

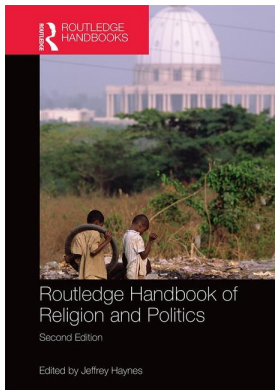
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### **Integrating religion into international relations theory**

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## INTEGRATING RELIGION INTO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

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Religion and international relations (IR) theory have had a unique and interesting relationship. It is arguable that modern IR has some of its roots in religious conflict in that the Peace of Westphalia (1648), which many consider the origin of the modern international system, was to a large extent motivated by the desire to end international wars fought over religion. Despite this, until around the new millennium, few IR scholars addressed religion.<sup>1</sup> Yet today it is becoming increasingly clear that religion is an important influence on IR theory. There is an emerging body of work that recognizes and investigates this influence.<sup>2</sup>

In this chapter we discuss the multiple influences of religion on IR theory. We argue that religion is a multi-faceted phenomenon which interacts with politics, society and the economy in multiple ways. This is also true of its interaction with IR theory. Any one of these influences, by itself, would be worthy of note and the sum of these influences results in a combined impact that makes it one of the most important intervening variables in IR.

In addition we discuss how one prominent IR theory, classical realism, can accommodate an understanding of these influences. This is not to argue that other prominent IR theories like neo-realism, liberalism, constructivism, the English school, and Marxism have no explanatory power. Rather, we use classical realism to demonstrate how an understanding of religion can be integrated into an existing IR theory strands.

For the purposes of this chapter, we define religion as a social and political phenomenon that influences aspects of politics, society, and the economy. Of course religion is more than this but this definition is sufficient for the purposes of this essay – to determine religion's influence in the international arena. This is because the discussion below focuses on what religion does and the nature of its influence in the specific context of IR rather than what religion is.<sup>3</sup>

### **Classical realism and religion**

While classical realism is not a monolithic school of thought, most thinkers within this school of IR theory agree on some basic parameters. States are the key unit of analysis and they seek power in a competitive anarchic environment. Decision makers are rational in that they have consistent and ordered preferences which they seek to achieve in a utility-maximizing manner.

Many scholars of IR theory argue that classical realism cannot easily account for issues of culture and identity, including religion.<sup>4</sup>

Yet if one looks closely the “fathers” of realism did include religion in their thinking. Thucydides in his *History of the Peloponnesian War* included multiple religious references. For Machiavelli “religion was something that demanded scrupulous attention, but its importance derived from its impact on the causes of men’s actions, not from its truth.”<sup>5</sup> For example he argues that “rulers . . . should uphold the basic principles of the religion which they practice in, and, if this be done it will be easy for them to keep their commonwealth religious, and, in consequence, good and united . . . even though they be convinced it is quite fallacious.”<sup>6</sup> Hobbes in his book *The Leviathan* recognized religion as a powerful motivational force. Yet all of these thinkers, while recognizing religion’s power to create outcomes in an anarchic world, warned political leaders against basing their policies upon moral considerations including religion. Twentieth-century thinkers who are foundational to modern classical realism such as Hans Morgenthau make similar arguments.<sup>7</sup>

Given this, we posit that religion is not foreign to classical realism. Below we discuss several ways religion can influence IR and how classical realism can accommodate an understanding of these influences.

### Legitimacy

While Classical Realism emphasized material power and interest, these concepts contain sufficient flexibility to include less tangible forms of power including legitimacy and persuasion. Along these lines, religion can lend legitimacy to governments as well as specific policies followed by governments. Legitimacy can be defined as “the normative belief by an actor that a rule or institution ought to be obeyed.”<sup>8</sup> To convince another that your policy preference is legitimate is to convince them that you are correct, perhaps even morally correct, and that they should support your policies and the actions based on those policies, or at least not oppose them. Religion can be a potent tool in this arena.

