

## **A Bibliometric Study: The Historiography of the Jewish National Movement**

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**Abstract:** The paper presents a bibliometric study which analyses the research literature published during sixty years on the Jewish National movement prior to the establishment of the State of Israel. The main research issues in the present study are the rate of growth of the related research literature from 1948 to 2005 by decades; main publication types and their segmentation; languages, countries of publication and the leading universities where the research was performed. The paper compares also the compatibility of the findings of the bibliometric study with the conclusions of historiographic and bibliometric literature, and the factors that influenced the study of the topic during six decades.

**Keywords:** Bibliometrics, Historiography, Literature growth.

### **1. Introduction**

The aim of this paper is to present a bibliometric study of the research literature on the history of the Jewish National Movement up to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, which was published during the years 1948-2005, in order to determine its scope, evolution, progress, modes of publication, segmentation, etc.

### **2. Historical background**

The Jewish national movement evolved in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, its goal being the return of the Jewish people to their historical homeland in the land of Israel. It is in many ways a continuation of the ancient national connection of the Jews and of the Jewish religion to the historical region of the land of Israel. The failure of the Russian Revolution of 1905 and the wave of pogroms and repressions that followed, caused growing numbers of Russian Jewish youth to immigrate to the land of Israel as pioneer settlers. On Nov, 2, 1917– Great

Britain's foreign minister issued the "Balfour Declaration", which promised British support for the creation of a Jewish national home in the land of Israel. The declaration was included in Britain's League of Nations mandate over the land of Israel (1922).

In the following years Jews built up the Jewish urban and rural settlements. Jewish immigration remained relatively slow however, until the rise of Hitlerism in Europe (238,000 -20 percent of the population by 1933). Nevertheless, the Arab population feared that the land eventually would become a Jewish state and bitterly resisted the Jewish national movement. Hitlerism and the large-scale extermination of European Jews in the Holocaust (1939-1945) led many Jews to seek refuge in the land of Israel. As tensions grew among Arabs and Jews, Britain submitted the problem first to Anglo-U.S. discussion for solution and later to the United Nations, which on Nov. 29, 1947, proposed partition of the country into separate Arab and Jewish states and the internationalization of Jerusalem. The creation of the State of Israel was declared on May 14, 1948. The scope of the history of the Jewish national movement covers different facets of the subject: The history of the movement, its philosophy, the Jewish settlement in the land of Israel and the struggle for the establishment of the State of Israel, its activity in the Diaspora, its historiography, etc. (Almog, 1992; Kolat, 1976).

### **3. Methodologies for studying historical research**

There are different methodologies for studying historical research. Classical historiographical research methodology is based on content analysis of historical sources, primary or secondary (Carr, 1985; Bentley, 1999). The information science approach is to follow the published literature and infer from the growth of the literature the movement of ideas and associations between scientists (Tabah, 1999). The subject of literature dynamics belongs to the specialty of bibliometrics, which studies the growth of literatures. Growth refers to the increase in productivity of an area of interest and is the concrete manifestation of output. It is a universal measure that can be measured by publicly available data. Therefore it can be stated that bibliometrics deals with the growth dynamics of literatures, as reflected in the work of those active in a research area (Tabah, 1999). Bibliometrics utilizes quantitative analysis and statistics to describe patterns of publication within a given field or body of literature.

### **4. Sources of information**

The main sources of information from which Jewish National Movement-related studies were retrieved were the databases of the National Library in Jerusalem, i.e. the National library catalogue, the Israel Union dissertation catalogue database, RAMBI – the index of articles on Jewish studies and the National bibliography Qiryat Sefer. Additional sources were the catalogues of the National libraries of France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Australia, Canada, the catalogue of the Library of Congress; etc. University libraries catalogues

were also scanned, among them the catalogues of Yeshiva University, Harvard and Yale. A comprehensive information retrieval was performed in Dissertations Abstracts International, and printed bibliographies were consulted.

## 5. Research population

Circa 12,000 items were retrieved and entered in a special database. All items were checked against the pre-determined criteria in order to ensure their validity for the research. Circa 4000 publications that did not match these criteria were removed from the database, while 7625 items were validated for this research.

