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[Continued on p. 3 cover]
Petr Drulák (Chairman), Institute of International Relations, Prague, Czech Republic
Regina Axelrod, Adelphi University, Garden City, NY, USA
Dorothee Bohle, Central European University, Budapest, Hungary
Vladimír Handl, Institute of International Relations, Prague, Czech Republic
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Paul Luif, Austrian Institute for International Affairs, Vienna, Austria
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Andrei V. Zagorski, Institute for Applied International Research, Moscow, Russia

Editor-in-Chief
Petr Kratochvíl, kratochvil@iir.cz
Associate Editor
Mats Braun, braun@iir.cz
Book Review Editor
Vít Střítecký, stritecky@iir.cz

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Institute of International Relations, Nerudova 3, 118 50 Prague 1, Czech Republic.
Tel.: 00 420 / 251 108 101 (P. Kratochvíl), 00 420 / 251 108 363 (V. Střítecký).
Fax: 00 420 / 251 108 222.
www.iir.cz

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Perspectives Vol. 17, No. 2 2009
The Religious Turn in IR:
A Brief Assessment

PETR KRATOCHVÍL

The time when it was commonplace to talk of an absence of religion in IR curricula is now over. These laments about the neglect of religion marked only the start of ‘the religious turn’ in the study of international relations. But even at the end of the 1990s, the debates about the rise of religion still seemed to be just footnotes in the margins of the mainstream academic research. Only after the 2001 terrorist attacks did the mainstream academic circles, in the United States and elsewhere, come to the conclusion that ignoring religion as a major international force was no longer possible. This led to a gradual increase in the attention dedicated to religion but also – as the contributions to this special issue amply demonstrate – to the growth of plurality in terms of methodology, research focus and the willingness to compromise with the mainstream research. Even a brief examination of this prolific literature shows that religion is approached from extremely diverse perspectives that are at times complementary, but much more often mutually incompatible (cf. the literature overview attached to the piece written by Kubálková for this special issue). Hence, it seems that we are at another critical juncture now since it is high time to reflect upon the ways in which the religion-IR nexus is studied in our discipline.

The aim of this introductory article is, therefore, twofold: First, I would like to briefly sketch the main types of religion-related inquiry that are now common in the field of IR and show how these types are linked. Second, I will point to some points of contention as well as to some promising directions of future research on religion in IR. This discussion will be directly followed by the introduction of the articles chosen for this special issue since they – as diverse in approach, method and topic as they are – nicely demonstrate the breadth and the future potential of the contemporary research on religion in IR.

STUDY OF THE PAST: THE RELIGIOUS ROOTS OF MODERNITY

The first broad category of scholarly work that is now booming in IR is related to the ‘discovery’ of the religious roots of modernity. While this discovery has been commonly discussed in various social sciences for several decades (Haynes, 2005), it took quite some time before it was acknowledged by IR scholars as well. Yet after
the so-called third great debate in IR (Lapid, 1989), the Enlightenment-inspired conviction about the autonomy of the modern world including modern (positivist) science is finally no longer taken for granted, even in the study of IR. But there are numerous ways in which this change can be acknowledged. The easiest and least disquieting manner of admitting the indebtedness of IR to religion and/or theology is to point to the religious background or theological inspiration of individual IR scholars. For instance, there are studies exploring the Augustinian heritage in the work of American classical realists or adherents of the English school (for instance, George Kennan and Martin Wight). While this strategy may function with those thinkers whose inspiration is only indirect and does not influence their entire work, a more thorough revision of the traditional picture is needed when exploring those with whom religion constitutes the (so far overlooked) essence of their writing (e.g. Thomas Hobbes and Reinhold Niebuhr).

The focus on persons and their ties to religion is sometimes replaced by the analysis of conceptual ties between some IR theories and their religious antecedents – such as in various neomedieval approaches or in just war theories (Rengger, 2002). The most radical version of this sort of conceptual analysis is political theology rooted in the work of Carl Schmitt (Schmitt, 2005). It is no longer individual political thinkers or some particular concepts that give testimony to the relations of politics and religion, but the field of politics and political science is dependent on religion and theology in its entirety. Indeed, theology defines – in a rather deterministic manner – the limits of the possible in terms of the political institutions of the modern state system. Secularisation of theological themes is obviously not limited to the study of politics, but it also pertains to the general study of philosophy (as in the Hegel’s triad of art, religion and philosophy, which, in his view, follow each other both conceptually and historically, or in Comte’s law of three stages).

The revival of Schmittian studies in recent years has further evolved into two distinct research agendas: The first stresses the fundamental role religion and religious institutions have played in the establishment of the modern system of sovereign states, and it is more historical in nature (Lehmann and Van Der Veer, 1999). This approach limits the applicability of the traditional IR theories to just the modern period and in so doing it denies the ahistorical nature of such IR theories as realism, which claim to have discovered universal political laws. The second explores the often unconscious assimilation of theological terms by modern IR theory (Luoma-Aho in this issue, but also Luoma-Aho, 2009) and hence it goes even deeper by questioning the secular nature of the current international relations. Even though this approach has the potential to challenge the positivist study of (international) politics as it is conducted today, it has some limitations too: Its exclusive focus on the analysis of concepts and on their transfer from the religious
milieu and theology to politics and the social sciences often leads to a strongly deterministic picture of the modern polity that cannot but build on the conceptual base of medieval theology (cf. Fitch, 2007).

**STUDY OF THE PRESENT: THE RISE OF RELIGION**

The genealogical approach of the scholars whom we have discussed above is certainly enriching for the study of international relations. Indeed it may even challenge some of the basic assumptions on which the edifice of the academic study of IR is constructed. Yet it cannot deny its historical nature and the focus on the past. This also means that religion is often (but not always) understood in an instrumental manner in the sense that it is analogical to a burial site of long extinct anthropoids whose excavation can be useful for our understanding of our own species, which still carries a strong family resemblance to its dead relatives.

The second broad category is not so much focussed on the past, but rather on the synchronic analysis of religion in international relations. To push the same parable a bit further, political scientists have suddenly realised that those considered dead are alive and thriving and that many of us in fact belong to this seemingly extinct species. In short, the second group analyses present manifestations of religion. Again, there are at least three types of scholarly work that can be discerned here. The first stream comes from the discussions in (Western) political philosophy about the role religion is attributed by classical liberalism. The rising self-awareness of new religious minorities combined with the growing political activism of old religious groups casts doubts over the traditional liberal distinctions between the private and the public, and between religion, culture, and politics (Elshtain, 2009).

Another stream is related to the worldwide resurgence of religion and the need to broaden our understanding of international politics by including the activities of increasingly religious states and religious non-state actors (Fox, 2001; Haynes, 2005). Notwithstanding the fact that for obvious reasons most of the attention is oriented towards the Muslim world, a similar rise of religion is clearly palpable in India, large parts of the Americas and elsewhere. The theoretical discussion about the best constitutional arrangement and the empirical study of the religious resurgence around the globe merge in the third approach, which revolves around the secularisation hypothesis (see, e.g., Hallward, 2008). Ever more contested on empirical grounds, the thesis cannot be easily pruned away since impugning its essential features (such as the linearity of progress or the universal nature of the Western model of political organisation) necessarily casts doubts over many cognate concepts (such as ‘modernisation’) which are widely used in various social sciences.
Table 1: Six types of religion-related inquiry in IR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temporal focus</th>
<th>Object of study</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious past</td>
<td>Religious inspiration of IR scholars</td>
<td>English School, R. Niebuhr</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Religious roots of IR concepts</td>
<td>Just war, human rights, harmony of interests</td>
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<td>Religious roots of (international) politics and the modern state</td>
<td>Sovereignty, war</td>
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<td>Present role of religion</td>
<td>Contestation over liberalism in political philosophy</td>
<td>Role of religion in the public-private sphere; its place in the international system</td>
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<td>Resurgence of religion as a political force</td>
<td>Political Islam, Christian Right, religious warfare</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Secularisation debate</td>
<td>Orientalist critique of Western science, de-secularisation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

IS A POSITIVIST STUDY OF RELIGION POSSIBLE IN IR?

The basic division line that spans across all six types of religion-related inquiry in political science and international relations (see Table 1) pertains to the stance of individual scholars towards the positivist ideal of science as the field of empirical testing of causal hypotheses. To put the same problem differently, we could ask whether it does justice to religion if we understand it in functionalist terms (as, for instance, the early Habermas did). Some would argue (see Kubálková’s piece in this issue) that this is an attempt at a reduction of the sacred to the profane which leads to the replacement of the transcendental aspects of religion with the mundane concepts of IR such as transnational movements, international institutions, etc. At the same time, others (e.g. Fox in his famous article which announced the return of religion to IR /2001/) claim that what is gaining in importance in sociology of religion and other cognate fields is rational choice theory, i.e. the theory that can be considered the very incarnation of the positivist science.

In terms of the academic study and teaching of IR, the question is whether the so-far absent religious dimension can simply be added to IR curricula (cf. Hallward, 2008: 5) or whether we should rebuild the discipline anew, constructing it ‘from the first principles’ (Kubálková, 2000: 677). Even though the former approach is obviously more acceptable for the IR mainstream, serious long-term study of religion will probably lead to the creation of alternative, less reductionist accounts of the role of religion in IR. Other social sciences offer an additional argument for why a simple addition of religion to our ‘research basket’ would not do much credit to the catch-phrase about the ‘rise of religion’. These disciplines, even those where religion has been studied continuously for decades, such as sociology or cultural studi-
ies, and where we cannot reasonably talk about a return of religion, have also witnessed a return to religion. In other words, in these disciplines the religious turn does not connote merely the arrival of religion as a new object of study, but rather a need to redefine the basic self-understanding of these disciplines to accommodate a non-reductionist interpretation of religion. IR should learn from them and not fall into the trap of reproducing the pattern that is just being abandoned elsewhere.

Admittedly, this basic tension is difficult to solve. Indeed, some believe that there is ‘no method of resolving the conflict between the transcendental and secular, on ontological or epistemological grounds’ (Kubálková, 2000: 685). Yet there are some directions that the future research on religion in IR could follow. First of all, what is needed is an opening up of the disciplinary borders of IR. In other fields (such as sociology, cultural anthropology, international law, theology, and history), the number of answers to the question of the possibility of a non-positivist study of religion and politics is high and growing. For instance, in theology a large corpus of works exists in the framework of the so-called ‘new political theology’ inspired by Johann Baptist Metz (1997) and built in direct opposition to the ‘old political theology’ of Carl Schmitt. Similarly, the French nouvelle théologie came up with a convincing account of the translation of medieval theological concepts into the language of modern philosophy (including political philosophy).

The plurality of positions vis-à-vis the religion-politics nexus is also reflected in the contributions to this issue of Perspectives. Nevertheless I believe that all of the articles that finally made it to the publication stage offer some promising direction for the future research on the role of religion in IR, or even present concrete proposals about how religion should be conceptualised in the new context. Vendulka Kubálková, in this issue’s first article, does exactly this: after a careful exploration of the limitations of the discipline of IR and the call for a more interdisciplinary approach, Kubálková presents her ‘international political theology’ as an ambitious but nonetheless inspiring non-positivist proposal for the study of religion in IR (see also Kubálková, 2000). Readers will also undoubtedly find useful the two appendices to her article that contain the most relevant bibliography of sources both from within and without the discipline. While Kubálková is a strong proponent of an alternative account of IR to the one currently in vogue in the discipline, Jeffrey Haynes shows in his concise study that even if we use the traditional vocabulary, a convincing demonstration is possible of the growing impact of religious actors on IR and of their ability to shape particular foreign policies or the international order as such. By doing so, Haynes pertinently challenges the traditional differentiation between the ‘dark Orient’ and the ‘enlightened West’, a feature still subconsciously present in many studies of religion and politics.

The mutual dependence of international relations, domestic politics and religion is further explored in the two studies written by Mika Luoma-aho and Jan Hanska.
In his Schmittean analysis of the relations between the theological concept of corpus mysticum and the political imagery of the state, Luoma-Aho puts forward a fascinating account of why the state plays such a crucial role in international political thought. Jan Hanska also draws inspiration from the Judeo-Christian tradition and explores the concept of a prophet, showing how both the contents and the narrative structure of ‘prophetic politics’ can be (mis)used by politicians to manipulate the public and gain support for ‘visionary’ domestic and foreign policies.

The last two studies challenge the conventional wisdom regarding the relation between secularity and democracy. Petr Kratochvíl discusses the role public reason plays in the debates of religious actors about foreign policy and claims that what we are witnessing is a slow emergence of the Habermasian ‘post-secular societies’ accompanied by a modernisation of religious consciousness. Finally, Nataša Kubíková argues that the inclusion into international structures of religious radicals (such as Hamas) may lead to their moderation but she also discusses the ability of (authoritarian) religious actors to compete democratically, a phenomenon that is under-researched in the literature, but whose frequency is probably going to rise.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

THE RELIGIOUS TURN IN IR: A BRIEF ASSESSMENT

A ‘Turn to Religion’ in International Relations?¹

VENDULKA KUBÁLKOVÁ

...just as humanity was said to be reaching the summit of its development, a feeling emerged in the collective consciousness of philosophers, critics, poets, and theologians...[that] something was being lost, forgotten... the depth of humanity was being overrun by the fiend of mindless material consumption....

Creston Davis (2009)²

Now... the dismissal of [transcendence] is being reconsidered.

Daniel Bell (2006)³

Abstract: The Anglo-American discipline of International Relations defends its main principles and resists with an almost religious fervor any change to them, although the explanation of world affairs has been eluding it since its inception. The article attempts to draw up possibly the first historiography of the IR scholarship about religion in world affairs since the 90s, showing the heightened interest in the subject from most other social sciences and humanities. The article proposes the use of the term ‘International Political Theology’ to bridge the multiple literatures as well as to underscore the theological commitment of the IR discipline to its basic creeds and dogmas.

Key words: international relations as a discipline, religion in international relations, international political theology

Could we teach physics or chemistry without telling the students in the class that there is a new – or hitherto overlooked – substance in the atmosphere which is, or may be, interacting with the air which we all breathe, and which interferes with laboratory experiments? Even if we personally did not believe in the existence of such a substance, but others were arguing that there was evidence to prove it, would we take the chance that we might be proven wrong, and accept responsibility for not mentioning it to our charges? Could we simply brush aside the question by saying that the ‘substance’ in question is either not there or must be merely a mutation of something we already know?
In my paper, the ‘substance’ in question is ‘religion’. It is very much a part of the ‘atmosphere’ of the late modern world. What we refer to as ‘religion’ has become a significant issue in public discourse in the US as well as a factor in many international conflicts in which the US is involved. My main question is: How are International Relations’ scholars in the US dealing with this change in the atmosphere? Has it been noticed? Is it recognized as marking an important change in how we understand and talk about the world, or is it dismissed as a mere mutation of what we have already mapped out?

The discipline of IR considers itself to be the chief custodian and self-appointed gatekeeper of what is considered to be ‘knowledge’ in and of world affairs. It is also the engine for the production and reproduction of that knowledge: IR professors not only write academic treatises for their peers in the scholarly community in order to advance the scholarly knowledge of the subject, but they also generate the textbooks distilling the essence of that knowledge for use in the education of undergraduate and graduate students.

Why should this be of any concern? The relationships of IR scholarship to pedagogy and, no less importantly, to the cultivation of informed public opinion – especially the ability to adjust to change in the world – are ultimately held hostage to professorial self-indulgence no less than to the expenditure of scarce resources for public good.

This short piece is an introductory/preliminary work for a textbook on IR and Religion (with Marsha Cohen, 2010, in progress). It is not a part of it, but it sets the stage for the textbook. This paper begins by explaining why ‘disciplines’ – the main organizational units of academic enterprise – handle ‘alone’ the issues that confront not just one of them but many disciplines at once. I begin by outlining here the earlier challenges, which the discipline of IR had to grapple with throughout its existence. My main purpose is to see whether the turn to religion, which happened in many other fields, has reached IR and how the IR discipline has responded to this fundamental challenge. I reiterate a proposal I made in 1998 that a scholarship of religion and IR be treated in the International Political Theology, where the fields in question advance in tandem with one another – where one goes, the other must necessarily follow; there is no backpedaling.

**ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES**

The intellectual ‘real estate’ of most universities is subdivided into lots with demarcated boundaries known as ‘fields’ or ‘disciplines.’ The word ‘discipline’ is derived from the Latin word *discipulus*, meaning a student or follower. A ‘discipline’ is therefore a branch of knowledge, or a course of instruction, handed down through ‘disciples’ – people who have dedicated themselves to the absorption and transmission of a particular narrative of knowledge. The number of academic disciplines has
mushroomed at an incredible rate during the last 50–60 years, fractifying the European Enlightenment model of higher education, particularly the 19th century German ideal of a ‘research university.’

When students select their courses, they elect to work with specific faculty members who, through their own years of rigorous study, have become ‘disciples’ in and of their field. Faculty members are expected to provide instruction to students within a distinct disciplinary range of subject matter, to which an appropriate methodology, which is regarded as best suited and most appropriate for that field of study, is applied. The two characteristics required of an autonomous academic discipline are a delineated subject matter and a distinctive, discernible methodology.

Although the specific focus of their research may be the same as or similar to that of colleagues in other fields and subfields, professors of different disciplines often reside in different buildings and corridors. Their books sit on different library shelves and they require different reading lists of their students. They read different journals, belong to different national and international associations, and attend different conferences. They hold PhDs in different fields. Computer generated ‘maps of science’ provide ample empirical evidence of the interaction between but also the separation of various disciplines and fields 5.

An example: Awareness of ‘globalization’ has swept most academic fields. Anthropologists, historians, economists, sociologists and political scientists all participate in their own conferences on ‘globalization.’ When they occasionally manage to be able to talk to one another, it is neither with comfort nor clarity. Another example is our current concern: religion as a factor of world affairs, which is tackled by theologians and departments of religious studies, sociology, cultural studies, history, philosophy, political science and international studies, but in isolation from one another. Like the proverbial ‘blind men and the elephant,’ each person or department touches upon the role of faith or religion in world affairs while being limited by their own vocabulary, vantage point and research agenda, their intellectual vision being impaired by disciplinary isolation.

So, in the course of looking at the organization of knowledge in the modern university, certain questions arise. If scholars in different fields are dealing with similar or related research questions, how can the barriers between disciplines be justified? Can scholars in a particular field simply ignore the overlapping work of scholars in other fields who are grappling with the same or similar issues? Should they simply parallel each other’s explorations, oblivious to relevant research emerging from outside the boundaries of their own narrow academic niche?

Seen through the prism provided by Michel Foucault, disciplines can be seen as self-policing professional domains where innovation tends to be treated as deviance. This is no less true of the academic disciplines which comprise the Enlightenment-modeled university. Such disciplinary overspecialization leads to parochialism, and
parochialism culminates in narcissism. Scholars cannot afford the time or effort to read outside their own discipline. Even when they can, highly specialized language deters scholarly ventures across disciplinary frontiers. Scholars often answer questions which nobody has asked, and frame their answers in a language which nobody outside their discipline can understand. Too often, as Somerville puts it, the scholar stands in front of a mirror when he speaks, not noticing that there is no audience.

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AS A DISCIPLINE**

International Relations emerged nearly a century ago as an academic discipline devoted to the study of world affairs in response to the carnage of World War I. Its founders envisioned the establishment of university departments—including professors, undergraduate and graduate programs, and journals— with a clear purpose and dedicated to a very ambitious agenda: to figure out the causes of world conflicts and discover how to prevent them. The founding fathers of this new academic field argued for their discipline’s intellectual and administrative autonomy on the grounds that the international system composed of sovereign states—a faceless environment called ‘anarchy’ within which developments in world affairs take place—is unique among all other contexts of social experiences. The challenges faced by the newborn discipline of IR were regarded as unparalleled in other fields of social science, including Political Science.

The history of the 20th century which has given rise to the discipline of IR—its wars, innumerable political crises and economic problems—is well known. What were at the time of WWI thought of as ‘weapons of mass destruction’—weapons of trench warfare, machine guns, artillery, tanks, submarines and airplanes—all of which could be mass produced by new technologies implemented in the furnaces and factories of industrial Europe and North America, had made the massive carnage of World War I possible. WWII, far from being averted, brought carnage at a still greater scale. With the explosion of the first atomic bombs in 1945, humanity entered the ‘atomic age’. The nuclear weapons developed after World War II enabled those who possessed them to develop into global superpowers. ‘Hot’ war was replaced by the Cold War, so-called bipolarity, tension, anxiety, even a stability of sorts, and a vindication of the claim that states are not just the preeminent social reality of the atomic age, but that states and their nuclear weapons will dominate social reality as far into the future as we can imagine. If they do not, it will only be because ‘deterrence’ failed and a nuclear Armageddon ensued.

After World War II, IR established itself rapidly in a steadily increasing number of universities, particularly within the US. Befitting the size, power and status the US projects in world affairs, the American model for the study of IR acquired superpower status in academia worldwide, dominating doctoral training and scholar
publications. A majority of IR scholars in the US have been, and continue to be, protagonists of the approach to IR called ‘realism,’ focusing on sovereign states as the primary agents in world affairs. According to the most fundamental postulates of classical realism, all states, as unitary actors, amoralistically seek to maximize their own national power and further their own interests, irrespective of their domestic mode of political organization. Realist IR scholarship within the US long held that the components of national power and interest could be calculated with the precision of natural sciences, and that the potential as well as the consequences of clashes between the powers and interests of states, particularly superpowers, could be scientifically measured and predicted in conformity with the laws of physics.

IR has shown an incredible staying power and resilience to the onslaught on most of its predictions and core postulates. The emergence of the discipline of IR failed to alert the world that another war (WW2) was due. The disintegration of the former Soviet Union also came as a complete surprise to IR scholars in the US, flying in the face of realism’s core assumptions and rendering several decades of scholarship out of date. Gorbachev’s decision to voluntarily dissolve his Empire and his subsequent actions simply could not fit into any existing theoretical framework. Nor were the predictions as to what would immediately follow the emergence of a ‘unipolar’ world, in which the US is the only superpower, at all accurate. The challenges to the most closely held tenets of IR theory have continued to bring fresh surprises. The nature of conflict, the parties to conflict, and the ends as well as the means of conflict have dramatically changed. So have a number of the discipline’s foundational premises.

One of the most fundamental tenets of realism as well as of the IR discipline, in fact its raison d’être, has been called into question: the sharp distinction and separation of domestic and international affairs. While domestic affairs were previously considered to be outside the bounds of, and irrelevant to, the study of IR, it now appears that it is nearly impossible to talk about international affairs without a consideration of the internal dynamics of the states involved in any issue.

Furthermore, while the number of states in the world has more than quadrupled since World War II (there are now over 200), quite a few of them are inconsequential (or indeed ‘failed’) from a classical realist perspective. Yet it is with and within many of these seemingly inconsequential/‘failed’ states that many 21st century conflicts are emerging, although these states are not among the major powers to which traditional peace research devoted most of its attention. Alongside states as the main actors, world affairs are increasingly animated, perhaps even dominated, by non-state denizens. Economic giants, including multi-national corporations and super wealthy international elite individuals, can, in many cases, trump the wealth of states. Non-government organizations (NGOs) in the thousands populate the world, often as important surrogates for state action or inter-state international organizations (IGO). The technology of contemporary warfare continues to surpass all expecta-
tions for human ingenuity. In the early years of the new millennium humanity has realized that it faces new, unanticipated dangers, many of them by-products of globalized capitalism, industrial production and mass consumption.

Another foundational dogma – again indispensable to the IR discipline’s self-definition – was challenged by Wendt’s pronouncement that ‘anarchy is what states make of it’ – i.e., that there is an acephalous, unique world political structure which can be regarded as objectively given and which is a constant feature of world affairs since 400 B.C. and the era of Thucydides. Conveyed in this famous adage is the sentiment that states could one day reject anarchy (in which case they would cease to be states, for anarchy also continues to make states what they are: in this view, states and anarchy are necessarily ‘co-constitutive’). Furthermore, war itself – organized violence sanctioned as the ultima ratio tolerated among sovereign states – is now frequently ‘intrastate’ or ‘civil’. The opponent is not a state, but a faceless opponent who is unafraid to die. World inequality, deadly poverty, hunger and disease draw the attention of scholars from many disciplines.

As a discipline, IR is losing its proclaimed monopoly on understanding the world. The subject matter of this almost 100-year-old field of inquiry has fractured, its many parts scavenged by outsiders. In the 21st century, as unforeseen challenges continue to emerge, it should come as no surprise that all things ‘global’ cannot be intellectually and educationally monopolized by one homogenous group of scholars.

IR scholars outside of the US were somewhat less inclined to adopt realism as the main IR approach or as their theoretical umbrella, and many more have been skeptical about the idea that IR research could be approached ‘scientifically.’ Yet the globalization of Enlightenment-style higher education has meant a proliferation of IR departments whose scholarly practices mimic those of the US. In the US, few IR scholars are regarded as public intellectuals, in contrast to some of the other advanced industrial countries. Nevertheless, it is also the case that think tanks, lobbyists and single issue activists are becoming as important outside the US as they are in it. Professors are most likely to have a public face – although not always a voice – in those parts of the world where higher education is least institutionalized and disciplinary boundaries least enforced.

The name of the field – International Relations – helps its longevity and staying power. University students realize that important, and perhaps transformative, things are happening in the world today. They take courses whose names point specifically to the world affairs offered in departments of IR, International Studies or Political Science. Thus it is critically important to ask ‘To what extent does – and should – the discipline of IR, in the scholarly works and the teaching materials it produces, reflect the profound changes confronting our era?’ There appears to be little discussion at IR conferences, in the US or elsewhere, about what subjects are, and ought to be, covered in undergraduate classes. That decision is essentially left in the
hands of publishing houses and their marketing strategies for the textbooks they produce. Course syllabi generally conform to the chapter outlines in major textbooks, all of which bear a striking resemblance to one another. IR pedagogy does not seem to concern very many of us. The distinction between research and teaching in IR is very sharp, and the gap between the two seems to be growing. The rewards are going to research, and lip service is being paid to pedagogy. As a recent APSIA report pointed out, ‘insufficient professional discussion occurs regarding the connections between the production, the transmission, and ultimately, the consumption of knowledge.’

RELIGION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The subject of religion as a factor in world affairs is yet another major challenge to the IR discipline, and one of the most recent ‘new’ developments for which the discipline of International Relations has not prepared. Nor is it catching up – certainly not in so far as IR classrooms are concerned. Although discussions of religion in world affairs have been going for two decades now in other fields, within IR ‘claims for the absence of religion in the study of global politics are now so common that they refute themselves.’ We are at a stage when the topic should have started percolating into the IR textbooks. Only now has there developed a coterie of ‘religion scholars’ in IR but their books’ strongest features are numerous case studies with the framework proposed being far too esoteric to be suitable for undergraduate un-specialized education. Judging from the number of papers dealing with religion presented at the ISA conventions from 2006 to 2008, this group is still very small but its numbers are growing. Thus it seems to be appropriate to talk about a turn to religion, following in the footsteps of turns to religion in literature, history, philosophy, and sociology. Many scholars making this turn across other fields are former Marxists or critical and postmodern theorists – of whom there have been relatively few in IR to start with to lead the way. No wonder that IR is so late in making the turn. ‘Je ne sais pas. Il faut croire.’ This is the closing line of one of Derrida’s late works (Memoires d’aveugle, 1990). Too many scholars in IR ‘know’ that matters of belief have nothing to do with the world their discipline has made for them.

Since the 1990s the subject of religion has entered the more general discourse of world affairs with a bang, as Gilles Keppel has observed (Revenche de Dieu). Religion has been dubbed the ‘missing dimension’ and depicted as ‘returning from exile,’ lurking behind almost all of the new or old features of the post-Cold-War, post-9/11 world, even if most scholars in IR cannot see it or choose to ignore it.

Outside of IR, there is now an embarrassment of riches with regard to books and articles touching upon the strange resurgence of religion in 21st century world affairs.
A comprehensive interdisciplinary bibliography has yet to be compiled; such a project is daunting even to contemplate. Religion as a global phenomenon is addressed not just by scholars in many disciplines, but also by journalists, former politicians and statesmen and public figures, in defiance of smug predictions that were made not so many years ago of the imminent – and overdue – demise of religion in the modern world. Many authors previously hostile or indifferent to religion are rethinking their positions, sometimes in a dramatic fashion, making ‘turns’ to religion in their respective fields, such as literature, sociology, philosophy, and others.

As I remarked above, the turn to religion in IR has been slow: positivist strictures and structures dominated IR scholarship, putting, historically speaking, the Marxist, critical or postmodern scholarship very much on the margin on the grounds that their discourse has never met the positivist standard of the scientific rigor to which the IR discipline has aspired, especially in the US. (From the vantage point of the UK and Europe, this may not be as obvious as to those of us working in the US.) Positivist scholars insist upon the strict standard of ‘use of evidence to adjudicate between truth claims’[19] and assign theories which are not ‘testable’ to the ‘margin of the field’ because it is ‘impossible to evaluate their research program’[20]. Religion in whatever shape, however it might be defined, is outside the permitted parameters. However much the ‘post’ critics of the IR positivist mainstream in the course of what was called the ‘Third or Fourth IR Debates’ have succeeded in unsettling their mainstream colleagues by scoring philosophical points, they have not succeeded in making much of a dent in the mainstream’s fealty to the ‘scientific’ conduct of inquiry.

Nonetheless, certain concerns introduced by the post-critics of the IR mainstream foretold indirectly the arrival/return of religion getting the IR audiences – even reluctantly – to certain terms and concepts. Perhaps most importantly the return of religion to the radar has forced the placement of ‘modernity’ into a broader context. We tend to forget just how brief the ‘modern’ period (more or less coinciding with the political organization of the world into states) has been in relation to the history of ideas, realizing that many postmodern ideas have been closer to modernity’s precursors. Two hundred years ago or so, religions still provided the dominant modes of thought, and thus many ideas even today have their roots in religion.

Let me mention some examples of postmodern concerns that might have been noted in the IR literature. They reflect an origin in religious ‘pre-modern’ experience and are playing an important part in religion’s return, granting that this was not always the intention of the scholars expressing these concerns.[21]

The entire shift of attention to the ‘inside’, the ‘insider’s perspective’, feeling and ‘emotional identification’, which we recognize in some postmodern writings, has religious antecedents. Here we can undoubtedly trace the influences of Romanticism: the movement originating in the late eighteenth century as a revolt against
modernity’s rationalism that recalled medieval emotionalism. In philosophy and in art, Romanticism focuses on the irrational and the non-rational, and on feeling rather than thought. For example, originally intended to make believers feel the pain of Jesus, emotionalism would later charge the concept and command of love (agape) with emotional force. This emotional force has, in turn, nurtured many secular ideologies, for example, nationalism. The stress on identity, the ‘insider’s perspective’, and the distinction between ‘inside/outside’, prominent in the work of many postmodernist writers, has always been central to religious thought and practice.

Phenomenology, another source of inspiration for postmodern scholars, also owes much to religious influences, particularly in regard to the shift from the focus on outward appearances to the attention to consciousness, the experience of the body, intuition, perspective, and the engagement requiring empathy, along with careful linguistic textual and historical studies. One might even say that the idea of phenomenologists listening to the inner ‘voices’ coming from deep within derives from the preoccupation of religions with inner meaning. Religion and art are prime examples of human attempts to find meaning and value in life. A concern for ‘emancipation’, drawing on the engagement of the Frankfurt School with the work of Sigmund Freud, also resides in large measure in the mind, in knowing, in the understanding of the human predicament as a precondition for, if not the realization of, emancipation itself.

Hermeneutics, named after the Greek god of communication, Hermes, adds ‘interpreting’ and ‘reflecting’ as approaches to knowledge. Hermeneutics, not surprisingly, originated in schools of theology, where its methods were developed for the interpretation of sacred texts. At the hands of scholars like Paul Ricoeur, hermeneutics was extended to the search for the ‘sacred’ in ‘texts’, the sense of which was allegedly lost through the modern notion of the human being as the centre of the universe. Entering a plurality of ‘worlds’, Ricoeur argued, helps people to become ‘decentered’. Ricoeur’s reliance on metaphor, the ‘weaving’ together of fragments of identity stressed by some feminists, parallels religious practice.

Ricoeur’s student Jacques Derrida used his teacher’s concept of ‘play’ to show that words interact so that their meanings are never fixed. Like theologians, postmodern scholars ‘tell stories’, rejecting the obsession with ‘theory’ and its endless strictly modernist pursuit. Derrida aimed at ‘deconstructing’ modern, secularized texts, which he terms as ‘logocentric’, thereby suggesting that the words and ideas of such texts always point to an external reality. It is often overlooked that the goal of Derrida’s deconstruction was to create a space for attention to ‘sacred’ texts. Derrida believed that after the ‘deconstruction’ of the foundations of Western secular philosophy, Westerners would consider other cultures and religions more relevant.

Finally, I would like to mention that postmodern scholars have addressed the problem of ‘incommensurability’: the notion that various theoretical approaches
refer to different realities, as well as the even more intractable problem of the anti-foundationalist view that there is no reality, but only different interpretations of a text in the readers’ minds. The consequence of Francois Lyotard’s famous anti-foundationalist ‘incredulity toward metanarratives’ is the belief that there are no foundations outside any individual theory which could serve as a neutral arbiter between competing theoretical accounts. Postmodernism – *like religion* – questions the notion of reality presented by positivist IR texts.

It is possible, of course, to be a romantic/phenomenologist/hermeneuticist without being spiritually inclined. One can live without meditation or prayer, or without any of the disciplines designed to understand the Self and its sense of cosmic connection. To many, the limits ‘modern’ rationalism imposes on our modes of knowledge are entirely acceptable. The many attempts to compensate for these limits and to fill in this void are not. The religious concern for the soul, as the later section will argue, runs a lot deeper and neither modern nor postmodern scholarship has managed to supplant it.

The glimpses I referred to above are familiar to the IR audience which followed the ‘Third / Fourth Debate’ in IR. However, now in the first decade of the 21st century, these topics are much more widespread. The current stage of globalisation is discussed well beyond the confines of the IR discipline. Anthony Giddens, for example, argues that in this late modern time of many changes, people change. They become reflexive and increasingly willing to change beliefs in order to improve their lives. They do this through critically analyzing their lives. People no longer rely upon another; instead they put their trust in technology – e.g. the automatic pilot on an airplane – rather than the real person. Giddens argues that the circumstances of the moment can provide the conditions for the reemergence of religion. As people become more reflexive, they may feel that secular life becomes meaningless and therefore will return to religion.

Habermas’ philosophical writings have also taken a noticeable turn towards religion during the first decade of the new century. Yet it is *tradition*, rather than faith, that he seems to be concerned with. While his earlier philosophy was unambiguously hostile towards tradition, if not religion, in his later writings he is taking a different tack. In his dialogues with Joseph Ratzinger, for instance, he speaks with a lament of what has been lost with the death of traditional religious worldviews. His biographers have tried to explain this as part of his reaction to contemporary world events. Thus his reaction to the attacks of 9/11 are invoked to explain his recent engagement with religious tradition, while his aversion to Nazism and his regret that the church did not intervene explain his early resistance to Christian tradition. Although Habermas’ recent work contrasts sharply with his earlier dismissive attitude towards religion, he now appears to be more receptive to it, arguing that in an emerging multicultural global society, the encounter with religion as a contemporary
intellectual formation requires secular thought to engage in a serious reflection on its own origins.

Derrida’s turn to religion has been equally noteworthy and influential, particularly within theological studies. Following Derrida the Dutch philosopher de Varies (Philosophy and the Turn to Religion, 1999) argues that we cannot properly engage ‘recent debates concerning identity and self-determination, the modern nation-state and multiculturalism, liberal democracy and immigration, globalization and the emergence of new media, the virtualization of reality...’ (11) unless we recognize that they emerge from and indirectly answer to religious traditions.

Michael Polanyi returns to the great fourth-century patrist St Augustine to argue that far from denigrating the importance of science, it is vital to recognize the indispensable role belief plays in knowing all that we know. There is no knowledge without prior faith. Areas such as morality, religion, and aesthetics, which are not susceptible to scientific demonstration, should not be denigrated as subjective opinion. There are powerful arguments from different vantage points casting doubt on the concept of secularization, and a Turkish writer challenges even the ideas of the ‘West’ and what is ‘Western’, as most of the ‘Western’ ideas – she argues – are of non-Western provenance. The debate amongst philosophers, theologians, sociologists and historians is gathering momentum, challenging some of the unexamined ontological, epistemological and methodological pillars and narratives on which the social sciences and IR have been built. The issues most challenged and questioned are the meaning of reason and belief and the relationship between them, and the idea of the West, of modernity and its myths. These issues are all built into the IR discourse. The divisions into disciplines, like levees and floodwalls, are crumbling up and are impossible to hold up with shovels and sandbags. The ‘Revenche de Dieu’ will eventually lead to us rebuilding our way of looking at and understanding the world.

GOD SELLING / WRITING BOOKS IN IR?
Let me turn now to a survey of the literature on religion – both the IR literature in the discipline and the wider literature on religion that IR scholars (should) have taken into account as they now also write on the subject. Notwithstanding many works that I might have missed, the literature I list is now already an entire library involving dozens of authors (see Table 1 and 2). These authors, hailing from different disciplines, address the same or similar world affairs/IR themes but they have different library codes on library shelves. The non-IR works (Table 2) are written by philosophers, sociologists of religion, historians of religion, political theorists, theologians, international lawyers, and journalists, and the distinction between the writings of Table 1 (IR and religion) and those of Table 2 (Religion and world affairs) has become very blurred. The latter group, as it writes more and more specifically on IR topics, often shows a lack of knowledge of IR literature.
The authors are a very cosmopolitan group, and not necessarily Anglo-American, as most of IR still tends to be. In addition to prominent sociologists of religion such as Peter Berger, there are well-known Islamicists such as Oliver Roy and Gilles Kepel. There are experts in religion who have pioneered faith-based diplomacy, peace making and reconciliation – an area predating 9/11 in origin, and perhaps the first foray of such experts into IR. We discover very interesting works originating in Scandinavia and the Netherlands. I also list the works of newcomers jumping onto the religion bandwagon. People previously silent on the topic reveal publicly that they discovered God and how much he always mattered in their life and work (see Madeleine Albright’s 2006 book, The Mighty and the Almighty, following close on the heels of her 2003 memoir, in which the Almighty did not play much of a role).

The interdisciplinary bibliography of literature about religion in world affairs (Table 1) focuses specifically on what IR scholars have written as opposed to what scholars from other disciplines have written about the same subject. My bibliography is chronological to indicate both the progression of topics generating interest and the increased volume of the literature in the aftermath of 9/11. I believe this might be a useful beginning of the work on a composite interdisciplinary bibliography, and we should avoid two problems that typically arise in assembling bibliographies for disciplinary consumption. First, we should avoid duplicating work and ‘rediscovering America,’ which happens because authors might not be aware of parallel or antecedent work. Second, we should avoid relying on the work of only one or two disciplinary ‘interpreters’ of the relevant work in other disciplines. This is, in my view, a practice rooted in the common IR scholarly practice of cobbling together second hand quotations. It now seems that those in IR who are interested in religion will only read and quote Scott Thomas, Daniel Philpott, and Jonathan Fox – all IR professors – while unaware of the rich parallel literature outside IR. Notwithstanding the quality of these early IR works, not engaging sources outside IR seems like a breach of common sense that is bound to impoverish our research, understanding and teaching.

