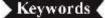## Hindutva and Zionism: Parallel Nationalist Ideologies and the Global Fallout of Religious Supremacism in South Asia and the Middle East

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Abstract

This paper examines the similar paths of Hindutva in India and Zionism in Israel as the successful ethno-religious nationalism models that promote internal control and regional turmoil. With a reliance on the setting of recent hotspot surrounding of the and May 2025 India Pakistan and the June 2025 Iran Israel, the study investigates what happens when state-sponsored religious supremacism facilitates the transformation of domestic politics, the oppression of minority groups, and the international confrontation. A comparative qualitative analysis pursued by the paper addresses ideological and strategic similarities between the two states, evaluates the reaction of key world political players and questions the reduced form of pluralistic democracies. The implications of the findings lie in the highlight they give to the effect of spreading the danger of religiously centered nationalism in the international arena in case it is institutionalized in the state policy.

Keywords   India-Pakistan Conflict 2025, Iran-Israel War 2025, Religious Supremac, Settler Colonialism, South Asia, Middle East, Political Ideology.

Introduction

Religious nationalism has recently become an effective political trend in 21 st century, both at domestic and foreign nation policies. The world over identity based ideologies are reshaping democratic institutions, remodelling the statehood limits. Hindutva in India and Zionism in Israel can be suggested as two of the most powerful manifestations of this trend since both ideological movements have become quickly transformed into state-sponsored regimes with deeply geopolitical connotations (Shani, 2024; Dubnov, 2014).

Hindutva and Zionism Background

Hindutva is a term that was created by V. D. Savarkar during the early part of the 20 th century, and as Raymond Ariely explains, Hindutva touts the idea of cultural and political unification of India under one Hindu nation at the expense of religious minorities (Ariely, 2005). Gradually over the decades Hindutva has shifted its position in the centre of Indian politics, particularly in the political dispensation of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Zionism, in turn, emerged in late 19th century, Europe as an anti-Semitism counter-movement to create a Jewish Nation in Palestine. Modern Zionism has been secular at first, but it relapses into religious assertions, especially when it comes to land claims, drawing a blurry but solid line between nationalism and theology (Kaufmann, 2016).

2025 Geopolitical Climate

The scenario proposed in the research is one of the growing geopolitical tensions in 2025 which involved the India Pakistan military standoff in May and Iran Israel confrontation in June. These crises show how religious nationalist ideologies can spill across borders between the domestic policy

and regional conflict leading to instability, cross-border conflicts, and sectarian polarization (Gorre & Islam Jui, 2025).

Rationale of Comparative Analysis

A comparative model allows revealing the implantation of religious supremacism in state authorities and policy-making. The validity of this research is that by comparing the two phenomena of Hindutva and Zionism, one sees that the same pattern of the marginalization of the society (minorities), populist agitation and the loss of the pluralistic reality exists and by comparing it to the present day, it illustrates that those two ideologies are not unique but rather belong to one and the same trend that has dangerous effects upon democratic processes and international order.

Comparative Analysis

Hindutva and Zionism Similarities

❖ **An official Religious Dominance.** Hindutva as well as Zionism constitutes legal systems into institutionalization of majority religious ideas. Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC) in India have faced criticism on account of their being discriminatory on the basis of religion, specifically the Muslim faith (Jaffrelot, 2021; Srivastava, 2023). The 2018 Nation-State Law in Israel legitimized and emphasized the national religious hierarchies when specializing the country as the native land of the Jews only (Papp e, 2020).

❖ **Organized Discrimination and Intimidation of Minorities.** The two ideologies have resulted to institutional oppression. Hindutva and Zionism have driven the violence of anti-Muslim pogroms in Gujarat (2002) and mass murder on the streets of Delhi (2020) or the military actions, settler-normalized violence against the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank (Finkelstein, 2021; Human Rights Watch, 2021).

❖ **Expansionist National Escapes.** The two encourage territorial maximalism. Hindutva popularizes the idea of Akhand Bharat, or Hindu-dominated Indian subcontinent. According to Zionism, there is the Greater Israel, which stipulates territorial expansion beyond international boundaries of Palestine and Israel (Khalidi, 2020; Jaffrelot, 2021).

❖ **The Effective Propaganda Use of the Digital Media.** Online sources have turned out to be instruments of propaganda. The BJP IT cell spreads Hindutva stories and counterdissent material at a very fast pace over the internet. The Israeli state and nonstate actors also utilize the social media to associate the Palestinian resistance with terrorism and receive international assistance in securing Zionist policies (Fuchs, 2021; Udupa, 2020).

