Religion and International Relations: A Primer for Research

The Report of the Working Group on International Relations and Religion of the

Mellon Initiative on Religion Across the Disciplines

University of Notre Dame

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Introduction

Over the past decade-and-a-half, the academic study of religion and international relations has sprouted from a sparse scattering of works into a vibrant body of scholarship. The Working Group on International Relations and Religion, funded by a grant from the Mellon Foundation to the University of Notre Dame, met four times over two-and-a-half years to assess this trend, asking how far scholarship on religion and international relations has come and where it might go. The group's task, though, was not merely to explore the existing literature but also to engage broad questions: What is religion and how has it shaped the international system of states and international relations theory? And, how is religion most importantly manifested in contemporary international relations?

The resulting report offers insights for all who are interested in research on religion and international relations, whether they are scholars, students, practitioners, or general readers. The report's center of gravity lies in political science, with ten of its thirteen contributors hailing from this field, but also manifests disciplinary breadth. One contributor is a theologian, William T. Cavanaugh, who is one of the past decade's most innovative and provocative scholars of religion and its relationship to politics, violence, and the nation-state. Atalia Omer, one of the leading young scholars in the field of religious studies, both engages the work of political scientists in this area and points to pathways of inquiry in other disciplines. William Inboden, a historian and a former U.S. foreign policy official, has pioneered the connection between religion and international relations in these other realms. Even the political scientists include

political philosophers, empirical scholars, and those who combine these approaches. The ensuing reflections, then, entail diverse methodologies, angles of inquiry, substantive emphases, and viewpoints, sometimes manifesting interesting disagreements among one another.

Michael Desch, one of the working group's two co-conveners, leads off with an essay that explores the rise of "new thinking" on religion and international relations. A body of scholarship on the subject has emerged, he agrees, but it remains marginal in the political science subfield of international relations. Behind this marginalization is the persistent power of the secularization thesis, which holds that religion is irrational, inherently violent, and doomed for extinction, and which has dominated not only international relations research but also the western academy until recently. Desch argues that the secularization thesis is dead wrong, allies himself with a growing group of critics of the thesis, and offers fresh research that refutes it. He identifies and assesses the promise of three waves in the new scholarship on religion and international relations.

The next five essays, constituting Part Two of the report, focus on foundational issues in research on religion and international relations, revolving around the questions, What is religion?, How ought we to conceptualize religion's influence?, and How has religion shaped the assumptions and theories that underlie international relations?

If scholars of religion and international relations are to proceed ahead with their research, they need to clarify what they mean by religion, right? Well, it is not so easy, argues William Cavanaugh. Most scholars of international

relations think that religion is easily identified and defined, Cavanaugh points out. He sets forth a useful typology of these meanings. He is skeptical, though, that a transhistorical, transcultural definition of religion—a genus of which there are species—can be found. Does this mean that we should discard the concept? No, he answers. Rather, we should recognize that religion has been constructed by modern people (that is, since the 17th and 18th centuries) and often with the purpose of marginalizing traditions like Christianity and Islam from other areas of life like politics, economics, and culture. Rather than treating religion as something simply found "out there" in the world, scholars should ask what kinds of power are involved in constructing certain things as "religious" and other things as "secular" or "political." Ron Hassner also takes up the issue of how scholars ought to conceptualize religion in their research, focusing on religion and violence in particular. Typically, he argues, international relations scholars "conceive of religion as a deviant and irrational set of ideas that propel radical non-state actors into conflict." Hassner questions, though, whether scholars ought to conceive of religion as a set of ideas at all and proposes looking at religion in terms of symbols, practices, rituals, social structures, and discourses. Thinking about religion in this way, scholars could escape their confinement to viewing religion as a set of ideas and reasons that cause war and could understand better religion's more pervasive influence on how, when, and where war is fought.

Another conceptual issue is religion's role in shaping the most prominent theories of international relations, realism and liberalism. The skeptic will object that neither theory has much to say about religion at all. Such an objection is

borne of amnesia, argues Daniel Philpott, for religion's absence in these traditions arises from its founders' engagement with—and rejection of—religion. Machiavelli and Hobbes, Locke and Kant wrote at a time when the international system was being formed through a secularizing set of events. These thinkers both applauded this secularism and built it into their explanation of the behavior of states. This secularism has endured in these theories and explains why they have not performed well in describing the resurgence of religion.

Timothy Samuel Shah continues this focus on how religion has shaped the international system by focusing on normativity. He argues that religion has contributed to the moral and legal norms that characterize the international system. Historically, religion shaped the sovereign states system, just war norms, and the global humanitarian ethic. Religion has also propelled key historical shifts that have given form to modern international relations: the rise of Erastianism (state control of religion) through the religious wars, the rise of the nation, and the genesis of the UN system of the mid-twentieth century. Globally shared values that may appear both secular and taken for granted, Shah shows, have behind them the shaping hand of religion.

No discussion of the theoretical foundations of research on religion and international relations can ignore one concept in particular: political theology. Dating back at least to Augustine, the concept has been used by theorists in a great variety of ways, Ernesto Verdeja explains, ranging from thinkers in the Enlightenment tradition like John Rawls and Jürgen Habermas, who have viewed theology as antithetical to core liberal political values (though Habermas has softened his stance in recent years) to theologians like Johann Baptist Metz

and Jürgen Moltmann, who construed political theology in terms of an activist agenda that included nuclear disarmament and environmental protection. Verdeja conducts a helpful and concise tour of these meanings that concludes with a discussion of perhaps the most famous theorist of political theology: Carl Schmitt, the early twentieth century German political philosopher who saw modern politics as a secularized version of Christian theology.

The ensuing five essays, constituting Part Three, build on these conceptual foundations and explore more particular manifestations of religion in international relations. They look at religion's relationship to nationalism, civil war, terrorism, and American foreign policy.

Atalia Omer introduces this section with a theoretically deep essay on religion and nationalism. She begins with an exploration of what role religion has played in three major schools of theory in the study of nationalism: modernist, ethno-symbolist, and primordialist. She continues on to offer a critique of how contemporary international relations theory frames the relationship between religion, nation, and state. The study of religion, nationalism, and international relations, she argues, is advanced best by rejecting the notion of religion (and state, and nation) as being an unchanged historical essence and instead theorizing the boundaries of religion and politics as interpenetrating, ever shifting, and strongly dependent upon power relations.

Kirstin Hasler continues the discussion of religion and nationalism in the study of international relations by focusing on contemporary international relations theory. It was not until the end of the Cold War, she points out, that international relations theorists made serious efforts to integrate nationalism

into their analyses. Realists have conducted most of this integration, grafting nationalism into its core concepts of power, threat, and security dilemma. Such grafting, however, gives little play to nationalism's influence as an idea and a source of identities, dynamics that the realist framework does not easily contain. It is here where religion most fruitfully enters into the analysis insofar as it sometimes shapes the character of nationalism and sometimes transcends it.

The next piece, by Monica Duffy Toft, looks at one of the major sites where religion causes and influences violence: civil wars. Religious civil wars are more destructive than other civil wars, she reports, rooting her explanation in religion's distinctive character and how it plays out in domestic and international politics. At the domestic level, Toft stresses the interplay between religious actors and states, including that of secular governments, as critical to the maintenance of peace or the onset of violence. At the international level she highlights how religion—its associated ideas, people and networks—transcends boundaries and thereby challenges the contemporary international order of states. She points out that existing international relations theory is ill equipped to explain these dimensions of religion—a common theme that emerges among the essays in this report.

Nilay Saiya explores the other major form of religiously inspired violence: terrorism. Echoing the other essays, he points out that scholarship on religious terrorism has not markedly increased even as religious terrorism itself has grown rapidly in the past three decades. He surveys what we know about religious terrorism, including what makes it distinct, what it has in common with secular terrorism, and its tendency to be more lethal and long-lived than secular

terrorism. He then lays out five pathways for future research, urging international relations scholars to take religion far more seriously.

William Inboden concludes Part Three with a piece on religion and foreign policy. He focuses on American foreign policy, but much of what he has to say will pique the interest of foreign policy makers in any country. The American foreign policy establishment, he claims, shares western elites' commitment to the secularization thesis and their attendant "allergy to religion." This malaise inhibits their analysis but also causes them to miss opportunities for marshaling religion salubriously for foreign policy ends. He makes his case with respect to several categories of analysis, including anthropological, public diplomacy, conflict and reconciliation, economic development, governance and democratization, and religious freedom, this last one being that to which he devotes the most attention. Were foreign policy makers to take seriously the research for which the other authors of this report are calling, he argues, they would discover priceless assets for their endeavors.

Sebastian Rosato graciously agreed to serve as an in-house critic in the working group, being tasked to hold the others' arguments to the fire and serving to remind us why many international relations scholars remain skeptical of religion's influence. In his view, the emergent body of literature on religion and international relations falls short in three ways. First, it has failed to show that incorporating religion would affect the way that leading traditions explain outcomes in international relations. Second, it has failed to show that religion has a causal effect on international political outcomes. Third, the scholars in this area have not ruled out alternative, non-religious explanations for the

phenomena that the scholars claim to explain. For those interested in research on religion and international relations, Rosato poses challenges to confront.

The report concludes by outlining directions for future research.

The Coming Reformation of Religion in International Affairs? The Demise of the Secularization Thesis and the Rise of New Thinking About Religion

Michael C. Desch

Introduction

Over the last forty years, the world has been getting religion in a big way. Beginning with Israel's seemingly "miraculous" victory in the June 1967 Six-Day War, which brokered the marriage between Zionism and Religious Orthodoxy in Israel, and continuing through the 9/11 attacks on the United States, the result in part of the post-1967 events in the Middle East, religion has increasingly been a central factor in relations within, and especially among, states.

As with so many other things, however, scholars have been slow to recognize that religion remains an important factor in world politics, particularly outside the European world, and to grapple with the challenges of both comprehending how religion shapes that world and also understanding what role it ought to play in contemporary United States foreign policy. Timothy Shah notes this striking puzzle: "religion has become one of the most influential factors in world affairs in the last generation but remains one of the least examined factors in the professional study and practice of world affairs."[1]

The root of this puzzle lies in the dominance of the "secularization thesis"—the view that as the world modernizes, religion will, in Marx's famous

[1] Timothy Samuel Shah, "Introduction: Religion and World Affairs: Blurring the Boundaries" in Timothy Samuel Shah, Alfred Stepan, and Monica Duffy Toft, eds., *Rethinking Religion and*

phrase about the state, "wither away"—in contemporary social science, including international relations. But while elements of the secularization thesis remain influential, there is a growing realization that it is both internally inconsistent (it holds both that religion is fading but that it has been, and remains, a source of war and other international problems) and increasingly passé. Most of the world, for most of history, has been characterized by a thorough interpenetration of religion and other aspects of society so that today's global resurgence of religion is actually better characterized as a return to business as usual. The combination of a grudging intellectual realization that social science needs to deal with religion, in combination with dramatic examples of religion reasserting itself into international politics, is starting to put religion back on the intellectual and policy agendas.[2]

To be sure, there is already a literature on religion and global politics that offers some conceptual and theoretical signposts pointing the way to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of religion in global politics, but thus far it is marginal in the larger field of international relations. The result, as Monica Duffy Toft observes, is that "traditional international relations theory provides little guidance for those needing to understand the interplay of religion and politics in a global setting."[3] Unfortunately, recent theoretical and conceptual developments in this literature pose challenges that may continue to keep

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[2] Eva Bellin, "Faith in Politics: New Trends in the Study of Religion and Politics," *World Politics,* vol. 60, no. 2 (January 2008): 315 and 319. Also see Shah, "Introduction" in Shah, Stepan, and Toft, eds., *Rethinking Religion and World Affairs*, 1.
[3] Monica Duffy Toft, "Religion and International Relations Theory," in *Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 673.

religion on the margins of international relations theory and American foreign policy.

This essay explores these challenges by, first, considering the secularization thesis and its discontents in contemporary international relations theory. Next, it traces three recent waves of theorizing about religion and global politics. Like waves rolling into a rocky cove, they did not come in smooth sequence but rather ran together and continue to slosh about. At times, the same scholar surfs on different waves. The first of these waves looked at religion's residual legacy in secular international relations; the second, at the causes and consequences of the global resurgence of religion in terms of the numerical spread of belief and the greater incidence of religiously motivated events; the third wave, in contrast, focuses on a more conceptual aspect of the resurgence of religion: the growing challenge to the notion that religion is a distinct social element that can be separated from the other factors shaping global politics.

Taken together, these three waves are eroding the grip of the secularization thesis and making a strong case for a greater role for religion in international relations theory and as a factor in practical statecraft. This is especially striking in the case of the third wave, which advances arguments about the indistinguishability of religion and other factors in international politics. While these arguments may be descriptively accurate, they nonetheless pose nettlesome methodological and analytical challenges that may ultimately hinder efforts to give religion the greater role in our thinking and practice which contributors to the burgeoning literature on religion and global politics would like to see.

The Secularization Thesis and Its Discontents In International Relations

At its most basic level, secularization means that "religion is becoming less important in the world."[4] Secularization, in this view, is one of the hallmarks of modernity. "There is universal agreement," observes Rodney Stark, "that modernization is the causal engine dragging the gods into retirement."[5] There are three specific elements of the secularization thesis: First, it maintains that there is an increasing distinction between the "religious" and "secular realms." Second, religious belief becomes most appropriately consigned to the private sphere. Finally, this privatization of religion is the *sine qua non* of liberal democracy.[6] Philip Gorski helpfully clarifies that the secularization thesis is actually a family of distinct theories that range from those emphasizing the decreasing prevalence of belief to those highlighting the eroding boundaries between the secular and the profane.[7]

The secularization thesis dominates American social science more generally, but it is particularly well ensconced in international relations. The reason is that the field, as Jonathan Fox argues, literally had its origins "in the rejection of religion" after 1648 and it remains a largely secular enterprise to this

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[4] Jonathan Fox, "Religion as an Overlooked Element in International Relations," *International Studies Review*, vol. 3, no. 3, (2001): 53-74. For a similar definition see Daniel Philpott, "The Challenge of September 11 to Secularism in International Relations," *World Politics* 55, no. 1 (October 2002):69.
[5] Rodney Stark, "Secularization, R.I.P.," *Sociology of Religion*, vol. 60, no. 3 (1999): 251. Also see Philpott, "The Challenge of September 11 to Secularism in International Relations," 81.
[6] Jose Casanova, "Rethinking Public Religions" in Shah, Stepan, and Toft, eds., *Rethinking Religion and World Affairs*, 25.
[7] Philip S. Gorski, "Historicizing the Secularization Debate: Church, State, and Society in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe, ca 1300 to 1700," *American Sociological Review*, vol. 65, no. 1 (Feb. 2000): 141.

day.[8] There is a consensus on this among both skeptics about a greater role for religion[9] as well as critics of the field's largely secular bent. As Jack Snyder puts it, "the main canonical works of international relations theory, which continue to shape much empirical work, hardly mention religion."[10] Daniel Philpott echoes this observation: "The dominant theories in the field assume that the states, nations, international organization, parties, classes, businesses, interest groups, nongovernmental organization, and lobbies that carry on politics pursue ends that include power, conquest, freedom, wealth, a redistribution of wealth, welfare provision, human rights, justice, environmental cleanliness, and other goals, but they do not pursue religious ends and are not influenced by religious actors."[11] The roots of this rejection are both intellectual and historical.

On the former, the Age of Enlightenment's jaundiced view of religion shaped the thinking of some of the founding fathers of modern social science in the Nineteenth Century. As Eva Bellin observes, "the tendency to ignore religion can be traced to the … theoretical inspiration drawn from the works of Weber, Durkheim, and Marx. All three theorists believed that religion was a premodern relic, destined to fade with the advance of industrialization, urbanization, bureaucratization, and rationalization."[12] This skepticism about religion was hard

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[8] Fox, "Religion as an Overlooked Element in International Relations," 54.
[9] For example, see John J. Mearsheimer, "Kissing Cousins: Nationalism and Realism," (unpublished Manuscript, University of Chicago, May 5, 2011) at: http://irworkshop.sites.yale.edu/sites/default/files/Mearsheimer_IRW.PDF, which largely eschews any discussion of religion in modern nationalism.
[10] Jack Snyder, "Introduction" in Jack Snyder, ed., *Religion and International Relations Theory*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 1.
[11] Daniel Philpott, "Has the Study of Global Politics Found Religion?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 12 (2009): 186-87.
[12] The strongest statement of the impact of 9/11 on our thinking about religion and international relations is Daniel Philpott, "The Challenge of September 11 to Secularism in International

wired into the discipline of political science as it professionalized in the Twentieth Century.[13] In the subfield of international relations, religion fits poorly with our preferred conceptual tools and paradigms and also challenges the boundaries with the sub-field of comparative politics, which we are loath to breach.[14] All of these problems are exacerbated by the fact that, as two prominent political scientists point out, "those who set the research agenda of the discipline for the profession were almost universally uninvolved in organized religion and indifferent to it more generally."[15]

On the latter, the experience of the Reformation and its resulting wars continues to loom large for many as a cautionary tale about the consequences of religion transgressing the bounds of the private sphere.[16] As Philpott summarizes the conventional view, "Religious war and its attendant abridgements of sovereignty were the chief sources of contention in European politics for over a century, but after Westphalia this centrally defining form of conflict ceased."[17] Theologian William Cavanaugh calls this view that religion is the source of

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Relations," *World Politics* vol. 55, no. 1 (October 2002): 66-95. Also see Bellin, "Faith in Politics: New Trends in the Study of Religion and Politics," 316-17.

[13] For an early critique of modern social science's ignoring religion, see Leo Strauss, "Reply to Schaar and Wolin, II," *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 57, No. 1 (March 1963): 153.

[14] Snyder, "Introduction" 1. Also see, J. Bryan Hehir, "Why Religion Now?" in Shah, Stepan, and Toft, eds., *Rethinking Religion and World Affairs*, 15 and Hyun Cho and Peter J. Katzenstein, "In the Service of State and Nation" in Snyder, ed., *Religion and International Relations Theory,* 169.

[15] Kenneth D. Wald and Clyde Wilcox, "Getting Religion: Has Political Science Rediscovered the Faith Factor?" *American Political Science Review*, vol. 100, No. 4 (November 2006): 526. Also see, 523.

[16] Philpott, "Has the Study of Global Politics Found Religion?" 187. Also see Bellin, "Faith in Politics: New Trends in the Study of Religion and Politics," 318; Michael Barnett, "Another Great Awakening? International Relations Theory and Religion" in Snyder, ed., *Religion and International Relations Theory*, 91.

[17] Daniel Philpott, "The Religious Roots of Modern International Relations," World Politics, vol. 52, No. 2 (January 2000): 213.

international conflict the "creation myth for modernity."[18] The rise of political Islam has powerfully reinforced secularism in the West. "More than any other single religious or political tradition," Elizabeth Hurd notes, "Islam has come to represent the 'nonsecular' in European and American political thought and practice.... [Secularism has] been consolidated in part through opposition to the idea of an anti-modern, anti-Christian, and theocratic Islamic Middle East."[19]

Of course, there is a marked tension between these two views that, on the one hand, religion is an increasingly irrelevant artifact of the past, and on the other hand, that it remains a potent source of international conflict.[20] Nonetheless, like Wonderland's Queen who could believe up to six impossible things before breakfast, both premises remain influential among scholars of international relations.

As with Mark Twain's death, reports of the demise of the secularization thesis may be premature, but there is no doubt that it is not aging gracefully. There is, for example, a growing body of opinion that holds that it is precisely the process of modernization that is producing the current religious resurgence. As Samuel Huntington explained, "the processes of economic modernization and social change throughout the world are separating people from longstanding local identities. They also weaken the nation-state as a source of identity. In much of the world religion has moved in to fill this gap, often in the form of movements

[18] Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 123.
[19] Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International* Relations (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 49.
[20] Barnett, "Another Great Awakening?" 93-94.

that are labeled fundamentalist."[21] Conversely, other scholars are challenging the widely held view that religion is a cause of interstate war, arguing in Cavanaugh's words, that the "so-called wars of religion appear as wars fought by state-building elites for the purpose of consolidating their power over the church and other rivals."[22] Challenging the view that public faith and democracy are incompatible, still other scholars see them as mutually reinforcing.[23] In short, important elements of the secularization thesis are breaking down under intellectual inquisition.

If the secularization thesis is correct about the link between religion and war, we should observe three developments:[24] First, there should be a decrease in the number of religious believers as the world becomes more peaceful (beliefs are the micro motives of the actors).[25] Second, of the few wars that do occur, it should not be the case that they tend to have different religions arrayed against each other on either side (this is a correlational argument). Finally, the strongest evidence for the secularization thesis would be a decline in the number of wars fought for explicitly religious reasons (this involves analyses of the causal processes).

The first two hypotheses are easy to challenge using simple quantitative data. To begin with, the world is hardly becoming less religious, at least as

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[21] Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 71, no. 3 (Summer 1993): 26.
[22] Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence*, 162.
[23] Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Shah, *God's Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010), 9 and Fox, "Religion as an Overlooked Element in International Relations," 57.
[24] Gorski, "Historicizing the Secularization Debate," 142.
[25] John Mueller, *Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War* (New York: Basic Books, 1989).

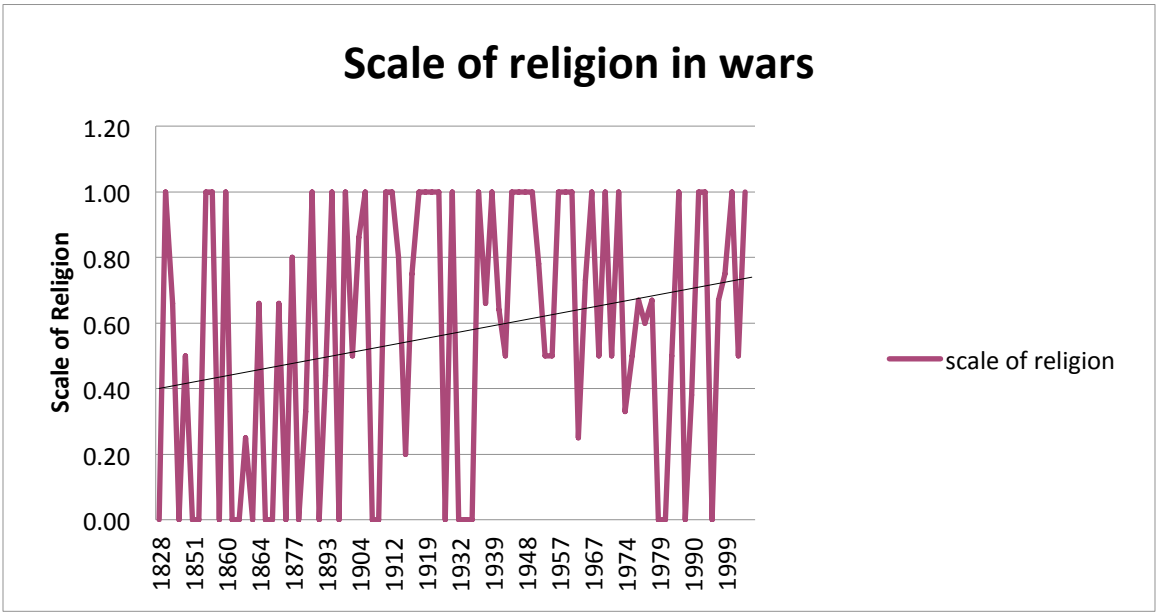
measured in terms of the percentage of believers. Assaf Moghadam has assembled the most comprehensive data on the global trends of religious adherence and finds that with the exception of a few faiths (e.g., Judaism [.81 % p.a.], Buddhism [1.04 % p.a.], and new religions .94 % p.a.]), most other faiths (Christianity [1.27 % p.a.] , Islam [2.11 % p.a.], Hinduism [1.54 % p.a.], and ethno-religions [1.30 % p.a.]) are in fact growing at a faster rate than the that of the world's population [1.22 % p.a.]. In other words, the world is becoming more, rather than less, religious. The most striking evidence for this is that those claiming to be "nonreligious" [.80 % p.a.] or "atheists" [.24 % p.a.] are growing at the slowest rate of all, well below the rate of population growth.[26]

Also, a simple measure of whether wars involved conflict within the same religion (0) or between (1) different religions, reveals that since 1823 the general trend has been toward more wars involving different religious actors on either side (see Figure 1). The extent to which a war was "religious" was derived from the number of conflict dyads between the two sides. I counted the various Christian sects as different religions here. The possible score ranges from zero (no religious component because all combatants are of the same religion) to 1 (complete religious conflict because each side consists of different religions). This

[26] Assaf Moghadam, "A Global Resurgence of Religion?" (Unpublished paper, Weatherhead Initiative Project on "Religion and Global Politics," August 2003), Table: "Global Trends in Religious Adherence, 1900-2025, by Religion." Laurie Goodstein("Study Finds One in 6 Follows No Religion," *The New York Times*, December 18, 2012.) reports the results of a recent Pew Survey of Americans which despite the growth of this category still finds that over 83% identify with some religion. See http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/18/world/pew-study-finds-one-in-6-follows-no-religion.html?_r=0.

is not a perfect measure, to be sure, but other scholars have used a similar approach to ascertain what percentage of civil wars had a religious component.[27]

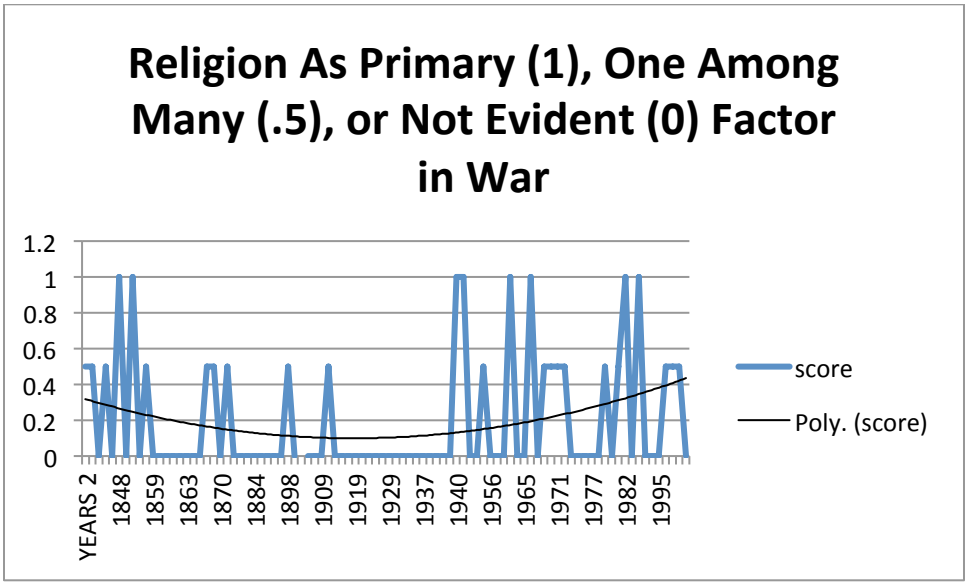
Figure 1: The Increasing Number of Wars Between Combatants of different Religion



Of course, the strongest support for the hypothesis that religion is a cause of war would be to show that it was religion, as opposed to other sorts of factors, that was the *casus belli* in an increasing number of cases. But to demonstrate this would, under the best of circumstances, be a challenge. Wars are among the most complex of social phenomena, and disentangling the religious from other elements in war would be a significant historical and contemporary empirical challenge. Nonetheless, as a first cut at assessing the historical pattern of the role of religion as a cause of war, I had a research assistant (who had no prior assumptions about an answer to this question one way or another) look at these

[27] Monica Duffy Toft, "Religion, Rationality, and Violence" in Snyder, ed., *Religion and International Relations Theory,* 118.

same wars to determine whether religion was a primary cause (1), one among many (.5), or not evident as a cause of them. The results, summarized in Figure 2, suggest that the trend has been that religion has, despite a marked dropoff late in the nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries, nonetheless been increasingly a cause of interstate war over time.*Figure 2: The Historical Pattern of Religion as a Cause of Interstate War*



Admittedly, there are two limitations to the data in Figure 2. One strategy that could be employed by skeptics of my argument that religion is once again becoming an increasingly important factor in international relations would be to challenge my interpretation of the role of religion in individual cases. In Appendix I, I do my best to justify my codings, but as the unresolved debates about the causes of such well-studied wars as the First World War make clear,

decisively settling the causes of any particular war remains a challenging exercise.[28]

Second, and ironically given its association with my view that religion's role in world politics has been underappreciated, the latest wave of scholarship on religion and international relations has made making this case even harder by assuming that in fact religion is both undefinable and indistinguishable from other political factors. The result of these assumptions is that ascertaining the influence of religion on international relations will remain deeply problematic given that the strongest test of the influence of religion on war cannot be undertaken if religion and everything else are assumed to be inseparable.

