

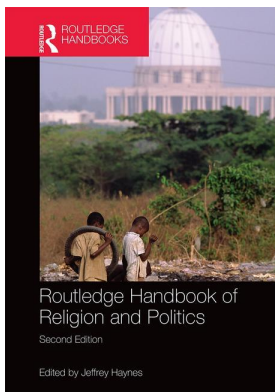
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Jeffrey Haynes

### **Religion and foreign policy**

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RELIGION AND  
FOREIGN POLICY*Nukhet A. Sandal*

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The role of religion in the making and practice of foreign policy has been at the center of heated debates. We can attribute this interest to two main factors. The first is the rise in the number and prominence of religious actors in the international arena, and an increasing awareness on the part of the policy circles that religion is here to stay. In a message to State Department diplomats in Washington and overseas, the Secretary of State John Kerry said, “In every country, in every region of the world, and on nearly every issue central to US foreign policy, religious institutions and actors are among the drivers of change”.<sup>1</sup> The second is the rise in the number of academic publications on the issue of religion and international relations that goes beyond the relationship between religion and violence. In 2002, Philpott argued “with few exceptions, international relations scholars have long assumed the absence of religion among the factors that influence states”.<sup>2</sup> This long-term neglect has recently transformed into a vibrant research agenda. Political science scholars have written about religion and its connections to international relations theory,<sup>3</sup> military,<sup>4</sup> peacebuilding,<sup>5</sup> and international organizations.<sup>6</sup> This renewed interest in the study of religion and politics spills into the field of foreign policy as well.

Before analyzing the linkages between religion and foreign policy, we should pay attention to how we define “religion” since there is no single definition of the concept, and how we define “foreign policy”. As Buzan and Little assert, International Relations thinking should shift from mutually exclusive interpretations to an interlinked set of perspectives that complement each other.<sup>7</sup> Religion indeed should be seen from such an inclusive perspective and the lack of one single definition should not deter the foreign policy scholars who are ready to define carefully the aspect of religion used in an academic investigation. The same religion can have different policy manifestations in different settings, therefore it is critical not to take “religion” as a monolithic concept.<sup>8</sup> In the study of foreign policy, religious phenomena can be investigated as an independent (as a cause), intervening (as a link between the cause and the resulting observation), and dependent variable (as the “product” of non-religious causes). Even when religion is captured as an independent variable, it is not assumed to be the single cause of any event. When it comes to defining “foreign policy”, the picture is clearer, although there are still multiple ways to approach the definition. This chapter takes the traditional understanding of foreign policy as a state’s strategy towards dealing with other states and international actors. However, it also recognizes that foreign policies are not just made in vacuum and

they are influenced by transnational actors, local interest groups, and the beliefs of individual policy-makers. Similarly, a state's foreign policy is not only about actions towards other states; it includes the state's strategy towards international organizations and transnational networks (including terrorist groups).

Following the conceptual directions above, we can study religion and foreign policy from multiple perspectives and at multiple levels. There are examples of theoretical approaches towards religion and foreign policy that take into account diverse linkages. Warner and Walker, for example, propose a framework of religion and foreign policy that allows multiple causal explanations that include linkages among power, interests, institutions, ideas/culture, and agents.<sup>9</sup> This chapter reviews the possible linkages and influences under four main headings, reflecting four analytical levels: (1) Religion's influence on individuals (individual level), (2) Domestic actors, local politics and foreign policy (sub-state level), (3) States, foreign policy and religion (state level), and (4) Transnational actors and foreign policy (international/transnational level). These categories are not mutually exclusive and there are inevitable overlaps among them. For example, it might be difficult to separate the influence of the local churches on foreign policy from the overall influence of Vatican, or World Council of Churches. Despite this overlap, these categories help us to evaluate contemporary questions of religion and foreign policy in a more systematic manner.

### **Religion's influence on individuals and foreign policy**

Individuals might define themselves through religion either because they believe in the ideologies a religion has in itself, or for pragmatic reasons. Joseph Kony, the leader of the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda, called himself God's spokesperson and created a political theology that is a combination of Acholi nationalism and Christianity. The motivation behind the 9/11 attacks, and the attackers' worldviews, was based at least in part on an extreme version of Wahhabi Islamic worldview. Sinhalese Buddhist nationalists in Sri Lanka, Hindu nationalists in India, and ultra-orthodox Jews in Israel believe that it is their duty to behave in line with their traditions and they have a special political mandate. Religious actors do not have to be the very decision makers who make foreign policy to have an impact. They can influence policies through public opinion and activism. Haynes addresses this dynamic when he states "If religious actors 'get the ear' of key foreign policy-makers because of their shared religious beliefs, the former may become able to influence foreign policy outcomes through the exercise of religious soft power".<sup>10</sup> Religious identity shapes how individuals perceive other countries and their policies as well. Ciftci and Tezcur show that religious identity at the individual level affect favorability ratings of and the projection of soft power by Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia in the Middle East.<sup>11</sup> These views might put constraints on the policy options of foreign policy decision makers even if these decision makers do not share the same views.

