Comparative Perspectives on Civil Religion, Nationalism, and Political Influence

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Chapter 1
Introduction:
Civil Religion and Nationalism on a Godly–Civil Continuum

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THE CHARACTERISTICS OF RELIGION

Scholars have been trying to understand the social expression of religion at least since the nineteenth century (Spilka et al., 2003: 3-23). The scholarly discussion about religion reflects a divide between those who maintain substantive definitions of religion and those who hold functional views. Substantive definitions relate to the content of the religious phenomenon, referring mainly to the sacred (belief, doctrine, devotion, rituals, agents), whereas functional definitions point to the utility or the effect that religion has (community, immortality). (Fursech, Repstad, 2006: 16-20; Droogers, 2009: 263-269).

Several definitions from scholarly literature have been considered for the purpose of operationalizing the term of religion in this study. One definition was Max Muller's proposal that religion is:

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[…] a mental faculty which […] in spite of sense and reason, enables man to apprehend the infinite under different names and under varying disguises (Muller, [1880] 1930: 21).

Keith Yandell proposed that religion is:

[…] a conceptual system that provides an interpretation of the world and the place of human beings in it, bases an account of how life should be lived [… and sets] rituals, institutions, and practices (Yandell, 1999: 16).

Talcott Parsons and Anthony Wallace described the prototype of religion as having certain qualities, seven that are essential: (1) A belief in the existence of a divine entity, supernatural and metaphysical, that rules the world; (2) A solid doctrine that constructs the framing of reality and forms the moral codes according to which everything in life can be explained; (3) Total devotion, expressed often by personal willingness for self-sacrifice; (4) Public rituals and ceremonies; (5) A cohesive community; (6) Immortality; (7) Social agents and institutions that continually maintain religion and ensure that all the other attributes do not erode (Parsons, 1979: 62-65; Wallace, 1966: 52-101).

1. A Belief in the Existence of a Divine Entity

All religions are characterized first and foremost by a complex system of beliefs in a divine or superhuman power, and a sense of dependence on a power that is beyond human command (Radcliff-Browne, 1956: 157). Religion is a universal feature of human culture in the sense that every society recognizes the existence of unsolved and awe-inspiring extraordinary manifestations of reality (Lowie, 1936: xvi). Thus, the practices and rituals that are typical for religion derive from a belief that a divine superpower, a supernatural being, controls the universe. The basic common denominator of all religions is the belief that there are spirits that inhabit an invisible world and people have a relationship with them (Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi, 1975; Beit-Hallahmi, 1989; Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle, 1997). William James portrayed the essence of faith in a divine entity as an acceptance of the existence of some parallel cosmos:

[…] there stretches beyond this visible world an unseen world of which we now know nothing positive, but in its relation to which the true significance of our present mundane life consists (James, [1897] 1956: 51).

The deep faith in mystic forces enables religion to act as a mediator between the invisible supernatural, godly world and the visible, natural, human one. This postulate as a definer of religion provides the researcher with an initial cross-cultural clear distinction between religious and non-religious ideologies and behavior (Beit-Hallahmi, 2006: 15).

2. A Solid Doctrine

The leading feature of religion is its entirety. It is a decisive set of values that bears no compromise. This array of ideas is a doctrine, typical for every religion and at the same time differing according to the specific religion. It is the religious doctrine that organizes the group affections of identity and solidarity, which form the foundations for its ability to mobilize social resources (Dow, 2007; Southwold, 1978). The power of religious doctrine explains not only the relationship of religiousness with collective action, but also the believers' readiness to make costly personal sacrifices and even to participate in acts of violence (Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle, 1997).

Religious doctrine is made solid and coherent through the use of religious texts. Within these texts, three traits of doctrinal cohesiveness are prominent: (i) integration: most elements hang together and cross-reference each other; (ii) deduction: by considering the general principles, one can infer the religious position on a whole variety of situations; (iii) stability: believers get the same messages from different sources on which the religious tradition is founded (Boyer, 2001: 278).

3. Total Devotion

The vitality of religion, as scholars have realized, stems from its capacity to be absolute. It serves as a complete and infinite value system (Kishimoto, 1961: 236-240). One's religion is, therefore, one's dedication to a certain purpose that might often even determine his course of life (Ferre, 1970). Understanding the totality within which religion operates is illustrated in the logic of some common idiomatic expressions. When someone is personally obsessive about sport, for example, we might say something like "soccer is his religion". The word "fanatic", describing someone who is filled with an extreme and uncritical enthusiasm or zeal, is derived from the Latin word "fannum" that translates into "temple" and stands for a religious source for devotion (Rapoport, 1991). Religion has the capacity to induce commitment and dedication exceeding any other social mechanism (Argyle, 1970: 116-117).

4. Public Rituals and Ceremonies

Religious rituals are a set of practices, that adherents of a religion are expected to perform, through which the participants relate to the sacred (Lessa ans Vogt, 1979: 220). Rituals are repeated formal patterns of social behavior, which are expressive and symbolic. Religious rituals tend to attach value to objects and to events which, too, are important objects, or symbolically representative of such objects, that link together the people in a community (Radcliffe-Browne, 1979; Argyle, 2000: 116-117).

Ritual is manipulative in the sense that it combines certain kinds of action with mental process. It is communicative, customary, prescribed, playful, stereotypic, and secretive. The specific actions that are taken throughout ritual include reading (silently, out loud, or both), singing, group processions, dance, and sacrifice. Rituals also include some form of union and communication with the supernatural sphere that characterizes the particular religion (Collins, 2009: 672).

Ritual constructs religion by acting as social glue; it is a vehicle for securing social unity. By making the critical acts and the social contracts of human life public and subject to supernatural sanctions, religious belief and ritual strengthens the bonds of social cohesion (Malinowski, 1979: 46; Radcliff-Browne, [1922] 1964; Glickman, 1963).

5. Community

From its etymological roots, the word “religion”, *religio* in its Latin origins, has two distinctive sources. The first one, *relegere*, from *legere*, means to bring together, to gather. This meaning recognizes that any society that chooses to group together does so on the basis of a common religion. The second etymological source is *religare*, from *ligare*, that means to tie and to bind together. This meaning indicates the moral force that is essential for controlling and regulating human beings, and points to the social regulatory practices of religion (Derrida, 1998).

