

# Divine Sovereignty and State Authority in Israel and Iran

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## Abstract

This thesis investigates the relationship between religion and politics in Israel and Iran through examining the development of Revolutionary Messianism as the founding philosophy of these contemporary states. These states differ in their political history and structure. In both cases, however, Messianism has been the core religious ideology in their understanding of revolution and their religio-political identity in the contemporary Middle East. Revolutionary Messianism negates the existence of apolitical and apocalyptic messianic theologies and gives rise to the emergence of new state actors: theological politicians and political theologians. This thesis examines the transformation of messianic ideology in the context of Israel's and Iran's security politics, their political structures, their legal systems, and their social environment. In doing so, it demonstrates the lasting impact of the messianic ideas on religion and politics in these states. It argues that the transformation of messianism has resulted in political elitism, the rise of new forms of fundamentalism, and the de-sacralisation of theology.

This thesis offers a new analytical model for studying the relationship between religion and politics in Israel and Iran by identifying three phases: Revolutionary Messianism, State Building Messianism and State Maintenance Messianism. This model allows us to not only analyse the development of Revolutionary Messianism during the Revolutionary Phase but it crystallises the relationship between religion and politics after the establishment of the post-revolutionary states. In addition, it explains how these states define secularism, secularity, and secularization. It clarifies the boundaries that each state determines between religion and politics and the impacts of the development of Revolutionary Messianism on societies. It argues that in both cases politics is not subordinate to theology, but in fact it changes theology, and consequently religion.

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## Table of Contents

Abstract

Acknowledgments

Abbreviations and chronological chart

Introduction.....	6
Chapter One: The Rise of Revolutionary Messianism .....	24
Chapter two: Hermeneutics of Sacred Texts and Political Legitimacy.....	59
Chapter Three: From an Imaginary State to a Political State: Securitization of Revolutionary Messianism .....	81
Chapter Four: Land, State, Law, and the Messiah: Rethinking Divine Law and State.....	110
Chapter Five: Politicization of Messianism: State Messianism .....	139
Chapter Six: Politicized Messianism and Society.....	172
Conclusion.....	209
Bibliography.....	216

## Abbreviations

USA	United State of America
USSR	United Soviet Socialist Republics

## Introduction

I am a child of the 1979 revolution in Iran. I was eight years old when I watched from the pavements of Tehran's streets waves of people walking together chanting against the Shah. During the first year after the revolution Tehran erupted into a political rainbow but soon the sweet taste of victory turned into the bitter taste of violence. Throughout the primary and intermediate years of school until Khomeini's death in the last year of my high school, every day, in the morning ceremony, our principal made us repeat after her the slogan "Oh God, Oh God, Keep Khomeini [alive] until the Mahdi's revolution/ take years from our lives and add them to his life!" The slogan was intentionally designed to closely connect the Islamic Republic to the messianic promise of Shi'a theology for us who were the first generation of the revolution. The turning of the revolution into a dictatorship raised many questions for my generation, who were not old enough to participate in the revolution but old enough to understand the failure of its messianic promises.

The exaggerated patriarchal ideology and obsessive attempts to form us into a revolutionary generation was not limited solely to undermining the Shah and his modernization efforts. The Islamic Republic highly publicized Iran's radical shift of policy towards Israel and made the country a mystery for my generation. Every night we watched video clips of conflict between Israeli soldiers and Palestinians but never received any honest information either about that conflict, or Israel. What made accepting the Islamic Republic's stance on the conflict more problematic was that over the years its position had not helped to resolve the conflict. On the contrary, it worsened the situation. In order to understand the revolution, the change of Iran's political map and its ineffective regional policies I continued my studies in the Humanities after high school. During my Bachelor and Masters degrees in Iran, I studied the historical, linguistic, and cultural roots of Iran's revolution in order to understand the reasons for the revolution and the development of the post-revolutionary state in the country. In 2002, I left Iran for New Zealand to continue my education in a democratic academic environment where I could have access to materials and freely conduct my research.

I pursued my studies at Victoria University of Wellington writing my second Masters' degree on Ayatollah Khomeini's revolutionary discourse on martyrdom and the construction of a revolutionary identity for the state during the eight years of war between Iran and Iraq (1980-1989). In my research for this degree I studied Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem and found striking similarities between some of the revolutionary ideas of Zionism and those of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Both revolutionary discourses understood the integration of politics and theology as the only solution for ending injustice and preparing for a messianic age. Prior to conducting this research I tutored a course on Judaism and Zionism that Professor Paul Morris offered in the Religious Studies Programme. He explored these

areas through the lens of the integration of religious and political ideas which directly related to my questions about the development of the concept of messianism in the post-revolutionary states of Israel and Iran. Tutoring the course encouraged me to study Hebrew under the supervision of Professor Morris for over a year in order to expand my knowledge of Jewish sources.

## Thesis Statement

Similarities between Jewish and Shi'a messianic theology and the influence of Marxism on the Zionist and the Islamic Republic's revolutionary and messianic discourses led me to the main question of this comparative study: what is the role of revolutionary messianism in the development of the state in post-1948 Israel and post-1979 Iran?

During the first two years of this study I worked separately on Iran and Israel. However, I found that dividing the thesis into two separate parts failed to highlight adequately the parallel developments of revolutionary messianism in these states, and provided an inadequate structure for testing the comparative model I aimed to present. Therefore, I reshaped the argument on the development of messianism thematically and divided the thesis into three phases: Revolutionary Messianism, State Building Messianism, and State Maintenance Messianism. In this way, I could trace the development of revolutionary messianism into state politics in both states, across different chronologies, and present an analytical model that could explicate religion and politics in Israel and Iran. In the analysis that follows I compare the foundational histories of these two states to explain the parallels between the two systems, and analyse recent elections in Israel and Iran to focus on the challenges that these states face in the transition of revolutionary messianism into state politics.

## Methodology

In the dominant scholarly literature the development of revolutionary ideologies, what I understand to be revolutionary messianism, in Iran and Israel is analysed in only two phases; revolution and post-revolutionary. This thesis argues that a three phase model makes better sense of the development of messianism in these states. It expounds upon this three phase model in order to shed further light on the development of the relationship between religion and politics in the post-revolutionary states. The proposed analytical model in this thesis allows us to understand the reasons behind Israel's and Iran's pragmatic or idealist policies and assess the role of revolutionary messianism in the political decisions of the states concerning domestic and international issues.<sup>1</sup> Each phase is addressed in two chapters, which

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<sup>1</sup> Some scholars like Mehdi Moslem view the reformist faction in Iran to be a progressively pragmatic force and the fundamentalists as an idealist one. See: Mehdi Moslem, 'The State and Factional Politics in the Islamic Republic of Iran', in, , *Twenty Years of Islamic Revolution: Political and Social Transition in Iran Since 1979*, ed. Eric Hooglund (NY: Syracuse University Press, 2007), 19-36. Also see: H. Amirahmadi, *Revolution and Economic Transition: the Iranian Experience* (NY: SUNY Press, 1990), 256-258. M. Mahmood, *The Political System of the Islamic Republic of Iran* (Maharashtra, India: Gyan Publishing House,

facilitates the examination of various dimensions of revolutionary messianism and the characteristics of the transformed form in each phase.

This study investigates the changing of messianic theology from a largely apolitical theology to a political doctrine in the Revolutionary Phase. The core concept that distinguishes traditional from revolutionary messianism is the role of human agency in bringing about the messianic age. While in the pre-modern period, in both traditions, salvation was awaited with patience and trust in divine intervention, the modern narrative is active. Revolutionary Messianism is different from the pre-modern form in three ways. First, elements of self determination and nationalism are pivotal concepts in the modern messianic narrative. Secondly, contrary to the traditional version in which the divine is the sole responsible agent in any historical change, the modern narrative systematically institutionalises messianic hopes in a human bureaucratic system of a state. Thirdly, Revolutionary Messianism in its nationalistic form as a political ideology has played a pivotal role in the construction of state identity in contemporary Iran and Israel. It is in this context that the first two chapters of this study trace the process of the development of traditional messianism into a political idealism. The claim is that in both cases the revolutionary narrative of messianism is inherently unstable and its instability is imbedded in both concepts of revolution and messianism. In Israel the Revolutionary Phase began in the 1890s and ended in 1949 with the establishment of the state of Israel. In the case of Iran it began in the 1890s and ended in 1979 with the establishment of the Islamic Republic.

Iranians and Jewry had different encounters with modernity. While Iran's history as a nation in specific geographical boundaries is continuous, Jewry preserved and practiced their cultural and religious identity in the Diaspora. For both, the French and Russian revolutions played a determining role in organizing their demands for the establishment of a nation state. In Iran, the Constitutional Revolution followed only years after the Russian revolution. Nationalists demanded the limiting of monarchical power, the end of economic oppression, and the establishment of national legislative and judiciary systems. For Jewry the wish for a national identity mobilized European Jewish intellectuals in the late nineteenth century to unite communities and form a nation state, and to re-define communal identity in national terms, within geographic borders. The continuation of communal history was then bound to the understanding of religion in relation to territorial nationalism. In both cases debates on messianism between secular and religious forces shaped their understandings of the foundations of the nation state. These debates are recorded in the Constitutional arguments of the early twentieth century in Iran when

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2006), 109. Debates over the pragmatic and idealistic nature of the state of Israel are located in debates over the future of the territories, one-state or two states solution for the Israel-Palestinian conflict, and Israel's political ties with the USA. For these debates see: Y. Ginzburg, *Rectifying the State of Israel: a Political Platform Based on Kabbalah* (Liverpool: GalEinai Publication Society, 2002), 162. R. Cohen-Almagor, *Israeli Democracy at the Crossroads* (London: Routledge, 2005), 13-16. A. M. Garfinkle, *Politics and Society in Modern Israel: Myths and Realities* (NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000), 139-145.



the superiority of religious establishments over legal institutions was challenged by secular forces and fiercely debated between conservative and reformist religious figures. In the case of Israel, these debates are recorded in the history of Zionism between secular and religious Zionists and between pro-Zionists and anti-Zionists religious factions.

One of the significant political implications of different understandings of revolutionary messianism in Israel and Iran is the model of their post-revolutionary statehood. The Iranian republic and Israeli parliamentary systems are both Westphalian in terms of its three main constructing factors of centrality of a political body called the state, economic and human resources that enables a state to implement its policy, and centrality of military and political powers within a territorial border. Israel and Iran, however, differ in the model of government. In Israel's case, the new understanding of messianism was based on an institutional rather than an agent-based system. This narrative has made the adaptation of a representative democracy in which the political power is centred in the body of a parliament (Knesset) but the state is obligated to maintain its Jewish identity. In Iran's case the preferred model based on French republicanism is limited by monarchical dictatorship. The state claims to be a republic where the majority are the ultimate political decision-makers.

In the State-Building Phase, this study examines how Revolutionary Messianism produces an extraordinary impact on the role of security in these states. The core concept of this section is that the establishment of post-revolutionary states in Iran and Israel and the involvement of these states in military conflicts offer a political environment in which Revolutionary Messianism becomes securitized. Although both Iran and Israel share a common political foundation with other secular states like France in that institutionalization and state bureaucracy are inseparable parts of state structure, the messianic doctrine creates a specific form of state identity that focuses on resisting oppression and preventing destruction by using previously theological messianism. Since in both cases their histories were dominated by oppression, the State Building Phase was the advent of a new era in which protecting the post-revolutionary state becomes a vital necessity. This process of securitization opens a new chapter in the political history of these countries and transforms Revolutionary Messianism into the source of legitimacy for the security doctrines of the post-revolutionary states. As the result of securitization, messianism becomes a premise for justifying the authority of these religio-political states, an indicator of the religious adherence of political factions, and the understanding of nationalism. Chapters Three and Four of this study investigate this process of securitization of Revolutionary Messianism and its impact on the legal systems in Israel and Iran. In Israel the State-Building Phase began in the 1950s, while in Iran it began in 1980. It concluded for both states in 1989 with the ending of the Cold War.

Although neither Israel nor Iran became a French style secular state, securitization enabled them to understand their post-revolutionary national identity as, in part, a continuation of their historical political identities. The securitization of messianism, though romanticised and at times idealistic, generated basic rules for the states' legal system. These rules have been contested or supported passionately by secular and religious groups, thus the states' legal systems become the best case study for examining the challenges that the securitization of messianism creates in these states. These chapters argue that studying the securitization of messianism is the key to understanding the dynamics of the relationship of religion and politics in these states. As Securitized Messianism becomes the underlying philosophy of the states' security doctrines it creates tension at institutional and bureaucratic levels. It adapts the state to a solely security orientated entity, which, for its continuity, needs an enemy.

This thesis investigates the ways in which Securitized Messianism is imbedded in Iran's and Israel's domestic and regional policies in the State Maintenance Phase. It argues that in these states the transformation of Securitized Messianism into Politicized Messianism in the post-Cold War era is the main decisive factor that directs debates between the secular and the religious groups; determines the level of the states' secularity and religious identity; and, explains their understandings of political legitimacy and state responsibilities. This section explains how the structure of political factionalism in these religio political states is radically different from a secular state like France as the result of the inclusion of the religious institutions in political decision making. It examines how the involvement of religious institutions in state politics determines the limits of state authority in relation to individual rights and the states' policies on religious institutions. The goals of Politicized Messianism which are expressed in state policies, whether publically announced in Iran or indicated in both secular and religious parties' plans in Israel, are an indicator of Israel's and Iran's understanding of the secular.

The politicization of messianism requires de-securitization and the incorporation of the states' security doctrine into pragmatic politics. De-securitization transforms the concepts of secularism and religion in these states, thus modern politics, as well as theological developments, becomes a main influential factor in religious transformations in Iran and Israel. During the process of de-securitization, messianism is institutionalised and secularised. Chapters Five and Six of this study examine this process and its impacts on the states' political factionalism and society. They argue that the concept of authority as the fundamental theme in Securitized Messianism is transformed in the process of de-securitization. While securitization extends the states' responsibilities from those of a secular state to a state with some "sacred" goals, the politicization contains this sacred responsibility by pragmatic politics and causes further challenges to the legitimacy of the actors of the securitization period.

The development of the notion of Revolutionary Messianism in the post-revolutionary stages in these countries is the focus of this comparative study. The benefit of such comparative study is that only through the comparative method specific factors of the development of secularisation in each case can be identified. Comparatively studying the development of revolutionary messianism in Iran and Israel signifies the importance of rethinking the understandings of the dynamics between religion and politics, and the simultaneous processes of securitization and secularisation of religion. This comparative study facilitates identifying theological factors that determine Israel and Iran's political decisions on regional and international issues and encourages rethinking the role of state security in the development of a theological notion such as messianism. By using a comparative method this study can describe how the understanding of legitimacy in a religion-political state is constructed through re-defining messianism in the state security context.

Although the focus of this study is to identify the understanding of secularisation in these states by highlighting their differences, their similarities can shed light on their understanding of the secular and some other areas for further studies in secularisation theories. First, in both cases, during the revolutionary stage the theology legitimizes the revolutionary goals. In the case of Zionism, the theological understanding of territorial sovereignty gave momentum to the growth of Zionism. In the case of Iran the notion of ending the tyranny in the time of occultation legitimized the revolution. In both cases, this legitimization project changed direction in the post-revolutionary state and the existence and the success of the post-revolutionary state legitimizes the validity of messianic doctrine. This rotation in the sources of legitimacy further confirms the role of the state in defining religion and theology and exposes a clear gap in secularisation theories. Secondly, they demonstrate that a neo-fundamentalist approach towards messianism could only rise as an organized political structure in a nation state and in a securitized context. As this study will demonstrate in Iran the rise of neo-fundamentalists is the direct outcome of the conflict atmosphere during the Iran-Iraq war. In the case of Israel, the Shas party could not develop into a main political player without their involvement in the settlements negotiations, debates over Jerusalem and, Israel's political ties with the United States. Thirdly, it demonstrates that regardless of the political structure of the states, the integration of politics and religion at the institutional level secularises religion at the institutional level.

## Rationale

### Messianism in religious and political context

This thesis offers a new understanding of the religio-political states of Israel and Iran based on a Benjaminian understanding of the integration between politics and theology in a nationalist revolution. It suggests that while the traditional political theories, such as Marxism, can define aspects of the political cultures of Zionism and the Iranian revolution of 1979, they fail to define the relationship between messianism, theology, and politics in the revolutionary and post-revolutionary stages. This thesis argues that studying the meaning of these terms in the revolutionary and post-revolutionary stages in Israel and Iran sheds light on the understanding of secularity and religion in these states.<sup>2</sup> I have chosen messianism as the central theme for this study because revolutionary messianism is a founding philosophy of the contemporary states of Iran and Israel. Messianism has inspired the political structure of these states and legitimized their authority. It has been the core religious ideology in their understanding of nation state and in situating these in the contemporary religio-political map of the Middle East.

Messianism limits the definition of theology in political context, justifies the institutional integration of religion and politics, and attributes religious legitimacy to these states. By messianism this thesis refers to a central theological theme in Jewish and Shi'a religious traditions: waiting for a redeemer. In both traditions, messianism is the belief in the coming of a saviour. Although Jewish and Shi'a messianism were developed in different communities and contexts, both place emphasize on global justice. According to the Shi'a narratives Mahdi is the same as the Jewish messiah.

In Judaism, this belief is one of the thirteen principles of Faith that is recited daily. In Shi'a Islam, it is the core philosophy of divine guidance (Imamat). In both traditions, prayers for the fulfilment of the conditions for the coming of the messiah are recited daily.<sup>3</sup> In neither of the traditions is the idea of messianism explicitly addressed in their sacred books. There is no direct reference about a messiah in the Qura'n or in the first five books of the Torah. In both traditions, however, scholars argue that the concept was implicitly indicated in the sacred books and explicitly explained by prominent religious figures and clergy. In addition, both Judaism and Shi'ism view the concept of messianism as an integrated part of their understanding of the day of justice, which both believe to be the final episode of

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<sup>2</sup> C. Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 44-50.

<sup>3</sup> In Judaism the Shemoneh-Esrei daily prayer specifically addresses the three conditions of the coming of the messiah; the ending of the exile, the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem, restoration of a Torah-based justice system, the restoration of the kingdom of Israel (king David), the ending of the heretics and apostates, rewarding the righteous, and restoration of Jerusalem. In Shi'a Islam, the Faraj prayer is recited daily for the ending of the occultation and the coming of the Mahdi; for bringing the rule of Shariah and ending the time of injustice.

human history. The significant difference between these messianic doctrines is the human nature of the messiah.

In both traditions, there is a wide variety of ideas about the conditions and time of the coming of the messiah. In Judaism, the term Mashiach (Messiah) means the anointed one; one who is anointed to be a king in the latter days (the day of justice) but the term does not refer to any particular person.

Therefore, in every generation a person could be born with the potential to be a messiah. These potentials in an individual become possibilities only if the conditions are right. The messiah inspires the community by being an example. He is a true believer, making righteous decisions, and freeing Jewish community from the rule of others. He is a person rather than a god or a semi-god, and it is his commitment to the Torah rather than his supernatural characteristics that makes him the final redeemer.

In Shi'ism the term refers to the son of the eleventh Imam (Hassan ibn Ali- Askari) who was born in 869CE.<sup>4</sup> While according to Shi'a sources the title Mahdi was used by Shi'a followers in the first fifty years after the death of Imam Askari, to some of Mohammad's descendants, neither was able to fulfil the demands of Shi'a followers.<sup>5</sup> Shi'ites believe that the time of the occultation is divided into two periods of lesser and greater occultation. The lesser occultation period began in 874 and ended in 941. During this time, Mahdi communicated with his followers via his four deputies.<sup>6</sup> The time of great occultation began in 941CE when the last of the four deputies died and the communication channel between the Imam and his followers ended. During the time of the occultation, the Shi'ites believe, the Mahdi is alive and present amongst people. They usually refer to him as the "sun behind clouds".<sup>7</sup> In both traditions predicting the time of the coming of the messiah is strongly forbidden, as it could result in the loss of faith of the faithful and aversion from religion in its totality.

## Walter Benjamin

There are three reasons for choosing Walter Benjamin as the main theorist for explaining the characteristics of revolutionary messianism in Iran and Israel in this thesis. First, Benjamin equated messianism with longing for redemption that could bring about an ideal time. He argued that theology was the missing component in understanding historical development and considered the companionship of the "dwarf of theology" a vital component for any revolution. To Benjamin secularisation was an

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<sup>4</sup> According to Shi'a narratives, he was born in Madina on (6.12.846 AD) and died in Samarra Iraq when he was 28 years old. He was the Imam of the Shi'ites for 6 years after his father died. The Shi'ites refer to him by the title of Askari (on who belongs to an army) because, they believe, he spent most of his life in the military town of Samarra (about 60KM south of today's Baghdad) because his father was under house arrest by the Caliphs al-Muktadi and al-Mu'tamid.

<sup>5</sup> W. Madelung, "Al-Mahdī," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. (Leiden: E. J. Brill. 1986), vol. 2, 1231–8.

<sup>6</sup> V. Klemm, "Islam in Iran ix; The Deputies of Mahdi", in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. <http://www.iranica.com/articles/islam-in-iran-ix-the-deputies-of-mahdi> December 28, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> M. A. Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism: The Sources of Esotericism in Islam* (NY: SUNY Press, 1994), 116.

inevitable outcome of historical development that he explained in the “wreckage upon wreckage” that the angel of history helplessly witnesses. In both Iran’s and Israel’s cases, revolutionary narrative of messianism strongly relied on theology for justifying their causes and emphasized revolting against the process of secularization. Secondly, Contrary to Carl Schmitt, Benjamin did not understand theology as sets of religious rules and legal discourses that defined authority and order in a society. To Benjamin, redemption was the most significant aspect of theology for politics which was expressed in messianic hope. In both the case of Israel and Iran, the issue of redemption was the central theme of the revolutionary stage that connected a theological concept to a modern political goal. More significantly, Benjamin emphasised the global characteristics of messianism, which was also a central theme in the revolutionary discourses of Zionism and the Iranian republics. Thirdly, he articulated messianism in the relationship between suffering and remembrance.<sup>8</sup> This understanding of theology clearly defines Iranian and Israeli revolutionary messianism. Neither early Zionists nor Iranian revolutionaries claimed their goal to be the establishment of an absolute theocracy. Rather they articulated their messianic ideals in their attempts for political independence, remembering, and ending of political suffering.

Benjamin correctly identified the potential dangers of the integration of redemption theology into politics in the age of mass production. Benjamin wrote about the loss of the aura of a work of art in the time of mechanical reproduction. His emphasis on the dangers of capitalism impeded him from considering that while the integration of politics and theology to form a state could be redemptive, the secularisation of theology following its involvement is inevitable. Therefore, the Benjaminian model clearly explains the relationship between theology, messianism and politics in the revolutionary stage but fails to explain the consequences of this relationship in the post-revolutionary stages on both politics and religion. By drawing on Benjamin’s understanding of theology, messianism and revolution this thesis develops a post-Benjaminian definition of this relationship where it is neither religion nor politics but state security that relates messianism to political legitimacy.

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<sup>8</sup> Benjamin, however, was not the first philosopher who acknowledged the importance of theology in politics. Carl Schmitt was a German legal theorist who began writing about the relationship between politics and theology since the World War I. He was a critique of liberalism and argued that democracy is based on sets of ideas rather than an ideology. Schmitt was a practicing Catholic during the early stage of his writing career and believed in a supernatural political union that embodied Roman Catholicism in political form and could further the boundaries of our understanding of a nation state. For Schmitt, liberal democratic constitutional systems were unstable as they lacked a basis for their legitimacy and are thus inherently destructive. He argued that authority is the central element that defines a law. The ordering role of a state obligates individuals to its politics. Authority, Schmitt wrote, creates the foundation of civilizations, allows a culture to develop and protects individuals. Accordingly, for Schmitt, the central concepts of modern politics were the secularised version of older theological concepts of social order and authority. As in the pre-state time theology was a tool to legitimize the sovereignty and authority of God, constitutions and laws legitimize the authority of a state. Although Benjamin cited Schmitt, it was Adorno in the Frankfurt school who was interested in Schmitt’s work. During the World War II Schmitt formally joined the Nazi party and his preminent status in the German intellectual environment made him a propaganda tool for the Nazis. See: C. Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 44-50.

Amongst many political characteristics that Benjamin identified in messianism, three are central to the understanding of the relationship between politics and theology in Iran and Israel. To Benjamin the central theme in political messianism is its elusiveness. Benjamin was clearly aware of this elusiveness. While he recognized the centrality of political messianism in Jewish theology he rejected the idea of the establishment of a practical and successful theocracy. This elusiveness of messianism is clearly evident in the Israeli and Iranian politics where the foundations of states politics are neither purely theological nor purely political. The politics of Iran and Israel should be discussed in terms of the tension between the pragmatism of realpolitik and the idealism of revolutionary messianism. Therefore while their understanding of messianism heavily relies on their theological history it does not address any issue in the context of the present time. As Benjamin rightly wrote, Messianic history is a battle between the past and the future. In political terms the pragmatism of the state in both Israel and Iran is discussed in the glory of the past and the hope for a messianic future. Therefore, as Benjamin noted, the only way to explain a messianic history is by understanding the notion of hope. Both the elusiveness of political messianism and its paradoxical view of history make political messianism an intrinsically unstable political notion. It gains momentum in a revolutionary context but is radically unstable as a ruling ideology for a state. In “Theological and Political Fragment” he developed these ideas as he wrote:

“First the Messiah completes all historical occurrence, whose relation to the messianic he himself first redeems, completes, and creates. Therefore nothing historical can intend to refer to the messianic from itself out of itself. For this reason, the kingdom of God is not the telos of the historical dynamic; it cannot be set towards a goal. Historically seen, it is not a goal but an end. Thus the order of the profane cannot be built on the idea of the kingdom of God; theocracy, therefore, has not political only religious significance.”<sup>9</sup>

## Modernity

Modernity is a matrix of political and social regimes that have transformed Europe since the seventeenth century.<sup>10</sup> Industrialization, urbanization, differentiation, and rationalization are the dominant factors in the European experience of modernity.<sup>11</sup> The combination of these factors, radical alteration in modes of education, and the colonization of the Middle East attracted many Iranian and Jewish intellectuals to modernity.<sup>12</sup> Many of these viewed nationalism as an alternative unifying force in their societies and considered revolution to be the only path to liberation from political oppressions. Specifically they were

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<sup>9</sup> E. Jacobson, *Metaphysics of the profane: the political theology of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2003), 20.

<sup>10</sup> Ch. Turner, *Modernity and Politics in the Work of Max Weber* (London: Routledge, 2002), 105-110.

<sup>11</sup> B. S. Turner, *The New Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Religion* (NY: John Wiley and Sons, 2010), 136-140.

<sup>12</sup> For Iran see: V. Martin, *The Qajar Pact: Bargaining, Protest and the State in Nineteenth-century Persia* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2005), 66-71.

attracted to the political changes that modernity instigated in the European ruling systems and the transformation of the old feudal and monarchical ruling systems into national and secular states. In Europe nationalism limited the power of religious institutions over states and opposed pre-modern elitism in state politics. The separation of political institutions from religious establishments institutionalised the concept of differentiation in the body of the new states.

A nation state is an institutional form of modern politics and it is in the process of nation building that many concepts of nationalism were translated into practical institutional form in Europe.

Acknowledging territorial borders, unifying local military forces under a national structure, identifying a national flag, and the formation of a sovereign central political body are examples of this institutionalization process. Such a process was premised upon the categorization of knowledge, another transformation in modern politics, and resulted in the formation of European national administrations, legislation and judicial institutions. Decision-makers in the new states pledged loyalty to the ruling power by association, which were theoretically based on an elective system. It promoted an open economy and revolutionised the concept of citizenship. The French revolution in the eighteenth century (1789–1799) and the Russian revolution in the early twentieth century (1917-1918) had momentous effects on the understanding of nationalism amongst Jewish and Iranian intellectuals.

In addition, limiting the power of religious institutions in Europe was set off and strongly supported by new businesses and trades that had emerged as a result of industrialization and new modes of production and distribution. This drastic change in the socio-economic fabric of European societies demanded radical changes in the political system and under the influence of these factors secular nation states emerged. Therefore, modern nation states in Europe, powered by the economic demands of industrialization and territorial expansion, spread out of geographical borders and rapidly conquered trade routes and natural resources. Numerous countries in the Middle East were directly colonized by these newly formed nation states and many responded to this change in regional politics by accommodating modernity in one way or another.

Prior to the radical political changes in Europe, messianism in Shi'a and Jewish theology was a theological doctrine that enabled these communities to live under the political sovereignty of others while preserving their communal political identity. After the destruction of Jerusalem (70 CE) and the Islamic conquest of Persia (637-651 CE) neither Persians nor Jewry had an autonomous state for centuries. Persia until the sixteen century was ruled under the mandate of the caliphates and Jewry were obliged to live in exile until the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. During this time some messianic figures appeared amongst Iranians and Jews, who revolted against the existing political system, but they failed in changing the political situation with their pre-modern active messianism. During the



nineteenth and twentieth centuries, however, European nationalism, and the political colonization of the Middle East posed challenges to both communities that instigated theological and political revolutions. Theologically, these debates were revolutionary against the long tradition of apolitical messianism in their concession that a legitimate state might be formed in the absence of a “divine saviour”. Politically, these debates addressed the necessity of a revolution against the political status quo and the formation of a nation state. They included anti-colonial themes, responded to the political situation in Europe and the Middle East, and were passionate for national political sovereignty. Significantly, these new approaches to the relationship between messianic theology and politics re-defined the relationship between secular and religious political groups over the structure of the law and the state in the post-revolutionary phases. In both traditions, in the Revolutionary Phase secular forces were not concerned with the fulfilment of messianic promises and preserving religious traditions. Rather, the main factor that motivated religious groups to unite with the non-religious in the Revolutionary Phase was the religious groups’ opposition to the spread of secularism and their fear of the process of assimilation, and the complete annihilation of religious traditions, beliefs, and rituals.

Under the influence of modern political thought and as the result of the new challenges that were posed to these communities, a new form of politically active messianism emerged that was intrinsically different from the pre-modern messianic doctrine in term of its goals and actors. The new form was highly nationalistic and aimed to institutionalise the pre-modern spiritual-apolitical messianism in modern political terms and concepts. Consequently, political independence became an indispensable pre-condition of spiritual redemption and the formation of a nation state was transformed to a religious obligation as much as a civil one that metamorphosed messianism and messianic hope in Shi’a and Jewish theologies into a nationalistic revolutionary ideology. Nationalism became the dominant and unifying narrative of messianism. It culturally and politically marginalized apolitical and spiritual pre-modern messianism and adopted a revolutionary character that viewed state formation the sole practical response to ending the political oppression.

In my interpretative approach, the understanding of history, aesthetics, and redemption in the revolutionary narrative of messianism in Iran and Israel reflects a Benjaminian understanding of historical development. This is because in both cases the theological interpretation of messianism allows the inclusion of a redemptive factor in a political revolution. Benjamin’s view on Marxism is similar to the views of revolutionaries in both the case of Iran and Israel, in three ways. First, in neither of these cases, was early Marxism considered to be an answer to the devastating political and social situations, yet both embraced Marxist social activism and revolutionary ideology. Like Benjamin both revolutionary discourses recognized a redemptive character in theology but viewed a religio-political modern state instead of theocracy to be the answer to ending suppression. Secondly, they were

Benjaminian in that they both insisted on the significance of theology in the relationship between the development of history and redemption. Thirdly, the progressive account of messianism that Benjamin offered through his analysis of complete and incomplete (dichotomy of suffering and hope) generated a reciprocal relationship between the present and the past in which each informs the other thus opening up the possibility of a revolutionary account of messianism to emerge. In addition, Benjamin understands messianism as an absolute extra-historical concept and his emphasis on the universality of messianism resonated in both revolutionary discourses.

Jewish and Shi'a jurisprudential literature has always been founded on a relationship between the time for the coming of the messiah and human conduct. This dependency is the foundation of their political theology. Whatever the literatures assume to be the conditions of the coming of the Messiah, whether he comes in the time that he is most needed or in the time he is most deserved, messianic time is when the political and legal rule of God supersedes those of humans.

The establishment of such a ruling system intrinsically contradicts the notion of a nation state that heavily relies on human capability in ruling human societies. This intrinsic tension makes the revolutionary narrative of messianism adaptive to the notion of unity and a nationalist revolution but is simultaneously potentially anti-modern due to its negation of individual rights. The Nation state is the most globalised manifestation of institutional separation between religion and politics. The globalization of the nation state has introduced the option of a non-religious ruling system and consequently a way of life in the world. This philosophical foundation of a nation state, this study argues, is the main factor in the drastic transformation of the perception of individual rights in both Israel and Iran.

By observing Israel and Iran's political structure, legal systems and security politics, this study demonstrates how the dynamics of revolutionary messianism and nationalism embedded in state politics necessitates the emergence of mediatory theologies. This comparative study discusses the elements that give rise to growing groups of political theologians and theologian politicians who transform the political scene of these state as well as the theological orientations of religious institutions to which they are associated. The study concludes that these religio-political states can maintain their legitimacy only through redefining a boundary between politics and religion in their dealings with challenges that the securitization process creates. Without carefully monitoring the transition from revolutionary messianism to securitized messianism and solely relying on the states' mediatory role between religion and politics, political issues can create challenging legitimacy crisis for religion in both cases.

While the striking similarities between the two cases provide the rationale for this study, it is their different understanding of nationalist Revolutionary Messianism that highlights the unique characteristics of each case. In Iran, Revolutionary Messianism evolved and was later presented as the

basis for Ayatollah Khomeini's Jurisprudential Leadership theory. In the Revolutionary Phase, Khomeini, as a charismatic leader, became the sole agent for materializing the messianic promises of the revolution. He directly linked the theological state legitimacy to an agent based interpretation of Revolutionary Messianism in which the role of a Jurisprudential Leader was centralized. After his death, however, his messianic charisma faded and needed to be institutionalised in the body of the Islamic Republic. The failure of the state in rationalizing the Jurisprudential Leadership position and its institutionalization resulted in the emergence of continuous challenges to the state legitimacy. In the post-Khomeini period confrontations over the messianic goals of the state became the framework for modern political debates over the conditions of the legitimacy of the Islamic Republic. Specifically, the challenges have targeted the issue of the legitimacy and authority of a Jurisprudential Leadership in relation to the Constitution and the hierarchical citizenship system that Khomeini's agent based understanding of Revolutionary Messianism has created. Due to this agent based interpretation, in Iran all political tensions and challenges directly target the legitimacy of the Jurisprudential Leadership.

By contrast, in Israel after the foundation of the state, Revolutionary Messianism remained concentrated on an institutionally based narrative. Therefore, while the government's responsibilities towards preserving the Jewish identity of the state and citizens have developed within messianic debates, the relationship between the secular and religious factions in Israel did not become as tense or oppositional as in Iran. Israel has viewed the success of Zionism as the result of the efforts of its charismatic leaders, mainly Herzl and Ben Gurion, but considers the state rather than these agents to be the main actor in the fulfilment of the Zionist utopian promises. The secular Zionist leaders in Israel remained signifiers of national identity but focused on the institutionalization of messianism. Revolutionary Messianism in Israel has developed into a more religiously conservative form as the result of the increasingly complicated ties between political parties and religious institutions. Due to its institution based Revolutionary Messianism Israel has successfully institutionalised the charisma of its revolutionary leaders in the body of educational institutions and the military. As secular political parties in Israel progressed in this process of institutionalization their interaction with religious institutions created a closer relationship between secular and religious party politics. However, most Israeli Prime Ministers have been politicians with a military background.

## Outline of chapters

The aim of Chapter One is to elaborate on the relationship between messianic theology and national unity in the Revolutionary Phase. It investigates similarities and differences between the two revolutionary messianic narratives and the political context in which they became the dominant revolutionary narratives. It examines how during this first phase, Revolutionary Messianism enabled the

revolutionaries in both cases to mobilize various groups for the revolution and how for both this messianic reading of nationalism is integral to the establishment of a modern state. It examines how this narrative positioned theology in revolutionary politics by separating messianism from its traditional context and attaching to it political values in order to direct the revolutions to forming a new model of the religio-political state. It draws on Benjamin's re-reading of Marx's theory in order to examine how both traditions understood the formation of a state to be the only response to their theological and political oppressions and whether revolution for both was a response to their histories or solely a political revolution against a particular oppressive system.

The aim of Chapter Two is to articulate the relationship between Revolutionary Messianism, the re-reading of theological history, and the changes in the traditional concept of authority in legitimizing the post-revolutionary states in Israel and Iran. It investigates the theological changes that the revolutionary narrative demanded as it changed the ritualistic reading of sacred texts, re-defined its distinct status in these religious traditions, and transformed their supporting hermeneutical traditions in the Revolutionary Phase. It examines how the revolutionary narrative of messianism translated the traditional theological authority of the clergy into the political authority of the states, and the political implications of this translation for the state legitimacy in both cases. It further investigates whether with the idealist revolutionary vision of a utopian and progressive messianism the post-revolutionary states could efficiently re-define the traditional concepts of legitimacy. It argues that in both cases Revolutionary Messianism gave the states the authority for implementing economic and legal policies that were deemed to be consistent with religious imperatives.

Chapter Three of this study argues that the process of state building in both Iran and Israel resulted in changing the revolutionary narratives of messianism into the foundation of the post-revolutionary states' security policies. By analysing the process by which the states positioned this narrative at the heart of their security discourse, this chapter draws on Barry Buzan's securitization theory for studying the dynamics between religion and politics in this State-Building Phase. Securitization, it is contended, links the political state legitimacy to revolutionary identity and the wars in which these states were involved. The wars generated new theological debates that further bound religion to politics. The success of the states' securitization project was the outcome of their revolutionary hermeneutics of messianism that effectively associated the security of the state with the security of religion. In both cases, securitization created new state elites, who became the main political decision makers in the states and enabled them to sustain their power because of the securitization that generated a polarized political situation. In both cases, the wars allowed the states to implement policies that could support their securitization project by creating social solidarity in the face of threats. The contention of this chapter is that securitization

changes the messianic idealism of the Revolutionary Phase to a political ideology in the State-Building Phase.

Chapter Four of this study investigates the process of establishing the authority of Revolutionary Messianism in the states' legal institutions. It examines whether within their legal systems, as the most influential agency in establishing the state legitimacy, Israel and Iran could institutionalize Securitized Messianism and merge religious laws with revolutionary messianic ideals in their national laws. This chapter examines how securitization contextualises state legitimacy within policies of national security. It further examines if the success of the institutionalization of Securitized Messianism in the states' legal systems depends on the success of the securitization of messianism prior to the process of institutionalization. The integration of national and religious laws, the chapter argues, poses novel political challenges to the states, particularly in defining boundaries between politics and religion in national life. It explains how the main challenges to establishing the legal authority of the states are directly related to the inherent tension between divine and human law, which is the result of the different sources of legitimacy for these laws, their goals, and methods of implementation.

Chapter Five examines the development of Securitized Messianism in Israel and Iran in the State-Maintenance Phase when the revolutionary momentum declined and the Cold War situation ended. This chapter focuses on the end of the Cold War and debates between the revolutionary elites and emerging political groups over the messianic goals of the state. These become factors that contributed to the rise and development of neo-fundamentalism in the political scene in both Israel and Iran. It contends that neo-fundamentalism gains power at the State Maintenance Phase and develops parallel to the de-securitization of messianism. It argues that the de-securitization process undermines the legitimacy of Revolutionary Messianism when oppressive political systems that gave momentum to the revolutionary ideology are removed and the external and existential threats to the wellbeing or the identity of the state have declined. While securitization legitimizes the post-revolutionary states, the lack of a military threat and an oppressive political system intensify political instabilities in these religio-political states.

Chapter Six of this study aims to demonstrate how Iran and Israel construct norms for civil behaviour through the integration of the individual and religious identities of their citizens and by means of integrating religious and national identities of citizens in legal and social policies. This integration process determines the success of the institutionalization of the collective identity in the political and legal bodies of the states. The chapter examines how in the State Maintenance Phase, Israel and Iran have incorporated elements such as urbanization and technological advancements in their civil policies. It further explains how technological advancement, industrialization, and urbanization that encourage

the development of individual identity could be included in Israel and Iran's civil policies. The claim of this chapter is that the transformation of messianism from revolutionary idealism to security strategy, and then to a political guideline, de-sacralises messianic theology and makes it a tool for the states by which they can control the involvement of citizens and the clergy in state politics. The politicization of messianism is reflected in these states' nationality laws and in their definition of citizenship.

## Conclusion

It is through examining the development of Revolutionary Messianism in the post-revolutionary states of Israel and Iran that the specific nature of secularity within these states can be explained. Examining pre-modern and modern interpretations of messianism is essential for understanding the process of secularization. In addition to the relationship between the states and religious institutions, the challenges that the development of Revolutionary Messianism poses to the traditional religious views on individuals, the state legitimacy, and the clergy's involvement in a participatory political system determine the success of these states in balancing religion and politics. These challenges are more evident and highly contested in three features of the religio-political state: the actual authority of the state and national law; the political factionalism; and the civil rights of individuals.

This research encourages the rethinking of secularization theory as it relates to the process of institutionalization of revolutionary ideology in the body of religio-political states. Without institutionalization a state cannot define its political identity nationally, its security doctrines, and its criteria for citizenship. In the process of the construction of these states, religion and religious institutions are integrated into modern politics. The historical and political contexts in which these states were established contribute to this integration. As a consequence of this integration the liberalization of the individual, which is an indispensable component of western modern political thought, loses its central importance in contemporary Israeli and Iranian politics. Therefore, Politicised Messianism in these states relies heavily on securitization and limits individual liberty. In Iran the strong rejection of liberalism by the state has resulted in the development of a highly idealistic and populist approach to politics. In Israel, while western liberalism is practiced by the state, the social context determines a more conservative approach to individualism. In Israel the ongoing conflict situation has created a more unanimous view on politics across political parties. However, gradually the power of more conservative parties has increased and religious institutions have been more politically orientated. Therefore, this thesis asserts, contrary to European secularization where secular nation states have moved towards a pluralistic understanding of religion, in Iran and Israel institutionalization of messianism has left only a small space for secular political debates.

This study raises several questions regarding the necessity of further research for defining a nation state in the new millennium. It suggests that the acknowledgement of the existence of various forms of states such as the religio-political states fosters better understanding of secularization and the various forms of state that could result from the establishment of electoral democracies. The recent shifts in the balance of power in the region necessitate the presentation of a practical definition for nation states and their ethical boundaries. It also raises questions regarding modern religious debates and the many inevitable challenges that clergy face as consequences of their involvement in modern complex issues such as international relations and the state politics.

## Chapter one – The Rise of Revolutionary Messianism

### Introduction

This chapter presents a historical background to the interplay between European political secularism and the constructing of the modern nation state in Iran and Israel.<sup>13</sup> It examines the influence of the French revolution and neo-Marxist philosophy in shaping each revolution and argues that messianism, particularly through its political and theological impacts, has been a crucial factor not only in shaping these nation states bureaucratically, but also in legitimizing their political authority. It claims that although the rise of these religio-political states can be read as one of the consequences of rapid political changes in the region and the similarly swift globalization of ideas about the modern nation state, political messianism is the central theme based on which both Iranians and Jewry have shaped debates about secularism, secularization, and the goals of their revolutions. In both cases, the concept of Revolutionary Messianism motivated the formation of a modern religious state and fundamentally changed the political status quo. In the Revolutionary Phase, the majority of religious figures interpreted traditional messianic ideas in modern political terms and employed the notion of Revolutionary Messianism in their support of the formation of nation states. Through the concept of Revolutionary Messianism both traditions have redefined European secularism, enabling each to form a national identity in two parallel religious and political histories.

In both cases during the Revolutionary Phase, articulating the aims and goals of a messianic revolution in synchronic histories created an exclusivist political theology. It successfully linked the goals of messianism to political ideals of Russian and French nationalist revolutions, anti-imperialism, and anti-colonialism. The agents of the revolution established their legitimacy through attesting this historical, religious, and national narrative of messianism which enabled them to resolve the tension between traditional and political messianism. Among various philosophical traditions, Walter Benjamin's neo-Marxist philosophy can elucidate the philosophical themes in shaping both messianic revolutionary ideologies. However, the Revolutionary Messianism that Benjamin's philosophy offered proved to be theologically and politically unstable as a political theory for the post-RPs. This inherent instability of Revolutionary Messianism, I argue, was the factor that encouraged the revolutions and determined post-revolutionary politics and theology in these states.

Walter Benjamin's view on messianism, expressed in his debates with Jewish philosopher and historian Gershom Scholem over the nature and possibility of a messianic age through the formation of a nation state, clearly articulates this tension. In his writings on Jewish messianism, Benjamin idealized the

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<sup>13</sup> By secularization I mean the radical changes that followed the enlightenment and transformed European societies from a system in which religious values dominated political structure to a non-religious and institutional system.



notion of a messianic age but contradicted Scholem's idea that such an age could be achieved through political endeavours or the formation of a state. Benjamin argued that such an age could only be realized where a major transition from a traditional understanding of messianism to an individual and spiritual one has occurred. Scholem believed that a revolutionary ideology with strong theological and cultural links could respond to the question of nationalism and modern messianism. The development of such debates, in the Revolutionary Phase, reflects the real political actions that the notion of a religio-political state mobilized. In conclusion, by examining their debate on messianism, we can explain the political theology of these revolutions and post-revolutionary states. Debates over the nature and ideals of an ideal state that Scholem and Benjamin discussed were also represented in Iran's political debates in the 1908 Constitutional Revolution and developed into an effective revolutionary ideology by 1979. Ayatollah Khomeini and Ali Shariati's views on the nature and goals of a Shi'a revolution in Iran represented this tension in the Iranian revolutionary context.

In Iran, as the revolution succeeded and Khomeini established the post-revolutionary state, a specific theological and political discourse dominated Iran's politics that has served to undermine the historical diversity of Shi'a jurisprudence. In the Revolutionary Phase, messianism, as a political idealism, has played a mediatory role in the tense relationship between secular nationalism and the apolitical religious tradition. While in Israel Revolutionary Messianism aimed for the fulfilment of messianic promise by focusing on a progressive messianic age, by comparison, Iran's 1979 revolutionary ideology remained faithful to the traditional agent-based narrative of messianism and maintained a view that success was to be the result of centralizing political and theological power in one position. Attributing ultimate political and theological power to Jurisprudential Leadership was the response to the political and theological tensions between apolitical, political, and traditional messianism.

In both cases, theological debates over messianic revolutionary idealism were embedded in their revolutionary ideologies with some of the particular characteristics of European secularism. These characteristics, such as national unity based on political sovereignty over a specific territory and unified language, were factors that verified the legitimacy of the post-revolutionary states. Such secular notions enabled these ideals to gain indisputable support and authority amongst the revolutionaries. Modern messianic theology, particularly the concept of the nation state, inspired a new and dominant interpretation of messianism which legitimized debates over the character and goals of the national revolutions and the state. During the Revolutionary Phase, it enabled the revolutionaries to explain ideas of nationalism in a politically selective narrative of messianism that encouraged an inclusivist political discourse. In both cases, the success of the revolutions transformed this revolutionary ideal to a political system that regulated theological debates on messianism. Any regulation required institutionalization and the institutionalization of Revolutionary Messianism in turn gave rise to new

political challenges that could introduce new variables to messianic debates or terminate a vital factor that re-shapes these debates.

### Embedded Secular Notions in Revolutionary Messianism

Explaining the elements and implications of the condition known as modernity has been the topic of many studies of nationalism, secularism, and secularization. Marxist and neo-Marxist philosophers have sought not only to explain and define modernity but to describe the social and theological changes that have followed the rise of national secular states.<sup>14</sup> Secularization theorists have different views from the neo-Marxists on the fundamental principles that have had the most influence in the process of secularization. However, a majority of them consider the following forces to be pivotal motivators of modernity.<sup>15</sup> For the purpose of this thesis I separated these elements into two distinct philosophical and political categories. Philosophical issues such as rationalization, differentiation, the birth of the subjective individual, and categorization of knowledge are the dominant variables in all secularization theories. Unanimously, secularist theorists agree that the rise of a modern view on history and individual identity have instigated a crisis for the existing political order.<sup>16</sup> The notion of a political individual has inspired the move towards political and economic equality. Secularization and neo-Marxist philosophers both refer to Emmanuel Kant and argue that in a nation state, these philosophical ideals could materialise in the ways in which the state defines its power structure and goals.

Kant connected the idea of freedom to rationalism.<sup>17</sup> He distinguished a transcendental understanding of freedom from a rational and practical understanding of freedom, calling the first the negative, and the latter, a positive conception of freedom.<sup>18</sup> His definition of the concept and its connection with the notion of a state that respected the will of individuals was based on his modern understanding of differentiation between religion and politics, which has been a premise in the majority of secularization theories. In the European context this link between freedom, individual identity, and the differentiation between religion and politics determined the limit of the power of a nation state over institutions and citizens. It is also a philosophical foundation that gave rise to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' revolutions that replaced monarchical and clerical rule with a state as the centre of political decision making.

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<sup>14</sup> Henry Williams, "Liberty, Equality and Independence; Core Concepts in Kant's Political Philosophy," in *A Companion to Kant*, ed. Graham Bird (NY, John Wiley and Sons, 2009), 364.

<sup>15</sup> For a comprehensive study on these factors See: P.E. Glasner, *The Sociology of Secularization: a Critique of a Concept* (London: Routledge, 1977), 110-140. Also see: D. Martin, *A General Theory of Secularization* (London: Gregg Revivals, 1993), 52-63.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> K. Flikschuh, *Kant and Modern Political Philosophy* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 30.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

Defining what religion is – intrinsically a modern concept - would not be a matter of debate under pre-modern political and social conditions. It was only after the rise of modernity and the categorization of knowledge that difficulties in defining these concepts and their relationship with each other arose.<sup>19</sup> The radical changes in defining these concepts have been the subject of other extensively studied topics in secularization theories. Classical and contemporary theories of secularization struggle to provide a definition for the term religion and to identify the spheres in which it operates.<sup>20</sup> Emile Durkheim's study on the role of religion in societies was one of the earliest attempts that motivated a modern understanding of the distinct spheres of state politics and religion.<sup>21</sup> Durkheim, who was interested in studying the way religion operates in a society, was concerned with the future of humanity in the world where religious communities no longer held political power.<sup>22</sup> He was convinced that religion would lose its power in a society where it was excluded from political power. Early secularization theorists, such as David Martin, considered differentiation between the two uncompromising spheres of rational realization of politics and theological politics an indisputable premise for any nation state.<sup>23</sup> As a result, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries any scholarly work on the relationship between religion and politics has taken place within this philosophical framework. The majority of early secularization theories considered the dominance and impact of secular politics and lifestyle would result in a decline in religion.<sup>24</sup> Regardless of their divergent opinions on the influence and status of religion before and after modernity however, most theorists argue that "authentic individual identity" has been progressively asserted during modernity and has since been an integrated part of modern political ideologies.

In addition to Durkheim, most early secularization theories rely on Max Weber's analysis of the modern subjective individual, which he considered to be a product of the domination of Protestant ethics around Europe and the emergence of capitalist economic structures.<sup>25</sup> Weber emphasised that capitalism achieved supremacy over other economic ideologies because of the "spirit of capitalism" echoed in the

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<sup>19</sup> Émile Durkheim defined religion as "a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things..." Karl Marx defined religion as "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people." Freud defined religion as "'Religion is an attempt to get control over the sensory world...' See: É. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. by C. Cosman (London: Oxford University Press, 2001), 48-52. K. Marx, *Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of right'*, trans. by J. O'Malley (NY: Cambridge University Press Archive, 1977) 79-103. Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, trans. by K. Jones (Irvine: Vintage Books, 1967), 64.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> É. Durkheim, *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> David Martin, in his 1965 critique of secularization theory, claimed that the theory itself can be criticized as an ideology and its propositions often contradictory. D. Martin, *On Secularization: Towards a Revised General Theory* (NY: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2005), 20. See: D. Martin, *Towards Eliminating the Concept of Secularization*, in *Penguin Survey of the Social Sciences*, ed. Julius Gould (NY: Penguin Books, 1965), 47-68.

<sup>24</sup> For various intellectual traditions on the effect and future of religion in the context of American secularization process, see: Troeltsch 1955 – 109 (sociology), Shiner 1967-215, Erich Fromm 1950 (psychoanalyses) and William Clebsch 1969 (theology), Also See: P. E. Glasner, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-39.

<sup>25</sup> M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. by T. Parsons (N. Chelmsford: Courier Dover Publications, 2003), 55-62.

Puritan doctrine of Protestantism.<sup>26</sup> He linked the concept of individual piety to the rise of capitalism and the birth of the individual.<sup>27</sup> Following him, most secularization theorists have argued that the emergence of scientific inquiries, the flourishing of philosophy, and rule-bound definitions of legitimacy led humanity into a secular world.<sup>28</sup> The universe became de-mystified and history de-sacralised.<sup>29</sup> As Gilbert Germain notes, Weber's definition of a disenchanted world relies on the demystification of the world and the assertion that humanity is in charge of its own destiny.<sup>30</sup> Based on this view of the disenchanted individual, traditional secularization theorists argue that the inevitable consequence of modernity is the privatization of religion. The modern, empowered individual should therefore become less religious.

Early secularization theorists asserted that the European models of secularization were the only and unavoidable outcomes of secularism.<sup>31</sup> However, the United States of America had a different experience of modernity and formed a different model of a secular state. Uniquely, secularization in the United States of America did not stigmatize the political involvement of religion in the social context. Contrary to the European model, religion has played a significant part in the construction of American national identity and the political identity of the state.<sup>32</sup> David Martin and Jose Casanova both argue that the difference between European and American experiences of secularization stems from their different histories and social contexts.<sup>33</sup> These dissimilar conditions of secularization fostered different relationships between religion and the state. Recent secularization theories present diverse explanations about the role, function and future of religion.<sup>34</sup> While early secularisation theorists argued that a decline in religious beliefs was the only outcome of secularization, later theorists state that modernity can have various outcomes in regard to the relationship between religion and politics. Charles Taylor defined these outcomes as "multiple modernities".<sup>35</sup> Within Taylor's explanatory framework,

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Guenther Roth and Wolfgang Schluchter, *Max Weber's Vision of History: Ethics and Methods* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 51.

<sup>29</sup> Sutcliffe argues that the desacralization movement began before the Enlightenment and is a result of the Reformation and not the Enlightenment. He identifies banishing the institution of priesthood, the translation of sacred texts and the destruction of icons as indicators of this movement. To Sutcliffe the emphasis that Otto and Tillich place on the "holy" served to re-sacralise Protestant theology and was rather a reaction to the above mentioned process. Peter Harrison on the other hand argues that the process of desacralization began after the Enlightenment and is a result of the rise of scientific inquiry. See: S. Sutcliffe, *Religion: Empirical Studies* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2004), 60. P. Harrison, "Religion" and the Religions in the English Enlightenment (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 5.

<sup>30</sup> G. G. Germain, *A Discourse on Disenchantment: Reflections on Politics and Technology* (NY: SUNY Press, 1993), 30-35.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> See David Martin's interview with Miroslav Volf <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1QISnc1Zqqw> also see Jose Casanova interview with Miroslav Volf on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iSnNAc3hGgc>

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ch. Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2007), 21.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

secularization does not necessarily result in a decline of religious beliefs or absolute separation between religious and political institutions.<sup>36</sup>

Regardless of their positions in defining the role of religion in a secularised society, they all agree that the rise of nation states in Europe ended the hegemony of religious institutions on politics. Following Weber, Nietzsche, and Marx, secularization theorists considered this institutional separation as an indispensable premise for the nation state.<sup>37</sup> In the case of Israel and Iran, although the European revolutionary ideology motivated the rise of national revolutions, the formation of the post-revolutionary states resulted in an increase in the role of religious institutions in politics and society. In each case, their unique encounter with modernity, secularism, and colonialism raised new questions regarding the relationship between religion and politics and the possibility of multiple understandings of secularism.<sup>38</sup> The reason for studying messianism in the Revolutionary and SBPs is to explore what Casanova calls “the Knowledge regime of secularization” in Iran and Israel.<sup>39</sup> During the Revolutionary Phase the idealised image of a state with messianic features created an inclusivist political ideology by designating a nationalistic narrative of messianism that could only be meaningful within the context of modern bureaucratic models of a state. Studying these revolutionary ideologies allows us to focus on the political implications of what Benjamin called the aesthetic of redemption on these messianic ideals in order to explore the relationship between the messianic and nationalistic ideologies that facilitated the legitimation of these post-revolutionary states.

Differentiation between the public and private spheres is an indispensable component of the modern nation state. However, different experiences of modernity determine different limits for this separation.<sup>40</sup> While secularization theories have argued that “differentiating” political from religious

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> For a recent view on Secularization and the future of religion see: Jose Casanova, ‘Secularization revisited; a Reply to Talal Asad’, in *Powers of the Secular Modern: Talal Asad and His Interlocutors*, eds. David Scott and Charles Hirschkind (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2006), 12-30. Casanova argues that the rise and interactions of multiple public spheres in Europe resulted in the decline of the influence of religion on state, science and the economy. See: J. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 211- 221.

<sup>38</sup> Talal Assad criticizes the model presented by Taylor raises questions on the role of individuals in the process of election, even in contemporary liberal democracies. He negates Taylor’s assumption in considering a direct access to power structure by the politics of participation. He notes that access to politics is less evident in society and that the participation in elections every three or four years does not prove individual commitment and discipline. In order to support such claims, he notes, secularization requires anthropological observation. Casanova supports Assad in his theory, however, sees answers to questions of secularization as issues that require detailed historical comparative studies, specifically the context in which a nation state produces political culture and responses from society. See: T. Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2003), 1-67.

<sup>39</sup> Lorne L. Dawson, ‘Privatization, Globalization, and Religious Innovation; Giddens’s Theory on Modernity and Refutation of Secularization Theory’, in *Theorising Religion: Classical and Contemporary Debates*, eds. James A. Beckford and John Walliss (Chesterfield: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2006), 105-119.

<sup>40</sup> Casanova defines differentiation as “...core and the central thesis of the theory of secularization is the conceptualization of the process of societal modernization as a process of functional differentiation and emancipation of the secular spheres – primarily the state, the economy, and science – from the religious sphere and the concomitant differentiation and specialization of religion within its own newly found religious sphere.” J. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 19.

spheres has contributed to the construction of the subjective individual, and thus the revolutionary (whose identity is separate from that of their community), in Iran and Israel the revolutionary ideology contributed to the formation of a strong religious identity for the post-revolutionary states. In both, although the ideals of revolutionary individuals significantly contributed to the formation of these states, it simultaneously undermined an autonomous individual identity. The political culture of these revolutionary states and their messianic doctrines are crucial issues that define differentiation between political and religious spheres and determine the limits of the power of the state. In both Israel and Iran, urbanization, industrialization, and rationalization motivated their modern revolutionary ideologies but each post-revolutionary state presented a unique definition of the relationship between politics and religion. Their definitions were not formed or developed in isolation but rather heavily influenced by contextual factors such as economy, ethnic distribution, and technology. These factors not only instigated different approaches towards Revolutionary Messianism but they also motivated diverse ideological and political encounters with the states regardless of their similar messianic theology. In both Shi'a and Jewish traditional messianism, the divine saviour was a male descendant of the founders of the religion and his genealogical link was a necessary condition of the Messiah's ultimate authority. Revolutionary Messianism, however, deconstructed this hierarchical narrative of messianism, redefined its goals in revolutionary idealism, and transformed the traditional messianic charisma to what Weber viewed as "Pure" charisma with an anti-hierarchical and anti-patriarchal nature.<sup>41</sup>

By observing history in a progressive Hegelian manner, Weber stated that the legitimacy of rule either rested upon customs, as in the time of old regimes, devotion under charismatic leadership as in the case of the prophets, or upon the virtue of "legality" as in the case of nation states.<sup>42</sup> The ruling system that invests in the virtue of legality transfers the authority to the validity of a legal status, based on rationally created rules.<sup>43</sup> By "legal status", Weber meant a bureaucratic system in which ruling agents are either selected by people or appointed by the legitimate system, like officials in a democratic government.<sup>44</sup> A bureaucratic system, Weber noted, is the "purest form of legal rule" but even in this purest form, legal rule is not absolute and includes different forms of authority.<sup>45</sup> For Weber, traditional rule represented the feudal, old regime, a regime in which the ruler was a master and the ruled his servants. The ruler was not selected but selected his servants. This form did not follow rational rules, rather it operated based on emotions that defined the relationship between ruler and the ruled.<sup>46</sup> Personal relationships and favours affected the rule and instead of an institutional relationship, nepotism and closeness to the

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<sup>41</sup>Hans Heinrich Gerth and Charles Wright Mills, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (London: Routledge, 2003), 247-48.

<sup>42</sup> M. Weber, *Max Weber's Complete Writings on Academic and Political Vocations* (NY: Algora Publishing 2008), 157.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Max Weber and Sam Whimster, *The Essential Weber: a Reader* (London: Routledge, 2004), 133.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 134.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

ruler decided individual positions within the state, whether they were directly dependant on the feudal lord or if they lived with high social status and possessions. In traditional systems, the legitimacy of the ruler was limited to the area where tradition and customs had influence, but beyond this boundary, the power of the ruler was limited.<sup>47</sup> In charismatic legitimacy, Weber contended, the legitimacy of a leader is not linked to kinship ties or an institutional framework but is constructed through devotion and loyalty of an individual to the charismatic leader.<sup>48</sup>

In Israel and Iran, Revolutionary Messianism bridged the gap between traditional and modern political authorities and offered an alternative discourse to the existing political situation based on this new narrative of messianism. The revolutionary narrative of messianism attributed theological authority to the revolutions and bound the post-revolutionary states' definitions of the secular and religion to revolutionary idealism. It is through this ideological position that political and religious groups communicated their understandings of secularism and the nature of the post-revolutionary state. In both cases, the longing for an egalitarian society and economic justice that became a major force in forming a revolutionary community had roots in their messianic theology. Specifically, the attainment of a just political and economic society which was one of the main characteristics of these messianic theologies, played a critical role in determining the goals of the revolutions. In addition to these impacts, the formation of a revolutionary idealism in both cases responded to the colonization of the Middle East and the spread of colonial states in the region based on the French Jacobin model in which there was hardly any place for the involvement of religion in politics.<sup>49</sup>

### Walter Benjamin and Revolutionary Messianism

"A Klee painting named 'Angelus Novus' shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one perceives the angel of history. His face is towards the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one catastrophe, which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 139.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Even now the American pluralistic approach towards religion is not included in Middle Eastern debates on the nature of a nation state.

<sup>50</sup> B. R. Hüppauf, War, Violence, and the Modern Condition (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), 44.

This research draws on Walter Benjamin's view on messianism based on his critique of Marxism to articulate the concept of Revolutionary Messianism in Israel and Iran. There are three reasons for basing the theoretical framework of this study on Benjamin. First, Benjamin was a Marxist and although neither of the revolutionary narratives of Iran or Israel was communist uprisings, Marxist motifs and symbols had a heavy presence in both cases. Secondly, amongst neo-Marxist theorists, Benjamin identified the mutual dependency of theology and historical development and considered the neglect of this factor detrimental to the success of a revolution. In both case studies, this mutual dependency is the ground for the emergence of a revolutionary narrative of messianism and the legitimization of it as the possible solution to political oppression. Even though in Iran and Israel the revolutions had different motivational factors both evidence this dependency as one of the premises of their revolutions. Finally, Benjamin viewed history as a catastrophe that is a piling of "wreckage after wreckage" and argued that only this inherent nihilist character of history provides the possibility of redemption through revolution. In the case of Israel and Iran, revolutionary narratives were based on such nihilistic visions, because neither viewed a possibility of reform from within the existing political situation. This was partly due to similarities between traditional Jewish and Shi'a messianism and was partly the result of historical realities. Benjamin connected historical development to "remembrance", "oppression", and "revolution".

This particular approach towards messianism creates an inherent flexibility in the understanding of oppression that allows us to use Benjamin's concept of messianism in new ways and in new contexts. This flexibility also relates messianism to the material world and makes revolution possible. This characteristic of Benjamin's messianism is also a fundamental aspect of Revolutionary Messianism in Iran and Israel and is the ground for establishing and maintaining post-revolutionary states in both cases. Through analysing Benjamin's concept of messianism and discussing the Benjaminian characteristic of the revolutionary messianic narratives in Israel and Iran we can clearly explain their structure and goals. This section focuses on the works he wrote during the time of his exile, the last decade of his life in France. While his views on messianism were evident in his early writings on German literature and his article on translation, it was developed politically in his later writings on Marxism in which he used historiography, literary criticism, and Jewish theology in order to explain the aesthetic of redemption and his view on messianism. This piece connects different chapters of my thesis, as my main argument in this thesis is the continuity of Benjaminian themes in the three messianic phases that I identified in Iran and Israel; Revolutionary Messianism, State Building Messianism, and State Maintenance Messianism.

In Walter Benjamin's time, for Marxist theorists, the devastating economic situation in Europe between the two world wars and the rise of fascism that plagued Europe was a signal of the crisis of



‘capitalism’.<sup>51</sup> Benjamin agreed with Marx on the growth of capitalism in Europe but disagreed with him over the predictability of history and the rise of an inevitable proletariat revolution against the bourgeoisie. He also disagreed with Marx over the concept of alienation. Marx viewed the ownership of means of production and not the means themselves as the source of alienation. Benjamin, however, saw the means of production as a reason for alienation.<sup>52</sup> Benjamin was among the scholars who attempted to present a neo-Marxist response to the failure of Marx’s theory, and to highlight the neglected factors in that theory, in order to overcome the undermining of its credibility.<sup>53</sup> It is in his critiques of the Marxist notions of history, aesthetic, theology, and redemption that we can find his understanding of revolution and messianism.<sup>54</sup>

### Benjamin’s View on History

Benjamin articulated his view on history based on his critiques of Hegelian historicism and Marxist historical materialism.<sup>55</sup> He criticized Hegel’s theory on history and argued that it left no ground for historical criticism. To him, historicism bound each historical event to its particular contextual conditions and neglected the voice of the oppressed. Therefore, historicism to Benjamin was an unsatisfactory approach to the question of history which could neither present a comprehensive view of historical development nor open a possibility for historical criticism.<sup>56</sup> Benjamin also criticized Marx’s view on a progressive history that followed a rational order but he agreed with Marx over the necessity of a ‘revolution’. Benjamin recognized an inherent redemptive feature in Marx’s historical materialism, for the possibility it provides for revolting against oppression, and for its social activism. Richard Wolin notes that from Benjamin’s early writing it was clear that he did not envisage any redemptive feature in Marxism because of its ideological position on history and its rejection of theology, but Marxist social activism attracted Benjamin to it.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> It was Adorno who introduced Benjamin’s writing and collected them for publication after his death. For a historical examination of Adorno’s relationship with Benjamin see: Theodor W. Adorno and Walter Benjamin, *The Complete Correspondence, 1928-1940*, ed. Henri Lonitz (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 24-31. Also R. Wiggershaas, *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories, and Political Significance*, trans. by M. Robertson (NY: MIT Press, 1995), 90-97. For Marx’ theories see: J. M. Bernstein, *The Frankfurt School: critical assessments* (London: Routledge, 1994), 41-48.

<sup>52</sup> Richard Wolin contends that eschatological motifs in Benjamin’s writings are natural reactions to the disastrous economic and political situation of Europe in the early twenty-first century. R. Wolin, *Walter Benjamin, An Aesthetic of Redemption* (LA: University of California Press, 1994), xxvii.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> Hegel defined the realisation of “world spirit” as the ultimate goal of history that forms the dialectic process of historical development. He considered the state to be the synthesis between the undifferentiated unity and differentiated disunity and the foundation not only for law but also for art, science, and social development. Benjamin eloquently described his goals in his critiques of Marxism in his critical essays on art where he examined a work of art as a source of culture as well as its product and as an ideology that operated in an industrial society. Ch. Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 466-468.

<sup>55</sup> Hegel viewed the contemporary state of the human situation to be the result of the exact event of the past. *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> A. E. Benjamin, *Walter Benjamin and History* (London: Continuum, 2005), 121-124.

