The Great Chain of Orientalism: Jewish Identity, Stigma Management, and Ethnic Exclusion in Israel

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This paper explores the role that orientalism has played in shaping ethnic inequality among Jews in Israel. Earlier works usually explain ethnic exclusion as a function of Jewish life on Israeli territory. Here, however, exclusion is located within an earlier history of a Jewish encounter with orientalism and Western European colonialism. It is argued that prior to their immigration to Israel, Jews the world-over had been stigmatized as Oriental. Through a complex process, they accepted this stigma, and they arrived in Israel deeply invested in developing the new country as "western" and uncomfortable with anything identified as "eastern." It is the imperatives of this westernization "identity project" that account for the initial impetus to exclude Middle Eastern Jews, as well as non-Jewish Arabs, from emerging Israeli society. Viewing history from this perspective, ethnic cleavages in the Jewish world appear to have a historical stability and consistency that is at odds with the current focus on contingency and historical indeterminacy.

SEVERAL FEATURES of race and ethnicity are now abundantly clear to sociologists. First, racial and ethnic boundaries are mutable social constructions. Second, they are relational constructs in that describing a "self" by implication describes an "other." Third, these moving boundaries that form ethnic groups are real in their consequences as they are fundamental building blocks of social hierarchies.

But while sociologists care about shifting boundaries largely because they are so often related to exclusion, precisely this connection between boundaries and exclusion has received little empirical attention. Currently, the literatures on immigration and racialization are concerned primarily with charting the processes by which group boundaries are created, strengthened, or weakened. Within this work it is not always clear why definitional moves are initiated, why boundaries take particular forms when others are available, or how the emergence of ethnic *difference* is related to the emergence of ethnic *inequality*.

Here, I use one instance of rapid transformation in ethnic boundaries to explore these issues. Contemporary Jewish Israeli society was formed in the 1950s as the result of a massive immigration of Jews from many countries. Despite significant heterogeneity among the immigrants, a bifurcated social

structure emerged in which Ashkenazim (European, primarily East European[1] Jews) were the dominant group and Mizrahim (Middle Eastern and North African Jews) were subordinate (Amit 2001; Nahon 1987). It has been argued that one of the ways Ashkenazim acquired their domination of Jewish Israeli society was to "orientalize" Mizrahim. That is, Ashkenazim used the previously-existing east/west dichotomy to advance a binary construction of ethnicity in Israel in which the heterogeneity of the arriving cultures was simplified into two, homogenous categories: Ashkenazim, who were fully "western," and Mizrahim, who were fully "eastern" (Shohat 1988, 1989). This bifurcation in the realm of representation, it is argued, both shaped and justified an unequal distribution of resources (Bernstein and Swirski 1982). As a result, the binary ethnic division has become entrenched, such that across a range of important contexts Israel can now be said to have only two Jewish ethnic groups.

The imposition of new ethnic boundaries in Israel was clearly a first step in the process of exclusion. However the dynamics most often invoked to explain these moves—competition for scarce material resources and the natural tendency to help one's own—cannot account for the choice of these particular ethnic boundaries over others or for their emergence as central axes of exclusion. I suggest that a far better explanation lies in an expanded and historicized account of orientalism in the Jewish world.

Based on a review of secondary source materials, and building on the works of Goffman (1963) and Said (1978), I argue that the past two centuries of Diaspora Jewish history in Europe and the Middle East can be conceptualized as a series of oriental-izations. Through this history, Jews came to view Jewish tradition as oriental, developed intense commitments to westernization as a form of self improvement, and became threatened by elements of Jewish culture that represented the oriental past. Self-classification then drove how others were classified—perceived levels of westernization became the primary determinant for evaluating other Jewish communities, and exclusion resulted when a putatively less western group threatened the westernization project of another. In Israel, I argue, the Ashkenazi move to create Mizrahim, and the move to exclude them and Middle Eastern non-Jews, both developed from this historical need to manage a "spoiled identity." (Goffman 1963).[2] Thus it was not the formation of ethnic groups per se that accounts for the emergence of ethnic closure but the content of the identities around which they were formed.

This argument has two local implications and one global one. First, a large scholarly literature on a Jewish inferiority complex has only begun to interpret that complex as a historical reaction to Orientalism or internal colonization (Heschel 1999; Hess 2000; Khazzoom 1998; Kramer 1999) or to connect it to communal relations within the Jewish world (Aschheim 1982; Khazzoom 1998; Raz Krakotzkin 1989; Rodrigue 1993), and then only in limited local instances. In contrast, this work demonstrates that the effect of orientalism on Jewish identity was massive. Group boundaries informed by orientalism served not only to integrate Jews into their host hierarchies but also to integrate disparate Jewish communities into a hierarchical, transnational structure that shaped interaction both before and after immigration to Israel. Second, although I focus on Jew-

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[1] It is difficult to talk about constructed entities in ways that avoid reification but also attend to their de facto reality as a result of daily practice. The problem comes up in things as simple as capitalization. I this paper, I capitalize "eastern" and "western" when they refer to geographical entities (i.e., to the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Western Europe), largely because this is common practice. In all other cases, these terms are written in lower case. I also capitalize most group names, such as Jews, Mizrahim, or Ashkenazim.

[2] For the purposes of this paper, identity refers to two related dynamics: the experience of belonging to a group (what is often referred to as subjective identity) and the set of characteristics group members use to describe their group. It is the second dynamic that is the focus of analysis here. I produce a history of what those who considered themselves to be Jewish wanted the Jewish collectivity to become (or to appear to be). An "identity project" is an effort to change group characteristics, or perceived characteristics, that is widely shared by those who see themselves as belonging to that group.

ish Israel, one implication is that the "internal ethnic" (Mizrahi/Ashkenazi) and the "external national" (Israeli/Palestinian) divides are intimately related, and that analyzing them together is necessary (also see Raz Krakotzkin 1998; Shohat 1989). Third, when the Israeli case is reinterpreted, ethnic cleavages in the Jewish world appear to have a historical stability and consistency that is at odds with the current focus on contingency and historical indeterminacy.

THEORETICAL PROBLEM

Why does one group move to exclude another from access to socially valued resources (Parkin 1979)? This venerable social stratification question is here married to work on racialization and the creation of difference (Omi and Winant [1986] 1994). Clearly, exclusion cannot occur without the prior articulation of group difference. Those cases Jenkins (1994) termed "categorization," in which the more powerful impose boundaries on the less powerful, should be of particular interest. But stratification work generally has been limited to asking when one axis of difference predominates over another or how several axes interact (Grusky 2001; Parkin 1979), treating group boundaries themselves as stable. Similarly, work on categorization has asked how identities are imposed and institutionalized (Espiritu 1992; Omi and Winant [1986] 1994), adopted and resisted (Espiritu 1992; Lopez and Espiritu 1990; Omi and Winant [1986] 1994; Portes and MacLeod 1996; Tefft 1999), or undermined by internal diversity (Kibria 1998), treating exclusion as a constant background force. I combine these related concerns by asking why, in the Israeli case, categorization prefigured exclusion.

Said's (1978) work suggests that the relationship between categorization and exclusion can be illuminated by casting categorization as a relational process.[3] Orientalism,

[3] There are two reasons to use *Orientalism*, Said's (1978) study, as an analytical framework for this paper. The first is empirical: Categorization in Israel referenced the orientalist discourse, and Said's text-based historical survey of the content, scope, and use of that discourse remains the defining work. The second reason is theoreti-

for Said, is a system of thought that first posits an opposition between Occident and Orient and then builds on that opposition to construct the orient as inferior, to "dominate it, restructure it, and have authority over it" (p. 3). The process of orientalization is relational not simply because one category implies another but because constructing the east is how the west produces itself. It is the fact that one group has the ability to classify another that makes orientalization an exercise of power, and this form of power is linked to the monopolization of resources and group conflict in several ways (also see Said 1993). First, European orientalist thought developed in reaction to fear of Moslem invaders; it was an attempt to domesticate those invaders by producing them as inferior. Second, orientalist thought in part inspired Napoleon to invade Egypt in 1798. Third, that invasion led to a sharp turn in orientalism, which began to justify colonialism by producing the east as incapable of ruling itself. Much work on colonialism and classification has followed these basic connections, either on the same grand historical scale (Wolff 1994) or on a smaller scale (Anderson 1991; Heschel 1999; Hess 2000; Mitchell 1991; Stoler 1992). Similarly, the assertion that the power to classify is an important form of domination is a guiding insight of the U.S. literature on racialization (Espiritu 1992; Jenkins 1994; Kibria 1998; Omi and Winant [1986] 1994).

The Israeli case suggests two broad contributions to this framework. First, Said (1978) historicizes orientalism on a macro level, writing a history of the orientalist discourse and its use by westerners as a tool of domination, but he does not write a history of the people who used it. Thus even as he argues that the east/west distinction is central to western identity, westerners appear unaffected by it, able to reshape the discourse at will in response to changing needs for domination or self definition (also see Gal 1991; Wolff 1994). However power is known to be a much more complex activity, and its exercise constrains both dominators

cal: One of Said's driving interests was to demonstrate the connection between categorization and exclusion. I summarize Said's main arguments in the text.

and the dominated. I historicize orientalism and its effect on group relations by asking how it becomes anchored in identity. I focus on a specific set of actors: members of a group that was classified as eastern by the orientalist discourse but that was given a chance to westernize. That "transformation option," I argue, is what caused Jews to both accept their own negative evaluation and use the east/west dichotomy to classify others. Jews were participating in their own domination when they imagined new selves based on a discourse that was used to classify them as inferior, and the categorization and exclusion of others was an integral part of this self domination.

To build these arguments, I draw on Goffman's (1963) classic work, *Stigma*. To some extent, this is an obvious choice. This period of Jewish history has long been analyzed as one in which Jews struggled with stigma and self-hatred, and Jewish reactions to the Enlightenment follow Goffman's map of stigma-management strategies. From this perspective, orientalist stigmas may be unique in their content, and perhaps in their reliance on a systematic discursive structure for their representational power, but they are not unique in their effect on the self.

There are also deeper reasons for the choice of Goffman's work, however. Jewish orientalism is a story of interaction and strategic self-presentation. Orientalist images of Jews, whether produced by Christians or by other Jews, were often explicitly produced for eastern consumption, often in the form of specific demands for change.[4] Representatives of the momentary western

group were usually available to evaluate the expected transformation, and westernizing Jews oriented private and public behavior toward these evaluating others. Goffman (1963) often compared social life to theatrical performance, in which individuals, sometimes, after significant "backstage" preparation, present carefully crafted selves to each other. He saw stigma as a special case of this dynamic, in which self presentation is shaped by the belief that an other is either aware or could become aware of a characteristic of the self that is despised or that is not consistent with the self's advertised role.[5] It is by reference to this interactional dynamic that one can explain not only why the stigma came to shape identity among specific groups of Jews, but also how it traveled from group to group, and

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[4] The nature of the Jewish stigma, and list of characteristics that had to be changed, were disseminated among individuals through face-to-face interaction and through the print media. For most Jewish groups, the orientalization of others was simultaneously a way of westernizing the self and stimulating change among the orientalized group. Thus representations could be produced for at least three groups: the western other, the eastern other, and the self. The relationships considered here frequently crossed language barriers and national and physical borders. The initial communication across such borders appears to have been largely through elites, and it was through internal communication that the stigma was disseminated to the larger communities.

Note that for Said (1978), the orientalist discourse is an internal conversation. Those who construct themselves as western do so by producing images of the east that are largely for western consumption; the putative easterners do not contribute to the images that cast them as other, and circulation of the images among the easterners is less of a priority than circulation among westerners. In the Jewish case, images may have been produced for eastern consumption, but orientalized Jews were still not invited to contribute to their production. They may nevertheless have shaped orientalist images (Kramer 1999).