Specifically, religion is a complex and versatile tool of persuasion. Most religions are complex with multiple traditions upon which policy makers can draw to justify different, and often contrasting, policies. For example most religious traditions can and have been used at various times to justify policies of war and violence as well as peace and reconciliation.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps this is why many US presidents have used religious imagery to support their foreign policies. Ronald Reagan called the USSR an “evil empire” and George W. Bush has repeatedly used religious imagery in his justification for the war in Iraq and the war on terrorism. In fact, most American presidents have relied on religious imagery to prepare the nation for war.<sup>10</sup> George W. Bush’s view of the world is not unopposed. Numerous Muslim leaders have characterized Bush’s policies as a war against all Muslims, invoking religious imagery in order to oppose these policies. In addition, there exist Christian-based challenges to Bush’s policies.<sup>11</sup> Religion is also in many ways a double-edged sword in that those who wish to oppose a policy can generally also find legitimacy.

It is important to note that this use of religious legitimacy as a means for persuasion has at least three limits. First, religious persuasion is often limited by cultural and religious boundaries. For example, invoking Jesus is more likely to sway Christians than Muslims or Jews, much less Hindus or Buddhists. Second, not everyone will be swayed by religious arguments. In fact, some people are anti-religious and religious persuasion may make them more likely to oppose a policy. Many secularists in Israel, for example, resent the influence of religious parties on the government and are likely to oppose any policy that is perceived as religious in

origin. Finally, religious persuasion is to a great extent dependent on the credentials of the one using it. Someone who is known to be not particularly religious will have more difficulty using religious persuasion than someone with good religious credentials. For example, the Pope or the Dalai Lama will have an easier time invoking religious legitimacy to support a cause than a secular leader widely known to have engaged in immoral behavior, such as Bill Clinton.

Classical realism can encompass this view of religious legitimacy by classifying it as a form of power. While most classical realists focus on material power such as military and economic might, there is room for other forms of power. Hans Morgenthau specifically states that “Power comprises anything that establishes and maintains the control of man over man. Thus power covers all social relationships which serve that end, from physical violence to the most subtle psychological ties by which one mind controls another.”<sup>12</sup> Niebuhr similarly argues that man can “create an endless variety of types and combinations of power, from that of pure reason to that of pure physical force.”<sup>13</sup> While classical realist thinkers rarely addressed religion as one of these psychological or social forms of power, it clearly fits into that mold.

### World-views

The discussion of legitimacy and persuasion implies that in some cases religion is a tool used cynically by policy makers, among others, to advance their goals. While this certainly occurs, religion can also act as an independent motivating force. This argument is common in the comparative literature on religion. For instance Seul argues that “no other repositories of cultural meaning have historically offered so much in response to the human need to develop a secure identity. Consequently, religion often is at the core of individual and group identity.”<sup>14</sup> Mark Juergensmeyer similarly argues that religion “provides the vision and commitment that propels an activist into scenes of violence, and it supplies the ideological glue that makes that activist’s community of support cohere.”<sup>15</sup> This argument that religion can strengthen identity and influence behavior is clearly applicable to IR theory.

This can influence IR in two ways. First, religion can influence the world-view or belief system of a policy maker. To the extent that this is true, religion has the potential to influence that policy maker’s decisions. In cases of religious world-views this can lead to extreme and intractable policies because “religion deals with the constitution of being as such. Hence, one cannot be pragmatic on concerns challenging this being.”<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, religion can also encourage peace and reconciliation.<sup>17</sup>

There are numerous important international incidents and trends that are clearly influenced by religious motivations. Iran’s ruling clergy feels that its actions are divinely inspired and, therefore, cannot be wrong. Similarly, the motivation for the 9/11 attacks was based at least in part on a version of the extremist Wahhabi Islamic theology.<sup>18</sup> It also does not fit well into paradigms of IR which are based on material motivations because the Saudi elites from whom this ideology arose are to a large extent dependent upon US support, thus religious motivations provide a potential explanation for why they acted against their material interests.

It is not necessary that a policy maker’s world-view be completely religious for religion to have an impact. Most people, including religious people, have complex world-views based on a number of factors including, but not limited to, their upbringing, education, friends, family, cultural heritage, political ideologies, and personal history. Religion need only be among these influences to have an impact. It is likely that that most significant influence of religious world-views on the decisions of policy makers is not in the more blatant examples like Iran and al Qaeda, but rather in the cumulative influence of religious aspects of policy makers’ world-views.

