of ethnic Jewish identity on the one hand and Jewish religious affiliation on the other – _every_ and _iudei_ – illustrates the Soviet success at splitting Judaism into two distinct components: religion and ethnicity. Indeed, Jewish ex-Soviets generally arrived in Israel lacking even a basic knowledge of Jewish religious traditions. Twenty-five years after emigration, a rather different picture has emerged. Relocating from the country of State Socialism to the country of State Judaism (using the words of Larissa Remennick, Professor of Sociology, Bar-Ilan University), immigrants have noticed that the _kippa_ functions in a way similar to the Communist party membership card in the Soviet Union, as some of them have phrased it. Surveys conducted in the past decade have shown that nearly one-third of Russian-speaking Israelis define themselves as "religious" and about the same number define themselves as "non-believers," making even larger the percentage of Russian immigrants affiliated with some sort of faith.

This phenomenon can have different explanations. First, it is definitely connected to the incorporation of Jewish religious affiliation into Israeli citizenship and civil life. More than 50 percent of Russian-speaking immigrants were born into families of mixed ethnic origin, and many of them are not considered Jewish according to Jewish religious law (_halacha_). These immigrants are encouraged by the state to undergo religious conversion (_giyur_), a long process that includes the theoretical and practical study of Judaism and, more importantly, requires proof that a religious lifestyle is being practiced. Five percent of Russian immigrants of mixed Jewish origin undertake this act, aiming to correct their "problematic" Jewishness as a way to achieve normative citizenship and social integration.

Additionally, my own research indicates that the sites of Russian religiousness in Israel share important features of post-Soviet religiosity. The Soviet cultural background made Russian immigrants highly ambivalent towards religiosity. Soviet ideology strove to create a New Man inspired by materialist and scientific worldviews, but the dogmas and beliefs of Marxist-Leninist ideology operated rather like religious systems. At the same time, the religious arenas existing at the margins of Soviet society acquired political and cultural meaning as a private opposition to Soviet collectivistic values. But the wheel has turned in Russia, too; I was told that in today’s Moscow “to admit to your co-workers that you don’t believe in God is just inappropriate.”

The massive post-Soviet religious awakening, constructed from the late 1980s as a "supermarket of religions," is accompanied by a clear presence of new religious ideologies and movements that marshal eclectic, universalistic, pseudo-scientific, and therapeutic discourses. This inclusive and universalistic nature of post-Soviet religiosity is evident today in the religious beliefs and practices found in post-Soviet spaces, including those in Israel. The transnational phenomenon of post-Soviet religious revival is evident in the Jewish new religious movement Kabbalah La-am (or Bnei Baruch) as well as in the Judeo-Messianic communities, as, in both, the majority of the members consist of Russian speakers.

These days, I am working on a manuscript that explains this dramatic religious transformation occurring among Russian-speaking post-Soviet immigrants in Israel. The book is based on an ongoing empirical study that was conducted between 2010 and 2015, in collaboration with Nelly Elias (Ben-Gurion University). The book brings ethnographic and narrative evidence of Russian speakers’ participation in nine various religious communities in the Jerusalem and Beersheva areas, and explores the origins, meanings, and practices of this religiosity. The chapters of the book trace the biographical trajectories that bring people closer to Jewish or Christian religious ideas and institutions, whether as part of the post-Soviet transformation or the immigrant experience. It presents voices of Russian-Israeli Christians (the followers of messianic evangelists, the parish of Seventh Day Adventists, and immigrants from the Russian Orthodox Christian community) as well as the voices of the Russian Jews from the Orthodox Zionist communities, Chabad and Hassidic ultra-Orthodox Jewish streams, and participants in modern Kabbalah studies groups. The comparative analysis of different religious trajectories within the same immigrant collective, which is simultaneously "attracted" to two religions – Judaism and Christianity – enables the study of how religious doctrine impacts immigrants’ identity and social networks as well as their attitudes towards the home and the host societies.
The Language of Gaga

The Israel Institute speaks with dancer and choreographer Ella Rothschild, who spent several months at Howard University this past fall as a Schusterman Visiting Israeli Artist.