[5] This second possibility is less important in the Jewish case. Note that Goffman's (1963) empirical focus was face-to-face interactions, while the Jewish case entails more attention to the "backstage" and to indirect interaction (such as written media). Note also that while Goffman did not focus on relations between groups, he did argue that stigma could either create or reinforce group boundaries (e.g., gays and Jews, respectively), and he connected individual stigma management strategies to the self awareness of such groups. Finally, the Jewish case reflects back on Goffman's notion of the self. Goffman was never entirely clear about the extent to which inner and outer selves could be analytically separated from each other, particularly because the inner self is also a product of social interaction. What is clear in the Jewish case is that Jews wanted the inner and outer self to merge. They wanted to be western when "backstage" and when they were in performance. Perhaps more correctly, they wanted the western self no longer to be a performance but a reality.

how the resulting need to present a western self to the world mediated between twin impulses to exclude and to change groups of Jewish others.

The post-colonial literature is also concerned with articulating the experience of the classified and often uses similar notions of stigma and interaction. This paper is very much in the post-colonial vein. However the focus of post-colonial scholarship has been on the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, not on the relationship between different groups of stigmatized others (e.g., Heschel 1999; Hess 2000; Memmi 1965; Said 1978; Spivak 1988; Trinh 1989).[6] As such, the kind of chain I elaborate here has not appeared before. Goffman (1963), by simultaneously attending to relations with "normals," more stigmatized others, and less stigmatized others, anticipates such a chain more closely.[7] His elaborate road map of po-

tential stigma-management strategies describes a series of contradictory, ambivalent,[8] moves and countermoves, including the tendency to assimilate to the normal other as well as separate from it, and the tendency to exclude similarly stigmatized others as well as missionary-style attempts to help them normalize. This approach blends well with the distinctions often made in the US literature between "assimilable" and "inassimilable" minorities (Blauner 1972; Ogbu 1987) as well as the tension between assimilation and cultural preservation (Brubaker 2001; Waldinger n.d.).

A second broad contribution of the present paper concerns fluidity and stability in racial/ethnic formations. Recently, sociologists have focused on showing contingency (Brubaker 1994), which can be defined as the historical indeterminacy that is generated by multiple sources of stability and change in ethnic formations (also see Omi and Winant [1986] 1994), or by the susceptibility of discourse to multiple uses and interpretations (Gal 1991). But what stands out in the longer historical view of the Israeli case is not indeterminacy but stability—stability in the use of the east/west contrast to classify self and other, in the use of specific cultural characteristics to establish that contrast, and in the resulting patterns of hierarchy and exclusion. I explain this stability, however, without reference to primordialism. Instead, it extends

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[6] This is true even though the literature often *mentions* the Euro-philic stance of many of the colonizers' former protegee groups. The outstanding exception is Fanon's (1967) *Black Skins White Masks*, which posits that access to French culture becomes a resource for power and prestige among blacks in Martinique. However Fanon's analysis is less oriented toward elaborating the multiple possibilities for social action than is Goffman's, and so is less useful for asking when exclusion occurs. Similarly, Fanon's (1963) *The Wretched of the Earth* considers cleavages among natives. But he is focused on rejection of the less assimilated native, rather than Goffman's complex vacillation between rejection and missionary behavior (also see Gilman's [1986] use of Fanon to describe the German Jewish case); similarly, Fanon is concerned with material interests rather than stigma. Bhabha's (1994) notion of hybridity is specifically intended to disrupt the colonizer/colonized dichotomy. But his interest is the possibility of undermining colonial practice, not relations between the self consciously hybrid and those they construct as fully native. Bakic-Hayden (1995) showed that identity in the former Yugoslavia is characterized by a series of nested orientalizations, but this piece is primarily descriptive.

[7] Note that I am generating a conceptual split between the "first" exercise of power on the part of Western Europeans, whom I am leaving as independent of the discourse as Said made them, and those who were the objects of the first exercise of power and who exercise power later but with far less control over their tools. While this

perspective is helpful in structuring the paper, it may be an artificial distinction, and it is likely that the point about power is applicable to Western European Christians as much as to Jews. For example, works by Heschel (1999) and Hess (2000) suggests that Western European Christians were aware that since Christianity emerged in the east, they too could be seen as eastern. Orientalization of Jews, by positing enormous differences between Jews and Christians, could be seen as an attempt to deemphasize this debt.

[8] Bhabha's (1994) concept of ambivalence is different from Goffman's (1963). Bhabha is concerned with the twin reactions of repulsion and desire, or recognition of difference and its disavowal, in contrast to Goffman's twin reactions of exclusion and missionary behavior. Goffman's form of ambivalence is most salient in the specific literature I am considering, and is also closer to the dynamics studied in the U.S. literatures on immigration, race/ethnicity and assimilation.

from two dynamics. First, the internalization of a stigma among Jews pushed in consistent directions across time and space. Second, because the strategy Jews used to become western was to produce other groups as eastern, consistency in patterns of identity formation led to consistency in patterns of ethnic relations. Said (1978) has long been criticized for positing an "essence," to orientalism, an internal coherence that survives the changing uses to which the discourse is put (Behdad 1994; Bhabha 1994; Young 1990). But when, as in the Israeli case, one posits a core self-definitional concern as driving the categorization of others, such consistency might be expected.

This point, then, returns us to Said's use of categorization as relational to connect it to exclusion. Recent work has argued that because identity is relational, ethnicity must be treated as a system of interdependent parts, rather than, say, as a characteristic of individuals (Becker 1998; Eriksen 1993; see Butler [1990] 1999 for a similar argument regarding gender). In the reinterpretation of the Israeli case presented here, such a move does yield greater explanatory power. By marginalizing Mizrahim, Ashkenazim were producing themselves and their state as western. This not only explains why Mizrahim were excluded but also the precise details of the distributive system. Examples of such details include: Poles and Rumanians who spoke Yiddish (a marker of easternness) received lower returns to education, Yemenites and Moroccans were moved to geographically isolated new towns or rural areas (Khazzoom 1998). Similarly, understanding what is behind marginalization says something about the circumstances under which ethnicity might become less relevant to the distributive system.

But rather than confirming the general necessity of a "relational" approach to ethnicity, the Israeli case also suggests its limits. All constructions of the other are simultaneously constructions of the self, but only sometimes does the need to define the self in a particular way cause moves to construct and exclude an other. Israel can serve as an example of such a "relationally-driven" system, as, it has been argued, can the black/white line in the United States (Roediger 1991). In these cases, majorities may be deeply invested in a particular contrast because their own identities are implicated. But in other cases, as when Espiritu (1992) in part credits administrative efficiency for the imposition of an Asian category in the United States, the fact that categorization also shapes borders around the self appears less relevant, and majorities appear, if not less invested in particular categorizations, at least differently invested. It may be that the distinction between those instances of categorization driven by the identity concerns of the powerful and those that are not is important in understanding racial/ethnic systems generally.

Why Israel?

Sociologists have underestimated the relevance of Jewish ethnic formation to the study of ethnicity. The case is important for a number of reasons. In this paper I build primarily on one: Jews constituted a large, loosely organized, multinational set of groups that maintained near-constant contact over time. Because specific subgroups' locations on the east/west dichotomy shifted, it is possible to observe the long-term impact of using the orientalist discourse to structure social relations. I allude to other sources of relevance in this paper. First, the assimilation of Jews into post-Enlightenment Europe constituted the test case for newly emerging ideas on national/ethnic belonging in the modern nation state. What happened to the Jews as they faced Europe's Jewish question thus provides important background material for contemporary debates about assimilation and preservation (Roger Waldinger, personal communication). Second, western colonial powers usually ruled through intermediaries who were generally groups that had been marginalized prior to colonial arrival and so had ambivalent reactions to colonial invasion. In the Middle East, Jews tended to be such an intermediary group, in some cases to a greater extent than Christians. Because Jews were more often considered assimilable than inassimilable, and because they established their own state predicated on the westernization project that resulted from their intermediary status, the Jewish case sheds light on the complex ways these intermediary groups have supported and resisted western

domination. Third, and relatedly, it can be argued that by representing itself as a western entity within a solid east/west dichotomy, Israel has been a participant in the recent polarization of the Christian and Moslem worlds when it could well have functioned as a powerful resistor. The history articulated here can account for Israel's choice.

THE ISRAELI CASE: THE CONSTRUCTION OF ETHNIC DIFFERENCE IN THE 1950S

Two related practices—the classification of Israeli Jews into two ethnic groups and the application of an east/west distinction to describe those groups—have only recently been critiqued by Israeli academics. Earlier researchers approached data using the binary classification as a neutral analytical tool and found that ethnic inequality resulted from cultural, educational, and occupational disadvantages the Mizrahim brought with them. For these researchers, the east/west distinction was not problematic. On the contrary, the Oriental origins of the Mizrahim explained their lower skills and apparent inability to compete in Israel's modern industrialized society (e.g., Eisenstadt 1967; Lissak 1965). Then the focus of mainstream sociological work shifted, and researchers began supplementing information on Mizrahi disadvantage with that on Ashkenazi social closure behavior in housing, politics, the educational system, and the labor market (e.g., Herzog 1985; Kraus and Hodge 1990; Levy 1997; Lewin-Epstein and Semyonov 2000; Segev 1986; Shafir 1989; Shalev 1992; Shavit 1990; Smooha 1978; Smooha and Kraus 1985; Swirski 1989; Yaish 1998). Much of this work, including the most recent, differs only in that it conceives group relations as conflictual and not in its basic conception of group boundaries. But the focus on social closure also highlighted "eastern" and "western" as categories of social and political practice (e.g., Herzog 1985; Shafir 1989; Swirski 1989). Concurrently, a group of sociologists, historians, and literary critics attacked the east/west categories directly by arguing for their inaccuracy (Alcalay 1993; Anidjar 1996; Lavie 1992; Nahon 1987), linking them to exclusion (Bernstein and Swirski 1982; Eyal 1996; Piterberg 1996; Raz Krakotzkin 2002;

Shenhav 2002a, 2002b; Shohat 1988, 1989), and suggesting that social scientists were key agents in their dissemination (Anidjar 1996; Eyal 1996; Piterberg 1996; Raz Krakotzkin 1998; Shohat 1988).

These latest works made the assertion that Israel did not *receive* Mizrahim and Ashkenazim but rather *created* them, producing two ethnic groups when in fact it started with many more. Nahon (1987), for example, found that among older immigrant men, educational attainments varied widely among their 10 major countries of origin with no obvious clustering of Middle Eastern and European countries. Among younger Israeli-born men, however, educational attainments did in fact cluster into the two groups. Similar arguments about the 1950s immigrants have been made regarding occupation and income (Amit 2001; Darwish 1982, 1985a, 1985b, 1987; Khazzoom 1998), as well as prior access to Western European societies or adoption of their institutional and behavioral forms (Goldberg 1996a, 1996b; Haddad 1984; Laskier 1983; E. Meir 1993; Y. Meir 1989; Rodrigue 1993; Rejwan 1985; Schroeter 1988; Schroeter and Chetrit 1996; Yehuda 1996).[9] Studies such as Shohat's (1989) classic survey of Israeli film, Eyal's (1996) history of the Arab village concept, Shenhav's (2002b) study of European Zionist emissaries and Middle Eastern Jews, and Piterberg's (1996) analysis of history textbooks can be seen as building on this work, tracing the east/west construction's dissemination on specific sites.

