You are kindly invited to the public defense to obtain the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY**

of Ms. **Tzofnat Peleg-Baker**

Which will take place **online** on 2020, October 6 - at 5PM in Brussels (UTC+2)

Link: [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)

**CONTEXTUAL-RELATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR TRANSFORMING CONFLICT**

From Adversarial Interactions to Dialogic Relations

*From Division to Co-creation to Inclusion*

“The most important meditation is critical thinking followed by action. Discern what your world is, know the scenario of this human drama, and then figure out where your talents might fit in to make a better world.” The Dalai Lama

**JURY**

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The purpose of this dissertation is to deepen the understanding of the contextual and relational nature of conflict. Instigated by her experiences as conflict resolution practitioner and seeking leads to transform conflicts from hostile interactions to opportunities for learning and growth, T. Peleg-Baker engages in an in-depth theoretical study of conflictual dynamics. The study offers three theoretical frames for developing a complex, nuanced understanding of the emergence and evolvement of conflictual dynamics and their potential transformation from adversarial, hostile interactions to inclusive, dialogic relations. The first frame is social constructionist theory offering a critical analysis of the individualist ethos wherein the self is dominant, and the other is positioned as secondary, thus accelerating interpersonal divisions and destructive conflicts. The second frame is a body of knowledge on defensive reactions and biases that pose barriers to inclusive, dialogic relations. A third frame relates to the importance of social environments wherein relationships are being constructed, discussing them as essential for shaping relational quality. Together the three frames provide guidance for addressing conflicts as learning opportunities. It is proposed that conflict transformation leading to opportunities for growth and co-creation of reality, requires (1) raising peoples’ awareness – through reflective practice – of their multidimensional self, of the other, of their being in the relationship and of how one’s understanding of the self shapes the way one positions the other in the interaction, and (2) supporting this new awareness with revised behaviors that are systematically practiced in diverse situations. The study concludes with practical considerations and models supporting awareness-raising that can be tested by practitioners in conflict transformation and further investigated in research.
Tzofnat is a social psychologist and a conflict resolution scholar-practitioner, who has been a teacher, trainer, facilitator, consultant, and mediator in the Middle East, Africa, and the U.S. She is an Adjunct Professor of Communication, Conflict, and Negotiation in the professional MBA program, School of Business at Rutgers University-Camden, where she also work closely with students, providing them with mentorship and coaching in dealing with conflicts. As the head of the Dispute Resolution Center (CDRC) in Queens, NYC, she provided strategic and operational leadership and oversaw all services to over two million residents. As the Head of Strategy at the Ministry of Justice, Israel, she served on the national team that introduced and integrated ADR and mediation in the country. Serving as a Board Member and facilitator in peace organizations, she designed and led collaborative-inclusive leadership programs and facilitated inter-group dialogues between religious and secular groups, Jews and Arabs, and Israelis and Palestinians. Democratic and dialogic educational reforms she was part of, earlier in her career, powerfully shaped her contextual-relational approach to conflict as an opportunity for learning, which she links to the changing role of leadership today. To seize the opportunity, she incorporates reflective frameworks to help rising above underlying cultural, social-psychological barriers to effective decision-making and inclusivity. Tzofnat earned an M.A. in Communications from Indiana University and an M.A. and Ph.D. (ABD) in Psychology (research in conflict and mediation) from Rutgers University.