The second influence of world-views on IR is the constraints placed on policy makers by widely held religious beliefs among their constituents. Even under autocratic regimes it can be unwise for policy makers to take an action that runs directly counter to some belief, moral, or value that is widely held by their constituents. For example, in the Arab–Israeli conflict, leaders from both sides need to weigh how their populations will react to any agreement. This is particularly true of agreements dealing with the disposition of holy sites like the city of Jerusalem. While there are few large-n studies which specifically focus on the religious constraints that can be placed on policy making, several studies show that religion can influence the political and cultural mediums in which policy makers act. For instance several studies show that Islam is associated with authoritarian governments.<sup>19</sup> There is also no shortage of studies showing that religious affiliation is associated with political attitudes.<sup>20</sup>

While classical realism focuses on power as a primary motive, theorists in this tradition allow for other motivations. For example Niebuhr argues that reason can become subservient to “prejudice and passion and the consequent persistence of irrational egoism.”<sup>21</sup> Kissinger allowed that leaders might base their decisions on ideology rather than more “objective” criteria.<sup>22</sup> In a discussion of Communist ideology Kissinger argues that ideology “furnishes the standard of truth and ultimate success . . . provides a means for maintaining cohesion . . . [and] supplies the criteria for settling disputes.”<sup>23</sup> Morgenthau both argues for and criticizes the power of these irrational motives:

carrying their idols before them, the nationalistic masses of our time meet in the international arena, each group convinced that it executes the mandate of history, . . . and that it fulfills a sacred mission ordained by providence, however defined. Little do they know that they meet under an empty sky from which the gods have departed.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, realist thinkers allow that ideology and religion can influence foreign policy but they strongly advise against allowing this to occur.

Also, shared religious ideology can be the basis for alliances between states just as political ideologies are the basis for such alliances. For example the bipolar system that existed during the Cold War based on political ideology could be a model for a similar division of states along religious lines. This is essentially Samuel Huntington’s basic argument in his Clash of Civilizations theory.<sup>25</sup>

### **Institutions**

Religious institutions clearly play a role in domestic politics, where they can be potent agents of political mobilization. Classic mobilization theory<sup>26</sup> holds that any group which has an existing organizational infrastructure, such as religious institutions, can use that infrastructure as a basis for mobilization. This strategy for mobilization is effective because religious institutions tend to have most of the features one would want to have in order to mobilize people for political action. They have meeting places and communication networks. People who are active in religious organizations tend to develop organizational and leadership skills. Religious institutions also often have considerable economic assets and good access to the media. In some cases they are part of international networks.<sup>27</sup>

However, there is also a countervailing trend where religious institutions tend to be conservative and support the status quo. Comparative research shows that when religious institutions benefit from the status quo they tend to support it but when some aspect of the status quo is a

threat to these institutions or the religion they represent, they tend to support the opposition. For example, Anthony Gill shows that in Latin America the Catholic Church tends to support opposition movements in countries where they are in danger of losing their congregants to other denominations. Usually in such cases these congregants are disillusioned with the government and the Church needs to disassociate itself from the government to remain legitimate in their eyes. In cases where this challenge is not present and the Church benefits from government support it supports the government.<sup>28</sup>

Religious organizations are active both domestically and internationally supporting political causes.<sup>29</sup> For example, the World Council of Churches played a key role in supporting the various international divestment and actions which led to the fall of the Apartheid regime in South Africa.<sup>30</sup>

While classical realism focuses on the state as the primary actor in international politics, it is possible to expand the pool of actors to include religious institutions. This can be true of those religious institutions which are themselves international. It is also possible for religious actors and institutions to influence a government's foreign policy. For example Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer, two prominent neo-realists (a school of thought even more strict in excluding non-state actors than classical realism) acknowledge that ethnic and religious lobbies have influenced US foreign policy.<sup>31</sup>

### **Non-state religious actors and transnational religious movements**

There are a number of types of non-state religious actors and transnational religious movements which clearly influence IR. We discuss several of them here.