In connecting the formation of Israel's ethnic hierarchy to orientalism, this literature makes an important advance, but it leaves open the question of *why* Ashkenazim, specifically, would exclude Mizrahim, specifically, when arguably neither group existed in

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[9] Less work has been done regarding similarities of language, history, and even behavior, that could underlie a Mizrahi/Ashkenazi distinction. But particularly with language and behavior, internal differences within each group may have been greater that those between the two groups. For example, even though all Middle Eastern immigrants probably understood Arabic, and most Europeans Yiddish, the upper classes both geographical regions tended to speak Western European languages, while the lower classes spoke either Yiddish or Arabic.

the first place. Two explanations can be culled from the literature. The first concerns competition for scarce resources. The construction of Mizrahim as eastern, primitive, and uneducated was explicitly linked with the notion that they needed less: less pay, less immigrant or socialist worker benefits, less attention paid to the quality of their housing. The newspaper *HaTsvi* argued,

> [The Yemenite worker] is the simple, natural worker, capable of doing any kind of work without shame, without philosophy, and also without poetry. And Mr. Marx is, of course absent from both his pocket and his mind. (Quoted in Shohat 1988:14)

Ben-Gurion noted,

> We need people who are born workers. . . . The Oriental Jews['] . . . standard of living and their needs are lower than the European workers'. (Alcalay 1993:43)

Similarly, characterizations of Yemenites as nonintellectual, quantity workers (as opposed to intellectual, quality workers) underlie a proposal that only 1,000 francs need be spent on each Yemenite family's housing, as opposed to 2,000 for each Ashkenazi family (Shafir 1989). Also, Swirski (1989) argues that Ashkenazim built on their construction of Mizrahim as inexperienced to use them as a ready-made proletariat, on the backs of which the Ashkenazi-dominated Israeli industries gained their strength and sophistication.

But this is ultimately an unsatisfactory explanation for the specific boundaries that formed. It would have been the veteran elite, who took up positions as everything from immigrant placement officials to university presidents, who would have established the initial contours of social closure. But having already obtained the most valued positions for themselves, this group had little to gain by handing out other positions according to a binary ethnic criterion. Certainly they would want to divide resources according to group boundaries that included them; certainly the orientalist discourse had wide currency, making it a readily available, effective, and possibly already-tested (Shafir 1989; Smooha 1978) basis for group formation and exclusion; and certainly it was the discourse, not the gatekeepers, that invented

the distinction between those from the Moslem and Christian worlds. But this argument is also tautological, as it assumes the discourse's currency. The Zionist discourse also held wide currency, and Zionist condescension, even disgust, toward "weak" Holocaust survivors, "backward" Yiddish-speakers from East European ghettos, "non-ideological" refugees, and Diaspora Jews generally (Zerubavel 1995), in addition to a heartfelt commitment to ethnic *equality,* all provided alternate axes for social closure and mitigated against the kind of ethnically based solidarity that would make preference for all Europeans an obvious response.[10]

The second alternate hypothesis, the van den Berghe (1987)–style argument that people naturally select and protect their own, is also problematic because it assumes the discourse's currency. In Israel, it is argued, Ashkenazim gave important jobs to Ashkenazim, not to create ethnic inequality but to people their offices with those with whom they felt comfortable.[11] But again, this argument seems weak in the face of evidence that the Mizrahi/Ashkenazi distinction was chosen out of a series of viable alternatives. In

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[10] In fact, as I have shown in other work on immigrant attainment in 1961 (Khazzoom 1998), preference for all Europeans may not actually have been the response. Among the examples, it appears that Ashkenazim who spoke Yiddish as their primary language did, in fact, have had a harder time translating prior educational attainment into Israeli occupations. It is my contention that gatekeepers, conditioned by the orientalist discourse, did in fact see two ethnic groups. However, because their concern was actually westernization/modernization, and not the formation of ethnic inequality, there was room for Mizrahim to prove their westernness, and thus avoid exclusion; similarly there was room for Ashkenazim to inadvertently demonstrate insufficient westernness (e.g., by speaking Yiddish) and thus become victims of exclusion.

[11] This hypothesis tends to be written into introductions of scholarly work on Israel, and to my knowledge it has never been directly examined (e.g., see Kraus and Hodge 1990). Other hypotheses that have been articulated in the Israeli literature explained the emergence of ethnic inequality but without reference to social closure. These include the argument that Mizrahim arrived with lower human capital than Ashkenazim.

fact, I argue that the Ashkenazi/Mizrahi distinction structured feelings of similarity. I also argue, however, that the longer historical perspective is necessary to explain why that was the case.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

The secondary sources I use in this study consist of the historical literature, published primarily from the 1940s through the current time, on Jewish communities in Germany, France, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. The literature affords two forms of "data": quotations from primary sources, and historians' descriptions of the discourses, identities, and interactions of the time. In several cases, these scholars explicitly consider the role of the east/west dichotomy in shaping Jewish identity or intercommunal dynamics (Aschheim 1982; Heschel 1999; Hess 2000; Kramer 1989; Rodrigue 1993; Yehuda 1996) but do not consider this process as part of a larger dynamic of orientalism (but see Raz Krakotzkin 1998); in other cases, the theme of westernness is either not raised or is relegated to the background.

The use of secondary sources can be seen as introducing a form of sampling bias to the study, as I am dependent on data that were gathered to answer empirical questions different from my own. Nevertheless, the historians cited were concerned with issues that overlap those I consider here, such as Europe's Jewish questions and the changes wrought by the Enlightenment on Jewish culture and identity. Moreover, there is little disagreement among the scholars themselves on the details that are central to my argument. My "concern" is thus not with the representativeness of data that was collected in the past, but with how that data can be differently interpreted.

A JEWISH HISTORY OF EAST, WEST, AND COLONIAL DOMINATION

The series of orientalizations that can be discerned from available secondary sources is diagramed in graphic form in Figure 1. Beginning with Western Europe's Enlightenment, French and German Christians cast Jews in their countries as their eastern foils. Probably soon after that, German Jews orientalized East European Jews, but the trend became pronounced during the mid- to late-1800s. It was also at about that time that French Jews established the Alliance school system in the Middle East, the main vehicle by which Middle Eastern Jews were exposed to orientalization. Once the westernization project had circulated among Middle Eastern Jews, they, and probably Western European Jews as well, orientalized Arabs. Finally, as many have argued (see esp. Shohat 1988), Israel has a three-tiered structure, as the primarily East European Ashkenazim are cast as western, the Mizrahim as assimilable easterners, and Palestinians and other Arabs as inassimilable easterners.

Orientalization of Jews in France and Germany

I begin the history of ethnic exclusion in Israel with Western Europe's Enlightenment and the first two orientalization episodes. The history itself is well known (Aschheim 1982; Barzilay 1955; Bayme 1981; Goldscheider and Zuckerman 1984; Greenberg 1944; Heschel 1999; Hess 2000; Katz 1973; Lichten 1986; Mendelsohn 1983, 1986, 1989; Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz 1980; Raisin 1913; Zipperstein 1985). Beginning in the late 1700s, influential groups of elite German and French Christians resolved to allow Jews full social and economic integration, but at a price.[12] Jews were expected to "prove their fitness for equal rights" (Aschheim 1982:5), by shedding their "backward" traditions, dismantling their separate communal infrastructures, and moving forward into "modernity."[13] Most

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[12] The Enlightenment also affected the Jewish position in England, but because this line of orientalization did not extend to other Jewish communities with the same intensity, I have not included it in this account.

[13] The terms "modern" and "western" were probably used in a variety of ways by the various actors in this history, and the meanings probably changed across time and space. But because Jewish orientalism is a new subject, there are no careful analyses of the meaning of each term in Jewish thought or of the relationship between the two terms. For the moment, it is safe to say that
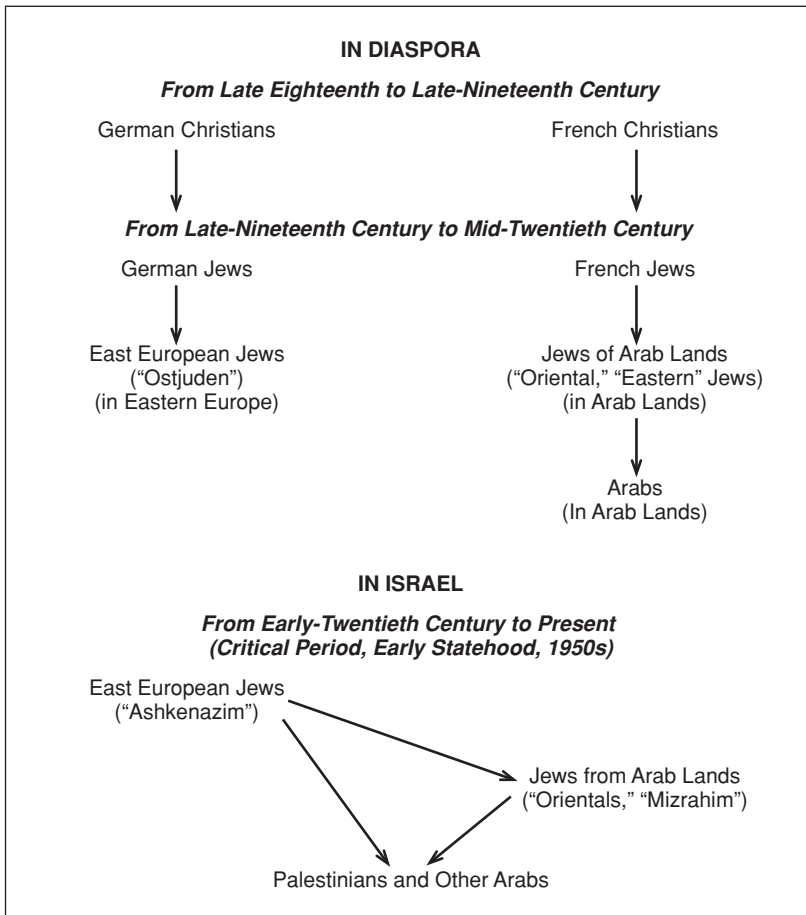
IN DIASPORA

From Late Eighteenth to Late-Nineteenth Century

German Christians   French Christians

↓   ↓

From Late-Nineteenth Century to Mid-Twentieth Century

German Jews   French Jews

↓   ↓

East European Jews   Jews of Arab Lands
("Ostjuden")   ("Oriental," "Eastern" Jews)
(in Eastern Europe)   (in Arab Lands)

↓

Arabs
(In Arab Lands)

IN ISRAEL

*From Early-Twentieth Century to Present
(Critical Period, Early Statehood, 1950s)*

East European Jews
("Ashkenazim")

Jews from Arab Lands
("Orientals," "Mizrahim")

Palestinians and Other Arabs

Figure 1. Intercommunal Orientalization in Post-Enlightenment Jewish History, and Approximate Timing of the Most Intense Periods of Orientalization

Note: Arrows denote direction of orientalization.

Jews accepted this deal and launched numerous transformation projects designed to make Jewish life more compatible with the Christian ideal.[14] Both the Enlightenment and the Jewish reaction to it differed greatly between Germany and France, as did the legal process of Jewish emancipation and the ease with which Jews were integrated into the larger society. But in the characterization of the Jews, the nature of the demands for change, and the overall effects on Jewish identity the dynamics in the two countries were very similar.

Christians demanded that Jews, "those unfortunate Asiatic refugees" (Dohm quoted in Greenberg 1944:13),[15] reform their lifestyle, values, and social, economic, and educational structures. Friends and foes alike were disgusted by Jewish poverty, by their dark,

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both terms were used to refer to the set of characteristics I elaborate below.