The meanings and linguistic origins of religion stress its social foundations. Durkheim and others, who viewed religion as eminently social, argue that religious representations are collective ones and express collective realities. Ceremonies and rituals are actions that take place in the midst of assembled groups and are destined to excite, maintain, or recreate mental states among group members. According to the social functionalist attitude, religion attaches the individual with the solemn obligations of social life; it makes the vital ties of society’s common life sacred by turning every important human bond into a union with the divine as well. Through religion, following this reasoning, one belongs to a spiritual community, where his personal obligations to the common – be it family, tribe, or any social institution – are divine, and his devotion is total (Boodin, 1915).

6. Immortality

All religions share visions of death and recognize that we are all eventually doomed to die. The common denominator of all religions, however, is the perception that death is merely a passage to another life, and this after-life takes its various forms in different religions accordingly (Huizinga [1919] 2013: 124-125). Hence, within the religious sphere, people overcome death by a variety of techniques: their spirits do not die; they come back in another form; they wait eternally for the Last Judgment (Boyer, 2001: 203-204). Religion did not only create sacred space, where important lifecycles are determined, but it also put death in the midst of this sacred space and established it as an integral part of these lifecycles. Since prehistoric times, religions have stressed personal immortality either through the rise of one's soul to heaven or by some form of reincarnation. Additionally, promises of resurrection monopolize religions as a framework for the existence of some form of afterlife once life on earth ends (Beit-Hallahmi, 2006: 16).

7. Social Agents and Institutions

Social life tends to be ambiguous and full of conflicts; naturally, people have their doubts and differences over a variety of issues. In order to reaffirm the divine anchor of their basic beliefs, believers turn to specific persons whom they consider to have religious authority. Consequently, those who hold religious authority decisively determine courses of action and interpret the words and wishes of the Divine. By virtue of this special status, religious specialists or clergy gain the social power and he legitimacy to impose moral and normative decisions on communities of believers (Borg, 2009).

THE TERM OF CIVIL RELIGION

There is no doubt about the role that Christianity played, for example, in the eleventh century, when hundreds of thousands of Catholics were willing to take the deadly path to the Holy Land once Pope Urban II urged them to do so (Duncalf, 1909). The Crusaders were called to their death for a holy cause just like other believers throughout history. Moslems heeded a call to jihad, and were willing to sacrifice their lives for a divine purpose. Jews went to war to "sanctify His Name" rather than accept pagan beliefs.

However, the puzzle of human collective behavior and the willingness to sacrifice seems far from being solved by an inquiry that is limited to religion. There are also many examples of collective behavior that were inspired by secular motives and

ideas. Take, for instance, the strange case of Italian Fascism. On October 2, 1936, an enormous wave of rallies took place throughout Italy, with 50 percent of all Italians storming the streets and gathering in town squares to express their support of Benito Mussolini's announcement of the invasion of Ethiopia, avowing their willingness to fight. In the Piazza Venezia in Rome, crowds of ordinary Italians pushed and elbowed to get nearer the balcony where the Duce gave his speech. They shouted and screamed ecstatic replies to their leader's rhetoric appeals. Spontaneous popular enthusiasm for Fascism and for the Duce seemed to create a unitary bond between Mussolini and his followers.[1] The Duce expressed this vividly:

Blackshirts of the Revolution, men and women of Italy, Italians scattered throughout the world, across the mountains and across the oceans, listen! A solemn hour is about to strike in the history of the fatherland. Twenty million men are at this moment gathered in the piazzas through the whole of' Italy. Never in the history of mankind has there been seen a more gigantic demonstration. Twenty million men: a single heart, a single will, a single decision. […] Forty four million Italians are marching in unison with this army. [...] Never more than in this historic epoch has the Italian people revealed the force of its spirit and the power of its character (Connor, 1992: 52).

Patriotic convulsion in Fascist Italy was expressed by the people not only in crowded rallies. Women queued up to hand over their wedding rings in order to assist the government in financing the war, demonstrating an active desire to participate in the national effort at personal costs. When the government officially invited the public to donate all gold objects to the national cause, about 35 thousand kilos of gold were collected (Corner, 2010).

During the following decade nearly four million Italians served in the Italian Army of World War II, and about half a million of them lost their lives (Overy, 1995).[2] Even though historians have found criticism of the war effort amongst the high ranks of the Italian Army as well as some signs of popular disapproval, the fact remains that millions of Italians went willingly and enthusiastically to fight for the Duce and Italy. Is there a connection between the long and bloody march from Rome to Stalingrad and the Christian march to Jerusalem in the eleventh century? Which God was it that led hundreds of thousands of Italians to march to their heroic death? The answer, according to this study, lies within the continuum of forms that religion can take. In the case of Mussolini and his followers, as in the case of Nazism and Soviet Communism (Zeldin, 1969: 100-111) that flourished during the same decades, we are witnessing an extreme form of a different kind of religion that plays according to similar rules: the civil religion.

Civil religion is a term that was coined by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau, a thinker of the Enlightenment and of the French Revolution, envisioned a new form of religion that was the product of secular legislation and which united society with a spiritual foundation consisting not of God but rather of the state, its institutions and laws (Rousseau, [1762] 1960). Pride in the state, veneration for its institutions and reverence for its laws and customs should be inculcated in citizens. It was the responsibility of the state to teach moral values and a civic creed that would foster loyalty, obligation and brotherhood among its citizens. Civil religion was to be a top-down phenomenon; it was in effect a political religion, bearing a politico-religious dogma which would be inculcated into the citizens of the state by its leaders and institutions. Rousseau had an instrumental view of civil religion, as a means by which state authorities could ensure unity, loyalty and obedience (Cristi, 2001).

Durkheim perceived civil religion somewhat differently. While its purpose was in fact the same, Durkheim saw the development of a civil religion as a bottom-up process, in which civil religion was created by the people. In his last major work, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, (1912) Durkheim postulated that religion was not divinely or supernaturally inspired; it was rather a product of society (Durkheim, [1917] 2001: 43). Deriving his conclusion from a study of an Australian aborigine tribe, he noted that a religion could replace belief in a supernatural being with an earthly substitute: the public. In Durkheim's words: "The god of the clan [...] can therefore be nothing else than the clan itself" (Durkheim, [1917] 2001: 28). The deity is at its base an expression of the self-worship of the collective. Unlike Rousseau, Durkheim did not see civil religion as an instrumental political process to secure loyalty to a particular social order nor was he interested in its political utility. For Durkheim, civil religion emanates from the people themselves as an expression of self-love and serves as an agent of social cohesion; as such, it establishes the norms and values that define the social order.