## 6. The research issues

The research issues addressed in the present paper are: the rate of growth of Jewish National Movement-related research literature, its main publication types and their segmentation, the languages of publication, the leading countries and the leading universities where the research was performed.

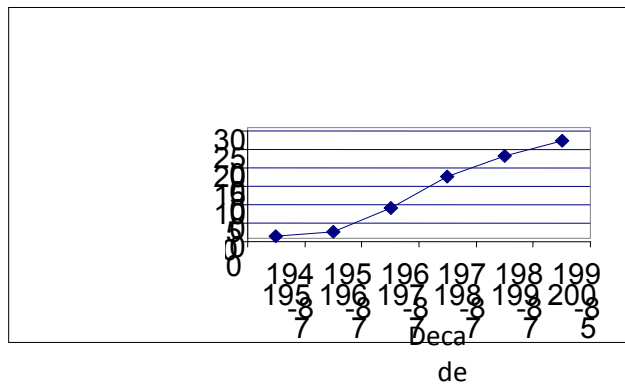
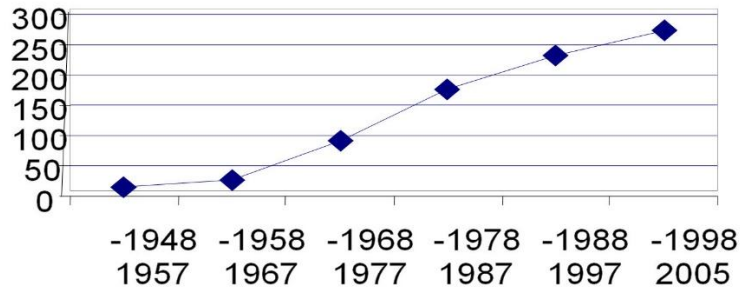
Finally, the paper also compares the compatibility of the findings of the bibliometric study with the conclusions of historiographic and bibliometric literature, and the factors that influenced the study of the topic during six decades.

## 7. Findings

The main conclusions of the research yielded the following findings: The analysis of sub-periods by decades (1948-1957, 1958-1967, 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 during the specified timeline. Until the third sub-period (namely until the 1970's of the 20th century) 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).

Period	Output	Annual average	Growth
1948-1957	149	14.9	
1958-1967	270	27.0	81%
1968-1977	924	92.4	242%
1978-1987	1753	175.3	90%
1988-1997	2334	233.4	33%
1998-2005	2195	274.4	18%

**Table 1: Growth of output by decades**



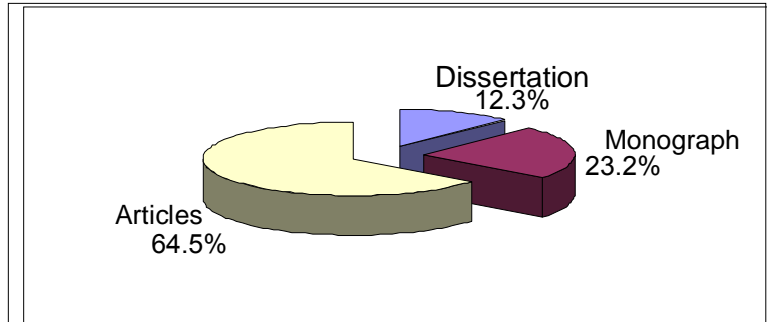
Annual average

**Figure.1: Growth of research, 1948-2005**

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%).

Publication Type	No. of items
Dissertations	946
Monographs	1807
Articles	4872
Total	7625