**IIM:** For the past decade, you’ve been immersed in Gaga, both as a student of Ohad Naharin and as a teacher and choreographer. What do you like about Gaga in contrast to other forms of contemporary dance?

**ROTHSCHILD:** Other than the fact that Gaga was the last training I did as a dancer, it’s a great tool for a dancer, for exploring your body. You are constantly developing; you are not staying in one spot or in the same frame. When I’m teaching, I’m also learning from my students and further developing in class. And it’s a smart way to approach dancing; for a warm up, it’s amazing for your body. Anyone can benefit from Gaga, you just need to have an open mind.

**IIM:** In the documentary Mr. Gaga, actress Natalie Portman describes how every person who uses this movement language – Gaga – will have their own dialect [of the language]. How would you describe your dialect?

**ROTHSCHILD:** I don’t know if there is a different dialect to each person. I think there is personality. It’s the way you think, the way you move, the way you understand your own body. You are all operating in the same direction, but there is space where you can develop your creativity.
There are some principles of Gaga, a common understanding, that are crucial to getting the most out of it: for example, taking pleasure in your physicality and in moving. I want people to get the point [of Gaga], not just come to class.

IIM: Can you take us through one of your classes?

ROTHSCHILD: Everybody who is dancing, the first thing they do is close their eyes, so they aren’t aware of their surroundings or their body in the space. When you close your eyes, you have no sense of your own reflection. As a dancer and choreographer myself, the highest point [of rehearsal] is when your mind is where your body is. I will give you a small example. In every moment, I’m always thinking about what I’m doing. I’m not just letting myself go. I’m constantly thinking about every part of my body: Where are my feet? Where are my hands? This isn’t something that people are usually doing.

As a teacher, I like to insist that if a student isn’t moving some part of their body, I insist – it’s not personal! – that it will happen by the end of the class. I can look at a student and see that they are not following what I want them to follow. Maybe they think they’re doing it or maybe I’m unclear. But I need to find different wording, a more creative way, to make them move the way I want them to move. I use a lot of imagery to make my point, and I won’t give up on them. It’s challenging, and you must stay engaged, alert, and creative – all the time – in class when you’re teaching.

IIM: The piece you’re working on with your students at Howard, 12 Post-Dated Checks, was inspired by the struggle to find affordable, livable apartments in Tel Aviv. Can you take us behind the scenes of your creative process? How did you develop the choreography? Why did you decide to use cardboard for the set?

ROTHSCHILD: This piece started in Tel Aviv’s City Hall, where I participated in an artist showcase a few years ago. I created a fictional character, a real estate agent, and gave a tour of City Hall, offering the different offices in the building as legitimate apartments: the secretary’s room, the convention room, the head of City Hall’s room – that was the penthouse. This was right after huge protests in Tel Aviv by people demanding affordable, livable apartments.

What is Gaga?

Gaga is a movement language developed by Ohad Naharin, an Israeli contemporary dancer, choreographer, and artistic director of the famed Batsheva Dance Company, as a training tool for his Batsheva dancers, who had asked for a “tool kit” to better perform his demanding choreography. Gaga was designed to build awareness of the body’s strengths, weaknesses, and limitations and, at the same time, help dancers develop their artistic range and improve their agility, flexibility, and stamina. In a typical Gaga class, teachers use imagery and sensory-based instructions that build on top of each other, without pause. Instead of merely copying each movement, students interpret and follow these instructions, according to their own abilities and limitations. Today, Gaga is the primary training method for the Batsheva Dance Company, and both dancers (“Gaga dancers”) and non-dancers (“Gaga people”) alike take classes all over the world.
who couldn’t afford housing and experienced housing troubles; the housing crisis is still a problem today. I also experienced enormous troubles with my apartment and landlord. This was the beginning of something. It was fun and people were engaged. I felt then that this character needed to grow, and decided to turn it into a bigger piece, adapt it for stage and involve more dancers, and dive deeper into this idea I had just been playing with.

