

The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute Annual Review 2015



מכון ון ליר בירושלים

THE VAN LEER JERUSALEM INSTITUTE

معهد فان لير في القدس



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About The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute

The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute (VLJI) is a leading intellectual center for the interdisciplinary

study and discussion of issues related to philosophy, society, culture, and education. The Institute gives expression to the wide range of opinions in Israel and takes particular pride in its role as an incubator and a creative home for many of the most important civil society efforts to enhance and deepen Israeli democracy. The Institute was founded by the Van Leer family to advance knowledge in the realms of philosophy, society, and culture. Since 1959 it has operated as a center for advanced studies and for public discourse about ideas and social issues. Its intellectual and research goals are rooted in its commitment to public responsibility and civil ethics. With the support of the Van Leer Group Foundation in The Netherlands and under the guidance of its Board of Directors, the Institute plays a central role in important and socially sensitive fields, touching on the main foci of tension in Israeli society. The contribution of a core of renowned scholars at the Institute has made possible the successful implementation of reforms and new approaches in formal and informal education, policy studies, civil empowerment, and cultural diversity. The Institute continues to realize its vision in the areas of culture, identity, and social unity.

AIMS

- > To be an incubator for innovative ideas in the humanities and social sciences
- > To foster excellence in research and to use research findings for the public good
- > To promote humanistic, democratic, and liberal values in social discourse in Israel
- > To define and shape the public discourse and to point out alternative ways of thinking about current topics

ACTIVITIES

To achieve its goals, the Institute undertakes projects in four main areas: Advanced Studies, Jewish Thinking and Culture, Israeli Civil Society, and Mediterranean Neighbors. It employs a variety of methods and approaches in each of these areas. It runs projects and discussion groups and encourages cooperation with academe, civil society organizations, and government departments, while providing a platform for diverse views and broad representation of various groups. Its activities include conducting studies of public policy and applied social research, developing and running education programs and a range of training programs for educators and community leaders, and opening its doors to the general public for various cultural activities. The Institute cooperates closely with a large number of Israeli and international research institutions and conducts joint projects with visiting scholars from around the world. It publishes books, anthologies, and journals that are the fruits of its academic labors. The Institute's beautifully landscaped campus houses two auditoriums, two libraries, conference rooms, a multi-purpose hall, seminar rooms, a restaurant, and cutting-edge multimedia services.

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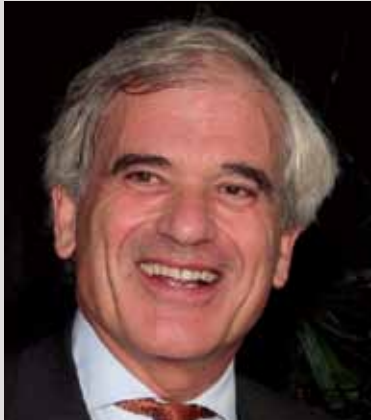
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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

During 2015, the situation in the Middle East remained a source of serious concern. The further collapse of the political infrastructure in some of the countries in the region, notably Syria, created additional uncertainty.

Against this background, the tensions in Israel and in the occupied territories increased, making apparent, once again, the inevitable need for a true dialogue between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

The Institute tries to contribute to this by being a meeting place for open dialogue, by organizing conferences and lectures, and by enabling research.

The Polonsky Academy continued its successful development. By the end of 2015, the building housed twenty-two Polonsky fellows.

The Institute itself had another very successful year under the excellent leadership of Prof. Gabriel Motzkin.

It is evident that the Institute, by being open and independent, fulfills an important role in Israeli society.

In 2015, we said goodbye to our longstanding colleague Rien van Gendt who, first as Executive Director and subsequently as board member of the Van Leer Group Foundation, contributed

to the Institute's board for many years. His commitment to the Institute was invaluable and we are deeply grateful to him.

At the same time, Yoram Peri stepped down as board member after six years of membership.

We welcomed Yarom Ariav as a new member representing the Van Leer Group Foundation.

The success of the VLJI is completely dependent on the commitment of all who work for the Institute and those who are connected to it.

On behalf of the entire board I express my sincere gratitude to all of them for their efforts during the past year.

Tom de Swaan



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The past year was very rewarding for Van Leer. Our multi-year initiative focusing on the worldwide crisis of the humanities bore fruit. We were invited to submit a report on this crisis to the Knesset, which we did, and which seems to have affected the discourse on this topic. Together with the Volkswagen Foundation and Tel Aviv University we organized an international conference on higher education curricula in the humanities and social sciences, which resulted in a report that considers the international aspects of this crisis. Together with the Council on Higher Education we convened a conference on improving the Arab minority's access to higher education, which has become a higher education priority for the policy-setting bodies in Israel. Together with the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities we held an international conference on funding research in the humanities. The participants included the heads and senior officials of national funding organizations from Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom; and the United States. As part of our research program with the Hebrew University and the University of Frankfurt, funded by the German Ministry for Education and Research, which studies the massive German funding of the humanities in Israel, we held a conference discussing the cultural effects of this funding. The attendees included some of the senior academics who had been instrumental in forging this international academic cooperation between Germany and Israel. We also awarded an annual national prize for the best seminar paper in the humanities written by a high-school student. The prizewinners were received by the President of Israel in a special ceremony. Finally, our Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship program at the Polonsky Academy

for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences was as always a much-sought award, and we are pleased at the high level of our successful applicants who are presented below in this report. Another set of activities concerns our constant preoccupation with the theme of memory, both Jewish memory and the collective memories of different groups in this country. In the spring we hosted an exhibition on Holocaust memory, co-funded by the Polonsky Foundation, the Rothschild Foundation, and the Holocaust Restitution Fund. This exhibition was the outcome of an international discussion group of writers and artists who met for three years at Van Leer. We also hosted an international conference marking the centenary of the Armenian genocide. Another international conference focused on the conversos (Spanish and Portuguese Jewish converts to Christianity). Among many notable evenings was the event on the memory of the Holocaust and the memory of the Nakba, which attracted protests and a large audience to talks that compared the memories of the two historical experiences as defining the identities of the two peoples who live in this land. These are only a sample of what we did, and I invite the reader to become involved with us and participate in our activities.

Prof. Gabriel Motzkin

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a library or archive. It shows numerous books and documents, some of which are open, revealing text in Hebrew and Yiddish. The books are arranged on shelves, and some are displayed prominently in the foreground. The overall tone is academic and scholarly.

Advanced Studies

Academic director: Dr. Yochi Fischer

Project director: Dr. Adam Klin-Oron

www.vanleer.org.il/en/advanced-studies

The Advanced Studies program reflects the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute's commitment to intellectual excellence and cutting-edge scholarship in the service of society. The program, which is one of the leading centers for intellectual inquiry in Israel, serves as an incubator for cultivating new ideas and pursuing intellectual inquiries in the humanities and social sciences. It encourages the combination of innovative, groundbreaking, and often unconventional theoretical thinking with practical social applications for Israeli society, exploring Israeli issues from a global comparative perspective and emphasizing international collaborations. Currently the program is focusing on issues of religion, secularism, and democracy; equality, pluralism, and racism; the state of higher education, especially of the humanities; and issues of history, memory, and reconciliation, from a comparative and interdisciplinary perspective.

The program provides an exceptional cadre of Israeli academics with a forum for thinking, writing, debating, presenting, and publishing their ideas.

Yiddish for Children



Memory Transmission and Fiction

Academic director: Prof. Michal Govrin

For three years, the group has considered the question of how to transmit the memory of the Holocaust after the demise of the last survivors. The group members—artists, researchers, curators, historians, brain scientists, scholars, and psychoanalysts—have explored the ways in which this rupture has been constructed in their diverse disciplines in order to understand the many forms that memory takes and its constant transformation. The thorough and innovative discussion that emerged in the group, bringing together both scientific and artistic perspectives, led to many important insights. In 2015 the group presented the results of its efforts in an exhibition and in a variety of events and discussions. Exhibition visitors encountered diverse ways of remembering as expressed by the group members and three survivors who were guests of the group: Aharon Appelfeld, Saul Friedländer, and Otto Dov Kulka. Accompanying the exhibition were a two-day conference, discussions, and gallery talks with artists, researchers, and intellectuals. The memory of the Holocaust is usually perceived as a single, pre-formulated collective message in which the element of victimization has become increasingly prominent. The group turned the tables on this perception and argued that memory is a personal choice with a multiplicity of expressions, a conscious act of involvement that leads to commitment. Exhibition visitors and participants in the events were invited to ask themselves what memory means for them and what are the personal and human meanings of the connection between “the responsibility to remember” and “remembering responsibly.”



Gathering for Holocaust Remembrance Day

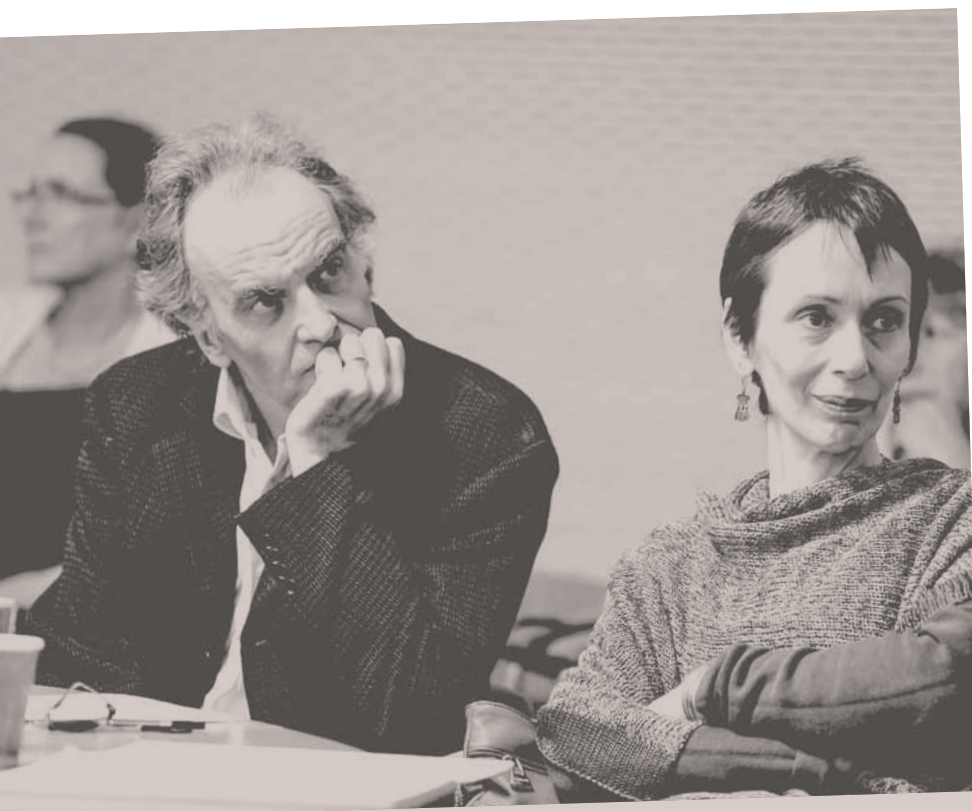
As the generation of survivors dwindles and while the voices of the last of the witnesses can still be heard, we have taken upon ourselves to design a gathering for Holocaust Remembrance Day, as a way of transmitting the memory of the Holocaust to coming generations. The gathering is a personal, experiential, and inclusive memory circle in groups of active participants, led by a facilitator. With readings, songs, testimony, stories, memories, and individual voices of the participants, discussion, prayer or silence, the gathering brings memory to the present. It is intended for social circles or the family, communities, and educational settings. To create the gathering, a team was established that included researchers, community leaders, philosophers, and artists, and was led by the writer Prof. Michal Govrin. In 2015 ten experimental gatherings were held at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and elsewhere, with hundreds of participants.

Researching Academe in Israel: A Multidisciplinary Discussion

Academic director: Prof. Gili S. Drori

Academic coordinator: Dr. Adi Sapir

Research about academe in Israel is diverse and is focused primarily on matters of inequality and differential access to higher education, the role of academic research in Israel's economy, and the ties between Israeli academe and nation building. The aim of the disciplinary diversity of our discussion team is to spark creative approaches for future research agendas. Most of our meetings during 2015 were held in three separate sub-groups devoted to the following themes: (1) relations with Israeli society; (2) academic knowledge and disciplines; (3) organizational dynamics of the Israeli academic system. On the basis of these discussions and the relevant work of group members we began preparation for the publication of a special issue of the *Megamot* journal, to be published in 2016–2017.



German-Israeli Research Cooperation in the Humanities (1970–2000): Studies on Scholarship and Bilaterality

Academic directors: Prof. Gabriel Motzkin, Prof. Yfaat Weiss (Franz Rosenzweig Minerva Research Center), Prof. Werner Konitzer (Fritz Bauer Institut, Frankfurt am Main)

Academic coordinator: Dr. des. Irene Aue-Ben-David

This project analyzes from an interdisciplinary perspective the evolution and establishment of German-Israeli research cooperation in the humanities. What motivated that cooperation? What were the preconditions, and what is the impact of this cooperation on the humanities in Israel? Can reciprocal effects on the politics of science and the humanities in Germany be observed?

The fiftieth anniversary of German-Israeli diplomatic relations afforded an opportunity for presenting the project and discussing initial assumptions, at international conferences, workshops, and seminars. In November 2015, the international colloquium titled “The Humanities between Germany and Israel: Historical Perspectives” took place at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and brought together researchers dealing with questions of knowledge transfer in the humanities as well as some of the leading scholars of the German-Israeli research cooperation itself.

The State of the Humanities Report

In collaboration with the Planning and Budgeting Committee of The Council for Higher Education and the Yad Hanadiv Foundation
Authors: Dr. Yochi Fischer and Dr. Adam Klin-Oron

As part of its involvement with the Permanent Committee for the Humanities in the Planning and Budgeting Committee of the Council for Higher Education, the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute was tasked with writing a report on the state of the humanities in Israel, which will serve as a basis for informed debates and decision-making. As part of a comprehensive consideration of the meaning of “humanities,” through months of meticulous research, data were gathered on teachers and pupils in high schools, matriculation exams, exposure to humanities and culture in the public arena, employment of humanities' graduates, as well as staff, research, and students in higher education—at all degree levels and across both universities and academic colleges. The final report, 200 pages long and containing 270 diagrams, received extensive media coverage and was widely circulated.



Funding Research in the Humanities: Challenges and Opportunities

In collaboration with the Planning and Budgeting Committee of the Council for Higher Education, the Israel Young Academy, the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

There has been much debate in recent years regarding the appropriate place of the humanities within the broader disciplinary research array, informed in part by differing conceptions of the impact of humanities research on society. This, in turn, has sparked discussion within research funding agencies in a number of countries regarding how humanities research might best be supported, particularly in an environment in which research in the “hard” sciences is much more likely to attract attention and research funding.

This roundtable event examined these issues within the context of a variety of national environments, with participants including IAS (Israel), SSHRC (Canada), NEH (US), NWO (Netherlands), FAPESP (Brazil), ANR (France), AHRC (UK), and DFG (Germany). Current challenges and opportunities associated with humanities research funding were addressed, and recommendations were formulated regarding potential models and best practices to support research within humanities disciplines in the future. The topics included digital humanities, open access, granting councils, and modes of knowledge transfer.

