



המכון הישראלי לדמוקרטיה
THE ISRAEL DEMOCRACY INSTITUTE
The Guttman Center



ISSSC
Institute for the Study of Secularism
in Society and Culture

Trinity College

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Jerusalem, August 7, 2008

Identifying Indicators for Secularism Conference Schedule

9:30: Gathering

9:45: Greetings

Asher Arian, Chair, Scientific Director of Guttman Center, Israel Democracy Institute
Barry Kosmin, Director, Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society &
Culture, Trinity College
Arik Carmon, President, Israel Democracy Institute

10:00: First Session

Speakers:

Yaakov Malkin, Tel-Aviv University, *On Atheism and the Belief in Man*

Jonathan Fox, Bar Ilan University, *Can Secularism be Measured without Reference to Religion?*

Dahlia Scheindlin, The Israel Democracy Institute, *The Secular State: Separation Whither?*

Giora Kaplan, The Gertner Institute for Epidemiology and Health Policy Research,
*The Identification of Religious and Secular Individuals in Surveys:
Some Self-Examination and Some Self-Criticism*

11:30: Break

11:45: First Session (continued)

Ariela Keysar, Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society & Culture,
Trinity College, *Measuring Secularity and Segmenting the Secular
Population in the United States*

Emanuel Gutmann, Hebrew University
Nissim Calderon, Ben Gurion University
Gabi Bar-Haim, Netanya College

13:30: Lunch

14:30: Second Session

Speakers:

Guy Ben Porat, Ben-Gurion University, *Ideology and Everyday Life: Measuring
Secularization in Israel*

Yair Sheleg, Haaretz and The Israel Democracy Institute, *Secularism in an Age of
Individual Identity*

Ilana Ziegler, Israel Family Planning Association, *Solidarity Without Coercion:
the Challenges of an Increasingly Fragmented Society - a View From
Reproductive Health*

15:45: Break

16:00: Second Session (continued)

Tamar Hermann, The Israel Democracy Institute and The Open University
Sivan Maas, Tmura Institute
Yair Tzaban, former minister and Knesset member

17:15: Closing Session

Identifying Indicators for Secularism:
Collected Articles

Yaakov Malkin, *On Atheism and the Belief in Man*. pp.3-14

Jonathan Fox, *Can Secularism be Measured without Reference to Religion?* pp.15-23

Dahlia Scheindlin, *The Secular State: Separation Whither?* pp.24-29

Giora Kaplan, *The Identification of Religious and Secular Individuals in Surveys:
Some Self-Examination and Some Self-Criticism*. pp.30-33

Ariela Keysar, *Measuring Secularity and Segmenting the Secular Population
in the United States*, pp.34-39

Guy Ben-Porat, *Ideology and Everyday Life: Measuring Secularization in Israel*, pp.
40-45

Yair Sheleg, *Secularism in an Age of Individual Identity*, pp.46-51

Ilana Ziegler, *Solidarity Without Coercion: the Challenges of an Increasingly
Fragmented Society - a View From Reproductive Health*, pp.52-56

Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, *Secularization Indicators in the 21st Century: the Case of
Israel*, pp.57-66

On Atheism and Belief in Man/ Yaakov Malkin

The 21st century “clash of civilisations” is a clash between non-religious humanistic belief in human rights, and religious belief in obeying leaders.

The conflict that has shaken humanity in the 21st century is a conflict between non-religious beliefs - as reflected in the prevailing lifestyle, culture and political system in western democracies - and the totalitarian religious beliefs that guide politics, culture, lifestyle and education in fundamentalist states and communities, controlled by rulers and leaders of both God-based (Muslim, Christian, Jewish) and secular (communist, fascist) religions.

Religious beliefs are beliefs that compel human beings to obey Religious leaders who purport to speak in the name of a god or the deified supreme leader of a religious or secular, totalitarian movement.

Non-religious beliefs include belief in the sovereignty of man, in the right of all human beings to equality and the freedom to choose their own paths in life, in the truth of scientific hypotheses regarding the universe and nature, and in the power of justice and democratic law to guarantee the rights of individuals and to increase their happiness - the purpose of life (Aristotle) and the goal of all human behaviour (Freud).

The lifestyles of those who espouse such non-religious beliefs (including many who profess “belief in God”) are characterised, *inter alia*, by: 1) participation in and support for democratic life free from religious interference, viewing man as the source of authority, and utility to man as the measure of ethical behaviour; 2) daily and holiday practices free from “religious precepts” - i.e. precepts invented by religious leaders in God’s name; 3) education in non-religious institutions; 4) sex and family lives free from religious prohibitions and limitations.

Non-religious beliefs in human rights, man’s sovereignty and freedom from religious precepts, are common to atheists, agnostics, pantheists and deists.

The non-religious belief in the sovereignty and autonomy of man is shared by atheists, agnostics, pantheists and deists. Some non-religious believers do not reject the use of the term “God”, as long as it does not denote a personal being who seeks to control individual and public life by means of binding precepts. Non-religious believers include:

- Deists (like Epicurus and Voltaire), who believe in the possible existence of gods, detached from human reality and uninvolved in human life - like the god in the epilogue to the book of Job, or Epicurus’ perfect gods who dwell between the worlds, concerned only with their own affairs.

- Pantheists, who believe (as Einstein said of himself) in “Spinoza’s God”. From the identification of divinity with nature stems the belief in man’s natural right to freedom and happiness in this world, freedom from the precepts of religious leaders who purport to speak in the name of a god shaped by human myths. (In 1954, one year before his death, Einstein wrote to the philosopher Eric Gutkind, that belief in a personal god is an “expression of human weakness’ on the part of those who naïvely believe the Bible’s “childish legends”.)

- Agnostics (like Socrates and Protagoras), who believe in doubt, in the impossibility of knowing whether or not God exists, let alone His will or commandments. Agnostics therefore share the non-religious belief in the freedom of man and the responsibility such freedom entails, in terms of justice and ethics, enhancing human life, and reasoned virtue - whereby we choose to restrain our passions for the sake of long term goals (as opposed to instant gratification), allowing us to endure the pain and sorrow we encounter as we strive to uphold our commitments and aspire to happiness.

- Atheists (like Russell or Dawkins), who view religious beliefs - in the existence of a commanding, personal God, and the obligation to obey religious leaders - not only as entirely contrary to current scientific hypotheses (accepted as more reasonable than alternative explanations as long as they are supported by observation and withstand the test of refutation), but as harmful to the lives of individuals and to society as a whole. The danger inherent to these beliefs stems

from the fact that they afford clerics the power to command and compel observance of arbitrary religious laws, which may coincide with the principles of justice (e.g. the Ten Commandments), but may also radically depart from them - witness, for example, all of the precepts that discriminate against the female half of society in religious states or communities, or prohibitions against contraceptives and family planning, which lead directly to population explosion and the spread of diseases such as HIV.

It is a grave mistake to refer to those who hold humanistic and atheist beliefs as “non-believers”, yet even atheists such as Dawkins, Hitchens and Harris continue to do so.

In response to the threats posed by religious fundamentalism to secular democracies, the 21st century has seen books by extreme atheists such as Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens and Sam Harris become runaway bestsellers. These authors have been accused of showing “a lack of reverence” toward religious beliefs in the truth of fantastic accounts of supernatural events and the rituals based upon them - such as the weekly consumption of the flesh and blood of the Jewish son of Yahweh in churches around the world, or the “miracle stories” that form the basis of Islam and Judaism. I can see no reason why such fictional accounts should be treated with reverence, except when they are part of literary masterpieces, the value of which lies in the poetic and intellectual experiences they afford, as culture-founding classics.

I believe that Dawkins, Hitchens and Harris have successfully drawn attention to the fact that the danger that religion poses to humanity goes well beyond the activities of terrorist organisations and the religious states that sponsor them. They point to the danger in the proliferation of religious beliefs that condition millions of people to obey religious leaders, uncritically and unquestioningly, unaware of any alternative. In so doing, they deny the human rights of a large part of mankind - including many in their own religious communities and states.

The serious mistake that nearly all atheist authors make is to agree to be called “non-believers”, so that “non-belief” has come to be synonymous with non-

religious belief.

This misnomer distorts the spiritual image of those who hold non-religious, humanistic beliefs, placing them in a negative light. All human beings are believers, inasmuch as the capacity to believe is a uniquely human trait.

Belief and trust are essential to human society. From infancy, our behaviour is guided by belief and trust - in parents, teachers, role models, laws and justice, doctors, and our own critical abilities. The kinds of lives we lead thus reflect our beliefs - whether we observe religious precepts and obey religious leaders, or place our trust in our own choices, as free, independent human beings.

Since all belief implies denial of other beliefs, all believers can also be deemed “deniers” or “non-believers”. Religious belief in the creation of the world 5768 years ago, as described in the book of Genesis, necessarily implies denial of evolution and the scientific view of the universe.

Non-religious - whether atheist, agnostic, deist or pantheist - belief in the truth of scientific hypotheses (i.e. their greater probability than alternative explanations) necessarily implies denial of creation of the world in six days (two thousand years after the Mesopotamians were already drinking beer).

The humanistic belief in man’s commitment to the principles of universal justice (which must be universal if they are to be just, as demonstrated by Kant) necessarily implies denial of man’s obligation to observe religious precepts that violate the principles of justice, equality, freedom and autonomy. Yeshayahu Leibowitz was thus correct in his assertion "I am not a humanist", since he believed it was his duty as a Jew to observe all of the precepts of his religion, even those that run counter to the principles of humanism. (His lecture on the Subject was published in *Free Judaism*, Vol. I, Issue 4, p.30.)

The distinction between non-religious belief in man as sovereign and the source of authority, and religious belief in the sovereignty of a religious leader (God-oriented or secular), is a distinction between two forms of belief rather than between “belief” and “non-belief”.

Atheism was originally a belief in naturalism, from which stems belief in the sovereignty of man, freedom of choice and freedom from religious precepts.

The roots of atheism are older than those of religions based on the existence of a personal god. Atheistic belief in the independence of nature and its universal laws developed from naturalism (as explained by Dewey).

Naturalism is a term used to describe all ancient and modern beliefs that view the universe as an independent system of natural causes, which can be said to act in accordance with the laws of statistical probability.

The Rabbis described this heresy as the belief that “the world is *automatos*”. In other words, they too were familiar with (and denied) the widespread naturalism of their day - the era of globalised Hellenistic culture that saw Epicurean philosophy spread throughout the Mediterranean basin.

Belief in the independence of nature and the universal validity of its laws is incompatible with belief in a supernatural being who acts against the laws of nature, chooses a single people inhabiting one of the millions of transitory bodies in the universe, in order to command its observance of specific precepts, oversee the behaviour of each and every one of its members, and reward or punish them like a father: “our Father in heaven”.

Naturalism preceded Hellenism and the atheism to which it gave rise. In “prehistoric ” or “first” cultures, as they are termed by the curators of the Quai Branly Museum in Paris, people worshiped the forces of nature - such as the sun, the moon, mountains and trees - as independent forces, rather than worshipping a master of each or all natural phenomena. Such cultures - remnants of which have been discovered on remote Pacific islands - represent the first expressions of naturalism, devoid of any awareness of the gods. At the same time, we also find the beginnings of ancestor worship, involving a primordial father or mother who, although no longer physically present, continues to play a role in the dreams and spiritual lives of his or her descendants. (Georges Minois discusses the various expressions of such beliefs, in his *Histoire de l'athéisme*.)

Writings attributed to naturalists, who ignored the gods and therefore felt no need to deny their existence, began to appear around the middle of the first millennium BCE, in India (ancient Buddhism), and in Greece (pre-Socratic philosophy, further developed in Hellenistic times by Aristotle and his disciples).

The sources of humanistic atheism include the non-religious philosophies of mid-first millennium India and Greece, regarding the nature of the universe and non-religious ethics.

The writings attributed to Buddha, recorded centuries after he began to teach his doctrines in India, in the middle of the first millennium BCE, have inspired non-religious beliefs of all kinds, throughout the ages. The Buddha's belief in his own role as a doctor of the soul, rather than a god or an agent of divine will, underscored the idea that man is sovereign over his own life. Only man, he believed, can overcome the fears and causes of suffering in his soul, by *awakening from the illusion and false belief that it is the gods who plant them there (see Y. Raz, Zen Vebudhism). The gods thus played no role in the Buddha's conception of spiritual life and human destiny.*

Buddha's belief in doubt as a motor of critical thought in which all must engage - even with regard to the words of the Buddha himself - was an inspiration to thinkers, such as Nagarjuna, who developed a philosophy of systematic doubt (a poem by Nagarjuna, against the gods, can be found in Shlomo Biederman's *Reshit Habudhism*). In any event, the Heraclitean view that the world is in constant flux, and that nothing can be eternal or unchanging, makes the existence of eternal, divine beings impossible.

