Modernity and the hybridization of nationalism and religion: Zionism and the Jews of the Middle East as a heuristic case

Yehouda Shenhav

Abstract This article looks at nationalism and religion, analyzing the sociological mechanisms by which their intersection is simultaneously produced and obscured. I propose that the construction of modern nationalism follows two contradictory principles that operate simultaneously: hybridization and purification. Hybridization refers to the mixing of "religious" and "secular" practices; purification refers to the separation between "religion" and "nationalism" as two distinct ontological zones. I test these arguments empirically using the case of Zionist nationalism. As a movement that was born in Europe but traveled to the Middle East, Zionism exhibits traits of both of these seemingly contradictory principles, of hybridization and purification, and pushes them to their limits. The article concludes by pointing to an epistemological asymmetry in the literature by which the fusion of nationalism and religion tends to be underplayed in studies of the West and overplayed in studies of the East/global South.

Introduction

This article seeks to reassess the relationship between religion and modern nationalism. I test the veracity of the presumed incompatibility between these two concepts in the modern lexicon through an empirical examination of Zionist nationalism, a phenomenon born in the West, but applied in the Middle East. By virtue of its being "western" and "eastern," "ancient" and "modern," and "religious" and "secular," the Zionist case provides a lens through which one can also examine both the Eastern and Western biases in the literature with regards to the nexus between nationalism and religion.

Y. Shenhav (✉)
Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv 69978, Israel
e-mail: shenhav@post.tau.ac.il

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In the last two decades, the debate on nationalism has crystallized around two ostensibly opposing models.[1] According to the "primordial" (also known as "perennial") model, nationalism is a result of deep ancient roots, a sui generis process of coalescence involving collective loyalties and identities that has always characterized human communities (Smith, 1986, 1995). Thus, for example, the immigration of Jews to Palestine/Israel throughout the twentieth century was perceived as rooted in an ancient religious yearning for Zion (Smith, 1995).

According to the "modernist" model, nationalism is a distinctly modern phenomenon, a functional substitute for pre-modern categories and an invented mechanism of mobilization in the hands of manipulating political elites.[2] Whereas nationalism replaced religion and ethnicity as a modern form of collective identity (e.g., Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1990; Kedourie, 1971), it manipulated images of the past to create an impression of historical continuity (e.g., Anderson, 1991; Hobsbawm, 1983). According to this perspective, Jews came to Palestine as a result of the activity of European secular Zionist functionaries who engaged in the "engineering of nationalism"; they also manipulated Jewish religious sentiments by imbuing them with national (secular and universal) colors. History, ethnicity, and religion, this perspective holds, are organized and tailored to meet the needs of the present (Anderson, 1991; Hobsbawm, 1990).

Although the gulf between the primordialists and modernists was initially stimulating, it became a straw-man setup. It is clear today that these models are not mutually exclusive and that the opposition between them has been largely exaggerated. Whereas the primordial model falls short of acknowledging the extent to which the past is engineered, the modernist model trivializes history, religion, and tradition and reduces nationalism to merely a political manipulation (Brubaker, 2002; Calhoun, 1991). Furthermore, as Gorski (2000b, p. 1429) shows, pre-modern "national consciousness" was more like "modern nationalism" than the modernists have allowed. In his own words, "some instances of early modern national consciousness must be counted as instances of full-blown, modern nationalism by the very criteria set forth by the modernists" (Gorski 2000b, p. 1433). Also, both models are too quick to accept the epistemological categories produced by the subjects under study (i.e., nationalists), mixing the "subjective" with "objective" attributes of nationalism. Thus, while the primordialists accept nationalists' essentialization of human grouping (Brubaker, 1996), the modernists accept the nationalists' self-identification as secular modernizers.[3]

Hence, there are two interrelated epistemological asymmetries characterizing the debate on nationalism. The first epistemological asymmetry lies in the treatment of the "modern" and the "pre-modern" in these models. Whereas the social construction of the (pre-modern)

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[1] There are, of course, alternative ways in which the literature on nationalism can be classified. Gorski (2005), for example, describes four waves of social science discourse on nationalism. In some ways, his project corresponds with mine, as he adopts a Bourdieuian framework to understand the notion of modernity in nationalism.

[2] The debate between the two camps pertains to two different dimensions. The first debate concerns an ontological question, namely the nature of nations (and is characterized by the debate between primordialists vs. social constructivists); the second is a debate about the timing of nationalism's emergence (and can be characterized as the debate between perennialists vs. modernists). For the sake of simplicity I keep the distinction between primordialists and modernists as representing these two—albeit different—dimensions.

[3] Beck and Sznaider (2006) further argue that social scientists take it for granted that society should be equated with the "national, modern, society," a phenomenon that they label "methodological nationalism."

past has been extensively addressed (e.g., Anderson, 1991 and Hobsbawm, 1983), the social construction of the "modern" and its cognates has been largely ignored.[4] Thus, while "religion" is often analyzed in terms of social construction, the "secular" is mostly taken for granted. The second is an epistemological asymmetry between the West and East/global South. Whereas the role of religion has been overemphasized for the non-Western nations it was grossly underemphasized for Western nations. The two asymmetries, taken together, suggest that religion characterizes mostly "them": the non-Westerners or the pre-modern people.

In the following, I go beyond these assumptions and propose a more symmetrical epistemological approach to study nationalism and religion. According to this epistemology I suggest that (a) the modern—much like the pre-modern tradition—is a category of practice and discourse that has been reified in the political field (Brubaker, 1994, 1996); (b) the two models of nationalism ("primordial" and "modern" are not mutually exclusive but rather two simultaneous aspects of modern nationalism (Gorski, 2000b); and (c) religion and modern nationalism feed into each other, both in Western and non-Western societies. Indeed, it is now a truism in the postcolonial literature that the distinction between the religious and the secular is a product of modern thinking. But what are the sociological mechanisms that produce and obscure the distinction between them?

To answer this question I extend Latour's (1993) framework on modernity to the literature on nationalism. Latour suggests that the term "modern" designates two sets of contradictory principles. The first, known as "hybridization," mixes "non-homological" and distinct elements. The second, known as "purification," creates separate ontological zones with no continuity between them (Latour 1993, p. 10).[5] It is only when both hybridization and purification are at work that the modern emerges as a category of practice and discourse.

Using Latour, I argue that Zionism follows the same code in constructing modern nationalism. It hybridizes the secular with the religious, while at the same time it obscures these hybridization practices, thus purifying nationalism (the very product of hybridization) and treating nationalism and religion as two separate spheres of action. As Latour (1993) frames the relationship between them: "the modern constitution allows the expanded proliferation of hybrids whose existence, whose very possibility, it denies" (p. 34). Through the simultaneous processes of hybridization and purification, the religious is relegated to the pre-modern (and to the East/global South), while the secular is relegated to the modern sphere (and to the West).

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[4] Admittedly, several researchers have addressed the rise of modern nationalism. Anderson (1991) surely discusses the social construction of nationalism, which he termed "imagined community," but his analysis of modernity is ultimately founded on homogenous time and on a developmental model of history. Brubaker (1994) provides alternative explanations for the rise of French nationalism and the modern concept of citizenship, but his analysis does not address the modern as a constructed and illusionary category. Gorski (2000b, 2005) suggests abandoning the "modernist thesis," which argues that nationalism is "inherently modern." He shows that in some cases the modern criteria of nationalism can be applied to pre-modern forms of nationalism, but in so doing he accepts and endorses the distinction between the "modern" and "pre-modern." My point is that while there is literature on "tradition" as a constructed category ("the invention of tradition") it does not address "modern" ("the invention of the modern") head on—as Latour does.

[5] Zerubavel (1996) uses "lumping" and "splitting" as two basic mental operations underlining "cognitive sociology." Albeit somewhat parallel to Latour, the latter does not use his principal categories at the cognitive level only; rather these are pre-epistemological categories that determine the construction of the modern as a category of practice and discourse.

Zionism is quintessentially hybrid. It is originally European, yet materializes in the Middle East; arguably secular, yet imbued with theology; modern, yet relying on ancient roots. I believe that no other national movement provides such a blend of political representations of East and West. I argue that a critical examination of "Zionist exceptionalism" allows us to sharpen the focus on the two principles of hybridization and purification—providing an opportunity to follow these sociological mechanisms at work. Thus, the analysis of Zionist nationalism, where key conceptual issues are brought into sharp relief, serves as a heuristic blueprint of how to examine more closely the relations among nationalism, the public sphere, and religion in societies that are customarily defined as secular.

The analysis of its rhetoric and practice shows that Zionism speaks simultaneously in two contradictory voices: "primordial/religious" and "modern/secular." The primordial voice mixes (i.e., hybridizes) the old and the new. It attempts to ensure the legitimacy of Zionism, particularly outwardly, by emphasizing its historical continuity with its religious past. The "modern voice" speaks inwardly, addressing the members of the nation and trying "to modernize" them by turning its back to the past (i.e., purifying). Modern Zionism seeks to distinguish the "new Jew" from the old (unproductive and religious) Jew. This argument collapses the distinction between primordial and modern nationalism and suggests that they should be viewed as simultaneous practices of hybridization and purification.

The paper is divided into three main sections. The first section develops a theoretical framework that examines the role of religion in the construction of 'modern' nationalism. The second explains why Zionism can provide theoretical insights into this process. The third section presents three empirical case studies that examine the encounter of Zionist emissaries (known as *Shadarim*) with Jewish communities in Yemen and in Iraq. I end with a concluding section on the theoretical and historical implications of the argument, as well as its scope and limitations.