Religion can influence foreign policies directly through the decision makers who make them. Guner argues that "state leaders and decision makers can ascribe meanings to reality by assessing foreign policy through their religious lenses".<sup>12</sup> Thus religion can influence how they "identify causes of global problems, allies, enemies" as well as how they assess national interests. Many US presidents, for example, have used religious imagery to legitimize their foreign policies. Carter's conciliatory religious discourse enabled him to bring different worldviews to the table, especially within the context of the Middle East peace process. Ronald Reagan called the USSR an "evil empire". George W. Bush has repeatedly used religious imagery in his justification for the war in Iraq and the "war on terrorism". Bush's worldview and the legitimacy of his policies have been challenged numerous times, even from a Christian

perspective.<sup>13</sup> Albright, the US Secretary of State from 1997 to 2001, draws attention to the religious worldviews of the American presidents and how they helped create an exceptionalist American political culture.<sup>14</sup> Inboden highlights Eisenhower's religious framing of the Cold War, noting his famous words, "when God comes in, communism has to go".<sup>15</sup>

Religious individuals might also play significant roles in foreign policy and peacebuilding initiatives. The concept of faith-based diplomacy builds on the faith-based conflict resolution literature.<sup>16</sup> Its proponents argue that religion can facilitate reconciliation between enemies, solidarity with the poor and the overturning of unjust structures. Faith-based diplomacy focuses on emphasizing pluralism, inclusion, peacemaking through conflict resolution, social justice, forgiveness, healing collective wounds, and atonement. There are also prominent religious figures who played the role of mediator in sensitive situations. One such example is the Anglican churchman Terry Waite, who was an assistant for Anglican Communion affairs to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Waite negotiated hostage releases with post-revolutionary Iran, Libya, and Islamic Jihad.<sup>17</sup> Religious institutions and individuals play a crucial role in defusing crises and restoring stability.

While much of this literature focuses on grassroots efforts, faith-based diplomacy also covers state-to-state interactions.<sup>18</sup> In her book, *The Mighty and the Almighty*, the former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright explains how the United States has not understood the motivations of religious states well enough. At the same time, Albright counts exemplary instances of how and where faith has played a key role in successful initiatives in American diplomacy. A famous example of faith-based peacemaking was orchestrated by President Jimmy Carter at Camp David in 1978, which would not have happened if Carter had not had the ability to "understand and appeal to the deep religious convictions of President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin", Albright argues.<sup>19</sup>

In some contexts, religious and political actors are the same. Political leaders then have infinite access to religious discourse in both domestic and foreign policy making, and can rally their supporters more effectively. Ian Paisley, the former leader of the Democratic Unionist Party in Northern Ireland and an important party to the conflict, which spread beyond the local borders, was also the leader of the Free Presbyterian Church. For years, Paisley did not shy away from attacking the Catholic Church in the newspaper he co-founded, *The Protestant Telegraph*. The case of Paisley and the conflict in Northern Ireland is an instance of fundamental evangelicalism that has regional and international repercussions.

### **Domestic actors, politics, and foreign policy**

Domestic actors, such as religious organizations, lobbies and local interest groups, can have an impact on foreign policy. This influence can happen through creating a strong public opinion on issues, or connecting with transnational organizations to create pressure on decision makers. Thanks to the advance of technology, religious actors also take part in global civil society, transcending the distinction between the domestic and the international.<sup>20</sup> Individuals who share the same religious conviction around the world come together to challenge the premises of the traditional state structure. Religious institutions connect with each other to realize their local and transnational objectives.