In the mid-first millennium BCE, Ionian philosophers began to assert the independence of nature and to speculate on the nature of the material world and the totality of the processes it comprises. Thinkers from Thales and Heraclitus to Democritus proposed pre-scientific hypotheses (i.e. not subjected to experimentation, substantiation and refutation) to describe an independent universe, in which all is perpetual change, with no room for gods, and in which indivisible particles (according to Democritus) combine at random to form

transitory bodies in space and on Earth, eventually disintegrating and returning to their original state, only to repeat the process.

The complete randomness of physical events manifests patterns of statistical probability or “laws of nature”, on the basis of which such events can be predicted fairly accurately. In the realm of human history however, we must always expect the unexpected, since dictators and totalitarian movements upset the randomness of events when they arrest or change the course of human culture and consciousness, for centuries at a time. *The processes of scientific and cultural development set in motion in the Hellenistic era were thus brought to a halt in Europe for nearly a thousand years, by the Catholic Church; and scientific and cultural development remains blocked to this day, in societies controlled by radically conservative Islamic regimes.*

Pre-scientific hypotheses regarding the nature of the universe and the laws of nature ignored the gods, who were products of mythology, but had been assigned imaginary roles in the physical and human world.

Ethical philosophers, such as Socrates (in the works of Plato) and Aristotle, also ignored the gods. Their thought focused on right (or “ethical”) conduct, measured by the extent to which it contributes to the good life and to human happiness.

“Man is the measure of all things” (Protagoras) would become the guiding principle of non-religious, ethical humanism, to this day. The Hellenistic period saw the development of Epicurean and Stoic non-religious ethical philosophy, as set forth in the works of Epicurus, Lucretius, Epictetus and Seneca. Martha Nussbaum, in “Therapeutic Arguments”, shows how Hellenistic philosophy sought not only to understand the world, but to bring about change in human life - to improve emotional life and heal the soul (like Buddhist philosophy).

Socrates was the first person to be executed for the “crime” of atheism, since he helped people question and re-examine conventions, while pursuing the kind of right conduct and virtue that would help human beings to live better lives as

individuals within a just, democratic society and state.

As a result of his belief in the sovereignty and freedom of man, Socrates persisted in his educational activities in Athens. As a result of his belief that the laws of a democratic state must be upheld, even when one believes them to be unjust, he refused to flee the death sentence issued by the popular jury of Athens, for the crime of agnostic atheism and corruption of the youth.

Aristotle, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, views man as sovereign, responsible for his own moral conduct, with no obligation to observe religious or divine precepts. Epicurus, who also saw liberation from fear and suffering (like Buddha) as a prerequisite for the good life, developed the philosophy of “hedonistic altruism” (as it is termed by De Witt): developing the capacity for enjoyment in such a way as to further man’s desire for happiness, including the enjoyment that one affords *others, friends and the community in which one lives*.

What modern atheist-humanist belief shares with the non-religious humanistic beliefs that arose in India and in Greece in the mid-first millennium BCE, is the belief in man as master of his own destiny, in a world where there is no “Master of the universe”.

Ignorance of the principles of non-religious humanistic belief heightens the danger posed by religious beliefs and by the secular religions: communism and Nazism.

In the 21st century, as in the previous century, most of those who espouse non-religious beliefs continue express their beliefs in their daily lives and lifestyles, without being aware of the fact that they are believers in man’s sovereignty and his right to freedom from the precepts of religious leaders and leaders of secular religions.

This lack of awareness on the part of secular believers is due, in part, to the fact that non-religious beliefs are not taught in secular schools, which continue to teach religions and their founding works, while ignoring non-religious humanistic

studies and the great works of humanistic literature, art and philosophy produced since the Renaissance, and in ancient times.

Unfamiliar with the ideas and principles of their own beliefs, many secular believers accept the erroneous characterisation “non-believers”, since they do not know how to define what they believe in. This lack of awareness and inability to express their beliefs in thought and in words weakens their powers of critical thought and resistance to religious beliefs and the religious principle of obedience.

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Can Secularism be Measured without Reference to Religion?

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In this essay I address the question of whether secularism can be measured as anything other than the negation of religion and, if yes, what would such a measure look like?¹ Overall, the current state of research on the topic lends me to believe that such a variable would be difficult to create. This is because to the best of my knowledge nothing exists in the current literature that would provide the building blocks for such a variable and that there are structural and theoretical reasons why this is so. Put differently, I could find no references in the literature to secularism in which secularism was not somehow related to religion, and there is good reason to believe that this is not a coincidence.

Existing Measures and Definitions of Secularism

Those variables, of which I am aware, which measure some aspect of secularism fit into one of two categories. The first are variables that measure some aspect of religion as it manifests in societal or political structure. That is they measure an aspect of religion and assume that the absence of whatever factor measured constitutes secularism—though not necessarily by that name—and a drop in that variable constitutes secularization. Examples of this are not particularly rare including my studies on religion and state which measure, among other things, the extent of government support for religion, religious legislation, and religious discrimination. (Fox, 2006; 2008) These variables are structural in that they measure religion in some aspect of government, societal institutions, or collective behavior.² Sociological studies such as those of Norris and Inglehart (2004) measure religiosity in individuals

¹ This essay uses the Religion and State (RAS) dataset. The RAS research program was supported by the Israel Science Foundation (Grant 896/00), the Sara and Simha Lainer Chair in Democracy and Civility, and the John Templeton Foundation. A copy of the RAS dataset can be downloaded at www.biu.ac.il/soc/po/ras.

² For similar studies see Barro and McCleary (2005) and Toft (2007)

using survey-based variables such as belief in God and church attendance.³ The second type of variable—also from sociological survey based studies—define secularism based on self-definition. This takes the form of a declaration that one has no religion⁴ or self-identification as secular.⁵ In the latter case, no definition is given to the term secular and it is left to the respondent to decide what he considers secular and whether he fits that description.⁶

An examination of the terms secular, secularism, and secularization, in the literature, also show few references to the term that do not somehow relate to religion. For example, Hurd (2004a: 235) argues that

Secularism identifies something called ‘religion’ and separates it from the ‘secular’ domains of the state, the economy, and science. The ‘secular’, then is associated with the worldly or temporal. It carries no overt reference to a transcendent order or divine being. In normative terms, secularism is characterized by its universalist pretensions and its claim to superiority over non-secular alternatives.

Hurd (2004a; 2004b; 2007) further argues that European conceptions of secularism are intrinsically linked to religion. She identifies two such conceptions. The first, *laicism*, is the belief that religion is irrelevant, antithetical, or anachronistic to politics and therefore must be removed from the public sphere. Put differently, it is an ideology of the negation of religion. Hurd's second form of European secularism is *Judeo-Christian secularism*. This form of secularism is an achievement of Western Judeo-Christian theology. It supports separation of religion and state but is informed by Judeo-Christian values and is, perhaps, less compatible with other traditions such as Islam. Put more bluntly, this form of secularism is based on religious values. It also involves the negation of religion in that it requires separation of religion and state.

Much of the discussion of secularism in the literature takes place in the context of the discussion of secularization theory. This theory is intrinsically related

³ For similar studies see, among others, Bruce (2000), Ellingson (2005), McCleary & Barro (2006a; 2006b), and Presser & Chaves (2007).

⁴ See, for example, Fetzer & Soper (2003)

⁵ See, for example, Olson et. al. (2006).

⁶ For a more thorough discussion of how social scientists measure religion see Fox (2008: 32-61).

to religion in that it describes the predicted decline of religion in the modern era. The political science literature focuses on how processes inherent in modernization such as urbanization, science, and mass education, among others, undermine the traditional religious community and religious values. The sociological literature focuses on how rationalism and science are purported to be replacing religion. This literature, like the quantitative literature, focuses on either the political-social structure or on individual religiosity. There is much debate over whether religion in these arenas has declined and, if yes, whether this decline is sufficient to call it secularization. Thus, this literature essentially defines secularism as the negation of religion.⁷

There is a recent attempt to go beyond the negation of religion in the discussion of secularization theory. Charles Taylor (2007), while acknowledging the structural-institutional and religiosity versions of secularization proposes a new form that he calls "secularity 3." He argues that we have moved "from a society where belief in God is unchallenged...to one in which it is understood to be one option among others." (Taylor, 2007: 3) Thus, secularism is an ideology that is separate from religion. However it challenges religion for its role in society and this is new to the modern era. This argument, while likely accurate, is less original than Taylor claims. Juergensmeyer (1993), for example, argues that secular ideologies replaced religion in much of the third world as the ideologies that guided government but the failure of these governments to deliver on their promises of social justice and economic prosperity has led to a legitimacy crisis for these ideologies. As a result religion is making a comeback as the basis for political ideologies. Also, the literature on fundamentalism posits that the modern era has posed unique challenges to religion which has caused new strains of religion to evolve, including fundamentalism.⁸ Thus, even when secularism is considered separate from religion, secularism not only exists in an environment which is influenced by religion, secularism also competes and interacts with religion. This competition and interaction between religion and secularism is not far removed from secularism as the negation of religion. Even in this context it exists as a duality with religion. Thus, it is still inexorably linked to religion.

Finally, there is mounting evidence that secularism as the absence or negation of religion is not particularly common. In my study of religion and state in 175 countries (this includes all countries with a population of 250,000 or over as well as

⁷ For a more thorough review of this literature see Fox (2008: 12-31).

⁸ See, for example, Appleby (2000) and Almond, et. al. (2003).

some smaller countries) between 1990 and 2002 I found that only one state, the United States, had none of the 33 types of religious legislation I measured. Also, even based on various definitions of separation of religion and state—including some very lenient definitions of the concept—between 0.6% and 22.2% of these states had separation of religion and state. This finding was consistent across regime types, world regions, and major religious traditions. (Fox, 2007; 2008) Norris and Inglehart (2004) in their study of religiosity found that while it may be declining in some Western states, there are large numbers of religious people in even the supposed bastions of secularism in Western Europe and, overall, religiosity across the world is increasing.

Why is this important? Even if we were to find a definition and measure of secularism that was not related to religion, secular people, governments, and institutions still could not be religious and secular at the same time. That religion, both in its structural-institutional and individual religiosity manifestations remains strong in the world indicates that even should such a measure exist, there may be little to measure.

In sum the literature on secularism, in all its manifestations, is strongly linked to religion. In most cases the term secular refers to the negation of religion

What Would a Non-Religious Measure of Secularism Look Like?

Let us assume that, despite the inability of previous treatments of the topic to separate secularism from religion, such a separation is possible. What would a variable based on this definition look like? It would need to find some aspect of secularism which is (1) not the negation of religion (2) not something that would also be found in a unit of analysis that is religious.

One potential avenue would be to measure hostility to religion. This type of variable, while not ideal for reasons discussed below, is not strictly the negation of religion. The negation of religion would be to measure a religious phenomenon such as the presence of religious legislation and designate the absence of this phenomenon as secularism. The recent French law restricting religious symbols and dress in schools would be an example of the phenomena this type of variable would measure. In fact, such a measure exists. I developed a measure of government regulation of all religion in a state which includes the following items:

- Restrictions on religious political parties.*
- Restrictions on trade associations or other civil associations being affiliated with religion.
- Restrictions on clergy holding political office.
- Arrest, continued detention, or severe official harassment of religious figures, officials, and/or members of religious parties.*
- The government restricts or harasses members and organizations affiliated with the majority religion but who operate outside of the state sponsored or recognized ecclesiastical framework.
- Restrictions on formal religious organizations other than political parties.*
- Restrictions on the public observance of religious practices, including religious holidays and the Sabbath.*
- Restrictions on religious activities outside of recognized religious facilities.
- Restrictions on public religious speech.*
- Restrictions or monitoring of sermons by clergy.
- Restrictions on clergy and/or religious organizations engaging in public political speech (other than sermons) or propaganda or on political activity in or by religious institutions.
- Restrictions on religious-based hate speech.
- Restrictions on access to places of worship.*
- Restrictions on the publication or dissemination of written religious material.*
- People are arrested for religious activities.*
- Restrictions on religious public gatherings that are not placed on other types of public gathering.*
- Restrictions on the public display by private persons or organizations of religious symbols, including (but not limited to) religious dress, the presence or absence of facial hair, nativity scenes, and icons.*
- Restrictions on or regulation of religious education in public schools. (This variable represents direct government control of teachers and or curriculum not a ban on religious education in public schools).
- Restrictions on or regulation of religious education outside of public schools or general government control of religious education.
- Restrictions on or regulation of religious education at the university level.