The Three Waves of Religion and Global Politics

The secularization thesis has progressed, paraphrasing Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, though various stages of dying. In the first stage, proponents conceded the continuing manifestations of religion in contemporary politics but dismissed them as the atavistic holdovers of a bygone era. Like the dead hand of the past, religion continued to shape modern secular politics, despite the fact that fewer and fewer people actually believed in that 'ol time religion. "All significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts," Carl Schmitt suggested, "not only because of their historical development—in which they were transferred from theology to the theory of the state, whereby, for

[28] On the competing takes on the origins of World War I, see the various chapters in Steven E. Miller, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, Stephen Van Evera, eds., *Military Strategy and the Origins of the First World War: An "International Security" Reader*. [Revised and Expanded] (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991). Even a seemingly more clear-cut case like World War II turns out to be highly contestable. See, for example, A.J.P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

example, the omnipotent God became the omnipotent lawgiver—but also because of their systematic structure, the recognition of which is necessary for a sociological consideration of these concepts."[29]

The classic example of this argument that religious legacies continue to shape modern secular politics was the German sociologist Max Weber's linkage of Protestantism and Capitalism. Weber famously argued that the ascetic worldliness of the Protestant faith was conducive to many of the values that made for the successful businessman, including "restless, continuous, systematic work in a worldly calling."[30] David Laitin observes in an important review of the first wave that "Weber's great contribution involved delineation of the idea of a practical religion, and the marshaling of arguments to adduce its economic functions. He wove the theological, the psychological, and the sociological components of the doctrine together into what Durkheim called the 'social fact'; he further interwove his skein with the existence and development of other social facts."[31] This approach distinguished between "theological" or, pure doctrinal, approaches to the social impact of religion which were not of interest, from their "practical" manifestations, the real-world causes and consequences of religious doctrines, which was his primary focus.[32]

A late example of this first wave approach is an early essay by Philpott entitled "The Religious Roots of Modern International Relations" in which he

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[29] Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 36.
[30] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 172.
[31] David D. Laitin, "Review: Religion, Political Culture, and the Weberian Tradition," *World Politics*, vol. 30, No. 4 (July 1978): 570.
[32] Ibid., 570-71.

argued that "Religious ideas … are at the root of modern international relations," concluding that "had the Reformation not occurred, a system of sovereign states would not have developed, at least not in the same form or in the same era as it did."[33]

The second wave of theorizing about religion and global politics emphasized the contemporary proliferation of religious actors and marked an increase in religiously tinged events. Here, religious resurgence was measured primarily in quantitative terms.[34] Philpott marks the beginning of this wave with the June 1967 Six Day War between Israel and its Arab neighbors because it "signified the beginning of the religion's global resurgence…. It awakened a religious conscience among Israeli Jews and crippled the prestige of secular nationalism among Arab Muslims."[35] The Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip inaugurated an historic shift in Zionism from its secular socialist origins to the increasing predominance of National Orthodoxy in Israel, with associated implications not only for domestic politics but also for foreign policy.[36]

There is, in fact, a long list of other international events in which religious resurgence played a significant role. After the Six Day War, the quintessential example was the Iranian Revolution of 1978, which overthrew a pillar of secular modernism in the Gulf and knocked out the keystone in the architecture of America's Nixon Doctrine in the Persian Gulf, dramatically undermining the

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[33] Philpott, "The Religious Roots of Modern International Relations," 206 and 214.
[34] For an example of the primarily quantitative nature of this wave, see, *inter alia*, Toft, "Getting Religion? The Puzzling Case of Islam and Civil War," *International Security*, vol. 31, no. 4 (Spring 2007): 97-131.
[35] Philpott, "Has the Study of Global Politics Found Religion?" 190.
[36] Gershom Gorenberg, "Settling for Radicalism," *The Prospect* (May 20, 2009) at http://prospect.org/article/settling-radicalism

strategic balance in the region.[37] To that, we also ought to add the Pan-Islamic response to Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which not only stalemated the Soviet Union there but also may have contributed not only to the process of *Perestroika* within the Soviet Union, which ushered in the end of the Cold War. Unfortunately it also lead to the rise of the fundamentalist movement *al Qaeda*, the perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks.[38] Finally, a host of religiously motivated civil wars broke out in the wake of the end of the Cold War, the most dramatic of which were those in the former Yugoslavia among Latin, Orthodox, and Muslim groups. Given that the combatants in these last conflicts were ethnically homogeneous, they are most appropriately characterized as "religious" rather than "ethnic" wars.[39]

This apparent increase in the incidence of religion affecting international politics spurred new theorizing about religion and international relations. The most influential example was the late Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" thesis. In it, he argued that future global politics would be characterized by the interaction among civilizations, which he defined as the highest cultural grouping whose "most important" defining feature was common religion.[40] Huntington's thesis generated sharp debate, but the general consensus after the 9/11 attacks was that it was quite prescient in important

[37] Gary Sick, *All Fall Down: America's Tragic Encounter With Iran* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1985).
[38] Chalmers Johnson, *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire* [Second Edition] (New York: Holt, 2004).
[39] Wald and Clyde Wilcox, "Getting Religion," 527
[40] Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" 25.

respects.[41] Indeed, Fouad Ajami, originally a critic of Huntington's thesis, subsequently conceded that "nearly 15 years on, Huntington's thesis about a civilizational clash seems more compelling to me than the critique I provided at that time."[42]

In addition to the increase in the number of apparent manifestations of religion influencing important aspects of global politics, there was also a marked conceptual change in the relationship between the two that set the stage for the third wave of thinking on the topic. Part of the impetus for this new way of thinking was a series of developments in the real world that were striking not so much for the frequency of their occurrence but rather for the decidedly different nature of the role of religion in each of them. Specifically, religion seemed to be deeply infused, perhaps inextricably, from the political elements in each of these events.[43]

For example, the U.S. invasion of Iraq in March of 2003 and subsequent overthrow of Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath regime, a long-term pillar of secular Arab nationalism, was followed by a replacement of that regime, not with another secular democratic one, but by intense religious conflict that ended with the

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[41]Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996). Fouad Ajami,"The Summoning," Kishore Mahbubani, "The Dangers of Decadence," Robert L. Bartley, "The Case for Optimism," Liu Binyan, "Civilization Grafting," Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, "The Modernizing Imperative," Albert L. Weeks, "Do Civilizations Hold?" Gerard Piel "The West is the Best," and Samuel Huntington, "If Not Civilizations, What?" *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, no. 6 (November/December 1993): 186-94. Also see Pierre Hassner, "Morally Objectionable, Politically Dangerous, False," *The National Interest* 46 (Winter 1996/1997): 63-69.

[42] Fouad Ajami, "The Clash," *The New York Times*, January 6, 2008 at http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/06/books/review/Ajami-t.html?pagewanted=all

[43] Emblematic of this is the inextricable link between religious belief and political conflict over specific pieces of territory. For a good discussion of this, see Ron E. Hassner, *War on Sacred Grounds* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009).

coming to power of a sectarian Shi'a government.[44] This process had broader effects throughout the Persian Gulf in awakening an increasingly pro-Iranian Shi'a consciousness and causing conflict with the various Sunni governments, especially that of Bahrain.[45] The other related development was the so-called "Arab Spring" which toppled long-term secular regimes in Tunisia, Libya, and most dramatically in Egypt, and brought Islamicist parties into the political sphere. There is some evidence that the anti-Assad rebellion in Syria is having a similar effect.[46]

But it is not just in the Arab world that we're seeing the previously strong walls between religion and politics crumbled. In Turkey, once another paragon of Nineteenth-Century secular nationalism, the Republican Party of Kemal Ataturk has been displaced by the mildly Islamicist Justice and Development Party (AKP). As Hurd points out, events in Turkey are disconcerting to the secular world because it challenges our secular notions of "how religion and politics relate to each other."[47] One can see especially in Turkey's current foreign policy the erosion of its relationship with Israel and its new-found commitment to the Palestinian cause, and how the changed role of religion in Turkish politics is

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[44] On the Iraq debacle, see Thomas Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: Penguin, 2006) and Ricks, *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006-2008* (New York: Penguin, 2009). For evidence of the increasingly pro-Iranian bent of the al-Maliki government, see James Risen and Duraid Adnan, "US Says Iraqis Are Helping Iranians Skirt Sanctions," *The New York Times*, August 18, 2012 at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/19/world/middleeast/us-says-iraqis-are-helping-iran-skirt-sanctions.html?pagewanted=all.

[45] Ira M. Lapidus, "Silent Minority," *The New York Times*, March 5, 2000 at http://www.nytimes.com/2000/03/05/books/silent-minority.html?scp=1&sq=bahrain+shia&st=nyt.

[46] Tim Arango, Anne Barnard, and Hwaida Saad, "Syrian Rebels Tied to Al Qaeda Play Key Role in War," *New York Times*, December 8, 2012 at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/09/world/middleeast/syrian-rebels-tied-to-al-qaeda-play-key-role-in-war.html

[47] Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, 85.

affecting regional dynamics, both for good and ill.[48] But Turkey is not the only country where the wall of separation between religion and politics is falling down. The rise of the Hindu nationalist BJP in India and the growing influence of the religious right in the United States are dramatically changing those previously secular societies, with important implications for their foreign policies.[49]

From a more global, and also much longer-term, perspective, there is a growing body of scholarship making the point that the current forms of secularism (either the militantly "laicist" secularism of Western Europe or the more accommodative separation of church and state that characterizes the Judeo-Christian version in the United States) are both regionally specific and time bound. Outside of the Atlantic world since 1648, most of the rest of the world has not been secular in a meaningful sense.[50] Indeed, historians now believe that the strict dichotomy between a religious Middle Ages and a secular modernity in Europe is overdrawn.[51] As Vendulka Kubálková observes, "the Western 'faith' in secularism … is unprecedented in human existence."[52] Likewise, the core assumption of the secularization thesis—that secularism is part and parcel of material and intellectual progress—is belied in the case of the United States, which ranks among both the most economically modern and politically democratic countries in the world and is also one of the most

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[48] Focusing on the potential benefits is Michael C. Desch, "Turkey's Doing It Without the Fez On," *The National Interest* (October 26, 2010): at http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/without-fez-4299.
[49] Walter Russell Mead, "God's Country?" *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 4, no. 3 (September/October 2006): 24-43.
[50] Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, 23-45.
[51] Gorski, "Historicizing the Secularization Debate," 138-67.
[52] Vendulka Kubálková, Towards An International Political Theology," *Millennium – Journal of International Studies*, vol. 29, no. 3 (2000): 684.

religious.[53] Finally, other scholars question whether science and faith are really incompatible, noting that lack of faith is far more common among "soft" social scientists rather than "hard" physical scientists.[54]

While this qualitatively new manifestation of religion in global politics takes on many forms, its most profound element is the radical conceptual claims it has made. "What is identified as religious resurgence is actually a political contestation of the most fundamental contours and content of the secular," according to Hurd, "a contest that signals the disruption of preexisting standards of what religion is and how it relates to politics."[55]

Theorists of this third wave begin with the long-recognized challenge of defining "religion." Scholars more clearly situated in previous waves recognized that defining religion was not straightforward. Laitin, for example, remarked that "no consensus exists as to what religion *is*."[56] "The very term *religion* must be used provisionally and with care," Philpott cautioned.[57] And Toft concedes that religion is "a lumpy and complex concept or variable"[58] Still, these aspects of

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[53] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* [vol. 2] (New York: Vintage, 1945), 21-29. Also see, Bellin, "Faith in Politics: New Trends in the Study of Religion and Politics," 330 and Casanova, "Rethinking Public Religions" in Shah, Stepan, and Toft, eds., *Rethinking Religion and World Affairs*, 30. For an accessible discussion see Mead, "God's Country?"
[54] Stark, "Secularization, R.I.P.," 254. For a more sustained argument see Alvin Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
[55] Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, 136.
[56] Laitin, "Review: Religion, Political Culture, and the Weberian Tradition," 570.
[57] Philpott, "The Challenge of September 11 to Secularism in International Relations," 67.
[58] Monica Duffy Toft, "Religion, Terrorism, and Civil Wars" in Shah, Stepan, and Toft, eds., *Rethinking Religion and World Affairs*, 133.

religion have not prevented them from treating it as a variable in a conventionally positivistic way.[59]

However, third wave scholars depart dramatically from this conventional social science approach, rejecting both "substantive" definitions of religion (i.e., things related to the transcendent) as well as "functionalist" views (how religion operates). [60] Cavanaugh denies the very possibility of distinguishing religion as a distinct social factor: "there is no transhistorical and transcultural concept of religion."[61] The consequence of this view is that it, in his view, "is impossible to separate religious from economic and political motives."[62]

Hurd asserts that "to identify something as *religion* and assign to it a permanent and fixed role in politics is itself a political move. In my understanding of the social construction of secularism, elements of religion escape attempts to define and confine it to particular roles, spaces, or moments in politics. It is not possible to stabilize the category of religion and lock in its relationship to politics."[63] The consequence, in her estimate, is that religion "falls just beyond the peripheral vision of the empiricist and rational-choice methods that have dominated mainstream American political science …"[64] Kubálková sharpens the point, arguing that we cannot employ "positivist frameworks …

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[59] Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, "Ideas and Foreign Policy: An Analytical Framework," in *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 3-30.
[60] Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence*, 57-60. Also see Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, 116.
[61] Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence*, 59
[62] Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence*, 3-5.
[63] Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, "Secularism and International Relations Theory" in Snyder, ed., *Religion and International Relations Theory,* 63. Also see, Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, 28 and Barnett, "Another Great Awakening?" 93.
[64] Hurd, "Secularism and International Relations Theory," 83.

without emasculating the essence of religion."[65] The best we can do, according to Daniel Nexon, is recognize that "religious orientations supply ways of apprehending the world, which, in turn, constitute conditions of possibility for social action. Actors operating within a particular set of religious frameworks have a limited number of scripts, rhetorical commonplaces, and styles of reasoning available to them. Religious beliefs, experiences, and frameworks draw boundaries, however blurred, around what constitutes acceptable arguments and warrants."[66]

We see both the promise as well as the limitations of this approach in Cavanaugh's path-breaking critique of the long-standing association of political religion and violence. He admits that "the only way I can hope to refute the myth [of religious violence] is do a genealogy of these contingent shifts and show that the problem that the myth of religious violence claims to identify and solve—the problem of violence in society—is in fact exacerbated by the form of power [secularism] that the myth authorizes. The myth of religious violence can only be undone by showing that it lacks the resources to solve the very problem that it identifies."[67] While there is no doubt that the conventional indictment of religion as a source of conflict is overdrawn given the mixed motives of most global actors, it is not clear that a genealogical approach will provide us with the intellectual wherewithal to determine when and under what conditions religion is a source of strife or oil on troubled waters.

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[65] Kubálková, Towards An International Political Theology," 677.
[66] Daniel H. Nexon, "Religion and International Relations: No Leap of Faith required" in Snyder, ed., *Religion and International Relations Theory,* 158.
[67] Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence*, 7.

My view of the third wave of religion and international relations is therefore mixed: On the one hand, while the definitional problem with religion is not trivial, we believe that the third wave's solution—which amounts to definitional nihilism—throws the baby (the effort to correct the secularization thesis' view that political religion is always pernicious) out with the bath water (a distinct category of religion). One can, in my opinion, distinguish at least contemporary religion from other ideational factors by virtue of how it 1) grounds truth; and 2) what means it applies to apprehending it. Religion grounds truth in the extra-sensory realm (where) and relies upon faith (how), rather than reason, to grasp it. Of course, many in the Catholic intellectual tradition will argue that it successfully reconciles reason and faith but in my view there remains a fundamental tension between these two realms that can be made creative, but is never fully reconciled.[68] Figure 3 illustrates how this approach would divide up the intellectual landscape by meaningfully distinguishing among the concepts that third wave theorists claim are conflated with religion.[69]

Figure 3: Defining and Distinguishing Religion from Other Causes in Global Politics

	Sensory	Extra-sensory
Belief	Nationalism	Religion
Reason	Science	Platonic/Metaphysical Philosophy

Given religion's status as an ideational variable, it is not surprising that many scholars believe that non-positivist approaches to international relations,

[68] The classic statement of this is Leo Strauss, "Jerusalem and Athens: Some Preliminary Reflections" in Thomas Pangle, ed., *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 147-73.
[69] Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence*, 22.

approaches that regard ideas constitutive of actor identity and thereby the motive for their behavior, are the methodologies most compatible with renewed interest in religion in international relations.[70] My more serious reservation about the third wave approach is that it poses, in Michael Barnett's understated assessment, "considerable conceptual, theoretical, and methodological hurdles."[71] "How would one go about showing from empirical evidence," Cavanaugh asks rhetorically "that religion has caused more violence than any other institutional force in history, when the distinction is absent from premodern cultures?"[72] The answer is that if we cannot distinguish religion from other factors in our assessment of their influence in global politics, the role of religion is likely to remain opaque and therefore contentious. This may be why not all contemporary advocates of paying greater attention to the role of religion in international relations have embraced a non-positivist approach to thinking about it.[73]

In fact, one can accept the third wave's claim that religion is *often* indistinguishable from other causal variables in international relations without accepting that this is *always* the case. The task for scholars is to identify those "crucial cases" in which religious and other motives push in different directions

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[70] Philpott, "The Challenge of September 11 to Secularism in International Relations," 92; and Kubálková, Towards An International Political Theology," 675-704.
[71] Michael Barnett, "Where Is the Religion?" in Shah, Stepan, and Toft, eds., *Rethinking Religion and World Affairs*, 172. This is a problem with ideational variables more generally. See my "Culture Clash: Assessing the Importance of Ideas in Security Studies," *International Security*, vol. 23, no. 1 (Summer 1998): 141-70.
[72] Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence*, 82.
[73] Snyder, "Introduction," 14 and Barnett, "Another Great Awakening?" 95 Of course, it is by no means impossible to study ideational variables using a basically positivist epistemology. For a recent example, see the various contributions of Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, eds., *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993). But it remains a challenge, as I argue in "Culture Clash: Assessing the Importance of Ideas in Security Studies," *International Security*, vol. 23, no. 1 (Summer 1998): 141-70.

to find evidence of when and how religion can matter. This strategy may not settle the question of how often religion matters in international politics, but it can establish under what conditions it does matter and help to identify the causal processes that might in turn help to distinguish religious from other motives in those cases where they push in the same causal directions.[74]

On the other hand, it seems to me that at least one of the third wave's core insights—that "secularism" is alien to many other cultures around the world and even our own until quite recently—is true and the implications of this are quite profound for the theory of international relations and the practice of U.S. foreign policy in the years to come. The challenge, then, is to determine how to study the role of religion in international relations, and advise policymakers in a useful way, given the fact that this core variable is hard to distinguish from alternative explanations.

The Challenge: Crafting a Research Agenda Given the Third Wave's Argument

It strikes me that all three waves of theorizing about religion and politics can agree with Fox's broad claim that religion matters in global politics in 1) shaping the worldview of decision-makers, and 2) imposing limits on their range of policy choices.[75] Bellin suggests that beyond that basic consensus, "IR scholars interested in exploring the impact of religion on international affairs need to focus more on developing empirically grounded middle-range theory than on

[74] On crucial cases, see Harry Eckstein, "Case Studies and Theory in Political Science" in Fred I. Greenstein & N. W. Polsby, eds., *Handbook of Political Science,* vol. 7 *Political Science: Scope and Theory* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1975), 94-137. On process tracing, see Alexander L. George and Timothy J. McKeown, "Case Studies and Theories of Organizational Decision Making." *Advances in Information Processing in Organizations*, vol. 2 (1985): 21-58.
[75] Fox, "Religion as an Overlooked Element in International Relations," 61-63.

pursuing paradigm wars," including "the variable appeal of transnational religious movements, the variable power of religious ideals to trump material interest, and the variable tendency of religious traditions to inspire violence and/or cooperation in the international sphere."[76] To do this, however, they will have to suspend a level of analytical disbelief and define religion in a way that it can be distinguished from other causal factors in international relations, at least in principle.

The most pressing objective today is to remedy the "undertheorization" of religion in international relations—when and how it matters.[77] The first task, therefore, is of a typological nature: We need to identify and disaggregate the effects of different "types" of religions.[78] Analogous to that is the study of the distinctive aspects of religious actors. Having established those things, we will then need a theory of "religious *variation*, to tell us when and why various aspects of religiousness rise and fall."[79] We also need an understanding of when and under what conditions religion has influence.[80] Finally, we need a better understanding of religion's political agenda, what is often called political theology.[81]

There are also some concrete issues that need to be addressed. These include clarifying the link between modernization and religion, religion and democracy, and religion and the state. For example, another of the third wave's

[76] Bellin, Faith in Politics: New Trends in the Study of Religion and Politics," 346-47.
[77] Ibid., 339-42.
[78] Toft, "Religion and International Relations Theory," 37.
[79] Stark, "Secularization, R.I.P.," 269.
[80] Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence*, 226.
[81] Philpott, "Has the Study of Global Politics Found Religion?" 198. Also see Kubálková, "Towards An International Political Theology," 675-704.

provocative, and compelling, theses is that religion, far from being an atavistic holdover, it is in fact a thoroughly modern development. That claim could bear more scrutiny.

In terms of religion and democracy, Toft, Philpott, and Shah claim that "those religious actors who promoted democracy most ardently were those who—even under dictatorship—both preserved a sphere of independence and embraced a political theology that favored foundational elements of modern democracy like religious freedom, separation of church and state, and rule by the people."[82] This is what Alfred Stepan refers to as the "twin tolerations."[83] The question is whether they are correct that some form of Judeo-Christian secularism is more compatible with democracy than some alternative political theology. Finally, Snyder argues that there is a mismatch between the state and the role of religion in much of current international relations theorizing.[84] In his view, supranational religion (a la Huntington's Civilizations) is less important because of the continuing primacy of the state. In contrast, subnational religion tends to be a source of weakness within states as it is frequently a source of division, often even civil war. The logical intersection between religion and the state in international relations theory is nationalism.

Unfortunately, "nationalism"—the primary form of group identity in contemporary international relations—is both central to many of our theories but also quite under-theorized. The role of religion, or more precisely the lack

[82] Toft, Philpott, and Shah, *God's Century*, 17.
[83] Alfred Stepan, "Religion, Democracy, and the 'Twin Tolerations;'" and Casanova, "Rethinking Public Religions" in Shah, Stepan, and Toft, eds., *Rethinking Religion and World Affairs*, 59.
[84] Snyder, "Introduction" 5.

thereof, in nationalism is a particular manifestation of this problem. Therefore, we need to think further about the continuing relationship between religion and democracy.

Conclusions

The larger intellectual takeaway from the three waves of religion in international politics seems to me to be simply summarized as the gradual decline of secularism in international relations. In the first wave, to be sure, secularism was alive and well, but it opened the door to religion by conceding the latter some residual influence. By contrast, in the second wave, secularism was in retreat as it came under assault by the increasing numbers of global religious actors and the growing frequency of religiously tinged events around the world. Finally, in the third wave, which emphasizes the conceptual change in the nature of the relationship between religion and other factors in world politics, secularism is down for the count but not out yet. What has blunted religion's knockout punch is the fact that some third wave approaches have adopted definitions of religion, and embraced epistemologies for analyzing its effects, which will ensure that the role of religion in global politics remains opaque and obscure and thus subject to debate.

Of course, this discussion of the role of religion and international relations is of more than just academic importance. Understanding its role in the practical world of foreign policy is directly connected with being able to answer these

conceptual questions.[85] Unfortunately, as Barton, Hayden, and von Hippel conclude, "most government officials and implementing partners still do not have the requisite tools or necessary understanding of the issues to factor religion into policy and practice in an appropriate manner."[86] Therefore, it is not just scholars of international relations who need to get religion; foreign policymakers will also have to come to Jesus, or Allah, or the Buddha in order to address many of the pressing policy issues they face in the coming years. The most recent wave of theorizing about religion and global affairs has nailed some convincing theses on the door of the cathedral in their reformation of international relations, but we cannot yet take their entire intellectual agenda as an article of faith.

[85] An important effort to chronicle the role of history in American foreign policy is Andrew Preston, *Sword of Faith: Religion and American War and Diplomacy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012).
[86] Frederick D. Barton, Shannon Hayden, and Karin von Hippel, "Navigating the Fog: Improving U.S. Government Engagement With Religion" in Shah, Stepan, and Toft, eds., *Rethinking Religion and World Affairs*, 280.

Appendix: Religion as a Cause of War:

Franco-Spanish War (1823): At the Congress of Verona, France was authorized to intervene in Spanish civil war. King Louis XVIII sent an army to restore Ferdinand VII to the Spanish Throne. France was a member of the Holy Alliance, which supported absolute monarchy and Catholic values. Hence, we code religion as one among many motives.

First Russo-Turkish War (1828): Russian troops came to the aid of Greeks in their war for independence. This war involved two orthodox nations fighting against remnants of the Muslim Ottoman Empire, but also involved other issues, such as the Turkish Sultan's closure of the Dardanelles to Russian ships and revocation of Russian-Ottoman Treaty. Hence, we code as one among many.

Mexican-American War (1846): The United States annexed Texas after it seceded from Mexico. Religious motive is not evident.

Austro-Sardinian War (1848): The Kingdom of Sardinia (along with other Italian states and Papal forces) declared war on Austria in order to liberate northern Italian city-states. Given the involvement of the Papacy, we code religion as one among many other causes.

First Schleswig-Holstein War (1848-50): The war was caused by clashing Danish and German nationalisms in contested border provinces. Hence, we code religion as not evident.

War of the Roman Republic (1849): The Sardinian declaration of independence inspired secular nationalist forces led by Giuseppe Mazzini, who ousted the Pope and declared a new Roman Republic. French President Louis

Napoleon is pressured by French Catholics to restore the papacy to Rome and so French forces invade Italy and besiege Rome. We judge that religion was a primary cause of this war.

La Plata War (1851): This was a war fought between Brazil and Argentina for control of River Plate region. We code religion as not evident in this case.

Crimean War (1853): Given that competition for control of the Holy Land in the Ottoman Empire led to war between Russia and French/British/Ottoman alliance, we judge religion to have been the primary motive for this war.

Anglo-Persian War (1856): Britain sought to prevent Russian influence from expanding into India and so their grand strategy *designated* Afghanistan as a buffer state for their Indian territory. When the Persians attacked Afghanistan, the British launched a military campaign in retaliation. Given these purely geopolitical motives, we code religion as not evident.

War of Italian Unification (1859): This was a continuation of the Austro-Sardinian War (1848) and so we code religion as one among many factors.

First Spanish-Moroccan War (1859): This war was the result of tensions between Morocco and Spain over Spain's Ceuta enclave on the southern side of the Strait of Gibraltar. We code religion as not evident in it.

Neapolitan War (1860): Italian nationalist leader Giuseppe Garibaldi invaded Sicily, encouraging the local Sicilians to join him in toppling the Neapolitans. Garibaldi's motivation for engaging in war was to unite Italian-speaking peoples and to throw out foreign occupying forces (France and Austria). Hence, we code religion as not evident.

Italo-Roman War (1860): Piedmont and Garibaldi joined forces to attack the Papal States and crush the Neapolitans. Hence, we code religion as not evident.

Franco-Mexican War (1862): Mexican President Bento Juarez stopped interest payments to Mexico's creditors which provoked a military intervention by Spain, France, and Britain. We code religion as not evident in this case.

Ecuadorian-Columbian War (1863): This war was the result of Colombian support for Ecuadorian rebels attempting a coup against the Ecuadorian government. We do not see religion as a factor in the conflict.

Lopez War (1864): A series of border disputes between Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina escalated until conflict broke out between Paraguay, on the one side, and Brazil and Argentina, on the other. Religion was not evident as a factor in this conflict.

Second Schleswig-Holstein War (1864): Prussian troops (with Austrian assistance) invaded Schleswig-Holstein to settle a continuing border dispute (see First Schleswig-Holstein War). We do not see religion as a factor in this conflict.

Naval War (Spanish-Chilean War of 1865): Spain attempted to reclaim a foothold in the Western Hemisphere by seizing several islands off the coast of Peru which led to a series of naval engagements between Peru and Chile, on one side, and Spain, on the other. Religion was not a factor here.

Seven Weeks War (1866): This was the key campaign in the wars of German unification in which Protestant Prussia fought Catholic Austria to exclude the latter from the new Germany. Given the religious and power-political

elements of the conflict, we judge that religion represented one among many factors.

Franco-Prussian War (1870): Bismarck sought to place a Hohenzollern on the Spanish throne against French wishes. Given the religious factors shaping the process of German unification, we judge it was one among many factors in the war.

First Central American War (1876): Porfio Diaz revolts against Benito Juarez in order to take control of Mexican government. Hence, we code religion as not evident.

Second Russo-Turkish War (1877): Ottoman suppression of Christian rebel groups in the Balkans prompted Russia to side with fellow Orthodox states. Since the Russians hoped to free Balkans of Ottoman control, we judge religion was a primary factor in this war.

War of the Pacific (1879): This war was strictly a struggle for natural resources. Hence, we code religion as not evident.

Conquest of Egypt (Anglo-Egyptian War of 1882): After Egyptian rioters killedfifty Europeans in 1882, British and French warships responded by bombarding Alexandria, landing 25,000 British troops, and forcing the abdication of the Egyptian government. Hence, we code religion as not evident.

Sino-French War (1884): This was a conflict between French and Chinese forces over control of the Tonkin region of northern Vietnam. Hence, we code religion as not evident.

Second Central American War (1885): This war was the result of several failed peaceful attempts by Guatemalan President Barrios to unify Central

America, which exacerbated tensions in the region resulting in war. Hence, we code religion as not evident.

Franco-Thai War (1893): French expansion into Laos prompted tensions with Siam. Hence, we code religion as not evident in it.

First Sino-Japanese War (1894): This war was the result of Chinese and Japanese competition to control Korea. Hence, we code religion as not evident.

Greco-Turkish War (1897): A rebellion on Crete leads to Greek intervention prompting a conflict with the Ottoman Empire. However, we code religion as not evident in it.

Spanish-American War (1898): The "Yellow Press" fanned the flames of war, bolstered sympathy for the Cuban cause in the United States, and the sinking of the U.S.S. Maine provided the pretext for the war. We do not, however, see much role for religion in the conflict.

Boxer Rebellion (1900): Growing xenophobia in China led to violence against Western missionaries, Chinese-Christian converts, and European diplomats. Western nations retaliated by sending forces to crush the Boxer Rebellion. Given the religious element, we code it as one cause among many.

Russo-Japanese War (1904): conflicting Russian and Japanese imperial ambitions led to clashes over the territorial control of Manchuria and Korea. Given the primarily geopolitical motives on either side, we code religion as not evident.

Third Central American War (1906): This was a war between Guatemala, on the one side, and Honduras and El Salvador, on the other, in which no religious motives were evident.

Fourth Central American War (1907): This was a war between Honduras and Nicaragua involving disputes about nonreligious issues. Hence, we code religion as not evident.

Second Spanish-Moroccan War (Second Mellilian Campaign of 1909): This was a war involving Spain with rival tribes in Morocco squabbling over economic and natural resource issues. Hence, we code religion as not evident.

Italo-Turkish War (1911): This was a war of conquest by Italy to wrest Libya from Turkey, largely for geopolitical reasons. Therefore, we code religion as not evident.

First Balkan War (1912): The Orthodox Balkan league (Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece) fought to oust the Ottoman Empire from the Balkans, in part to secure territory, but also to protect Orthodox Christians who chaffed under Ottoman rule. Therefore, we code religion as one among many causes of it.

Second Balkan War (1913): Dissatisfied with the terms of the Treaty of London, which ended the First Balkan War, Bulgaria turned on its allies Serbia and Greece. In this case, we code religion as not evident.

World War I: There were many causes of the First World War but we did not see religious issues as among them. Hence, we code religion as not evident.

