



للدراستات المستقبلية

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Special Issue on

“Critical Readings of Israeli Forecasting”

Theorizing about the future has long occupied an important place in the development of Zionist thought. Once the Zionist movement moved from the scope of ideological vision to practical application, it moved on to plan and study the future of the Jewish state, which became central to the Zionist project. This was simultaneously a project of occupation and settlement as much as it was a project for a state. For example, Theodor Herzl, the founder of political Zionism, foresees the form, nature and structure of the "Jewish State" in Palestine in his book *The Jewish State*, showing clear attempts to envision the future aspects of a Jewish state. Hence, strategic thinking and envisioning "the Jewish State in Palestine" in the near future were key features of the Zionist colonial settler project.

Following the declaration of the state of Israel in 1948, Israeli politicians, military and strategic experts began to formulate plans, strategies, and visions for the future of Israel across various fields and sectors. It is no coincidence that the social and human sciences have been mobilized by Israeli academia to set out future visions of the new

state, in terms of planning and building, demographic evolution, assimilation of Jewish immigrants and their geographic distribution (particularly in border regions and the Negev), technological visions, and more. Setbacks and failures to implement many of these plans formulated by the state and the founding generations gave impetus to the development of an Israeli field of knowledge specifically dealing with future studies. The emergence of this field was spurred by a decline in centralized planning at the apex of the political and security hierarchy and the rise of various planning research units in government ministries, each with its own field and focus. This was also encouraged by the emergence of Israeli research centers and think tanks outside the framework of the state and central government – despite efforts to ensure overlap and coordination. In recent decades, a wealth of research, studies and reports on Israel's future have thus been published (**Annex 1** reviews some of the most recent and important ones).

Jerusalem occupies a central place in this field. Israeli policies on Jerusalem embody a model of future planning for expansion, annexation, and Judaization and their application on the ground. The Israelis have continued to forecast the future of Jerusalem –sparked by a nationalist-religious vision converging on the conception of Jerusalem as the “eternal and unified capital”– while also working to change Jerusalem's legal status and its political and demographic realities since the seizure of its western half in 1948, and the eastern half in 1967. Specialist Israeli research centers dedicate themselves to Jerusalem affairs. A statistical yearbook produced on Jerusalem aims to equip decision makers in Israel with forecasts of Jerusalem's future transformations and demographic, societal, and planning trends, as well as plans for future archaeological excavations in the city, with the sole concern appearing to be to unearth and consolidate an exclusive relationship between the Jews and Jerusalem.

All the above makes it necessary to examine Israeli visions for the future of Jerusalem and urban and settlement plans.

Demography is another field of critical importance given the current demographic weight and birthrate of Palestinians, and the projections that tip in the Palestinians favor in the future. Demographic forecasts are in fact key to Israel's political decisions, particularly if we consider the six million Palestinians in the diaspora. These demographic projections predict that the Palestinian population will exceed the Jewish population, even without counting the Palestinian diaspora, after 2025 when it reaches 53 percent¹. Also considered in these studies is the waning Jewish immigration to Israel in parallel with the continued high rates of reverse migration out of Israel in the future. Demographic forecasting is thus not restricted to the Palestinian issue, but also covers internal Jewish matters, in terms of changes in the Jewish demographic structure among the various ethnic and cultural groups (Mizrahi versus Ashkenazi, religious versus non-religious, new immigrants versus second generation and older). These changes are reflected in political, cultural and social aspects of Israeli society, and are therefore reflected in the relationship with the Palestinians inside and outside the Green Line.

In the economic field, Israeli research and development and innovation sectors rank highly on the global level. The discoveries of important gas reserves in recent years (the most important of which are the Tamar and Leviathan fields with potential reserves of more than 1,500 billion cubic meters²), have given a strong boost to

¹ Hussein Al-Rimmawi & Esmat Zeidan, "Effect of Demographic Factor on Palestinian-Israeli Conflict," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, vol. 3, no. 6, Special Issue (March 2013).

