# Introduction

Galileo Galilei’s declaration at the end of his trial, “And yet it moves,” expressed the preeminence of human curiosity, which never rests in its quest for scientific truth and the advancement of human society. This search for truth is the foundation on which the entire academic world is built.

In the 1990s, the system of higher education in the State of Israel opened its gates to the masses. Currently, almost half of the students each academic year have the opportunity to attend an institute of higher education. This has a significant contribution to the development of society and the growth of the national economy because there is a relationship between education level and unemployment/income level. The rise in the educational level in the 1970s and 1980s contributed to 29% of the gross national product (GNP), investments in research and development contributed to a 41% increase in the GNP, and 70% of the patents were the fruits of university research (Volansky, 2005, 13). Similar findings emerged from studies examining the contribution of higher education to Israeli society today. In 2019, the unemployment rate among people with twelve years of schooling or less was 4.5 times higher than among those with sixteen years of schooling or more (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2020).

Academic research also contributes to Israeli society and economy. A study commissioned in 2014 by the National Council for Research and Development of the Samuel Neaman Institute for National Policy compared Israel to seven other developed countries and found that Israeli universities and research institutes held first place for registering patents in 2005-2009 (Feld et al., 2015, 16). Israel had the highest proportion of citizens with an academic degree from a research university out of the comparison group of seven countries. It ranked fourth out of forty developed countries for the most cited academic articles. The researchers concluded that since the purpose of research universities is to generate knowledge and disseminate it for the benefit of society and the national economy, they recommended “preserving what exists and strengthen it, and in any case not to hinder the universities from doing what they do well” (ibid., 103).

Another Neaman Institute study on Israel’s research and development outputs in 2000-2015 praised “the dominance of the universities in inventive activity and their esteemed position throughout the years” (Leck et al., 2018, 2). They noted that in 2015, among all the countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Israel held fourth place in the development of inventions. They emphasized the contribution of research institutions in the proliferation of start-up companies and the strong ongoing demand for inventive works from Israeli institutions.

Despite the impressive contribution of the academic system in Israel to the national economy and society and its value as a prolific creative center for technological innovation and intellectual growth, it has experienced major upheavals in the past two decades. This book reviews various aspects of these crises.[[1]](#footnote-1) Although they do not threaten the existence of the academic system itself or the individuals in it, they do hinder its development and erode its position. The chapters of this book examine the growth and revitalization of Israel’s academic system since the beginning of the millennium, the upheavals it has undergone, and directions that may help stabilize it and improve its ability to cope with the challenges it faces today.

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Since the establishment of the State of Israel, its higher education system has grown consistently in all aspects of activity: the number of students has increased, new universities have been established, an impressive number of academic colleges have been added, and it has reached into the social and geographic periphery of Israel. By the end of the twentieth century, the higher education system had been transformed from a monolithic system to a pluralistic and versatile one. The achievements of the Israeli academic system are recognized around the world as well as within the borders of the country.

However, this expansion has not been free from growing pains and crises. This book begins by reviewing the milestones in the development of higher education in Israel from the founding of the State through the end of the twentieth century, then continues with an examination of its upheavals, crises, and achievements from the beginning of the twenty-first century through 2023. The crises that characterized the past two decades are multidimensional and touch on all aspects of academic life: research, the quality of learning and teaching, the politicization of higher education, and the diminished status of the regulatory bodies. Alongside this, a significant effort was made to broaden accessibility to higher education among the Arab and ultra-Orthodox Jewish populations. Additionally, a process began for moving away from traditional teaching and learning styles and methods and adopting new ones.

Parallel crises are taking place in academic systems around the world. Indeed, there is an international axis tightly bound with trends of globalization, neoliberal ideologies, monopoly busting, public budgeting challenges, and demands for democratizing higher education and opening it to the general public. However, analyzing the local picture based only on this global axis is misleading and does not show how the system in Israel is coping with the unique issues that arise from budget crises and political interventions in decision-making processes, such as opening a university in Judea and Samaria (Ariel University), an area under military authority, or Israeli’s distinctive multiculturalism, in particular concerning the Arab and ultra-orthodox Jewish populations, who are the poorest and least integrated sectors of society.

## The Relationship Between Theory and Research

Theoretical research on higher education has indicated three prominent and interrelated variables that led to changes in the structure of higher education around the world, beginning in the last decades of the twentieth century:

1. Democratization and opening the doors of institutes of higher education to social strata; previously, the doors had been closed to them;
2. Increased government involvement in the sciences and higher education;
3. The transition to an information-based society in the twenty-first century, which changed the structure of the labor market and impacted teaching and learning methods in academia.

