

Yoav Peled ~ Towards A Redefinition Of Jewish Nationalism In Israel



The electoral success of Shas, a mizrahi, religious political party in Israel is analysed with the help of the cultural division of labor model. Mizrahim (Jews originating in Moslem countries) are a

semi-peripheral ethnic group in Israel, located between the dominant ashkenazim (Jews of European origin) and the Palestinians. While most mizrahim have been voting Likud in the past twenty-five years, increasingly the poorer among them have been shifting their vote to Shas. The key to Shas's success, where other efforts to organize mizrahi political parties have failed, is its integrative, rather than separatist, ideology. Shas seeks to replace secular Zionism with religious Judaism as the hegemonic ideology in Israeli society, and presents this as the remedy for both the socioeconomic and the cultural grievances of its constituency. This integrative message, emphasizing the commonalities between mizrahim and ashkenazim, rather than their differences, is attractive to mizrahim because of their semi-peripheral position in the society.

The complete paper (PDF): https://www.academia.edu/Towards_a_Redefinition