[14] These projects varied along a number of axes. Among them were the level of tradition that Jews wanted to retain and the role that Jewishness, in some form or another, should play in individual identity. But in France and Germany, there were few explicitly anti-westernization projects. In addition, even projects that pre-

served tradition sought to mold it into something more compatible with western Christian observance. The modern orthodox, for example, added decorum to their services, while the conservative and reform sought to update Jewish ritual itself.

[15] See Appendix A for a description of the individuals quoted in this paper.

disorderly ghettos with the "narrow streets, dirt, throngs of people, . . . and ceaseless haggling" (Aschheim 1982:6, paraphrasing and quoting Goethe's description). Jewish appearance, particularly the beards and sidelocks, were attacked (Goldscheider and Zuckerman 1984), and Goethe disliked the rabbis' "fanatic zeal . . . wild gesticulations . . . [and] piercing outcries" (Barzilay 1955: 221). Special animosity was reserved for the Yiddish language. Not only, argued the enlightened, was it "the incarnation of linguistic ugliness" (Miron 1973:45), it was also too underdeveloped to support high-powered thoughts (Miron 1973). Jewish economic structure accounted for what everyone agreed was their dishonesty and parasitic natures. To solve the problem, Jews needed to reduce their numbers in commerce, especially peddling (Barzilay 1955; Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz 1980). Christians attacked Jews for their particularistic orientation, their "state within a state." Finally, Jewish education had to be completely reformed. The heder, the primary educational institution, was dismissed as crowded, unhygienic, and chaotic. Children, it was said, were taught by rote rather than by rational thought. And the subjects of their education, particularly the Talmud, were denounced as everything from superstition to sedition (Barzilay 1955; Heschel 1999).

As noted, this history is well known and generally not disputed. What has only recently been added to the analytical picture, however, is that Jews in Western Europe were not simply constructed as being backward, but as backward because they were Oriental, Eastern, or Asian (Khazzoom 1998; for analyses regarding Jews in Germany, see Biale 2001; Heschel 1999; Hess 2000; Kramer 1999; Raz Krakotzkin 1998). My own characterization of the French and German stigmatization of western Jews as the first orientalizations is based on three observations: (1) Jews were considered Asiatic, (2) the package of deficiencies said to characterize them was already part of a discourse of Western European superiority (Fredrickson 1981), and (3) the discourse that constructed Orientals as inferior already existed (Said 1978). Thus Dohm, quoted above, appeared to clearly connect the dislike of Jews to their origins in Asia, Voltaire

was of the opinion that "the [ancient] Jews were vagrant Arabs infested with leprosy" (Barzilay 1955:190), and many believed that Jews operated as a fifth column for the Moslem enemy (Cutler and Cutler 1986).

Of course it is empirically true that Jewish ghettos were small, crowded, and noisy, that Jews were located in commerce, and that they had a separate institutional infrastructure. This is part of the reason that, until recently, Jewish historians approached this period as a time of needed reform rather than as a period in which Jews were subject to a power play. But the superficial accuracy of the construction is misleading. For example, there is nothing inherently backward about narrow, twisting streets; today, many parts of Europe are popular precisely for their romantic, intimate sidelanes. In addition, while Dohm complained that Jews overbuilt, colonists to the Americas asserted that Native Americans did not build enough. Denouncing Jews for their particularistic orientation is also suspicious because Jews were initially attractive to the Western European powers precisely because of their lack of investment in the internal European power struggles (Barzilay 1955). Finally, with the increasing importance of commerce to the Western European economies, and indeed to the Enlightenment itself, Christians should have been delighted to have a skilled commercial group in their midst.

From this perspective, straight streets, decorum, and even a peddler-free occupational distribution, have little to do with practical questions of advancement or with economic and social efficiency. They are, rather, characteristics that are given value by a group with power, often because perceived cultural superiority can make economic or political privilege appear deserved (Bourdieu 1984, Bourdieu and Darbel 1991). The argument that lifestyle can be a tool in the monopolization of resources can be traced back to Weber ([1921/1922] 1978), and it has been taken up in different ways in research on social stratification and inequality (in addition to Bourdieu, see DiMaggio 1982; Ridgeway et al. 1998). Said (1978) and the post-colonialists can be said to be arguing for a particularly pervasive form of lifestyle-as-legitimization. They define the broad referential system in which "east" and "west" are con-

nected to other binarily opposed characteristics—straight/not straight, quiet/not quiet, rational/emotional and Christian/non-Christian—as a discourse. Nearly every possible social and personal characteristic becomes associated with one side of the discourse's dichotomy. It is because of this power-by-association that something as trivial as street width can appear to indicate something as complex as social development.

Importantly, Weber ([1921/1922] 1978) presented the choice of cultural/lifestyle characteristics used to demarcate group boundaries as not, in the main, predetermined (e.g., chap. 5). He did argue that some markers, such as language, are more likely to be chosen because they tend to be effective, and that others, such as putting butter in the hair, are chosen because they are highly distinctive. Generally, though, the goal tends to be differentiating one putative group from another and so any distinction will do. For the post-colonial literature, on the other hand, one central observation is consistency in the characteristics used across time and space to construct different groups of others as backward. Sets of characteristics similar to the "orientalization package" described here have been used with relatively little variation to describe societies as diverse as Chinese, Africans, North American Indians, and even the Irish (also see Fredrickson 1981). For postcolonialists, cultural characteristics do come to evoke visceral reactions, but in the main this consistency is seen as a form of convenience. Having become part of widely known discourses of difference, these packages resonate with people and so become effective bases for new, often unrelated, distinctions. In the Jewish case, consistency is again salient but for different reasons. What will become clear is that the lifestyle features that were used to build stigma came to have enduring meaning for Jews, in and of themselves. These characteristics—religiousness, traditional clothing, narrow streets, even employment in sales—were later used to create other distinctions, not so much because distinction was the goal but because observing these features on other Jews induced panic among those who believed they had made some progress in bringing them under control.

JEWISH ACCULTURATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STIGMATIZED IDENTITY

Jews initially engaged in the required acculturation for practical reasons. Equality and integration meant less violence against them as well as increased educational and occupational possibilities. In addition, rabbinical hegemony within the Jewish world left many Jews searching for a way to undermine its strength (Barzilay 1955). However in losing their separate infrastructures, Jews also lost the boundaries that had protected them from their stigmatized place in Christian society (Bayme 1981). This was a moment whose negative consequences would change Jewish history. Jews became vulnerable to self hatred, as they began to see themselves from the orientalizers' eyes. Even further, they placed the legitimate judges of Jewish acceptability outside the Jewish world. Over time, the goal was less to produce a Judaism that Jews liked than it was to produce a Judaism that the Christians could tolerate.

Goffman's (1963) discussion of stigma can be used to explicate this process. He departs from Weber's ([1921/1922] 1978) insight that, when stigmatized ethnic groups are segregated, a separate sense of honor can shield them from the effects of exclusion and stigmatization. He then argues that in the United States, because

> . . . separate systems of honor [are] on the decline the stigmatized individual tends to hold the same beliefs about identity that we do. . . . The standards he has incorporated from the wider society equip him to be intimately alive to what others see as his failing, inevitably causing him . . . to agree that he does indeed fall short of what he really ought to be. Shame becomes a central possibility, arising from the individual's perception of one of his attributes as being a defiling thing to posses. (Goffman 1963:7)

Although Goffman's focus was on interactions between normal and stigmatized dyads ("mixed contacts" [p. 12]), it is clear that knowing one is stigmatized continues to shape self-evaluation and behavior outside of the interaction in anticipation of future interactions:

The immediate presence of normals is likely to reinforce this [sense of inadequacy], but in fact self hate and self-derogation can also occur when only he and a mirror are about. (Goffman 1963:7)

One reaction to such a process, says Goffman, is to attempt to rid the self of the stigmas to gain the acceptance of "normals."

Spurred by the promise that change would effectively destigmatize them, Jews accepted and propagated the negative image developed by others (Aschheim 1982; Boyarin 1997; Cuddihy 1974). They decried the narrow Talmudic world of the Heder, Berr Isaac Berr exhorted his fellow Jews "to divest ourselves entirely of that narrow spirit, of Corporation and Congregation" (1807, reprinted in Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz 1980:108), Eduard Gans wanted to destroy Jewish particularism, "the obstinate, self-centered independence of the Jews" (1882, reprinted in Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz 1980:191), Heinrich Graetz called Yiddish a "half bestial language" (1895, quoted in Miron 1973:36). And they simply loathed peddlers (Aschheim 1982).

Jews told each other about their individual responsibility to change these specific characteristics of themselves. Walter Rathenau's words to his fellow Jews in 1897 illustrate the self-contempt they often expressed:

Look at yourselves in the mirror! . . . As soon as you have recognized your unathletic build, your narrow shoulders, your clumsy feet, your sloppy roundish shape, you will resolve to dedicate a few generations to the renewal of your outer appearance. (Quoted in Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz 1980:232)

Importantly, the articulation of the Jewish stigma as an Oriental stigma specifically may have solidified over time, possibly as the orientalist discourse itself and the notion of a Semitic race became more central to Western European thought. In fact, it may be that it was only when western Jews orientalized other Jewish communities in the mid- to late-1800s that the characterization of their own pasts as Oriental crystallized. It was about that time that the French Jew, Naquet, told the Chamber of Deputies that, through Aryanization, contemporary French Jews had lost "that inferiority which I find in all Oriental people" (Marrus

1971:23–24), and German Jews believed that East European Jews represented the "Asian form of Judaism" (Aschheim 1982:20) that was the German Jews' own past.

As they increasingly adopted the east/west dichotomy and its hierarchy of cultures, a number of concepts became fused in the Jewish world view. These included: enlightenment, progress, modernity, secularism, rationality, reason, and non-Jewish Western European culture. As in the larger, non-Jewish European community, these concepts were translated into binary, oppositional categories, under the umbrella of the east/west dichotomy, and given a moral connotation. But, since Jews initially placed themselves on the nonprogressive, ignorant end of the east/west dichotomy, it was their own origins that became the central symbols of degeneracy and backwardness. Says Aschheim (1982), "The ghetto symbolized the distinction between enlightenment and superstition, progress and reaction, even beauty and ugliness" (p. 6). This kind of transformation project tends to create a protracted liminal state. As Goffman (1963) wrote, even when "repair" of the stigma is possible, "what often results is not the acquisition of fully normal status, but a transformation of the self from someone with a particular blemish into someone with a record of having corrected a particular blemish" (p. 9). Because of their own ambiguous location within the dichotomy, Jews continued to fear regression until very late in the process of westernization (Aschheim 1982; Rodrigue 1993).

GROUP FORMATION AND SOCIAL CLOSURE; THE PRODUCTION OF "OSTJUDEN" AND "ORIENTAL JEWS"

In Goffman's (1963) schema, the internalized stigma affects one's perception of other group members:

The stigmatized individual exhibits a tendency to stratify his "own" according to the degree to which their stigma is apparent and obtrusive. He can then take up in regard to those who are more evidently stigmatized than himself the attitudes the normals take to him. Thus do the hard of hearing see themselves as anything but deaf persons,

and those with defective vision, anything but blind. (P. 107)

But the less-stigmatized not only exclude the more-stigmatized, they also feel attached to other members of the stigma group. This is partly because normals are insensitive to differences among the stigmatized and partly because the less-stigmatized experience empathy. "In brief, he can neither embrace his group nor let it go" (Goffman 1963:108). Goffman argues that in an attempt to free themselves from this ambivalence, normalizing members of the stigmatized group may simultaneously push other members to normalize, and also distance themselves from them.