During the 1930s, Talcott Parsons building upon Durkheim's notion of an allegedly godless form of religion, described American culture as being shaped by a secular style of Christianity (Parsons, 1935). Decades later, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Parsons and others brought back into use the specific term of civil religion (Coleman, 1970; Hammond, 1976; Thomas and Flippen (1972); Wimberly, 1976). Best-known and one of the first in this new wave was Parsons' student, Robert Bellah. In 1967, Bellah published his seminal article titled *Civil Religion in America* (Bellah, 1967), and evoked a new concept of social order.[3] Bellah's article electrified the scholarly community and resulted in scores of articles responding to his thesis; it stirred up a debate over civil religion in the United States. He asserted that there was in the United States an elaborate well-institutionalized civil religion, residing alongside and differentiated from churches and synagogues. According to Bellah, most Americans share a common Judeo-Christian religious base which provides

a common foundation of sanctity to their secular political institutions and to their domestic and foreign policies as well. This common base gave religious legitimacy to political authority and inspired the political process. This he found most clearly in the frequent mention of God in presidential speeches. Civil religion in the United States ascribed to ostensibly secular institutions a measure of godly reverence and sanctity that could unite and also inspire its citizens. "Defense of liberty", the Constitution Following Bellah, most contemporary academic discourse refers to the American case as the prototype of civil religion, which can then be applied to our understanding of other modern societies (Bellah, 1967; 1975).

The godly connection which provides inspiration and reverence to American secular institutions need not be present in civil religion as such. Veneration for institutions, leaders, and public symbols can be fostered by means of a secular ideology such as nationalism, or secular totalitarian ideologies such as fascism and communism. Within the framework of civil religion, not only is the almost fanatic support for Fascism understood but also the motivation of patriots throughout history to declare, each in their own language, Horace's *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*, "Sweet and fitting it is to die for the fatherland" (Grafton and Settis, 2010: 287).

Nationalism and Patriotism: Components of Civil Religion

Civil religion necessarily includes an aspect of nationalism, since it unites the nation through its role in politics (Santiago, 2009). In the name of nationalism, people have accomplished the greatest human achievements but have also executed humanity's worst atrocities and genocide. Some scholars distinguish between patriotism and nationalism, mainly because correctly or incorrectly the latter is associated with centuries of bloodshed in Europe. Maurizio Viroli, for example, differentiates between the two concepts, claiming that nationalism is exclusive whereas patriotism is generally inclusive (Viroli, 1995). Patriotism, following this distinction, puts forward affective connections with the nation, its institutions and principles, whereas nationalism spotlights chauvinism and superiority, thus giving rise to the notion that nationalism is simply a corrupt version of patriotism (de Figueiredo and Elkins, 2003). Whereas patriotism is considered a virtue, nationalism can be seen a fault. Perhaps the best illustration for this position is the assertion that nationalism is no more than patriotism's bloody sister (Schaar, 1981). Charles De Gaulle, for this matter, is quoted as having said that "patriotism means that the love towards one's countrymen comes first; nationalism means that the hatred toward others comes first" (Poper, 2004: 195).

However, this study adopts the view that patriotism, like nationalism, is an expression of a strong and uncompromising bond to the country and to the people, and a resolute unconditional support for its values its critics. Patriotism, just like nationalism, is connected to a deep emotional identification with the country's

culture and symbols. Patriotic national pride is based on an ideal portrayal of state and nation, shaped by the political establishment in schools, media, and other social organizations (Dekker et al., 2003).

Some scholars regard nationalism not only as different in its essence from religion but also as its contradiction. British nationalism developed in the eighteenth century on the foundation of rationalism and humanism that became popular among an emerging anti-aristocratic Franco-phobic bourgeoisie that strove to establish a more egalitarian socio-political order (Newman, 1987; Greenfeld, 1992). In France, inspired by the writings of Montesquieu, Voltaire and Rousseau, the revolutionaries, made Man the yardstick of everything and God lost his primacy. Society became now, in the eyes of these political philosophers, a collection of free citizens, and the nation-state became the framework for these citizens to govern themselves. The early flowering of democracy went hand in hand with the establishment of modern nationalism. Napoleon Bonaparte used French nationalism to justify his military campaigns across Europe to distribute the enlightened ideals of the French Revolution. Indeed, Napoleon's invasions spread the concept of nationalism all over the continent (Motyl, 2001; Greenfeld, 1992).

Decades later, towards the end of the nineteenth century, anti-clericalism became practically a part of the official ideology of nations. Schoolmasters, for example, who were part of the large civil service system, were dispatched across the country to eradicate the influence of ecclesiastical teaching and teach the values of the nation. The nation-state that took shape in France, as well as in other small states in Western Europe, was a political entity with a nationalist, patriotic political ideology, devoid of religion and a secularized public sphere (Weber, 1976).

Thus, the Western European nationalism that emerged presented a secular rationalist social order. Marcel Mauss' definition reflects this approach towards nationalism:

[A nation is] a society materially and morally integrated, with a stable and permanent central authority, with determinate borders whose inhabitants possess a relative moral, mental, and cultural unity and consciously adhere to the state and its laws (Mauss, 1969: 108).

Typically, in this definition, as well as other definitions of nationalism, we do not find reference to any belief or religious doctrine. However from a functionalist perspective, not only are the two phenomena, religion and nationalism, similar in their behavioral manifestations but they are also similar in the way they affect society and influence the loyalties and commitments of their adherents. To further clarify this point we will utilize the essential qualities of religion derived from the works of Talcott Parsons and Anthony Wallace to analyze nationalism and national patriotism (Parsons, 1979; Wallace, 1966).

1. Divine Entity

National patriotism relates to loyalties to one's country and to its inhabitants. There is a wide consensus among scholars that the essence of patriotism is the supremacy of the group over its individual members. It is something that society forms in order to justify the devotion of major private resources to collective goals (Ben-Amos and Bar-Tal, 2004; Schaar, 1981; Viroli, 1995; Lewin, 2010). Hence, the core of national patriotism is devotion to a social sphere; dedication to the attitudes, actions and organizations that belong to the collective group. This almost blind devotion is similar to the unquestioned belief in the supernatural in the context of religion. It allows one to relinquish the need for a reestablishment of decisions in every junction; it is stronger than any idea of justice or ethics, and forms, therefore, the grounds for people's readiness to sacrifice for the object of their patriotic loyalty (Grodzins, 1956; Oldenquist, 1982). Religion may provide the identity that turns the community into a cohesive social entity and connects it with a particular geographical space. The combination of ethnic nationalism with national religion as in the case of Catholic Ireland, Catholic Croatia or Muslim Bosnia can make devotion to the national cause all the more powerful.

