



# Religious Claims, Nationalism, and Human Suffering in Political Conflict: Perspectives from South Africa

Johannesburg, October 9-10, 2015

Wits Institute for Social & Economic Research

University of Witwatersrand

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

OVERVIEW.....	3
PARTICIPANT BIOS (Listed in Alphabetical Order) .....	4
SESSIONS.....	8
I.    Nomboniso Gasa, Mark Gevisser, Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian.....	9
II.   Liam O’Dowd, Khaled Hroub, Nadim R. Rouhana .....	10
III.  Steven Friedman, Kelly Gillespie, Naeem Jeenah .....	12
IV.   Dhammamegha Annie Leatt, Achille Mbembe, Raef Zreik.....	14
V.    Ran Greenstein, Hlonipha Mokoena, Ali Banuazizi.....	16
VI.   David Theo Goldberg, Amos Goldberg.....	17
CONCLUSIONS.....	18
QUESTIONS ON REPORTING GUIDELINES .....	21



Workshop Participants: (Back row—left to right): Amos Goldberg, Liam O’Dowd, Raef Zreik, Nadim R. Rouhana, Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Sarah Nuttal, Achille Mbembe, Nomboniso Gasa, Hlonipha Mokoena; (Front row – left to right): David Theo Goldberg, Dhammamegha Annie Leatt, Sahar Huneidi.

## OVERVIEW

---

From October 9-10, 2015, Professor Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian and Professor Nadim R. Rouhana co-convened a workshop entitled *Religious Claims, Nationalism, and Human Suffering in Political Conflict: Perspectives from South Africa* at the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg.

The workshop was part of a larger comparative research project sponsored by the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University in collaboration with Mada al-Carmel: Arab Center for Applied Social Research in Haifa, Israel and supported by the Luce Foundation. The larger project seeks to examine the range of manifestations in which religious claims can penetrate, reconstruct, promote, and even challenge nationalism, while examining the manifestation of such a fusion in different contexts. In addition to the South African case, the larger project examines the fusion of religious claims and nationalism in Israel, Palestine, Ireland, India, Sri Lanka and the former Yugoslavia. Thus, in addition to scholars from South Africa, the workshop brought together a small group of international scholars who presented other cases in order to strengthen the comparative dimension of the workshop.

The workshop examined the causes and conditions in which religion, or perhaps more accurately religious claims, become fused with nationalism in certain contexts, and the effects of this fusion on the legitimation of violence and dynamics of conflict. Hosting the workshop in South Africa sought to further understand to what extent, if any, such processes played a role in the South African case. Driving questions in the South Africa workshop included how to address issues of disaster/catastrophization, the rewriting of histories of oppression and renaming related to knowledge formation, the persistence of structural inequalities through informalized segregation, and questions of occupation and de-occupation in post-apartheid South Africa.

## PARTICIPANT BIOS

---

**Ali Banuazizi** is Professor of Political Science at Boston College and Director of the Program in Islamic Civilization & Societies. After receiving his Ph. D. from Yale University in 1968, he taught at Yale and the University of Southern California before joining the Boston College Faculty in 1971. Since then, he has held visiting appointments at the University of Tehran, Princeton, Harvard, and Oxford University, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and M.I.T. He served as the founding editor of the Journal of Iranian Studies, from 1968 to 1982. He is a past President of the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) and the International Society for Iranian Studies (ISIS), and, currently, Associate Editor of the Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World. Ali Banuazizi is the author of numerous articles on society, culture, and politics of Iran and the Middle East, and the coauthor (with A. Ashraf) of *Tabaqat-e ijtimai, dowlat va enqelab dar Iran* [Social Classes, the State and Revolution in Iran] (2008) and coeditor (with Myron Weiner) of three books on politics, religion and society in Southwest and Central Asia.

**Steven Friedman** is Director of the Centre for the Study of Democracy at Rhodes University and the University of Johannesburg. He is a political scientist who has specialized in the study of democracy. He researched and wrote widely on the South African transition to democracy both before and after the elections of 1994 and has, over the past decade, largely written on the relationship between democracy on the one hand, social inequality and economic growth on the other. In particular, he has stressed the role of citizen voice in strengthening democracy and promoting equality. He is the author of *Building Tomorrow Today*, a study of the South African trade union movement and the implications of its growth for democracy, and the editor of *The Long Journey and The Small Miracle* (with Doreen Atkinson), which presented the outcome of two research projects on the South African transition. His current work focuses on the theory and practice of democracy and his study of South African radical thought *Race, Class and Power: Harold Wolpe and the Radical Critique of Apartheid* will be published in 2015. He writes a weekly column in *Business Day* on current political and economic developments.

**Nomboniso Gasa** is a researcher and analyst on gender, politics and cultural issues. Her work, which spans more than two decades, weaves together academic, lived experience and constant engagement with contemporary and historical issues. She interrogates the intersections, continuities and discontinuities between the past and the present on land and customary systems; spirituality and rituals, ascribed and fluid identities. Her current work – the land remembers, inter and intra boundaries – looks at violence and reprieve offered by identity politics. She has worked on male initiation in South Africa – manhood carved on the body - for almost two decades and has expanded the focus into the study of the body as a site of identity, ritual and manhood, issues that continue to mark South African society today. Gasa engages with scholars and political and cultural actors on the continent, notably in Nigeria where she worked for over four years prior to and after the 1999 elections. This forms part of a wider range of networks in various parts of the world with whom Gasa has related on gender, human rights and issues of peace and democratisation.

