



DIGITAL SEARCH: Lena Salaymeh points to a line in a manuscript, with Noah Greenfield, in the Robbins Collection's reading room.

From High Tech to Holy Text

Conferences explore influence of law on business, religion

Unfazed by the scope of its challenge, the Berkeley Institute for Jewish Law and Israeli Law, Economy and Society spanned 1,700 years of legal analysis in two spring semester conferences.

In February, "Israel Through the High-Tech Lens" tackled modern-day topics such as challenges for Israeli entrepreneurs, cross-border collaboration in the Middle East, and clean-tech growth. In April, "Legal Heterodoxy in Islamic and Jewish History" started with the 4th century to explore how religious communities have tolerated—or not tolerated—dissimilar legal opinions.

The first conference, which was co-sponsored by the Berkeley Center for Law & Technology, drew about 350 corporate leaders, entrepreneurs, scholars, students, and policymakers from Israel and the United States. "We addressed a critical issue for the Bay Area tech community: the future of Israel's high-tech sector and its deep collaboration with Silicon Valley," institute Faculty Director Kenneth Bamberger said.

One panel discussed expanding opportunities for Israeli Arabs—who now comprise 0.5 percent of Israel's high-tech professionals. The hurdles they face include minimal networking opportunities, limited access to capital, and simple geography. "Most Arabs live in the north,

two to three hours from Tel Aviv, Israel's business center," noted Kheir Abdel Razek, deputy CEO of a nonprofit that promotes employment opportunities for Arab university graduates.

Cisco Systems' Zika Abzuk described a current national initiative that encourages high-tech companies to recruit Israeli Arabs. According to Jimmy Levy, who manages Israel's first fund to invest in Arab companies, "Few have experience managing research and development, sales, and budgets. That makes it hard to raise capital even if they have a great idea."

Another panel weighed strategic considerations for Israeli tech companies, including decisions involving where to incorporate. Case in point: Incorporating in Delaware brings an advanced system of corporate law and a direct mergers and acquisition process; incorporating in Israel yields a lower corporate tax rate and better investment incentives.

Innovators also need to decide whether it would be in their long-term interest to seek funding from Israel's Office of the Chief Scientist. To keep promising companies within Israel, the office issues grants covering up to half of a firm's technology program in return for royalty payments of 3 percent of revenues.

"The catch is that the company must go through a very complicated buyout system if it wants to move its technology and know-how out of Israel," said Israeli high-tech lawyer Ayal Shenhav. Corporate executive Sharon Segev added, "If we can't share the know-how among our subsidiary companies in different countries, that's a problem."

The Legal Heterodoxy symposium was principally funded and planned by Boalt's Robbins Collection, an international center for comparative legal and historical studies. Additional sponsors included the institute's Jewish Law Program and UC Berkeley's Initiative on Muslim-Jewish Relations, Townsend Center, Jewish Studies Program, and Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life.

Noah Greenfield, a graduate fellow in Jewish law at the institute, and Lena Salaymeh, a Robbins Collection Islamic Law postdoctoral fellow in 2012–2013, played key roles in organizing the event. "In both Jewish and Islamic legal studies, sectarian and minority legal opinions remain relatively underexplored," Greenfield said.

Scholars analyzed how monotheistic communities reconcile the notion of divine law with

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—Noah Greenfield

the reality of multiple juristic opinions, and how jurists rationalize and defend the diversity of legal opinions in their communities.

Each panel featured an Islamic law speaker, a Jewish law speaker, and a nonlegal expert involved in comparative research on Islam and Judaism. Boalt professor and Robbins Collection director Laurent Mayali chaired a panel on ortho-

doxy and heresy, and Bamberger chaired another on minority and dissenting opinions.

“Modern scholars of Jewish and Islamic law tend to work in isolation from each other,” Greenfield said. “We wanted to remedy this oversight and change future scholarship by showing just how productive and crucial such comparative work can be.” —*Andrew Cohen*

Soft Spot in a Real Hard World

Warren Institute report finds funding gaps impede state-supported victim/witness centers

It has been nearly 20 years since California funded a network of centers to serve the rights of witnesses and victims of violent crime. In May, the Chief Justice Earl Warren Institute on Law and Social Policy released the first comprehensive report on the effectiveness of those 59 Victim/Witness Assistance Centers (VWACs)—one in each county, one in the City of Los Angeles—addressing the needs of women harmed by sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking.

Among other findings, the report, *A Complex and Compassionate Response: The Role of Victim/Witness Assistance Centers in Responding to Violence Against Women in California*, identified a lack of adequate financial support to deliver even minimal rights and services mandated by law.

“We heard repeatedly that funding has plateaued or diminished, while costs and the need for services have skyrocketed,” says report author Heather Warnken ’09, a legal policy associate at the Warren Institute. “Many advocates reported they had to ‘triage’ at the expense of quality case assessment, face-to-face contact, and continuity of care.”

The report relied on online surveys, site visits, focus groups, and interviews with service providers and experts to identify victims’ needs and gather data. “In doing so, we outlined several best practices for government-based victims’ services in responding to violence against women and in facilitating both the prosecution and prevention of these crimes,” Warnken adds.

She describes VWAC advocates as “the vital link between the hard edges of the criminal jus-

tice system and the compassionate and complex response needed by victims.” Without this link, she says, many victims feel invalidated or mistreated by the criminal justice system—often prompting them to disengage from the protections offered by both the criminal and civil legal systems.

The report also found that stories and statistics are equally important. “We need more data-driven research to support evidence-based practices for state-supported victim services in the criminal justice system,” says Warnken. “But we also must be informed by the victims themselves. We need to ensure that VWACs remain—as one manager described her center—the soft spot in a real hard world.”

Developed for the California Crime Victims Assistance Association and the California District Attorneys Association (CDA), the report was funded with a grant from the California Emergency Management Agency. It intersects with another Warren Institute–CDA project: creating a standardized, statewide training curriculum for victim-witness advocates.

“We bring to this project a wealth of expertise, from the VWAC report to research on Marsy’s Law [Victims’ Bill of Rights Act of 2008] and the realignment of inmates from the state to counties,” says Andrea Russi, the institute’s managing director and director of criminal justice. “This work epitomizes our role as a bridge between academia and legal practice, and uses research to influence policy.” —*Diane Fraser*



Read *A Complex and Compassionate Response: The Role of Victim/Witness Assistance Centers in Responding to Violence Against Women in California* at www.law.berkeley.edu/ewi.htm.