**HISTORIOGRAPHY OF RELIGION AND IR LITERATURE**

So where are we? In Table 1 I list Samuel Huntington’s work, which was published not in a scholarly journal but in *Foreign Affairs* (1993), a public affairs journal with a large audience, and later as a bestselling book (1996). While Huntington’s dramatic claims about clashing civilizations bring religion to the forefront and provoked much discussion, he muddled many issues with regard to the identification of his religion-based civilizations and lacked clarity with regard to theoretical concerns in IR. Huntington’s views struck a chord with many conservative members
of the intellectual and policy communities and may have influenced G. W. Bush’s foreign policy. From the point of view of the IR discipline, Huntington did very little. He confirmed the nature of the state system, albeit now ‘tinted’ with the colors of (misidentified) civilizations. He emphasized the clash between states identified with Islam and the West. For Huntington, this new ‘civilizational’ clash replaced the ideologically motivated clash of the two Cold War superpowers – democracy/capitalism vs. the communist ‘other’ – with a new axis of ideological conflict, which is a line that was pursued in a more focused way in Mark Juergensmeyer’s influential 1994 book *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State*. Altogether different in thrust and tone is *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, which Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson edited in 1994 and which showed incredible foresight in alerting to the importance of the subject. The editors are veterans of conflict resolution and peace studies, and both have a pioneering interest in the role of religion in the political arena.

The engagement of self-identified IR scholars with religion began later, when the London School of Economics in conjunction with *Millennium* sponsored a conference on Religions and International Relations in 1998. A number of papers presented at the conference appeared as a special issue of *Millennium*. With a somewhat different set of contributors, it was published in 2004 with the fitting title *Religion and International Relations: A Return from Exile*. Its editors were the two LSE PhD students, Fabio Petito and Pavlos Hatzopoulos, who convened the LSE conference, edited the *Millennium* special issue and clearly foresaw the importance of the topic before 9/11. Thanks to the LSE initiative, the number of papers and panels on the subject of religion and IR noticeably increased with the ISA Convention in 2001. If we accept the LSE conference as the contemporary beginning of IR’s engagement with religion, then it is revealing that it took place in Britain, although some participants who were invited were from the US and the Continent. It is likewise telling that PhD students, neither British nor American in origin, formulated the initial agenda.

In 1998, two US journals, *SAIS Review* and *Orbis*, published special issues dedicated to religion. Neither issue clearly formulated a theoretical agenda for IR, which is a feature that is characteristic of the literature to this day (Haynes, 2004). Nonetheless, both collections provide a wealth of specialized materials on individual world religions and particularly on their role in peace making, faith-based diplomacy and reconciliation. The early works also include long lists of outreach activities, papers, conferences and briefings on the subject of religion and world affairs sponsored by the non-profit Foreign Policy Research Institute (which also publishes *Orbis*), the Pew Foundation, and the government funded US Institute for Peace.
INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL THEOLOGY (IPT)

It is at this point that I interrupt my overview of the bibliography of the IR writing on religion to introduce the concept of International Political Theology, which I proposed in the 1990s with the intention to create an intellectual space for the literature on the subject of religion and world affairs, which I envisaged would become one of the most important topics of the new millennium. I used the term ‘theology’ deliberately to shock my colleagues but also to close the gap between IR and the study of religion, albeit now necessarily redefined as a pursuit of ‘theos’ – ‘an absolute and insurmountable point of reference for everything that has impact, validity and permanence’. My use of the term ‘theology’ does not go as far as the political theologians’ claim that political theorizing should have its ultimate ground in religious revelations, although such a position is also compatible with my framework. ‘Theology’ was once synonymous with philosophy and science. Following the understanding of sociologists of religion, I take ‘theos’ not in its common secular meaning as ‘erroneous beliefs in supernatural extraterrestrial existence’, but (along with the term ‘theology’) to refer to the systematic study of discourses concerning world affairs that search for – or claim to have found – a response, transcendental or secular, to the human need for meaning, and the relations amongst these discourses. My purpose is to find a way of bringing the study of religion and the study of IR together – possibly for the first time – in a manner which would minimize their distortion and facilitate their understanding. IPT can accommodate in one framework the pioneering but so far fragmented attempts to come to grips with the significance of religion in IR.

In this sense, theology – as in International Political Theology – would assume a new role. Theology has been banished from modernity’s secularized structure of knowledge; we can hardly be surprised by its return as modernity itself appears to be undergoing a transformation. Tellingly, the secularists reviewing the publications in which I mentioned IPT objected not so much to my proposing a field but to the name I was proposing, a red flag to devout secular humanists. (I forego here any discussion of secular humanism as an unacknowledged religion with devoted adherents.) IPT was intended to welcome, embrace and learn from the scholars outside the IR field and their work. My proposal, of course, offended secularists insofar as it cast doubts on the nature of their work.

In proposing a new field, I put forward a framework in which religions and IR theories would be brought together by virtue of all having to admit just how much of their scholarship is based on acceptance on faith (which I argue in Kubalkova, 1998, 2004) (it is a rational act of ‘abduction’ along the lines of the scholarly deductive or inductive reasoning that is demanded by modern science) and how much they need to draw on interdisciplinary wisdom. I hastened to say that there is nothing wrong
with acceptance on faith because that too is a form of reasoning, a view supported in the recent research in neuroscience analyzing reasoning and emotions and the impossibility of separating them. I have noticed a growing number of authors (even in IR) going well beyond my suggestions, arguing, in fact, that IR too is based on a dogma, a religion and a theology.

My framework for IPT is constructivist and not of the mainstream positivist variety. The positivist sort of constructivism is methodologically incapable of doing anything but forcing ‘irrational’ religion into secular and positivist categories, at one end of the spectrum treating it superficially as a culture or identity, at the other end of the spectrum subordinating religion to the existing positivist IR categories. As my overview will show, many writers are reducing religions to religious institutions and categorizing them as elements of transnational civil society or even as distinguishing attributes of civilizations. If the religions engage in violence, so goes the argument, they do so because they believe the ends justify the means or suffer from ‘anti-social’ socialization.

These simplifications result in a profound misunderstanding of the strength of the passion that many religious people feel, a fervor which infuses religious practices and compensates for their lack of material capabilities. This, in turn, produces surprise when, on occasion, religiously motivated organizations, including governments, act ‘irrationally’ or ‘non-rationally’ and with a force at odds with their material strength, thus confounding positivist expectations. For this point, see Juergenmeister’s concept of ‘cosmic war’ as developed in the Rand Study.

In contrast to the social science positivist understanding, most religious people agree that it is impossible to describe the transcendent reality of God in normal conceptual language (and this is certainly the case with Jews, Muslims and Christians). (There is, by the way, an ironic parallel with the postmodernist dislike of modern logocentric metanarratives.) For religions, of course, the transcendent meta-reality does exist, though it cannot be expressed either in ordinary or scholarly language, let alone subjected to social scientific ‘tests’. The meaning ascribed to the reality of God is fixed nonetheless by social conventions and can be expressed in everyday language. This rendition is imperfect and requires reflection, interpretation, illumination, repetition, metaphor, and ritualization. Thus Christianity, Islam, and Judaism derive divine meaning from stories (sacred texts), which are constantly read and reread and subjected to exegesis.

The ongoing representation of what eludes representation is required to provide the believer with a map of reality. The map orients the individual and fixes his or her identity in ontological terms. The identity of the believers can only be lost with the loss of faith. Many psychoanalysts and psychologists agree that modernity’s malaise, as well as the loss of identity that attends it, comes from its secular nature and the absence of any substitute for religion. Religious belief and the identity which it pro-
vides give meaning to life, driving believers to act unselfishly and make sacrifices for others (and not just for their fellow believers). Believers who fail this test may well feel extreme remorse at their failure.

In the believer’s view, the origins of religious experience are beyond the realm of human choice, let alone the ‘rational choice’ around which most social science discourse revolves. The freedom of conscience that is given such prominence in liberal thought means the exact opposite in religious discourse. At the most fundamental levels of a believer’s existence, it means following the dictates (not choices) of conscience, for conscience has no choice but to follow belief (Frohock, 1995: 47, 163). Narrative, myth, normative injunctions, blessings, curses, confession, adoration, metaphor, symbol, analogy, and parable all loom large in religious discourse, as it accommodates both a transcendent reality not confined to sensory experience and the secular, that which could be called the ‘divine realm of positivist social science’. There is nothing in the positivist bag of tricks to match this achievement, not that positivists have ever tried or would ever consider it to be worth trying. The failure to negotiate the problems of incommensurability successfully is not an affliction of positivists only (also see Kubálová, 2000: 688).

SOME COMMENTS ON THE SELECTED IR WORKS ON RELIGION

In my bibliography (Table 1) I draw attention to the seminal article by Daniel Philpott, ‘The Challenge of September 11 to Secularism in International Relations,’ which was fittingly published in World Politics, one of the main scholarly journals in the US. If we were to identify the beginning of the comprehensive engagement with religion on the part of IR scholars in the US, Philpott’s 2002 article would certainly be the starting point. Nevertheless, one of the doyens of IR, Robert Keohane, constrained any excursions in the IR discipline to the territories of religion not by contradicting the idea that we ought to ‘take religions seriously,’ but by complicating it to the point of rendering cross-disciplinary thinking impossible. Soon after Philpott published his seminal piece, Keohane chastised his colleagues in the discipline for their parochial philosophical disputes and suggested that 9/11 could best be understood through a synthesis of classical realism, institutionalism, and constructivism – i.e. the mainstream approaches to IR in the US. All of the parties to Keohane’s proposed synthesis are positivist and committed to rationalism. Thus, Keohane did not so much pour a bucket of cold water on the early interdisciplinary efforts but placed landmines in the path of anybody planning to take religion seriously and transgress his standards for scholarship in the discipline. Keohane did include constructivism in general in the proposed synthesis, but only constructivism of the mainstream positivist variety, forcing ‘irrational’ religion into secular and positivist categories and treating it as a culture or identity.
Thus it should not come as a surprise that social scientists, including the majority of IR scholars, are prone to reducing religion to religious institutions and categorizing them as elements of transnational civil society or expressions of general cultural tendencies. The religious faithful are always presumed to act instrumentally even when committing acts of terrorism; if they engage in violence, they do so because they believe the ends justify the means. Notwithstanding the differences between the main approaches to IR (neorealism, neoliberal institutionalism and positivist forms of constructivism), they all approach religion in much the same way. Territorially exclusive sovereignty means that there can be no power above the state, anarchy is a necessary condition among states, and states have an abiding primary concern for security and power. The remarkable work of Jeff Haynes fits into this category by treating religion as a ‘soft power’, following the concept of Joseph Nye. So does the work of Jonathan Fox, who is committed to an empirical approach. The book of Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, which she styles as a general theory of religion and IR (the first of its kind), ignores the key features of religion and much of the literature outside the IR field\(^n\). Hanson goes further, ‘proposing a very complex theoretical post-Cold War paradigm based on the interaction between the contemporary globalization of the political, economic, military, and communication systems and the significant role of religion in influencing politics’ (17), in short the ‘political and EMC’ systems (by which he means the political plus the economic, military, and communication systems) in the world today (Hanson, 2006).

For the study of religions, it is very important to appreciate that IR theories without exception assume the knowability of the ‘objective’ world; that is to say, IR defines the world as consisting of that part of reality which can be observed with one’s senses or plausibly extrapolated from what we observe to the exclusion of the metaphysical. Furthermore, IR assumes that we, as observers, have no impact on what we observe; language simply represents what we observe. IR also assumes that reality is stable and that the social and natural worlds are inseparable and therefore subject to the general laws of a ‘Newtonian’ universe. IR aspires to a universalism by virtue of having formulated models and theories that are applicable everywhere; context is treated as a methodological inconvenience. Given these assumptions, it would be difficult for Keohane to take religion seriously, no matter how sincerely he wished to do so.

There are individual works which challenge the IR canon. It takes the courage of a senior scholar of Ann Tickner’s stature to politely contradict Keohane, which she did in an article (available on the Internet but not yet published) that was ironically intended to be in a festschrift for Keohane\(^n\). A leading feminist in IR, Tickner argues that accommodating religion will not be possible unless IR’s disciplinary space is broadened. She identifies the work of Morgenthau, especially his 1946 book Scien-
tific Man Versus Power Politics, and the non-mainstream linguistic constructivism of the variety I have proposed in my International Political Theology as two of the three main avenues to be pursued. In Scientific Man Vs. Power Politics, Morgenthau pointed to a disillusionment with modernity and its association with secular rationalism, a disillusionment which is central to contemporary fundamentalist thinking in a variety of religions. Morgenthau disputed the liberal claim that in a liberal society, reason, revealing itself in the law of economics, would reign and of necessity bring about harmony, the welfare of all, and world peace. Liberals believed that this would come about through reason, which has its own inner force, and independently of human intervention (Morgenthau, 1946: 25). In a severe indictment of liberalism and rationalism, Morgenthau was strikingly pessimistic about the ability of scientific reasoning to solve social problems. Suggesting that man’s nature has three dimensions – the biological, the rational and the spiritual, he concluded that the rationalistic or instrumentalist conception of man, which is portrayed by liberal social science, has completely disregarded the emotional and spiritual aspects of life (Morgenthau, 1946: 122). Unsurprisingly, the third avenue Tickner proposes is engagement with feminist theologians who see the omission of religion and the neglect of gender as reflecting a general highly regrettable condition.

Despite the thickening list of literature on the subject, the interest in the subject of religion and IR is increasing very slowly. The number of papers presented at ISA gatherings until 2008 on the subject of religion was statistically insignificant. At the San Diego 2006 ISA annual meeting, which attracted 3000 participants, only 3 out of 720 (!) panels with 3000 participants were devoted to the subject. As a rule, the few papers on religion at such conferences are produced by a small group of scholars from outside North America, and the information they present hardly ever finds its way into the IR classroom.

To the extent to which scholars in IR do take religion seriously, they are divided on how to proceed. As I have already indicated, some scholars argue that IR can accommodate religion within existing theoretical frameworks and supporting assumptions (Keohane, 2002; Fox, 2004; Fox’s earlier work with the exception of Fox, 2001). Other scholars, myself among them, argue that we need to reconceptualize the foundational myths and assumptions on which the discipline has been built, not least by interrogating the meaning and accuracy of our understanding of secularity and thus of modernity. Such efforts implicitly threaten IR as a stand-alone discipline and demand that we rethink the scope of IR as a subject and ‘globalize’ it.

There are those who point to the tremendous potential of religions to help humanity not only to resolve conflict but also to lead humanity out of the apparently intractable problems that modernity has brought with it. Madeleine Albright echoed this view when she suggested not only that religion and politics are inseparable, but that their partnership, when properly harnessed, can be a force for justice and peace.
Other eminent scholars agree, including the international legal scholar Richard Falk and the sociologist of religion Peter Berger, who once championed the secularization thesis but now publicly denounces it.

There is an abiding and dangerously under-theorized association of religion (either of all religions or of the religion of the ‘other’) with violence and all evil. 9/11 and the so-called War of Terror account for most of what little interest most scholars in IR have in religion. As Robert Jervis, a leading scholar in the US, has remarked, ‘Terrorism grounded in religion poses special problems for modern social science, which has paid little attention to religion, perhaps because most social scientists find this subject uninteresting if not embarrassing’ (my emphasis). Not just embarrassed, the vast majority is silent. Nothing said, nothing changes. Until we have an overview of what we know so far, it will be hard to set an agenda.

IN CONCLUSION

In the piece I have obviously tried to do too much. My main point is the need to overcome disciplinary approaches to the key issues of the world, and I reiterate my proposal of a common ground which I call International Political Theology. In conclusion I would like to return to the points I made at the beginning of this paper and in its title. We were ‘breathing the air’ long before Galileo started asking questions about the atmosphere. Yet the last new substance in the air was only discovered about 120 years ago. What does or does not exist – an ontological issue – does so irrespective of whether or not we have the methodological tools to know about it, much less to change it, or to choose to talk about it.

Sociologists and historians of religion argue that creating or constructing gods is one of the human universals, a practice going back 14,000 years to the ancient world of the Middle East. All major religions share strikingly similar views of transcendental reality. Homo sapiens is inherently homo religiosus, a species in need of finding a system of beliefs essential to the self-definition of individuals within any society. A unique arrangement of political society was institutionalized in Europe in 1648, when the Peace of Westphalia enshrined the fundamental principle of cuius regio eius religio – the exclusion of issues of faith – from relations among sovereign states. International Relations, an academic discipline that emerged in the early 20th century, adopted the Westphalian moment as the model and motto of its foundational myth, and the ‘rigors’ of social science as its method. Religion was ontologically and axiologically excluded from its purview, and its birth from religion was ignored, as Daniel Philpott pointed out in his seminal work (2001).

There is a great deal to be done in order for the parochialism of disciplines to be overcome and the disciplinary levees to be broken. The need to study world affairs in the 21st century from a more holistic, comprehensive, and inter- or trans-disciplinary perspective requires that the discipline of International Relations be recast in
order to remain relevant. If those engaged in studying the ‘return’ of religion to IR begin to see themselves as a part of a larger interdisciplinary community of IPT, there is a chance for IR’s recognition that religion has, like the air we breathe, been there all along. Religion can’t ‘return’ to IR. It never left.

ENDNOTES

1 As usual I would like to thank Nicholas Onuf for his great help and his most useful suggestions for this paper. My thanks also go to Marsha B. Cohen for suggestions and help with editing. Rachel Roberts prepared an overview of the most frequently used IR textbooks from the point of view of their attention to religion and culture, the starting point of the paper. Melissa McCaughan provided me with the figures of the numbers of papers dealing with religion and IR at ISA conventions.


3 Daniel Bell cited in ibid.: p. 5.

4 The standard usage is that International Relations (IR) is capitalized when it refers to the IR discipline (also International Studies) and non-capitalized when it is a synonym of ‘world affairs’ in the ‘real world’.

5 See the ‘maps of science’ produced in a study of over a billion user interactions recorded by the scholarly web portals (clickstreams) of some of the most significant publishers, aggregators and institutional consortia. This resulted in a reference data set covering a significant part of the world-wide use of scholarly web portals in 2006, including those related to humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. Bollen, Johan, Herbert Van de Sompel, Aric Hagberg, Luis Bettencourt, Ryan Chute, Marko A. Rodriguez, and Lyudmila Balakireva (2009) ‘Clickstream Data Yields High-Resolution Maps of Science’. Online: www.plosone.org/article/info:doi/10.1371/journal.pone.0004803.

6 Ibid.


8 According to UNESCO, after India, the US has the second largest number of higher education institutions in the world: a total of 5,758, a significant proportion of which have a core of arts and science departments, a belt of professional schools and a penumbra of extramural programs and activities. The US also has the highest number of higher education students in the world: 14,261,778, or roughly 4.75% of the total population. Quoted on: www.aneki.com/universities.html.


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15 The counts and the percentages of papers dealing with religion in the ISA Conferences 2006–2009 are as follows: 2006: 3,079 papers (.003%); 2007: 3,095 papers (.004%); 2008: 4,123 papers (.006%); 2009: 3,969 papers (.009%).


24 Douglas Johnston, Ph.D., Founder and President, International Center for Religion and Diplomacy, is a distinguished graduate of the United States Naval Academy and holds an M.A. in public administration and a Ph.D. in political science from Harvard University. Cynthia Sampson is an Associate at the Institute for Peace Building, Eastern Mennonite University.


30 In her book (Hurd, 2007) and several articles anticipating its publication, Elizabeth Shakman Hurd claims to have developed a new approach to religion and international relations that challenges the realist, liberal, and constructivist assumptions that religion has been excluded from politics in the West. Her focus is on secularism as a form of political authority in its own right, and she describes two forms of secularism. There is no indication of her citing or having any awareness of the work of Giorgio Agamben, Alain Badiou, Terry Eagleton, Jürgen Habermas, Slavoj Zizek, etc. regarding religions, secularism and secularization, etc.
Table 1: Religion and International Relations Discipline Bibliography

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early works and authors that IR theorists now cite as directly relevant:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• St Augustine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ‘Christian realists’ including Raymond Niebuhr and Hans Morgenthau.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Early English School (Martin Wight, Herbert Butterfield).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The works on ethics: in fact, the return of an interest in ethics constitutes a back door to the discussion of religion under the heading of natural law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lapid, Yosef and Friedrich Kratochwil (eds) (1996) <em>The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory</em>. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner (‘religion’ is not mentioned but the discussion of ‘culture’ opens the door to a potential discussion of religion).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early indications of interest (after the Cold War’s end) in the 1990s:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Huntington, Samuel (1993) ‘The Clash of Civilizations?’, <em>Foreign Affairs</em> 72 (Summer 1993). The clash of civilizations thesis was originally formulated in an article with the intention to expand it into a book.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**SYMPOSIA, CONFERENCES, SPECIAL JOURNAL ISSUES:**

As Philpott pointed out in his *World Politics* article in 2002, International Relations scholarship is indeed secularized: in his survey of articles in four leading International Relations journals (*International Organization, International Studies Quarterly, World Politics, and International Security*) over the period 1980–1999, he finds that only six or so out of a total of about sixteen hundred articles featured religion as an important influence. There are, however, important exceptions, which he lists. *Orbis* and *Millennium* have each published special issues on religion and international organization within the last four years, the latter theorizing innovatively about the role of religion.

The **1998 LSE Millennium conference entitled Religions and International Relations**, 27 May 1998, to coincide with the special issue of Millennium: Journal of International Studies on the subject of religions and international relations, deals with issues such as the resurgence of religion in global politics, theorizing religions in international relations, and the historical role of religions in different international systems. For a list of participants, see the below citation for the special issue of *Millennium, Religions and International Relations, Millennium* 29 (1) (Jan 2000).


**Orbis – Special Issue, Volume 42, Issue 2 (Spring 1998)**

Hurst, G. Cameron III ‘The enigmatic Japanese spirit’;

Kurth, James ‘The Protestant deformation and American foreign policy’;

Langan, John, S. J., ‘The Catholic vision of world affairs’;

Lynch, Edward A. ‘Reform and religion in Latin America’;

McDougall, Walter A. ‘Introduction’;

Radu, Michael ‘The burden of eastern Orthodoxy’;

Sicherman, Harvey ‘Judaism and the world: The holy and the profane’;

Sivan, Emmanuel ‘The holy war tradition in Islam’;
Waldron, Arthur ‘Religious revivals in communist China’.

SAIS Review, Volume 18 (Fall 1998)
Appleby, R. Scott, ‘Religion and Global Affairs: Religious “Militants for Peace”;
Bacevich, Andrew J., ‘Introduction’;
Esposito, John L., ‘Religion and Global Affairs: Political Challenges’;
Little, David, ‘Religion and Global Affairs: Religion and U.S. Foreign Policy’;
Marostica, Matthew, ‘Religion and Global Affairs: Religious Activation and Democracy in Latin America’;
Marshall, Paul A. ‘Religion and Global Affairs: Disregarding Religion’;
Mayotte, Judith A., ‘Religion and Global Affairs: The Role of Religion in Development’;
Nasr, Seyyed Vali Reza, ‘Religion and Global Affairs: Secular States and Religious Oppositions’;
Rickard, Stephen A., ‘Religion and Global Affairs: Repression and Response’;

AFTER 9/11:

World Politics, Volume 55, Number 1, October 2002
Fish, M. Steven ‘Islam and Authoritarianism’;
Philpott, Daniel ‘The Challenge of September 11 to Secularism in International Relations’.

Brown Journal of International Relations, Summer/Fall 2005, Vol. XII, Issue 1 (Special issue): Christianity in IR
Falk, Richard ‘The Christian Resurgence and World Order’;
Kubálková, Vendulka ‘International Political Theology’;
Mansbach, Richard ‘Calvinism as a Precedent for Islamic Radicalism’;
Sanneh, Lamin ‘Prospects for Post-Western Christianity in Asia and Elsewhere’.

With Peter Berger, Jonathan Fox, Scott Thomas, Karen Armstrong, Abdullah An-Na’im, Riffat Hassan, Thomas Pogge, Oliver Roy and Hans Opschoor participating.

Books and articles on Religion and IR from the late 1990s (not only from the IR discipline):
A ‘TURN TO RELIGION’ IN IR?


Books and articles on Religion and IR from the 2000s:


• Luoma-aho Mika (n.d.) ‘Political theology of international relations’.


Table 2: Selected works from outside the IR discipline that assert the growing global role of religion in International Relations by historians of religion, sociologists of religion, theologians, philosophers, journalists, and scholars of Peace Studies, divinity, political theory, ethics, religion, and religious studies.

- Many publications of the United States Institute for Peace.
- Ninian Smart, the founder of religious studies as an academic discipline: his work on issues of the interface of religion and world affairs.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher/Year</th>
</tr>
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**A ‘TURN TO RELIGION’ IN IR?**

Transnational Religious Actors and International Order

JEFFREY HAYNES

Abstract: The contention of this paper is that the dynamics of the new religious pluralism influence the global political landscape, with significant impacts upon international order. To provide evidence for the claim that (1) transnational religious actors are influential in international relations and (2) what they do can be important for international order, the paper focuses on two sets of transnational religious actors: American Evangelical Protestants and al-Qaeda.

Religion impacts on international relations with ramifications for international order. The first part of the paper addresses this issue conceptually. The second part of the paper examines the issue empirically, with an examination of two transnational religious actors: American Evangelical Protestants and al-Qaeda.

Key words: religious pluralism, international order, transnational religious actors, al-Qaeda, American Evangelical Protestants

The contention of this paper is that the dynamics of the new religious pluralism influence the global political landscape, with significant impacts upon international order. To provide evidence for the claim that (1) transnational religious actors are influential in international relations and (2) what they do can be important for international order, the paper focuses on two sets of transnational religious actors: American Evangelical Protestants and al-Qaeda. Religion impacts on international relations with ramifications for international order. The first part of the paper addresses this issue conceptually. The second part of the paper examines the issue empirically with an examination of two transnational religious actors: American Evangelical Protestants and al-Qaeda.

There is renewed scholarly interest in the involvement of religion in international relations, with a focus on both state and non-state actors. Religion’s renewed significance is observable among many cultures and religious faiths and in countries at various levels of economic development. For many observers and scholars, this was unexpected because it challenged conventional wisdom about the nature and long-term historical impact of secularisation, calling into question a core presumption of
Western social science: As societies modernise they *invariably* secularise, with consequential effects for religion, which is both marginalised and ‘privatised’, and correspondingly excluded from the public realm.

The ‘return’ of religion to international relations necessarily involves deprivatisation, with implications for international order. Recent challenges to international order emanate from various entities, but particularly notable are Islamic ‘extremists’, who are often said to be ‘excluded’ from the benefits of globalisation for reasons of culture, history and geography. Islamic extremist pathologies present themselves in various order-challenging forms, including the 9/11 assault on the USA and the November 2008 atrocity in Mumbai that killed 170 people.

**TRANSNATIONAL RELIGION ACTORS AND INTERNATIONAL ORDER: CONCEPTUAL ISSUES**

International order is a regime characterised by widespread – although not necessarily universal – acceptance of certain values and norms of behaviour, involving a range of actors, rules, mechanisms and understandings. The expanding corpus of international law is central to the concept of international order, as are the various organisations and institutions that seek to develop and embed it, including the United Nations and the World Trade Organisation. The overall aim is to try to manage as consensually as possible the co-existence and the complex interdependence of states and important non-state actors, although it is widely accepted that ‘international order’ serves the interests of the dominant international actors.2

The concept of international order centres on two main themes: (1) more or less consensual international acceptance of common values and norms – including the body of international law, and (2) development of institutions geared to preserve and develop international order. This combination of structures and processes – involving various actors, rules, mechanisms and understandings – serves overall to manage the co-existence and interdependence of states and non-state actors. In the literature there is no consensus about the impact of transnational religious actors on international order, although there is a general acceptance that various religious actors can influence international order.3

At the end of the Cold War, 20 years ago, there appeared to be a window of opportunity to establish the contours of a new, post-conflict consensual framework for international order, primarily based on the dissemination of Western values and norms. In the early 1990s, the then US president, George H. W. Bush, spoke confidently about the birth of a ‘new world order’ following the collapse of the Soviet Union, which would be predicated on the strengthening of international law and global and regional organisations, especially the United Nations and the European Union. Bush’s optimism was, however, soon dashed: the first Gulf War
(1990–1991) and decisive US setbacks in, *inter alia*, Somalia and Haiti in the early 1990s made it clear that Bush’s vision of a US-directed but significantly consensual international order would not be easy to achieve. When his son, George W. Bush, became president in 2001, the US’s focus had shifted to the desirability of global acceptance of US hegemony and its core goals: liberal democracy, human rights and capitalism. These were seen to be interlinked and interactive goals, necessary to ensure widespread prosperity and enhanced human development and progress.

To what extent are religious belief systems associated with specific political ideologies? In some cases, the existence of a connection is not difficult to demonstrate. Close links exist, for example, between Hindu chauvinism (or ‘fundamentalism’) and ultra-nationalism in India, Jewish fundamentalism in Israel, and new Buddhist movements and demands for a more just social, political and economic order in Thailand.4 More generally, religious leaders and movements in many countries express views on various non-religious issues, including:

- the nature of desirable governmental, development, human rights and economic systems,
- preferences regarding international relations, and
- the types of social mores, customs and manners that should predominate both domestically and internationally.

Many religious groups with political aims endeavour to achieve their objectives by focusing efforts on both domestic and international fields of action. And this can impact upon international order. For example, the Iranian revolution of 1979 helped to stimulate an increase in expressions of radical Islam, both in relation to domestic ‘non-Islamic’ governments, especially in the Middle East, and in relation to encouraging a perception in the West that ‘Islamic fundamentalism’ is a significant and persistent threat to both Western security in particular and international order more generally.

In addition, the impact of religion on international relations has attained increased prominence as a result of globalisation. This is because globalisation facilitates increased links between state and non-state actors. This increases the ability of religious actors to spread their messages and to link up with like-minded groups; geographical distance is no longer an insuperable barrier to cross-border links between such actors. Peter Beyer explains that ‘We now live in “a globalizing social reality”, one in which previously effective barriers to communication no longer exist’.5 The result is that cross-border links between various religious actors have recently multiplied, and so have their international concerns, many of which are linked to international order issues.6
Some transnational religious actors can be seen to help advance international order. Increasing and improving international order is said to be dependent on growing numbers of democratic countries, in accord with the wishes and designs of the dominant actors in international relations, such as the government of the United States and other Western states. The Roman Catholic Church was noteworthy in this regard from the 1980s, encouraging authoritarian regimes to democratise, especially in Catholic parts of the world such as Latin America and parts of Central and Eastern Europe and Africa. In addition, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference is also seen to have an important role in helping to build international order and helping to promote dialogue and cooperation between Muslim and Western governments.7

On the other hand, the actions of some transnational religious actors, including terrorist organisations such as al-Qaeda and Lashkar-e-Taibar, who were implicated in the recent atrocities in Mumbai, have quite different ramifications for international order. Such groups explicitly reject and seek to undermine the foundational norms, values, institutions and rules that underpin international order and its key institutions, such as the United Nations (Haynes 2005c). In addition, they offer a competing logic to the sovereignty-based state system and seek to undermine Muslims’ popular allegiance to their nation-states.8 The 2005 Human Security Report highlighted the significant threats that transnational religious terrorist groups pose to international order. The Report noted that: ‘International terrorism is the only form of political violence that appears to be getting worse. Some datasets have shown an overall decline in international terrorist incidents of all types since the early 1980s, but the most recent statistics suggest a dramatic increase in the number of high-casualty attacks since the September 11 attacks on the US’.9

Such transnational non-state actors rarely control territory for long – although the Taliban government in Afghanistan did allow Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda considerable freedom of movement in the country from the mid-1990s until late 2001, which was brought to an end by the US-led bombardment and subsequent invasion. More generally, ‘failed’ states, such as that of Pakistan, may facilitate the formation and development of religious terrorist organisations, including Lashkar-e-Taibar, allowing greater freedom of action than when there is a strong central government.10

In sum, a combination of circumstances – including the events that followed the end of the Cold War and the continuing impact of globalisation – encouraged various transnational religious actors to focus upon international order. This not only reflected a generally increased involvement of religion in international relations, but it also highlighted how easily domestic issues can ‘spill over’ to become issues of regional or international concern. For example, both Hamas and Hezbollah have fought Israel in conflicts that are as much about competing religious be-
liefs as they are about secular nationalist goals. These conflicts illustrate how domestic and international political issues can feed off each other to present significant challenges to international order, with religious values and norms being of central concern.

The post-9/11 focus on extremist Islamist organisations reignited the ‘clash of civilisations’ controversy, while serving partially to obscure the evolving transnational religious landscape with its impact on a variety of international issues. This is characterised by both conflict and cooperation, with the latter centring on various human rights and development issues. Informing both developments is the impact of various facets of globalisation, especially the communications revolution. These are key factors in encouraging the dynamic growth of transnational networks of religious actors. In addition, over the past two decades or so, global migration patterns have also helped to spawn more active transnational religious communities. The overall result is a new religious pluralism that has impacted upon international relations in two key ways. First, there has been an emergence of ‘global religious identities’ that may lead to increasing interreligious dialogues, involving greater religious engagement around various issues, including international development, conflict resolution, and transitional justice. On the other hand, this globalising environment can also encourage greater, and often more intense, interreligious competition between members of various religious faiths and traditions.

Two entities – American Evangelical Protestants and al-Qaeda – are the focus of the next two sections of the paper for the following reasons. First, American Evangelical Protestants are said to be the ‘new internationalists’, with representative organisations developing in recent years an international agenda characterised by a focus on improved outcomes relating to development, health, and religious freedom, especially in the Arab/Muslim Middle East. Second, al-Qaeda has also sought to develop its transnational influence in recent years, encouraging ‘ordinary’ Muslims around the world to get involved in its anti-US and anti-Western activities. In sum, these two sets of actors wish to see the spread and development of very different values and norms, which collectively impact on international order, and they use their transnational networks to try to effect these changes.

Transnational religious actors aim to spread their influence by establishment and development of cross-border networks, through application and development of religious ‘soft power’. This paper will not be concerned with an in depth examination of this issue, although readers interested in it are asked to consult my recent paper. For now, it is sufficient to note that for Nye, soft power is the power of attractive ideas to persuade individuals or groups to act in a certain way in pursuit of identifiable goals. Soft power can be conceptually contrasted with the notion of ‘hard power’, that is, military or economic influence, involving overt leverage and/or coercion.
Transnational ideas, both religious and secular, emerge and develop in response to changing international circumstances. For example, since World War II, anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, anti-racism, national self-determination, and environmentalism have all been encouraged by the creation and development of transnational networks. Such ideas represent soft power in international relations because they appeal to large numbers of people around the world who, by virtue of their collective effort, may seek to influence outcomes in the directions they would like to see. Success or failure does not necessarily depend on their ability to link up with state power. Thomas contends that: ‘Transnational actors represent – or are seen to represent by individuals and groups in the international community – ideas whose time has come, ideas which increasingly shape the values and norms of the international system’. Note that this does not necessarily imply that such values or norms are socially progressive. In fact, they are applicable to a wide range of actors with varying outlooks, norms and goals. In sum, transnational ideas – both religious and secular – can help set and mould international agendas. They do this by adding to the lexicon and vocabulary of debate; and in some cases they are a source of soft power in international relations, informing the ideas and development of transnational civil society.

AMERICAN EVANGELICAL PROTESTANTS AND INTERNATIONAL ORDER

During the Clinton and (George W.) Bush presidencies, US-based Evangelical Protestants (henceforward, ‘evangelicals’) managed to translate their religiously-grounded support for certain international human rights causes, regarded as a key component of a better international order, into a more generic humanitarian language that non-evangelicals – and more generally, even non-religious people – could also support. Attempts to translate moral and/or religious values into US foreign policy is not a new phenomenon. Indeed, as Table 1 indicates, religion has had a strong and continuous influence on US foreign policy over a long period.

The contemporary prominence of evangelicals in the US has its roots in the late 1970s, when evangelicalism began a political resurgence, seeking to pressurise the US government to change policy in relation to certain domestic issues, all of which were concerned with moral issues such as abortion, family values, and school curricula. As Dan Wessner argued in 2003, from the movement’s origin until the present day, evangelicals have ‘politicked to take back the Supreme Court, the Congress, the public schools, textbook publishing houses, foreign affairs, and the Executive branch. ... [T]heir crusade is as evident as anywhere in the words and deeds of the current Bush Administration’. Note that Wessner is not referring solely to domestic issues; he also points out that evangelicals seek to influence foreign policy.

Perspectives Vol. 17, No. 2 2009
Table 1: Religion and Foreign Policy in the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Mission</th>
<th>Adversary</th>
<th>Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-revolutionary colonial America (1600–1776)</td>
<td>Millennium</td>
<td>‘Papal antichrist’</td>
<td>Example as ‘city on a hill’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolutionary and founding era (1776–1815)</td>
<td>Empire of liberty</td>
<td>Old world tyranny, ‘hellish fiends’ (Native Americans)</td>
<td>Example, continental expansion, without entangling alliances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manifest Destiny (1815–1848)</td>
<td>Christian civilisation</td>
<td>‘Savages’ or ‘children’ (Native Americans)</td>
<td>Example, continental expansion, without entangling alliances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperial America (1898–1913)</td>
<td>Christian civilisation</td>
<td>‘Barbarians’ and ‘savages’ (Filipinos)</td>
<td>Overseas expansion, without entangling alliances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilsonian Internationalism (1914–1919)</td>
<td>Global democracy</td>
<td>Autocracy and imperialism</td>
<td>International organisations and alliances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold War liberalism (1946–1989)</td>
<td>Free world</td>
<td>Communism</td>
<td>International organisations and alliances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bush and neo-conservatism (2001–2009)</td>
<td>Spread of religious freedom and human rights</td>
<td>International terrorism, often linked to extremist Islam; totalitarian states, such as North Korea</td>
<td>Unilateral action with ad hoc alliances</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Expansion of the agenda beyond domestic culture-wars issues to international affairs was encouraged by the accession to power of George W. Bush, who many evangelicals believed was a suitable individual to champion their preferred values in foreign policy. But the broadening of evangelicals’ global horizons was already established during the Clinton presidencies (1993–2001). Indeed, as Alan Hertzke details in his important book Freeing God’s Children: The Unlikely Alliance for Global Human Rights, from the mid-1990s, evangelicals were the most important part of a new human rights movement in the USA. This movement helped create a new architecture for human rights monitoring and advocacy in American foreign policy. The ‘unlikely alliance’ in Hertzke’s subtitle refers to the fact that this movement comprised strange bedfellows. To maximise influence it was essential to develop broad alliances with diverse religious groups (e.g. the Jewish community and mainline Christian organisations) and with secular entities (e.g. student bodies on college campuses and traditional secular human rights organisations). The willingness to build coalitions reflects a significant change in the activism of conservative evangelicals.
By usual social movement standards, the evangelical-led movement to put various human rights issues on the foreign policy agenda had a remarkable influence in a remarkably short time. Some of the highlights include:

• The International Religious Freedom Act (1998): By establishing an office and an annual international religious freedom report that grades countries on their religious rights, this law made freedom of religion and conscience a core objective of U.S. foreign policy. It was lobbied for by ‘a coalition of conservative Christians, Jews, Catholics, mainline Protestants, Tibetan Buddhists and others’. 17

• The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (2000): The aim was to remove international crime syndicates that dispatch children and women from the developing world into prostitution and sweatshops.