I decided to work with cardboard because you can relate to it in so many ways. The homeless use cardboard to cover themselves. You can use cardboard to create models or prototypes of a city. In the original work, there is a huge piece of cardboard lying on the ground and I build it up into a city. Inside, there is a person, and she’s living in this tiny box. Regarding the housing crisis, we are all victims of capitalism, of the race for housing and for money, and she embodies these dynamics.

IIM: How did your students at Howard react to the piece?

ROTHSCHILD: They really related to it. We had some really interesting meetings in Philadelphia and at the local Jewish Community Center. My students talked about the gentrification happening in their communities, where people are pushed out of their own neighborhoods and richer people are taking their places. Another interesting reaction came from one student who said that she related to the main character, the real estate agent, because she was a woman who was strong and fully in control and not afraid; she can sell you anything she wants. It was interesting to me, to see my students relate to such different aspects of the piece.

IIM: Is this the first time that some of your students have been exposed to Gaga?

ROTHSCHILD: Yes, it was. It is always nice to teach fresh minds, people who are not already familiar with the concept [of Gaga]. In the beginning, there is always some suspicion, some hesitation. They were excited about it, but they didn’t know what it was.
By the end of the semester, my students were fully engaged in the process.

Throughout the semester, I saw them changing, each person with their own weaknesses overcoming their weak points. It’s refreshing to see how people can change; they think they know their body – they’re already dancers – but they discover a whole new universe.

IIM: Do you think any of your students will stick with Gaga?

ROTHSCHILD: I think the class changed them. In D.C., I don’t think they have a lot of opportunities [for Gaga], but some of them are finishing their degrees this year and spreading out to New York; one student is even coming to Israel to audition for the Batsheva ensemble. If they want it, they can find it. And they can practice – they had three intensive months of it!

IIM: How was your experience teaching at Howard University? Have there been any new collaborations or opportunities that arose from your residency at Howard?

ROTHSCHILD: My students and I put on an enormous Gaga class in Philadelphia, at the University of the Arts, and then they performed there. They also performed with the Washington Ballet, and at the Jewish Community Center in D.C. In early January, they performed in New York at the 92nd Street Y, a multicultural community center in Manhattan, at their annual “Out of Israel” festival. Eight of my students traveled up to perform 12 Post-Dated Checks; this was a nice opportunity for them to perform outside of the university setting.

I had a beautiful experience with my students. Howard’s dance program was very generous to me. It was an amazing experience to meet people who want to be there, and work with instructors who want to push their students and themselves. You never know, I might come back to teaching at Howard or I might meet them in a different setting.

IIM: Did you enjoy your time in Washington? How does D.C.’s or, more broadly, the American art scene differ from the Israeli art scene?

ROTHSCHILD: I went everywhere, to every museum I could. For me, the United States is genuinely cosmopolitan. For example, I went to see Zakir Hussain, an Indian percussionist, in a synagogue; that’s something that’s amazing by itself. I saw Phillip Glass at a museum. Here, culture, religion, and art are intertwined with one another, and I think this is something that is special to Washington. You can find everything here, from American artists to French artists, you name it. The art scene is very rich, and I truly hope that it will stay this way.

“This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity.”

One of the most active dance artists in Tel Aviv, ELLA ROTHSCHILD is a dancer and choreographer who trained and danced with the Inbal Pinto and Avshalom Pollak Dance Company, and with the Batsheva Dance Company under the artistic direction of Ohad Naharin and house choreographer (at the time) Sharon Eyal. Between 2006 and 2010, Rothschild choreographed six pieces through the “Batsheva Dancers Create” annual project. Since then, she has choreographed independently and in collaboration with musicians, video artists, and sculptors, in countries ranging from Israel to Japan. In Fall 2016, she was an Artist-in-Residence at Howard University, through the Israel Institute’s Schusterman Visiting Israeli Artist Program.
Throughout the 2016-2017 academic year, the Israel Institute continued to expand its academic programming on campuses across Europe.