Theoretical framework

The nexus between nationalism and religion

The secularization paradigm Among other social indicators—such as democratization, economic development, technology or the diffusion of cultural values—secularization is one of modernity's archetypal markers. In the ideal formulation of secularization theory, the terms "secular" and "religious" are perceived as bifurcated and polarized. The term "secularization" is first associated with Max Weber's ideas of rationalization, disenchantment, and intellectualization, meaning that there were no "mysterious incalculable forces" the individual cannot master (Weber, 1904/1930; Weber, 1946, p. 139). For Weber, the term *Entzauberung* (disenchantment) did not simply mean that people ceased to believe in religion, but rather that the concept of mystery was devalued (Swatos & Christiano, 1999). Weber's legacy on the subject is vague, since neither did he define religion nor did he often use the term secularization. However, seen as a whole, Weber's work suggests a decline in the significance of religion in the West (Gorski, 2000a) if not its complete disappearance from public life (Berger, 1967; Gauchet, 1997; Luckman, 1967; Wilson, 1985). Recently, Gorski (2000a) neatly identified four different interpretations of secularization in Western sociology: the disappearance of religion (traced back to Comte), the decline of religion (traced back to Weber), the privatization of religion (traced back to Luckman), and the

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transformation of religion to other spheres of action (traced back to Durkheim and Parsons). As Gorski rightly suggests, all four interpretations entertain the assumption that religion and secularity are two distinct categories and that the role of religion in modern public institutions is weakening (see also Casanova, 1994; Taylor, 1998).

The contour lines of the secularization paradigm apply to the literature on nationalism as well. Gellner (1983, 1994) maintained that national movements furthered the secularization of political discourse by placing an idealized ethnic culture, rather than religion, at the center of the nation. Anderson, too, was explicit about the declining role of religion: "In Western Europe the eighteenth century marks not only the dawn of the age of nationalism but also the dusk of religious thought..." (Anderson, 1991, p. 19). Several scholars have developed the idea that nationalism replaced religion as a form of political mobilization and group solidarity, becoming a surrogate for religion (Greenfeld, 1992; Taylor, 1998). In an essay entitled "Nationalism as a Religion," historian Hays (1928) attributed nationalism's missionary zeal to people's basic "religious sense." Hays cited the French Revolution as a landmark for the emergence of nationalism as religion and identified three religious features in modern nationalism: missionary idealism (e.g., we are a distinctive people), civic liturgies (e.g., the liturgies surrounding the flag), and political theology (e.g., official doctrines, precepts of the founders, declaration of independence, and constitution). Smith (2003) takes a similar course, highlighting analogous features between nationalism and religion. In this vein, Greenfeld (1996) defines nationalism as "modern religion" and Llobera (1994) coins it "the god of modernity."[6] This theoretical tradition also finds expression in the concept of "civil religion," suggested by Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton (1985), or by the concept of "humanist religion" suggested by Huxley (1941). By making such an assertion—that nationalism is analogous to religion and therefore replaces religion—these scholars treat nationalism and religion as antinomies and thus purify nationalism from religion.

Critique of the secularization paradigm During the last two decades, the secularization paradigm has come under heavy attack, as religion refused to disappear from public space (Bell, 1952; Casanova, 1994; Chaves, 1994; Hadden, 1987; Swatos & Christiano, 1999). Critics argue that Western intellectuals and researchers romanticized and idealized the portrayal of modern society and that religion never ceased to be an essential factor of modernity (Hadden, 1987). European history shows, contrary to common belief, that the Protestant Reformation was the real impetus for the Christianization of Europe and that modern Europe is more Christian today than was medieval Europe (e.g., Le Bras and Delumeau, cited in Gorski, 2000a; Stark & Iannaccone, 1994). In his analysis of modern politics and law, Schmitt (1934) has argued that they cannot escape theology and theological assumptions. Milbank (1990) further argued that the construct of "the secular" is neither religion-free nor is it a space in which human life emancipates itself from the controlling power of religion. From the beginning, "the secular" was part of theological discourse (see also Asad, 2003, p. 192). Furthermore, numerous empirical studies have shown that religious participation has increased in most Western modern societies, let alone in the non-Western ones (e.g., Finke & Innaccone, 1996; Stark, 1996; Stark & Iannaccone,

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[6] These arguments echo Durkheim's prediction about the decline of traditional religion and the rise of alternative forms of belief. Since society cannot function without religion, new religions would eventually replace the old ones: "The old gods are growing old or dying and the new gods have not been born" (cited in Gorski, 2000a, p. 141).

1994). As part of this revisionist trend, several scholars have suggested either dropping the term "secularization" from all theoretical discussions or revising its meaning.

A comprehensive study by Gorski (2000a) has shown that the two paradigms— "secularization" vs "sacralization"—are not necessarily mutually exclusive. He argues that while the breakup of the Western Church diminished the unity of religious elites and institutions, it did not diminish the intensity of religious authority. He further argues that it is fairly probable that Western society has become more secular without becoming less religious (Gorski, 2000a). This argument implies that a different hermeneutic is needed here, a hermeneutic of hybridization and permeable boundaries, rather than one of bifurcation. To gauge it in Latourian terms, we can argue that the secularization debate wrongly employs "purifying narratives" that treat the secular and the religious as antinomies. Furthermore, there is a gross asymmetry in the treatment of religion in Western and non-Western societies; the "purifying narratives" described above (e.g., Greenfeld, 1992; Hays, 1928; Smith, 2003) are overplayed in the study of the West and underplayed in the study of non-Western nationalism. While I do not deny such asymmetries in real life, my argument is that researchers of Western societies have been too quick to employ narratives of purification, thus denying the extent to which religion is a factor there, too.

The hybridization of nationalism and religion in the West If in fact the West faces processes of sacralization at least as much as it faces processes of secularization—and if we do not accept the sharp distinction between religion and secularization—there is no reason to believe that such processes have skipped nationalism. To begin with, the emergence of the Western nation state was imbued with Christianity (Bendix, 1967; Friedland, 2001; Hastings, 1997; Marx, 2003). It is the French Revolution that was exceptional in that it constituted itself in opposition to religion and even this argument is controversial (see Marx, 2003, p. 28). The Irish came to be identified with Catholicism when they refused to follow the English into the Reformation. The people of Wales converted en masse to Protestant dissent in the nineteenth century as part of the acquisition of a national consciousness (Hobsbawm, 1990). The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries witnessed not merely enlightenment attacks on religious authorities but also new and vibrant religious movements such as Methodism in England or pietism in Germany (Hefner, 1998). The American Revolution was accompanied by a diffusion of Protestant belief, known as the Great Awakening (Friedland, 2001; Hefner, 1998).

Hefner (1998) argues that in numerous contemporary Western societies religion exercises a significant influence on civil society and on the public sphere. For example, the Protestant Church in East Germany has adopted an official position regarding the unification of Germany in 1991. American nationalism today is couched in biblical symbols and religious terminology, as Morone (2003) convincingly argues. He shows that the hybridization of nationalism and religion was, and still is, standard practice in American politics and culture. McAlister (2001) similarly argues that religious narratives helped forge contemporary US foreign policy in the Middle East and have bolstered the American sense of national identity. Thus, it is fairly reasonable to assume, following Geertz (1983), that sacred religious symbols seep from religion into all forms of political and institutional life. These examples point to the fact that the role of religion in national movements in the West has not necessarily diminished. This is true, obviously, for non-Western societies as well.

The hybridization of nationalism and religion in non-western societies Scholars of modernization initially believed that modernization processes would diffuse secular values

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from Western to non-Western societies. It was believed that it would only be a matter of time until non-Western societies would be modernized and would therefore experience secularization and the privatization of religion (Hefner, 1998; Tibi, 1990). Historical reality has taken a different course. As Gellner has argued, in Islam "modernization on the one hand, and the re-affirmation of a putative old local identity on the other, can be done in one and the same language and set of symbols" (Gellner, 1981, p. 5; Hefner, 1998, p. 90). Likewise, Friedland (2001, 2002) has shown that the formation of many non-Western modern national identities and national movements are suffused with religious narratives, symbolism, and ritual. The extreme examples can be categorized under the label "religious nationalism": in Iran, Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, to mention just a few notable examples. The world today is witness to fierce religious–national struggles throughout the globe involving corporatist Islamists, conservative Hindu nationalists, Latin American Pentecostals, and Messianic Jewish nationalists—in their respective locations.

I ask the reader, however, not to confuse the subject of this article with the concept of religious nationalism (Friedland, 2001; Juergenmeyer, 1993). Religious nationalism—such as Iranian nationalism since 1979—wishes to religionize the public sphere and to define the national collective identity explicitly as religious (Friedland, 2002). However, whereas religious nationalists hybridize their practices, they do not employ practices of purification. In Latourian terms, they do not purify because they do not aspire to become "modern" (or "secular").

The examples above—from Western and non-Western societies—should neither suggest that all religions are homologous, nor that the relationship between nationalism and religion is identical across nations. But they point to the fact that models of modernity fail to acknowledge the complexity of religious intensity, its hybridization, and its relationship with contemporary modern nationalism. Or at least they suggest that some further sociological conceptualization of the issue is called for.

Postcolonial perspective is explicit about the epistemology of hybridization as a way to think about culture, power, and fluidity (Asad, 1993, 2003; see also Bhabha, 1990, 1994; Chatterjee, 1993). For example, in his *Formations of the Secular*, Asad (2003, p. 31) argued that the secular is neither a successor to religion nor its predecessor. Both are constructs that emerged in nineteenth-century social scientific and theological thought and rendered a variety of overlapping social forms into mutually exclusive immutable essences.[7] In practice, "the principle of structural differentiation—according to which religion, economy, education, and science are located in autonomous social spaces—no longer holds" (Asad, 2003, p. 182). Although postcolonial theory offers a sound critique of the modernist assumptions, the sociological model suggested by Bruno Latour provides a more satisfactory theoretical framework to examine the relationship between modern nationalism and religion (Latour, 1993; see also Bockman & Eyal, 2002).