2. Doctrine

Patriotism involves an understanding that the object of patriotic loyalty, that is – the political entity, deserves dedication because of the values that it stands for. National identity includes accepting the values and ideals of one's country; national patriotism; in practice is loyalty not just to the specific political order but rather loyalty to the ideas that it stands for (Keller, 2005). Ideas such as democracy, freedom, and equality have inspired patriots throughout history to support their governments and to make sacrifices in their name.

It is important to note that there is an inherent tendency of national patriotism to go often beyond the morals of any constructed ideology and to even reject logic if need be. The well-known declaration of Stephen Decatur, the American naval officer, is perhaps one of the best examples illustrating this: "Our Country! In her intercourse with foreign nations may she always be in the right; but right or wrong, our country!" (Somerville, 1981: 571).

3. Total Devotion

National patriotic loyalties often lead to what some scholars refer to as obsessive dedication, an unconditional love, and a compulsive commitment to the object of admiration (Tamir, 1997). Willingness to sacrifice is an elementary attribute of na-

tional patriotism, the core of its beliefs and affections. This is why military service and participation in combat, where the personal risks are great, are often regarded as the ultimate expressions of patriotism (Somerville, 1981). American children are commonly taught the words of Nathan Hale, hero of the Revolutionary War, before he was executed by the British: "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country" (Seymour, 2006: 122).

4. Rituals and Ceremonies

Religions are clearly marked by public and private rituals and ceremonies that conjoin believers together into a community and celebrate past events. In patriotic nationalism too rituals commemorate moments of common history that mark milestones in shaping and crystallizing the nation. They are constructed to establish a crucial link between the private and the public. Hence, although patriotic rites were originally militaristic by nature, they later included public parades, singing the national anthem, flags, speeches of political leaders, festivals, and even pilgrimage to specific cites of importance to the collective identity (Barber, 1949; Lukes, 2004; Alexander, 2004). National rituals may also take the form of visits to national history museums and memorials of national leaders, which become in effect national shrines (Glass, 2009: 12-13). Perhaps the most outstanding shrines are the mausoleums of national leaders such as Russian Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, Chinese Mao Zedong, Vietnamese Ho Chi Minh, and the memorials of American Presidents George Washington and Abraham Lincoln.

The educational system is one of the most important spheres where patriotic celebrations are practiced. During the late nineteenth century, patriotic rituals were fused together with school practices and composed a sort of national liturgy. Rites are iterated at school annually. Before studying their country's history, school-children already internalize emotions, recount myths, and identify with the nation and its political entity (Carretero, 2011: 119-122; 186-190).

5. Community

Religion, as mentioned earlier, unites believers into a community and creates a relationship between God and His People. Similarly, national patriots share a love for their countrymen. It is not a humanitarian love that emanates from deep compassion toward all members of the human race; instead, it is directed specifically toward those who belong to one's particular group, even in cases when no prior personal acquaintance exists. Moreover, the patriot's commitment to his compatriots has nothing to do with friendship or even familiarity; most of the people for whom

he acts will remain unknown to him forever. Such patriotic loyalty, then, refers to the large national community, which extends far beyond one's personal ties and networks (Primoratz, 2002).

6. Immortality

The national patriot who sacrifices his life, or hers, for the country becomes an immortal hero. The hero's life is renewed in the nation's collective memory—and the endurance of the nation becomes a necessary condition for the promise of a lasting commemoration of the patriotic deed (Tamir, 1997). Thus, past and future are joined in patriotism; the belief that the national group is an entity rooted in history is essential for the individual to believe in its eternal future, and the belief in an eternal future of the group, promising commemoration of the patriot's sacrifice, is a reflection of its historic past (Ben-Amos, 1997).

7. Social Agents and Institutions

Empirical studies have shown the importance of trust in political leadership. In fact, there is evidence that vertical trust, reflecting people's confidence in officials who lead the military and other state institutions, is crucial in maintaining patriotic action; its absence is likely to lead to a decline in national patriotism (Lewin, 2010). National leaders often inspire high esteem and even veneration in the eyes of citizens not because of their own attributes but rather because of the revered office that they fill. "Hail to the Chief", the official anthem of the US. President played on the arrival of the President at public gatherings, creates the mystic of the office. While trust in political leadership may be declining (Hetherington, 2004), in times of crisis the public still look to their leaders to offer guidance, solace and hope for the future, a role which in the religious context is filled by the clergy. Without the presence of God, then, national patriotism seems to demonstrate the very same traits that religion does, thus forming the profound example of a secular civil religion, that is – a religion where the nation replaces God.

Social groups may perform rituals and live within a clear system of beliefs and common collective principles even with the absence of a godly entity (Robertson, 1970). As early as the 1930s, Gaetano Mosca noted that both religious institutions and political parties use the very same techniques of myths, symbols and rituals in order to manage the masses. He called it *crowd manipulation*, implying that it was all about manipulating the public and tricking people into action (Mosca, 1939). This approach towards both religion and politics sees tradition as no more than a manipulative tool to motivate and control the masses. It corresponds to Eric Hobsbawm's assertion that social practices are in fact demagogic means, consciously invented by

political actors in order to gain legitimacy for their power; rituals and other religious expressions are, hence, essentially utilitarian and instrumental (Hobsbawm, 1983).

Consequently, the border between religion and nationalism is not always a clear one, particularly since nationalism often fulfills some of the functions that are considered religious ones, like the sense of belonging to a certain group or the willingness to sacrifice for the nation. Carlton Hayes, for example, left no doubt with the title of his book *Nationalism: A Religion* and asserted clearly that nationalism was no more than a modern substitute replacing the historic form of supernatural religion (Hayes, 1960). Boyd Shafer, who wrote about nationalism in the West during the second half of the twentieth century, suggested that in modern France nation and nationalism supplied new gods, new hopes, and a means to achieve a good life, at a time of instability and insecurity (Shafer, 1955). However, even proponents of the "nationalism versus religion" theory would find it hard to deny that even if nationalism was a secular force that pushed religion aside, religion often proved to be so resilient that it co-opted nationalism under its control (Canetti-Nisim, 2003). Since religion is capable of arousing deep social allegiance, nonreligious leaders who strive for secular goals often use it manipulatively (Rapoport, 1991). The state may have the bureaucratically efficient apparatus to manage society, but it is actually religion that creates a legitimacy that is necessary to maintain the secular state (Rothi et al., 2005).