UNITED KINGDOM

Sociologist Sammy Smooha, of the University of Haifa, is currently teaching two semester-long courses on the history of Zionism and Zionist ideology at SOAS University of London. Prof. Smooha remarked that teaching is a "quite rewarding experience" because "the students have a strong interest in Israel" and, due to this interest and their preparedness for class, it is possible to hold lectures and discussions at "a high level."

Last fall, Prof. Smooha opened SOAS’ Center for Jewish Studies lecture series with a talk on “Is Israel Really Western? Does It Have Viable Alternative Options,” attracting many students, faculty, and members of the greater community. He also gave a talk on “The Challenge of National Minorities to Ethnic Majority Hegemony: A Comparative Perspective” to the Middle East Study Group at the University of Hull in northeast London.
FRANCE
This past semester, Prof. Uzi Rabi, Director of the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University, taught an intensive course on state cohesion in the Middle East after the Arab Spring at Sciences Po Menton. Said Prof. Rabi of his “most enjoyable experience teaching in France:” “In times of dramatic changes in Europe and the world, students were so engaged in the subject. The discussion was more lively than in my classes in Israel, and showed the various perspectives of people coming from different cultures, very curious and very creative.”

CENTRAL EUROPE
At Charles University, the Institute supported the Prague Centre for Jewish Studies’ fourth annual Israel Week, “The Future of Israel Studies in the Czech Republic,” in late October. The aim of Israel Week is to bring Israel Studies to the academic fore, further engaging Czech scholarship with the Israeli and international academic world. Israel Week organizer Dr. Marcela Zoufala observed: “Israel Week at Charles University is gaining more attention every year, not only among Czech and international students and academics but also among the general Czech public. For example, this year’s keynote speaker, Prof. Elie Rekhess of Northwestern University, gave an interview to the Czech State Radio and was also invited to participate in a live broadcast of Czech television, Channel 24.”

In the Policy World
This past semester, the Israel Institute supported Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Yossi Baidatz at the Brookings Institution, where he participated in a number of discussions and events on U.S.-Israel relations and strategic decision making with the Center for Middle East Policy.

The Institute also supported a partnership between Tel Aviv University’s Moshe Dayan Center and the Center for Israel Studies in Amman, Jordan. Institute funding has facilitated academic exchanges between Israeli and Jordanian students and faculty, a book translation from Hebrew into Arabic, and academic conferences, such as “The Future of Hebrew Language in the Arab World” recently held in Jordan this past December.

SCHOLARLY WORKS
Over the past few months, our grantees’ works have been featured in Foreign Affairs, The National Interest, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace’s Sada Journal, Fathom Journal, Newsweek Europe, Women’s Studies International Forum, and more.

Dr. Orit Rozin, an Israel Institute Research Grant recipient, recently released a new book: A Home for All Jews: Citizenship, Rights, and National Identity in the New Israeli State. Published by Brandeis University Press, the book focuses on the construction and negotiation of citizenship in Israel during the state’s first decade. Firmly anchored in archival sources, and enriched by theoretical literature on citizenship, rights, and freedoms, this book will appeal to scholars and students of Israeli history, law, politics, and culture.

A recent paper, “Is the Government Fiscally Blind?,” co-authored by Dr. Ronit Levine-Schnur and based on research supported by an Israel Institute grant, received accolades from celebrated U.S. law professor Nicole Stelle Garnett, who noted in a review that “it represents a significant contribution to the literature on eminent domain.”
Conference Collaborations

Through its Public Discourse Events Program, the Israel Institute funds and promotes forums for the study and discussion of contemporary Israel, such as academic conferences and workshops, think tank fellowships and events, public lectures, and more. In 2016, the Institute supported:

1. A Seminar in Israel for University Presidents and Chancellors, which was held at the end of May. Campuses represented included George Washington University, Oberlin College, Occidental College, Syracuse University, and the University of California, among others. Chaired by Janet Napolitano, President of the University of California and former Secretary of Homeland Security, the delegation furthered the exchange of cross-cultural ideas on innovation and learning, establishing a foundation for additional collaboration with Israel partners in academia and university administration.

