

**The History of Zionism till the Establishment
of the State of Israel –
Bibliometric study of the Research Trends, 1948-
2005**

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Abstract:

The aim of this dissertation was a quantitative analysis of research literature on the history of Zionism and the "Yishuv" up to the establishment of the State of Israel, which was published during 1948-2005, in order to determine its scope, evolvement, progress, modes of publication, segmentation, etc.

The research tool utilized, for the first time in Zionism studies, was bibliometrics – based on statistical analysis of scientific publications within a specific research field. The underlying premise was that growth in the volume of publications may indicate increased research activity. Bibliometrics is a universal measure facilitating the quantitative assessment of publicly available data (online bibliographic databases, online catalogues, etc.). It deals with the dynamics of scientific literature as reflected in the publications of active scholars in any given research field. It describes the nature and process of evolvement of a discipline by means of analyzing the various features of its scientific publications. Numerous studies have shown that bibliometrics contributes to a better understanding of the development of various scientific research fields. Exploration of the history of science enables one to trace patterns in the progress of research in different fields of knowledge, to identify factors which influence scholars in choosing research topics, and to map topics and fields for future research.

The main sources of information from which Zionism-related studies had been retrieved were the databases of the National Library in Jerusalem, the National library catalogue, the Israel Union dissertation catalogue database, RAMBI – the index of articles on Jewish studies and the National bibliography Qiryat Sefer.

Circa 12,000 items have been retrieved and entered in a special database. All items were checked against the following pre-determined criteria in order to ensure their validity for the research: use of critical research methods; publication date corresponding to the research timeline; subject matter dealing with the study of Zionism. Circa 4000 publications which did not match any one of these criteria were removed from the data-base, while 7625 items were validated for this dissertation.

The research issues were these: rate of growth of Zionism-related research literature; derivative topics studies during specified timeline; most frequently studies topics; main publication types (dissertations, books, articles) and their segmentation; language of publication; characteristics of publication in journal articles, scattering of articles in journals and authorship of publications, namely, single or co-authored. Did a small group of scholars account for a relatively large percentage of the publications in the field?

The main conclusions of the research yielded the following findings: The analysis of sub-periods by decades (1948-1967, 1968-1977, 1978-1987, 1988-1997, 1998-2005) indicates that both the overall output of publications and the annual average increased from decade to decade along the specified timeline. Until the third sub-period the rate of growth had increased during each decade, however unevenly. As of the fourth decade this rate had decreased unevenly too from sub-period to sub-period, with publication reaching its peak during the third decade (1968-1977), following the Six Day War.

Six derivative fields have also been studied: "Zionist ideology and historiography"; "The Yishuv in Eretz Israel"; "Immigration and settlement"; "Movements and parties in Eretz Israel and in the Diaspora"; "Zionist movement"; "Zionist activity in the Diaspora".

The most frequently studied field was "The Yishuv in Eretz Israel" (31.4%) followed by "Zionist ideology and historiography" (20.4%). However, a comparison between Hebrew publications in Israel and non Hebrew publications abroad, in terms of preference, distribution and frequency, yielded notable differences. The leading field in Hebrew studies was "The Yishuv in Eretz Israel" (35%) while the leading fields in foreign language were "The Yishuv in Eretz Israel" (26%) and "Zionist ideology and historiography" (26%). The most frequent dissertations presented at universities abroad were on "The Zionist movement" (32.1%), and "Zionist ideology and historiography" (23.3%).

The leading universities in the USA, in terms of the number of dissertations presented, were New York University (2.4%), Columbia University (1.5%) and Brandeis University (1.4%). The leading universities in Europe were the Sorbonne (2.5%), London University (2.2%) and Oxford University (1.7%).

Conversely, the most frequent dissertations presented in Israeli universities were on "The Yishuv in Eretz Israel" (31.2%), which together with the dissertations on "Movements and parties in Eretz Israel and in the Diaspora" (18.5%), constituted half of the works presented in Israel. The leading universities in Israel were the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (22.7%), Tel-Aviv University (18.3%), Bar Ilan University (10.3%), Haifa University (4.9%) and Ben Gurion University (1.7%).

The findings on research trends along six decades indicated that the most frequently researched field during the first two decades (i.e. the 1950s and 1960s) was "The Zionist movement". In the third and fourth decades (from the

late 1960s up to the late 1980s) the most frequent field was "The Yishuv in Eretz Israel". Although the "The Yishuv in Eretz Israel" continued to lead as far as the number of publications was concerned, during the fifth decade (the 1990s), its relative share dropped, while the share of studies in "Zionist ideology and historiography" increased to the point of being the most widely researched subject in the 2000s.

