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INTERRELIGIOUS CONFLICT IN ISRAEL: THE GROUP BASIS OF CONFLICTING VISIONS

Kenneth D. Wald and Samuel Shye

Utilizing several theories of sociocultural mobilization, this paper examines the contours of secular-religious conflict in contemporary Israel. According to a survey of adult Israelis, resistance to "religious coercion" among the secular population is driven primarily by symbolic, social, and cognitive forces rather than perceived discrimination or the threat posed by spatial proximity to the religious. As such, it is rooted in cultural identity. The theocratic disposition among religious Israelis is almost entirely a matter of social identification. These findings both confirm existing theories of intergroup conflict and suggest a framework for analyzing religion and state controversies in other polities.

For most social observers, the very mention of Israel connotes images of nationalist conflict between the country's Arab and Jewish populations or, less commonly, ethnic strife between eastern and western Jews. But many Israelis, scholars and citizens alike, identify religiosity rather than nationality or ethnicity as "potentially the sharpest dividing line in the society" (Katz and Gurevitch 1976: 32). The alarmist accounts consulted by Alan Dowty (1991: 1) "paint a dismal portrait of sharpened conflict, unyielding dogmatism, and impending catastrophe," leading to forecasts of a full-blown *kulturkampf* between religiously observant and nonobservant Israeli Jews. The "senseless and destructive hatred" between the camps has prompted some secular Israelis to characterize the religious community as Israel's own "Islamic Jihad" while Ultraorthodox spokespeople more than repay the compliment, branding secular Israelis as "heretics" who have wounded Judaism more grievously than all its external enemies (Rolef 1991; Wallfish 1990; Aviad 1983, ch. 3).

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The skirmishes between the secular and religious camps periodically escalate from words to deeds, encompassing such weapons as arson, mass riots, destruction of public property, and other violent assaults on public order (Claiborne 1986; Seib 1986). Given such cues, we are not surprised that, "The majority of Israelis perceive substantial cultural differences, social distance, and conflict between religious and secular Jews in Israel" (Ben Rafael and Sharot 1991: 161). More temperate voices, which recognize the integrative capacity of a common religious identity, nonetheless acknowledge a "widening cleavage between the religious and the nonreligious sectors of the population" manifested in residential segregation, endogenous marriage, separate schooling, confessional labor federations, and other disintegrative practices (Gutmann 1979: 32). Even the military, long regarded as the chief engine of societal integration and the sole venue for daily contact between people of divergent religious backgrounds, has acceded to growing demands for segregation between the observant and the secular (Cohen 1993).

Confronted with the persistence of "primordial" religious cleavages, modern scholars schooled in the secularization paradigm may dismiss such conflict as a quaint throwback to the preindustrial era, a subject more suitable for historians than social scientists. But as cultural conflicts become more frequent and intense, it becomes much less defensible to overlook "the persistent claims that primary attachments have upon people—the ties to family, kin, neighborhood, brotherhood, and tribe, and their manifestations in religion, ritual practice, or tribal custom" (Connor 1991: 177). No observer of recent American politics—presidential elections in particular—can deny the resonance of cultural themes rooted in value conflict (Edsall and Edsall 1991; Hunter 1991; Leege, Lieske and Wald 1991; Ornstein, Kohut and McCarthy 1988; Wald 1992; White 1988). The violent dissolution of multi-ethnic, religious and racial states in central and eastern Europe attests to the potency of similar conflicts elsewhere. In many parts of the Third World, politics is still marked by confrontations between competing cultural groups over a broad range of issues. If religion is not the root cause of polarization in many such situations, it is the idiom that defines the contestants. Conflicts anchored in religious loyalties, so remarkably resistant to "reasonable" solutions, warrant the continuing attention of contemporary scholarship.

Because religious observance has become such a flashpoint for social tensions, Israel offers an opportunity to pursue the problem of intergroup antagonism. This paper explores the basis of Israel's religious/secular cleavage through several theories of group conflict developed in other contexts. Our goal is to identify the empirical factors that generate resistance to religious encroachments among the numerically predominant secular population. By

so doing, we shall attempt to shed light on the more general problem of group formation in the political sphere

BACKGROUND

At base, the "ongoing war over the character of the state" engages conflicting visions of Israel: Is it a "state of the Jews" or a "Jewish state" (Halevi 1992)? Are its citizens primarily Israelis or Jews (Herman 1970)? This debate is essentially a competition between different models of citizenship, one civic-territorial, the other ethnocultural, rooted in conflicting national visions (Peled 1992). The former option, derived from classical Zionism and Theodore Herzl, recognizes Israel principally as a haven for a persecuted people who happen to share a common religious identity. This essentially secular perspective acknowledges the place of Judaism in the Jewish tradition but envisions a state that is more responsive to universalist norms of progress and pluralism than to the imperatives of Orthodoxy (Hertzberg 1959: 15–100; Rubinstein 1984). Indeed, many Labor Zionists identified traditional Judaism as a factor retarding Jewish political empowerment, even suggesting that it must be abandoned as a condition of "normalizing" Jewish existence in modernity.