<sup>57</sup> Richard Wolin, *op. cit.*, p. xxvii, Benjamin accepted Marx’s definition of ideology as sets of unchangeable pre-suppositions that could be either conscious or unconscious but disagreed with Marx that what appears to him as ultimate historical truth

Benjamin's critiques of Marxism shows a departure from the critical tradition of Marxism in the 1920s that idealised the human condition as a pre-supposition for Marxist utopian vision of society. Rolf Tiedemann considers Benjamin's position on history to be clearly articulated in his work *Theses* and his interpretation of Paul Klee's painting in 1921. According to Tiedemann, rather than a coherent and homogeneous view of history, in his commentary on *Angelus Novus*, Benjamin offered a fragmented one in which events do not necessarily follow a rational order.<sup>58</sup> Benjamin freed history from being an empiricist science and argued that "remembrance" was the factor that showed the limits of the scientific explanation of history.<sup>59</sup>

For Benjamin, Wolin asserts, the destructive character of the world in the Marxist nihilistic view of society portrays society as a system that is constantly on the verge of total destruction.<sup>60</sup> Its nihilism can only be overcome by a revolution because revolution creates the possibility of redemption. Benjamin emphasized this characteristic of historical materialism as he wrote to Max Horkheimer, "Remembrance can make the incomplete (happiness) into something complete, and the complete (suffering) into something incomplete (happiness)."<sup>61</sup> In this statement Benjamin considered this relationship between complete and incomplete as the foundation of messianism which is represented in the past generation's messianic hopes (incomplete) and their oppression (complete). Benjamin stated that a work of art was representative of attempts at human liberation. The utopian hope of each generation holds a secret promise, which Benjamin called "weak messianism".<sup>62</sup> Tiedemann notes that while Benjamin accepted the redemptive characteristics of historical materialism he disagreed with Marx and Hegel over a causative relationship that is formed by necessity or a progressive nature for history.<sup>63</sup> He viewed the disastrous situation of human life as a complete failure, where the technological progress of humans gave rise to ultimate barbarism and brutality. Benjamin expressed his view on history in his comment on Paul Klee's painting.<sup>64</sup>

Scholem notes that the painting functioned as a "meditative focal point" for Benjamin. He perceived it as a Biblical angel, a *Mala'ch*, a messenger "from the world of paradise" who failed in his mission and is

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could have timeless universal validity. Benjamin however, agreed with Marx that technology reshapes human's relationship with the world and that the ideological narrative that the dominant class in a society produces through technological means represents their way of thinking as the only truth narrative of the world. In his essay "Work of Art" he extends Marx's definition of ideology and argues that the mass production of art can be used as a means for sending political messages for creating a political "truth" as it becomes a commodity in late capitalism. See: Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" in, *Media and cultural studies: keywords*, eds. Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas Kellner (London: John Wiley & Sons, 2006), 364.

<sup>58</sup> Rolf Tiedemann, 'Historical Materialism or Political Messianism? An Interpretation of the Theses "on the Concept of History"' in Benjamin: Philosophy, History, Aesthetics, ed. Gary Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 190.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 182.

<sup>60</sup> R. Wolin, op. cit., xxvii.

<sup>61</sup> A. E. Benjamin, op. cit., 122

<sup>62</sup> A. E. Benjamin, *Walter Benjamin and Art* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2005), 15.

<sup>63</sup> A. E. Benjamin, op. cit., 177.

<sup>64</sup> B. R. Hüppauf, op. cit., 120.

gazing at the piles of wreckage without anything more to communicate.<sup>65</sup> Tiedemann argues that possibly for Benjamin the failure of the angel is because the angel attempted to initiate or complete the work of the Messiah.<sup>66</sup> The inevitable gaze of the angel at history resembles the horror of humans as they view their history. The ambiguity of the future, which is at the back of the angel, has a redemptive factor but only if the present is informed by the past, the remembering of the past and the search for the “lost paradise”.<sup>67</sup> Benjamin admired Klee’s painting for its symbolic representation of hope and the utopian vision that it represents in weak messianism. Benjamin saw in *Angelus Novus* human striving for completeness while it clearly stated its incompleteness. This attempt to revive the lost paradise of the past in the future which is a utopian characteristic of a messianic era, Tiedemann notes, is identical to the Jewish image of a messianic age in which the lost paradise of the past is revived in its full glory.<sup>68</sup>

Benjamin’s discussion on historicism and historical materialism opened a way for him to formulate another critique of the Marxist ideological position that shaped his messianic ideas. Ernest Bloch, who was a prominent neo-Marxist philosopher and wrote extensively on history and utopia in “the Principle of Hope”, attracted Benjamin. Specifically, he was inspired by Bloch’s critique of social realism for its neglect of the utopian visions that humans expressed throughout history and continues its existence in popular art.<sup>69</sup> Bloch considered art and literature as a mediator for human relationships as well as a drive for utopia. The connection that Bloch made between utopia and literature indicates that for him utopian visions and endeavours are about human everyday life. His criticism of Marxist social realism is because of its failure to recognize this utopian characteristic that reflects the hope of the oppressed, and for presenting an ideological and pessimistic narrative of history.<sup>70</sup> Benjamin’s view on messianism, Wolin notes, was the realization of the promise of redemption that the past carries into the present. A promise that exists in each generation but is not fulfilled and will never be, unless the messianic age comes, when the whole structure of human history collapses. This promise of redemption passes from one generation to the other by means of remembrance and tradition. The messianic age is when this promise is fulfilled and the end of history comes.<sup>71</sup> Wolin argues that for Benjamin, the messianic era was not an abstract or metaphoric phase of human existence but an inevitable outcome of the destruction and the “dialectical recuperation of human history”.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> E. Jacobson, *Metaphysics of the Profane; The Political Theology of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2003), 26.

<sup>66</sup> R. Tiedemann, *op. cit.*, 194.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> E. Bloch, *Aesthetics and Politics* (Maharashtra: Verso, 1980), 84.

<sup>70</sup> Bloch extends his critiques on social realism to explain how each daily action has a utopian characteristic. See: Ernst Bloch, Jack Zipes, and Frank Mecklenburg, *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature: Selected Essays* (NY: MIT Press, 1989), xxxiii.

<sup>71</sup> R. Wolin, *op. cit.*, xviii.

<sup>72</sup> Benjamin’s view on the interconnectedness of redemption and destruction is evident in his writings on Blanqui’s cosmology. See also, *Ibid.*, 108.

There are two striking similarities between Benjamin's understanding of history and the understanding of history in the revolutionary messianic narratives in Iran and Israel. First revolutionists in both cases acknowledged nihilistic character in the world and particularly in their political situation. Zionists and Iranian revolutionaries both insisted that the political situation had left no space for reform and believed in no possibility for negotiation or for changing the system from within. Secondly, although both the Israeli and Iranian revolutions rose out of specific historical catastrophe (genocide for Jews: the Holocaust, and systematic political oppression for Iranians: torture and execution of political dissidents), for both Revolutionary Messianism was a response to historical oppression rather than a reaction to recent political events. Both deemed the revolution to be an act that had redemptive characteristics beyond the realm of politics, with universal goals. In Iran, the revolutionaries believed that the 1979 revolution was a response to millennia of hegemony of empires and the rule of others.<sup>73</sup> It was, they argued, the spring of human liberation and could be the example for all liberation movements regardless of their ideology or political situations.<sup>74</sup> In Israel, Zionist revolutionaries regarded the building of the state as the response to millennia of exile, living under foreign rule, and genocide. In both cases, theology became a means for redemption.<sup>75</sup>

### Benjamin, Aestheticization of Politics, and Messianism

Rodolphe Gasche contends that Benjamin's understanding of aesthetic relies on some of the motifs present in Kant's theory of aesthetic.<sup>76</sup> For instance, Benjamin, like Kant, viewed beauty as a form of expression free from object and more connected to the feeling of satisfaction and dissatisfaction from the experience of the subject. Gasche notes that Benjamin's position connected him to rationalist and utopian traditions of David Hume, Kant, and Marx.<sup>77</sup> Like Kant, Benjamin expressed interest in explaining the aura of an artwork in connection to the function of an artwork in magical or even secular rituals.<sup>78</sup> In his essay "Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" he criticized late capitalist mass production of art that has utterly transformed its function by taking away its aura and separating it

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<sup>73</sup> This notion was particularly emphasized in the revolutionary mots and songs such as "May the spring be praised" [Baharaan Khojasteh baad] and mots such as "Our revolution was the explosion of light" [Enghelab-e maa enfejaar-e nour bood]

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> J. Kornberg, Theodor Herzl: From Assimilation to Zionism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 159.

<sup>76</sup> Rodolphe Gasche, 'Objective Diversions; On Some Kantian Themes in Benjamin's 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in Walter Benjamin's Philosophy: Destruction and Experience, ed. Andrew E. Benjamin (London: Routledge, 1994), 185.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Gasche notes that although Benjamin "modified" the Kantian definitions of subject, object and their relationship, his theory heavily relies on Kantian objectives of aesthetic. See: Ibid, p. 184 both Claude Imbert and Gasche point to the elements in Kantian aesthetic to which Benjamin objected. See: I. Kant, Critique of Judgement (NY: Cosimo, Inc., 2007), 27-30.

from traditions. He argued that mechanical mass production makes a work of art a capitalist commodity and a means for the aestheticization of politics. The core of Benjamin's argument is this changing of the function of an artwork that ultimately constructs its meaning, separated it from its traditional function but attached to it new values of "authenticity" and "originality".<sup>79</sup> He asserted that in the pre-modern era, religious places where one could find artworks and their sighting were associated with performing sets of rituals and expressing faith in particular dogma. These factors attached an indispensable mysterious quality (aura) to an artwork.<sup>80</sup> The mass reproduction in industrial society has provided the possibility of separating a work of art from its environment and attaching a different meaning to it through intended reproduction. Benjamin considered it was these characteristics of mass production, particularly, the "liquidation" of traditional values of cultural heritage that gave rise to fascism instead of inspiring utopian revolutions.<sup>81</sup>

In his analysis of the transformation in relationship between art, politics, and the modes of production Benjamin linked the aestheticization of politics to the rise of fascism.<sup>82</sup> For Benjamin, the bourgeoisie used national symbols for mass indoctrination and social conformity by the aestheticization of politics through controlling mass communication means, staging street demonstrations, and using national symbols. Lutz Koepnick states that Benjamin's essay on the age of mechanical reproduction concentrated on explaining the methods that a state uses in order to generate social loyalty.<sup>83</sup> Through this process of mass indoctrination, the state uses technology in order to make its archaic methods of populist propaganda socially effective. Therefore, the hardware of modernity becomes the justifying force of mass indoctrination that Benjamin calls archaic software.<sup>84</sup> The popularity of fascism in Europe, Benjamin argued, was specifically the outcome of successful engraving of the charismatic energy of fascism into ornaments of power that the state intentionally produces as vehicles for generating social loyalty.<sup>85</sup> In his writings during the 1920s and 30s Benjamin viewed leadership as an example of the ideological account that aestheticization of politics produces.<sup>86</sup>

In the case of both Israel and Iran, rejecting the assimilation of tradition into western secular culture and the fear of a substitution of values were significant themes in Revolutionary Messianism . In Ayatollah

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Walter Benjamin, 'Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', op. cit., 36.

<sup>81</sup> R. Gasche, op. cit., 186.

<sup>82</sup> Benjamin contended that through the aestheticization of politics in late capitalism this ideology aims to create war as the only means for uniting people and for generating a sense of satisfaction for the lost traditions and religious rituals; the aura of an artwork. Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> L. P. Koepnick, *Walter Benjamin and the Aesthetics of Power* (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 35.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. Koepnick argues that from Benjamin's early writing it is clear that he was well aware of anesthetisation of politics and the political dimension of aesthetic. Koepnick notes, however, Benjamin never wrote about the specific characteristics of aesthetic and rather grounded his argument on aesthetic based on the liberation of a work of art from the process of production, by which he meant free from author, space, and time. Ibid, 37.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 53.

Khomeini's and Rabbi Kook's theologies, preserving tradition and preventing the total annihilation of culture as the result of assimilation, were foundational themes. These themes have continuation and remained as grounds for political legitimacy for the post-revolutionary states. In Israel's case, the hope of assimilation shattered following the rise of fascism and the tragedy of the Holocaust. The ideological nationalism that fascism spread throughout Europe disillusioned European Jewry about assimilation and showed them the horror of mass indoctrination. They witnessed how the separation of art and literary works from their environment could produce sets of completely new ideas and prepare the ground for fascist brutality. Kook's position on tolerance and coexistence between religious and non-religious Jews was the strategy that had the potential to preserve the tradition. In Iran, Khomeini argued that the Pahlavi monarchy could sustain its dictatorship by constantly undermining the role of theology in politics. In Benjaminian fashion, he associated the rise of dictatorship with the demystifying of the aura of traditions and replacing it with modern and destructive values.

## Benjamin and Theology

"First the Messiah completes all historical occurrence, whose relation to the messianic (in this sense) he himself first redeems, completes, and creates. Therefore nothing historical can intend to refer to the messianic from itself out of itself. For this reason, the kingdom of God is not the telos of the historical dynamic; it cannot be set toward a goal. Historically seen, it is not a goal but an end. Thus the order of the profane cannot be built on the idea of the kingdom of God; theocracy, therefore, has no political but only religious significance. To have repudiated the political meaning of theocracy with all intensity is the greatest service of Bloch's Spirit of Utopia."<sup>87</sup>

Messianic motifs and theological language are recognizable from Benjamin's early writings. However, it is after his friendship with Gershom Scholem that he developed his views on Jewish theology and messianism.<sup>88</sup> During the 1920s, Scholem asked Benjamin to immigrate to Israel and work with him on his project on Jewish mysticism but Benjamin refused.<sup>89</sup> While Benjamin supported the assimilation of Jewish culture in European culture and spent the last decades of his life writing on Marxism, he maintained his position on the role of tradition in human hope for self-development and for the development of a utopian vision of history. Scholem's migration to Israel and his taking up the study of Jewish messianism made him more conservative in his support of tradition as a means of preserving

<sup>87</sup> Eric Jacobson, *Metaphysics of the Profane*, p. 20. Also Walter Benjamin, 'The Theological Mythical Fragment' "Gedanken über Gerhart Hauptmanns Festspiel" in *Gesammelte Schriften*, eds. Max Rheinstein and Hans Georg Leser (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1979), vol. 2, 60.

<sup>88</sup> As evident in the above quote in Benjamin's 1914 article and his 1916 article *On Theological and Mystical Fragments*, Benjamin agreed with Kant in identifying the Kingdom of God equal to the perfection of history but considered human self-development to be the ultimate task of history. *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Biale argues that some of Scholem's ideas in his study of Jewish mysticism were influenced by Benjamin's views on language and in his 1916 article "language itself and on the language of man". D. Biale, *Gershom Scholem: Kabbalah and Counter-history* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 114.

identity and encouraged Benjamin to contribute to Zionism rather than entertaining the idea of a utopian neo-Marxist community.<sup>90</sup>

Although Benjamin greatly appreciated Scholem's understanding of Jewish theology and mysticism he did not share Scholem's view on Jewish messianism, identity, and political Zionism. Their difference stems from their different understandings of the goal of theological messianism. Benjamin rejected nationalist and political Zionism based on the ground that to him messianism was the end of history and the construction of a political state could not be assumed as the historical goal of messianism.

Nonetheless, both agreed that theology was a missing element in Marxism. As Tiedemann notes, to Benjamin, remembrance generated an experience that prevented humans from understanding history without theology but he warned against reading history theologically.<sup>91</sup> The "nationalist" characteristic of political Zionism to Benjamin entirely opposed the universality of Jewish messianism that reduced it a "radical cultural will" to him.<sup>92</sup> Bernard Witte argues that for Benjamin Jewishness was "a duty toward the development of European culture".<sup>93</sup> Based on this definition, Benjamin called himself a "cultural Zionist" who strove for the realization of Judaism that he viewed as "the most distinguished bearer and representative of the spiritual".<sup>94</sup> Benjamin was well aware, Wolin states, of the possibility of reading his writings in light of the fascist ideology that dominated Europe.<sup>95</sup> Therefore, he emphasized his "conservative revolutionary tendencies" to avoid any misconception of his understanding of revolution.<sup>96</sup> Benjamin agreed with Marx and Weber about the disenchantment of the world by modernity, but argued that through the re-emerging of mythical motifs and symbols in modern narratives such as politics, late capitalism and its super narrative of consumption, the world were re-enchanted.<sup>97</sup>

For Benjamin, the notion of theology was closely connected to redemption, as evident in messianic hopes. Michael Mack argues that Benjamin's view on theology had its roots in German romanticism.<sup>98</sup> His use of theology provided him with a solid critique of Marxism and at the same time became a means

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<sup>90</sup> In the 1920s Benjamin was significantly influenced by Berthold Brecht and highly attracted to communism.

<sup>91</sup> Rolf Tiedemann, *op. cit.*, 182.

<sup>92</sup> Witte notes that Benjamin became familiar with Zionism for the first time in August 1912 during a vacation with Zionist school friends Kurt Tuchler and Franz Sachs. B. Witte, *Walter Benjamin: An Intellectual Biography*, trans. by James Rolleston, (MI: Wayne State University Press, 1997), 26-27. Benjamin wrote: "their personality was inwardly by no means defined by Jewishness; they preach Palestine but drink like Germans." *Ibid*, 27.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*, also see: Uwe Steiner and Michael Winkler, *Walter Benjamin: An Introduction to His Work and Thought*, trans. by M. Winkler (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 24.

<sup>94</sup> Witte notes that Benjamin's refusal of migrating to Palestine was an expression of his view on Zionism. It was only during the time of exile and under the pressure of many predicaments that he unsuccessfully approached Scholem to facility his migration to Palestine. *Ibid*.

<sup>95</sup> R. Wolin, *op. cit.*, xxvii.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>97</sup> R. Wolin, *op. cit.*, xxxiii.

<sup>98</sup> Michael Mack, 'Modernity as an Unfinished Project: Benjamin and Political Romanticism', in *Walter Benjamin and the Architecture of Modernity*, ed. Andrew Benjamin (NC: Re.press, 2009), 59-62.

for Benjamin's theory on history.<sup>99</sup> Benjamin understood messianism as a utopian vision with an extra-historical dimension but rarely directly connected messianism in his writing with theology, considering redemption as the only important theological theme for politics, and the most suitable means for historical materialism.<sup>100</sup> Remembrance and traditions are means through which he defines the relationship between messianism and theology. This position emphasizes the significance of theology in historical development but negates the possibility of a political theology or a messianic state. Mack argues that in his 'Theological-Political Fragment' essay Benjamin differentiates the profane from the messianic in order to clearly explain their dependencies.<sup>101</sup>

In his later writing 'On the Concept of History', Benjamin defined the relationship between historical fate (historicism) and historical materialism based on "chess automaton" in which historical materialism could only win when it binds its power with the "wise hunchback" of theology.<sup>102</sup> Tiedemann and Irving Wohlfarth's interpretations of Benjamin's works represent two intellectual positions on the relationship between historical materialism and theology in his writings. According to Tiedemann, for Benjamin, theology is "subservient" to history while Wohlfarth argues that for Benjamin, presenting a comprehensive account of the past requires theology and this premise in Benjamin's writings makes history subservient to theology.<sup>103</sup> This ambiguity is very important to my work and is the key point in the political legitimacy of the post-revolutionary states. This ambiguity is the most significant thrust of Benjamin's discussion on the relationship between revolution and messianism and one of the reasons for Benjamin's rejection of political Zionism was his awareness of the potential conservatism embedded in this ambiguity. He was also well aware of the consuming power of late capitalism and its efficiency in using symbols for mass production of intended and new values. In this ambiguity lies a potential for utopia as well as a potential catastrophe. The catastrophe, to Benjamin, would be transforming the messianic hope he saw in theology into a state ideology that demystified messianism by using it as a means for the aestheticization of politics.

The danger that Benjamin noticed has affected Israel and the Islamic Republic of Iran in different ways due to the different political realities of their situations. Nonetheless, in both cases, messianic narratives and theology represented the voices of the oppressed during the Revolutionary Phase. In the State-Building Phase, theology transformed messianism from an extra-historical and universal utopian vision into a security-orientated political theology. From the moment that revolutionary energy declines Revolutionary Messianism becomes a political ideology and thus is bound to historical conditions. This

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Slavoj Žižek, Eric L. Santner, and Kenneth Reinhard, *The Neighbor: Three Inquiries in Political Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 20.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, 68.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 91.

<sup>103</sup> R. J. Goebel, *A Companion to the Works of Walter Benjamin* (London: Camden House, 2009), 181.



Benjaminian narrative of messianism is a successful means for legitimizing post-revolutionary states because it suggests that the reciprocal relationship between complete (suffering) and incomplete (happiness) is a necessary requirement for understanding the aesthetic of redemption. In both Iran and Israel the completeness of (suffering, revolution, immigration, and war), and the incompleteness of the state resembles the incompleteness of messianism. In both cases, theological apocalyptic messianism was substituted by political progressive messianism and the states have been progressively dependant on messianism as a political ideology. Thus messianism lost its mystical aura in the Revolutionary Phase and has become a means for aestheticization of politics. This is the danger that Benjamin warned us about in the theological reading of history.

### Revolution, Socialism and the Messianic Age

Since the sixteenth century in Europe, the separation of religious from administrative and legislative institutions and the rise of nationalist politics have transformed the nature of the relationship between state and citizens. Eric Hobsbawm articulates this notion in his discussion on post-nation state nationalism which he considers to be different from pre-state nationalist sentiments in three key ways.<sup>104</sup>

First, post-nation state nationalism facilitated individual cooperation and involvement in state politics. Secondly, it consolidated political and military powers in a central administration, and encouraged territorial expansion, and finally, technological development. The consolidation of military forces and the centralization of political power in the body of a state enabled European states to extend their economic and geographical territories into new regions and encouraged the political and military domination of more natural and human resources.<sup>105</sup> This transformation negated the existing political exclusivism and included all members of a group in a “body of people” that declared themselves as a nation and demanded the right to have an independent state.

In the Middle East, the promise of an autonomous state encouraged various communities to claim territorial sovereignty. There are two distinct views about the spread of the nation state from Europe to the Middle East. Scholars, such as Daniel Brown, argue that the history of state formation in the Middle East was not constructed through colonization or the western imposition of a nation state on the region,

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<sup>104</sup> E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 110-131.

<sup>105</sup> For the history of the nation state in Britain see; Patrick K. O'Brien, 'Political Structures and Grand Strategies for the Growth of British Economy; 1688-1815', in *Nation, State, and the Economy in History*, eds. Alice Teichova and Herbert Matis (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 11. For France see; Francois Crouzet, 'Economic Factors and Building of the French Nation-State', in *ibid*, 34-56. Following Napoleon's attack on Egypt in 1798 and British colonization of the Middle East in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century colonial governments were established in the region. For a historical account of Napoleon's attack on Egypt and Britain's response see: Fr. W. Kagan, *The End of the Old Order: Napoleon and Europe, 1801-1805* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2007), 14-49.

rather it was due to an increase in contact between the two.<sup>106</sup> Other scholars, such as Sami Zubaida and Roger Owen, argue that the “modern” states in the region are a “compulsory form of the western model”.<sup>107</sup> Both of these views could hold some truth in these cases. Iran was never officially colonized and Iranians motivated and supported changes in the political system. In the case of Israel, the territory was officially colonized by Britain. While one case, Iran, proves Brown’s argument, the other, Israel, attests to Zubaida’s approach. Nonetheless, in both cases intellectuals eagerly responded to the idea of a bureaucratically structured state, either similar to or copied from the European model and rejected colonialism and imperialism. These models have played vital roles in the nationalist discourse in Iran and Israel during the Revolutionary Phase.

In the Middle East, the competition between the military powers, British, French and later Russian, over Middle Eastern resources and the two world wars fuelled nationalistic sentiments. Early responses to the colonization of the Middle East appeared in the late nineteenth century and continued until the advent of the Cold War. In this period, the geopolitical map of the Middle East was redrawn.<sup>108</sup> This was due to a number of factors, such as the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the colonization of the region, the Russian revolution, Iran’s Constitutional Revolution, the rise of Zionism, and tensions between nationalist and religious communities. As in Europe in the nineteenth century, these factors dramatically changed the geo-political map of the Middle East during the twentieth century. Some states, such as Turkey and Iran, invested in the secularization of their states in order to create a legitimate bureaucratic administration with a strong army.<sup>109</sup>

Iranians and Jewry were attracted to the idea of a nation state for different reasons. However, both encouraged the formation of a strongly nationalistic state through a messianic revolution. Similarly to the situation in Europe in the eighteenth century, Iranian intellectuals of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries championed nationalism, particularly ideas of independence and unity, as a means to limit the power of the monarchy.<sup>110</sup> They admired the technological progress of the West and

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<sup>106</sup> For Brown’s argument see: B. Milton-Edwards, *Contemporary Politics in the Middle East* (Qld: Polity press, 2006), 26. For Zubaida’s argument see *Ibid.* and: S. Zubaida, *Islam, the People, and the State: Political Ideas and Movements in the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1993), 121.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, The change to western attire, as well as the removal of the Hijab, was very popular amongst the new, secular, generations. In her bibliography, Mernissi eloquently describes how modern changes in Morocco encouraged many young men to be strong nationalists in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and how her life as a young girl in a Harem was transformed. She explains how the new generation who received an education and were employed by the state became the trustees of the new nation state and were, at least publically, secular. See: F. Mernissi, *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood* (Jackson, TN: Perseus Books Group, 1995), 29-50.

<sup>108</sup> S. Zubaida, *Islam, the People, and the State*, 125.

<sup>109</sup> Both Ataturk and Reza Shah rejected employing the community leaders of the old regime as executives, thus creating a new elite class with enough economic resources to receive modern education. J. M. Landau, *Ataturk and the Modernization of Turkey* (London: BRILL, 1984), 45-57. A. Banani, *The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941* (CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 28-41.

<sup>110</sup> H. E. Chehabi, *Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism: the Liberation Movement of Iran under the Shah and Khomeini* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1990), 13-19.

recognized that industrialization and the formation of a Constitutional monarchy was the only way to reconcile the tension between the ruling system and the public.<sup>111</sup> About eighty years after the defeat of the Safavids, the Qajar monarchs imported western military technology and sent students to European countries to be trained in how to operate this technology.<sup>112</sup> The importation of modern military technology, and the training of military personell in the West, facilitated further intellectual encounters between Iran and Europe. Iranian intellectuals, who became familiar with the concept of limiting the power of a ruling system to the peoples' will, spread ideas about nationalism and mobilized the public to oppose the ultimate power of the Qajar Monarchs.<sup>113</sup>

Iranian intellectuals were attracted to socialism, as they believed accommodating socialism in state politics could guarantee the political success of Constitutional monarchy.<sup>114</sup> Their opposition to absolute monarchy provided a means of articulating loyalty to home, as well as a means to unite the masses, both of which were required factors for a modern state. Their encounter with modern western political theories and their opposition to the Qajar resulted in the Constitutional Revolution in 1909.<sup>115</sup> The formation of the Parliament (Majles) was the most evident political outcome of this revolution. Although Reza Shah resumed the monarchical ruling system in Iran, he fulfilled many of the goals of the Constitutional Revolution during his time.<sup>116</sup> Primarily, he established ministries of education and justice and imported secular education and judiciary systems from European countries - mainly France - to Iran.<sup>117</sup>

Similarly, in nineteenth century Europe, Jewish intellectuals were inspired by the ideals of nationalism.<sup>118</sup> Many of them were assimilated within their country of residence and became passionate nationalists.<sup>119</sup> Contrary to those intellectuals who were promoting assimilation, many Rabbis were hostile to the assimilation of Jewish communities and strived to protect Judaism from the perceived infiltration of secularization.<sup>120</sup> The failure of secular politics to end political discrimination against Jewish communities in Europe gradually attracted Jewish intellectuals in support of nationalist Zionism as an alternative to European secular nationalism.<sup>121</sup> Throughout Europe, Jewish communities debated

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<sup>111</sup> A. Mirsepassi, *Democracy in Modern Iran: Islam, Culture, and Political Change* (NY: NYU Press, 2010), 169.

<sup>112</sup> A. Gheissari, *Iranian Intellectuals in the Twentieth Century* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 1998), 26-33.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> A. Kasravi, *History of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution*, trans. by E. Siegel (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publications, 2006), vol. I, 230-250.

<sup>116</sup> Touraj Atabaki and Erik Jan Zürcher, *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernization under Atatürk and Reza Shah* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2004), 137.

<sup>117</sup> E. Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions* (NY: Princeton University Press, 1982), 60-67.

<sup>118</sup> Michael Greatz, "Jewry In the Modern Period; The Role of the 'Rising Class' in the Politization of Jews in Europe," in *Assimilation and Community: the Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, eds. Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 156-177.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> J. Kornberg, *Theodor Herzl*, 115-130.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

the processes of secularization with a particular focus on the role and position of messianism.<sup>122</sup> Zionism incorporated tradition into modern politics and mobilized the Diaspora by creating a sense of synchronic history, which revived the glory of the past and planned for the future. Early Zionism was secular with a strong messianic ideal. This characteristic made Theodor Herzl's Zionism a strategically valuable ideology in territorial arguments about a modern Jewish state.<sup>123</sup> By the late nineteenth century, many European Jewish intellectuals and Rabbis fervently supported Zionism and attributed the charisma of the theological messianic figure to Herzl and his vision of Zion.<sup>124</sup> Gradually secular Zionism came to include religious messianic discourse and articulated a messianic theology within the context of national identity.<sup>125</sup>

In the early twentieth century, the territory that later became the modern state of Israel was under British rule. The Ottoman Empire lost its power due to its extensive borrowing from the West and continual warfare with Great Britain, France, and Russia.<sup>126</sup> Capitalist ambitions instigated a fierce competition between colonisers over Middle Eastern territories and resources. Moreover, as Beverley Milton-Edwards notes, the capitalist adventure of European businessmen and investors occurred before the formal colonial history of the Middle East.<sup>127</sup> By the mid nineteenth century these entrepreneurs had developed strong economic ties with local businessmen and had drawn the attention of Ottoman officials to the Western market. This competition resulted in the establishment of weak colonial states which were intended mainly to create a harmonious economic system and to facilitate easier transportation of goods and resources.<sup>128</sup>

Competition between France and Britain, the focus of the Ottoman Empire on modernizing the military instead of liberal democracy, the growth of urbanization, and the colonial states' inability to satisfy the demands of the newly settled urban population were all issues that contributed to the failure of direct colonial states in the region.<sup>129</sup> The public and intellectuals separated the colonizers from the colonized, rejected colonization but fervently supported nationalism, thus, transformed the power structure in the region. During the First World War, Britain's better strategic position and technological superiority allowed it to defeat the Ottomans. However, British mismanagement of the Arab revolt in 1919 and the unstable post war situation weakened their authority as direct rulers of the governments in the Middle

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Robert S. Wistrich and David Ohana, *The Shaping of Israeli Identity: Myth, Memory, and Trauma*, (London: Routledge, 1995) vol. 1, Issue 3 of *Israel Affairs*, 30.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>126</sup> Jan-Erik Lane and Hamadi Redissi, *Religion and Politics: Islam and Muslim Civilization* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2004), 133.

<sup>127</sup> B. Milton-Edwards, *Contemporary Politics in the Middle East*, 19.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid, 19-28.

East.<sup>130</sup> Controlling the colonial states became more challenging and the economic recession of the 1930s added another layer to the complex political situation. Soon after the establishment of secular colonial states in the region the excluded religious institutions re-organized and became more involved in public politics.<sup>131</sup>

Nationalism challenged traditional definitions of identity and it became difficult for new states in the Middle East to define a nation. The new framework of a secular government contradicted the faith-based arrangement of the old political system, thus the new states were only able to vaguely define the national identity of their citizens.<sup>132</sup> The European concepts of territorial boundaries and of statehood were not meaningful for Middle Eastern communities who had understood their relationship with the Ottoman Empire based on tribal and religious identities. Terms such as geographical boundaries, shared languages, ethnicity, national loyalty, or even secular administration were confusing for the newly separated tribes.<sup>133</sup> The establishment of these new regimes raised questions and debates about the nature of the sovereignty of a state and its relationship with its citizens. Ultimately they faced challenges with regard to the appropriate agents to implement national laws and the broader political identity of colonial states. In order to respond to the emerging anti-colonial resistance, colonial states heavily relied on their armed forces or foreign support to ensure the interests of the political elites of these new regimes.<sup>134</sup>

In the Middle Eastern political context, the state of Israel took form through the tireless endeavours of Zionists who encouraged a revolutionary nationalist movement.<sup>135</sup> Their efforts bore fruit following the Second World War when Israel became an official member of the United Nations. The Zionist movement was an example of the growing nationalism that challenged the colonial ties between the ruling elite and religious figures and reconstructed these traditional relationships through the framework of a nation state.<sup>136</sup> Strong political ties with the business community and the resultant mismanagement of political and economic affairs made British colonial forces in Palestine the target of fierce opposition.<sup>137</sup> In addition to domestic political uprisings, colonial forces faced challenges in creating a comprehensive governing system for an ethnically and religiously diverse population under a nation state. The notion of modern nationalism entered into the literature of resistance against post-colonial governments. Zionist groups such as Haganah and Irgun viewed British colonialism as

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>131</sup> R. A. Hinnebusch, *The international politics of the Middle East* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 3.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> For the disintegration of Ottoman Kurdistan see: D. McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 89-95.

<sup>134</sup> The colonial state in Palestine faced resistance from right-wing Zionists. W. R. Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, the USA, and Postwar Imperialism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1986), 430.

<sup>135</sup> W. Laqueur, *A history of Zionism* (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2003), 92-97.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> D. Gregory, *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004), 232.

inadequate and untrustworthy and strongly advocated nationalism.<sup>138</sup> They believed that only through the consolidation of military power around a nationalist state, the formation of a judiciary, and the proliferation of secular education, could people experience political emancipation. Ironically, the nationalists' demand for sovereignty over a geographical territory was rooted in the literature of European nationalism and Giuseppe Mazzini's view of "every nation one state".<sup>139</sup> Contrary to the situation in Europe during the late nineteenth century, where the notion of nationalism became the dominant political discourse, the transformation of the social and political environments in the Middle East was instigated by opposition to colonial states.<sup>140</sup>

Walter Laqueur, in his comprehensive study of the history of Zionism, notes that in the early years of the twentieth century European Jews rapidly adopted modernity and were integrated within the new urban cultures.<sup>141</sup> Modernity became more popular amongst urban European Jews than the traditional apolitical culture of the Diaspora.<sup>142</sup> Those who supported assimilation rejected Jewish messianism and traditional Jewish communal life.<sup>143</sup> Gabriel Riese, a well-known Jewish scholar at the time and a strong supporter of assimilation in Germany, considered those German Jews who opposed assimilation as criminals.<sup>144</sup> Riese praised the Jewish community in Russia, who viewed communism as a messianic revolution and rejected supporters of Zionism for adopting romantic views about the future of Jewry.<sup>145</sup> At the time, traditional Jewish messianism was incapable of attracting audiences in either Europe or Russia until the late nineteenth century when Herzl staged his Zionist campaign.<sup>146</sup>

Herzl's campaign itself was the result of the modernization of Jewish tradition. In Europe, the early modernist Jews of the eighteenth century began this process. A century after Baruch Spinoza's (1632-1677) de-sacralization of sacred texts, Moses Mendelsson translated the Pentateuch and founded the tradition of *miskilim* (rationalism). Prussian intellectuals encouraged *Haskalah* (enlightenment) and the abandonment of pre-modern traditions.<sup>147</sup> The process of modernization continued despite increased anti-Semitism during the last decades of the nineteenth century. The modernization of Europe emancipated Jewish communities with rapid social integration and increased participation in economic activity. As the pre-modern monarchical and feudal systems lost power over the state there were challenges to political legitimacy within the modern states. The vacuum that the pre-modern political system had created regarding the mediating agencies caused these challenges. Jewry's longing for

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<sup>138</sup> W. R. Louis, *op. cit.*, 430.

<sup>139</sup> R. Sarti, *Mazzini: a life for the religion of politics* (NY: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1997), 2.

<sup>140</sup> E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: programme, myth, reality* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 110.

<sup>141</sup> W. Laqueur, *op. cit.*, 8.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> H. L. Goldschmidt, *The Legacy of German Jewry* (NY: Fordham Univ Press, 2007), 76.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>147</sup> D. Cohn-Sherbok, *Judaism: History, Belief, and Practice* (NY: Routledge, 2003), 254.

emancipation and equal participation in modern European states gradually faded as anti-Semitism became established within the states' institutional structure. In addition, the focus on individualism, the capitalist economy and the growing power of states posed a threat to the legitimacy of non-Christian religious communities. Increasing anti-Semitism pressured many to relocate to the United States of America or other places such as Palestine.

Herzl (1869-1904), who was influenced by ideas of modernity and Jewish emancipation, travelled throughout Europe to convince European Jews that emancipation under the rule of others was an illusion.<sup>148</sup> He argued that only after the formation of an independent state could the survival of the community be possible. Herzl became a messianic figure who worked incessantly to see the dream of a Jewish state in Israel materialize.<sup>149</sup> As Laqueur notes, traditional messianic ideas were proved to be ineffective in presenting a national identity for the diverse Jewish communities.<sup>150</sup> During the world wars and when the United Nations passed the Declaration of Independence there was hardly a Zionist who doubted that the messianic age was at hand and that the gathering of Jews from Galut (exile) would bring redemption.<sup>151</sup> However, the combination of Zionism and messianism was a later development during the Revolutionary Phase.<sup>152</sup> Early Zionism was secular, with a strong messianic utopian vision for territorial sovereignty. As the situation in Europe changed, increasing anti-Semitism and European secularization instigated reactions from Rabbis who viewed Zionism and the formation of a Jewish state as a solution to the integration of Judaism within western cultures.<sup>153</sup> The failure of secularization in ending political discrimination against Jewish communities gradually gave momentum to a Zionist revolution.

Theological debates, both in support and in opposition to the process of secularization, became common within the Jewish communities of Europe. Zionism incorporated traditional messianism into modern politics and motivated the Diaspora by creating a sense of nationalism and reviving the glory of ancient Israel. Zionism interpreted messianism within a political context in the attempt to establish a political system based on the idea of redemption and connected it to modern nationalism. The re-reading of Jewish history in the context of self-determination as a nation and de-legitimizing other accounts of history mediated the intrinsic contradictions between the two discourses. The nationalist interpretation of history required radical changes in traditional theological discourse that defined history as a divine mystery. In pre-state Jewish theology, history was understood to be a linear path of actions and reactions between the divine and humanity. The cause of historical events could only be understood

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<sup>148</sup> S. Beller, Herzl (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2004), 128-134.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid, 128.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> W. Laqueur, *op. cit.*, 338

<sup>152</sup> R. Munk, Hermann Cohen's Critical Idealism (Coneta di Macomb: Springer, 2005), 210.

<sup>153</sup> W. Laqueur, *op. cit.*, 338.

when they passed through the process of theological appropriation. The appropriation of history into the great divine plan was the main tool by which divine determination materialized in messianic theology in which history documented God's purpose and was directed towards a divine goal.

Gradually, secular Zionism included religious messianic discourse and idealized a religio-political state. Eastern European Jewish communities attributed the charisma of traditional messianic figures to Herzl and fervently supported him and played a pivotal role in this process.<sup>154</sup> While the assimilationists regarded the traditional messianic responsibilities of the Jews to be Jewish in exile, Zionists presented an alternative vision of how to keep tradition from totally assimilating with other cultures. Assimilationists' aversion to Zionism gave Zionists a platform to highlight the importance of a state. They emphasized that those who stayed in their land, waiting for the Messiah, were waiting for "pot flesh" and not the real Messiah.<sup>155</sup> In this process the nationalistic interpretation of messianism provided a political legitimacy that defined a theological "truth" in a revolutionary discourse. Nationalism became infused with the meaning of messianism and was placed as the premise for interpreting messianic literature and ideology.

### Theological Background of Iran's Revolutionary Messianism

While the political situation in Europe sped up the success of Zionism, Iran faced different challenges following the Qajar's encounter with European secular states in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>156</sup> As Houchang Chehabi notes, the sense of continuity in Iran's history as a nation is similar to some European countries.<sup>157</sup> European secular states, specifically France, significantly influenced Iranian intellectuals' understanding of a state. However, in the first parliament after the Constitutional Revolution there was no indication of the secular identity of the state. On the contrary, the political participation of the Constitutionalist ulama (jurisits) guaranteed their involvement in the parliament. The importation of the printing machine from Europe and growing literacy made access easier to various state ideologies, such as socialism and communism, and provided intellectuals with alternative viewpoints about the limits of the power of a monarchy. Ideas such as gender equality and a Marxist economy supported the yearning of many Iranians for economic and political justice.<sup>158</sup>

Following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in today's Turkey and most of the Middle East, the Qajars decentralized politics proved to be an ineffective system for assimilating the population within a nation

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<sup>154</sup> R. Patai, *The Messiah Texts* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988), xviii.

<sup>155</sup> W. Laqueur, *op. cit.*, 397.

<sup>156</sup> Nikki R. Keddie and Yann Richard, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 26-27.

<sup>157</sup> H. E. Chehabi, *op. cit.*, 7 and 30-67.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*



state. The monarchy was weakened due to a lack of professional human resources needed to operate imported western military technology and the new industrial machinery.<sup>159</sup> Intellectuals wrote of the wars, economic devastation, and symbolized public opposition against the tyranny of the monarch.<sup>160</sup> They contended that modern nationalism provided a means for articulating the feeling of loyalty to the home country.<sup>161</sup> They admired liberal democracy in the west and recognized that industrialization and the formation of a nation state, even in the form of a Constitutional monarchy, was the only answer to the question of nationalism and development.<sup>162</sup> Iran experienced its first modern revolution in the early twentieth century (1906), just a year after the Russian revolution (1905).<sup>163</sup> Iranian intellectuals advocated ideas of independence and national unity and voiced the necessity of a Parliament.<sup>164</sup> The formation of the Parliament (Majles) was the most evident political outcome of the revolution that intellectuals passionately supported.<sup>165</sup>

During the time of Reza Shah (1925-1944), he established and developed efficient state institutions. Although the state was not politically democratic the existence of a functioning central state terminated political disorder around the country.<sup>166</sup> During the Pahlavi era, the two world wars radically changed the political situation in Iran.<sup>167</sup> Following the forced abdication of Reza Shah in 1941 his son Mohammad Reza became the King. Mohammad Reza Shah followed his father's path in the modernization of Iran but the state became more politically exclusive when Mohammad Reza Shah refused to accept the participation of other political parties such as the Communist Party (Tudeh).<sup>168</sup> Public support of the nationalization of oil and the demand for political freedom resulted in a growing unrest in Iran in 1953 when the Prime Minister of the time, Mohammad Mossadeq, opposed the Shah's oil policies.<sup>169</sup> Mohammad Reza Shah left the country but returned after a coup and increased the suppression of all political parties and organizations.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Michael E. Bonine and Nikki R. Keddie, *Modern Iran: the Dialectics of Continuity and Change*, (NY: SUNY Press, 1981), 160-162.

<sup>160</sup> Qajar's loss of geographical territory during the war with Russians enraged the intellectuals. M. Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East: A Political History Since the First World War* (NJ: University of California Press, 2005), 30-31.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>162</sup> A. H. Hairi, *Shiism and Constitutionalism in Iran: a Study of the Role Played by the Persian Residents of Iraq in Iranian Politics* (London: London, Brill Archive, 1977), 20-21.

<sup>163</sup> H. E. Chehabi, *op. cit.*, 12.

<sup>164</sup> N. R. Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion in Iran: the Tobacco Protest of 1891-1892* (NY: Routledge, 1966), 70-99.

<sup>165</sup> Janet Afary, Kevin Anderson, and Michel Foucault, *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seductions of Islamism* ed. Kevin Anderson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 72-73.

<sup>166</sup> For a detailed study of the Tehran Conference see: P. D. Senarclens, *Yalta* (Piscataway: Transaction Publishers, 1988), 13-22.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>168</sup> For a detailed study of Iran's nationalization of oil and the overthrow of Prime Minister Mossadeq see: D. N. Wilber, *Regime Change in Iran: Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran, November 1952-August 1953* (Nottingham: Spokesman Books, 2006), 52-59.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

The masses were mobilized around issues of economic injustice and access to political power. Intellectuals and religious institutions united in support of ending the monarchical rule and political injustice. The Shah's economic reforms that had targeted the traditional market sector also reduced the power of religious institutions. Their loss of power united them with other forces who criticized the Shah for the mismanagement of the oil budget and his strong pro-American politics. However, neither of the revolutionary forces demanded forming a pre-modern Islamic state or dismantling the bureaucratic institutions. In effect, the difference was over the order of religion and politics in the state. At the time of the 1978-1979 revolution, the revolutionary interpretation of Shi'a messianism operated as an inclusive ideology and constructed a collective anti-monarchical and anti-imperialist identity that attracted individuals regardless of their religious commitment or political orientations.<sup>171</sup> In the long battle among various religious and secular forces over the form and nature of a nation state, the idea of an Islamic Republic seemed a position of compromise. Religious and non-religious groups have contradicted each other over the arrangement of politics and religion in the body of a state for over a century in Iran and their conflict has shaped the country's contemporary political history. At the centre of these debates rest the differences between a modern and the pre-modern Shi'a understanding of political legitimacy and messianism.

In debates over the role of religion in politics in the Constitutional Revolution, a split developed between two major Shi'a Jurisprudential schools over the source of governmental legitimacy and individual political participation within a conditioned monarchy during the time of Qeybah (occultation).<sup>172</sup> The Usulies (Principialists) justified the revolution and the Akhbaris (Traditionalists) rejected it. Both used Shi'a messianism to support their political positions.<sup>173</sup> While Usulies like Ayatollah Nai'ni attested that in the time of occultation establishing an administration to end the tyranny and the oppression of monarchy was obligatory, the Akhbaris disputed this.<sup>174</sup> The Akhbaris supported an absolutist monarchy and were concerned over securing the ulama's status in the judiciary and education systems.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> A. Rahnama, *Pioneers of Islamic Revival; Studies in Islamic Society* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994), 208-240.

<sup>172</sup> Even though Akhbari and Usuli schools have conflicted over jurisprudential issues since the time of the Safavids, it was during the Constitutional Revolution that the political implication of their jurisprudential difference extended to modern political topics, primarily nationalism. For Ayatollah Khui's argument on the issue see: A. A. Sachedina, *The Just Ruler (al-sultan al-dil) in Shi'ite Islam: the Comprehensive Authority of the Jurist in Imamite Jurisprudence* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), 161.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Hairi focuses on the responses given by the Constitutionalist ulama on the issue of a participatory political system. N. R. Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion in Iran: the Tobacco Protest of 1891-1892* (NY: Routledge, 1966), 70-99.

<sup>175</sup> Mirza Fathali Akhundadeh (1812- 1873), who was educated in Russia, was the first intellectual who devoted his career in promoting a new view of literature by writing novels focusing on social issues. F. Vahdat, *God and Juggernaut: Iran's Intellectual Encounter with Modernity* (NY: Syracuse University Press, 2002), 43-48.

Constitutionalist ulama like Na'ini in Najaf and Ayatollah Mahallati declared their solidarity with the revolutionaries by calling for the formation of a parliament as a religious duty for the ulama.<sup>176</sup> They argued that the lack of political and economic justice in the time of the Qajar was extensive and obeying the monarchy should be forbidden. During the time of the occultation it was the duty of the Ulama to ensure the execution of justice, thus they considered the formation of a parliament to be the most practical representation of justice in the absence of a divine government.<sup>177</sup> In opposition to Na'ini, Seyyed Kazim Yazdi, an absolutist and Akhbari, claimed that taking sides with the revolutionaries in their call for the deposing of the Shah was an "irreparable loss [in Islam] and cannot be indemnified except by the coming of the twelfth Imam".<sup>178</sup> Nai'ini strongly supported the idea of revolution and rejected the idea of the rule of the ulama in the absence of the twelfth Imam. He announced "the opposition [to the Constitutional revolution] thinks that Tehran is the district of the Twelfth Imam, and it is the period of Ali Ibn Abi Talib's rule, and the people are attempting to interfere in his rightful leadership. I wish it could have become clear that Tehran is neither the sacred district of the Imam nor does anyone want to usurp the Imam's authority. The people's representatives only want to curtail oppressive rule".<sup>179</sup> In addition to Na'ini another prominent Shi'a Ayatollah, Mirza Hasan Shirazi, who had issued a fatwa against Tobacco concession in 1891-1892, fervently supported the revolution based on Shi'a messianic views. In his fatwa against the Tobacco concession he had announced "today the use of tunbaku or tobacco in any form is reckoned as against the Imam of the Age".<sup>180</sup> His fatwa sparked a national campaign and provoked a civil uprising against the concession. This influenced the royal court of the Qajar and forced Naser-e din shah to terminate it.<sup>181</sup> From this year on, national independence entered public political discourse, and Shi'a modern messianism for both Constitutionalists and Absolutists resonated as the ideal of national independence.<sup>182</sup>

Sheikh Fadhlollah Nouri and his followers were Absolutists who disagreed with the Constitutionalists over parliamentary authority. They forbade the support of the revolution. Nouri contended that Constitutionalism was a western idea that was incapable of managing Iran's affairs.<sup>183</sup> He remained loyal to the monarchy and opposed the Constitutionalists. In his sermon against the nationalist's proposal of state law, he said:

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<sup>176</sup> A. H. Hairi, *Shi'ism and Constitutionalism in Iran*, 108.

<sup>177</sup> Hairi disagrees with Keddie in considering the motivation of the Constitutional Revolutionists ulama to be solely self orientated or institutional. *Ibid*.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid*, 159.

<sup>179</sup> Nai'ini, 'Tanbih', in *Ibid*, 208.

<sup>180</sup> J. D. Groot, *Religion, Culture and Politics in Iran: from the Qajars to Khomeini* (London; I.B.Tauris, 2007), 175.

<sup>181</sup> N. R. Keddie, *op. cit.*, 84.

<sup>182</sup> Hamid Enayat, 'The Debates Over the Constitutional Revolution', in *Expectation of the Millennium: Shi'ism in History*, eds. Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr and Hamid Dabashi (NY: SUNY Press, 1989), 311.

<sup>183</sup> Ali Gheissari and Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Democracy in Iran: History and the Quest for Liberty* (NY: Oxford University Press US, 2006), 28.

“The principal party of this game-Constitutionalism- was played by the erroneous groups [i.e. the non-Muslim citizens and most probably the Babis] in order to escape from the four definite provisions which are made for those who renounce Islam. What a wrong idea! What a [set of] vain thoughts! The house [i.e. the territory of Islam] has a lord and the religion has [its] master - Oh, heretics! If this state law is in conformity with Islam, it is not possible to include equality in it, ... See how the master of the Shari’ah has granted you honors because you have been embellished with Islam. He has granted you privileges, but you deny them by saying that you must be equal brothers with Zoroastrians, Armenians and Jews; God’s curse may be upon those who approve this [equality]- Sheikh Fadhlollah Nouri.”<sup>184</sup>

The absolutists maintained their dominance over Shi’a institutions and as Said Amir Arjomand notes, they gathered power in the first years after the revolution.<sup>185</sup> Neither group at the time believed in the idea of Jurisprudential Leadership. Those who opposed the revolution remained loyal to the monarch and later quietists. The fragmentation of these ideological positions intensified under the semi-secular rule of the Pahlavi, which influenced Khomeini’s theory of Jurisprudential Leadership. Khomeini’s modern interpretation of Shi’a messianism relied on arguments put forth by the Iranian Shi’a ulama of the Constitutional Revolution.<sup>186</sup> His theory contradicted the concept of an Islamic Republic with regard to the power structure of republican politics but it could not prevent the incorporation of secular nationalism into Shi’a messianic discourse. Jurisprudential Leadership, as a political position, is merely functional in a state with a secular institutional foundation. It channels the power into a hierarchical system for the establishment of a religious monarchy. The traditional Shi’a religious institution that had withstood attaining administrative power, and reacted to the formation of a parliament, due to the traditional Shi’a messianism, supported Khomeini during the 1978-1979 revolution.

Khomeini praised Nouri for his vehement hostility towards a secular parliament and agreed with him about limiting the power of parliament to Islamic Shari’a. Much like Nouri, Khomeini, focussed on the Shah’s economic and political policies, which directly targeted the interests of the Shi’a institutions but did not reject a monarchical system. In fact, he advocated a similar political system in his theory.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid, 325.

<sup>185</sup> Arjomand argues that the Ulama’s main concern was how to protect Islam. S. A. Arjomand, *Authority and Political Culture in Shi’ism*, (NY: SUNY Press, 1988), 180-81.

<sup>186</sup> Gholam Ali Haddad-Adel, a prominent fundamentalist figure (who was the speaker of the Parliament of Iran from May 2004 – May 2008), said “the great founder of the Islamic revolution of Iran called JLSH the political philosophy of the revolution and it is our honour that a call from him [the JL] is the ultimate verdict for the society”. <http://www.irna.ir/View/FullStory/?NewsId=703934> (Haddad-Adel’s daughter is married to Khamenei’s second son) also see Assadollah Askar-Oladi, I am not an Emperor, an interview with the Parliament News 04 October 2009. <http://www.parlemannews.ir/?n=4201>

<sup>187</sup> R. Khomeini, *Islamic Government: Governance of the Jurist*, trans. by H. Algar (Tehran: The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini’s Works, International Affairs Department) <http://www.al-islam.org/islamicgovernment/>

Khomeini's hostility towards Pahlavi's secularization plan in the early years of his political activities never extended to claiming political authority for the ulama. Rather, it was the nationalist revolutionary readings of Shi'a messianism that gave rise to his revolutionary position during the 1970s.<sup>188</sup> Ayatollah Boroujerdi, the founder of the Qom theological institution, believed in the separation of religion and the state.<sup>189</sup> His position gave the Qom centre an autonomous status.<sup>190</sup> This apolitical position provided Khomeini with the possibility of developing his theory, which relied on the philosophical foundation of a monarchy.

Had it not been for the efforts of socialists like Jallal Al-Ahmad and neo-Marxist idealists like Ali Shari'ati, Khomeini's notion of an Islamic Republic would not have been comprehensible as a practical leadership model. Jallal Al-Ahmad, who was a prominent critic of the Shah's policies in the 1960s, presented a metaphoric interpretation of Islam. Calling Islam the core identity of Iranians he argued that the Mahdi's "popularity arises from him being the hope and refuge of believers against the insurmountable inequities of the world".<sup>191</sup> He considered individual "Westoxication" and the gaze to the West to be the source of Iran's failure in attaining independence.<sup>192</sup> Al-Ahmad argued that return to Islam and the rejection of the western concept of a secular state were the solution for preserving Iran's cultural identity.<sup>193</sup> This neo-Marxist reading of Shi'a myths, specifically Shi'a messianism, by non-clerical intellectuals such as Shari'ati and Al-Ahmad situated Khomeini's theory at the centre of Iranian intellectual's anti-monarchical idealism and reconceptualised the notion of political legitimacy in Shi'a theology. Khomeini's vision for an Islamic Republic was a combination of the Constitutionalists' understanding of messianism and the traditionalists view on political legitimacy.<sup>194</sup>

In a similar fashion, theological debates that centred on Revolutionary Messianism within Zionist ideals demonstrated theological tensions over the establishment of a Jewish state during the time of waiting for the Messiah. Although European secular intellectuals planted the seed of Zionism, the movement did not gain widespread popularity until Heredi Jewish Rabbis established the Sephardi, a religious party that unified the Zionist movement under David Wolffsohn (1856-1914).<sup>195</sup> Russian Jews who joined the Zionist movement and attempted to bring about the messianic age relied on the success of the communist revolution in Russia and nationalist revolution in France. They were passionate, filled with

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also see: M. Moaddel, *Islamic modernism, Nationalism, and Fundamentalism: Episode and Discourse* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 261.

<sup>188</sup> B. Moin, *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1999), 74.

<sup>189</sup> Samih K. Farsoun and Mehrdad Mashayekhi, *Iran: Political Culture in the Islamic Republic* (London: Routledge, 1992), 40.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> Nikki R. Keddie and Yann Richard, *Modern Iran*, 180.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>193</sup> Al-Ahmad vehemently argued against Westoxication which he considered to be a malady that had absorbed Iranians and alienated them from their identity. *Ibid.*

<sup>194</sup> In the Islamic Republic, the idea of the Guardian Council is inferred from Sheikh Fadhlollah Nouri's Jurisprudential Constitutional regime. *Ibid.*

<sup>195</sup> T. M. Endelman, *Comparing Jewish Societies* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 23-28.

revolutionary zeal and strongly nationalist.<sup>196</sup> Yoram Shapira argues that the formation of Zionism was predominantly the result of Jewish disappointment with modernity, a direct response to anti-Semitism.<sup>197</sup> Their disappointment united various groups and combined Russian patriotism, French romanticism, and neo-Marxist idealism in Zionism. The nationalistic and inclusivist narrative of messianism and re-reading of the role of individuals in the fulfilment of the messianic age compromised the disagreements between secular and religious Zionists, and between the Heredi Jewry and Zionists. Disagreement between Heredi rabbis and Zionists had its roots in their understanding of Jewish messianic theology. Heredi messianic literature lamented their lost autonomous political identity and yearned for the end of suffering and exile.<sup>198</sup> In addition to political identity, which they defined in intercommunity politics for centuries, the apolitical messianism that they expressed in poetry and literature allowed them to form a Heredi community in exile that hoped for divine intervention in the restoration of their political identity.<sup>199</sup>

Michael Myers and Vardit Ravitzky both emphasize the importance of acknowledging apolitical messianism as the dominant form of pre-modern Jewish political philosophy.<sup>200</sup> Myers identifies three key issues that are important to understanding the relationship between messianism and Jewish national ideas at that time of the rise of Zionism. The three issues comprised of the main purpose of the messianic promise to end the exile, that human intervention could play a role in the ending of exile, and the discussion of the means through which Jews should terminate the exile and the nature of the post-exile society.<sup>201</sup> A Rabbi's response to these questions determined his political position as either a quietist or an activist messianist. National Zionism was different from the active messianism that flourished during the Bar Kochba (132–136 CE) revolution and later in Rabbi Zvi's (1658-1718CE) movements. The pre-Zionist active messianism was a Universalist philosophy, as Benjamin noted, with the potential to be a political ideology but it did not offer any practical political plan for changing the existing situation or the structure of a possible political system. Therefore, the politically passive form of messianism remained the dominant theology in the pre-modern era when Jewish communities faced the challenges of exile.<sup>202</sup> These challenges were evident in the historical messianic figures such as Bar Khochba. As Richard Marks notes, the image of Bar Khochba in traditional literature is an example of

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<sup>196</sup> In the 1904 conference, when the assembly passed the bill and reluctantly accepted Uganda as a temporary solution, the East European Jews left the auditorium. Zeev Jabotinsky, a fervent Zionist and a prolific journalist rejected the idea of forming Israel in Uganda. M. Alon, *Holocaust and Redemption* (Bloomington, IN: Trafford Publishing, 2004), 162.

<sup>197</sup> T. M. Endelman, *op. cit.*, 23-28.

<sup>198</sup> R. G. Marks, *Image of Bar Kokhba-Pod* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2004), 1.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>200</sup> Jonathan Frankel and Universi'ah ha-'Ivrit bi-Yerushalayim Makhon le-Yahadut zemanenu, *Jews and Messianism in the Modern Era: Metaphor and Meaning* (NY: Oxford University Press US, 1991), 4.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>202</sup> Pre-modern Jewish literature records many accounts of individuals who claimed to be the divine saviour. David Alroy, a self proclaimed Jewish Messiah who lived in the twelfth century in the Kurdistan of Persia, motivated the Jews of northern Iran to support him in his revolt against the caliphate. H. Lenowitz, *op. cit.*, 81-93.

pre-revolutionary active messianism.<sup>203</sup> In response to Yehoshafat Harkabi's *The Bar Kochba Syndrome* (1981), Marks explains that the response of the traditional rabbinic literature to Bar Kochba's revolution was a combination of condemnation and admiration.<sup>204</sup> He mentions two other thinkers who studied Bar Kochba's images in Jewish history. The first is Scholem, who argued that the Rabbis did not respond positively to Bar Kochba's revolution, although he remained a hero-Saint amongst the people. The second is Yegael Yadin, who claimed that Bar Kochba's image was one of a national hero - "a people's hero".<sup>205</sup>

For Heredi Jews of Eastern Europe the issue of a state in Israel was theologically problematic. Returning and living in the holy land was considered a religious mitzvah, but having a state contradicted their passive messianism that focused on preserving the Mitzvot- Halakhah and viewed Zionism as a betrayal to the spiritual mission of Jews. Moreover, forming a state threatened the main duty of Jewish scholars within the Heredi communities. This duty was to define everyday life matters within a greater divine historical scheme. The view that history solely involved the unfolding of the transcendent plan contradicted active participation in the state building process. A main doctrine of Heredi Judaism, states that the will of God rules the universe and all aspects of human life; the course of history is to prove that his will supersedes all earthly powers. When this divinely determined "time" comes, God will send the saviour to the world. God determines the time and nature of this promised divine redemption and human intervention disturbs the divine balance. During the early 1920s however, many Heredi Jewish Rabbis who had previously expressed opposition to Zionism and the formation of a nation state became more lenient towards the building of settlements in Israel.<sup>206</sup> It was ultimately the issue of security and the devastating political situation in Europe that made them alter their strong ideological positions in opposition to the Zionist movement. Specifically, following the Arab riot of the late 20s and the murder of three Rabbis in Safed, Jerusalem, and Hebron they became more cooperative with the Zionists.<sup>207</sup> During the 1950s, a new theological development began with Rabbi Kook and his interpretation of the messianic age. His Revolutionary Messianism bridged the gap between the theological value of the land and nationalism and gave momentum to religious Zionism.

### Rabbi Kook

Rabbi Kook (1865–1935 CE) is rightly called the theological founder of religious Zionism. In his writings, he developed the image of the state of Israel as a progressive redemptive move towards the

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<sup>203</sup> R. G. Marks, *op. cit.*, 10.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>206</sup> A. Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism* (Chicago; University of Chicago Press, 1996), 46-50.

<sup>207</sup> T. M. Endelman, *op. cit.*, 410.

fulfilment of Jewish messianism.<sup>208</sup> Suggestive of his fervent support of Zionism, Rabbi Kook called the state building process “the beginning of redemption” and the “age of return” to the holy land.<sup>209</sup> He argued that the return to Israel and the formation of a state was not primarily an intervention by human agents in the divine plan, but a direct order from God.<sup>210</sup> Kook contended that the Torah offers a template for modern Zionism. In response to anti-Zionist Heredi Rabbis like Margolis, who accused Zionism of “forcing the end”, Kook said: “No, it is not we who are forcing the end but the End that is forcing us”.<sup>211</sup> Ravitzky writes that in the religious Zionism that Kook developed he viewed the religious concepts of redemption and repentance within a Zionist nationalist ideology. Thus, instead of presenting purely a theological critique of apolitical messianism Kook offered a political ideology.<sup>212</sup>

Kook’s view was an example of the integration of national politics and theology that has remained significant in Israeli politics.<sup>213</sup> Religious Zionism with a messianic approach towards the state compromised the existence of a secular state. He argued that the religious identity of the state should be expressed through a strong independent and moral state rather than within an Heredi theocracy.<sup>214</sup> He took a stand against Heredi anti-Zionist Rabbis because of their opposition to the formation of the state.<sup>215</sup> He also opposed secular Zionists who insisted that Zionism was a secular nationalist movement.<sup>216</sup> He did not accept that there were any inconsistencies between a secular nationalist movement and Jewish messianic ideology. Rather he considered the existence of one to be the necessary pre-condition of the other. Kook’s religious Zionism has been taught in Yeshivot around Israel and in the late 70s became the main ideology of the rightwing Gush Emunim.<sup>217</sup> This party had a major influence on Israeli politics and society after the Six Days War. Many of the leaders of today’s religious parties have been educated within this system.<sup>218</sup>

Kook’s religious Zionism responded to the issue of state authority during the time of state building in Israel. While pre-state messianism emphasized the coming of a divine saviour as a response to suffering and exile, it conditioned the possibility of a messianic age to the unification of the Jewish people and their political sovereignty over the Holy Land. Whether the issue was returning to the Holy Land or the implementation of justice, it aimed to unite people for the realization of a progressive messianic state.

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid, 57.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid, 80.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> Idith Zertal and Akiva Eldar, *Lords of the Land: the War over Israel’s Settlements in the Occupied Territories, 1967-2007* (NY: Nation Books, 2007), 202.

<sup>212</sup> A. Ravitzky, op. cit., 48-56.

<sup>213</sup> A. M. Garfinkle, *Politics and Society in Modern Israel: Myths and Realities* (NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000), 77.

<sup>214</sup> A. Ravitzky, op. cit., 89.

<sup>215</sup> J. Wertheimer, *The Modern Jewish Experience: A Reader's Guide* (NY: New York University Press, 1993), 165.

<sup>216</sup> A. Ravitzky, op. cit., 93 and 79.

<sup>217</sup> D. Newman, *The Impact of Gush Emunim: Politics and Settlement in the West Bank* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1985), 14, 27-28.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.



Revolutionary Messianism, based on which Kook formulated his religious Zionism, emphasises economic justice, political justice and independence as the prerequisite for the coming of a messianic age. In pre-state messianic theology, the characteristics and attributes of the divine saviour are all indicative of the political authority of a leader, which in the Revolutionary Phase were idealised in the vision of a state.

## Conclusion

For Iranians and Jews, Revolutionary Messianism provided the possibility of understanding modernity politically and theologically. At a political level, revolutionary ideology held the possibility of emancipation and theologically messianism promised a progressive step towards the fulfilment of utopian promises. Both groups understood messianism in light of modernity as a revolutionary politics that expressed messianic hope in the context of national self-determination, thus, uniting various groups. While in the West the non-religious revolutionary disassociated individuals from their religious communities, Revolutionary Messianism in both cases strongly bound individuals to their religious communities which theologically and politically committed them to state building. All other responses to colonization, from secular political authority or apolitical messianism, lost legitimacy. The centralization of state power affirmed the dominance of this politically inclusive and theologically exclusive ideology. Iranian and Jewish religio-political systems emerged because of the political and religious implications of modernity and in response to the colonization of the Middle East. In both cases their encounters with regional colonization united religious and non-religious groups and individuals around the ideas of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism.

In both cases, the inclusion of theology in revolutionary idealism was partly a response to regional colonization that both Iranian and Jewish clergy supported in order to prevent the integration of traditional power structures and values in secular states. The pre-state apolitical messianism theologically connected Iranians and Jewry to the states by mediation, as the authority of the clergy was not derived from their connection to a ruling power, but rather from their commitment to religious laws. According to apolitical messianism the concept of a politically legitimate state during the time of waiting was absurd. The existing political rules under which they lived were only conditionally accepted and their authority was limited to communal and family affairs. By connecting messianism to nationalism, they eradicated the possibility of apolitical messianism. Active messianism, which played a central role in legitimating the revolutions and post-revolutionary states, became a dominant theology. Revolutionary Messianism that encouraged Iran and Israel to form a state to fulfil a divine promise and sustain divine sovereignty over human life was inherently nihilistic and considered no option for resolving the politically oppressive situation. In the Revolutionary Phase, while revolutionary idealism

created a politically inclusive environment, active messianism limited theology in two ways. First, it rejected the existence of an apolitical theology and second, it limited both theologies to redemption theologies.

The aim of this chapter has been to elaborate on the relationship between messianic theology and national unity in the Revolutionary Phase. It explored how in both cases Revolutionary Messianism was an example of Walter Benjamin's re-reading of Marx's historical materialism in which he suggested theology as the answer to Marx failure. In the case of Israel, a pre-state political authority created an inclusive religio-political system in which secular movements could gain momentum. Rabbi Kook's view of a state and its messianic functions, in which the glory of the divine saviour was manifested in the body of the state, created a compromise political culture in the Revolutionary Phase, giving rise to a vibrant party politics. Revolutionary Messianism offered an inclusive political sphere for the development of collective national identity that included both the non-religious and religious voices. It formed a revolutionary identity for the members and attached their religious identity to the sacredness of the land, making it the dominant criteria for acknowledging an individual's rights. The theological and political utopia expressed in their revolutionary ideals formed a political theology that affirmed the legitimacy of the revolution through a web of collective political and religious histories.

In Israel and Iran, the revolutionary narrative of messianism achieved political legitimacy and positioned theology in everyday politics by separating its values from its traditional context and attaching to it new values, such as nationalism, for the purpose of revolutionary unity. When theology was reduced to one messianic narrative, it could become a means at the service of politics. Positioning messianism as the central narrative of legitimacy for revolution associated the historical realities of a political situation with messianism and the idea of progress to a theological utopia. The inconsistency between traditional messianic utopia and real politics, however, could potentially result in the de-sacralization and secularization of theology. The next chapter explores the link between politics, the diverse theological interpretations of religious texts, and the suppression of alternative readings of a sacred text in the Revolutionary Phase. Contrary to western institutional secularism in which states have progressed towards a pluralistic understanding of religion, in Iran's and Israel's post-revolutionary states Revolutionary Messianism dominated political debates and informed each state's national religious identity. The establishment of a post-revolutionary state equally affected theology as it transformed the revolutionary into a securitized narrative of messianism.