Perhaps the most prominent type of transnational religious movement is religious fundamentalism. Both the origins and agenda of religious fundamentalism can be said to be transnational. In brief, religious fundamentalism is a reaction against modernity.<sup>32</sup> In fact, a major goal of fundamentalists is to protect their religious identities and traditions from modernity and secularism.<sup>33</sup> Ultimately many fundamentalist movements, especially Islamic ones, hope to create a worldwide religious society that knows no borders. Thus, for them, transnationalism is very much their goal.

Certainly, few of these movements feel that their ideology is limited by state borders and many of them seek to spread their movement internationally. This is accomplished through a number of strategies. First, many movements seek to take control of or at least influence state and local governments. If they manage to gain control of a state, in addition to enforcing their religious ideals locally, they use the state to spread the revolution worldwide. This places them firmly within the bounds of classical realist thought. Iran and Afghanistan under the Taliban regime are prime examples of this.

Second, they try to take over religious institutions and become the sole arbiters of religious legitimacy and authority. If they succeed this allows them to use this monopoly of religious legitimacy and authority to portray their goals as moral and correct and paint any who oppose them as evil and subversive. Third, these movements form transnational linkages with other like-minded movements worldwide. These linkages range from the informal to the formal, but clearly represent an effort to form a transnational agenda. Fourth, they make use of the media and international communications to both co-ordinate activities and spread their message worldwide.

While there are some isolated examples of fundamentalist movements taking over states, it is likely their successes in persuasion and framing public debate and influencing governments (rather than taking them over) which has the greatest influence on international politics.



Religious states like Iran and the Taliban government in Afghanistan, while having a significant impact on IR, can be effectively marginalized and countered by the international community. However, the ability of fundamentalist movements to persuade and influence world leaders and, more importantly, the constituents of these leaders of the morality and correctness of their agenda has a less measurable impact, but one that is most likely more significant. Thus, the grass-roots efforts of fundamentalists to gain converts to their ideologies will likely have the longest-lasting and most important long-term impact on IR.

Religious terror movements are another prominent set of international religious actors. While religion has always been a justification for terrorism,<sup>34</sup> religious terrorism is becoming the dominant form of terrorism in the world today.<sup>35</sup> A series of studies has shown that beginning in the 1980s, religious terror has become the most prominent form of terror and that most, but certainly not all, terrorist groups formed during and since the 1990s are Muslim groups, as well as that most terror from this period onward was perpetrated by these groups.<sup>36</sup> Despite the prominence of Islam in recent religious terrorism, it is important to note that both currently and historically, religious terrorism is not synonymous with Islam.

Religious terror has been prominent in a number of high-profile conflicts such as the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, the Chechen rebellion against Russia, the Iraq war, and the civil war in Algeria. Pan-Islamic terror groups like al Qaeda are responsible for high-profile attacks in the West as well as in the Islamic world. Religious terror is also present in conflicts that do not involve Muslims, such as the civil war in Sri Lanka.

This phenomenon, in its current form, is related to the growth of fundamentalism. This is true for at least three reasons. First, as noted earlier, fundamentalism is in part a reaction against modernity. Fundamentalists feel the need to alter the political status quo in order to bring the world into alignment with their ideology. Second, fundamentalist movements are often linked with national movements supporting minorities that seek some form of self-determination. Third, fundamentalists of all stripes resent the encroachment of secular values into their societies.<sup>37</sup>

All of these motivations require political changes in order to accomplish their goals. This, along with the tendency of fundamentalists to want to reorder the world, is a potent combination. However while most fundamentalist movements would likely prefer peaceful means to accomplish this, peaceful means are often insufficient. Since fundamentalist ideologies are generally absolutist, they are able to justify violence in order to achieve these goals. Why terrorism specifically? Because terrorism is perceived by the fundamentalist movements that use this tactic as the most effective form of violence available to them. Put differently, if these movements were able to achieve their ends peacefully or had military forces comparable to that of the United States, for example, they would not need to use terrorism. But in most cases these movements are involved in asymmetrical conflicts against state forces which have more objective military and police power than them. This leaves terrorism as one of the few options available to them.