Franco-Turkish War (Cilician War of 1919): This war was sparked by French efforts to gain control of mines in southern Turkey and Syria. Religion was not a factor here.

Russo-Polish War (1919): This war began with Polish occupation of territories that contained ethnic Poles which was evacuated by the German Army

at the end of the First World War. Religious motives did not seem central; hence, we code religion as not evident.

Hungarian Adversaries War (Hungarian-Allies War of 1919): Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Rumania formed an alliance against Hungary to prevent a Hapsburg revival and Hungary retaliated by declaring war on Czechoslovakia. Religious motives did not seem central; hence, we code religion as not evident.

Second Greco-Turkish War (1919): After its defeat in the First World War, the Ottoman Empire collapsed and Greece intervened to take advantage of Turkey's weakness. Religious motives did not seem central; hence, we code religion as not evident.

Lithuanian-Polish War (1920): Both Poland and Lithuania claimed the city of Vilna, but after the Russo-Polish War the Soviets ceded it to Lithuania. In response, Poland attacked Lithuanian-occupied Vilna in order to seize the city. Religious motives were not evident in this case.

Manchurian War (Sino-Soviet War of 1929): This conflict erupted due to escalating Sino-Soviet border tensions. Religious motives were not involved.

Second Sino-Japanese War (1931): This was a continuation of the First Sino-Japanese War, which was the result of regional competition and Japanese aggression, rather than religion.

Chaco War (1932): This war was fought by Bolivia and Paraguay over the Gran-Chaco region, which both sides mistakenly thought was rich in oil. Religious motives were not evident in it.

Saudi-Yemeni War (1934): In the course of Ibn Saud's efforts to gain control of Saudi Arabia his forces encroached on Yemeni territory, which resulted in war. Territorial, rather than religious, issues were central in this conflict.

Conquest of Ethiopia (Italo-Ethiopian War of 1935): A border dispute between Italy and Ethiopia escalated and Italy invaded Ethiopia, provoking an undeclared war. Religious motives were not evident.

Third Sino-Japanese War (1937): This war was part of Japan's campaign of territorial conquest in China. Religious motives did not play any evident role.

Changkufeng War (1938): This war was the result of a Soviet effort to secure territory in Manchuria, which the Japanese repulsed. Religion was not a factor on either side.

Nomonhan War (1939): This conflict was another skirmish in the continuing Soviet-Japanese conflict over China, in which religion played no significant role.

Russo- Finnish War (1939): Prior to the Second World War, the Soviet Union sought to protect its Western flank by creating a buffer zone of satellite states in the Baltic. Finland refused to acquiesce and war ensued. Religious motives were not a significant factor.

World War II (1939): Like the First World War, the Second was the result of many factors but religion did not seem to be among them. Hence, we code religion as not evident.

Franco-Thai War (1940): Thailand took advantage of French weakness during WWII to reclaim lost territory. Religion did not play a major role in this conflict.

First Kashmir War (India-Pakistan War of 1948): This war was the result of the incomplete partition of India and Pakistan which left Jammu and Kashmir provinces with a mixed Hindu and Muslim population. Since the 1947 partition lines were drawn primarily based on religious demographics, we attribute this war primarily to religion.

Arab-Israeli War (1948): The establishment of a Jewish state by the United Nations after the dissolution of the British mandate over Palestine sparked this war with Muslim Arab states. Given that, we attribute this war primarily to religion.

Korean War (1950): This war was the result of a North Korean attack on South Korea to reunify the peninsula under the communist regime. Given that, we characterize the role of religion as not evident.

Off-Shore Islands War (Taiwan Strait Conflict of 1954): This conflict was between the Chinese Communist and National regimes for control of strategically located islands in the Taiwan Strait. We do not see any role for religion in it.

Soviet Invasion of Hungary (1956): This conflict was the result of an anti-communist uprising in Hungary which overthrew a pro-Soviet regime. The Soviet Union intervened to reestablish communist supremacy. The role of religion in this conflict was not evident.

The Suez War (1956): Britain, France, and Israel used the pretext of the Egyptian nationalist leader Gammal Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal to invade Egypt. Many factors were involved and among them we would include religion given Israel's effort to seize more of its biblical territory.

Ifni War (Forgotten War of 1957): This was an anti-colonial uprising in Morocco against Spain in which the role of religious issues was not evident.

War in Assam (Sino-Indian Border Conflict of 1962): A festering border dispute between China and India in the Himalayas produced this conflict, in which religious factors were not evident.

Second Kashmir War (1965): This was a continuation of the First Kashmir War, which we concluded was primarily motivated by religious factors.

Second Laotian War Phase 2 (Secret War of 1965): This civil war in Laos was part of the larger proxy war between East and West in Southeast Asia. Religious factors were not in evidence.

Vietnam War Phase 2 (1965): The United States intervention in Vietnam was motived primarily by geostrategic motives, with religion not playing much, if any, role.

Six-Day War (Third Arab-Israeli War of 1967): We regard the Six-Day war as another episode in the Arab-Israeli conflict, which we regard as primarily fueled by religious motives.

Football War (1969): This war was sparked by non-religious conflicts between El Salvador and Honduras.

War of Attrition (Israeli-Egyptian War of 1969): This conflict was initiated by Egypt against Israel not to eliminate the Jewish state but rather to recover Egyptian territory occupied by Israel in 1967. To be sure, the religious motives of the Arab-Israel conflict were part of it, but we believe there were others as well.

War of Bangladeshi (Third Indo-Pakistani War of 1971): This war began with an Indian intervention into a civil war in East Bengal, a part of Pakistan. Given that, we conclude that religious factors were not the sole cause of the war.

Yom Kippur War (Ramadan War, Fourth Arab-Israeli War of 1973): As with the War of Attrition, we attribute the Yom Kippur War to a number of motives, among them religion.

Turko-Cypriot War (Turkish Invasion of Cyprus of 1974): This war was the result of a Greek-backed military coup in Cyprus, an island divided between Christian Greeks and Muslim Turks, which then precipitated a Turkish invasion. The ongoing religious conflict on the island, and between Greece and Turkey more generally, was only one factor among many in this war.

Vietnamese-Cambodian Border War (1975): This war was the result of border disputes between Vietnam and the Communist Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia. We find no evidence of religious factors at work.

Angolan War (1975): This was a civil war in Angola that drew in outside forces from Cuba and South Africa but did not seem to have any religious dimension.

Second Ogaden War, Phase 2 (Ethiopian-Somalia War of 1977): This war was due to a border conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia, which lacked a religious element to it.

Ugandan-Tanzanian War (1978): This war resulted from mutual meddling in each side's domestic politics but it did not have any identifiable religious component.

Sino-Vietnamese Punitive War (1979): China invaded northern Vietnam in retaliation for Vietnamese attacks on China's ally, the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. No religious factors seemed to be involved.

Iraq-Iran War (1980): Religion was one factor among a number in the decision of the secular Ba'athist regime in Iraq to invade Iran while it was in the throes of the Islamic Revolution.

Falklands War (1982): This war was largely about an unresolved colonial dispute between Great Britain and Argentina and religious motives were not evident.

War over Lebanon (Israel-Syria War of 1982): Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982 in response to a terrorist act against one of its diplomats, but this operation was also connected to Israel's efforts to weaken the Palestine Liberation Organization on the occupied West Bank, territory that many in Israel claimed for religious reasons.

War over the Aouzou Strip (1986): This conflict arose from the efforts of a Muslim group in northern Chad, backed by the Libyan government, to topple a Christian government. Given that, we regard religion as a primary cause of the conflict.

Gulf War (1990): This war was the result of a territorial and natural resource dispute between two Arab states. Religion, in our view, was not a significant factor in it.

War of Bosnian Independence (1992): With the collapse of Communist Yugoslavia, separate religious groups sought independence. Given that the

Bosnians, Croats, and Serbs were otherwise ethnically homogeneous, we regard this conflict as primarily motivated by religion.

Azeri-Armenian War (Karabakh War, 1988-94): This war was the result of the attempt by the province of Nagorno-Karabakh to secede from predominantly Muslim Azerbajian and join Christian Armenia. Despite these religious differences, we do not see a significant role for religion in the conflict.

Cenepa Valley War (1995): This was a border dispute between Peru and Ecuador in which religious issues played no apparent role.

Badme Border War (1998): This war was the result of a border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea about control of the Badme province. Religion was not a factor in it.

Kargil War (1999): This was another skirmish in the ongoing Indo-Pakistani conflict, so it clearly involved religion, but because strategic issues were also involved, we conclude that religion was only one factor among many.

War for Kosovo (1999): This conflict was the result of ethnoreligious tensions between Serbs and ethnic Albanians. While other issues were at stake, religion was clearly one of them.

Invasion of Afghanistan (2001): The United States invaded Afghanistan after the al-Qaeda attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. While it is clear that AQ had some religious motives for the original attack, the U.S. response was not religiously motived.

Invasion of Iraq (2003): The United States' rationale for invading Iraq was in response to the secular Ba'athist regime's apparent unwillingness to abide by United Nations resolutions proscribing the development of weapons of mass

destruction and to end Iraqi support for terrorist groups. Religious motives were not evident in this case.

What is Religion?

William T. Cavanaugh

If we are to talk seriously about something, we ought to be able to say what it is. This is a commonsense principle of rational speech that unfortunately is often regarded as an unduly burdensome requirement when it comes to religion. International relations scholars exude confidence that we can talk about religion sensibly, but the issue of definition tends to be dismissed rather quickly, either by laying hold of one of the standard substantivist definitions that lie readily to hand, or by appealing to some version of "We all know it when we see it." International relations scholars do not generally doubt that religion is out there; we just have trouble defining it. Like many large concepts—"culture" or "politics" perhaps—the edges are fuzzy, but we share a common vision of the core of the concept "religion" such that we can move fairly quickly past questions of definition and start talking about the way that religion acts in the world.

One problem with this breezy dismissal of the difficulty of defining religion is that it masks a significant diversity in the way that scholars address religion. Let me begin by laying out a typology of approaches that can be found in international relations literature.

A) *Religion as sui generis* — In this type of approach, religion is regarded as a *sui generis* impulse in human cultures that is essentially distinct from other types of human endeavor—commonly labeled "secular"—such as politics, economy, art, etc. Some cultures at some times are said to "mix" politics and religion in various ways, such that in practice it can be difficult to separate the two. But religion is nevertheless essentially distinct from these other types of endeavor. It is also

assumed in this approach that religion is a transhistorical and transcultural phenomenon, that is, it can be found in all times and places. Precolonial African ancestor worship and 21st century Scientology in California are both examples of religion.

There are two variations in international relations of the idea of religion as *sui generis*.

A1) Some who believe that religion is *sui generis* think that international relations should generally avoid religion because international relations is essentially a secular social science. Some scholars see the development of the discipline of international relations as a response to the sidelining of religion in the development of the modern nation-state. International relations as such were born with the breakup of Christendom into sovereign states, and eventually nation-states, each with their own interests based on essentially secular pursuits such as security, land, access to natural resources, and so on. Realist scholars in particular see the rise of nationalism as a secularizing process. International relations is the study of nation-states' pursuit of secular interests, and religion can only become a matter of study when it happens to intersect with such interests. Behind this view is often some version of the secularization thesis that equates modernity with secularity, and therefore expects that the progress of time will only render religion more marginal to public life. But this view need not imply a negative judgment on religion itself; researchers may consider themselves personally religious, but downplay the relevance of religion to IR.

According to John Esposito, because the academy has been considered secular, religion was privatized, and "Neither development theory nor

international relations considered religion a significant variable for political analysis."[87] Peter Katzenstein writes, "because they are expressions of rationalist thought deeply antithetical to religion, the silence of realist and liberal theories of international relations on the role of religion in European and world politics is thus not surprising."[88] Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* is an example of a work that simply ignores religion as a significant factor.[89] Some scholars in this category do not simply remain silent on religion, but consider it as an obstacle to modernization. Examples include Daniel Lerner's book *The Passing of Traditional Society* and Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man*.[90] A2) Other scholars who believe that religion is *sui generis* think that religion is an important field of study for international relations scholars. Although religion is essentially distinct from secular pursuits like politics, religion often has a profound effect on politics across the globe. Contrary to the predictions of the secularization thesis, religion has made a comeback globally over the last few decades, and has done so in politically assertive ways. To get a complete picture of global politics in the 21st century, international relations must be attentive to religious actors. Examples of this approach include the book *God's Century* by Monica Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Shah, and *Religion in International Relations: The Return from Exile*, edited by Fabio Petito and

[87] John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, [2nd ed.] (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 200, quoted in Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 29.
[88] Peter Katzenstein, "Multiple Modernities and Secular Europeanization?" in Peter Katzenstein and Timothy Byrnes, eds., *Religion in an Expanding Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 31, quoted in Hurd, 30.
[89] Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979).
[90] Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (New York: Macmillan, 1958; Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: The Free Press, 1992).

Pavlos Hatzopoulos.[91] The resurgence of religion can be either celebrated or lamented, but those who take this approach agree that religion is an important independent factor "out there" in the real world, and international relations must take it into account.

B) Religion as not *sui generis* — There are those who do not believe that religion is a *sui generis* aspect of human life, essentially distinct from secular pursuits like politics, economy, art, etc. There are two variations of this approach as well.

B1) Some scholars regard religion as reducible to other, more basic, factors. A follower of Marx might regard religion as superstructural, a secondary effect of more basic economic causes. A follower of Durkheim might regard religion as the expression of more basic social dynamics of a given group. Scholars of this type may regard religion as found in all times and places, but as essentially illusory; that is, it never refers to something independent of more basic economic, social, or psychological processes. Examples of an historical materialist approach to religion in international relations include Immanuel Wallerstein's *The Modern World-System* and Perry Anderson's *Lineages of the Absolutist State*. According to Wallerstein, "History has seen [religious] passion turn to cynicism too regularly for one not to be suspicious of invoking such belief systems as primary factors in explaining the genesis and long-term persistence of large-scale social action."[92] Anderson considers religion to be superstructural, but in pre-capitalist

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[91] Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Samuel Shah, *God's Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011); Fabio Petito and Pavlos Hatzopoulos, eds., *Religion in International Relations: The Return from Exile* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

[92] Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Academic Press, 1974), 48.

societies he does allow that religion is part of the "constitutive structure of the mode of production."[93] B2) The rejection of religion as a transhistorical and transcultural human impulse, essentially distinct from secular pursuits, need not be reductive. Scholars of this type are convinced by the historical evidence that "religion" as we understand it, as something inherently distinct from "politics" and other "secular" phenomena, is not a transhistorical and transcultural aspect of human life but is instead an invention of the modern West. Scholars of this type take an historical approach and view the religious/secular distinction as a Western construction that was exported from Europe to the rest of the world through the process of colonization. This is not to reduce, for example, the worship of God to economic causes. It is instead to call into question the permanence and objectivity of the religious/secular divide. As David Scott argues, "part of the problem to be sketched and investigated therefore has precisely to do with the instability of what gets identified and counted by authorized knowledges as 'religion': how, by whom, and under what conditions of power. In other words, the determining conditions and effects of what gets categorized as 'religion' are historically and culturally variable."[94] Elizabeth Hurd's book *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations* applies this approach to IR, arguing that the categories of "religious" and "secular" are not

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[93] "The 'superstructures' of kinship, religion, law or the state necessarily enter into the constitutive structure of the mode of production in pre-capitalist social formations…In consequence, pre-capitalist modes of production cannot be defined *except* via their political, legal, and ideological superstructures, since these are what determine the type of extra-economic coercion that specifies them." Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: New Left Books, 1974), 403-04.

[94] David Scott, "Conversion and Demonism: Colonial Christian Discourse and Religion in Sri Lanka," *Comparative Studies in Society and History vol.* 34, no. 2 (1992): 333, quoted in Hurd, 33.

neutral analytical categories but are themselves already historically constructed by different kinds of power relationships, relationships that international relations should be examining rather than assuming. The categories that international relations uses are already structured by ideologically secularist assumptions that skew the analysis. According to Hurd, "The question, then, is not 'What is religion and how does it relate to politics?'...Rather the question is, *How* do processes, institutions, and states come to be understood as religious versus political, or religious versus secular, and how might we ascertain the political effects of such demarcation?"[95]

In examining these four approaches, it should be noted that the two types of A's seem to have little in common, and the same applies to the B's. Indeed, the 1's seem like closer allies with each other, as do the 2's with each other. A1 and B1 have in common a dismissive attitude toward the study of religion in IR. A2 and B2, on the other hand, are more likely to find things to talk about, because both are interested in, for example, the importance of Islam for the field of IR. A2 and B2 would agree that the downplaying and dismissal of the political importance of Christianity, Islam, and other faiths in much twentieth century international relations scholarship left a significant gap in the field.

Where A2 and B2 disagree is on whether "religion" is a stable and coherent category across time and space, such that its use as an agent in international relations discourse ("religion does this or causes that") helps make sense of the data. What is at stake can be seen in the fact that many practitioners and

[95] Hurd, 16.

scholars of what are commonly labeled "religions" reject the label. Many Muslims and scholars of Islam reject the notion that Islam is a religion, because it does not generally function with the same Western divides between religion and politics and religion and secular life.[96] The main Hindu nationalist party, the BJP, tends to reject the idea that Hinduism is a religion, because it encompasses what Westerners tend to divide into religion, politics, economy, culture, social obligations, and so on. To claim that Hinduism is not a religion allows the possibility of Hinduism providing the social glue in a "secular" state. In the early twentieth century, Shinto elites insisted that Shinto was not a religion, but the Constitution imposed on Japan by the United States at the conclusion of World War II declared that Shinto was a religion, and was therefore subject to disestablishment and marginalization from political life.[97] B2 is just as enthusiastic as A2 about the inclusion of Islam, Hinduism, Shinto, et al. in the discourse of IR. B2 argues, however, that putting these diverse ideologies and practices into the category of "religion" distorts them and reveals a Western bias. To label Islam a "religion" is already to mark it as an abnormal religion, because it does not separate religion from politics. B2 argues that what should be

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[96] John Esposito, for example, says that labeling Islam a "religion" automatically labels it an abnormal religion, because Muslims do not tend to distinguish Islam from politics in the way that Westerners assume that religion and politics are two essentially distinct things. Esposito writes, "the modern notions of religion as a system of belief for personal life and of separation of church and state have become so accepted and internalized that they have obscured past beliefs and practice and have come to represent for many a self-evident and timeless truth. As a result, from a modern secular perspective (a form of "secular fundamentalism"), the mixing of religion and politics is regarded as necessarily abnormal, (departing from the norm), irrational, dangerous, and extremist." *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, [3rd ed.] (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 258.

[97] For a thorough genealogy of the concept of religion in the West and in non-Western societies, see chapter 2 of my book, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

scrutinized by international relations is not the political impact of religion, as if it were simply a thing out there in the world, but the political impact of using the category of religion.

Debates over the definition of religion in the twentieth century tended to fall along substantivist/functionalist lines. International relations scholars of types A1 and A2 generally adopt substantivist definitions. Substantivists define religion according to the substance of beliefs. Because substantivists tend to define the core of religion according to the lists of "world religions" devised by European scholars in the nineteenth century, they want to include Buddhism, Taoism, Jainism, and other systems that do not have a central concept of God or gods, and so they tend to broaden the concept of religion to belief in "the transcendent" or some more inclusive term. Once the definition has been thus made more inclusive, however, it becomes difficult to exclude nationalism, Marxism, capitalism, and other ideologies that similarly structure people's lives and hold their allegiances. Functionalists include such systems as religions by defining religion not according to what people say they believe but according to how such a system actually functions in people's lives. If a person says she's a Christian but in empirical fact is really devoted to the stock market, then a functionalist says her religion is capitalism, not metaphorically, but really.

Both substantivists and functionalists see religion as *sui generis*; functionalists just cast the net wider to include phenomena like nationalism that a substantivist would consider "secular." International relations scholars of type A1 and A2 tend to adopt substantivist definitions, if they define religion at all, because they are invested in the religious/secular distinction and want to keep

"religion" more narrowly defined—A1 to keep international relations distinct from it, A2 to make it a proper object of study. Debates over the definition of religion have gone on for more than a century, however, without resolution. There is no lack of ingenuity in crafting definitions to include what one wants to include and exclude what one wants to exclude, but in the absence of consensus, a degree of exhaustion and cynicism about the question of definition is inevitable. Most international relations scholars simply ignore functionalism, make some quick nod to a substantivist definition, and proceed to talking about religion as if everyone knew what they were talking about.

There is a third type of approach beyond substantivism and functionalism, however, of which most international relations scholars seem unaware. In religious studies and related fields, the approach is known as "constructivism" (which should not be confused with the way the same term is used in IR). This approach is historical. Rather than try to decide once and for all what the definition of religion is, or whether Confucianism or consumerism or Hinduism is really a religion or not, this approach sees the religious/secular divide as a modern Western invention that was subsequently exported to the rest of the world through colonization. The scholar's task is to determine under what circumstances some things are called "religion" and some are not, and to ask what kinds of power are being enacted by such labels. [98]

In 1962, Wilfred Cantwell Smith's book *The Meaning and End of Religion* undertook the first comprehensive study of the concept "religion," and his work

[98] See my discussion and critique of substantivist, functionalist, and constructivist approaches in *The Myth of Religious Violence*, 102-122.

has been built upon by a growing legion of scholars since. Smith found that there was no such concept in premodern Europe or in any culture that has not been influenced by the modern West. More recently Brent Nongbri's book *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept* has updated, corrected, and expanded Smith's work, showing that religion as we understand it is a modern, Western construction.[99] *Religio* in ancient Rome, says Augustine, refers to "an attitude of respect in relations between a man and his neighbor"[100]; it included all kinds of obligations that a modern Westerner would consider "secular."[101] In medieval Europe, the religious/secular divide was a distinction between two kinds of priests, those who belonged to orders such as the Benedictines and those who belonged to a diocese. Religion as something inherently distinct from politics was born in the seventeenth century as social orders were imagined in which ecclesiastical and civil authority would be separate. It is not simply that religion and politics used to be mixed, and then modernity sorted them out; the religion/politics distinction was invented, and did not exist before. The religious/secular distinction, which was invented at roughly the same time, is likewise not transhistorical, engraved in the nature of things. These distinctions resulted from a contingent early modern European Christian struggle between ecclesiastical and civil authority.

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[99] Brent Nongbri, *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012.

[100] "We have no right to affirm with confidence that 'religion' (*religio*) is confined to the worship of God, since it seems that this word has been detached from its normal meaning, in which it refers to an attitude of respect in relations between a man and his neighbor"; Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972), X.1 [373].

[101] Claims that "religion" in the modern sense can be found in Lactantius are, to my mind, decisively refuted in Nongbri, *Before Religion*, 26-34.

Much recent scholarship has focused on the creation of the category of religion in colonial contexts. Tomoko Masuzawa's *The Invention of World Religions*,[102] Daniel Dubuisson's *The Western Construction of Religion*,[103] Derek Peterson and Darren Walhof's *The Invention of Religion*[104] and many similar works present detailed historical analyses of how the contested category of religion has been used by European colonial powers in different contexts. After initially declaring that the natives had no religion at all, religion became an important way of categorizing local cultures. Classifying local practices as religion allowed Christian missionaries to make (usually negative) comparisons between them and Christianity. And declaring local practices religious meant that they were essentially private and could be separated from public governance, which was the province of the colonial powers.

From the point of view of B2, this historical work must be taken into account in order not to talk nonsense when talking about "religion." A2, however, is rightly worried that the B2 approach dissolves the category of religion; after working hard to get international relations to take religion seriously, A2 now finds some B2 scholarship suggesting that religion itself does not exist, and that "religion" is a misleading term that should be dropped altogether. But we need not take such an approach. Religion does exist, but as a constructed category. Religion is not simply an object; it is a lens, one that often

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[102] Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).
[103] Daniel Dubuisson, *The Western Construction of Religion: Myths, Knowledge, and Ideology*, trans. William Sayers (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).
[104] Derek R. Peterson and Darren R. Walhof , eds., *The Invention of Religion: Rethinking Belief in Politics and History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002).

distorts. International relations scholars need to stop looking through that lens and start looking at the lens. Important work needs to be done on "religion" to show how the category constructs power in IR. International relations can no longer afford to use uncritical, outdated, and essentially Western concepts of "religion" and "secular" as if they were neutral descriptors of the facts on the ground.

Religion as a Variable

Ron E. Hassner

Introduction

International relations scholars conceive of religion as a deviant and irrational set of ideas that propel radical non-state actors into conflict. The alternative, I'd like to suggest, is to envision religion as a common and pervasive background condition that shapes not just the ideas but also the practices of combatants, secular and religious alike, be they non-state violent actors or conventional military forces. Studying religion and violence cannot just mean studying other people's religion and other people's violence. It must also include studying the day-to-day religion of our soldiers, and how it affects combat operations.

The State of the Art

The very developments on the world stage that led to the current resurgence in the study of religion and violence have also skewed this research program in unfortunate ways. The number of books under this subject heading in the Library of Congress catalogue has expanded from two or three books per year in the last three decades to an average of fourteen books a year since 2001. More books have been published on Islam and war since 9/11 than ever before in human history.[105] Over 80% of all the articles published on religion in international relations journals appeared after September 2001. The journal *International Security*, a leading journal in its subfield, now publishes three

[105] Ron E. Hassner, "Religion and International Affairs: The State of the Art" In *Religion, Identity and Global Governance: Ideas, Evidence and Practice*, eds., Steven Lamy and Partick James (University of Toronto Press, 2010).

times as many articles with references to religion as it did in the 1970s and 1980s.[106]

Of these publications since the 1980s, Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* deserves particular mention because it introduced three biases into the study of religion and war that prevail to this day. Huntington reified religions as theologies, assumed that religions were inherently in conflict, and singled out Islam as the primary religious threat.

First, although Huntington heralded an era of conflicts between large religious blocs, he dedicated only four paragraphs to discussing the roots of these clashes in religion.[107] In reducing religious movements to (a distorted version of) their *formal* beliefs, Huntington encouraged a generation of scholars to dismiss the role of informal religious beliefs, practices, symbols, and social structures as irrelevant to the study of international conflict. Indeed, Huntington's decision to dedicate less than a page (in a 360-page volume) to the religious sources of purportedly religious conflict persuaded many of his followers to forgo the study of religion altogether. In these often rationalist analyses, religion is seen as a proxy or cover for some other set of identities, interests, or strategies.[108]

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[106] Ron E. Hassner, "Correspondence: Debating the Role of Religion in War," *International Security*, vol. 35, no.1 (Summer 2010): 202-206.

[107] Huntington asserted that Christianity was distinct from Islam because it recognized the separation of Church and State; Islam was an absolutist religion of the sword; both Christianity and Islam were monotheistic (so they "cannot easily assimilate additional deities"), universalistic, missionary and teleological religions that espoused crusades and jihad respectively. Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), pp. 70, 210-211 and 263-4.

[108] See, for example, Robert Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2006); Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004); Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (Cambridge, MA.: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Monica Duffy Toft, "Getting Religion? The Puzzling Case of Islam and

Huntington's second legacy is the persistent notion that religious movements are inherently in conflict with one another, a claim that both reifies religions and obscures their role in conflicts between actors that share a religious identification.[109] The most cited quantitative analysis of the correlation between religion and conflict, for example, "codes a conflict as religious if the two groups involved are of different religions."[110] These problematic assumptions, and the coding that arises directly from them, are likely to bias the analysis of some of the most important ongoing conflicts, including the intra-Islamic conflict in Iraq today.

The singling out of Islam as the most war prone of all "civilizations" proved to be Huntington's third and most enduring contribution to the study of religion and conflict. The ensuing Islam-and-violence cottage industry, compounded by events in the first decade of the 21st century, evinced a preoccupation with Islam that has manifested in academia and the popular media alike. The *New York Times*, for example, has tripled its references to Islam compared to the pre-9/11 era. In the overwhelming majority of these articles, Islam is mentioned in the context of extremism, terrorism, and insurgency.[111]

Civil War," *International Security*, vol. 31, no. 4 (Spring 2007); and Monica Duffy Toft, "Issue Indivisibility and Time Horizons as Rationalist Explanations for War," *Security Studies*, vol. 15, no. 1 (January-March 2006).

[109] Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*, pp. 67-8, 129-130, 245 and 292.

[110] Jonathan Fox, "Religion and State Failure: An Examination of the Extent and Magnitude of Religious Conflict from 1950 to 1996," *International Political Science Review,* vol. 25, no.5 (2004): 63. Fox is relying, in part, on an earlier study by Henderson that makes similar assumptions. Errol A. Henderson, "Culture or Contiguity: Ethnic Conflict, the Similarity of States, and the Onset of War, 1820-1989," *Journal of Conflict Resolution,* vol. 41, no. 5 (Oct., 1997): 661.

[111] Hassner, "Religion and International Affairs," 38-40.

Ironically, Huntington's critics have fallen into the same conceptual traps. Those seeking to defend religion from its detractors have tried to emphasize the peaceful essence of religion and the productive role it could potentially play in international diplomacy and conflict resolution.[112] But in relying on a close reading of religious texts as their principal form of evidence, they reduce religion to theology, at best, or selective exegesis, at worst.[113] Defenders of Islam, on the other hand, are perpetuating a research program that continues to place this religion in the spotlight, to the exclusion of other religious movements.[114] *International Security*, mentioned above, now publishes more articles on Islam than on Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Judaism combined.[115]

In sum, the literature suffers from four interconnected blind spots. First, on the religious side of the equation, students of religion and war tend to restrict their analyses to theology as gleaned from sacred texts. Second, the focus on religion as a cause of war risks obscuring how religion can shape the meaning, nature, and outcomes of ongoing wars. Third, the literature has emphasized

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[112] See, for example, Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Samson, eds., *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1995); Marc Gopin, *Holy War, Holy Peace: How Religion Can Bring Peace to the Middle East* (Cambridge, MA: Oxford University Press, 2002); and David R. Smock, *Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding* (Washington, D.C.: USIP, 2002).

[113] The same is true of the community of scholars investigating the Just War, Holy War and Jihad traditions. See, for example, Roland H. Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Towards War and Peace* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1960); John Kelsay and James Turner Johnson, eds., *Just War and Jihad: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives on War and Peace in Western and Islamic Traditions* (New York: Greenwood, 1991); James Turner Johnson and John Kelsay, *Cross, Crescent and Sword: The Justification and Limitation of War in Western and Islamic Tradition* (New York: Greenwood, 1990).