## Chapter 2- Hermeneutics of Sacred Texts and Political legitimacy

### Introduction

Discussions in this chapter address the transformations of Revolutionary Messianism into a state political ideology with reference to Israel's and Iran's political and historical contexts. It studies the relationship between hermeneutics of sacred texts, clerical authority, esoteric and legalist approaches to messianism and state authority in both cases, in order to clarify the relationship between messianic idealism and nationalism in the Revolutionary Phase. This chapter suggests that this relationship characterizes the states' position regarding the intrinsic contradictions between the theological legitimacy of traditional messianism, which intrinsically negates the establishment of a political state, and the political legitimacy of the post-revolutionary states. In the Revolutionary Phase, messianism offers a modern political response to the oppressive situation and mediates inherent tension between a pre-state theological concept of messianism and nationalism. In this phase, revolutionary idealism transforms messianism into the primary theological foundation for the legitimacy of a nationalist state. The success of the Revolutionary Phase, the legitimizing foundations for the states' bureaucratic system, and the power of religious institutions all rest upon the relationship between esoteric and legalist messianism, and between the theological and the modern political concept of authority.

This chapter contends that in both cases, in the Revolutionary Phase, the interpretation of messianism did not explicitly address the question of the role of religion in the post-revolutionary state but clearly asserted the goal of the Revolutionary Messianism in structuring a state based on religious legitimacy. The nationalist characteristics of these revolutions could adapt the bureaucratic structure of a nation state but the state legitimacy remained conditional upon the outcome of the dynamics between nationalism and messianism. The legitimization of the revolutions in the pre-state interpretation of messianism rested upon the approach that the revolutionary ideologues adopted towards the traditional understanding of sacred texts and the agent of messianism.

The aim of this chapter is to show that in both cases, Revolutionary Messianism elicited a new theology based on traditional understanding of authority. To elaborate on the impacts of this theology on the concept of political authority in the phase of State Building, it is necessary to analyse the traditional Shi'a and Jewish theological notions of authority. In the section on hermeneutics, leadership, and agency, this chapter demonstrates that first, both traditions are flexible in generating revolutionary hermeneutics, yet maintain their authority and the authority of the text. Secondly, that the hermeneutics of both traditions create religious elites whose power is hermeneutic and is related to their interpretation of traditional materials. Thirdly, the importance of this understanding of authority is that it is never ideally fulfilled and the authority of the clergy is never complete. However, because of the open structure of

these hermeneutics, the clergy can claim religious and political authority. The theological treatment of the concept of authority has had immense weight in the political legitimacy of both states. In the section dealing with the esoteric and the legalist aspects of authority, this chapter presents an external framework to examine these traditions, rather than an internal one, as this provides a more analytic approach to clarifying the relationship between theological and political authorities in these states.

### Hermeneutics of Sacred Texts

In their core philosophy Jewish and Shi'a messianism rely on the monotheistic cosmology in which divine determination instigates creation. The destiny of humanity, conceived as the ultimate goal of creation, is decided by God whose absolute power over time designates the course of history. This homocentric view of the world necessitates constant divine intervention in human affairs. As the ultimate product of creation, humanity's innate ability in producing languages distinguishes their status from other creatures. Language is the intermediate agency for human involvement in the history determined by God. In this system, prophets are thus human agents whom God chose for their infallibility in understanding and transferring the divine message in words. According to this cosmology, no deviation from the original message occurs in the prophets' understanding or in the transference of the message into linguistic form. The trustworthiness of the prophets in this process is the dominant feature for their selection, the main characteristic of Abrahamic prophets, and highly emphasized in the narratives of their life stories. Their trustworthiness preserves the sacredness of the message in its original totality and in sacred texts.

In both traditions sacred texts are the vessels that contain the complete codes of creation and provide answers to existential and philosophical questions, but their comprehensive understandings are conditional upon human existence on earth which obstructs deciphering the definitive meaning of sacred texts. They acknowledge that on two levels the limited knowledge of humans creates a barrier for comprehending the true meaning of a text; first, in the process of understanding the texts, and secondly in transferring its message. To reduce the effect of these barriers a specialized group, the clergy, developed linguistic strategies to study sacred texts. The traditions acknowledged the fallibility of the clergy and their legitimacy was dependent on scholarly endeavours, the commitment expressed in their scholarly work, and their absolute loyalty to religious laws.<sup>219</sup> The term in Persian and Hebrew for meaning, *Ma'na*, indicates discovering the enclosed message of the text. The tradition of *tafsir* (interpretation) includes contextualising sacred texts in order to generate the theological continuity and

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<sup>219</sup> M. A. Fishbane, *The Midrashic Imagination: Jewish Exegesis, Thought, and History* (NY: SUNY Press, 1993), 52.

legitimacy of historical events. They explain monotheistic cosmology and human/God relationships in this synchronism.<sup>220</sup>

Rabbis and Shi'a ulama developed theological frameworks, implemented disciplinary strategies, and established religious educational institutions while simultaneously emphasising the education of individuals in formal reading.<sup>221</sup> Although in the pre-Revolutionary Phase, one of the main tasks for rabbis and the ulama was instruction in the rituals of formal reading of sacred texts, they did not place emphasis on the teaching of exegesis or methods of interpretation in their public teachings. This was due to their belief that the meaning of a sacred text could not be disclosed by any individual or institution and comprehending its hidden meaning required discerning the net of meanings in symbols and signs that construct the texts. In the pre-Revolutionary Phase, the clergy did not apply informal reading, understanding a text as an indispensable component of reading, to sacred texts and religious institutions discouraged it.<sup>222</sup>

The formal and ritualistic reading of the sacred text defined its distinct status in these religious traditions and stressed the status of agents who discerned the connotation of symbols and articulated the layers of meanings of the texts. The aim of studying sacred texts was to elaborate God's political sovereignty by creating a semiotic association between language and history. Therefore, contextualization and interpretation constructed the political philosophy of Jewish and Shi'a theological thoughts. In addition to primary sources, recognizing the "true" meaning of a text in both traditions requires studying the existing interpretations of previous scholars within the fixed premise of a divinely determined history.<sup>223</sup>

This approach distinguished divine sovereignty from human political authority, negated the latter and praised the former. Mastering the skills of understanding a sacred text gives the agents of interpretation a position of trustworthiness in using exegesis for decoding history. As Michael Mayer notes,

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<sup>220</sup> In the Shi'a tradition, the letters of the Qur'an are also meaningful and not all of them can be understood by humans. The true meaning of the Qur'an is only clear to the infallible twelve Imams and not ordinary humans. A normal reader understands "Ma'nay-e Sourī- manifest content of the text and the Ma'nay-e Batenī- the hidden meaning of the text is only clear to religious scholars. Faur presents a similar argument in Jewish Rabbinic tradition and notes that the authority of a rabbi is bound to the text by the "synchronic" relation between the two that makes them a "conceptual unit". J. Faur, *Golden Doves with Silver Dots: Semiotics and Textuality in Rabbinic Tradition* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986), xv.

<sup>221</sup> Reuven Firestone, *American Jewish Committee*, and Harriet and Robert Heilbrunn Institute for International Interreligious Understanding, *Children of Abraham: An Introduction to Judaism for Muslims* (Jersey City, NJ: KTAV Publishing House Inc., 2001), 58. Not far from Babylon the first Shi'a theological school was formed: A. A. Sachedina, *Islamic Messianism: The Idea of Mahdī in Twelver Shi'ism* (NY: SUNY Press, 1981), 32.

<sup>222</sup> Ha-qora (to read) in Hebrew and Qara't (reading) in Persian from the root Q-R-A (to read) has a different meaning from Khandan (to read) in Persian and the phrase (Bal Qurah) in Hebrew refers to the master of reading the Torah. The root (QRA) means the formal reading of the sacred text. In this form of reading the process includes purification rituals, dressing, and prosody. The book itself is sacred and should be opened only when one has followed specific rituals. The place, time, and the correct manner for the formal reading are explained in religious texts and commentaries. In the post-revolutionary Iranian literature, the word Qara't also refers to the state's specific political understanding of din (religion).

<sup>223</sup> See the Corbin's study on Shi'a hermeneutical methodology in the two texts *The Compendium of Esoteric Doctrines and The Source of Light*, and *Treatise on the Knowledge of Being* in Henry Corbin 'Shi'i Hermeneutics: Jami' al-Asrar wa Manba' al-Anwar and Risalah fi Ma'rifat al-Wujud; Two Texts from the Baghdadi Period (725/1351-52 C.E)', in Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Hamid Dabashi, op. cit., 188.

throughout the pre-modern era, Jewry believed that history was the place for God to determine the fate of his chosen people and Jewish historiography was a means through which they explained the will of God in diverse approaches.<sup>224</sup>

Revolutionary Messianism deconstructed this understanding of history, human/God relations, and the process of interpretation. The translation of apolitical messianism into a revolutionary idealism led to the expression of messianic hope in nationalistic discourse and introduced the new factor of a state to their messianic theologies. It de-validated the differentiation between God's sovereignty and human authority. Messianism in the pre-state phase solely explained the reasons for the failure to preserve the political authority of the religious communities, and recognized the will of God as the sole redeeming factor. The revolutionary idealism, however, transferred the responsibility of changing the course of history from God to humans. Instead of emphasising the importance of individual loyalty to a collective religious identity in delegitimizing the authority of a ruling political system, it focused on constructing a collective religio-political identity and a legitimate political system.

The synchronic relationship between history and the people strengthened the authority of religious history through religious Zionism in Israel and an Islamic Republic in Iran. During the Revolutionary Phase this encouraged moderation with others within the revolutionary community. Although politically pragmatic, Revolutionary Messianism in both cases nationalised religious laws of purity, diet, initiation, rites of passages, and inter-communal economics. Revolutionary Messianism propagated an idealist vision of a religio-political state that could effectively replace the traditional agent based system. In this idealist vision, the state replaced the traditional religious agents for monitoring social and individual behaviours and implementing religious disciplinary methods. This state centred narrative of messianism negated the possibility of alternative theological interpretations, became the dominant messianic theology, and the only political discourse that could effectively limit the boundaries of interpretation. Revolutionary Messianism unified political groups around the goal of enacting economic and political justice and directed the interpretation of sacred texts towards legitimizing a state.

Revolutionary Messianism fused various perspectives on the conditions and characteristics of the time and the agent of messianism and attributed a sense of sacredness to both geographical territory and the ideal of a utopian post-revolutionary state. This nationalist feature made the fulfilment of messianic promise conditional on human involvement in real politics. Although varied in symbols and structure, the theologians either developed interpretations of sacred texts which were adoptive of the nationalist discourse or limited their apolitical interpretations to the current political situation. In both cases these narratives were supportive of revolutions, extremely nationalistic, and emphasized at the core the

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<sup>224</sup> M. A. Meyer, *Ideas of Jewish history* (NY: Behrman house Inc., 1987), xii.

centralization of religious and political powers. Because of their inclusive nature, nationalist narratives attained public support and simultaneously extended the influence of religion from politicians and theologians to law makers, non-religious political groups, and apolitical religious citizens.

Revolutionary Messianism transformed the traditional limitations of interpretation and placed the sacredness of land as an indispensable element for deciphering the messianic history. It deconstructed the traditional relationship between text and history that in the past had attributed to the text a higher status. Therefore, during the Revolutionary Phase an interpreter became an agent in the service of revolutionary ideals. The revolutionary interpretation of sacred texts thus focused on the relationship between the state, messianic history, and God. Theologians who had depicted historical moments in sacred texts in order to explain God's power in determining the course of events, in the Revolutionary Phase, conceived them as evidence of the role of the community in changing its political situation. The theological disciplinary functions of sacred texts became extended to forming idealist visions of a utopian egalitarian state that would enforce religiously legitimate economic and political policies and encourage individual loyalty. Contrary to the pre-state narratives, in which passing the boundaries of human authority resulted in detrimental consequences, Revolutionary Messianism praised the formation of a powerful central state and the involvement of individuals in the revolution.

### Leadership and Agency

In Jewish and Shi'a messianism, the Messiah's lineage affirms his commitment in protecting the religion of his fathers. In Judaism, the Messiah is a descendant of King David through his paternal line.<sup>225</sup> His lineage is accompanied by distinguished qualities that identify him as the indisputable legitimate political authority.<sup>226</sup> In Shi'ism, the divine saviour, the Mahdi, is the descendant of Mohammad through his paternal line, and will appear at the end of time to bring justice.<sup>227</sup> He will be successful because God designates his "time" and guides him to rule. He will not receive revelations, however, with his infallible and divine knowledge he will open the gate of knowledge and renew his ancestors' religion.<sup>228</sup>

In both cases, traditionally, messianism created a unique approach towards the rise and decline of political powers in relation to religious identity, political authority, and economic prosperity. Relying on a complex net of historical, linguistic and political symbols, it outlined this political identity by defining the boundaries of the domestic and regional activities of the ruling power. Apolitical

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<sup>225</sup> Anointing was a ceremonial initiation to kingship in ancient Israel. In the Torah Samuel anointed Saul (Sam Chapter 10-1) and David (Sam Chapter 16-11-13)

<sup>226</sup> He is a righteous man, anointed by God (in later literature by David), and is the legitimate leader of all Jews. Jeremiah (33:15-17) – (30:21) and (23- 5)

<sup>227</sup> Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr and Hamid Dabashi (1989), op. cit., 7-12. Also see: I. M. Lapidus, op. cit., 95. For the Persian lineage of the Shi'a divine saviour see: M. Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practice* (NY: Routledge, 2001), 151.

<sup>228</sup> N. Tabassi, [Chashmandazi be Hokumat-e Mehdi] A Perspective towards the Mehdi's Government (Qum: Imam Khomeini's Institute of Research, 2007), 160-188.

messianism acknowledged and promoted a distinction between political authority and political legitimacy. Political authority, being both temporary and vulnerable, was illegitimate due to its human nature. The political legitimacy that belonged to God was both permanent and victorious and was expected to be implemented by the Messiah in its complete form. In the time of waiting, the clergy could enjoy political and religious legitimacy but were denied political authority. This contrast shaped the discourse of messianism and articulated the position of religious institutions in relation to the existing political system. They expressed their yearning for the time when these two would consolidate under the rule of the Messiah in religious literature. Religious institutions justified their apolitical position by expressing faith in the divine promise and used this interpretation as a survival and political strategy.

As discussed above, in the Shi'a tradition of Tafsir (interpretation) the interpreter is an object of the text and exploits linguistic methodologies to describe verses in the Qura'n in relation to the contextual conditions in which the verse was revealed (Sha'n-e Nozol [conditions of revelation]).<sup>229</sup> Since the medieval period, the ulama used Tafsir to attest to the existence of a divine saviour who would end the political oppression of the Shi'a community under the Sunni rule. A treatise by 'allama al-Helli, a scholar in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, explained the necessity of Imamate, a divinely guided political leadership, as a requisite in human creation.<sup>230</sup> He categorized two "major" and "minor" premises to verify that the Imam was one of the pillars of faith for Shi'a Muslims and to corroborate the existence of the twelfth Imam.<sup>231</sup> The major premise in his argument referred to the realm of the metaphysics arguing that the Imam was the only means to fulfil the aim of divinely designated history.<sup>232</sup> The minor premise of the argument referred to politics and the necessity of social order. Like Thomas Hobbs, al-Helli considered a determined leadership essential for avoiding political and social anarchy.<sup>233</sup> Lutf (God's blessing), al-Helli noted, is the first proof for the existence of the twelfth Imam, since conforming to a political authority directs people to good behaviour.<sup>234</sup> Hence, the political authority of any appointed leader is limited relative to the Imam, whose sovereignty is "incumbent" and able to recognize all aspects of evil. Al-Helli suggested that in the case of a concealed Imam the possibility of the end of occultation at any moment was a transcendental blessing for the faithful.<sup>235</sup> Following a similar line of argument, Tabatabai, a prominent Alim (pl. ulama) in contemporary Shi'ism, stated that whether the twelfth Imam is known

<sup>229</sup> M. B. Hojjati, *A Research on The Holy Qura'n* (Tehran: the Office of publishing Islamic culture, 1999), vol. xiv, 50-65.

<sup>230</sup> 'Allama al-Hilli, 'On the Imamate and Ijtihad', ed. and trans. by John Cooper, in *Authority and Political Culture in Shi'ism* ed. Said Amir Arjomand (NY: SUNY Press, 1988), 240-250.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid, 241.



or concealed, a world cannot exist without the presence of an Imam to comprehend the true meaning of religious laws and protect it.<sup>236</sup>

In both cases, Revolutionary Messianism bridged the gap between these traditional narratives and nationalism, responded to the question of the legitimacy of a nation state, and directed the involvement of clergy in politics. In Iran, it temporarily resolved the historical disagreements between Absolutists and Constitutionalists and between Absolutists and nationalists by presenting an idealistic vision of an Islamic state in the 70s. The majority of ulama believed that any attempt in forming an Islamic state in during the time of the occultation was forbidden. Prior to the revolution, one of the main reasons why the ulama supported the monarchy was to avoid participation in politics. The ulama considered political participation an attachment to worldly affairs that disturbed the course of the divinely designated history.<sup>237</sup> Contrary to the monarchical system, the formation of a parliament and a bureaucratic state would coerce them into being involved in politics as citizens and affect their power status as sources of emulation for the faithful.<sup>238</sup>

The formation of a nation state could be an opportunity or a potential threat to the ulama's religious legitimacy. Theologically, in a monarchical system there is no concept of citizenship and in fact, it discourages the political participation of the public. A culture of political participation would extend the responsibilities of the ulama as sources of emulation in giving advice and passing fatwas (religious creeds) in support of or against political groups. This political responsibility could associate the clergy to the centres of power, spread worldly ideologies in theological studies, and open a door for economic and political corruption. The question of political participation and the limits of the power of the ulama in the post-revolutionary state, however, remained unanswered during the Revolutionary Phase. Khomeini's theory of Jurisprudential Leadership offered a solution to the ulama's hesitation to participate politically as it idealized the accommodation of state policies within a religious legal framework.<sup>239</sup>

Amongst Jewry, Ashkenazi rabbis encouraged the issue of political participation and presented theological justification for a nation state by messianism. Scholem distinguishes three schools within Rabbinic Judaism: conservative, restorative, and utopian.<sup>240</sup> Conservatives assume a legalistic approach

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<sup>236</sup> Allameh Seyyed Muhammad Husayn Tabatabaei (1892-1981 CE). See; Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr and Hamid Dabashi, *op. cit.*, 164-166.

<sup>237</sup> Similar to the Jewish movements, most of the Shi'a messianic movements were opposed by the legalist scholars. Many of Shi'a mystical schools were uprooted by mass killings of their followers by the ruling power. The Shi'a legalist ulama in Iran, however, supported passive Messianism and adopted a quietist approach towards politics.

<sup>238</sup> For the uprising of Sarbadaars and the end of the Mongol era (14<sup>th</sup> century), William Bayne Fisher, Peter Jackson, and Laurence Lockhart (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Iran: The land of Iran, Vol. 4: The period from the Arab invasion to the Saljuqs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 34.

<sup>239</sup> R. Khomeini, *op. cit.*, 144-145.

<sup>240</sup> G. G. Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (Berlin: Schocken Books, 1971), 3.

and have contributed to the development of Halakhah, Restoratives strive for reviving the glorious era of religion, while utopians work for a utopian future. The conservatives, Scholem notes, did not play a part in the development of messianic ideas within Judaism, rather, they remained protective of Jewish life in exile.<sup>241</sup> Scholem views the advancement of one group over others as closely connected to the changes in the European political environment and the emerging rationalism of modernity during the Middle Ages.<sup>242</sup> He argues that the advancement of the restorative messianic ideas of Maimonides during the medieval period was closely connected to the situation of life in exile, however, the growing rationalization of Europe completely eradicated the restorative approach and interlinked Jewish messianic ideas with utopianism. According to Scholem, Hermann Cohen was the prominent scholar on messianism whose writings explicitly demonstrate the influence of modernity on messianic ideas.<sup>243</sup> Cohen, in his essay titled “The Human Face, Anticipating a Future Prior to the Past”, rejects the idea of a restorative messianism and argues that Jewish messianic views should focus on the human universal condition and its redemption.<sup>244</sup>

In Iran Revolutionary Messianism advanced the political status of the revolutionary ulama over both apolitical ulama and other revolutionary groups. Jewish Revolutionary Messianism attributed political power to culturally religious but politically secular intellectuals. The political environment in which these ideas flourished amongst Jewish intellectuals in Europe defined Revolutionary Messianism as a non-religious political ideology. The growing anti-Semitism in Europe and the rise of Nazism and Fascism that endangered the life of millions of European Jews saw the failure of enlightenment philosophy in fulfilling its egalitarian promise, but it did not impede the development of secular politics. Even Benjamin, who channelled messianic hope to political activism, remained faithful to secular politics. However, in both cases, Revolutionary Messianism identified a distinguished class for clergy based on individual support of the revolution rather than their religious authority. This was a radical change in the traditional role of the clergy and the first step for their involvement in state politics.

In both cases, supporting the revolution was an individual responsibility that indicated both political and religious commitments. The strong religious component of Revolutionary Messianism also attributed a revered characteristic to the groups who supported the revolution and endeavoured for its success. The assumption that a revolutionary’s life is devoted to serve a metaphysical goal and to emancipate a group or a society from oppression attributes a non-beneficial character to the revolutionaries. Consequently, the revolutionary community evolved into a harmonious political unit with short term strategic alliances. Revolutionary Messianism in both cases mediated the intrinsic tension between the mythological

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<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>244</sup> Hermann Cohen and Almut Sh Bruckstein, *Ethics of Maimonides* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 127.

language of sacred texts and political language of nationalism. Contrary to what Benjamin believed, in neither of these cases could Revolutionary Messianism be limited to liberating the mythological language of messianism through a historical process, or rationalising messianism in ethical language as Hermann Cohen argued.<sup>245</sup> In the political context Revolutionary Messianism translated the mythological language of redemption to the liberation of individuals from political oppression by commitment to preserving the revolution's nationalist idealism. This ideology that attributed a sacred character to the revolution affected and was affected by the two main schools of esoteric and legalist messianism.

### Esoteric Messianism versus Legalist Messianism

The traditional framework of theological interpretation of sacred texts in both religions designated a space for the subjectivity of the interpreter. By indicating this space in naming a religious concept or elaborating on the meaning of sacred texts, the subjectivity of the object and the subject were connected and crystallised. It acknowledged the paradox between the context-bound meaning and the "true" meaning of the texts free from any context. As a result of this acknowledgement interpreters were permitted to use logic and philosophy as a means of interpretation.<sup>246</sup> Revolutionary Messianism redirected the main focus of the interpretation of messianism by creating a unanimous subjectivity for interpreters who eagerly supported the formation of a state. Their interpretation of messianic literature thus became an attempt to discern a national history, which was described in the text, and to understand the past in relation to their political present.<sup>247</sup> Attributing a mythological value to the revolution was the result of the merging of the legalistic and mystical schools of interpretation. Legalistic and mystical approaches towards hermeneutics of sacred texts share some fundamental premises in their scholarship, nonetheless their understandings of messianic doctrine are often contradicting. They both agree indisputably that the divine source of sacred texts grants a divine character through a mystical dimension, to the texts. They disagree however, over the conditions of interpretation, the limits of human knowledge, and the methods through which the secrets of sacred texts could be realised.

The legalists, who formed the majority of the clergy, interpreted the texts in relation to the existing historical situation and employed philosophical methods within the framework of religion to

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<sup>245</sup> M. Kavka, *Jewish Messianism and the History of Philosophy* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 122.

<sup>246</sup> Daniel H. Frank, Oliver Leaman, and Charles Harry Manekin, *The Jewish Philosophy Reader* (London: Routledge, 2000), 245. R. J. Abisaab, *Converting Persia: Religion and Power in the Safavid Empire* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 14.

<sup>247</sup> Shlomo A. Deshen and Charles S. Liebman, *Israeli Judaism: the Sociology of Religion in Israel* (NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1995), 204.

contextualise the divine order for human life.<sup>248</sup> The process of legalistic interpretation that they used for explaining religious laws incorporated the appropriation of historical events within a greater religious context.<sup>249</sup> Similarly to the Jewish tradition, the legalist Shi'a ayatollahs were not involved in esoteric interpretation of messianic debates.<sup>250</sup> In both traditions, mystic commentaries regarding messianic theology have been either apocalyptic or utopian but all considered humans to be involved in the divine plan, or at least capable of deciphering its time and condition. During the pre-state phase, legalists opposed the mystic messianic claims, generally cooperated with the ruling power, and were involved in communal political affairs. They explained their social and at times political, involvement as an inevitable task that ensured the survival of the community and the religion. They acknowledged God as the sole agent of history and human involvement in changing political authority unproductive, even destructive. Pragmatic legalistic scholars debated the textual meaning of sacred texts in relation to the context of the socio-political situation.<sup>251</sup>

Parallel to the legalist school in both traditions a mystical school of messianism had been developed where scholars viewed sacred texts as windows to the divine.<sup>252</sup> Mystics attempted to look into the divine through the text rather than appropriating sacred texts to the context of the socio-political situation for legal injunctions. For them, a sacred text did not only reveal law for human life, it also revealed the divine in its mystical code.<sup>253</sup> The mystical approach signified a legalistic component and their followers were committed and at times were even more passionate than the legalists, about religious regulations. They were esoteric and attempted to discern the signs and conditions of the time of the messiah by using semiotics and numerology.<sup>254</sup> Their followers assumed their masters to have a direct relationship with the divine through their visions and dreams. Mystics considered commentaries of previous mentors as sacred and attributed numerical value to these texts to predict the time of the coming of the messiah.<sup>255</sup>

The "codes" in sacred texts represent an enigmatic "true" meaning and could only be interpreted by an agent with specific characteristics whose endeavour in understanding the divine fostered a metaphysical relationship between the agent and God. The relationship between the inner and literal meanings of sacred texts had political and social implications for the understanding of messianism. In the pre-

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<sup>248</sup> N. S. Hecht, *An Introduction to the History and Sources of Jewish Law* (London: Oxford University Press, 1996), 121. S. A. Arjomand, *Authority and Political Culture in Shi'ism* (NY: SUNY Press, 1988), 14.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>252</sup> H. Corbin, *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1978), 124. G. G. Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, ed. Raphael Jehudah Zwi Werblowsky, trans. by A. Arkush (NY: Princeton University Press, 1991), 177.

<sup>253</sup> G. Scholem, *Ibid.*, 65-69. E. Yar-Shater, *The Cambridge History of Iran, Volume 4*, eds. R. N. Frye, William Bayne Fisher, Ilya Gershevitch, Ehsan Yar Shater (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 445.

<sup>254</sup> Gr. Scholem, *Ibid.*, 231.

<sup>255</sup> For the similar methods that Iranian Sufis used in their analysis of the texts See: J. Baldick, *Mystical Islam: An Introduction to Sufism* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2000), 65.

Revolutionary Phase, in times of political upheavals when the community desperately needed a messiah, mystics became charismatic/messianic leaders and heroes. They had idealist visions, practiced asceticism, and preferred revolution to reform. They were not pragmatic in their political view towards political authority and were either completely apolitical or revolutionary. The coexistence of these contrasting modes of thinking was possible due to the apolitical messianic doctrine of the legalists. It provided a pluralistic theological sphere where these schools could flourish and a space for the articulation of their views in writings. Being connected to the political authority by association freed both mystics and legalists from concerns over appropriating communal laws to state politics. The mystical component of the text and the significance of the agent of interpretation are fundamental reasons for the existence of these schools.

The esoteric philosophy that mystics have recorded in literature heavily relies on attributing sacredness to great mentors.<sup>256</sup> Traditionally, they reported the miraculous deeds of their prominent religious figures and discouraged intellectual debates. In the Shi'a mystic tradition of Erfan and the Jewish tradition of Kabbalah, mystics are regarded as holders of the divine light (blessing) on earth.<sup>257</sup> In some literature the existence of the world in each generation relies on the existence of a group of mentors whose status guarantees the continuation of God's blessing, thus their knowledge is superior to humans.<sup>258</sup> This outlook is the outcome of their messianic doctrine and their expression of redemption in one human agent. For mystics who believed in a messiah who is a male and well-versed in the texts, means potentially each prominent mystic master could have divine attributes. In both traditions, the records of their miracles indicate an innate capability that resembles the prophets' trustworthiness in transferring God's message in its totality.<sup>259</sup>

Kabbalah, the mystic sect of Judaism, flourished in the early thirteenth century and was led by Rabbi Isaac ben Abraham who criticised the teaching of Law of the legalist Maimonides.<sup>260</sup> The Kabbalist sect developed through the attempts of Nachmanids and followers of Girona during and after the thirteenth century. It created a religious system based on personal knowledge and experiences of wise sages.<sup>261</sup> The flourishing of various Jewish mystic traditions from the sixteenth century until the eighteenth century was the result of the autonomy that the Jewish communities experienced during this time and

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<sup>256</sup> G. Scholem, *Ibid*, 37-39. E. Yar-Shater, *Ibid*, 449.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid*, 89-91.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>259</sup> For Iran's mystic tradition: L. Ridgeon, *Morals and Mysticism in Persian Sufism: a History of Sufi-futuwwat in Iran* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2010), 47-48. for Jewish mystic tradition, Kabbalah, see: A. Y. Finkel, *Selections from Classic Kabbalistic Works from Razi'el Hamalach to the Present Day* (NY: Targum Press, 2002), 88-91.

<sup>260</sup> J. Dan, 'The 'Unique Cherub' Circle: a School of Mystics and Esoterics in Medieval Germany', in *Texts and Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Judaism*, ed. Klauss Hermman (Tuebingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), vol. 15, 224.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid*, 236 for the Girona School of Jewish mysticism see: Michael Gerli and Samuel G. Armistead, *Medieval Iberia: An Encyclopaedia* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2003), 585.

ended with the division of Poland between Russia, Prussia, and Austria in the late eighteenth century.<sup>262</sup> As the Jewish centres declined in Spain and Germany, the centre of Jewish mysticism was transferred to Poland.<sup>263</sup> Moshe Idel notes that early Hassidic masters in the late seventeenth century were influenced by Moshe Cordovero's understanding of prayer in metaphysical terms, the spread of divine blessing through letters and the sounds of the prayer.<sup>264</sup> Influential mystics like Rabbi Yisrael ben Eliezer, the Besht, were recorded as masters with the power of healing that they gained from using sacred names. This approach significantly influenced Hasidism and their perception of uttering sacred names with divine power for healing through concentration and pronunciation of letters and sounds.<sup>265</sup> The nineteenth century witnessed the rise of rationalism and the spiritual traditions of Kabbalah and Hasidism were marginalised and practiced by only small groups of Jews across Europe.

Here it is worth mentioning the difference between Scholem's representation of Jewish mysticism and Moshe Idel's. To Scholem and the intellectuals of his time, all forms of Jewish legalistic and mystic traditions could flourish intellectually when the goal of Zionism would be fulfilled.<sup>266</sup> His strong nationalist sentiments shaped his view on Jewish messianism and mysticism. Moshe Idel in his study of Kabbalah writes that Scholem's definition of Jewish mysticism underestimated the anthropocentric, individualistic, and ecstatic characteristics of Jewish mysticism.<sup>267</sup> Scholem's definition, Idel notes, limited Kabbalah to the canonical, pluralistic, and less mystical forms of Jewish mysticism.<sup>268</sup> Scholem's description of the pluralistic characteristics of Zionism was in the tradition of Benjamin, Buber, Kafka and many other German intellectuals who although each analysed Jewish messianism from different angles they all agreed that it provided answers to the two threats that targeted the Diaspora: assimilation and anti-Semitism. For religiously observant intellectuals like Scholem messianism guaranteed the continuation of Jewish traditions and for the secularists like Benjamin it offered spiritual emancipation. However, in both cases they understood this continuation and emancipation to be conditional on the staging of a revolution against the apolitical messianic tradition. Scholem argued that Revolutionary Messianism offered a better environment to most apolitical mystics and Halakhah sects regardless of their political affiliation, bridged the gap between legalist and mystic messianism, and cultivated the

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<sup>262</sup> Ibid. For the influence of Lurian mysticism on Jewish messianism in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, see: *ibid*, 173. For a detailed study of the Shabbetai Tzvi movement during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, see: *ibid*, 181.

<sup>263</sup> D. S. Ariel, *Kabbalah: the Mystic Quest in Judaism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 171.

<sup>264</sup> M. Idel, *Hasidism: between Ecstasy and Magic* (NY: SUNY Press, 1995), 74.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid*, 75.

<sup>266</sup> For Scholem's view on Zionism see *Ibid*, 4.

<sup>267</sup> M. Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 65. Peter Schafer, 'Jewish Mysticism in the Twentieth Century', in *Jewish Studies at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: Proceedings of the 6th EAJS Congress, Toledo*, eds. Judit Targarona Borrás and Angel Saenz-Badillos (Boston, MA: BRILL, 1999), vol. 2, 13.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid*.

process of political unification.<sup>269</sup> Rabbi Kook's religious Zionism was an example of this pluralistic characteristic.<sup>270</sup>

Rabbi Kook's writings on the issue of the migration of secular Jews from Europe and his view on the fulfilment of Tiqun Olam (putting the world in the right order) demonstrates that the mystical power of the pre-state traditions was channelled through the theological legitimization of a political state. For Rabbi Kook the state of Israel was a preparation state for the messianic age.<sup>271</sup> The state of Israel in his view aimed to bring "the Light of Repentance".<sup>272</sup> With its redemptive nature it could fulfil the mitzvah of Tiqun Olam.<sup>273</sup> Each of these concepts had been central to different Jewish traditions. Lurian Kabbalism's concept of Tiqun Olam was associated with the Halakhik idea of repentance, and messianic ideologies that most of the other traditions shared.<sup>274</sup> Kook strongly believed in progressive messianism and considered the state of Israel to be the window of a global messianic liberation which could only materialize following the migration of Jews to the holy land and the establishment of a powerful and independent state.<sup>275</sup> He understood the completion of the messianic age to be interlinked with the ethical and political behaviour of human beings and the coexistence of the religious with non-religious Jewish migrants to Israel its theological necessity.<sup>276</sup>

The Shi'a mystic tradition is an agent based system in which comprehending the inner layer of a text through interpretation of its symbols is impossible without the mentoring of a master.<sup>277</sup> Sufi masters of the time clearly stated this theological approach in their writings that dominated mysticism in the medieval era. Farid edin Attar Neyshabouri, a prominent (Aref) mystic at the time, in his book "Tadhkirat al-awliya" (biographies of the Saints-11<sup>th</sup> century), gathered recordings of the visions and "miracles" of the mystics of his time and connected their "miracles" to their religious devotion that made their living experience infused with the longing for unity with God.<sup>278</sup> The mystics were advocates of an uncompromising faith and for them, faith superseded pragmatism.<sup>279</sup> Their devotion to the path that their mentor specified took precedence over obeying the social norms. They believed that there was a

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<sup>269</sup> Ibid.

<sup>270</sup> D. Biale, Ibid, 15.

<sup>271</sup> E. Gellman, Essays on the Thought and Philosophy of Rabbi Kook (London: Fairleigh Dickinson Univ Press, 1991), 130.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> See, for example, Joel (3:3): R. Moshe al-Dari'i used this verse in the eleventh century and convinced people to sell their properties and be ready for the Messiah on the Passover eve. The account is reported in one of the Maimonide's letters. See: H. Lenowitz, op. cit., 65.

<sup>275</sup> E. Gellman, op. cit., 130.

<sup>276</sup> He became a vegetarian because he conceived the progressive process of messianic perfection to be interlinked with the perfection of human ethics. For Rabbi Kook and his theological reasoning for becoming a vegetarian in the Messianic Age See: A. I. Kook, et al, op. cit., 22-25.

<sup>277</sup> L. Ridgeon, Ibid, 47-48.

<sup>278</sup> Farid ud-Din 'Attar was a Persian poet, Sufi, theoretician of mysticism, and a hagiographer. See: E. G. Browne, A Literary History of Persia (NY: Routledge, 1999), 506.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

possibility for establishing direct contact with the divine through visions. This was the result of the absolute faith and dedication of one's life to abstinence, in order to detach one's self from the material world.<sup>280</sup> Rationalizing religious commandments and debating Shari'a were earthly concerns and could lead one astray from the truth of the text and the light of God.<sup>281</sup>

Contrary to the legalistic ulama whose debates about Shari'a comprised the main component of their methodology, mystics believed in the concept of the "Perfect Man".<sup>282</sup> In the seventeenth century, Mullah Sadra was the founding philosopher of Shi'a mysticism in Iran. He instigated a radical change in the understanding of Shi'a messianism which had been assumed to materialize when the world was unjust and chaotic. Sadra's conception of history and thus messianism was progressive. He considered the redemption of humans possible during the time of occultation as one reached the status of a "Perfect man".<sup>283</sup> Prophets, Imams, and their companions were the examples of the Perfect Man, whose esoteric knowledge distinguished them from ordinary man.<sup>284</sup> Sadra who was significantly influenced by the Platonic idea of the philosopher king viewed redemption as only possible under a utopian (Madineh Fazelleh) political system in which the Perfect Man rules.<sup>285</sup> For mystics, the perfection of a spiritual existence was possible only by gaining esoteric knowledge.<sup>286</sup> It required detachment from the material world and contradicted political activism which was associated with the emotional attachment to an ideology. During the time of the Safavids, occasionally, the ulama declared the mystics heretics or staged attacks against them to "cleanse" the Shi'a religion from heresy. However, by the time of the Safavids the mystics enjoyed a relatively peaceful era.<sup>287</sup>

The Shi'a political culture that the Safavids (1501 to 1722 CE) implemented was influenced by their Sufi background.<sup>288</sup> Similar to other mystic traditions, Sufis highly respected their leaders and attributed miraculous deeds to them. The monarchs developed powerful theological centres for Shi'a ulama, supervised the performance of religious rituals, gave sermons, and answered political problems by revealing secrets in their dreams and visions.<sup>289</sup> The places the monarch resided, the food they touched, and the land they walked on were considered to contain healing and blessing powers. During the time of the Safavids the kings introduced mysticism to state politics and Shi'a scholars were expected to be

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<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid.

<sup>282</sup> Michael E. Bonine and Nikki R. Keddie, *Modern Iran: the Dialectics of Continuity and Change* (NY: SUNY Press, 1981), 42.

<sup>283</sup> Mullah Sadra was influenced by Ibn Arabi (1164-1240) see: Ibid, 39.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid, 40.

<sup>285</sup> Keddie notes that the urafa preferred channelling their idealism of a "perfect man" in their religious devotion and search for truth. Ibid, 41.

<sup>286</sup> S. A. Arjomand, *Authority and Political Culture in Shi'ism* (NY: SUNY Press, 1988), 94-100.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid.

<sup>288</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Hamid Dabashi, and Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr (1989), *op. cit.*, 161.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.



respected in the same manner as a Sufi monarch.<sup>290</sup> The monarchs sponsored national praying sessions for the coming of the twelfth Imam. Most sermons ended with the praying for the health and the coming of the Mahdi in order to strengthen the public power of his representatives during the time of occultation.<sup>291</sup>

Safavids considered the Shah to be a mystic with political and religious authority.<sup>292</sup> His distinguished status gave him ultimate power over the ulama, the mystics, and the public.<sup>293</sup> Shah Ismael Safavi viewed Shi'a apolitical messianism as a great political tool for igniting an uprising against the Ottoman Empire.<sup>294</sup> For the first time, Shi'a scholars, who joined forces with Shah Ismael, argued that, in the time of the occultation obeying a caliph would be haram (prohibited) which negated the existence of any legitimate Islamic state during this time.<sup>295</sup> In reality they preferred a Shi'a monarchy with close political and economic ties to and in control of Shi'a leaders and their educational centres. Safavids who claimed to follow the model of Ali's caliphate announced Shi'a Islam as the official religion and encouraged the expansion of Shi'a educational institutions.<sup>296</sup>

During the Qajar monarchy the role of the Shi'a ulama was to support the monarch and guarantee their group interests.<sup>297</sup> Contrary to the Safavids, Qajar kings did not claim divine power or a mystic lineage, and thus were less threatening to the ulama.<sup>298</sup> During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, secular nationalism achieved support from intellectuals but conservative ulama like Nouri vehemently opposed them. Following the Constitutional Revolution and the establishment of the Pahlavi monarchy, the majority of ulama attempted to maintain the status quo by continuing their existence as a social institution.<sup>299</sup> In addition to many economic and political reasons, the ulama became involved in political activism as an inevitable consequence of the Constitutional Revolution. Although the state remained a monarchy during the Pahlavi era, modern political ideas flourished in Iran.<sup>300</sup> The emergence of diverse underground political parties made the implementation of a one party political system of the monarchy vulnerable to liberal democratic ideas.<sup>301</sup> The more the Shah limited political

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<sup>290</sup> Ibid.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid, 162.

<sup>292</sup> E. Karsh, *Islamic Imperialism: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 119-120.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid, 126.

<sup>297</sup> Michael E. Bonine and Nikki R. Keddie, *op. cit.*, 47.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid.

<sup>299</sup> E. Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions* (NY: Princeton University Press, 1982), 419-450.

<sup>300</sup> H. E. Chehabi, *The Liberation Movement of Iran under the Shah and Khomeini* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1990), 54.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid.

freedom, the more revolutionary ideas spread throughout society. Religious groups became the dominant voices in the revolution due to the suppression of any other political groups.<sup>302</sup>

Revolutionary Messianism in Iran mediated the inherent tension between the legislative and mystical approaches to messianism and united both groups. Khomeini studied Islamic mysticism (Erfan) and was conscious of the mystic approaches to religious mentoring.<sup>303</sup> Although he remained a legalistic jurist his view was a combination of both traditions.<sup>304</sup> He respected Sadra's view on the metaphysical relationship between Allah and devoted ayatollahs but did not consider any exceptional innate power to be influential in the position of a Jurisprudential Leader.<sup>305</sup> He considered the clergy the best reference for political authority, not because of some mystical or direct relationship with the divine, but because he believed they had the best knowledge of religious laws, were detached from earthly interests, and could not be tempted by worldly lures.<sup>306</sup> Following the mystic tradition of the Safavids, Khomeini viewed political power a vital factor for ending the time of the occultation. He connected the coming of the Mahdi to the success of the revolution and a proceeding phase that perfected the post-revolutionary state.<sup>307</sup> For Khomeini, the legitimacy of a political system was directly related to the legitimacy of the agent of power. His theory reflected the utopian vision of the Shi'a mystics rather than a vision of an absolutist Shari'a based state. After the success of the revolution, however, he strongly increased the power of the legalist ulama, rejected esoteric knowledge, and isolated secular nationalists.<sup>308</sup> The exclusivist nature of this messianic narrative during the time of Khomeini gradually developed the theory of Jurisprudential Leadership into a theory of "absolute" Jurisprudential Leadership and altered the nature and conditions of the position.

Therefore, in both the Israeli and Iranian cases, in the Revolutionary Phase, Revolutionary Messianism was theologically dependant on messianic doctrine for legitimacy and the revolutionaries considered the success of the revolution and the establishment of a state as the only redemptive political model. A religio-political state offered a safeguard against the destruction of religious traditions and values in the process of assimilation in secular politics and culture. It validated the necessity of political participation of clergy in a state, a system that had been traditionally illegitimate. Modern politics involved the participation of religious institutions in everyday politics, thus reducing their political autonomy. While the traditional account of messianism acknowledged a commitment to religious laws and faith in God as sufficient political activities in the pre-messianic age, Revolutionary Messianism strongly encouraged

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<sup>302</sup> Michael E. Bonine and Nikki R. Keddie, op. cit., 54. Also H. E. Chehabi, *ibid*, 47. For Shariati's biography and ideologies, see: A. Rahnama, op. cit., 208-250.

<sup>303</sup> B. Moin, op. cit., 45-47.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid*, 42.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>308</sup> For Khomeini's post-revolutionary policies, see: *Ibid*, 245-250.

political activism. In its progressive assumption of messianism, it legitimized the formation of a state as the only appropriate response to political injustice. This shifting of the reference of authority to revolutionary agents made it an exclusivist theology.

In Israel, Revolutionary Messianism shifted the reference of authority from apolitical to political messianism. The agent of the messianic age became the state, and the responsibilities of the Messiah became the responsibilities of the Knesset and the judiciary system. The fulfilment of spiritual redemption and a messianic utopia were both connected to the success of the nationalist revolution and the incorporation of messianic theology into pragmatic policies. It transformed the concept of a redeeming “time” from a climatic historical event to a progressive process where the political and spiritual dimensions of redemption developed into an ideal unity within a bureaucratic political system. A consequence of ending political oppression would be the redemption of individuals and could only materialize in the context of national unity. Political redemption, as a preparatory phase of messianic redemption, would be achievable through state policies, as well as through demonstrating one’s self-disciplined commitment to the fulfilment of revolutionary goals. Therefore, from a legalistic perspective, these elements theologically justify the establishment of a nation state. Revolution itself was then a blessing bestowed by God that would hasten the progress of human history and would bring about the messianic age. Political activism substituted the mystical dimension of redemption, which had been the dominant approach in pre-modern active messianism. Revolutionary Messianism encouraged fundamental changes in the relationship between esoteric and legalistic traditions.

The pluralistic approach to messianism found in pre-state traditions incorporated aspects of extremely utopian, conservative, and apocalyptic narratives of messianism. The revolutionary agents limited this approach to their progressive utopian idealism. In Iran, they linked the legitimacy of JLSHtheory to the Shi’a mystic progressive view of history and the Perfect Man. In this interpretation of messianism human beings are not only involved but also play a major role in determining the end of history. Accordingly, Khomeini considered the ulama as the agents of political order who were responsible to implement Shari’a during the time of occultation and thus he strongly opposed apolitical messianism. In Israel, both religious and non-religious groups considered the victory of Zionism as the beginning of a distinguished era and incomparable with any other historical events in Jewish history. In both post-revolutionary states, the main political function of the revolution was to implement justice and to prepare for the fulfilment of the divine promise which only political activism could ensure.

The revolutionary context altered the role of individual clerics in traditional religious communities and encouraged the involvement of non-clerical individuals in theology. It bound the interpretation of sacred texts to a specific political idealism. In the process of interpretation, it created a symbolic past in

relation to the political present and offered a religio-political utopian vision of the future. This revolution-bound history became the source of political legitimacy for the states and the national identity of citizens. It shaped a framework for articulating the present political situation in two parallel worldly and messianic histories. The infusion of these histories attributed a sacred character to the revolutions and the states that followed. A rich history of mystical tradition, its language and symbolism further legitimized the political authority of the agents of revolutions. This transformation justified a secretive dimension in the post-revolutionary states' politics which was reflected in the ideological tensions over the conditions and limits of the power of the state.

### Utopia and Economic Justice

Prior to the formation of the state of Israel, the Jewish Diaspora had some economic autonomy and was actively involved in local and regional economic growth and trade under various political rules. The abstraction of political messianism allowed Jewish communities to maintain their loyalty to their cultural identity and allowed for the separation between religious and political authority. Separation from political power gave them independence in education and judicial issues.<sup>309</sup> Similarly, until the beginning of the rule of the Safavids, Shi'ites adopted apolitical messianism in order to be excused from taking political action against the Sunni Caliphs, although they did express their disagreement with the Caliphate in principal.<sup>310</sup> The majority of the Shi'a ulama during the Qajar era maintained this theological position.<sup>311</sup> Throughout the rule of both the Safavids and the Qajar, feudalism dominated local economies.<sup>312</sup> Parallel to the development of the feudal model in rural areas, Iranians were involved in trade which they had developed for centuries by the Silk Road and Iran's geographical position.

In the Jewish rural Diaspora and Iran's rural areas, the control of social and political affairs was in the hands of religious figures. In trade centres the possibility of monitoring individuals was limited. Although in the pre-modern cities members of different religious communities lived in exclusive urban quarters their occupations required contact with members of other faiths and ethnicities.<sup>313</sup> There were strict religious rules on inter-community, trade and economic activities, but such rules did not apply to

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<sup>309</sup> The Sanhedrin, the first religious institution for the Jewish community in exile was the main reference for Halakhik laws. It was responsible for producing an annual calendar and educating religious scholars. S. M. Wylen, *The Jews in the Time of Jesus: An Introduction* (NJ: Paulist Press, 1995), 148-151.

<sup>310</sup> The term Caliphate refers to the rule of a Caliph (successor) and the first governing system in Islam. For a comprehensive study on the history of Caliphate see: M. Lecker, "The 'Constitution of Medina': Muhammad's First Legal Document", in *Journal of Islamic Studies* 19, (2, 2008), 251-253.

<sup>311</sup> Sharif al-Murtada, 'The Problem of Working in the Government', in *Shi'ism*, eds. Heinz Halm, Janet C. E. Watson, and Marian Hill (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 50-55. I. M. Lapidus, *op. cit.*, 38.

<sup>312</sup> H. Halm, et al, *op. cit.*, 52. Some of ulama argued that during the time of occultation, the existence of collective religious rituals was also under question. *Ibid*, 54.

<sup>313</sup> H. Halm, et al, *Ibid*. In the case of Jewish Diasporas, H. Lenowitz, *op. cit.*, 70.

outside activities.<sup>314</sup> Apolitical messianism produced a religious system that integrated communal politics and everyday life.<sup>315</sup> It opened secular political and economic spheres for individuals, specifically in urban areas and trade cities. Economically, this secular economic sphere facilitated interactions with other communities. Traders and businessmen connected different agrarian communities with each other and connected these communities with urban centres.<sup>316</sup>

For Iranian and Jewish communities, economic relations were the decisive factor in appropriating political changes and defining the class status of individuals within the community.<sup>317</sup> The existence of a secular public sphere in which economic ideas flourished, created a different circumstance in the Middle East than that of Europe. As Weber argued, the formation of secular states in Europe and the rise of capitalist economy were significant consequences of modernity and formed a secular multi-communal economic and political structure.<sup>318</sup> This secular (non-religious) economic situation however, had existed in the Middle East for millennia.<sup>319</sup> Therefore, both religious traditions theologically accepted and supported the adaptation of some aspects of the modern economy. Ironically, Revolutionary Messianism instigated transformation in the traditional politics of economic relations. During the revolution, the ideas of an economically egalitarian utopia in messianism attracted the revolutionists to Marxism and socialism and in effect limited the existing economic spheres.

Economic justice, which had been inclusive in messianic redemption, became a communal and individual ideal which revolutionists fervently attempted to materialize in revolution. Although the Marxist anti-religious ideologies were not highlighted in Zionism, and neglected in the Communist Party in Iran, both revolutionary groups incorporated Marx's ideas of economic and political justice, class struggle, and the liberation of labor from the economic status quo in their ideologies. Marxism contributed to mobilizing ideologues in both traditions who considered a nation state to be the only adequate response to colonization. As Israel Kolatt notes, throughout the last century Marxism has significantly influenced the history of Judaism.<sup>320</sup> It has addressed the issue of the survival of the Jews within capitalist Europe, where their economic activities were gradually limited.<sup>321</sup> In Israel, it shaped the structure of Kibbutzim and legitimized the Labor Party as the founders of the future state.<sup>322</sup> In Iran,

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<sup>314</sup> Stephen Sharot, 'Jewish Millennial-Messianic Movements: A Comparison of Medieval Communities', in, *Comparing Jewish Societies*, ed. Todd. M. Endelman, (Bloomington, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 62.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

<sup>316</sup> H. Gerber, *The Social Origins of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1987), 1-19.

<sup>317</sup> The complicated politics of charity (Sadaqeh in Persian and Sadaka in Hebrew) is an indicator of communal class system.

<sup>318</sup> Max Weber and Talcott Parsons, op. cit., 48-52.

<sup>319</sup> M. V. De Mieroop, *The Ancient Mesopotamian City* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 130-145. also: Tremper Longman and Peter Enns, *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry & Writings* (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 783.

<sup>320</sup> Israel Kolatt, 'Zionist Marxism', in *Varieties of Marxism*, eds. Shlomo Avineri and Van Leer Foundation for the Advancement of Human Culture (Amsterdam: Springer, 1977), 227-271.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid.

it produced revolutionary ideologues such as Jallal Al-Ahmad and Ali Shari'ati who opposed the shah for his economic policies that they claimed had created injustice, instigated class struggle, and oppressed various political groups.<sup>323</sup>

The centralization of the economy led to the further integration of messianic ideology with bureaucratic politics. Revolutionary Messianism redefined Marx's view of economic relations as a relationship between the state and individuals within a political framework. The notion of redemption added economic responsibilities to the responsibility of revolutionaries and increased the power of the post-revolutionary states. In this economic context Revolutionary Messianism bound economic activity with nationalist and religious idealism. All political groups involved in the revolutions strived for a Marxist economic utopia and elaborated their goals in its symbolic and theological terms.<sup>324</sup> In the case of Iran, Khomeini denied any association between his vision of an Islamic state and Marxism and disagreed with the spread of communism and the influence of leftist parties on Iran's politics while his economic policies reflected those of Marxism.<sup>325</sup> In Israel, the majority of settlers attempted to convince the religious communities to coexist with the Marxists and secular national Zionists and strongly supported the integration of socialism in state politics.<sup>326</sup> In both cases the implementation of economic justice remained one of the main goals of the revolutions and a precondition for the messianic age.

In addition to these intellectual influences, both Iranian and Israeli politics during the 1960s and 70s witnessed the rise of communist political parties who attempted to replicate Russian communism. Iran shared a border with the former USSR and Israel experienced an influx of immigrating Russian Jews to Israel following the World Wars. The communist party in Iran was formed in the early 1940s under the influence of Russian communism but officially declared their connections with Russia in the early 60s.<sup>327</sup> They were nationalists and the party announced itself a supporter of Islam, with a majority of members calling themselves Muslims.<sup>328</sup> Kolatt details the power Russian Marxism had on Zionism by focusing on the labor workers' movement, the Bund, which formed during the late nineteenth century.<sup>329</sup> This movement became the forerunner in the battle for redemption.<sup>330</sup> While, as Kolett notes, the fundamental difference between Zionism and traditional Marxism was included in their view on nationalism and territorial concentration, in Iran the main challenge was the Marxist attitude towards

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<sup>323</sup> Ali Gheissari and Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Democracy in Iran: history and the Quest for Liberty* (NY: Oxford University Press US, 2006), 70.

<sup>324</sup> Milani argues this had been expressed in Persian poetry of the Middle Ages, like Sa'di's work. Sa'di, Milani notes, was a secularist in this sense and in his poetry presented a global view of human politics. See A. Milani, *Lost Wisdom: Rethinking Modernity in Iran*, (Waldorf, MD: Mage Publishers, 2004), 56-73.

<sup>325</sup> E. Abrahamian, *Khomeinism: Essays on the Islamic Republic* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1993), 24.

<sup>326</sup> A. I. Kook, et al, op. cit., 244.

<sup>327</sup> A. Rahnama, *An Islamic Utopian: a Political Biography of Ali Shari'ati* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2000), 6.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid.

<sup>329</sup> I. Kolatt, op. cit., 230.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid.

religion. As Ali Gheissari and Vali Nasr note, the main task of revolutionary religious thinkers like Shari'ati was to appropriate Marxist ideas to the Shi'a political system.<sup>331</sup>

Nationalist Marxism was formed within a specific historical context, at a time when both Jewish and Shi'a traditions suffered from the consequences of colonialism and imperialism. The formation of nation states in the Middle East de-legitimized the existing political and economic relations within these societies and instigated a rethinking of Marxism within a practical political context. The development of secularism in Middle Eastern politics limited the communal power of religious figures and involved them in practical political debates. This process of appropriation shaped the ideological identity of post-revolutionary states in Israel and Iran. The amalgamation of nationalist, revolutionary, and messianic ideology made the establishment of religio-political states possible and involved religious figures in real political debates on secularism, secularization, and political participation.

## Conclusion

This chapter has explained the complex web of hermeneutics, history, and political authority within the Revolutionary Phase in both Jewish and Shi'a traditions. It has discussed how the combination of secular nationalism and a revolutionary narrative of messianism created the foundation of religio-political states and explained how understanding history through a nationalistic interpretation of the sacred texts transforms Revolutionary Messianism into a practical political ideology. The ideal of a nation state directs theology towards real politics and reduces messianism to a particular political ideology. The aim of this chapter was to show that Revolutionary Messianism creates historical change through the re-reading of theological history, re-defining the role of the hermeneutics of the sacred texts in historical changes, and legitimizing a nation state. In the Revolutionary Phase, Revolutionary Messianism dominated modern theological debates because it included elements from esoteric and legalist messianism. Connecting redemption to political sovereignty relates the historical event of the revolution to both spiritual and political messianism. This chapter identified the elements that shaped the dominant theological and political structure of the Revolutionary Phase based on the transformation of pre-modern messianism to this specific nationalist and revolutionary ideology with utopian economic and political ideals.

Although different in some aspects, Jewish and Iranian revolutionary intellectuals highly admired the Marxist revolutionary ideology and included its economic egalitarianism in their ideals. It bound their understanding of a revolution to modern interpretations of politics. Contrary to Marx's ideal revolution, however, it attributed an advantageous political status to religious institutions over other political groups. The unification of these ideas limited the non-religious economic sphere which had existed in

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<sup>331</sup> A. Rahnama, *Ibid*, 235. Ali Gheissari and Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *op. cit.* (2006), 70.

both traditions. In both cases the discourse of the religious revolutionary forces indicated that in order for the continued existence of religious traditions, they would have to work under a bureaucratic national political system. Apolitical theological approaches towards messianism were increasingly marginalised. The incorporation of nationalist and anti-colonial language in Revolutionary Messianism demanded a fundamental change in the existing political system in order to implement revolutionary ideals of political freedom, stop oppression, and bring about economic justice. This utopian vision of the nationalist revolutionary ideology reflected ideas of liberation found in socialist and communist revolutionary ideologies. These political demands united nationalist and religious groups. Revolutionary Messianism transformed the traditional intellectual relationship between mystics and legalists with regard to the limits of political activism, removed the limits of political involvement of religious figures, and legitimized political participation.

The next chapter discusses the political implications of the transformation of Revolutionary Messianism on religious centres and the state. It studies how during the State-Building Phase of these post-revolutionary states, national and regional circumstances and the centrality of Revolutionary Messianism in political debates inevitably suppressed philosophical debates over the source of legitimacy and the religious identity of the states. The unification effect of Revolutionary Messianism eradicated the possibility of political tensions and allowed the establishment of state institutions. The political implications of Revolutionary Messianism, the next chapter argues, were not limited to the source of state legitimacy, but shaped the states' legal framework and party politics. In Iran and Israel this legitimized the bureaucratic structure of the administrations and gradually strengthened the power of the state institutions. Although traditional apocalyptic messianism legitimized the revolutionary interpretation of messianism neither of the states became involved in theological debates on messianism or the conditions and nature of the "End Time". The process of state building transformed messianism from an apocalyptic doctrine to a progressive political one in which the legitimacy of messianic doctrine is conditional upon the success of the state building process.



## Chapter 3: From an Imaginary State to a Political State: Securitization of Revolutionary Messianism

### Introduction

The success of Revolutionary Messianism in terminating an existing political system obligates revolutionaries to secure and institutionalise the revolution's ideals in social, political, and economic contexts in order to accommodate religion and politics in post-revolutionary state identity. In both case studies the State-Building Phase was dominated by situations of military conflict. Developing under the shadow of the Cold War, securing revolutionary ideals and fulfilling their goals through the construction of strong nationalistic and religious military discourse has defined the messianic identity of Israel and Iran. Instead of politicising religion or creating a theocracy, the focus of the State-Building Phase became the securitization of Revolutionary Messianism.<sup>332</sup>

Barry Buzan, in his Security Complex theory in 1983, offered a different approach to studying security and threats.<sup>333</sup> Buzan suggested that instead of analysing whether something is an objective threat it is important to study the process through which an issue becomes a security threat or loses its primacy in the security discourse of the state. If an issue becomes a security threat it is securitized and if it loses its importance in the security discourse it becomes de-securitized. The difference between politicization and securitization, he argues, is the sense of emergency attached to the topic of securitization that demands instant action for dealing with an existential threat, a threat that targets the existence of a state or a group of people, whether towards a state or environment. There are three foundational factors in the securitization process. The first is the securitizing actor or the authority that makes the securitizing claim, whether in the form of statements or movements. The second is the referent object which Buzan defines as the object (abstract or physical) that requires protection and is threatened. The third is audience or those that a securitizing actor aims to convince and unite. This chapter focuses on the referent object and draws on Buzan's theory to discuss the process through which Revolutionary Messianism became the rationale for identifying security threats and for dealing with those threats. It shows how the conflict situations in these states linked national security to political legitimacy by placing Revolutionary Messianism as the referent object of their securitization projects.

Throughout the Cold War the securitization discourse in Iran and Israel and the ideals of their Revolutionary Messianism reflected the ideological battle between the United States of America and the former USSR over political and economic justice. While in Israel the discourse of securitization adopted a different theme as the country moved from conventional conflict with Arab states to battles with

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<sup>332</sup> Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 21-49.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid.

various Palestinian militias in the later 70s, it remained orientated towards military and securitized state politics. In Iran, the success of the revolution and the politics of the Cold War resulted in the country's involvement in a war with Iraq for almost a decade and the state securitization of its authority. The process of State Building resulted in the successful establishment of the states' political legitimacy through the securitization of Revolutionary Messianism. The importance of this chapter is to demonstrate the structure of the states and the particular stories which developed with Revolutionary Messianism. In both the national account of the state raises historical claims that make the state the response to Jewish and Shi'a histories of political oppression. The significance of this narrative is necessarily drawn to the past and because the past is revolutionary, the revolutionary messianic themes are woven into real politics. This chapter discusses this legitimation process within the different contexts of colonization and the Cold War and the roles they played in the legitimacy and development of these states in the State-Building Phase.

The conflict situation in these post-revolutionary states created a military orientated government with an elite leadership. The new elite were revolutionary agents who endeavoured to secure the ideals of Revolutionary Messianism. This chapter discusses how the securitization of Revolutionary Messianism generates a different definition of state identity from secular states and theocracies. By studying Israel's political situation throughout the Cold War, it aims to explain the elements that transformed Revolutionary Messianism into Securitized Messianism and to highlight the factors that channelled the legitimacy of the revolution into the body of the state. In Iran's case, I discuss how the process of securitization defined the Islamic Republic's power structure within that of the Cold War. In both cases the ruling elites of the new system were limited to those who were either associated with the conflict or the founders of the revolution. The Politicised Messianism that emanated from the securitization process also reduced the understanding of religion by religious institutions to their political environments. This process dominated the states' political factionalism and the discourse of national security. It dictated the states' definition of religion and politics. Far from the utopia that the revolution had promised, post-revolutionary Securitized Messianism became both politically and religiously limited to the process of securitization.

Post-revolutionary securitization was not exclusively a state political project but involved religion and religious agents, revolutionaries, and various social groups. At the State-Building Phase, they were similar to secular states in regarding the state as the ultimate agent for identifying and dealing with security threats. They differed from secular states in distinguishing religious threats from political ones. In Israel, Zionism substituted for Judaism and in Iran the Islamic Republic substituted for Shi'ism. Together with religious and political responsibilities, the security responsibilities of these states extended beyond the limits of a secular state and extended into religion. It is throughout the process of

the securitization that these states accommodated bureaucratic institutions. The conflict situation dominated the relationship between the state and its institutions by defining the new national identity and leadership structure in a particular way in order to secure revolutionary ideals and legitimize the discourse of the revolutionary agents as the only adequate response to any existential security threat.

### The Role of War in State Legitimization in Israel and Iran

This section explains how theological discourses in both states addressed the justification of the wars that each post-revolutionary state faced soon after their establishment. It argues that both Iran and Israel considered their wars not only a reaction to a political security threat but as an inevitable component of the materialization of theological promises and an existential threat to the security of religion. It was because of this approach to war that religious figures were involved in providing a theological justification for the states' engagement in a military conflict. In addition, the atrocity of war, suffering and oppression in both theological traditions are inevitable conditions of human existence, but the war could be highly praised if the faithful endured the suffering on the way to protecting religion or if it could hasten the holy war. In Israel, all the wars were theologically justified by virtue of the biblical covenant between Abraham and God in which God bestowed the sovereignty over the land of Zion to Abraham. This biblical narrative on territory formed the foundations of Ze'ev Jabotinsky and his revisionist followers during the 1948 conflict.<sup>334</sup> Following the Six Days War conflict the radical political group Kach, who insisted on the transport of the Arab population of Israel to other Arab countries, claimed their policy to be based on the biblical covenant and the repeated theme of holy war in the Bible.<sup>335</sup> There are some intrinsic theological values in war, especially the manner in which the Bible depicts God as a warrior who either defeats the army of an enemy without the help of humans or leads the Jewish army in battle against their enemies.<sup>336</sup> Equally, the Bible indicated laws to specify the conditions of a war, the acceptable means for triumph, and the motivations and ideals of the fighters.<sup>337</sup> Therefore, Jewish theology discusses and explains war as a reality of human life. In addition to the Bible, the issue of war is a significant part of the Jewish messianic tradition that introduces the Messiah as a great military figure who will lead Israel in victorious wars.<sup>338</sup>

In Shi'a tradition prior to the Islamic Republic and according to the quietist Shi'a ulama, the enactment of those Shari'a that apply corporal punishment, collect religious taxes, lead Friday prayers and

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<sup>334</sup> B. Morris, *One State, Two States: Resolving the Israel/Palestine Conflict* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 73-4.

<sup>335</sup> For the development of the idea into a political ideal, see *ibid*, 70-85.

<sup>336</sup> The New Oxford Annotated Bible: The Holy Bible, ed. Herbert G. May and Bruce M. Metzger (NY: Oxford University Press, 1973) (Deuteronomy 20:1-20); (Joshua 10:10-11; 6:18-19); (Judges 5:11; 20:21-25).

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid*, Deuteronomy 20:11, 19-20.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid*, Jeremiah 23:5.

announce an expansionist Jihad remain impossible during the time of the occultation.<sup>339</sup> The law on jihad, however, did not cover a defensive jihad.<sup>340</sup> After the revolution and according to Khomeini's Jurisprudential Leadership a jurist in that position could announce a holy war like other Shari'a.<sup>341</sup> He believed that through war, the nation could replicate the suffering of the third Shi'a Imam, Hussein. Identifying a territorial war with Shi'a holy wars further involved religious figures and centres in the securitization project. Not only were mosques turned into military bases for transporting troops to the front, but Khomeini also directly connected the war to the holy war that he claimed was to be waged to return Jerusalem to Muslims. One of the most popular mottos of the war was "liberating Quds through Karbala" which indicated the strong emphasis on a theological justification of the war.

In both states theological debate about the war and both political and theological justifications have legitimized the political authority of the state. Conditions of war, participating in military forces, and exemption from military services are not solely legal and include theological debates. In Israel, debates over the exemption of Yeshivot students from military service have been an ongoing challenge for the state and political parties. The reasons the Heredim offer for the exemption are solely theological but have significant political implications.<sup>342</sup> Both states employ religious words and language when they refer to security issues. Therefore, in both states a defensive position is not only acceptable but also generates martyrs, brings the holy war, and is a reminder of God's wrath and mercy. The reality of theological debates is transformative in that state security becomes a religious issue as well as a political one. Since the security discourse relies on religious foundations, it incorporates messianic hopes and ideals. The states' framing of a theological orientation in order to introduce a war and to explain their security framework gives their particular theological discourse a context. Thus, securitization institutionalises the theology of war and national security. This experience leads the states to a specific form of securitization which differs from secular securitization not only in terms of definition and implications but also in terms of application and practical effects.

### The State and its Responsibilities in the Pre-messianic Phase

In Israel the process of nation and State Building has developed simultaneously. The tragedy of the Holocaust, which resulted in the mass immigration of European Jewry to Israel, and the Balfour Declaration, instigated many theological and political responses to political oppression amongst Jewish

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<sup>339</sup> H. Halm, *op. cit.*, 54.

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>341</sup> Kh. Ruhollah, *Islam and Revolution: Writing and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, trans. by H. Algar (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1981), 45-57.