Local religious actors can influence national and international politics and they have access to resources. Religious organizations often have most of the organizational resources necessary for political mobilization. These resources include meeting places in which people regularly congregate. While these meetings are usually religious and social meetings, using those meetings to announce the details of a political mobilization campaign requires very little

additional effort. Religious institutions also have communication networks. Active members of religious organizations tend to develop organizational and leadership skills that can also be applied to political activities. Religious institutions also often have considerable economic assets and good access to the media. In this vein, Kalyvas argues that “religious entrepreneurs” are better able to initiate collective action and intense conflict.<sup>21</sup> Ozdamar and Akbaba, for example, show that religious discrimination is an important predictor of initiating and becoming involved in international crises.<sup>22</sup> Basedau, Pfeiffer and Vullers also find that the overlap of religious and other identities, religious groups’ grievances, and religious leaders’ calls for violence are factors that will likely fuel armed conflict.<sup>23</sup>

Local religious organizations and groups also create and consolidate religious myths in the political sphere which can also have implications for foreign policy. For example, Hindu nationalists make speeches for the liberation of Lord Ram’s birthplace and the phraseology is imbued with religious imagery.<sup>24</sup> The Bharatiya Janata Party’s (BJP) fierce stance led to an aggressive foreign policy and a faster development of nuclear weapons, not to mention harsher positions vis-à-vis Kashmir and Pakistan. In another example, aware of the strong Buddhist values of the society, Thaksin Shinawatra, former Prime Minister of Thailand, employed religious rhetoric and made references to an influential ascetic monk and philosopher, Buddhadasa, in his political speeches.<sup>25</sup> Ironically, it is argued that his downfall was partly due to the spiritually informed Buddhist public opinion, which expected him to live up to the Buddhist standards he highlighted in his speeches.<sup>26</sup>

Local politics and gestures can have foreign policy implications based on past traumas and experiences. The Yasukuni Shrine, dedicated to the spirits of those who died when fighting for Japan, has been at the center of political controversies since noted war criminals were also named among the spirits that are to be revered. The former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi’s visits to the shrine had angered the Chinese and the South Koreans as it signaled an aggressive form of Japanese nationalism that was proud of both its nationalist and Shinto heritage, even the most violent episodes. Local religious organizations, in conjunction with their transnational counterparts, might also use the soft power of religion in foreign policy and conflict resolution. Johnston and Sampson show how religious organizations have played a major role as mediators in ending conflict or facilitators of democratic change with case studies including Nicaragua, Nigeria, East Germany, the Philippines, and South Africa.<sup>27</sup>

Religiously inspired lobbies and interest groups might have an impact on foreign policy too. Walt and Mearsheimer, in their study of the influence of the Israeli lobby on American foreign policy, note, “interest groups can lobby elected representatives and members of the executive branch, make campaign contributions, vote in elections, try to mould public opinion” among other actions.<sup>28</sup> Amstutz argues that in the United States, Evangelicals translate their belief that humans were created in God’s image into a core principle of American foreign policy and took action on issues ranging from global poverty to foreign policy towards Israel.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, Ross explores how Muslim interest groups influence the United States, Canada, and United Kingdom foreign policies.<sup>30</sup>

As the examples above already indicate, one can observe the increasing influence of religious actors, including religious political parties, in secular settings. In an officially secular country, Turkey, the ruling Justice and Development (AK) Party came to power due to its Islamic credentials. Although the party did not prove to be as “radical” as the secular circles expected, it challenged the conventional power politics wisdom from time to time, relying mostly on the Muslim public support. For example, in March 2003, the majority of the members of the parliament from the AK Party voted against a resolution authorizing the deployment of the forces of its North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) ally, the US, to Turkey

to open a northern front in a war against Iraq, a fellow Muslim-majority country. Taydas and Ozdamar report that the deputy Prime Minister of the time, Abdullatif Sener, remembers that it was especially difficult “to convince the [AK; that is, the ruling party] party’s pro-Islamist deputies, who were being seriously pressured by the Islamist conservative media, intellectuals, and constituencies not to participate in the war”.<sup>31</sup> This is a case that shows how local religious actors ranging from media to pundits can directly influence critical foreign policies.

Even nationalist groups that condone violence might have strong ties with religious institutions. *Ethniki Organosis Kypriou Agoniston* (EOKA), a Greek Cypriot nationalist movement that employed paramilitary activities to reach its goals, had ties with the Greek Orthodox Church.<sup>32</sup> Groups or establishments that are strongly affiliated with religious institutions might represent themselves as alternatives to the traditional state. Some transnational religious groups seek to take over states or territories within states, and possibly transform them into religious states, can have a considerable impact on the international politics, as we have witnessed with the ISIS expansion in the Middle East. In some states, this claim to political power is regarded as the primary security threat, coming before threats that are posed by other states.