**Table 2: Segmentation of publication types, 1948-2005**

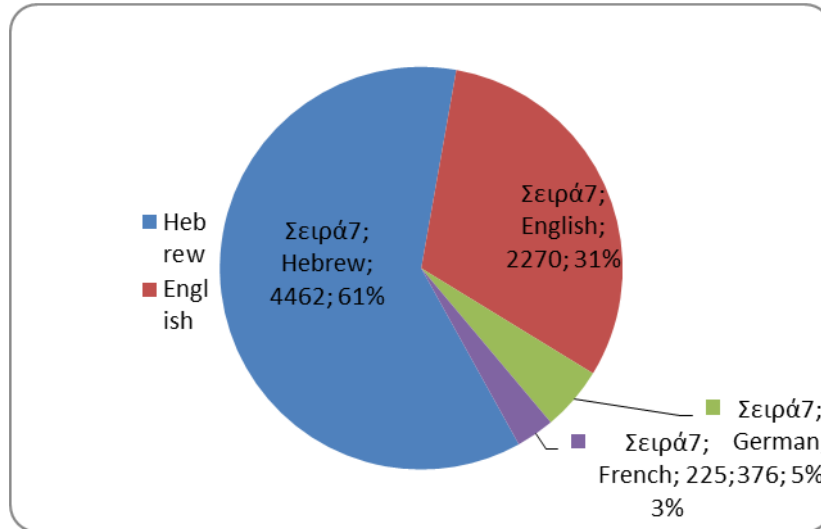


**Figure 2: Segmentation of publication types, 1948-2005**

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

Language	Publications	Percentage
Hebrew	4462	%59
English	2270	%30
German	376	%5
French	225	%3
Arabic	70	%1
Italian	61	%1
Spanish	46	%1
Russian	29	%0
Dutch	20	%0
Polish	17	%0
Romanian	13	%0
Yiddish	12	%0
Hungarian	10	%0
Croatian	4	%0
Portuguese	3	%0
Swedish	3	%0
Danish	1	%0
Japanese	1	%0
Norwegian	1	%0
Finish	1	%0
Total	7625	%100

Table 3: Languages of publication



**Figure 3: Main languages of publication, 1948-2005**

### 8. Case study

The output of dissertations and its characteristics (countries and universities in which the research was performed, and the percentage of dissertations in each of them) reflect the research performed and published in all types of publication. We will therefore present the dissertations' countries of publication and the leading universities in which the research was performed, as a case study.

### 9. Findings of case study

The leading universities in Israel in terms of the number of dissertations presented, 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 leading universities in the USA, 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%).

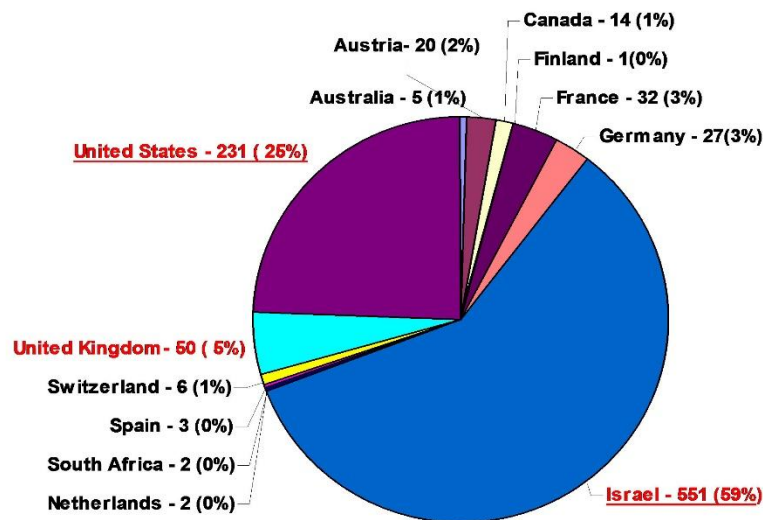


Figure 4: Countries of dissertations' output, 1948-2005

#### 10. Compatibility of the findings of the bibliometric study with the conclusions of scholars in the field of bibliometrics

Our findings augment the conclusions of scholars in the field of bibliometrics, analyzing the characteristics of scientific research. Findings concerning the analysis of growth in publication rate coincide with Price's proposal that the evolvement 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 the Jewish National Movement-related research also largely fits Price's proposal that science grows exponentially, doubling its size every ten to fifteen years (Price, 1961, 1963).

The importance of monographs in the humanities is emphasized in numerous bibliometric studies showing that researchers in the humanities tend to use monographs more than journals (Broadus, 1987; Devin & Kellogg, 1990; Loewe, 2003; Thompson, 2002). 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 (Nederhof et al, 1989; Nederhof, 2006).

Bibliometric studies that examined the languages 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 (Loewe, 2003, Nederhof et al, 1989; Mustigman, 1997).