2. The European Association of Israel Studies’ fifth annual conference on Israel Studies, “Thinking about Israel: Borders, Boundaries, and Cultures,” hosted by the University of London in early September.

3. A symposium entitled “Sustainable Management of Iconic Lakes: Lessons Learned from Lake Michigan and the Kinneret (Sea of Galilee).” Held in mid-September at Michigan State University, both American and Israeli scholars shared ideas about pressing environmental questions surrounding lake management. The symposium was envisioned as a first step toward ongoing research collaboration that will culminate in a Great Lakes/Kinneret Research Consortium, which will conduct applied scientific and policy research between relevant institutions and experts in Israel and Michigan.

4. The Arizona Center for Judaic Studies’ second annual Israel Studies conference, entitled “Balancing Unity & Diversity: Israel’s Changing Society & Politics.” Held in early December, the two-day gathering brought together a team of historians and social scientists from Israel and the United States, featuring a keynote speech by renowned scholar and Israel Prize winner Dr. Anita Shapira of Tel Aviv University.
HONORS AND AWARDS

In recognition of their many academic achievements, the Institute is proud to feature recent awards and distinctions earned by the Institute grantee class of 2016-2017:

- **Gilat Bachar** received the Carl Mason Franklin Prize for Outstanding Paper in International Law for her first dissertation paper (Stanford Law School)
- **Bachar**, along with **Erez Maggor, Matthew Nanes, Hisham Sabbagh**, and **Noam Shoked**, received several grants to conduct dissertation-related research and participate in training workshops
- **Moran Benit** received the Warburg Prize (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
- **Prof. Leora Bilsky** received the Patricia and William Kleh Award in International Law (Boston University)
- **Avner Golov** received the 2016 Morris Abrams Award in International Relations (Tufts University)
- **Aviad Levy** received an Erasmus+ EU grant
- **Elad Popovich** was awarded the 2016 prize of the Israeli Intelligence Heritage and Commemoration Center for an article on social media and conflict
- **Hisham Sabbagh** received a British International Studies Association (BISA) Bursary to participate in, and present at, the BISA U.S. Foreign Policy Conference at Bath University
- **Daniel Sobelman** received an honorable mention from the Institute for National Security Studies Tschetchik Prize for Strategic Studies for his doctoral dissertation

ARTS & CULTURE

- Poet and computer scientist **Eran Hadas** is teaching at Caltech this spring semester. Hillary Mushkin, research professor of art and design in mechanical and civil engineering, who orchestrated Hadas’ visit to Caltech through the Schusterman Visiting Israeli Artist Program, notes: “This is the first class that is cross-listed between computer science and humanities.”
- Choreographer and dancer **Ella Rothschild** recently won an award from the Israeli Ministry of Culture and Sport for a decade of achievement in dance.
- The Schusterman Visiting Israeli Artist Program was featured in three national dance publications recently: *Inside Dance*, *Dance Magazine*, and *Dance Teacher*. Additionally, choreographer **Iris Erez**’s residency this spring at Reed College was the cover story of the January 2017 *Oregon Jewish Life* magazine, and a profile of visiting choreographer **Ya’ara Moses** made the cover story of the Winter 2017 *Connecticut College Magazine*.

(Top) Israeli choreographer Iris Erez graces the January 2017 cover of Oregon Jewish Life (Bottom) Israeli choreographer Ya’ara Moses teaching her students at Connecticut College.
What We Do

The Israel Institute works in partnership with leading academic, research, and cultural institutions to enhance knowledge and study of modern Israel in the United States and around the world. In pursuit of this mission, the Israel Institute supports a diverse range of programs, listed below:

ACADEMICS

DOCTORAL AND POST-DOCTORAL PROGRAMS

- **Doctoral Fellowships:** We offer fellowships to Ph.D. students who have completed their coursework, passed their comprehensive exams, and are researching and writing dissertations on topics related to Israel or incorporating Israel as a case study. We seek candidates who have an interest in pursuing careers in Israel Studies outside of Israel.