- Foreign religious organizations are required to have a local sponsor or affiliation.
- Heads of religious organizations (eg. Bishops) must be citizens of the state.
- All practicing clergy must be citizens of the state.
- The government appoints or must approve clerical appointments or somehow takes part in the appointment process.
- Other than appointments, the government legislates or otherwise officially influences the internal workings or organization of religious institutions and organizations.
- Laws governing the state religion are passed by the government or need the government's approval before being put into effect.
- State ownership of some religious property or buildings.
- Conscientious objectors to military service are not given other options for national service and are prosecuted. •

Other religious restrictions.*

The items marked by asterisks have been collected for the 1990 to 2002 period for 175 states. All of them are currently in the process of being collected for these states for the 1990 to 2008 period.

While this variable was developed to measure government regulation of all religions in a state (as opposed to regulation of just minority religions which is measured by a separate variable) it provides a good approximation of a measure of hostility to religion. However there are both empirical and theoretical problems with this variable as a measure of hostility. Empirically, there is good reason to believe that it is not a good measure of secularism. All of the states which engage in any of the 11 activities for which data are currently available also engage in religious legislation. In fact the composite variable for all 11 factors for which data are currently available is positively correlated (.305, $p = .000$) with the religious legislation variable.

Furthermore, 29.8% of states which restrict all religions have official religions and another 22.3% give preference to one religion over all other without declaring an official religion. Thus, empirically, many of the states which would appear hostile to

religion based on this variable, also support religion in a manner that is in no way consistent with the concept of secularism.⁹

On a theoretical level, the concept of hostility to religion is similar to Hurd's concept of laicism which is essentially the rejection of religion. Thus while it does not measure the negation of religion it does measure the rejection of religion. Thus, even were such a variable a good measure of secularism, it would still not constitute one that is unrelated to religion.

Perhaps it is possible to find some aspect of the structure of government or society's institutions that meets the two criteria above for a non-religious secularism measure. However no such aspect comes to mind. It is more possible to find some set of ideological orientations or opinions that are not related to religion and may be unique to secular people. However, I am not aware of any existing set of measures which do this. However, were I to try to develop such a set of measures, I would begin with in depth interviews of individuals who identify themselves as secular and look for common opinions and attitudes which meet the criteria I describe above. It is even possible that the insights from such a study might lead to the development of structural-institutional indicators of secularism. Thus, while developing a non-religious measure of secularism has, to my knowledge, never been done and would be difficult, it is not necessarily impossible.

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THE SECULAR STATE: SEPARATION WHITHER?

Dahlia Scheindlin

Three countries have made secularism and civic culture a mainstay of their national identity. It was a reaction to an era of church dominance over their political lives, cultures. Their decision can be seen as an embracing of the belief that religion ought to be a private matter, free for individuals to decide their beliefs; and the rise of liberal belief in individual volition and self-determination - accompanied by a receding role of the state. But there was a subtext, that religion was on its way out. The roots of political liberalism stretch back to Hobbes and Locke; the enlightenment to follow would change the outlook on religion in the public sphere forever.

Science was made the premium, and with the scientific revolution, 19th century elites would increasingly view religion a primitive crutch characteristic of the uneducated masses. This led some several countries to insist on divorcing religion from state, and some enshrined the value of secularism - or at least separation of church and state - into their very self-conceptions of national identity.

Three such countries, the US, France and Turkey, are dynamic, living examples of that process. How has the national identity played out in those countries? Is there a comfortable separation between church and state? Does the secularism that is woven into the modern national political identity reflect the identity of the population? And when religion is excised from public life, where exactly does it go? How real is the separation?

Of the three, America has the softer attitude towards religion. While separation of church and state is a founding principle, America does not actively pursue the banning of religion from public life. "God," the Judeo-Christian, monotheistic, kind is found in its state symbols, from the Pledge of Allegiance recited in public schools, to the good old greenback.

Yet America is of course one of the more religious countries in the world today. Ninety-two percent of Americans believe in god, according to the Pew Religious Landscape Survey published in February, 2008. In another Pew survey from late 2002, fifty-nine percent of American said religion was a very or somewhat important part of their lives, higher than 16 other developed nations, close to Mexico and

Venezuela. One of the countries with an even higher rate was Turkey, with 65% - France, however, showed only 11% who believed religion to be important in their lives. And in the 2008 Pew study, only 17% said they were either unaffiliated or didn't answer the question - meaning 83% of Pew's enormous sample defined themselves as having a religious identity.

Rather than having excised religion from public life, religion plays out heavily in one of the most public of all spheres in a democracy, the electoral dynamic. Voting behavior in America is famously linked to religious identity, sometimes along stereotypical lines. Jews overwhelmingly vote democratic (notwithstanding some minor erosion in recent elections due to the perception of Republicans as more "pro-Israel"). The country has a long-standing Protestant bias; only one out of 43 Presidents was Catholic. In 2004, it is commonly held that the Evangelical vote swayed the elections solidly in favor of a second term for George W. Bush. At that time, according to a BBC report, one-in-five voters was Evangelical, and three-quarters of white voters who defined themselves as evangelical voted for Bush. Religious identity and the values held by each community - whether support for Israel, or "family" and "moral" values - are central to how voters want to be represented. So much for separation of church and state in terms of the representative democracy process.

France, for over 100 years, has had a law intended to enshrine secularism in its national identity, a concept known as "laicite". The law stipulates separation of church and state and bars the government from recognizing or funding any religious communities. For the better part of the century, French society seemed to wear its secularism well, easily developing a modern identity of enviable (and to Americans, insufferable) epicurianism instead. The French people view themselves as markedly non-religious: as noted, in the Pew survey from 2002, 11% said religion was important. As opposed to 17% of Americans in Pew 2008 who said they had no religious affiliation, 27% of French people said they were unidentified, and out of the 64% (in a December 2004 poll cited by the US State Department) who identified themselves as related to the Catholic Church, only 12% attend church services. Then the demographics of the country began to shift. After several decades of immigration from Algeria, Morocco, and other Muslim countries flowed into the

country, Muslims now make up between 7-10% of France's population,¹⁰ Islam is the second largest religion in France after its lackadaisical Catholicism, and Muslims make up nearly 50% of the non-Catholic population, in a survey cited by the US State Department.

Alongside the demographic shift, a fierce debate has been playing out in French public life about the nature of freedom of religion, versus freedom from religion. Over the last few years, the issue of girls wearing Muslim headscarves to public school has become a battleground for refining French secularism. It seems that after all religion matters, and it matters negatively. The issue took the country and the Muslim world by storm, and is a factor in what political scientist Ahmet Kuru has called "assertive" or even "combative" secularism, of France in which the state actively rejects religion in public life.

Officially, the question underlying the debate over headscarves seemed to be whether they symbolize freedom of or freedom from religion. Freedom of religion: Should not the students of France to be allowed to wear anything they believe expresses their private inner beliefs? Freedom from religion: Is it more important for the non-Muslims of France to study in an environment absent of religious symbols? The French Senate overwhelmingly opted for the latter, passing the bill to ban headscarves by 276-20, in March 2004 (the National Assembly voted similarly one month earlier, passing the bill by 494-36, according to news reports).

Yet another, more problematic question is whether French secularism became a convenient vehicle for anti-Muslim sentiment: is the ban fighting for secularism, or against Muslims? Does the ban represent freedom of religion, or the opposite: suppression of religious expression of a minority group, by the majority from a different religious tradition? Is there a sort of begrudging sense that, if the Catholic majority has agreed to suppress religious expression in the public sphere, then by no means should Muslim forms of expression be allowed either? In the attempt to preempt this critique, the ban was extended to include large crosses on necklaces, large kippot and Sikh turbans.

In a very different case of personal status issues, the French courts recently allowed the annulment of a marriage requested by a Muslim husband after learning that his bride had lied about her virginity. The annulment was granted under French law

¹⁰ Robert S. Leiken, "Europe's Angry Muslims," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2005.

stating that a marriage may be annulled if based on false information about "essential qualities" - and thus, in effect the court agreed with the Muslim approach that virginity is an essential quality. France's Justice Minister, ironically herself a woman of Muslim descent, was sufficiently confused to change her position from upholding the annulment, to sending it back to the courts for review. Again, the questions raised by the case are multi-dimensional: If the secular laws unwittingly uphold religious traditions, ought they to be revised to safeguard the secular rights of individuals even on an issue that reaches deeply into the private sphere? Is this about guarding private secularism, or is it about defeating the spread of Muslim values in French life, using state institutions?

In France, then, the two current topics mentioned here show no clear answer as to whether the French are seeking more to protect their non-religious identity, or to exclude a specific religious identity. The former would indicate a prevailing consensus to uphold secularism. The latter would hint that, after a century, the de facto national religion - the church its citizens *don't* attend - is still too important to let either public or private life be redefined by a different tradition.

In Turkey, the secularism promulgated by Kemal Ataturk was linked to an undisguised political agenda. It was part of a broader vision for the country, of throwing in its lot with the developing western world, rather than identifying with the Islamic countries of the east. It was about modernization, democracy, and the revival of the country following the demise of the Ottoman Empire.

Today, the religious-secular divide is the focal point of the country's most intense political struggles. The military became the symbolic heirs of Ataturk's legacy, which arguably assisted them in their role as the fierce guardians of the country's secularism. Yet, the people have shown no signs at all of foregoing their religious identity.

Although it has the most official and active secularist policy of the three, it also has the highest level of religious identification - no 17% or 27% "unaffiliated" here: 99.8% of the population is Sunni Muslim, according to the CIA World Factbook.

And for that population, religion is not solely a private affair, but rather religion has made a powerful comeback in political life.

By the mid-1990s, the Islamic Welfare Party had become a major political force. Its leader, Necmettin Erbakan, became Prime Minister in 1996, and the party became the largest Parliamentary group. The country struggled with its two identities: the following year, the military waged a political campaign against the Islamic influence in politics,

effectively causing Erbakan to resign as Prime Minister. The Welfare Party was banned.

But the developments failed to keep religion out of politics: the defunct Welfare Party later reinvented itself as the Justice and Development Party, won the 2002 elections, and now a restive tension between the military and the political leadership prevails, with each side - staunch secularists and Islamic-identified politicians and voters - feeling threatened and even besieged by the other.

Turkey is a riddle and a contradiction. Perhaps counter-intuitively, the military is the secular stalwart that is often accused of being anti-democratic, for seeking to hold down the democratically-elected Islamic political leadership. Turkey was way ahead of France on the question of allowing secularism to encroach on individual rights: for the last 80 years Turkey flat-out banned Islamic head scarves for women in universities.

The contradictions continue: Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan positions himself as a moderate, and notably promotes a pro-Europe agenda which seems poised to strengthen the secular political character of the state. Ever-conscious of the watchful eye of the secularists, he frequently reassures both his country and the West that his party will maintain Turkey's secular values. Yet under his government, that long-standing symbol of secularism - the head-scarf ban - was lifted, this past February. The move sparked a heated debate in Turkey, revealing cracks in the dam against an inherently religious identification and world view among the people of the country. Thus Turkey, which has gone the furthest of the three countries in pursuing an official public secularism, appears to have the greatest level of tension between religion and politics in its public life. With an irony worthy of more systematic analysis, religious political parties not only exist, but in fact lead the country, in this modern nation-state founded on an aggressively-promoted vision of secularism. In this, it is much closer to Israel which also has religious political parties - in a state defined *by virtue* of its ethno-religious identity.

But ultimately, in all three states that have officially embraced secularism to a greater or lesser extent, religion retains a central role in public life. In the US, its influence is particularly powerful in the voting ballot. In France, one of the deepest debates over France's national identity was sparked by a religious symbolic practice that threatened either France's secular identity, or its dormant, private, but still present Catholic character.

These brief observations imply that legislating secularism in no way removes religion from the public agenda. It appears to have no effect at all in reducing religious sentiments among the public. While this was arguably the very goal - to allow religion to flourish in private - in each of the three countries it appears that there is not a definitive separation between private religion and public life. Religion, after all is not inherently a private matter but a world view. Many who believe fully in its values and laws, believe inherently that the world - or at least their countries - should reflect them.

**The Identification of Religious and Secular Individuals in Surveys:
Some Self-Examination and Some Self-Criticism**

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(Remark: I relate here to research in which religion is not the focus of the study).