Van Leer Prize for High School Final Projects in the Humanities

In collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Derech Ruach As part of its ongoing dedication to the furthering of the humanities in Israel, and in order to encourage the writing of original, scholarly, and excellent final projects in the humanities in Israeli high schools, VLJI has initiated a prize awarded to four such projects displaying extraordinary merit. In the first year, more than sixty projects covering many disciplines and subjects were submitted to the prize committee, which included academics from several universities. In a ceremony in June 2015, the prize was awarded by Prof. Gabriel Motzkin to four students from Umm al-Fahm, Kfar Menachem, and Jerusalem, whose projects were: “The Relations between Aesthetics and Immorality in Film,” “Expressions of the Reviving Hebrew Culture in the Translations of Alice in Wonderland,” “Woman and Her Diverse Descriptions and Social Dimensions in Two Novels by Hanna Mina: Sharaf Qate’ Tarik (Dignity crosses a road) and Hin Maat Alnahed (When the devil died),” and “Hints of Legends in Twentieth-Century Hebrew Poetry: A Study of the Poems of Five Poets.”



Dostrovsky Forum for the Advancement of Music and Dance Education

In collaboration with the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance
Academic directors: Dr. Michal Smoira-Cohn z"l and Prof. Yinan Leef
The Dostrovsky Forum consists of some fifty of the most prominent music and dance educators, composers, choreographers, performers, dancers, and researchers, representing the most important academic institutions, conservatories, and secondary institutions in these fields in Israel. This think tank focuses on the principal issues concerning music and dance education and its place and significance in modern society and in the education system in the country. The forum conducts several sessions every year, each devoted to a particular agenda; issues position papers and public statements; and maintains a dialogue with policy makers.
This year, 2015, was eclipsed by the passing of the forum's founder and chair, Michal Smoira-Cohn.
The 2015 general theme for the forum's discussions was the issue of quality in teaching music and dance. It included the following topics: the pupil at the center—as manifested by aspects of repertoire choices; the good teacher—models and characteristics; the place of arts education in a changing reality; and a view from the field—case studies focusing on projects in Arab, mixed, and ultra-Orthodox communities.

The Polonsky Postdoctoral Seminar

Academic director: Prof. Gabriel Motzkin
The weekly Polonsky Postdoctoral Seminar offers an academic platform that enables fellows to advance their research through discussion with colleagues, to acquaint themselves with each other's work, and to collaborate with each other. The talks cover a wide range of disciplines and subjects—for example, the philosophy of mathematics and a joint reading of some texts by Maimonides—and the seminar offers lively discussion of questions and considerations with which the fellows are grappling.

New Religious Movements in Israel

Academic directors: Prof. Boaz Huss, Dr. Adam Klin-Oron, Dr. Rachel Werczberger
Contemporary Israeli society is fertile ground teeming with religious activity, the site of new configurations of the three monotheistic religions, and a center of new religions, both imported and local, as well as of New Age spirituality. Over the years, the activities of the new religious movements have given rise to sensational reports in the media, intense public discussion, vigorous anti-cult action, and sometimes even involvement by state authorities. So far, very little reliable scientific information exists about the new religious movements in Israel. Consequently, public discussion of these groups is often superficial, relying on incomplete or incorrect information.
This project seeks to broaden the scientifically grounded knowledge about the new religious and spiritual movements in Israel today, as part of the establishment of Meida: The Israeli Information Center on Contemporary Religions. Reports on five new religious movements were compiled during this year, and a workshop was held with the renowned British expert on new religious movements, Prof. Eileen Barker.

A Shared Perspective of Jews and Muslims for Europe: Beyond Judeo-Islamophobia

Academic directors: Prof. Nilüfer Göle, Prof. Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, Dr. Yochi Fischer

An international study group, in collaboration with the Istanbul Policy Center, Sabanci University–Stiftung Mercator Initiative, and the CNRS and CESPRA EHESS, Paris

This project explores the ways in which Jews and Muslims relate to secular modernity and to European pluralism. By comparing the historical trajectories and social experiences of Jews and Muslims, we aim to expand our thinking about religion, secularism, and nationalism to encompass a multilayered, pluralistic view. This “Judeo-Muslim” approach challenges the growing use of the Eurocentric term “Judeo-Christian civilization” and offers a comprehensive framework of discussion that includes both Europe and the Middle East. The discussions include normative and philosophical perspectives, yet are grounded in the contemporary political tensions, cultural confrontations, and social divisions that are challenging European democracies. The project is designed to provide mediation and a collaborative space in which scholars, thinkers, and researchers will be invited to go beyond their respective national and disciplinary fields and the established divides between the Orient and Occident. The group focuses on five specific controversies: male circumcision, halal food and ritual slaughter, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism, questions of identity in Europe, and politics of memory. The first workshop in Istanbul examined the controversy in Europe over male circumcision. The following gathering, held in Berlin in cooperation with the Jewish Museum, included a public event and a workshop further examining this issue and also discussing the issue of ritual slaughter and the public response to it in Europe.

Demons and Demonology in Late Antiquity

Academic directors: Dr. Domenico Agostini, Dr. Tommaso Tesei, and Dr. Roy Vilozny

The conference was organized by three Polonsky fellows who work on Zoroastrian, Qur’anic, and Shi’a studies, respectively. The idea of dealing with this topic was inspired by the spirit of the Polonsky Academy, which places great emphasis on comparative studies and research as well as on bringing together scholars from different disciplines. The conference hosted leading international and Israeli scholars who, each from his or her particular perspective; presented their contributions to the topic. Speakers addressed the way demons, and evil beings in general, were conceived, represented, invoked, or rejected by some religious traditions of the Late Antique Middle East, such as Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Mandaeism, and Islam. In the course of two days, the participants tried to answer several questions regarding the continuity, redefinition, and development of the concept of demons and demonology, while referring to the ontology and representation of evil as well as to the role of demons and malevolent creatures in cosmology and theology.

Democracy and Neoliberalism Following the Economic Crisis

Academic directors: Dr. Amit Avigur-Eshel, Dr. Ronen Mandelkorn

A group of researchers from a wide range of disciplines and academic institutions has met regularly throughout the year to discuss contemporary tensions and interactions between the theory and practice of democracy and neoliberalism. The group focused its discussions on the presentation and critical review of how different disciplinary perspectives tackle the concept of neoliberalism and its concrete manifestations in various democratic contexts. Whereas neoliberalism is commonly perceived mainly as the unleashing of market forces and the limiting of state economic intervention, the group’s deliberations revolved around neoliberalism as a theory and practice of democratic governance that substantially transforms the mechanisms and logic of popular democratic representation.

International Workshop—(Re)Imagining Justice in Contemporary Conflicts: Interdisciplinary Perspectives

In collaboration with the Division of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages at Stanford University

Academic directors: Yochi Fischer, Renana Keydar, and Amir Eshel (Stanford University)

The (Re)Imagining Justice project asks how contemporary society imagines what it means to be just in the context of contemporary conflicts. The project's focal point is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the challenges its protracted nature poses to traditional ideas of justice. This year we organized, in cooperation with Stanford University, an international interdisciplinary workshop held in December and devoted to the question of justice in the exceptional reality of protracted conflicts. The workshop began with a thought-provoking keynote lecture by Prof. Russell Berman of Stanford University on the cultural representations of the Eichmann Trial, as a segue to a broader discussion of memory, community, and justice. Another highlight of the workshop was a unique conversation between Prof. Amir Eshel, who researches the work of renowned artist Dani Karavan, and the artist himself, who joined the discussion. Bringing together scholars from the fields of law, humanities, and social sciences, the workshop offered an innovative and fresh perspective on issues such as the very meaning of justice as an idea of enlarged loyalty, the possibility of reconciliation in various cultural settings and modes of expression, comparative case studies of post-war justice, and theoretical and legal frameworks of accountability between the individual and the collective level.

Social Aspects of Language Research

Academic director: Dr. Michal Gleitman

Scholars working on the social (as opposed to neurological or cognitive) aspects of language are spread across numerous disciplines, such as linguistics, communication studies, philosophy, education, anthropology, and political science. Even though they share interests and use similar theories and methodologies, these scholars are often unaware of each other's work and find it hard to collaborate because of disciplinary divides. The group titled Social Aspects of Language Research provides a place where senior and junior scholars as well as advanced graduate students can come together, learn about each other's work, exchange ideas, and collaborate to improve research and teaching in the field. In light of the group's diversity, our meetings in 2015 were designed to help participants get acquainted and were devoted to presentations by the group's members. In the future we hope to provide a platform that supports teaching initiatives that will benefit students in the field.





The Polonsky Academy

for Advanced Study in the Humanities
and Social Sciences at the Van Leer
Jerusalem Institute

Inaugurated in 2014 through the generous donation of Dr. Leonard Polonsky, the Polonsky Academy for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute will, at full capacity, host thirty outstanding postdoctoral fellows from Israel and abroad. The academy provides the fellows with a stipend of \$40,000 a year for up to five years and a welcoming physical environment with state-of-the-art services for their research, including individual offices, a library, advanced IT, lecture halls, and meeting spaces. The Polonsky Academy serves as their intellectual home for the duration of their fellowship.

Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellows

Sinai Rusinek

In 2010 Dr. Sinai Rusinek was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to engage in her proposed research project, "The History of the Early Modern Concept of Envy."

Chrysi Kotsifou

In 2011 Dr. Chrysi Kotsifou was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to work on a monograph titled "People, Objects, and Ideas in Motion: Communication and Social Interaction in the Late Antique Mediterranean."

Ronen Mandelkern

In 2011 Dr. Ronen Mandelkern was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to further explore the conditions that enable and support experts' involvement in, and influence on policy making.

Silvia Jonas

In 2012 Dr. Silvia Jonas was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to work on her project, "Mathematical Self-Evidence and the Rationality of Religious Belief."

Stefan Ihrig

In 2012 Dr. Stefan Ihrig was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to focus on two aspects of the societal acceptance of murder as a "legitimate" political tool in pre-1945 Europe.

Wael Abu-'Uksa

In 2013 Dr. Wael Abu-'Uksa was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to explore political concepts in his research project, "From Freedom to the Ideology of Freedom: Conceptual History of Liberalism in the Arabic-Speaking Countries in the Nineteenth Century."

Domenico Agostini

In 2013 Dr. Domenico Agostini was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship in order to tackle the transformation of the concept and the architecture of the afterlife, from Zoroastrian eschatology to Dante's Divine Comedy, from the philological and religious perspectives.

Michal Gleitman

In 2013 Dr. Michal Gleitman was awarded the Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to further develop her PhD research. She is concentrating on the question of "How Conventional Is Linguistic Understanding? Individuals with Autism and Nonhuman Animals as Test Cases."

Shalom Sadik

In 2013 Dr. Shalom Sadik was awarded the Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to study the philosophy of Jewish apostates in Spain, from the beginning of the twelfth century to the end of the fifteenth century.

Tommaso Tesei

In 2013 Dr. Tommaso Tesei was awarded the Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to study "The Eschatology of the Qur'an in Light of the Cultural and Historical Context of Late Antiquity."

Ana Bajželj

In 2014 Dr. Ana Bajželj was awarded the Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to trace the development of the Jain understanding of time and temporality, placing it in the specific frameworks of Jain metaphysics. The title of the study is "Being in Time: An Analysis of the Jain Doctrine of Time and Temporality."

Almog Behar

In 2014 Dr. Almog Behar was awarded the Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship for a study titled "Between Hebrew and Arabic in the Literature of the Jews of the Arab World in the Twentieth Century."

Claire Benn

In 2014 Dr. Claire Benn was awarded the Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship for a study titled "Artificial Goodness: Doing and Being Good in the Digital Age."

Erdal Kaynar

In 2014 Dr. Erdal Kaynar was awarded the Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue his research titled "Economic Thought in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Question of the Nation."

Olla Solomyak

In 2014 Dr. Olla Solomyak was awarded the Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship for a study titled "Lessons from the Metaphysics of Perspectives: Temporal Experience and the Sense of Self."

Roy Vilozny

In 2014 Dr. Roy Vilozny was awarded the Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue his research project titled "A Shi'ite Mythology."

Sharon Berry

In 2014 Dr. Sharon Berry was awarded the Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue her research on "Mathematics, Logic, and the Access Problem."



New Fellows

Dr. Sivan Balslev

In 2015 Dr. Sivan Balslev was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue her research titled “Looking at the History of Masculinity, Childhood, and Sexuality in Modern Iran.” She received her PhD in 2015 from Tel Aviv University. Her dissertation, titled “Javanmard, Fokoli, Boy Scout: Changing Masculinities in Modernizing Iran, circa 1870-1940,” dealt with the emergence of a new model of Iranian hegemonic masculinity. It analyzed how a small group of Western-educated men of the elite used their privileges and experiences to construct a new model of masculinity. This process was closely linked to other historical processes such as the development of Iranian nationalism, trends of Westernization, modernizing reforms, and the establishment of modern education in the country. She is working on the revision of her dissertation for its publication as a book and will later turn to a new and relatively unstudied field of gender history in modern Iran: the study of children and childhood. Her latest publication is “Dressed for Success: Hegemonic Masculinity, Elite Men, and Westernisation in Iran, c. 1900-1940” in *Gender & History* 26 (3), November 2014.



Dr. Nea Ehrlich

In 2015 Dr. Nea Ehrlich was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue her research titled “Animated Realities: How Animation Emerged as the Visual Language of the 21st Century and Why We’ve Come to Believe It.” She is working on turning her thesis into a book titled *Virtual Veracity*, about the believability of images in an increasingly virtualized culture.

Dr. Ehrlich completed her PhD in art history at the University of Edinburgh in 2015. Her thesis on contemporary animated documentaries linked new-media aesthetics with the documentary turn in visual culture. Her aim has been to broaden the scope within which animation is analyzed, including data visualization and educational, journalistic, and scientific imaging. Her work lies at the intersection of art history, film studies, animation, digital media theory, gaming, and epistemology, tracing media transformations and their relation to visual culture’s potential for producing plausible truth claims.

Dr. Ehrlich has published articles in edited volumes and journals. Her latest publication is “Animated Documentaries: Aesthetics, Politics and Viewer Engagement” in Routledge’s 2013 *Pervasive Animation*, edited by Suzanne Buchan. Dr. Ehrlich is the co-editor of, and a contributor to, *Drawn from Life*, the 2016 anthology about animated documentaries forthcoming by Edinburgh University Press.



Dr. Filip Ivanovic

In 2015 Dr. Filip Ivanovic was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship for a project titled “Virtue and Happiness: Moral Philosophy in Late Antique Christian Thought,” which focuses on the moral philosophical views of Clement of Alexandria, Dionysius the Areopagite, and Maximus the Confessor.

Dr. Ivanovic holds a BA and an MA from the Department of Philosophy of the University of Bologna, and a PhD from the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, where in 2014 he defended his doctoral thesis titled “Love, Beauty, Deification: The Erotic-Aesthetic Soteriology of Dionysius the Areopagite and Maximus the Confessor.”