The principles of modernity

In the Latourian epistemology, the secularization–sacralization debate itself is overly modern and cannot be resolved as long as two epistemological assumptions remain

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[7] Durkheim's (1915, 1965) *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* is a case in point. He argued that "all known religious beliefs, whether simple or complex, present one common characteristic. They presuppose a classification of all things...into two classes or opposed groups, generally designed by two distinct terms which are translated well enough by the words profane and sacred" (Durkheim's 1915/1965, p. 37).

unaltered. The first assumption is that secularity and religion are two mutually exclusive antinomies, where one is always defined in opposition to the other (Swatos & Christiano, 1999, p. 213).[8] The second assumption is that modernity is a given entity that subscribes to developmental rules and pertains to a concrete historical period. In contrast, for Latour modernity implies a set of two contradictory principles that divulge the hybrid nature of our reality. He starts with an observation about a gross epistemological asymmetry between the modern and the pre-modern.

The asymmetry between the modern and the pre-modern In advance of Latour, Douglas (1975) pointed to the asymmetry in social construction between the modern and the premodern in her critique of Durkheim. Primitive groups, according to Durkheim, are organized by similarities (mechanical solidarity) and their knowledge of the world is anchored in the stability of their social relations (Douglas, 1975). Modern society, on the other hand, is organized by diversified individuals united by specialized services (organic solidarity) and their knowledge of the world is anchored to material objects. According to Douglas (1975, p. xii), "the social construction of reality applied fully to them, the primitives, and only partially to us." Furthermore, Douglas argues that whereas Durkheim's theory of the sacred is a theory about "how knowledge of the universe is socially constructed," this unfortunately does not apply to the profane (Douglas, 1975). That asymmetry seems to prevail up to this day. Asad describes such disciplinary asymmetry in contemporary anthropology. A collection of university and college syllabi prepared for the American Anthropological Association shows that whereas religion is extensively studied as a subject matter, the secular makes no appearance in the collection (Buckser, 1998). Nor is it included as an object of study in well-known introductory texts (Asad, 2003).

Douglas also gives separate attention to hybridization and purification. In her work on dirt and pollution, Douglas (1966; 1975, p. 50; 1966, p. 2) does not assign absolute, or nominal, values to these phenomena: dirt is simply a hybrid phenomenon; a matter out of place. Like any cultural pollution, dirt is sanctioned by community rules of purification. By the same token, Douglas addresses the fragility and the construction of boundaries between the sacred and the profane. She argues that

> religious ideas are volatile and fluid; they float in the mind, unattached, and are always likely to shift, or to merge into other contexts at the risk of losing their essential character. There is always the danger that the sacred will invade the profane and the profane invade the sacred. The sacred must be continually protected from the profane by interdictions. Thus, relations with the sacred are always expressed through rituals of separation and demarcation and are reinforced with beliefs in the danger of crossing forbidden boundaries (Douglas, 1975, p. 49).

Douglas's theoretical position is similar to that of Latour. She observes hybridization ("invasion") and purification ("separation and demarcation"), but she falls short of Latour by excluding the principle of simultaneity. Unlike Latour, Douglas does not allow for both processes to take place concurrently. In her formulation, once boundaries are created they are external, real, and fairly rigid, an assumption that is also common to most sociological research on boundaries today (e.g., Bourdieu, 1984; Kemp, 1997). Even most literature on the transgression of boundaries presupposes such boundaries (e.g., Butler, 1991).

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[8] As Baily ironically put it: "Secular is really quite easy to define! Its meaning keeps changing yet remains consistent. It always means, simply, the opposite of 'religious'—whatever that means" (quoted in Swatos & Christiano, 1999, p. 213).

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Hybridization and purification as a definition of modernity Latour criticizes the conventional narrative on modernity, which associates the modern with technology, science, economic development, and the replacement of theology and metaphysics by ontology and epistemology. Instead, he emphasizes that the term modern designates two sets of entirely different principles that must remain distinct to be modern. The first set, known as hybridization, creates mixtures between entirely different phenomena: it lumps together nature and culture, humans and non-humans, secularity and religion.[9] The second, known as purification, creates two entirely distinct ontological zones: that of culture and that of nature; that of humans and that of non-human; that of religion and that of secularity. Herein lays Latour's entire modern paradox. There is a complete separation between the work of hybridization and the work of purification. On an everyday level, we are confronted with networks and actors representing hybrid reality. At the epistemological level of society, however, these hybrids do not challenge the absolute separation between categories. Thus, says Latour, "modern men and women could be atheists even while remaining religious" or "secular and pious at the same time" (Latour, 1993, p. 33).[10]

Latour's contribution lies in the fact that he provides a general theory of modernity that treats the two processes—of hybridization of purification—simultaneously. The success of modernity as a project stems from the ability to mix objects and categories without ruling out any combination (genetic engineering is a telling example). Yet, while modern narratives give lavish credit to purification, they deny the practices of hybridization. According to Latour (1993, p. 50), it is the concurrent effect of hybridization and purification that constitutes the code of modernity; the proliferation of hybrids has saturated our reality but purification does not allow us to acknowledge it. The secularization debate focuses on the location of boundaries and denies the hybrid and constructed nature of secularism and religion. When Hays, Smith, and Greenfeld suggest that secular nationalism is analogous to religion, they in fact invoke "purifying narratives" that separate the two. To circumvent the problem of purification, Latour proposes the study of networks.

Studying nationalism through networks Networks, which White (1992) termed "phenomenological realities," usually do not comply with the principle of purification. Because they are based on ties and alliances that transcend existing categories they themselves are sources of hybrid practices. As Emirbayer and Goodwin (1994) put it, the point of departure in examining networks is their "anticategorical imperative." This imperative rejects all attempts to explain human behavior or social processes solely by way of mutually exclusive categorical attributes (Emirbayer, 1997; Emirbayer & Goodwin, 1994).

The idea of studying nationalism in the form of networks corresponds well to Brubaker's theoretical work on nationalism (Brubaker, 1994, 1998, 2002, see also 1996). Brubaker identifies at least three epistemological problems in the sociology of nationalism. First, he

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[9] Latour (1987, pp. 103–144) also uses the term "translation," which refers to the proliferation of hybrids, since "hybridization" may imply previously existing unadulterated elements. I chose the term "hybridization" for consistency purposes, with the qualification that hybridization is an ongoing process that denies the possibility of previously existing, pure categories.

[10] Boundary setting and classifications have always been at the forefront of sociological analyses of modernity from Durkheim and Mauss to Bourdieu and others. They ask questions about epistemology, group closure, symbolism, and representation (see also Lamont & Molnar, 2002). Whereas most sociologists (particularly within the modernization tradition) have accepted modernity as given, others have alerted us to the constructed nature of its own boundaries (e.g., Douglas, 1966, 1975; Gieryn, 1983; Mitchell, 1991; Proctor, 1991). The position of these latter scholars varies with respect to the location, stability, agency, and visibility of the boundaries.

argues against the essentialist and primordialist assumptions embedded in the "return of the repressed" ("primordialist"), and against the reductionist nature of the "manipulating elites" (modernist) models. Both are oversimplifications of the political reality of nationalism. Second, he argues against the developmental nature of modern theories about nationalism. The canonic literature—including Gellner, Anderson, Smith, and Hobsbawm—is developmental in the sense that it traces long-term changes that lead to the gradual emergence of nations (Brubaker, 1994, p. 8). Third, he argues that national groups should not be conceived as externally bounded and internally homogenous blocs (Brubaker, 1998, p. 274).

According to Brubaker, the understanding of nations as real groups contradicts recent developments in sociological theory such as network theory, ethnomethodology, post-structuralism, and feminism. These developments show growing interest in network-forms rather than in fixed entities; in groups as constructed, contingent, and fluctuating, rather than fixed entities; in fragmentary, ephemeral, and elusive boundaries rather than in static categories (Brubaker, 1998, p. 292). These networks are bound together by some overlapping sense of what they are trying to accomplish, but only loosely so. In essence, Brubaker (1994) suggests studying nations as events that emerge through situated networks. Given its anticategorical imperative, the network approach has the potential to reject all varieties of essentialism or methodological individualism (Emirbayer & Goodwin, 1994).

In the following, I empirically examine the hybridization and purification of religion and secularity in the construction of modern Zionist nationalism. I examine a network of emissaries of European origin who visited Arab–Jews throughout the first half of the twentieth century. These emissaries crossed, and at the same time transgressed, boundaries between West and East, between secularity and religion, and between modern and pre-modern societies. Thus, I identify national practices through these networks. Nationalism is treated phenomenologically, more as the product of these networks than the other way around; the emissaries' everyday practice became what Brubaker would define as nationalism. More essentially, as networks they do not conform easily to the pre-existing categories or perceived boundaries between religion and secularity.

Why study Zionist nationalism

Zionism is the offspring of European nationalism, and its proponents identified themselves as promulgators of European utopian thought. Jewish national historiography arose in the mid-nineteenth century as a branch of modern European—and particularly German—historiography (Piterberg, 1996). Zionist thinkers adopted ideas from the German nationalist movement concerning the relations between homeland and diaspora, socialization practices of nationalization (such as national education or the establishment of national youth and sports movements), and the establishment of rural settlements as devoted to character building. As early Zionist thinker Hans Kohn wrote, young Zionists "transferred Fichte's teaching into the context of our own situation..." (cited in Buruma & Margalit, 2004, p. 12). In fact, all the thinkers and actors who are considered the precursors of the Jewish national movement—from Graetz, Hess, and Smolenskin to Herzl, Nordau, Ussishkin, Pinsker, Sokolow, Borochov, Gordon, and Ahad Ha'am—were based in Europe (Avineri, 1981).[11]

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[11] Yet Zionist nationalism resembles more the ethnic German or Eastern European model than the French civic model (Joppke & Rosenhek, 2002; for extended analysis and critique, see Brubaker, 1992, 1999).

