



New Directions: Sephardi/Mizrahi Migrations in Global Contexts

International Conference
December 17-19, 2019 | Israel
Ramat-Gan, Sede Boqer Campus



Migrations of Jews from North Africa, the Middle East, and the Balkans to Europe and the Americas began in the late 18th century and accelerated during the 19th and 20th centuries. These migrations were driven by diverse “push” and “pull” factors of both a global and local character. Successive generations of Sephardi/Mizrahi immigrants have thus experienced social and economic mobility in new countries as their national, ethnic, and religious identities have continued to evolve.

However, much of the scholarly work devoted to Sephardi/Mizrahi migration thus far is situated in the context of Middle Eastern geopolitical affairs, particularly the establishment and development of the State of Israel and other regional nation-states. In focusing on the Israeli context and internal hierarchies within Israeli society, prominent Israeli studies of Sephardi/Mizrahi ethnicities have largely overlooked aspects of Sephardic migration and resettlement in non-Israeli, diasporic contexts, as well as the transnational linkages between Israel and other migration destinations.

This conference seeks to address Sephardi/Mizrahi migration and the formation of Sephardi/Mizrahi diasporas in the last 200 years from an interdisciplinary and comparative perspective. We look forward to receiving proposals that evince diverse perspectives on immigrants’ integration and encounters with Jewish and non-Jewish and Sephardi and non-Sephardi populations in new lands.

We invite presentations covering the historiographic, sociological, demographic, economic, and cultural aspects of these migratory processes, as well as related theoretical and methodological implications that can aid our understanding of Jewish-Muslim and Mizrahi-Ashkenazi relations. Additionally, the conference will include a session on Jewish press and media as a lens through which the transnational dimensions of these migrations can be examined.

Rather than remain confined to the ‘bipolar’ perspective of Israel and the Jewish world, one of our goals is to showcase research on Israel-Diaspora relations from the alternative perspective of the Sephardi/Mizrahi sub-ethnic diaspora in the West. We also seek to redress the current disparities between Israeli and non-Israeli scholars working on these topics. This segment of the conference will be conducted as a workshop at the Center for Israel Studies, Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism, BGU.

The conference will be held over two and a half days on two campuses: the opening panel and initial sessions will take place at Bar-Ilan University in Ramat-Gan, while the second half will take place at Ben-Gurion University’s Sede-Boqer Campus, with a subsequent return to Bar-Ilan University. English is the preferred language for all presentations and discussions.

Proposals should include a lecture title, an abstract of up to 500 words, and a brief autobiographical note (English preferred, Hebrew if necessary). These should be submitted by March 1, 2019 to Dr. Aviad Moreno, new.directions2019conference@gmail.com.

We strongly encourage joint proposals for full thematic panels.

Academic Organizing Committee:

Bar-Ilan University
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Prof. Larissa Remennick
Dr. Nissim Leon
Dr. Itzhak Dahan

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
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