<sup>342</sup> Yair Ettinger and Moti Bassok, Cabinet Exempts Haredi Yeshiva Students from Israel Defence Force, *Haaretz* August 02, 2010, <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/cabinet-exempts-Haredi-yeshiva-students-from-idf-1.305384>, accessed on 9/11/2011.

scholars. The Declaration of Independence was signed on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May, 1948.<sup>343</sup> Ben Gurion, the party leader of the Zionist Socialist Party (Mapai), became the first Prime Minister of Israel.<sup>344</sup> The tension between the religious and the secular identity of the state was reflected in the Balfour Declaration in which both religious and secular concepts were indicated. While the state was called “Eretz Yisrael” (which is a biblical phrase that refers to the holy land of Israel), the declaration begins with the phrase “Trust in the Rock of Israel” instead of using “Trust in God”.<sup>345</sup> Ben Gurion considered the state to be of Jewish character although he remained a strong secularist.<sup>346</sup> The basic law, agreed upon as Israel’s Constitution, determined the objective nationalism for the state and the people of Israel. According to the Act passed in 1949, the national identity of Israel was linked to the religious identity of the state.<sup>347</sup> The Act stipulated its duty to preserve the Halachik dietary laws, nominated the Sabbath as a public holiday, solely acknowledged religious marriages, and supported religious education.<sup>348</sup> Instead of criteria such as a shared language, common ethnicity, or culture that Béland and Lecours call the objective component of nationalism and nation building, in Israel, national unity has been formed based on a common religious identity reinforced by situations of intense conflict. Therefore the subjective component of nationalism, which Béland argues forms a collective act of will, in Israel, securitized the secular Zionist ideology.<sup>349</sup> Secular Zionism not only combined the subjective and objective components of nationalism but it also rationalised nationalism by focusing on Jewish autonomy and independence.<sup>350</sup> Autonomy and independence referred to anti-colonial revolutionary ideologies as well as the conflict with neighbouring Arab states. Securitized Messianism became an intrinsic characteristic of the state nationalism in Israel. The combination of the securitization project and the collective will for autonomy and independence justified the victory of Mapai and the National Religious Party in Israeli politics from 1948 to 1977.<sup>351</sup>

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<sup>343</sup> J. Schneer, *The Balfour Declaration: The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (NY: Random House Publishing Group, 2010), 25-39.

<sup>344</sup> J. Heller, *The Birth of Israel, 1945-1949: Ben-Gurion and His Critics* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2000), 13.

<sup>345</sup> The Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel, May 14, 1948, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ Website: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace%20Process/Guide%20to%20the%20Peace%20Process/Declaration%20of%20Establishment%20of%20State%20of%20Israel>, accessed on 9/11/2011.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-26.

<sup>347</sup> Mazie notes that the postponement of the drafting of a single Constitution in Israel prevented a kulturkampf (cultural tension) in the new state with diverse population. S. V. Mazie, *Israel's Higher Law: Religion and Liberal Democracy in the Jewish State* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), 34 and 145.

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>349</sup> This definition is the framework for the case studies on England, Belgium and Canada in the book. Daniel Béland and André Lecours, *Nationalism and Social Policy: The Politics of Territorial Solidarity* (NY: Oxford University Press US, 2008), 15-16.

<sup>350</sup> For Ben Gurion’s vision for Israel and developing a Turko-Greek secular model of state see: J. Heller, op. cit., 110.

<sup>351</sup> P. Y. Medding, *Mapai in Israel: Political Organization and Government in a New Society* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 19-23.

Amongst the Middle Eastern countries, Iran had geo-political significance for the United States of America. The revolution in Iran disturbed the polarized political structure of the region.<sup>352</sup> Iran had not only been the United States of America's strongest economic partner in the region after WWII but was also a strong regional base for the United States of America from which it could support and ensure their economic and political interests in the shadow of the neighbouring USSR.<sup>353</sup> Following Iran's revolution, however, each redefined their political ties with Iran and rearranged their forces in vulnerable areas like the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean.<sup>354</sup>

Iran's post-revolutionary state began the process of State Building in the midst of the Cold War when the contestation between the USSR and the United States of America affected almost every political change in the Middle East. The complexity of the post-revolutionary security situation in Iran demanded the revision of Middle Eastern policies for the United States of America and the USSR. Iran connected the Asian market to Europe and offered the only route to the Indian Ocean for USSR.<sup>355</sup> In addition to its significance in the regional economy and transport routes, Iran has sovereignty over the largest portion of the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hurmoz.<sup>356</sup> Considering that the Persian Gulf is the region from which about 85% of global oil is transported, the importance of Iran's revolution on regional security cannot be underestimated.<sup>357</sup>

Changes in Iran's security policies affected the other main oil producing countries in the Persian Gulf as well as the consumers.<sup>358</sup> For these producers oil is not only a source of income but 'the' only source of income.<sup>359</sup> The annual budget figure of these countries demonstrates how heavily they rely on oil income for providing the basic needs of their population.<sup>360</sup> Due to their geographic situations and drought their agricultural activities are limited. Their dependency on oil makes their economies reliant on the security of the Persian Gulf. The securitization of the USSR as an existential threat to regional states encouraged the states to compete over economic cooperation with the United States of America in order to further involve the United States of America in the region and gain its political support.<sup>361</sup> In Iran, the Pahlavi's focus on economic development and industrialization, spread the capitalist economy and widened the gap between social groups.<sup>362</sup> These economically motivated politics were confronted by the growth of anti-capitalist religious and secular groups, ultimately resulting in a revolution. The

<sup>352</sup> L. L. Fawcett, *Iran and the Cold War: the Azerbaijan Crisis of 1946* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 41-66.

<sup>353</sup> D. S. Painter, *The Cold War: An International History* (London: Routledge, 1999), 242.

<sup>354</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>355</sup> A. Taheri, *The Persian Night: Iran Under the Khomeinist Revolution* (NY: Encounter Books, 2010), 15.

<sup>356</sup> D. S. Painter, *op. cit.*, 242.

<sup>357</sup> Ch. Marschall, *Iran's Persian Gulf Policy: from Khomeini to Khatami* (NY: Routledge, 2003), 19-21.

<sup>358</sup> M. Herb, *All in the Family: Absolutism, Revolution, and Democracy in the Middle Eastern Monarchies* (NY: SUNY Press, 1999), 31-36.

<sup>359</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>361</sup> M. J. Medhurst, *Cold War Rhetoric: Strategy, Metaphor, and Ideology* (MI: Michigan State University Press, 1997), 59.

<sup>362</sup> A. Ehteshami, *After Khomeini: the Iranian Second Republic* (London: Routledge, 1995), 80.

revolution and the terminating of the previous regime instigated radical domestic changes. However, it was radical transformations in Iran's religiously constructed security policies that instigated distress in neighbouring countries.<sup>363</sup> It specifically affected three influential states; Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. The post-revolutionary state strongly supported Palestinian groups, cut political ties with Egypt because of its political ties with Israel, and became a Shi'a political threat to Saudi Arabia.<sup>364</sup> In order to ideologically challenge the United States of America's long-term embargo, Iran gradually strengthened its economic ties with China and India who later were emerging as global economic powers.<sup>365</sup> The post-revolutionary state used the cutting or limiting of its political ties with Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Israel as justifications for the legitimacy of its sovereignty and securitization project.<sup>366</sup> The political events of 1978-79 were followed by the Iran-Iraq war waged during the 1980s and the execution of multi-action sanctions on Iran.<sup>367</sup> The Islamic Republic persistently attempted to present a revolutionary portrait of Iran abroad and domestically placed full force on a national Islamization mission as a response to the polarized political environment of the Cold War.<sup>368</sup> In fact the war and economic isolation guaranteed the success of the state's ideologically assembled securitization project.

### Nationalism, National Security and Political Exclusivism

If it is the conflict situation that reconciles the inconsistencies between political and religious identities of the state in the phase of State Building, the legitimacy of these states is unavoidably security orientated. These shared characteristics of the religio-political states of Iran and Israel differ from what John Breuilly in *Nationalism and the State* defines as nationalism in the European context.<sup>369</sup> He argues that nationalism is political in nature because it is constructed within the context of modernity and as an abstract concept is interlinked with the concept of the nation state.<sup>370</sup> To him nationalism needs to be discussed as a political concept (and in the context of modern nation states) with the focus of any research in this field on studying the changing construction of nationalism in the political environment.<sup>371</sup> In these states, on the contrary, the state becomes the ultimate legitimate reference for identifying threats to political and religious systems as a consequence of being the agent for securing victories and ideals of Revolutionary Messianism in a conflict situation.

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<sup>363</sup> Joseph Moynihan, 'The Gulf Cooperation Council and the USA: Common and Uncommon Security Interests', in *Gulf Security in the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Christian Koch and David E. Long (London: I.B.Tauris, 2003), 57-68.

<sup>364</sup> D. Pipes, *In the path of God: Islam and Political Power* (NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1983), 328.

<sup>365</sup> J. W. Garver, *China and Iran: Ancient Partners in a Post-imperial World* (DC: University of Washington Press, 2006), 95-102. For Iran-India, G. Pant, *India, the Emerging Energy Player* (New Delhi: Pearson Education India, 2008), 139-153.

<sup>366</sup> B. Moin, *op. cit.*, p. 266

<sup>367</sup> Hossein Alikhani, *Sanctioning Iran: Anatomy of a Failed Policy*, (London: I.B.Tauris, 2000), pp. 70-77

<sup>368</sup> In this research the anti-monarchical motivations of the Islamic revolution of Iran are not discussed in detail because they have been extensively studied by Middle East scholars like Hamid Dabashi, Houchang Chehabi, Abbas Milani, David Menasheri, and Rey Tekkyeh.

<sup>369</sup> J. Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 173.

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*

War policies demand a strong state-centred securitization project that can be executed nationally. The project should be effective in creating a harmonious representation of the society to face the existential threat that targets the state at the time. It should present a response to what a state acknowledges as a threat in the areas of recognition, legitimacy, and governing authority from internal or external sources.<sup>372</sup> As Buzan et al suggest in their conceptual framework for studying national security, any discussion on security indicates the existence of a threat.<sup>373</sup> An “existential threat” is only meaningful when it is discussed in relation to either a particular character of the referent object or its core of existence.<sup>374</sup> In Iran and Israel the post-revolutionary states considered ensuring the security of Revolutionary Messianism as the referent object of national security and their revolutionary ideology as the ultimate target of threats. Their use of symbols and the discourse of nationalism, their firm stand on territorial sovereignty, and their emphasis on safeguarding the religion serve to underline the ideological nature of their securitization projects.

The Securitized Messianism that is constructed in a conflict situation relies on a specific narrative of religion that revolutionaries and forces other than religious institutions accept. Military power remains the sole solution for dealing with security issues and is the element that consolidates the policies of the central authority. This enables the states to utilize military forces, or military discourse, for stabilizing domestic unrest or suppressing political opposition. In both Israel and Iran this process of securitization resulted in the formation of an institutionalised fundamentalism (one formed within the bureaucratic structure of the state) that imbues nationalism with an indispensable religious nature. The challenging issue for this form of fundamentalism was creating consistency between the sovereignty of the political system and the legitimacy of the divine. The following section explains how the securitization of Revolutionary Messianism defined the relationship between religion and politics in the course of constructing a framework of national security for both countries.

As a result of these transformations in both states Securitized Messianism linked the security of religion to the security of the state. It created an advantage within the domestic political environment for those who supported the interests of the revolutionaries over those who attempted to establish an institutionalised political system. Gradually, the political system became exclusivist and relied heavily on conflict situations for the ideological justification of its militarily orientated policies in order to create a stable political situation during a conflict. In Israel’s case the centre of securitization was territorial sovereignty. The theological and political significance of obtaining sovereignty over a specific geographical territory replaced pre-state, idealist Zionism amongst Israeli politicians. During the phase of State Building, Zionist messianism motivated the formation of a religio-political militarism,

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<sup>372</sup> B. Buzan, et al, op. cit., 21.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>374</sup> Ibid.



established rules for defending its territory, and justified the expansion of geographical boundaries as a religious obligation during the decades of conflict with its Arab neighbours that formed Securitized Messianism.

### Development of Military Zionism in Israel during the Cold War

The institutional structure of the state of Israel is made up of a parliament (Knesset), a judicial system (High Court), and a presidential office. Israeli Defence Forces and other official institutions operate based on the Knesset's legislation.<sup>375</sup> The High Court has been involved in political cases when the members of the Knesset disagree over a bill.<sup>376</sup> It also reviews official claims and corruption allegations against politicians and political parties.<sup>377</sup> Parliament in Israel operates on a model of proportional representation to ensure the rights of minority political groups.<sup>378</sup> As a result, lobbying and changing alliances between secular and religious parties have dominated Knesset politics.<sup>379</sup> The success of the main political parties in achieving a majority of seats is the result of their efficiency in lobbying with smaller parties within the Knesset as well as extending their constituency.<sup>380</sup> As the state securitization project developed, it reshaped traditional party politics in Israel and resulted in the emergence of new political forces that ended the dominance of traditional Labor secular Zionism over Israeli politics.

Soon after the formation of the state and the 1948 Arab-Israeli war it became clear that the traditional theological foundations of a messianic utopia could not explain the existing conflict situation.<sup>381</sup> Far from being a miraculous redemption, the state faced various economic and political struggles in its development. One of the main challenges for the state in the phase of State Building was passing and executing national laws. Accepting religious laws as national laws was challenging for secular Jews, many of whom accepted the religious identity of the state but emphasized fostering cultural unity against Jewish suffering rather than institutionalising absolute commitment to Halakhah and Rabbinic tradition. Secular Zionists, who were the agents of securitization, neither encouraged Herediy nor strived for a Halakhik state.<sup>382</sup> Rather, they focused on the securing of the state, the expansion of Israel's territory, and economic development.<sup>383</sup> Prior to the State-Building Phase, Jewish communities had needed messianism for both political hope and survival. However, during the State-Building Phase, the

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<sup>375</sup> A. Dowty, *The Jewish State: A Century Later* (CA: University of California Press, 2001), 69-71.

<sup>376</sup> G. S. Mahler, *Politics and Government in Israel: the Maturation of a Modern State* (NY: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 76.

<sup>377</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>378</sup> I. Rabinovich, *Israel in the Middle East: Documents and Readings on Society, Politics, and Foreign Relations, Pre-1948 to the Present* (NH: UPNE, 2008), 95.

<sup>379</sup> S. Sager, *The Parliamentary System of Israel* (NY: Syracuse University Press, 1985), 76.

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>381</sup> B. Morris, *1948: A History of the First Arab-Israeli War* (CA: Yale University Press, 2008), 77.

<sup>382</sup> A. H. Silver, *History of Messianic Speculation in Israel* (Kila, MT: Kissinger Publishing, 2003), 190-200. Silver counts four foundational factors in the Middle Ages' redemption theology (as articulated in a page in the *Pesikta Rabbati*): Suffering, the appointed end, repentance, mercy, and the merit of the fathers to hasten the redemption.

<sup>383</sup> *Ibid.*

responsibility for securing Jewish communities and political hope was transferred to the state and the defence forces.

For both the Jewish citizens of Israel and the Jews of the Diaspora debates on State Building included messianism.<sup>384</sup> While some traditional factions opposed the domination of politics by secular Zionists who based their theological debates on sovereignty, many religious figures followed Rabbi Kook and encouraged communities to participate in the nation building process and defend Israel's territory.<sup>385</sup> Zionism, which interpreted messianism in modern political terms, maintained the unity of secular and religious communities by attaching an imminent threat to the security of Judaism, Jewish autonomy, and independence.<sup>386</sup> Religious Zionism contextualised messianic scriptures in order to achieve two security goals. They interpreted the texts to narrate a history that described a national religious past in relation to the conflict situation of the present, and to redefine the relationship between religion and politics. This politically orientated interpretation undermined alternative understandings of the texts and focused specifically on the state. It bound religious messianic hope to nationalism in order to shape the state's response to existing threats and to form its religious legitimacy. Securitized Messianism articulated the nationalist discourse of self-determination and developed theologically by attaching the meaning of messianism to national security.

The literature of religious Zionism, which later became the most common educational model in Jewish settlements, produced an ideological component for the traditional narrative of history and was a main component in the state legitimacy. It presented a comprehensive picture of the nation over the course of its history that generated a sense of political continuity. Securing this historical political identity became the source of unification for culturally diverse immigrant communities. It also constituted a relationship between a geographical boundary and a nation. The success of religious Zionism is irrelevant to the exact correlation between reality and historical narratives of nationalism in Israel, and is more in debt to the securitization process. The securitization of messianism also directly affirmed the right of Jewish communities to establish a sovereign state. This factor underlines Rabbi Kook's writings. He redefined the conditions of the messianic time, which had been bound to a politically passive community, to actively protecting the security of the state and its prosperity. For secular Zionists with modern political thought, the securitization project was vital because to them only the existence and prosperity of a Zionist state could resolve issues of geographical territory, national language, and ethnicity in Israel.

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<sup>384</sup> Ibid.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid.

<sup>386</sup> For Ben-Gurion's view on messianic responsibilities of the state of Israel, Sh. Aronson, David Ben-Gurion and the Jewish Renaissance, trans. by N. Greenwood (London: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 259-265.

They viewed the state as the only agency that could contextualise a Jewish religious discourse of redemption in modern political context.<sup>387</sup>

The political system legitimized this theological approach as it required religious legitimacy for State Building. The establishment of a modern administration in the form of an electoral democracy in Israel is the outcome of the efforts of secular socialist Zionists who were either educated in secular schools or trained in the Israel Defence Force (Israel Defence Forces), the most secular institution in the state at the time. However, the passionate nationalists who strongly supported the promises of equality and freedom in Zionism envisioned in the state the missing link that could be reconciled to a theological past with the promise of the future. To them, the securitization of messianism gave meaning to the existence of the state and explained the present political situation in relation to a messianic future that revealed the true meaning of the history of the nation. The existence of the state was not an exclusively political issue, it also had crucial theological implications.

In his study of messianic belief in Israel, Abba Hillel Silver identifies three constructive political elements: “the will to live dominantly and triumphantly”, “the rehabilitation in a national home”, and “the unfaltering faith in divine justice by whose eternal canons the national restoration was infallibly prescribed”.<sup>388</sup> He notes that messianic calculation is rejected in the state of Israel so that the state can prevent the encouragement of false hope and social disorder and eliminate its constant concern and stress over the rise of a pseudo- messianic ideology or person that exploits messianic longing.<sup>389</sup> These three factors endorse the argument that during the process of securitization national security is understood as identical to religious security. These three goals have theological as well as political foundations and all validate the securitization of messianism.

### The Six Days War and the Political Implications of Securitization of Messianism

The securitization project of the 1960s in Israel was predominantly constructed to respond to the Cold War policies of its neighbouring countries. As Jordan opposed the Arab League plan for creating a Palestinian state, and conflict between Israel and Syria in the east of the Sea of Galilee continued, the Syrian government collapsed as the result of an anti-Egyptian coup.<sup>390</sup> The Ba’ath party increased its power soon after the overthrowing of the Qasim’s regime in Iraq and gradually achieved more power in

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<sup>387</sup> Sh. Aronson, *op. cit.*, 259-265.

<sup>388</sup> A. H. Silver, *History of Messianic Speculation in Israel* (DC: Kessinger Publishing, 2003), ix. M. A. Tessler, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict* (IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), xi.

<sup>389</sup> A. H. Silver, *op. cit.*, 196.

<sup>390</sup> I. Rabinovich, *Syria under the Ba’th, 1963-66: the Army Party Symbiosis* (NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1972), 18. The Shah of Iran recognized Israel as a *de facto* state and broke political ties with Egypt. see: T. Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: the Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the USA* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 20-22.

Syria until the Ba'ath party coup in 1963.<sup>391</sup> During this decade the three Arab nationalist regimes in Syria, Iraq and Egypt strengthened their political and military relationships with the USSR. and announced their strong oppositional position to Israel by establishing the Palestine Federation.<sup>392</sup> Due to endless conflict between the Arab states at the time, Jamal Abdul Nasser renounced the Federation soon after its establishment.<sup>393</sup> Syria, however, insisted on supporting Palestinians and their right of return thus becoming the main supporter of the Palestine Liberation Organization (Palestinian Liberation Organization).<sup>394</sup>

As the conflict progressed, Israel's diplomatic efforts for establishing international political allegiances increased.<sup>395</sup> In the meantime, the United States of America got more directly involved in Israeli conflicts as it sold Hawk missiles to Israel and increased the country's military capability.<sup>396</sup> The conflict situation intensified as the Arab countries signed mutual defence treaties and united to stage a military attack against Israel.<sup>397</sup> Clashes between Israel and Syria continued in 1967 and so did the espionage war between Arab countries and Israel.<sup>398</sup> Egypt increased its military readiness and alongside other Arab countries advertised deployment for a United Arab Force. The Iraqi forces that had joined the United Arab Regiment entered Jordan.<sup>399</sup> Israel rapidly boosted its military power, formed a National Unity Government with Moshe Dayan as Israel Defence Minister, and launched pre-emptive strikes on Syrian, Egyptian, and Jordanian air bases and forces in Gaza.<sup>400</sup>

The sweeping victory of the Israel Defence Force and the defeat of the United Arab forces had a significant impact on Israeli politics and society. The Six Days War created an Israeli generation with a strongly religious identity.<sup>401</sup> It united Israelis as a nation with a nationalist mission of safeguarding the country and linked the Diaspora to Israel.<sup>402</sup> Gideon Aran argues that the war created an integral link between religion and the secular government, Israel's secular and religious history, and its religious and

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<sup>391</sup> I. Rabinovich, *Ibid*, 22 and 26.

<sup>392</sup> William B. Quandt, Paul Jabber, and Ann Mosely Lesch, *The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism* (Santa Monica: University of California Press, 1973), 159.

<sup>393</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>394</sup> *Ibid*, 160.

<sup>395</sup> E. S. Marshall, *Israel: Current Issues and Historical Background* (Carbondale, IL: Nova Publishers, 2002), 222- 226.

<sup>396</sup> J. P. Jankowski, *Nasser's Egypt, Arab Nationalism, and the United Arab Republic* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 87-90.

<sup>397</sup> From 1966 sporadic but serious clashes between Israel, Syria and Jordan were forming. *Ibid*.

<sup>398</sup> For the espionage competition between Israel and its neighbours see: L. J. Silberstein, *Postzionism: A Reader* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 259-261.

<sup>399</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>400</sup> The Ba'thist gained power in Iraq and Mohammad Qaddafi became the head of the state in Libya. See: G. L. Simons, *Libya: the Struggle for Survival* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 1993), 170.

<sup>401</sup> Professor Paul Morris, personal conversation, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, 28 November 2009

<sup>402</sup> Gideon Aran, 'A Mystic-Messianic Interpretation of Israel Modern History: The Six Days War in the Religious Culture of Gush Emunim', in *Israeli Judaism: the Sociology of Religion in Israel*, eds. Shlomo A. Deshen, Charles S. Liebman, and Moshe Shokeid (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1995), 197-213.

national identity.<sup>403</sup> To him, the victory of Kookism and Israel's further militarization in the 1970s were the outcomes of the Six Days War and early Kookism.<sup>404</sup> Aran notes that in the early Kookist journal (*Mosharah*), which was published during the 1960s, land and territorial issues constituted the fundamental themes of the articles. The Kookists' discourse on land included theological debates on redemption (*geulah*) that considered territorial settlements and conflict as central factors in the victory of progressive messianism.<sup>405</sup>

In the post-war literature the war was referred to as "the war of redemption" indicating its theological significance.<sup>406</sup> The spread of Kookism, the birth of a religious generation, and religious political parties can be explained comprehensively within the context of the securitization process. One of the momentous political impacts of the war on the national and religious identity of the state was the way in which it strengthened Israel's position for remaining in the Golan Heights.<sup>407</sup> Moreover, it facilitated unity amongst political parties in the Knesset in their stance on Jerusalem, and they claimed it as the capital of Israel: a "united city", despite the Arab summit's non-recognition of an Israeli state.<sup>408</sup> Domestically the war united the secular parties Rafi, and Mapai with the religious party Ahdut Ha'avodah, who together formed a strong Labor government under the leadership of Golda Meir.<sup>409</sup> Regionally, the Six Days War became a scene for the great powers to test their regional influences in a conflict. The victory of Israel in the war affected the unity of the Arab states.<sup>410</sup>

Gradually, the Cold War environment polarized the political situation of the Middle Eastern conflict, the diplomatic involvement of the United States of America and the USSR, and the building and improvement of the military capabilities of Middle Eastern countries intensified.<sup>411</sup> In October 1973, the Yom Kippur War began, with Syrian and Egyptian military incursions over the contested borders that had been established following the Six Days War.<sup>412</sup> Oil producing Arab countries announced an embargo on the United States of America and Israel. The United States of America attempted to find a

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<sup>403</sup> Ibid, 200.

<sup>404</sup> He notes that the journal *Mosharah*, which began to be published after the Six Days War, remains the best source for studying early Kookism, the "path of religious Zionism". Ibid.

<sup>405</sup> Ibid.

<sup>406</sup> Ibid, 201.

<sup>407</sup> Ibid.

<sup>408</sup> D. Newman, op. cit., 52.

<sup>409</sup> Y. Medding, op. cit., Ibid.

<sup>410</sup> G. W. Breslauer, *Soviet Strategy in the Middle East* (NY: Routledge, 1990), 45. Michael T. Klare, 'Soviet Arms Transfers to the Third World', in *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, (1984), vol. 40, 26.

<sup>411</sup> Loch K. Johnson, 'Strategic Intelligence,' in *Intelligence and the Quest for Security* (London: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007), vol.1, 167-69.

<sup>412</sup> A. Yaniv, *Dilemmas of Security: Politics, Strategy, and the Israeli Experience in Lebanon*, (NY: Oxford University Press, 1987), 115.

diplomatic solution to the conflict, and Richard Nixon warned about a possible USSR attack on Israel on behalf of Egypt.<sup>413</sup> But, Sadat soon proposed a ceasefire.<sup>414</sup>

Inside Israel, the political implications of the ceasefire reshaped the government. The United States of America ceasefire plan posed major political challenges to Golda Meir and her government lost power as the result of the growing gap between the party and its constituents.<sup>415</sup> Followers of Gush Emunim expressed their opposition to the ceasefire plan and phased public demonstrations and marches in the settlements.<sup>416</sup> In the post Six Days War the settlements celebrated religious rituals publically and pressured the government to recognize the new settlements in the annexed territories.<sup>417</sup> While the state's political power remained exclusively in the hands of Labor Ashkenazi parties, religious groups like Gush Emunim attracted more followers subsequent to the war.<sup>418</sup> After being appointed as Prime Minister, Yizhak Rabin urgently announced his strong opposition regarding the formation of a Palestinian state between Israel and Jordan but continued diplomatic efforts to achieve a peace plan with the United States of America, Egypt, and Jordan.<sup>419</sup>

As diplomatic ties between Israel and Arab neighbouring countries improved, the "Palestinian question" became the dominant issue in Israeli politics.<sup>420</sup> Participants at the Arab summit conference in Rabat nominated Yassir Arafat's Palestinian Liberation Organization as the sole representative of the Palestinians.<sup>421</sup> His nomination instigated two major transformations in the Arab countries' regional policy. First, it announced the end of the nationalist unity amongst the Arab countries and disassociated Palestinian issues from the politics of the Arab states. Secondly, for Israel this diplomatic decision made the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Palestinians an exclusively Israeli security issue. Israel refused to accept sole responsibility for the Palestinians or for negotiating a Palestinian state. They opposed the decision of the summit regarding the removal of Arab countries as the main political decision makers for the future of the Palestinians and further, announced that they would not participate in any negotiations with the Palestinian Liberation Organization.<sup>422</sup> The fragile economic condition in

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<sup>413</sup> H. Druks, *The Uncertain Alliance: the U.S. and Israel from Kennedy to the Peace Process* (London: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2001), 81.

<sup>414</sup> UN Resolution 388 remained ineffective until the USA interfered. K. W. Stein, *Heroic Diplomacy: Sadat, Kissinger, Carter, Begin, and the Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace* (NY: Routledge, 1999), 115.

<sup>415</sup> M. J. Aronoff, *Power and Ritual in the Israel Labor Party: a Study in Political Anthropology*, (NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1993), 157-8.

<sup>416</sup> Gideon Aran, 'The Father, The Son, and The Holy Land; the Spiritual Authorities of Jewish-Zionist Fundamentalism in Israel', in *Spokesmen for the Despised: Fundamentalist Leaders of the Middle East*, ed. Robert S. Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 294-328.

<sup>417</sup> D. Newman, *op. cit.*, 58.

<sup>418</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>419</sup> K. W. Stein, *Heroic Diplomacy: Sadat, Kissinger, Carter, Begin, and the Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace* (NY: Routledge, 1999), 146-156.

<sup>420</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>421</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>422</sup> In the same year the PLO achieved observer status in the United Nations.

Lebanon and the flux of Palestinian refugees fuelled ethnic and religious conflicts in Lebanon, eventually leading to a full scale civil war in 1976.<sup>423</sup>

Inside Israel, the Palestinian Liberation Organization staged attacks in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem and the Israeli government continued the expansion of settlements within the post 1967 borders. The signing of the second agreement between Egypt and Israel demonstrated a complete shift in Egyptian policy towards Israel, which was by then a strong ally of the United States of America.<sup>424</sup> The United States of America supported Israel militarily and economically in order to prepare for any attack from the USSR and block the spread of communism, especially in Israel, home to a strong Russian community and the Labor Party.<sup>425</sup>

Domestically, Rabin's resignation marked the end of the Labor Party's thirty years of power and ushered in the era of the rightwing Likud party - the highpoint of religious Zionism in Israel.<sup>426</sup> In his regional politics Menachim Begin pursued peace negotiations with Egypt and other Arab states but opposed the idea of recognizing the Palestinian Liberation Organization or their participation in peace negotiations.<sup>427</sup> The securitization of Zionism gained momentum after the 1973 war. By 1976, and as the result of the achievement of the securitization, more religious communities were involved in Israeli party politics. Their success in Knesset elections reshaped the country's political culture. In December 1976, Rabin's government submitted its resignation to the Knesset over a motion of "non-confidence" from an Hasidic party (Agudat Yisrael) against the landing of F-15 Fighters after sunset during Sabbath, the day of rest.<sup>428</sup> By the time of the Begin government, the Gush Emunim movement was well established in Israel and its followers were housed in new settlements across the West Bank and Jerusalem.<sup>429</sup>

In the late 70s a Jewish underground group opposed Israel's withdrawal from the Sinai and the evacuation of Israeli settlements in the northern Sinai.<sup>430</sup> At the same time, the increase of Palestinian Liberation Organization bases on the Lebanese border, from where Fatah members staged their

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<sup>423</sup> E. O'Balance, *Civil War in Lebanon, 1975-92* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), 10.

<sup>424</sup> In 1975, President Ford attempted to put the USSR under pressure for freeing the immigration of Russian Jews to Israel. Shlomo Aronson and Oded Brosh, *The Politics and Strategy of Nuclear Weapons in the Middle East: Opacity, Theory, and Reality, 1960-1991: an Israeli Perspective* (NY: SUNY Press, 1992), 128.

<sup>425</sup> Ibid.

<sup>426</sup> Sadat's trip to Jerusalem as the head of a powerful Arab state was an immense diplomatic success for Begin's government. Jordan, Iraq, Libya, Algeria and South Yemen harshly opposed Sadat's peace initiatives and Egypt's diplomatic ties with other Arab countries were reduced. Ibid.

<sup>427</sup> Ibid.

<sup>428</sup> Y. Rabin, *The Rabin Memoirs* (LA: University of California Press, 1996), 291.

<sup>429</sup> By focusing on Israeli economic development, Begin's government encouraged the capitalization of economy he succeeded in improving the Israel's economic situation by abolishing state control over the currency exchange and encouraging the private sector. Ibid.

<sup>430</sup> B. Morris, *Righteous Victims: a History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001* (Vancouver, WA: Vintage Books, 2001), 491.

operations into Israel, instigated another wave of attacks on Israel's borders.<sup>431</sup> In 1978, the Israel Defence Force crossed into Lebanon and Begin announced that Israeli forces were to remain in the area unless Israel was guaranteed its security from its northern borders. Following resolution 425 the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces entered the area and the Israel Defence Force withdrew.<sup>432</sup> Israel, Egypt, and the United States of America signed the Camp David Agreement which specifically addressed the Egypt-Israeli peace agreements and established a five year autonomous territory in both Gaza and the West Bank.<sup>433</sup> In 1979 Egypt and Israel signed the peace treaty in Washington while sporadic fights along the Lebanon border between Syrian forces, the Palestinian Liberation Organization, and the Israel Defence Force continued.<sup>434</sup> This diplomatic improvement even encouraged Saudi Arabia to show interest in recognizing Israel as long as Israel accepted complete withdrawal.<sup>435</sup>

The United States's Middle East policies became more linked to Israeli security after Iran's 1979 revolution, the USSR's attack on Afghanistan, the hostage crisis in Iran, Saddam Hussein's arms deals with the USSR, and the creation of a new pro-soviet front in the region.<sup>436</sup> In 1981, Israel bombarded areas in the Golan Heights. The government announced that this region housed bases for Syrian supported Palestinian militant groups.<sup>437</sup> This development resulted in the 1981 Golan Heights Law in which the Israeli government and its laws were applied in the Golan region.<sup>438</sup> Clashes along the Lebanon border increased until late 1982 when Israel attacked Beirut and southern Lebanon.<sup>439</sup> Once more, the United Nations ceasefire resolution remained ineffective until the Reagan government became involved in the negotiations.<sup>440</sup> The war in Lebanon grew to be very unpopular amongst Israelis and the massacre of Sabra and Shatilla raised more doubts about Israel's involvement in Lebanon.<sup>441</sup>

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<sup>431</sup> Ibid.

<sup>432</sup> W. J. Durch, *The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping: Case Studies and Comparative Analysis* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 1993), 186-190.

<sup>433</sup> W. B. Quandt, *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 1986), 376-388.

<sup>434</sup> During the negotiations, Egypt and Israel disagreed over a number of issues, such as the right of Israel in the Sinai oil fields and their withdrawal from the Sinai. C. Murphy, *Passion for Islam: Shaping the Modern Middle East: the Egyptian Experience* (Ann Arbor, MI: the University of Michigan, 2002), 62-63.

<sup>435</sup> Begin's government opposed the US Senate's decision on selling the AWACS jets to Saudi Arabia but after a long battle with the Israeli lobby in the US, the government approved the contract with Saudi Arabia, and later the sale of F-16 and Hawk missiles to Jordan. N. Safran, *Saudi Arabia: the Ceaseless Quest for Security* (NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 335.

<sup>436</sup> Carter's government signed an agreement with Israel and guaranteed the supply of oil to Israel in times of need. Ch. Panaspornprasit, *US-Kuwaiti Relations, 1961-1992: an Uneasy Relationship* (NY: Routledge, 2005), 69.

<sup>437</sup> Ibid.

<sup>438</sup> Israel accepted the ceasefire package that the USA Ambassador Habib proposed. The Security Council called Israel to refrain from proceeding with the Golan Heights Law. Ibid.

<sup>439</sup> Israel's operation was called "Operation Peace for the Galilee" and in its early phases was responded to by heavy artillery attacks by the Palestinian Liberation Organization. M. A. Tessler, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), 576.

<sup>440</sup> The USA vetoed the resolution. Ibid, 569-573.

<sup>441</sup> Begin asked the Supreme Court to mount an investigation into Israel's role in the massacre. The Courts' commission (Kahan) announced that there were some faults in Israeli actions. Defence Minister Moshe Dayan resigned from his post. Ibid, 560.



As a consequence of the two wars, the Kookist Yeshivot schools spread in the settlements.<sup>442</sup> The central theme in their teaching was the spiritual and religious value of defending the land and the messianic future of the people and state. The military became central to the nation's efforts to guard its national and religious identity.<sup>443</sup> Moreover, although it was specifically Zionist messianism that the state securitized, it as well made the future of religion as a holistic system of beliefs conditional upon the protection of revolutionary messianic ideals. While the military operated under secular institutional rules it adopted a religious framework for its ideology. In addition to the military's distinguished social position as defenders of national security, in less than a decade, the Israel Defence Force became the most organized and influential institution of the state.<sup>444</sup> The development of military and educational institutions in the Israeli political and legal systems gave rise to debates over the military drafting of Yeshivot students. Although some Heredi Yeshivot resisted participation in military activities, many Yeshivot accepted and encouraged military drafting.

As Mordecai Bar-Lev notes, the main difference between the post-war Yeshivot and the traditional Lithuanian religious schools is their approach towards four issues; Zionism, the state of Israel, joining military services, and political participation.<sup>445</sup> The post-war Yeshivot required students to serve at the Israel Defence Force, study the Torah with a pragmatic approach, respect the nation and the state, and spread religious education in the settlements.<sup>446</sup> Thus securitization of Revolutionary Messianism enabled the military to expand its role from being a force for territorial advancement to becoming the most influential factor in Israel's political culture. Adopting a pro-military attitude in Yeshivot demonstrated that the securitization of Revolutionary Messianism facilitated the nation's shift from a traditional educational and governing order to a bureaucratic and institutional order. In the State-Building Phase, civilian rule becomes subordinate to the military even though the state maintains its legal obligations of not interfering in civil affairs. This concentration of political power is not free from praetorianism and economic corruption, especially when the military plays a crucial role in political and economic reforms.

### State legitimization and the Securitization of Revolutionary Messianism in Iran

In order to create a distinct national identity the Pahlavi monarchy defined Iran's national identity, based on a narrative of Iran's pre-Islamic national identity and aiming for a distinct and superior role for Iran in the region. Both Mehran and Arshin Adib-Moghaddam note that the Pahlavi made an effort to

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<sup>442</sup> G. Aran, *op. cit.*, 294.

<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>444</sup> Mordecai Bar-Lev, 'Tradition and Innovation in Religious Education in Israel', in *Tradition, Innovation, Conflict: Jewishness and Judaism in Contemporary Israel*, eds. Zvi Sobel and Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi (NY: SUNY Press, 1991), 120-21.

<sup>445</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

associate a “superior” sense of Iranianness to any discourse on nationalism.<sup>447</sup> In the late Pahlavi era the Shah became more insistent on advocating “Persian identity” through the 1971 celebration of the 2,500 years of the Persian Empire in Persepolis, and in abandoning the Islamic solar calendar and replacing it with a Persian Imperial calendar in order to create an Iranian utopia.<sup>448</sup> Trita Parsi argues that this project, although it differed in terms of the agent and ideology, never stopped after the revolution.<sup>449</sup> Nonetheless, during the Cold War Iran’s secular administration and its close economic and military contacts with the United States of America placed the country in the western camp and made it closer to Israel as the two non-Arab states in the region. Iran remained neutral during the Middle Eastern conflicts of the 1960s and 70s. Following the revolution, however, the Arab states were distressed about the consequences of Khomeini’s “exportation of Islamic revolution” in the region.<sup>450</sup>

Three issues made Iran’s effort of fostering diplomatic ties and exporting the revolution fruitless. The first was that Khomeini’s discourse on unity addressed an Islamic Ummah (the Global Muslim community) rather than cooperation among Islamic states. In fact, Khomeini on many occasions criticized the Arab states for being “puppets of the West” and accused them of deviating from Islam with their “monarchical rules”.<sup>451</sup> Focusing on Islam as a unifying element for the exportation of the revolution was alien to Sunnis, who theologically accept the existence of a semi-secular state under the rule of a Caliph.<sup>452</sup> The rise of pan-Arabism and its attempts at reviving the golden age of the Islamic Ummah has its roots in this theological approach. Moreover, while most of the Arab countries compete, or at times fight, with their Arab neighbours over natural resources, they consider the historical caliphates as the legitimate rulers of the Islamic Ummah. In Iranian Shi’ism none of the four Righteous Caliphs, except Ali, was a legitimate ruler. In fact, in early Ahadith (narratives) on Mahdi, the main responsibility of the Mahdi in the end-time was to be setting up a just state that opposed the central authority of the caliphate.<sup>453</sup>

The second issue was that Iran’s revolutionary understanding of Islam included concepts that were anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist, anti-Zionist, anti-monarchical, and anti-oppression all of which undermined the power of the central Arab states. The emphasis on unity and revolution against tyranny disturbed Arab states.<sup>454</sup> None of the states were attracted to his “exportation of the revolution” project.<sup>455</sup> His

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<sup>447</sup> A. Adib-Moghaddam, *Iran in World Politics: the Question of the Islamic Republic* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2008), 47.

<sup>448</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>449</sup> T. Parsi, *op. cit.*, 50.

<sup>450</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>451</sup> S. Zabih, *Iran since the Revolution* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1982), 190-93.

<sup>452</sup> Subhi Y. Labib, "Capitalism in Medieval Islam", in *The Journal of Economic History* (1969; 29), vol.1, 79-96.

<sup>453</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Hamid Dabashi, and Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Shi’ism: Doctrines, Thought, and Spirituality* (NY: SUNY Press, 1988), 291.

<sup>454</sup> In spite of the fact that Khomeini insisted on the cultural exportation of the revolution, in his meetings with Arab officials it was the fear of Khomeinism that concerned the Arab states rather than the instigation of revolution, S. Zabih, *op. cit.*, 193.

messages attracted Shi'a minorities, political oppositions, and isolated groups in Arab countries, thus creating potential threats to regimes across the Middle East.<sup>456</sup> The third issue was that during the Iran-Iraq war, the majority of Arab countries supported Iraq and this situation of conflict added complexity to Iran-Arab relations.<sup>457</sup> The atmosphere of conflict between an Arab state and Iran ultimately terminated the possibility of the success of the exportation project.

What intensified the securitization of Revolutionary Messianism in Iran were the 1980 hostage crisis, the following hostility between the United States of America and Iran, and the Iraq-Iran war.<sup>458</sup> The political implications of the hostage crisis further securitized and legitimized the state. Following the takeover of the United States of America Embassy in Tehran the hardline revolutionaries insisted on keeping the United States of America diplomatic corps as hostage in the hope that the United States of America would return the Shah to Iran for a trial.<sup>459</sup> The temporary government and newspapers warned the hardliners of the outcome of the possible termination of political and economic ties with the United States of America for both Iran and the region.<sup>460</sup> It cost Mehdi Bazargan his premiership and his cabinet but strengthened Khomeini's position as the leader of the revolution.<sup>461</sup> The continuation of the hostage crisis further isolated Iran and instigated hostility between Iran and the majority of Arab states which could not survive without the United States of America market and American financial aid.<sup>462</sup> In the early 80s, Arab states, like Egypt, terminated their diplomatic ties with Iran. Others, like Saudi Arabia, minimized their political ties with the Islamic Republic. Syria was an anomaly in the Arab world and continued its political ties with Iran, but even Syria was perusing its own political advantages.<sup>463</sup>

Following the hostage crisis, Iran's state defined Revolutionary Messianism in anti-Americanism.<sup>464</sup> Prior to the crisis, revolutionary literature focused on debating the limits and possibilities of implementing freedom of speech, economic independence, and a republic in which Shi'a Shari'a were respected in Iran.<sup>465</sup> Iranian revolutionary officials criticized the United States of America solely for its pro-Pahlavi policies and avoided increasing the tensions between the two countries. In a radical shift and

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<sup>455</sup> S. M. Walt, *Revolution and War* (NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 215.

<sup>456</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>457</sup> Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, *The Foreign Policies of Arab States: The Challenge of Globalization* (Cairo: Amer University in Cairo Pr, 2010), 473.

<sup>458</sup> Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Raymond Hinnebusch, *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rainer Publication, 2002), 11.

<sup>459</sup> D. R. Farber, *Taken Hophase: the Iran Hophase Crisis and America's First Encounter with Radical Islam* (NY: Princeton University Press, 2005), 142

<sup>460</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>461</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>462</sup> W. J. Burns, *Economic Aid and American Policy toward Egypt, 1955-1981* (NY: SUNY Press, 1985), 180.

<sup>463</sup> J. M. Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran: Diplomatic Alliance and Power Politics in the Middle East* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2006), 30.

<sup>464</sup> For the view of the post-revolutionary forces on Cuba, see: E. Abrahamian, *Radical Islam: the Iranian Mojahedin* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1989), 197.

<sup>465</sup> Ettela'at Newspaper articles from February 1978 until November 1978, Etella'at Newspaper, Tehran, 1978.

as a consequence of the crisis, the revolutionaries and Khomeini announced their stand against “imperialism and oppression” in the world as the global messianic goal of the revolution.

Four months after the revolution, Iran withdrew from the CENTO because of their ideological position and hostility towards the United States of America.<sup>466</sup> In addition, Iran became the only Shi’a state in the world, eventually motivating different Shi’a communities who had been oppressed as religious minorities to follow the Iranian model and form Shi’a political or military groups in their own countries.<sup>467</sup> The anti-Imperialist and anti-Zionist ideals of Iran’s revolutionary discourse reflected Sayyid Qutb’s negation of Jahilliyah (ignorance) and his anti-western ideology which attracted those who disagreed with American and Israeli politics in the Middle East.<sup>468</sup> The post-revolutionary state invested in two regional strategies that could ensure its existence in the new political arrangement of the region. The first was discussing the unity of Islamic Ummah in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and arguing that the issue of Palestinians was not just an Israeli or Arab issue but a Muslim issue. By substituting the concept of Ummah instead of Mellat (nation) Khomeini aimed to deconstruct the traditional pan-Arabism in the region and increase his power in regional decision-making.<sup>469</sup> Khomeini used the issue of Palestine as the central topic in his sermons on regional policies to demonstrate Iran’s keenness for a regional strategic alliance amongst the Muslim countries in order to oppose the “hegemony of the West”.<sup>470</sup>

In the national context Khomeini used the term Ummah in order to legitimize the securitization of Revolutionary Messianism. The use of the term affirmed the state’s determination in transforming Iran to an Islamic state. To achieve this aim, the state required a new ideological structure for its security policies that could direct the aim of the securitization process from protecting a monarchy to protecting the revolutionary objectives. Following the hostage crisis the state rationalised its securitization project by basing it on three ideological premises: anti-colonialism, the victimization of revolution (conspiracy theory), and advocating animosity between upper and lower socio-economic classes. To show their loyalty to these ideas, the revolutionaries carried out mass executions of the Pahlavi’s high-ranking officials who were accused of connection with the “westernized” regime.<sup>471</sup>

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<sup>466</sup> J. P. Miglietta, *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002), 44-48.

<sup>467</sup> E. Azani, *Hezbollah: the Story of the Party of God: from Revolution to Institutionalization* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 63-69.

<sup>468</sup> Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, *Non-Western International Relations Theory: Perspectives on and Beyond Asia* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2009), 181.

<sup>469</sup> D. Menashri, *Post-revolutionary Politics in Iran: Religion, Society, and Power* (NY: Routledge, 2001), 228.

<sup>470</sup> Dabashi argues that the notion of Ummah, which was re-defined in the revolution, had first appeared in Ali Shariati’s series of lectures on Islamization. H. Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent: the Ideological Foundation of the Islamic Revolution in Iran* (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2006), 116-17.

<sup>471</sup> H. E. Chehabi, *op. cit.*, 258.

The themes of anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism that animated the Islamic Republic's securitization discourse stigmatized oppositional voices in Iranian society. Securitization justified the state's suppression of various political groups and mass execution of their followers, many of whom had played a crucial role in the success of the revolution. During the revolution the slogan "neither eastern, nor western, an Islamic Republic" referred to the economic and political dependency of the Pahlavi regime.<sup>472</sup> In the post-revolution era all political groups were recognized by their association with one of the Cold War "western" or "eastern" blocks and identified as a threat to the revolution.<sup>473</sup> The construction of an ideological "other" and the introduction of the "other" as the enemy, dominated security discourse. As the war against Iraq began, the state in Iran faced a military invasion and sanctions, while it accused the "West" of plotting against the ideals of the revolution.

Following the takeover of the United States of America Embassy, the term 'anti-revolutionary', was attributed to those who supported political ties with the West or chose a secular lifestyle. A westernized individual was identified by their appearance, women without a Chador (long black Hijab) and men with shaved faces and by the style of their dress. Anyone with Marxist or liberal ideas, supporters of Mujahedin Khalgh, secularists, and supporters of the open market economy were called anti-revolutionary. The number of political prisoners after the hostage crisis increased and a new element entered the securitization discourse.<sup>474</sup> The security ideology of the state categorized the public into two groups; those who were anti-imperialist and supported the revolution's global ideals, and those who supported imperialism and disagreed with state policies.<sup>475</sup> The latter were to be excluded from participating in the political scene of the country due to the fact that their disagreement not only violated national security but also gave an excuse to the "enemy to enslave" Iran once more by conspiring against the post-revolutionary state. By placing the protection of the revolution as the aim of the securitization project, the state theologically justified the use of torture, imprisonment, mass executions and unfair trials against opposition groups, ethnic groups, and some religious minorities.<sup>476</sup>

The conflict situation temporarily alleviated unemployment and other domestic or industrial crises and channelled the nation's recent revolutionary energy into military frontlines, Revolutionary Guards, Basij, Revolutionary committees, and other security services. The state designed its national policies in

<sup>472</sup> R. Afshari, *Human rights in Iran: the Abuse of Cultural Relativism* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 38.

<sup>473</sup> Ibid.

<sup>474</sup> R. Khomeini, *Islamic Government: Governance of the Jurist*, trans. by H. Algar (Iran: Tehran, The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works), <http://www.al-islam.org/islamicgovernment/>, accessed on 9/11/2011 (International Affairs Department). And S. Zabih, *The Left in Contemporary Iran: Ideology, Organization, and the Soviet connection* (NY: Routledge, 1986), 33.

<sup>475</sup> Ibid.

<sup>476</sup> Amnesty International Report, *Over 900 Executions Announced in Five Months in 1989*, (London: Amnesty International Secretariat, 19 June 1989), <http://www.iranrights.org/english/document-100.php>, accessed on 9/11/2011.

response to political opposition that emphasised this definition of national security. It also considered any critique of the institutions, freedom of speech, and party politics as threats to national security. This narrow definition of national security instigated a gap between the people and the state and assigned ultimate authority to the Jurisprudential Leadership. During the time of Khomeini his charismatic leadership cemented this gap but maintaining unity within the Islamic Republic after his death proved to be very challenging. Similar to the situation in Israel, the success of the securitization process in a conflict situation legitimized the state but unlike in Israel, the project produced a one-party political system. Thus, any opposition or criticism of the state's decisions became an existential threat to the security of Jurisprudential Leadership and was dealt with by force.

#### State Political Structure: Bureaucratic Structure and Securitized Messianism

The political implications of securitization extend to the nature and limits of the authority of political agents and state institutions. The securitization of revolution in Iran temporarily reconciled the real tension between state authority and divine sovereignty by strengthening the link between the success of the revolution and messianic hopes. In the political context it regulated the relationship between political agents, religious institutions, and state institutions by placing a jurist as the ultimate decision maker. It centralised religious power and thus brought Iranian Shi'a religious institutions under the control of the state, fundamentally transforming the traditional Shi'a discourse on the concepts of authority and sovereignty.

The securitization projects in Iran and Israel brought to an end the pre-state theological tradition which acknowledged a place for a non-religious public sphere. The quietist and apolitical stand of religious figures and institutions can only exist when politics is distinguished from religion. In a religio-political state, it becomes almost impossible to create a secular public sphere when Securitized Messianism becomes the basis for the institutionalization of revolution. It constructs the states' political philosophy and legitimizes the existing political power by associating it to a progressing messianic theology. In both states, political opposition against the existing security policies and the states' responses include religious debates. This is contrary to pre-Revolutionary Messianism in which political opposition to the ruling system meant revolting against and interfering in God's ordained history. In both cases, the securitization process placed the state as the pre-condition for the progression of messianic history. Therefore, opposition to the ideals of the revolution was religiously forbidden because securing the state is not solely a national or even religious obligation, but it is the main element that designates the success of messianic history.

The securitization projects in these states direct the structure of its institutionalization. When the state is legitimized as the sole agent in the progress of messianic history it initiates new regional security

alliances and identifies different targets as threats. Due to its ideological foundations a religio-political state is capable of creating ideological bonds and is not limited to geographical borders. In the case of Israel, Zionism fostered the formation of the AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) and strong political ties between American Jewry and Israel.<sup>477</sup> In Iran's case, the ideological bond prompted the formation of Hezbollah in Southern Lebanon in 1982, which resulted in a stronger alliance between Lebanese Shi'ites and Iranian revolutionaries.<sup>478</sup> The emergence of Hezbollah not only instigated hostility between Iran and Israel, but also threatened the peace agreement between Egypt and Israel.<sup>479</sup> Syria attempted to build a strategic alliance with Iran in order to maintain its sovereignty over the Golan Heights.<sup>480</sup> While the securitization of Revolutionary Messianism in Israel justified the 1982 attack on Lebanon, in the Islamic Republic it fostered the formation of the military wing of Hezbollah.<sup>481</sup>

Redefining security policies in these states was not limited to a regional context; it re-structured the national political scene. The regional wars of the 1960s and 70s resulted in the growth of religious groups in Israel who theologically legitimized the Zionist goal of territorial expansion.<sup>482</sup> In Iran, as a result of this conflict situation almost all the ayatollahs supported Khomeini. The absence of Iran in global politics, which contradicted the increasing global importance of its natural resources, and its perpetual economic isolation, helped advance the establishment of the Jurisprudential Leader's hegemony over Iranian politics. In Israel, Heredi Jewish suburbs like Yamit in the northern Sinai demonstrated their power in domestic politics by resisting the government's evacuation order and clashing with Israel Defence Force forces in the early 1980s.<sup>483</sup> As the Lebanon-Israel war came to an end the tension between Syria and Arafat increased.<sup>484</sup> As a result Syria asked Arafat to leave the country.<sup>485</sup> Begin resigned from his post and Yitzhak Shamir's government won a vote of confidence from the Knesset.<sup>486</sup> In 1984 thousands of Ethiopian Jews entered Israel an event that would later

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<sup>477</sup> When Israeli and Russian officials met to establish diplomatic relations at the consular level in 1986 for the first time after decades, thousands of people gathered in the US to pressure the USSR government to free up the processes of immigration for Russian Jews into Israel. See: Sidney Heitman, 'Soviet Emigration under Gorbachev', *Journal of East European Jewish Affairs*, Summer 1989, vol. 19, 15-24.

<sup>478</sup> Hezbollah (Arabic: **حزب الله**) "Party of God" is a Lebanese Shi'a military group who receive support from Syria and Iran. For a study on Hezbollah see: A. R. Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History* (NY: Princeton University Press, 2009), 33-42.

<sup>479</sup> A. R. Norton, *op. cit.*, 39-44.

<sup>480</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>481</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>482</sup> According to the Torah, the divine saviour's first action is fighting the enemies of the community, who are by proxy the enemies of God. He will pursue the development of a religious state by his military might, (Jeremiah: Ch. 30:18), (Jeremiah: Ch. 33:25), (Jeremiah: Ch. 23:1)

<sup>483</sup> In 1985, the Supreme Court recognized those who were involved in the bombing and violence in the settlements as convicts. S. Cohen, *The Scroll or the Sword?: Dilemmas of Religion and Military Service in Israel* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1997), 27.

<sup>484</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>485</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>486</sup> *Ibid.*

drastically change the political map of the country.<sup>487</sup> The sharp increase in the number of immigrants, as well as the long term conflict situation and the slowing of the process of industrialization led to inflation in Israel.<sup>488</sup>

Regionally, Syria gradually became Israel's centre of attention as Assad strengthened Syria's political and military influence in Lebanon.<sup>489</sup> In 1987, the first wave of Intifada caused more security challenges for Israel and initiated stronger military, economic and political ties between Israel and the United States of America, as its most trusted ally in the Middle East.<sup>490</sup> Following the Palestinian Liberation Organization's announcement of the establishment of a Palestinian state, Arafat agreed to recognize Israel to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the United States of America.<sup>491</sup> At the same time, Hamas announced its existence by distributing their communiqué in Palestinian territories. Ultimately, the United Nations granted the right of the Palestinian Liberation Organization to be referred to as representatives of "Palestine", effectively giving it membership status. Yitzhak Shamir expressed concerns over the United States of America Secretary of State George Schultz's plan for the settlements.<sup>492</sup>

The fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and the disintegration of the USSR put an end to the decades of polarized politics in the region. The end of the Cold War dramatically changed Israel and Iran's security situation and the goals of Securitized Messianism. The end of the Cold War coincided with the end of the Iran-Iraq war and the death of Khomeini in Iran. In Israel, the mass immigration of Eastern Jews (Mizrahim) and Russian Jews reshaped Israel's demographic and post-Cold War politics. The post Cold War politics of the 1990s influenced the redefinition of Israel's strategic alliance with the United States of America as well as its relationship with the United Nations. This new political environment impacted on the Shamir peace plan and the Israeli response to the Intifada.<sup>493</sup> In Israel the 1990s brought about a transition from its State-Building Phase to a phase of state maintenance.<sup>494</sup>

### Securitized Messianism versus Revolutionary Messianism

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<sup>487</sup> The USA/Israel Free Trade Zone agreement, loans and financial aids assisted Israel to overcome the soaring inflation. V. P. Shannon, *Balancing Act: US Foreign Policy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (US: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2003), 87.

<sup>488</sup> Ibid.

<sup>489</sup> A. R. Norton, op. cit., 44.

<sup>490</sup> Hamas (Arabic: حماس) is a Palestinian Sunni Islamic political party in Gaza Strip. For a study on Hamas see: Matthew Levitt and Dennis Ross, *Hamas: Politics, Charity, and Terrorism in the Service of Jihad* (NY: Yale University Press, 2007), 67. The US vetoed a UN resolution that condemned Israel's air strikes in Lebanon in 1988. A. R. Norton, op. cit., 44.

<sup>491</sup> V. P. Shannon, op. cit., 87. Intifada is a Palestinian uprising that began in the 80s and continued during the 90s. See: R. Schleifer, *Psychological Warfare in the Intifada: Israeli and Palestinian Media Politics and Military Strategies* (NY: Sussex Academic Press, 2006), 48.

<sup>492</sup> Ibid, 88.

<sup>493</sup> Walter Laqueur and Barry M. Rubin, *The Israel-Arab Reader: A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict* (London: Penguin Books, 2001), 224-256.

<sup>494</sup> Ibid.



Revolutionary Messianism in Iran relied on fostering hostility towards notions of aristocracy and loyalty to the monarch. However, Securitized Messianism in the phase of State-Building Phase strongly encouraged elitism and the expression of loyalty to the post-revolutionary state. Revolutionary Messianism blamed non-revolutionary intellectuals for resisting reform while Securitized Messianism considered any reform a security threat. The success of a securitization project in this phase was producing a system that rejected any alternative political discourse as a viable possibility. During the Revolutionary Phase, resisting the existing political power had been highly praised. On the contrary, Securitized Messianism strongly opposed the tradition of protest. Revolutionary Messianism, that Marxist ideals of economic equality and justice had influenced, opposed the development of the bourgeoisie. Securitized Messianism, in contrast, encouraged the development of a new middle class. It rejected the formation or development of any independent collective organization except those that the revolutionists strongly supported.

In Israel, Revolutionary Messianism had helped to unite workers, many of whom were members of minority populations made up of relocated immigrant communities. The conflicts sped up the development of military industry and smoothed their transition from egalitarian communities to industrial urban life in the Kibbutzim. The concentration of European immigrants in major cities, the state's emphasis on industrialization, and the development of state institutions, all contributed to social and political advantages to Ashkenazi communities who formed the majority of political decision makers in Israel. The parties whose interests were associated with the military industry became political legislators. Due to the diversity of ethnic communities, even within the Ashkenazi communities, and the political structure of the Knesset, the impact of the securitization process on Israeli politics did not manifest until the later years of the Cold War. From the 1970s to the mid-80s, North African Jewish communities who migrated to Israel in great numbers lived in poor socio-economic conditions as the result of the militarism and Ashkenazi elitism of Israeli politics.<sup>495</sup> The formation of the Black Panthers movement, which staged violent demonstrations in Jerusalem against the first United National government, was one outcome of the demographic change and ethnic class struggle in Israeli society.<sup>496</sup> By the mid seventies about one hundred thousand Russian Jewish immigrants settled in Israel.<sup>497</sup> Immigrants from North Africa and Russia established settlements in the West Bank and other post war territories.<sup>498</sup>

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<sup>495</sup> In some cases the government evacuated the settlers from new settlements like Elon Moreh despite previous authorization. Y. Holzman-Gazit, *Land Expropriation in Israel: Law, Culture and Society, Law, Justice, and Power* (NY: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2007), 131-2.

<sup>496</sup> I. Rabinovich, *op. cit.*, 234-237.

<sup>497</sup> Y. Holzman-Gazit, *op. cit.*, 131-132.

<sup>498</sup> *Ibid.*

In both cases of this study the states have needed a conflict situation for establishing their political and religious legitimacy and post-revolutionary political institutions. In Iran's case, the state associated the legitimacy of political parties, trade unions and other social communities with revolutionary ideals. Establishing Khomeini's Jurisprudential Leadership as the core issue in any security policy, which relied solely on the Revolutionary Messianism, became the main aim of the post-revolutionary state. Gradually expressing loyalty and commitment to Jurisprudential Leadership became necessary and sufficient grounds for the legitimacy of any political party or individual. In Israel the conflict situation legitimized the nation, the state and its institutions, with Zionism becoming the durable element of the state and the reference for the legitimation of political parties, trade unions, and various ethnic Jewish communities. In Iran those citizens who were not associated with the state were excluded from decision making and stigmatized. In Israel, Palestinians became the target of isolation and alienation.

The tension between the secular structure of western nation states and the political power of religious institutions in secular states has been one of the most studied areas in the history of secularism. It is a concept that defines the source of the state legitimacy. In western democratic states, the bureaucratic order of state institutions, a strong civil order, and the participation of political cultures provide the grounds for the state legitimacy. These secular sources also establish a form of institutional trust between citizens and the state. In religio-political states, the state needs religious legitimacy in order to validate the existence of a political state. In both Iran and Israel religious institutions that had differed in their perspectives regarding the conditions of the coming of the messiah supported Revolutionary Messianism and a commitment to the state in the State-Building Phase.

Religious revolutionaries of whom the majority had been apolitical or quietist passionately pursued the securitization process. They used messianic discourse in order to mobilize public support for the state during the State-Building Phase and in times of conflict. The Securitized Messianism discourse involved not only theological experts in politics but also produced a form of political, legal, and administrative discourse based on Revolutionary Messianism which was increasingly religious. These religio-political states produced secular forces whose understanding of the secular was religious. For the religious revolutionaries, they linked the understanding of secularism to colonialism and oppression. According to them, the dominant form of understanding of human interactions and dealing with the world was religious and no alternative existed. Thus, a non-religious political governing system was an existential threat to both national and religious security. As messianism entered everyday politics it posed new questions for theological institutions regarding the relationship between state security and the protection of religion. Their responses to these questions further bound state politics and religion to Securitized Messianism.

Religion gradually gained stronger support as the only appropriate political ideology that could protect the national identity of citizens. Israel's peace initiatives with the Palestinians, which Heredi Jews opposed, paved the way for the involvement of Heredi communities in politics. Gideon Aran calls their involvement as the preceding legitimacy ground for the emergence of Gush Emunim as a political party.<sup>499</sup> In Iran the post-revolutionary state formed an exaggerated form of national identity that was ideologically different from liberal democracies or socialist states. In a liberal democracy, as Barry Buzan argues, threats to a state can be divided into three groups: threats that target the idea of a state (nationalism), threats that target the physical and material existence of a state (population and resources), and the threats that target the political system of a state. In these post-revolutionary states however, these issues were identified as threats to both the state and religion.<sup>500</sup> For reformists in Iran and secularists in Israel, part of the domestic challenge during the State-Maintenance Phase has been re-stating boundaries between politics and religion and changing the closed political culture of the states which identifies revolution as the ultimate and deliberate target of all security threats regardless of their economic, political, or social nature. Attaching a sense of urgency to securing revolutionary ideals legitimized the post-revolutionary states based on the system against which they had revolted. In Iran the Islamic Republic copied the monarchical system. Israel focused on the blood-relation of the people as the basis of its identity in order to transform Revolutionary Messianism into a collective national and religious identity.

## Conclusion

The process of State Building in both Iran and Israel resulted in the progressive hegemony of Securitized Messianism over politics. Normally the focus of studies on state authority is on the political decisions of the states, but it is more useful to explain the relationship between national state legitimacy and revolutionary identity by using Buzan's securitization model. It allows us to see the relationship between Revolutionary Messianism and the construction of national identity. It also clarifies how different perspectives generate a semi-unified idea of messianism centred on the sacredness of land, contextual security threats, and the continuation of history that define theology in modern political discourse. Although theologians have different perspectives regarding various religious laws as the outcomes of the hermeneutics of the sacred texts, revolutionary hermeneutics generate similar understandings of the sacred texts with a nationalist tone.

The hegemony of Securitized Messianism in these states works in accordance with their revolutionary ideology and legitimizes the authority of the state, its political culture, and the security goals of the

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<sup>499</sup> G. Aran, *op. cit.*, 197-212.

<sup>500</sup> B. Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post Cold War Era* (London: Lunne Rienner, 1995), 9.

country. In Israel and Iran, in the phase of State Building, securitization created a form of state elitism that contradicted the revolutionary understanding of equality. While the securitization process connected the Jewish and Shi'a understanding of political authority to post-revolutionary state identity, it articulated the states' definition of nationalism in the State-Building Phase. It translated revolutionary messianic hope into the territorial expansion of Zionism in Israel and the Islamization and exportation of the revolution in Iran by replacing the state as the ultimate factor for the fulfilment of messianic hope. Thus, religious discourse is focused on justifying the state's policies, or theologizing the states' conflicts. In both states, the conflict situation directed the securitization of messianism towards military idealism in the post-revolutionary states. The hermeneutics of sacred texts on messianism accommodated state politics and provided it with a source of legitimacy. The securitization of Revolutionary Messianism during this phase developed into the ideological foundation of the states' political structure. The existence of a conflict situation, specifically a conventional war, denied the prospect of any political alliance amongst oppositional groups in Iran and suppressed Sephardim voices in Israel. Securitized Messianism differs from Revolutionary Messianism in terms of its understanding of the concept of authority and the relationship between the state and its citizens.

During the State-Building Phase, the securitization process forced Iran and Israel to emphasize their central power, characterize their national identity, and solidify their relationship with the Cold War superpowers. In Israel the wars strengthened the states' military, economic, and political ties with the United States of America and prompted the unification of religious and secular political groups against external military threats. In Iran, Khomeini identified the United States of America's military bases in the region, its military involvement in regional politics, and its support of Iraq during the war as threats against the revolution and used these factors as foundations for the Islamic Republic's securitization project. Securitized Messianism legitimized a new form of national identity that relied heavily on religious tradition and the history of the revolution. The securitization process created an alliance between the military, religious groups, and individuals who shared the goal of protecting the state. These groups, although different in their strategies, ideologically supported the securitization process and were both nationalist and religious.

Contrary to the Revolutionary Phase, in which an ideological idealism united various social groups, the State-Building Phase witnessed the alliance between the state and social groups based on the groups' military and security support of the state. Religion, which had been a significant motivator of political opposition during the Revolutionary Phase, became a subcategory of Securitized Messianism during the State-Building Phase. In Israel, the parallel progress of State Building and nation building created a harmonious development for the solidification of state authority. In Iran, the imposing of a revolutionary identity over a well established national identity for the state proved more problematic.

The securitization process in this phase resolved the question of the relationship between the state's national identity and its religious identity. However, this issue poses an ongoing challenge to these states, which indicates that there is a real tension between Shi'a and Jewish understandings of authority and the modern political understanding of authority in a nation state. The next chapter examines how state elitism, militarism, and messianic goals became institutionalised in the states' law and how challenges between the secular and the religious created tensions between the new class of political theologians and theological politicians.

## Chapter 4 - Land, State, Law and the Messiah: Rethinking Divine Law and State Constitution

### Introduction

During the institutionalization of Revolutionary Messianism in the legal system the most crucial challenge for Israel and Iran has been accommodating the contradiction between the religious nature of messianism and the secular structure of state institutions. In both cases, reconciling contradictions between the bureaucratic legal system of a nation state and the theological dimension of messianism has been a political issue as well as a legal and theological one. This manifests in the challenges their respective legal systems face. This chapter argues that the main functions of Securitized Messianism are the legitimization of the state and the formation of a legal system that incorporates both religious and civil laws. The success of the institutionalization of Securitized Messianism depends on the success of the states' legal system in resolving these post-revolutionary challenges and also in re-defining the boundaries between the secular and the religious. For defining any boundary between legal and religious laws both these states require a security discourse that theologically relies on messianism while accommodating the realities of the states' institutional structure.

In these states, the existence of contradictory religious and national sources of law poses difficulties for the development of coherent legal systems and defining who a citizen is and what their rights are. In addition, due to the importance of messianism in their revolutions, neither of these legal systems could be completely non-religious or religious. The solution for resolving this tension is in enacting sets of disciplinary laws based on their revolutionary messianic ideals. Moreover, the requirement to institutionalise such a disciplinary framework establishes the political and the religious legitimacy of their legal systems. In both cases, as the result of the involvement of the state in theological debates and issues, and the involvement of theologians in practical politics, the institutionalization of Securitized Messianism in the legal system of the states leads to the de-privatization of religion.<sup>501</sup> For these states, the main challenge in the de-privatization process appears to be sustaining the efficiency of their legal systems in balancing the secular and religious sources of law and maintaining their political legitimacy within the national context. Due to their different political structures, the de-privatization of religion takes different forms in each state. The existence of a secular parliament, free media, and commitment to distribution of political power in Israel has produced many public spaces for negotiating these challenges. The presence of a conflict situation in the country serves to unite various political groups

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<sup>501</sup> I use Casanova's definition of "de-privatization" in this study on public religion. He writes "By deprivatization I mean the fact that religious traditions throughout the world are refusing to accept the marginal and privatized role which theories of modernity as well as theories of secularization had reserved for them." J. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 5.

and very often it re-contextualises domestic issues and makes them less contentious. In Iran these challenges have weakened the closed political system and created a legitimacy crisis for the state.