Surprisingly, secularity is still not a common variable in medical/epidemiological research as well as in psychosocial surveys. Admittedly, a measure of *level of religiosity* or of *religious affiliation* is usually included among the list of socio-demographic variables, and *secularity* is one of the categories in the variable (most often a residual category). I have to admit that most of us don't systematically cope with the conceptual definition of this variable or with explicit hypotheses regarding religiosity and our dependent variables. We vaguely assume that since religious people have a dissimilar life-style, and are part of a delineated community, with a peculiar identity, a common reference group, and a share of values; they will probably differ from the rest of the study population on most of the dependent variables in which we are interested.

For each religious group we try to define different meaningful categories. For Jews, for example, we define: "orthodox", "religious", "traditional", and even "traditional-religious" and "traditional non-religious"; and of course at the end of the scale we include the "secular" category implicitly assuming the absence of religion in one's life. Then in relation to the operational definition, we usually prefer the option of subjective self-definition or general self-reported identity. We infrequently ask about specific religious behaviors; and even less often about faith or beliefs. Since we usually evade dealing with the conceptual definition of the phenomena that we actually want to measure, it is not possible to evaluate the validity of our measure.

Even a superficial look at dictionaries' definition of religion raises many conceptual questions: Do we want to characterize the people in our samples by their subjective beliefs, with a focus on the personal faith and mystic experience? Or by their worship

practices? Or by the level that personal beliefs and practices reflect a system of belief and worship held by a group of people? Or perhaps by the level of participation in group rituals and communication stemming from shared conviction? Sociologists and anthropologists tend to see religion as an abstract set of ideas, values, or experiences developed as part of a cultural matrix. For example, in Lindbeck's *Nature of Doctrine*¹¹, religion does not refer to belief in "God" or a transcendent *Absolute*. Instead, Lindbeck defines religion as, "a kind of cultural and/or linguistic framework or medium that shapes the entirety of life and thought... it is similar to an idiom that makes possible the description of realities, the formulation of beliefs, and the experiencing of inner attitudes, feelings, and sentiments." According to this definition, religion refers to one's primary worldview and how this dictates one's thoughts and actions. Answers to these questions immediately raise a skeptical reaction to the validity of the measure used in research. Does our usual question identify all individuals fulfilling the criteria to be included in each of the categories of the religiosity scale, and are only those fulfilling the criteria eventually included? For example, the simple multiple-choice question "*How frequently do you go to the synagogue/mosque?*" can produce significant misclassifications when we were in fact interested in measuring religious faith. Arab women who do not go to mosques and many Jews infrequently attend synagogue may pray at home daily. This is a very biased measure and obviously asking "*How frequently do you pray?*" has much higher face validity for estimating religious faith.

The cutoff point between "traditional" and "secular" in the *level of religiosity* ordinal scale - which in many analyses even becomes the dichotomous separation between "religious" and "non-religious" - have probably changed over time. How many of the young Jews of oriental descent who today commonly perform the practice of kissing the "mezuzah" would define themselves as "traditional" and how many as "secular"? Some of them may explain their actions as cultural/traditional rather than "religious". To the best of our knowledge, the relationship between personal beliefs, religious practices, self-identity and self-definition when answering the customary religiosity question has not been systematically studied in Israel, and many potential biases in our measurement can easily be raised. Are we consistent in our conceptual

¹¹ George A. Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1984), 33.

perspective by allowing someone to classify his/her self as “religious” when he/she does not believe in the existence of God? Or someone who defines his/herself as “secular” when he/she believes in God existence? Are we still consistent by classifying as “secular” someone who performs ritual circumcision and Bar Mitzvah for his/her children, and even observes kosher practices and goes to the synagogue on most holidays (even if he/she explains the practice as “*doing it for their parents*”)?

Furthermore, we must ask ourselves if defining “secularity” as the negative of “being religious” is valid enough. As Keysar and Kosmin¹² wrote “*Secularism and manifestations of secularity can take both positive (pro-secular) and negative (anti-religious) forms. It can offer a range of alternative non-theistic belief systems as well as levels of irreligion and indifference to religion across the realms of belonging and behavior*”.

Since the majority in most samples falls into the “secular” category on the religiosity scale, it seems rather amazing that we do not try to further define sub-categories. Even adopting the “negative” approach (secularity as non-religious) we can at least try to define some ordinal scale from “*strongly anti-religious*” to “*indifferent*”. We can improve on that approach by using the foundation on which secularity is based as criteria; for example to differentiate between secularity as an active choice or a passive default, or relating to how someone was raised and the decision he/she made or did not make (e.g. raised as very religious and intentionally became secular). Dr. Elisheva Langner¹³ suggests the option of combining attitudes to religion (negative/antagonistic, indifferent/neutral, positive/embracing) with actual behavior (engagement in rituals). Six categories can be defined from that combination including two which express a clear situation of conflict: positive attitudes to religion without engagement in religious behavior and negative attitudes to religion but practicing rituals.

In my opinion, the approach of just including a parameter of religiosity based on an implicit and diffuse hypothesis and seeing what we find (“fishing expedition”)

¹² Keysar A. & Kosmin B.A.. The Freethinkers in a Free Market of Religion. In: Kosmin B.A. & Keysar A. (eds.). *Secularism & Secularity*. Trinity College, Hartford, CT: ISSSC, 2007.

¹³ Dr. Elisheva Langner, Center for Applied Psychology, Monsey, NY. Personal communication, 2008.

becomes less and less scientifically legitimate. In many medical or epidemiological studies we may think about life style when including the religiosity variable, and if so, why not to use a direct measure instead of using religiosity as a proxy? If we have a hypothesis, for example regarding the effect of faith or beliefs on coping with disease, then a totally different measure should be used. Requiring the formulation of explicit hypothesis with clear conceptual rationale, including explanations and the mechanisms involved, will produce specific variables which probably will not include the conventional and simplistic separation between “religious” and “secular”.

Finally my recommendations: I strongly encourage further development of our knowledge about secularity and secularism as a very important area in which many disciplines have their own contributions to make. For those of us working on population surveys, we clearly need to improve our measurements of religiosity and secularity. We must learn from our colleagues specializing in the subject about different aspects and expressions of the phenomena, and then choose those characteristics about which we are able to explicitly formulate specific hypotheses relating to our areas of interest, and to operationalize this knowledge into more valid and significant variables. We will then be able to provide meaningful empirical data to our colleagues investigating religion and secularity. The upcoming meeting, which I am sure will be very fruitful, should continue as an ongoing dialogue between disciplines.

Measuring Secularity and Segmenting the Secular Population in the United States

An Outline for a Presentation in Jerusalem on Aug. 7, 2008

by

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Secularity involves personal behavior and identification with secular ideas as a mode of consciousness, while *secularism* refers to the realm of social institutions (Kosmin, 2007).

The terms secular, secularism and secularity have a range of meanings and their manifestations differ in each society (See Caron, 2007; Voas and Day, 2007, Pasquale, 2007; Engineer, 2007). This paper explores various ways in which we at the Institute for Study of Secularism in Society and Culture (ISSSC) measure secularity in the United States. It shows findings from past national U.S. surveys and presents new ideas and plans to study and shed light on the secular segments of society.

Segmenting the Secular Population

We start with a demographic and social profile of three distinct groups: self-identified atheists, self-identified agnostics, and those who answered “none” to a survey question, “*What is your religion, if any?*” The first two groups are quite small, together amounting to about 1% of the U.S. adult population. The third group, which we term the no-religion group, is about 13% of the population. All are growing. Together, the three groups increased from about 14 million in 1990 to over 29 million in 2001, according to *Religion in a Free Market: Religious and Non-Religious Americans, Who, What, Why, Where* by Barry A. Kosmin and Ariela Keysar (2006).

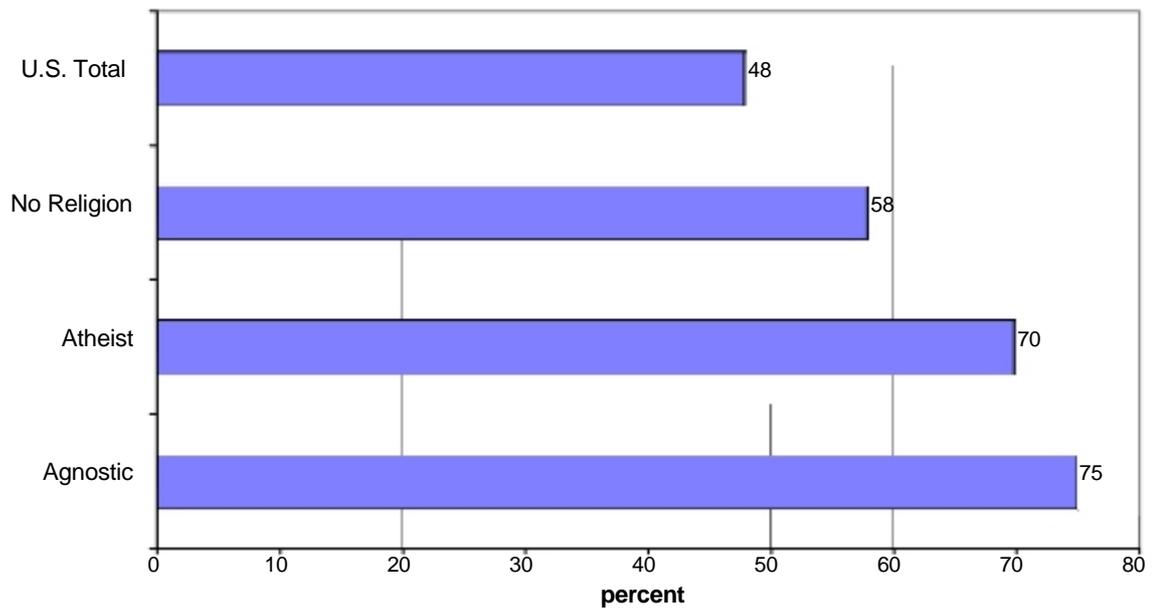
It takes a large sample of the population, in fact a very large sample, to make a reliable portrait of minority groups as small as those of atheists and agnostics. The American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) 2001 was perhaps the first survey that is large enough. With its random sample of 50,281 adult respondents, it estimated the number of American adult atheists as 900,000 and adult agnostics as 990,000.

This data set presents a unique opportunity to distinguish between three groups that have been lumped together in previous research: atheists, agnostics, and those professing no religion. Drawing on the fine detail available from the ARIS survey, we show the differences as well as the similarities between these three unique groups. In this outline gender and age patterns are presented. For further analysis on socio-demographic, geographic and political attitudes, see Keysar (2007).

Gender

Both agnostics and atheists are predominantly male. In the U.S. population as a whole, 48% of adults are male, as are 47% of Catholic adults. By comparison males account for 56% of the no-religion group, 70% of atheists, and 75% of agnostics. This may reflect men's greater tendency to disbelieve and reject an authoritative power.

Chart 1

Percent Male among Atheist, Agnostic and No Religion Adults

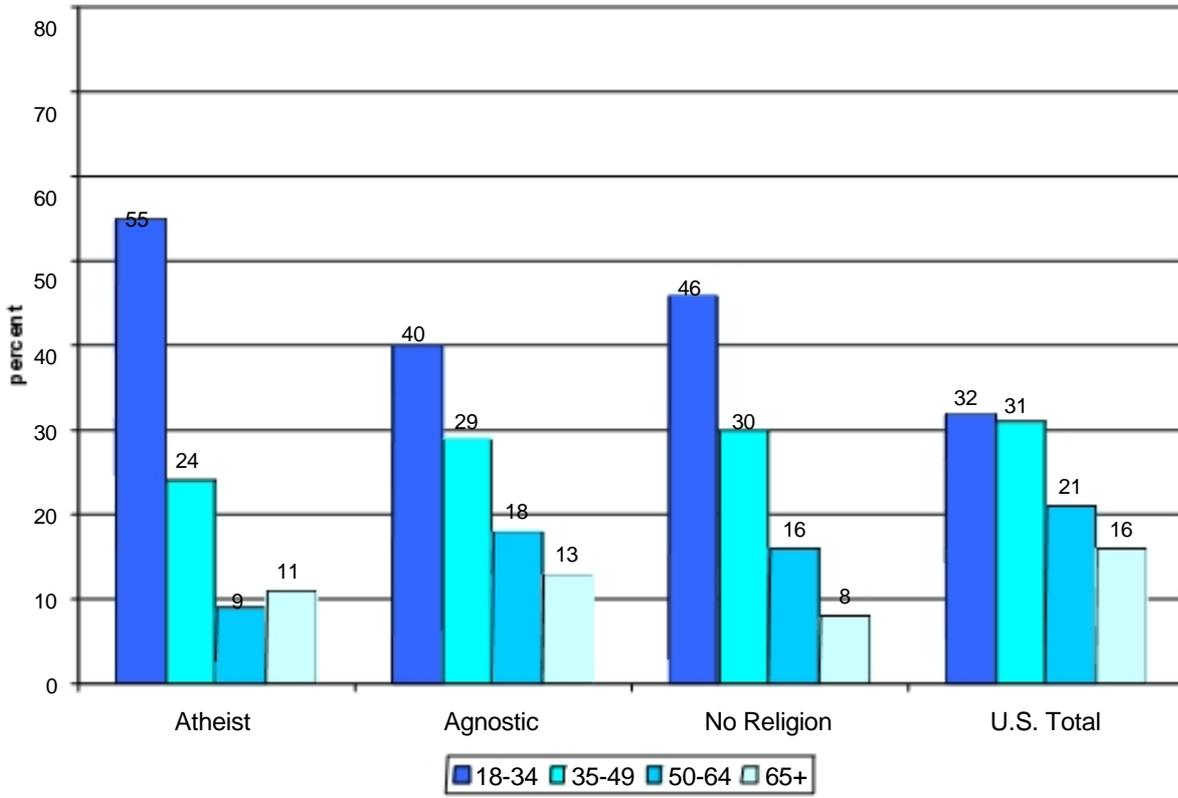
Source: American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) 2001

Age

Atheists are young. Fully 55% are under age 35. Only 20% of atheists are 50 and over, vs. 37% of all American adults. Interestingly, agnostics are older than atheists, though still younger than the general population, as shown in Chart 2.