Martin Trow (2004) explained the expansion of higher education in most OECD countries at the end of the twentieth century as the intensification of the democratic ideal. He asserted that democratization changed the nature of the higher education system, which used to be selective and based on universities, then adopted an operative structure more open to the broad public.

Similarly, Philip Altbach (2007) claimed that the development of various types of higher educational institutions in the twenty-first century resulted from expectations among multiple populations that the doors of academia would be open to them. States found it difficult to accommodate all the applicants who wanted to acquire an academic education in prestigious universities that focus on research. Therefore, institutions were founded that ranged widely in terms of quality, goals, and the resources available to them. The inevitable result was a decline in academic standards, mainly due to the composition and quality of the student body, the faculty, and the facilities at these institutions. External and internal pressures have created the “perfect storm” (Altbach, 2007), which set the higher education systems in motion to carry out a significant reform and change what had been long-standing operational traditions for most of the twentieth century. These, too, impacted the quality of academia.

Trow analyzed governments’ deepening political involvement and found that politicians are not concerned with making reforms necessary to improve higher education but “they prefer that the reform emanate from them” (Trow, 2004, 202). That is, politicians request or even demand that planned or implemented reforms be presented as if they had been the initiators. Heyneman et al. (2007, 35-54) adopted a similar view in claiming that the universities’ missions were harmed by the intervention of government entities who wanted to design curricula promoting the views of their preferred ideological groups and suppress those of others. Under these circumstances, universities tend to avoid controversy and disagreements with the government, even when questions of academic quality are involved, mainly so the government will not sabotage them due to their position.

According to Birnbaum and Shushok (2001, 59-84), this ongoing situation causes disruption and instability in institutions of higher education. While eternal stability is an illusion and utopian ideal that, in reality, can never be achieved and change is a natural phenomenon and expected feature of the political process in a democratic society, as Birnbaum and Shushok pointed out, crises are not necessary to improve the higher education system.

Regarding the change in teaching and learning methods, Knight (2002, 191-210) explained that the growth of the knowledge economy and increasing use of information and communication technology (ICT) provide alternatives that allow virtual learning and the gradual release from traditional teaching patterns. Expanding on Knight’s explanation, Kai-ming (2004) said this reflects changes in the labor market emphasizing employee entrepreneurship and innovation that have affected teaching and learning methods. The job market in the twenty-first century requires employees to constantly deal with emerging issues and develop abilities such as self-learning, generating knowledge, critical thinking, and creativity. Therefore, education and instruction systems must bid farewell to traditional learning methods and adopt methods and means for evaluating achievements that are relevant to the changing reality and job market that young people will encounter after their studies. Similar findings emerged in my book *Students of Yesterday, Students of Tomorrow* (Volansky, 2020) in which I reviewed trends in learning and teaching methods in the twenty-first century. Traditional methods are giving way because they are no longer relevant to a generation born with a keyboard in hand and who never knew a world without the Internet.

Some of the theoretical dimensions discussed as global transformations are also relevant in examining the changes the Israeli higher education system has undergone – and is still going through. The rapid increase in the rate of those admitted to institutes of higher education in Israel since the mid-1990s has had consequences in two directions. One, for the first decade of the twenty-first century (the so-called “lost decade”) the government refused to grant operating budgets that matched the rate of growth of the academic system. This severely damaged research universities in particular.[[2]](#footnote-2) Two, as access to academia became an issue of public interest, the political system intensified its intervention in decision-making processes, sometimes contradicting academic standards and undermining the authority of the regulatory bodies. The broadening of higher education and opening it to the Arab and ultra-orthodox Jewish communities was a manifestation of the democratization of higher education occurring in other countries around the world at that time. The goals were to integrate these distinctive sectors into the labor market and combat poverty among them.

## Synopsis of the Study

The research described in this book focused on the following five themes:

Theme 1: The consequences of the “lost decade” for the higher education system. Harsh budget cuts (about 25%) during the “lost decade” had long-term impacts on operational elements of higher education and academic research. About a thousand faculty members, across all institutions, were cut and virtually no new, young faculty members were hired; therefore, the median age of faculty members rose. The number of students in classrooms increased. Infrastructure vital for research laboratories was downsized. Libraries and information centers were impaired and could not develop. Universities’ dire financial situation made it difficult for them to invest in academic development. The number of non-thesis master’s degree programs increased, which generated income for the institutions but undermined their purpose as research institutions.