- **Post-Doctoral Research Grants:** We provide grants for post-docs who are conducting research on a topic related to modern Israel or that incorporates Israel as a case study. Applicants must have received their Ph.D.s, in any discipline, within the past three years.

TEACHING PROGRAMS

- **Visiting Faculty Programs:** Our Visiting Faculty Programs bring Israeli academics to teach at elite universities in the United States and Europe. These programs give both tenured and tenure-track Israeli professors the opportunity to spend an academic year abroad teaching about modern Israel and expanding their professional circles, while granting students from top universities access to leading Israeli academics.

- **Teaching Fellow Program:** Our Teaching Fellow Program is a multi-year teaching placement for academics, of various ranks and nationalities, with the interest and expertise to teach about modern Israel. This program is designed for Israel experts who are free to be placed by the Israel Institute at colleges and universities in the United States.

- **International Short Course Grants:** Our International Short Course Grant Program supports courses about modern Israel at top-ranked colleges and universities outside the United States and Israel that do not have resident experts available to teach courses in Israel Studies. These grants enable scholars to travel to schools to teach either semester-length or intensive short courses on modern Israel.

- **Visiting Faculty in China:** Our Visiting Faculty in China Program enables experts in Israel Studies and Hebrew language instructors to spend a semester teaching at elite universities in China.

- **Faculty Development Grants:** We offer grants to permanent faculty members to help them add Israel-focused courses to their teaching portfolios. The purpose of this program is to assist professors who have the interest and desire, but not yet the expertise, to teach courses about...
modern Israel. The grant affords select scholars with the opportunity to conduct research, travel to Israel, hone language skills, or pursue any other activity that would be conducive to developing and teaching Israel Studies courses.

OTHER PROGRAMS

- **Research Grants**: We offer research grants for established scholars conducting substantive research on modern Israel. These grants are designed to facilitate the research and writing of books or scholarly articles that make an original contribution to the field of Israel Studies and promote a greater understanding of modern Israel. Areas of study include, but are not limited to, Israeli history, politics, sociology, economics, and law.

- **Publication Support Program**: We provide grants in support of forthcoming books in Israel Studies that have already been accepted for publication by leading university presses. We award grants for the translation of major contributions to the field written and published in Hebrew. Israel Institute grants seek to facilitate the publication of books that make an original contribution to the field of Israel Studies and/or promote a greater understanding of modern Israel.

PUBLIC DISCOURSE

PUBLIC DISCOURSE EVENTS PROGRAM

- **Funding for Conferences, Lectures, and Workshops**: We co-sponsor and provide grants for academic conferences, lectures or lecture series, and workshops devoted to Israel Studies and/or the study of the modern state of Israel. We support public events of various formats and on a wide variety of topics including, but not limited to, modern Israeli history, sociology, politics, economics, law, and environment.

ARTS & CULTURE

SCHUSTERMAN VISITING ISRAELI ARTIST PROGRAM

- Through our residency program, we bring Israeli artists from various disciplines – including film, music, dance, and the visual arts – to the United States and Europe. Artists-in-Residence reside for two-to-four months at some of the nation’s most esteemed universities. Originally launched as a standalone initiative in 2008 and integrated into the Israel Institute in 2013, this program has proven to be overwhelmingly successful at establishing meaningful connections between students and visiting artists, increasing collaboration between Israeli artists and their American counterparts, and spurring a lasting interest in Israel and Israel’s vibrant arts scene.

PROGRAM CONTACTS

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Interested in one of our programs? Please visit israelinstitute.org to learn more and apply.

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The Israel Institute provides programs for emerging and senior scholars to encourage new scholarship, facilitate the development of new courses, and expand learning opportunities. The Institute is dedicated to promoting new research on Israel and showcasing Israeli literature, arts, and culture. The Institute also provides unique opportunities for exceptional college students and graduates to immerse themselves in Israel-relevant work and gain experience in Israel-related research through valuable internship experiences. We invite you to learn more at www.israelinstitute.org or call us at 202.289.1431 for more information.