

Name: Eran Tzidkiyahu

Title: From the Margins to the Center: Religious-Nationalism in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

A Comparative Approach

Supervisor: Alain Dieckhoff and Yitzhak Reiter

This dissertation examines in a comparative approach the similar shift made by Israeli-Jewish and Palestinian-Muslim national-religious movements since the 1990s, from the political and social margins to center-stage. This shift was generated on both sides by an objection to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and territorial and ideological compromise. This work examines this transformation from its historic and ideological roots through its institutional and political manifestations, by an ideological and thematic analysis of its contemporary discourse.

The work is divided into three parts. In the first part, Chapter 1 lays down a theoretical infrastructure on Strong Religious-Nationalism (SRN), a form of Religious-Nationalism in which both elements are equal, intertwined and interdependent. In Chapter 2 the theory of SRN is applied to the Israeli-Palestinian case by reexamining the conflict's historical roots. This highlights both the special role of SRN in the mainstream national narrative and its centrality in the conflict.

The second part of the dissertation deals with the shift from the margins towards hegemony through the process of politicization and institutionalization. It includes two chapters, examining first Hamas and then religious-Zionism (RZ) with a comparative reference to the previous chapter.

The third part exemplifies how SRN becomes hegemonic through a dialectic of ideological discourse. Both RZ and Hamas advanced to center stage by posing a comprehensive ideological worldview. These SRN worldviews interact. The main interlocutors surveyed are Jewish and Muslim RN clergy, public intellectuals and politicians.