The most frequent form of publication was the article. Circa two thirds of the studies (64%) were published in article form in periodicals and compilations; a quarter published as books (24%) and the rest presented as dissertations (12%). As to the segmentation of articles in journals, this study indicates that most of the articles were published in a small number of journals, which formed the core of journals of Zionism-related research.

The studies were written in 20 languages, the majority published in Hebrew (58.5%) followed by English (29.8%), forming together 88.3% of the research output. Other languages were German (4.9%) and French (3%), while all other accounted for less than 1%.

The relative share of Hebrew publications, which constituted 68% in the decade, indicated alternate ebb and flow along the decades – a decrease to 60% in the second decade, an increase to 64% in the third decade, a decrease to 61% in the fourth decade and a decent 49% in the decade. Although in the sixth period the relative share of Hebrew publications increased to 57% it did not reach the growth rate of previous decade.

The relative share of publications in English remained stable during most of the sub-periods (29%), except in the third decade (1967-1978) when it dropped to 27%, while the share of Hebrew publications increased from 60% to 64%, and in the fifth sub-period when the relative share of publications in English reached a peak of 32%, while those Hebrew dropped sharply to 49%.

The relative share of German publications, which represented 1% in the first decade, constituted 4% - 5% of research output until the fifth sub-period, and increased to 6% during the sixth sub-period. The relative share of French publications increased from sub-period to sub-period, from 1% in the first decade to 4% in the sixth sub-period.

Notwithstanding the numerous scholars involved in the study of Zionism, a group of pivotal scholars emerged, who published extensively in both book and article form. Heading the list of the most prolific scholars who published books in the field were Israeli historians Anita Shair, Aharon Klieman, Yosef Gorni and Michael Cohen, and Jehuda Reinhartz, residing abroad. Among those who published articles, key figures were Yossi Katz, Joseph Gorni, Matityahu Mintz from Israel, and Jehuda Reinhartz from the USA.

It was also established that nearly 100% of the articles and 88% of the books were written by a single author, while only 220 books (12%) and two articles were a collaboration of two authors or more.

Most of our findings are in line with conclusions reached by historians who have analyzed the historiography of Zionism: Such studies indicate that while the history of Zionist ideology and Zionism in the Diaspora was written by historians in different countries, with a considerable part of the synthetic literature (i.e. the study of the Zionist movement), written mainly in the USA and the UK, most of the research on the history of the "The Yishuv in Eretz Israel" was written almost exclusively in Israel.

Our findings also augment the conclusions of scholars in the field of bibliometrics, who have been analyzing the characteristics of scientific rate coincide with Price's proposal that the evolution of scientific knowledge has three stages: a first stage characterized by slow publication rate, a second stage of accelerated exponential growth, and a third stage of stable growth.

The growth rate of Zionism-related research also largely fits Price's proposal that science grows exponentially, doubling its size every ten to fifteen years.

The importance of monographs in the Humanities is emphasized in numerous Bibliometric studies, along with the ongoing growth of published articles. Researchers in the Humanities tend to use monographs more than journals. However, new research studies of the makeup of Humanities and Social Sciences related literature, indicate that articles in scientific journals are fast becoming the most widespread publication.

Bibliometric studies that examined the language of research in the Humanities and in Social Sciences against those in exact Sciences, indicate that contrary to the latter, which caters to an international public of scientists, a considerable part of the output in Humanities and Social Sciences is primarily addressed to a local public in its own language on local issues, and appears in regional or national serials, monographs and reports.

The compatibility of our findings with the conclusions of historiographic and bibliometric literature is discussed at length in our dissertation, as are the factors that influenced, in our view, the study of Zionism along six decades.

Due to legal restrictions denying access to relevant historic archives in Israel and abroad during the first decade (1948-1957), most of the research during that time was carried out outside Academia, mainly by researchers who were personally involved with the subject matter of their studies, namely, the movements and parties whose archives were readily available to them. Moreover, scholars in Academia were reluctant to pursue Zionism-related studies in the absence of a much needed historical perspective, as well as apprehensive of politicized research. Outside Israel, during that decade especially in the USA, Zionism-related studies were based on secondary printed sources.