At the same time, it became clear that the existing structure of Israel’s Council for Higher Education (CHE), which grants permits to open new study programs, could not adequately cope with the changed reality. A bottleneck of some 450 programs awaited approval by CHE for many years. Once this weakness of the higher education system was identified, the Israel Ministry of Finance made an unsuccessful attempt to change CHE’s operational structure and authority by proposing three consecutive legal bills. The first, in 2008, sought to nationalize the Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC) and transfer authority for its activities to the Ministry of Education. (The PBC is a subcommittee of the CHE but has independent status by virtual of a 1977 government decision). In 2009, a second bill proposed changing the composition of the PBC membership. The third bill, in 2010, proposed that a central governmental committee would direct research activities and transferring to the Ministry of Education the authority to measure and evaluate achievements in various fields of research and knowledge. However, the Knesset never voted on any of these bills proposed by the Ministry of Finance and therefore none became law.

The apparent weakness of the system led to the establishment of a government committee to address the ongoing crisis. Subsequently, two other committees were tasked with finding ways to improve the status of the academic system. Their research revealed the long-term damage in the first decade of the twenty-first century caused by the budget cuts. As explored in Chapter 2, The findings indicated the need to streamline the planning processes and coordinate the activities of the government and the regulatory bodies for higher education to prevent recurring damage to the research infrastructure and the quality of academic teaching, which would also impact Israeli society and the economy.

Theme 2: Policies encouraging integration of ultra-Orthodox Jews and Arabs into higher education and barriers to their integration. Beginning in the mid-1990s, Israel’s higher education system opened its doors to the country’s social and geographic peripheries, mainly by granting recognition to about forty new colleges. Nevertheless, the two poorest and most isolated populations in Israeli society – Arabs and ultra-Orthodox Jews – were left behind. Chapters 3 and 4 of this book analyze the policy tools designed to promote the integration of these two communities into the academic system starting from the beginning of the twenty-first century. It also discusses barriers to this integration, which stem, among other things, from institutionalized cultural biases and the cultural distance of these two populations from the academic world. The premise of the plans to integrate Arabs and ultra-Orthodox Jews into higher education was to reduce poverty among them, given the link between academic education and employment rates. The government and CHE sought to pave the way for these two populations to acquire higher education and improve their integration into the labor market. This trend is consistent with other efforts to curb the ever-intensifying cycle of poverty among these two populations.

The policy tools examined include the measures that academic institutions took to bridge cultural gaps and economic incentives offered to support the institutions and encourage them to invest in reaching out to these two communities. The need to formulate a policy to integrate the ultra-Orthodox in academic education was influenced, inter alia, by demographic projections that while they currently represent about 12% of Israel’s population, by 2065 this sector will make up almost a third of the country’s residents and half the population of children aged 0-14.

Research sources include the archives of the CHE, Israeli universities, and a campus for ultra-Orthodox college students in Jerusalem. The latter includes letters from the chief rabbis of Israel giving their permission, support, and encouragement to the ultra-Orthodox population to attend institutes of higher education.

Barriers to the ultra-Orthodox public acquiring higher education lie in the contradiction between the fundamental values of the academic tradition and those of the ultra-Orthodox public. One condition that the ultra-Orthodox demand for attending academic institutions is that classes would be segregated by gender. This contradicts principles of equality between the sexes, races, and religions that are at the core of the culture of higher education. Unsurprisingly, the plan to integrate the ultra-Orthodox by allowing gender segregation provoked widespread opposition, a stormy public debate, and a legal case that reached Israel’s Supreme Court in 2021. The Supreme Court expressed reservations about the assumption that ultra-Orthodox students could be taught under the principle of “separate but equal.” It also became clear that there were significant gaps between the quantitative goals for integrating ultra-Orthodox students and their actual numbers in academic institutions.

In Chapter 3 of this book, I explain the essence of the barriers to the integration of ultra-Orthodox in higher education and offer alternatives that could overcome some obstacles. Among other things, I propose establishing a dedicated multi-campus university for ultra-Orthodox Jews that focuses on granting bachelor’s degrees. This is based on the model of regional colleges, which enabled the sharp increase in the number of students from Israel’s periphery starting in the 1990s.