In the few cases where Muslim fundamentalists control a state – Iran, and Afghanistan under the Taliban – their efforts to spread the Islamic revolution also include terror. This is because engaging in more traditional state warfare is dangerous to those states, especially since those who they consider their primary enemies – the West and Israel – have strong militaries. Thus, engaging in terror through various proxy groups allows them to pursue the violent path but still insulate themselves from retaliation. Though the recent hostilities between Israel and both the Hamas-led Palestinian government and Hezbollah in Lebanon show that this insulation is not complete.

Be that as it may, it is clear that this religious wave of terror has significantly influenced international politics. It has caused the formation or realignment of international alliances between states in order to fight it. It has also led to a recognition that non-state actors can be

a potent force which undermine the traditional state monopoly on the use of violence. It has also influenced the foreign policies of many states and will likely continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

While fundamentalism and terror are high-profile issues, there are other forms of international religious actors. Traditional religious institutions often try to influence foreign policy and act internationally.

While dealing with transnational entities such as religious movements, fundamentalist, terrorist, or otherwise, is likely better addressed by other schools of IR such as neoliberalism, constructivism, or the English school, there are avenues for explorations within classical realism. These movements can be seen as a challenge to the international system as a whole or even an effort to create a world government. Wolfers argues that “lack of consensus among the major nations about the desirability of a world government as well as about the kind of world government today would be more likely to lead to war than to reduce enmity.”<sup>38</sup> On a more limited basis they can be seen as a challenge to state governments which, when successful, create religious states.

### Religious states

States which are fully guided by a religious ideology are rare but almost half of the states in the world either have an official religion or give one religion prominence over all other religions without declaring that religion the official one.<sup>39</sup> Of course an official religion can mean different things in different states. For example both Iran and the United Kingdom both have official religions but few would argue the impact of religion on international policy is the same in these two states. Nevertheless, many governments’ foreign policies are influenced to some extent by religion. In these states, all of the factors we discuss above become more relevant.

While, as we note above, classical realism clearly recommends against religious factors influencing foreign policy, classical realism does have tools to account for religious states. For example Morgenthau allows for religion to influence how a state determines its interests when he argues that “the kind of interest determining political action in a particular period of history depends upon the political and cultural context within which foreign policy is formulated.”<sup>40</sup> Foreign policy can be seen as the consequences of elite preferences and their reaction to the external environment.<sup>41</sup> It is possible to include religion in these preferences and perceptions.

The ideological imperative to spread the influence of one’s religion is not altogether different from the Soviet Union’s policy of spreading communism, a topic discussed extensively by classical realists. In fact, Morgenthau described this imperative in decidedly religious terms:

Today, the two main power centers in the world, Washington and Moscow, are also the centers of two antagonistic political philosophies which have a tendency to transform them into political religions. These two power centers profess and act upon two incompatible conceptions of human nature, of society, and of government, and have found it at times hard to resist the temptation to try and make the world over in the image of these conceptions.<sup>42</sup>

Even if one does not accept this interpretation of classical realism with ideology driving policy, it is clear that during the Cold War ideology drove alliance formation and there is no reason this could not also occur with religious ideologies.

Also, national security and national interest are ambiguous terms open to interpretation. Accordingly threats to religion can be interpreted as threats to national security or national



interest. Wolfers argues that these terms permit “everyone to label whatever policy he favors with an attractive and possibly deceptive name.”<sup>43</sup> Lippman similarly argues that such threats can include threats to a state’s “core values.”<sup>44</sup>

### **Other transnational religious trends, issues, and phenomena**

There are a number of additional transnational trends, issues, and phenomena which overlap with religion that are worthy of note. Many of them have ethical elements. For example, the issues of human and religious rights are increasingly becoming international issues. The issue of human rights in general has become an important element of the foreign policies of many Western states. Also, the issue of religious rights is included in a number of international treaties and documents including the 1948 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention of Genocide, the 1981 UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief; the 1950 European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedom, the American Convention on Human Rights, the 1969 African Charter on Human and People’s Rights, and the 1990 Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam, among others.