² Steven W. Popper et al., *Natural Gas and Israel's Energy Future: Near-Term Decisions from a Strategic Perspective* (Washington: RAND Corporation, 2009); David Lefutso, "Energy Bonanza or Abyss: Israel's Options for the Future," *Journal of Futures Studies*, vol. 17, no. 3 (March 2013), pp. 41-64.

studies on the future of energy. Having ensured its energy security for the next 50 years, and the ability to supply the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 (the territories of the Palestinian Authority) and Jordan with natural gas, Israel is seeking to develop future strategies to maximize the geopolitical impact of its exports. In the same vein, studies have also appeared predicting the future of research and development in Israel, the future of Israeli academia in the light of globalization, and the challenges it faces. These include the brain drain, the decline of research and Israeli scientific output, the availability and popularity of higher education, the employment of academics, and the future of the high tech sector, which has come to shape the economic future of Israel after the decline of traditional industries and agriculture. The question of energy and sustainability is inextricably linked to the problem of water, with increasing water scarcity and mounting Israeli monopolization of water supplies³. Following declining rainfall over recent years and the search for alternative water sources, Israel seeks to deal with this predicament in the context of a growing Israeli economy and increasing human consumption of water.

Furthermore, the Zionist project undertook analysis of the international system with view towards foreseeing changes and achieving its goal of building the state of "Israel" in alliances with international powers able to realize the project's implementation, as well as to support and protect it when required. The formation of Zionist-British and Zionist-French alliances should be seen in this light – as well as the Zionist-American alliance, whose last fruit was US President Donald Trump's 6th December 2017 decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel. Furthermore, Israel is directing its attention eastwards, building strategic alliances in keeping with its reading of the rise of new powers (China, India, Russia) in the

³ Haim Gvirtzman, "The Israeli-Palestinian Water Conflict: An Israeli Perspective," The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies Bar-Ilan University, *Mideast Security and Policy Studies*, no. 94 (January 2012).

international system. Finally, Israel's regional relations dominate the thinking of state leaders and the functioning of its civil and security institutions and agencies, and carry important weight in Israel's plans to shape its future directions and build alliances according to changes in the international system. This reveals the importance of a critical perspective with respect to Israeli futurist visions of changes in the structure of the international and regional system.

Finally, religious visions to this day continue to be central to many Israeli ideological visions that derive from biblical interpretations, especially those relating to settlement of land. The religious dimension is at the heart of political and national conflicts over the planning of Jerusalem and its environs and other occupied territories⁴. This coincides with the growing demographic and political strength of religious groups, be they the ultra-orthodox (*haredim*) or religious Zionists. This shift will no doubt have repercussions for the Israeli public sphere on the one hand and the Palestinian issue on the other. Studies emerging in recent years have sought to examine how the Israeli army⁵ and the public sphere⁶ are becoming more religious and how the ultra-orthodox community is changing⁷. The changes in the settler community in the West Bank, the rise of the settlers' power in Israeli politics, and the attempts of the right in general and the religious right in particular, continue to dominate the Israeli public sphere. The exchange of the traditional Israeli elites with

⁴ Warren R. Bardsley, "The Question of Zion and the Future of Israel/Palestine," *Erasmus Darwin Society* (March 25, 2009).

⁵ Yagil Levy, *The Divine Commander: The Theocratization of the Israeli Military* (Tel Aviv: Am Uved Publishers, 2014). (in Hebrew)

⁶ Guy Ben-Porat, *In Practice: The Secularization of Contemporary Israel* (Haifa: Pardes Publishing, 2016). (in Hebrew)

⁷ Benjamin Brown, *The Haredim: A Guide to their Beliefs and Sectors* (Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute, Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2017). (in Hebrew)

new elites contributes also to point to an alignment with right-wing visions of the future of Israel and the Zionist project. In recent years, other studies have also explored the relationship between the state and the Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel in terms of demographic, academic, economic, and political development, as well as planning and construction issues, particularly regarding Israeli plans in the Negev.

