



The exhibition on Research Day

Research Grants Awarded by External Funds in 2005-2006

Seven studies conducted by Open University faculty were awarded funding from external funds this year, of which three were from the Israel Science Foundation.

- **Dr. Yoav Yair and Dr. Reuven Aviv (with Prof. Colin Price, Tel Aviv University): A study of the network behavior of lightning flashes in distant thunderstorms**

The research studies the assumption that a lightning flash in one thunderstorm cell can affect the discharge of another lightning flash in another, distant, cloud and that these electrically active clouds form a synchronized network of mutual interactions. An initial analysis shows that the network observed in natural thunderstorms is not random, but rather behaves like other (ecological, neurological or engineering) networks that reach synchronization and coordination, and may alternate between random and organized states. The present research will analyze lightning data from ground and space systems by using tools adopted from network theory, aiming to increase our understanding of this phenomenon and decipher the electromagnetic process that presumably generates it.

- **Dr. Sonia Roccas (with Lilach Sagiv, the Hebrew University): Traits and Values: Their Differential Implications for Attitudes and Behavior**

Traits and values are central constructs in personality, predicting perception, attitudes and behaviors. Both constructs have been widely studied in such diverse areas as political attitudes, parenting styles, health care and well-being. Traits and values refer to stable individual differences, defined in terms of broad response dispositions. Surprisingly, only few studies have examined the relations between the two constructs. These studies focused mainly on the commonalities between traits and values,



Posters from the Research Day exhibition (left to right): Dr. Avriel Bar-Levav, "Death and Mourning among Oriental Jewry" (Graphic design: Nira Arbel); Prof. Tamar Hermann, "The Israeli Peace Movement and the Oslo Process – On the Way to Nowhere" (Graphic design: Yarden Zahavi); Prof. Eli Levin, "Potential Theory and its Uses" (Graphic design: Nira Arbel); Dr. Bat-Zion Eraqi Klorman, "Yemeni Jews in the Moshavot's Society and Economy" (Graphic design: Avi Hatam).

revealing consistent correlations between them. Given this consistent overlap, one may ask - do we need both? This research proposes to test the general hypothesis that traits and values are not redundant constructs: they differ conceptually and have different consequences for perceptions, attitudes and behaviors. Our study will examine the relationships of values and traits to discrepancies in self-image; relationships between traits, values and moral judgment; and how traits and values predict behaviors and attitudes over which people have different levels of cognitive control. Explicating the relations of traits and values to behaviors is likely to deepen our understanding of the structure of personality and to lead to more complete knowledge of the situational constraints under which each of these constructs is more likely to impact behavior.

■ **Dr. David Mekelberg: The role of the media in the globalization of international relations**

IR and globalization studies are largely blind to the information revolution that has been taking place since the end of the nineteenth century and in particular since the mid-twentieth century. This stands in contrast to the recognition of the actual participants in the international arena that communication and mass media influence almost every aspect of their political and social activities. The purpose of this research is to fill the gap between the academia and the actual participants of the international and global arenas, by highlighting some of the ties that connect the processes of international relations, globalization, communication and mass media. This research suggests that communication and mass media play a unique role in the process of international and global relations by fulfilling two major functions: as actors, and as an arena within which the actions of other actors take place. Moreover, the media are a major component of the process of globalization by enabling cross-border messages to create global culture and global society and by enabling the process of widening international and global participation. The study offers a comparative analysis of thirty years of the development of media coverage and its influences on international global politics. This analysis will enable a unique glance at the development of environmental media salience and homogenization and their influence on the widening participation in the international process.

Four studies by members of the senior faculty were awarded grants by other external funds:

- **Dr. Yoav Yair** (with Prof. Colin Price, Tel Aviv University) was awarded a research grant from the European Commission for the FLASH Project, "Forecasting flash-floods by using lightning data"
- **Dr. Anat Barnea** was awarded a research grant from The National Institute for Psychobiology in Israel, for a study on "Neurobiological aspects of migratory behavior in birds: A neuroethological study, comparing migrant and resident species in Israel"
- **Prof. Miriam Souroujon** was awarded two research grants: One from the European Commission, for a study on "Development of models to improve management of Myasthenia Gravis: From basic knowledge to clinical application"; and one from the Association Française contre les Myopathies (AFM), for a study on "Immunomodulation of myasthenia gravis employing the rat model disease"

Research Grants from the Open University Research Authority Fund

Ninety-one requests for funding were submitted to the internal fund in 2005-2006 (compared to 68 last year). The Steering Committee approved 73 requests: 7 research grants; 2 research grants for on-going / exploratory research; 5 limited grants for on-going / exploratory research; 11 research scholarships; 5 grants of excellence for doctoral students; 38 grants for continuing education research; 1 grant for research laboratory work; 3 grants for partial scholarships for a student in experimental sciences; one publishing grant. Below are short descriptions of three of the studies that received grants from the internal fund.