### **11. Compatibility of the findings of the bibliometric study with the conclusions of historiographic literature**

Most of our findings are in line with conclusions reached by historians who have analyzed the historiography of the Jewish National Movement and pointed out the factors that influenced the study of the Jewish National Movement. 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 done outside the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (which was at the time the only university in the country where research in the humanities was carried out). Most of the researchers 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 the Hebrew University of Jerusalem were reluctant to pursue the Jewish National Movement-related studies in the absence of a much needed historical perspective, as well as apprehension of politicized research. In the USA, the Jewish National Movement-related studies were based on secondary printed sources (Kolatt, 1997; Almog, 1988; Barnai, 1996; Gelber, 2007; Tzahor, 2007).

During the second decade of our study (1958-1967) the foundations for the future of the Jewish National Movement research had been laid. On the one hand the inauguration of new universities in Israel, the rebuilding of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem following the loss of the Mount Scopus campus and library during the War of Independence and the founding of the first academic research institutes. On the other hand, the completion of the legislation of the Archives Law in Israel enabled the gradual opening of archive files in Israel on which future historical research depended, and of archives outside Israel, especially relating to the period of the British Mandate (Mossek, 2000; Penslar, 2007).

The third decade (1968-1977) was the sub-period in which the Jewish National Movement-related studies thrived. Among the significant factors in this phase was easy access to archival files in historic archives, notably the Central Zionist Archives and Israel's State Archives, and the declaration of previously inaccessible political archives 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 launched at Bar-Ilan, Tel-Aviv, and Haifa Universities, and the number of the Jewish National Movement-related courses and seminars had greatly expanded. At Bar-Ilan and Ben Gurion Universities, two new institutes for the study of the Jewish National Movement were founded and two independent



research institutes: Yad Ben Zvi Institute and Zalman Shazar Center were founded as well.

All historiographic oriented research indicates that the third decade was a turning point in the study of the Jewish National Movement, 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 (Kolatt, 1976; Almog, 1988; Mossek, 2000; Barnai, 1996; Gelber, 2007).

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 the number of students, a decrease in the number of Ph.D. degrees, as opposed to the increase in graduates and Master's degrees, as well as in the number of the Jewish National Movement-related seminars on offer. On the other hand, new research institutes were founded in universities both in Israel and in the USA, which were to contribute to the study of the Jewish National Movement in years to come; scholars started studying uncharted territory, such as the attitude of the movement toward the Holocaust and its economic history under British rule. Moreover, comprehensive biographies of prominent leaders of the movement had been published (Vital, 1981; Almog, 1988; Penslar, 1998; Gelber, 2007).

The "historians' controversy" which started in the late 1980s and swept sociologists, political scientists, writers and journalists, revived the historiography of the Jewish National Movement 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 this paper) increased during that decade (Shavit, 1996; Bartal, 1996; Shapira, 1997; Almog, 1988; Penslar, 1998; Mossek, 2000; Tzahor, 2001; Gelber, 2007). This was one of the contributing factors to the small growth in the study of the Jewish National Movement 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 (1973) economic crisis in Israel, steep inflation which persisted on 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. To these factors should be added the declining status of the humanities field among Israeli students, reflected in the decrease in graduates, as opposed to the increase in the number of graduates in social sciences and business management, changes which reflected global trends.

The economic recession in Israel in the 2000s, further decreases in the government's funding of universities and reduction in the number of faculty

members were probably all 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 (Gelber, 2007). Consequently, the number of potential scholars in the humanities dropped. Another crucial factor was the mobility of scholars from researching the Jewish National Movement in the pre-State era to researching the State of Israel. New research institutes for the study of the State of Israel were founded in Israel and abroad, and attracted previous scholars of the Jewish National Movement.

## 12. Conclusions

The bibliometric study found that the research literature on the history of the Jewish National Movement grew exponentially from the 1950's through the 1970's, when it reached its peak; it continued growing till the 2000's, although at a decreasing rate of growth. The most frequent form of publication in the field was the article, and the languages of the majority of its output were Hebrew and English. The leading countries engaged in the research of the subject were Israel, the USA and the UK. The findings of the bibliometric study were found compatible with the conclusions of historiographic and bibliometric literature. Finally, it was concluded that academic, ideological, and economic factors, as well as global trends, influenced the growth rate of the Jewish National Movement related literature.

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