Nevertheless, perceptions of the scope and application of these rights differ along religious lines, especially between the secular and Muslim states. One reason for this is that the modern concept of human rights developed in the West and this development was influenced in a number of ways by Christianity.<sup>45</sup> For example, most secular documents provide a list of specific rights<sup>46</sup> but the Cairo Declaration which represents the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers contains only a protection against forced conversion. In fact, the Cairo Declaration goes further in rejecting the international human rights regime by defining Islam as not only the preferred value system for the world’s Muslims, but as the only acceptable value system for the entire world.<sup>47</sup> As human rights violations are increasingly being considered justifications for international intervention, this issue is becoming increasingly important in the international arena. Similarly, the issue of women’s rights is becoming an increasing source of tension between the West and the non-West. Non-Western states, and especially Muslim states, place many restrictions on women that are incongruent with Western ideas of equality for women. Religion is often used to justify many of these restrictions.

Not all of these ethical sources of tension are inter-religious. One such issue is that of family planning. In this case the tension is between those with a more secular orientation and those with a more religious orientation as family planning, and especially abortion, is to varying degrees restricted or banned by most interpretations the Abrahamic religions. The issue of stem-cell research also has caused tensions along similar secular vs. religious lines.

Interestingly, ethical issues are not completely foreign to classical realism. Niebuhr, for example, emphasized the “ethical consequences of interdependence” arguing that it is impossible to think of a nation and its interests in a narrow manner.<sup>48</sup> In fact Niebuhr “defended the use of force against Nazis in terms of morality and justice.”<sup>49</sup> Such actions can also be defined in terms of national interest as expansionist dictators who engage in human rights abuses can often become threats to the stability of the state system.

Another major international issue is holy places. The holy places for the three Abrahamic religions which are located in Israel have been an issue of contention. This includes competing territorial claims between the Jews and the Muslims, among Christians for control of Christian holy sites, and tensions between Christians and Muslims over holy sites in Nazareth. All of these disputes have led to the political involvement of a number of foreign states. Another prominent international incident regarding holy sites was when the Taliban-controlled Afghan

government decided to destroy two giant statues of Buddha in Bamiyan, Afghanistan. In addition to Buddhist governments and scholars, there was also involvement by UNESCO and even several Muslim states in the unsuccessful efforts to stop the destruction of these statues.<sup>50</sup> Clearly state behavior in these instances demonstrates that the safety and control of these holy places are linked to their national interest. Control of them can also be seen as a form of power, in that access to them is a commodity desired by other states.

## Identity

One of religion's many facets is identity. The concept of religious identity overlaps with most of the other ways religion influences IR that we discuss earlier in this essay but it deserves to be identified and discussed separately. That IR is influenced by various identity issues is probably accepted by many IR scholars though there are no doubt many – including realists, neo-realists, and Marxists – who would dispute this notion. In short, both the extent and nature of this influence are disputed.

The debate over Samuel Huntington's<sup>51</sup> Clash of Civilizations theory illustrates this point well. Huntington essentially argues that the national and ethnic identities which were prominent during the Cold War are becoming less relevant, and in the post-Cold War era more macro-level identities, which he calls civilizations, will become the primary form of identity which drives international politics and the primary basis for international conflict. Huntington defines a civilization as:

the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of what distinguishes humans from other species. It is defined by both common language, history, religion, customs, institutions and by the subjective self identification of people.<sup>52</sup>

This definition is essentially the same as most definitions of ethnic and national identity. The primary difference is that the identity groupings he describes are much larger. In fact, Huntington's concept of civilizations is essentially an amalgamation of more narrowly defined ethnic and national identities into a broader identity group based on more generally defined common traits. Furthermore, these amalgamations are largely along religious lines. Most of the civilizations on Huntington's list of civilizations – the Western, Sino-Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American, and "possibly" African civilizations – include at least some aspect of religion in their definition and even are named after religions. Other than the African civilizations, they are largely religiously homogeneous. Thus, in essence, Huntington argues that religious identity will be the basis for IR in the post-Cold War era.<sup>53</sup>

This theory was among the most controversial of the late-twentieth-century IR theories. A number of criticisms emerged to counter it. However, few of these criticisms directly denied that identity in general and religious identity in particular now influence IR, sometimes significantly. In fact many argued that identity would remain important, but it would be the *national* and *ethnic* identities which were the primary forms of identity in the Cold War era – not religious identities per se – which would remain the dominant forms of identity in the post-Cold War era.<sup>54</sup> Thus, to the extent that religion plays a role in national and ethnic identities,<sup>55</sup> religious identity will play a role in international politics.