This chapter investigates these developments by first studying the contextual factors that contribute to the transition of Securitized Messianism to Politicised Messianism before discussing these abstract notions in the case studies. It examines these changes in Iran from 1985 to 1997, particularly focusing on the shift of authority from Khomeini to Khamenei. In the case of Israel, it concentrates on the 1990s and the rise of the Shas party. The central argument of this chapter is that these changes are a phase in this unfolding process which I have called a transition from Securitized Messianism to Politicised Messianism. This chapter outlines the overview of the concept of law in secular nation states and the re-setting of legal structures in these post-revolutionary states, then, uses examples to illustrate how these states move from the State Building to State-Maintenance Phase. While in the process of explaining this transition this chapter refers to some of the legal changes in the real politics, and particularly focuses on the formal legal discourse by which these states manage their religious traditions and transform them to national laws.

## Law and Securitization of Messianism

The non-existence of a divine transcendent power is the indispensable institutional foundation of modern laws.<sup>502</sup> In a nation state, the grounds for the legitimation of law are the decisions of its citizens. Citizens can evaluate political parties' policies in elections and determine the success or failure of national political decisions. The limitation of law is subsequently bound to the sovereignty of a state and its efficiency in managing public affairs. The state authority is designated on the basis of a social contract between citizens and the state. Anthony Giddens argues that the deconstruction of pre-modern trust relations in European states and the establishment of modern political trust relations (which is between state institutions and the populace) gave meaning to European nation states.<sup>503</sup> The reconstruction of trust relations around new sources of legitimacy and the establishment of legal systems were the political consequences of modernity. Institutional trust relations have remained a determining feature of modern legal systems since the establishment of nation states in the eighteenth century.

<sup>502</sup> In modern nation states, the states are not institutionally reliant on transcendental power, except, in somewhat anachronistic professions of transcendence in national symbols and rituals such as national anthems or currencies. A. Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 102.

<sup>503</sup> *Ibid.*

For a legal system to be an efficient state institution, it must create a form of trust between the public and the state. In Israel and Iran the post-revolutionary understanding of legitimacy and the tension between religious and political sources of legitimacy in relation to national laws have transformed traditional religious trust relations. As a result of supporting the institutional model for a national legal system, the clergy have necessarily limited their power over legal matters, as the examples in this chapter demonstrate. Religious/non-religious tensions and changes in the political atmosphere of these states have played vital roles in transforming theological approaches towards the power of the state and in the establishment of trust between the populace and a political state. In both states, the subjectivity of the individual is a central and contentious issue between the state and religious institutions and a problematic issue in theological debates. The inconsistency between the modern understanding of an autonomous individual and the theological definition of an individual is also evident in national political debates.

Following Hobbes and his theory of the atomic individual, most western political philosophers have defined an individual as having some inalienable rights. Arthur Lord categorized the main factors in the modern political understanding of the relationship between the state and the individual into three groups. The first is that an individual is the centre of any political thought. The second is that an individual is “coming to count for more” in a modern political world and the third is that an individual “ought to count for more” in a modern political order.<sup>504</sup> Both Jewish and Shi’a religious traditions acknowledge the rights of an individual based on their commitment to their religion and the fulfilment of their moral duties towards their faith.<sup>505</sup> Thus individuals are connected to each other by sets of religious, social, and political duties and not only by their individual choices. This religious perspective on individual rights contradicts the legacy of the west in which hyper individualism, the protection of an individual’s interests, remains a dominant concern. As Revolutionary Messianism develops into a security-orientated ideology, traditional understanding of individual commitment to religion transforms into one’s service and commitment to the security of the state and also striving towards its messianic goals. This transformation limits legal debates on individual and civil rights to political and legal concerns over state security. Although Israel and Iran have adopted radically different approaches towards national laws and individual rights, their legal decisions and policies are primarily affected by security issues.

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<sup>504</sup> A. R. Lord, *The Principles of Politics: an Introduction to the Study of the Evolution of Political Ideas* (Ayer, MA: Ayer Publishing, 1971), 205.

<sup>505</sup> M. Fakhry, *An Interpretation of the Qur’an: English Translation of the Meanings* trans. by M. Fakhry, (NY: New York University Press, 2004), (Q. Surah 48:6), (Q. Surah 47:4), (Q. Surah 2:191), (Q. Surah 9:12-28-29-123), (Q. Surah 2:191), (Q. Surah 33:61)



An account of the relationship between the individual and the religio-political state should be complemented by examining these states' policies regarding the relationship between individuals, religion, and the state. This observation leads to an analysis of the tension in these legal systems which incorporate a religious understanding of the individual who is not born free, is bound to a religious or communal contract with others, and is particularly responsible for the protection of God's rights in modern institutional trust relations between a legal system and citizens. The establishment of institutional trust relations in the post-revolutionary states and their religious and political implications determine the limits on the rights of religious figures and institutions in legal decision making but struggles to create a coherent legal system that protects the rights of all citizens regardless of their religious identity. In the security-orientated policies which relate to the civil rights of citizens in these states, the equality of individuals supersedes the liberty of individuals. Nonetheless, theological attempts to present a theological explanation of national laws and civil rights serve to securitize Revolutionary Messianism, eradicate boundaries between religious and national communities, and prioritize the political responsibilities of individuals. When a legal definition of the limits of individual freedom is solely discussed within the context of national security, the choice of individuals regarding their religious identity is undermined. Moreover, such a legal system makes civil rights conditional upon the political environment and becomes progressively dependant for legitimacy on the rise of religious and rightwing political parties.

## Trust Relations

Giddens considers four categories to distinguish the concept of trust and trust relations between pre-modern and modern cultures.<sup>506</sup> He views kinship relations as a device for organising identity in pre-modern societies and identifies the relationship between an authority and a subject as the way to define identity. The local community played a crucial role in these societies as a place for constructing and establishing trust relations.<sup>507</sup> Religious cosmologies in pre-modern societies were another foundation for trust relations. Religious traditions complemented these factors, which functioned as a means to connect the past to the present and present a historical continuity for society.<sup>508</sup> Giddens argues that the two concepts of trust and risk in pre-modern cultures were limited to the danger that nature, human violence, and malicious magic posed to the group. Modernity, he argues, transformed these concepts.<sup>509</sup> Contrary to the pre-modern system, trust in the modern period relies on a personal relationship instead of kinship. Modernity created an abstract system that replaced local communities with national

<sup>506</sup> In this research trust is defined in relation to state politics and does not refer to personal trust in social relations. A. Giddens, *op. cit.*, 102.

<sup>507</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>508</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>509</sup> A. Giddens, *op. cit.*, 100.

communities and has functioned as a means for establishing social relations. In modern societies, future-orientated and rational thought performs a social function similar to the function that classical religious cosmologies played in explaining natural threats.<sup>510</sup>

Giddens explains the role of religion and religious cosmology in relation to trust relations in the pre-modern context as mediatory.<sup>511</sup> Religious beliefs, he asserts, can be a source of anxiety and should be categorised as a risk. The moral principles embedded in a religious cosmology highlight the establishment of trust as a priority between humans and a transcendental force when facing natural threats, rather than the creation of a direct link between humans and nature. This complex net of anxiety and theological explanation made the transcendent the ultimate source of trust and attributed to religion and religious specialists a mediatory role.<sup>512</sup> He places emphasis on the reliability which religion gives to the “experience of event and situations” and argues that religion provides a framework for individual and collective responses to these events.<sup>513</sup> Giddens defines religious tradition not solely as an organized body of rituals and beliefs, but as the manner by which beliefs and practices are arranged in relation to time, which he explains as “a distinct mode of structuring temporality”.<sup>514</sup> These modes of trust relations decreased after modernity and were replaced by a new understating of time-space and social relations. In the development of liberal democracies, he notes, the traditional form of trust relations was reconstructed and institutions established mechanisms to control “discretionary powers implied in trust relations”.<sup>515</sup> Politically, modern institutional trust relations limit the power of state authorities to institutional interactions and shape the institutionalization of modern politics in European nation states.<sup>516</sup>

The radical shift from pre-modern to modern understandings of the trust relations involves conceptual transition of trust relations at the social level from an agent based system into an institutional one. This form of institutionalised trust, which is now clearly established in liberal democratic states, also creates

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<sup>510</sup> Ibid, 102.

<sup>511</sup> Ibid.

<sup>512</sup> Guido Mollering in his book ‘Trust: Reason, Routine, Reflexivity’ explains the conditions and limits to any philosophical debates on trust. He warns that there is an infinite number of issues that need to be considered when studying trust or using the term in academic research. He notes that trust, like justice or freedom, is an abstract concept. The issue of trust becomes important when a lack of trust is felt. He notes “The plea “Trust me!” certainly sounds helpless and/or raises suspicion in most practical situations, irrespective of whether it is uttered by a loved one or the leader of a nation- and is therefore generally not to be recommended except as a very last resort, if only because it draws attention to a potential failure as mentioned above.” G. Mollering, *Trust: Reason, Routine, Reflexivity* (West Yorkshire: Emerald Group Publishing, 2006), Introduction, 3.

<sup>513</sup> A. Giddens, op. cit., 103.

<sup>514</sup> He considers Levi-Strauss’s notion of “reversible time” essential to his understanding of the temporality of people’s behaviour and faith. Ibid, 105.

<sup>515</sup> Ibid.

<sup>516</sup> In his study of democracy and trust, Warren asserts that liberal democracy stems from public distrust of traditional religious and elite political authorities. M. E. Warren, *Democracy and Trust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1.

distinction between trust in people and confidence in institutions.<sup>517</sup> While trust between individuals is based on face-to-face contact, familiarity and a history of personal exchange, institutional confidence is a product of the efficiency of the institution itself.<sup>518</sup> Due to the central role of citizens and the development of political participation culture, the regulations that the states' institutions envisage, aim to create confidence in people which is central to the legitimization of regulations.<sup>519</sup>

Israel and Iran face many challenges in adopting the modern changes of trust relations during the State-Building Phase. Contrary to secularized European states, these revolutionary messianic states are obliged to use the agent-based pre-modern trust relations in order to create public confidence in the state and to mobilise support for the legal system. The unique use of pre-modern trust relations in legitimising Iran and Israel's legal system is further complicated by the security-orientated policies of both states and the established economic connections between the military and revolutionary elites. The latter creates a tight relationship between the local economy and the legal system, which prevents the establishment of secular regulations. Therefore, instead of regulations, the states base their legitimacy on an agent based trust relationship.

### Legal Authority of Securitized Messianism

Authority involves attributing certain privileged rights to a particular individual or group of individuals. In Iran and Israel, one of the main challenges to establishing authority through the legal system relates to how each state affirms and sustains its "authority". In these states, a key factor in presenting a claim for the ultimate authority of the legal system is the continuing theological tension between the transcendent and the actual. Theologically, for both religious systems, the contention that an individual or select group of individuals has authority over others appears to contradict the exclusive authority of God. According to the theological view, a state can only enjoy legal authority but cannot exercise transcendental authority over others. The conflict between the authority of the transcendent and the actual authority of the state is the main concern of many religious voices. These religious spokespeople challenge and reject the authority of a securitized state. This conflict between religious and secular viewpoints results in the emergence of opposing political positions regarding the condition and limits of the authority of the legal system over religion and politics. This notion contradicts a key foundation of the secular legal system, in which political decisions are taken independently of religious institutions and

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<sup>517</sup> Russell J. Dalton and Hans-Dieter Klingemann, *Oxford Handbook of Political Behaviour*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 344.

<sup>518</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>519</sup> *Ibid.*

figures. Examining how Iran and Israel define political authority highlights their similarities and their differences in understanding the limits and conditions of the states' actual and transcendent authority.

The tension between traditional authority and political legitimacy marks the first phase of the institutionalization of messianism. A nation state could not be built without a legitimate ruling system. Contrary to secular nation states in which public trust is the foundation for political legitimacy and stability, in Iran and Israel it is the Securitized Messianism that enables each state to establish civil and political institutions. Consequently, each of these institutions should be legitimated in order to be able to function, and should be publically engaged in creating social trust. They achieve the transformation of divine sovereignty into political authority by institutionalising the divine authority of the Messiah into the religious identity of the state. This process creates challenges for traditional religious institutions and their understandings of the authority of God over human affairs. Therefore, while in modern nation states the power of religious agents and institutions is limited as they gave their legal power to the nation states' representative, in Iran and Israel the authority of the states representatives is emanates from securitized messianic laws and religious sources.

The limits of the rights of the legal authority of a state cannot be explained without defining the sources and conditions of national law. In Israel and Iran, law is a combination of divine laws (revelations) and political laws copied from European Constitutions which require theological justifications. Accordingly, in both phases of institutionalization and in the implementation of a national law, these states are dependent on religious institutions. Messianic debates, thus, become politically orientated and introduce modern issues such as citizenship, parliamentary bills, and individual freedom into theological debates. These states become responsible for policing society on behalf of religious institutions while also fulfilling the duties of a modern nation state in providing social services such as healthcare and education. Consequently, the duty of protecting the religious identity of national law is annexed to the responsibilities of a modern legal system. Gradually, the legal systems in these states develop a strong dependency on religious institutions. This political situation created an environment in which new political parties became subservient or reactionary to influential religious institutions for political legitimacy.

The political implications of the securitization process are not limited to civil regulations, security or defence laws. Securitized Messianism constructs the ideological foundation of the state and is imbedded in military, administrative, and legislative decisions, giving the administrations the legitimacy for enjoying executive power. As the State-Building Phase develops, theological institutions require state legitimization for social and religious efficiency. Consequently, they lose their semi-autonomous institutional administrative power and become subordinate institutions of the state. In turn, religious

institutions gain immense power over the legal structure of these states. The tension of the pre-modern agent-based trust relations and institutional trust relations further engages religious institutions in political competition. The relationship between legal system, administrative, and legislative powers creates a political public sphere where various groups challenge each other over sources and social implications of laws. Responses from each group to these challenges signal the level of cooperation or tension between religious and state institutions. These challenges incorporate various issues from decision making at an institutional level to the legitimacy of excising political power relations in the administration.

### Divine Law versus Collective Legal Solidarity

According to Jewish and Shi'a theologies, those who are aware of the religious law and its interpretations should have the power to implement divine laws in the community. For a legal system in a messianic state to become legitimate in religious terms, national laws must consider the incorporation of theological views in any legal decision. In contrast, from a modern legal perspective the agents involved in implementing laws should be legal professionals, regardless of their religious commitment or knowledge. This tension in religio-political states results in the emergence of two new professional groups of theologian politicians and politician theologians.<sup>520</sup> According to both groups, those who favour the increasing power of civil laws not only betray the state but also betray the divine plan of messianism. They attach a sense of urgency to strengthening the religious identity of the national law and legal system, consider secularism a threat to religion, and favour the extension of the power of a religious- based legal system into all aspects of social life.<sup>521</sup>

Divine law is primarily distinguishable from human law in its source of legitimacy. The purpose of the expression or interpretation of divine law appropriates human intentions and actions into God's law. Humans are obligated to obey the law and play a minimal role in formulating the law. Submission, rather than participation, defines the structure of religious laws. The religious justification for an individual's submission to divine law is that God, as the omnipotent and omnipresent power in the world, has presented the best model of a legal system for the people, as he is the most aware of human needs and conditions. In addition, human beings, as God's agents on earth, are responsible for the fulfilment of the divine promise via an absolute commitment to religious laws. The religious community and the divine are thus not in a reciprocal political relationship. In this uni-directional cosmology, without divine guidance, human beings are unable to fulfil their responsibilities on earth; without submission to God's rules they cannot achieve redemption. In Jewish and Shi'a religious systems, the

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<sup>520</sup> Y. Sarfati, *The Rise of Religious Parties in Turkey and Israel; a Comparative Study*, PhD Dissertation, University of Ohio, 2009

<sup>521</sup> For discussion of democracy in Iran and Israel see chapter six of this study.

obligation of obeying divine laws shape the individual's communal and political identity and is a fundamental aspect of the rationalization of messianic goals.

According to these messianic theologies, during the time of waiting, the clergy decide the nature and conditions of religious laws and discuss their understandings with other clergy in debates that are recorded in long lines of theological commentaries bound to the uni-directional theology.<sup>522</sup> In the State-Building Phase this theological view of law combined with the securitized interpretation of sacred texts, constructs the ethics of the legal system. The framework of national law in each of these legal systems consists of regulations that stipulate the states' explanation of communal history and the religious identity of its citizens. In addition to maintaining their connection with messianism the laws are written to consider the idealist vision that the states provide and the grounds for the coming of the messianic age. Contrary to religious groups, non-religious entities that support civil laws view national laws as contextualised, relative and demonstrative of the local characteristics and demands of a given society. Connecting the ethics of the legal system to messianism opens the possibility for both revolutionary elites and religious leaders to establish their position as the exclusive mediators of national law. It also justifies the use of exegesis in legal matters as a means for understanding the law and responding to the divinely- determined history that could lead the state to a messianic age.

In both the Jewish and the Shi'a traditions, the political rule of the messianic age is legitimized by its legal situation: the fulfilment of divine law. In Shi'a tradition the Messiah's legal power is not limited and covers all aspects of the social, political and economic life of the community and the wider world.<sup>523</sup> His ultimate and just legal approach creates a collective solidarity amongst members in his state. In the Jewish tradition the messianic age and the messiah have never been clearly distinguished.<sup>524</sup> The prophets in the Torah are vague about the exact conditions of the messianic age and refer to it solely as 'the day of religion', 'the day to come', 'the day of the justice', or 'the day of judgement'.<sup>525</sup> Therefore, contrary to Shi'a Islam in which only a person (Mahdi) can bring about the messianic age, in Jewish tradition both the messianic age and a messiah are incorporated in messianic theology.

The focus of messianic ideology on justice adds another layer of complexity to the structure of the legal system in these security orientated states. For the religious groups who support a strong religious legal system in the states, the concept of justice is exclusively theological. They rarely support issues that could strengthen civil society or individual rights. For religious groups, religious laws are the only sets

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<sup>522</sup> By uni-directional theology I mean a theology that views God as the ultimate power in the world and understands the responsibility of humans to be submissive to the rules that God has sent to them through his prophets.

<sup>523</sup> According to the Shi'ites, Mahdi (Mohammad ibn Hassan Asghari), was born in Samarra (868 CE) and after the martyrdom of his father went to occultation (Ghaybah). Hamid Dabashi and Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Expectation of the Millennium: Shi'ism in History* (NY: SUNY Press, 1989), 8.

<sup>524</sup> Personal conversation with Professor Paul Morris, 18, May 2011, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

<sup>525</sup> Ibid.

of laws that are legitimate and able to create a just society. The feeling of injustice emanates from implementing human laws, which are temporary and solely concern the interests of individuals. Divine laws, which are permanent and comprehensive, ensure social justice and could lead a society to a messianic age. God grants the community the advantageous position as loyal servants who have suffered a history of discrimination but stood fast in their faith to the coming of a messianic age. The violation of religious laws by individuals, thus, brings God's wrath on the state and the people and delays the messianic age. Therefore, for religious groups the states' legal system becomes the primary institution for the integration of the national collective identity and the promise of messianism. In real politics, this ideological position emphasises the supervisory power of the state in the implementation of justice and grants legal legitimacy to the body of Rabbinic/Jurisprudential literature on law. This theological position reflects the traditional kinship political system in which a system of agent-based law governed communal affairs.

### The Differences between National Law in Iran and Israel

The conflict situation that Iran and Israel faced during the State-Building Phase introduced another factor to the complex relationship between religion and politics. Securitization of messianism during these times created a vacuum of civil institutions, which contributed more power to religious institutions as the sole civil agency inside and outside the government in Iran. The Iranian state rapidly modernised traditional religious institutions, used their network systems, and monitored their funding and connections. Through these institutions, the Islamic Republic could easily stigmatize and suppress opposing groups like Marxists or Mojahidin.<sup>526</sup> Parallel to the war against Iraq Khomeini established a state sponsored religious monitoring militia with executive power in all political and legal areas. The ideological and practical involvement of religious institutions in security issues modernized religious institutions and politicized the religious leaders' stance regarding urbanization, gender issues and participation in the military. The combination of religious and political power ended the era of theological plurality and bound Shi'a Islam to the state's Securitized Messianism.

Khomeini validated the legitimacy of Jurisprudential Leadership by affirming its legal status.<sup>527</sup> Similarly to the Constitutionalist Ayatollahs, Khomeini strongly disputed a post-revolutionary passive messianism and argued that an Islamic state was a pre-requisite for ending tyranny in the age of occultation, a position that anti-Constitutionalists like Nouri rejected. Simultaneously, like the anti-Constitutionalists,

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<sup>526</sup> MKO, (Mojahedin Khalq Organization) is an Iranian political party with a military branch that played a significant role in the success of the 1979 revolution but was soon abandoned by Khomeini. The Islamic Republic executed thousands of its followers and many escaped Iran and settled in Europe or in a camp in Iraq. R. Cohen, *The Rise and Fall of the Mojahedin Khalq, 1987-1997: Their Survival after the Islamic Revolution and Resistance to the Islamic Republic of Iran* (Oxford: Sussex Academic Press, 2009), 52-71.

<sup>527</sup> Article 111 in Iran's Constitution, A. Ehteshami, *After Khomeini: the Iranian Second Republic* (London: Routledge, 1995), 40.

Khomeini rejected the establishment of a legislative system that was focused on protecting the interests of individuals. He argued that introducing these political systems to the Middle East were strategies that the colonising powers employed to usurp Iran's national resources and religious identity.<sup>528</sup> Fanatically concerned with the future of religious institutions, Khomeini's view of an Islamic state was that of a political state that would guarantee the persisting dominance of Shi'a ulama over Iran's political, educational, and judicial systems. In order to achieve this objective he used the language of modern politics and excluded any law, regulation, or group who supported civil law from Iran's political scene.

The Islamic Republic legal system referred to Khomeini as the ultimate authority in managing Iran's affairs and the Constitution became the secondary source of authority.<sup>529</sup> Khomeini's theory suggested that replacing a monarch with an alim (pl. ulama) and religious institution created an unsurpassed model of just leadership for Iran.<sup>530</sup> The ulama, who had maintained their status as the agents of decoding the secret messages of the divine into everyday political affairs by their theological accomplishments, became national decision makers.<sup>531</sup> Prior to his death, in a revision of Iran's Constitution, Khomeini added the word "absolute" to Articles 111 and 57 and extended the limits of the power of Jurisprudential Leadership.<sup>532</sup> The end of the war diverted the conflict from the front line to domestic issues and revived debates over state legitimacy that had been quieted during the first decade of the state. The charismatic leadership that cemented the secular foundations of Iran's politics to Shi'a messianism died with Khomeini and the institutionalization of the leader's legitimacy over Iran's legal system proved challenging.

According to Article 111 of Iran's Constitution, an absolute Jurisprudential Leader delineates Iran's policies and supervises the proper execution of the general policies of the system.<sup>533</sup> He is the supreme commander of the armed forces and declares both war and peace. He has the power to appoint or dismiss Clergy members on the Guardian Council, the country's supreme judicial authorities, the head of the radio and television network, the joint chief of staff, the chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, and the supreme commanders of the armed forces.<sup>534</sup> He signs the decree formalizing the election of the President and can dismiss the country's elected president. He regulates the relations between the three wings of the armed forces and has the final verdict in problems that are

<sup>528</sup> Ruhollah Khomeini, op. cit., <http://www.al-islam.org/islamicgovernment/>, accessed 10/11/2011.

<sup>529</sup> Translation of Iran's Constitution:

<http://www.iranonline.com/iran/iran-info/government/Constitution.html>, accessed 10/11/2011

<sup>530</sup> The first chapter of Khomeini's book is dedicated to arguing for the necessity of establishing an Islamic state during the time of the occultation. R. Khomeini, op. cit. 35-50.

<sup>531</sup> A. Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought: From the Prophet to the Present* (NY: Routledge, 2001), 43-44.

<sup>532</sup> On January 6 1988 Khomeini expanded the authority of the JLin the Constitutions. For his speech and the historical background of this change, see: B. Reich, *Political Leaders of the Contemporary Middle East and North Africa: a Biographical Dictionary* (NY: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1990), 316.

<sup>533</sup> Iran's Constitution Article 111

<http://www.iranonline.com/iran/iran-info/government/Constitution.html>, accessed 10/11/2011.

<sup>534</sup> Ibid.



not resolved by “conventional method”.<sup>535</sup> Within the framework of Islam, he can pardon or reduce the sentences of convicts in a recommendation to the head of judicial power.<sup>536</sup> According to Article 57 the powers of the state in the Islamic Republic are vested in the legislature, the judiciary, and the executive powers, all of which function under the supervision of the absolute Jurisprudential Leader. These powers are independent of each other.<sup>537</sup> This institutionalization of Jurisprudential Leadership in the Constitution reduced Shi’a messianism to a nationalistic security ideology. In Khomeini’s discourse, those who did not conform to his political translation of Shi’a uni-directional theology were represented as “anti-revolutionaries” who threatened “Islam” and should be excluded from any legal protection. In Iran, sustaining an Islamic Republic based on the authority of Jurisprudential Leadership after Khomeini could only be possible if people would place the protection of the position itself as the goal of a new securitization project. Khamenei and his circle became the agents of a new project that focused on strengthening their power bases in Iran’s legal system in order to stop Khatami’s de-securitization attempt.<sup>538</sup> While Khomeini considered the Islamic revolution as an ideological religious state with unlimited executive power formed to provide the ground for the Mahdi’s revolution, while Khamenei re-defined Jurisprudential Leadership as the main factor that facilitated the coming of the Mahdi.<sup>539</sup>

As the result of changes in the politics of the state in the post-war, post-Khomeini context, the Securitized Messianism that established Khomeini’s legitimacy became a potential security threat to the power of Jurisprudential Leadership. The ideological source of Khomeini’s legitimacy was the first challenge Khamenei faced in establishing his legitimacy. Khomeini legitimized his rule after a revolution.<sup>540</sup> Whether, as secular Iranian scholars argue, Khomeini high-jacked Iran’s national revolution or whether he was truly the leader of the majority of revolutionaries, does not negate the fact that his legitimacy relied on public support for the revolution.<sup>541</sup> On the contrary, Khamenei obtained his position as the result of a political decision and lacked theological legitimacy for the position.

The lack of revolutionary legitimacy diverted Khamenei and his supporters’ attention to mystic schools of messianism. Gradually, the new fundamentalists separated the source of legitimacy of the Jurisprudential Leadership from the public and made it an exclusively divinely ordained position.

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<sup>535</sup> Ibid.

<sup>536</sup> Ibid.

<sup>537</sup> Ibid.

<sup>538</sup> Brumberg argues that the routinization of Khomeini’s charisma unleashed attacks from hardliners. I argue that prior to any possibility of institutionalization a concept is de-securitized and debated in the context of normative politics. For Brumberg’s view see: D. Brumberg, *Reinventing Khomeini: the Struggle for Reform in Iran* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 186.

<sup>539</sup> R. Khomeini, *Ibid.*, and D. Brumberg, *ibid.*, 41.

<sup>540</sup> V. Nasr, Meet ‘The Decider’ of Tehran. It’s Not the Hothead You Expect, in *Washington Post*, Washington, December 9, 2007

<sup>541</sup> For the secularists’ claim see: J. Amuzegar, *The Dynamics of the Iranian Revolution: the Pahlavis’ Triumph and Tragedy*, (NY: SUNY Press, 1991), 291. For critiques on this claim see: Annabelle Sreberny and Ali Mohammadi, *Small Media, Big Revolution: Communication, Culture, and the Iranian Revolution* (MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 118.

Khamenei supported this view, which advocated an active political role for the Mahdi in the legitimacy of Jurisprudential Leadership and diminished the importance of legitimation through public participation.<sup>542</sup> The tension between the legalist and mystical schools of Shi'a messianism did not surface during Khomeini's time it did, however, result in the ideological confrontation between reformists (who believe in the supremacy of the Constitution) and fundamentalists (who believe in the ultimate rule of the Jurisprudential leader) over the source of legitimacy for the Jurisprudential Leadership during Khamenei's time.<sup>543</sup> The neo-fundamentalist messianic narratives affirmed that a JI was one who is directly elected by the twelfth Imam and like him, has divine attributes. Therefore, submitting to the rule of a Jurisprudential Leader is the crucial means to understanding Shari'a.<sup>544</sup>

The other radical change in Khamenei's project was the shift in the mythical symbol of the revolution. During the time of Khomeini when Ayatollahs Motahari, Montazari, and Taleqni were the revolution's ideologues, the story of Hossein and his martyrdom in Karbala by Yazid's army constructed the myth of the revolution.<sup>545</sup> Shari'ati, Khomeini and other revolutionary thinkers used the Ashura myth to mobilize people for the war.<sup>546</sup> After the war, however, Hossein's myth lost its social function and was substituted by Shi'a messianism which magnified the role of a leader in a divinely ordained political system. The relationship between the Shi'a Imams, Hossein and Mahdi, during the time of the Mahdi is depicted in a Shi'a prayer called Nudbah. The prayer says that when the occultation is over the Shi'a third Imam, Hossein, will come back from heaven to confirm the Mahdi's leadership. This relationship between Hossein and the Mahdi is mirrored in the way neo-fundamentalists view the relationship between Khomeini and Khamenei's leadership.<sup>547</sup> While in Iran, studying the power of the Jurisprudential Leadership institution and its relationship with other leadership institutions helps to explain the new securitization project, in Israel the focus of Zionism on the messianic age and the structure of the Knesset has formed a different arrangement for the relationship between political and

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<sup>542</sup> By using the word neo-fundamentalists I refer to the political groups who reject any apolitical Shi'a messianic theology and view the path to the end of suffering to be political participation and strengthening of the state. In Israel's case the term refers to parties like Shas who, contrary to the previous non-statist religious parties, believe in the pivotal role of the state in the fulfilment of messianic promises.

<sup>543</sup> An influential state institution in this conflict is the "Council of the Guardians", whose twelve members are directly or indirectly appointed by the Jurisprudential Leader. Michael E. Bonine and Nikki R. Keddie, *Modern Iran: The Dialectics of Continuity and Change* (NY: SUNY Press, 1981), 23-24.

<sup>544</sup> The reformists strongly criticized this securitization project and argued that Khamenei and his supporters were turning Iran back to time of the Safavids. R. Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 238.

<sup>545</sup> Sh. Khosravi, *Young and Defiant in Tehran* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 51.

<sup>546</sup> The day of Ashura is the tenth day of the month of Muharram when Shi'a lament for the defeat of Hossein (the grandson of Mohammad and the third Imam of Shi'ites. For a historical account see: H. Halm, *The Shiites: A Short History* (NY: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2007), 41-50.

<sup>547</sup> Nudbah prayer: Nudbah means wailing, and crying over a dead person while mentioning their merits. One of the customs and duties of Shi'ites in the age of absence is wailing and lamenting for the absence of their Imam. The Nudbah prayer consists of the Shiite's laments and expresses their regret the absence of the Mahdi is quoted and read every Friday, and on the occasion of Eid. According to Shi'ites the sixth Imam (Jafar ibn Mohammad) narrated the prayer. For more information on the Nudbah Prayer See: A. A. Mehdipour, *With Wailing prayer at the Dawn of Friday* (Tehran: the Cultural Institute of the Promised One), <http://mouood.org/content/view/915/3>, accessed 10/02/2011.

religious groups. The secular structure of the state of Israel creates various political spaces for the development of debates about the goals of securitization or the de-securitization of messianism.

### Supreme Court, Rabbinic Courts, and Civil Courts<sup>548</sup>

In their study of the historical background of the Supreme Court (High Court of Justice) in Israel, David Levi-Faur and others, explain that soon after the formation of the state, the High Court of Justice progressively achieved authority to be the ultimate reference in legal matters not only amongst the Jewish citizens of Israel, but also Israeli Arab citizens who viewed this legal system as “the last resort of hope”.<sup>549</sup> They note that such a view is due to the professionalism of the court which results in more objective decisions.<sup>550</sup> Gad Barzilai highlights the similarities between the United States Supreme Court and the High Court of Justice, particularly after the 1970s when the High Court of Justice became extensively involved in Israeli politics and extended its role in monitoring Knesset bills.<sup>551</sup> The Court enjoyed a largely independent position during the Labor government of the early 90s when the Knesset passed three Constitutional laws “the Basic Law on Human Freedom and Dignity, the Basic Law on Freedom of Occupation, and the Basic Law on Government”.<sup>552</sup> In the late 1990s, the increasing power of religious parties like Shas in the Knesset challenged the Supreme Court’s independence.<sup>553</sup> Their independence was particularly undermined in negotiations amongst the political parties, when Shas agreed to a coalition with the Labor party only if those Court rulings that violated the “religion-secular status quo” in the agreement were removed.<sup>554</sup> In 2000, the Knesset also joined the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). All of these initiatives were in conflict with some of the decisions of the Rabbinic Courts. Although the Supreme Court is adoptive of progressive democratic decrees, its struggle with the Chief Rabbinate over the accepting of conversion to Judaism in under the auspices of reform synagogues, the sponsoring of reform synagogues, and the citizenship status of non-Jewish citizens of Israel have continued. In 2009, Rabbinic Courts strongly

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<sup>548</sup> There are several court systems in Israel, each of which is semi autonomous and operates based on its specific jurisdictional authority. Yvonne Schmidt divides the court system in Israel into two general systems of ‘general courts of law’ and ‘tribunals and other authorities’. The general jurisdiction courts consist of “Magistrate Courts, District Courts, and the Supreme Court which is the highest court in the country. The Tribunals and other authorities consist of Military Courts, Religious Courts and Labor Courts. Religious Courts have limited power and address various cases within religious communities. Section 15 of the Basic Law acknowledges the Supreme Court as the highest court in Israel for hearing cases on disputes between citizens and the state but is primarily an ‘appellate, court. Y. Schmidt, *Foundations of Civil and Political Rights in Israel and the Occupied Territories* (München, Germany: GRIN Verlag, 2008), 109-111.

<sup>549</sup> David Levi-Faur, Gabriel Sheffer, and David Vogel, *Israel: the Dynamics of Change and Continuity* (NY: Routledge, 1999), 28.

<sup>550</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>551</sup> In Israel, Arab Israeli citizens and other religious minorities administer their legal matters in their communal courts as a continuation of the Ottoman *Milat* system. Gad Barzilai, ‘Courts as Hegemonic Institutions: The Israeli Supreme Court in a Comparative Study’, *ibid.*, 18.

<sup>552</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>553</sup> Barzilai counts three similarities between the USA Supreme Court and the Israeli High Court of Justice. They both accept decisions of the courts not solely based on an abstract definition of law but based on each case. They both have activated judicial reviews and both have been criticized for replacing political debates with judicial activism. *Ibid.*

<sup>554</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

opposed the Supreme Court when it passed a law for funding conversion to Judaism under the auspices of reformed Jewish synagogues.<sup>555</sup>

Rabbinic Courts functioned as community courts under the British Mandate prior to the formation of the state in Israel. During the mid 1950s Israel's Knesset passed a legislative decree according to which the communal Rabbinic Courts became a subcategory of the national legal system.<sup>556</sup> Since 1955, Rabbinic Court judges, like civil judges, have received a salary from the Israeli legal system.<sup>557</sup> They service the Heredi communities who follow a Rabbi and refer to Rabbinic Courts for settling diverse local legal matters, including domestic issues such as marriage and divorce.<sup>558</sup> Since that time the courts have been in disagreement with the secular legal establishment over civil laws.<sup>559</sup> Although, as they note, some level of conflict is inevitable in the legal settlement of civil issues such as divorce and marriage, settling issues can become more complicated due to the coexistence of legal systems. This is evident particularly in cases such as the case on the powers of the Rabbinic Courts in which the Supreme Court overruled the decision of a Rabbinic Court and favoured the wife's right to a divorce, or in cases where the Supreme Court has accepted the citizenship of a homosexual partner. Both these examples highlight these complications but also indicate the Supreme Court's power in Israeli society.<sup>560</sup>

### Institutionalization of Securitized Messianism in Israel's Legal System

Until the 1980s, the Israeli political scene was divided into statist and non-statist parties.<sup>561</sup> Categorizing parties in Israel into these groups is based on their orientation toward the state. Until 1997, there were left and right parties who all acknowledged the state and its legal and political legitimacy. The non-statist parties were those who were ambiguous about the state or had theological objections to the state. The latter groups operated as political parties but did not participate in state processes. The statist parties were mainly consciously messianic; they considered the successful formation of a sovereign Jewish state to be an indispensable condition of redemption for Jews. The non-statist religious parties, on the other hand, argued that the Jewish people still lived under the conditions of exile and the state was not a precondition of messianism. For example, until 1977 the traditional Agudat Yisrael refused

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<sup>555</sup> The state had only funded Heredi conversion until this bill was passed. Hillel Fendel, Court Orders Equal Funds for Reform Conversions, May 19, 2009, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/131439>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>556</sup> E. Birnbaum, *The Politics of Compromise: State and Religion in Israel*, (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1970), 81. In the Ottoman court, the majority of the rural and urban communities were represented by a judge. R. Shamir, *The Colonies of Law: Colonialism, Zionism, and Law in Early Mandate Palestine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 35- 48 and 66- 72

<sup>557</sup> Ibid, 82.

<sup>558</sup> Ibid

<sup>559</sup> Ibid.

<sup>560</sup> Asher Cohen and Bernard Susser, *Israel and the Politics of Jewish Identity: The Secular-Religious Impasse* (Baltimore, MD: JHU Press, 2000), 79.

<sup>561</sup> Israeli Knesset Website for a comprehensive history of the Agudat Yisrael party [http://www.knesset.gov.il/faction/eng/FactionPage\\_eng.asp?PG=22](http://www.knesset.gov.il/faction/eng/FactionPage_eng.asp?PG=22), accessed on 10/11/2011.

to participate in any coalition government because they thought it would legitimise a secular state in the Holy Land. Ashkenazi European Zionists who constituted the majority of the Jewish population in the state and were strongly nationalist, attributed messianic characteristics to the state of Israel and dominated the country's political scene until the emergence of political parties like the Shas.

Agudat Yisrael was originally a religious non-statist party in Israel. It was formed in May 1912 out of the Chabad movement of Eastern Europe.<sup>562</sup> For decades the party was the only Heredi party until the 1980s, when Rabbi Elazar Shach formed his new party called Degel HaTorah (Flag [of] Torah). Lithuanian Heredi Jews formed the majority of the party's politicians and constituents.<sup>563</sup> The spiritual leader of the later Shas party, Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef, was a member of Agudat before he formed the Sephardic (Middle Eastern/Eastern) religious party (Shas) in 1984.<sup>564</sup> The Shas party became increasingly involved in secular party politics in the Knesset after its formation. In the late 1980s, the party was separated from the United Torah Judaism voting block and candidate lists.<sup>565</sup> The growing power of religious parties, specifically the Shas party, influenced the legal system and undermined the Supreme Court's secular foundations via the Rabbinic Courts who managed the affairs of the Heredi communities. In the 1980s, the Shas party achieved great political success.<sup>566</sup> Studies on Shas suggest that some of the reasons for this success were (and continue to be) its strong opposition to Zionist Ashkenazi elitism, and discrimination against Sephardim cultural and Halakhic traditions, as well as the poor economic conditions of the Sephardim.<sup>567</sup> The following section discusses the success of the Shas party in lobbying with other religious parties over the expansion of the power held by the Rabbinic Courts over Israeli society which is a means for the party to gain political authority and demonstrates their views on the messianic goals of the state of Israel.

To a great degree, the change of security policies in Israel and the rise of political parties like the Shas were the result of the de-securitization of the Cold War environment, which terminated the bipartisan security arrangement in the region. De-securitization instigated the breakdown of traditional military alliances and the rearrangement of the regional security map. In Israel, the end of the Cold War, as well as the end of Israel's conventional wars with Arab countries reshaped the balance of political power. The Securitized Messianism during the time of conflict in Israel could not be sustained by the revolutionary elites in the post-war context. Although the Israel Defence Force's sporadic fights with

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<sup>562</sup> (אגודת ישראל, Agudat Yisrael), for the history of the party, see: Paul R. Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World: a Documentary History* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1995), 445.

<sup>563</sup> Martin E. Marty and Robert S. Appleby, *Fundamentalisms Observed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 249.

<sup>564</sup> Zvi Zohar, "The Sephardic Halakhic Tradition in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century," in *Sephardic Jewry and Mizrahi Jews*, ed. Peter Y. Medding (NY: Oxford University Press US, 2008), 127.

<sup>565</sup> Ibid.

<sup>566</sup> Ibid.

<sup>567</sup> Eliezer Ben Rafael and Yohanan Peres, *Is Israel One?: Religion, Nationalism, and Multiculturalism Confounded* (Leiden: Brill Books, 2005), 111.

Palestinian armed groups and the Lebanese Hezbollah continued, the end of the Cold War ended the possibility of a Soviet sponsored attack on Israel for being the United State's strategic ally in the region. In addition, the war between Iraq and Iran de-securitized the idea of a war between Israel and a united pan-Arab force. However, the annexation of the West Bank and Gaza and the expansion of Israeli settlements led to more violent attacks against Israel from Palestinian groups. Thus, the de-securitization of Israel's securitized Zionism and the lack of security in the new settlements gave rise to new tensions and sporadic wars and Israel moved from one securitization project to another in which Palestinians, instead of Arabs, became the dominant security threat.

Within the state, the growth of the Shas party and their political success signalled the end of the hegemony of Ashkenazi Zionists over Israeli domestic politics. The forming of the Shas party demonstrated the success of the state's securitization project in establishing its legitimacy as an inclusive centre of legal decision-making that both secular and religious political groups accepted. The defeat of the Labor party in the parliamentary elections of the late 80s affirmed the change that religious Zionism created in Israeli political culture. Religious Zionism motivated Sephardim to participate in state politics. Contrary to traditional Heredi communities, who refused to join the army and rarely became involved in state politics outside their community interests, the new religious Zionists considered themselves an integrated part of Israeli society and joined the Israeli Defence Forces. They were mainly educated in Ashkenazi Kookist schools, had completed their military service, and entered parliamentary party politics as an ethno-religious nationalist party.

A Council of Torah Sages that includes Rabbinic Councils of prominent religious leaders of the Heredi communities designates, supervises, and confirms the policies of the Shas party.<sup>568</sup> The Rabbinic Council and prominent members like Yosef fiercely criticize the "morally deprived" way of secular life, basing their party's politics on anti-secularism.<sup>569</sup> Their disagreement with the Supreme Court is due to some of the court's decisions which have undermined the power of Rabbinic Courts over issues of marriage and divorce. The power of the Rabbinic Court is a crucial issue for the Council of Torah Sages and Heredi communities. While the former enjoys economic benefits, such as state remuneration, from the Rabbinic Courts in Heredi communities, the latter increase their power within the legal system by training theologian politicians for Rabbinic Courts in Yeshivot.<sup>570</sup> Having access to financial resources from the state has enabled Shas to expand its constituency, and take advantage of coalition opportunities in the Knesset for extending its influence in the Ministry of Justice and the Rabbinic Courts. In spite of their pragmatic politics within the Knesset, they remain an exclusively authoritarian and hierarchical

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<sup>568</sup> Federal Research Division, Israel A Country Study, (Glenview, IL: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), 254.

<sup>569</sup> J. Mandel, "Ovadia Yosef Slams Maverick Shas MK Amsalem," Jerusalem Post, Jerusalem, November 21, 2010 <http://www.jpost.com/Israel/Article.aspx?id=196092>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>570</sup> Roger Friedland and Richard Hecht, To Rule Jerusalem (LA: University of California Press, 2000), 88.

party. The Shas' emphasis on the Sages' Council is an indicator of their theological position in relation to political and religious authority in the state. They use their power in the Knesset to minimise the influence of secular parties like the Meretz within the legal system.<sup>571</sup> The institutionalization of Rabbi Kook's Zionist messianism in the post-war Yeshivot created a political ideology in which economic, social, and political developments were discussed in relation to the religious identity of the state and politicians.<sup>572</sup>

In Israel, as the result of Sephardim's political participation and the growth of their political party, the Shas followers' economic networks and connections have expanded. Ironically, the party owes its success to the support of lower class Sephardim who rely on the Shas' lobbying power for greater financial assistance from the government.<sup>573</sup> The party achieves its political power in the parliament by using anti-secular and anti-elitist policies. In parliamentary election campaigns they use populist economic slogans and emphasize the protection of the religious tradition of Sephardim communities.<sup>574</sup> Their strong emphasis on family institutions guarantees the inheritance of land in Heredi communities and has strengthened the legitimacy of local religious leaders in Rabbinic Courts. In rural Heredi settlements, communal work and social life reinforce the merging of individual identity into collective religious identity. The residential proximity of the religious communities intensifies the ritualistic observance of religious regulations. The power of the Shas party among its constituents relies on maintaining traditional trust relations that involve the mediation of a rabbi in the political and legal decisions of the party.

For religious parties like the Shas, the responsibility of a Jewish state during the age of absence is articulated in their commitment to implementing religious laws.<sup>575</sup> Rabbis in the Shas council share this messianic belief with other Hasidic parties. According to religious parties, it is only through the absolute commitment of the state of Israel to its Jewish identity that the coming of the messianic age is possible.<sup>576</sup> The Heredi religious parties share a foundational philosophy of Judaism that connects the institutions of rabbis to Jewish identity.<sup>577</sup> Religious parties in Israel consider commitment to Halakhah to be the main source of state legitimacy and proof of its commitment to Jewish identity.<sup>578</sup> As Esther

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<sup>571</sup> A. Diskin, *The last days in Israel* (London: Routledge, 2003), 122-125

<sup>572</sup> Ibid.

<sup>573</sup> A. Machlis, "Shas Party's Growing Power Linked to Schools for Poor," Jewish Telegraphic Agency, June 4, 1999, <http://www.jweekly.com/article/full/10952/shas-party-s-growing-power-linked-to-schools-for-poor/>, accessed on 12/01/2008.

<sup>574</sup> Asher Arian, Alan Arian, Michal Shamir, and Makhon ha-YiŠre'eli le-demokratyah, *The Elections in Israel, 2006* (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2008), 287-307.

<sup>575</sup> Ernest Krausz and David Glanz, *Politics and Society in Israel* (NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1985), 275.

<sup>576</sup> Ibid.

<sup>577</sup> Ibid.

<sup>578</sup> Ibid.

Benbassa notes, theologically Jews are chosen to serve God and fulfil his commandments.<sup>579</sup> Without this definition it would be problematic to define Judaism. However, she argues that the Heredi's definition of Judaism does not satisfy the multi-cultural fabric of Israel.<sup>580</sup>

Although the religious parties have not achieved enough Knesset seats to control Israeli politics, they have achieved extensive power in forming coalition governments. Shas leaders deal pragmatically with other parties in the Knesset.<sup>581</sup> Their interparty politics is similar to other religious parties, where a Rabbinic Council of Sages decides party politics and the relationship between rabbis and politicians is hierarchical and authoritative.<sup>582</sup> In Shas, Rabbi Yosef is the spiritual leader and none of the party's decisions are implemented without his advice.<sup>583</sup> In fact, Shas' strong criticisms of the Supreme Court are partly due to the inconsistencies between the sources of legitimacy in Rabbinic and Civil Courts.<sup>584</sup> Lobbying the Knesset to increase the power of the Rabbinic Courts allows religious parties to use their parliamentary positions to extend the power of rabbis in civil matters such as marriage and divorce.

The legal system in Israel consists of two parallel systems of Rabbinic and Civil Courts. As a secular institution, the Supreme Court is the highest court in the country and mediates between rabbinic and civil courts in legal debates over national laws and in judging controversial cases. In each city and kibbutz there is a Rabbinic Court, which mainly consists of three learned Jewish men who address communal issues.<sup>585</sup> Religious Sephardim and Ashkenazim have their own national chief rabbis and each community has its own Rabbi and settle their matters in the Rabbinic Courts.<sup>586</sup> Civil Courts settle civil matters for the non-religious population, whether they live in urban centres or rural kibbutz.<sup>587</sup> The existence of two parallel legal systems makes it legally impossible to decide whether an issue is secular or religious. Besides, amongst religious communities, who refer to Rabbinic Courts for all their claims, the religious courts have authority to validate the ritual of circumcision (Shechita) and burial practices, certify the kosher status for food manufacturers and restaurants, supervise animal sacrifice (Mohelim),

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<sup>579</sup> Esther Benbassa and Jean-Christophe Attias, *The Jews and Their Future: a Conversation on Judaism and Jewish Identities* (London: Zed Books, 2004), 124.

<sup>580</sup> Ibid.

<sup>581</sup> A. Arian, et al, op. cit., ibid

<sup>582</sup> Eliezer Ben Rafael and Stephen Sharot, *Ethnicity, Religion, and Class in Israeli Society* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 228.

<sup>583</sup> The Likud, Kadima, and religious parties adopted a pragmatic approach towards negotiations for the 2009 Knesset election and forming a government.

<sup>584</sup> For instance, the Shas party criticised the secular parties who had called for an investigation on Rabbi Yosef and other members of the Shas party.

<sup>585</sup> The only exception was Tel Aviv. Haim Shapiro, "Headline: Huldai Proposes One Chief Rabbi for TA," *Jerusalem Post-Jerusalem*, August 17, 2001, p. 5 <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P1-46379881.html> and Haim Shapiro and Rabbi Shlomo Amar, "Elected Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv," *Jerusalem Post – Jerusalem*, March 18, 2002, 4.

<sup>586</sup> M. Edelman, *Courts, politics, and Culture in Israel* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1994), 70-85.

<sup>587</sup> Ibid.



accept or reject conversion (Giyur), monitor and supervise the status of ritual baths (Mikvah) and determine whether one is a true Jew.<sup>588</sup>

The rabbinic decisions on each of these matters and the conditions of their power have generated lasting political debates in the Knesset.<sup>589</sup> Shas party Knesset members accuse the Supreme Court of interfering in religious affairs when it makes final decisions over citizenship cases for those who are converted in reform establishments, or asking the public to keep a record of their genealogy.<sup>590</sup> The issue of increasing the authority of the Rabbinic Court is such a pivotal matter for the religious parties that presenting a bill in parliament for increasing their power was discussed during the coalition negotiations between religious and non-religious parties.<sup>591</sup> Politicians in Israeli religious parties use national symbols such as the flag, currency, the national anthem, and religious myths and language to gain religious and political authority. Their national identity relies heavily on constructing and maintaining beliefs in religious Zionism as an alternative governing model.<sup>592</sup> The successful institutionalization of Securitized Messianism into progressive Politicised Messianism has played a significant role in the construction of Shas political identity. The nationalist sentiments incorporated in progressive messianism are manifested in the party's use of religious language in legislative debates, legal procedures, and the categorization of law.

During the securitization process, the states' legal systems in Iran and Israel developed rapidly into exclusivist legal powers. They mainly protected the interests of the post-revolutionary elite class and became a site of fierce competition between the developing political factions, each of which presented a different ideal about the relationship between religion and politics in the religio-political states.

Securitization in Israel made rabbinic legislative institutions an indispensable component of the national legal system and gave rise to political groups such as Israel Beiteinu, Meretz and Shas who differ in their views about the role that religion should play in state politics. Moreover, the inherent tension between secular and religious sources of law in the Israeli legal system is evident in the limits and conditions of the power of Rabbinic Courts in the state, as well as in differences between the Supreme Courts and Rabbinic Courts over some legal decisions such as conversion, and the conflicts between parties over bills that address the limits of the power of Rabbinic Courts. The roles and policies of the religious Zionist parties in the Knesset are conditional upon their success in political debates and increasing their influence in the legal system.

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<sup>588</sup> Ibid.

<sup>589</sup> Ibid.

<sup>590</sup> The Minister Yaakov Mergi's (Shas) opposition to the High Court's decision against the Rabbinic Court for their rejection of a conversion case (in 2009). <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/131539>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>591</sup> Yair Ettinger, "Justice Minister pushes bill to extend rabbinical courts' authority," Ha'aretz <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1086222.html>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>592</sup> S. Sager, *The Parliamentary System of Israel* (NY: Syracuse University Press, 1985), 45.

Theologically, if the religious identity of the legal system, as fundamentalists in both states argue, is necessary and sufficient requirement for the implementation of justice, the existence of a secular source of legitimacy in the form of a Constitution or Basic Laws is unnecessary and ineffective. In addition, the inclusion of secular concepts such as freedom of speech, civil rights, and political participation, which are all modern western political concepts, depends on the social and political acceptance of individual rights. In Iran the framework of the Constitution includes phrases like “freedom” or “civil rights”, however, the dominance of the rule of Islamic Shari’a over the Constitution and the centrality of the role of Jurisprudential Leadership in the legal and political systems has created a convoluted document in which these phrases become meaningless. In Israel, the Rabbinic Courts’ influence over civil issues such as marriage and divorce challenge the secular structures of the Basic Laws. These unclear areas make defining the concept of democracy in Iran very problematic. Specifically, such a definition becomes challenging when issues such as consensual harmony, equality, and the common good are defined in relation to a divine promise. Contrary to democratic Constitutions in which the source of reference for democracy is the society, the Islamic Republic defines democracy theologically.

In Israel, the state’s structure of political power distribution and election supervision allows political parties to efficiently negotiate their differences in elections. According to section 4 of Israel’s Basic Law, which was re-enacted in 1958, members of the Knesset should be elected in “general, country-wide, direct, equal, and proportional elections” based on a proportional party list system.<sup>593</sup> An all-party central committee administers the election, from country-wide candidate lists, to counting votes. A Supreme Court judge, a member of the party, and a representative from District and Polling Committees chair the central committee. The parties are permitted to appoint representatives to polling committees.<sup>594</sup> Ideologically, the emphasis of religious Zionists on the messianic age, rather than a messiah, as well as in supporting progressive messianism rather than esoteric messianism, forms a pluralistic approach to party politics. In Iran, the failure of the securitization process is the result of adopting an agent-based narrative of Revolutionary Messianism that emphasizes greatly the central role of clergy in political, social and economic decision-making and creates an authoritarian exclusivist political system that can be vulnerable to any social change.

The institutionalization of state legitimacy in the form of an agent or institution based legal system shapes the relationship between the major political decision-making, legal, and religious institutions. The incorporation of religious regulations into modern law conflicts with the modern law’s intentional restriction of religious institutions in state administration. In non-religious states, the limitation placed

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<sup>593</sup> Ibid.

<sup>594</sup> Information about the Israeli national budget and government expenses are accessible to the public on the Knesset website. The biography of all the candidates and their political profiles in Knesset is available online and the factions announce their political positions in public media.

on religious institutions explains the boundaries between religion and national law. These limitations also dictate to what degree the legal system investigates legal issues as purely legal matters separate from theological debates and how the state differentiates between the spheres of religion and law. However, the integration of national and religious laws in Israel and Iran de-constructs the notion of separation between the power of state agencies and religious institutions within the legal system.

While in non-religious states, the administrative agencies are autonomous from religious institutions, in Israel and Iran the legal system is dependent on religious institutions both ideologically and pragmatically. This dependency not only deconstructs the boundaries between law and religion but also between religion and politics. In Israel, these issues underline political debates in the Knesset and significantly influence the structure of coalition governments. After the 1980s, when Israeli religious parties increased their political influence in various coalition governments, the Knesset has fiercely debated the role and power of the Rabbinic Courts in the legal system, especially in the Supreme Court's legal decisions over civil issues such as the growing number of religious schools funded by religious parties. As the main centre of political decision-making, the Israeli Knesset creates a political sphere where political factions could compete. Therefore, the state's political decisions are made based on the outcome of the debate within the Knesset or ultimately between the Knesset and the Supreme Court. By contrast, in Iran, the centralization of Jurisprudential Leadership has encouraged many political tensions between reformists, fundamentalists, and neo-fundamentalists, which has resulted in the neo-fundamentalists' hegemony over religious and political institutions.<sup>595</sup>

### Legal Authority and Religious Institutions

In both the Jewish and Shi'a traditions, prior to the Revolutionary Phase, identifying an absent divine individual as the only legitimate voice for interpreting divine law had encouraged a pluralistic system because there were many interpretations of the nature and goals of a messianic age. Apolitical messianism allowed the clergy to apply comparable hermeneutical methodologies in their studies of the sacred texts in order to minimize the threat of deviation while also encouraging a conditioned plurality within the socio-political context. According to these traditions, those sanctioned to interpret the sacred texts must accept monotheism and place the will of God as the rationale for all the laws they infer from sacred texts. In their hermeneutical studies individual clerics used faith as a mechanism that made the authority of an interpreter dependant on a divine determination and correct understanding of sacred texts. Relying on a system for understanding the laws based on contextualization has constructed the theological structure of legislative theologies in Jewish and Shi'a traditions, both of which emphasise human logic with a pragmatic view of society.

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<sup>595</sup> "Karroubi Accuses Guardian Council of Partiality," Press TV, Tue, Apr 07, 2009, <http://www.presstv.ir/detail.aspx?id=90711&sectionid=351020101>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

As discussed in previous chapters, Jewish and Shi'a apolitical messianism acknowledged a non-religious space for the economic and social engagements of individuals. Apolitical messianism is a survival strategy which has enabled both traditions to deal with changing political environments throughout history. Accommodating political changes would be a matter of survival for both individuals and communities and a responsibility for individual clerics whose legitimation was necessary for any accommodation but their legitimization was based on their spiritual status rather than political authority within the governing system. The State-Building Phase changed religious institutions into subordinates of the state and obliged them to participate politically. As a consequence, both political theologians and apolitical theologians needed to gain legitimacy from the states instead of solely relying on religious institutions.

This politically made authority attributed to them was conditional on the power to appropriate state laws for religious regulation, but their power was dependent on the success of the institutionalization of Securitized Messianism.<sup>596</sup> From this new condition, there emerged a complex web of political relations that deconstructed the traditional system in which the legitimacy of a cleric was established solely based on his individual commitment to religious obligations. Exegeses and religious literary comments thus became infused with political notions and religious institutions involved themselves in lobbying for more financial support from the state. This association fostered a pragmatic political approach to the state within religious institutions. However, within the theological schools, this pragmatic approach narrowed the scope of theological debates. As the future of the religious communities became an associated topic with the future of the state, the institutionalization process bonded the future of the state to the future of religion.

In post-revolutionary Iran, there are very few theological positions or critiques published on the theory of Jurisprudential Leadership in theological schools. Groups of Ayatollahs with connections to the Leadership Institution monitor the main theological centres in Qom and Mashhad. Moreover, until the early 1980s, the ulama had autonomous sources of income from the religious taxes of Khums, Zakat, and Sahn-e Imam (the Share of the twelfth Imam). Khomeini's theory of Jurisprudential Leadership institutionalised Iran's Shi'a theological schools, terminated their financial autonomy, normalised their functions, and diminished their elite status in Iranian society.<sup>597</sup>

In Iran, contrary to the situation in Israel, the reformist and fundamentalist Ayatollahs do not argue whether or not the government should support religious education or have religious education included

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<sup>596</sup> The Leadership Institution receives large amounts of money from the Sahn-e Imam (the share of the Twelfth Imam). R. Khomeini, *op. cit.*, 33-52.

<sup>597</sup> The "Imam Khomeini's Assistance Committee" offers direct aid to about one million households in Iran (2.6 million individuals) that are identified by the Committee to be economically underprivileged. See: A. Gheissari, *Contemporary Iran: Economy, Society, Politics* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2009), 15.

in school curriculums.<sup>598</sup> There is no parliamentary based monitoring system to supervise the allocation of finances to religious schools or review their financial reports. Although individual clerics may side with the reformists or the fundamentalists, the centres are closely linked to the Jurisprudential Leader and predominantly fundamentalist. Neo-fundamentalist clergy have established politically orientated theological centres, like the Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute in Qom, to unconditionally support the Jurisprudential Leadership, theorize his power in their religious publications and seminaries, and train neo-fundamentalist politicians.<sup>599</sup> The Institute and its associated offices hold public seminars and regular meetings with both the leadership office and prominent neo-fundamentalist politicians, and are actively involved in election campaigns. They train clergy for political posts within state bodies, the Revolutionary Guards, the Basij, and neo-fundamentalists mosque networks.

Religious education and monitoring dietary regulations have always been primary concerns for Israeli religious political parties. The Agudat Yisrael, the United Torah Judaism, and the Shas strongly support an increase in government funding for their religious Yeshivot. In fact, many of the members of the Shas party were educated in Government sponsored Mafdal Yeshivot that promoted the study of the Torah and strengthened the party's support amongst its Heredi constituents.<sup>600</sup> Since its formation in the 1980s, the Shas party obtained control over the ministerial position and has strived to insure increased government funds for the Sephardim and the Shas educational centres in election campaigns and lobbying with main parties for coalition governments.<sup>601</sup> For instance, in Sharon's government in the 1990s, the Shas party benefited from the integration of their Yeshivot into the national curriculum.<sup>602</sup> Their growing involvement in state politics and in Sharon's government enabled Shas to be more active in ministerial positions, increased their power in Rabbinic Court elections, and influenced the passing of religious laws on topics such as the observance of Sabbath and Kashrut.

State funding for religious schools and the supervision of their curriculum have been controversial issues in Israel and have led to tensions between the secular Meretz and the religious Shas parties. In 2000, comments by Rabbi Yosef caused the conflict between the two parties to intensify. Following an inquiry by the Ministry into the Shas's Ma'ayan Hahinuch Hatorani school system, the Ministry concluded that the

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<sup>598</sup> Interestingly, only in the fundamentalist government did an issue about religious institutions and publications arise.

<sup>599</sup> This, however, does not necessarily include students or employees of the centres. The lack of statistical data in this area makes any estimation regarding the support of their audience unscientific. The situation about quietist Ayatollahs or centres around Iran is similar. Qom is strongly monitored by security and intelligence forces and news about theological centres has been censored.

<sup>600</sup> According to their website in 2009 there are 2069 educational institutions in Israel sponsored by this plan. <http://www.shasnet.org.il/Front/NewsNet/newspaper.asp>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>601</sup> Ibid.

<sup>602</sup> The Sephardim are diverse and not all support the religious parties. The Shas however, introduced religion as a factor that shapes the social fabric of the Sephardim and argue that it should be projected in the state ideology because it can protect the traditional social identity of the Sephardim and is the cornerstone of their religious and political identity.

schools lacked transparency and their education curriculums lacked secular subjects, therefore the Minister decided to cut their budgets. In response to this decision, Yosef cursed Yossi Sarid, the Meretz leader and Education Minister at the time, and wished him the same fate of Amalik and Haman (biblical Jewish enemies). Sarid reacted to Yosef's curse, sent a complaint to the Supreme Court, and explained the reasons for the Ministry's decision to cut the funding of Shas schools in details revealed during a press conference.<sup>603</sup> When the Supreme Court decided to investigate the case, Yishai and Health Minister Shlomo Benizri (another Shas Member of the Knesset) called the decision racist.<sup>604</sup>

Some months later when debates between the Shas party and the Ministry of Education continued, Benizri accused Meretz of using similar tactics reminiscent of the ones the Nazis used against Jews.<sup>605</sup> In both cases, the Shas Members of the Knesset used their anti-secular and Sephardim identity to block ministerial investigations and change their curriculums. The Shas made no effort to comply with the ministry's order to present records or guidelines for schools. They called both enquiries conspiracies aimed at the Sephardi religious population.<sup>606</sup> These disagreements over Yeshivot's budgets hindered the alliance between the Shas and Labor. In 2001, Shas refused to support the government's economic plan and temporarily broke their alliance with the government.<sup>607</sup> In a meeting that Sharon held to resolve the issue with the Shas party, the party demanded that the government continue to support the Yeshivot and to offer additional support for its schools.<sup>608</sup> Only after Sharon's government accepted the Shas and their demands did the party return to the coalition and the coalition government remained in power.<sup>609</sup>

In 2005, the issues of funding for the Shas Yeshivot and the reduction of child support once again created fierce conflict between the Shas party and the secular party of Shinui.<sup>610</sup> While Yishai criticized Shinui for demanding 700 million shekels (\$US160 million) for the defence budget and higher education, he made the participation of Shas in the coalition conditional on the restoration of government sponsored child support and the continuation of funding for the educational Yeshivot.<sup>611</sup> In his critique of the Shinui, Yishai stated: "Shinui was founded on the basis of hatred and incitement. No anti-religious

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<sup>603</sup> Gil Hoffman, "Sarid's revenge: Listing ways Shas schools failed to meet commitments," Jerusalem Post – Jerusalem, Mar 20, 2000, 2.

<sup>604</sup> David Zev Harris, "Yishai, Benizri call Rubinstein's decision racist," Jerusalem Post – Jerusalem, Mar 28, 2000, 2.

<sup>605</sup> David Franklin and Nina Gilbert, "Following Benizri comparison of Meretz to Nazis, Time running out for coalition," Jerusalem Post – Jerusalem, Jun 13, 2000, 1.

<sup>606</sup> Ibid.

<sup>607</sup> Gil Hoffman, "Sharon asks Shas to behave," Jerusalem Post – Jerusalem, May 26, 2002, 1. N. Gilbert, "Shas ministers return, pledging obedience," Jerusalem Post – Jerusalem, Jun 4, 2002, 3. When Shas returned to the coalition the Meretz' leader in a comment associated their presence in the government with the sponsorship of their personal luxurious lifestyle. See: Gil Hoffman, "Sharon to receive Yosef endorsement tonight," Jerusalem Post – Jerusalem, Jan 7, 2001, 2.

<sup>608</sup> In 2001 when the parliament debated the passing of the Bezaq bill (Communication) the Shas and National Religious Parties demanded that the cable TV companies air Yosef's educational channel. Gwen Ackerman, "Poraz: Religious demands could hold up Bezaq bill," Jerusalem Post – Jerusalem, Jul 13, 2001, 10.

<sup>609</sup> Ibid.

<sup>610</sup> "Shas: Evacuation Would Be Victory for Extremists," April 04, 2005, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/81056>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>611</sup> Ibid.

party ever has been established in a Christian or Moslem country."<sup>612</sup> Educational institutions also became good avenues for attracting constituents. Haar and Busuttil note that children of poor Sephardim families join the Shas' schools because they are the only public schools with bus services, hot lunches, and longer teaching hours. However, they also indicate that these sexually segregated schools have a narrow and religious focus in their curriculum and in the content of their textbooks, which mainly focus on religious education.<sup>613</sup>

The Shas' Yeshivot expanded quickly during the 2000s. In 2009, the Ha'aretz newspaper published a report where it noted that one in three children in Israel attended a Haredi kindergarten.<sup>614</sup> Referring to a report by the Education Ministry, the article stated that the Haredi schools have been growing steadily at the expense of the secular public schools.<sup>615</sup> Most of the religious schools receive funding from the government, which makes up fifty to one hundred percent of their expenses.<sup>616</sup> The report indicates that religious schools are not transparent in their reports and monitoring their activities at the institutional level is problematic for the government.<sup>617</sup> The aforementioned political disagreement between the parties points to a deeper ideological difference. The non-religious parties refer to secular judiciary institutions as the legal source of legitimacy and pressure religious parties to comply with the rulings of the Supreme Court. In contrast, religious parties oppose the secular framework of national laws and follow their religious leaders as their primary source in legal matters. The different legal structures of the traditional communities encourage different criteria for inter-communal politics, which, in many cases, reflect their party politics.

### The Rise of Neo-fundamentalism in Iran

The presidency of Mohammad Khatami in the late 1990s encouraged the advent of the de-securitization of Revolutionary Messianism in Iran. The reformist government attempted to limit the power of the Jurisprudential Leader and to establish a governing system similar to a Constitutional Monarchy. During the eight years of Khatami's presidency, the reformists revitalised the ideals of the Constitutional Revolution of 1908 and its debates, such as civil rights, freedom of speech, and the Constitutional power structure of domestic politics. Arjomand argues that the "rule of Law" was one of the distinct

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<sup>612</sup> Ibid.

<sup>613</sup> Alice Shalvi, 'Renew Our Days as of Gold; Religious Fundamentalism and Social change in the Modern Jewish State', in, *The Freedom to Do God's Will: Religious Fundamentalism and Social Change*, eds. Gerrie ter Haar and James J. Busuttil (NY: Routledge, 2003), 89.

<sup>614</sup> Or Kashti, "1 in 3 preschoolers attends Hasidic kindergarten," Ha'aretz, August 20, 2009, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1108559.html>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>615</sup> Ibid.

<sup>616</sup> Ibid.