[114] See, for example, Graham Fuller and Ian O. Lesser, *A Sense of Siege: The Geopolitics of Islam and the West* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995); William Pfaff, "The Reality of Human Affairs," *World Policy Journal*, vol. 14, no. 2 (1997); John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1995); Fred Halliday, *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation: Religion and Politics in the Middle East* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996).

[115] Hassner, "Correspondence," 204-05.

cases in which religious rivalries overlap with political rivalries. Fourth, the contemporary association of a particular brand of Islam with a temporary trend in global terrorism has led to an overemphasis on that religious movement. This, in turn, has placed insurgents and terrorists in the spotlight at the expense of professional military forces.

The Path Ahead

How might we correct these biases? First, on the religious side of the equation, we need to expand our conceptualization of religion to include more than theology. By conceiving of religion as a lived system of symbols and practices we can account for informal as well as formal beliefs, religious ideas, rituals, social structures and discourses. The ideas of religious actors are important. But what these actors actually do with those ideas should matter no less. It doesn't require tremendous familiarity with religion to know that, just as with American voters, there is often a tremendous gap between formal ideas, how individuals interpret those ideas, and how individuals choose to implement those ideas.

For example, U.S. military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan were not motivated by religious principles. By no stretch of the imagination were these wars of religion, wars because of religion or wars for achieving religious goals. Nonetheless, the prevalence of religious beliefs and practices among U.S. troops, Muslim insurgents, local noncombatants and regional observers, shaped and constrained U.S. decision making on the battlefield. U.S. troops have had to contend with the escalation of insurgent-initiated attacks during Ramadan, recognize the vulnerability of Shi'a and Christian communities to sectarian

violence during their respective holy days, as well as consider the costs of initiating operations during dates of religious sensitivity to a broad Muslim audience, both inside and outside of Iraq. At the same time, U.S. troops have striven to protect churches and mosques from assault, while risking condemnation for desecrating holy sites in which insurgents have sought refuge. Throughout the conflict, military chaplains, Islamist clerics, and local religious leaders have played a key role, acting as mediators, motivators, and interpreters of religious principles relevant to the conduct of war. Rather than directly compel U.S. involvement in Iraq, religion has indirectly influenced U.S. planning and performance by shaping the interests of U.S. troops, their opponents, and third parties.

Second, rather than focus exclusively on religion as a *cause* of war, we should extend our investigations to explore how religion shapes the meaning, nature, and outcome of war. This multifaceted view of religion will reveal a series of intricate relationships between religion and war that do not end when conflict begins. Scholars of religion and conflict, be they followers of Huntington, students of fundamentalism, or just war theorists, have focused excessively on "why" questions of religion and war, which constrain religion to the realm of ideas. A shift to studying religious practices would open up "how", "when", "where", and "who" questions for analysis.

For example, even in modern combat among professional and (ostensibly) secular armies, sacred time, sacred space, and sacred authority have influenced strategic decision making. These sacred phenomena act as both constraints and motivators on the planning and execution of military operations by shaping the

organizational culture of a military as well as its tactical environment. On the one hand, regard for the sacred and a concern over desecration, be it in relation to the combatants' own religious proclivities or those of third parties, introduces an element of caution into the execution of operations. At other times, the symbolic force inherent in these holy days, sites, and leaders motivates troops. In still other instances, combatants to even exploit the vulnerabilities that arise from their opponents' reverence for sacred times, shrines, or persons.

A third avenue for future inquiry involves recognizing the pervasive presence of religion in war. As a consequence, the role of religion is not restricted to cases in which religious rivalries overlap with political rivalries. Religion can influence secular conflicts as well as conflicts among groups adhering to the same belief system. By the same token, religion can prove conducive to compromise and peacemaking in conflicts irrespective of the religious or secular nature of the combatants. At the same time, religion can prove significant in a war not only because of how it affects the parties in conflict but because of how it affects victims, observers, and third parties.

Strategic bombing in the Second World War offers a case in point. This is a hard case: The conflict was neither motivated by religion nor did it cross clear religious divides. The military organizations involved were professional, modern, armed forces conducting conventional combat under significant material constraints. Nonetheless, even the choice of targets for strategic bombing missions was influenced by allied and German notions of sacred space. At times, participants sought to demoralize their opponents by targeting religious, cultural and historical structures. Where they succeeded, as in Coventry, their attacks

provoked outrage and counterattacks. Where they failed, as in London, the miraculous survival of sacred sites infused civilians with hope and determination. At other times, as in the bombing of Rome, combatants assumed significant risk to protect sacred sites in order to placate religious audiences inside and outside the theater of operations. At yet other times, as in the assault on Monte Cassino, sites were destroyed regardless of their religious significance. But even here, military operations were preceded and followed by extensive debates concerning the religious significance of sites and the likely effects of an attack on rivals, third parties, and even one's own troops.

Fourth, by unraveling the role of religion, broadly understood, across different stages of war and across various types of conflict, both religious and secular, we can begin to question the link between Islam and war. If Islam is unique, this is due to the contemporary association of a particular brand of Islam with a temporary trend in global terrorism. Deemphasizing Islam will allow us to expand the range of actors under our scrutiny from insurgents and terrorists to states and professional military forces. The result is a universe of cases that makes up in relevance, significance, and quantity what it may lack in superficial drama. We have been studying a very narrow slide of the religion and conflict nexus, leaving out modern, interstate, conventional wars in which religion plays a role, sometimes a small role, sometimes a more substantial role. Students of geography and conflict don't just study wars on volcanoes and earthquake fault lines. Students of psychology and war don't just study schizophrenics and megalomaniacs. As students of religion and war, we should not have to limit our analyses to fanatics and suicide bombers.

The Religious Roots of International Relations Theory

Daniel Philpott

Mainstream international relations theory—especially the liberal and realist traditions—is secular because its founding fathers described, celebrated, and incorporated into their thinking a secularizing set of historical events: the development of the international system of sovereign states between roughly 1500 and 1700. These events were secular in three senses. First, they involved a transfer of the authority and power of religious actors into the hands of the sovereign state. Second, they involved the sovereign state's subordination of religious actors within its territory. Third, these first two trends not only took place but were actively celebrated by leading intellectuals of the period. Thus, Thomas Hobbes, Niccolo Machiavelli, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant, and others not only described a world in which religious actors had lost their authority but recommended that politics proceed without them.

A large consensus of historians and sociologists holds that in Europe between 1500 and 1700, or what is called the Early Modern Period , state institutions strongly increased in their power and authority relative to other kinds of organizations and entities, including religious bodies, especially the Catholic Church, which had held great temporal authority prior to this time. The periodization is not exact and the trend is not linear, but it took place all across the continent. Whether or not one thinks that the system of sovereign states was consolidated at the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, as I do, it is very difficult to dispute that, in the decades surrounding this date, an international system was

consolidated in which sovereign states were the dominant entities.[116] And it is very difficult to dispute that in terms of temporal power, the Catholic Church was the loser. No wonder Pope Innocent X called the Peace of Westphalia "null, void, invalid, iniquitous, unjust, damnable, reprobate, inane, empty of meaning and effect for all time."[117]

Why did the state win? Theorists like Charles Tilly, Hendrik Spruyt, Brian Downing, and others tell a material story.[118] The state best survived a Darwinian struggle through which it became the type of organization best able to fight military battles and in turn to raise the taxes and the troops necessary for this fighting. Others, including myself, tell a story in which changes in ideas helped to bring about the change in political organization. In *Revolutions in Sovereignty: How Ideas Shaped Modern International Relations*, I focus on the effects of the Protestant Reformation. Prior to the Reformation, I argue, the Catholic Church wielded considerable temporal power—the ability to tax, the ownership of large tracts of land, and other prerogatives that we now think of as political—and was assisted by figures like the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, who would use his soldiers to enforce orthodoxy, thus reinforcing the symbiosis of temporal and ecclesial authority. The Reformation did three things to facilitate the transfer of

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[116] My view of Westphalia can be found in Daniel Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty: How Ideas Shaped Modern International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), Chapter Five. For a challenge and a good review of the literature, see Daniel H. Nexon, *The Struggle for Power in Early Modern Europe: Religious Conflict, Dynastic Empires, and International Change* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), Chapter Eight.
[117] Quoted from David Maland, *Europe in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Macmillan, 1966), 16.
[118] Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States AD 990-1990* (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1992); Hendrik Spruyt, *The Sovereign State and its Competitors* (Princeton, NJ; Princeton University Press, 1994); Brian Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change: Origins of Democracy and Autocracy in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).

power and authority over to the state. First, it developed a theology—roughly Martin Luther's two kingdoms idea—that delegitimized the temporal prerogatives of the Catholic Church and legitimized the enhancement of kings' and princes' prerogatives. Second, by withdrawing the allegiance of large bodies of people (though still a minority in Europe) from the Catholic Church, the Reformation weakened the Catholic Church's temporal prerogatives. Third, because the reformers had to seek protection from forces allied with the pope, they placed themselves in the hands of princes, whose newfound power and authority they thus bolstered. Religious ideas were not a sole cause, I argue, and operated in tandem with material changes to bring about the sovereign state system. Others are more convinced by a "material causes alone" argument. William T. Cavanaugh, in *The Myth of Religious Violence*, seeks to show that the period was not one of religious war. It was rather one of the growth of state power, which took place apart from religion and came to dominate religion.[119] Whatever account to which one subscribes, the fact remains that the sovereign state won and religious authority lost, yielding the arrangement that became the sovereign state system, the subject of international relations theory.

What does it mean to say that religious authority lost? First, it means that the pope's transnational authority lost much of its temporal relevance and became more purely spiritual. No longer would the pope arbitrate wars, excommunicate kings and queens, release the king's or queen's subjects from obedience, or play an active part in the diplomacy and wars of Italian city-

[119] William T. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict,* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009).

states.[120] By and large the pope ceased to wield authority over rulers that had come to wield supremacy within their territory, or sovereignty.

Second, religious authorities were largely subordinated to political authorities within states. Historian of the Reformation Euan Cameron has written that churches were little but "departments of state" by the middle of the seventeenth century.[121] Protestant churches often came under the direct control of princes and kings, whether in a friendly fashion in Germany or through the brutal seizure performed by Henry VIII in England. But Catholic Churches were increasingly coming under royal control, too. The French king asserted "Gallican liberties" vis-à-vis the pope and did so with the support of the French bishops, who wanted to curtail the pope's authority. The Spanish king asserted sharp control over the Church, as did the Spanish and Portuguese crowns within New World colonies, where they asserted the "patronata royal." True, the symbiotic character of medieval church-state relations partially remained. In France, for instance, the king actively supported the Church and acted to uphold its religious monopoly, even kicking the Huguenots out of the country. But the overwhelming trend of the period—all across the continent—was the growth of state power and the relative decline of the temporal power of the Christian churches.

This long historical trend can also be captured through an idea that has become popular among scholars in several disciplines: the migration of the holy. The thesis seems to have been launched by the great Catholic theologian Henri de

[120] This last decline is somewhat exaggerated, for the Pope would continue to be a diplomatic player in Italy to some extent up through the 1929 Lateran Treaty, which established the Vatican as a sovereign state, but after Westphalia his role greatly diminished.
[121] Euan Cameron, *The European Reformation* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1991), 153.

Lubac in his book *Corpus Mysticum*, which he wrote just after World War II.[122] In his research into medieval theology, De Lubac noticed a transformation in the notion of the Body of Christ. First, it had meant the consecrated host—the actual body and blood of Christ in the mass. Then, during the High Middle Ages, it also came to mean the Church as a body of people or an institution. From there, the concept migrated to the modern state, where it became secularized as the body politic yet retained the sacredness and the attendant claim on the loyalty of the members. It is a theological story that matches what happened in the transformation of the relationship between Church and political authority from medieval to modern times. Others, who have espoused the thesis or something quite like it, include the political philosopher Sheldon Wolin, the medievalist Ernst Kantorowicz, theologian William Cavanaugh, theologian Chad Pecknold, and historian John Bossy.[123] In a chapter of his book, *Christianity and Politics*, entitled "Towards Hobbesian Bodies," Pecknold draws our attention to the famous drawing that appears on the front cover of the Penguin edition of Hobbes' *Leviathan*. In it, a giant human being, the Leviathan, is composed of scores of tiny human beings—thus he incorporates them into his body. Whereas once it

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[122] Henri Cardinal de Lubac, S.J., *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages*, trans. Gemma Simmonds, CJ with Richard Price and Christopher Stephens, eds. Laurence Paul Hemming and Susan Frank Parsons (London: SCM Press, 2006).

[123] Sheldon Wolin, *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Vision in Western Political Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study of Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); William T. Cavanaugh, *Migrations of the Holy: God, State, and the Political Meaning of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011); C.C. Pecknold, *Christianity and Politics: A Brief Guide to the History* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2010); John Bossy, "Unrethinking the Sixteenth-Century Wars of Religion" in Thomas Kselman, ed., *Belief in History: Innovative Approaches to European and American Religion* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 278.

was thought that Christ incorporated human persons into his body as members, now the state claims to do so.[124]

Those philosophers who are considered founders of today's international relations traditions, both realist and liberal, wrote roughly during this period, especially if we extend it to 1800, and largely incorporated the secularizing historical trends into their theories. Following Michael Doyle's *Ways of War and Peace*, I consider Thomas Hobbes, Niccolo Machiavelli, and John-Jacques Rousseau the founders of realism during this period and Immanuel Kant, John Locke, and Adam Smith the founders of liberalism.[125] To say that they incorporated secularism means that 1) they described international relations as if ecclesial authorities wielded little control; 2) they generally thought that this was a good thing, either explicitly advocating and celebrating the loss of churches' temporal powers or else just ignoring the churches; and 3) they espoused a morality of international relations that paid little heed to the authoritative teachings of churches and was largely based on autonomous reason. Informing their thinking were the lessons that they learned from their historical context. Whether or not it is true that the wars of early modern Europe were really fought over religion, most of these thinkers thought that religion was a chief cause of war and should therefore be privatized and taken out of politics. This perceived lesson greatly shaped their adherence to secularism. Not all of them were atheists, but all of them adhered to the kind of secularism that I have been describing.

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[124] Pecknold, *Christianity and Politics*, 69-83.
[125] Michael Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace: Realism, Liberalism, and Socialism* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 1997).

Machiavelli looked around him and saw warring city-states and yearned that Italy might be unified in a glorious republic. He thought that the Church was a problem. It taught a religion that was enfeebling and prevented political leaders from taking needed manly action. The Church itself, he thought, was little more than another political actor, engaging in the same kind of conniving, manipulative, and sometimes cruel behavior that other leaders of city-states exhibited. Why should it be taken seriously as a religious entity? Better to keep its ecclesiology out of politics. Then, Machiavelli took a momentous turn in the development of modern moral thinking (or so argues Jacques Maritain in his 1942 essay, "The End of Machiavellianism"[126]) when he counseled statesmen sometimes to do what is not good. Machiavelli did not reject morality per se or offer any philosophical arguments as to why it was not valid. Rather he counseled statesmen not to be moral when it was necessary and in so doing rejected the classical tradition of Plato, Aristotle, and Thomas Aquinas, all of whom would never have agreed to such a thing. Machiavelli was not a consequentialist but he did lay the foundations for an enduring theme of realism—namely, that moral absolutes cannot be adhered to consistently in matters of statecraft.

Through the eyes of faith, figures like St. Catherine of Sienna saw things differently. During the late 14th century she would become an advocate of the Church's authority during a time of nasty wars among the city-states during which allies of the pope would do their own share of nasty things like kill the

[126] Jacques Maritain, "The End of Machiavellianism," *The Review of Politics* vol. 4, no. 1 (1942): 1-33.

inhabitants of a city. She told skeptical friends, though, that even if the pope and his friends did not seem very holy at times, the pope was still the pope and had the spiritual authority of the successor of St. Peter, and thus ought to be protected and even situated in Rome. She became a player in the politics of the time and was instrumental in bringing Pope Gregory XI to Rome from Avignon. Like Machiavelli, she valued masculinity and encouraged Pope Gregory XI to be a "manly man" and go back home to Rome over the opposition of French cardinals. Unlike Machiavelli, though, she saw the pope as more than just another politician.

Hobbes wrote during the time of the English Civil War—largely a religious war, arguably—and also yearned for stability (security and stability have always been big themes for Realists). He was also the translator of Thucydides' Peloponnesian Wars, the Ur-source of Realism. In *Leviathan*, he advocated that political authority be concentrated in the hands of a single ruler (or body of rulers) and that the church be utterly subordinated to this single ruler. He did not ignore religion (people argue about whether he was a religious believer) and *Leviathan* was full of scriptural references and arguments. But he envisioned politics without the influence of religious actors, especially bishops. In the beginning of *Leviathan*, he constructs his argument for political authority, beginning with the laws of matter in motion, thus resting the authority of the state on scientific naturalism and not on the ordination of God or the requirements of the common good. He rejected the Aristotelian-Thomist tradition of moral reasoning.

Realists in the 20th century carry on these commitments. In 1962 Hans Morgenthau wrote that

> The moral problem of politics is posed by the inescapable discrepancy between the commands of Christian teaching, of Christian ethics, and the requirements of political success. It is impossible, if I may put in in somewhat extreme and striking terms, to be a successful politician and a good Christian.

Morgenthau goes on,

> I would . . . maintain that it is particularly difficult to be a Christian in politics, because the aim of man in politics is to dominate another man, to use man as an instrument, as a means to his ends; and this is a direct denial of Judaeo-Christian ethics. The political act is in a specific, particularly acute sense incompatible with Christian ethics, in a sense in which the non-political act is free.[127]

Here we can see the commitments of Hobbes and Machiavelli carried forward. Traditional morality, Christian morality, cannot govern international affairs (or even politics in general). It cannot be expected to be followed, leaving us with a form of consequentialism, "the morality of the national interest." Generally, Morgenthau sought to describe international politics, indeed to develop a scientific theory of it, on the basis of states pursuing power. Religious actors were not influential on this pursuit; nor, largely, were religious ideas.

It might seem that Reinhold Niebuhr, the 20th century theologian whom Morgenthau called "the father of us all," might be an exception to realist thinking about religion. He was a theologian, after all. But his thought leaves little more room for religious influence on international affairs than that of other realists.

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[127] This and the above quote are cited in Ivan Strenski, *Why Politics Can't Be Freed From Religion* (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 126-127.

He also thought power was pervasive. He thought that the pursuit of moral goals beyond power would come to ruin ironically in a world of sin. He didn't think that moral norms could or should govern political behavior in any absolute sense; in effect, he counseled states to pursue the least sinful form of action, a morality similar to, if not identical to, consequentialism. In both his description and prescriptions for politics, he was little different from secular realists.

As any student of international relations knows, liberal theorists have thought and still think that international norms, liberal domestic regimes, and moral ideas can mitigate the effects of anarchy and the pursuit of power and allow a greater degree of peace and justice to prevail. But they have accorded religion little more role than have realists. The liberals of the Enlightenment did not think religious actors played an important role in politics and said little about them. As for the moral teachings of religion, these were now largely reduced to precepts of reason, norms that any human mind could discern through the exercise of rationality—"religion within the limits of reason alone," as Kant famously put it. They, too, reflected back on the religious wars and thought that traditional religion was irrational and divisive. As it was then, so it is in the present day.

Liberalism and realism are the dominant traditions of international relations theory today and each have a pedigree of centuries behind them. There are, of course, other traditions. For a while, Marxism was a prominent point of view but it needs no pointing out that it did not leave much room for the independent influence of religion. It might seem that constructivism, with its stress on ideas, identities, and culture, might make more room for religion.

Theoretically it does. But neither Alexander Wendt, the school's founding father, nor the seminal volume of essays, *The Culture of National Security*, gave play to religion.[128] Peter Katzenstein, the editor of this volume, however, has done much since to advance the study of religion in international relations theory and has done so broadly out of constructivist commitments. Jack Snyder's edited volume, *Religion and International Relations Theory*, contains a set of essays that seek to theorize religion and IR, though it is not centrally constructivist in its bent.[129] A small but vibrant and growing field of scholars in religion and international relations are seeking to overcome the limitations of secularist assumptions and to theorize religion in an era that is arguably one of "resurgence."

[128] Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Peter J. Katzenstein ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).
[129] Jack Snyder, ed., *Religion and International Relations Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

Religion and International Relations: Normative Issues

Timothy Samuel Shah

Religious beliefs and communities have contributed to normativity in international relations in numerous ways. By normativity I mean the totality of norms—moral, legal, and cultural—that shape the international system, the relations between states, and the identities and policies of actors within the international system. This set of norms shapes international relations by influencing the framework of the international system and the actual conduct of states as well as the prior and arguably more important dynamic of how actors perceive the international system and their own identities, aspirations, goals, policies, and overall place within the international system.

Normativity in international relations, like normativity in general, shapes conduct by pointing to ideas, principles, norms, and aspirations that "command, oblige, recommend, or guide."[130] Of course, the commands and obligations of normativity can be refused, disobeyed, or evaded, just as in every domain of human affairs. But they can shape human conduct—sometimes in profound ways—even when they are not being followed. States that conspicuously violate normative principles make extraordinary efforts to persuade themselves and others that their conduct is justifiable nonetheless. The very emergence and existence of the elaborate theory of "realism" in international relations—which is in many ways itself a normative theory—testifies to the power of normativity in the theory and practice of international relations. Precisely to the extent that

[130] Christine M. Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 8.

international statecraft departs from the standards of traditional morality or ethics, its practitioners and theorists are keen to provide an elaborate account of why such departures in fact represent a higher practical wisdom or morality, which is precisely what "realism" claims to define. In other words, "realism" generates its own stringent and hortatory norms and obligations—*raison d'état*, necessity, rationality—for states either to follow or to flout.

How, then, has religion contributed to some of the norms and principles that have significantly shaped international politics?

First, religion has historically contributed to the definition and construction of the official and quasi-official moral and legal norms that help to define the international system. In other words, religion has helped to define some of the constitutive rules of the game in terms of its basic parameters, players, and codes of conduct. There are many examples of such historical contributions. Grasping them is important not just as a historical exercise but as a way to understand better the particular character of the norms that shape modern international relations as well as the nature of the modern international system itself.

One example is probably the most foundational feature of the modern global political order: the Westphalian system of sovereign states. Importantly, this system is constituted by norms. One of the Westphalian system's constitutive norms is that one and only one political authority—the "state"—should exercise sovereignty over a given territory. A corollary to this norm is that no authority above or outside any particular state can violate or otherwise interfere with the sovereignty it exercises over its own territorial jurisdiction.

How did these norms come into being? There is little question that religion is an indispensable part of the story. The notion that the individual sovereign state is and should be the primary unit in the international system was importantly assisted by Protestantism, as Daniel Philpott has powerfully argued.[131] In the realm of ideas, the Reformation proposed a conception of the church as local and spiritual, in place of the medieval Catholic conception of the church as a universal body or *corpus Christianum* with distinct authority structures and competing, transterritorial jurisdictional claims. In the realm of political practice and social consequence, the Reformation removed large swaths of northern Europe from the effective authority of the Roman Catholic Church. Furthermore, it prompted the Catholic Church to forge closer alliances with state authorities in Spain, France, and southern Europe in order to defend itself against Protestant advances. The result, across the board, was to establish the state as the normatively central actor on the European stage.

It is important to underscore that this valorization of the state as the central locus of external sovereignty or the political community's relations with political authorities beyond its borders went along with an increasingly aggressive insistence on the state as the pinnacle of internal sovereignty. Here, too, Protestantism played a crucial role, justifying an "Erastian" subordination of religious institutions to political institutions within political communities throughout Europe. Protestant political theologies sharply condemned the notion that spiritual authorities should exercise any temporal power or

[131] See his *Revolutions in Sovereignty: How Ideas Shaped Modern International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

jurisdiction, which meant that, from a normative point of view, the notion of shared or overlapping authority or sovereignty between religious and political institutions conceived as roughly coequal became increasingly unacceptable. In lands strongly influenced by such theologies, the upshot was that states became the only important and legitimate political actors—the only actors with a "legitimate monopoly on the use of violence," as Max Weber would later canonically define the state.

A further example is that religion played an important role in constituting the non-legal though nonetheless powerful norm that the main players in the international system should be not just states but *nation-states*. As Linda Colley and Anthony Marx have noted, forms of nationalism crucially inspired and shaped by religion increasingly gave the peoples of Europe a new and distinctive source of collective identity. Increasingly, the locus of religious faith was less a universal church than a territorially and linguistically bounded national community, a shift nicely evoked by the title of Anthony Marx's monograph on the subject, *Faith in Nation*.[132] Rather than promote a faith that transcends the nation, religious leaders and religious traditions in France, Britain, and the United Provinces, for example, increasingly mobilized faith to buttress and indeed sacralize the nation—particularly in its conflicts with nations that could be defined as religiously "other." So Protestantism was increasingly mobilized to buttress Britain against Catholic Spain, France, and Ireland; Catholicism was

[132] Anthony W. Marx, *Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). On religion's crucial role in the formation of European nationalism, see also Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) and Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion, and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

increasingly mobilized to buttress France against Protestant Britain and Spain against both Protestant Britain and the rebellious United Provinces; and Protestantism was increasingly mobilized to buttress the United Provinces against Catholic Spain. Religion was an essential ingredient in a strong national identity and a determined resolve to oppose and defeat the enemies of one's nation. This faith-based nationalism (which implied a "religion within the limits of nationalism alone") powerfully began to shape political discourse and action in the West in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and became more important in the eighteenth century, particularly after the French Revolution deepened national consciousness and self-determination across Europe, further contributing to a four-fold fusion of state, faith, people, and land.[133]

Religion, then, performed a crucial role in constituting the new norm that nations governed by states are and ought to be the main players in global politics. One might say that religion helped make it *normal* — in both a descriptive and normative sense — to speak of world politics precisely as *international* politics.

A third example is the contribution of religion to defining the norms and codes of conduct governing conflict and warfare between the political units in the international system. These norms are embodied, for example, in the international law of war. Substantively, they include the normative presumption that military action by one state against another is unjustified except in cases of reasonable self-defense, as specified in the United Nations Charter. Here, too, the contribution of religion has been crucial. In the form in which it has

[133] The corollary to the rise of the norm of the "faith-based nation" was that religion should not be a source of identity that in any way competes with or undermines the nation.

developed down to the present day, the body of norms governing interstate conflict is inconceivable apart from the historical contributions of the "Just War Tradition," as developed and refined by thinkers such as Saint Ambrose of Milan, Saint Augustine, Saint Thomas Aquinas, Francisco de Vitoria, Hugo Grotius, and Paul Ramsey.[134] As Oliver O'Donovan has reminded us, this "longstanding tradition of thinking about war" undoubtedly has "deep roots in Christian theology."[135]

The Christian-inspired "Just War Tradition" has shaped modern norms governing interstate conflict in numerous particular ways. Francis Lieber's famous General Orders No. 100, which formed the basis of the modern law of warfare, is grounded in what one scholar has called "Christian realism"—a "religious ethic" that "included a rejection of pacifism that recalls Augustinian-Thomist ideas and anticipates the thinking of such modern 'realist' theologians as Reinhold Niebuhr." In Lieber's code, drafted in 1863 for use in the American Civil War, "principles of good faith and fairness rely on a theologically inspired concept of the humanity [of] belligerents."[136] Furthermore, in the twentieth century, Christian just war thinking contributed to a recovery of the principle of

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[134] Though this body of thought is often termed "just war theory," it actually contains a rich, complex, and sometimes mutually contradictory set of theories and principles. It is therefore better to speak of the "Just War Tradition," as suggested by James T. Johnson, *Just War Tradition and the Restraint of War: A Moral and Historical Inquiry* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1981), Oliver O'Donovan, *The Just War Revisited* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. vii, and Christopher Eberle, "God and War: Some Exploratory Questions" (April 22, 2011), available at SSRN: http://ssrn.com/abstract=1819722 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1819722.

[135] Oliver O'Donovan, *The Just War Revisited*, p. vii.