Hindutva and Zionism on Difference

❖ **Historical ground and Background.** Zionism is based on European Jewish nationalism of the 19 th century, ending in settler colonial statehood. Hindutva, in its turn, appeared after the independence and proposes internal redefinition of a secular republic of India on the basis of its Hindu main schedule (Savarkar, 1969; Khalidi, 2020).

❖ **War Strategy and Doctrine Manifestation.** Israel is pronouncedly militaristic, and its actions are directed by the airstrikes as well as particular doctrines, such as Dahiya and Octopus. Hindutva-based India demonstrates a tendency of turning to hybrid warfare, i.e. law machinery, spying, and domestic policing, which is particularly evidenced in conflict areas such as Kashmir (Basrur, 2020; Inbar, 2021).

❖ **International Lobbying and Diplomatic Corps.** Zionism has been able to use well organised lobby groups like the AIPAC and close connections with the U.S and Europe to their advantage. The outreach of India is still less institutionalized and rather based on regional diplomacy and diasporas (Anderson, 2015; Khalidi, 2020).

Research Questions and Objectives

❖ What are some of the ways that the Hindutva and Zionism have become institutionalized in the structure of modern states?

❖ What role did these ideologies have in regional conflicts in 2025?

❖ What do these regimes do to the minority communities at home?

❖ What do such developments mean to international diplomacy, peacebuilding, and democratic norms?

Significance and Originality

It is an opportune and cross disciplinary examination of two adjacent and dominant nationalistic philosophies which are indistinguishable in their potency and comparable in their notions of thoughts, -Hindutva in India and Zionism in Israel in the greater panorama of the religious nationalism of the world. The bridge of gaps in comparative scholarly knowledge of the study field is attained by the addition of methods and approaches of the sciences of the society (political science) and of relations between countries (international relations), as well as religious studies. It also carries the special contextualization of these ideologies in the form of the 2025 geopolitical crises with Pakistan-India and Iran-Israel, which has the empirical relevance and urgency. It also says about broader international implications of populist theocratic state sponsoring, of which there exists a lurking aspect on destabilization on its impacts of democracy, minority rights and local peace. The article gives new comparative thoughts to the nationalism, totalitarianism and the erosion of the pluralism in the multipolar world politics arguments.

Literature Review

- ❖ **Hindutva Primal Texts.** Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1923) presented the ideological framework of Hindutva, as at that point in India, he saw a Hindu nation based on cultural heterogeneity and religious particularism. M. S. This vision was further elaborated by Golwalkar (1939), a central ideologue of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), who based the position of Muslims and Christians on alien to the Indian nationhood. Christophe Jaffrelot (2007) gives invaluable academic criticism on the Hindutva seeking to define the concept as a political movement and showing how religious identity is being utilized to gain a dominant voice that will control over the secular Indian Government.

- ❖ **Central Zionism Thought.** Zionism starts as a European nationalistic movement in the late 19 th century that promoted a Jewish homeland. It was ideologically prepared by Theodor Herzl in Der Judenstaat (1896) which maintained that the anti-Semitism problem could be solved only with a Jewish sovereignty. David Ben-Gurion embodied these concepts into reality by way of state-building in Palestine. Contrastingly, Ilan Papp (2006) carefully revisits the Nakba of 1948 to present it as an ethnic-cleansing act, where they describe Zionism as a settler-colonial activity that has a long-term geopolitical impact.

- ❖ **The Religious Nationalism and Political Theology Theories.** According to Mark Juergensmeyer (2003) religious nationalism is the combination of sacred authority and political power, particularly powerful when the society is experiencing some form of perceived existential threats. Rogers Brubaker (2017) goes a notch higher to examine the mobilization of religious narratives as a reason to frame ethnonational exclusion. The theorizations assist in understanding the workings of Hindutva and Zionism as theological-nationalist ideologies that decentralize the minorities and centralize the majoritarian rule.

- ❖ **Available Literature on the State Policies of India and Israel.** The India cases with regard to recent political developments of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the abolishing of Article 370 in Kashmir give evidence of Hindutva institutionalisation using the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as a tool. Jaffrelot (2007) and Basu (2021) criticise such developments as a move, willingly conducted, to redefine citizenship based on religion. Likewise, the 2018 Nation-State Law and the frequency of military operations in Gaza in Israel demonstrate how the law Zionism is implemented by an exclusionary application of the state. According to Peleg and Waxman (2011), these trends have given an indication that the Israeli democracy is shifting to the ethnocratic form of democracy which prioritizes Jewish identity.