Another contribution of the research presented in this book, although not novel in the discourse of Israeli education, is the recommendation to revisit the requirement to teach core curriculum subjects in ultra-Orthodox schools for boys, where learning is based almost exclusively on the study of sacred texts. When only some 6% of Israeli students were in the ultra-Orthodox sector, as was the case for most of the years that the state has been in existence, this situation received marginal attention. However, given the prediction that one-third to one-half of the student population may soon come from this educational stream, a renewed examination of the education policy for ultra-Orthodox children is necessary. Their lack of a foundation in secular studies leads to a high dropout rate from academic studies, particularly among ultra-Orthodox men. As explained in detail in Chapter 3, this book proposes a reassessment of policies that were close to implementation between the government and the ultra-Orthodox leadership in the early 2000s and even through 2022, which aimed to promote their successful integration into higher education (as will be explained in Chapter 3).

Barriers to the Arab population acquiring higher education are rooted in the complex history of Jewish-Arab relations in Israel. In practice, this is manifest, first and foremost, in the language gap. In the Israeli public school system, Arab and Jewish students study in separate schools from elementary school through high school. Their first close interaction often only takes place in higher educational institutions, where the language of instruction is Hebrew. Arab students who want an academic education must learn in a language that is not their mother tongue. In fact, they must function in four languages during their studies: literary Arabic, spoken Arabic, Hebrew, and English. The psychometric screening exam is the first barrier since it does not favor Arabic speakers. Currently, Arab students’ average score on psychometric exams is about 70 points lower than that of Jewish candidates for higher education.[[3]](#footnote-3)

There are other barriers to their integration. Pre-academic preparatory courses are not adapted to Arab culture, so separate preparatory programs were designed for the Arab student population. There is a lack of counseling for academic studies or regarding career choices following higher education studies. The majority of the Arab public lives far from educational institutions, so their average travel time by public transportation is up to five hours a day, or they must take on the expense of renting accommodations near the campus.

The research presents reports by experts regarding the necessary conditions for accelerating the integration of the Arab population in academia, alongside recommendations of committees and commissions working on programs to promote the accessibility of Israel’s universities to the Arab population. Chapter 4 of this book identifies cultural and economic barriers, in the context of the PBC’s policies and incentives and the solutions offered by the academic institutions, which led to a turning point in the rate of Arab students accepted into academia. It reviews the results of these policies as reflected in the numbers, according to which by 2020, Arabs made up close to 19% of the student body in institutes of higher education, which is similar to their proportion of the general population.

Theme 3: Disparities in the quality of research and teaching in various disciplines. Sixty-one reports by international committees the CHE appointed to assess the quality of research and teaching in Israeli universities and colleges between 2006-2019 were analyzed. The findings of these committees shed light on the achievements and weaknesses of the universities and colleges in various areas of research and teaching and identified a number of weaknesses. Israeli institutions had high status and ground-breaking achievements in fields such as mathematics, music, physics, computer science, electronic engineering and communication, and psychology. However, other fields previously considered prestigious lost status over the past two decades, such as economics, business administration, history, Jewish history, Arabic literature and language, and social work. In another thirty-five disciplines, achievements were defined as mediocre, with Israelis neither falling short nor surpassing their peers around the world. The findings indicated that a significant number of academic programs suffer from chronic “budgetary starvation” that threatens to further degrade their status. A preliminary analysis of the commissions’ reports found that the experts recommended that the CHE and PBC adopt a policy of corrective budgetary preferences to support neglected disciplines. However, implementation of their recommendations was delayed, and programs continued to deteriorate.

Furthermore, international research funding sources, to which Israel also applies, tend to give grants to collaborations in fields at the forefront of international scientific interest, with secondary support for the humanities and social sciences. They tend to support successful and prestigious departments or faculties with researchers who generate substantial income for their institutions by receiving competitive funding or developing patents that can be commercialized and are in demand on the private market. This reflects the decision-making process at all levels of the system, which reinforces “successful” and “prestigious” fields and further marginalizes weak ones.

While the crisis in the humanities and social sciences is a global phenomenon, it has distinctive features in the Israeli context. This is especially true in fields in which Israel previously led research in the international arena or in which it has specific cultural and geopolitical interests, such as Middle Eastern studies, Arabic language and literature, Hebrew language and literature, and Judaic thought. These subjects are the cradle and roots of Israeli culture and form a basis for understanding the country’s turbulent history and bringing about a future of peace and good neighborliness in the Middle East. In 2000, there were 1,821 students enrolled in Hebrew language and literature studies in Israel, but by 2017 this had dropped to 323 students. This illustrates the depth of the crisis in a field that once enjoyed prestige in Israel and internationally.