<sup>617</sup> Ibid.

characteristics of Khatami's presidency.<sup>618</sup> Ironically, his presidency began during a period of unlawful activities such as attacks on universities, closing the newly opened reformist newspapers, and assassinating reformers like Said Hajarian, that the fundamentalists, Khamenei's supporters, and the neo-fundamentalists in the Revolutionary Guards planned and executed.<sup>619</sup> While securitization during the time of Khomeini demanded the obeying of his rule and the demonstration of absolute loyalty and devotion to revolutionary ideals, Khatami's attempt at de-securitization required the de-sacralization of the position of the Jurisprudential Leadership. A major effect of this was the overt acknowledgement of the limits of his executive power.<sup>620</sup> The fundamentalists strongly opposed Khatami's reforms and claimed that the de-securitization of the leadership position would result in the collapse of the Islamic Republic.

Khatami's attempts led traditional fundamentalist and reformist factions to redefine their understanding of the role of religion in Iran's national security.<sup>621</sup> Fundamentalists argued that national security was as important to the security of the Jurisprudential Leadership position as the ideologies of Revolutionary Messianism.<sup>622</sup> They promoted an ethical-cultural view on securitized Jurisprudential Leadership, claiming it to be the ultimate achievement of the revolution.<sup>623</sup> They maintained that this achievement has been under attack by the West especially by the United States of America. For the fundamentalists, the religious source of legitimacy of the Islamic Republic was the only factor that separated Iran's revolution from others and one that could guarantee its continuance.<sup>624</sup> They acknowledged the existence of a Constitution but viewed it as an ineffective source of legitimacy without a Jurisprudential Leader. Their opposition implies a rejection of the authority of the Constitution over religious groups that the leadership finances and supervises which negates the legitimacy of the state institutions. Contradictions within the Constitution, as well as the centralization of power in the Jurisprudential Leadership position made it almost impossible to resolve tensions between the two factions in the Islamic Republic.

In both Iran and Israel, prior to the Revolutionary Phase, the tension between the state and the religious institutions was limited to communal and institutional interests. Whether in Israel, where the Hasidic parties only discussed politics when it concerned their communities, or in Iran, where fundamentalists

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<sup>618</sup> S. A. Arjomand, *Civil Society and the Rule of Law in the Constitutional Politics of Iran Under Khatami*- Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, 2000 in [http://www.iranchamber.com/government/articles/civil\\_society\\_politics\\_iran\\_khatami.php](http://www.iranchamber.com/government/articles/civil_society_politics_iran_khatami.php), accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>619</sup> A month after his presidency and following the opening of few reformist newspapers, university dormitories were attacked. Soon after, his government was faced with the mass killing of Iranian intellectuals, which was sponsored by a group within the Ministry of Intelligence. I was personally involved in the student uprising at the time.

<sup>620</sup> Eur, *The Middle East and North Africa 2003* (NY: Routledge, 2002), 365-370.

<sup>621</sup> Department of Research Institute of thought and culture and Amir Shahla eds., Khatami; *Crossing the Crisis - the Reform Era* Diarist (Tehran: Aknoun Publication, 2001), 108.

<sup>622</sup> Ibid, 54-73.

<sup>623</sup> Ibid.

<sup>624</sup> Ibid.



and reformists debated the relationship between the Constitution and the leader, securitization hegemonized post-revolutionary politics. Debates between religious and non-religious groups during this phase were rarely extended to debates over the political and the religious sources of state legitimacy. In Iran, the hegemony of religion over every day politics brutally excluded non-religious voices from any debates. In Israel, by contrast, Ashkenazi Zionism excluded the non-Zionist Sephardim from political decision-making. However, during the State-Building Phase each system faced different challenges. For Israel, the involvement of the Sephardim and the de-securitization of the war increased tensions between the non-religious and the religious parties. These tensions were extended to security issues, such as territorial concessions and peace with the Palestinians. In Iran, the institutionalization process that started during Khatami's presidency introduced relatively inclusivist politics that allowed for voicing different views that indirectly targeted the legitimacy of the Jurisprudential Leadership position. The victory of the reformists in the sixth parliament strengthened the government's ability to implement fundamental changes in the country's political structure. In Israel, as debates between non-religious and religious parties intensified, the Supreme Court gained more power in mediating political tensions as an autonomous and legitimate institution. The lack of such an independent agency in Iran resulted in a larger rift between reformists, fundamentalists, and neo-fundamentalists.

## Conclusion

This chapter examined the ideologies that underlie the institutionalization of Securitized Messianism and their role in the forming of the states' legal systems. It aimed to explain the conditions through which the institutionalization of Securitized Messianism in national laws could be successful in these religio-political states. The legal system in both states is the most influential agency in establishing the state legitimacy in the State Building and State-Maintenance Phases. These states construct their legitimacy via the institutionalization of Securitized Messianism and the incorporation of religious laws and revolutionary messianic ideals into national laws. Through this process, the central legal system faces many challenges emanating from contradictory sources and methods by which religious and modern political systems define national laws. Their incorporation of religious laws into national law increases the dependency of the state on religious educational institutions for social networks and the recruiting of new forces. The priority that legal systems have in these states reflects their ideological understanding of Securitized Messianism.

In each state, the history of the revolution replaces the traditional religious narrative of history, thus, Securitized Messianism articulates the role of the state in the revolution's messianic history. The integration of national and religious laws also poses political challenges in both states as they attempt to identify boundaries between politics and religion within a legal context. National laws determine the

limits of freedom for religious and ethnic groups within the borders of a nation state. In order to resolve challenges between religious and political sources of law in these states both rely on political theologians and theologian politicians. The securitization of Revolutionary Messianism directs the states' legal systems towards rightwing conservative policies and reduces the power of the liberal leftwing parties. In political debates over national laws the religious identity of these states is emphasised as the power and influence that separates conservative religious factions from others.

There is a disagreement between religious and non-religious parties in Israel and between the fundamentalists and the reformists in Iran over the source of legitimation for national laws. According to religious groups, the sovereignty of God is a transcendent law that is permanent and non-negotiable. This separate source of law from the human and the material world provides a comprehensive legal system for the state. To religious groups, the state legitimacy is not based on a social contract or its political history. It is based on its religious identity, thus, should express practical commitment to religious laws. Society is divided between religious and unbelieving groups and the state's policing of the individual commitment to religious laws is not solely its religious obligation. Non-religious parties in Israel argue that regardless of the role that religion has played in the construction of the state, the laws of the country should be secular and pluralistic. Connecting state laws to religious responsibilities in supervising religious obligations creates problems in the differentiation of the public from private spheres. To them, the relationship between religious institutions and bureaucratic systems, in their disagreement on the source of national law, should not be solely based on religious criteria, but should include political history for creating an inclusive and just state for all its citizens.

The view of the ruling party or the coalitions on the messianic nature and goals of the state plays a decisive role in Israeli and Iranian politics. In the State-Building Phase and SMPs, responses from political parties and religious institutions in these states have been equally important in political debates and demonstrate the integration of religion and politics in their legal system. The following chapter examines whether the institutionalization of Securitized Messianism into the states' political system could be successful and further legitimize these states, or whether it could develop into a potential security threat not only to the state but also to religion. Thus, religious institutions consider their involvement in politics as an indispensable religious duty. The success of the institutionalization of Securitized Messianism into the state's political structure determines the legitimacy of the Politicised Messianism.

### Introduction

Securitized Messianism undermines political pluralism and elevates the unifying force for changing revolutionary idealism into a political institutional ideology. It heavily relies on the power of a unifying force that strengthens with sacrifice and absolute political commitment. The fulfilment of a divine promise in institutional or agent-based Securitized Messianism is conditional on the success of the states in deterring security threats in the State-Building Phase. In this phase, securitization limits political pluralism to a competition over supporting the state and striving for the fulfilment of its military goals. In the State-Maintenance Phase, the unity of the securitization period fragments and political parties present radically different ideas about Politicised Messianism and the path to a messianic utopia. This chapter argues that during the State-Maintenance Phase, political factions in these states define their identity in their specific definition of the messianic goals of the state. As the revolutionary momentum decreases and the conflict situation ends the founding revolutionaries redefine the messianic goals of the state and, out of their disagreements, a new form of fundamentalism emerges. In both states, the emerging group perceive their political goals to be changing the political culture of the State-Building Phase. Nonetheless, like revolutionary elites they support security-orientated and ideological policies in order to mobilize groups for their strategic goals. Contrary to these groups, the liberal and leftwing factions who support negotiating security issues within the political context rather than in an exclusively security environment, view the success of any institutionalization conditional on political development. The central issues in the debates between these groups, create a framework for the neo-fundamentalists' understanding of the concepts of secularity and religion in the political environment in Israel and Iran.

In the State-Maintenance Phase, the relationship between political parties in both states is constructed through their methodological differences. This chapter argues that the implementation of religious laws (instead of state institutions), the formation of religious groups that police public behaviours in society, and religious education centres that pursue the strengthening of the states' religious identity, all contribute to the de-construction of revolutionary unity. However, as the state begins the process of de-securitization these debates extend to the limits of the power of the state and its source of legitimacy. The Shas party in Israel gained popularity by questioning the dominance of Ashkenazim as the agent of Zionism. In Iran the neo-fundamentalists questioned the legitimacy of revolutionary elites like Rafsanjani as the agent of Islamic Revolution ideology. Both the Shas party in Israel and the neo-fundamentalist faction in Iran affirm the legitimacy of the revolution but disagree on the methods that the revolutionary elites used to fulfil their messianic goals.

Neo-fundamentalist parties emerge in the State-Maintenance Phase and develop their policies parallel to the de-securitization of messianism. This chapter argues that there are three factors that connect this parallel development to the state legitimacy. First, as an ideology, Revolutionary Messianism needs a specific political context. Secondly, the mobilization of all the groups can only materialize if there is a coercive power that has blocked any channel for communication and negotiations. Finally, there is a possibility of revolt against a political situation when it poses a threat to the population's wellbeing, identity, survival, or economy. Without the securitization of a political situation in this manner neither revolution nor institutionalisation is meaningful. In the State-Maintenance Phase when no military threat targets territorial borders and the oppressive system is disestablished, political problems in these states intensify. The changing of Securitized Messianism into Politicised Messianism also depends on a specific political context in which there is no sense of urgency attached to domestic political issues.

In order to legitimize their political stance the neo-fundamentalists have to de-legitimize the legislative and administrative policies of the revolutionary elites during the State-Building Phase. Not only their legitimacy as a political group depends on the policies of the revolutionary elites, their ideological position could only exist based on rejecting these policies. The position of the neo-fundamentalists asserts that as a political system, Revolutionary Messianism resists de-securitization and the normalization of politics. Therefore, the end of the conflict era and the beginning of de-securitization gives rise to a new form of fundamentalism that reproduces the security-orientated discourse of the second phase in the political environment. While during the State-Building Phase disagreements between political factions are limited to economic and domestic policies of the existing government, during the State-Maintenance Phase, they disagree over the political institutionalized ideology of the states and attempt to regenerate the dominance of the revolutionary messianic themes.

By studying the debates between political parties and the neo-fundamentalists over the nature of a messianic state and their strategy for attaining its goals this chapter aims to explain three elements that contribute to the success or failure of de-securitization in Israel and Iran. First, the political structure of these states in which parties interact determines the success or failure of de-securitization. The particular narrative of Revolutionary Messianism in each case constructs this political environment. Secondly, debates between political parties in these states do not include the separation of religion from politics or propose the decline of the supervisory role of religion in national identity. Thirdly, debates over the dynamics of the relationship between religion and politics are limited to the power of conservative religious forces in the states' institutions.

Politics in Israel and Iran are centralised around securitization or de-securitization of Revolutionary Messianism in political and social institutions. From defending the country against a military attack to

political debates over public holidays, political parties contest, decide, and implement all political activities of the state in this binary context. Politicised Messianism is formed in the constant clash between political forces over security. Defining the messianic goals of the revolution in security terms limits the scope of theology to state politics. As an inevitable consequence of securitization the states change the reference to history from religious or political to revolutionary and further politicize theology. Therefore, neo-fundamentalists in both states stigmatise any apolitical theological approach, use theology as an effective instrument for political legitimacy, and attempt to present a model that could successfully adopt the messianic goals of the state in politics.

The chapter examines the political goals and activities of the Shas party in Israel by analysing their position on settlement and peace in national politics during the 2009 parliamentary election. The Parliamentary election and associated debates highlight the challenging aspects of Politicised Messianism . It focuses on the Shas party as an example of a neo-fundamentalist party with growing power and significant influence in the settlements in order to explain the particular messianic ideology that the neo-fundamentalists consider to be the main source of state legitimacy. In the international context it discusses the Shas position regarding Israel and diplomatic ties with the United States of America and how their position on international issues relates to their view on Israel's messianic goals. In Iran's case it examines the rise of neo-fundamentalists and their position on Iran's national politics in the 2009 presidential election and discusses their relationship with the leadership, Revolutionary Guards, and other political forces within the state. In the international context this chapter analyses the faction's view on Iran's political ties with the United States of America and nuclear policies. Examining the interaction between the parties explains the neo-fundamentalists' view on the messianic responsibilities of the Islamic Republic.

Ultimately, the failure or success of the de-securitization and institutionalization of Revolutionary Messianism affects the direction of politics in Israel and Iran. This chapter studies the characteristics of Politicised Messianism in the relationship between political parties in Israel and between political factions and leadership in Iran and argues that in the State-Building Phase the political factions within these states can be ideologically categorised into two groups of nationalists and theocrats. In Israel, traditionally religious statist parties considered the goal of Zionism to be the establishment of a theocracy which will achieve the messianic goals of the revolution by using a human-made political system as a means for the development of a progressive messianic state. Non-religious statist parties by contrast have understood Zionism as a national revolution and Judaism to be the cultural and religious identity of the post-revolutionary state but disagree over the state's decision regarding territorial expansion and political developments. In Iran the fundamentalists argue that the identity of the revolution was Islamic, thus attempting to present a model for a messianic Islamic state. The reformists

however consider the goal of the revolution to be creating a just and progressive political and economic state based on Islamic teachings in order to make Iran a powerful state.

### Israel: Religious and Non-religious Politics: Shas - Coalition with Kadima

The ethnic diversity of Israeli society has significantly influenced the structure and ideologies of the political parties in Israel in the last decades. Avigdor Liberman's party, Yisrael Beiteinu, and Rabbi Yosef's Shas party both present good examples of the transformation in the political culture of the parties in the State-Maintenance Phase. Both parties rely on ethnic support - the Russian community in Israel for Yisrael Beiteinu and Sephardim for Shas. The politics of these parties are also a sign of the growing influence of these communities in Israeli society. Thomas Banchoff notes that the influence of ethnic diversity in Israel is not limited to domestic politics and is extended to the relationship between American Jews and Israel. He argues that Shas' disagreement with Yisrael Beiteinu on the conversion issue and the attempts of the Shas party to establish the power of Haredi rabbis over conversion in the 1990s shows that conflict over the Jewish identity of the state is at the heart of the argument between religious and non-religious statist parties.<sup>625</sup>

Banchoff also considers that the roots of decline of traditional Zionism are to be found in changes wrought in Israeli society, particularly during and after the Oslo peace process when peace with the Palestinians seemed imminent.<sup>626</sup> For him these political changes have widened the gap between the religious and non-religious statist parties over the issue of the Jewish identity of the state. In the 1980s and in opposition to the non-religious statist parties, the religious non-statist Sephardim established a new party based on their views of a Jewish state under the rule of Halakhah. The new religious statist party sought to "replace secular Zionism with religious Judaism and hegemonic ideology in Israeli society and presents this as the remedy for both socio-economic and cultural grievances".<sup>627</sup> As Ravitzky notes, the Shas party of the 1980s, was a new form of religious party that did not take the traditional religious non-statist view of the state, and thus, could be involved in cooperating with the state at ministerial level. The break from tradition, Ravitzky argues, has provided them with many national and communal advantages that they can negotiate in coalition governments.<sup>628</sup> The culture of party politics is well established in Israel and the main political parties enjoy significant influence in the Israeli national and international political scenes.

Presenting a share list for coalition government requires pragmatism and compromise and the alliance between the parties highlights their differences about the nature, goals, and behaviour of the state. The

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<sup>625</sup> Th. F. Banchoff, *Democracy and the New Religious Pluralism* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2007), 92.

<sup>626</sup> Ibid.

<sup>627</sup> Ibid.

<sup>628</sup> A. Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 175-177.

structure of both right and left political parties in the recent election was fundamentally different from the pre-1990s situation. The growing power of the neo-fundamentalist parties in the Knesset and the necessity of political alliance for forming the government in 2009 have contributed to a fundamental re-arrangement of politics and security discourse in the country. In the recent election, religious parties presented three lists. Shas, United Torah Judaism, and The Jewish Home were the main political parties in alliances that won seats in parliament. Following Labor, Shas became the sixth party in parliament and together the religious parties won nineteen seats in the Knesset. The following section examines the difference between religious and non-religious parties in their definitions of Politicised Messianism .

### Israel's Parliamentary Election in 2009

In September 2008, Tzipi Livni won the leadership election in the Kadima party after Ehud Olmert resigned from his post as Israel's Prime Minister.<sup>629</sup> Livni did not succeed in gaining enough support to form a coalition government in the parliamentary election.<sup>630</sup> Although she convinced the Labor party to join the government, the government was not formed due to strong opposition from the religious parties. Livni was successful with the leftwing social democrat parties like Meretz-Yachad, but failed to convince the religious parties to participate in the coalition government.<sup>631</sup> After months of negotiations, in October Kadima proposed a bill asking President Shimon Peres to call an early election. When the three week period for an alternative, decreed by Peres, was over without any specific solution, the Knesset chose the time of election for February 2009. Thirty three political parties participated in the election, out of which twelve parties won seats in the parliament and participated in negotiations with Likud to form a coalition government.<sup>632</sup> In a very close competition with Kadima, Likud won the election. Benjamin Netanyahu began negotiations with other parties to form a coalition government that could gain a confidence vote from parliament in the six weeks following the election, as the law provided.<sup>633</sup>

The three main religious parties in the Knesset, although different in their policies and political aims, share similar characteristics. They are run by Rabbis, attempt to appropriate the laws of the state to

<sup>629</sup> In 2005 the Kadima party split from the Likud under the name of "Achrayut Leumit".

<sup>630</sup> Olmert resigned from his post due to allegations of economic corruption. The election was supposed to have been held in 2010 but it was held in early 2009.

<sup>631</sup> In 2005, the Meretz-Yachad party (Democratic Choice) was formed from a coalition between Meretz and Yachad.

<sup>632</sup> The names of the parties are arranged based on the seats each party won in the 2009 parliamentary election. Kadima (28), Likud (27), Yisrael Beiteinu (15), Labor Party (13), Shas (11), United Torah Judaism (5), United Arab List-Ta'al (4), National Union (4), Hadash (4), New Movement-Meretz (3), The Jewish Home (3), Balad (3), The Green Movement-Meimad (0), Gil (0), Ale Yarok (0), The Greens (0), Yisrael Hazaka (0), Tzabar (0), Koah LeHashpi'a (0), Da'am Workers Party (0), Yisrael HaMithadeshet (0), Holocaust Survivors and Ale Yarok Alumni (0), Leader (0), Tzomet (0), Koah HaKesef (0), Man's Rights in the Family Party (0), HaYisraelim, Ahrayut (0), Brit Olam (0), Lev LaOlim (0), Lazuz (0), Lehem (0). The parties that are named after "Balad" did not achieve any seat in parliament in the election.

<sup>633</sup> Gil Hoffman, The shape of the next Knesset?, Jerusalem Post- Jerusalem, Nov. 6, 2002

<http://www.jpost.com/GreenIsrael/KKLJNFWorldLeadershipConference2011/Article.aspx?id=214272>, accessed on 10/11/2011

Halakhah, and believe that the root of political problems in Israel is secularity. These parties tend to ally themselves with the rightwing non-religious parties rather than centre-left or left parties. In the recent elections none of these parties agreed to align themselves with parties like Meretz or Hadash in a leftwing government run by Kadima.<sup>634</sup> In the 2009 election Shas staged successful negotiations with Likud for their participation in the coalition government. Although the head of the party, Eli Yishai, negotiated with Kadima about coalition after the election, he changed the party's coalition overnight from Kadima to Likud.<sup>635</sup> The disagreement between Shas and Kadima arose over tax increases on child support, and Kadima's sympathy towards dividing Jerusalem in the process of peace negotiations with the Palestinians. Due to rapid population growth, the formation of more religious settlements in the West Bank and their political coalition with the right, the Shas party has taken a more conservative position about the settlements in the recent election and supported the Likud party against Kadima's peace plan and actively supported the basic law "Jerusalem, Capital of Israel".<sup>636</sup> For Shas, the security of the communities is a matter of concern but they are not fervent supporters of expanding settlements. As is clear from the examination of the Shas party's policies, to them, the secularization of Israel is a more problematic issue on the path to redemption than peace.

In their negotiations with Kadima, the representatives of the Shas party rejected Kadima's proposed national budget, specifically the Value Added Tax, which they argued, directly influenced their communities.<sup>637</sup> Yishai (Shas) welcomed Netanyahu's policy to cancel budget cuts that he argued would affect the disadvantaged populations. He also clarified that this would not satisfy his party and demanded an increase in child allowance.<sup>638</sup> The new budget included NIS 1.5 billion to cover child allowances and NIS 800 million for Yeshivot.<sup>639</sup> The two other religious parties have also benefited from their negotiations with Netanyahu. The United Torah Judaism, an alliance of Agudat Yisrael and Degel HaTorah, is another religious statist coalition. This political party, formed in 1992, won four seats in the 2009 election.<sup>640</sup> Rabbi Yosef Sholom Elyashiv, the leader the Degel HaTorah's party is one of the prominent Heredi Rabbis. He is a Rabbi and an ultimate guide of law for the Lithuanian Heredi

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<sup>634</sup> For instance, in Knesset 2002 election: Likud (21), Labor (25), Shas (17), Meretz (10), Arab factions (10) Like United Torah Judaism, Arab parties, National Union/Yisrael Beiteinu (7), Shinui (6), National Religious Party (5), Center (5) United Torah Judaism (5), Am Ehad (2), Geshar (2), Herut (1). Ibid.

<sup>635</sup> Since the time that Deri was imprisoned for fraud, Yishai has been leading the party. He has held other senior positions in the Shas party as the party's Secretary General and the Director General of the Shas educational network (El Ha'maayan) in the 1990s.

<sup>636</sup> The USA abstained from voting in favour of the Security Council's condemnation of the law.

<sup>637</sup> Hillel Fendel, "Budget Passes, Budget Director Resigns," Israel News <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/131336>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>638</sup> Roni Sofer, "Shas Wants Child Allowances Increased," Israel News, August 05, 2009, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3712792,00.html>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>639</sup> Ilan Marciano, "Shas to Receive 4 Portfolios, NIS 1.8 Billion," Israel News, April 30, 2006, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3245689,00.html>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>640</sup> In 2005, the collapse of the United Torah Judaism gave rise to Agudat Yisrael and Degel Hatorah who remained allies in their lists for the 2009 election. United Torah Judaism (יהדות התורה המאוחדת, Yahadut HaTorah HaMeukhedet)



community. His party is vehemently anti-secular and the focus of its policies is targeting non-religious statist parties.

In the 2009 election, Agudat Yisrael, the religious party, with Hasidic and Heredi supporters, negotiated with Likud for more funds for their Yeshivot and communities following which two members of the party received governmental positions. Meir Porush became Deputy Minister of Education, and Yakov Litzman, gained the position of Deputy Minister of Health.<sup>641</sup> Both are critical positions for Agudat Yisrael who aim to implement Kashrut on a national scale and spread its Yeshivot.<sup>642</sup> It is their common dislike of the secular identity of the state that unites the two Heredi parties as a voting bloc in each election.<sup>643</sup> The two other members, Uri Maklev and Menachem Eliezer Moseshold positions in associated government organizations.<sup>644</sup>

Another successful faction in Likud's coalition government was the National Union Voting Block. It is a rightwing Zionist faction that includes two religious and two secular parties. The most religious party in this block is Eretz Yisrael Shelanu (Our Land of Israel).<sup>645</sup> In contrast to the members of the United Torah Judaism (who only have religious education and refrain from participation in military services), members of the Eterz Yisrael Shelanu have a secular education and hold ranks in the army. The party, which gained four seats in the 2009 election, includes two secular and two religious members. Yaakov (Katzeleh) Katz is the leader of the religious statist party of Moledet and Michael Ben Ari is from the Eterz Yisrael Shelanu party.<sup>646</sup> Uri Yehuda Ariel is a member of the Tkuma and Arie Eldad from the secular Zionist party HaTikva. Katz is one of the founders of the Gush Emunim movement. Along with other party members he rejects the formation of a Palestinian state and opposes the 2005 Disengagement Plan.<sup>647</sup> It is a party with a strong military focus and its members are involved in providing medical care and support for military servicemen. They negotiated with Likud over the increasing military budget and the expansion of Israeli settlements.

In the 2009 election, the left political parties - Meretz and Tnu'a HaHadasha - presented a joint list, and Tarabut joined Hadasha. This alliance focused on peace negotiations and the freedom of religion, as well as a strong emphasis on environmentalist policies.<sup>648</sup> Just a month before the election the two Arab

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<sup>641</sup> Amnon Meranda, "United Torah Judaism, Likud Sign Coalition Deal," Israel News, January 04, 2009, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3695618,00.html>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>642</sup> [http://www.knesset.gov.il/mk/eng/mk\\_eng.asp?mk\\_individual\\_id\\_t=216](http://www.knesset.gov.il/mk/eng/mk_eng.asp?mk_individual_id_t=216), accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>643</sup> [http://www.knesset.gov.il/mk/eng/mk\\_eng.asp?mk\\_individual\\_id\\_t=35](http://www.knesset.gov.il/mk/eng/mk_eng.asp?mk_individual_id_t=35), accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>644</sup> Maklev is the Directorate of Jerusalem Municipality and Deputy Mayor.

<sup>645</sup> (ארץ ישראל שלנו), Eretz Yisrael Shelanu) official website in English and Hebrew, <http://www.sos-israel.com/en.html>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>646</sup> Ibid.

<sup>647</sup> Ibid.

<sup>648</sup> (התנועה החדשה-מרצ), previously known as Meretz, then Yachad, and later Meretz-Yachad (Hebrew: מרצ-יחד, Vitality-Unity). Tarabut is a new peace movement which opposes the separation fence in the West Bank. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3637894,00.html>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

parties of Balad and United Arab List (Ta'al) were disqualified as political parties.<sup>649</sup> The Central Elections Committee announced that their disqualification was based on the parties' failure to recognize the state of Israel. They were also blamed for promoting armed struggle against the state and supporting Palestinians attacks. The Supreme Court however, rejected the ban and the parties were allowed to participate in the 2009 election.<sup>650</sup>

The main political parties in the Likud government became Shas, Israel Our Home (Yisrael Beiteinu), and the National Union (Ichud Leumi).<sup>651</sup> Their representatives, who have close ties with the spiritual leaders of Heredi and Hasidic communities, achieved cabinet posts in negotiations. The victory of Israel Beiteinu in the government as the third party has revived tensions between the religious and non-religious parties over the issues of conversion and citizenship. Yisrael Beiteinu, whose constituent base is Russian Jews, and mostly non-religious voters, challenged the Heredi definition of state identity by recognizing commitment to the state as the main criteria for citizenship. The religious parties insisted on increasing the power of Heredi rabbis in validating conversion to respond to the Yisrael Beiteinu's emphasis on an oath of alliance to the state. The religious parties have also expressed opposition to the "pluralist Judaism", American Reform and Conservative movements in Israel in strong political statements.<sup>652</sup>

#### Religious Parties and Secular Messianism - Ashkenazim and Sephardim in the Construction of the Party's Political Identity

Changes in the political environment after the 1967 Six Days War, and as the result of securitization, religious parties such as Agudat Yisrael changed from a non-statist religious party to a statist religious party which is active in seeking ministerial positions.<sup>653</sup> The Shas party, by contrast, has been active in both legislative and ministerial positions since its inception.<sup>654</sup> Shas members in ministerial positions

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<sup>649</sup> Aviad Glickman, "Arab Parties Disqualified from Elections," Israel News, January 1, 2009, <http://www.ynet.co.il/english/articles/0,7340,L-3654866,00.html>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>650</sup> Ibid.

<sup>651</sup> Yisrael Beiteinu split from the Ichud Leumi in 2006. Ibid.

<sup>652</sup> Banchoff uses direct quotes from the Sephardi Chief Rabbi Bakshi-Doron, who called these movements "more dangerous to the Jewish nation than the Holocaust" to show the extent of their opposition to these movements which attract many post-Soviet immigrants as well as Americans. Ibid.

<sup>653</sup> In 1990, Moshe Gafni (UTJ) became the Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs. In 1996 and 2001, Meir Porush (UTJ) became the Deputy Minister of Housing. In the 2009 election, the UTJ received two government positions and Yakov Litzman became the Deputy Minister of Health, and Meir Porush, the Deputy Minister of Education. Both have only completed Yeshiva studies. <http://www.knesset.gov.il/>

<sup>654</sup> Ariel Atias from Shas became the Minister of Communications in 2006 and the Minister of Housing and Construction in 2009. David Azoulay, became the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs in 2002. Yitzhak Cohen became the Minister of Religious Affairs in 2000, the Deputy Minister of Finance in 2001, the Minister of Religious Services in 2008, and the Deputy Minister of Finance in 2009. Yakov Margi became the Minister of Religious Services in 2009. Meshulam Nahari became the Deputy Minister of Education in 2000 and the Minister without portfolio in 2009. Yitzhak Vaknin became the Deputy Minister of Communications in 2000 and the Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Welfare in 2001. Eliyahu Yishai became the Minister of Labor and Social Welfare in 2000, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Internal Affairs in 2001, the Minister of Industry, Trade, and Labor in 2006, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Internal Affairs in 2009. See: <http://www.knesset.gov.il/main/eng/home.asp>

have ensured the increase of funding for the Sephardim. Shas' involvement in high profile government positions introduced new political complexities in defining secularity and religion in the political sphere, as the gap between political and religious laws narrowed.<sup>655</sup> More significantly, the shift of power into the hands of Rabbis created a new elitist class that had an advantaged position in negotiating their particularistic view of religion. This elitist discourse is ironically constructed as an oppositional discourse to Ashkenazi elitism.

The Shas emphasis on ministerial posts in the Ministry of Religious Affairs is due to two reasons. First, the Ministry is at the centre of decision making regarding religious affairs and through the ministry the party can keep control of religious affairs in the hands of Rabbis with Heredi/Hasidic connections. Secondly, the party can use their position to bargain potential political alliances and have more power over Rabbinic Courts.<sup>656</sup> According to Magnus Norell, control over the religious courts has three main functions: through it, the party can monitor and promulgate religious communal life, participate in the legislative process, and influence the selection of staff for religious institutions nationwide.<sup>657</sup> The attention of the Shas party to religious issues, not only as a party ideology but as the main fabric of state and society, has encouraged the party to demand a ministerial post in the Ministry of Religious Affairs.<sup>658</sup> Their involvement in this ministry, in addition to their view on politics, reflects their messianic views. Most of the religious parties, including the Shas party, do not view the state as messianic in nature but rather view it as a state with messianic potential. Yosef clearly states in his comments on Israeli politics that the implementation of Halakhah is a priority in steps towards the coming of the Messiah. Power in the political environment and their influence over the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Shas believe, could activate the state's potential.

This understanding of messianism and the state has also altered the religious non-statist parties who did not view the state as being messianic in nature, abstained from military service, and relied on the religious budget. For religious Jews, the messianic age would come when its theological preconditions are fulfilled, thus, they are concerned about the observance of Sabbath and any Jewish business in Israel functioning on the day.<sup>659</sup> Legally, monitoring the observance of the Sabbath is the responsibility of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Members of the Druze community monitor the observance of the Sabbath which requires the employment of a large number of public servants. The Shas party, for example, has

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<sup>655</sup> Some of the criteria that determines whether a business is kosher are; refraining from work on Shabbat, investments in the corporate bonds, and selling of non-kosher foods in Israel.

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/Flash.aspx/169728>, November 19, 2009.

<sup>656</sup> Norell argues that preserving the Millet system enabled the Sephardim (Sephardim) to establish their religious court system and an institutional base. M. Norell, *A Dissenting Democracy: the Israeli Movement "Peace Now"* (NY: Routledge, 2002), 58.

<sup>657</sup> Ibid.

<sup>658</sup> Haim Shapiro, "Yishai: Religious Affairs Ministry will 'flourish'," *Jerusalem Post* – Jerusalem, Mar 13, 2001, 4.

<sup>659</sup> The Holy Bible, op. cit., Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea

expressed its concern over respecting the law of the Sabbath on various occasions. The issues of public transport on the Sabbath, travelling in any motor vehicle and the sexual segregation of buses in Jerusalem has created tensions between the Hasidic communities and non-religious populations in Jerusalem. The difference between the two sub-cultural groups is particularly evident in Jerusalem and also to be found in Tel Aviv.

Jerusalem, with a more conservative population and home to many pilgrimage sites, has witnessed the increase in the power of the Hasidic Rabbis on city politics. With a growing number of community members and Yeshivot they have been able to organize demonstrations opposing those rules that violate the laws of the Sabbath or for the lack of sexually segregated buses for the Hasidic communities.<sup>660</sup> They have successfully used the city's religious significance and its conservative atmosphere for establishing networks and pursuing their political goals. The success of their networks is directly related to the continued growth of Hasidic communities and changes in the demographic population. They, however, needed to revise their communal position on participation in politics, and the observance of Halakhah by refraining from political engagement, which they viewed to be an activity that could pollute their religious observance. To Hasidim, Halakhic marriage laws determine the identity of the state and are therefore of the highest priority. Consequently, in the ministry, they attempted to further integrate religious ritual on public holidays, dietary laws, and even in allowing daylight saving.<sup>661</sup>

Contrary to the non-religious statist parties, such as Likud, that understand Israel as a messianic state that will progressively create a utopia, the Sephardim consider the religious identity of the state to be a pre-condition of a messianic utopia. Shas presents this ideology in their election campaign advertisements in sentences like: "Who is on Hashem's side, come to me", a verse from Exodus spoken by Moses when he returned from Sinai with the Ten Commandments.<sup>662</sup> Placing this motto next to Yosef's portraits indicates that, for the party, it is through political participation and through the political process that the ultimate goal of the divine hope for the Jewish people is determined.

Yosef's belief in government as a utility for the coming of the messianic age is so significant that the issue of voting has become an exclusively religious issue for the Shas party. In a statement he made after casting his vote in the 2006 election, he called voting a mitzvah (religious duty) and in his remarks suggested that Kadima supporters would go to hell and Shas supporters to heaven.<sup>663</sup> His comments

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<sup>660</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uI-BSl8N1k8&NR=1>, accessed on 10/11/2011. See debates on lunching a sexually segregated bus line for the Haredi neighbourhoods in Jerusalem.

<sup>661</sup> In June 2009, a new cemetery in Kfar Saba opened and offered "alternative" burial services. Although alternative burials to *hevra kadisha* were accepted in the Burial Law in 1996, the first of such facilities opened in 1999. Some of these facilities have been subject to attacks by the Hasidic who consider alternative burial services against the Halakhah. H. R. Gur, "New Cemetery Brings Personalized, 'Alternative' Burials to Kfar Saba," *Jerusalem Post-Jerusalem*, August 06, 2009,

<sup>662</sup> Ariel Jerozolimski, "A Shas Campaign Poster," *Jerusalem Post- Jerusalem*, Nov 30, 2005, 2.

<sup>663</sup> Ilan Marciano, "Rabbi Ovadia: Kadima voters going to hell," *YeNet*, Mar 24, 2006, 1.

about Yossi Sardid in early 2000 and later about parties on the left on many occasions indicate that for Yosef and his supporters, the boundaries of political responsibilities, either from the state or from the citizens, are in nature religious and selectively beyond national law. The combination of the two is not expressed with such intensity by other religious parties. Further, during times of political upheaval Yosef has shown no reservations in expressing outrageous comments directed at Ashkenazim. In 2000, when Aryeh Deri was accused and on trial for embezzlement charges, Yosef created a national scandal by calling the victims of the Holocaust “the reincarnation of sinners”.<sup>664</sup> A year later Yosef demanded separate prayer sessions for Sephardim in the military.<sup>665</sup> Although he supported his argument by asking the Israel Defence Force to recognize diverse styles of prayer rituals, it was a move to affirm the party’s political position in a dominantly Ashkenazi environment. In the 2009 election it was due to the position of the religious statist parties like Shas, and United Torah Judaism, that the non-religious statist party of Yisrael Beiteinu achieved a stronger position in the Knesset.

### Iranian Messianic Symbols and Khomeini’s Jurisprudential Leadership Theory

Political parties in Iran cannot be distinguished merely by their left and right political stands in national or international politics.<sup>666</sup> Khomeini created a political environment in which those who undermined the power of state institutions for the benefits of leadership achieved more political power in state institutions. In 1995, parliament passed the “Political Party Legislation Act” and outlined the limits of activities of political parties. The Act provides that the formation of any non-religious political party is an anti-revolutionary act and a threat to Iranian national security. According to the Act, political parties are permitted to be active in the Islamic Republic only if they express their loyalty to the Islamic Republic and the definitive rule of the Jurisprudential Leader.<sup>667</sup> Moreover, according to Article 57 of

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<http://www.ynet.co.il/english/Ext/Comp/ArticleLayout/CdaArticlePrintPreview/1,2506,L-3231788,00.html>, accessed on 10/11/101, also “Voter turnout rate: Only 47%,” YeNet, Mar 28, 2006, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3233150,00.html>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>664</sup> For his controversial comments on Israeli politics see: “Profile: Rabbi Ovadia Yosef,” BBC, Aug 08, 2000, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/870953.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/870953.stm), accessed on 10/11/2011. For the views of the secular parties on Deri’s trial, See: David Forman, “Shas Versus the Ashkenazi 'Elite',” Jerusalem Post – Jerusalem, Sep 5, 2000, 8.

<sup>665</sup> Greer Fay Cashman, “Yosef Calls for Separate Prayers in Israel Defence Force,” Jerusalem Post – Jerusalem, Apr 30, 2001, 4.

<sup>666</sup> More than fifty active cultural institutions in Iran are supervised by the institution but receive their budgets from the government. The heads of these centres are either appointed by Khamenei or their appointment is approved by him. The Centre of Islamic Invitation, the Martyrs foundation, the Research Centre for Islamic Cultures and Thought, the Office of the Islamic Invitation in Qom, Jame’at ul-Mustafa (Mustafa’s association), the Global Centre of the (ahl-e beit), dar ul-Taqrīb (the Association for the Unity of Muslims), Shahid University, the Centre of Islamic Culture and Communication, the Centre for Studies of Islamic Knowledge (Nour), and many others are included in this list.

<sup>667</sup> Political parties in Iran are divided into three categories of legal, illegal and government parties. The phrase “Government parties” refers to some parties during the Pahlavi rule that were formed based on the orders from the Shah and had no public support. After the revolution, the Ministry of the Interior in Iran became responsible for issuing a certificate for a party before it could announce its existence and only when the Ministry examines the party’s political doctrine and ideology is it able to start operating. See: د. ادن، ل. ر. ۱۳۹۰، جوم (J. M. Nejadiyan, The Regime of Political Parties (Tehran: Amir Kabir publication, 1990), chapter two. Iran Ministry of Interior’s website : <http://www.moi.ir/Portal/Home/ShowPage.aspx?Object=News&CategoryID=832a711b-95fe-4505-8aa3-38f5e17309c9&LayoutID=dd8faff4-f71b-4c65-9aef-a1b6d0160be3&ID=56ebdaa1-a6b6-4604-a5d1-c81f9e9ab04d>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

Iran's Constitution, "The Powers of Government in the Islamic Republic are vested in the legislature, the judiciary, and the executive, functioning under the supervision of the absolute Valayat al-'amr (religious authority) and the leadership of the ummah, in accordance with the forthcoming articles of this Constitution. These powers are independent of each other".<sup>668</sup> Paradoxically this article indicates that loyalty to the leadership is a pre-condition for political participation in any government body. It states that these three powers act independently of each other, but it does not stipulate how such independence is possible when they all function under the absolute rule of a leader.

Establishing the rule of behaviour for political parties in this authoritarian style makes any attempt to observe the dynamics of religion and politics in the Islamic Republic a challenging task. The one party politics that Khomeini created through sets of imagery and discourse left no place for the development of secular politics.<sup>669</sup> Unlike Israel's democratic political system, the political doctrine of the parties in Iran does not allow the process of politicization and considers any attempts in politicization as a threat to its survival. Secular political discourse is non-existent amongst political factions due to the brutal suppression by the state.<sup>670</sup> However, the lack of data about secular ideas and politics does not mean there is a lack of such ideas in Iran or that Iran is a harmonious society in the support of the religious ruling system. On the contrary, reactions from fundamentalist parties in recent years and the issues that reformists addressed in the last two presidential elections demonstrate the growth of secular political ideas in the public sphere. In Iran, even the political parties who pass all ideological and practical filters and become legitimate political parties in the system become vulnerable if their relationship with the Jurisprudential Leader is disturbed. The electoral system of the Islamic Republic, similar to its party politics, is an agent based system in which individuals are accepted as candidates for any election only if they affirm 'practical commitment' to the leadership - rather than for their professional capabilities.<sup>671</sup> The Jurisprudential Leadership and their supporters struggle in the establishment of pre-modern trust relations in bureaucratic, military, and educational systems. This demands that the political parties compete in passing oppressive policies rather than working to constrain the power of the leadership by establishing legal limits and democratic policies.

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<sup>668</sup> Iran's Constitution text in English: <http://www.iranonline.com/iran/iran-info/government/Constitution-5.html>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>669</sup> For studying the view of non-religious, sceptics and atheists or even the existence of such views the cyberspace is the only possible option. However, the lack of any statistical data about the number of non-religious people who have no access to the internet adds to the complexity of any statistical study in this field.

<sup>670</sup> The Islamic Republic brutally suppresses any secular discourse to exist but paradoxically there is a large and strong secular political discourse in the society. These discourses became evident in the Green Movement's slogans and their opposition against the unlimited power of the Jurisprudential Leadership.

<sup>671</sup> E. Abrahamian, *Khomeinism: Essays on the Islamic Republic* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1993), 135.

Khamenei in a fatwa (decree) affirmed that a Jurisprudential Leader has equal rights to a prophet as both are only agents for implementing the Shari'a.<sup>672</sup> It is evident from his fatwa that he does not recognize any attempts in the politicization of the authority of Jurisprudential Leadership to be legitimate. Khamenei and his supporting Ayatollahs, absolutely oppose the boundary between politics and religion in their circles. This further highlights the inherent political and theological problems of the position. It was, however, only by attaching some divine attribution that Khamenei could achieve such legitimacy. Gradually, and specifically after 1997, he became more dependent on those fundamentalists who argued that a Jurisprudential Leader is installed by God (installation theory), rather than those who believed that he is chosen by people.<sup>673</sup>

The view of the fundamentalist Ayatollahs on Jurisprudential Leadership has produced excessively patriarchal politics. They transformed the state's institutions to a private utility for the leader. Those institutions that play the mediatory role between people and the leadership, like the Guardian Council, had a crucial role in establishing their political rule.<sup>674</sup> As the political culture of Iran changed during the time of Khatami, Khamenei's dependency on Basij, the Revolutionary Guards and religious institutions intensified.<sup>675</sup> Just a year after his presidency in 1998 Rahim Safavi, a commander of the Revolutionary Guards, announced the formation of this party in a speech. He stated in a gathering of the Revolutionary Guards that some of the reformers' policies were threats to the Islamic Republic and that the Guards would "cut the throats and break the pens" of those who pose any threat.<sup>676</sup> Their political party relies heavily on the relationship between individual politicians who are somehow connected to the leadership, and the Guards. Patrimonial politics is evident in their administrative policies under Ahmadinejad's government. The presidential election in 2009, in which all candidates were involved in the power politics of the Islamic Republic that have existed since its inception, demonstrated the closed political system which such a definition of Politicised Messianism produces and its political implication on the institutionalization of state legitimacy.

Since the rise of the neo-fundamentalists in 2004 the government and the fundamentalist parliament have structured their policies around an "installation theory" as the source of legitimacy for Jurisprudential Leadership. As a consequence, Iran's politics has been dominated by a small group of

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<sup>672</sup> Khamenei's official website: <http://farsi.khamenei.ir/treatise-content?uid=1&tid=8> accessed January 10, 2010.

<sup>673</sup> For details of the "installation theory of Absolute Jurisprudential Leadership", see: M. T. Mesbah-Yazdi, *Islamic Government and the Jurisprudential Leader* (Tehran: Islamic Propaganda Organization, 1990), 37. M. T. Mesbah-Yazdi, *Frequently Asked Questions and Answers* (Qom: Imam Khomeini Institute of Education and Research, 1998) 45, and A. J. Amoli, *On Revelation and Leadership*, (Qom: Zahra, 1989), 78.

<sup>674</sup> Gh. Tazmini, *Khatami's Iran: The Islamic Republic and the Turbulent Path to Reform* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2009), 104-111.

<sup>675</sup> Ibid.

<sup>676</sup> Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Mahjoob Zweiri, *Iran and the Rise of Its Neoconservatives: the Politics of Tehran's Silent Revolution* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2007), 21.



influential politicians who manage public relations and state policies.<sup>677</sup> The underlying difference of neo-fundamentalists (who are committed to the installation theory) to fundamentalist (who believe in the supremacy of a jurisprudential leader) and reformist clergy is not only their view on the source of legitimacy for the Jurisprudential Leadership but also the limits of its authority. The former group believe in the absolute power of a Jurisprudential Leader and acknowledge three characteristics for the leadership. First, his power has no geographical border and the leader's rule is absolute for all Shi'ites in the world. Secondly, its power is not limited to specific groups of law and covers all aspects of human life. Finally, his verdict is final and non-negotiable. The neo-fundamentalists similarly believe that the Jurisprudential Leadership, as the representative of the Mahdi, receives its legitimacy from God and not from the people. The responsibility of the Expediency Council is thus solely to discover a leader and not to supervise his actions.<sup>678</sup> All supporters of the installation theory refer to the Shi'a theory of God's lutf (blessing) to justify their argument.

According to the installation theory, people's decisions and votes have no effect on the legitimacy of the leadership and elections function rather as a decorative act. In reality, they declare, it is the state that requires legitimizing by the leader.<sup>679</sup> The neo-fundamentalists argue that Khomeini aimed to establish a theocracy with the 1979 revolution in which the legitimacy of the leader was disassociated from and positioned above the Constitution. The reformists, on the other hand, believe that Khomeini was the founder of an Islamic Republic, not of an Islamic totalitarian regime.<sup>680</sup> In their view, Khomeini believed in the supervisory role of the Shi'a ulama but did not approve their absolute rule. On the contrary, he strongly emphasized the importance of elections and never undermined the legitimacy of the Constitution.<sup>681</sup>

### The 2009 Presidential Election

According to data presented in parliamentary archives before 1996, there is hardly any record of party politics in Iran.<sup>682</sup> Since the 1996 election, parties have gradually formed and allied in new fundamentalist and reformist parties.<sup>683</sup> All candidates in 2009, except Ahmadinejad, have been at times involved in both factions. The complicated net of relations between the revolutionary "elites" is interlinked to their relationship with these two political factions. Tensions between the political factions

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<sup>677</sup> Sami Moubayed, "Iran and the Art of Crisis Management," Asia Times Online, January 19, 2006, [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle\\_East/HA19Ak03.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/HA19Ak03.html) accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>678</sup> Both Yazdi and Amoli argue that Khomeini discussed this theory in his book "Ba'yi" when he said: "Whatever reason justifies Imamate the exact same reason justifies the necessity of an (Islamic) government, in the age of the absence." See: M. T. Mesbah-Yazdi. *Frequently Asked Questions and Answers*, vol. 1, 25.

<sup>679</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>680</sup> Gh. Tazmini, op. cit., 141.

<sup>681</sup> Ibid, 52.

<sup>682</sup> For the lists and times of parliamentary elections and the political parties in 1980s and 90s in English, see: Iran's parliament official website: [http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2149\\_arc.htm](http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2149_arc.htm), accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>683</sup> Ibid.



in the 2009 presidential election demonstrate a mounting breach between reformists and fundamentalists and a division within the fundamentalist camp over the issue of state legitimacy. Candidates in these camps are nominated by one of the main parties, the “Society of Combatant Clergy” and the “Society of Combatant Clerics”.<sup>684</sup> The former is a fundamentalist religious party with strong influence in the traditional Bazaar and with the clergy and has members in all political institutions. The latter was formed in the final year of the war when the “Islamic Republic Party” was abolished.<sup>685</sup> The fundamentalists, who formed the Society of Combatant Clergy, had a close connection with the Bazaar political party “the Allied Islamic Society” and fundamentalist clergy in Qom, “the Society of Qom Seminary Teachers.”<sup>686</sup> The support of privatization in this context benefited those with connections to the ruling circle and thus the combination of these economic policies in two decades has led to the dominance of the neo-fundamentalists over economic activities.<sup>687</sup>

From the two reformer candidates in the 2009 election, Hossein Musavi achieved significant success in mobilizing public support. He was Iran’s Prime Minister during the Iran-Iraq war and resigned from his position following a dispute with Khamenei (the president at the time) but returned to his position when Khomeini supported him and his cabinet.<sup>688</sup> After the death of Khomeini, Khamenei became the Jurisprudential Leader and removed the Prime Ministerial position.<sup>689</sup> Musavi then left politics and became the president of the Academy of Arts of the Islamic Republic in Tehran until the 2009 election when he became a candidate for the presidential election. He announced that his candidature was due to the threats that neo-fundamentalists’ policies posed to the country and the ideals of the Islamic Republic.<sup>690</sup> He criticized the existing economic situation, the government’s management of public policies, and the closing of the government’s budgetary institutions such as the Centre of Public Management and Planning. In the hope of attracting votes from the moderate fundamentalists he refused to announce any radical reformist policies.<sup>691</sup> Throughout the campaign he emphasised his

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<sup>684</sup> B. Moin, *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1999), 181. The Society of Combatant Clerics (سازمان مجاهدین) and Society of Combatant Clergy (سازمان مجاهدين) See: Gh. Tazmini, *Ibid*, 45-46.

<sup>685</sup> The economic policies of the “Association of Combatant Clergy” which were more revolutionary resulted in the formation of the later reformist’s party. A. Ehteshami, *After Khomeini: the Iranian Second Republic* (London: Routledge, 1995), 26-30.

<sup>686</sup> The “Islamic Coalition Party” is a strong pro-Khamenei party and its members are mainly religiously conservative. An interview with Asadollah Askar-Oladi, I am an Emperor, 05 Oct 2009, (in Persian) <http://www.jamejamonline.ir/newstext.aspx?newsnum=100951039096>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>687</sup> M. Moslem, *Factional Politics in post-Khomeini Iran; Modern Intellectual and Political History of the Middle East* (NY: Syracuse University Press, 2002), 69. During the first years after Khomeini, a pragmatic cooperation between the two factions was formed. A. Ehteshami, *After Khomeini: the Iranian Second Republic* (NY: Routledge, 1995), 26.

<sup>688</sup> M. Mohaddessin, *Islamic Fundamentalism* (New Delhi, Delhi: Anmol Publications PVT. LTD, 2003), 114.

<sup>689</sup> Musavi refused to be a candidate in the 1997 and 2005 elections and announced his candidature in 2009 only three months prior to the election.

<sup>690</sup> Musavi’s presidential debate with Ahmadinejad was broadcast live from the national TV. This was the first time that election candidates ran public, live debates.

<sup>691</sup> Fariba Adelkhah, *Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, and Centre d’études et de recherches internationales, Being Modern in Iran* (London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers, 1999), 56.

loyalty to the ideals of the revolution and blamed the government for a lack of transparency, lying, and the economic deficit of the national budget.<sup>692</sup>

Mahdi Karroubi, the other reformist candidate, was the speaker of parliament during the reformist government. He started the National Confidence Party (Hezb-e Etemad-e Melli) after the 2005 election and has adopted a reformist position since.<sup>693</sup> During the time of Khatami, however, Karroubi belonged to both the central factions. At times, even the reformists criticized him harshly. One example was when he sought Khamenei's decision in a case where there was disagreement between the Guardian Council and Parliament over reforming the law on freedom of the press, undermining the power of the reformists completely.<sup>694</sup> In the 2009 presidential election, however, Karroubi adopted a radical left position as he supported civil rights for Bahai's, optional wearing of Hijab, and criticised the control by the state of broadcasting institutions.<sup>695</sup>

The two fundamentalist candidates, Mohsen Rezai and Mahmud Ahmadinejad, disagreed over the practicality of the government decision for economic development. Mohsen Rezai was the Chief Commander of the Revolutionary Guards during the Iraq-Iran war. Rezai, supported by a small group within the fundamentalists, announced in his campaign that Ahmadinejad's economic policies would lead Iran into economic disaster.<sup>696</sup> He focused on economy but also strongly criticized Ahmadinejad for his foreign policies and comments on the Holocaust.<sup>697</sup> The fundamentalists who supported Rezai generally disagreed with Ahmadinejad's lack of compromise but even before the election Rezai knew that he had little chance of beating Ahmadinejad. Rezai, with a long history in the Revolutionary Guard, became the representative of the traditional fundamentalist politicians who had lost significant influence in the first round of Ahmadinejad's government in 2004.

Ahmadinejad, the neo-fundamentalist candidate, has been the great promoter of populist policies and nepotism, and has been devoted to the establishment of Islamic rule rather than a republic. He began his political career in the 1980s as the governor in Khoy and Maku, two cities in Iran's Kurdistan province. He was later appointed governor general of this province. In the late 1990s, he was replaced but

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<sup>692</sup> Ibid.

<sup>693</sup> Ali Gheissari and Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Democracy in Iran: History and the Quest for Liberty* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), 109.

<sup>694</sup> Fars News, a neo-fundamentalist news agency that is controlled by Khamenei, published an article to justify the governmental order from a Shi'a theological perspective. Ali Akbar Kalantari, "What is a Governmental Order," FarsNews, April 5, 2009, <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=8802160963>, accessed on 10/11/2011, also: M. Mohammadi, *Judicial Reform and Reorganization in 20th Century Iran: State-building, Modernization, and Islamicization* (NY: Routledge, 2008), 116.

<sup>695</sup> In 2007, he suggested introducing a private TV channel to end the hegemony of state owned broadcasting in Iran but his project did not succeed.

<sup>696</sup> For all the election's televised debates with English translation see:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9DNmR15Lui8> accessed on May 12, 2010,

<sup>697</sup> For all election televised debates with English translation see: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9DNmR15Lui8> accessed on May 12, 2010.

continued his activities in the Tehran City Council as a member of the Alliance of Builders of Islamic Iran. The faction was formed from various rightwing groups and fundamentalists who won nearly all the elections in Iran between 2003 and 2009.<sup>698</sup> Returning to politics in 2005, he became the mayor of Tehran and a year later became a candidate in the presidential election.<sup>699</sup> The goal of politics and religion in the Islamic Republic, neo-fundamentalists argue, should be the creation of an ideal messianic state. They believe that the signs and symbols in messianic texts that outline the politics in the time of Mahdi and the Shi'a utopia, should be deciphered and idealised as the political goal of the Islamic Republic. This ideology eradicates the plurality of Shi'a jurisprudence and ironically undermines the absolute rule of the Jurisprudential Leadership, which claims its legitimacy to be directly from Shi'a messianism. This claim also makes the global aims of messianism a subservient aim for the state's nationalistic and economic developments and reduces the political power of Ayatollahs as Sources of Emulation.<sup>700</sup>

The concept of Marja'yat-e Vahed (One Source of Emulation) that Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi introduced threatened the semi-independent status of religious institutions and established the power of leadership over other ayatollahs. This politicization of the clerical role in Politicised Messianism has alienated the traditional religious institutions from the neo-fundamentalist government and made the leadership into a threat to their legitimacy.<sup>701</sup> The position of Mesbah Yazdi has enabled the neo-fundamentalist government in Iran to minimize the role of parliament and other state institutions in political decision-making and the economy and ignore the concerns of the dominantly fundamentalist parliament over the undermining of the power of parliamentary Acts. As a result, in the 2009 election, the fundamentalist parties were more divided in introducing Ahmadinejad as their unanimous candidate and fundamentalist parties such as the Alliance of the Builders of Islamic Iran refused and did not support Ahmadinejad.

When, prior to the election, the reformists asked for an independent supervisory system from the Guardian Council, their demand indicated the rising tension between the reformists and the neo-fundamentalists over the trustworthiness of existing monitoring institutions that are responsible for

<sup>698</sup> Abrahamian believes that the neo-fundamentalists owe their victory to the Bush's Middle East policies, specifically, his "axis of Evil" speech that severely undermined the reformists' attempts in democratization. E. Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 192.

<sup>699</sup> Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Mahjoob Zweiri, *Iran and the Rise of Its Neoconservatives: the Politics of Tehran's Silent Revolution* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2007), 56-60.

<sup>700</sup> Mesbah Yazdi does not reject the institution of fatwa but argues that the power of the ulama should be constrained by the rule of the J.L. See M.T. Mesbah-Yazdi, *A Tabloid to the Theory of Jurisprudential Leadership*, 120. The chapter is published on the website of the Qom Theological Centre. See:

<http://www.andisheqom.com/Files/velayat.php?idVeiw=2119&level=4&subid=2119&page=2>, accessed on 12/05/2011.

<sup>701</sup> In 1997, Hamid Ansari, the Deputy Secretary General of Mesbah Yazdi's research institution published a pamphlet titled; "[Religious] Sovereignty and leadership; Separation or unity?" His theory demanded a restructuring of the Shi'a jurisprudential tradition and substituting unity instead of individual jurisprudence, (پول: ان، و تء). H. Ansari, "[Religious] Sovereignty and leadership; Separation or unity?" (Tehran: Orouj publishing, 1997), 17.

protecting the credibility of the election.<sup>702</sup> It further illustrated the inefficiency of trust relations that the leadership has propagated since the time of the reformists. Both reformist candidates claimed that their presence in the election was due to their grave concerns over Ahmadinejad's national and foreign policies, which they argued, were threatening the existence of the Islamic Republic and Jurisprudential Leadership.<sup>703</sup> All presidential candidates emphasised their loyalty to Khomeini's leadership and the Islamic Republic (to establish their legitimacy for standing as candidates), none however approached the issue of Jurisprudential Leadership and its unlimited powers. The reformists blamed the neo-fundamentalists for failing to implement the Constitution and the neo-fundamentalists blamed the revolutionary elites for establishing ineffective policies.

The participation of religious forces in a democratic nation state is conditional upon and limited to the secular structure of its institutions. But the nature of a religio-political state eradicates such a limitation. In both Israel and Iran the neo-fundamentalists that emerged from the political tensions in the State-Maintenance Phase are radically different from the fundamentalists in the Revolutionary Phase and the SBPs. Although strongly religious, they not only accept the rules of state institutions but they also concentrate their attempts on achieving political advantages and positions in them. In fact, their ideology is to develop their powerbase in the state's bureaucratic system. Neo-fundamentalism has reshaped messianism from an apocalyptic revolution into a stable and egalitarian governing system as they depend for their success on the strengthening of the states' religious identity. For neo-fundamentalist and reformist parties, the states' failure in implementing economic justice has roots in the post-revolutionary elitism. In addition, they both define their political goals based on reactionary and populist politics and use messianic symbols in their political discourse to advocate their political identity. This broad and flexible use of messianic language and symbols has limited the neo-fundamentalists' messianic discourse to political matters.

Millennialism, belief in the end time following the coming of the Messiah, has almost disappeared from this politicised account and the messianic goal is altered from ending history to perfecting the existing political state. The fundamentalist parties still maintained a link with Revolutionary Messianism regarding human involvement in the divine plan and in changing the course of history. Although they united to form a state and practiced active messianism they did not claim to mirror the policies of the ideal messianic time in their state. In the State-Maintenance Phase, the state changes from a preparatory phase of messianism to a necessary condition for messianic time. Contrary to the Revolutionary Phase and SBPs, when revolutionaries understood utopia in terms of economic and political developments the

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<sup>702</sup> Th. Erdbrink, "Ex-Iranian President Criticizes Ayatollah; Open Letter Faults Supreme Leader for Not Censuring Ahmadinejad Over 'Lies'," Washington Post Foreign Service, June 10, 2009, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-20392465.html>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>703</sup> Ibid.

neo-fundamentalists view the state as a pre-condition for changing the course of history as the result of its central role in the development of religious laws. This ideology in a political context limits messianism to a political instrument for opposing the development of secularism and resisting the acknowledgment of any distinction between state politics and its messianic obligations. The neo-fundamentalists' messianic discourse instigates the emergence of multiple discourses on messianism in political competitions.

The fact that neo-fundamentalism in both these states is expressed by political parties with economic and educational goals verifies that, at least politically, religious forces have conformed to the rules of a nation state by forming political parties to participate in elections. The public atmosphere that a Revolutionary Messianism provides is the prerequisite for the conformity of neo-fundamentalism. Moreover, the growing political power of the neo-fundamentalists in Iran and Israel increases their authority for coercing a strong religious identity on the state. The neo-fundamentalists' emphasis on populist politics indicates their utilitarian view on political parties which is radically distinct from traditional fundamentalist and religious parties in the following ways. Inconsistencies between the traditional religious parties and the neo-fundamentalists' view on the state and the role of political parties in Israel has resulted in the increasing power of religious parties, specifically Shas, who consider themselves as an integrated part of Israeli politics. Their conformity to parliamentary politics has made them pragmatic politicians in the national context who participate with non-religious and leftwing parties in coalition negotiations. In Iran, on the contrary, Politicised Messianism solely aims to strengthen the power of the Jurisprudential Leadership over politics. The failure of the institutionalization process has instigated an alienation of internal political forces. Neo-fundamentalists in Iran are thus very idealistic in their national politics and rather than using pragmatic and diplomatic initiatives they support the exclusion of reformists from the political scene. The position of the neo-fundamentalists and their power in politics affects the states' international politics.

### Foreign Policies – Politicised Messianism Underlying Religious Discourse

This section examines the attitudes of neo-fundamentalists in both cases towards the states' foreign policy in the elections, for three reasons. First, in both states for neo-fundamentalists, foreign policy is not an isolated issue and has numerous political and social consequences for their legitimacy and success. In Iran, the Iran-United States of America political ties, is one of the determining political factors that separate the reformists from the fundamentalists. The neo-fundamentalists in Iran claim their political legitimacy partly based on their analysis of Iran/United States of America' political ties and partly based on their stand on the issue. In Israel, the position of the neo-fundamentalists on foreign policy indirectly crystallises their position on domestic issues, particularly allowing us to understand their stance on

territorial concession, the future of settlements, and peace with the Palestinians. In Israel, all Jewish parties place emphasis on the Jewish identity of the state in the Knesset regardless of their debates over territorial concessions and the expansion of Israeli settlements. This emphasis takes the Arab parties' opposition to the state beyond merely political opposition and gives them a theological dimension. In the State-Building Phase, territorial issues connected Politicised Messianism to everyday politics and strengthened Ashkenazi political dominance.<sup>704</sup> The militarization of Israeli politics that followed the conflict situation alienated religious parties like Agudat Yisrael who abstained from participating in military service for theological reasons. In the State-Maintenance Phase, however, the neo-fundamentalists' attitudes towards military service changed and many of their supporters join the army after their studies.<sup>705</sup>

In spite of their support of the Yeshivot and in sponsoring more educational centres, the issue of the state legitimacy's theological claim over land for Shas has not been as challenging as Agudat Yisrael's. The Shas party has successfully addressed the social issues that concern the Sephardim in the military, expressed their response to the state's territorial policies and has increased their role in those policies.<sup>706</sup> For instance, in 2001 Yosef proposed that Sephardi soldiers be allowed to perform different prayers to those of the common military format.<sup>707</sup> The involvement of the Shas in territorial decisions is a response to the traditional dominance of the Ashkenazim over security policies. In the 1990s the Shas party considered territorial compromise for peace a possibility to such an extent that Israel's Chief Rabbinate prohibited acting according to Yosef's idea of concessions, and renounced any compromise over territorial issues.<sup>708</sup> Moreover, in his speech Yosef announced that in his meeting with President Mubarak of Egypt he had expressed his concern over Syria and Iraq's hostility towards Israel which indicated the Shas determination for being involved in Israel's foreign politics.<sup>709</sup>

The Shas, however, adopted a different position regarding the Oslo Accords as part of Rabin's cabinet. As Deri, who was the party leader at the time announced many years later, Yosef had ordered the party to abstain from voting regardless of Rabin's attempt to negotiate the support of the Accord with them. Deri criticized Yosef for not ordering the Shas representatives to vote against the accord and also for

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<sup>704</sup> For an example see the opposition of Aryeh Deri, the former leader of the Shas party, to the allegation of corruption against him in the "Ashkenazi media".

<http://www.articlearchives.com/crime-law/criminal-offenses-crimes-against/1042841-1.html>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>705</sup> According to a poll conducted in late 2001, approximately 76% of Jewish Israelis support the drafting of Yeshiva students. Jerusalem Post Staff, "Headline: Poll: Overwhelming Support for Haredi Draft," Jerusalem Post- Jerusalem, December 12, 2001, 3.

<sup>706</sup> In the 1988 election, the religious parties won eighteen seats in the Knesset and their influential participation in the Second National Unity government significantly affected the policies of the Likud party under Yitzhak Shamir.

<sup>707</sup> Greer Fay Cashman, "Yosef Calls for Separate Prayers in Israel Defence Force," Jerusalem Post – Jerusalem, Apr 30, 2001, 4.

<sup>708</sup> Haim Shapiro, "Rabbi Ovadia Yosef: It is Permissible to Give up Territory if Peace were Feasible," Jerusalem Post – Jerusalem, Aug 14, 1989, 1.

<sup>709</sup> Alfonso Chardy, "Land for Peace a Religious Issue as well," Chicago Tribune- Chicago, Oct 5, 1989, 30.

running negotiations about the accords with Rabin in secret so that even Deri himself was unaware of the details.<sup>710</sup> In 1997 in a proclamation Rabbi Moshe Maiya, an influential Rabbi in the Shas party, described the theological view of the Shas party on the Six Days War, territorial concessions, and Intifada as following the Oslo Accord.<sup>711</sup> He argued that the physical liberation of Jews to return to Israel was the miracle and disagreed with the idea that transferring parts of the territories would negate the existence of the miracle. To him, the “great unity” amongst Jews made the miracle of victory in the Six Days War possible. Thus he linked a miracle to the secular concept of national unity which facilitated a military victory.<sup>712</sup>

The political stances of religious and non-religious parties over Israel’s security policies regarding Jerusalem is a clear example showing how embedding revolutionary and messianic ideologies shape debates and policies of the neo-fundamentalists in the State-Maintenance Phase. The Heredi were traditionally against expanding settlements but the neo-fundamentalists have adopted a more conservative position regarding the evacuation of settlements.<sup>713</sup> They temper this conservative position with their lenient position on peace which has enabled them to negotiate the possibility of alliance with non-religious statist parties in the Knesset.<sup>714</sup> While there are different views amongst the religious and non-religious parties regarding the expansion and evacuation of the settlements, the majority of political parties agree upon the centrality of Jerusalem, as the capital of the state, in any peace negotiations. For the neo-fundamentalists the protection of Jerusalem’s borders is a religious duty as the city has significant theological importance in Jewish theology and messianism. In addition to its theological and national significance, Jerusalem is home for the majority of Hasidic suburbs which are the main constituents for religious parties. Similarly to the Ashkenazi Heredi suburbs, Sephardi suburbs strongly oppose any negotiation with Palestinians about the future of Jerusalem. Their position was reflected in the political stance of the Shas on the 2004 Disengagement Plan.

Rabbi Yosef’s power as a rabbi intensified when he became the prominent voice for Sephardim on the issue of the Golan withdrawal referendum.<sup>715</sup> He also harshly criticized Ehud Barak just before his departure for the Camp David Summit for the concessions Barak had offered at Camp David for Jerusalem. For the Shas party was furious about the idea of settling Arabs in East Jerusalem. During his speech against Barak Yosef called Arabs “snakes” who were interested in killing Jews and called any

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<sup>710</sup> Gil Hoffman, “Article: Deri Blames Ovadia Yosef for Passage of Oslo Accords,” Jerusalem Post – Jerusalem, September 4, 2002, 3. <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P1-67109445.html>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>711</sup> Yehudah Mirsky, “The Tragedy of Ovadiah Yosef,” The Jerusalem Report – Jerusalem, Apr 17, 1997, 55.

<sup>712</sup> Rabbi Dov Begon, “Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben David,” Israel National Radio, August 01, 2004, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/3195>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>713</sup> Eli Berman, “Sect, Subsidy, and Sacrifice: An Economist’s View of Hasidic Jews,” NBER Working Paper No. 6715 Issued in August 1998.