- ❖ **Literature Gaps.** Although Hindutva and Zionism have been fairly researched separately, it is difficult to find comparisons between the two which bring out the structural and ideological similarities. In this research, we will fill that gap by putting both ideologies in conversation as we unearth how state-supported religious nationalism violates pluralism and that led to regional instability.

Methodology

This research study adopts the qualitative comparative case study research design that is an ideal design to investigate the ideologically driven state action in the complex political landscape. This is how cross-contextual analysis combined with sensitivity to the historical and socio-political development of individual states, can take place (George & Bennett, 2005). India and Israel were

chosen as the reference cases based on their involvement in regional destabilising conflicts in 2025 the Pakistan India military confrontation and the Iran Israel one both of which brought out the entrenchment of statecraft in religious nationalism. The study of the paper takes a triangulated data of the primary and secondary data in order to guarantee analytical rigor. These will be official government publications and legislative records, policy white papers, and statements of the governments of India and Israel in 2022-2025; war-time reports and statements; reports of international organizations (the United Nations, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International) and peer-reviewed scholarly works; and investigative journalism of major international news organizations (Al Jazeera, The Guardian, Haaretz, The Wire). Any materials found were checked critically in relation to the reliability of source and cross checked to reduce biasness and improve credibility. This paper uses three correlated qualitative techniques. One is the discourse analysis of political speeches, religious iconography and media framing showing how patterns of ideological narration and symbolic logics occur. In this approach, one sees the use of language and images to promote the exclusionary form of nationalism (Fairclough, 2013). Second, tracing the policy is used to track the institutional decisions made in 2025 during the crises so that the study can be used to find a connection between the ideological commitments and the strategic state decisions that were in play at real time (Bennett & Elman, 2006). Lastly, underlying belief systems, foundational myths, and policy paths of ideological mapping are used to determine how the soft cultural nationalism will give way to the aggressive supremacism of religious kinds. These two countries (India and Israel) have been chosen due to their strategic but not only geopolitical relevance but because of the ideologically parallel crises in 2025. The use of high stakes in both states went international as religion was brought directly into play in service to policy. The state legitimacy, as constructed in their respective leaderships (based on right-wing nationalists movements), was also publicly associated with these ethno-religious identity. This renders the two nations comparatively and analytically rich to conduct the study on Hindutva operationalization under the modern prerequisites and Zionism. The research is aware of a number of limitations. Top of the list is poor access to classified military intelligence which limits the analysis to the publicly published materials which may be not real-time in terms of strategic insights. Moreover, qualitative methodology, including discourse and ideological analysis, cannot dealing without interpretive judgment. Although attempts to increase inter-coder reliability and ensure the transparency in analysis have been made, the subjectivity should be present. It is an ethically solid line in the study between a belief in religious institutions and the use of them as a political tool. This is not meant to be a political critique of faith-based traditions, but an effort to reveal how the political elites utilize the construction of religious identity to serve exclusionary and in many ways militarized purposes. Due attention was paid to preventing communal stereotyping, or supporting propagandist versions.

Discussion

- ❖ **Ideological Foundations:** RSS–BJP and Likud Zionism.The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and its political wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are the pinnacle of Hindutva in modern-day India. They all are united in their vision to make India a *Hindu Rashtra* where the state will be based on Hindu identity and Hindu primacy in civilization leading to a challenge of the constitutional adherence to secularism and pluralism (Jaffrelot, 2007). In Israel, such path is witnessed in the form of the **Likud Party** and the larger alliance of the Zionist allies, who cling to the nationalist system that intends to further establish the Jewish nature of the state, which usually excludes the Arab-Palestinian citizens (Papp permissions, 2006). The two ideological undertakings have historical grievances, victimization narratives, and religious revivalism as their sources of legitimacy. These constructions are determinants of ethno-nationalism policy programs and the re-engineering of the state in a reflection of religious majoritarianism.

- ❖ **Religious Nationalism and State Behavior.** The role of religious nationalism in the state policy can be clearly seen by reference to both states. India has come under the BJP, and under its watch, the "Majoritarian form of Governance" has come to the limelight whereby the state machinery and discourse has been biased against non-Hindu citizens, in favor of Muslims in particular (Ayoob, 2020). Likewise, the Likud-led governing coalitions in Israel have entrenched Jewish ethno-national identity by authoring laws (i.e., the 2018 **Nation-State Law**) and flagrant settlement construction that has elicited condemnations that the

policies reinforce the apartheid-like state (Human Rights Watch, 2021). In both the instances, dissent is not only political but is presented in terms of existential betrayal, in which opposition to state ideology is equated with disloyalty to the nation.