Chart 2

Age Composition of Atheist, Agnostic and No Religion



Source: American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) 2001

Summary of Socio-Demographic Comparisons

Both in academic research as well as in public opinion polls there is a tendency to blur distinctions among atheists, agnostics, and what we call the no-religion group. Often, the large no-religion group is regarded as identical to the smaller groups of atheists and agnostics. ARIS 2001 data highlighted the distinctions between them. For example, it demonstrated that atheists are by far younger, more likely to reside in the West, and more politically independent. Both atheists and agnostic are predominantly male. And agnostics are by far the most educated group. How these fringe groups relate to the larger “no religion” group: In political preferences, age composition, and geographical residency, agnostics and the “no religion” group are similar. On educational attainment, on the other hand, atheists are more similar to the “nones.” By gender, atheists and agnostics are more male than the “nones.” This illustration of

clear distinctions should discourage the practice of lumping together atheists, agnostics, and the “no religion” group into an undifferentiated mass.

Dimensions of Secularity

Secularity, similar to religion, can be measured along the three dimensions of belonging, belief and behavior (the three B’s). Each dimension contributes to understanding of religion and its absence, secularity, because the three are by no means strictly collinear. Nevertheless, surveys typically report on each dimension separately. We will show an in-depth look at how the three dimensions are combined in real people (Keysar, 2007^b). Some Americans are secular by belonging and behavior yet religious by belief, for example. Others may be secular by belief, but religious by belonging and behavior. We explore which patterns are most and least common and the socio-demographics associated with these secular constellations in contemporary America.

New Surveys in the Field

Finally, we present alternative ways to measure secularity by discussing the new American Religious Identification Survey, ARIS 2008, which is under way in the field now. The new survey is designed to elicit a comprehensive picture of the public’s attitudes and behavior regarding issues of religion and secularity. It aims at developing measurements of secularity beyond the simple absence of religiosity. We are looking for independent indicators which reflect patterns in contemporary modern societies. These comparative questions are administered to a large national sample of secular American adults as well as to a general random sample. We hope that some of the questions will also be utilized in other countries. In the symposium we plan to discuss appropriate local modules for each country, and explore universal topics that are suitable for international comparisons.

An example of this dual model of researching issues on both local and universal levels is the ISSSC Worldviews and Opinions of Scientists Project. The first phase was launched in India in 2007; see www.worldviewsofscientists.org

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Ideology and Everyday Life: Measuring Secularization in Israel

Guy Ben-Porat

Measurements of religiosity and secularization in Israel are often presented along a continuum between the ultra-orthodox on one side and the seculars on the other side. In between the extremes are placed the so-called "traditionals" and the "non-religious" that constitute the majority of Israeli Jews. These categories, however, based on self-definition, provide limited information on secularization and religiosity and even less on the role they play in political and social life in Israel. For example, what is the relation in Israel between secularism and liberalism? And, will secularization, evident in different areas of life in Israel, lead to a more liberal and tolerant society? In this Paper, I will suggest, first, of the need to study the religious/secular divide through its different dimensions - beliefs, practices and values - and, second, propose an analytical distinction between two identified forms of secularization in Israeli society: a "principled" secularism and a secularism we associate with the "practice of every-day life." Principled secularism is rooted in liberal values and is translated into a series of struggles over civic rights and a desire to separate church and state or to break the Orthodox monopoly on central issues. The secularism of everyday life, conversely, is rooted in socio-economic changes associated with globalization, consumerism and consumer culture and is translated into "practical" decisions of leisure and consumption.

Secularization is a process in which religion loses its significance in the operation of the social system, either through the general disengagement from churches or the subordination of religious values to secular ones.¹⁴ Thus, secularization entails a disengagement of religion from the public sphere, political life and aesthetic life and its retreat to a private world where it has authority only over its followers.¹⁵ As such, secularization is a differentiation process in which religion becomes one institution among others and loses its overarching claims.¹⁶ The historical narrative of secularism presents itself as a *modus vivendi* between different

¹⁴ Wallis, Roy and Bruce, Steve 1989 "Religion: The British Contribution" *The British Journal of Sociology*, 40, 3, pp.493-520.

¹⁵ Daniel Bell, "The Return of the Sacred? The Arguments on the Future of Religion" in *The Winding Passage, Essays and Sociological Journeys 1960-1980*. (Cambridge, Mass: Alt Books, 1980), p.330

¹⁶ Karl Dobbelaere, "Secularization: A Multi-dimensional Concept" *Current Sociology* 29,2 (March 1981), 3-153

sects of Christianity that ended in securing private freedom, pluralistic democracy, individual rights, public reason and the primacy of the state.¹⁷ The art of separation and the "wall" established between church and state in the process of secularization were the source of new liberties and equality.¹⁸ The separation of church and state also underscores the existence of a democratic, free society based on liberal values that include a commitment to individual rights, respect and tolerance.

Recent accounts of secularism, responding to the resurgence of religion against the critiques of "secularization theory", attempt to disaggregate the process. To do so, they separate the decline of religion from that of religious authority and differentiate between the institutional aspect of secularism and individual (decline of) religious beliefs and practices. Mark Chaves points to three different levels of secularization: laicization, which refers to the process of differentiation whereby political, educational, scientific and other institutions gain autonomy from the religious institutions of society; internal secularization, in which religious organizations undergo internal development leading to conformity with the secular world; and disinvolvement, which refers to the decline of religious belief and practices among individuals. In a recent comparative study of secularization on a global scale, Norris and Inglehart¹⁹ suggest three dimensions for the measurement of secularization: (a) religious participation that involves collective religious practices and the erosion of individual religious practices, (b) religious values that pertain to the goals that people prioritize for their society, community and themselves and, (c) religious beliefs that refer to the faith in the core beliefs held by different world theologies.

The deregulation of the religious realm is combined with a cultural emphasis on freedom and choice, leading to intermingled and interfused forms of religion or a "bricolage" of beliefs, practices and values. "Believing without belonging" and an individual patchwork of beliefs or a "religion a la carte" underscore the individual and

¹⁷ Guy Ben-Porat, "In a State of Holiness; Rethinking Israeli Secularism" *Alternatives* 25,2 (2000), pp.223-246

¹⁸ Michael Walzer, "Liberalism and the Art of Separation" *Political Theory* 12, 3 (August 1984), pp.315-330.

¹⁹ Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

societal religious *bricolage* that defines contemporary Western societies.²⁰ The disaggregation of the concept of secularization opens up the possibility of a more nuanced and empirical study of both the declining role of religion in society vis-à-vis other systems (political and economic) and the role of religion in individual lives (beliefs, practices and values). This model seems to fit well with the study of religion in Israeli society. While many Israelis describe themselves as "traditional" this category implies different things for different people as it translates to a variety of behaviors and self-perceptions, which seem at times contradictory.

The bricolage model can help explain not only inconsistencies in beliefs and behaviors but also the potential gap between secularization, measured by the declining role of religion, and the development of liberal values essential for democracy. First, based on the discussion above, rather than a uniform and coherent secularism (or religion), we can often expect inconsistencies between beliefs, practices and values. Second, secularization, as a process, can be observed in what we describe as a "practice of everyday life" when people engage in leisure activities and consumption habits that violate religious codes but, at the same time, often refuse to define themselves as secular and maintain their relation to religion either through personal beliefs or through other practices. And, third, because secularization can be the result of external, economic and non-principled societal transformations, its relation to principled liberal values is uncertain.

Measurement of secularism and secularization in Israel using the bricolage, therefore, is a multidimensional exercise of examining beliefs, practices and values. The question of belonging, often used in countries that have a separation of church and state, seems less relevant to Israeli society where the belonging is all but mandatory. Namely, the performance of significant rituals like marriage or burial through the Orthodox Rabbinate is hardly a choice in Israel as church and state are not separated. The question of belief in surveys is usually examined through two main questions. The first engages with the actual belief in God and/or the afterlife and the second with self-definition (religious, traditional or secular) that is related also to the level of belief, but more so to the issue of observance.

²⁰ James A. Beckford, *Social Theory and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Dobbalaere, K 1999; Thomas Luckman, *The Invisible Religion: The problem of religion in modern society* (New York: Macmillan, 1967) p.99

The measurement of observance or practices involves a wide range of behaviors. The Guttman Survey published in 2000 measured a wide range of practices, from placing a Mezuzah on the front door, a practice that the majority of Israelis perform, to daily prayer in the synagogue, practiced only by a minority. The difference between the two is not only in the greater commitment the latter demands but also in the interpretations given to these practices. While religious people perceive them part of their religious identity others may be motivated by personal history, folklore and national identity. Secular Jews, for whom Jewishness is an ethno-cultural identity, share a great deal in common with religious Jews in terms of both practices and collective commitments to Jewish continuity²¹ and often participate in religious rituals, interpreted as cultural and part of their national identity. Secular practices are also important to measure. The way people marry and conduct other rituals, their patterns of consumption and leisure activities either demonstrate explicit secular choices or an incremental and partial adoption of a secular lifestyle.

Finally, the issue of values examines the commitment of secular Israelis to values considered "secular". The separation of church and state, secularists advocate, supposedly underscores the existence of a democratic, free society based on liberal values that include a commitment to individual rights, respect and tolerance. But, as the Israeli case demonstrates, the adoption of secular practices and even the decline of religious belief or self-identification are not necessarily related to a secular-liberal value system. Specifically, in the Israeli case, secular practices like shopping on the Sabbath, were found not only to co-exist with religious practices but also unrelated to the adoption of a liberal agenda so that secularization and liberalization are not necessarily related.²² This gap, I argue, can be explained by the two types of secularism, principled and everyday life.

Secularization of Israeli society in the past two decades is underscored by two significant developments, the emergence of a consumer society and the immigration from the former USSR. In the 1990s, the Israeli economy experienced a growth spurt similar to that of the East Asian "Tigers," and living standards rose to approximate those of the rich OECD democracies. The economic developments were matched by

²¹ Charles Liebman and Bernard Susser, "The Forgotten Center: Traditional Jewishness in Israel" *Modern Judaism* 17,3 (October 1997) 211-220.

²² Guy Ben-Porat and Yariv Feniger "Live and Let Buy, Consumerism, Secularization and Liberalism", forthcoming *Comparative Politics*

an “Americanization” of Israeli society that included the introduction of consumerist behavior and values, leisure activities, entertainment patterns and lifestyles into the previously, relatively closed, Israeli society. The immigration from the former USSR strengthened these trends as the million immigrants to Israeli society, most of them secular and many non-Jewish according to Orthodox interpretation, added to the secularization trends described above. Not only were the consumption patterns of these immigrants secular, many were suspected as not being Jewish and were prevented from religious services, yet not offered alternative ones.