• The Sudan Peace Act (2002): Evangelicals promoted this law, as they were outraged by the Sudanese government’s attacks on southern Sudanese Christians and animists. The law and its accompanying sanctions were influential in helping create the road map for Sudan’s 2003 ceasefire and the peace treaty in 2004.

• The North Korea Human Rights Act (2004): Evangelicals and Korean Americans lobbied for this bill. The aim was not only to focus U.S. attempts to help North Korean defectors, but also to focus attention on the country’s egregious human rights violations and nuclear weapons programme.

These kinds of causes do not conform to evangelical culture-war stereotypes, and the diverse coalition partners that evangelicals have worked with on these issues are testament to the fact that what is going on here is more than just conventional interest group politics salient only to narrow segments of the population. Furthermore, it is important to reiterate that this movement did not emerge only as a partisan echo chamber for the moralistic foreign policy rhetoric used by the George W. Bush administration. In fact, the movement developed first during the Clinton administration and persisted during the George W. Bush administration – sometimes as its ally but sometimes as a critic as well.

The root of the evangelicals’ persuasiveness is found in a commonplace but crucial fact: Unlike all other Western countries, the US is a highly religious nation. 18 And because in the US, religion plays an important role in political life, there exists a ‘greater prominence of religious organizations in society and politics’. 19 Religious organisations are not mere run-of-the-mill lobby groups, nor are they necessarily monolithic in views, beliefs, and expectations. Moreover, while the tangible resources of religious interest groups pale in comparison to those of corporate lobbies, religion
can often wield an indirect influence that can be instrumental in helping construct the mindset of policymakers. This is the case in the religious interest groups’ relation to international human rights in US foreign policy, with subsequent impacts on international order.

During the presidency of Jimmy Carter (1977–1981), himself a committed evangelical believer, a progressive version of evangelical politics became influential as it shared with Carter a focus on human rights and Christian humanitarian values. For some, however, Carter’s presidency was notable for a rising tide of pacifist sentiment that permeated not only the American critical consciousness at the general level but also the upper levels of the Carter administration. By contrast, Ronald Reagan shared many of conservative evangelicalism’s ideals and goals and encouraged it to develop into a significant lobby group. Then during the Clinton era the pendulum swung back toward left-leaning religious activists, who again enjoyed easy access to top administration officials. After George W. Bush’s election in 2001, conservative evangelical leaders were once again able to play the part of White House insiders, putting their stamp on administration priorities, including those in the area of foreign policy – a shift Howard LaFranchi refers to as the ‘evangelization’ of US foreign policy.

A key issue which informed evangelicals’ involvement in foreign policy during the Clinton and especially during the George W. Bush administrations was a strong belief that the US was involved in a continuing international struggle between good and evil, with attendant conceptions of international order. While in the 1980s this struggle was defined by the secular struggle encapsulated by the Cold War between the USA and the Soviet Union, from the mid-1990s, evangelical concern focused centrally on various international human rights issues – including religious freedom (especially protection of victims of sex and sweatshops trafficking), repression of non-Muslims in Sudan and more generally in the Arab/Muslim world, and the government of North Korea’s egregious suppression of its citizens’ civil liberties, including its suppression of religious freedoms.

RELIGIO-MORAL PERSUASION DURING THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION

The Cold War came to an unexpected end in the late 1980s. At the time, foreign policy issues were not high up the list of priorities of most leaders in the evangelical movement. However, a series of events in the mid-1990s brought foreign policy issues to the fore. In 1995, Michael Horowitz, a neo-conservative scholar at the Hudson Institute who had earlier been a general counsel in the Office of Management and Budget during the presidency of Ronald Reagan, wrote an opinion piece for the Wall Street Journal entitled ‘New Intolerance between the Crescent and the Cross’. Horowitz described what he saw as American indifference to religious per-
secution of Christians in several non-Christian parts of the world, including many Muslim countries.

The article helped galvanise a sustained and coordinated evangelical response to Christian persecution around the world, encouraging America’s largest evangelical organisation – the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) – to adopt in 1996 a Statement of Conscience expressing grave indignation at the religious persecution around the world.25 This in turn led to sustained evangelical pressure on the Clinton administration to place more emphasis than it ever did before on the issue of religious persecution around the world. Two people – Elliot Abrams (a lawyer who served in foreign policy positions for both Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush) and Nina Shea (Director of the Centre for Religious Freedom, based at the Hudson Institute) – were particularly influential in persuading the initially sceptical Clinton government to adopt the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA).26 IRFA stipulated the creation, on the one hand, of an Ambassador-at-large for religious freedom and, on the other, required compulsory disciplinary procedures for governments of countries that were deemed to be seriously repressing free religious expression. Several US human rights groups strongly supported the Act, partly as a result of the contemporaneous egregious events in the Balkans (i.e. ethnic cleansing, especially that of Muslims, in Bosnia), which the US government appeared to be tolerating. Business interests, on the other hand, regarded IRFA as a threat because it created the possibility of sanctions against important trading partners, including China, Russia, and Saudi Arabia. Partly as a result of their lobbying, IRFA was eventually moderated to safeguard business relationships with ‘problematic’ countries. In sum, the ratification of IRFA clearly signified the determination of an initially sceptical Clinton administration to support human rights concerns, notably concerns about religious persecution, as a key area of US foreign policy.

Two years later, in 2000, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) was passed – almost without demur – by both houses of Congress, and it was signed into law by the president on the 28th of October. TVPA sought to address a growing global human rights concern: international crime syndicates collecting children and women from the developing world and then disseminating them into both prostitution and sweatshops. Once again, Michael Horowitz was a driving force in getting the Act onto the statute book. Various human rights groups, joined by several feminist organisations, added their support, demonstrating the growing power of a new human rights coalition involving both evangelicals and secular groups. With the help of Senator Paul Wellstone, the advocates of this cause were instrumental in persuading the Clinton administration to expand the Act to include all forms of trafficking, not ‘just’ sex trafficking. TVPA linked U.S. aid to efforts to crack down on trafficking in humans, and it was widely seen as a good piece of legislation by groups that promote social justice. The Act was the conclusion of the U.S. government’s efforts fo-
cused in the Trafficking in Persons and Worker Exploitation Task Force, an inter-agency group that brought together the FBI, the Department of Labor, and other agencies to remedy a problem with both domestic and global dimensions.

As Gretchen Soderlund has argued, the TVPA was illustrative of how, pre-9/11, both the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations sought to use abolitionist legal frameworks to stimulate international regime change with an overall but implicit concern with building a better international order. In this context, combating international traffic in women and children became a common denominator political issue, uniting individuals and groups across political and religious spectrums. The point can be made more widely in relation to international human rights legislation enacted in the US during both administrations, which involved the creation, development and consolidation of a broad-based coalition of religious and non-religious activists in pursuit of various human rights improvements around the world.

RELIGIO-MORAL PERSUASION DURING THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION

We have noted that the evangelical lobby encountered an initially sceptical Clinton White House. Things changed with the accession to power of George W. Bush in January 2001. President Bush wore his religious credentials on his sleeve. For Bush, the country’s commitment to Christian values explicitly generates moral courage and character. Such claims provide a clear religious focus in current US foreign policy, which sought to establish ‘freedom’ and ‘democracy’ in various countries, including Afghanistan, Iraq, North Korea, and Sudan. The overall – yet implicit – aim was to improve international order through increasing numbers of democratic countries, following US encouragement. While Bush did not necessarily privilege religious over secular values, it is plausible to suggest that the religio-moral persuasion of conservative evangelicals – sometimes in tandem with other religious, as well as secular, entities – significantly influenced US foreign policy, especially in relation to human rights issues.

As Adam Wolfe notes, the ‘election of a president with established ties to evangelical leaders, who was comfortable quoting from the Bible in foreign policy speeches, allowed for an open dialogue on the issues of concern for advocates of the evangelical mission abroad’. At this time, two international human rights issues attracted particular attention of both evangelicals and non-evangelicals: (1) slavery and persecution of non-Muslims in Sudan, and (2) the government of North Korea’s egregious civil liberties violations.

During the George W. Bush presidency, evangelical Christians were able to strengthen their influence within the government. The NAE was particularly influential; in October 2004 it drew up a framework for political action entitled ‘For the Health of the Nation: An Evangelical Call to Civic Responsibility’. The foreign pol-
icy sections of the document strongly endorsed abolition of sex trafficking and, more generally, protection of religious freedoms and other human rights.

These concerns were highlighted in the 2002 Sudan Peace Act (SPA), which came about through the efforts of a coalition of evangelical and human rights groups. The background to the SPA was that the northern-based National Islamic Front (NIF) government in Khartoum was violating human rights through numerous acts, including enslavement of women and children in the non-Arab south of Sudan; ethnic cleansing, mainly in the same part of the country; destruction of churches and schools in the South; and prevention of food aid from reaching animists and Christians in the South, in the context of a conflict with NIF forces. 30

This drew the attention of both evangelical and non-evangelical groups in pursuit of justice. Nonetheless, it took years of coordinated pressure to move the Congress and the White House. An extraordinary coalition emerged in pursuit of legislation, grouping together numerous black churches, mainly white evangelicals, Chuck Colson’s Prison Fellowship, the Hudson Institute, Freedom House, the Institute on Religion and Democracy, the Congressional Black Caucus, the Boston-based American Anti-Slavery Group, and resolute civil rights leaders such as Joe Madison (an activist radio talk show host) and Walter Fauntroy (Pastor of the New Bethel Baptist Church in Washington, D.C).

There were, however, opponents of the Act, notably US business interests, that aligned themselves with the NIF government because of newly discovered oil fields in Sudan. For these business interests, the NIF government was seen to represent the strongest and most stable available administration, able and willing to provide the best protection to foreign investment in the oil fields. Evangelical Christians, on the other hand, strongly supported in the South the opposition Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), mainly because the SPLM/A was believed to be protecting both Christians and animists from religious prosecution from the NIF government in Khartoum.

Following the success of the SPA, a similar coalition of evangelical and non-evangelical organisations focused upon another example of troubling human rights violations, this time involving the government of North Korea. After intense negotiations, the Senate unanimously passed the North Korea Human Rights Act (NKHRA) in 2004. The Act provided financial support to U.S. non-governmental groups aiding North Koreans; demanded that the United Nations (UN) confront China regarding its policy of repatriating North Korean refugees (a violation of a UN convention which the government of China had signed); called for the president to assign a special envoy for North Korean human rights; and made human rights a central issue in future US negotiations with North Korea’s government.

Several senators, including Evan Bayh, Sam Brownback, and Richard Lugar, were instrumental in guiding the bill’s passage. They were supported by an interfaith coali-
tion led by evangelical Christians, within which the NAE was particularly active. This reflected the fact that the NAE had long ‘been at the forefront of efforts to bring greater religious freedom and respect for human rights to North Korea’. The issue of human rights violations in North Korea was further highlighted when, on 20 July 2006, the NAE joined with other religious and human rights organisations in outlining what was called a ‘Third Way’ for US negotiations with North Korea. This was put forward in an 18-point document entitled ‘Helsinki Approach to North Korea Policy Principles and Recommendations’. It emphasised a joint human rights and humanitarian approach rather than what its signatories saw as the Bush Administration’s dogged focus on arms control alone. The statement also gave its support in 2006 to the Scoop Jackson Let My People Go Act, which sought to curtail a designated list of Chinese exports to the US if China did not live up to international legal obligations regarding North Korean refugees.

The issue of North Korea was not restricted to human rights concerns. It was also linked to other concerns, notably that of humanitarian assistance for the country’s starving people and the government’s nuclear programme. At the level of policy-making, there was no consensus about whether to link the issue of human rights to other areas of concern, including the nuclear crisis and humanitarian aid. In Congress, on the other hand, there were attempts to consolidate existing legislation, with the issue of human rights a part of a wider strategy of ‘regime change’ that more generally targeted the world’s remaining dictatorships. At the level of non-governmental organisations, the evangelical movement worked with non-religious human rights activists in pursuit of religious and civil freedoms. As Richard Cizik, vice president for governmental affairs at the NAE and a signatory of the ‘Helsinki Approach,’ put it, the coalition was ‘going to be stronger than ever and we don’t intend to lose. This is a major movement... We have a left-right coalition that bar none will move Washington, and it’s got China in the headlights.’

CONCLUSION

The evangelicals’ focus on human rights during the Clinton and George W. Bush presidencies dovetailed well with a long-term governmental goal: to construct and embed an international order reflective of US norms and values, including, most importantly, democracy and enhanced religious freedoms, especially in the Arab/Muslim world. This is not to suggest that the evangelicals were cynically used by the administration in pursuit of these goals. Instead, we saw that an open political system like that of the USA can facilitate the achievement of goals when pursued by a well-organised and well-connected social movement. The evangelicals helped mould foreign policy preferences during both the Clinton and the George W. Bush presidencies (1993–2009). They did this by facilitating the spread of their values and goals in relation to various human rights concerns that dove-
tailed well with successive US administrations’ conceptions of a desirable international order.

AL-QAEDA AND INTERNATIONAL ORDER

For al-Qaeda, the aim of 9/11 was not simply to wreak terrible destruction but also to create a global media spectacle, a spectacular advertisement for the organisation and its militant ideological goals. Its goal, it wished to announce, was to transform international order by any means necessary, including random terrorist violence. The mass of ‘downtrodden ordinary Sunni Muslims’ was the key target audience for the highly visual spectacle of the attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon.

Al-Qaeda used 9/11 especially to grab the attention of such people, inviting them to make connections between the attacks on the United States itself and the multiple resentments many ‘ordinary’ Muslims would have already felt against America, reflective of a US-dominated international order. Proximate reasons for the Muslim antipathy included the apparently unquestioning US support for Israel and the unrepresentative rulers in the Arab world and the American-led invasions of Iraq in 1990–1991 and 2003 and Afghanistan in 2001. Taken together, as they often are, these issues indicate a deep degree of hatred of the United States in many parts of the Muslim world, an antipathy not necessarily restricted to the small numbers of religious or political radicals united in their belief in takfiri-jihadi ideology.

Apart from killing Americans and their allies, al-Qaeda has four other related goals, which collectively have clear international order implications:

• A return to a ‘pure and authentic’ Islam as practised by the Prophet Mohammed and his companions in seventh century Medina in order to bring back glory and prominence to Muslims.
• The overthrow of regimes that al-Qaeda deems to be ‘non-Islamic’.
• The expulsion of Westerners and non-Muslims from Muslim countries – particularly the holy land of Saudi Arabia, because the West is said to have subjugated the lands of Islam, and Western individualistic values have corrupted Muslims.
• The establishment of a pan-Islamic Caliphate throughout the world by working with a network of like-minded Islamic militant organisations united by the belief in takfiri-jihadi ideology. (Blanchard 2007)

During the 1990s, Al-Qaeda expanded its capacity and network, building links with various Islamist groups, including Egypt’s Islamic Jihad, whose leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, became bin Laden’s deputy in 1998. Other Islamist groups affiliated to Al-Qaeda include the Islamic Jihad Movement (Eritrea), al-Ihiaad al-Islamiya (Somalia), al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya (Egypt), the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and the Harakat
ul-Mujahidin (Pakistan). Following its expulsion from Afghanistan in late 2001, Al-Qaeda dispersed into small, often autonomous groups in various parts of the world, which formed a network of Sunni Islamic extremists. Al-Qaeda has also developed money-making front businesses, solicited donations from like-minded supporters, especially in Saudi Arabia, and illicitly siphoned funds from donations to Muslim charitable organisations, including Islamic NGOs.34

**KEY TENETS OF AL-QUEDA’S IDEOLOGY**

Al-Qaeda’s members and sympathisers are united in a belief that they are involved in a three-pronged jihad (holy war) against ‘apostate’ Muslims, un-Islamic rulers and the West (Riedel, 2008). The organisation’s ideology draws on two key sources: Wahhabism – a version of the official version of Islam found in Saudi Arabia – and the ideas of an Egyptian, Sayyid Qutb. Al-Qaeda’s chief ideologue is bin Laden’s deputy, Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri.

The roots of Wahhabism, a puritanical interpretation of Islam, are found in the ideas of Mohammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, an eighteenth-century Sunni reformer born in Arabia. He believed that Islam had been corrupted more than a thousand years earlier, shortly after the death of the Prophet Mohammed. Al-Wahhab denounced any theology – including religious scholarship – and any customs that had since developed as non-Islamic. In a religious revolution, he and his supporters took over what is now Saudi Arabia, where his ideology (Wahhabism) is still the dominant school of religio-political thought. Wahhabism has two central tenets: it (1) preaches against worship of ‘false idols’, including the mystical form of Islam known as Sufism – because Sufis worship local saints as well as God; and (2) regards Shias, Muslims who revere the descendants of Ali, the Prophet Mohammed’s son-in-law, as apostates. Wahhabism dynamically emerged from the Arabian peninsula 200 years ago, taking root among Sunni Muslims in many parts of the Middle East and elsewhere.

The second key religious and ideological thinker informing Al-Qaeda’s ideology is Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966). Qutb was an Egyptian, a prominent Islamist and member of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Arab world’s oldest Islamist group, which advocates an Islamic state in Egypt. His thought was deeply influenced by the revolutionary radicalism of a contemporaneous Indian Islamist, Sayyid Abu’l-A’la Mawdudi (1903–1979). Qutb’s ideological development fell into two distinct periods: the one before 1954 and the one from 1954 until his execution by the Egyptian government in 1966, following his imprisonment and torture by the secularist government of Gamal Abdel-Nasser. Following an attempt on Nasser’s life in October 1954, the government imprisoned thousands of members of the Muslim Brotherhood, including Qutb, and officially banned the organisation. During his second, radical phase, Qutb declared ‘Western civilisation’ the enemy of Islam, denounced
leaders of Muslim nations for not following Islam closely enough, and sought to spread the belief among Sunni Muslims that it was their duty to undertake jihad to defend and purify Islam.

Bin Laden’s deputy, Dr Ayman al-Zawahiri, is al-Qaeda’s chief ideologue. He was the man most responsible for turning al-Qaeda into an international network, following the merger between his organisation, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, and al-Qaeda in 1998. According to Montasser el-Zayat, a prominent Egyptian attorney who defends Islamic radicals and spent three years in prison with al-Zawahiri from 1981 for conspiracy to assassinate the late Egyptian president Anwar Sadat, ‘he is bin Laden’s brain… the planner, the organiser and the thinker who laid the ground for the idea of an Islamic front’. Al-Zawahiri is also a key figure in promoting the use of suicide attacks. He claimed in an interview in 2002 that ‘It is the love of death in the path of Allah, that is the weapon that will annihilate this evil empire of America’.

Following the failure of attempted Islamist initiatives in the Arab Middle East – for example, in Algeria and Saudi Arabia – al-Zawahiri believed that tactical changes were necessary in order to achieve success. He is believed to have personally persuaded bin Laden to refocus Al-Qaeda’s attention towards the United States – and the West more generally – and to stop trying to spread revolution in the Muslim world (Phares, 2008: 32). To this end, al-Zawahiri was the second of five signatories – bin Laden was the first – to the 1998 fatwa which declared ‘jihad against Jews and Crusaders’ and ‘authorised’ the killing of Americans. This was a pivotal moment in the development of Al-Qaeda’s ideology as it gave a concrete set of goals in relation to contemporary issues which could be justified and pursued by reference to the organisation’s ideological referents: Wahhabism and the ideas of Sayyid Qutb.

In sum, al-Qaeda’s militant ideology underpins resistance to what its leaders see as the dictates of a US-led, secular and inherently corrupting international order. For al-Qaeda leaders this is emblematic of a wider, corrosive social and economic dislocation – most notable in Palestine’s occupied territories, Iraq and Afghanistan – that undermines the stability and cohesion of local Sunni Muslim cultures. Followers of Al-Qaeda are urged to deal with attempts to impose the US-led international order by recourse to traditional patterns of behaviour rooted in their Islamic heritage. There is also the context provided by the fact that, in the Sunni Muslim world, especially among the Arab countries, Muslim traditions have for decades generally been denied or at best downplayed. This was the result of policies of various kinds of secular and secularising regimes that filled the Muslim world after World War II. That these countries had rulers widely believed to be ‘in the pockets’ of Western governments, especially that of the USA, while often disappointing the developmental and political expectations of their populations was regarded as proof of a more fundamental, holistic denial of Islam as a self-contained religious, social, po-
political and economic system and of capitulation to the dictates of a US-led international order. 37

AL-QAEDA, ORIENTALISM AND THE ‘CLASH OF CIVILISATIONS’

It is useful to briefly examine the development of al-Qaeda’s view of international order in relation to two theses: Edward Said’s Orientalism and Samuel Huntington’s ‘clash of civilisations’. This will enable us to locate al-Qaeda’s conception of a desirable international order in the context of what its supporters see as a long-term, historically rooted, Western cultural, political and economic domination. The conception involves a rejection of key ‘Western’ values that underpin associated conceptions of international order: pluralism, liberal democracy, relativism and radical individualism.

The idea of Islam as a body of religious and social thought that is inherently atavistic and at odds with Western conceptions of thought, culture and order is captured by Edward Said’s concept of Orientalism. Said defined Orientalism as a ‘style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between “the Orient” and (most of the time) the “Occident”’. 38 He claimed that many Western politicians and academics ‘essentialised’ both Muslims and Islam into unchanging categories, but that many of these assumptions were little more than generalisations with little or no foundation. Said cited Lord Cromer, the British governor of Egypt between 1882 and 1907, who argued that ‘the Oriental generally acts, speaks and thinks in a manner exactly opposite to the European’. While Cromer claimed that ‘the European’ is a ‘close reasoner’ and a ‘natural logician’, he believed ‘the Oriental’ to be ‘singularly deficient in the logical faculty’. 39 Although Cromer was no doubt a product of his times, there is no obvious reason to believe that his prejudiced views are entirely extinct.

A recent example of what might be called nouveau Orientalism is to be found in Huntington’s ‘clash of civilisations’ thesis. 40 Given that 9/11 and many subsequent terrorist outrages were undertaken by militant Muslims against western targets, then the question can be asked whether these events mark the beginning of Huntington’s mooted ‘civilisational’ conflict between Islam and the West. It is plausible that 9/11 and subsequent US responses have made Huntington’s prophecies about clashing civilisations appear far less abstract and far more plausible in recent times than when first articulated over 15 years ago.

Huntington’s main argument is that following the end of the Cold War, a new, global clash was under way, replacing the four-decades-long conflict between liberal democracy/capitalism and communism. This new fight was between the (Christian) ‘West’ and the (mostly Muslim, mostly Arab) ‘East’. The core of Huntington’s argument was that after the Cold War, the ‘Christian’, democratic West particularly found

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itself in conflict with radical Islam, a key threat to international order. Christianity, on the other hand, was thought conducive not only to the spread of liberal democracy but also more generally to a pro-Western international order. In evidence, he noted the collapse of dictatorships in southern Europe and Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s, followed by the development of liberal democratic political norms (rule of law, free elections, civil rights) and the consequent acceptance of international order norms and values. These events were regarded by Huntington as conclusive proof of the synergy between Christianity and liberal democracy, collectively foundations of a normatively desirable international global order reflecting Western-style liberal values.

Several objections can be raised against Huntington’s argument. First, critics of Huntington’s argument note that it is one thing to argue that various brands of political Islam have qualitatively different perspectives on liberal democracy and perhaps on international order than some forms of Christianity, but quite another to claim that Muslims en masse are poised to enter into a period of conflict with the West in an attempt to redraw the parameters and content of international order.

Second, the 9/11 atrocities and subsequent bomb outrages do not appear to have been carried out by a state or a group of states or at a state’s behest, but by al-Qaeda acting without state support. Despite energetic US attempts, no proof was found to link the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq with Al-Qaeda.

Third, the idea of religious or civilisational conflict is problematic because it is actually very difficult to identify clear territorial boundaries to civilisations, and even more difficult to perceive them as acting as coherent units. Huntington’s image of ‘clashing civilisations’ appears to focus too closely on an essentially undifferentiated category – ‘civilisation’ – and place insufficient emphasis on various trends, conflicts and disagreements that take place within all cultural traditions, whether Islam, Christianity, Judaism or whatever. The wider point is that cultures are not usefully seen as closed systems of essentialist values à la Orientalism. It is actually implausible to understand the world as comprising a strictly limited number of cultures, each with its own unique core sets of beliefs.

Finally, the image of ‘clashing civilisations’ ignores the fact that al-Qaeda’s terrorism is aimed not only at the United States and the West more generally: it also targets unrepresentative, corrupt and illegitimate – in short, ‘un-Islamic’ – governments in the Arab/Muslim world. Since the 1970s, the general rise of Islamist groups – including al-Qaeda – can be seen as a consequence of the political and economic failures of such governments, which were supported by successive US administrations, rather than the result of bin Laden’s influence by itself.

Taken together, the arguments of Said and Huntington underline that there is a deep-rooted tradition in Western thought that sees the Muslim world (the ‘Orient’) as both distinct and distinctive compared to the ‘Christian’ West. During the
centuries of Western imperialism, frequent debates focused on what rights non-Christian and non-European peoples should enjoy. In the centuries of competition and sometimes conflict between Christianity and Islam, there emerged the notion of ‘holy war’ – that is, a special kind of conflict undertaken effectively outside any framework of shared rules and norms – and ‘just war’, which is carried out for the vindication of rights within a shared framework of values. There is also a further strand of Western thought that contends that, because of their nature, some types of states and ideological systems cannot realistically be dealt with on ‘normal’ terms; that is, accepted rules that govern international relations have to be set aside when dealing with them. For example, during the 1980s, the Reagan administration in the United States averred that there was a basic lack of give-and-take available when dealing with communist governments, which meant that it was appropriate that some basic notions of international law could be set aside in such contexts.

Like certain traditions of Western thought, some aspects of al-Qaeda’s conception of international order also have universal themes like, for example, the focus on injustice and inequality. But when we ask ‘What do al-Qaeda bombers and cadres hope to achieve?’, we may be trying to apply a Western concept underpinned by the implicit assumption that they are trying to achieve certain finite goals.

However, the question can be posed differently: ‘Why do al-Qaeda bombers believe that they must act as they do when, for example, they kill people apparently randomly in bomb attacks?’ The answer, according to various well-informed sources, is that they literally believe that they have no other rational choice – that is, if they are going to defend their religion and culture against attempts to impose a US-led international order. This is underpinned by the timbre of militant statements from some captured al-Qaeda terrorists that emphasise both the general and the specific. For example, Imam Samudra, the Bali bomber, perceived what he saw as a specific abomination – Bali’s Western-orientated night clubs – as an integral aspect of a more general Western-directed order which undermined the existential positions of all Muslims. This mix of specific and general concerns is a more general component of Islamic militant ideology and beliefs wherever ‘Muslim terrorism’ is carried out or threatened: from Kashmir to Chechnya to Kenya and Somalia. For example, the day following a 1998 al-Qaeda bombing in Nairobi that killed over 200 people, the Islamic Liberation Army of the People of Kenya (ILAPK), an al-Qaeda cover organisation, issued a communiqué that included reference to both specifically Kenyan and more general concerns:

The Americans humiliate our people, they occupy the Arabian peninsula, they extract our riches, they impose a blockade and, besides, they support the Jews of Israel, our worse enemies, who occupy the Al-Aqsa mosque... The attack was justified because the government of Kenya recognized that the Americans
had used the country’s territory to fight against its Moslem neighbors, in particular Somalia. Besides, Kenya cooperated with Israel. In this country one finds the most anti-Islamic Jewish centers in all East Africa. It is from Kenya that the Americans supported the separatist war in Southern Sudan, pursued by John Garang’s fighters. 42

Such combinations of the specific and the general have helped to spread Al-Qaeda’s ideological convictions throughout the Sunni Muslim world. As a result, Al-Qaeda cadres believe that they are front-line troops engaged in a battle for the survival of their society, culture, religion and way of life, which are undermined and attacked by aggressive US-led attempts to impose order. 43 As the quote from the ILAPK communiqué indicates, they believe that they are fighting in self-defence in a last-ditch stand; and under such circumstances it is rational for them to justify the use of their tactics – such as apparently indiscriminate bombings – as being acceptable during conditions of a no holds barred ‘holy war’.

However, it is ironic that al-Qaeda (‘the base’) no longer appears to have a physical base following its expulsion from Afghanistan. Since 2001–2002, the scattering of al-Qaeda has weakened, but not destroyed, the organisation. Over the last decade, al-Qaeda has transformed itself into a collection of regional terror groups that operate more autonomously than before, collectively informed by shared ideological convictions that it is necessary to destroy the US-led international order.

CONCLUSION

There is a further irony in that the war in Iraq – presented as an opportunity to do away with a brutal, obnoxious regime and spread Western values of order, democracy and religious freedom – actually provided Al-Qaeda with an excellent chance to exploit the resulting circumstances, both materially and ideologically. The US government’s claim was that Saddam’s Iraq was a place where terrorists gathered; it appears that it wasn’t then, but it certainly is now. George Tenet, then director of the CIA, stated in early 2004 that ‘as we continue the battle against Al-Qaeda, we must overcome a movement – a global movement infected by Al-Qaeda’s radical agenda’. 44 The inference is that al-Qaeda’s extremist ideology is now attracting increased support, as it is expanding its networks among a new generation of supporters not only in Iraq but also elsewhere in the Sunni Muslim world. I have argued that such people may be often regarded as idealists who believe that the concept of global jihad is necessary to liberate the lands of Islam from Western control. Al-Qaeda strategists may not have hoped to defeat or even to weaken ‘America’ militarily on 9/11, but to gain publicity, to reach out to further recruits; and this has been forthcoming. This amounts to a psychological victory and useful progress towards the achievement of Al-Qaeda’s goals: jihad against ‘Christians’ and ‘Jews’; chasing away
the Americans from the holy land, Saudi Arabia; and the establishment of the puritanical rule of Wahhabism throughout the Sunni Muslim world.

Several of these objectives have already been achieved. Some of President Bush’s responses to 9/11, especially the swift war in Afghanistan, were unavoidable given the state of public opinion after the attacks. However, the unfortunate crudeness and depth of response against what many Muslims now believe is an assault not only on Al-Qaeda but also on Islam itself has done nothing to either defeat Al-Qaeda or stop the spread of its ideology. President Bush quickly declared a ‘crusade’ against both the specific threat of bin Laden and Al-Qaeda and terrorism in general. He sent the US fleet back to the Middle East, undermined the Saudi royal family, and removed US troops from the country. This led to two counterproductive outcomes: much free publicity for bin Laden and Al-Qaeda, and the antagonism of many ordinary Muslims around the world because of various policies, including ‘racial profiling’, draconian legislation, mass arrests, and detentions at the Guantanamo Bay prison camp.

OVERALL CONCLUSION

The paper began with the claim that religion impacts on international relations with ramifications for the international order, an unexpected development that challenged conventional wisdom about the nature and long-term historical impact of secularisation. It also contended that the ‘return’ of religion to international relations necessarily involves religious deprivatisation. This implies that religion may have a key public role, with implications for the international order. The international order is a regime characterised by widespread – although not necessarily universal – acceptance of certain values and norms of behaviour, involving a range of actors, rules, mechanisms and understandings. We saw that the concept of international order centres on two themes: (1) a more or less consensual international acceptance of common values and norms – including the body of international law, and (2) development of institutions geared to preserve and develop international order. The combination of structures and processes – involving various actors, rules, mechanisms and understandings – serves overall to manage the co-existence and interdependence of states and non-state actors in the context of ‘international society’. In the literature there is no consensus about the impact of transnational religious actors on international order, although there is generally an acceptance of the idea that various religious actors can influence international order outcomes in various ways. The paper focused on two specific transnational religious non-state actors – American Evangelical Protestants and Al-Qaeda – to assess their impact on international order. American Evangelical Protestants can be thought of as ‘new internationalists’, having developed a wide post-Cold War international agenda focusing on improving development, health, and religious freedom, especially in the devel-
oping world. Al-Qaeda, on the other hand, has a very different perception of international order, presenting a significant challenge to US hegemony, a focal point of the post-9/11 US-directed ‘war on terror’. Both wish to spread their influence by the establishment and development of cross-border networks. An influential group of evangelicals developed in the USA from the mid-1990s, becoming over time increasingly influential in the pursuit of human rights measures in US foreign policy. The paper indicated that it was not necessarily crucial for effective exercise of evangelical influence on foreign policy for policymakers to actually share evangelicals’ religious values. Evidence for this comes from the fact that both Bill Clinton and George W. Bush – men who would not necessarily be noted for sharing either religious or secular beliefs, despite the fact that both describe themselves as Christians – were equally responsive to evangelical-led campaigns for human rights. This also indicates that a specifically ‘evangelical’ set of religio-moral values in foreign policy is not the key issue. Rather it is that evangelicals have, since the early years of the Clinton presidency, cannily married together their religious values with more general humanitarian values to form a convincing argument in relation to US human rights-oriented foreign policy and, by extension, wider concerns of international order. As a result, it seems likely that, during the Obama presidency, the religio-moral persuasiveness of human rights concerns will retain its centrality in American foreign policy, as will the significance of the evangelical lobby on policymakers, including President Obama himself.45

For their part, Al-Qaeda leaders have ‘displayed a pragmatic willingness to adapt the strategic and tactical content of their statements to changing circumstances while retaining a messianic commitment to their broader ideological agenda’.46 While bin Laden’s self-professed goal is to encourage Muslim support for a revolutionary change in international order, he has so far been unable to mobilise widespread Muslim support in pursuit of this objective. On the other hand, surveys of Muslim public opinion since late 2001 indicate that many Muslims are dissatisfied with the United States and its foreign policy.47 Perhaps reflecting this trend, Al-Qaeda leaders have shifted towards a stance informed by a more explicitly political and ideological rhetoric. The aim, it may be surmised, is not to undermine the challenge to the international order but to try to broaden the movement’s appeal. It is also suggestive of a strategy that highlights how Al-Qaeda’s leaders have consistently sought to characterise the movement’s actions as both defensive and religiously sanctioned in the belief that this encourages supporters and followers to accept their broader ideological programme. In other words, asserting limited political objectives and identifying their achievement as an essential step towards dealing with broader grievances chimes with Al-Qaeda’s core ideological agenda. Overall, the Al-Qaeda leaders’ statements over the last 15 years strongly suggest that they regard themselves as leaders of a vanguard transnational Islamic movement dedicated to putting
an end to US ‘meddling’ in Muslim countries’ affairs and, against ‘necessary’ efforts, to redirecting Islamic societies according to their own interpretation of Islam and Islamic law.48

ENDNOTES


7 Haynes, ‘Transnational religious actors and international politics’, op. cit.

8 Rudolph and Piscator, op. cit., p. 12.


17 Ibid.


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21 Ibid.


35 Online: [www.news24.com/News24/World/News/0,6119,2-10-1462_1500844,00.html](http://www.news24.com/News24/World/News/0,6119,2-10-1462_1500844,00.html).


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39 Ibid., p. 39


44 Online: www.csmonitor.com/2004/0226/p03s02-usfp.html.


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International Relations and the Secularisation of Theological Concepts: A Symbolic Reading

MIKA LUOMA-AHO

Abstract: This article takes seriously Carl Schmitt’s argument that secular political concepts share structural identity with certain concepts in Christian theology and exposes its implications for contemporary International Relations. The key for understanding Schmitt’s argument is in its corporeal social imaginary. What connects the theological structures of Christianity with those of the contemporary social order is the corpus mysticum: the image of an embodied polis. The origin of the image is in scripture and it has been a subject of much theological speculation in the Christian tradition. The same image has a secular incarnation in the institution of the state, which is, of course, an omnipresent element in contemporary IR as well as in the everyday discourse of international relations. The article concludes with a thought on the role of political theology in the study of IR.

Key words: International Relations, political theology, symbolism, Carl Schmitt, Martin Luther

INTRODUCTION

The problem with most of us in the academic study of International Relations is that we choose not to see that the project we are involved in – a particular form of a cultural tradition that we partake in by asking questions in the name of ‘IR’ and coming up with educated answers too – serves a highly political purpose. We may like it or we may not, but in so doing, we can sincerely say that there is no escape from the fact that we are employed by an idol, an imaginary being of the unseen world, to legitimise a political hierarchy over human life.

What am I talking about? (Or rather, who am I talking about?) The state, of course. If there is anything like an ontology in this project of ours, a fulcrum around which IR seems to turn, it is the polity of the state. We live in a world inhabited by states. I want to emphasise inhabited, because this is the image we have before us when we gaze at the world political: a society of 200 or so persons in a state of international society characterised by enmity or co-operation depending on which one of the following two thinkers you talk to: Thomas or Hugo.
What am I trying to say? Am I saying that the states of the world – like Britain, France, Germany, or, well, all of them really – are not real? This is an ontological question, one that you answer with a definition of ‘real’. What states do not possess is a physical essence that would render their reality tangible for physical perception. Having said that states do have a capability to signify reality, there are people acting in their name. We have them demarcated on maps, identified by flags, worn on sleeves and mobilised in green metal. But the state is no one in particular, not a picture, a flag, or a tank – all of these are symbols for something which cannot be seen, but we either believe it is there or are just ready to play along.

Philosophically this is hardly a revelation: there is little novelty in the claim that the state is a question of collective belief. This has been the state of the art ever since IR opened shop. E. H. Carr writes in his The Twenty Years’ Crisis that:

> it is difficult to see how orderly international relations can be conducted at all unless Englishmen, Frenchmen and Germans believe (however absurd the belief may be) that ‘Great Britain’, ‘France’ and ‘Germany’ have moral duties to one another and a reputation to be enhanced by performing those duties. The spirit of international relations seems more likely to be improved by stimulating this belief than by decrying it. (Carr, 2001: 139)

Hans J. Morgenthau states the following in his Politics Among Nations:

> A nation[al state] as such is obviously not an empirical thing. A nation as such cannot be seen. What can be empirically observed are only the individuals who belong to a nation. [...] Therefore, when we speak in empirical terms of the power or of the foreign policy of a certain nation, we can only mean the power or the foreign policy of certain individuals who belong to the same nation. (Morgenthau, 1993: 115)

Ditto Kenneth N. Waltz in Man, State and War:

> In studying international politics it is convenient to think of states as the acting units. At the same time, it does violence to one’s common sense to speak of the state, which is after all an abstraction and consequently inanimate, as acting (Waltz, 1954: 175).

