Between State and Synagogue: The Secularization of Contemporary Israel. By Guy Ben-Porat. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. Pp. xxii+258. $28.99 (paper).

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In *Between State and Synagogue*, Guy Ben-Porat offers a fascinating account of what he broadly describes as the secularization of contemporary Jewish-Israeli society. He lucidly differentiates the process of secularization, which emerges from his complex exposition as a multifaceted development (a bricolage), from secularism as a worldview. The latter he equates with liberalism, individualism, and tolerance, a destination that bears no necessary positive correlation with the actual practices and variously grounded commitments to the secularization of certain targeted practices that, taken in their sum total, contribute to the deinstitutionalization of religion in Israel and the diminishing scope of religious authority. "The secularization of Israeli society," Ben-Porat concludes, "seems to have a limited, if any, effect on the illiberal character of Israeli state and society" (p. 224). Israeli Jews, in other words, may (especially since the 1990s) have come to tolerate pork selling, celebrate commerce on the Shabbat, embrace or tolerate civil marriages and burials and more appeasing aesthetics and gender equality in burial practices. And yet, these Israeli Jews could nonetheless remain beholden to ethnocentric and illiberal assumptions and commitments.

Secularization, on this account, amounts simply to the decline of religious authority and institutions in their ability to prohibit or curtail certain practices that, on their surface, contradict religious, and especially Haredi, sensibilities and regulations. It also amounts to the diminishment of the instrumentality of official political channels, the increase of nonofficial activities, and the rise of a new kind of agent embodied in the persona of the "secular entrepreneur." The entrepreneur may be motivated by greed as much as ideology and principles. The author demonstrates the processes of secularization through the aforementioned four contested issues, each discussed in a neatly structured chapter and based on surveys, in-depth interviews, and an analysis of public events. This careful and multilayered examination of marriage, burial, pork rearing and selling, and commerce activities on the Shabbat—all reflect, so the narrative goes, the confluence of activism and daily practices of what Ben-Porat classifies as ideological or principled secularism, secularization of everyday life, and demographic secularism associated with the transformative needs and demands of immigrants from the former Soviet Union (FSU).

The third ideal type of "secularization of everyday life" amplifies the economic engine behind the secularization of contemporary Israeli society. The supposedly impersonal forces of globalization which the author often classifies as "nonideological" have contributed to the "consumerist revolu-

tion" in Israel, as in many other contexts around the globe, and brought out, on the Shabbat no less, people of diverse demographics under the canopy of various shopping malls. The fact that many people shop on the Shabbat, however, does not—and here we return to the main argument—necessarily reflect secularist attitudes if those come nicely wrapped in liberal sensitivities and thus with a greater inclination to also fall on the "Left" vis-à-vis the questions of minorities and the broader conflict with the Palestinians. However, secularization can be measured as the outcome of multifaceted processes that take place often in "nonpolitical" spaces but always within a Jewish-national discourse. The author acknowledges that secularization takes place within this exclusionary landscape and yet he abstracts his discussion of secularization and secularism from their context-specific entanglement with Zionism. As a result, "religion" and the "religious" are associated with questions of beliefs, cognitive choice, authority of official religious leaders and institutions—this rendering reflects, as many critics of the discourses pointed out (for instance, Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion* [John Hopkins University Press, 1993]), secularist and liberal assumptions.

Indeed, it is precisely the differentiation between ideological and nonideological engines of secularization that illuminates the author's conceptual reliance not so much on the intensive work done in the past decades on secularism but rather on the globalization literature, a reliance that proves quite beholden to unreconstructed secularist presumptions. I now turn to explaining this argument. As mentioned, the theoretical takeaway of the book is the critical distinction between secularization and secularism, a distinction that confirms (as the author admits) the suspicion of many critics such as sociologist José Casanova concerning the normative versus the descriptive dimensions of secularization (*Public Religions in the Modern World* [University of Chicago Press, 1994]). Hence, the author frames his contribution as intervening in the secularization literature. Consequently, chapter 1, which provides the theoretical anchor for the book, intends to unpack secularization and the various debates surrounding this concept. But the chapter only illuminates some scholarly interlocutors, overlooking engagement with others that could have expanded the potential theoretical contribution of the work.

What results from Ben-Porat's otherwise effective review of the secularization debates is a typology of secularization that simply presumes that such things as personal tastes and preferences and even marriage out of romantic love constitute self-evident data, including the curious transformation of the kibbutzim from socialist to profit-maximizing capitalist entities, providers of civil burials, nonkosher delicatessens, and Shabbat shopping. These assumptions concerning agency and personhood are what the above-mentioned penetrating critiques of the discourse of secularism expose. The author does not engage such critics as Asad, whose work has become a key conceptual touchstone for anyone who aspires to interject in the secularism debates (*Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* [Stanford University Press 2003]). A consideration of Asad's work,

as well as the various theoretical efforts to decipher secularization comparatively and with awareness of postcolonial critique, could have benefited Ben-Porat's already solid theoretical contribution as well as the descriptive dimensions of his discussion. Without such a consideration, however, the author's differentiation between secularism qua worldview and secularization qua process may be overstated. Secularism may have projected itself at one point as a coherent project but the phenomenology of secularism and empirical studies suggests otherwise: secularism is always path dependent and it always materializes in particular religious, cultural, and national settings.

While selectively treading in secularism studies, Ben-Porat's conceptualization of secularization qua process of change through nonformal channels (or "subpolitics") relies on theorist of globalization Ulrich Beck's work, a theoretical framework that extends without historicizing the same secularist and liberal assumptions about personhood and agency that Asad and other postcolonial critics expose. And yet, globalization is presented as an inevitable, impersonal, and exogenous force that simply happened to Israeli society (p. 22, for instance) rather than the result of sets of discourses and geopolitical agendas, including the neoliberal one, with its ideological baggage. Therefore, to construe the economic entrepreneur as nonideological presents some difficulties that do demand further reflection beyond the author's intriguing observation of the kind of liberal or republican arguments such entrepreneurs instrumentalize in furthering their agenda. In fact, both the liberal and republican arguments are equally embedded within a republican landscape that needs to be attended to. Ben-Porat's operative contrast between secularism and secularization proceeds within a nationalist myopia. In this context, a reliance on the globalization literature is very significant for his thesis because it seemingly vindicates the rationale behind Benjamin Barber's Manichean analytic prism of religion in a post–nation-state globalizing world ("Jihad vs. McWorld," *Atlantic Monthly*, March 1992).

Social Organizations and the Authoritarian State in China. By Timothy Hildebrandt. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. Pp. xvi+217. $90.00.

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Social Organizations and the Authoritarian State in China systematically examines and compares social organizations in three issue areas—environmental protection, HIV/AIDS prevention, and gay and lesbian rights—within four administrative regions (Beijing, Yunnan, Henan, and Sichuan). Focusing on societal actors, such as social organizations and organization leaders, Timothy Hildebrandt explores "the frequent *routine* relationships between state and society" (p. 4) in a nondemocratic regime. With its meth-