Furthermore, the Zionist national movement emerged as a heterodox phenomenon, both because it sprang from the European Enlightenment, which was based on an anti-religious tradition (at least prima facie), and because it crystallized within European socialism at a moment when rabbinical institutions ceased to be consulted in the national sphere (Kena'ani, 1976). The Zionist movement was flagrantly hostile to religion (Avineri, 1981) and the national ideology was constructed in part through the negation of religious life and all that it entailed.[12] Work and productivity, the creation of a new rational individual, economic independence, and progress through science and technology were paramount values of secular Zionist national life. Even though many of those who arrived in Palestine during the late nineteenth century had grown up in religious homes themselves, their move to Palestine signified a revolt against everything that was identified with Orthodox religious life. As such, Zionist nationalism resembles the secular characteristics of modern national movements in the West. Similar to the Western narrative of nationalism, Zionism emerged out of a theological context and ostensibly surpassed it by transforming religion into modern nationalism. Yet, it is clear that Zionist nationalism retained several theological assumptions. Scholars have argued that basic concepts of the Zionist enterprise—redemption of the land and the Hebrew language, the utopian vision of the "return to Zion" and its holy places—were organized around theological myths (for example, Raz-Krakotzkin, 2002; Raz, 1999; Kimmerling, 1998, 1999).[13]

As suggested at the outset, this entanglement between nationalism and religion is not unique to Zionism. In the Zionist case, however, the principles of hybridization and purification are pushed to the limit. It is born in modern Europe and materialized in the Middle East. It perceives itself as secular and still fighting the remains of traditional religion, yet at the same time capitalizes on its religious roots. Thus, Zionist nationalism is simultaneously Western and Eastern, ancient and modern, religious and secular. It is precisely because Zionism transcends these antinomies that it provides a more symmetrical approach (and a more general case) to examining how hybridization and purification can be at work simultaneously.

The three empirical cases below focus on European-born emissaries visiting the Jews of Yemen and Iraq. In the Zionist lexicon, these emissaries were called *Shadarim* and their network *Shadarut*. They were part of a hybrid body of loosely coupled individuals operating among religious and non-religious (but ethnically Jewish) communities. Many of the Zionist emissaries (particularly in the third case study) genuinely thought that they were involved in a secular movement. As noted, many were virulently anti-religious. Thus, Zionist emissaries were not expected, prima facie, to "religionize" the Arab Jews. Nevertheless, they did. The following analysis shows that network of *Shadarut* refuses to yield to the categorical imperatives and the normal divisions that arise from the bifurcation of religiousness/secularity. The historical materials for this study were collected from four different archives: Central Zionist Archive (CZA), the Israeli Labor Movement Archive

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[12] Indeed, the leading rabbis in Europe launched a frontal attack against Zionism; among them was the Admor of Lubavitch (Shalom Dov Baer), who emphasized the danger latent in the Zionist movement.

[13] A recent example is the negotiation of the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, notoriously secularist, with the Palestinian delegation at the Camp David summit meeting in the year 2000. To the disbelief of several of his colleagues in the Israeli delegation, Barak suddenly begun to argue that "the holy of the holies" should remain in Israel's possession. Barak wanted to be remembered in Jewish history as the man who gave Israel sovereignty, if only partial, over Temple Mount (known also as, Haram al-Sharif). After Camp David he also started to claim that when the Palestinians deny the Jewish connection to Temple Mount, it is if they are denying the Jewish connection to all of the Land of Israel, including Haifa and Tel-Aviv.

(LMA), the Israeli Kibutz Archive (Ha'kibutz Hameuhad, KMA), and the Israeli State Archive (ISA). In addition, memoirs and autobiographies of individual emissaries have been examined and analyzed (for example: Brawer, 1944; Yavne'eli, 1932).

Shadarim: A hybrid network of Zionist emissaries

It is only since the beginning of the twentieth century, with the dawn of Zionist nationalism, that the *Shadarim* (emissaries) started to serve Zionist purposes. Originally, these emissaries were observant Jews, including many eminent rabbis, who went on religious missions. They represented the Holy Land and were part of a structure of support that developed among the Jewish leadership in Palestine. The emissaries visited Jewish communities to raise funds for the Jewish centers in Palestine which was considered the "Land of Israel." Their impact derived from their authority to deliver judgments in complex legal affairs and to arbitrate conflicting religious rulings. They enhanced the power of the communities' leaders in the eyes of the people, introduced regulations, authorized religious works, disseminated books, ordained rabbis and ritual slaughterers, and delivered new biblical interpretations (Yaari, 1951).[14] The local chroniclers noted an emissary's arrival as a special event in the community. In most cases, the emissary appeared in the synagogue and delivered the first sermon in the community, which served as a prologue to fundraising. The fact that the emissaries' actions took place in the synagogue emphasized the emissary's status (see Shenhav 2003a)

The role of the *Shadarim* began to change starting at the end of the nineteenth century (after 1871, which is considered the dawn of modern Zionism in Palestine). The Zionist leadership started to depend on the *Shadarim* for disseminating the national message and mobilizing Jewish communities to immigrate to Palestine. To be sure, the emissaries were part of dispersed, loosely coupled, networks and coalitions connecting Zionist establishments in Palestine and Diaspora Jews. These were networks in the sense that they did not correspond to formal institutions, let alone to single formal organizations. For example, some of the emissaries were soldiers in the British army, others were part of a large Jewish construction company, yet others were sent on religious missions by prominent Jewish rabbis. The case studies described below exemplify how their actions, multiple locations, and affiliations transcend the existing categories defining religion and secularity.

I now present three watershed moments in the history of the *Shadarim* and their encounter with the Jews of Arab countries. I use the case studies to show the ways in which religion constitutes or hybridizes the nation, as legitimation, as organizational basis for mobilization, as a source of discourse, and as content of identity. The first is the mission of Shmuel Yavne'eli in 1910 to import Jewish workers from Yemen to Palestine. Yavne'eli went to Yemen as a declared religious emissary carrying a letter from Rabbi Kook which

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[14] The emissaries' missions might last for months, possibly even a year or two, and they received a third of the entire net revenues for themselves. The emissary was provided with a sheaf of documents, including a letter written on parchment in orotund language and signed by as many Torah sages as possible, which described the city and the reasons for the mission, and served as the emissary's introduction to the members of the target community. In addition to the letters, the emissary was also furnished with a power of attorney, which gave his demands legal validity. By means of this document, the emissary was entitled to act as the legal envoy of the community that sent him, collect in its name charitable funds, bequests, or debts, and appear in court. The emissary had a special ledger, in which the heads of communities and individuals recorded the sums they gave him. The ledger served as testimony when he returned home, a kind of receipt-book.

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provided the cover story for his national mission. This case points to a tension, or at least to an apparent distinction, between religion and nationalism. The second moment is the attempt of the Zionist leadership, in 1929, to integrate the religious network of *Shadarut* into the forefront of the secular Zionist endeavor. The assimilation of nationalism and religion exemplifies how hybridization and purification work simultaneously. The third case study is the Zionist mission to Jewish communities in Iraq in the 1940s in which religion is intertwined with nationalism and the separation between them is no longer possible. The cases represent different historical periods and different forms of purification and hybridization of religion and nationalism.

Case study 1: 1910. Zionist emissaries meet the Jews of Yemen

Shmuel Yavne'eli was an ardent Zionist, notoriously socialist and secular, who was sent in 1910 by Dr. Arthur Ruppin, a German-born leader of the Jewish settlement project in Palestine, to encourage the immigration of Jewish workers for the new colonies in Palestine.[15] Although Yavne'eli was sent to Yemen for Zionist purposes, he was disguised as a religious emissary (*Shadar*). He was explicit about the element of deception that characterized his mission:

> [I]t was decided that this trip should be cast in a religious character and that I should go, on the surface, on a mission from Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Kook in Jaffa in order to pose to the rabbis of the communities in Yemen a series of questions concerning marriage, divorce, family life, prayer, synagogues, and receive from them written replies. Equipped with a letter and with a notebook of questions from Rabbi Kook.... I sailed from Jaffa to Port Said... (Yavne'eli, 1932, p. 73).

Furthermore, Yavne'eli reported that his mission was an extension of a wide network composed of heterogeneous representatives:

> The mission to Yemen was a joint operation of the representatives of Zionism in Palestine and the Labor movement, together with members of Hapoel Hatza'ir [the Young Worker movement] headed by Yosef Aharonovich, together with certain circles of farmers from the colonies, and functionaries, such as Eliahu Sapir and Aharon Eisenberg, and a representative of the rabbinical world, the Chief Rabbi of Jaffa and the colonies, Avraham Yitzhak Kook (Yavne'eli, 1932. p. 8).

This amalgam of representatives attests to the hybrid nature of the network as his mission. Evidently, Yavne'eli's visit was perceived as the natural continuation of the mission undertaken by Rabbi Yaakov Sapir, who set out for the East on June 25, 1855 to raise funds for building a synagogue. In the letter that Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Kook supplied Yavne'eli, he introduced the latter to the elders and heads of communities in Yemen in this way:

> The bearer of this letter who is visiting your country is the important dignitary and sage Mr. Eliezer Ben Yosef.... This dear man was in the Holy Land for many years and he has information about the customs of all our brethren, may they live.... We have entrusted him with matters to investigate and to inquire about from the high and

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[15] Yavne'eli published his conclusions from his eighteen-month journey, along with the letters he sent to Dr. Arthur Ruppin and to Dr. Yaakov Tahoun, twenty-one years later in a book, *Journey to Yemen*.

honorable sages... in order that we may also allow the communities of Yemenites who are gathering among us to follow their own customs, that sons shall do like their fathers (Yavne'eli, 1932, pp. 185–186).