And another contemporary neo-realist states more or less the same thing:

> Of course we ‘realists’ know that the state does not really exist. [...] Only individuals really exist, although I understand that certain schools of psychology
challenge even this. Only individuals act, even though they may act on behalf of one of these collective social entities, the most important being the group. (Gilpin, 1984: 301)

What we have today is, more or less, a world and a humanity divided into states, their territories and their populations. Even if this world expects us human beings to fill some of its logical gaps – like the one in which the state does not really exist – it does make perfect sense in its own sphere: that of international relations. Once you imagine the state, believe in it or just play along, then world politics begins to make sense.

What I am doing in this article is grounding our social imaginary of the state in Christian theology and – since doing just this is hardly difficult – also making these grounds relevant for the study of IR today. When we properly understand that the ‘secular’ concepts we use when doing IR have passed down to us from theology and see that the political purposes these concepts served in theology serve the same purposes in IR today, we have grounds for a radical re-thinking of the role and purpose of our art.

To get there we have to do two things. Firstly, we need to take Carl Schmitt’s political theology seriously, which I will attempt to do in the following section. Secondly, we have to make an excursion into our social imaginary. On this excursion I will extract and analyse a peculiar form of symbolism – one that identifies in the image of a person the substance of political community – which has passed down from Christian theology to the modern theory of the state.

What I am about to argue in this paper is not only that political theology is a going concern in the study of politics, but that it is especially important for IR. Bear with me as I lay out my claims.

**SCHMITTEAN POLITICAL THEOLOGY**

What do we mean by political theology? William T. Cavanaugh and Peter Scott put forward a general definition: ‘analysis and criticism of political arrangements [...] from the perspective of differing interpretations of God’s ways with the world’ (Cavanaugh and Scott, 2004: 3). Political theology has been a significant discourse especially in the context of Western Christianity, where most people identified or identifying themselves as political theologians are coming from. Within the general framework there are different interpretations regarding the task of political theology. Some see politics as a social ‘sphere’ with its own secular autonomy clearly distinct from the ecclesiastical sphere, and assign to political theology the task of holding the line between the two spheres. Others see theology as relating to material society as a superstructure, and allot political theology to expose the ways in which theological discourse reproduces political and economic inequalities. Still others make no essential separation between the secular and the ecclesiastical.
sphere or between the social superstructure and the material base, but rather see theology and politics as similar activities: both produce metaphysical images around which communities are organised.

I would argue that the political theology most relevant to IR is that of the last type. In this sense the topic has been explored in political theory, but it has unfortunately received very limited attention in IR theory. A notable exception is R. B. J. Walker, for whom the theory of international relations built on the doctrine of state sovereignty ‘can be read as a very elegant specifically modern resolution of [...] philosophical problems that had once received a more theological treatment’ (Walker, 1995: 320). According to Walker (ibid.: 314–315), IR is a theological discourse of ‘eternity’ despite the extent to which it has been and is being framed in the secular terms of the Enlightenment. Another notable exception is Vendulka Kubalkova, who brings the study of IR and religion together with her notion of International Political Theology (IPT), which involves ‘the systematic study of discourses and relations amongst them concerning world affairs that search for – or claim to have found – a response, transcendental or secular, to the human need for meaning’ (Kubalkova, 2000: 676–677).

The political theologian most relevant to IR is the first of them: Carl Schmitt. Schmitt is widely known these days; there is no reason for me to go into his life and the controversy surrounding him. Over the last few decades Schmitt scholarship has grown massive as a new generation of political and legal theorists have discovered his work, as it is now widely available in translation. Schmitt’s significance to contemporary IR theory was a topic of a recent anthology titled The International Thought of Carl Schmitt (see Odysseos and Petito, 2007). Most of the attention there is paid to Schmitt’s inter-war book The Concept of the Political and the post-war The Nomos of the Earth; both are highly relevant texts, of course, that address many of the international issues of our neo-Schmittean moment. There are (at least) two other texts that the theorists of IR should try reading, in my opinion: Political Theology (1922) and Political Theology II (1970). What I am offering here is a reading of Schmitt that aims to make political theology – ‘the explicit attempt to relate discourse about God to the organization of bodies in space time’ (Cavanaugh and Scott, 2004) – momentous for IR today. The crux of my reading is the metaphysical image that, for Schmitt, connects the political to the theological, making the presence of the latter endemic in the former.

In Political Theology Schmitt declares that ‘[a]ll significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts not only because of their historical development [...] but also because of their systematic structure, the recognition of which is necessary for a sociological consideration of these concepts’ (Schmitt, 1985: 36). Schmitt’s sociology of concepts is concerned with identifying metaphysical images of reality with temporal forms of political organisation: ‘estab
lishing proof of two spiritual but at the same time substantial identities’ (ibid.: 45). From this follows an interesting analysis of the concept of state sovereignty, which, for Schmitt, shares a ‘spiritual but at the same time substantial’ identity with belief in God:

In the theory of the state of the seventeenth century, the monarch is identified with God and has in the state a position exactly analogous to that attributed to God in the Cartesian system of the world [...] A continuous thread runs through the metaphysical, political and sociological conceptions that postulate the sovereign as a personal unit and primeval creator. (Schmitt, 1985: 46–47)

The systematic structure inherited from Christian theology serves a secular purpose because ‘[n]o political system can survive even a generation with only 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.’ (Schmitt, 1996: 17)

On this premise Schmitt elaborates his well known definition of the sovereign as the person who decides on the exception (Schmitt, 1985: 5; see also Hirst, 1987). The emphasis is on the person here, because Schmitt argues that ‘[t]o represent in an eminent sense can only be done by a person, that is, not simply a “deputy” but an authoritative person or an idea which, if represented, also becomes personified’ (Schmitt, 1996: 21). With this he essentially subscribes to Hobbes’s covenant with the leviathan:

I authorise and give up my right of governing myself to this man, or to this assembly of men, on this condition; that thou give up, thy right to him, and authorise all his actions in like manner. This done, the multitude so united in one person is called a COMMONWEALTH; in Latin, CIVITAS. This is the generation of that great LEVIATHAN, or rather, to speak more reverently, of that mortal god to which we owe, under the immortal God, our peace and defence. For by this authority, given him by every particular man in the Commonwealth, he hath the use of so much power and strength conferred on him that, by terror thereof, he is enabled to form the wills of them all, to peace at home, and mutual aid against their enemies abroad. (Hobbes, 1996: ch. xviii, capitals in original)

The crux of this covenant is personification: it is made with ‘this man’ or ‘this assembly of men’. Schmitt argues that when we give up our right to govern ourselves, it is absolutely necessary that we give it to someone – a person in the actual or corporeal sense of the term – who uses it for our protection at home and abroad. This is concrete sovereignty: the highest legally independent, underived power that ra-
diates from an authoritative person, or something authoritative personified, within a state in every state. What Schmitt refuses to accept is any attempt to substitute a person with something else, a legal abstraction or a political theory perhaps. Abstractions and theories can do little against the enemy. (Schmitt, 1985: 16–35)

Schmitt’s vitriol is in self-defence. The second essay in Political Theology is a defence of concrete sovereignty against precisely such theories and abstractions. Schmitt singles out ‘association theory’ and monistic jurisprudence as the embodiments of his antithesis, but what he is criticising is the early 20th century liberal notion of a modern state. Most of Schmitt’s polemic is set against Hugo Krabbe and Hans Kelsen.

In his The Modern Idea of the State, Krabbe absolutely opposed the doctrine of sovereignty, the idea that political authority is a person standing outside the law. Krabbe argued that the term belonged to a political theory of the absolutist era, whereas in the Rechtsstaat positive law has gradually superseded the sovereign claim to unconditional obedience. For Krabbe the authority of the state was nothing other than the impersonal authority of the law: ‘[h]ence there is only one ruling power, the power of law’ (Krabbe, 1922: 2). This was the revelation of the modern idea of the state:

We no longer live under the dominion of persons, either natural persons or fictitious legal persons, but under the dominion of norms, of spiritual forces. [...] The old foundation which heretofore had mainly supported the life of the community, the personal authority of the sovereign, has been compelled to give place (or at least is more and more giving place) to another foundation which is derived from the spiritual nature of mankind. [...] These forces rule in the strictest sense of the word. Obedience can be freely rendered to these forces, for the very reason that they do proceed from the spiritual nature of mankind. (Krabbe, 1922: 8–9)

Unfortunately, Krabbe writes, political theory had not taken account of this, but persistently clung to the ‘old’ idea of sovereignty: ‘It is indeed difficult for it to free itself from the conception of a personal power which is supported by a tradition of centuries and from a terminology adapted to this conception’ (Krabbe, 1922: 10).

This is also what Hans Kelsen’s ‘pure jurisprudence’ was about – de-personification of the concept of sovereignty. Kelsen identified the state with its legal order and deprived sovereignty of all relevancy to any person, physical or corporate. The state was a normative order, and the idea of the person-hood of the state could only symbolise this order, if it was needed at all. Indeed, after World War II, Kelsen relegated the idea to the historical and ideological domain of totalitarianism:
Political absolutism [has] a political theory at its disposal which describes the state as an absolute entity existing independently of its subjects. According to this theory, the state is not merely a group of individuals; it is more than the sum-total of its subjects. It is a collective, and that means here a super-individual, body which is even more real than its members, a mystic organism and as such a supreme and super-human authority, whose visible representative or incarnation is the ruler, whether he be called the monarch, Führer or Generalissimo. It is the concept of sovereignty serving the purpose of this deification of the state which implies the worship of the ruler as a god-like being. (Kelsen, 1948: 909–910)

Kelsen agreed with Schmitt in his belief that the image of the personified state had a religious origin, but he argued that this image had become antiquated along with mediaeval theology and that democratic legalism no longer needed deification. At this point in time and with his intellectual background, Schmitt was hardly in a position to object.

What we can learn from this discussion is in the image at the centre of the debate. A king on his throne with the people at his feet is the classical image of sovereign political authority. What Kelsen argues is that we do not need this image in the modern state. What Schmitt argues is that even though the picture may change, it always tells us the same story: it does not have to be a king sitting on a throne, but the people always hurry at someone’s feet. Hobbes agrees: ‘subjection, command, right, and power, are accidents, not of powers, but of persons’ (Hobbes, 1996: ch. xxxii). A single person can be the highest, but so can an assembly or a majority capable of making political decisions on behalf of a people. What matters is that there is someone that represents political unity:

If the formula is no longer: One God – One King, but: One God – One People, and if the political side of political theology is no longer oriented towards the single monarch but towards a people, then we turn to democracy. (Schmitt, 2008: 72)

**SYMBOLISM, CHRIST AND THE STATE**

Since this is an exercise in *Symbolic* Reading, it may be useful to discuss what is meant by this term. Symbolism is of course a difficult thing to pin down exactly, but I believe a simple definition is likely to suffice for our present purpose. A symbol is a tangible representation of some intangible reality. Symbols are like containers for something we understand to be ‘uncontainable’: words, actions, and images that bridge the gap between our limited abilities to conceive and understand, and something that by its nature transcends those limited abilities (Chernus, 1986: 6). For ex-
ample, a picture of ‘Finland’ drawn on a map and the Finnish flag worn on a sleeve are tangible representations of the state of Finland. What is printed on paper or fabric, of course, can not exhaustively express what Finland ‘is’, but symbols like these are all we have, all that Finland has. If I am not alone – that is, I belong to a collective of Finns – there is no other means but symbolism to represent this we. In other words: *symbolism is the essence of political identification.*

In the previous section I discussed a theoretical debate concerning the possibility of containing political authority in the symbol of a person. Whence came such symbolism? Why do we subject ourselves to the power of personification? We can locate the urge in ourselves. Schmitt reasons that ‘[a]s long as the human being is anthropomorphic, that is, a being modelled on humanity, he understands himself and his social relations in such “images”’ (Schmitt, 2008: 57). Leonard Barkan argues that ‘the human body is both phylogenetically and ontogenetically one of the first and most basic entities the mind can grasp’ (Barkan, 1975: 62). It seems natural to make sense of objects of discourse such as human motivations, goals, actions, and characteristics in our own terms. Michael Walzer emphasises that the image of the body has not been used simply as a decorative metaphor applied by a writer who has already grasped the nature of political community and wishes to convey this understanding. The image is rather as prior to theoretic understanding as it is to articulation, and necessary to both. When the state is first imagined as a body politic, then a particular mode for understanding the nature of the state is made available. The image does not reinforce existing political ideas as much as it underlies them: ‘It provides an elementary sense of what the political community is like, of how physically distinct and solitary individuals are joined together’ (Walzer, 1967: 194). When we imagine and represent the state as a body, we bring it into close relation with the organicist world: ‘[a] single vocabulary describes animal bodies and political communities and makes the second appear almost as familiar, as natural, as well organized as the first’ (Walzer, 1967: 195).

According to Charles Taylor (2004: 12–13), the body politic is a typical pre-modern social imaginary. Pre-modern forms of society reflect an ‘embedded’ understanding of human life, where the polity itself is seen as God’s creation. This image naturally provides a basis for an hierarchical organisation of society, where people find their place in different orders of society – some of greater dignity and value than others. This is why organism and body have been powerful political metaphors in the pre-modern social order: they have been easy to employ in arranging functions to the orders – that the feet are below the head is how it should be.

We know that bodily figurations have been employed in political discourse since the Ancients, though they are likely to have a much richer history than we can tell (see, e.g., Coker, 1910; Laird, 2005). The metaphor of the embodied *polis* we have
today is, however, an artefact of the Christian civilisation. It has a biblical origin and this is where we begin.

The symbol that joined the members of the early Christian community together was the body of Jesus Christ. Paul the Apostle writes that ‘For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.’ (Rom. 12:4–5; see also 1 Cor. 6:15, 10:16–17, 12:12–27, ESV.) What is the meaning of the identification of Christians becoming one in \textit{corpus Christi}? For the first disciples, bodily community with Jesus did not only mean participation in his teaching, but living and suffering with him in bodily community – this is literally what the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is all about. When the physical body of Christ died on the cross, its place on earth was taken by the church. For Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the church is the present Christ himself: ‘While we are used to thinking of the church as an institution, we ought instead to think of it as a \textit{person} with a body, although of course a person in an unique sense’ (Bonhoeffer, 2003: 218, emphasis in original). The sacrament of baptism incorporates a man into this body, into the new or ‘second’ humanity (1. Cor 15:47), in which there is neither Greek nor Jew, neither free nor slave.

According to Otto Gierke (1913: 11–12), medieval political thought proceeded from the idea that not only those who shared communion, not only the church, but mankind in its totality was conceived as \textit{corpus Christi}. This universalist understanding was not alien to biblical theology. Jesus, like Adam before him, was both an individual and a personification of humanity – when Adam fell, the old humanity fell; when Jesus was crucified, the new humanity was crucified. Thus, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus are events which implied all human beings. Those who had been baptised and thus had become members in the body of the Christ were different from the lot in that they were no longer in the flesh of Adam, but had won death in Christ. This is the theological context, and this is where interpretation really begins.

This is also where the Roman Church has played an active role, as in the overall administration of the affairs of the universal \textit{corpus Christi}. If the new humanity was one, there could only be one hierarchy, one authority, one state; and that state could be none other than the Church God himself had created. From this premise the Roman Church deduced the proposition that it was the authority of the Christ that was on the highest summit in temporal as well as ecclesiastical matters. The political conclusion of this proposition was, at least for Rome, unequivocal: creation itself places temporal rulers hierarchically under the Vicar of the Christ, for were there additional heads for emperors in the body politic, we would have before us a monstrosity instead of the son of God.

In his \textit{The King’s Two Bodies}, Ernst H. Kantorowicz (1957: 193–232) brilliantly documents the history of this image in mediaeval theology and jurisprudence. Bodily
metaphors were employed at the time to reinforce the idea of the Christian community as a whole as well as that of its secular parts. As the Roman Church bid for a more influential secular presence after the investiture controversy, it began to re-imagine itself as a temporal body: a political and legal organism on a level with secular political entities, which were at this time beginning to assert their political presence vis-à-vis the Church. With this image of the corpus mysticum Christi, the Church itself secularised its symbolism and politicised the body of Jesus Christ, which resulted in that the ideologues of the nascent territorial state followed suit and also began to employ bodily metaphors. While the Roman Church was the ‘perfect prototype of an absolute and rational monarchy on a mystical basis’, at the same time ‘the State showed increasingly a tendency to become a quasi-church or a mystical corporation on a rational basis’ (Kantorowicz, 1957: 194).

Deciding this struggle in favour of the territorial state, the role played by one German monk, Martin Luther, was key. This is basically what Luther had to say: a Christian is not a humble subject of a universal hierarchy administered by the Pope in Rome, but instead belongs to two different kingdoms ruled by two separate governments. The two kingdoms refer to the two overlapping spheres of Christian existence, and the governments to the two ways in which God governs the world (Steinmetz, 2002: 115). The kingdom of God is the realm of revelation and faith. Because in the spiritual realm all Christians are equal, there is no need for authority in the church. The dialectical partner of the spiritual realm, the kingdom of the world, is the realm of reason and unbelief that is ruled hierarchically and ‘by the sword’. This was the wedge Luther drove between the church and the state: one was not a part of the other, but both were separate and distinct and with clearly defined roles and spheres of influence. The Church had no influence in the temporal sphere. The ecclesiastical officer had no coercive authority; the state alone possessed the sword. (Whitford, 2003: 180–181.)

Luther sided with temporal authorities in the political encounters of his day. What Luther did was that he provided a theological apologia for the principle of non-intervention in temporal affairs. In the polemical context this declaration undermined the authority of the Roman Church in Germany. In his 1520 To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate, Luther demands for the pope to stick to ecclesiastical matters and to leave the ‘lands’ to take care of themselves:

It should be decreed that no temporal matter is to be referred to Rome, but that all such cases shall be left to the temporal authority, as the Romanists themselves prescribe in that canon law of theirs, which they do not observe. It should be the pope’s duty to be the most learned in the Scriptures and the holiest (not in the name only but in fact) and to regulate matters which concern the faith and holy life of Christians. He should hold the primates and archbishops to this
task, and help them in dealing with these matters and taking care of these responsibilities. This is what St. Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 6:7, and he takes the Corinthians severely to task for their concern with worldly things. That such matters are dealt with in Rome causes unbearable grief in every land. It increases the costs, and, moreover, these judges do not know the usage, laws, and customs of these lands, so that they often do violence to the facts and base their decisions on their own laws and precedents. As a result the contesting parties often suffer injustice. (Luther, 1999c: 160)

With this letter, Luther told German princes that they not only can, but should declare their ‘lands’ politically independent territorial states, never mind Rome. Though the treaties were signed in Westphalia a hundred years after Luther, the core principles of our modern, secular international society were articulated here. For Luther Hess Waring, Martin Luther was not only a prophet or a forerunner, but ‘the founder of the modern theory of the state; not that he secularised it, but he declared it to be absolutely separate and distinct from the church and the sole possessor of coercive authority and sovereign power’ (Waring, 1910: 278–279).

Though the Reformation can be written into the master narrative of enlightened governance, along with incidents like the Revolution in France and artefacts like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the theme you will not find in Luther is civil liberty. What you will find instead is the Pauline ethos of civil obedience. For Luther, the fourth commandment was the constitutional norm for all authority in the kingdom of the world:

For everybody must be ruled and subject to other men. So we see here again how many good works are taught in this commandment, for in it all our life is made subject to other men. That is the reason obedience is so highly praised, and all virtue and good works are included in it. (Luther, 1999a: 182)

Thus, one man’s political authority over another flowed directly from God, and the burden of the Christian was to submit. Luther was an advocate of civil obedience because he feared the chaos of anarchy more than he did the tyranny of authority (Whitford, 2003: 181). Chaos was the devil’s handiwork: it always hurt the weak more than it did the powerful, the innocent more than the guilty. Luther was adamant in his view that there could never be an authority tyrannical enough to justify riot and rebellion against them:

For God has appointed subjects to care for themselves as individuals, has taken the sword from them, and has put it into the hands of another. If they rebel against this, get others to join them and break loose, and take the sword, then
before God they are worthy of condemnation and death. Overlords, on the other hand, are appointed to be persons who exist for the sake of the community, and not for themselves alone. They are to have the support of their subjects and are to bear the sword. Compared to his overlord the emperor, a prince is not a prince, but an individual who owes obedience to the emperor, as do all others, each for himself. But when he is seen in relationship to his own subjects he is as many persons as he has people under him and attached to him. So the emperor, too, when compared with God, is not an emperor, but an individual person like all others; compared with his subjects, however, he is as many times emperor as he has people under him. The same thing can be said of all other rulers. When compared to their overlord, they are not rulers at all and are stripped of all authority. When compared with their subjects, they are adorned with all authority. (Luther, 1999c: 126)

This is also the image pictured on the frontispiece of Hobbes’ Leviathan. Man acts in the image of God as he gives up his right of rule and joins the bodily community of his polis. Why should he do this? Because the kingdom of the world is a kingdom of evil, where ‘men would devour one another, seeing that the whole world is evil and that among thousands there is scarcely a single true Christian’ (Luther, 1999b: 91). In this world reduced to chaos, ‘[n]o one could support wife and child, feed himself, and serve God’ (ibid.).

Were it not for the wickedness of sin, there would be no need for a political order, no need for the sword in this world, in any world. In order to preserve the life and property of the law-abiding at home and to defend against enemies abroad, God has ordained a second government: the government of the state. Most of us are probably not sure about the ‘God’ part, but inherit the state nevertheless. This is why we have this symbolic image – human beings becoming one in a body politic – because it seems to be the only thing we got against evil, the last ‘man’ standing between it and us. We need the image of the state because we need its sword: none of us alone can boast enough power and strength to overcome the terrors of this world. The community we thus imagine is not unlike corpus Christi in that it gives our becoming one a symbolic form and identifies us as parts of a particular commonwealth, as British, Finnish, French, German, or whatever else. What distinguishes the corpus mysticum of the state is that it does not embody the love of God and the promise of eternal life – no, not love but fear of the neighbour in this life.

IMAGINING INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY
The genesis of the modern international system is conventionally dated to the year of 1648. The Peace of Westphalia was preceded by thirty years of religious conflict between the Catholic Habsburgs and reformed German, Swedish, French and Dan-
ish princes. The treaty codified the principle of *cuius regio eius religio*, which essentially meant that both Catholic and Protestant states had to tolerate each other’s existence. Westphalia has been made an epochal signpost in international history. Andreas Osiander (2001) argues that the prevalent image of Westphalia is a myth utilised by the realists of IR to sacralise state sovereignty. According to Osiander, the pre-Westphalian system did not disappear overnight, but over a longer period in which the revolution in France was probably a more significant turning point. Daniel Philpott (2001: 98–99) argues that Western Europe would have seen a modern state system even without the reformation and the ensuing wars of religion, but the process would have taken longer than it did.

Be that as it may, we now have a system of ‘modern’ states. It is quite easy to think that the states today are secular institutions, even though we know that the history of the idea, the symbolic image of that society is of theological origin. It is easy now because of everything that has happened to our social imaginary since the pre-modern era, in ‘modernity’. One of the things Luther and the reformation, and especially the democratic revolutions, brought about was a new, secularised embedding for temporal authority. Since the state was no longer a part of the universal hierarchy of God’s cosmos, it had to come up with a new understanding of history and modes of narration for its existence in time and place – this is basically the story Taylor (2007) tells us in *A Secular Age*. One of the most powerful of these modes has of course been nationalism, the idea that people belong to one another in virtue of a common language, common culture, common religion, and common history. While most of these shared understandings and narratives are often pure invention, this has hardly weakened the political impact of nationalism.

Even though states or nations are not ‘empirical things’, but rather questions of collective belief, they still provide the starting point for doing IR today. ‘States’ is the conventional answer to the following question: ‘What do we see when we look at the world political?’ Writing in his 1899 *Philosophical Theory of the State*, the British idealist Bernard Bosanquet answered that

> [T]he Nation State [...] is the widest organisation which has the common experience necessary to found a common life. This is why it is recognised as absolute in power over the individual, and as his representative and champion in the affairs of the world outside. It is obvious that there can be but one such absolute power in relation to any one person; and that, so far as the world is organised, there must be one; and, in fact, his discharge from one allegiance can only be accepted by another. (Bosanquet, 1899: 320)

We might phrase it differently today, but the ‘world outside’ is still a world of states. Yes, ‘people talk, and within certain limits behave as if there were a world commu-
nity’ (Carr, 2001: 147), but at this point in time, we do not have such a community, a *civitas maxima* to use one of Martin Wight’s (1992: 40–44) terms. There are, of course, exceptions, but this is the rule: the world political is an international society or community that has states, i.e. not people, as members.

This is the state of the art today. In his *Social Theory of International Politics*, Alexander Wendt not only made constructivism a household approach in IR, but, by claiming that ‘states are people too’, he also (re-)introduced personification of the state to IR theory. Indeed, it was the analogy between the actor-ness of human individuals in society and that of states in international society that made Wendt’s (1999: ch. 5) theory *social* in the first place. This was a natural assumption to make because states are systematically represented in discourse as ‘big people’ with human capabilities and characteristics. We hear and read about it every day: the United States is a ‘bully’, North Korea a ‘rogue’, &c. Come to think of it, it is very difficult (if not nearly impossible) to communicate about international relations without paraphrasing states and their relations through personifying metaphors.

What does contemporary IR theory make of all this? For a realist mind like Wendt’s, behind personification, there are ‘real actors to which we can legitimately attribute anthropomorphic qualities like desires, beliefs and intentionality’ (Wendt, 1999: 197). For a narrativist like Iver Neumann (2004), states are not *real*-ly persons, but only *like* persons, and personification should not be more than an analogy, a comparison, a metaphor. Colin Wight, another thinker with a realist mindset, criticises the metaphorical treatment of theoretical terms (such as the state) for allowing the theorist an escape from ontology: ‘If theoretical posits are not attempts to refer to real entities the theorist has no obligation to give an account of them’ (Wight, 2004: 272). For Wight, this is a ‘misdescription of the practice of science’: if metaphors are not scientifically measured against reality, e.g. if we do not inquire into how like a person a state is, ‘[w]hy do we need the state and other political fictions when religions have always had perfectly adequate “as if” entities that have the added advantage of explaining everything?’ (Wight, 2004: 273, emphasis in original).

This is a well-grounded question, but *only* if we assume that IR is not a religion, and that the polity of the state has not provided or at least attempted to provide an adequate explanation to everything. Wight’s remark is a typical example of secular IR arrogating to itself the right to define religion and its role in politics and science, pretensions of universality and claims of superiority over non-secular alternatives implied. As rightly noted by Elizabeth Shakman Hurd (2004), the demarcation of the category of ‘religion’ from ‘politics’ is a highly politicised decision that has yet to be fully accounted for in Western social theory and practice, IR included. IR is not the neutral observer it pretends to be, but is actually already implicated in religion by its own secularist self-perception (Laustsen and Waever, 2000).
To the question of whether or not states should be imagined as having personhood, Wendt replies in the affirmative:

[S]tates help bring order, and yes, even justice to the world, and if we want to have states then it is better they take the form of persons rather than something more amorphous, because this will help make their effects more politically accountable. (Wendt, 2004: 316)

For Wendt, the personified state is not a vernacular for totalitarianism, but quite the opposite: it ‘provides a metaphysical basis for liberalism’ (Wendt, 2004: 292). If we do not have to ‘beware of organicism’, as even a cursory reading of the history of bodily politics might suggest and Kelsen and Neumann (2004) certainly do, we have to read Wendt within the tradition of E. H. Carr, who introduced personification to IR – or is it rather IR to personification? Since its very beginning in the early twentieth century, the only form of agency understood by the discipline has been anthropomorphic, and though the content of this understanding has been revised, its form has remained intact.

In his The Twenty Years’ Crisis 1919–1939, E. H. Carr defended the idea of the personified state against its ‘utopian’ critics. For Carr, personification of the state provided a foundation for the creation of international law on the basis of natural law, which rendered possible the conferring of duties and rights to states in international relations – i.e. an international morality. The utopians denounced the idea of personhood of the state, firstly, on the grounds that it was fictitious unlike living human beings and, secondly, because it denied or took precedence to an international morality based on individuals. Despite having a liberal and progressive origin, the growth of the power and complication of the institutions of the embodied state has made its rights more conspicuous than its duties. For its critics, personification had by the early twentieth century become little more than an assertion of unlimited rights of the state over human beings, and the critics thereby saw it as an authoritarian idea to be rejected with fervour just like Krabbe and Kelsen did. (Carr, 2001: 136–137)

For Carr, the controversy over the truth or falsehood of the personified state was meaningless and misleading ‘because it does not purport to be a fact, but a category of thought necessary to clear thinking about international relations’ (Carr, 2001: 138). Person-hood of the state was certainly fictitious, but as such, it was ‘a necessary fiction or hypothesis – an indispensable tool devised by the human mind for dealing with the structure of a developed society’ (ibid.: 137). According to Carr, personification did not mean authoritarianism per se: like any other tool, it was always prone to misusage, and ‘to decry it on the ground of the use to which it is sometimes put is no more intelligent than to abuse a tool for killing a man’
Personification could just as well be used for liberal purposes by emphasising the duties of the state vis-à-vis both the individual and other states. Personification did not mean that the modern territorial state was the only imaginable form of political organisation either, but only that as long as it was generally accepted as such, personification was necessary for the human mind to come to terms with it:

The fiction of the the group-person, having moral rights and obligations and consequently capable of moral behaviour, is an indispensable instrument of modern society; and the most indispensable of these fictitious group-persons is the state. In particular, it does not seem possible to discuss international politics in other terms. (Carr, 2001: 137)

It was clear to Carr that the ‘spirit of international relations’ seemed more likely to be improved by accepting personification than by decrying it, and in any case, the human political imagination would have to undergo a radical change before it would discover an equally convenient and effective political fiction to replace personification (Carr, 2001: 139). But since personification was a fiction, did this not make the international community/society fictional also? Of course, but this is of no consequence whatsoever. According to Carr, ‘we need not to regard as “unreal” a hypothesis which is accepted in certain contexts as a guide to individual behaviour’ (ibid.: 139). In other words, as long as states are the primary actors in world politics and the people acting in the name of these actors are agreed in that this should be, the hypothesis remains effective.

The hypothesis on which Carr based his conception of international community provides the paradigm on which Alexander Wendt bases his Social Theory. Wendt begins with a direct analogy: ‘There cannot be a states system without states any more than there can be a (human) society without people. The units make their respective systems possible’ (Wendt, 1999: 194). Thus, states are people too: ‘purposive actors with a sense of Self’ (ibid.: 194). Wendt needs personification to make an assumption of the state-as-actor which draws from and develops substantially Kenneth N. Waltz’s Theory of International Politics (see Waltz, 1979). According to Wendt, though the state-as-actor assumption is central to international relations, it has been in a state of neglect in IR theory (Wendt, 1999: 195). Wendt also notes that it is not just academics who personify the state, but all of us: ‘In our daily lives citizens and policy-makers alike routinely treat states as if they were people, talking about them as if they had the same kinds of intentional properties that we attribute to each other’ (Wendt, 1999: 195). For Wendt, as well as for Carr before him, it is through personification that the realities of the international community (Carr) or the system (Wendt) become real in the first place.
Whether you are a realist, a liberal, an institutionalist, a Marxist, a constructivist, a behaviouralist, a feminist, a postmodernist, or something in between, the chances are that the idea of state personhood, at some fundamental level, makes sense to you: ‘[i]n a field in which almost everything is contested, this seems to be one thing on which almost all of us agree’ (Wendt, 2004: 289). And it is not just the academics, but all of us who ‘systematically personify the state’; ‘this is how most of us, most of the time, think about the state in world politics’ (Wendt, 2004: 289).

In other words, IR continues as a disciplinary tradition that works to conserve the political ontology of states and their world politics – as long as it does not come up with something else to conserve and justify, that is. If we give up the embodied and personified state, we flush out everything or nearly everything we (thought we) knew about international relations. Or as Carr puts it: ‘Personification is the category of thought which expresses the continuity of institutions; and of all institutions the state is the one whose continuity it is most essential to express’ (Carr, 2001: 138).

**CONCLUSION**

What I am trying to say is that political theology is not only interesting and an important field in political studies – that it is worth it to read a single article about it, perhaps – but that it is especially so for IR now. The argument made in this article is that pre-modern metaphysical images of political society are replicated today when we personify the state.

The premises of this argument are Schmitt’s, of course, but the story continues without him. Charles Taylor’s story is one of a ‘long march’ from an embedded to a disembedded society. A pre-modern society is one where political authority is inconceivable without God, where structures of society cannot be understood separately from the divine, the higher, the numinous. According to Taylor, this imposed a certain verticality to society, which depended on the fact that it was God’s creation and had its origins in ‘higher time’. Thus, pre-modern authority is mediated authority, as its ‘subjects are only held together within an order that coheres through its apex, in the person of the king, through whom this order connects to higher time and the order of things’ (Taylor, 2004: 158). This was the ancien régime, the characteristics of which most mediaeval regimes shared before the reformation and the democratic revolutions. (Taylor, 2004: 187)

Modern, secular societies are markedly different. The modern order no longer gives hierarchy or any structure of social differentiation an ontological status. By contrast, the contemporary social imaginary sees us all as taking part in forming our political entity, to which all of us relate in the same way, as equal citizens. This is what Taylor means by the modern principle of horizontal society: ‘We have moved from a hierarchical order of personalized links to an impersonal egalitarian one; from a ver-
tical of mediated access to horizontal, direct-access societies’ (Taylor, 2004: 158). This is what Krabbe tried to say when he argued that we no longer live under the dominion of persons, but under the dominion of norms: ‘in every field, even in that of international relations, the authority of law is growing’ (Krabbe, 1922: 10). Taylor has lived to see it:

This whole development reaches its culmination in our time, in the period after the Second World War, in which the notion of rights as prior to and untouchable by political structures becomes widespread – although they are now called ‘human’ rather than ‘natural’ rights – and in which this consciousness is given expression in the entrenchment of charters of rights, by which ordinary legislation can be set aside when it violates these fundamental norms. These declarations of rights are in a sense the clearest expression of our modern idea of a moral order underlying the political, which the political has to respect. (Taylor, 2004: 173)

This is a brilliant diagnosis, and I subscribe to every single word of it. As citizens of secular modernity – say, as passport holding Britons, Finns, Frenchmen and Germans – we enjoy full membership privileges since it is us standing there on the horizon; we are the ones that make up the one that is the social body. There are exceptions to this rule – there always is an exception! – but this is the pre-political foundation of liberal democratic order.

But what about the political foundation? ‘The political entity cannot by its very nature be universal in the sense of embracing all of humanity and the entire world’, writes Schmitt, ‘[t]he political world is a pluriverse, not a universe’ (Schmitt, 1976: 53). If the different states, religions and all the other human groupings on earth should be so unified that conflict among them would be impossible, a political foundation would no longer be required – we would need ‘neither state nor kingdom nor empire, neither republic nor monarchy, neither aristocracy nor democracy, neither protection nor obedience’ (ibid.: 57). Although some of us have moved from a vertical to a horizontal society and have pre-political foundations of rock at home, it needs to be said – even though we know this well enough already – that this is not (yet) so in ‘our’ international relations. In the ‘world outside’ there is no political entity and we are not even the ones making up the society. Yes, the authority of law is growing as ever in international relations, yet the states are the ones carrying all the swords and embodying us in that international society.

Political theology is an attempt to relate discourse about God to the organisation of bodies in space time (Cavanaugh and Scott, 2004). International relations is a discourse firmly embedded on an ontology of order: it is a sublime act of faith in the positive existence of a vertical society above and a pre-modern authority over man.
What we need to do in IR is to relate the state as one of the gods. Political theology of IR is a cratological political theology: it is premised – for the time that remains, that is – on a radical non-autarchy of the human being in the world political and questions those who are in charge of this bystander, from the highest authority downward, in ‘international relations’. What is the foundation of this authority? How is it executed? How is it legitimated?

ENDNOTES

1 Daniel Philpott (2000) locates the religious roots of modern international relations in the Christian Reformation. There is, of course, political theology outside the sphere of Western Christianity (see, e.g., Khir, 2004; Ochs, 2004).

2 According to Oliver O’Donovan (1996: 4), the modern use of the term ‘political theology’ is generally held to begin with Schmitt’s Politische Theologie (first published in 1922). For a good contextualisation of Schmitt as a political theologian, see Hollerich (2004).

3 Schmitt made a habit of writing sequels to his earlier works in his later years. Political Theology II is a rejoinder to some criticism of political theology published in between Schmitt’s volumes, particularly Erik Peterson’s Monotheismus als politisches Problem and Hans Blumenberg’s The Legitimacy of the Modern Age. The second volume does not make new arguments inasmuch as it sheds light on the central claims of the first. What makes II important is that it testifies to Schmitt’s continuing faith in the claims made in Political Theology more than 50 years after their publication.

4 ‘To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded?’ Paul is trying to say here that righteous followers of Jesus are able pass judgement on ‘worldly’ matters without outside intervention. The fact that some of Paul’s Corinthian brethren had lawsuits against one another before ‘unrighteous’ Jewish arbitrators was very shameful for the whole Christian community in Corinth (Malina and Pilch, 2006: 82).

5 ‘Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.’ (Ex. 20:12, ESV).

6 Peter Wilson (1998) gives a very useful contextualisation of Carr’s arguments in the so-called First Debate.

7 This is the adjective used by Wolf-Daniel Hartwich, Aleida Assmann and Jan Assmann in their afterword to The Political Theology of Paul by Jacob Taubes – a book that is, by the way, compulsory reading for anyone doing anything with political theology. In contrast to Taubes’ horizontal or sociological political theology, Schmitt understands the political theology vertically, as an interpretation and a foundation of sovereignty ‘as a nexus of authority, revelation, and obedience’ (Taubes, 2004). According to Hartwich, Assmann and Assmann, the difference between the horizontal-sociological and vertical-cratological political theologies stems from their religious reference: in Taubes’s case, Judaism and in Schmitt’s, Christianity.

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Prophetic Politics
- Leadership Based on the
Stories of a Golden Past and
a Glorious Future

JAN HANSKA

Abstract: This article concerns itself with establishing and defining the concept of prophetic politics as a narrative-based political leadership. It focuses on the use of religious, mythical and otherwise culturally dominating narratives which are often taken for granted or as ‘common sense.’ By a skilful politician, these stories can be given new forms and used as tools of leadership. This article explores the differences between traditional prophesies in the religious context and political prophesies and shows how with the use of prophetic narratives the politician is able to keep politics from stagnation since every moment and every decision can be endowed with special importance in actualizing the vision that remains the fascinating but elusive goal of politics – whatever it is narrated to be. This might re-invigorate the citizens to participate more in politics. The focus of the article is on American politics since the American civil religion and the narrative tradition of the jeremiad provide ample tools for political prophets, but the concept is not restricted solely to America. I argue that well told narratives have great influence on how people think and that can be manipulated politically. This type of leadership opens new vistas for political candidates, but it also opens new vistas for researchers to use in their study of politics.