<sup>714</sup> Yehoshua Menachem Pollack lost his seat in the recent election. Shmuel Halpert was Deputy Minister of Transportation in the 2005 labor led government.

<sup>715</sup> Herb Keinon, “Harnessing Halacha for Political Ends,” Jerusalem Post – Jerusalem, Jan 14, 2000, 3.

attempt to reach a permanent peace with Palestinians senseless.<sup>716</sup> The referendum united twenty Heredi Rabbis associated with the Heredi-leumi (Heredi-nationalist) parties who voted against the withdrawal, declaring the withdrawal from any part of Eretz Yisrael, forbidden.<sup>717</sup> The position of the neo-fundamentalists, however, did not reflect the position of the majority of Rabbis who considered withdrawal a political rather than a Halakhic decision and adopted a pragmatic approach..<sup>718</sup> The lack of theological significance limited the Rabbis' reaction to non-religious statist parties but the Shas party questioned the guarantee of peace in exchange for land transfer.<sup>719</sup>

The day Ariel Sharon achieved the majority vote to form a government in 2001, Arafat in a letter congratulated his sweeping victory and said he hoped for the continuation of peace negotiations.<sup>720</sup> A month after the formation of Sharon's government in his Passover sermon Yosef called for the "annihilation of Arabs" and "wasting their seeds".<sup>721</sup> Israeli Justice Minister Meir Sheetrit and the Palestinian Authority strongly criticised the sermon and called it "racist".<sup>722</sup> Later Yitzhaq Suderi, a Shas Member of the Knesset, claimed that Yosef only targeted Arab criminals and terrorists in his sermon and his comments were not inclusive of all Arabs.<sup>723</sup> While these comments signalled the increasing power of the Shas party, it was the Disengagement Plan that opened the door for Yosef. He adopted a radical oppositional and in a sermon said that "God should strike the Prime Minister over the Disengagement Plan".<sup>724</sup> He, along with other Rabbis wrote letters and held speeches to unite world Jewry to stop the Plan. In one of these letters signed by Yosef and other influential Rabbis they accused the government of rejecting the "desirable land and the Torah" and called the media emissaries of "ancient spies".<sup>725</sup> In the following months Yosef publically continued to support anti-evacuation camps, asked the government about peace guarantees, and participated in mass prayers for the "nullification of

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<sup>716</sup> Jack Katzenell, "Rabbi Says Holocaust Victims Were Reincarnations of Sinners," The Independent, 6 August 2000, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/rabbi-says-holocaust-victims-were-reincarnations-of-sinners-711547.html>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>717</sup> Ibid.

<sup>718</sup> Joseph Berger, "For Heredi Israelis, Views Differ on Yielding Gaza," New York Times- New York, June 15, 2004, <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/06/15/world/for-Heredi-israelis-views-differ-on-yielding-gaza.html>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>719</sup> Ibid.

<sup>720</sup> Greg Myre, "Sharon and Arafat Hold out Possibility of Peace Talks," Associated Press, Tel Aviv, March 9, 2001, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-6883612.html>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>721</sup> Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, "Rabbi Calls for Annihilation of Arabs," BBC, 10 April, 2001, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/1270038.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1270038.stm), accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>722</sup> Ibid.

<sup>723</sup> In February 2000, Yosef's grandson was arrested on the suspicion of stockpiling weapons in his dormitory apartment in Jerusalem's Rehov Shmuel Hanavi. Tamar Hausman, David Harris, and Itim, "Ovadia Yosef's Grandson Suspected of Stockpiling Weapons," Jerusalem Post – Jerusalem, Feb 10, 2000, 1.

<sup>724</sup> In the following days Yosef wished Sharon a long life but yet hoped that Sharon would be "enlightened with wisdom and take back his unilateral Disengagement Plan." Tovah Lazaroff, "PM's office Reprimands Shas Mentor," Jerusalem Post – Jerusalem, Mar 10, 2005, 1.

<sup>725</sup> "Rabbis Call for World Jewry to Stop Disengagement," Israel News, Feb 26, 2005, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/77491>, accessed on 10/11/2011.



the uprooting decree.”<sup>726</sup> During this united front against the Disengagement Plan at each opportunity the Shas party blamed secular parties and ideologies for the failing plans of the government. Specifically their targeting of the non-religious was due to the fact that most of these settlements were lived in by religious communities. Rabbi Moshe Kempinski defined Yosef’s decision for voting against the referendum as “withstanding the stench and the onslaught of the dung of the donkey that the Messiah will be riding on, even if that donkey may have been elected to be the Prime Minister of Israel. All the indignities inflicted by that donkey will be as naught when all will be made right.”<sup>727</sup> His statement implies that Yosef’s attempts and the Shas party’s stance are based on their messianic view in which the state is the vessel through which the messianic time will eventuate.

The statements of Yosef and other neo-fundamentalist Rabbis demonstrate how they have utilised biblical narratives to explain Israel’s political situation and to justify their political stances on military and foreign policy. By using biblical literature, they have theologically legitimized the decisions of the neo-fundamentalist parties over the state’s involvement in peace negotiations, the future of the settlements and political ties with the United States of America. For instance, Rabbi Shlomo Aviner, an influential Rabbi in the National Religious Party who supported the army in the evacuation of settlements during the Disengagement Plan proposed a unique view of Israel’s politics by explaining the meaning of ‘suffering’ in messianic redemptive theology and relating it to the state decision.<sup>728</sup> He argued that the response to all suffering is the coming of the messianic age but emphasized that the state of Israel is a pre-condition of the messianic kingdom. The beginning of the age of redemption, he stated, began in 1881 by the return of Jewry to Zion and has been progressively developing towards the messianic kingdom.<sup>729</sup> To him the state of Israel is the “small scale regime” which is promised in the Prophet Michah’s writings (Michah 4:8) and will progress to be the “kingdom of the daughter of Israel”.<sup>730</sup> The inefficiency of Israel for attaining peace, for Aviner, is the reality or characteristic of a small scale regime which is described in the sacred texts. Nevertheless, he considers the state to be a

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<sup>726</sup> Israel National News, “Mass Prayer Against Expulsion at Foot of Holy Temple Mount,” Aug 10, 2005, [http://goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/gi\\_0199-4557109/Mass-Prayer-Against-Expulsion-at.html](http://goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/gi_0199-4557109/Mass-Prayer-Against-Expulsion-at.html), accessed on 10/11/2011.

“Shas: Evacuation Would Be Victory for Extremists,” April 04, 2005, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/81056>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>727</sup> Rabbi Moshe Kempinski notes that the public opposition to the Plan was also based on economic reasons. Moshe Kempinski, “The Dung of the Donkey, and the Woman in the Field,” May 14, 2006, <http://web.israelinsider.com/Views/8451.htm>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>728</sup> Rabbi Shlomo Aviner, “What Will Be in the End?” Israel National News, 02 March, 2004, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/3403>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>729</sup> Amongst all the neo-fundamentalist Rabbinic comments on the settlement and Disengagement Plan only Sephardi Rabbi Shaul Bar-Ilan, the head of the Kfar Darom kollel, opposed the engagement order based not only on Halakhic rules but also on the international law of “ethnic purging”. Mati Wagner, “Rabbi Rules: Disengagement Entails Fourteen Biblical Sins,” Jerusalem Post – Jerusalem, Feb 24, 2005, 2.

<sup>730</sup> Ibid.

preparatory phase for the messianic age.<sup>731</sup> The position of the neo-fundamentalist Rabbis encouraged the incorporation of esoteric messianism into party politics.

Yosef, and David Batzri, a Kabbalist Rabbi, in separate sermons in September 2005 called Hurricane Katrina a divine punishment for President George W Bush for pursuing the implementation of the Disengagement Plan.<sup>732</sup> In 2002, with the support of Deri, Rabbi Kadouri, a prominent Kabbalist scholar formed the Sephardim Kabbalist political party, Ahuvat Israel, under his spiritual leadership.<sup>733</sup> In 2005, Kadouri issued a declaration and by connecting the natural disasters to the coming of the Messiah, suggested that when natural disasters happen more frequently Jewry understand the importance of the return to Zion and the re-building of the temple.<sup>734</sup> He presented this declaration to Sharon, who was travelling to the United States of America, to be read to the American Jewish community in order to encourage them to migrate to Israel.<sup>735</sup> In the same speech he claimed that the Messiah was already in Israel and predicted huge calamities before the messianic age. Referring to Sharon's Disengagement Plan he called the Plan a reason for the continuation of a disastrous situation.<sup>736</sup> He predicted that Sharon would be the last Prime Minister of the "old era" in Israel and a new era would begin. He announced that he would reveal a secret about the Messiah on Yom Kippur day. On that day, in a prayer meeting and after a long meditation he announced that "With the help of God, the soul of the Messiah has attached itself to a person in Israel."<sup>737</sup> The neo-fundamentalists' strategy of directly linking the state decision to messianism created another political alliance which was rooted in the Six Days War.

## The Six Day War

The Six Day War intensified the theological value of Jerusalem. The evidence for this intensification is the emergence of a messianic political group that demanded the re-construction of the Temple Mountain in Jerusalem for its significance in Jewish messianic theology. The Temple Mount Faithful is an extremely nationalist group and receives considerable support from the American Jewish community.<sup>738</sup> They view the outcome of the 1969 war as a great victory because of the return of

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<sup>731</sup> Ibid.

<sup>732</sup> Matthew Wagner, "Is Katrina Divine Retribution?," Jerusalem Post – Jerusalem, Sep 8, 2005, 1.

<sup>733</sup> Amotz Asa-El, "Fall of the Demigods," Jerusalem Post – Jerusalem, Nov 29, 2002, 1.

<sup>734</sup> Baruch Gordon, "Rav Kaduri Warns: Natural Disasters Awaiting the World," Arutz Shiva – September 25, 2006, <http://www.IsraelNationalNews.com>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>735</sup> Ibid.

<sup>736</sup> Ibid.

<sup>737</sup> Baruch Gordon, "Leading Kabbalist Urges Jews to Israel - More Disasters Coming," October 19, 2005, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/91417>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>738</sup> Hal Lindsey, "The Temple Mount Uprising," World Net Daily, August 30, 2009, [http://www.wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE\\_ID=23868](http://www.wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=23868), accessed on 10/11/2011.

Jerusalem and in its centre, the Temple Mount, to Jews.<sup>739</sup> As the head of the group, Salomon, believes two of the three theological conditions of the messianic age have been fulfilled and by reconstructing the Temple the third condition will be completed. He refers to the three theological conditions for the messianic age which are Aliyah or the return of Jews to Israel, the re-establishment of the state, and the re-construction of the Temple.<sup>740</sup> During the 2003 commemoration day, the Temple Mount Faithful condemned creating a Palestinian state based on Bush's "Road Map" and called its content "un-godly and sinful".<sup>741</sup> Their negotiations also fostered a strategic alliance between the Rabbis and the "Temple Mount Faithful" who also rejected the peace policies of the leftwing parties and blamed the supporters of secularism for the failure of peace negotiations with the Palestinians. During Yosef's campaign against the "Disengagement Plan" he and other leading Rabbis gathered at the foot of the Temple Mount to pray for the evacuation to end.<sup>742</sup> The significance of this strategic unity between the Temple Mount Faithful and Yosef's campaigns is that for the first time in Israeli politics the neo-fundamentalists criticized the state particularly because, according to them, the state plays a central role in the fulfilment of messianic theology.<sup>743</sup>

Yosef's anti-disengagement position further involved him in security issues when in 2006 he organized and blessed a meeting between three Rabbis and Hamas representatives that aimed to reach a ceasefire.<sup>744</sup> By organizing the meeting neo-fundamentalists aimed to blame the secularists for the failure of peace negotiations. Yosef's blessing statement, further affirming this position, he noted that a possible ceasefire was to be initiated between Palestinians and the Jewish people rather than the state and Palestinians. This is echoed by broad opinion, as evident in a commentary on the reasons for the meeting, Rabbi Jakobovits referred to the common fear of secularism for both Jewish and Muslim religious leaders as a reason for unification and their opposition against secularization was a commonality for negotiations.<sup>745</sup> This fear and opposition, he indicated, could play a significant role in dialogue between the West and the Muslim world.

Between 2006 and 2008, the political stance of the Shas party strengthened the role of religious figures like Yosef and provided them the legitimacy for initiating negotiations with other rabbis over the conditions of peace with the Palestinians, the possibility of evacuation plans, and debates over

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<sup>739</sup> Yehoshua Menachem Pollack lost his seat in the recent election. Shmuel Halpert was Deputy Minister of Transportation in the 2005 labor led government.

<sup>740</sup> The Temple Mount Faithful Will March to the Temple Mount on the Day, The group's official website, May 29, 2003, <http://www.templemountfaithful.org/Events/jeru2003.htm>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>741</sup> Ibid.

<sup>742</sup> "Mass Prayer Against Expulsion at Foot of Holy Temple Mount," IsraelNationalNews, Aug 10, 2005, [http://goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/gi\\_0199-4557109/Mass-Prayer-Against-Expulsion-at.html](http://goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/gi_0199-4557109/Mass-Prayer-Against-Expulsion-at.html), accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>743</sup> Ibid.

<sup>744</sup> Matthew Wagner, "Haredi Rabbis Seek 'Hudna' with Hamas." Jerusalem Post- Jerusalem, Aug 11, 2006, 3.

<sup>745</sup> Rabbi Jakobovits is the dean of the Harav Lord Jakobovits Torah Institute of Contemporary Issues in Jerusalem, Ibid.

Jerusalem.<sup>746</sup> In accordance with Yosef's position, the Shas party disagreed with the Olmert government plan to include Jerusalem in peace negotiations. In 2007, following a meeting with a delegation of rabbis, Yosef even threatened to order the Shas party to leave the coalition with the Olmert government if he were to concede to the division of Jerusalem.<sup>747</sup> Although Yosef participated in rabbinic peace initiatives, Shas opposed the Kadima government plan for resuming negotiations with Syria and insisted on placing conditions for such negotiations. They considered the negotiations a threat to Israel's security which attributed to Hezbollah a strategic advantage. During the debates in the Knesset over the issue Yishai expressed this opposition in security terms.<sup>748</sup> In Netanyahu's government, Shas joined other parties, except Labor, to send a message to Netanyahu and warn him about the idea of creating a Palestinian state. In addition, they rejected his decision to remove settlements in the West Bank.<sup>749</sup> Rabbi Yaakov Katz (Ketzaleh), the head of Ichud Leumi Party, also criticised Netanyahu for destroying Jewish settlements by calling them "outposts" while rocket attacks had turned some towns like Sderot into a "ghost town".<sup>750</sup>

The issue of settlements continued to be a primary challenge for Israel when President Barak Obama came to office in the United States of America and insisted on closing down of settlements in the West Bank. In a rally authorized by the Israel Defence Force, Yishai addressed the audience in a letter and emphasized that the 2004 Disengagement Plan was a "mistake" and affirmed that through determination and courage the previous residents could re-build the Homesh settlement in Gaza.<sup>751</sup> Yosef in another fiery speech opposed the freezing of settlement construction and took a more evident anti-western political position.<sup>752</sup>

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<sup>746</sup> In a 2005 Centre of Youth leadership poll, Rabbi Yosef was nominated by about 25% of Israeli youth as the most influential person in Israel. Haaretz Service, Poll: Youth Name Ovadia Yosef as Most Influential Israeli, Ha'aretz, July 11, 2006, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/784942.html>, accessed on 10/11/2011. In his meeting with Jimmy Carter in mid 2009, Yosef did not negate Carter's peace plan but criticized schools that teach hatred for Israel. Hillel Fendel, "Rabbi Ovadia Meets with Jimmy Carter," Israel National News, Aug 29, 2009, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/133090>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>747</sup> Nissan Ratzlav-Katz, "Rabbi Ovadia Yosef: Shas Will Quit If Jerusalem Split," Israel National News, Nov 27, 2007, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/124386>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>748</sup> For Yishai's view on Syria see: Haaretz Service and News Agencies, "Shas Leader: Syria still in Axis of Evil," Ha'aretz, May 21, 2008, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/985727.html>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>749</sup> Hillel Fendel, "Calls for Israel to Resist US Pressure and Just Say 'No!'," Israel National News, May 26, 2009, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/131571>, accessed on 10/11/2011. For another member of the Shas party Haim Amsalem see: <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1242212367965&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>750</sup> Maayana Miskin, "24 Judea, Samaria Towns Face Destruction," May 25, 2009. Months later, Yishai travelled to some of the settlements and repeated Katz' argument calling them "legal settlements". See: Bethlehem - Ma'an/Agencies, "Four Israeli Ministers Tour Illegal Outposts," September 17, 2009, <http://www.maannet.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=219644>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>751</sup> Efrat Weiss, "Ministers to Homesh Evacuees: You'll Return to Settlement," Israel National News, May 13, 2009, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3715028,00.html>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>752</sup> "Israel Coalition Jewish Leader Calls Obama 'Slave'," World Bulletin, July 31, 2009, [http://www.worldbulletin.net/news\\_detail.php?id=45487](http://www.worldbulletin.net/news_detail.php?id=45487), accessed on 10/11/2011.

In May 2009, the Knesset passed the “Jerusalem, Capital of Israel Bill” upon which both coalition and opposition factions agreed. It was submitted as an amendment and stipulated that making any decisions about the future and borders of Jerusalem required the presence and participation of eighty members of the Knesset instead of the sixty members in the present law.<sup>753</sup> Their vote on the Bill, their disagreement with Netanyahu over settlement issues, and their opposition to his visit to the United States of America in May 2009 for negotiating the settlement issue with Obama, has brought the Shas party closer to the centrist and rightwing parties. This alliance has been much stronger since the victory of Likud in the 2008 election and Shas opposition to closing the watch posts.<sup>754</sup> After both Shas and Ichud Leumi disagreed with Netanyahu’s plan, the strategic Affairs Minister Moshe Ya’alon supported them.

Even when, under the pressure of Obama’s office, the government considered freezing the expansion of settlements, Ariel Attias, Housing Minister and a Member of Knesset from the Shas party, also rejected the idea and announced that the construction would be merely postponed until an agreement was reached with the United States of America. Yishai, the Interior Minister in Netanyahu’s government, announced neither people nor the state could tolerate the freezing of the construction.<sup>755</sup> The Shas policies on territorial issues and Israeli foreign policy in the State-Maintenance Phase have followed two goals. The party has attempted to establish a separate but unified Sephardi religious identity that could contribute to the success of the party in elections, and to establish Yosef’s legitimacy as the ultimate authority, reflecting the Sephardi communities. The examination of Shas position in the last election allows us to see the transition of Politicised Messianism from the traditional national religious parties like Mafdal to Shas. Mafdal gained legitimacy by placing emphasis on the central role of the pioneers and settlers in Israel, which is still evident in settlers’ ideology. For Shas, on the other hand, political legitimacy does not exclusively rely on this issue. The change from the language of Mafdal to that of Shas demonstrates the development of Securitized Messianism into Politicised Messianism.

In Iran, reformists believe Iran’s national interests and economic progress could improve with the increase of foreign investments and by activating the private sectors. For them, the prerequisite for any economic improvement is the termination of Iran’s economic embargo which is interconnected with the complex net of political problems between Iran and the international community, especially the United

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<sup>753</sup> Members of Knesset of three religious parties, Shas, HaBayit HaYehudi, and Ichud Leumi signed the bill, <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1242212438630&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>754</sup> “Yishai: Outposts are ‘legal settlement’,” The Global News Service of the Jewish People, August 17, 2009, <http://jta.org/news/article/2009/08/17/1007297/yishai-outposts-legal-settlement>

<sup>755</sup> Hillel Fendel, “Attias: Construction Not Frozen, Merely Waiting,” Israel National News, September 18, 2009, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/132975>, accessed on 10/11/2011. And Roni Sofer, “Ministers Call out against US Demand to Freeze Settlements,” Ynetnews, March 31, 2009, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3723755,00.html>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

States of Amercia.<sup>756</sup> Although it is not the purpose of this study to discuss the nature and conditions of Iran's nuclear situation, or evaluate their argument, the debates and diplomatic solutions presented by the reformers, fundamentalists, and neo-fundamentalists on the issue clarify their approach towards foreign policy and the messianic obligations of the state. Debates over Iran's motivations and the progress of its nuclear programme have been the central issue for both reformist and neo-fundamentalist governments. Since 2003, the aims and the nature of Iran's nuclear programme have involved these political factions in fierce arguments about the future of Iran-United States of Amercia political ties. In the course of negotiations all the main political powers in Iran have led formal negotiations with the European Union and the International Atomic Energy Agency at some time. Since their views on the issue are shaped by their understating of Politicised Messianism their strategies reflect their views on the state's responsibilities in the "age of absence".

During the first round of negotiations between Iran and the European Union in 2003, and when reformers had administrative power, Iran voluntarily stopped its uranium enrichment programme during the negotiations and attempted to cooperate with EU-3 representatives to solve the enrichment issue. Iran acknowledged faults indicated in the IAEA's reports, accepted their mistake in reporting to the agency, and announced their readiness for further negotiations. But months later in 2004 the first round of Iran-EU-3 negotiations failed to lead to further meetings. In June 2004 Ahmadinejad became the president in Iran and the neo-fundamentalists became the main nuclear strategists. Ahmadinejad used the reformists' discourse on economic independence and introduced Iran's nuclear programme as an example of national independence. He advocated for his nuclear strategies by using populist politics, staging public ceremonies and excessive messianic language in order to connect the messianic responsibilities of the state to technological independence and Iran's nuclear programme.<sup>757</sup>

The neo-fundamentalists' first government adopted a harsh diplomatic language and rejected the agreements of the reformists. Ahmadinejad in his speeches called his nuclear policy a success for Iran's foreign affairs. The neo-fundamentalists justified their harder position by pointing to the existence of a military situation outside Iran's borders under the Bush administration. The presence of coalition forces and the fall of Saddam Hussein were to neo-fundamentalists sufficient reasons for the improvement of Iran's military capabilities. Equipping forces, including security forces, had for the government, other economic and political benefits, which later became evident in the events after the 2009 presidential election.<sup>758</sup> As many scholars, such as Anoushiravan Ehteshami, argue the militarization of politics was

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<sup>756</sup> Ibid.

<sup>757</sup> In 2007, in a speech in a mosque, while the map of a nuclear site was hanging behind him Ahmadinejad said "The enemy wants to tell us that we cannot. We have to shout loudly that oh! Youth and people of Iran, we can..." See the video clip in Persian on; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fzwTiVKhsMk>, accessed on 10/02/2011.

<sup>758</sup> Frederic Wehrey, Jerrold D. Green, Brian Nichiporuk, Alireza Nader, Lydia Hansell, Rasool Nafisi, and S. R. Bohandy, *The Rise of the Pasdaran; Assessing the Domestic Roles of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps* Prepared for the Office of the

further developed following the success of the neo-fundamentalists in the 2003 Municipal Council election.<sup>759</sup> The neo-fundamentalist government created a symbolic image of Iran's nuclear programme as a sign which indicated that in his presidential term the era of colonization and imperialism would come to an end.<sup>760</sup> In his speeches during the first round of his presidency Ahmadinejad claimed that opposition to Iran's nuclear programme was fabricated by the "bullying powers" who attempted to stop Iran from developing technological capabilities.<sup>761</sup> Iran's nuclear programme, which during the time of Khatami was solely for infrastructure projects, became the symbol of Iranian national pride and celebrated by the government. The more Iran was pressured to stop its programme the more ritualised the celebration of the programme became.<sup>762</sup>

Neo-fundamentalists oppose the reformists' negotiation strategies and their view on Iran's national security. Reformists disagreeing with the militarization of national security argue that adopting harsh international policies is against Iran's national security interests in the long term. In 2002, Khatami stated in Washington and later in London that elevating Iran's political status in the international community was the main factor for ensuring Iran's security.<sup>763</sup> While the reformists stress the importance of forming a balance between the European parties involved in negotiations, and Russia, the neo-fundamentalists have relied heavily on Russian support in the process of negotiations.<sup>764</sup> The Ahmadinejad government attempted to link the future of Iran's nuclear negotiations to Russia's regional interests and hoped that Russia would not halt its nuclear deal with Iran for the sake of better political ties with the United States of America. The Neo-fundamentalists also involved China as another party in negotiations by increasing the volume of trade. Tensions between Russia and the United States of America during the Bush administration, the presence of coalition forces in Iraq, and the growing market for Iran's exports in the East all instigated the imposing of further sanctions on Iran. In April 2007, months after Ahmadinejad had promised "good nuclear news", he announced Iran's completion of the nuclear enrichment programme, by up to three and half percent. The news was celebrated in a ceremony with a highly messianic tone.<sup>765</sup> Although Ahmadinejad publically announced that his hardline

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Secretary of Defense, Approved for public release; distribution unlimited (Washington: National Defense Research Institute, 2009), 77-81.

<sup>759</sup> Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Mahjoob Zweiri, op. cit., 21-25.

<sup>760</sup> See the Islamic Republic News Agency, IRNA (Iran), August 21 and 25, 2007. <http://www.irna.com/>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>761</sup> Ibid.

<sup>762</sup> For the influence of the USA's Middle East policies (Bush's "axis of evil" speech), the war in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the regional geopolitics in Iran's nuclear diplomacy, see: Ibid, p.200. Also see: R. Takeyh, *Guardians of the Revolution: Iran and the World in the Age of the Ayatollahs* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2009), 214.

<sup>763</sup> A. H. Alinaqi, *A Review of Iran's National Security Issues* (Tehran: The Institute of Practical Studies, 1991), 50.

<sup>764</sup> Khatami's view on the issue, "Khatami: Iran Entitled to Nuclear Energy," Iran-UN, Politics, August 25, 2006, <http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/060825/2006082502.html>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>765</sup> The ceremony began with the recitation of the Qur'an. Ahmadinejad cried during the ceremony as the news was broadcast. The phase was decorated ornately. A yellow cake was distributed at Tehran University to celebrate the success of the production of yellowcake.



policy will be uncompromising during his presidency he has never rejected the possibility of negotiations.<sup>766</sup> His nuclear strategies are however related to a more problematic challenge for the Islamic Republic, and that is Iran's political ties with the United States of America.

Most scholars of Iran's foreign affairs agree with Amir Hussein Alinaqi in identifying Iran's political ties with the United States of America as the ideological core of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy.<sup>767</sup> The issue of the future of political ties between Iran and the United States of America became a public debate between Khamenei and Khatami when in January 1998 Khatami accepted an interview with the CNN news agency.<sup>768</sup> Khamenei's supporters launched demonstrations and harshly criticized Khatami in rightwing newspapers.<sup>769</sup> In February 1998, in response to many attacks, Khatami announced "Two groups have been concerned about my speech, those who genuinely oppose negotiation with America and those who have attempted for many years to establish negotiations, and today they think they have lost their position as initiator or have been left with no place for further activities. I promise to the two that I have no intention to negotiate or establish diplomatic ties with America. The first group should not be concerned and the second group can be assured that they have the monopoly of negotiation and establishing diplomatic ties with America."<sup>770</sup>

Khatami referred to the neo-fundamentalists and Khamenei who believed that the ideological foundations of the Islamic Revolution radically contradict any attempts to establish diplomatic ties with the United States of America. Conversely the reformists argue that establishing political ties based on mutual understanding and respect in the long term benefits Iran's national interests. From the perspective of Khamenei and his supporters, the power of starting or preventing any diplomatic ties with the United States of America should be solely in the hands of Khamenei. As a strongly patrimonial faction the neo-fundamentalists prefer to establish secretive political ties with the United States of America while at the same time maintaining their ideological position in the national context.<sup>771</sup> Both fundamentalists and neo-fundamentalists promulgate a negative portrayal of western countries in which all foreign countries constantly plot against the Islamic Republic. These threats target all political, social, and cultural ideals of the state. Khamenei is specifically concerned with what he calls "the Soft War" against the Islamic Republic's cultural achievements. He refers to the 'de-Islamization' of Iranian society

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<sup>766</sup> In March 2008, the United Nation Security Council passed Resolution 1803 (pursuant to resolution 1737) according to which the sanctions applied to Iran were extended to financial institutions.

<http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1737/index.shtml>, accessed on 23/07/2008.

<sup>767</sup> A. H. Alinaqi, *A Review of Iran's National Security Issues* (Tehran: The Institute of Practical Studies, 1991), 20.

<sup>768</sup> Department of Research Institute of thought and culture and Amir Shahla eds., Khatami; *Crossing the Crisis - the Reform Era* (Tehran: Aknoun Publication, 2001), 109-110.

<sup>769</sup> Ibid, 109.

<sup>770</sup> Ibid.

<sup>771</sup> "Translation of Ahmadinejad's letter," Washington Post- Washington, November 6, 2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/11/06/AR2008110603030.html>, accessed on 10/11/2011.



through the spread of western values. Both neo-fundamentalists and fundamentalists recommend a close political and social national environment as the solution for the “Soft War”.

## Conclusion

This chapter examined the process of the politicization of messianism and the challenges between political parties over the nature and characteristics of Politicised Messianism through the analysis of the last elections in Israel and Iran. Throughout it discussed the views of the neo-fundamentalists on states’ politics in national and international contexts in order to explain the political structure of these states as indicated in debates on the messianic goals of the states. It demonstrated that during the State-Maintenance Phase rather than parties’ views on the existence or lack of a boundary between the secular and religious identity of the state, it is the messianic goals of securitization that form political debates in these states. Political parties and their interactions in the Knesset in Israel and the relationship between political parties and the Jurisprudential Leader in Iran determine the success of a faction and the dominance of a specific narrative of Politicised Messianism over politics. In both cases while in the State-Building Phase, leaders of political parties were limited to revolutionary elites, in the State-Maintenance Phase the leadership is transferred to new political factions and the post-war generation.

In political debates in these states, rest two non-reconciled concepts of traditional communal politics and factionalist party politics. It is in these tensions that the embedding of Revolutionary Messianism functions as a unifying force. The emergence of neo-fundamentalism in both states indicates that both reject the fundamentalists and reformist interpretations of Revolutionary Messianism as hegemonic narratives. In both states neo-fundamentalism undermines the efficiency of revolutionaries in managing political and economic affairs. For them, crucial foreign policy issues and their position within the international community are interlinked with their understanding of Politicised Messianism. Their vision on foreign policy relies on a complex web of religious ideology and political history in which religious values, group interests, and the state’s messianic obligations are determining factors. In their view, the states’ foreign policy extends the social implications of Politicised Messianism to domestic politics, thus the states’ decision becomes not only a measure for its political orientation but also a signifier of its religious commitment. Neo-fundamentalists use religious symbols to explain the states’ ideology in relation to foreign policy and their view on religious identity of the state and its foreign policy.

In both cases, the neo-fundamentalists use foreign policy as an instrument to decrease the power of reformists and secular forces by undermining the effectiveness of their national security policies. They connect this inefficiency to their failure in fulfilling the responsibilities of the state in the pre-messianic time. Both consider specific roles for the state in the fulfilment of messianic history and refrain from minimizing Politicised Messianism to philosophical or religious discourses. For them, the messianic age is a just political system that will be established for the fulfilment of the law thus protecting the state's interests in relation to foreign policy is ideologically related to the success of the state. Their strong anti-liberal position further intensifies their view on foreign policy. In Israel, the Shas party has accused the secular parties of failing to guarantee Israel's security in the Oslo Accord negotiations, the Disengagement Plan and later settlement issues. In Iran, the neo-fundamentalists have condemned the reformists' policies for the continuation of challenges to Iran's nuclear programmes.

Shas is pragmatic in its national policies, but is idealist in its foreign policy (particularly Israel's political ties with the United States of America), and the political consequences of settlement negotiations. In Iran the neo-fundamentalists adopt a more pragmatic approach to their foreign policy. Through the integration of religion and politics and due to the potentially changing nature of the political situation, political acts based on ideological positions oblige the parties to adopt a compromising position for survival. Changes in the political scene, thus, could transform this environment and further involve neo-fundamentalists in Politicised Messianism and discussions over its nature and conditions in a political context. The intense involvements of the Shas party in Israel, their understanding of Politicised Messianism, and their view on the responsibilities of the state have posed challenges to traditional Zionism of the secular Likud or Kadima parties. Their position on the integration of politics and religion in the state's foreign policy, this chapter has argued, politicises messianism and further makes theology dependent on politics. The rise of neo-fundamentalism in Iran is the result of extending the authority of the Jurisprudential Leadership to all aspects of public activities. Cooperation between fundamentalists, neo-fundamentalists and Khamenei aimed to formulate a system of rationality that connects Shi'a mystic messianism to Jurisprudential Leadership. In the neo-fundamentalists' view, the authority of a Jurisprudential Leadership is the inevitable outcome of a form of contact between the Mahdi and his representatives.

The immense ideological shift in the politics of Jurisprudential Leadership after Khomeini has transformed the arrangement of religion and politics in the state. The political ramifications of the changes have created tension at various levels of state politics and surfaced dramatically in the 2009 presidential election campaigns and the brutal aftermath of the election. During the campaigns the most contested social and political issues were directly or indirectly interlinked with this ideological shift and the political implications of neo-fundamentalist discourse on Iran's national and international politics.

This ideological shift has transformed a patriarchal Securitized Messianism to a patrimonial authoritarian ideology. The politicization of messianism, therefore, affects elections and the interactions between political parties in both states. Politicization is the prior phase of establishing new policies in society and establishing the legitimacy of neo-fundamentalist as the agent of progressive messianism in social life. The next chapter discusses the social issues that arise in this process and analyses the factors that determine the success or failure of their attempts.

### Introduction

The end of the Cold War and the reshaping of the security map of the region led to new security policies in Israel and Iran. In addition, the end of the wars between the united Arab forces and Israel and between Iraq and Iran further de-securitized Politicised Messianism. After the Cold War, the presence of the United States of America military in the region could no longer be justified as a defence strategy against communist Russia. As the result of this change, many of the traditional security threats to the Islamic Republic and the state of Israel decreased. The end of the bipartisan security arrangement in the Middle East resulted in a vacuum which was filled by new security threats and regional alliances. Iran and Israel both defined their post Cold War security policies regionally, and regarded one of the regional states or a group of states as their 'enemy' and an ultimate threat to their national security. For example, between 1948 and the late 80s Israel considered the united Arab forces as its main security threat, but in the post-Cold War era Palestinian militias and the Middle Eastern states which supported them became the main security threat for Israel. In Iran, the end of the Cold War coincided with the end of the Iran-Iraq war and the death of Khomeini. The end of these wars reshaped the political structure of the Islamic Republic and the state called all who criticized it its security threats.<sup>772</sup>

During the Cold War period, in Iran and Israel alliances between the revolutionary elites and traditional religious forces were based on their attempts to secure the revolutions and the states. In this State-Building Phase, the states were less concerned with redefining the concepts of religion and secularity than with the balance of political power in their societies. The end of the Cold War challenged the status quo and instigated new ideological positions about the distribution and centralization of political and religious powers within the framework of Politicised Messianism. Influential religious voices, which had been one of the main motivators of Securitized Messianism and nationalism, now challenged the legitimacy of each state due to their increasing de-securitization of Revolutionary Messianism. Consequently, secularism and its political implications became the focus of the political debates within these states. The two concepts of messianism and nationalism, which had previously legitimized Politicised Messianism, now needed to be re-defined. Only through such a redefinition could these states give meaning to their social policies.

This chapter studies the impact of the de-securitization of Revolutionary Messianism on Israeli and Iranian societies and argues that first, both of the states resist the de-securitization of messianism and secondly, that revolutionary messianic themes maintain their presence in all the states' social policies

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<sup>772</sup> After 1979, Israel shared this regional role with Iran, a Shi'a state and a threat to the Arab states' regional and national security.

and everyday politics even during the process of de-securitization. As these states proceed from the State-Building Phase to State-Maintenance Phase, they produce a particular definition of citizenship and enforce civil policies that impact on religion and politics. In the State-Maintenance Phase, Politicised Messianism becomes an effective political ideology for these states because it eradicates the boundaries between the existing public and private spheres and ultimately strengthens their power. They are obliged to socially re-define these spheres in order to affirm their legitimacy in the new security environment. This necessity is the result of the transition of the states from State-Building Phase to State-Maintenance Phase as well as the development of new social groups.

While civil identity is to a degree constructed through social background and interactions of individuals it is dominantly the outcome of a state's intentional policies, such as educational policies or civil laws. This chapter explores the civil policies that these states employ in order to establish the dominance of a particular ideology in their societies. It focuses on the states' national social policies through which citizens can obtain information and are regulated in terms of political behaviour. These political norms are conveyed to the public in various forms - such as the symbolic representations of national identity, supporting educational materials, civil laws and the construction of citizenship in relation to legal national identity. It is through these policies that citizens begin to identify with the political goals of Politicised Messianism.

Nearly all other factors in the development of this collective identity, including the influence of educational institutions, the geographical area that a citizen chooses to live in, the media and the work place are shaped in association with what a state determines to be its national identity. This chapter addresses this process by examining the relationship between citizens and the state in the areas of citizenship, human rights, gender equality and education. It argues that during the two previous phases, the securitization process reduced the likelihood of secularism. By contrast, the de-securitization process and the complimentary politicization of messianism during the third phase have increased the likelihood of secularism. Ironically, Iran and Israel's successful political mobilization of citizenry relied on the creation of a symbolic relationship between religious messianic authority and the political authority of the state. This involvement of religion and politics in the states' social policies can be seen to open a space for debates about core religious beliefs and a potential space for rebelling against religion. Religious and non-religious groups normalise the Securitized Messianism by using it as a platform to express their own views on the goals and ideals of Politicised Messianism . Studying these policies, however, is a complicated issue as any definition and policy could be either the product of the states' conscious decisions or the inevitable by-product of securitization. While in the State-Building Phase, both consciously and deliberately determined their intentional policies because of their

involvement in a military conflict, in the State-Maintenance Phase their social policies are more affected by the changes in society.

Dividing the development of these states into State-Building Phase and State-Maintenance Phase introduces an historical dimension to this discussion in order to explain the spectrum between the intended policies and the inevitable by-products of de-securitization. It also explicates the embedding of the revolutionary ideologies in the states' unintended and intended policies. The importance of exploring these ideologies and their societal impact is to demonstrate how, in both cases, messianic themes have achieved continuity in state politics, even in the State-Maintenance Phase, when the revolutionary momentum has decreased. These ideologies exist because they are embedded in civil laws and are the outcome of the state's security-orientated policies. In the State-Building Phase, the intentions of the states are clearer. For instance, in the case of national citizenship law in these states, the law is clearly intended to define the meaning of citizenship. These definitions, however, are influenced by the security environment. In the case of Israel, the state consciously and deliberately defined citizenship in political language but the religious symbols and tones are embedded in Israel's Declaration of Independence and civil laws.

In the State-Building Phase, creating a non-religious and political nature for citizenship in Israel was the intended policy but the religious tone of the texts was the unintended by-product of securitization. In Iran, while the state intentionally defined citizenship and civil laws in religious terms, the intended outcome of securitization such as non-religious and political compromises of the state were the by-products of securitization and the consequences of social reality. This is also the case for educational policies that are the main vehicle for setting the intended policies of the states' as social norms. Many of the states' educational policies in favour of religious education school systems have been the result of political compromises. The legal status of citizenship constructs a general institutionalised national identity through the symbolic language that obligates both religious and non-religious groups to take a position regarding gender equality, the spread of new communication technologies, and civil rights of the individual in these states. Studying the civil policies of these states in the State-Maintenance Phase, explains how the states' management of the relationship between religion and politics, and changes in the regional security environment, shape Israel's and Iran's understandings of civil rights. In the last section this chapter discusses how these rights affect the role that religious and non-religious groups play in these states.

In both cases, in the State-Building Phase civil laws were predominantly intended to frame religion in a security-orientated state and has resulted in a series of consequences for these societies. While the states determined directive conformist and civil policies to shape a particular form of state, each determined a

different approach towards these policies in the State-Maintenance Phase. In Israel from 1948-1977, the state decided powerful conformist and directive policies, such as excluding the Sephardim from political power, that were exclusive and suppressive of the Sephardi ethnic identity. These oppressive policies were embedded in the state's military policies, school system, and national laws. After 1977, however, the state became more accommodating of various social and political groups. As Israel moved to the post Cold War era and entered the State-Maintenance Phase, various social and civil groups challenged the legitimacy of its coercive policies. The rise of women's movements, a Sephardi party, and the further involvement of Agudat Yisrael in the Knesset are examples of these changes. In Iran, during the State-Building Phase, the state passed many coercive laws, which severely undermined gender equality, and excluded non-Shi'a voices, ethnic minorities, and political opposition. In State-Maintenance Phase the state adopted a no-compromise position and refused to admit or resolve any of the social challenges it faced.

The significance of the examples used in this chapter in relation to gender and technology is to demonstrate how these states maintain these ideologies in the State-Maintenance Phase, even if their policies are not always consciously intended. In the case of Israel, these examples demonstrate that the Revolutionary Messianism sustains because of the accommodating position of the state regarding the new ideas and changes that affect it. This is so even if the security-orientated ideology is still present in the rhetoric of the settlers and in the language of the National Religious Party (Mafdal). In the case of Iran, these examples show that the state attempts to maintain Revolutionary Messianism by enacting coercive policies, excluding other political voices and social policing, as evident in the rhetoric of religious figures, political parties, and religious groups. These examples also clarify the social responses to the states' re-definition of the terms 'religious' and 'secular'. These definitions are both sociologically and politically constructed and have a particular meaning in each case.

The emergence of politician theologians and theologian politicians, the political participation of religious figures, and the influence of religion over national laws have created a social situation in which the definitions of secular and religious have clear meanings but in their Israeli and Iranian interpretations do not correlate with academic definitions of the terms. In academic use, the term secular refers to the political system or a public sphere in which religion does not play a determining role.<sup>773</sup> This definition could not hold in either Israel or Iran. One of the main reasons for the failure of this academic definition is that the boundaries between religion and secularity in Israel and Iran respectively have behavioural meanings. In both societies, religious groups have particular constituencies that are identifiable by clothing, behaviour, political adherence and leadership. To be secular means to be not religiously

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<sup>773</sup> Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 5-7.

affiliated in that way, but it does not mean to be secular in the western sense, which is founded based on privatisation of religion, and individualism.<sup>774</sup>

One of the main objectives of the states' civil policies is to re-define boundaries between politics and religion in Iran and Israel. However, defining such boundaries in civil, political and social rights of citizens challenges the legitimacy of Politicised Messianism. Contrary to secular politics within which the civil laws aim to privatize religion, in these states, these laws further de-privatize religion. In a secular system, the state acknowledges a form of differentiation between the public and the private spheres, and encourages separation between religious and political institutions. This process rationalizes the privatization of religion and forms the political culture of western secular states. In Iran and Israel, religious institutions and figures are either directly involved in politics or have an alliance with a political faction within the state. Thus, it is religious coalitions and alliances that influence the states' politics and undermine the acknowledgment of any form of differentiation between these spheres.

Political participation is another factor that contributes to theological and political changes in Israel and Iran during the State-Maintenance Phase. The Securitized Messianism of the State-Building Phase prioritized the communal identity of individuals in order to foster unity amongst citizens for protecting the state. The states in this phase advocated individual sacrifice and absolute commitment to the states' political goals. The development of an autonomous individual identity thus became a potential threat to these states in the State-Maintenance Phase. In both cases Securitized Messianism linked the fulfilment of the divine promise to the appropriation of individual behaviour to the post-revolutionary laws. The individuals' political participation in both systems follows a set definition and is only accepted if the individuals support the revolutionary ideals and strive for the fulfilment of the messianic utopia. In both Jewish and Shi'a messianic theologies, the significance of messianism is in that the messianic age is a hope but is never fulfilled, therefore, the absolute implementation of God's laws in the pre-messianic age becomes necessary and distinguishes the relationship between the citizens and the states from other political systems. Consequently, although they, like any other state, are obliged by virtue of their bureaucracies to define some boundaries between the public and private spheres, they are incapable of separating religion from any of these spheres.

For religious political parties, the acceptance of the free will of individuals, the notion of electoral politics, and civil rights cause major challenges as they face the political implications of the institutionalization process and encounter social reality. Specifically, the inconsistency between the Jewish and Shi'a messianic traditions and the notion of an autonomous individual defies their political

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<sup>774</sup> For the case of Israel see: Sh. Sharan, *Israel and the Post-Zionists: a Nation at Risk* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2003), 177-181. For the case of Iran see: H. Shahidian, *Women in Iran: Emerging Voices in the Women's Movement* (NY: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002), 95-97.



and religious legitimacy of Politicised Messianism. In these states, one of the fundamental changes after securitization is the deconstruction of the fixed social roles present in pre-Revolutionary Messianism. These states claim to foster egalitarianism but this idealistic revolutionary egalitarianism is theologically a potential threat to Jewish and Shi'a agent-based legal systems. It reduces the power of the clergy and excludes any apolitical method of interpreting sacred texts, as well as their formal status as a distinguished class in society. Neo-fundamentalists in both states accept the institutionalization of messianic doctrine but are less hierarchical. The deconstruction of their hierarchical structure is the result of the dislocation of religious institutions within secular politics which inevitably transforms religious institutions into political agencies that are less dependent on religious leaders. Both use messianic symbolism in their civil policies in order to overcome the challenges faced by Politicised Messianism from the non-religious dimensions of a modern nation-state. The success of these states in enacting their civil policies depends on the inclusivity of these policies and the states' understandings of Politicised Messianism and civil society.

Politicised Messianism integrates political ideology into religious discourse, prioritizes the notion of achieving individual salvation through political means, and specifically opposes private religion. The de-securitization of messianism affects the relationship between politics and religion within the social context and instigates both public admiration and condemnation of the direct involvement of religious figures in politics. In the State-Maintenance Phase, these states accept a form of differentiation and establish specialised state institutions. Politicised Messianism, however, instigates challenges between political and social groups over the objectives of Securitised Messianism, the nature of the states' political and social programmes, and civil and individual rights. The de-privatization of religion initiates the involvement of religious institutions in both the public and private spheres and indicates a shift in the social understanding of religion from that of a solely transcendently focused system to an overtly political one. Therefore, in effect, the state legitimacy relies on creating a balance between the involvement of religious institutions and the state in the public and private spheres.

This political culture contradicts the secular system in which the state legitimacy relies on the successful creation of a boundary between political and religious values. In Israel and Iran this political culture has an impact on the relationship between citizens and obligates the states to re-define any form of civil relationship in the social context. The contextualization transforms any political disagreements between religious and non-religious citizens into theological disagreement. In Israel and Iran, religious citizens target non-religious citizens, attack their lifestyle, and blame them for the failure of state policies. Non-religious citizens accuse religious figures and groups for a lack of tolerance and blame them for hindering peaceful social coexistence, because of their hegemony over politics. In order to mediate these disagreements for both religious and non-religious groups the states are obliged to create policies

through which they can inform the public about national political values, communicate the state's political culture, and encourage political participation.

### Citizenship and Political Rights of Individuals

As the result of the politicization of messianism, defining citizenship and institutionalizing the concept within national law becomes the most challenging issue for Israel and Iran. Like any other nation state, the concept of civil law in Israel and Iran is bound to the states institutional definition of geographical borders and national identity. In his study of the concept of citizenship in the West, Keith Faulks considers three factors determinative in a modern understanding of citizenship. He notes that although in theory citizenship is a global concept that attributes to all citizens of a state equal status free from geographical boundaries, in practice the notion of citizenship is bound to the legacy of the French revolution; it is determined by state institutions and acts as a state instrument for "closure".<sup>775</sup> He argues that the tension between the "ethnic and pre-political identity of nationality" and the "civic, political status of citizenship" are the factors that make the understanding of modern citizenship "ambiguous".<sup>776</sup> Therefore, presenting an account of the relationship between citizens and the states in Iran and Israel requires an examination of the way in which each state defines 'an individual citizen' and their relationship with religion and the state.

In Israel and Iran, the ethnic and religious identity of citizens has intensified citizenship challenges for the states and their citizens. In Israel, the diversity of Jewish ethnic groups makes creating unity based on an ethnic commonality impossible. Thus the pre-state religious identity of the Jewish Diaspora and their ethnic diversity is mediated by a common political and national identity. The Zionist revolution and the conflicts the state faced after its formation intensified the state's challenges of the integration of non-Jewish religious and ethnic communities, especially Israeli Arab citizens. The state of Israel was able to integrate various immigrant groups into Israeli society due to its centralization of religious identity as national identity. In Iran however, the centralization of religious identity as national identity created issues for the state in a country that contains diverse ethnic and religious groups. In order to overcome these tensions both states relied on their revolutionary identity in the construction of citizenship. In Iran the criteria for the state became the citizens' devotion to the JIship. Although in Iran's Constitution the rights of Iranian religious and ethnic groups are protected, the state has excluded non-revolutionaries and anti-revolutionaries in its discourses on citizenship.

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<sup>775</sup> K. Faulks, *Citizenship; Key Ideas* (NY: Routledge, 2000), 29. Riesenberg, in his study of citizenship, asserts that the concept of citizenship in the West in the late eighteenth century was transformed from the old elite and a passive citizenship model to a nationalist and active one. P. Riesenberg, *Citizenship in the Western Tradition: Plato to Rousseau* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press, 1994), 7.

<sup>776</sup> K. Faulks, *ibid*, 36.

The integration of religious and political identity has raised issues regarding the religious meaning of an autonomous individual as well as a civil identity in the state. The acceptance of the existence of an autonomous individual with certain undeniable rights precedes the notion of the civic political status of citizens. Conceiving of a civic political right for citizens relies on the modern notion of an individual. Rousseau's theory of a "social contract" and all western political theories on the notion of citizenship after him consider an individual as a subjective entity. This view contradicts the Abrahamic notion of an individual who is born with some kind of religious and social contract with other members of the faith.<sup>777</sup> A modern subjective individual is a secular being but a religious individual is in the image of God. The former is responsible for protecting their rights in relation to the rights of the other, while the latter is responsible for protecting God's laws. The identity of a religious individual is based on connecting an individual's identity to their religious community. These factors form a different mechanism for the state's perception of citizenship identity and explain the criteria by which an individual's civil rights are acknowledged and protected.

Revolutionary Messianism, as a modern political narrative, views an individual's identity as being connected to the revolutionary community and transforms the traditional relationship between an individual and their religion. In the State-Building Phase, the notion of a citizen is embedded with the religious obligation that any individual must uphold in order to participate in the facilitation of the coming of the messianic age. This embedding dimension undermines any enduring religious or political identity that exists separately from the state. The securitization process ended the era in which apolitical social and economic spheres allowed differentiation between religion and politics. Translating the responsibilities of the Messiah into Securitized Messianism has undermined the rights of citizens as autonomous individuals. In the agent-based system of Iran, transferring the responsibilities of the Mahdi and his status as the saviour to a Jurisprudential Leader precisely rejects the affirmation of the individual rights. In Shi'a messianism, the Mahdi is the infallible Imam, because his individual identity as a leader is the exact representation of how the Shi'a tradition recognized a perfect human being. The Mahdi's individual identity is identical to his communal identity and this is what makes his rule just. In the institutional-based system of Israel the progressive messianic identity of the state will be perfected when protecting the religious identity of the state becomes the main priority for citizens.<sup>778</sup>

The religious institutions and parties of both states insist on the equality of citizens under God. Therefore, those groups in the state which insist on the hegemony of its religious identity over its political identity argue that human political systems justify the imposition of individual or group interests over the rest of society. For them, modern laws address issues relating to an individual's behaviour and actions in the public sphere, whereas synthesizing individual and collective religious behaviour guarantees the fulfilment of messianic hope. Merging individual and communal behaviour

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<sup>777</sup> Anne-Marie Korte and Maaïke de Haardt, *The Boundaries of Monotheism: Interdisciplinary Explorations into the Foundations of Western Monotheism* (London: BRILL, 2009), 115.

<sup>778</sup> N. Rotenstreich, *Zionism: Past and Present* (NY: SUNY Press, 2008), 124-126.

through the regulation of behaviour by means of dietary and purity laws, marriage, basic religious education, and compulsory religious charity is a key way by which the state can construct the identity of its citizenry. The accepting of individual identity creates a distinction between the private and public sphere that does not exist for one who observes religious obligations. This blurry line between the private and public spheres is a consequence of the doctrine of monotheism in which the individual's observance of religious laws is crucial to asserting one's religious identity.

The institutionalised religious identity implemented in state politics constitutes a dominant narrative of citizenship; this narrative is religiously and politically exclusive. In addition, the extension of the legal authority of the state into religious institutions gives opportunities to religious groups to coerce others in the social context through the regulation of individual and collective social behaviour. In Israel and Iran, this involvement has targeted non-religious individuals and those who belong to other religious groups. Although less evident in Israel, these states have attempted to institutionalise the collective identity in political terms. Although the ideological foundation of Revolutionary Messianism remains the main source of citizenship identity, it needs to incorporate the states' eager adoption of certain generic characteristics of nation states, such as industrialization, urbanization, and technological advancement - all of which contribute to the integration of a secular way of life in these societies.

Defining the meaning of citizenship poses challenges to religious and non-religious groups in both states. These challenges emanate from contradicting sources of legitimacy put in place by agents of religious laws (rabbis/ayatollahs), and agents of secular laws (judges). The relationship between agents and sacred texts in these religious systems is based on observance and faith and relies on pre-modern trust relations. It contradicts the relationship between agents of law and national law, which is based on institutional professionalism and trust relations. These contradicting relationships make the incorporation of religion into modern laws problematic. Thus, the state agencies that are responsible for mediating these tensions achieve greater political power. The institutionalisation of Securitized Messianism within the states' legal system is a means through which pre-modern individual and communal religious relations are translated into individual and civil rights and responsibilities. A successful institutionalisation process de-secritizes messianism and transforms it into a politically applicable discourse that negotiates the revolutionary ideals within the legal system. In such a system, debates over civil rights, political participation, and citizenship take place in the political sphere rather than being categorized as security debates. The failure of the institutionalisation process results in the continuation of the securitization phase. This inevitably leads to the exclusion of other religious and ethnic groups and the violation of their citizenship rights. The following section discusses two case

studies in order to highlight these tensions and the methods that each state adopts for resolving these issues.

Many elements influence the construction of the political identity of citizens in Israel and Iran. Besides family, social class and peers, the structure of a collective political identity in these religio-political states necessitates the engagement of both bureaucratic and religious institutions in the states' decisions over civil laws including the freedom of expression and media. The involvement of religious and political groups in the states' theological and political actions in relation to civil laws affects the participation of the political parties' constituencies and determines the future of the development of civil rights. During the State-Building Phase, these states regulate the political engagement of individuals and groups in the public sphere by laws. The national citizenship laws are not only the foundation of civil laws but they also shape the political attitude of citizens by categorizing and labelling them in their social discourse. The social implications of national citizenship laws are not limited to legal systems but indirectly determine the relationship between religion and politics. At the educational level, the political ideologies of these states are directly and indirectly indicated in their national education programmes, from the arrangement of educational materials to the national school curriculum, teaching materials, and regulations. Through the enforcement of national laws, civil laws, and national education, these states attempt to regulate how their citizens understand the states' messianic goals and control social demands for civil rights.

In Israel and Iran, the influence of war over politics resulted in the dominance of a specific perception of religion and religiosity. While the states' used theology and Securitized Messianism during the conflict era, domestically, their war policies filled religious groups with a sense of divine responsibility. War attributed to them the ethical task of moral guidance and correcting the wrongs of the society. As these states celebrated both religious and national ceremonies with religious tones they increased the political power of more conservative groups who either performed or supervised the celebration rituals. This advantageous position enabled the religious groups in both societies to justify their opposition to any secular political groups or decisions. These groups play different roles in Iran and Israel. In Iran, they function as the state sponsored militias of Basij and Ansar whose loyalty is solely to the Jurisprudential Leadership. In Israel, Heredi/Hasidic communities organize groups and stage public demonstrations against secular parties and policies of the state that they consider to be violations of Halakhah. Nonetheless, in both cases, the rift between religious and non-religious citizens is an inevitable by-product of securitization that attributes ethical superiority to religious groups in debates over the state legitimacy. Political theologians who produce and disseminate responses to the states' policies and mobilize the public to support or oppose the states' civil policies are also involved in this process.

During the State-Building Phase the situations of religious groups in Israel and Iran were very different. In Israel these groups were either apolitical or refused to criticize the state due to the militarization of Israeli politics and the marginalization of religious groups. The transition of Securitized Messianism into Politicised Messianism posed challenges to the institutionalization of trust relations in the state. While in the State-Building Phase, religious and non-religious groups were united against a shared enemy, new political and civil groups, such as Shas in Israel and neo-fundamentalists in Iran, emerged from within the de-securitized environment of the post- Cold War period. In Israel the continuation of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians has maintained the legitimacy of the Securitized Messianism , effectively lessening conflicts between secular and religious groups over the nature of the state. In Iran, the state's opposition to the development of any civil society of the State-Maintenance Phase has further fragmented the society.

Historically, the birth of the notion of citizenship in Europe relied upon the hyper individualism in the western philosophical tradition that understood the concept of an individual with intrinsic rights independent of their connection with others.<sup>779</sup> While the individual could adopt a religious identity, their religious affiliation bore no consequence to their civil rights.<sup>780</sup> The concept of citizenship directed the coercive characteristic of the previous communal lifestyle into a new form of individual identity, which included the right of political participation.<sup>781</sup> Moreover, the notion of a liberal individual negates the coercive power of religion in the formation of citizenship identity, underlies the notion of freedom of speech, and necessitates political participation and the development of human rights. This situation is radically different in a religio-political state where the integration of religion and politics facilitates the adaptation of modern political thoughts but hinders the establishment of liberal democracy.

In both states, it is particularly the structure of civil politics and national collective identity in their nationality laws that highlight the challenges that these states face in balancing the rights of individual and in distinguishing the public from private spheres. Through these laws the states aim to structure political identity for individuals and determine educational policies, civil relationships, and social order. In Iran's case, the Revolutionary Messianism rejects bestowing any undeniable and inherent rights to an individual. The embedding of revolutionary themes enforces the rejection of a non-religious or autonomous individual identity and the rights of an individual are subordinate to those of the state. In Israel, the embedding themes enforce externalism and associate the rights of an individual with Zionist ideals and their religious community. However, the religious communities and parties in Israel oppose the state's civil policies that allow the development of an autonomous individual identity in their communities. They encourage, rather, those policies that enforce the submission of individuals to

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<sup>779</sup> D. Shanahan, *Toward a Genealogy of Individualism* (MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 4-6.

<sup>780</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>781</sup> Pierre Birnbaum and Jean Leca, *Individualism: Theories and Methods* (London: Oxford University Press, 1990), 173.

Halakhah. In Iran, the concept of an autonomous individual is a potential security threat and limiting the rights of an individual, for the state, has become the state's existential security threat. In placing the Jurisprudential Leader as the core security objective, citizens' political submission becomes indispensable to the state legitimacy. In Israel, to the contrary, religious political parties need public political participation for their legitimacy and success.

#### What are the Responsibilities of a Citizen? Nationality, Policies and the Monitoring of Political Behaviour of Individuals

In Iran and Israel, structuring national laws and determining civil policies has always raised challenges for religious and political groups. These challenges stem from the differences between the embedded revolutionary messianic ideology and modern political notions such as civil rights and equality. For example, redemption and divine justice are the central themes of Shi'a and Jewish messianism. The message of their messianism is unequivocal; it highly praises religious values and demonizes all that is non-religious. In contrast, modern political language is alien to the uncompromising language of religious regulations and is pragmatic. The tensions between religious absolutism and political pragmatism encumber the development of individualism as a blueprint for the development of civil society. Nationality laws in these states exclusively reflect the religious identity of the majority and are inevitably biased against the rights of other religious traditions. This bias not only affects the relationship between citizens and the states' powers but shapes the responsibilities of citizens regarding their participation in the military.

The different historical situations in Iran and Israel have attributed particular Iranian and Israeli connotations to the social understating of an autonomous individual. While in the Revolutionary Phase a philosophical tradition had motivated radical social changes prior to the formation of modern states, in the State-Maintenance Phase the state laws and policies instigate social change. Also, in the Revolutionary Phase, revolutionary energy facilitated the development of a central state and promised the liberation of individuals, but in the State-Maintenance Phase, the states' laws obligate individuals to protect the state. Therefore, the nationality laws rely on the embedding of ideologies that shift the power of political change from the divine to humans and involve religion in politics. Each of these states employs a particular strategy to balance the power of theology with that of individual citizens. The Islamic Republic considers the religious responsibilities of citizens to be an indispensable part of their civil duties and coerce adherence to Shari'a in order to overcome the inherent contradiction between the civil rights of citizens and their religious obligations that continuously pose challenges to the state. Nationality laws present a legal definition for citizenship that incorporates the states' social objectives, delineate the framework for civil laws and indicate the states' management of the relationship between

religion and politics. The embedding of revolutionary ideology establishes social norms between acceptable and unacceptable civil behaviours and negotiates this norm with citizens through a collective identity based on self-determination, a powerful central state, and the limiting of individual rights within its messianic goals. It strongly influences the social attitude towards democracy, freedom of speech, and the rights of individuals.

### Citizenship and Religious Identity

The oath of citizenship in Iran and Israel goes beyond a social and political contract and has overt religious connotations. Limiting these ideologies to law conditions the fulfilment of messianic goals to the states' policies and reduces it to normative politics. Therefore the fusion of religion and politics constrains the development of civil societies by the state's revolutionary ideological position. This view on citizenship contradicts the western model, which considers the shift from an ideologically based political system to an agent based one to be the cornerstone of state legitimacy.

According to the Israeli Nationality Law of 1952, a person is only eligible for citizenship if they meet one of the five criteria stated in the law.<sup>782</sup> The Nationality law states that any Jewish immigrant, who is born in, returns to, or receives a certificate for returning to Israel, is a citizen of the state. This law applies to all Jewish immigrants who have returned to Israel prior to or subsequent to the establishment of the state and anyone with an Israeli parent. Those Palestinians who are born in Israel are included in the law. However, the law does not cover those Palestinians who were not registered residents in the state before the Nationality Law came into being. It also excludes their parents if they had made a declaration against the citizenship status, or rejected Israeli citizenship. Citizenship was only extended to Palestinians that already resided in the state, providing they had registered as an inhabitant, or resided in areas that later became Israeli territory.<sup>783</sup>

Under the Naturalization Law, a person can be granted citizenship if they have lived in Israel for three years, has permanent residency permission, has some knowledge of the Hebrew language, and has renounced their prior citizenship status.<sup>784</sup> In Israel, one is exempt from naturalization if they have served in the Israel Defence Force, or the Ministry of Defence and its associated institutions. Exemption also applies to those who have lost a child in military service and Palestinians who are married to an Israeli citizen. The state confers Israeli nationality upon the underage children of a citizen.<sup>785</sup> Any citizen

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<sup>782</sup> "Laws of the State of Israel: Authorized Translation from the Hebrew," (Israel: Jerusalem, Israel Law Resource Centre Government Printer, (1948-1987), February, 2007), vol. 6, 50-53.

<sup>783</sup> The term "minor" refers to a person under eighteen years of age, See *ibid*

<sup>784</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>785</sup> "Where a minor, not being an Israel national, is an inhabitant of Israel, and his parents are not in Israel or have died or are unknown, the Minister of the Interior, on such conditions and with effect from such day as he may think fit, may grant him Israel nationality by the issue of a certificate of naturalization. Nationality may be granted as aforesaid upon the application of



aged eighteen and over, can demand the renunciation of their citizenship status. They can also do this on behalf of their children.<sup>786</sup> However, underage citizens remain citizens so long as one of their parents remains a citizen. The state can revoke one's citizenship if the naturalised citizen commits an act of disloyalty, makes an application based on false evidence, or if the person has been away from Israel for an extended length of time. Renunciation of prior citizenship is only required for those Palestinians who apply to be naturalised citizens but Jewish citizens are not required to renounce prior citizenship.<sup>787</sup>

The Civil Code of 1928 articulates Iran's naturalisation laws.<sup>788</sup> According to Article 976 of the Code, "all persons residing in Iran except those whose foreign nationality is established are citizens."<sup>789</sup> All children born in Iran are instantly Iranian citizens; this includes minors with unidentified parents as well as those who are the progeny of non-Iranian parents.<sup>790</sup> Children born to an Iranian mother and a non-Iranian father can only become citizens if they reside in Iran for one year after turning eighteen years old, while non-Iranian women who marry men with Iranian nationality are not automatically granted citizenship; they must apply for it.<sup>791</sup> Iran's naturalization laws also allow a person to become a citizen if they are eighteen years old, have resided in Iran for at least five years, have not deserted military service and not been convicted of a crime in any other country.<sup>792</sup> If a person has either conducted notable services for the country or its people, or has married an Iranian wife, or has a high intellectual distinction they can become an Iranian national without the requirement that they have lived in Iran for a set amount of time.<sup>793</sup>

According to the Act, naturalised citizens enjoy all the rights of Iranian nationals. However, they may not contest or hold strategic positions such as the presidency, a position of cabinet or diplomatic roles.<sup>794</sup> Until 10 years after their citizenship, they cannot hold positions in the Islamic Consultative Assembly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or the provincial, district and municipal councils. Iranian

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the father or mother of the minor or, if they have died or are unable to apply, upon the application of the guardian or person in charge of the minor." Ibid.

<sup>786</sup> Ibid, 50-53.

<sup>787</sup> Ibid.

<sup>788</sup> The law was last amended in 1985. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6b5a68.html> accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>789</sup> "The foreign nationality of such persons is considered to be established if their documents of nationality have not been objected to by the Iranian Government". Ibid.

<sup>790</sup> Ibid.

<sup>791</sup> "Reciprocal treatment will be observed in the case of children born in Iran of nationals of countries where children born of Iranian subjects are considered as nationals of that country and the return of such children to Iranian nationality is made dependent on permission." Ibid.

<sup>792</sup> Ibid.

<sup>793</sup> Ibid.

<sup>794</sup> Ibid.

nationals can renounce their citizenship only if they have permission from the Council of Ministers, have completed their military service obligations and are over twenty five years of age.<sup>795</sup>

Therefore, in both cases the nationality laws emphasize the central role of the state in accepting or rejecting one's citizenship and attributes executive power to the states' institutions as the law enforcement agencies. They give power to the state to determine civil policies as the sole authority that regulates nationality laws and produces national political culture. The nationality laws are the primary vehicle for the states to establish the Securitized Messianism as the blueprint of the country's political culture. The nationality laws at the same time obligate the states to recognize certain rights for their citizens and increase the power of individual citizens in political decision-making. A voting and politically responsible populace places limitations on a state institutional power. Within these states, political participation is a significant foundation of the citizens' revolutionary identity. In Israel, participation creates the possibility of forming political alliances that shape the political direction of the state. Due to the pluralistic structure of the state's electoral system, where various political parties strive for political control, there is space to introduce various and often-contradictory political doctrines and goals. This characteristic of the state creates a pragmatic political atmosphere within the country. In Iran political participation is solely accepted if one accepts the mono-party political system of the state and submits to the absolute rule of the JIship. Due to the homogenous and closed structure of the electoral system, political participation is a sign of affirmation rather than participation.

### Political Participation and Civil Rights

In the social context, encouraging political participation is associated with the flourishing of varieties of ideas about the roles and responsibilities of a state. In the cases of Israel and Iran these ideas are predominantly about the role of religion in the politics of the state. Non-religious groups in Israel and reformists in Iran view the policing and management of national assets to be the paramount responsibility of the state. By contrast, religious parties such as Agudat Yisrael in Israel and the fundamentalists in Iran, insist on the states' control of religious laws because, to them, the state's primary responsibility is safeguarding religion from violations by foreign enemies and the secular public. In both states, they criticize the non-religious for the states' lack of efficiency in creating a theocracy by legal coercion and enforcing policies that obligate citizens to adhere to religious laws and stop the spread of non-religious culture. Their non-compromising position is a sign of their religious commitment. They publically express their criticism of the states' lack of commitment to religious regulations. In Iran, religious groups gather in white shrouds to remind the reformists, or the students, or women, that their uncompromising support of the religious identity of the state is part of their religious duties. In Israel,

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<sup>795</sup> The citizenship of the wife and children of a male national who renounces his citizenship are not affected by his decision. Ibid.

the religious neighbourhoods stage lamenting rituals to demonstrate against the opening of a car-park facility on the Sabbath, or to chastise women who are not dressed according to their religious laws.<sup>796</sup>

In Israel and Iran, there are specific behavioural characteristics through which one is recognized as a “religious” or “non-religious” person. There are various terms in Hebrew and Persian that refer to an individual’s commitment to their religious beliefs which demonstrate the diversity of the religious fabric in these societies. In both countries the term non-religious refers to people who do not live their lives based on religious commandments and are less observant of religious rituals.<sup>797</sup> Individuals still identify themselves as members of their religious communities, even if they do not live their lives based on religious laws or rituals. There are also those who do not observe religious rituals, those who observe some of their religious rituals, those who observe all the rituals, and those who are orthodox in their religious observance. When differentiating between religious and non-religious individuals in Israel and Iran, the term “non-religious” does not refer to an atheist population. The majority of the population is monotheists and believe in a God, but the non-religious are less religiously expressive in their appearance.<sup>798</sup> The religious groups discourage communication with the other religious and non-religious communities in order to preserve their identity. In Israel, nearly all Hasidic communities discourage marriage between members of two different Hasidic communities and people from non-Hereditarian communities.