### States, foreign policy, and religion

Religion’s influence on states’ foreign policy is more observable in religious states. Fox, in a study of 177 states’ religion policies between 1990 and 2008, demonstrates that in practice official support for a single religion is common. Forty-one (23.1 percent) have official religions and an additional forty-four (24.8 percent), while not declaring an official religion, support one religion more than others.<sup>33</sup> Political leaders in religious states, in an attempt to justify a course of action, might be more likely to resort to moral discourse on a state level. In a meeting on nuclear weapons with his South Korean counterpart, for example, the Israeli president at the time, Shimon Peres, called Ahmedinejad “the world’s greatest corrupter of morality”.<sup>34</sup>

Religious states are directly influenced by and also actively shape transnational religious ideologies, which we will touch upon later. As Thomas argues, Zionism is a transnational idea as is Pan-Islamism, each having its own symbols and “prophets”, yet both these ideas have contributed significantly to the interest formations and power definitions of individual state actors.<sup>35</sup> In their foreign policy dealings, the leaders of religious states might make references to different understandings of world order, which they might perceive as natural and commonsensical. To illustrate, for Ayatollah Khomeini the 1979 revolution in Iran that transformed Iran into a religious state was only the first phase of a world Islamic Revolution. According to Khomeini, the revolution was to be spread by non-violent means because it was “self-evident” and thus did not require enforcement.<sup>36</sup> Religious states usually have leadership claims, which might have a direct impact on their foreign and domestic policies. For example, Saudi Arabia (Sunni) and Iran (Shi’a) regard themselves as the champions of the Islamic societies. Saudi Arabia severely restricts the religious practices of Shi’a Muslims, including bans on the imports of Shi’a religious books and audiocassettes and censorship of public speeches by Saudi clerics and scholars.<sup>37</sup> This religious ideological competition, in short, has significant local and transnational implications, and shapes foreign policy accordingly.

However, it would be a mistake to conclude that a religious state plays only by religious rules in foreign policy making. Religious states and groups care about how they are recognized and treated by other states. Sharp explains how the ambassador-designate of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Mullah Zaeef, operated as a link between the Islamic vision of the world and Western international society.<sup>38</sup> He shows how the Taliban worked for international recognition as the legitimate government of Afghanistan.

Sharp also demonstrates that as an actor in this quest, Zaeef even sought American support for the Taliban's legitimacy, especially after the praise received by the group from the US due to the ban on poppy cultivation.

When analyzing the influence of religion on foreign policy, it is crucial to recognize the history of the political ideologies and power struggles that empowered religious ideologies and states. The colonial experience has had a tremendous impact on the perceptions, fears, and attitudes of the developing world. For example, Shahin asserts that "many leading [Egyptian] Islamists have explicitly declared their commitment to democracy, but they frequently distinguish between democracy as a system of values and democracy as a policy instrument".<sup>39</sup> Some Islamists think that "the West has betrayed the modern humane ideals in its connection with the Muslim world, and the betrayal is best exemplified by colonialism and its lingering political and economic impacts".<sup>40</sup> In such cases, religious ideology and foreign policy decisions might be manifestations of resistance to imperial and colonial interventions.

Religion can also be influential in the foreign policies of secular states. Nationalism, by itself, carries elements of religious ideologies. Nationalist perspectives are constantly renegotiated in the light of religious frameworks. Brubaker criticizes the understanding of nationalism as a distinctively secular phenomenon, stating that one can treat religion and nationalism as analogous phenomena; religion might help explaining the features of nationalism; religion can be part of nationalism; and there can be forms of religious nationalism.<sup>41</sup> Saat, for example, shows how Malay identity is refashioned towards a tolerant Islam and the unwillingness of the *ulama* to define national identity independent of religion.<sup>42</sup> In the Christian Orthodox world, the Serbian religious elite "developed their theological concepts on the basis of the idea that Serbian orthodoxy forms the heart of the Serbian national identity and that from a historical perspective the Serbian nation is under constant threat".<sup>43</sup> When national identity is influenced by religion, there will be inevitable yet subtle manifestations of this underlying religious identity in foreign policy.

Another such manifestation is the political discourse that has religious references, and the employment of religious narratives in foreign policy. Brown and Theodossopoulos illustrate how Byzantine and Orthodox narratives prevail in the worldviews of the Greeks with regard to international relations.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, Marsden draws attention to the "city on a hill" image (from Matthew 5:14) and "manifest destiny" that has become "deeply ingrained within the American psyche".<sup>45</sup> Sandal illustrates how in the minds of Turkish citizens and officials, the ideal citizen is constructed as Sunni, emphasizing the difficulties of challenging the religious narratives that are rooted in the worldviews of regular citizens, and showing the foreign policy implications of such constructions.<sup>46</sup> As these examples show, national and communal narratives might carry strong religious overtones; through education, upbringing and other social interactions, prevalent narratives and discourses shape worldviews. These worldviews translate into public and foreign policies. Kraus, for example, reports that many Washington-based advocacy groups use religious language to influence the public agenda.<sup>47</sup> Several studies have found that countries that intervene in ethnic conflicts tend to intervene primarily on behalf of minorities which belong to their religion.<sup>48</sup> This shows that in order for religion to be influential in foreign policy decisions, a state does not have to be religious. Existing repositories of national identity and social capital already have significant religious content.