Rabbi Kook added in his letter:

You surely know that in recent years many of the dispersed from the Diaspora have ingathered in the Land, the Land of the Heart, including a good many of your Yemenite compatriots, and a good many of them have settled in the colonies to be workers of the land on the sacred soil and thereby honorably to earn their bread for themselves and their home, by their own toil and labor, happy is their lot.... [T]he Yemenites who come to us here wish to follow your customs, but until now we were separated by a distance and we did not know for certain some details of the permanent customs you practice; therefore we are unable to lay down a ruling on the basis of what we are told by these people... in some things which differ from our customs... (Yavne'eli, 1932, p. 85).

Thus, Rabi Kook, despite his earlier objections to the Zionist cause, takes part in the process of nationalizing the Yemenite Jews and the attempts to bring them to Palestine ("The Holy Land"). Yavne'eli describes how the Yemenite Jews took for granted the *Shadarut* phenomenon:

I said I had been sent by the Rabbi from Jaffa to examine the various customs and also in general to get to know the life of the Jews in Yemen.... From this visit and from what I heard here in the city, I got the impression that the sages who come from the Land of Israel are an everyday, regular matter and that they do not speak to them much, but receive them when they arrive and escort them when they leave and give them the charitable donation according to the value and are rid of them. And now I too am in just such a situation....[16]

Yavne'eli in fact set new goals, which were different from those of the old-style emissary: a search for diligent workers ("human material for us") with a "healthy, sturdy body" who felt "affinity for the land or for manual labor," were "ready to work in the colonies," and were "able to underwrite the cost of their immigration to the Land" (Yavne'eli, 1932, p. 83; also Shafir, 1989/1996, pp. 92–96). He singled out the existence of a different element in his mission:

Emissaries from the Land of Israel come here every few years. Sephardim or Ashkenazim, but they all resemble one another: they come to receive.... [They] are all are beggars. But despite that, they are valued guests. They are wanted and beloved, these sons of Zion. However, was there one of them who called on the people to go up to the Land of Israel? Did any of them bear a message? No.[17]

Yavne'eli dwells on his liminal status, which on the one hand hybridizes the old and the new and draws its strength from the continuous, unbroken existence of the old-world cosmology; but at the same time purifies his practice by breaking that continuity and creating a new, national cosmology that is secular, modern, and Western. "The conclusion... I reached is that in the country of Yemen there is broad potential for Zionist work in all the

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[16] Yavne'eli in a letter to Dr. Y. Toun, Jan. 2, 1911.

[17] Yavne'eli, from a report to Dr. A. Ruppin, p. 150.

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same aspects we are accustomed to in other [European] countries."[18] To disseminate the
message of the Zionist revival, Yavne'eli proposed that literature, of the type he considered
to possess a canonical national character, religious and secular alike, be sent to him at the
town of San'a.[19]

In some cases, Yavne'eli's writings demonstrate a narrative that speaks in two different
voices: primordial and modernist. He praises the old Jewish ways of doing, and uses
religious language, but at the same time appears as a secular missionary who rejects the old
religious way of life. He describes his mission in hybrid manner, religious and national/
secular:

> I urged them to eat from the Lord's table: from the field, to absorb the influence of the
> Creator, of the First Hand, the direct channel, and not from the go-between. Work the
> land, trust in God, sow and pray to Him to send His blessing, and do not bargain and
> hope for the generosity of the nations of the world. Purify your souls by settling in the
> Land of Israel and working the soil, which is undefiled, and flee from commerce, with
> its usurious money lending, involving fraud and sin.[20]

The fact that a national emissary speaks in two contradictory voices—hybridizing and
purifying—is hardly surprising. The "primordial voice" ensures the legitimacy of the
national project by capitalizing on its historical continuity. The "modern voice" intends to
reorganize and realign power relations within the national community itself. Thus, Zionism
is not a fixed entity. It becomes a site where hybrid representations of the nation ostensibly
contest and negotiate with each other, but in fact allow for the construction of modern
nationalism (Duara, 1995, p. 8).

Yavne'eli made recourse to the "secular–religious" network time and again. For
example, in a letter to Palestine he proposed that the authority of Rabbi Kook be invoked to
prepare the ground and to justify a project in which the Yemenite Jews would be brought to
Palestine.[21] Inevitably, however, his national mission (which entailed recruiting workers
and disseminating the message of the Jewish national revival) and the fact that there were
other emissaries who were part of the same network brought about tension with the
ostensibly "religious" capacity in which the visit was made. In a letter of January 1911, he
describes a dramatic, unintended, meeting with the Hakham-Bashi (a Sephardic Rabbi) of
Hebron, who was visiting Aden at the time on a "purely religious" mission. The meeting
provides a condensed test case for the anomalous status of Yavne'eli's mission. Being
unaware of Yavne'eli's mission, Hakham-Bashi started questioning him and his motives.
This became a point at which hybridization and purification ostensibly clashed:

> Hakham-Bashi addressed me in Hebrew of the Land of Israel and he did speak to me
> and did express his desire to reply himself to Rabbi Kook's questions here, on the
> spot. In the meantime, however, we got into a lengthy and somewhat frank
> conversation.... I told him first that Rabbi Kook had sent me, in addition to the goal
> of investigating their customs, also to investigate and ascertain how it might be
> possible to improve the Yemenites' situation. From here, of course, we moved in the
> rest of the conversation to [the subject of] emigration from Yemen to the Land of

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[18] Yavne'eli, letter to Dr. A. Ruppin and Dr. Y. Toun, Sadah, 28 Adar 5671 (March 28, 1911).

[19] Yavne'eli, letter to Dr. A. Ruppin and to Dr. Y. Toun, San'a, 5 Iyar 5671 (May 3, 1911).

[20] Yavne'eli, report to Dr. A. Ruppin, 1932, p. 151.

[21] Yavne'eli, letter to Dr. A. Ruppin and Dr. Y. Toun, Aden, 7 Av 5671 [Aug. 1, 1911], p. 111.

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Israel and to the fact that the reason for the meagerness of such emigration is poverty.[22]

Appealing to the Hakham-Bashi in the name of their shared mission as emissaries from the Land of Israel, Yavne'eli asked him to explain to the Jews in Yemen that he had not come on a "regular mission" (i.e., religious), that he was not there "to receive" or as an "emissary" (meaning a mendicant). "At the end he [Hakham-Bashi] asked me who provided the money for the expenses and I told him that I did not know who actually gives it, that I knew only Dr. Ruppin, who is from the Zionists, and where he gets it from—I did not know" (Yavne'eli, ibid.). Despite Hakham-Bashi's suspicions concerning Yavne'eli's "secular" intentions, he agreed to Yavne'eli's request to deliver a letter to the Jewish community with the aim of inducing "healthy people who are fit to work the land, who love the Land of Israel and who can cover the expenses of the journey" to immigrate to the Holy Land.[23]

In Yavne'eli's mission, the "religious" and the "secular" follow Latour's modern code. They have been hybridized and purified at the same time. He himself is neither solely religious nor exclusively secular. He is both. His mission was the outcome of a joint effort of religious and secular authorities, and his objectives were hybridized. At the same time, however, he enacted the distinction between the secular and the religious and formulated the relationship between them in terms of a rift, a declared disparity, which is even fraught with tension, as Yavne'eli was consciously acting under false pretenses as a *religious Shadar*. The saint's cloak (to use a Weberian metaphor) was ostensibly only a guise used for manipulative reasons, but Yavne'eli knew that it was not so easy to throw it aside. He found that he was becoming increasingly entangled in the religious cloak in which he had wrapped himself.[24] Sociologically speaking, Yavne'eli's mission and the network in which he was embedded also reveal that the two versions of nationalism—primordial and modern as described in the outset—are not mutually exclusive in this case. Truly, one can ask to what extent Yavne'eli was conscious of the hybridity of his action, the extent to which he saw hybridity as threatening, or the extent to which hybridity reflected unconscious inconsistency of his own understanding of what is religious and what is secular. These questions are important, but they are beyond the scope of this article. Furthermore, even if Yavne'eli was compelled to act as an impostor in this historical drama, subsequent Zionist activists endeavored to moderate the "conflict" and place the network of *Shadarut* "naturally" and structurally at the epicenter of the Zionist act itself. This was done, again, through hybridization and purification.

Case study 2: 1929. Zionist leadership hybridizes and purifies the network of Shadarut

In the 1920s, Zionist leaders and historiographers spoke about the network of *Shadarut* in two contradictory voices. On the one hand, they treated the emissaries as part of the pre-national cosmology: as religious, parasitic, and infused with the "ghetto mentality" (Herzog, 1984). They stood in sharp opposition to the ideals of the new national person (the "new Jew") who was productive, who sanctified the "religion" of work and nationalism.

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[22] Yavne'eli, letter to Dr. Y. Toun, January 2, 1911.

[23] Yavne'eli to Dr. Y. Toun, Dali, 25 Teveth 5671 (Jan. 25, 1911).

[24] This is why it would be difficult to explain Yavne'eli's behavior in terms of ideology and manipulation. Even if he used religion instrumentally, he remained entangled in the hybrid identity in which nationalism and religion are intertwined. Religion is not an instrument because it does not go away.

Yet, at the same time, the *Shadarut* was integrated into the epicenter of the national enterprise, perceived as an essential element in national awakening and as a network linking the Zionist center to the Diaspora communities. Whereas in the previous case the two voices clashed with each other, or at least were experienced as distinct, the second case demonstrates how the two were synthesized by processes of hybridization and purification.

In 1929, Avraham Menahem Ussishkin, a prominent Zionist figure,[25] asked the (secular) Zionist leadership to support the network of *Shadarut*: "The institution of the emissaries is necessary, without it our work would be totally inconceivable.... You must... support this matter in the executives of both funds, so that we can enlarge and expand this institution— our institution of emissaries."[26] The background to this plea was contemptuous criticism aimed at JNF (Jewish National Fund) emissaries, who were accused of spending all their time fundraising instead of engaging in the ideological work of the Zionist revival. Collecting money without placing a strong emphasis on the national revival engendered too much of an undesirable resemblance between the activity of the JNF and the *schnoring* of the old religious ghetto.