Key words: American politics, narrative, prophesy, political narratives, political theology

Without a vision the people perish.
Proverbs 29:18

The world of politics is in crisis because of the loss of the credibility of and interest in the political process. The traditional parties have blurred the distinctions between each other and keep moving to the centre of the old left-right scale. This leaves empty spaces on both ends of the spectrum and a lot of voters disillusioned with contemporary politics. I argue that prophetic politicians can rejuvenate the disillusioned and apathetic segment of the citizenry. While the assertion about the ab-
sence of God or even His death shapes modern politics, there arises as a balancing counterforce a simultaneous religious feeling which only enhances the need for prophetic voices and tropes in political leadership. It is partially just the religious deprivation caused by the myth of the death of God which paradoxically creates an open space and even a demand for prophets. Modern politics are in a way deeply religious but the mechanisms of this religiosity have been neglected in studies. The relationship between politics and religion is increasingly important and the dilemma is how to handle them in study since both influence each other to a point of contamination.

The goal of this article is theoretical and I will elaborate on the idea of prophetic politics and the role it might actually play in the contemporary politics of our somewhat secularized world. I will start by contrasting the role of a prophet as it is traditionally seen in a religious context and the role of a political prophet. In the next subsection I will further elaborate the role a political prophet needs to play and what could be the content of his message. I will then continue to describe how a practitioner of prophetic politics needs to manipulate the concepts of past, present and future to concoct a suitable blend of temporalities. I will further burrow into the narrative side of prophesying by describing what types or genres of stories are available for the prophetic narrator and finally make a case for how prophetic narratives can provide the building blocks for a new and more inclusive type of civic religion and show how indeed prophetic narration has been in use for the creation of the American self-image in the form of a jeremiad. Ultimately I will argue that there is a far wider field than identity politics where a prophetic style of leadership can be used for great benefit.

Jim Wallis and David Gutterman have endorsed the concept of prophetic politics and have claimed that Christian values should play a larger role in American politics. (Wallis, 2005; Gutterman, 2005) In this essay I shall use their term but try to imbue it with a slightly different meaning. Prophetic politics is often understood only as the infusion of religion into politics. My intention is to argue that with the use of narratives, a political leader is able to communicate a grand vision of a glorious future and at the same time portray each moment as a time of important choices to be made, and thus he is able to make the events in the political realm more significant and interesting for the average citizen to participate in them. I am not, however, claiming that religiosity does not play a huge role in prophetic politics but merely trying to distance the concept from the more established church religions. I separate the idea of prophesying from its religious connection vis-à-vis any particular denomination and argue that prophetic politics can use the religiosity inbuilt into all of us.

My focal point is the politics of the United States of America because it stands as the first and foremost of all western nations when it comes to the importance of religion in the political realm. There is no point in restricting oneself to generally claim-
ing that religion plays a role in American politics. Such a claim would be far too universal and bland. There is a heated and ongoing debate about the wall of separation between the church and the state. America has long seen itself as a New Israel, a land specially set aside by Divine Providence and imbued with a Manifest Destiny. The idea of American exceptionalism still runs amuck in all its world affairs. Forces both religious and secular try to assert their influences over the public sphere. (Marty, 1984; Kosmin-Lachman, 1993; Curry, 2001; Meacham, 2006) To assert that this religiosity takes a prophetic shape actually adds something new to the discussion. The Western system of moral values is to a large degree grounded in the moral norms of Christianity. Religious values are to be found in practically all levels of political rhetoric but the use of religious narratives as actual tools of political leadership has not been researched. The viewpoints of narrative and religo-political studies have been neglected in studies on American presidency. The president often assumes the role of a ‘pastor of national faith’. (Marty, 1984) Prophetic politicians who choose this manner of leadership and use religion to their advantage do not necessarily work towards the realization of Christian good for all people in an altruistic manner. Leadership is narrated as interpreting God’s will, but God Himself gets somewhat secularized in this model into the god of the civil religion, which is to a great degree tainted with purely American values.

I consider prophetic politics to be a form of charismatic political leadership that focuses on the use of future-oriented storytelling as well as narrating the past differently, as it is to create in each actual present moment of politicking a moment of choice, where the decision made will echo unto eternity and completely choose the direction politics and the country take, either towards Gomorrah or an actualization of a golden future. For me a prophetic politician is first and foremost a leader who uses stories and narratives of promise and greatness to contrast the gloomy present with a future beyond all imagination if only the choices he advocates are made. He has to be a skilful narrator who can manipulate and exploit a multitude of the myths, sacred stories or metanarratives that shape our existence and identity for his political purposes. One of these grand narratives, which still plays a large role for us, is religion, and if he chooses not to use religion, he has to transplant the religious faith to something else – for example, patriotism. Prophetic politics is about a vision of change and acting according to that vision. It is my intention to argue that political leadership can be rested on a prophetic politician’s ability to communicate the values of Americans and that his main vessel of communication is telling stories and becoming a narrator. The traditional image of a politician is like that of a manager, a gentleman in a fitting suit with thoughts formulated so as not to arouse any passions, pro or con, in anyone. He and his kind are the ‘gray eminences’ in politics, men who have adapted to the political system to such a degree that they seem to have become its fleshy manifestations. The prophetic politician wants to separate himself
One central concept in my thinking of narratives which occurs often in the essay is ‘storyworld’. The concept was invented and elaborated by David Herman but there has indeed evolved an actual field of study among narrative theorists around the ‘possible worlds’ concept, and the terminology is very colorful, ranging from ‘storyrealm’ to ‘taleworld.’ (Genette, 1980; Todorov, 1981; Ryan, 1991; Palmer, 2004; Herman, 2002) It refers to the ability of storytelling to create alternative worlds and transport the reader into them. In the creation of these storyworlds, both the narrator and the reader play an active role. A storyworld has its own natural laws, its own chronology, and every aspect of the world is a narrative construction and must follow the logic of the story itself. The more elaborate and fulsome in detail the narration is, the more complete will the resulting storyworld be. For political purposes the plausibility of a storyworld is essential because once it has been structured, certain elements that occur in the ‘real world’ of politics can be excluded from the storyworld, which is constantly being recreated with repetitive tellings and narrations.

Emile Durkheim noted that there is an often overlooked element of religion: its recreational and aesthetic element. Religious dramatic performances use the same techniques as drama and ‘they make men forget the real world so as to transport them into another where imagination is more at home.’ (1995: 384) Durkheim seems to assert that there are storyworlds which can be entered by the means of religion. Thus religious storytelling, whether civil or not, opens up new vistas in the form of storyworlds. A prophetic politician needs to be aware of this and consciously create storyworlds with the help of civil religion to allow his people to escape the harsh realities of everyday life into these worlds. It is well-known that mythology has connections with poetry and for this reason mythology has often been situated outside religion. For Durkheim, nevertheless, ‘the truth is that there is a poetry inherent in all religion.’ (1995: 386)

THE ROLE OF THE PROPHET AND THE CONTENTS OF HIS MESSAGE

Max Weber wrote about ‘charismatic leadership’ and claimed that this can be exercised by ‘the prophet – or in the field of politics – by the elected war lord, the plebiscitarian ruler, the great demagogue, or the party leader.’ (1994: 312) It is not a big step to blend the boundary between religion and politics as they are already intermingled in the American context and they both employ the role of the prophet in politics as well. Weber also claims that this type of leader is ‘personally recognized as the innerly “called” leader of men. Men do not obey him by virtue of tradition or statute, but because they believe in him.’ (1959: 79) Even Weber himself
talks of charisma as an ‘extraordinary personal gift or grace’, in terms which are inherently religious. So what Weber did was bring the prophet into the more secular or profane sphere of politics, and my purpose is to reverse the process and de-secularize the charismatic politician back into his prophetic role and reconnect him with religion and particularly civic religion.

I have chosen to use the label ‘prophet’ even though a different label like ‘oracle’, for example, would suffice almost as well. But an oracle is only someone who gives consult to the leader while the prophet takes upon himself the function of the leader of his people. Concerning the status of the prophetic politician, Northrop Frye stated that

It is clear that the poet who sings about gods is often considered to be singing as one, or as an instrument of one. His social function is that of an inspired oracle. [...] The poet’s visionary function, his proper work as a poet, is on the plane to reveal the god for whom he speaks. This usually means that he reveals the god’s will in connection with a specific occasion [...] but in time the god in him reveals his nature and history as well as his will, and so a larger pattern of myth and ritual is built up. (1957: 55)

The poet-politician becomes connected to the god he narrates about, whichever it may be, and if he is able to use the story to his maximum benefit, some of the divinity will rub off on him as well. But this is easier said than done.

America traditionally fears demigods and dictators who have charisma, divine favour, or grace granted to them by God. ‘American democracy is embarrassed in the charismatic presence.’ (Boorstin, 1962: 50) On the other hand Paul D. Erickson asserts that the romanticization of American history is an unconscious phenomenon and that there is a ‘mysterious impulse’ similar to those of the ancient societies which turns history into folklore and then into mythological religions to transform American human leaders into ‘demigods.’ (1985: 3) While his choice of terms is a little strong, the point still rings true. This is evident in the process where George Washington has been transformed from an able statesman and administrator into ‘the quasi-divine Father of Our Country.’ (Ibid.) Erickson further notes that this ‘fictive deification’ is still present in the way Americans tend to view their president. As soon as a person gets elected, he somehow rises as a chief executive above mortality into ‘a state of superhumanity’ and thus every president since the first has found himself defined by this popular notion of his symbolic role. (Ibid.) This places new demands on the political prophet to be. He has to narrate his identity in such a manner so that at the same time he would be the messenger of God to the people and the messenger of the people to the powers that be. He must be a common man but at the same time possess a touch of the divine. He has to create a role of being among
the people and working for them as selflessly as he works for God and stand outside the political work of governing the people. A political prophet must be a champion of the people and a champion of God at the same time, and narrating such an identity, in which he serves two masters, is a demanding task.

While Biblical Prophets often spoke in allegories which are sometimes hard to grasp at least in retrospect, the modern political prophet needs to use clear language in his message. The modern world is often difficult to understand because of its complexity, and one of the reasons why political narratives are useful is that they can simplify the world. The use of allegories just as certainly has its place in the modern prophets’ repertoires as well, but essentially the vision must be communicated in a form ‘everyman’ can understand. Biblical prophets often went to the desert without food or drink and returned with their vision in a state more delirious than not. William James argues that religious leaders have been liable to abnormal psychological states and that their lives have been characterized by inner conflicts, trances, hearing voices, and seeing visions. In general they exhibited such traits as those that are commonly considered to be pathological, but actually, it is precisely these pathological characteristics that have advanced their rise to the position of a religious authority. (1981:14) In contrast, the modern prophetic figure must be constantly attuned to the changes in the political world and have his finger on the pulse of events. His vision must be coherent and not give the impression that it originates from hallucinations. Times have changed and along with them, the requirements of a prophetic message changed as well. While there undoubtedly is a niche for rambling ‘prophets’ that speak in tongues within some churches of the more evangelical denominations, the political prophet needs to be clear and coherent in his storytelling. All too often, even today, the figure of a prophet is seen as needing to ‘have hallucinatory visions or dreams (for them as vividly real as any physical experience) in which they directly confront the deity.’ (McLoughlin, 1978: 16)

The traditional prophets truly believed they had seen their respective gods or heard them declare themselves. These men had a strong sense of inspiration, in this sense meaning that they acted as vessels for a higher power. This higher power entered them with great and irresistible force, which determined the point of view the prophet had concerning his contemporary issues. This is a reason why Old Testament prophets uttered their prophecies as if God himself was speaking through their mouths. James argues that the characteristic of a prophet was that he spoke with the authority of God, declaring himself what God wanted to say (‘Thus sayeth the Lord God.’) (James, 1981: 340). Prophets and the content of prophesies have changed and the prophets of our times cannot show signs of emotional, spiritual or mental disturbances, but they have to deliver their message in a relatively rational manner and terminology and even shy away from claiming to speak for God in the words of God. The prophetic leader (for example, a politician), with the form and content of
his prophesying (that is, with a narrative), can only evoke the metatexts and meta-
narratives of prophecy and guide his or her story recipients to associate his/her nar-
rative with the prophetic genre.

When one considers the idea in relation to American prophets, it is necessary to
keep in mind the American tradition of laymen working as preachers, organizing re-
vivals and generally spreading the Gospel. Indeed, most of the very efficient re-
vivalists were not clergy, but average people. There was a deep dislike of the
separation of clergy and laity, especially in the cases that involved the composition
of the ministry. (Herberg, 1960: 106) Revivalism is not unique to the Americans but
its popularity and power owed much to the fact that it depended on public speech
in plain language and extemporaneous speech. (Boorstin, 1965: 318) Religion and
the word of God were democratized in America. ‘If God spoke through the common
man, the voice of the people was the voice of God.’ (McLoughlin, 1978: 86) This is
a two-sided argument; anybody, layman or priest, can adopt the prophetic role with-
out connection to the church but additionally, the politician can glean the word of
God by listening to the people.

De Tocqueville writes that it is not necessary for God himself to speak in order for
the people to discover the true signs of His will. The examination of the ‘usual course
of nature and the continuous tendency of the events’ (2000: 6–7) is enough to re-
veal God’s will. The important point is that the prophet does not need to hear the
voice of God to interpret it. He can use his powers of deduction and by close ob-
servation of the world around him mentally compose the picture of what God’s plan
includes. The vision of the political prophet has to be narrated so as to derive from
an intelligent interpretation of God’s will. This is a more suitable method of proph-
esying to our contemporary conjunction. Rationality or at least the appearance of
it is crucial in carrying out policies and one of the greatest challenges of prophetic
politics is to combine the notions of God’s will or plan with such rational guidelines
of policy that even an atheist could accept the reasoning behind them. But if the di-
vine inspiration is depicted to have been communicated by means of reason instead
of ‘a voice from the burning bush’, the prophetic policymaking creates a narrative
which is more inclusive in its nature.

Prophets often arise from the margins of society and Gutterman sees even the
Biblical prophets as outsiders of their societies and cultural contexts in a position
where they can criticize the social order and attempt to further equality and justice.
(Gutterman, 2005: 43) I argue that the prophet can be a central figure of the soci-
ety as well if he chooses to only narratively situate himself outside the realm of pol-
itics. In fact the most interesting political prophets are those who have an authority
bestowed on them by their elevated socio-political status. This gives them a domi-
nant narrator’s position and helps the process in which their stories cue their listen-
ers more efficiently to engage in their storyworlds. A successful prophet is a leader
in some sense of the word. He may not be a political or military leader, but at least he is a moral authority figure with the power to influence the thinking of others and play a prominent part in the creation of common values. A prophet truly becomes one only when he is able to distinguish himself and attain a leadership position. An unsuccessful prophet is just another grumbler in the opposition and may even be only a village idiot of the modern age.

It is specifically those times when the existence of the entire society is threatened that call for prophetic political figures to arise within the ranks of the highest office-holders. Prophets from the margins of society are not sufficient to project the society as a whole and the leadership must assume a new role. The need for strong, prophetic figures to express strong visions to rally the people is important. Both Gutterman and Wallis see the birth of prophetic figures entwined with times of crisis so that it would be impossible for prophetic figures to arise during times of societal harmony and well-being. (2005) It is, nevertheless, possible to ‘create a crisis’ narratively. While domestic and social problems have not been in short supply in the past decades, the presidents have been able to narrate situations of crisis in foreign policy and at the same time downplay pressing problems on the domestic front. Once the political prophet has created a detailed and plausible storyworld to attract listeners and get them to allow themselves to be transported away from the immanent world and get carried along with the political story, it is relatively easy for him to assume the role of a super-narrator in the entire field of politics and gain the power to create or hide a crisis. This ability is only within the reach of particularly gifted narrators.

Especially during the recent years in American politics, the Republicans have exploited religion, and the Democrats have been afraid to use it at all. (Wallis, 2005; Lakoff, 1995) Ronald Reagan, for example, entwined religious values into his storyworld in a manner that could be used to support almost every political decision, and the failure of Democrats to include religion in their counter-narratives allowed Reagan a free playground with religious narratives and a monopoly in prophesying. More than one prophetic political figure is needed at the same time to avoid the misuse of religion. The lack of a powerful and compatible counter-narrative enables the vision of the prophetic politician to be able to strive to establish his story as a master-narrative. Gutterman distinguishes stories from ideology by claiming that a narrative enters the world and lives as one among many while ideology seeks to establish itself as uncontested, as the sole story which masters the meaning of states, actions and events and closes them from reinterpretation. (2005; 44) But when stories are used to spread and communicate ideologies and modes of thinking, storytelling becomes a practice that seeks domination in the political arena. The more proclamatory storytelling in politics is, the more prophetic politics become. A storyteller definitely is not a person who wants to shout his stories into a dark void. He always seeks some kind of response, some effect. He wants to be heard, noted and
acted in accordance with. To be truly effective a political prophecy cannot and must not enable contesting narratives to be heard. It is the primary object of prophetic politics to prevent the story recipients from getting the impression that there would even exist another way of depicting political reality. Unless other charismatic figures are offered as an option, even a feeble prophet gains acceptance of his vision if it is able to give the impression of being grounded well enough in common values. Faith certainly has inspired American politicians from Abraham Lincoln to George W. Bush but in most cases the inspiration derives from its use as a weapon in politics instead of it being something that reforms the outcomes of political decision-making.

Gutterman focuses his attention on the actual mechanisms of how prophesies are communicated and he sees ‘sacred stories’ as the foremost vessels of spreading the vision. For him prophetic politics simply means that political figures or institutions base their identities in certain Biblical narratives which enable the formation of relatively stable political identities and visions. (2005) I argue that any story which is foundational to a given culture can be viewed as sacred. These sacred stories are so sedimented into a certain cultural context that they are able to mould the culture and the vision of politics by setting limits to the more mundane stories that can be told about related subjects. There is not necessarily anything religious in these stories, but the term is used to imply their unquestionable status in the given culture. They themselves create laws of telling within their respective storyworlds by establishing themselves as ‘common sense’ or simply almost eternal truths. There can be many different sacred stories and they may differ from one period of time to another. (Gutterman, 2005: 10–15, 30–34) As Corrine Squire argues, master narratives are ‘always less stable and unified than they appear, more susceptible to fracture and diversion.’ (Cit. Andrews, 2004: 4–5) Even the type of master narrative which practically seems to have been engraved in stone is teetering on a tightrope. This creates the constant need for a prophetic politician to rearticulate, reshape and retell his narratives so that they are more likely to dominate the discourse. Northrop Frye writes:

It is obvious [...] that one major source of order in society is an established pattern of words. In religion this may be a scripture, a liturgy, or a creed; in politics it may be a written constitution or a set of ideological directives [...] Such verbal patterns may remain fixed for centuries: the meanings attached to them will change out of all recognition in that time, but the feeling that the verbal structure must remain unchanged, and the consequent necessity of reinterpreting it to suit the changes of history, bring the operations of criticism into the center of society. (Frye, 1957: 349)

Frye allows the sacred story the chance to change its meanings and leave itself open for reinterpretations. The Constitution and other sacred texts and stories from the
American history can be taken by a prophetic politician and reshaped in such a way that their verbal structure seems unchanged but the original sacred stories are modified into new ones. Prophetic politicians can evoke sacred stories from the collective memory of the nation and give them new meanings and simultaneously draft new storyworlds. The use of quotes and words of others takes nothing away from the originality of a prophetic politician.

The prophetic politician can describe reality as vastly different from the way it is usually conceived to be. Aristotle wrote that ‘If it be objected to the poet that he has not represented things conformably to truth, he may answer that he has represented them as they should be.’ (1940: 52) Ochs and Capps argue that a teller may sequence his/her narratives as experiences which are situated in an ‘unrealized past as well as unrealized present and future realms.’ (2001: 165) The teller can therefore naturally sequence a chain of events that has never happened, nor is likely to ever happen, but by taking a moral stance or some other viewpoint, he or she claims that it should or could have happened either earlier or after the narration. The difference between this type of narrative and a prophetic narrative actualizes itself in the future only if the event sequence does take place. If the unrealized future becomes realized, that is, things happen in the way the teller describes, we retrospectively label the narrative as a prophecy. But essentially prophesy is not future-telling but articulating moral truths so that the prophet diagnoses the problems of the present and provides a solution to contemporary social dilemmas.

The politically important aspect of prophesies is the actions and functions during the actual time of the prophecy itself. The strength of the prophecy manifests itself in its short-term results and in changing the present to inflict the future. Visions are used to push through developments in the political decision making and as political tools to gain more down-to-earth benefits. Thus, paradoxically, important visions of the distant future actualize themselves almost simultaneously with the actual utterance of the prophecy. Vision is just a mirage beyond the horizon, but its effects echo in the present. A prophet can portray his vision but it is often totally unattainable in the foreseeable future, and thus the importance lies in the ways in which the prophet can narratively seduce the citizenry to follow his example, fulfil his immediate political goals and thus bring the actualization of his political vision infinitesimally closer. Visions and prophesies are ultimately about the future but the actual policymaking takes place in the present. The impact of prophetic politics needs to be felt in the present for it to be effective, and credit for long term benefits should be left for the subsequent historians to give.

What then should be the content of a true political prophecy? Almost any kind of radical change of values or transformation of the status quo could fit into the concept. Only when the ‘bad’ policies of the past are brought to light, a new, different option which leads to better times is given as the alternative, and the political pro-
cess of giving a choice or at least an illusion of a choice to the citizenry takes place can the message be considered prophetic. In the Bible most of the prophets set out to correct social injustices or attack the faithless, but these are not necessarily the only acceptable goals for visionaries. Using the traditional wrongs to correct and visions makes the actual prophesying easier because the listener recognizes the story as belonging to a prophetic speech genre almost immediately. This is because it is essentially based on the same proto-stories, meta-narratives, sacred stories or myths as the ‘original’ prophesies. These sacred stories are important because a narrative has to resonate with other similar narratives in the mind of the listener/reader to get recognized as belonging to the same genre. If the political prophecy does not cue a citizen to identify it as a prophecy, some of its ability to create a preferred type of a storyworld is lost.

THE MANIPULATION OF TIME IN PROPHESIES

Wallace Martin makes a crucial mistake when he claims that ‘narratives concern the past. [...] Whereas most sciences involve prediction, narrative involves retro-diction.’ (1987: 74) Martin is stuck too much with the historical conception of a narrative. The predictive side of narratives is and, for effectiveness, should always be present in prophetic politics. Naturally one main focal point of a prophetic narrative is and has to be in the past in order to interpret the past in the most suitable manner, but to lead effectively, the sights of the narration must be focused into the future. Narrative leadership is future-oriented, but it has its roots in the past and in the process of storytelling, both the past and the future become very fluid concepts indeed for the benefit of the narrator. The past is like a vast array of stories, a bag the politician can dip into according to his will and bring up features that support his storytelling and his storyworld, and all else can be omitted and silenced.

Our self-conception even as a society can be achieved through the use of narrative configuration, and the existence can be made whole by understanding it as a single unfolding and developing story. In the words of Donald E. Polkinghorne the self ‘is not a static thing nor a substance, but a configuring of personal events into a historical unity which includes not only what one has been but also anticipations of what one will be.’ (1986: 150) One of the key features the prophet must have is the ability to provide the people he is leading with a unified view of themselves and their existence and an idea of a joint purpose. This requires the communicated message to include historical events in the configuration of the future. Both the past and, especially, the future must be inherent in the prophetic message. There is no vision of the future that is separated from the past and present, but the future must be narratively created (with an almost solid existence instead of being merely one possible idea that might actualize) by tying together a continuous teleological timeline.
that connects the past to the present and the choices that must be made to follow ‘on the right path’ into the ‘right’ future.

We live out our lives, both individually and in our relationships with each other, in the light of certain conceptions of a possible shared future, a future in which certain possibilities beckon us forward and others repel us, some seem already foreclosed and others perhaps inevitable. There is no present which is not informed by some image of some future and an image of the future which always presents itself in the form of a telos – or of a variety of ends or goals – towards which we are either moving or failing to move in the present. (MacIntyre, 1984: 215–216)

How could one better put in writing the essence of prophetic politics? The most important aim of narrative prophetic politics is to communicate to the people a vision of the future in order to ‘beckon them forward’ and at the same time to warn them of the alternative future which will become inevitable if the narrated politics are not followed. The citizenry needs to be convinced with credible and skilled storytelling that the objectives of the politician are precisely the same as its own or the ‘beckoning future’ the individual has in mind needs to be transplanted with the prophetic vision of the future the politician narrates. As Uri Margolin notes, we are continuously surrounded by prognostications concerning the future. Reality is envisioned as a space of at least partially indeterminate potentialities existing around us, or in which we exist, at any given moment. Futurologists of all types, military, economic, social or political, forecast for us their own respective versions of the future and out of this battle of contrasted storyworlds, the prophetic politician must be able to get his voice heard and his story believed in. (Margolin, 1999: 163–164)

The prophet is ‘a storyteller, situated between a people’s past and future, [and] the prophetic figure takes on the role of defining the identity and vision of a community or nation. Interpreting and retelling the history of a people, the prophet articulates the crisis of the present moment and the promise as well as the dangers of the future.’ (Gutterman, 2005: 49) The expression ‘situated between past and future’ is crucial. The prophetic political storyteller should not live in the present since the present is ambivalent. Each tick of the clock transforms the future into the present only to move it to the past. The present is just a fleeting moment when political decisions have to be made and each of these moments enables a different future to come into existence. The present is always a moment of instantaneous choices, and the eyes of the prophet look only to the past for guidance and to the future to identify things which he perceives as threatening to the fulfilment of his vision or rather the Divine Plan he communicates. ‘The prophet is thus poised to charge listeners with a mission to transform the world.’ (Gutterman, 2005: 50)
Despite the fact that prophetic narratives are by definition future-oriented, they must deal with the past as well. Frank Kermode argued that narrative gathers up meaningful episodes from the flow of time and that the methods used in this process are cultural. In Western culture these methods continue to be drawn from the Biblical notion of temporality, which is not an uninterrupted flow of *chronos*-time, but broken into moments of *kairos* which are imbued with special significance. The beginning of a *kairos* moment is identified as an event that makes a difference in the life experienced and the ending comes about with a resolution that returns the life to routine. (Polkinghorne, 1986: 79) One can plausibly therefore argue that the entire narrative takes place in *kairos* time because of the need, which was emphasized by Jerome Bruner, to breach the canonicity and thus create something worth telling. (1986) *Kairos* time is just as crucial to prophesying. It is all about seizing the appropriate moment of chronological time to make fundamental choices. The politician lays a special emphasis on the need to make decisions and to follow his vision so that the values in the heart of his narrative would actualize. The *kronos*-time is only an illusion in prophetic politics, since precisely every moment is turned into a *kairos*-moment and the routine does not return since there is always a new decision to be made. This leaping from decision to decision and continuously living on the culmination points of *kairos*-time allows the prophetic politician to avoid stagnation. The progress which stands in the focal point of his vision is continuous if, and only if, decisions favourable to him are made in each moment.

The world-creation in prophetic politics often happens through the process of reconstruction of memories. The object of political theory is not so much to reform our morals as it is to reform our memories. It is through the reshaping of memories that our morals are reformed. (Guterman, 2005: 33) One of the important things in the structures of prophetic political narratives is their orientation towards time and history. In addition to mediating between God and his chosen people, the prophet must act as a temporal mediator as well. In each of his retellings of any sacred story, the prophetic politician alters the shifting relationships between the past, the present and the future. (Ibid.: 14) Time cannot be still, temporality must remain fuzzy, different moments of *kronos*-time must overlap, and the flow of time must become erratic as the future and the past are in a flux and blend together. The prophet must orient himself in time and bind the *kronos* time into his story, but at the same time he often distorts the idea of linear time when he seeks to narratively change the history in order to alter the future. The past as it is perceived has led to the present, and the linearity of time and the notion of causality allow the prophet to decipher the meanings of past events and predict a future according to the laws of causality. Should he choose to do so, he can alter the past by narrating it in a different manner and thus the actions of the past lead to a different present and this allows the prophet to give alternative meanings to the states, events and actions in his present.
Because the past is altered, the present can be described as something entirely different from the common description. Thus the prophetic politician is able to create crises even when they do not exist, and this ability to portray the society as facing a crisis at any chosen moment is crucial to prophetic politics since it acts as a way of avoiding situations of political or social stasis or stagnation. The idea of causality also allows the prophetic politician to describe and narrate a plausible future. Since he has already altered the past to create a certain kind of present, it is easy to offer solutions and predict their eventual outcomes (these predictions can involve both failures in realizing his vision and those occasions when the solutions offered are accepted and the golden future comes one step closer). As Catherine Kohler Riessman argues, ‘the “truths” of narrative accounts are not in their faithful representations of a past world, but in the shifting connections they forge among past, present and future’ (2004: 35). All narrators interpret the past in their stories rather than producing the past as it was. Prophetic storytelling is simultaneously self-making and world-making activity where the identity and context of the past, present and future are delineated and a unified conception of reality is projected into the world. (Gutermann, 2005: 22) Politics that concern today must not limit themselves to making today better but essentially they must create, primarily narratively, but also in a more concrete manner, the future. Former Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig argued that ‘to make foreign policy for a powerful state is, to a degree, to make the future.’ (1984: 13) When a narrator foreshadows his narrative, he considers ‘the present not for itself, but as a harbinger of an already determined future.’ (Ochs-Capps, 2001: 5) The narrator presents events and casts characters in such a way that he gives the impression of knowing what the future will hold. The past is merely a waypoint on the teleological path into predetermined events if the right political choice or decision is made.

Every moment is a crossroads where the way of the vision leads to a glorious future and the other way leads to a despair or gloom of some sort. For the object of all politics, the citizen, this process of choosing manifests itself most clearly in the form of elections. The political parlance prior to elections is full of promises and visions of a better future if one particular politician is chosen. Elections are full of hollow words and promises to be broken, but relatively seldom are there actual visionary prophecies of better times to come. It is hard to define whether this or that political promise to the electorate is prophetic or not since the scale is gradual. Everyday promises of ‘a chicken in every pot’ or reducing unemployment are not much as prophesies go. But visioning, for example, a future where America ‘shines as a beacon of hope to all those who long for freedom and a better world’ (Reagan 4.11. 1983) is communicating a prophecy. The glorious future must be narrated to always be just within and just out of reach at the same time. A view of the future of America in which it might potentially become the true fulfillment of the Kingdom of
God on earth one day is a powerful motivator, since it remains in front of the citizenry, always beckoning, always calling the people to strive further towards a golden future while at the same time always remaining unattainable like a mirage. A true prophetic vision in politics must never be actualized because that would be the point where progress terminates. Politics cannot allow itself to ever reach the perfect society it strives for. Should it happen that prophetic politics would promise something tangible, palpable and above all measurable and fail to deliver on that promise, the guilt of failure would come into existence and would have to be expiated or removed. This expiation would be a complex process and a prophetic politician is indeed able to make it unnecessary. As long as his promises of deliverance are vague and ambivalent enough so that there can be no claims as to them not having come true, the need for expiation does not arise. As Boorstin claims, vagueness is a great resource of America because uncertainties are the producers of optimism and energy. ‘If other nations had been held together by common certainties, Americans were being united by a common vagueness.’ (1965: 219) De Tocqueville writes that in religion, everything is ‘classified, coordinated, foreseen, decided in advance’ and in politics, it is ‘agitated, contested, uncertain.’ (2000: 43) The ambiguousness of the political world can be eradicated by an infusion of religion. Uncertain issues can be endowed with a semblance of certainty derived from the divine plan according to which things must ultimately go. Therefore prophetic politics makes it possible for the unstable realm of politics to seem and feel more stable and thus to offer more of a sense of security for the people. The vagueness still remains, since prophetic politics only seems to offer certainties by the leadership, but this is an illusion. Boorstin also argues that the ‘very uncertainties which inspired and exhilarated Americans also made them feel a special need of reassurance. The more uncertain its destiny, the more necessary to declare it “manifest.”’ (Ibid.: 274) It is the vagueness and not the ‘manifestness’ of the national destiny which is the great power of American national and political life.

THE GENRE OF PROPHETIC NARRATION
A similar vagueness is a characteristic of the genres the prophetic political narratives belong to. Ambiguousness situates the story between genres. Frye writes that ‘the tragic hero is typically on top of the wheel of fortune, halfway between human society on the ground and the something greater in the sky. Prometheus, Adam, and Christ hang between heaven and earth, between a world of paradisical freedom and the world of bondage.’ (1957: 207) This metaphor of a wheel of fortune is fitting for prophetic politics. At the top the wheel is able to turn either way once it reaches the perilous equilibrium. The prophetic politician as a narrator can portray each moment as if the society were precariously balanced at the top. The citizenry is cast as the machinery which spins the wheel in either direction by making right or
wrong choices. At the same time the genre of the story itself is undecided. With the wrong decision, the story may turn out to follow the characteristic path of a tragic storyline, where the hero, America, will have an eventual downfall. If the right choice is made, the story continues as a romance and the wheel merely gains more momentum towards the future. In prophetic politics the story told has to be left open for changes of direction and at the same time for changes of the genre itself. That is why the peaceful fall of the Soviet Union was open for a depiction following the storyline characteristics of a comedy. Had there been a nuclear war and America had survived, then the story would have been a romance. Had America deteriorated instead of the Soviet Union, the story could have been told as a tragedy, where some flaw brought forth the downfall of the hero. Prophetic policymaking has to tell a network of stories which fluctuate between genres.

It is tempting to view prophecy as merely a tale of a bright future. If we choose to see it as a tale, we can employ Vladimir Propp’s research. One thing that fits within the American context is the possible lack of helpers to the hero in the dramatic personae. The hero, who is his own helper, then takes over the functions and attributes of the helper, of which one of the most important is ‘prophetic wisdom [...] When a helper is absent from a tale, this quality is transferred to the hero. The result is the appearance of the prophetic hero.’ (Propp, 1968: 83) Very suitably for the American mind-cast, the hero is a self-sufficient maker of his own fortune with the aid of his wisdom, which, despite its prophetic quality, is the ‘common’ wisdom. Since there is no one to help America, the DIY-attitude of the American way of life is given free hands but actually the role of the ‘hero’ changes as well. Since there is no prophetic and external advice available, the American type of hero will himself gain the ability to connect with the gods and act both as the messenger of a higher will and a tool for carrying it out. This type of story can be best employed in a situation of crisis; the worse the situation is, the better the story will work.

Tales can be labelled as belonging to the genre of fantasy, and Forster sets aside fantasy and prophesy from other types of stories but makes a distinction between them as well. ‘They are alike in having gods, and unlike in the gods they have. There is in both the sense of mythology which differentiates them from other [stories]’ (1953: 103). For fantasies the ‘gods’ are fauns, dryads or fairies but for prophesies the gods are otherworldly, whether Jahweh or Allah. Forster sees prophesy not as foretelling the future but rather as a tone of voice, which may imply any religion, or as he says, ‘any of the faiths that have haunted humanity – Christianity, Buddhism, dualism, Satanism, or the mere raising of human love and hatred to such a power that their normal receptacles no longer contain them.’ (Ibid.: 116)

It has to be stated at the same time that the prophetic narration does not have to be confined solely to the type of traditional storyline that is considered prophetic since according to Frye there is
a number of subsidiary forms, notably the commandment, the parable, the aphorism, and the prophesy. Out of these, whether strung loosely together as they are in Koran or carefully edited and arranged as they are in the Bible, the scripture or sacred book takes shape. (1957: 315)

Even jokes and funny anecdotes can be put to use by the prophetic politician. Our contemporary culture pays homage to laughter as a part of the human condition, and the prophetic politician, to be fully in touch with the spirit of the society, cannot assume the role of an austere and unforgiving, even judgemental, Old Testament prophet. Profane and mundane stories, like proverbs, have their place in prophetic narration too. Proverbs are both profane and sacred by nature. By profane proverbs, I mean those proverbs used within a certain culture that derive from ‘folk wisdom’ and by sacred proverbs, I mean those that have their origin within a certain religious discourse – for example, citations from the biblical Book of Proverbs. As Ricoeur argues, the intention of a proverb ‘intends to throw up a bridge between the point of view of the faith and the experience of a person outside the faith circle.’ (1995: 59) As metaphors go, this is suitable, because it implies the possibility to cross the bridge in either direction. Persons of faith can enter the profane world of politics with a parable, and a secular person can get drawn by the help of a parable from his experience-based beliefs into the realm of the religious. By telling a suitable parable on a certain occasion to a particular audience, a prophetic politician is able to draw people to enter his storyworld. The importance of taking a moral stance is crucial when particular lived experiences are turned into guidelines for the story recipients on how to conduct themselves in similar situations in the future. Such narratives are able to provide moral guidance for overcoming obstacles and achieving goodness both for oneself as an individual and also for the community one belongs to. (Ochs-Capps, 2001: 225–226)

**PROPHETIC POLITICS AND THE AMERICAN CIVIC RELIGION**

The interlinking of religion and politics is important in the long run. As de Tocqueville has observed, ‘There is nothing in the world but patriotism or religion that can make the universality of citizens advance for long toward the same goal.’ (2000: 89) Naturally the combination of both would be even more effective. Thus prophetic politics needs to be able to combine the love of God and the love of country narratively in such a way that loving one means practically the same as loving the other. If one’s own country can be narratively recreated as the kingdom of God on earth or at least as something striving to actualize it in this world, the two great motivational factors work for the same purpose. It is relatively easy to blend different stories of religion, mythology and history together and concoct a completely new blend of belief. The
difficulty lies in creating enough credibility in the story to alight passions such as patriotism and other strong sentiments. It is my intention to suggest that a prophetic politician should attempt to create his own version of civil religion from essentially the same ingredients as those before him but by blending the sacred stories and myths together in a new way. Civil religion is no more stable and unchanged than identity itself. It has to be recreated and retold in a new way.

Even today America is often depicted as a ‘Christian Nation’, and in earlier times, it was certainly the case that ‘[b]eing a Protestant, a Catholic or a Jew [was] [...] perhaps the only way, of being an American and locating oneself in American society.’ (Herberg, 1960: 39) To be American, one must belong to one of these religions, which form the ‘three great branches or divisions of “American Religion,”’ with a certain theological unity. (Ibid.: 38) There certainly is at least a democratic unity because as de Tocqueville has noted, there is no religious doctrine hostile to democratic and republican intentions. (de Tocqueville, 2000: 277) This political unity of all faiths assists greatly in the creation of a truly unifying civil religion, but what could this ‘American Religion’ be? Herberg offers the answer that a common religion for Americans, by and large, is the system familiarly known as the American Way of Life, which supplies the society in times of conflict with a feeling of unity. (1960: 75) The American Way of Life should not be dismissed as a mere political formula but it is actually ‘a spiritual structure, a structure of ideas and ideals, of aspirations and values, of beliefs and standards; it synthesizes all that commends itself to the American as the right, the good, and the true in actual life [...] The very expression “way of life” points to its religious essence, for one’s ultimate, over-all way of life is religion.’ (Herberg, 1960: 75) It is not a ‘superreligion’ embracing the three major faiths but it works on a different and deeper level in the minds of Americans. (Ibid.: 87–88) One can love America and God with equal fervour and belief but on a different level.