As it did from the beginning of the modern Zionist movement, the secular perspective clashes with a competing vision of Israel as the embodiment of messianic yearning (Luz 1988; Tirosh 1975). To be worthy of recognition as a "Jewish state," religious Zionists insist, Israel must express Jewish values and enforce Jewish law. The core assumption of this perspective was expressed concisely by one of its advocates, Rabbi Samuel Mohilever, when he enjoined Zionists that "the Torah, which is the Source of our life, must be the foundation of our regeneration in the land of our fathers" (cited in Hertzberg 1959: 403). Those religious Zionists who worked in concert with secular nationalists justified their actions in the conviction that they were hastening the day of redemption. That hope has not been lost by those who endow the state with theological significance.

The tension between these conflicting images emerged at the founding of the state, producing an ambiguous reference to the "Rock of Israel" in the 1948 Proclamation of Independence and fueling opposition to the development of a secular constitution. The basic religious framework for the state, worked out in the "Status Quo" agreement, attempted to compromise these differences by allowing some Jewish content in an otherwise secular state framework (Abramov 1976). The concessions to the religious included kosher kitchens in state institutions, government funding for a religious school system, military exemption for religious scholars and observant women, state recognition of the Jewish sabbath and holidays, and, most significantly, allocation of personal status issues such as marriage and di-

vorce to Orthodox religious authorities. Other than these concessions, the demands of Jewish law *(halacha)* were not to be enforced by the state but by private conscience and community pressure. This led to a patchwork arrangement that deferred to the sensibilities of the religious in their strongholds but disregarded most Orthodox norms in secular communities.[1] In practice, the minimal demands of the Orthodox put little burden on the vast majority of the nonobservant population.[2]

Although most "Status Quo" provisions enjoy strong public support even from the nonobservant, secular Israelis have determinedly resisted what they see as recent efforts by Ultraorthodox Jews to expand the public scope of religious law.[3] At the same time, the religious community has protested vigorously against actions that appear to undermine the religious character of Israeli life. The "regime" that governs secular-religious relations, a system of consociational bargaining (Don-Yehiya 1986), occasionally breaks down to produce violent confrontations over such issues as abortion, autopsies, public advertisements picturing women, mixed-sex activities, Sabbath entertainment and travel, and archeological digs—all practices proscribed or restricted by Orthodoxy. The conflict reaches into the Knesset when religious parties extract material and policy concessions as the price for their membership in governing coalitions (Sharkansky 1985, ch. 4). Since the Six Day War of 1967, this conflict has been further exacerbated by the messianic territorialism that captured the imagination of many religious Jews but alienated a large proportion of the secular population.

In some respects an ideal-typical example of intergroup hostility, the Israeli secular-religious division differs from social cleavages based on race, ethnicity, and language.[4] In the first instance, the conflict does not clearly fit the case of a dominant majority exercising supremacy over a repressed minority. Though the nonreligious are clearly more numerous than the observant share of the population, which is commonly estimated at 20–25 percent, secular Israelis do not see themselves as supreme. Rather, as noted by several observers, both the secular majority and the religious minority regard themselves as the victims of oppression (Shye 1987: 87–88).

Second, the nature of group membership is ambiguous. Israel lacks an authoritative system for determining who is religious and who is not. While the Orthodox regard theirs as the sole legitimate form of organized Judaism, no single marker of religious commitment enjoys universal legitimacy. Some Jews who do not engage in extensive observance of all prescribed religious rituals nonetheless regard themselves as "religious." By the same token, many people who label themselves "secular" nonetheless engage in some religious observance (Kedem 1991).

Third, the concept of secularity enjoys only a tenuous hold on the Israeli imagination. Though several organizations press for religious freedom and

contest religious coercion, there is no broad support for secularism as a value and, to the contrary, a tendency to respect religious tradition as an important component of Israeli culture and identity (Ben-Rafael and Sharot 1991, 173). According to Daniel Elazar (1982: 117–118), the Labor party's self-defeating identification with secularization was a major source of its electoral marginality during the Begin era.

Finally, Israeli confessional differences are not reinforced by a legal framework that mandates separation between the contending forces or allocates legal advantages or disadvantages by virtue of religious commitment. To a large extent, the separation between the religious and secular population is the result of voluntary forces and can be transcended by individual initiative.

We shall need to be sensitive to these unique qualities in our empirical analysis of religious-secular conflict. If this dimension of Israeli social conflict can be explained by existing theories of group hostility despite these confounding factors, that will provide powerful evidence for the universal validity of these theories.

EXPLANATIONS FOR INTERGROUP CONFLICT

While the conflict between religious and secular Israeli Jews may seem straightforward enough, the basis for group antagonism remains elusive. Is the hostility a reflection of a genuine conflict of interest in which contending sides struggle over public supremacy? Does the recurring tension constitute a form of "symbolic politics" in which the real stakes are public validation for a style of life or system of values? Is there evidence that secular Israelis genuinely feel imposed upon by the religiously observant? Or are they perhaps rejecting the religious themselves rather than the policies advanced on their behalf? These possibilities are suggested by various theories of group conflict.