❖ **Domestic Repression as a governance Apparatus.** The important ideological enforcement mechanism in both situations is domestic repression. Policies like the "Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)" and the "National Register of Citizens (NRC)" issued in India have failed to favor the Muslim community, and instead, they have been put into question as to where they belong. The annulment of Article 370 and the following curfew on Jammu and Kashmir in 2019 can be regarded as an example of a militarized policing of one of the Muslim-majority regions (Chatterji et al., 2019). In Israel, repression is taking the form of frequent military attacks on the territory of "Gaza", repeated land confiscations, and expansion of "Settlements in the West Bank" where it is usually based on the pretext of security of the country. Human rights groups like B tselem (2021) have denounced such actions as a wider effort towards forced demographic to control in the pretext of fighting terrorism.

❖ **In National War-Making, there is also the Religious Symbol.** The symbolism is impressively important in the act of justifying violence in India and Israel, much more than it represents a sense of the divine command. The Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, constructed on the ashes of the Babri Masjid has now become a nationalist symbol after being turned into a religious venture. The leaders of BJP often use this symbol to demonstrate the Hindu revival with the connections between political hegemony and the cultural pride of the country (Jaffrelot, 2021). Similarly, analysts have defined the symbolic actions on Israel side, including the raising of the **red flag over Jamkaran Mosque** as religious militarism, where divine support is given to actions of punishment towards perceived enemies (Guzansky & Berti, 2021). Such allegoric acts are used to arouse popular support, holy war and militarize religious identity.

❖ **Minority Community and the World-Diaspora Responses.** The minority community in both states has reacted to exclusivist nationalism in a mix of resistance, mobilization and international lobbying. In India, pressure against legal and cultural encroachment by Hindutva was led by Muslim women through the Shaheen Bagh protest movement that emerged as a symbol of grass-root fighting (Ali, 2020). Prolonged instability in the Palestinian territories due to both "Intifadas" and persisting resistance in "Gaza and the West Bank" is a symbol of constant defiance to the occupation and forced displacement caused by the state itself (Pappé, 2017). Such local struggles are getting amplified by "Diaspora Communities" who have brought their stories to bigger global campaigns including human rights issues, racial equality, and resistance to Islamophobia. Such transnational advocacy has assisted in busting the state-sponsored discourse and ensuring world focus on repressive nature of both religious-nationalists regimes.

Future Impact and Findings

❖ **The Forecasted Consequences to Peace in the South Asian Region and Middle East Region.** The current ethno-religious nationalism in India and Israel promises to jeopardize regional peace in the long perspective in two of the most unstable regions of the world. In South Asia, the aggression of India in Kashmir still causes opposition and militarization. On the same note, the aggression exhibited by Israel in Gaza and the West Bank propagates a cycle of violence that serves to sabotage any peaceful processes. In both instances, nationalist ideologies promote non-compromising diplomacy and make the region polarized (Ganguly & Kapur, 2010; Finkelstein, 2021).

❖ **India Pakistan Dynamics and Nuclear Brinkmanship.** The hostile relationship that exists between India and Pakistan and the fact that the two countries possess nuclear weapons is a unique threat. The Hindutva-driven stance of India by the BJP has helped in formulating more provocative defense moves that can be seen in the 2019 Balakot air strikes and retaliatory moves by Pakistan. With increasing strategic calculus, there is a high probability of the miscalculation or escalation in religious nationalism (Basrur, 2020; Ganguly & Kapur, 2010).

❖ **Regional Alignments and Israeli security Doctrines of Iran.** The changing Israeli security system with its new and so-called Octopus Doctrine indicates moving towards aggressive

deterrence of the Iran-proxy forces like Hezbollah. Iran on its part has been solidifying an ideological as well as military partnership within Syria, Iraq and other war zones. The ideology of the theocratic state of the Islamic Republic is highlighted by its readiness to a war fought with ideological connotations, which is demonstrated by the symbolic raising of the Red Flag over various shrines (Inbar, 2021; Guzansky & Berti, 2021).

❖ **Virus of Ideology.** The exportation of the ideology of Hindutva and Zionism in the world presents a burden to multicultural democracies. Hindutva groups affiliated with the Diaspora, as well as well-established Zionist lobby groups, have been able to determine how Islamophobia, national security concerns and identity politics have been spoken about in Western cultures. Such an ideological diffusion poses a threat to social unity and liberal democracy (Anderson, 2015; Khalidi, 2020).