Spiritually the American Way of Life is a true faith because it has ‘its symbols and its rituals, its holidays and its liturgy, its saints and its sancta, and it is a faith that every American, to the degree that he is an American, knows and understands.’ (Herberg, 1960: 78–79) This is certainly what presidents work to narratively create but the problem is that in our pluralistic society there could not be one unified way of life that each and every citizen could vouch for. Herberg himself notes that the American way of life is a middle-class way (1960: 81), but fails to realize the exclusiveness that results from this. This exclusivity is the major problem of creating a truly unifying civil religion. The answer could lie in finding such fundamental common denominators in all citizens that the ideals resulting from them would be universally acceptable. ‘Life, liberty and pursuit of happiness’ could be one civil religious trinity that all probably could agree with, but these are at the same time concepts that are too universalistic, and building a way of life entirely upon such abstractions could
not work. Prophetic politics cannot entirely rely on the Judeo-Christian tradition and its beliefs. To gain a secular audience, the narrator must use civil religion as the sacred story that his narrating relies upon. Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s (1997) or even Robert Bellah’s (1967) ideas of the essence of civil religion make the mistake of portraying it as a unified concept. A modern society has such a complex structure that it is impossible to imagine that one single vision of the ‘American way of life’ could serve as the one civil religion that goes along with the official religion itself.

The study of civil religion has, according to Ira Chernus, imprisoned itself. It is unimportant to study whether a citizen believes or not but one should rather focus on precisely how the citizen defines the object of his belief. Either there are multiple civil religions or the concept itself should be seen as a wide and dynamic field of beliefs in interaction with each other. (Chernus: a and b) One version of public religion is not enough, and one sacred story is not sufficient to build an identity either. The key lies in combining multiple sacred stories and interconnecting them. The end result of this for the prophetic politician may yet still not be a unified version of a civil religion, but if he can manipulate sacred stories, he might be able to produce a dogma of public religion dynamic enough to fit into the world-view of the majority of the citizens. Studying the construction of civil religion by narratives is beneficial because the story logic and the creation of storyworlds about the essence of the American Way of Life give the whole concept a more dynamic form. Since the storyworld is to a large extent created by the reader/listener, narratives allow different ideas about the American Way of Life to fit within the boundaries of a storyworld than a more traditional concept of civil religion can accommodate. Thus I suggest that the only way of creating a truly inclusive civil religion is to narratively craft it so that its limits, contents and boundaries cannot be strictly defined even if they can always be communicated by rich storytelling. Then each citizen could follow the most pleasing storyline into the web of stories. This civil religion would not be unifying in the strict sense of the word, but it would give an illusion of unification. That is, each citizen could construct a civil religious storyworld to his or her own liking and, due to the ambiguousness involved in the storytelling, imagine that others actually think of the civil religion in the same terms as s/he does. The American Way of Life should not be narrated in detail, but its characteristics should be vaguely described in order to allow people to design it as they please.

Mircea Eliade notes that millennialistic movements ‘are always begun by strong religious personalities of the prophetic type, and are organized or expanded by politicians for political ends.’ (1963: 70–71) I argue, nevertheless, that in the case of the creation of a civil religion, the order is reversed. A politician can incite a revolutionary political movement and act as a prophetic leader if s/he tells stories that are effective enough. There is no need for religious personality in the equation, but the politician can use and exploit religion for his earthly purposes. De Tocqueville noted
in Americans the tendency to seek ‘with an almost equal ardour material wealth and moral satisfactions, Heaven in the other world and well-being and freedom in this one.’ (2000: 43) This is one explanation to the dilemma of why the American society seems highly secular and highly religious at the same time. Despite the division between the sacred and the profane worlds, essentially the same passions cause Americans to seek success in both worlds simultaneously. The benefit of prophetic politics in the creation of civil religion is to seem to combine the two modes of pursuit into one. The two worlds are depicted as storyworlds and their respective boundaries are blurred to allow for easier transportation from one to the other. This enables making the deeply religious interested in the wellbeing of the society in the here-and-now, and at the same time it leads the purely materialistic to abide by some of the mores derived from religion and thus it makes the society more ‘god-fearing.’

But as a skilful prophetic politician can, with his storytelling, greatly influence the way his people perceive their reality, he is able to create the illusion that the object of worship is something other than what it seems to be. Furthermore, if the American experience is narrated as democracy, the American civil religion can be used on a more global scale. The world civil religion of democracy and free markets would be a fulfilment and not a denial of the American civil religion. As Robert Bellah argues, a world civil religion ‘has been the eschatological hope of American civil religion from the beginning. To deny such an outcome would be to deny the meaning of America itself.’ (1967: 18) The spread of democracy still continues in the 21st century as the situation in Iraq or Afghanistan clearly shows. There are strong seeds of imperialism in the eschatological vision of America to bring the salvation of democracy, or in other words, the American experience, to the grasp of all nations.

**THE AMERICAN JEREMIAD**

*We shall be a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us, so that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a byword throughout the world.* (John Winthrop, 1630)

If religion can be Americanized, or maybe ‘Americanonized’, with the infusion of patriotic elements, so can the concept of a prophet. Sacvan Bercovitch argued that the Americans have produced their own distinct prophetic mode of expression, the ‘American jeremiad,’ which is the most important single contribution of the US to political rhetoric. (1975) The jeremiad unfolds in three consequent phases: a delineation of sins, a warning of God’s awful judgement, and an offer of renewed hope for the nation. (Gutterman, 2005: 9) In each generation the definition of the crises and the guidance to the road of renewal take a particular shape and speak to the social context of that time-period. Jeremiah was an Old Testament prophet who lived during the collapse of the kingdom of Judah, creating powerful apocalyptic visions
to set the Jews on the right path again. Jeremiah’s prophetic message was very conservative and he called on his people to abandon the new ways and obey God-given laws. The jeremiad as a form provides a structure for history that is imbedded with moral significance and responsibility. (Erickson, 1986: 87) In other words, the jeremiad offers a ready-made way to emplot history into a story of morality.

The American jeremiad depicts America as a city on the hill and elevates the founders of the country into the status of near deities ‘blessed by God to create a country on divine principles, demonstrating the unswerving belief that the American people have been and are historically called by God as instruments for God’s plan on the human race.’ (Smith, 1997: 815) But the most interesting aspect of the jeremiad is that there is an inbuilt paradox in it. ‘While jeremiad speakers have absolute faith in their divinely assured mission, success always eludes them’. (Ibid.) This is a factor that has to be taken into account by any prophetic politician, and it can then even be exploited to his benefit. He just has to make the ultimate success of his policies elusive, a mirage shimmering in the horizon and something to strive for but always evasive enough not to be actualized.

I argue that the very nature of the prophetic message can be altered from the Old Testament version, which often offered fire and brimstone in the future, to a more optimistic version, where the future need not be disastrous but heeding the message of the prophet can bring along a more prosperous and religious era than ever before. Prophecy is indeed grounded upon tradition because it can use whatever is deemed worthy in the past to build everything anew along the lines laid out in the prophecy. The prophetic assignment, according to Walter A. McDougall, is easily defined: to decide which American traditions to reaffirm and apply and which to discard as irrelevant or even repugnant. (1997: 3) The old values are a base of certitude in the future as well. They have only been mislaid in recent times, but to use them again fulfils an optimistic prophetic message. There is no inbuilt need to follow the storyline of the jeremiad faithfully, no need for an imminent threat. It can be only the gloomy present juxtaposed against a glorious future, and no specific threats need mentioning. The American jeremiad often seems like using a stick and carrot in politics. Just as well the jeremiad can metaphorically only wave an abundant cornucopia in front of – but naturally outside the immediate reach of – the citizenry. The optimistic version of the jeremiad still follows the tradition, and John Kares Smith has come up with a fitting term for my use: the ‘Hollywood jeremiad.’ (1997: 821) This can accommodate the notion of happy endings with the prophecy. Since prophetic politics uses stories as the means of communication, it is hard to imagine that in the American context, the storylines of the Golden Days of Hollywood filmmaking would not affect the telling and aim to create anything other than a truly happy ending.
CONCLUSION

And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

2. Timothy 4:4

In order to create a civil religion one does not have to re-invent the wheel. The narrative building blocks are already in existence waiting to be reassembled anew with elaborate storytelling as the cement to hold them together. Old common beliefs exist in any society. They have to be resurrected and given a new shape with different retellings of the old stories. Intertextuality plays a huge role in this process since the ready-made beliefs only have to be conjured up from the collective memory of the society. Every society has told and tells stories about its own existence and there is a virtual library at the disposal of the prophetic politician. By no means is prophetic politics merely confined to establishing a national identity or creating a civic religion. In can be seen as a new narrative based form of political leadership which may be able to interest the citizenry in politics again. At the same time the ability of prophetic policymaking to arouse passions may lead to undesirable outcomes. The penultimate type of outcome is war, such as those that occurred after the stories of the ‘axis of evil’ and weapons of mass destruction.

The essence of a prophecy lies in the mixture of both the content and the form of the narrative. However, the juxtaposition of a present full of problems and a future full of promises is the core of a prophecy. A cynic sees the political world as full of trouble and unfulfilled promises but even a hopeless pessimist acknowledges that the aim of politics is to make choices for a better future. A narrative has more potential in awakening passions and activating the imagination than statistics or cruel facts and figures. Narrativizing the political process enables the citizenry to better gain an interest in the events by involving them in the creation of the storyworld. Storytelling is another means of political persuasion which bypasses the brain by refraining from rational argumentation and aims at winning over the heart and the base emotions.

The power of stories should not be undervalued in contemporary politics. In our confusing world we seek guidance, simplifications of the complex world and parables which enable us to understand at least to some degree our multifaceted identities and surroundings. I argue that the role of stories told in politics needs to be studied thoroughly if only in order to develop counter-stories for the prophetic politics of zealots and dictators. To diminish the effects of leadership by narratives, one must be able to formulate contesting narratives to be offered as plausible alternatives. Prophetic politics can be beneficial to democracy in a pluralistic society but if there are no other narratives on offer, they can be the gravest threat to democracy by working as centres of gravity and distorting the free flow of ideas. Even the Endlösung that was the aim of Hitler’s politics could be considered a prophetic vision
once we distance the concept of a prophet from its Biblical connotations and only view the difference between a society at the moment of issuing the prophecy and the society in which the prophecy would be fulfilled. All that is needed is a powerful vision, for good or evil. Evaluating the virtue or vice of the prophetic message in inconsequential. Democratic political narration must be able to counter these ‘dark prophecies’ which may result in bloodshed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


The Religion-Politics Nexus in East-Central Europe: Church in the Public Sphere of Post-Secular Societies

PETR KRATOCHVÍL

Abstract: The paper deals with the perplexing role religion plays in the politics of the post-communist societies of East Central Europe. Building upon three theoretical models describing the role of religion in public life (Rawls, Habermas and Wolterstorff), it examines the strikingly different ways in which the local churches and their leaders enter the public spheres in these countries, in particular when addressing international issues such as European integration. This empirical material allows us to critically reflect upon the suitability of these three models for an analysis of these societies. In addition, other notions related to the religion-politics nexus, such as the Habermasian concept of ‘the post-secular society’, will be discussed as well. Methodologically, the paper is based on a comparative study of the Czech and Slovak Republics. Even though these two countries had long shared a common state, their respective levels of (institutionalised) religiosity are very different, which makes the two countries two extreme cases on the religiosity scale: While the Czech Republic is arguably the most atheistic country in the world, in Slovakia, the influence of the (Catholic) church is very strong.

Key words: religion, public sphere, foreign policy, post-secular society, liberalism, Czech Republic, Slovakia

INTRODUCTION

The secularisation thesis belongs to the most enduring theoretical claims in both sociology and the history of religion. Even though the thesis, which can be briefly summarised as the process that leads to ‘the diminution of social significance of religion’ following a society’s modernisation (Bruce, 1992: 11), is still defended by a number of prominent sociologists,1 its claims have been subject to thorough critiques at least since the 1960s.2 Among the arguments raised in efforts to refute the thesis, the most ubiquitous are those claiming that (1) the previous ages were not as religious as they might seem from our perspectives and that (2) our age is not as secular as Westerners, and in particular Europeans, tend to believe (cf. Wilson, 1998).
However, a third argument, which is most relevant for political scientists, is gaining in importance as well. It revolves around the claim that – contrary to the secularists’ belief – religion has not been losing its institutional authority over political matters in most parts of the world but has been rather re-gaining in political importance after several centuries of retreat. This argument adopts two basic forms – one general and the other more specific. The general version of the argument posits a universal upsurge in the political relevance of religions across the globe, as demonstrated by the rise of fundamentalists in all three of the monotheistic religions as well as some other religious groups (such as Hinduism) (Juergensmeyer, 2003; Almond, Appleby and Sivan, 2003; Emerson and Hartman, 2006). The specific version of this claim focuses on particular developments in some geopolitical regions or within particular religious traditions. Hence, some scholars talk about the renewed prestige of religion in post-Communist Europe (Russia, Poland, the former GDR) (Froese, 2004). Others mention the rise of new religious movements within western Christianity (Brouwer, Gifford, and Rose, 1996) or in Islam (Choueiri, 1997).

Political philosophers responded to the secularisation controversy in three distinct ways: The first, which is most typically taken by liberals such as John Rawls (1993) and Robert Audi (Audi 1996), insists that irrespective of the evidence about the growth of the political power of religion (or the lack thereof), liberal democracies have to adhere to the distinction between the public forum, in which only secular, rationally constructed arguments are allowed, and the private (or at least non-public) sphere, where religious beliefs may be expressed in a language which would be otherwise inaccessible in the public arena. The second stance, which is frequently adopted by the opponents of traditional liberalism (N. Wolterstorff, P. Weithman), argues that the failure of the secularisation thesis is concomitant with the inadequacy of the liberal distinction between the private and the public spheres and testifies to the need to re-define the role of religion, which is essentially social as well as political and thus cannot be reduced to the status of a privatised belief (Wolterstorff, 1996; Eberle, 2002). There have been several attempts at finding a compromise formula that would retain the general commitment to the secular nature of the state while simultaneously allowing for greater and more symmetric participation of religious citizens in the public deliberation and legislation. Habermas’ conception of the postsecular society is a prominent example of this (Habermas, 1998 and 2002).

If we take these three models not only as ‘realistic utopias’ (Rawls, 1999: 126), but also as attempts to grasp the current situation that describes the way religion is active in liberal societies, the key question that arises is which of these three positions best reflects the relations in the triangle state-society-religion. To answer this empirical question, we will proceed in three steps. First, we will describe in more detail the three theoretical positions mentioned above – that of John Rawls, the alternative account given by Jürgen Habermas, and the vaguer yet also influential position of
Nicholas Wolterstorff. In particular, we will show that the basic distinction between the three models lies in their distinctive answers to the question of how far religious citizens have to translate their beliefs into secular language. The Rawlsian liberalism interprets the translation as the basic condition for a proper functioning of a democratic society. The late Habermas proposes some refinement to the traditional liberal doctrine, claiming that this translation must take place in the informal public sphere in the course of a mutual self-reflective dialogue between the church and the society. Wolterstorff and some more radical critics of liberalism insist that this translation should not be as strict as Rawls believes and that believers should not be forced to transcend their own comprehensive doctrine in their reasoning.

In the second step, we will introduce our research design, explaining the choice of our two case studies (the Czech and Slovak Republics) as well as the discursive areas on which we focus (European integration). Third, we will present the results of the discourse analysis in our two cases studies. In a final step, we will discuss the suitability of the three models for our case studies and we will draw some general conclusions that may contribute to a better understanding of the situatedness of the religious in our contemporary societies.

RELIGION IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE: RAWLS, HABERMAS AND THEIR CRITICS

This section will briefly outline the positions pertaining to the role of religion in the public sphere of Rawls, Habermas and some of their critics. In particular, attention will be given to the crucial role the translation of religious language into secular language plays in both the liberal interpretations and the critical evaluations thereof. Although a common stereotype about both Rawls and Habermas would be that they underestimate the role religion plays in the public life of modern societies, they have both turned to a closer inspection of this particular issue in recent years (cf. Dombrowski, 2001: vii ff; Chambers, 2007).

In the case of Rawls, this is connected with the major change in Rawls's theoretical evolution, the shift from defending liberalism as one particular comprehensive doctrine in A Theory of Justice (Rawls, 1971) to the claim that what he expounds are free-standing political principles independent from any comprehensive doctrine, but rather built on an overlapping consensus of reasonable doctrines (Rawls, 1993). The focus on free-standing political principles, however, implies that reasons supplied by religion (i.e. by a comprehensive doctrine), expressed in their original metaphysical formulation, must never enter the public forum unless they are later supported by public reasons that would be equally accessible to all, i.e. to religious as well as to non-religious citizens.

For Rawls the practical application of publicly accessible and understandable justification is the condition sine qua non for a functioning liberal democratic public de-
liberation: If the state acquiesced to one particular moral doctrine and gave it precedence over another, for instance by granting the arguments derived from this doctrine public validity without recourse to ‘public reason’ (for the definition of this term, see Rawls, 1997a and 1997b), the resulting situation would be either that of a hegemonic position of one particular religious group over the society or the breakdown of public order and an explosion of religious struggle. This obviously does not mean that a stance defended by a religious citizen that is in accordance with his or her religious belief is not permissible at all, but rather that ‘a responsible citizen in a liberal democracy ought not support (or reject) a coercive law on the basis of religious convictions alone’ (Eberle, 2002: 12, emphasis added).

This position has been hotly contested ever since it was first formulated, the most common critique being the split identity objection: Religious citizens are required to artificially divide their identity into the private, religiously motivated self and the public self whose acts are based primarily on public reasoning, whereby a person’s public reasoning can even run counter to the same person’s privately held beliefs about proper actions (cf. Yates, 2007; Wolterstorff, 1997; Weithman, 2002). Even though this objection certainly deserves close scrutiny, Rawlsian liberalism is not as radically secular and restrictive as these critics claim: Rawls does not operate with the simple dichotomy public-private but differentiates between the public sphere proper (or the public forum), the non-public sphere of civil society (or the background culture) and the private sphere. Rawls claims that the reasoning within the voluntary associations rooted in the background culture can use modes of reasoning different from the public reason (Rawls, 1997a). The proviso Rawls introduces here is that religious views may be introduced into public debates if sufficient public reasons supporting these views will be provided later, at the appropriate time (Rawls, 1997b: 783). But in spite of all these qualifications, he is quick to add that the ‘the ideal of public reason does hold for citizens when they engage in political advocacy in the public forum.’ In other words, various moral and philosophical positions can be expressed in public but they are not allowed in the more narrowly defined public forum, where only public reasons can be legitimately accepted.

Let us turn to the second influential view of religion in the public – that of Habermas. Even though comparative studies of Rawls and Habermas often exaggerate the different stances they take vis-à-vis the role of religion in the public sphere (Yates, 2007), once we take into account the intellectual exchange between the two (starting from the exchange in 1995: Habermas, 1995; Rawls, 1995), it is clear that their positions demonstrate a great – and growing – similarity. Habermas also draws a clear line beyond which religious arguments are not permissible. In a manner strikingly similar to Rawls, Habermas claims that ‘the institutional thresholds between the “wild life” of the political public sphere and the formal proceedings within political bodies are also a filter that from the Babel of voices in the informal flows of
public communication allows only secular contributions to pass through.’ (Habermas, 2006: 10)

Unlike Rawls, however, Habermas identifies the informal public sphere (nigh synonymous to the Rawlsian background culture) as the appropriate locus of translation of particular reasons specific to individual (not only) religious groups into the publicly accessible language of the formal public sphere: ‘The truth content of religious contributions can only enter into the institutionalized practice of deliberation and decision-making if the necessary translation already occurs in the pre-parliamentarian domain, i.e., in the political public sphere itself.’ (ibid.) In addition, for Habermas, it is not so much the content of the deliberations in the public sphere that is most relevant, but rather their procedural aspects (Habermas, 1999). Theoretically, this opens up more space for those who want to defend a political stance grounded in a religious belief. Habermas himself, in his defence of the ‘post-secular society’, cites at least two reasons for why this greater openness towards religious reasons should be supported even by the secular state. The first is a direct response to the split identity objection. Habermas insists that we should not ask religious citizens to give up their private reasoning in the political public sphere if this should ‘endanger their religious mode of life’ (Habermas, 2006: 10). The second reason points to the (so far) irreplaceable role of religion in the public sphere, where religious actors are often capable of discovering hidden intuitions or of recreating lost elements of meaning and identity (ibid.). Habermas believes that the informal public sphere should be the site of mutual dialogue among different groups with different sets of beliefs where all of them engage in self-reflexive exposure of their values and aim at the translation of their specific principles into a language that would be understandable to outsiders as well. Importantly, this task does not pertain only to religious citizens since it requires that secular citizens also remain ‘sensitive to the articulation power of religious languages’ (Habermas, 2002: 71).

It is exactly the obligation to translate religious reasons into secular terms that is seen as the critical juncture by the opponents of the liberal view of religion in the public sphere. For instance, Nicholas Wolterstorff claims, in his oft-quoted passage, that ‘it belongs to the religious convictions of a good many religious people in our society that they ought to base their decisions concerning fundamental issues of justice on their religious convictions. They do not view it as an option whether or not to do it... Their religion is not, for them, about something other than their social and political existence.’ (Wolterstorff, 1997: 105) This is, however, related to the second, more provocative, claim that because of the unbearable burden on religious citizens, we cannot ask them to translate their arguments in the informal public sphere and that the same applies to the public sphere in general, i.e. including formal reasoning in the legislature as well as the judiciary. Paul Weithman (2002), among oth-
ers, criticises Rawls’ requirement of translation as unnecessary and discriminatory. According to Weithman, basing one’s own arguments on his or her moral or philosophical doctrine and being able to give reasons for why the measure advocated is equally good for everyone from the point of that particular doctrine is a sufficient condition for participation in public deliberation. In other words, it is again, as with Wolterstorff, the need for translation into the secular language that is challenged as inappropriate. The three positions towards the role of religion in the public sphere, which we sketched above, are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distinction between formal and informal public spheres</th>
<th>Position I (Rawls)</th>
<th>Position II (Habermas)</th>
<th>Position III (Wolterstorff, Weithman)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal public sphere/public forum</td>
<td>Secular reasons</td>
<td>Secular reasons</td>
<td>Non-secular reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal public sphere/ background culture</td>
<td>Non-secular reasons dominant</td>
<td>Secular and non-secular reasons</td>
<td>Non-secular reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The locus of translation</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Informal public sphere</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear that there is a broad overlap between Rawls and Habermas in terms of justificatory liberalism (the grey fields in the table) – for both of them, (1) advocacy of a measure is justified in the formal public sphere as long as it is supported by secular reasons; (2) in the informal public sphere, the plurality of voices can include non-secular reasons as well; and, as a consequence, for both, (3) the distinction between these two types of public reasoning is vital. The most important difference between them, on the other hand, lies in Habermas’ assertion that the informal public sphere is the place where translations from one language into the other must take place. In this sense, the Rawlsian background culture is more restrictive than the Habermasian informal public sphere. While background culture is primarily concerned with discussions within particular associations (e.g. churches) (Rawls, 1997: 99), Habermas sees the informal public sphere as including both deliberations within these bodies and deliberations between them. Hence, a mixture of secular and non-secular reasons is present in the informal public sphere as the particular associations try to enter into dialogue with other associations and hence feel the need to translate their reasons into terms that are intelligible for citizens with other comprehensive doctrines. Position III in the table starts from the premise that there is no need for that kind of translation. As a result, the distinction between the two kinds of public spheres is not necessary, and reasons based on comprehensive
doctrines can be present in public deliberations of any kind, including those of legislators and the justice.

**RESEARCH DESIGN**

The greatest single difference between the positions discussed above lies in the differing requirements about when religious citizens and their organisations are supposed to translate their claims into the secular language, which is accessible to both the members of the particular religious community and the rest of the society. The question, however, is whether religious groupings and their members are capable of such a translation. And even if the answer were positive, an additional question mark hovers over their willingness to do so. To explore this issue, we used an approach based on two elaborate analyses of (critical) discourse analysis (Milliken, 1999; Wodak and Meyer, 2009).

We chose two countries – the Czech Republic and Slovakia – and we analysed public statements by the Roman Catholic Church and its prominent adherents in these two countries. Obviously, it would be nigh impossible to analyse all public appearances of the church’s representatives so we chose just one topic – the church’s attitude towards the European Union. The choice of the two countries was based mainly on the fact that they have many characteristics in common but substantially differ as far as religion is concerned. The two countries have very similar cultures and languages and a common history (both were part of the Habsburg Empire, and for most of the twentieth century, they were the two parts of Czechoslovakia). Both of them are member states of both the European Union and NATO, and their economic developments have been similar (with Slovakia being slightly poorer, but developing faster). The single most conspicuous difference is the different levels of religiosity in these two countries. Notwithstanding the fact that the Catholic Church is by far the largest religious group in both of the countries, Catholics constitute more than two thirds of the populace in Slovakia (68.2 percent (the 2001 census, see The World Factbook a)) but only approximately one quarter of the Czech population (26.8 percent (the 2001 census, see The World Factbook b)). Interestingly, the share of people who answered ‘unspecified’ or ‘unaffiliated’ to the question of their religious affiliation reaches only 16.2 percent in Slovakia, while the share of Czechs identifying with either of these two positions is extremely high and almost equal to the percentage of Slovak Catholics (67.8 percent). Thus, the analysis of the Catholic Church in these two countries can be methodologically rewarding since they represent two extreme cases in terms of levels of religiosity and are possibly also different in terms of the needs of the Church to address other religious groups as well as non-believers.

We tried to reduce the probability of intervening factors playing a role in our research in three ways. First, as was already mentioned, we selected two very similar countries with differences pertaining mainly to religion as the objects of our study.
Second, we focussed solely on the statements and public involvement of the Catholic Church. Other denominations are very active in both countries (the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren and the Czechoslovak Hussite Church in the Czech Republic; the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession and the Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia), but since these churches have different roots and backgrounds, it would be hard to ascertain whether their (un)willingness to translate their arguments into secular language is due to the differences in the countries’ religiosities or whether it is rather grounded in their own histories. Even though these churches are often part of the same international ecumenical bodies, an international comparison of them would still be difficult since they often have a different heritage (e.g. the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren was created as a church to unify Lutherans and Calvinists). The Catholic Church, on the other hand, is a transnational organisation with a centralised hierarchical structure to which the representatives of the national Catholic churches in both of the countries are responsible. Therefore, differences in the Czech and the Slovak Catholics’ involvement in the public sphere cannot be attributed to differences in church teachings or the institutional structure for these elements (as these are the same in both cases) but rather to the differences in national context that override their commonalities.

The third way in which we assured clearer results was in that we selected an appropriate topic for our analysis. The commonly analysed discussions about euthanasia, abortion or rights of same sex couples are strongly conditioned by national contexts. They are often stirred by legislative proposals of both Catholic politicians and their opponents, and the frequency of their media appearances, as well as their style, follows different patterns in different national settings. That is why we chose an international topic that was relevant for both nations at the same time and to the same extent – the European integration. Two issues were the most prominent within this broader topic – the countries’ simultaneous accession to the Union in 2004 and – after their accession – the deepening of the integration process (in particular, the lively debate about the reference to God in the EU constitution).

Our analysis included both the formal and the informal public spheres. In the formal public sphere, we explored all the contributions by the Christian members of the two countries’ parliaments pertaining to parliamentary discussions about European integration. Obviously, it would be very difficult to ascertain which MPs are Christians and which are not, so we overcame this problem by analysing the contributions of those MPs who were members of Christian parties in the national parliaments (the Christian Democratic Union – Popular Party in the Czech Republic (KDU-ČSL) and the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) and the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union – Democratic Party (SDKÚ-DS) in Slovakia).

In the informal public sphere, the texts chosen for discourse analysis covered the three most relevant venues through which religious arguments are expressed – (1)
statements issued by bishops (most frequently those of the whole bishops’ conferences), (2) individual statements of other prominent Catholics (both lay and ordained), typically in the most read newspapers, and (3) radio or TV appearances of either of these. As we limited the amount of available texts by choosing just one main topic, we explored all the available materials, which were pretty evenly spread both over time and over the two countries. The texts cover the period of 2002–2009, with the vast majority covering the years around the Czech and Slovak EU entry (2003–2005). Their distribution is summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of the analysed texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Formal public sphere</th>
<th>Informal public sphere</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In each of the texts from the informal public sphere, we mainly focussed on six features: Three were linked to the ‘we-you-they’ triangle. First, we wanted to know how the speaker identifies him- or herself: Does he or she speak in the name of all Christians, the citizens, the Catholic Church, or the bishops? In short, who is the ‘we’ in the text? Secondly, we explored the related issue of whom the speaker wants to address – the whole society, Christians, Catholics, fellow priests, etc. (the ‘you’ problem). Thirdly, it is equally important to see who represents otherness in these texts. In some cases, the speaker may posit a church-society dichotomy or a Christians-non-believers distinction, but sometimes the speaker may be very explicit, identifying specific persons as those opposing the church.

The other three features analysed the structure of the texts. First, we were interested to know whether the religious position is presented with or without argumentation. In other words, some texts simply state what the church believes or, more frequently, what it forbids without exactly saying why this should be so. In these cases, the texts rely on the church’s authority instead. Second, if an argument was present, we wanted to know whether this argument draws from an internal, religious base, grounding its strength in scripture, church tradition, Christian values or past church pronouncements, or whether it applies arguments accessible to non-Catholics as well. Finally, we identified the argumentative strategies, in which the ‘we-you-they’ distinction is related to the kind of argumentation used.

**RESEARCH FINDINGS**

In both the formal and the informal public spheres, the attention was directed almost exclusively to two topics: the EU accession and the reference to God in the EU constitution. What the actors in the formal public sphere of both countries shared
was the general approach to interpreting the role of the EU. In contrast to the dominant rhetoric in both republics, which very much stressed the role of economic advantages and the reduction of the welfare gap between the current EU members and the candidates (cf. Braun, 2008), the Christian deputies’ key word was ‘a community of values’ (document 1). In all discussions about the advantages and disadvantages of the countries’ entry into the Union, their argumentative strategies cautiously avoided all allusions to the ‘Christian nature’ of the EU and instead focussed on advocating the conception of the EU as ‘the greatest realised peace project in world history’ (document 2) or ‘a democratic community’ (document 3). Hence it seems that the relevance of values and the conspicuous absence of stress on economic benefits indicate that their rhetoric is indeed a translation of more specific Christian values.

However, while in the Czech Parliament, Christianity was almost never explicitly mentioned as the source of the support for European integration (with only one exception, document 4), in Slovakia, deputies often clearly indicated that they see a direct connection between EU’s values and those of Christianity, e.g. when speaking about the way in which ‘the Christian view of humanity and life will be projected into such a unique process as the life of nations’ (212) and the question of ‘which of the Christian virtues and values will be preferred when taking concrete political decisions’ (document 5). Similarly, even though the main reasons for giving support to the EU entry were always of a secular nature, secondary arguments with religious contents were present in Slovakia and entirely absent in the Czech Republic. For instance, the influential Slovak deputy and later European Commissioner J. Figel’ claimed that ‘today’s Europe is not in need of inventing new architectures, but rather of building on the proven ground. Schuman, Adenauer, De Gasperi, the founders of the European Communities, who were inspired by the Christian faith, were successful’ (document 6). In other words, while this translation is clearly a process taking place in the Slovak formal public sphere, no clear evidence is present in the Czech case, where the translation seems to be finished already when the argument enters the formal public sphere.

The difference between the finished translation in the more secular country and the translation as a process in the more religious one is even more conspicuous in the other issue pertaining to EU integration that was frequently discussed by Christian deputies – the reference to God in the EU constitution. Both the Czech and the Slovak representatives of the national Christian(-democratic) parties argued in favour of this provision. Yet while the Czech argumentation was always couched in secular language, some of their Slovak counterparts retreated to strongly religious language. To give two examples, we can compare the statements of two religious and strongly conservative deputies who spoke on the issue. The Czech Jiří Karas claimed that God should be mentioned because ‘Christians form a vital part of modern
democratic society, to the creation of which they greatly contributed. It was Christianity that changed the barbaric face of the continent, liberated slaves, cultivated culture and science, organised state administrations, and established care for the ill and the socially weak. (document 4) To strengthen his argument, Karas mentioned the role of other religions that would also welcome the allusion to God in the constitution. On the other hand, Pavol’ Hrušovský, the chairman of the Slovak parliament (the National Council), fully embraced religious rhetoric when he insisted that ‘the lack of Christianity’ is one of the main reasons for why the constitution should be rejected without giving any secular reasons for this stance, and he finished his speech by saying ‘I pray that in spite of this vote we succeed in maintaining the traditions of our Western Christian civilization for the next generations. Ladies and gentlemen, may God help us in making today’s decision.’ (document 7) As a result, a resort to religious reasons can be detected in almost one fifth of all the texts in the Slovak case, whereas there is not a single instance of such a strategy in the Czech Parliament (see Graphs 1 and 2).

Graph 1: Slovak formal public sphere

- 18% Religious reason
- 82% Secular reason

Graph 2: Czech formal public sphere

- 0% Religious reason
- 100% Secular reason

We can now turn to the informal public sphere. The voices here are much more varied and it is often difficult to determine to what extent a particular Catholic voice rep-
presented the official position of the church or his or her own private view of the issue. Altogether 55 documents were analysed in both countries. Generally, Catholic speakers much more frequently resorted to the use of religious arguments in their public utterances than was the case in the formal public sphere. The typical argumentation strategy, which was very different from that of the formal section of the public forum, started with one main argument (either religious or secular), which was consequently backed up by an auxiliary argument of the other persuasion. For instance, Czech Catholic bishops, in their epistle of 2002 (document 8), advocated the Czech EU entry in secular, widely accessible terms by claiming that the step would be ‘the logical and appropriate culmination of the post-Communist course of our country’ (ibid.) and then added that the European integration process was supported by the Pope as well, thus switching to religious argumentation based on ecclesiastical authority. In most cases, however, it was possible to determine which of the two arguments played the main role; the distribution of secular and religious arguments can be seen in Graphs 3 and 4.

**Graph 3: Czech informal public sphere**

![Graph 3](image1)

**Graph 4: Slovak informal public sphere**

![Graph 4](image2)

It is evident from these graphical representations that the distribution is roughly the same in both countries. However, differences between the two cases start to arise
if we look at the more specific breakdown of the figure in terms of the target audience. In other words, we were interested in finding out whether religious reasons were used exclusively when addressing church members and secular reasons when speaking to the society in general. Surprisingly, this was not always the case. The result of our analysis is depicted in Graphs 5 and 6.

**Graph 5: Distribution according to target audience (Czech Republic)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Religious reason</th>
<th>Secular reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society or unspecified</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Graph 6: Distribution according to target audience (Slovakia)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Religious reason</th>
<th>Secular reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society or unspecified</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is perhaps not surprising that secular reasoning dominated the church’s approach to the society as a whole. But even here, our preliminary assumption was that given the much more secular nature of the Czech society, the secular argumentation would be more visible in the Czech Catholics’ dialogue with the society than in the Slovak Catholics’ dialogue. The analysis shows, to the contrary, that the share of secular reasoning is even higher in Slovakia than in the Czech Republic. This can probably be attributed to the sharper distinction between the statements targeting the believers and those targeting the society in the case of Slovakia.

This is related to the strikingly distinct ways in which the churches address their members. The Slovak Catholics, in particular the Bishops’ Conference, focus exclusively on religious reasoning when advocating a specific policy – supporting their claims either by generally referring to Christian values or, more specifically, by draw-
ing attention to the triangle of their tradition, authority (the Pope) and Scripture. The most common way presented Slovakia as the country with the God-given mission to re-Christianise Europe. For instance, Catholic bishops of Slovakia claimed that ‘Europe needs a new evangelisation and we should be apostles of Christ’s teaching’ (document 9). Yet the Czech Catholic bishops, in their analogical messages to Czech Catholics (op. cit. and document 10), adopted very secular arguments, speaking about ‘European integration, which is the guarantee of a peaceful and undisturbed future for our continent’ (document 10). There is no doubt that Czech bishops also frequently employ religious argumentation, but secular arguments are as present as religious arguments in their messages for Catholic Christians.

If we return to the above mentioned question and try to explain the differences in the formal and informal public spheres in the two countries, then the most probable answer lies in the fact that because the Slovak church does not use secular arguments in its interaction with the believers, Catholics in the Slovak Parliament carry out the translation on their own, and hence, traces of religious argumentation are still palpable in their deliberations, and sometimes an outright return to religious rhetoric can be seen as well. On the other hand, the Czech Christian deputies, who stuck to purely secular arguments, are probably used to this kind of argumentation from their own church and consider the secular arguments valid for Catholics as well – hence the unproblematic exclusive reliance on non-religious reasons in the Czech Parliament.7

CONCLUSION

Even though secular reasons clearly dominate the public spheres of both countries, religious reasons take on an important role in the Slovak case while being entirely absent from the Czech Parliament’s deliberations. Czech Christian Democratic deputies usually advocate the same position as their Slovak counterparts (seeing the EU in a positive light, favouring the EU entry, calling for the reference to God in the EU constitution), but their references to Christianity always put forward secular arguments for a positive view of the religion. Slovak MPs, on the other hand, sometimes slip into religious reasoning, and even when secular argumentation prevails, the process of translation can be frequently detected in their speeches.

In the informal public sphere, the Catholic Church in both countries uses similar approaches when addressing the society. Surprisingly, in spite of the much higher share of Catholics in the population in Slovakia, secular reasoning is slightly more present in the Slovak case than in the Czech one. Contrariwise, the Slovak church never uses secular reasons internally, while the internal deliberations in the Czech Catholic Church use secular and religious arguments in equal amounts. In other words, in the Czech case, the translation is happening not only in the interaction with the society at large, but already in the church itself.8
We argue that the Czech case partially corresponds to what sociologists call modernisation of religious consciousness (Habermas, 2006: 13). This is extremely important for Habermas: His notion of the postsecular society is based on the claim that both the society and the church are capable of entering into a mutual learning process that leads to internal reflection on both sides. This reflection (as well as the concomitant self-modernisation) puts Habermas at odds with classical liberalism as well as his own earlier works (among others, Habermas, 1975), where religious belief is usually seen as the absolute opposite of the reflexivity of the modern, rational mind.

Hence, the Czech case (characterised by the low level of political influence of the church, a plurality of religious voices, and a high share of non-believers) comes very close to position II in table 1 (i.e. the position of Habermas: no presence of religious reasons in the Parliament, translation going on in the informal public sphere, some – albeit weak – evidence of a reflexive self-modernisation of the church, etc.). The Slovak case, on the other hand, reflects position I (i.e. the position of Rawls: there is a reliance on secular reasons in the Parliament, yet the translation is being carried out in the Parliament too; the church, exactly as Rawls describes it in his analysis of the public forum, does not use secular reasons internally).