Ussishkin yanked the network of *Shadarut* out of its history, nationalized it by placing it at the forefront of the Zionist enterprise, and purged it (ostensibly) of its religious and "parasitic" implications. Referring to the emissaries of the Jewish National Fund, Ussishkin said, "They too I call *Shadarim*. And I consider this is an honorable title, not one of contempt and condemnation" (ibid.). Ussishkin hybridizes the old type of emissary with the new one, but at the same time he also purifies and distinguishes between the national enterprise and the old religious endeavor. Both acts are evident in the following paragraph:

> When the future historian comes to consider the deeds of these generations, he will be struck by both types of emissaries alike. Both those of 100 years ago and those of our time. They will be treated with great respect by future generations—those who will enjoy the fruits of the great edifice that was built both by us and by the generations that preceded us, the people of the old settlements [in Palestine].[27]

In this vein Ussishkin blurs the boundary between the sacred and profane and does away with historical differences ("both those of 100 years ago and those of our time"). In order to strengthen the productive and innovative aspect of the network of "our *Shadarim*," Ussishkin plays up the ideological (Zionist) work over parasitic fundraising, which is too much like the old practice of *Shadarut*. At the same time, he describes the practice of sermonizing as one that adapts itself to a diverse range of audiences where he draws a distinction between the "religious old emissary" from the "secular new emissary":

> In the past, when the emissary came to a Jewish town, he went in fact from house to house and collected money, but he also preached in the synagogue and expounded on the Torah on the Sabbath during the Third Meal.... And our modern emissary too, when he arrives at a place, goes from house to house in order to collect money, but he also takes the platform and... helps disseminate our idea among the people. Our modern emissary speaks his piece to those who visit the Zionist club as well as in the

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[25] Ussishkin was one of the leaders of the "Hovevei Zion" (the so called "Lovers of Zion" movement in the late nineteenth century), served as director of the Jewish National Fund (JNF) from 1923 to 1941, and overall was a representative of what is known as "pragmatic secular Zionism."

[26] The lecture, delivered at a conference of Keren Hayesod in Jerusalem, was published in the daily *Ha'aretz* (*Ha'aretz*, 23 Shvat 5689 [Feb. 23, 1929]).

[27] *Ha'aretz*, 23 Shvat 5689 (Feb. 23, 1929).

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synagogue... if he finds himself among elderly people, he talks about the holy places;
if he finds himself in a milieu of landlords, he talks about the colonies and about the
perspectives of commerce and industry in the Land; and if he is among young people,
then he talks about pioneering, about the national problems, the nationalization of the
land.... If he does not do this, then he is an emissary who is not worthy of his task.[28]

Ussishkin's comments constitute a first formulation of both the purification of the cate-
gories ("past emissaries" and "our modern emissary"), while also offering to mend the rift
between religion and secularity (hybridization: "who visit the Zionist club as well as the
synagogue"). This flexible and pragmatic distinction of *Shadarut* keeps the hybrid network
of emissaries intact and at the same time keeps the image of Zionist nationalism separate
from the old religious practices. In the 13 years separating Ussishkin and the following case
study, Zionist emissaries mixed secular and religious practices without experiencing any
conflict between the two. Paradoxically, during this period, Zionism came to be identified
increasingly secular and free of religion (Luz, 1988).

Case study 3: 1942–1945. Zionist emissaries meet the Jews of Iraq

In the 1940s, following Ussishkin's effort described above (Case Study 2), the *Shadarut*
emerged as a central network-body connecting the Zionist leadership in Palestine with the
various Jewish communities outside of Palestine. Between 1942 and 1945, some 450
emissaries resided in the Iran–Iraq region on a permanent basis. The first Zionist emissaries
arrived there as British soldiers or as members of a "labor battalion" of the Solel Boneh
Jewish construction company.[29] Some 40 emissaries resided in Baghdad alone, and paid
brief visits to outlying towns (Meir, 1996). Many of their encounters with the Jewish
community in Iraq were documented in letters and reports that they sent back to the Jewish
leadership in Palestine. Unlike the case of Yavne'eli (Case study 1), these emissaries no
longer had to go undercover in a religious disguise. The religious cloak and the nationalist
thrust were now organized into one "organic" hybrid package. As emissaries who
networked among the different Jewish communities, connecting them with the Zionist
center in Palestine, they transcended seemingly distinct categories: West and East, pre-
modern and modern, nationalism and religion. The third case study analyzed below will
make this point clearer.

The encounter between the emissaries and the local Iraqi Jews is counterintuitive.
Viewing themselves as secular (and socialist), the emissaries arrived at a world they knew
nothing about in the capacity of religious emissaries (*Shadarim*), to meet Iraqi Jews and to
bond them with the Zionist project. In their reports back to the Jewish leadership, these
emissaries lamented the lack of "authentic" religion among these Jews. In some cases, they
even tried to infuse the local Jews with increased religious fervor, as a signifier of national
fervor. This may seem counterintuitive, given their own secularity and ignorance of biblical
and religious law, and given the religiousness of the local Jews. It is historically evident that
even though Iraqi Jewry underwent a process of exposure to colonial culture, and even

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[28] *Ha'aretz*, 23 Shvat 5689 (Feb. 23, 1929).

[29] The circumstances by which the Jewish leadership in Palestine discovered the Jews of Iraq are complex.
They involved a series of events and developments: the need to transfer by land Jewish refugees who had
reached the Soviet–Iranian border during the war; a plan to bring a million Jews to Palestine because of
anxiety about the demographic situation in Palestine; and a pogrom perpetrated against the Jews of Baghdad
in June 1941 (see Shenhav 2006).

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espoused modern anti-religious ideologies, religion was deeply rooted in broad public strata (Meir, 1993).

Indeed the local Jews—who thought the emissaries had been sent by the rabbinical establishment in the Holy Land (as was the case in Yavne'eli's mission to Yemen) and greeted them with an almost messianic welcome—were astonished at the visitors' ignorance of biblical and religious law (Meir, 1996, p. 55). Yerachmiel Assa, one of the emissaries, for example, caused a sensation in a Baghdad synagogue because of his secular appearance. He was "shaved, bareheaded and ignorant even of the mode of prayer in a synagogue." Embarrassed at this anomalous event, officials of the Zionist leadership in Baghdad made the excuse that his appearance was due to the conditions of his work in the underground, which forced him to shave his beard.[30]

This encounter exemplifies the paradoxes inherent in the situation. European emissaries who traveled to Arab countries attempted to identify religious sentiments among the local Jews as an indication of their Zionist feelings, but to their chagrin they failed to identify their religiousness. This failure, I argue, should be understood in the context of their European perspective, employing an Orientalist gaze at the Iraqi–Jews. Thus, one emissary reports back that:

> This material is not European material, it is material that is quick to become enthusiastic, but also quick to despair...it is assimilation from a Levantine type into a culture that does not yet exist or is at a nadir.... They can be turned into "human beings," but we will not be able to accomplish that task without the help of the people in the Land....[31]

The fact that the Arab–Jews appeared to be more Arab than Jew created a problem for the emissaries, because they were viewed as ill-suited to the recruitment process of Zionism, ("They can be turned into "human beings," but we will not be able to accomplish that task without the help of the people in the Land"). Another report offers a particularly colorful Orientalist description of Iraqi Jews:

> Their whole life is in cafes. There is no family culture. The man is not to be found with his wife and children, but sits in the café and plays at taula [backgammon] or cards for hours on end.... In every corner are brothels and arak.... This culture is total assimilation in the Orient.[32]

Whereas evidence of such orientalizing statements are readily available in the postcolonial literature (Said, 1978), here we face a particular kind of Orientalism, which can be coined "Jewish Orientalism" (see also Shohat, 1988; Raz-Krakotzkin, 1998, 2002; Khazzoom, 2003; and Shenhav, 2006). Importantly, this Jewish orientalist gaze also colored the emissaries' perception of the degree of religiosity of the Jews that they encountered. One emissary cites the absence of any national/ethnic/religious fervor among these Jews:

> I set myself the goal of restoring first of all part of dispersed and sorrowful Jewry, who also share in the calamity of the dispersion in the Diaspora. They must be made to know the fate of our brethren in the ghettos of Poland and the occupied countries....

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[30] Conference of members of the Aliyah Committees, tapes 641–2, in Meir, 1993, p. 272.

[31] Remarks by Sereni to the Committee for Aliyah Bet Affairs, July 2, 1942, LMA, Israel Galili Archive, File 8, p. 9; quoted in Meir, 1996, 62.

[32] "Passages about Jewry in Iraq," Feb. 4, 1943, KMA, Section 2 Overseas, Folder 17, File 87. Quoted by Meir, 1996, 61.

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They must be shown the calamity of our dispersion in all its manifestations and in all generations, and especially that in every generation there are those who seek to destroy us as long as we are in the Diaspora.... You will see tears streaming from their eyes and after the conversation they will admit to it, saying: "Only now are we beginning to be Jews...."[33]

Why are secular emissaries seeking evidence of religious conviction among the Arab–Jews? The emissaries' reports clearly reflect disappointment both about the Arab culture of the Arab Jews and about the absence of "authentic" Jewish religion among them. In the face of the preaching for secularization in the West, the Zionist emissaries sought to discover and create, of all things, Jewish religiousness among Arab Jews. Infusing the Arab Jews with what the Zionist emissaries called "religion" was a way to make them better fit to the recruitment process to Zionism.