When we look at religious narratives that shape even secular nationalisms, it is common to come across references to sacred lands. Religious and secular states alike typically have fundamental attachment to their territories, which they see as vital to their identity. The importance of holy places to the followers of a religion also makes acquiring or keeping sacred territories under one's control a matter of security. To illustrate, Israel declared Jerusalem as its capital

city despite reactions from the international community. Yet, even Israel's close allies, such as the USA, still keep their embassies in Tel Aviv, not recognizing full Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem. Palestinian leaders also declared Jerusalem as their "eternal" capital, and the status of the city is still debated. Smith argues that such covenantal ideas of election and attachment to the territory exist in a number of societies, including Armenia, Russia, Ethiopia, Northern Ireland, South Africa, India, Iran, and even in the United States, among the Protestant revivalists.<sup>49</sup> Akenson, in his comparative study of Israelis, Ulster-Scots, and Afrikaners, describe their cultures as "covenantal cultures" that have a deep attachment to their territories. For such communities, the defense of these sacred lands is a matter of supreme national interest.<sup>50</sup> The king of Saudi Arabia has the formal title of "The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques" (*Khaadiim al-Haramain al-Sharifain*), which indicates the responsibility for the protection of Mecca and Medina. Many states, even secular ones like France and Germany, have had their sacred claim to the land that shaped their national identity.<sup>51</sup> These attachments and understanding of sacred land shape security conceptions and foreign policies. Hassner uses the concepts of divisible and indivisible conflicts to understand conflicts over holy spaces such as the ones in Jerusalem.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, Svensson uses data on the primary parties' religious demands and identities as well as all intrastate conflict-dyads in the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), 1989–2003, and finds that if the sides in a conflict make demands that are explicitly anchored in a religious tradition, they will come to perceive the conflicting issues as indivisible, and the conflict will be less likely to be settled through negotiations.<sup>53</sup>

Many states, religious or secular, have also explored the soft power of religion or spiritual traditions. The soft power of an entity entails three resources: its culture, political values, and policy (resting on legitimacy and moral authority).<sup>54</sup> Chinese policy makers, among others, recognized this "soft" power of religion, and since 2004, they have begun to establish Confucius Institutes around the world intended to promote friendly relationships with other countries. Cho and Katzenstein report that Korea also caught up with China in terms of reclaiming Confucianism as an asset.<sup>55</sup>

The United States was late in recognizing the importance of religion in diplomacy and foreign policy, which is surprising since it is arguably the world's most powerful "modern" country with a high proportion of apparently highly religious people.<sup>56</sup> In particular, the increasing visibility of political Islam caught US and European foreign policy by surprise. Hurd criticizes the epistemological underpinnings of European and American foreign policy towards political Islam and she argues that "secularist epistemology produces an understanding of 'normal politics' that lends a particular coloring to the politics of Muslim-majority societies".<sup>57</sup> Albright also criticized the Bush administration for its lack of recognition of religion's influence in non-Christian contexts: "One of the many ironies of US policy is that the Bush administration, for all its faith-based initiatives, is far more comfortable working with secular leaders than with those Iraqis for whom religion is central. This is true even when the religious leaders are moderate in orientation and generally accepting the US goals".<sup>58</sup> Albright's prescription for a more successful American diplomacy requires greater understanding of other religions by the state establishment:

In the future, no American ambassador should be assigned to a country where religious feelings are strong unless he or she has a deep understanding of the faiths commonly practiced there. Ambassadors and their representatives, wherever they are assigned, should establish relationships with local religious leaders. The State Department should hire or train a core of specialists in religion to be deployed both in Washington and in key embassies overseas.<sup>59</sup>



The US now has offices and institutions that facilitate religious engagement especially in foreign policy. For example, the White House has an Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships that was established in 2001. Another office, the Office of Religion and Global Affairs, advises the Secretary of State on policy matters as they relate to religion and is a “first point of entry” for those who would like to engage the State Department in Washington on matters of religion and global affairs. These institutional changes show that religion is now recognized as a significant factor in shaping international relations and foreign policy, and it is up to states to use this influence to their advantage by careful communication and engagement.