**Mark Gevisser** is an award-winning South African author and journalist. His award-winning biography, *Thabo Mbeki: The Dream Deferred*, won the Alan Paton and Recht Malan Prizes in 2008, and his memoir, *Lost and Found in Johannesburg*, won the Recht Malan Prize and was shortlisted for the Alan Paton Prize in 2015. Both books were also shortlisted for the Jan Michalski Prize for World Literature. His journalism and narrative non-fiction has appeared in *Granta*, *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, *The Observer*, *Foreign Policy*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Los Angeles Times*, and many other South African and international publications. His feature-length documentary film, *The Man Who Drove With Mandela*, won the Teddy Award for Best Documentary at the Berlin Film Festival in 1999. He is currently working on “The Global

Sexuality Frontier”, for which he received an Open Society Fellowship, to be published in 2017. Mark was born and raised in Johannesburg, and educated at Yale University. He now lives in Cape Town.

**Ran Greenstein** is Associate professor of Sociology at the University of the Witwatersrand. He has published *Genealogies of Conflict: class, identity and state in Palestine/Israel and South Africa* (Wesleyan University Press, 1995), *Comparative Perspectives on South Africa* (Macmillan, 1998), and *Zionism and its Discontents: a century of radical dissent in Israel/Palestine* (Pluto, 2014). Currently he is working on manuscript titled *Against the Current: nationalism, resistance and the struggle for rights in Israel/Palestine and South Africa*.

**Amos Goldberg** is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Jewish History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His co-edited books include *Marking Evil: Holocaust Memory in the Global Age* (with Haim Hazan; published by Berghahn) and *The Holocaust and the Nakba: Memory, National Identity and Jewish Arab Partnership* (with Bashir Bashir; published by the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, in Hebrew), released in 2015. His recent book *Trauma in First Person: Diary Writing during the Holocaust* (Hebrew) came out in 2012 and is soon to appear in English.

**David Theo Goldberg** is Director, system-wide of the University of California Humanities Research Institute and Executive Director of the UC Irvine MacArthur Digital Media and Learning Research Hub. He directs the annual international Digital Media and Learning Competition, supported by the MacArthur Foundation and is Professor, Departments of Comparative Literature, Anthropology, and Criminology, Law and Society, UC Irvine. He has published extensively on race and racism as well as on humanities and the digital. His latest book, *Are we all postracial yet?* has just appeared.

**Khaled Hroub** is Professor in residence of Middle Eastern Studies and Arab Media Studies at Northwestern University/Qatar, and a senior research fellow at the Centre of Islamic Studies of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Cambridge, where he directed the Cambridge Arab Media Project (CAMP) until 2012. He authored *Hamas: A Beginners Guide* (2006/2010), *Hamas: Political Thought and Practice* (2000), and edited *Political Islam: Context versus Ideology* (2011) and *Religious Broadcasting in the Middle East* (2012). In Arabic he published *Fragility of Ideology and Might of Politics* (2010) and *In Praise of Revolution* (2012). His academic writings have appeared in *Middle East Journal*, *Middle East International*, *Journal for Palestine Studies*, ‘*Shu’un Arabyya*’ (Cairo), *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies*, *Holy Land Studies Journal*, *New Global Studies*, *The International Spectator* (Rome), *Outre Terre* (Paris) and *INTERNATIONALE POLITIK* (Berlin). His weekly article appears in six Arab dailies (Jordan, Qatar, Egypt, UAE, Oman, Palestine, Mauritania and the UK); he also published in the *Daily Star*, *International Herald Tribune*, *El Pais*, and *La Razon*, and is a frequent contributor to *OpenDemocracy.com* and *Qantara.net*.

**Dharmamegha Annie Leatt** was awarded her PhD from WISER in 2011 with a thesis entitled *The State of Secularism: Constituting Religion and Tradition toward a Post-apartheid South Africa*. Her broad interests lie in the intersection of religion, politics and society. Her graduate work in religious studies (UCT and UC Santa Barbara) was in the areas of the politicization of religion and culture, gender, sexuality and religious communities, and secularisation. Dharmamegha also spent a decade working as a researcher and manager in various NGOs in South Africa. She worked at the Law, Race and Gender Research Unit and was the executive director of Triangle Project. For three years she headed the Child Poverty Programme, a social policy research unit at the Children’s Institute at UCT. From this work she has published in areas of social justice, sexuality, legislative reform and monitoring, and child health and poverty. Recently, she has been responsible for coordinating the 2015 Johannesburg Workshop on Theory and Criticism on the theme *Bios, Techné and the Manufacture of Happiness*. She is currently a post-doc fellow at WISER in the

Medical Humanities project, and writing on secularism, neurosciences and changing practices and conceptions of the human. She is also a member of the Triratna Buddhist Order.