This point is further illustrated by the reflections of Enzo Sereni—a self acclaimed secular Jew, a quintessential product of European enlightenment who was later killed in Auschwitz—who was the first emissary to be positioned in Baghdad in the early 1940s. His reports to the Jewish leadership in Palestine about the encounter with Iraqi Jews expressed deep disappointment:

... It is difficult to say that there is a religious existence. There is a traditional existence. The Sabbath is observed and kosher food is eaten solely out of "inertia," without intention or enthusiasm. The religious culture is also meager. There are no important rabbis, there are no sages who have gained a reputation even within the country, and the traditional way of life is disintegrating without a battle, without organized resistance. Jewish officials in the government work on the Sabbath. I did not hear of a case in which someone gave up his post in order to observe the Sabbath. I did not hear of cases in which elderly people objected to the desecration of the Sabbath by their sons if they were "obliged" to do so for reasons of "livelihood." There is no religious interest or deep religious feeling.[34]

Sereni is uninterested in Sabbath observance as a precept. His viewpoint is neither exclusively religious nor exclusively national; it is a viewpoint that hybridizes the religious and the secular to imagine the national community. What interests him is the absence of collective solidarity among Jews, which he attributes to their pursuit of personal, petty–bourgeois interests above the Jewish collective interest, and to the fact that they are for all practical purposes Arabs. As he claimed time and again in his reports: "The existence of the Jews in Iraq is an Arab existence" (ibid.). Note the conflation of the national and religious categories. Because the Jews in Iraq were not acting as part of a pan-national community their Jewishness was indiscernible. In other words, it did not exist in the eyes of the Zionist emissaries.

In a lecture he delivered during a visit to Palestine in the summer of 1942, Sereni was categorical, giving explicit expression to the national question that was entailed in the degenerating state of religiousness: "In Iraq, at first glance, I cannot tell the difference between a Jew, an Arab, and Christian...."[35] Again, Sereni was incapable of identifying the nationalist, Zionist Jew, which was supposedly being renewed; it had no other signifiers.

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[33] Letter from emissary in Tehran, July 6, 1943, ibid.

[34] Kibbutz Hameuhad Archives (KHA) 25 Ayin/Container 1/File 12, Summer 1942.

[35] KMA 25 Ayin/Container 1/File 12, Summer 1942.

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Ben Zion Yisraeli, who had also visited Baghdad and attended Sereni's talk in Palestine, questioned Sereni's categorical thesis:

> Concerning the lack of religiousness of this Jewish community, weren't you rash in saying that?... I am told that in Baghdad there is a seminary of kabbalists, of students of Kabbalah. Could you look into that, please. I met a kabbalist from there some years ago in Jerusalem. He made a very warm [naive?] impression....[36]

Nevertheless, Yisraeli went on to reinforce some of Sereni's insights about the Jewish religion and its relationship to nationalism, discerning a link between religious observance and the hope of national redemption:

> The great majority of the worshippers in the synagogue could not read the book and did not understand the meaning of the words they repeated after the cantor.... The dominant spirit in the Baghdad community is signified by alienation toward nationalism and Zionism externally, and love of the nation and its hopes inwardly, in the heart.... Sometimes, as a result of the habit of external alienation, the hope of redemption is emptied of all practical content and reaches a situation of total betrayal....[37]

Knowing how to read the Bible and expressing Zionist sentiments are equated in this report. How are we to interpret the reaction of the emissaries to their experience among the Arab–Jews? Their reports indicate how their secularity is intertwined with a deep theological conception. Their secularity notwithstanding, their agenda was dictated by the national program founded on the sanctity of the Land of Israel and the passion for it; a primordial solidarity among Jewish communities, and a need to deliver them to Palestine. Their target audience, the Jews from Arab countries, was expected to be purely "Jewish" (religious) and thus also potentially national (proto-Zionist). The emissaries had however a hard time identifying the Jewishness of the Arab–Jews because of their orientalist views and because their Jewishness was not infused with national sentiments. Furthermore, the more "secular" the Arab–Jews were, in the emissaries' perception, the more their "secularity" blurred the distinction between them and the Arab space in which they existed, to the point of assimilation. Hence, the potent religious feelings that the emissaries hoped to find among the Arab–Jews were an extension of their own national–religious fervor as well as an extension of their own view of Zionism as a Western, European project.

Hence the paradox presented at the outset. Emissaries who declared that they were secular (socialists), but who were imbued with a strong ethnic (of a national–religious stripe) thrust, arrived on a mission to the Arab world via a hybrid network that was religious in origin (*Shadarut*), found there communities that observed religious practices, yet reported back with disappointment about their secularity. Rather than accepting this "reality," they aspired to infuse them with religious fervor.

This act of "religionization" attests both to their hybridization and purification practices. In the case of the emissaries, to "religionize" meant not only to imbue the Arab Jews with

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[36] KMA Yad Tabenkin, Section 25 Ayin /Container 1/File 12, Aug. 30, 1942.

[37] KMA Yad Tabenkin, Section 25 Ayin /Container 1/File 12, Aug. 30, 1942.

religion, but also one that was more explicitly connected to the national Zionist project. At the same time, however, Zionist ideology considered itself an increasingly secular enterprise. The emissaries considered themselves secular, just as other Zionist intellectuals (such as Ahad Ha'am and Berdizevski) did (see Luz, 1988).

Yet, it was in this context that the phenomenon of national *Shadarut* was challenged, and by none other than the Orthodox establishment, which stigmatized the modern emissaries as heretics who were traitors to the religion of Israel. In December 1944, the "High Court of the Sephardic Community in Jerusalem" together with the "Court of Justice of all the Ashkenazi Assemblies"—both rabbinical institutions—drew up a joint proclamation that was addressed to the heads of the Jewish community in Persia and Iraq. The emissaries were accused by the rabbis of "inciting and leading astray" the local Jews and of teaching doctrine that was "heretical and blasphemous, and anyone who hears them and who learns from their behavior will have no part in the world to come."[38] The national emissaries, as truly modern, invoked the old (pre-national) religious mechanisms, mixed the practices and then purified them. The rabbinical leaders contested this interpretation. They were "non-modern."

Summary and conclusions

The three case studies, which were diachronically ordered, show that the relationships between nationalism and religion were different in the three historical periods described above. The first case study represented the earliest attempt to orchestrate an immigration of non-European Jews to Palestine. As a young movement—by then only 10–15 years old—Zionism neither had ready-made practices for mobilization, nor did it have much experience in coordinating its various bodies. The encounter between the "secular" Zionist leadership and the religious establishment was based mainly on trial-and-error. Yavne'eli received enormous help from the religious authorities to complete his mission, yet he perceived his mission as a secular one in disguise. The hybrid nature of the mission generated tension with the "secular" identity of his assignment. Next, following Ussishkin's major reorganization of the network of emissaries, some tension was resolved. By the 1940s, the Zionist movement carried already an institutionalized hybrid model of a Zionist emissary. Emissaries experienced no conflict between their "secular" identity and its religious and theological justifications. It was germane to the national practice and its rhetoric. Thus Zionism could hybridize its practices and at the same time deny its religious underpinning. I turn briefly to discuss the ramifications of the findings in three different areas: secularism in contemporary Israeli society, theoretical implications, and the scope of the argument.

Implications for secularism in contemporary Israeli society

The case studies presented above demonstrate that, from the outset, modern Zionist nationalism could not subscribe to the distinction between religion and secularity in its ideal modern form. It was, and still is, a hybrid package that is based on the assimilation of the cloak and the iron cage (to use the Weberian metaphor) in a manner that rules out

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[38] Lavon Institute, section 320 IV/file 6, December 1944.

secularization.[39] Jewish philosopher Gershom Scholem anticipated this assimilation process in 1926 when he wrote to Franz Rosenzweig:

> The people here [in Palestine] do not understand the implications of their actions... They think they have turned Hebrew into a secular language, that they have removed its apocalyptic sting. But this is not the case.... Every word that is not created randomly anew, but is taken from the "good old" lexicon, is filled to overflowing with explosives.... God will not remain mute in the language in which he has been entreated thousands of times to return to our lives... (quoted in Shapira, 1989, p. 59).

In other words, to attempt to bring into being a secular conceptual world by means of the holy tongue is to walk into a trap. Nevertheless, there are strong pressures for purification on the Israeli national sphere. For example, the Israeli secular–liberal public issues frequent calls today for the formulation of a secular pact, as it feels distress and fear in the face of what is portrayed as the spread of Orthodoxy within the Israeli society. In 1997, the Israel Institute for Democracy set up a commission to define Israeli secular identity. Some of the speakers at a conference on the subject referred to education for secularity, or the self-image of secularity in Israel. However, the discussions broke down precisely at the point where the majority of those present, who supposedly wanted to further the secularization project, failed to strip nationalism of its Jewish identity and to forge a secular nationalism (i.e., Israeli nationalism rather than Jewish nationalism), which would sever nationalism from religion.[40]

This attempt to find or to construct secularity within Jewish nationalism (a democratic–Jewish state) appears to be a barren effort. The process of the "Zionization" of religion in Israel and the "religionizing" of Zionism are not enigmatic and capricious phenomena. They take off from the national–religious–secular runway that Zionism built itself from its inception. The theological basis of Israeli nationalism is highly pronounced within Israeli liberalism, which finds it difficult to extricate itself from the trap of secularity that is linked fundamentally to Judaism. By clinging to what is called a democratic–Jewish state, Zionist secular liberalism with its own hands continues to constrain the possibility that an Israeli secularism can exist.