Due to the sheer volume of the debate over Huntington's theory it is impossible to fully discuss the critics of that theory in this context but a brief listing of the types of criticisms is in

order. First, many argue that the previous bases for conflict will remain the bases for conflict in the post-Cold War era. The argument that national and ethnic identities will remain important fit into this category. Second, the world is becoming more interdependent and a single world identity will form that will make all previous sub-identities irrelevant. This criticism has the distinction of being one of the few that directly argues against the relevance of religious identity. Third, many argue that Huntington ignored or missed some essential factor which makes his theory irrelevant. These factors include conflict-management techniques, population and environmental issues, the importance of military and economic power, the processes of modernization and secularization, and the desire of many in the non-West to be like the West. Fourth, many point out that Huntington's description of the facts is inaccurate or even intentionally distorted. Fifth, every quantitative study, which when combined include nearly every domestic and international conflict since World War II, consistently find that civilizational conflicts are a minority of conflicts, civilizational conflict did not increase with the end of the Cold War, and more traditional explanations for conflict have better explanatory power than civilizational factors. Sixth, some argue that Huntington himself does not believe his theory and the reason he presented it was to influence US foreign policy. Seventh, many attach Huntington's methodology for various, and often contradictory reasons. Finally, several critics note that Huntington's predictions are potentially self-fulfilling prophecies. That is, if foreign-policy makers come to believe his predictions, especially his prediction of a Muslim vs. West conflict, this will help to make those predictions come true.<sup>56</sup>

There is room for the concept of religious identity in classical realism. Just as religious ideology can be the basis for alliances so can religious identity. On a deeper level both Morgenthau and Niebuhr emphasized "human nature" in their thinking. Human nature includes the human desire for belonging.

## **Conclusions**

There is a growing realization that IR theory's blind spot for religion is one of the greatest failings of that body of theory. Many like Samuel Huntington argue explicitly or implicitly that religion has returned to the international scene after having been gone for some undefined period of time. Yet, does it really make sense that religion disappeared then reappeared? Or is it more likely that religion was always present and IR scholars were blinded by their paradigms to its existence?

Certainly the influence of many of religion's individual facets waxes and wanes over time. It is also certain that the influence of religion evolves over time. The rise of religious fundamentalism is one example of this. Yet religious fundamentalism's influence on IR is a new manifestation of an old influence. The idea that religion should guide the state and the desire to spread the influence of one's religion are not new to the relations between states. In fact these influences of religion can be described as ancient. What is new in this case is the specific form of religious ideology. Thus, the content of religious ideologies may change over time, but how they interact with IR remains more constant. This is true of most of religion's influences on IR.

Religion is used to legitimate and de-legitimate actions and policies. It influences the world-views and actions of policy makers and their constituents. Religious institutions can both mobilize their members for political action and discourage political action. Religious conflicts cross borders. And there exist a number of transnational phenomena and issues related to religion. These general patterns remain constant but their specific manifestations can vary over place and time. Put differently, the specifics of religion's influence on IR may change over time, but no matter the evolution of these specifics, the general pattern remains relatively constant.

While some would argue that we need to create entirely new theories of IR to deal with these realizations, we argue that existing theories can account for religion. We demonstrate here that classical realism, a theory many would consider to be incompatible with religion, can in fact account for many of religion's influences on the relations between states.