He is the editor of *Dionysius the Areopagite between Orthodoxy and Heresy* (2011) and the author of *Symbol and Icon: Dionysius the Areopagite and the Iconoclastic Crisis* (2010). Dr. Ivanovic’s most recent publications include “Maximus the Confessor’s Conception of Beauty” in the *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 2015; “Eros as a Divine Name according to Dionysius the Areopagite” in *The Ways of Byzantine Philosophy*, ed. M. Knezevic, 2015; and “The Eternally and Uniquely Beautiful: Dionysius the Areopagite’s Understanding of the Divine Beauty” in the *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology*, 2014.



Dr. Torbjørn Ottersen

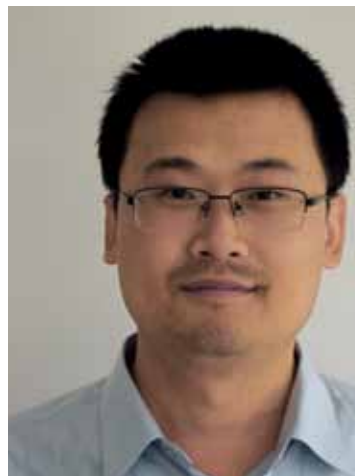
In 2015 Dr. Torbjørn Skinnemoen Ottersen was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue his research project titled “Staging the Present: *Regieoper* and Documentary Opera on the Modern Stage.” This project will examine in tandem two particular types of performance that have risen to prominence on the opera stage in the period since the Second World War: *Regieoper* (“director’s opera”) and documentary opera. The former denotes productions of the canonical warhorses of the repertoire that dramatically deviate from traditional conventions of operatic staging, forcefully stamping the performance with the director’s vision of the opera’s meaning today, whereas the latter denotes operas that take their plot “straight from the headlines,” placing recent events on the operatic stage. Conceiving of both traditions as means of staging the present, the project will explore both the developing aesthetic and political strategies of such stagings and how such productions are received by today’s multifaceted opera audiences.

Dr. Ottersen received his PhD in music from the University of Cambridge in July 2015. His thesis, “Remembering through Music: Issues in Musical Commemoration since World War II,” studied musical commemoration through three works written to commemorate events that took place during the Second World War.



Dr. Uri Weiss

In 2015 Dr. Uri Weiss was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue his research titled “Negotiation and Distributive Justice,” which investigates how to reduce injustice in negotiation. He is also a lecturer at Bar-Ilan University. He wrote his doctoral dissertation titled “Issues in Law and Game Theory” under the supervision of Prof. Robert J. Aumann and Prof. Ehud Guttel at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He completed his studies in law (LLB, *magna cum laude*) and economics at Tel Aviv University, where he later completed his master’s degree (LLM, *summa cum laude*, ranked first in class) under the supervision of Prof. Omri Yadlin. Weiss has been a Hebrew University Senate member (PhD students’ representative); a visiting scholar at Bonn University; a participant in many summer schools; and a participant in the Lindau Meeting of Nobel Laureates in Economics (one of four young Israeli talents in economics chosen by the then governor of the Bank of Israel Stanley Fisher to represent Israel). He was awarded the Goldberg Prize (2011) and the Israeli Society for Labor Relations Prize (2011). Weiss has published many op-eds and literary reviews in newspapers, and his poems have been published in literary reviews.



Dr. Dong Xiuyuan

In 2015, Dr. Dong Xiuyuan was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue his research on the impact of Buddhism on the early Islamic and Jewish Kalām. The project, titled “The Presence of Buddhist Thought in Early Arabic Theological Literature,” is intended to analyze the report of early Muslim theologians on Buddhist thought and disclose the interplay between Buddhism and Abrahamic religions during the formative period of Islamic theology.

In 2014 he received his PhD from Shandong University. In his doctoral dissertation, “Maimonides on Cosmogony,” he applied the approach of dialectical reading to understanding Maimonides’ subtle position in the debate of eternity versus creation *de novo* of the world. From 2013 to 2014, he was a Noble Group fellow at the W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem.

Dr. Dong’s recent publications: “迈蒙尼德论萨比教” (“Maimonides on Sabiannism”), *Religious Studies*, 2015/02, pp. 272-279; “伊斯兰经院哲学中的原子论学说探讨” (“Atomic Theory in Islamic Scholasticism”), *Studies in World Religions*, 2014/04, pp. 140-148; “法拉比论完美城邦” (Chinese translation of al-Farabi’s *al-Madīna al-Fāḍila*), Shanghai: East China Normal University Press, 2015.

Nea Ehrlich

Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellow Academic Report

I recently came across a description of someone's first encounter with the Beatles' music in the 1960s. It was described as something so overwhelmingly new as to have literally taken her breath away. In 2008 I experienced a comparable moment of surprise when I watched Ari Folman's Oscar-nominated *Waltz with Bashir*, an animated documentary about soldiers' recollections of war. Although I had always loved animation, fascinated by the idea of boundless worlds created from scratch that come to life before me on screen, this combination of appalling content with a visual form associated with a fictional and childhood aesthetic was extraordinarily powerful. Animated imagery was used in this film to question the difference between animation and photography and to reflect upon different modes of representation that are considered real and accepted as believable and legitimate documentation. *Waltz with Bashir* was new and it was unclear. Animation in a documentary setting captured my imagination and stimulated my thinking.

My doctoral studies in art history at the University of Edinburgh linked new media aesthetics with the documentary turn in contemporary visual culture. My dissertation explored the implications of novel aesthetics used in contemporary experimental and hybrid documentaries that merge fact and fiction to varying extents. My interest was in the growing use of animation to depict nonfictional content, which raises epistemological and ontological questions about realism, visual signification, viewer reception, and believability. Some of the questions I ask are: What are the reasons for the rise of animated nonfiction in the early twenty-first century? What is the truth status of animation? What are the ethical implications of depicting sociopolitical realities in visual imagery associated with fiction? What does the rise of animated nonfiction reveal about contemporary nonfictional representation, spectatorship, and visual literacy in general? How do the changing uses and conceptualizations of animation influence the discourse about documentaries, realism, and what constitutes "the real" today?

In 2015 I was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue my research and I am currently revising my dissertation into a book titled *Virtual Veracity: The Credibility and Ethics of*



Animated Nonfiction. Virtual Veracity establishes animation as a central visual form of the twenty-first century and an important aspect of knowledge production in nonfictional imagery as an alternative to photography. Grounded in the technological context of contemporary culture, the book examines the ethical and epistemological ramifications of animation in nonfiction (in both cinematic and interactive platforms). Drawing on the fields of contemporary art, animation, ludology (gaming theory), semiotics, epistemology, film, and media studies, the book traces the development of animated nonfiction in fields as varied as documentaries, journalism, education, informatics, serious games, scientific visualization, and data visualization. By researching animation's intersection with other visual fields since the 1990s, *Virtual Veracity* redefines the scope within which animation is analyzed and understood, widening the sphere of documentary aesthetics and theorizations of what constitutes "the real."

I have the honor and the privilege of pursuing my research in the Polonsky Academy, a unique example of an interdisciplinary and multicultural academic milieu. I am grateful to the Polonsky Foundation for its generous financial support and to the staff of the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and the Polonsky Academy for their ongoing help, collaboration, and professionalism.





Mediterranean Neighbors

Academic director: Prof. Cyril Aslanov

Project director: Dr. Edo Litmanovitch

www.vanleer.org.il/en/mediterranean

The goals of the Mediterranean Neighbors unit are to contribute to the establishment of a democratic society and to the establishment of a culture of peace and healthy relations with the region. It aspires to influence the way in which the region is portrayed and understood and serves as a unique platform for bringing together Israeli and Palestinian scholars and for empowering young Arab scholars. To achieve these goals we undertake various types of activities in two main avenues: Israel and its neighbors and the Manarat Center for Jewish-Arab Relations. In both avenues, the unit promotes academic excellence by developing and conducting academic research, discussion groups and workshops and by publishing academic literature; disseminates the acquired knowledge about the region to a broad public while raising fundamental and challenging questions for public discussion by means of conferences, book launches, symposia, and nonacademic publications; and promotes regional cooperation.



The Political Dimensions of the Converso Phenomenon in Portugal and Beyond

in conjunction with Bar-Ilan University, co-sponsored by the Israel Science Foundation and by the Camões—Instituto da Cooperação e da Língua in Portugal and the Embassy of Portugal
Academic director: Prof. Claude B. Stuczynski

The international conference “The Political Dimensions of the Converso Phenomenon in Portugal and Beyond” discussed the findings of leading scholars on the economy, politics, and society of the converso world. It did so by examining—from both contextual and comparative perspectives—a neglected aspect of the converso phenomenon: the public or political facets of the group viewed as a “nation” or as a socioeconomic class of businessmen, negotiating their complex and variegated individual identities with the Old Christian environment.

This conference was held at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and Bar-Ilan University in May 2015. Its fruits will be published in the *Journal of Levantine Studies* in 2016.

Gender, Families, and Transmission in the Contemporary Jewish Context

in conjunction with the Centre de recherche français à Jérusalem (CRFJ); Academic director: Prof. Cyril Aslanov

The structure of families around the globe is constantly changing, because of both exterior influences and interior forces. This change is not smooth and not without its opponents and prices. One of the strongest agents for both change and preservation is religion. It is in this context that the international conference “Gender, Families, and Transmission in the Contemporary Jewish Context” was held. During three days in June 2015, scholars discussed the social, religious, and cultural transformations of the family, as well as gender relations in contemporary Jewish families. Among other topics discussed at the conference were changes in gender roles in ultra-Orthodox families; contemporary influences on the Jewish life cycle, from midlife pregnancy to end-of-life care; and the transmission of traditions between generations.

The Black Sea Project: Πόντος as a Bridging Space

Academic director: Prof. Cyril Aslanov

The recent and continuing events on the Crimean Peninsula again underscore the importance of the Black Sea area, which is shared by Ukraine, Russia, Georgia, Turkey, Bulgaria, and Romania. The discussion group, titled “The Black Sea Project: Πόντος as a Bridging Space,” aims to emphasize the importance of the Black Sea in the formation of Israeli culture; to highlight the need to integrate Black Sea studies in Mediterranean studies; and to foster and deepen the ties with academic institutions so as to develop an international project in the Black Sea region that will serve as a bridging space between Eastern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean. In its first year, the discussion group focused on topics such as the linguistic relations around the Black Sea and between this region and the Eastern Mediterranean; the Circassians, as a case study of people who reside both in the Black Sea area and the Levant; underwater archaeology in Bulgaria; and economic growth in the countries around the Black Sea. In 2016 the group will continue to meet and to consider further directions of research.

Arabic Narratives of Migration and Journey

Academic director: Dr. Ariel Sheerit

“The journey” has been a crucial topic in modern Arabic literature since its inception, appearing first in descriptions of actual travels in the nineteenth century, later in novels from the first half of the twentieth century predicated on an Arab man’s fictional journey to the West, and in works of fiction of more recent decades that describe travel and migration from many points of view and in multiple directions. The research and discussion group was initiated in 2015 at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute on the topic of Arabic narratives of migration and journey. The group consists of researchers who focus on diverse aspects of Arabic literature that are connected by themes of travel and identity and researchers who focus on related themes. The group’s objectives are to read and discuss modern literature written in Arabic that deals with topics and themes of migration and journey and secondary themes that include exile, displacement, diaspora, estrangement, and transnationalism. As the group discovered in its first year of activity, such texts tend to raise issues of identity and belonging by shaping the self or selves in light of diverse encounters. In the group’s first year its members read and analyzed short stories, novels, autobiographical novels, and travel narratives that raised issues of identity and change in connection with

journey and place. In 2016 the group intends to continue this line of research, reading extensively from a broad range of texts that concentrate on these issues. The group has been enriched by meetings with local writers of Arabic literature and will continue to host both writers and researchers whose texts revolve around different types of journeys. Several of the meetings will constitute lectures in Arabic that will be open to the public.

The Turkish Forum: Perspectives on Privatization in the MENA Region, International Workshop on the Cases of Turkey and Israel

in conjunction with The Center for Social Justice and Democracy in Memory of Yaakov Chazan and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
Academic director: Medi Nahmiyaz-Baruh

In 2015 the Turkish Forum at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute organized a two-day workshop in partnership with the Center for Social Justice and Democracy in Memory of Yaakov Chazan and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. The workshop, titled “Perspectives on Privatization in the MENA Region, International Workshop on the Cases of Turkey and Israel,” took place at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute on October 11-13, 2015. In the 1980s both Turkey and Israel adopted policies favoring privatization of public services and resources. For Israel, privatization has been the most comprehensive and consistent reform in the political-administrative system since the mid-1980s. For Turkey, privatization became part of Turkey’s policy in 1986, but the process was slow and limited until the 2001 crisis. After 2001, with the formation of a pro-privatization coalition, institutional changes were introduced and Turkey began to undergo mass privatizations. Although there are a number of studies on the privatization process in Turkey and Israel, very few studies have assessed the privatization process and its impact on the state apparatus and the social, political, and welfare systems. Therefore, the partners decided to organize a bilateral workshop to present a comparative evaluation of the privatization processes in Turkey and Israel by focusing on common themes: the health system, the social system, natural resources and environment, education, and workers and workers’ unions. Turkish and Israeli experts explored each of these themes from their own perspective, thus providing a comparison between the Turkish and Israeli cases. The workshop brought together academics and members of civil society organizations from Israel and Turkey and created a common platform for dialogue between these societies. The workshop contributed to the creation of networks and cooperation between experts researching similar issues.



The Transformations of Mythic Ideas in Shiite Islam

Academic director: Dr. Roy Vilozy

Starting in 2014, this research and discussion group focused on mythic ideas that lie at the heart of the Shiite faith: creation, the existence of good and evil, and predestination. The group's aim was to trace the possible origins of central myths in Shiite literature and to describe the transformations and adaptations they underwent before finding their place in the Shiite corpus. Underlying the group's discussions was the question of whether the existence of mythic ideas that are shared by Shiite Islam and other religions—for example, Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, or Manichaeism—is necessarily evidence of interfaith relations and the transmission of knowledge and ideas in the formative stages of Shiism. The group continued its meetings during 2015, examining the mythical aspects of other pivotal notions, such as the figure of the Imam, his occultation and return, and eschatology in Shiite tradition.

In November 2015, the group also hosted a symposium on contemporary theo-political uses (and abuses) of myths in Islam as justifications for engagement in the armed conflicts in Syria and Iraq. This symposium showed how ancient and sectorial interpretations of myths, in both Shiite and Sunni Islam, are lethally relevant in contemporary conflicts.

In December 2015, the group concluded its activity with an international two-day conference at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, devoted to the mythic dimension of Islam. The conference aimed to examine the role of myth in the Shiite corpus, both in its own right and in relation to the place that myths occupy in the literatures of other Islamic streams, including Sunni Islam. The discussion focused on various layers of Islamic literature, ranging from the most ancient traditional texts and the exegetic literature to the theological and philosophical literature. The conference proceedings will be published in 2017.

