

# COMMUNITY AND IDENTITY IN MODERN ISRAEL

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What makes human societies cohere and what makes them stay together? On the other hand, what brings about conflict, confrontation and ultimately, breakdown? These are seminal questions that have plagued scholars for years. This course is about processes and dynamics which form, maintain, and solidify a human society. Alternatively, there are always forces which destabilize groups and tear them apart. These opposing orientations of integration and disintegration of societies characterize civilization since its inception.

Through the story of the Israeli society, the students will be familiarized with the motivations, interests, emotions and interactions which drive groups and individuals toward and away from each other. Means and mechanisms of socialization and group cohesion such as history, language, culture, politics, values, conflict and ideology will be introduced as part of the community building and identity construction efforts of the new country. Israel, as a relatively small and newly founded nation, embodies a multitude of the ingredients which might consolidate or bring down a society and hence, it is an ample example for this course.

## Readings:

Anderson B. - *Imagined Communities* (2006)

Arieli Y. - *History and Politics* (1992)

Avruch K. - *Critical Essays on Israeli Society, Religion, and Government* (1996)

Benhabib S. - *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political* (1996).

Ben Rafael E. and S. Sharot- *Ethnicity, Religion and Class in Israeli Society* (1991)

Eisenstaedt S.N- *The Construction of Collective Identities* (1999)

Herzog H. and E. Ben Rafael- *Language and Communication in Israel* (2000)

Lewin-Epstein N. and M. Semyonov – *Stratification in Israel: Class, Ethnicity, and Gender* (2004)

Peleg M. - *Communication - How Can Human Communities Survive and Prosper in a Post-Modern Age* (2010)

Smootha S. - *Israel: Pluralism and Conflict* (1979)

Zerubavel Y. - *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (1997)

### Grading:

There are two exams, a midterm and a final and a written assignment to describe a socialization mechanism of one's choice. Accordingly, the final grade will be computed as follows:

Midterm: 30%

Final Exam: 40%

Assignment: 20%

Attendance and Participation: 10%

### Lectures (rudimentary List):

1. Introduction: individual and collective
2. The Jew versus the *Kehila*; The Israeli versus the *Chevre*
3. Community as a Human Agency: Instrumental, Substantial and Imagined.
4. The Israeli society: what type of community?
5. Dynamics and Communication in Community: Consensus Vs. Rifts
6. Plenty of rifts: The Israeli society as an immigrants society
7. Politics as Decision making for the Collective: Authority, Leadership, Legitimacy
8. The Israeli political culture: origins and prospects
9. History and Myth: What's your Story?
10. Right and Left narratives: Massada, Tel-Hai, Altalena and the Rabin assassination
11. Language and Discourse: Is There Anything to Discuss?
12. Yiddish, Hebrew, Slang and Gibberish: the lingual arena.
13. Culture, Sub-Culture and Counter Culture
14. The *Sabre* and the *Galut* : two codes of conduct and meaning
15. Identity, Belonging and Meaning: Who Am I, What Am I
16. A Jew, an Israeli, a Shenkinai, a Kibbutznik, a Settler and a Refusnik walk into a bar...
17. Participation, Awareness and Activism: What Makes Them Tick?
18. Protest and activism in Israel
19. Aggressiveness, Violence and indignity: Menu for Breakdown
20. The *Season*, Reparations from Germany, Peace versus Territories and the rabin assassination: Whither Israel?
21. Democracy: Participatory, Thick, and Deliberative: The Solution?
22. The Israeli Democracy at 60