Perhaps not surprisingly, with the rise of religiosity, religious reasoning is more present in the formal public sphere. In other words, this seems to indicate the intuitive understanding that position III (Wolterstorff) would be applicable only in such cases where religious reasons are taken as valid by the whole society. Further research would be needed to see whether in (liberal) societies with an even more pronounced influence of religion in the public life than Slovakia (possibly Poland or Ireland), religious reasons indeed become legitimate arguments in the formal public sphere, and what impact this has both on the outcome of these deliberations and on those minorities in the society that oppose the religious discourse.

ENDNOTES

1 Among the advocates of the secularisation thesis, we could list Bryan Wilson, David Martin, Karel Dobbelnaere, and Steve Bruce. Others, like Peter Berger, have changed sides and while they previously supported the thesis, they are now critical of it. I am indebted to one of the anonymous reviewers for this remark.

2 For various criticisms of the secularisation thesis, see the first comprehensive critiques by Shiner (1967) or Glasner (1977). For more recent discussions about the thesis, see, e.g., the contributions in Bruce and, in particular, those by Brown and Finke in the same volume. For an older but pertinent overview of the debates surrounding the secularisation thesis, see Swatos and Christiano (1999).

3 Here, Rawls claims that ‘another feature of public reason is that its limits do not apply to our personal deliberations and reflections about political questions, or to the reasoning about them by members of associations such as churches and universities.’ (Rawls, 1997a: 95).

4 Obviously, there are other historical differences between the two countries, including their different status in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, their different processes of industrialisation or urbanisation, etc.
I am indebted to one of the anonymous reviewers for drawing my attention to further differences between the two countries.

There is a number of distinguished scholars who have explored the church-state relation in this region. In particular, I should mention the international project Aufbruch (Pastorales Forum, 1997) or the works by Zdeněk Nešpor (see, for instance, Nešpor, 2004).

In this text we will use this useful shorthand. However, the precise title is the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe.

Clearly, alternative explanations exist, such as that because the percentage of Catholics (and Christians in general) in the Czech Parliament is lower, their adherence to secular reasoning is higher. Yet this is disputable since Czech Catholics do not play a marginal role in the Parliament and in the Czech political life, often holding very important political positions, such as that of Minister of Foreign Affairs (the Catholic who held this office was a frequent speaker on European integration in the Parliament).

Yet we should stress here that our corpus is quite limited, so more research would be needed to confirm our findings. This would mean that other topics need to be addressed since we only used all the available documents regarding the church’s position on European integration. That is also why we are starting to explore the church’s reactions to the war in Iraq.

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Political Inclusion as a Key Factor to Moderate Islamists: The International Community's Choice of Policy Impacts on Hamas's Pragmatic or Radical Tendencies

NATAŠA KUBÍKOVÁ

Abstract: The article is based on a thesis according to which repressive and excluding state policies may contribute to a radicalisation of political Islamic movements, while inclusion and accommodation may have an opposite effect – moderation of Islamists. The paper transposes the ‘inclusive-moderation’ hypothesis of the ruling regimes in the Middle East to the international community and argues that the choice of the policy external players apply on Islamists in the region may affect the scope of the moderation or radicalisation of the Islamists. The analysis draws attention to the international engagement in the region with respect to recent developments in the Palestinian Territories following Hamas’s landslide victory in the parliamentary election in 2006.

Key words: Hamas, Islamic Resistance Movement, Palestinian National Authority, Islamists, radicalism, moderation, democratisation, Middle East, international community

The world has witnessed the rise of political Islamic activism in recent decades and since then it has sought an appropriate approach to the new phenomenon of political Islam. The political Islam has been disseminating concerns of an allegedly pending second Islamic revolution in the style of the 1979 Iranian Islamic revolution. These concerns stem from the pronounced ideological commitments of Islamists to overthrow current political regimes and replace them with Islamic ones and also from the political violence that some political Islamic groups employ. The most recent concerns were related to the unprecedented electoral victories of Islamic political movements in some Middle Eastern countries. The regimes and the international community have been ambiguous in their attitudes towards Islamists. The Jordanian and Kuwaiti monarchies, for instance, included Islamists in their po-
political systems, but regimes like those of Algeria or Syria kept them at a distance from politics. Also the approaches of different members of the international community differ, but the main division line can be seen between the West and non-Western powers, even though different members of the two designated groups of states may have different preferences and priorities in the region in relation to Islamists. The West is often embodied by the US as Washington seems to be the most vocal and active power in the Middle East. Some European states, such as the UK, also adhere to the US’s principles and policies, but some, such as France or the EU as a whole, often prefer different tracks. Some Middle Eastern countries that are on good terms with the West, such as Egypt, have seen a western attitude that favours some of those countries’ regimes over Islamists. On the other hand, in states that are unfriendly toward the West, like Iraq under Saddam Hussein, the trend has been rather contrary when the international coalition helped Shi’a Islamists to come to power following the fall of Hussein’s reign. Which of the two described approaches to Islamists – political exclusion or inclusion, could be considered as the more appropriate one?

The analysis will argue that while exclusion may result in an increase of the scope of radicalisation, an inclusive policy may, on the other hand, generate more moderate pragmatic behaviour on the part of Islamists (Esposito, 1997 and 1999; Hamzavy, 2005; Lust-Okar, 2005; Noyon, 2003; Schwedler, 2006; Hafez, 2003). The analysis will elaborate upon the ‘inclusion-moderation’ hypothesis in connection with regimes’ influence on Islamists’ behaviour and then apply this model on the international community to show how the world influences the form of political Islamic activism in the broader context of the ongoing democratisation process in the Middle East. The following case study of the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) after its victory in the parliamentary election in 2006 will seek to depict the impacts of the international community’s stance on Hamas. How did the international community’s isolation and economic blockade of the Hamas government impact on the movement’s choice of strategy, be it radical or moderate?

DOES POLITICAL INCLUSION MODERATE ISLAMISTS?
The Islamists’ underlying goal is to create an alternative type of regime to replace the current one. They call for a restoration of Islamic identity in the societies, in the name of which they would pursue a wide range of reforms to improve the lives of people. Islamists blame the incumbent secular and authoritarian regimes for deteriorating societal, economic and political conditions and for betraying Islamic values to the benefit of Western norms. They oppose Western principles and criticize regimes for being un-Islamic. While questioning the political legitimacy of the current governments that perpetuate autocratic rule, Islamists legitimise their conduct through re-
Political inclusion and religious moderation

Religious norms, which are the ultimate ideological framework of reference for society and politics (Hamzawy, 2005).

Islamists are often perceived as an undemocratic, intolerant and militant movement with an antagonistic approach to their ideological rivals, such as the West or Israel. This perception of Islamists is rather simplifying and questionable as there is no foundation for an assessment of political Islamic movements as a monolithic course. A distinction between moderate and radical Islamists should be applied. Moderate Islamists are usually defined as pragmatics who seek gradual societal and political reforms within the existing system. Radicals aim to impose required changes through revolutionary means, often implying the use of violence (Hadar, 1993; Esposito, 1997; Hafez, 2003; Lust-Okar, 2005; Schwedler, 2006). But as Burgat (2005) argues, it would be a mistake to think that the political struggle between regimes and oppositions in the Muslim world today is purely ideological. He adds that there is no reason to interpret Islamists’ terms of reference, modes of expression or behaviour as functioning within the framework of the Quran. They are products of a context, not of a universal Islamist principle (Burgat, 2005: 20–22). In a context of a regime’s policies towards Islamists, two questions emerge. To what extent does an irreconcilable approach radicalise Islamists and what effects could an inclusive state policy have on the character of political Islamic movements? How does the choice of a regime’s approach to Islamists impact on the behaviour of Islamic movements?

Regimes in Egypt, Algeria, Jordan and others set out on a path to political openings, which brought opposition forces to the political ring. In an open political battle, Islamists emerged as the most visible part of the opposition, though also as controversial political players due to the violence that some political Islamic movements advocated. However, the political openings were often limited in scope and time, which impacted on the choice of strategy Islamists employed vis-à-vis these delusory moves that the state adopted. The loosening of the political reins was suddenly reversed to become a suppression of basic political rights. The most apparent example was that of the political liberalisation in Algeria, where the political success of Islamists represented in the Islamic Salvation Front (Front Islamique de Salut – FIS) in the first round of the legislative elections in 1991 was met with repression that ended the short lasting liberalisation. FIS was subsequently banned in 1992. In the tense political situation, many parts of the Algerian Islamic society became radicalised and called on the government to end the import of western political models of democracy. Radical fractions of FIS launched an armed struggle against the regime and called for a second national liberation war. (Schulze, 2007: 299–230).

As the Algerian experience indicates, in an exclusive, repressive and authoritarian political system, Islamists are more likely to resort to violence and radicalism. On the other hand, Norton (1998) and Schwedler (2006 and 2007) argue that the inclusion in the political game may be one of the means to moderate strongly ide-
logically motivated Islamists. The inclusion could be introduced through enacting political openings, including the introduction of pluralism within a multiparty system, the guarantees of basic human rights, and fairly regular elections for national and municipal assemblies. What effects could such political softening have on the behaviour of Islamists?

Schwedler (2007) believes that in an inclusive system, Islamists will likely undergo a learning process in which they will discover that no political gains are possible without negotiation and cooperation with other political forces and that compromises are also inevitable. Under inclusive, pluralistic and open systems, political Islamic movements may be prone to enter into negotiations with other political players in order to successfully pursue their objectives and eventually form political partnerships with them, which would reflect an affinity of these players and ideological rivals on certain issues. It may also involve an increased tolerance in societies and bring about a decline in the use of violent means. A broad-minded society has better predispositions to marginalise or maybe even eliminate radical elements and to praise pragmatic ones. Objections to the inclusive policy usually refer to the fear that Islamists would seek power through the ballot boxes with the sole intention of subsequently nullifying the principles of an open political environment and imposing an Islamic rule like the Iranian type of theocracy through a ‘one man, one vote, one time’ strategy (Hadar, 1993) as Islamists’ commitment to liberalisation and democratisation is claimed to be purely instrumental.

Even though the political context cannot be considered as the only variable of a possible moderation of Islamists, it could be a substantial one. Views on moderation of Islamists can vary depending on the frame of reference applied. Anderson (1994) argues that there is no evidence that Islamists intend to abandon their ideological goals, but there is some evidence that they are able to alter their strategies and combative tactics. On the other hand, Wickham (2004) and Schwedler (2006 and 2007) believe that a broader process of liberalisation or even democratisation can facilitate moderation not only of Islamists’ strategies, but also of their core values and beliefs. According to Schwedler, a change in Islamists’ course of action might be considered as ideological moderation, not only as moderation of tactics used, if it is initiated through an internal political debate within particular movements in which moderate views would gain dominance over radical tendencies. Although radicals may win internal disputes over a movement’s policy, that is likely to happen only under particular circumstances, such as when Islamists face a regime’s repressions.

Ideological moderation is a complex phenomenon and it necessitates a balanced political setting which would allow movements to undergo gradual development through various learning processes in a changing political environment. The moderation implies not only that Islamists would turn into more pro-democratic political forces, but also that other political tendencies would be better organised and
Regimes would open space for healthy competition. As Brumberg (2002) puts it, the challenge is not to figure out whether Islamism is essentially democratic versus autocratic, or liberal versus illiberal, but we also have to see whether Islamists operate within a hegemonic political arena or within a competitive one. Given that a regime provides an open atmosphere and incorporates Islamists at least partially, they would learn that no political gains are possible without negotiations and find themselves pushed to re-evaluate their internal norms and political behaviour for the benefit of tolerance. An open, liberalised system would be more prone to create opportunities for Islamists to embrace pluralistic or liberal norms than extremist ones. (Mandaville, 2007: 144, 145)

REGIMES’ SURVIVAL STRATEGY TO BE REPLACED WITH INCLUSIVE POLICY

What are the reasons behind the exclusive and inclusive policies that ruling regimes apply on Islamists? The autocratic regimes such as that in Syria have been insisting on a marginalisation of Islamists due to the fear that they would challenge the regime’s survival. On the other hand, ‘facade democracies’ (Milton-Edwards, 1993) or ‘liberalized autocracies’ (Brumberg, 2002) such as those of Jordan, Morocco or Kuwait adopted a limited liberalisation and bet on an inclusive card for Islamists. The aim was to build a protecting shield against other political adversaries that the particular regime faces by its essential survival strategy and to secure religious legitimacy for the regime, which usually aspires to command the highest religious authority in its respective country.

Regimes like that in Egypt or Algeria consider Islamists as a threat to their survival or an obstacle to democratisation processes most likely because of Islamists’ political strength and proclaimed goals to overturn the current political systems. Unlike other opposition forces, which lack public support and political capacity, Islamists secured their popularity among constituents and supporters on local levels thanks to their extensive social networks. Movements like the Palestinian Hamas and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood have built up a sophisticated system of education, health and economic services. These are the fields in which both the ruling elites and other political players usually fail. Integration of such a strong and well-established opposition group could have several positive effects on the transformation of the current political and economic systems and the preservation of pro-democratic ones if established (Noyon, 2003).

Firstly, the opportunity for Islamists to take part in the political life could bring about a moderation of their conduct, which is often perceived as unchangeable. In the situations when Islamists were expelled from the political scene, they took a hostile approach to the regimes and offered often extreme and unrealistic solutions to a wide range of domestic problems. Islamists under illegality could have formed...
their reputation on being victims of the regime’s oppressive politics and thereby justified their decisions to resort to radical struggle as the only method available. Besides ideological reasons, the decision to adopt militancy could originate from the fact that excluded Islamists cannot be held accountable for their deeds as they are not part of the existing systems. In this context, inclusion could create preconditions for moderation because Islamists working within a system would have to take the full responsibility for their actions on their shoulders and justify the effects adopted measures would have on people’s lives. Within an open political environment which would propose many ways, but not military ways, to instigate different reforms and desirable political changes, Islamists would have to think twice before starting to promote violent solutions. Under an open system, militancy may actually prove to be less popular and less effective with people and at the end of the day, it could ruin Islamists’ political prospects. Once included in the decision making processes, their position would become more fragile. Islamists would be directly responsible for the decisions made and it would be more difficult for them to pursue their extreme objectives, as those may not lead to the necessary political, economic or socio-cultural solutions. When integrated into the system, they would be pushed to review their policies and strategies, and to seek practical and realistic solutions to the daily problems of people. Encountered with the new circumstances, Islamists would likely re-evaluate their ideological goals, timeframe and methods for the implementation of their goals, bearing in mind public opinion, which they would need to keep on their side. Political movements with no prospect of gaining power, like those under a repressive and excluding setting, often advocate positions they know to be untenable otherwise. On the contrary, the objectives of included movements seem to be more sustainable and practical. The strategies and goals of an included opposition reflect the real issues of daily life and their rhetoric loses a rigid ideological symbolism.

Secondly, inclusion is also very likely to throw Islamists into the arms of their political and ideological opponents. When under the limited liberalisation Islamists were given a chance to run for parliamentarian posts, they recorded no major political gains that would enable them to pursue their objectives alone. The Islamists’ popularity is actually not as endless as it might appear. In fact, many Arabs fear Islamist organisations (Ottaway, 2008). Therefore they found themselves in need of political negotiations and were forced to reach compromises. They gradually reached out to the secular opposition parties, and some of them even built cross-ideological alliances, often directed jointly against the repressive policy of the regimes (Ottaway and Hamzawy, 2008: 8) and aimed at pursuing common objectives.

Another possible effect of inclusive policy in relation to Islamists could be a decline in radical Islamism. One aspect of moderation, as mentioned above, is that Islamic movements would be pushed to negotiate about their goals and modify their
political programmes accordingly. The other aspect is that through the progress and success of moderate Islamists, militant Islamists could lose steam and become a marginalised force. Although there is no hard evidence to support the view that Islamists, once elected to parliamentary offices, would overturn the system, there are numerous indications that where Islamists have lacked the opportunity to integrate into the political system, their rhetoric tended to be more demagogic, rigid, scriptural and apocalyptic. The Jordanian Islamic Action Front, the political representation of the Muslim Brotherhood, once integrated in 1989, proved to be able and willing to play by the set rules. On the other hand, the FIS resorted to violence in the wake of the nullification of the first round of the Algerian parliamentary elections in 1991. The violence that the FIS resorted to, however, was not merely an ‘Islamic violence’, but above all a reaction to the ruthless attempts by the Algerian military to cling to power, and to the short-sightedness of the West, which helped them to carry out these attempts through silent support (Burgat, 2005: 20, 79).

As Anderson (1997) argued, the Islamists’ violence and its accompanying rigid rhetoric are partly attributable to the violence visited upon Islamists by their governments and independent of the content of political beliefs and ideology. It was very much visible in the 1990s, when political openings were replaced by repressions in liberalised autocracies and the number of confrontations between the regimes and Islamists increased.\(^\text{2}\)

**ISLAMISTS SEEN THROUGH THE LENSES OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY**

In the 1990s, attempts by the international community (mainly by the Western countries) to introduce democracy in the region enhanced its influence on the political development. One of the challenges the world encountered had been the Islamists with their unexpected and numerous electoral victories. What is the stance that the international community has on Islamists and what role does it play in the current political development in the context of Islamic activism in the region?

The international community maintains an ambiguous stance toward Islamists based on different political and ideological criteria. On one hand, the world perceives Islamists as a threat, and on the other as reliable allies. The former view has been visible mainly in countries that co-operate closely with the West such as Egypt and also in the countries where Islamists challenge regimes with which the world powers need to do business, such as the Palestine Territories or Lebanon. The latter view has been seen in the countries with anti-Western governments, such as Iran or Sudan. Islamic forces are also doomed to repudiation in the eyes of the West.

As to ideological criteria, the world’s dissenting voices are heard at the address of radical Islamic groups that espouse violence and pursue armed struggle such as the Palestinian Islamic Jihad or the Egyptian Jama‘at al-Jihad. However, the international
community remains paradoxically reserved in its support of pragmatic Islamists like the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood or the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front. The denial to favour moderate Islamists could be a result of the previous distinction between regimes that are friendly and regimes that are unfriendly in their relations to the West. The assessment of Islamists thus seems to be subjugated to this insufficient distinction of regimes’ foreign political orientations. But the attitude to the ruling regimes is not the only determinant according to which the international community perceives Islamists.

Prejudices or stereotypes against Islamists, disbelief over Islamists’ adherence to Western type democracy, unsubstantiated overestimation of secular political players and other factors of various economic, political or ideological types might have also played an important role in the formulation of the world powers’ policies towards Islamists. The stereotypes might stem from a common view that Islamists are religious revolutionists who oppose Western norms and may pose a global pan-Islamic threat if they succeed in establishing instituted theocracies of the Iranian or Sudanese types. Some political Islamic movements are suspected of ignoring basic human rights and holding discriminatory illiberal views on key socio-cultural and political issues. However, as Esposito (1999: 209) argues, many Islamic movements which were critical of democratic principles in the past turned into champions of pluralism and democratic and economic reforms in recent years. Like it or not, the international community should gradually re-evaluate its perception of Islamist movements and only then could it discover their potential to conduct political and economic reforms and provide societal transformation in their countries. It is also crucial for the international community to take into consideration the fact that the eagerness of some Islamists to participate in the political processes does not necessarily mean that they espouse full-fledged democracy. Participation in an election is only one side of the democratic equation and needs to be complemented with protection of individual rights and liberties. Therefore, the world powers should analyse political Islamic movements in the Middle East more thoroughly while taking into account not only the movements’ political manifestos created some decades ago, but also the current development of the movements, their potential to transform further in the future and their possible altering of objectives rather than dismissing a dialogue with Islamists over stereotypical sentiments. Along this line of argument, Hamzawy (2005) says that Hezbollah could be presented as a moderate political Islamic movement, given that it has an active political branch and showed a willingness to adhere to the rules of the political game, even though it has not sworn off violence or pledged full adherence to the democratic rule of law.

On account of Islamists’ willingness to transform, Emmanuel Sivan (2003: 6) maintains that Islamists tend to give higher consideration to the parliamentary option than before as they increasingly question the dead end of violence and da’wa. The
proponents of parliamentarism point to its many virtues. It permits them to introduce legal reforms, shape policy-making, and allocate resources to causes like Islamic education that are close to the radicals’ hearts. ‘Parliamentary friendly’ Islamists could also inflict heavy blows to radical tendencies within their movements through internal debates pointing to a range of benefits that political engagement promises and the impasse of militant strategies. Movements such as the Jordanian Islamic Action Front, the Yemeni Reformist Union and the Egyptian Centre Party (Al Wasat) do adhere to the principles of democracy, the rule of law and human rights.

Furthermore, insufficient international endorsement for moderate Islamists may also relate to an overly favourable perception of secular, liberal or leftist political parties. However, if the West wants to promote a transition of the Middle Eastern countries to democracy, it should recognise the possible executors of its goals. And the capabilities of secular currents in most of the Middle Eastern countries are rather limited. Unlike Islamists, secularists have failed to attract many supporters and encourage people to come to polling stations as they did not formulate an appealing political programme as an alteration of the incumbent regimes and fell down in establishing grassroots bases. Islamists’ programmes sound attractive and agitation spreads at universities, schools and mosques, where it could best target people. Islamists also aimed at locally providing social services, ranging from education to health care, which secularists were unable to offer. The best example of the Islamists’ beneficiary work for local communities was seen in 1989, when an earthquake destroyed the Tipasa region of Algeria. On this occasion, the efforts of the Islamists’ doctors and rescue teams strongly contrasted with the indifferent attitude of the government and of other political forces to the catastrophe (Kepel, 2006; Schulze, 2007). The other political parties had not been equipped and organised well enough to participate in rescue operations. Mainly due to their inefficiency and invisibility to local citizens and a non-existent network of social services, non-Islamic political parties command low public support and thereby are unable to mobilise people for their cause or effectively challenge the ruling elites. The reasons for the failures of liberal and leftist parties differ. On one side there are liberals with a focus on abstract principles, whose name has been discredited among numerous supporters of political Islamic movements over suspected ideological links with Western secularists; on the other there are leftist parties that embody the previous washout of the Arab socialist experiment. Therefore, maybe the international community may seek to redefine its policies with respect to the failures of secularists and focus its attention on stronger representatives of political Islam if it wishes to launch political changes in the region.

Even though secularists have a more limited capacity to implement changes than Islamists do, still there is a strong disproportion in support for different ideological movements in the Middle East. While the international community tends to over-
look and tacitly approve arrests of Islamists, it does condemn individual arrests of liberal personalities (Hamzawy, 2005: 6). Similarly, while the West pressures Islamists to dismantle their combative units, the Hamas military wing ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, it does not call for dissolving similar units held by secularists such as Fatah’s Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades. This seems to be another apt example of the ambiguity of the international policy towards Islamists, which the world may need to reassess. Commanding a relatively strong public support, Islamists could actually be reckoned as the most viable figures in the region.

**THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY PLAYS ITS ROLE IN THE REGION**

Due to a number of reasons, the international community seems to be afraid to acknowledge that Islamists represent an element which should be taken into consideration. With its possible fear of the Islamists’ relatively good political performance in liberalised settings, the international community formulates a policy of silent support for ruling elites to the detriment of Islamists. The world powers seem to be paying lip service to democratisation in the region.

The Western pressure to institutionalise political opening regimes in Egypt, Algeria, Jordan, Morocco or Kuwait introduced guided pluralism and released the reins of power at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s. But the liberalisation process lasted briefly as the first indications that Islamists could do well in elections appeared. The end to the launched political reforms came with a tacit blessing from the Western countries. The regimes played up the danger these religious political movements represented over fear of losing power to Islamists and cast themselves against the rise of an Islamic state. The regimes suppressed Islamists by imposing a ban on their movements and arresting their high ranking officials. Following the measures, the regimes easily succeeded in defusing Western pressure for the democratic reforms that the West initially called for (Ottaway, 2008: 3). Due to the impact that tacit approvals of the regimes’ measures have had on the political development in those countries, the international community could be considered as one of the factors that contributed to the expulsion of Islamists from the political system.

Hybrid regimes of liberalised autocracies or façade democracies widen and narrow the boundaries of participation and expression in response to what they see as the social, economic, political, and geostrategic challenges they face. This policy of a repeated circle of political openings and tightening was designed in accordance with regime survival strategies, and a disguise of liberalisation has given the regimes an opportunity to conform to international demands for political openings only for show and thus to ease the pressure for reforms. A dilemma about the scope of the pressure the international community should exert on ruling regimes emerged. Brumberg (2002) believes a solution to this dilemma may lie in a gradual introduc-
tion of reforms which would address the weakness or even absence of political society (Schwedler, 2006). This implies strengthening civil society and promoting liberalisation and democratisation from the bottom up, and endorsing constitutional and institutional reforms that would empower independent judiciaries, effective political parties, competitive, internationally observed elections, and legislature that would represent majorities (Brumberg, 2002: 57; Brumberg, 2005: 13). The purpose of gradualism is to carefully assist liberalised autocracies in moving beyond the politics of mere survival, and it will require a much larger boost from the international community.

The key to this gradual democratisation policy is to build up a functioning pluralistic political scene which would allow an inclusion of moderate Islamists and could help to hamper any forms of radicalism from gaining power by providing space for moderate tendencies. Should the gradualism be successful, radicals will most likely boycott the new political system as their rigid ideology opposes any forms of ‘westernised’ political norms and systems. Radicals shun democracy as un-Islamic (Hafez, 2003: 42) and they are more likely to try to strike against it than to strive for a victory in this profaned political struggle. On the basis of this, the radicals’ feared political wins could be questioned. Also, with respect to the notion that if peaceful ways for change exist, people are less likely to opt for revolutionary and militant options, and radicals may lose credit for the benefit of pragmatic Islamists. This gradualist policy promises better chances to moderate the political settings than the current policy of silent tolerance of authoritarian regimes.

In addition, this policy may also have a considerable impact on the ideological and strategic behaviour of Islamists. The international community’s silent support for the political exclusion of Islamists could be seen as a contributing factor to Islamist rebellions and could have caused the marginalisation of moderate voices within the political Islamic movements (Hafez, 2003: 27; Ottaway and Hamzawy, 2008: 12). The containment of moderate Islamists likely strengthened the positions of hard-liners within the movements and led to an increase of support for violent revolutionary activities. A proposed gradual democratisation, involving an emergence of a pluralistic political environment and a competitive multiparty system, would deprive radicals of their arguments that regimes are illegitimate and must be overthrown due to the repressive measures they employ against political Islamic forces. Under these circumstances, moderate Islamists could improve their position within movements and thus pursue pragmatic politics. The more accessible the system is, the more likely it is that Islamist movements will adopt accommodative policies and shun violence over time. An inclusive environment could also diminish a joint militant opposition against regimes. Excluded opponents would moderate their policies only in return for inclusion. Along the same lines, inclusion could stir up internal debates between moderates and radicals in which an open political access would allow...
moderates to argue in favour of conventional politics. Moderates will be able to advocate political participation as a less costly alternative when compared to a revolutionary path and silent radicals by reducing material and organisational resources for their militant wings (Hafez, 2003; Schwedler, 2006).

Rather than eliminating Islamists, the international community should develop policies to positively engage with the moderate Islamists or otherwise risk a danger of a possible Islamic radicalisation. Under the ongoing democratisation processes in which the international community is fully engaged, the world powers should revisit their policies towards Islamists, taking into consideration that its growing impact and influence in the region could become fatal not only for movements and parties that are based on Islamic teaching, but also for the individual regimes and for the whole region with respect to the potential emergence of new forms of radicalism and extremism (Esposito, 1999: 272; Hamzawy, 2005).

INTERNAL DYNAMICS OF HAMAS
The following case study of the Palestinian Resistance Movement – Hamas (Harakat al-Muqāwamah al-Islāmiyyah) – will focus on what stance and measures the international community took in response to the Hamas victory in the 2006 parliamentary election. How did the decision to curb a Hamas-led government impact on further political development in the Palestine Territories and within the movement?

Hamas emerged as an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) movement in response to spontaneous demonstrations of Palestinians in 1987 and in the wake of the first Palestinian uprising (intifada). Its primary objective was to expand MB’s charitable activities. Hamas followed the teaching of its predecessor, the Islamic charity organisation al-Mujamma’ al-Islami, which advocated a gradual reformation of the Palestinian society with an accent on Islamic identity and a renunciation of the political violence embraced at that time by the Islamic Jihad or nationalist movements (Milton-Edwards, 1999; Mishal and Sela, 2000). The data about the background and exact date of the movement’s foundation vary.\(^3\)

The movement’s structure is rather complex, but the key positions are assigned to the Advisory Council (Majlis ash-shura), the Political Bureau headquartered in Damascus, Syria, and the internal leadership in Gaza and the West Bank.\(^4\) The role of the Council is to formulate the general policy of the movement, and it enjoys final authority over formal policy decisions, which are then implemented by the Political Bureau (Gunning, 2008: 99). The process of adopting general policies is consensual. The Council consults the wider leadership, both the internal and the external leadership, about their positions on concrete issues. A decision about political objectives and aims is then made, and it is mainly based on a general consensus. Hamas also consists of a controversial military wing, the ‘Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, which were formed in 1991 as a result of one of several local initiatives
taken by senior military activists and became its official military apparatus (Mishal and Sela, 2000: 64). The extent to which the Brigades’ activities reflect the central political direction remains questionable. A number of violent acts have been organised by the central political command, but several militant acts have been conducted by local leaders and supporters independently of the central command. According to Levitt (2006), the military wing is fully subordinated to the Political Bureau. However, Gunning (2008: 139) argues that the percentage of senior political officials who are also commanders in the Brigades is remarkably small, which indicates that Hamas’s political leaders tend to derive their authority from other sources than the Brigades’ capacity of violence.

In addition, Hamas consists of a number of different institutions, committees and centres. It operates on the local level through its well-known network of social, health and charitable branches. The network works as a substitute for the Palestinian government’s lacking social security system, which, with its numerous shortcomings and publicly known corruption, failed to provide basic social securities to people. Hamas has been consistently helping Palestinians in their daily lives by providing free aid for several decades.

The basis of the movement is the Islamic religion. The Islamic ideology sets the main objectives for Hamas, such as a reformation of Muslim society in accordance with Islam and a liberation of historic Palestine through an armed struggle with Israel. As stated in the movement’s Charter, Hamas opposes the Israeli-Palestinian peace process as it contradicts its beliefs. Although the ideological principles and strategic goals of the Charter are perceived as intransigent, the movement’s objectives and methods are more complex and reflect the different priorities of the territorially divided internal and external leaderships. The internal leadership, which is personified by Ismail Haniya (Hamas election leader and former prime minister) in the Gaza Strip, advocates relatively pragmatic reasoning, while the external Political Bureau in Damascus, Syria, which is identified with Khaleed Mishal, represents radical trends. The differences between the two leaderships might emanate from their dissimilar experiences related to the form of struggle they wage against the Israeli occupation. While the internal leadership, residing in the occupied territories, has to put up with the immediate effects of the Israeli occupation and political discussions with the Palestinian Authority, the external administration in Damascus rarely faces direct attacks or missile assaults against its prominent representatives by the Israeli army and less often holds face-to-face negotiations with the Authority officials. This internal dynamics of the movement, besides the above mentioned consensual decision-making, has also played a significant role in the process of determining Hamas’s political trajectory. However, which of the two factions will dominate within the movement depends not only on outcomes of internal debates, but also on external factors and circumstances.
The moderate wing of the movement seems to be following the legacy of Hamas’s predecessor al-Mujamma’. They have sought to influence the Muslim community of Palestine in conformity with Islamic morals and values and thereby to bring a moral reformation of both individuals and the community – an ‘internal jihad’. Without the internal reformation, an ‘external jihad’ aimed at other countries would not be possible. (Milton-Edwards, 1999: 182; Legrain, 1997: 170; Mishal and Sela, 2000: 33) Although the Hamas ideology was initially rooted in a modernist-reformist Islamic approach to political change without aspirations for a revolution and an overthrow of the existing political system (Abu Amr, 1994), in its history Hamas repeatedly resorted to violent acts. The militancy and intention to wage war against its external ideological enemies could be ascribed to the radical elements of the movement. But even though Hamas has incorporated political violence as its strategy, it did not, however, presuppose its ideology as being based on political violence, like the Islamic Jihad did. In addition, Hamas’s long-term political and charitable activities also suggest that the movement should not be perceived only as a monolithic terrorist organisation, despite their use of violence (Hamzawy, 2005). Indeed, Hamas threw away its disguise of an irreconcilable and militant movement and demonstrated its willingness to refrain from the use of military methods. Hamas’s pragmatic politics was also proved when the movement forged alliances with its ideological opponents from among fractions of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), a coalition led by Fatah on more than one occasion.

THE WORLD’S RESPONSE TO THE UNPRECEDENTED ELECTION VICTORY OF PALESTINIAN ISLAMISTS

Hamas leads internal debates about policy and objectives during which tensions between the moderates and the radicals usually surface. One of the recent discussions was about the dilemma of whether the movement should participate in the parliamentary election in 2006. Unlike the situation a couple of decades ago, when the Advisory Council had decided to boycott the legislative elections, just prior to the January 2006 election, the decision favoured participation in elections. Hamas entered the electoral battlefield under the name Change and Reform and scored a landslide victory with 56% of the votes, gaining 74 seats in the 132-member parliament. Out of the remaining seats, Fatah won 45, and 13 mandates went to smaller parties and independents. Although a strong showing for Hamas had been predicted, its overwhelming victory caught the world by surprise. Prompted by the election outcomes, Israel and the Quartet (the US, the EU, the UN and Russia) adopted a number of measures in order to restrain Hamas’s power. In an immediate response to the formation of the Hamas-led government, Israel conditioned its recognition of
Hamas’s cabinet by a set of demands ranging from the disarmament of Hamas militias, the full recognition of Israel’s right to existence, and a renunciation of violence to an acceptance of previous Israeli-Palestinian peace agreements. The Quartet backed the demands. As predicted, Hamas refused to comply with the requirements, which led to an economic embargo that the Quartet imposed on the Palestinian territories. This kicked off the internal Palestinian political negotiations over what concessions the Palestinian Authority and Hamas could offer in order to mitigate the impacts of the measures.

The international boycott and economic embargo came immediately after Hamas assumed power in March 2006. The sanctions consisted of a withholding of tax revenues collected in the Palestinian territories by Israel that totalled $50 million a month, a cut-off of international aid of nearly three quarters of $1 billion from the Quartet countries, Israel’s restrictions on the movement of officials within the Palestinian territories and of goods and labour forces moving in and out of the territories, and US banking restrictions. Israel and the Quartet said that the economic blockade would be lifted only after the Palestinians have met Israel’s four requirements, which was not believed to be likely. When the economic hardship worsened in June, the EU, followed by other members of the Quartet, endorsed a plan to ease the sanctions and to channel financial aid to the Palestinian territories on the condition that the Hamas administration would be kept from receiving and distributing funds. Given the Quartet’s strong disapproval of Hamas, one could argue that the exclusion of the Hamas administration from the financial aid inflows could have been one of a number of means through which the Quartet sought to remove Hamas from power and help the Fatah movement assume control of the territories. With respect to these allegations, the US was accused of plotting with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas about the fall of the Hamas government.

Subsequently, no major progress in Palestinian negotiations was seen until March 2007, when a national unity government consisting of Hamas and Fatah, the two largest political parties, was formed. The Quartet welcomed the progress, however, as it was in line with its strict adherence to its policy ‘to help Hamas fall’. It reiterated its concerns over the initial demands on Hamas. As a result, the Quartet refused to open talks with the unity government unless all its fractions complied with international demands, which implicitly meant that the new unity government should get rid of Hamas. Hamas repeatedly refused to meet the requirements and two months later factional fighting between Fatah and Hamas erupted in the Gaza Strip and led to an expulsion of Fatah officials from the territory and the installation of Hamas rule there. Fortunately, Hamas dominance over the Gaza Strip did not hamper further political negotiations and in October 2008, Fatah and Hamas leaders concluded their discussions by expressing willingness to form a national unity government and prepare for a pre-term election.
The Quartet’s rejecting stance to the Hamas-led government and also to the proposed unity governments which would include Hamas was related to a number of factors. The fact that Hamas is listed as a terrorist organisation in the US and EU might have been decisive. Also, the general fear of Islamic ideology that Hamas embodied as well as uncertainty over the allegedly impending suspension of the Middle East peace process had a strong weight too. Also, Hamas’s irreconcilable attitude to the four demands formulated by the Quartet and Israel increased circumspection. However, did the economic sanctions, the insistence on the requirements, and the rejection of the proposed unity government involving support for Fatah to the detriment of Hamas meet the internal objectives to avoid Hamas rule?

OUTCOMES OF INTERNATIONAL POLICY

It seems that the Quartet’s policy did not meet the initial objectives with regard to the exclusion of Hamas from power, but it impacted on many other aspects of the political development within Hamas and in the Palestinian territories. The key question seems to be one of a possible shift of power balance to the radical stream within Hamas.

Hamas participated and won in what some media called a democratic election or even ‘one of the most democratic elections the Middle East has seen’. Palestinians therefore regarded attempts to dethrone Hamas as a violation of their democratic voting. Hamas stood firm in its resistance not only to Israel, but also to the international community that imposed harsh living conditions on Palestinians under the severe economic sanctions. The international boycott of Hamas allowed Islamists to stylise themselves into the role of an oppressed protester that heroically resisted the pressure from the West and got public support by playing the victim card (Croitoru, 2007: 200). Hamas capitalised on their image of martyrs, and prompted by the international isolation, it raised a banner of a repressed victim that was unrightfully excluded from the political scene as an inconvenient player.

When Hamas’s election victory was announced, Ismail Haniya made clear that he was seeking to build a national unity government involving all parties in the parliament, including Fatah (Croitoru, 2007: 194). Hamas’s pragmatism could not have been mistaken then. However, as this proposal was responded to with foreign pressure against all political parties that would play with an idea to enter into negotiations with Hamas (Baumgarten, 2006: 182–183), all factions succumbed to the pressure, and the movement was left with no choice but to establish a one-party government. This form of government and other proposals for a functioning national unity government were met with international rejection. As a result, Hamas had to set a new course of actions, and an internal debate about what steps the movement should take subsequently erupted. During the debate the pragmatic wing seemed to be losing the ground and a shift of power balance in favour of radical trends occurred.
The shift could have resulted from the intensive international rejection of any forms of Hamas participation in the politics regardless of its election victory. Since Hamas’s victory, there has been a growing pressure on the movement to succumb to the ‘three demands’ placed on it by the international community. Hamas has debated between three ‘pragmatic’ options to bring an end to the boycott. These included making a distinction between the Hamas movement and the PA government, accepting the Saudi-brokered deal on a unity government in February 2007, and accepting the PLO as the official interlocutor with Israel. However, by the end of 2006, when the political isolation and economic sanctions started to have a great cost, the debate within Hamas had fallen to one side and the movement had chosen a path which included the complete rejection of these options and the rejection of moderate, more realistic tendencies (The Reut Institute, 2006).