Journal of Levantine Studies (JLS)

Editor: Dr. Abigail Jacobson

Associate editor: Dr. Edo Litmanovitch

Coordinator: Medi Nahmiyaz-Baruh

JLS is an interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed publication dedicated to the critical study of the cultural, historical, and political space known as the Levant. As a platform for novel academic discussion, *JLS* strives to publish original scholarship and engage new paradigms for studying and understanding the region. The journal's electronic issues also include abstracts in Arabic, Hebrew, and Turkish. Since the journal's inception in 2010, we have successfully published 9 issues, and Vol. 5, No. 2 is scheduled to be published in the winter of 2016. Among *JLS* subscribers are leading universities, such as Harvard University, Princeton University, Stanford University, Humboldt University of Berlin, and the University of Oslo. As of June 2015, *JLS* has a new editor, Dr. Abigail Jacobson.

The journal's website: <http://www.levantine-journal.org/>

PUBLIC EVENTS

A Hundred Years Later: New Perspectives on the Armenian Genocide

One hundred years after the beginning of the great massacre perpetrated against the Armenian minority in the Ottoman Empire, on Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day, the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute hosted a symposium to reassess the background of this tragedy, to understand how it paved the way to the perpetration of other genocides throughout the twentieth century, and to evaluate its impact on the emergence of the concept of genocide in the terminology of international law. The symposium offered a podium to specialists of varying origins from the disciplines of history, political science, and law. The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute hopes that paying tribute to the victims of the tragedy on this very special date will help the Israeli public grasp the importance of the event and realize that it constituted a precedent that the Germans had in mind when they planned the Final Solution. At the end of this hundredth year since the Armenian Genocide, the Institute will hold another public evening of commemoration.

Politics and Memory: Political and Public Perceptions of the Holocaust in Turkey

In the past few years, the Holocaust has become increasingly present in Turkish politics and in the public sphere. Some Turkish officials joined the international Holocaust Remembrance Day celebrations on January 27; the Turkish government is considering implementing Holocaust education in the school curricula; and the Turkish Ambassador to Germany held a mourning ceremony for "Turkish victims" at the memorial site of Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

This lecture, by Dr. Corry Guttstadt, showed how most of these publications or events do not focus on the Holocaust itself or on the fate of the victims, but rather aim to present Turkey as a country that saved Jews, claiming that Turkish diplomats saved Jews from Nazi persecution, allegedly at the risk of their own lives. Guttstadt showed how this picture is widely disseminated in public speeches, novels, and films and is considered the official Turkish version. The presentation discussed how this discourse functions in Turkey and in international contexts.

When God Holds the Crescent from Both Sides

Sacred narratives underlie one of the strongest emotional aspects of religion. These narratives often have mythic characteristics and are used to construct a sense of identity and promote ideologies. Prominent examples of the use of mythic narratives in our region are manifested by the warring forces in Syria and Iraq, each of which claims to have not only moral but also theological supremacy.

This symposium offered a glimpse into the viewpoints of armed groups such as Hezbollah, presented by Dr. Benedetta Berti and Isis, presented by Daniel Lav—two main armed forces representing the Shia and Sunna, respectively. The main focus was each side's sectarian interpretation of Islamic sources to legitimize its combat against other manifestations of Islam that it regards as heretical.





MANARAT: THE VAN LEER CENTER FOR JEWISH-ARAB RELATIONS

Director: Dr. Yonatan Mendel; Project coordinator: Ms. Hanan Saadi

<http://www.vanleer.org.il/en/manarat>



Having recognized the great importance of fostering projects related to Jewish-Arab relations, the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute established the Manarat Center in 2015. Manarat (“lighthouses” in Arabic) sheds its light on a variety of issues and aims to attain its objectives through three main fields of activity. First are the projects related to the Arabic language. The second group of activities focuses on local Jewish-Arab sociopolitical issues associated with the current sensitivities of Israeli society in light of the weakening of democratic and liberal values. The third group engages in regional action regarding Israel and the Middle East, in an attempt to improve relations between Israeli society and the Arab world.

The following are Manarat projects:

Promoting the Use of the Arabic Language in Israeli Academia

A joint project with Dirasat—The Arab Center for Law and Policy, and Sikkuy—The Association for the Advancement of Civic Equality, both of which are funded by the EU.

The project was established because of the continuing erosion of the status of the Arabic language which, although an official language of Israel, suffers from an inferior status. During 2015 the following activities took place: four academic conferences were held for the first time in Israel in Arabic in four universities (Tel Aviv, The Hebrew University, Ben-Gurion University and the University of Haifa); four university courses were taught for the first time in Arabic; and research on signage and the linguistic landscape in the Israeli academic sphere was conducted.

The Druze in Israel: Affiliation, Identity, and Future Challenges

Academic director: Dr. Rabah Halabi

The focus of this research group was an inquiry into the ethnic and cultural identity of the Druze community in Israel. The participants studied the development and nature of the relations between members of the Druze community and the other Palestinians in Israel and between the Druze and the Jewish citizens of the state.

The Arabic-Hebrew Translators Forum

Academic director: Prof. Yehouda Shenhav

Academic coordinator: Ms. Maisalon Dallashi

In Israel in 2014, only 2% of Jews knew Arabic, as compared with 92% of the Arabs living in Israel who spoke and used Hebrew daily. This is obviously due to both political and linguistic factors. With this geopolitical precondition in mind, in 2015 we initiated the creation of the only professional forum in Israel for Arabic-Hebrew translations. The leading Israeli translators are meeting at VLJI to create a series of books translated from Arabic into Hebrew. The first books to be translated are a novel by the Lebanese writer Elias Khoury, a collection of poetry composed by Yezidi writers in Iraq, and a novel composed by the Palestinian author Salman Natour.

Ofek-Horizon—A Joint Project with I’lam and the Daily *Yedioth Aharonoth*

Academic directors: Prof. Amal Jamal and Dr. Yonatan Mendel

Horizon is a project conducted in conjunction with the daily newspaper *Yedioth Aharonoth* and I’lam (Media Center for the Arab-Palestinian Community in Israel). The project aspires to give the Israeli public access to opinion pieces originally written in Arabic. We select opinion pieces by Arab intellectuals that have appeared in the Arabic media throughout the region, translate them into Hebrew, and publish them on the opinion page of *Yedioth Aharonoth*.

Planning and Construction in East Jerusalem

Academic director: Dr. Meir Margalit

The planning and construction policy is undoubtedly one of the most acute issues in East Jerusalem, and more specifically in the Arab-Palestinian neighborhoods of the city. The research group consists of academics in the disciplines of law, planning, and sociology. The group addresses the question of why planning and construction are so problematic and it aims to highlight alternatives to how the municipal planning authorities relate to East Jerusalem.

Putting Arabic in the Center

Dr. Yonatan Mendel

Usually, when asked to describe my work, it makes most sense to me to say that I focus on the Arabic language and now the study of it—and the changing associations, discourse, and knowledge—has shaped my work as well as my life. I studied Arabic in the “official,” state-oriented method and framework from age 10 to age 22. This included Arabic in the fifth and sixth grades, Arabic as an elective (instead of French) in junior high, Arabic as an elective (at the highest level, five units) in high school, and Arabic in the Israel Defense Forces, where I served in Navy Intelligence.

But when I was 22, and started working at the Jewish-Arab Bilingual School in Jerusalem, I had two very gloomy insights. First, that I do not know Arabic—that perhaps I can conjugate a verb and say whether it is plural present passive or first person future, but I cannot write a letter, send an e-mail, ask a question, or read a book in Arabic. The second insight was that it was only then, in the Jewish-Arab Bilingual School in Jerusalem, that I used my Arabic in a Jewish-Arab environment. That is, Arabic was no longer a language that is studied in a “safe space” in which a Jewish teacher and Jewish students study about the Arab “other,” or in which the Jewish commander and the Jewish soldiers study about the Arab “enemy”; this was an egalitarian situation in which Arabic was a civil, ordinary, daily, positive, unthreatening, approachable language.

Since then, many barriers within me have fallen, together with the changes in my Arabic. Working for one year at the Jewish-Arab Bilingual school, followed by three years as a Hebrew teacher in the Arab School of Hassan Arafat (in Jaffa), followed by a year-long stint in the occupied territories with Physicians for Human Rights where I served as the coordinator for medical treatment in Israel for Palestinians from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, I began to identify Arabic with interaction, culture, and real human beings. I earned my MA at the School of Middle Eastern Studies in London, where I realized that Arabic is not only the language

of the Arab “enemy,” be it from Lebanon or Egypt, it is also the language of the Arab neighbor, from these very countries. I also worked in the media in Israel, where I was already critical of the inferior place of Arabic in news coverage, and when I began my PhD at the University of Cambridge, I had no doubt that my topic would be the sociology and politics of the Arabic language within the Jewish community.

At the VLJI

Four years since I finished my PhD, and a year after my book, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic: Security and Political Considerations in the Making of Arabic Language Studies in Jewish Schools in Israel*, was published, I had the honor of establishing **Manarat: The Van Leer Center for Jewish-Arab Relations**, working in conjunction with the center’s coordinator of projects, Ms. Hanan Saadi, a Palestinian citizen of Israel, originally from Acre. It is no surprise that projects related to Arabic are a significant part of the center’s work. We have three main pillars of work—Jewish-Arab relations, Israel in the Arab world, and Arabic—yet we feel that there is symbiosis between the three, and the research on and with Arabic sheds light on a much greater picture.

Currently, for example, the use of Arabic in Israel is the subject of intense debate. Some have tried to weaken the status of Arabic as an official language (in addition to Hebrew) and to establish Hebrew as the supreme and exclusive official language of Israel. Others, including us, believe that Arabic’s official status should be used as a springboard for creating a more democratic and inclusive society that respects and values Arabic language and culture. We recognized that Arabic is serving as a proxy for social conflicts and competing values and visions within the state, in which approximately 20% of the citizens have Arab national identity. And we realized that this situation is reflected in the university setting where Hebrew and English dominate and Arabic is nearly nonexistent. Furthermore, the almost complete absence of Arabic on campus—in signage, in courses and conferences, and in terms of services offered—alienates Arab students and faculty alike, linguistically, culturally, and individually. One of our projects, therefore, is a strategic partnership with



two Arab organizations to expand the presence of Arabic in the academic public space shared by Arabs and Jews. Through work in this influential setting, we strive to reach two key target groups (Arabs and Jews) and to create a model for other public spaces in Israel. By holding four academic conferences in Arabic, for the first time in Israel, we increased the campus presence and visibility of Arabic and Arab citizens of Israel, both linguistically and culturally. In this way we promoted policies and practices that are sensitive to Arab-Palestinians' unique linguistic and cultural needs and we created an association between Arabic and intellectual debate and academic life. All the conferences had simultaneous translation into Hebrew and were open to all.

We believe that focusing on Arabic tells a much greater story. It highlights the place of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel within the state, the way the Jewish-Israeli society looks at the Arab world, the internal Jewish debate about the Mizrahi Jews, and Israel's invented status of being "in the Middle East but not of the Middle East." Therefore, our decision to focus on Arabic is at the same time discursive, sociopolitical, and strategic.

We believe that focusing attention on Arabic through projects that analyze its status in Israel, bolster its presence in the public space, and emphasize translation and dissemination of new knowledge from Arabic into Hebrew will promote a set of values and insights about Jewish-Arab relations, particularly the Jewish-Arab rift. We believe this is because only some 2% of the Jewish population of Israel has a sufficient command of Arabic to read literature—and this in the Middle East where the lingua franca is Arabic, and in

which 350 million Arabic-speaking people live. We believe this because Jewish-Israelis' awareness of Arabic is mainly limited to security-linked uses and because the great majority of Hebrew-speaking Israelis have almost no access to the vast cultural treasures of contemporary Arabic literary writing. This makes "positive Arabic" almost an unknown in Israel, and this, we believe, has implications for the intractable lack of understanding of the other. It even distances the Israeli option of thinking about a peaceful future scenario.

Hence the decision to focus on Arabic. Other projects, in brief, include a research group to create a new curriculum for the study of Arabic in Jewish schools from the 1st to 12th grade; a series of translations to Hebrew of books originally written in Arabic, to be published at the rate of four a year; and translations of op-eds from Arab newspapers in the Middle East into Israeli Hebrew media. We believe that by focusing on Arabic we are sending a message to both Jewish-Israeli and Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel that says that Arabic, like the Arab population, should enjoy equal status in Israel, and whose culture and presence should not be questioned in any way. And a message that says that Arabic is a key to integration, understanding, eradication of stigmas, and awareness of a sea of knowledge, long before it is connected to war, terror, and enemies.



Israeli Civil Society

Academic director: Prof. Moshe Justman

Project director: Ms. Hanan Saadi

www.vanleer.org.il/en/civil-society

The aim of the Israeli Civil Society program at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute is to promote and reinforce democratic discourse and culture in Israel. We seek to create a body of knowledge on citizenship and civic policy that is incorporated in public discourse and is drawn upon by decision-makers.

Three centers—Economics and Society, Gender, and Social Justice—are described separately. The projects described here address three major themes, often in tandem: citizenship, education, and Arab society in Israel.

Values and Citizens: Citizenship and Democratic Education

Director: Haifa Sabbagh; Editor: Rabbi Naftali Rothenberg

A longstanding effort of the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute to promote active learning of civics in Israeli schools has led to the publication of a civics textbook for junior high school, *Values and Citizens: Citizenship through Active Learning*, which was officially approved by the Ministry of Education in 2014 and supported by the Cohen Foundation. The book charts a path to a shared civic infrastructure and literacy, directly addressing the challenge of teaching citizenship in a complex political and social environment with deep ethnic, religious, and ideological differences. It fosters civic responsibility, engagement, and pro-active citizenship and examines the pathways that enable individual citizens to influence government decisions in a democratic society and function as active members of the community. A variety of activities enable teachers to initiate values-oriented discussions of social and political questions, strengthening the students' commitment to the democratic system while nurturing their capacity to be active, involved, and responsible citizens. VLJI is working with the ministry and the publisher to distribute the textbook to junior high schools across the country.

"Umm el-Fahm Reads": A Holistic Municipal Approach to Promoting Reading with Young Children from Disadvantaged Families

Project directors: Ms. Haifa Sabbagh, the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute; Prof. Margalit Ziv, al-Qasemi Academic College of Education; Dr. Mahmoud Zohdi, Umm el-Fahm Municipality.

A joint project of VLJI, the Bidayat Early Childhood Center at al-Qasemi College of Education, and the Umm el-Fahm Municipal Department of Education, supported by the Bernard Van Leer Foundation and the Bosch Foundation.

Entering its fourth year, the program works to deepen parents' and professionals' awareness of the importance of reading books with young children, enriching their knowledge base, expanding their access to high-quality books, and creating an organizational and professional leadership with the commitment and knowledge to promote reading books with children. To achieve these goals, the project conducts capacity-building courses and workshops for parents, community activists, teachers, teachers' aides, early childhood caregivers, and other professionals; purchases and distributes quality books; and holds community events on book-reading activities. External professional evaluations of the program's first three years indicate that thousands of children have already benefited from the program as parents have learned how to select high-quality, developmentally appropriate books and have acquired book-reading habits. A nucleus of professionals has been trained, and the municipality is strongly committed to the program's continuity and sustainability. We are working to promote similar programs in other communities.