While no one denies the importance of the humanities and social sciences in research institutions, there is no guarantee that these fields will yield scientifically important and resounding breakthroughs that will bring substantial research grants to the institution. Some of the international committees appointed by the CHE recommended designating alternative budgeting criteria that would restore status to fields that were once at the forefront of academic research and teaching in Israel but have been left behind. The variables examined in the committee reports included student demand for various fields, teaching and learning methods, faculty members’ teaching load, the existence or absence of long-term planning in the field, student demographics, student readiness for higher education, the operating budgets at the disposal of departments, corrective measures in the budgeting model to support weakened classes and programs, and the necessary distinction between universities that are expected to function as research institutions and colleges that are primarily teaching institutions.

Although the CHE discussed the committees’ reports and even made them publicly available on their website, it is unlikely that many people read them in this archived format. In this book, the findings are presented in a concise form for the perusal of the scientific community and the general public. A broad and systematic explanation of the situation is given, illuminating the achievements and weaknesses of the fields of research and teaching that make up Israel’s higher education system. This will enable decision-makers at various levels to examine means for promoting the status of fifteen specific areas that the committees identified as being neglected. For example, the crisis in the humanities was the subject of six reports beginning in 2003, all of which recommended similar courses of action to restore the status of this field in Israel. However, it was not until 2021 that the committee recommendations were approved, and the budget allocated was relatively modest given the severity of the crisis in the field. Similarly, until two decades ago, economics and business administration were prestigious academic fields. For many years, experts trained in these fields were solid pillars of the government, serving as professional advisors and senior officials. Now that the status of this field has diminished, there is a shortage of people capable of advising and contributing to government policy.

Theme 4: Politicization of higher education and its impact on regulatory bodies. For about half a century, the CHE was headed by the Minister of Education and enjoyed freedom in navigating its role, under the 1958 Council for Higher Education Law. This began to change in the early 1980s, with the development of institutions for higher education in the territories of Judea and Samaria, and the establishment of the Council for Higher Education of Judea and Samaria under military authority. A manifestation of this was the government's decision to establish a university outside the territorial borders of Israel. This violated the CHE Law, which is limited to the state’s borders, and contradicted the recommendations of the PBC, which said there was no need to establish another university. This decision harmed the status of the regulatory bodies. It also provoked sharp criticism from the academic community who opposed political interference in establishing an educational institution and creating a decision-making mechanism other than the CHE of Israel that could approve accreditation.

In response, the rhetoric against the established universities intensified. They were called a “cartel” that must be subjugated. Politicians called for the dissolution of the CHE on the grounds that it prevents the establishment of new universities in order to preserve its power. Accrediting a new university in Judea and Samaria caused upheaval in academia and an ongoing crisis of trust between its senior officials and the government. Additionally, the membership of the regulatory bodies was changed in such a way that ensured the government could pass resolutions as it wished.

Once political interference created this rift, it continued to widen and erode the authority of the entity entrusted with planning higher education. Decisions were made to establish a medical school at Ariel University and to recognize an interdisciplinary center in Herzliya as a university, both of which contradicted the recommendations of the majority of CHE committee members. This book gets to the roots of this crisis and the failed attempts to renew and update the status and structure of the regulatory bodies. For example, a bill was proposed to establish a government-appointed committee intended to offer a new balance between academia and the state. The government eventually vetoed the bill due to concern that the proposed governance mechanisms would establish and limit the scope of its influence on the higher education system. Research on this topic was based on an analysis of decision-making processes in which the political system was involved, and on documents and protocols from the CHE archives, including those attesting to the involvement of the military establishment in approving decisions regarding academic activity in the territories of Judea and Samaria.

The government’s blatant interference in academic issues violated accepted standards in the academic world and guidelines for accrediting an academic program or institution. This took place alongside growing tension and discord among faculty members, reflecting the controversy dividing Israeli society in general on the relationship of the state to the territories of Judea and Samaria and the idea of ​​the military being involved in academia. One contribution of this book is its analysis of the step-by-step subjugation of teaching, science, and academic research to the Procrustean bed, with the aim of making it a tool in the hands of the government and violating the accepted rules and basic conditions for recognizing an academic institution or program. The study notes the degradation of the status of the regulatory bodies due to political interference and the blurring of the boundaries between academic considerations and political considerations. Blaming the universities for behaving as a cartel that only serves the needs of existing institutions is geared towards suppressing the concerns of the entity entrusted with planning and budgeting for higher education, which opposed accrediting the two new universities and the medical school.