In the past, these visions, strategies and future studies have not enjoyed sufficient critical academic Arab study and serious Arab epistemological approaches dealing with the future of Israel, failing to present Arab knowledge on Israel's future based on the critical engagement with Israeli conceptions and studies. This special issue of *Istishraf* is thus devoted to "Israeli Forecasting and Planning". We hope it will enable an exploration of these issues and the analysis of their impact on the future of the Palestinian cause and on the Arab countries, especially within the following topics:

- **Jerusalem**
- **The West Bank and Gaza Strip**
- **Arab Palestinian citizens of Israel**
- **The future relationship of religion and society**
- **Future transformations in demography**
- **Energy change and the energy shift**
- **Economy, technology, and innovation (universities, scientific research, and the private sector)**
- **Israeli futurist visions of changes in the structure of the international and regional system**
- **Israel in light of the conflicts and relations with Iran and the Arab world**
- **Contemporary readings of Israel's future in biblical prophecy**

These topics are presented in this issue exclusively through the lens of Israeli planning and forecasting.

Submission procedure

- *Istishraf* welcomes research proposals on “Critical Readings of Israeli Forecasting” which offer new research treatments or additional value and results, according to the specifications for research proposals adopted by the ACRPS.
- Completed research papers will be adjudicated by a specialist academic board.
- Research papers should be anywhere between 6,000 to 8,000 words.
- Research papers should be in Arabic or English, and in the latter case they will be translated once accepted.
- The deadline for submissions is **September 20, 2018**.
- Submission should be addressed to istishraf@dohainstitute.org

Note: *Istishraf* also accepts reviews of recently published books on the theme “Critical Readings of Israeli Forecasting”. Reviews should be between 1,000 to 3,000 words.

Annex 1

- Israeli vision of conflicts in the Middle East and their implications for Israel's security [2017].⁸

- Israel 2028, Vision and Strategy for Economy and Society in a Global World [2008].⁹

- Israel 2020: Detailed Plan for the Future of State and Society [2000].¹⁰

- JPPI's 2017 Conference on the Future of the Jewish People [2017].¹¹

- Jerusalem 5800¹².

- Demography, Geopolitics, and the Future of Israel's Capital [2010]¹³.

⁸ Ahmad Khalifa, *Israeli vision of conflicts in the Middle East and their implications for Israel's security* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2017). (in Arabic)

⁹ "Israel 2028, Vision and Strategy for Economy and Society in a Global World," Presented by a Public Committee Chaired by Eli Hurvitz, Edited by David Brodet, Initiated and supported by the US-Israel Science and Technology Commission and Foundation (March 2008), accessed on 3/1/2018, at: <https://goo.gl/9izmhM>

¹⁰ *Israel 2020: Detailed Plan for the Future of State and Society* [6 Vols.], transl. from Hebrew rev. by Elias Shoufani and Hani Abdullah (Beirut: Center for Arab Unity Studies, 2005) (in Arabic)

¹¹ The Jewish People Policy Institute, "JPPI's 2017 Conference on the Future of the Jewish People," accessed on 3/1/2018, at: <https://goo.gl/8hhDJL>

¹² "Jerusalem 5800," accessed on 3/1/2018, at: <https://goo.gl/m82TgB>

¹³ Nadav Shragai, "Demography, Geopolitics, and the Future of Israel's Capital," Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (2010).

- A Vision for Jerusalem: Plan for Revitalizing Jerusalem, the Capital of Israel [2008]¹⁴.
- Jerusalem, Final Status Issues [1995]¹⁵.
- Future Scenarios for Jerusalem [2014]¹⁶.
- Jerusalem in the Future: The Challenge of Transition [2007]¹⁷.
- Israel: A Future Compromise [2012].¹⁸
- Israel Demography 2010-2030: The Road to Religious State [2010].¹⁹
- Israel 2020: A Strategic Vision for Economic Development [2008]²⁰.
- Israel 2020: Two scenarios for the Future²¹.