There being no shortage of intergroup conflict in the modern world, scholars have had ample opportunity to develop diverse theories about the sources of communal hostility. These various accounts identify a number of distinct mechanisms that sensitize group members to consciousness of kind and, through that link, build a commitment to protect the status of the group. As the term *protection* implies, these theories claim to account both for efforts by dominant groups to maintain their privileged status and for efforts to reduce social differentials by members of subordinate groups. These theories offer a promising source of hypotheses to explain religious/secular antagonism in Israel. In the interests of space, we shall not spell out fully the assumptions of each approach but concentrate primarily on the mechanisms identified by competing models as sources of political cohesion in cultural conflicts.

The *social identification* model treats collective action as the outgrowth of social categorization and the concomitant tendency to accentuate the virtues of the in-group at the expense of some opposed out-group. Proceeding from the assumption that individuals acquire preferences as a means of strengthening their association with a group, social identification theory offers a psychological model of group conflict. The clear affinity of this cognitive approach with classic reference group theory is apparent in the common assumption that, "A sense of involvement, concern and pride can be derived from one's knowledge of sharing a social category membership with others, even without necessarily having close personal relations with, knowing or having any material personal interest in their outcomes" (Abrams and Hogg 1990: 3). This assumption also sets social identification theory apart from alternative approaches to group conflict by denying that membership or self-interest are necessary conditions for group cohesion. Rather than interest, contact, or involvement, it is the simple fact of social identification that promotes group cohesion. The hypothesis that personal identification with the group is a prerequisite for collective political action has been sustained in several empirical studies of women, racial minorities, and ethnic groups (Conover 1984, 1988; Gurin 1985). Studies of religiously based conflicts have also yielded evidence that intensity of group identification promotes political solidarity and resistance to competing groups (Wilcox 1992).

The *social context* perspective diverges from social identification theory by asserting that personal contact is the spur to group solidarity. Contextual models posit identification with the group as a necessary but not sufficient condition for the recognition of common political interests. Through interaction with other members of a group, an individual develops a normative commitment to the collectivity. Such commitment, in turn, encourages the internalization of group norms. In the classic formulation of this view, contact with other in-group members was assumed to promote attitudinal consensus (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954). Subsequent research has explored the other side of this process: the impact of contact with members of competing groups. Such contact across group boundaries may either reinforce in-group solidarity or break down intergroup barriers and thereby diminish intragroup cohesion. The former is likely when the contact is episodic and competitive, the latter outcome more probable when sustained contact occurs under conditions of equality (Allport 1958, ch. 16). Though most commonly tested on class, and racial groups, interreligious contact has been shown to facilitate common political outlooks in several settings (Gilbert 1991; Jelen 1991; Wald, Owen, and Hill 1988).

The *power model* treats intergroup hostility "as a natural product of competition among groups for scarce resources" (Giles and Evans 1986: 469).

The resources for which groups contest may involve not only tangible economic rewards but more abstract goods such as social respect and valuation. In common with the other theories we have reviewed, the power approach regards group identification and/or membership as an essential precursor to collective action. The distinctive quality of the power approach is the assumption that membership or identification alerts individuals to external challenges from other groups and provides a basis to politicize individual grievances. The more "exposed" the group member to competition from competing groups, so the power model reasons, the greater the likelihood of collective action on behalf of the membership group. That dynamic has been confirmed in several studies of American race relations documenting that resistance to black political mobilization is strongest among whites who feel most threatened by black competition (Bobo 1983; Giles and Evans 1986; Wright 1977). Something of the same process may account for the ready political mobilization of religious group members who resent their social devaluation by a predominantly secular value system (Wald, Owen, and Hill 1989).

The final theoretical tradition we consider, the *symbolic politics* approach, tends to deemphasize in-group tendencies and the perceived danger to which group members are exposed by virtue of interaction with a competitive out-group. To explain how people react to any controversy involving competing groups, this perspective emphasizes the role played by broad orientations toward the groups in question:

> People acquire stable affective preferences through conditioning in their preadult years, with little calculation of the future costs and benefits of these attitudes. . . . When confronted with new policy issues later in life, people respond to these new attitude objects on the basis of cognitive consistency. The crucial variable would be the similarity of symbols posed by the policy issue to those of long-standing predispositions. (Sears et al. 1980, p. 671)

In effect, this approach suggests that people are equipped by socialization experiences with dispositions to favor one group or another. When a specific conflict arises pitting groups against each other, those affective images are engaged. Consistent with this reasoning, a number of scholars have reported that people take sides in group conflicts based on their symbolic orientations to the contestants, not their personal stakes in the outcome or their abstract views of justice. That logic also finds support in research about the role of group affect in structuring political choices regarding religious traditionalists (Jelen 1990).

As is customary in scholarly combat, these different perspectives have usually been deployed competitively; social identification theorists insist

that social interaction is unnecessary for the development of a group perspective and the symbolic politics model explicitly rejects threat or self-interest as a sufficient explanation for resistance. Yet the four explanations overlap and could be integrated along the lines suggested by Miller et al. (1981) who included measures of identification, symbolic affect, and power differential to explain political cohesiveness among various groups. In that spirit, we ransack all these traditions to generate predictions about the expression of religious/secular hostility in modern Israel.

DATA AND MEASURES

We focus our study of intergroup antagonism on opposition to religious coercion by secular Israelis. Despite their numerical majority status, the secular think of themselves as engaged in defensive efforts to fend off initiatives by the religious population. Precisely because they consider themselves a subordinate group, disadvantaged by the unofficial state recognition of Judaism, the secular constitute an interesting population for study. We pursued our interest by analyzing data from a 1985 opinion survey of nearly 1,200 adult Israeli Jews.[5] Conducted by the respected Louis Guttman Institute using a national probability sample, the survey inquired broadly about religious values, practices, and identification.