Religious-secular debates or struggles in Israel involve several issues that mix ideology, needs of immigrants not recognized as Jewish and economic motivations. The first, the definition of Jewishness (“who is Jew?”) and the Orthodox monopoly over conversion. The second, the demands of secular and non-Orthodox Jews to allow marriage and burial services other than the Orthodox ones. And, the third, secular economic initiatives that respond to a growing demand for shopping on Sabbath and non-kosher food that challenge previous church-state arrangements. These struggles are underscored, on the one hand, by a principled secularism committed to equality and liberty and separation of church and state, on the other hand, by a growing consumer culture and lifestyle. The relations between the two are important for the understanding of secularization and the way religious and secular beliefs and practices translate into political agendas.

Principled secularism has potentially significant implications for the status of women, minorities and other marginalized groups in Israel. Israel has been described as a “non-liberal democracy” that, in contrast to the liberal democracy whose first priority is the individual and his/her rights, puts a strong emphasis on the collective or community. The Orthodox monopoly is often justified by its contribution to protecting the boundaries and core values of the Jewish community. The struggles associated with this secularism - civil marriage, equality for women in rabbinical courts, equal status for non-Orthodox rabbis, etc. - oppose the Orthodox monopoly and struggle for religious freedom. Yet, secularization may be only partially related to the development of liberal values - tolerance and equality - and these liberal values may be applied only to certain groups and denied to others. Thus, not only might traditionalists who hold a middle ground display inconsistencies and contradictions, but also self-defined secularists may often share more in common with religious Jews

than they are willing to admit, especially when it pertains to nationalism and minority rights.

But the distinction between principled secularism and the secularism of everyday life has implications even for the more limited aspects of secularization related to separation of church and state. The secular practices observed, for example, in Sabbath shopping could develop independently from a secular belief system and from liberal values. On a personal, micro-level, people who shop on the Sabbath and by doing so, defy a religious commandment, may obey other commandments, perform religious rituals, maintain religious beliefs and hold non-liberal values. Thus, for example, they might oppose civil marriage or have little interest in the struggle against the Orthodox monopoly. Consequently, on a societal, macro-level, the secularization of everyday life practices may be only partially related to a more comprehensive political commitment to the concept of the separation of church and state or the breaking of the Orthodox monopoly.

In conclusion, the following issues are suggested regarding the measurement of secularization. The first, treating secularization as a multidimensional process, or a bricolage of beliefs, practices and values. Second, paying attention to the relations between the different aspects of secularism and secularization and mapping of the process. Specifically, it is interesting to learn what secularism means to people who describe themselves secular in terms of values and political commitments. And, consequently, third, separating the "principled secularism" (that challenges the foundations of religious authority) from the more popular "everyday life" secularism (influenced by the development of a consumer society). The latter is especially significant for understanding the political consequences of secularization. Secular practices can be performed by people who do not define themselves as secular and whose other activities display a traditional or religious tendency. In the same vein, these secular practices are not necessarily related to a commitment to liberal values. Thus, secularism and liberalism can develop along different trajectories and at a different pace so that the secularization of everyday life is only partially related to a politically principled secularism and, consequently, will have a limited impact on the liberalization of Israeli society.

Secularism in an Age of Individual Identity

Yair Sheleg

From its earliest appearance in the days of the Renaissance, through the centuries of the Enlightenment and the Haskalah, to the mid-20th century, secularism as a phenomenon has been relatively easy to identify by its positive, activist, anti-religious nature. It was the enemy of religion, which it sought to displace. This is not surprising, for secularism was born of a revolt against religion. For this reason, the underlying assumptions of the religious and secular worldviews, and of the persons who identified with them, were diametrically opposed: one placed the emphasis on God and the commitment to his commandments (as these were perceived by man, paradoxically enough, since even the most pious individual has no direct communication with God), while the other placed man and the commitment to his dignity and needs at the center.

This binary relationship was suited to the general approach to the concept of identity at the time. In the modern age of Enlightenment, man's axis of identity revolved around ideas and ideology. Individuals were characterized in accordance with their worldview and the ideas that they expressed; and quite often, this was not even their personal philosophy but that of the "camp" with which they were associated. If they were classified as belonging to the secular camp, this already presupposed certain prior assumptions regarding central tenets of their philosophy (atheism, the centrality of man, a negative attitude toward tradition, and so forth). Alternatively, if they were defined as belonging to the religious camp, this was likewise clearly presumed to reflect various a priori assumptions regarding their philosophy (belief in God, commitment to tradition, and the like).

Since people's personalities were complicated even then, there were of course many who did not fit this one-dimensional classification. And since the axis of identity was ideological, individuals whose personal leanings differed from those of the camp to which they formally belonged found themselves in a state of cognitive dissonance. Thus, for example, a secular individual who had religious tendencies, not to mention an actual desire to pray on Yom Kippur, might feel as though he were not being true to his secular soul, so to speak. Conversely, a religious person who was inclined to believe in the validity of biblical criticism, for example, to say nothing of longing to hear music on the Sabbath, doubtless felt a tension in his religious identity.

The second half of the 20th century interrupted this continuum. This was caused by a range of circumstances, but the primary factor was apparently the collapse of the major secular ideologies—nationalism and socialism. When nationalism found monstrous expression in the form of Nazi Germany, as did socialism in the Communist Soviet Union, the shapers of public opinion, at least in Western culture, lost patience with outsized ideologies in general, and the emphasis shifted to the individual—in terms of philosophy, to existentialism (the approach that emphasizes man’s existential awareness rather than any external value), and in terms of governance, to liberalism, that is, the rights of the individual.

If the axis of identity is no longer ideological/binary but individual, then secularism and religiosity do not necessarily conflict with one another. And if the axis of identity is the consciousness and soul of the individual, both secular and religious elements reside within the souls of most people, specifically, the pull toward spiritualism and transcendence of the soul, on the one hand, and the appeal of secular freedom, on the other. It therefore follows that both these inclinations of the soul no longer need feel dissonance as a result of their desire to coexist. On the contrary, every individual—whether his “camp” identity is secular or religious—can free the tendencies in his soul and shape the different proportions of religious and secular identity as he sees fit, in accordance with the authentic inclinations of his personality. In fact, we can speak of individuals with a dual, religious-secular identity (for which the term *datiloni*—a compound of the words for “religious” and “secular”—has already been coined in Hebrew).

Israeli society, which until twenty years ago was highly ideological, was quite slow to accept this shift, but signs of it are definitely evident today: increasing numbers of secular Jews are opening themselves to the traditional and religious world in recent years: they study Judaism in secular *batei midrash* (study halls), learn Kabbalah in Kabbalah Centers, design for themselves Jewish life-cycle events with a personal character, and some even worship in Reform congregations or secular prayer groups (there are already roughly 15 such congregations throughout Israel, and the very fact that the apparent oxymoron of a “secular prayer group” does not bother them indicates, more than anything, that what is important is the soul’s inclination and not the ostensible philosophical contradiction between a secular identity and the desire to pray).

At the same time, growing numbers of religious Jews are allowing themselves not only to partake of the secular cultural world but to be full partners in its creative process, in the media, film, theater, literature, and the like. More and more religious individuals—many of them with a genuine religious identity, not people who simply follow the crowd—are allowing themselves to open up to secular freedom: from freedom of thought on a higher level (such as critical approaches to Jewish studies) to the most basic freedom of leisure and entertainment (religious Jews who spend time at secular clubs or pubs, out of a desire to enjoy the pleasures of the senses, while at the same time maintaining the strictures of kashrut as an expression of their religious identity).

At this point, I would like to mention two key areas of emphasis:

1. In the case of Jews—in particular, Israeli Jews—the merging of religious and secular identities is more prevalent than among other peoples, and even precedes the existential explanation. The reason is that the religious culture is the cornerstone of Jewish national identity, meaning that those who wish to adhere to their Jewish identity cannot totally avoid the aspects of religious identity. And if this is true of secular Ashkenazi Jews, how much more so for the Mizrahi community, which did not experience the secular revolt against religion that took place in Europe, and already in the “ideological era” had no problem adopting secular codes of behavior alongside religious codes, in what came to be known as the “traditional” (as opposed to the secular or religious) community. This is why, in all of the surveys that sought to analyze Jewish/Israeli identity in the area of religious behavior (e.g., those of the Guttman Center, among others), it was found that what we have is not a dichotomy between religious and secular but a broad spectrum of identities, including a vast number who define themselves as “traditional”—a community that in turn embraces a wide range of degrees of observance.

2. Even in an age of individual identity, it is obvious that ideological identity has not yet faded away completely. Quite the opposite: since there is an inherent need for ideological coherence (a sense of cohesion and consistency) in the human soul, the emergence of individual identity actually drives the “gatekeepers of tradition” (hailing mostly from the religious camp, of course, which is more ideological by nature) to fight against it and the “compromising of values” that it represents. For this reason, it is not surprising that in recent years we are witnessing—and will doubtless continue to witness—the frequent occurrence of internal struggles within the religious world

over the degree of freedom that its young people are entitled to assume for themselves. One of the more prominent battlegrounds, in the world of religious Zionism, is the area of feminism: as opposed to the religious-feminist school, which calls for maximum equality for women (within the setting of the synagogue and congregation as well), voices and organizations are emerging that seek to put women back in their “traditional” place and even to see this as a value.

Notwithstanding the above qualifications, the phenomenon of dual identity still carries meaning, and we can certainly see in it a significant new direction. Not only is its very incidence significant but, even more so, the fact that those articulating such a mixed identity belong, for the most part, to the cream of both societies—the religious and secular elites—who are not apologetic about adopting the norms of “the other camp” but do so openly and with heads held high.

How, then, can we identify, characterize or “measure” the new secular individual? First, it is clear what we can’t do. We cannot assess him through the lens of an anti-religious worldview, and certainly not by identifying with a democratic-liberal perspective. Although liberal democracy was originally predicated on secular assumptions, today these have also been accepted by many religious Jews; and in any event, it is obvious that we cannot make use of these assumptions to identify and analyze secular Jews.

The true (and universal) test of the “new secular individual” must therefore focus on the principal element that distinguishes him—the conceptual component (as opposed to the ideological or behavioral)—that is, his fundamental perspective on the world. Is it “vertical,” meaning that he believes in a transcendental element higher than himself, and would therefore be defined as religious; or is it “horizontal,” in the sense that he relates to the world around him as an equal, and would therefore be defined as secular. This is based on the assumption that even in a world where the components of complex identities occur in varying proportions, in most cases one extreme still predominates. In any event, those who attempt to measure secularism should bear in mind that in fact we are speaking of a world not of polar opposites but of a range of degrees.

Along with this universal assumption, it is important to remember that even in our global era, issues of cultural identity, such as the question of secularism, are not uniform in nature. On the contrary, globalization is primarily an economic phenomenon that also carries cultural significance (for instance, the spread of the

English language and of the Western consumer and leisure cultures); yet at the same time, as described by Samuel Huntington, it actually brings separate cultural identities into sharper relief. Accordingly, we cannot content ourselves with a single global measure of secularism versus religiosity, but must also create a set of individual measures that take into account the unique nature of the different cultures under discussion.

Thus, for example, even within Western culture itself, the cultural profile of Western Europe is not like that of the U.S., and certainly not in matters of secularism and religiosity. If in Europe a person who defines himself as believing in God and/or who regularly attends church would be thought of as unquestionably religious, in the U.S. (where church-going is a widespread), even those who fit most of the accepted measures of “secularism” may in fact attend church on a regular basis (just as many American Jews who are, too all intents and purposes, secular, may attend synagogue every Sabbath as an expression of their Jewish identity).

And if there is no uniform measure within Western culture, all the more so when the perspective is broadened to encompass other cultures. Thus, for example, it is reasonable to assume that in the case of Jews and Muslims—two groups with a significant body of religious law—the yardstick of religious observance (to what extent are you committed to the religious lifestyle of your faith) would also be an important means of gauging the extent of secularism.

A final comment: There are many who would characterize today’s world as post-modern (meaning that values in general do not carry much weight), since its basic philosophy does not support taking steps toward a better future—contrary to the belief of the various ideologies. According to this assumption, we should not speak at all of positive measures of secular identity, since such measures would necessarily be value-based, rendering our discussion here irrelevant. At most, we can make the assumption that a secular individual is anyone who is not religious.

Nonetheless, even if present-day Western culture is noteworthy for its post-modernist stance (incidentally, this is true only of Western culture, and it would be well worth conducting an in-depth examination of the degree of correlation between this phenomenon and the apparent decline of Western culture), in my opinion this phenomenon will not persist in the long term as it is foreign to the spirit of man—both individual man and human society—which seeks to invest meaning in our lives. In truth, even most of the public figures who are depicted as post-modern seek, for the

most part, to promote a values-based (i.e., “modern,” as opposed to post-modern) agenda in their private lives. Thus, for example, if they have children, it is likely that they do not tell them there is no difference between devoting effort to their schoolwork and spending time at the bowling alley. Unfortunately, the sense of responsibility that they display in their private lives, based on the realization that they will bear the consequences, does not characterize their behavior in the public arena, where they promote an agenda that—beneath all the scholarly trappings—is nothing more than simple nihilism.