¹⁴ "A Vision for Jerusalem: Plan for Revitalizing Jerusalem, the Capital of Israel," The JIIS Studies Series no. 116 (Jerusalem: The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 2008).

¹⁵ Dore Gold, "Jerusalem, Final Status Issues," Series: Israel-Palestinian, Study no. 7 (Tel-Aviv University, The Jaffe Center for Strategic Studies, 1995).

¹⁶ International Peace & Cooperation Center, IPCC, *Future Scenarios for Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: IPCC Jerusalem, 2014), accessed on 14/1/2018, at: <https://goo.gl/aZpWfB>

¹⁷ Shlomo Hasson (ed.), *Jerusalem in the Future: The Challenge of Transition* (Jerusalem: The Floersheimer Institute for Policy Studies, 2007).

¹⁸ Richard Laub and Olivier Boruchowitch, *Israel: A Future Compromise*, translating from French: Avner Lahav (Tel Aviv: Resling Publishing, 2012). (in Hebrew)

¹⁹ Arnon Soffer & Evgenia Bestrov. *Israel Demography 2010-2030: The Road to Religious State* (Haifa: Reuven Chaikin Chair in Geostrategy, University of Haifa, 2010). (in Hebrew)

²⁰ Clyde Prestowitz & Ben Carliner, *ISRAEL 2020: A Strategic Vision for Economic Development* (Washington: The Economic Strategy Institute, 2008).

²¹ "Israel 2020: 2 scenarios for the future Scenario 1: Towards the end of the State of Israel/ Scenario 2: Towards a durable Israeli state," GEAB, 16/9/2016, at: <https://goo.gl/ozs4Gc>

- A new national security vision for Israel's 75th Year [2013]²².
- Israel Sustainability Outlook 2030 [2012]²³.
- Barriers Preventing Food Security in Israel, 2050 [2014].²⁴
- The Future of Israel/Palestine: Embracing the Broken Middle [1997]²⁵.
- Israel's New Future [1994]; Israel's New Future Revisited [2013]²⁶.
- Back to the Future': A Comparative Ethical Look at Israeli Arab Future Vision Documents [2008]²⁷.
- The Future of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict [2005]²⁸.
- Israel's Future: The Time Factor [2008]²⁹.

²² The Reut Institute, "A new national security vision for Israel's 75th Year," (November 2013), at: <https://goo.gl/HFXUHx>

²³ "Israel Sustainability Outlook 2030," at: <https://goo.gl/YE4GxJ>

²⁴ Efrat Hadas & Yoav Gal, "Barriers Preventing Food Security in Israel, 2050," *Managing Global Transitions*, vol. 12, no. 1 (2014), pp. 3-22.

²⁵ Marc H. Ellis, "The Future of Israel/Palestine: Embracing the Broken Middle," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol. 26, no. 3 (Spring 1997), pp. 56-66.

²⁶ Manfred Gerstenfeld, *Israel's New Future Interviews* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 1994); Manfred Gerstenfeld, *Israel's New Future Revisited: Shattered Dreams and Harsh Realities, Twenty Years after the First Oslo Accords* (New York: RVP Press, 2013).

²⁷ Uriel Abulof, "'Back to the Future': A Comparative Ethical Look at Israeli Arab Future Vision Documents," *Israel Studies Review*, vol. 23, no. 2 (2008), pp. 29-54.

²⁸ Yossi Alpher, *The Future of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Critical Trends Affecting Israel*, Washington, United States Institute of Peace, Special Report 149 (September 2005).

²⁹ "Israel's Future: The Time Factor," A Debate between Efraim Inbar and Ian S. Lustick, *Israel Studies Forum*, vol. 23, no. 1 (Summer 2008), pp. 3-11.