Given the research focus, our first step was to partition the population into religious and secular components.[6] In the absence of objective criteria and on the assumption that Jewish religiosity is primarily a matter of observing mandated rituals, we defined secular Jews as people who said they observed the religious tradition "somewhat" or not at all. So defined, secular Jews constituted three-quarters of the survey respondents.[7] To put this figure in context, it is essential to recall that secularity in Israel is defined in reaction to the extremely stringent demands of Orthodox Judaism and does not necessarily entail a conscious rejection of Jewish religious identity or even necessarily connote indifference. Although their standard of observance is low by Orthodox standards, many of the ostensibly secular exhibit an array of religious acts that would mark them off as fairly religious in the American context (Liebman and Cohen 1990: 139–140). Though the term is misleading, "secular" is the common label to identify people who do not consistently practice the ritual behavior mandated by Orthodox Judaism.

For our dependent variable, we require a measure of resistance to what is perceived as religious coercion. How is opposition to religious coercion likely to be displayed by secular Israelis? Though we would have preferred a behavioral measure, nothing suitable was available.[8] Nor did the survey we utilize ask about specific policy issues that divide the religious and secular. The best available attitudinal indicators, views about the proper role of

religion in Israeli society, tap the underlying issue or philosophy that divides the religious and secular camps (Zelniker and Kahan 1976). In essence, we are measuring an attitude or worldview that warrants resisting the "Judaicization" of the state. We assume that people who perceive Israel in secular terms would contest efforts to enlarge the sphere of life subject to Jewish law.

The composite measure of antitheocratic sentiment was constructed from three questions: Respondents were asked whether "adherence to religious tradition" should be a central Israeli value, whether to increase or diminish "the religious character of the State of Israel," and if they thought that "the establishment of the State of Israel is the beginning of the redemption of the Jewish people in the religious sense." Responses to these three items were coded such that high values indicated a rejection of Judaism as a societal value, a preference for reducing the religious character of the state, and a secular interpretation of the Israeli experience. Consequently, the scale expresses an antitheocratic mentality.[9] For the secular population as defined above, scores on the standardized scale ranged from −5.0 to 5.2 with a mean of 0.80. The slightly positive skew, manifested by the positive value of the mean, reflects the greater prevalence of antitheocratic orientations among the secular population.

Precisely because we use an attitudinal rather than a behavioral measure of opposition to theocracy, it is important to distinguish it from measures of individual religiosity that will be used as independent variables. To anticipate by one paragraph, we will construct a measure of religious identification based on the degree to which respondents embraced "religious" and "nonreligious" labels. While social identification theory predicts that attitudes about the religious function of the state will respond to religious self-identification, the two constructs are not identical. In part, this is evident from the imperfect correlation between the anti-theocracy scale and two questions about religious identification in our data set. Among those we classified as secular, the correlation between the anti-theocracy scale and self-identification as a religious Jew was −0.54 while the correlation with a parallel measure of self-identification as nonreligious dropped to 0.33. Even allowing for measurement error, the distance of these correlations from unity confirms the conceptual independence of the anti-theocracy scale.

A similar pattern was observed by Kedem (1991: 261–266), who administered a composite "State and Religion" scale to a representative sample of adult Israelis. While scale scores were significantly affected by personal religious commitment, there were sufficient deviations from the pattern to justify treating theocratic beliefs as an independent dimension. Specifically, two-thirds of the ostensibly nonreligious respondents endorsed state ac-

tions to service the religious needs of the observant and three-quarters approved of efforts to maintain some public recognition of Judaism by closing stores on the Sabbath and teaching about Judaism in elementary schools. Most strikingly, a sample in which 83 percent of respondents chose something other than the "religious" label for themselves produced only 47 percent support for an abstract statement calling for separation of state and religion. Because our anti-theocracy scale contains items of equivalent generality, we are confident it does not simply replicate the measures of religious identification.

Each theoretical tradition was represented by one or more empirical measures.[10] As just noted, the *social identification* hypothesis was embodied by a continuum representing degree of religious/nonreligious identification. The maximum value on this 9-point index was reserved for respondents who felt themselves nonreligious to "a very great extent" and "very little or not at all" religious. This is consistent with the prediction that strong identification with the nonreligious vis-à-vis the religious activates a disposition to collective action when the legitimacy of secularity is threatened. We have already established that religious identification was conceptually and empirically different from the anti-theocratic belief scale used as a dependent variable. By the same token, religious identification was not identical to the religious observance measure used to apportion respondents into secular and religious categories. There was considerable variation in religious identification among our ostensibly secular respondents: almost one-third reported they identified as at least somewhat religious and almost one-fourth identified themselves as equally religious and nonreligious or even more religious than nonreligious.

The *social context* model requires a measure of interreligious contact. On the assumption that familiarity breeds intimacy, we used a communalism scale based on the presence of religious people among respondents' friends, neighbors, families, co-workers, and childrens' friends (alpha = .70). We assumed that intimate contact with religious people would tend to make respondents relatively more sympathetic to the religious and thus diminish their hostility to religious values in the state.

