

Editors' Note

The Romanian Journal of Society and Politics, an academic project developed under the auspices of The National University of Political Science and Public Administration, is publishing a special thematic volume dedicated to Israeli studies: the Volume 8, Number 1 of the New Series (Issue 15). The decision to have this special issue is due to the increasing interest of Romanian students and academics in this area of studies, and due to the establishment of a Center of Israeli Studies at NUPSPA, within the Faculty of Political Science. A brief description of the rationale, of the objectives and plans of development is present in the beginning of the present volume and it is authored by professor Liviu Rotman, director of the Center.

The authors of the present Issue of RJSP were participants in the inaugural conference of the Center, which was dedicated to "*Contemporary Issues in Israeli Politics and Society*", and was held in Bucharest at NUPSPA between 19-22 February 2013. There are five articles included in this issue, to be briefly reviewed below.

In the first article, "*Inclusive Citizenship as a Framework for Jewish-Arab Relations in Israel*" by Yitzhak Reiter, analyzes the Israeli model of citizenship and its implementation. The author uses a liberal-democratic paradigm which stimulates the inclusive citizenship. Inside of this paradigm, Dr. Reiter finds that the Israeli state is not able to implement an inclusive citizenship "due to the purpose of establishment of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state that implements Zionist ideology". On this account, the Israeli state maintains a structural difference on its citizens based on the distance between identity, ideology and citizenship at some institutional levels. The main explanatory element is still represented by the regional territorial conflict.

In the article "*Higher Education among Arab Students from Israel: The Dilemma of Studying in an Israeli University or Abroad*", Kussai Haj Yehia analyzes the accessibility of Arabs to the higher education system in Israel. Dr Haj Yehia identifies, on the basis of empirical research, inequalities inhibiting Arab students' access to higher education in Israeli universities; he also emphasizes factors that determine Arab students from Israel to study at universities abroad.

"*The Violence on Inter-religious Background in Three Israeli Cities: Safed, Nazareth, and Beit Shemesh*" written by Yitzhak Reiter and Nancy Kobrin, explores the factors leading to political violence escalations based on religious discourses and ideologies in Israel. The authors develop three study cases taken from the Israeli urban space over the last 15 years, making use of a theoretical framework mainly defined by the work of Durkheim and Arendt. The research explores whether the political violence erupted on a religious basis or the religious discourse represented just an easy platform to initiate violence as a reaction to deeper social changes.

The article *“Israel – Diaspora Relations: Mutual Images, Expectations, Frustrations”* by Raphael Vago presents the specific model of the developing relations between the State of Israel and the Jewish Diaspora abroad, including related challenges. Dr. Vago discusses the complexities of Israeli-Diaspora relations beyond the political issues. The article reveals “two parallel Jewish worlds” that represent two different realities; as the author states, “there are no easy solutions to the problems that are also debated within each of the component parts – in the Diaspora and Israel”.

The article that closes the special Issue is *“Integration Patterns of Romanian Immigrants in the Israeli Society: Sociopolitical Aspects”* by Adina Babes. In her article, Dr Babes studies the immigration of Romanian Jews to Israel and their integration as citizens of the country, defined in terms of social and political rights. The article uses both a normative framework (through the lenses of Amartya Sen’s theory of capabilities and Martha Nussbaum’s theoretical developments) and an empirical framework (through 30 interviews conducted among Romanian Jews repatriated between 1970 and 1980).

This special Issue of RJSP is meant to offer its readers a glimpse of the research preoccupations of academic life at NUPSPA. Another thematic issue has already been announced through a special call for the RJSP issue of June 2014: *Imperial and Post-Imperial Orders*, covering themes of empire, imperial ideas, structures and history, imperial orders, colonialism and post-colonialist societies and orders.

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