Access of Arab Students to Higher Education in Israel

In cooperation with Israel's Council for Higher Education (CHE) and generously supported by the Social Venture Fund (SVF) USA and the Schocken Family Foundation

Project leader: Dr. Sarah Ozacky-Lazar

Expanding access to, and success in, higher education for Arab citizens in Israel promotes greater equity and supports the country's economic development. In 2013, the Council for Higher Education launched an ambitious and well-funded six-year program to promote this goal, nominating a faculty member in each institute of higher education to coordinate these efforts. VLJI initiated a forum for these representatives to exchange ideas and learn from each other. In 2015, the forum held a plenary meeting on pluralism in higher education and creating joint campuses. It also held four specialized meetings, one each on Bedouin society, students from East Jerusalem, employment of graduates, and Arab students in arts, design, and architecture.

Arab Society in Israel: Population, Society, Economy

Project director and editor: Ramsees Gharrah

This yearbook provides a comprehensive, reliable infrastructure of statistics on central themes pertaining to the Arab citizens of Israel, by demographic, geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic categories. Data from all previous volumes are freely available in Hebrew and English to researchers, policy-makers, and the public at large through the Institute's website and are widely used by researchers. The seventh volume appeared electronically in 2015, its publication marked by a well-attended half-day conference; volume 8 is now in draft form, and work has begun on volume 9.

Arab Society in Israel since the Turn of the Millennium

Project director: Prof Aziz Haidar

This study group has conducted academic empirical studies on Arab society in Israel since 2011, based on the data collected in *Arab Society in Israel* and on other sources. These studies track trends and processes related to demographic variables, education, employment and the composition of the workforce, income distribution, poverty, and various measures of the quality of life. These are set in their historical, economic, political, and social contexts.

Manbar-Bamah—An electronic newsletter on the relations between Arabs and Jews in Israel

Editor: Dr. Sarah Ozacky-Lazar

Associate editors: Dr. Yonatan Mendel, Ms. Hanan Saadi

<http://www.forum.vanleer.org.il/>

This electronic periodical, established in 2013, examines current topics related to Arab life in Israel and to relations between the Palestinian minority and the state, the Jewish majority, and the wider Arab community. *Manbar-Bamah* appears in Arabic and Hebrew and is sent out electronically to thousands of subscribers in academe, politics, civil society, the media, education, and the general public. Contributors to the magazine, Arabs and Jews, include prominent figures in academe, public life, culture, and the media. Each issue is devoted to a specific topic. Past issues have focused on the status of the Arabic language in Israel, Israel's Arabic-language media, Knesset legislation related to the Arabs' "conditional" citizenship, and Palestinian literature in Israel.

Comprehensive Planning of the Israeli Education System: Is It Necessary? Is It Possible? How Can It Achieve Its Goals?

Project director: Nachum Blass

This study group comprises 40 leaders in the field of education, including a former minister of education, four former directors-general, other senior officials at the national and local level, NGO heads, school principals, and leading academics. It addressed the question of whether rational and comprehensive planning is possible in light of Israel's major education reforms and current policy. At a conference open to the public the group's key insights were presented. All the meetings were recorded and can be accessed through the Internet. The group is continuing its meetings in 2016 and is considering various modes of publication.



THE VAN LEER FORUM FOR CIVIL SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS (VLFCSO)

Academic chair: Dr. Nissan Limor; Project director and researcher: Ms. Libat Avishai; Legal researcher: Adv. Noy Brindt

Established in 2011 and active through its concluding year of activity in 2015, **The Van Leer Forum for Civil-Sector Organizations (VLFCSO)** became a key actor, highly valued among all stakeholders—including the government, civil-sector organizations, academe, and professionals in the field—as a unique and innovative platform that promoted topics and issues that had not been dealt with sufficiently concerning the Third Sector and civil society organizations (CSOs) in Israel.

These issues were mainly in four categories:

the conceptualization of Israeli CSOs as a whole, the principles that should inform their legislative framework in the future, reconstruction of the relationship between the CSOs and the government, and reformation of their tax status.

During 2015, the forum focused its activity on the issue of taxation. In collaboration with the Center for Philanthropy and Law at Tel Aviv University, the Taxation Discussion Group was established and its members met throughout the year, serving as a unique, pioneering platform, in which representatives of the Israel Tax Authority, the State Revenue Office, the Ministry of Justice, CSOs, and umbrella CSOs, together with researchers, lawyers, and accountants thought, learned, and openly discussed taxation policy regarding CSOs in Israel, an issue that had previously not been the subject of public discussion. The topics discussed in the monthly meetings included the Income Tax Ordinance, the VAT law, tax benefits for donors, and the tax policy regarding CSOs. A key tool in the group's learning process was the study of tax policy regarding CSOs in other countries and contexts.

Three workshops with international scholars and experts were conducted:

1. **Dr. Michael Ernst-Pörksen** \ EuroCom <e3> Forum on Legal and Fiscal Environment of the Third Sector in the EU and the Neighboring Mediterranean Countries, on Germany's tax policy regarding CSOs and relevant trends and experience of other EU member states.
2. **Dr. Oonagh Breen** \ UCD Sutherland School of Law, Dublin University, on the taxation policy regarding CSOs in Ireland and England.
3. **Prof. Mark Sidel** \ Doyle-Bascom Professor of Law and Public Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, on the American tax policy regarding CSOs.

A study meeting with Prof. Sidel and the VLFCSO team was also conducted at the Israel Tax Authority for its top management, including the head of the authority.

In September 2015, Dr. Nissan Limor gave a reciprocal lecture in Germany at the EuroCom <e3> Forum on Legal and Fiscal Environment of the Third Sector in the EU and the Neighboring Mediterranean Countries.

Work is under way on a policy-oriented paper that will highlight the group's main insights, principles, and recommendations for improving Israel's tax policy regarding CSOs.

In addition to the work on taxation, in 2015 the forum published a working paper titled **"From Third Sector to Civil Sector: On the Collective Identity of Civil-Sector Organizations,"** by Prof. Benjamin Gidron, Dr. Nissan Limor, and Dr. Ester Zychlinsky. This paper is the product of the Conceptualization Discussion Group that met within the VLFCSO framework.

Also, two research papers were written by Dr. Nissan Limor and Ms. Libat Avishai, at the request of the Government-JDC Initiative for Civil Society:

1. "The Civic Bridge: CSO Preparedness for Reconstructing Relationships with the Government"
2. "Inclusive Cross-sectoral Partnership—Reference Paths to Minorities within National Initiatives for the Reconstruction of Government-CSO Relations: Basic Insights from International Experience"



THE ECONOMICS AND SOCIETY PROGRAM

Academic director: Prof. Michel Strawczynski; Project director: Mr. Yarden Kedar

<http://www.vanleer.org.il/en/economics>

The Economics and Society Program serves as a think-tank specializing in economic issues related to Israel, with an emphasis on government policy. The program's goals are to address the growing gaps in Israeli society, with a focus on growth, income distribution, and the labor market, to elaborate different alternatives for socioeconomic policy in Israel, and to play an active role in shaping the economic discourse in the country. The staff includes senior economists with many years' experience in key positions in the civil service. To further its goals, the program publishes policy studies and position papers and sponsors conferences. All videos of the conferences and lectures and all publications are freely accessible on the website.

Online Magazine

The program publishes a quarterly magazine presenting new and interesting studies and perspectives in a variety of economic fields. This year we redesigned the magazine website to make it relevant to larger audiences and we achieved unprecedented acclaim from the public for our publications. The magazine dealt with issues including mandatory pensions and exemptions for long-term savings, the capitation formula in the health sector, job-placement of the chronically unemployed, and gaps between minorities and between geographical areas. We interviewed leading economic stakeholders, most notably Prof. Eitan Sheshinski, about the policy regarding natural resources and the Bank of Israel governor, Dr. Karnit Flug, about monetary policy.

<http://www.econmag.vanleer.org.il/>

The Van Leer Wellbeing Index

This project aims to respond to recent calls for alternatives to the GDP as a measure of wellbeing. By incorporating the views of dozens of Israeli experts in various fields of wellbeing, we devised the **Van Leer Wellbeing Index**, which shows the Israeli position in each field, both in relation to the rest of the developed world each year and in relation to Israel itself throughout its history, while separating current wellbeing from sustainable wellbeing. In December we held our annual conference, which introduced our index alongside several governmental initiatives in the area. The conference was addressed by guest lecturer Prof. Andrew Oswald of Warwick University, a leading scholar in the field, who pointed out the cross-national determinants of wellbeing around the world.

Government Budget

As we do each year, we conducted our Budget Conference in June, presenting alternative scenarios for public spending and tax changes for the government budget. We also presented a Social Index, showing the status of members of Israel's lower-income deciles in education, health, housing, the job market, welfare and poverty, and inequality. The conference was addressed by guest lecturer Dr. Daniel Schraad-Tischler of the Bertelsmann Foundation, who spoke about the Social Index of other developed countries, and by a panel of notable economists and representatives of various sectors, including the head of the Bank of Israel's research department, an influential local journalist specializing in economics, and leading members of the Knesset.

The Socioeconomic Platforms of the Political Parties

In March, in advance of the national election, we held a conference in conjunction with the Chazan Center at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, presenting our traditional analysis of the socioeconomic platforms of the different political parties. We showed that despite some major differences between the parties, there were mainly commonalities. Senior economic representatives of the parties, including Prof. Manuel Trajtenberg, the Zionist Union (Labor) Party's candidate for finance minister, attended. They showed that although the pre-election public debate usually focuses on domestic and security issues, social and economic issues are also deserving of discussion.

"Social Economists" Scholarship Program

This program, launched last year in conjunction with the Social Economic Academy with a syllabus based on our "Disputes in Economics" series, is beginning its second year. The target group of this scholarship is economics students who aspire to work in the public sector. Our aim is to expose them to the many discussions on, and critiques of, the current economic paradigm, many of which are not raised in the classroom. The program combines complementary studies in public economics

with a professional apprenticeship in one of the public sector departments, where the students take upon themselves to address and analyze a real-life issue. Last year's projects were presented at a conference in July and dealt with issues that included public subsidies for healthier food and promotion of coordination between departments in the Health Ministry.

Monitoring the Government Budget Execution

At the end of the year we launched a new project: monitoring the execution of the budget allotted to each ministry by the government. The formulation of the government budget is widely debated, but we know little about its execution. We found that the Defense Ministry's budget execution was far greater in 2015 than the original allocation, whereas the budget execution of civilian ministries, particularly those that provide social services, was below their already scarce budget allocations as declared by the government.



THE CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE (WIPS)

Academic directors: Prof. Hanna Herzog, Prof. Naomi Chazan

Academic coordinator: Ronna Brayer-Garb; Research coordinator: Hadass Ben-Eliyahu

<http://www.vanleer.org.il/he/wips>

WIPS's Vision

The central objective of WIPS is to promote gender mainstreaming as an overall strategy for advancing the democratic and civil status of women from diverse social groups. According to this approach, gender inequality is a general social worldview that relates to both men and women. To pursue these goals, WIPS engages in four areas of activity: theoretical and applied research; proactive projects of gender mainstreaming to enhance women's representation and increase the presence of women's voices in the public sphere; policy initiatives related to gender equality and gender mainstreaming; and public education to address key current issues.

The Gender Index

In 2015 the WIPS center pursued its goals by means of several projects and research initiatives: The third Gender Index report was launched at the Knesset Committee for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality. It received much attention and we are certain that the effects of this groundbreaking tool for advancing gender equality in Israel are continuously growing. The Gender Index is an innovative tool for broad evaluation of the level of inequality between women and men in Israel over time. It provides a detailed picture of the state of inequality in eleven key domains, including education, the labor market, and the distribution of power. The WIPS Gender Index is the first to examine gender inequality in a broad range of areas within a country; as such, it provides a model for other countries. The Gender Index is updated annually with a different focus each year and with suggested policy applications.

<http://www.genderindex.vanleer.org.il/?lang=en>



Gender Equality in Action

Another major project of WIPS is Gender Equality in Action—a training program that provides strategies and tools for challenging gendered practices and barriers within the workplace. This innovative program enables a network of women from diverse professional fields and organizations to incorporate gender-sensitive viewpoints and practices into their everyday lives and experiences in the workplace. This initiative empowers participants by providing them with practical tools with which to interpret their experiences from a gendered perspective, teaching them how to decipher organizational networks of power, and training them as agents of social change to make work environments more rewarding, safe, and respectful toward women. Our action groups include women journalists who came together to lead a campaign against sexual harassment in the media; a group of women senior researchers at a leading university who developed measures to ensure women's representation in central academic committees; a group of women in hi-tech who are formulating solutions for women who face harassment in interpersonal interactions; and a group of Orthodox women who are trying to introduce more egalitarian practices in their communities.



Invisible Work

WIPS's central research initiative this year focused on “invisible work,” which is the term coined for unpaid care work and housework done mainly by women, both in the private and public spheres. A diverse research group has been working on the subject from various perspectives, addressing and analyzing the assumption that women make a double “contribution” to the economy by earning less (which means greater profit for the employers, including the state, which is a large employer) and through the “invisible work” they do, mainly in the private sphere, work that is neither recognized nor compensated. WIPS recently received a large research grant from the National Insurance Institute of Israel to develop this research topic and derive conclusions applicable to state policies.



THE CENTER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY IN MEMORY OF YAAKOV CHAZAN AT THE VAN LEER JERUSALEM INSTITUTE

Privatization, Regulation, Collaborative Governance, and Local Authorities Project 2015

Academic directors: Prof. Itzhak Galnoor, Dr. Amir Paz-Fuchs, Dr. Eyal Tevet, Dr. Varda Shiffer,

Project director of the Chazan Center: Nomika Zion

<http://www.hafrata.vanleer.org.il/>

PRIVATIZATION PROJECT

Book on privatization policy in Israel

Privatization Policy in Israel: State Responsibility and the Boundaries between the Public and the Private, the first study of its kind in Israel, was published in June 2015. It contains fourteen chapters on general issues, privatization of social services, and specific topics such as the environment, pensions, and human resources. The book is in great demand and is already serving as a basis for academic studies in several colleges and universities.

Book in English on privatization policy in Israel

The new English version will make available to an international audience the products of the Center's research and the wider lessons that can be learned from Israel's privatization policy. The book is to be published in 2017 by Palgrave-Macmillan.

Privatization website

This website serves as a source of up-to-date information about privatization and nationalization initiatives in Israel. The website aims to promote transparency and the free flow of information between policy makers and the public. During the year we published two newsletters containing reports of current developments on the website and we used social media to disseminate the information.

Workshop with researchers from Turkey

In October we held a two-day study workshop on privatization in Israel and in Turkey with experts from both countries and with the collaboration of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. Both countries have undergone extensive privatization since the mid-1980s. The economic changes in each country were presented and the ramifications of privatizing various domains were discussed. It was decided to continue future cooperation, under the auspices of the Ebert Stiftung Foundation in Turkey.

Policy change 2015

This year we focused on an attempt to influence decision makers regarding privatization policy, using the privatization bill proposal and the Manual on Privatization and Outsourcing.

