“Decentral Israel”: The Socio-Politics of Israel’s Pivotal Periphery Regions

Roughly one in three Israeli citizens live in what’s known as “the periphery” – the smaller cities, towns, and villages situated outside the country’s geographic and economic center. These communities, which face socio-economic disparities compared to “Central Israel,” are frequently overlooked or are depicted in stereotypical fashion as hard-and-fast bastions of a traditionalist-religious-rightwing outlook. On March 31, 2020, we went beyond the stereotypes to explore Israel’s periphery in greater depth – the socio-economic reality, the cultural and religious leanings, and, of course, the political interests, preferences, and power of the people who live there. Three experts joined us to discuss this issue were: Prof. Yifat Bitton, president of Achva Academic College Avi Dabush, author of The Periphery Rebellion and founder of Meretz’s “Peripheries Headquarters” Prof. Yossi Yonah of the Ben-Gurion University’s Department of Education.

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