### Transnational actors and foreign policy

Ideas generate material conditions, and religious ideas have indeed played a transformative role throughout political history. Religious actors usually do not recognize national borders as “natural”.<sup>60</sup> Horowitz, in his study of the crusades and the importance of religious ideologies, maintains that “the Crusading case is the importance of new religious ideas in generating shifts in theological systems over time and the strong resistance of ingrained religious ideas to changes in material conditions – even very powerful conditions”.<sup>61</sup> Strong religious ideologies have the power to restructure the international system and its rules. Although these ideologies are usually transnational, the manifestations can be observed at a local level too.

Evangelical Christians in the USA have significantly affected some foreign policy decision making and execution, particularly in relation to: democratization, human rights, and religious freedom.<sup>62</sup> Allen Hertzke states in his book, *Freeing God’s Children: The Unlikely Alliance for Global Human Rights*, that since the mid-1990s US evangelicals have been the most important part of a new human rights movement. Similarly, Kayao lu traces Islamic activism and dialogue of civilizations, which was initiated by the former Iranian President Muhammad Khatami.<sup>63</sup> Bettiza and Dionigi follow up on this particular research area, investigating the dynamics of religious-based norms, promoted by non-Western norm-makers, within the institutional structures of the international liberal order.<sup>64</sup>

Transnational religious ideologies and organizations might have different manifestations and influence in different countries. Gill, for example, asks the question of why the Catholic Church supported the governments of some Latin American states but supports the opposition in others. He finds that historically in most Latin American states the Church had benefited from a religious monopoly supported by the government, undermining any interest in opposing the government in favor of social, economic, and political change.<sup>65</sup> In many Latin American states citizens were disillusioned with the Church support for unpopular governments. This alienation from pro-establishment churches has contributed to conversions away from Catholicism to North American-style Evangelical denominations. In such competitive settings, the Catholic Church started to support the opposition in order not to lose any congregants. Gill shows that religious institutions tend to support opposition movements when they feel their institution or religion itself is threatened, and the loss of a significant number of congregants constitutes such a risk. This support or opposition defines who rules, and has inevitable implications for foreign policy as well.

There are many other examples of religious institutions having strong influence on shaping regional politics. The Serbian Orthodox Church, which was initially disappointed at the disinterest of Slobodan Milosevic in consolidating the social and the financial status of the clergy, strongly backed Serb nationalist parties in Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina.<sup>66</sup> The Church is geographically located in Serbia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Montenegro, Republic of Macedonia, and Croatia, and it has been politically active in furthering policies that have been in accordance

with Serbian interests. Its influence has been coupled with the public religious expressions of the Orthodox leaders in the Balkans. Radovan Karadic and Ratko Mladic (respectively the political and military leaders of the Bosnian Serbs) “made great play of their Orthodox faith”.<sup>67</sup> In another case, the demise of Communism in Eastern Europe was clearly influenced by the Catholic Church, which had long been a bulwark against the Prussians, Russians, and Austro-Hungarians and, post-1960s, a defender of democracy against Communism.<sup>68</sup> The Polish, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian Catholic Churches challenged the spread of communist ideologies, mostly subscribing to the Vatican II premises that emphasized individual freedoms.<sup>69</sup>

As we have indicated above, religious actors might have different understandings of community, which goes beyond national borders. The influence of such actors on foreign policy would reflect this perception of community and its interest. Shani discusses two conceptions of universality that the Western international relations theory has ignored: One is the *Umma* constructed by the Islamist discourse that is simultaneously critical of imposed elite secularism and the neofundamentalism of Salafis; the other one is *Khalsa Panth*, the Sikh transnational community of believers.<sup>70</sup> Barnett goes to the extent of stating that liberal cosmopolitanism itself can be regarded as a faith tradition, as belief in the divine and transcendental values does not necessarily depend on the existence of a God.<sup>71</sup> Similar to institutions that represent liberal cosmopolitanism, there are institutions that bring together states and individuals under a religious identity. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is one example. Established in 1969, the OIC has fifty-seven member states and it defines itself as “the collective voice of the Muslim world”.