**Achille Mbembe** was born in Cameroon, obtained his Ph.D. in History at the Sorbonne in Paris in 1989 and a D.E.A. in Political Science at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques (Paris). He was Assistant Professor of History at Columbia University, New York, from 1988-1991, a Senior Research Fellow at the Brookings Institute in Washington, D.C., from 1991 to 1992, Associate Professor of History at the University of Pennsylvania from 1992 to 1996, Executive Director of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (Codesria) in Dakar, Senegal, from 1996 to 2000. Achille was also a visiting Professor at the University of California, Berkeley, in 2001, and a visiting Professor at Yale University in 2003. He has written extensively in African history and politics, including *LA NAISSANCE DU MAQUIS DANS LE SUD-CAMEROUN* (Paris, Karthala, 1996). *ON THE POSTCOLONY* was published in Paris in 2000 in French and the English translation was published by the University of California Press, Berkeley, in 2001. In 2015, Wits University Press published a new, African edition.

**Hlonipha Mokoena** received her Ph.D. from the University of Cape Town in 2005. She is currently an associate professor and researcher at WiSER (Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research) at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. Her articles have been published in: *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*; *Journal of Religion in Africa*; *Journal of Southern African Studies*; *Scrutiny2: Issues in English Studies in Southern Africa* and *Baobab: South African Journal of New Writing*. She has contributed opinion pieces and book reviews to: *African Studies Review*; *History & Theory*; *The Politics of Jacob Zuma*, *ACAS Bulletin No. 84*; the blog "Africa is a Country" and the exhibition "PASS-AGES: References & Footnotes". Her first book is on Magema M. Fuze, author of the *Abantu Abamnyama Lapa Bavela Ngakona (1922) / The Black People and Whence They Came (1979)*. The book is titled *Magema Fuze: The Making of a Kholwa Intellectual*. The basic argument she presents in the book is that as an author and an aspirant historian Fuze represents a set of questions about the emergence and arrested development of a black intelligentsia and literati in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century South Africa. His life and writings reveal both his singular attempt to create, under adverse cultural, political and social conditions, a literary career and a body of knowledge while also participating in the constitution of a discourse community or a public sphere of Zulu-speaking intellectuals.

**Sarah Nuttall** is Professor of Literary and Cultural Studies and Director of WiSER (Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research) in Johannesburg, South Africa. She is the author of *Entanglement: Literary and Cultural Reflections on Postapartheid*, editor of *Beautiful/Ugly: African and Diasporic Aesthetics*, and co-editor of many books including *Johannesburg – The Elusive Metropolis* and *Load Shedding: Writing On and Over the Edge of South Africa*. She has for many years taught the Fall semester at first Yale and then Duke Universities in the United States and will be an Oppenheimer Fellow at Harvard University in Spring 2016.

**Liam O'Dowd** is Professor of Sociology and Director of the Centre for International Borders Research at Queen's University Belfast. His research interests include: ethno-national conflict, border studies, contested cities, and the Northern Ireland Conflict. He has recently completed as co-investigator a six year ESRC funded research project: *Conflict in Cities and the Contested State: Everyday Life and the Possibilities of Transformation in Belfast, Jerusalem and other Divided Cities*, with colleagues at the University of Cambridge, and Exeter. Currently working on a book based on this project with James Anderson, entitled: *Cities and Ethno-National Conflict: Empires, Nations and Urban Processes*, he has published extensively on borders, Northern Ireland, ethno-national conflict and divided cities. Recent books include: *Religion, Violence and Cities*, London: Routledge, 2015 (co-authored and edited with

M.McKnight), *Crossing the Border: New Relationships between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland*, Dublin: Irish Academic Press, (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007, pp.339 ( joint editor with John Coakley) and *NEW BORDERS FOR A NEW EUROPE*, London: Frank Cass, 2003,pp.208 (co-edited with J.Anderson and T.Wilson)

**Nadim N. Rouhana** is founding director of Mada al-Carmel—Arab Center for Applied Social Research, which was established in 2000. He is Professor of International Negotiation and Conflict Studies at the Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy, Tufts University in Boston. Prior to that, he was a Chair Professor of Conflict Studies at George Mason University and held various academic positions at Palestinian, Israeli, and American universities. Dr. Rouhana received his BA from the University of Haifa and his PhD from Wayne State University in Social Psychology in 1984. From 1984 to 1986, he taught at al-Najah National University in the West Bank, where he served as the Dean of Social Research. He then pursued postdoctoral work at Harvard University and taught at Harvard University and Boston College. He was a Research Fellow at Harvard University’s Weatherhead Center for International Affairs from 1992 to 2001 where he chaired the Center’s Seminar on International Conflict. From 2001 to 2004, he was an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology & Anthropology at Tel Aviv University. His publications include the book *Palestinian Citizens in an Ethnic Jewish State: Identities in Conflict* (Yale University Press, 1997) and numerous academic articles on collective identity, multiethnic states, democratic citizenship, dynamics of asymmetric conflicts, and Palestinian and Israeli societies.

**Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian** is a longtime anti-violence, native Palestinian feminist activist and scholar. She is the Lawrence D. Biele Chair in Law at the Faculty of Law-Institute of Criminology and the School of Social Work and Public Welfare at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Shalhoub-Kevorkian is also the director of the Gender Studies Program at Mada al-Carmel, the Arab Center for Applied Social Research in Haifa. Her research focuses on femicide, state crime, child abuse, and other forms of gendered violence, crimes of abuse of power in settler colonial contexts, surveillance, securitization, and trauma in militarized and colonized zones. Her most recent books are entitled: “*Militarization and Violence Against Women in Conflict Zones in the Middle East: The Palestinian Case Study*” published by Cambridge University Press (CUP), 2010, and “*Security Theology, Surveillance and the Politics of Fear*” published by CUP, 2015. Shalhoub-Kevorkian plays a prominent role in the local Palestinian community. As a resident of the old city of Jerusalem, Shalhoub-Kevorkian engages in direct actions and critical dialogue to end the inscription of power over Palestinian children’s lives, spaces of death, and women’s birthing bodies and lives.

**Raef Zreik** is a graduate of the Hebrew University School of Law. He earned his MA at Columbia University and a doctorate from Harvard University School of Law focusing on Kant legal theory. He is currently assistant professor at Carmel academic college and academic co-director at the Minerva center for the humanities at Tel Aviv University. His fields of research include legal and political theory.

## SESSIONS

---

The workshop was comprised of six sessions, each of which developed different aspects of the theme in comparative perspective. This section highlights key contributions of each participant's presentation, as well as analytical takeaways and ideas for further expansion of the workshop themes highlighted in the closing session.





## SESSION I. CHAIR – ACHILLE MBEMBE

---

### *Choosing Selves: Pain, Negation and Affirmation*

**Nomboniso Gasa** began her talk by discussing the memory of the land, and the memory inscribed in the landscape. She examined different modes in which power and disempowerment are being created in South Africa. The scars of memory, she argued, are internalized within the colonized population and connected to dispossession of the land. [Insert further description when received]

### *“Rainbowism” in Israel and South Africa: Some thoughts about Queerness in Nationalist Politics, there and Here*

**Mark Gevisser** discussed an intersectional queer politics in relation to Palestine/Israel and South Africa. He problematized the discourse of rainbowism in both the South African and Israeli contexts—and how both emerged from a particular western liberal notion of multiculturalism, where different minorities come together. He argued that there is a Zionist contingent in South Africa that embraces a multicultural discourse in a similar way to which the Gay rights discourse is being instrumentalized to continue Israel’s settler colonial project. Moreover, he examined the deployment of a U.S. black feminist politics in a contemporary student movement, the “Rhodes must fall” movement, in the South African university as a way of problematizing a U.S.-centric intersectional politics being applied in differing political contexts.

### *Aesthetics of Violence, the Occupation of Senses and Religion in Settler Colonial Contexts: The Case of Occupied East Jerusalem*

**Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian** examined the extent to which Zionist dispossession and domination in Israel/Palestine are performed through various forms of violence, among them aesthetic violence rooted



in cultural, historical, religious and national justifications. The paper, focused on the case of occupied East Jerusalem, analyzed how an aesthetic of violence invades spaces, homes, streets, bodies, and even the senses of the colonized to re-create exclusivity through cultural, religious, national and security claims. By showing how aesthetic violence is performed through the use of historicized religious and nationalist, and/or culturalized/civilizing “modernist” claims, the paper revealed colonial disruptions of comprehension, in its physical, psychological and epistemic embodiment of war against the

colonized. It concluded by arguing that invoking a meticulously and well calculated aesthetic violence, justified by artistic cultural, religious and nationalist claims, colonial commanders enhance their sovereignty in oEJ, claim civility, modernity, and cultural exclusivity and maintain the Zionist entity as blameless of the vulgarity of fueling religious and nationalist wars.

## SESSION II. CHAIR—ALI BANUAZIZI

---

### *How does Religion Matter? Comparative Lessons from the Northern Ireland Conflict*

**Liam O'Dowd** examined the extent to which religion matters in the Northern Ireland (NI) conflict. His paper sought to challenge two extreme positions (1) that religion is irrelevant in what has become a secular political conflict between two competing nationalisms and (2) that the NI political conflict is rooted in enduring and irreconcilable religious differences and, as such, is merely an anomaly in a western secular context. A more nuanced analysis of the Northern Ireland conflict raises, at the outset, the question of how we are to understand religion and its different meanings for different protagonists in the conflict. In acknowledging the difficulty of arriving at a consensual definition of religion, the paper adopted a working distinction between institutionalized forms embodied in churches and popular religion understood as a set of lived experiences and practices. Drawing on interviews with grassroots religious activists in Belfast who played a key role in mediating the violent conflict on the streets, the paper explored the connections between memory, place, religion and violence in an urban, and ostensibly secular, setting riven by ethno-national conflict. It found that the battle to occupy and control public space and the types of violence it involves are forms of ritual performance linked to sacred spaces and territorial enclosures by both religious and nationalist protagonists.