As a result, it is hard to imagine that the post-modern mood will endure over time (even today, it is shared by only a minority—albeit a dominant one that undeniably influences the overall atmosphere). Already today, we are seeing a return to religion in the Western world (even if it is of the “New Age” variety) in reaction to the spiritual vacuum and absence of values offered by post-modernism. For this reason, the analyses outlined here, which propose positive (if complex) indicators to assess secularism, are relevant even in an era seemingly given over to the post-modern school.

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Solidarity without coercion: the challenges of an increasingly fragmented society - a view from reproductive health

Ilana Ziegler*

- The 21st century poses a challenge and an opportunity to societies undergoing secularization, particularly in the west: on the one hand, their heritage, language, customs and social rules are heavily influenced by their respective dominant religions; on the other hand, some of these underlying dogmas appear unsuitable for a modern society, built on principles of equality, human dignity and freedom.
- By way of illustration, it was suggested by commentators that one of the reasons for the rejection of the new European Union treaty ('The Lisbon Treaty') by the Irish public in the June 2008 referendum was their fear of the so-called European Human Rights agenda and the possible effects it may have on the legality of the Irish prohibition on abortion, premised on its strong Catholic tradition.
- The Irish 'fear' has been exacerbated by the 2007 European Court of Human Rights ruling in the *Tysiack* case, holding that denying a Polish woman the right to have an abortion despite a determination by three doctors that continuing her pregnancy would endanger her health and seriously damage her eyesight was a violation of her right to privacy under the European Convention on Human Rights.
- Consequently, euro-skeptics in Ireland warned that since the Lisbon Treaty includes an adoption of the European Convention by the European Union as part of its constituting documents, it may lead to Ireland being forced to change its policy on abortion (an unwarranted fear as it includes exemption clauses tailored in part for Ireland's situation).
- However, challenges amount also when *communitarian principles*, derived from an engrained sense of solidarity, give way to radical individualism; the latter, celebrating autonomous decision-making and facilitation of personal

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choice, has reached its pick in modern secular society, but came at a cost of compassion disappearing from the societal discourse, coupled with lack of proper care for the weak (financially and otherwise), the disabled and the elderly, to name but a few of the groups left behind in the modern 'rat race'.

- This results in ill-recognition of the importance of childcare and of treating patients with respect and compassion at their deathbed, the latter not considered by society to be 'productive'; in contradistinction, most traditional societies rejected such (ungrateful) behaviour and recognised the responsibility of the better-abled members of the community to aid others.
- A recent example in Israel has been the public awareness campaign to prevent the closure of the end-of-life treatment unit (hospice) at Tel Hashomer hospital; the unit premised its operation on palliative care, historically provided at hospices, based on a Catholic tradition (at the times of the crusaders) and reinvigorated in modern times in the United Kingdom by Dame Cicely Saunders. The hospice began operating in the 1980s as a joint initiative of the Israel Cancer Association and the Health Ministry and has treated over 25,000 near-dying patients. In 2008, the budget department at the Finance Ministry forced in effect a shutdown of the hospice by refusing to continue to fund it without the hospital setting aside permanent posts (from its existing resources) for the hospice's operation. An online petition, signed by almost 60,000 people, has contributed to an agreement reached between the ministry and the hospital to fund *new* permanent posts that will enable the hospice's operation.
- The successful public awareness campaign demonstrates that even in an individualised world, where city squares are no longer filled with lay women and men discussing public issues (save perhaps in the American presidential primaries) new mediums such as the internet can facilitate a communitarian effort to advance worthy goals.
- The task is, thus, to be able to find common ground between longstanding and traditions, which survived hard times and remained relevant to-date, and the principles of modern life in an inclusive, equal and rights-respecting society; We should not be turning a cold shoulder to our past simply because the

raison d'etre of its precepts presupposed a religious conviction, as this would be throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

- We should instead try to define our modern secular values in a way which is both responsive to the past, and provides a suitable platform for the future; which relies on concepts which are shared by religious and secular alike, while placing them in a rights-promoting context; which finds a place for religious feelings of individuals as their acceptance, to a degree, is one of the hallmarks of a tolerant, broadminded and pluralist society; which defines its 'secularity' not negatively, as other-than-religion, but positively, by embracing suitable aspects of the religious discourse into a public secular sphere; which returns to the communitarian values that forms part of the heritage of our societies in the pre-secularisation era, without resorting to the coercion that accompanied it; which aims to obtain a richer understanding of the interaction between all members of society, young and old, female and male, religious and secular.
- One of the underlying concepts of both traditional and modern society is the inviolable dignity of individuals. Two landmark Supreme Court decisions, from Israel and the United States, dealing, respectively, with the ending and the creation of life, can perhaps elucidate the possible link between the religious and secular meanings attributed to dignity.
- The Israeli Supreme Court (by former Justice Elon), in the *Yael Shefer* case dealing with the legality of euthanasia, interpreted the constitutional right to human dignity in Israel's *basic law: human dignity and liberty*, holding that:

"Judaism has derived additional implications from the principle that 'in the image of G-d He made man'. Thus, for example, just as man is commanded not to harm the Divine image of his fellow man, so too is he commanded not to harm his own Divine image, by harming his own life, body and dignity."
- In contradistinction, when the U.S. Supreme Court handed down its ruling in *Planned Parenthood V. Casey*, regarding the limitations on abortions in the United States, it noted that:

“Our law affords constitutional protection to personal decisions relating to marriage, procreation, contraception, family relationships, child rearing, and education. (...) These matters, involving the most intimate and personal choices a person may make in a lifetime, choices central to personal dignity and autonomy, are central to the liberty protected by the Fourteenth Amendment. At the heart of liberty is the right to define one’s own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life. Beliefs about these matters could not define the attributes of personhood were they formed under compulsion of the State.”

- Reproductive health matters, mentioned above, are perhaps where combining individualistic liberal values, developed in the enlightenment period, with communitarian values derived from our past is most pertinent.
- Reproductive health, according to the definition adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development, is 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes.'
- Reproductive health therefore implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so. Implicit in this last condition is the right of men and women to be informed and to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning of their choice, as well as other methods of their choice for regulation of fertility.
- Society's role in reproductive health conforms to the now commonly accepted triadic form of human rights obligations - the duty to respect, the duty to protect and the duty to provide.
- Society plays a vital role in respecting choice, as seen in the U.S. supreme Court decision in *Casey*; thus, the International Planned Parenthood Federation maintains that sexual and reproductive rights should be internationally recognized as human rights and therefore guaranteed for everyone; that individuals, women in particular, should be able to take control

of their reproductive lives; that equality between men and women should be promoted, aiming to eliminate gender biases, by acknowledging that women should be able to make decisions affecting their future without undue burdens;

- But 'choice' alone is not enough when information is lacking; when impoverishment prevents a person from exercising her choice; when social support networks cease to operate; when one's life is threatened by her peers if she decides to act in a way which best reflects her thoughts and desires; this is where society should positively act, by providing education, counseling and disseminating knowledge; by allowing women faced with an unwanted pregnancy they can make an informed choice; by facilitating access to services, such as safe abortions, on a needs-basis; and by promoting the role of support network within communities.
- It is striking to note, for example, that each year an estimated 500,000 women die of pregnancy-related causes, and almost all maternal mortality occurs in developing countries, representing one of the widest, and most unjust, health gaps between developed and developing nations. Of these deaths, complications from unsafe abortion account for approximately 70,000, or 13 per cent, of all deaths. In many cases, this is a result of difficult access to services due to financial or geographical reasons. It is estimated that accessible and effective family planning and contraceptive services may avert up to 35 per cent of maternal deaths.
- Societies in the past tended, based on religious convictions, to tie together solidarity and coercion, thereby supporting an externally determined 'choice'; modern societies, by reinterpreting principles such as human dignity and accustoming them to the needs of today's world, should untie the Gordian knot: on the one hand, facilitate autonomous decision making without resorting to fragmentation and solitude; on the other hand, support such choice with the required financial and other supportive means without impeding on personal decisions.

SECULARIZATION INDICATORS IN THE 21st CENTURY: THE CASE OF ISRAEL

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William James described religion as “the belief that there is an unseen order, and that our supreme good lies in harmoniously adjusting ourselves thereto” (1902/2002, p. 53). This unseen order is the world of the spirits, with which humans have been negotiating for many thousands of years. Any given religion, i.e. a particular set of beliefs about the world of the spirits, becomes a shared collective identity for small or large collectivities, ranging in size between a score and a billion adherents. Individual and collective religiosity, a continuous variable, is measured as the loyalty to the super-naturalist worldview. What we can measure is commitment to supernaturalism, expressed in individual and collective investment of resources. The centrality or marginality of religious activities can best be measured as the fraction of all individual or collective resources invested in supernaturalism. Secularization is noted when we observe a decline in the resources expended on “harmoniously adjusting ourselves” to the world of the spirits. All measures used to assess religiosity can serve as the quantitative indicators of secularization.

THE ISRAELI CASE

How relevant is research on secularization elsewhere to the reality of life in Israel? I would suggest that despite its uniqueness, Israel is subject to the regularities of social behavior found everywhere. (The following discussion relates only to the Jewish collectivity in Israel, and not to Palestinians in Israel).

European Jews have undergone massive secularization over the past three centuries, and the process has been first and foremost part of European secularization.

Furthermore, European Jews and their descendants have become the carriers of modernity, secularization, and the Enlightenment spirit wherever they have gone.

Individuals of Jewish descent are over-represented in secularist, humanist, and international human rights organizations all over the world.

Secularization in the Jewish case shows some universal features, together with uniquely Jewish aspects. If secularization is measured by distance from the historical dominance of religion, for Jews, it has meant creating distance from historical, rabbinic (Orthodox) Judaism, created in the Middle Ages.

Jewishness was been separated from Judaism, with the result that most Jews today are such only in a sociological sense. Secularized Jews were a European reality by the early nineteenth century, and a significant majority in Western Europe by its end. By that time, the process of secularization was making significant inroads into Jewish communities in Eastern Europe. Most sociological Jews today are and far removed from historical Judaism and they have little idea what its traditions are. There is a minority of about 10 percent of world Jewry that still preserves historical Judaism.

Zionism, and the State of Israel it created, represents one response to the process of secularization among Jews, which has been more radical than in any other religious group.

Israel represents a conscious attempt to remake a religious community into a nationality (cf. Beit-Hallahmi, 1993).

The Israeli case is unique because of its historical background and political context, particularly the formal involvement of the state in religious institutions. The State of Israel formally regulates the religious activities of its citizens in many ways. The state maintains a list of recognized religions (16 at last count), and classifies all residents according to their presumed religious affiliation. Marriage and divorce can take place only within the (recognized) religious group. Religious conversions from one recognized group to another are registered and reported. Vital statistics are reported based on religion (e.g. “live births by mother’s religion”).

Israel defines itself as the state of the Jewish people, meaning about 13 million individuals, less than half of whom currently reside in Israel. Jews are viewed by the

state not only as a religious group, but as a national group, but joining this national group is only possible through a religious conversion. Thus the boundaries of the Jewish group are maintained by the system of religious courts, as well as by civil authorities. Attempts to have the state recognize an Israeli nationality (as distinct from citizenship) have been rejected time and again by the courts, and this rejection is supported by a solid majority of the public.

The state invests significant public resources in the maintenance of historical Judaism and its commandments. This means, first, financing an expensive system of lifelong Talmudic learning, in which more than 100,000 individuals are involved. Such a large religious education system is unprecedented in Jewish history. In addition to the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox educational systems, from nursery school to adult full-time scholars, there is a system of rabbinical courts, where the judges enjoy the same salaries and benefits as civil judges, and other systems providing the services which maintain ritual purity for those who desire it, at state expense. Many ultra-Orthodox and Orthodox men are full-time religious professionals, creating a modern “priestly class”. Their occupations include those making sure that any menstruating Orthodox woman can find a ritual bath close to home, and those engaged in support of food taboos. The whole enterprise of maintaining Orthodox traditions employs many thousands of civil servants, all Orthodox. Ultra-Orthodox parties, which currently hold 18 seats out of 120 in the Knesset, (and are openly non-Zionist) act to increase religion budgets. However, they would not be able to do that without widespread public support for the idea that the state should invest in maintaining the system of Jewish traditions, including some Sabbath observance.