Knesset

The opposition leader, MK Itzhak Herzog, agreed to promote the current policy effort in cooperation with coalition member MK Moshe Gafni, chair of the Finance Committee.

Government Ministries

We met and explored ways of working together with the Policy Planning Division of the Prime Minister's Office, ministries of health and welfare, the Employment Service, Israel Police, and others. We also published two position papers about the bill for establishing a national credit database and are trying to introduce amendments to the proposed bill through such means as discussions in the Knesset Economics Committee and roundtable meetings.

The State Comptroller

We were invited to contribute to in-service training programs for ministry employees. In two seminars we discussed our research, presented our manual, and recommended that it be used as a tool in their work. We also set a date for a meeting with the State Comptroller.



RESEARCH ON REGULATION

The research (starting in 2012) examines regulation in Israel through test cases and aims at publishing position papers with concrete recommendations for regulatory models suitable for the Israeli system of government. Seven of the eleven papers are already complete. The project included a year-long seminar in which the participants presented their research and learned from experts.

New Research on Collaborative Governance

In March 2015, a call for research proposals was published for a continuation of the study on privatization and regulation focusing on collaborative governance (state-market-society). In May, a research workshop was established with 35 researchers from various disciplines. The workshop will operate for two years and the results will be published in a pathbreaking study.

Developing Educational and Leadership Structures to Improve the Local Education System

This is action research, designed to strengthen the managerial and leadership abilities of the leading education teams in local authorities, to generate trust, and to enhance collaboration among stakeholders in education. The aim of the project, which started in Yerucham (2013), and continued in Kafr Qasim, is to improve significantly the educational achievements of all the children in the local community. Following recent success in Arab and Jewish localities, the Ministry of Education has commissioned expansion of the project to other localities.

Research on the Growth of New Cooperatives in Israel

The research, which began in April 2015, is mapping the new cooperatives established in the past decade and is focused on three models introduced after the social protest of 2011. The study will be part of a book on cooperatives in Israel, under the supervision of the Yad Tabenkin Institute.



Developing Educational and Leadership Structures for Improving the Local Education System: A Subversive, Yet Timely, Project

Dr. Varda Shiffer

This project is an action research study, designed to strengthen the managerial and leadership abilities of the leading education teams in the localities, generate trust, and enhance collaboration among stakeholders in the field of education. The project operates on several levels simultaneously within the community with the expectation that local government will assume a central role in heading its own education system and thus significantly improve the educational achievement of all the children in the locality.

The project helps create frameworks for collaborative governance that include all the relevant stakeholders, particularly representatives of the central government, the local government, social organizations, and members of the community. Our case studies in a number of localities are thoroughly documented and will become the basis for a research report that will propose viable models for education systems in localities.

Against a background of little trust between central and local government and growing suspicion between Jews and Arabs in Israel, this project is subversive in that it counters these worrisome trends. The project's focus on improving opportunities for all children builds trust, establishes a shared interest while overlooking political disagreements, and generates a new division of authority and roles between the Ministry of Education and local government. This new form of educational governance produces local policies that are more coherent and better adapted to local needs and therefore more implementable.

The project is timely because it aims to develop detailed education plans in time—in the case of Kafr Qasim, by April 2016—to benefit from the recent government decision to allocate special funds to the Arab population in Israel. We began in 2013 with a pilot in Yeroham, a small locality in the Negev, and are currently operating in Kafr Qasim, an Arab city about 12 miles east of Tel Aviv.

Objectives

1. To establish a permanent local education committee that will create a plan for the local education system, oversee its implementation, and accompany the development of the local education services. The committee will include representatives of the Ministry of Education, heads of the local government authority, and the main stakeholders in education.
2. To enhance a planning process based on data and evidence. The project will assist in mapping and diagnosing the locality's education system (including analyzing evaluations; interviewing principals, teachers, and local leaders; and visiting education institutions) to create an information base for the planning process.
3. To introduce a professional-development scheme for teachers based on teachers' teamwork. The project advises principals and teachers and facilitates a process that will help schools become self-improving.
4. To develop models for higher-level, research-based intervention by local government to improve the local education system. The models will be based on the theoretical literature on collaborative governance and will include an updated division of tasks and authority between central and local government.



Premises

This action-oriented project draws on a rich body of research and experiments over the past fifteen years. These studies suggest that teamwork among teachers within schools and across clusters of schools contributes significantly to the improvement of teaching and learning (and hence to school climate and achievement).

The project is also based on cumulative evidence concerning the potential contribution of local government to improving the provision of social services, under certain conditions and following the creation of suitable management structures. The trigger for the development of this project was a policy paper that presented a broader model for collaborative governance in localities, written by the education team at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute in 2013 for the Eli Hurvitz Conference on Economy and Society.

Initial Outcomes

1. In both Yeroham and Kafr Qasim we enlisted the support of the local education leadership for the project and its objectives. In both places a local education committee, with representatives of all stakeholders, has been established.
2. We mapped the teaching workforce in elementary schools and middle schools (and one of the high schools in Yeroham) and analyzed pupils' achievement trends over five years.
3. A detailed report with recommendations was prepared in collaboration with the local leadership, and was presented to the respective local education committees. Both committees adopted the recommendations.
4. In Yeroham the recommendations are being implemented gradually over five years.
5. In Kafr Qasim, because of different needs, the project is currently working with school principals and teams of teachers to strengthen capacities and develop the local education leadership.
6. In Kafr Qasim, where the project has been active for only eighteen months, there are already marked improvements in pupils' achievements. This is probably due to the project's multi-level approach (local leadership, education committee, school principals, and teams of teachers) and the fact that the project is an integral part of a citywide development vision.

In light of these initial successes, the Ministry of Education (Central Bureau), which is actively supporting the project, has asked us to expand to other Arab localities. We are currently exploring possibilities in Qalansuwa.



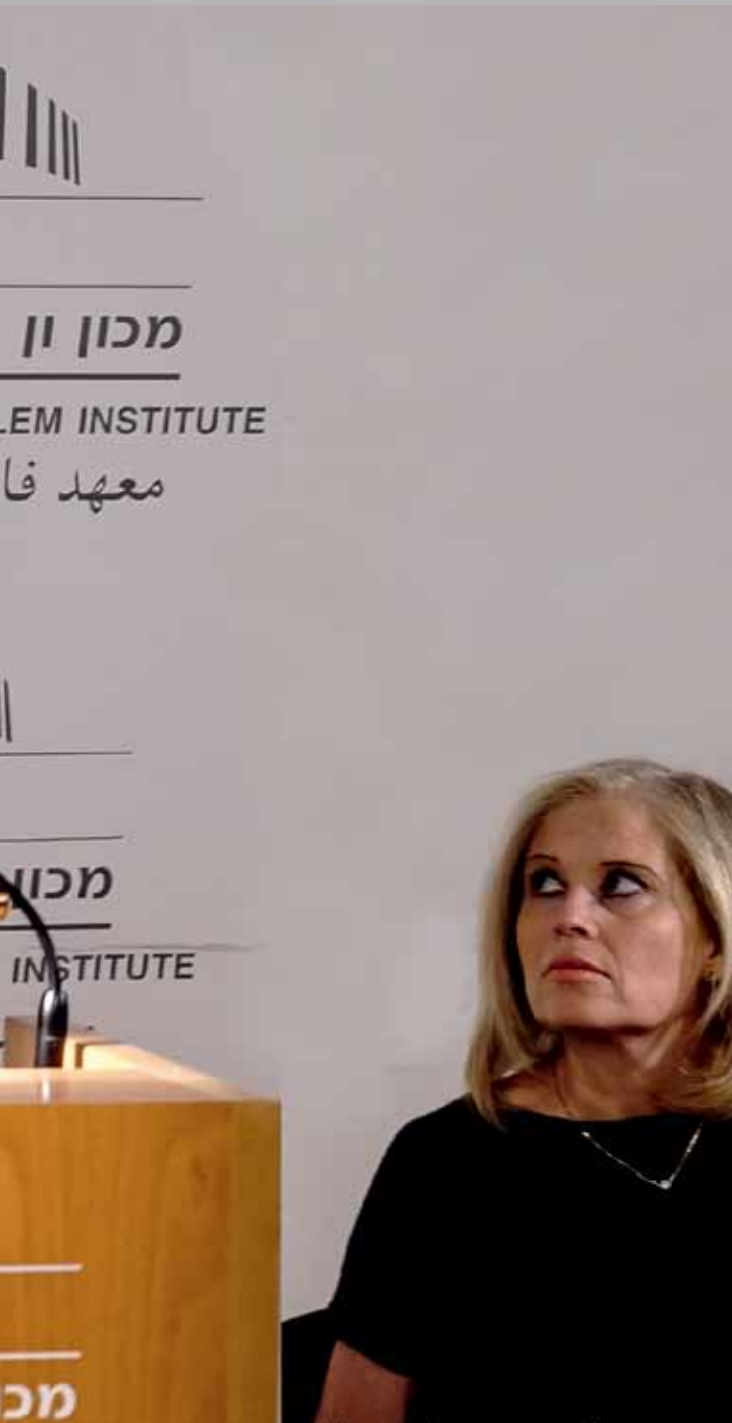


Jewish Thinking and Culture

Academic director: Prof. Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin
Project director: Dafna Schreiber

www.vanleer.org.il/en/judaism

The Institute promotes research and public events concerning Jewish thinking and culture in Israel and the Diaspora. The Institute's Jewish thinking and culture program focuses on interdisciplinary research and learning whose aim is to propose new perspectives on major topics that occupy Jewish thought, such as science and religion, Judaism and democracy, traditions, and civil rights. The program aims to expand and enhance the understanding of all forms of Jewish thinking and culture in the contemporary world. It strives to promote dialogue between various groups of Jews in Israel and in the Diaspora and to facilitate access to sources of Jewish culture. It seeks to be actively involved in developing and enhancing a Jewish democratic perspective within various Jewish groups. It also initiates public events to address various aspects of Jewish culture in the past and in the present.



Identities: Journal of Jewish Culture and Identity

Editor: Rabbi Naftali Rothenberg; Co-editor: Dr. Yotam Ben-Ziman

Identities is an interdisciplinary peer-reviewed journal whose goal is to inspire the educated public to discuss the culture and identity of the Jewish people today.

In keeping with the journal's aim of presenting artworks related to Jewish culture and identity, the cover of the sixth issue (Fall 2015) was adorned by an image of the renowned Israeli sculptor Jack Jano's work "Daf Yomi."

The sixth issue begins with an essay by Prof. Gershon Greenberg on metahistory and the Holocaust, in which he calls for a return to a metahistorical or metanarrative approach in order to understand how the Jewish people have intuited historical processes from biblical times to the Holocaust.

The issue's symposium, titled "Civil Marriage in Israel," which was moderated and edited by Ruth Halperin-Kaddari, was devoted to the question of instituting civil marriage in Israel. Participants in this symposium were Adv. Shirin Batshon, director of the Family Law Clinic at the College of Law and Business in Ramat Gan; Rabbi Dr. Mark Washofsky, professor of Talmud and halachic literature at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati; and Rabbi David Stav, rabbi of Shoham and chair of the Tzohar group of Orthodox rabbis in Israel. The symposium concluded with a dialogue between Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari, associate professor of law at Bar-Ilan University, and Prof. Ruth Gavison, Haim Cohn Professor Emerita of Human Rights at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and founding president of Metzilah—the Center for Zionist, Jewish, Liberal, and Humanistic Thought. The issue includes two book reviews and research papers, including a paper on Orthodoxy as a pseudo-evolutionary multisystem, using extreme Orthodoxy as a case study; a paper on religion and nationalism that discusses the secular Jews in the religious Zionist halachic context; and a paper on Remembrance Day ceremonies at Kibbutz Nirim.

The journal's website: <http://www.identities.vanleer.org.il/en>.

Opening the Week—The Biblical Model and Its Formative Role in History

Project director: Dafna Schreiber

Certain books are the outcome of historical circumstances; other books have shaped history. The Book of Books belongs to the latter category. From the very beginnings of human existence the Bible has served as a guide and a compass. Leaders and ordinary people, military commanders and lawmakers have sought in its words ways to shape their lives and environments so they accord with its insights and teachings; its commandments have become guidelines; its stories have become real.

This year's lecture cycle in the Opening the Week series was devoted to the interface of words and actions. We explored the historical circumstances in which the Torah portions were formed and then influenced world events, directly or indirectly—from the commentaries of those who sought to heal the world in the Dead Sea two thousand years ago to the interpretations of Socialist healers of the world; from the Puritan doctrine of the Founding Fathers of North America in the seventeenth century to the demand to “Let my people go” that was uttered on the same continent by those engaged in the struggle for human rights three hundred years later. All these may draw us closer to the meaning of the commandment to “remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations” (Deuteronomy 32:7) with all its interpretations—in action and in thought—throughout the ages. In the course of the year, lecturers from many fields of scholarship and knowledge, with diverse cultural and ideological backgrounds, explored various historical events in light of the weekly Torah portion, using classical and modern commentaries, offering contemporary interpretations and new exegeses.

Mizrahi Perspectives, Jewish Perspectives

Academic director: Prof. Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin

Group coordinator: Assaf Tamari

This research group is the continuation of the group titled The Jews of the East, Orientalism, and Modern Awareness, which met at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. The group reexamines questions regarding the Jews of the East, in historical and contemporary contexts that go beyond the traditional disciplinary and conceptual distinctions between the historical treatment of Jewish communities of the East and the ethnographic and sociological treatment of Mizrahim in Israel. The group is exploring the disjuncture that these distinctions created between the Mizrahi present and its past. First and foremost, this framework has made possible a continuing and fruitful exchange of ideas between young scholars who present the historical emphases typical of the Ben-Zvi Institute and the contemporary emphases typical of the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. This encounter has also created a framework in which the discussion of Mizrahi perspectives of various kinds makes it possible to shed a critical light on some of the underpinnings of the secularization thesis, taken broadly, and to reexamine the dichotomies on which it rests—religious-secular, West-East, national-religious—through the historiography that it generates and through the widespread practices that derive from it and perpetuate it.



The group focuses on an analysis of various aspects of the critique of secularization through such basic concepts as “tradition” and “messianism,” with the aim of examining how they may offer alternatives to the binary division underlying the secular order. Meanwhile, the group provides a single framework for examining diverse historical phenomena—from the sixteenth-century Kabbalah of Safed to contemporary Mizrahi poetry, both philosophy that developed in the East and that which emerged in the West—and exploring the conceptual lines that connect them, in an attempt to propose a broad critique of Western consciousness and contemporary Israeli consciousness within it. During the last year the group held monthly meetings as well as two one-day workshops devoted to its themes. The peak of its activities, however, was a comprehensive conference held in October 2015, devoted to the different perspectives arising from the participants’ shared work and outlining the different possibilities opened up by the group’s discussions.

Research group on Psychoanalysis and Kabbalah

Steering committee: Dr. Ruth Kara-Ivanov Kaniel, Prof. Haviva Pedaya, Dr. Hani Biran

This research group aimed to identify the relations between the kabbalistic world and the world of psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic treatment, to develop a language based on connections and similarities between the two worlds, but also to examine the gaps and differences between the two. The group was for women only, including both senior and young researchers in the areas of Kabbalah and literature, alongside experienced psychoanalysts, research students, and artists, who accepted our invitation to create a framework for empowering women that would allow the creation of a multidisciplinary conversation and a joint exploratory and theoretical multidimensional observation of this realm.