These decisions harmed the status of the CHE and PBC. This study explains the dynamics that led to the government rejecting the proposal to establish new planning and management bodies for higher education, even though these were intended to strengthen the government’s position in guiding the development of the academic system in Israel.

The case of Israel offers an important lesson in the dividing lines between science and politics, between populism and academia, between the desire to please the masses and the need to maintain a scientific and academic ethos.

Theme 5: Changing learning and teaching methods in academia. Two main factors have influenced the change in teaching and learning methods. The first is the new youth culture with its deepening symbiosis to information and communication technologies offering a rich world of content. This cultural shift opened the world of knowledge to the masses through the Internet and digitization of international information sources. This made transparent and open to everyone information that was previously only accessible in libraries: books, journals, archives, and public or scientific websites. The second is the transition to a knowledge-based economy that increasingly uses computing processes, automation, robotics, and artificial intelligence. In this economy workers on production lines are no longer needed, as was the case for most of the twentieth century. Rather, there is a need for engaged employees who ask questions, seek answers, and think critically and creatively. These two factors are changing the traditional learning and teaching patterns in the higher education systems, as reflected in the reforms that began at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

A pioneering study included in this work examines emerging shifts in teaching and learning methods in nine Israeli institutions of higher education. These institutions are shedding traditional teaching and learning patterns and making breakthroughs in cutting-edge pedagogic methods appropriate for the contemporary youth culture and work world. The research methodology involved an examination of the policies and incentives offered by the CHE and PBC. Additionally, I conducted interviews with policymakers, faculty, and students at these institutions to assess the nature of the change. The relevance of this research became even more apparent when change processes accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic. The interviewees spoke about their efforts to adapt teaching and learning methods to the circumstances imposed on them by the pandemic. These included instructors increasingly using ICT to teach and students studying alone or in small groups. These institutions attach considerable value to developing the skills of asking questions and critical and creative thinking because these arouse students’ interest and are perceived as valuable for graduates when they move into the rapidly changing job market after their studies. This pioneering research revealed the transformation of students from passive to active learners; lecturers shifting from traditional to novel teaching patterns; the adoption of new methods for measuring and evaluating student achievements, and more.

## Structure of the Book

Chapter one reviews milestones in the development of the higher education system in Israel until the end of the twentieth century.

Chapter two addresses the “lost” decade at the beginning of the twenty-first century and its consequences for all components of the higher education system, including the quality of teaching and academic research.

Chapters three and four chapters deal with the challenges of expanding the accessibility of academic education to the ultra-orthodox Jewish and Arab populations, respectively.

Chapters five and six process and analyze sixty-one reports of international committees that examined the achievements of all disciplines in Israeli academia.

Chapter seven reveals the depth of political involvement in the CHE, including expanding Israeli academia into the territories of Judea and Samaria and mobilizing the army and military leadership for this task. This decreased the status of the CHE in Israel.

Chapter eight deals with the diminished position of the PBC, the entity entrusted with planning and budgeting higher education. This is in the context of the decisions made to establish three universities (Ariel University, the university in Herzliya, and the University of the Galilee) and a school of medicine, contradicting or ignoring the position of the PBC.

Chapter nine looks at attempts to change the structure of the regulatory bodies so that they would operate according to the government’s demands. The aim was to intensify the state’s participation in planning higher education while preserving the freedom of the institutions. The outline of this new governance was formulated into a bill but ultimately vetoed by the government.

Chapter ten is dedicated to the efforts being made to discard traditional teaching models. It reviews preliminary steps toward developing a new pedagogic model that changes students’ study patterns and lecturers’ teaching styles.

Chapter eleven summarizes the research findings.

The epilogue examines the possible consequences for Israel’s higher education system of this attempted legal coup of 2023.

The chapters of this book present the reader with a broad and complex picture of the challenges that Israel’s higher education system is facing today. The data and discussion may enrich people in a wide range of roles in all realms of society who hope for the continued growth and development of Israel’s higher education system and the impressive and abundant intellectual resources of those privileged to work in it.

1. For more on this issue, see publications such as *Academia All the Lies* (2020) by Tamar Almog and Oz Almog. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This coincided with the reduction of government spending in all areas, due to an economic crisis. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Around 2002, the gap between Jews and Arabs in the psychometric test scores was about a hundred points. The exam is also given to candidates in the Arabic language. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)