[136] In Lieber's formulation in the General Orders, "Men who take up arms against one another in public war do not cease on this account to be moral beings, responsible to one another and to God" [para. 15]. For this quotation and for the account of Lieber on which I rely here, see James A.R. Nafziger, "The Functions of Religion in the International System," in Mark W. Janis and Carolyn Evans, eds., *Religion and International Law* (The Hague; Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1999), p. 166.

discrimination between civilian populations and combatants, or "non-combatant immunity." In the post-World War II public debate over nuclear weapons, there was a widespread appeal to just-war condemnation of indiscriminate attack. Oliver O'Donovan comments that

> [i]n this debate Christians played a decisive role; for the revival of interest in classic just-war categories, fuelled precisely by their relevance to strategic warfare, had begun in Roman Catholic circles in the 1920s, and by the 1960s was becoming common coin among Western Christians. It had a notable last-minute influence upon the Second Vatican Council, where a late revision to the text of *Gaudium et Spes* condemned in very solemn terms 'the indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their inhabitants.'[137]

The injection of these norms into public debate had some impact. For example, the 1983 pastoral letter of the US Catholic Bishops on nuclear weapons, "The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response," succeeded in eliciting from the Reagan Administration some clarification about the nuclear targeting of Soviet installations.[138] Furthermore, these faith-inspired norms fostered a growing consensus that any actual use of the nuclear deterrent (as opposed to its possession) would be immoral, leading some, such as President Reagan himself, to engage in an urgent search for alternatives to the nuclear deterrent in the form of missile defense, a nuclear freeze, or nuclear disarmament.[139]

In the last century in particular, religion also played a crucial role in widening the normative vision of the major players in international politics to include a robust recognition of the rights, needs, and dignity of individual human

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[137] O'Donovan, *Just War Revisited*, p. 34.
[138] Ibid.
[139] On Reagan's views concerning the immorality of nuclear weapons, see John Finnis, Joseph M. Boyle, and Germain G. Grisez, *Nuclear Deterrence, Morality, and Realism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

beings. One way to describe this faith-inspired normative shift is that religious traditions such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Hinduism have contributed in different ways to what could be called a norm of global humanitarianism. According to the norms of humanitarianism, every human being on the face of the earth is equally entitled to a certain set of basic immunities, protections, and goods, including rights not to be tortured, not to die of starvation, rights of freedom of expression and conscience, including religious freedom, and the rights even of prisoners of war not to be subject to "inhumane" treatment. On this general subject Michael Barnett has recently written a historically rich and conceptually illuminating book, *Empire of Humanity*, which emphasizes not only the constitutive role of religious traditions and ideas in the development of global humanitarianism but also the respects in which even apparently "secular" constructions of humanitarianism betray religious features, such as the investment of human beings with a transcendent and ineffaceable dignity as well as a strong missionary and proselytizing impulse. "Religious beliefs," Barnett writes, "were critical to the origins of humanitarianism and continue to influence its unfolding."[140]

There are innumerable instances of religious contributions to the emergence of global humanitarian norms. The evangelical Protestant revivalism of the First Great Awakening on both sides of the Atlantic (ca. 1730-ca. 1750) and the Second Great Awakening in the United States (ca. 1790-1830) spurred a variety of unprecedented social reform efforts, including an international

[140] Michael N. Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 2011), p. 20.

movement against slaveholding and slave-trading.[141] The faith-inspired antislavery movement was an extraordinary milestone in the development of humanitarianism, for, as Adam Hochschild observes "[i]t was the first time a large number of people became outraged, and stayed outraged for many years, over someone *else's* rights."[142] A few decades later, in 1859, after witnessing a battle between French and Austro-Hungarian troops in Italy, evangelical Calvinist Henry Dunant began an international campaign to care for the victims of war that eventually led to the creation of the International Committee for the Red Cross and the Red Cross Movement.[143] In the early decades of the twentieth century, drawing on an eclectic mix of religious ideas that included radical Jain pacifism, Hindu renunciation of desire, and a Tolstoyan reading of the Sermon on the Mount, Mohandas K. Gandhi devised the notion that even one's political enemies should be accorded dignity and respect and that opposition to injustice therefore must take the form of nonviolent resistance.[144] And in the mid-twentieth century, before the end of World War II, a movement of ecumenical Protestants active in the World Council of Churches and the American Federal Council of Churches (now the National Council of Churches) lobbied intensely and effectively for an international body and an international charter dedicated to promoting global peace and human rights. As John Foster Dulles observed, "It

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[141] See Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), originally published in 1957, and Michael P. Young, *Bearing Witness against Sin: The Evangelical Birth of the American Social Movement* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).
[142] Adam Hochschild, *Bury the Chains: Prophets and Rebels in the Fight to Free an Empire's Slaves* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005), p. 5, quoted in Barnett, Empire of Humanity, p. 57.
[143] Barnett's laconic conclusion is that "Christianity contributed to the emergence and perseverance of the ICRC and the Red Cross Movement," in *Empire of Humanity*, p. 79.
[144] Bhikhu C. Parekh, *Gandhi's Political Philosophy* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989).

was the Christian churches in America that in 1941 took the initiative in demanding that, after this war, there should be a world organization in which the United States would participate."[145] And a diverse group of religious leaders and thinkers made indispensable contributions to the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1948.[146]

It is crucial not to overlook the radicalism of such notions, and their constitutive and inextricable relationship to religious ideas, traditions, and communities. It is not plausible that these global norms of humanitarianism arose "naturally" or simply as a matter of course, independently of religious ideas and traditions. Would Thucydides have ever imagined how the competition between one polis and another could have escaped the famous normative fatalism of the Melian dialogue: "[T]he strong do what they will, while the weak suffer what they must"? Yet faith-inspired humanitarianism claims to break out of precisely this normative fatalism or amoralism, and with important historical consequences. Of course, one should not exaggerate the influence of faith-inspired humanitarian norms. Yet apart from the historically novel advent of a humanitarian ethic, beginning in the eighteenth century and gaining steam and global influence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, an array of important international institutions and developments—such as the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and

[145] John Nurser, *For All Peoples and All Nations: The Ecumenical Church and Human Rights* (Washington, D.C: Georgetown University Press, 2005), p. 58.
[146] Mary Ann Glendon, *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (New York: Random House, 2001).

Political Rights, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Court of Justice, the postwar foreign aid regime, and numerous others—would be inconceivable in their present form. Moreover, a state that wantonly disregards such norms is likely to suffer important political and diplomatic costs, including international isolation, a decline of influence and "soft power," and, potentially, sanctions that can concretely undermine their "hard power." Religiously inspired norms that Thucydides could never have imagined, in other words, importantly shape international relations today.

In addition, it may be argued that religion helped to generate dynamics and problems that led to what could be called "normative turning points" in the history of international relations. Such turning points are events that are widely interpreted as requiring a major revision in prevailing global-political norms, or perhaps new norms altogether. One such normative turning point was prompted by the series of conflicts and wars, both internal and transboundary, which afflicted Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Many of these wars and conflicts had a religious dimension. While there are some features of the history of the so-called "Religious Wars" of early modern Europe that deserve revisionist critique, religion and religious conflict were widely and to some extent rightly perceived to play an important role in many early modern political conflicts.[147] And entirely apart from the role religion actually played, the fact that

[147] Christopher Eberle observes that one of the major arguments in Peter H. Wilson, *The Thirty Years War: Europe's Tragedy* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), is that the Thirty Years War was *not* primarily a religious war. While there may be good evidence for that conclusion, there were numerous other major conflicts in this period—the French wars of religion, the so-called "Eighty Years War" between the Dutch and Spain (1568-1648), and the English Civil War—that had an undeniably religious dimension.

religion was widely perceived to play an important role helped to shape and justify the normative turning point of Westphalia, which over the long-run delegitimized confessional wars and weakened the power of the Roman Catholic Church on the European stage. Rightly or wrongly, a major point of departure for *On the Laws of War and Peace* (1625, 1646)—the treatise by Hugo Grotius that helped to lay the normative foundations of the Peace of Westphalia—was the view (or rather the horror) that many of Europe's conflicts from the late sixteenth century and up through the first half of the seventeenth century were a result of religious fanaticism in both Calvinist and Catholic forms. For this reason, Grotius devotes considerable attention in his treatise to arguing that religious wars can be justified only under the narrowest of conditions.[148] This normative turning point would not have occurred in this way except against the background of the "Religious Wars," particularly as they were interpreted by thinkers and statesmen such as Grotius. One can also argue that the "Religious Wars" were a crucible for two other crucial normative turning points in the history of international politics. First, they helped to justify and accelerate the increasingly aggressive "Erastian" subordination of religious institutions to political institutions throughout Europe, a trend discussed above. Second, the "Religious Wars" also encouraged the eventual conversion of Europeans to the new religion of nationalism, in which politically defined nation-states often became a higher

[148] Hugo Grotius, *De Iure Belli Ac Pacis Libri Tres (on the Law of War and Peace, Three Books)*. The Classics of International Law. ed. Scott, James Brown (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1925). The only religious *casus belli* Grotius considered justified was what one might call an outrageous "crime against divinity" (my phrase, not his)—an unlikely eventuality in which an entire people deliberately and wantonly abandons devotion to its God or gods. What Grotius considered relatively insignificant theological differences, on the other hand, could never count as a just cause of war. See Grotius, *The Laws of War and Peace*, Book II, Chapter 20.

object of identity and loyalty than faith or church, also as discussed above. In short, it is hard to imagine the nation-state arising in the way it did without the crucible of the "Religious Wars."

The subsequent historical development of the nation-state arguably has further religious dimensions and trajectories, and these religious developments in turn led to a third normative turning point that is crucial in the history of international relations. One can argue that once nations became the highest object of allegiance for more and more people—almost the only thing for which most people would kill and die—nationalisms looked more and more like political cults or political religions.[149] And as nationalisms assumed more and more of the features of what we normally think of as religion, often promising an "immanentized eschaton," they became more extreme and expansive in their ambitions.[150] This widespread "religionization" of nationalism played an important role in the ascendancy and spread of Fascism in the twentieth century. The horrors unleashed by Nazism and other increasingly aggressive political religions, particularly the murder of six million Jews and others in the Holocaust, accelerated another major normative turning point, which is noted above—the shift towards a more robust global humanitarianism, specifically including the creation of the United Nations system and increasingly formal attempts to

[149] On the religion of modern nationalism, see the brilliant study by William T. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), and see also Michael Burleigh, *Earthly Powers: The Clash of Religion and Politics in Europe from the French Revolution to the Great War* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2005) and Michael Burleigh, *Sacred Causes: The Clash of Religion and Politics, from the Great War to the War on Terror* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007).
[150] The phrase "immanentized eschaton" was the way Eric Voegelin captured and critiqued the destructive utopianism of modern political religion in *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952).

establish an international regime of human rights standards and mechanisms of enforcement.

Finally, religiously inspired normativity is one of the factors that necessarily structures the perceptual frameworks of actors in the international system, including how they perceive themselves as well as other actors, the system as a whole, and their place in the system. Twenty years ago, the late David Lumsdaine eloquently argued in *Moral Vision in International Politics* that

> the facts of power are not plain and clear and do not lend themselves to objective perceptions of self-interest. Deciding how to serve even selfish interests depends upon one's general outlook on international politics and requires judgments about what to think, trust in, and value. The great difficulties of rationality are not those of calculating what to do in a known world, or even of assessing probabilities among known alternatives. The real difficulties are those of understanding what the main features of the world are like.

Lumsdaine continues:

> Any rationality with which states conduct themselves is not (as Waltz seems to imply) some inexorable realpolitik wisdom dictated by the international system (mysterious, invisible, yet more real than the things that are seen). Leaders are not demigods unswayed by human passions, philosophies, political interests, or moral concerns (as Morgenthau suggests). The rationality relevant to international politics is no mere matter of calculating payoffs from alternative futures with ascertainable probabilities and valuations. It is just this imaginative, imperfect, ideologically charged, outlook-dependent understanding that actual scholars, politicians, and publics have to use. So national self-interests emerge from a social process of choice and self-definition whose character and objectives are influenced by people's basic values and views of life.[151]

If the "rationality," perceptual "framework," and "self-interest" of any given actor in the international system is not perspicuous or automatic but dependent at

[151] David H. Lumsdaine, *Moral Vision in International Politics: The Foreign Aid Regime, 1945-1989* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 20-21.

least partly on "philosophies" and "basic values," it is clear that religion can be one important factor in determining the "philosophies" and "basic values" of politicians and publics around the world as they define their own identity and place in the international system and as they define and engage other actors in the system. As John Owen has recently argued in a magisterial study, ideological frameworks that are frequently informed by religion are central to both how leaders understand threats to their interests and how they seek to respond to them, across history and down to the present day.[152]

Consider the United States. American politicians and publics routinely express the view that America plays a special role in the international system because of an undeniably religious belief that the arc of history favors the progress of freedom and modernity, and America is somehow at the vanguard of this linear progress. American policymakers have therefore consistently believed that with a bit of prodding and pacification and development and nation-building here and there, peoples around the world who are longing for freedom—indeed, whose historical destiny is to be "free"—can in fact be liberated through the judicious (and sometimes overwhelming) application of American power. It is America's special mission, furthermore, to help to make such peoples free, by one means or another.[153]

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[152] John M. Owen, *The Clash of Ideas in World Politics: Transnational Networks, States, and Regime Change, 1510-2010* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2010).
[153] These themes are explored in several recent works by Andrew J. Bacevich, including *The New American Militarism: How Americans Are Seduced by War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) and *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2008).

In a highly uncertain world, where it is exceedingly difficult to define where America's true "self-interest" really lies, this inarguably religious optic plays an incalculable role in shaping the international outlook and conduct of the world's greatest of great powers, as Andrew Preston's recent study, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy*, demonstrates in exhaustive historical detail.[154] Indeed, according to Preston's study, religion has been one of America's most powerful sources of ideas about the wider world—and about itself. And many of the ways America perceives itself and the wider world—from John Cotton's "City upon a hill" onward—are a tight and indissoluble weave of normative *and* faith-inspired beliefs, reflecting religiously charged visions, dreams, and aspirations.

[154] Andrew Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012).

International Political Theology

Ernesto Verdeja

Political theology is a heavily debated concept, applied in a variety of ways depending on context and purpose. The term has Christian roots and is discussed as early as St. Augustine's *The City of God*, where he examines earlier works that separate theologies into political, mythical and cosmological categories, each concerning a different kind of actor and set of practices.[155] Augustine sought to reformulate these categorizations by drawing a distinction between human and heavenly worlds to explain the struggle between good and evil as well as the proper relation between "Man" and God. The term appears in the following centuries in scholastic and medieval works that analyze the place of religious (namely Christian) concepts in law and political authority, and receives extended treatment in Baruch Spinoza's seminal text, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670).[156] Modern thinkers such as G.W.F. Hegel have been described as promoting distinct political theologies, while other thinkers have sought to sever all ties between politics and theology and place each firmly in its own domain.

Political theology remains a highly contested and internally heterogeneous term, open to continued debate and reformulation. Nevertheless, we can identify some of its basic features. Theology broadly concerns the study of God and how humans relate to God and the sacred. Politics refers to the arrangement,

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[155] St. Augustine *The City of God*, trans. Marcus Dodds (New York: The Modern Library, 1994), sections 4.27, 31.
[156] Ernest H. Kantorowicz *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957); Baruch Spinoza *Theological Political Treatise*, trans. Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

distribution and competition over resources, public power and authority, or memorably put, "who gets what, when and how."[157] Of course, politics is not simply about arrangements over power and public goods, but also concerns the normative principles, institutions and practices that define and enable a just social order, however conceived. For a Thomist, for example, politics may refer to the role of authority in relation to the common good, understood through natural law.

In its most basic formulations, then, political theology may concern the analysis of politics through the use of theological concepts and interpretive methods; the analysis of religious actors, institutions, interests, beliefs, norms, values and practices involved in politics; or some combination of the two.[158] Below, I sketch various formulations of political theology and then move on to a brief discussion of Carl Schmitt's conception of political theology, which identifies a number of the key ontological issues surrounding state authority and practice in a nominally secular world.

Hent de Vries provocatively argues that the relation between politics and theology remains unsettled, with contending accounts of whether it is a relationship of conjunction, distinction or subordination, which in turn has

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[157] Harold Laswell *Politics: Who Gets What, When, and How* (New York: Peter Smith Publishers, 1990).

[158] The literature in political theology covers a wide terrain, ranging anywhere from theological exegeses of the political dimensions in canonical religious texts, to the concrete ways in which religious concepts, institutions and actors impact politics. Three useful texts covering the field are William T. Cavanaugh, Jeffrey W. Bailey and Craig Hovey, eds. *An Eerdmans Reader in Contemporary Political Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012); Peter Scott and William T. Cavanaugh, eds. *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007); and Hent de Vries and Lawrence E. Sullivan, eds. *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008).

profound consequences for the study (and practice) of politics. De Vries cites Jacqueline Lagrée's work to identify a variety of possible relations between politics and theology. Lagrée argues that the relation may be formulated in five different ways: as one of conjunction between the political and theological; a strict separation of the two; a subordination of the political to the theological; a subordination of the theological to the political; or, interdependence of the two.[159]

These five formulations offer some insight into the complexities of "political theologies" and the variety of ways in which they can be conceived. The first sees politics and theology as largely autonomous and separate from one another but become conjoined through their mutual submission to some "higher" analytical category, such as rational philosophy. This has deep roots in Platonic rationalist thought and was later resurrected, with significant differences, in Hegel's philosophy of history, but it is no is no longer a dominant view of political theology.

In an alternative formulation, politics remains a separate, secular domain with its own internal logic and autonomy, but there is no master philosophical framework that incorporates both politics and theology.[160] Here, a political theology can at best explain how religious beliefs are connected to issues of pressing public concern while accepting the distinction between the two domains. In a strongly liberal version of this formulation, theological claims must be "translated" into claims justified on rational terms that are accessible to all

[159] Jacqueline Lagrée cited in Hent de Vries, "Introduction", in de Vries and Sullivan, eds. *Political Theologies,* 26.
[160] See, for instance, Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1996).

members of the community; political claims cannot be justified, for example, solely on revelation or religious belief. This is the core of John Rawls's defense of the modern, normatively "neutral" state. So-called "comprehensive" doctrines (the broad ethical frameworks that may be grounded in religious belief) cannot serve as the basis of statecraft and policy in a world of normative pluralism. Jürgen Habermas goes further and claims that modern constitutional law, human rights and sovereignty do not require religious or metaphysical grounding; rather, they rest on their own rationally evident and defensible justifications. For both Rawls and Habermas, theology cannot be permitted to "colonize" the secular domain of politics, for it would rapidly destroy the foundations of tolerance and rights that form the core of modern liberal democratic societies. In recent years, Habermas has softened his stance on the role of religion in politics and come to acknowledge that religious traditions can provide a kind of socialization into desirable political virtues necessary to sustain liberal democratic societies.[161] Even in this reading, however, the liberal distinction between politics and religion is sustained: Politics remains its own autonomous domain, and the value of religion (and thus political theologies) is largely instrumental.

A more activist account of religion in politics is found in the "political theology" movement in 1960s Germany, which sought to resist the quietist post-war Christianity that had turned its back on public issues. For theologians such as

[161] See the debate between Jürgen Habermas and Pope Benedict XVI. Jürgen Habermas, "On the Relations Between the Secular Liberal State and Religion" and Pope Benedict XVI, "Prepolitical Moral Foundations of a Free Republic", both in Hent de Vries and Lawrence E. Sullivan, eds. *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008).

Johann Baptist Metz, Jürgen Moltmann and Dorothee Söllee, a publicly engaged theology was necessary to confront the legacy of the Holocaust and imminent evils like nuclear war and environmental collapse.[162] Latin American liberation theology sought even more radical political change through a combination of Catholic social thought and Marxism (and Hegelianism), explicitly employing theological conceptions of justice to indict widespread poverty, inequality and racism.[163] In neither case, however, was politics to be subsumed into theology; rather, theological concepts and teachings were used to reintroduce fundamental moral values into public discourse with the aim of challenging unjust or dangerous political arrangements.[164]

In certain formulations, of course, the very division between theology and politics is rejected, as the distinction itself is seen as an arbitrary imposition with specific historical roots. In this reading the modern nation state essentially created and then sidelined religion as a separate sphere of human activity, and in the process monopolized political authority (a point raised elsewhere in this report).[165] A political theology may then be concerned less with "translating" religious values and lessons into politically acceptable (that is, liberal) terms, and more with interrogating the distinction between politics and religion and the

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[162] Johann B. Metz, *The Emergent Church* (London: SCM, 1981); Jurgen Moltmann *God for a Secular Society* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Books, 1999); Dorothee Söllee *Beyond Mere Obedience: Reflections on a Christian Ethic for the Future* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing, 1970).
[163] For instance, see Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1971); and Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000).
[164] See Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Shah, *God's Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010), 17; Daniel Philpott, "Has the Study of Global Politics Found Religion?" *Annual Review of Politics* 12 (2009): 183-202.
[165] More generally, see Elizabeth S. Hurd *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

practical and normative consequences of this division. In more robust formulations, the goal may be to *subsume* politics into religion, as is the case with certain strands of Calvinism, Jewish theocratic thought, some versions of modern American evangelism, and so-called "political Islam." Alternatively, subsumption may work in the opposite direction: The aim may be to establish a political theology that explicitly harnesses theological tropes and their affective force for the purpose of securing secular political authority, typical of the anticlerical "civil religions" found in the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and other early modern thinkers.[166]

Within each formulation, the relation may be theorized as contingent or necessary, conflicting or harmonious. In some cases, politics and theology are seen as contingently linked, a product of specific historical and contextual factors as certain issues gain greater public attention and religious and secular political groups form and mobilize, sometimes in alliance and at other times in opposition to one another. In other cases, politics and theology are posited as constitutively interconnected. For instance, Carl Schmitt seeks to show how the modern state incorporates a set of hidden theological assumptions and concepts. For Schmitt,

> All significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts, not only because of their historical development—in which they were transferred from theology to the theory of the state, whereby, for example, the omnipotent God became the omnipotent law-giver—but also because of their systematic structure, the recognition of which is necessary for a sociological consideration of these concepts.[167]

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[166] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings*, ed. and trans. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Eric Voeglin *The Political Religions* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1986); Emilio Gentile *Politics as Religion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).).

[167] Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 36.

Schmitt's discussion is particularly relevant to the study of modern politics and statecraft. Expanding on the claims of Thomas Hobbes and other early modern thinkers, Schmitt sees the modern state as resting on secularized forms of religious sovereignty and legitimacy. Whereas in premodern times leaders relied on religious law and authority to exercise worldly political power, the modern state is based on a secularized law that is largely self-grounded—that is, not dependent on external sources of validity like religious natural law or God, but rather on its own claims to comprehensive rational justification rooted in Enlightenment principles. Within this framework of positivist law modern elites seek to "depoliticize" issues of public concern by transforming religious (and later "political ideological") conflicts into questions of technical administration through the application of transparent and rational norms, rules and procedures. For Schmitt, this effort at rationalizing legitimacy (and the law more generally) is most clearly found in the works of Hans Kelsen and John Stuart Mill, who sought to create legal systems bereft of religious anchoring that could generate normative validity through appeals to their own self-evident rational content.

Like many other analyses of political theology, there is also a distinctly normative dimension to Schmitt's account. According to him, the weakening of religious foundations has left political authority on shakey ground. Modern political orders face a fundamental crisis because they are incapable of addressing the most difficult question confronting them, namely, the problem of authority: "no political system can survive even a generation with only the naked techniques of holding power. To the political belongs the idea, because there is no

politics without authority and no authority without an ethos of belief."[168] By bracketing the profound normative (i.e., religious) requirements of authority and focusing instead on technical questions such as economic growth and population management, modern states, regardless of express political ideology (liberal, socialist, fascist), are unable to generate political legitimacy.[169]

No legal system can address all possible political contingencies, and thus a sovereign actor is needed—for Schmitt, this is the agent who can make an authoritative and binding decision in times of "exception," that is, when the legal system is incapable of resolving political crises. The messianic overtones to his conception of the sovereign are not merely coincidental, and instead reflect the fundamentally theological basis of political authority. One need not adopt Schmitt's problematic political views (he was for some time a Nazi) to recognize how political authority needs firm grounding, the challenges it faces when earlier foundations have eroded or disappeared, or the ways in which political crises can severely challenge a political order.

This brief discussion of political theology highlights the variety of ways in which it may be theorized and used for political mobilization and analysis. The multitude of understandings reflects something of the ongoing debates about the proper relation between politics and religion in modern life, debates which are unlikely to disappear anytime soon.

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[168] Carl Schmitt, *Roman Catholicism and Political Form* (Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 1996), 17; Kam Shapiro, *Sovereign Nations, Carnal States* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 2003).
[169] Schmitt, *Roman Catholicism*, 13.

Religion and Nationalism: What is the Link?

Atalia Omer

Within the theoretical study of nationalism one can locate a few notable and often overlapping contexts for studying the interfaces between religion and nationalism. The nationalism literature is usually preoccupied with the role of religion in the emergence of premodern and modern national movements. This scholarly thread encompasses "modernist," "ethno-symbolist," and "primordialist" approaches, as they are conventionally dubbed within the parlors of nationalism studies. These approaches play out similarly in the religion and conflict literature, which frames the so-called "resurgence" of religion as critique and/or reaction to the presumptions and failed practices of secular ideologies. The nationalism literature also intersects with the core paradigms in international relations (realism, liberalism, and constructivism) on a variety of fronts, and especially in negotiating the relative worth of materialist versus idealist explanatory frames. In what follows, I explicate how religion interfaces with these distinct yet overlapping approaches, locating them in the broader discourses of modernism and secularism and their various debunkers.

The Modernist Paradigm

Benedict Anderson's oft-cited *Imagined Communities* typifies a modernist account of the emergence of nationalism and the nation-state unit.[170] Anderson responds to another modernist theorist, Ernest Gellner, who offers a materialist

[170] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verson, 1983). Anderson's chronology of nationalism echoes earlier discussions of nationalism. See, for field-making examples, Hans Kohn, *The Age of Nationalism* (New York: Harper, 1962); and Carleton Hayes, *The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism* (New York: Richard Smith, 1931).

critique of primordialist (but not less modernist) or romantic (folkist) Hegelian articulations of the nation as an awakened "sleeping beauty."[171] Gellner's rejection of the primordialist paradigm is reductionist (and instrumentalist) in claiming that nationalism was invented *ex nihilo* simply as an elitist mechanism to consolidate control through the standardization of culture. Such material reductionism as typified in Gellner's work is also consistent with certain forms of unreconstructed realism that render religion (and nationalism for that matter) as a form of "false consciousness," an elitist fabrication.[172] By contrast, Anderson's constructivist-modernist approach suggests that nationalism was imagined out of antecedent cultural and religious building blocks and that this imagining of radically novel social formations entailed shifting from vertical (messianic) to horizontal (and empty) conceptions of time. While the modern nation, for Anderson, denotes a sociopolitical, and inevitable, paradigm shift, it functions similarly with regard to religion in that it promises the "transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning".[173] This construct becomes the focus of devotion and the potential altar upon which to commit ultimate sacrifices.

In Anderson's account, therefore, nationalism is a replacement for religion. But even in substituting for the social functionalism of religion,

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[171] See, for instance, Ernest Gellner , *Thought and Change* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1964).
[172] Jack Snyder correctly points out that at bottom such realist construal conveys a limited analysis of power. Snyder urges such realists to consider Max Weber's notion of legitimacy and legitimate (not in any absolutist sense) as much more complex than mere "naked power." For this critique, see Jack Snyder, "Introduction," in Jack Snyder, ed., *Religion and International Relations Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), especially p. 9.
[173] Anderson, *Imagined Communities,* 11.

nationalist mythology draws selectively on the reservoirs of religious and cultural resources that predate modernity.

The analysis of the nation as an imagined community with ambivalent and selective relations to antecedent religious and cultural resources and the nation as a replacement for religion, however, as critics highlight, did not sufficiently account for who did the imagining and why.[174] Unlike Gellner's and other materialist articulations of nationalism as an elitist invention predicated on a need to engineer new forms of domination over industrializing societies, Anderson, as does Anthony Marx, recognizes a more complex and lingering interlacing of traditional religions upon nationalism. And yet, nationalism functionally is articulated as a replacement for religion, which partially situates Anderson (and other constructive or revisionist modernists) within the Durkheimian tradition, with its form of social reductionism that conceptualizes nationalism as modern totemism—a society worshiping itself. [175]

Working within a tradition of anthropocentric projectionist theorizing about religion, Durkheim's basic distinction between "sacred" and "profane" did not depend on metaphysical truths. And yet, the "sacred" was a real and authentic social fact (with causal properties), perpetuated and reproduced through processes of socialization.[176] Indeed, Durkheim's sociological reduction

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[174] For a specific critique of Anderson's thesis, see Partha Chatterjee, "Whose Imagined Community?" in Gopal Balakrishnan, eds., *Mapping the Nation* (London: Verso, 1996).
[175] For an interesting exemplification of Durkheim's application of his social reductionism to the French Revolution, see Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Joseph Ward Swain (New York: The Free Press, 1915), pp. 215-216.
[176] For a classical articulation of conceptually similar projectionist anthropocentric approach see Peter Berge, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of A Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Doubleday, 1967).

of religion echoes Anderson's observations that nationalism offers the promise of salvation and meaning through consecrating the communal identity. The sacredness of the religious communities and the dynastic realms was displaced and redirected toward the idea of the nation, understood as a cultural creation and artifact.[177]

Situating the constructive modernist account within the Durkhemian tradition illuminates the importance of connecting our discussion of the link between religion and nationalism to the sociological construct of civil religion, which, while hardly novel, in its contemporary manifestation is usually marked by methodological nationalism.[178] Whereas the nationalism literature is preoccupied with when, why, and what is nationalism and how religion functions instrumentally in nation-making processes, the sociological study of the mechanisms undergirding the reproduction of nationalism (i.e. "civil religion") has presupposed national boundaries as an empirical and settled given.[179] As a result, it only asks how the nation-qua-society is reproduced and how might traditional religions relate to the reproduction of what is concurrently the modern functional religion replacement.[180]

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[177] Anderson, *Imagined Communities,* 12-36.
[178] For an earlier articulation of this concept, see Jean-Jacques Rousseau *On The Social Contract* (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1978).
[179] Indeed, in his groundbreaking 1967 essay "Civil Religion in America," sociologist Robert N. Bellah argued that while civil religion is composed of commonplace mechanisms that aim to ensure the nation's continuous legitimacy, it is something much more like a variant of religion rather than something opposite or outside of, religion. See Robert N. Bellah, "Religion in America," *Daedalus* vol. 96, no. 1 (Winter 1967): 1-21.
[180] For a detailed exposition of the conceptual interrelations between the study of nationalism and civil religion, see Atalia Omer and Jason A. Springs, *Religious Nationalism: A Reference Handbook* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2013).

Recognizing the affinities between Anderson's view of nationalism and the concept of civil religion blurs the paradigmatic distinctions usually drawn between the modernist and ethno-symbolist accounts of nationalism. The ethno-symbolist framing of nationalism as a cult of authenticity points to the homogenizing impulse of modern nationalism, and this homogenization silences but does not imagine away alternative modes of interfacing between ethnicity, religion, culture, and nationality. In fact, the very notion of the "authentic" evokes competing and divergent interpretations.

But while redirecting or "migrating the holy" to the political construct of the nation may constitute an unapologetic idolatry[181], the nation is not a mere replacement of religion but, at times, is instrumental to the fulfillment of religious objectives. This is not only the case with messianic settlers in the Occupied Territories of Palestine, but similar motifs could be located also within the mythologies of Sinhala Buddhism, Hindutva, Hamas, and a host of other explicitly religious forms of nationalism.[182] None of these nationalisms, however, could be explained outside intersecting discursive formations, from colonialism to orientalism and to the very autochthonous logic of nationalism. Nor can they be reduced to these formations either. More on this shortly.

While the modernist and ethno-symbolist approaches are usually presented in contradistinction to one another, they both attribute special qualitative novelty to the manifestations of nationalist groupings in modern

[181] See William Cavanaugh, *Migrations of the Holy: God, State, and the Political Meaning of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011).
[182] See, for instance, David Little's exposition of the mythology of Sinhala Buddhism in Sri Lanka: "Religion and Ethnicity in the Sri Lankan Civil War," in Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *Creating Peace in Sri Lanka: Civil War & Reconciliation* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1999).

times, and in some instances already in the so-called "proto-nationalisms" of pre-modernity. Likewise, both approaches, albeit to varying degrees, concede to the instrumentalist value of religion in generating political passions and social cohesion.