❖ Influence on International Standards, Presentation of Religious Freedom, International Law and Human Rights. India and Israel have state-sponsored religious extremism that goes against fundamental international principles of minority protection, freedom of religion, and equality of citizenship. The two states have been condemned by international bodies such as United Nations on the issue of flouting human rights within religiously framed governments. When uncontrolled, such tendencies may degrade the norms of law at the international level and the validity of global human rights systems (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [OHCHR], 2021).

Conclusion

❖ This paper has discussed the intertwining processes of Hindutva and Zionism, their underlying ideological likenesses and difference of context in strategies. The two movements albeit brought about by different historical contexts and geopolitical settings meet on common ground in that they have adopted the concept of religious nationalism to consolidate power, marginalize minorities, and provide a basis of expansionist politics.

❖ The evidences which have been ticked off by the India-Pakistan crises and Iran- Israel crises in 2025 shows the ways with how religiously articulated nationalism expresses itself in the actions of states- usually having very destabilizing effects. The analysis affirms not only that Hindutva and Zionism are not confined to the isolated phenomena but also that they are a larger global movement to theocratic populism, all the way down to the legal codification of the supremacy of ethno-religious identity and the strategic employments of the military and media instruments. The wars of 2025 do not signify aberrations but a synthesis of decades of solidification of ideology. Such courses, with the absence of both local opposition and external responsibility, could wear off pluralistic democracies and endanger future regional stability in both Middle East and South Asia. Ultimately, this study serves as a cautionary examination of how religion, when weaponized by the state, can reshape geopolitics, redraw alliances, and redefine the moral fabric of modern nationhood.

Recommendations

❖ **Strengthen the International Legal Systems in Order to Curb the Supremacism of Religions.** The existing international organisations like the United Nations, European Union, and Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) should enhance legal structures that observate and act upon ethno-religious nationalism. The mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief should be enhanced to having systematic review at national legislation, security doctrines and military functions to institutionalize religious or ethnic discrimination. They should increase the accountability measures such as public reports, sanctions, and legal advisories on the states that fail to comply with these norms.

❖ **Encourage Comparative and Cross Disciplinary Study of Theocratic Nationalism.** Institutional and international policy-oriented think tanks must invest in long-term research programs or even studios on comparative theocratic populism. The state of Hindutva and Zionism active ideologies ought to be viewed through multiple-regionalism to understand the domestic sociopolitical effects and transnational implications of ideological applications. With such studies, ideological convergence and policy mimicry can be identified early on in different contexts.

❖ **Promote the Civil Society Resistance and Minority Advocacy Networks.** The NGOs, human rights organizations, and international donors also have to offer strategic, financial and

legal assistance to the grassroots resistance movements. Localized activism is needed to fight the repressive state practices and digital censorship in the form of Kashmir, Gaza, and the diaspora community and they cannot do it short of institutional support. Human rights defense activists, working on high-risk zones, should have protection mechanisms.

❖ **Increase Counter-Narratives via the Global Media and Education Reform.** There should be preparation of educational courses; journalism courses and use of media platforms to spread an inclusive account of the past which undermines the religious-nationalist stories. Academic and journalistic culture now must incorporate historical consciousness of settler colonialism, government-based repression, and movements of resistance so that a culture of pluralism and critical thought might become global.

❖ **Bilateral and Multilateral Partnerships to be in line with Human Rights Benchmarks.** All the world powers, such as the United States, China, Russia, and other international coalitions, should incorporate the binding human rights and minorities protection articles in their diplomatic, trading, and defense treaties with India, Israel, and other dictatorial regimes. The aims of strategic partnerships have to be refocused so it is not only aligned towards geopolitical priorities, but also agreeing on normative rules of democratic governance and the rule of law.

❖ **Host Interfaith Coexistence/De-Radicalization Regional Dialogue.** The SAARC, GCC and OIC ready to institute systematic talks on interfaith harmony and anti-extremism. such forums should include state actors, religious leaders, civil society members, as well as peacebuilding specialists to come up with inclusive alternatives to ethno-religious majoritarianism.

❖ **Include Ideological Contagion in International Risk and Intelligence Strategies.** Ideological contagion cannot be left out as part of the threats to global security organizations such as intelligence bodies, policy forecast networks, and international crisis monitoring bodies. Transnational campaigns of Hindutva, the Zionist exceptionalism and others are long term threats to social integrity and diaspora politics and international interventions. The proactive form of identification and containment strategies must be considered as the essential factors of international peace and organizational security planning.

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