The inherent bond between traditional religion and nationalism explains why in European countries, and not necessarily only there, there is a deliberate formal connection between religions and state institutions. In fact, many states have fostered religion as the very foundation of their nationality, as in Greece, Ireland, Italy, Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries.

The Catholic Church has also proved to be powerful in post-Communist Poland. When the country's democratic constitution was formulated in 1997, the secular forces were strong enough to prevent any official status from being conferred on the Church. Nevertheless, the preamble to the Constitution reflects the notion of an accepted connection between Catholic Christianity and Polish national identity (Durham et al., 2003; Flere, 2011).

The American case of the relationship between religion and national patriotism is noteworthy. The First Amendment of the American constitution guarantees the free exercise of religion and prevents the federal government from making any law respecting an establishment of religion. However, the American creed, this large foundation of common identity, is based both on the Declaration of Independence and on the Anglo-Protestant culture of its forefathers. The religious dimension of this culture was a commitment to Christianity and its values, among them the Protestant idea of individualism (Huntington, 2004).

In many democratic countries, religion has been fostered as a synergetic vehicle for national unity. However, it is important to note that at the same time, citizens of these states, as individuals, are free not to practice religion. They regard themselves as secular because they do not practice rituals in their daily lives; however, at the same time, they identify with the Christian ethos of public institutions in the country and participate in religious rituals at key points in their lives (for example, rites of passage such as baptism, marriage and burial) provided by their church (Bruce, 1996; 2000).

Conclusively, one can see that when observing national patriotism's basic traits and when comparing patriotism to religion according to the latter's seven qualities – we are in fact witnessing diverse types of the same phenomenon, that are intertwined with each other.

There is broad understanding that civil religion contains a civil component and a religious one, but the question remains which of them is the nucleus of this phenomenon. Are we dealing with occurrences where politics takes the form of religion or are we concerned with religion that asserts itself in politics? Is civil religion a set of godly beliefs that is trimmed and supplemented to support the political order, in which case the political order is the center, or is the reverse true and civil religion is the framework within which godly religion, takes over politics in order to establish itself in the minds and hearts of the citizens? No doubt, in both cases we encounter a fusion of political life with religious imagery and practices. However, whereas the first option implies that we should examine temporal political authority the second sends us to inquire about godly authority and its political expression.

THE GODLY-CIVIL CONTINUUM

This study has set itself the task of framing the concept of civil religion in a comparative perspective. In order to do so, the point of departure of our analysis is that civil religion falls, as the simple linguistic structure of the words implies, within and without the boundaries of religion; civil religion is, put simply, a religion that is civil in its nature.

As we have explained earlier, civil religion is a way in which particular political and social arrangements acquire some kind of sacred meaning and as a result gain elevated stature and legitimacy. The civil religion borrows some of its symbols and rituals from the dominant traditional religion; consequently, it provides the social glue that unites societies around a common base (Mcclay, 2010).

Our conceptualization of a general model that puts onto one continuum civil religion and traditional (godly) religions follows the approach outlined by Emilio Gentile in his book *Politics as Religion*. Gentile concluded that religion is a phe-

nomenon that is liable to be a godly one, but it is also likely to be a non-godly one; both the godly and the non-godly religions belong to the same continuum of social occurrences. He generalizes the phenomenon as follows:

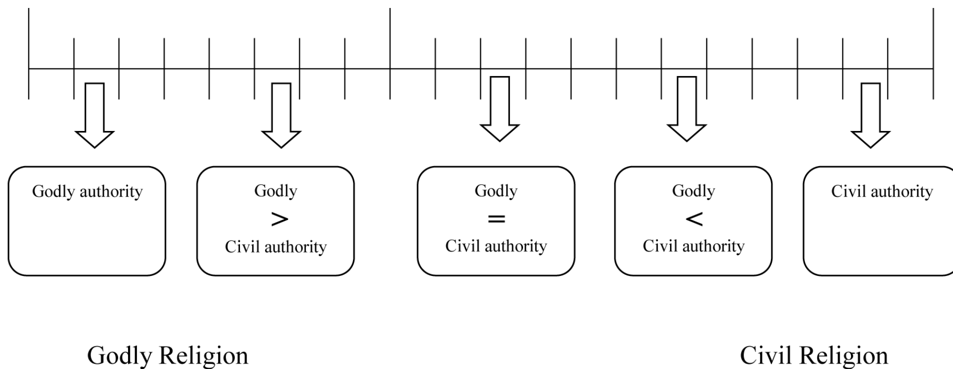
A developed system of beliefs, myths, rituals, and symbols that create an aura of sacredness around an entity belonging to this world and turn it into a cult and an object of worship and devotion. […] Any human activity from science to history or from entertainment to sport can be invested with [… sacredness] and become the object of a […] cult, thus constituting a […] religion (Gentile, 2006: 76).

The analytical model of the relations between civil and traditional religion regard them both as springing from a common prototype. The paradigm suggested here is that relations between traditional religion and civil religion are the continuance of the centuries-long struggle between godly authorities and civil authorities.[4] Hence, the two phenomena are not dichotomous; rather, there is a continuum stretching from one pole to another, with states and nations falling along a range, some of them being closer to traditional religion and others located near the opposite extremity of a secular civil religion. If we were to map out the relations between different manifestations of civil religion and the authority of the state in different societies, some would be located closer to the edge of the continuum where state and God mesh into one dominant authority, and where religious leadership and political leadership are one and others would be located on the opposite edge where legitimacy is based entirely on a secular model of civil religion. In order to be as exact as possible within the limitations of social sciences, we suggest to split the continuum into five different categories. These categories reflect the relative distribution of power that the two sources of authority have over society: (I) at one pole of the continuum – political entities where godly authority reigns; (II) political entities where a godly authority is dominant but weaker civil institutions have their own legitimacy and authority; (III) at the center of the continuum – political entities in which godly authorities and civil authorities share power; (IV)political entities where a civil authority is dominant but a weaker godly authority has some legitimacy and authority; (V) at the other pole of the continuum – political entities where civil authority reigns and religion is illegitimate and powerless.

The five different categories form two groups of religions: the godly one, where a godly authority either totally controls or dominates the political realm, and the civil one, where a secular, civil authority either shares, dominates or replaces its godly rival. The paradigm is illustrated in Figure 1.