Exposing the implicit theory of religion that dominates the social sciences calls for critical exchanges among theorists in the study of religion that reveal the epistemological constraints that render religion as functionally secularized in the political realm, and, at the same time, codified and essentialized as a set of dogmas and ideas in the so-called private realm.[183] The social scientific "conceptualization of modern religion, *as it is* and *as it ought to be*," as one discursive critic of the theopolitical underpinnings of the "secular" argues, "has a theological rather than a sociological foundation."[184] This mode of analyzing religion can easily default into an uncritical idealist attribution of causality to religion-qua-ideas.

Daniel H. Nexon, in his important intervention in the international relations and religion debate warns against a version of the false dichotomies inherent in conceptualizing the modernist and ethno-symbolist accounts of nationalism as antithetical to one another. In the international relations context, Nexon argues, the "discovery" of religion risks distilling the "religious" as constitutive of the realm of ideas, meanings, and beliefs and attributing to such

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[183] See See Slavic Jakelic, *Collectivistic Religions: Religion, Choice, and Identity in Late Modernity* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), ch 1. I likewise develop this idea in my engagement with and critique of theorist of religion Russel McCutcheon in Atalia Omer, "Can a Critic Be a Caretaker Too? Religion, Conflict, and Conflict Transformation," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* vol. 79, no. 2 (June 2011):, 459-496.
[184] Jakelic, 16.

things direct causality. This, Nexon argues, merely amounts to situating "religion" as the new focus of an old disciplinary struggle between materialist and idealist approaches.[185] Clearly, the discussion of the instrumentality of religion could betray idealist as well as materialist reductionism and thus deserves nuanced scrutiny. One key to negotiating among those forms of reductionisms is already found in the effective Weberian synthesis and critique of the various reductionisms, as carried through by comparative ethicist David Little and as articulated in a host of culturally embedded, nuanced, and, at times, historicist works on ethnoreligious nationalisms and in the genealogical critiques of the modernist cognitive bias inherent in the theorizing of nationalism and religion.[186]

Little's constructive prism for analyzing the interlinking and contestation of religion-qua-nationalism insightfully challenges the kind of teleology inherent in the modernist paradigm of nationalism. Weber's "elective affinities" indeed leads to the notion that "there is no resting place," or a fixed and hermeneutically sealed conception of nationalism. This insight provides a theoretical framework from which to analyze how various typologies of religion (priestly, prophetic) and nationalism (liberal, illiberal) intersect elastically to generate (never in a historical and global vacuum, of course) various competing modalities of national programs. These intersecting typologies, Little contends, carry predictive and correlative qualities in that the likelihood of direct forms of violence increases

[185] Daniel H. Nexon, "Religion and International Relations: No Leap of Faith Required," in Jack Snyder, ed., *Religion and International Relations Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), pp. 141-167.
[186] See, for example, Claire Mitchell, *Religion, Identity and Politics in Northern Ireland: Boundaries or Belonging and Belief* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006); Michael Sells, *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1998).

with illiberal definitions of nationality and when those definitions coalesce with exclusive and priestly types of religiosity.[187] Drawing on Weber's substantive engagements with religious traditions likewise opens up this elastic approach to the study of religion and nationalism to engage and interrogate the actual and internally plural content (not mere function) of religious traditions.[188] But this synthetic approach needs to be complemented by a discursive critique in order to broaden more fully the interpretive and reinterpretive links between religion and nationalism.[189] This point brings to light that one problem with conventional theorizing about religion and nationalism as a subset of the broader canonical paradigms in international relations is that its enduring reliance on the discourses of secularism, modernism, and orientalism likewise delimits the possibility of thinking about religion as a source of critique and discursive reframing.

Discursive Critique and Rethinking International Relations

Indeed, matrices designed to measure religion-state relations that bracket out the relevance of religion to the construction and reproduction of national boundaries contain delimiting conceptual blind spots.[190] Without a discursive

[187] This basic conceptual framework is effectively exemplified in Scott W. Hibbard, *Religious Politics and Secular States: Egypt, India, and the United States* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2010).
[188] The focus on the internal pluralism of religious traditions is likewise pivotal in the work of R. Scott Appleby on religion, conflict, and peacebuilding. See especially his field shaping *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (Lanham, MD.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000).
[189] I unpack and illustrate this point in great details in my *When Peace Is Not Enough: How the Israeli Peace Camp Thinks about Religion, Nationalism, and Justice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).
[190] This mode of relying on unproblematized methodological nationalisms (with their intricate relations to religion) is exemplified in Jonathan Fox, *A World Survey of Religion and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

critique, therefore, the analysis of religion would remain confined within the hegemonic hold of national historiographies. This can be detrimental not only in terms of the scholar's complicity with certain discourses that may end up falling on the wrong side of history but also in terms of occluding the predictive effectiveness of such scholarly undertaking.

By evoking the notion of discourse, I explicitly allude to Foucault's analysis of "truth" as ineradicably yet non-reductionistically linked to power and Antonio Gramci's conception of "cultural hegemony." Power, on this account, is constituted through accepted ways of knowing. While Foucault's analysis of power came under scrutiny for being too diffuse and thus supposedly stripping away the possibility of resistance and change, his view of truth as a function of hegemonic epistemic fields does not preclude the possibility of change and resistance—new epistemic "regimes of truths" might arise.[191]

Surely, international relations theorists are in the business of empirical descriptions rather than counter-hegemonic social critique and movement. In relation to my discussion of the link between religion and nationalism, therefore, the question to is how identifying heterogeneity, despite the homogenizing impulse of nationalism, could enable pushing the predictive and analytic limits of the discipline. It requires deconstructing an inclination to rely on methodological nationalism, the presumption that hermeneutically debated national boundaries

[191] For an account of creativity within the constraints of the Foucauldian frame, see Jason Springs, "'Dismantling the Master's House:' Freedom as Ethical Practice in Brandom and Foucault," *Journal of Religious Ethics* vol. 37, no.3 (September 2009): 419-448. See also Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Elizabeth Bucar, *Creative Conformity: The Feminist Politics of U.S. Catholic and Iranian Shi'i Women* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2011).

(a debate that indicates a particular working out of the interrelations among religion, culture, ethnicity, and nationality) are fixed, once codified and enshrined within geopolitical boundaries. This discursive blindness allows for the conceptual differentiation between religion-qua-faith and religion as it relates elastically to, and sometime constitutes, sociological, political, and cultural boundaries.

Of course, the mere framing of religion as faith, as cultural anthropologist Talal Asad effectively articulates, is Christo-centric and orientalist, and, as such, intimately connected to the projects of colonialism and empire. Hence, as Asad famously challenges sociologist José Casanova's retrieval of the possibility of public religion within the constraints of civil society, what is "public" is not a given but a space defined intricately and ineradicably by power.[192] Indeed, the possibility of the differentiation of the spheres, the supposedly descriptive subthesis of secularism that Casanova wishes to uphold, can only permit certain kinds of religions to go public, so to speak. "The introduction of new discourses," Asad explains, "may result in the disruption of established assumptions structuring debates in the public sphere." "More strongly," he continues, "they may *have* to disrupt existing assumptions to be heard."[193]

The Asadian line of critique points to the conceptual and discursive limits of the modernist paradigm of nationalism. It also illuminates the importance of historicizing the so-called resurgence of religion within the complexities of Christo-centrism, colonialism, orientalism, imperialism, and neoliberalism. In

[192] Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 184.
[193] Ibid, 185.

fact, much of the critique of modernist interpretations of religion is but a footnote to Asad's discursive and genealogical analysis of the secular and the religious and how they are constitutive of the discourse of modernity.[194] Echoing in some respects the modernist presuppositions inherent in secular nationalism and its constitutive liberal discourse and conceptions and mythologies of tolerance and religion, the scholarly focus on the so-called distinct phenomenon of religious nationalism often inclines one to posit religious nationalism as a program fundamentally subversive of the presuppositions underlying secular (or "good") nationalism. Proponents of such an agenda do not simply express their voices just for the sake of speaking, but also attempt to disrupt, in the Asadian sense, the very assumptions that constitute the public and the private spheres.

My discussion of Israel below suggests that oscillating between secular and religious forms of nationalism indicates that the differences between the two can be explained more as a matter of gradation than radical binaries. The messianic settlement movement that arose in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War of 1973 was enabled structurally and ideologically by a particular Zionist political theology (continuously reproduced through processes of socialization), even if the

[194] Elizabeth Shakman Hurd explicitly introduced the Asadin line in her discussion of the discursive limits of international relations theorizing and practice. See, Shakman Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008). In an example of integrating discursivity into the analysis of IR, Shakman-Hurd and anthropologist Saba Mahmood apply Asadian discursive tools in their critique of the deployment of the discourse of religious freedoms in the making of American foreign policy. Their study, titled "Politics of Religious Freedom: Contested Norms and Local Practices," (http://iiss.berkeley.edu/politics-of-religious-freedom/) engages the historicity and politics of religious freedoms and the kind of political actions this discourse has authorized. Clearly, this project relates directly to the critique of the secularism discourses. It constitutes but one arena (increasingly instrumentalized in the making of American foreign policy) where secularism, orientalism, and neoliberalism intersect in framing agenda and interests. Asad offers a further reflection on the politics of religious freedoms and liberties in his "Thinking about Religion, Belief, and Politics," in Robert A. Orsi, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 36-57.

majority of Israelis are "secular." At the same time, as I address in great detail in another work, framing secular nationalism as a form of political theology does not mean that it replicates the logic of Carl Schmidt's use of the same concept, but rather indicates the elasticity of discursive formations and the hermeneutical and contested character of nationalist mythologies.[195] I now turn to sketch further the working out of a discursive analysis in the case of Israel.

Without diminishing the authenticity of the existential threat hardwired into the Israeli and Jewish ethos, differentiating Judaism-qua-nationality/ethnicity/culture from Judaism-qua-faith has been implicated in forms of structural and cultural violence. The differentiation between the discussion of relations between religion and state and Israeli nationalism as it unfolds in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict methodologically (and ideologically) accepts the ethnocentric definition of Israeli nationalism. Questions of "freedom of religion and conscience," in other words, replicate secularist conceptions of religion-qua-faith which enables compartmentalizing the discussion of how religion relates to the construction of national boundaries.[196] This mode of compartmentalization blindsides and constrains the discussion of religion-qua-nationalism. It naturalizes the 1948 borders while positing the Occupied

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[195] Omer, *When Peace Is Not Enough*, especially chapters two and three.

[196] Israeli sociologist Yehouda Shenhav provides an especially penetrating account of how the construction of Zionism as Jewish nationalism depended on "purifying" or differentiating the categories of ethnicity and religion, while also inviting instrumental "hybrids." The example Shanhav is particularly focused on is that of the Arab-Jews whose "road" into Zionism ironically had to go through their Jewishness. It's their Jewishness that marks them still within the normative Euro-Zionist Orientalist underpinnings of Zionism rather than outside of this threshold inhabited by Palestinian-Israelis and non-Israeli Palestinians. See Yehouda Shenhav, *The Arab Jews: A Postcolonial Reading of Nationalism, Religion, and Ethnicity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006); See also Omer, *When Peace Is Not Enough*, especially chapter seven.

Territories of 1967 as the locus for the analysis of religion and nationalism and indeed of any discussion of justice (thereby distinguishing not only spatially but also normatively between the territories of 1948 and 1967).[197] In effect, however, secular and religious articulations of Zionism need to be analyzed along a spectrum and with attention to interlacing discursive formations and on a unitary normative landscape rather than one bifurcated by the Green Line.

Zionism was one of many other coeval incipient nineteenth century European nationalist movements. Zionism as a nationalist discourse, therefore, needs to be analyzed in this European context with its discursive underpinnings of anti-Semitism (Zionism is a solution to the "Jewish problem"), colonialism (lobbying for land distribution by colonial administrators did not seem odd or unethical to Theodore Herzl, the "father of political Zionism," and subsequent Zionist leaders), and orientalism (Zionism as a political movement and later as enshrined in the cultural, political, and socioeconomic practices of the Israeli state has been steeped in orientalist images of the indigenous Palestinians as well as of Mizrahim, the "Arab-Jews"). Zionism, like other modern nationalisms, also involved cultural homogenizing, a process that, in the case of imagining a Zionist historiography, secularized and ethnicized Jewish identity, while deeply depending on the theological imagination and traditional Jewish longing to return to the particular land of Zion (which is why the Uganda Proposal failed to

[197] For one attempt to break away from how, in the Israeli case, this conceptual dichotomy coincides spatially with the green Line, see Joyce Dalsheim, *Unsettling Gaza: Secular Liberalism, Radical Religion, and the Israeli Settlement Project* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). For a critical critique from the perspective of political geography, see Oren Yiftachel, *Ethnocracy: Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

materialize in the Zionist Congress, not that there were no indigenous inhabitants in Uganda!). The Zionizing of Jewish histories projected a particular European experience (with its orientalist undertones) as a universally applicable Jewish destiny. Mizrahi histories, for instance, only enter Zionist historiography insofar as they conformed to the narrative of repeated persecutions. Hence, the Mizrahi critique deploys post-colonial tools to recover heterogeneity despite the homogenizing impulse of the nationalist discourse.[198]

That early Euro-Zionisms (indeed the plural denotes the multiple threads of Zionism), despite the often explicit antinomian sentiments and atheism of their leaders and adherents, relied on religious motifs and a revival (secularization) of Hebrew to concoct nationalism attests to Weber's insight concerning the "elective affinities" among religion, ethnicity, culture, and nationality. This definitional symbiosis (or what Anderson identifies as the "philosophical poverty" of nationalism, one of the paradoxes of this sociopolitical construct[199]) was codified in the so-called Status Quo Agreement that, in David Ben Gurion's attempt to secure a wide consensus prior to his 1947 bid in the UN for the establishment of an independent nation-state, outlined the enduring contours of religion-state relations. The Status Quo, among other issues, secured the Sabbath as the official day of rest, limited public transportation on Shabbat, required Kashrut in official offices and the military, enabled a culture of exemption to yeshivah students from otherwise mandatory military service, and

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[198] For notable examples of the Mizrahi critique, see Shenhav, *The Arab Jews*; Ella Shohat, *Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation* (Austin: University of Texas, 1989); Shohat, "Zionist Discourse and the Study of Arab Jews, *Social Text,* 21 (2), 49-74; Shohat, "The Invention of the Mizrahim," *Journal of Palestine Studies,* vol. 29, no, 1 (Autumn 1999): 5-20.
[199] Anderson, *Imagined Communities,* 5.

established full control of the newly created official rabbinate over the personal lifecycle of every citizen (from birth to burial).[200]

Influenced by the theological-political writings of Baruch Spinoza, who recognized the anthropological truth of religion (to be distinguished from metaphysical truths), Ben Gurion's statism also translated into the establishment of a ministry of religion and (an unprecedented development in Jewish histories) the creation of an official rabbinate.[201] This institutionalization of religious authority intended to subordinate religion to the state. But the already mentioned reliance on a selective retrieval of religious symbols, motifs, and claims for constructing Zionism and later reproducing Israeli nationalism already carries the hints as to why the subordination of religion to the state would result in the cooptation of the state by religion over time. Indeed, Michael Sells framed this dynamic in the case of the emergence of Christo-Slavism in the late 1980s (Serb nationalism) astutely: "At some point the manipulator of the symbol becomes manipulated by the symbol."[202] Of course, only a deeply contextual analysis can conjecture as to why those symbols had manipulative qualities to begin with.

An emphasis on denaturalizing what may seem to be axiomatic (who is the nation?) does not entail giving up the analytic distinctness and efficacy of

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[200] For a systemic attempt to pluralize the definition of who is a Jew (dominated by the official rabbinate) and to negotiate issues of freedoms and liberties within the Jewish-Israeli framework, see Gavison-Medan Covenant. I offer a critique of this document in *When Peace Is Not Enough*, Chapter Four.

[201] This also was in keeping with the logic of British colonialism and its divide and rule practice that included establishing such "official" bodies.

[202] Micahel Sells, "Pilgrimage and 'Ethnic Cleansing' in Herzegovina," in David Little and Donald K. Swearer, eds., *Religion and Nationalism in Iraq: A Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 145.

religion, but rather attunes the analysis to a non-reductionist account of religion. This account is non-reductionist in that it departs from modernist biases and paradoxes. Imagining modern nationalism as a first instance where religion intersects with sociological realities to generate cultural and political boundaries concurs with the complementary manufacturing of religion as a transcultural and ahistorical essence. This essentializing of religion (and its domestication and interiorization) was critiqued by theorists of religion as conservative and as potentially implicating scholarship on religion that subscribed to the modernist paradigms in intra-religious structures of injustice. This last discursive critique, however, constitutes a form of cultural and historical reductionism that is likewise problematic in that it dismisses the heterogeneity of traditions, heterogeneity that is not merely backward-looking to some codified books but also thoroughly embedded and embodied in hybrid and lived experiences.

While deploying the tools of cultural critique by illuminating how and why certain interpretations of identity gained hegemonic status (and identities are always interpretative even if constituting real social facts), the discursive turn I propose is non-reductionist because it recognizes that the cultural and religious resources that constitute collective articulations of identities are always selective and that this selectivity necessarily raises the questions of who, why, how, and what enabled such articulations. It also raises a question concerning the possibility of change: Is it possible to reinterpret the interfaces between religion and political belonging? Where do counter-hegemonic interpretations already exist in actual embodied experiences? What resources might be used/retrieved in operationalizing such a transformation? The last questions call upon familiarity

with the actual substance of religious traditions, theologies, histories, symbols, and experiences. It thus facilitates retention rather than a wholesale decimation of the rich phenomenological tradition of the study of religion as suggested by the aforementioned cultural reductionism. In other words, religion is more than its particular historicity and convergence with nationalist mythologies. [203]

The analysis of religion as it relates to nationalism, therefore, need not only engage in a re-description of religion as a social construct, an analytic move that involves a discursive unpacking, but must also constructively engage the resources of religion. These resources are not fixed or ahistorical essences but can also be located in the very historical and embedded intersections of subaltern/subnational and diasporic spaces that do not cohere with and challenge by virtue of their experiences national historiography and its deployment of religion. Such spaces expose how the creative potential of discursivity goes in various directions. It is not only about retrieving alternatives from distant historical chapters, such as the non-messianism of the Hasmonean period or from forgotten or previously downplayed rabbinic opinions, but also through the actual experiences of hybrid identities born out of the national discourses. In the case of Israel, Palestinian-Israelis and Mizrahim occupy two such discursive places.[204]

[203] I fully develop this point in "Can a Critic be a Caretaker Too?" See also Omer, *When Peace Is Not Enough*, Chapters 2 and 3.
[204] Omer, *When Peace Is Not Enough*, especially chapters 6 and 7.

Beyond these subnational critiques and potential reframing, the contestation of national boundaries is translocal as well.[205] The American-Jewish political theorist Judith Butler, for example, deconstructs the Zionist hegemonic hold over Jewishness by valorizing estrangement or non-belonging. Drawing on the non-nationalist ethical tradition of Hannah Arendt and Walter Benjamin as well as critical challenges (from the point view of the victims of Zionism) posed by Edward Said, Butler argues that it is only through denaturalizing Zionist ontological claims that cohabitation in Palestine/Israel can be ethically worked out. For her, denaturalizing the axiomatic hold of Zionism cannot merely be the outcome of gazing exclusively into Jewish traditions but must be a function of exogenous confrontation with the misery of Palestinians. Justice, on this account, therefore, is grounded in the kind of relationality that chauvinistic claims and cults of authenticity blind.[206] Likewise, without a post-colonial reading from the sub-national level of the Mizrahim as well as Zionism's other victims, and without recognizing the heterogeneity of Jewish conceptions of identity, the analysis of religion remains reductionist and delimited to the nationalist discourse, even if it elucidates clearly the elastic fluctuations along more or less liberal interpretations of religion and nationality. The question that remains is whether such heterogeneity and discursive undertakings are and/or

[205] I engage the role of diaspora and the contestation of ontological national claims in Atalia Omer, "'Tell them to get the hell out of Palestine': Solidarities, Diasporas, and Breaking the Cycle of Mutual Silencing," in Scott Appleby, David Little, and Atalia Omer, eds. *Oxford Handbook on Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
[206] Judith Butler, *Parting Ways: Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012) See also Omer, "The Hermeneutics of Citizenship as a Peacebuilding Process: A Multiperspectival approach to Justice," *Journal of Political Theology,* vol. 11, no. 5 (October 2010): 650-673.

should be of relevance to international relations and whether dismissing such scrutiny would replicate and naturalize methodological nationalisms.

Above I have suggested that the Weberian non-reductionist lens for analyzing the dynamic interfacing among converging typologies of religion and nationalism challenges and improves the conventional paradigms in international relations (and nationalism studies), without dismantling them altogether. And yet, by introducing the complexities of the Israeli case, I show that the hermeneutical potential found in the non-reductionist approach can be further broadened through a discursive analysis that deconstructs and interrogates national boundaries that may appear, but, in effect, are not ontologically certain.

Consistent with various accommodationist treatments[207] of the "religion variable" within international relations, for the constructivist-modernist theorist of nationalism, religion intersects substantively with the historical construction of modern sociopolitical units as well as provides structural hints as to the functionality of nationalist ideologies and practices. While this mode of integrating religion into the analysis of political formations is useful, it lacks the kind of discursive and elastic interrogation that asks not only who imagined the nation and why they did so but also moves beyond a face-value acceptance (and empirical observation) of how the nation is imagined and reproduced to ask how and by whom it could be reconstituted and what resources may be deployed in this process. This approach, resonating with new developments in the subfield of

[207] Snyder, "Introduction."

the cultural sociology of religion, would entail moving beyond a Durkhemian-like conservatism, which precludes the kind of change that may arise out of potential shifting epistemic and discursive fields. It is this lack of discursivity that could leave many an expert "shocked" and "surprised" at the face of "religious resurgence," for instance.

The cultural sociology of religion also critiques and attempts to move beyond the enduring hold of presuppositions embedded in the models of secularization and modernization. Especially problematic is how these paradigms have informed the analysis of religion as a choice and a socially cohesive force, without scrutiny of power positionality and sociocultural embeddedness or by simplistically framing religion as an independent variable with direct causal properties, betraying particularistic and cognitive presuppositions about authority structures.[208] Some scholars within this emergent subfield, therefore, take on the question of symbolic boundaries, looking at how religious metaphors, vocabularies, ideas, and practices vindicate and naturalize unequal social relations as well as intra-religious injustices. This attention to boundaries enables engaging in a discursive critique of power relations (often through the deployment of Bourdieu's analyses of symbolic violence, social positionality, and moral habitus) but also in the interpretative

[208] For a comprehensive review of the various preoccupations of the subfield of the cultural sociology of religion, see Penny Edgell, "A Cultural Sociology of Religion: New Directions," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 38 (2012): 247-65.

possibility to transform symbolic boundaries and their shaping of social and political mechanisms, institutions, and practices of inclusion and exclusion.[209] The notion of the positionality, selectivity, and malleability of cultural boundaries, then, intersects in pertinent ways with the discursive study of nationalism-qua-religion I introduce above, one attentive to the constructive role of critique. While projecting an ontological certainty, the "nation" or the question "who we are" is thoroughly contested and contestable. Religion intersects with the imagining, reproducing, and potential critiquing and reimagining of nationalist claims and subjective boundaries. The shift beyond a mere discursive critique that exposes the historicity of hegemonic "regimes of knowledge" in the Foucauldian sense to a constructive reimagining of (the possibility of) alternatives, necessitate more than the mere interrogating of secularist and modernist biases. It also calls for an interdisciplinary, multi-local, and thoroughly contextual engagement with the internal intersections among various indices of identity.

My focus here on discursive critique as well as a constructive engagement with historical, cultural, and religious resources in reassessing the contours of national boundaries, as I suggest, coheres and carries forward Nexon's insistence that "epistemological questions" cannot be bracketed[210] and that assimilating the "religion" variable into either materialist or idealist explanatory paradigms risks cultural and religious essentialism as well as new manifestations of classical

[209] See, for example, Prema Kurien, "Multiculturalism, Immigrant Religion, and Diasporic Nationalism: The Development of an American Hinduism," *Social Problems* vol. 51, no. 3 (2003): 362-85; Roger Friedland, "Religious Nationalism and the Problem of Collective Representation," *Annual Review of Sociology* 27 (2001): 125-52.
[210] Nexon, *The Struggle for Power in Early Modern Europe*, 141.

cultural and material reductionistic analyses of religion.[211] Viewing nationalism as a contested arena of intersecting discursive formations and sets of embodied experiences and practices could provide a research agenda for moving away from replicating the fallacies of the materialist-idealist debates while also meaningfully engaging the complex interfacing of religion with other variables. This research focus needs to accept the multidirectionality of change. Religion, within this conceptual framework, cannot remain untouched by its historicity and intersections with political, social, and cultural fields. Retaining religion as an ahistoric, unchanged essence, that while manifesting historically in various forms remains unchanged, merely replicates the rather modernist and secularist presuppositions of an unreconstructed study of the phenomenology of religion, while betraying the enduring Christo-centrism and Euro-centrism of theorizing in the social sciences. Indeed, it also replicates the unhelpful dichotomies born out of and implicated in materialist versus idealist explanatory frameworks in IR.

[211] Ibid., especially 145-6.

International Relations Theory and Nationalism: Any Room for Religion?

Kirstin Hasler

International relations scholarship was late to incorporate nationalism into its theories. While it was sometimes mentioned as a reason for conflict and for military performance,[212] it was not until the early 1990s and the break-up of the communist bloc states that international relations scholars began to consider nationalism in earnest.[213] Since that point, realism has been the theory most eager to incorporate nationalism into its framework, both because nationalism influences the issue area that most interests realists—armed conflict —and because realism shares certain theoretical similarities with nationalism.[214] Liberalism has been far less comfortable with the topic, and tends to treat nationalism as a backwards force that needs to be overcome or at least tamed into a civic form.[215] Strangely, constructivism has not given much treatment to the effects of nationalism in international relations, though some strong scholarship on the development and construction of nationalism has developed, especially in

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[212] See for example: Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), Book VIII; and Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* [3rd ed.] (New York: Knopf, 1960).
[213] Lars-Erik Cederman, "Nationalism and Ethnicity" in *Handbook of International Relations,* edited by Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth A. Simmons (London: Sage Publications, 2002), Martin Griffiths and Michael Sullivan, "Nationalism and International Relations Theory," *Australian Journal of Politics and History,* vol. 43, no. 1, (1997).
[214] See John Mearsheimer, "Kissing Cousins: Nationalism and Realism" (Unpublished Manuscript, University of Chicago, May 5, 2011).
[215] See for example: Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993). Nationalism and religion may have this in common in liberalism.

comparative politics.[216] For these reasons, I will focus primarily on realism's treatment of nationalism, asking whether it adequately addresses the subject and whether there is any room for religion within that framework. I conclude that realism's commitment to the state as a unitary actor limits its ability to account for phenomena such as religion and nationalism, but suggest that theories that consider a greater variety of actors and their beliefs offer a framework for incorporating religion into the study of international politics.

According to John Mearsheimer, realism and nationalism are related due to their common focus on particularistic groups (states for realism, nations for nationalism), survival of those groups, and threats to that survival. Both are particularistic theories that claim that actors' main goal is to survive in an anarchical world full of potential threats.[217] Realists have thus addressed nationalism's role in international politics in two ways. First, realists have considered the role of nationalism in state strength or power. Nationalism helps to make armies stronger and more effective in battle, leads populations to stand firm in the face of strategic bombing and suffering in war, and produces a "rally round the flag" effect when the state goes to war.[218] Thus, states utilize nationalism as yet another form of power maximization, just as they build new weapons and work to improve their economy. According to this logic,

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[216] See for example: Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Stuart Kauffman, *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); and Cederman, "Nationalism and Ethnicity", 417.
[217] See Mearsheimer, "Kissing Cousins".
[218] See, for example: Barry Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict", *Survival* vol. 35, no. 1 (1993), Robert Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War,* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), John Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001).

nationalism works in basically the same way in all states and is a part of the overall distribution of power.

Second, realists have addressed the role of nationalism in conflict. Some scholars have examined the role of nationalism—or "hypernationalism"—in increasing the pressures leading to World War I.[219] More recently, realist scholars have turned to intrastate and secessionist conflicts. This literature grew primarily out of the break-up of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. Applying realist concepts, such as the security dilemma, structural constraints, and anarchy, realists argued that nationalist and ethnic conflict in Eastern Europe could be explained in the same way that international conflict was explained.[220] Taking nationalist groups to be analogous to the theory's unitary state actor, realists argued that under anarchical conditions national groups act just as states would; they seek survival through a build-up of power.

It is in the second category, realist explanations of nationalist conflicts, that the most progress has been made in international relations theory's understanding of nationalism. However, this understanding actually comes at the expense of realism's theoretical commitments. For example, Barry Posen argued that the security dilemma could explain nationalist violence in the former Yugoslavia. As the state collapsed in the wake of communism, anarchy emerged and nationalist groups were forced to act for their own survival. They organized,

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[219] See, for example, Stephen Van Evera, *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict,* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999).
[220] See, for example, Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," Chaim Kaufman, "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars," *International Security*, vol. 20, no. 4, (1996), and Stephen Van Evera, "Hypotheses on Nationalism and War," *International Security*, vol. 18, no. 4, (1994).

armed themselves, and even attacked the other groups due to the structural constraints of an anarchical environment—a classic realist explanation for conflict where actors are caught up in a spiral of defensive escalation.

Yet it was not simply anarchy that led to conflict between Serbs and Croats, but also their perceptions of the other's national identity. According to Posen, groups assess the offensive potential of the other's identity by looking to history and asking what that group did the last time they were unencumbered by the state.[221] Because it is difficult to distinguish between offensive and defensive capabilities, groups look to the offensive or defensive content of each other's identity. The content of nationalism, or beliefs about the self and the other, crept into the security dilemma.

Stephen Van Evera also considers the content of nationalism in his "Hypotheses on Nationalism and War." Van Evera suggests that the effect a particular nationalism has on international politics is determined by whether it is "benign" or "malign," which is in turn determined by how that particular nationalism views itself, others, and history. He writes, "The effects of nationalism depend heavily on the beliefs of nationalist movements, especially their self-image and their images of their neighbors."[222] While highlighting the importance of realist structural factors such as geography, demography, and the balance of power, Van Evera nevertheless emphasizes the importance of the content of national identity to outcomes in international politics.