As they moved into the Western European world, German and French Jews began organizing their identities around the east/west dichotomy, evaluating themselves and others according to conformity with the western cultural model. Their discomfort with their Oriental past became particularly important when they were placed in direct contact with other, unwesternized, Jewish populations. For German Jews, East European (particularly Polish) Jewish communities became an orientalized "other" against which the German Jews measured their own advancing westernization. Aschheim (1982) argues that it was at this point that an east/west distinction first began to shape Jewish intercommunal relations, as German Jews dubbed East Europeans "Ostjuden," literally "Eastern Jews":

> East European Jews . . . were regarded as immoral, culturally backward creatures of ugly and anachronistic ghettos. In large part this was a view formulated and propagated by West European and especially German Jews, serving as a symbolic construct by which they could distinguish themselves from their less fortunate, un-emancipated East European brethren. In this sense, the very notion "Ostjude" was the product of the modernization of Jewish life and consciousness, for before the penetration of Enlightenment thinking, Jews did not divide themselves into radically antithetical "Eastern" and "Western" components. (P. 3)

Only a short time later, French Jews orientalized Jews in Arab lands (dubbed at this point "Oriental," and later in Israel also "Mizrahim" [lit. "easterners"]) as part of French colonial expansion into that part of the world (Rodrigue 1993).

Both of these orientalization-driven relationships simultaneously contained elements of exclusion and attempts to westernize the oriental group and bring it into the fold. But the balance differed, depending, I argue, on the type of contact between the western and the orientalized group. In Germany in the late 1800s, Jews' still-shaky status as westerners was threatened by massive immigrations of these orientalized East European Jews (Aschheim 1982). Concerned that integration of so many Ostjuden would disrupt their acculturation process, German Jews reacted primarily with exclusion, funneling the would-be immigrants to the United States or Palestine (Aschheim 1982). In France, on the other hand, contact with Middle Eastern Jewish communities was probably less threatening. It took place physically outside of France, and by constructing the interaction as facilitating the French colonial enterprise, French Jews were actually able to use the relationship to strengthen their own "Frenchness" (Goldberg 1996b; Rodrigue 1993). In this case, orientalization did not result primarily in exclusionary activities but in missionary-style projects aimed at westernizing the Oriental population. French Jews formed the Alliance school system, an intensive, and highly successful, westernization enterprise.

Orientalization of East European Jews

The influence of Haskalah (Jewish Enlightenment) ideology on Eastern European Jewish communities and identities can be divided into two historical periods. In the late 1700s, students and business people were exposed to the changing German self-concept (Fishman 1995). At that time, however, the Haskala took root primarily in larger cities such as Odessa and Vilna (Goldscheider and Zuckerman 1984; Zipperstein 1985). Then, in the early- to mid-1800s, two changes sped up the East European Haskala. First, a new Russian Czar opened the social system to Jewish penetration (Greenberg 1944; Raisin 1913). Second, German and Germanized maskilim (proponents of the

Haskalah) began orientalizing in earnest. They wrote a series of Yiddish novels, whose intent was to show East European Jews the decaying and backward nature of their own culture (Miron 1973; Rischin 1962). These novels, characterized by Rischin as "paper pogroms" (persecution or attacks), were very influential. As Goldscheider and Zuckerman (1984) put it, the "winds of change" had soon reached nearly everywhere.

And those winds meant the acceptance of stigma and the launching of westernization projects. Israel Singer, the brother of Isaac Bishevas Singer, wrote:

> See what Jews look like—stooped, despondent, living in filth. Watch them drag their feet as they walk. Listen to them speak. It's no wonder everyone else thinks of them as Asiatics. And how long do you think that Europe will stand for this clump of Asia in its midst? (Quoted in Selzer 1967:35)

Substantively, both Jews and non-Jews, pro- and anti-Semites, Germans and East Europeans, agreed on the nature of Jewish deficiency. The filthy, chaotic, uncultured ghettos with their narrow twisty streets were prominent. The German Jew Zunz complained that the Hassidim (Jewish mystics) of Sklow "screamed and raved and sang like the savages of New Zealand" (Aschheim 1982:14). East European maskilim requested that the Russian government outlaw Hassidic clothing (sidecurls and long black coats) (Seltzer 1967) and urged Jews to speak local languages rather than "our corrupted jargon that grates on the ears and distorts" (Osip Rabinowich 1861, reprinted in Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz 1980:322). And the Ostjuden were attacked for their large families. Marx complained that Polish Jews bred "like lice" (Aschheim 1982), the anti-Semitic *Vilna Journal* reported that "in the same dwelling may be found four, five, or even six families, each of them having a number of children of tender age" (quoted in Rischin 1962:30), and in a Mendel Moicher Sforim story:

> Observe the miserable conditions of the pauper, . . . the way his wife lies pregnant, the way his children roll about, the way they are clothed, and the way they are raised. (Quoted in Rischin 1962:40)

EASTERN AUTHENTICITY, WESTERN FUTURES, AND VARIATION AND LIMITATION IN REACTIONS TO ORIENTALIZATION IN EUROPE

European Jews did not react with one mind to their orientalization; they rather responded with a variety of identity projects, including anti-westernization projects (Bayme 1981; Katz 1986) and romanticization of the orient (Aschheim 1982; Kramer 1999). Nor would the stigmatized have seen themselves as an undifferentiated group of Orientals; in addition to the well-researched religious/secular division in Eastern Europe, numerous internal stratification systems would have either arisen or been reinterpreted along orientalist lines. Yet structuring the variety of responses and relationships, at least in Europe, was an opposition between oriental authenticity and western modernity. Once a group had internalized the oriental stigma, identity projects—whether advocating retention, transformation, or rejection of Jewish tradition—and relations with groups perceived as less western—whether vilifying them as culturally backward, romanticizing them as carriers of unspoiled culture, or both simultaneously—were organized around the diametric opposition of a new, modern, secular, west and an old, traditional, religious, east.

This is important because few westernization projects had full acculturation as their goal; rather most, including Zionism, aimed for a synthesis between "old" and "new." But having also accepted the diametric opposition, most groups experimenting with synthesis wanted to be seen as fundamentally western with oriental features, not as fundamentally Oriental. Several consequences are of interest. First, syntheses had to be undertaken with care, and delicate balances could be easily upset. Eyal (1996, personal communication) suggests that Jews became more adventurous in their syntheses when they were confident in their westernization. Thus, later groups of German Jews built synagogues with oriental architecture; similarly early Zionists experimented with Arab dress and other forms of "Arabization." Second, for westernizing Jews who wanted to connect to the past, preservation of *other* populations' eastern-

ness may have become important (for similar dynamics in the colonial context, see Bhabha 1994; Trinh 1989). Work on German Jewish romanticization of the Osjuden (Aschheim 1982; Brenner 1996) suggests such a dynamic, as does the combination, in Israel, of admiration for the purity and authenticity of Yemenite Jewry with exclusion from central areas of the country and economy (Raz Krakotzkin 1998; Segev 1986).

Finally, the reaction to at least one piece of the orientalization package differed significantly among Western Europe, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East and may have been critical to interaction later in Israel. Secularization was correlated with westernization projects in all three areas. There was variation, however, in the extent to which differing levels of religious observance translated into social movements and related to the larger task of acculturation. First, movements with formally articulated philosophical stances on how Jews should alter religious observance (such as Germany's reform or conservative movement) emerged in Europe but not the Middle East. Westernizing Middle Eastern Jews did become less observant (Goldberg 1996a), but there is evidence that they did not see religious change as necessary (Goldberg 1996a; Stillman 1995; Zohar 1986, 1996) and may have even played it down to preserve communal unity.[16] In Europe, in contrast, specific changes in religious thought and practice became highly salient, visible, and even requisite symbols of adherence to westernization projects. Haskalah thinkers placed the elimination of older forms of thought and practice high on the list of priorities and were often virulent in their attacks. As the Yiddish writer Israel Aksenfeld proclaimed, "we must find instruments for ridiculing [the Hassidim] . . . so that the common people will jeer at them in the streets" (quoted in Miron 1973:53).

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[16] This is one of those statements on which most scholars agree but on which there has been little direct research. The argument weaves through the work cited above, from Stillman (1995), Zohar (1986, 1996), and Yehuda (1996). In the in-depth interviews that I am currently conducting with Iraqi immigrants, this strategy is mentioned as well.

These divergences are significant because, given the delicacy of the east/west syntheses Ashkenazim tried to produce, the apparent religiousness of the Mizrahim may have itself been enough to trigger stigma-related panic among veteran Ashkenazi settlers. In this respect, it is important that as the project moved to Eastern Europe, it gradually shifted from religious reform to secularization, increasing the distance between Middle Eastern behavior and East European perceptions of what constituted westernness and modernity. In Germany, the Haskalah project involved both thought and practice, including bringing the logic of justification for individual religious belief in line with Christian thought, stressing the voluntary nature of belief and ritual observance, abandoning or privatizing conspicuous religious behaviors (particularly dress), and inventing new traditions more in line with Christian practice (Katz 1973). In Eastern Europe, two shifts occurred: "The Haskalah became less religiously-oriented and more overtly polemical against the established Orthodoxy" (Bayme 1981:179), and orthodoxy explicitly redefined *maintenance* of tradition as resistance to westernization (Katz 1986; Kimmerling 1999). Finally, while East European maskilim continued to favor transformation over secularization (Bayme 1981; Katz 1973), their Zionist inheritors were often explicitly non- or even antireligious (Shimoni 1995), as was the larger Jewish population (Greenberg 1944).

ORIENTALIZATION OF MIDDLE EASTERN JEWS

The French interaction with Middle Eastern Jews is best understood within the larger history of Western European colonization of the non-west. To manage conquered societies, colonizers often used previously marginalized ethnic groups as mediators between themselves and the mainstream of the conquered society. In return, the marginalized groups were provided with social and economic opportunities, and often themselves became pro-western elites. In the Arab world, Jews and Christians (collectively known as "Dhimma") provided this marginalized population. Within this framework, French Jews used the Alliance school sys-

tem, established in the 1860s, to simultaneously reinforce their French and Jewish identities. First, French Jews would advance the French cause by westernizing Arab Jews and developing them as an inroad for cultural colonialism. Second, they would help fellow Jews by teaching them the languages and skills that would enable them to take full economic advantage of the European presence in the Arab world. But there was a third goal as well. By westernizing this "oriental" component of world Jewry, French Jews would be eliminating a potential source of embarrassment (Goldberg 1996; Laskier 1983; Rodrigue 1993).

The leaders of the Alliance network did orientalize Middle Eastern Jews, just as the German Jews had orientalized East European Jews. But, perhaps because Middle Eastern Jews were not threatening to immigrate into France, as the Ostjuden were threatening to immigrate to Germany, French Jews did not react with exclusion. Rather, their goals were to: regenerate the degenerate eastern Jews, to shape them, and "inculcat[e] them with useful knowledge" (Maïr Levy 1892, reprinted in Stillman 1991:204), such as reading, writing, and new languages (Rodrigue 1993; Yehuda 1996). As Middle Eastern students graduated, many traveled to Paris for further education and returned to teach in the schools themselves.