In conclusion, the paper examined some comparative implications of the NI case for our understanding of the relationship between religion and nationalist conflicts: (1) it argued that the sharp distinction between secular nationalism and religious politics needs to be re-examined with a more explicit focus on the distinction between institutionalized and popular forms of religion and the changing relationship between them; (2) it pointed to the growing importance of the intersection of religion, nationalism and violent political conflict in urban settings and (3) it highlighted the capacity of religion not just to transcend contested national boundaries in a globalising context, but also to crystallize violent conflict in specific sacred sites and public spaces.

### *Religious Discourse and Claims within Nationalist and Islamist Palestinian Movements*

**Khaled Hroub** questioned the perception of the Palestinian/Israeli context as a religious conflict. His paper examined what he analyzed as a clear dissimilarity between the Zionist colonial-settler perspective and that of the Palestinian National Movement (PNM) in relation to the employment and exploitation of religious claims. Whereas such claims functioned as a primary force to invent a strong nationalist Jewish connection with Palestine, and mobilize Jews the world over behind Zionism, the Palestinians did not need such claims either to prove their long and historical relationship to Palestine nor their unbroken links with it. Almost since its inception, the Zionist movement has been nervous in relation to establishing a convincing legitimacy for its 'connection' and later claim of 'ownership' of the land of Palestine. For the Palestinians, there was no such nervousness, rather the overriding concern lied in how to resist the actions led by and that resulted from Zionist claims.

Thus from the outset, the discourse of the PNM was primarily one of an anti-colonial struggle. The emergence of Hamas in late 1980s in the wake of the failure of the PLO and Pan-Arabism brought no major change on the Palestinian perspective of the struggle against the Zionist colonial project, despite all the religiosity that Hamas has started to inject in the Palestinian public sphere and sociality. Religious claims and discourse deployed by Hamas were scattered over various fronts, rendering them a secondary force in the national struggle against Zionism and its Israeli occupation. Unlike the one-way traffic in Zionist/colonial perspective where religious discourses are put in the service of nationalist claims, Hamas

has ended with multi-lane use of religious discourse. By virtue of being a late-comer to the arena of PNMs and resistance, Hamas embraced resistance wholeheartedly, trying to prove itself in front of its followers and foes, cleanse the resistance-idle past of the Islamists in Palestine, and to project itself as a branch of universal Islamist internationalism (by declaring that it was the Muslim Brotherhood branch in Palestine). In such a diverse agenda, religious claims were used differently, mostly unconsciously, to achieve different ends. The self-perception of Hamas as an internationalist organization that aspires to a project greater than liberating Palestine —resurrection of Islam’s power —strikingly opposes Zionism’s self-perception where universal (Judaic) religion and religiosity is put in the service of national claims.

*The Settler Colonial, the National, and the Religious in Zionism’s Encounter with Palestine*

**Nadim N. Rouhana** examined the interplay among three dimensions of Zionism: The settler colonial, the national, and the religious. The presentation analyzed how these dimensions unfold in an ongoing project of settler colonialism, which has not been defeated but cannot yet claim triumph either. The presentation argued that while Zionism is a settler-colonial project with national features, the total conflation between nationalism and religious affiliation requires examining how the three dimensions feed into each other in Zionist practice and in the justificatory systems they produce. The author examined the implications of



these features to the dynamics of the conflict with the Palestinians, its future directions, and the potential means of violence that Zionism is likely to employ. The fusion between Jewish religion and Jewish nationalism—a colonial project with religious justifications— makes Israeli claims for exclusive claims to the homeland of the Jewish people hard to challenge, and turns Palestinians into invaders in their own land. Seeing that exclusive nationalism has historically been a factor in enabling mass atrocities in other contexts, the paper concluded by arguing that Israel’s fusion of religious claims and nationalism in its continued settler colonial project are fertile grounds for mass atrocities against the native population, even beyond those that have already occurred over the history of the conflict.

### SESSION III. CHAIR—DILIP MENON

#### *The Promised Land: Zionist Religious Themes in Afrikaner Nationalist Ideology*

**Steven Friedman** examined Zionist themes in Afrikaner nationalist ideology and the conflict between Zionism and Jewish ethics. One strong similarity between Palestine/Israel and the South African case, he argued, is the ideological commonality between groups in power (e.g. a national mythology of persecution, a civilizing mission, etc.). In South Africa the original dominant form of colonialism was a standard form of British colonialism. The ideology of British colonialism was one of trusteeship—the idea that according to the colonizer, the purpose of colonization is not to steal other peoples land, but to ‘civilize them’. Trusteeship meant, in this case, that black people can become part of the polity as long as they become civilized. Afrikaner nationalism emerged as a rebuke of British colonial power and its apparent sympathy with black indigenous inhabitants embodied in its project of trusteeship. Emerging out of this was a rigid segregationist ideology encapsulated in the phrase “no racial equality in church or state”—an attempt to create a religious nationalist community that explicitly excluded everyone else. The author argued that the South African case bears significant differences with the Israeli/Palestinian case: 1) Despite argument of refugees and fear, Zionism did not go away, it became stronger. Zionism didn’t define itself as an anti-British project after 1948, whereas Afrikaner nationalist ideology defined itself as anti-British project. 2) Afrikaner nationalism was an anti-colonial project, so it had an egalitarian basis to it. 3) Given that Zionism was not originally a religious movement, that religious component came later, is it as dispensable in that context as it is in the SA case? The religious component in Israeli component is not decisive.