The strength of this model is that it is an inclusive one. Combined with the definitions of religion, as outlined above, it has the capacity to form a framework for understanding a variety of social phenomena and comparing them. It is within

Figure 1. The godly-civil continuum of religions



this framework that we can refer to nationalism, patriotism and a variety of social movements, to view them as religious forms of social experience, to place them accordingly along the godly-civil continuum, and consequently to deepen our understanding of these social phenomena.

In conclusion, when we inquire why individuals and societies are ready to kill or to die for a cause, to suffer hardships or to celebrate ecstatically collective victories and achievements, a broad comparative perspective should be adopted. Consequently, by reducing our discussion to only one dimension, one that refers solely to religion, godly or civil, the linear model provides us with a conceptual framework that allows us to understand political behavior in a large comparative context. We can now take diverse social and political experiences, place them along the model's continuum and evaluate them not only in their specific historical setting but also in relation to each other.

The chapters in this book present a wide purview of civil religion and changes and challenges to civil religion in such diverse countries as Germany, Russia, Israel, Egypt and Iran. In *Chapter 2, Religion and Politics: A Troubled Relationship in a Volatile World*, Keren Sasson discusses the religious political renaissance of the Egyptian Moslem Brotherhood during the 2011 Arab Spring in Egypt. With an object to explain religious revival in an era of globalization and the political success or failure of religious movements in their domestic spheres, Sasson defines the conditions under which relations between religious movements and the political establishment will be conflictual or reconciled.

The theoretical and empirical sections of Sasson's chapter offer an interesting perspective on the linkage between religion and politics in the developing world, particularly among non-democratic, or quasi-democratic countries, as found in the Arab Middle East. Sasson shows how in the age of globalization and modernization,

the renewed relations between religion and politics is characterized by a complex dualism of conflict and reconciliation, and how the political trajectories of religious movements are contingent upon their ability to assimilate change and modernization into traditional religion. As she shows in the case study of the Moslem Brotherhood in Egypt, a genuine shift in the boundaries of religion, and of religious movements, must take place. A nuanced political ideology, that combines religious and secular principles needs to be adopted in order to unite successfully state and society under one leadership.

A second discussion of the utility of religion as a mechanism of political control and influence is found in Tabbasom Fanaian's chapter on the persuasion techniques of Iran's religious leader Ayatollah Khomeini. In *Chapter 3, The Theocratic Deception Trap: Khomeini's Persuasion Techniques and Communication Patterns*, Fanaian sheds light on the communication patterns and persuasion techniques used by the religious leader to convey his theocratic ideology. Fanian focuses on Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic state and first supreme leader in Iran. In order to decipher the persuasion techniques and communication patterns in Khomeini's messages, she uses a qualitative approach and content analysis to study Khomeini's texts, and applies theories of social representation, information manipulation, and what she calls "the theocratic deception trap".

Fanian analyzes the mechanisms of manipulation and control over Iranian citizens, who face many legal restrictions as well as the methods of religio-ideological indoctrination in support of theocratic authority. In his addresses to the people, Khomeini generates a discourse in which democracy and human rights are considered anti-Islamic or the enemy's conspiracy. His main method for creating related knowledge and familiarizing the unfamiliar is by the use of propositions that exaggerate the strangeness of the unfamiliar. A second technique is taken-for-granted knowledge as explained in social representation theory. Presuppositions of the religious and intellectual superiority of jurists over ordinary people and of the rightful role of Islamic government as the supreme agency for the establishment of God's dominance on earth are components of taken for granted knowledge.

Understanding the mechanisms of religion, whether led by a certain God or when structured around certain sacred but ungodly values, can enable us to comprehend not only political entities but also social movements and certain cultural manifestations. In *Chapter 4, Anti-Semitism as a Civil Religion: Progressive Paradigms in the Anti-Semitic Construction of German National Identity*, Marc Neugröschel argues that, in conceptualizing German collective identity, nineteenth-century German anti-Semitism fulfilled the function Durkheim identified as the essence and soul of religion. Rather than being a reaction to modernity, anti-Semitism, represented a progressive form of societal imagination that, in addition to appropriating the modern idea of nationalism, reflected nineteenth century beliefs in science and

anti-transcendentalism. Anti-Semitism constituted an effort to solidify the sense of national identity; the Jew was turned into a counter-image against which the nation—transcending tribal, class, and religious differences—could form its identity.

In his chapter, Neugröschel first defines the concept of anti-Semitism that he employs, viewing it as a cultural manifestation of out-group discrimination that predicates the conceptualization of collective identity on intergroup-distinctiveness. He then describes the socially-formative function of anti-Semitism in Germany, relating it to the phenomenon of religion in general and civil religion in particular. He explores the distinctively progressive aspects of anti-Semitism, revealing the paradigms and mechanisms it employed to delineate German national identity in accordance with the intellectual premises of the late enlightenment.

Understanding anti-Semitism as a late-modern response to the quest for identity may contribute to a better understanding of contemporary European anti-Semitism and hatred of Israel. Like nineteenth-century Germany, contemporary Europe is currently experiencing the disintegration of old frameworks of social reference, thereby prompting a new search for identity. While the modern forms of nationalism that have replaced pre-modern forms of social identity are themselves now becoming passé, the post-national vision of an overarching European identity lacks shape and substance in much the same way as the notion of German national identity did in the nineteenth century. Just as modern Germans were torn between pan-German integrationist nationalism and autonomy for the various German states, principalities, and city-states, postmodern Europeans are torn between post-national aspirations for pan-European integration and particularistic neo-nationalism. The conditions under which anti-Semitism emerged in nineteenth-century Germany thus resemble those in which it is re-emerging in twenty-first-century Europe.

The next chapters center on the collision between godly forms of religion and secular ones, between a traditional religion and a civil one. In *Chapter 5, How Civic is Russia's New Civil Religion and How Religious is the Church?* Yuri Teper demonstrates how and explains why a shift in the balance between civic and religious elements of a civil religion can take place, using post-Soviet Russia Russia as an illuminating case study. Teper shows how religion can be utilized to reinforce national identity and to strengthen the legitimacy of the political system in the face of their civic weakness. He describes how the civic-democratic political model, officially designated during Yeltsin's presidency, gradually changed to a more religiously grounded one during Putin's rule. In the Russian case there were two levels of civil religion: an official and openly communicated secularism, and an established church religion, promoted by the political establishment in more subtle but not necessarily less aggressive ways. It further shows that just as the state has to adopt religious features in order to be deified, religious institutions have themselves become more secular to make them suitable for inclusion in the state's civil religion.