There were probably at least some differences in the perceived "orientalness" of Ostjuden and the Orientals (also see Wolff 1994 for the non-Jewish parallel). Nevertheless, the characterizations of the two orientalized populations are largely similar, and at least some western Jews consciously and explicitly connected the two populations. As late as 1927, a visitor to Libyan cave dwellers, who arrived with the local rabbi, reported:

> The most prominent men of the village took advantage of our presence [the visitor arrived with the local rabbi] to bring up for trial a dispute . . . which was dividing the community . . . —for all the world like an orthodox Polish community. (Nahum Slouschz 1927, on his 1906 visit in North Africa, quoted in Stillman 1991:217)

Similarly, in his 1930 biography of Sabbati Zvi, the German, Kastein (1930), remarked that western Jews "regarded [Sabbateanism] from a more worldly, concrete, and political point of view than the Oriental and Polish Jews" (Kastein 1930:228; translated quote presented here is from Biale 2001:93).[17]

As with Eastern Europe, for practical reasons Jews from Arab countries initially took on westernization projects—in this case adopting languages, institutional forms, and occupations. Colonialism generated significant economic possibilities, including careers in colonial enterprises and international business opportunities (Goldberg 1996; Stillman 1991). Eventually, however, many came to see themselves from their orientalizers' eyes.[18] Westernization became a central goal, at least among the wealthy, educated, or urbanized. Said Naim Kattan of 1940s Baghdad, "The rich Jews never missed a chance to slip a few words of English or French into their conversation" (Kattan 1975, quoted in Stillman 1991:281). And a Gallacized Tunisian wrote of his boyhood prior to World War I,

> They had tried to give me some religious instruction. A rabbi, not too famished-looking and not too threadbare, would come to teach me to read the sacred books three times a week. . . . How rudimentary was the good

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[17] Sabbati Zvi lived in the seventeenth century, not in the 1930s, and so Kastein's remark is theoretically about how Oriental, Polish, and western Jews perceived Sabbateanism in the seventeenth century. I argue, however, that Kastein is reading contemporary constructions back into history. In fact, the time of Sabbatai Zvi predates the westernization of even the western Jews, and so without the assumption that Kastein is using contemporary constructions, his argument would not make sense at all.

[18] In contrast to Europe, where there is general agreement that Haskala ideology came to shape identity in most communities (including oppositional identities), almost no research has been done on the extent to which the westernization project actually reached which Middle Eastern groups. But some empirically based theorizing suggests that a good portion of urban Jews had had at least one year in an Alliance or other modern school, and therefore was exposed to propaganda about the need for westernization. Moreover, even uneducated Jews used hospitals, social services, and old age homes that were built and run by westernized or modernized Jews, and so were probably exposed to the westernization project as well.

man's pedagogy, how mediocre his culture! Comparing him to my French teachers made him look ridiculous. (P. 252)

Jewish Orientalization of Arab Non-Jews

For all their progress, their European networks, and their fluency in western languages and culture, "there remained always the nagging suspicion that the process had not gone far enough, that the truly westernized self remained always at a remove, and could not be totally captured" (Rodrigue 1993). Just as German Jews had reacted to cultural insecurity by orientalizing East European Jews, so many westernizing Middle Eastern Jews became invested in discursive and symbolic separation from their own Oriental other, Moslem Arabs. Over time, these groups developed identities in which, at the most extreme, Jewishness meant non-Arabness.[19] This move is important not just because it would later facilitate Middle Eastern Jewish acceptance of the oriental stigma in Israel, but because it may have set the stage for orientalization of non-Jewish Arabs there as well. It thus adds another piece in the evolving relationship between orientalism and social closure in Israel.

In this sense, it is significant that Jewish distance from Arabs appears to have been at least as important to French Jews as it was to westernizing Middle Eastern Jews. In fact,

the first group to use the Arabs as foils was probably the French Enlightenment–oriented Jews.[20] In their diaries and reports home, Alliance teachers underscored Middle Eastern Jewish success at westernization by pitting it against the continuing Oriental nature of the Arabs:

> The Arab has a plodding mind and is slow to comprehend; his religion and traditions make him a creature of habit and his ideas are desperately slow in changing. The Jew, on the other hand, now that he has been freed of the chains that had reduced him to the status of pariah through the ages, has suddenly taken flight. . . . Today [he] is a free man, capable of keeping step with the European in his dress, manners, and the development of his mind. (Rodrigue 1993:218)

In an important variation on this theme, an Alliance secretary wrote in 1903 that "numerous communities have imitated the Arabs, who . . . marry off their children at an age when they should still be sitting at school benches (Jacques Bigart 1903, quoted in Stillman 1991:200). In this case, Arabs are "blamed" for the orientalness of the Oriental Jews, despite the fact that the orientalization package of European Jews also mentioned early marriage. In his turn of phrase, the Alliance secretary presents Oriental Jews as not truly of the Orient, but as some lost group that has only to find its true western self.

Westernizing Middle Eastern Jews then used the orientalization package in their ethnic struggles with Arabs. Said a gallicized Moroccan Jew in 1926, "Was it not Judaism which spread among the Berber tribes, bringing them the first glimmers of civilization?" (reprinted in Stillman 1991:302). And in 1918, two leaders of the Iraqi Jewish community used the dichotomy in a more subtle

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[19] Scholars such as Shohat (1988), Shiblak (1986), Alcalay (1993), and Shenhav (1999) argue that the non-Arab identity was neither popular nor indigenous among Jews in the Arab world. They suggest instead that Ashkenazi Zionists exacerbated and often even created divisions between Middle Eastern Jews and their host societies. That western Jews were themselves invested in Mizrahi distance from Arabs is consistent with these scholars' contention. Recent suggestions that the Iraqi Jewish anti-Zionist (Esther Meir, personal communication) and communist (Kazzaz 1991, 2002) movements were larger and more important than previously acknowledged also suggests strong currents of Middle Eastern Jewish identification with Arabs rather than the west. Nevertheless, it is difficult to know how to interpret anti-Zionist statements from Middle Eastern Jewish leaders in a context in which pro-Zionist statements could lead to imprisonment and death.

[20] Because the literature is not oriented toward understanding the history of orientalization, the story of how Middle Eastern Jews came to use Arabs as foils must be built with logic and available historical information. Within the literature I reviewed, the technique appears first in Alliance documents, and so appears to have been of French origin. Middle Eastern Jews had been in economic competition with Arabs for centuries, but, although they appear to have nurtured a sense of superiority to Arabs, they would not have had the discursive equipment to orientalize Arabs prior to the arrival of the French.

way, when they requested that the British government restrict Arab political power in Iraq. The Arabs, they said, were too inexperienced "to undertake with success the management of their own affairs" (Stillman 1991:256–57). They would set up a religious, rather than a democratic, government, and since they had so few scientific institutions, they were unqualified. Conversely, the westernness of the Jews is suggested when the community leaders declare that their goals and orientations are commensurate with those of the British: "Two centuries of active commercial relations with Great Britain have slowly cemented a community of interests" (President of the Jewish Lay Council and Acting Chief Rabbi, reprinted in Stillman 1991:257).

Zionism and the Orient

Zionist ideas first began to appear in the late 1800s, as small segments of European Jews became convinced that the integration promised as a result of the Enlightenment would not be forthcoming. Borrowing from other nationalist movements in Europe, the Zionists argued that the respect Jews sought could not be attained by assimilating into European society but instead by striking out on their own, in their own country, building their own nationalist pride. This constituted a rejection of the Haskalah's integration project and so had the potential to challenge the stigmatized identity adopted by European Jews. Instead, however, the stigma was embedded in the Zionist enterprise and traveled to Israel with the settlers.

Zionists were almost obsessed with creating a culture that was new, unaffected by the "medieval" religious culture most had only recently left behind (Even-Zohar 1981; Zerubavel 1995). The following quote from Theodor Lessing is startling because it comes from a pamphlet problematizing Jewish self-hatred:

> Who you are? The son of the slovenly Jewish pedlar Nathan, would you think, and of lazy Sarah whom he had accidentally slept with? . . . No! Judah Macabee was your father, Queen Esther your mother. . . . They have been there all the time and tomorrow their spirit could be revived. (1930, reprinted in Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz 1980:238)

Lessing's discomfort with Nathan and Sarah is acute, and he wants to make them disappear. But this escapism leaves Jews vulnerable. Because Nathan and Sarah are, in fact, parts of the Jewish past, considerable energy would have to be spent constantly denying their existence.

That Zionists tried to replace the old culture with a new one is known, and much has been written about it (e.g., Even-Zohar 1981; Penslar 1991). What has not been articulated, except by Selzer (1967), and more recently by Raz Krakotzkin (1998), is the extent to which the Zionist transformation project was a westernization project, specifically. It is in *Altneuland*, written by Theodor Herzl, that this is most clear. In the story, Dr. Friedrich Loewenberg travels to Israel with his companion. He is disappointed. The town of Jaffa

> . . . was pitifully shabby. . . . The narrow alleys smelt to heaven; they were dirty and neglected, full of motley oriental misery. . . . A strange odor, as of mold and open graves, made breathing difficult. (Selzer 1967:43)

Jerusalem was no better:

> Shouts, smells, tawdry colors, people in rags crowding the narrow airless streets, beggars, cripples, starveling children, screaming women, bellowing shopkeepers. (Selzer 1967:43)

In other words, says Selzer, Israel was as Oriental as an East European Jewish ghetto. But in Altneuland, 20 years of Jewish stewardship changes Israel greatly. Haifa "looks just like America" (Selzer 1967:46); in Jerusalem, "modern suburbs had arisen," (Selzer 1967:46) and the Jews had even widened and straightened the streets.

Zionism was in many ways a move directed toward Europe, a final bid for acceptance as equals in the European family. When Herzl wanted to "form a portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism" (1896, reprinted in Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz 1980:425), he was trying to place Jews on the European side of the fence, on the western side of the east/west dichotomy, and to argue that the Jewish project and the European project were one and the same. Similarly, David Ben Gurion famously stated, "[W]e do not want Israelis to become Arabs. We are duty bound to fight against

the spirit of the Levant." And Abba Eban argued, "[T]he object should be to infuse the Sephardim with an Occidental spirit, rather than allow them to drag us into an unnatural Orientalism" (both quoted in Shohat 1989:116–17). These quotations reveal the extent to which the Zionists were trying to establish themselves as the west's outpost in the Middle East. Ahad Ha'am's words, however, are the most startling: "What Herzl understood is that only by leaving Germany and settling in the Jewish state could the Jew finally become a real German" (as quoted in Ilam 1998:4).[21]

But Zionism is a complicated ideology, and its stance toward the Oriental, and toward Jewish tradition as part of the Oriental past, often has been complex and ambivalent. Zionism, after all, also sought to return Jews to their roots in the Middle East. Some Zionist strands romanticized and partially adopted the Arab way of life as a model of a land-rooted peasant that was more appropriate to Israel than the models available in Europe. Nevertheless, argues Even-Zohar (1981), these models were problematic precisely because they were also Oriental, and thus simultaneously "heroes, men of the soil . . . [and] inferior and almost savage" (p. 173). In a similar vein, Cordova (n.d.) argued that an internal movement aimed at fully adopting an Oriental identity did not succeed because it was too far out of the range of the Zionist discourse.

Zionism in fact struggled with the same fundamental tension between stigmatized authenticity and new western identities that plagued most European Jewish identity projects. It brought Jews to their ancient roots in the east in order to westernize them; it advocated a revival of Jewish life and celebration of uniqueness, but saw Jewish tradition as incompatible with modernity (Zerubavel 1995). Zionists clearly wanted to integrate both Judaism and the Middle East

into Israeli culture, but these were handled like dangerous, potentially polluting substances, and maintaining control was key. One common strategy was to transform tradition into a series of symbols that would preserve the uniqueness of Jewish life and provide rallying points for Israeli unity but leave Jews largely secular. An example is the Israeli flag, whose blue stripes are meant to symbolize the Jewish prayer shawl. The revival of Hebrew shows a similar concern with maintaining a delicate balance (Kimmerling 1999). The care with which these projects attempted to combine tradition with a continuing cultural connection with Europe is critical, because it was into this delicately balanced project that the massive immigrations of Jews from the Arab world arrived.