Theoretical implications about ideology, power, and nationalism

Note that I did not draw on theories of power to interpret the findings. The fact that Yavne'eli was operating under the false pretense of a religious emissary could be interpreted as an act of political manipulation. Such interpretation could be based on theories of ideology in the neo-Marxist tradition writ large. For example, using a Gramscian perspective (Gramsci, 1971), I could have suggested that the emissaries represented the Zionist cultural hegemony and as such they acted to extend its legitimacy structure and achieve ideological domination over the Yemenite Jews. In the same vein, I could have used Althusser's (1969/1971) concept of interpellation (or hailing) to show how ideology recruits or transforms individuals to become subjects of a particular (Zionist) order. In our

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[39] As noted, even though Zionism formulates its political logic on the basis of a constant dialogue with Jewish theology, it should not be identified unequivocally with Orthodox Judaism; in a certain sense it can be called "heterodox Judaism." In other words, what we need to do here is formulate a conceptual system having as its two poles not "religiousness" vs. "secularity" but "Orthodox Judaism" vs "heterodox Judaism" (Fischer, 1988).

[40] Israel Institute for Democracy, protocol of secularity forum, January 2, 1997.

case, the interpellation of the individual (or the group) to becoming a "Zionist subject" would be based on the interrelationships between nationalism and religion. Lastly, I could invoke Foucualt's (1991) notion of governmentality to suggest that the emissaries were part of a broader system that employed political technologies to manage the population, immigration being one of them (see Shenhav, 2006 for such analysis). Such technologies were based on practices of classification and demarcation and are subject to certain discursive rules. Yes, there were struggles for control among different Jewish groups (Shafir, 1989/1996). Indeed, as Khazzoom (2003) argues, Zionism sought to westernize Jews, and the religious and the Middle Eastern became discursively connected during the period known as Haskalah (enlightenment). Truly, Zionism thought to religionize the Arab Jews and to orientalize them through religion (Shenhav, 2006).

Whereas these interpretations are theoretically plausible, they imply at the same time a clear ideological structure that views the emissaries as part of the "manipulating elites" (Brubaker, 1996). Such interpretations are overly simplistic for the historical situation at hand, not only because they reduce a complicated set of historical circumstances to one dimension of power, but also because they misrepresent the history of nationalism. More specifically, the Zionist movement during these early years was too young to be considered a hegemonic force that represents a coherent ideological framework or a consolidated discourse. To the contrary: it was an amalgam of fragmented centers and ephemeral efforts that did not amount to a single unified body. It was only in the 1940s that political Zionism was solidified as a clear ideological body. The reality of early Zionism can be better described as decentralized and as based on dispersed networks following practices of trial and error and expressing diverse interests.

This conclusion is in accordance with the use of networks as the proper unit of analysis. Networks do not have a priori ideological commitments nor do they conform to specific categories or centralized power. I believe that this study embraces Brubaker's suggestion to study nationalism through networks rather than fixed entities. He saw national groups as constructed, contingent, fluctuating, and with elusive boundaries rather than as static categories (Brubaker, 1998). Thus, one can conclude that the consolidation of national identity is a product of these networks, not only the other way around. As Calhoun put it, identity cannot be "adequately captured by the notion of interest. Identity is no more than a relatively stable construction of the ongoing process of social activity" (Calhoun, 1991, p. 52). This theoretical conclusion can be applied to various situations that involve group identification and their emerging sociological practices.

Scope of the argument and its applicability

Are the findings peculiar to the Zionist case only? To what extent are they applicable to a broader spectrum of nations? On the one hand, I have stressed the idiosyncratic features of Zionism. Zionism is overwhelmingly Jewish[41] and Judaism is an ambiguous construct with multiple meanings. Furthermore, my study is historical and phenomenological in nature, a methodology that runs counter to the principle of generalization. Yet, the Zionist case provides a useful prism, and heuristic device, to look at the intersection of religion and

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[41] I use the word "overwhelmingly" because Zionism today incorporates into its ranks new groups of non-Jews such as a big portion of the Russian immigrants. Many of them (approximately 30% of those who immigrated to Israel since the early 1990s, and 50% on average every year since 2000) had never been Jewish, but may have married Jewish spouses, or were using Jewish identity as a means to immigrate from the former Soviet Union at a time when hardly anyone except Jews were being permitted exit.

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nationalism because it pushes the two principles of modernity (hybridization and purification) to their limit and because it transcends the Western/non-Western divide.

It is important to keep in mind that the nexus between nationalism and religion tends to be emphasized in studies of non-Western societies and deemphasized in studies of the West. I believe that a more balanced epistemological approach is needed, one that admits that Western nationalism is not completely secular and that non-Western nationalism is not completely religious. At the risk of oversimplification let us briefly compare two, admittedly different, models: Iran and the USA.

As far as the Iranian regime is concerned, it will be simplistic to denounce it simply as "religious." Scholars of the Iranian Revolution have argued that the 1979 revolution was not merely "Islamic," rather it was first and foremost a "nationalist" revolution that was nurtured from Islamic symbols and images cast in a new mold (Dabashi, 1993; Ram, 2000a, 2000b, 2006). Ram shows how "Islam" in the post-revolutionary Iranian state became an indispensable part of contemporary Iranian nationalism. He claims that the guardians of the Islamic Revolution are no less stern nationalists than Islamicists, and that their "Islam" served as a nationalistic, unifying emblem against foreign encroachments. Likewise, Dabashi (1993) traces "crypto-secular" elements in the ideology of the Islamic Revolution, thus showing the symbiotic relationship between religion and secularism in modern Iranian identity. Also, Gelvin (1999) shows that because many area experts studying the Arab Middle East commonly hold that nationalism and religion are antagonistic they assert that nationalist sentiment in the region has declined or has capitulated to Islamicist ideologies. However, as Gelvin shows, popular forms of nationalism not only have strong roots in the region, they have been continually reinforced over time. As a result, the current support for Islamicism in the Arab world cannot be taken as a sign that nationalism is on the decline, particularly in light of the fact that Islamic movements in the Arab world share with nationalism a number of significant attributes. From the perspective of the current article, we can convincingly assume that Iranian nationalism is a hybrid package that does not aspire to be purified.

In the USA, on the other hand, religion plays a more central role in the American public sphere and in American nationalism than one is ready to admit. It has been shown already that US foreign policy since 1945 is suffused with biblical justifications and religious symbols (McAlister, 2001). Also, religion is a strong factor in US internal politics and the public sphere at large. As political commentator Michael Barone has noted, "Americans increasingly vote as they pray, or don't pray" (quoted in Sullivan, 2003, p. 2). In fact, Republican and Democratic candidates in the USA feel strong obligation to address religious audiences during the primary seasons. It is telling, for example, that Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, the only Democratic nominees to have won the White House since 1964, went out of their way to discuss issues of faith and to speak before congregations early during their respective campaigns. When politicians address the American people as a constitutive category, there is often a thin layer of (inclusive) religious reference that serves as a substitute for the notion of the public good. The phrase "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance is an acknowledgment of this layer which is also analogous to "In God We Trust" on coins and bills. President Eisenhower summarized it succinctly: "Our government makes no sense unless it is founded in a deeply felt religious belief" (Morone, 2003; Sifton, 2004). This religious layer becomes increasingly wider when Americans face external threats that require reaffirmation of their national identity (the red scare during the Cold (cultural) War, or September 11 might be useful examples). In such critical moments, national identity, and questions of who we are, solidify and emerge most clearly. It is exactly in these instances that the conflation between American nationalism and religion

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becomes more visible and discernable. In the weeks following September 11, 2001, Americans flooded into churches and congregations. A poll released on September 19 by the Pew Research Center found that 69% of Americans reported that they were praying more in the wake of the attacks (Pew Research Center, 2002). Further, 78% of the American public said that the influence of religion on American life was increasing. Many religious leaders issued statements that supported the war in Afghanistan based on religious theology and the notion of "just wars" (Pew Research Center, 2002). These moments are not restricted to "national security" only. Public debates about immigration, for example, are an arena in which one can find national soul searching of "who we are" or "who are we going to be," a phenomenon that was coined as "American new nationalism" (Dittgen, 1997). The role of the religious establishments in setting immigration laws and policies as well as forming public opinion about it cannot be underestimated. In the year 2000, for example, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a resolution calling upon federal policy makers to reexamine immigration policies and reforms (see Morone, 2003 for additional examples). It is true that the domain of religion is distinguished from the state in the modern secular American constitution. But formal constitutions—as do all formal institutions—never give the whole sociological story. My point is that it will be simplistic to describe American nationalism merely as "secular." The picture is much more complicated, and I believe that a Latourian analysis may shed some sociological insights on the phenomenon. For example, how do practices of purification work in the US school system? How are they used in the political system both in practice and rhetoric?

These examples do not imply that the hybridization and purification of nationalism and religion is identical across these nations. To the contrary: they are very different. At the individual level, for example, many more Americans, compared with Israelis, claim to believe in God or to attend religious congregations (see Guttman, 2002). In fact, in the USA most people say they believe in God (95%)—in distinct contrast to Britain (76%), France (62%), or Sweden (52%), and Israel (30%). More than three out of four Americans belong to a church and 40% attended services (Morone, 2003, p. 22). At the public level, however, religion and state are more separated in the USA than Israel, let alone Iran. Specific analysis can also show that religion becomes public under different philosophies and constitutional traditions and can flow in many unexpected directions (Casanova, 1994). Both in Israel and in the USA, religious challenges promote public debates around liberal issues and thereby enhance "secular" values. Thus, rather than suggesting to generalize the results of my study, which I do not, I suggest that they should be viewed as a heuristic device to examine more closely the relations among nationalism, the public sphere, and religion in societies that are traditionally defined as secular. This article stands as an example of how such nuanced analysis can proceed.

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Yehouda Shenhav (Ph.D. Stanford University, 1985) is professor of Sociology at Tel-Aviv University. He is the editor of *Theory & Criticism* (Hebrew) and senior editor for *Organization Studies*. Among his recent books are *The Arab Jews* (Stanford University Press, 2006), *Manufacturing Rationality* (Oxford University Press, 1999), and *What is Multiculturalism* (Bavel Press, Hebrew, 2005, with Yossi Yonah). He is currently working on topics in political theology, colonial bureaucracy, and "state of exception."