

## **Summary of Ph.D. thesis:**

### **Middle Eastern Conflict in the French Public Space (2000-2010)**

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The main objective of the thesis is to analyse and typologise French social discourse on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on a reflection of certain opinions, interests, stances and values associated with today's Jewishness and Jewish diasporic identity. The research also contains an analysis of the official political-diplomatic discourse of both Presidents Jacques Chirac and Nicolas Sarkozy.

Based on the methodology of typologisation and critical discourse analysis, we distinguish three basic positions related to the debate on the abovementioned topics in the years 2000-2010: republican, anti-imperialist and neoconservative. The thesis elaborates on attitudes of presidents of the French Fifth Republic towards Israel and how their policies have been perceived by the Jewish community. The community as such is also a matter of the research: its changing religiosity, demography, immigration of Nord African Jewry and the attitude towards Zionism and the State of Israel. The thesis follows four main thematic axes when analysing arguments of the most important speakers.

First, when analysing the duty of memory (*devoir de mémoire*), the author carefully examines moral argumentation concerning the reminder of the tragedy of the Holocaust, the role of schools and educational system in creating so-called national memory and the perception of the Jewish community as a privilege interpreter and guard of the somber heritage of the past. The study also deals with the issue of the reminder of uniqueness of the Holocaust in the context of other genocides, colonialism and slavery.

The conception of the so-called *new anti-Semitism* (or new Judeophobia) is treated critically in the context of the wave of anti-Jewish violence in France between 2002 and 2005. The thesis deals with the sensitive issue of political instrumentalisation of accusations from anti-Semitism used against leftist critics of the politics of the State of Israel. The thesis reflects disputes concerning the measure, origins and consequences of the rising ethno-national and religious tensions in French society.

The debate on attitude of the *French foreign policy towards Israel* reveals varying opinions on Palestinian statehood. The metamorphosis of the French Left's stance vis-à-vis Israel is the

matter of debate in different parts of the Jewish community. Attention has been paid to various social movements which mobilise public opinion in favor of Palestinians.

Sarkozy's run for presidential office brought the topic of *national identity* to the center of political debate. However, the issue of integration of immigrants has been debated since the mid-1980s and is related to the rise of racism in politics and questions upon national self-determination of French society. Positions towards political Zionism are treated in this chapter, as well as the issue of communitarism and weakening of the doctrine of strict secularism (*la laïcité*).

The final part of the thesis is dedicated to in-depth analysis of chosen speeches of both Chirac and Sarkozy from the period 2000-2011. The same analytical axes have been applied for the official discourses and social debate. At the end of each chapter, typical rhetorical figures and arguments have been chosen and compared in the conclusions, with three main types of discourse as categorised above (republican, anti-imperialist, neoconservative).

The annex contains lists of 110 names of main personalities involved in the current debate, key social movements and political parties.