ORIENTALIZATION AND ETHNIC INTERACTION IN ISRAEL

With a deeper understanding of the meaning of westernness to European Jewish communities, I now take a closer look at the application of the east/west dichotomy to the post-state immigrants to Israel. What stands out is the similarity between the German Jewish orientalization of the Ostjuden (i.e., East European Jews)[22] in Europe, and the Ostjudisch orientalization of the Mizrahim in Israel less than a generation later. In orientalizing the Mizrahim, the Ostjuden simply took the arsenal of images and symbols that had been used to exclude them and applied them, wholesale and nearly unchanged, to the Mizrahim. They thus presented themselves as the westerners that they had, up until that point, never been.

In Israel, ethnic differences in Zionist philosophy and orientation comprise one of the most commonly raised examples of the easternness of the Mizrahim, as well as one of the most effective justifications for Ashkenazi supremacy. The common conception

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[21] Note, however, that Berkowitz's (1997) accounting of "western" Jewry's attachment to Zionism does not require reference to the westernization project. Berkowitz argues, in part, that western (Berkowitz does not unpack the concept) Jews liked Zionism because it could alleviate the poverty of the Ostjuden; he does not mention alleviation of their easternness.

[22] Currently, the term "Ashkenazi" refers to all Jews whose recent (last 100 years or so) backgrounds are on the European continent and who are not descended from Spanish Jews (these Jews are "Sephardic"). Most Ashkenazim in Israel are of East European background, and so most come from the group that was called "Ostjuden."

is that Mizrahim, being non-western and thus not self-consciously philosophical, were not intellectually Zionist. Rather, their Zionism is understood to have emerged from their deeply religious orientation, to have been felt but not thought, inspired by mystical and messianic tendencies (e.g., Eisenstadt 1967). This construction is, internally, an extraordinarily powerful justification for Ashkenazi dominance in Israeli politics; the argument is that Ashkenazim, being the "better" Zionists, were uniquely qualified for stewardship of the state. Following, however, is a 1920s' description of the Zionism of the Ostjuden, according to Nordau, a prominent Zionist thinker:

> [Nordau] distinguished the Western Zionism of the "educated and free Jewish elite" from the East European version. There the attachment to the Zionism of the uneducated tradition-bound masses was a matter of instinct rather than of reasoned reflection; they were still partly influenced by "mystical tendencies." (Aschheim 1982:87)

Theodor Herzl, another prominent Zionist leader, made similar comments after speaking to a gathering of East European Zionists in 1896 (Hertzberg 1984). In fact, Herzl remained deeply disdainful of the East European Zionists throughout his career (Goldstein 1986).

Orientalization in Israel also focused on Middle Eastern educational practice prior to immigration. It was portrayed as religious rather than intellectual, with children being taught by rote in large, uncontrolled classes, by teachers "whose only method of teaching is the whip" (Organization for Youth Immigration in Morocco and Algeria, quoted in Segev 1986:110). These descriptions parallel Enlightenment descriptions of the European heder, as described by Aschheim (1982):

> This institution, above all others, was held to be at the root of the "distortions" of Eastern Jewry [i.e., Ostjuden]. Dark, dank, overcrowded, chaotic, as indeed it was, it was here that the seeds of spiritual and physical degeneration were sown. (P. 19)

Other important parallels exist as well. Just as the peddler—dark, shifty-eyed, and dishonest—was the symbol of the degenerate Ostjude (Aschheim 1982; Avineri 1981;

Katz 1973), so was the peddler regularly invoked to demonstrate the backwardness of Mizrahi immigrants. In 1951, a Jewish Israeli journalist wrote of recent immigrants from Morocco: "They all say that in Africa they were 'merchants.' What they really mean is they were peddlers. And they all want to settle in the city [as opposed to peripheral areas]. What can be done with them? How are they to be absorbed?" (Segev 1986:160). The status of women, the extent of rabbinical authority, and early marriage were also cited as problems with both the Ostjuden and the Mizrahim. Finally, Israeli scholarly and media publications constantly evoked the large families of the Mizrahim (Ginor 1979; Kraus and Hodge 1990; Smooha and Kraus 1985;) as a primary source of ethnic disadvantage in Israel, despite the statistical weakness of this effect (Kraus and Hodge 1990).

A PLAUSIBLE STORY

But while the quick conversion of yesterday's easterners into today's westerners may help to classify the formation of ethnic inequality in Israel as a process of social closure, it cannot explain why Israel's gatekeepers would have used the orientalist discourse, specifically, to draw lines around groups of arriving immigrants. The history of stigma, by connecting social closure to processes of self-classification and their consequences, explains this choice and adds a new dimension to the complicated story of ethnic formation and exclusion in Israel. The care with which Ashkenazi groups, from Maskilim to Zionists, sought to balance their eastern heritages with their western futures, and the ferocity with which they often fought each other over this balance, shows how tricky their project was and how easily it could get out of control.

A passage from Segev's (1986) *The First Israelis* demonstrates how high the stakes were. On the first anniversary of Israeli independence, a parade was planned. The crowd was huge and unruly, and at some point a scuffle broke out.

> Among the scufflers were some who held tickets to the guest podium—government Ministers, Members of the Zionist Executive, Members of the Knesset and foreign

diplomats. A judge was seen to climb over a barrier, a foreign ambassador leapt over benches. By the time they all reached the platform, it was already filled. A senior officer was seated in the place of an Ambassador's wife and refused to vacate it. A Consul took the place of a Minister's wife. The Minister's Director General tried to help her, but the Consul was stronger than he. Everybody was shouting and cursing and waving their invitations. . . .

The following day *Maariv*'s chief editor, Azriel Karlebach, wrote that people wept like children with bitter disappointment, fury and shame "about the disgrace, about the impression abroad, about the disorders and failure, the demonstration of our incapacity on the day of our strength." (Segev 1986:266)

The incident, as described by Segev, can be seen as one of the first opportunities for the public self-presentation of Israel to the European "normals" since the establishment of the state. Most of the honored guests would have been veteran Ashkenazim, many of whom had been recently orientalized by the very people they were trying to impress. That lack of decorum—a central tenet of Jewish orientalization since the German Enlightenment—made the moment a failure, and the level of shame that resulted from this failure demonstrates again how important it was to veteran elites to be seen as western in the eyes of the now physically distant Western Europeans.

For these uncertain Israelis, the Jews from Arab countries, whatever contact with the west they might previously have had, were frighteningly Oriental. They were dark, they had large families, their language had the guttural characteristics that German Maskilim had carefully removed from the Hebrew language, and they adhered to a form of religious practice that in Europe was one of the stronger and more meaningful markers of pre-westernization lifestyles. This left the state's elite torn between two cherished identity projects. On the one hand, they were deeply invested in westernization, and the massive influx of Jews from the Levant, as they saw it, could drag Jewish society back to its not-at-all-distant Oriental state. On the other hand, they were deeply committed to the free immigration of all

Jews, and were hoping to make the new Orientals the state's Jewish laborers, and thus could not solve the westernization problem by restricting immigration from the Middle East. Struggling to find a way to incorporate the new immigrants without losing ground on the westernization project, the elite resolved the dilemma by integrating the most oriental of the Middle Easterners into the margins of Israeli society, where their impact on the emerging culture and society would be minimal. Very quickly, new immigrants from Eastern Europe would then have built upon the initial lines of closure, to strengthen their advantaged position in the competition for resources.

For their part, Jews from the Middle East, at least the educated among them, were also deeply invested in westernization and were intent on underscoring their social distance from Israel's Arab neighbors. To construct them as Oriental, the Ostjuden used the same symbols that the Middle Eastern elite had themselves adopted, symbols which resonated for them. And, even if they did complain about uneven distribution of resources—and they did (Herzog 1985)—to organize along ethnic lines would highlight their ethnic distinctiveness from Ashkenazim and underscore their cultural similarity to Arabs. For a group that had spent almost a century distancing from Arabs, this would be unacceptable.

CONCLUSIONS

Since the formation of the Jewish state and society in Israel and the arrival of the first immigrants from the Arab world, the question of whether Ashkenazim discriminated against Mizrahim has been a central one in Israeli politics and academics. Reversals such as the one discussed here, in which a group of Jews recently tagged as eastern suddenly tagged another group as eastern, as well as evidence that the Mizrahi/Ashkenazi distinction itself was an Israeli creation, have been for many evidence of discrimination. In this paper, I have tried to push the orientalism/exclusion connection further by asking why gatekeepers would categorize and discriminate along the lines of the orientalist discourse specifically, when other options were available.

A long history of orientalism in the Jewish world, I argued, contextualizes Israeli dynamics and explains the abiding attachment to orientalism as a framework for classifying people. Within this history, the sudden transformation of East European Jews from easterners into westerners appears not as a reversal but as an extension. Enlightenment-era acceptance of an oriental stigma made the orientalist discourse the primary framework for self-classification among Jews in Western Europe. Self-classification then led to categorization of other groups of Jews, who themselves accepted the stigma. But this chain of orientalizations did not automatically result in social closure. To manage the discomfort caused by the existence of other, apparently less western, Jewish populations, westernizing Jews had always reacted with both exclusion and moves to westernize the oriental. In the history reviewed here, it was when one group's westernization project was threatened by the physical presence of a putatively less western group that the balance shifted and the relationship was characterized primarily by exclusion.

Ironically, this casts the extensive transformation in Israel's group boundaries as an example of stability in ethnic formations. I have argued, however, that this is one way that the history of Jewish ethnic formation is relevant to contemporary literature. Elements of both fluidity and stability are observed by most scholars, but in general, the new emphasis on fluidity stems from two observations. First, although new formations are always related to old formations, the precise nature of the new formations is unpredictable, because they emerge from the interaction of numerous pressures from above (e.g., the state) and below (e.g., social movements) (see Omi and Winant 1986). Second, once a semiotic reference structure is found to effectively establish distinctions, it is likely to be used for a number of unrelated purposes. In the Jewish case, I argue, stability and fluidity are again both present. However the always-unfinished westernization project, and its accomplishment through the definition of ethnic others, pushed ethnicity in consistent directions across time, space, and political formations. It is of more than passing interest that this stability emerges when the historical window is widened; focusing on specific sites of orientalization, as does most Israeli scholarship, or on one intergroup relationship, as does new work on Jewish history, are both relatively more likely to produce a picture of fluidity.

More specifically, three observations can be made from the longer history told here. First, despite the scale of change in Israel, the new group boundaries that emerged are entirely consistent with those that shaped Jewish identity and communal relations for more than a century before the mass immigration, and long before the development of Zionist ideology. Second, not only the east/west contrast, but also its uses, were consistent as new group boundaries became the basis for exclusion or for missionary outreach. Finally, and most important, there is a good theoretical reason for the consistency in characteristics used to establish the same east/west contrasts in different situations. It is not, as much discourse analysis would imply, because people apply previously established semiotic structures to new sites as the need arises, but because those "stigma symbols" that had been used to cast Jews as backward—religiousness, traditional dress, street size, peddlers, and so on—resonated with Jewish selves in deep, even unconscious ways. The presence of stigma is always frightening and always generates the impulse to distance oneself; Goffman (1963) himself notes that normals fear stigma by proxy. But for those who were once stigmatized, the discomfort is stronger and more threatening. That Jews had established particularly delicate projects—in which they wanted not to eliminate the eastern but rather retain it in neutralized or marginalized form, and in which they moved the westernization project to the geographical Middle East—only intensified the dynamic further.