The group members sought to find ways in which Kabbalah and psychoanalysis can inspire each other, both on the research and theoretical level as well as on the practical and therapeutic level. During the year the group addressed issues that included identity, femininity, sexuality, creativity, home, writing, birth-giving, periphery, the body, and the Divine Presence. Every meeting was aimed at refining the similarities or the differences between the two worlds. It turned out that the

therapists’ exposure to the Jewish world and to the extensive world of Kabbalah contributed greatly to their therapeutic work, and the Kabbalah researchers were greatly enriched by their engagement with psychological and psychoanalytical theories. During the year we held a two-day conference as well as a symposium open to the public that was attended by scholars from Israel and abroad. Among the prominent senior scholars who participated in the group and who were part of the group’s steering committee are the following: Dr. Dana Amir, Dr. Galit Atlas (NYU), Prof. Bracha Ettinger, Prof. Yolanda Gampel, Prof. Michal Govrin, the psychoanalyst Malka Hirsch (London), Prof. Ruth Karton-Blum, Prof. Vivian Liska (Belgium), Prof. Ilana Pardes, and Prof. Haviva Pedaya.

Ultra-Orthodox Discussion Group of Secularization and Shared Social Life

Academic director: Prof. Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin

Group coordinator: Rabbi Yosef Miller

Coexistence between different societies and individuals is one of the key challenges of our times. Eradicating racism and hatred between groups and nations is the desire and hope for all humanity, especially in the global era. The aim of this discussion group, consisting solely of ultra-Orthodox rabbis, is to clarify and discuss coexistence and the eradication of racism from a halachic, Torah-based, and ethical perspective, while establishing a dialogue with the philosophical, ethical, and general and universal legal discourse and clarifying the group’s positions on these matters. At the same time, the group aims to offer a Torah-based statement grounded on halachic sources dealing with these issues that will be meaningful for the general cultural and philosophical discourse in the State of Israel beyond the ultra-Orthodox community. During the year the group engaged in thorough study and analysis of philosophical texts, with an emphasis on texts that analyze the boundaries of secularization and religion, and the meaning derived from them in the modern and postmodern eras. The group’s members, equipped with a religious and halachic perspective, juxtaposed critical ideas regarding views of human knowledge and culture and the logic and principles of Jewish and halachic thought.

Among the topics the group discussed were the following:

1. The concept of history and an examination of how historical approaches construct the view of society
2. Orientalist ideas used by states and majority societies to justify how they relate to ethnic and religious minorities

BOOK SYMPOSIA

3. The connection between sovereignty and state, on the one hand, and religion and worship, on the other, and the influence of these and other concepts, such as Hebrew and its religious meanings and the clash of cultures, in the State of Israel
4. Anti-Semitism and its origins, in light of Jewish separateness throughout the Exile, and particularly in light of the philosophy of civil rights and social equality

In the course of the year it became clear that there was a need for papers based on the religious corpus and on comprehensive knowledge of the new concepts of culture and thought that would address the cultural conflicts in the world today. Such papers would be unique and innovative in combining comprehensive critical thought about culture with an extensive halachic knowledge.

Haredi Leadership's Responsibility to Israeli Society at Large—Concluding Event

Project director: Rabbi Yosef Miller

Adviser: Rabbi Naftali Rothenberg

With the support of the UJA Federation of New York

This groundbreaking project aimed to generate an internal discourse within the haredi (ultra-Orthodox) world about the increasing influence that haredi groups have on all aspects of life in Israel. It also aimed to apprise haredim of economic, social, political, and security issues. The project was conducted at the VLJI for three years, and concluded in a festive event in May 2015. That event included a comprehensive discussion of national security, which was the group's focus in the third year. The group's participants themselves gave presentations on each of the subjects that they had focused on over the three years: the Israeli economy (facilitated by Prof. Moshe Justman); political structure (facilitated by Prof. Dan Avnon); and national security and the army (facilitated by Major General ret. Yoram Yair).

Remainder of Faith: Postmodern Sermons on Jewish Holidays

By Rav Shagar (Shimon Gershon Rosenberg)

This symposium was held in honor of the book containing a selection of the late Rav Shagar's sermons for Jewish holidays. These sermons aim to rehabilitate a religious-Jewish perspective in the spaces of postmodernism. They do not seek to protect religious discourse from the winds of time, but rather to reestablish it on the foundations of criticism and deconstruction proposed by postmodernism. The religious values are constructed anew from the fragments of words, verses, and midrashim from which the sermons are assembled. This process often involves a "return of the repressed," the awakening of the mystical kernel of religion from the coma imposed on it by the modern era. The participants in this symposium included Dr. Zohar Maor (chair), Prof. Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, Dr. Miriam Feldmann Kaye, Prof. Haviva Pedaya, and Yishai Mevorach, the editor of the book.



SYMPOSIUM

The Complete Stories of Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav

By Zvi Mark

The symposium was held in honor of this pioneering book, which enables the readers of Rabbi Nachman's works to experience for the first time the entirety of his rich and variegated writings as a single entity, as his life work. The image of this unique, righteous man arises from the sequence of his stories, which are arranged here for the first time in accordance with his life story. Thus he is revealed—in story and vision, dream and fable—as one of the giants of Hebrew literature, a righteous man whose words, even two hundred years after his death, are still redolent of the unique aroma of "Hungarian wine," whose taste Rabbi Nachman promised his disciples would remain with them until the coming of the Redeemer.

The participants in the symposium included the editor of the book, Mr. Dov Elbaum (chair), Prof. Dan Miron, Prof. Yehuda Liebes, and the poet Sivan Har-Sheffi, who read poems about Rabbi Nachman. Prof. Zvi Mark responded.

Torah, Wisdom, Compassion, and Peace: The Philosophy of Rabbi Dr. Aharon Lichtenstein

The teaching and philosophy of Rabbi Dr. Aharon Lichtenstein—the head of the Har Etzion Yeshiva and the recipient of the Israel Prize for Jewish literature—reflect his breadth of knowledge and original thought and provide a special voice in the contemporary religious world. His philosophy reflects traditional thorough learning that comprises the entire realm of Halachah, on the one hand, and expertise in philosophy, culture, and literature, on the other hand, combined with an ethical call to heal society. The participants in this evening examined the varied aspects of his thought. The participants included Prof. Aviad Hacoen (chair), Dr. Shlomo Fischer, Prof. Rami Reiner, Malka Piotrkovsky, and Supreme Court Justice Neal Hendel.

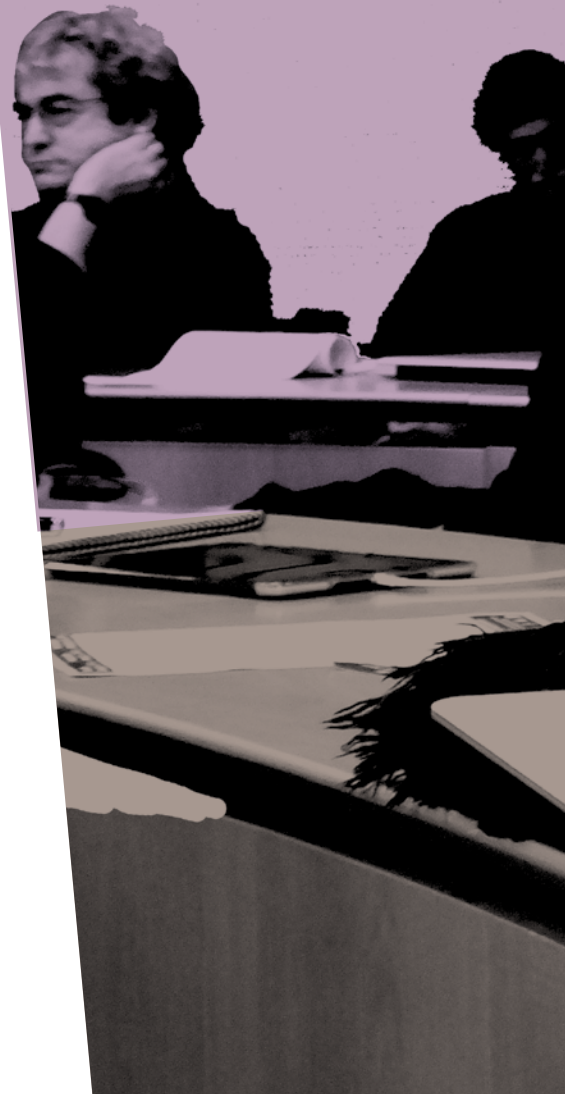


Public Events

Director: Shulamit Laron

www.vanleer.org.il/en/public-activities

Built as a center for the meeting of minds, a space where local and international scholars congregate to exchange and explore ideas, the VLJI has since its inception prized its public events. Today, the Institute continues to host a dynamic array of events that display its work to the public and create an interface between the institution and its environment. The Institute's many conferences, workshops, colloquia, and symposia, and other public meetings generate a stimulating dialogue. Its public forums bring together leading thinkers from Israeli and international academe, the media, public policy, and politics, thus fostering the open exchange of ideas that is the livelihood of the Institute.



CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

Space-Time Theories: Historical and Philosophical Contexts

Academic directors: Prof. Yemina Ben-Menahem,
Prof. Hanoch Gutfreund

The centenary of Einstein's General Theory of Relativity (GTR), a theory that revolutionized our concepts of space and time, was marked in 2015. To celebrate this anniversary, we held a conference on theories of space and time that brought together leading physicists as well as leading historians and philosophers of science, all working from different perspectives on problems

inspired by GTR. Although this was not a conference on Einstein, contemporary issues were the center of the discussion. Two sessions devoted to recent Einstein scholarship had a distinguished list of speakers, including Kip Thorne, Lee Smolin, Carlo Rovelli, Diana Buchwald, Jürgen Renn, Robert Disalle, Gabriel Motzkin, and Hanoch Gutfreund.

The conference was organized and sponsored by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in cooperation with the VLJI, the Einstein Papers Project at Caltech, the Max Planck Institute in Berlin, and the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities.



Landscapes of Collectivity in the Life Sciences: The 29th Annual International Workshop on the History and Philosophy of Science

Academic directors: Dr. Snait Gissis, Dr. Ehud Lamm, Dr. Ayelet Shavit

This workshop brought together leading researchers in a wide range of fields of the life sciences, outstanding theoreticians (mathematicians and physicists) who use new and groundbreaking modeling approaches to study biological questions, and prominent philosophers of biology. The workshop's focus was the exploration of a set of common problematics of the life sciences that are investigated by harnessing notions of collectivity, sociality, rich interactions, and emergent phenomena as essential explanatory tools. The workshop opened with a video session on collective phenomena in the life sciences. The three kinds of sessions were presentations of papers, general topical discussions, and professional-biographical interviews. All were intense and generative. New cooperations, new coauthorships of papers, and new collaborative authorship of several sections of the intended book have resulted from the workshops' lively multiple dialogues.

The workshop's revised papers, much enriched by introductions and field essays, will be published in the Vienna series in Theoretical Biology, MIT Press in Fall 2017.

A joint endeavor of the VLJI, the Cohn Institute at Tel Aviv University, and the Edelstein Center at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Hans Blumenberg in Jerusalem: Philosophical and Literary Perspectives

Academic director: Dr. Pini Ifergan

The first Blumenberg Conference in Israel was a milestone in Blumenberg research in Israel and an important contribution to Blumenberg research in general, which has been growing in recent years. The participants were researchers from Israel and abroad, including Angus Nicholls, whose lecture focused on the political aspect of Blumenberg's thought, particularly his use of the concept of political myth. Oliver Müller examined "visibility" as a fundamental category in Blumenberg's anthropology. Pini Ifergan discussed the philosophical uniqueness of Blumenberg's book/essay on myth, examining the relation between the narrative aspect, especially the discussion of Goethe, and the central anthropological argument of the book/essay.

The conference was unique in that it combined philosophical aspects of Blumenberg's thought with aspects that brought to the fore his great engagement with literature. The conference sought to examine the relation between the two by locating them in the dialogue between literature and philosophy. We hope that the conference will lead to the broadening of academic interest in Israel in Blumenberg's philosophy and the opening of a dialogue between literature and philosophy. Some of the conference lectures were published in *Iyyun: The Jerusalem Philosophical Quarterly*.

Organized by the VLJI's Spinoza Center, Bar-Ilan University, and Tel Aviv University.



COLLOQUIA AND SYMPOSIA

The Bar-Hillel Colloquium for the History, Philosophy, and Sociology of Science

Academic director: Dr. Orly Shenker

In its thirty-fourth year, the Bar-Hillel lecture series featured lectures on a variety of aspects of the history and philosophy of science, delivered by renowned speakers. Hasok Chang (Cambridge University) delivered the Mara Beller memorial lecture on reductionism and the relationship between physics and chemistry, in which he showed that physical theories are imbued with ideas from chemistry and that therefore a reduction to pure physics is impossible. David Papineau (King's College, London) lectured on sensory experience and cognitive representation, defending the equation of conscious sensory properties with intrinsic nonrelational properties of the vehicles of sensory representation; comments were by Oron Shagrir (Hebrew University of Jerusalem). Stathis Psillos (University of Athens and the Rotman Institute of Philosophy, Canada) gave a lecture titled "Metaphysics of Science: Fact or Framework?" that examined the relation between the various metaphysical views of the world and our best scientific theories, looking at both from a contemporary and a historical point of view; with comments by Yuval Dolev (Bar-Ilan University). Naomi Oreskes (Harvard University) lectured on the role of the scientist in a world in crisis, with comments by Yaron Ezrahi (Hebrew University of Jerusalem). A joint endeavor of the VLJI, the Cohn Institute at Tel Aviv University, and the Edelstein Center at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

The Fifth Lecture Series of the Spinoza Center: Other Liberals

Conveners: Dr. Pini Ifergan, Dr. Dror Yinon

The series titled "Other Liberals" featured a gamut of political positions that are close, each in its own way, to the central liberal tradition that is based on John Locke, later on John Stuart Mill, and now on John Rawls, and yet is not considered part of this tradition. The thinkers presented in this series all regarded the value of liberty as essential to the political framework and as the sovereign's source of legitimacy, but they did not necessarily embrace the liberal conception of the value of liberty. The liberal position is typically founded upon optimistic assumptions about human nature and the interests that shape human behavior. It stresses the close link between the value of liberty and the right to private property as well as the importance of the distinction between the public and the private realms, advocating a

maximization of individual liberty and a minimization of state intervention. The varied lectures presented the thought of Machiavelli, Hobbes, Spinoza, Rousseau, and Hegel, all of whom criticized and challenged fundamental aspects of liberalism and developed alternative philosophical models for the shaping of our political and social lives.

The Sacred Site in Israel as a Center of Devotion, Confrontation, and Disagreement

Convened by Prof. Elhanan Reiner

Three symposia were convened with the aim of examining the social and political aspects of the way sacred sites in Israel are managed. In recent years these sites have become the foci of religious, social, and cultural unrest, thus reflecting tensions in Israel, including interethnic tensions and those between religious and secular populations, ultra-Orthodox and Orthodox communities, and, on the margins, between Jews and Christians. Experts and researchers familiar with these issues were invited to the discussions, to expose the points of disagreement to the public and to open them up for public consideration, in an attempt to draw closer to possible solutions.