Bosmat Yefet in *Chapter 6, The Clash of Civil Religions in Post-Revolutionary Egypt*, discusses Egypt, where politics after the 2011 Revolution became polarized between different visions of the civil state. She applies the civil religion paradigm to analyze a clash of civil religions. According to Yefet, the civil religion established and controlled by Gamal 'Abd al-Nasser revolved around values of Pan-Arabism, anti-imperialism, and commitment to social justice. This civil religion expressed the needs and aspirations of the Arab community in the post-colonial era, provided it with goals and a Egyptian and pan-Arabic identity and served as a unifying force. Traditional religion had a secondary role in supporting the political order; it granted legitimacy to Nasser's policy and helped provide nationalism with an aura of sanctity. Nonetheless, Nasser's failure to achieve results in the areas central to his vision impaired the ability of civil religion to serve as an integrative force. His successors, Sadat and Mubarak, redefined the tenets of the civil religion to reflect the changing needs and interests of the elites, and at the same time, their lack of legitimacy obliged these leaders to designate a larger role for traditional religion in public life. The civil religion became moregodly than civil and ceased to be an integrative force, culturally, socially, or politically. This process reached its apex in Mubarak's era. Mubarak's' inability to encompass the different components of Egyptian society, to provide a social vision, and to establish an ethical hegemony paved the way for the rise of alternatives that used different forms of civil religion to express their own political and ethical visions.

The 2011 Revolution and Mubarak's fall highlight the existence of two conflicting and hostile civil religions in Egypt, with differing values and ethical principles and diverse conceptions regarding Egypt's identity and political culture. The 2013 counter-revolution that led to the removal of President Mohammad Morsi and the election of former military chief, 'Abd al-Fattah al-Sissi as president indicate that Egypt has returned to the unifying framework of Egyptian nationalism and rejected the Islamic one proposed by the Muslim Brothers. Al-Sissi's Rousseauian civil religion incorporates traditional religion, which not only legitimizes the political order and provides al-Sissi's mission with an aura of sacredness, but also constitutes one of the pillars of the state and of national unity.

Remaining in the same geographical neighborhood yet in a totally different culture, Dorit Zimand Sheiner highlights in *Chapter 7, The National Liberty Meaning of the Exodus Myth*, the utilization of myths in advertisements as a reinforcement of beliefs and as an agent of change. Zimand Sheiner studies advertisements during the years of the British Mandate in Palestine and the first decade since the establishment of the State of Israel, when the collective memory of the Jewish population was being built. She concludes that the local advertisers presented their products and services to the local consumers in accordance with the ideology, interests and needs of Zionism.

Using qualitative-interpretive advertisement analysis, Zimand Sheiner points to the national significance of the exodus myth in the Jewish people's collective memory in Palestine and its use in product promotion. Ads from the period of the British Mandate utilized the "national liberty" aspect of the exodus myth, particularly its national-economic meaning: having the freedom to make a living in the Land of Israel (in contrast to Jews in the Diaspora). Ads emphasized the essence of the collective, and the deep commitment to the community that Jews in the Land of Israel shared.

After the establishment of the state, emphasis was placed upon maintaining national security. Instead of promoting their products in their ads, some advertisers chose ads consisting of greetings and prayers that created an emotional connection with their target audiences by stressing the unity of marketers and consumers as members of one people.

Indeed, the Israeli case study is rich with examples for collision between the different forms of religion. Myron Aronoff introduced the paradigm into the Israeli milieu in his paper "Civil religion in Israel" (Aronoff, 1981). Aronoff noted that Zionism placed collectivity at the center of its meaning system and that it established a symbolic structure which created a common Israeli frame of reference (Aronoff, 1981). Charles Liebman and Eliezer Don-Yehiya further developed this idea and described a civil religion that was shaped by Ben Gurion's notion of *mamlachtiut* (Liebman and Don-Yehiya, 1983) best translated as *etatism.* The Israeli form of *etatism* established power for the state far beyond its institutional dimension; it offered nationalist, patriotic ethos that stressed values and symbols that recognized the state as an ultimate entity, legitimized its power, and mobilized the population to serve its goals (Eisenstadt, 1967: 362-363). However, the term *etatism* is somewhat misleading, because Ben Gurion did not consider the state to be an end in itself: he wished to instill in Israeli citizens a respect for legitimate public authority and a sense of public consciousness (Medding, 1990: 135). *Mamlachtiut*, then, should not be understood as positing state predominance over other social power centers, but rather should be understood as a form of responsible citizenship (Kedar, 2003).

Ben Gurion's *mamlachtiut* conforms with John Coleman's notion that civil religion is a symbolic system that relates the citizen's role and society's place in space, time, and history to the conditions of ultimate existence and meaning (Coleman, 1970). However, from its essence, although relying on Jewishness as its common denominator, *mamlachtiut* stood in total contradiction with the old religious traditions, particularly those of the ultra-Orthodox group within Israeli society. Nissim Leon, in *Chapter 8, Counter-Nationalism and the Case of the Ultra-Orthodox and the Military Draft in Israel* examines the phenomenon of deferments of army service in Israel of *haredi* (ultra-Orthodox) men studying in yeshivas. Historically, this arrangement dates back to the early days of the state, when David Ben-Gurion

granted deferments to 400 yeshiva students. More recently, Israel's military command has reconsidered this policy in light of their forecast of a shrinking reservoir of conscripts in the future. However, the question of military recruitment is but one element within a larger macro-economic problem: because they devote their years of study to religious texts alone, most ultra-Orthodox youth lack basic educational and technical skills that would prepare them to enter the workforce.

According to Leon, orthodox yeshiva students have a counter-nationalist worldview. He employs the term counter-nationalism to describe an approach that takes a critical view of nationalism, but has in effect adapted it to the structure of the discourse, organization, and aims of the hegemonic national ideology. The *haredi* scholar-society has undergone gradual change from a sectorial entity that isolated itself from the nation-state, and viewed the state as an undesired political fact, to an entity that maintains its own counter-nationalism. This social cultural religious entity regards itself as a symbiotic or active partner in the national endeavor, specifically through the insular *haredi* ethos.Their yeshiva studies is their contribution to the national endeavor and even to national security.[5] In the ultra-Orthodox case, one might argue that the ongoing practical coming to terms with the Israeli nation-state has, over many years, gradually morphed into a covert but clear ideological-theological change.