In positing the management of a spoiled identity as the fundamental dynamic behind group formation and exclusion in the Jewish case, I cast Jews as both in control of and controlled by what has been identified as one of the central justification systems for inequality worldwide. It is largely accepted among sociologists that the powerful are themselves constrained by the tools they use to dominate others. In the case I have examined, Jewish orientalizers occupied a com-

plex position vis a vis orientalism because it was out of their own experience of being classified that the move to classify others arose. Dominating others, in other words, was an integral part of, and a direct reaction to, the experience of being dominated.

I began this paper by first arguing that I could "unpack," in the Jewish case, the relationship between the elaboration of group difference, on one hand, and moves to translate that difference into social inequality, on the other. I suggested several alternate ways of articulating what is essentially the same categorization/exclusion relationship; I reproduce two here. First, categorization and exclusion were connected because both emerged from the same need to present the self as western to critical others. Here, changing that need[23] should theoretically eliminate both the salience of an east/west dichotomy in forming group boundaries and the use of east/west lines as an axis of exclusion.[24] Building on Said (1978), Roediger (1991), and the Israeli case itself, I suggested that, more generally, those instances of categorization that are driven by the identity concerns of the powerful are usefully grouped together analytically because both

the depth of majority commitment to the specific racial/ethnic boundaries they impose, and the relationship between categorization and exclusion, will follow similar patterns.

Second, I argued that it was not the fact of group boundaries becoming salient that explained exclusion, but the content of the identities around which these boundaries were formed. Jews wanted to be western, and they wanted Western European Christians to see them as western. That they accomplished these two goals in part by comparing themselves to other groups of Jews led to ethnic groupings, and even rankings, but not necessarily to concerted moves to exclude. On the contrary, the need to be seen as western also led to investment in *westernizing*, and incorporating, these Jewish others. Exclusion became the main reaction when the possibility of representing the self as western appeared threatened. The physical location of Israel in the Middle East, and the size of the indigenous Middle Eastern population (Jewish and non-Jewish), presented such a threat.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Among the many issues that future research on Jewish orientalism could address, two are of particular interest. Orientalization was also a method for the exclusion of non-Jewish Arabs (Alcalay 1993; Eyal 1996; Lavie 1992; Shohat 1988), and clearly, elaborating the historical antecedents of that relationship is important. From the perspective of this paper, one dynamic stands out. Historically, orientalized relationships between *Jewish* communities appear to have involved some balance between exclusion and proselytization, while the pre-immigration orientalization of Arab *non-Jews* appears to have been characterized by exclusion alone. This is consistent with Goffman's (1963) analysis; it would have been the German and French Jews' identification with Ostjuden and Mizrahim, be that identification externally- or internally-imposed, that drove the complicated dynamics I have discussed here. This distinction between the stigmatized's reaction to an internal and external other then may make sense of a detail that has often been noted: Israel has a three-tiered orien-

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[23] There are currently moves in Israel to reconceptualize Israel as part of the Middle East, rather than a western country. Some are driven by second-generation Middle Eastern Jews (e.g., the intellectual group *Keshet*), others by secular Ashkenazim. At the same time, recent comments by Tommy Lapid suggest a far stronger move to reassert Israel's non-Middle-Easternness. Lapid is the head of the self-consciously secular and middle- to upper-middle-class political party, Shinui, which was highly successful in the recent Israeli elections. It is of note that Lapid is in favor of the Oslo accords. From a December, 2002 article in the left-leaning newspaper *Ha'aretz*: "We are in a corrupt, lazy, backward Middle Eastern environment. . . . What keeps us above water is our cultural difference. The fact that we are a forward outpost of Western civilization. If our Westernism erodes, we won't have a chance. If we let the Eastern European ghetto and the North African ghetto take over, we will have nothing to float on" (Ari Shavit, www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=243072).

[24] Although once the mass immigration had settled into the new ethnic hierarchy, material interests in its preservation probably joined the continuing concern with westernization.

talization-driven hierarchy, in which Mizrahim emerge as the transformable liminal group between western Ashkenazim and unredeemably oriental Arabs. To the extent that relations with non-Jewish Arabs continue to be driven by Jewish reaction to an oriental stigma, the history discussed here may help illuminate some aspects of the current Arab/Israeli conflict. More generally, Israel is a central player in the current worldwide polarization of Moslem and western worlds, and it is worth asking if this role results from a continuing complex relationship to orientalism.

Finally, the specific argument I make about social closure among Jews—that, through the first years of statehood, exclusion occurred when westernizing groups experienced a serous threat to their own newly minted statuses as western—can be further examined with primary research. Because I have relied on secondary sources, it was able to analyze group relations only along the largest, generally national, axes. Clearly, however, adopting the east/west dichotomy would have produced or assigned new meaning to numerous internal distinctions, both among Jewish communities and between Jews and non-Jews. This would have produced a complex tree of nested orientalized relationships. These relationships then provide a larger pool of data with which researchers can examine the changing balance between exclusion and proselytization , as well as between fluidity and stability in the use of the orientalist discourse to make specific ethnic contrasts.

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APPENDIX A

Historical Figures Quoted in the Text

Ahad Ha'am (orig. Asher Ginsberg) (1856–1927). Russian, Jewish. In contrast to Herzl's political Zionism, Ahad Ha'am believed that, in the project of regenerating the Jewish people, spiritual rebirth should come before the political formation of a Jewish state. However, he did see Israel as the appropriate place for a renaissance of Jewish culture, and thus as the center and model for Jewish life in the Diaspora.

Ben Gurion, David (orig. David Gruen) (1886–1973). Polish, Jewish. First Prime Minister of Israel, oversaw the establishment of the state. Attended college in Istanbul, Turkey, but did not finish.

Berr, Berr Isaac (1744–1828). French, Jewish. Well-to-do merchant and banker from Nancy. One of the leaders in the Jewish movement to obtain emancipation in France.

Bigart, Jacques. French, Jewish. Secretary of the Alliance Israelite Universelle from 1892 until his death in 1934. Eradication of child marriages was a central goal of the AIS in the early twentieth century.

Eban, Abba (orig. Aubrey Solomon) (1915–2002). British, Jewish. Studied Oriental languages and classics and lectured at the University of Cambridge, served as an aide to the British minister of state in Cairo in 1941. Served as Israel's representative to the United Nations and ambassador to the United States, minister of education and culture, president of the Weizmann Institute of Science deputy, prime minister, and foreign minister.

Gans, Eduard (1798–1839). German, Jewish. Disciple of Hegel. Co-founded the Society for Jewish Culture and Science with Leopold Zunz (see below) and Moses Moser. Converted to Christianity in 1825 to avoid glass ceiling at University of Berlin. Promoted to Professor of Law a year later.

Graetz, Heinrich (1817–1891). Prussian-born, Jewish. Famous for his 11-volume *History of the Jewish People* (Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1941–1956, c1891–1898). Taught at the conservative Breslau seminary, believed that "Jewish theology should attempt to moderate between Orthodox literalism and Reform liberalism ("Graetz, Heinrich," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, retrieved July 26, 2003 <www.britannica.com/eb/article?eu=38348>).

Herzl, Theodor (1860–1904). Hungarian (moved to Vienna with his family at age 18), Jewish. Founder of "political Zionism," first president of the world

Zionist organization. Organized first world Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland (in 1897). "Regarded assimilation as most desirable [direction for the Jewish people] but, in view of anti-Semitism, impossible to realize. Thus, he argued, if Jews were forced by external pressure to form a nation, they could lead a normal existence only through concentration in one territory (Encyclopedia Britannica)."

Kattan, Naim (1928–). Iraqi, Jewish. Involved in the communist movement in Baghdad. Left Baghdad in 1947, studied literature at the Sorbonne, immigrated to Canada in 1954. Currently professor at University of Quebec in Montreal, department of literary studies. The excerpt is from his book *Farewell Babylon* Taplinger Publishing, NY, NY [1976] 1980.

Lessing, Theodor (1872–1933). German-Jewish philospher. Initially converted to Lutheranism, then later became a Zionist.

Levy, Maïr (1869–?). Moroccan, Jewish. Alliance official from 1887. Became director of Tripoli Alliance in 1900.

Moicher Sforim, Mendel (pen name of Shalom Jacob Abramowitsch, 1835–1917). Russian, Jewish. Known as the creator of modern literary Yiddish, the literary tradition that sought to inspire East European Jews to accept the "Haskalah," or Jewish Enlightenment, by poking fun at their traditional ways (or, as the Encyclopedia Britannica puts it, his stories are "written with lively humour and gentle satire" ["Mendele Moykher Sforim" *Encyclopeadia Britannica* www.britannica.com/eb/article?eu= 53270. Accessed July 26, 2003]). Began publishing under this pseudonym in 1897. First Yiddish story published in 1864.

Naquet. French, Jewish. Appears to have been a member of Parliament. Quote is from the late 1800s.

Nordau, Max (orig. Max Simon Südfeld) (1849– 1923). Hungarian, Jewish. "Physician, writer, and early Zionist who was instrumental in establishing recognition of Palestine as a potential Jewish homeland to be gained by colonization" ("Nordau, Max" *Encyclopaedia Britannica* www.britannica.com/eb/ article?eu=57504. Accessed July 26, 2003). Supporter of Herzl.

Rabinowich, Osip (1817–1869). Russian (Ukranian) Jewish. Educated in both traditional Judaism and secular studies, he decided not to study law because law careers were generally closed to Jews at the time, and became a notary instead. Moved to Odessa in 1845, and after establishing himself professionally began to publish articles and literature, as well as the Russian-language Jewish newspaper *Razsvet*.

Rathenau, Walter (1867–1922 [assasinated]). German, Jewish. Statesman, industrialist, organized German economy after World War I and founded the middle-class German Democratic party.

Singer, Isaac Bishevas (1904–1991). Polish-born, Jewish. Yiddish writer, became a United States citizen. Was the 1978 recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Singer, Israel Joshua (1893–1944). Polish-born, Jewish. Yiddish writer, older brother of Isaac Bishevas Singer. Began writing tales of Hassidic life in 1915, immigrated to United States in 1933.

Slouschz, Nahum (1872–1966). French, Jewish. Jewish historian and writer of *Travels in North Africa* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America [1927] 1944), the result of a series of excursions into North Africa, from 1906 to 1916, in search of Jewish communities. *The Jewish Week*, (January 26, 2001) asserts that Slouschz originally traveled to Tunis in 1891, at Herzl's request, to find a possible Jewish homeland; the 1906 excursion was funded by the Alliance and the Academie des Belles Lettres of Paris.

Voltaire (pseudonym of François-Marie Arouet) (1694–1778). French, non-Jewish. Satiric writer, Enlightenment thinker. In addition to the standard Enlightenment ideals, such as the value of reason and objective science, he was also a proponent of Deism.

von Dohm, Christian Wilhelm (1751–1820). German, non-Jewish, Enlightenment thinker. In 1781 he wrote "On the Civil Improvement of the Jews," pleading for Jewish emancipation. A friend of Moses Mendelsohn.

von Goethe, Johann Wolfgang (1749–1832). German, non-Jewish. Romantic playwright, poet, novelist, natural philosopher.

Zunz, Leopold (Heb. Yom-Tob Lippmann) (1794– 1886). German, Jewish. Historian of Jewish literature, co-founder of "Wissenschaft des Judentums" ("Science of Judaism"), which "stressed the analysis of Jewish literature and culture with the tools of modern scholarship" ("Zunz, Leopold," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* <www.britannica.com/eb/article? eu=80601>)." Wrote a biography of Rashi, the medieval biblical commentator.

Zvi, Shabbatai (1626–1676). Born in Ottoman Empire, Jewish. Known as the only false messiah to gain a strong following. His following extended well into Western Europe and North Africa, and remained large long after his death. He converted to Islam, probably under pressure, in 1666.

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