#### *Homonationalism and the Strange Politics of Pinkwashing*

**Kelly Gillespie** analyzed Israel’s deployment of gay rights to extend its settler colonial agenda. Gay rights more broadly have been appropriated, in numerous contexts, to further the goals of racial capitalism. Pinkwashing, the deployment of gay rights as a resource in the maintenance of other systems of



oppression, has become a liberal democratic marker of a ‘good state’. In South Africa, there was a distinct fight for gay rights within the anti-apartheid movement, and a fight against white supremacy within the gay rights movement. This fusion of political trajectories formed the beginnings of articulating an intersectional anti-racist politics, and created the conditions for freedom of sexual orientation to

be recognized as a viable political claim by ANC. The author concluded by noting that creating an

intersectional anti-racist anti-imperialist struggle that embraces LGBTQ movements for freedom is a challenge to both Israeli and Palestinian nationalisms.

*Islamism in South Africa*

**Naeem Jeenah** examined the role of religion in South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle, with a focus on Islamism. Muslim engagement with SA began early on, as the first Muslims arrived within 10 years of the first colonialists, as exiles or slaves. There were three Islamic strands in the struggle for justice in South Africa in the early 1980s, including the Muslim youth movement and Muslim students' association. While these movements sought to create new nationalism/s, they also ended up creating new forms of Islam. It was and always will be a two-way interaction. Finally, the emergence of Islamic feminisms in SA was due in part to the emergence of national liberation struggle.

## SESSION IV: CHAIR—NADERA SHALHOUB-KEVORKIAN

---

### *Gods of Mutuality, Gods of Destruction*

**Dharmamegha Annie Leatt** examined the depoliticization of religion in post-apartheid South Africa. The author argued that while South Africa was not secular, but Christian, Christianity was largely depoliticized through law with the enactment of the new constitution. South Africa adopted the Indian model for its constitution – having a democratic parliament based on constitutional rights. In that model, religion became part of the negotiation and was incorporated into the constitution without jeopardizing other individual rights. There was a clear institutional separation between religion and the state, but an inclusive approach to religion.



### *The Politics of God and the Theology of the Nation State*

**Achille Mbembe** began his talk by discussing various forms of nationalism that emerged or achieved full development in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century –in the aftermath of, in parallel with, or concomitant to fascism, Nazism, colonialism, Bolshevism, communism—what he termed “mega dream-worlds that shaped the century.” By doing so, he raised the possibility that there are continuities between these projects and contemporary nationalisms based on a settler colonial structure—and the larger issue of a need to trace genealogies of power and violence in examining contemporary forms of violence and oppression. His hypothesis was that there is not a form of nationalism that emerged from settler colonialism that did not share similarities from fascism and/or Nazism.

Mbembe further moved to outline various forms of settler colonialism premised on the “contentious idea of some recognition of mutual dependency between the oppressors and the oppressed—dependency that is mutual, although asymmetrical”: 1) A first version is a negative recognition of mutual, though asymmetrical dependency, as was the case in South African apartheid where there was partition between settler and native, but settlers relied on the extraction of native labor. 2) A second version of settler colonial nationalism premised from the beginning on the impossibility of dependence. In this version recognition of the native is fundamentally prevented, and thus, a project of total elimination is enacted. 3) A third form—the Israeli/Palestinian model—is a one-way dependence. One way in the sense that

Israel arrogates to itself total sovereignty on the condition of the survival of the Palestinians. They entirely depend on Israel. This form of sovereignty is, according to Mbembe, fundamentally necropolitical.

#### *Herzl and Religion*

**Raef Zreik** examined Herzl's take on religion and its role within his project for a Jewish State. According to Zreik, there are numerous quotations from Herzl's writing that clearly show his attempt to keep distance from the religious establishment while advocating what appears as a completely secular version of politics. The paper demonstrated a deeper level through which one can view Herzl's religiosity and the inherent tensions between his attempts to advocate Zionism as an opposition to religion while at the same time deploying religion within his scheme. This double nature of Zionism- both as a revolt against religion and as an extension of it- is still with us today.

## SESSION V. CHAIR—SARAH NUTTALL

---

### *Nationalism, Religious Claims and Political Conflict: South Africa and Israel/Palestine Compared*

**Ran Greenstein** argued that there are no specific dynamics that differentiate settler colonial societies from other societies in a theoretical sense. Settlers and indigenous social structures shape each other's strategies for the enactment of power and resistance. Yet while the centrality of religion and nationalism is a mainstay of the Israel/Palestinian 'conflict', it is less so in the South Africa context. The author argued that other fundamental differences include the global historical contexts in which both cases emerged. While South Africa settlement took place in one historical context—as part of the global colonial extension—the Israeli settlement project took place in a different global historical, in the aftermath of the collapse of major colonial empires. Another fundamental difference lies in indigenous political organization. In South Africa, indigenous resistance was small scale and locally based, so colonization decimated the indigenous social structures, while indigenous groups in Palestine inhabited much more stable social structures.