In the State-Building Phase, the self-imposed isolation of the Hereditarian communities became the rationale for the traditional religious non-statist parties to avoid taking any executive or administrative positions in the government. For decades, they predominantly operated as ethnic and religious parties that solely protected the interests of their communities. Within the multicultural Israeli political environment, they used strong language to draw a clear boundary between their community and the non-religious. Ironically, their isolation has increased the power of the Hereditarian groups in state policies regarding citizenship, specifically in relation to the issue of conversion. These interactions demonstrate that the power of the religious within Israel’s democratic state is based on the success of democracy, particularly, in the State-Maintenance Phase even as they re-define it. Only in this condition Revolutionary Messianism can be successfully institutionalised only in a secular nation state.

### Conversion and Citizenship in Israel

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<sup>796</sup> Efrat Weiss, “J’lem: Haredi Injured in Parking Lot Protest,” Ynet News, Jerusalem, August 28, 2009, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3768734,00.html> accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>797</sup> M. Semati, *Media, Culture and Society in Iran: Living with Globalization and the Islamic State* (NY: Routledge, 2008), 250.

<sup>798</sup> H. E. Chehabi, *Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism: the Liberation Movement of Iran under the Shah and Khomeini* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1990), 71-73.

In the State-Maintenance Phase, the majority of the religious parties adopted a more politically pragmatic position, allied with the rightwing non-religious parties and advocated patriarchal policies. In the social context, however, many religious communities still identify themselves with a specific theological tradition and refuse to engage with the centres of secular economic activities like Tel Aviv, where religious rituals are downplayed or considered to be private matter and non-religious and religious citizens coexist. The Hasidic prefer isolation from the non-religious society and trust their religious leaders to monitor the public sphere. Their Rabbis advocate individual religious commitments by supporting religious education. Their isolation creates tensions between religious and non-religious residents in Jerusalem, reflected in the difficulties of the extremely ritualistic Hasidic communities in developing a pragmatic approach towards civil rights and the implementation of secular laws.

Conversion has been a major concern for the religious parties and has created tension between the rabbinic and Supreme Court authorities in Israel.<sup>799</sup> Controversy over the Jewish identity of Israeli citizens and converts has a long history in debates between religious and non-religious parties.<sup>800</sup> Accepting those who have converted to Judaism under the auspices of reform Jewish authorities as citizens, challenges Heredi communities who consider conversion valid only if it occurs under the supervision of Beith Din (religious courts). Reform conversion limits the power of Heredi in the Israeli legal system, especially in affirming one's individual religious identity. They have strongly opposed this undermining of the power of the Heredi rabbinate in society. In 2002, the Supreme Court passed a law according to which the state accepted Reform conversion only for the purposes of Aliyah (immigration). The Court ordered the Ministry of Interior to implement the law but the Ministry refused.<sup>801</sup> The Ministry announced that the problem of conversion was not limited to reform or conservative courts but also conversion after or before migration.<sup>802</sup>

Shlomo Amar, the Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv, expressed concern over the Supreme Court's decision.<sup>803</sup> The Shas party joined other religious parties and argued that accepting reform conversions would benefit those who use the law to be awarded citizenship and accused the Supreme Court of interfering

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<sup>799</sup> In 1962-63 the Supreme Court acknowledged an interfaith marriage between a Jew and a Christian in Cyprus as valid for granting citizenship to the Christian spouse. R. Halperin-Kaddari, *Women in Israel: a State of Their Own* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 224.

<sup>800</sup> Gideon Alon, "Meretz MKs Table Bill to Allow Civil Marriage," *Ha'aretz*, June 21, 2003, <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/meretz-mks-table-bill-to-allow-civil-marriage-1.9470>, accessed on 24/03/2010. Hillel Fendel, "Civil Marriage for Non-Jews," *Arutz Sheva*, March 16, 2010, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/136544>, accessed on 24/03/2010. Neta Sela "Shas: Secular marriage? Never," *IsraelNationalNews*, October 08, 2006, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3312396,00.html>, accessed on 24/03/2010.

<sup>801</sup> Tovah Lazaroff, "Yishai Bill Would Bypass Conversion Ruling," *Jerusalem Post – Jerusalem*, Feb 21, 2002, 4.

<sup>802</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>803</sup> Yair Ettinger, "Shas Minister: Reform Conversions Will Prompt Influx of Palestinians to Israel," *Ha'aretz*, May 25, 2009 <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/shas-min-reform-conversions-will-prompt-influx-of-palestinians-to-israel-1.276631> accessed 27/05/2009.

in Rabbinic affairs.<sup>804</sup> This position of Shas regarding Jewish identity and citizenship has not always been the same. In the 1980s, when a number of Ethiopian migrants called for the right of return, Yosef welcomed them and in a decree announced that they were the descendants of the “tribe of Dan”.<sup>805</sup> He did not, however, share the same view about those who were converted under the auspices of reform Jewish authorities. As Yishai noted, Reform conversion could result in the influx of Palestinian immigrants to Israel, therefore, Shas disagreed with the law for placing political conditions on citizenship. In 2009, after a meeting between religious parties at the offices of the Chief Rabbinate, Shas rejected the Supreme Court’s decision that the Knesset must fund Reform conversion.<sup>806</sup> All the ministers of the Shas and the Deputy Minister from United Torah Judaism attended the meeting and “unanimously” demanded that the Chief Rabbinate have full control and supervision of conversion.<sup>807</sup> Together, the United Torah Judaism and Shas prepared a bill attributing the exclusive right of conversion to the Chief Rabbinate.<sup>808</sup>

The insistence of religious groups and parties on limiting conversion to Rabbinic Courts has alienated those immigrants who are strongly patriotic Israelis but are not recognized as Jewish by the Haredi community. It has benefited Rabbinic Courts, Haredi communities, and Haredi authorities who have successfully maintained their authority in validating conversion and ultimately the converts’ citizenship status. In response to the religious parties’ bill on conversion, Israel Beiteinu made its acceptance of the bill conditional on state supervision and control over conversion regulations such as the right of conversion for city Rabbis.<sup>809</sup> They, instead, proposed the “Allegiance Law” or “Citizenship Law” to oblige citizens to pledge alliance to the state and to serve in the military. The Shas, Likud and Labor parties all rejected the bill.<sup>810</sup> For Shas, accepting this condition undermined its influence in Rabbinic Courts, had potential to weaken its political alliance with United Torah Judaism, and alienated the Sephardim from the party.<sup>811</sup>

Religious parties have reacted negatively to the granting of citizenship rights to homosexuals and to the debates over the possibility of a legalisation for civil marriages and divorces.<sup>812</sup> In 2006, after Shas

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<sup>804</sup> Ibid.

<sup>805</sup> Hunter R. Clark and Robert Slater, Israel an Airlift to the Promised Land, Time Magazine, 14 Jan, 1985, 4.

<sup>806</sup> Gil Ronen, “Religious Parties Demand: Put Rabbinate in Charge of Conversion,” Israel National News, May 24, 2009 <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/131539>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>807</sup> Ibid.

<sup>808</sup> “Israeli Minister Favours Haredi exclusivity,” Jerusalem Post- Jerusalem, August 27, 2009, <http://jta.org/news/article/2009/08/27/1007479/israeli-minister-favors-Haredi-exclusivity>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>809</sup> Matthew Wager, “Bill to Anchor Haredi Conversion Monopoly,” Israel News, May 28, 2009, 3.

<sup>810</sup> Gil Ronen, “Government Rejects Allegiance Law, Softens Naqba Day Bill,” Israel National News, May 31, 2009, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/131634>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>811</sup> Hebrew: יהדות התורה המאוחדת, Yahadut HaTorah HaMeukhedet

<sup>812</sup> P. J. Woods, Judicial Power and National Politics: Courts and Gender in the Religious-Secular Conflict in Israel (NY: SUNY Press, 2008), 53.

achieved strong representation in the Knesset, Eli Yishai called homosexuals, “sick people.”<sup>813</sup> This was a similar position to Shlomo Aviner, an influential Haredi rabbi who rejected the possibility that homosexuals could be included in Jewry and announced that their punishment should be death according to the Torah.<sup>814</sup> In the same year, the Haredi community of Jerusalem came out in force to protest the city’s Gay Pride Parade. Both Muslim leaders and Haredi rabbis called the parade a threat to the citizens of Israel and suggested that the parade should be held in Sodom.<sup>815</sup> In 2009, the most violent attack on the homosexual community occurred. Shas and other religious parties condemned the attack. Nonetheless, the gay community saw the attack as the result of a long term condemnation and incitement by the Haredi communities.<sup>816</sup> The strong opposition of the Haredi community to homosexuality mirrors their stance on the issues of gender equality and women’s rights in Israeli society and politics.

### Religious Groups and Gender Equality in Israel

The Shas party, like other religious parties, has no women members in the Knesset. They follow traditional Jewish gender roles. They fund the expansion of Mikvah (ritual baths) for religious purification and harshly oppose non-religious parties for their support of civil marriage. In 2001, soon after the Ministry of Religious Affairs came under the control of a Shas Minister, the Ministry set rules for sexual segregation at sites of pilgrimage as well as buses in the Haredi section of Jerusalem.<sup>817</sup> On the contrary, within the Haredi community, the Shas party and Rabbi Yosef have adopted a more moderate position regarding women’s education and their social engagement. For instance, the opening of the first Haredi collage by Yosef’s daughter, Adina Bar-Shalom, was a deviation from Haredi tradition of Yeshivot and created a controversy within the Haredi community.<sup>818</sup> The power of the Hasidic parties has enabled the Haredi communities in Jerusalem to enforce strong religious laws in their communities, which in some instances has resulted in physical abuse and the beating of women in the street.<sup>819</sup> Although Israel has signed the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and emphasises gender equality at the state level, among the Haredi communities, religious sexist laws are maintained. An Israeli woman can join the army, become a pilot,

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<sup>813</sup> Attila Somfalvi, “Shas Chairman: Gays are Sick People,” Israel National News, February 22, 2006, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3219924,00.html>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>814</sup> Ibid.

<sup>815</sup> Neta Sela, “Rabbis: Stop Jerusalem Gay Parade,” April 07, 2006, <http://www.ynet.co.il/english/Ext/Comp/ArticleLayout/CdaArticlePrintPreview/1,2506,L-3270788,00.html>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>816</sup> Matthew Kalman, “Gay vs. Haredi: A Deadly Turn in Israel’s Culture War?,” Time Magazine- Jerusalem, Aug 03, 2009 <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1914391,00.html#ixzz0cM6fOrHG>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>817</sup> David Rudge, Itim, “Separate Sexes on Ascent to Mt. Meron,” Jerusalem Post – Jerusalem, May 8, 2001, 5.

<sup>818</sup> Hana Levi Julian, “Hareidi College Creates New Professionals,” Israel National News, Jan 24, 2006, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/97189>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

<sup>819</sup> Kobi Nahshoni, “Haredi, Religious Residents Clash in Beit Shemesh,” Jewish World, May 21, 2008, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3641737,00.html>, accessed on 10/11/2011.

and even a Supreme Court Judge but remains subject to traditional religious rituals and laws for marriage and divorce. They enjoy equal political rights and are active in public life, the welfare system, healthcare, and education but are not members of the Knesset in the religious political parties.<sup>820</sup> They are well represented in the Judiciary system but not in the Rabbinic Courts.

In summary, the case of conversion demonstrates that in Israel civil legislation and laws that obligate citizens to obey religious rules correspond to those that make the public obey civil rules. In Israel, the reaffirmation of the authority of the state is discussed in religious debates over ethnic relations, conversion, and the autonomy of religious communities. These debates are vital for the engagement of ethnic and religious communities in Israeli politics and for providing a public space for negotiating national and group interests. For instance, the Heredi communities oppose the state's secular policies such as secular education for Hasidim, conversion, and participation of Heredi students in military services. Conversely, their lenient position on peace negotiations enables them to negotiate with the secular centralist parties, demonstrates their pragmatism in Israeli domestic politics, and expresses their loyalty to the state. In Iran and Israel the existence of an official religion creates civil inequality between the observant members of the official faith and the non-observant members. It also attributes an advantageous position to the members of the official faith over the followers of other religions. These civil inequalities can foster economic inequality and limit the political possibilities of the non-observant members of the official faith and also for the members of other faiths, which on occasion can result in the use of violence against some communities or the implementation of coercing civil politics. These coercive policies confer a beneficial social position on the observant followers of the official religion and create classes of first class and second class citizens.

Although, in both Israel and Iran, the national law acknowledges the rights of religious communities in managing their legal affairs, both legal systems at the national level, exclusively address Jewish and Shi'a citizens. In Iran, the political ideology of the state has severely oppressed the Baha'i faith and limited the rights of other non-Shi'a citizens. Jurisprudential Leadership as the main security discourse can justify the restriction of citizenship rights and silence sceptics, atheists, secularists, and feminist voices. In Israel, the comparatively objective position of the Supreme Court plays a reconciliatory role in cases that deal with the rights of the country's religious minorities. The welfare and interests of the Jewish population, however, whether religious or non-religious, remains the state's priority. Although national laws restrict the power of state officials, in both cases, the existence of an official religion with a narrow interpretation of civil rights is discriminatory against other citizens and could stigmatize any citizen as a potential threat to the security of the society and religion. In Iran, the Baha'i community, atheists, and

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<sup>820</sup> Kalpana Misra and Melanie S. Rich, *Jewish Feminism in Israel: Some Contemporary Perspectives* (London: UPNE Press, 2003), 134.

religious sceptics are the targets of state violence, while the Jewish and Christian communities enjoy relative freedom in expressing and practicing their faiths.<sup>821</sup> In Iran, through implementing coercive policies, the state has instigated an irreconcilable social position in relation to the involvement of religious institutions and Shi'a clergy in politics.

### Neo-fundamentalism and Civil Policies

The birth of neo-fundamentalism in Israel and Iran seems to be a by-product of securitization. The neo-fundamentalists in both countries consider religion to be the only source of legitimacy for the state and insist on prioritizing the protection of the states' religious identity in any national political decisions and civil policies. The neo-fundamentalists attract supporters for their political parties and advocate their political values and ideals in their criticism of the traditional Heredi and rightwing parties. To them, Politicised Messianism remains the source of legitimacy that grants actual authority to the states and enables them to implement religious civil laws. They are communalists and support the limiting of individual freedom. Their focus on community makes their policies inevitably populist and promotes the establishment of a community based politics.

During the State-Building Phase, the inherent instability of Revolutionary Messianism instigates the emergence of hostile political factions, as well as the advent of new political ideologies. A new form of fundamentalism dissociates itself from the traditional political camps of the revolutionary and SBPs. They express their political and economic goals in relation to the failure of Securitized Messianism to bring about the messianic promises of the revolution and blame the weakness of the states in managing religious, political and economic affairs on their normalisation of religious values. Although they view Revolutionary Messianism as the core ideology of the state, they differ from the traditional rightwing in criticism and ideology. The neo-fundamentalists disagree with the traditional conservatives over the success of the states in materializing the revolutionary ideals. Their criticism of the states' policies targets both civil and foreign policies. Specifically, they criticize the revolutionary "elites" for deviating from the revolutionary ideals and creating an economic and ethically corrupt network system to guarantee their individual and group interests.

The rise of neo-fundamentalism indicates the challenges that Iran faces in maintaining state legitimacy in the State-Maintenance Phase. The neo-fundamentalists in Iran disagree with the reformists for their liberal policies and with fundamentalists for their economic corruption. They strongly support the categorization of citizens into first and second class citizens and highly admire the Basij and Revolutionary Guards for imposing religious laws on society. Their negation of the revolutionary elites

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<sup>821</sup> Article 13 of Iran's Constitution [http://www.iranchamber.com/government/laws/Constitution\\_ch01.php](http://www.iranchamber.com/government/laws/Constitution_ch01.php), accessed on 25/05/2010



is a direct consequence of the closed social environment that the state gradually established in the State-Maintenance Phase. The public uprising against the results of the 2009 presidential election attests to the failure of the state in maintaining its legitimacy. The demonstrators opposed diverse political and economic issues, from the Revolutionary Guard's monopolization of economy to the absolute rule of the Jurisprudential Leadership and the unlimited power of those institutions that function under the supervision of the leadership.

The advantageous position that the neo-fundamentalists gave to religious citizens divided Iran's citizens into two groups, "insiders" and "outsiders". The state considers those who encourage or ignore the undermining of civil rights, support the monopolization of the economy, and submit to the decision of the Jurisprudential Leader as insiders and the rest of the citizens as outsiders. The combination of political, civil, and economic factors have united various groups around short-term strategic goals and fostered the formation of the "Green Movement" that includes both religious and secular groups. They insist on reforming the political system and demand social and political freedom.

In Israel, the exclusivity of the early Zionist narrative resulted in the enforcement of many coercive policies but instead of monopolization the state has encouraged economic activities in various communities. Israel's post-Cold War economy has focused on reducing the government's economic intervention and transforming the state-orientated market into an open market economy.<sup>822</sup> The unprecedented growth of Israel's information technology, military, and tourism industries has reduced the wage gap between various economic classes.<sup>823</sup> The growth of these industries, as well as the increase in the number of Israeli enterprises, has made the total economic inclusion of religious communities an inevitable social reality.<sup>824</sup> The state encourages political participation and the growth of the job market both of which require human resources and economic security. Within a secure economic environment, both religious and non-religious citizens enjoy better economic conditions which foster more beneficial encounters between these groups.

Israeli neo-fundamentalists, like Shas, criticize the agents of Politicised Messianism, the Ashkenazi non-religious Zionists, for the depressed economic and political situation of immigrant communities and accuse them of deviating from the religious goals of Zionism. In Iran, the neo-fundamentalists indirectly affirm the failure of the Jurisprudential Leadership in establishing the revolution's promised utopia. These common characteristics show that the politics of neo-fundamentalism in both cases are directly connected to the politicization of messianism and changes in the security environment.

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<sup>822</sup> Asher A. Blass and Ovad Yosha, 'Reform in the Israeli Financial System and the Flow of Funds of Publicly Traded Manufacturing Firms', in *The Israeli Economy, 1985-1998: from Government Intervention to Market Economics*, ed. Avi Ben-Basat (Boston: MIT Press, 2002), 189.

<sup>823</sup> *Ibid*, 192.

<sup>824</sup> N. Stadler, *Yeshiva Fundamentalism: Piety, Gender, and Resistance in the Hasidic World* (NY: NYU Press, 2009), 50.

In the State-Maintenance Phase changes in the economic and political strategies in Iran and Israel have created two parallel, though routinely oppositional, political ideologies. In Iran, the tension between nationalist and religious ideologies became worse when the Revolutionary Guards and Basij lost their exclusive status as protectors of national security. The Iran-Iraq war that had unified these forces against an external security threat ended and the state designated a number of new and complex security threats. It introduced the public sphere as the new front and organized its forces to coerce the citizens to submit to the absolute rule of the Jurisprudential Leader. During the de-securitization process, through this intentional reconstruction of the security threat the state maintained unity amongst these forces, reduced the rate of unemployment, and followed its Islamization project by militarizing the public sphere. The imposition of the state's messianic ideology on a securitized public sphere, however, reduced religion to theological statements that justified the state's coercive civil policies. In order to reinforce the significance of their role in protecting religion and the purity of the society, the state has given these forces unlimited access to national resources and encourages them with economic compensations.

In Israel, the continuation of the Palestinian conflict has marginalized civil debates concerning the state's position on freedom of speech, freedom of religion, gender equality, civil rights and information technology. Gender equality and equal rights are clearly stated in Israel's national laws. The neo-fundamentalists, however, demand more direct involvement of the state in citizens' private lives. For instance, for Heredim, the main issue in conversion is the lack of state commitment to monitoring the private life of the converts in order to ensure their commitment to their new faith. Their demands are affirmed by the states' social policies. Both states express their national identity through religious symbolism and rituals. They affirm the legal framework of citizenship and advocate the patriotic political culture through the public celebration of political ceremonies, such as war commemorations and memorial services for fallen soldiers, in a religiously ritualistic fashion. The ritualistic character of these ceremonies transforms political events, military victories and defeats into religious events and creates a direct link between Politicised Messianism, state legitimacy, and individual morality as the foundations of national security. This symbolic representation of security provides a broader definition of the enemy. It does not solely address those who threaten the political or territorial security of the states. It also includes those who hinder the unification of religious and political identities of the states by their lack of commitment to religious laws.

In addition to these political implications, the securitization of Revolutionary Messianism impacts on the social status of religious institutions. The first impact is that it undermines the traditional authority of the religious centres in society as the state gains ultimate authority in regulating and enforcing laws and becomes the sole agent for defining and articulating civil rights. The second impact is that theological

politicians replace the clergy as the agents who determine policies to safeguard religious laws such as dietary regulations and conversion in Israel and policies on the Hijab and other Shari'a moral laws in Iran. The theologian politicians are the ones who discuss and decide these policies in social and legal environments rather than in theological centres. The third impact is that the state becomes the exclusive political power that determines the objectives of the civil policies and is capable of negotiating civil rights in cases where civil rights contradict religious laws. This displacement of authority from clergy to the theologian politicians secularises messianism and gives the ultimate decision-making power to the state administrative and executive bodies. Political theologians and theological politicians are the main groups that attempt to appropriate the core values of politics and theology to state policies.

The emergence of political theologians and theological politicians has resulted in the radical politicization of religion and by positioning theology at the centre of political debates it de-sacralises religion in Iran. As the state transformed messianism from a religious ideology to a security strategy, messianism inevitably became de-sacralised; a tool for the state to reaffirm its legitimacy and determine the relationship between citizens, the clergy, and Shi'a messianism. In Israel, securitization disassociated commitment to Halakhah from national loyalty. For instance, securitization challenged the Haredi religious ethics and involved them in deciding civil policies regarding gender equality, the laws of Sabbat, and the economy. Debates and decisions over these issues have become a threat to the isolation of the Heredim who saw themselves as a community that has moral superiority over others. The Heredim who were dominantly apolitical in the State-Building Phase began to publically express their opposition towards secular politics in public demonstrations in the State-Maintenance Phase.<sup>825</sup>

The majority of religious groups in both states accept the central role of the state and have been active in networking with and participating in the formal processes of the state. At the same time they attempt to preserve their semi-autonomous positions. In Israel, Rabbis still have authority within their communities, but are financially dependent on the state for educational funding and public services such as roads and transport. Thus, they are now involved in political competition with other Haredi communities, reform synagogues, and public schools over government budgets. In Iran, as the result of securitization, Ayatollahs shared their advantageous position with the martyrs of the war, and members of the Basij and Revolutionary Guards. In addition, due to the existence of a Jurisprudential Leader, their fatwas (religious creeds) lost credibility as they could not be contradictory to the rules of the Jurisprudential Leader. This factor reduced the role of both to that of state agents who provide theological explanations for contemporary political situations. They are no longer the sole interpreters of sacred texts and compete with theological politicians over this position.

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<sup>825</sup> Michael Hirsch, "The Decline and Fall of Haredi Judaism," Jerusalem Post- Jerusalem, June 27, 2010.

These challenges that Rabbis face in Israel indicate how embedded revolutionary ideologies mediate the contradictions between the concept of citizenship and the religious understanding of a communal individual. In Iran, the unlimited power of the Jurisprudential Leadership in decision making translates the state's political failures into the failure of religion. Ayatollahs affirm the central role of the leadership in protecting Shi'a Islam by supporting the nationalisation of religious rituals, the militarization of the public sphere, and implementation of state policies by force. Two factors, however, destabilises the situation in Iran in the State-Maintenance Phase. The first is the spread of a modern and global understanding of citizenship that fundamentally challenged the model of the individual presented by and normalised in the Islamic Republic. The second factor is the rise of neo-fundamentalism that further encouraged a secular atmosphere by accusing the revolutionary elites of economic and political corruption.

The development of individual identity, the growth of the technocratic Sephardi class, a well established professional bureaucratic culture, and conflict with Palestinians contributed to a better integration of neo-fundamentalists in state politics in Israel. The neo-fundamentalists united in the support of conservative political parties, especially those that advertise conservative family values and fund religious education. They debate the settlement issues, ethnic relations and the autonomy of religious institutions within a democratic and pluralistic political system. The main political implication of the development of the concept of citizenship and individual rights is seen in the states' national and international politics. Analyzing the policies of the neo-fundamentalists in both states requires a careful study of the interactions between political theologians and theological politicians. This analysis presents the question whether neo-fundamentalists are pragmatic or idealist and whether traditional definitions could comprehensively explain their policies.

### Pragmatism versus Idealism

The dominant strand of scholarly literature on Iran and Israel contends that these states began as ideological and revolutionary states that were pragmatically realised over time. Although studying the development of pragmatic politics in these states sheds light on many of their political positions, it fails to explain the consequences of embedding the moral messianic responsibilities in politics that makes them different to secular states like France. It is through their national and international policies that the states describe these moral responsibilities and mediate political and religious tensions. The academic literature on Israeli and Iranian politics highlights that in both states, the ideological foundation of Politicised Messianism played a central role in their politics. They, however, do not explain why emphasizing the religious identity of the states is a political and existential necessity rather than a pragmatic policy. The lack of study on the development of new political and theological classes in these

societies is thus related to the lack of studies on the development of Revolutionary Messianism into Politicised Messianism and the political implications of securitization.

The embedding of messianic themes in Israel and Iran constrains their distinct religious and revolutionary identities in national and international politics. Neither of these states is an extreme ideological theocracy nor an exclusively pragmatic and secular state. Rather than an extreme religious or purely secular, it is the embedding of these ideologies in Politicised Messianism that has dictated the tenets of their policies. Therefore, in some cases the states' policies may violate religious laws but they could not undermine Securitized Messianism. Their policies are both intentionally constructed based on the themes that attribute legitimacy to the state and are inevitable products of Securitized Messianism. One of the results of these embedding themes is that in Iran and Israel responses to security threats and implementation of state policies require theological legitimization. Moreover, both religious traditions consider some intrinsic value to be found in war and martyrdom that unifies people, safeguards the community, and intensifies religious commitments.<sup>826</sup> Due to the fact that protecting national territory and religion have identical importance in their security doctrines, potentially each war could be the "Final War" and the beginning of the messianic age. While both share this theological position each state offers different perspectives on the issues that are threats to their national security and the adequate strategy for deterrence.

Israel and Iran's view on national security attributes a particular connotation to the meaning of political pragmatism and ideology. In political language, pragmatic policies are decided based on factual evidence and a calculation of their real consequences. The practicality of a policy determines whether it is pragmatic or ideological. Pragmatic policies are meaningful when they are decided within the framework of national security. Therefore, Iran and Israel decided their pragmatic policies in accordance with the embedding ideologies that form their national security doctrines. Due to its pluralistic structure, Israel's national politics is pragmatic. Various religious and secular Jewish communities consider themselves citizens of the state regardless of their ideological differences, participating in politics, and coexisting. At the international level, Israel is less pragmatic, maintaining a stance on strategic issues such as peace with the Palestinians, the citizenship status of Arab Israelis, and the expansion of the settlements. While political groups are willing to cooperate and ally with each other in the national scene, they are less flexible in international politics and refuse to make a pragmatic decision about peace or the settlements. Their stance on international policies may in time affect their relationship with the international community, particularly with the United States of America, but the embedded messianic ideologies do not allow the state to make solely pragmatic and compromising

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<sup>826</sup> A. Taheri, *The Persian Night: Iran Under the Khomeinist Revolution* (London: Encounter Books, 2010), 96-97.

decisions about the future of settlements, peace with Palestinians, and Israel's political ties with the United States of America.

In contrast to the situation in Israel, Iran's international policies are pragmatic. Despite its anti-American slogans, Iran continues to seek dialogue with the Americans since the reformist government in the 1990s. Khatami and Rafsanjani both attempted to re-establish political ties with America. Ahmadinejad, who is the neo-fundamentalist president in Iran, has travelled to the United States of America more than any other president in the history of the Islamic Republic and written letters to ex-President George W. Bush and President Barak Obama. However, re-establishing political ties with the United States of America is problematic for the Islamic Republic because of their extreme national ideological stance. Although the Islamic Republic is well aware of the disadvantages it suffers from the lack of political ties with the United States of America, its pragmatism in international politics is complicated by its ideological position on national policies. Specifically, in the State-Maintenance Phase as the state re-defined its national security doctrine, it presented any independent political or civil activities as a potential security threat sponsored, designed or implemented by the United States of America. Through this connection they untied the hands of their intelligence services, and militias to suppress any civil activity with full force.

### Monitoring information Technology

Voting and political participation is the way for citizens to express their political opinions and contribute to the political development in their country. Political participation is a significant aspect of citizenship that allows citizens to shape the structure of national politics and contribute to its progress. In liberal democracies various political parties have the opportunity to express, share, and negotiate their political doctrines and goals and practice respect, coexistence and tolerance. A free public space in which various groups participate in political and social debates and decisions is a necessity for the development of civil society and to create a balance between state control and individual freedom. However, prior to the development of any public space within a civil society, the people must be aware of the necessity of such a pluralistic public space.

Since the last decades of the twentieth century globalization has introduced new opportunities for the development of public awareness about civil rights by facilitating easier access to information, a more active global market, and the spread of electronic communication technology. These factors have had different impacts on Israel and Iran and instigated different responses in each state. The responses of religious and non-religious groups in each state towards the spread of these technologies in the public sphere crystallises the ideological themes that form the states' policies. In general, the development of communication technologies presents two challenges to religious groups in these states. The

development of a “global village” through new communication technologies has resulted in the enhancement of an autonomous individual identity which is a potential threat to religious communal identity. For example, the isolation techniques and coercive policies could neither stop the spread of public awareness nor communication between religious and non-religious individuals. The development of an individual identity has posed challenges for religious groups in Israel but posed an existential security threat to the state in Iran.

During the State-Building Phase in Israel and Iran prominent religious nationalist leaders - Rabbi Kook and Khomeini - believed that there was an inherent value in technological advancement, not only as a sign of progress but also as a path to the messianic age.<sup>827</sup> They never reconciled their admiration for technological products with their rejection of the secular scientific culture which made the production of technology possible. Israel adopted a relatively liberal approach towards information technology, but this progressive policy was not effective in Hasidic suburbs. In Iran, Khomeini attempted to strengthen his supervisory role over Iran’s technological progress but also supported training in areas of human resources and secular education. These paradoxical stances towards technology are echoed in the attitudes of religious groups to new information technologies.

The state of Israel does not filter or censor information, but as a consequence the religious communities refuse to have access to information technology, specifically cyberspace. Having access to cyberspace is associated with the risk of exposure of their members to non-religious ideas and their assimilation into the secular culture. These communities believe that access to cyberspace may encourage the members to pursue secular education or politics, undermine attempts to eradicate boundaries between religion and politics, and introduce new challenges to theology. While the state encourages investment in private television channels and other information technology, the majority of Haredim refuse to watch TV and attack public offices in their neighbourhoods that install TV screens.<sup>828</sup>

Prior to the introduction of the internet and cable TV to Iran during the late 1990s, the controlling of social relations and the spread of information had been manageable. This was because all broadcasting activities were under the control of the National Broadcasting Institution, a state institution under the direct control of the Jurisprudential Leader.<sup>829</sup> More than any other state institution, it has served the Islamic Republic by the production of programmes intended to propagate the state’s vision of the ideal Islamic and revolutionary citizen. However, both the IRIB and the Ministry of Islamic Guidance have

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<sup>827</sup> For Khomeini’s view on technology see: B. Moin, op. cit., p. 76, For Kook’s view on technology see: D. Schwartz, *Faith at the Crossroads: a Theological Profile of Religious Zionism* (London: BRILL, 2002), 271.

<sup>828</sup> “Jerusalem: Haredim Attack Post Office Guards over 'TV Screens',” *Israel News*, July 18, 2010, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3921259,00.html>, accessed on 14/11/2011.

<sup>829</sup> The name of the institution was changed to “Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcast.” According to the post-revolutionary Constitution, the leader directly appoints the head of the institution.

proved to be inefficient monitors of the internet and cable TV, and have been incapable of preventing the growth of a cyberspace civil community. Electronic information technology has reduced the social and political costs of political participation and expressing one's religious views. It becomes an existential threat to the state because it makes the securitized public space and the implementation of coercive policies against the development of civil society inefficient. The development of information technology is a double-edged sword for the state. On the one hand, it provides the state with the opportunity to spread their message globally or to use these instruments for educational purposes. On the other hand, with the free flow of information and the possibility of sharing ideas anonymously coupled with the impossibility of controlling the content of the materials passed between individuals, state legitimacy is potentially threatened.

In his 2002 study of Iran's information technology and the related growth of civil society, Michael Rabasco noted that since the establishment of network connection in 1992, Iran has had the highest growth rates of internet usage in the region, reflected in the increase of internet cafes from 450 in 2000 to 1,200 in 2001.<sup>830</sup> He contends that Iran offers an interesting case study of the influence of information technology on politics and the development of civil policies.<sup>831</sup> The growth in internet usage and weblogs has been of significant concern to the Islamic Republic, particularly fundamentalists and neo-fundamentalists. During the time of the reformists, state control of the internet and its content were relatively relaxed but the situation changed in 2002 and the end of the reformist government. Cyberspace provided a relatively secure space for civil rights activists to express their opinions about state policies, raise awareness about the violation of human rights in Iran, and form campaigns. The danger of cyberspace is so dominant at present to the Islamic Republic that it has called the increasing number of weblogs and secular website as the West's "soft war" against the state.<sup>832</sup> The state hopes that by connecting the growth of use of cyberspace to the 'dangerous' West it could create a theological justification for suppressing the cyber social network. It has set aside funding for religious institutions and encouraged the Basijis (who are involved in cyberspace, trolling internet forums and social networks) to identify the users. The more civil society opposes the state's totalitarianism, the harsher these policies become.

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<sup>830</sup> Michael J. Rabasco, 'Civil Society in Iran', in *Information Technology and World Politics*, ed. Michael J. Mazarr (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 116- 130.

<sup>831</sup> According to the data presented by the World Bank Development in 2008, the number of internet users as percentage of population (per 100 inhabitants) in Iran has grown from 0.997% in 2000 to 32% in 2008. Iran is amongst the first five countries with 20% rate of growth in internet usage. [http://www.google.com/publicdata?ds=wb-wdi&met=it\\_net\\_user\\_p2&idm=country:IRN&q=internet+usage+in+iran](http://www.google.com/publicdata?ds=wb-wdi&met=it_net_user_p2&idm=country:IRN&q=internet+usage+in+iran), accessed on 14/11/2011. "Telecoms And Technology Forecast for Iran", Telecoms and technology, Economist Intelligence Unit, 18 June 2008, and Grey Burkhardt ed. "Iran, National Security and the Internet in the Persian Gulf Region", (Washington: Georgetown University, 1998) <http://web.archive.org/web/20070703041209/http://www.georgetown.edu/research/arabtech/pgi98-4.html>, accessed on 15/07/2009.

<sup>832</sup> S. C. Poulson, *Social Movements in Twentieth-Century Iran: Culture, Ideology, and Mobilizing Frameworks* (NY: Lexington Books, 2006), 301-6.



In response to the development of this space the neo-fundamentalists filtered internet social networks, imprisoned bloggers, and formed a “Cyber-Army” which is responsible for fighting against the cyber-civil society. It has not however been successful in preventing the growing number of users accessing information. Iran’s fundamentalists, reformists, and neo-fundamentalists are well aware of the possibilities and challenges that information technology presents to the legitimacy of the regime. While the official political sphere is relatively free of secular debates, Iranian weblogs and internet sites have become the scene of political and religious debates, many of which breach the restrictions on civic discussions enforced by the Islamic Republic.<sup>833</sup>

Cyberspace and mobile phones provide individuals with the opportunity to experience freedom in communicating their religious views and debating politics. The globalization of information technology has provided individuals with the opportunity to express themselves in divergent ways and offered them creative avenues for articulating their civil demands. It has had a significant political impact on the formation of a global civil society that could raise awareness about civil rights and effectively limit the power of the state. Its spread has made the control of the education system a vital issue for religious groups in both states because it is through education that states and religious communities can transfer their political cultures and values to the next generation.

Religious communities in Israel strongly support their isolation from the non-religious and react in a hostile manner towards any policies that appear to encourage individualism. The religious communities regulate their interaction with others. They are semi-independent in managing the affairs of their Yeshivot and in choosing educational materials for their curriculum.<sup>834</sup> They view education as an exclusively religious issue and, as such, do not consider the state to be a legitimate source in making decisions concerning the education of religious communities. Nonetheless, they consider the government responsible for the funding of Heredi schools, (such as the construction of additional classrooms).<sup>835</sup> Avraham Ravitz, in his study on citizenship in Israel, argues that the Heredi community believes that the government serves all “brethren from Israel, no matter if they are Hasidic, Lithuanian or secular”.<sup>836</sup> For instance, he notes that Degel Hatorah has an inclusivist view about the public services that the government should provide for Israeli citizens but an exclusive view about the responsibilities of

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<sup>833</sup> There are no statistics on the number of atheists in Iran. However, the internet has provided them with an opportunity to express their views in weblogs.

<sup>834</sup> The 1952 Education Act in Israel states the state’s dual funded secular (Tali) and religious (Dati) school systems. In addition to these systems the Heredi community have their own education system that they insist to be funded by the government at the same rate of the two other education systems. See: B. Reich, *Political Leaders of the Contemporary Middle East and North Africa: a Biographical Dictionary* (London: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1990), 103.

<sup>835</sup> Peggy Cidor, “We say loud and clear: ‘Hands off our lifestyle,’” *Jerusalem Post*- Jerusalem, May 21, 2009, <http://www.jpost.com/LocalIsrael/InJerusalem/Article.aspx?id=143056>, accessed on 14/11/2011.

<sup>836</sup> Roger Friedland and Richard Hecht, *To Rule Jerusalem* (Fresno: University of California Press, 2000), 89.

their communities towards the state.<sup>837</sup> Protecting their religious identity motivates their criticism of secularism and the development of individual identity, which they consider to be the root of the community destruction. Their rejection of secular education and directing students to solely focus on studying religious texts is aimed at preserving their theological, ritualistic, scholarly, and ethnic heritage and specify their identity in the state.

The neo-fundamentalists in Iran disagree with the relatively liberal educational policies of the reformists and have either closed some of the university programmes or replaced liberal lecturers with neo-fundamentalists. For them, educational policies are an essential vehicle of identity making and include religious education as a mandatory subject in school curriculums and all university programmes. By implementing coercive educational policies that are overtly explained in the school texts the state indirectly teaches students about appropriate social behaviour. Particularly, in Iran and Israel, religious education is concerned with teaching the “appropriate” roles and responsibilities of women in a social environment. In educational environment, they attempt to shape their behaviour by insisting on a religious style of dressing which primarily eradicates differences and undermines individual identity.

### Gender Politics and Religious Identity<sup>838</sup>

Securitized Messianism cultivates theological and political debates over gender equality in Israel and Iran. Gender equality is a complex issue with many social and political implications in both states. In the Revolutionary Phase women actively participated in mobilizing, campaigning, and advocating revolutionary ideals on equality and on egalitarian society. The image of an ideal revolutionary woman was no longer limited to the performance of religious rituals and her revolutionary identity extended her responsibilities to the fulfilling of the goals of Revolutionary Messianism. In Israel, early secular Zionism had a strong tradition of gender equality supported by leftwing communists, secular European Jews and the culture of communal production in Labor Kibbutzim which is reflected in the state’s secular policies on gender equality. In the State-Maintenance Phase, the neo-fundamentalists have forcefully opposed the passing of progressive civil laws such as civil unions and secular marriages, predominantly in order to uphold their full control over the legal and ritualistic aspects of marriage and family laws.

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<sup>837</sup> Itzhak Pindrus is the Mayor of Betar Illit, a Lithuanian Hassid and a member of the Degel Hatorah part of the United Torah Judaism party. Ibid.  
<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1242212435248&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>, accessed on 14/11/2011.

<sup>838</sup> Mottahedeh believes that changes in the social and political life of the people in the post-revolutionary context are represented in the Iranian cinema, which reflects a drastic shift from the pre-revolutionary modes. N. Mottahedeh, *Representing the Unpresentable: Historical Images of National Reform from the Qajars to the Islamic Republic of Iran*, Gender, Culture, and Politics in the Middle East, (US: Syracuse University Press, 2008), 189.

A marriage in Israel can proceed only after compulsory sessions with a state Rabbi, the performance of compulsory Mikvah (religious bath) rituals, and the affirmation of religious marriage rituals by a Rabbi.<sup>839</sup> In her study of the Mikvah ritual Esther Fuchs argues that the compulsory performing of Mikvah laws associates the body of women with sets of religious icons, discourses of purity, and ultimately, politicizes it.<sup>840</sup> She notes that legislating these rituals and customs connects women to particular sets of cultural values and symbols that have disciplinary functions.<sup>841</sup> The politicizing of the body of women and limiting their role to providing domestic services are propagated by religious parties as well as communities. Religious communities discourage the political participation of women and define their roles in relation to their maternal responsibilities and as the backbone of their families.<sup>842</sup> In spite of the lack of any official law on the code of clothing for women, religious communities apply strict norms for clothing in their suburbs. Hasidic communities discourage secular education for women and only a few of their educational centres accept female students. These policies have significantly influenced the policies of neo-fundamentalists.<sup>843</sup> Menachem Freidman, in his study of women's rights in Israel, argues that for both Heredi and Hasidic women the issues of employment and maintaining a traditional family structure have been a challenge since the formation of the state.<sup>844</sup> The Heredi community urges women to permit their husbands to devote as much time to their religious studies as possible, while the state encourages the women to take jobs and participate in the workforce.

In Iran, it is the integration of Shari'a with civil law in the Constitution that has resulted in many discriminatory laws, such as marriage and custody laws, and created a similar situation to the Heredi communities in Israel, but the development of civil laws in Iran can not be compared with Israel. The Islamic Republic is a non-democratic state and excludes any voice that does not submit to the power of Jurisprudential Leadership or requests any form of equality. In addition to its non-democratic laws, the power of the Jurisprudential Leader, who appoints the head of the judiciary system and the members of the Guardian Council, Constitutionally limits any attempts to involve other voices in legal debates. The legal system thus becomes an ineffective institution with no executive power over the leadership and its associated militia and institutions.

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<sup>839</sup> Yair Ettinger, "Justice Minister Bill Enhances Rabbinic Court Powers," Ha'aretz, June 21, 2009, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1087095.html>, accessed on 30/05/2009.

<sup>840</sup> E. Fuchs, *Israeli Women's Studies: A Reader* (London: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 150-55. H. Sedghi, *Women and Politics in Iran: Veiling, Unveiling, and Reveiling* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 202-214.

<sup>841</sup> E. Fuchs, *Ibid*, 153.

<sup>842</sup> Y. Yishai, *Between the Flag and the Banner: Women in Israeli Politics* (NY: SUNY Press, 1997), 177-183.

<sup>843</sup> David Rudge, Itim, "Separate Sexes on Ascent to Mt. Meron," *Jerusalem Post – Jerusalem*, May 8, 2001, 5.

<sup>844</sup> M. Freidman, *The Position of Haredi Women in Israel*, in Shimon Shetreet, *Women in Law* (NY: Kluwer Law International, 1998), 335.

This section uses the compulsory rule of Hijab in Iran as an example of the social and political implications and the nature of such discriminatory laws.<sup>845</sup> The rule of compulsory Hijab is not solely discriminatory for Muslim women, rather it affects people in all groups, classes, faiths, and ethnicities in Iran. The state's implementation of compulsory Hijab politically affirms the legitimacy of Shi'a religious groups as the ultimate authority in the legal system and as the agent for the Islamization of Iran.<sup>846</sup> Because in the State-Building Phase the issue of Hijab became a security issue the state treats any theological or political debate on the legitimacy of the law as a threat. During wartime a common piece of state propaganda on Hijab was taken from the will of a "martyr", Abulfadhl Sangtarashan who said: "You, my sister ... your Hijab is mightier than my red blood".<sup>847</sup> The slogan covered many walls in Iranian streets in order to emphasize the importance of submission to the law of compulsory Hijab to protect Iran's national security.

The Islamic Republic considered the securitization of Hijab to be a political as well as a religious priority.<sup>848</sup> The Revolutionary Guards and the Basij were the two forces who accepted the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of the law, punishing those who defied it.<sup>849</sup> By this decision the state gave executive power to these forces and gradually built a parallel police force in the country. The significance of this shift was that both the Basij and Revolutionary Guards were loyal to the Jurisprudential Leadership and not to the Constitution. Both forces developed into well trained armed forces during the Iran/Iraq war with close economic and political ties with the state. As religious military forces, they are also connected with religious schools and mosques. Neither the Revolutionary Guards nor the Basij report to parliament or have any obligation to be transparent or to obey legal procedures. Members of the Basij consider their mission to be the safeguard of religion and stop the development of civil society.

For the fundamentalists and neo-fundamentalists, compulsory Hijab remained a security priority in the State-Building Phase and State-Maintenance Phase. It paved the way for the strengthening of the power of the two forces over legislative, administrative, and legal systems. They attacked universities and dormitories to show the reformists their power of obstructing the implementation of any of the Constitutional laws that would limit the power of the Jurisprudential Leader by increasing the power of citizens. Their responsibility to control Hijab has provided them with the opportunity to police citizens. Although their policing policies violate the civil rights stipulated in Articles 23, 24, 27, and 29 of Iran's

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<sup>845</sup> Homosexuals have no rights in Iran. "Ahmadinejad: No homosexuals in Iran," AFP – Sep 24, 2007

<http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5hATGOzv6YSmgeMY1zdYbdpyrG2cw>

<sup>846</sup> F. Milani, *Veils and Words: the Emerging Voices of Iranian Women Writers* (NY: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 4.

<sup>847</sup> M. Kar, *Women, the Victims of the Iranian Revolution*, personal website, March 5, 2010, <http://www.mehrangizkar.net/english/archives/000520.php>, accessed 08/03/2010.

<sup>848</sup> H. Sedghi, *Women and Politics in Iran: Veiling, Unveiling, and Reveiling* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 199.

<sup>849</sup> *Ibid*, 214.

Constitution, they have not been held responsible for their actions.<sup>850</sup> The ideological position of the Jurisprudential Leadership obligates Khameneii to unconditionally support and fund their control of Hijab. Monitoring, controlling, and administering Hijab has reinforced the strategic alliance between the fundamentalist Ayatollahs, the traditional bazaar, and those who view compulsory Hijab as a precondition for a Shi'a utopia.<sup>851</sup>

In addition to the Revolutionary Guards and Basij, the leadership encourages the faithful to participate in the monitoring of women's Hijab in the street, religious seminaries, national media, and mosques.<sup>852</sup>

The majority of propaganda claims that forcing women to wear Hijab expresses the devotion of the Iranian people to Islam and secures the ideals of the Islamic Republic.<sup>853</sup> The faithful encourage the government to enforce the rule with coercion, to prove their devotion to the Jurisprudential Leader and the state's messianic ideals. However, while nearly all legal political factions agree on the enforcement of compulsory Hijab they disagree over strategies. The hardliners propagate coercion as the best social strategy while reformists see coercion as an inept strategy that could trigger public dissatisfaction with government policies, and notably, alienate the public from religion.

Since Khatami's presidency, the reformists have questioned the effectiveness of policing of the Hijab in Iran.<sup>854</sup> They argue that decades of coercion and the use of violence and enforcement have not led to the successful implementation of compulsory Hijab.<sup>855</sup> Fundamentalists and neo-fundamentalists relate the inefficiency of the system of enforcing the law relating to Hijab to the state's compromises. In order to resolve the problem, they suggest, the government should use measures that are more forceful than previously used.<sup>856</sup> Iranian fundamentalists refuse to sign the International Convention for Gender Equality and support the law of polygamy. Most of the participants in the civil campaign "One-million Signatures for Ending Discrimination against Women" have been imprisoned while women's political rights have been severely violated.<sup>857</sup> Women are poorly represented in Iran's judicial system; they cannot become Ayatollahs, a Jurisprudential Leader, the president, or even a judge. Iranian women's rights groups have been struggling for decades to change the radically sexist laws of the Islamic Republic but the integration of Shari'a into national laws has left them stigmatized and classed as threats to

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<sup>850</sup> Article 23 of the Constitution: [http://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/ir00000\\_.html](http://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/ir00000_.html) , accessed on 24/03/2010.

<sup>851</sup> H. Sedghi, *op. cit.*, 214.

<sup>852</sup> *Ibid*, 209.

<sup>853</sup> *Ibid*, 219.

<sup>854</sup> In 1998, Abdullah Nouri, Khatami's former Interior Minister publically announced the inefficiency of enforcing compulsory Hijab law in Iran. See: Sarah F. D. Ansari, Vanessa Martin, and Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, *Women, Religion and Culture in Iran* (London: Routledge, 2002), 187.

<sup>855</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>856</sup> R. Afshari, *Human Rights in Iran: the Abuse of Cultural Relativism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 268.

<sup>857</sup> Amnesty International, *Amnesty International Report 2008: The State of the World's Human Rights* (Ottawa, ON: Amnesty International Publications, 2007), 139-141.

national security. Women are obliged to marry and divorce based on religious laws and do not have the right to travel or work without their father's or husband's permission.

## Conclusion

In the State-Building Phase, this chapter has argued, the securitization of messianism enabled the states to reconcile the tensions between non-religious and religious citizens through coercive and intentional laws. In this phase, security issues were the main rationale for determining any policy regarding civil rights. The State-Maintenance Phase not only reshaped the direction of the states' politics, it also demanded a redefinition of the role of the armed forces in society.

In both cases, the de-securitization of the State-Maintenance Phase weakened the power of the revolutionary elite and strengthened the position of the emerging political groups. It further politicised messianism in the social context in order to reconcile the tension between the political and collective religious identities of individual citizens. Globalization challenged this strategy with new information technologies. The development of information technology has enabled individuals to develop an autonomous individual identity, free from the coercion of the state or their ethnic and/or religious communities. The combination of these factors provides an environment in which individuals can form new and autonomous civil groups and become influential social forces. The emerging neo-fundamentalist groups encourage religious citizens themselves to monitor societies' moral norms in order to fulfil the ideals of Revolutionary Messianism. The central role of individual political participation in the initial, highly idealistic, revolutionary vision of citizenship, transforms in the State-Building Phase to a submissive role. Their participation in politics is to express their support for the states in defending their geographical territory. In the State-Maintenance Phase the rise of neo-fundamentalist political groups, the de-securitization of Revolutionary Messianism, and the spread of communication technology again transformed the role of the citizen in the state.

Although in both societies, Securitized Messianism defines the role of citizens in the State-Building Phase, there are several factors that make the transformation in the State-Maintenance Phase less problematic in Israeli society. The first factor is the existence of an immediate security threat that unifies the society. The second factor is the self-imposed isolation of the influential Israeli religious communities, which although temporary, has eased the tensions between religious and non-religious groups. The third factor is the political structure of the state that eliminates the possibility of silencing any group's political voice. Furthermore, the democratic approach of the state towards the exchange of information, the press, fair and regular elections, and political competition further reduce social tensions. While in legal terms, Arab citizens of the state enjoy similar rights to Jewish citizens, in the

areas of education, marriage laws, and employment in civil services there is a large gap between the two groups.<sup>858</sup>

None of the abovementioned factors could be applied to Iran's case. The last conventional war in Iran finished over two decades ago and there has been no immediate threat to its border since. There is no physical separation between people with different faiths or ethnicity. In Iran, religious and non-religious citizens live together in neighbourhoods. They are neither able to nor are supportive of forming isolated communities. The superior position of the conservative religious social groups in the state's securitization project, thus, created an exclusive social ideology in which the non-religious citizens and those citizens who have another faith have been banned from political participation and become the subject of discriminatory policies. The end of the war intensified the domestic internalization of the state's militarily orientated policies. For example, the state silences and discriminates against Iran's dissenting ethnic and religious groups while the Guardian Council engineers and manipulates elections in its favour. The continuation of the coercive policies in the State-Maintenance Phase has delegitimized the ideological foundations of the revolution.

The Jurisprudential Leader, fundamentalists, and neo-fundamentalists view any factor that facilitates the development of an individual identity as evidence of the West's cultural invasion of the Islamic Republic and a security threat to the state. To them, the development of civil society increases the risk of secularisation and liberalism. Through the spread of electronic communication technology, the state's security system has become incapable of controlling the citizens' political activities or their private lives. Therefore, Securitized Messianism, which acted as a deterrent strategy in the State-Building Phase, loses its function in the State-Maintenance Phase and fails to ensure the legitimacy of the Jurisprudential Leader in the new security environment. The 2009 post presidential election uprising in Iran confirmed that the continued enforcement of coercive policies can unify opposition from various groups. Access to communication technologies enabled the opposition groups to create a front that targeted the Jurisprudential Leadership as the cause of social and political unrest.

In the social context securitization limits the utopian vision of a messianic state and produces coercive policies that aim to form a singular portrait of theology and national collective identity. Within the discourse of Politicised Messianism the criticism of state policies could be a threat to religious communities. In Iran, after the war, the state failed to re-define the boundary between religion and

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<sup>858</sup> Yoav Stern, "Olmert Decries 'Deliberate and Insufferable' Discrimination against Arabs," Ha'aretz, November 12, 2008, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/olmert-decries-deliberate-and-insufferable-discrimination-against-arabs-1.257103>, accessed 12/11/ 2011. Also see: "The Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law (temporary provision) 5763 – 2003," and Human Rights Watch, Israel Second Class Discrimination Against Palestinian Arab Children in Israel's School, 2001, 3, [http://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/citizenship\\_law.htm](http://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/citizenship_law.htm), accessed 12/11/ 2011.

politics. Consequently, the assimilation of individual identity in theology and politics has presented the greatest challenge to the state, its religious institutions, and inevitably religion, in the social context. This shift in the understanding of religion and politics and the resultant subordinate authority of religious leaders and institutions has limited the power of clergy in both societies. The Iranian and Israeli states respond to critiques or demands for civil rights with reference to an enemy that has a flexible reference in theological language but a unifying function in society. This combination creates the situation in which religious institutions lose their autonomy and develop a mutual dependency on the conservative political group; the existence of one is conditional upon the existence of the other. Thus, religious institutions not only theologically explain the political decisions of the state, they also adopt a secular language to define messianism.



## Conclusion

This thesis has argued that in the Revolutionary Phase in Israel and Iran the incorporation of messianic theology in revolutionary ideology resulted in an increase in the role of religious institutions in politics and society. The revolutionary narratives of messianism were politically inclusive and theologically exclusive. They eliminated the possibility of the development of passive and apolitical messianism and radically limited theology to a political theory. Revolutionary Messianism linked their idealised image of a state with messianic features to modern political thought. Analysing their differences in this phase allows us to explain the relationship between religion and politics in the post-revolutionary states. Iranians and Jewry had different encounters with secularism and these affected the process of urbanization, industrialization, and institutionalization in each case. Revolutionary Messianism also gave rise in each case to a unique relationship between politics and religion. Revolutionary Messianism did not originate in isolation, and contextual factors such as technology and economy played a central role in shaping them. These contextual factors have encouraged their unique ideological and political definitions regardless of their similar messianic theology. Iran's 1978-1979 revolution was the continuation of the Constitutional Revolution and a response to the failure of the monarchy in implementing political and social justice. Khomeini's Jurisprudential Leadership theory incorporated secular nationalism in Shi'a messianic discourse, but this could be merely functional in a modern bureaucratic state. In Israel, the Zionist revolution understood the establishment of a state to be the only solution to the liberation of Jews from genocide, anti-Semitism, and political oppression. While in Iran, religious groups dominated revolutionary discourse, in Israel European Jewish intellectuals became the revolutionary elites.

In both cases, the revolution idealised an economic utopia that resonated with some Marxist ideas, but this vision was closely connected with nationalism and messianic theology. Revolutionists understood the ending of political oppression as the advent of the redemption of individuals. Political redemption would inspire state policies and one's commitment to revolutionary goals could guarantee their fulfilment. Revolutionary Messianism united the two distinct pre-state legalist and esoteric messianic traditions. Both called their revolutions blessings and substituted political activism for the mystical dimension of redemption. The Revolutionary Phase transformed the concept of a redeeming "Time" from an apocalyptic event to a progressive political process for an ideal vision of unity within a bureaucratic state.

In Israel, the revolutionaries changed their theological approach from an agent-based to an institutional system through changing the reference of authority from an individual Messiah to a messianic age. The Knesset and judiciary systems were in the service of the state for the success of Revolutionary

Messianism fulfilling spiritual redemption. Zionism connected the traditional Jewish notion of a messianic utopia and legitimised the incorporation of messianic theology into pragmatic policies. This shifting of the reference of authority to revolutionary agents made Revolutionary Messianism an exclusively revolutionary ideology and because Ashkenazi secular groups were the main revolutionaries they became the political, and by proxy, the religious agents for the fulfilment of messianic goals. In Iran, partly due to the lack of a strong civil society or political party, Khomeini's theory of Jurisprudential Leadership gained momentum. It remained faithful to an agent-based messianic tradition and while it resolved the traditional theological debates over the existence of the state in the time of occultation it linked the success of the revolutionary ideals to submission to the rule of a Jurisprudential Leader. This theological difference is the reason for the establishment of a democratic political system in Israel and a totalitarian state in Iran. Their different interpretations of a similar theology shaped the theological and political structure of the revolutionary states with utopian economic and political ideals.

In the State-Building Phase, in both states, securitization united various revolutionary hermeneutics, producing a messianic narrative centred on the sacredness of land. It contextualised security threats, combining the religious and political identities as the source of state legitimacy. In both cases it made the legitimacy of these states, inescapably, security orientated. In these post-revolutionary states securitization could not be an exclusively political project as both heavily rely on religious legitimation. It united different legal theological views by further relating the hermeneutics of the sacred texts to Revolutionary Messianism with a strong nationalist tone. This dependency was not uni-directional. Securitization gives these states absolute legitimacy for identifying political and religious threats, making religious figures and institutions dependant on the state. Securitized Messianism, also, dominated political factionalism and politically and theologically limited messianic theology to the states' security projects. Both used religious symbols to affirm their stand on territorial sovereignty and emphasized safeguarding religion in their securitization projects, thus, securitization institutionalised fundamentalism.

In Israel the stronger bond between messianism and state legitimacy motivated the spread of Kookism. Notions of autonomy and independence that had united Zionists for a revolution, united them in a war against the neighbouring Arab states. Their victory characterised the state nationalism of Israel. Securitization transferred the responsibility of protecting Jewish communities from religious leaders to the state and the state's Defence Forces. It reshaped traditional party politics in Israel and by further connecting the political and religious identities of the state, gave rise to new politically active religious groups. These gradually ended the dominance of traditional Labor secular Zionism over Israeli politics. Religious Zionism effectively paved the way for the transition of Revolutionary Messianism to a political ideology which presented a comprehensive picture of the nation in history and generated a sense of

political continuity that required state protection. As a result, it united the culturally diverse society in Israel, affirmed their right to establish a sovereign state, and ultimately re-enforced the state legitimacy.

In Iran, Revolutionary Messianism positioned the protection of the legitimacy of Khomeini's Jurisprudential Leadership as the core issue of the state's security policy. Khomeini used the war against Iraq and Iran's economic isolation as a means for the success of his securitization project. These factors enabled him to re-read Revolutionary Messianism and create a new ideological structure for the state's security policies. His rule and definition of Iran's security goals combined religion and politics and changed revolutionary idealism into a totalitarian ideology. This shift produced a closed political system which became unavoidably fragile. Failure in establishing a pluralistic and open political system resulted in the impotence of the state in absorbing new political ideas and parties. The rise of any political group became a potential security threat. Because of the agent-based interpretation of messianism, securitization justified the implementation of coercive policies and the establishment of a one party political system.

The institutionalization of Securitized Messianism in states' legal systems results in the de-privatization of religion. Securitization reconciles the inconsistencies between legal bureaucracy and theology because it allows the states to resolve these issues in a security context. It makes defining clear boundaries between legal and religious laws an ambiguous security discourse, but this ambiguity is the key to its efficiency. In I&I this relationship between political and religious sources of state legitimacy transforms traditional religious trust relations. In these states, the legal system is in need of ideological and pragmatic religious legitimacy which would succeed only if the boundaries between law and religion are ambivalent. Both states, link the ethics of their legal systems to Revolutionary Messianism and through this association revolutionary elites and religious leaders establish their authority within the legal systems.

The de-privatization of religion takes different forms in Israel and Iran due to their different political structures. Israel is a democratic state with a pluralistic parliamentary politics and free media. This structure has produced various public spaces for negotiating legal matters. Israel still faces sporadic conflict with Palestinians which functions as a unifying force and facilitates negotiating domestic issues. The development of neo-fundamentalist parties in Israel, like Shas, could not be possible without the de-securitization of the Cold War bipartisan regional security environment. The post Cold War environment broke down the traditional arrangement of religion and politics and gave rise to new policies that addressed security issues in the new settlements moving Israel from one securitization project to another. The neo-fundamentalists considered the implementation of Halakhah to be the necessary factor for the success of the state in its securitization projects. Consequently, Israel has been

successful in the institutionalization of Securitized Messianism in its legal system. The political participation of the Sephardim and de-securitization intensified political and social tensions between the non-religious and religious groups over national laws and security issues, such as territorial concessions and peace with the Palestinians. The state's support of an idealist approach towards progressive messianism rather than an agent-based messianism and the focus of religious Zionists on the messianic age have been the grounds for Israel's pluralistic party politics.

In Iran, Khomeini's death and the transition of political power from Khomeini to Khamenei limited the goals of the state's securitization projects to the protection of the Jurisprudential Leadership position. This transition fragmented the political system, in the late 1990s, during the presidency of Khatami, who insisted on the normalization of Iran's political ties with the United States of America and the de-securitization of the relationship by changing the reference to 'enemy'. Khamenei vehemently opposed Khatami's attempts at institutionalization, as this could have resulted in limiting Khamenei's power by the Constitution. The lack of a charismatic authority had two political consequences for Khamenei. First, it closely connected Khamenei to the neo-fundamentalists who argued that the authority of a Jurisprudential Leader is identical to the authority of the twelfth Imam, and secondly, it further positioned Jurisprudential Leadership at the centre of political problems ultimately weakening the Islamic Republic. This situation demonstrates the failure of the state in both the beginning of a new securitization project and the politicization of messianism.

Similarly in Israel and Iran, neo-fundamentalists demand radical changes in the political culture of the state. Although they support security-orientated policies, and the states' ideological position on the fulfilment of Revolutionary Messianism, they strongly disagree with the elitist culture of the State-Building Phase. In both cases they use foreign policy, and by criticizing the effectiveness of the revolutionary elites' security policies, they oppose revolutionary elitism. They view these policies as an obstacle to the fulfilment of the states' messianic goals. They are strongly anti-liberal and understand the messianic goals of the states to be predominantly political. Specifically they stress the states' responsibilities in establishing a just political and economic system that aims to implement religious laws. They perceive the success of the states to be dependent on the strengthening of religious identity, and their failure in implementing economic justice to be the result of political and economic elitism. They are populist parties and use messianic symbols to legitimize their political positions. Their flexible use of these symbols has limited theology to a political instrument for rejecting secularism, instigating the development of multiple discourses on messianism within the states' political sphere.

In Israel the Shas party criticizes the secular parties for the Oslo Accord negotiations, the Disengagement Plan, and for settlement issues, attributing to Ashkenazi non-religious statist parties the

failure of ensuring Israel's security. It was the Shas' position on security issues and their stress on the sacredness of the land that have resulted in their growing power in Israeli politics. Shas views political participation and competition as a means for the fulfilment of the messianic goals of the state. Contrary to the traditional non-statist religious parties, Shas not only support the development of state institutions but they also fervently participate in party politics and elections, and consider the state as a pragmatic and effective instrument for messianism. Shas associates the fulfilment of the messianic goals with the development of a progressive theocracy and egalitarian governing system.

In Iran, the neo-fundamentalists have denounced the policies of the revolutionary elites and blamed them for Iran's failure in resolving the challenges to the country's nuclear programmes. They argue that the progress of the Islamic Republic to an ideal messianic state should be the goal of the state's politics and a messianic utopia could only materialize when the messianic goals of the Shi'a tradition become the blueprint for the state's security policies; the state's elitism deflects the revolution from its genuine goals of implementing economic and political justice. The study of party politics in Iran's last presidential election demonstrates that although all parties have remained loyal to Khomeini, they disagree over the ultimate source of state legitimacy. The reformists considered the Constitution to be the source of legitimacy; the neo-fundamentalists positioned the Jurisprudential Leader as the decisive source for state legitimacy. The position of the neo-fundamentalists ultimately undermines the absolute rule of the Jurisprudential Leadership.

In Israel and Iran, the states acknowledge the rights of monotheistic religious communities. They have, however, adopted an official religion with a specific narrow interpretation of their civil laws. In its totalitarian manifestation in Iran, the state laws become discriminatory against the majority of Iranians; in its democratic manifestation in Israel, laws are ineffective in addressing discriminatory attitudes in the religious suburbs. The politicization of messianism within the state's institutions brings the clergy under the control of the state, limiting their autonomy. Their dependence on the state undermines their traditionally elitist status in society. Instead of clergy, political theologians and theological politicians grow to be the main groups who manage the appropriation of the core values of Securitized Messianism to state policies. For both, a symbolic representation of security in messianic theology elicits a broader definition of security threat that goes beyond political issues and enables the state to target any specific group as a threat to its security, and by proxy, the security of religion. In both cases the politicization of messianism instigates disparity between religious and non-religious citizens by giving the first group an advantageous moral position in society.

Examining their gender politics and the spread of new communication technologies highlights the challenges that the construction of a collective identity poses to the states in I&I, and explains the

methods that each adopts for resolving these. In Israel these challenges are visible in their understanding of the responsibilities of the state to religious and non-religious groups. While religious groups see the crucial duty of the state to be protecting religion from any violations, including the secular and non-religious public, the secularists understand the main responsibility of the state to be the development of an independent, nationalist, and wealthy environment. The secularists reject the creation of a theocracy by legal coercion. Israel is a signatory of the UNCDW, and has adopted progressive gender politics at the state level. In the religious communities, however, traditional sexist laws are dominant. The growing power of the religious parties in the state has created inconsistencies between gender equality on the ground in real politics and in state policies. With gender politics, although women are not limited in their social and political activities by the state, they have to perform religious rituals and adhere to religious laws. The same situation is valid for the state policies regarding the spread of communication technologies in religious suburbs. While the state heavily invests in the growth of industry, religious communities are reluctant to use new communication technologies.

Applying the analytical model of this thesis allows us to see how Rabbi Kook embraced secular Zionism in his theology, and established religious settlements. The inclusivism of his theology gave rise to three different political groups. The first is the secular Zionists whose understanding of the state and its messianic responsibilities resonate Benjamin's view on theology, becoming the mainstream dominant Labor party in the State-Building Phase. The second are supporters of the National Religious party who subscribes to the formation and development of the state but are predominantly religious. They cooperated with the secular Labor party having similar views on the significance of the political and economic developments. The third is the non-statist religious parties of the State-Building Phase, such as Agudat Yisrael, who had fundamentally different views on the state's messianic responsibilities and its theological importance. By applying this analytical model we can see how these radically different political views have given rise to the birth and development of a new form of religious political party, like Shas, that is nationalist and religious.

In Iran, this model clarifies in which areas the system fragments and why. It also demonstrates that because of the integration of religion and politics, the fragmentation of the political system results in the fragmentation of religion. This analytical model clearly explains why such fragmentation happens and what would be its long-term consequences. The Islamic Republic deems the religious responsibilities of citizens to be an indispensable part of their civil duties. As a totalitarian state they coerce adherence to Shari'a and view these policies a solution to the increasing tension in society that directly or indirectly targets the state's legitimacy. Two factors contribute to political fragmentation and de-sacralise messianism: the spread of a global notion of citizenship and the rise of neo-fundamentalism that has further encouraged the incorporation of messianism in everyday politics. The spread of communication

technologies poses new challenges to religious groups by developing a virtual autonomous identity which could neither be stopped by isolation techniques nor be undermined by coercive policies. The state uses the flexibility of religious language to stigmatize civil groups and activities as security threats and thus has internalized its securitization project. The social implications of the transition of Securitized Messianism to Politicised Messianism create a wide gap between religious and non-religious groups. These implications not only separate religious from non-religious citizens but also instigate growing political problems between the fundamentalists and the neo-fundamentalists and between the latter and the Jurisprudential Leader.

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