This perspective raises the possibility that the ultra-Orthodox do not view their culture as a rival alternative to the militaristic culture that has developed in Israel. On the contrary: they are beginning to view themselves as maintaining a complementary partnership with the Israeli culture, and to a considerable extent have even constructed a similar cultural structure, a sort of mirror-image of the militaristic one. In this sense, some ultra-Orthodox no longer conduct themselves as an antagonistic counter-culture but seek, instead, recognition for their version of counter-nationalism, which they view both as an alternative and as a part of the whole – but clearly the more superior part. Hence, according to Leon, the *haredi* mainstream seeks recognition for itself in a new national role: as the spiritual elite troops of the State of Israel – a role that sits well with their efforts to gain control over the state's religious institutions and their gradual integration into its institutions and into the job market.

Still within the Israeli case study, in *Chapter 9, Avoiding Conscription in Israel: Were women pawns in the political game?* Nurit Gillath tackles Zionism as a modern manifestation of nationalism that includes religion as an essential component of national identity. Positing from a feminist perspective that national identity is synonymous with masculinity, Gillath searches for the women's place in the Zionist movement, particularly through the prism of military service.

The Israeli army had a major role in the creation of a Zionist national ethos, and the concept of a people's army. Women were included as equal participants, Israel

being the only western democracy that conscripted women. With the establishment of the state, women were called to duty and conscription to the IDF was made mandatory for both men and women.

However, women's conscription met bitter opposition from religious Orthodox circles. Gillath focuses on the conflict between the mainstream civil-religion approach that promoted women's enlistment and that of religious leaders who strongly opposed it. In Gillath's analysis, orthodox women were political pawns in the hands of religious leaders. They were robbed of their right to choose military service and as such to be an equal part of Israel's diverse society. Gillath warns that if this long-enduring clash between religious and civil protagonists in Israel leads to a victory of the ultra-Orthodox community, all women may be exempt from military service. Such a decision would have serious social consequences for women's equality in Israel.

The conflict between godly religion and civil religion is never an easy one. In another Israeli case study Tehila Kalagy takes Nurit Gillath's analysis one step further. In *Chapter 10, Values, Constraints and Maneuvers: Processes of Academization among Ultra-Orthodox Women and Bedouin Women in Israel*, Tehila Kalagy discusses the changes that religious groups undergo when living within the framework of a nation state that has a civil religion that contradicts their worldview and values. Kalagy chose to study Jewish ultra-orthodox women and Bedouin women living in the Negev who are students in academic university programs in order to understand how conservative societies cope with the wheels of change. She presents a theoretical flow model, based on three parameters: value-constraint-maneuver. *Value* constitutes a spiritual or physical asset which most of the group are interested in preserving; it signifies a certain ideal, which under optimal conditions and with no constraints, is fully realizable. *Constraint* is the formation of conditions perceived as containing restrictions and conflict even at the price of harming certain values. *Maneuver* is the construction of response patterns and actions, designed as much as possible, to maintain the values.

Kakagy's model of the adaptation process indicates the development of new conservative sub-groups within the national framework. The model portrays a general pattern where in spite of social and cultural, and above all - religious contradictions, the inquired sub-groups combine traditional values with contemporary indicators in order to preserve cultural norms as well as to adopt new elements of the civic culture.

To conclude, the general and innovative paradigm we have presented here places godly religion and civil religion on a religio-secular continuum. At times, as will be explained throughout the book's chapters, relations between these two strains of religion may find themselves in competition and conflict. At others, political leaders may utilize godly religion as part of the civil religion in order to forge stronger ties between society and the regime. As we have seen, both godly religion and civil

nationalist patriotism contain similar elements of inspiration, devotion, commitment and self sacrifice that motivate and energize collective human behavior.

In all, then, this book is a kaleidoscope, where different forms of religion in various geographical and political settings are the beads or pebbles that are reflected in the rectangular mirrors and create colorful patterns. It embodies analyses of case studies from all over the globe. Within its chapters, studies of different aspects of civil religion in diverse countries, are laid out. Yet in spite of the multiple reflection effect of the kaleidoscope, our book is anchored in the conceptual framework of civil religion and in its place on the godly-civil continuum of religion, civil religion and nationalism. This continuum provides an analytical model for each of the book's chapters and is an enlightening model for further research.

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ENDNOTES

1. We should note that some of the testimonies regarding this event have been put into question. See Corner, P. (2010), Italian Fascism: Organization, Enthusiasm, Opinion, *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 15, 3: 378-389; Corner, P. (2012), *The Fascist Party and Popular Opinion in Mussolini's Italy*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
2. Although the performance of the Italian military during World War II became the butt of jokes, their poor performance was not because of cowardice or lack of patriotic enthusiasm. Italian troops under German command were vastly outnumbered by Soviet forces and faced severe weather conditions and yet fought bravely. In fact, some Italian units excelled on the eastern front, like the Italian *Alpini* [the mountain troops] and the *Voloire* [horse mounted artillery]. See Sadkovich, J. (1994), *The Italian Navy in World War II.* Westpoint,

CT: Greenwood Press; Vincent O'Hara, V. (2009), *Struggle for the Middle Sea*. London, UK: Conway, 2009; Walker, I. (2003), *Iron Hulls Iron Hearts: Mussolini's Elite Armored Divisions in North Africa* (Marlborough, UK: Greenwood Press.

[3] Bellah analyzed John F. Kennedy's 1961 inaugural address where God was mentioned, compared it to other speeches of American presidents, and concluded that in the United States the separation of church and state had not denied the political realm a religious dimension. See Bellah, R. N. (1967), Civil Religion in America, *Daedalus – Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 1: 1-21.

[4] Although innovative in its nature, one ought to bear in mind that different attempts to define civil religion along a continuum have already been made; indeed, some of them have laid theoretical grounds for the paradigm suggested in this book. For a discussion about different views of civil religion, one that sees it as a set of beliefs that is based on existing common religious rituals versus a point of view that sees civil religion as dependent on the society's bonds with God, see Weed, R. and J. von Heyking (2010), Introduction, in R. Weed and J. von Heyking eds., *Civil Religion in Political Thought: Its Perennial Relevance in North America*. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press: 2-3.

[5] The concept of counter-nationalism was developed by anthropologist Arjun Appadurai, who described modernity as a process of cultural imagination that responds to conflicting systems of social relations. See Appadurai, A. (1986), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.