Religious networks can also play established roles due to their practices and traditions. Various religious actors have taken the view that involvement in politics is essential as part of their ethics”. Religious actors can also encourage peace and reconciliation. Using the cases of South Africa and Northern Ireland, Sandal shows that religious epistemic communities, with their transnational linkages, contribute to both domestic and foreign policy changes.<sup>72</sup> Another prominent example of a link between religious identity and a universally recognized niche is the case of Quakers and mediation practices. Quakers, also known as The Religious Society of Friends, are known for their social activism and pacifism. Quakers believe that there is no justification for the use of arms even when someone is confronted with evil. Traditionally, this basic premise has led the Quaker organizations like American Friends Service Committee to play the role of mediators in conflicts including the Israeli-Palestinian case.<sup>73</sup> The Catholic Church and its relationships with its local networks directly affect “domestic political developments, intergroup conflict or alliance, and cultural and symbolic meanings”.<sup>74</sup> In short, the interplay of transnational and local religious dynamics might influence foreign policy.

### **Conclusion: prescriptions for an effective foreign policy**

The works mentioned under the four levels described above investigate the dynamics of religion and foreign policy. Most of these books and articles have concrete foreign policy implications. Given the centrality of religion to contemporary international affairs, practitioners cannot afford to ignore the academic studies of critical links between religious phenomena and policy.

One common recommendation of this recent body of literature is to take religion seriously. The Westphalian state system has been predominantly secular, so religion has not attracted much attention in state dealings. The Cold War dynamics did not change this trend either. However, many issues that currently occupy foreign policy agendas have religious dimensions. Farr highlights these religious issues surrounding the US, ranging from the surge of religion in

China to the changing dynamics of the Islamic world.<sup>75</sup> He argues that US diplomacy should “treat faith as much as it does politics or economics”. Similarly, Patterson argues that religious literacy should be integrated into the “training, planning and execution of foreign policy” and he calls for “a political strategy that ranges from presidential engagement to a major investment in holistic public diplomacy”.<sup>76</sup> Learning the principles and history of religious traditions will likely lead to more informed decisions. However, knowing is not enough by itself. It is also crucial to communicate with “the other” and to try to find common interest areas. Johnston, based on his policy world experience as the president and founder of the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy, recommends deeper cultural engagement and even employing religious attachés to understand how others view the world.<sup>77</sup>

There are other foreign policy recommendations in the literature on religion and politics. One is embracing the religious circles in local and transnational politics that are playing constructive roles in conflicts and development. After explaining the increasing activism of the evangelicals in American foreign policy, Mead recommends that “those concerned about US foreign policy would do well to reach out” to these groups even though they are likely to focus on US exceptionalism and “care more about US foreign policy than most realists prefer”.<sup>78</sup> It is also critical to support more inclusive public theologies rather than the violent ones. Religious texts can be helpful in that regard. Rees argues that the use of religious texts in international affairs may counter “reactionary traditionalism (the seedbed of religious fundamentalism) and traditionless individualism (the seedbed of economic exploitation)”.<sup>79</sup> This usage is not without its challenges, however, and many terrorist groups that claim to be representing a religious tradition already do it. Criticizing the manner of the selective use of Islamic sources by ISIS and the notion that ISIS reflects the real Islam, Dagli notes that “there is a wide chasm between someone who ‘laces’ his conversations with religious imagery (very easy) and someone who has actually studied and understood the difficulties and nuances of an immense textual tradition (very hard)”.<sup>80</sup>

Freedom of religion has also been a significant concern, and it is increasingly evoked by foreign policy circles of multiple countries. Miles, for example, states that the ultimate goal of American international policy on religion “must be to make all religions equally secure in every nation, thus to ensure that no national shall (or need) threaten any other nation’s religion or religions”.<sup>81</sup> Here, it becomes critical to merge local and transnational understandings of human rights. Kilinc argues that the implementation of international norms on religious freedoms depends on the existence of strong domestic actors who support the reforms due to either their material interests or normative commitments.<sup>82</sup> A constructive foreign policy would aim to strengthen the domestic and international actors who pay special attention to these freedoms, even if the ideologies and the goals of these actors are not in perfect alignment with narrow state interests.

## Notes

- 1 Casey, “The Future of Religion and Diplomacy”.
- 2 Philpott, “The Challenge of September 11”.
- 3 Sandal and Fox, *Religion in International Relations Theory*.
- 4 Hassner, *Religion in the Military Worldwide*.
- 5 Philpott, *Just and Unjust Peace*.
- 6 Haynes, *Faith-Based Organizations at the United Nations*.
- 7 Buzan and Little, “Why International Relations Has Failed”.
- 8 Sandal, “Clash of Public Theologies?”
- 9 Warner and Walker, “Thinking about the Role of Religion”.