Based on the notion that state exclusive and repressive policies significantly impact on the scope of radicalisation of Islamic and other opposition movements, the recent case of Hamas indicates that the external actors can also play a decisive role in this respect. The tougher the measures the international community imposed on Hamas, such as the economic sanctions, the refusal to accept the national unity government, and its support for Fatah at the expense of its major Islamist rival, the more radical the tracks Hamas seemed to follow, such as taking control of the Gaza Strip or assuming a resistant position in regard to negotiations. As a result, the hard-liners appeared to have gradually gained superiority over the pragmatics within Hamas. Furthermore, the hard-liners were thus given an opportunity to start questioning and undermining the pragmatic approach and its efficiency vis-à-vis the international boycott and thereby to discredit the moderates. The ostensible political failure of the moderate wing, which was accused of bringing economic breakdown to the Palestinian territories, played into the hands of Hamas’s external and more extremist political leadership in Damascus, which sought to resolve the crisis with tougher methods.

Despite the hardship of the economic sanctions inflicted upon Palestinians, which could not have been softened despite renewed financial aid from the EU, support for Hamas among Palestinians was relatively high. This was probably due to Hamas’s functioning network of charities, schools, clinics and mosques and the inefficiency of President Abbas and his Fatah in distributing the international aid as quickly as it was wished for. In September 2006, 42% of Palestinians were satisfied with the overall performance of the Hamas government, while 54% were dissatisfied. The public was least satisfied with the government’s performance regarding economic issues (26%), but despite that, Hamas’s overall popularity stayed at the level of more than 30% for several more months and slightly increased in reaction to the opening of the Rafah crossings with Egypt (Palestine Centre for Policy and Survey Research, 2006). The expected fast decline of support for Hamas did not occur. On the contrary,
when the Hamas radical wing was gaining dominance in the movement, 57% of Palestinians voiced their support for armed attacks against Israel (Palestine Centre for Policy and Survey Research, 2006). Palestinians endorsed Hamas’s radical strategy regardless of the scope of violence it involved, which was opposite to the isolation of Hamas that the Quartet wanted. The Palestinians, especially the Gazan community, took Hamas’s side despite its militant tactics, most likely due to the extensive charitable work Hamas conducted and the fight against the corrupt Fatah-led administration it waged. Appointing Fatah as a protector and distributor of limited international financial aid appeared to have undesired effects, such as the rather stable level of popularity for Hamas.

**REVISION OF INTERNATIONAL POLICY TOWARD ISLAMISTS COULD CONTRIBUTE TO MODERATION OF ISLAMIC RADICALISM**

A policy of excluding Hamas from the politics based on an assessment of Hamas as a rigid terrorist organisation seems to be insufficient. When formulating its stance in regard to Palestinian Islamists, the international community should also consider the moderate tendencies that the movement has shown. Associations of particular Islamic groups in the Middle East with terrorism run a risk of obscuring the fact that terrorism is a tactic rather than an ideology. And to characterise or dismiss a movement solely in reference to its use of particular tactics could be dubious (Mandaville, 2007: 202). In this respect, Hamas should be perceived as being different from other extremist groups that pursue their goals purely through combative means. Hamas differs mainly by its political engagement and social work. Unlike those groups that are, strictly speaking, militant groups, in its 22-year history, Hamas has shown on numerous occasions that it is willing to make compromises and to adapt its policy to actual circumstances, even though it conducted violent acts as well. In 1996, as Hamas’s violent tactics slowly proved insufficient and counterproductive, Hamas bowed out, adopting a controlled-violence and ‘wait-and-see’ approach (Mishal and Sela, 2000: 103). Hamas resumed its militancy in response to the second intifada that erupted in 2000, but even then, Hamas refrained from violent activities at the outset of the uprising, adhering to a ceasefire deal it had made with the then Palestinian President Yasir Arafat’s government, and only after five months of the intifada did Hamas decide to launch its first suicide bomb attacks in four years (Baumgarten, 2006: 143). This move indicates that although the Islamic religion constitutes the key element of Hamas’s ideology, the choice of radical tools is usually subordinated to the political climate and external conditions, and does not derive merely from its Islamic ideology.

In addition, Hamas as a political movement has articulated its intentions to stick to the rules of the political game when it allied with leftist political parties or when it opted to participate in the municipal election in 2005 and in the parliamentary
Indeed, Hamas’s commitment to electoral processes was articulated by the prominent leader and ideological father of the movement, Sheikh Ahmad Yasin, already in the 1980s (Mandeville, 2007: 220; Baumgarten, 2006: 172-3). However, when assessing Hamas, one must not mistake its intentions to participate in the Palestinian politics for an absolute adherence to the democratic procedures. But the overall exclusion of Hamas from the political game has proved ineffective. A solution to this dilemma could be to accommodate and support the moderate wing of Hamas, which could become a key ally for the international community in the Palestinian territories.

The world powers should reconsider the possible advantages that the inclusion of Hamas could bring. To open talks with pragmatic factions of Hamas could be a catalyst for moving the group’s focus further away from radical rejectionism to mainstream politics and for bringing about a moderation of Hamas (Herzog, 2006). In this respect, an inclusion of Hamas in the national unity government involving the Fatah movement could be another option for combating the movement’s seemingly irreconcilable objectives and helping to moderate Hamas’s Islamic radicalism. If Hamas moderates its politics, it could have a positive effect on resolving other key issues in the Palestinian territories, such as the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. There is evidence that some senior Hamas leaders accept the existence of Israel within its pre-1967 borders. Most recently, Ismail Haniyya, prime minister of the dissolved government of Hamas, stated in June 2009 in Gaza that Hamas supports any real effort to establish a sovereign Palestinian state on the 1967 borders with Jerusalem as its capital. If inclusion brings its expected effects, the moderates within Hamas could also prevail in the question of violence. Hamas largely maintained a unilateral truce during 2005 and the pragmatic proponents of Hamas proposed to extend the truce with Israel for a minimum of ten years. To start working in accordance with the proposed long-term truce should become one of the main focuses of international diplomacy (Mepham, 2006).

Having seen the questionable results of the current international policy towards Islamists, the world powers may want to reconsider whether it would be worth it to revisit their strictly rejectionist approach to the Islamists from Hamas. In a wider perspective of ongoing democratisation attempts in the region, the international community may want to seek consistence in acknowledging relatively fair election results because the annulment of the election followed by the exclusion of some political parties from the political scene may become one of the factors that could contribute to Islamic radicalisation.

**CONCLUSION**

The international community should undoubtedly seek to combat all forms of radicalism and use its opportunities to cooperate with the kinds of regimes and politi-
cal forces that are able to undermine or eliminate these radical tendencies. The analysis argued, based on an ‘inclusion-moderation’ hypothesis applied on Islamists, that besides the autocratic regimes, the international community with its large commitments in the Middle East could impact on the moderation of Islamists and thereby help to bring about a decline of Islamic radicalism. The moderation could be achieved through an inclusive and accommodative approach to pragmatic Islamists as political exclusion and intimidation may lead to a rise in the scope of radicalisation. The case study of the Palestinian Hamas aimed to show that the international community’s policy of political isolation of the Hamas government and the economic sanctions imposed on Palestinians following Hamas’s parliamentary election victory appeared to be two of the decisive factors that contributed to the tilting of the internal balance within Hamas in favour of the radicals, which might be behind the violent takeover of power in the Gaza Strip. In order to effectively fight all forms of radicalism in the region, the international community and mainly the West should revisit their approach to proponents of political Islam, bearing in mind the inevitable distinction between radical and moderate forces.

ENDNOTES

1 Islamism is a set of ideologies holding that Islam is not only a religion but also a political system. Islamists are representatives of this ideological tenet. The analysis refers to political Islam or political Islamic movements.

2 For instance, under the rule of President Hosni Mubarak at the beginning of the 1990s, violent confrontations between the Islamists and the regimes increased in number as a result of the cessation of liberalization and the reintroduction of state repressions against Islamists. Between 1992 and 1997, there were 741 incidents of violence, which is in stark contrast to the 143 incidents that took place between 1970 and 1989. (Hafez and Wiktorowicz, 2004)

3 A semi-official history of Hamas points to 1967 as the year of the movement’s genesis. According to the movement’s own historical narrative, Hamas evolved through four main stages from 1967 to 1987. In 1987 the movement was officially set up as a combatant arm of the MB in Palestine. (Mishal and Sela, 2000: 18) A more specific date of Hamas’s foundation, according to some experts, was 8 December 1987, which was the day when the first Palestinian uprising, or intifada, was launched. Allegedly, Hamas has been artificially associating the foundation of the movement with the onset of the intifada for propagandistic purposes. Hamas wanted to evoke an impression that it had given the first impulse to the intifada, even though the uprising began through spontaneous demonstrations of Palestinians over disenfranchisement and the social and economic situation at the time (Introvine, 2003: 35). Conversely, according to Milton-Edwards, the leadership of Mujamma’ was slow to respond to these demonstrations. Therefore it was only after some months that a co-ordinated reaction to the uprising was forthcoming. Based on that, Hamas’s foundation was preceded by meetings of MB in the West Bank, and the establishment of the movement is thus dated late February 1988. (Milton-Edwards, 1999: 146)

4 As to the structure, Mishal (2002: 157–163) says that the Political Bureau consists solely of exiled leaders. He does not mention the Advisory Council. Gunning (2007: 99) and Levitt (2006: 9–10)
state that the Bureau and the Advisory Council consist of leaders from both inside and outside the leadership.

5 Since about 1995, Hamas demonstrated that it is able to limit the level of armed struggle. The political command held its military wing at a distance and refused to be held accountable for the wing’s three suicide attacks in summer 1995. A truce that lasted from August 1995 to January 1996 was respected as negotiations between Hamas, the PA and some Israeli authorities were held (Legrain, 1997: 174–175).

4 In a protest against the Palestinian participation in the peace process, Hamas signed joint statements with its ideological opponents from the Marxist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (Abu-Amr, 1994: 51).

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Reviews

CHARLES-PHILIPPE DAVID AND DAVID GRONDIN (EDS): 
HEGEMONY OR EMPIRE?: THE REDEFINITION OF US POWER 
UNDER GEORGE W. BUSH


This book is a collection of essays presented by various scholars at an academic conference. The authors of the chapters are examining the position of the United States in today’s global setting. The main question the scholars are trying to answer is whether the US is still ‘only’ a world hegemon, a status it gained after the end of the Cold War, or if the policies pursued by George W. Bush’s administration made an imperialistic power out of the US. George W. Bush’s presidency and his political decisions are, of course, evaluated in the light of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the subsequent declaration of the ‘global war on terror.’ The book is divided into two parts: in part one, the essays examine various American domestic and foreign policies and how the redefinition of US power influences the US’s status as a hegemon or an empire. In part two, the authors are dealing primarily with the perception of US hegemony abroad and the implications of this power redefinition in different world regions. Therefore, the book offers us an American point of view in part one and perceptions of different world regions in part two.

In the introduction, the coeditor David Grondin opens the book with a discussion of different interpretations of the terms ‘hegemony’, ‘empire’ and ‘imperialism’, as well as providing the reader with the sources of American politics and placing them in historical context. But as Grondin points out, ‘no matter what name American power has been given, whether it is empire, imperialism or hegemony, one must take a step back and reassess the exercise and representation of American power as well as its perception since George W. Bush took office’; the Bush administration pursued such major overall policy changes that it can be seen as the most radical change in the global political setting since the end of the Cold War. The discussion of US power under George W. Bush in terms of old world order vs. characterizing the new world order and the various definitions of empire, imperialism or hegemony prove to be extremely helpful once the reader starts reading the essays. Grondin is also dealing with one of the most crucial points – the fact that ‘empire’ and ‘imperialism’ can be considered to be outdated terms and trends, and therefore inapplicable to the United States. However, supporting his argument with other IR scholars’ opinions, he is trying to draw a parallel between empire in the traditional sense, and how it can be interpreted now. He takes into consideration the advantages a state gains by its position as an empire, and in what forms these advantages would be present in any current day empire. According to cited scholars,
one of the solutions to clarifying this complex argument would be to analyse literature on globalization. This approach could help to provide a better conceptual and historical context for the present imperial discourse. As Grondin quotes Bryan Mabee, ‘combining an American empire with globalization could give us a more historicized version of globalization, and one that firmly brings power back into the equation instead of taking globalization as a neutral and/or natural phenomenon.’

In part one, *Representation of American Hegemony/Empire*, all five essays allude to one of the basic sources of American politics, exceptionalism. Robert Vitalis, in his essay, draws attention to the conceptual problems of such an analysis (hegemony vs. empire). He brings light to the fact that these two modes of rule are not mutually exclusive, but can often coexist. Simon Dalby, in his analysis *Geopolitics, Grand Strategy and the Bush Doctrine*, and Shirley V. Scott, in *Revolution or ‘Business as Usual’?*, both highlight the fact that the current American political concept is not all that new, and that it can be traced back to George H. W. Bush, as well as to Clinton’s administration. However, both also take into consideration significant differences; in Dalby’s case, it means examining the influence of neoconservatives and the Bush doctrine on the national security strategy of the United States. Scott compares and contrasts the Clinton and Bush administrations’ attitudes towards international law and its foundations. She concludes that the most significant difference between the attitudes of the two administrations was the rhetoric used by George W. Bush which undermined ‘the idea of international law.’ Scott also prophetically points out that ‘removing terror suspects from the US legal system and treating them in ways forbidden by US and international law, for example, means that ultimately those individuals cannot be readily returned to be dealt with by legal system’ – a problem Obama’s administration has been dealing with since it decided to close down the Guantanamo Bay prison. Aida A. Hozić focuses on the Bush administration’s rhetoric and the use of the media to create its ‘truth,’ which she compares to the practices of a Cold War-type state. Hence, in her opinion, by bending the reality and expanding the American influence (even though not in the traditional expansionist sense), the US presents itself as an empire. Frederick Gagnon gives us a historical overview of the role of Congress in US hegemony. Congress, acting domestically, can have a significant influence on US foreign policy. He specifically focuses on the position of Congress towards the White House’s national security policies during Bush’s presidency, but he also draws historical parallels of compliance and resistance between the president and Congress.

In part two, *Perceptions of American Hegemony*, five essays focus on the implications of US power on five different regions: the Middle East, Europe, Western Africa, the North American periphery, and Asia. This way, the reader is offered yet another approach to the issue. This time, instead of using a conceptual approach, the essays focus on the regional and international dimensions. Particularly interesting is
Andre Laliberte’s chapter on the American influence in Asia; his analysis outlines the issues the US is facing in Asia, i.e. the rise of China, and provides a possible projection of the future world order. Laliberte points out that even though the ties of the United States with Asia are close, it is unlikely that ‘this structure can be consolidated or expanded... in the long run, especially in the face of a changing distribution of economic, political and military power.’ At the same time, he notes that ‘a transition to a global hegemony under Chinese leadership would not represent a catastrophic change in the global order’.

In the conclusion, coeditor Charles-Philippe David comes back to the introduction written by his colleague, David Grondin, and evaluates it. He builds on the presented material and the opinions presented by the scholars. In the end, he says, it is up to everyone to form their own opinions about the world status of the United States, but he remarks upon the ambivalence of the American position and its changing attitude: ‘American foreign policy seems to be riddled with contradictions, constantly swinging back and forth between the “imperial temptation” and the “refusal of empire.”’

The book is not able to give a clear answer to the basic question that it poses in its title due to its structure, in which ten authors and two coeditors express their points of view. However, it does provide a critical, thorough and complex analysis contrary to other discussions on this topic, because the presidency of George W. Bush is considered a major factor in the analysis. The opinions are diverse and distinct and each chapter could stand on its own. This structure also gives the reader a larger perspective, because one can see in how many different ways, and from how many perspectives, the posed question in the title can be approached. Also, taking into consideration that the book is a result of an academic conference in 2005 (published in 2006), i.e. after the end of George W. Bush’s first term and his re-election, it would be interesting to see how the scholars would react to the next four years of the Bush administration, and how its policies would influence their opinion on whether the United States is a hegemon or an empire.

_Alena Svobodová_

**ENDNOTES**


2 Ibid., pp. 8–9.

3 Ibid., p. 85.

4 Ibid., p. 84.

5 Ibid., p. 179.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., pp. 223–224.
MEGHNAD DESAI: RETHINKING ISLAMISM, THE IDEOLOGY OF THE NEW TERROR


On 7 July 2005, London experienced the new terrorism, terrorism ‘wearing Islamic garments’. After this unprecedented incident, a hot debate about Islam and Muslims broke out in the United Kingdom. Meghnad Desai, a Labour peer in the House of Lords and professor emeritus at the London School of Economics, felt obliged to contribute to this debate since, in his point of view, this debate was full of inaccuracy and confusion.

Ideas have consequences; that is the basic assumption of the book. We have to treat terrorism as a phenomenon inseparable from the political ideology of Global Islamism, which is the fertile soil from which the new terrorism grows. If we are to win the war against terrorism, we must understand the nature of the ideology of global Islamism and fight it as an ideology; ideas have to be fought by ideas. These are the main theses Desai elaborates in his book.

The book has four main parts. In the first one, Desai sketches his view on what the origins of the new terrorism are. The second one classifies the new terrorism as an ideology and deals with the anatomy of ideology in general. The third one deals with the anatomy of the ideology of Global Islamism itself, and the last one offers a proposal suggesting what should be done against terrorism. The structure of the book is logical, moving from the causes of terrorism to an analysis of its ideology and then to a proposal of action against it. Thus what is quite perplexing is a mistake in the author’s description of this structure in the introduction. Here the author states: ‘The fourth chapter deals with history of Islam and of Muslim societies.’ Although almost all of the chapters offer short insights into history, there is no systematic chapter on the history of the Muslim countries and Islam in the book. There is also one more unaccustomed thing about the structure of the book. The introduction is counted as the first chapter, which, together with the above mentioned mistake, makes the orientation in the book more difficult than it could be. On the other hand, in the book, there is an index that makes orientation easier.

In the first chapter the author tries to sketch his attitude towards the etiology of the new terrorism. In his point of view, there are mainly two reasons for its upsurge. The first one is a feeling of outrage when witnessing the present decline of Muslims, and the second one is the current processes of globalization, for example cheap traveling and communication. These reasons are plausible and the author presents them compellingly, but the problem may be more complicated.

Desai tries to show that Global Islamism (defined in contrast to Moral and National Islamism) as ‘an ideology that waged a terrorist war on a global scale since
the early 1990s is to be understood as a political ideology rather than a religion and that it is comparable to other ideologies like communism, anarchism or nationalism. He explains quite successfully that Global Islamism possesses the anatomy of political ideologies: a glorious past, a miserable present, an enemy responsible for the current situation and a program of action which will restore the glorious past.

But in his explanation there is a problem with the exactness of definitions. On the one hand the author seems to define ideology in a negative sense, saying that ‘...the ideology is political, its aim being the winning of power over people’ On the other hand the author defines ideology as a set of ideas that tries to make sense of the world by using reason rather than some ‘irrational principles’ as religion does. Thus it is not conspicuous whether the author actually considers political ideologies as dangerous or as necessary and rational. The definition also implies a very controversial conclusion as it claims that ideology is reasonable (? ) in contrast to religion, which is irrational.

The core of the book is devoted to a study of the ideology of Global Islamism by means of analysing Bin Laden’s speeches and fatwas. The author convincingly compares the Islamist thinking with his ideal, which is tolerant, liberal thinking, and comes to the bold conclusion that Global Islamism is regressive, intolerant and hypocritical. Much criticism will probably occur in reaction to such a denouncement of Global Islamism. Desai expects this and excellently points out that the current unwillingness to judge non-western ideologies is caused by the fear of accusation of racism. It is really just a fear of the consequences of telling the truth.

The last part of the book, dedicated to the author’s proposal regarding the fight against terrorism, is also interesting and inspiring. Desai starts from the assumption that since Global Islamism is an ideology, we can learn how to combat it from the study of how other ideologies (for example, communism) were defeated. He claims that the defeat of communism occurred particularly because of the free flow of information and debate over communism, which exposed its intolerance and capacity for violence. Thus the author suggests that ideas should be fought by other ideas. It is a pity that there is not much space left for this central argument. According to Desai, to be successful in combating terrorism, it is also necessary to study the other society, to break down the mutual isolation of the two cultures (here, Western and Muslim). This is also probably one of the aims of the book: to help the people in the West to become acquainted with the basic problems of Islamic terrorism.

For Desai, the above-mentioned argument implies that it is essential to make a difference between fighting terrorism and fighting terrorists. The latter includes above all army, police and information services; the former is to be done by an im-
provement of mutual understanding and free discussion. This is surely an interesting point; nevertheless, in this particular shape, it may be too optimistic. The author shows an optimism typical for the thinkers of the Enlightenment tradition. He apprehends the development to be the same for all the societies. He expects ‘liberal modernity’ to come in the Muslim countries and solve the problem of global terrorism.

Desai wrote his book apparently in an effort to offer a clear solution to the appalling terrorist problem. Therefore it should not be understood only as an academic contribution to etiological theories of terrorism and strategies for fighting it, but rather as an attempt to offer a clear solution to the public and political scene. The demands on such a work are obvious: it must be quite short and comprehensive; it must offer clear statements and use understandable language. These characteristics are thus the virtues of the book. But this approach also has its reverse side. The author must have been aware of the possibility of oversimplifying answers to difficult questions; he has to find a compromise between clarity, comprehensiveness, etc., the exactness and complexity of social reality, and academic seriousness. This is not an easy task.

Even if the author must have been aware of this difficulty, he nonetheless sometimes did not succeed in overcoming it. The book tries to cover too broad a problematique, ranging from the etiology of terrorism to making a proposal for fighting it, from deconstructing its ideology to comparisons with prominent western ideologies. The author even tries to express himself in regard to some particular problems like the Kashmir problem or the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Sometimes he does well, as in the case of analysing the ideology of Global Islamism, but sometimes the compromise between comprehensiveness and depth is not successful, like when he suggests a strategy for combating terrorism.

To summarize, the book offers an intelligible and wide-ranging introduction to the problematique of Islamism and Islamic terrorism. It can be understood as a comprehensive and brief treatise on the main problems, which have to be solved in the Muslim countries, and their causes. The virtues of the book are as follows: it is comprehensive, short and understandable; it offers clear arguments about the nature of the problem and proposes clear solutions. When mentioning the strong points of the book, we should also mention a certain boldness of the author: he is not afraid to say that something is perverse when he feels that it is really so.

What should not be expected is a deep inquiry on a specific topic written in typical academic language. The drawbacks of the work therefore include possible oversimplification of difficult questions, a range of comprehended topics that is too broad and some analyses that are too short. As a result, reading it would be useful above all for students or the broader public. The ideas of the book fall under the Enlight-
enment tradition: they are universalistic, atheistic and optimistic. Today many people would criticize them for being naïve.

Karel Hlaváček

ENDNOTES

2 Ibid., pp. vii–viii.
3 Ibid., p. 27.
4 Ibid., p. 86.
5 Ibid., p. 23.
6 Ibid., p. 59.
7 Ibid., p. 178.
IAN HURD: AFTER ANARCHY: LEGITIMACY AND POWER IN THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL


After Anarchy opens up a new theoretical aspect in International Relations by viewing the ‘logic of appropriateness’ and the ‘logic of consequence’ as ‘complementary rather than mutually exclusive’ (p. 16). Ian Hurd deepens our understandings of how states strategically behave under the community environment of their mutually shared belief in ‘legitimacy’ while aiming to ‘introduce a workable concept of legitimacy to the study of International Relations’ (p. 1).

Hurd provides a detailed discussion of his analytical tools in Chapters 2 and 3. Legitimacy is defined as ‘the belief by an actor that a rule or institution ought to be obeyed’ (p. 30). If such a belief is widely shared in society, states will change their behaviour by reconfiguring their interests according to it because to do so would enhance their social reputations. Moreover, they will use this social force to justify their actions by showing how they are closely associated with this collective belief. Accordingly, Hurd claims that contestation over legitimacy for states’ interests is happening around the authority and symbols of the United Nations Security Council, viz. ‘potentially the most powerful international organization ever known to the world of states’ (p. 12).

The theory of legitimacy is examined in the case study chapters. Chapter 4 investigates the legitimation process of the United Nations that was accomplished at the San Francisco conference in 1945. Chapter 5 in turn discusses how the legitimacy ascribed to the Security Council changes the strategic action of states by exploring their resistance to the deletion of their proposals from the Council’s agenda list, the competitiveness of the non-permanent Council membership election, Russia’s strategic considerations in borrowing UN symbols – such as intentionally painting its helmets ‘blue’ to make its military operations appear as ‘legitimate peacekeeping’ – and the attempt of the Americans to gain UN authorisation prior to their invasion in Iraq. Chapter 6 explores how legitimacy affects the power relationship between strong and weak actors by focusing on Libya’s successful campaign to delegitimise its sanctions with the use of liberal international norms.

Hurd’s most significant contribution is that he successfully demonstrates the strategic use of international legitimacy by states in an observable way. As he states, legitimacy is ‘a subjective quality’ founded on the actors’ ‘perception’ (p. 7) – hence, their ‘internalization’ is the basic condition for this concept to work (pp. 7, 31). But unlike other constructivists who ‘discern whether individuals’ belief in the legitimacy of an institution is well founded’ (p. 8), he seeks the answer in external relations with others because ‘Internal conditions are hard to access and measure, and are subject
to distortion by both the observer and the observed’ (p. 31). That is to say, by viewing states trying to win over the authority and values of the Security Council to evince the righteousness of their actions to their audience, he reveals how they subjectively recognise its decisions and symbols as legitimate and reshape their strategy to use them to gain a boost for their policy. For this reason, Russia orders its soldiers to wear blue helmets to pretend that their military deployment was authorised and thereby to cloak Russia’s real motive, which is to stretch its influence over the so-called ‘near abroad’. Also for the same reason, the Americans tried to go through the Security Council in their military operations, even if they knew that they would fail. Starting military attacks in a straightforward manner would crucially delegitimate their actions, though it would save enormous costs, energy and time at the Council. These conducts precisely suggest that states make their individual calculations by connecting themselves with collective belief in legitimacy. In short, by seeing their efforts to employ it to their advantage, Hurd adroitly elucidates how states are placed under the influence of legitimacy ‘as an objective reality’ (p. 46).

Nevertheless, when it comes to the ‘power’ of legitimacy to constrain and change states’ actions, and not merely to affect their calculations, it is not as fully exemplified as he wishes. It is true that ‘the existence of sovereign authority beyond the state’ (p. 30; also see pp. 60–64 and Chapter 7) – the concept which he poses as a worldview ‘after anarchy’ – is sufficiently explicated as states rely on this superordinate belief to defend their purposes. However, how constraining is this authority for state action? In the Libyan instance (Chapter 6), Hurd argues that its strategy to appeal to various international laws and symbols and to reinterpret them in light of the new evidence that it provided succeeded in increasing its supporters and delegitimising the sanctions against it, which consequently made America and Britain reconsider their decisions. But the fact that should never be dismissed is that after having incurred huge economic damage due to the sanctions (p. 157), Libya paid compensation to the families of the victims of the Lockerbie terror incident and took a cooperative attitude with the Western states as a ‘good international citizen’ (p. 153). Considering this point, the hurdle for the big two – America and Britain – of lifting the sanction had already been considerably lowered. Put differently, there remains the question of whether Libya’s use of the symbols of international legitimacy alone was enough to convince the big two to change their policy. Surely, Hurd disagrees with this interpretation (p. 162) – but this sort of ‘coercive diplomacy’ account is his real opponent to beat, and it should have been investigated more intensively to demonstrate what he calls ‘power based on legitimacy’ (p. 3).

Likewise, Russia was able to win the UN permission for its former Soviet area military deployment as it had hoped; however, apart from a few modifications, its ‘military operations still do not resemble peacekeeping as practiced or defined by the United Nations’ (p. 127). If so, the power of legitimacy is just secondary to embel-
lishing state policy, not to changing its considerations fundamentally – which implies, contrary to his theoretical observations, that legitimacy emanating from institutions that are thought to be obeyed is subordinated to individuals’ calculations and has little independent power over their preferences.

These criticisms, however, do not weaken the theoretical perspective that Hurd introduces. In all, his research illustrates how strategy and social environment are closely interconnected in daily politics, although they are the concepts which have been considered irreconcilable in the dichotomy of the logic of appropriateness and the logic of consequence. In other words, he makes states ‘users’ of social norms, and not their mere ‘recipients’. His insight undoubtedly advances understandings of the constructivist-rationalist linkage in a more empirically demonstrable and rigorous manner.

Yuki Abe
SETH G. JONES: THE RISE OF EUROPEAN SECURITY COOPERATION


In The Rise of European Security Cooperation, Seth G. Jones examines the development of European cooperation in security issues since World War II. He concludes that cooperation among European states in the security realm has risen after the end of the Cold War because of structural changes in the regional and global structure. His book can be regarded as an important contribution to the current debate on European security. Jones explains European cooperation in security issues in a neo-realist way. This attempt is quite new since most structural realist approaches weren’t able to explain cooperation in security and defence issues. Instead, they could rather only explain the absence of such cooperation in that field.

His main argument is that the rise of security cooperation is rooted in a shift in the global structure through the decline of American power in Europe and the change in the regional structure through the German re-unification. Jones measures security by an examination of ‘all major attempts to create a European security institution, all cases in which European states imposed sanctions for foreign security goals, all cases of transnational weapons cooperation involving European defence firms, and the collaboration of military forces’ (p. 5). With these indicators Jones gives evidence to his assumptions.

The book is divided into seven chapters. In the first chapter the author explores his argument, which he evaluates against four counter arguments in the next section. These alternative arguments come from considering neo-functionalism, pressure from domestic actors, international institutions, and European identity.

Jones argues that a security pillar of the EU was first established by the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992 while all earlier attempts from the Cold War era failed.

In the introduction the author explores his arguments; European security cooperation results from the changes in the regional and international system, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the reunification of Germany. Security cooperation among EU member states is directed to ‘project power abroad’ (p. 5) and to ensure peace and stability in Europe by a ‘binding-strategy’ (p. 5) toward Germany. During the Cold War, European states collaborated with the US through NATO in order to balance the Soviet threat, which prevented autonomous European security cooperation. On the regional level, the reduction of US-forces and the German re-unification were the main causes of a change in the regional structure.

In fact it can be disputed that the Treaty of Maastricht can be qualified as a significant step for European security coordination. Other observers of European se-
Security argue that the real breakthrough was the British-French summit in Saint Malo in 1998. Before this event the EU’s security pillar was lacking a credible military arm. Apart from that, it is hard to believe that a binding strategy works effectively in a unanimous voting system, which depends on the good will of the potential threat, that state that is the target of the binding strategy. Even though Jones also refers to St. Malo several times, he does not explain its theoretical relevance.

Chapter Two evaluates the main argument of the book against four alternatives and explores the logic of Jones’s main argument. Jones outlines his structural realist viewpoint. States seek security and influence in the international system. By influencing others, states aim to increase their security. Power is crucial for increasing security; hence power increases the ability to influence others. Consequently, power makes states more secure. Jones conceptualizes power as the possession of material capabilities such as military and economic assets. According to Jones, during the Cold War, European states cooperated with the US through NATO; they built weapons and posed sanctions with the US to balance the Soviet threat. With the collapse of the Soviet empire, the system turned from a bipolar to a unipolar one. No single state has the capacity to balance the great power; a unipolar system is not hegemonic. However, a group of second-order powers can still balance the great power. According to Jones, Europeans are not balancing in the traditional sense since the US does not represent a military threat. It only aims to aggregate independent power.

Afterwards Jones develops counterarguments – namely arguments based on neo-functionalism, pressure from domestic actors, international institutions, and European identity.

A counter explanation through neo-functionalism is problematic because of its inability to explain variation in the degree of integration. Furthermore neo-functionalism fails to explain when spill-over occurs and when it does not.

The liberal argument argues that European security cooperation is the outcome of pressure from domestic elites and interest groups.

After exploring institutional arguments, Jones concludes that according to these arguments, the EU should have an independent impact on European states and European security cooperation should correlate with the establishment of the European Political Cooperation (EPC) and that European states should not be concerned about American power, since it has been institutionalized through NATO. Jones could not find any evidence for that assumption.

According to the argument of a common European identity, European states have adopted common norms and values to such a degree that the security of the other EU members is seen as their own. Thus, there should be no regional security concerns, and even a re-unified Germany should be viewed as nonthreatening.

In the following section Jones shows why Europeans have chosen a binding strategy toward Germany, why they constructed a security arm after the Cold War and
why earlier attempts failed. After re-unification, Germany had the potential to dominate Europe and to become a new regional hegemon. Binding means cooperation with the potential hegemon in a multilateral institution.

Jones argues that the creation of a security arm of the EU is a result of a reduction of American power in Europe. He further makes the case that the German re-unification was a factor which pushed the creation of European security institutions. In order to test this argument, Jones examines four cases where Europeans attempted to create security institutions: the European Defence Community (1950–1954), the Fouchet Plan (1958–1963), the European Political Cooperation (1969–1991) and the Treaty on European Union (1991–).

NATO was the main reason why all attempts to build a European security institution prior to Maastricht failed. After the collapse of the Soviet Union NATO lost its ‘raison d’être’ (p. 83). European leaders feared that the Americans could withdraw their forces from Europe in the long run. The creation of a European security arm represented a suitable solution to the problem of a potential security dilemma. According to this argument, NATO was not able to bind a unified Germany. The question why NATO was not able to do so remains open. However, European leaders decided to launch a Common European Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in 1991 and a European Security and Defence Policy in the late 90s.

What Jones does not explain is the time gap between the collapse of the Soviet Union, the German re-unification and the establishment of ESDP. ESDP is definitely the security arm of Europe’s foreign and security policy arm CFSP. It is often argued that the creation of ESDP correlates with the experiences of the wars in the Balkans, as he also does. This argumentation actually goes in line with the argument that European security cooperation is a result of the declining American presence in Europe and Europe’s inability to project power abroad.

Sanctions are an important instrument of foreign policy since they impose high costs on the target country and therefore are likely to change its behaviour. In order to analyse the development of sanctions as a tool of foreign policy, Jones gathered data from every single case where a European state imposed sanctions between 1950 and 2006. His findings show that European states increased imposing sanctions through the EU after the end of the Cold War. According to the author European states coordinated sanctions during the Cold War with their main ally, the US. Even though the sanctions were effective in some cases, what Jones focuses on is the quantity of sanctions rather than their success.

The fifth chapter deals with the cooperation in the European arms production and weapons industry. During the Cold War, NATO members cooperated in arms production, technical research, and standardization. Jones’s analysis shows that after the Cold War, European states tended to cooperate more with other European states.
and less within NATO. Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, the opposite was true.

The sixth chapter examines the development of joint military forces. A reason for rising cooperation in that area is the decline of America’s strategic interest in Europe. The wars on the Balkans showed the unwillingness of the US to engage in a strategically unimportant region. At the same time the dependency of the Europeans on US power became clear. In order to overcome that dependency, Europeans established joint military forces and built up their own political-military structure.

The final section of the book summarizes the findings. Finally the author states that it was not the objective of the book to explain European security cooperation entirely with only one single theory. He rather wants to show that different theories are relatively important. Jones concedes that his structural explanation is in some aspects problematic. For example, he acknowledges the influence of unit-level factors such as political, economic or cultural factors. These unit-level factors may explain why Britain still cooperates with the US more than other European countries and why Britain is less enthusiastic about ESDP. For the future, Jones predicts that these trends in the increasing security cooperation in Europe will continue. For the further development of transatlantic relations, Jones expects that the relationship will be determined by power considerations and that disagreement on foreign policy and security issues between America and Europe will increase.

With *The Rise of European Security Cooperation* Seth G. Jones offers a very interesting study. Apart from the richness of his empirical research, this book represents an important contribution for the theoretical debate on CFSP and ESDP. With its neo-realist argumentation, Jones’ book also enriches the validity of structural realism. What he and all structural realists cannot sufficiently explain is the change in the structure. Even though in neo-realist thinking, this is the independent variable, it is obvious that states as the elements of the structure can change their environment through their behaviour. In this sense it is hard to believe that the German re-unification was not possible without the content of the main Western allies.

In any case this book is a must-read for everyone who is interested in European security and transatlantic relations.

*Daniel Schneider*

**ENDNOTES**


2 Ibid., pp. 3–5.
Notes on Contributors

YUKI ABE is Research Assistant at European Institute, Sophia University, Tokyo, Japan.

JAN HANSKA works as officer of the Finnish Defence Forces and is PhD Student in the Department of Political Studies at the University of Tampere, Finland. He is writing his doctoral dissertation on the concept of prophetic politics.

JEFFREY HAYNES, professor, is Associate Head of Department, Department of Law, Governance and International Relations, London Metropolitan University, London, UK. He is the author of 25 books, the most recent of which are: The Handbook of Religion and Politics (editor, Routledge, 2008); Religion and Politics in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. Secularisation, democracy and citizenship (editor, Routledge/ECPR Studies in European Political Science, 2009); Religion and Politics: Critical Concepts (four volumes) (editor, London, Routledge, 2009).

KAREL HLAVÁČEK is currently a student of theoretical sociology at Charles University in Prague. He holds an Ing. in International Relations from the University of Economics in Prague. He was an intern at the Parliamentary Institute of the Parliament of the Czech Republic and the IIR. He is interested in theoretical questions of social sciences like the nature of knowledge and its implications for social sciences.

PETR KRATOCHVÍL works as the Deputy Director of the Institute of International Relations. He is a member of the US-based International Studies Association, a member of the European Commission’s expert pool Team Europe, a consultant for the European Parliament, and the IIR’s official representative to the European Consortium for Political Research and to the Trans-European Political Studies Association. His research interests cover theory of international relations, the religion-politics nexus, international political philosophy, Eastern Europe and European integration. He has published about fifty monographs, edited volumes, book chapters, and articles, among others in Journal of International Relations and Development, Europe-Asia Studies, and Journal of Communist and Post-Communist Studies.

VENDULKA KUBÁLKOVÁ is Professor of International Studies and Assistant Provost for University-Wide International Studies. Her research and teaching interests include Theory of International Relations, Post-Soviet Studies and Religion and Culture in World Affairs in addition to pedagogy and the use of IT in professional education on International and Global Studies. She has held appointments in England, New Zealand, and Australia as well as being Senior Fulbright Professor at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University and the University of California at Berkeley. Professor
Kubálková is the lead co-author/co-editor, author and editor of many books, and her articles have appeared in numerous journals and edited volumes.

NATAŠA KUBÍKOVÁ is a PhD candidate at the Institute of Near Eastern and African Studies, Charles University, Prague. She holds an MA in International Relations from the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, Prague. She also studied at Uppsala University, Sweden. She specializes in the modern history of the Middle East and political developments in the region and focuses on political Islam and Islamic political parties.

MIKA LUOMA-AHO is a Doctor of Philosophy (Newcastle upon Tyne) and a University Lecturer in International Relations at the University of Lapland, Finland. He is currently writing a monograph tentatively titled ‘International Relations as Political Theology’.

DANIEL SCHNEIDER is currently working on obtaining his master’s degree in European Studies at the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder), focusing mostly on the issues of European security. He was an intern at the IIR.

ALENA SVOBODOVÁ is studying at Wheaton College, Massachusetts, majoring in Russian Studies and International Relations. Currently, Alena is spending the year studying abroad in Moscow at the Russian State University for the Humanities. She was also an intern at the IIR.
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