Threat, the key factor in the *power model*, was operationalized in two ways: a straightforward question asking whether nonreligious people were victims of discrimination in Israel and a proxy measure of the percentage of religious people who lived in the community of residence. The density of the religious population, which we equated with the share of children attending religious schools, is likely to have a direct bearing on the degree to which secular respondents feel themselves under siege from a hostile element. Residential concentration matters because the religious population may attempt to enforce Sabbath quiet by forbidding traffic, closing enter-

tainment and otherwise curtailing the prerogatives of the nonobservant on their only day off from work. Demands for "modesty" in female dress, conformity to dietary laws, and attacks on "blasphemous" practices may further threaten secular Israelis who live in proximity to Orthodox concentrations. Therefore, as religious density increases, so might secular residents' sense of vulnerability and disposition to resist religious initiatives.

To test the *symbolic politics* hypothesis, the last of our four explanatory frameworks, we constructed a composite measure of general affect toward the religious. The intent was to assess if respondents thought positively or negatively of the religious. Symbolic politics theorists assert that such broad cognitive orientations underlie responses to particular policy debates. That was also the view of an Israeli commentator who suggested that many Israelis on the left "define themselves chiefly by what they are not: Orthodox" (Gorenberg 1992). The measure comprised three items about the quality of relations between the religious and nonreligious and three statements attributing negative qualities to the religious. A high score indicates that interreligious relations were bad due to the aggressiveness and exclusiveness of the Orthodox community. As such, religious affect epitomizes negative symbolization of the religious. As a related behavioral measure, the analysis also included a variable tapping the proportion of religious classmates in respondents' elementary schools. Given the preadult origin of many social values and the explicit reference to socialization in symbolic politics models, it seemed logical to include this measure. We expect that such shared experiences during childhood would promote a kinder feeling toward the religious.

Before undertaking multivariate analysis, it is important to check that the independent variables are statistically independent. As is evident from Table 1, correlations among these independent variables do not approach levels that threaten collinearity in a multivariate analysis.[11] The patterns, though modest in magnitude, make a great deal of sense given the overlap in some of the concepts. As expected, those who identified strongly with the nonreligious tended to hold negative views of the religious, to have primarily secular social relationships, and to have had a secular education. Religious communalism, which varied positively with religious density and the experience of religious education, diminished the symbolic hostility of secular Israelis toward the religious population. Anti-religious affect also decreased with the proportion of religious classmates during elementary education. In the only other correlation of note, the perception of discrimination against secular Jews was positively associated with anti-religious symbolism. With the exceptions noted above, neither of our threat measures—felt discrimination and religious density—correlated strongly with more global orientations or behavior.

TABLE 1. Correlation Among Predictors of Anti-Theocratic Orientations Nonreligious Respondents Only (N = 772)

	NRI	COMM	DISCRIM	DEN	AFFECT	RELED
Nonreligious identification (NRI)	1.00	−.36**	.02	.00	.30**	−.26**
Religious communalism (COMM)		1.00	.04	.17**	−.28**	.29**
Felt discrimination (DISCRIM)			1.00	.01	.16**	.00
Density of religious population (DEN)				1.00	−.00	.05
Anti-religious affect (AFFECT)					1.00	−.20**
Personal religious education (RELED)						1.00

**signifies $p < .001$

ANALYSIS

Our basic goal is to determine whether several factors suggested by theories of intergroup conflict actually predict the level of antitheocratic sentiment among ostensibly secular Israeli Jews. The literature review suggests that resistance to religious coercion among the nonobservant will be positively associated with nonreligious self-identification, the sense that the nonreligious suffer discrimination in Israeli society, the spatial density of the religious population, and an anti-religious symbolic affect. Because intimate social contact is likely to facilitate good relations, we predict that the level of religious communalism will diminish opposition to the religious character of state and society. The coefficients are coded to produce signs consistent with these hypotheses.

The most stringent test of the hypotheses is to enter the measures simultaneously as predictors of anti-theocratic sentiment. The results of a corresponding multivariate OLS regression are listed in the first column of Table 2. With the exception of religious density, which did not register a significant effect, all predictors contributed to anti-theocratic sentiment as predicted. The resistance to a Jewish image of Israel grew with nonreligious identification, a sense of discrimination at the hands of the religious, and anti-religious affect. The more the respondents' intimate social environment included religious people and the greater the proportion of religious classmates encountered in elementary school, regardless of personal religiosity, the greater their sympathy for a religious understanding of the

TABLE 2. Predictors of Antitheocratic Orientations

	Equation 1	Equation 2	Equation 3
Nonreligious identification	.42**	.36**	−.49**
	(.36)	*(.31)*	*(−.60)*
Religious communalism	−.16*	−.13**	.06
	(−.09)	*(−.07)*	*(.04)*
Felt discrimination	.16**	.15**	−.09
	(.12)	*(.12)*	*(−.07)*
Density of religious population	−.001	.002	−.001
	(−.01)	*(.01)*	*(−.01)*
Anti-religious affect	.09**	.09**	.02
	(.22)	*(.20)*	*(.04)*
Personal religious education	−.25**	−.16*	
	(−.15)	*(−.10)*	
Income		.01	.07
		(.01)	*(.09)*
Age		−.03	−.07
		(−.04)	*(−.09)*
Sex (male)		.23	.31
		(.05)	*(.08)*
Education		.16**	−.07
		(.11)	*(−.07)*
Ethnicity (eastern)		−.12**	−.07
		(−.16)	*(−.11)*
Multiple R^2	.35	.39	.46
N of Cases	772	665	191

Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients *with standardized coefficients in italics*.
*t values significant at $< .01$.
**t values significant at $< .001$.
Equations 1 and 2 were estimated solely for persons who identified themselves as nonobservant as described in the text. Equation 3 was calculated for the much smaller set of highly observant respondents.

state. Using the standardized coefficients to indicate relative contributions among predictors, always a hazardous undertaking, suggests that nonreligious social identification was the most potent predictor of anti-theocratic sentiment, followed at some distance by anti-religious affect, and with religious communalism, personal religious education, and felt discrimination substantially less influential.

We cannot be certain these patterns will hold with the addition of a number of socioeconomic control variables. It is possible that the effects attributed to the various factors identified by theories of intergroup conflict really stem from the correlation of religious attitudes with various social traits. In Israeli society, as in many other nations, age has been strongly

and positively linked to personal religiosity while education and income have a negative impact on religious commitment (Goldscheider and Friedlander 1982).[12] Women have also tended to demonstrate stronger religious commitment than men. Accordingly, we will enter measures for these variables in a new equation. Any study of Israeli social attitudes must also acknowledge the significant differences between eastern Jews, the *Sephardim* from North Africa, Asia, and Arab lands, and the *Askenazi* Jews from the west. Much less exposed than their Western counterparts to modernizing influences, the Jews from the east have demonstrated much stronger attachment to religion in contemporary Israel (Ben-Rafael and Sharot 1991). Accordingly, we will also include a measure of identification as an easterner.

As the second column in Table 2 clearly demonstrates, the addition of these controls did not disturb the conclusions in column 1. Of the new control variables, identification as an easterner significantly decreased resistance to a religious image of the state. Neither age, income, education, nor gender contributed independently to attitudes about the religious qualities of the state. The positive finding for ethnicity, consistent with secularization theory, added to the overall explanatory power of the original equation without altering the signs on the variables of major theoretical interest. As in the first equation, the principal influences on anti-theocratic values in the full equation were identification as a nonreligious person and a negative symbolic disposition toward the religious. A sense of discrimination, religious communalism, and religious education contributed, the one positively and the other two negatively, to anti-theocracy at about the same level as the significant socioeconomic control. In neither equation did the density of the religious population exert significant influence.[13]

Despite our principal concern with the attitudes of the nonreligious toward the public role of Judaism, the factors we deployed for that purpose might also explain the views of religious Israelis on the same issue. To test that possibility on the respondents who claimed to observe religious tradition "to a great extent" or "in all particulars" (approximately 24 percent of the sample), we constructed parallel measures of affect toward the nonreligious and communalism with nonreligious people. Naturally, the measure of social identification was recoded to generate higher values for people who were strongly identified as religious. Because religious observance is so highly correlated with elementary religious education, we did not include the measure of personal religious education. Other than that, the equation summarized in column 3 of Table 2 was identical to the analysis undertaken for the nonobservant in column 2.

Of the ten variables included in the analysis for the religious, only the measure of religious identification attained statistical significance and it ac-

counted for most of the variance explained by the set of predictors. Each one-point increase in religious identification moved respondents an average of 0.5 points closer to a theocratic orientation. Affect toward the nonreligious and social contact with them diminished theocratic leanings while sense of grievance, manifested in the belief that the religious were discriminated against, worked to enhance theocratic views. Though consistent with predictions, these relationships all fell short of significance. The religious density of the community had no impact at all. These findings could be the result of relatively low reliabilities among the scales for the small subset of observant respondents.

Yet there may be substantive reasons why the attitudes of observant Jews responded relatively little to the factors that tended to sensitize secular Israelis to perceived coercion. The attitudes of the religious on the religion and state issue may be essentially normative—intrinsic to the Orthodox mindset—rather than situational. After all, Orthodox Judaism asserts that religious law binds all Jews, whether they are religious or not. From the Orthodox perspective, therefore, the religious character of the state should be a matter of principle, neither negotiable nor dependent on situational forces. There is another possibility suggested by Liebman (1990: xiii–xiv), that religious Israelis simply have a stronger sense of group distinctiveness than the more heterogeneous population of the nonreligious. Because living an Orthodox life imposes heavy demands on the individual, claiming the identity of a religious Jew likely has greater consequences for the observant than does the selection of a nonreligious identity by the secular.[11] If so, social identity should have a stronger influence on political attitudes among the religious than the secular. These factors may explain why only the social identification hypothesis directly predicted theocratic attitudes among the religious.

DISCUSSION

The ongoing conflict between the religious and secular sectors in Israel appears to conform to the major theories of intergroup hostility. The debate over the extent to which Israel should reflect Jewish religious values, at least from the point of view of secular Israelis, was the product of several distinct mechanisms that worked in concert. To the extent that Israelis identified themselves as nonreligious, entertained negative images of the religious, and felt subject to discrimination because of their secularity, they strongly resisted a Jewishly conscious view of Israel. On the other hand, contact with religious Jews in a relatively intimate manner dissipated their resistance.