- 10 Haynes, "Religion and Foreign Policy Making", 143.
- 11 Ciftci and Tezcur, "Soft Power, Religion, and Anti-Americanism".
- 12 Guner, "Religion and Preferences", 219.
- 13 Laaman, *Getting on Message*; Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil*.
- 14 Albright, *The Mighty and the Almighty*, 17.
- 15 Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy*, 259.
- 16 Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*; Abu Nimer, "Conflict Resolution, Culture, Religion"; Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon*.
- 17 Lloyd, "Christian Mediation in International Conflicts", 229.
- 18 Cox and Philpott, "Faith Based Diplomacy".
- 19 Albright, *The Mighty and The Almighty*, 77.
- 20 Bartelson, "Making Sense of Global Civil Society".
- 21 Kalyvas, "Commitment Problems", 393.
- 22 Ozdamar and Akbaba, "Religious Discrimination and International Crises".
- 23 Basedau, Pfeiffer and Vullers, "Bad Religion?"
- 24 Varshney, "Contested Meanings".
- 25 Phongpaichit and Baker, *A History of Thailand*, 137.
- 26 Kitiarsa, "In Defense of the Thai Style Democracy".
- 27 Johnston and Sampson, *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*.
- 28 Walt and Mearsheimer, "The Israeli Lobby", 6.
- 29 Amstutz, *Evangelicals and American Foreign Policy*.
- 30 Ross, "Muslim Interest Groups".
- 31 Taydas and Ozdamar, "A Divided Government", 229.
- 32 Rapoport, "Fear and Trembling", 674.
- 33 Fox, *An Introduction to Religion and Politics*.
- 34 Sofer, "Peres Calls for Moral Sanctions".
- 35 Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 106.
- 36 Hashmi, "International Society", 23.
- 37 Boyle and Sheen, *Freedom of Religion and Belief*; Fox, *A World Survey*.
- 38 Sharp, "Mullah Zaeef and Taliban Diplomacy", 486.
- 39 Shahin, *Political Ascent*, 70.
- 40 Mentak, "Islam and Modernity", 119.
- 41 Brubaker, "Religion and Nationalism".
- 42 Saat, "Islamising Malayness".
- 43 Van Dartel, "The Nations and the Churches in Yugoslavia", 281.
- 44 Brown and Theodosopoulos, "The Performance of Anxiety".
- 45 Marsden, "Religion, Identity and American Power", 328.
- 46 Sandal, "Public Theologies of Human Rights".
- 47 Kraus, "Thou Shall Not".
- 48 Fox, *Religion, Civilization and Civil War*; Khosla, "Third World States as Interveners".
- 49 Smith, "The Sacred Dimension of Nationalism", 805.
- 50 Akenson, *God's Peoples*.
- 51 Smith, *Chosen Peoples*.
- 52 Hassner, *War on Sacred Grounds*.
- 53 Svensson, "Fighting with Faith".
- 54 Nye, *Soft Power*, 11.
- 55 Cho and Katzenstein, "In the Service of State and Nation".
- 56 Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular*.
- 57 Hurd, "Political Islam and Foreign Policy".
- 58 Albright, *The Mighty and The Almighty*, 177.
- 59 Ibid., 77.
- 60 Mendelsohn, "Sovereignty under Attack", 55.

- 61 Horowitz, "Long Time Going", 192.
- 62 Haynes, "Evangelicals and a Human Rights Culture".
- 63 Kayao lu, "Constructing the Dialogue of Civilizations".
- 64 Bettiza and Dionigi, "How do Religious Norms Diffuse?"
- 65 Gill, *Rendering unto Caesar*.
- 66 Perica, *Balkan Idols*, 144.
- 67 Bruce, *Politics and Religion*, 50.
- 68 Weigel, *Final Revolution*.
- 69 Mojzes, *Yugoslavian Inferno*, 294.
- 70 Shani, "Toward a Post-Western IR".
- 71 Barnett, "Another Great Awakening?", 110.
- 72 Sandal, "Religious Actors as Epistemic Communities".
- 73 Gallagher, *Quakers in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*.
- 74 Vallier, "The Roman Catholic Church", 490.
- 75 Farr, *World of Faith and Freedom*, 15.
- 76 Patterson, *Politics in a Religious World*, 105.
- 77 Johnston, *Religion, Terror, and Error*.
- 78 Mead, "God's Country".
- 79 Rees, "'Really Existing' Scriptures".
- 80 Dagli, "The Phony Islam of ISIS".
- 81 Miles, "Religion and American Foreign Policy".
- 82 Kilinc, "International Pressure, Domestic Politics".

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