■ Prof. Ruth Beyth-Marom (with Dr. Tehila Kogut, Hebrew University): **Pro-social decisions: Divergent perceptions of self and others**

The way individuals, and policy makers in particular, perceive how others will behave may influence their personal as well as their policy decisions (e.g., educational, military, medical). Recent studies of the perception of others indicate a consistent difference between the way people judge themselves and the way they perceive others' judgments (Pronin & Gilovich, 2004; Kruger & Gilovich, 1999). The discrepancy between self-perception and the perception of others has not been studied in the context of pro-social decisions: decisions regarding helping behavior. This research aims to fill this void by comparing subjects' judgments toward self and others regarding four known psychological phenomena in the context of pro-social behavior: the bystander effect (Latane & Darley, 1970), proportion dominance effect (Bartels, 2000), the identified victim effect (Kogut & Ritov, 2005) and risk taking (Hsee & Weber, 1997). Participants will respond to different dilemmas that describe situations in which helping behavior is called for. They will have to respond to these from their own perspective (what they would do), or from the perspective of an average student. Discrepancies between subjects' own willingness to help and their perceptions regarding the willingness of others are predicted. Biases already known regarding the four phenomena (e.g., the identified victim bias), are assumed to increase when subjects judge others' perceptions and behaviors. From a theoretical perspective, hopefully this research will contribute to understanding the cognitive mechanisms and strategies underlying an individual's self and others' perceptions, as well as to the literature regarding intuitive vs. rational/elaborative decision processes. From a practical point of view, the present work may shed some light on public policy making, on advertising and marketing, and on the presentation of public decisions.

■ Dr. Gal Levy (with Dr. Michael Shalev, Hebrew University): **Class voting among Non-Arab Voters in the 2005 Elections**

Due to the lack of overt class politics in Israel, one interesting question is the role of class in shaping voters' political behavior. Since the 1980s, elections in Israel have depended on voter ideology; in other words, their attitude towards the conflict and the occupied territories. Specifically, the ethnic nature of voting distribution convinced researchers to assume that social class has a bogus influence on voting because it mainly reflects the affinity between ethnic origin and class. Many researchers avoided examining class voting patterns because they preferred theories that focus on cultural-ideological factors in voting behavior. The study aims to examine whether, like in the 1999 and 2003 elections, the class factor remained a significant factor in voting patterns in the 2005 elections, despite changes in voting patterns. Using ecological analysis of the election results, the researchers aim to examine changes in the political map, to identify the class ranking of the parties and to explain how the interaction between class and the concrete political circumstances of the elections shaped voting based on class interests.

■ Dr. Tal Shavit (with Prof. Uri Benzion, Open University and Dr. Shosh Shahrabani, Emek Yizrael College): **The effect of risk attitude and competition attitude on risky and riskless assets pricing**

According to basic economic theory, the price a subject is willing to pay (WTP) for a product should be the same as the price he is willing to accept (WTA) for the same product if he owns it. However, research in economic behavior shows that WTA is higher than WTP. In the proposed research, subjects were asked for their WTP and WTA in different auctions. On the assumption that subjects are affected by their competitiveness, we hypothesized that a subject with high competitiveness is willing to pay a high price and ask a low price in order to win the auction. We expect to find a negative difference between WTA and WTP for this subject and the opposite for a subject with low competitiveness. In testing the entire population, we expect to find no difference between WTA and WTP since low competitiveness subjects offset high competitiveness subjects. In the research, the subjects are divided into sub-groups according to the WTA-WTP difference. The importance of this study is the test of competitiveness-seeking and aversion, and its affect on evaluation of assets. The findings may explain the non-conclusive results in literature dealing with the WTA-WTP gap.

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Research Authority Activities

Managing intellectual property – An ad-hoc committee chaired by the head of the OU Research Authority is currently in the process of formulating policy for handling intellectual property issues at the Open University in the academic field and in preparing appropriate procedures for protecting intellectual property and implementing University policy on the issue.

Research Day – This year, for the first time, the Open University held a Research Day. On this day, which we plan to hold every year, the research endeavors of senior faculty members and the academic teaching staff were presented. This year, the guest of honor at Research Day was Prof. Menachem Yaari, former president of the Open University and currently President of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities. Three University researchers lectured on their research. An exhibition titled "Research from a Different Perspective" presented works of designers from the graphics department inspired by studies by OU researchers in various fields.

The Chais Research Center for the Integration of Technology in Education

The Chais Research Center acts to encourage research by University faculty with the aim of enhancing the integration of learning technologies in teaching. More than thirty faculty members from various OU departments are part of the Chais Center. The Center supports studies conducted by its members and awards grants to outstanding students pursuing advanced degrees. This year we saw the first signs of research collaboration between faculty members and graduate students. The Center conducts on-going academic activities in the form of symposia, workshops and research seminars and operates in close cooperation with *Shoham*.

Research at the Chais Center in 2005-2006

- The contribution of email messages to OU students' feeling of belonging, perception of personal welfare and coping strategies
- The effect of learning style, learner personality and learner's degree of persistence on dialogic behavior
- The effect of attributing failure on dialogic behavior
- Examining the perception of 'social presence' in asynchronous study discussion groups
- The effect of gender on participation in classroom sessions and online discussion groups
- Identifying impersonation in a computer-mediated conversation
- Pressure and strategies for obtaining information
- Friendship in cyberspace
- Multimedia project – the continuous symmetry index
- The culture of digital games among adolescents worldwide
- Living books and their significance on learning to read in a digital environment
- Comparing information assessment skills in digital and printed formats
- Thinking in the digital world
- Leadership styles in an Internet learning environment
- The quality of discussion in study discussion forums as a function of the design and planning of teaching
- A collaborative assignment in an academic course in a WIKI environment

Awards

- The paper by **Dr. Ronit Bogler** and Anit Somech, "Organizational citizenship behavior in school: How does it relate to participation in decision-making?," published last year in the *Journal of Educational Administration*, was among the outstanding papers in Education Management chosen as "highly commended" in 2006 by the Emerald Literati Network Awards for Excellence.
- **Dr. Ron Weidberg** was awarded the 2005 ACUM (Authors, Composers and Music Publishers Association of Israel) Lifetime Achievement Award in music, for his own compositions and for his advocacy and promotion of Israeli music.