[221] Posen, "Security Dilema and Ethnic Conflict," 30.
[222] Ibid., 26.

Both Posen and Van Evera begin from realist premises of anarchy and survival to explain nationalist conflict, but both must bring in identity and beliefs in order to explain fully how nationalism functions in conflict. It is only through breaking open the unitary actor model and considering the internal organization and beliefs of the group that the role of nationalism in international politics can be fully understood. As Lars-Erik Cederman argues, only when international relations scholarship moved away from reifying the national group did it begin to develop a solid theory of nationalism.[223]

Realist scholars have contributed greatly to our understanding of nationalism, but I argue that this has been in spite of the theoretical underpinnings of realism. Realism focuses on material factors such as economic and military power and assumes that all actors have the same goal—survival. While perception of threat plays a role in some realist theories, that perception is generally based on capability rather than characteristics or beliefs of the threatening actor.[224] By looking to the beliefs and self-images of nationalist actors, realists bring in non-material factors that are ill at ease in the realist framework. In the end, while realist scholars have contributed to our understanding of nationalism, realism itself seems to need fundamental changes in order to accommodate the phenomenon.

While perhaps not a good thing for the realist paradigm, the move away from the unitary actor model and toward a consideration of identities and beliefs in the study of nationalism opens up space for incorporating religion into the

[223] Cederman, "Nationalism and Ethnicity," 422.
[224] See, for example, Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances,* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987).

study of international relations. Currently, realist scholarship tends to see nationalism in competition with religion. John Mearsheimer describes the development of nationalism as a history of nationalism taking over loyalty from religion.[225] Robert Pape, in his study of suicide terrorism, argues that it is nationalism and not religion that explains the use of that particular tactic by terrorist organizations.[226] However, if realism can make room for considering the self-image of nationalists, then perhaps it can also make room for the role of religion in informing national identity.

Comparative scholars have gone further in developing theories of nationalism that incorporate the content of nationalism, and they have also begun to consider how religion might inform that content. Stuart Kaufman examines the role of religion in forming Israeli and Palestinian national identity and how that national identity influences the conflict between those two groups.[227] Mark Jurgensmeyer has written extensively on the growing role of religion in nationalisms around the world, though focused more on its influence on the formation of religious nationalism rather than its effects.[228]

Perhaps because identity and beliefs are already ill at ease within the prevailing realist framework of nationalism in international relations, religion has not made its way easily into this literature. As discussed above, realists see many similarities of type between realism and nationalism—the focus on states, particularistic groups, physical survival, and threat. Religion does not fit easily

[225] Mearsheimer, "Kissing Cousins."
[226] Robert Pape, *Dying to Win*, (New York: Random House, 2006).
[227] Kaufman, *Modern Hatreds*.
[228] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

into this type. Religion often makes universalist claims and crosses borders even more often than national groups do. While religion is concerned with survival and political influence, it is not as directly concerned with acquiring its own state as nationalism. Nationalism may often take on religious forms through symbols, rites, and even concern with the afterlife, but in the end it is primarily concerned with the group's relation to the state. Religion fundamentally differs in its primary concern—humanity's relation to the transcendent. For many realists this is a bridge too far.

In so far as theories of nationalism have begun to consider the content that informs national identity, the field of international relations has gained a better understanding of the workings of that phenomenon. Some nationalisms draw heavily on religious content—Israeli and American, for example—while others are primarily secular—French nationalism, for example,—and that should not frighten away scholars of international relations. If the beliefs and self-images of nationalists shape the influence of that nationalism on international politics, religious content too deserves our attention.

However, I hesitate to claim that religion is purely analogous to nationalism in international politics and can be studied in exactly the same way. As Mearsheimer and others have pointed out, nationalism is particularistic and is closely tied to the state system. Religion tends to be universalistic and has influenced world politics under a variety of systems (imperial, feudal, city-state, etc). Lars-Erik Cederman points out that the study of nationalism in

international relations would benefit from consideration within a wider world-historical context.[229] This is even truer for religion.

Realism and other theories of international relations are hampered in their understanding of nationalism by a focus on states and a state-based structural understanding of politics. However, nationalism is closely related to the state system and needs to be understood within it, even if current theories are not well equipped to do so. Religion, on the other hand, was around long before the state system emerged.[230] Theories that take that system as their starting point will have difficulty incorporating religion in any meaningful way.

The growing importance of religion in international relations should push scholars to move away from purely state-based theories and toward theoretical frameworks that consider a variety of actors and their beliefs and identities. Constructivist scholars of foreign policy have pointed to the importance of decision makers' beliefs in the creation of foreign policy and choices about international actions.[231] As noted above, comparative scholars have done important work on the role of identity and beliefs in shaping group behavior at the sub-state level. By de-emphasizing the states as unitary actors, both of these approaches make room for considering the influence of beliefs and identities such as nationalism and religion on international behavior and outcomes.

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[229] Cederman, "Nationalism and Ethnicity," 421.
[230] Though, as Daniel Philpott argues, it may have strongly influenced that system's development. Philpott, Daniel, *Revolutions in Sovereignty: How Ideas Shaped Modern International Relations,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).
[231] See, for example, Elizabeth Saunders, *Leaders at War: How Presidents Shape Military Interventions,* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2011).

That religion fits uncomfortably into current international relations theories has more to do with the limitations of our major theories than with the importance of religion. Just as realism had to move away from its unitary actor commitment in order to incorporate nationalism, religion will encourage even further moves. By opening our theories to multiple actors and their beliefs and identities, international relations as a discipline can come more comprehensively to understand the world and the forces that shape it.

Religion and Civil Wars: Next Steps?

Monica Duffy Toft

Understanding the influence of religion in civil wars is critical for three reasons: (1) its influence over the identities and motivations of people in conflict; (2) its influence over the scope and intensity of a religious group's political objectives; and (3) the transnational nature of religious groups and communities.

First, as a category of civil war, religious civil wars are more destructive than nonreligious civil wars, causing more deaths among combatants and noncombatants alike.[232] Second, they last longer than other sorts of war by an average of two years. Third, in cases where religion is a central component, wars once halted by cease-fire or negotiated settlement recur twice as often as civil wars lacking religious motivation.

As I have argued elsewhere, religion in civil wars has had these effects for two reasons. First, religion often leads to uncompromising demands. Even given some liberty in translation over time, religious texts and interpretations circumscribe the conduct of followers in important ways. Conduct departing from these guidelines is believed to put a follower at risk of losing God's favor with the risks and penalties varying depending on the nature of the breach of conduct. Thus, when followers believe they are being asked to violate the fundamental tenets of their faith, they are less likely to do so even when it might result in what most would consider a better outcome, such as peace.

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[232] Monica Duffy Toft, "Getting Religion? The Puzzling Case of Islam and Civil War," *International Security*, vol. 31, no. 4 (Spring 2007): pp. 97-131.

Second, as a rule, most of the world's prominent religions encourage followers to discount their physical survival. The logic is simple. The physical self is mortal and thus temporary, but the religious self is potentially immortal and eternal. If belief is strong enough, it can therefore become rational to sacrifice the temporary and mortal to obtain the eternal and immortal.[233] In the Christian and Muslim traditions, it is believed that self-sacrifice in religiously prescribed conduct will be rewarded by eternal, super-physical existence in a heaven or paradise.[234] This is a critical distinction that international relations scholars often miss. Whereas most international relations theories focus on survival and material well being (particularly the survival of the state), religion frequently asks it followers (often not states, but groups) to discount their survival.[235] But this undermines a central pillar of the states system itself: So long as it may be assumed that all fear death above all else, then a credible threat to kill becomes a kind of universal currency of power and deterrence.

This explains why the states system that had its birth in Europe following thirty years of religious wars is so inimical to theocracy, or the idea that religious and secular authority should be combined leading eventually to the

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[233] Religion is not the only system of beliefs that can have this effect. Nationalism shares some of this effect in promising that one's sacrifice will help to guarantee the survival of the nation or group. However, while both promise the perpetuation of the group, nationalism does not promise individual salvation, whereas religion does. See, especially, Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 9–12 and Monica Duffy Toft, *The Geography of Ethnic Violence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

[234] For elaboration of some of these ideas, see Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

[235] Monica Duffy Toft, "Religion in International Relations," in *Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

subordination of religion in western Europe.[236] Given the nature of the interstate system, it was assumed that states must act rationally and predictably on the basis of *tangible* costs and benefits (individual physical survival being the most prominent benefit); and this is why European states sought to purge religion from governing affairs after 1648. It is also for this reason that religious civil wars (and theocratic states such as Iran) are of such concern to contemporary state policymakers. If the twin pillars of predictability and deterrence weaken or collapse, we face the possibility of a future in which the link between war and politics becomes severed, and, as in the Thirty Years' War, lethal. The fear was and continues to be that uncompromising violence will escalate until it either burns itself out, or humanity ceases to exist.[237]

As in interstate wars, civil wars are large-scale violent episodes involving individuals fighting as a part of groups. However, the locus violence takes place within the borders of a state. Similar to interstate wars, the violence is organized and the combatants have objectives in mind and the capacity to achieve those objectives.

In thinking through the interaction of religion and politics, including war, a government's actions and responses are critical. Just as in interstate wars, civil wars result from the interaction of the combatants, states, and oppositions. In some cases the state itself may be one of the combatants, but in others, the state

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[236] Stephen Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999) and Daniel Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty: How Ideas Shaped Modern International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001) and his "The Challenge of September 11 to Secularism in International Relations," *World Politics*, vol. 55, no. 1 (October 2002): 66–95.
[237] Samuel S. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

is not party to the violence. In some instances it is a government's imposition of a particular vision that leads to violence. This vision might be a secularizing state that seeks to displace religion (e.g., Algeria) or a "religionizing" state that seeks to impose one set of religious doctrine throughout its borders without regard of religious minorities or atheists (e.g. Sudan in the 1980s). Another example is the famous 1972 United States Supreme Court case, *Roe versus Wade*, which was viewed by many religious groups as a virtual declaration of war; spurring a push to mobilize religion politically.

As in any conflict, objectives on both sides can be narrow or expansive. Combatants may seek to overthrow an oppressive regime, while the regime might seek to suppress the rebellion. One instance that comes to mind is the Kosovar Albanians up against the Yugoslav state. In this case the objectives started out limited—simply seeking an end to oppression or a change of regime policies. But, in other cases, the goals are more expansive, with the rebels seeking full independence from the state. When religion is involved, however, the most common pattern is mixed: a conflict that begins with limited aims tends to escalate with religion becoming more central to the conflict as governments and localities fight to determine (1) whether and (2) the extent to which religion will be part of public life.

This was the situation in Sudan in the wars between the North and South. Initially the South sought only reduced repression and greater autonomy. But after the northern dominated government abrogated the Addis Ababa treaty that ended the first civil war (1956-1972) and sought to extend Islamic law throughout all of Sudan (including non-Muslim areas), the South's aims shifted from greater

autonomy to full independence, which was achieved in 2011. So, while the South accepted the government's imposition of sharia in the North, it would not accept its imposition in the South. As an independent state, it now has control over local affairs, including the public role of religion.

Similar dynamics were at work Afghanistan. The civil war in Afghanistan was not initially about religion, but as has occurred in a number of other cases religion quickly emerged as the most significant factor. It was a Soviet-backed coup in 1978 that introduced Marxist ideas and reforms. Because Marxist doctrine considers religion to be both counter-revolutionary and backward (as opposed to modern), Afghanistan's Islamic traditions and customs were among the first targeted by the new and inexperienced Marxist government. The new government's promises to modernize Afghanistan and eliminate corruption were made irrelevant in the eyes of most Afghans by its insistence that Islam be purged. Far from succeeding in making everyday Afghans question their faith, the new government's policies dramatically reinforced an Islamic identity, and led to the formation of ever broader coalitions of Islamic government opposition movements. As the war progressed, these movements gained strength and legitimacy, leading to the defeat of the Soviets and their local allies by the Muslim *mujahideen* in 1989. When the *mujahideen* itself experienced internal rifts, the more religiously fundamentalist Taliban emerged as another resistance group in 1994. The Taliban took power in 1996 and proceeded to enforce its vision of Islamic law throughout Afghanistan.

At the local level then, religiously inspired violence, like most other forms of political violence, is at least partially fueled by itself—by its recent history in a

given location, and its intensity in surrounding areas. Within the political science literature there has been intense debate about whether religiously based violence, particularly Islamist violence in the form of civil war and terrorism, is rooted in local conditions or is part of a larger transnational enterprise.[238] Robert Pape makes the case that suicide terrorism, a tactic often deployed as part of a broader civil war, is the product of *local* conditions, notably occupation. He claims that religion as a root of motivation provides little explanatory power.[239]

To support his claim, Pape undertook a statistical assessment of all suicide terrorist campaigns from 1980 to 2003 and concluded that the main goal of suicide terrorism has been to compel democracies to withdraw their military forces from lands that the terrorists consider to be their homeland. Pape argued that religion had little to do with the fights, basing his conclusion on three findings. First, most campaigns were concerted efforts. Second, democratic states have been uniquely vulnerable. And third, the main objective of the suicide terrorists had been to obtain or maintain self-determination. He argued further that Al Qaeda's campaign fits this pattern.

Pape's argument has undergone a good deal of scrutiny, with some scholars countering that religion underpinned many terrorist campaigns, including suicide campaigns. Assaf Moghadam, for example, challenged Pape's conclusions on two fronts.[240] On the empirical front, Moghadam argued that because Pape's database ended in 2003, he failed to capture a change in patterns

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[238] David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla* (New York: C Hurst & Company, 2011).
[239] Robert Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2005).
[240] Assaf Moghadam, *The Globalization of Martyrdom: Al Qaeda, Salafi Jihad, and the Diffusion of Suicide Attacks* (Baltimore, M.D.: Johns Hopkins Press, 2008).

of suicide attacks. Accordingly, although Pape might have been correct up to about 2001-2003 that suicide campaigns were more localized, Al Qaeda had since developed into a globalized, transnational actor with the capacity to spread its influence and resources. On the second front, Moghadam argued that the appeal of Salafi Jihadism, the guiding religious ideology of Al Qaeda, has grown. He connected a more recent rise in suicide attacks—and particularly the emergence of a new form of globalized suicide attacks—directly to Al Qaeda and Salafi-Jihadist ideology, an ideology based in religious beliefs.

Although the arguments on both sides of the scholarly debate are sound, empirical testing has been inadequate and basic questions, such as whether and how the transnational nature of religion matters, remain unanswered. What makes Afghanistan and Sudan such important cases in understanding religion and civil war, then, is precisely how the transnational nature of religion allowed for international influences to play out in these conflicts.

Although in theory civil wars are localized phenomena, they have critical international implications and increasingly this influence is tied to religion. Global forces helped bring religion into the political limelight in Afghanistan due to the ties of identity and ideology between Afghanistan and other states in the region, allowing for the war to spread beyond its borders. For example, the Shii majority state of Iran supported the Shia in Afghanistan both politically and militarily in the hopes that they would become a powerful force in the post-Soviet context. This interest was particularly strong in light of the Taliban's opposition to Shii Islam. Returning to Sudan again, part of that government's decision to align with the Islamists was based in a desire to strengthen its ties to Saudi

Arabia to become a more influential force in Africa. This explains in part why Osama bin Laden was invited to Sudan. Ties to global politics and dynamics also explain why he was expelled a decade later as the Sudanese government tried to eradicate its pariah status.

Furthermore, with the globalization of religious networks, one state's religious violence has the power to seep into the affairs of another. Rarely do the ideas of a religious opposition movement remain contained within its borders; those ideas have the power to spread and become an ideology that others apply to their own circumstances. This pattern can be seen plainly in the global jihadist movement. Whereas religious opposition to the Saudi government gave rise to Al Qaeda, its goals have gained sympathy and a following from Muslims elsewhere in the world, such as within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and in post-war Iraq.

As critical as it is to focus on the interplay of the local and the transnational in understanding the impact of religion in civil wars, to date international relations theory has not done a good job of framing good questions (much less providing useful answers). One reason why is that the field of international relations itself tends to focus on politics at the interstate level as distinct from those at the substate level. What is so paradoxical about the Pape and Moghadam debate about the local-global dynamics is that one would more readily place Pape in the international relations camp and Moghadam in the comparative politics camp. Yet, it is Pape who presses the argument about local dynamics and Moghadam about global ones.

This leaves us with the question of what an international relations scholar should do to get a handle on the dynamics of religion and civil wars. On the

theoretical side, scholars need to be aware of their theories' limitations—explanatory boundary conditions—when analyzing types of actors beyond state representatives. Just as nations have ties to territory and homelands that compel them to act differently or beyond the predictions of classic rational choice theories, religious actors seem to be motivated differently as well.[241] The discounting of survival and death are not neatly nor easily handled within the confines of existing theory, where the strong temptation is to move such actors into the error term (i.e. to declare them irrational). Moreover, because religious actors are transnational actors, but embedded in local conditions, a more subtle understanding of the interplay of these different levels is needed. But the academy has been generally increasing incentives for scholars to drill down into more and more narrow understandings; whereas understanding the twin interactions in play here—religion and politics, local and transnational—actually demands a more old-fashioned sort of scholar, or at least one capable of wearing anthropological, comparative, and international relations hats simultaneously. Pape and Moghadam provide a good first step in helping us to see how local and transnational dynamics play out, but each stretches his analysis a bit too far. It is not a question of local or transnational, but how much local dynamics matter in the context of global dynamics or conversely how much global dynamics matters in the context of local contexts.

[241] Monica Duffy Toft, "Issue Divisibility and Time Horizons as Rationalist Explanations for War," *Security Studies*, vol. 15, no. 1 (January-March 2006): 34-69.

In sum, given that an increasing number of individuals, communities, groups, organizations, and states identify as 'religious' worldwide and are demanding a greater role in politics, it is incumbent upon international relations scholars to take religion into account in much more systematic terms, both empirically and theoretically.

Religion and Terrorism: What Remains to be Said?

Nilay Saiya

Introduction

Much like the word "terrorism," the term "religious terrorism" carries no uniform definition. Yet one might still be able to attempt a description of some of the fundamental attributes that distinguish it from secular terrorism. For instance, religious terrorism is carried out by actors who claim for themselves religious aims and identities. They believe they are compelled to perform acts of violence because of their belief that an otherworldly force has commanded it. Religious terroristic violence, therefore, justifies bloodshed by invoking the will of a particular deity or otherworldly power. It is this concern with transcendent reality that distinguishes religious from secular terrorists the most.

Scholarly interest in the study of religious terrorism has increased since the attacks of September 11, 2001, though, in fact, religious terrorism had been steadily increasing worldwide since the 1980s. Until 1980, virtually all terrorism was secular in nature, encompassed in three types of organizations: (1) independence movements struggling against colonial occupiers as in Algeria and Kenya; (2) separatist groups seeking territorial autonomy or national sovereignty as in Ireland and Spain; and (3) socioeconomic revolutionaries fighting for their version of justice in places like Latin America, Italy, and West Germany.[242] What tied all these movements together was that they grounded their actions in secular

[242] Jonathan Fine, "Contrasting Secular and Religious Terrorism," *Middle East Quarterly* vol. 15, no. 1 (2008): 59-69.

ideals—Marxism, anti-colonialism, social justice—rather than in religious motivations.

Things began to change after the Iranian Revolution of 1978-79, which served as a catalyst for religious terrorism worldwide. As the aforementioned secular ideologies—class conflict, anti-colonial liberation, and secular nationalism—began to lose their appeal, religious terrorism experienced a relative upsurge. Whereas in 1968—the year marking the advent of modern, international terrorism—there were no active religious terrorist organizations, that number rose to two in 1980; eleven in 1992; sixteen in 1994; twenty-six in 1995; and fifty-two (or roughly half) in 2004.[243] This increase in religious terrorism has also been met with a marked decrease in the number of separatist/ethno-nationalist religious terrorist groups. Today, religious terrorism has become, in the words of former American Secretary of State Warren Christopher, "one of the most important security challenges we face in the wake of the Cold War."[244]

Yet this rise in religious violence has not been met with a marked increase in scholarship dealing specifically with the causes of religious terrorism. In a pattern that mirrors trends in social science of ignoring religious variables more generally, scholarship that does recognize the religious dimensions of terrorism tends to treat it cursorily. Much of the literature on the causes of terrorism fails to make a distinction between religious and secular terrorist groups and the varying motivations that drive them. A common belief continues to persist that

[243] Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 90-94.
[244] As quoted in Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 6.

religion only masks the secular rational motivations for terrorist activity. Such motivations typically emphasize underlying conditions such as poverty, alienation, humiliation, oppression, and foreign occupation.[245] In these analyses religion may still matter in that it helps to motivate combatants, but it matters as an intervening rather than an independent variable and is secondary to more material motivations.

A second reason why religious terrorism remains understudied is that most of the literature dealing with religious violence tends to examine religious civil wars and communal conflict more generally instead of religious terrorism specifically. While terrorism certainly can occur within the course of communal conflict, it does not necessarily have to. Generally speaking, religious terrorism is more intermittent and targeted than civil conflict, though it can be repeated over prolonged periods of time and result in sizeable and widespread casualties.[246]

What Do We Know?

Nevertheless, the work on religious terrorism that has emerged over the past ten years or so has revealed several key insights into the causes, consequences, and nature of religious terrorism. I will highlight three of them here.

First, religious terrorists are motivated by a discernible religious political theology of violence, despite the particularities of each faith tradition. Religious

[245] For example, see Robert A. Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *American Political Science Review* vol. 97, no. 3 (2003): 343-361; Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2005); Mia Bloom, *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).
[246] Daniel Philpott, "Explaining the Political Ambivalence of Religion," *American Political Science Review* vol. 101, Issue 3 (2007): 505-525.

actors, for example, inspire or legitimate violent conflict by framing it as a divinely sanctioned act of justice.[247] They accomplish this through a selective but literalist reading of sacred texts that reinforce the universalistic truth claims of their particular belief system believed to be given directly by a supernatural power, rendering them immutable and beyond interpretation.[248] It is this concern with transcendent reality that distinguishes religious from secular terrorists the most. The divine imperative many times leads them to work towards the supplanting of civil law with religious law and the destruction of any notion of religion-state separation. Political authority, in other words, ought to hail from religious precepts. Religious terrorists perceive themselves to be God's agents on earth, put here to help bring about these changes (i.e., the kingdom of God or some similar concept) as part of the ultimate showdown between good and evil. Finally, they often invoke a selective history of magnificent images of a religious community's glorious past—often symbolized by a militaristic hero associated with past triumphs in war—to depict what an ideal future would look like, in stark contrast to the bleak present in which the community finds itself. Fighting for the sake of God serves to create a collective sense of empowerment, pride and honor.

Second, although religious terrorism is driven by a religious imperative, religious terrorists almost always pursue non-religious goals as part of or in

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[247] David C. Rapaport, "Fear and Trembling: Terrorism in Three Religious Traditions," *American Political Science Review* vol. 78, no. 3 (1984): 658-677; Bruce Hoffman, "'Holy Terror:' The Implications of Terrorism Motivated by a Religious Imperative," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 18 (1995): 271-284; and Asaf Moghadam, "Motives for Martyrdom: Al-Qaida, Salafi Jihad, and the Spread of Suicide Attacks," *International Security* vol. 33, no. 3 (2008): 46-78.
[248] Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 81-130.

addition to their religious objectives.[249] Rationalist analyses appear to draw an artificial distinction between religious and secular terrorism, when, in fact, the two are not so easily separable insofar as all religious terrorism makes some kind of political demand. Religion, for instance, as Ron Hassner has shown, can shape one's devotion to a particular piece of territory as a "holy land."[250] (It is hard, for example, to understand the violent conflicts that have surrounded the city of Jerusalem for millennia without taking religious factors into account.) Furthermore, while scholars like Robert Pape are correct that one of al Qaeda's main goals is to end the foreign occupation of Muslim holy lands by Western powers, it is also important to realize that this objective is itself driven by the fundamentally long-term mission of the group: to establish an Islamic caliphate that unites all Salafi adherents desiring to return to the glory days of early Islam.[251] This is an important point because, even though there is little consensus in the literature as to what constitutes a religious conflict, it needs to be recognized that a conflict does not have to be solely over religious issues in order to be considered "religious." It is difficult indeed to identify a single contemporary conflict that involves only religious issues or no issues of religious

[249] Mark Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War?: Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Roger Friedland, "When God Walks in History: The Institutional Politics of Religious Nationalism," *International Sociology* vol. 14, no. 3 (1999): 301-319; Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God*; Gabriel A. Almond, R. Scott Appleby and Emmanuel Sivan, *Strong Religion: The Rise of Fundamentalism Around the World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Daniel Philpott, "Explaining the Political Ambivalence of Religion," 505-525; Mark Juergensmeyer, *Global Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular State from Christian Militias to al Qa'ida* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); and Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Samuel Shah, *God's Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011).
[250] Ron E. Hassner, "To Halve and to Hold: Conflicts over Sacred Space and the Problem of Indivisibility," *Security Studies* vol. 12, no. 4 (2003): 1-33; and Ron E. Hassner, *War on Sacred Grounds* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009).
[251] Assaf Moghadam, "Suicide Terrorism, Occupation, and the Globalization of Martyrdom: A Critique of *Dying to Win*," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* vol. 29, no. 8 (2006): 707-729.

significance at all. Nevertheless, when present, religion lends a sacred quality and intensity to conflicts that also have significant secular dimensions. In short, religious and secular motivations for terrorism can and often do coexist.

Third, evidence seems to confirm the hypothesis that religiously motivated terrorism is more lethal and long-lived than purely secular forms. A key explanation is that religious terrorists justify the use of indiscriminate violence as being part of a divinely ordained plan. Seth G. Jones and Martin C. Libicki, for instance, demonstrate that religious terrorist organizations have greater longevity than secular groups.[252] In a study that compared religious and secular terrorist organizations, Victor Asal and R. Karl Rethemeyer found that organizations acting on religious or ethnoreligious ideologies caused more devastation than other types of terrorist groups.[253] The fact that religious terrorists do not seek to gain popular approval for their actions allows them to proceed with greater impunity in conducting assaults resulting in high casualty rates.[254] James A. Piazza revealed that in terms of casualties (wounded or killed) per terrorist attack, assaults by religious actors resulted in more than four times as many casualties as attacks by nationalist-separatist terrorists; more than four times as many casualties as attacks by leftist (anarchist, anti-globalizationist, communist, socialist, and environmentalist) groups and individuals; and almost sixteen times

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[252] Seth G. Jones and Martin C. Libicki, *How Terrorist Groups End: Lessons for Countering al Qa'ida* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2008).
[253] Victor Asal and R. Karl Rethemeyer, "The Nature of the Beast: Organizational Structures and the Lethality of Terrorist Attacks," *Journal of Politics* vol. 70, no. 2 (2008): 437-449.
[254] Bruce Hoffman, "The Confluence of International and Domestic Trends in Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* vol. 9, no. 2 (1997): 1-15; Jessica Stern, *The Ultimate Terrorists* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000); and Walter Enders and Todd Sanders, "Is Transnational Terrorism Becoming More Threatening?: A Time Series Investigation," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* vol. 44, no. 3 (2000): 307-332.

as many casualties as attacks by rightist (racist, right-wing conservative, and right-wing reactionary) groups.[255]

The number of religiously inspired suicide missions has also increased in recent years, while suicide attacks by secular groups have declined. Assaf Moghadam shows empirically the increase and relative lethality of suicide attacks by groups motivated by a Salafist theology.[256] Peter S. Henne finds that suicide missions by groups holding a religious ideology cause far more death and devastation even when accounting for group motivations and structural factors.[257] The relative lethality of religious terrorist organizations can be attributed to the fact that its practitioners regard violence as a divine imperative that not only condones but also compels bloodshed.[258] They believe that they are involved in a spiritual battle for transcendent truth and are therefore less discriminate in their targets and tactics.

What Remains to be Said?

Much work is yet to be done on religious terrorism. After the events of September 11th, policy makers, journalists, and academics tended to focus on

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[255] James A. Piazza, "Is Islamist Terrorism More Lethal?: An Empirical Study of Group Ideology, Organization and Goal Structure," *Terrorism and Political Violence* vol. 21, no. 1 (2009): 62-88. My own analysis of the Global Terrorism Database confirms these findings. Of the 50 deadliest terrorist attacks since 1970 in which the perpetrator could be identified, 27 (54 percent) were carried out by religious actors. This is quite remarkable considering that religious terrorism did not really become a widespread phenomenon until the 1990s and that religious terrorist organizations comprise only a small fraction of all terrorist groups. Of the 12,371 individuals killed in these attacks, 7779 (61 percent) were slain by religiously motivated terrorists.
[256] Assaf Moghadam, *The Globalization of Martyrdom: Al Qaeda, Salafi Jihad, and the Diffusion of Suicide Attacks* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).
[257] Peter S. Henne, "The Ancient Fire: Religion and Suicide Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* vol. 24, no. 1 (2012): 38-60.
[258] See, for example, Walter Laqueur, *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Daniel S. Gressang IV, "Audience and Message: Assessing Terrorist WMD Potential," *Terrorism and Political Violence* vol. 13, no. 3 (2001): 83-106; Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God*; and Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 83.

events in the Middle East and especially the relationship between Islam and violence when discussing terrorism. This situation had the effect of reinforcing the perception among many in Western audiences that religious extremism in the developing world pertains only to Islam (though it should be noted that the majority of religious terrorist groups in existence are indeed Islamic organizations). Yet all of the world's major religions contain violent movements within them, and Muslims in general are not more likely to be involved in violent conflict than members of other faith traditions[259] So-called "saffron terrorism" carried out by Hindu extremists in India, for instance, has received scant scholarly attention. The same could be said of Uganda's Christian-syncretistic terrorist traditions, namely the Holy Spirit Mobile Force and the Lord's Resistance Army. Indeed, Sikhism, Buddhism, and Judaism all have their own terrorist strains. More attention ought to be given to terrorism in these traditions, including its causes and consequences, and its implications for domestic and international peace and security. Future work in this area may strive to compare terrorism found in different religious traditions or religious terrorism in general with secular terrorism in order to discern its unique impact.