The principle surprise of the analysis was the failure of the religious den-

sity measure—the share of schoolchildren enrolled in religious education—to predict anti-religious feeling. A similar surrogate, whether based on class composition, racial distribution, or ethnic patterns, has contributed significantly to group-based attitudes in studies conducted elsewhere. Why did the customary pattern of contextual reaction fail to develop in Israel? From a methodological perspective, the religious density measure may not tap the operative social context as well as we imagined. Recall that the measure assigned a uniform value to residents of large and diverse geographical units, such as Jerusalem, when more specific residential patterns probably account for attitudinal development. A nonreligious Israeli living in a relatively well-defended secular stronghold in Jerusalem is less subject to religious "intrusion" than a similar person living in a borderland between religious and secular communities. To the latter person, who may be subjected to informal religious coercion and pressured to leave the neighborhood, religious coercion has an immediacy and salience that is not apparent to the former—yet both would have a common score on the measure of religious density. If this type of contact encourages the nonreligious to resist the religious claims on the state, the broad measurement scheme may not be precise enough to pick up the effect.

However, it is unlikely that the failure of the density measure is due entirely to validity problems. When we dichotomize the sample of the nonobservant into those who live in communities where less than 20 percent of the children attend religious schools ($N = 478$) and the remainder who reside in closer proximity to Orthodox concentrations ($N = 381$), it is clear that the measure does tap differences in social interaction patterns. Compared to nonobservant persons who live in religious environments, the secular residents of secular communities tend to identify as more nonreligious, exhibit greater hostility to the religious, and are less likely to engage in communal relations with the religious. In a simple analysis of variance, they are also more disposed to anti-theocratic sentiments. The difference in means on the dependent measure, 0.97 versus 0.63, is significant at the .05 level. Yet the differences are not substantial enough to survive multivariate analysis. Put simply, where one lives does not have a strong independent impact on views about the religious vision of the Israeli state.

But there is another possibility, a possibility that makes these findings of interest well beyond the borders of Israel. For the secular population, social identification and religious affect exercised by far the strongest influences on our measure of intergroup hostility. The sense of grievance or threat due to discrimination at the hands of the religious and a proxy measure of random contact with the religious were appreciably weaker. Among the religious, self-identification as such was the only significant predictor of theocratic disposition. Individuals take sides on Israeli synagogue-state con-

troversies, it seems, not so much in terms of what they have to gain or lose but rather on the basis of how closely they feel toward the groups whose identity is engaged. Secular Israelis who identify as nonreligious, think poorly of the religious, and lack intimate contact across confessional boundaries are more inclined to reject efforts that define the state in religious terms. What this suggests, as Sears and associates (1980) have argued at length, is that responses to social conflict have more to do with broad cognitive orientations toward the competing groups than with individual self-interest in the outcome. This is not to deny that group conflicts may be based on realistic competition for scarce resources and that individuals may have different stakes in how such competition is resolved. However, in determining where they stand on such matters, individuals tend to rely on their symbolic commitment to the groups rather than their personal stake in the outcome.

These findings add yet more ammunition to the growing movement against a pure and narrow "self-interest" model of political behavior (Mansbridge 1990). In cultural conflicts, it appears from these findings, behavior is more a function of symbol manipulation by social beings than utility maximization by self-interested individuals. If so, there is much to be said for broadening the concept of self-interest to incorporate group attachments rooted in social identities. In Aaron Wildavsky's (1987: 4) pointed assertion, "The origins of our preferences may be found in the deepest desires of all: how we wish to live with other people and how we wish others to live with us." From the perspective of cultural theory, he further suggests, the immediate source of preference formation is the social interaction associated with "defending or opposing different ways of life." That framework has been found quite useful in studying the political mobilization of traditional religious groups in the United States (Lorentzen 1980; Page and Clelland 1978). In many conflicts against secular elites, religious traditionalists seek the validation of their lifestyles through public endorsement of a particular moral code. The interreligious conflict in Israel nicely fits the same "politics as lifestyle defense" paradigm with the twist that both mobilization and countermobilization are rooted in the same dynamic.

We imagine that the same force operates in religion and state controversies elsewhere. While individuals may develop principled positions on the degree to which government should take official cognizance of religion, those positions may well be anchored in affective ties to the contending sides. As empirical studies about church and state attitudes have revealed, the American public distributes itself in a manner compatible with this interpretation (Wilcox. et al. 1992). Even judges, key decision makers who are supposed to be immune to the tug of group loyalties, tend to rule on church-state controversies in a manner consistent with their group attach-

ments (Sorauf 1976 ch. 9). Individuals seemingly cannot free themselves from the group nexus when salient social identities are aroused.

In another point of general interest, the findings also support scholars who have argued for a "value added" perspective on intergroup hostility. Whatever their differences, the major theories that guided the analysis identified factors that worked together to promote group-based orientations. While social contact may not be necessary to generate group solidarity, as social identification theorists argue, it is certainly not incompatible with other social forces. Similarly, although perceived threat may not be essential to generate resistance to an outgroup, it certainly does produce that effect. Given the complexity of social conflicts rooted in contending values, the researcher should consider multiple forces that fuel the fire of culture wars.