During the second decade of our study (1958-1967) the foundations for future Zionism research had laid: the expansion of new universities in Israel and the recovery of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem following the War of Independence; the founding of the first academic research institutes, and the completion of the legislation of the Archives Law in Israel, which enabled the gradual opening of archive files in Israel on which future historical research depended, and of archives outside Israel, especially respecting to the period of the British Mandate.

The third decade (1968-1977) was the sub-period in which Zionism-related studies had been thriving. Among the significant factors in this phase were easy access to archival files in historic archives, notably the Center Zionist Archives and Israel's State, and previously inaccessible political archives have been declared as part of the officially accessible public ones. Another important factor was the fast expansion of universities in Israel and the increasing number of students and graduates. Departments of Jewish history were language at Bar-Ilan, Tel-Aviv and Haifa Universities, and the number of Zionism-related courses and seminars has greatly expanded. At Bar-Ilan and Ben-Gurion Universities two new institutes for the study of Zionism were founded as well as two independent research institutes: Yad ben Zvi Institute and Zalman Shazar Center.

All historiographic oriented research indicate that the third decade was a watershed in the study of Zionism, and that the Six day War boosted the development of this field which began in the early 1960s. Research became more meticulous, criticism-oriented and based on high standards of historical discipline, winning acclaim at Israeli universities.

The relative decrease in research output during the fourth decade (1978-1987) was probably due to the changeable state of universities in Israel, characterized by fluctuations in number of students, a decrease in the number of Ph.D. degrees, as opposed to the increase in graduates and post-graduate

degrees, as well as in the number of Zionism-related seminars on offer. On the hand, new research institutes were founded in universities both in Israel and the USA, which were to contribute to the study of Zionism I years to come; scholars started studying uncharted territory, such as the first wave of immigration to Eretz-Israel, the attitude of the "Yishuv" toward the Holocaust and the economic history of the "Yishuv" under British rule. Moreover, comprehensive biographies of prominent Zionist leaders, among them Berl Katznelson and Chaim Weitzman, had been published.

The "historians' controversy" which started in the late 1980s and swept sociologists, political scientists, writers and journalists, revived the historiography of Zionism in the fifth decade (1988-1997). On the other hand, research on the War of Independence and its aftermath (topics not included within the scope of our dissertation) increased during that decade. this was one of the contributing factors to the small growth in the study of Zionism during that decade. This was one the contributing factors to the small growth in the study of Zionism during this period (33.1%), and the decrease in the number of dissertations presented and books published.

Other factors in the declining research were, no doubt, the post Yom Kippur War economic crisis in Israel, steep inflation which persisted to the middle of the 1980s, and the government's budget cuts in 1985, which included permanent cuts in universities budgets. Conversely, the number of students in universities increased in the 1980s and 1990s, while the number of faculty members, the reservoir for research, dropped with the number of Zionism-related seminars available to students. To these factors should be added the declining status of the Humanities among Israeli students, reflected in the decrease in graduates in that faculty at that time, as opposed to the number of graduates in Social Sciences and Business Management, changes which reflected global trends.

The economic recession in Israel in the 2000s, further decrease in the government's funding of universities, reduction in the number of faculty members and in the number of Zionism-related seminars on offer, were probably central to the decline in research output in the sixth sub-period of our study (1998-2005). To these factors should be added, as in the previous decade, further decline in the status of the Humanities among students in Israel and abroad. Consequently, the number of potential scholars in the Humanities, and particularly in the study of Zionism dropped. Another crucial factor was the mobility of scholars from research Zionism to researching the State of Israel, the latter shifting to research institutes previously engaged mainly in the study of Zionism and the history of the "Yishuv" in Eretz Israel. New research institutes for the study of the State of Israel were founded in Israel and abroad, and attracted previous scholars of Zionism.

The thriving field of "Zionist ideology and historiography" and the fact that it emerged as the leading field of research during that period, is no doubt the result of the ongoing "historians' controversy", and of the expansion of the study of Zionism to areas of social history and the history of ideas, as indicated in historiography studies.

The contribution of the present dissertation lies in documenting and delineating the involvement process of Zionism-related studies over a period of nearly sixth years. The use of bibliometrics for the purpose of facilitating this quantitative analysis of scientific publications, affords a better understanding of the emergence, development and segmentation of these studies in Israel and abroad. Moreover, this dissertation identifies various crucial factors and patterns that affected Zionism-related studies, during the timeline discussed. Our research may also prove helpful to scholars in discovering and mapping future research fields.

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