Second, since much of the work on religious terrorism takes the form of singular case studies, more theoretical work would be helpful in elucidating any structural similarities that give rise to this form of religious violence. Past scholarship has emphasized a range of motivations for religious terrorism: metaphysical battles of good vs. evil that manifest in "cosmic war"; sexual, social,

[259] Jonathan Fox, "Is Islam More Conflict Prone Than Other Religions?: A Cross-Sectional Study of Ethnoreligious Conflict," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* vol. 6, no. 2 (2000): 1-24.

and spiritual insecurity; and the lure of eternal rewards.[260] For others, religion only masks the secular rational motivations for terrorist activity. While the former set of analyses help elucidate the psychological reasoning of the individual religious terrorist, they do not attempt to put forth generalizable and testable propositions for why religious groups and individuals turn to violence. The latter analyses highlight important political grievances that militant groups might hold; they fail, however, to appreciate the differences between religious and secular terrorists or the ways in which religion can shape one's views toward temporal objectives. Future work here also should examine the causes of international religious terrorism—why terrorist groups based in one country attack targets in another.

A third potential avenue for future research concerns how religious terrorism ends. While some analyses have addressed this topic from a more general standpoint, further research is needed on the cessation of religious terrorist violence.[261] Past scholarship has found that religious terrorists tend to be more unconstrained in terms of their weapons and tactics, and more expansive in their targets and goals than their secular counterparts. If religious and secular terrorists really are different in these fundamental ways, then it stands to reason that the ways in which these groups end might be different as well. It is conceivable that terrorism with a religious impulse might be less amenable to negotiations and more resilient in the face of police and military

[260] Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God*; and Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003).
[261] See Jones and Libicki, *How Terrorist Groups End*; and Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

operations—strategies that have been successful in ending many secular terrorist campaigns. Work in this vein also ought to look at the role that faith communities play in ending or reducing terrorism.

Fourth, work should be done examining the relationship of the Arab Spring and the onset of religious extremist violence. Opinions diverge regarding whether the Arab Spring will have the effect of increasing or decreasing terrorism's appeal. Optimists hold out hope that the era of Arab autocracy, economic stagnation, and gender inequality is coming to an end and that new democratic and accountable governments will defuse extremism as religious groups seek to work through participatory processes instead of turning to violence to exact political change. Pessimists believe, however, that the instability and turmoil brought about by the Arab revolutions in places like Libya and Syria will provide fertile breeding ground for global jihadists who, finding themselves left behind by the wave of liberal protest, are now looking at ways to exploit the situation in weak and divided states. It is too soon to gauge which of these scenarios will prove to be more accurate. Nevertheless, work in this area will serve to evaluate theories of terrorism more generally and perhaps spur some new thinking as well.

Finally, on a methodological note, like terrorism in general, studies of religious terrorism have typically failed to incorporate informal violence in their analyses—"systematic targeting of particular ethnic, religious, or other groups that is not organized by a state, army, or network, including riots, other waves of

killing and destruction, as well as what is usually called terrorism."[262] This organized form of violence, despite being on the rise globally, is typically not included in terrorism databases and consequently is not reflected in much of the terrorism literature. Informal violence, however, constitutes an important dimension of terrorism, especially in places like India, Indonesia and Nigeria, where tit-for-tat reprisals on the part of religious communities have given way to spirals of deadly violence. The death and destruction that occurs as part of these waves of violence usually go uncounted. A more holistic understanding of religious terrorism, therefore, compels scholars of terrorism to take into account this form of violence in future studies.

[262] Monica Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Samuel Shah, *God's Century*, 126-127.

Religion and International Relations: How Should Policymakers Think About Religion?

William Inboden

For many—probably too many—policymakers, this question is problematic because it assumes they should think about religion in the first place. An institutional-cultural bias against taking religion seriously as an analytic category unfortunately persists throughout much of the national security policy community. Yet while the situation is bleak, the trends are not all negative. Religion has enjoyed something of a renaissance in recent years as a subject of serious analytic interest to policymakers and foreign policy scholars. A proliferation of recent books, articles, task forces, and conferences have elevated religion as a significant factor—for good and for ill—in international relations. This renewed attention seems to be following a renewal of religion itself. Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Samuel Shah argue in their new book on global religion that "a dramatic and worldwide increase in the political influence of religion has occurred in roughly the past forty years."[263] Yet while religion is now being treated more seriously as an analytic category, it still remains foreign to many policymakers, who struggle to understand religion let alone integrate and operationalize it as a policy category.

The probable reasons for the relative neglect of religion within the policy community, in the past and somewhat in the present, are beyond the scope of this paper, but a few tangential speculations can be ventured. First, most American

[263] Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Samuel Shah, *God's Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton 2011), 9.

national security policymakers do not personally possess strong religious commitments, especially in comparison to the much more religiously observant broader American public. This relative dearth of religiosity among policymakers might make them less attuned to the salience of religion in the lives of others. Second, as this working group purports to address, most scholarly international relations programs—the same graduate programs that train most aspiring policymakers—give but cursory treatment to religion as an important factor in foreign policy, if not ignoring it outright. Third, the American constitutional tradition of disestablishment of religion may heighten the discomfort that policymakers feel about interacting with religion, due to (generally unwarranted) fears of constitutional barriers.[264] Fourth, the post-Enlightenment tradition in the West of treating religion as an exclusively private and personal matter sometimes prevents policymakers from perceiving the public and corporate nature of religion in many non-Western societies (as well as portions of some Western societies).

Nevertheless, the religion allergy among policymakers has declined considerably in the past decade, and there has been a growing appreciation in many policy circles that religion needs to be taken seriously. This has largely been in acknowledgement of empirical realities. Events including the September 11th attacks and the professed religious motivations of the terrorists, the sectarian divisions that beset Iraq in the aftermath of the American invasion, the

[264] See, for example, the discussion and dissenting treatments of this issue in *Engaging Religious Communities Abroad: A New Imperative of U.S. Foreign Policy*, A Report of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs Task Force on Religion and the Making of U.S. Foreign Policy. Available at: http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/UserFiles/File/Task%20Force%20Reports/2010%20Religion%20Task%20Force_Full%20Report.pdf

manifestations of political Islam in the unfolding Arab Awakening, the opacity of the Iranian regime's *Velayat-e-faqih* ideology and nuclear program, the resurgence of religious nationalisms in nations such as India and Russia, and the upsurge in Pentecostalism and political participation in many Latin American and African countries, have all reinforced the relevance of religion for foreign policymakers. Thus the question for this paper: If religion is a factor in international relations, how should policymakers think about it?

I offer the following categories as ways that national security policymakers should think about religion, either as a category of analysis, an instrument of policy, or both.

Anthropological

This means understanding religion as a consequential dimension of human and social identity. As a basic empirical matter, religion appears to be inescapable from how most people in the world consider their own humanity. Policymakers who seek to understand the causes of human behavior cannot disregard religion. Materialism is simply insufficient as a mode of inquiry, and for the most devout, material causes sometimes even exacerbate rather than erode religious motivations. In a vividly illustrative research project, anthropologist Scott Atran found that "offering people material incentives (large amounts of money, guarantees for a life free of political violence) to compromise sacred values can backfire, increasing stated willingness to use violence. Such backfire effects occur both for convictions with clear religious investment (the status of Jerusalem, sharia law) and for those that are at least initially

nonreligious (Iran's right to a nuclear capability, Palestinian refugees' right of return)."[265]

Even a cursory glance across the span of human history shows that it is almost impossible to find a society, culture, or even civilization that was not religious. Historically speaking, human beings appear to possess an innate religiosity that is manifest consistently across a staggeringly diverse array of geographies and eras—even as the particular expressions of this religiosity are almost as diverse themselves. The twentieth century's onset of secularization only offers a very partial and contingent modification of history's pervasive religiosity—the gradual onset of secularization in postwar Western Europe provides one of the very few examples in history of a society voluntarily relinquishing widespread religious faith (in contrast to the totalitarian communist regimes that sought, with uneven success, to exterminate religion forcibly). And even this is a provisional judgment, given the recent small but measurable upticks in religious observance in Europe.

The other historical fact that follows from this and also emerges on almost every page of history is the remarkable *power* of religion to motivate human behavior and shape the actions of nations. Not surprisingly, the mixed character of human nature, prone to base conduct yet also capable of nobility, is mirrored by the mixed nature of religion, which has caused great malevolence as well as great benevolence. The eschatological dimension of religion is an especially

[265] Scott Atran, "God and the Ivory Tower: What we don't understand about religion just might kill us," *ForeignPolicy.com* 8 (August 2012). Available at: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/08/06/god_and_the_ivory_tower?page=full.

noteworthy sub-set of the anthropological, and accounts for much of religion's potency. The eschatological belief systems of some religions at a minimum complicate traditional "rational actor" expectations of foreign policy behavior—what may be "irrational" in this world can be seen as "rational" in a hoped-for world to come. Thus we find the belief of jihadist suicide bombers in the blessings of martyrdom, the willingness of Tibetan Buddhists to self-immolate, the Hindu belief in reincarnation, or the hope of the Christian martyr in the eternal felicities of heaven. Eschatology can have a corporate manifestation as well, whether the post-millennial optimism of mid-century American mainline Protestantism and its important role in creating the United Nations and the post-war international order, or the apocalypticism that appears to characterize some aspects of the current Iranian regime and its nuclear decision making. Policymakers and intelligence analysts today may not find such eschatological teachings agreeable or even comprehensible, but they cannot be ignored as influences on foreign policy actors.

Public Diplomacy

Given the pervasive religiosity among the world's populations, American Government efforts to communicate with foreign audiences will be immeasurably strengthened by sensitivity to religious phenomena. The public diplomacy dimension of statecraft includes shaping global opinion towards the United States and its policies and values, countering unwelcome ideas and attitudes, and promoting more constructive messages in their place. A public diplomacy that attempts to communicate with religious people and societies while ignoring religion will be inadequate if it does not outright fail. A positive recent example

of incorporating religious themes into a public diplomacy exercise was President Obama's Cairo University speech in 2009. Beyond the discussion of policy issues, Obama quoted multiple times from the Koran and the Bible, described his own religious faith, and made repeated invocations of the divine will for ideals such as peace and unity. Such explicitly religious references accounted in part for the speech's very favorable reception among the mostly Islamic audience (which included some Egyptian Christians as well).[266]

Conflict and Reconciliation

Religion's role in fomenting conflict is well known, even among those policy professionals otherwise disinclined to pay attention to religion as a factor in international politics. As the aforementioned Chicago Council Report describes (among many other sources), the most prominent recent example was the Sunni-Shi'a civil war that ruptured Iraq and caught most American policymakers unaware. Sectarian conflict is also one of the most pronounced fault lines in the ongoing Syrian civil war. Other examples are legion, whether the Hindu-Muslim dimension of the Kashmir conflict, the Protestant-Catholic dimension of the Northern Ireland conflict, the Jewish-Muslim dimension of the Israeli-Palestinian stand-off, and so on. At a minimum, policymakers would benefit from paying more attention to religious factors as potential predictors, catalysts, and/or accelerants for conflict.

Perhaps less appreciated among policymakers is religion's potential role in peacemaking and reconciliation. "Religion" is hardly univocal, of course, and just

[266] Text of the speech is available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-cairo-university-6-04-09.

as sometimes religion causes conflict, it is also capable of playing a salubrious, even indispensable role in peace efforts. Examples abound, whether the role of the Moral Rearmament religious community in the post-war Franco-German reconciliation; the work of the Catholic lay Community of Sant'Egidio in the Balkans, Mozambique, and elsewhere; the place of Islam in the Sudanese peace process, and many others.[267] Here again, policymakers would be wise and well served to include engagement with religious actors and awareness of religious motivations as important instruments in the policy toolkit for peace and reconciliation processes.

Economic Development

One area of government that has long appreciated religion's role is the development sector. Given the rich and diverse array of religious NGOs devoted to relief and development work, USAID and its related entities focused on development policy work regularly in partnership with religious organizations engaged in development work. However, this is merely one dimension of the policy intersection of religion and development: the supply-side inputs of mostly Western religious actors into mostly non-Western developing and impoverished nations. Policymakers would also benefit by expanding this conceptual zone of engagement, from exploring the ways that religion can serve as a driver or restrainer of economic growth and a contributing or mitigating factor for poverty. Channeling Max Weber and his latter day intellectual descendants, policymakers

[267] For more extensive discussions on this theme, see Douglas Johnston, ed., *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik (*New York: Oxford University Press 2003) and Daniel Philpott, ed. *The Politics of Past Evil: Religion, Reconciliation, and Transitional Justice* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006).

should consider in what contexts religious beliefs and practices have a measurable impact (for good or for ill) on economic development, and thus explore policy frameworks that incorporate these findings.

Governance and Democratization

As with economic development, religion has a similarly ambivalent relationship with democracy. Depending on the political and cultural context and confessional standards, religion has played and does play a role in either undermining or advancing democratization. Religious impediments to democratization are well known, including Muslim communities in many Muslim-majority countries and the Orthodox Church in Russia. Less appreciated but arguably as important are religious contributions to supporting and sustaining democratization, such as the Protestant churches in South Korea in the 1980s, the Catholic Church in Poland and elsewhere, Judaism in Israel, Islam in Indonesia, and Buddhist democracy activists in nations such as Vietnam, Burma, and China. The American government devotes extensive economic and diplomatic resources to promoting democratization overseas, yet appreciation for or even engagement with religious actors is almost wholly absent from the democratization policy infrastructure.

Religious Freedom

While related to democratization and other policy equities, religious freedom merits its own category, due in part to its intimate relationship with religion itself. Taking religion seriously as a policy concern almost inevitably points to including religious freedom as a policy priority. Religious freedom touches on each of the other policy areas discussed above. Here I want to focus

on the possible relationship between religious freedom and national security, and offer a few provisional reflections that might be explored in greater depth.

As an empirical matter, there are very few (perhaps not any) states that both respect religious freedom and pose a security threat to the United States. There are at least three ways that religious freedom can be better integrated with security policy.[268] First, religious freedom violations can serve as a diagnostic or leading indicator of a potential security threat. Second, religious freedom promotion can function as a mitigating factor in ameliorating existing security threats. Third, improvements in religious freedom can prevent the emergence of new security threats.

Diagnostic

The United States devotes considerable resources—billions of dollars, thousands of analysts, countless man-hours, endless bureaucratic anxieties—across the national security community to identifying potential security threats. Policymakers and analysts should add religious freedom conditions to the set of indicators they use to identify and track possible security threats. As Grim and Finke have found, violent religious persecution also helps cause social conflict and instability, and can be a leading indicator of a failing state or looming civil war.[269] This is not to say that an increase in religious persecution automatically indicates a security concern, but that deteriorations in religious freedom increase the odds of instability and possible security threats.

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[268] This section borrows from my article, "Religious Freedom and National Security," *Policy Review* 175, (October/November 2012).
[269] Brian Grim and Roger Finke, *The Price of Freedom Denied: Religious Persecution and Conflict in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Consider Afghanistan before the September 11th attacks. While generally relegated by international policymakers to the back burner of priorities, Afghanistan occasionally lurched into international attention when the Taliban would engage in particularly egregious displays of religious intolerance. This included the destruction of the sixth-century Buddhas of Bamiyan statues in March 2001, or the imprisonment of two American women missionaries that same year. And those who consistently suffered the most under Taliban rule were Afghan Muslims who did not share the Taliban's Islamist predilections. Internationally, before September 11th the Taliban's depredations provoked the ire of religious freedom advocates and women's rights advocates, but were otherwise largely dismissed by foreign policy professionals as unfortunate albeit irrelevant to national security concerns. Yet the very same conditions of religious intolerance that were appalling to human rights advocates were appealing to Al Qaeda. This is by no means to say that a more vigorous push for religious freedom would have prevented the September 11th attacks. But at a minimum, more attention to the Taliban's religious persecution also might have helped reveal the potential terrorist threat.

Religious freedom violations can also be a leading indicator of authoritarianism. As Peter Berger has observed of China as Beijing increases its repression of independent religious groups, "modern authoritarian rulers have understood instinctively that uncontrolled religion can be a threat. By the same token, violations of religious freedom frequently foreshadow other measures of

tyranny. Thus Chinese Christians today may resemble canaries in a coalmine, their fate sending out an alarm."[270]

Ameliorative

The promotion of religious freedom protections may in some cases help ameliorate potential security threats. Consider the case of Pakistan. If the blasphemy laws were to be taken off the books, Islamists would lose a favored instrument for targeting religious minorities, intimidating moderate Muslims, and bolstering Islamist leverage in government and society. Pakistan's maladies are legion, so the end of the blasphemy laws would hardly be a blanket palliative. But it could serve as one ameliorating measure to undermine extremist elements. In a related vein, American support for religious freedom protections for peaceful Muslims in divided, fragile societies such as Afghanistan or Yemen would also aid counter-terrorism efforts by building trust among the populace and increasing their confidence in sharing intelligence tips.

Religious freedom promotion can also help mitigate some of the enabling factors behind authoritarian security threats. Independent religious groups can often serve as bulwarks against the pretensions of the state to exert control over all aspects of the society. In the case of China, a substantial step for the Chinese government would be to allow its millions of unregistered house church Christians to worship legally and regularize their role in Chinese society. Their newfound liberties would enable these Christians—many of whom occupy important roles in China's intellectual and commercial classes—to shape Chinese

[270] Peter Berger, http://blogs.the-american-interest.com/berger/2011/06/22/confucius-and-religious-freedom/

society in a more pacific direction while eroding the bellicose nationalism that the Chinese Communist Party relies on in part for its legitimacy.

Preventive

Ensuring religious freedom protections can also play a constructive role in states that do not now pose a security threat but are forging their development and identity. Promoting religious freedom can help prevent a future security threat and destabilization from emerging. In Grim and Finke's words, "the higher the degree to which governments and societies ensure religious freedoms for all, the less violent religious persecution and conflict along religious lines there will be."[271] The precarious stabilization and reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan are instructive. While each country's new constitution offers some hortatory commitment to religious freedom, other clauses undermine this by privileging Islamic law. And in practice the conditions for religious minorities are precarious, as evidenced by the recent imprisonment and horrific treatment of an Afghan citizen for converting to Christianity. While religious freedom protections alone will not guarantee the emergence of stable and self-governing states in Afghanistan and Iraq, the absence of religious freedom protections will make failure more likely. Egypt faces a similar reality in its ongoing political transition. While it faces manifest challenges in institution building, economic growth, and democratic processes, one key determinant of Egypt's democratic transition will be religious freedom. Specifically, Egypt will need to ensure robust legal protections for the rights of its Coptic Christian minority as well as the

[271] Grim and Finke, *The Price of Freedom Denied,* 2-3.

rights of moderate and progressive Muslims who do not share the Islamist agendas of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafists.

The Sufficiency of Secular International Relations Theory

Sebastian Rosato

Although there is a growing body of scholarship about religion and international politics—much of it reviewed in this collection of essays—the discipline of international relations remains largely secular. If scholars who privilege religion in their research want to persuade the majority that their work is important, they must go some way toward accomplishing three tasks. First, they must show that existing approaches—specifically realism, liberalism, and constructivism—would come up with different explanations of international politics if they were to incorporate religion in their theorizing. Second, they must demonstrate that religion has a causal effect on international politics rather than merely being correlated with various outcomes. Third, they need to rule out alternative, non-religious, explanations for the international political phenomena they claim to explain.

Contribution to Existing Approaches

A good case can be made that the inclusion of religious variables would add little to our current, secular, understanding of international politics.

Realism depicts a world in which states are the main actors, their primary goal is to survive, and they operate in an anarchic system, which is to say that there is no authority above states capable of protecting them or enforcing agreements among them. This state of affairs leads states to pay careful attention to how much power they have compared to their competitors. The reason is obvious: In an anarchic system, states can only be secure and pursue their

interests if they possess sufficient material capabilities. Weakness, on the other hand, leaves them vulnerable to predation and means that they have a limited ability to pursue their interests.[272]

The knowledge that a given state was religiously motivated would change little in the realist understanding of international politics. It might tell the analyst what that state's interests were, though those interests would not trump a desire for survival since a state cannot pursue any interest unless it first survives. But even if it did provide an insight into the state's interests, it would not shed light on how that state would behave since a state's ability to act on its interests is tightly constrained by the amount of power it has compared to others.

The current debate about Iran's potential acquisition of nuclear weapons provides a good example. As Kenneth Waltz explains from a realist perspective, "Iranian policy is not made by 'mad mullahs' but by perfectly sane ayatollahs who want to survive just like any other leaders."[273] In other words, Iran may be an "Islamic state," but its goals are the same as those of any other state. Moreover, even if it its goals are in some way "Islamic," Iran is tightly constrained from pursuing them by the balance of power and, specifically, by the fact that the United States and Israel have the ability to retaliate massively against Tehran.

Liberal theories begin with the premise that individuals and groups have interests and governments aggregate those interests in various ways in order to

[272] See John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), esp. pp. 29-54.
[273] Kenneth N. Waltz, "Why Iran Should Get the Bomb," *Foreign Affairs* vol. 91, no. 4 (2012): 4.

define their preferences. International outcomes are then the result of bargaining among states that have defined their preferences.[274]

It follows that an understanding of religious interests would help analysts to describe state preferences. For example, it may be that the Arab Spring has added a religious dimension to Egyptian preferences, though it would be up to scholars of religion to show that this dimension was important. It is less clear, however, that the incorporation of religious interests would change liberal understandings of state behavior and international outcomes. The reason is that, once liberals have established what state preferences are, behaviors and outcomes are determined by the extent to which states' preferences are in harmony or conflict and on their relative bargaining power.

Constructivists argue that state behavior is influenced by the ideas they hold and their identities, which is to say who they are. Constructivism therefore has little trouble incorporating religion; it is one of several possible identities that states could have. The task for religion scholars—one they have not yet accomplished—is to show that a wide variety of states have defined their identities in religious terms and that those religion-based identities actually affect state behavior.[275]

Causal Effects

If traditional international relations scholars are to take religion seriously, students of religion must show that religion exerts a causal effect in world

[274] Andrew Moravcsik, "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics," *International Organization* vol. 51, no. 4 (1997): 513-553.
[275] See, for example, Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

politics. The problem is that the existing literature does not show this. To be sure, there is some evidence that religion has had domestic political effects. But there is less evidence for the causal impact of religion in the international arena.[276]

Consider Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Shah's *God's Century*, which argues that religion is a powerful causal force in international politics. Upon careful inspection, most of the causal claims are assumed rather than demonstrated. For example, the authors assert that Hinduism, in the guise of the BJP, has led India to pursue a "nationalistic" foreign policy. But India has pursued a nationalistic foreign policy since its birth. The authors do not provide evidence that the ascendance of a Hindu party has caused India to pursue a nationalistic foreign policy rather than simply being coterminous with it. Similarly, Toft, Philpott, and Shah say that the Pope John Paul II's "open air pilgrimages…led to the downfall of the Communist regime and sparked a chain reaction that ended the Cold War." This is a strong assertion of causation to be sure, but it is just that, an assertion. The authors deploy no evidence of a causal connection. Indeed, they appear to acknowledge the problem, conceding that religious actors have not become more influential in international politics, just "far more *active* and *engaged*."[277]

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[276] My focus on causal arguments about modern day international politics eliminates some work on religion by definitional fiat. For example, Daniel Philpott's *Revolutions in Sovereignty*, provides an excellent account of religion and the origins of the Westphalian system. See Daniel Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).
[277] Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Samuel Shah, *God's Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011).

Jonathan Fox's work on religion in international relations suffers from similar weaknesses. Fox provides a tremendous number of empirical findings. For example, he shows that "when religion and separatism are combined, the average level of rebellion increases," and that "ethnic conflicts involving groups of different religions are more likely to experience political intervention but not military intervention."[278] Crucially, however, these and other findings are just that—findings. Fox does not provide a causal story to explain them.

The foregoing works are representative of a weakness that runs through most of the religion literature: the conflation of correlation and causation. Scholars who privilege religion in their work have come up with a great deal of data that says religion is on the rise. An ever-increasing number of groups are described as "religious," wars are described as taking place between different "religious" groups, and states are routinely given a religious designation. But religion scholars have not taken the next step, which is to demonstrate a causal connection between religion and international outcomes. There is scant support for the claim that religious groups act because of their religious convictions, that religion was the cause of wars between religious groups, or that Iran's relations with the United States have soured because it is a "theocratic" state, and so on.

Ron Hassner's *War on Sacred Grounds*, which provides an account of what sacred spaces are and why they lead to conflict is a notable exception to the

[278] Jonathan Fox, "In the Name of God and Nation: The Overlapping Influence of Separatism and Religion on Ethnic Conflict," *Social Identities* vol. 8, no. 3 (2002): 448; Jonathan Fox, "Religious Causes of International Intervention in Ethnic Conflicts," *International Politics* vol. 38, no. 4 (2011): 522.

rule.[279] Nevertheless, it is important to note that Hassner's cases primarily involve conflicts over sacred spaces that have international repercussions. They are not cases in which religion was the key driver of interstate politics.

Eliminating Alternatives

Religion scholars must also rule out alternative secular explanations for the phenomena they seek to explain if religion is to get a place at the table. To date, they have failed to do so.

Proponents of the view that religion has a powerful impact on international politics routinely invoke the September 11th case and the phenomenon of suicide terrorism more broadly. Simply put, suicide bombers do what they do because they are religiously motivated. Daniel Philpott puts the point well, arguing that the attacks of September 11 were "motivated by ideas, but not economic, strategic, or politically liberal ones…. Rather, those involved…were animated by…religion."[280] As Robert Pape has pointed out, however, the leaders who send them to their deaths have political rather than religious goals. Specifically, they seek to coerce occupying powers into withdrawing from their territory. In this formulation, religion provides the motivation for individuals, but the international political outcome—suicide terrorism—is driven by an alternative, nationalist, logic.[281] If religion scholars want to influence the debate it is not enough for them to repeat their claim that individual suicide bombers are religiously motivated. Instead, they need to show that the elites that organize the

[279] Ron Hassner, *War on Sacred Grounds* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009).
[280] Daniel Philpott, "The Challenge of September 11 to Secularism in International Relations," *World Politics* vol. 55, no. 1 (October 2002): 66-67.
[281] Robert A. Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *American Political Science Review* vol. 97, no. 3 (2003): 343-361.

suicide campaigns are driven by religious as opposed to secular or material factors.

Scholars who privilege religion also point to Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* as an example of religion mattering in international politics. Specifically, they point to Huntington's claim that global politics would be characterized by conflict between civilizations whose defining feature was a common religion.[282] As in the case of suicide terrorism, however, they have failed to rule out alternative explanations. In this case, the obvious alternative is nation-states rather than religious groupings. And as Stephen Walt has shown, the evidence overwhelmingly suggests that most conflicts have been and continue to be fought along national rather than religious boundaries.[283]

As both of these examples suggest, claims that religion "matters" repeatedly come up against the claim that it is nationalism, not religion, that drives the behavior of international actors, be they stateless entities or nation states.

Conclusion

It is not clear what contribution a sustained investigation of religion would make to grand theories of international politics. It would at best give us a more nuanced picture of state interests but it would add little to our understanding of state actions or international outcomes, which are determined by other factors.

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[282] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).
[283] Stephen M. Walt, "Building Up New Bogeymen: The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order," *Foreign Policy* 106 (1997): 176-189.

This alone makes it difficult for international relations theorists to pay sustained attention to religion. But part of the blame lies with religion scholars themselves who have, to date, failed to demonstrate a causal connection between religion and important international phenomena and have not ruled out alternative explanations for the cases they do purport to explain.

Conclusion

The foregoing pieces cover broad terrain and, as noted in the introduction, do not always agree with one another. On a few matters, virtually everyone agrees. First, religion has been marginalized in the study of international relations. Second, this marginalization has much to do with the thinking of the secularization theory. Third, this marginalization is unwarranted. Religion's growing influence on politics merits far greater scholarly attention.

Many of the pieces point to directions for future research. Can anything more general be said? The field of religion and international relations is still small and relatively new, although also growing. Conceptual issues remain to be worked out. A consensus on what religion is may remain elusive, as Cavanaugh predicts, but scholars of international relations might pay more attention to the issue of how distinctive religion is in comparison with other ideologies—liberalism, socialism, realism, and the like—and other organizations, including states, parties, lobbies, NGOs, and so on. Is religion *sui generis*, one of the views that Cavanaugh sets forth? Can it be theorized like other organizations?[284] Or does it pervade other areas of life so much that it indistinguishable from them?

One potentially distinctive aspect of religion, following Toft, is its transnational character. Most religions are communities that span borders. (Exceptions are Hinduism and Judaism, which are concentrated in, and indeed organized in relationship to, a single nation, but even these religions have large and politically significant diaspora populations.) If this is the case, then it might

[284] This suggestion was provided by Jack Snyder, one of the members of the working group, in a communication to the group.

be difficult to confine the study of religion strictly to international relations, that is, to relations *between* states and the norms and organizations that seek to govern these relations. That is, the line between international relations and comparative politics may well become blurred. If so, the blurring may prove to greatly expand what is conceived as the study of religion and international relations.

Many in the group agreed that scholars need to pay far more attention to the content of religions and, for that matter, differences between religions. This might include their theologies, but also, following Hassner, their symbols, rituals, and lived practice. Religious communities' organization (central and hierarchical or diffuse and horizontal?), their size, the intensity of their belief and practice, their historical relationship to the state, and other factors may also prove relevant to their political impact. If these factors—what is most distinct about religion—prove of importance, it will strengthen the case for looking at religion as a distinct and unique phenomenon worth studying.

Perhaps the most promising avenue for future research is one that Desch proposes, drawing upon the suggestion of political scientist Eva Bellin, namely, the development of middle-range propositions about religion and politics in a wide variety of settings. These might be of two sorts. The first tests the impact of religion—religious organizations, religious individuals, religion-state relationships—on important political outcomes, including war, terrorism, the formation and development of international organizations, human rights, women's rights, democratization, dictatorship, peace settlements, transitional justice, humanitarian intervention, economic growth, and foreign policy. The

second sort would conceive of religion as the thing to be explained. Why do religious actors take on the politics that they do? What explains variation and changes in political theology—in religion-state relationships?

Ultimately, the fate of research in religion and international relations will be determined by whether scholars inquire with their feet. Perhaps this is most true for graduate students. Will they make religion and global politics the subject of their dissertations? Will they continue to build their career as scholars around this subject? The members of this working group believe that there is more than enough phenomena in the world to sustain a burgeoning research agenda. Whether such an agenda thrives will depend on the faith of scholars that these phenomena are present, interesting, and important to the future of international relations.