### *Nationalism and the Vicissitudes of Political Islam in the Middle East*

**Ali Banuazizi** examined the relationship between nationalism and political Islam as ideologies and sociopolitical movements in the Middle East over the past several decades, at times overlapping and at times hostile to each other. After reviewing their parallel developments in the decades following the Second World War, he showed how political Islam emerged gradually as the dominant political ideology in the MENA region, particularly after the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran. In its various forms, political Islam became an ideology of resistance and liberation against authoritarian regimes by drawing on religious loyalties, deeply-rooted cultural traditions, and powerful religious symbols and ideals. This "politicization of religion" had many precedents in the Muslim world and elsewhere, and it was not necessarily incompatible with pluralistic political arrangements and coalitions.

The more recent rise of such movements as the "Islamic State" (ISIS, ISIL, or DAESH), Al-Qaeda, and Boko Haram—quite aside from their gruesome brutalities and wanton destructiveness—must be distinguished from political Islam on ideological and religious grounds. Rather than using religion as an ideological tool in politics ("politicization of religion"), these movements place their objectives, their leaders, their actions, and territorial holdings above and beyond temporal politics. Their "sacralization of politics," combined with their highly sectarian orientation, make these movements fundamentally averse to any possibility of compromise, pluralism, or coalition-building. It is highly likely, however, that their threat to the security and territorial integrity of the existing nation-states in the region may contribute to a revival of nationalist ideologies in the Middle East after their eclipse for nearly two generations.



## SESSION VI. CHAIR—RAEF ZREIK

---

### *'Prisoner No. 2382981: Government Property': Winnie Mandela and her Exile in Branfort*

Hlonipha Mokoena examined the gendered politics of the South African anti-apartheid movement through the experience of Winnie Mandela. Although never imprisoned like her husband, Winnie Mandela experienced different forms of incarceration—house arrest, exile, and briefly solitary confinement. In some ways, as Winnie became the prisoner that Nelson became, the state became more lenient on him and harsher on her. Nelson becomes the 'model prisoner', whereas Winnie does not. In post-apartheid SA Nelson Mandela's prison number becomes a 'brand'—4664. Winnie's number does not. In delineating Winnie's experience, the author makes an argument for the need to gender the nation.

### *Theo-Politics*

**David Theo Goldberg** traced the parallel histories of development of Zionism and apartheid. Each, according to the author, can trace its conceptual origins to the second half of the nineteenth century. Each mobilized constituencies of support from those taking themselves to be persecuted. Each sought to establish (or reclaim) a homeland. Each rationalized the displacement of local indigenes the establishment of the homeland would inevitably entail by recourse to a mix of lack of any alternative home, historical right, and Biblical injunction. In short, each comes into being—at exactly the same historical moment—on the basis of a political theology. But these histories are more than parallel. They also intersect, and historically and politically reinforce each other in their institutionalization and claims to historical inevitability, both in terms of judicial conception and historical institutionalization.

In his talk, Goldberg argued that Zionism is an extension of European racism. Racial configurations have religious reference—differentiating origins have tied bodies to behavioral projections, historical circumstances to religious. He suggests that from the 16<sup>th</sup> c on, the racial takes on much resonance of the religious, in the sense of providing an origin of human origins and naturalizing the artifice of socially produced differentiations. Thus the author examines the extent to which the religious becomes racialized as a governing technology in the Israeli state, with parallels to the racialization of governance in South Africa. Finally, the author argues that South Africa and Israel have long intersected with each other not just as two parallel conditions, but have reinforced each other over time as political projects.

### *The Sacralization and Secularization of the Holocaust*

**Amos Goldberg** examined the extent to which Holocaust memories have become global, or at least Western, as a "foundational past" with a sanctifying logic. The memory of the holocaust has been manipulated for Israel's colonial project.



## CONCLUSIONS

---

Some of the most powerful insights and ongoing debates that arose in this workshop included:

- That scholars need to trace histories and genealogies of power and violence within a global political power structure. These include the need to situate nationalism, settler colonial nationalism, and various technologies of violence within the rise and fall of major empires and political projects such as fascism, Nazism, bolshevism, Marxism, and others. However, a key question that remained for the group was within which genealogies of power settler colonial nationalisms should be examined in relation to.
- As Mbembe theorized, there are multiple forms of ‘dependency’ between the oppressors and the oppressed in settler colonial contexts. He outlined various forms of settler colonialism premised on the “contentious idea of some recognition of mutual dependency between the oppressors and the oppressed—dependency that is mutual, although asymmetrical”. A first version is a negative recognition of mutual, though asymmetrical dependency, as was the case in South African apartheid where there was partition between settler and native, but settlers relied on the extraction of native labor. A second version of settler colonial nationalism premised from the beginning on the impossibility of dependence. In this version recognition of the native is fundamentally prevented, and thus, a project of total elimination is enacted. A third form—the Israeli/Palestinian model—is a one-way dependence. One way in the sense that Israel arrogates to itself total sovereignty on the condition of the survival of the Palestinians. They entirely depend on Israel. This form of sovereignty is, according to Mbembe, fundamentally necropolitical.
- There are multiple modes and arenas in which the matrixes of settler colonial power and violence operate. This includes the violence of the law, and the law as violence, as mentioned by Mbembe. Here, the over-politicization of law in Israel emerged as a primary case study in further discussion among the group. The aesthetic realm, and the embodied, affective realm, raised by Shalhoub-Kevorkian, also emerged as another mode of colonial violence. Here, violence works through performativity, theatricality, and what she termed the “occupation of the senses.”
- The immense power politics in the fusion of religious claims and nationalism, but also the depoliticization of religious claims in certain contexts, such as South Africa.
- The gendered and sexual politics of both South African and Israeli/Palestinian nationalisms emerged as another important point of discussion. While two participants, Gevisser and Gillespie, examined the gendered and sexual dynamics of consolidation of state power in Apartheid South Africa in comparison with the politics of “pinkwashing” and “homonationalism” in Israel, Shalhoub-Kevorkian highlighted the intimate, embodied aspects of the fusion of religious claims and nationalism in the hypermasculine performativity of state power through her discussion of the aesthetics of violence. Other participants raised the question of to what extent there was a change in masculinities in post-conflict contexts such as Belfast.
- Race and racism, and the political work of racism, was a major component that emerged in the fusion of religious claims and nationalism. Zionism is, as Goldberg argued, an extension of European racism. Moreover, in Israel, the religious assumes the properties of the racial, as Jewishness, like whiteness, becomes a property that provides privileges to those who are a part of this group.

- The effects of colonial power inscribed on the land, memory and embodied experiences of those who both suffer and perpetrate colonial violence are ongoing, and live on beyond the structure of settler colonial power/system of apartheid are formally ended, as demonstrated in the South African case by Gasa's talk.
- Discussions over what decolonization entails; decolonization, various participants argued, is an embodied psychological process as much as it is a dismantling of structures of power. Struggles over memory of the land, for instance, are ongoing, and de-colonization must also entail a re-owning of the memory of space by those formerly/colonized.



(Nomboniso Gasa intervenes in group discussion)

Several parallels and distinctions emerged between the fusion of religious claims and nationalism in South Africa and Israel/Palestine, including:

- The working of this fusion under contexts of domination, segregation, racism and dispossession
- Suffering and violence as a mobilizer for political change, but also political silencing. Human suffering was a major factor that promoted, and was used/abused by hegemonic power holders.
- In both contexts, nationalist ideologies were underpinned by a mythology of persecution. In Zionism, settler colonizers viewed themselves as victims in relation to a global historical context of oppression rather than as enacting a colonial project. As Friedman highlighted in his talk, a mythology of persecution was also a feature of the Afrikaner nationalist movement. However, Afrikaner nationalist ideology was within a framework of suffering from British colonialism, and thus defined itself as an anti-British project, whereas Zionism did not define itself as anti-British after 1948.
- A civilizing mission energized by a European discourse of white supremacy was an inherent part of the political project of settler colonialism in both contexts. Racism is an inherent aspect of both structures of oppression, as well as a technology of governance of native populations. While apartheid was formally ended in South Africa, the white power structure was not

dismantled, and thus racial oppression continues to manifest against the black population, though in different forms over time.

- South African and Israeli settlement took place within two different historical contexts, as argued in Greenstein's talk. While the settlement of SA was part of the global colonial extension, the Israeli settlement project took place in a different world historical context in the aftermath of a collapse of major colonial empires. There is also a fundamental difference in indigenous political organization. In SA indigenous resistance was small scale, locally based, so colonization decimated indigenous social structures, while indigenous groups in Palestine inhabited much more stable social structures.
- The religious component of Israeli nationalism is fundamentally different from that of Palestinian nationalism, as highlighted particularly in Hroub's discussion of Hamas.
- The fusion of religious claims and nationalism is much more deeply entrenched in the Zionist project than in the Afrikaner nationalist movement.

## QUESTIONS ON REPORTING GUIDELINES

---

- I. How closely did the workshop follow the work plan and timeframe?  
The workshop closely followed the work plan and timeframe. The only exception is that three participants' flights were delayed, which caused them to miss the opening session.
- II. If objectives changed, outline the reasons for the change, and the revised objectives.  
There were no changes in workshop objectives.
- III. Have any major conditions such as staffing or funding changed during implementation of the project, and if so, how has this affected the project?  
No major conditions such as staffing or funding changed during implementation of the project.
- IV. Were any programmatic or administrative problems encountered? If so, how did they affect the work and how were they addressed?  
As previously noted, there was a flight delay that caused several speakers to arrive late to the first day of the workshop. However, workshop organizers ensured that they were quickly integrated into the workshop and engagement with other participants as soon as they arrived. In addition, several participants who were invited were unable to join the workshop. Workshop organizers addressed this issue by inviting other participants. Finally, South African participants were unable to submit abstracts in advance of the workshop, which made it difficult to program panels thematically. Workshop organizers addressed this by organizing panels to their best ability based on the abstracts that they received from other participants.