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NOTES

1. Under this regime, to give one example, buses travel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem on the Sabbath. In secular Tel Aviv, departing passengers board at the central bus terminal. Out of respect for the holiness of Jerusalem and its large religious population, arriving passengers disembark on a street outside the station.
2. The major barrier, the prohibition on civil marriage, has been surmounted by Israeli recognition of marriages performed outside Israel. Israel maintains a system of plural establishment that allocates authority over family law to recognized religious communities—Muslim and various Christian groups. The non-Orthodox forms of Judaism prevalent in the West are tolerated but not granted independent religious status.
3. Most overt religious conflict involves clashes between secular Israelis and the Ultra-orthodox (known as *Haredim*) who reject both modernity and the state of Israel. The modern Orthodox, who participate fully in Israeli life, have been drawn into these clashes and usually end up supporting the *Haredi* position.
4. Despite the lack of exact correspondence between religious identification and practice, we shall follow Israeli custom by referring interchangeably to secular, nonreligious, and nonobservant respondents. Their opposites will similarly be designated religious, observant, or Orthodox Jews. Again, using the language that is common in Israel, we will describe efforts to enforce *Halacha* as religious coercion. No normative judgments are implied.
5. The survey was conducted in December 1985 under the auspices of the Louis Guttman-Israel Institute of Applied Social Research in Jerusalem. Using a three-stage sampling procedure, personal interviews were conducted with a representative national sample of the adult (over 20) Jewish population, excluding residents of kibbutzim (3.8 percent of the

population) and persons on active military duty The sampling frame included all sixteen towns with 55,000 or more residents (which contain approximately two-thirds of the Jewish population). For the remainder of sampling points, localities were selected by probability proportionate to size from three categories (old towns, new towns, and *moshavim*). Households within these locations were selected randomly from the names on the most recent voter register. Within households, respondents were selected by a Kish table.
Comparison of sample parameters with census data indicates that some subgroups, particularly older citizens of Eastern descent, were undersampled relative to their Western counterparts yet the sample as a whole conformed closely to national population estimates. Given that our concern is to examine variations among groups rather than to derive population parameters, the sampling bias does not interfere appreciably with our research goals. The contents of the questionnaire (in English) are reprinted in Shye (1987) and may be obtained by contacting the authors.

6. By dichotomizing the sample in this way, we may have obscured some of the differences associated with religious commitment. In principle, we could have followed scholars who more finely apportion those who are not highly observant into the overtly nonreligious (*lo dati* in Hebrew) who disclaim any observance and the "traditionalists" (*masortim*) who report moderate levels of religious activity (see Kedem 1991). Though our classification variable would have permitted such a distinction, we chose nonetheless to combine these groups in a single, more heterogeneous "secular" category and to distinguish them as a group from the small share of the population that reported high levels of observance. This decision was taken both to preserve sample size and because the dichotomous classification more closely mirrors public rhetoric on questions of religion and state. As Liebman notes (1990: xiii-xvi), the increasing polarization between religious and secular in recent years has promoted an "us" versus "them" mentality that leaves little room for a middle position. We recognize that a trichotomous classification might well have produced even stronger relationships than we report here.
7. In distinguishing between religious and secular Jews, we had a choice between the religious observance item and another measure that asked respondents how closely they identified with the "Orthodox" label. Such a small percentage of the sample strongly accepted the "Orthodox" label that we preferred to use the measure of reported religious observance.
8. Israel lacks a strong grass-roots movement explicitly committed to secularism and political movements distinguished primarily by their religiosity or secularity attracted only a small share of the vote in 1984. Secular interests tend to be expressed through ad hoc groups on an issue-specific basis.
9. Face validity aside, the scale presented an acceptable degree of internal consistency (alpha = .75). Because of differences in response options, the individual items were standardized before summation.
10. One might legitimately contest the association of specific measures with particular theories. The population share composed by the religious, which we use to measure perceived threat, could arguably be used to assess the social contact hypothesis. The greater the religious share of the population, the more frequent the encounters that are likely to generate ill-feeling among the secular. Or consider the global measure of religious hostility that includes two items characterizing the religious as aggressive. Though we consider this an indication of symbolic affect, it is hard to distinguish it from perceived threat. Personal religious education might be deemed an appropriate indicator for both social contact and symbolic politics hypotheses. This overlap derives from the conceptual similarities among the theories. In the extreme case, the symbolic politics approach seems to have been derived from social identification theory.

11. The same conclusion emerged from a more rigorous test that regressed each independent variable upon the complete set of predictors. In no case did the collective predictors account for more than 20 percent of the variance in any one member of the set.
12. Age presents a peculiar relation to religiosity in Israel. Within the *Sephardi* and *Ashkenazi* communities, age is positively correlated with religiosity. Yet because the overall level of religious observance is so much higher among *Sephardim* and they are collectively a much younger population than the *Ashkenazim*, the overall relationship between age and religiosity may be obscured (Shye 1987: 60).
13. To check on the possibility that the pattern might be curvilinear, the equations were run with both the original density variable and its square. This did not change the results.
14. We are grateful to the reviewer who urged us to emphasize this possibility.

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