Mt. Zion as a Focus of Conflict—This symposium was a first attempt to deal with what has been taking place on Mt. Zion in recent years. The goal was to lay bare the religious, political, and social roots of these developments; to identify the direction in which they are headed; and to define the forces at work there.

Meron: Who Does It Belong To?—This symposium was devoted to the tomb of Rashbi, Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yohai, one of the most important holy places in Israel. Although the largest annual event in Israel takes place at this site, it is unfamiliar to large parts of Israeli society but supremely important to others, whose political importance in the country is growing.

The Western Wall: Israeli Culture 1967–2015—This symposium dealt with the Wall, constantly under heavy pressure from diverse directions. The participants included a series of intellectuals from various fields, including the writer A.B. Yehoshua, the artist Avital Geva, and the composer and musicologist Andre Hajdu.

In cooperation with Da'at Hamakom: Center for the Study of Cultures of Place in the Modern Jewish World, and I–CORE: Israeli Centers of Research Excellence

Susya—A Local or a National Issue?

Convened by Prof. David Shulman

The High Court of Justice recently removed the last legal obstacle to implementation of the demolition of Palestinian homes in Khirbet Susya, which is adjacent to the Jewish settlement Susya in southern Mount Hebron. The possibility that some 350 Palestinian inhabitants will be uprooted from the site has rekindled the debate over the ownership of the land in the West Bank/Judea and Samaria and over Jewish-Arab relations in general. Four speakers—Ambassador Lars Faaborg-Andersen, head of the Delegation of the European Union to Israel; Adv. Quamar Mishirqi Asad, the petitioner on the Palestinian side; archaeologist Yonathan Mizrachi; and Yochai Damri, head of the Mount Hebron Council—discussed the legal, political, international, and historical aspects of the case.



GUEST LECTURES

The Challenge of Religious and Secular Pluralisms: Toward Post-Confessional and Post-Secularist States

Lecture by Prof. José Casanova

Most of our political and legal theories were based on secularist notions that assumed that religion in the modern world would decline and would become a private and politically irrelevant phenomenon. The notion of “religious resurgence” as a legal and moral challenge is predicated on such an expectation. The presentation had three stages: First, it offered a more global and less Eurocentric narrative of modern processes, replacing the grand narrative of European secularization with a more complex narrative based on the intertwining of two different roads: the internal European road of homogeneous confessionalization followed by homogeneous secularization with minimal religious pluralization, and the external road of European colonial encounters with religious and cultural “others,” which leads to religious pluralization and the formation of the global pluralist system of world religions. Second, it was argued that these intertwined roads lead to two different types of pluralism—a pluralism of secular and religious worldviews and a global religious pluralism—and therefore our moral and legal challenges on a national as well as on a global level are twofold, namely, accommodating the two different types of pluralism. And third, this accommodation requires the modern state to adopt a post-confessional and post-secularist identity.

The Presence of Absence: On Hauntings, Traces, and Memory in Palestinian and Israeli Discourse

Lecture by Dr. Lital Levy

Blending history and literature, Lital Levy’s book *Poetic Trespass: Writing between Hebrew and Arabic in Israel/Palestine* traces the interwoven lives of Arabic and Hebrew in Israel/Palestine from the turn of the twentieth century to the present to explore the two languages’ intimate intertwining in prose, poetry, film, and visual art. It investigates voices from the Hebrew-Arabic “no-man’s-land”: the voices of those who defy intense political and social pressures to write in the language of the other, or who bring the languages into dialogue so as to rewrite them from within. In her talk, Levy discussed the “presence of absence” as a shared trope of recent Palestinian and Jewish-Israeli discourses, with an emphasis on the writings of Mahmoud Darwish, Almog Behar, and Ayman Sikseck.

LITERARY EVENINGS

This platform brought together authors, academics, and critics to examine new books:

Ex-Libris: Chronicles of Theft, Preservation, and Appropriating at the Jewish National Library

Gish Amit / VLJI and Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House

The World without Jews: The Nazi Imagination from Persecution to Genocide

Alon Confino / Yale University Press

Atatürk in the Nazi Imagination

Stefan Ihrig / Harvard University Press

The Creation of Israeli Arabic: Political and Security Considerations in the Making of Arabic Language Studies in Israel

Yonatan Mendel / Palgrave Macmillan

The Holocaust and the Nakba: Memory, National Identity, and Jewish-Arab Partnership

Bashir Bashir, Amos Goldberg, editors / VLJI and Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House

Website and Multimedia

Multimedia manager: Nahariel Leader

Photographer and new-media editor: Tamar Abadi

The multimedia array at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute continues to bring the Institute's content to the public through various media: the website, the application, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. We have almost 6,000 followers on our Facebook page, which keeps our audience up to date regarding events, publications, and news items that mention the Institute and which is an active participant in discussions of the topics the Institute deals with.

The Institute's YouTube channel has become a rich library of lectures that is attracting more and more views from around the world. Our YouTube library contains more than 1,800 recorded lectures that have already had nearly 800,000 views.

In the coming year we expect to top the one million mark.

The Institute's application is accessible in Hebrew and English and can be downloaded to Android-supporting or Apple devices for following the content published by the Institute, such as live broadcasts, recorded lectures, new publications, and for signing up for the distribution list.

The Institute's website is accessible in three languages and has an average of 16,000 hits per month, some of which are of shoppers in the Institute's online bookstore of its publications.

Tamar Abadi, a talented photographer who has added depth to our combined abilities, joined our multimedia team this year.

<https://www.facebook.com/vanleer.institute>

<http://goo.gl/c2bv2Q>

<https://twitter.com/VanleerInst>

<https://www.youtube.com/VanleerInstitute>



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Director and executive editor: Dr. Tal Kohavi

Publishing production manager: Yona Ratzon

Scientific editor: Asaf Shtull-Trauring

www.vanleer.org.il/en/publications

Journals

Theory and Criticism, India/Israel

special issue, Vol. 44, ed. Eitan Bar-Yosef.
Published in cooperation with Hakibbutz
Hameuchad Publishing House, Tel Aviv.

Theory and Criticism, Vol. 45, ed. Eitan Bar-Yosef. Published in cooperation with Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, Tel Aviv.

Journal of Levantine Studies, Vol. 5
No. 1 (Summer 2015), ed. Abigail
Jacobson [in English].

**Identities: Journal of Jewish Culture
and Identity**, No. 6; No. 7, ed. Naftali
Rothenberg, co-editor: Yotam Ben-Zimman.
Published in cooperation with Hakibbutz
Hameuchad Publishing House, Tel Aviv.

Contributions to the History of Concepts, Vol. 10 No. 1; Vol. 10 No. 2, ed. Sinai Rusinek.

Research and position papers

Command of Arabic among Israeli Jews,
Yehouda Shenhav, Maisalon Dallashi,
Rami Avnimelech, Nissim Mizrahi, and
Yonatan (Yoni) Mendel.

The Gender Index: Gender Inequality in Israel 2015, Hagar Tzameret-Kertcher, Hanna Herzog, and Naomi Chazan.

From Gendered Practice to Practice of Equality: A Field Guide, Hadass Ben-Eliyahu and Zeev Lerer.

Women, Peace, and Security: United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in the Israeli Context, Sarai Aharoni.

Implementing and Monitoring National Action Plans: Strategies of Women's Organizations, Pnina Steinberg.

Baseline Report: Women's Representation in Security Decision Making 2013-2014, Pnina Steinberg.

Government Budget for 2015: The Fifth Annual Conference of the Economics and Society Program at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute.

Re-examination of the Israeli Risk-Adjustment Formula: The Introduction of Socio-Economic Risk Adjustment,

From Third Sector to Civil Sector: On the Collective Identity of Civil-Sector Organizations, Benjamin Gidron, Nissan Limor, and Ester Zychlinsky.

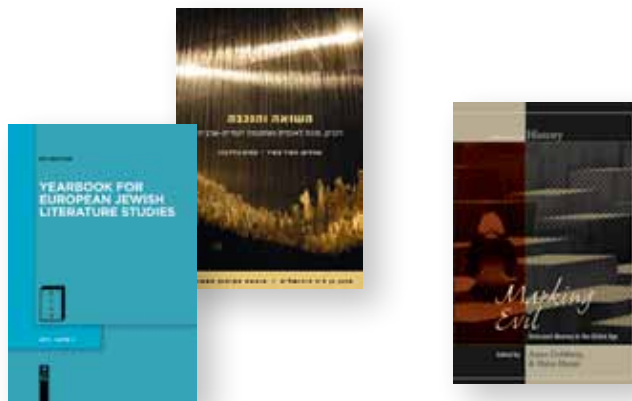
Non-Hebrew research and position papers

The Gender Index: Gender Inequality in Israel 2015, Hagar Tzameret-Kertcher, Hanna Herzog, and Naomi Chazan [in English].

Baseline Report: Women's Representation in Security Decision-Making 2013-2014, Pnina Steinberg [in English and Arabic].

Implementing and Monitoring National Action Plans: Strategies of Women's Organizations, Pnina Steinberg [in English and Arabic].





Books

Where Levinsky Meets Asmara: Social and Legal Aspects of Israeli Asylum Policy, ed. Tally Kritzman-Amir. Published in cooperation with Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, Tel Aviv.

This Is No Africa: Boundaries, Territory, Identity, Haim Yacobi. Published in cooperation with Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, Tel Aviv.

The Holocaust and the Nakba: Memory, National Identity and Jewish-Arab Partnership, eds. Bashir Bashir and Amos Goldberg. Published in cooperation with Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, Tel Aviv.

Privatization Policy in Israel: State Responsibility and the Boundaries between the Public and the Private, eds. Itzhak Galnoor, Amir Paz-Fuchs, and Nomika Zion. Published in cooperation with Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, Tel Aviv.

Arab Society in Israel: Population, Society, Economy (7) (electronic book), ed. Ramsees Gharrah.

Secularization and Secularism: Interdisciplinary Perspectives, ed. Yochi Fischer. Published in cooperation with Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, Tel Aviv.

The Ethics of Witnessing: A History of a Problem, Michal Givoni. Published in cooperation with Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, Tel Aviv.

The Question of the Existence of Jewish Mysticism, Boaz Huss. Published in cooperation with Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, Tel Aviv.

Wandering Heroes, Committed Writers: Nihilists and Nihilism in Russian Literature, 1862–1866, Rafi Tsirkin-Sadan. Published in cooperation with Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, Tel Aviv.

Zionism and Empires, ed. Yehouda Shenhav. Published in cooperation with Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, Tel Aviv.

Non-Hebrew Books

Marking Evil: Holocaust Memory in the Global Age, eds. Amos Goldberg and Haim Hazan [in English]. Published in cooperation with Berghahn Books.

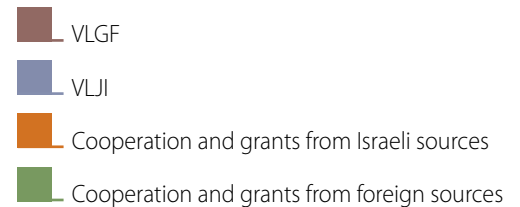
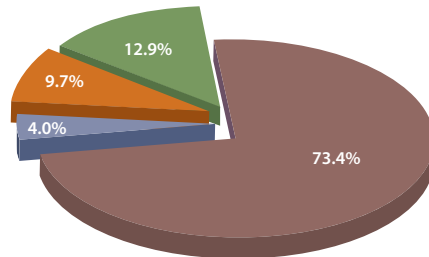
The Legacy of Polish Solidarity: Social Activism, Regime Collapse, and Building of a New Society, eds. Andrzej Rychard and Gabriel Motzkin [in English]. Published in cooperation with Peter Lang International Academic Publishers.

Yearbook for European Jewish Literature Studies, Vol. 2 (2015), ed. Karin Neuberger. Published in cooperation with De Gruyter.

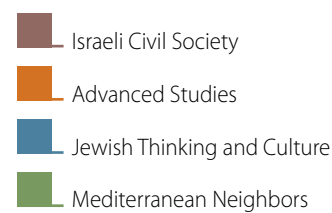
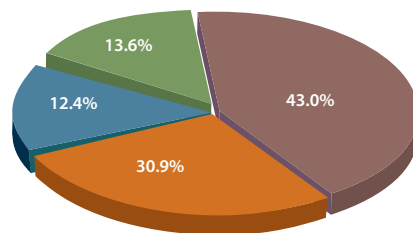


FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES DATA (2014)

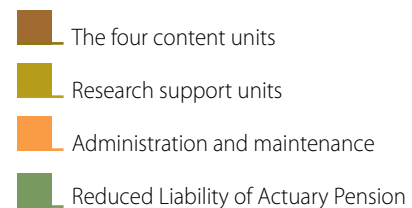
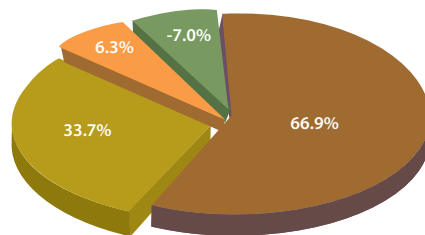
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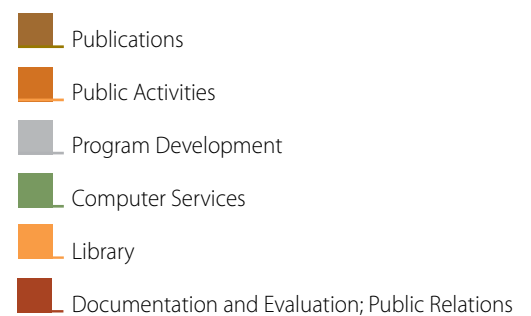
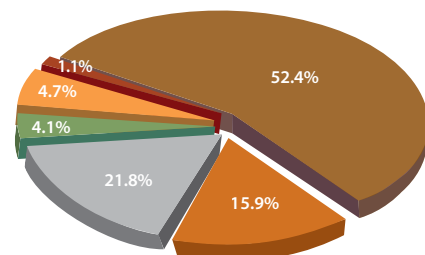
Content Units Research Cost as a Percentage of Total Research Cost



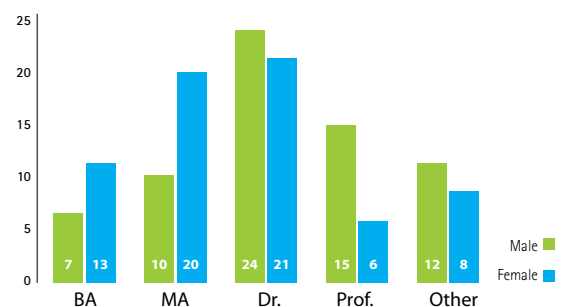
Percentage of Total Expenditure by Main Categories



Research Support Units Expenditure as a Percentage of Total Research Expenditure



Number of Employees by FTE
Data refer to CPA's report for 2014



Employees by Degree and Gender

* Because percentages have been rounded off, there may be a discrepancy of about 0.1 percent.

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