## Notes

- 1 Hassner, "Religion as a Variable"; Philpott, "The Challenge of September 11." For a detailed discussion of why religion was ignored in the social sciences in general see Fox, *An Introduction to Religion and Politics*.
- 2 Examples include Sandal and James, "Religion and International Relations Theory"; Snyder, *Religion and International Relations Theory*; Sandal and Fox, *Religion in IR Theory*.
- 3 For a discussion of how to define religion in the context of the social sciences see Fox, *An Introduction to Religion and Politics*, 4–7.
- 4 Keohane and Nye, "Power and Interdependence in the Information Age"; Lapid, "Culture's Ship."
- 5 Preus, "Machiavelli's Functional Analysis of Religion," 173.
- 6 Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, 168.
- 7 Fox and Sandal, *Religion in IR Theory*, 31–5.
- 8 Hurd, "Legitimacy and Authority in International Politics," 381.
- 9 Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*.
- 10 Kelly "With God on His Side."
- 11 See, for example, Laaman, *Getting on Message*. For a more general argument for religious pacifism see Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil*.
- 12 Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 8–9.
- 13 Niebuhr, *Nature and Destiny of Man*, 20.
- 14 Seul, "Ours is the Way of God," 558.
- 15 Juergensmeyer, "Terror Mandated by God," 17.
- 16 Laustsen and Waever, "In Defense of Religion," 719.
- 17 Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*; Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon*.
- 18 Gold, *Hatred's Kingdom*.
- 19 Fisch, "Islam and Authoritarianism"; Midlarsky, "Democracy and Islam." These studies look at statistical relationships across large numbers of states. Thus they imply that, on average, Muslim states tend to be more autocratic than non-Muslim states. This does not mean that there are no Muslim states which are also democratic.
- 20 For a discussion of these studies see Beyerlain and Chaves, "The Political Activities of Religious Congregations in the US."
- 21 Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, xx.
- 22 Kissinger, "Domestic Structure and Foreign Policy."
- 23 *Ibid.*, 518–19.
- 24 Morgenthau, "Politics Among Nations," 234.
- 25 Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" and *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*.
- 26 See, for example, McCarthy and Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements"; and Tarrow, *Democracy and Disorder*.
- 27 Fox, *An Introduction to Religion and Politics*.
- 28 Gill, *Rendering Unto Caesar*; Fox "Do Religious Institutions Support Violence or the Status Quo?"
- 29 Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 98–115.
- 30 Sandal, "Religious Actors"; Fox, *An Introduction to Religion and Politics*.
- 31 Walt and Mearsheimer, *The Israel Lobby*.
- 32 For a more detailed discussion of the definition of and characteristics of fundamentalism as well as the links between fundamentalism and modernity see Almond, Appleby and Sivan, *Strong Religion*.

- 33 Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*, 87–94.
- 34 Rapoport, “Fear and Trembling.”
- 35 Rapoport, “Modern Terror.”
- 36 Weinberg and Eubank, “Terrorism and Democracy”; Weinberg, Eubank and Pedahzur, “Characteristics of Terrorist Organizations.”
- 37 Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War?* and “Terror Mandated by God.”
- 38 Wolfers, “Statesmanship and Moral Choice,” 187.
- 39 Fox, *An Introduction to Religion and Politics*.
- 40 Morgenthau, “The Evil of Politics and the Ethics of Evil,” 12.
- 41 Schweller, “Unanswered Threats,” 169–70.
- 42 Morgenthau, “What Is the National Interest,” 4.
- 43 Wolfers, “National Security,” 481.
- 44 Lippman, *US Foreign Policy*, 51.
- 45 Martin, “The Three Monotheistic World Religions.”
- 46 For example see the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief at <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/36/a36r055.htm>.
- 47 Martin, “The Three Monotheistic World Religions.”
- 48 Niebuhr, “Repeal the Neutrality Act!,” 2.
- 49 Patterson, *Just War Thinking*, 3.
- 50 For a more detailed discussion of these issues see, Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 108–13.
- 51 Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” and *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*.
- 52 Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?,” 24.
- 53 For a more detailed discussion of the overlap between Huntington’s civilizations and religious identity see Fox, *Religion, Civilization and Civil War*, 157–9.
- 54 See, for example, Gurr, “Peoples Against the State”; and Walt, “Building Up New Bogeymen.”
- 55 Prominent scholars of ethnicity and nationalism generally argue that religion is often an essential element of ethnic and national identities. See, for example, Gurr, *Minorities at Risk*, 3.
- 56 For a full review of these critiques of Huntington’s theories see Fox, *Religion, Civilization and Civil War*, 161–5.

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