The rhythm of public and private life in Israel follows the Jewish calendar, and that means that religious Jewish holidays are public holidays and that most of them are universally celebrated and marked. By law, Israeli Jews are not allowed to work on the Sabbath, and every year, businesses pay fines if they are caught employing Jews in economic activities. A business open on Saturday is immune if it can prove, with the help of government identity cards, that its employees are non-Jews. Raising pigs and selling pork are forbidden by state law (to Jews and Muslims), representing a symbolic

victory of millennia of Jewish dietary taboos, but the non-observant can easily get around these limitations.

The varying levels of religiosity among Israeli Jews are reflected in the following labels: *Haredi*, denoting the very Orthodox, *Dati* (literally religious) denoting Orthodox, *Mesorti* (literally traditional) denoting those who are partially observant, and *Hiloni* (literally secular) denoting the non-observant. These Hebrew terms are widely used in everyday life, and in both spoken and written language.

The Zionist vision, created under the impact of the Enlightenment and European nationalism and secularization, faces another kind of historical challenge among Israeli Jews. While about half of Israeli Jews are of European descent, the other half is comprised of individuals whose ancestors lived in the Islamic world. Patterns of identity and culture developed in Eastern Europe were imported to Israel by European Jews. Their descendants display a pattern of relative secularity and a commitment to individualism and egalitarian values. Jewish communities in Islamic countries have not shared the great European transformation (Diner, 2002). Their descendants in Israel display a pattern of traditionalism, correlated with more authoritarian attitudes. Those Israelis whose ancestors were living 200 years ago north of Belgrade and west of Moscow constitute today the modernized and more secular segment of Israeli society.

The gap between Israelis of European descent and those with an Islamic world legacy is easily shown. In one 2004 survey, there was a particularly high prevalence of the secular label (63%) among native Israelis of European descent, compared to 33 percent among native Israelis of Asian origin, and 25 percent of native Israelis of North African origin. This was consistent with earlier surveys, which showed higher levels of observance among *Mizrahim* or Eastern Jews (Kedem, 1991). In terms of income, secular Jews had the highest levels, followed by the Orthodox, the traditionally observant, and at the bottom the ultra-Orthodox. Secular Jews also had the highest level of education, with 32% reporting higher education.

Self identification as a secular Israeli means a lower likelihood of religious belief and a much lower likelihood of religious observance. To a large extent, this follows the universal pattern of reducing the spirit world to one element (belief in “God”) and the loyalty to religious life-cycle rites. Those who describe themselves as non-observant among Israeli Jews follow a pattern of minimal observance, which is still acceptable in terms of the Orthodox rabbinate. “Secular” Jews follow the minimal requirements of Orthodox Judaism whereby divorce (more important than marriage) can be handled only by rabbinical courts. Beyond the minimal requirements, secular Jews also follow the rituals of circumcision for male infants, mezuzah (door amulet), and bar-mitzvah for boys at age 13. As a result, the Orthodox rabbinate still views them as worthy of Orthodox marriage and burial rites, because they are matrilineal Jews, whose lineage is not marred by an improper divorce.

To properly appreciate the connection between Israeli “secular” culture and Judaism, it is useful to examine the state education system. The state school system in Israel for Jews (there is a separate system for Arabs) is divided into two parallel sub-systems, one religious and the other "secular". Children of the religious subculture (not the ultra-Orthodox), raised according to Jewish Orthodox beliefs and practices, attend state religious schools. There is also an independent orthodox system, which is state financed, but run by the ultra-Orthodox community. What we can observe is that even the "secular" state schools follow a curriculum with large doses of Old Testament narratives and traditions. The stated rationale for that is that these are the building blocks of Jewish national identity, and without them such an identity will be totally devoid of content and meaning.

Observing a so-called secular Israeli nursery school today we discover that children as young as three are taught the Genesis story of the creation, the Exodus story, starting with the baby Moses in the bulrushes, and so on. These stories are taught every year in the same order, in connection with related religious holidays. In elementary school they are taught as the starting point of national history. Thus, most non-observant adults in Israel believe in the historicity of Old Testament narratives. The main difference between the traditions of Rabbinical Judaism and what is taught in Israeli state schools is the almost total absence of the Talmud, which has been the historical foundation of Jewish identity. In contrast, Zionism privileges the Old Testament, representing a mythic, glorious, Jewish past rooted in West Asia.

SECULARIZATION IN ISRAEL: PROPOSITIONS AND QUESTIONS

Is Israel today more secular than it was in 1948 or 1968? Let me present some tentative propositions and statistical generalizations, all open to challenge and verification, as well as a couple of research topics.

1. In International surveys, Israel appears higher than most European countries, in terms of belief rates. Two surveys conducted during 1991 and 1993 by the International Social Survey Program (ISSP), looked at religious beliefs in seventeen countries.

These were the questions:

God: "I know God exists and I have no doubts about it"

Afterlife: "I definitely believe in life after death"

Bible: "The Bible is the actual word of God and it is to be taken literally, word for word."

Devil: "I definitely believe in the Devil."

Hell: "I definitely believe in Hell."

Heaven: "I definitely believe in Heaven."

Miracle: "I definitely believe in religious miracles"

Results are shown below.

Country	God	Afterlife	Bible	Devil	Hell	Heaven	Miracles	Evolution
United States	62.8	55.0	33.5	45.4	49.6	63.1	45.6	35.4
N. Ireland	61.4	53.5	32.7	43.1	47.9	63.7	44.2	51.5
Philippines	86.2	35.2	53.7	28.3	29.6	41.9	27.7	60.9
Ireland	58.7	45.9	24.9	24.8	25.9	51.8	36.9	60.1
Poland	66.3	37.8	37.4	15.4	21.4	38.6	22.7	35.4
Italy	51.4	34.8	27.0	20.4	21.7	27.9	32.9	65.2
New Zealand	29.3	35.5	9.4	21.4	18.7	32.2	23.1	66.3
Israel	43.0	21.9	26.7	12.6	22.5	24.0	26.4	56.9

Austria	29.4	24.8	12.7	11.1	10.0	20.1	27.4	N/A
Norway	20.1	31.6	11.2	13.1	11.4	23.0	17.8	65.0
Great Britain	23.8	26.5	7.0	12.7	12.8	24.6	15.3	76.7
Netherlands	24.7	26.7	8.4	13.3	11.1	21.1	10.2	58.6
W. Germany	27.3	24.4	12.5	9.5	9.3	18.2	22.7	72.7
Russia	12.4	16.8	9.9	12.5	13.0	14.7	18.7	41.4
Slovenia	21.9	11.6	22.3	6.9	8.3	9.5	13.4	60.7
Hungary	30.1	10.6	19.2	4.2	5.8	9.4	8.2	62.8
E. Germany	9.2	6.1	7.5	3.6	2.6	10.2	11.8	81.6

Most surveys since the 1990s have reported similar 60:40 ratios for super-naturalist belief.

2. According to Kedem (1991), the levels of non-observance between 1962 and 1988 ranged from 22% to 32% of the Jewish population. Guttman Center findings show a similar degree of stability, which raises some questions about possible historical and demographic changes.

3. The universal sex segmentation involving religiosity and secularization is found in Israel. Secularization, secularity, and secularism are animated by masculinity, while women invest more energy in the world of the spirits. In Israel, European women are the customers for the “New Age” (most of which is quite old), and to the new “spirituality”, while Eastern women constitute the majority of pilgrims to saints’ tombs.

4. Worldwide, secularization is tied to economic development (Norris & Inglehart, 2004). Within Israeli society, secularity and secularism are found among those segments that are well integrated into the globalized economy. This in turn is tied to ancestry and modernity, as shown above.

5. Since 1968, the number of Knesset members representing religious parties, and specifically non-Zionist ultra-Orthodox parties, has risen, because of the appearance of the Shass party. This party represents Jews whose ancestors lived in Islamic countries. Its declared ideology is that of preserving the traditions associated with those ancestors

6. Since 1968, the number of observant Knesset members, regardless of party affiliation, has also risen significantly.

7. The Israeli elite has remained largely non-observant : If we look at the leadership of the state, we discover that it has always been totally non-observant. Of all Israeli prime ministers since 1948 (David Ben-Gurion, Moshe Sharett, Levi Eshkol, Golda Meir, Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, Yitzhak Shamir, Ehud Barak, Binyamin Netanyahu, Ariel Sharon, Ehud Olmert, and Menahem Begin), it was only the last one who ever attended synagogue services outside of fulfilling an official or social duty. It is important to note also that Israel's intellectual, literary, scientific, and artistic elite is still overwhelmingly non-observant

8. Since 1968, the percentage of Israeli GNP devoted to the support of Orthodox Judaism has risen significantly, due the growth in government expenditures for the Ultra-Orthodox educational systems, rabbinical courts, etc.

9. Since 1968, the percentage of Israeli GNP generated by economic activity on the Sabbath day, that is between sundown on Friday and sundown on Saturday, has risen dramatically. These twenty-four hours, traditionally a time for prayer, reflection, and family time, have become a focus of frenzied consumption and entertainment. Saturday has become a day for shopping, travel, and eating out. As described By Ben-Porat & others, the Israeli Sabbath is now integrated into the global economy. While the state invests in the maintenance of Judaism, market forces operate to weaken its hold. The secularization of Sunday in the United States represents a similar victory of market forces over tradition (Keysar, Beit-Hallahmi, & Kosmin, unpublished).

10. Since 1968, there has emerged a small ultra-secular minority that opts out of Jewish life-cycle rituals. This is noticeable in marriages and burials, where a few

thousands every year do not follow tradition, while male circumcision is still universal. This small minority is made up of well-educated Europeans, with a clear commitment to Enlightenment values.

11. Those who call themselves secular, whether in Italy, in the United States, in Germany, or in Israel, are more likely to demonstrate a commitment to democratic values (Beit-Hallahmi, 2007), while those scoring high on religiosity measures are committed to conservatism and authoritarianism (Beit-Hallahmi, 1989; Beit-Hallahmi & Argyle, 1997).

Authoritarianism seems to connect religiosity and anti-democratic attitudes (CanettiNisim & Beit-Hallahmi, 2007).

12. Since 1948, secularist groups calling for the total separation of religion and state and an end to the enforcement of religious laws, whether on the right or the left, have remained marginal. Such ideas have been correctly viewed as threat to the political order, as they entail a complete re-definition of citizenship and the state. Israel is a state with a mission, and the mission is revitalizing Jewish identity, while preserving the essence of the historical Jewish caste system. Most “secular” Jews in Israel are committed to this mission. There is a national consensus around the overall Jewish identity label. Zionism cannot betray its links to a historical Jewish identity, whose content has been totally religious.

It would be interesting to gather evidence on the following:

1. Changes in self-definition as *hiloni* (“secular”), *mesorti* (traditional), *dati* (Orthodox), *haredi* (ultra-Orthodox) over time in the Israeli population. Who are the individuals who used to define themselves as secular, and now present themselves as Orthodox? Who are those that moved in the opposite direction? We know that those that cross social boundaries are close to them to begin with, in most cases. That is, very few ultra-Orthodox individuals become atheists, and very few atheists become ultra-Orthodox. Some ultra-Orthodox may go lower on the religiosity scale and become regular Orthodox.

Among the Zionist Orthodox, secularization is most likely, as they are the closest to the secular-religious dividing line in Israeli society.

Since 1973, there has been a rise in levels of Orthodoxy affecting tens of thousands of individuals and families. This has occurred mainly among Eastern Jews, but has involved thousands of European Jews as well (cf. Beit-Hallahmi, 1992). What happens most often is that among the traditional Eastern Jews there is a move towards greater Orthodoxy.

One visible change in religious practices in Israel over the past decade has been the frequency with which one can observe individuals kissing the mezuzah as they enter a room in a public building. As expected, those kissing the mezuzah are likely to be female and of Eastern descent. This practice has to do with universal religious ideas about *mana*, a sacred physical force, and the protection against evil spirits. It is related to the prevalence of references to the mezuzah in everyday discourse. It is, first, a public assertion of both confidence in one's identity, which can be publicly displayed, and anxiety about the surrounding world, and deserves to be closely examined.

2. The traditional (*mesorti*) self-definition is historically new. It was certainly not known in the 1950s. Its appearance in the media and among pollsters must have been a recognition of social reality, and of the growing political strength of this Eastern group and its leaders.

A Longer version of this paper, with a list of references is available from the author.

